

**MAY 2022** 

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#### **TASKED & TAXED**

# Why growers may never reconcile the carbon tax



This year's spring sting is a federal increase in carbon taxes of 11 cents/litre of gasoline and diesel. That's not welcome news for horticulture which is grappling with disrupted supply chains, spiralling fertilizer costs and higher labour wages. Yet tillage work must continue. This 12-foot wide cultivator, for example, is used in one pass to bury the leftover 'fruit mummies.' Used in every other row, the practice reduces disease inoculum in this peach orchard at Tregunno Farms, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario. Photos by Karen Davidson.

# KAREN DAVIDSON

Every rumble of a farm engine now signals higher costs. As of April 1, the federal government added 11 cents/litre for gasoline and diesel, with no exemption for Canadian farmers producing food. It's a carbon tax that will be ratcheting up by \$15/tonne every year until 2030.

"It's a source of frustration," says Ken Wall, Sandy Shore Farms, Port Burwell, Ontario. "The real question is whether carbon taxes change the way we as consumers live our lives. The concept of a tax is to change behaviour. The problem for agriculture is that there is no viable alternative

The reality is that the carbon tax stresses margins for everyone up and down the food chain. As Wall points out, that makes Canadian farmers less competitive against imports. His asparagus competes against Mexican product that had lower input costs before implementation of the

tax. And an unwanted perverse outcome quite possibly could be that Canadian farmers decide to downsize or quit operations altogether. The unintended result would be a higher carbon output from more imports being hauled into Canada by boat, plane and truck.

"It's a non-winning formula," says Wall. "It's a tough conversation to have with elected officials and the public. The moment that you say that carbon taxes are hurting agriculture, you are pegged as being anti-environment. And of course, that's not the case. Farmers are all in for the environment with their care of the soil and water. My fear is that Canada will lose production capacity in horticulture, the ability to grow local food. But it's a tough argument with the political class and the media commentariat."

The vast majority of elected officials, both federally and provincially, are urbanites. So, there's no quick sound bite to explain the farm to plate story of globally interconnected networks. Carbon taxes alone won't sink

agriculture but when layered on top of other, everincreasing farming costs, they are inarguably detrimental to the spirit of growing food.

Pictures can often paint a thousand bites in telling this story, though. Look no further than the aerial shots of flooding in British Columbia's Fraser Valley in November 2021.

As Jason Smith, chair of the BC Blueberry Council explains, it may take years to replant and regain the 750 to 1,000 acres of blueberries affected by flooding. Adding carbon taxes to a sector already stretched by recovery, strikes most BC growers as counter-intuitive.

"Our margins are so thin," says Smith. "Honestly, we are not getting paid any more money for our fruit than we were 15 years ago yet input costs have more than

Continued on page 3

CPMA Convention & Trade Show

Code of conduct still on the table PG 13

Irrigation & water management PG 14

# AT PRESS TIME...

# **Expect first release of** 2021 Census of **Agriculture data**

On May 11, 2022, the first Census of Agriculture data will be released, providing an updated and comprehensive picture of agriculture across Canada.

Key changes to the 2021 Census of Agriculture include:

- A new conceptual definition of a "farm" or an "agricultural holding";
- Increased use of data integration;
- A new data processing environment

For the 2021 Census of Agriculture a "farm" or an "agricultural holding" now refers to a unit that produces agricultural products and reports revenues or expenses for tax purposes to the Canada Revenue Agency. Before 2021, a "farm" was defined as an agricultural operation that produced at least one agricultural product intended for sale.

The majority of the 2021 questions remained unchanged compared with 2016 to maintain consistency and comparability of data over time. Other questions have been added or deleted to reflect changes in the agriculture industry. For example:

- Agricultural production (filter questions)-This is a new step, consisting of yes or no questions that identify the commodities being produced on the respondent's operation.
- Business information-A new step was added on the main activity of the
- Emerging agricultural products-These emerging categories included, for example, hemp, haskaps, kale and
- Greenhouse products-Sub-categories were added for greenhouse fruits and vegetables (greenhouse tomatoes, greenhouse cucumbers, greenhouse peppers, greenhouse herbs, and other greenhouse fruits and vegetables); cut



flowers and potted plants were split up into two subcategories. Examples were added of other products grown in a greenhouse.

- Mushrooms-The mushroom questions were expanded to request separate areas for Agaricus and specialty mushrooms.
- Machinery-Two new categories for tractors were added to account for the increased use of more powerful tractors
- Technologies-Some categories were removed and new ones were added to reflect technological evolution and technology adoption by farms.
- Renewable energy producing systems-A definition for renewable energy was added. A question was added asking for the intended use of renewable energy produced on the operation (for use on the operation or for sale).
- Direct sales-Direct sales categories were expanded, as well as the methods of direct selling, to include off-site farm stores or stands, direct deliveries to consumers, and community-supported agriculture and food baskets. A new question was added on the percentage of gross farm receipts from the sale of agricultural products directly to consumers for human consumption.
- Succession planning-The succession planning question was expanded to include whether a written succession

plan that is not in place has been discussed or not.

Source: Statistics Canada April 19, 2022 news release

# **CPMA** announces new chair



Mario Masellis is the new 2022-2023 chair of the Canadian Produce Marketing Association. He is the vicepresident, sales

and marketing of Catania Worldwide. A board member since 2009, he's been a mentor for the Passion for Produce program, and brings broad knowledge and 25 years-plus experience to his role.

As CPMA chair, he will focus on areas that are close to his heart, including education and training, government relations efforts, and diversity and inclusion.

Joining him on the executive are: Guy Milette, past-chair; Colin Chapdelaine, first vice-chair; George Pitsikoulis, second vice-chair; Steve Bamford, executive committee member.

# **NEWSMAKERS**

Félicitations to Alain Routhier, president, Courchesne Larose Ltd and now the recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Canadian Produce Marketing Association (CPMA). Alain has been working in the fresh produce industry since a young age. Under his leadership, Courchesne Larose Ltd. has expanded to become one of the major players in the Canadian fresh fruits and vegetable market. Alain has also held various roles within the industry including QPMA chair in 1998 and CPMA chair in 2011.



Hearty congratulations to the winners of other prestigious awards by CPMA:

- Fresh Health Award **Gwillimdale Farms**
- Young Professional Award Stewart Lapage, The Oppenheimer Group
- The Packer's Produce Person of the Year Award Mimmo Franzone, Longo Brothers Fruit Markets Inc.

#### **Best Booth Awards**

- Best Island Booth Award Mucci Farms
- · Best Inline Booth Award Ponderosa Mushrooms
- Best First-Time Exhibitor Booth Award ALLWays Local produce

#### New Product Showcase Awards

- Best New Product Award Simple Sides by Highline Mushrooms • Best Snackable Product Award - Salted Hot Cocoa Nut Mix by
- Natursource Inc. • Packaging Innovation Award – ReadyCycle sustainable packaging by
- Sambrailo Packaging New Technology Award- Open Plastics Project by The Star Group
- Organics Award Natural Organics Grape Tomatoes by Mucci Farms

Congratulations to Richmond, BC grower Bill Zylmans who was recognized for his many years of contributions to British Columbia's agriculture sector by the BC Agriculture Council (BCAC) on March 30. This award of Excellence in Agriculture Leadership honours leaders who exemplify leadership, integrity, and innovation within the farm community. Bill and his wife



Sandra work as partners operating W&A Farms where they produce and market a wide range of products including strawberries, potatoes, beef, and hay. He is currently also chair of the Canadian Potato Council.

The Ontario Processing Vegetable Growers held their annual general meeting March 30. David Hope is chair. He is joined by vice-chairs Ron VanDamme and Chris Stewart. Directors include: Dan Froese, Tracy Gubbels, Tom Keller, Ryan Leclair, Carl Merrick and Neil Reimer. For more AGM details, go to page 8.

After five years of service, **Thomas McDade** left his role at the end of March 2022 as agricultural director, Potato Growers of Alberta. In his farewell column in The Potato Minute newsletter, he noted many learnings from the McCain Regenerative Soil Health webinars.

Farmers Markets Ontario announces its 2022 slate. Aartje den Boer, Vankleek Hill Farmers' Market is chair; **Deanna Chakarova**, St. Catharines Farmers' Market is vice-chair; Helen Martin, Creemore Farmers' Market is secretary; Ann Slater, St. Marys Farmers' Market is treasurer and Thomas Merritt, Great Sudbury Market completes the executive. They are joined by the following directors: Elmer Buchanan, Havelock Farmers' & Artisan Market; Lisa Cooper, Uxbridge Farmers' Market; Patsy Schmidt, Mountjoy Farmers' Market – Timmins. Catherine Clark is executive director.

The BC Cranberry Marketing Commission has announced that Kalpna **Solanki** is chair, Jack DeWit is vice-chair and **Jeff Hamilton** is secretary.

The United Potato Growers of Canada (UPGC) has hired a new general manager, Victoria Stamper. She brings a commodities distribution background to the organization with the principles of supply and demand, and profitability. She moved into the role on April 25, replacing the long-serving **Kevin MacIsaac** who has retired.

The Grape Growers of Ontario have re-elected Matthias Oppenlaender for a third term as chair. Kevin Watson becomes vice-chair replacing Bill Schenck who held the role for six years. Directors include: Steve Pohorly and Erwin Wiens (Niagara-on-the-Lake); Joe Schenck (St. Catharines); Doug Funk Jr and Jim Morrison (Lincoln); Brock Puddicombe (Grimsby); Robert Peck (southwestern Ontario); Murray Wilson (Prince Edward County & all other areas).

















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# Why growers may never reconcile the carbon tax

#### Continued from page 1

Stewart Lapage has witnessed the extreme struggles of the food industry firsthand from Calgary, Alberta. As executive director of operations and logistics for The Oppenheimer Group (Oppy), he's been in the maelstrom every day, supervising transportation, warehousing, quality control, packaging and storage.

"Food security became a big concern," he says, recalling the BC floods. "It was really scary for a couple weeks."

The unprecedented weather event washed out roads, took down rail lines and effectively cut off commercial traffic to the rest of Canada. It was only through concerted industry efforts that alternative routes were created, even moving product under bond through the United States to bring food and goods to and from the BC market.

And the Canadian food complex is by no means "above water" six months later.

"I understand why the carbon tax is there but I question the timing of this most recent increase on top of the natural disaster and all the other complexities in the marketplace," says Lapage. "With all the price increases, inflation is pushed higher and consumers will be paying more. There is no reprieve in sight for 2022."

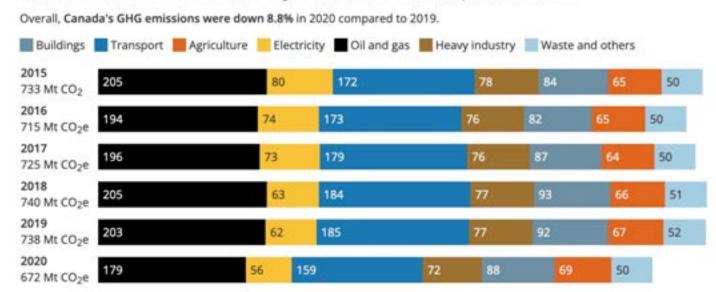
The situation has been worsened by Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the resultant disruption to international trade routes. Russia and Belarus are big importers of fruits and vegetables, but their usual ports of entry on the Black Sea are closed so deliveries from the southern hemisphere are being diverted elsewhere.

'That fruit is now looking for a home here in North America, but we're already backed up at ports," he says.

At this juncture, the Canadian Produce Marketing Association (CPMA) and Fruit and Vegetable Growers of Canada (FVGC) are taking this complex story to parliamentarians on May 10. As Shannon Sommerauer, CPMA's director of government relations explains, "We know that many in the Canadian fresh fruit and vegetable industry have really led the way in terms of adopting more environmentally sustainable practices, and those contributions should be recognized. We have been calling on the federal government to provide better, retroactive recognition for efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and implement more sustainable practices, including when we're looking at a carbon offset system."

She adds, "On the front end, we are also calling for all parties to support Bill C-234, which is

# Canada's GHG emissions by economic sector, 2015-2020



Measured in megatonnes of carbon dioxide equivalents (Mt CO2e).

Chart: Dexter McMillan . Source: National Inventory Report, Environment and Climate Change Canada

CBC News



Agriculture accounts for about 8 per cent of Canada's greenhouse gas emissions with about 50 per cent attributable to animal agriculture and the remainder to cropping systems. Canadian agriculture is such a vital part of the global food system that production cannot be reduced without impacting global food security, so the future must be dominated by strategies to increase production while reducing emissions.

Source: Canadian Agri-Food Policy Institute

currently before the House of Commons. That bill would ensure all fuels used for primary agriculture, including for such activities as heating and cooling, are eligible for up-front exemptions under the Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act, which would help to alleviate costs, maintain food security and support the competitiveness of Canadian growers."

Their story will be supported in part by a nuanced analysis titled "Carbon Sequestration in Agricultural Soils: Addressing Canada's Climate Change Targets" by Dr. Susan Wood-Bohm published by the Canadian Agri-Food Policy Institute. She's president and CEO of her own consulting firm, and sits on Genome Canada's Science & Industry Advisory Committee.

Her study is a realistic perspective, acknowledging that while Canadian farmers must increase production and at the same time reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the preferred approach strategically however, is soil sequestration.

"Climate change impacts that disrupt the typical moisture cycles, such as through flooding or drought, or increasingly rapid snow melt in the spring may alter the carbon cycle dramatically in the upper soil horizons," writes Wood-Bohm. "Over time, microbes assist in the movement of soil organic carbon to deeper soil horizons where carbon pools are more stable."

She's optimistic that soil sampling methods may underestimate the amount of stored carbon. "This work supports the idea that more carbon may be stored below the agriculturally active layers than previously thought," she writes.

Farmers willingly take on the task of growing the healthiest, most nutritious food possible, while remaining steadfast in their role as good stewards of the land.

How is it fair that they are carbon-taxed right along with consumers, yet receive no consideration that their land actively sequesters CO2? The final chapter of this story can only deliver a just telling at the tax coffers.

The Grower is "Digging Deeper" with Stewart Lapage, executive director, operations and logistics, The Oppenheimer Group, based in Calgary, Alberta. He comments on the real-life implications of the BC floods and how both domestic

and global events are taxing the food chain. He's the CPMA's 2022 winner of the Young Professional Award. This podcast is sponsored by Cohort Wholesale.



### CROSS COUNTRY DIGEST

# **BRITISH COLUMBIA**

# New funding boosts raspberry replant program

BC's raspberry sector, valued at \$14 million annually, will be encouraged with the ag ministry's announcement of up to \$300,000 under the Raspberry Replant Program for plantings in 2023.

"The new investment in this program will help more B.C. growers replant their fields with varieties that will support their businesses and increase the amount and improve the quality of local berries," said Lana Popham, minister of Agriculture,

Food and Fisheries. "Planting varieties that grow well in our climate and produce berries suitable for fresh, specialized frozen and value-added markets will ensure B.C. raspberries continue to be on many menus and part of BC's food economy."

The program covers some of the expenses incurred when growers replace plants of lowerquality berries with varieties that grow well in the coastal climate and are more suitable for fresh,



individually quick frozen (IQF) and higher-value processed products. The new funding will help growers replant fields in the spring and fall of 2023.

The new funding allows growers to pre-order plants from the nurseries a year in advance, as is typically done by berry growers, while knowing the program is available to support their efforts. Raspberry growers can place plant orders for 2023 plantings before June 2022.

The B.C. government launched the Raspberry Replant Program in the fall of 2020 as part of the province's economic recovery plan, StrongerBC. To date, the program has supported

the replanting of 49 hectares (120 acres) of raspberry fields.

Source: BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Fisheries March 30, 2022 news release

# **BRITISH COLUMBIA**

# Vertical farming vegetables regulated by BC Vegetable Marketing Commission

The British Columbia Vegetable Marketing Commission (Commission) anticipates the arrival of new agricultural technologies including vertical farming, where crops are grown in vertically stacked layers within an enclosed structure.

Agritech operations that intend to use this technology or other innovative practices and controlled environment structures are reminded that vegetables and vegetable marketing are regulated in British Columbia by the Commission.

All vegetables grown in the province are subject to the Commission's authority. Producers are required to be licensed by the Commission to grow, process or market regulated vegetables. These include: lettuce, tomatoes, peppers, and cucumbers that are grown within an enclosed structure.

The BC regulated vegetable industry is organized under the Natural Products

Marketing (BC) Act and the British Columbia Vegetable Scheme (the Scheme). The Scheme prescribes the rules, procedures and application. The Commission is the first instance regulator and acts by the authority delegated through the Natural Products Marketing (BC) Act and its Regulations. It is responsible for administering the Scheme, including coordinating producer activities, to ensure Orderly Marketing. Orderly Marketing is

achieved through the promotion, control, and regulation of production, transportation, packing, storage, and marketing of vegetables.

More details are available at www.bcveg.com or emailing: info@bcveg.com

Source: BC Vegetable Marketing Commission April 6, 2022 2022 news release

# **QUEBEC**

# Savoura invests \$55M in new greenhouse complex

The Savoura Group is investing \$55 million in its Sainte-Sophie greenhouse

complex, the municipality where the company was founded in 1995. The nine-hectare expansion represents the largest construction project to date in the Lower Laurentians.







The project is expected to be completed in the fall of 2022, housing conventional tomato production, including varieties specific to the Savoura brand. Company executives point out that the latest technological advances will be used to meet the highest environmental standards. Protective screens, for example, will be installed to minimize light waves from the growth lighting for the plants.

In addition, Quebec-based technology – Sollum's intelligent LED lighting – will be used in one hectare.

Financial partners are Desjardins Enterprises and Financement Agricole Canada. "There is a long way to go

between wanting to innovate within the framework of a project and realizing real innovations," says Peggie Clermont, CEO, Savoura. "If you knew all the energy and imagination put in by all our production teams to achieve such a project. Nothing was left to chance in order to implement a project that was both structuring for the company and responsible towards all of our workers, suppliers and clients. We are not perfect, but we are aware of our role as a corporate citizen and we are determined to improve with each project."

Source: Savoura Group April 6, 2022 news release

#### **CROSS COUNTRY DIGEST**

### **PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND**

# Shipments of PEI potatoes resume to mainland U.S.

Prince Edward Island's table stock potatoes are moving again. Not only was a load in transit to Puerto Rico on April 4, but at least one load to mainland U.S, according to the PEI Potato Board's Facebook page.

USDA-APHIS published a federal order on April 1, allowing the shipment of PEI potatoes to clients in the United States. Those conditions are:

To prevent the introduction of *S. endobioticum* into the United States, APHIS will only allow the umportation of potatoes from PEI into the United States

1a) Potatoes must not originate from any fields restricted by CFIA as index fields, adjacent fields, primary contact fields, and other contact fields for *S. endobioticum* as defined in Canada's Potato Wart Domestic Long-Term Management Plan (CFIA, 2009).

b) Certified seed potatoes which were planted to produce potatoes for consumption must not originate from fields CFIA restricted for potato wart as index fields, adjacent fields, primary contact fields, and other contact fields for S. endobioticum.
c) Potatoes must meet the requirements of the U.S. No. 1 grade standard.

d) Potatoes must be free of soil upon inspection at the port of

entry. The potatoes must be washed with a forced stream of water to eliminate adhering soil, including caked dirt. Other methods such as brushing and rinsing may be required, in addition to washing with a forced stream of water to ensure the potatoes are free of soil. e) Potatoes must be treated with a sprout inhibitor that is registered with the Canadian Pest Management Regulatory Agency. f) Consignments must be accompanied by a statement on the export documentation detailing the treatment including the date of sprout inhibitor application and product used. g) All potato shipments must have traceability from production site to packing and export to allow a full trace-back and recall. h) Potatoes for consumption must be officially inspected for pest freedom prior to export. This inspection should take place after the potatoes are washed. Any suspect infected potatoes should be reported to CFIA. i) Each consignment must be inspected and accompanied by a certificate issued by CFIA and

approved by APHIS stating that

potatoes for consumption are free

of quarantine pests for the United States. The certificate must

include an Additional Declaration

that states: "The potatoes in this

shipment were grown in a field where potato wart is not known to occur and meet all requirements from the USDA Federal Order DA-2022-14 dated April 1, 2022."

j) Each consignment is subject to inspection at the port of entry into the United States.

2) Seed potatoes for planting are prohibited entry into the United States.

3) In vitro plantlets, micro-tubers and mini-tubers for planting are allowed entry but require a permit.

The PEI Potato Board's
Facebook page confirmed that the
first load of potatoes was shipped



This truck holds 11,000 five-pound bags of PEI potatoes destined for the port of Halifax on April 4 and eventually Puerto Rico. It's a donation to the food banks of the U.S. territory and a thanks for support during the recent export ban.

to the mainland United States on April 4, 2022.

Source: USDA-APHIS April 1, 2022, PEI Potato Board Facebook April 4, 2022



#### CANADIAN PRODUCE MARKETING ASSOCIATION

# Four trends that point to the future



Sambrailo won the Packaging Innovation Award for its ReadyCycle home compostable alternative to single plastic.



The Star Group offers Just Picked greenhouse vegetables and other ingredients in sustainable packaging that cater to millennials and e-commerce platforms.



Windset Farms offers a party tray of mixed greenhouse vegetables, appealing to the busy entrepreneur who wants to entertain in a condo setting.

#### KAREN DAVIDSON

For any newcomer to the Canadian Produce Marketing Association (CPMA) annual convention, the glitz and expanse of the trade show floor are overwhelming. Where to start?

Besides the potato chip food truck!

The Innovation and New Product Showcase, just outside the entrance, is an insightful glimpse into what's happening. Exhibitors put a lot of sweat into these dioramas with last-minute replacements of fresh product.

#### Packaging trends

One of the most obvious trends is how much packaging has changed for shelf life, sustainability and e-commerce. It was fortuitous timing then, that Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada announced \$376,000 to

As of March 25, 2022

CPMA for a national pilot that explores how the fresh produce industry can further sustainable packaging design and use materials that enhance recyclability or composting.

The goal is to better understand and characterize the food and produce packaging system in Canada, assess the impacts of various packaging options and create a deployment plan. Key stakeholders including manufacturers, packaging producers, retailers and recycling facilities will be engaged.

Three companies are already leading the way. Take Mucci Farms for example, which has introduced the linerless label cardboard tray. This new series of trays are made from 100% recyclable kraft paperboard and fastened by a one-piece linerless label lid made from food-approved paper label material. Using 80% less adhesive and silicone than conventional labels, this latest innovation is ecological, lightweight and durable, and best of all, has zero waste.

The custom die-cut label allows for variable product visibility and includes a double-sided print process that maximizes real estate for high-impact graphics on the top side and product information on the bottom. This packaging attracts consumers at store level and e-commerce platforms.

Sambrailo, an American company based in Watsonville, California, won the Packaging Innovation Award for its ReadyCycle, home compostable alternative to single use plastic. The company provides closed baskets, dry pint green baskets, baskets with kraft film covers and one-pound baskets.

# E-commerce trends

The pandemic has forced more attention to how produce items are packaged and presented

on e-commerce platforms. Companies are also honing in on who is buying online. Statistics Canada revealed in its 2016 census that one-person households accounted for 28 per cent of all households in Canada. In other words, that's a segmented marketed of four million.

The Star Group has pinpointed this demographic with trays that contain all the Just Picked fresh ingredients to make an omelette. With choices such as Tex-Mex or Mediterrean style, for instance, the millennial consumer can customize with the addition of two eggs.

Windset Farms has caught this trend as well with its party tray, brimming with vegetables. The streamlined, recyclable packaging also appeals to this demographic.

#### Controlled Environment Agriculture trends

Increasingly, media reports are referring to Controlled Environment Agriculture or CEA. The umbrella term comprises both indoor greenhouses as well as vertical farming, both requiring capital-intensive technology and sophisticated management. Whether it's the Growcer, leveraging modular technology to deploy containerized pods to northern Canada or GoodLeaf Farms, boosting leafy green production with vertical farms in urban areas, these companies are capturing the ambitions of a new generation.

Barry Murchie, CEO, GoodLeaf Farms, emphasizes the importance of data collection and analysis going forward as well as recipe optimization for vertical farming. He told a CPMA Learning Lounge audience that "understanding all of our inputs and replicating the same recipe for predictability, consistency and quality will be key."

Continued on next page



Containerboard Packaging, Centre Maraîcher – Eugene Guinois Jr., Dole Food Company, Domex Superfresh Growers, DRC – Fruit and Vegetable Dispute Resolution Corporation, Driscoll's,

Duda Farm Fresh Foods, Inc., Florida Tomato Committee, Fresh Del Monte Produce (Canada)

Inc., Fresh Direct Produce Ltd., Gambles Ontario Produce Inc., Hydroserre Inc. (Mirabel), Italian

Produce Co Ltd, Loblaw Companies, Martin's Family Fruit Farm, North American Produce Buyers

Limited, Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers, Pure Hot House Foods Inc., POM Wonderful,

Red Sun Farms, Rainier Fruit Company, Sobeys Inc., Sollum Technologies, Star Group/Star Produce Ltd., The Fresh Wave LLC, Thomas Fresh, Tomato King 2010 Inc., Transcontinental

Packaging Flexipak Inc., Trinity Fruit Sales Co., Vineland Growers' Co-operative Ltd., VLAM,

Washington Apple Commission, Westmoreland (TopLine Farms), Wonderful Sales

# Four trends that point to the future

#### Continued from page 6

He also identified the issue of seed that's adaptable to vertical farming. "Seed around the world is developed for open air farming, drought resistance and pest resistance. There's been a surge in seed engineering for CEA. And we hope to see these advancements in yield and quality."

Dr. Amy Bowen, Sensory and Consumer Sciences, Vineland Research and Innovation Centre, agreed that new variety development and adaptation will be important in the future for all growing systems. "We need to be multi-disciplinary in our approach, integrating seeds into the appropriate environment, understanding the lighting and nutritional needs as well as the end user of the product."

Murchie expands on her point. "The consumer's pain points are our pain points. When we try to understand these issues of transportation, shrink, and flavour and now inflation, there are very real challenges in the marketplace."

### Addressing food waste

Gwillimdale Farms has installed a fully automated potato grading system—equipped with artificial intelligence—to its onestop shop near Bradford, Ontario. This new system has multiple different parameters set to meet the required specifications of size, volume, shape, grade, and deviation. This investment allows a big move toward reducing food waste.

"We've had an ongoing struggle with dumping and disposing of perfectly good potatoes with minor blemishes for years," says Quinton Woods, senior sales and plant operation manager, Gwillimdale Farms. "Edible food waste is bad for the environment through the decomposing of vegetables and contributes to food insecurity and equality. 15.6 per cent of Canadians are living foodinsecure when 400 million potatoes can be diverted to retail and onto the tables of hungry people."

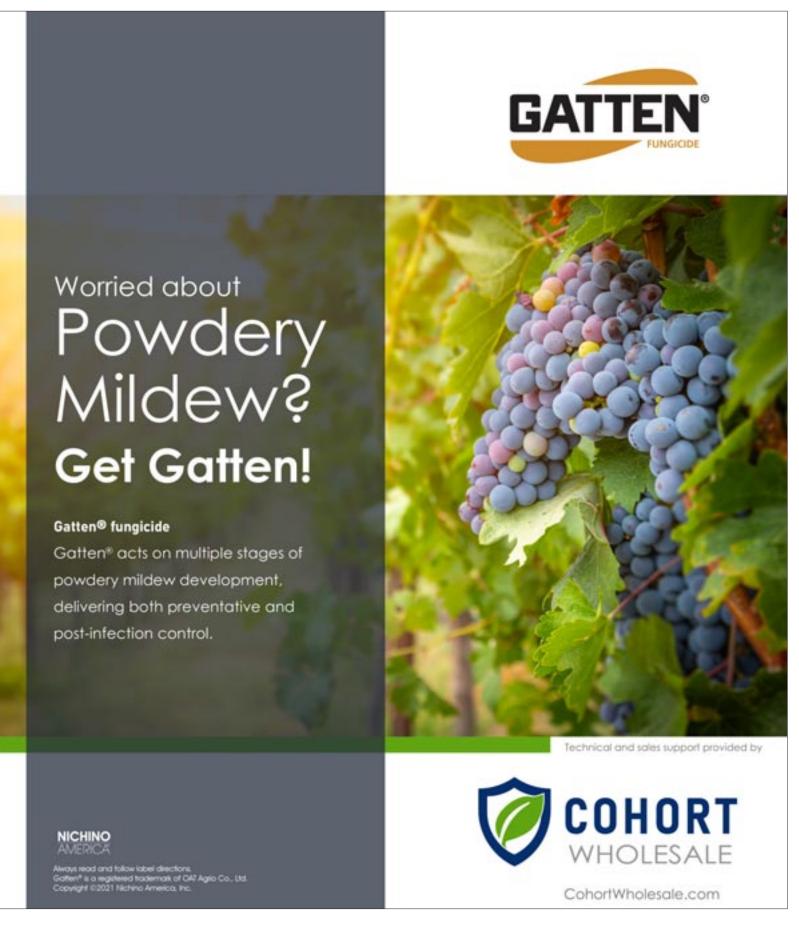
Gwillimdale came up with the Conscious Consumption program which diverts 20 per cent of edible food waste from landfills and is an environmentally sustainable, completely compostable product with no plastics. The Conscious Consumption line comes in a smaller five lb package, further contributing to the elimination of food waste in homes.

Conscious Consumption also offers consumers a cheaper alternative to fight food insecurity, while providing a health-conscious option.



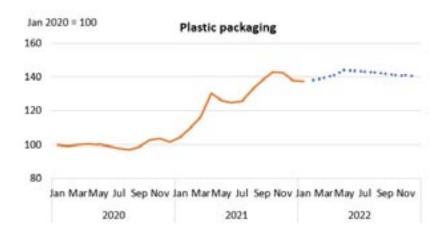


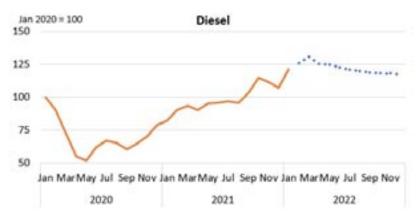
EarthFresh Foods is packaging high-quality potatoes in an appealing way that speaks to the food waste issue. "These are normally wasted because they don't fit regular size standards. Help us rescue these delicious spuds!"



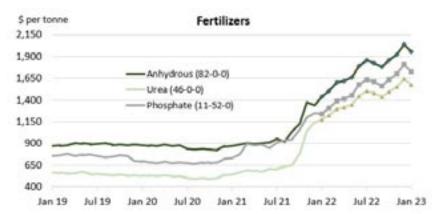
# **ONTARIO PROCESSING VEGETABLE GROWERS**

# Input costs are up, up and away





# Jan 2020 = 100 Wood containers and pallets 190 160 130 Jan MarMay Jul Sep Nov Jan MarMa



#### KAREN DAVIDSON

For the 327 Ontario processing vegetable growers who earned \$98 million in farmgate revenues in 2021, there was no surprise in the current economic trends laid out by JP Gervais, chief agricultural economist, Farm Credit Canada at their March 30 annual general meeting.

Tight supplies and very strong demand for all commodities, as Gervais outlined, have already been acknowledged in the 2022 negotiations with processors. All contracts are up by double digits. Sweet corn leads the way with a 36 per cent increase, with peas following with 34 per cent increase. Other crops: green and yellow wax beans (+27%); lima beans (+32%); cucumbers (+22); squash (+22%).

2022 contract prices for tomatoes and carrots are negotiated directly between growers and processors, and are kept confidential.

"These large increases are the result of unprecedented chal-

lenges from rising input costs and the costs of competing crops in all growing regions," reported Ron Van Damme, vice-chair, Ontario Processing Vegetable Growers (OPVG).

Gervais explains that the Russian invasion of Ukraine amplifies the volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity (VUCA) of global markets citing not only cash crops such as wheat but vegetable oils. In some business circles, the acronym VUCA now explains that overwhelming sense of seismic change.

Sweet corn, contracted by Bonduelle, is harvested near London, Ontario. Photo by Glenn Lowson.

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Supply chains are still not moving efficiently, Gervais says, pointing out that the Vancouver port is still congested. The war in Ukraine will further disrupt global patterns of trade, with three ports out of commission in the Black Sea.

Supply chain disruptions also affect inputs such as plastic packaging, wood containers and pallets, diesel fuel and fertilizer. The steep climb in prices for these basic inputs is detailed in the accompanying charts.

All of this to say that inflation is not a short-term problem. To tame Canadian inflation now pegged at 5.7 per cent, the Bank of Canada signalled another 0.5 basis point increase on April 13. And some financial markets are pricing in at least six more

increases before the end of 2022.

"I find these forecasts quite aggressive," Gervais commented. "But I do feel compelled to say never fight the market."

For Ontario farmers, there is both comfort and anxiety in rapidly rising farmland prices. Depending on whether you are a seller or a buyer, the increase of 22 per cent in Ontario farmland in 2021 is "quite unique in the magnitude of increase," says Gervais. "These increased values were seen right across the board in all regions. The diversity of buyers, including urban interest in farmland, has driven up prices."

For more in-depth analysis, go to www.fcc.ca/knowledge

Chart source: Statistics Canada; FCC computations

#### **MILESTONE**

# W.D. Potato Limited is celebrating 50 years

KAREN DAVIDSON

The immigrant success story is alive and well with Englishman, Walter Davidson arriving in Canada with \$15 of pocket money. Since 1956, he's parlayed his beginning as a farm labourer into a \$120 million family potato business near Beeton, Ontario. Some good luck has been in his sails along with his partnership with his wife Linda, his dedicated children Kim and Paul and grandchildren Amanda, John and Ryan.

Davidson started working at Crang Farms in the potato business in 1960 eventually becoming farm manager, renting the farm and eventually growing 150 acres of table stock potatoes. In 1970, Crang decided to move west, so Walter jumped at the opportunity to purchase the potato storage facility and the adjoining acreage. In 1972 he converted from table stock to the chip processing business and started contracting with other potato growers in eastern Canada, growing more volume.

Over many decades he has carved a niche, building a network of 45 processing chip and seed growers, increased storage and washing capabilities, a dedicated fleet of trucks and a reputation as Canada's largest supplier of chip potatoes.

In the last decade, Davidson shifted again to focus on food safety, sustainability and innovation issues. Documenting how these issues play out on the farm has been important in supplying Canadian-grown chip potatoes to customers.

The business has grown almost every year. "Today 50 per cent of our business goes to the United States," says Linda Davidson. "That represents about 80 loads per week."

Growth always comes with challenges. "Being in business for 50 years, you can say you've seen everything that could happen, but then the pandemic hit and we've had to dig deep and use our expertise and network to trudge through the constant unknowns and deliver," says Walter Davidson.

Recent potato negotiations were one of the most difficult he can remember. "A 15 to 20 per cent increase in price -- that's the biggest increase ever, but it's still not enough to cover the inflation seen on fertilizer and other inputs," he says.

Besides the usual hurdles with Mother Nature, Davidson is sizing up the future of the potato business in general. "We're running out of land to grow potatoes," he warns. "I don't understand the land use planning where good agricultural land is

being planted to houses."

To future proof the business W.D. has been working to build sustainability further into the supply chain. In 2020, efforts were made to bring new seed potato operations closer to the company's commercial growers saving cost and improving quality.

A 50th anniversary is always cause for reflection, and this year is no exception. Davidson compliments his family, employees and grower cooperators for helping to bring the business to where it is today. He and his wife Linda look forward to their family carrying it on.

"My word is gospel," says Walter. "I've always delivered on my promises."

Kevin Brubacher, general manager of the Ontario Potato



Three generations of the Davidson family are pictured at their farm gate near Beeton, Ontario.

Board, has the last word. "WD has played a vital role in the success of Ontario potato growers

over the last 50 years. We are proud to have Walter and Linda as business partners, and

furthermore, as friends."



# CHAIR'S PERSPECTIVE

# The importance of following the science



**CHARLES STEVENS** CHAIR, OFVGA

In the agriculture sector, we often talk about the importance of science-based decision-making. And we quickly get frustrated when policymakers, thought leaders and influencers make decisions or express opinions that have more in common with misinformation than with science.

We point to the often-shared fact that less than two per cent of Canadians feed the other 98 per cent and that most people are

now several generations removed from the farm and therefore have little understanding of agriculture and where our food comes from.

It's a situation we've had to come to live with over the last several decades as farmers. The result is that agriculture is often collateral damage when new policy or legislation is enacted to solve a problem or address an issue in one sector or another. In fact, we've used other columns in this paper to explain the need for governments collectively to prioritize domestic food production so that it's a prime consideration in all policy and regulatory decisions made.

Generally speaking, though, while the lack of understanding of basic science as it relates to growing crops and raising livestock has been inconvenient in the past, it will be impacting our farms and farm businesses more starkly in the years to come. The federal government's approach to climate change is the most prominent and recent example. Let me be clear: we know that

climate change is real, and we know that collectively, we all need to take action so that our children and grandchildren will be able to enjoy sustainable futures.

But that action needs to be driven by science, and not political rhetoric or misguided activism. Much of the narrative around climate change and climate change mitigation currently focuses on carbon and reducing carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. So much so, in fact, that for some people, carbon dioxide has become synonymous with a pollutant that must be eliminated - and yet carbon dioxide is an absolutely essential part of growing crops. Whether directly or indirectly, all of our food comes from plants. The process of photosynthesis relies heavily on carbon in the atmosphere.

Another basic pillar of science is that for every action there is a reaction. Governments want food sustainability, a reduction of carbon in the atmosphere and an affordable food supply. This last

point is particularly critical currently as we are starting to deal with rising inflation rates for the first time in decades.

As growers, we excel at producing food. And more than most Canadians, we are in tune with weather and the environment on a daily - if not hourly -basis as they directly impact our businesses every single day. However, we must also be profitable and competitive so that we can keep those businesses

In politics, easy solutions that yield quick results are often the name of the game. That approach isn't going to work in this case. I strongly believe we will have a food production and food security problem if we do not take a balanced approach to solving the big problems that lie before us all, especially relating to the environment and climate change.

That brings me back to the core position of the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association (OFVGA): we need to follow the science when it

comes to policy impacting food production, whether it's land-use, labour or environment.

The OFVGA has long been at its core a lobby organization. We work to understand the needs of growers and our sector, and we advocate with government for change to meet those needs. Over the last several years, though, we've come to realize that we also need to be taking our messaging to the broader public. Public policy so often is driven by public opinion, so we need to make sure that we are part of the discussions that are influencing the decisions that will impact how we do

This began with the launch of the More than a Migrant Worker campaign last year, and as that work has been gaining traction, we are looking ahead to expand the scope of our proactive outreach to include other issues where people can make better decisions with better information.

# **WEATHER VANE**



Here' a teaching moment. At this time of year, the orchards are alive with the soft buzz of honeybees. If you're asked about reports of overwintering bee losses, here's some context from beekeeper Hugh Simpson: The beekeeper demographic is diverse in experience and protocols. Loss-reporting disciplines are mixed and while risks are myriad, we commercial guys know it's about varroa mite management." These healthy honeybees were photographed in sour cherries at Schuyler Orchards near Simcoe, Ontario. Photo by Glenn Lowson.

# STAFF

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**The Grower** is printed 12 times a year and sent to all members of the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association who have paid \$30.00 (plus G.S.T.) per year for the paper through their commodity group or container fees. Others may subscribe as follows by writing to the office:

#### \$30.00 (+ HST) /year in Canada \$40.00/year International

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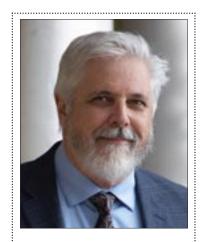
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#### **URBAN COWBOY**

# New study shows growers can take heart over public trust



**OWEN ROBERTS** 

Fruit and vegetable growers have more than their fair share of challenges, but new research suggests public trust isn't one of them. The public is not only behind growers, it's making changes to its consumption habits in ways that speak highly of the sector's efforts to promote sustainability and food security.

Consider these findings from Grassroots Public Affairs, a Toronto-based government relations and research consultancy that has funded its own research into Canadians' perspectives on agriculture and food for the past four years. Its most recent study, based on a survey of 1,000 Canadians at the end of March, shows respondents consider fruit and vegetables as most deserving and highest prioritization of government support of any sector in agriculture.

And that's good information to have at hand as we look ahead to what could be another difficult growing season and consider areas that could benefit from government support – labour, housing, transportation, inputs and marketing, among them. The government needs to know Canadians are behind fruit and vegetable growers when it's considering support. Through the Grassroots study, the public has spoken.

Farmers in general fared very well in the study. People continue to put their trust in farmers and agricultural institutions, with 86 per cent saying they have a fair amount or a great deal of trust in them. That's as high as the other top-rated group, researchers. Health Canada is only a percentage point behind.

I believe statistics like that underline why it's also vital that those groups continue investing in public-facing communications. Producers earn some degree of trust from the likes of farmers' markets and farm visits. But the vast majority of the public gets behind agriculture based on what it sees and hears in social and conventional media from farm groups, commodity groups, universities and governments. All those stories, news releases, commentaries, podcasts, videos and social media posts are helping build public trust. And once that trust is gained, you can never take

your foot off the gas.

Finally, among the many other noteworthy findings in this top-drawer study from Grassroots is consumers' heightened understanding of what food sustainability means in their own homes. The poll shows rising prices have prompted people to take stock of how much food they're wasting -- and better yet, to do something about it.

We know from other research that well-intentioned consumers buy way too much produce, when indeed they will consume only a portion of it and discard the rest. But the Grassroots survey shows that waning. Almost half of the survey respondents said they are purchasing smaller volumes of food – that's a 25 per cent increase in just two years.

And there's been a one-third increase in the number of people who have shopped for discount or lower-food options. That's where they'll find the likes of perfectly good imperfect produce. In this case, they can cut back their food bill but still have access to nutritious food that isn't



processed to the hilt.

There's still work to do. Even though public trust in farmers is high, agriculture itself takes a whipping in the Grassroots study. While about a quarter of respondents said they believe modern agricultural practices are less harmful to the environment than those in the past, almost the same number consider these practices more harmful. That's a stalemate that casts a pall on research, which is largely responsible for modern agricultural practices that promote environmental and economic sustainability.

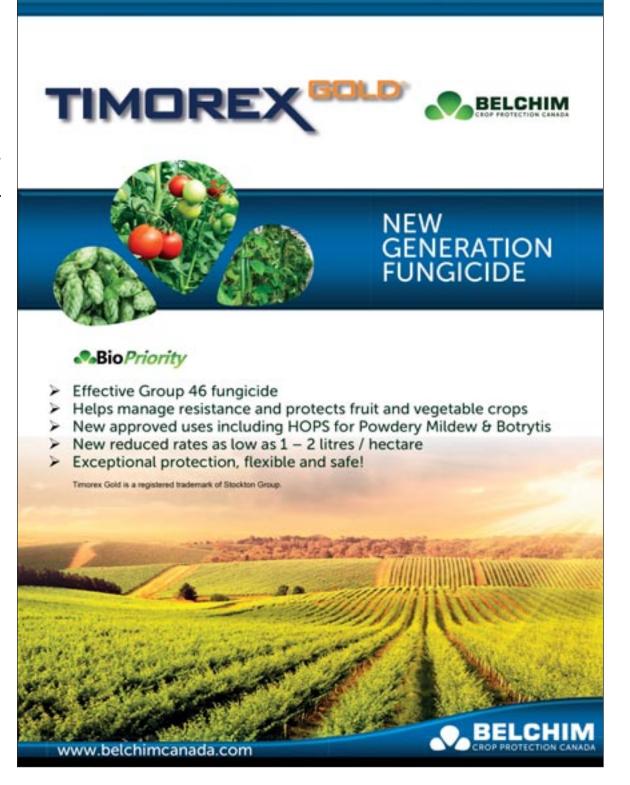
But overall, the Grassroots findings are overwhelmingly positive. "Multiple years of thorough research has reinforced Grassroots Public Affairs strong belief in the growth potential of Canada's domestic food system," says the company. Indeed, these study results should be elevator speech- and coffee-shop material for the entire fruit and vegetable sector.

Owen Roberts is a past-president of the International Federation of Agricultural Journalists and a communications instructor at the University of Illinois.



Michiel Buijsse @845SpudFarms · 24m New round, new chances. #windsucks





### **FARM & FOOD CARE**

# Farm and Food Care Ontario funded for public trust initiatives



#### AMBER ANDERSON

On April 13, famers, processors and agriculture business representatives gathered in in Elora for the first time since 2019 to participate in Farm & Food Care Ontario's (FFCO) 2022 annual conference.

FFCO received a boost from OMAFRA Minister Lisa

Thompson who announced a funding agreement of up to \$547,200 to FFCO outreach initiatives over the next three

The new funding will be put towards supporting five of the organization's activities, all designed to raise awareness and appreciation of Ontario farmers and food producers. The funding will support:

- Interviews, photography and videography showcasing seasonal agricultural workers and temporary foreign workers in Ontario for the More than a Migrant Worker initiative;
- FFCO's Breakfast on/from the Farm events which provide a unique and personal experience for non-farming Ontarians to visit and explore agriculture with working farmers each year;

 Farm tours for culinary students which allow them to learn about raising livestock and horticultural products they prepare in the

- The Garden in a Box program that connects home gardeners with Ontario farmers;
- Numerous digital consumer outreach activities including virtual field trips highlighting the diversity of farms and food processing facilities to consumers.

"Ensuring Ontarians have the facts on where their food comes from, how it grows, and how it is made is key to growing the next generation of leaders for Ontario's agri-food sector," said Lisa Thompson, Minister of

Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. "This important investment will empower Farm and Food Care Ontario to deliver these critical programs."

As a registered charity, Farm & Food Care Ontario funding largely comes from farmers, farm organizations, agribusinesses and others through memberships and program partnerships. The funding is the first Farm & Food Care has received from the provincial government for public trust work and will support these initiatives until 2025.

Amber Anderson is communications manager, Farm & Food Care Ontario.

# **COMING EVENTS 2022**

May 10 CPMA and FVGC Farm to Plate Event, Parliament Hill, Ottawa, ON

May 11 Census of Agriculture results

May 30-June 2 11th World Potato Congress, Ireland

Dispute Resolution Corporation Annual General June 2 Meeting

June 12 Ontario Agricultural Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony, Grand River Raceway, Elora, ON

July 7 Potato Growers of Alberta Golf Tournament, Taber, AB

July 17-20 International Fruit Tree Association 2022 Summer Tour, Richland, WA

July 17-21 Potato Association of America, Holiday Inn Downtown, Missoula, MT

July 17-21 International Cool Climate Wine Symposium, St. Catharines, ON

July ??? FPT ag ministers meeting, SK

Aug 18 The Ontario Potato Field Day, HJV Equipment, Alliston, ON

Sept 13-15 Canada's Outdoor Farm Show, Woodstock, ON

Sept 29-Oct 1 Canadian Farm Writers Federation Conference, Saskatoon, SK

Oct 3-9 Ontario Agriculture Week

Oct 5-6 Canadian Greenhouse Conference, Niagara Falls,

Oct 18-20 World Ag Robotics Forum, Fresno, CA

Nov 2-4 Grow Our People Summit, Sheraton Fallsview, Niagara Falls, ON

Nov 2-4 Asia Fruit Logistica, Bangkok, Thailand

Nov 4-13 Royal Agricultural Winter Fair, Toronto, ON

Nov 5 Canadian Agricultural Hall of Fame induction ceremony, Liberty Grand, Toronto, ON

Nov 15-17 Alberta Potato Conference and Trade Show, Cambridge Hotel and Conference Centre, Red Deer, AB



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# Industry code of conduct still on the table



PETER CHAPMAN

Every stakeholder in the Canadian food and beverage industry should be aware of the conversations related to an industry code of conduct. The final decision will impact everyone in the value chain.

We know the relationship between suppliers and retailers is stressful and can lead to both parties losing focus on the ultimate goals, which should be to keep consumers happy and sell more products, at a reasonable profit. In any sector where the total market is more than \$100 billion and five companies control access to +/-90 per cent of the market, there will be issues.

# Loblaw Hostess issue increased the awareness

Animosity between retailers and suppliers is not new. The February 2022 decision by Hostess Frito Lay to stop shipping to Loblaw was covered by most national media outlets. Consumers were more aware of this industry issue as they did see it in the media and it had an impact at retail. Loblaw banners, including Shoppers Drug Mart, had empty chip aisles for a few days then the space was filled with President's Choice, No Name and some regional suppliers.

It would have been very interesting to understand the real issue that led to Hostess making the decision to stop shipping. Many surmise it was a proposed cost increase that Loblaw felt was too big. From my perspective, there might be more to the issue. If Loblaw really did draw a line in the sand about a cost increase, my conclusion would be Loblaw felt another retailer was being treated differently. It is always a challenge to rationalize costs and the direct store delivery model, used by Hostess, makes it even more difficult.

In most cost of goods negotiations, retailers' first goal is to ensure they are being treated fairly in the marketplace. If retailers believe their competition is getting a lower price or a better price, relative to the product/ service provided, they will take a

One consideration is that the

Canadian-based retailers are dwarfed by Walmart and Costco, when you examine their total business. Delving into 2020 financial results, I see that Walmart sales are 14 times the size of Loblaw Companies and almost 26 times Sobeys parent, Empire. When you consider the amount of product Hostess is selling to Walmart, relative to Loblaw or Sobeys, there is a big difference. Perhaps there is some form of volume discount that Hostess could justify and Loblaw could not. We will never know, but one learning for all suppliers is to consider a level playing field. You do not have to justify it to your customers but you should be able to justify it in the mirror. Many suppliers in the Canadian industry were cheering for Hostess. They were excited to see a supplier stand up to a retailer. It is a lot easier for a global business, such as Hostess parent company PepsiCo, to take a stand in the Canadian market. Hostess sales to Loblaw are likely a rounding error on the PepsiCo financial results. They can afford to take a stand. The issue is not the same for Canadian producers who sell 40-50 per cent of their crop to Loblaw.

The issue has been resolved and Hostess chips are back on Loblaw shelves. We will never know the details, but after close to two months of near-empty shelves, they were able to find common ground and get back to servicing consumers. Another fact we will never know is how much impact it had on either company. Hostess would get a great lesson on the power of their brand. Did consumers cross the street from Loblaw to buy their chips? Loblaw would also learn about consumer behaviour in terms of how many consumers were willing to stay in the category but trade away from the leading national brand.

# Is change on the horizon?

We know an industry working group composed of associations representing retailers and suppliers are trying to find a solution. They did provide an update at the end of March to illustrate they are having discussions about the various issues. There was no definitive agreement but the indication is progress is being made and all parties such as Retail Council of Canada (retailers), Food Health and Consumer Products (large consumer packaged goods companies), Canadian Produce Marketing Association and other sector representatives signed the update.

It is a huge challenge to find a solution that will be acceptable to retailers, large multi-national consumer packaged goods companies (like PepsiCo) and small Canadian producers and proces-

sors. Unfortunately, the larger companies will have the loudest voice and they probably need the code of conduct the least. They have more leverage than the small grower with their sales divided between one or two Canadian retailers. We can hope those at the table remember the different constituents they represent.

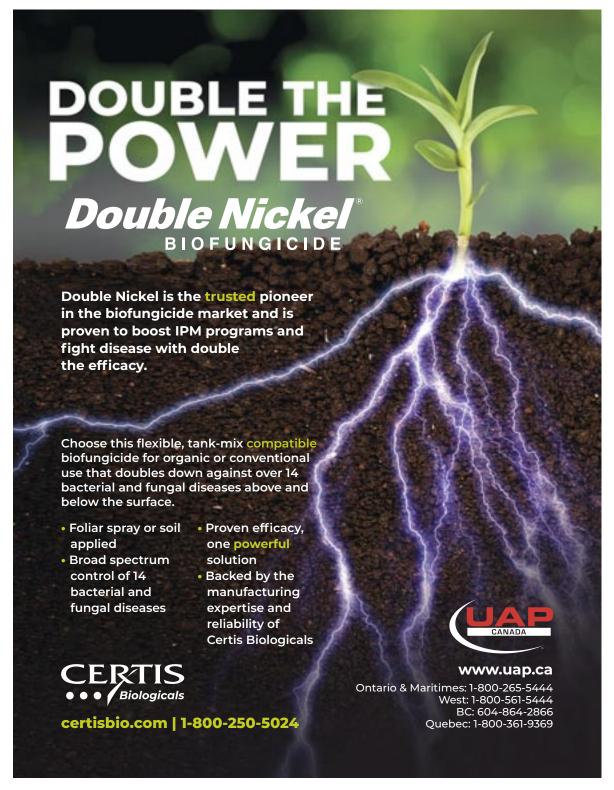
The most contentious issues for suppliers are arbitrary fee increases imposed by retailers, compliance fines and the perception they are penalized if they do not come to the table with over and above money. I do believe we will see some more structure to the agreements between retailers and suppliers where the fees and fines will only be introduced or changed at the point of a new negotiation. There are many challenges to proving a supplier is being penalized unfairly. The most contentious issues for retailers are cost of goods increases, service level performance and the level playing field I referenced earlier. Service level is relatively easy to quantify -- agree on targets that can determine how to assess performance. Cost of goods and a level playing field are more



difficult to manage without sharing confidential information. One practice that was used in the U.K. was the open book relationship. Producers and retailers would agree on a profit percentage for the producer and at the end of the year they would share the books and the retailer would pay the profit percentage. This seemed to alleviate some of the mistrust and allow both parties to focus on producing and selling quality product.

With all of the major sectors represented at the table, I do believe we will see some change. Industry would prefer to find a solution as opposed to having it legislated or mandated. The pandemic has reinforced the necessity of a viable sustainable food industry in Canada. That will require suppliers and retailers working better together.

We have lost the level of trust we need. It will always be a negotiation. Both suppliers and retailers will believe the other side is making too much or not bearing enough risk. We need to find the common ground where we can focus on the consumer and increase the trust in relationships. A reliable and fair third-party method of resolving disputes would go a long way to improving the situation.



### **FOCUS: IRRIGATION & WATER MANAGEMENT**

# St. Mary's River Irrigation District now has 500,000 acres under management





Sauder Chute spillway pictured in fall 2021. Photos courtesy of St. Mary's River Irrigation District.

"

I'm pretty excited about agriculture. We're blessed to have good temperatures and water.

~ MIKE WIND

77

# KAREN DAVIDSON

Picture an area between Lethbridge and Medicine Hat, Alberta, south of the Oldman and South Saskatchewan rivers. This region is home to Canada's largest irrigation district, one that's on the verge of getting even bigger with the amalgamation of the St. Mary's River Irrigation

District (SMRID) and Taber Irrigation District (TID) to create 500,000 acres under water management.

The two districts are waiting for a ministerial order from the Alberta Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Economic Minister Nate Horner to officially amalgamate and begin operating as one district under the umbrella name, St. Mary's River Irrigation District.

The history-making agreement may be in place as soon as the 2022 growing season and no one could be happier than Mike Wind, chair of the Taber Irrigation District. He'll lose his chair's position but gain a seat as a director of the new entity.

"The largest benefit is that rather than do projects individually, we can make the jobs more feasible and complete them faster," says Wind. "Rather than schedule a four-year completion date, we can do it in one shot. It will also be easier to decide who owns the water storages and how water will be distributed."

Going into the 2022 season, water rates are pegged at \$23/acre, the same for SMRID growers but slightly lower for TID growers from a year ago. The annual allocation of 16 inches at the farmgate remains intact. Water usually starts to flow the first week of May. That will be good news for potato growers who have close to 20,000 acres under pivot in the SMRID.

In total, there will be 15 reservoirs totalling 373,010 acre feet of live storage. The SMRID will comprise 1,231.8 kilometres of pipeline and 940.7 kilometres of open canals. All water users are invited to sign up for a new web app: WaterMaster. This is an irrigation water ordering management system, that also includes real time data, up-to-date ordering history and advance notification of scheduled shut downs from a member's phone or computer.

To delve into what these developments mean, Mike Wind shares his own Windiana Farms' history near Taber where he farms with his two sons. About five years ago, Wind started growing 320 acres of sweet peas for Bonduelle's processing plant in Lethbridge. (In his terms three pivot irrigation circles). It's a nitrogen-fixing crop, but it's also good for the rotation of potatoes, seed canola, timothy and wheat for the farm.

"It's always about rotation, rotation, rotation," says Wind. "We never follow a grain crop with another grain crop. The impact of the irrigation

development is that we can keep up with rotation and add new acreage."

Windiana Farms has 1,000 acres of potatoes under irrigation, mostly in chipping varieties. The opening of a new Super-Pufft Snacks plant in Airdrie, Alberta is encouraging growth.

Wind adds, "I'm pretty excited about agriculture. We're blessed to have good temperatures and water. The opportunities are tremendous. Nothing is more encouraging than having my two sons active on the farm."

His optimism is bolstered by the statistics recorded from the Rocky Mountain snow pack. David Westwood, general manager, SMRID, explains, "There are three strategic locations in the Rocky Mountains which feed our snowmelt. "With the measurements above the upper quartile, it's looking very good (for 2022.)."

Going forward, the St. Mary's River Irrigation District will be the geographic focus of 26 modernization plans plus four from the Taber district for a total of \$192 million. Savings are expected in the range of 40,000-acre feet of water through reduced seepage, evaporation and spill.

The combined districts are participating in the planned Chin reservoir expansion along with the Raymond Irrigation District. This expansion will generate between 75,000 and 100,000 acre feet of additional storage. The Chin reservoir is budgeted at \$133 million.

These transformational changes are cementing a future for valued-added agriculture. Several plants compete for potatoes. Three fry plants include Lamb Weston, McCain Foods and Cavendish Farms. Three chip plants comprise Pepsico Frito-Lay, Old Dutch and now Super-Pufft.





# For more information contact:

Phone: 416-783-3737

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Web: twistyer.com

#### THE GROWER

# **FOCUS: IRRIGATION & WATER MANAGEMENT**

# Wire clips are the faster way to install drip tubing

KAREN DAVIDSON

One of the innovations on display at this year's Ontario Fruit & Vegetable Convention was the Agrifast wire drip tube clip system. As Mike Sowden, Vanden Bussche Irrigation explained, "It's almost as quick as using a staple gun."

This tool and clips are recommended for orchard and vineyard drip tubing. The operator loads the sleeve of 36 20-gauge galvanized clips into the holder and then with a comfortable grip and low-pressure motion, the clip is clamped onto the tube (see picture).

"The unit clip cost is comparable to zip ties or plastic clips," says Bill Divitcoff,
Twistyer sales representative.
"Even better, the installation time is reduced by 30 per cent or more."

The Agrifast clips are galvanized to prevent corrosion. As Divitcoff explains, when the trellis wire and the clip are both galvanized there is no reduction in the rust protection at the point of contact.

The operator can benefit from

immediate savings in installation labour costs compared to zip ties and various styles of plastic clips. There's no wasted time in picking up dropped ties. You can't over-tighten the wire clip as you can with a zip tie that potentially damages the drip tube.

The longer term bonus is the return on investment over the life of the clip. The wire clip will outlast plastic or nylon clips in the field by years. Chemical sprays do not affect longevity. Once installed, the clip will not slide along the tube or trellis wire; it stays put helping maintain the life of the drip tubing. Mechanical harvesting or high winds will not dislodge the clip preventing damage and contributing to the life of the drip tubing. If wanted, the clips can be removed with a basic hose clamp plier; no cutting is required as with a zip tie.

The Agrifast wire drip tube clip system from Twistyer Products Inc. is available through Vanden Bussche Irrigation headquartered in Delhi, Ontario. For more information contact Bill at 416 783 3737 or email divitcoff@twistyer.com.



The unit clip cost is comparable to zip ties or plastic clips. Even better, the installation time is reduced by 30 per cent or more.

~ BILL DIVITCOFF

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### **FOCUS: IRRIGATION & WATER MANAGEMENT**

# Water on, water off is the new strategy under extreme weather events

KAREN DAVIDSON

Extreme weather in recent years has driven Doug Van Luyk to invest in more equipment for tiling, subsoiling and irrigating.

"We're getting five-inch rains

now," says the Holland Marsh onion and carrot grower near Newmarket, Ontario. "For the last five years, I've lost 15 to 20 per cent of my crop. And fortunately, I've carried crop insurance and been able to make a claim. The weather was never that extreme in the previous decade."

To help manage the weather risks, he's now operating under a "water on, water off" strategy. He has invested in four center-pivot irrigation systems, each of which can irrigate 330 acres. More



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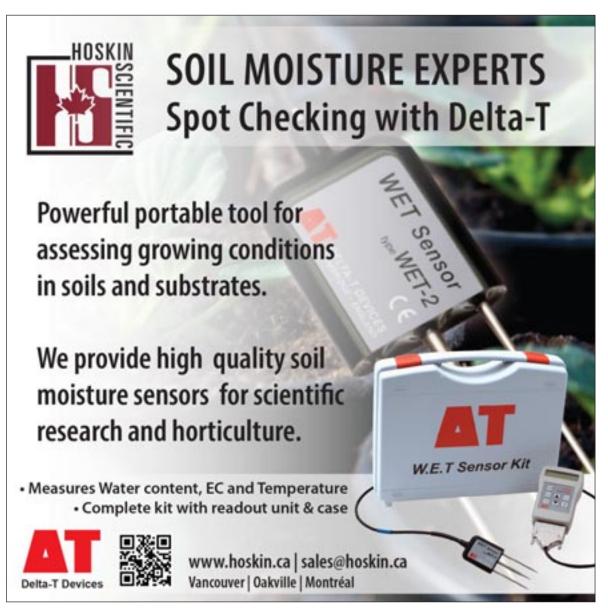
common with potatoes, these systems are a game-changer for carrots in terms of savings in both labour and fuel.

His family team is happy not to be moving pipe. And the center pivot system requires 20 per cent of the diesel fuel compared to other systems. That's a big consideration given that the carbon tax added another 11 cents/litre of fuel this spring.

Perhaps the biggest saving is that the irrigation system can be managed from a cell phone. "We're putting on less water, more often," he says. "And that decision is made based on experience."

In the Holland Marsh, growers have witnessed such extremes that they have pumped water off their fields, only to have to irrigate within a few short days or weeks. That's why Van Luyk is tiling 70 acres every year to improve drainage and using sub-soiling equipment.

# Phosphorus recycling plant to be built in Holland Marsh





The Ontario government has committed \$24 million over the next three years for the Holland Marsh Phosphorus Recycling Facility.

The proposed facility will reduce phosphorus runoff from the Holland Marsh basin into the Holland River and Lake Simcoe by up to 85 per cent, removing an estimated 10 tonnes per year.

"The Holland Marsh Growers' Association commends the Ontario government for their investment in the reduction of phosphorus in Lake Simcoe," said Quinton Woods, chair of the Holland Marsh Growers. "For over a decade the agriculture producers in the Holland Marsh have been working to reduce their impact. We are thankful the Ontario Government is finally taking the phosphorus issue in Lake Simcoe as seriously as our growers have been."

According to the Ontario Government's Lake Simcoe Protection Plan, released in 2009, the goal is to have Lake Simcoe's phosphorus pollution reduced by 50 per cent to 44 tonnes a year, which is needed to protect the cold-water fishery and to prevent excessive weed growth and algae blooms.

# Diverting spent greenhouse growing media away from landfill into sustainable solutions

Ontario research is showing promising results in diverting thousands of tonnes of greenhouse vegetable production waste from landfills. Walker Industries (Walker) has partnered with Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers (OGVG) to evaluate the feasibility of collecting and recycling spent growing media from growers in the Leamington/Kingsville area.

Funded in part through the Greenhouse Competitiveness and Innovation Initiative (GCII) administered by the Agricultural Adaptation Council (AAC), the research also involves testing Walker's composting process to determine whether it can successfully inactivate certain viruses such as the Tomato Brown Rugose Fruit Virus (ToBRFV). This is a highly destructive plant pathogen that can cause severe production losses in affected crops; it has spread to all the major greenhouse tomato growing regions of the world.

Stonewool (also referred to as rockwool) is one of the main substrates used by greenhouse vegetable growers in Canada to grow their crops. A mineral-based product spun into wool and enclosed in plastic, it provides structure for the roots of plants grown hydroponically (without soil). At the end of its life cycle, most stonewool "slabs" currently end up in landfill, as do traditionally compostable materials such as pepper and tomato vines to prevent the spread of ToBRFV.

"The goal is to eliminate the disposal of the spent growing media slabs and instead turn that waste into usable products," says Geoff Boyd, vice president of Resource Recovery at Walker. "At the same time, we want to make sure that we can compost this material properly and effectively destroy any plant viruses, so we don't inadvertently spread them

The research team is conducting trials to separate the plastic that surrounds the stonewool slabs and to process the remaining material into a clean and usable product that is free of plastic contamination. The processed stonewool is then composted in Walker's static aerated composting system. Prior to placement in the compost row, the infected material is secured in a specifically formulated vessel that allows the heat and air to pass through but prevents the stonewool from coming into contact with the other material in the compost row.

After the compost process is completed, a bioassay is used to determine if composting was effective in deactivating the virus. Samples of tomato tissue from the bioassay are sent to a testing

lab to detect for the presence or absence of the virus.

"So far, the results are positive on the processing," says Boyd. "We are now waiting on lab results from the bioassay tissue samples." Hopes are to wrap up the project by fall 2022.

Once it is proven that composting successfully deactivates ToBRFV, the next step is to determine the best application for the finished composted product. To ultimately

be successful, such a recycling and waste reduction venture must be cost competitive to some degree with traditional landfill disposal for it to make sense for greenhouse growers, but he's hopeful that will be achieved.

"Keeping waste out of landfill is incredibly important and successful project results could provide a solution to help greenhouse growers increase the sustainability and competitiveness of their operations," says AAC



chair Doug Alexander. "This project is an excellent example of a collaboration between growers and a business to trial innovative solutions that will contribute to long-term sustainability of the sector."

According to Boyd, the GCII funding was invaluable to help Walker, a company that normally deals in food and yard waste, get this project off the ground in a meaningful way and conduct extensive trials and testing that wouldn't otherwise have been possible.

Source: Agricultural Adaptation Council April 4, 2022



# Increase your family's food literacy skills this spring with Six by Sixteen

Spring marks the beginning of another growing season as Ontario farmers work hard to plant and nurture over 200 commodities that will eventually make their way from the fields to your forks.

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You can find the farmers and growers in your community that sell directly to the public on your county's Buy Local Map or by visiting farmersmarketsontario.com.

Need recipes? Our website sixbysixteen.me has a bounty of locally sourced recipes, youth activities, a downloadable recipe guide and much more.

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#### THE GROWER

# **Funding available to continue** testing herbicide-resistant weeds

Agricultural Information Contact Centre: 1-877-424-1300 ontario.ca/crops

# **Ontario Berry Grower**

Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs

# Ontario 👸



**Table 1: Available Genetic Tests** 

| Weed Species Group(s) (provided |    | Common Herbicide Trade Name(s)<br>(provided ONLY as example herbicides<br>commonly used in horticulture) | Target Site Mutation / Metabolic / Species<br>Identification |  |
|---------------------------------|----|--|--|--|
| Amaranthus species              | -  | -  | Species Identification                                       |  |
| Brassica species                | -  | -  | Species Identification                                       |  |
| Brassica species                | 9  | Glyphosate   | Presence of transgene  |  |
| Canada fleabane                 | 9  | Glyphosate   | Target-site (P106S)  |  |
| Common chickweed                | 2  | Pinnacle, Prism, Pursuit, Sandea   | Target-site (P197Q & unpublished)                            |  |
| Common ragweed                  | 2  | Pinnacle, Prism, Pursuit, Sandea   | Target-site (W574L)  |  |
|                                 | 5  | Atrazine, Sencor, Simazine, Sinbar   | Target-site (V219I)  |  |
|                                 | 7  | Lorox  | Target-site (V219I)  |  |
|                                 | 9  | Glyphosate   | Target-site (P106S)  |  |
| Eastern black<br>nightshade     | 2  | Pinnacle, Prism, Pursuit, Sandea   | Target-site (A205V)  |  |
| Giant foxtail                   | 2  | Pinnacle, Prism, Pursuit, Sandea   | Target-site (unpublished)                                    |  |
| Giant ragweed                   | 2  | Pinnacle, Prism, Pursuit, Sandea   | Target-site (W574L)  |  |
|                                 | 5  | Atrazine, Sencor, Simazine, Sinbar   | Target-site (V219I)  |  |
|                                 | 7  | Lorox  | Target-site (V219I)  |  |
| Green foxtail                   | 2  | Pinnacle, Prism, Pursuit, Sandea   | Target-site (unpublished)                                    |  |
| Green pigweed                   | 2  | Pinnacle, Prism, Pursuit, Sandea   | Target-site (S653N & W574L)                                  |  |
|                                 | 5  | Atrazine, Sencor, Simazine, Sinbar   | Target-site (A251V, S264G, V219l & F274L)                    |  |
|                                 | 7  | Lorox  | Target-site (A251V, V219l & F274L)                           |  |
|                                 | 14 | Aim, Authority*, Chateau*, Goal, Reflex*   | Target-site (ΔG210 in PPX2L)                                 |  |
| Italian ryegrass                | 9  | Glyphosate   | Target-site (P106S)  |  |
| Lamb's-quarters                 | 5  | Atrazine, Sencor, Simazine, Sinbar   | Target-site (S264G)  |  |
| Large crabgrass                 | 1  | Assure, Poast Ultra, Select, Venture   | Metabolic: ACCase gene amplification                         |  |
| Redroot pigweed                 | 2  | Pinnacle, Prism, Pursuit, Sandea   | Target-site (S653N & W574L)                                  |  |
|                                 | 5  | Atrazine, Sencor, Simazine, Sinbar   | Target-site (A251V, S264G, V2191 & F274L)                    |  |
|                                 | 7  | Lorox  | Target-site (A251V, V219l & F274L)                           |  |
| Waterhemp                       | 2  | Pinnacle, Prism, Pursuit, Sandea   | Target-site (S653N & W574L)                                  |  |
|                                 | 5  | Atrazine, Sencor, Simazine, Sinbar   | Target-site (A251V, S264G, V2191 & F274L)                    |  |
|                                 | 9  | Glyphosate   | Metabolic: EPSPS gene amplification                          |  |
|                                 | 14 | Aim, Authority*, Chateau*, Goal, Reflex*   | Target-site (ΔG210 in PPX2L)                                 |  |

Several of these tests were developed by other researchers and reproduced from the scientific literature. \*Soil applied/preemergence herbicides are still effective against Group 14 resistant species because they prevent the weed from germinating or kill the weed as it germinates. However, much more research is required in this area

# KRISTEN OBEID

Funding is available for producers, agri-business, consultants and extension personnel to submit weed samples to be tested for herbicide resistance again this year. Sample collection kits with sampling procedures can be obtained from kristen.obeid@ontario.ca. These tests only require a small amount of leaf tissue from the suspected resistant weeds. DNA is extracted from the leaf tissue to determine if there is a molecular change where the herbicide acts to kill the weed, making the weed

There are 19 molecular tests (more in progress) to assist Harvest Genomics www.harvestgenomics.ca

in identifying herbicide resistance in 14 weed species. Tests are also available to differentiate between Brassica (mustard) and Amaranthus (pigweed) species. Tests differentiating pigweed species have been instrumental in confirming new cases of waterhemp in Ontario, Manitoba and Quebec. Once confirmed, the waterhemp is tested for Groups 2, 5, 7, 9 and 14 resistances.

#### Results:

- 1. 121 new cases of herbicide resistance in Ontario crops since 2016.
- 2. New tests developed in 2021 for:
- a. Groups 2, 5 and 7 resistant giant ragweed
- b. Group 9 resistant Italian ryegrass
- c. Group 9 resistant common ragweed
- d. Group 14 resistant green pigweed
- 3. New mutation conferring resistance to Groups 5 and 7 was found in green pigweed.
- 4. Continued increase in the number of fields with multiple resistant weed species:
- a. Common ragweed resistant to herbicide Groups 2 and 5 in pumpkins and 2, 5 and 7 in soybeans and sunflowers.
- b. Redroot and green pigweed resistant to herbicide groups 2 and 5 in tomatoes.
- c. Redroot and green pigweed resistant to herbicide
- Groups 5 and 7 in carrots and potatoes. d. Waterhemp resistant to herbicide Groups 2, 5, 9 and 14 in asparagus, peppers, corn, soybeans and white beans.
- 5. Continued increase in the number of horticulture crops with glyphosate (Group 9) resistant Canada fleabane (apples, blueberries, carrots, grapes, onions, pumpkins and strawberries).

This testing has been instrumental in documenting new cases of herbicide-resistant weeds. In 2021, 96 per cent of the fields tested in Ontario were resistant to at least one herbicide group. These tests deliver a result and recommendation to the producer within the same growing season, sometimes in as little as five days.

Traditional resistance testing in the greenhouse can take from three months to a year to get results. Once confirmed producers were provided the resistance profile enabling a change in management to help prevent spread. Participants were pleased with the timely results, welcomed the in-season management recommendations, and highly valued this service.

There are many more undocumented cases of herbicide-resistant weeds in Canada. The resistance mechanism is unknown for most of them. The major concern is their distribution and economic impact for producers. Knowing where resistant biotypes are located will improve management and maintain the longevity of our crop protection tools.

Contact Kristen Obeid for sample collection kits, sampling procedures and how to submit samples to



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#### **BITS & BITES**

# **Canadian ag workforce strategy has five pillars**

"

Workforce issues in primary agriculture and food manufacturing are critical and need to be addressed urgently.

~ JENNIFER WRIGHT



THE GROWER

National
Workforce
Strategy for
Agriculture and
Food &
Beverage
Manufacturing



"

The Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council (CAHRC), together with partners the Canadian Federation of Agriculture (CFA) and Food and Beverage Canada (FBC-ABC) have announced the launch of the National Workforce Strategic Plan for Agriculture and Food and Beverage Manufacturing.

The Strategic Plan is the launching point for what will be a comprehensive roadmap to workforce stability for the agriculture and food and beverage manufacturing sectors.

"Workforce issues in primary agriculture and food manufacturing are critical and need to be addressed urgently," said Jennifer Wright, acting executive director at CAHRC. "While good work is being undertaken by many groups, industry also recognizes the gravity of the challenge, the need for new and different ways of doing things and most importantly the need for collaborative action."

Funded by the Government of Canada's Future Skills Centre, this industry-led initiative complements the work identified in the Prime Minister's Mandate Letters to Ministers Marie-Claude Bibeau and Carla Qualtrough tasking them with developing an Agricultural Labour Strategy for farming and food processing. Developed around five key pillars, the Strategic Plan is comprehensive, actionable and broad, as well as capable of adapting to changing times and realities. It includes short, medium and long-term solutions to address both immediate labour shortages and systemic workforce challenges.

According to FBC-ABC, food and beverage manufacturers are short an average of 25 per cent of their workforce, according to recent Public Safety Canada data. Labour has repeatedly been identified as a key issue preventing the sector from realizing its growth potential.

"Food and beverage manufacturing is one of Canada's most important sectors, and Canada's largest manufacturing employer, contributing to Canada's provincial, regional and national economies, supporting our international trade goals, and underpinning local food

production and food supply," said Kathleen Sullivan, CEO at FBC-ABC.

Similarly, employers in primary agriculture suffered

earning losses of \$2.9B in total sales in 2020, directly attributable to unfilled vacancies tied to the pandemic. This is nearly double the \$1.5B in lost sales recorded

in 2014.

Source: Canadian Agricultural Human Resources Council April 8, 2022 news release

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- Bush hog, 10' wheel disc, Int. 10' Wheel Disc, 10' Turnco Packer
- 5'-9 blade off set disc, 12" 3 PTH post hole auger, 16' Vibrashank wheel cult. and harrows
- Gill 7' 3 PTH adjust. Blade, Agro-trend single auger 7' snow blower
- WIFO 3 PTH fork lift, Vicon 3 PTH fertilizer spreader, Kuhn 5' 3 PTH Rototiller
- Perfect 8' Orchard mower, Votex 8' Rotary mower, Bush hog 6' mower
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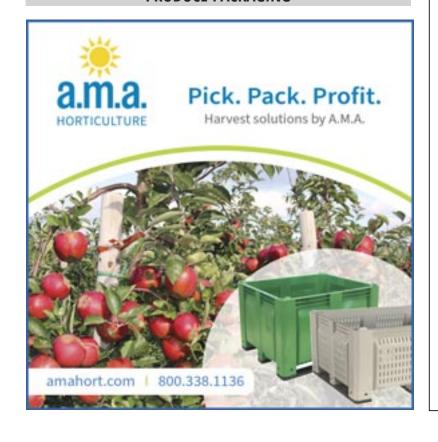


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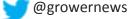
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# **CROP PROTECTION**

# Report from 20th Annual National Pest Management Priority Setting Exercise



JOSH MOSIONDZ

Once again, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Pest Management Centre (AAFC-PMC) held the 20th annual national pest management priority setting meetings virtually due to the uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic as announced in 2021. The exercise was broken into three two-to-three-day workshops held over the course of several weeks between February and March of 2022.

The meetings brought together a wide range of participants as seen in previous workshops with representation including university and federal researchers, crop extension specialists and private consultants, provincial specialists, provincial minor use coordinators (PMUCs), registrant representatives, Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) and AAFC-PMC staff, growers and grower organization representatives, processors, and other stakeholders all present. International participants from the U.S. IR-4 Program, and Australia were also in virtual attendance.

The meetings were held to review the top priorities identified by each of the provinces' horticultural and ornamental crop industries to establish the top national priorities for the minor crops sector. Priorities which were selected in the final 'A' round will guide AAFC-PMC's field research program as research projects in the 2023 season and eventually support future minor use label expansion submissions sent to PMRA once complete.

Each workshop progressed remarkably quickly due to careful and detailed planning in advance of each set of meetings as well as strong co-operation between all

| CROP   | PEST(S)                           | PRODUCT<br>SOLUTION | ACTIVE<br>INGREDIENT<br>SOLUTION      | REGISTRANT      |  |  |  |
|--|-----------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------|--|--|--|
| WEED SCIENCE PROJECTS  |                                   |                     |                                       |                 |  |  |  |
| Onion, dry bulb  | Weeds                             | Tough               | pyridate                              | Belchim         |  |  |  |
| Pea, dry   | Weeds (Cleaver control)           | Command             | clomazone                             | FMC             |  |  |  |
| Timothy (established) for seed and forage  | Plant Growth Regulator            | Manipulator         | chlormequat chloride                  | Belchim         |  |  |  |
| Saskatoon Berry  | Plant Growth Regulator            | Apogee              | prohexadione calcium                  | BASF            |  |  |  |
| Cranberry  | Weeds                             | Elevore             | halauxifen                            | Corteva         |  |  |  |
| Coriander seeds  | Desiccant                         | Tergeo              | tiafenacil                            | ISK Biosciences |  |  |  |
| ENTOMOLOGY PRIORITIES  |                                   |                     |                                       |                 |  |  |  |
| Greenhouse Cucumber  | Thrips                            | Plinazolin          | isocycloseram                         | Syngenta        |  |  |  |
| Raspberry  | Strawberry Bud Weevil             | Cormoran            | acetamiprid + novaluron               | ADAMA           |  |  |  |
| Celery   | Red Headed Flea Beetle            | Harvanta            | cyclaniliprole                        | ISK Biosciences |  |  |  |
| Outdoor grown conifers (including<br>Christmas Trees)  | Balsam Gall Midge                 | Harvanta            | cyclaniliprole                        | ISK Biosciences |  |  |  |
| Corn, Sweet  | Aphids                            | Exirel              | cyantraniliprole                      | FMC             |  |  |  |
| Greenhouse Ornamentals   | Thrips                            | Plenexos            | spidoxamat                            | Bayer           |  |  |  |
| PATHOLOGY PROJECTS   |                                   |                     |                                       |                 |  |  |  |
| Ornamental Bulbs<br>[Automatic A]  | Root Rot                          | Posterity           | pydiflumetofen                        | Syngenta        |  |  |  |
| Greenhouse Lettuce   | Powdery Mildew                    | Pyriofenone         | pyriofenone                           | ISK Biosciences |  |  |  |
| Broccoli   | Alternaria                        | Сечуа               | mefentrifluconazole                   | BASF            |  |  |  |
| Cabbage  | Alternaria                        | Сеvyа               | mefentrifluconazole                   | BASF            |  |  |  |
| Cherry, tart   | Cherry leaf spot                  | Allegro             | fluazinam                             | ISK Biosciences |  |  |  |
| Greenhouse Ornamentals   | Powdery Mildew                    | Adavelt             | florylpicoxamid                       | Corteva         |  |  |  |
| REGIONAL UPGRADE PROJECTS-listed by region. * Denotes addressment of an EUR.   |                                   |                     |                                       |                 |  |  |  |
| Parsnip * (MARITIMES)  | Weeds                             | Tough               | pyridate                              | Belchim         |  |  |  |
| Hops*(QUEBEC)  | Diapothe Leaf Spot (Halo Blight)  | Fullback            | flutriafol                            | FMC             |  |  |  |
| Pepper, field * (ONTARIO)  | Anthracnose                       | Captan              | captan                                | ADAMA           |  |  |  |
| Hemp (PRAIRIES)  | Fusarium, Pythium, Rhizoctonia    | Rancona             | ipconazole + carbathin +<br>metalaxyl | UPL             |  |  |  |
| Greenhouse Strawberries * (BRITISH COLUMBIA)   | Powdery Mildew                    | Palladium           | cyprodinil + fludioxonil              | Syngenta        |  |  |  |
| ORGANIC PRIORITIES   |                                   |                     |                                       |                 |  |  |  |
| Radish   | Flea Beetle                       | Pyganic             | pyrethrins                            | MGK             |  |  |  |
| Grape, wine  | Root and trunk rot (vine decline) | Sulphur             | microscopic sulphur                   | Loveland        |  |  |  |
| Table 1: Selected 'A' priorities for the 2022 workshop. Lines that are bolded will move forward as PMC projects in 2023 while those that are |                                   |                     |                                       |                 |  |  |  |

Table 1: Selected 'A' priorities for the 2022 workshop. Lines that are bolded will move forward as PMC projects in 2023 while those that are italicized were chosen as an 'A' priority but will not move forward at this time. Regional selections with an asterisk (\*) listed indicate a priority that was selected due to a recent Emergency Use Request (EUR).

commodity representatives. One hundred and fifty 'C' priorities per discipline (Weed Science and Plant Growth Regulators, Entomology, and Pathology) from a list of 5757 submitted priorities were chosen between February 8 – 9, which was then further narrowed to 50 'B' priorities per discipline on

February 16th, avoiding a second day of selections as originally planned. Finally, all 'A' priorities, including regional upgrades and organic priorities were chosen on March 23.

Continued on next page





- Extremely systemic & highly unique phosphite fungicide
- Direct & indirect effect on harmful oomycete diseases on a broad range of crops
- Effective, convenient & flexible preventative protection against downy mildew, late blight, root rots & septoria leaf spot

# Report from 20th Annual National Pest Management Priority Setting Exercise

#### Continued from page 22

Presentations from senior management at PMRA and AAFC-PMC, as well as small tracking formalities such as product selection were worked out the following day on March 24th wrapping up with just a half-day session as opposed to the three full-day workshop as originally planned.

This year, 24 projects were selected at the 'A' selection workshop, a noticeable decrease from the number of projects selected in previous years. This was broken down into 18 mainstream selections (those chosen through group discussions), five regional upgrades selected by PMUCs, and two organic priority selections.

Following the conclusion of the 'A' workshops, the 18 mainstream selections then underwent a new capacity analysis process being piloted by AAFC-PMC for the 2022 workshop. This process further narrowed the list of 18 mainstream priorities to nine final priorities, for a grand total of 16 projects selected at this year's priority setting workshop. An additional six projects will be chosen as joint projects between the U.S. IR-4 project and AAFC-PMC at the IR-4 food use workshop scheduled for September 2022.

The new piloted capacity analysis introduced this year was implemented to ensure projects are completed in an efficient, and timely process in the coming years according to staffing resources, funding, and the number of ongoing projects already underway selected in previous priority setting workshops. Selected projects from the mainstream priorities were picked with consideration of numerous factors including expertise and support staff availability within AAFC-PMC, crop availability in residue crop zones across Canada, whether a selection would support a crop group registration, selected solution product



One of the entomology priorities is the control of thrips in greenhouse cucumbers. Photo by Glenn Lowson.

availability, selected pest pressure, registrant support conditions, and 'category A' new use project statuses. The capacity analysis also considered the priorities that were automatically selected as a project including regional upgrades, organic priorities, and 'Automatic A' selections (AA), specifically with respect to staffing resources. There was one AA selection in the pathology discipline which was carried forward from a previous workshop's "A Priority Without Solution" (APWS) selection. This year, four out of the five regional upgrades were to address recent Emergency Use Registration requests.

AAFC-PMC has emphasized that the process used in the 2022 selections is a pilot and further changes may be implemented in future priority setting workshops to best support both growers and AAFC-PMC staff. Information pertaining to the 2023 workshop including any additional process changes as well as whether the format will return to an in-person event will be announced later in 2022.

The table on page 22 summarizes the projects agreed upon as 'A' priorities for the 2022 workshop. Lines which are bolded indicate projects which will move forward as AAFC-PMC projects in 2023. Lines which are italicized were not selected as part of the piloted capacity limit process; certain projects not selected may still be chosen as a 2023 project if the project aligns with those set at the IR-4 selection OR if AAFC-PMC cannot find six projects which align with Canadian grower's needs during the workshop.

Ideally, these projects will be submitted to the PMRA by AAFC-PMC, and the data requirements completed in 2024-2025. Ideally, registration decisions for these will likely occur in late 2026 and 2027.

Josh Mosiondz is minor use coordinator for the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.







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Apple growers who want to maximize their marketable economic yield must capitalize on limited opportunities to positively impact the crop. Science-Driven Nutrition™ empowers growers with the information, tools, and roadmap they need to succeed throughout the season.

When integrating a foliar nutrition program, the bloom through petal fall period is a critical window of opportunity and Agro-K's pollinator friendly products have a strong fit. This is when the crop begins to enter fruit cell division, and the right mix of nutrients are required to support and energize this process.

During this point of the season growers can have a significant number of products in the tank. Science-Driven Nutrition™ ensures growers only apply the nutrients necessary to produce consistently high-quality apples. Using sap analysis testing, growers quickly learn what their crop needs to perform its best, ultimately saving time, money, and tank mix conflicts.

Certain nutrients are critical at this stage. Calcium, for example, optimizes the bloom window and maximizes pack out at the end of the season. Effectively applying foliar calcium using products like Agro-K's **Vigor Cal** require growers to appreciate the limited timeframe for getting the nutrient into the fruit.

Calcium applied from pre-bloom until four-to-six weeks post-petal fall can positively impact the fruit cells that are forming within the apple. After cell division ends, calcium applications help to maintain the crop's nutrient levels from depleting but do not influence the fruit cell development. When boron is combined with the calcium applications, such as with Agro-K's **Vigor Cal-Bor-Moly**, there is a synergistic effect that increases the uptake of both nutrients. Boron is essential for pollen viability, pollen production and flower health making Agro-K's **Top Set DL** another ideal tool for this window of opportunity.

During fruit cell division phosphorus helps energize the crop and maximize fruit size. To ensure foliar uptake it is important to use a 100% ortho phosphorus based, food grade product such as Agro-K's **AgroBest 9-24-3**. Balanced with nitrogen to ensure continuing development, and a minimal amount of potassium to avoid antagonizing calcium, **AgroBest 9-24-3** provides the essential nutrition needed for bloom and early fruit formation.

To help maximize their investment in crop nutrition, Agro-K sets growers up to make smart decisions using Five Rs: The  $\underline{R}$ ight nutrient applied at the  $\underline{R}$ ight time in the  $\underline{R}$ ight form in the  $\underline{R}$ ight mix targeting the  $\underline{R}$ ight location in the plant. Science -Driven Nutrition<sup> $\mathbb{M}$ </sup> is implemented to determine crop nutrient levels and foliar product applications ensuring the apples get what they need to thrive.

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