



Southwold Economic Development Committee

Agenda

Thursday, February 13th, 2025 at 8:00 am
Township Council Chambers – Municipal Office Fingal

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of the Agenda
3. Approval of the December 12, 2024 Minutes
4. Development and Infrastructure Updates:
 - a. Shedden – Commercial Plaza and Former Firehall
 - Disposal/development update
 - Sale proceeds recommendations
 - b. Shedden/Fingal Sanitary Servicing
 - c. WWTP Updates for Shedden & Talbotville
5. Elgin County Manager of Economic Development Updates:
6. Business Networking Events – Future Events, Elgin County Business Network
Event Planning Committee membership (add'l from Southwold), event funding
7. Southwold 175 Update – Launch Event was January 25, 2025
8. New and Other Business:
 - a. St. Thomas Chamber of Commerce – Tarriff Threat Survey
9. Next meeting date, time and location
10. Adjourn



Southwold Economic Development Committee

Meeting Minutes

Thursday December 12th, 2024 at 8:00 a.m.
Council Chambers/Webex Meeting

Voting Members

Present: Deputy Mayor Justin Pennings
Councillor John Adzija
Steve Bushell
Barry Harrison

Regrets: Michelle Hoffsuemmer, Lisa Higgs

Staff/Resource: Aaron VanOorspronk, Director of Infrastructure and Development
Tanya Wilson, Elgin Business Resource Centre
Carolyn Krahn, Manager of Economic Development and Strategic Initiatives
June McLarty, Deputy Clerk

1. Call to Order

Deputy Mayor Pennings called the meeting to order at 8:04 am.

2. Approval of Agenda

The Committee approved the agenda for the August 22nd meeting.

3. Approval of the August 22nd, 2024 Minutes

The Committee approved the minutes as drafted from the August 22nd, 2024 meeting.

4. Development and Infrastructure Updates – Servicing & Planning Status Updates

a. HEWSF Transfer Payment Agreement Status

Director of Infrastructure and Development Services, Aaron VanOorspronk

reported that the Agreement was presented and signed at the December 9th, 2024 Council meeting. We will receive 25% of the grant, once the agreement has been signed by the Ministry.

b. Conveyance System Tender Status

Director of Infrastructure and Development Services, Aaron VanOorspronk reported Tenders will soon close, and a report will be brought to Council for acceptance.

c. WWTP Updates for Shedden & Talbotville.

Director of Infrastructure and Development Services, Aaron VanOorspronk reported that the tenders for these projects will be available soon. Mr. VanOorspronk also reported that we may receive better pricing if we offer better terms.

5. Commercial Plaza Update

Director of Infrastructure and Development Services, Aaron VanOorspronk reported that with discussions and a recommendation from the EDC, an RFP was completed. Submissions closed on November 1st with one submission from DHP was received. The proposal included a mixture of commercial and 12 residential units with a historic feel. It is not low-income housing. This will beautify the downtown and provide revenue for the Township. Mr. VanOorspronk also reported that the sale does not close until site plan approval has been made. Mr. VanOorspronk informed the committee that DHP has started the process for rezoning and draft plan of subdivision for the Stoss property. A discussion was held on the inclusion of having walking paths for pedestrians to the downtown, multi-use paths to the parks and maybe the possibility of having bike or walking paths to connect Fingal and Shedden.

A concept drawing of the Shedden-Fingal WWTP was provided by Mr. VanOorspronk. This facility will be bricks and mortar building. Who will operate the facility will need to be determined.

6. Elgin County Business Retention and Expansion – Final Report

a. Development and Building Permit Process Mapping Project.

Carolyn Krahn, Manager of Economic Development and Strategic Initiatives reported that Planner will be hired for this project. Details about this will be provided to the committee once available.

b. Elgincentives Review

Carolyn Krahn, Manager of Economic Development and Strategic Initiatives reported that Elgincentives is 10 years old. A survey will be

available on the Engage Elgin webpage. This survey will help to determine if this program will still continue to be effective for local municipalities and businesses.

c. Recap of Cultivating Success Rural Business Networking Event

Carolyn Krahn, Manager of Economic Development and Strategic Initiatives thanked Nature's Oasis for hosting the event and Deputy Mayor Pennings for being the Master of Ceremonies. It was suggested that 3-4 events like this be held in 2025. The formats for these events will need to be determined.

d. Update on Meeting with Industrial Landowners in Talbotville

Carolyn Krahn, Manager of Economic Development and Strategic Initiatives reported that a meeting was held with the landowners. Discussions were held on marketing the land and servicing costs. Deputy Mayor Pennings commented that it was good to have everyone in the same room to get their feedback on these lands.

7. Centralized Planning Services with Elgin County.

Director of Infrastructure and Development Services Aaron VanOorspronk reported that a meeting was held with the County and local municipalities to determine what is needed for planning services. The County has prepared an agreement and will be presented County Council soon. An agreement has yet to be presented to Southwold Council. There may be some cost savings with this agreement. The County will handle planning services for Southwold. Southwold Council will still make decisions on planning matters.

8. Southwold 175 Update

Deputy Clerk June McLarty reported that Southwold 175 Planning Committee has booked a headliner. There will also be fireworks, a kids zone, car show, beer garden, artisan market and food vendors. More details will be available soon for the August 9th event.

9. New and Other Business

None.

10. Next Meeting date, time and location

The next meeting was scheduled for February 13, 2025 at 8:00 am.

11. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 9:01 am.

Chairperson, Justin Pennings

Deputy Clerk

DRAFT

From: [Paul Jenkins](#)
To: [Dyke, Sean](#); ckrahn@elgin.ca; lisarochellehiggs@gmail.com; [Mayor G. Jones](#); [Joe Preston](#); asloan@centralelgin.org; deleitch@centralelgin.org; [Jeff Carswell](#); cao@elgin.ca
Subject: Chamber Member Feedback - Tariff Preparedness
Date: February 5, 2025 1:15:33 PM
Attachments: [Tariff survey - feb 5.pdf](#)

Some people who received this message don't often get email from paul@stthomaschamber.ca. [Learn why this is important](#)

Good Afternoon –

Hope everyone is doing well on this sunny Wednesday afternoon.

In light of Trump's moving tariff target, I thought you might find the attached survey results interesting/useful.

In your review please note we forgot to include agriculture as an industry when we initially released the survey.

Several businesses, however, indicate they operate in the agriculture space, which is documented in the notes.

If you're interested in our Chamber's take on the situation, this 94.1 myFM clip captures some of my thoughts... <https://www.stthomastoday.ca/2025/02/03/community-spotlight-as-tariff-war-kicks-off-what-can-canada-do-to-help-small-business/#>.

Here's the latest from the Ontario Chamber of Commerce on reducing inter-provincial trade barriers (an opportunity amidst the chaos)...
<https://occ.ca/mediareleases/canadas-provincial-chambers-unite-to-urge-premiers-to-dismantle-internal-trade-barriers/>.

And here's the latest from the Canadian Chamber of Commerce...
<https://chamber.ca/news/canadian-chamber-on-30-day-tariff-delay/>.

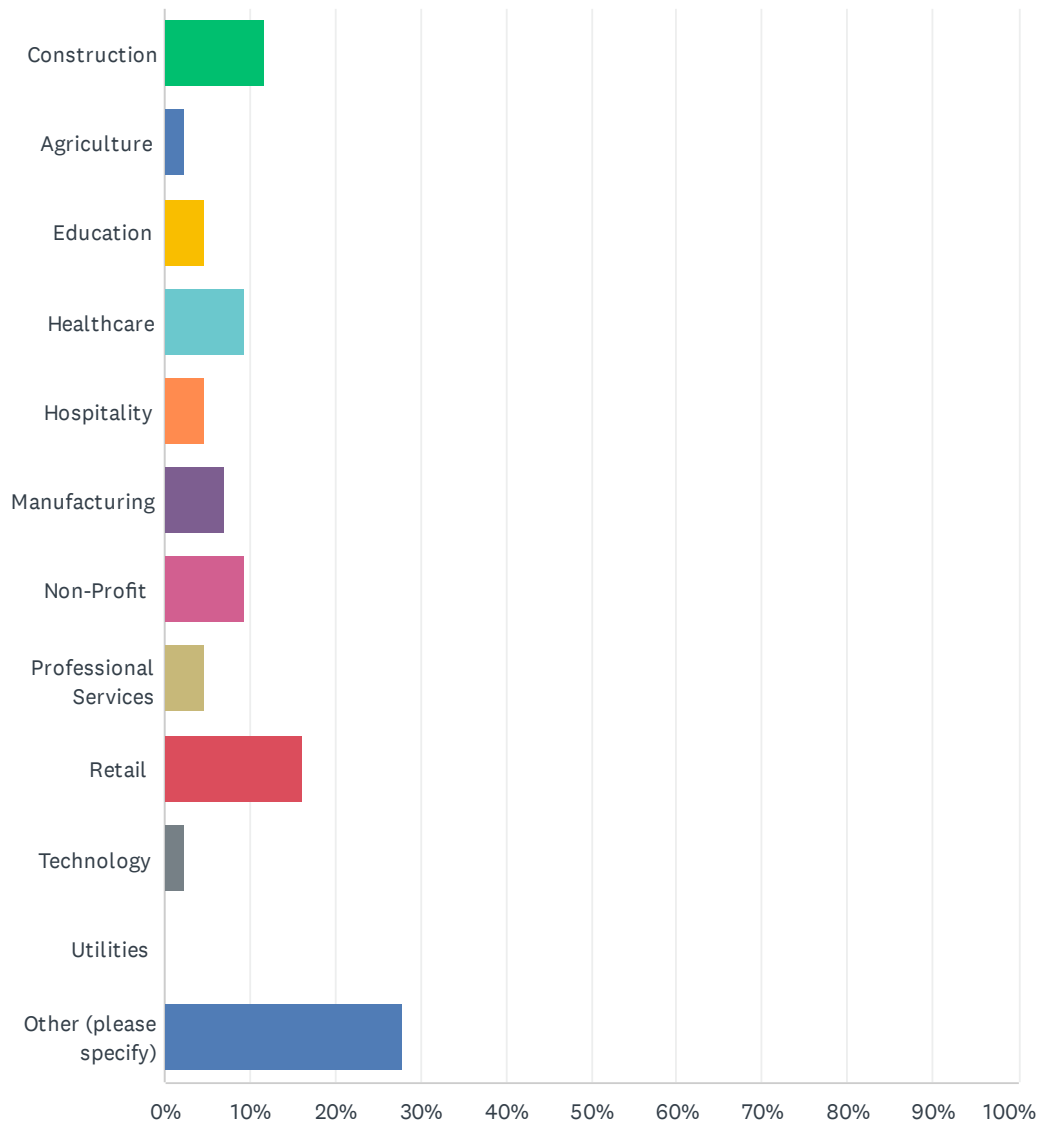
Moreover, despite absolutely no response, I continue to reach out to the Chamber CEO and the Mayor of St. Thomas' Sister City, Bowling Green, Ohio.

As always, please let me know if you have any questions and I'm happy to chat.

Kind Regards,
Paul

Q1 What sector is your business/organization in?

Answered: 43 Skipped: 0



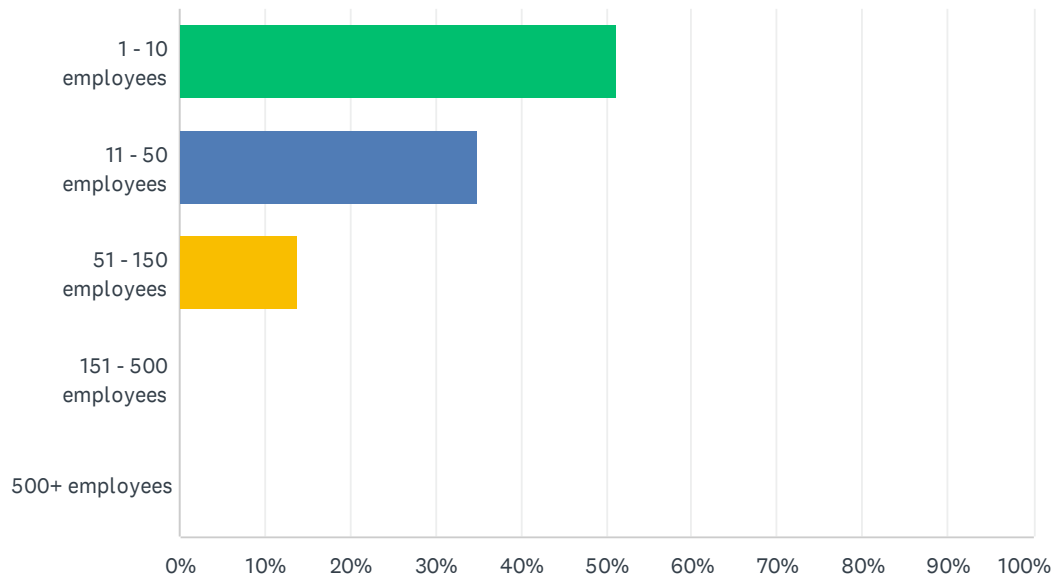
Chamber Member Survey on U.S. Tariffs 2025

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Construction	11.63%	5
Agriculture	2.33%	1
Education	4.65%	2
Healthcare	9.30%	4
Hospitality	4.65%	2
Manufacturing	6.98%	3
Non-Profit	9.30%	4
Professional Services	4.65%	2
Retail	16.28%	7
Technology	2.33%	1
Utilities	0.00%	0
Other (please specify)	27.91%	12
TOTAL		43

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Renovations	2/4/2025 5:23 PM
2	Auto service and repair	2/4/2025 12:29 PM
3	Real Estate	2/4/2025 9:18 AM
4	Housing	2/4/2025 9:12 AM
5	Food/Restaurant	2/3/2025 7:11 PM
6	Agriculture \ Food Processing	2/3/2025 3:39 PM
7	agriculture	2/3/2025 3:11 PM
8	Agriculture	2/3/2025 3:01 PM
9	Auto service and repair	2/3/2025 3:00 PM
10	Window Coverings	2/3/2025 1:58 PM
11	Agriculture (Horticulture)	2/3/2025 1:48 PM
12	Industrial Supply	2/3/2025 1:39 PM

Q2 What is the size of your business?

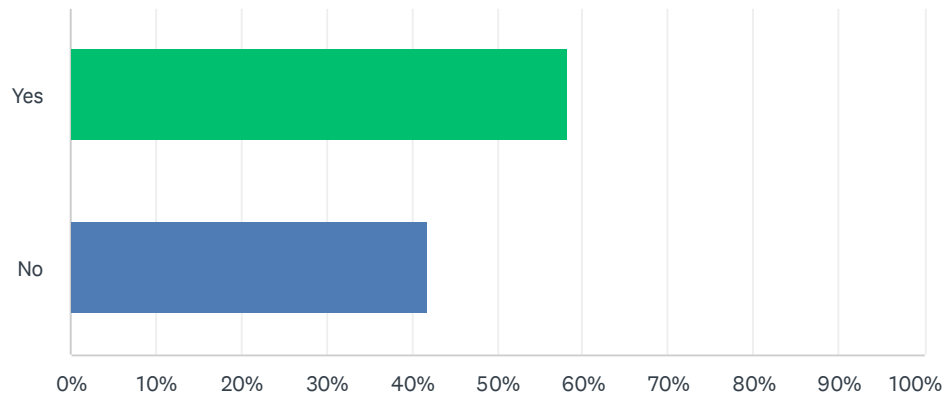
Answered: 43 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
1 - 10 employees		51.16%	22
11 - 50 employees		34.88%	15
51 - 150 employees		13.95%	6
151 - 500 employees		0.00%	0
500+ employees		0.00%	0
TOTAL			43

Q3 Does your business participate in cross-border trade or supply chains?

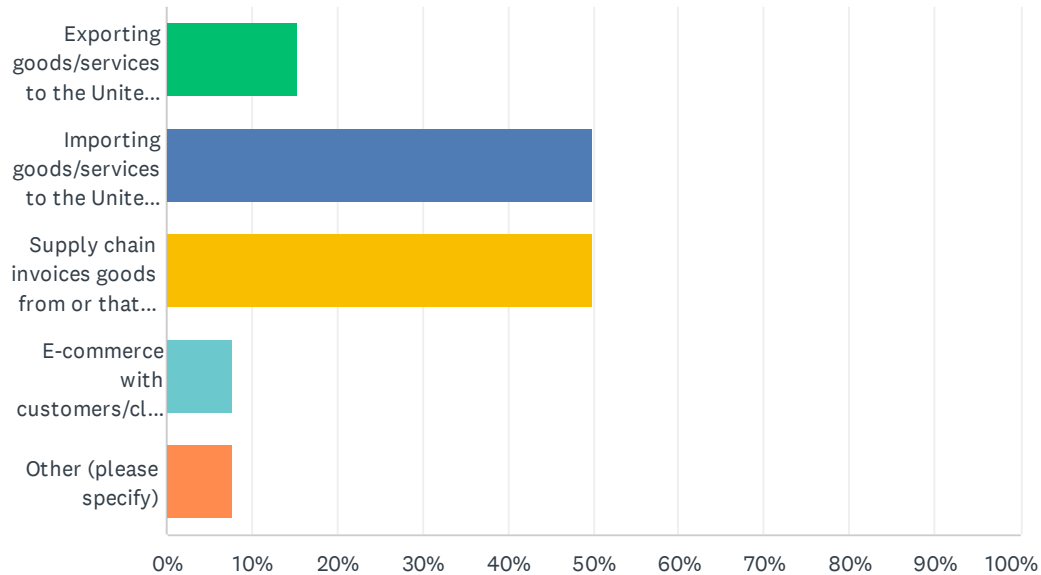
Answered: 43 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	58.14%	25
No	41.86%	18
TOTAL		43

Q4 If yes, how does your business participate in cross border trade? Please select all that apply.

Answered: 26 Skipped: 17

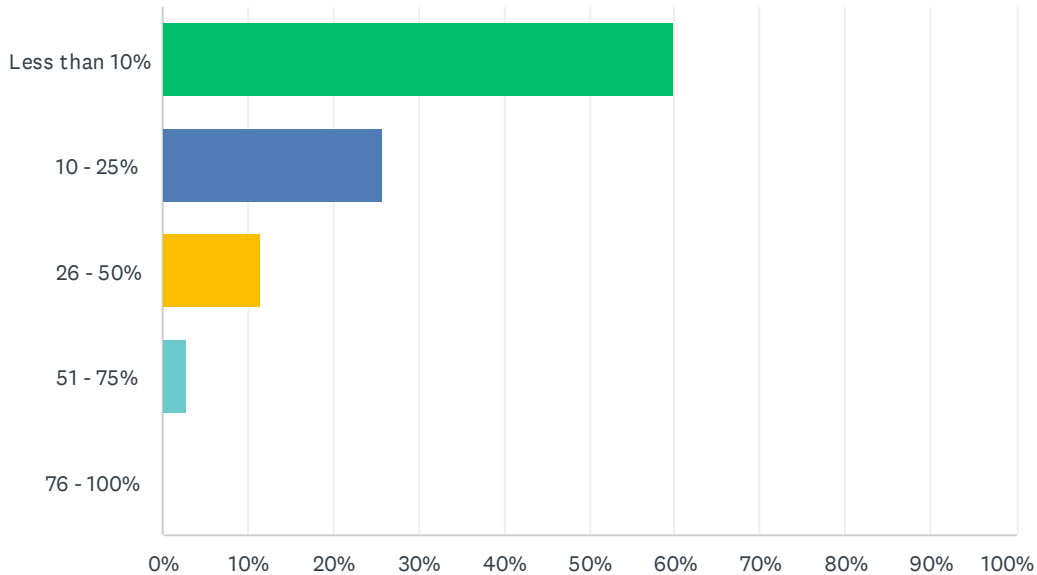


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Exporting goods/services to the United States	15.38%	4
Importing goods/services to the United States	50.00%	13
Supply chain invoices goods from or that travel through the United States	50.00%	13
E-commerce with customers/clients from the United States	7.69%	2
Other (please specify)	7.69%	2
Total Respondents: 26		

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Foods imported from u.s.	2/3/2025 7:11 PM
2	inputs from united states	2/3/2025 3:11 PM

Q5 What percentage of your total revenue does business with the U.S. represent?

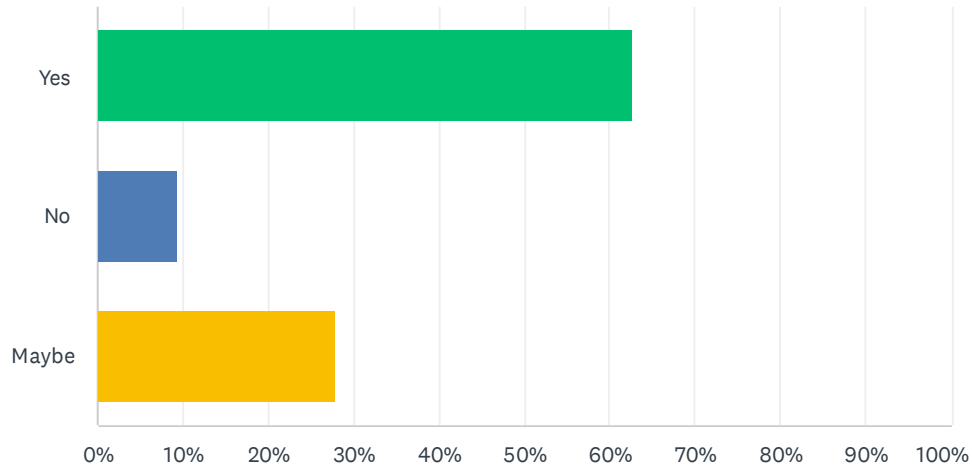
Answered: 35 Skipped: 8



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Less than 10%	60.00%	21
10 - 25%	25.71%	9
26 - 50%	11.43%	4
51 - 75%	2.86%	1
76 - 100%	0.00%	0
TOTAL		35

Q6 Do you expect your business to experience challenges due to the U.S. tariffs?

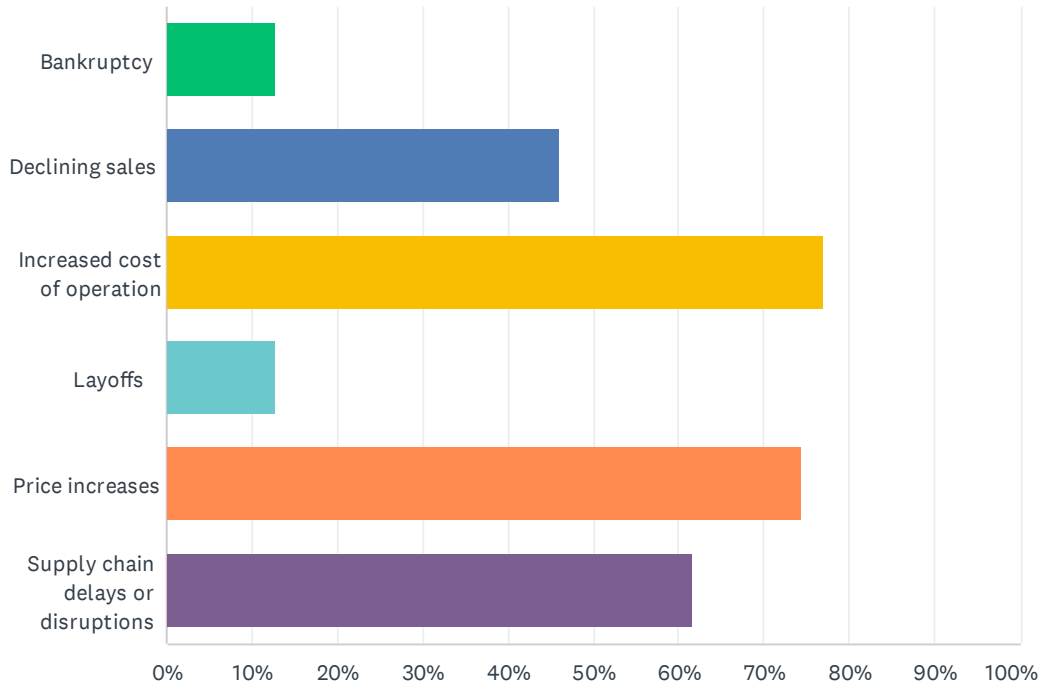
Answered: 43 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	62.79%	27
No	9.30%	4
Maybe	27.91%	12
TOTAL		43

Q7 If yes, what would be the immediate impacts on your business? Please check all that apply.

Answered: 39 Skipped: 4

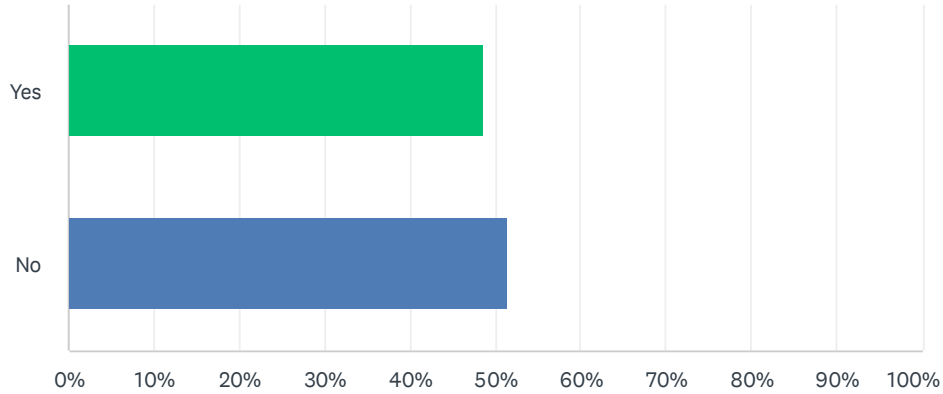


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Bankruptcy	12.82%	5
Declining sales	46.15%	18
Increased cost of operation	76.92%	30
Layoffs	12.82%	5
Price increases	74.36%	29
Supply chain delays or disruptions	61.54%	24
Total Respondents: 39		

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Canadian markets could become saturated with product that would 'normally' have gone to US market. Resulting in disruptions and pricing changes domestically.	2/3/2025 3:39 PM
2	Lack of government funding to support socials which will be more necessary as the risk of job loss is increased.	2/3/2025 2:50 PM
3	Food costs	2/3/2025 2:19 PM

Q8 Are you taking precautions to mitigate the impact of ongoing trade disputes with the United States?

Answered: 39 Skipped: 4



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	48.72%	19
No	51.28%	20
TOTAL		39

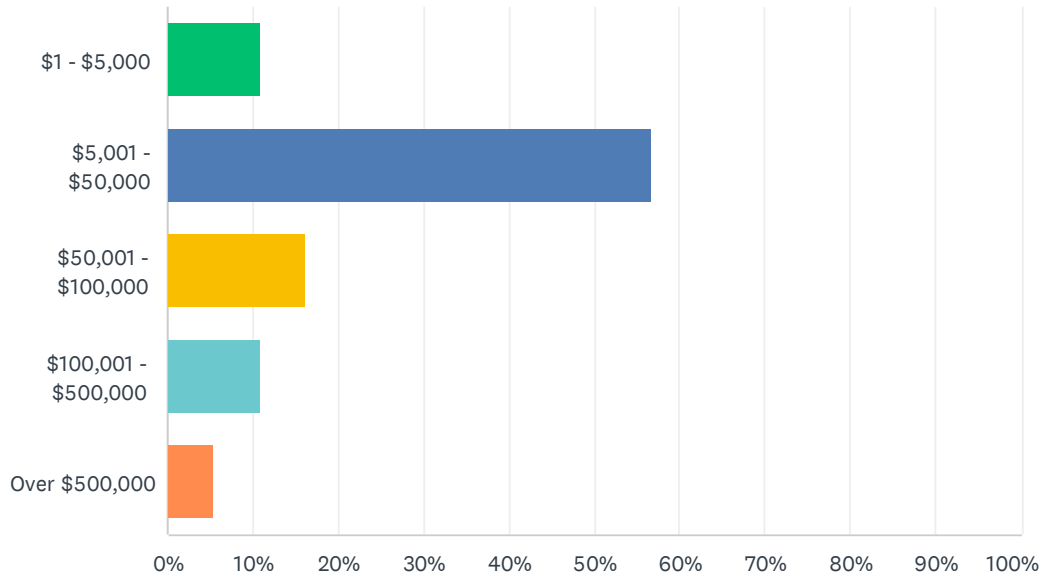
Q9 If yes, please provide some examples of those precautions.

Answered: 19 Skipped: 24

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Keeping a close look at inventory and changing purchasing policies.	2/4/2025 12:29 PM
2	Changing focus to buy/sell with the usa as little as possible and at the same time Increase buy/sell interactions with other parts of the world.	2/4/2025 10:43 AM
3	Minimal options available, but trying to diversify customers/vendors.	2/4/2025 9:33 AM
4	Looking for different food sources/companies	2/3/2025 7:11 PM
5	NO QUOTING TILL WE RE EIVE NEW PRICING FROM OUR CURRENT SUPPLIERS.	2/3/2025 5:49 PM
6	investigating alternative canadian made products	2/3/2025 5:13 PM
7	Regarding question 8: Not yet, but considering options. Regarding Question 10: I really don't yet have a clue what the financial implications will be. Totally depends on the length of time.	2/3/2025 3:39 PM
8	sourcing canadian inputs	2/3/2025 3:11 PM
9	As we are Canadian based & focused - marketing that to ensure other Canadians know who and what we are!	2/3/2025 3:08 PM
10	There really is not a lot that can be done - businesses cannot find alternative markets overnight - in most cases it will take years.	2/3/2025 3:01 PM
11	Keeping a close watch on inventory in case of a supply chain disruption.	2/3/2025 3:00 PM
12	Advocacy work with provincial and national bodies.	2/3/2025 2:50 PM
13	Switching to Canadian only suppliers	2/3/2025 2:49 PM
14	Looking for different products.	2/3/2025 2:01 PM
15	TRYING TO SOURCE MATERIALS THAT ARE 1. MADE IN CANADA OR 2 MADE IN ANOTHER COUNTRY	2/3/2025 2:00 PM
16	We currently try to buy all local or canadian. Reviewing cost allocations now.	2/3/2025 1:48 PM
17	Trying to seek out other suppliers. Not having much luck doing that at the moment. I have found some and much higher cost.	2/3/2025 1:43 PM
18	Buying more Canadian	2/3/2025 1:39 PM
19	Reviewing prices to ensure we are still a strong option for local customers. Reviewing all US based products to find Canadian sources	2/3/2025 1:37 PM

Q10 What do you expect the financial impact to be on your business because of the tariffs?

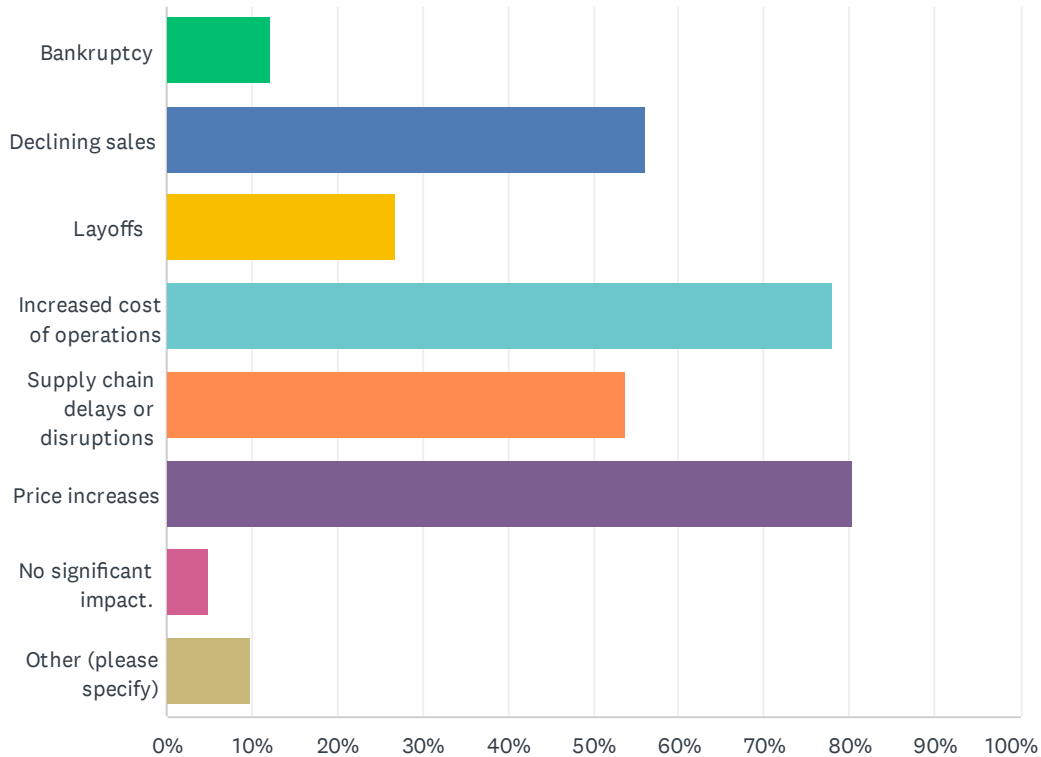
Answered: 37 Skipped: 6



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
\$1 - \$5,000	10.81%	4
\$5,001 - \$50,000	56.76%	21
\$50,001 - \$100,000	16.22%	6
\$100,001 - \$500,000	10.81%	4
Over \$500,000	5.41%	2
TOTAL		37

Q11 If the tariffs were to continue long-term, how would they affect your business? Please check all that apply.

Answered: 41 Skipped: 2



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Bankruptcy	12.20%	5
Declining sales	56.10%	23
Layoffs	26.83%	11
Increased cost of operations	78.05%	32
Supply chain delays or disruptions	53.66%	22
Price increases	80.49%	33
No significant impact.	4.88%	2
Other (please specify)	9.76%	4
Total Respondents: 41		

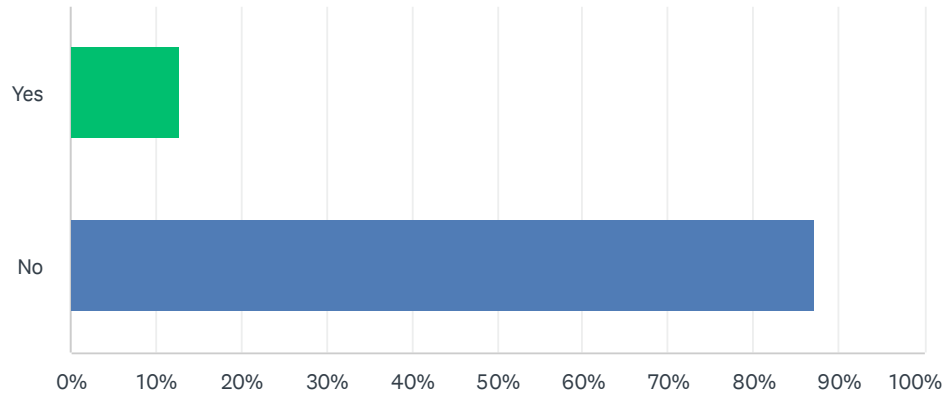
#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Being in the food industry it is hard to guess how we will be impacted. Overall it is something that will completely destroy small businesses with food sources unless we chase the sales now.	2/3/2025 7:11 PM
2	Changes in food growing cycle	2/3/2025 3:39 PM

Chamber Member Survey on U.S. Tariffs 2025

3	shrinking margins and profit	2/3/2025 1:48 PM
4	may need to decrease services	2/3/2025 1:48 PM

Q12 Have you experienced restricting or tightening of available capital from creditors?

Answered: 39 Skipped: 4



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	12.82%	5
No	87.18%	34
TOTAL		39

Q13 Please share specific examples of how the tariffs will impact your business.

Answered: 14 Skipped: 29

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	I already have customers not purchasing our products/services as they wait to see how the tariffs will affect them and our economy	2/4/2025 5:23 PM
2	Higher material input costs, import tariffs on finished goods to USA, customers will reduce orders based on their higher costs and budgets.	2/4/2025 9:33 AM
3	Banks	2/4/2025 9:18 AM
4	Being in the food industry it is hard to guess how we will be impacted. Overall it is something that will completely destroy small businesses with food sources unless we chase the sales now.	2/3/2025 7:11 PM
5	I am in a very competetive market and the 25% Tariff will put me out of the market against my competition that buy from Canadian Markets.	2/3/2025 5:49 PM
6	Have no idea until it happens	2/3/2025 4:29 PM
7	Our main competitors are from countries that do NOT have tariffs (ie. Chile and Norway). They are poised to increase their markets in the US. However, I am concerned about the Canadian market becoming flooded with product that would have been directed to the US. That can cause market disruptions and fluctuating prices too.	2/3/2025 3:39 PM
8	Lack of being able to trade with Canada's number 1 business partner.	2/3/2025 3:01 PM
9	Any price increases will get passed on to the consumer until this dispute gets resolved. This will only serve to fuel inflation. This may force suppliers to source parts/products from other countries.	2/3/2025 3:00 PM
10	We would look to more sales in Canada and probably scale business back in the US	2/3/2025 2:20 PM
11	People will stop buying from many of our vendors.	2/3/2025 1:58 PM
12	If these tariffs lead to higher unemployment then that will cause a decrease in sales to us and eventual layoffs for our company as well. These tariffs need to be eliminated!!	2/3/2025 1:43 PM
13	As in restaurant our vendor are sysco and Gordon. Our lettuce comes from California, few of our sauces and dry rubs are from states and quite more things. This might force us to increase the price but will try for sure not to as it impacts alot of people who are just hand to mouth.	2/3/2025 1:43 PM
14	It comes to how the economy and jobs do locally; if people suffer they will come less to us for eating and enjoying.	2/3/2025 1:37 PM