

## **Minutes of the Production Task Group, Savour Muskoka**

**Date:** December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2010, 7:30pm, Bracebridge Arena

**In attendance:** Ayako Horiguchi, Joel Clipsham, Eyan Wheatley, Lynda Hutt, Dianne Kretschmar, Gord Mitchell, Ruth Weise, Sue Smith, Briar Smith, Mike McKenna, Ron & Bonnie Karson, Matt Richter, Elise Curry, Karen Harvey, Klaus Wand, Bob Norris.

**Regrets:** Melissa Halford, John Earl, James Murphy.

Dianne gave a brief background on the process that has brought about this meeting and the formation of the Production Task Group. This group has been asked to address several related topics which came forward at the November session at Grandview. It is hoped to have a solid action plan and budget by mid February 2011.

Key points of discussion are categorized and summarized below.

**Inventory:** There is a need to do an inventory of equipment, tools, greenhouses, skills, land etc that is available in Muskoka-Parry Sound. Diversity, variety and the coordination of production is also an important aspect. Savour Muskoka's Chefs Committee has been asked to prepare their wish list to help guide producers.

There is a need to consider the entire process including storage, processing and marketing.

ACTION: Ron Karson, Lynda Hutt & Dianne Kretschmar will explore the inventory and resources available to new and established farmers and report back at the next meeting.

**Education:** Education was an ongoing theme in the evenings discussions. Dianne has made initial contact regarding the Farmstart program based in Guelph.

Based on the very positive uptake in the fall workshops offered, Savour Muskoka is tentatively planning a February workshop.

The website at Savour Muskoka could be a starting place for agricultural education.

Each high school has a well developed Hospitality program. Eyan Wheatley suggested taking his hospitality class to a local farm for a hands on experience that included working on projects to assist the farmers.

Savour Muskoka does have an Education Committee which Elise Curry is a member of. They will be having a meeting in Mid January and she would welcome individuals who are interested to attend.

ACTION: Bob Norris offered to look into the Farmstart program in more detail.

**Mentoring:** It was expressed that mentorship is an important piece to encouraging and supporting new producers. Concerns were raised regarding the time and money involved in sharing knowledge with potential competitors. A 4H type club for adults was suggested as a potential way to share knowledge. The need to foster a more cooperative attitude was noted.

**Website:** A website has the potential to enhance education and to connect farmers to resources. The value of a website came up several times. Dianne did address the reality that there is a financial implication to making additions to the Savour Muskoka website or to the creation of a new website.

ACTION: suggest to Savour Muskoka that a forum be created on their website to list resources as they become available.

**Videoclips:** Karen Harvey has prepared a 4 minute video clip of Dianne at her farm. She has offered to do this for others who are interested.

**Government Regulations:** There was discussion regarding government regulations and the need to 'push back'. This requires getting more people informed and engaged to put pressure on the government.

**Farm Labour:** There is a need for skilled and reliable labour. Suggestions to address this issue included trying to have an apprenticeship program created, which led back to the education theme. CSA's were also mentioned as an option. Another untapped resource may be retirees who might be interested in farm work.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynda Hutt