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For Immediate Release

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**Ontario's Local Food Champions:
Cultivating Change in the Broader Public Sector**
- Report Recognizes Leadership and Innovation in Local Food-

(Toronto, Ontario) – Change is in the air and on our plates. More Ontario food is making its way into the kitchens of daycares, schools, universities, colleges, hospitals, long-term care facilities and municipalities in Ontario. Released today, *Ontario's Local Food Champions report* celebrates the local food trailblazers in Ontario's public institutions. The report recognizes three leaders from public institutions and three farm groups that have gone the extra mile to identify solutions to incorporate more Ontario food onto the plates of municipalities and public institutions.

"The role models recognized today are creating the ripple effect of change that is needed to grow the amount of Ontario food in broader public sector institutions. The more Ontario food purchased by the province's institutions, the better it is for our economy, environment and farmers," said Burkhard Mausberg, President, Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation.

The following Champions have demonstrated innovative means to growing the amount of Ontario food in the education, health care and municipal sectors. Here are the highlights:

Jaco Lokker, Director of Food Services, University of Toronto, St. George Campus and Executive Chef at 89 Chestnut Residence:

- Leader in the education sector
- In 2010, 65 per cent of food purchases were from Ontario
- Ontario universities are looking at Jaco's model to drive food procurement changes and increase Ontario food used

Markham, First Ontario Municipality to Develop a Local Food Policy:

- Cutting edge food service model bringing more Ontario food into a municipally run cafeteria
- In 2008 Markham committed to procuring no less than 10 per cent Local Food Plus (LFP) certified Ontario food in the municipal cafeteria, with a target of five per cent yearly increases
- By 2010 over 30 per cent of food procurement was LFP certified, Canada's only local sustainable food certification
- Based on Markham's success other municipalities, such as Halton Region, are implementing similar food procurement policies

Leslie Carson, Director Food & Nutrition Services, St. Joseph's Health Centre, Guelph:

- Overcoming operational barriers to provide more Ontario food to residents in a health care facility
- After introducing salads and hot dishes made with Ontario foods, satisfaction rate with food service has climbed to 87 per cent among St. Joseph's patients and residents, compared with Ontario's 60 per cent average
- With 115 million meals served to patients and residents at Ontario's health care facilities, St. Joseph's is proof that there are vast opportunities for growing the amount of Ontario food served in such facilities



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In addition to these Champions, three farm groups: Vineland Growers, Algoma Orchards and Rowe Farms, are also highlighted as leaders serving public institutions. They represent the strength in Ontario's agricultural community to develop innovation that meets the unique needs of broader public sector institutions.

Ontario's Local Food Champions also launches the nomination process for the 2012 Champions. It is open to anyone working across the agri-food value chain to increase the amount of Ontario food in public institutions. The selected applicants and nominees innovations will be celebrated by being profiled in the January 2012 Ontario's Local Food Champions report. Nomination forms are available in the 2011 report and online at www.greenbelt.ca.

Ontario's Local Food Champions is available online at www.greenbelt.ca and upon request by emailing info@greenbelt.ca.

Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation:

Ontario's Greenbelt is over 1.8 million acres of green space, farmland, vibrant communities, forests, wetlands, and watersheds – all permanently protected by world-leading legislation. In return, the Greenbelt gives back much to Ontario, providing \$5.4 billion to Ontario's economy through farming and food production, and \$2.6 billion in ecosystem services annually.

The Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation is working to help farmers in the Greenbelt be more successful; to protect and enhance natural features; and to strengthen local economies. To learn more about the Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation, please visit www.greenbelt.ca.

With a commitment to building awareness and growing the amount of Ontario food reaching broader public sector institutions, the Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation and its sister organization the Greenbelt Fund have received funding from the Ontario government to execute several initiatives, including Ontario's Local Food Champions.

The additional projects include:

- **Broader Public Sector Investment Fund (Greenbelt Fund):** Grants are being distributed to organizations to increase the amount of Ontario food served in daycares, schools, universities and colleges, hospitals and long-term care facilities. Letters of intent for the final round of grants will be accepted until June 15, 2011. Visit www.ontariofresh.ca for more information.
- **Ontariofresh.ca (Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation):** A free website and online marketplace that will expand the market for buyers and sellers of Ontario food. Individuals can register and create a profile in advance of the site launch in late summer. Visit www.ontariofresh.ca to register and build a profile.

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