



# Message from the Chair

March 2012

As I write this today, just a few days after we launched the Golden Horse Shoe Food and Farming Action Plan, it gives me cause to reflect on the remarkable effort and hundreds of hours of volunteer time that went into producing it.

I want to begin by thanking the great team on the Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Steering Committee who navigated their way the process of building consensus and securing the endorsement of the final plan from many diverse stakeholders. It was truly a team effort – one which brings to mind a famous baseball quote which goes something like this: “Talent wins games but teamwork and intelligence wins championships.”

I would also like to extend my thanks to the expert team that was assembled to organize the launch led by board member Rebecca LeHeup (Executive Director, Ontario Culinary Tourism Alliance) and members of the Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Steering Committee. And of course, thanks are owed to Dr. Jim Brandle, CEO of the Vineland Research and Innovation Centre and his staff for hosting the event.

As more than 100 of us gathered at the Centre, together with the Minister of Agriculture, Ted McMeekin, the Minister of Environment, Jim Bradley, PC Agriculture Critic Ernie Hardeman and Master of Ceremonies, Mayor Hodgson of Lincoln, the power and passion of teamwork was clearly evident.

The morning was truly a celebration of all that the food and farming cluster of our area has to offer Ontario, Canada and the world. And so many of us had reason to celebrate: our donors who made this possible, including The Greenbelt Foundation, the Agri-Adaptation Council, Agriculture Canada, our regional municipal governments and federations of agriculture and the Cities of Hamilton and Toronto, as well as the many other stakeholder groups that have championed the growth and vitality of the food and farming cluster for many years. A thank you is also in order for the community of municipal leaders, planners and economic development officers who contributed so much to this initiative.

And of course, the farming community to whom I owe an apology. During my remarks to the gathering, I forgot to extend thanks to this dedicated group, and for that I am truly sorry. Without the foresight, vision and dedication of the Federations of Agriculture and their members, the Action Plan simply would not have come to fruition. In many ways, it is their tireless efforts both on the farm and off that have created the treasure of food and farming of the Golden Horseshoe which now generates more than \$12.3 billion of economic activity a year in Ontario, and \$35 billion to the Canadian economy through the multiplier

effect. Clearly the cluster is critical to the health and sustainability of both the provincial and national economy. Don Ziraldo, former CEO of the Vineland Research and Innovation Centre put it into perspective in no uncertain terms. If every household bought \$10 of local produce each week, it would translate into a \$2.4 billion impact on the provincial economy. That's a challenge we should echo over and over again throughout the coming months and years as we move forward and begin to implement the Action Plan.

The event was memorable for so many reasons, including the luncheon prepared by some of Canada's finest chefs who hail from the Golden Horseshoe including Chef Michael Pasto from the Good Earth Wine and Food Co., Chef Bettina Shormann from the Bread Barn in Hamilton, Toronto Chef Jamie Kennedy and Chef Christian Pritchard from Durham. The Ontario Craft Brewers were on hand pouring a selection of craft beers and Wine Country Canada and members of the Good Earth Wine and Food Co. and Foreign Affairs Winery provided a great selection of their wines. To all of them, thank you on behalf of everyone who enjoyed the offerings.

In my October message, I spoke of the frustratingly slow process of getting the Action Plan completed and approved. I am delighted that we stuck it out. Throughout the process, we learned the valuable lesson that cooperation may imply compromise, but if it advances our goals, it is a gain for us all.

There is much to be done as we move forward, and the activity is underway. Individuals are being invited to sit at the Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance table and we just hired a coordinator to help steer the way along with our Executive Coordinator, Janet Horner. We have also introduced a new website at [www.gtaaac.ca/](http://www.gtaaac.ca/) and a Greater Toronto Area Agricultural Action Committee Facebook page to provide timely updates and seek feedback and ideas, and individuals are being selected to sit. We invite you to get involved. You can start by downloading a copy of the Action Plan on the website or leaving a comment on Facebook (Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming) or with Janet at [Janet@whitfieldfarms.com](mailto:Janet@whitfieldfarms.com)

Respectfully,  
Nick Ferri, Chair, GTAAAC

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