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Golden Horseshoe and Holland Marsh food and farming summit re-scheduled

February 15 - A summit planned for early March to discuss a food and farming strategy for the Golden Horseshoe has been re-scheduled. Organizers of the summit report that initial response to the first draft of the Agriculture and Food Strategy for the Golden Horseshoe released in mid-January has been positive, but given the magnitude of the project, some respondents thought the timeline was a bit too aggressive.

"We want to get this right (and) I believe the timing is right for a comprehensive agriculture and food strategy. There is a provincial election this fall. What better time to present candidates with solutions to health care and education, environmental problems and fluctuating farm income," says Nick Ferri, chair of the Greater Toronto Area Agriculture Action Committee (GTA AAC), one of the partners of the project.

The draft study document "Agriculture & Agri-Food Strategy and Action Plan for the Golden Horseshoe" will be the focus of the "Food & Farming: An Action Plan 2021" workshop in Toronto next month. Stakeholders with an interest in sustaining a thriving agri-food cluster in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), Hamilton, Niagara and the Holland Marsh are all welcome to attend the event.

Participants will be asked to comment on the draft study document and brainstorm the action plan to transform and invigorate agriculture and food processing in the study area.

"Let's boast about agriculture and the agri-food industry becoming the driving engine of the Ontario economy," says Ferri.

Workshop keynote speaker Bob Seguin, Executive Director of the Guelph-based George Morris Centre will address ideas for positioning food and farming in the Golden Horseshoe and Holland Marsh as a key solution provider for Ontario's economic, environmental and social needs.

The draft study document was prepared by Planscape Inc. for the GTA AAC, together with the City of Hamilton, the Niagara Region and the Holland Marsh Growers' Association and will be available for download at www.planscape.ca/agriculture.html or www.gtaa.ca.

The workshop will be held Wed. March. 30 at Evergreen Brick Works, 550 Bayview Avenue, Toronto. Seating is limited and advance registration is required. RSVP deadline is Mon. March 21 and should be made to the Region of Durham Planning Department at 1-800-372-1102 x 2551 or by email at planning@durham.ca.

The project is a joint initiative of the GTA AAC, the City of Hamilton, Niagara Region and the Holland Marsh Growers' Association, who received funding support from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada through the Canadian Agricultural Adaptation Program (CAAP), delivered by the Agricultural Adaptation Council (AAC).

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