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Green Tractors John Deere dealerships to host Green Tag Event Open Houses

Green Tractors in Nobleton, Brampton and Milton are hosting Green Tag Event Open Houses next Saturday (May 8), running from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The Green Tractors Green Tag Event Ride and Drive Open House is a unique opportunity for consumers to get behind the wheel of a variety of equipment, from lawn tractors to gators, and from compact utility tractors to large farm equipment. Specialists and dealer representatives will be on hand to demonstrate the new lineup of John Deere equipment.

Stephanie Berger, advertising and marketing coordinator of Green Tractors, said "many people have concerns about what exactly is best suited for their property's needs - this day is a great way to see our smart solutions first hand.

"The event is designed to provide people who may not be familiar with John Deere equipment a chance to check out the equipment, operate it and learn more about the features, maintenance, attachments and other aspects of equipment ownership," she added. "We want to make it a fun experience for everyone and to bring the community together."

Visit the Web site www.greentractors.ca or your local Green Tractors John Deere Dealership for details.



Liberal Leader Michael Ignatieff was at the Holland Marsh farm of Doug Van Luyk (left) Monday, announcing the party's National Food Policy. Also on hand was York - Simcoe Liberal candidate Cynthia Wesley-Esquimaux, former Oak Ridges - Markham MP Lui Temelkovski, Liberal Agriculture Critic Wayne Easter and Health Critic Dr. Carolyn Bennett.

Photo by Bill Rea

Ignatieff commits to Canada's first National Food Policy

By Bill Rea

Rural Canada matters when it comes to healthy, home-grown food.

That was the message federal Liberal Leader Michael Ignatieff had Monday as he announced Canada's first National Food Policy.

He made the announcement on the Holland Marsh after touring one of the farm operations there.

Several other Liberal officials were on hand for the announcement, including former Oak Ridges - Markham MP Lui Temelkovski and Cynthia Wesley-Esquimaux, nominated Liberal candidate in York - Simcoe. Also in attendance was Liberal Agriculture Critic Wayne

Easter.

In his remarks, Easter stressed the importance of farmers to the overall well-being of the country. "Farmers in this country are the generators of economic wealth, he declared, adding they are not always able to retain a lot of that wealth for themselves.

The announcement was made at Holland Acres Farm, which has been run by the Van Luyk family for three generations. Ignatieff observed it's in the heart of "Canada's salad bowl," having produced high-quality food since the 1930s. He commented that the produce from the marsh could put four pounds of carrots on every Canadian plate per year.

"Urban Canada takes rural Canada for granted," Ignatieff declared. "That's got to stop."

"It's not just rural Canada feeds urban Canada," he added. "Rural Canada employs urban Canada."

Farming provides roughly one-eighth of the jobs in Canada, generating some \$42 billion annually in economic activity and contributing eight per cent to the country's gross domestic product (GDP). But he added the recent economic woes have strained farms to the breaking point.

"We need more home-grown food on Canadian tables - because our health and our economy depend on it," Ignatieff said. "Our

farmers produce the healthiest, safest, highest-quality foods in the world - and we'll help them get more of their products on our tables with Canada's first comprehensive National Food Policy."

Ignatieff pledged that a future Liberal government will implement the comprehensive food policy, focusing on five areas for action:

- Healthy living, including an \$80-million Buy Local Fund to promote farmers' markets and home-grown foods, a \$40-million Healthy Start program to help 250,000 low-income children access healthy foods, introducing progressive health labeling and tough standards on trans fats, and launching a Healthy Choices program to help Canadians make informed eating decisions;
- Safe food, by implementing all of the Weatherill Report (which investigated what led to the listeriosis outbreak that left 22 people dead during the summer of 2008) recommendations and investing \$50 million in improving food inspections and ensuring imported foods meet tough domestic standards;
- Sustainable farm incomes, with a Clean Slate Commitment to build practical, bankable farm programs in partnership with farmers and restore AgriFlex to offer regionally flexible programs that help meet the costs of production;
- Environmental farmland stewardship, by strengthen-

ing Environmental Farm Plans, improving fertilizer and pesticide management, and rewarding farmers for their role in clean energy production and protecting wildlife habitat; and

• International leadership, to promote Canadian food internationally and expand Canada's share of high-value export markets while also fostering food security in Africa and the world's poorest nations. "We've got to get behind the Canadian bran internationally," he declared.

"We can't prevent disease, fight obesity or control health care costs if we don't get more healthy home-grown food on our tables," said Liberal Health Critic Dr. Carolyn Bennett, who was also on hand for the announcement. "Our farmers will be central to meeting the health care challenge of the next decade."

The National Food Policy is the second part of the Liberal Party's "Rural Canada Matters" initiative. Ignatieff recently announced a plan to help attract doctors and nurses to underserved rural communities.

"We're presenting Canadians with a clear choice," he said. "The Liberal choice is to pay down the deficit and invest in priorities like a comprehensive National Food Policy, while Stephen Harper has chosen more tax cuts for corporations that our country and our families can't afford."

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