

Headwaters equine committee releases report

The Headwaters Equine Leadership Group (HELG) has released a baseline report on the economic impact of the equine sector in the Headwaters Region.

HELG is a committee of the Hills of Headwaters Tourism Association. It is a collaborative initiative with regional stakeholders who are committed to the importance of the equine sector in the region, which includes Caledon, Dufferin, Erin and King Township. Their principle objective is to promote the Headwaters region as a centre of equine excellence in Ontario, and to support, grow and advocate for this sector of the regional economy. HELG and the Headwaters Horse Country initiative are supported by the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

The equine industry has been identified by HELG, municipal partners and stakeholders as an important facet of the economic prosperity of the Headwaters region. As noted in the report, Headwaters Horse Country is home to more than 23,000 horses, 2,000 horse farms and hundreds of businesses that support these horses and their owners. It is also home to four internationally recognized event facilities two of which are hosting equestrian events for the TO 2015 Pan American Games.

The report describes the indicators that impact the economic sustainability of a region that are directly related to the equine sector. Additional data points include primary use of horses, on-farm operating expenditures, on-farm operating cost and on-farm capital expenditures.

The report conservatively estimates the economic impact of the equine sector in the Headwaters to be a minimum of \$100 million annually for ongoing operating costs with a further \$300 million spent on property improvements, including barns and arenas and as investment in horses. It is also noted that much of this spending is locally focussed, further emphasizing the sector's importance to the local economy.

The equine sector is strong in the Headwaters Region and the economic impact of the sector is an important component of the efforts of HELG. This report will be updated annually and is one of numerous initiatives being undertaken by HELG to support the development of the Headwaters region as a centre of equine excellence.