Selling a Hobby Farm or Acreage in Wellington North

The Complete Preparation & Marketing Checklist
for Equestrian, Agricultural & Lifestyle Property Sellers

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38 Years Experience | Over $500M in Real Estate Sold

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This guide focuses on process, strategy, and checklists that do not change with the market. For current Wellington North market data, visit flaherty.ca/wellington-north-real-estate-market.

1. Property Documentation & Zoning Verification

Buyers of hobby farms and acreage are not just buying a house -- they are buying land, infrastructure, and a set of permitted uses. The single fastest way to lose a buyer's trust is to be unable to answer basic questions about zoning, taxes, and boundaries. Assemble this paper trail before your property goes on the market.

Core Documents to Gather

- ☐ Most recent property tax bill (note if farm tax class applies)
- ☐ Existing legal survey or reference plan, if available
- ☐ Deed and title documents identifying easements or rights-of-way
- ☐ Well record(s) and any past water quality / flow test results
- ☐ Septic permit, design drawings, and pump-out receipts (3-5 years)
- ☐ Building permits for the house and all outbuildings
- ☐ Farm Business Registration (FBR) number, if enrolled in the farm tax program
- ☐ Documentation of any shared laneway or maintenance agreements
- ☐ Records of any conservation authority or environmental designations
- ☐ Utility bills (hydro, propane, oil) for the last 12 months

Zoning Verification Checklist

Zoning dictates what a buyer can legally do with the property -- livestock limits, outbuilding size, and home-based business potential. Confirm the following with the Township of Wellington North before listing.

- ☐ Confirm exact zoning designation (Agricultural A1, Rural RU, or other)
- ☐ List all permitted uses under that zoning category
- ☐ Verify the number and type of livestock permitted
- ☐ Confirm Minimum Distance Separation (MDS) setbacks for any new barns
- ☐ Check whether a second dwelling or accessory apartment is permitted
- ☐ Identify any wetlands, floodplain, or Grand River Conservation Authority areas
- ☐ Determine realistic severance potential (verify with the municipality)
- ☐ Confirm road frontage classification and access/entrance permits
- ☐ Note any heritage or environmental protection overlays

Farm Property Class Tax Rate Program (FTCRP)

If your farmland is enrolled in the FTCRP, eligible acreage is taxed at no more than 25% of the residential rate. This benefit does NOT transfer automatically. Prepare to explain to buyers that they must reapply through Agricorp with a valid Farm Business Registration number and a qualifying farm business, or the tax rate reverts to residential.

2. Outbuilding & Barn Assessment

Outbuildings add contributory value -- not dollar-for-dollar what they cost to build. A clean, permitted, functional barn or shop is a major asset; a sagging, unpermitted structure is a liability that invites demolition-cost deductions. Walk every building and complete this assessment honestly.

Structural Condition

- ☐ Inspect barn roof for leaks, sagging ridgelines, and missing shingles
- ☐ Check foundations and posts for rot, heaving, or cracking
- ☐ Examine beams and trusses for insect damage or structural failure
- ☐ Confirm floors are sound (note concrete vs. dirt vs. wood)
- ☐ Test all sliding and hinged doors for safe operation
- ☐ Look for evidence of past water intrusion or flooding
- ☐ Identify any structures that may require demolition disclosure

Systems, Permits & Safety

- ☐ Verify electrical service is safe and, ideally, ESA-inspected
- ☐ Confirm building permits exist for each outbuilding
- ☐ Note presence of water lines and frost-free hydrants
- ☐ Check for working lighting and adequate ventilation
- ☐ Assess older barns for possible asbestos in roofing/siding/insulation
- ☐ Document any wood-burning appliances requiring WETT certification
- ☐ Confirm fire separation and safe storage of fuel/chemicals
- ☐ Photograph each building's interior and exterior for marketing

Value-Add Features to Highlight

When an outbuilding is permitted, powered, and structurally sound, market it specifically. Buyers pay a premium for ready-to-use space, so describe utility precisely rather than generically.

- ☐ Concrete flooring and slab foundations (signals permanence)
- ☐ 200-amp or upgraded electrical service
- ☐ Insulation, heating, or climate control for year-round use
- ☐ Water and plumbing rough-ins or working washrooms
- ☐ Workshop, studio, or home-business potential
- ☐ Drive-in / oversized door access for equipment or trailers

3. Fencing, Pasture & Land Condition

The land itself is a product. Equestrian and livestock buyers walk fence lines and study drainage before they ever look at the kitchen. Fencing repairs return an estimated 70-90% of their cost, and pasture and drainage improvements return roughly 65-85%, making land prep one of the highest-ROI preparation tasks for an acreage seller.

Fencing

- [ ] Walk every fence line and tighten loose boards and wire
- [ ] Replace broken, leaning, or rotten posts
- [ ] Repair or replace all gates so they swing and latch properly
- [ ] Remove any barbed wire (a major red flag for horse buyers)
- [ ] Confirm electric fence grounding and tension where applicable
- [ ] Clear brush, weeds, and fallen limbs from fence lines

Pasture & Land Management

- [ ] Reseed worn or bare areas where practical
- [ ] Address muddy, wet, or compacted spots and improve drainage
- [ ] Mow and tidy overgrown sections and laneways
- [ ] Identify and document workable acres vs. bush vs. wetland
- [ ] Note soil type (sandy loam drains well; heavy clay holds moisture)
- [ ] Highlight any rotational grazing layout (2-4+ connected paddocks)
- [ ] Clean up debris, scrap, and old equipment piles
- [ ] Maintain a clean, well-located manure management area

Water & Drainage

- [ ] Confirm well depth and flow rate (not just 'it works')
- [ ] Test water quality (bacteriological and, if near farmland, chemical)
- [ ] Verify frost-free hydrant locations near barns and paddocks
- [ ] Check condition of any automatic waterers or troughs
- [ ] Inspect ponds, creeks, and natural water sources for safety/access
- [ ] Review property for floodplain or seasonally wet areas

4. Equestrian Facility Preparation

If your property is set up for horses, it must show as horse-ready. Equestrian buyers value immediate functionality far more than cosmetic flash. Present clean, safe, well-organized facilities so buyers can picture moving their horses in tomorrow.

Barn & Stalls

- [ ] Confirm stall safety, sizing, and secure latches
- [ ] Improve ventilation and airflow throughout the barn
- [ ] Ensure adequate, safe lighting in aisles and stalls
- [ ] Organize and clean the tack room and feed room
- [ ] Repair or replace damaged stall mats and dividers
- [ ] Stage wash racks, cross-ties, and grooming areas neatly

Arena & Turnout

- [ ] Drag and level the arena footing before showings
- [ ] Improve arena drainage and remove weeds and debris
- [ ] Confirm arena fencing and access points are safe
- [ ] Clarify turnout flow from barn to paddocks
- [ ] Highlight trail access or proximity to riding areas

5. Marketing Preparation for Acreage

A 10-acre parcel cannot be captured with standard ground-level photos. Reaching relocating GTA buyers who want the country dream requires showing scale, layout, and lifestyle. The Flaherty Team uses drone photography and Video Narrated VR Animated Online Showings so distant buyers experience the whole property before they ever make the drive north.

- [ ] Schedule high-altitude drone photography of lot lines and topography
- [ ] Create a Video Narrated VR Animated Online Showing of the home
- [ ] Capture all outbuildings, paddocks, and the arena in marketing media
- [ ] Write descriptions that specify utility (e.g., '30x40 insulated shop, 200-amp')
- [ ] Prepare a property feature sheet: acreage, zoning, water, and outbuildings
- [ ] Compile inspection reports and documents into a buyer information package
- [ ] Identify and target the equestrian and lifestyle buyer audience
- [ ] Plan a presentation strategy for the current season (spring vs. winter)

6. Showing & Closing Considerations

Farm showings are different. Buyers want time to walk fence lines, tour barns, and inspect every acre. Make the property easy and safe to show, and have your documentation ready so a serious buyer can move from interest to a firm offer without friction.

Showing Preparation

- [ ] Secure or supervise all animals during showings
- [ ] Provide safe footwear guidance and clear walking paths
- [ ] Make barns, sheds, and gates accessible (but secure)
- [ ] Prepare a printed property map and feature sheet for visitors
- [ ] Be flexible with out-of-town and weekend buyer schedules
- [ ] Stage the home interior for light, flow, and a sense of space

Offer & Closing Considerations

- [ ] Review conditions on financing, well, septic, and zoning carefully
- [ ] Disclose all known material latent defects in writing
- [ ] Confirm whether the buyer intends to maintain the farm tax class
- [ ] Clarify which fixtures, equipment, and chattels are included
- [ ] Coordinate closing dates with your own next purchase if applicable
- [ ] Choose the offer most likely to close, not just the highest number

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Ready to Sell Your Hobby Farm?

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