



# cities AND farms

Have you ever heard the question, “Which came first – the chicken or the egg?” Which do you think came first? Cities or farms? Although farming was the basis of many of Canada’s early settlements and communities, modern-day cities and farms may have a closer connection than you might think.

Cattle were brought to Canada in the 1500s and early 1600s, along with the practice of using cows to provide milk. Dairy cows were part of early European settlements in Acadia and New France in the 1600s. They were also brought west in the 1800s as western Canada was settled by Europeans. A cow was often part of a farming family and was their source of milk. Extra milk and cream were made into butter and cheese for the family’s use.

Early settlements and trading posts also had farms nearby that provided food. These growing farms close to early areas of settlement were an important influence on the early beginnings of many of Canada’s future cities and towns.

Today, Canada is becoming more and more **urbanized**. This means that more people are living in urban centres, such as towns and cities.



## Canadian Cows



A Canadian cow is a breed of dairy cow that came from the cows of New France in about 1610. Canadian cows are black or brown. Their milk has high amounts of protein and is excellent for making cheese. Today, most dairy cows are Holsteins, a large black and white cow that produces more milk.



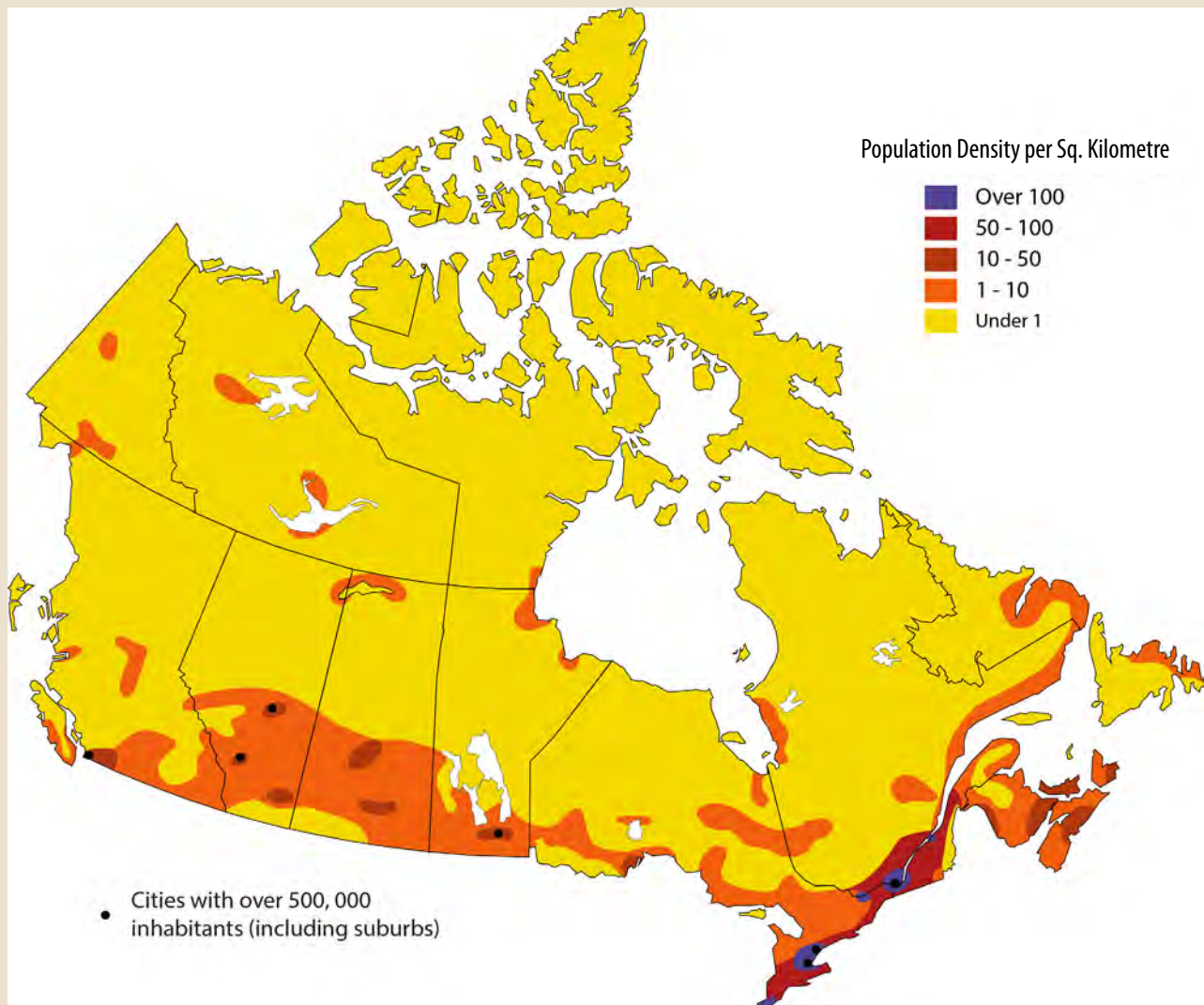
How could you show the increases in Canada's urban population over time in an infographic or graph?

A large **urban area** has a high population with many buildings, roads and facilities that support the people who live there. Statistics Canada calls these large cities – together with the towns, villages or land areas close to them – **metropolitan areas**. There are 35 metropolitan areas in Canada.

In 1901, just over one-third of Canada's population lived in villages, cities and towns. By 1921, about half of Canada's population lived in cities, towns and villages. By 1976, this number increased to about 75 percent. In 2016, 84 percent of Canadians live in an urban area that has at least 10 000 people.



### Canada's Population Centres



**Population density** refers to the number of people living in an area. For example, the population density of all of Canada averages about 5 people per square kilometre. Can you identify the centres of population on this map?



How would you describe the location of Canada's large centres of population from the information on the population map?

When we think of a large city, we most likely do not think about farms. However, some of today's farms can be found close to large cities. Farms that are located close to cities have some advantages. Farmers can use the goods and services in the cities and also have access to people who can work with them on their farms.

However, **urban sprawl**, or the expansion of city areas, is an important issue today. Urban sprawl can "eat up" land that is suitable for agriculture.

Farms that grow fruits and vegetables, as well as greenhouses, tend to be located closer to cities and towns because they can sell their products directly to people. Fruits, vegetables and greenhouse products are **perishable**, which means they can spoil quickly. Farming in a location that is close to people helps to make sure that the products are fresh. Dairy is also a perishable food product, but dairy farmers can not sell milk directly to people.

However, changes in the way that perishable foods are transported have also made them more available to people living anywhere. For example, modern transportation and technology – like insulated stainless steel tanker trucks that keep milk cold when it's being transported from the farm to the processing plant – make it possible to move dairy products from farms to different markets and centres of population.