



Royal City Men's Club

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Anniversary Luncheon

April 17th, 2014

The Royal City Men's Club met in the Trinity United Church Gymnasium on the above date. There were 51 members, one guest, the guest speaker and the Trinity Church Minister in attendance.

President Soren Sondergaard called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m. by ringing the bell, welcomed everyone and noted that we were starting later than usual because of our Anniversary Lunch to follow the meeting. He recognized guest Joe Markey and the guest speaker and presented a short watermelon story.

Ed Herold introduced guest speaker Art Smith, CEO of the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association (OF&VGA).

Art spoke about: Areas in which the OF&VGA works, Services and programs of the OF&VGA, Sector make-up of the Industry, Sector issues, and What lies ahead. The areas included: Crop Protection Labour, Safety Nets, and Food Safety and Security. Their services and programs included The Grower, a monthly publication; a School Snack Program currently concentrated in northern Ontario; Fresh from the Farm, a school fund-raising program; Water Use, to help growers be compliant with government regulations; and Vineland Research and Innovation Centre, to develop new crops that will allow Ontario producers to capitalize on the tastes of new Canadians.

The Fruit and Vegetable Industry in Ontario is dominated by greenhouse production at \$800 million per year, followed by: Field grown vegetables \$250M, Potatoes \$100M, Grapes \$100M, Apples \$75M, Tender Fruit \$55M, and Small Fruit \$25M.

Art talked about three Sector Issues:

- **Global Marketplace:** Year round supplies of fruits and vegetables from lower production cost areas have reduced the pent-up demand impact of seasonality and lowered prices to Ontario producers.
- **Retail Consolidation:** 95 percent of fruits and vegetables are sold through Loblaws, Metro and Sobeys. They are exerting "Walmart-like pressure" on suppliers, reducing the price they agree to and then paying only 98% on invoices.
- **Government Regulations:** Necessary but can be too costly for producers.

So what lies ahead?

- Nine billion people in the world to be fed by 2050 presents a huge opportunity.
- Survival of the sectors depends largely on government regulations.
- Policies must be developed with food production in mind.

Art entertained a number of questions before Ed Herold thanked him and reinforced the impact of high cost regulations with a story about shrimp farmers going out of business in Hawaii. He then gave Art a book on the History of Guelph as a token of appreciation on behalf of the RCMC. Members gave him a good round of applause.

Ray Biffis said 51 members had paid up for the lunch. Soren advised that coffee next week will be at the Symposium Restaurant and the next meeting will be May 1 in the Church Sanctuary, at the regular time. Mark Fenske will be speaking about Brain Fitness and Resilience.

Tom Beale, Chair of the Nominations Committed advised that we are seeking candidates for Vice President and three other Director positions on the Board. He encouraged anyone interested to speak to him after the meeting.

Soren adjourned the meeting at 11:43 a.m. and members moved their chairs to the tables in preparation for an excellent lunch catered by The Pour House.

Gordon Framst
Secretary