



Creation Care Farm wins one of two Agriculture Innovation Accelerator Awards

Passive-solar aquaponic greenhouse will model low-impact farming in the Valley

NEWS SUMMARY: Creation Care Farm won the \$15,000 prize in the Agri-Food category of the Agriculture Innovation Accelerator Award, announced in December by the Annapolis Valley Chamber of Commerce. Barrelling Tide Distillery won the \$15,000 Agri-Tech prize.

A new low-impact farming enterprise in the Annapolis Valley is building a passive-solar aquaponic greenhouse to produce salad greens and fish, year-round. By combining aquaculture and hydroponics, the business partners behind the new venture will produce food for local consumption, in a way that replaces imports, reduces the carbon foot print, reduces the amount of water needed for production, and cuts out chemicals. Hence the business name: Creation Care Farm.

After working in Winnipeg and South Africa, Hippolyto Tshimanga and Miriam Tshimanga Maenhout recently settled in Steam Mill, Kings County, with their two school-age sons. The husband-and-wife team is trained in aquaponics.

Aquaponic farming is a symbiotic process that combines fish-farming with soil-less production of vegetables. In this closed-loop system, nutrient-rich water from fish tanks feeds the plants, while the plants purify the water for the fish.

The greenhouse of just under 1000 square feet has been designed to capture solar heat and store it in ground pipes that will release the heat, as needed. "It's not big, but it's a start," said Hippolyto, who has led several innovative and small-scale agricultural projects in rural Africa and Latin America, enabling churches and villages to generate new revenue streams and supply local food.

To offset the cost of the materials and parts needed to build the greenhouse next to their home, the partners applied to the Annapolis Valley Chamber of Commerce (AVCC) for its annual Agriculture Innovation Accelerator Award. In December, they won \$15,000 in cash and in-kind business services in the agri-food category. The winner in the agri-tech category was Barrelling Tide Distillery, which is investing in new instruments to analyze alcohol content in spirits and fruit liqueurs.

"With this award, we will be able to finish the greenhouse and have the production system installed," said Hippolyto. "The in-kind services from financial advisors and lawyers are also significant for us," he said.

Since creating the award in 2013, the AVCC has awarded more than \$190,000 in cash and in-kind services to help Valley entrepreneurs advance projects to the next phase development. The prize package comes from local enterprises that are committed to sustaining and growing the agriculture sector in the Annapolis Valley.

***Written by Rachel Brighton,
Research Analyst at the Valley
Regional Enterprise Network –
a supporter of the 2018 Agriculture
Innovation Accelerator Award.***





Agriculture Innovation Accelerator Award

THESE PHOTOS ARE AVAILABLE FOR PUBLICATION



ABOVE: Miriam Tshimanga Maenhout (left) and Hippolyto Tshimanga of Creation Care Farm stand in the passive-solar aquaponic greenhouse being built on their property in Steam Mill, Kings County.



LEFT: Hippolyto Tshimanga and Miriam Tshimanga Maenhout of Creation Care Farm, centre, accept the Agriculture Innovation Accelerator Award from the Annapolis Valley Chamber of Commerce on December 4 at the Berwick and District Lions Club. Joining in the presentation were judging panel member **Ruphina Kaulback** of Bishop & Company Chartered Professional Accountants (left) and the **Honourable Leo Glavine**, Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage (right).

Quick facts

News summary

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Agriculture Innovation Accelerator Award

→The Annapolis Valley Chamber of Commerce (AVCC) created this unique community-sponsored award in 2013 to recognize outstanding agri-business innovators, producers, processors, suppliers and organizations in the Annapolis Valley.

→The Agriculture Innovation Accelerator Award helps the successful applicant advance their project to the next phase of development.

→To date, more than \$190,000 in cash and in-kind business services has been awarded.

→In 2018, the AVCC offered two awards (\$15,000 each), for outstanding innovators in Agri-Tech and Agri-Food.

→The 2018 award ceremony was held on December 4 at the Berwick and District Lions Club.

Past winners

- 2017:** Integrated HACCP Solutions / renamed FoodByte (food safety software platform)
- 2016:** TapRoot Fibre Lab (machinery development)
- 2015:** Frostbyte Interactive Inc. / Aerhyve Division (aerial imaging)
- 2014:** Hillcreek Family Farm in Grafton (pumpkin seed processing)
- 2013:** HarvestHand New Media Communities (sales platform)

Media contacts

Gary Morton
Chair, AVCC Agriculture Committee
mha@bellaliant.net

Hippolyto Tshimanga
Creation Care Farm
hmtshimanga@gmail.com

Colleen or Russell Murphy
Barrelling Tide Distillery
barrellingtidedistillery@gmail.com

