



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**The Royal Agricultural Winter Fair builds a shrine to local food**

The biggest addition to the Fair in years highlights the culinary delights from across the province.

**September 23, 2019 [Toronto, ON]** – The Royal Agricultural Winter Fair has announced a new feature for the 2019 edition of the 97-year old Fair. *Spotlight on Local Presented by Metro* is a 7000+ square foot feature that brings together winners from this year’s Royal food competitions, entrepreneurs from Metro’s *Locally Sourced* program, and the best artisanal local food and beverage suppliers from across Ontario’s regional tourism destinations.

At the heart of this initiative is the opportunity for Royal patrons to meet the amateur, semi-professional and professional makers, bakers and producers who represent the very best local food that Ontario has to offer. *Spotlight on Local Presented by Metro* is comprised of several elements including *Champions Showcase Presented by Metro*, Ontario’s regional tourism destinations, OLG Entertainment Stage and Metro’s *Locally Sourced* program.

*Champions Showcase* will feature prize-winning products from the Royal’s Food Competitions with a different food product being featured each day, including three new categories. The best butter, butter tarts, cheese, honey, maple products, jams, jellies, pickles and preserves and for the first time ever, champion ice-cream, hot sauce, and jerky.

Ontario’s regional tourism destinations will provide an opportunity to experience the wineries, breweries, growers, producers, bakers and food innovators from areas all over Ontario including Niagara-on-the-Lake, the Central Counties (York, Durham, and Headwaters), Manitoulin Island, South Eastern Ontario, Northern Ontario, Grey, Simcoe and Frontenac Counties, as well as the province’s Indigenous Communities. Featured products will include cheese curds, chocolate, haskap berry treats, bison, craft beers and ciders, pies, bannock, and cheesecakes. Attendees will also get to experience the culinary and Agri-tourism destinations across the province including open-to-the-public farms, farm-to-table dining experiences, Niagara-on-the-Lake’s Ice-Wine Festival, Central Counties’ Temperance & Temptation tour and Trousdale’s General Store (Canada’s Oldest General Store).

The OLG Entertainment Stage will feature ten days of live entertainment including musicians from across the province and instructional sessions such as Kitchen Gardening and Cottage Coach.

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As part of their Locally Sourced program, Metro has been sourcing and qualifying local small businesses and food entrepreneurs, providing business coaching, marketing support, free listing opportunities and prominent placement in stores. Fair-goers will have a chance to meet some of the Locally Sourced success stories, sample and purchase their delicious goods.

“People are paying very close attention to where their food is coming from and who the people and businesses are behind that food,” said Charlie Johnstone, CEO of The Royal. “We knew that we wanted to build something special for 2019 that really showcased all of the great small businesses and hopeful amateurs that we see every year in our food competitions. When we saw what Metro was doing with their Locally Sourced program we knew it was a natural fit, and we are so pleased to have them on board to help present Spotlight on Local.”

As part of the partnership, successful entrants may earn distribution in Metro stores regionally or across Ontario, an introduction to Metro’s private brands or the opportunity to work with Metro to develop products and scale. This is in addition to the traditional benefits of entry into The Royal competitions - tremendous exposure at the country’s most prestigious agricultural event, with the winners featured in the Fair’s media and marketing communications.

“As a neighbourhood grocer, we are always looking to tailor our product offering to the community through our Locally Sourced program. This partnership with The Royal represents our mutual recognition and support of Ontario-based suppliers. We look forward to seeing the best that Ontario producers have to offer,” says Joe Fusco, Senior Vice President, Metro.

Food competition winners will be on display and sampled throughout the duration of the Fair in the Champions Showcase, within the brand-new feature: Spotlight on Local Presented by Metro. For more information please email [foodcompetitions@royalfair.org](mailto:foodcompetitions@royalfair.org)

#### **About The Royal Agricultural Winter Fair**

Every year in November, more than 300,000 guests visit The Royal Agricultural Winter Fair, which is the world’s largest combined indoor agricultural and equestrian show in the world. Held at Exhibition Place in Toronto, the Fair showcases Canada’s leaders in agricultural, food, and equine excellence. The Fair runs November 1-10, 2019.

#### **About METRO INC.**

With annual sales of approximately \$16 billion, METRO INC. is a food and pharmacy leader in Québec and Ontario. As a retailer, franchisor, distributor, and manufacturer, the company operates or services a network of more than 600 food stores under several banners including Metro, Metro Plus, Super C and Food Basics, as well as of more than 650 drugstores primarily under the Jean Coutu, Brunet, Metro Pharmacy and Drug Basics banners, providing employment to almost 90,000 people. For more details, visit [corpo.metro.ca](http://corpo.metro.ca).

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