

Food and farming strategy for the Holland Marsh

by Anne Howden Thompson

The Greater Toronto Area Agriculture Action Committee (GTAAAC), together with the City of Hamilton, Niagara Region and the Holland Marsh Growers' Association are pleased to announce funding to create a 'Food and Farming Strategy and Action Plan for Ontario's Golden Horseshoe and the Holland Marsh'. Support for this project has been provided by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada through the Canadian Agricultural Adaptation Program (CAAP). In Ontario, this program is delivered by the Agricultural Adaptation Council.

"The need for an actionable food and farming strategy for the highly urbanized areas within the Golden Horseshoe and Ontario's Greenbelt was envisioned at a July, 2009 meeting of all of the groups supporting this initiative," notes Peter Lambrick, Halton Region farmer and Chair of the GTAAAC Food & Farming Strategy and Action Plan Committee. "We farm in spaces within the greatest urban concentration anywhere in Canada, and the GTA is home to the sec-

ond-largest food processing economy in North America. We need a practical action plan that ensures co-existence of agriculture, food processing and urbanization for mutual benefit, as well as sustainability of the environment, human health and the economy."



The anticipated outcome of this project is not just another consulting report, but a ten-year plan that will serve as a blueprint for progress. The strategy and action plan will strengthen Ontario's second largest economic driver (agriculture, agri-business and food processing) within the Golden Horseshoe and Holland Marsh. It will also maximize mutual benefits for farmers and consumers within this densely populated region.

A profitable agriculture industry in the Golden Horseshoe and Holland Marsh area that is environmentally and socially responsible as well as responsive to market demands will be the main outcome of the 10-year Action Plan. It will identify opportunities for market growth and the resulting economic activity driven by changing population ethnicity and increasing consumer needs for healthy, nutritious foods. The project will include the development of a discussion document that includes all previous research on this topic, the drafting of an Action Plan, and a stakeholder consultation process that will ensure diverse and thoughtful input into the final plan.

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