

Planning a Farm Event in Association with StopSprawl HamOnt and StopSprawl Students

SUSTAIN 3S03: Implementing Sustainable Change



Image taken showcasing participants interacting with the pigs on the farm.

Photo Credit: Dr. Kate Whalen



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Community Project Champions

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Overview

For decades, cities have expanded their urban boundaries to use precious farmland for low density housing, which increases emissions, affects food security, and is costly for taxpayers.¹ About 38% of the world's land area is dedicated to agriculture but this is changing with urban development.² In 2022, the Ontario provincial government ordered the City of Hamilton to expand its urban boundary by 5,400 acres, despite Hamilton city council's support to hold the boundary firm.³ Stop Sprawl HamOnt (SSHO) is a "volunteer organization consisting of concerned residents who believe the best future for our city is one that invests within the existing urban boundary and preserves Hamilton's surrounding farmland and green space for a sustainable future".³ Working with SSHO, the goal of our project was to foster an enduring community of local agricultural enthusiasts by engaging McMaster students in an immersive farm experience at Manorun Organic Farm.

Objectives

1. Engage students to want to learn about and experience local farmland
2. Facilitate a memorable farm experience
3. Share and amplify visual content and outcomes of the event

Reporting

To achieve our first objective we came together to create visually inspiring content, which we shared through social media, hard copy posters, and word-of-mouth. Through Instagram we were able to reach 100 accounts with 22 saves, we also displayed 50 physical posters and promoted in six classes through online posts and in-class talks. Through these efforts 120 students registered and 110 attended to participate in the day's events.

To achieve our second objective, we created an immersive experience for students at the farm. We started by handing out freshly prepared lunch with locally sourced vegetables and meat followed by a series of speeches which wove a tapestry of the importance of learning about agricultural preservation. This unique experience of eating organic food ignited our senses and deepened our connection to the land. Students then took a farm tour on a wagon, visiting happy pigs, grazing horses, and vegetable gardens. Students learned how to plant garlic and participated in collaborative games like sack race and spikeball. This fun-filled hour helped students explore the beauty of Manorun Organic farm and other farms across Canada.

To achieve our third objective, we worked to demonstrate all the hard work in impactful ways. We interviewed with McMaster's student-led newspaper, the Silhouette, for a story that was published and made accessible to all students. Finally, we created an Instagram reel to showcase our event which got 2,666 views and 69 likes.

Collaborators

We express our sincerest gratitude to our Community Project Champions for their incredible support and guidance throughout our project. We are grateful to our event speakers, including Councillor Alex Wilson and MPP Sandy Shaw. Thank you to Jonny Blonde for the delicious and locally-sourced lunch. This event would not have been possible without Chris Krucker of Manorun Organic Farm who created an unforgettable experience. In-kind and financial support for the promotion and facilitation of this event was generously provided by Stop Sprawl HamOnt, StopSprawl Students, OPIRG McMaster, and McMaster's Academic Sustainability Programs Office. Finally, we would like to thank students and community members for their participation and engagement.

References

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