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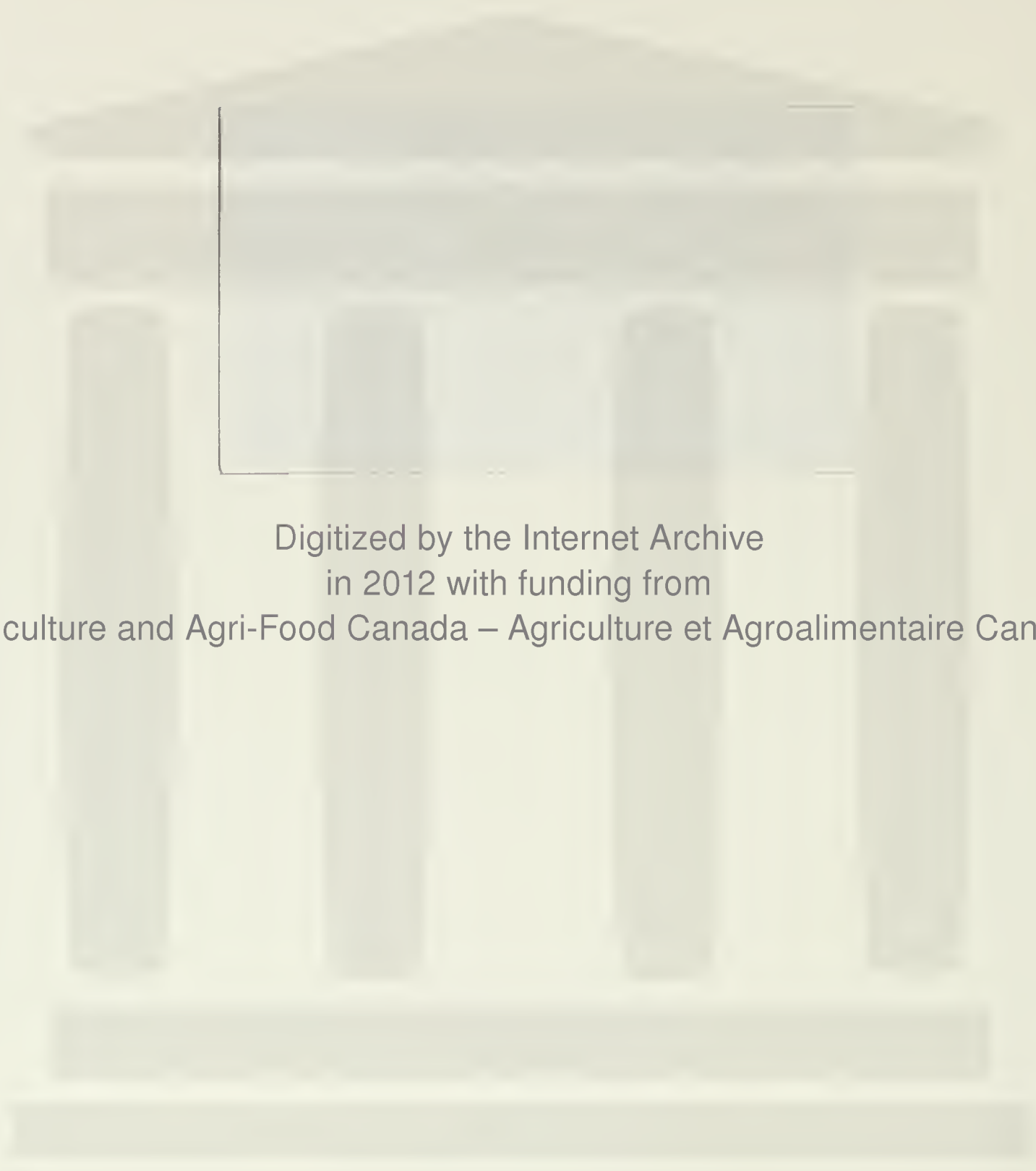
Guelph Session
June 28, 2001

CANADIAN RURAL PARTNERSHIP
RURAL DIALOGUE



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**Ontario
Rural Dialogue 2001**

**Guelph Session
June 28, 2001**

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We wish to acknowledge the contributions made by the rural citizens of Guelph and the surrounding area who participated in the Ontario Rural Dialogue 2001. Their thoughtful discussions and insights made it possible to identify the rural assets most valued in that part of Ontario and the strategies that should be adopted to sustain them. Our thanks go to the local coordinators and the local steering committee members for bringing together a diverse group of participants and for planning a successful dialogue session. Thanks are also due to the University of Guelph for making facilities available to the session, to the Ontario Agricultural Training Institute for the overall coordination of the dialogue session, and to PEOPLEnergy and local facilitators for facilitating the sessions. The session would not have been possible without the generous funding provided by Human Resources Development Canada, Health Canada, the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario, and Public Works and Government Services Canada. Our sincere appreciation for their generosity.

The Ontario Rural Dialogue 2001 is an initiative of the Rural Secretariat of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and Rural Team-Ontario. The partners in the endeavour were the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs; The Ontario Rural Council; and the University of Guelph. A heartfelt thanks to our partners.

FOREWORD

A total of six Ontario Rural Dialogue 2001 sessions were held — in Kemptville (eastern Ontario), Alfred (Francophone), Ridgetown (southwestern Ontario), Guelph (central Ontario), New Liskeard (northeastern Ontario), and Emo (northwestern Ontario) — during June and July 2001.

This document is a record of discussions that took place at the Ontario Rural Dialogue 2001 sessions in Guelph on June 28, 2001. Many of the discussions took place in brainstorming sessions at which no limits were placed on the participants. Views expressed do not necessarily represent those of the Government of Canada. In order to present a true report of the free-ranging discussions, recommendations made by participants that fall outside federal jurisdiction are also included. Participant recommendations contained in this report are recorded as they were heard. We thank session participants for their comments.

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Ontario Rural Dialogue 2001 Guelph Session

Executive Summary

Introduction

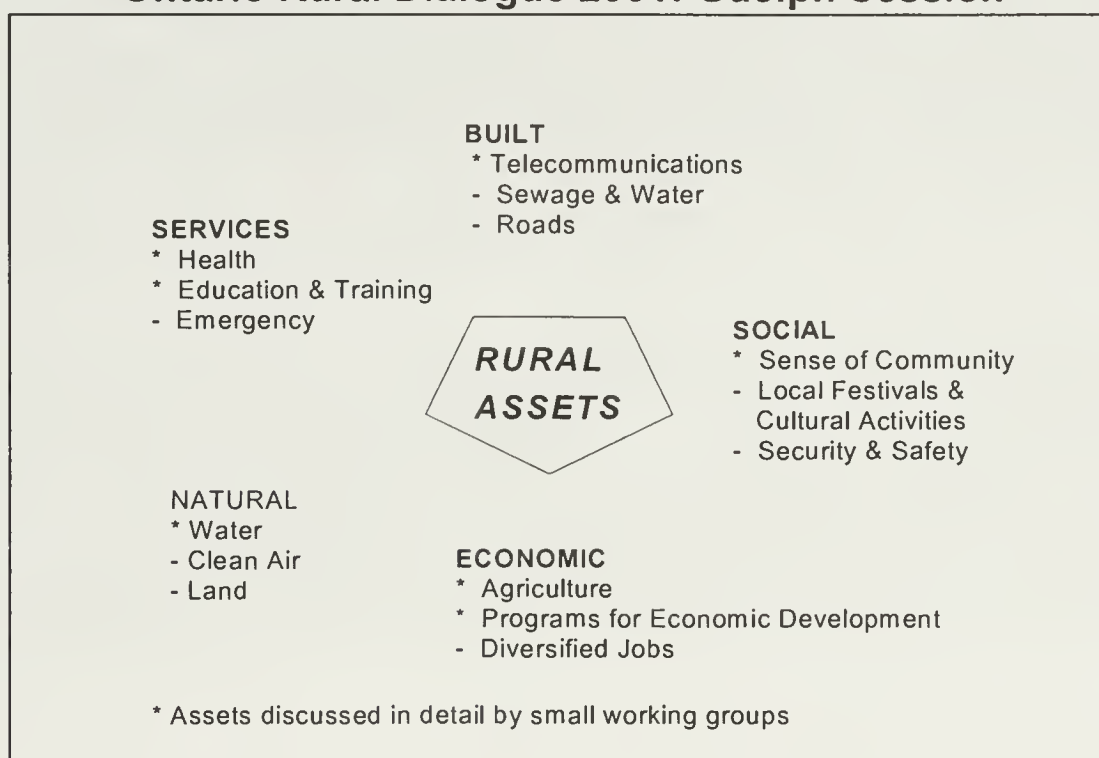
The fourth of six Ontario Rural Dialogue 2001 sessions was held in central Ontario. Fifty-two rural residents from a variety of age groups, interests and occupational categories met in Guelph on June 28, 2001, to discuss positive perspectives on rural values and priorities as part of the Ontario Rural Dialogue 2001 process.

The Assets Approach to Valuing Rural Ontario

An **assets-based approach** was used to enable participants to focus on the strengths and resources of rural and remote communities and to identify threats to these assets. Participants then discussed positive strategies for citizen and government action to sustain key assets.

Participants identified and defined the key rural assets within **five asset bundles** — **built (infrastructure)**, **social**, **economic**, **natural**, and **services**. The following diagram identifies the key rural assets in each asset bundle.

Assets Wheel Ontario Rural Dialogue 2001: Guelph Session



Through a discussion and voting process, the Guelph participants identified the rural assets they value most: **water, land, telecommunications, education and training, economic development, agriculture and the family farm, health, and sense of community.**

Participant Recommendations

After meeting in focus groups, participants came together to present strategies that could utilize resources and mitigate threats to sustain the identified assets. By vote, the group identified the following strategies as most significant:

Citizen Strategies

- Advocate the importance of viable and sustainable agriculture
- Clarify responsibility for water use
- Build and maintain supportive “community”
- Hold community partner meetings to develop action plans with clear focus and accountability
- Make use of existing communication tools to advocate for rural priorities

Government Strategies

- Create one voice for schools, citizens, business, farmers organizations and advocate for agriculture
- Foster cooperation between federal, provincial, and municipal governments for a seamless approach to funding and support for education and training programs
- Increase training initiatives to ensure adequate medical staff
- Tighten municipal zoning by-laws; e.g., agricultural versus industrial use
- Increase flexibility to allow local initiatives or provision of services
- Bring government to the table whenever possible (government – business – community)
- Change the curriculum; agriculture in grades 1-5 (Ontario Government)

Ontario Rural Dialogue 2001

Guelph Session

Date: June 28, 2001

Location: University of Guelph

Introduction

The fourth of six Ontario Rural Dialogue 2001 Sessions was held in Central Ontario. Fifty-two rural residents from a variety of age groups, interests and occupational categories met in Guelph on June 28, 2001, to discuss positive perspectives on rural values and priorities as part of the Rural Dialogue process. A demographic profile of participants is presented in Appendix A. After identifying the key rural assets (strengths) of the region, participants discussed the resources that sustain the assets and the threats that may affect them. They then identified citizen and government strategies to sustain the assets for the future.

The Rural Dialogue Process

In 1998, the federal government launched the Canadian Rural Partnership (CRP) to support community development by adopting new approaches and practices to respond to rural and remote development issues.

The Rural Dialogue, a key citizen-engagement component of CRP, is an ongoing two-way discussion between the federal government and Canadians from rural and remote regions. The Dialogue helps the federal government understand local and regional challenges and opportunities, and it gives rural and remote citizens an opportunity to influence federal government decision making on policies and programs.

The Ontario Rural Dialogue 2001 process was designed to continue this dialogue. It was led by the Rural Secretariat of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and Rural Team-Ontario (RT-O), representing many federal departments and provincial ministries. Other partners in the process were the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA); The Ontario Rural Council (TORC); and the University of Guelph (UoG). Funding for the dialogue was provided by Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC), Health Canada (HC), the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario (FedNor), and Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC).

Overview of the Assets Approach

Assets are what we want to keep, build upon and sustain for future generations.

Assessing and measuring rural assets is a **positive way** of valuing what we have and want to keep in rural Canada. Using an assets approach allows us to generate a total picture of the features and characteristics of rural life that are most valued by rural citizens. The information acquired in this data-gathering approach identifies and affirms what we **all** think is important about rural life. It becomes vital information for political and strategic representation of the “rural.” Asset-building connects people to a common cause. It brings us together, focuses our attention and points us in the same direction.

The assets approach is both positive and inclusive:

- Rural assets sustain livelihoods in both rural **and** urban areas.
- Assets include both **public and private** goods.

Important areas for action have traditionally been identified through a needs-assessment process. This approach identifies “problems”— areas that need attention because something is wrong or missing. In contrast, the assets approach emphasizes positives to identify resources on which to build.

A commonly voiced concern about the assets approach is that it does not sufficiently acknowledge legitimate rural needs. This, however, is not the case. What appear as “needs” in the needs-assessment approach appear as “assets that are threatened” in the assets approach, or as resources that are not being utilized. (As an example, consider low levels of employment, which, in the assets approach, are considered to be an asset of a population available to work). Thus, the assets approach does identify “needs,” but it examines them in the context of the larger resource pool. This enables participants to recognize the value of all of the assets in rural areas and to identify strategies to sustain the most important assets, rather than to focus solely on the assets that appear to be most threatened at the time.

Assets are often measured by calculating the total value of goods and services produced in rural areas. Such assets are mathematical and can be expressed as gross domestic product (GDP). The assets approach adds the view of what is important about rural Canada from the perspective of the rural population, the people who live and work amid the rural assets themselves.

In summary, rural assets are those popularly recognized attributes of rural areas that are considered essential for the maintenance of livelihoods, both rural and urban, and vital to the sustainability of the economy, society, and environment of rural Canada.

Rural Assets Ranking

The process of identifying assets is new to most people. Over the past 30 years, processes for determining priorities for action have emphasized identifying needs. The needs-assessment approach focuses on problems and negatives. The assets approach helps people focus on positives while including the total picture of both positives and negatives.

It takes time to adjust to this new way of thinking. To enable participants to work with this new method and to focus on positives, the valuing of identified assets occurred in several stages. For details of the process, see **“The Process of Valuing Assets in Rural Ontario”** (Appendix B).

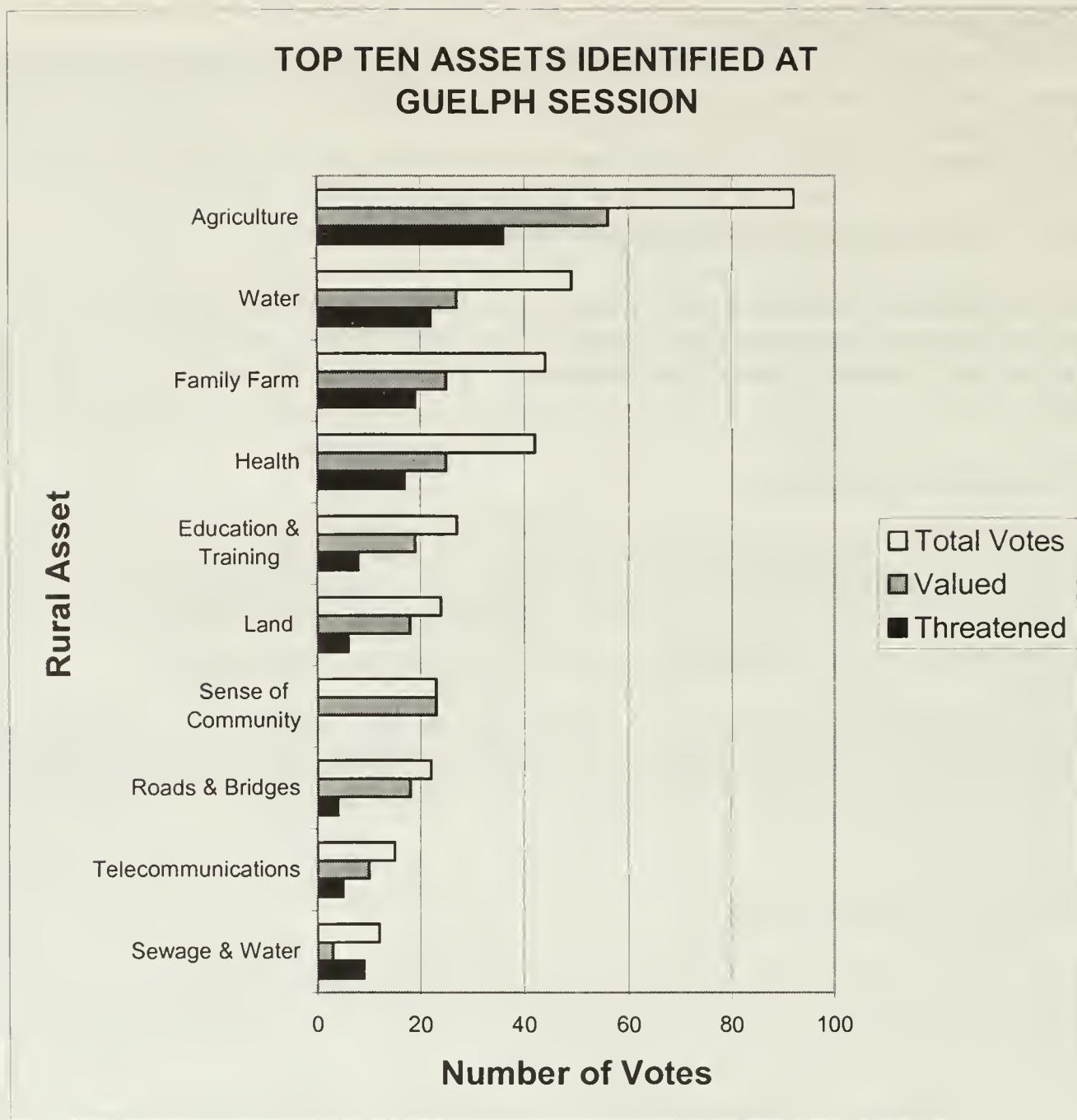
Individual Rural Asset Ranking

Over the course of the day, participants established in many ways the relative value of the assets they had identified. After the initial morning discussions, participants were asked to individually rank the assets on separate forms. **Individual asset ranking percentages are reported under each key rural asset discussed by small working groups.**

Because there is significant overlap in the definition of rural assets, they cannot be ranked precisely. For example, water and health, two commonly identified rural assets, are frequently cited in reference to the same issues. Therefore, it is a matter of judgement whether they should be considered one asset or two.

Large-group Rural Asset Ranking

Before the individual assets were ranked, participants undertook a large-group “asset voting” process, using blue and red dots (see Appendix C for results). This enabled them to consider the relative value of the assets they had identified and the extent to which they were valued (blue dots) or threatened (red dots). The following graph represents the top ten assets that were identified in the large-group asset voting process. It shows the total number of votes, as well as the breakdown of assets considered to be valued and threatened.



Strategies for Sustaining Key Rural Assets

Citizen and government strategies developed by the Rural Dialogue participants for the key rural assets discussed in detail by small working groups are listed in the following pages. Individual and large-group asset ranking, definitions for assets, resources sustaining the assets and threats to the assets identified by participants are found in Appendix D.

Water (and Land)

Citizen Strategies

Participants identified the following strategies as most significant for local citizens:

Water:

- 1) Clarify responsibility for water use
- 2) Bring grassroots-driven action suits

Land:

- 1) Recommend preservation of current forested areas
- 2) Recommend incentives to increase natural areas

Other citizen strategies:

- Recommend no retirement severances on land

Government Strategies

Participants identified the following strategies as most significant for government action:

Water:

- 1) Pass sunset laws to force reviews of conflicting legislation
- 2) Amend NAFTA (remove water as a commodity)

Land:

- 1) Tighten municipal zoning by-laws regulating agricultural and industrial use
- 2) Develop and implement nutrient management policies with teeth
- 3) Other government strategies:
 - Establish land trust to keep land in production
 - Implement sustainable co-housing development planning models
 - Clarify whether policy development emphasizes conservation or preservation

Agriculture (and Family Farm)

Citizen Strategies

Participants identified the following strategies as most significant for local citizens:

- 1) Bring Ontario home; buy goods locally
- 2) Farmers should offer farm tours and tell our story

Other citizen strategies:

- Create one voice and unity to citizens
- Educate and promote ourselves
- Be proactive
- Advocate through education to let Canadians know about the importance of agriculture

Government Strategies

Participants identified the following strategies as most significant for government action:

- 1) Advocate the importance of viable and sustainable agriculture
- 2) Change school curriculum; teach agriculture lessons in grades 1-5

Other government strategies:

- Lobby Food Land Ontario – government shelf fees
- Understanding of different commodity groups and look for commonalities to give a single farm voice
- Recognize umbrella associations such as Ontario Federation of Agriculture

Health

Citizen Strategies

Participants identified the following strategies as most significant for local citizens:

- 1) Promote and support local organizations to network for better/cooperative planning
- 2) Build and maintain supportive “community”

Other citizen strategies:

- Reach out more to others
- Build and maintain support groups
- Create local visioning (work together to get what we need)

Government Strategies

Participants identified the following strategies as most significant for government action:

- 1) Increase training initiatives to ensure adequate medical staff
- 2) Increase flexibility to allow local initiatives or provision of services

Other government strategies:

- Continue to encourage local industry and local community groups to partner
- Promote and support local organizations to network for better/cooperative planning
- Encourage more flexibility to allow local initiatives and services (e.g., policies/use of locally raised funds)
- Increase training initiatives to ensure adequate medical staff to rural areas (psychiatric staff)
- Increase availability of locums – temporary replacement physicians
- Develop standards for needs-based funding (i.e., under-serviced areas/areas with higher health needs)
- Continue to increase local input to services (e.g., ambulance/nurse practitioners, transportation)
- Increased accessibility and flexibility of respite care for children with disabilities and seniors)
- Work out funding for nurse practitioners

Sense of Community

Citizen Strategies

Participants identified the following strategies as most significant for local citizens:

- 1) Bridge Groups – support groups for farm and non-farm; e.g., library as a link to government services
- 2) Community Web site

Other citizen strategies:

- Organizations geared to community
- Support
- Cultural events (rather than more meetings)
- Community projects
- On the security issue – crisis brings people together. All rural residents, farm/non-farm, have the same agenda

Government Strategies

Participants identified the following strategies as most significant for government action:

- 1) Inventory opportunities for improvement; e.g., disabled accessibility
- 2) Offer community information centres through libraries; e.g., Service Canada

Other government strategies:

- Inventory opportunities for improvement
- Provide funding for projects; e.g., for accessibility

Education and Training

Citizen Strategies

Participants identified the following strategies as most significant for local citizens:

- 1) Bring community partners together for meetings that produce action plans with clear focus and accountability
- 2) Identify local “champions for change”; e.g., United Way, to energize and empower community

Other citizen strategies:

- Open and candid dialogue
- Promote partnerships (community partners meetings)
- Community accountability
- Government can't and shouldn't do it all
- Attitude is key along with communication
- Focus on client groups

- See the bigger picture
- Consult the local citizens (how to overcome apathy)
- Follow-up is critical
- Quality is not only quantitative accountability
- Count the blessings and build on them
- Building community mindedness – focus
- Engage the whole community and empower them with spirit and abilities to improve their situation

Government Strategies

Participants identified the following strategies as most significant for government action:

- 1) Government should provide funding and supports geared to sustainability rather than “seed” money to get things started – real money, not political money
- 2) Federal, provincial, and municipal governments should cooperate in a seamless approach to funding and supporting education and training programs

Other government strategies:

- Boards of Education have mandate for life-long learning (continuing education); rural areas are under-serviced
- Provide critical tools to kick-start local communities (rural/urban, funding programs, supports)
- Downloading is hampering municipal governments and Boards of Education from serving local areas properly (equal accessibility)
- Federal and provincial governments need to get their collective act in gear – seamless programs – cooperate “who is in first”? Youth, etc., federal government is in and out of training
- Government mandates change regularly – jeopardize or end sustainability
- Improved dialogue between government and local organizations
- Pool resources instead of dwelling on bottom line for individual organizations – “where there’s a will, there’s a way”
- End duplication and work together (network and share)

Economic Development

Citizen Strategies

Participants identified the following strategies as most significant for local citizens:

- 1) Citizens should continue to ask who else should be involved
- 2) Citizens make it their responsibility to know who is doing what

Other citizen strategies:

- Individuals are responsible for determining who is doing what
- People should work with organizations so that they will be more receptive
- Continue to ask who else should be at the table

Government Strategies

Participants identified the following strategies as most significant for government action:

- 1) Government should be at the table whenever possible (government, business, community)
- 2) Government should share success stories and ensure analysis of results

Telecommunications

Citizen Strategies

Participants identified the following strategies as most significant for local citizens:

- 1) Make use of existing communication tools to advocate for rural priorities
- 2) Support community-based radio and television stations to build community identity, cohesion and avoid homogenization

Other citizen strategies:

- Rural people should give input to CRTC for review
- Use libraries, radio station CHY to raise awareness of the review (promote, encourage, advocate)
- Adopt attitude that rural citizens are not second-class citizens
- Using the communication we have, individuals and groups need to advocate for themselves

Government Strategies

Participants identified the following strategies as most significant for government action:

- 1) Government should support “rural telecommunications infrastructure”
- 2) Plan and deliver programs with the following components; local control/priorities, long-term/continuous, training/infrastructure (e.g., CFDC)

Other government strategies:

- Connect people to information resources, e.g., Canada Ontario Business Service Centres (COBSC)
- Order priorities so that the value and quality of service are key, not just economic cost of delivery
- Provide more training subsidies and programs specific to rural communities; e.g., quality service and technical trades
- Government should continue to subsidize rural telecommunication infrastructure
- Use telecommunications, e.g., “tele-health,” education, justice, to overcome distance. This means investing in band-width
- Ongoing financial support is needed for community information, Internet access and sustainability of Community Access Program (CAP) sites

Recommendations

As the day was ending, participants gathered to present the strategies recommended by the five focus groups. Participants then voted individually on what they believed to be the best three citizen and government strategies overall.

Citizen Strategies

- Advocate the importance of viable and sustainable agriculture
- Clarify responsibility for water use
- Build and maintain supportive “community”
- Hold meetings of community partners that result in action plans with clear focus and accountability
- Make use of existing communication tools to advocate for rural priorities

Government Strategies

- Create one voice for schools, citizens, business, farmers’ organizations, and advocate for agriculture
- Foster cooperation between the federal, provincial, and municipal governments for a seamless approach to funding and supporting education and training programs
- Increase training initiatives to ensure adequate medical staff
- Tighten municipal zoning by-laws; e.g., agricultural versus industrial use
- Increase flexibility to allow local initiatives or provision of services
- Government should be at the table whenever possible (government – business – community)
- Change the curriculum; agriculture in grades 1-5 (Ontario government)

Common Themes

- Education
- Local boards/committees
- Government programs
- Lack of volunteers/volunteer burnout
- Increased demand for services
- Decreased funding

Next Steps

The Ontario Rural Dialogue 2001 sessions took place in six regions across Ontario. Information from all sessions will be amalgamated and analysed in a comprehensive picture of the assets valued by citizens in rural Ontario. Results of this larger analysis and the information from the Ontario Regional Rural Conference 2001 held in North Bay, Ontario, August 26-28, 2001 will be incorporated into a final report.

The final report will reflect a comprehensive portrait of key rural assets in Ontario, along with the strategies recommended by conference participants.

Appendix A:

Demographic Profile of Participants

The Rural Dialogue process is designed to represent all citizens living in rural Ontario. Enough demographic information was collected from participants to identify the diversity of participants and to pinpoint which ideas were expressed by specific groups, such as farmers and youth. The following numbers are based on the 52 completed profile forms returned by participants.

Demographic features of the Guelph session:

- ⇒ 71% of participants (37 of 52) were female, 29% were male
- ⇒ 44% of participants were 46–64 years old, 36% were between 30 and 45, 12% were youth (15–29), 8% were seniors (65+)
- ⇒ 52% of participants live on farms, 11% live in towns under 25, 000 population, and 7% live in rural non-farm residences
- ⇒ 84% of participants have lived in their local area for at least 10 years
- ⇒ 38% of participants listed **farming** as their primary or secondary occupation
- ⇒ 21% of participants listed **government** as their primary or secondary occupation
- ⇒ 19% of participants listed **social services** as their primary or secondary occupation
- ⇒ 16% of participants listed **education** as their primary or secondary occupation
- ⇒ 16% of participants listed **homemaking** as their primary or secondary occupation
- ⇒ 16% of participants listed **health** as their primary or secondary occupation
- ⇒ 65% of participants reported total household incomes of over \$40,000

Overall, a diverse group of rural citizens participated in the Rural Dialogue at Guelph.

Appendix B:

The Process of Valuing Assets in Rural Ontario

All the information presented by participants was gathered into a “data set,” which includes information both from and about the participants. Information from all six dialogue sessions will be amalgamated and analysed in a comprehensive picture of the assets valued by citizens of rural Ontario.

- ⇒ **Participant Profile:** As part of the registration process, participants were asked to complete a two-page Participant Profile, which included demographic information. This information will be used to characterize the diversity of participants and to identify which ideas were expressed by specific groups, such as farmers and youth.
- ⇒ **Assets Wheel:** Participants created a comprehensive list of the key rural assets under five asset bundles: built (infrastructure), social, economic, natural, and services.
- ⇒ **Assets Voting:** Participants were given seven blue dots to indicate the assets they valued most, and three red dots to indicate the assets which they believed to be most threatened at this time. Asset Voting Results can be found in Appendix C.
- ⇒ **Comprehensive Overview of Key Assets:** The three assets with the most votes in each of the asset bundles were posted at the front of the room and discussed. This enabled participants to think about what other rural residents valued as rural assets.
- ⇒ **Assets Ranking:** Following the group discussion, participants were given a second opportunity to rank rural assets. Participants were asked to identify the five assets that they, as individuals, valued the most. These asset rankings were collected on individual sheets.
- ⇒ **Asset Working Groups:** Participants then broke into working groups to discuss the characteristics and issues surrounding a particular asset. Working group discussions were organized around the following:
 - ⇒ **Asset Definition**
 - ⇒ **Resources Sustaining the Asset**
 - ⇒ **Threats to the Asset**
 - ⇒ **Recommended Citizen Strategies for Sustaining the Asset**
 - ⇒ **Recommended Government Strategies for Sustaining the Asset**
- ⇒ **Large group Recommendations:** As the day ended, each focus group presented its recommendations for government and citizens. All the participants voted on their top three citizen strategies and top three government strategies.

Appendix C: “Asset Voting” Results

During the morning session, participants were asked to identify, and then vote on, the rural assets they believed to be most important to rural lives. Participants were given seven blue dots to indicate the assets that they valued most, and an additional three red dots to indicate the assets they believed to be most threatened. The totals for all of the assets identified are listed below. The blue dot totals are listed first, separated by a comma from the red dot totals.

Built

Transportation – 2,1
Private line Access – 0,0
Small Industry – 0,1
Town & Villages – 4,0
Community Radio – 2,0
Public Parks Conservation – 2,0
Farm Building – 0,1
Art & Culture Centres – 0,0
Rail Fences – 0,0
Non-development of Secondary Roads – 0,0
Utility (Energy, Natural Gaslines) – 3,1
Drainage – 2,0
Historical Building – 2,0
Subsidized Housing – 2,3
Telecommunications – 10,5
Roads, Bridges – 18,4
Sewage & Water – 3,9
Community Centres – 8,1

Social

Independence – 3,2
Rural Mythology – 1,0
Women's Institute – 0,0
Privacy – 0,0
Security/Safety – 1,6
Sense of Community – 23,0
Concern for Issue citizenship – 0,0
Peaceful – 3,0
Organized Association – 2,0
Local festival & cultural activities – 8,0
Churches – 6,0
Sports Leagues – 0,0
Networking – 1,0
Play day/good for kids – 5,0
W. Willie – 0,0
4-H Youth Club Jr. Farmers – 7,0

Services

Library – 1, 0
Government Related Farm & Support – 0,0
Outreach Workers – 0,0
Grant Systems/Funding – 0,0
Women's Shelter – 2,0
Family Resource Centre – 0,0
Child Care – 3,0
Neighbourhood Watch – 0,0
Public Health – 2,3
Volunteers – 3,1
Community Care Access – 1,0
Recreation – 1,0
Emergency Services – 5,0
Garbage & Recycling – 2,1
One Stop Shopping – 0,0
Employment Services – 0,0
Postal Services – 1,0
Policing – 1,0
Mental Addictions – 2,1
Education and Training – 19,8
Health – 25,17
Neighbourhood Sharing – 6,0

Economic

Prime Land (water used for business) – 6,4
Family Farm – 25,19
Programs for Economic Development – 9 0
Agriculture – 56,36
Market Proximity Export – 0,0
History and Culture to exploit – 0,0
Tourism – 2,0
Lower Cost Living – 0,0
Job Training Opportunities – 0,0
Micro business Opportunities – 0,0
Climate, geography to grow – 0,0
Small business Support – 3,0
Government Supports – 0,0
Co-ops and Credit Union – 3,0
Diversified Jobs – 0,1
Manufacturing & Food Processing – 3,1
Accessible Loans – 0,1
Skilled Base – 3,0

Natural

Clean air – 5,3
Water – 27,22
Land – 18,6
Sun/wind – 1,0
Natural process – 4,1
Wild Life – 4,3
Habitat – 3,0
Open Spaces – 5,2
Natural Feature Caves 1,0
Trees – 3,0
Trail Coordinators – 1,1
Privacy – 1,2
Rocks/Minerals – 0,0
Wild Flowers – 0,0
Quiet – 3,2
Top Soil – 2,2
Dark Night Sky – 2,0

Appendix D:

Key Rural Assets Discussed in Small Working Groups: Definitions/Resources/Threats

Through a voting process, participants were asked to identify five key rural assets that they, as individuals, valued most from the list of key rural assets identified by the large group asset voting process.

Telecommunications

Individual Rural Asset Ranking

Telecommunications appeared in the top five individual rural assets ranking for 3% of the participants.

Large group Asset Valuing

In the initial large group session, **Telecommunications** was identified as the second most significant asset in the “built” asset bundle.

Participants gave “telecommunications” a total of 15 votes:

- 5 blue (valued)
- 10 red (threatened).

In the individual ranking, telecommunications was not listed first by any of the participants.

Definition of “Telecommunications”

Participants identified the following meanings associated with “telecommunications”.

- Existing infrastructure; e.g., telephone, cable, radio towers, transmitters, wireless cell-phones/towers, satellite
- Internet access
- Television

Resources Sustaining “Telecommunications”

- Continual upgrade of expertise
- Subsidization of long-distance toll (under review)
- Customers/users
- Canadian Radio and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC), regulation and rules
- Viable service providers – rate of return and local content
- Local economic health
- Maintenance
- Capital investment and volunteers for CHY Radio Station

Threats to “Telecommunications”

- CRTC review and how subsidy will be defined in high-cost areas
- Increased control of media: where will farmers and First Nations have a voice?
- Decreased availability of skilled trades and distance to do training
- Limited access to service (high-speed Internet, keeping up, infrastructure cost)
- Potential withdrawal of funding
- Centralization of maintenance staff = longer waits for service calls (call centres)

Education and Training

Individual Rural Asset Ranking

Education and Training appeared in the top five individual rural asset ranking for 35% of the participants.

Large group Asset Valuing

In the initial large group session, **Education and Training** were identified as the second most significant asset in the “service” asset bundle.

Participants gave “Education and Training” a total of 27 votes:

- 19 blue (valued)
- 8 red (threatened)

Definition of “Education and Training”

Participants identified the following meanings associated with “Education and Training”.

- Informing/awareness of opportunities
- Life-long process
- Personal asset building; identifying skills and abilities, confidence building and attitudes
- Broad spectrum in nature
- Instilling values/beliefs from early age
- Both informal and formal

Resources Sustaining “Education and Training”

- Many flexible training programs
- Local boards established to advise federal and provincial governments on training groups and available programs.
- Available technology; e.g., Internet, has great training potential in non-rural areas; Community Access Program (CAP) sites are coming
- Strength of current rural organizations (4H, Junior Farmers, Women and Rural Economic Development [WRED], small business support centers)
- Public education is still a key resource

- Adult and continuing education, Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP) Bridging, Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology (CAAT) Programs, Bridging
- Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) service centres limited resources
- Ontario Agricultural Training Institute (OATI) Programs; agriculture service centres
- Foundation funding
- Volunteer base/part-time coordinators
- Women in Non-Traditional Trades (WITT) and successor programs

Threats to “Education and Training”

- Lack of volunteers
- Increased demand for services – equal accessibility
- Lack of government funding (transportation/programs are cut or reduced)
- New gaps in education curriculum (nothing for “basic” level, less for special education kids; ending of arts programs; limited technical programs despite skilled trade shortages)
- Lack of understanding/awareness by general population of critical issues, threats
- Poor communication
- Misleading media information
- Lack of ongoing government support for valuable programs – sustainability issues
- Can’t be or are not picked up by Ontario community groups
- Lack of employer commitments to training (non-support for apprenticeships; other training by large employers – smaller employers can’t afford to). Increase of part-time work, no benefits
- Migration of rural youth to urban centers, lack of opportunities

Water

Individual Rural Asset Ranking

Water and land were categorized separately in the individual ranking but were discussed together in the small working groups. Overall, water appeared in the top five assets ranking for 69% of the participants, and land appeared in the top five assets ranking for 42% of the participants.

Large group Asset Valuing

In the initial large group session, **water** was identified as the most significant asset in the “natural” asset bundle.

Land was also identified as a significant asset.

Participants gave “water” a total of 49 votes:

- 27 blue (valued)
- 22 red (threatened)

Definition of “Water (and Land)”

Participants identified the following meanings associated with “water and land”.

- Supports livelihoods
- Growth/demand for water
- Water conservation issues
- Global nature of this issue
- Maintaining lifestyle and standards
- Can’t be labeled as an “asset”; it is priceless
- Water is a basic need

Resources Sustaining “Water (and Land)”

- Coordination of provincial and federal responsibility for “agriculture” and “immigration”
- Role of government and private sector
- Land use (severances) and planning (infrastructure development)
- Zoning guidelines
- Land conservation and a base for production
- Conservation for land and water quality
- Existence of water, privatization of water
- Under North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) is classified as a common good
- Policy pressure; need to make water a common good
- Well water quality
- Water taking – Kitchener/Waterloo/Cambridge are the largest well sourcing urban area
- Quantity of water in rural sourced aquifers, deep source and surface water
- Ownership of the resource
- Existence of current water policy – private ownership versus community ownership
- Research
- How will we be accountable (citizens, government, quality, use of land)
- Leadership; University of Guelph and modeling for use of sprinklers
- Land use and management practices
- Intact ecosystem, vegetation, and wetlands
- Rainfall and conservation activities
- Increasing individual awareness
- Recycling practices, “blue-boxes” and rain barrels
- Legislation to enact and enforce at public and international levels
- Citizens holding industry accountable and effective penalties

Threats to “Water (and Land)”

- Water contamination related to drainage
- Development and urban sprawl
- Chemical treatment of urban water
- We don’t understand the value of our resources
- Pressure of urban/industrial use (accountability for water management)
- Debate over ownership of resources
- Clash of values from different user groups
- Deep water is affected by heavy metals and nuclear industry
- Growth and development

- Individualism versus community approach
- Non-enacted legislation
- Land policy – conservation or preservation?

Health

Individual Rural Asset Ranking

Health appeared in the top five individual rural asset ranking for 63% of the participants.

Large group Asset Valuing

In the initial large group session, **Health** was identified as the most significant asset in the “service” asset bundle.

Participants gave “health” a total of 42 votes:

- 25 blue (valued)
- 17 red (threatened)

Definition of “Health”

Participants identified the following meanings associated with “health”.

- Local comprehensive service (mental, community, hospital emergency, ambulance)
- Availability/accessibility
- Affordability
- Waiting lists
- Support for professionals (linkages)
- Wellness/treatment (prevention and health promotion)

Resources Sustaining “Health”

- Grassroots, community based
- Public health going into resource centres
- Seniors day away program
- Staff – doctors nurses, x-ray, lab, medical staff
- Support groups to support families and people with health conditions, health organizations (e.g., associations and societies)
- Cross-board representation -- Community Care Access Centres (CCAC) and hospital
- CCAC – provide direction and coordination (volunteers)
- Emergency services
- Money/funds – if deemed under-serviced then grants provided

Threats to “Health”

- Lack of resource (staff and funding)
- Aging population – fewer volunteers (support groups) affect rural women and increase workload (sandwich generation)
- Demographics – increased aging and increased burden on the health care system, lowered birth rate
- Increased dependence physically, heavy work load of nursing and custodial staff
- Inappropriate use of existing resources; e.g., emergency rooms
- Lack of trust in medical system
- Centralized ambulance
- Affordability (user fees)/accessibility (transportation)
- Extended hours of medical staff; e.g., doctors on call
- Inability to attract health care professionals
- Health care worker burnout, increased stress and increased hours/travel
- Dual income (2 people must work)
- Lack of support for alternative medical/health

Agriculture (and Family Farm)

Individual Rural Asset Ranking

Agriculture and the family farm were categorized separately in the individual ranking but were discussed together in the small working groups. Overall, agriculture or family farming appeared in the top five assets of 63% of the participants.

Separately, **Agriculture** appeared in the top five assets ranking for 46% of the participants, and **Family Farming** appeared in the top five assets ranking for 40% of the participants.

Large group Asset Valuing

In the initial large group session, **Agriculture** was identified as the most significant asset in the “economic” asset bundle.

Participants gave “agriculture” a total of 92 votes:

- 56 blue (valued)
- 36 red (threatened)

Participants gave “family farm” a total of 44 votes:

- 25 blue (valued)
- 19 red (threatened).

Definition of “Agriculture”

Participants identified the following meanings associated with “agriculture” and the “family farm.”

- How we eat/where we get our food
- Number of people who attribute livelihoods to agriculture
- Small viable land holdings (300–400 acres)
- Stewardship
- Way of life
- Small business
- Economics of sustainable farming (cooperative and collaborative workforce)
- Freedom – own best management practices, independent
- Traditional mix with innovation
- Innovative marketing
- Profitable
- Diversified
- Field to fork operations
- Farm = community continuation, citizenship and country
- Family heritage – passing farms through the generations
- Long-term planning
- Sense of pride

* Key insight – family farming is a viable, sustainable small business that has tremendous economic impact, and the small farm is responsible for all business aspects.

Resources Sustaining “Agriculture”

- Marketing and promotion of products
- Education of urban population about rural agriculture
- Farmers’ markets
- Farm organizations and commodity groups = power connections
- Voice of collective group
- Popularity of co-ops
- Jersey breed and quality support services as well as business management practices would sustain dairy farmers concentrating on Jersey breed
- Farmer needs to have access to business supports

Threats to “Agriculture”

- Independence of farmers
- Efficiencies cost money
- Just-in-time production does not equal agriculture
- Food is too cheap
- Government policies and social programs
- Legislation and lowered independence
- Marketing
- Loss of esteem
- Extremist groups and effective marketing
- Urban understanding of farming practices

- Grocery store and cost of shelf space
- Climate and seasonal nature of agriculture
- Customers need and want a consistent year-round profit
- Not competitive in global markets
- Distribution centers who have market power

Sense of Community

Individual Rural Asset Ranking

Sense of Community appeared in the top five assets ranking for 46% of the participants.

Large group Asset Valuing

In the initial large group session, **Sense of Community** was identified as the most significant asset in the “social” asset bundle.

Participants gave “sense of community” a total of 23 votes:

- 23 blue (valued)
- 0 red (threatened)

Definition of “Sense of Community”

Participants identified the following meanings associated with “sense of community”.

- Belonging to a place or to the people
- Develop “blood” relationships in the workplace and long-term relationships
- Security – comfort zone
- Feelings about where you are
- Perceptions – knowing and being a neighbour

Threats to “Sense of Community”

- More transient population
- Amalgamations
- Lack of sense of control
- Television, security with media and internet

Economic Development

Individual Rural Asset Ranking

Economic Development appeared in the top five individual rural asset ranking for 10% of the participants.

Large group Asset Valuing

In the initial large group session, **Economic Development** was identified as a significant asset in the “economic” asset bundle.

Participants gave “Economic Development” a total of 9 votes:

- 9 blue (valued)
- 0 red (threatened)

Definition of “Economic Development”

Participants identified the following meanings associated with “Economic Development”.

- Sustaining
- Strengthen communities
- Based on partnerships
- Inclusive
- Wealth creation
- Any community initiative with economic benefits
- Environmentally balanced

Resources Sustaining “Economic Development”

- Government programs (Community Futures Development Corporations, HRDC, OMAFRA Field Offices, municipalities)
- Organizations – Canadian Cooperative Association, Community Economic Development Technical Assistance Program (CEDTAP)
- Funding agencies/foundations (Trillium)
- Women and Rural Economic Development (WRED)
- Economic Development Committees
- Chambers/Business Improvement Areas
- Associations/Local Agencies (Civil Society), 4H, Churches, Community Groups

Threats to “Economic Development”

- Affordable housing
- Shrinking funding
- Difficulty in partnering
- Socio-economic barriers
- Volunteer burn-out
- Marketing activities and awareness
- Broad geographic areas to cover/isolation
- Balance between agriculture and economic development
- Inclusiveness
- Environmental degradation



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