

GROUND ZERO

Eyeing the shifts in demand for Canadian seed potatoes



Not many acres of seed potatoes are found in Ontario, a province that grows just 1.4 per cent of supplies in Canada. That statistic is not thwarting the ambition of Duane Holm (L) and Jacco de Lange. Together, they are betting that an isolated site with sandy loam soils near Southampton, Ontario will offer an advantage to their newly-formed Sauble Creek Seed Company and just-built storage facility. Photo by Glenn Lowson.

KAREN DAVIDSON

What does raw ambition taste like? That’s a question for potato growers Duane Holm and partners Jacco and Alisa de Lange who have formed Sauble Creek Seed Company in an unlikely place: Southampton, Ontario.

It’s isolated. The area is known more for its summer tourists and pastoral scenes of grazing beef cattle than horticulture. Yet, the beacon for this venture is Lake Huron. That wall of water is a coveted advantage for those seeking distance from insect vectors of disease. The deal-maker is that the farm site of 250 acres has sandy loam soils.

“It’s hard to believe that just a year ago, we decided to make this pipe dream a reality,” says Jacco de Lange. “We did not cut any corners in building a state-of-the-art storage facility. From the agronomy side, we are very

We are sizing the seed as it is harvested so that we can supply single-drop seed to our customers.

~ JACCO DE LANGE

encouraged to expand the seed potato business in Ontario.”

That’s moxie. Ontario is the source for only 1.4 per cent of Canada’s seed potatoes as reported by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency in October, 2020. (see chart, page 3) Seed acreage is expanding in northern Ontario, notes Eugenia Banks, consultant to the Ontario Potato Board. Young growers see an opportunity to produce vigorous, healthy seed. A new website that includes all Ontario seed growers – [www.OSPGA.ca](http://www.OSPGA.ca) – is also stimulating more dialogue with growers outside the province.

That said, Prince Edward Island dominates the seed sector with almost 30 per cent of the hectareage. Alberta has heft with 22 per cent, so together, these two provinces account for more than half of seed supplies..

Continued on page 3



AT PRESS TIME...



Top consumer priorities: transparency, food affordability and sustainability

New research from the Canadian Centre for Food Integrity’s (CCFI) 2021 Public Trust Research Report shows that Canadians are interested in improving the food system as a whole. Through qualitative and quantitative research methodologies, the results demonstrate that consumers are interested in advancing overarching matters of the food system such as food affordability, profit-driven systems and sustainability, while asking for more transparency.

The research indicates that of the 2,202 Canadians sampled, the proportion of Canadians who felt that Canada’s food system is headed in the right direction has significantly declined after a

considerable improvement in 2020. Most respondents who jumped from the ‘right direction’ option went straight to the ‘don’t know’ category. These results show that consumers are overwhelmed with information and do not know which way to turn.

“Respondents do not feel they can confidently say that the food system is moving in the right or wrong direction because they simply don’t know what information to trust,” explained John Jamieson, president and CEO for the Canadian Centre for Food Integrity. “The information doesn’t appear transparent due to the vast amount of conflicting misinformation.”

For the first time, global warming and environmental issues have made the top five list of concerns for Canadians. This data demonstrates how environmental concerns influence consumers everyday lives and the importance of a sustainable food system to Canadians.

The research reveals that the global pandemic has not affected trust levels among Canadians. Respondents indicated that they do not feel it was more difficult to access food during the pandemic, with some even saying it was easier. There was minimal mention of empty grocery store shelves with respondents indicating this was only for “hot ticket items.”

When asking Canadians what a Canadian farmer looks like – responses such as “man”, “older” and “plaid” were prominent answers. These results reflect the imagery that is currently being presented and demonstrate how Canadians view the food system. Results also indicated that respondents do not feel this is representative of the farming community today and an increase in diversity is necessary moving forward.

Canadians are concerned about the ‘big picture’ of food and themes such as profit-driven markets, sustainability and affordability need to be addressed in communication efforts moving forward. The 2021 results provide action items for stakeholders in the food system to share their stories and be transparent to build public trust.

For the 2021 Public Trust Research Report, visit [www.foodintegrity.ca](http://www.foodintegrity.ca), or click on the following link: [www.foodintegrity.ca/research](http://www.foodintegrity.ca/research)

Source: Canadian Centre for Food Integrity October 20, 2021

NEWSMAKERS

Best wishes to **Kevin Schooley**, general manager of the Berry Growers of Ontario, who is stepping down after 18 years in the role. He will be leaving at the end of November 2021. He will be staying on as executive director of the North American Strawberry Growers’ Association.

Winnipeg-based Peak of the Market welcomes two new hires. **Deena Clarke** has joined as chief financial officer, bringing a dozen years of experience as controller at Granny’s Poultry Cooperative. The executive team has been broadened with **Jodi Johnson** in the newly created position of marketing and communications. Her 20-year career spans roles with the Manitoba Turkey Producers, special events with the Calgary Stampede and the Red River Exhibition.



Deena Clarke and Jodi Johnson

Congratulations to Ontario berry grower **Luke Charbonneau** who was interviewed in national media in his role of mayor of Saugeen Shores and the historic out-of-court agreement reached September 21 between the town and the Saugeen Ojibway Nation. The municipality is providing 1.7 hectares of property, financial compensation and support for housing development. Luke, and his parents **Norm** and **Nora**, operate Hi-Berry Farm, Port Elgin, Ontario. For full story, see page six.

The Rural Ontario Institute has announced its current and emerging leaders from across the province for its Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program (AALP) Class 19. **Christopher Sopuch**, a vegetable grower from Marshland Gardens, Bradford, Ontario is one of the 19 selected for the class beginning November, 2021.



A shout-out to organizers of the first-ever hybrid Open Farm Day in New Brunswick on September 19, 2021. More than 6,500 people took part. Twenty-one farms in New Brunswick and 70 farms across Atlantic Canada participated. Collaborators included: **Prince Edward Island’s Agriculture Sector Council**, **Nova Scotia’s Federation of Agriculture**, **Newfoundland’s Federation of Agriculture** and the **Agricultural Alliance of New Brunswick**.

Kudos to **Lilian Schaer** and **Madeline Rodrigue** for being named “Communicator of the Year” by the Canadian Farm Writers’ Federation. Jointly they worked on the *Real Dirt on Farming* publication of Farm and Food Care Ontario. The 2020 edition was awarded the best publication of more than 750 words intended to provide information to a targeted audience about an agricultural topic.

Congratulations to **Denis Cahill**, retired *St. Catharines Standard* news photographer and contributor to the Weather Vane slot in the January 2020 issue of **The Grower**. His photo of a Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario orchard has won first prize in the landscape photography category of the Canadian Farm Writers’ Federation 2021 awards. When judged against first-place winners in People and Production categories, he went on to win Best Photo of the Year.



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COVER STORY

Eyeing the shifts in demand for Canadian seed potatoes



Sauble Creek Seed Company is now storing potatoes in its 260-foot by 80-foot building in Southampton. It's equipped with Klim Top Controls ventilation. A sizer is determining where single-drop and oversized seed are stored for inventory control. Photo by Eugenia Banks.

Five Years. Average - Hectares Accepted 2016-2020

Province	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	(5 years / années) mean / moyenne	% of hectareage / % de la superficie en hectare
NL/T-N-L	32	31	27	7	28	25	0.1%
PE/Î-P-É	6,288	6,686	6,387	6,858	6555	6,555	29.5%
NS/N-É	0	109	149	131	152	108	0.5%
NB/N-B	3,690	3,240	3,107	2,982	2754	3,154	14.2%
QC	2,631	2,809	2,728	2,917	3108	2,839	12.8%
ON	314	313	318	247	351	309	1.4%
MB	2,497	2,629	2,873	3,226	3081	2,861	12.9%
SK	1,146	1,200	1,167	1,230	1170	1,183	5.3%
AB	4,398	4,440	4,864	5,268	5477	4,889	22.0%
BC/C-B	340	308	308	297	275	306	1.4%
TOTAL	21,335	21,765	21,928	23,163	22,952	22,229	100.0%

Source: Data extracted by Canadian Food Inspection Agency October 16, 2020

Continued from page 1

Shifts in source

As statistics show, Canadian seed potato hectareage has not shifted much in the last five years, but the source of seed has. Alberta's share of the market is growing, driven by the recent expansion of the Cavendish

Farms potato processing plant near Lethbridge. It's vertically integrated processors who are dictating what seed varieties do best in their plants. McCains, Lamb Weston and Simplot all designate their choices to contracted growers. "Russet Burbank is the number one seed variety by volume," explains Kevin MacIsaac, general

manager, United Potato Growers of Canada. "It is not the best variety agronomically, but it has good colour and it fries well." This seed variety can withstand weather challenges, and it has dual end use as either a tablestock or French fry. That's why Russet Burbank is the seed of choice, followed closely by Goldrush. "It's not a fast-moving track to

improve potatoes in Canada," explains MacIsaac. "There's risk in the industry coming out too soon with a variety that can't withstand drought or a variety that doesn't store well. There could be more promising varieties in Europe or the United States, but they must be grown in our climate."

Shifts in climate

The two Canadian coasts are bearing the brunt of extreme weather. Just two harvests ago, Prince Edward Island was mired in muddy fields, taking the brunt of history-breaking rains. Along with Nova Scotia, these maritime provinces are subject to the nasty tail-ends of hurricanes hurling up the eastern seaboard. On the western coast, the 2021 heat dome devastated not only British Columbia but the prairies. "Potato seed will be in short supply in North America in 2022, because of the effects of the heat dome," says Bill Zylmans, chair of the Canadian Potato Council, based in Delta, BC. "Those record-breaking temperatures affected Idaho, Oregon and some of my customers in Washington state. There were temperatures well over 40°C. Holy cow!" With these whirlwinds of climatic change, it's not such a leap of faith to build new seed storage facilities in Ontario. "We need seed security," says Duane Holm. For the last 20 years, he's been growing fresh potatoes and in the last five years, seed varieties such as AC Chaleur, Clearwater Russet, Dakota Pearl, Dark Red Norland and Yukon Gold. "A lot of big companies want to spread risk and know that quality seed can be sourced from various geographies," Holm points out. His partner Jacco de Lange echoes those concerns. "In Ontario, growers pay a high cost to transport seed from North Dakota and Wisconsin," he explains. "It costs \$8 per 100 lb of seed and if a grower is planting 2,200 pounds per acre for the Frito-Lay chip processor, that input is costing \$160 per acre." More than half of Ontario's potato acreage is devoted to the end use of chips, not French fries. So seed variety requirements and

agronomics are different. Chipstock potatoes require closer plant spacings of about six inches apart, in order to produce smaller-sized potatoes and higher tonnage per acre.

Shifts in client needs

De Lange is bringing an agronomy perspective to the enterprise, as a consultant to the North American clients of CanGrow Crop Solutions. With more emphasis on micronutrients, just enough at the right time, he's looking for more tubers per plant and a more consistent size profile. "That's where the next agronomic opportunity lies," explains de Lange. "We are sizing the seed as it is harvested so that we can supply single-drop seed to our customers." Single-drop seed – weighing 2.5 ounces – is desirable to potato growers who don't have to cut the seed and risk disease infection. It's easy to grow potatoes, but it's more work to sell them. For Sauble Creek Seed Company, the first-year risk was getting a storage facility built on time. Crop was coming off in October as the electrician was installing hydro. Fortunately, one factor was in their favour. The entire lineup of seed was sold to brokers before it was sown in the ground. The first year of operation was marked by salty sweat, and in the end, sweet reward.

The Grower goes "Behind the Scenes" with Kevin MacIsaac, general manager of the United Potato Growers of Canada based in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island. He shares his take on the future of the seed potato business in Canada. This series is sponsored by BASF Agricultural Solutions.



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CROSS COUNTRY DIGEST

ALBERTA

Storing heat-stressed potatoes

The extreme heat that Alberta had this summer has had a negative effect on the potato crop, writes Thomas McDade, agricultural director for the Potato Growers of Alberta.

One issue that is already apparent is sugar end disorder. Tubers that are affected by sugar ends cannot be healed through conditioning in the storage. These potatoes will not improve as the sugar end development happened as a direct result of the heat stress at tuber initiation and early tuber bulking.

The storage management issue is to keep these potatoes from breaking down and to maintain acceptable colour for the portion of the potato not affected by sugar ends. It is important to be aware that the collapse of tissue

in the sugar end rot area provides an opening for other pathogens to infect the tuber. Therefore, regular and diligent management of the potato storage is crucial in spotting potential problems, while still manageable. See Nora Olson & Mike Thornton “Review of the Sugar End Disorder in Potato.”

The old expression, ‘a potato storage is not a hospital,’ may prove to be more relevant than ever this year. In addition to sugar ends, the top storage diseases (late blight, pink rot, pythium leak, fusarium dry rot and bacterial soft rot) may well be of more concern this year. This is of course due to the stress that this year’s potato crop has been subjected to.

“We had a lot of cycling between extreme high and more

normal, cooler temperatures,” says Dr. Jonathan Neilson. “This is very stressful on plants. For storage what this means is that the tubers are going in compromised and any further stress experienced is going to be magnified.”

Such stress will make the stored crop more susceptible to all storage issues. All the usual best management practices apply: ensuring good air flow, carefully managing temperature and regular monitoring for sugar spikes will be the key strategies to limiting any further losses.

New research at the Lethbridge Research and Development Center, AAFC-AAC is looking into interventions to prevent or lessen the impacts of extreme weather on



Effects of heat stress are shown in size and profile of these Russet Burbank potatoes.

potato crops.

“We have a couple research projects that are beginning this year to see what can be done to address weather-related damage to potato canopy and tubers. The first part is to lessen the impact in the field and the second is to remediate the tuber physiological problems in storage.”

Source: Potato Growers of Alberta October 1, 2021 newsletter with credit to Dr. Jonathan Neilson and Dr. Dmytro Yevtushenko.

ALBERTA

Research is driving innovation in greenhouse sector

Results Driven Agriculture Research (RDAR) is investing \$783,000 to optimize the growing conditions for pre-commercial and commercial-scale production of strawberries as well as tomatoes on the vine in Alberta.

“This grant funding begins a long-term research collaboration between Lethbridge College and Sunterra Farms Greenhouses Ltd.,” says Dr. Kenny

Corscadden, associate vice-president research, Lethbridge College. “Together, we recognize the significant opportunity in Alberta for greenhouse-grown fruits and vegetables. There is excellent market potential in our province for both strawberries and tomatoes and these pre-commercial trials in our Brooks Research and Production Greenhouse with Sunterra will

contribute to this growing sector.”

Sunterra is finishing the first 20-acre phase of a 70-acre commercial greenhouse operation in Acme, Alberta. It is one of the largest food production areas under glass in Alberta.

With this new funding, Lethbridge College will continue to build on its unique expertise in sustainable food production, improving indoor growing



Novel strawberries grown in Brooks, Alberta and ready for sale in Sunterra Markets.

conditions by establishing best practices for water and nutrient management and energy efficiency.

Lethbridge College’s greenhouse research facility at Brooks, Alberta is 60,000 sq ft and operates to advance greenhouse research and demonstration for Alberta producers.

Greenhouse growers – 230 operations at last count – are quickly expanding to meet local food needs. Alberta contributed roughly \$118.8 million in sales in 2020, up from \$55.7 million in 2016. The province aspires to expand greenhouse food production from 200 acres under glass to 1,000 acres within five years.

Source: Research Driven Agricultural Research October 4, 2021 news release



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BRITISH COLUMBIA

Exploring an apple marketing commission

After 20 years of being the advocate for Ambrosia apples, the New Tree Fruit Varieties Development Council (NTFVDC) has contracted Ference and Company to explore the feasibility of transitioning to an Apple Marketing Commission.

The consultants’ report indicates the potential for significant price increases. Their premise relies upon the establishment of minimum selling prices, regulation of apple quality and the launch of an aggressive export and domestic marketing program with the buy-in of BC apple packers.

Based on the experience of Québec and Ontario apple producers as well as potential for BC apple exports to Asia, the consultants report that prices could increase by 10 to 20 cents per pound for those meeting market requirements. These prices would more than offset the grower levy of less than one cent per pound required to operate an apple commission.



## QUÉBEC

# Québec apple growers to continue modernizing orchards

Québec’s agriculture ministry (MAPAQ), under the leadership of minister André Lamontagne, wants to continue modernizing orchards and replacing foreign imports with more locally-grown apples. The recent announcement of a one-year initiative follows from the Apple Orchard Modernization Program which has been in place since 2006. The maximum financial assistance is \$50,000 per company for the duration of the program.

The modernization plan has several stages, starting with replacing trees with new varieties that have the most economical benefit as well as suitability for Québec’s environment. The results of the work of RECUPOM (apple cultivar and rootstock trials) will be important in these phases. The last stage will be planting these varieties at

high densities which will enable mechanized harvesting. The hope is to see a New Apple Orchard Modernization Program by spring 2022.

We are proud to offer quality apples to consumers year-round,” says Eric Rochon, vice-president, Québec Apple Growers. “This ministerial initiative to modernize apple growing in the upcoming years of 2021-2022 will allow us

to continue improving productivity as well as augmenting apple varieties. I encourage producers to complete their application in order to benefit from financial assistance for the work of the 2021 season.”

For more program details, link here: <https://bit.ly/3ldTyX3>

*Photo courtesy of Québec Apple Growers*



## BRITISH COLUMBIA

# BC raspberry replant program to continue

British Columbia is the largest raspberry-producing province in Canada, leading the nation in the sale of raspberries valued at nearly \$14 million. Most of that production, about 2,350 acres, is in the Fraser Valley. That’s why fresh provincial funds of \$300,000 for the Raspberry Replant Program are so important.

“The B.C. raspberry industry greatly appreciates the continued ministerial support for the Raspberry Replant Program,” says Jordan Alamwala, chair, BC Raspberries. “This program will be imperative in helping raspberry farmers grow varieties that are better suited for the fresh and individually-quick-frozen markets, ultimately ensuring that high quality raspberries continue to be grown and sourced locally in British Columbia into the future.”

The 2020-2021 replant program provided cost-share funding for 12 producers resulting in 46 acres of new raspberries in British Columbia.

Applications for the Raspberry Replant Program will be accepted from Oct. 12 to Dec. 6, 2021, to support the spring 2022 raspberry planting season.

*Source: BC ministry of agriculture, food and fisheries October 6, 2021 news release*





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-Paul Wafler, Wafler Farms Inc.



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GROUND TRUTHS

Small town of Saugeen Shores settles with local Saugeen Ojibway Nation



Luke Charbonneau (L), one of the owners of Hi-Berry Farms and mayor of Saugeen Shores, was interviewed about a land claims settlement with the nearby Saugeen Ojibway Nation. Chief Lester Anoquot shared his perspective as well. For the CBC interview, link here: <https://bit.ly/3Ay1ZRn>

“  
There is a cost – socially, emotionally, economically – in being in a state of perpetual conflict. Instead, let’s look at the opportunity of working together.  
”  
~ LUKE CHARBONNEAU

KAREN DAVIDSON

The Town of Saugeen Shores announced a land claim settlement with the Saugeen Ojibway Nation (SON) on

September 24, 2021 with a news release so short at 378 words that it belies the scope of thousands of court documents over 25 years. While many terms remain confidential, the Lake Huron municipality has agreed to

provide to SON about 1.7 hectares of municipal property, financial compensation and support for housing development. “We are pleased to close this chapter of our land claim,” said Chief Lester Anoquot, SON. “Through cooperation and a spirit of listening and joint respect, we have been able to arrive at an agreement with Saugeen Shores that supports a strong relationship between our communities.” The timing of this deal piqued the interest of mainstream media preparing for the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation on September 30. And that’s how berry and vegetable farmer Luke Charbonneau, also mayor of Saugeen Shores, came to prominence. He was interviewed

by the CBC’s The National about the town’s agreement with Chief Lester Anoquot and his SON members. Growing up, Charbonneau remembers how the two communities were interconnected through high school as well as hockey and ball tournaments. The same holds true today for the municipality of 14,000 citizens. “There’s lots of agriculture surrounding the territorial lands that the Saugeen Ojibway Nation lay claim to on the Bruce Peninsula,” says Charbonneau. “More than a century ago, the municipality took over the maintenance and care of many roads. SON wants access to those roads.” The land claim had gone to trial in 2019, about the same time as Charbonneau was elected mayor. But the issue was unresolved.

“I think that you get to know everybody in small rural communities,” says Charbonneau. “You rely on your interpersonal relationships and leverage that to start conversations in the local coffee shop.” “Farming is a community effort,” he continues. “You can’t do it on your own without innovation and creativity to solve problems. In the case of Saugeen Shores, with our council and staff, we wanted to stop spending money on legal matters and start investing money on resources and building our community.” The settlement lists concrete actions. A recent housing development unearthed archeological artifacts of potential significance to the nearby Indigenous community. So the developer conveyed a parcel of land to the town whose responsibility is to work with SON on renaming it as a cultural landmark. In the recent past, the perceptions of many rural communities were that land claims should be solved by provincial or national authorities.

Charbonneau takes a different view. “The greatest potential for innovation is on the ground,” he says. “Rural communities are as capable as cities to resolve these issues. We shouldn’t assume that this is the responsibility of (Ontario’s) Queens Park or Parliament Hill.” In the current context of media stories of the repeated tragedies at residential schools across Canada, there is a new awareness of the importance of reconciliation. “I think there is now a broader perspective of what a win looks like regarding land claims,” says Charbonneau. “There is a cost – socially, emotionally, economically – in being in a state of perpetual conflict. Instead, let’s look at the opportunity of working together.” To that end, Charbonneau sees a shared economic development opportunity where SON is restoring a natural amphitheatre area on the shores of the Saugeen River, at the heart of its territory. Once developed into a cultural centre, then it could easily become a beacon for tourists. And that’s a boon to the entire community.

At Wikipedia’s website, the Anglo-Saxon perspective of Saugeen Shores’ history starts in 1849 with no acknowledgement of any other past. All of the pioneers were of European descent. Today, that history must be shared with Indigenous ancestors. The name ‘Saugeen’ is derived from the word *Zaagiiing* in the language of the Chippewas of Saugeen Ojibway Territory meaning: “at the mouth of the river.” Out of the mouths of Charbonneau and Chief Anoquot comes wisdom that can be shared everywhere in Canadian rural circles.



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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S PERSPECTIVE

Making room for new leaders

Passion and skill as important as gender when it comes to farm organization leadership



ALISON ROBERTSON  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In early October, I participated in a round table meeting for female leaders in agriculture, hosted by the Ontario minister of agriculture, Lisa Thompson.

Many of the themes of the discussion were not new, including the need to have more women serving on the boards of agricultural organizations in our province. Now while in principle that's not something I disagree with, I'm going to go out on a limb and say that our organizations – and indeed the farmers we serve – deserve the best qualified board members, regardless of gender.

I see sitting on boards and ultimately assuming leadership roles in organizations, be it as chair, vice-chair or heading up a committee, as the end of a journey. It's not a role that someone simply takes on by virtue of their gender.

Let me explain. Agricultural boards do important work and all directors, male or female, need to bring skills, experience and perspectives to the table that add value.

The horticulture sector has certainly seen the value of strong boards over the years, from free trade negotiations in the 1990s to today's COVID-19 pandemic challenges. When the chips are down, we need our A Team representing our sector and I think most of us would agree that we don't care whether those people are men or women.

All agricultural organizations are struggling with attracting people to serve in volunteer roles as directors, committee representatives or other positions, a challenge that is even greater when it comes to looking for

young growers – male or female – to step forward.

We must encourage growers, and young people in particular, to get involved where they can so that some will rise up to eventually do board work. That means encouraging them to first participate in industry and regional committees and working groups – and yes, it would be great to see more women step up to serve.

Even though we've had female directors and chairs, our Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association (OFVGA) board is currently all male, with our directors appointed to their positions by the commodity organization they represent. This tells me that we should encourage women in our sector to become involved in board work at the commodity level so that some would have the opportunity to be nominated to the OFVGA board.

At the same time, as I look at our broader horticulture sector, I see a plethora of female executive directors, general managers, CEOs, chairs and presidents heading organizations such as OFVGA, Ontario Apple Growers, Grape Growers of Ontario, Ontario Tender Fruit, Holland Marsh Growers Association, Ontario Ginseng, the Canadian Horticultural Council, the Ontario Food Terminal Board and others.

And it's not just horticulture. The Farm Products Marketing Commission, Canadian Agricultural Human Resources Council, Farm & Food Care Ontario, Ontario Federation of Agriculture, Dairy Farmers of Ontario and Ontario Sheep Farmers all have women either leading the staff or board or in some cases, both.

We have female ministers of agriculture provincially and federally, and arguably one of the best deputy ministers we've had in recent memory at the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs was also a woman.

Since my 20s, I have worked in both the ornamental and edible sides of horticulture and once my sons were a bit older, I started to become involved in committee and tradeshow work. For example, I helped with the

Canadian Greenhouse Conference and after sitting on that committee for several years, a male colleague asked me if I would consider stepping up to become chair.

It's not something I had considered before that conversation, and as I reflect back, all of my mentors throughout my career have been men and I would not be where I am without their support.

Most boards I have sat on or chaired have been mostly male.

Yet I have never felt under-appreciated. Yes, in my private life, I have from time to time had to offer an attitude adjustment to a car salesman or a contractor, but overall, the produce industry has been a great sector for a woman to work in.

So, what does that mean for us looking forward?

We need new people to step up to become involved in our organizations. I believe those of us already in leadership roles have a responsibility to approach,

encourage and mentor people we see with abilities, passion and drive, regardless of gender.

And our organizations need to make sure there is room for new volunteers to move up. Perhaps that means setting term limits for director positions and looking for opportunities to encourage new leadership potential.

Our industry is resilient and progressive, and we need our boards to be as strong as possible. That includes diversity of all ages, gender and ethnic backgrounds.

WEATHER VANE



Under brooding skies, this antique tractor brings a welcome chuckle at the end of harvest. Photo courtesy of Hugh Simpson, Osprey Bluffs Honey Company, Singhampton, Ontario.

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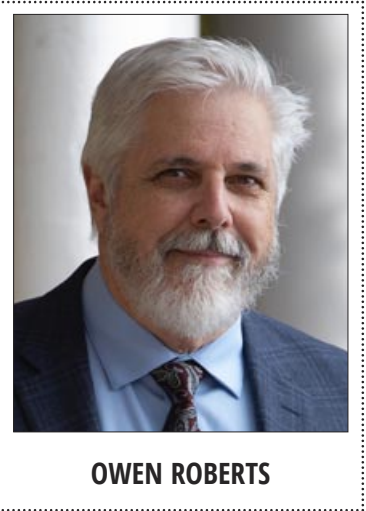
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**THE GROWER**



URBAN COWBOY

Can industry take a greater role in supporting agricultural education?



OWEN ROBERTS

Throughout North America and probably beyond, the difficulty of trying to get accepted into the university of your choice is having a trickle-down effect on agricultural education. And it's not good.

Universities want to admit the best students. For the most part, students' excellence is measured on the marks they earn in high school.

Well-rounded students -- those with an impressive resumé or portfolio -- get some of the prestigious scholarships.

But it's mainly still their grades that get them in and determine the cut-off point for program admission. It's not how much

they volunteered at the local retirement home, or that they captained their minor sports team, or that they worked two jobs on top of going to school to save for tuition. It's their grades.

Universities are not solely to blame for creating this culture. They're clamouring for funding. They want and need to be associated with the brightest stars, who often go on to be the most generous alumni, the most high-profile ambassadors for their educational institutions, and those who help society address its most complex challenges and opportunities (other than agriculture program graduates, of course, who address the most fundamental of all challenges and opportunities, that being producing food).

The problem is that as the competition to get into universities rises, students give more attention to the core subjects on which universities mostly base their admissions.

And that leaves many electives for students, such as agriculture, out in the cold.

If students aren't focussed on electives, schools are likely to ignore them too, despite their value in helping students understand what makes the world

go around. Lack of focus ends up meaning fewer resources to teaching agriculture.

It's been fascinating to watch AgScape, the Ontario-based organization dedicated to providing teachers with agricultural resources, punch above its weight on this issue and creatively try to bring agricultural education back to the fore. AgScape is far from being flush with cash, so it counts on partnerships. Lately, it's brought attention to the fact that it's partnered with beef and pork commodity groups to create modules for teachers who introduce animal agriculture into their curriculum.

I suspect that approach will lead to other groups getting on board. It's a great way for growers to get balanced information across to those who, in the near future, will be making buying decisions. And it's best if those decisions are knowledge-based.

But is this approach OK with everyone? There's no question it's open to ridicule from self-interest groups and activists. Even though you don't see them announcing their support for education -- nor will you, if they are touting unbalanced perspectives -- they'll be the first to say commodity

group money put into education constitutes influence.

However, in agriculture, it's likely the shape of things to come.

I can't see the province getting appreciably more involved in determining how agriculture should fit into a curriculum . . . although in Ontario, if ever there was a chance of that happening, it's with the current minister of agriculture, food and rural affairs Lisa Thompson, who is also the former education minister.

Discussions about this new approach are happening everywhere, at a high level. In the U.S., an organization called the Society of Agricultural Communications Scholars is holding a webinar shortly on "infusing industry perspectives into agricultural communications curriculum development processes."

It's part of a broader discussion on leveraging relationships to keep curricula relevant with industry trends and needs -- in particular, the kinds of skills and knowledge that graduates need to assimilate into a new job and immediately make a contribution to their employers, or to the sector.

It's reasonable to ask the sector

to support curricula that is meeting their needs, especially if whatever is available from the state or province is inadequate. Again, critics will wonder why public support is inadequate. They'll ask this: Don't government officials value the agri-food sector enough to dedicate adequate resources to it?

Well, there's only so much government money to go around, especially considering pandemic recovery will go on for years.

And there's only so much producer money to go around, given how margins are minimal.

That leaves industry. We know tension exists between some growers and suppliers over rising input costs. We also know industry needs to be profitable. But if some of those profits are clearly funneled back into agricultural education, it's an investment in the future that could lead to a more amicable culture and better future for all concerned.

*Owen Roberts is a faculty member at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.*

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TRANSPORTATION

Air Canada Cargo upgrades cold chain capacity



Air Canada is expanding and enhancing cold chain handling capabilities for shipments such as pharmaceuticals, fresh food and other perishables at its Toronto Pearson International Airport cargo facility. The \$16 million project is part of the airline’s strategy to further develop its cargo division, which also includes the acquisition of freighter aircraft, the launch of dedicated freighter routes and an expansion into e-commerce.

“This is another important step for Air Canada Cargo as we continue to grow our business and invest in our facilities to better serve our customers. Our new temperature-controlled facility, which will be the only one of its

kind for a Canadian airline, represents a significant addition to Air Canada’s on-site capabilities at Toronto Pearson and to Canadian cold chain logistics. It will also give Air Canada Cargo a strategic advantage at our main hub, which handles more than 60 per cent of all our traffic, and will support the launch of routes to be served by our new freighter aircraft,” said Jason Berry, vice president, Cargo, at Air Canada.

Once completed, the upgraded facility will feature more than 30,000 square feet of temperature-controlled areas and an expanded cooler to fully meet the requirements of cold chain shipments.

The extended cooler will accommodate more unit load devices (ULD) and loose shipments with COL (+2°C to +8°C) and CRT (+15°C to +25°C) temperature requirements, provide additional racking, and an upgraded dedicated area for active temperature control units. These enhancements are the first step in a multi-year investment plan.

Air Canada Cargo has converted eight Boeing 767-300ER aircraft into dedicated freighters. The first of the newly reconfigured aircraft will enter into service for Air Canada Cargo in Q4 of 2021 and will initially operate on key routes to provide additional capacity during the busy peak season.

Starting in early 2022, the first freighter will fly primarily out of Toronto and operate to Miami, Quito, Lima, Mexico City and Guadalajara, with additional cities such as Madrid and Frankfurt, Halifax and St. John’s connecting to the freighter network when the second aircraft is delivered in 2022.

Source: Air Canada October 1, 2021 news release

COMING EVENTS 2021

Nov 3-5	North American Plant Protection Organization AGM, <b>VIRTUAL</b>
Nov 5-14	Royal Agricultural Winter Fair, Exhibition Place, Toronto, ON <b>VIRTUAL</b>
Nov 4 -6	Interpoma, Bolzano, Italy
Nov 8-10	Federal-provincial-territorial agriculture ministers’ meeting, Guelph, ON
Nov 13	Farm and Food Care Ontario Gala-in-a-Box, <b>VIRTUAL</b>
Nov 16	BC Tree Fruit Cooperative Annual General Meeting
Nov 17	Prince Edward Island Potato Board Annual General Meeting, Charlottetown, PE
Nov 21	Induction Ceremony, Canadian Agricultural Hall of Fame, Fairmont Winnipeg, Winnipeg, MB
Nov 22-24	Alberta Potato Conference and Trade Show, Cambridge Hotel and Conference Centre, Red Deer, AB <b>CANCELLED</b>
Nov 29	CanAgPlus Annual General Meeting, <b>VIRTUAL</b>
Nov 30-Dec 2	Grow Canada Conference, Hyatt Regency, Calgary, AB
Dec 1	Ontario Potato Board Annual General Meeting, Guelph Conference Centre at Delta Hotel, Guelph, ON
Dec 2-3	Canadian Potato Council Fall Meeting, Ottawa, ON
Dec 2	Agricultural Adaptation Council Annual General Meeting, <b>VIRTUAL</b>
Dec 7-9	Great Lakes Expo, Grand Rapids, MI
Dec 9	Fresh Vegetable Growers of Ontario Annual General Meeting <b>VIRTUAL</b>
2022	
Jan 5-6	National Potato Council Potato Expo, Anaheim Convention Center, Anaheim, CA
Jan 16-19	North American Strawberry Growers’ Association Annual General Meeting and Conference, Nashville, TN
Feb 8-9	Pest Management Centre Priority Setting Workshop C <b>VIRTUAL</b>
Feb 9-11	Fruit Logistica, Berlin, Germany
Feb 16-17	Pest Management Centre Priority Setting Workshop B <b>VIRTUAL</b>
Feb 21-24	North American Raspberry and Blackberry Conference, Gaithersburg, MD
Feb 22	Canada’s Agriculture Day
Feb 22	Berry Growers of Ontario Annual General Meeting, Niagara Falls, ON
Feb 22	Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers’ Association Annual General Meeting, Hilton Hotel, Niagara Falls, ON



NOTICE OF MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the  
Annual General Meeting  
of the  
FRESH VEGETABLE GROWERS OF ONTARIO  
will be held  
Virtually via Zoom

**December 9th, 2021**  
9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m

Election of Directors of the Association, discussion of financial reports and any other business that may arise will take place.

To register for the meeting or view meeting details please visit the FVGO website at [www.freshvegetablesontario.com](http://www.freshvegetablesontario.com)  
Registration closes December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2021



# Telling your story is more important now than ever



PETER CHAPMAN

There have been a lot of challenges with the pandemic. The disruptions have impacted every part of our economy and created more hurdles for farmers producing food.

One positive to come out of the pandemic is that consumers want to know more about where their food is coming from. Consumers and customers want to know more about you and your business. Remember when you are telling the story, it must resonate with them. It is not all about you and your business.

### Why your story is so important

Recently I was watching a webinar from the Sobey School of Business at Saint Mary's University based in Halifax. One of the guest speakers was Joe Jackman from Jackman Reinvents. I had the privilege of working with Joe when I was at Loblaw Companies and I have always respected his insights into marketing and our food industry.

During his segment, Joe stated: "in our market, values now trump value." This is very interesting because many people in the food industry would believe value, or the combination of price and quality, is paramount. Joe referenced Sobey research and other examples from the market to support his perspective. I believe this is related to why people want to know where their food is coming from. They are looking for products that are built with similar values and one way for them to confirm this is to know more about your business.

### Your story has to resonate

There are so many great stories in our food industry. Unfortunately, they are not all understood or even considered because the storytellers are talking to themselves, not the audience.

If you want to be successful in this industry you have two masters to satisfy: customers and consumers. Customers buy your product for their store or to re-sell and consumers are the end users. When you think about sharing your story, this is the

audience you must resonate with.

Sometimes we are so close to something we find it difficult to see a different perspective. You are proud of what you do and how you do it. Now we need to figure out how to take those attributes and tell the story consumers and customers need to hear.

If you are buying a piece of equipment for your business, think about the transactions that are best for you. Equipment suppliers don't just talk about their business. They should illustrate how the features and benefits help your business and why you need to make the investment.

Perhaps they explain how it can relieve some of the labour pressures you face or integrate with existing equipment to save you time. They might explain how it will reduce damage to your product and increase your yields. These are all important factors to the audience, the person buying the equipment. If they are talking about their business and the ability to service the equipment, they should be using terms such as reducing your down time and operating with better fuel efficiency to save you money.

### Telling your story to your customer

Retailers and distributors have heard about a lot of great products. What they need to hear is how your story integrates with them and supports what they are trying to do. We know sustainability is still a big issue in the market. Whether it is reducing food waste, changing packaging or other initiatives to reduce environmental impact you need to help them understand what you are doing and why. Offer to provide a small write-up they can use in their flyer to give you both some credit for working together to reduce food waste.

Retailers are adding a 'local' flavour to a lot of what they do. Figure out how your story can be part of their story. Perhaps you have been selling to them for three generations (of their business and yours). This could be an opportunity for an instore signage program or their ad.

Food safety is not negotiable. Your customers are knowledgeable about this and you need to tell your story in terms they want to hear. This is usually certifications and proof of your processes. Use the terms they need to hear.

Cost of goods is a big issue in our food industry. Part of your story that will resonate with your customer is initiatives to keep costs from increasing or increasing too much. This will be both values and value to a retailer.

Increases can be a reality but five per cent is better than 10 per cent in their world.

Your customers might even require a slightly different story from one to another. Yes they are all selling food but they have their own way of doing it. Your story to Loblaw might be slightly different than it is to Costco. Different attributes will resonate with each of them.

### Telling your story to consumers

We know people want more Canadian ingredients and products produced closer to home. Share your story about how you produce it in their backyard or go the extra mile to use Canadian ingredients. There are also examples where producers are telling the story of the people working hard to produce food. These are real people, regardless of where they are from and this resonates with consumers.

You can tell your story in many places and you have to do it over and over again. You can do these things on your packaging,



your social media and your website. People are busy so do not be discouraged if they do not take the time the first time. When it resonates, they will find the time.

Food safety is an issue for consumers too. They want to know the food they are taking home to their family is safe. They do not understand CanadaGAP or British Retail Consortium but they do want to know. Use terms they can relate to and perhaps tell the story of your food safety people in your business.

### Your story evolves as the audience changes

You are on a journey and need

to keep updating your story. Consumers and customers have changed a lot in the past 18 months. Your business has probably changed a lot too. If you agree values trump value, you should take a look at the story you are telling and make sure it resonates with the audience.

*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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FOCUS: SEED & ROOTSTOCK

Crunching the odds for the apple outstanding in its field



Rachael LeBlanc, research scientist, Vineland Research and Innovation Centre

KAREN DAVIDSON

Ask any consumer about their favourite apple and the likelihood is that Honeycrisp, Gala and Ambrosia will be in the top three. What gaps in the apple galaxy could possibly be filled by a new variety?

Those are questions for the apple breeding program at Vineland Research and Innovation Centre (Vineland) which is now in its tenth year of searching for a made-in-Canada apple. The reality is that tastes evolve over time as consumers buy

imported apples such as Envy from the U.S. and Jazz from New Zealand.

“Consumers are demanding and purchasing newer varieties of apples,” explains Rachael LeBlanc, research scientist, Vineland. The domestic market here is decreasing as consumers are purchasing varieties not grown in Ontario or Canada. We are looking to fill this void and breed apples that are suited for our growing conditions but also meet consumer demands now and into the future.”

This fall, LeBlanc and her assistant have been walking the

test orchard every day, sampling apples from trees in their first to third fruiting years. It’s a daunting task with 33,000 trees at different growth stages in the plot. As some trees are discarded, new trees are planted to keep the research pipeline full.

“We have 15,000 to 18,000 fruiting trees right now,” says LeBlanc. “We’re looking for good flavour, crispness and juiciness.”

All of these samples will be cooled and stored for two months and then an in-house tasting panel will conduct initial screening.

LeBlanc is excited to work

with multidisciplinary teams at Vineland including genomics, consumer insights and biochemistry. The breeding group has worked with Dr. Amy Bowen and her consumer insights team to finetune taste testing. They are guided by a preference map that she created after working with consumers to compare flavour and texture of 70 apple varieties.

A recent breakthrough by the biochemistry team is their ability to identify a molecular marker for key aroma volatiles that contribute to apple flavour. That’s a leg up if researchers can pre-select seedlings that have a better chance of enhanced taste.

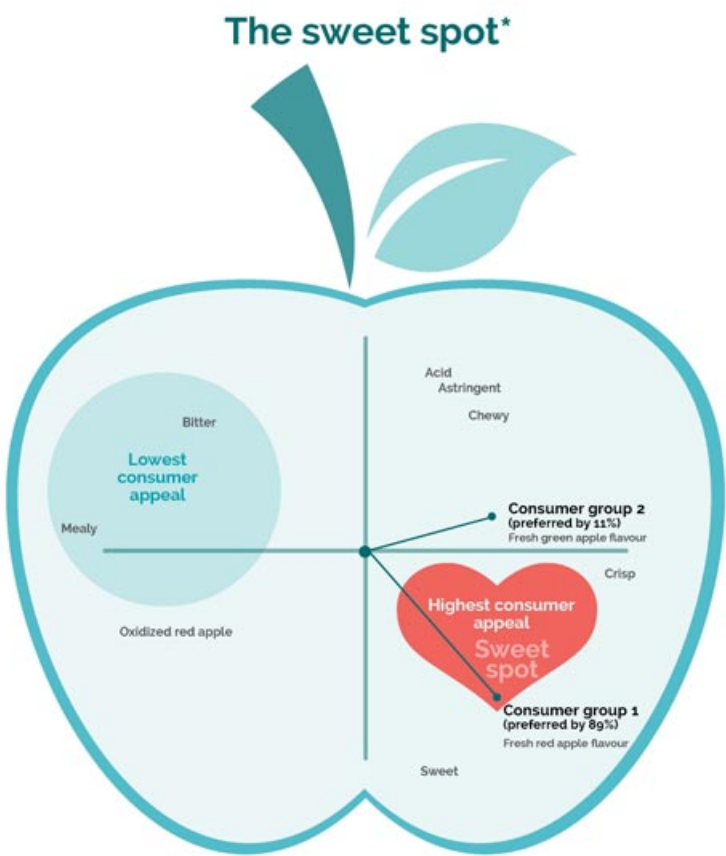
The “gap” or the “window” that could excite growers is the opportunity to harvest a new variety on the shoulders of the regular season, i.e. late August or mid October. That variety still has to meet flavour and texture characteristics, as identified by the tasting panel, but also meet agronomic traits for yield, winter

hardiness, disease resistance and storability.

To that end, 2021 was the first year that Ontario growers had the chance to plant trees in five geographic regions: Georgian Bay, Lake Huron, Lake Erie, Niagara, Lake Ontario. Known only by their numbers for now, 10 trees of three candidates were planted in each location.

Vineland’s research, supported by a Canada-wide consortium in Summerland, British Columbia and Kentville, Nova Scotia, is expected to take another seven years. The target date for the first release from Vineland’s research farm to commercial plantings is 2028 with fruit to consumers in 2030.

*This research is supported by Ontario Apple Growers through the Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada AgriScience Program and the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs/University of Guelph Partnership Program.*



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Tempo XR is a 76 day bi-color SH2 sweet corn that has a great ear size for mid-season roadside and fresh markets. This IFSI, rust resistant variety provides excellent husk protection and consistent tip fill across varying environmental conditions.



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STM2255 is a very versatile and adaptable determinate tomato salad variety from Sakata, with high yield potential and good vine-ripe flavour. The medium tall plants produce fruit with an attractive red colour, are firm, and provide good shelf-life. STM2255 can be used for both mature green and vine ripe markets.

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Late maturity, 95~100 days. The dark purple ear is approx. 7~8” long, 2” in diameter, 16~18 rows of kernels. Sweet and sticky and tasty. Good disease resistance. Wide adaptability. Rich in anthocyanin antioxidant, which is known to improve the immune system.



**ZUCCHINI-BLACK JADE F1**  
40~45 days. Cylindrical fruits in shiny dark green colour. Tolerant to PM and virus. High yielding.



**GREEN PAK CHOY-CHUN MEI F1**  
An extra slow bolting hybrid. Upright. Dark green leaves with broad, long and shiny green petioles. An excellent variety for standard Shanghai Pak Choy. Cold tolerant and best for spring and fall.

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FOCUS: SEED & ROOTSTOCK

On-the-ground farmstand trends

KAREN DAVIDSON

Michael Overmars,  
Antigonish, Nova Scotia

The pandemic has overturned the market carts. Michael Overmars, for example, had been a vendor at the Antigonish Farmers’ Market in Nova Scotia for six years. But with more COVID hurdles to handle every week, he gave up his spot in July 2021 and retreated to his all-day farmstand on the outskirts of the town.

As a graduate of the Everdale community teaching farm in Hillsburgh, Ontario, Overmars has gained invaluable experience, not only in growing but burnishing his reputation with on-trend signage.

“A lot of my farmers’ market customers followed me,” says Overmars who has kept hours consistent from 8 am to 8 pm, seven days a week. Ecologically-grown greens are what he’s known for. Baby kale and peppery arugula are popular in a salad mix. Hakurei turnip eats like a mild radish.

“The turnips spoke for themselves when there was sampling,” says Overmars. The greens can be eaten raw or cooked lightly.

For 2022, Overmars is adjusting his plans. He expects to plant fewer greens, more yellow bush beans, ornamental gourds and pumpkins. While both

Mokum and Bolero variety carrots have been in his portfolio before, he’ll be cutting back on volumes.

On the West Coast Seeds website, Mokum carrots, maturing in 75 days, are described as having blunt as opposed to pointed ends. Bolero carrot seeds are known for how well they keep in storage, an attractive characteristic for market growers.

“Our (West Coast) Bolero carrot seeds are also available as pelleted seeds for easier handling. Pelleted seed for small-seeded crops such as lettuce, carrots and some flowers are less prone to sticking or jamming in the seeders. Each seed is coated with a layer of clay to increase its size for easier handling.”

With all of these factors in mind, Overmars will be making his 2022 seed orders soon. In his own words, he speaks fondly of his farmstand: “it’s a little gem.”

Mélanie Giroux,  
Château-Richer, Quebec

Les Jardins du Petit-Pré is situated on the north shore of the St. Lawrence, 25 kilometres east of the provincial capital. That means grower Mélanie Giroux can bring the freshest produce possible to the Grand Market in Québec City.

“Our most popular vegetables are our red and pink greenhouse tomatoes, greenhouse and field cucumbers, greenhouse leaf lettuce and field carrots,” says



Michael Overmars



Mélanie Giroux

Giroux. “In the photo you can see our patty-pan squash which was very popular and sought after in 2021. The seed variety is Sunny

Delight F1 offered by Norseco.”

“In addition to freshness, consumers are drawn to the beauty of our produce and the taste!” she continues. “Taste is very important because that’s what will ensure that we retain our customers. We are always on the lookout for new varieties of produce that are more efficient in terms of yield, conservation and more tolerant of diseases.”

“When choosing our seeds, we look for variety, price and good customer service. For example, Norseco offers more choices for greenhouse-grown products and certain vegetables such as leeks. Stoke Seeds, on the other hand, offers more choices for field-grown cucumbers. Each company has their strengths and weaknesses. We generally buy from these two companies.”

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THE GROWER

FOCUS: SEED & ROOTSTOCK

On-the-ground farmstand trends

Thames River Melons  
Innerkip, Ontario



Asparagus is a favourite spring starter. The butt ends of asparagus are displayed amongst bunches showing the tips.

Kujawy Farms  
Bradford, Ontario



Kohlrabi is a welcome addition to this farmers' market display. A member of the cabbage family, kohlrabi carries a signature sweet-but-peppery flavour profile, with a taste and texture reminiscent of broccoli stems. This vegetable is grown in the Holland Marsh.

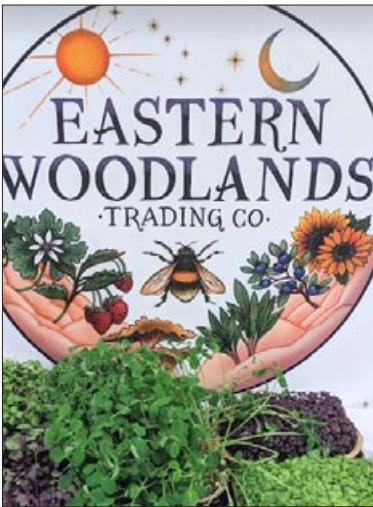
Forbes Family Farm  
Oliver, British Columbia



These tigger melons are a super small, very sweet melon with yellow and rust-red stripes. The flesh is creamy inside with very small seeds. The flavours conjure up banana, lemon and cantaloupe. The vines produce plenty of melons that are no more than one pound in size. They are grown by Forbes Family Market, a second-generation of organic farmers.

Eastern Woodlands Trading Company  
Burlington, Ontario

This market gardener is known for microgreens. The beautifully crafted signage pays tribute to bees. If a vendor pays this much attention to signage, then think about the care the team pays to production.



Vida Farm  
Vancouver, British Columbia

Market gardener Vida Rose, a vendor at the Vancouver Farmers' Market, is passionate about growing *Solanaceae* vegetables that remind her of homeland Iran. But it's her greenhouse-grown ginger that is a novelty. She propagates vegetatively and nurses along the shoots in trays.



# RAISING THE BAR

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**STM2255** is a very versatile and adaptable determinate salad variety tomato from **Sakata**, with high yield potential and good vine-ripe flavor. Fruit have an attractive red color, firm and provide good shelf-life.

## RAISING THE BAR

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FOCUS: SEED & ROOTSTOCK

# Potato seed factors that give the crop a good start

EUGENIA BANKS

### Seed selection

Healthy seed is the foundation of a high-quality crop and a high marketable yield, but the management practices used to handle, treat and plant are as important as the quality of the seed itself. Seed should be:

- Certified by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) graded as certified or higher class. This ensures that the seed meets the minimum standards for the common seed-borne diseases: common scab, late blight, Rhizoctonia, Pectobacterium soft rot.
- Firm, not spongy, which indicates it was stored properly.
- Uniform in size, preferably close to 225 g.
- True to type.
- Tested for viral diseases. Seed can appear healthy but infected. PVY is a very important viral disease that does not produce tuber symptoms on all varieties but does reduce yield. Varieties such as Yukon Gold that produce necrotic tuber symptoms when infected with PVYntn should also be tested. A test for Dickeya dianthicola is recommended for varieties susceptible to blackleg.
- Not too physiologically old. Physiologically old seed may produce little tubers instead of normal sprouts.

### Receiving seed

Immediately after receiving the seed, growers should take random samples and wash them. Diseases such as powdery scab, black dot are not easily detected without washing the seed.

If you detect a seed problem, contact CFIA and request a re-inspection of the seed. The request must be made to the CFIA within two working days of receipt of the seed shipment in question.

### Handling the seed

Seed potatoes delivered to the farm will have been removed from bulk storage, loaded onto a truck, driven to the farm, and then unloaded. Thus, it is important to provide conditions favourable for the healing of wounds. This will minimize exposure to pathogens, reduce mechanical damage to the seed, and provide favourable conditions for rapid plant development once the tubers are planted. Improper seed handling and planting results in seed decay, weak plants, poor stands, low yields, and poor quality at harvest.

### Cutting, treating and planting

This is a common practice in Ontario and across North America. Trials comparing whole seed versus cut seed have shown that the marketable yield and tuber quality are similar provided



Healthy seed



10-row planter. Photos by Eugenia Banks

that the seed is cut, treated, and planted properly. Whole seed, however, is more tolerant to stress, an important factor when spring is cool and wet.

Seed should be warmed to about 10°C a few days before cutting. Warm seed not only cuts better but is also more

physiologically active. This means that the cut surface of the seed will heal faster. Seed cutters should be cleaned and sanitized at least daily while cutting and always when switching to a new seed lot. The cut surfaces of seed are points of entry for bacteria and fungi. There are seed treatments for fungal pathogens but not for soft rot bacteria, which can cause poor emergence in either wet or warm years. Cutting is not recommended for varieties that have most of the eyes concentrated near the bud end of the tuber. Cutting seed of these varieties results in many blind seed pieces that will not produce plants. Cut seed should range in weight from 1.5 oz to 2.0 oz. A good rule is to keep the number of cut surfaces per tuber to a minimum.

After cutting, seed pieces can be either planted immediately or held in storage under conditions that favour wound healing, a practice known as pre-cutting.

As soon as a seed tuber is cut, a natural process of wound healing begins. Wound healing is favoured by fresh air, 95-99% relative humidity, and temperatures of 13 – 15°C.

If seed is cut and planted immediately, wound healing and suberization take place in the soil and it occurs more rapidly when both the seed pieces and the soil are around 13-15°C.

plant seed, growers may be forced to cut and store seed if wet spring weather delays planting.

After cutting, the precut seed should be stored under the conditions mentioned above that favour rapid wound healing. Some growers use pallet boxes to hold precut seed, while others place it in piles no more than four to six feet deep. Humidity should be monitored carefully to prevent condensation. Suberization of cut surfaces should occur in a few days under proper conditions.

### Seed treatments

Chemical seed treatment is often used as insurance against disease. A chemical seed treatment is necessary if seed is to be planted in wet, very dry or cold soils.

### Pre-planting care

- Calibrate and sanitize the planter.
- Make sure there are no planter parts that cause bruising. Bruises affect seed vigour.
- Do not leave seed potatoes under the sun on hot days for long periods of time.
- Cover the seed truck with a tarp on rainy days.
- Train personnel on safety regulations.

*Eugenia Banks is a consultant to the Ontario Potato Board.*

### Pre-cutting seed

Although potato growers in Ontario usually cut, treat, and



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# CanadaGAP change: unannounced audits effective October 1, 2021

COLLEEN HASKINS

As the fruit and vegetable production season nears its end, many producers will be transitioning into their post-harvest and off-season routines. Part of this transition is tidying up, cleaning the machinery and harvest equipment for storage, and closing the binders on current food safety programs.

For those producers certified to (or working towards certification of) the CanadaGAP program, GFSI recognized streams – Options B, C or D, keeping those binders and paperwork handy over the winter may prove beneficial. Aside from signing off on all the operational records, completing the required annual review of your own program, and identifying areas that may require changes, you will want to consider a significant change CanadaGAP has made regarding unannounced audits.

For CanadaGAP to maintain compliance to the GFSI requirements, changes are required for the unannounced audit process.

Communication about this change was provided by CanadaGAP in its August 2021 newsletter, posted on its website.

The following information applies ONLY TO THOSE SELECTED FOR AN UNANNOUNCED AUDIT IN A GIVEN YEAR. Otherwise, regular scheduled audits carry on as usual.

### When does the change come into effect?

Effective October 1st, 2021,

CanadaGAP program participants (of the GFSI recognized options B, C and D) will no longer be given two to five business-day notice prior to an unannounced audit (UA) by the Certification Body (CB). For program participants following non-GFSI recognized options, such as A1 and A2, the unannounced audit program will continue unchanged.

### Who is affected?

**Options C and D** (individual certification): Each year, 10% of the Certification Body’s clients will be chosen for an unannounced audit. The CB must select a different 10% each year.

**Option B** (Group certification): Each year, 25% of group members will be selected by the CB for an unannounced audit. For those selected for an unannounced audit – these are the two options (assuming both are being offered by the participants’ CB).


**There are two unannounced audit (UA) options:**  
1. UA Option 1 – available through all CBs, and  
2. UA Option 2 - only available at the discretion of the CB. Not all CBs will offer UA Option 2. High level comparison of the options:

**UA Option 1:** 1 audit per year, unannounced.  
• This unannounced audit will be considered the participants’ audit for that year. In subsequent years, audits will be scheduled until the CB has completed all

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ontario.ca/crops

Ontario Berry Grower

Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs



### Summary Table of Highlights:

Option	Effective October 1st, 2021	CanadaGAP GFSI options B, C & D	Number of audits per year	Notification timeframe
UA 1	✓	✓	1	• Start of calendar year only
UA 2	✓	✓	2	• Start of calendar year, and • Up to 30 days’ notice of “audit window”

unannounced audits for their total clientele. It may take several years (estimated 5 – 10 yrs) for the CB to complete all unannounced audits.

- When all the unannounced audits for clientele group of that CB have been completed, the cycle of unannounced audits will reset.
- Participants choosing this option will be notified at the start of the calendar year (Jan – Mar) if they are chosen for an unannounced audit
- Audit will occur during a time determined by the CB based on the operational and crop details provided by the participant.

**Benefit of UA Option 1:**  
• It will be several years before a participant experiences another unannounced audit  
• Participant will only pay for one audit per year under \*\*\*normal audit circumstances. (\*\*\*)please refer to the information provided on the CanadaGAP website (section 1.1.3) for additional information where additional

audits and costs may be incurred by participants under UA Option 1.

- Deterrent of UA Option 1:**
- Other than knowing that the audit will occur during their usual period(s) of activity (e.g., harvest, packing, etc.), participants are not given advanced notice or an “audit window” of when their unannounced audit may occur
  - Participants may experience an unannounced audit during peak periods, and will need to become available to the auditor for the process to continue
  - If a CB is unable to complete an audit due to unexpected circumstances, the participant may incur additional costs at their expense or experience loss of certification.

**UA Option 2:** 1 scheduled audit AND 1 \*\*unannounced audit in the same year  
• An \*\*unannounced audit under this option is similar to UA Option 1, in that once the unannounced audit has been completed, the participant will not be subject to another unannounced audit again until the CB has completed all unannounced audits for their total clientele. It may take several years (estimated 5 – 10yrs) for the CB to complete all unannounced audits.

- When all the unannounced audits for clientele group of that CB have been completed, the cycle of unannounced audits will reset.
- Participants choosing this option will be notified by the CB at the start of the calendar year (Jan – Mar) if they are chosen for an unannounced audit.
- The regular, scheduled audit will occur during a time determined by the CB based on the operational and crop details provided by the participant – typically during peak activity time. (e.g. harvest).
- Participants choosing this option (if available via the CB), will have an “audit window” for the unannounced audit, where the CB will inform the participant up to 30 days in advance of the audit window. The “audit window” will

occur prior to or after the participant’s usual scheduled audit.  
• The “audit window” will typically consist of a 30-day period, where the participant can choose up to five blackout dates (1 per 6 days) when an audit would not occur.

**Benefit of UA Option 2:**  
• It will be several years before a participant experiences another unannounced audit  
• The unannounced audit will occur within a known window, and may occur outside of the peak period of activity

- As an example, the unannounced audit could occur during times of storage/shipping, or during the growing period in the spring (crop dependent)

  
• The participant can better plan for both audits (announced and unannounced).  
• The unannounced audit may be less stressful as it can occur “off peak” and the participant is given a window of time of which to expect the audit.

**Deterrent of UA Option 2:**  
• Participants will experience two audits in one given year, and they will be required to pay the total costs for both audits.  
Please note, the information contained in this article, is a high-level summary of the recent change for unannounced audits issued by CanadaGAP. The information provided was extracted from various sources found on the CanadaGAP website [www.canadagap.ca](http://www.canadagap.ca). For full details on the changes to unannounced audits for the GFSI recognized certification options, please visit CanadaGAP’s website for more information.  
If you have questions about which UA Option is offered by your Certification Body, please contact your Certification Body directly.

*Colleen Haskins is food safety program lead for OMAFRA. The information provided has been approved by CanadaGAP.*

## NOTICE OF MEETING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT THE  
**163rd Annual Members and Directors’ Meeting**  
of the  
**Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers’ Association**  
will be held in Niagara Falls, ON  
at the Hilton Niagara Falls Fallsview  
on February 22nd, 2022



*Election of Directors of the Association will take place as well as dealing with resolutions and any other business that may arise.*





ONTARIO BERRY NEWS

Got nematodes?

ERICA PATE AND  
TAHERA SULTANA

Many plant-parasitic nematodes are pests to blueberries, feeding on or within the roots. This feeding reduces root volume and function, with above-ground symptoms including poor, weak areas of the field, slow-growing plants, and lower yields. In addition to some of these symptoms, nematodes can also vector viruses, including necrotic ringspot and tomato ringspot virus. Virus symptoms can include misshapen leaves, necrotic spots on leaves or canes, reduction in berry quality and yield, plant decline and eventual death.

Nematode damage can be difficult to distinguish from other issues, such as fertility challenges, so soil samples need to be analyzed to accurately identify nematodes.

Our knowledge in Ontario of the association between nematodes and blueberries is limited, so in 2019 we began working on a blueberry nematode survey to better understand the occurrence and distribution of four major plant-parasitic nematodes associated with blueberry fields in Ontario. Samples were collected from blueberry farms in eight counties. Each sample included eight to 10 soil cores taken close to the plant.

The plant-parasitic nematodes were identified to genus and 92 per cent of the samples were positive for at least one of the plant-parasitic nematodes tested, and most were positive for more than two of the nematodes tested (*Pratylenchus sp.*, *Mesocriconema sp.*, *Xiphinema sp.*, and *Paratylenchus sp.*):

- 76% of the samples had lesion nematodes
- 38% of the samples had ring nematodes
- 32% of samples had dagger nematodes
- More than 50% of samples were positive for pin nematodes, although in lower counts.

This study concluded that plant-parasitic nematodes are a significant concern for Ontario blueberry growers. According to our survey, 92 per cent of the total sites were positive for plant-parasitic nematodes which may lead to a major impact to blueberry plant’s health and susceptibility to other pathogens. One of the major plant-parasitic nematodes that we tested was Dagger nematode (*Xiphinema sp.*), a well-known vector for several nepo-viruses, including necrotic ringspot. Presence of these viruses and nematode together can cause key decline in blueberry production.

However, not all the common plant-parasitic nematodes have been tested in this study and

sample numbers were also relatively low. Therefore, a follow-up survey with larger sampling and more representatives of blueberry orchards began in 2021, and we are planning on continuing this survey in 2022.

We are looking forward to learning more about the presence of plant-parasitic nematodes associated with blueberries in Ontario. If any blueberry growers suspect nematodes are causing damage to their blueberries, or are interested in participating in this survey please contact Erica Pate (erica.pate@ontario.ca). The initial survey was voluntarily

supported by AAFC researcher Tahera Sultana within her nematology lab at the Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada Vineland Station. Thanks to all participants in this survey.

*Erica Pate is fruit specialist for OMAFRA. Tahera Sultana is a researcher in the nematology lab at Vineland Station, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.*



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GREENHOUSE GROWER

# University of Guelph researches light leaks in Ontario greenhouses

“It’s common to measure light inside a greenhouse and its effects on crops. There’s much less information on light that comes out of greenhouses.”

~ WILLIAM LUBITZ

Greenhouse growers need plenty of light to nurture crop plants and flowers, but the nighttime glow from increasing numbers of glasshouses in Ontario has municipalities looking to crack down on light pollution.

Now, a University of Guelph engineer is leading a pioneering drone project intended to help curb light leaks from commercial greenhouses, ensuring optimum plant yields for the province’s ever-growing vegetable and flower production.

Dr. William Lubitz, a professor in the School of Engineering, and graduate student Benjamin Snow will use drone technology this coming winter to measure light emanating from Ontario greenhouses.

“As far as we know, this is new,” said Lubitz. “There are no other cases in the literature of people testing the types of greenhouse measures we’re doing.”

He said the project will help provide data that is lacking even as municipalities -- notably Kingsville and Leamington, Ontario -- have enacted bylaws this past year to limit light pollution from growers.

That area in southern Ontario is already home to one of North America’s largest concentrations of greenhouse growers. Many of those growers are moving to year-round production of vegetables.

With electricity use in the province’s greenhouses expected to nearly triple over the next few years, new transmission lines are being built to provide even more electricity for supplemental lighting, especially in winter. That could mean more light leaks and more conflicts with area residents unless the industry can find ways to limit light pollution.

“It’s common to measure light inside a greenhouse and its effects on crops. There’s much less information on light that comes



out of greenhouses,” said Lubitz, who discussed his new research at October’s Canadian Greenhouse Conference.

“We’re trying to fill that gap in Ontario.”

It’s a challenging task. “Measuring light is actually very difficult in the field,” said Lubitz. Light contains varying spectra and people perceive light differently depending on its amount, colour, intensity and other factors.

The team will collect photos and data from light intensity sensors mounted on a drone hovering above the greenhouses. By opening and closing light abatement curtains on the greenhouse ceilings and varying the lighting, they will study amounts and kinds of illumination.

Growers already use light

abatement curtains designed to prevent light from escaping a greenhouse. But in some conditions, closing the curtains can impair ventilation and air exchange, risking crop production problems from heat and humidity.

The team hopes their data will help growers find an optimum balance while complying with light pollution bylaws.

Last winter, the University of Guelph researchers conducted a preliminary study using the drone to test greenhouses on campus and at several commercial facilities. That study showed that drones could accurately measure relative light levels and that light abatement curtains effectively reduce light emitted by greenhouses.

This coming winter’s study will allow the team to collect

more data for an entire growing season; they plan to repeat the experiment at more greenhouses in 2022. They will also use the drone to measure light from other campus locations and will compare light levels in other settings such as urban areas.

“This is an example of providing data where data doesn’t exist,” said Lubitz. “It should help with these discussions between growers and the community and help with understanding the effects of changes in greenhouse operating procedures.”

This work is part of a larger project funded by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, with support from the Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers.

Source: University of Guelph communications

# The quest for better tomato shelf life – it’s all in the genes

A group of plant scientists has discovered a gene that could extend shelf life of tomatoes without sacrificing flavour. Jim Giovannoni, a faculty member at the Boyce Thompson Institute (BTI), has published his team’s research recently.

The research is described in a paper published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, with authors from BTI, Cornell University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Zhejiang University.

The study looked at the genome of the tomato for genes involved in fruit softening but not fruit ripening. The team identified a transcription factor that regulated a broad array of cell wall-related genes and fruit-softening processes.

“Until now, nearly all of the transcription factors my lab has

identified in tomato are involved in global control of ripening,” said Giovannoni. “(This transcription) SILOB1 is interesting because it primarily regulates genes involved in cell wall softening and other textural changes of the fruit.”

Previously, his team found that many transcription factors related to tomato ripening were initially expressed in the fruit’s locule – the gel-like tissue surrounding the seeds.

“Most fruit biologists discard the locular gel because it contains the seeds, which are ‘embryonic plants’ distinct from the fruit itself,” he said. “But the first indications of ripening occur in the locule, even before the fruit begins to change colour or produce ethylene that helps it ripen. My group has been looking more closely at the locule over the last few years.”

For this reason, the team



Jim Giovannoni inspects some tomatoes in a Boyce Thompson Institute greenhouse in Ithaca, New York. Photo by Chelsea Fausel.

searched a tomato gene expression database for transcription factors that were highly expressed in the locule.

An important finding is that inhibiting SILOB1 expression had no effect on the ripening process. Fruit levels of sugars and acids were unaltered suggesting

that “from a flavour perspective, the fruits were likely unchanged,” said Giovannoni.

“If we can find SILOB1 gene variants that delay softening, breeders could introduce those into commercial varieties to produce high-quality, good-tasting tomatoes that don’t get

too soft before the consumer gets them home.”

Source: Boyce Thompson Institute, October 11, 2021



BITS AND BITES

Farmland values fueled by favourable commodity prices and interest rates



Photo by Glenn Lowson

Strong commodity prices combined with low interest rates continue to sustain farmland value increases in most parts of Canada, according to a mid-year review by Farm Credit Canada. Ontario had double-digit increases of 15.4 per cent in the last 12 months. (See chart)

“While the drought across most of Western Canada and the pandemic have captured most of the headlines, strong commodity prices and low interest rates have been quietly supporting a vibrant farmland market for the first six months of 2021,” said J.P. Gervais, FCC’s chief economist.

Average farmland values in Canada are once again showing steady increases for the first half of 2021, although the full impact of widespread drought this summer has yet to be weighed.

The average value of Canadian farmland increased by 3.8 per cent for the first half of this year, compared to an average increase of 3.7 per cent for the same time last year. This increase is in line with mid-year results over the past six years, which showed single-digit increases for the full year.

In general, Prairie and Atlantic provinces reported the most modest increases, while Ontario, British Columbia and Quebec had the largest increases. Buyers from different sectors are competing for the limited amount of land on the market.

Interest rates declined at the outset of the pandemic and remain historically low, which is also supporting the demand for farmland and weakening the supply of available land for sale in

the market.

“The overall economic environment of the next 12 months bears watching,” Gervais said. “The possibility of higher interest rates, inflationary pressures and the demand for ag commodities could influence the demand for farmland.”

He recommends farm operators continue to exercise caution, especially in regions where the rate of farmland values growth significantly exceeded that of farm income in recent years. He also recommends operators maintain a risk management plan to protect their business from unpredictable circumstances.

For more information and insights, visit [fcc.ca/Economics](http://fcc.ca/Economics).

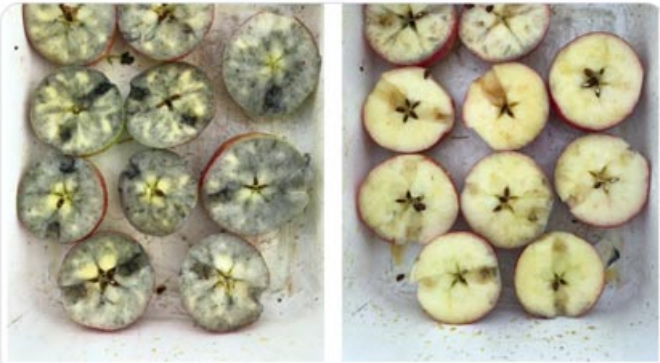
Source: Farm Credit Canada  
September 28, 2021 news release

Average increase in farmland values		
	Average % change Jan 2021 - June 2021 (6 months)	Average % change July 2020 - June 2021 (12 months)
BC	8.8	13.6
AB	3.7	5.6
SK	1.8	3.5
MB	3.5	6.3
ON	11.5	15.4
QC	8.1	13.7
NB	0.9	1.8
NS	4.5	5.8
PEI	0.4	1.5
NL	N/A	N/A
Canada	3.8	6.1

SCENE ON TWITTER

**Perennia** @NSPerennia · 30m

Starch is a maturity indicator used by the apple industry because starch is converted to sugars as ripening progresses. This test is used because iodine binds to starch molecules turning them black, whereas sugars remain clear. For an update visit [nstreetfruitblog.com](http://nstreetfruitblog.com)



**Michel Camps** @cpfarmsltd · 9h

As I am heading into the tail end of harvest, I check my bins and need to stand back and realize that the summer heat did do damage and it was out of my control and I shouldn't beat myself up over it. Smile and be happy with what you got in storage so far and try again next year



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**Grapes, Vineyards & Berries**

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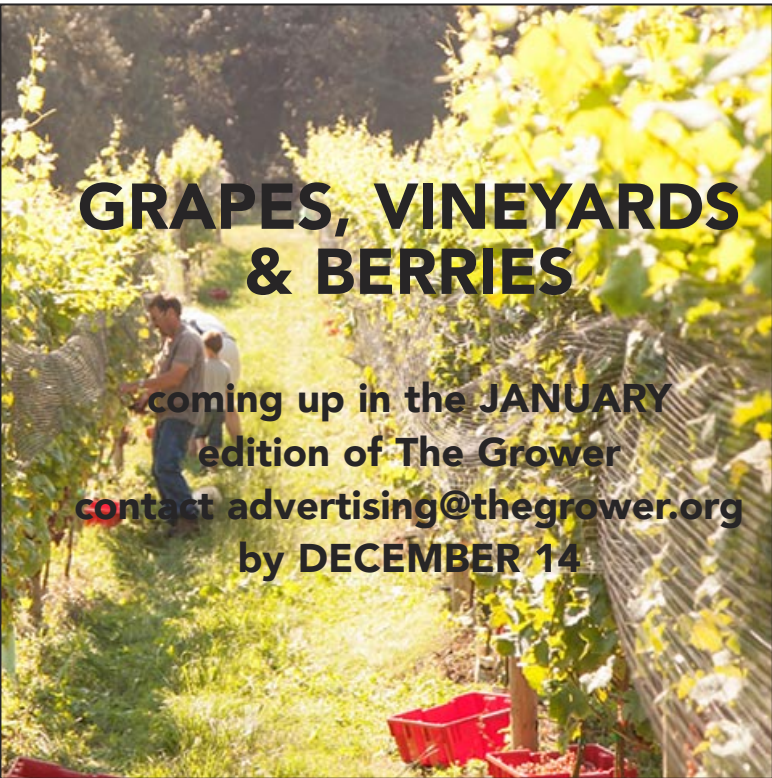
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CROP PROTECTION

# More pest management funding is coming . . . with strings attached



CHRIS DUYVELSHOFF  
CROP PROTECTION ADVISOR  
OFVGA

As reported in *The Grower's* September issue, new federal funding has been promised for pest management initiatives. A \$50 million investment in total was announced with \$42 million earmarked for the Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA). A further \$7 million will be allocated to Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC), and \$1 million to Environment and Climate Change Canada in supporting work, to accelerate the research, development and adoption of alternative pest management solutions. This is desperately needed to support the pest management environment.

It's been no secret that PMRA has been seeking additional funding for several years. Resource crunches have been affecting the timeliness of decisions across the agency including in re-evaluation and registration. In fact, in PMRA's most recently published annual workplan, it was announced that the re-evaluations of several active ingredients are delayed to direct resources for work on priority files. More importantly for growers, PMRA announced in early 2020 that it was embarking on an overhaul of its unsustainable re-evaluation program. The newer "integrated approach" as termed by the agency includes earlier stakeholder engagement, improved risk communication, and a focus on seeking enhanced empirical data for use in decision making.

The newer model for re-evaluation was widely supported in general by all stakeholders and PMRA sought additional funding in the 2021 federal budget. It was not to be found. This prompted a response

from the federal Pest Management Advisory Council – which includes grower representation by the Canadian Horticultural Council – indicating the significant impact of this funding deficit on the pest management regulatory system. Perhaps they, along with other stakeholders, finally got through.

The \$42 million additional funding announced over a three-year period equates to \$14 million annually. On approximately \$30 million base funding for the PMRA per year, that represents almost a 50 per cent increase. While details are vague at this point on where exactly this will be directed, I've been told at least some new initiatives are being given the green light, such as efforts in collecting better data. Good news for growers.

On a similar note, funding for AAFC's Pest Management Centre (PMC) has been stalled for years. With a role of delivering the minor use program supporting the registration of crop protection products on many horticultural crops, the PMC provides a critical service in pest management. In addition to their activities supporting registration, PMC also has a goal of supporting the development of alternative pest management approaches – when they have funding.

The PMC budget has been flat for a decade with inflation reducing the number of projects they can conduct each year. Furthermore, the budget for the alternative pest management work was most recently a meager \$210,000. Not much to help a multi-billion dollar sector spanning the country. While it's been indicated that some of the \$7 million allocated for AAFC will be directed towards the PMC this hasn't been confirmed. Basically all of it is needed at PMC; it also isn't clear if the AAFC or PMRA funding is a permanent increase or a one-off. Several questions remain but at least it's something.

As exciting as it is to finally have some news about new desperately needed funding, it didn't come without some cause for concern. First, the news release from Health Canada announcing the funding was downright bizarre. Pest management funding wasn't



Photo by Glenn Lowson

“

**Now that the federal election is over, the Ministers should ensure their departments have the appropriate funding and let their departments take care of the science decisions.**

”

mentioned in the title, nor even in the first three paragraphs. It wasn't until the second half of the announcement that new spending was mentioned. Rather, the news release title began with "Government of Canada pauses decision on glyphosate" and the initial action announced by Patty Hadju, Minister of Health, was a pause on proposed increases to Maximum Reside Limits (MRLs), including for glyphosate, until at least spring 2022. I cannot recall many news releases where the government funding announcement is reserved for the end.

Clearly, this was a political attempt to play both sides. The announcement title itself of "pauses decision on glyphosate" is a bit of a misnomer. Glyphosate isn't currently under review in

Canada. That has been the case since 2019 when PMRA re-affirmed their 2017 final re-evaluation decision after receiving notices of objection – which were subsequently determined to be not scientifically validated. Rather, the current pause of decision is regarding increases to MRLs, for glyphosate and a number of other active ingredients. And politics has no business here.

As has been discussed in previous columns, MRL setting by PMRA follows a rigorous science-based process to ensure the food Canadians eat is safe. It integrates into the agency's overall risk management programs including for re-evaluation and registration. The currently announced pause is no different than a Minister interjecting in

these other well-established processes. In fact, most of the proposed MRL increases were to align with the United States or CODEX, the latter being an international standard developed by the United Nations.

The funding announcement was very welcomed and more is certainly needed but it came with strings attached. Hopefully this was an election blip. Canadian policy should remain firmly based in science, rather than science being driven by politics and policy as we are seeing in the EU. Now that the federal election is over, the Ministers should ensure their departments have the appropriate funding, and let their departments take care of the science decisions.

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CROP PROTECTION

# Bee Vectoring Technologies adds insect control for first time

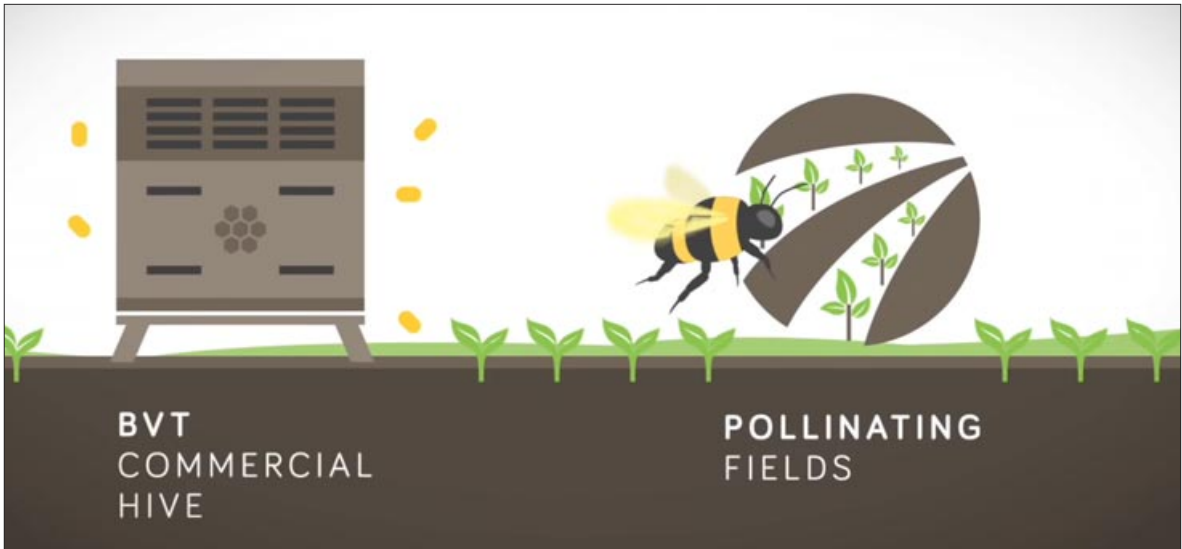
Bee Vectoring Technologies (BVT) has announced its first commercial agreement with BIOGARD, a division of CBC (Europe) S.r.l., one of the leading bioprotectant companies in Europe. The company will have exclusive access to BIOGARD’s biological insecticide Beauveria bassiana ATCC 74040 for bee vectoring uses throughout the European Union and Switzerland.

BVT has pioneered a precision vectoring system using commercially grown bees that replaces chemical pesticides and delivers biological pesticide alternatives to crops. This system is harmless to bees and allows minute amounts of biologicals to be delivered directly to blooms, providing improved crop protection and yield results.

The agreement will enable BVT to operate in the EU through the development and registration of a bee-vectoring

product extension of an already-accepted biological active substance, rather than waiting for approval of a new active substance submission – a process that can take up to three years.

Through the agreement, BVT will develop a biological insecticide solution for delivery to crops through BVT’s proprietary bee vectoring platform using BIOGARD’s active substance registration. This could be either stacked alongside BVT’s own biological fungicide, Clonostachys rosea strain CR-7 (CR-7), for a complete fungicidal plus insecticidal solution for certain crops, or used as a stand-alone when some diseases are not present. Bee vectoring uses up to 98 per cent less product per crop hectare compared to traditional application methods since the active ingredient is delivered directly to crop flowers with no waste. The agreement also



includes a long-term arrangement for BIOGARD to supply the active substance to BVT.

BIOGARD’s microbiological insecticide, Beauveria bassiana ATCC 74040, has EU registration and has been used for 10 years through a foliar spray to control insects such as thrips, whiteflies and aphids. These insects cause damage to multiple crops including strawberries and peppers, which are among the priority target uses for BVT’s solution.

“This agreement represents two important firsts for BVT,”

said Ashish Malik, CEO of BVT which is headquartered in Mississauga, Ontario. “It propels BVT into the EU, allowing us to generate first revenue from this region and validate our technology with growers while we work to complete the registration process for the approval of CR-7. It is also our first product expansion by in-licensing a third-party biological for use in BVT’s bee vectoring system. This deal validates that BVT technology can be used to deliver multiple biocontrol agents and extends our solution beyond disease control to

now include insect control as well.”

BVT’s initial priority will be to target greenhouse production of crops such as strawberry and peppers, which represent 200,00 hectares(~500,000 acres) in Europe, including 100,000 acres grown in covered environments.

For a video on how bee vectoring works, link here: <https://bit.ly/2YXi7ix>

*Source: Bee Vectoring Technologies October 14, 2021 news release*

# Congrats to outstanding researchers

The Gold Harvest Award – a crystal trophy and certificate – recognize exceptional and significant contributions made by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada employees through the excellence of the work they perform, the exemplary behaviour they demonstrate and the positive results they achieve. Recipients are nominated by fellow employees. The 2021 award went to the Herbicide Resistance Project Team.

Since 2016, this federal-provincial collaboration has developed 16 new molecular-based rapid diagnostic tools. The new tools have significantly reduced timeframes to identify cases of herbicide resistance,

allowing producers to quickly detect herbicide-resistant weeds and make informed decisions for their control. The team’s work has influenced a change in culture and production practices by growers and crop advisors, who now prioritize testing prior to considering weed control measures. The work has positioned Canada as a global leader in resistance detection.

- Kerry Bosveld, AAFC
- Sylvain Fortin, AAFC
- Cezarina Kora, AAFC
- Martin Laforest, AAFC
- Annie Marcoux, MAPAQ
- Sydney Meloche, AAFC
- Robert Nurse, AAFC
- Kristen Obeid, OMAFRA

- Eric Page, AAFC
- Marie-Josée Simard, AAFC
- Brahim Soufiane, AAFC

Project partners include: Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, AAFC-Pest Management Centre, Bayer CropScience Inc., FMC Corporation, Fresh Vegetable Growers of Ontario, MAPAQ, Ontario Apple Growers, Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers’ Association, Ontario Processing Vegetable Growers and Syngenta Canada Inc.

**Photo right: Herbicide-resistant pigweed in carrots to herbicide groups 5 and 7. Photo by Kristen Obeid.**



# Pesticide residues remain extremely low

The U.S.-based Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has issued its latest report on pesticide residues in food for the 2019 fiscal year (October 1, 2018 – September 30, 2019). The findings show that about one per cent of domestic samples and 11 per cent of samples from imported products had chemical residues that violated Environmental Protection Agency limits. Nearly three-quarters of the samples were taken from imports.

These results are consistent with the trend of low levels of pesticide residue violations over the past eight years," the agency says.

This year, FDA is conducting additional sampling for cabbage, lemons, lettuce, and soybeans. The extra testing is

targeted to commodities with violation rates near 10 per cent and imported foods where FDA has relatively few samples.

U.S. regulators help ensure that food produced with the use of pesticides is safe to eat by setting allowable levels called tolerances for pesticide chemical residues and by monitoring foods in the market to determine if those levels are being exceeded. The role of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is to establish pesticide tolerances on the amount of a pesticide chemical residue a food can contain. The Food and Drug Administration is responsible for enforcing those tolerances for domestic foods shipped in interstate commerce and foods imported into the United States.





BITS AND BITES

OPVG offer bursaries

The Ontario Processing Vegetable Growers (OPVG) Bursary Program is offering three bursaries to eligible college or university students studying commercial field agriculture/horticulture or food manufacturing.

The program was created to support and encourage students pursuing a career in the processing vegetable industry and to ensure there are new individuals who will have the interest, skill and ability to further develop and grow this sector of Ontario’s agri-food economy.

One bursary is awarded to a student in their second year at Ridgetown Campus, with a value of \$2,000 in memory of former OPVG director Jim Whitson.

The second bursary is awarded to a student in their second, third, fourth or post-graduate year of study at an eligible

college or university, with a value of \$2,000 in memory of former OPVG director Ken Epp.

The third bursary is an industry award with a value of \$1,000 for a student in their second, third, fourth or post-graduate year of study at an eligible college or university. Applicants must be registered as a full-time student in a program which relates to the processing vegetable industry.

Eligibility details and a Bursary Application Form are available at [www.opvg.org](http://www.opvg.org) or by request via email at [opvg@opvg.org](mailto:opvg@opvg.org). Applications must be received at OPVG no later than November 15, 2021.

OPVG is a marketing board regulated under the Farm Products Marketing Act and represents nearly 350 Ontario processing vegetable growers producing crops such



as tomatoes, onions, sweet corn, carrots, cucumbers, green & wax beans, lima beans, green peas, squash and pumpkin. Farmgate sales for processing vegetable crops in 2020 was \$97.8 million. OPVG members are family-owned and operated businesses,

growing vegetable crops for Ontario food manufacturing companies.

Source: Ontario Processing Vegetable Growers October 15, 2021 news release

Nature Fresh Farms to be rebranded

Nature Fresh Farms, one of the largest independent greenhouse produce growers in North America, is sharing its new brand identity that embraces the recent growth and innovation of the company.

The Leamington, Ontario-based operation specializing in peppers, cucumbers, tomatoes, and soon-to-be strawberries, is launching its new look and feel by way of introducing retailers to the

depth of greenhouse-grown produce and the benefits of supplying customers with quality, great tasting produce all year round.

Nature Fresh Farms’ new branding comes in the wake of a variety of changes that have expanded the company’s presence throughout North America. Increased distribution, the physical development of expanded facilities in Ohio, Mexico and

Texas, retail partner growth, sustainability efforts and new product innovation all play a role in the success of Nature Fresh Farms as it is today.

“The rapid growth of Nature Fresh Farms over the past few years has helped us identify the need for a change that would reflect all of the best elements of our company. Our purpose, culture, people, products, innovation and of course, our



story are what set us apart,” says Matt Quiring, director of sales for Nature Fresh Farms.

For more information on Nature Fresh Farms, visit

[www.naturefresh.ca](http://www.naturefresh.ca)

Source: Nature Fresh Farms October 4, 2021 news release



I AM EXPO

“My favorite part of the EXPO is networking on the trade show floor and attending the banquets. You get to learn and see the latest advancements in farm practices, talking directly with the people behind it all.”

— Danielle Oomen, Oomen Farms

Danielle Oomen, Michigan



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