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We harvest what we sow

Hopefully, the message being sent through the Harvestin' the County campaign isn't soon forgotten.

Attendance at a celebration luncheon of the month-long initiative in Bloomfield Tuesday is a strong indication County folks are getting the message to support our local farmers.

Close to 400 people showed up to dine on some of the area's fine culinary delights where everything on the table was 100 per cent County raised.

Economic development officer Dan Taylor and Rebecca LeHeup-Bucknell, executive director of Taste the County and her staff deserve a large pat on their collective backs for such an effort.

While the aim of Harvestin' the County is to raise awareness here of the value of buying locally-produced foods, it is also geared toward the bottom line - specifically - increasing sales.

Taylor, no stranger to crunching numbers, did the math and it's really quite simple. The municipality's 25,000 residents eating three meals a day represents more than 2.3 million meals in Prince Edward County for the month of August. Throw in the huge numbers from tourists visiting the region and the buying power is massive.

Directing our food purchases toward local product and our farmers would benefit immensely.

Undoubtedly, the message from Taylor and crew will be redundant for many County folk. Some make the effort to fill their refrigerators with as much local product as possible. The embarrassing aspect is we all don't and that's where the campaign comes in.

Really there is no excuse for it. Roadside stands are abundant throughout the area and it really doesn't take much of an effort to stop once or twice a week to stock up.

Picton's IGA store is making it even more convenient to buy locally produced. They have started to identify which products are produced here, going so far as to even tell the consumer who produced it. Surely, armed with that information consumers will make the right choice.

Government regulations aren't making life as a dairy farmer any easier but remember this - the bulk of milk from Prince Edward dairy farmers finds its way to local processors. So whether buying a bag of milk or block of cheese, if it comes from a local processor, you are in all likelihood supporting a local dairy farmer.

While farmers certainly appreciate the Harvestin' the County initiative and have been quick to jump in line to participate, the message will hit more than the consumer.

Tuesday, while visitors dined on everything from home-grown popcorn to County-raised beef to sparkling cider, another sector had an almost altogether different interest in the proceedings.

"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," said Nathan Vader of Mill Creek Farm.