



April 11, 2014

Rose Caterini
City Clerk
City of Hamilton
Hamilton City Hall, 71 Main Street West
Hamilton ON L8P 4Y5

Dear Ms. Caterini,

As outlined by Regulation 720 under the *Liquor Licence Act* (www.e-laws.gov.on.ca), Vintner's Quality Alliance ("VQA") wine may be sold at eligible Ontario farmers' markets beginning on May 1, 2014. As the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario (AGCO) will be administering this new program, I would like to take this opportunity to outline key aspects that may impact municipalities, including municipal authority to restrict VQA wine sales within their jurisdiction.

To participate in this program, wineries must obtain an authorization from the Registrar of Alcohol and Gaming ("Registrar") for an occasional extension of their on-site winery retail store. Authorized occasional extensions will only be permitted to operate within farmers' markets that meet the definition provided in Regulation 720 under the *Liquor Licence Act*:

"farmers' market" means a central location at which a group of persons who operate stalls or other food premises meet to sell or offer for sale to consumers products that include, without being restricted to, farm products, baked goods and preserved foods, and at which a substantial number of the persons operating the stalls or other food premises are producers of farm products who are primarily selling or offering for sale their own products.

Regulation 720 also provides a municipality with the ability to prohibit the sale of VQA wine at any or all farmers' markets located within it by providing a written objection to the Registrar (by mail or email of a scanned copy of the signed original to farmersmarkets@agco.ca). A municipality will be able to exercise their authority to object at any time, regardless of whether VQA wine has been sold at a particular farmers' market previously.

Additionally, municipalities that operate farmers' markets or permit farmers' markets to operate on municipal property, may be able to set further rules for VQA wine sales within those farmers' markets, as long as the rules do not contravene the AGCO's regulatory framework as set out in the *Liquor Licence Act*, Regulations and Registrar's policies. The AGCO will conduct inspections to ensure compliance with the LLA, Regulations, and Registrar's policies.

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A list of farmers' markets that intend to allow VQA wine sales will be posted on the AGCO web site. This list will be updated on a weekly basis and can be accessed after May 1, 2014 at www.agco.on.ca.

The AGCO will be hosting a webinar on April 23, 2014 from 11:00am to 12:00pm to provide details of the program to municipalities, wineries and farmers' market operators. Please email farmersmarkets@agco.ca to register.

VQA wine sales at farmers' markets is a pilot program and the AGCO welcomes any feedback that you may have that will assist in improving it.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jean Major". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "M".

Jean Major
Chief Executive Officer
and Registrar