

## **Ontario Celebrates Local Agri-food Heroes**

*Local food report highlights those who are keeping food on store shelves and kitchen tables during COVID-19 outbreak*

June 3, 2020 9:00 A.M.

TORONTO - The Ontario government is celebrating local agri-food heroes who have stepped up to ensure the province's food supply chain remains strong during the COVID-19 outbreak. Individuals, businesses and organizations are highlighted in [2020 Local Food Report: Ontario Spirit - A Celebration of Local Food Collaboration](#).

"Ontario's agri-food supply chain is one of the strongest in the world and COVID-19 has just reinforced that fact," said Ernie Hardeman, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. "The commitment shown by our farmers, food processors, grocery store workers, truck drivers, restaurateurs, and everyone across the agri-food sector during the COVID-19 outbreak is inspiring."

The 2020 Local Food Report demonstrates the importance of local food for Ontario consumers and communities, while recognizing farmers and those who keep food on our plates. Highlights include:

- Breweries and distilleries adapting their production facilities so they can produce hand sanitizer to help address the supply shortage;
- Organizations promoting local food literacy through online resources, virtual experiences and recipes that focus on locally-sourced ingredients;
- Food banks, industry partners and local communities working together to create and distribute emergency food boxes to those in need;
- Local public health units and agencies, along with industry and community food organizations, collaborating to offer weekly meal packages to families in place of school food programs that aren't currently operating.

"Over the last two months, we have heard stories of hard-working and dedicated people that have adapted to these challenging times and gone above and beyond to ensure access to local Ontario food, and we are pleased to have an opportunity to celebrate them," said Hardeman.

Ontario is home to nearly 49,600 farms and 4,400 food processing facilities that contribute over \$47 billion to the provincial GDP, making the agri-food sector a key economic driver of Ontario's economy. Now more than ever, buying and supporting local food creates jobs and economic growth in communities across the province.

## QUICK FACTS

- Ontario celebrates Local Food Week annually during the first week in June.
- The Local Food Report is a cornerstone of Local Food Week in Ontario.
- To learn more about Ontario's local food system, please visit our [website](#).
- For more than 40 years, [Foodland Ontario](#) has helped consumers identify and purchase all the good things that are grown and made in Ontario.

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