

FOOD SECURITY

Hardest harvest reveals hard truths and even harder questions



Dejected workers gather to tear down the brittle leaves of a cucumber crop that perished after Nature Fresh Farms was shut down by public health authorities on June 30, 2020. Peter Quiring, the owner and president of the Leamington, Ontario greenhouses, went on record in a recent short documentary that 199 asymptomatic workers tested positive for COVID-19 but no one was ever hospitalized. The devastating effects of losing 7.8 million pounds of produce aren't just economic but emotional as his workers have testified. Photo courtesy of Nature Fresh Farms.

KAREN DAVIDSON

When guest workers are given a role, pride shines through. That emotion was laid bare in a new 22-minute documentary, “The Hardest Harvest” recently released by Nature Fresh Farms, Leamington, Ontario.

“When you feel you have your own area, you feel as if it’s your own crop,” says Gervacio Estrada, a seasonal worker from Mexico. “When you think that everything will be spoiled, your heart hurts even if you think it’s not my own crop but my boss’s.”

That despair was shared by almost 600

workers when the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit shut down the Nature Fresh greenhouse facilities on June 30, 2020. The owners and managers – Peter Quiring, John Ketler, Matt Quiring and Cornelius Neufeld – had led the way in advocating for on-farm COVID-19 testing, believing that all protective measures had been followed to the letter of the law. But when 199 asymptomatic workers tested positive, the ensuing health directive was dramatic and immediate. These workers were bussed to off-site hotels to self-isolate. And all workers – domestic and foreign – were forbidden from entering the greenhouse.

It would be two weeks before the 160-

acre facility became fully staffed again. Some of the crops survived. But in those humidity-saturated days, starved of fertilized water, some of the tomatoes, peppers and cucumbers were lost -- 7.8 million pounds.

To make matters worse, Nature Fresh Farms was prevented from continuing to deliver culturally-appropriate food to their isolating workers. The Red Cross failed to provide satisfactory food, both in quality and quantity, prompting more outrage from workers. Ironically, the agencies designed to protect foreign food workers were not up to the task of feeding them.

As Peter Quiring, president, Nature

Fresh Farms, recalls the hard truth of the virus crisis, “There were lots of people in charge, but no one was accountable.”

Months after the coronavirus became a real and present danger, Ontario’s greenhouse growers are re-planting. John Ketler, vice-president, Nature Fresh Farms, says that the same crops, same acreage are now being planted for 2021. And nothing has changed the sector’s steadfast pledge to care for and protect guest workers who come year after year to Canada to support their families.

Continued on page 3

AT PRESS TIME...

Mancozeb fungicide to remain registered on some crops

On November 19, the horticultural industry learned some positive news from the Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) regarding the revised re-evaluation of mancozeb. It is a multi-site contact fungicide used in a wide variety of fruits and vegetables.

Under the authority of the Pest Control Products Act, Health Canada has determined that continued registration of products containing mancozeb is acceptable with additional risk mitigation measures. An evaluation of available scientific information found that the registrant supported uses of mancozeb products (ground and aerial foliar application to potatoes; ground foliar application on apples, onions, sugar beets, ginseng, field cucumbers, field tomatoes, grapes, pumpkin, squash, and melon (including cantaloupe but excluding watermelon and in-furrow application to onions) meet current standards for protection of human health and the environment and have value when used according to the revised conditions of registration which includes new mitigation measures.

Risk mitigation measures will be required.

Some uses, formulations and application methods will be



Eight applications of mancozeb can be applied to potatoes, including aerial.

cancelled including:

- All seed treatments (including potato seed piece treatment), greenhouse uses (in other words, tobacco, tomatoes), use on pears, carrots, celery, lettuce, watermelon, lentils, wheat, alfalfa grown for seed, as well as ornamentals and forestry uses
- All applications using any hand-held equipment.
- All end-use (commercial class) wettable powder or dust formulations.

This decision is welcomed by the horticultural industry because this crop protection product is valued in an integrated pest management program. Growers have the ability to rotate between chemistries to prevent resistance.

“Back in the fall of 2018, all field uses were proposed for cancellation,” says Chris Duyvelshoff, crop protection advisor for the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers’ Association. “While the loss and reduced use of mancozeb will create challenges on several crops, overall the decision represents a huge improvement from the original proposal. Some uses of mancozeb were maintained on several key crops, and this will strongly aid in disease control and pathogen resistance management.”

For details of the PMRA’s re-evaluation decision, link here: <https://bit.ly/3nKyxSp>

NEWSMAKERS

The Ontario Produce Marketing Association celebrated its 30th anniversary and its annual awards virtually on November 19, acknowledging heroic efforts during a most unusual year. Congratulations to all winners!

The Cory Clack-Streef Produce Person of the Year goes to **Peter Quiring**, president and founder of Nature Fresh Farms, Leamington, ON. This award salutes his efforts to easing rising tensions towards the agricultural industry during the COVID-19 pandemic. He offered full transparency into the greenhouse operations during an asymptomatic outbreak, sharing not only the company’s experience but insight into the many obstacles that farmers and greenhouse growers faced.

The OPMA Fresh Award, given to someone under 40, was won by **Tom Heeman**, near London, Ontario. He’s a strawberry grower, cidemaker, beekeeper, local municipal councillor and chair of Berry Growers of Ontario. He and others worked on safe operating guidelines for U-pick berry season.



The OPMA Outstanding Achievement Award was won by **Joe Sbrocchi**, general manager, Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers. He’s been at the epicentre of the COVID-19 crisis, managing media, labour issues, market access and community relations along with his dedicated team.



The OPMA gave two Lifetime Achievement Awards. **Vince Pillitteri**, Seaway Gardens, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario won recognition for his business building instincts in strawberries, peaches and produce. “Action is more important than fear,” recalled son Joe, emcee for the event.

The second award went to **Gord Love**, North American Produce Buyers for his many years of service to the produce industry and to the OPMA, of which he was a founding director.

The Holland Marsh Growers’ Association is paying tribute to **Don Chapman**, 76, an industry pioneer who passed on November 17. Based in Queensville, Ontario, he dedicated his life to farming and remained involved up until his passing.

Jim Willwerth has been named as the new chair-elect for the American Society for Enology and Viticulture-Eastern Section. The society of professionals from wineries, vineyards, academic institutions and organizations is dedicated to the interests of enologists, viticulturists and others in the fields of wine and grape research and production throughout the world. Willwerth recently accepted a new role in Brock University’s Mathematics and Science department as assistant professor, specializing in grapevine physiology.

AgScape has announced that **Taylor Selig** becomes executive director of the Ontario charity that delivers agriculture and agrifood information to the province’s two million students. For the last six years, he’s been the development manager, leading initiatives as varied as refreshing the website to nurturing new partnerships.

Several moves in the McCain Foods Canada executive suite have led to change. President **Danielle Barran** has an expanded role to lead the North American potato business. She came to the company in 2018 with 20 years of consumer packaged goods experience.

Anita Stewart, 73, culinary icon, cookbook author, founder of Food Day Canada, passed on October 29. She was a passionate crusader for Canadian cuisine and generous to everyone she met. Look to page 13 for our tribute.



The Ontario Labour Relations Board has ordered Scotlynn Sweetpac Growers to pay **Luis Gabriel Flores Flores** \$25,000 in lost wages and compensation after Flores was fired when he raised health and safety issues at the Vittoria, Ontario farm following the death of his bunkmate, **Juan Lopez Chaparro**, 55, due to COVID-19.

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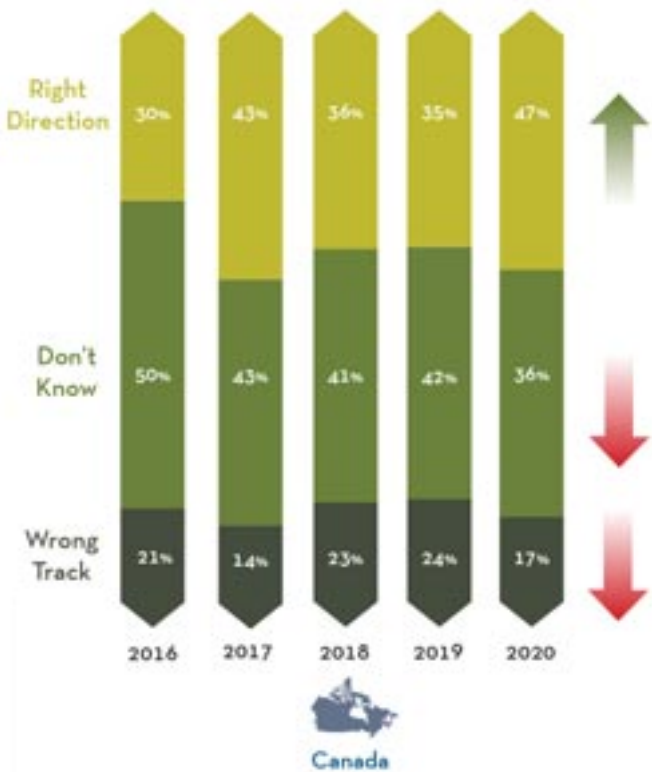
Hardest harvest reveals hard truths and even harder questions

“

There were lots of people in charge, but no one was accountable.

~ PETER QUIRING,
NATURE FRESH FARMS

”



Source: The Canadian Centre for Food Integrity 2020 Public Trust Research



Carts of red peppers are illuminated by a streak of sunshine in a darkened warehouse at Nature Fresh Farms. Photo by Glenn Lowson.

Continued from page 1

As farm worker Juan Jose Coredero Bran shares in translation, “Separating hurts a little, but at the same time there is peace of mind because we know that there will be better well-being.”

Consumers, for their part, are seemingly unconcerned about disruptions to food supplies. The Canadian Centre for Food Integrity released its 2020 Public Research in mid-November, noting that consumer trust is at an all-time high. In fact, the survey of 2,903 Canadians recorded a 12-point increase to 47 per cent when consumers were asked: “Overall, would you say that the food system in Canada, including how food is grown, produced and sold, is moving in the right direction or the wrong direction.”

The findings are somewhat surprising given the negative newspaper headlines about guest workers and the public scrutiny of the food supply. But as Mike von Massow, the University of Guelph chair of Food System Leadership, blogged this fall, “The narrative that labour and other constraints on both food production and processing will affect Canadian food security is overblown.”

He made the case that food supplies are plentiful and that Canadians will continue to depend on imports.

“While the food security argument might resonate more with policy makers and the general public (through the media), it is not clear that either the long term or currently worsened crisis has had any substantial effect on food security,” he wrote in an October

2020 blog. (Link here: <https://bit.ly/2IYw1J8>)

Farm security, he acknowledged, is real with pressures to remain viable and profitable.

For business owners, the difficult question being asked going forward is how to assess and manage risk after a year as tempestuous as 2020. Will the Canadian/U.S. border remain open to essential traffic? Will changing rules for housing guest workers be reasonable and executable in time for new arrivals? Will the process for applying for guest workers be responsive or will new sources of workers be required from other countries in South America or beyond?

To a large extent, these questions are beyond the control of individual businesses, but they are certainly in the domain of

umbrella organizations such as the Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers (OGVG), the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers’ Association and Foreign Agricultural Resource Management Services (FARMS).

Working at local, provincial and federal levels, Joe Sbrocchi, general manager, OGVG, looks to the next two to three years and foresees a flex workforce of 400 to 500 for the greenhouse sector. If on-farm, rapid testing becomes a reality in 2021, it’s possible there could be a small percentage of positives who will need to isolate. And with history leading the way, those workers will need to be replaced tomorrow, if not sooner, to avoid on-farm disasters.

“In the long run, it’s prudent insurance,” says Sbrocchi.

To view “The Hardest Harvest,” link here: <https://bit.ly/35q0Pes>

The Grower goes “Behind the Scenes” with John Ketler, vice-president, Nature Fresh Farms, Leamington, Ontario. He shares what happened after the 160 acres of greenhouses were shut down by local health authorities due to asymptomatic workers testing positive for COVID-19. This series is sponsored by BASF Agricultural Solutions.



CROSS COUNTRY DIGEST

BRITISH COLUMBIA

An award-winning biopesticide targets larvae on cabbage

A partnership between Kwantlen Polytechnic University (KPU) researchers and an industry partner, Sylvar Technologies, has won an innovation award for their work to create natural pesticides to support sustainable food production.

Dr. Deborah Henderson and Michelle Franklin from KPU's Institute for Sustainable Horticulture partnered with Sylvar Technologies to create baculovirus biopesticides, which are non-toxic, safe and natural products.

Now the project has received the Synergy Award for Innovation from the Natural Sciences and Engineering Council of Canada. The \$100,000 award will help the

institute with new equipment, stronger partnerships and recognition.

“Our mantra at the institute is ‘putting more biological products in the hands of growers and landscape managers’,” says Dr. Henderson, director of the Institute for Sustainable Horticulture. “When you have those biological tools available, then you can start to figure out how to use them. But if you don’t have them available, and all you have is chemicals, then all you’re going to use is chemicals.”

These products will be a sustainable replacement for the chemical pesticides currently used in agriculture. Dr. Henderson says the new biopesticides protect the environment, human health and animal health.

“If you’ve ever eaten coleslaw, you’ve eaten millions of baculoviruses. They’re in your diet, they’re in your environment, and they’re not harmful,” adds Dr. Henderson. “People have resistance against chemicals. There are objections to using chemicals, there are concerns about the environment, and those concerns aren’t going away.”

Sylvar Technologies and the Institute for Sustainable Horticulture have commercialized Loopex FC, a biopesticide that targets larvae on cabbage and alfalfa crops, and they are hoping to develop or produce a larger portfolio of biopesticides for commercial use.

“New products will diversify our company and allow it to expand into new markets in



Dr. Deborah Henderson

Canada,” says Laura Forbes, international business and regulatory affairs manager at Sylvar Technologies.

“Currently we see high demand for effective biocontrol and bio-stimulant products in the agriculture and landscape sectors and we anticipate highly positive benefits from this project for our company, for sustainable

agriculture in Canada, and for the environment.”

Founded in 2005, the Institute for Sustainable Horticulture is dedicated to developing biological products for commercial use. Earlier work to create a fungi-based pesticide received almost \$200,000 in funding from the Government of Canada.

QUEBEC

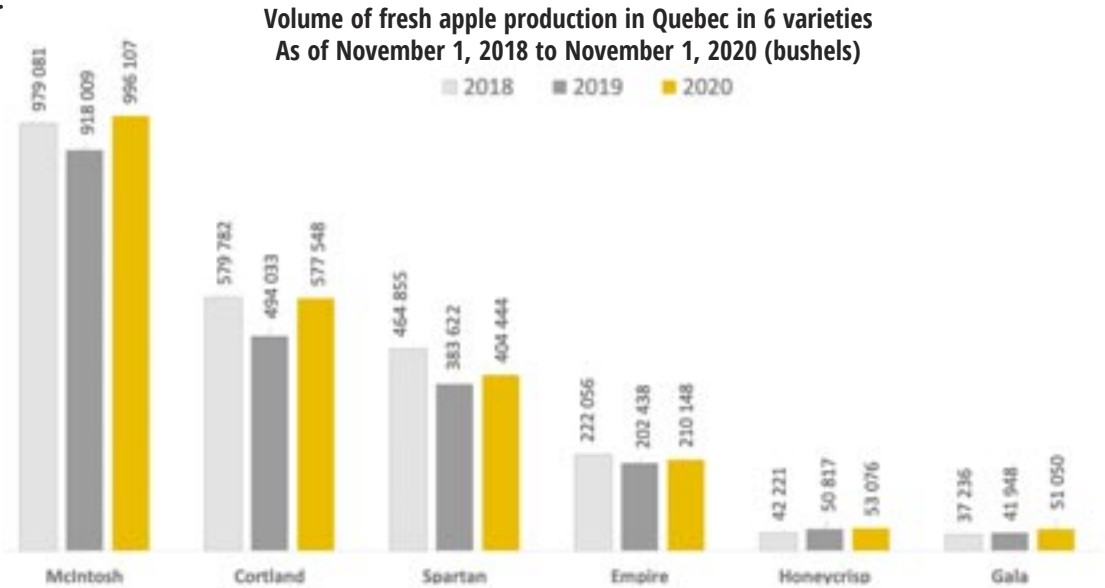
Heavy consumer traffic to U-pick orchards was reported

Les Producteurs de pommes du Québec reports that apple volumes are average, but higher than the 2019 season. Jennifer Gagné, research and development advisor for the apple association, says that fruit is of good size and quality.

According to the first association survey, this year’s

fresh apple holdings on November 1, 2020, totalled 2,354,733 million bushels, 11 per cent higher than the inventories reported on November 1 last year. One bushel equals 42 pounds.

Despite the pandemic, heavy consumer traffic was reported in the orchards, with sales higher for U-pick and at kiosks.



ALBERTA

The Irrigation Belt is about to be flooded with money

The federal government has announced \$815 million to expand irrigation on the prairies, with about 200,000 acres in southern Alberta tapped for upgrades. The project will replace canals with underground piping, add four new reservoirs and install low-pressure centre pivots.

Make no mistake that more water will magically appear from its sources in the Rocky Mountains. This is about using current water supplies more judiciously.

As Willemijn Appels, irrigation scientist with Lethbridge College explains on her homepage, her research starts with observation of each agricultural field during the growing season with a variety of sensors below, on, and far above the ground. Data obtained by sensors needs to be analyzed and translated into a management decision that is optimized to the

crop being grown, the irrigation equipment being used, and the management style of the producer.

“We use existing and new sensors to obtain a suite of observations to get a better, timely and quantitative picture of soil water availability and crop water demand during the growing season,” says Appels.

Examples of tools are: soil moisture sensors, weather stations, portable probes, thermal infrared cameras, a UAV (drone) and remote sensing imagery.

In addition to hands-on experimenting, the research scientist develops plant-soil-water models to simulate the effects of new irrigation techniques and adaptive scheduling on yield of the crops found in southern Alberta. The use of computer models allows an analysis of these effects over the entire range of soil types and topographic features found in the region.

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Sobeys calls for grocer code of conduct

Source: Ontario Fruit & Vegetable Growers' Association November 12, 2020 news release

Canada's Food Price Report 2021

For the first year, the University of Saskatchewan and University of British Columbia have joined the project. Watch **The Grower** website for an executive summary.





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HEALTHY COMPETITION

Honeycrisp Apple Contest winners rewarded

KAREN DAVIDSON

Honeycrisp are famous as hearty, juicy apples, but sometimes they get out of hand. For size, that is.

The Grower issued a challenge in October for the biggest Honeycrisp apple, spurred by Ontario apple grower Gail Ardiel at Apple Springs Orchard. To their credit, growers in the provinces of Ontario, Nova Scotia and Manitoba responded with eight entries overall.

Congratulations to the winner -- Van Ymeren Orchards, Alymer, Ontario -- for its whopper measuring

4.9175 inches. The Nova Scotia winner is from Joan Hebb at Scotian Gold Cooperative, Coldbrook, for an apple measuring 4.28 inches. In Manitoba, Waldo and Lorna Thiessen, Altona, take the prize for their 3.5 inch apple.

The Thiessen’s explain that they are strawberry and raspberry growers in Altona, Manitoba.

“We first learned about Honeycrisp when we attended the Minnesota Fruit and Vegetable Conference in St. Cloud. We had a tour at the University of Minnesota where they introduced Honeycrisp. That’s when we bought the tree,” says Lorna Thiessen.

Sponsor Agro-K recognized the need for a lighter

moment during a busy 2020 growing season.

“Growers familiar with Honeycrisp know how challenging it can be to achieve the perfect fruit size,” says Rick de Jong, Agro-K Canadian business development manager. “Having a contest for the largest Honeycrisp may seem backwards but it sure is fun.

Agro-K thanks farmers from across Canada for all their hard work, especially now during these trying times.”

All entrants will receive a Grower cap. Each provincial winner will receive a \$150 VISA gift certificate.



Van Ymeren Orchards Alymer, ON - 4.9175”



Gail Ardiel, Apple Springs Orchard, Clarksburg, ON - 4.75”



Ian Martin, Wilmot Orchards, Newcastle, ON - 4.6”



Cathy Passafiume, Stouffville, ON - 4.5”



Stuart Bauman, West Montrose, ON - 4.166”



Joan Hebb, Scotian Gold Cooperative, Coldbrook, NS - 4.28”



Samantha Grandy, Scotian Gold Cooperative, Coldbrook, NS - 3.994”



Waldo and Lorna Thiessen, Altona, MB - 3.5”



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Rick de Jong, Canadian Business Development Manager
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INTERNATIONAL

American agriculture lobbies for priority to COVID-19 vaccine

The lobbying has already started in the United States for priority access to a COVID-19 vaccine once it becomes available. On November 11, the United Fresh Produce Association and allied partners urged the American president to recognize the critical role of essential workers in agriculture, food processing and distribution, retail and restaurants.

In its November 11 letter, reference was made to the COVID-19 Vaccination Program Interim Playbook which considers prioritizing four groups if initial vaccine supplies are limited. They include:

healthcare personnel, non-healthcare essential workers, adults with high-risk medical conditions and people 65 years of age and older.

The letter said: “As described in the Playbook, we strongly support prioritizing essential workers in critical infrastructure industries, including those responsible for ensuring the continuity of our nation’s food supply.”

Source: United Fresh Produce Association November 11, 2020 letter



Rabobank offers five-year blueberry market outlook

For the period from 2021 to 2025, Dutch-based Rabobank reports that U.S. blueberry production volume will likely expand in a limited way, as U.S. growers are facing increasing production costs in some regions and increased import competition. Total U.S. blueberry imports are likely to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of about seven to nine per cent in volume during the same period.

On the demand side, U.S. per capita consumption is expected to grow at a CAGR of about five to six per cent during the 2021-2025 period.

"Provided increasing shipments from Peru and Mexico continue, seasonal price peaks at the beginning of the spring and fall are likely to be less pronounced and shorter-lived during the next few years," it said.

"By 2025, blueberry prices in the U.S. market are

expected to be relatively flat throughout the year, fluctuating mainly due to weather shocks in growing regions."

The report stated that should consumer demand for blueberries grow faster than assumptions, actual prices would sit in the higher percentiles of its estimates.

If shipments from Peru continue to increase markedly, what used to be a price peak around week 40 may become a price 'valley' in five years' time. On the other hand, the price peak around week 12 may be more resilient, as weather shocks are more likely to continue limiting availability during this time of the year.

Also, on the demand side, there is usually less diversity of competing items in the fruit aisle during this market window due to seasonality, potentially favouring blueberries.



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WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Mental wellness is a key priority for farm families

TERESA VAN RAAY

If someone asks, “How are you doing?” do you want to throw something at them, or do you break down in tears, or both? I’m not one to judge, I’m a ‘both’ kind of person.

The pandemic has brought many changes into our everyday lives. It has offered some relief from external expectations related to travel and busy schedules. However, this roller coaster of uncertainties has increased the level of pressure and stress in our families, businesses and on our farms. Most farmers I know want to be in control and fix everything. When you are facing emotional exhaustion because of COVID constraints, there may be little control or desire to fix anything. The good news is we are not alone.

Without the traditional season of gatherings and meetings with friends, family and the farming community, we’re encouraging everyone to be aware of the care and wellness necessary to thrive, not just survive, through the winter months.

Mental health continues to be

top of mind for the Ontario Federation of Agriculture’s (OFA) advocacy and outreach efforts, and we’re seeing positive progress in government and organizations focusing on managing stress and increasing the understanding of how mental health struggles can impact life on the farm.

Recently, OFA has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), Ontario Division to address key mental health issues affecting Ontario farmers, agriculture employees and farm families. This is a tremendous opportunity to offer half-day, evidence-based mental health literacy programming, and create awareness and support specific for farmer mental health through ‘In the Know’ sessions. These sessions, developed at the University of Guelph, are expected to be launched in early 2021.

OFA continues to drive home the point that the agriculture industry must be recognized in the new Centre of Excellence for mental health and addiction announced by the Ontario

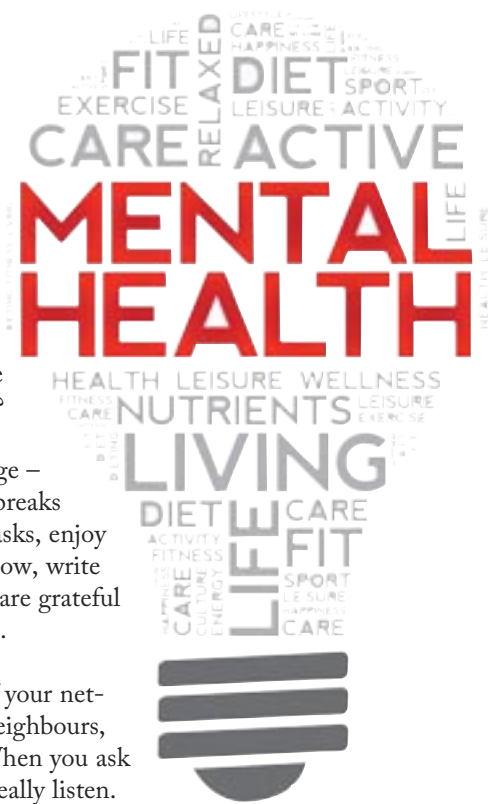
government last February. In the meantime, to help raise the profile of farmer wellness, OFA launched two campaigns through CTV Bell Media Fields to Forks featuring farm voices speaking about the importance of seeking help in times of distress and planning for support to avoid the dangers of working alone when overwhelmed.

At the grassroots level, county federations of agriculture have been leading the way on hosting workshops and Mental Health First Aid training. The Farmer Wellness Program is gaining traction as Lennox and Addington, Hastings and now Northumberland members have access to counselling sessions, and other counties are poised to join this model in the future.

Provincially, organizations including Grain Farmers of Ontario are increasing awareness by sharing listings of agencies and counsellors who understand the realities of farm life, and focusing on wellness-themed social media posts.

Think of mental health and wellness as a dashboard using these helpful tips:

- Check your own levels – are you close to ‘empty’ on energy, patience, sleep, hydration . . . or cruising close to burnout? Is your “give a darn” metre broken?
- Find ways to recharge – hobbies, staycations, breaks from everyday farm tasks, enjoy a favourite comedy show, write down something you are grateful for (chocolate counts).
- Do a circle check of your network – check in on neighbours, friends and family. When you ask how they are doing, really listen.
- Don’t hesitate, reach out for help – Look for help from a specialist if the situation is overwhelming, or start by talking to a trusted COVID comrade. We are in this together.
- As farmers, we often pride ourselves on our work ethic, strength and entrepreneurial spirit. But in order to maintain the resilience required to thrive, mental well-being must be part of the equation. It begins with starting a conversation and



watching out for each other. For information, resources and help lines, visit ofa.on.ca/issues/mental-health. If you need immediate help, please contact the toll-free mental health and addictions line at 1.866.531.2600.

Teresa Van Raay is a garlic grower near Dashwood, Ontario and a director of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture.



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CANADAGAP ANNUAL REPORT

Highlights from 2020



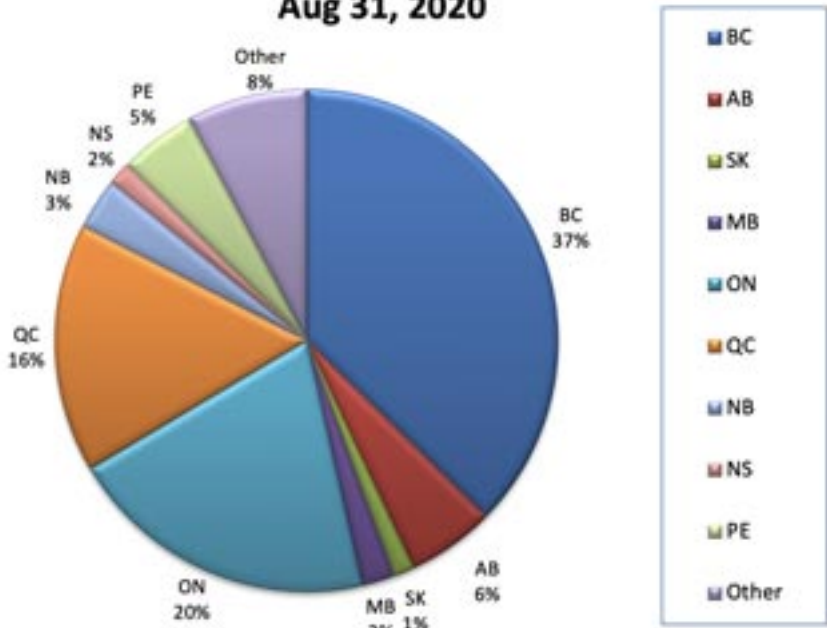
HEATHER GALE

With the arrival of the global coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic early in the year, 2020 brought unprecedented challenges to the food industry globally and within Canada. As in all sectors, the regular course of business for fresh produce operations and food safety programs was profoundly

disrupted. The industry has risen to the challenge and shown great resilience and flexibility in these uncertain and difficult times. CanadaGAP and its partner Certification Bodies have also worked hard to be responsive and creative in adapting to the shifting landscape. Some of the program adjustments that have been required over the course of 2020 include:

- Postponement of audits and extensions of CanadaGAP certificates for up to six months, when audits could not proceed as planned.
- Development and implementation of new procedures to allow for CanadaGAP audits to be performed using partially remote auditing methods, to reduce the auditor’s time on-site.

Operations Enrolled by Province
Aug 31, 2020



• Extensive communications with all stakeholders, including program participants, producer organization representatives, auditors and certification bodies, buyers and customers in the retail, processing and food service sectors, and all levels of government.

• Rescheduling of meetings and events to an online format.

• Ongoing updates to a dedicated COVID-19 webpage on the CanadaGAP website, focused on helping CanadaGAP program participants access timely and helpful resources to navigate the dynamic demands of adjusting to COVID-19 within their operations.

Alongside the challenges of enabling and maintaining a focus on the safe production and handling of fresh fruits and vegetables during the pandemic, CanadaGAP was successful in undertaking the following activities over the course of the past year:

• **Re-benchmarking to GFSI – in progress:** CanadaGAP has been benchmarked and officially recognized by the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) since 2010. To maintain recognition, CanadaGAP undertook re-benchmarking to GFSI Version 2020 during the summer months. While re-benchmarking activities are not yet complete, GFSI recognition remains a priority for the program, as it is crucial to securing support for CanadaGAP certification from retailers, processors and food service customers.

• **Maintaining government recognition:** CanadaGAP first received full Government Recognition in 2017 under the Canadian Government Food Safety Recognition Program. To maintain government recognition, CanadaGAP must continue to demonstrate sound management of the certification system, align with all applicable regulatory

requirements, and receive approval from CFIA for any proposed changes to the program. In August 2020, CanadaGAP submitted materials as required for CFIA to complete their annual review of changes prior to publication of the next version of the CanadaGAP Program. CanadaGAP anticipates publishing updates to the CanadaGAP Food Safety Manuals (Version 9.0) in December 2020, with an implementation date for CanadaGAP audits effective April 1, 2021. The advance publication of new Lot Code requirements will assist operations in complying with CFIA’s planned enforcement of corresponding Lot Code requirements in the Safe Food for Canadians Regulations beginning on January 15, 2021.

• **Updates to the CanadaGAP Food Safety Manuals:** Version 8.0 of the CanadaGAP Food Safety Manuals was released in January 2020, and took effect on April 1, 2020. As in previous years, a number of changes to the manuals were driven by new GFSI Benchmarking Requirements.

• **Changes to CanadaGAP program scope:** Driven by changing risk profiles and emerging research, several technical decisions were implemented in 2020 with respect to crops and activities that are eligible for CanadaGAP certification. In 2020, aquaponics and microgreens were removed from the scope of the CanadaGAP program for production, packing and storage activities. Meanwhile, the program scope was expanded to include all commodities grown in non-controlled environments (e.g., high and low tunnels).

Continued on next page

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CANADAGAP ANNUAL REPORT

Highlights from 2020

• **New certification body:** Perry Johnson Registrars Food Safety, Inc. (PJRF SI) was licensed by CanAgPlus in July 2020 as the newest certification body offering CanadaGAP audits in Canada (excluding Quebec) and the United States. Perry Johnson Registrars Food Safety, Inc. has a demonstrated history of providing value-added food safety certifications to clients, with a track record of rigour and consistency throughout the certification audit process. PJRF-SI joined NSF Canada Ag and Bureau de normalisation du Québec (BNQ) in the list of available certification bodies for CanadaGAP.

• **Responsive/electronic documentation solutions:** The CanadaGAP Program has made efforts in recent years to respond to program participants requesting solutions to challenges related to documentation and record-keeping. We have increased our partnerships with interested affiliate organizations who have developed proprietary software for record-keeping, a fillable Word version of the manuals, and translation of the CanadaGAP template forms in various languages. For several years now we have made the full manuals available in Spanish as a resource.

In 2020 CanadaGAP also made the food safety manuals and the self-assessment checklist available in a fillable PDF format. CanadaGAP is in the process of surveying program participants to determine if the resources provided directly by CanadaGAP have been useful to users.

Participation trends

The following participation trends are noteworthy for 2020:

- Participation in 2020 rose most markedly among producers in Ontario and the United States.
- Among commodity groupings, a small increase in participation was seen in the Field Vegetable industry, with a slight proportional drop in participation from the Greenhouse, Potato and Small Fruit sectors.
- BC continues to maintain the highest enrolment levels overall, at 36% of all CanadaGAP-certified companies.
- Growth in Option D enrolments for repacking, wholesaling, and brokerage operations continues to increase, now representing 5% of all CanadaGAP-certified companies. Close to 120 program participants are enrolled in Option D.
- Group certifications comprise nearly 20% of all enrolments,

while 23% of certified companies are enrolled in the four-year audit cycle. The number of program participants moving to an annual audit under Option C continues to increase. Option C now includes 58% of all participants, up 5% from 2019.

• For the purposes of analyzing participation trends, enrolment figures are broken down by five crop groupings:

- o Tree and Vine Fruit
- o Field Vegetables
- o Potatoes
- o Small Fruit
- o Greenhouse

Total participation in CanadaGAP is 100%. The proportion of that total occupied by each crop grouping is presented below and within the attached program statistics, where further details as well as a provincial breakdown are included. Data is current as of August 31, 2020.

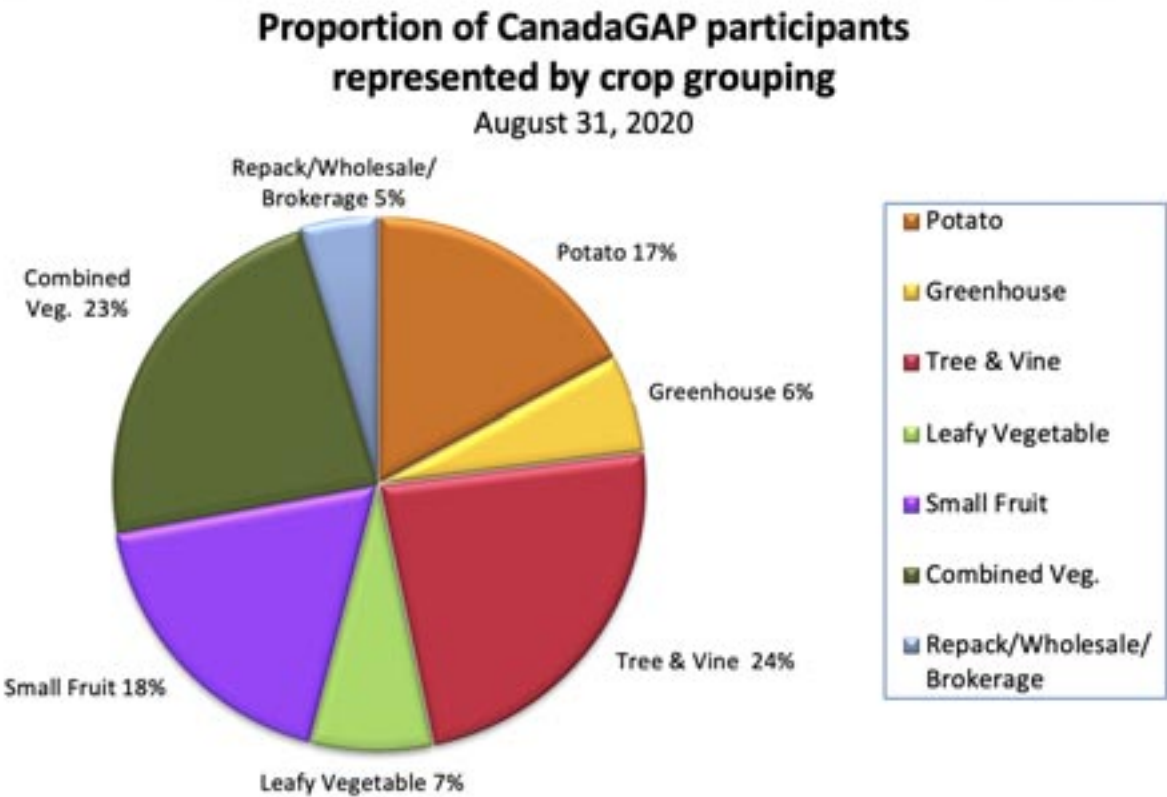
Random Audit Programme

CanadaGAP offers certification on a four-year cycle to companies participating in Option A1 and A2. These certification options are not GFSI-recognized as they do not entail an annual on-site audit. To become certified, companies undergo a scheduled audit in the first year of the four-year cycle. To be recertified in the subsequent three years, they may be randomly chosen for an audit in any or all of the three years. If they are not randomly selected, they must complete a self-declaration and self-assessment and submit it to the certification body to demonstrate their ongoing adherence to program requirements.

The table below compares certification audit scores to random audit scores since 2012. Interestingly, for the last three years, operations randomly selected for an audit have, on average, achieved slightly higher scores than Option A1/A2 operations undergoing their regularly scheduled audit. Data pertaining to 2020 random audits will be available in 2021.

What’s ahead for 2021?

- Updated CanadaGAP Food Safety Manuals (Version 9.0) will be published in December 2020, with implementation of new requirements effective April 1, 2021
- Relaxation of certain GFSI technical requirements for operations enrolled in CanadaGAP certification options A1 and A2 will be announced in December 2020, in conjunction with the release of the next version of the CanadaGAP Food Safety Manuals – stay tuned!



- Conclude GFSI re-benchmarking to Version 2020
- Engagement in GFSI technical working groups for Leafy Greens and various “Race to the Top” initiatives will be maintained. CanadaGAP is a member of several task groups, including one that is developing Auditor Training benchmarking requirements and expectations for

continuous professional development, and another that is addressing Key Performance Indicators for monitoring of Certification Bodies and Certification Programme Owners.

- Complete refresher testing for CanadaGAP auditors
- CanadaGAP will continue its active participation in the development of the new

ISO/IEC 22003-2 standard, which could have a significant impact in future on CanadaGAP and its Certification Bodies

Heather Gale is the executive director of CanAgPlus, the group that administrates the CanadaGAP program.



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CHAIR’S PERSPECTIVE

The unexpected rollercoaster -- a look back at the year it’s been



BILL GEORGE JR.
CHAIR, OFVGA

There likely aren’t many who are sad to see 2020 come to a close. It’s been a year unlike any other not just in our horticulture sector, but indeed across agriculture, across Canada and around the world.

The COVID-19 pandemic has thrown unusually difficult challenges our way and I doubt any of us will ever forget what we went through individually on our own farms this year and collectively as a sector.

And yet, our entire industry rose to the challenge and I’m extremely proud of what Ontario’s fruit and vegetable growers were able to accomplish this year.

It was not an ideal year for all edible horticulture sectors with some taking larger hits than others, and although it might have been an easier choice to sit this year out or turn to some alternative crops, growers stepped up and we were able to keep shelves filled and consumers well stocked with local produce.

Staying operational under COVID-19 this year meant additional costs for PPE, reconfiguring living and working spaces to ensure physical distancing, rethinking how pretty much every task on a farm can be done safely to minimize the risk of illness, dealing with quarantining incoming workers and how to react to worker shortages, and often adjusting on the fly to new rules, regulations and requirements.

And that’s on top of the “regular” stresses of the season that we all face, such as weather, labour and marketing challenges - to name just a few.

And that brings me to the role of the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers’ Association (OFVGA).

If ever there was a year that has proven how vital agricultural and commodity organizations can be to farming operations, this was

it.

I’m incredibly proud of the staff and board team at this organization and all the hard work that went into - and continues to go into - working with government to ensure the grower voice is heard when critical decisions are being made.

The COVID-19 pandemic became very real for all of us with the border closure announcement in March and the looming spectre of a growing season without the foreign workers so many of us depend on.

Thanks to the leadership of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture and OFVGA, and the support of other groups including Ontario Federation of Agriculture, Canadian Horticultural Council, FARMS and Farm & Food Care Ontario, we were successful in being able to have seasonal workers come to Canada this year.

Early on, we developed an inventory of needs for our sector and the supports that could help take the pressure off in some of those areas. We weren’t successful with all of our asks, but both levels of government have provided varying degrees of support for growers, which has been appreciated.

We worked closely with government to secure federal and provincial cost-share funds to help growers offset additional costs for PPE, quarantines, and other COVID-related expenditures.

Both the provincial and federal governments agreed to enhance crop insurance coverage this year to include labour shortages resulting from the pandemic, and the provincial government increased funding for Ontario’s Risk Management Program, which includes our Self-Directed Risk Management program.

OFVGA took an active role in the distribution of information to growers through regular email updates, a dedicated section on our website, and webinars to help explain and demystify new rules and how to navigate them.

An added stressor this year was the incredible activist, government and media scrutiny on our sector with respect to seasonal workers. Together with our member organizations and Farm & Food Care Ontario, we wrote editorials, submitted grower profiles, bought ad space and responded to countless media requests to ensure our side of the story was also part of the greater narrative around seasonal workers.

Harvest is pretty much wrapped up for this season, and we’re looking ahead to 2021 and beyond. We know we face the prospect of changes to our foreign worker programs, and we continue to be at the table to make sure grower needs are represented.

The global political and trade environment is as volatile as it has ever been, and we’re pushing for financial and regulatory supports to help keep growers competitive. As COVID-19 has shown us, the value of domestic food security cannot be overestimated, and we will continue to do our utmost to ensure the ongoing viability of our sector.

To each and every one of you, thank you for the part you’ve played in helping Ontario’s fruit and vegetable industry come through this unprecedented year. I wish you all the best for the holiday season, and a healthy, happy - and less tumultuous! - new year.

WEATHER VANE



Don’t worry, be happy! That’s David Walcott who has travelled from Barbados to Wilmot Orchards, Newcastle, Ontario for 17 years. We salute all growers and their seasonal agricultural workers who braved 2020. Happy holidays! Photo by Glenn Lowson.

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THE GROWER

URBAN COWBOY

We’ve lost two giants who changed the culture of Ontario agri-food



OWEN ROBERTS

We lost Larry Milligan and Anita Stewart this year, two Canadian agri-food giants who changed the very culture of the way we look at food here, as well as our access to it.

Writing about their passing is heartbreaking. I had strong ties to them both.

Larry gave me my break at the University of Guelph 33 years ago. He hired me to get the public interested in research via the media, and to help create a culture that supports it. For her part, Anita was a kindred spirit in communicating with the public. As a food author and culinary advocate, she tirelessly underlined the intrinsic but poorly understood connection between agriculture and food.

Larry and Anita were committed to the best interests of the agri-food system. I’ve never really thought about them in tandem. But it’s fascinating to consider how their separate yet collective contributions set the table for the current and next chapter of food in our province.

Larry’s career at the University of Guelph started in 1986, when he was hired as the Dean of Research. He came to Guelph with a reputation as one of Canada’s top animal scientists and departmental administrators, having served as chair of the Department of Animal Science at the University of Alberta.

Larry arrived in Guelph at a time when huge changes were underway at many research-intensive Canadian universities. Increasing emphasis was being put on the research portfolio, as institutions recognized the excitement, prestige and support

that accompanied a vigorous graduate studies program.

Administratively, that development included advancing the research lead from a deanship to a vice-presidency...a change that took place at the University of Guelph in 1990, when Larry became the university’s first vice-president of research.

He had many achievements at Guelph, but by far the greatest was the development of the OMAFRA – U of G partnership for research, now the Ontario Agri-food Innovation Alliance. Through this initiative, which was renewed in 2018 for a 10-year period for \$713 million, the ministry and the university work together to advance research and innovation that contributes to the success of the province’s agri-food sector and promotes rural economic development.

Research, laboratory, and veterinary capacity programs operated through the Alliance ensure Ontarians have access to healthy, safe food. As well, they help farmers and businesses have the information they need to be productive, sustainable and resilient.

All this means you see Larry’s legacy every time you shop for food and pick out Ontario-grown products. Farmers are huge supporters of research, and it was Larry and the team he worked with that modernized and formalized the province’s agri-food research system, so farmers would have access to new varieties and new approaches to food production.

Here’s the synergy.

For her part, Anita worked tirelessly to promote the farmers who produced the food that emanated from the program that Larry was pivotal in establishing. What a one-two combination.

Anita was widely and accurately regarded in Canada as the heart of the local food movement here. I’ve written about her often in *The Grower*, about her immovable, nationalistic, and pioneering perspectives on Canadian food.

Fruit and vegetables from our country were among her favourites, and she could describe them with mouth-watering accuracy.

But it was the assault on Canada’s beef sector that inspired her to start in 2003 what would become Food Day Canada to support beleaguered beef producers who’d been hammered by the BSE crisis.

“I said then, and I still do now, that if we don’t get behind these farmers and keep them in business, we won’t have them,” she told me for an article about Food Day Canada in 2017. “Then what? Wait for other countries to come and dump whatever food they have extra on our doorstep?”

That concern escalated when, a year later, U.S. President Donald Trump was pouring billions of dollars into farm aid for American producers. That gave U.S. farmers a leg up on our own producers who didn’t have access to such a vault.

Anita again urged Canadians to get behind those who produce and prepare food here.

“Nothing is more patriotic – or more environmentally responsible – than feasting on our local northern bounty,” she said. “Even though, for years eating locally has been a movement and a way of life for many Canadians from every corner of the nation, this year is a watershed moment. If there ever was a time to eat like a Canadian, cook like a Canadian and shop like a Canadian, it’s now.”

Anita uniquely understood and championed the connection between farming and cuisine, including the research that leads



Dr. Larry Milligan



Anita Stewart appeared at the Elora Research Station several years ago during the annual Potato Research Day. Always knowledgeable with how food really got to the table, she was on the cutting edge observing variety development and connecting with growers such as Dave Brenn.

to new varieties. She worked with food scientists and others at the University of Guelph – which officially named her its food laureate – to create the first and only Guelph Food Inventory, way back in 1999.

The university has named scholarships in the names of both Larry and Anita. And rightly so. They blazed trails that allowed it to claim it’s Canada’s Food University. Theirs is an indelible legacy.

Next chapter

Congratulations to Owen Roberts who is now a faculty member in the Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education and Communications at the University of Illinois. His mandate is to help develop a new agricultural communications curriculum in addition to initially teaching courses in public information campaigns in

agriculture and co-teaching about science communications. The land grant university is based in Urbana-Champaign.

Owen retired from the University of Guelph on August 1, 2020 as director of research communications, a position he’s held for 33 years.

Owen will continue to bring his perspective to **The Grower**.



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CONSUMER EDUCATION



The Real Dirt on Farming 2020 now available



Farm & Food Care officially unveiled the fifth edition of The Real Dirt on Farming, its flagship public-outreach publication, at its virtual Harvest Gala on November 14.

The Real Dirt on Farming is a nation-wide initiative designed to help Canadians connect with their food and the farmers that produce it – who they are, what they do, and why they do it. Using stories and credible science, the 60-page publication addresses common questions and misconceptions about Canadian food and farming, as well as other subjects that the general public has indicated are important to them.

The booklet is created through a partnership of the three Farm & Food Care organizations in Saskatchewan, Ontario and Prince Edward Island and was written by freelance journalist Lilian Schaeer. A national committee of researchers, commodity and subject matter experts, including the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers’ Association and Canadian Horticultural Council staff, were also involved in reviewing and vetting content which was determined, in part, through questions asked by the Canadian Centre for Food Integrity in its annual public trust survey of Canadian consumers.

Previous editions covered crop protection, genetic engineering, pollinator health and the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program. These topics were updated or expanded in the newest edition to reflect advances in science, global events and consumer questions. To keep pace with Canada’s changing food and farming landscape, new subjects have been added including medicinal crops, Canadian innovations such as the non-browning Arctic apple, Cold Snap pear and sustainable food packaging.

Luci Faas, product development specialist with Nature Fresh Farms, which recently launched its 100% Home Compostable Cucumber Wrap, is featured in the publication alongside 31 diverse agriculture career profiles from across Canada. The Real Dirt on Farming will introduce readers to Trinidad Vargas Sanchez, a Seasonal Agricultural Worker in the Holland Marsh, as well as fruit and vegetable grower Chris Oram (Newfoundland), potato farmers the Hayden family (Prince Edward Island) and award-winning viticulturist Karnail Singh Sidhu (British Columbia). In addition to many primary producers, other careers profiled include a plant scientist, chef, registered dietitian, entomologist and regulatory affairs specialist.

This is the fifth edition published since the project’s inception in 2006. To date, 4.5 million copies have been distributed across Canada to libraries, doctors’ offices, registered dietitians, political leaders, educators, and through inserts in national publications.



Trinidad Vargas Sanchez, a seasonal agricultural worker from Mexico, with his son Eddie and son-in-law Juan. The three help grow and harvest carrots, onions, parsnips and beets at the Van Luyk family farm, Holland Acres, in Ontario’s Holland Marsh. Their profile appears on page 37 of the new Real Dirt on Farming. Courtesy Nancy French Photography.

New in this edition will be a classroom resource currently being developed by Agriculture in the Classroom Canada. This resource will be completed in the winter of 2021 and will be distributed, along with the booklet, to classrooms across Canada with the help of provincial agriculture in the classroom organizations.

The publication is currently available online on a newly-developed website at www.RealDirtOnFarming.ca where new topics and profiles will be added regularly. Hard copies may also be ordered from the website. Both a digest version and a French translation of the publication will be available in hard copy and online in January 2021.

In total, more than 25 companies and agribusinesses across Canada supported the 2020 initiative. Champion level partners (\$20,000 or more) include Cargill, Canada Beef, Canola Eat Well, CropLife Canada, Farm Credit Canada, Wallenstein Feed & Supply Ltd.

The project was funded, in part, through the AgriCompetitiveness program of the Canadian Agricultural Partnership, a federal, provincial, territorial initiative.

Farm & Food Care is a coalition of farmers, agriculture and food partners working together to ensure public trust and confidence in food and farming. For more information, visit www.FarmFoodCare.org.

COMING EVENTS 2020

Dec 1-3	Grow Canada Conference, Westin Hotel, Ottawa, ON CANCELLED
Dec 2	CanAgPlus Annual General Meeting, 1 pm VIRTUAL
Dec 2	Ontario Potato Board Annual General Meeting, 10 am VIRTUAL
Dec 2-6	Outstanding Young Farmer National Event, Delta Bessborough Hotel, Saskatoon, SK CANCELLED
Dec 3	Ontario Apple Growers Annual General Meeting, VIRTUAL
Dec 8-10	Great Lakes Expo, DeVos Place, Grand Rapids, MI VIRTUAL
Dec 10	Global Berry Congress, Rotterdam, Netherlands VIRTUAL
Dec 10	Fresh Vegetable Growers of Ontario Annual General Meeting, VIRTUAL
	2021
Jan 6-7	Ontario Agricultural Conference (SouthWest Agricultural Conference, Guelph and Eastern Ontario Crop Conferences combined)
Jan 6-7	Potato Expo, Gaylord Texan Hotel, Grapevine, TX LIVE & VIRTUAL
Jan 13	Nova Scotia Fruit Growers’ Association Annual General Meeting, 1-2 pm, VIRTUAL
Jan 18-20	North American Strawberry Growers’ Association Annual Meeting and Conference VIRTUAL
Jan 21	Producteurs de pommes du Québec AGA, VIRTUELLE
Jan 26-28	Manitoba Potato Production Days, Keystone Centre, Brandon, MB CANCELLED
Jan 27	Nova Scotia Fruit Growers’ Association, Convention, VIRTUAL
Jan 28-30	Pacific Agriculture Show, Abbotsford, BC VIRTUAL
Jan 26-30	Guelph Organic Conference, Guelph, ON ONLINE SEMINARS - VIRTUAL
Feb 8 -11	Mid-Atlantic Fruit & Vegetable Convention, VIRTUAL
Feb 16	Ontario Fruit & Vegetable Growers’ Association Annual General Meeting, VIRTUAL
Feb 17-18	Ontario Fruit & Vegetable Convention, Scotiabank Convention Centre, Niagara Falls, ON CANCELLED
Feb 22-24	International Fruit Tree Association Annual Conference, VIRTUAL
Mar 4	Ontario Potato Webinars VIRTUAL
Mar 15-18	Canadian Horticultural Council Annual General Meeting, VIRTUAL
April 12	Canadian Produce Marketing Association Fresh Week, VIRTUAL
May 1-5	International Strawberry Symposium, Rimini, Italy
May 18-20	Fruit Logistica Special Edition, Berlin, Germany
May 30-June 3	11th World Potato Congress, Dublin, Ireland POSTPONED to May 30-June 2, 2022

RETAIL NAVIGATOR

Preparing for 2021



PETER CHAPMAN

How many people have you heard say, “2020 has been quite a year, can’t wait to see it wrap up.” I hate to be the bearer of bad news, but just because we flip the calendar from December 31, 2020 to January 1, 2021 not much will change. The world will still be struggling to contain the pandemic and the food industry will need to find people to produce food to feed consumers that have changed so much in a very short period of time.

As we enter a new year, we should be ready for it. Despite the challenges of 2020, we need to be ready for 2021.

Perhaps a lot of your planning is in place which is great. It has been difficult to look too far forward so you might be planning for the new year but not as far out as in previous years when you had a better sense of the volume and the marketplace.

To prepare for 2021 there are some considerations:

1. Your sales history

The year started off as you probably would have expected and then in March so much changed. Review the fluctuations in volume and try to reduce the impact of any stockpiling or panic buying on your sales. If possible, you want to find your baseline volume in 2020. This would be your regular weekly volume, without ads or other fluctuations. On average, food retail seems to have been up 10-15 per cent, when compared to previous years. Obviously, every item performs differently and even the retailers are getting different results as consumer shopping patterns change.

It is important to look at your history by customer as some volume has shifted in the market.

2. People will continue to work at home

This change in consumer behaviour will likely continue for some time. People have learned how to work differently. It does have an impact on their eating, especially if your product can be consumed as part of lunch. There is also more snacking at home.

3. Consumers are shopping differently

Most people want to get in and out of the store as quickly as possible. Items that relied on impulse sales really need a change of strategy. The best approach is to get on the shopping list before consumers go to the store or complete their online order. It is time to shift investments from in-store programs to opportunities where you can get their attention when they are making a shopping list or planning meals for the week.

4. Travel and mobility will still be reduced

Travel restrictions remain in place and the 14-day quarantine for any out-of-country travel really does limit the numbers. Events and other gatherings will be curtailed for early 2021. One consideration this winter will be the number of snow birds who choose to stay home as opposed to going south for the winter. There could be as many as 200,000 more Canadians staying put rather than migrating to Florida, Arizona or California. Consumers will be home more, looking for more interesting food. They will also need help to prepare it and enjoy it.

5. Online shopping will continue

We know more consumers are buying more food online than ever. Estimates range from 12-15 per cent of total food is being

purchased online. This would include click and collect, direct selling and delivery. Depending on which model you and your customers use, this can impact your sales. This might also be an opportunity for incremental sales if your presence in this channel has been limited.

6. Restaurants and other food service will be down

People are eating more at home which means restaurants and other food service establishments will struggle. If you sell into retail this means more volume but if you sell into food service, it means less. Many of these establishments have increased their capacity for delivery, however volume is still down.

Once you review your history and factor in the issues impacting your volume, you should be able to put together a forecast for 2021. Use your starting point to begin the conversation with your customer. You need to know what they are thinking and if your assessment is in line with what they see. Retailers prefer suppliers who bring a starting point, not an open-ended question.

WHAT’S IN STORE?

Food waste is still on the radar

Certainly 2020 has changed the focus for many in the food industry. Service level and the shopping environment increased in importance as suppliers and



retailers had to learn to operate in a new environment. Despite these changes, food waste continues to be a major issue. We did not hear as much about it during 2020 but it is not going away.

Recently Sobeys implemented an in-store campaign with Love Food Hate Waste to increase awareness and provide some proactive solutions to consumers in store and on its website. All major retailers in Canada with the exception of Costco made a commitment to reduce food waste by 50 per cent by 2025. Suppliers need to be thinking about their role in this initiative.

Peter Chapman is a retail consultant, professional speaker and the author of A la Cart—a suppliers’ guide to retailer’s priorities. Peter is based in Halifax, N.S. where he is the principal at SKUFood. Peter works with producers and processors to help them get their products on the shelf and into the shopping cart.

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KAREN DAVIDSON

As a practising agronome in Québec and now a full-time farmer, it's no surprise that Kévin Rivard is a fan of cover cropping. The 29-year-old grower near St. Ambroise, Québec produces 250 acres of seed potatoes and 350 acres of fresh potatoes – varieties that range from Elmo to Envol to Milva and Noblesse.

During the last decade, the Rivard family has reduced inputs by 10 per cent while increasing yields by the same amount to more than 350 cwt/acre, depending on the potato variety. Cover cropping is one of several practices that contribute to those gains.

“We quit growing oats in the crop rotation,” says Rivard. “The equipment we required was not good for our soils and the benefits weren’t worth it.”

His five-year rotation goes as follows: seed potatoes, fresh potatoes, two or three years of green manure mixes such as red clover, ryegrass, yellow mustard (a biofumigant for nematode control), timothy grass or buckwheat.

He’s a fan of buckwheat to suppress weeds and to protect the black soils from erosion. Buckwheat’s attractive white flowers are a home for beneficial insects. When the crop is disked

under, it also increases phosphorus and micronutrient availability in the root zone for the following year’s potato crop.

“This rotation has helped us reduce the need for nitrogen per acre by 10 per cent per year for the same yield,” says Rivard.

Another practice is precision irrigation and the use of station tension meters to measure the availability of water in the soil. Lots of experiments have tested the best frequency of irrigation as well as the optimal timing.

The farm adopted the thinking behind energy efficiency in many ways. “We have converted to electricity to power our irrigation,” explains Rivard. “We own the high-tension lines for our own access.”

A third environmental practice is the conversion from powders to liquids for crop protection products. Liquid formulations, easier for handlers to use safely, also concentrate the common active ingredients in a way that reduces risk of contamination in the environment.

To be successful, Rivard says that growers must know their costs and margins. Then you have confidence to move forward.

“With our group Québec Parmentier, we have access to the best marketing,” concludes Rivard. “We do not need to be big to have good markets. We are very proud of that.”



Kévin Rivard, president of Parmentier Québec, uses many sustainable practices at the third-generation family potato farm, Production Rivard near St. Ambroise, Québec. In 2019, he won the Environmental Sustainability award from Solio, formerly known as La Coop Fédérée.



Yellow mustard, as green manure, is disked under every August.

ONTARIO

Gerald Backx signed up for the long haul by joining the family corporation in 2020. The third-generation farmer is banking on the muck soils of the Grand Bend, Ontario area to continue growing 60 acres of potatoes, 60 acres of yellow onions and wheat, soybeans and corn.

“I’m a fan of managing well what you have,” says Backx.

The Ridgetown College graduate and his parents, Paul and Lynda, have been practising minimum tillage for years. Their three-year cropping rotation consists of potatoes, soybeans and onions. Soybeans, a legume crop, can add anywhere from 30 to 50 pounds of nitrogen per acre to the soil. The crop also serves to break disease cycles and problem weeds such as pigweed. Cover crops after potatoes and onions minimize wind erosion, promote microbial activity and suppress weeds.

As rich as they look, muck soils work extremely hard and can be depleted easily without stewardship.

“Most vegetable crops are big potash eaters,” says Backx. “We soil sample two out of three years ahead of the vegetable crops.”

Working with Yara International which specializes in mineral nutrition, the Backx family tracks nitrogen, potassium and phosphorus levels as well as key micronutrients of magnesium, boron and zinc. Magnesium, for example, is a central component of chlorophyll which helps to absorb sunlight during photosynthesis. It also acts as a phosphorus carrier in plants.

Boron plays its part in regulating the plant’s hormone levels and promoting proper growth. It’s also associated with flower production – important in potatoes. Only small amounts of zinc are required, however, it’s a key constituent of many enzymes and proteins,

The Backx family closely monitors the trends of these micronutrients and adjusts as needed. “We consult with Yara if we have any questions,” adds Backx.

Tissue sampling is conducted on a weekly basis during the heart of the growing season, from end of June until mid-August. An onion leaf and the third or fourth petiole of a potato sample are placed in paper bags and shipped to an A & L Laboratory for analysis. The results inform foliar



L-R: Gerald Backx and his father Paul survey the onion crop on their Grand Bend, Ontario farm in July 2020. Photo by Glenn Lowson.

feeding decisions to keep the crop balanced on a weekly basis. It's easy to finetune foliar nutrition along with what's going into the spray tank for fungicides.

“Healthy plants are less likely to get sick,” says Backx. Hotter

and drier years have been recorded in the last decade, so a strong immune response to stress is valued. Despite a droughty 2020, above average yields were achieved with potatoes and onions. The family credits strong

relationships with all retailers and their advice on input supplies.

“If you look after your ground, it will look after you at the end of the day,” says Backx.

SOIL HEALTH & CROP NUTRITION

Wealth is buried in soil tilth



ONTARIO

As a potato scout on the family farm, Kate VanderZaag knows her drill. No weeds, check. No aphids, check. No late blight, check. A few years ago, her morning walk of the Alliston, Ontario farm didn't feel right.

"There's not enough life out here," she realized.

That gut instinct was reinforced when she attended an ACRES conference in the U.S. and heard Australian soils ecologist Dr. Christine Jones. The epiphanal moment was learning that as a good steward of the land, you should keep photosynthesis going as long as possible, as much as possible. It's the plants that are building the soil.

This philosophy is now a journey for VanderZaag and her husband Peter. For five or six years now, they have been experimenting with cover crops on both owned and rented land. The biggest change is using a multi-species cover crop after all cereal crops.

There's no specific prescription but the mix often contains up to eight species, including radish, crimson clover, cowpeas, Austrian winter peas, oats, buckwheat, phacelia, vetch and sunflowers. Sunflowers? Yes, pollinators particularly like the sunflowers.

"This looks messy, but there are no weeds," says Vanderzaag. "The point is to have multiple plant species with different root lengths and flowering times."

"Here we are on November 20, and I have green fields that are still photosynthesizing, with the roots feeding micro-organisms and sequestering carbon," she says.

As of 2020, there are about 90 acres in cover crops which means there is about 16 months of rest before the next potato seeding and 600 acres of cover crop seeded after wheat harvest. Nitrogen inputs have decreased. Potato yields have increased.

The program's benefits include increased capacity of the soils to hold water and defend against drought.

For the VanderZaag's, the next challenge is to figure out what to plant after corn or soybeans. It is possible to interseed.

DIGGING DEEPER...



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SOIL HEALTH & CROP NUTRITION

More to be understood about micronutrients in apple orchards

KAREN DAVIDSON

What’s in the spray tank? More often than not, crop protection and crop nutrition products are side by side, boosting the ability of plants to weather the elements.

That’s what Ian Parker, general manager, is testing at Wilmot Orchards, Newcastle, Ontario. He collaborated in an experimental trial with NutriAg in 2020 using SilicalMax. The foliar fertilizer contains calcium, a cell-wall builder – and silicon, a stress-buster. It can be applied in a wide range of fruits and vegetables.

In this case, Parker used the product for its qualities to prevent bitter pit in apples, a common disorder in apples that results in breakdown of cells under the skin. The dark depressions in the skin are not attractive, nor is the bitter taste of the fruit. According to the scientific literature, this disorder is directly linked to calcium (Ca) concentrations and is considered a key indicator of calcium deficiency in apples.

The Honeycrisp apple variety is vulnerable to this disorder, which can be a significant economic loss for apple farmers.

NutriAnalytics bitterpit modelling projects have revealed that bitterpit outcomes are best explained by a complex of nutrients instead of simply calcium alone. One element which continues to show relevance in Honeycrisp disorder prediction is silicon (Si).

According to scientific literature, Si coats the leaf surface, reducing transpiration and reinforcing the external barrier to pathogens and insects. The micronutrient penetrates into the plant where it fortifies the cuticular barrier, protecting against water loss and improving tolerance to environmental stress.

“This product works fantastic,” says Ian Parker. “We reduced the number of spray applications from 14 with another product to six passes with SilicalMax. That’s a saving in labour, fuel and wear and tear on equipment.”

Sebastian Margarit, vice-president of informatics and agronomy, NutriAg, is also an apple farmer. He explains that the trial work in 2020 demonstrated that six applications of one litre per acre were applied throughout the growing season. It was compared to another competitor’s product. Starting June 29, fruitlet samples were taken from 10



Honeycrisp apple harvest, Newcastle, Ontario. Photo by Glenn Lowson.

apples and analyzed for the level of calcium. At that juncture, no differences were observed in calcium levels in the two products as few foliar nutrients had been applied.

By September 17, the finished fruit were analysed and these results showed that SilicalMax-treated apples contained 16.5 per cent more calcium than the grower’s standard. The total nutrient profile of SiliCalMax-treated fruit had a lower N/Ca ratio and showed improvements in Si uptake relative to the competitor fruit. Initial modelling for quality of fruit suggested a reduced likelihood of bitter pit incidence based on the fruit nutrient profile. These apples will continue to be monitored during

storage.

SilicalMax has been trialed in New York, Washington, Nova Scotia and Ontario orchards. It is pending registration, expected in 2021.

For Wilmot Orchards, this will become part of their management plan for 30 acres of Honeycrisp apples which make up one-third of their varieties.

Another tool for apple growers is foliar-applied TruPhos. According to NutriAg company literature, this high phosphorus liquid fertilizer helps to improve sizing and colouring during fruit development and lowers internal disorders in storage.

There are several ways to influence the synthesis of

anthocyanins, the flavonoids that give apple skins their red colour. One way is to use foliar applications of ortho-phosphate products such as Truphos.

Again, the finicky Honeycrisp apple variety as well as Pink Lady are sometimes slow to colour. Two to four applications of TruPhos at two litres/acre are required during cover sprays.

Margarit adds that colour and size premiums continue to reflect significant economic opportunities for farmers, especially on varieties such as Gala for size and Honeycrisp for colour. Products such as TruPhos can improve the bottom line for farmers and packers alike while satisfying the customer’s desire for high fruit quality.

Honeycrisp apple volumes continue to grow in Ontario

The Ontario Apple Growers (OAG) have released crop estimate yields by variety, showing that Honeycrisp had a banner yield with a 65 per cent increase.

“Honeycrisp wants to fruit every other year – one more challenge to manage,” says Cathy McKay, chair, OAG. “This was the year for a big crop.”

Fuji apples enjoyed a good growing season with yields up 20.4 per cent. Because it’s the last variety to be harvested, in early November, it’s tough to get through all the weather hurdles. There were no major hail events in 2020.

Gala, another popular variety with consumers, had yield increases of 17.6 per cent. “We’re

November 2020 yield estimate
Apple yield by variety

Variety	2018 Production ('000 lbs)	2019 Production ('000 lbs)	2020 Production ('000 lbs)	2020 Production ('000 bushels)	% Change 2020 vs 2019
Other early varieties	8,622	9,159	9,823	234	7.2%
Ambrosia	19,706	24,384	27,670	659	13.5%
Courtland	13,025	13,063	11,275	268	-13.7%
Crispin/Mutsu	2,444	2,818	2,844	68	0.9%
Empire	39,328	30,400	30,103	717	-1.0%
Fugi	2,874	6,176	7,438	177	20.4%
Gala	56,965	58,795	69,138	1,646	17.6%
Golden Delicious	7,595	9,725	10,785	257	10.9%
Honeycrisp	32,903	29,427	48,127	1,146	63.5%
Idared	5,614	4,138	4,283	102	3.5%
McIntosh	63,466	51,781	49,264	1,173	-4.9%
Northern Spy	47,093	22,203	23,201	552	4.5%
Red Delicious	25,540	28,571	26,714	636	-6.5%
Spartan	4,644	4,754	5,550	132	16.7%
Other Late Varieties	12,003	16,309	17,534	417	7.5%
Total Fresh	341,823	311,705	343,751	8,185	10.3%

excited about this variety because we can supply it almost year-round,” says McKay.


Ambrosia had yield increases of 13.5 per cent. “This variety

really likes the heat and it has a better size this year.”

Packers are reported to be happy with apple movement in retail stores this fall. Any growers

with pick-your-own operations were fully booked.


Source: Ontario Apple Growers



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POTATO PRODUCTION

New potato varieties

EUGENIA BANKS

Variety	Yield Cwt/acre	Maturity	Specific Gravity	Skin & Flesh Color	Common Scab	Comments
Reveille Russet	304	Late	1.070	Russet, white flesh	TBD	Fresh market. No hollow heart or second growth detected
LaBelle Russet	323	Medium early	1.083	Russet, white flesh	Tolerant	French fries and fresh market. Needs irrigation Performed very well in the Melancthon area this season
Ballerina	375	Medium early	1.060	Yellow skin & flesh	Tolerant	Sizes well. High yield. No second growth observed
Allison	362	Medium late	1.077	White skin and flesh Oval tubers	Tolerant	Needs irrigation Pear-shaped tubers under drought stress
Rosi	372	Medium late	1.076	Round to round oval tubers. Smooth, ruby red skin. Cream colored flesh	Resistant	Very attractive tubers. High yield. Resistance to scab is a plus. Second growth not detected.



These varieties performed very well this year in research plots with irrigation. Their evaluation will continue in 2021. Results are more reliable when replicated in time and place, but the final test comes when varieties are released and planted in commercial fields, not in plots.

This project was funded through the Canadian Agricultural Partnership (the Partnership), a five-year federal-provincial-territorial initiative and the Ontario Potato Board

Eugenia Banks is a consultant to the Ontario Potato Board.

Farming with Phytophthora



Photo by Glenn Lowson

Improving drainage and using raised beds for non-vining crops can be effective for growers.

KATIE GOLDENHAR

Rotten fruit are not appealing to anyone, especially growers. In 2020, the late summer rains across Ontario resulted in severe losses in many squash and pumpkin crops that were ripe and ready to be harvested. This was due to the destructive, soilborne disease Phytophthora blight. Phytophthora blight is caused by the oomycete *Phytophthora capsici*, which can cause fruit, crown and root rot. This disease can infect cucurbits (cucumbers, melons, squash, pumpkins, etc.), tomatoes and peppers, as well as eggplants, beans and some weed species. Once Phytophthora blight is in a field, it becomes an on-going management issue. Every grower of these crops should have this disease top of mind – especially if *Phytophthora capsici* is not already established in a field.

Symptoms of crown rot appear as a sudden wilting of the whole plant and will typically be found in low-lying areas where water pools or it follows surface drainage patterns. Some crops such as cucumbers have reduced susceptibility to crown rot and are more susceptible to fruit rot. Fruit rot symptoms typically appear where fruit is touching the ground (Figure 1a), as the sporangia survive in the soil. The sporangia can also splash from rain or overhead irrigation onto fruit (Figure 1b&c). Initially lesions will be a water-soaked, darker spot before expanding, and a powdered, sugar-like growth appears. As the infection

progresses, fruit turn soft and become fully rotten. The powdered sugar-like growth is the sporangia that contain the infecting zoospores. These zoospores need free water to move and infect the plant. The sexual spores of this pathogen are known as oospores, which are thick walled and can survive in the soil for more than 10 years. Once Phytophthora blight is established in a field, it isn't leaving.

It is crucial to work on excluding this pathogen from fields that are not already infested, as it becomes an on-going management issue once the pathogen is present.

Here are three key focus areas to prevent Phytophthora blight on your farm:

- 1) Avoid disposing of diseased fruit and plants near vegetable fields. These diseased fruits may contain spores that can overwinter and travel through water run-off to nearby fields.
- 2) Cleaning equipment to be free of soil is important if moving from an infected field to a non-infected field.
- 3) Recognize the risk of different irrigation sources – surface water (ponds and streams) can be a source for this pathogen to move from field to field.

Once *Phytophthora capsici* is in a field, these are some things to consider implementing or improving to keep host crops healthy and profitable. These include:



Figure 1. Fruit rot caused by *Phytophthora capsici* a) pumpkin b) pepper c) tomato

- 1) Crop rotation away from hosts (cucurbits, fruiting vegetables, beans) is important for reducing the inoculum level for when a host crop is planted back into the field. The oospores can survive for more than 10 years, so crop rotation will not eliminate the disease, but reduce the inoculum level.
- 2) For pepper growers, there are tolerant varieties that can reduce the incidence and severity of Phytophthora blight.
- 3) Improving drainage and using raised beds for non-vining crops can be effective. Don't over irrigate!
- 4) Storing bins inside after harvest can help reduce the chances that rain will move the pathogen to healthy fruit when sitting together. If a fruit is symptomatic at harvest, do not place it into the bins as it will spread the disease in storage.
- 5) During the field season if there is limited Phytophthora blight in the field, destroy infected fruit or plants to help reduce the inoculum load. Remember to bury deeply or dispose of infected material in a landfill to not spread the disease further.
- 6) There are fungicides registered, refer to OMAFRA's publication



Figure 2. Irrigation on a cucumber crop. *Phytophthora capsici* can survive in surface water and spread through irrigation.

838 for details. Ensure you are targeting the proper plant part (crown and/or fruit) with your application.

Fungicides are more effective when applied preventatively, so if *Phytophthora capsici* is in the field, the crop is susceptible and there are favourable conditions, fungicides can be an effective tool when used in conjunction with other methods. Fungicides cannot be relied upon solely for management of this disease.

With planning and thoughtful management, Phytophthora

blight can be managed to produce profitable yields in susceptible vegetable crops. More information about Phytophthora blight in Ontario is needed including distribution, integrated management options, fungicide efficacy and impact of irrigation water treatments. To know more about *Phytophthora capsici* or participate in future research on this disease, contact katie.goldenhar@ontario.ca, 519-835-5792.

Katie Goldenhar is pathologist – horticulture for OMAFRA.

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CROP PROTECTION

Zampro fungicide label expanded

JIM CHAPUT

The Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) recently announced the approval of a minor use label expansion registration for Zampro MPRO fungicide (ametoctradin + dimethomorph) for control of downy mildew on spinach and suppression of downy mildew on blackberries in Canada. Zampro fungicide was already labeled for management of several diseases on a range of crops in Canada.

These minor use proposals were submitted by Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada, Pest Management Centre (AAFC-

PMC) as a result of minor use priorities established by growers and extension personnel.

The following is provided as an abbreviated, general outline only. Users should be making disease management decisions within a robust integrated pest management program and should consult the complete label before using Zampro fungicide.

Zampro fungicide is toxic to aquatic organisms. Do not apply this product or allow drift to other crops or non-target areas. Do not contaminate off-target areas or aquatic habitats when spraying or when cleaning and rinsing spray equipment or containers.

Crop	Target	Rate (L/ha)	Application Information	PHI (days)
Spinach	Downy mildew (control)	1.0	Begin applications of prior to disease development and continue on a 5 to 7-day interval. Apply in at least 200 L water per ha. Maximum of 3 applications per season.	0
Blackberries	Downy mildew (suppression)	0.8 – 1.0	Begin applications of prior to disease development and continue on a 5 – 7 day interval. The addition of a registered non-ionic surfactant at 0.125% v/v is recommended to improve disease control performance. Apply spray to obtain thorough and complete plant coverage. Maximum of 3 applications per season.	14

Follow all other precautions, restrictions and directions for use on the Zampro fungicide label carefully.

For a copy of the new minor use label contact your local crop

specialist, grower association representative, regional supply outlet or visit the PMRA label site.

Jim Chaput is minor use coordinator, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

Ecoation partners with robotic arm developer

Ecoation Innovative Solutions Inc., a leading provider of data-driven Grower Assist Technology, and Kinova, a Canadian-based global leader in professional robotics, are teaming up.

By adding robotic grasping capabilities to Ecoation’s grower assist platform, this ‘Canadian Duo’ aims to enable real-time identification and treatment of pest and disease risks in greenhouses globally. With an initial focus on closed-loop and automated Integrated Pest

Management (IPM) strategies, specifically surgical treatment application to targeted areas of the canopy and autonomous biological control distribution, this partnership will bring the best of each company’s capabilities to the market as a commercial crop monitoring and management package.

“Kinova is a leader in robotic arm development with impressive and robust products that have been deployed commercially for many years in the global market,” commented Ecoation founder and

CEO, Dr. Saber Miresmailli.

“What excites me the most is the fact that through this partnership, two leading Canadian companies are joining forces to tackle important and timely issues that are impacting humanity globally: food security and farm labour shortage. Combining the ecoation AI/IA Human+Machine platform with Kinova’s robotic arm will not only allow the Canadian duo to detect, diagnose and report problems but also help them to treat the issue using the proper solution with



surgical precision.”

Entering the market within the first half of 2021, this partnership will complete the “find and fix” strategy that Ecoation introduced several years ago. In the meantime, the partnership will explore all of the

exciting possibilities that are unlocked when you pair a set of robotic arms with Ecoation’s OKO platform, the grower’s eyes on the ground.

Source: Ecoation November 23, 2020 news release

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CROP PROTECTION

Prowl H2O herbicide label expanded for transplanted celery



JIM CHAPUT

The Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) recently announced the approval

of a minor use label expansion registration for Prowl H2O herbicide for control of labeled weeds on transplanted celery in Canada. Prowl H2O herbicide was already labeled for use on a

Crop	Target	Rate (L/ha)	Application Information	PHI (days)
Celery	Green foxtail, redroot pigweed, lamb’s-quarters (suppression)	2.37	Apply as a broadcast over the top application at least 21 days after transplanting and prior to the emergence weeds. One application per year. Use a minimum of 200 L water per hectare	60
Celery	Barnyard grass, crabgrass, green foxtail, yellow foxtail, common chickweed, lamb’s quarters, redroot pigweed	6.6	Apply as a broadcast over the top application at least 21 days after transplanting and prior to the emergence weeds. One application per year. Use a minimum of 200 L water per hectare	60

number of crops in Canada for control of several weeds. This minor use project was submitted by Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada (AAFC-PMC) as a result of minor use priorities established by growers and extension personnel. The following is provided as an abbreviated, general outline only. Users should be making weed management decisions within a robust integrated weed management program and should

consult the complete label before using this herbicide. Prowl H2O herbicide is toxic to aquatic organisms and non-target terrestrial plants. Do not apply this product or allow drift to other crops or non-target areas. Do not contaminate off-target areas or aquatic habitats when spraying or when cleaning and rinsing spray equipment or containers. Do not apply Prowl H2O herbicide more than once in two consecutive years.

Follow all other precautions, restrictions and directions for use on the Prowl H2O herbicide label carefully. For a copy of the new minor use label contact your local crop specialist, regional supply outlet or visit the PMRA label site.

Source: Jim Chaput, minor use coordinator, OMAFRA November 2, 2020 news release

Linuron herbicide can be used under specific conditions



Health Canada has completed its re-evaluation of linuron, the active ingredient of several herbicides, and deemed it safe for continued use under specific conditions for specific crops. These include carrots, parsnips, potatoes and asparagus. However, note the following cancelled uses on all product

labels: • Tree fruit (apple, peach, pear, plum/prune, cherry), corn (field and sweet), wheat, barley, oats, soybean, celery, Saskatoon berries, chokecherries, dill, coriander, caraway, sweet white lupins, and pre-emergent combined with post-harvest application to asparagus.

• Airblast and right-of way application equipment. Cancelled uses with an extended phase-out schedule: A subset of cancelled uses were found to lack suitable alternatives for the management of weeds, for which growers would face significant challenges: • Chokecherries (fall seeded plantings), dill, coriander, caraway, celery, and sweet white

lupins. As a result, the implementation of the re-evaluation decision for these cancelled minor specialty crops will be delayed for an additional two years to allow growers to find pest management solutions. During this extended period, the overall exposure to human health and the environment will be significantly reduced by the removal of other cancelled uses, as well as through


the implementation of additional interim mitigation measures that will be required when applying linuron to these cancelled minor uses. Here is the link to the Re-Evaluation Decision for linuron from Health Canada issued November 5, 2020. <https://bit.ly/3571cdT> Source: Health Canada November 5, 2020

Tricor LQ herbicide registered

UPL AgroSolutions Canada Inc. is launching Tricor LQ, a new liquid formulation of Tricor, to the Canadian market after receiving registration from the Pest Management Regulatory Agency. With the legacy of Tricor DF, a Group 5 herbicide, introduction of the new liquid formulation gives growers extended application method and timing flexibility. Tricor is a proven herbicide for the control of annual grass and broadleaf weeds in soybeans, potatoes, cereals and many other crops. Tricor main active ingredient is metribuzin, which many weed scientists and consultants recommend as a foundation ingredient for an effective herbicide resistance management

program. “This new LQ formulation of Tricor provides a great option for growers and custom applicators who prefer to use liquids in their weed management programs,” says Chris Nowlan, marketing portfolio manager, UPL AgroSolutions Canada. For growers who are looking to increase yield potential due to early season weed pressure, Tricor LQ is a great new tool to use as part of a weed control program. In the production of soybeans, potatoes and tomatoes, Tricor increases the control of velvetleaf and several pigweed species. Source: UPL Ltd. November 17, 2020 news release

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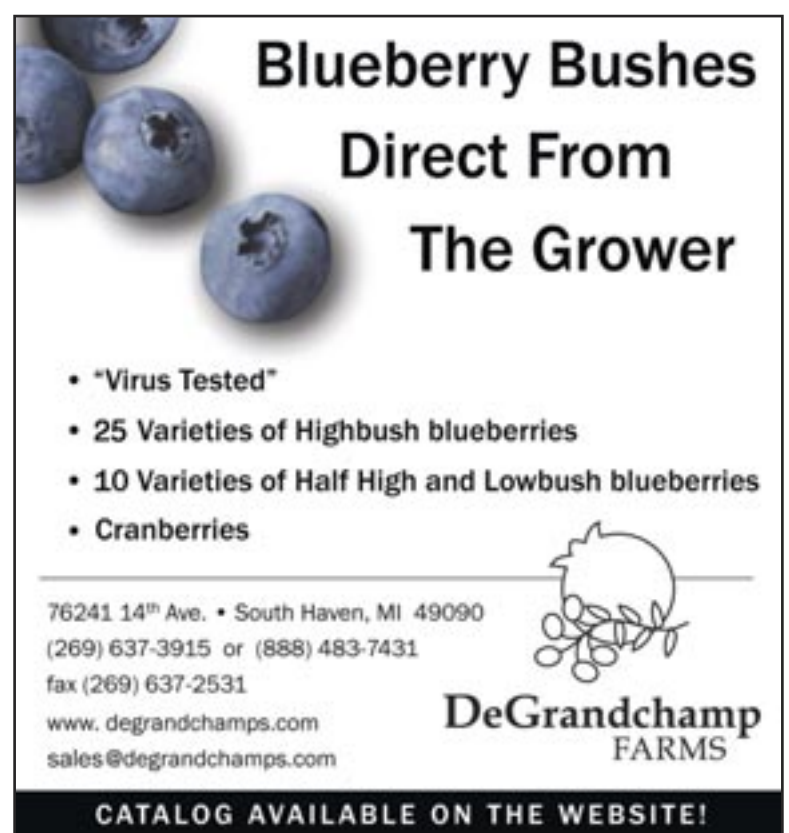
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CROP PROTECTION

Protecting food crops

As the year comes to an end, so does the UN-sanctioned International Year of Plant Health. The Food and Agriculture Organization estimates that up to 40 per cent of food crops are lost due to plant pests annually.

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Pest Management Centre (PMC) points out its role in sustainable weed management in vegetable crops, so that more of the crop can be harvested and stored.

In 2015, as part of the PMC-led Strategy for Integrated Weed Management in Field Vegetables, stakeholders identified herbicide resistance and early detection of resistant weeds as a top priority. As part of this strategy, PMC supported a project to develop rapid genetic testing methods for detecting herbicide resistance in weeds in less than a week.

Traditionally, identifying resistance in a weed takes at least six months, and results are only useful for the following growing season. But through this project, scientists developed 16 genetic tests that can help them detect

weed-specific resistance to herbicides much faster. Using these newly developed test protocols, the Quebec Pest Diagnostic Lab (in French only) is already offering growers a testing service. Results are provided within 10 days of receiving samples.

With this new tool, growers can now make herbicide-selection decisions informed by science and reduce the risk of spreading herbicide-resistant weeds by managing them within the same season.

But growers still need more herbicide options with different modes of action in their toolbox. So another focus of PMC's work has led to the registration of at least nine herbicides for labelled weeds in several vegetable crops. These products provide growers with access to different modes-of-action tools for use in crops where weed resistance to certain herbicides has been identified.

PMC also supported projects to develop non-conventional weed management approaches such as the use of cover crops to suppress weeds. In fact, growers



Protecting vegetable crops in the Holland Marsh.

in Eastern Canada now have access to a web-based tools that identifies the cover crop best suited to their farm needs. PMC has also lent its support to technologies that reduce herbicide use such as banded sprays.

These are just a few examples

of the support PMC provides to better protect crops.

Working in partnership with growers since its launching in 2003, the PMC's work has led to the registration of more than 1,400 new pesticide uses. Pest control tools and practices that

support sustainable pest management have also become available through PMC's efforts.

Source: Pest Management Centre


2021 ushers in International Year of Fruits and Vegetables



The International Society for Horticultural Science (ISHS) is pleased to be involved as a privileged partner society supporting the 2021 International Year of Fruits and Vegetables and actively contributing to the success of the project that closely integrates with the aim of the ISHS "...to promote and

encourage research and education in all branches of horticultural science and to facilitate cooperation and knowledge transfer on a global scale through its symposia and congresses, publications and scientific structure."





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CROP PROTECTION

Poast Ultra herbicide for control of weeds in basil



Crop(s)	Target	Rate (L/ha)	Application Information	PHI (days)
Basil (fresh and dried)	Labeled grassy weeds	Maximum of 1.1	Apply up to 2 applications per year not exceeding a total maximum application rate of 1.1 L/ha per season. Allow a minimum of 14 days between applications.	14

JIM CHAPUT

The Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) recently announced the approval of a minor use label expansion registration for Poast Ultra herbicide for control of labeled weeds on basil (fresh and dried) in Canada. This herbicide was already labeled for management of grassy weeds on a wide range of crops in Canada.

This minor use proposal was submitted by Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada, Pest Management Centre (AAFC-PMC) as a result of minor use priorities established by growers and extension personnel.

The following is provided as an abbreviated, general outline only. Users should be making weed management decisions within a robust integrated

weed management program and should consult the complete label before using Poast Ultra herbicide.

Poast Ultra herbicide is toxic to aquatic organisms and non-target terrestrial plants. Do not apply this product or allow drift to other crops or non-target areas. Do not contaminate off-target areas or aquatic habitats when spraying or when cleaning and rinsing spray equipment or containers.

Follow all other precautions, restrictions and directions for use on the Poast Ultra herbicide label carefully.

For a copy of the new minor use label contact your local crop specialist, regional supply outlet or visit the PMRA label site.

Source: Jim Chaput, OMAFRA, October 28, 2020 news release

Syngenta Group adopts new brand identity

After the mergers and acquisitions of global crop protection and seed companies in recent years, it’s tough to know who’s who. Here’s a clearer road map for the Syngenta Group which was formed on June 18, 2020.

The Syngenta Group is the umbrella for four business units: Syngenta Crop Protection, Syngenta Seeds, ADAMA and Syngenta Group China.

As of October 30, 2020, Syngenta Group announced a new logo and visual identity that

represents “the vibrancy, wonder and abundance of the four elements that enable agriculture: water, earth, plants and sunlight.”

The four leaves of the Syngenta Group logo are a strong link to the four seasons that shape agriculture in most parts of the world. The news release says that the fresh new colours signal the innovation power, pioneering spirit and digital capability of the umbrella company.

The distinctive customer-facing branding of Syngenta Crop Protection, Syngenta Seeds and



ADAMA remains unchanged. Shanghai.

Syngenta Crop Protection remains headquartered in Switzerland while Syngenta Seeds is headquartered in the United States. ADAMA is headquartered in Israel. Syngenta Group China is based in

In a separate news release, ADAMA announced it will acquire a majority stake in Jiangsu Huifeng Bio Agriculture’s crop protection plants in China for about US \$175 million. The purchase includes synthesis and

formulation facilities.

Source: Syngenta Group October 30, 2020 news release

Quadris Top fungicide labeled for globe artichokes



Crop(s)	Pest(s)	L product per ha	Application Information	Days before harvest
Globe artichokes	Ramularia leaf & bud spot (suppression), Powdery mildew (control)	0.73 – 1.025	Begin applications prior to disease onset when conditions are conducive for disease. Apply Quadris Top on a 14-day schedule. Maximum of four (4) applications per year.	3

Use sufficient water for thorough coverage

JIM CHAPUT

The Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) recently announced the approval of an URMULE registration for Quadris Top fungicide for management of Ramularia leaf and bud spot and powdery mildew on globe artichokes in Canada. Quadris Top fungicide was already labeled for use on a number of crops in Canada for control of several diseases.

This minor use proposal was submitted by OMAFRA as a result of minor use priorities established by growers and extension personnel.

The following is provided as an abbreviated, general outline only. Users should be making disease management decisions within a robust integrated disease management program and should consult the complete label before using Quadris Top fungicide.

Difenoconazole is toxic to aquatic organisms, fish and mammals. Azoxystrobin is toxic to freshwater and estuarine/marine fish and aquatic invertebrates.

Azoxystrobin can be persistent for several months or longer. Azoxystrobin has degradation products which have properties similar to chemicals which are known to leach through soil to ground water under certain conditions as a result of agricultural use. Use of this chemical in areas where soils are permeable, particularly where the water table is shallow may result in ground water contamination. Do not contaminate aquatic habitats when spraying or when cleaning and rinsing spray equipment or containers.

Difenoconazole is persistent and may carry over. It is recommended that any products containing difenoconazole not be used in areas treated with this product during the previous season. Follow all other precautions and directions for use on the Quadris Top fungicide label carefully.

For a copy of the new minor use label contact your local crop specialist, regional supply outlet or visit the PMRA label site.

Jim Chaput, minor use coordinator, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.



While 2020 will be remembered as a year marked by its challenges, the agriculture community can hold its head high as it relates to taking care of business while taking care of its own. Keeping children and youth who live on farms safely occupied is challenging at the best of times. That challenge has taken on a whole other meaning in this year of COVID-19.

Following a spring and summer with children home most of the time due to physical/social distancing limitations, parents are now facing the prospect of caring for children being schooled entirely online or on a reduced schedule at a particularly busy time of year.



As winter sets in this means parents on working farms need to keep track of irregular school schedules as well as remind themselves when they are performing tasks such as moving snow, that kids who were at school last year are on the farm and need to be accounted for.

Provide Supervision for Children

Marsha Salzwedel, youth safety expert representing the Childhood Agricultural Safety Network, cautions that, “Younger kids want to be with their parents and extra care needs to be taken so they do not stray from safety zones, be they fenced in areas or within the house. Regardless of the realities of running a farm, children need to be supervised.”

Parents need to talk with children about farm safety. Rules and boundaries must be established and adhered to in ways that are much different than they were last year in the fall and winter.

One thing to consider is informing those that make deliveries to the farm – propane, feed, milk trucks, etc. – that there are children around at times they never were before and to be aware. This can be done through conversations as well as through signage installed on driveways leading into the farm to remind them.

Use Stop Think Act to Protect Young Workers

Young workers will be looking for work opportunities to make up for employment that never materialized over the summer.

While they may be brimming with youthful enthusiasm, it’s important to take a step back and consider tasks that will be physically and cognitively appropriate. This is where the ‘Stop, Think, Act’ process can come in handy.

When young workers come through the door Stop.Think.Act.

Stop

Ask yourself what could go wrong if they’re not ready to do the work.

Think

Are you sure that just because this teenager is husky and strong, that he is capable of handling the job you need him to do?

Act

Ask the questions that will determine whether they have the ability to perform the tasks associated with the job, using the Agricultural Youth Work Guidelines on the Cultivate Safety website. Access the site at wsps.news/3hQyOvM

For more information about **Stop Think Act**, please visit <https://wsps.news/3ckEbFM>

For free online resources related to child and youth safety on the farm, visit:

<https://wsps.news/3n2KT8M>

OMAFRA is providing funding to Workplace Safety & Prevention Services to deliver resources and consulting services to help farmers and other agri-food businesses provide safe workplaces

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