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For Immediate Release

Retired General Rick Hillier's passion inspires leadership

LONDON, ON – Retired General Rick Hillier shared amusing anecdotes, coupled with heart-wrenching tales from his 35-year military career, during his passionate keynote address entitled *"Leadership Traits and Leader Responsibilities"* at the Wm. A. Stewart Lecture and Reception held in London on March 31, 2011.

"Leadership is all about people," said Hillier, former Chief of the Defence Staff, Canada's highest ranking position in the Canadian Forces. "It's about mentoring and inspiring those in your charge. A leader needs to spend quality time with their team," Hillier said. Hillier explained that good team leadership is dependent upon effective communication - both leading by example through one's actions as well as with words. Hillier also emphasized the importance of leaders having a vision and that a leader needs to be tough, optimistic and sometimes ruthless when making decisions. "Maintaining a sense of humour does help in times of challenge," Hillier shared.

Hillier's key messages hit the mark for the 2009-2011 graduating class of the Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program (AALP). The importance of people, vision, communication and optimism are key messages, that the AALP Class 13 participants have heard many times from speakers and during their travels over the past nineteen months. "Rick Hillier exemplifies leadership. His passion for people and for Canada are inspiring, plus his leadership principles are definitely something we can all relate to as we continue on our own leadership journeys," said Gunther Csoff, Class 13 member.

"AALP brings smart, passionate people together and the work they do will ensure that the future of agriculture is sustainable for consumers and viable for farmers. By sharing information and ideas we grow our collective understanding, and that will have a positive impact on the future," says Craig Bremner, Vice President Agriculture Services, TD Canada Trust, presenting sponsor of 2011 Stewart Lecture.

The Wm. A. Stewart Lecture & Reception is held every other year and commemorates the Hon. William A. Stewart, past Minister of Agriculture and Food and Honourary Chairman of AALP at its inception. This year's event was partially funded by the Wm. A. Stewart Endowment, along with presenting sponsor TD Canada Trust. Additional sponsor support was received from Monsanto Canada Inc., AdFarm, Gay Lea Foods Co-operative Ltd., Miller Thomson LLP, Ontario Mutuals and Pioneer Hi-Bred Limited. The funds raised will support the Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program (AALP).

AALP is a program of the Rural Ontario Institute. Now in its 27th year, AALP is a 19 month leadership development opportunity for individuals actively involved in Ontario's agriculture, agri-food and rural sectors. Through a series of seminars, national and international study tours, self-directed learning and distance education, the program prepares leaders to help shape the future of their communities, businesses, organizations and associations. There are currently 382 graduates of AALP making a difference in Ontario's agricultural, agri-food and rural communities.

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