

THE GREAT SUCCESSION

Farm transfers are about more than land and legacy



Farmers never retire. They transition. That’s the case with grape grower Bill Schenck and his son Brian who are in discussions with other family members about the next chapter near St. Catharines, Ontario. Photo by Glenn Lowson.

KAREN DAVIDSON

There is no season as hard as succession. According to Farm Management Canada, more than 75 per cent of Canadian farms will change hands over the next decade. But for those aged 60-plus, they would rather face machinery breakdowns and mud than a mug of coffee to talk about farm transition.

“We’re not a very good success story on that front,” says Boyd Rose, president of East Point Potatoes, and one of the owners of R.A. Rose & Sons, Souris, Prince Edward Island. The 62-year-old does not have retirement in his vocabulary: “I’ll likely work until I die.”

The family operations, involving a brother, nephews and daughters, are highly respected in the agricultural industry. They started talking about a succession plan about five years ago, but life events such as physical injury and off-farm opportunities keep turning the plans upside down. Perhaps the biggest challenge is how to integrate daughters into the plan when they are mothers with

toddlers. These well-educated women have capability and what’s more, desire, to be business managers.

The complexity of family farm businesses is also played out in Ontario for Schenck Farms and Greenhouse Co Ltd., known for grape growing and floral greenhouse operations in St. Catharines. Bill Schenck works with his brother and other family members at this business. He’s counted 43 harvests, some bountiful, some not.

“As I get older, I like to observe and mentor the next generation,” he says. “Every year is different and the 2022 season with its winterkill of a large percentage of the vineyard meant that my experience was useful in transferring knowledge.”

His son Brian has benefitted from that guidance, working full-time in the vineyard since 2015 and building on his summer experiences as far back as 2008. The farm has grown less tree fruit during those years and is now focussed on 100 acres of grapes.

“Every day, I’ve been taking on the farm manager role, spraying, managing farm equipment and employees,” says Brian Schenck, adding that he relishes the outdoor work.

Transitional planning is ongoing in the Schenck family. One of the tough issues is how to find fairness in land evaluations. As Bill Schenck explains, a lot of investment money has flowed into the Niagara peninsula bidding up the prices of vineyards. On the downside, that money does not bring grape-growing expertise or specialized equipment.

“I think there’s a huge opportunity for the next generation to take on that management role,” says Schenck. “Grape growing in the future may not be on our own property.”

While every farm family has its own unique story, there are common threads of angst throughout this process of transitioning land and leaving legacy. Elaine Froese, Boissevain, Manitoba, is an expert for farm families who want better communication and conflict resolution to secure a successful farm transition. She recently spoke at the annual general meeting of Potato Growers of Alberta.

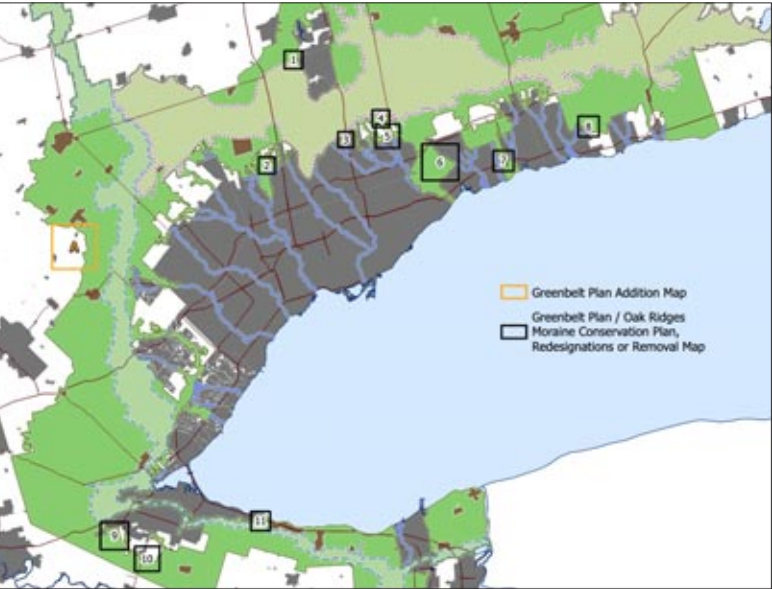
Continued on page 3

Greenhouse grower awarded PG 6

Potato crop exceeded 5-yr average PG 8

Grapes, vineyards & berries PG 14

AT PRESS TIME...



Source: Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing

Ontario government removes land from Greenbelt

Ten days after a public consultation ended, the Ontario government proceeded with removing 7,400 acres from the protected Greenbelt in the Greater Golden Horseshoe. Issued in mid-December 2022, the regulations will affect 15 areas in the two-million acre Greenbelt.

These areas include: Township of King, City of Vaughan, City of Richmond Hill, Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville, City of Markham, City of Pickering, Town of Ajax, Municipality of Clarington, City of Hamilton and Town of Grimsby.

The Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing is proposing to amend the

designation of lands located in the Town of Grimsby at 502 Winston Road. These lands are currently designated as Specialty Crop (Niagara Peninsula Tender Fruit and Grape Area) and Natural Heritage System in the Greenbelt and would be redesignated to Town/Village under the proposal.

The premier has promised to add 9,400 acres elsewhere. The Paris Galt Moraine area is named as one geography.

The province's goal is to build 50,000 homes in the Greater Golden Horseshoe in the near term.

For more detail, go to: ero.ontario.ca/notice/019-6216

Looking forward to OFVC

Get ready for the Ontario Fruit & Vegetable Convention coming February 22-23, 2023 at

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- Young Farmer Forum luncheon with featured speakers David and Jennifer VanDeVelde of Wholesome Pickins Market and Bakery.

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NEWSMAKERS

Congratulations to **Richard Lee**, the new executive director of the Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers, as of January 2, 2023. He's been with the association for 16 years, most recently serving as senior manager of operations and compliance.



Richard Lee

British Columbia has a new minister of agriculture and food. **Pam Alexis**, MLA for Abbotsford-Mission, was appointed in early December 2022, replacing **Lana Popham** who had been in the role since 2017. Previously the mayor of Mission from 2018-2020, Alexis holds a bachelor of arts from the University of Victoria and obtained her post degree professional program certificate in 1982 with a focus in English and theatre.



Pam Alexis

Best wishes to **Trish Jordan**, government and industry affairs for Bayer CropScience, who is retiring January 6, 2023. She first made her mark at Monsanto Canada for her unflinching advocacy of genetically modified organisms and continued trailblazing leadership for women in agricultural careers.

At its annual banquet, in late November 2022, the Prince Edward Island Potato Board gave recognition awards for lifelong contributions to the PEI potato industry to **Gerald "Jeddy" MacFadyen**, **John Robinson** and **Kevin MacIsaac**. The industry acknowledged outgoing board representatives **Mark MacMillan**, **Mary Gillis** and Young Farmer **Michael Ramsay** for their time on the board. New board members **Ian Shaw** and **Katie MacLennan** were welcomed. Current PEI Potato Board chair **John Visser** received recognition for completing his first year as chairperson and for rising to the significant challenges as the board's leader during a difficult year.

The Ontario Potato Board re-elected **Shawn Brenn** as chair and **Harry Bradley** as vice-chair at its December 7, 2022 annual general meeting. The executive is rounded out with **Jamie Lundy**, **Steve Bradley**, **Jacob Vander Zaag** and **Mike Smalley**.

Congratulations to **David Jones**, general manager of the Canadian Potato Council for the last 11 years. He will be retiring in March 2023 after a 40-year career in the agricultural sector, ranging from field research to regulatory activities in both the public and private sectors. "Being able to conclude my career representing potato growers across Canada has been extremely special to me. Potato growers are hardworking business people and they provide a lot of value to Canadians every day.

The news continues for the "R" generation. Peak of the Market has announced that long-time employee **Dave Whitmore** has retired after 28 years of dedicated service as a produce champion. **Ryan French** is vice-president of sales. **Matt Matheson** is director of sales.

Dr. Owen Roberts has been named director of the Agricultural Communications Program, College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences, University of Illinois. He joined the faculty in December 2020, after many years as research communications director at the University of Guelph. The past-president of the International Federation of Agricultural Journalists continues to write The Urban Cowboy column for **The Grower** with a revitalized perspective from Champaign Illinois.

CanAgPlus held its annual general meeting on December 1, 2022. Congratulations to four returning directors: **Alvin Keenan**, Rollo Bay Holdings; **Jody Mott**, Holland Marsh Growers' Association; **Susan Ranck**, Ranck & Association LLC; **Scott Wright**, University of Saskatchewan.

Condolences to the family and friends of **Jeet Dukhia**, 74, a former president of the British Columbia Fruit Growers' Association (BCFGA) and former chair of the board of BC Tree Fruits, who passed on December 14, 2022. He died from complications of terminal lung cancer. He began farming in the Vernon area in 1977, growing cherries as well as Gala, Ambrosia, Fuji, and Honeycrisp apples on the family farm. Dukhia was elected BCFGAs president in 2013 and was elected vice-president in February 2022.

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COVER STORY

Farm transfers are about more than land and legacy

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“Farm succession or transition planning is a journey of understanding,” says Froese, (pronounced PHRASE). “Courageous and clear communication involves seeing things from another person’s perspective, uncovering their intentions, fears, hopes, and dreams for their future. It’s about embracing conflict resolution as a business risk management strategy and not being afraid of talking respectfully about tough issues. Attacking the issues, not the

person.” Heather Watson, executive director of Farm Management Canada, agrees with this approach of farm transition as business management. “This is a gateway to better business practices,” says Watson. “Are we profitable? What additional skills does the farm need?” To help farmers answer these questions, the association is sponsoring a Farm Transition Appreciation Day on January 10, 2023 to celebrate hard-working farm families and to kickstart those tough

emotional conversations. Elaine Froese will be one of those speakers. “A succession plan is about the transfer of labour, management and ownership which is best done when the founder is alive,” says Froese. “An estate plan is about what happens upon the founder’s death. The gap is the 20 years after the founder lets go of the business at 62 or 72 and lives longer than expected to 82 or 92. This is the lifestyle plan that many folks don’t even think of.” Bill Schenck, for one, is on a healthy lifestyle track. After a decade, he’s resigned

as vice-chair of the Grape Growers of Ontario and he spends free time cycling. Now in his early sixties, Schenck is co-chair of the World Rowing Championships which is coming to St. Catharines in 2024. He’s a wise man for cultivating interests outside of agriculture, while keeping his hand on the farm. Schenck’s vision of happiness? “There’s nothing better than doing a stint on the tractor in the vineyard, cranking up the tunes and listening to Old Rock.”



Farm transition tips

Farm Management Canada is hosting a webinar on January 10, 2023 called “Handing over the keys: Transferring knowledge in farm transitions.” Speaker Joel Bokenfor, a Farm Credit Canada business advisor will be leading the discussion from 2 – 3 pm EST. To participate, link here: <https://bit.ly/3V6DzIS> Elaine Froese will be speaking in a webinar on January 10, 2023 titled: Prioritizing emotional well-being while finding harmony in farm transition.” Time is 1-2 pm EST. To participate, link here: <https://bit.ly/3PwbTfy>

1. **Establish clear, written family and business goals** involving everyone.
2. **Hold a formal meeting** to identify and harmonize the vision and goals of key stakeholders in writing.
3. **Start the conversation** about farm transition at least 10 years before the transfer is set to take place to allow sufficient time for stakeholders to prepare and adjust.
4. **Prepare a formal written farm transition plan** that can be shared, referenced and reviewed on a regular basis.
5. **Establish a clear and mutually agreed on transition timeline** between the current owners and successors to reduce uncertainty about the future of the farm and everyone’s role within it.

6. **Involve family members** and other key players in the development of the transition plan.
7. **Hire a coach** or transition planning facilitator to help keep your transition planning on track.
8. **Assess and confirm the financial viability** of the transition plan.
9. **Review transition plans** with farm business experts (e.g. accountants, lawyers, financial planners, family relationship experts) to ensure the plan is viable and the right steps are being taken to achieve your goals.
10. **Organize regular formal farm team meetings** (including agendas, minutes and pre-meeting preparation) to review progress towards meeting family and business goals and the individual needs and desires of the farm team.
11. **Identify the qualifications**, experience and skills required for the successor(s) based on the evolving needs of the business. Write it down in a job description.
12. **Identify a successor** or successor(s) for the farm with the capacity to take over the business. You may find your best choices come from outside of the family.
13. **Implement a personal development**



- plan** for the successor(s) (e.g. experience, skills development, etc.) in order to prepare them for the transition.
14. **Involve the successor(s)** in the development and implementation of the farm transition plan.
 15. **Involve the successor(s)** or potential successor(s) in regular farm team meetings.
 16. **Establish a timeline for the gradual transfer of managerial responsibilities** to the successor(s).
 17. **Establish a timeline for the gradual transfer of ownership** to the farm successor(s).
 18. **Establish a timeline for the gradual transfer of assets** to the farm successor(s).
 19. **Identify and implement conflict resolution solutions** (e.g. education, training, coaching, mediation).

Source: Farm Management Canada

The Grower is “Digging Deeper” with Elaine Froese, Boissevain, Manitoba. She’s been called Canada’s Farm Whisperer for her understanding of the emotional hurdles that many families face when transitioning the family farm. This podcast is sponsored by Cohort Wholesale.



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CROSS COUNTRY DIGEST

MANITOBA

The details of Manitoba’s water strategy will dominate winter meetings

KAREN DAVIDSON

A new water management strategy was unveiled by the Manitoba government in November 2022, the first in 20 years, and it’s not a moment too soon. Wet and dry cycles can last for years, yet they may transition quickly from one to the other in a single season.

“We’re tapped out,” says Pamela Kolochuk, CEO of Peak of the Market. “Our ability to irrigate is maxed out. We have 10,000 acres of fresh vegetables and in addition to water for irrigation, many of these vegetables need to be washed.”

Vegetable production in Manitoba runs the gamut from fresh potatoes to carrots, parsnips, beets, onions, cabbage, broccoli and squash.

“Our collective water needs are changing,” said Heather Stefanson, Manitoba premier. “Our growing communities, vibrant agriculture sector and expanding industries all depend on continued access to water. At the same time, climate change and extreme weather, such as floods and droughts, have a significant impact on water availability and security.”

To date, stakeholder engagement has been administered through Enterprise Machine Intelligence and Learning Initiative (EMILI). Kolochuk gave a candid assessment to EMILI in November

2021. She wrote: “Irrigation will become the biggest use of water in Manitoba going forward. Large-scale processing facilities like those for McCain Foods and Simplot will require irrigated land, which might have the effect of limiting overall growing area. Other uses of water throughout the supply chain include the washing and processing of vegetables at the grower level.

Key to all of this – and a possible point of contention, layered on top of localized issues that exist within each watershed – will be determining who should have priority access to water during times of drought. And granting that water supply in a way that doesn’t undermine local aquatic ecosystems. Right now, agricultural irrigators appear to be fifth or sixth on the list of stakeholders, and behind golf courses in terms of overall consumption.

Doing a better job of recycling water would help. To enable the agriculture and agri-food processing sectors to take advantage of market opportunities will also require working to bring some municipalities around to the benefits of expanding irrigation and creating a more accurate portrayal of the positives of irrigation. Instead, there appears to be this public perception that expanding irrigation capacity will hurt the environment and reduce drinking water supplies, both of which are untrue.



There’s a lack of clarity right now around water resources in the province – who owns the water? Which entities have authority and oversight over water? There are even questions about whether we have accurate information on water resources. Various reports say that a number of aquifers in the Winkler area are fully allocated when there’s good reason to believe they aren’t.

These are issues we need to figure out and allocate water accordingly, because otherwise we are unnecessarily limiting our irrigation capacity in Manitoba, when we should really be doing something big here with irrigation. Allocation right now appears to be more politically motivated or determined, and not based on science.

Both Alberta and Saskatchewan, meanwhile, have made big announcements recently about their plans to support increases in irrigation, yet Manitoba has done nothing. The Saskatchewan-built

Lake Diefenbaker (a man-made lake) is now the site of building a new connected irrigation network. We don’t have anything like that in Manitoba – and yet we have more water and lakes than either province. Large-scale processors such as McCain and Simplot will need irrigated land, which produces far more potatoes than unirrigated fields, she said. Washing potatoes and vegetables also takes a lot of water.

In some areas, including Portage and Winkler, farms can’t drill wells but they can pump water from rivers within the limits of a water license, Kolochuk said. Some farms aren’t close enough to rivers, so they’ve built reservoirs to capture runoff for irrigation. This takes up valuable land.

To read the water management strategy and learn more about next steps visit: https://manitoba.ca/sd/pubs/water/water_mgmt_strategy2022.pdf.

QUÉBEC

Provincial government backs vertical farming of leafy greens in Longueuil

Canada’s leading vertical farming company, GoodLeaf Farms, is on track to open a

climate-controlled indoor farm in the Montreal suburb of Longueuil by the middle of 2023.

The new farm, which has been supported by a \$7-million loan from the Government of Québec





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and several smaller grants from various economic development agencies including Développement économique de l’agglomération de Longueuil (DEL), is being built on boul. Clairevue site, in close proximity to Highway 20 and the St. Hubert-Longueuil Airport. The 100,000-square-foot vertical farm will produce 1.9 million pounds of microgreens and baby greens for grocery stores and the hospitality sector across Québec, with capacity to also service Atlantic Canada.

With Quebec’s limited growing season, most open-field farms can harvest one crop a year, whereas GoodLeaf’s climate-controlled indoor farms are able to grow and harvest more than 40 crops of a microgreen each year, and more than 20 crops of a baby green — a dramatic increase in productivity.

The farm also provides a local food source for a product that is typically imported — as much as 90 per cent of the leafy greens on store shelves in Québec are trucked from the southwestern United States. Growing these greens locally and reducing the number of trucks on the road

reduces carbon emissions significantly.

GoodLeaf’s system is also free of pesticides, herbicides and fungicides, has no risk of fertilizer run-off into local water sources, and uses 95 per cent less water than the same crops in an open-field farm. The cutting-edge technology used in vertical farming results in a sustainable solution for farmers, retailers, the food service sector and consumers.

GoodLeaf Farms grows microgreens and baby greens including pea shoots, micro radish, spinach, arugula, and spring mix.

“GoodLeaf is building a national network of vertical farms, ensuring Canadians from coast to coast have access to fresh, sustainably and locally grown leafy greens year round,” says Barry Murche, CEO, GoodLeaf Farms. Our new farm in Longueuil is perfectly located to support all consumers across Québec via retailers and food service operators”

Source: GoodLeaf Farms November 29, 2022 news release

CROSS COUNTRY DIGEST
BRITISH COLUMBIA

Pears sparkle in fruit soda

Farming Karma, an Okanagan farming family turned beverage manufacturer, has taken a bow in the spotlight at the November 3, 2022 BC Food and Beverage Awards. Its pear fruit soda took home the Product of the Year Award – Silver.

Karma Gill has been growing apples, cherries and pears in the Okanagan for 30-plus years. A few years ago, he asked his son Avi and wife Binny the big question: what comes after retirement? Do you have plans for the orchards?

At the time, Avi Gill was following his pharmacy career path in Kelowna. “As a family, we planned to make some apple juice out of our fruit and maybe sell it at a farmers’ market or our fruit stand. The original plan evolved to setting up a canning line, juicing equipment, tanks, pasteurizer and all sorts of manufacturing equipment. We had no previous experience in manufacturing food products so this was all new to us.”

The last three years have seen explosive growth, from the first introduction of an apple soda in 2020 to more than 10 products.

“Ultimately, we are a farming family that is new to the world of retail,” says Gill. “We are learning every day and growing across Canada step by step.”

The product portfolio comprises Farming Karma Soda in apple, cherry, berry, peach and pear flavours. Spirit Karma vodka sodas (5% alcohol) repeat the same flavours. Both beverage brands are lightly-carbonated beverages made with real fruit.

Core values are: no added sugars, no added preservatives, no colours or artificial flavours, no concentrates or syrups, made with real fruit and a serving of real fruit. It’s not a pure juice so the calories and sugar content imitate eating a single serving of fruit. It’s also a vegan, gluten-free beverage.

The company has won shelf space across Canada including Sysco, Gordon Food Service, Farm Boy and soon to come Loblaw and Costco.

“The award is a reminder of our journey – the challenges and the victories along the way,” says Gill. “In January 2020, were a farming family that didn’t have any background in food manufacturing, product development, marketing, packaging, selling or any of the other things that go along with putting a product in the market. With consistent hard work, believing in ourselves and tremendous support from our community and mentors, were able to develop a product that we are proud of.”

The creative juices haven’t stopped with a wholesale business. The family has opened

a tasting room in Kelowna where tourists and locals alike can sample Green Apple Gelato and Apple Fries Poutine with salted caramel sauce.

Avi, Binny and Jhelum Gill are pictured at the BC awards.



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GREENHOUSE GROWER

Pure Flavor awarded for ‘Eat Well Together to Be Well Together’ campaign

The FMI Foundation recently announced its 2022 Gold Plate Award winners, highlighting outstanding family meal programs implemented by the food industry and community organizations. This Arlington, Virginia-based foundation supports the food retailing industry by providing information on food safety, health and nutrition.

In the Category of Industry Supplier, Canadian greenhouse fruit and vegetable company Pure Flavor won the Gold Plate Award for its ‘Eat Well Together to Be Well Together’ campaign that supported FMI’s National Family Meals Month in September.

“The recipients of the 2022 Gold Plate Awards represent a collective industry effort to help families stay strong with family meals,” said FMI president and CEO Leslie Sarasin.

“I’m particularly proud of the programs that went the extra mile to connect the importance of family meals, however one defines family, to mental health. Through creative messages, in-store promotion and innovative employee engagement, the passion for the Family Meals Movement is just one way our industry stands out.”

Pure Flavor’s ‘Eat Well Together to Be Well Together’ campaign was strategically designed to bring awareness to the importance of family meals, both physically and mentally, by encouraging meal prep, family interaction, and the consumption of

fruits and vegetables. Each week, the greenhouse fruit and vegetable brand promoted new recipes, tips, and family meal facts, along with engaging three different targeted audiences in surveys, giveaways, and partnership interaction.

“Our omni-channel approach to connect with consumers with our ‘Eat Well Together to Be Well Together’ campaign ensured that we connected with the right people on the right channel at the right-time with the right message. The promotion of National Family Meals Month was right in our wheelhouse as a brand since our year-round promotional strategies are focused on just that, families!”, commented Chris Veillon, chief marketing officer. Pure Flavor created a dedicated website to support the campaign: www.pure-flavor.com/fueling-healthy-families/

Pure Flavor partnered with the Healthy Family Project, reaching more than 20,000 e-newsletter subscribers and securing 94,000 impressions and 11,000 engagements between their combined social media accounts. Pure Flavor’s celebration of National Family Meals Month gained more than 436,000 impressions on social media and more than 15,500 surveys completed, contributing further impact to improving family mealtime for their customers.

“Healthy Family Project was honoured to partner with Pure Flavor for National



Family Meals Month. It is important that we are part of any momentum that helps create a healthier generation. This partnership was an excellent example of how we can fuel healthy lives and create family moments with fresh produce”, said Tracy Shaw, senior digital marketing manager, Healthy Family Project.

FMI Gold Plate Award Campaign Summaries: www.fmi.org/family-meals/award

Source: Pure Flavor December 16, 2022 news release

Sollum and Savoura team up for technology showcase

To highlight the benefits of dynamic lighting for Québec horticultural businesses, Investissement Québec, as an agent of the Québec government, has granted \$350,000 to Sollum Technologies for a 1 showcase involving a novel strawberry research trial in partnership with Savoura.

Strawberry production in greenhouses under lighting is relatively new. The goal of the project is to use Sollum Technologies’ unique dynamic LED grow light solution to refine lighting strategies to increase the productivity and quality of greenhouse strawberries. The Ministère de l’Économie, de l’Innovation et de l’Énergie (MEIE) program is a perfect

vehicle for this commercial-scale demonstration. That’s because Investissement Québec administers MEIE’s Innovation program that encourages companies and research bodies to develop cutting-edge technological and economic initiatives. Sollum has previously been supported by the program to conduct critical research for a wide variety of fruits and herbs to expedite the commercial launch of its lighting solution.

“We at Savoura are thrilled to take part in this technology showcase,” says Richard Dorval, Agr., president and COO at Savoura Group, who adds that the LED fixtures will be tested to adapt to different growth states. Sollum Technologies vice-

president business development Kassim Tremblay, says “Growing strawberries under supplemental lighting is no small task. We hope to provide a model for strawberry cultivation using dynamic lights just as we have done for winter pepper production.”

“In Québec, we need to innovate to increase and ensure year-round food autonomy. Sollum and Savoura stand out with their project to increase and extend strawberry production while ensuring better use of energy,” said Pierre Fitzgibbon, Minister of the Economy, Innovation and Energy, Minister responsible for Regional Economic Development and Minister responsible for the



Metropolis and the Montréal Region.

The project will be carried out in Savoura’s greenhouses in Danville, in the Eastern Townships. This is not the first time that Sollum and Savoura Group have worked together. Earlier in 2022, Sustainable Development Technology

Canada granted Sollum \$2.5M in phase two funding to conduct greenhouse tomato research in collaboration with Savoura Group, Prism Farms and the Harrow Research and Development Centre in Ontario.


Source: Sollum Technologies November 29, 2022 news release

THE GROWER

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GREENHOUSE GROWER

Vineland researches how to breed resistance to tomato brown rugose fruit virus

Nearly 10 years ago, Vineland Research and Innovation Centre (Vineland) initiated, in collaboration with the Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers (OGVG) and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC), the only greenhouse tomatoes-on-the-vine (TOVs) breeding program in Canada.

As most tomato varieties have been developed by European seed companies, Vineland's program focused initially on developing flavourful greenhouse TOVs adapted to the unique climate in southern Ontario, the epicentre of modern greenhouse vegetable production in North America. However, the focus shifted in late 2019, when OMAFRA and OGVG invested in additional research at Vineland to identify a

source of resistance to the Tomato Brown Rugose Fruit Virus (ToBRFV) and develop the necessary tools to add resistance to Vineland's breeding program.

First identified in Israel in 2014, ToBRFV is a newly emerged virus mainly affecting tomatoes and peppers, which has since spread world-wide and was detected in Canada in 2019. Discoloured leaves and crinkled brown or yellow spots on the fruit are the hallmark symptoms of the disease. Although not a food safety concern, the virus reduces the market value of the fruit and threatens global food security.

The Vineland team has since been involved in two separate efforts to combat this virus. First, the team collaborated with researchers at AAFC to screen

Vineland's collection of diverse tomato lines for ToBRFV resistance. Secondly, a partnership was forged with two global seed companies to screen a wide collection of tomatoes in Europe for ToBRFV resistance and to develop tools to efficiently breed that resistance into Vineland's elite, Canadian-adapted TOVs.

If current efforts are successful, it is anticipated that Vineland will be able to begin testing new, high-yielding varieties in commercial greenhouses in two years, using the newly identified resistance and breeding tools. In August 2022, Vineland showcased its research facility to a group of participants during the International Tomato Brown Rugose Fruit Virus Symposium. Hosted by OGVG in partnership



Drying tomato plants for removal following a viral outbreak.

with OMAFRA, AAFC and Flowers Canada Growers, researchers from around the world addressed topics including: on-going research, crop management strategies and mitigation approaches.

This research program has been funded through AAFC, Genome Canada, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) and OGVG.

More robotics coming to greenhouses

The Canadian Agri-Food Automation and Intelligence Network (CAAIN) has unveiled the projects to be funded through its second Open Competition. Ecoation Innovation Solutions, Kingsville, Ontario, will be receiving \$627,898 for its innovative approach to a fully autonomous greenhouse mobility platform.

Called project ANT, the funds will go towards a fully

autonomous greenhouse mobility platform. It breaks from the traditional approach of the single-purpose greenhouse robot, and will demonstrate the feasibility of a flexible platform capable of carrying various payloads and addressing many of the challenges inherent in Controlled Environment Agriculture (CEA) automation.

ANT is a system of autonomously navigating robots

that serve as a universal mobile platform for nearly any greenhouse automation task. It uses multiple classes of robots that cooperate to delegate tasks efficiently and lower total systems costs. The initiative will accelerate the development and adoption of new automation.



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POTATO PRODUCTION

Canadian potato crop up marginally in 2022

Canada's 2022 potato production is reported by Statistics Canada to be 122,970,000 hundred weight (cwt). This is slightly up by 956,000 hundred weight or 0.8 per cent over 2021 due to increases in planted acres and yields in certain parts of the country.

The United Potato Growers of Canada notes that for comparison purposes, there were two significant changes to the originally reported numbers for 2021. Prince Edward Island was revised from 28,510 down to 27,209 and Québec was revised from 16,216 down to 14,100, bringing the overall Canadian reported production to 122,014,000 hundred weight for 2021, compared to 125,431,000 originally reported one year ago.

The largest increases in potato production for 2022 were reported in the west: Alberta (+8.9% to 26.8 million hundred-weight) and Manitoba (+4.9% to 26.1 million hundredweight). Seeded areas rose to meet growth in processing demand. Québec also showed a healthy increase of 5.9% due to increased planted acreage and a very good harvest for 2022.

The regions producing the largest share of potatoes in Canada were very close with Alberta at 21.8%, followed by Prince Edward Island at 21.6% and Manitoba at 21.3%. These shifts are due to large demand for processing potatoes in the west and a decline in planted acreage, mostly in seed, in PEI.

In 2022, overall planted

acreage was 386,591 acres nationally, a small increase of 3,355 acres (+0.9%) over last year, largely from increased demand for processing potatoes in North America. The increase was not even across the regions, with some (Alberta, Québec and Manitoba) on the rise and others (PEI, British Columbia and Ontario) decreasing compared to 2021.

Weather conditions were very favourable during the harvest season across Canada, which permitted most growers to harvest the vast majority (98.7%) of the total seeded area. If we compare this year to 2021, we can see that the overall harvested acreage was up 0.5% to 381,451 acres from 379,429 acres last year.

During initial digs and right through harvest, there was a great deal of variability in yields being reported across Canada and even differences from field to field for an individual grower in certain cases. Regional differences were also reported within provinces, with examples cited between southwestern Ontario and the Alliston area or between the western and eastern sections of Prince Edward Island.

The two highest average yields were increases over last year and continue to come from the west with Alberta at 375.9 cwt per acre followed by Manitoba at 329.8 cwt per acre. Although New Brunswick reported a decline in average yield compared to 2021 they are still very close to Manitoba at 329.5 cwt per acre, and Prince Edward Island showed a nice increase of 0.9% this year



December 7, 2022
Source: Stats Canada

Province	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022 Reported	% Diff. to 2021
NFLD.	56	54	55	55	52	-5.5%
P.E.I.	22,600	24,302	21,000	27,209	26,600	-2.2%
N.S.	365	416	300	357	240	-32.8%
N.B.	15,670	16,400	11,500	18,200	17,000	-6.6%
Que.	11,221	12,648	12,731	14,100	14,916	5.8%
Ont.	6,919	6,705	7,518	8,953	8,160	-8.9%
Man.	20,300	19,700	24,000	24,927	26,139	4.9%
Sask.	1,454	1,500	1,400	1,519	1,450	-4.5%
Alta.	21,762	21,718	23,407	24,614	26,813	8.9%
B.C.	2,100	2,145	2,155	2,080	1,600	-23.1%
Canada	102,447	105,589	104,066	122,014	122,970	0.8%

reporting a 324.8 cwt per acre, far and above their six-year average. In comparing the overall average yield for the country, there was a slight increase reported of 0.2% over 2021,


moving from 321.6 to 322.4 cwt per acre in 2022.

Statistics Canada has estimated Canadian potato production in 2022 to be 122,970,000 cwt up 0.8% over 2021. Despite a very cold and wet spring delaying planting and very hot, dry weather in many parts of Canada throughout August and into the harvest, Canada still brought in another record crop compared to the five-year average. There is a good supply to match the continually increasing demand for processing potatoes both here in Canada and in the United States.



Overall Canadian yields increased slightly from 321.6 cwt./acre in 2021 to 322.4 cwt./acre in 2022. There was a great deal of variability across Canada and even between areas within provinces for the 2022 crop.







Source: United Potato Growers of Canada Dec 7, 2022 news release

Editor's note:
The province of Québec is disputing the figures registered by its provincial statistical group to Statistics Canada, both in number of planted acres and the resulting estimated potato production. All parties are involved to get this issue resolved.




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SUSTAINABILITY

Canadian consumers mostly unaware of agriculture’s innovations

According to the 2022 Perceptions of Canadian Agriculture Survey, released December 12, 2022 by Climate FieldView and conducted among members of the online Angus Reid Forum, the vast majority (98 %) of Canadians recognize the country’s farmers importance to domestic food security, and four-in-five Canadians say they are confident in their ability to continue meeting domestic food demand.

“Canadians are making the connection on the importance of Canadian farmers to our food system,” says Matt Eves, Bayer digital farming lead for Canada. “Farmers have faced many external challenges in recent years, trying to meet supply demands for Canadians while also striving to innovate to stay ahead of these challenges, while ensuring sustainability remains top of mind.”

In order to better manage these challenges on farms, many Canadian farmers are turning to technology to help make better use of their resources and reduce the impacts of climate change as much as possible, and better manage unexpected issues that may arise. As a result, modern farms today look much different than the image Canadians might have in their minds.

When asked what kinds of technology came to mind that farmers use in their operations, 26 per cent of respondents could not cite any examples, and only 13 per cent of Canadians viewed agriculture as more innovative compared to other domestic industries. Furthermore, while the Canadian Centre for Food Integrity report showed four in 10 strongly agree that Canadian farmers are good stewards of the environment, 16 per cent of respondents in the Climate FieldView study did not know how Canadian farmers support sustainability, showing many may not understand the true impact technology and innovation has on farming and sustainability.

“Right now, there is a gap in knowledge of the innovation on farms,” says Eves “but public awareness and support for these advancements will be crucial for the

industry to continue to innovate to be more sustainable and resilient in order to face ongoing challenges in the future.”

Highlights

- When asked about extreme weather events that occurred in the past year, 62% of Canadians say they have an increased appreciation for Canadian agriculture, with the highest increase in appreciation coming from British Columbia (76%).
- 69% in Ontario
- 63% in Atlantic Canada
- 60% in Alberta
- 57% in Saskatchewan/Manitoba
- 46% in Quebec
- The vast majority of Canadians across all regions believe the country’s farmers are very important to domestic food security (90%), though only 67% would rate Canada’s importance in global food security as very important.
- Interestingly, Canadians among the younger generation (18-34) were significantly less likely than older generations to say Canadian farmers are very important, both for domestic and global food security.
- 84% see Canadian farmers as very important to domestic food security, compared to 90% and 95% among the 35-54 and 55+ age groups, respectively
- Only 50% see Canadian farmers as very important to global food security, compared to 67% and 80% among the 35-54 and 55+ age groups, respectively
- Only 13% of Canadians see agriculture as more innovative than other domestic industries
- 23% in Alberta
- 21% in Saskatchewan/Manitoba
- 14% in Atlantic Canada
- 13% in Ontario
- 9% in British Columbia



- 8% in Quebec
 - 16% of Canadians don’t know how farmers support sustainability, down from nearly one quarter of Canadians in 2021.
 - Knowledge of innovation in Canadian agriculture is low, with 36% saying they don’t know how it compares to other Canadian industries and another two-in-five (39%) expecting it’s about the same.
- Climate FieldView is a global, industry-leading digital platform. Through its suite of easy-to-use data visualisation and analysis tools, farmers have a single platform to unite data from each piece of their precision equipment and access those insights from anywhere with a smartphone, tablet device or computer. For more information visit climatefieldview.ca.

Source: Climate FieldView December 12, 2022 news release

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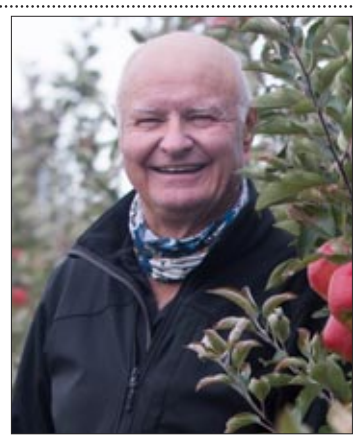


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CHAIR'S PERSPECTIVE

Good governance essential to effective advocacy



CHARLES STEVENS

Last year, delegates at the 2022 annual meeting of the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association (OFVGA) passed a resolution directing the board to undertake a governance review. At the time, we were still heavily immersed in COVID-19 and all of the related issues affecting our industry. As we start 2023, we're hopeful that the worst of the pandemic is behind us and it's now time to revisit the issue of governance. Over the next several months, an external consulting

team will work with the OFVGA board and senior staff to help guide us through this process. I've gone through this exercise on my own farm in preparing for transition to the next generation, so I know first-hand how valuable it is. Good governance minimizes conflict in the team – and I believe it also makes us better leaders and better decision-makers. As a board, we need to make sure our by-laws and policies are up to date and reflect the current needs of the organization. A solid governance structure paired with good communications reduces the potential for internal discord and lets us focus on the issues that matter. One of those external issues is the overall competitiveness of our industry. This includes inflation and the rising cost of inputs, the challenges and inconsistencies of environmental compliance approvals, and the need for better energy infrastructure in rural areas. Given the significant increase in production costs, OFVGA and our partners in the Ontario

Agriculture Sustainability Coalition (OASC) – Beef Farmers of Ontario, Grain Farmers of Ontario, Ontario Pork, Ontario Sheep Farmers, Veal Farmers of Ontario – have been asking the provincial government to increase its investment into Self-Directed Risk Management (SDRM) and the Risk Management Program (RMP). We've also been drawing the provincial government's attention to challenges growers are facing with environmental compliance approvals. It's important to balance the need for environment performance with the need to produce food and to ensure farmers aren't buried under excessive red tape and long approval times. Ontario also needs upgraded energy infrastructure so that growers – particularly in the greenhouse sector – can adopt more sustainable technologies, reduce their energy costs and ultimately, grow more food. Keeping access to seasonal and temporary worker programs and crop protection tools are also

important parts of ensuring the ongoing competitiveness of the fruit and vegetable industry. We've also realized some success in the last year too. OFVGA has built a strong relationship with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) and we became a partner of choice to help deliver several important projects. This includes developing health and safety resources for temporary foreign workers in a variety of languages, supporting COVID-19 vaccination clinics at Pearson airport for incoming seasonal workers, and making welcome kits available to workers as they arrived in Ontario for their work terms here. Our More than a Migrant Worker outreach initiative has had a very good year. We published eight news stories in the *National Post* and the *Toronto Star*, interviewed dozens of seasonal workers and growers, and are showcasing their stories about their lives here and why they come to Canada in their own words on our website and on our

social media channels. It's been gratifying to see follower numbers grow and to read the many positive comments left on our stories and posts. A highlight was More than a Migrant Worker winning top honours for best social media campaign directed at the general public from the Canadian Agri-Food Marketing Association, and runner-up for best general public website. And finally, in the last several months, we've seen a return to in-person advocacy after more than two years of meeting virtually with elected officials, political staff and government employees. This past fall, OFVGA held a successful Queen's Park lobby day, and participated in the Fall Harvest outreach with Fruit and Vegetable Growers of Canada and the Canadian Produce Marketing Association in Ottawa. I wish all of you health and success for 2023.

Charles Stevens is chair, Ontario Fruit & Vegetable Growers' Association.

WEATHER VANE



Temporary foreign workers are key to so many horticultural operations. In fact, they're family. "Owen MacDonald has been with me for about 10 years and is like a brother," says Rich Feenstra, Mountainview Orchards, Beamsville, Ontario. Photo by Marcella DiLorenzo.

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THE GROWER

RETAIL NAVIGATOR

The value of trend reports



PETER CHAPMAN

As we flip to a new calendar year there are many trend reports and suggestions about where consumers and the market are going. You need to look to the future, but you also have to ensure any changes deliver a return for your business. Trend reports can be interesting, but you need to make sure they are appropriate for the customers and consumers you hope to sell to.

Trend reports to consider

There are a number of trend reports available in the food and beverage industry, often published by businesses focused on one segment of the market or a different geography which might or might not align with your business.

Nourish Marketing is a Toronto-based business with considerable experience in the food and beverage space. You can find the full explanation for each trend at www.nourish.marketing/trend-report. They see the top 10 trends going into 2023 to be:

1. **The Rise of Reducatarianism:** Trading “either/or” for “everything, but less”
2. **Good Eats, Better Sleeps:** The role of food as a sleep aid to promote overall well-being
3. **This One’s for the Ladies:** Female food is a missed opportunity we can no longer overlook
4. **Food Without Borders:** Social media unites us globally so we can shop and cook together
5. **Robots, AI, and Connected Kitchens:** The future of food automation finally arrives
6. **Breaking the Chains:** Localized production offers an alternative to shaky global supply chains
7. **Closing the Loop:** Self-contained food systems are the future
8. **From Science Fiction to Science Farming:** Ag innovation sees exponential growth to meet environmental and market needs

9. **Solidarity for Sustainability:** The future of eco-conscious agriculture is cooperative
- Whole Foods Market, services a premium segment of the market, publishes a list of trends each year. These stores are a division of Amazon, so it is likely they have more focus on data analysis than some other retailers. Whole Foods share more details on their trends and you can also buy the products at: www.whole-foodsmarket.com/trends/top-food-trends-2023. They see the

- trends being:
1. **New brew-Yaupon:** Yaupon is a holly bush found in the Southern region of the U.S. and happens to be North America’s only known native caffeinated plant.
2. **Pulp with purpose:** By upcycling by-products such as oat, soy and almond pulp, brands are creating new products for the modern baker — think alternative flours, baking mixes and ready-to-eat sweets

3. **Produce meets pasta:** There’s a new crop of plant-based pasta alternatives to help us all up our veggie and fruit intake, with ingredients such as spaghetti squash, hearts of palm and even green bananas.
4. **The great date:** The dehydrated fruit often referred to as “nature’s candy” is having a major renaissance as a sweetener — not only for at-home bakers, but also in the form of pastes and syrups, and hidden in everything from ketchup to overnight oats.


5. **A poultry revolution:** More and more consumers believe chickens should be able to act like chickens, so they’re prioritizing welfare when shopping for both poultry and eggs.
6. **Help from kelp:** Kelp grows quickly, doesn’t require freshwater or added nutrients, and is nutritious and versatile in food products — we’re seeing it in noodles, chips, fish-free “fish” sauce and beyond.
- Continued on page 13

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CROP INSURANCE

Agricorp updates fresh market vegetable claims for 2022

Acreage loss for fresh market vegetables (as of December 12, 2022)				
	2022	2021	2020	2019
No. of customers	110	115	114	111
Acres	18,284	20,008	18,844	17,641
Total liability (millions)	\$56.03	\$56.63	\$48.02	\$46.00
Total premium* (millions)	\$6.56	\$5.75	\$4.53	\$4.30
Claims (millions)	\$3.07	\$10.01	\$6.31	\$3.73

*Includes both government and customer premiums paid

Breakdown of coverage by commodity types				
Type	Contracts	Acres	Liability (millions)	Claims
Root	35	8,080	\$24.1	\$606,083
Fruit	61	6,934	\$24.2	\$1,983,372
Leafy	18	2,433	\$6.5	\$403,773
Other	13	837	\$1.2	\$77,948
Total	127	18,284	\$56	\$3,071,175

Average Farm Yield Coverage for Fresh Market Vegetables (as of December 12, 2022)				
Crops	Contracts	Acres	Liability (millions)	2022 Claims
Onions	23	1,525	\$8.6	\$439,978
Potato	21	3,668	\$14.39	\$696,429
Peppers	24	702	\$3.34	\$585
Other*	9	529	\$1.49	\$157,303
Total	77	6,423	\$27.8	\$1,294,295

*Other- fresh market carrots, butternut squash, and rutabagas

In the coming months, Ontario vegetable growers will be making important decisions about their business risk management options for the year ahead.

The programs that Agricorp deliver help growers protect their valuable businesses against risks like large income declines, adverse weather, lost markets, and increased costs.

Here’s a look at participation in acreage loss coverage, as of Dec 12. You will notice that participation has remained stable while the value of coverage (liability) increased by over \$10 million in the last four years. Premiums also remained stable and affordable with the government paying 60 per cent of the cost.

In 2021, there were record payments. These payments under acreage loss coverage were predominantly due to excess rainfall (\$8.4 million), hail (\$1.1 million), and disease (\$0.98 million).

As of December 12, Agricorp has paid \$3.07 million predominantly due to disease (\$1.7 million), drought (\$569,704) and hail (\$332,537).

Average farm yield coverage for fresh market vegetables

This coverage gives growers a guaranteed level of production unique to their farm.

Coverage is based on comparing a grower’s actual yields to their average historical yields for each crop.

Under this coverage, growers

are covered for losses due to adverse weather, disease, pests, wildlife, or other uncontrollable natural perils.

Available coverage includes: unseeded acreage, replant, salvage benefit, and production loss.

In 2021, there was \$33.6 million in total liability and \$5.2 million in claims for average farm yield coverage for fresh market vegetables. These claims were predominantly due to excess rainfall (\$4.8 million), frost

(\$0.194 million), and disease (\$0.146 million).

Here’s a look at 2022 average farm yield coverage. As of December 12, Agricorp paid total claims of \$1.29 million with \$1.23 million because of drought.

Growers can watch Agricorp.com in the spring for 2023 program information.

COMING EVENTS 2023

Jan 4-5	Potato Expo, Gaylord Rockies Resort & Convention Center, Aurora, CO
Jan 22-24	North American Raspberry and Blackberry Conference, Tampa, FL
Jan 23-24	Scotia Horticultural Congress, Old Orchard Inn, Greenwich, NS
Jan 23-29	Guelph Organic Conference & Trade Show, University of Guelph Campus, ON
Jan 24-26	Nova Scotia Fruit Growers’ Association Annual Convention, Old Orchard Inn, Greenwich, NS
Jan 24-26	Manitoba Potato Production Days, Keystone Centre, Brandon, MB
Jan 26-28	Regenerative Agriculture and Growers’ Short Course, Tradex Centre, Abbotsford, BC
Jan 26	Les Producteurs de Pommes du Québec Annual General Meeting, Longueuil, QC HYBRID
Jan 31	Canadian Agri-Food in a Hungry World Conference, The Westin Hotel, Ottawa, ON
Feb 6-7	Empire State Producers Expo, Oncenter, Syracuse NY
Feb 8-10	Fruit Logistica, Berlin, Germany
Feb 12-15	International Fruit Tree Association Annual Conference & Tour, Amway Grand Plaza, Grand Rapids, MI
Feb 15	Canada Agriculture Day
Feb 21	Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers’ Association Annual General Meeting, Niagara Falls, ON
Feb 21	Berry Growers of Ontario Annual General Meeting, Embassy Suites, Niagara Falls, ON
Feb 22-23	Ontario Fruit & Vegetable Convention, Niagara Falls Convention Centre, Niagara Falls, ON
Feb 28	British Columbia Fruit Growers’ Association 134th Annual Convention, Penticton, BC
Mar 2	Ontario Potato Conference & Trade Show, Delta Hotel, Guelph, ON
Mar 7-10	North American Strawberry Growers Association Meeting and Strawberry Symposium, San Luis Obispo, CA
Mar 12-18	Ag Safety Week
Mar 14 – 16	Fruit & Vegetable Growers of Canada Annual General Meeting, Westin Bayshore Vancouver, BC
Mar 21-23	Minor Use Priority Setting Meeting, Gatineau, QC



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The value of trend reports

Continued from page 11

7. Climate-conscious call-outs: Climate consciousness is more relevant than ever, and as a result, brands are working to improve the impact of food and beverage production. Across our aisles, product labels are speaking to sustainability efforts in a time when consumers expect brands and retailers to do more related to carbon and climate.

8. Retro remix: Retro products are being reinvented with consideration for the wellness-conscious customer, creating the ultimate mash-up of throwback indulgences with better ingredients and special diets in mind.

9. Only the finest for fido: Pet supplements such as bone broth have exploded onto the scene, and pet-food recipes are dialing up the deliciousness.

10. Avocado oil craze: Taking the place of other oils such as canola and safflower oil in snacks, mayonnaise, ready-to-eat meals and more, avocado oil is sure to stick around.

There are other sources for

trend reports such as data analysis companies such as Mintel and Nielsen IQ. They have access to front-end sales and therefore can predict trends in the future. FCC publishes a number of trend reports and updates through the year, helpful because it is Canadian and includes benchmarks for comparison. Often publications such as Canadian Grocer will share trends.

Create your own trends

Most businesses should have their own sales data to review. Comparing your results year over year can tell you a lot about what is happening with your customers and consumers. Look for trends regarding sizes and different SKUs to help with your future plans. You should consider what you are producing and inputs such as packaging and flavours if you are doing added-value products.

If you are selling products online and/or attract consumers to your website, you can learn a lot from the metrics available. Explore what consumers are buying and where they are visiting from.

Given the challenges of the pandemic, you might have to go back to 2019 to find a base year

to compare results. We know sales fluctuated between retail and food service and there were many other factors influencing sales data. Once you decide on a baseline year you can explore your own data for trends to help you predict the future.

SKUFood trends for 2023

We have some trends for you to consider as we get into 2023. We approach this a bit differently as our trends are developed for suppliers in the food and beverage industry. They are based on what we learn talking to different retailers, suppliers and stakeholders in the industry.

1. Calm focus on the priorities: Everyone has endured two to three years of upheaval and challenges to produce. Retailers are looking to work with suppliers who are focused on how they can get it done as opposed to the reasons why they can't.

2. Sales growth is key: With consumers returning to food service, retailers are facing negative comparable sales. Any supplier who delivers positive year-over-year growth will be ahead of many.

3. Stability in product cost: Food inflation is a big issue and retailers are eager to work with suppliers who find a way to keep their costs in line and deliver stability.

4. Local products that sell: Retailers have allocated more space and resources to regional and local brands. Now they need to see them deliver sales.

5. Sustainability matters: Sustainable packaging, reduced food waste and your environmental footprint all matter. They can be a path to the shelf or your route off the shelf if someone else in your category figures it out.

6. Tasty plant-based products: Until now, it has been enough to be plant-based, now the products need to taste good and sell. There are opportunities but plant-based is not enough anymore.

7. Reduce logistics costs: Products need to get from where they are produced to the shelf and it is costing more all the time. Retailers might entertain creative solutions such as fewer deliveries of more products, to share some benefits.

8. Accountants will have more

input: Retailers are facing higher interest rates like everyone else. The cost of inventory and when it is paid for will be under more focus and pushed to the limits.

9. Communication is evolving: Some retailers are back with in-person meetings and others prefer video. Keep an open mind. Remember they are all different.

10. Watch your category: With sales declines, food inflation and focus on inventory, a lot might change. There could be a lot of pressure to drive private label, reduce SKUs and focus on items that sell. Spend time in the stores and talk to your customers about how to deliver sales growth.

As we enter 2023, it does not mean everything changes, but it is a good time to reflect on where you should invest your resources. Focus on the trends that are right for your markets, your consumers and your customers.

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



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FOCUS: GRAPES, VINEYARDS & BERRIES

What’s happening in social media, the new grapevine



Leeann Froese, owner of Town Hall Brands, was asked to be Canada’s first ambassador for #winelover in 2015. She is an administrator on this global Facebook community of more than 26,000 people. Her agency is based in Vancouver, British Columbia representing many winery brands in the province.

KAREN DAVIDSON

Facebook, like. Instagram, like. Twitter, maybe not so much. Leeann Froese, proprietor of

Town Hall Brands, was already an avid adopter of Twitter when she launched her winery-focused agency in 2013 in Vancouver, British Columbia. Twitter is acknowledged as a favourite

10 Most Downloaded Apps in 2021					
Worldwide					
#1		TikTok	#6		Snapchat
#2		Instagram	#7		Zoom
#3		Facebook	#8		Messenger
#4		WhatsApp	#9		CapCut
#5		Telegram	#10		Spotify

In the fast-moving social media universe, 2022 data will likely show a huge uptick in Mastodon as well as Hive because Twitter followers have migrated says Leeann Froese. Source: www.TheSocialShepherd.ca. Here is an example of a successful client Instagram post <https://bit.ly/3FRBMmI>

hang-out of journalists and opinion makers. But since Elon Musk took over the social media giant in late October 2022, confidence in the channel has eroded. The lack of proper

moderation is causing angst amongst Twitter users.

“Brand safety is threatened if a client advertises on that channel and suddenly, content is side by side with anti-Semitic comments or science disinformation,” says Froese. “But if you’re not doing paid ads and if you’re engaged with a specific audience on Twitter as a follower, then you’ll be amplifying like-minded people. You have a lot more control over where your posts appear. But there is still no way to guarantee your followers don’t also follow some morally questionable accounts that your content could reside beside. This is why many brands – and people – are leaving Twitter as it seems like an unsafe place for brands.”

All of this to say, that social media is a rapidly changing universe. Consider the sensation of TikTok, the platform launched in 2016 for short-form videos. During the pandemic, it grew by 180 per cent in the demographic of 15-25 year-olds. TikTok was the most downloaded app in 2021, but with its popularity among a very young demographic, it’s not an appropriate channel to communicate wine brands.

That’s why social media savvy is in high demand to create brand awareness and build community for lifestyle-oriented brands. A lot of brand owners invest in social media with either and in house employee or an agency because they know they need to be part of the digital conversation, but they struggle with the ways to see if it is worth the investment.

Off the top, Froese says it’s difficult to measure return on investment for entertaining and educating potential customers.

Brands get focused on follower counts and this is a bit of a vanity measure. Engagement is where the focus should be.

Most social media marketing experts agree that a good engagement rate is between 1 to 5

per cent. However the more followers, the harder it is to achieve growth.

To make a commercial offer and get customers in the sales funnel for conversion, paid social content should drive people to a landing page. But there is a lot of competition in the space, so companies need to manage expectations and really consider what social networks are for: sharing stories and updates to build brand awareness and an audience of followers.

So for example if a client has 4,000 followers on Instagram and earns 40 likes (1%), she says the client shouldn’t be disappointed. “Wouldn’t you like to have the opportunity to have 40 customers in a room? That’s a good number.”


Using channels such as Instagram, Facebook and YouTube, Town Hall Brands has been successful in telling stories about people, places and product. If it’s a photo of macerating grapes, then that’s a Did You Know? moment. If it’s about soaking grapeskins, then that’s an “aha” moment about Pinot Noir. But most successful are stories about people. Far and away, Froese says that the most popular social media hits show people.

The social media landscape is evolving in new ways.

“If you’re not making videos now, you should be exploring this medium for 2023,” says Froese. “Make sure the audio is of high quality. Facebook is now a place to see 15-second videos.”

“If you’re an Instagram user, then make sure your photos are in focus and well-lit.”

Finally, never lose sight of your audience. Target your messaging to the right audience at the right time. Today, this means building and scaling a successful micro-influencer strategy. Like wine, it’s about quality.



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FOCUS: GRAPES, VINEYARDS & BERRIES

From berry to bottle, winemakers review the 2022 season



Brock Oenology and Viticulture graduates Barclay Robinson, Kim Gorman and Gabriel Demarco share their thoughts on the 2022 harvest.

ANDREA PETERS

Although the 2022 harvest season presented challenges for winemakers across Canada — a cool, wet spring and early summer in British Columbia, winter damage in Ontario and Hurricane Fiona in Nova Scotia — three of Brock’s Oenology and Viticulture

(OEVI) graduates all agree they are excited about the quality of fruit this vintage. Barclay Robinson (BSc ‘09), winemaker at Road 13 Vineyards in Oliver, B.C., says if producers took care of the fruit early in the season, they reaped the rewards. “The fruit came in pristine,” he says. “The Syrah and Malbec are particularly special this year. They

have an elegant power, and I am really looking forward to seeing how they turn out in barrel.” Kim Gorman (OEVC ‘07), assistant winemaker at Domaine de Grand Pré in Nova Scotia, says the 2022 growing season in the Annapolis Valley was quite warm and humid prior to Hurricane Fiona, and then the weather became unpredictable.

“Although we lost some volume due to rot, considering the humidity and the hurricane, we made out pretty well,” she says. “I think our Marquette is going to be lovely this year, it came in quite ripe and flavourful.” In Niagara, Gabriel Demarco (BSc ‘13) of Cave Spring Vineyard says despite the winter damage which affected the size of the crop, the fruit quality was exceptional.

“We had some dry conditions but a nice amount of rain and timely as well. When we were just getting into drought stress, we got a bit of precipitation,” he says. “We had a beautiful harvest window and we picked some of the best Riesling in the history of our company this year. It’s exceptional stuff.”

Vintage variation plays a significant role in Canada’s cool climate wine regions, where vineyards are situated between 30- and 50-degrees latitude north. Though this may be a deterrent for some, Demarco not only embraces variability, it’s part of why he chose to make wine in Niagara.

“I love that challenge of the variability of each vintage and the precision that is required to follow the grapes from bud break all the way to the finish — understanding what the vines are going through and then adjusting your approach in order to maximize any given season,” he says.

Gorman says the hands-on experience she had during the Certificate in Grape and Wine Technology (OEVC) program in both vineyards and the teaching winery at the Cool Climate Oenology and Viticulture Institute (CCOVI) was invaluable.

“Brock offered a much more scientific, in-depth approach to the ‘why’ of how things happen during winemaking,” she says. “Knowing the ‘why’ behind certain actions allows me to adapt to different conditions, since every year is always a little different.”

With family from the east coast, Gorman felt Nova Scotia was a natural fit. “I love that the industry here is about where the Niagara wine industry was when I was growing up,” she says. “Now, I get to experience the innovation and growth of a wine industry from this side of it and it’s very exciting.”

Robinson, who was a pre-medical student before pivoting to winemaking, says the OEVI program helped fulfil both his scientific and artistic sides.

“Brock gives you the analytical and scientific tools to draw on, so that you can troubleshoot and trust your palate,” he says. “It gives you the knowledge to assess anything that is going on in the vintage, whether it is in the vineyard or winery.”

Prior to his career in wine-making, Robinson was a sommelier in fine-dining restaurants, giving him a unique perspective on blending and refining his wines from berry to bottle.

“Tasting as a sommelier versus tasting as a winemaker is a completely different skill set, but it’s similar enough that you can adapt it very quickly,” he says. “It’s just a different hat, is the best way of putting it, instead of assessing wine for ageability, you’re assessing whether there’s anything that’s kind of going sideways that needs to be stick handled or analyzed.”

For more information on grape and wine undergraduate degrees (OEVI and OEVC) and CCOVI programming, visit ccovi.ca

Andrea Peters is marketing and communications officer for the Cool Climate, Oenology and Viticulture Institute.

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FOCUS: GRAPES, VINEYARDS & BERRIES

Nova Scotia touts its wine roots

2022 marked the 40th anniversary of the Grape Growers Association of Nova Scotia (GGANS) celebrating the province’s long history and a bright future when it comes to growing grapes and making wine.

Some of the earliest reports of grape plantings in Nova Scotia date back to 1611, with a vineyard established by Louis Hébert in Port Royal. By 1913 the Kentville Research Station was working with experimental varieties. Fast forward to 1980 when the first commercial vintage was produced by Roger Dial at Grand Pré and to 1982 when the Grape Growers Association of Nova Scotia was formed by a handful of industry pioneers with a vibrant vision for the future.

Today, Nova Scotia boasts more than 70 independent grape growers supporting approximately 20 wineries, all of whom are dedicated to producing world-class wines that showcase the terroir of Nova Scotia.

GGANS has contributed to industry advancement in significant ways. A founding member of the Canadian Grapevine Certification Network, GGANS focuses on grape research and certified, disease-free vines. Working with Perennia they

provide up-to-date information to local growers on Best Practices in Vineyard Management. GGANS often works alongside the industry association representing local wineries, Wine Growers Nova Scotia, on common industry matters.

The focus on quality has paid dividends in the form of internationally recognized wines and the development of Tidal Bay, Nova Scotia’s signature appellation wine reflecting the terroir of a region heavily influenced by its proximity to the Bay of Fundy.

Most recently, in April 2022, the Nova Scotia government announced the creation of a wine authority to administer a quality standards program for Nova Scotia wines.

“We are fortunate to have a unique climate and talented winemakers producing world-class products in Nova Scotia,” said agriculture minister Greg Morrow. “A wine authority will support the industry’s focus on quality for consumers and help the sector grow and prosper.”

Source: Grape Growers Association of Nova Scotia



Beausoleil Farmstead: Artisanal Winery and Nova Scotia’s first Vinous Cidery. www.beausoleilvineyards.ca Photo courtesy of Melanie Eelman.

Organic vineyards test biostimulant

As growers face the challenge of balancing reduced N, P and K fertilizer applications against farm profitability, Ontario-based Velocity Green is offering effective, affordable bio-solutions for Canadian farmers.

Together with the Vineland Research and Innovation Centre (Vineland), Velocity Green has conducted biological trials with Ontario vineyards, berry production and vegetable crops.

“Working with third-party consulting and research facilities such as Vineland is a key part of our mandate to incorporate biologicals into conventional and organic farming across the country,” says James Bradshaw, CEO of Norfolk County-based Velocity Green Inc.

Qinglu Ying PhD, research scientist, Plant Production, Vineland, spearheaded the project to capture the fruit composition analysis on a plot at biodynamic Southbrook Wineries, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario. The key findings of this research show grapevines were generally healthier with ACF Fruit and Vegetable biostimulant, indicated by higher relative chlorophyll content in the early season and higher relative chlorophyll at harvest. These are factors indicative of plant health.

Len Van Hoffen, vineyard manager, Southbrook Vineyard, says that healthier plants within the treated block were also associated with reduced sprays, higher level of nutrition and minimal sour rot and/or bunch rot. Reducing the need for spraying is the biggest draw for ACF Fruit and Vegetable biostimulant.

Data are available at www.velocity-green.com.



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FOCUS: GRAPES, VINEYARDS & BERRIES

VineAlert licensed to two provincial industry associations

Winter’s arrival signals the time for the return of VineAlert, a flagship industry outreach service developed by Brock University’s Cool Climate Oenology and Viticulture Institute (CCOVI).

Now that the research and development of the system has been completed and as growers have come to rely on the program since its launch in 2010, CCOVI has licensed VineAlert to two industry associations to ensure the service continues to support grape growers.

The Grape Growers of Ontario (GGO) and Centre de Recherche Agroalimentaire de Mirabel (CRAM-Mirabel) will manage the program in Ontario and Québec, respectively.

VineAlert tracks grapevine bud cold hardiness throughout the dormant period from fall to spring to assist grape growers in mitigating the impact of a cold weather event, to avoid winter injury of the vine and crop loss. Grapevine cold hardiness is not static, but varies throughout the dormant period, determined through a grapevine’s genetic potential and environmental

conditions.

Bud sampling and testing for VineAlert will be completed by the GGO in Ontario and CRAM-Mirabel in Québec throughout the entire dormant season. Based on this data, the industry associations can send real-time alerts through the VineAlert platform to warn growers which grape varieties are at risk of sustaining damage from a forecasted cold weather event, enabling their growers to determine when to utilize wind machines or other freeze-avoidance methods to mitigate the impact of any potential damage.

CCOVI director Debbie Inglis said this example of technology transfer back to industry illustrates the Institute’s commitment to advancing the Canadian grape and wine industry.

“What began as a research tool has expanded over the years to become an important service for the industry,” she said. “This investment from our stakeholders shows us that the industry has seen value in VineAlert in order to provide growers with the



Québec grape growers will benefit from access to VineAlert this winter.

ability to make informed cold hardiness-related decisions.”

GGO CEO Debbie Zimmerman said VineAlert is an important tool that growers can use to “mitigate further devastating winter damage in Ontario’s vineyards.”

“As a founding partner of

Ontario’s VineAlert technology, Grape Growers of Ontario support our members’ endeavours to monitor and adapt their vineyard management practices during critical changes in the weather,” she said.

Andréanne Hébert-Haché, Brock University Biological Sciences PhD candidate and viticulture research scientist at the Centre de Recherche Agroalimentaire de Mirabel (CRAM-Mirabel), will oversee VineAlert’s launch in Quebec. Hébert-Haché said providing access to VineAlert for Québec’s grape growers was imperative, as the climate and core varieties are very different from Ontario.

“Quebec winters are generally much colder compared to Ontario, which has led the industry to favour cold-hardy cultivars, such as Frontenac and Marquette,” she explained. “As cold hardiness is significantly impacted by temperatures and varies between cultivars and site, implementing a Québec-specific cold-hardiness monitoring

program was critical.”

For the past three years, researchers at the CRAM-Mirabel have been collecting cold-hardiness data and sharing it through e-bulletins every other week, so Hébert-Haché said joining VineAlert will bring many advantages to the region’s growers.

“Leveraging VineAlert’s technology will allow us to share data as soon as it is collected, aiding growers in making faster decisions regarding cold protection as they will be able to subscribe and be instantly notified when new data relevant to their vineyard is available.” she said.

“Moreover, VineAlert hosts data we previously collected, allowing growers and agronomists to compare annual trends in cold hardiness between sites and cultivars.”

For additional information or to subscribe to VineAlert, visit ccovi.ca/vine-alert



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FOCUS: GRAPES, VINEYARDS & BERRIES

Bee Vectoring Technologies seeks approval of biological fungicide in Canada

Headquartered in Mississauga, Ontario, Bee Vectoring Technologies (BVT) has tackled large markets in the U.S. with its proprietary commercially-reared bees that deliver pest and disease management biologicals. This commercially proven technology is on its way to Canada with submission of its *Clonostachys rosea* CR-7 (CR-7) biological fungicide for regulatory review.

The company founded in 2000 now has a track record with numerous crops, including blueberries and strawberries. A Georgia blueberry farmer, for example, has shared that he’s gained higher marketable yields in both conventional and organic fields with the VectorHive Bumblebee system in which bees deliver biologicals to plant blooms.

“Canadian growers face the same disease pressure as those in the U.S., and the adoption of biologicals in the country is growing rapidly,” said Ashish Malik, CEO of BVT. “It’s a strong market opportunity for BVT to scale our success in the U.S. into Canada with our strong value proposition of sustainable agriculture.”

Malik added, “BVT was granted an experimental use

permit (EUP) from the regulatory agency which allows us to conduct demonstration trials in multiple crops in Canada starting in 2023, even before the regulatory approval is obtained, which will create demand for our system and assist in quicker adoption once registration is granted.”

For the past two years, BVT has worked with the Health Canada Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA).

“A biological product typically takes two to two-and-a-half years for Canadian regulatory approval,” said Sherri Tedford, technical and regulatory manager at BVT. “Since we are headquartered and founded in Canada, we are very familiar with the agriculture landscape here and have had numerous pre-submissions requests resolved with PMRA and therefore do not anticipate any major issues with the submission.”

The submission is focused on crops that require pollination by commercially reared and managed bees, such as strawberries, tomatoes, canola, blueberries, sunflowers, cherries and plums.

In other developments, BVT has partnered with Missouri-based Agri Spray Drones,



These VectorHive Bumblebee systems were set up in a Georgia blueberry operation at bloom time.

leading-edge provider of end-to-end agricultural drone solutions. That initiative will trial drone application of CR-7 biological fungicide on large-acre crops such as soybeans, corn, alfalfa and canola.

“BVT has been primarily focused on delivering CR-7 via commercially-managed bees,” says Malik. “Additionally, we have also been working on alternate delivery methods including foliar,

soil-applied, seed treatment – and now drone applications. This exciting development is part of our overall strategy to maximize the utility of our core patented asset, CR-7, and expand its application into non-pollinated crops providing farmers an additional sustainable tool to control pathogens and improve yields.”

Drones are quickly becoming a desirable delivery method for

plant protection products for the agricultural industry. They are fast, evasive of crop damage, can access fields in wet conditions where ground tractors can’t, and can fly close to the canopy, minimizing overspray or drift. In 2020, the global agriculture drone market was valued at more than US \$1.3 billion, and is expected to reach US \$10.5 billion by 2028.



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FOCUS: GRAPES, VINEYARDS & BERRIES

Getting off the ground: growing strawberries in substrates



Peat is screened and stored by fraction at BVB Substrates in the Netherlands (L-R: Fraction 0, 1, 2).

SHAWN MALLEN

Maybe you’re thinking, “The ground is perfectly fine! What’s wrong with growing strawberries directly in the soil?” My answer to that is nothing. I’m not here to tell you how to grow. Every grower is different, and every context is different. In this article, I just want to share a little bit about types of berry substrates available to growers, what’s in them and what to watch out for, and some tips and benefits for growers looking to make a change.

Know your substrates

Substrates are sort of like cakes. Each one uses a combination of standard ingredients to make different recipes that serve different purposes. Those ingredients are typically peat, perlite and coir.

Peat is screened by chunk size and produced in fractions that range from more water (fraction 0) to more air (fraction 2). A combination of fractions can be used in mixes, and the most common are fractions 1 and 2. European peat has become the gold standard for berry production because of its complex fibre structure that offers perfect root-substrate contact.

Perlite, an expanded volcanic rock, is a lightweight material with high porosity and lots of air, which increases the Air-Filled Porosity rate (AFP) of a substrate. It also makes a substrate more hydrophilic by attracting water.

Coir, also known as cocopeat, used to be considered a waste product of coco fibre production but is now seen as a valuable raw material for substrate production. Fibres are taken from the inner part of the coconut shell and stored until the soft material decays, leaving only tough bark. The bark is processed into coir pith or cut into coco chips, which come in fine and medium grades.

Like perlite, coir also improves the AFP of a substrate and, when blended with peat, stabilizes the pH level.

It’s important that you only use washed and buffered coir to maintain good electrical conductivity (EC) in your substrate. Strawberries are highly sensitive to high salinity and calcium deficiency and unprocessed coir can lead to white fruit production and other defects.

Getting the recipe right

Substrates have physical (air, water, stability) and chemical (EC, pH, nutrients) qualities. It’s the producer’s job to develop recipes that will achieve the desired crop performance. Like cakes, substrates are made in batches and quality-tested before heading to the grower.

Several factors go into deciding on a substrate recipe, including type of plant material, climate, crop duration, and irrigation system – just to name a few. Getting the recipe wrong can lead to headaches for growers, as seen in this comparison photo. One recipe is poorly suited to the grower’s irrigation method, while the other one, to quote Goldilocks, is “just right.”

Compaction of your substrate can also make a big difference in results. What you want to see is a lot of air, which is good for healthy root production. Too much compaction creates problems.

To avoid compaction and improve AFP, aim for a complex mix that uses European block peat in different size fractions, combined with coir and perlite. BC5++ is a good example, and it has been intentionally designed for the North American climate. Consistency plays a role in reducing compaction, too, and this can be achieved through pot filling machines.



White fruit and other plant defects caused by high salinity and calcium deficiency.



L: Substrate recipe unsuited to irrigation system. R: The right substrate for the right plant in the right context.

Tips for setup

When it comes to getting berries off the ground, here are a few helpful tips to get set up.

Standard substrate formats: Grow bags, big bales, compressed coir slabs, 70L bags

Row spacing: 1 metre / 39” – the width of a 1 metre growbag or wave trough

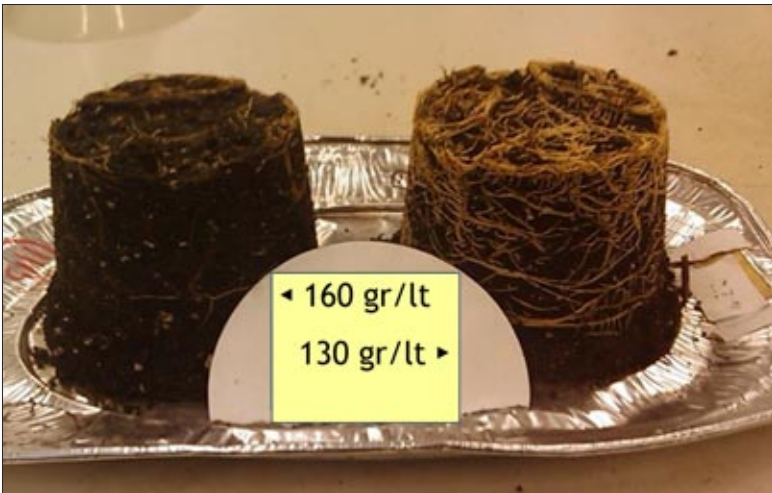
Number of plants: 8-12 plants per grow bag or trough is typical, depending on variety

Benefits of substrate driving berry innovation

Whether you’re moving your crop into an old hoop house or turning over a high-tech greenhouse, getting your berries off the ground can bring a number of benefits to your production. Higher yields, improved quality, easier labour conditions, less chance of botrytis or anthracnose, as well as damage from snails, birds or other pests... the list goes on.

For growers looking to improve sustainability, using a clean substrate in a protected environment also reduces your need for chemicals. Most systems collect run-off water and fertilizers, which can be reused after disinfection.

These benefits, combined with



Air in the substrate supports root development. 160 grams of substrate per litre, compared to 130 grams per litre.

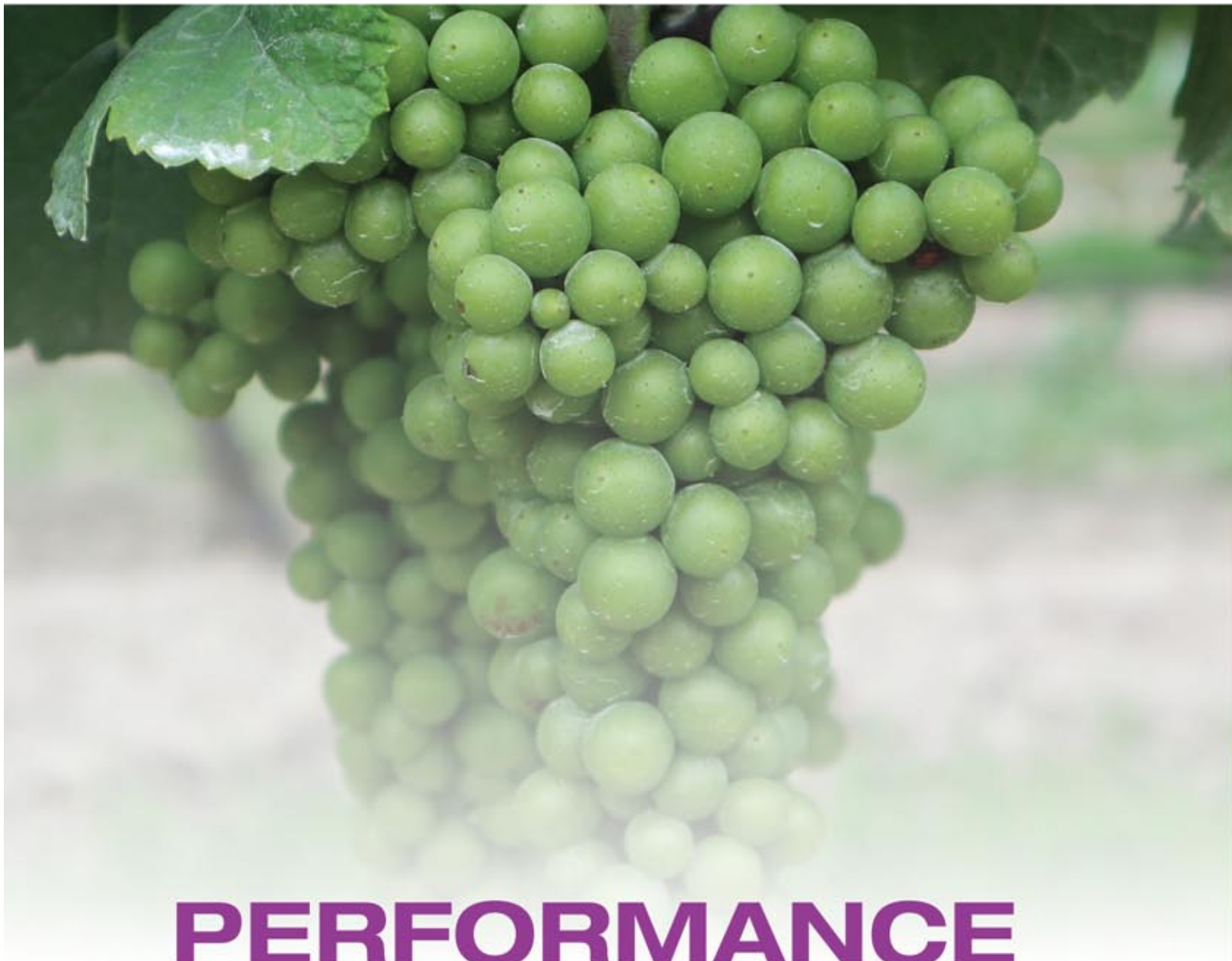
new options and knowledge within the industry, are helping to grow the berry industry here in Canada and increase interest in substrate-grown berries.

In the future, we can expect to see raspberries, blackberries and blueberries grown in the greenhouse to extend the season of these crops. This is being tested in greenhouses across the Netherlands and Europe. Substrates and systems for these crops are now being fine-tuned and it’s likely we’ll see adaptations for the North American environment within the next couple of years, if not sooner.

Shawn Mallen is manager, hydroponics and berries, A.M.A. Horticulture.

Benefits of growing in substrate

- Reduced disease pressure
- Easier pest control
- Lower pesticide usage
- Efficient water/nutrition usage
- Increased ability to “steer” crop
- Plant material/tray plants
- Clean fruit
- Growth control
- Improved food safety
- Labour benefits/efficiencies
- Structure options/suppliers
- Pot/container options
- Efficient production & packing
- Improved marketability of fruit
- Improved yield



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Day-neutral strawberry varieties in Ontario

A 2022 update from the Canadian Berry Trial Network

BEATRICE AMYOTTE

Strawberry variety trials in Ontario, Québec and Nova Scotia show variable yield trends to go along with variable weather patterns in recent years.

Strawberry trials

Ten-day neutral strawberry varieties were tested in Ontario, Québec and Nova Scotia over the past five years. Preliminary results suggest that a small number of varieties have consistent performance across years and locations. The trials were performed by the Canadian Berry Trial Network (CBTN). The CBTN is a collaboration between small fruit research teams in Ontario, Québec, Nova Scotia and British Columbia. Our objective is to perform coordinated variety trials for blueberry, raspberry and strawberry. This update includes results from the eastern provinces, and focuses on the day-neutral strawberry trials.

Trial locations

The Ontario day-neutral strawberry trials were performed by the University of Guelph at the Simcoe Research Station. This site is within Horticultural Zone 6b (Natural Resources Canada). The Nova Scotia trials were performed by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) at the Kentville Research and Development Centre. The site is within Zone 6a, which is slightly colder than Zone 6b. The Quebec trials were performed by Carrefour industriel et expérimental de Lanaudière (CIEL), an independent agricultural research institute located about 50 km north of Montreal. The CIEL research farm is within Zone 5b, which is the coldest of the three sites.

Climate

Variety performance was impacted by climate conditions in each trial location over the past five years. Québec consistently had the coldest winters, with average temperatures around -10°C. In comparison, the winter temperatures in Ontario* and Nova Scotia were around -5°C. Spring and fall were warmer in Ontario and Nova Scotia as well, however the summer temperatures tended to be highest in Québec and Ontario. Overall, the range of temperatures was widest

in Québec, and narrowest in Nova Scotia. Rainfall was variable between locations and years. Nova Scotia was the wettest location, with 1000-1400 mm of precipitation per year. The wettest years for Ontario* were 2018 and 2019, with about 1000 mm each. The next two years were moderately dry, while 2022 has been the driest year so far with only 400 mm by mid-October. Rainfall patterns in Québec were similar to those in Ontario, however 2020 was dryer and 2022 is on track to be wetter. These precipitation trends show that growing seasons in eastern Canada are becoming dryer and less predictable. **Climate records quoted here are from Ridgetown, ON, not Simcoe. Both are Zone 6b.*

Climate and yield

The differences in precipitation and temperature had pronounced impacts on strawberry variety yields in each year and location. There was no single variety that surpassed all others in all conditions. However there were five varieties that showed either average or above-average yields in at least two separate trial conditions. These varieties are considered to be consistent and reliable for production in Ontario. Data collection and analysis are ongoing, therefore the following results are considered preliminary. Growers are encouraged to test a small number of plants to ensure that the varieties highlighted here are compatible with their own growing conditions.

Results

Ten varieties were tested in Ontario, Québec and Nova Scotia trials planted from 2019 to 2021. These included industry standard cultivars, recently named cultivars, and advanced selections from Canadian breeding programs. The strawberries were grown in plasticulture beds in open fields with drip fertigation and conventional pest management. Each variety was planted in four replicates, with 10 plants per replicate. Plants were harvested in the fall of the planting year, as well as the following spring-summer. Averages were calculated for each location and planting year. Marketable yields varied by location and year. The results were scaled to represent varieties with average, above-average, or

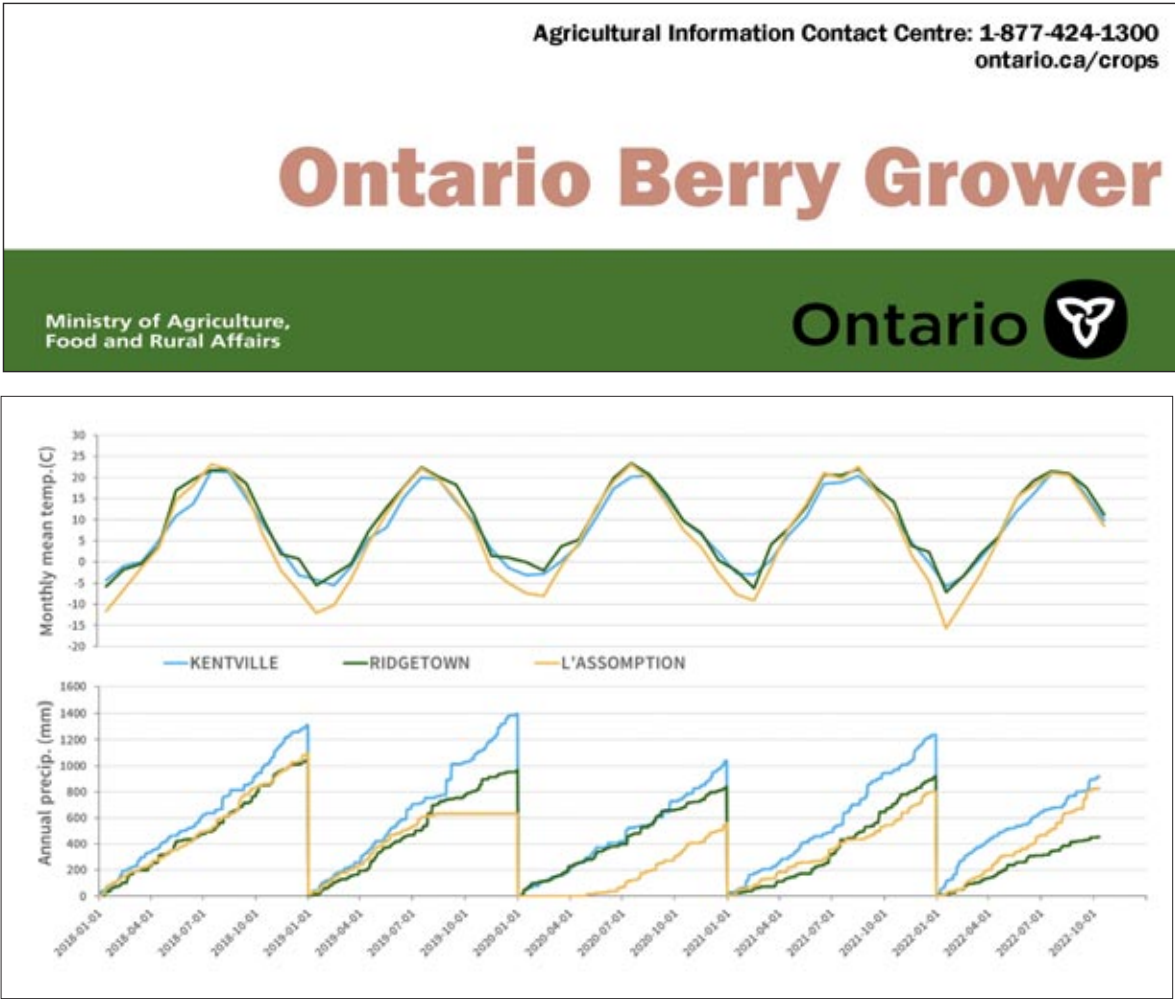


Fig. 1. Monthly average temperatures and cumulative annual rainfall in Kentville, NS, Ridgetown, ON, and L'Assomption, QC from 2018-2022. Data from Environment and Climate Change Canada.

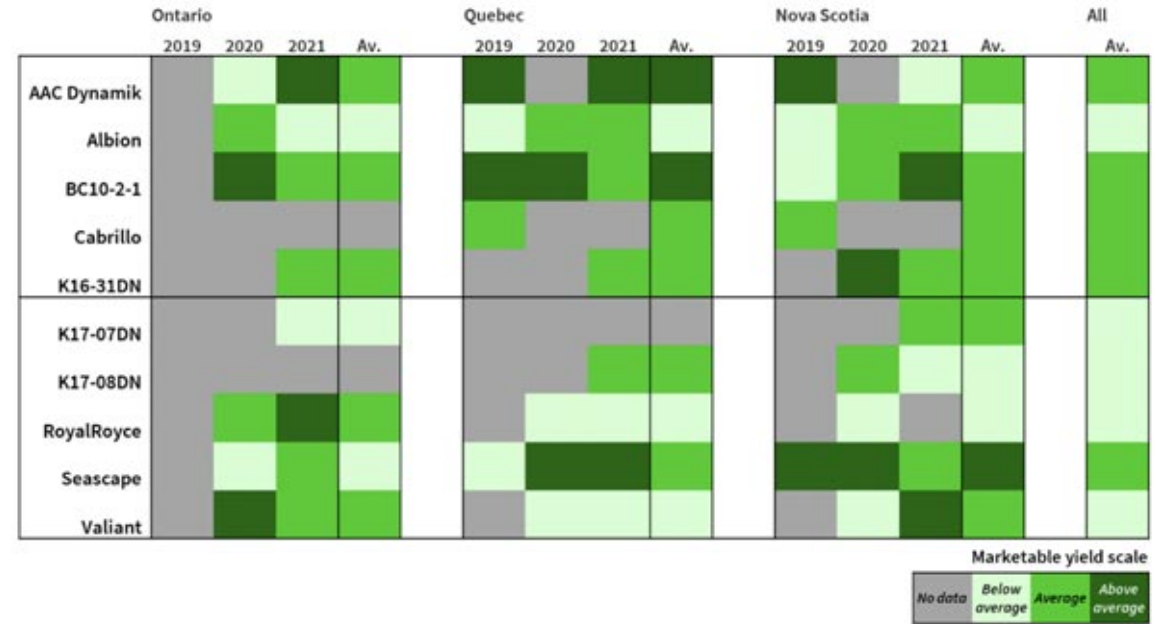


Fig. 2. Scaled yield data for day-neutral strawberry varieties tested in Kentville, NS, Simcoe, ON, and L'Assomption, QC. Varieties were ranked as either below-average, average, or above-average in marketable yield for each location and planting year. Average (Av.) yield potential was rated within and across locations.

below-average marketable yields in each trial. This simplified the identification of varieties with potential stability across variable climates. In Ontario, three varieties were found to have average or above-average yields in at least two years. These were BC 10-2-1, Royal Royce, and Valiant. Among these, only BC 10-2-1 was found to also have stable yields in Québec and Nova Scotia. This suggests that BC 10-2-1 may have adaptation to the more extreme temperatures in Québec and the more intense rainfalls in Nova Scotia, as well as to the comparably temperate and dry conditions in Ontario. **BC 10-2-1 advanced selection** BC 10-2-1 is an advanced selection from the BC Berry Breeding Program. Results from the CBTN suggest that BC 10-2-1 is adaptable to variable

climates, and therefore is a good candidate for eastern Canada. The analysis of quality attributes is ongoing, but preliminary data from Nova Scotia show that BC 10-2-1 has large, firm berries with low acid and good visual appeal. BC 10-2-1 has also been tested for about five years in British Columbia through CBTN research trials and on-farm trials. The breeder Dr. Michael Dossett is currently in discussions with stakeholders to determine whether this variety is ready for commercial release. Stay tuned for announcements related to BC 10-2-1 in the next year or two. **Other varieties** Other varieties of interest identified in the day-neutral strawberry trials include Royal Royce, Valiant, AAC Dynamik, and K16-31 DN. Royal Royce and Valiant are

two new cultivars from California. Both showed average or above-average yields in Ontario, but did not perform well in Québec. This suggests that the two varieties are cold-sensitive and may be a good choice for warmer locations such as Zone 6b. AAC Dynamik is a new cultivar from the former AAFC breeding program in Québec. It consistently yielded above-average in Québec, but showed variable performance in Ontario and Nova Scotia. It may therefore be sensitive to very wet or very dry conditions, but well-adapted to colder regions in Zone 5b. K16-31 DN is an advanced selection from the AAFC breeding program in Nova Scotia. It showed average yields in all three provinces, but needs another one to two years of testing to determine its consistency. **Continued on next page**

ONTARIO BERRY NEWS

Day-neutral strawberry varieties in Ontario

Continued from page 22

The industry standard varieties Albion and Seascape were also included in the trials. Both varieties showed average or below-average yields in Ontario. This suggests that there is value in trying out some of the newer varieties as potential replacements for these longer-lived standards.

Other trials

The CBTN team is continuing to collect and analyze data from other trials, including June-bearing strawberry, floricanes and primocane raspberry, and highbush blueberry. Highlights from these trials will be assembled into a final project report, expected to be released around May 2023.

Next cycle

The CBTN team is also getting ready for the next five-year trial cycle that will start in April 2023. Our research proposal is presently in review by the Fruit and Vegetable Growers of Canada (FVGC), the national organization that administers the Horticulture Cluster. The plan is to continue our coordinated variety trials of blueberry, raspberry and strawberry in four

provinces. Starting in 2023, the CBTN will also add two new layers of research to the project. The first will be an evaluation of disease resistance in the trial varieties, and the second will be an evaluation of postharvest storability. We have recruited experts in pathology and physiology to help us with these new objectives, which we hope will provide additional value to Canadian berry growers. The funding decisions for this research are expected in early 2023.

Research team

The CBTN research leads are Beatrice Amyotte, Eric Gerbrandt, John Zandstra, and Pierre Lafontaine. We are supported by academic collaborators, berry specialists, and representatives of provincial berry grower associations in Ontario, Québec, Nova Scotia and British Columbia. Special thanks to Erica Pate for advising the Ontario trials and facilitating this research update.

Funding and administration

The CBTN is an activity of Horticulture Cluster 3, a research partnership administered by the FVGC and AAFC. The research is supported by



Fig. 3. Five new day neutral strawberry varieties, compared to standard cultivar Albion. Photos from 2021 CBTN trials in Kentville, Nova Scotia.

the Berry Growers of Ontario and the University of Guelph, as well as grower associations and research institutions in Québec, Nova Scotia and British Columbia. We thank these organizations for their generous funding support and

look forward to partnering again for the next five years.

Beatrice Amyotte is one of the research leads of the Canadian Berry Trial Network.

Berry Growers of Ontario announce AGM agenda

Mark your calendars for the Berry Growers of Ontario Annual Meeting, February 21, and the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Convention, February 22-23, in Niagara Falls. We have a full program planned with researchers, industry, and growers joining to share their expertise, insights, and experiences. Contact Bernie Solymar at info@ontarioberries.com to register for the Berry Growers of Ontario Annual Meeting and registration is open for the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Convention here: <https://www.ofvc.ca/>. Looking forward to seeing everyone!



Berry Growers of Ontario Annual Meeting Program Tuesday, February 21, 2023 – Embassy Suites, Niagara Falls		
9:00 am	Introduction and Welcome	
9:15 am	Grower Profile	Mitch Deschatelets, Leisure Farms
10:00 am	Pollinator Stewardship in Berry Crops (virtual)	Ana Heck, Michigan State University
10:30 am	Berry Research Update	Dr. Melanie Kalischuk, University of Guelph
10:45 am	Overview from the BC Berry Industry	Dr. Eric Gerbrandt, BCBC/RIDC/BCSGA
11:15 am	Stocking Your Mental Health Toolbox with Agriculture Wellness Ontario	Canadian Mental Health Association, Ontario
12:20	Lunch & BGO Annual Meeting	
	Marketing & Management Track-	Production Track –
2:00 pm	Single Use Plastic Ban – What Does it Mean for Growers? Angela Reid, Fruit and Vegetable Growers of Canada (virtual)	Metagenomics Based Monitoring of Plant Viruses in Blueberry Production Systems, Dr. Jonathan Griffiths, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
2:15 pm	Berry Cost of Production, John Molenhuis, OMAFRA	Crop Protection Update, Erica Pate, OMAFRA
2:30 pm	Labour Update, OFVGA	Three Valuable Ways to Use a Compostable Mulch Film for Growing Strawberries, Hugo Meunier, FilmOrganic
3:00 pm	Trends and Opportunities in Value-Add Sales – Grower Panel Nick Vranckx, Blueberry Hill Estates; Marlene Beyerlein, Bayfield Berry Farm; Jordan McKay, Willowtree Farm, Pingle’s Farm	Breeding Seed-Propagated F1 Hybrid Strawberries, Dr. Adam Dale, University of Guelph
3:30 pm	Round tables –	
	1. Ontario Crop Protection Hub	Erica Pate, OMAFRA
	2. Cost of Production Worksheets	John Molenhuis, OMAFRA
	3. New Varieties- What do Ontario Growers Need?	Victoria Eastman, BGO
5:00 pm	Adjourn	
7:30 pm	OBGA Hospitality Rm. #	

Berry Growers of Ontario OFVC Berry Program Wednesday, February 22, 2023 – Niagara Falls Convention Centre		
9:25 am	Introduction and Welcome	
9:30 am	Bird Management: Risk Factors and Management Strategies	Dr. Catherine Lindell, Michigan State University
10:00 am	A Midwestern Perspective on a New Strawberry Disease Caused by <i>Neopestalotiopsis</i> spp.	Dr. Dan S. Egel, Purdue University
10:30 am	Miticides for Cyclamen Mite in Strawberry	Dr. Justin Renkema, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
11:00 am	Product Update for Berry Crop Protection	Gowan, Syngenta, N.M. Bartlett, Bayer, BASF
11:45 - 2:00	Lunch and Visit the Trade Show	
2:00 pm	Overview of Our Past Nine Years Experience with Soilless Long-cane Raspberries Grown Under Shelter at Ferme Onésime Pouliot	Audrey Bernet, Ferme Onésime Pouliot inc.
2:30	Horticulture Methods for Increasing Productivity and Optimizing Crop Inputs for Berry Growers	Dr. Eric Gerbrandt, BCBC/RIDC/BCSGA
3:00 pm	Release of Asian Parasitoids for Biological Control of SWD in Ontario: Current Status and Future Prospects	Dr. Tara Gariepy, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
3:30	Grower Panel: Row Covers on Strawberries	Kevin Schooley, KS Consulting; David VanDeVelde, Wholesome Pickins; Ian McGregor, McGregor’s Produce

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NOTICE OF MEETING

is hereby given that the
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Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association
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Election of Directors of the Association will take place as well as dealing
with resolutions and any other business that may arise.



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CROP PROTECTION

Observations regarding crop protection from the 2022 year



CHRISTOPHER P. DUFAULT,
P.A.G.

I have had the pleasure of serving as Acting Manager, Crop Protection, of the Fruit and Vegetable Growers of Canada (FVGC) in 2022, and welcome the return of Caleigh Hallink-Irwin to this role in January 2023. During the past year, I have witnessed the ‘perfect storm’ regarding crop protection issues facing fruit and vegetable growers in Canada. In this article, I outline some of these concerns and comment on what FVGC is doing to address them.

Crop protection concerns

To begin with, the Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) is mandated under the *Pest Control Products Act* to re-evaluate crop protection products every 15 years. This process has led to the loss of some of these products, or at least some of their uses, thereby impacting the control of insects, plant diseases and weeds in fruits and vegetables.

For example, the loss of most uses of the multi-site mode of action (MoA) ethylene bis-dithiocarbamate fungicides has left growers with alternative single-site MoA products that may be less efficacious and more prone to the development of pest resistance. Furthermore, some of those products that remain registered have had use restrictions added to their labels such as longer, agronomically unfeasible pre-harvest intervals (PHIs) or restricted entry intervals (REIs).

Where we are seeing resistance to crop protection products in the management of horticultural crop pests, some products with new MoAs are being developed but they are scarcely keeping up with

current and anticipated future needs.

New species of invasive pests arrive in Canada with unfortunate regularity, necessitating urgent research on their control, and rejigging of integrated pest management (IPM) strategies developed for other pests on the same crops. Recent examples of invasive pests that come to mind include the spotted wing drosophila and the brown marmorated stink bug.

Of further concern, some jurisdictions, such as the European Union (EU), are reducing the acceptable maximum residue limits (MRLs) for a succession of crop protection products making it ever more challenging to export Canadian crops to the EU.

Finally, funding for the Pest Management Centre (PMC) of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) has been frozen for at least the last 10 years. PMC conducts research on newer and safer crop protection solutions for pests of low acreage, i.e., ‘minor’ crops that would otherwise be left without control options. This funding freeze means that PMC’s former target of 40 new minor use research projects per year will be reduced by nearly half in 2023.

What FVGC is doing to address these concerns

To help make PMRA’s health and environmental risk assessments of crop protection products more realistic, so that more products and uses survive the re-evaluation process, the fruit and vegetable industry needs to assist PMRA in collecting information on crop production methods and the use of these products. Without this information, PMRA must make the most conservative, i.e., worst-case assumptions regarding use patterns for crop protection products in performing their risk assessments (e.g., assumptions of 100% crop treated, maximum rate of application, maximum number of applications). This means it is critical for growers to participate in surveys that provide PMRA with real-world use data. FVGC continues to run such surveys in response to requests from PMRA and to lobby the federal government to extend the three years of additional operational funding that PMRA was granted until 2024 in aid of their



Photo by Glenn Lowson.

To help make PMRA’s health and environmental risk assessments of crop protection products more realistic, so that more products and uses survive the re-evaluation process, the fruit and vegetable industry needs to assist PMRA in collecting information on crop production methods and the use of these products.

continuing to be able to collect and effectively use this information.

We note that PMRA has asked for “glove studies” to be conducted on a half dozen horticultural crops in aid of quantifying protection factors for farm workers when wearing gloves during various activities in the field after products have been applied. These protection factors should shorten REIs to be more agronomically feasible and aid retention of crop protection products that could otherwise be lost to conservative worker exposure assessments. FVGC is advocating for completion of the protocol for this research and is lobbying government and industry for the funds to do the actual research work.

Each time that the EU proposes reductions in MRLs for products used on fruits and vegetables grown in Canada,

FVGC is informed of these proposals via the Market Access Secretariat (MAS) of AAFC. FVGC responds to these proposals by researching and documenting the potential impact of these proposals on exports by Canada’s fruit and vegetable growers which MAS forwards to the World Trade Organization in an effort to halt the EU’s proposed actions.

Lastly, growers also need to see an increase, not further decreases, in research to address industry-identified minor use priorities. To accomplish this, FVGC and OFVGA are actively lobbying the federal government with aligned messages asking for an immediate \$5 million increase in PMC’s budget with annual increases to account for subsequent inflation.

Conclusion

It’s abundantly clear that all the above concerns make it increasingly difficult to successfully manage crop pests which is why FVGC continues to work diligently on the crop protection file in aid of Canada’s fruit and vegetable growers.

Christopher P. Dufault was Acting Manager, Crop Protection, at the Fruit and Vegetable Growers of Canada in 2022. He previously headed the Re-evaluation and Use Analysis Section at the Pest Management Regulatory Agency until his retirement from the federal government in 2012 and was editor of The Grower in 1980-81. He has been an Ottawa-based consultant since 2013.

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Contest challenges growers to share success stories on outsmarting pest resistance

Canadian field and horticultural growers are being asked to share their resistance management tips, tricks and success stories in a new first-of-its-kind online contest in Canada – Pest Management Challenge: How do you outsmart resistance on your farm?

The contest is hosted by Manage Resistance Now, a collaborative effort of industry, academia and government experts, brought together by CropLife Canada to raise awareness and promote the adoption of strategies to manage weed, insect and disease resistance.

“What better way to get farmers thinking about resistance management issues in their fields than by rewarding them for sharing their own experiences?” says Jennifer Hubert, executive director, Plant Biotechnology with CropLife Canada.

“Canadian farmers are already dealing with resistance issues on their farms and the Pest Management Challenge is an opportunity to get people talking and to encourage the adoption of resistance management best practices. After all, this is critical to protecting crop yield and quality today and to ensure continued access to technologies to

support sustainable production going forward.”

The online contest (pestmanagementchallenge.ca) is open to all Canadian growers from November 29, 2022 to March 31, 2023*. Contest entrants can fill out the short online form and share their own experiences for a chance to win an iPad Air 256 GB** and the first 200 entrants will receive a \$10 Tim Hortons electronic gift card. Three iPad prize winners will be drawn on April 10, 2023. Contest rules are available [here](#).

The Pest Management Challenge: How do you outsmart resistance on your farm? contest is operated by CropLife Canada with support from Alberta Canola Producers Commission, BASF Canada, Grain Farmers of Ontario, Les Producteurs de grains du Québec, Pulse Canada, RealAgriculture and Syngenta Canada.

About Manage Resistance Now

Manage Resistance Now (manageresistancenow.ca) is a complete go-to resource to help growers and industry proactively manage herbicide, insecticide and fungicide



resistance. With a goal to increase knowledge and promote adoption of strategies that will lead to a reduction of weed, insect and disease resistance, Manage Resistance Now is a first-of-its-kind initiative in Canada. The initiative provides a holistic approach that includes resources on cultural, mechanical, biological and chemical best management practices.

Source: CropLife Canada November 29, 2022 news release

Kumulus DF fungicide registered for nectarines

JOSH MOSIONDZ

The Kumulus DF fungicide label has been expanded via the Minor Use Program to help manage diseases on nectarines in Canada.

The Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) recently announced the approval of a minor use label expansion registration for Kumulus DF fungicide for control of brown rot, bacterial leaf spot, scab, and powdery mildew on nectarines in Canada. Kumulus DF fungicide was already labeled for

management of diseases on a wide range of crops in Canada. This minor use proposal was submitted by the British Columbia Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Fisheries as a result of minor use priorities established by growers and extension personnel.

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

Do not apply directly to

Crop(s)	Target	Rate (kg of product / ha)	Application Information	PHI (days)
Nectarines	Control of Brown Rot, Bacterial Leaf Spot, and Scab	22.5	Apply in pink, bloom, shuck, cover and pre-harvest sprays. Apply just before picking and repeat between pickings if weather is wet.	1
Nectarines	Control of Powdery Mildew	11.3 – 12.0	Apply at husk-fall and repeat in 10 - 14 days.	1

aquatic habitats (such as lakes, rivers, sloughs, ponds, coulees, prairie potholes, creeks, marshes, streams, reservoirs, and wetlands) and estuarine/marine habitats. Do not contaminate water by cleaning of equipment or disposing of waste. DO NOT allow effluent or runoff from

greenhouses containing this product to enter lakes, streams, ponds or other waters.

Ontario growers can contact Wendy McFadden-Smith, horticulture IPM specialist OMAFRA, Vineland (905) 932-8695, for a label. Or you can contact your regional supply outlet,

or visit the PMRA label site www.hc-sc.gc.ca/cps-spc/pest/registrant-titulaire/tools-outils/label-etiq-eng.php

Source: Josh Mosiondz, OMAFRA December 8, 2022 news release

Carnation tortrix deregulated in the U.S.



The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) confirmed the presence of carnation tortrix (*Cacoecimorpha pronubana*) in British Columbia in June 2021 at a nursery in the Fraser Valley.

This native of northern Africa is currently a regulated pest in Canada. It is a highly polyphagous insect that feeds on strawberries, grapevines, pears, stone fruits, roses and many more plants. Carnation tortrix is established in the northwestern United States and was originally detected in Oregon in 1964. The United States Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

(USDA-APHIS) deregulated this pest for the continental United States in August 2020.

Following International Plant Protection Convention principles and standards, carnation tortrix is considered to be present but not widely distributed in Canada. However, the CFIA is in the process of reviewing this pest’s regulatory status in Canada due to no reports of significant impacts by Canadian growers and its recent deregulation for the continental United States.

For more details, visit the CFIA website <https://inspection.canada.ca>

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OUTLOOK REPORTS

Farm equipment market adjusts to economic environment

Strong demand for farm equipment is expected to continue in 2023, as the market weathers rising interest rates and a weakening Canadian dollar, according to Farm Credit Canada’s outlook.

“Producers will benefit from strategic planning as inventory levels for farm equipment remain below pre-pandemic levels, something we expect could continue through 2024,” said J.P. Gervais, FCC’s chief economist, noting tractor inventory levels are down 42 per cent and combines are down 47 per cent from the five-year average. “This equipment demand is supported by strong farm cash receipts, while inventory is hampered by the supply chain disruptions we saw over the past two years.”

The used equipment market

has seen increased demand because of the pandemic-related shutdowns. With limited availability of new equipment and parts, producers were adapting by having additional used equipment available for parts if needed.

Equipment manufacturers are expected to increase production of new equipment due to the changing economic environment providing the opportunity for inflationary pressures in the used equipment market to moderate.

As for new equipment, the Canadian dollar has a direct impact on equipment prices.

“Most new tractors and combines sold in Canada are manufactured south of the border, so an expected depreciation of the loonie through 2023 should lead to price increases on farm machinery,” Gervais explained.

“This is also the result of inflationary pressures in the supply chain that occurred in the last half of 2022.”

While the depreciating loonie makes new tractors and combines more expensive, producers can take some solace in the fact that a depreciating loonie also has a positive effect on farm commodities destined for export.

Strong commodity prices will continue to support the demand for farm equipment, offsetting the impact of higher interest rates and a lower Canadian dollar. The used equipment market is expected to stay robust for most of 2023 and into 2024.

Farm equipment sales for 2023 are projected higher for high horse-powered (HP) tractors, combines, and implement sales driven by strong crop receipts:



- 100+ HP tractor sales to rise 8.7 per cent
 - 4WD tractor sales to rise 13.9 per cent
 - Combine sales to rise 19.3 per cent
 - Canadian agricultural implement manufacturing to rise 32.2 per cent
- However, small HP tractor sales, which are largely driven by

the health of the Canadian economy, are expected to slow in 2023:

- Less than 40 HP tractor sales to decline 0.4 per cent
- 40 – 100 HP tractor sales to rise 0.4 per cent

Source: Farm Credit Canada
November 29, 2022 news release

Canada Food Price Report predicts 5-7% increases in 2023

2023 Food Price Forecasts

FOOD CATEGORIES	ANTICIPATED CHANGES %
Bakery	5% to 7%
Dairy	5% to 7%
Fruits	3% to 5%
Meat	5% to 7%
Other	5% to 7%
Restaurants	4% to 6%
Seafood	4% to 6%
Vegetables	6% to 8%
Total Increase in Food Prices	5% to 7%



KAREN DAVIDSON

Inflation is not easing according to Canada’s Food Price

Report. Food prices will rise five to seven per cent in 2023, caused by supply chain disruptions, Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and climate change. The 13th edition

is published by Dalhousie University, the University of Guelph, the University of British Columbia and the University of Saskatchewan.

Thanks to sharp merchandising skills, Kyle Oakley presents a picture-perfect array of vegetables at Goldsmith’s Farm Market & Bakery, Thornbury, Ontario.

Last year’s report predicted an overall food price increase of five to seven per cent in 2022. The current rate for food price increases has exceeded that prediction, tracking at 10.3 per cent as of September 2022.

In 2023, it is expected that Canadian consumers will

continue to feel the effects of inflation and food insecurity/affordability. Imported fruits and vegetables will cost more due to the weakening Canadian loonie and higher transportation costs.

Source: Canada’s Food Price Report
December 5, 2022



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