

Asset Mapping Completed for Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming

For Immediate Release

TORONTO, October 31, 2013 - The Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance presented the findings of their Asset Mapping Project to the Municipal Agriculture Economic Developers Conference in Simcoe, Norfolk County on Thursday, October 31.

A key part of the “Grow the Cluster” pillar of the Alliance's Action Plan, the asset mapping project was initiated to establish an understanding of agri-food assets across the Golden Horseshoe area. These assets include farms, food processors, industry suppliers and distributors, as well as infrastructure, research centres, and the service industry. Now standardized and centralized, the data has allowed for an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the existing assets, while identifying existing gaps and profiling emerging economic opportunities within the regions' food and farming cluster.

Analysis of the data shows the strength of the agricultural industry within a near urban environment. The project has confirmed that the agri-food sector is an essential component of the economy for both the rural and urban areas of the GHFFA region; the Golden Horseshoe region accounts for 38% of total Agri-Food businesses in Ontario.

Strong activity is shown in the two specialty crop areas of the Golden Horseshoe – the Niagara Region and the Holland Marsh. A thriving landscape sector is identified both in the growing of landscape products and the employment in the service sector. In food processing, the Grain/ Milling/ Bakery sector is thriving with potential for more growth. The meat processing industry, on the other hand, shows consolidation and an underrepresentation in the region.

The project brought staff and information from all participating regions and cities together to collaborate on this landmark project. The documented process can also act as a guide for any other groups who wish to map agri-food assets. Partial funding and data for the project was obtained from the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food.

The GHFFA is a partnership between the Toronto Region Conservation Authority, Friends of the Greenbelt, Ontario Ministry of Food and Agriculture (OMAF), and the regional municipalities of Niagara, Peel, Halton, York, and Durham as well as the cities of Hamilton and Toronto. The collaboration works for an integrated and coordinated approach to food and farming viability in the area to ensure that the Golden Horseshoe retains, enhances and expands its role as a leading food and farming cluster.

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