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Export date: Sat Oct 31 7:09:29 2026 / +0000 GMT

Applications open for Dufferin County?s 2026 Experimental Acres Program

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The County of Dufferin is encouraging farmers to apply to the 2026 Experimental Acres Program by March 27.

?Experimental Acres provides Dufferin farmers with educational and financial support to de-risk new practices that improve yield, soil health, carbon sequestration and overall sustainability,? reads a county press release. ?The program is intended to champion farmer-led discovery, with small-scale experimentation that can link to larger funding opportunities.?

There are three Experimental Acres funding streams.

The Living Roots and Green Cover Stream focuses on maintaining soil cover, as this helps reduce soil erosion from wind and precipitation. This could include cropping, intercropping and introducing new crops into the rotation.

The Innovation Stream provides funding to projects that benefit soil health and don't fit into other categories. Tarping to reduce tillage intensity, planting a tallgrass prairie, and winter crop rotation are all eligible projects for the Innovation Stream.

The third funding category is the Integrating Animals on the Farm Stream, which includes financing to support rotational grazing, silvopasture, and bale grazing. Animals bring many benefits to soil health and carbon storage.

?Experimental Acres brings farmers and partners together in a shared learning journey to advance sustainable agriculture. The program supports practices that strengthen climate resilience while improving soil health, protecting water resources, and increasing biodiversity,? Sara MacRae, manager of climate and energy at Dufferin County.

During the past three growing seasons, Experimental Acres has supported a variety of producer-led projects. These projects include suppressing plant competition with ducks, implementing espalier methods, creating natural pesticides, companion planting, cover crops, and green manure.

?Dufferin County continues to invest in a strong, innovative agriculture sector. Through the Experimental Acres Program, farmers gain early-stage support to test new ideas, build momentum, and position themselves for future funding while scaling up regenerative approaches on their farms. The Experimental Acres Program is grounded in respect for farmer expertise. We know that every farm is different, and real progress comes from solutions designed by producers that reflect practical, on-the-ground realities,? said Dufferin Warden Lisa Post.

To view past projects, visit dufferincounty.ca/county-services/climate-and-energy/experimental-acres

?Successful applicants can expect to receive prompt reimbursement of costs to de-risk their trial, and for soil testing and result analysis, research support from staff, and information about related events and programs,? the county explained.

To apply for the program, which accepts submissions until March 27, visit tinyurl.com/ExperimentalAcres