



Gazette photo by Jason Parks

Farm Hands ? – Councillors (from left to right) Gord Fox, Paul Morris, Monica Alyea and Economic Development Officer Dan Taylor, Robert Quaiff, and Brian Marisset look ready for the fields at the Harvestin' the County media day. The EDO and Taste the County have created a 31 day campaign to promote buying local produce.

Dive into county bounty

Harvestin' the County is looking for your participation

By Jason Parks
Gazette Staff

Harvest time is almost here.

And for the County's fresh market food producers and their supporters, this harvest should be very satisfying.

Harvestin' the County is a 31 day agricultural awareness campaign created by Taste the County and the municipality's economic development office aimed at county residents to buy local and eat fresh, and at the same time, put some more money in the pockets of Prince Edward's produce farmers in the month of August.

"Did you know there are over 2.3 million meal occasions (three meals a day x 31 days x 25,000 people) to be had in August by Prince Edward County residents? Imagine the financial impact that could have on farmers if all those meals were made up of locally grown food," Dan Taylor, Economic Development Officer for Prince Edward County, said at the recent *Harvestin'* media day.

"This campaign is about community and all about showing support and it's real easy to show support – just buy local," he noted.

The event is a unique one through the EDO office and Taylor said he was looking for a way to really positively impact county agriculture in a meaningful way.

"I think the difficulty in agriculture worldwide, let alone local, is a big economic challenge," Taylor said

regarding the issues facing farmers today.

"I've been looking for something that will have an economic impact as opposed to smoke and mirrors, so hopefully this idea is the start of where we are going to make a tangible difference. Prince Edward County wouldn't be Prince Edward County without agriculture and we don't want to lose it, and we can't afford to lose it. I think this is going to be a good...I mean who doesn't want to eat fresh and local and maybe we can have some fun with it," Taylor added.

Taylor acknowledged the event wouldn't address issues in other sectors of agriculture, (ie grains and oilseeds) but it was a start.

When compared to the other major campaigns the EDO and TTC have worked together on in 2006 (Maple in the County, Birding, etc.), this effort is contrasted in that it appeals to local county residents and not trying to attract tourists to Prince Edward County.

Executive director of TTC, Rebecca LeHeup-Bucknell, said the organization does more than just try and draw people to the place that was once known as Canada's foodbasket.

"We don't just work on things that are tourism oriented, Farmer's Faces, for example is an initiative we have

See **Bounty** page 23



Support County farmers by eating and buying locally grown food this August!

Harvestin'

of all harvests please take one step to participate in Harvestin'

Make time to stop by the Harvestin' the County stand. Running August 2nd - 8:00am to 2:00pm on Elmfield's Main Street

the County

Connect us online: harvestin.org or harvestin.org • (619) 978-2796 for details

Gazette photo by Jason Parks

"To Harvest Or Not To Harvest..." - Prince Edward County Economic Development Officer Dan Taylor speaks at the Harvestin' the County media day on Tuesday.

Bounty from pg. 1 worked on. (TTC) isn't just the county's destination marketing organization, we do look at assisting the overall quality enhancement of tourism, agriculture, arts and culture. We work on other initiatives that aren't tourism driven because it is for the betterment of the community as a whole," LeHeup-Bucknell said.

And she's excited about *Harvestin'*.

"It's a really cool way of engaging the local community to support what's here," said LeHeup-Bucknell, adding this is a way for county residents to show tangible support for what is a very important industry in the county.

Fresh fruits and vegetables, local meats and county crafted foods are what organizers are calling local residents to load up on in August. That means not only dropping by your local roadside stand, but also local supermarkets. Tuesday's event was hosted at the Picton IGA and owner

Jamie Yeo said he and his staff were excited about the upcoming campaign.

"We appreciate and support our local agricultural community and work to offer as many local products in our store as possible," Yeo said, adding IGA will be highlighting all of the local produce they offer as well as specialty products such as cheese, maple syrup, etc., to make it easier for those participating to make sure they are buying local.

And if eating local, fresh produce and supporting local farmers isn't enough incentive, *Harvestin'* is also hosting a contest where entrants pledge to spend a certain amount of their grocery bill on local food. The delicious prizes include a half share from Vicki's Veggies in her community shared agriculture program (\$250 value) and a five course tasting menu for two at the Harvest restaurant.

Funding dollars for getting the campaign off the

ground from the Prince Edward-Lennox & Addington Community Futures Development Corporation were presented in the amount of \$2,500 Tuesday and Executive Director Craig Desjardins commented the teamwork exhibited in the creation of the event was great to see.

"It's a great step forward and we are happy to see the local federation of agriculture, Taste the County and the municipality teaming up for the campaign and it's a pleasure to be involved," Desjardins said

Local MPP Ernie Parsons was on hand and said there were issues some politicians wouldn't touch with a 10 foot pole, but he was happy to note he was firmly in support of food. Quips aside, Parsons said eating local meant assurance in the quality of the food people were consuming.

"Food from this community is safe. There are parts of the world where they don't have assur-

ances...but we have it here. There isn't safer food produced in the world than is produced right here," Parsons said.

Mayor of the month, Monica Aleya stepped in for a vacationing Leo Finnegan and told *the Gazette* the campaign should be a great one, but would only go as far as local county residents would take it.

"It will go a long way as long as local people support it. At the end of the day, the tourists will come and go and eat where it's convenient to buy, but if locals don't do the local purchasing, it won't be as successful as it can be," Aleya said, agreeing with Taylor's assessment that, while the event wasn't an all encompassing one, it gets the ball rolling.

"It doesn't take in every sector of agriculture, but it's a start and I think its a great start," she said.

For more information on the project, point your browser to www.thecounty.ca/harvestin.