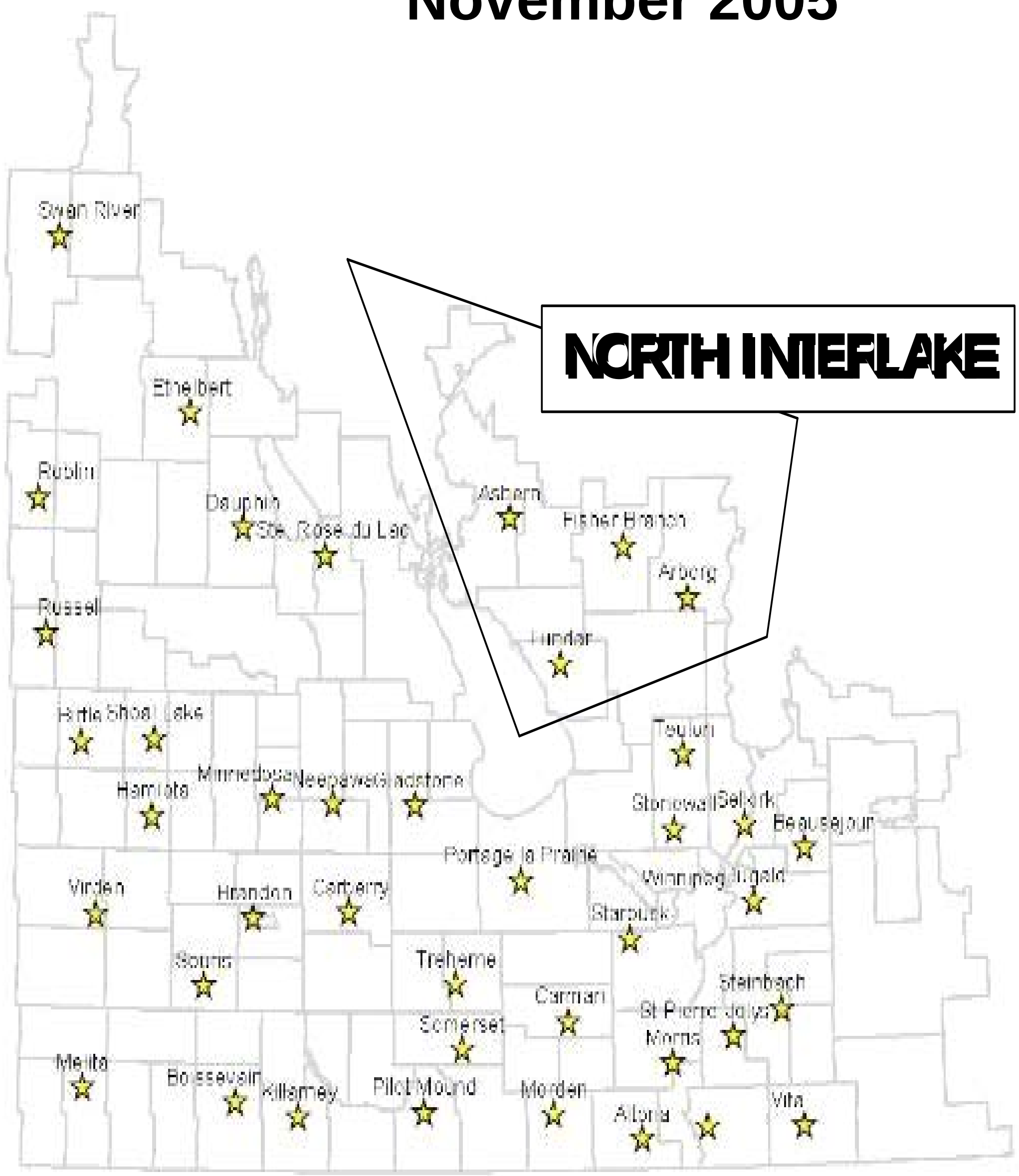
North Interlake

GROWING Opportunities

Area Scan

November 2005



Manitoba

Building for the Future

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

The 10,000 square kilometers of the North Interlake GO region stretches from the eastern shore of Lake Manitoba to the western shore of Lake Winnipeg as far north as the Dauphin River and as far south as St. Laurent. The region includes eight rural municipalities—Armstrong, Bifrost, Coldwell, Eriksdale, Fisher, Grahamdale, St. Laurent, and Siglunes—eight First Nations reserves, and some Northern Affairs land.

Just over 13,000 people from a wide variety of ethnicities call the North Interlake home. The North Interlake is known as a vibrant agricultural region—with an abundance of nutrient-rich farm land with great access to quality water sources and drainage. The region's picturesque location between two of Manitoba's largest lakes also draws thousands of tourists and cottagers, especially in the summer, wanting to enjoy the regions' numerous attractions. The two lakes on either side of the region also serve as great fish reservoirs for commercial and sport fishermen alike.

Demographics

Several communities have enjoyed fluctuations in their populations in the last decade, while others in the region have experienced depopulation. Overall, the North Interlake region has been depopulating over the last two census years (i.e. 10 years), although the rate of depopulation is slowing. The population is also aging, as many youth migrate out of the area and do not return.

The labour force in the North Interlake has relatively low levels of education and training. Thus, there is a shortage of skilled labour in the area. There is a mismatch of labour supplied and labour demanded.

Some parts of the North Interlake have very low unemployment rates (i.e. lower than the provincial average), while others have very high unemployment rates. The unemployment rate of men in the North Interlake is higher on average than the unemployment rate of men in other parts of Manitoba. Those who are employed are paid low wages on average. Lower wages means that there is less income spent in the local economy. The region also relies on government transfer payments to make up almost one quarter of personal income.

Agriculture

The North Interlake is historically known as a great agriculture district—rich in diversity. Beef operations are the most common type of farm, but the region is also home to hundreds of wheat, grain and oilseed, and other field crops, as well as numerous dairy farms, hog operations, poultry and egg operations, vegetable farms, and a diverse range of specialty and combination farms.

One in three persons in the region is employed in the agricultural industry. Although the region still largely relies on primary industry (i.e. agriculture, fishing, forestry, etc.) to provide one third of its economic activity, this dependence on resource-based industry has been declining in the last decades (i.e. the number of farms and farm operators are declining).

FARM TYPE	1996	2001	Percentage Change (1996 - 2001)
Dairy	73	20	-72.6%
Cattle (Beef)	865	847	-2.1%
Hog	34	27	-20.6%
Poultry and egg	24	17	-29.2%
Wheat	121	77	-36.4%
Grain and oilseed (except wheat)	188	136	-27.7%
Field crop (except grain and oilseed)	169	188	11.2%
Fruit	0	0	N/A
Miscellaneous specialty	88	84	-4.5%
Livestock combination	24	20	-16.7%
Vegetable	2	3	50.0%
Other combination	17	17	0.0%
Total number of farms reporting total gross farm receipts greater than $2,499 in the North Interlake GO Region	1,605	1,436	-10.5%

Source: 1996 and 2001 Censes of Agriculture, Statistics Canada

The trend seen across the agriculture industry is a movement towards larger, but fewer farms. In the increasing industrialization and commercialization of the agriculture industry, smaller farms have typically been forced to either expand or cease operations all together. However, farm operators have other choices then to ‘go big or go home’, and there has been a rising trend across the North Interlake on this respect. Farm operations, which are able to diversify, specialize, or change production in such a way as to increase value added have been very successful in the global trend of depressed commodity prices.

The organic food market is growing rapidly, and numerous farm operators in the North Interlake have found that shifting to organic production is an effective and profitable way to add value to an otherwise homogeneous commodity. Farm operations have also increased the value of their agriculture commodities by expanding their production to include some processing. Other farm operations have benefited from local processing and manufacturing industry expansion which uses agricultural commodities in its production.

Agricultural producers face some major challenges in light of the changing dynamics of the industry. Shifting production techniques requires time (which is of short supply for half of farm operators who work on the farm over 40 hours a week) to investigate new innovations, markets, or trends. Lack of industry knowledge and inexperience in conducting market research and development may pose great threats to the viability of shifting production to a more profitable one when resources on the farm are already stretched.

Despite some of the challenges to shifting production towards more value added products, there are many opportunities for growth in the agri-business industry.

Economy and Rural Development

There are numerous businesses in the North Interlake, most of which are very small businesses—not employing any persons. The majority of business establishments are in the agriculture industry.

Tourism is a popularly cited strategy for economic development by communities in the North Interlake. Certainly the region boasts many tourist attractions within its surrounding lakes, and there is great opportunity for communities in the region to capitalize on these natural attractions to increase economic activity. Challenges posed by tourism include seasonal employment, environmental concerns, and a very high reliance on external demands.

The region benefits from numerous community organizations (which are funded by various levels of government). Many of these organizations work together to achieve particular goals and/or projects to stimulate economic and community development in their local communities. The North Interlake has benefited greatly from its thousands of dedicated volunteers who offer many hours of service to their communities in various capacities. Some act as board members, while others volunteer at the concession stands in their local recreation centres. It is these community members who are the drivers of local economic development.

Conclusions and MAFRI Impacts

The statistical summary and SWOT analysis of the North Interlake region is a work in progress. From this rough sketch of the current baseline conditions of the region, our GO team is now seeking input by participants on our Advisory Council to outline the key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and issues of the region. The Advisory Council will identify several key areas that our GO team ought to focus our energy on. These key areas will be used in shaping our strategic plan for the following years. Our GO team will be restructuring our services and program delivery according to this strategic planning process.

Statistical Summary
&
SWOT Analysis

North Interlake Area Scan
November 2005

STATISTICAL SUMMARY & SWOT ANALYSIS

Introduction

In 2004, Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives (MAFRI) established a comprehensive and focused strategy to reposition ourselves to best serve our clients' needs. Within this new Growing Opportunities (GO) initiative, MAFRI is committed to reviewing the department's priorities within the context of each unique GO region. An area scan of the current baseline conditions was determined to be the first step in this strategic planning process. This regional profile will be used to analyze the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for each region for use in community consultations to determine future initiatives and projects to be undertaken and/or supported by GO team members and other supporting agencies, organizations, businesses and individuals.

Under this new GO initiative, the province of Manitoba was divided into eleven GO teams—ten in rural Manitoba and one in Winnipeg. The North Interlake GO region includes over 10,000 square kilometers stretching from the eastern shore of Lake Manitoba to the western shore of Lake Winnipeg as far north as the Dauphin River and as far south as St. Laurent.

The North Interlake region is staffed by Business Development Specialists (some of whom have specializations in Community Development and Business Management), Farm Production Advisors (including those with specializations in Crown Lands and Forages), Rural Leadership Specialists, Extension Coordinators, a Knowledge Assistant, and a Team Manager working out of offices in Arborg, Ashern, Fisher Branch, and Lundar.

The 10,000 square kilometers of the North Interlake GO region stretches from the eastern shore of Lake Manitoba to the western shore of Lake Winnipeg as far north as the Dauphin River and as far south as St. Laurent. The region includes:

- *8 Rural Municipalities*
  - R.M. of Armstrong
  - R.M. of Bifrost
  - R.M. of Coldwell
  - R.M. of Eriksdale
  - R.M. of Fisher
  - R.M. of Grahamdale
  - R.M. of St. Laurent
  - R.M. of Siglunes

- *8 First Nation Reserves*
  - Dauphin River First Nation (Northern Affairs) no. 48A
  - Fisher River First Nation no. 44 & 44A
  - Kinonjeoshtegon First Nation (Jackhead) no. 43 & 43A
  - Dog Creek (Lake Manitoba) no. 46
  - Lake St. Martin First Nation no. 49 & 49A
  - Little Saskatchewan First Nation no. 48 & 48B
  - Peguis First Nation no. 1
  - Pinaymootang First Nation (Fairford) no. 50

- *Some Northern Affairs land*

Demographic Data

- ***Population***

	Population 1996	Population 2001	Population Change (%) 1996 - 2001	Land Area	Total Private Dwellings	Population Density per square km
Armstrong	1,866	1,905	2.1%	1,864.96	947	1.0
Bifrost	2,851	2,967	4.1%	1,642.56	1,272	1.8
Coldwell	1,399	1,320	-5.6%	901.84	697	1.5
Eriksdale	942	889	-5.6%	784.76	418	1.1
Fisher	2,154	2,049	-4.9%	1,481.35	835	1.4
Grahamdale	1,625	1,500	-7.7%	2,384.61	874	0.6
St. Laurent	1,020	1,172	14.9%	462.51	1,324	2.5
Siglunes	1,585	1,513	-4.5%	837.42	804	1.8
North Interlake GO Region	13,442	13,315	-0.9%	10,360.01	7,171	1.3
Manitoba	1,113,898	1,119,583	0.5%	551,937.80	477,085	2.0

Source: 2001 Census, Statistics Canada

The population in the province of Manitoba grew 0.5% from 1996 to 2001. However, the population of the North Interlake region (not including those living on reserves) declined at a rate of -0.9%. Despite the overall decline in population, the R.M. s of Armstrong, Bifrost and St. Laurent experienced population growth over the five year period.

Although the population of the North Interlake is declining, as indicated by the population change from 1996 to 2001, it is declining at a slower rate than was recorded by the change from 1991 and 1996. The five year population change in 1996 was -1.5%.

	Registered Population	Population On Reserve Total	Population On Reserve Male	Population On Reserve Female
Dauphin River no 48A	263	141	71	70
Fisher River no 44 & 44A	3,016	1,668	854	814
Kinonjeoshtegon (Jackhead) 43 & 43A	659	327	161	166
Dog Creek (Lake Man.) no 46	1,652	859	457	402
Lake St. Martin no 49 & 49A	2,081	1,338	680	658
Little Saskatchewan no 48 & 48B	1,006	641	306	335
Peguis no 1	7,815	3,294	1,696	1,598
Pinaymootang (Fairford) no 50	2,578	1,215	614	601
Total Population	19,070	9,483	4,839	4,644

Source: (October 2005)

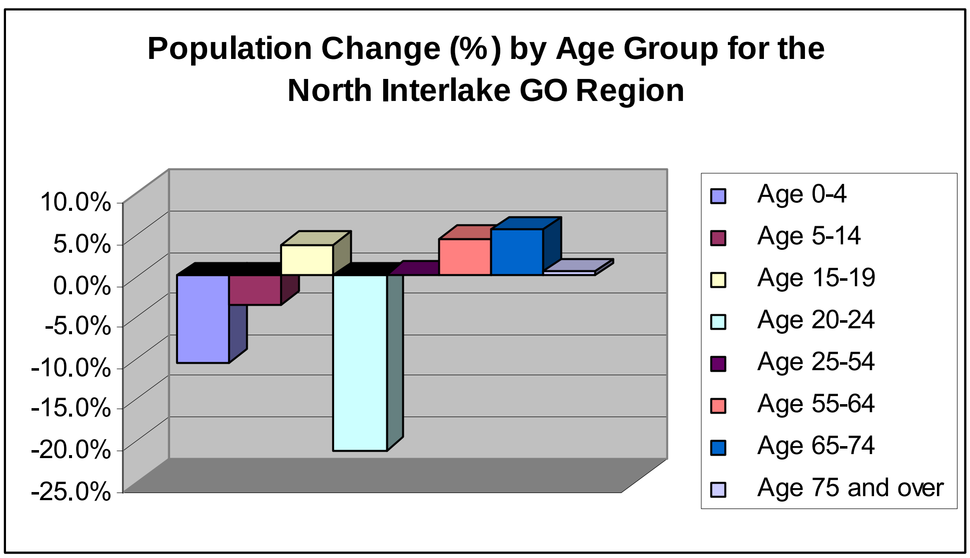
In total, 19,070 status Indians are registered to the eight First Nations reserves in the North Interlake GO region. The total population on reserve is 9,483 persons, as of October 2005. Peguis First Nation reserve is the largest reserve, with more than 3,000 persons. Whereas, only 141 persons live on the Dauphin River First Nations reserve.

Summing the population of those living on reserves (as of October 2005), and those living within the municipalities (according to Census data of 2001), we can estimate that the total population of the North Interlake is 23,000, roughly speaking.

- ***Age Distribution***

Age Group	**1996**	**2001**	**Population Change (%) per Age Group**
Age 0-4	905	810	-10.5%
Age 5-14	2,125	2,050	-3.5%
Age 15-19	925	960	3.8%
Age 20-24	710	560	-21.1%
Age 25-54	5,065	5,070	0.1%
Age 55-64	1,455	1,520	4.5%
Age 65-74	1,250	1,320	5.6%
Age 75 and over	1,000	1,005	0.5%
TOTAL	13,435	13,295	-1.0%
Percentage of the population 15 years and older	77.4%	78.5%	

Source: 2001 Census, Statistics Canada



Source: 2001 Census, Statistics Canada

In rural areas, migration of youth (those aged 20-24) is an expected phenomena as they go away to school and go off to 'see the world' after high school. However, it is expected that youth would return home to settle and raise their family upon completing their education and traveling the world. The population change of -21.1% of youth aged 20-24 over the five year period certainly indicates that, indeed, youth are migrating out of the North Interlake. However, only very few youth are returning back to the region (as indicated by the very small increase in the population of those aged 25-54).

The North Interlake population is aging. A greater percentage of the population was 15 years and older in 2001 than in 1996. All age groups greater than 'Age 20-24' experienced positive changes in population over the five year period. The depopulation of the North Interlake is due to the decline in the number of youth (24 years old or younger) in the area.

- ***Ethnicity***

	Total - All persons	**Canadian-born population**	**Foreign-born population**	**Immigrated before 1991**	**Immigrated between 1991 and 2001**	**Non-permanent residents**
Armstrong	1,895	1,740	155	145	15	0
Bifrost	2,960	2,705	240	70	175	10
Coldwell	1,300	1,260	35	35	0	0
Eriksdale	885	855	30	30	0	0
Fisher	2,030	1,870	105	95	10	50
Grahamdale	1,500	1,425	70	75	0	10
St. Laurent	1,155	1,115	35	30	0	0
Siglunes	1,475	1,405	75	40	35	0
North Interlake GO Region	13,200	12,375	745	520	235	70
Manitoba	1,103,695	965,520	133,660	101,310	32,345	4,515

Source: 2001 Census, Statistics Canada

According to the 2001 census, 745 persons living in the North Interlake GO region are foreign-born (i.e. not born in Canada), which makes up 5.6% of the population. Almost one third of the foreign-born population in the North Interlake immigrated between 1991 and 2001. In contrast, foreign-born persons make up 12.1% of the population in Manitoba.

A total of 2,180 people (or 16.5% of the population) identified themselves as Aboriginal, whereas Aboriginals make up 13.6% of the population in Manitoba (not on reserve). Also, 90 people identified themselves as belonging to another visible minority group. Although visible minorities make up 7.9% of the population in Manitoba, only 0.7% of the population in the North Interlake is composed of visible minorities.

- ***Education***

Age Group	Total Population	Less than a high school graduation certificate	High School graduation certificate and/or some postsecondary	Trades Certificate or Diploma	College Certificate or Diploma	University Certificate, Degree or Diploma
North Interlake GO Region						
20-34	1,905	34.6%	33.9%	11.8%	15.0%	7.4%
35-44	1,895	35.4%	24.5%	15.1%	12.9%	11.6%
45-64	3,400	50.7%	14.3%	13.2%	12.2%	9.3%
Manitoba						
20-34	214,530	22.5%	33.1%	10.3%	15.7%	18.4%
35-44	175,780	25.6%	23.7%	14.1%	17.7%	18.9%
45-64	253,605	34.3%	18.9%	13.0%	14.6%	19.1%

Source: 2001 Census, Statistics Canada

Half of the population in the North Interlake aged 45-64 have less than a high school graduation certificate. For all age categories, significantly more persons in the North Interlake have less than a high school education than in Manitoba as a percentage of total population. The other significant difference between the educational levels in Manitoba and those in the North Interlake is in terms of those holding a University certificate, degree or diploma. Only 7.4% of those aged 20-34 in the North Interlake hold a University certificate, degree or diploma, while 18.4% of those aged 20-34 in Manitoba have a University education. Significantly fewer people have a University education in the North Interlake than in Manitoba for all age groups as a percentage of total population.

- ***Labour Force Characteristics***

	Participation Rate			**Unemployment Rate**		
	Total	**Male**	**Female**	**Total**	**Male**	**Female**
Armstrong	64.3	67.9	60.7	8.3	7.0	9.9
Bifrost	70.5	80.5	58.5	3.5	2.6	5.0
Coldwell	62.0	67.2	56.7	8.3	12.8	3.6
Eriksdale	64.7	65.7	63.4	6.7	6.8	4.4
Fisher	65.8	72.3	58.6	2.5	3.6	2.2
Grahamdale	71.0	82.1	60.7	3.4	4.0	0.0
St. Laurent	60.7	66.0	54.8	25.9	33.9	15.2
Siglunes	62.4	70.3	55.7	4.8	7.7	2.9
North Interlake GO Region	65.9	72.9	58.6	6.8	8.2	5.2
Manitoba	67.3	73.6	61.4	6.1	6.3	5.7

Source: 2001 Census, Statistics Canada

The data from the 2001 census indicates that persons in the North Interlake are participating in the labour market at a lower rate than are Manitobans on average. And of those actively participating in the labour market, more persons are unemployed in the North Interlake than in Manitoba on average. The unemployment rate of males, 8.2%, is significantly higher than the unemployment rate of females, 5.2%. However, although the unemployment rate of women is much lower than the unemployment rate of men, only 58.6% of women participate in the labour force, which is much lower than the participation of men, at 72.9%. Comparing the data in the table between the North Interlake and Manitoba shows that the greatest deviation is in the unemployment rate of males. Significantly more men are unemployed, as a percentage of total persons in the labour force, in the North Interlake than in Manitoba on average.

In 2001, the R.M. of St. Laurent experienced the lowest participation rate, and an alarmingly high unemployment rate, at 25.9%. Clearly, the R.M. of St. Laurent is experiencing a severe job shortage. The data also shows that men in Coldwell have great difficulty finding employment. The R.M. s of Bifrost, Fisher, Grahamdale and Siglunes have very low unemployment rates – well below the Manitoba average of 6.1%.

Employment by Industry

INDUSTRY	North Interlake GO Region Total	North Interlake GO Region Male	North Interlake GO Region Female	Manitoba Total	Manitoba Male	Manitoba Female
Agriculture and other resource-based industries	2,175 (32.2%)[a]	1,565 (40.7%)	610 (21.1%)	48,700 (8.4%)	36,350 (11.8%)	12,350 (4.5%)
Manufacturing and construction industries	1,075 (15.9%)	950 (24.7%)	125 (4.3%)	96,655 (16.7%)	74,340 (24.2%)	22,315 (8.3%)
Wholesale and retail trade	705 (10.5%)	395 (10.3%)	310 (10.7%)	84,190 (14.6%)	44,790 (14.6%)	39,400 (14.6%)
Finance and real estate	160 (2.4%)	20 (0.5%)	140 (4.8%)	28,775 (5.0%)	11,140 (3.6%)	17,635 (6.5%)
Health and education	1,170 (17.3%)	170 (4.4%)	1,000 (34.5%)	114,270 (19.8%)	28,220 (9.2%)	86,050 (31.9%)
Business services	465 (6.9%)	280 (7.3%)	185 (6.4%)	87,960 (15.2%)	55,825 (18.2%)	32,135 (11.9%)
Other services	995 (14.8%)	470 (12.2%)	525 (18.1%)	116,805 (20.2%)	56,800 (18.5%)	60,005 (22.2%)
Total - Experienced Labour Force	6,745 (100.0%)	3,850 (100.0%)	2,895 (100.0%)	577,355 (100.0%)	307,465 (100.0%)	269,890 (100.0%)

[a] Persons employed as a percentage of total number in employed (in the last column) is indicated in parentheses.

Source: 2001 Census, Statistics Canada

The labour force in the North Interlake GO region is made up 6,745 persons – although only about half of these are employed full-time for the full year.

Agriculture and other resource-based industries is the largest employer in the North Interlake. One out of three persons in the North Interlake labour force is employed in some form of agriculture or resource-based industry. Comparing the small percentage of the Manitoba labour force employed in agriculture, at 8.4%, highlights the importance of the resource-based industry for employment in the North Interlake. Employment in manufacturing and construction industries, and health and education combined make up another third of the jobs in the North Interlake.

Although agriculture and resource-based industries is the largest employer overall, it is not the primary industry for women in the North Interlake. Only 21.1% of women are employed in agriculture, whereas 40.7% of men working in the North Interlake are in the agriculture industry. The largest employer of women is the health and education industry, at 34.5%.

Employment by Occupation

	North Interlake GO Region			Manitoba		
OCCUPATION	**Total**	**Male**	**Female**	**Total**	**Male**	**Female**
Management	440 (6.5%)[a]	280 (7.2%)	160 (5.5%)	50,855 (8.8%)	33,200 (10.8%)	17,655 (6.5%)
Business, finance and administration	640 (9.4%)	85 (2.2%)	555 (19.1%)	101,945 (17.7%)	27,765 (9.0%)	74,180 (27.5%)
Natural and applied sciences and related occupations	80 (1.2%)	70 (1.8%)	10 (0.3%)	26,690 (4.6%)	21,370 (7.0%)	5,320 (2.0%)
Health	420 (6.2%)	60 (1.5%)	360 (12.4%)	36,690 (6.4%)	7,410 (2.4%)	29,280 (10.8%)
Social science, education, government service and religion	410 (6.0%)	85 (2.2%)	325 (11.2%)	45,885 (7.9%)	15,810 (5.1%)	30,075 (11.1%)
Art, culture, recreation and sport	40 (0.6%)	10 (0.3%)	30 (1.0%)	12,175 (2.1%)	5,710 (1.9%)	6,465 (2.4%)
Sales and service	1,205 (17.7%)	365 (9.4%)	840 (28.9%)	139,945 (24.2%)	59,050 (19.2%)	80,895 (30.0%)
Trades, transport and equipment operators and related occupations	1,340 (19.7%)	1,275 (32.9%)	65 (2.2%)	85,640 (14.8%)	80,535 (26.2%)	5,105 (1.9%)
Occupations unique to primary industry	2,105 (31.0%)	1,570 (40.5%)	535 (18.4%)	40,585 (7.0%)	31,295 (10.2%)	9,290 (3.4%)
Occupations unique to processing, manufacturing and utilities	110 (1.6%)	80 (2.1%)	30 (1.0%)	36,950 (6.4%)	25,330 (8.2%)	11,620 (4.3%)
Total - Experienced Labour Force	6,790 (100.0%)	3,880 (100.0%)	2,910 (100.0%)	577,360 (100.0%)	307,475 (100.0%)	269,885 (100.0%)

[a] Persons employed as a percentage of total number in employed (in last column) is indicated in parentheses.

Source: 2001 Census, Statistics Canada

The primary occupation of persons in the North Interlake is in a primary industry (i.e. agriculture and resource-based). Again, the data indicates that men in particular have occupations unique to primary industry, at 40.5% of total employment. The secondary occupations for men in the North Interlake are in trades, transport and equipment operators and related occupations, at 32.9%.

The primary occupation of women is in the sales and service industry, at 28.9%. One in five women work in business, finance and administration occupations; and another one in five women work in occupations unique to primary industry.

What is of great interest here is the tiny fraction of persons in occupations unique to processing. The North Interlake is heavily involved in primary industries, but is only involved in producing value added to this primary product in a very small way. There is much room for growth in occupations in processing and manufacturing.

- ***Earnings***

	Worked full year, full time (counts)			Average earnings (worked full year, full time ($))		
	Total	**Male**	**Female**	**Total**	**Male**	**Female**
Armstrong	505	295	215	$24,441	$25,441	$22,625
Bifrost	830	560	270	$24,933	$26,603	$21,484
Coldwell	370	230	140	$28,345	$31,629	$22,931
Eriksdale	265	160	105	$19,988	$21,986	$16,885
Fisher	525	305	215	$27,038	$23,822	$31,518
Grahamdale	460	295	165	$20,240	$21,486	$18,019
St. Laurent	195	115	75	$33,187	$39,093	$23,677
Siglunes	455	245	210	$24,732	$26,239	$22,976
North Interlake GO Region	**3,605**	**2,205**	**1,395**	**$24,980**	**$26,188**	**$22,780**
Manitoba	337,100	197,990	139,115	$36,729	$41,153	$30,433

Source: 2001 Census, Statistics Canada

Data on average earnings for those persons who earned income from full year, full-time employment is shown in the above table. Men make up approximately 60% of the labour force in both the North Interlake and Manitoba as a whole. Men earn more income from full-time employment than do females on average. On average, persons in the North Interlake employed full-time for the full year earn $24,980, which is substantially less than the provincial average of $36,729. The lower average earnings in the North Interlake can largely be attributed to the substantially lower income earned by men in the North Interlake. Although the provincial average earnings for men is $41,153, men in the North Interlake only earn $26,188 on average. On average, a male in the North Interlake earns 36% less income from full year, full-time employment than does the average male in Manitoba.

In the North Interlake, men earn 15% (or $3408) more from full year, full-time employment than women; while men earn 35% (or $10,720) more than females in Manitoba on average. The earnings gender gap is substantially narrower in the North Interlake than it is in Manitoba on average. This narrower gender gap is attributable to men in the North Interlake earning less income, than it is to women in the North Interlake earning more.

Also of note, is the earnings data for women in the R.M. of Fisher. Women employed full-time in the R.M. of Fisher earn $31,518 on average, which is slightly higher than the Manitoba average for women. In fact, women in the R.M. of Fisher earn more than men!

The R.M. s of Eriksdale and Grahamdale report the lowest average earnings in the North Interlake region. Persons employed full-time in the R.M. of St. Laurent enjoy the highest average earnings out of the eight R.M.s. It is the men in St. Laurent in particular who earn significantly more than their male counterparts in the rest of the North Interlake.

- ***Income***

	Persons 15 years of age and over with income	Median total income of persons 15 years of age and over ($)	Composition of Total Income (100%)	Earnings - % of income	Government transfers - % of income	Other money - % of income
Armstrong	1,530	$13,506	100.0	64.5	28.3	7.4
Bifrost	2,115	$18,022	100.0	72.1	17.4	10.5
Coldwell	1,000	$17,782	100.0	73.7	19.5	6.5
Eriksdale	665	$14,943	100.0	64.2	25.3	10.4
Fisher	1,360	$15,000	100.0	75.0	18.9	6.3
Grahamdale	1,215	$13,757	100.0	67.4	24.2	8.8
St. Laurent	845	$14,887	100.0	66.9	25.8	7.3
Siglunes	1,150	$16,126	100.0	57.3	25.8	17.0
North Interlake GO Region	9,880	$14,972	100.0	67.8	22.9	9.3
Manitoba	833,435	$20,469	100.0	75.3	13.4	11.3

Source: 2001 Census, Statistics Canada

Almost 10,000 persons in the North Interlake earn some income. The median total income earned by these persons 15 years of age and over is $14,972 in the North Interlake, while the median total income of persons in Manitoba is $20,469.

Wage earnings make up three quarters of total personal income for Manitobans on average, while just over two thirds of income is composed of wage earnings for persons in the North Interlake. Consequently, persons in the North Interlake rely more heavily on government transfers. Government transfers make up 22.9% of North Interlake incomes, while transfer payments make up only 13.4% of total personal income in Manitoba on average.

The R.M. of Armstrong relies on government transfer payments to make up 28.3% of total personal income, while earnings only make up 64.5% of total personal income on average. The percentage of earnings out of total personal income is the lowest in the R.M. of Siglunes, at 57.3%, and is highest in the R.M. of Fisher, at 75.0%.

SWOT ANALYSIS – Demographics

Trends:

- Population decline, although at a slower rate than previously experienced
- Aging population
- Migration of youth out of the North Interlake (greatest decline in ages 20-24)
- Lower education levels than Manitobans on average (both secondary and post-secondary)
- Some communities with very high unemployment rates, others with relatively low unemployment rates
- Unemployment rate of men is high
- Half of the labour force is underemployed
- One third of jobs are in primary agriculture and resource-based industries
- Health and education provides jobs for one in three woman in the labour force
- Very small fraction of employment is in processing, or value added industries
- Men earn more than woman, but they earn significantly less than their male counterparts in other parts of Manitoba
- Gender earnings gap is narrower in the North Interlake than in Manitoba
- Reliance on government transfer payments to make up almost one quarter of personal income
- The majority of farms are owned and operated by one person
- There are over 2000 farm operators, as of 2001
    - 75% of whom are male
    - 12% of farm operators are under the age of 35
    - The average age of farm operators, as of 2001 is 55 years old
- More than half of farm operators work over 40 hour a week on the farm and earn no off-farm income
    - However, more farm operators are pursuing off-farm income
- Aging farm operators
- Heavy reliance on primary export markets
- A need, and a growing wave to diversify and increase value added
-

Strengths:

- Low population density per square kilometer
- Population rate is declining at a slower rate than in previous years
    - Population is growing in R.M.s of Armstrong, Bifrost and St. Laurent
- Affordable and available work force
- Narrow gender income gap
- Low taxes
- Available and affordable land
- Relatively clean environment, rich in natural resources
- Services for seniors
- Lots of recreational facilities
- Lots of community organizations and strong volunteer base
-

Weaknesses:

- Declining and aging population
  - Due largely to the declining youth population
- Low levels of post secondary education
  → low-skilled work force
- Unemployment
  - Of men, in particular
  - R.M.s of St. Laurent, Coldwell, Armstrong
- Underemployment
  - only half of labour force is employed full-time, full year
  - low annual income, of men in particular
- High reliance on Government transfer payments
- High reliance on primary industry, and minimal involvement in processing and value-added industries.
  - distance to markets
- Doctor Shortages
- Access to technology (cell phones, wireless and/or high speed internet
-

Opportunities:

- Use the internet as a tool to increase the flow of information between rural and urban communities—including increased access to online post secondary education and increased access to global markets
- The aging population lends itself well to mentorship of old to young
- Rural communities to work together to achieve better quality of life for themselves
- New economic activity in the area to utilize the available labour and natural resources
- Immigration of skilled work force and/or businesses to assist in boosting the local economy
- Value added (increase processing and selling directly to food services)
- New Initiatives (i.e. Biodiesel, Organic Production, etc.)
- Market development
-

Threats (Issues)

- Aging and unskilled workforce is not highly employable
- Youth migration out of region, who do not return
- Shortage of high paying jobs
- Low wages and low incomes means there is less disposable income spent in the local economy
- Distance to markets
- Lack of Linkages and high reliance on primary industry for employment
- Environmental Regulations
  - Although increased regulations may make increase the sustainability of development it also make new ventures more difficult to start up (i.e. higher start up costs)

AGRICULTURAL DATA

- ***Farm and Farm Operator Characteristics***

Number of operators per farm		North Interlake GO Region (Agriculture Division #18)	Manitoba
Total farms	**Total number of farms**	1,535	21,070
	Average farm area (acres)	1,095	891
	Average farm receipts ($)	108,152	167,492
	Average farm capital ($)	524,977	726,346
Farms with one operator	**Total number of farms**	970	13,745
	Average farm area (acres)	944	811
	Average farm receipts ($)	95,149	156,144
	Average farm capital ($)	445,523	651,583
Farms with two or more operators	**Total number of farms**	565	7,325
	Average farm area (acres)	1,358	1,042
	Average farm receipts ($)	130,704	188,792
	Average farm capital ($)	662,782	866,674

Source: 2001 Census of Agriculture, Statistics Canada

Just over 1500 farms are scattered across the North Interlake landscape, making up 7.3% of the total number of farms in Manitoba. Farms in the North Interlake are larger than other farms in Manitoba in terms of land acres, but smaller in terms of average farm receipts or farm capital. Sixty-three percent of farms in the North Interlake are owned and operated by one person.

Number of Farms by Size	1996	2001	Percentage Change (1996 - 2001)
Under $50,000	76	29	**-61.8%**
$50,000 - $99,000	219	120	**-45.2%**
$100,000 - $199,999	438	279	**-36.3%**
$200,000 - $349,999	414	310	**-25.1%**
$350,000 - $499,999	212	202	**-4.7%**
$500,000 - $999,999	256	332	**29.7%**
$1,000,000 - $1,499,999	53	119	**124.5%**
$1,500,000 and over	45	69	**53.3%**
Total number of farms in the North Interlake GO Region	1713	1460	**-14.8%**

Source: 1996 and 2001 Censes of Agriculture, Statistics Canada

The table above which shows the number of farms by size (in $s) for 1996 and 2001 is very interesting. Overall, the total number of farms in the North Interlake has decreased by almost 15% from 1996 to 2001 (from 1713 farms in 1996 to 1460 farms in 2001).

What is of further significance is the percentage change in the number of farms by size. The greatest decline in the number of farms is observed by the smallest farms (those with under $50,000 in sales). From 1996 to 2001 the number of farms under $50,000 decreased by 61.8%! Farms with sales between $50,000 and $99,000 realized the second greatest decline in the number of farms, at -45.2%. Looking down the column of percentage changes, it is clear that the overall decline in the number of farms is due primarily to the decline in small farms.

On the contrary, the number of larger farms (with sales in excess of $500,000) actually increased significantly over the five year period. The number of farms reporting sales between $1 mil and $1.5 mil more than doubled from 1996 to 2001! Clearly, there is a trend towards larger farms. Smaller farms are either ceasing operations entirely, or are expanding to make their farm operations more viable.

Characteristics of Farm Operators	**North Interlake GO Region (Agriculture Division #18)**	**Manitoba**
Total number of operators	**2,145**	28,795
Sex - Male	**1,660**	22,275
Sex - Female	**490**	6,520
Age - Under 35 years	**260**	3,860
Age - 35 to 54 years	**1,085**	15,480
Age - 55 years and over	**805**	9,460
Average age of operators	**50.4**	49
Resided on the farm for all or part of the 12 months prior to the census - No	**175**	3,370
Resided on the farm for all or part of the 12 months prior to the census - Yes	**1,975**	25,420
Farm-related injuries during the 12 months prior to the census - No	**2,060**	27,645
Farm-related injuries during the 12 months prior to the census - Yes	**85**	1,145
Average hours per week spent working for the agricultural operation in 2000 - Less than 20	**435**	5,705
Average hours per week spent working for the agricultural operation in 2000 - 20 to 40	**550**	7,515
Average hours per week spent working for the agricultural operation in 2000 - More than 40	**1,170**	15,575
Average hours per week of non-farm work (not related to the agricultural operation) in 2000 - None	**1,170**	15,630
Average hours per week of non-farm work (not related to the agricultural operation) in 2000 - Less than 20	**230**	3,070
Average hours per week of non-farm work (not related to the agricultural operation) in 2000 - 20 to 40	**430**	5,475
Average hours per week of non-farm work (not related to the agricultural operation) in 2000 - More than 40	**320**	4,610

Source: 2001 Census of Agriculture, Statistics Canada

The 2001 census recorded a total number of 2,145 farm operators in the North Interlake. More than 75% of these operators are male operators. The majority of farm operators are over 35 years old. Only 12 % (or 260 out of 2,145) of farm operators are under the age of 35. Out of 88% of farm operators 35 years and older, 43% of them are 55 years and over. The average age of farm operators in 2001 was 50.4. If, for example, we assume that no young people have become farm operators since 2001, we could estimate that today the average age of farm operators is nearly 60 years. This is an alarming statistic for agricultural regions, such as the North Interlake.

Most farm operators reside on their farms for the entire year. More than half of all farm operators (or 1,175) in the North Interlake work more than 40 hours per week for the agricultural operation and spend no time working off the farm. Many other farm operators do however, spend less time doing farm work, and earn off-farm income. The majority of farm operators however continue to work full-time, or more than full-time, on the farm.

	TOTAL AREA OF FARMS			Tame or seeded pasture	
	Farms reporting	Acres	Average Size (acres)	Farms reporting	Acres
Armstrong	249	254,142	1,021	63	11,969
St. Laurent	49	57,615	1,176	10	1,740
Coldwell	131	175,620	1,341	37	5,858
Eriksdale	102	112,165	1,100	32	8,250
Siglunes	133	206,171	1,550	44	8,705
Grahamdale	200	288,351	1,442	73	16,004
Fisher	258	283,429	1,099	79	11,130
Bifrost	338	258,480	765	107	16,214
North Interlake GO Region	**1460**	**1,635,973**	**1,186**	**445**	**79,870**

Source: 2001 Census of Agriculture, Statistics Canada

Farms in the North Interlake are approximately 1,186 acres in size on average. Farms in Bifrost are the smallest, in terms of size on average; whereas farms in Siglunes are largest on average. Bifrost reports 107 farms with tame or seeded pasture, for a total of 16, 214 acres.

- ***Crown Lands***

	Active Parcels	In Acres	Inactive Parcels	In Acres
Armstrong	583	93,280	152	24,320
Bifrost	142	22,720	150	24,000
Coldwell	271	43,360	65	10,400
Eriksdale	121	19,360	89	14,240
Fisher	417	66,720	84	13,440
Gimli	5	800	0	0
Grahamdale	911	145,760	624	99,840
Siglunes	363	58,080	50	8,000
St Laurent	131	20,960	23	3,680
Northern Affairs	797	127,520	609	97,440
North Interlake GO Region	**3,741**	**598,560**	**1,846**	**295,360**

Source:

The North Interlake GO region is made up of 598,560 acres of active parcels, and 295,360 inactive parcels of crown lands.

- ***Gross Farm Receipts***

	Land Area (km^2)	Total Area of Farms (hectares)	Total Gross Farm Receipts (excluding forest products sold) ($)	Total Gross Farm Receipts per Total Area of Farms ($/hectares)	Total Farm Capital (market value) ($)
Armstrong	1,865	102,848	$29,502,631	286.86	$122,477,199
Bifrost	1,646	104,603	$45,377,823	433.81	$191,062,749
Coldwell	92	71,071	$12,148,161	170.93	$67,794,926
Eriksdale	839	45,392	$7,282,337	160.43	$44,173,821
Fisher	1,481	114,700	$37,150,338	323.89	$157,362,884
Grahamdale	2,476	116,691	$15,168,972	129.99	$100,205,266
St. Laurent	463	23,316	$2,277,106	97.66	$23,827,658
Siglunes	837	83,434	$11,819,229	141.66	$77,300,826
North Interlake GO Region (Agriculture Division #18)	**9,699**	**662,055**	**$160,726,597**	**242.77**	**$784,205,329**

Source: 2001 Census of Agriculture, Statistics Canada

The North Interlake GO region has 662,055 hectares of farm land, and receives more than $160 mil in gross farm sales. Total farm capital for all North Interlake farms is more than three quarters of a billion dollars.

The R.M. of Grahamdale has the largest total area of farms in the North Interlake (although the R. M. s of Fisher, Armstrong, and Bifrost are not far behind in terms of land used for agricultural purposes). Despite Grahamdale's large land area for farm use, gross farm receipts only total about $15 mil. Yet, the R.M. of Fisher, for example has almost the same number of hectares of farm land, and receives more than double the amount of gross farm receipts.

The R.M. of Bifrost has the greatest total farm capital, as well as the highest total gross farm receipts per total area of farms ($/hectares), at 433.81 $/hectares. Of the other communities in the North Interlake, the R.M. of St. Laurent receives the least amount of gross farm sales and has the lowest market value of farm capital.

- ***Crops Data***

	TOTAL AREA OF FARMS			**Land in crops (excluding Christmas tree area)**	
	Farms reporting	**Acres**	**Average Size - acres**	**Farms reporting**	**Acres**
Armstrong	249	254,142	1,021	214	53,744
St. Laurent	49	57,615	1,176	38	16,912
Coldwell	131	175,620	1,341	114	48,173
Eriksdale	102	112,165	1,100	80	37,011
Siglunes	133	206,171	1,550	118	58,975
Grahamdale	200	288,351	1,442	179	82,567
Fisher	258	283,429	1,099	231	131,034
Bifrost	338	258,480	765	307	168,062
North Interlake GO Team	**1,460**	**1,635,973**	**9,492**	**1,281**	**596,478**

Source: 2001 Census of Agriculture, Statistics Canada

Total land in crop (excluding Christmas trees) is 596478 acres, including:

Spring Wheat	94,034 acres
Winter Wheat	455 acres
Oats	25,597 acres
Barley	47,877 acres
Mixed Grains	3,378 acres
Rye	80 acres
Canola	35,800 acres
Flax	9,830 acres
Soybeans	159 acres
Dry field peas	3,481 acres
Dry field beans	961 acres
Canaryseed	1,372 acres
Forage Seed	32,371 acres
Other	1,483 acres

	Total number of farms producing certified organic products	Fruits, vegetables or greenhouse products	Field crops (grains, oilseeds, etc.)	Animals or animal products (meat, milk, eggs, etc.)	Other (maple syrup, herbs, etc.)
Gimli	0	0	0	0	0
Armstrong	0	0	0	0	0
St. Laurent	0	0	0	0	0
Coldwell	0	0	0	0	0
Eriksdale	1	0	1	0	0
Siglunes	0	0	0	0	0
Grahamdale	0	0	0	0	0
Fisher	2	0	1	0	1
Bifrost	5	0	3	2	1
North Interlake GO Region (Agriculture Division #18)	8	0	5	2	2

Source: 2001 Census of Agriculture, Statistics Canada

Some Certified Organic Production exists in the region. There is certainly room for growth in this area of crop production in the growing demand for organically grown food.

	Total vegetables			Sweet corn		
	Farms reporting	Acres	Hectares	Farms reporting	Acres	Hectares
Gimli	0	0	0	0	0	0
Armstrong	0	0	0	0	0	0
St. Laurent	1	x	x	0	0	0
Coldwell	2	x	x	1	x	x
Eriksdale	1	x	x	0	0	0
Siglunes	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grahamdale	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fisher	1	x	x	0	0	0
Bifrost	1	x	x	0	0	0
North Interlake GO Region (Agriculture Division #18)	6	94	38	1	x	x

Source: 2001 Census of Agriculture, Statistics Canada

	Tomatoes			Cucumbers		
	Farms reporting	Acres	Hectares	Farms reporting	Acres	Hectares
Gimli	0	0	0	0	0	0
Armstrong	0	0	0	0	0	0
St. Laurent	0	0	0	0	0	0
Coldwell	1	x	x	1	x	x
Eriksdale	0	0	0	0	0	0
Siglunes	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grahamdale	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fisher	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bifrost	1	x	x	1	x	x
North Interlake GO Region (Agriculture Division #18)	2	x	x	2	x	x

Source: 2001 Census of Agriculture, Statistics Canada

	Green peas			Green or wax beans		
	Farms reporting	Acres	Hectares	Farms reporting	Acres	Hectares
Gimli	0	0	0	0	0	0
Armstrong	0	0	0	0	0	0
St. Laurent	0	0	0	0	0	0
Coldwell	1	x	x	1	x	x
Eriksdale	0	0	0	0	0	0
Siglunes	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grahamdale	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fisher	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bifrost	0	0	0	0	0	0
North Interlake GO Region (Agriculture Division #18)	**1**	**x**	**x**	**1**	**x**	**x**

Source: 2001 Census of Agriculture, Statistics Canada

Six farms report to produce vegetables on a limited basis.

- **Livestock Data**

	Total cattle and calves		Total cows		Total number of farms	$200,000 to $349,999
	Farms reporting	Number	Farms reporting	Number		
Armstrong	192	23,385	185	9,997	249	67
St. Laurent	35	5,125	35	2,599	49	11
Coldwell	103	16,934	98	7,705	131	23
Eriksdale	78	11,558	77	5,477	102	17
Siglunes	113	23,859	104	10,120	133	32
Grahamdale	156	31,146	146	14,045	200	45
Fisher	150	25,196	144	10,685	258	45
Bifrost	158	22,936	142	8,784	338	70
North Interlake GO Region	**827**	**160,139**	**931**	**69,412**	**1460**	**310**

- **PFRA Community Pastures**

PFRA Community Pastures	Acres	Improved Acres	Patrons	Cattle	Calves	Horses	Colts
Sylvan	11,240	4,480					
Mulvihill	18,080	7,750	30	1200	650	0	0
Narcisse	13,280	3,700	20	1000	450	100	60
Total	42,600	15,930	50	2200	1100	100	60

- **Land, by Soil Class**

	Class 1 %	Class 2 %	Class 3 %	Class 4 %	Class 5 %	Class 6 %	Class 7 %
Armstrong	0	1.4	2	58.1	6	17	2
Bifrost	0	14	33	15.7	4	3	2.60
Coldwell	0	0	1.9	60.2	24.5	0.6	9.8
Eriksdale	0	0.3	0.1	65.1	1.9	17.9	1.4
Fisher	0.3	14.4	25.5	29.2	9.1	6.1	2.9
Grahamdale	0	1.9	0	61.7	9	12.5	1.4
St. Laurent	0	0	2.1	57.8	18	0	10.4
Siglunes	0	0.7	0.3	48.2	7.7	16.3	4.5

- **Land, by Type**

	Annual crops	Grassland	Tree Area	Wetlands and Organic Soils	Water	Non-agriculture Area
Armstrong	4%	36%	39%	14%	5%	2%
Bifrost	36%	23%	21%	16%	1%	2%
Coldwell	6.4	40.4	19.2	26.6	2.7	2
Eriksdale	5.2	41.1	31.2	14.3	5.3	1.7
Fisher	27.1	32.5	28.5	7.2	2.1	1.9
Grahamdale	3.1	31.7	44.4	14.6	2.8	1.7
St. Laurent	2.7	45	15.3	22	11.6	1.5
Siglunes	2.4	41.4	27.8	10.1	1.9	0.1

- **Wildlife Management Areas**

Wildlife Management Area	R.M.	Quarters	Acres
Lundar	Coldwell	17	2720
Sharpwood	Eriksdale	2	320
	Armstrong	26	4160
Narcisse	Armstrong	173	27680
Clematis	Armstrong	42	6720
	St. Laurent	5	800
Sandridge	Armstrong	16	2560
Inwood	Armstrong	18	2880
Harperville	St. Laurent	10	1600
Broad Valley	Fisher	65	10400
Lee Lake	Fisher	5	800
Sleeve Lake	Fisher	47	7520
	Grahamdale	180	28800
Little Birch	Fisher	70	11200
	Siglunes	2	320
	Grahamdale	266	42560
Grahamdale	Grahamdale	23	3680
Moosehorn	Siglunes	2	320
Hilbre	Grahamdale	20	3200
Gypsumville	Grahamdale	32	5120
Mantagao	Grahamdale	68	10880
	Fisher	40	6400
Total		**1,129**	**180,640**

- **Climate of the Region**

	Area		Average Frost-free Period	Average Degree-days above 5ºC
	Hectares	Townships	(days)	
Armstrong	192,832	21	99	1531
Bifrost	165,486	18	103	1495
Coldwell	92,020	10	99	1531
Eriksdale	81,371	8.8	99	1531
Fisher	149,716	16.2	109	1588
Grahamdale	246,219	26.7	101	1442
St. Laurent	53,786	5.8	127	1712
Siglunes	99,422	10.8	82	1527

SWOT ANALYSIS – Agriculture

The SWOT analysis for agriculture will be broken down into three separate analyses: livestock, forages, and crops.

SWOT ANALYSIS - Livestock

The North Interlake has an unfair livestock advantage within Canadian agriculture. The region boasts:

- Some of the lowest land values when comparing productive ability;
- Abundant pristine ground water resources;
- Unexploited forage production ability;
- Excess feed grain and oilseed production;
- Easy to achieve setbacks for Intensive Livestock Units (ILU);
- Close proximity to USA and both eastern and western Canadian livestock markets.

Manitoba has long been known as one of the least expensive agricultural region in North America to produce livestock and the North Interlake being able to feed any class of livestock more economically than nearly any other. Reasons for this includes that:

- Feed grain costs are the same in the North Interlake as in any other region of Manitoba. Manitoba feed prices are also much cheaper than Alberta. Proof: Saskatchewan hauls their grain west, not east.

- The North Interlake has excellent feed grain and silage production abilities as represented by the following appendices:
  - Appendix A is MASC – Insurance data indicating that on average barley grain production averages 58.6 bu/acre, while overall Manitoba barley production averages 56.2 bu based on region-to-region averages.
  - Appendix B is a barley silage field estimation based on barley grain yield. This graph visually shows that the North Interlake can produce above average barley silage.

- Forage prices are not based on the cash hay price to American dairies, which set the price for most other regions of Manitoba. Proof: Beef hay has been available at 2 to 2.25 cents per pound for most years.

- In almost all areas the ground water is clean and free of contaminants. Proof: In many locations there are artisian wells with quality human drinking water.

- No other province can boast similar distances to three different markets. Proof: Ashern, Manitoba to Brooks, AB – 1242 km; to Omaha, NE – 1221 km; to southern Ontario – 2400 km. Southern Ontario is a regular market for Manitoba livestock even though the distance is substantial. We are always penalized by distance but assisted by competition.

Beef

➷ Cow/Calf

Cow-calf operations in the North Interlake are abundant in all municipalities. Typically they are concentrated in areas where annual cropping is challenged by soil type, stoniness or topography making large scale grain farming difficult. Herd sizes are larger than in most other areas of the province. Beef farming is the “norm” for North Interlake farmers.

There are three types of cow-calf operations in the North Interlake. There are existing farms that are looking to expand, there are operators with off-farm jobs that have started into cattle because of the low investment and there are former Albertans, who have sold out and moved to the North Interlake because of the low cost of land.

Historically this area had settlers on every quarter with beef and dairy cattle. After two succeeding generations, dairy has nearly disappeared with farms converting to beef because of the low conversion cost.

Cash grain cropping has evolved in a downward spiral because of the distance to markets, which continues to lengthen due to loss of rail lines. Beef farming remains because of cheap land and high equity.

The North Interlake has an abundance of quality alfalfa hay, whether it is produced or purchased. The area is also renowned for providing consistent quality feeder cattle.

Issue: Difficulty Assembling & Managing Large Parcels of Land

Opportunity:

Cash and/or lease agreements between cow-calf producers and landlords or custom graziers are an opportunity for both parties. Custom and contract grazing operations are expanding on a regular basis.

Issue: Minimal Profitability

Opportunity:

Economics of scale are becoming a reality where beef herds are growing. 20 years ago, 200 head cow herds were unusual. Now they are the norm.

Mid-sized herds need to add value to current production, if they are going to flourish in today’s financial environment.

Issue: Lack of Links with Packers and/or Large Feedlots

Opportunity:

Links are needed to be built between cow-calf producers and the meat packers to deliver the type and quality of cattle that bring premium price and marketability.

Issue: Cull cattle over thirty months of age cannot travel to United States

Opportunity:

Slaughter capacity in Canada continues to expand. Canadian prices for cull cows are not representative of USA prices at this time. There is still a backlog of substandard cows that will be culled when the market returns to reasonable cull prices.

This will likely only be achieved when the USA offers competition to the Canadian packers.

Issue: Predator control is an issue in the north Interlake where Timber wolves are an issue.

Opportunity:

In the past producers had access to cyanide guns which were one of the few control measures for timber wolves. The ban on Cyanide guns should be re-evaluated as farmers have less time to control wolf populations with other less effective control methods.

Likelihood of Expansion – Moderate

➷ Beef Feeding Conventional (Hi-Energy Ration)

Beef backgrounding lots are relatively common in the North Interlake but finisher feedlots are not.

The northeast Interlake has abundant grain resources. There are rentable cereal fields that could be used for silage. Many of these fields are square making them efficient to harvest with large equipment. Alfalfa silage production is also a good option with excellent yields possible.

The northwest Interlake is quite different with field sizes being smaller and much less grain production. Cereal silage fields are small which make large scale silage harvesting less efficient but not impossible. Alfalfa silage production is well suited to this area.

The entire North Interlake has abundant calf supplies with large groups of stock available.

Issue: With 1200 kms+ distance to travel to slaughter markets, each semi load of livestock costs about $4000 to get to market. This hinders the efficiency of operations due to costs and shrink, making the need to assemble full pot loads of cattle necessary.

Opportunity:

Some new slaughter facilities are being developed closer to this region since the building boom in our post-BSE era.

Issue: There is a lack of links with packers. Packers are more apt to deal with large feedlots because of consistency issues and without being large it is hard to develop these linkages.

Opportunity:
With the advent of branded beef programs, age verification and herd of origin verification, feedlots are going to need to be very good with cattle identification and record keeping. Some branded beef programs may fit smaller operations with good records more so than commodity beef packers looking for big lots.

Issue: Reluctance by financial institutions to get involved with feedlot operations.

Opportunity:
This is an issue that will not change immediately. Financial institutions are now reluctant to move into this sector because of the extreme cyclical nature and high risk. Issues like BSE have been more devastating than just short term loss of market.

Issue: Environmental Engineering—in the past feedlots could be built with in open field with fence posts and boards. With current environment concerns, much more investment must be made before the first animal arrives.

Opportunity:
With few large feeders, new operations will start-up in better, more appropriate locations with ideal soils and setbacks that will make the end feedlot more sustainable in the long run.

Issue: Packer funded feedlots are developing in areas where there is experience (ie Feedlot Alley in southern Alberta).

Opportunity:
This is a great challenge as we have the farthest distance and little feeding experience. If this trend grows, it will be a real threat to future development in the North Interlake feedlot industry.

Likelihood of Expansion – High

➷ Beef Feeding (Grass Fed)

Grass fed beef finishing is the process of gaining a “finished” beef by managing the animal on grass rather than on a concentrated energy feed ration. Grass fed meat is a very different product than what North American producers are used to purchasing. Fat cover is typically much thinner, inter-muscular fat is less abundant and fat color is more yellow than barley fed beef. Grass fed beef may carry some health related traits such as omega 3 fatty acids and congugated linoleic acids (CLA’s). Grass-fed beef may be considered a health food.

Issue: Under the current Canadian grading system, an ideal grass fed carcass will be penalized for yellow fat and lack of finish. Selling these animals into the market will likely blemish the farm name in the books at the packers, so traditional marketing is a complete non-starter.

Opportunity:
Many countries in the world consider grass fed meat a high quality premium product. A segment of the North American population is moving toward these exotic foods. Because of lower volume, but higher dollar values per pound, this may be a segment that the North Interlake could pursue.

Issue: Market development is a necessity for grass fed beef. Currently the mainstream packers are looking for non-animal protein meats, full trace-back abilities, country of origin labelling (COOL) and branding programs for value added processing. Inventing a new and competing market segment for North America that may favour off-shore meat products is unlikely to be taken on by mainstream packers at this time. This market has competition from countries like Brazil, Argentina, Australia and New Zealand.

Opportunity:
New investment and market development will need to ride on the visionaries that are willing to work outside the traditional market chain and live with a great deal of risk. The benefits may be well worth the effort.

Issue: If a market develops, do we have a constant supply and slaughter capacity to provide the product?

Opportunity:
Canada may have enough slaughter and processing capacity to handle a new line of beef cutting. Since the BSE crisis began federally inspected capacity in Canada has rose to the point where there will be capacity to handle additional lines. Packer desperation for product may occur in the near future due to increased capacity and American competition now that the border is open to live Canadian UTM cattle and may be open soon to OTM beef.

Issue: Under continuous pasture and native grass management, grass-fed beef will have little success.

Opportunity:
Higher levels of grazing expertise will be required to keep gain sufficient to make production economical. Grass and forage will need to be well managed to be highly palatable and remain high in energy to meet the carcass finish needs of this market.

Issue: Grass fed beef cattle which may finish at over thirty months of age cannot be shipped to United States.

Opportunity:

Cattlemen must learn to sell cattle at ages before they reach 30 months of age. This may mean that cattlemen will need to select genetics that will finish before 30 months of age. If cattle are unlikely to finish by 30 months, they may need to redirect cattle growth away from grass fed to conventional production to assure they are slaughtered before 30 months of age.

Likelihood of Expansion – High in long term, Limited in the short term

DAIRY

Dairy in the North Interlake has been declining in recent years due to older farmers retiring and younger farmers selling quota at the high values of late.

Issue: Quota prices have been at an all-time Manitoba high for the last year. With quota at over $20,000 per kg of butterfat, it is excessively difficult for new entrants to enter the industry. The only entrants of late in Manitoba are immigrants with money from overseas land or quota sales.

Opportunity:

If immigrant families can be attracted to the North Interlake, there may be some option for expansion. This area boasts some of the lowest land costs and the ability to provide good setbacks to planned ILO'S.

There is incentive for the older dairy farmer who is nearing retirement to sell their quota at today's high prices and then re-invest the money elsewhere.

Issue: Lack of trained labour and local services.
At this time, very little experienced labour can be hired and all the dairy service businesses are located in the south-half of the province.

Issue: Distance to market problem.

Opportunity:

If a new dairy does start, market distance will be an insignificant issue if the dairy size is adequate to take semi-load lots. New start-ups that are small would have a hard time justifying hauling costs off the current routes.

Issue: Breeding stock over thirty months old cannot travel into the United States

Opportunity:

With breeding stock prohibited from entering the USA, a lot of profit potential is lost. If the border opens to breeding stock, this would allow breeders to recapture the markets they lost in May 2003.

Likelihood of Expansion under current quota scenario – Not likely

<u>HOGS</u>

➭ **Farrow to Finish, Early Wean, Finishing, Gilt development**

Conventional insulated barn operations

Issue: At this time, there is a lack of investment money for the establishment of new operations.

Opportunity:
2005 offered low grain yields and low income to many would-be investors to the hog industry. Future years may provide an opportunity to re-invest in this industry.

Issue: Lack of a skilled labour force.

Opportunity:
Assiniboine Community College offers training courses for management and general barn labourers. The new CASS program may offer financial assistance to encourage unskilled workers to upgrade.

Issue: Environmental regulations and community acceptance.

Opportunity:
In many areas in the North Interlake, there are sites that would be suitable for hog operations because of the sparse human population base. Because of the limited number of ILO’s in the North Interlake, there should be plenty of space for nutrient spreading with many municipalities running a nutrient deficit.

Hog ILO’s can provide a tremendous amount of nutrients that would be welcomed by neighbouring beef producers who need a low cost fertility source for forages.

Issue: Regulation setbacks and high health barns.

Opportunity:
In many areas in the North Interlake, there are so few hog operations that there is an opportunity to establish high health breeding stock facilities with minimal risk of infections.

Likelihood of Expansion – Good

✎ Hoop Structure Hog Barns

Hoop structure hog barns have been gaining popularity in recent years because of low start-up and infrastructure requirements. These barns show a viable alternative to conventional feeder barns.

Issue: Lack of concentration of hoop structure units in the North Interlake.

Opportunity:

The low cost of entry for a hoop structure operation may be the ideal way to start interest in the North Interlake.

Issue: Community protest limiting hog expansion.

Opportunity:

Hoop structure hog barns are less likely to be protested by the community as conventional barns have been in the last 10 years.

Issue: Environment and manure.

Opportunity:

Manure from a hoop structure is in the solid form and require less intensive management of waste than liquid operations. High organic matter contents from the straw based system allows for composting and storage without costly lagoons and retention ponds.

Likelihood of Expansion – Good

POULTRY

The poultry industry is controlled by a supply management system.

Issue: The cost of quota is nearly prohibitive for new start-ups operated by individuals.

Opportunity:

Because of the supply management system, prices have remained strong in the poultry industry. Under the National Allocation Pricing agreement there is some room for growth in the Manitoba Broiler Chicken Industry in the quota system.

The egg market has stabilized. Eggs and butter have been getting better nutritional press as of late.

There is also opportunity for small flock operations and value-added products, such as pasture raised poultry.

Issue: Consumption of chicken is approaching the upper limit.

Opportunity:
There is an opportunity to increase market share with value added products.

Issue: Domestic turkey consumption has been relatively stable for the past several years.

Opportunity:
As a nutritious alternative to other meats, there is potential to increase turkey consumption. Since McDonald's has introduced its turkey sub, turkey production has increased.

There's an opportunity and need to improve marketing programs to the general public.

Other issues:

Avian Influenza
This is a challenge especially for the small flock operations. Migratory birds (ducks) are potential vectors. A Small Flock Biosecurity fact sheet is being released by MAFRI. Avian Influenza is also an issue for commercial operations.

Animal Welfare
There has been recent negative media attention in regards to the welfare of laying chickens.

World Trade Negotiations
Currently the USA is limited to 5-7% of the Canadian market tariff-free, but if that were to rise to 20% or more, there would be detrimental affects on the Canadian poultry producer.

Likelihood of Expansion – Limited to Moderate

<u>EQUINE</u>

➬ Horse Ranching / PMU

Issue: Wyeth-Ayerst reduced the number of PMU farms drastically in the past three years due to the North American move away from HRT drugs. Most North Interlake PMU operations are closed and expansion is over. Many operations still carry some inventory of unsold horses that were held for marketing or sentimental reasons. In most cases these herds will need to be liquidated because of the limited earning potential of a band of commercial mares. As herd liquidations continue, pasture rental rates, timothy hay market, and etc will be affected.

Opportunities:
Horse meat production may be a viable enterprise. It is an industry veiled with secrecy because of the North American "humane" view of horses. There is some opportunity for production of meat horses that could be explored further.

There is opportunity for former PMU operators to convert existing barns into other uses, for example, a poultry operation.

Likelihood of Expansion – Unsure

⇴ Pleasure Horses

Due to the lack of population base in the North Interlake, the pleasure horse industry is a difficult endeavour. Many stables near population bases can charge $5.00 per day for horse boarding because the owner can see the horse within ½ an hour drive from their home. All North Interlake locations are a minimum of one hour from the capital region of Manitoba making pleasure horse boarding an unlikely option. Options exist for winter boarding and some level of nature trail riding facilities.

Likelihood of Expansion – Minimal due to proximity

⇴ Equine Seedstock Production

The North Interlake has opportunities in the Internet marketing of horses. Because of the distant location of this area from suburban horse areas, the Internet has become one of the main portals of marketing seedstock horses.

Issue: Distance to horse population centers.

Opportunity:
Manitoba is central in North America and transportation costs are similar no matter the direction of travel.

Opportunity:
Cost of production is a major benefit within this area, as the cost of forage production and pasture land are much less than that of farms in suburban areas where land values are constrictive.

Issue: Sales to the United States continue to become more challenging due to new rules regarding the importation of any product or animal.

Likelihood of expansion – Good

<u>SHEEP</u>

Issue: Sheep production is often overlooked as an opportunity in agriculture.

Opportunity:

There is potential for sheep production to be a viable, low cost operation. There is a low cost entry into the industry. High-end technology is not necessary. Sheep production can provide supplementary income to a diversifying operation. Producers can enter the industry with as little as 20 head. Sheep also fit well into a multi-species grazing approach.

Manitoba has an advantage with our low cost land prices, suitable grazing conditions and control of predator problems.

These are all positives that could also lead to a future in the feedlot industry.

Issue: Lack of industry knowledge and management skills in operating large flocks of economic size.

Opportunity:
There is an opportunity for the older generation and experienced producers to mentor the young and beginning sheep producers to pass on management skills.

There is a potential for co-operatives to better co-ordinate lamb production, processing, and distribution to make these areas more efficient and better able to respond to consumer demand.

Issue: Even though lamb is not a staple in most households (2 lbs/person/year), Canada does not produce enough lamb to satisfy domestic demand. 50 percent of lamb consumed in Canada is imported. The majority comes from New Zealand and Australia.

Opportunity:
Opportunity to increase market share in North America.

Issue: Prior to BSE, Manitoba lambs were also shipped to the U.S. In 2003 the U.S. border closed to all Canadian ruminants and ruminant products including sheep. The U.S. border has since reopened to ruminants under certain conditions. The rule permits the importation of sheep and goats less than 12 months of age. These animals may be imported for immediate slaughter and feeding prior to slaughter in the U.S.

Opportunity:
There is potential for “Home Grown” markets to develop. For example, Sunterra Meats in Alberta has expanded and is currently supplying Safeway, Sobey’s and other retail markets with fresh Canadian lamb.

There is also potential to expand the organic market. High disposable income earners will spend money on these products.

Farm Gate Marketing remains strong.

Issue: The majority of Manitoba lamb ends up in Ontario, Quebec and Alberta because of higher population and ethnic populations in Ontario and Quebec. Also the meat packing/processing facilities are located in these provinces.

Opportunity:

The ethnic markets (Kosher market and Hala market) are very important markets that continue to be a driving factor in lamb slaughter. These markets require lamb to be prepared according to a particular religious standard.

Restaurant consumption is the predominant location for most non-ethnic consumers. Young, high income earners are looking for the 'fine dining experience".

Potential to expand direct marketing to the foodservice industry.

Issue: In the past, the typical consumer has had an unfavourable perception of lamb (i.e. taste, cholesterol level, nutritional content, convenience, economic value, etc) as compared to other meats.

Opportunity:

The perception of mutton that was served in the war period is being overcome with time. The unfavourable perception of lamb is a challenge but also an opportunity for product promotion. Promotion, price, availability will sell more lamb.

Issue: Lamb is popular at ethnic feast days. It is like turkey at Christmas. It's even been compared on the same scale as lobster. In other words, it's not an every day meat. However, value added products are becoming more commonplace in the meat industry. Commodities ignoring the trend towards value added products are losing their share in the market place.

Opportunity:

Opportunity to develop value added and branded meat products.

Issue: Lack of a skilled labour force specific to sheep in Manitoba slaughter facilities resulting in a higher cost per unit to slaughter.

Opportunity:

Opportunity to train labourers specific to the sheep slaughter.

Issue: Leafy Spurge is a tenacious plant that infects grazing lands, degrades wildlife habitat and associated recreation lands and decreases native prairie plant diversity. Leafy Spurge is a very aggressive plant with no naturally occurring predators in North America. Best results are obtained when two or more management options are used at the same time. For example: multi-species grazing and herbicides. A study in North Dakota has shown that it takes about 5 years of multi-species grazing to reduce leafy spurge by up to 98 percent. Sheep and goats suffer no ill effects from eating Leafy Spurge and even prefer leafy spurge over many other common pasture grasses and legumes.

Opportunity:
Opportunity to convert a noxious weed into an economical gain rather than an added expense for weed control. Potential to contract graze sheep in areas infested with leafy spurge.

Other potential benefits of multi-species grazing include: improved pasture health, increased forage production, improved forage utilization, enhanced livestock performance and control of other noxious weeds (such as absinth, sage and thistle).

Issue: Predator control has been a major issue in the past. The use of guard animals, such as dogs, donkeys, or llamas, can be extremely effective for predator control. With the greater availability today of guard animals, predators are less of a problem.

Opportunity:
With the use of guard animals, there is a potential to expand sheep production into areas of the province where predators once where a threat. However without these guard animals, a producer could lose 1/3 of the lamb crop due to predators.

Issue: Scrapie is a Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathy (TSE) affecting sheep and goats. It is associated with the presence of abnormal forms of the prion protein. It is a fatal disease and there is no treatment or vaccine currently available nor is there an approved test to detect Scrapie in live animals.

Opportunity:
Scrapie is a hard disease to eradicate. Nationally there has been a shift from eradication to containment of the disease. There is an opportunity for local producers to manage their flocks to prevent the contraction of Scrapie, such as before buying an animal make sure that the farm it comes from has had no cases of Scrapie in the last 6-months. Also keep full records of the source of all sheep purchased, record identity of all sheep sold and the names and addresses of purchasers, etc.

Likelihood of expansion – Moderate

GOATS

The Canadian goat meat industry is built around ethnic demand for the product. As people continue to immigrate into North America from traditional goat consuming nations, the domestic demand for goat meat in these ethnic markets will continue to increase. This ethnic demand for goat meat is derived from a number of social and religious traditions. As a result, there is seasonality in the demand for goat meat.

Issue: As with sheep production, goat production is overlooked as an opportunity in agriculture.

Opportunity:

There is also potential for goat production to be a viable, low cost operation. There is a low cost of entry into the industry. High-end technology is not necessary. Goat production can provide supplementary income to a diversifying operation.

Issue: Lack of industry knowledge and management skills in goat production.

Opportunity:

The Manitoba Goat Association is developing and promoting the goat industry. The industry is currently building a network of producer contacts. There is a need to continue with enhanced extension activities in the industry. More information on herd health and management is being requested by producers.

Issue: The majority of Manitoba's production of meat goats is marketed through auction markets or sold to brokers, who arrange for goats to be slaughtered in Manitoba or exported.

Market development has been identified by producers as one of the main issues in their industry.

Opportunity:

There is potential to expand domestic markets at the farm gate, farmer markets, etc. To enter into larger markets and to promote a Manitoba product, a constant supply is needed.

Issue: In order for market share to increase, infrastructure is needed. Slaughter capacity in the province needs to increase. Currently there is a long wait time at existing slaughter facilities which may only take a limited number of animals at one time. Transportation costs to these facilities have also increased dramatically.

Opportunity:

There is potential to expand small animal / exotic species slaughter space within the province of Manitoba.

Issue: There is limited available genetics in Manitoba. It is costly to ship bucks into Manitoba for breeding purposes, especially for small and part-time producers.

Opportunity:

There is potential to expand the marketing of semen sales in Manitoba.

Issue: Leafy Spurge and Red Bartsia are both weeds of hayland, pastures and roadsides, which has become a challenge to farmers in the North Interlake.

Another limiting factor to livestock pasture in the Northern Interlake is brush encroachment.

Opportunity:
As described in the sheep section, there is an opportunity to convert noxious weeds into economical gain by grazing sheep and goats on lands infested with Leafy Spurge and Red Bartsia.

Goats will use a high percentage of woody browse in their diet if it is available. Examples of species browsed by goats include aspen suckers, buckbrush, hazel scrub, and wolf willow. Goats are also forb eaters. They will eat absinthe, sage and thistle. These plants can be brought under control with the use of sheep or goats in the grazing system.

Likelihood of expansion – Moderate

<u>EXOTIC LIVESTOCK</u>

Elk, bison, deer, wild boar, alpaca, lama, rabbit, mink, fox

Issue: Long term sustainability of individual species. Most exotic livestock species suffer from the boom/bust scenario. As the popularity grows, the prices rises to profitable levels for a finite period of time. When new investors cease purchasing breeding stock, the market busts and the popularity of the species falls off.

Opportunity:
Further market research and development is needed.

Issue: BSE in beef cattle caused waves in many non-beef species. When the border closed to beef cattle it also closed to all ruminants, which was devastating to the species disallowed from traveling to the United States.

Likelihood of Expansion – Variable

SWOT Analysis - Forages

The North Interlake region is made up of 1460 farms encompassing 1,635,973 acres, including:

- 79,870 acres of tame or seeded pasture
- 93,518 acres of tame hay or other fodder
- 699,691 acres of natural pasture land

Resources available for forages include:

- Sparsely populated
- Large Crown Land, wildlife acreage
- Experienced forage seed producers
- Large acreage per livestock animal unit
- Nutrient balance is negative, so there is much room for livestock expansion
- Large acreage per farm

Some general issues, opportunities and challenges exist for forages in the North Interlake. These will be identified and briefly explained in the paragraphs below.

Issue: Most of the tame forage acres in the North Interlake are alfalfa timothy. The longevity on these stands is 10 or more years. Optimum production would be with a rotation of 4 to 5 years. Production and economics dictate that on the better lands that adoption of a 4-5 year rotation is healthy. On the stonier lands, the maintenance of a stand for as long as possible cannot be criticized and innovative rejuvenation options other than cultivation are beneficial.

Trend: The trend as the cow herd increases and land prices increase is to rejuvenate all of these stands earlier to maximize production.

Opportunity:

The need for good extension in the intensive management of forage stands is needed more than ever. There is a need for intensive work and demonstrations on innovative successful rejuvenation options other than cultivation. Varieties that have longevity need to be promoted. Crops other than the traditional (alfalfa timothy) varieties need to be promoted and researched.

Issue: The herd size per farm and the herd size in the North Interlake has increased. This has put a strain on the land within the area to sustain the herd especially during a drought. In the drought of 2003, it was realized that there was a huge dependence on perennial alfalfa for winter feed and that older stands of alfalfa produce terrible in a drought.

Trend: We have seen an increase in silage production in the area. The move to silage also results in the need to produce greater volumes of D.M. per acre. We have seen a huge interest in sourcing other feedstuffs such as straw and screenings. The need for ration balancing has also increased.

Opportunity:

A concentrated extension effort is needed in complementing the silage and other feedstuff trend with proper training for producers. There needs to be a focus on the cost of producing a unit of protein and a unit of TDN.

Issue: Pasture acres because of the herd size have been under pressure from overgrazing. This is a time when there are environmental issues with overgrazing and grazing near water courses.

Trend: Producers are very interested in low cost ways of improving pastures and extending their grazing seasons well into the winter. There is a demand for information on alternative low cost wintering and summer watering systems

Opportunity*:*
A tremendous opportunity presents itself to respond to a thirst that is prevalent in the area for information on extending the grazing season and stretching the pasture in a low cost and environmentally safe manner.

Issue: Livestock manure regulations that have been adopted could have serious effects on cow-calf producers within the North Interlake. The increasing concern as to cattle having access to water bodies will also affect North Interlake cattle producers tremendously.

Trend: A recent survey indicated that the majority of producers within the North Interlake spread their manure on forage land. There has also been a trend to winter cows over as much land as possible to limit the amount of manure to haul from confinement areas.

Opportunity*:*
There is a need to do more work on the application of cow manure to forage. The distribution of cow manure and the proper management of wintering sites need to be demonstrated and promoted.

Issue: Brush encroachment is a serious problem that is prevalent in the North Interlake more so than any other area of the province. To complicate the situation even worse is that when producers adopt rotational grazing techniques, this can result in brush encroachment becoming worse.

Trend: There is a provincial focus on doing something about the problem with APF monies being allocated to address the problem. Industries such as Dow Chemicals and groups such as Sharptails Plus are also very supportive

Opportunity:
The challenge is to have as many dollars spent in the North Interlake on research and demonstration sites as possible. Projects need to be written up and submitted ASAP.

Issue: High quality hay has always generated good revenue in any year of production. In every area of the province, we have producers that are involved in the production of cash hay for sale into the domestic or export market. The producers that have taken this crop seriously have done extremely well financially.

Trend: The trend is that the cash hay and export hay markets are growing and the need for good quality hay is strong. New producers that become interested are few. Extension staff also hesitates to become involved and sometimes are too critical of the industry.

Opportunity:
This is an opportunity for many producers to make good profits in this industry. Producers with some marketing expertise that have the capability and desire to change their attitude are numerous throughout the North Interlake. This industry could be an alternative for many within the area.

Initiative Efforts are needed in:

- Stand Management
- Alternative Crops
- Rejuvenation of Forage Stands
- Silage
- Rations
- Pasture Planning and Management
- Alternative Watering for Livestock
- Manure Management
- Brush Encroachment
- Harvesting and Marketing of Cash Hay

Forage Resources & Industry within the North Interlake:

Issue: The west side of the North Interlake area has very few businesses other than primary production.

Trend: The influx of new businesses will not happen if the present trend continues. No new businesses are being proposed. The largest percent population drop in Manitoba from one census to another was the RM of Grahamdale. Producers that live in these areas have to travel quite a distance to get service of any kind.

Opportunity:
Some creative thinking needs to be done as to industry other than the traditional agricultural service industry. Wildlife, an abundance of Wildlife Management Areas, wide open spaces, forestry (Prendeville set up a post manufacturing plant in St Martin but Conservation would not let them source suitable trees), etc.

The forage seed industry is a natural fit for the North Interlake. We have numerous experienced forage seed producers and a substantial acreage in the North Interlake.

Wildlife Management Areas:

Issue: There are a total of 16 Wildlife Management Areas in the North Interlake covering an area of 180,640 acres. Most of them are located in the RM of Grahamdale. Because of the lack of funds, these areas are simply not managed. It is hard to argue that they are maintained in their natural state in that fire is not allowed to rejuvenate these areas. Brush encroachment and the lack of biodiversity have resulted in the exodus of wildlife. In contrast, PFRA pastures that have had good pasture management, have a biodiversity of wildlife and plants and are productive as well.

Trend: With the pressure on government to spend in other more important areas, the likelihood of government dollars being spent on WMA's is very slim. There is continuous pressure from some neighbouring producers that farm next to WMA's to use the land for pasture, etc. The administrators of WMA's hesitate to allow producers to use these areas because it becomes a permanent arrangement in that producers can be difficult to deal with.

At present, the only public use of these lands is that there is some excellent snowmobile trails through these areas. The other use which is getting less every year is from big game hunters.

Opportunity:

Some WMA's maybe could be used periodically by producers for grazing. If good grazing management is followed, this could be beneficial to the wildlife in the area and certainly could add some biodiversity to these areas. Producers, resources and agriculture would need to work together. The main challenge would be to change producer attitudes towards proper pasture management of the resource.

With new low cost technology in fencing, some of these areas could be set up as drought insurance to move livestock to in case of a drought.

Agriculture should be involved in the promotion of these areas to the public as true wide open spaces, etc.

PFRA Pastures:

Issue: There are three PFRA pastures in the North Interlake. Total acreage is 42,600. The acreage and soil is similar to Wildlife Management Areas. In the past, PFRA pastures were continuously grazed and have been criticized for poor pasture management. This has changed dramatically.

Trend: PFRA care about the job they are doing and the grass that they are grazing. Another initiative that PFRA are undertaking is that they want to do more extension as well. Some extension projects where they have something to offer is in the areas of innovative alternative watering projects as well as brush control initiatives that are impressive.

Opportunity:

We need to work with PFRA in their extension efforts

SWOT ANALYSIS - Crops

Trends:

- Less acres in bulky crops due to distance to market
- More acres seeded to canola which is well suited to our area
- Increase in forage seed and livestock fed production (to complement the increased livestock numbers)
- Increase in value added; such as hulled oats, bio-diesel and cold-rolled oilseeds.

Issues:

- Climate – shorter growing season than southern Manitoba.
- Limited available heat units for specialty crops.
- Shorter frost free period because of late spring, early fall on average.

Opportunities:

- Farmers of the North Interlake GO area have capitalized on the class 1 to 3 soils that exist and have also learned to optimize crop production on the lower classes.
- Promote varieties suited to area; ie. ones that require less days to reach maturity or a disease package suited to the area.
- Promote specialty crops with improved varieties with decreased days to maturity, ie. soybeans.
- Promote production for local markets and eliminate negative effects of distance to markets

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Trend:

- Earlier seeding dates due to improved surface water management and direct seeding equipment.

Issue:

- Geographical topography; production is limited due to ridge and swale topography, surface water management limitations (drainage) and generally soils in the area have poor internal drainage.

Opportunities:

- Adoption of laser guided drainage technology.
- Improved direct seeding equipment.
- Improved surface water management.
- Adopt cropping practices to promote improved subsurface water movement.

Issue:

- Access to markets.

Trend:

- Distance to market has increased. This has especially impacted the increased cost of bulky cereal crop transportation.

Opportunity:

- o Increase the need for Class 1 driver occupations.
- o Encourage RM's to plan for more "market" roads which are better able to handle heavy traffic year round.
- o Increased feed grain production to supply increased livestock production.
- o Promote adding value to primary crop production.

Issue:

- o Minor crop production
- o Vegetable, organic, small fruit and neutraceutical crop production have the potential to generate excellent revenue.

Trend:

- o Increased demand

Opportunity:

- o Small niche market potential exists in certain areas with certain crops.
- o Opportunity is small due to access to markets, high labour and intense management requirements.

COVERING NEW GROUND - *Manitoba's Agricultural Sustainability Initiative*
Eastern/Interlake Region
Consultation Report, March 2003

Introduction

On March 6, 2003 a consultation was held at Oak Hammock Marsh to consider present programming priorities in the Covering New Ground (CNG) program and future programming in the Agricultural Policy Framework (APF) Environment Chapter, particularly targeted to the agri-environmental scan requirement. The objective of the scan in the APF is to provide a decision tool that will be used to geographically target activities such as environmental farm planning, including the payment of incentives for beneficial management practices, and applied investigation, demonstration and technology transfer programs. The agri-environmental scan will be accomplished from the examination of resource information, technical expertise and local knowledge. Resulting conclusions will be categorized into the following APF priority areas considering the following designated agri-environmental factors as proposed by the federal government:

- **Air -** odour, greenhouse gas emissions, and particulate emissions
- **Water** – nutrients, pathogens, pesticides, and water conservation
- **Soil** – soil organic matter and soil erosion (tillage, wind and water)
- **Biodiversity** – habitat availability, species at risk, and economic damage by wildlife

In the Eastern/Interlake region, an overview of relevant regional resources was derived from various sources, including Soil Landscapes on Canada (SLC) maps, a national series of broad scale maps (scale = 1:1,000,000) containing information about soil properties and landforms, the Status of Agricultural Soil Resources of Manitoba, 2002, the Census of Agriculture (Statistics Canada, 2001) and Manitoba Conservation. Following a review of this information in a narrative presentation and from various maps, participants were asked to identify priority areas in environmental sustainability relating to the Eastern/Interlake region, and to identify activities to address these designated priority areas.

The comments from the Eastern/Interlake regional consultation are summarized as environmental, economic or social sustainability. The conclusions in the environmental sustainability section are further divided into the following categories - water, soil, air and biodiversity, as identified within the Agricultural Policy Framework. The last section of the Eastern/Interlake report is titled "Participant Comments'. This section documents all comments made during the consultation and intends to accurately reflect the broad range of the discussion that occurred.

Regional Overview

The Eastern/Interlake region includes all the agricultural land in the Interlake between Lake Winnipeg and Lake Manitoba, the area immediately north and northwest of Winnipeg, and all the farmland east of the Red River extending to the Ontario and US borders. There are approximately 2.6 million acres of improved land within the region. The soils and topography vary considerably from heavy clays to sandy and peat soils. Ridge and swale topography is typical in the Interlake and parts of the eastern side above the flat Red River valley area. The type of farming relates to the soil classes in the region. Soil classifications vary from Class 1 to marginal, where most of the cattle industry is located. In the Interlake, 14% of the agricultural land is Class 2 and 54% is Class 3. In the Eastern region, 20% of the agricultural land is Class 2 and 23% Class 3.

Beneath the majority of the farmland in the Interlake and parts of the Eastern region is a very large aquifer known as the Carbonate Rock Aquifer. This aquifer is generally protected by thick, heavy clays up to 30 meters in some areas; however, it is also very shallow with outcrops of rocks in parts of the central Interlake.

The Eastern/Interlake region has an abundance of surface water with several major watersheds draining its agricultural land base into Lake Winnipeg and Lake Manitoba. There are 14 watersheds in the Eastern/Interlake region. The lakes, rivers, streams and drains account for virtually thousands of kilometers of riparian zones. The health of these riparian zones, as well as the use of proper land management practices, is essential to maintain water quality.

The Eastern/Interlake region has approximately 29% of Manitoba farms (approximately 6,200 farms). Agricultural production is primarily livestock based. According to the Census of Agriculture (Statistics Canada, 2001), 26% of beef production, 59% of dairy production, 24% of sheep production, 52% of hog production and 59% of the poultry production in Manitoba occurs in the Eastern/Interlake region. The top five crops grown in the region are wheat, alfalfa and tame hay, oats, barley and canola. Over 60% of the provincial forage seed acreage is located in the region.

The tourism industry is a vital part of the region as well. This includes hunting, fishing, cottage and beach areas.

Ten local organizations have delivered *Covering New Ground* projects to agricultural producers. In the Eastern/Interlake region, the three priority areas for CNG are Forage and Forage Seed Production, Livestock Production and Crop Production.

Conclusions

- ***Economic Sustainability***

Priority areas include agronomic issues, economics, and on-farm management. Comments included the following key points:

- Producers need better weather monitoring and access to environmental information to make on-farm decisions.
- Production issues (livestock and crop) need to be a priority area.
- More research is needed to develop less expensive, more practical ideas.
- Farm profitability was indicated as a major factor in the adoption of environmentally friendly practices.
- Policy issues should encompass all operations regardless of size.

- ***Social Sustainability***

Priority areas include public awareness and right to farm legislation. Comments included the following key points:

- Public Awareness
    - Increase public awareness in rural and urban communities of sustainable and recommended farm management practices;
    - Organizations other than government should be responsible for public awareness;

  - o Involve agricultural producers in the structuring of regulations;
  - o Air quality perception;
  - o Urban vs. agriculture ideals (i.e. dust, noise, etc.)

- ➢ Right to Farm Legislation
  - o Producers should not face litigation for normal farming practices;
  - o Need provincial legislation (Bill of Rights for Farmers)

- ➢ Lack of Farmers *(Also relates to Economic Issues)*

- ➢ Liability issues.
  - o If environmental farm plans are not in place, will the producer be liable for an environmental problem on their farm?

- ***Environmental Sustainability***

Priority areas are categorized as follows:

✓ **Water**

Priority areas include surface water management, ground water quality, on-farm management practices, priority of water allocation, and improper handling of industrial waste.

Proposed activities include the following:

- Protection of surface water quality.
- Promote proper field management to reduce runoff. Monitor effects.
- Develop watershed management plans including drainage and retention projects.
- Improve surface water drainage. Maintenance of drains/ditches and current infrastructure.
- Assist producers with the development of on-farm drainage plans.
- Promote riparian management.
- Research past riparian projects. (ie. Are these riparian management practices making a difference to the environment?)
- Promote controlled grazing projects in riparian areas.
- Demonstration of off-stream watering projects.
- Limit fencing off of lakefronts.
- Promote ground water and well management to ensure practices don't compromise the high quality ground water supply of the region.
  - o Map and seal abandoned wells. Tax new wells being drilled and use money to cap wells.
  - o Rotate beef wintering facilities.
  - o Remove manure packs.
- Priority of water allocation for intensive livestock operations.
- Promote proper management of industrial waste and materials (used oil, chemicals, etc).

Other comments related to water include less Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) controls - regulations should be waterway specific (i.e. spawning grounds, etc); evaluate past projects done in Manitoba, as well as in other provinces and states to determine improvements and gaps for future projects; target dollars to assist producers in adopting certain practices or to follow recommendations, and producer and public education of these issues.

✓ **Soil**

Priority areas include nutrient management and on-farm management practices.

Proposed activities include the following:

- Nutrient management *(Also relates to Water Issues)*
  - Financial and technical assistance for nutrient management plans
  - Promote proper nutrient management
  - Livestock manure and synthetic fertilizer – timing of application and amount
  - Commercial and residential waste
  - Soil test for livestock manure and synthetic fertilizer residue and it's movement in the soil profile (concern of excess nitrates and phosphorus in soil and water).
- Promote proper manure management
  - Manure on alfalfa (recommendations and upper limits)
- Prevent equipment and storage facility failure
- Proper disposal of livestock mortalities
- Continue forage variety testing programs.
- Reduce agriculture production on marginal land. Change back to wetland, etc. *(Also relates to Water and Biodiversity Issues)*
- Promote forages on marginal land. *(Also relates to Biodiversity Issues)*
- Promote land use planning in each rural municipality (i.e. GIS surveys). The region has strong urban influences that affects agricultural practices. *(Also relates to Water, Air, Biodiversity and Social Issues)*
- Proper siting of intensive livestock operations. *(Also relates to Water Issues)*
- Input management. Control pesticide residues.

Other comments related to soil include land classification based on soil data collected in 1960's - maps need to be updated; detailed soil survey information is needed for the Interlake and Eastern region; research needed to determine accuracy of soil and manure tests.

✓ **Air**

The priority area is odour management.

Proposed activities include the following:

- Nuisance odour management.
- Manure management
- Shelterbelts around earthen manure storage systems
- Reduce particulate emissions (smoke and dust).
- Reduce residue burning

- Reduce wind erosion

✓ **Biodiversity**

Proposed activities include the following:

- Promotion of wetlands as buffer and filtration systems, and to enhance biodiversity.
- Improvement of riparian areas will increase plant and animal species.
- Designation of water retention areas.
- Brush encroachment control on pastures and forage land.
- Promotion of forages on marginal land.
- Rangeland management.

Participant Comments

Participant comments are organized in 4 categories – Introduction and Resource Presentations, Priority Areas, Proposed Activities per Priority Area and Other Comments.

Introduction and Resource Presentations:

- Land classifications are based on soil data that was collected in 1960's. Maps should be updated. If land has irrigation potential, it will have a higher value.
- There is a large bedrock aquifer under the entire Eastern/Interlake region. It is important to map and seal abandoned wells to protect this resource.
- Producers were concerned about liability issues. If they don't have an environmental farm plan, they may be liable for an environmental problem on their farm. Will this include small holdings too?
- More detailed soil information is needed for the Interlake region. Census data was shown to illustrate general trends only. Other data is available (i.e. Crop Insurance data, Management Plus Program, FEMS Survey).
    - Pesticide use in the City of Winnipeg was not provided.
- Corporate hog barns report in the rural municipality where the head office is located, so data may be skewed.
- Horses – map does not look accurate. There are large numbers of horses around Bird's Hill, which do not show up on map.
- RM of Hanover has a high hog concentration. Has there been any deep nitrate testing in this RM? Some testing has been done but the issue is the management practices on the land. With poor management practices, high nitrate levels can also occur with the use of commercial fertilizer.

Priority Areas:

Priority areas include surface water management, on-farm management practices, nutrient management, public awareness, groundwater quality, improper handling of industrial waste, priority of water allocation, odour management, economics and right to farm legislation.

Proposed activities:

Surface Water Management (top priority)

- Watershed management plans including drainage and retention issues, maintenance of drains/ditches, maintenance of current infrastructure and education of all these issues for producers/public.
- Assist producers in developing on-farm drainage plans, retention dams, etc.
- Demonstrations of off-stream watering.
- Controlled grazing projects in riparian areas.
- Promotion and study of riparian management issues. Are management practices making a difference to the environment?
- Evaluate past projects done in Manitoba, as well as other provinces and states to determine improvements and gaps for future projects.
- Target dollars for assisting producers to adopt certain practices or to follow recommendations.

On-Farm Management Practices

- Assist producers to develop farm plan.
- Provide financial assistance for nutrient management plans.
- Promote land use planning in each rural municipality (i.e. GIS surveys of each RM).
- Develop practical best management practices (BMPs).
- More research needed to develop less expensive, more practical ideas.
- More research required to determine the validity of soil and manure test results.
- Recent release of Lake Winnipeg study. Is agriculture responsible for high levels of nitrate and phosphate in lake? Need more monitoring and proper management to reduce runoff, etc. to improve water quality.
- Reduce agriculture production on marginal land - change back to wetland, etc. Wetlands are important for filtration and biodiversity.
- Producers need better weather monitoring and access to environmental information to make on-farm decisions.
- Study manure application (i.e. recommendations, upper limits) on alfalfa.
- Rotate beef wintering facilities.
- Remove manure packs.

Public Awareness

- Increase awareness in urban and rural communities of sustainable and best management practices.
- Organizations other than government should be responsible for awareness.
- Agriculture has the reputation as being a big polluter. Politicians and provincial governments need to make sure that urban people realize that they are polluters too.
- Groundwater Quality
- Promote abandoned well sealing. Tax new wells being drilled and use money to cap wells.

Other Comments:

- Economics are very important, and production issues need to be more in the forefront. If productivity is not included in priority areas, it will be left out of program.

- Producers need to make a living first. Environment issues are secondary.
- Will do it if it's affordable and beneficial to the producer.
- Building knowledge is good way to spend money.

RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DATA

- ***Community Futures Development Corporations***

Community Futures Development Corporations (CFDCs) are a component of Western Diversification (WD)'s Community Futures Program to enhance economic development in rural Manitoba. Contributions by WD support the service delivery costs of CFDCs and provide the capital for an investment fund which is administered by the CFDCs. This investment fund provides financial assistance to local small to medium sized enterprises to create and maintain employment in rural communities.

There are two CFDCs in the North Interlake GO region: North East Interlake Community Futures Development Corporation (NEICOM CFDC) and Super Six Community Futures Development Corporation.

Super Six CFDC, based out of Ashern, services the communities along highway #6 – including the R.M. s of St. Laurent, Coldwell, Eriksdale, Siglunes, and Grahamdale which partially make up the North Interlake GO region.

NEICOM CFDC, based out of Riverton, covers a wide region that stretches as far north as Jackhead and as far south as the R.M. of Rosser, and extends west from the western shore of Lake Winnipeg (including the R.M. of Bifrost) to the R.M. s of Fisher and Armstrong.

Each CFDC offers two branches of services: Community Development and Business Development.

The Community Development component of the CFDC assists community members who are interested in finding ways for their community to grow and become better places to live and do business in by offering financial assistance, project and proposal writing assistance, strategic planning services, maintenance of community profiles and business directories, market surveys, and industry development.

The Business Development Committee offers a variety of services to new and existing entrepreneurs, which include business plan development, market research assistance, business training, financial assistance, and other services relevant to small to medium size business start-up or expansion. CFDCs are lenders of last resort for new or expanding businesses who are unable to obtain loans through traditional means.

- ***Regional Development Corporations***

Regional Development Corporations (RDCs) have existed in Manitoba since the 1960s, and were originally established by the Government of Manitoba to address concerns about migration of the rural population. RDCs are partially funded by a 50/50 grant from the province.

Interlake Development Corporation

The Interlake Development Corporation (IDC) exists to promote, plan and develop growth for the region that stretches from Gypsumville on the north to the boundaries of Winnipeg on the south, and from the east shore of Lake Manitoba to the west shore of Lake Winnipeg. This territory embraces eight First Nations communities, the city of Selkirk, and eighteen villages, towns and rural municipalities within the Interlake.

Up until 2004, IDC generated revenues for research and development through membership fees. However in 2004, IDC elected to eliminate membership fees (for participating municipalities, and First Nations reserves) and instead, generate its matching funding through inputs from those communities involved in specific projects.

Along with representatives from municipalities, towns, villages, and First Nation reserves, the board of directors is made up of corporate and ex-officio members.

- ***Community Development Corporations***

A Community Development Corporation (CDC) is often formed as an outcome of a Community Round Table, or is the formalization of an economic or community development committee of board. The primary role of the CDC is to achieve the objectives set out in its community economic development action plan to stimulate the local economy.

The North Interlake is home to many CDCs—including Eriksdale CDC, Lundar CDC, R. M. of Coldwell CDC, Arborg-Bifrost CDC, Fisher CDC, Grahamdale CDC, Matheson Island CDC, Riverton-Bifrost CDC, St. Laurent CDC, and Siglunes/Ashern CDC.

Numerous other community organizations and economic development corporations are also very active in various communities to work on specific development projects and initiatives.

- ***Business Characteristics***

	Number of Business Establishments
Armstrong	132
Bifrost	583
Coldwell	124
Eriksdale	106
Fisher	214
Grahamdale	179
St. Laurent	89
Siglunes	182
Lake Manitoba First Nations	18
Fairford First Nations	19
North Interlake GO Region	**1,646**

Source: Manitoba Bureau of Statistics

According to Statistics Canada Business Register, as of December 2004, the North Interlake is home to more than 1,600 business establishments. More than one third of these businesses are based out of the R.M. of Bifrost.

	Number of Establishments by Employment Size
Indeterminate	1046
1 to 4 employees	396
5 to 9 employees	83
10 to 19 employees	67
20 to 49 employees	43
Other	11
Total: North Interlake GO Region	**1,646**

Source: Manitoba Bureau of Statistics

Almost two out of three establishments in the North Interlake are labeled as indeterminate in size. The establishments in the "Indeterminate" category do not have a workforce for which payroll remittances are made to Canada Customs and Revenue Agency. These establishments may have a workforce, which consists of contracted workers, part-time employees, family members, or business owners. This information is unavailable, and therefore the establishments have been assigned this category. The high proportion of businesses that are indeterminate in size indicates that many businesses in the North Interlake are small, family owned and operated businesses.

The second largest category of businesses by employment size is those employing between one and four persons, with a count of 396. Undoubtedly, the businesses in the North Interlake are primarily very small. The North Interlake is also home to some medium-sized businesses, and very few large businesses.

	Number of Establishments by Industry (NAICS 2002)
Agriculture	761
Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, Mining	42
Construction and Utilities	154
Manufacturing	40
Trade	173
Transportation and Warehousing	67
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate, Leasing	54
Professional, Scientific, Technical Services	32
Management, Administration and Support Services	43
Education Services	9
Health Care, Social Assistance Services	47
Information, Culture, Arts, Entertainment, Recreation Services	33
Accommodation, Food Services	67
Other Services	107
Public Administration	17
Total: North Interlake GO Region	**1,646**

Source: Manitoba Bureau of Statistics

Almost half of the businesses in the North Interlake GO region are in the Agriculture industry. The second largest industry, in terms of number of businesses, is Trade with 173 establishments; and right behind Trade is Construction and Utilities with 154 establishments. Other Services makes up another 107 establishments in the North Interlake. The rest of the businesses in the North Interlake are scattered across a wide variety of industries.

- ***Municipal Infrastructure***

Most residents of the North Interlake utilize individual wells for drinking water. Asher and Fisher Branch have a pipe water system. Most towns and villages in the North Interlake utilize a community sewer system and holding tanks, while rural residents usually use a septic tank or field for sewage disposal.

Hydro electricity is provided by Manitoba Hydro for both residential and commercial uses. Natural Gas is provided by Centra Gas only to the R.M. of Bifrost.

Fire service in the North Interlake is provided by numerous local volunteer fire departments. RCMP offices in Arborg, Ashern, Lundar, Gypsumville, Fisher Branch, Gimli, and Teulon provide police services to people in the North Interlake. Ambulance services are also provided by volunteers in the local communities. Residents of the town of Ashern, town of Fisher Branch, the R.M. of Grahamdale, R.M. of Eriksdale, and Lundar have some form of garbage pickup. Other areas (especially rural areas) do not have garbage pickup. Recycling drop-off is available for all areas in the North Interlake.

- ***Educational Institutions***

School	**Division**	**Grades**	**Enrollment 2004-2005**	**Enrollment 2005-2006**
St. Laurent St. Laurent MB	Prairie Rose	K – 12	215	200
Ecole Communautaire Aurele-Lemoine St Laurent MB	Franco- Manitobaine Scolaire	K-12	95	100
Lundar School Lundar MB	Lakeshore	K-4 9-12	227	233
Eriksdale School Eriksdale MB	Lakeshore	K-8	194	206
Ashern Early Years Ashern Central Ashern MB	Lakeshore	K- 4 5-12??	89 292	84 293
Alf Cuthbert	Lakeshore	K-8	95	90

Moosehorn MB				
Fisher Branch Early Years Fisher Branch Collegiate Fisher Branch MB	Lakeshore	K-4 5-12	96 180	93 179
Inwood School Inwood MB	Lakeshore	K-12	145	136
Broad Valley Colony Broad Valley MB	Lakeshore	K-	27	27
Marble Ridge Colony Poplarfield MB	Lakeshore	K-9	23	26
Gypsumville School Gypsumville MB	Frontier	K-8	45	34
Arborg Early Middle Years Arborg Collegiate	Evergreen	K-8 9-12	283 144	280 144
Riverton Early & Middle Riverton Collegiate	Evergreen	K-7 8-12	190 146	165 152
Fieldstone Ventures Ashern MB			Varies	Varies
Campus MB Eriksdale MB			Varies	Varies
Lake Centre Mennonite School & Church Sw23-23-1E	Private School 364-2201	1 – S1	30	27
Mennville School SW 4-25- 4E RivertonMB	Private School 378-5576	K – S2	42	28 (Grades1-7)
Morweena Christian School SW 21-23-1E Morweena MB	Private School 364-2466	K – S4	100 approx	100 approx
Interlake Mennonite Fellowship School (Okno) Arborg	Private 364-2328	1 – S3	114	97

Source: Super Six – CFDC Community Profiles, Lakeshore School Division office, Evergreens S.D. office, individual private schools.

Education in the North Interlake GO team regions is under the management of five public school divisions—Lakeshore, Evergreen, Prairie Rose, Division Franco-Manitobaine Scolaire, and Frontier. There are four private schools operating in the region. Three of them are non-funded independent schools meaning the government does not give them any grants other than a $50 per year per student textbook grant.

Home-schooling is another option available in the North Interlake. For the 2005-06 school year, there are 72 students enrolled in home schooling.

There are no post-secondary institutions based out of the North Interlake region, but residents of the region have numerous options to further their education. Persons may choose to attend a post-secondary institution in Winnipeg (including the University of Winnipeg, University of Manitoba, Red River College, or Winnipeg Technical College), in Brandon (Brandon University), in Assiniboine (Assiniboine Community College), or in Keewatin (Keewatin Community College) to stay within the province for their schooling.

Residents of the North Interlake who do not wish to leave the region to attend a post-secondary institution have several other alternatives. Gimli is home to the Interlake Red River Campus (a RRC satellite site) where residents may study to earn diplomas from Red River College. Campus Manitoba Eriksdale Center offers University courses to persons of the West Interlake via interactive Learn Linc to earn degrees from University of Manitoba, University of Winnipeg, or Brandon University. Other distance education courses and vocational training is available through some public high schools in the region.

The Distance Education Program is offered to students currently enrolled in high school or those who have graduated from high school and want to continue their education. This is a method of offering more specialized courses to smaller groups of people. A wide variety of courses are available.

Fieldstone Ventures Education and Training Centre offers many courses throughout the year. Some of them pertain to entrepreneurship/business courses, computer software training, business seminars and workshops, professional development, business counseling and job search skills and customized training to high school students and the public at large. The facility is located in the TBJ mall in Ashern.

<u>SWOT Analysis – Education</u>

Trends

- There has been a steady decline in school enrollments over the last ten years although it was not possible to get actual numbers to reflect that because of the change is structure in several schools in the region (eg. Lundar & Eriksdale).

- St. Laurent French School enrollment has been increasing slightly but enrollment is decreasing in the regular school.

- Lakeshore School Division enrollment has been in a steady decline over the last ten years. The enrollment decreased from 1368 in 2004 to 1342 in 2005 even though more students are being bused in from Lake Manitoba First Nations.

- Morweena Christian School enrollment has been slowly increasing.

- Interlake Mennonite Fellowship had been gradually increasing but this year enrollment declined.

- Mennville School (private) is only able to offer schooling to Grades 1 – 7 this year due to declining enrollments. Most of the older students are attending Riverton School. There was a slight increase in enrollment at Riverton because of this.

Opportunities

- There are a lot of opportunities in our region for students and adults to further their education by attending Campus Manitoba, Fieldstone Ventures, or Red River College courses.
- Red River College would likely offer more courses if the demand was there.
- More training courses offered through Human Resources (EI) if the need can be demonstrated.

Challenges

- To maintain enrollments to maintain the current programming being offered.
- To increase or maintain enrollments to maintain the current staffing levels.
- To encourage home-schooled students to enter the public school system would help to boost the enrollments in the schools.

- ***Tourism***

The North Interlake is a well known destination for travelers who want to experience, discover and explore. Situated between two lakes, there are a myriad of things to do and see. All communities recognize that tourism is very important to the sustainability of their area. There are opportunities to draw people from around the world to discover our natural wonders.

Some advantages are two lakes available for fishing, boating and water sports. Hunting wild game and fowl is also popular in the Fall. We have people who know this is a wonderful place to watch migratory birds as two flight paths cross around the Lundar area.

Some disadvantages are that crumbling infrastructure makes it harder to reach your destination. Hunting has decreased due to gun registration laws and changes to the shot used.

In the accommodation end, there are a few hotels. The Narrows Lodge was recently constructed and caters to the sports enthusiast. A variety of farm and rural bed and breakfasts also pepper the area. Due to our land base, there are several outfitting businesses that run camps in the North Interlake as well.

There is a regional tourism association, Interlake Tourism Association, which has a website as well as produces a map booklet annually. www.interlaketourism.ca

There is an opportunity to develop further agri-tourism businesses with on-farm accommodations and farm experiences.

- ***Community Profiles***

As part of their community development services, the CFDCs have created detailed community profiles which are posted on their web pages. The links for the communities in the North Interlake GO region are:

R.M. of Armstrong	http://www.neicom.mb.ca/partners/profiles/R.M.%20of%20Armstrong.pdf
R.M. of Bifrost	http://www.neicom.mb.ca/partners/profiles/R.M.%20of%20Bifrost.pdf
R.M. of Coldwelll	http://www.supersix.mb.ca/data/coldwell%20profile1%20pdf.pdf
R.M. of Eriksdale	http://www.supersix.mb.ca/data/eriksdale%20profile%20pdf.pdf
R.M. of Fisher	http://www.neicom.mb.ca/partners/profiles/R.M.%20of%20Fisher.pdf
R.M. of Grahamdale	http://www.supersix.mb.ca/data/Grahamdale%20profile%20pdf.pdf
R.M. of St. Laurent	http://www.supersix.mb.ca/data/St.%20Laurent%20profile%20pdf1.pdf
R.M. of Siglunes	http://www.supersix.mb.ca/data/siglunes2004.pdf

Appendix A – Community Contact Information

R. M. of Armstrong

Box 69
Inwood, Manitoba
R0C 1P0

Phone : (204) 278-3377
Fax : (204) 278-3437
E-Mail : rmofarm@mb.sympatico.ca

Reeve	Garry Wasylowski
Chief Administrative Officer	Don Rybachuk
Councilors	Ralph Hazelton Jack Cruise Diane Woychyshyn Timothy Dudrak Allen Evanchyshin

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R. M. of Bifrost

329 River Road
Box 70
Arborg, Manitoba
R0C 0A0

Phone : (204) 376-2391
Fax : (204) 376-2742
E-Mail : bifrost@mts.net

Reeve	Harold Foster
Chief Administrative Officer	L. Grant Thorsteinson
Councilors	Marvin Magnusson Wilbert Thorarinson Darvin Firman Robert Gudmundson Al Friederici Donald Vigfusson

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R. M. of Coldwell

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Box Box 90
Lundar, Manitoba
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Phone : (204) 762-5421
Fax : (204) 762-5177
E-Mail : coldwell@mb.sympatico.ca

Reeve	Brian Thomas
Chief Administrative Officer	K. Janet Isfeld
Councilors	Oluf Christensen Jim Dyck Ken Olafson Brian Sigfusson

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R. M. of Eriksdale

16 Main Street
Box 10
Eriksdale, Manitoba
R0C 0W0

Phone : (204) 739-2666
Fax : (204) 739-2076
E-Mail : rm@eriksdale.com

Reeve	Dave McLelland
Chief Administrative Officer	Diana Friesen
Councilors	Andrea Sweetland Jack Pool Del Kehler Wade Pluchinske

R. M. of Fisher

30 Tache Street
Box 280
Fisher Branch, Manitoba
R0C 0Z0

Phone : (204) 372-6393
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Reeve	Evelyn Stocki
Chief Administrative Officer	Linda Podaima
Councilors	Ernest Abas Gordon Fuz Robert Green Brian Karsin Wayne Vandersteen

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R. M. of Grahamdale

23 Government Road
Box 160
Moosehorn, Manitoba
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Phone : (204) 768-2858
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E-Mail : rm606@mb.sympatico.ca

Reeve	Brian Kiesman
Chief Administrative Officer	Beverley Yaworski
Councilors	Patrick Allen Richard Shannon Elmer Nickel Hilding Olson Robert Filion Perry Ewasiuk Clifford Halaburda

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R. M. of St. Laurent

436 St. Laurent Veterans Memorial Road
Box 220
St. Laurent, Manitoba
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Phone : (204) 646-2259
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Reeve	Denis Carriere
Chief Administrative Officer	Donalda Lavallee
Councilors	Lance Kennedy Terry Meindl Hugh Sigurdson Marc Chartrand

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R. M. of Siglunes

38 Main Street
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Reeve	Lorne Park
Chief Administrative Officer	Lori Postlethwaite
Councilors	Ed Krahn Art Jonasson Ted Fuchs Ken Peterson Matt Baker Randy Helgason

Dauphin River First Nation (Northern Affairs) no. 48
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Chief Emery Stagg
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Fisher River First Nation no. 44
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Chief David Crate
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Kinonjeoshtegon First Nation (Jackhead) no. 43
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Chief David Traverse
Phone: 394-2281
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Dog Creek (Lake Manitoba) no. 46
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