

## News Release

### **New Ontario hazelnut grower association formed**

*For Immediate Release*

Simcoe, Ontario, June xx, 2013 — Hazelnut growers have formed Ontario's newest farm organization. The Ontario Hazelnut Association (OHA) has been designated as an incorporated organization by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food (OMAF) under the *Agricultural and Horticultural Organizations Act*.

“The incorporation of the Ontario Hazelnut Association marks the latest milestone in a multi-year effort to establish a hazelnut industry in Ontario,” says John Kelly, Vice President of Erie Innovation and Commercialization, an initiative of the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association. “This is a significant step forward that will help us continue this important work and provide new market opportunities for Ontario farmers.”

Martin Hodgson, a grower from Courtland, Ontario, is the chair of the new organization. The executive includes a Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and a Public Relations/Membership Officer. A temporary executive will be appointed until the organization can hold its first annual or general membership meeting. The OHA board will be made up of a maximum of 13 directors representing the organization's membership and the head office will be located in Norfolk County at a location yet to be determined.

The OHA's objectives will focus on promoting the development, sale and export of hazelnut agricultural products; setting a vision for the province's hazelnut industry; creating a network for information sharing and collaboration amongst stakeholders and actively advocating for development and growth of the industry.

As a result of a hazelnut development project currently underway, a market potential equivalent to 10,000 hectares of hazelnut trees has been established in Ontario. The potential net return is estimated at \$2,000 per acre. It can take four years for hazelnut trees, which can be grown in Ontario in the same regions apples are, to start bearing fruit and seven years before they hit full production.

Investment in this project is provided by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada through the Canadian Agricultural Adaptation Program. In Ontario, this program is delivered by the Agricultural Adaptation Council. Support is also provided by the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association, Prince Edward Island Soil and Crop Improvement Association, Society of Ontario Nut Growers and Au Jardin des Noix.

Erie Innovation and Commercialization is part of the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association, dedicated to pursuing a regional approach to agricultural diversification to ensure the continuing economic stability and sustainability of the sector. Visit [www.erieinnovation.com](http://www.erieinnovation.com)

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