



Message from the Chair

June 10, 2011

*Enhancing
and Energizing
the GTA Local Food System*

With the federal election now past, we can now focus on the provincial election approaching this fall. The Greater Toronto Area Agricultural Action Committee (GTAAAC) is not a lobbying organization, but we still have the responsibility of getting our messages out to all the candidates and parties, and identifying issues and proposing solutions that will move the food and agriculture industry in the Golden Horseshoe towards our vision. That vision ensures health and prosperity for not only its farmers and the food industries, but also rural communities and cities alike, bustling with the all-important voting citizens. The messages that we advocate are aligned with the actions and tasks proposed to us through consultation with the many stakeholders in the agriculture and food system, from farmers through to consumers.

We recently had the opportunity to meet with Carol Mitchell, the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. In our meeting we talked extensively about our Agriculture and Agri-Food Strategy and Action Plan and some of our preliminary findings. Minister Mitchell was very interested in our progress and wants to be kept up to date with the results of our consultations throughout the summer. There will be many bold initiatives proposed and we hope that these new ideas will see some traction in the future. We also indicated that we would be back to present the final report and we want to fill the boardroom with all our partners who will be collaborating on initiatives with us. What a meeting that will be!

A few months ago I cited two excellent papers published by the Canadian Agri-Food Policy Institute (CAPI) titled, *Building Convergence: Toward an Integrated Health and Agri-Food Strategy for Canada*, and *Canada's Agri-Food Destination: A New Strategic Approach*. These reports stress that Canada is not realizing the full potential of a major key asset--its agri-food sector. By integrating a health and agri-food strategy

Canada could improve the health of Canadians and the economic viability of its farmers. The papers also present a compelling argument for developing a system-based food plan.

David McInnes, President and Chief Executive Officer of CAPI, attended our Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Summit on March 30, 2011, contributing to the success of the event. Conversing with other attendees he was able to obtain a new perspective of food systems. As a result of this summit David wrote an article about the work we are doing on the strategy and published it in the CAPI Spring Newsletter. David asked me to make the newsletter available to my audience for comment. If anyone wishes to comment, they can do so on the CAPI Blog page. Both links, available, below:

CAPI Newsletter:

<http://www.capiicpa.ca/newsletter/CAPlupdateSpring2011.pdf>

CAPI Blog Page:

<http://www.capi-icpa.ca/blog/index.html>

The rains have finally stopped long enough for me to try to get caught up on my long list of spring jobs. The orchard is in bloom and the strawberries are not far behind. I just wish I were as ready for my customers!

Respectfully,

Nick Ferri, Chair, GTAAAC

News from the GTAAAC will be published bi-monthly. The information contained within may be reproduced by anyone receiving it. If you are reading a forwarded copy and wish to receive your own copy please send an email with "Subscribe" in the subject line to Nick Ferri at bigapple@orchard-studio.com.

Greater Toronto Area Agricultural Action Committee (GTAAAC)

Janet M. Horner, Coordinator

Email : janet@whitfieldfarms.com

Phone: 519-925-5975

Website: www.gtaaac.ca

Twitter: @GTA _ AAC

