



The Ontario Food Terminal

The Ontario Food Terminal is the largest wholesale fruit and produce distribution centre in Canada and ranks in the top five by volume in North America. Dedicated to the wholesale distribution of fresh, high-quality produce, including fruit, vegetables and flowers, from local and international sources, it is provincially owned and operated by an arms-length crown *[Canadian government]* agency.

Located in Toronto, the 40-acre terminal site consists of 2 areas including a Farmer's Market with 550 stalls and a Warehouse Market housing 26 warehouse tenants, with 80,000 square feet of cold storage and 15,000 square feet of dry storage as well as being equipped with a 575 car-parking deck and two restaurants.

Farmers:

Any Ontario grower is allowed to occupy space in the Farmers' Market section of a daily basis by simply paying a small daily fee. The Board also provides semi-annual and annual leases for its Farmers Market Tenants. Farmers may distribute their produce on a commission basis through the warehouse units. It is estimated over 120 different commodities of produce are sold in the Farmers' Market, ranging from specialty Chinese vegetables to apples, pears and potatoes. Wholesale units are leased to companies who sell produce from Ontario and any other region in the world.

Buyers:

The majority of the buyers operate fruit and vegetable stores of sizes ranging from large independent retailers to small corner markets. In addition, corporate stores, restaurants, jobbers, institutional buyers, florists, peddlers and caterers purchase at the Terminal. More than 5,000 buyers are registered. Buying is on a wholesale basis only and as such, the general public is not allowed. To register as a buyer, you are required to provide proof of business activity showing that your business is part of the food or horticultural industry. There is a nominal fee for a two-year period.

The diverse cultural background of Ontario is reflected in the buyers' purchases and, as a result, a wide range of produce from all regions of the world is available at the Terminal. Buyers travel from as far west as Sarnia, east to Kingston, south to Fort Erie and north to Timmins, Produce is also shipped to buyers in other provinces and the northern states.

Service Providers:

Many varied service groups rent office space in the Terminal, such as inspection offices, produce brokers, truck brokers, grower co-operatives, restaurants, buyers and a bank.

Employment Input:

It is estimated that over one million vehicles enter and exit the Terminal each year. The direct and indirect employment attributed to the terminal is estimated at to be at least 42,000 people. The 42,000 represents 477 farmers tenants at an average of 10 people per tenant and their dealers which total 61 represent at least 10 growers who in turn employ at least 10 people each, 57 office tenants at an average of 10 people each, 26 warehouse tenants at an average of 40 people each, and the 6,000 Buyers at an average of 5 people each.

These figures represent only those directly operating out of the facility and do not take into account all other growers who use the market information that is generated from the facility. In short the importance of the terminal to Ontario and Canada is significant.

Sources:

www.clr.utoronto.ca/projects/LI/ontariofoodterminal.htm

www.oftb.com/partici.htm

<http://www.oftb.com/info.htm>