

September 17, 2012

VQA Support Program

We have been advised that payments from the Province are on schedule and should be issued by approximately mid-September. If you have any questions on these, contact D. Gibson at the WCO office.

Consumer Wine Shows

Attached is information about exhibiting in the Wine Country Ontario booth at the Ottawa Wine and Food Show and the Gourmet Food & Wine Expo in Toronto. Both shows take place in November. Register to participate here <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/consumershow2012> Deadline is Friday, October 5, 2012.

Ontariofresh.ca Unites Business and Farmers

- Marketplace Attracts over 1,200 Food and Agricultural Businesses-

(Toronto, Ontario) - The new version of the popular *Ontariofresh.ca* website was released today bringing more functionality and enhanced features to users. Connecting buyers and sellers of Ontario food, *Ontariofresh.ca* is a vital tool in finding new business partners to meet the growing demand for local food.

The new *Ontariofresh.ca* website allows local food buyers and sellers to search for products, announce the availability of seasonal products, and post contract opportunities by using a sophisticated search function. The website is also a source for industry information and stories from local food champions.

"*Ontariofresh.ca* is a game-changer that enables Ontario to capitalize on the demand for local food," said Burkhard Mausberg, CEO, Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation. "Whether it's Niagara's tender fruit, the Holland Marsh's vegetables, or award winning VQA wines, *Ontariofresh.ca* is helping connect the business of local food."

Launched as a beta site in November 2011, *Ontariofresh.ca* has grown to over 1,200 registered industry professionals. The website serves as a valuable economic tool among food service businesses and food producers to help meet the growing demand for Ontario food. In a survey conducted among *Ontariofresh.ca* members in early 2012, 20% of respondents had made connections and half of those reported sales resulting directly from the website.

Members on the site include hospitals and other public institutions serving millions of meals each year. In addition, some of the largest food service operators and distributors in North America like Dana Hospitality and Gordon Food Services are utilizing the site to make business connections, along with innovative food processors like VG Meats and farms of all sizes and commodities.

"Before this website was in place, it could be very difficult to locate local producers. It allows you to search for specific products and size of operation - it's like Facebook for food, putting a

face to people that are buying and selling local,” said Kelly Hughes, Local Food Procurement Officer, Metro Toronto Convention Centre.

Create a new or update an existing profile by October 15th and be entered to win a weekend getaway. For more information visit Ontariofresh.ca.

PR & Media Relations

Many of you send wine samples to key wine media on a regular basis and I wanted to make a recommendation regarding sending samples to **Eric Velland**, who writes for “The Grid” as the Wine Ponce and also is the food editor for House & Home. He does attend Vintages tastings when he can but also like so to get samples from wineries if possible.

Please send him samples throughout the year for possible review to the following address:

Attn: Eric Velland
1054 Shaw St., Toronto, ON, M6G 3N5.
(wine can be left on the porch if no one is home)

The samples that he is most interested in are general list or Essentials under \$25 as this increases the chance of a wine getting into The Grid.