

Lennox Farm, Field to Fork series gives glimpse into local agriculture

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Lennox Farm is working to bridge the disconnect between how food goes from the farm to the plate with a dinner series aimed at giving a glimpse behind the curtain of the agriculture industry.

"We feel so grateful to have the privilege of eating healthy, fresh food every single day and completely understanding where food is sourced from and what goes into producing it," said Jeannette French. "We believe in transparency and that you should know what you're eating, and where it comes from. A lot of people are disconnected with the food system and what they put on their plate every night."

Lennox Farm launched the Field to Fork experience in 2022 for residents and tourists, as a once-a-month event running from June until October. The goal of the five-part dinner series is to teach visitors about farming practices on Lennox Farm and show how their food goes from the farm to their plates.

"Food is something that everyone needs for survival and we depend on it a couple times a day at least, but we're really disconnected about what we're eating or where it's coming from," said French.

Each event spans roughly four hours with the first half consisting of a tractor and walking tour of the farm.

"We explore what we're growing, teach them about some regenerative farming practices we use on our farm and show them our greenhouses," explained French.

Then, after they've helped harvest some of the food items used in their dinner, the guests sit down for two-hour meal served in the field or in one of Lennox Farm's open-air buildings. The meals are created by a different chef each time and are made using ingredients and seasonal produce grown on Lennox Farm.

On the 500-acre farm, the three main crops grown are rhubarb, English pod peas and brussels sprouts, but the farm also grows an additional 35 produce items including; corn; potatoes; squash; asparagus; tomatoes; cauliflower; lettuce; zucchini; eggplant; and various herbs.

The chefs for the event are chosen from the local area or are clients of Lennox Farm, who has purchased produce directly from the farm for their restaurants.

"We've never repeated a chef. They each bring their unique flair, cooking style and background making every dinner a little different," said French.

Each summer, Lennox Farm chooses a local group, organization or charity to donate the proceeds raised through the Field to Fork event.

This year, Lennox Farm will be donating the proceeds to Headwaters Food and Farming Alliance (HFFA) and thus far, they've raised around \$2,000.

"They believe that the community should have access to healthy food and that farmers deserve to be compensated for providing that food. They do a lot of educational activities within the local school system and I think there's nothing better than inspiring our youth to be interested in food, how it's produced and what they're eating every day," said French.

Lennox Farm will be hosting its final Field to Fork experience for the 2024 year on October 5 from 4:30 to 8:30 p.m.

The event will show the final stages of Lennox Farm's field harvest, with guests learning about how brussels sprouts grow, how the farm uses greenhouses when the weather is not good, and how they cure vegetables such as onions, squash, garlic and sweet potatoes for the winter.

Guests will then have the chance to eat a four-course meal, created by Nishant Singh Negi, head chef and owner of Farm Concierge and Chef de Cuisine, Yumi Nakano. Local musician Sohayla Smith will provide entertainment throughout the evening.

?It's really fall focused and I love it because the weather is usually beautiful and it's colourful. It's just a great month to come out and explore the farm,? said French.

Tickets for the Field to Fork experience cost \$130 and can be purchased by visiting the Lennox Farm website at www.lennoxfarm.ca.