

N R E

THE NEW RURAL ECONOMY



Site 17: Usborne, Ontario

Usborne, which had a population of 1,535 in 1996, is a former township now part of the Municipality of South Huron, Huron County and is dominated physically by a commercial farm landscape. Cash-crop and livestock operations had a total value \$34 million in sales in 1996 and provided employment for 40% of the workforce (one of the highest shares reported in the province and in Canada). There is no town or village of any size in the township; most residents rely on the adjacent town of Exeter for service and some retail needs. Usborne's population is dispersed in farm and non-farm households.

Agriculture is of primary importance to Usborne's economic and community activity. Also significant for employment and income generation are the backward and forward linkages (both indirect and direct) that agriculture has into other sectors. It has a first-rate biophysical base for farming operations with soil capability Class 1 land in close to 70% of the township. Also relevant is its position among the top 5% of Canada's farm land in terms of the agroclimatic resource index. Although the number of census farms has declined by 34% from 1971-1996, farm land area has remained stable over the same time period.



Maps courtesy of Statistics Canada, Geography Division, 2000

<i>Characteristics in 1996</i>	<i>Usborne</i>	<i>Ontario</i>	<i>Canada</i>
Population	1 535	10 753 573	28 846 761
1991 to 1996 population change (%)	-1.1	6.6	5.7
% of population ages 15 and over	77.8	79.4	79.5
Unemployment rate	3.7	9.1	10.1
Participation rate	69.2	66.3	65.5
% Primary industry	26.5	4.1	5.6
% Secondary industry	22.8	31.3	20
% Tertiary industry	50.0	64.6	74.4
Average number of persons in married or common-law families	3.2	3.2	3.1
Average number of persons in lone-parent families	2.5	2.6	2.6

Source: Statistics Canada

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