

LOCAL CONTEXT RULES

Vexed by the vax: rolling out worker inoculations



A weather window allowed this transplanter crew to drop tomato plugs into the ground at night at VanRoboys farm near Chatham, Ontario. One person walks behind to check for any skips or doubles, ensuring an even stand. Growers are used to accommodating changes and will, no doubt, be grateful to schedule vaccinations. Photo by Krystle VanRoboys.

KAREN DAVIDSON

On the far side of yet another dark pandemic episode, farmers will welcome their slow-moving vehicles to be emblazoned with bumper stickers declaring: WE'VE BEEN VAXED!

For growers, this spring's COVID-19 inoculation roll-out across the country can't move fast enough. In British Columbia, starting in April, frontline staff such as grocery store clerks and employees in congregate living quarters will be prioritized to receive the AstraZeneca/SII Covishield vaccine. This would include about 3,500 greenhouse workers confirms

Linda Delli Santi, executive director, BC Greenhouse Growers' Association.

"I have heard that public health officials are vaccinating workers at the provincial government-sanctioned quarantine hotels upon arrival," says Delli Santi. "I have also heard that some of my members have had calls from public health to discuss vaccination for the staff on site or if the greenhouse has fewer workers, then arrangements are made to go to a vaccination clinic."

It's premature, though, to estimate how many essential farm workers in Canada will actually agree to be inoculated against COVID-19.

"Last fall, I think the sentiment

amongst workers was about 50/50 sign-up for vaccination," says Katie Keddy, the health and safety supervisor at Keddy Nursery, Kentville, Nova Scotia. "I'm a bit curious to see if feelings might change this year with cases rising in Jamaica and the vaccine now available."

The strawberry and sweet potato operation sources about 40 workers from Jamaica and Mexico through the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP). That's just a fraction of the 1,500 workers who arrive in the province annually, many of whom work in the Annapolis Valley tree fruit orchards.

Thankfully, the Maritime provinces experienced fewer cases of COVID-19,

says Keddy, but the prevention protocols were just as stringent as anywhere in Canada. "Last year, there were a lot of nerves amongst workers about what they were coming to."

The notion of "family" took on new meaning, depending on your perspective. Those workers who arrived were quarantined in "family" units in on-farm houses. When their 14 days were up, these units stayed together. They kept separate from locally-sourced employees. No outsiders were allowed in the packing house.

Continued on page 3

CHC highlights PG 6

Steps to a berry council PG 10

Worker health & safety PG 16

AT PRESS TIME...



A breath of fresh air greets temporary foreign workers at their lodging quarters in the Niagara region. Photo by Glenn Lowson.

Updated quarantine rules for TFWs

As temporary foreign workers arrive (TFWs) in larger numbers, doublecheck the rules for quarantine upon arrival. At Pearson International Airport in Toronto for example, asymptomatic workers will be COVID-19 tested then can travel by private transport to their pre-arranged quarantine destination. They can travel by van, for example, with others who travelled with them to Canada.

The federal government clarified that after March 21, those TFWs who are taking public transit – such as a commercial flight to a secondary destination – must stay in a government-approved hotel near Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto or

Montreal airports and wait for test results.

Note that some provinces have their own entry regulations and programs which do require a hotel quarantine stay for temporary foreign workers. For the rules in British Columbia, link here: <https://bit.ly/3IJYAJI>

In Ontario, employers of farm workers who will be required to stay at a hotel will need to make hotel reservations in advance of the worker's arrival in Canada using the current booking system available to all travellers. Link here: <https://bit.ly/2QhwfOV>

Provided TFWs have a suitable quarantine plan and safe transportation arranged to their place of quarantine, the federal government assures employers and TFWs will not assume incremental costs associated with the three-day quarantine

requirement at the point of entry. Workers will also be provided with supports on arrival and during their hotel stay.

Upon receipt of a negative test result, TFWs could continue to the employer's location to serve the balance of the 14-day quarantine or up to another full 14-day quarantine upon entry into the provincial jurisdiction, depending on provincial post-travel requirements. As per changes to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations in April 2020, employers are required to pay TFWs throughout their quarantine period, including additional days of quarantine due to provincial requirements.

Source: *Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada/BC Ministry of Agriculture*

NEWSMAKERS

Larry McIntosh, president and CEO of Peak of the Market for the last 27 years, plans to retire in June 2021. In his next chapter, he will be a volunteer member of the new Canadian Food Policy Advisory Council. Peak of the Market has offices and distribution centres in Winnipeg, Manitoba and Calgary, Alberta. The company has been selling Manitoba-grown and Canadian-fresh vegetables across the country and throughout the United States since 1942.



Larry McIntosh

The Canadian Horticultural Council (CHC) held its 99th annual general meeting virtually. The 2021 board of directors will be chaired by **Jan VanderHout**, a greenhouse pepper grower from Ontario. Joining him are: **Marcus Janzen**, first vice-president and **Jason Smith**, BC; **Albert Cramer**, second vice-president and **Beth Connery**, Prairies; **Bill George** and **Mike Chromczak**, ON; **Jocelyn Gibouleau** and **Pascal Forest**, QC; **Gerard Dykerman** and **Russell Weir**, Atlantic. **Brian Gilroy**, ON is past president.

Felicitations **Jocelyn St-Denis**! He's the winner of the Doug Connery Award presented by the Canadian Horticultural Council for his passion and dedication to the industry. He is currently executive director of the Association des producteurs maraîchers du Québec. With his talents as a chartered accountant, he's served as chair of the CHC's finance committee for the last three years.

Congratulations **Hector Delanghe**! The Blenheim, ON apple grower is this year's Canadian Horticultural Council Honorary Life Member. He was instrumental in founding FARMS, offering wise counsel to the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program.



Hector Delanghe

Fox Seeds Inc. has announced that **Cindy Rouet** will be joining the team as a new asparagus breeder on May 3. She will be working closely with **Dr. Dave Wolyn** to

transition the University of Guelph's asparagus breeding program to Fox Seeds over the next two years. She will then oversee and expand future private breeding of new asparagus varieties for both Ontario growers and international markets. She is currently working as the rose breeder research assistant for the Vineland Research and Innovation Centre while concurrently completing her Ph.D.

Quebec apple growers elected their 2021 slate of directors: **Stéphanie Levasseur** remains chair. Joining her on the board are: **Eric Rochon**, **Alexandre Simard**, **Mario Bourdeau**, **Richard Morin**, **Sébastien Morissette**, **Charles Choquette**, **François Turcotte**, **François Blouin**.

The BC Fruit Growers' Association, which represents 350 commercial tree fruit growers, held its annual general meeting virtually on February 25. **Pinder Dhaliwal** remains president and is joined by **Jeet Dukhia**, elected vice-president. Newly elected directors include **Joginder Dhand**, **Mani Gill** and **Ravinder Bains**. The board is completed with **Sukhdeep (Deep) Brar**, **Avi Gill** and **Talwinder Bassi**.

Congrats to **Shane Witzke**, winner of the Golden Apple Award. The owner of Northview Orchards, Kelowna, British Columbia was honoured at the February 25 annual general meeting of the BC Fruit Growers' Association.

Nova Scotia's new Liberal premier **Iain Rankin** announced a 16-member cabinet. **Keith Colwell** remains minister of agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture. He's held the position since 2013.

Cassie Russell has joined the Cohort Wholesale team as technical sales specialist supporting retailers and farmers in Ontario. Most recently, she was a vegetable specialist and tree fruit specialist for the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

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COVER STORY

Vexed by the vax: rolling out worker inoculations

“

Workers are in a catch-22. Our job is education not persuasion.

~ FRANCINE BURKE, DURHAM REGION
MIGRANT WORKER MINISTRY

”

Continued from page 1

As Keddy explained, the Nova Scotia government never defined what constitutes a “family” so it was hard to determine who could get groceries in nearby New Minas. For her, there was one simple question that was never answered: Is one worker from each family unit on the farm allowed to go to town?

With two small children, aged five and seven at the time, Phil and Katie Keddy took extra precautions. “I had to take a step back with the kids when the workers arrived,” explains Keddy. “We pulled the kids off the farm.”

With this team mentality, everyone did their jobs and the summer of 2020 was relatively normal. The worry now is about mid-March 2021 regulatory changes by the federal government, demanding that seasonal workers quarantine for three days in a Toronto-area hotel before fanning out to eastern Canada.

“Our workers are very nervous about flying through Toronto,” says Keddy. “The fear is still there.”

Vaccine hesitancy

Uncertainty is a common feeling among seasonal agricultural workers in Ontario. Ricardo Sookhoo, for example, is a little on edge about vaccination plans for seasonal farm workers. The Trinidadian has been coming to Eek Farms in the Holland Marsh since 2009.

He has several questions. What’s in the vaccine? How is it made? Are there side effects?

“It’s not just me with concerns,” says Sookhoo. “If 5,000 migrant workers get the vaccine and 3,000 get sick, who’s going to compensate us?”

As the vaccinations for

essential workers roll out this spring, he’s still pondering his choices.

“Workers are in a catch-22,” says Francine Burke, the new program coordinator for the Durham Region Migrant Worker Ministry. She works with a team east of Toronto with outreach to about 420 workers. Their mission is to distribute welcome kits as well as Service Canada information.

“Our job is education not persuasion,” she says. “However, we should point out the long-term consequences to future employment if the Canadian government decides that proof of vaccination is needed to come back to Canada. We need to keep that dialogue neutral.”

Ten-day hurdle

Effective the first day of spring, federal rules on arriving temporary foreign workers changed for some provincial jurisdictions such as Ontario. If they were taking private transport to on-farm quarantines, they could proceed with a 10-day, self-testing kit. However, test results are not being processed in a timely manner. And that in turn, is interrupting vaccination schedules.

As Phil Tregunno, chair of the Ontario Tender Fruit Growers, explains, he hand delivered test kits to the Switch Health processing centre in Mississauga, Ontario only to have 10 results “lost in the system.” The consequence was that those workers were still in isolation and missed the bus, literally. On March 22, the Niagara Region Public Health Unit organized vaccinations for more than 55 Tregunno Farms workers at a nearby community centre.

“Yes, there’s some hesitancy among workers,” says Tregunno. “But after the shots were done,



Ricardo Sookhoo, a seasonal agricultural worker from Trinidad, is concerned about potential side effects from the COVID-19 vaccine and what might happen if workers get sick.



A worker is vaccinated in British Columbia.

they said, ‘Oh it’s easy.’”

He credits educational flyers and meetings at the farm with the workers’ buy-in. He’s hopeful that the remaining workers will get their vaccinations soon.

These hurdles are prompting the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers’ Association (OFVGA) to lobby the federal government for temporary foreign workers to be vaccinated upon arrival at the airport.

“It would be a logical step to offer vaccines at the airport before workers reach the bunkhouses,” says Bill George, chair, OFVGA. “I realize that some education would be needed and that might be one of the hiccups.”

As for robust roll-outs, he expects that May will end up being the vaccination target month for many TFWs in Ontario. That window offers

more time for educational materials, in culturally appropriate language, to reach the workers.

If there’s one thing to grasp in the middle of this muddle, it’s the simple fact that although none of the vaccines are perfect, they all prevent hospitalization and death. And after last summer’s tragedies, that in itself is worth all the hardship.

The Grower goes “Behind the Scenes” with Phil Tregunno, chair of the Ontario Tender Fruit Growers. He details his on-the-ground experience of navigating municipal, provincial and federal rules for vaccinating temporary foreign workers. This series is sponsored by BASF Agricultural Solutions.



CROSS COUNTRY DIGEST

BRITISH COLUMBIA

BC tree fruit growers seek bridge financing

KAREN DAVIDSON

British Columbia's minimum wage rate will increase to \$15.20 per hour on June 1, the highest rate of any food-producing province in Canada. That's only one of the forces impacting the province's \$118 million tree fruit sector according to Pinder Dwaliwal, president, BC Fruit Growers' Association.

"Washington state supported its apple farmers with a \$0.07 per pound payment in 2020 to offset financial impacts caused by weather, trade and COVID-19," Dwaliwal told the 132nd annual general meeting held virtually on February 25. "Their apple producers expect to receive another seven to 14 cents per pound in 2021."

Provincially, the Tree Fruit Replant Program has not been renewed yet for 2022.

Apple returns are averaging about \$0.20 cents per pound, far below break-even at about \$0.40

cents per pound.

"A lot is at stake for tree fruit farmers," said Dwaliwal. "The accelerating transition that is occurring will impact the cherry farmers and vineyards. The apple financial crisis will impact the current balance of labour needs and infrastructure investments throughout the (Okanagan) valley."

With this background, voting delegates voted for the association to develop a 10-year strategic plan and for the renewal of the Replant Program with more flexibility and higher compensation to reflect the reality of \$35,000 to \$40,000 per acre planting costs. Growers also recommended that the Canadian Horticultural Apple Working Group consider a request to impose tariffs on dumped and subsidized apple imports.

Georgina Beyers, director, BC Agriculture Industry Development Branch, presented the rollout of the Tree Fruit Industry Stabilization Initiative.

Stakeholder meetings are underway with hopes for a draft plan by the end of July.

One of those stakeholders is the BC Tree Fruit Cooperative. About 40 per cent of the BC Fruit Growers' Association's members belong to the Kelowna-headquartered cooperative now helmed by CEO Warren Sarafinchan.

"We have made some drastic changes," said Sarafinchan, citing governance and the disposal of non-performing assets. Operating costs have been reduced in packaging, transportation and insurance. What used to be \$500,000 per month bank payments to cover principal and debt have been pruned to \$100,000 per month on \$35 million of debt.

The Summerland Varieties Corporation, a subsidiary of the BC Fruit Growers' Association, is also one of the stakeholders to be consulted in the provincial initiative. It's a developer of new varieties of sweet cherries and



apples.

A tri-coloured apple – firm, crisp and very sweet – is to be commercialized in 2025-2026 according to Sean Beirnes, general manager.

"The hybrid club model is an exciting way to launch an apple," said Beirnes. "We will be licensing everyone along the

supply chain. Do talk to your packinghouse now if you wish to be part of this launch."

Beirnes said that everything is being done to accelerate the launch, but reality is that it will take time to propagate trees. "Consumers will be evangelists of this apple," he concluded.

NEW BRUNSWICK

Quarantine restrictions tighten for TFWs

Agriculture NB – comprising the NB Agricultural Alliance, National Farmers Union of NB and Really Local Harvest -- is lobbying the provincial government to ease the quarantine rules for temporary foreign workers (TFWs). About 1,200

workers arrive in the Maritime province every year.

Effective March 5, growers were informed that TFWs would be required to quarantine individually with their own bedrooms, bathrooms, laundry and kitchen facilities for 14 days.

This provincial rule is stricter than the federal rule allowing workers to quarantine together so long as they are two metres apart at all times.

"The agricultural sector supports measures that increase the safety and wellbeing of



workers but these restrictions are financially oppressive to farmers and taxing to the mental and physical health of the workers," said the Agriculture NB news release. It was pointed out that Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island have implemented programs that either assist the farms in keeping the TFWs safe while quarantining or manage the entire quarantining process. Nova Scotia is also providing COVID-19 vaccinations to TFWs recognizing that delays in the agricultural workforce cannot be translated into delaying crops.

Agriculture NB advocated for a quarantine program similar to British Columbia's where the province manages quarantining facilities. This would allow public health authorities to ensure the safety of those entering the province, remove the burden from farms, and could allow the government to assist the hotel industry that has also suffered.

At a minimum, the farm association estimated that the costs for hotel rooms, meals, and pay for TFW's required to isolate

individually are \$6300 per worker. For New Brunswick's agricultural sector, this means an increased cost of \$1.2 million put on the farmers.

The likely opening of the Atlantic bubble in mid-April will present new challenges, says Lisa Ashworth, executive director, Agricultural Alliance of New Brunswick.

"Hotels are no longer interested in holding blocks of rooms at reasonable rates for the arrival of TFWs," she says. "If any tourist opportunities arise, these hotels understandably want to fill rooms at full prices, and most won't want to have TFWs and also be open to the public."

Ashworth anticipates this may create yet another barrier, as hotels are the only way to have individual bathrooms, food, etc. She suggests that farm workers going directly from ports of entry to on-farm quarantine would not only reduce the number of contact points for possible virus transmission, but it would remove the extra worry that there may not be rooms available when needed.

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CROSS COUNTRY DIGEST

NOVA SCOTIA

Labelling options considered for strawberry wooden quarts

Perennia’s horticulture, innovation and food safety teams have been working with consultants to find solutions for the new labelling requirements that came into effect in January, 2021. For the first time, Safe Food for Canadians Regulations, administered by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, require labelling on fresh fruit and vegetables packed in the field. In response to this new requirement, Perennia Food and Agriculture prepared two reports. One was investigating options for labelling wooden berry boxes and the second outlined traceability requirements.

The first phase of the project focuses on wooden boxes. This style of packaging is synonymous with local strawberries in the Maritimes. Due to the timing of ordering packaging materials for the 2021 growing season, Perennia released the findings from the first phase of the project.

The Perennia team and consultants reviewed the lot coding requirements and the packaging options for the 2021 season.

A number of ideas were shared with growers to ensure they would be in compliance with the

new regulations. The options included a paper insert that would be visible above the fruit, printing on the wooden band of the package to labels affixed to the side of the container.

Grocers sell into a variety of distribution channels from farm gate to farmer’s market to major retailers. Given the wide range of production and harvest methods and customers, there is no

solution that is right for every producer. Growers were encouraged to ask any questions and consider the option best for them, to ensure they are in compliance in 2021.

There will be a second report broadening the scope past the wooden boxes. Packaging is a complicated issue with many factors to consider. Perennia is working with the berry sector to

find the solution that best meets the needs of individual growers. This project is a component of the Agri-Food Accelerator Program which is funded in part through the Canadian Agricultural Partnership, the Province of Nova Scotia and the Government of Canada.



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PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Pollinator refuges to be established



Ryan Barrett, research coordinator and project lead for the PEI Potato Board, is inviting up to 25 farms to participate in Project Pollinator. This new program is in partnership with Syngenta Canada. Growers can apply to grow up to two acres of six species of forage mix friendly to pollinator species on small parcels of land. Examples would be wet spots, land adjacent to barns and grassed waterways.

Participating farms will have the seed supplied as well as a \$200/acre payment to assist with establishment/maintenance of the pollinator refuge.

First come, first served. Seed will be delivered in April.

CANADIAN HORTICULTURAL COUNCIL 99TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Labour, crop protection files dominate national issues



Jan VanderHout. Photos by Glenn Lowson.

KAREN DAVIDSON

For the first time in history, the Canadian Horticultural Council (CHC) met virtually for

its 99th annual general meeting on March 16 and 17, 2021. Thanks to Zoom technology, more than 175 people participated across Canada. Ontario greenhouse cucumber

grower Jan VanderHout was elected chair of the 2021 board of directors. Joining him are: Marcus Janzen, first vice-president and Jason Smith, BC; Albert Cramer, second

Working Group Chairs

2021	Working Group
Quinton Woods Brian Gilroy	Trade and Marketing Vice-Chair
Stefan Larrass Mark Wales	Business Risk Management Vice-Chair
Jody Mott Nancy Chong	Industry Standards and Food Safety Vice-Chair
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Joanne Driscoll Jody Mott	Field Vegetable Vice-Chair
Linda Delli Santi Joe Sbrocchi	Greenhouse Vegetable Vice-Chair

vice-president and Beth Connery, Prairies; Bill George and Mike Chromczak, ON; Jocelyn Gibouleau and Pascal Forest, QC; Gerard Dykerman and Russell Weir, Atlantic. Brian Gilroy, ON is past president.

Here is a summary of the resolutions, all approved by the members.

Labour

Members directed the CHC to continue working with the federal government to ensure the ongoing viability of the Temporary Foreign Worker Programs (SAWP, AgStream, and any other agricultural TFW programs) and to encourage the responsible ministries to improve program delivery, especially between multiple levels of government. The sponsor of this motion, the Nova Scotia Fruit Growers' Association, pointed out that the sector is totally reliant on the SAWP program for planting, pruning, spraying and picking the crop.

The Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers underscored that a more proactive consultation process is needed with the federal government to ensure that any contemplated emergency measures continue to recognize temporary foreign workers as essential to food production, recognize existing quarantine requirements and don't further burden horticulture's timely access to this labour pool. Members approved this motion.

Any future revisions to housing requirements for temporary foreign workers could pose onerous financial burdens, so the Quebec caucus is asking the CHC to work with the federal government on the following:

If new minimum requirements involve the modification of housing units (e.g., bunk beds, number of workers per room, bathroom equipment ratios), then the new regulations apply only to new housing units;

- Any new minimum requirements take into account the ability of growers to implement them in compliance with municipal and provincial regulations;
- Any new minimum requirements be implemented after a reasonable period of time be allowed to plan and carry out permitting and construction;
- Any new minimum requirements be supported by financial assistance to farm employers so as not to weaken the Canadian agricultural sector and its ability to receive foreign workers and its capacity to produce;
- Any new minimum requirements take into account the diversity of housing models in establishing the required ratios,

- Any new housing requirements be outcome-based to prioritize worker health and safety, and not be prescriptive nor arbitrary

Industry Standards and Food Safety

The Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers sponsored a resolution titled "Protective Covering is not Packaging." The sector wants the federal government to amend the Safe Foods for Canadian Regulations to redefine "package" to include a transparent protective wrapper on an individual unit of produce or clear unsealed protective bags of produce. At the moment, the pre-packaged product designation requires unnecessary labelling requirements for English cucumbers.

Québec vegetable growers (L'Association des producteurs maraichers du Québec) are requesting that CanAgPlus support innovative growers with agility and creativity in certifying emerging products and innovative production methods. In addition, they are asking the Canadian government to fund the risk analysis required by CanadaGAP.

The Canadian Horticultural Council wants to talk with buyer representatives through the Canadian Produce Marketing Association and/or Retail Council of Canada about retailer expectations that require GFSI and the necessity for primary agriculture to supply fruits and vegetables certified by GFSI or any GFSI-benchmarked program.

Trade and Marketing

The Berry Growers of Ontario, concerned about the United States International Trade Commission's investigation of Canadian imports of several Canadian-grown fruits and vegetables, is asking CHC to work with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada to ensure these claims are disputed and that if restrictions are put in place, that the Canadian government enact countervailing tariffs. A ruling is expected later this year on peppers, cucumbers, squash and strawberries.

Quebec's vegetable and potato growers are requesting that the Canadian Food Inspection Agency offer a more flexible service that's better adapted to current marketing practices and constraints of packaging plants. Additionally, through the CHC and Global Affairs Canada, they want U.S. authorities to eliminate the need for grade inspections for packaged onion trade (containers of 50 kgs or less) between the two countries.

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CANADIAN HORTICULTURAL COUNCIL 99TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Labour, crop protection files dominate national issues

Continued from last page

Grape Growers of Ontario are asking the Canadian government, through CHC, to understand the importance of creating good domestic policy that supports 100 per cent Canadian-grown horticultural products. The issue pertains to trade-related concessions to the Australia World Trade Challenge that will repeal the current federal excise duty exemption on wine made from Canadian-grown fruit by June 2022.

Crop Protection

Berry Growers of Ontario, are urging that the CHC work with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada to identify and facilitate an enhanced process involving stakeholders to consider the importation and use of biological control agents. Looking ahead, they say that macro-biologicals represent a promising and sustainable tool for crop protection technologies. Horticulture needs to support all avenues to replace the dwindling supply of traditional crop protection materials. Facilitating an enhanced process for considering new biological control agents will be important to speeding up access of viable crop protection tools.

In another resolution, the Berry Growers of Ontario advocated that the CHC engage the Pest Management Regulatory Agency to work with crop protection companies to develop a pathway and mechanism for pesticide labels to be amended so that pesticides can be applied by unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) as a lower impact mode of application.

The Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association is asking that CHC lobby the federal government for permanent enhanced funding for the Pest Management Centre to ensure it can provide urgently needed scientific support for minor use crop protection.

The Quebec caucus is echoing this resolution. It requests that Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada provide a specific budget and sufficient resources to the Pest Management Centre for each of the following needs:

- Increase the number of projects under the Minor Use Pesticide Program;
- Develop and transfer knowledge related to new technologies and alternative crop protection strategies;
- Address the gaps in crop protection caused by product abandonment resulting from re-evaluation;
- Catch up on the research backlog caused by the pandemic;

- Increase the resources allocated to the PMRA under the agreement between AAFC and Health Canada so that the agency can analyze more files under the User Requested Minor Use Label Expansion (URMULE) program.



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INTERNATIONAL

A semi-autonomous berry robot is tested in California fields

AgPro Robotics from Watsonville, California, has been working on a semi-autonomous strawberry harvesting robot since 2017. The machine is designed to support human strawberry pickers, as it can autonomously follow them through the field during harvesting. It's estimated that each harvester walks about five miles per day.

Erik Jertberg, founder and CEO, has a focus on integrating robotics step-by-step into current

harvesting systems. His analysis shows that human harvesters spend about 30 per cent of their time taking trays in and out of a row. At current picking rates, growers require about 1.2 to 1.5 harvesters per acre. He's trying to change this paradigm with the StrawBot.

Although there have been many attempts to develop an autonomous strawberry picking robot, no company has perfected this process. The barriers are

correctly identifying ripe berries and picking them without damaging the fruit. The StrawBot can, however, collect full strawberry trays from the workers, carrying the full trays to the end of row collection points.

The latest electric-driven prototype can accommodate bed widths of 48 inches, 52 inches and 64 inches. A solar panel is optional.



Wageningen University tops list of the world's best agricultural universities



Agri Marketing magazine reports that QS, in partnership with Elsevier, has released its eighth annual ranking of the world's best agricultural universities.

Retaining its first-place

ranking, Wageningen University in the Netherlands continues to impress with its focus on healthy food and living environment. In a March 8, 2021 announcement, Wageningen University & Research (WUR) and Tencent

are holding the 3rd edition of the International Autonomous Greenhouse Challenge.

Multidisciplinary teams from around the world will use artificial intelligence to remotely produce lettuce. The goal of the third

challenge – to be held between June 2021 and June 2022 – will be a fully automated and controlled greenhouse without human interference. Potential participants are invited to visit the website www.autonomousgreenhouses.com for more information and pre-registration.

WUR works on autonomous greenhouses, climate control, crop modelling, the use of sensors, data, intelligence, computer vision and robotics. Tencent is the sixth largest publicly traded company worldwide. Its mission is to

enhance the quality of human life through Internet services.

To learn more about the study and its methodology, link here: <https://bit.ly/3tnUPvX>

The top 10 globally and top 18 in North America include: (Indicated behind each is their prior year's ranking).

1. Wageningen University--the Netherlands (#1)
2. University of California--Davis (#2)
3. Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (#3)
4. Agro, ParisTech--France (#4)
5. Cornell University (#5)
6. ETH Zurich - Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (#7)
7. China Agricultural University (#10)
8. University of Wisconsin--Madison (#8)
9. University of California--Berkeley (#6)
10. Michigan State University (#11)

In Canada, the University of British Columbia placed 17th. The University of Guelph placed 21st.

Source: *AgriMarketing Magazine*

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Fruit Logistica Special Edition cancelled



18|19|20 MAY 2021, BERLIN

Organizers of the Fruit Logistica show bravely forecast a success with its Special Edition pushed to May 18-20, 2021. But the ongoing pandemic with new lockdowns in Europe have nixed the event.

Mark the calendar for February 9-11, 2022 in Berlin.

Source: *FreshPlaza.com March 18, 2021*

POTATO PRODUCTION

Wireworm under control

Wireworms, like cockroaches, are notoriously difficult to control, and their populations are increasing in farm fields across Canada. These pests, which are the larval stage of click beetles, are a common potato and cereal pest.

Thanks to support efforts from three Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) research scientists, farmers have a new wireworm defence. It's broflanilide, the active ingredient in two new insecticides developed by BASF Canada Agricultural Solutions. Launched in January 2021, Teraxxa F4 is an insecticide-coated seed treatment that targets wireworms in cereal crops, such as wheat, and Cimegra is a liquid soil-level spray for potato and corn crops.

For the past eight years, three AAFC scientists have tested and collected research data. They are: Dr. Christine Noronha in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island as well as Dr. Bob Vernon and Dr. Wim Van Herk in Agassiz, British Columbia. Their research consisted of observing wireworm populations and wireworm damage to various potato and wheat varieties following different application rates of broflanilide, as well as wireworm populations after harvesting these crops.

“What makes these new products exciting to farmers is that they effectively kill wireworms rather than other insecticides, such as the neonicotinoids, which just analyze them, and it does so with low application rates, which makes this a safer option for the environment,” says Dr. Van Herk. According to BASF, the research team provided an invaluable conduit to connect with experts across the country who helped them understand the biology of the pest, identify and map the different pest species across the country and develop a solution that would be able to control the pest, no matter where the farmers lived.

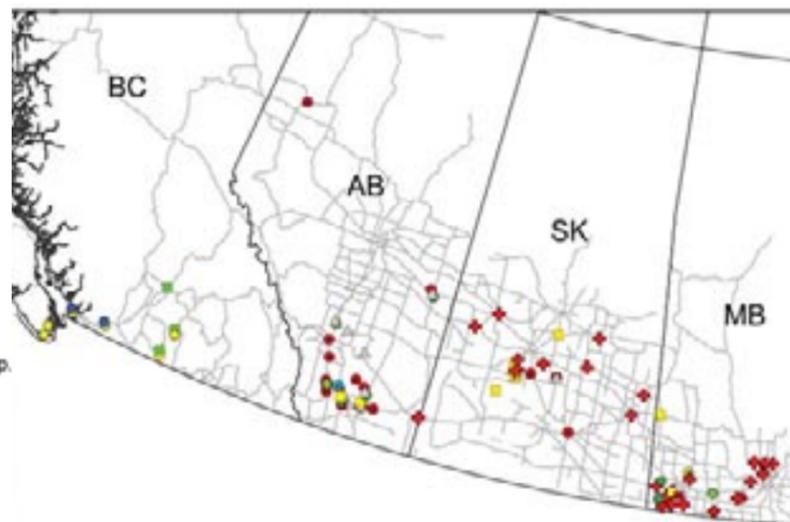
“BASF is incredibly appreciative of the work by Dr. Bob Vernon, Dr. Wim van Herk, and Dr. Christine Noronha in the development of broflanilide. Simply put, their contributions were integral in helping us create a robust solution to help Canadian cereal and potato farmers contend with the significant challenge of wireworm control,” says Wayne Barton, manager, research and commercial development, BASF Canada Agricultural Solutions.

“This will finally give farmers a very effective tool in their integrated pest management toolbox. Our lab has focused on trying to identify such a tool since 1995, so this development is extremely rewarding for myself, AAFC, BASF and hopefully

Canadian farmers,” says Dr. Van Herk.

Source: AAFC For more details, go here: <https://bit.ly/3eaUqZg>

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| ● Agriotes criddlei | ⊗ C. morula |
| ● A. lineatus | ⊗ Clenicera sp. |
| ● A. mancus | ⊕ H. abbreviatus |
| ● A. mellillus | ⊕ H. nocturnus |
| ● A. obscurus | ⊕ Hemirepidius sp. |
| ● A. sputator | ■ L. agonus |
| ● Aeolus melillus | ■ L. californicus |
| △ Athous sp. | ■ L. canus |
| ⊗ C. cylindriciformis | ■ Limonius sp. |
| ⊗ C. destructor | ⊗ M. communis |
| ⊗ C. lobata | ⊗ Melanotus sp. |



Western Canadian map of wireworm species.

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ORGANIZED

A long and winding road to a Canadian Berry Council

KAREN DAVIDSON

The concept of a Canadian Berry Council is still in its infancy. But the intensity of global competitors is causing some to consider the benefits of a more unified industry. One recent example is the United States Trade Representative investigating the impact of Canadian imports of blueberries on the U.S. industry. Fortunately, an American February 2021 ruling concluded that fresh, chilled or frozen blueberries from Canada don't pose a threat, but strawberries are still under review.

"We've been working towards a national group for more than 15 years," says Tom Heeman, chair of the Berry Growers of Ontario. "But last year's events have brought the provincial associations closer together."

The issues of protecting worker safety, developing COVID-19 guidelines for pick-your-own operations and responding to the U.S. trade challenge have galvanized the groups as never before. The blueberry, raspberry and

strawberry sectors in Canada struggle from time to time when low-cost imports arrive. A national check-off would permit a levy on foreign imports to help boost research and marketing.

The template for such an undertaking is the Canadian Beef Check-Off Agency. It was an elusive deal which took years to finalize. Now that it's been in place since 2002, the most recent 2019/20 annual report shows that the beef agency collected \$17.9 million net of the provincial portion of the federal levy. Of those funds, 49 per cent are pledged to market development and promotion with another 34 per cent devoted to research. To complete the allocations, 12 per cent is channelled to public and stakeholder engagement with the remaining five per cent invested in provincial efforts.

Not to be overlooked is the fact that \$1.1 million was collected from foreign imports says Melinda German, general manager of the Canadian Beef Check-Off Agency.

"This has been a big success story in the last few years," says German. "These funds go to

generic promotion, which is dedicated to spreading the word about the taste, nutrition and goodness of beef."

She points to www.thinkbeef.ca, a consumer-facing website that speaks to multicultural sensibilities and shares recipes such as Moroccan-spiced ground beef and lentil stew. In a word, this is a "rethink" of beef.

The track record of the beef sector has also encouraged the November 2020 launch of the Pork Promotion and Research Agency with the help of the Farm Products Council of Canada. It's the federal institution responsible for administering two federal acts: the Farm Products Agencies Act and the Agricultural Products Marketing Act.

"Our berry industry needs to get its head around this," says Jack Bates, chair of the 600-member BC Blueberry Council. "We're open to a national berry council, but it's how to get there. We need growers to understand that it's not money out of their pockets but that importers are paying into this too."

Bates points out that it would



need to be an industry-wide effort. Any check-off agency would need to include an importing country on the board.

That could be the United States, Chile, Peru or Mexico.

Continued on next page





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ORGANIZED

A long and winding road to a Canadian Berry Council

Continued from last page

The Delta, BC grower points out that monies generated for generic advertising would be welcomed. The Canadian dairy industry is a good example. “Generic ads do very well in our country,” he concludes.

In the midst of these sectoral developments, Tom Heeman explains that a January 2020 proposal for a national berry council was favourably received by fellow growers in Quebec. The Berry Growers of Ontario and the Association des producteurs de fraises et de framboises du Québec (Quebec strawberry and raspberry producers) signed a memorandum of understanding to pursue a National Strawberry Promotion and Research Council and the same for raspberries.

The next step is to prove to members of provincial associations that a restructuring of the industry has value. And then the provincial associations need to agree to a rate structure. Whether that’s a levy on a per pound, per quart or per acre basis is still to be evaluated on individual merits.

“Canadian exports face similar



charges when exporting to foreign markets,” adds Heeman. “If a reasonable pathway exists in the minds of Canadian berry growers, a national council could serve to level the playing field against imports and increase the domestic market further.”

When combined, the farmgate value of Canada’s berry sector totalled \$426.5 million in 2019, according to Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. Blueberries accounted for the lion’s share at \$270.7 million, followed by strawberries at \$123.7 million and raspberries at \$32.1 million.

Farmgate value of berries in context of Canada’s major fruits

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Blueberries[1]	282,637	254,513	214,627	259,868	270,692
Apples	200,598	233,147	228,955	249,280	240,041
Grapes[2]	122,800	161,917	192,089	186,805	202,371
Cranberries	123,801	157,933	114,858	142,960	135,411
Strawberries	100,998	108,534	123,970	123,273	123,678
Cherries, sweet	63,378	60,330	88,173	100,948	89,298
Peaches	34,647	32,802	40,583	36,680	35,797
Raspberries	34,947	37,952	34,942	35,452	32,116
Pears	9,184	9,081	9,536	9,638	10,699
Plums and prunes	6,038	5,374	8,055	7,248	7,789
Nectarines	6,127	7,646	8,510	9,594	7,222

Source: Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

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CHAIR'S PERSPECTIVE

How well do we know our partners really?



BILL GEORGE JR.
CHAIR, OFVGA

The Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association (OFVGA) is involved with and supports a variety of partners and their initiatives. We do so for

many reasons, but generally, we share common values around food, nutrition, healthy eating, and fruit and vegetable production in Ontario and Canada.

Every once in a while, though, there is an unwelcome surprise that makes us take a step back and wonder how well we really know the organizations we partner with. That's the situation OFVGA and our members, particularly the Ontario Apple Growers (OAG) found ourselves in during the second week of March.

Since 2008, Toronto-based food security organization FoodShare has been hosting an event called the Great Big Crunch. They bill it as an annual

moment of anti-silence where students, teachers, parents, and others passionate about food join the food movement and crunch into apples (or other crunchy fruit or vegetable) to make noise for healthy school food.

The fruit and vegetable sector has been a big supporter of this event since its inception in 2008 as it promotes consumption of locally grown, healthy food products and education of the next generation of consumers about our food system. Many growers also individually support FoodShare's community- and school-focused food programs.

Imagine our shock and dismay this year, when two days ahead of the March 11 event, we discovered that FoodShare was

also promoting an educator toolkit called "Spotlight on Migrant Farm Workers," which includes propaganda-style misinformation on temporary foreign workers and their treatment while in Canada.

How we were able to respond - and what we achieved on very short notice - truly is a success story for OFVGA, our members and growers, and public outreach about our food system. It also speaks to the value of strong relationships with government and the very valuable resource we have in our memberships with Farm & Food Care Ontario and AgScape.

We quickly pulled together a small working group of staff from OFVGA, OAG, AgScape and

Farm & Food Care Ontario and within short order, that group developed a positive and proactive action plan to get out a more accurate portrayal of temporary foreign workers in our sector.

OFVGA and OAG reached out to Ernie Hardeman, Ontario Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, and Ontario Education Minister Stephen Lecce, letting them know why we weren't supporting the event this year and asking their ministries not to do so either. And when another ministry tweeted a link to the toolkit, it was quickly removed when we got in touch to let them know about our concerns around misinformation entering the school system.

In less than two days, that group, under the leadership of Farm & Food Care Ontario and AgScape, developed a terrific downloadable teacher resource about temporary foreign workers along with a video, social media posts and seasonal worker profiles that were shared and promoted by all the involved organizations.

The video and teacher resource combined, for example, had a reach of almost 30,000 people on Farm & Food Care Ontario and AgScape's social media channels. A Faces Behind Food post on Instagram featuring a father and son who were both seasonal workers on a southwestern Ontario apple farm has chalked up more than 21,000 impressions since it was posted on March 4.

And although we'll never know exactly how much of an impact we had, there's no doubt that Great Big Crunch would have felt the lack of participation from government and the agriculture sector.

We often talk about the need to get "our" story out there proactively and are disappointed when those efforts aren't heard or aren't successful. In this case, however, we had a heads up and were able to take proactive action, which speaks to what we can achieve by working together.

It's also a learning opportunity for our sector, however. How well do we really know some of the organizations we are aligned with? Do our values align or has there been a shift that we're not aware of?

We just had a good reminder that we all need to be mindful of who we fund or sponsor and keep abreast of their activities.

WEATHER VANE



The stories of Hopeton and Denroy, a father/son team of seasonal agricultural workers from Jamaica were featured in a video and teacher resource guide distributed in March.

Hopeton shares: "My son Denroy was three years old when I started coming from Jamaica to work on this farm. That was 33 years ago. It was a big decision for my wife, Angela, and I to take this job. But it's not really easy sometimes to get a job back home."

Denroy shares: "I've been coming here with my dad for 14 years. I had a pretty good idea of what it would be like from hearing his stories."

Photo by Faces Behind Food/Farm & Food Care Ontario.

STAFF
Publisher: Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association
Editor: Karen Davidson, 416-557-6413, editor@thegrower.org
Advertising: Carlie Melara 519-763-8728, advertising@thegrower.org

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OFFICE
355 Elmira Road North, Unit 105
Guelph, Ontario N1K 1S5 CANADA
Tel. 519-763-8728 • Fax 519-763-6604

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

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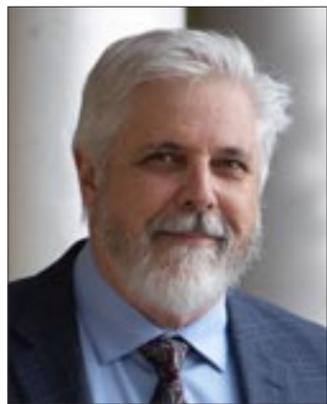
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URBAN COWBOY

Consumers want to hear about your farm, not about the GDP



OWEN ROBERTS

Agriculture and agri-food's contributions to the gross domestic product (GDP) are impressive indeed, and they're repeated often by the sector. The latest figures, from 2016, show agriculture and agri-food generated almost \$112 billion of GDP and accounted for nearly seven per cent of Canada's total GDP.

Politicians should be constantly reminded about them when making policy.

But let's not expect dollar figures to be public figures' focus when they speak publicly about

food production. In fact, let's hope they're not. Food and farming's support of the economy is not the only thing consumers want to hear from politicians, if indeed they want to hear it at all.

Yet on Canada's Ag Day in February, both Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and opposition leader Erin O'Toole drew criticism for heaping praise and respect on farmers, instead of pointing out the economic value of agri-food to Canadians.

They were called out for mouthing platitudes about the agri-food sector, and for not underlining it's an advanced technology user.

I say their critics are wrong. I think people want to hear the very things that the politicians are being chastised for saying, and Trudeau and O'Toole know it.

Here's why. As the local food movement continues to grow, "big" is not what people think of regarding agriculture and food. Commodity groups know that. You don't hear them boast to the public about the size of their industry.

Instead, you hear them say things like farmers are your

neighbours, that the food they produce is safe and wholesome, and that families are behind almost everything that makes its way to your plate. Those are the kinds of things Trudeau and O'Toole said. They're also facts, the kind of facts people want to hear.

Now, that doesn't mean people shouldn't know about technology and have at least an understanding of how the many moving parts of the agri-food sector come together to keep us nourished and functioning.

It should, but it doesn't. Although technology is absolutely essential for the kind of food production that feeds millions, it sounds cold. It doesn't leave consumers with a warm and fuzzy feeling. And neither do impressive-sounding statistics about agri-food's significant contribution to the economy.

That's where agricultural education and agricultural literacy come in. In early March, the federal government ponied up \$1.6 million over two years to kick off Agriculture Literacy Month. Specifically, the month is earmarked for agricultural

education in classrooms across the country.

It's unlikely business columnists will pay much attention. But the classroom is where future consumers will start learning about the vast agri-food sector. And once they start buying food on their own, they'll be savvy enough to make informed choices.

In other words, they'll be agriculturally literate. They'll have the capacity to, for example, have a perspective on local food and on global exports, both of which are essential for a healthy, productive agri-food system.

And what better place to get started on the drive towards an agriculturally literate society than school?

There will never be enough money for such an effort. Break down this latest government investment over two years, across the entire country, and it becomes clear much more is needed.

But maybe it's the best Ottawa figures it can do right now.

Some business writers will hold their nose at federal Agriculture and Agri-Food Marie-Claude Bibeau's upbeat

quote connected to her department's support for Agriculture Literacy Month.

"It is absolutely essential that young Canadians understand where their food comes from," she said. "They must know what farmers' work consists of and how hard they work to take care of their animals and our environment...to provide us with high-quality food. I encourage our young people to take an interest in the many job opportunities available to them on farms and in mechanics, electronics and engineering, science, animal and plant health and much more!"

Maybe it's "small" talk to some. But I think it's right on. Educate young Canadians about agriculture so they mature into knowledgeable consumers. That will enhance the depth and meaning of an agriculture celebration.

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



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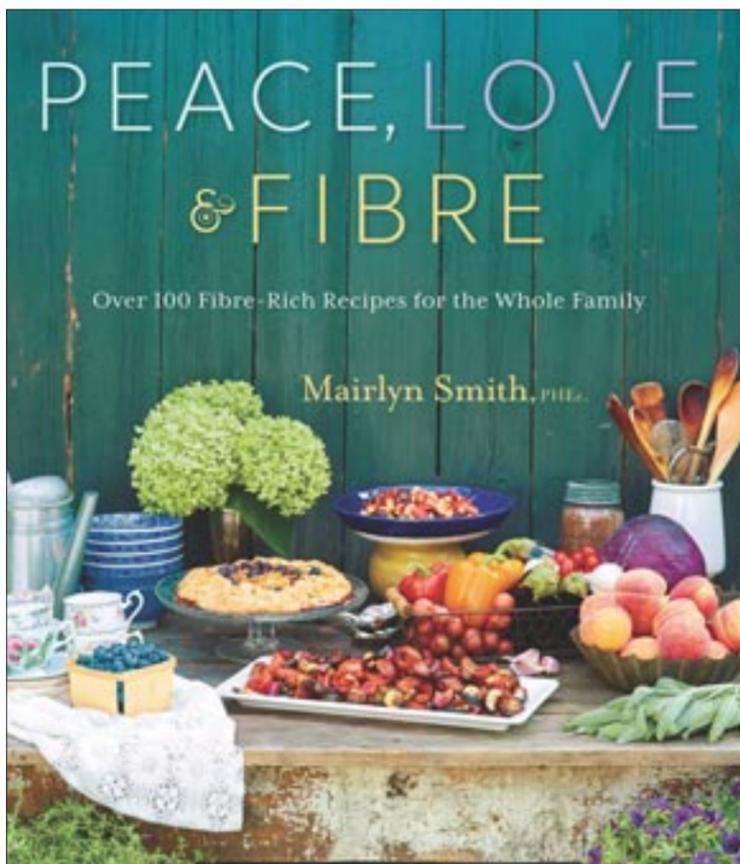


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Farm & Food Care virtual events free to attend



KELLY DAYNARD

Over the next few weeks, Farm & Food Care Ontario (FFCO) is offering free registration to several

virtual webinars and speaker programs.

On April 6, Farm & Food Care's annual conference and speaker program will also take a virtual format, running from 1 to

4 p.m. That event will feature two keynote speakers including:

- Professional Home Economist Mairlyn Smith on the topic of "Peace, Love & Fibre." Smith will talk about her food journey from the time she was a student at UBC to her current role as a popular media personality, MC and keynote speaker. She is also the author of seven award-winning cookbooks.

- David Coletto, CEO of Abacus Data Inc., will talk about "Generational Change and the Future of Food in Canada."

In partnership with Farm & Food Care Saskatchewan and Prince Edward Island, a series of three winter and spring webinars have focused on topics that Canadian food influencers (a key target audience of FFCO) have indicated that they would like to know more about. The sessions build on FFCO co-hosting the virtual Food & Nutrition Forum in partnership with the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair last fall which drew attendees from across Canada.

The first session, held in February, featured Professor David Smith from the UK on

international food trends. The second, held March 29, hosted Jo-Ann McArthur of Nourish Food Marketing on "Food Labelling: The good, the bad and the ugly."

The third webinar in the series will be held on April 22 at 1 p.m. and will feature food service industry specialist Scott McDevitt from Gordon Food Services on the topic "How has food service adapted during COVID: What does the future hold?"

To register for any of these events, visit www.FarmFoodCareON.org and click on the Events & Contests tab. The website also includes a link to recordings of the February and March webinars for anyone still wishing to view them.

Kelly Daynard is executive director, Farm & Food Care Ontario.

COMING EVENTS 2021

- Mar 30 Ontario Processing Vegetable Growers Annual General Meeting **VIRTUAL**
- Apr 1 Ontario Tender Fruit District 1 & 2 annual general meeting (Niagara region) **VIRTUAL**
- Apr 1 Ontario Muck Crops Conference (Onions) **VIRTUAL** 12:30-3:30 pm
- Apr 6 Farm & Food Care Ontario Virtual Conference and Speakers' Program, **VIRTUAL**
- Apr 7 Grape Growers of Ontario Annual General Meeting **VIRTUAL**
- Apr 12 -16 Canadian Produce Marketing Association Fresh Week **VIRTUAL**
- April 28 AgScape Annual General Meeting **VIRTUAL**
- May 5 AgScape Annual General Meeting **VIRTUAL**
- May 18-20 Fruit Logistica Special Edition, Berlin, Germany **CANCELLED**
- May 30-June 3 11th World Potato Congress, Dublin, Ireland **POSTPONED** to May 30-June 2, 2022
- June 24-26 United Fresh Convention and Expo, Los Angeles, CA **VIRTUAL** and **IN-PERSON**
- July 26-29 Potato Association of America Annual Meeting, **VIRTUAL**
- July 31 Food Canada Day
- Aug 11-12 AgriExpo, Grands Falls, NB
- Sept 7-9 Macfrut, Rimini Expo Centre, Italy
- Sept 23-27 Canadian Farm Writers' Federation Annual General Meeting, Windsor, ON
- Oct 6-7 Canadian Greenhouse Conference, **VIRTUAL**
- Oct 13-14 Public Trust Summit, Canadian Centre for Food Integrity, Toronto, ON
- Oct 28-30 Produce Marketing Association Fresh Summit, New Orleans, LA **LIVE**
- Nov 5-14 Royal Agricultural Winter Fair, Exhibition Place, Toronto, ON
- Nov 4 -6 Interpoma, Bolzano, Italy
- Nov 22-24 Alberta Potato Conference and Trade Show, Cambridge Hotel and Conference Centre, Red Deer, AB
- Nov 30-Dec 2 Grow Canada Conference, Calgary, AB



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RETAIL NAVIGATOR

Your customers have changed



PETER CHAPMAN

As society continues to adapt to changes brought on by the pandemic, your customers have adapted to a very different environment for selling food. Many of these are big -- in some cases the biggest -- companies with many layers and complicated structures. They cannot change direction quickly. They were forced to make a huge number of changes, very quickly.

that has helped retailers immensely through this past year has been the incremental volume in the retail channel. The shift from food service to retail has delivered a year-over-year, same-store sales increase between eight and 10 per cent. This is a huge number and in retail, volume hides a lot of sins. There are four fundamental questions to ask about customers as you try to determine your approach to producing and selling in 2021:

1. How can you understand your customer better?
2. How can you support your customer better?
3. What is the definition of success with your customers?
4. What is your plan to communicate and develop your relationship?

Let's explore each of these questions, keeping in mind the influences of the pandemic.

How can you understand your customer better?

There have been some significant changes to retail food in the past 12-14 months. Obviously one of them is the shift in sales from one channel to another. Retailer's priorities change and having the right amount of product at the right time is more important than ever. We have moved past the panic buying and in stock position has been much better. Talk to your customers about volume. When it comes to supporting them, they need inventory so try to understand what they will need and when. I prefer to put a position forward and then let them comment on it to ensure you are able to produce what they think they will need.

The retail environment has changed a lot. Make sure you get into the stores to look at how they are merchandising your

products and others in the category. Staff in stores are being asked to do their jobs differently so perhaps there are things you could do to reduce some of the work at the shelf?

One big change for many retailers is the amount of product being purchased online. Prior to the pandemic this number was very low in Canada but many consumers are now choosing e-commerce. You can review your customer's website to ensure your products are there and correct. They are managing many thousands of SKUs and if yours is not there you will both miss sales.

How can you support your customer better?

When resources are stretched everything has a better chance of working when each member of the value chain delivers what they are supposed to. Look both ways in terms of your own suppliers and the retailers you supply. Check inventories of packaging and inputs to ensure you will be able to produce what is needed, when it is needed. When you do have everything, you need to deliver it on time in full and meet or exceed expectations for quality.

Consumers are shopping differently. With so many people working at home the volume is spread out more through the week. It is possible your customers want to change the amount of product early in the week and less at the end of the week. When you ask the question, they perceive you to be interested and knowledgeable about their business.

What is the definition of success with your customers?

Now is the time to talk to your customers more than ever. The market continues to change so you need to understand what they expect. We might not always want to hear it but it is better when you know how your performance will be judged.

Using what you do know about their sales and service level, you can build your plan for the season. It is important you both agree to the plan. They might see a change coming in summer months and you will need to know what they are thinking. It is tough to forecast sales but you need to agree on what will happen in the market.

What is your plan to communicate and develop your relationship?

Many people are working from home, including category managers. You might have to communicate differently with them in this environment. My experience would be more frequent communication but

shorter meetings. In the past you might schedule a one-hour meeting at the office. Now you can accomplish a lot in a 30-minute video call.

If your product is available for a limited time you can schedule calls during the season to make sure things are going well for both the supplier and the customer. Shorter calls with greater frequency can be beneficial during the season.

Consumers want to know more about where their food is coming from. Plan to tell your story. It is also beneficial to share what you are doing with retailers. They are also more interested in being part of that story. You might have to develop relationships with different people within their organization. Category managers manage categories, they do not deliver social media marketing.

As you consider each of these questions for your own products, think about what should be done in 2021 to maximize the opportunity. It is a very different environment for selling food and there is potential for producers, processors and retailers who respond to the rapidly changing environment.



WHAT'S IN STORE?

We continue to see more space devoted to plant-based products. Even during a pandemic some shelf space is being converted from other categories to make room for this expanding listing base.

Retailers are also offering incentives to get consumers into the category. Purchases of these products are not limited to vegans. Many consumers are eating a flexitarian diet. They might still eat beef, pork and chicken, but they might be

enjoying one or two meals per week with plant-based protein.

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: WORKER HEALTH & SAFETY

Foreign agricultural workers pick up mobile banking



Veá el video de demostración en YouTube



cibc.com/apple



cibc.com/google



Photo by Krystle VanRoboys.



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Competitive exchange rates

KAREN DAVIDSON

Across Canada, the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce (CIBC) is rolling out a Global Money Transfer service that lets international recipients pick up their cash locally. This year's rollout is thanks to the success of a 2020 pilot project with several hundred greenhouse workers in Leamington, Ontario.

With the advent of the pandemic last year, there was an urgent need for foreign agricultural workers to send money back to their families without leaving farm premises to avoid community exposure to COVID-19. Joe Oswald, general manager, CIBC Leamington banking centre, identified this challenge and brought it forward to the Global Money Transfer product team to find a solution. Within 90 days, CIBC had a product to offer to international workers in September 2020.

CIBC's response was based on the experience with Global Money Transfer launched in 2015 which enabled clients to send money directly to a bank account overseas. The service continued to evolve with client needs. Compared to most remittance companies which charge \$10 to \$15 per transfer, this service has no transfer fees. Individuals can also send money through their smart phones and can complete a transfer in both English and Spanish.

Through CIBC working together with

MoneyGram, foreign agricultural workers can send funds to be picked up as cash by local recipients – an option that may be preferred by family members and communities receiving funds abroad.

The Global Money Transfer service, including the cash pickup option, is available at thousands of locations in countries including Mexico, Guatemala and Jamaica. Alternatively, funds can be sent to a bank account. This is a safe, secure and convenient option that also enables transfers from smart phones, using the CIBC mobile banking app.

CIBC has addressed training and education requirements in English and Spanish to support these agricultural clients and has already produced materials in both languages.

These new offerings showcase CIBC's commitment to improving products and services to meet the needs of the community during the pandemic. Either option – cash pickup or direct bank deposit – is available on the same app. Spanish-speaking team members have also been hired to support the service, in addition to posters and a YouTube tutorial for clients. There's also a promotion in the market at the moment with CIBC offering \$50 Canadian for first-time transfers.

Around 250 workers were onboarded in the first two months of the year, but CIBC expects these numbers to ramp up as more foreign agricultural workers arrive ahead of planting and harvest seasons.

Support for day-10 COVID-19 testing

Effective March 19, 2021, the federal government set up a dedicated call centre and email channel for employers of temporary foreign workers. This is to support the day 10 COVID-19 test. The safe and secure service is provided by Switch Health.

Employers will be prompted to provide specific information so

that the day-10 COVID 19 test can be administered in a manner that best supports the organization and their workers.

This service will be available between the hours of 8:30am – 6:30pm EDT, Monday to Friday and 10am-4pm EDT, Saturday and Sunday.

The following information is important:

- When swabs are sent to Switch Health, remember that they must be labelled according to the instructions in the test kit.
- Each worker must write their name on the label provided and place it on the test tube, being careful not to cover the serial number.

Employers are encouraged to use these new channels to contact

Switch Health directly if there are any concerns about outstanding day-10 COVID 19 tests for any temporary foreign workers.

Temporary foreign workers cannot leave their place of quarantine until they have received a negative test result from the day 10 test.

The Employer Contact Centre continues to be the primary

channel for all Temporary Foreign Worker Program related enquires.

Contact Switch Health:
1-888-511-4501
tfw-canada@switchhealth.ca
<https://www.switchhealth.ca/en/individuals/home-kits/covid-test/>

FOCUS: WORKER HEALTH & SAFETY

Resource library to be culturally appropriate for international workers

KAREN DAVIDSON

Necesito ayuda. I need help.

The stress of the COVID-19 pandemic has spurred all levels of government and industry to provide more help to temporary farm workers. It's not just physical assistance but tips for mental health too. In Ontario, a cultural resources library is soon to be stocked with the tools to help the 20,000-plus workers arriving for the 2021 growing season.

"That ground-truthing is underway to provide the best resource possible," says Gordon Stock, senior policy and government relations advisor, Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association (OFVGA). He's the lead for the \$118,000 project that's funded by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA).

Reaching out to the cultural liaison groups for the Caribbean, Mexico and Latin America, he's confident that the resource will be culturally considerate, linguistically sound and accessible. Ag worker interviews have taken place with English-speaking, Spanish-speaking and Thai-speaking workers in different regions of the province.

The questions developed by partner Ontario Health Clinics for Ontario Workers Inc included:

- Identifying what COVID-19 safety information workers have received
- Identifying if there are COVID-19 safety issues they are unclear about, or would like more information on
- Identifying the best formats and methods for information to be shared
- Flagging any COVID-19 vaccine/ vaccination concerns or information needs
- Determining cellphone use and internet availability for information access and sharing
- Gauging experience with cellphone apps and social media
- Identifying language and literacy levels and needs

There will be a "video companion" to the cultural resources library that can guide farm workers through the information to keep safe and secure.

Employers can be confident that the materials are aligned with federal and provincial guidelines. And they can rely on their own toolkit on how to best communicate to workers based on literacy, language, culture and knowledge.

The resource will be distributed in early April 2021. It will follow in the steps of "COVID-19 Resource Library for International Ag Workers and Employees." Link here: <https://bit.ly/38w4wAB>

COVID-19 TRANSPORTATION SAFETY

For your safety, vehicles should be routinely cleaned and disinfected.
Bring your own disinfectant wipes when travelling to take extra precautions.
Disinfect bicycle handles before and after use and do not share with others.

DO NOT ENTER OR BOARD THE VEHICLE IF YOU ARE ILL OR HAVE SYMPTOMS UNLESS YOU ARE BEING TRANSPORTED TO WHERE YOU WILL ISOLATE OR FOR MEDICAL CARE.

2M/6ft

Physical distance while lining up to board the vehicle.

Maintain space during transportation and travel.

Wear a mask at all times.

Wash hands or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer before and after the ride.

Do not eat or drink while in transit.

Open windows if possible, to provide air circulation.

IF YOU ARE TRAVELING IN A SMALL VEHICLE, LIKE A CAR, TAXI, TRUCK OR MINIVAN, WHERE SPACE IS LIMITED, YOU SHOULD TAKE EXTRA PRECAUTIONS. IF YOU ARE PART OF A COHORT OR BUBBLE ONLY TRAVEL WITH THEM.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS ON COVID-19 TRANSPORTATION SAFETY, SPEAK TO YOUR EMPLOYER OR SUPERVISOR. YOUR FEEDBACK AND PARTICIPATION IN HEALTH AND SAFETY IS IMPORTANT.

COVID-19: INCOME SUPPORT FOR INTERNATIONAL FARM WORKERS

YOU MUST QUARANTINE OR ISOLATE FOR 14-DAYS WHEN YOU ARRIVE TO CANADA BEFORE YOU CAN START WORKING.

Your employer is required to pay you 30 hours per week at your regular wage for this 14-day period.

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² Cash-pickup is currently limited to Mexico, Guatemala and Jamaica through MoneyGram outlets. The CIBC logo is a trademark of CIBC. All other trademarks are owned by CIBC.

FOCUS: WORKER HEALTH & SAFETY

Accounting for worker protection with gloves



Photos by Glenn Lawson

CHRIS DUYVELSHOFF

Have you noticed that a restricted-entry interval (REI) has become much longer on a key crop protection product lately? You're not alone. Re-evaluation decisions in recent years by the Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) have, at times, resulted in much longer REIs being applied to some products and tasks. For

example, want to apply mancozeb to an apple crop? Currently an REI of 24 hours is needed prior to hand thinning apples after application. When the new label changes take effect over the next two seasons, that interval will be increasing – to 35 days.

There are several reasons for such big shifts in REIs, including new toxicology information, the fact that many of these recent decisions applied to “old” products

registered before 1995, and a revised Pest Control Products Act coming into force in 2006. Suffice to say, how we got to longer REIs is a subject for another day. However, what can be done about it is a more pragmatic discussion at this time. One surprisingly simple solution is already in practice in some cases: working with gloves.

Estimating potential exposure to persons entering an area that was treated

with a crop protection product remains an important part of PMRA's risk assessments. The purpose of an REI is to ensure that agricultural workers in treated crops do not face unacceptable potential risks to human health. The conditions of product registration, including label directions such as REIs, mean that potential risks have been determined to be acceptable to human health.

Continued on next page

PROTECTING FARM WORKERS FROM COVID-19

With the 2021 growing season upon us and the ongoing pandemic, persistent and increased vigilance by employers of all farm workers is vital.

All farms with workers must take extra precautions to protect workers during these difficult circumstances.



Have a COVID-19 workplace safety plan in place



Actively screen employees daily for symptoms of COVID-19 and enable testing when circumstances warrant



Have strong protocols for physical distancing, masks, increased cleaning of workplaces and worker housing



Educate workers on how to protect themselves at home, in the workplace, and in the community



Take additional precautions if employing temporary help agencies

Together, employers and workers can help stop the spread of COVID-19. Resources for employers and employees can be found at: www.ofvga.org/covid-19. Check back regularly as resources are being updated on an ongoing basis.



FOCUS: WORKER HEALTH & SAFETY

Accounting for worker protection with gloves

Continued from last page

The length of an REI is based on several factors including toxicological data and estimated exposure to the product. Estimated exposure considers possible residues on the crop, duration and frequency of labour activities, and a factor for the degree of crop contact. The latter especially can have a major impact on the duration of REIs.

Residues that are on plant surfaces and are available for transfer are called dislodgeable foliar residues. Generally, residues are highest immediately after an application and decline over time due to various mechanisms including transformation into smaller compounds and mechanical removal due to rain. As the degree of potential exposure is related to the amount remaining on the foliage, potential exposure should decrease over time.

Duration and frequency of an activity such as hand harvesting is based on agronomic practices for a crop. This includes consideration for each task for hours per day, days per year, interval between repetition, crop stage, and calendar date range of the activity. Essentially it is how often and how long do workers perform these tasks in a crop. The crop contact factor – known as a transfer coefficient – is a measure of residue transferability from the foliage of plants to the body of a worker. Transfer coefficients can be determined for any given crop or, potentially, each crop stage and activity combination (for example hand harvesting peaches or scouting young celery plants) from post-application worker exposure monitoring studies. The transfer coefficient represents primarily a function of the degree of body immersion in treated foliage. Hand harvesting sweet corn, for example, has about eight times the transfer coefficient of hand harvesting field-grown strawberries, a far smaller statured crop.

Studies that are used currently to estimate post-application worker exposure are based on workers wearing long-sleeved shirts, long pants, socks, and footwear. This represents the baseline personal protective equipment (PPE) that workers performing hand labour tasks are expected to be wearing. Importantly, gloves are not considered – and hands are a key potential route of exposure.

Be it for comfort, protection, or food safety, some workers are commonly wearing gloves to perform activities in the field. Hand harvesting broccoli, cucumbers, or grapes already sees common use of gloves for example. Even some tasks

requiring a bit more finger dexterity such as hand thinning apples are being done with gloves on in some cases. Some studies suggest gloves can significantly reduce exposure – but this protection is not currently being accounted for on product labels.

A multi-stakeholder working group is hoping to address this gap. The Post-Application Exposure Working Group is comprised of representatives from Health Canada's PMRA, Agriculture and Agri-Food

Canada, CropLife Canada, and the Canadian Horticultural Council. The group has already determined that gloves are indeed possible mitigating PPE that can reduce potential exposure. Now what is needed is data to understand how the use of gloves affects the degree of crop contact. This will require field studies to generate new transfer coefficients under these conditions. Using representative crops from major types of horticultural production, the group ideally hopes to be able

to propose a default “glove protection factor” in the future that could apply broadly to most crops and tasks.

What does this mean for REIs? Well good news. A glove protection factor should result in reduced transfer coefficients and lower potential exposure. Shorter REIs will be the direct outcome of these developments. As for workers, the current regulation already requires that REIs be acceptable under barehanded conditions. Accounting for the

added factor of gloves will only help to make these occupational scenarios more realistic.

Chris Duyvelshoff is crop protection advisor for the Ontario Fruit & Vegetable Growers' Association.

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FOCUS: WORKER HEALTH & SAFETY

Rapid testing broadens overall screening program for COVID-19

KAREN DAVIDSON

When dawn breaks at Great Northern Hydroponics, the work day starts a little differently than other local greenhouses in the Windsor-Essex region. About 30 to 35 employees are chattering as they volunteer for a rapid antigen COVID-19 test. In about the time it takes to enjoy a coffee – 15 minutes – a positive or negative answer sets them up for the morning.

It's part of a pilot project that started in January 2021 at the Kingsville, Ontario tomato-growing facility under the leadership of Betty van het Hof. She's the corporate nurse for Soave Enterprises, based in Detroit, Michigan. It's the umbrella company for the hydroponics greenhouse and its sister company Soave Cogeneration. The 70-acre facility grows more than 10 varieties of tomatoes under the Village Farms' label.

Rapid antigen testing is used for screening purposes for all 240 Great Northern employees. It's not used for diagnosis of an acute infection. If there's a positive result, the employee would be sent to the local COVID-19 assessment centre for a PCR test to confirm the result.

Betty van het Hof made time to answer our questions.

Q. Why are you deploying rapid testing in your greenhouse facility? What exactly is the test?

A. When we were presented with



the opportunity to participate in this program, I agreed as I found it to be a great secondary screening tool. I expect that it will help us more quickly identify COVID-19 cases, therefore allowing us to react to these cases much faster and minimize the spread of COVID-19 at this facility. Our primary screening tool is the COVID-19 questionnaire that includes checking temperatures daily.

The test we are using is the Abbott Panbio Ag Rapid Test (aka antigen test), which detects certain proteins in the virus. The samples are collected with a nasal swab.

As the Corporate Nurse for Soave Enterprises, I have been utilizing antigen testing since April of 2020 throughout the United States, and I am

comfortable with the use of this type of testing and understand the pros and cons of it, so I was comfortable with the use of it in Canada.

Q. When did you start? How much time does it take to do the swab? And how long for results?

A. We began testing in January 2021. The test itself only takes a minute or two and the results take 15 minutes to process. I usually only test about 30-35 employees at a time, and I test three times a week.

Q. How many employees are participating? Do some not participate?

A. All Great Northern Hydroponics employees are participating in the testing. We

have had a few employees who refuse the testing but they are not exempt from the primary screening process. These same employees have later changed their minds and participated in the testing, which is encouraging.

Q. To what extent do the results contribute to making employees – and the employer – feel safe about the work environment?

A. I do not want any employee to get a false sense of security with any testing and loosen up on the recommended guidelines, however, I think it is a sense of comfort to our employees to know that we are taking every possible step to ensure everyone's safety and minimize the disruption of business.

Q. Is this testing program combined with other measures for safety?

A. Yes, the COVID-19 screening questionnaire. This questionnaire involves a series of questions, for example, regarding their health status for the day and temperature screening. This questionnaire is mandatory for everyone from management, support staff, and general labourers and has to be completed before everyone's workday. Moreover, we ensure all employees continue to practise social distancing, use their mandatory PPE, and wash/sanitize hands frequently.



New Workers

Employers are responsible for the safety of their workers. Educate new and young workers to identify hazards and minimize risks.

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Will rapid testing become routine?

By the end of May, about 8,800 temporary foreign workers are expected to be working in the greenhouse sector alone, with approximately 12 to 14,000 total throughout all of agriculture in the Windsor-Essex region says Joe Sbrocchi, general manager, Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers. By mid-March, well over 4,000 workers had already landed to tend to the increasing acreage of "lit" crops. That is, those crops which grow under year-round lighting.

"We are encouraging our members to use rapid testing as a COVID-19 screening tool," he says. "We've suggested to the provincial government to make our headquarters the distribution hub for these test kits."

This concept would protect the privacy of greenhouse employers and their staff and ease any apprehensions they may have in using the kits.

Agricultural workers will be in the next wave of vaccination priorities in Ontario, but it's becoming clear that vaccinations

alone aren't enough. With some workers vaccinated and others not, employers will be encouraged to use rapid testing as a risk management measure sometime into the future.

In efforts to make rapid antigen testing more accessible and remove barriers to implementation, the Ministry of Health (MOH) has revised its guidance on the Provincial Antigen Screening Program to allow for supervised self-swabbing. See link to the revised guidance: <https://bit.ly/3kZ09mk>. Training by health authorities is publicly available. Individuals supervising the self-swabbing process must ensure they have the appropriate knowledge, skills, and judgment to provide oversight, including how to operate the device, PPE requirements, and how to safely dispose of waste.

If growers are interested in how to access rapid antigen tests for their operations, they are encouraged to contact OMAFRA by emailing OMAFRA.Labour@ontario.ca.

FOCUS: WORKER HEALTH & SAFETY

Unique ministry lends a hand to seasonal workers

KAREN DAVIDSON

Pre-pandemic, it would be hard to point out the pastor on the soccer team. He wore his team jersey proudly.

But that's the leadership style of Rev. Augusto Nunez, the pastor of the Durham Region Migrant Worker Ministry east of Toronto. Thanks to the Anglican diocese of Toronto, Rev. Nunez has been fully funded for three years now to meet the diverse needs of about 420 seasonal agricultural workers. Whether that's through community suppers, music or soccer, he's cultivated relationships and trust with a broad group of men and women away from home.

It all started a decade ago when an Anglican minister in Beaverton, Ontario invited the Spanish-speaking Nunez to host weekly summer services. The get-togethers led to other social activities and soon community workshops sprang up to teach workers how to access nurses and physiotherapists, for example.

Over the years, the connections grew stronger by working with the Hispanic

Alliance in Durham, the Whitby Salvation Army, AIDS Committee of Durham Region and a health centre. The Presbyterian United Church in Orono contributed financially to the local efforts. A loosely-knit network of supports had grown up for the workers.

For Rev Nunez, his private Facebook page was a meeting place for workers returning every year. He knew their arrival schedules.

Then COVID-19 was kicked into the mix in March 2020.

"The pandemic has had an effect on all these activities," says Rev. Nunez. "All of the church services had to go online in both English and Spanish."

The relationships built with farmer employers were important in carrying out new tasks such as delivery of canned and dry goods to workers.

This year, Rev. Nunez is bolstered with extra helpers thanks to additional funding from KAIROS Canada. The Canadian government awarded the multi-denominational group \$2.1 million to assist temporary foreign workers in the Maritimes and Ontario until June 30, 2021.



Pre-pandemic, the soccer team stands shoulder to shoulder.

With some of that KAIROS Canada funding, Francine Burke has recently joined as program coordinator. Elisabe Espinosa is in charge of direct and outreach services. Cristina Gomez is rural workshop facilitator.

Espinosa helps with clothing donations, delivery of PPE and groceries while Gomez helps with translation of government pamphlets.

"This is not a 9-5 schedule for us," says Espinosa. "We're able to set up mobile numbers and help

them through the transition. We're a one-stop shop for physical, mental and spiritual support."

Francine Burke is careful to point out that they abide by Services Canada guidance and the plan for temporary foreign workers to be vaccinated in phase two.

"On the vaccination issue, we have to keep that dialogue neutral," says Burke. "It will be a fine line to navigate."

Every worker has the right to

accept or decline a vaccination. However Burke will counsel that workers consider whether government rules might change in the months ahead, requiring proof of vaccination to get back into Canada.

"For the workers, it's a catch-22," says Burke, who knows that many return year after year.

Rev. Augusto Nunez agrees. "It won't be easy, but these are the times we're living in."

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AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD CANADA

Accelerating the adoption of climate-smart best practices in agriculture

Farmers are on the front lines of worsening climate impacts, and face increasing risk of wildfires and extreme weather events, such as floods and droughts. The best way to build climate resiliency across Canadian agriculture's diversity of realities and landscapes is by developing and deploying solutions that are tailored for each region, led by farmers and farm groups themselves.

On March 18, 2021, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, the Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau, announced an investment of \$185 million over the next 10 years for the new Agricultural Climate Solutions (ACS) program.

This program aims to establish a strong, Canada-wide network of regional collaborations led by farmers and including scientists and other sectoral stakeholders. Together, they will develop and share management practices that best store carbon and mitigate climate change. This work will also help protect biodiversity, improve water and soil quality, and strengthen farmers' bottom lines. To be eligible for the ACS program, applicants must form a large network of partnerships within a province, including with agricultural non-profits, Indigenous organizations and environmental groups.

The program will proceed in



Kyle Horlings is an onion grower in Ontario's Holland Marsh who plants cover crops to restore soil health. Photo by Glenn Lowson.

two phases. The first phase, which will launch April 1, aims to support the development of proposals focused on regional collaboration hubs, also known as "Living Labs," by offering grants of up to \$100,000.

The aim is for every province in Canada to have at least one collaboration hub. Each hub will center on farms, where farmers and researchers can co-develop

best practices, including cover crops, intercropping, conversion of marginal land to permanent cover, shelterbelts, nutrient management, and inclusion of pulses in rotations. Applicants will need to demonstrate their ability to engage with researchers and develop plans for knowledge transfer and adoption among their peers. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada will host

regional information sessions over the coming weeks.

The program's second phase will open as early as fall 2021. At this stage, applicant groups can submit their applications for funding support of up to \$10 million per project.

The ACS program is one of many important new initiatives being undertaken to promote environmental sustainability and

resiliency in the agriculture sector and is part of Canada's Strengthened Climate Plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 30 per cent below 2005 levels by 2030, and towards net-zero emissions by 2050.

Source: Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada March 18, 2021 news release

Greenhouse research boosted at Vineland

The Canadian Agricultural Partnership is being tapped for \$330,000 to fund the purchase of specialized equipment for greenhouse projects at the Vineland Research and Innovation Centre.

Research will focus on improving harvesting and storage practices as well as inventory tracking and improvements to biosecurity and COVID-19 protocols.

Vineland facilitates,

coordinates and delivers applied research, innovation and commercialization activities focused on the needs of Ontario's horticulture value-chain – from producer to consumer and from research to industry.

Source: Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada March 18, 2021 news release



AgriStability improvements depend on prairie buy-in

The April 30 deadline is looming for sign-up to this year's AgriStability program. That's why federal agriculture minister Marie-Claude Bibeau called on the prairie provinces in a March 16 news conference to indicate if they're signing on to her proposed changes to AgriStability. She said she's willing to call another federal-provincial-territorial meeting to seal the deal.

Prairie governments, particularly Alberta, are pinched for revenues. So any commitment to partner with the federal

government on AgriStability comes with a multi-million dollar price tag. The program operates on a split with the federal government funding 60 per cent and the provinces 40 per cent.

The federal government has proposed to eliminate the reference margin limit in the AgriStability program which serves to reduce a farmer's payout, and boost the compensation rate to 80 per cent. This could lead to an increased payout from AgriStability of 50 per cent, or \$170 million nationally, into the pockets of

farmers who need it the most.

"At the request of prairie ministers, we will convene a further federal-provincial-territorial meeting," says Bibeau. "To ensure this is a productive meeting and that we can provide much-needed results for farmers, we would prefer to convene only when ministers have a decision in hand. We have had many discussions – Canadian farmers want us to act."

Discussions have started in regard to the next five-year agricultural policy framework, which begins in 2023. Bibeau is

willing to look at longer term changes.

"However, consultations on longer-term fixes to the business risk management suite of programs should not come at the expense of the short-term fixes to AgriStability that farmers are asking for today," she concluded.

Source: Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada March 17, 2021 news release

Science Driven Nutrition™ Improves Crop Quality and Yield - Bloom to Petal Fall



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

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

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

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

Calcium applied from pre-bloom until four-to-six weeks post-petal fall can positively impact the fruit cells that are forming within the apple. After cell division ends, calcium applications help to maintain the crop's nutrient levels from depleting but do not influence the fruit cell development. When boron is combined with

the calcium applications, such as with Agro-K's **Vigor Cal-Bor-Moly**, there is a synergistic effect that increases the uptake of both nutrients. Boron is essential for pollen viability, pollen production and flower health making Agro-K's **Top Set DL** another ideal tool for this window of opportunity.

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

To help maximize their investment in crop nutrition, Agro-K sets growers up to make smart decisions using Five Rs: The Right nutrient applied at the Right time in the Right form in the Right mix targeting the Right location in the plant. Science -Driven Nutrition™ is implemented to determine crop nutrient levels and foliar product applications ensuring the apples get what they need to thrive.

For more information on using science-driven nutrition to help your crop flourish throughout the season, visit www.agro-k.com.

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Carrot herbicide programs

DENNIS VAN DYK and KRISTEN OBEID

Pigweed is a constant headache for carrot growers and it's rare that a carrot field can escape at least one round of hand-weeding in a season. Growers have been dealing with Group 5 (Gesagard, Sencor) and Group 7 (Lorox) resistant pigweed since the late '90s. Some populations are resistant to both modes of action, the backbone of most carrot herbicide programs.

ONvegetables



Table 1. Currently registered products for carrots on muck soils

PRE	POST
Group 3 – Prowl H2O (90-day PHI)	Group 5 – Sencor (only after Lorox PRE)
Group 5 – Gesagard	Group 7 – Lorox
Group 6 – Pardner (45-day PHI)	Group 15 – Dual II Magnum (30-day PHI)
Group 15 – Dual (30-day PHI)	Group 14 – Aim (in-between rows)

The options for mineral soils include Group 3 Treflan/Rival/Bonanza PPI but excludes Pardner PRE.

Table 2. Herbicide trial treatments, application timings, rates and estimated costs.

Pre-emergence June 1	Post-emergence June 30	Post-emergence July 2	Estimated \$/acre
Gesagard (2.8 L/acre) + Dual II Magnum (0.6 L/acre)	—	—	\$204
Gesagard (2.8 L/acre) + Dual II Magnum (0.6 L/acre) + Prowl (2.6 L/acre)	Lorox (1.8 L/acre)	—	\$246
Prowl H2O (2.6 L/acre) + Pardner (0.4 L/acre)	—	Gesagard (1.5 L/acre)	\$171
Prowl H2O (2.6 L/acre) + Pardner (0.4 L/acre)	—	Gesagard (1.5 L/acre) + Dual II Magnum (0.6 L/acre)	\$201

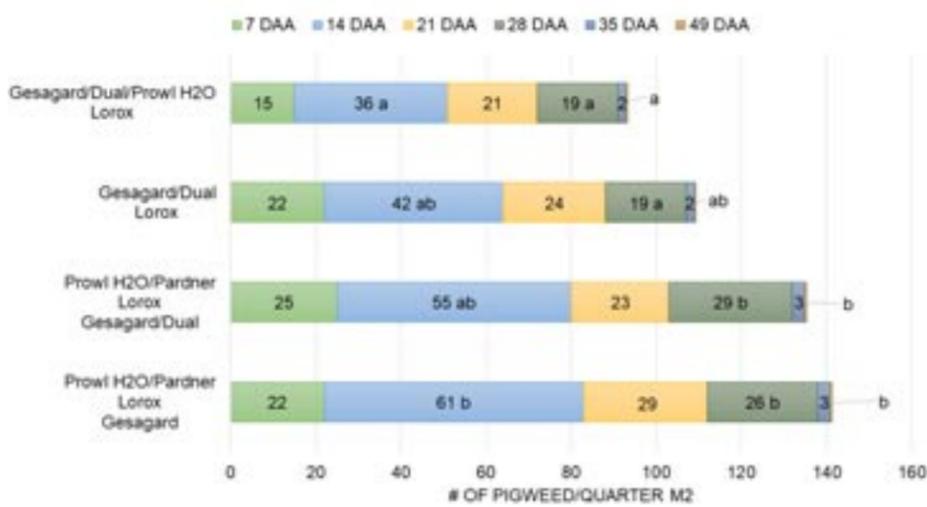


Figure 1. Total pigweed species weed counts



Figures 2, 3. Heavy pigweed pressure in the trial 28 DAA



Figures 4, 5. Pigweed and carrot stand after POST treatment applications

There is some potential help on the horizon including new herbicide options (Blazer, pyroxasulfone, Goal) and robotic

weeders but in the meantime, carrot growers need to work with what we have (Table 1).

In 2020 we conducted a

six-acre trial on muck soil to see if we could use currently registered herbicides in different ways to better control resistant

pigweed in carrots. Primed carrots (cv. Bolero) were seeded on May 31, 2020 and treatment details can be found in Table 2.

An application of Gesagard POST was included to see if that use pattern could give us better control, similar to practices in Wisconsin.

We did weekly assessments for stand, leaf stage and weed counts. Weeds were counted and identified in five quarter meter squares per experimental unit. Our first POST application of Lorox was between 28 and 35 DAA so the pigweed counts in

the first four assessments of Figure 1 are a result of our pre-emergence treatments.

Gesagard/Dual II Magnum PRE and Gesagard/Dual II Magnum/Prowl H2O PRE gave us better control of pigweed compared to Prowl/Pardner PRE (Figure 1). We did not see any stunting or stand losses as a result of any of the pre-emergence treatments.

Continued on next page



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ONTARIO VEGETABLE NEWS

Carrot herbicide programs

Continued from last page

By 28 DAA we had pretty heavy pressure of pigweed in the trial (Figures 2, 3). A rescue treatment of the full Lorox rate was applied at this point.

A follow-up application of Gesagard and Gasagard/Dual II Magnum was applied two days later. We did see some significant crop injury with the Gesagard treatments applied POST (Figures 4, 5). The crop injury was likely exacerbated by the two applications in short succession.

Statistically we did not see any differences between the treatments in marketable yield or percent marketable at harvest (Figure 6).

We saw no phytotoxicity with any of the pre-emergent treatments or the Dual II Magnum application POST. Since we

have maintained the use of Lorox after the latest re-evaluation (See note on restrictions below) it seems Gesagard applied POST might not be a good option going forward, but it definitely remains an important piece of a pre-emergence program on muck soils. We found that a pre-emergence application of Gesagard + Dual II Magnum + Prowl followed by a post-emergence application of Lorox at the full rate provides greater weed control and more competitive carrots than the other treatments, which was also evident visually. It is important to note that this treatment provided the best results because the dominant weed species were pigweed species, lamb's-quarters and yellow nutsedge which are targeted by the applied herbicides.

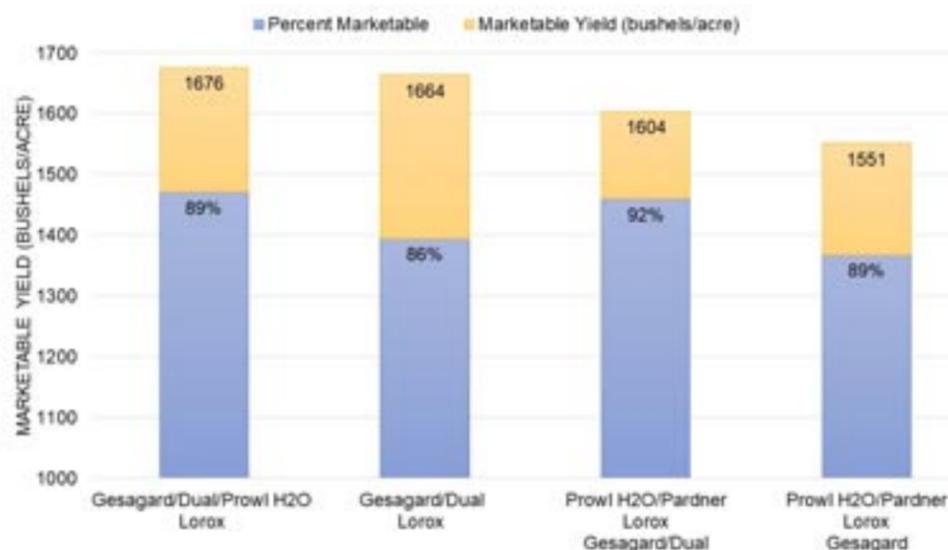


Figure 6. Marketable yield and percent marketable carrots at harvest

Lorox re-evaluation results for carrots

Although the use of Lorox on carrots was preserved, there will be some use restrictions added to the label (~50% reduction). The label changes will have to be made no later than November 2022 so new uses will be in place for the 2023 growing season at the latest. Summary of carrot changes in chart on the right.

Dennis Van Dyk is a vegetable crop specialist and Kristen Obeid is a weed management specialist (horticulture) for the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

Application timing	Maximum rate (kg a.i./ha)	Maximum rate (L/ha)	Maximum rate (L/acre)
Pre-emergence OR Post-emergence	1.08	2.25	0.91
Pre-emergence AND Post-emergence	0.6 (pre-emerge) + 1.08 (post-emerge) = 1.68 (total)	1.25 + 2.25 = 3.5 L/ha	0.51 + 0.91 = 1.42 L/acre



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ONTARIO VEGETABLE NEWS

Research in need of grower cooperators



Cabbage looper on tomato leaf.



Colorado potato beetle larvae on tomato transplants.

AMANDA TRACEY

Spring is upon us and most growers are thinking about and preparing for the upcoming planting season. At the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) we are doing some planning of our own as many specialists organize, lead and collaborate on a number of different research projects. The projects range from surveying for a variety of pests to trying out novel technologies for planting, harvest and pest detection. Often times OMAFRA specialists are in need of grower

cooperators to help with these cutting-edge projects.

For the upcoming field season, we are looking for pepper and tomato growers who have had issues with one or more insect pest species, specifically stink bug, pepper maggot, loopers and Colorado potato beetle. If you grow fresh market or processing peppers and/or tomato, have at least three acres of the crop and are interested in working with OMAFRA specialists, please email us at amanda.tracey@ontario.ca.

If you do not grow peppers or tomatoes, do not worry. There are a number of other ongoing projects that you could get involved in as well. We will try to match you

with a project in need or keep you in mind for the future. If you have been experiencing a particular crop/pest challenge, please reach out to us. We are always looking for new research project ideas and want to make sure we are meeting the needs of our horticulture growers as they change and evolve over time.

Stay tuned as many of the findings from the upcoming field season will be available at various winter conferences and webinars.

Amanda Tracey is a vegetable crop specialist for OMAFRA.

SPECIALTY CROPS

OMAFRA supports continued hazelnut research

JOHN ZANDSTRA
and KATERINA JORDAN

The expanding Ontario hazelnut industry recently received another boost with the signing of a six-year research funding agreement. This project, titled “Improvement of Ontario hazelnut cultivars focusing on winter hardiness and pest tolerance, with an emphasis on management of Eastern Filbert Blight” is funded by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA), through the Ontario Agri-Food Innovation Alliance. The project is being led by two researchers from the University of Guelph’s Ontario Agricultural College; John Zandstra from the Ridgetown Campus, and Dr. Katerina Jordan, who is with the Department of Plant Agriculture, in collaboration with OMAFRA IPM Specialist Melanie Filotas and the Ontario Hazelnut Association.

One phase of the project will involve establishing hazelnut cultivar trials at five locations across southern and eastern Ontario, which will be managed by John Zandstra and his colleagues. Given the diverse climate, soil, and environmental conditions across the potential hazelnut growing regions of the province, multiple locations are needed to help match cultivars with growing conditions.

Three of the sites are University of Guelph research stations – Cedar Springs (near Blenheim ON), Simcoe and Huron (near Exeter ON). The Cedar Springs Research Station has a gravelly loam soil and will be the warmest location, being in Plant Hardiness Zone 7a. The Simcoe Research Station is slightly cooler (Zone 6b) and is located on the Norfolk Sand Plain. Hazelnut cultivar trials have been ongoing at this location since 2008 under

the direction of Dr. Adam Dale.

The Huron location is in Hardiness Zone 6a and is of particular interest because of its clay loam soil; currently there is another hazelnut trial on this site investigating methods to grow hazelnuts on heavier clay soils, including raised beds. The remaining two locations are further east and in cooler locations in Zone 5b; one is on a grower site near Uxbridge with a range of soil types and the last site is at the Joyceville Institution in Kingston, which also has soil types ranging from loams to clay. At these last two locations, the exact site for the trial has not been selected.

We are planning to include at least 22 cultivars at each location. Many originate from the hazelnut breeding program at Oregon State University and we hope to include the most recent releases of Dr. Shawn Mehlenbacher (York, Wepster, McDonald, PollyO). Rutgers University in New Jersey also has a hazelnut breeding program and Dr. Tom Molnar has arranged to speed up the delivery of their five new cultivars; we hope to be able to plant these by late summer 2021 (Raritan, Monmouth, Hunterdon, Somerset, Beast). These cultivars were recently named and released, and are more cold hardy than most commercial hazelnut cultivars from Oregon. They also have a greater tolerance to Eastern Filbert Blight (EFB), which is a major disease of hazelnut. Finally, Grimo Nut Nursery and Martin Hodgson are each providing several cultivars they have developed in Ontario.

Data will be collected on tree survival and vigour, pest incidence, in particular Eastern Filbert Blight, and eventually nut yield and quality. We are especially interested in cultivars that will meet the quality requirements of large scale processors such as Ferrero.

The other aspect of this project focuses

on EFB disease and will be managed by Katerina Jordan and her research group. EFB is caused by the fungus *Ansiogramma anomala*, which is a native parasite of the American hazelnut. The disease is becoming more prevalent in Ontario and considered one of the greatest threats to hazelnut production in the province.

A recent survey of hazelnut trees in Ontario showed incidence levels as high as 64 per cent in some orchards. Infection occurs in the spring, at which point spores from infected trees are released and spread by wind and rain to young shoots. Upon entry into the plant, the fungus invades the phloem, cambium and the xylem of the tree, although symptoms are not visible until the following season, approximately 15 months after initial infection. At that point, fungal bodies called stromata erupt along through the bark in areas of dead and sunken tissue called cankers. Left untreated, a complete die-back of the canopy can be seen within five to 10 years. The current recommendations for this disease include pruning, the use of resistant cultivars and fungicide applications.

It is our research group’s hope to eventually learn about the biology of the pathogen in Ontario with an emphasis on its genetic diversity and determining pathogenicity of various fungal isolates on hazelnuts in the province. For this study, however, we are focusing on developing fungicide recommendations for growers by looking at efficacy of registered and potential new products as well as determining the appropriate timing of application to increase effectiveness of various fungicides. This will generate critical information for Ontario growers on how these products should be used under Ontario conditions, since until now EFB fungicides and spray timing has only been evaluated in Oregon. Finally, in collaboration with John Zandstra’s team,



Hazelnut orchard, Cedar Springs, ON.

we will be planting a sub-set of the cultivars being assessed and inoculating them with the pathogen to look for cultivars that are resistant to the Ontario isolates of the fungus.

Ultimately, we hope to have recommendations for growers on the best cultivars to use in their region of the province based on production as well as disease development. We also hope to provide guidance on what products to apply and when for maximum efficacy against EFB. The Ontario Hazelnut Association already conducts annual surveys at more than 25 member orchards, documenting cultivar survival, tree development and pest incidence; this project will more formally add to our collective knowledge about hazelnut cultivar performance and EFB management in Ontario.

Acknowledgment: The Cedar Springs, Simcoe and Huron Research Stations are owned by the Agricultural Research Institute of Ontario and managed by the University of Guelph through the Ontario Agri-Food Innovation Alliance, a collaboration between the Ontario Government and the University of Guelph.

John Zandstra is a researcher, fruit and vegetable cropping systems from the University of Guelph Ridgetown Campus, and Dr. Katerina Jordan, is associate professor, Department of Plant Agriculture, University of Guelph.

BITES AND BITES

CPMA Fresh Week offers star-studded speaker line-up

The Canadian Produce Marketing Association (CPMA) is holding a virtual Fresh Week event April 12-16, 2021. Mark your schedule for these highlights.

Keynote Speaker – Tuesday, April 13, 1 pm EDT

Super Bowl Champion Laurent Duvernay-Tardif is as well known on the Kansas City Chiefs football turf as he is in Montreal's healthcare community.

In May 2018, he graduated with his doctorate in medicine from McGill University. Refusing to choose between sports and studies, he played as a right guard on the Kansas City Chiefs Super Bowl winning team in February 2020. When the pandemic arrived, he worked as an orderly at a long-term care facility in the Montreal area. In July 2020, he announced that he was opting out of the 2020 NFL season due to COVID-19 – the


Laurent Duvernay-Tardif

first NFL player to do so.

His remarkable story reveals physical and mental toughness during the pandemic. Don't miss his keynote on Tuesday, April 13 at 1 pm EDT.

Keynote speaker – Friday, April 16, 1 pm EDT

CPMA is partnering with national research and insights

firm, Abacus Data, to explore the potential impact of the pandemic on consumer behaviour – from grocery shopping to where we want to work to what we will feel comfortable doing once the pandemic is over.

Throughout Fresh Week, participants will be invited to take part in a three-part poll, starting April 13. Responses to polling questions will be compared to the


David Coletto, CEO, Abacus Data

national survey, and a personalized report sent to you for your reference.

David Coletto, CEO, Abacus Data will present the findings and offer insights on their relevance to your business. Before founding the market research firm, he earned a PhD in political science at the University of Calgary in 2010 and is an adjunct professor at Carleton University. He is the

host and producer of InFocus with David Coletto, a new podcast that explores the intersection of public opinion, politics, public policy and consumer behaviour.

For the entire week's schedule, link here: <https://bit.ly/2Po4ZxH>

DelFrescoPure to build another 25 greenhouse acres

To meet demand for locally grown produce, DelFrescoPure announces Phase One of its greenhouse production expansion. The new 25-acre build will be fully operational by September 2021 to deliver high-quality Ontario greenhouse-grown tomatoes and strawberries for 2021-2022 winter sales.

"We're planning three phases to keep up with consumer demand for tomatoes and strawberries," said Carl Mastronardi, president of Del Fresco Produce Ltd.

Innovative technology for growing in all seasons include energy curtains and grow lights to

provide more than three quarters of a half million square-foot controlled micro-climate environment for growing tomatoes.

"We are proud to offer our retail partners and consumers high-quality locally grown greenhouse tomatoes from September 2021 winter production season," commented Ray Mastronardi, vice president of sales. "The decision to expand the winter tomato program was made clear from our retail partners asking for more acreage to meet the demand of the consumers."

DelFrescoPure brands



greenhouse tomatoes under Delights Blushing with Flavor, Mini Mixers, Ombra, G.R.Eat!, Heirloom, plus offers beefsteak and tomatoes on the vine with

local and national retail partners. The family-owned greenhouse company grows and markets greenhouse tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, beans, eggplants and

strawberries. Link here: www.DelFrescoPure.com

Source: *DelFrescoPure March 12, 2021 news release*

CROP PROTECTION

Zidua SC herbicide registered for potatoes

BASF Agricultural Solutions is reporting that Zidua SC herbicide recently received label registration for use on potatoes across Canada. The active ingredient in Zidua SC (pyroxasulfone) has MRLs established in the major export markets for Canadian potatoes: the U.S., Mexico, and Japan. Please check with your processor to ensure

Zidua SC is approved for application.

Zidua SC herbicide (Group 15) residual activity controls germinating annual grasses and broadleaf weed seedlings before or soon after crop emergence and can be used to support a variety of tank-mixes. This provides potato growers more options to manage resistant redroot

pigweed, common waterhemp, kochia and wild oats. The expanded label is registered for the 2021 season and beyond.

Source: *BASF Canada March 23, 2021 news release*

New global brand announced for naturally derived Spinosyn Insecticides

Corteva, Inc. has announced that it is implementing the new global brand names of Qalcova active (pronounced "kal-KO-vuh") for spinosad, and Jemvelva active (pronounced "jem-VEL-vuh") for spinetoram, demonstrating Corteva's commitment to building best-in-class, sustainable solutions for farmers. Together, these two naturally-derived active ingredients — both Green Chemistry Challenge Award winners — provide farmers worldwide with effective insect control options for more than 250 crops, including fruits, vegetables, soybeans, corn, rice and others.

"With unique and consistent global brands, farmers can be confident that products labeled with Qalcova active or Jemvelva active demonstrate the benefits of Corteva

Agriscience's exceptional research, development and testing," said Santosh Mangalam, Global Portfolio Leader, Corteva Agriscience. "They'll also be able to better recognize the high-quality active ingredients from Corteva in a growing insecticide market."

Produced through a proprietary natural fermentation process, Qalcova, the active ingredient in products including Entrust organic insecticide and Success insecticide, and Jemvelva, the active ingredient in Radiant and Delegate insecticides and other brands, belong to a class of insecticidal chemistry (Group 5) that does not show cross-resistance to other classes of chemistry. This makes the products in this portfolio a good fit for Integrated Pest Management (IPM) programs and

Insecticide Resistance Management (IRM) programs. Both Qalcova and Jemvelva have been awarded the U.S. EPA Green Chemistry Challenge Award, which recognizes novel chemistry solutions that incorporate the principles of green chemistry into chemical design, manufacture and use.

The new names specifically recall this connection to nature. Qalcova was inspired by "alcove," reflecting the product's proven ability to provide natural protection. Jemvelva incorporates "gem" and "velvet," suggesting a naturally derived, hidden treasure that's soft and gentle on the environment.

Source: *Corteva Agriscience March 23, 2021 news release*

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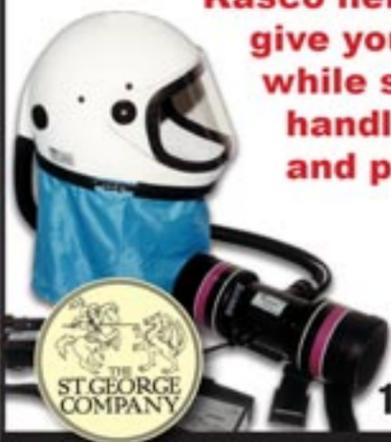
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CROP PROTECTION

Program renewal update: PMRA's new integrated approach to re-evaluations

CALEIGH HALLINK-IRWIN

As I'm sure you know, the Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) is our regulatory body for the registration and review of crop protection products in Canada. Crop protection products include everything from organic products to conventional pesticides. The PMRA is mandated specifically to protect both human health and the environment.

Currently, re-evaluations of crop protection products must be done every 15 years to ensure that they continue to meet current health and environmental standards. These re-evaluations are data-heavy, labour intensive, and can take years to conduct. Over the last few years, growers, industry, registrants and the PMRA have found that this re-evaluation process is unsustainable. There are too many re-evaluations (340 re-evaluations and special reviews are either underway or will commence in the next five years!), and they take too long to perform. We've seen that re-evaluations are especially difficult for the products undergoing re-evaluation for the first time due to changes in use pattern over time, and for minor use products (e.g. horticultural uses), because actual use data is less readily available than for the major grain and oilseed field crops.

As a regulator concerned primarily with the health and safety of both people and the environment, if there isn't enough data to defend continued, safe uses, then the PMRA is obligated to take an abundance of caution. Regulators then must use models with the highest assumptions of risk (versus the actual risk), which often leads to the cancellation of uses or, in the worst-case scenarios, cancellation of an entire product.

This means that Canadian growers are seeing a loss of critical crop protection products, delays in accessing new innovations relative to our trading partners, and ultraconservative risk mitigation measures.

The Integrated Approach

The new Integrated Approach plans to take a more streamlined perspective applied across the PMRA's work, instead of having separate processes for re-evaluation and registration.

First, they would use a continuous oversight approach. Instead of having a great, looming deadline at 15 years, they would check in on a registered product over time, using renewal touch points and major label expansions to identify any issues. With the old program, a product would be re-evaluated at 15 years – which often included an overwhelming amount of data and use changes to process. This ongoing approach would divide the work into more easily digestible chunks of information.

Second, they plan to update the scoping process for re-evaluations. This includes improved early data collection and expanding engagement and transparency. This is very promising! The PMRA has great needs for more data, including water monitoring data and pesticide use information, and it's very important that they have this information for use in re-evaluation.

Third, the PMRA plans to improve workload prioritization in order to focus on the highest priority pesticides first. They are currently trialing this in order to prioritize the delayed re-evaluation decisions that have accumulated as a result of reduced resources due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Next, they are planning to increase transparency around pesticide risk assessments, including their completion status and any further information needs.

Lastly, they are taking opportunities to work with international partners where it is valuable to Canada, and won't interfere with our own priorities and decisions.

The ongoing consultation process: engagement is key

The PMRA has been investigating ways to increase the



Photo by Glenn Lowson

The new Integrated Approach plans to take a more streamlined perspective applied across the PMRA's work, instead of having separate processes for re-evaluation and registration.

efficiency and efficacy of its re-evaluation program since 2016. Following consultation in late 2018, the Post-Market Pesticide Re-evaluation Review was based on three pillars: efficiency, increased surveillance and data, and engagement and transparency. This model has now been graduated into the new "Integrated Approach."

From February to September 2020, the PMRA consulted on this new approach, and the latest What Was Heard Report, published in February 2021, summarizes the comments and feedback they received over the past year. Overall, they found that there was a lot of support for the Integrated Approach concept, with a great interest in continued engagement during implementation, and the feedback could be organized into seven overall themes:

1. Support for Integrated Approach concept: suggestions for development of its details and implementation
2. Continuous oversight, including data checkpoints
3. New re-evaluation process: scoping, data collection, and new engagement opportunities

4. Workload prioritization and management: support for risk-based approach to workload management

5. Enhanced engagement and transparency
6. Evidence-base for decision-making: emphasized the need for a national pesticide water monitoring program, and framework to collect pesticide use information
7. International collaboration and competitiveness

Moving forward, the PMRA will continue engagement as it launches its multi-year program renewal project. PMRA hopes with these significant changes, it will be more efficient and lead to more scientific decisions that will better fulfill their mandate of protecting human health and the environment.

Overall

We at the Canadian Horticultural Council are optimistic about the changes that the PMRA is proposing and hope they are implemented swiftly. We want to ensure that changes do not create any barriers to innovation or for new registration

of minor use products, but we think that the more efficient, sustainable program will be a benefit to both the PMRA and its stakeholders, including growers.

The PMRA needs more data to make defensible science-based decisions, and acquiring that data is an ongoing, high priority need. Without accurate, up-to-date information, the agency can't make modern, data-based decisions. The CHC has long been lobbying for the PMRA to receive more funding for this purpose, and so we are glad to see that this Integrated Approach includes acquiring more data and increased transparency surrounding the process as a whole. We look forward to further increased engagement with the PMRA during the re-evaluation process.

For more details, and to read stakeholders' comments, pick up a copy of the PMRA's What Was Heard Report when it's published on the website.

Caleigh Hallink-Irwin is manager, crop protection, for the Canadian Horticultural Council.



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CROP PROTECTION

Gowan Canada and ISK BioSciences announce novel herbicide AI

Gowan Canada and ISK Biosciences have entered into the early stages of an agreement to market Tergeo, a new, unique PPO inhibitor herbicide, in Canada. Tergeo is a new molecule discovered by FarmHannong, a Korean agrochemical company, and jointly developed by Ishihara Sangyo Kaisha, Ltd. (ISK) and FarmHannong globally.

“Tergeo is a new PPO inhibitor, or group 14 mode of action herbicide, that provides high levels of activity on wild oats in addition to key broadleaf and

grass weeds in wheat and corn,” states Garth Render, general manager for Gowan Canada. “Our research has shown this product will be a valuable tool in an effective herbicide resistance management strategy.”

Both organizations note the potential of Tergeo because of its rapid and effective pre-seed burn down of grass and broadleaf weeds. This partnership and product align strongly with Gowan Canada’s overall approach to providing effective tools to farmers and their herbicide resistance management strategies.



The product is intended for use in the wheat, corn, soybean, grape and chem-fallow markets. Pending PMRA review, Gowan

and ISK Biosciences are hopeful to have this product available to Canadian farmers by the spring of 2022.

Source: Gowan Canada/ISK BioSciences March 2, 2021 news release

Bioline launches improved STARSKii sachets

Bioline Agrosciences is launching Climate Adapted Release Technology (CART) in its STARSKii products.

The new sachet combines pre-conditioning of the contents, permeability of the sachet and a carefully balanced formulation to produce perfect conditions for mite development and subsequent control of thrips and whitefly.

“We work hand in hand with technical, production and research and development teams to

continuously improve and adapt to grower needs with an environmentally friendly approach,” says Dr. Caroline Reid, senior technical lead for Bioline Agrosciences. “CART technology has boosted performance in the field, bringing high fecundity from the first day of release to give an increased effectiveness against whitefly and thrips.”

According to the news release, this improved product adapts to



fluctuating temperatures and humidities.

Source: Bioline Agrosciences March 12, 2021 news release

Ontario growers can monitor for spotted-wing drosophila

A project funded by Niagara Peninsula Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association, Ontario Tender Fruit Growers, Grape Growers of Ontario and Eastern Ontario Berry Growers Association supported a research project to develop the methodology to not just identify spotted-wing drosophila (SWD) in samples but to quantify it. The molecular method allows for detection of a single SWD in a sample with 1000 non-SWD flies with 97 per cent accuracy.

Wendy McFadden-Smith, tender fruit and grape IPM specialist, OMAFRA, recommends that growers set up three to four liquid-based traps in shaded areas around the field. Set up the traps when fruit start to turn colour

and continue until SWD has been identified. Each trap should be baited and have 100 mL of mouthwash. These traps should be collected every week and the contents sent to the Agriculture and Food Laboratory, University of Guelph.

The contents of multiple traps can be combined into a single sample for testing. Commercial traps and lures can be purchased from several suppliers. In comparison trials, Scentry lures have given the best results. If you prefer, you can make your own traps but make sure there’s a way to suspend the lure above the collection medium. Mouthwash (instead of plain water or apple cider vinegar) proved a much superior collection medium in the



traps as it effectively preserved samples and reduced contamination that interferes with the test.

The price for testing is \$80 per sample for 10 or more samples submitted as a batch. For batches

of fewer than 10 samples, a setup fee of \$100 will apply. The turnaround time from sample receipt to reporting results will be two to three business days.

Ensure that shipping containers are leak-proof and ship by courier

to avoid delays. The submission form can be found at: afl.uoguelph.ca/sites/default/files/pdf/general-submission-form.pdf

Source: ONFruit March 17, 2021.

Pest Management Research Report is published

The Pest Management Research Report (PMRR) is a periodical to facilitate the rapid exchange of information on Integrated Pest management (IPM) among those involved in research and advisory services on IPM of plant diseases and insect pests in the agri-food sector of Canada. The reports represent all aspects of pest management,

including cultivar and management responses, and are available to support the registration of pest control products.

In the entomological portion, there is also a section on Surveys and Outbreaks – Insect and Mites. Information on the occurrence and severity of plant disease in Canada and

on the assessment of losses from diseases is contained in the Canadian Phytopathological Society (CPS) publication “The Canadian Plant Disease Survey.”

Link here: phytopath.ca/publication/pmrr/

Source: Pest Management Centre March 22, 2021

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