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For Immediate Release

Building and Sustaining a Strong Local Food Value Chain 4th Annual Local Food Networking Event

February 9, 2012—GUELPH/ WELLINGTON, Ontario—Long the domain of farm stands and outdoor markets, the local food trend has grown from its modest roots into a multimillion dollar economy, and is now poised to capture significantly more value from the \$1.2 billion meat, dairy and produce industry. Restaurants, retailers, processors, distributors and even hospitals and high schools have quickly become a major market for local products and farmers are eager to cash in on this major market opportunity. It's not always easy for busy people to find each other, so Guelph Wellington Local Food has stepped in to make a few introductions. SOURCE IT HERE!, a Business to Business Networking Event, now in its fourth year, will be held at Loyola House, Ignatius Jesuit Centre on Monday February 27th from noon to 5:30pm.

"Creating and sustaining strong business relationships between farmers and businesses is central to the vitality of our local food system. We have reached the point where significant shifts need to occur in the way local food is bought and sold in order to achieve sustainable and secure food value chains. This event helps create those partnerships, and create the change that consumers have long desired," explains Kate Vsetula, coordinator of Guelph Wellington Local Food.

Farmers, retailers, processors, distributors and chefs join forces to bring more local food to local plates. It's exciting to for us to welcome for the first time our public sector partners; schools, hospitals, daycares and the University of Guelph who have been working with Guelph Wellington Local Food to implement more local food on their menus. The panel discussion, as well as the break out sessions and trade show component of the event each have a lot to offer to the attendees. This event is open to the 120 current taste real partners that have committed to using more local food in our region as well as any other businesses that are interested in finding out how they can be more actively involved in the local food value chains.

The keynote address Sustaining Value Chains....Priceless, will be presented by Dr. Ralph Martin, Loblaw Chair in Sustainable Food Production, University of Guelph. "It will be fascinating to learn how people in our community have become engaged with local food, each other and the possibilities for improving lives here," Dr. Martin enthused.

As part of the event, businesses from six different categories will be awarded the 2012 Local Food Champion Award for their efforts to promote Local Food. Nominations are open and can be submitted until February 17th , 2012.

This event has been made possible by funding from The Greenbelt Fund, University of Guelph, Wellington-Waterloo Community Future Development Corporation, the City of Guelph, Ignatius Jesuit Centre and the Guelph Community Health Centre.

Detailed information regarding the event and the awards as well as online registration are available at www.guelphwellingtonlocalfood.ca.

For more information on the Source It Here! Guelph Wellington Local Food Networking Event, please contact Kate Vsetula at (519) 821-6638 ex 335 or info@guelphwellingtonlocalfood.ca.

Guelph Wellington Local Food is an initiative of the Guelph CHC, which works to build relationships that, will grow a prosperous local food economy in Guelph and Wellington County.