

## CASE STUDY

**Applicant:** Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association  
**Project Title:** Surface Water Scientist

### **Organization:**

The Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association (OFVGA) serves as an umbrella organization for 28 commodity based farm associations within Ontario. The organization represents the province's fruit and vegetable sector to national and international bodies. The OFVGA takes a leadership role in lobbying issues to government, makes vital contributions to research and food safety, assists in the co-ordination of activities for non-regulated crops, handles media inquiries, clears commodity grade specifications and inspection changes, and supervises container introductions and specifications.

### **Project:**

The purpose of the Surface Water Scientist (SWS) project is to create a position within a provincial organization to prepare and assist with the development of water supply impact studies and plans. This will aid in overcoming barriers to greater water supply infrastructure for Ontario's agricultural community. The intent of the project is to provide Ontario's horticultural community with assistance in acquiring Permits To Take Water (PTTW) to support irrigation practices through the Ontario Ministry of the Environment and the Ontario Water Resources Act.

The project was created in response to the ongoing need for surface water in the process of growing. Over the last six or seven years, this has become an increasingly prevalent issue due to factors such as increased population, global warming and greater demands on natural resources. As a result, the Ministry of Environment implemented a permit system. A PTTW is required for individuals taking more than 50,000 liters of water a day from a lake, river, stream or groundwater source to ensure the conservation of Ontario's water. A PTTW is not required for farmers using water for the purpose of watering livestock, but must be acquired for irrigating crops.

The SWS project looks promote successful participation in the PTTW program, protect Ontario water resources, and promote fair sharing of water amongst agricultural users and between agriculture and other industries. The project also seeks to establish a standard, cost effective and timely process to satisfy the water taking impact study requirements, recognizing that a coordinated approach may satisfy both the needs of individual water taking studies and the more general needs of water managers.

The SWS is in its third year of operation (out of four) and is on target with initial projections. The first two milestones of the project, including the hiring of the SWS and initiating service delivery, have been completed. The OFVGA plans on having the remaining two milestones, providing surface water scientific studies for agricultural water taking projects and interim reporting on lessons learned, completed by July 1, 2012.

### **The Role of the Agricultural Adaptation Council:**

The AAC played a critical role in the creation of the SWS project, allowing the OFVGA to do a four year pilot by providing funding over the course of the project. Without funding from the AAC, the OFVGA would not have had the financial resources to execute the SWS project. In addition to the funding, the OFVGA has been very impressed with the service and support they have received from the AAC. The OFVGA has found the AAC to be easily accessibly whenever questions arise and have found them to be solution oriented.

This project was funded by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Adaptation Programming and administered by the Agricultural Adaptation Council.