# AGRICULTURAL SOCIETIES & FAIRS

## LOCAL TO INTERNATIONAL



The concept of agricultural societies and fairs was transplanted to the colonies by the earliest British settlers. These societies were formed to encourage farmers to be continual learners. The benefits of certain breeds of livestock and new strains of seeds would be discussed. Agricultural fairs, which often included a market component, were organized. **The first such fair in Northumberland** was held in Colborne on October 19, 1829, hosted. by the newly formed Northumberland Agricultural Society. Elijah Buck, of Cobourg, won first prize for **Best Team of Oxen**. The following year winning first and third respectively, for *"Best Managed Farm"*, were John Burnham, and Elias Jones.

In 1831, the Port Hope Agricultural Society held its first fair. In 2015 they will host their 184th fair! Congratulations for hosting one of the longest running fairs in Ontario!

In October of 1848, the Northumberland Agricultural Society hosted the **"Third Grand Annual Provincial Fair" in Cobourg**. Seven acres of land were loaned by Patrick Wallace in the west end and the Town itself donated 100 pounds for prize money! 5,000 to 6,000 visitors were expected. The grand finale was a steeplechase held on the Boulton property on the east edge of town.

From 1846 to 1861 exhibitors from Cobourg and Hamilton Township won no less than **530 prizes at Provincial Exhibitions!**

In May of 1831, a cattle show and ploughing match were held on Ebenezer Perry's land in Cobourg. Since then ploughing matches have gathered our local farmers to compete at county, provincial, national and international levels over the years. But Cobourg had a very





special place in the history of the International Ploughing Match!

In October 1953, **Cobourg hosted the very first International/World Championship Ploughing Match**. Thirty-five acres of land were loaned for the event and the Golden Plough monument at Elgin Street and Burnham now marks the place.

National Champions came from Finland, Norway, Great Britain, Sweden, Canada, Denmark, Northern Ireland, Holland, Germany, Republic of Ireland, U.S.A. Once our local Governor General, the Right Honourable Vincent Massey, had opened the event, each competitor ploughed half an English acre of grassland on the first day and half an English acre of stubble on the second. The winner was **Jim Eccles of Brampton, Ontario**, who became the World's Champion Ploughman and was awarded the Golden Plough.