



Ontario Federation of Agriculture

Ontario AgriCentre

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August 10, 2009

Mr. Gordon D. Montgomery
Warden
County of Dufferin
51 Zina Street
Orangeville, Ontario
L9W 1E5

Dear Mr. Montgomery,

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) is the voice of Ontario's farmers. Supported by approximately 38,000 individual members and 30 affiliated organizations, the OFA represents farm family concerns to governments and the general public.

Recently, OFA's Board of Directors adopted the following resolution relating to the unique soils found in northern Dufferin County;

THAT the Ontario Federation of Agriculture press the appropriate government planning authorities to classify the area containing Honeywood soils under the Specialty Crop Designation, so that this area is afforded the highest priority to protect these lands for ongoing horticultural crop production.

The OFA and its farm business members in Dufferin County are particularly concerned that the unique and highly productive "Honeywood Soils" will be permanently lost should large scale aggregate extraction be permitted. Currently, this area produces abundant crops of potatoes, a valuable Ontario crop that benefits from specialized soils.

In all likelihood, once aggregate extraction begins the farmers who farm them will be permanently lost. Moreover, the special soils, and their unique qualities, will be permanently lost. No amount of rehabilitation and site restoration will restore their productive capabilities. Finally, the crops produced from these soils will be replaced by producers from other areas of Ontario, or further afield.

The Provincial Policy Statement defines a Specialty Crop Area as an area;

"designated using evaluation procedures established by the province, as amended from time to time, where specialty crops such as tender fruits (peaches, cherries, plums), grapes, other fruit crops, vegetable crops, greenhouse crops, and crops from agriculturally developed organic soil lands are predominantly grown, usually resulting from:

.../2

*a) soils that have suitability to produce specialty crops, or lands that are subject to special climatic conditions, or a combination of both; and/or
b) a combination of farmers skilled in the production of specialty crops, and of capital investment in related facilities and services to produce, store, or process specialty crops.”*

The Honeywood soils certainly qualify and should be designated as such.

In addition to our concerns with respect to the permanent loss of agricultural land, and the unique Honeywood soils, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture also has serious concerns with the impact of a large quarry on surface waters and river flows in the Grand, Nottawasaga and other area watercourses.

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture requests that the Honeywood soils in Dufferin County be designated as a Specialty Crop Area.

Sincerely,



Bette Jean Crews
President

cc: The Honourable Leona Dombrowsky, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
The Honourable Jim Watson, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
The Honourable John Gerretsen, Minister of the Environment
The Honourable Donna Cansfield, Minister of Natural Resources
Ms. Gail Paech, Ontario Open For Business
Grand River Conservation Authority
Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority
OFA Board of Directors