

Jeff Duc Selected as 2024 Grape King

St. Catharines, ON (September 17, 2024) — Grape Growers of Ontario and Farm Credit Canada are pleased to announce that Niagara-on-the-Lake grape grower Jeff Duc has been chosen by his peers as the 2024 Grape King (*pictured – credit Denis Cahill*).



“We are delighted that Jeff Duc, Niagara-on-the-Lake grower has been selected Grape King. Jeff comes from a rich history of grape growers, and his knowledge is a wonderful combination to be selected as an ambassador for our industry,” says Grape Growers of Ontario Chair, Matthias Oppenlaender. “The annual crowning of the Grape King is a time honoured tradition that began in 1956 to recognize exemplary vineyard management stewardship in the grape growing industry” says Debbie Zimmerman, CEO of the Grape Growers of Ontario.

“FCC is pleased to support the tradition of naming an Ontario Grape King and with it, celebrating the best in the business such as this year’s recipient, Jeff Duc,” said Clinton Buttar, Ontario vice-president commercial and small business at Farm Credit Canada. “At FCC, we admire the meticulous care and passion that goes into every vineyard, every harvest, and every bottle. Congratulations to all the wine producers for your outstanding achievements, and a special toast to this

year’s Grape King Award winner.”

The Grape King carries the distinction of being nominated by their peers and selected by our industry judges who visit each of the nominated vineyards. The Grape King serves as a representative for Ontario’s grape and wine industry at events across the country, starting with the Invitational Grape Stomp on September 27th in Montebello Park and in the annual Grande Parade on September 28th the Niagara Grape and Wine Festival.

Jeff Duc is a third-generation grower in Niagara-on-the-Lake, managing the farm alongside his dad at Forrer Farms. They operate approximately 250 acres of vineyards with varieties including Pinot Gris, Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay, Riesling, Gamay, Cabernet Franc, Sauvignon, Merlot, and some hybrids. They also produce icewine.

Between high school and college, Jeff travelled to Australia and did harvest work for a winery in the small wine region of Mudgee. After returning from Australia, he graduated from the Niagara College Wine and Viticulture program, where he met his wife, Beth. They now have two kids, Abby and Michael. Abby is in 11th grade and has spent two summers working on the farm. This year, she decided to take a break from the farm and gain experience working for someone else. Michael is in 5th grade; he is too young to know if he will be interested in farming or not. Jeff is proud and honoured to raise his kids on the farm and in the same house where he grew up.

In addition to managing the vineyard, Jeff is an avid sports lover who has been involved in minor hockey for the past twenty years. Jeff has coached Niagara-on-the-Lake minor hockey and the Brock Junior Badgers girls' hockey organization during this time. In the summer months, Jeff coaches for the Niagara-on-the-Lake minor softball league.

Jeff is a valuable member of the Board of Directors of the Grape Growers of Ontario and the Board of Directors of the Niagara Peninsula Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association and is involved in multiple committees for both Boards.

Jeff Duc will be officially installed as the 66th Grape King in his vineyard located at 1753 Concession 2 in Niagara-on-the-Lake on Wednesday, September 18th following the Grape Growers of Ontario's annual Celebrity Luncheon. This year, given the challenges many in our community the Grape Growers of Ontario will be making a donation to PathStone.

Details and directions can be found at www.grapegrowersofontario.com or by calling 905-688-0990 ext 224.

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About the Grape Growers of Ontario

The Grape Growers of Ontario is the official organization that represents all of Ontario's 500 farm families on 18,000 acres in the province's three viticulture areas: Niagara Peninsula, Lake Erie North Shore and Prince Edward County, and emerging wine regions. Follow Grape Growers of Ontario on Twitter and Instagram [@Grapegrowersont](https://twitter.com/Grapegrowersont), like us on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/Grapegrowersofontario) and get more information at grapegrowersofontario.com.

About Farm Credit Canada

FCC is Canada's leading agriculture and food lender, with a healthy loan portfolio of more than \$44 billion. Our employees are dedicated to the future of Canadian agriculture and food. We provide flexible, competitively priced financing, management software, information and knowledge specifically designed for the agriculture and food industry. As a self-sustaining Crown corporation, we provide an appropriate return to our shareholder, and reinvest our profits back into the industry and communities we serve. For more information, visit fcc.ca.

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