



NORTH HALTON'S ONLY TRULY INDEPENDENT DAILY MULTIMEDIA NEWSGROUP

*Reclaiming our community, one story at a time.*

[HERALD ARCHIVES](#)

[COMMUNITY CALENDAR](#)

[SEARCH](#)

## Urban-based columnist too critical of agri-marketing boards

Posted on Wednesday, July 19 @ 09:42:50 EDT by [editor](#)

*From: the Herald's community reports section:*

*July 18, 2006*

"It seems like hardly a week goes by without an urban-based columnist writing something critical about [Canada's marketing boards](#). Many of these columnists believe that marketing boards cause high prices for food and insulate farmers from becoming more efficient. Most farmers know, however, that their marketing boards have been important in establishing fairness and in creating a set of ground rules about how the farm and food economy works.

Over the years, Ontario's farmers have benefited greatly from special legislation that allows marketing boards and producer associations to assist farmers in gaining market access or in offsetting the market clout of a buyer. These marketing boards and producer associations have generally served well in helping farmers pursue their individual and collective goals.

The types of marketing boards farmers have picked for their industries have been as varied as the commodities they produce. And if you think about it for a minute, that's to be expected. Not every commodity has the same mix of producers, buyers, consumer tastes, production variables and a host of other considerations. Each situation is unique and has required its own unique set of checks and balances.

In some commodities where there are lots of buyers and sellers, very little has been needed in the way of marketing tools. However, in other commodities with too few buyers and too many sellers, more substantive marketing tools are needed. And in the case of agricultural products that are perishable and require a good deal of market coordination, even stronger marketing tools have sometimes been used. Different solutions have been chosen in different situations.

The careful development of today's agricultural marketing tools, and the choice of tools farmers have actually made, doesn't always sit right with those who view the world through the narrow eyeglasses of ideology. Some say farmers shouldn't be sheltered from the free market, while others go to the opposite extreme of saying that the market can't be trusted at all and that a great deal of intervention is needed. Both ideologies are wrong. Reality is more complex than that, with a flexible set of checks and balances needed to ensure that everyone benefits from the economy.

Ontario farmers have benefited greatly from legislation that has allowed them to establish marketing boards and producer associations. The checks and balances they provide to agriculture have been important factors in making our province a vibrant place to farm --- even if they have required changes from time to time. But with all the challenges farmers face today, they can remain thankful that they continue to have legislation which allows them to make some key choices about their relationship to the marketplace --- despite what the critics say."

[Agri-food Policy in Canada.](#)

American Journal of Agricultural Economics perspective:

[Domestic Cost of Statutory Marketing – Case study – The case of the Canadian Wheat Board](#)

[Agricultural Marketing Boards in Ontario.](#)