

Media Release

Camros Organic Eatery joins COG Toronto's Off Our Plates! Program

(Toronto, ON, November 20, 2010) The Canadian Organic Growers – Toronto chapter (COG Toronto) hosted an event today to welcome Camros Organic Eatery to COG Toronto's Off Our Plates! Program.

The event was held at the Camros Organic Eatery at 25 Hayden Street with Tanmayo Krupanszky, Special Projects Coordinator and former Chair of COG Toronto, Mojdeh Shams, Founder of the Camros Eatery and Heike Heinze, co-director of the Off Our Plates! Program making the announcement.

By joining the Off Our Plates! Program, Camros Organic Eatery has committed to removing all foods items from their restaurant containing genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and working with COG Toronto to raise consumer awareness about GMOs and their adverse affects.

"We believe in clean and healthy food," says Mojdeh Shams. "We're hoping to spark a debate about GMOs and inform people of their adverse effects."

GMOs are plants and animals with altered or engineered genetic material. Genes from bacteria, viruses and other species are inserted into plants to create crops called genetically-modified crops which are then used in animal feed and human food. Studies show that genetically-modified foods result in health and environmental risks such as the development of antibiotic resistance and crop contamination.

"Canadian consumers have to wake up! Genetically modified foods pose a serious health risk, especially for infants and children, but most Canadians are not aware of GMOs, even though experts estimated that more than half of our food already contains them," says Heike Heinze, COG Toronto's co-director of the Off Our Plates! Program."

Consumers in other developed countries are aware of GMOs and their potential health risks. Europe has demonstrated a long history of resistance to the introduction of GMOs and since 2004, genetically-modified food must be labeled.

Heinze went on to say "Canada and the U.S. are currently the only two countries in the developed world that refuse to mandatory label genetically modified foods. The Off Our Plates! Program aims to get the participation of restaurants, schools and daycare kitchens as part of this education. We need educated consumers to make better choices in order to change the way our food is produced."

COG Toronto is the consumer chapter of a national organization, Canadian Organic Growers, and is concerned with providing information about eating and growing organic food.

For further details on GMOs, please visit www.cogtoronto.org or www.cog.ca

For more information or to schedule interviews, please contact Tanmayo Krupanszky, COG Toronto, 416-466-9584 or email tanmayo@idirect.com

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Canadian Organic Growers (COG) is a national charitable organization with chapters across the country. Membership includes farmers, gardeners, processors, retailers, educators, policy-makers, and consumers who share a vision for a sustainable bioregionally-based organic food system. Our members believe that organic food production is the best choice for the health of consumers and producers, for the protection and enhancement of the environment, and for the sustainability of the food production system.

COG Toronto is a consumer based chapter providing leadership and direction for the community and members interested in becoming knowledgeable, and/or creating and participating in organic education, events or projects. We encourage and support individuals in making informed choices and in taking actions to support that. COG Toronto holds an annual organic consumer conference in Toronto in February featuring top of mind issues for organic consumers and has recently spear headed the Off Our Plates! Program helping consumers live GMO free.

The Off Our Plates! Program is a project of Canadian Organic Growers Toronto. The program will help restaurants, schools and institutions identify and eliminate ingredients that are Genetically Engineered or 'at risk' for contamination. Its purpose is to alert consumers to the presence of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) in their food and provide them with alternatives.