



Ancaster Agricultural Society

ORGANIZED - 1850

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Capital Campaign - Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Ancaster Agricultural Society?

The Ancaster Agricultural Society (AAS) is a registered not-for-profit charitable, volunteer organization with deep roots in Ancaster since 1850 with the first Ancaster Fair 171 years ago. It is run by a Board of Directors with the help of 9 full and part time staff. It has 400 members and about 700 volunteers.

The Ancaster Agricultural Society hosts the Ancaster Fair, the 3rd weekend after Labour Day, to bring agricultural education to Ancaster and the surrounding areas. The AAS also provides numerous other community and agricultural education events such as Education Days (Farm Gate to Dinner Plate) for area schools, an agricultural based Summer Camp, Touch a Truck and a variety of equestrian clinics and schooling opportunities. Our organization continues to change and grow with the needs of our community.

Who owns the Fairgrounds?

There is a misconception that the Fairgrounds are owned by the City of Hamilton. In fact, the Fairgrounds have been owned and operated by the Ancaster Agricultural Society since 1850. Most of the revenue generated is used to run the facility as well as support agricultural activities in our area. In fact, over \$250,000+ meeting space has been donated to a variety of agricultural groups in our community.

Other than the Ancaster Fair, who else uses the Fairgrounds?

Although we are mostly recognized for our Fair, many people do not realize that the fairgrounds host events year-round. Our facility is used by many community members, businesses, livestock organizations, festivals and commodity groups for a wide variety of events. We are proud to say that we welcome \$400,000+ visitors from all over Ontario, Quebec and the USA.

Why should I support your project if I don't live in the Ancaster area?

Our goal is to be the premier equestrian, livestock, tradeshow and event facility in Southern Ontario. With the larger building, larger shows will commit to using our facility, fueling economic growth in our community and giving us the opportunity to make a long-term impact. As a society with a focus on agriculture, the new building will give us the opportunity to seek large agricultural events to encourage country to meet city. Availability of such a facility will also encourage participants to stay in Canada for events rather than venture to the USA for competitions.

Why do you need a new building?

As more people realize the countless benefits that human–equine interaction provides, the more prevalent recreational and competitive equestrian activities have become in our area. As a result, and due to the significant cost involved, suitable public facilities are scarce. There are limited facilities available focused on sports development and education where the equine community and other agricultural organizations (i.e. 4-H) can gather, learn, train, compete and grow their programs. If we want to keep our athletes and national competitors in our community, we have to give them somewhere to train so they do not have to leave town to access world-class facilities. The new facilities will give the Ancaster Agricultural Society the unique opportunity to meet the needs of the local, provincial and national community.

When will the shovel go in the ground and when is it expected to be completed?

The plan is to begin construction on the new Fairground Events Centre in April 2021 and to be completed by early winter 2021.

Where will the financial support come from to pay for the building?

The total cost of the new centre and site improvements, including all equipment and furnishings, is estimated at \$5.7 Million. The Ancaster Agricultural Society, through careful financial management and the excellent leadership of a volunteer board of directors, members and staff currently have \$1.4 Million in short-term investments to start the project and have the potential to sell additional assets worth approximately \$1.5 Million if required.

Through our “*Rooted in the Community – Growing for the Future*” capital campaign we aim to raise \$2 Million. The Ancaster Agricultural Society does not undertake this capital campaign lightly, and we seek charitable community funding only when necessary.

Our plan is to raise the majority of the funds through a capital campaign via sponsors, government grants, partnerships, pledges, foundations, donations and traditional fundraising. We will also look to trades and services that would be able to supply in-kind services to reduce the capital cost. Financing has been secured to cover any shortfalls.

There is the opportunity for a large sponsor to be offered the naming rights for the building.

Have you consulted other organizations for input on the use and design of the building?

We have gained valuable insight into the design of this building through formal and informal conversations with a wide variety of stakeholders including existing customers and future potential clients.

What are the benefits of the Fairgrounds location?

- Easy location to access as it is close to major highways and airport
- Lots of parking and clients appreciate the fact that major interior roadways are paved
- Excellent staff who are very accommodating and understand the needs of equestrian and non-equestrian clients
- Close to all amenities such as: accommodations, restaurants, groceries, hardware, etc.