

# PARENTS AND TEACHERS AGREE: NOT ENOUGH ONTARIO CLASSROOM TIME IS DEDICATED TO LEARNING ABOUT FARMING AND FOOD PRODUCTION IN ONTARIO.

*Nearly three-quarters (73%) of teachers and 7-in-10 (69%) parents feel not enough classroom time is dedicated to learning about farming or food production practices in Ontario.*



**Ontario Agri-Food Education Inc.**

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## ONTARIO PARENTS AND TEACHERS AGREE: NOT ENOUGH CLASSROOM TIME IS DEDICATED TO LEARNING ABOUT AGRICULTURE

*Nearly three-quarters (73%) of teachers and 7-in-10 (69%) parents feel not enough classroom time is dedicated to learning about farming or food production practices in Ontario.*

**Milton, ON** – Research conducted during the past twelve months with both parents and teachers of students in Ontario elementary and secondary schools, shows that most teachers (73%) and parents (69%) feel not enough classroom time is being dedicated to learning about farming or food production practices in Ontario.

*These are the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted on behalf of Ontario Agri-Food Education Inc. between May 2-12, 2006 (Parents) and December 11-20, 2006 (Teachers). Funding for this project was provided in part by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada through the Agricultural Adaptation Council's CanAdvance Program. The poll is based on a randomly selected sample of 704 Ontario parents of elementary or secondary school students and 211 Ontario elementary and secondary school teachers. For teachers, with a sample of this size, the results are considered accurate to within  $\pm 6.8$  percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire population of full-time Ontario teachers (130,000 in English Speaking Schools) been polled. For parents, with a sample of this size, the results are considered accurate to within  $\pm 3.7$  percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire population of parents of elementary and secondary school students been polled. The margin of error will be larger within regions and for other sub-groupings of*

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*the survey population. These data were statistically weighted to ensure the sample's regional and age/sex composition reflects that of the actual population according to 2001 Census data.*

***Nearly three-quarters (73%) of teachers and 7-in-10 (69%) parents feel not enough classroom time is dedicated to learning about farming or food production practices in Ontario.***

Teachers (73%) and parents (69%) of elementary and secondary students both say that Ontario's school children do not receive enough education about farming or food production in Ontario. Specifically, 39% of teachers say "not quite enough", while another 34% say "definitely not enough". Meanwhile, only 1% said too much classroom time is spent on this topic. Among parents, 42% say "not quite enough" time is spent on learning about farming or food production, while another 27% say "definitely not enough". Only 2% say too much time is spent.

- Parents of elementary students (66%) are less likely than parents of secondary students (73%) to feel that not enough time is dedicated to food production practices.
- Elementary school teachers (72%) and secondary school teachers (73%) are equally likely to feel that not enough time is dedicated to food production practices.

Other agrifood topics where a large number of Ontario parents and teacher feel students do not spend enough classroom time learning about include:

- Food safety practices, as they relate to farming in Ontario
  - 67% of parents of elementary students and 74% of parents of secondary students feel not enough time is dedicated to food safety practices on Ontario farms.



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- 74% of elementary school teachers and 71% of secondary school teachers feel not enough time is dedicated to food safety practices on Ontario farms.
- Environmental practices on Ontario farms
  - 70% of parents of elementary students and 77% of parents of secondary students feel not enough time is dedicated to environmental practices on Ontario farms.
  - 76% of both elementary school and secondary school teachers feel not enough time is dedicated to environmental practices on Ontario farms.

Although less dramatic, a majority of teachers and parents feel that not enough classroom time is being spent learning about nutrition and healthy food choices:

- 50% of parents of elementary students and 57% of parents of secondary students feel not enough time is dedicated to nutrition and healthy food choices.
- 33% of elementary school teachers and 58% of secondary school teachers feel not enough time is dedicated to nutrition and healthy food choices.

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