

Crowd gets a taste of home at event

By Bruce Bell
THE INTELLIGENCER

BLOOMFIELD — Large crowds came to Bloomfield hungry Tuesday for the Harvestin' the County lunch — a celebration of locally grown food.

"We are extremely pleased with the great crowd and the great weather," said Dan Taylor, Prince Edward County's economic development officer. "We were prepared to serve 350 lunches and we might end up serving as many as 400 so we can't ask for any more than that."

Harvestin' the County is a month-long initiative aimed at increasing awareness and sales of foods produced by Prince Edward County farmers.

More than a dozen growers and agricultural organizations set up displays along Bloomfield's Main Street selling fresh produce and other County-made goods while visitors enjoyed the feast.

Lunch featured 100 per cent County beef from Baitley Farms butchered by Aman's Abattoir; potato salad featuring Honey Wagon Farms potatoes; fresh County corn from Lakeshore Farms Market; heirloom tomato platters served with basil from Vicki's Veggies; cheese trays featuring a selection of cheeses from Black River Cheese; fresh baked rolls from Picton IGA; non-alcoholic sweet sparkling cider from the County Cider Company; bottled water from Pure County Bottled Water and penny cones of ice cream from Slickers County Ice Cream.



INTELLIGENCER PHOTO BY BRUCE BELL
Harley Guernsey carves some more beef at the Harvestin' the County lunch in Bloomfield Tuesday.

Rebecca LeHeup-Bucknell, executive director of Taste the County, said the event organizers were thrilled with the turnout.

"The goal of today and the entire

month is to make local people, and visitors for that matter, think about where their food comes from and to encourage them to support local agriculture," she said. "It might

take a little more effort to go to a vegetable or fruit stand somewhere to buy local products, but think about how much better it is. It doesn't travel thousands of miles to get here so you will get fresh produce every time."

Nathan Vader of Mill Creek Farm said the large turnout will help spread the word on local farming.

"It's great to see all the people here and it's good to enlighten them by showing them the different product that is grown locally," he said. "I think people will buy locally produced food, but quite often they just don't know if it's local or not and this will certainly help."

Vader said he was pleased to see a large number of children at the event.

"We need to attract young people to this business and I think it's great to see the kids sitting on the tractors and showing an interest in that."

Taylor said his office is developing Harvestin' the County as the local food brand and hopes to have the logo on as much locally produced food as possible.

"Hopefully these initiatives will help with sales because at the end of the day, not only do we want to raise the awareness of the consumer, but we want to put the farmer and the retailer together.

"The (Picton) IGA store has been fantastic and they are displaying locally grown foods and putting the name of the farmer right over top of the product," he said.

"If people see that they will likely always pick the local product."