

How about Harvestin'?

Program under way with eye on a County Meal Aug. 22

By Jason Parks
Gazette Staff

It's August 11. How many County meals have you eaten this month?

Harvestin' the County is a program designed for residents of Prince Edward to show appreciation and support for the County's farmers and agricultural community by eating as much County produce as possible during the month of August.

According to Prince Edward County Economic Development Officer Dan Taylor, Harvestin' has had some great initial response.

"We are just getting underway, but it seems to be going

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Gazette photo by Jason Parks

Best Of The County – (L-R) Taste the County executive director Rebecca LeHeup-Bucknell, Prince Edward County's Economic Development Office summer intern Emily Robson and EDO Dan Taylor show off some of the fresh County vegetables available at the Picton IGA.

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well and I'm pleased with what I've have heard so far. People have stopped me in the street and said how much they like the program," Taylor said.

Depending on the success rate of Harvestin' 06, the 2007 edition could even go longer. "Next year we might see Harvestin' run from the first week of July to the last week of September," Taylor said.

There is a general feeling that more and more consumers are looking to small farms and organic operations for most of their groceries as opposed to factory farms and Taylor says this latest effort will allow the purchaser some familiarity with a product.

"Not only did the food come from a farm, but it also came from a farmer, a person and a face and I believe showing people that this produce is tied to a farmer with a family is key," Taylor said.

Taste The County Executive Director, Rebecca LeHeup-Bucknell, joined Taylor and the EDO's summer intern Emily Robson at the Picton IGA and said the Harvestin' branding has made participating in the program easy.

"Whether it's blueberries from John Hughes or Mill Creek Farm's peas or Fosterholm maple syrup, it's all here clearly marked for convenience and ready for those that might not have the time to go out to a roadside stand," LeHeup-Bucknell said.

The Picton IGA is a trial shop, Taylor said, and hopes are high that other County grocery stores will come on board next year.

"This year is about creating building blocks, getting this thing off the ground and developing it over the next few years."

One of the jewels in the 31-day program is the Harvestin' the County lunch on Tuesday, Aug. 22 at 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the Main Street of Bloomfield

As part of the Harvestin' challenge of eating fresh county produce everyday, organizers are inviting every resident and visitor to a 100 per cent county lunch.

On the menu is beef from Baitley Farms near Wellington, prepared by Ted Aman of Aman's Abattoir and barbecued by Harley Guernsey; sweet corn from Lakeshore Farm Market; potato salad featuring potatoes from Honey Wagon Farm; cheese from Black River Cheese Factory all washed down with sweet, non-alcoholic sparkling cider from the County Cider Company round out the delicious social event.

"Outside of the beef, the entire meal will be prepared by celebrations catering," Leheup-Bucknell said.

Taylor added the event would provide a table for discussion about the agriculture industry.

"It will be a chance for

outreach and for consumers to get to know the farmers that grow the food they eat," said Taylor.

Also in attendance will be representatives from Farm Credit Canada and the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs for those that want to get information about farming issues from all sides of the agriculture spectrum.

Tickets for the event cost \$15 for adults and Children under 16 are \$10 and are available at: Aman's Abattoir, 286 Main St., Wellington; Books on the Bay, 230 Main St., Picton; County Farm Centre, 3 Cold Storage, Picton; Black River Cheese, 913 County Rd 13, Picton; Slickers County Ice Cream, 6 Stanley St., Bloomfield; Taste the County, 289 Main St., Bloomfield.