

Appendix 2. Description of the six sites

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The two Japanese sites are northeast of Tokyo. Awano in Tochigi Prefecture was selected as an example of a leading rural economy. Iitate in Fukushima Prefecture was selected as an example of a lagging rural economy. The four Canadian case study sites are located in Ontario and Québec, two provinces in eastern Canada. The four Canadian sites were chosen from among 32 sites identified as part of the New Rural Economy Research Project. St Damase and Usborne were selected among the sample of leading rural economies. Ste Françoise and Tweed were chosen from within the sample of lagging rural economies. The landscape, geography and the historical development of eastern rural Canada is more comparable to the Japanese landscape northeast of Tokyo than is the Western Prairies or Rocky Mountains of British Columbia. Eastern Canada was settled first and has a longer history of farming tradition with small family farms. A summary of each of the six selected sites follows.

St. Damase

Saint-Damase is an agro-industrial community approximately 45 minutes south east of Montreal. With a population base of 1327¹ in the village, St Damase is known for its agriculture and related manufacturing: two poultry processing plants, a cheese factory and a vegetable-canning factory. Residents value a strong, adaptable community and recently overcame an issue of polluted river water by constructing a new filtration system. The community seeks to protect the environment to keep its agricultural industry secure. There is one church in St. Damase, a large community centre, riding grounds, and fair grounds. As with the rest of the region, agriculture is primarily based on corn and grains as well as hog and poultry farming. Agriculture and food processing constitute the economic base of the community with abattoirs, milk products and other food industries counting for 91% of industrial employment. While many local residents work outside of the community, the industry of St. Damase also employs residents from the surrounding villages. The population showed consistent growth between 1951 and 1996 and the community has enjoyed an active workforce and a low unemployment rate. In 2002 the village of St. Damase amalgamated with the surrounding parish, increasing its population to about 2500. From the 2001 NRE household survey, this community is prosperous and sees itself as such. While residents reported a desire for a few more local services, such as a grocery store, most reported that they hoped the community would not change too much, even with the impending fusion of the village and parish.

¹ Between the years of 1996 and 2001 all four Canadian sites showed a slight decline in population. The one exception, St. Damase, was artificially increased due to the amalgamation of the parish with the village early in 2002. In 2002 the population rose to 2500 due to the amalgamation and by 2006 had declined slightly to 2,486.

Ste. Françoise

Ste-Françoise is located south of Trois-Pistoles and about 50 km east of Rivière-du-Loup, in the region of Lower-Saint-Laurent. Agro-forestry forms the economic base of this community. Today the community of 453 residents has about 12 commercial dairy farms and many small hobby farms. Hence, further development of the forestry sector would be of great help to the region. With a population of 453(2001)², and only two local businesses of 40 employees each, the population is too small to draw other services or businesses into the community. Ste. Françoise has been steadily dropping in population (60%) since 1951³ even though it is only 11 km from Trois-Pistoles (which has a population of more than 5000) and could serve as a bedroom community with most services nearby. As a community it would like to further develop its own business sector, tourism and restoration.

Tweed

Before its recent amalgamation with adjacent townships, Tweed was a town of 1,539 residents (in 2001)⁴, generally referred to as the ‘Village of Tweed’, and is located in Hastings County, 38 km north of Belleville, on a route between Toronto and Ottawa. Tweed acts as a service center for the surrounding farm and rural non-farm community. Tweed’s manufacturing industry and public service sectors have declined in the current economy which is mixed and based on tourism and retirement functions as well as retail and agricultural services. Tweed has a new Chamber of Commerce that is working closely with neighbouring communities to market itself in part by branding itself as ‘comfort country.’ The potential for expanding tourism and recreation services has helped many Tweed residents and businesses as they search for ways to improve economic conditions. Recent changes related to loss of services have created some stress for the community while trade, manufacturing, and other categories represent the main areas of employment. Almost 40% of Tweed’s labour force commutes out of the village for work. For those who remain, self-employment, especially for males, is relatively high compared to national standards. Numerous opportunities for employment appear to exist in the village’s private and public service establishments.

Usborne

Usborne, with a population of 1490 (2001)⁵, is a former township now part of the Municipality of South Huron, Huron County, and is dominated physically by a commercial farm landscape. Cash-crop and livestock operations had a total value \$34 million in sales in 1996 and provided employment for 40% of the workforce (one of the highest shares reported in the province and in Canada). There is no town or village of any size in the township; most residents rely on the adjacent town of Exeter for service and some retail needs. Usborne’s population is dispersed in farm and non-farm households. Agriculture is of primary importance to Usborne’s economic and community activity. Also significant for employment

² In 2006, the population had declined further to 431.

³ The population dropped from 1176 in 1951, to 470 in 1996.

⁴ In 2006, Tweed’s population remained stable at 5,614.

⁵ In 2006, Usborne (now called South Huron) had a population of 9,982, showing a further decline.

and income generation are the backward and forward linkages (both indirect and direct) that agriculture has into other sectors. It has a first-rate biophysical base for farming operations with soil capability Class 1 land in close to 70% of the township. Also relevant is its position among the top 5% of Canada's farm land in terms of the Agroclimatic Resource Index. Although the number of census farms has declined by 34% from 1971-1996, farm land area has remained stable over the same time period.

Awano

Located 100 km north of Tokyo and 26 km west of Utsunomiya-shi, the capital of Tochigi Prefecture, Awano is an agriculturally classified municipality, comprised of four districts, and spread over three valleys and one plain adjacent to urban areas. Responding to the amalgamation policy in Japan, Awano (population: 10,139 in 2005) town decided to merge into its neighboring city, Kanuma (population: 94,009 in 2005), beginning in January 2006. This will create yet another big change for people's lives in Awano. It is typical today for Awano residents to commute to a neighboring city, such as Kanuma, and Tochigi city (population 82,340 in 2005). People found it difficult to cross over the mountains to the adjacent valleys. In March 2003, construction to build a tunnel was finished, which has changed the commuting patterns for people living in Awano town. In 2003 a newly amalgamated school replacing 4 junior high schools was opened. Awano also created an industrial park (1990) to invite manufacturing companies, but the number of companies located in the park has not fulfilled town officials' expectations. As for agriculture, rice and strawberries are the most popular crops in Awano. The acreage of buckwheat is increasing because it is the base for the popular Soba noodles in demand by residents and tourists. Awano town provides various opportunities for urban visitors, such as a hot spring spa, direct sales of local produce, and various events organized by local people's groups. The forest area occupied 85.2% of the total area of the municipality in 2005, and the lumber industry using local cedar was prospering in Awano until liberalization of the timber trade.

Iitate

This village, located about 270 km north of Tokyo and 40 km east of Fukushima-shi, capital of Fukushima Prefecture, is home to 20 communities and 7,093 residents in 2000, and 6,722 in 2005. Known for its agriculture and principal industries of rice, beef, tobacco, and carved granite, this village strives for a high quality of life in a rapidly changing global environment. The forest area occupied 75.4% of the total area of the municipality in 2005, and 60% of this forested land is owned by the central government. In addition, there is a sizeable electrical company with about 60 employees with its headquarters near Tokyo. The company's president is originally from Iitate and it was he who opened the local factory to manufacture electronic components. The Agricultural Cooperative manages the meat shop and the supermarket. Iitate, like many rural municipalities, faces the challenge of depopulation. Since 1955 over 30% of its population has not been renewed.

The Mayor of Iitate has been a dominant political force for Iitate. He espouses an ideology of high quality of life based on experience and simple, but happy, living (*Madei Life*). He is more interested in community development than simply economic growth and would like to cooperate further with larger municipalities. He admits the policy approach and management of such collaboration can be difficult because of the differences between

communities. He encourages people to travel abroad, especially women who traditionally have stayed close to home, and organized the first trip to Denmark with 15 women in 2002.