

# Holland Marsh Growers get Greenbelt funding

For the past few years, Holland Marsh growers have watched as Greenbelt funding has gone to a wide range of organizations and projects, mostly in Niagara Region, the GTA, even Toronto.

Now, the Holland Marsh Growers Association has received a substantial grant from the Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation, to help promote their products in the local marketplace - and the Association is delighted.

"For decades, the Holland Marsh has been considered the crown jewel for

agricultural production. It is our very own "salad bowl", with over 150 Marsh farmers on nearly 10,000 acres," says farmer and Chair of the Growers' Association, Alex Makarenko. "With the might of the Marsh behind the local food movement, we anticipate a significant shift in choices for consumers."

On August 19, the Association received \$400,000 from the Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation.

"The Holland Marsh is the Olympics of farming,"

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said Foundation president, Burkhard Mausberg. "The sheer volume of vegetables coming from the Greenbelt's Holland Marsh deserves a gold medal. And this grant continues our staunch support for Greenbelt farmers."

To mark the occasion, renowned chef and food advocate Jamie Kennedy created a new salad, using ingredients picked entirely from the Holland Marsh, to showcase the taste, freshness and variety of local produce - including artichoke hearts, romaine lettuce, coloured carrots, radishes, Italian parsley, celery root, topped with roasted beefsteak tomatoes and a shallot vinaigrette. The salads were hand-delivered to Premier

Dalton McGuinty, and local MPP Julia Munro.

Makarenko thanked Kennedy for developing a salad "that reflects the diversity and quality the Marsh is renowned for." He added, "We want consumers asking for products of the Holland Marsh everywhere they go - because our products have the quality, taste and freshness they want, and come with the assurance that what we do is environmentally friendly as well."

The grant will be used to support growing, storing, processing and packaging produce within the marsh, diversify the crops grown, and to help farmers become certified "Local Food Plus", creating a distinct Holland Marsh Local Food Plus brand that consumers can take as a guarantee.

