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# Farmers reap benefits of promotion

## Cattlemen impressed by area's willingness to sell homegrown products

By Jennifer Pritchett  
Whig-Standard Environment Reporter  
VERONA

**K**INGSTON-AREA FARMERS ARE DOING better than many across the province when it comes to promoting and selling locally produced food, says the president of the Ontario Cattlemen's Association.

"Every area is trying to get there, but this is as good as I've seen," Gord Hardy told the *Whig-Standard*.

Yesterday, he was one of about 50 members of the Ontario Cattlemen's Association who visited various locations around Kingston as part of the organization's summer advisory councillor meeting.

One of the group's first stops was to visit Kim and Dave Perry's store, Local Family Farms, in Verona. The beef farmers, who own Perry Maine-Anjon Farms in Harrowsmith, sell their own beef, as well as food grown or produced by other farmers in the area.

The family is able to keep the store open in the winter by selling home-made entrees and baked goods using the frozen items grown locally during the summer months.

## *Prince Edward County food eaten up by Toronto restaurants*

By Bruce Bell  
Osprey News Network  
PRINCE EDWARD COUNTY

**P**RODUCE HARVESTED FROM THE fields of Prince Edward County is starting to make its way onto the tables of Toronto restaurants.

The municipality was recently called the "gastronomical capital of Ontario" by the *Globe and Mail* and economic development officer Dan Taylor said the municipality's agriculture sector is not wasting time capitalizing on the recognition.

Speaking at the media day for the third annual Harvestin' the County Supper, Taylor said the program,

By all accounts, the store has been a huge success, with customers in Kingston making the 30-minute drive to Verona to buy the fresh produce and other goods.

"I'm very impressed. What Dave and family have done here is amazing,"

which promotes buying locally, is making huge inroads in larger markets.

"We've come out of the gate because not so long ago, people in the city didn't know about Prince Edward County and now we have been dubbed the gastronomical capital of Ontario and that's a real coup for us," he said.

"Restaurants and stores want to use local produce and they have discovered how high the quality of our food is and they love it. This is all integrated and ties into our creative land use, the infrastructure and the plans for everything we have been working on for the last seven years."

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said Hardy.

It's inspiring to see a small community recognize that they can sell local food.

"They're following everything the [Ontario Cattlemen's Association] and the provincial government are promot-



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ing – eating local, the 100-mile diet,” said Hardy. “It’s just great.”

Indeed, there has been a movement in the Kingston area with the Food Down the Road project that promotes local food.

The project was also a key part of a local food summit held at St. Lawrence College last November. The event aimed to bring farmers together in order to increase public awareness about local food and to develop a system in which farmers could more readily sell it.

But Hardy said the biggest challenge for farmers to market local meat in large national grocery store chains remains a shortage of nearby abattoirs that are certified as federally inspected. The majority of abattoirs are provincially inspected slaughterhouses.

As a general rule, large grocery chains buy federally inspected meat.

“We have an initiative going right now that supports getting more expansion in the more under-serviced areas – including more slaughter facilities and fixing up the ones that are there and making them better,” said Hardy.

**‘It’s like  
potable  
water’**

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There are many farmers across the province who have to truck their animals for hours in order to get their meat to slaughterhouses.

The Ontario Cattlemen’s Associa-

tion is lobbying to change this scenario to make it easier for farmers to sell their meat closer to home.

Kim Perry said her family found a way to sell its beef locally by opening up her own store.

“The large stores could not possibly carry local meat because meat off my farm would have to travel to an abattoir in a larger centre closer to Toronto ... unless there was a real focus to trace the meat because the consumer wanted local meat, there would be so little of the local product available [in the large stores] that no one would ever actually do that,” she said.

“For you in Kingston to buy local, you have to go to a smaller, independent store to buy local beef.”

Perry said provincially inspected meat is of a high standard and the public has nothing to worry about in terms of its safety.

“It’s quality meat, it’s healthy, it’s maintained at proper temperatures,” she said. “It’s like potable water.”

Her family owns one of a small number of stores in the Kingston area that sell local, provincially inspected meat.

Other city businesses that sell meat from Kingston’s countryside include Bob’s Butcher Shop, The Pig and Olive, Gary Greenlees and Barriefield Meat Market.

Perry said her business success is proof of the growing demand for local food.

A poll conducted in 2007 found that local food is in demand and people are willing to buy it. The only problem is, it has to be more readily available in order for people to buy it.

The poll, conducted by Environics in partnership with the Greenbelt Foundation in Toronto, found that 91 per cent of respondents say they would buy more local products if it was more convenient to do so.

It also found that eight people out of 10 say they prefer to buy local and more than half say they do buy local produce once a week.

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# Events promote county

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Taylor said staff has been added to look after sales and the logistics of moving the produce to larger markets and now shipments are being made weekly to Toronto and Kingston, loaded with fresh produce.

Over the last seven years, his office has established events and activities with agri-culinary partners and local groups such as Taste the County, which has helped put the county on the map. Gastronomic and culinary products, including Maple in the County, TASTE! a celebration of regional cuisine, Taste Trail and Harvestin' the County, all showcase the communities strength in this area.

"People want to buy locally and in this area that represents about 27 million meals annually where people have

the opportunity to eat locally grown food," he said.

"In economic development, like business, if you can do one thing well and excel at it, your business will grow. Clearly, that is what our community businesses are doing here from quality farming and food producers to our newly designated wine region status and our fantastic chefs and restaurants."

Rebecca LeHeup-Bucknell, executive director for Taste the County, said the many culinary events held in Prince Edward County have heightened the municipality's reputation.

"In addition to the events that we have organized, others such as the Rotary Wine Dinner, Terroir Wine Festival and 6 Barrels for 6 Chefs, to name a few, have enabled us to solidify our gastronomic position in the province," she said.

*- Belleville Intelligencer*



Ian MacAlpine/The Whig-Standard

**Kim Perry (right) of the Local Family Farms store in Verona greets members of the Ontario Cattleman's Association in Verona yesterday.**

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## LOCAL FLAVOURS



*Michelle Truax of Campbell's Orchards and Country Market on Rednersville Road in Prince Edward County checks the pear crop.*

Bruce Bell/Osprey News Network