



SUMMARY REPORT

Fergus Agricultural Society Stakeholder Engagement Survey

April 2022

WILTON
CONSULTING GROUP



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1.0 **About This Report**

In Fall 2021, the Fergus Agricultural Society set out to plan for the future of the Fergus Fall Fair and other community events and asked local residents to help shape that plan.

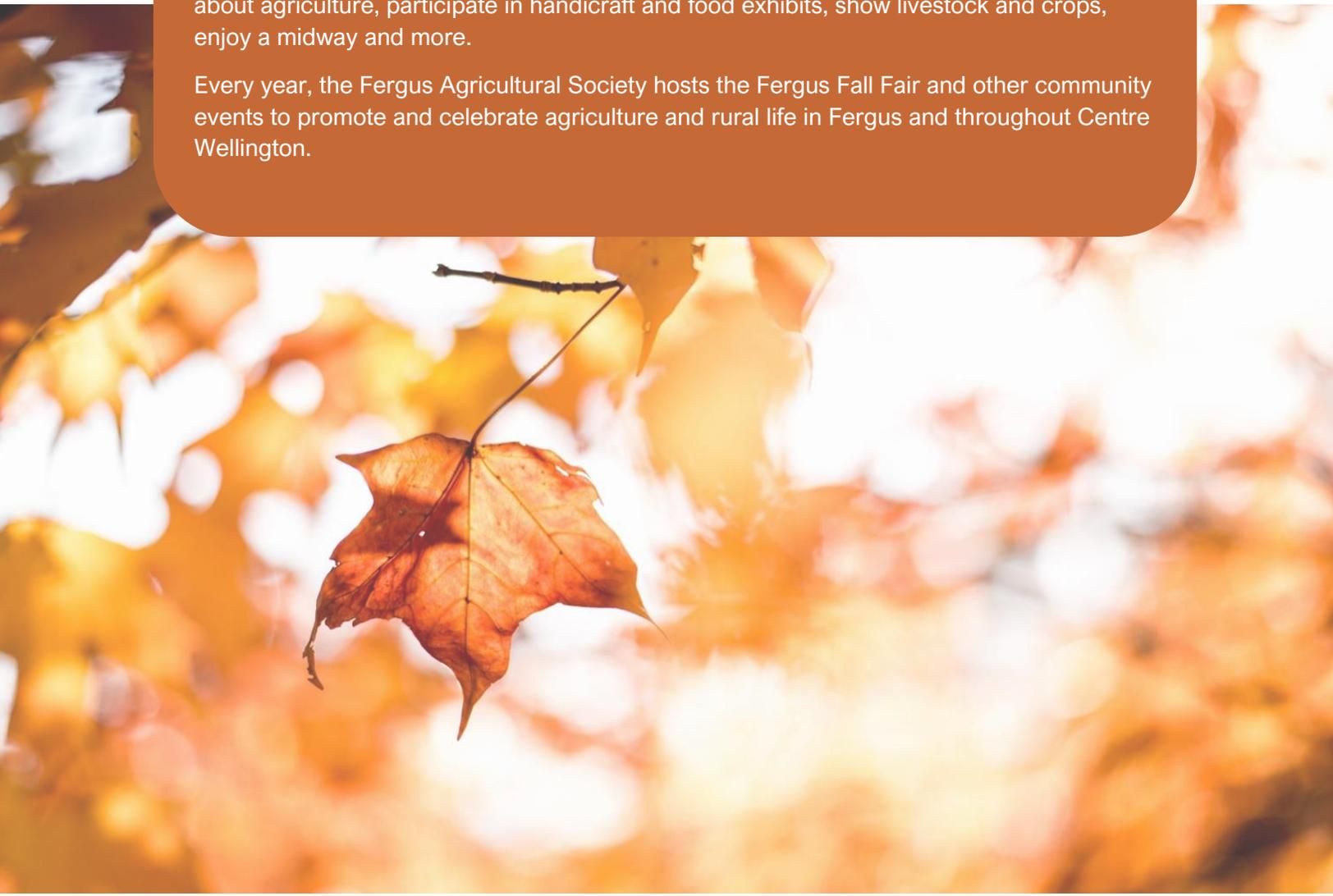
In January 2022 we conducted a survey to capture your feedback and opinions on how the Fergus Agricultural Society can grow and evolve while continuing to serve the needs of the Fergus and surrounding community. This report summarizes your feedback as community members and provides a look into the future of the Fergus Fall Fair

Thank you for sharing your ideas with us! The Fergus Agricultural Society will take what we have learned and apply it to our upcoming activities to best serve the Fergus community.

About the Fergus Agricultural Society

The Fergus Agricultural Society certainly has a long history; the Society has hosted the Fergus Fall Fair since 1836, making it the tenth longest-running Fall Fair in Ontario. Over time, the Fergus Fall Fair has evolved from primarily educating farmers about good agricultural practices, to a community pillar where people of all backgrounds can learn about agriculture, participate in handicraft and food exhibits, show livestock and crops, enjoy a midway and more.

Every year, the Fergus Agricultural Society hosts the Fergus Fall Fair and other community events to promote and celebrate agriculture and rural life in Fergus and throughout Centre Wellington.



2.0 About the Community Survey

The purpose of the Community Survey was to gather feedback from a wide range of community members in the Fergus area to draw insights for the Fergus Agricultural Society as it plans future events. The community survey was open from January 10th, 2022, until January 26th, 2022. We heard from:

- People who have attended the Fall Fair
- Sponsors of the Fergus Fall Fair and Fergus Agricultural Society events
- Current and previous volunteers with the Fergus Agricultural Society

3.0 Community Survey Results

In total, the Community Survey was completed by 1,011 people ranging in age from 18 years old or younger, to 66 years old and above (figure 1).

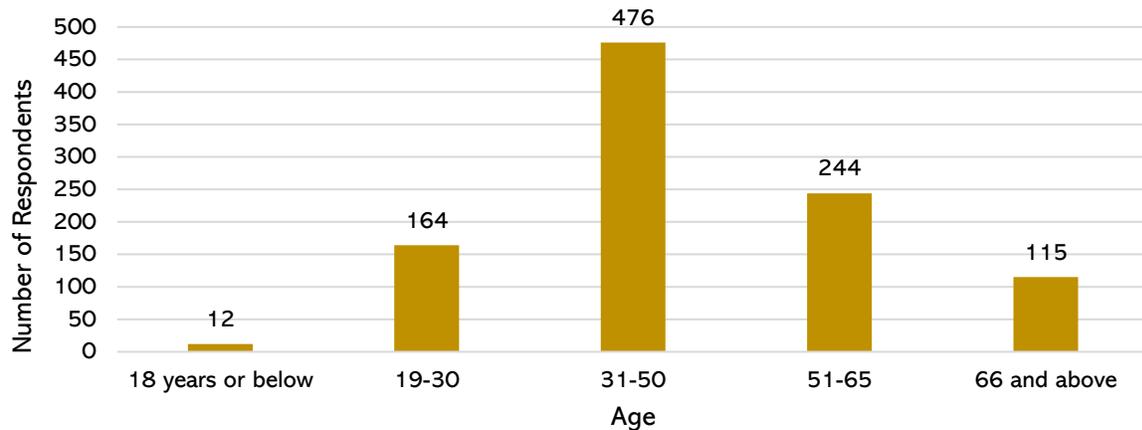


Figure 1. Survey respondents by age. (n=1,011)

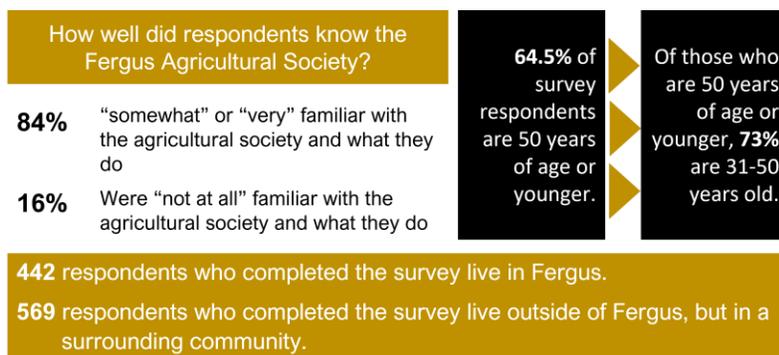


Figure 2. Overview of who completed the community survey.

Community Fair Favourites

Agriculture and Food: Livestock and Local Food are Fair Favourites

- Respondents enjoy almost all aspects of the Fall Fair
- Most popular answer for the favourite activity was **purchasing from local businesses**
- Livestock and poultry shows and competitions -- especially horse shows and the poultry exhibit -- are **enjoyed by all ages**

"I love to see my grandkids' smiling faces as they learn about farm animals, riding the midway and enjoying the food available. Great, great times!"

Family Fun

The top three favourite family fun activities are the **truck and tractor pull, live music and entertainment and the exhibit hall.**

- Dog shows and live music received the highest number of "likes" across respondents.
- **Rides and games** rank amongst the top-three favourites for those under the age of 30.

Coming Together as a Community

- Previous attendees emphasized the joy of "just being together" and "meeting old friends" to socialize.
- Others reflected on "the atmosphere of fun and excitement of seeing the kiddos faces light up, seeing old friends, and meeting new ones."
- Another respondent described their favourite part of the Fair as "community building through common presence."

Livestock shows
and competitions

Farm animal tent

Agriculture
activities for youth

Animal
demonstrations

Purchasing from
local food
businesses

Pancake breakfast



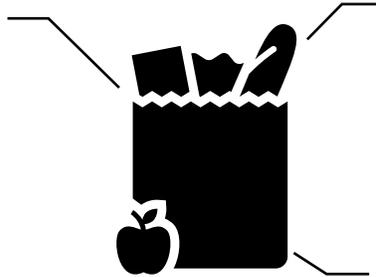
Fair Opportunities

Local Food is in High Demand

We heard that you feel strongly about supporting local food. In fact, **81%** of survey respondents want to see the Fergus Agricultural Society educate about local food and farming (n=927).

You would like more seating or “social” areas to enjoy local food and beverages.

You emphasized the importance of keeping these areas accessible for Fair attendees with physical disabilities.



**LOCAL FOOD IS
IN HIGH
DEMAND**

You are curious to learn more about what’s produced locally in Wellington County.

You want to see more variety of locally sourced food.

Many of you said you were excited to purchase local products – 62% would like to see a local food café at the next Fall Fair (n=506) and 46% would like to see a craft beer tent.



Agricultural Education

Education about agriculture is a keystone piece of the Fall Fair. Survey respondents on average, rated their knowledge of agriculture as 3.3 out of 5. Most respondents rated their knowledge of agriculture as a 3 or a 4.

We heard clearly that you want to learn more about where you can find local food and products from Fergus-area farmers.

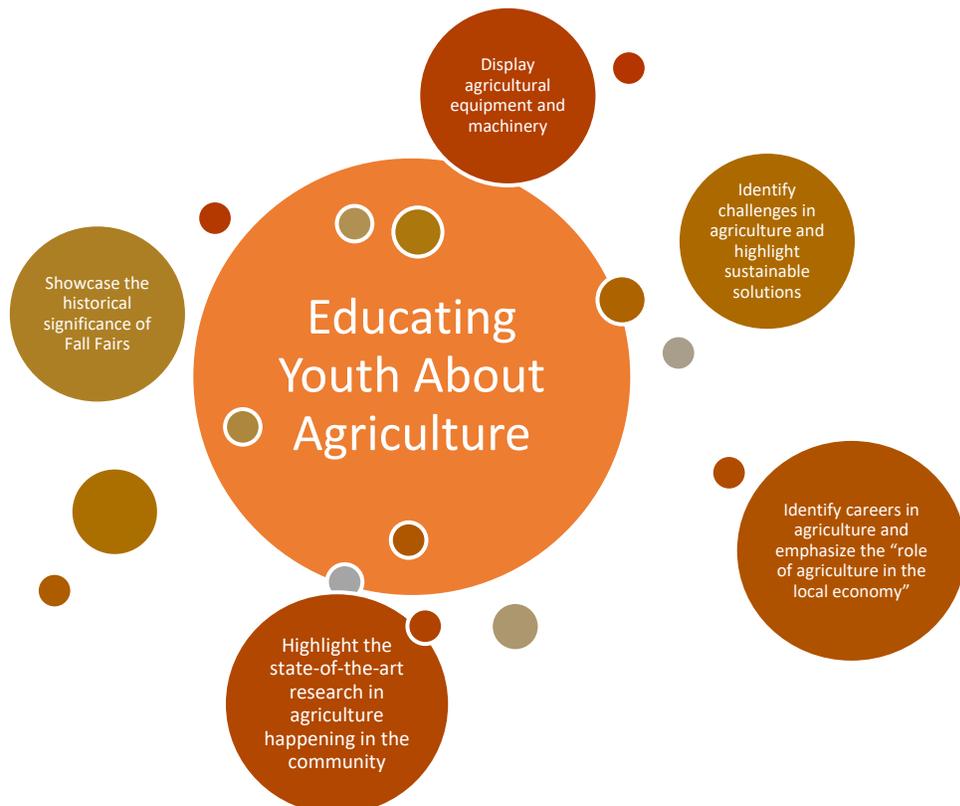
You also shared that you want to learn more about:

- Farm animals raised in the area
- Crops grown in the area
- Farming practices
- How to cook with local farm products

“I enjoy bringing my family and my kids enjoy learning about the animals, I have 4 kids and 3 have jobs working on dairy and equestrian farms because of what they learned from the Fair.”

Educating Youth About Agriculture

Those who are more familiar with the Fair and rate their knowledge of agriculture as 4 or higher gave helpful insights for future Fall Fair agriculture education activities. These respondents want to see opportunities to educate youth about several aspects of agriculture. It was recognized that the Fall Fair is likely many people’s **“only opportunity to interact with agriculture”** and education at the Fall Fair should be interactive and informative.



Agriculture and the Environment

Those with a stronger understanding of agriculture want to share the story of how it is important to recognize climate change as a key challenge and share what farmers are doing to reduce their ecological footprint and produce food sustainably, underscoring the importance of protecting farmland in the Fergus area.

Those without a strong knowledge of agriculture, too, note that they want to learn about agriculture and the environment. One respondent noted “I would like to hear about new technologies and practices that are being used to improve our environment, reduce our footprint.”



3.1 Volunteer Feedback

The Volunteer Experience

You shared your experience volunteering with us and many of you enjoy volunteering because the Fergus Agricultural Society is:

- ✓ Community-oriented
- ✓ Well organized
- ✓ A positive experience
- ✓ Run by passionate people

Many of you also shared that they enjoyed **“meeting and greeting all the people.”**

Interested in volunteering with the Fergus Agricultural Society? We are always looking for volunteers.

Email us at: info@fergusfallfair.ca for more information.

Over
170

Respondents provided feedback on their experience as volunteers



Average rating of 4.59 out of 5 stars for experience as a volunteer

44%

Can't wait to volunteer again

33%

Are considering volunteering again

“It has been a great experience and a wonderful feeling of belonging and community.”

~ volunteer

3.2 Sponsor Feedback

What do Sponsors Say About Their Experience?

- Some of you said that sponsorship provides “**good exposure for the price.**”
- A few of you said that you supported the fall fair “**because it was fun.**”
- Some of you added that you “**wanted to help print the book**” and that “**the continuance of fall fairs is everyone’s responsibility.**”

Email us at info@fergusfallfair.ca for more information about ways to sponsor the Fall Fair!

125

Respondents said they or their business have sponsored the Fergus Fall Fair before

Generally, respondents said their sponsorship provided **good** value



Average rating of 4.01 out of 5 stars for value of sponsorship

“Ag events that encourage youth and family involvement are always appreciated and encouraged.”

THANK YOU

For more information:
info@fergusfallfair.ca

