



Thursday, March 18, 2010

## \$377K for Ivanhoe Cheese

Gay Lea Foods is pleased to share the news that its Ivanhoe Cheese division has been awarded a \$377,000 provincial government grant through the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. This funding was made available from the Rural Economic Development Program, which is a key part of the Ontario's Rural Plan, a vision for building stronger rural communities.

Yesterday, Leona Dombrowsky, MPP for Prince Edward-Hastings made the announcement at Ivanhoe Cheese to plant management and employees, and local media. "It places cheese producers as a beacon in the food processing industry," she said.

Dombrowsky said the money will allow Ivanhoe Cheese to make environmental upgrades at its facility by installing a wash water system. The system will allow the treatment and re-use of a portion of the waste water that would normally be spread on farm fields over the summer months. We are investigating the possibility of sending solid materials produced by the treatment system to an energy generating station to serve as bio-fuel.

In recent months, the government modified its criteria for applications to this fund after recognizing that cheese factories in rural Ontario communities were important economic drivers.

Dave Toop, plant manager, is excited to see this Ivanhoe project going ahead. He predicted the wash water system will be up and running by the end of the year. He thanked Chris Spencer, operations manager at Ivanhoe Cheese, for his help in putting the application together.

Currently a consulting company is working on a hydro geological study to determine how much pre-treatment the wastewater will need. Gay Lea will then select one of the three proposals it has received to go ahead with the actual \$750,000 project. Work is expected to start in about 12 weeks; the project is expected to be complete before the snow flies next winter.

This is great news for Gay Lea Foods. On hand to welcome guests and share in the exciting news was VP of Operations for Gay Lea Foods, Amrit Leighl. In her words, "With this investment, we can continue making quality local cheeses, help protect the environment and support our sustainability initiatives. As a leader in the Ontario dairy sector, Gay Lea Foods is proud to be participating in this program to ensure the continued success of Ivanhoe Cheese, the newest member of our co-operative family."



*Pictured above (l to r): Dave Toop, plant manager; Leona Dombrowsky, former Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs; Amrit Leighl, VP of Operations*