



## **Media Release**

Milton, Ontario – December 21, 2017

### **ONTARIO BEEKEEPERS UNVEIL NEW ASSOCIATION FOR MEAD MAKERS**

**The Ontario Beekeepers' Association is buzzing with the announcement of the formation of an Ontario mead makers' association.**

With increasing demand for mead, Ontario beekeepers have come together and identified the need for an industry association to promote Ontario honey-based fermented products, like mead, honey wine and honey beer, and address and advocate on industry-wide issues, such as quality, market access, regulation, and taxation.

Mead is a lightly fermented beverage made primarily from honey. It's also believed to be the most ancient alcoholic beverage crafted by humans, predating both beer and traditional fruit and grape wines by thousands of years. According to the American Mead Makers Association, mead is one of the fastest-growing alcoholic beverages in the U.S.

"We're seeing the same kind of interest in making and drinking mead here in Ontario," says OBA Vice President André Flys, a 3<sup>rd</sup> generation beekeeper who operates Pioneer Brand Honey. "We hope that mead crafted from locally-sourced honey will give beekeepers a new, premium market for their honey while offering Ontarians another high quality beverage option to enjoy."

The idea of forming an Ontario mead association has been fermenting for some time. A catalyst was the hotly contested – and brand new – mead competition at last month's OBA Annual General Meeting & Conference in Niagara Falls. The event also brought together two well-known commercial mead makers: John Bryans of Munro Honey and Meadery and William Roman of Rosewood Estates Winery. Subsequent conversations and a sticky government issue that needed an urgent industry response capped the arrangement.

"We can see that this emerging industry needs a strong voice as the market matures and more beekeepers consider mead as a sweet business opportunity," says William

Roman, Operations Manager (and Bee Master) at Rosewood Estates Winery. Munro's John Bryans agrees. "Our goal is to produce world-class Ontario mead led by the bees and beekeepers who produce high quality Ontario honey." Bryans continues, "our vision is to craft Ontario mead that combines ancient brewing techniques with modern industry standards."

The Ontario Beekeepers' Association has represented the interests of Ontario beekeepers and the Ontario beekeeping industry since 1881. Ontario is home to over 3,100 beekeepers ranging in size from large commercial operations to small urban beekeepers.

The OBA fully supports the foundation of the new association as the group begins its work to identify the scope of the association and its mission and mandate.

The OBA operates two other specialty associations, the Ontario Bee Breeders' Association and the Ontario Honey Bee Pollination Association.

Last year, the OBA partnered with Niagara College in the development and launch of a commercial beekeeping program.

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For more information:

[André Flys](#)

Pioneer Brand Honey  
OBA 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President  
416 807-2253 (mobile)