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For Immediate Release

FFCO celebrates agriculture excellence at Harvest Gala

November 16, 2023 – (Milton) Farm & Food Care Ontario (FFCO) hosted the sixteenth annual Harvest Gala on Thursday, November 16, in Milton. 225 farmers, agribusiness professionals and other FFCO supporters attended the event to celebrate Ontario food and farming and raise funds for the charity's outreach activities.

Highlights from the evening included the unveiling of sixth edition of *The Real Dirt on Farming*, a celebration of the successful return to on-farm Breakfast on the Farm events, and the presentation of the 2023 Paul Mistele Memorial Award by Feed Ontario to Egg Farmers of Ontario.

Named for the late farm leader who founded Ontario Pork's Donate-A-Hog program in 1998, the Paul Mistele Memorial Award recognizes agricultural partners who have shown a significant and enduring commitment to ending hunger in Ontario. The award was accepted by EFO Chair Scott Helps. EFO was chosen for its longstanding commitment to the Feed Ontario egg program.

"Egg Farmers of Ontario provided an incredible 110,000 dozen eggs to Feed Ontario member food banks across the province this year, and have provided an astounding 1.2 million dozen since the program began in 2014," said Feed Ontario's CEO, Carolyn Stewart. "As food banks work to address record-high demand, this support is making an incredible difference in our ability to ensure people and families across Ontario have access to nutritious protein. Thank you to the Egg Farmers of Ontario for their continued and generous support."

"Egg Farmers of Ontario are committed to helping families and communities in Ontario to access healthy proteins - like eggs - through our donation program with Feed Ontario," said Scott Helps, EFO Chair. "We are honoured to be the recipient of the Paul Mistele Memorial Award for 2023 for this program designed to make it easier for farmers and stakeholders to contribute fresh, high-quality eggs."

Joining FFCO supporters was Parliamentary Assistant Trevor Jones, Member of Provincial Parliament for Chatham-Kent-Leamington. In addressing the crowd, PA Jones spoke about Farm & Food Care's important work on behalf of Ontario's entire agri-food industry.

"Ensuring that Ontarians have the facts on where their food comes from, how it grows, and how it is made is key to raising awareness and increasing public trust in our provincial food system," said Parliamentary Assistant Trevor Jones. "Through funding support of FFCO's activities including Breakfast on the Farm, farm tours for culinary students, and a large offering of digital consumer outreach activities highlighting the diversity of farms and food processing facilities to consumers, we stand alongside FFCO and its members to deliver these critical programs."

"Each year, the Harvest Gala is a time for Ontario's agriculture community members to come together to celebrate the harvest and look ahead with great promise for what we can accomplish together," stated FFCO Chair Crispin Colvin. "FFCO is proud to play a vital role in a busy industry, helping to gather, share and amplify the stories of each unique part of the agriculture sector, building public trust in food and farming across this great province. More than that, it's about continuing to show up and respond to consumers' questions about the food they feed their families daily."

All funds raised at the event will be put into future public trust initiatives. Anyone wishing to make a charitable gift to support FFCO's work can visit www.FarmFoodCareON.org.

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Farm & Food Care Ontario is a coalition of farmers, agriculture and food partners proactively working together to ensure public trust and confidence in food and farming. Farm & Food Care provides a coordinated approach and credible information on food and farming in Ontario. For more information visit www.FarmFoodCareON.org

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