

SPECIALTIES

## Shallots: the perils and profits of a niche crop



In 1753, the Swedish botanist Linnaeus first described the genus *Allium* which includes onions, garlic, scallion, leeks, chives – and shallots. For some growers, it still feels as though shallots are coming out of the shadows. Frank Schroyens and his wife Monique admire their shallot crop about to be harvested this month near Straffordville, Ontario. Photos by Glenn Lawson.

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#### KAREN DAVIDSON

Shove over, onions. Make room for shallots.

That's the rallying plea of a handful of Canadian growers who specialize in the aromatic. Frank Schroyens and his family have been digging a niche for the European delicacy since 1998. When they immigrated from Belgium to Straffordville, Ontario, they were astonished to discover that shallots were an unknown entity.

The Belgians saw an opportunity whereas local farmers saw only more work. Three small shallots equal one small onion. "Shallots are totally different from an onion," says Schroyens. "You can't compare." While he may be describing the gastronomic characteristics of the copper-skinned cloves, Schroyens is also alluding to the agronomic differences. Seed is sourced from France and Holland. Specialized equipment, imported from Europe, is required for seeding, harvesting,

packing and storing. Shallots require 2°C at 75 per cent humidity in storage.

The biggest hurdle was convincing retailers to buy shallots. Botanically, they belong to the *Allium* family which includes onions, garlic, scallion, leeks and chives. As a smaller cousin to the onion, shallots are also less pungent and therefore prized for their use raw in salads and dressings. Besides attractive pink-coloured flesh, shallots score high in sucrose sugars, a trait that allows them to

caramelize readily in the sauté pan.

It's this story of their cooking virtues that persuaded Costco's produce buyer Oleen Smethurst to visit the Schroyens farm many years ago. Today, the packing facility is food-safety audited annually to meet the standards of Costco as well as other retailers.

At Costco stores, you can find three-pound shallot packages.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

## AT PRESS TIME...



## Ontario berry growers seek new organization

Ontario's two berry grower organizations are proposing to join forces and create one new organization: Berry Growers of Ontario. The Ontario Berry Growers' Association (OBGA) and the Ontario Highbush Blueberry Growers' Association have received agreement from the Ontario Farm Products Marketing Commission to conduct an expression of opinion vote among all eligible growers of blueberries, raspberries and strawberries in Ontario.

"We're planning Berry Growers of Ontario in order to help growers earn better returns," explains Jenn Van DeVelde, a berry grower and current director of the OBGA. "There are so many issues facing growers today that require a strengthened organization."

"The new organization will give us the structure and authority we need to better serve growers," stated Steve

Kustermans, a blueberry grower and current chair for the Ontario Highbush Blueberry Growers' Association. "A unified voice for all berry growers will enable us to better get government's attention and resources to support our sector."

The new organization is not seeking any authority related to pricing or control of supply. It will be directing its efforts towards marketing and promotion, research and grower advocacy.

"Our budget will be lean and modest and will ensure that growers of each crop receive a fair allocation of resources towards that crop leading to more research, promotion and crop protection for every crop that we represent," commented Van DeVelde.

The proposed board of directors of nine will be comprised of three growers from each of the three crops: strawberries, raspberries and blueberries. If growers vote in support of the proposal and subsequently the establishment of a new board is supported by

the Commission and ultimately the Ontario government, then membership in the new organization will be mandatory rather than voluntary. Mandatory membership requires that every grower of two or more acres of any combination of the three crops will pay membership fees each year based on the number of bearing acres in production. This structure provides a fair and transparent way to fund organization activities.

The Commission expects to conduct the vote in late October and early November. Producers must be entered in the Commission's database to receive a mailed ballot. Growers that do not currently belong to one of the two existing organizations need to inform Commission analyst, Laurinda Lang, so that they receive a ballot. She can be reached during business hours by calling (519) 826-3242. More information is available in the growers and members section of the OBGA website at [www.ontarioberries.com](http://www.ontarioberries.com)

## NEWSMAKERS

The Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association (OFVGA) has announced that **John Kelly**, executive-vice-president, has resigned. Kelly has helmed the horticultural association since July 1, 2014, liaising with many industry and government partners on issues ranging from soil health and farm safety nets to water resource management. Previous to his executive role, Kelly led the Erie Innovation and Commercialization initiative for four years to help diversify agricultural opportunities for growers in the south central region of Ontario. This initiative was under the mantle of the OFVGA with other partners. He is leaving to pursue a range of entrepreneurial activities. A search is underway for a replacement.

Farm and Food Care Ontario has announced that Meaford-Ontario apple grower **Brian Gilroy** is the new chair, replacing long-time chair **John Maaskant**. He is joined by **Christine Schoonderwoerd**, vice-chair; **Sandi Brock**, secretary; **Jim Gowland**, treasurer.



Brian Gilroy (L) with former ag minister Ted McMeekin

Other directors elected or re-elected at Farm & Food Care's annual meeting in April include **Bruce Christie** (Nutreco Canada), **Heather Copland** (Grober Inc.), **Dave McEachren** (Grain Farmers of Ontario), **Les Nichols** (Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association), **Gerald Rollins** (Beef Farmers of Ontario) and **Peter van Sleuwen** (Dairy Farmers of Ontario).

Farm and Food Care Canada has announced that **Ian McKillop**, a fifth-generation egg, beef and grain farmer, will become its new chair. He has served as a board member of the Canadian Cattlemen's Association and has chaired the National Farm Animal Care Council's Beef Cattle Codes of Practice committee. Joining him as vice-chair is **John Geurtjens**, vice-president of Farm Credit Canada. **Gwen Paddock**, the national director of agriculture and resource industries for the Royal Bank of Canada, takes the position of treasurer. **Bruce Christie** will continue to serve on the executive in the role of past chair.

The Canadian Horticultural Council (CHC) has announced that **Rebecca Lee** will become executive director of the Ottawa-based organization. Most recently, she was technical director with the North American Plant Protection Organization, where she also served as acting executive director working closely with government, research and industry representatives from Mexico, the United States and Canada. She earned her Bachelor in Science/Agriculture from McGill University, her Masters in Science from the University of Guelph and her doctorate from Wageningen University in the Netherlands. She'll spend August reaching out to CHC members and start full time in September. For more information, see page 8.

In other news, CHC has hired **Julie Paillat** as the national coordinator, greenhouse vegetable sector. In previous roles, she has served as a research and innovation specialist with the Egg Farmers of Canada, a soybean breeding research associate with Monsanto Canada and an agronomist with Les Semences Elite du Québec. She travelled to the Leamington area in July to visit greenhouse vegetable operations and will take up her position on a half-time basis in the Ottawa offices of the CHC in September.

Sobey's CEO **Marc Poulin** departed suddenly in early July, following poor financial results. The acquisition of Canadian Safeway has proven difficult, especially given the softening economy of western Canada, particularly in Alberta. **Francois Vimard**, chief financial officer for parent company Empire is now in the role. See **Peter Chapman's** blog on this development at [www.thegrower.org](http://www.thegrower.org).

Condolences to the family and friends of **Dr. Clare Rennie** who passed away June 23, 2016 at the age of 90. He was lauded as a lecturer at the University of Guelph for 22 years, before he became Ontario assistant deputy minister of agriculture in 1974.

Congratulations to **Owen Roberts**, a columnist for **The Grower** and now the president of the International Federation of Agricultural Journalists. He was elected to the position at the recent annual meeting in Bonn, Germany. When he's not pushing for a free press in the developing world, he's at home in Guelph, Ontario where he's the director of research communications for the University of Guelph.



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## COVER STORY

## Shallots: the perils and profits of a niche crop

Continued from page 1

Other retailers such as Metro and Sobeys prefer the 350-gram package while Loblaw purchases 250 grams.

There's plenty of risk in specializing in shallots, but also profit and pride in being one of the few suppliers of this crop. The cost of growing onions is one-quarter of what it costs to grow shallots. However, the premiums for shallots are 40 per cent higher than onions if the crop can be harvested and stored properly.

Manitoba grower Lourens Arendse shares a similar trajectory to success. Originally a potato and onion grower near Portage La Prairie, he and his sons Sandor and Tim have

with defensive strategies. Plantings of shallots are spread over a multitude of fields to spread the weather risk. Crop insurance can mitigate any weather damage. Because the Arendse family grows shallots at a latitude north of the 49th parallel, the product is more authentic and true to the European standard for shallots. The quality of "northern" shallots is a distinguishing feature, one that outshines the shallots grown in the southern U.S. where they are more prone to splits and molds.

For these two growers, significant infrastructure has been built to handle the specialty crop. However market gardeners can also prosper with small acreages of shallots. Jan van der Heide, a Bejo Seeds



The grading line will be in action this month with new-crop shallots.

**The biggest hurdle is to build the retail market. It takes time to build awareness.**

~ LOURENS ARENDESE

transitioned out of that crop and since 2003, specialized in onion sets and shallots. Their company, L.A. Quality Products Ltd., now grows 100 acres of onion sets and 150 acres of shallots.

"The biggest hurdle is to build the retail market," says Arendse. "It takes time to build awareness."

After all these years, the Europeans consume 250 grams of shallots per capita compared to North American consumption of only 50 grams per capita. That fact can be discouraging or as Arendse says, an incentive to grow the market.

As suppliers to Peak of the Market cooperative in Winnipeg, they have developed a punnet tray so that the shallot skins leave no mess in the store. One-third of their production is sold domestically where they see room to grow the retail market. The rest of their crop is sold to the U.S.

As Arendse explains, there are several perils in growing a niche crop. Increasingly, erratic weather -- such as flooding in 2011 -- can wipe out the crop which has higher input costs. If Europe grows a big crop, then product flows into North America and depresses prices. It's up to growers themselves to promote and build consumer awareness.

These dangers are offset

representative for the northeastern U.S., notes that shallot seed sales have increased by 10 to 15 per cent, year over year, in the last decade. He attributes growth to the ingredient-driven agenda of TV cooking shows, which in turn sparks interest among consumers.

"Shallots do well at farmers' markets," says van der Heide, who represents varieties such as Conservor, Ambition and Picador. The standby variety has been Conservor which echoes the traditional, tear-drop-shaped French shallots. However, Ambition is a newer brown-skinned variety that is round-shaped and stores well, important attributes for those wanting to market year-round. More recently, Picador has been introduced, a more vigorous plant with higher yields. All mature within 90 days.

These varieties are well suited for those wanting to experiment. One seed produces one shallot. His best tip? Borrow an onion seeder to plant shallot seed.

Van der Heide estimates that Canadian shallots are grown on no more than 600 acres. Those copper gems add up to more than cents. Statistics Canada reports that in 2015, the shallot and green onion category had a farmgate value of \$29.2 million.

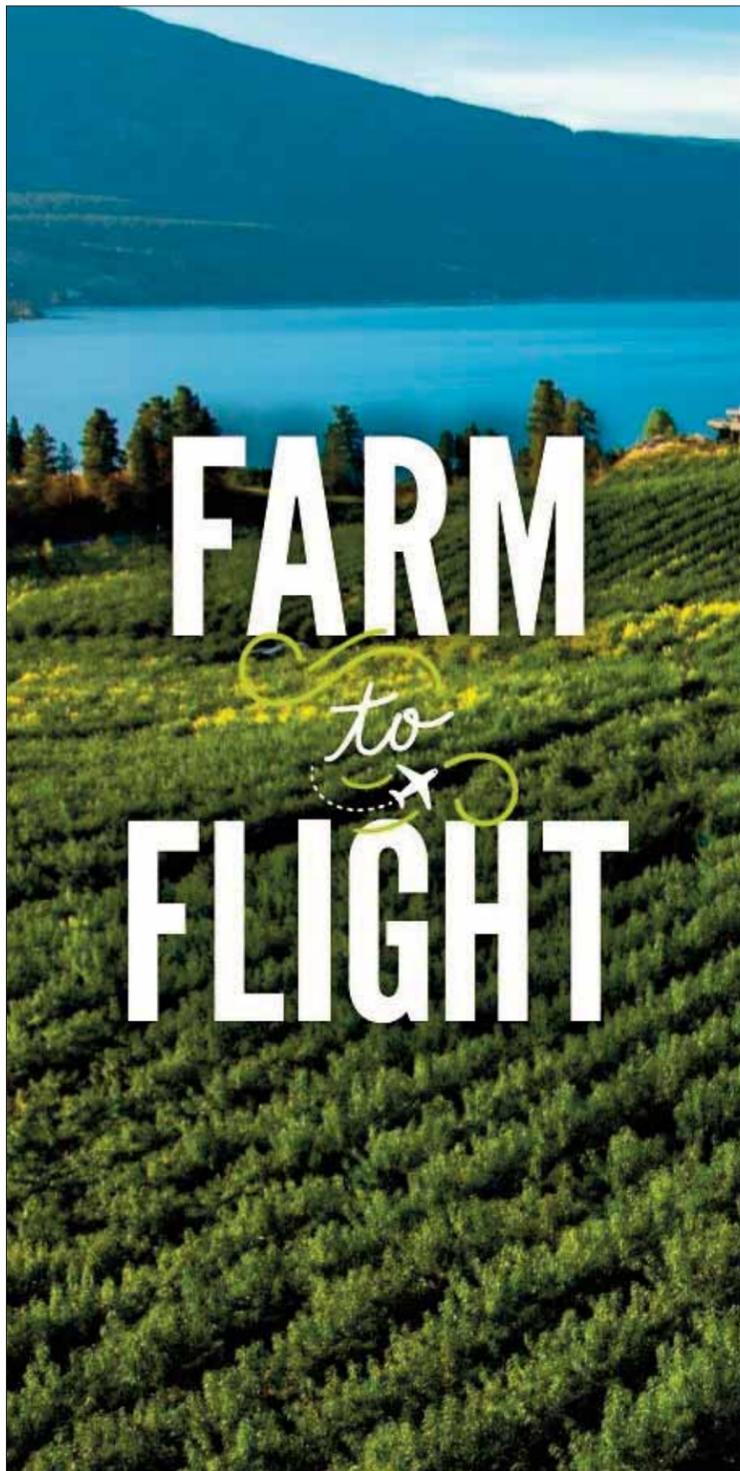


Bulk shallots are ready for the packing line.



There are only a handful of shallot growers in Canada. Pictured here are Portage La Prairie, Manitoba growers: Lourens Arendse (middle) and sons Tim (L) and Sandor (R). Photo courtesy of Karin Arendse.

## CROSS COUNTRY DIGEST



## BRITISH COLUMBIA

## Take the sunshine on flight

Kelowna International Airport is the first in Canada to promote cases of homegrown fruit.

Kelowna International Airport is pioneering the concept of farm-fresh fruit packaged ready for domestic travellers leaving the Okanagan Valley.

Airport director Sam Samaddar is enthusiastic about the "Farm to Flight" program which started with cherries in July and will continue with peaches, apples and pears in

season. Distributor De Simone Farms is coordinating the fruit deliveries from local growers, then making sure all regulatory requirements are met. Then the fruit is packaged in containers that will protect the fruit.

"It's about getting our brand out there, about the fruit products, and what the Okanagan's all about," Samaddar said.

Farm to Flight was launched in the airport about a month ago to get everything running smoothly, and Samaddar said everything has been so far, so

good.

"It's been selling very, very well. People are buying it. In fact, we could've sold the boxes that we had here today; we had to keep our passengers away from them," he said.

The rates the fruit is sold at is set by their concession. Currently, two pounds of cherries are being sold for \$10, while an individual cup to take on your flight runs at about \$3.50.

The fruit is specifically packaged so it isn't bruised or damaged during flights.

## PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

## Donation of spuds to Fort McMurray

The generosity of Prince Edward Island potato growers is once again on display with the shipment of 50,000 pounds of potatoes to Fort McMurray. The staple will be welcomed by the food bank in the northern Alberta city which was devastated by wildfires earlier this summer.

Cavendish Farms is covering the cost of shipping, with the freight cost and food value estimated at around \$30,000.

The potatoes arrived in Fort McMurray in mid-July.

## NOVA SCOTIA

## Accidents averted and kids alerted at Oxford's farm safety days



Accidents and injuries on the farm can be avoided – all it takes is a little education and the right resources. That's why Oxford Frozen Foods' Progressive Agriculture Safety Days (PASDs) continue to grow each and every year.

Presented in partnership with the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association and the Progressive Agriculture Foundation, PASDs are one-day educational events hosted annually by Oxford Frozen Foods to teach children in grades four and five about the importance of farm safety through fun, hands-on activities and live demonstrations. Because children often play or live on

farms, PASDs are a great way to learn about keeping themselves and others around them safe.

2016 has been a successful year, reaching nearly 1600 students. The organization's Annapolis Valley Safety Day in Middleton, Nova Scotia broke all attendance records by hosting 520 Grade four and five students.

First started in Oxford, Nova Scotia in 2011, PASDs have continued to branch out into other communities that work with Oxford Frozen Foods, including those in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick (their only French-language PASD, Sécuritéjour), Prince Edward Island and even across the

border in Maine. Highlights from previous events include giant sprayer demonstrations, meet-and-greets with police search and rescue dogs, along with displays of grain wagons, tractors, honeybees and emergency vehicles.

A true community effort, the continued success of PASDs relies on the support of dedicated volunteers, presenters, and sponsors including BASF who provides each attendee with a backpack. Look out for a PASD in Georgetown, PEI later this year as well as Truro, NS, St. Isidore, NB, Oxford, NS, Middleton, NS, Georgetown, PEI and Cherryfield, Maine in 2017.

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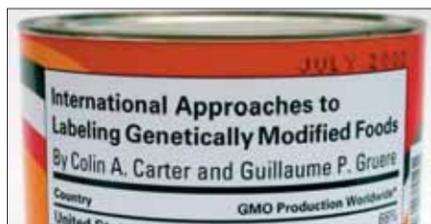
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## INTERNATIONAL

## UNITED STATES

## Federal standards for GMO labeling passed



On July 7, the U.S. Senate passed the National Bioengineered Food Disclosure Standard, preventing individual states from creating laws requiring labeling of foods that

contain genetically modified organisms (GMOs).

Tom Stenzel, president and CEO of United Fresh Produce Association, provided context.

“United Fresh applauds the historic passage of legislation crafted by Senator Pat Roberts of Kansas and Senator Debbie Stabenow of Michigan that establishes federal standards for the labeling of GMO foods. The Senate language passed on a strong, bipartisan vote of 63-30 and provides much-needed clarity for the food and agriculture sector, as well as consumers. The bill puts the requirement for labeling on those companies that introduce these foods into the marketplace, which may reduce the pressure on companies to seek “non-GMO” verified labeling.

“At the same time, the bill provides significant flexibility to companies with genetically engineered foods as to the manner of labeling, whether on package text, symbol, or link to a website. Finally, this bill would provide for a coherent national labeling program, preventing the 50-state nightmare that might otherwise arise. The bill is widely supported by all sectors of the food industry, including all major farm organizations, food manufacturers and retailers. United Fresh urges the House of Representatives to pass this measure as soon as possible and send it to the President for his signature.”

Health Canada does not require labeling on GM food because the items have been assessed for safety and nutritional standards.

Source: *FreshPlaza.com*

## EUROPE

## Cracks in European position towards Russia



The stalemate continues in Europe regarding the movement of fruit and vegetables to Russia. The EU is extending its sanctions against Russia by six months. In turn, Russia has extended its boycott to the start of 2017.

However, some European countries are softening. Pressure on fruit producers has translated into alliances between Belgium, the Netherlands and France which are pressing for access to the Russian market.

Between 2013 and 2015, Europe has lost \$60 billion U.S. in trade to Russia.

Source: *FreshPlaza.com*

## POLAND

## A powerhouse for apples and cherries

Recent Eurostat data shows that Poland is in the top three in five out of eight categories of fresh produce. The country accounts for a quarter of the EU’s apple production. Second are the Italians, who produce a bit over 19 per cent, and in third place are the French with 15 per cent of production.

Poland also leads against Italy and Spain when it comes to cherries. Meanwhile, it is in second place with strawberries, surpassed only by Spain and Germany.

Due to the Russian embargo, Polish exports of vegetables are down by 10 per cent and exports of fruit are down by 19 per cent from a year earlier.

Source: *FreshPlaza.com*

## PANAMA

## Impacts of Panama Canal expansion unknown

The recent doubling of the Panama Canal’s capacity will fast-track the neo-Panamax ships traversing the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. Onion growers from Idaho-Eastern Oregon are worried that increased onion imports could hurt business.

Imports of Peruvian onions to the U.S., for example, have tripled in the last three years. Shipments from South America can reach the eastern U.S. coast at an average of \$2,000 per load compared to shipments from the west coast to east coast receivers at a cost of about \$6,000.

Onion growers are mulling over the concept of establishing a regional intermodal transportation hub in the Ontario/Nyssa/Vale area of eastern Oregon.

Source: *FreshPlaza.com*

## Growing Forward 2

A federal-provincial-territorial initiative

## Get Started

## Thinking about farm improvements for 2017?

Apply NOW for *Growing Forward 2 (GF2)* funding assistance by following **3 easy steps**:

Consult the Producer Program Guide available at [ontariosoilcrop.org](http://ontariosoilcrop.org) to learn about opportunities and requirements under the program.

Questions? Attend a workshop\* and speak to a Regional Program Lead or Workshop Leader. Register at [ontariosoilcrop.org](http://ontariosoilcrop.org).

\*Some OSCIA Workshops may be a requirement for *Growing Forward 2* funding assistance allocations.

You have from October 14 to November 3, 2016 to submit an application for the next intake for funding assistance.

**1** ENROL YOUR FARM BUSINESS

**2** ATTEND A WORKSHOP

**3** APPLY FOR FUNDING ASSISTANCE



## WATER MANAGEMENT

## Clean not green

JAN VANDERHOUT

Recently I attended a Growing Ontario Together (GOT) meeting with Minister Jeff Leal (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs) and Minister Glen Murray (Minister of Environment and Climate Change) on the growers' behalf. GOT is a group of farm organization leaders (livestock, grain, and horticulture) who have been working together for the past few months to collectively brainstorm ways to manage phosphorus discharge, help government to understand the challenges and opportunities growers are facing, and perhaps most importantly, to help government hone in on practical and attainable solutions around phosphorus reduction.

Michael Keegan and Associates works closely with the group to ensure that the GOT messaging will have a positive effect as we dialogue with government. The GOT group was very organized and well prepared for the meeting. Amy Cronin (chair of Ontario Pork) delivered a very clear and concise presentation for the ministers. The short version is: phosphorus levels are a concern and agriculture is one of the

contributors. Farmers have a vested interest in water quality and are willing to do what can practically be done to reduce phosphorus discharge.

I am happy to say that the GOT messaging was well received but this is only the beginning for growers. All growers need to take action in their respective fields. We have been told that government would like to "use a carrot approach" as it charges us with improving our environmental performance. This is our opportunity, your opportunity to find innovative ways to improve your personal performance.

Minister Murray believes that farmers ultimately know best the details about their farms and where they can best improve. If you have not attended an Environmental Farm Plan workshop in the last five years this will be a critical step in focusing for a few hours on the many aspects of environmental performance. Environmental Farm Plan is also the key to accessing support funds such as Growing Forward 2 for projects you may want to undertake.

Take a few minutes to think about what you can do on your farm. Maybe you can improve the way you manage culls and plant waste or perhaps measuring nutrient levels in your fields

to add nutrients only where they are needed. For some it is the timing of fertilizer application or re-circulating nutrient feedwater. Ontario growers must do their part to make their farms, their watersheds and their Great Lakes as clean as they can be.

To be perfectly clear, we have not arrived but in fact we are just crossing the threshold. In the coming months Minister

Murray and this government may well be in dialogue with the GOT team and farm organizations to establish regulations to pull on track those who are off the rails. Let's all look for ways to be part of the solution rather than be part of the problem.

It is clear that Ontario farmers alone will not be able to stop the algae blooms from occurring in the Great Lakes. A large por-

tion of the solution will need to come from the American Midwest among other factions of society but it is imperative for us, with the support of government, to do our part to manage nutrient discharge and to help clean up our waters.

*Jan VanderHout is a greenhouse vegetable grower and vice-chair of the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association.*



Photo by Glenn Lowson

## Think ahead to obtain your 2017 water permits

SASHA NOVAKOVIC

The dry conditions this spring and early summer have caused problems for growers across Ontario. And while the supply of water is essential to any agricultural operation it can sometimes be overlooked, as many growers find themselves in a difficult situation when a dry season such as this comes around. That is why planning ahead to obtain a Permit to Take Water (PTTW) before the irrigation season starts can help mitigate stress and crop loss. Farmers who are thinking about applying for a PTTW, should be aware that the application process is not something that can be done overnight. In fact, depending on the complexity of the water taking -- the number of existing water users in the area, proximity to a natural heritage feature such as streams or wetlands -- some applications can take up to a few months to complete. In addition to collecting field data, pooling information from different resources, and preparing documents, maps, and reports, the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change (MOECC) also has to review the application. Upon receipt of the PTTW application, the MOECC has a period of up to 90 days within which to

complete their review. In that case, even if the preparation of the supporting documents began in May, the irrigation season could be over by the time a PTTW is issued. Yet there are some cases when the MOECC will issue a temporary PTTW for up to one or two years, provided that the Permit Holder develops a monitoring program and records water-taking volumes and water levels throughout the irrigation season. Still though, these permits would not be issued halfway through a season, because the collected data would only be half complete. No matter which way you look at it, the need for water will always be there for any agricultural operation, especially fruit and vegetable crops. It is a good idea to start planning now to secure a Permit to Take Water, and be prepared for a dry year before it hits you! The Water Program administered at the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association has helped many growers successfully obtain PTTWs and comply with MOECC regulations. We are here to help!

*Sasha Novakovic is the water specialist for OFVGA.*

## FINANCIAL PROTECTION

## PACA issue is on the front burner with Agriculture Minister MacAulay

KAREN DAVIDSON

It may be summer, but federal minister Lawrence MacAulay is taking no holiday on a key issue for horticulture: advancing financial protection for horticultural producers. He's invited to a Canadian Produce Marketing Association (CPMA) event in Prince Edward Island on August 9 when the issue will be raised, among others, in a town hall format.

MacAulay has been urged to move forward after the horticultural industry presented to the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food on May 9, 16 and June 1. The CPMA and Canadian Horticultural Council presented a strong case for measures to protect a \$5 billion, perishable-produce industry. If a produce buyer goes bankrupt, those who are most vulnerable to non-payment are Canada's fruit and vegetable growers, many of whom are small businesses with average sales of less than \$85,000 per year. New legislation would solve a long-standing domestic issue for growers who

have no protection on produce sales.

For those who export produce to the United States, it's also important that Canada's preferential access be re-established to the dispute resolution mechanism under the Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act (PACA). This protection was revoked by the U.S. in October 2014. To address this need, Professor Ron Cuming, University of Saskatchewan, has crafted draft legislation that would be a comparable "made in Canada" solution to a PACA-like tool in Canada. Essentially, it's a limited statutory deemed trust that would give the seller, the beneficiary under the trust, first priority status with respect to trust property.

Pat Finnigan, chair of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food, and his members were convinced by the presentations made by Anne Fowle, former executive vice-president Canadian Horticultural Council; George Gilvesy, chair, Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers; and Jason Verkaik, chair,

Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association. He is urging Minister MacAulay to implement Cuming's proposed model and to negotiate with the U.S. to restore Canada's privileged access under PACA.

American officials have indicated they would welcome the opportunity to restore the access. It's estimated that business insolvencies and lack of adequate financial protection results in losses of between \$18 and \$25 million per year.

This is heartening progress for George Gilvesy. About 70 per cent of Ontario's greenhouse vegetables are exported to the U.S. and are therefore vulnerable in case of buyer insolvency.

Gilvesy underscored the economic importance of the greenhouse industry in the Windsor-Essex region, one of the more economically depressed regions in Canada. It's worth almost \$1 billion per year. If financial protection is restored, Gilvesy anticipates a reduction in risk and improvement in market efficiency in the Canadian marketplace. A secondary benefit would be the



Photo by Glenn Lowson

reinstatement of PACA reciprocity into the U.S. market.

"When they know sellers and regulatory authorities are monitoring them, buyers act ethically and in good faith," Gilvesy says. "The retail industry is now highly consolidated and operating under the tightest margins in history. It's not just a matter of 'if' but 'when' those competitive pressures result in a

significant Canadian retail or wholesale bankruptcy."

With support from the Canadian Chamber of Commerce and the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, horticultural producers are hopeful that financial protection will be available in a highly competitive environment and that this trade irritant may be solved by the end of the calendar year.

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## CANADIAN HORTICULTURAL COUNCIL

## CHC releases fact sheet to address labour myths

In an effort to address myths and misconceptions about the Temporary Foreign Worker Program, Agriculture Stream, CHC's Labour Executive has released a fact sheet on 10 myths about the TFWP and its realities. For a downloadable copy, go to: <http://ow.ly/jaJQ302g6yJ>

### CHC seeks clarification on integrity audits

In mid-June, CHC labour committee chair, Murray Porteous, co-vice chair Denis Hamel and CHC EVP, Anne Fowlie, met with Marc LeBrun director general, Integrity Services Branch, Service Canada.

The objective was to gain clarity on the process relative to integrity audits for those employers engaging workers through the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP). The audits began a few years ago with a commitment to audit one in every four employers participating in the TFWP.

Audits fall in one of three categories: random, reason to suspect and compliance. CHC stressed the importance of communication, expectations, predictability and the impact on competitiveness and sustainability and the need for a pre-audit checklist to assist with preparedness. The process and timelines must be well communicated and understood.

"Growers want to comply with the requirements of the program and knowing what the audit checklist entails will help producers to be prepared, manage their time efficiently, avoid surprises and ensure no undue delays in processing

applications. Knowing what to expect will reduce stress in the audit process and make better use of both producer and auditor time," noted Porteous.

### Update on consultation responses to PMRA proposed re-evaluation decisions

The CHC Crop Protection Advisory Committee (CPAC) continues to respond to the Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) proposed re-evaluation decisions that have significant impact on fresh fruit and vegetable producers. The PMRA decisions propose either the discontinuation of all uses or severe limitations of remaining uses. Of particular concern is the proposal to discontinue or limit the use of essentially all multi-site mode-of-action fungicides that are essential to managing pathogen resistance in a sustainable disease management system.

CPAC responses focus on providing information to address incorrect assumptions regarding how growers use the products under re-evaluation that the PMRA has made in their risk assessment that led to the proposed decisions. In the case of the amended proposed decision for chlorothalonil (Bravo), an extensive grower survey of product use was conducted and summarized information was submitted to the PMRA. Recent responses to re-evaluation consultations include:

- methomyl, PRVD2016-02 (Lannate Insecticide) – Proposed discontinuation of all uses, April 14;
- thiram, PRVD2016-07 (Thiram Fungicide and vegetable seed



- treatments) – Proposed discontinuation of all uses, May 27;
- ziram PRVD2016-06 (Ziram Fungicide) – Proposed discontinuation of all uses, May 27;
- ferbam PRVD2016-05 (Ferbam Fungicide) – Proposed discontinuation of all uses, May 27;
- chlorothalonil REV2016-06 (Bravo and Edge Fungicides) – Proposed discontinuation of many vegetable, berry and tree fruit uses and limitations on remaining uses, June 10.

A response to the PMRA proposed decision to discontinuation all uses of iprodione (Rovral Fungicide) was prepared for submission by the July 15 deadline.

The PMRA has also proposed to discontinue many captan uses including some vegetable, berry, grape and tree

fruit uses, and to restrict use on other crops. A grower survey of captan uses (Captan, Maestro, Supra Captan fungicides) was distributed to grower organizations during the last week of June. Results of this survey will be submitted to the PMRA for use in the revision of risk assessments.

In addition, CPAC submitted a response on May 31 to the PMRA consultation on PRO2016-02, Management of the Pesticide Re-evaluation Process. This response provided comment on the inclusion of grower and other stakeholder input at the early stages of the re-evaluation process, to avoid the situation which growers are now facing with proposed re-evaluation decisions that are based on risk assessments conducted with incomplete or inaccurate information.

## CHC appoints new executive director

The Board of Directors of the Canadian Horticultural Council is pleased to announce that Rebecca Lee has accepted the position of Executive Director.

Rebecca has significant experience in the industry. Rebecca obtained her Bachelor in Science/Agriculture from McGill University, her Masters in Science from the University of Guelph and her Doctorate from Wageningen University in The Netherlands.

Rebecca's most recent position was as Technical Director with the North American Plant Protection Organization (NAPPO), where she also served as Acting Executive Director. During the six years with NAPPO, she worked very closely with government, research and industry representatives from the three North American countries.

Prior to that, she worked as Technical

Director with the Association of Colombian Flower Exporters, for whom she designed the Colombian Centre for Innovation in Floriculture. She then served as Executive Director of the Centre for six years. These two positions provided Rebecca with extensive experience in dealing with government in Colombia.

Rebecca's experience also includes consultancies in evaluation for organisations such as:

- Colombian Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
- Inter-American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture, IICA - Colombia
- Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje, SENA, Colombia
- Departamento Administrativo de Ciencia, Tecnología e Innovación, COLCIENCIAS (the "NSERC" of

Colombia)

- Canadian Embassy, Colombia (Research grants and Government of Canada Scholarships).
- Ontario African Working Group, as Evaluation Assistant, Guelph, Canada
- University of Guelph, as Evaluation Researcher, Guelph, Canada

Rebecca has significant experience in developing strategic plans, working with staff and bringing diverse groups together to develop common goals.

Rebecca will be working part time in August including connecting with CHC members and will be full time with CHC starting in September.

You may contact Rebecca by email at [rlee@hortcouncil.ca](mailto:rlee@hortcouncil.ca) or call 613 226 4880 extension 211, cell 613 296 8383.

Please join us in welcoming Rebecca to the CHC family.



Keith Kuhl (L) and Rebecca Lee.

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## CANADIAN HORTICULTURAL COUNCIL

## Horticulture is thriving on the west coast



L-R: A tour of a vegetable greenhouse was enjoyed by: Peter Swetnam, CHC Board Member; Joe Peschisolido, MP Steveston - Richmond East; Linda Delli Santi, BC Greenhouse Growers' Association; and Ray VanMarrewyk Westcoast Vegetables, Westcoast Produce and Westcoast Greenhouse Holdings, Surrey, B.C.



Tour participants learned about the manufacturing line for Hardbite chips at Heppell's Potato Corporation, Surrey, B.C.



(L-R) Alf Krause, Keith Kuhl, CHC chair and Sandee Krause are pictured at Krause Berry Farms, Langley, B.C.



This vast packing operation of blueberries is viewed at Driediger Farms, Langley, B.C. Photos courtesy of Trevor Eggleton.

## TREVOR EGGLETON

On July 7, CHC held its annual Summer Tour in British Columbia's Lower Mainland. The day-long tour brought together industry leaders, growers and Members of Parliament to explore and learn about various aspects of Canada's horticulture industry.

The tour's first stop was Sunnyside Greenhouses where Sunnyside owners, Jos and Bram Moerman and Ray VanMarrewyk of Westcoast Produce showed their process for growing and packaging green peppers for sale via Windset Farms. Next the tour visited Heppell's Potato Corporation which is about to become the home of Hardbite Potato Chips. Heppell's CEO Pete Schouten introduced participants to the plant which is being built on the Heppell's farm and will produce a variety of chips including potato, beet and carrot.

## Consumer education

Lunch was held at Krause Berry Farm and was hosted by Alf and Sandee Krause who gave us a history lesson about the farm and their rise from selling fruit out of the back of a van in the '70s to a beacon of agritourism today. Alf Krause spoke about how he informs consumers about necessary "tools" to produce food including pesticides and Integrated Pest Management practices.

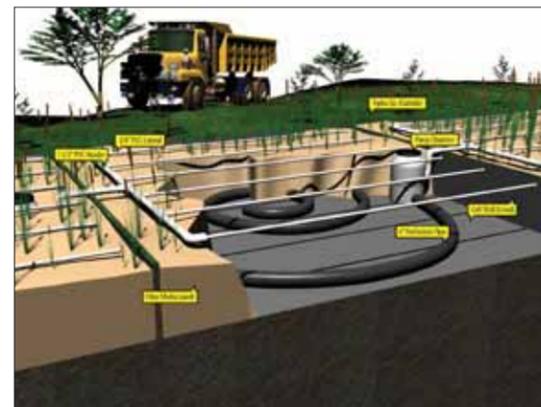
After lunch, participants were shown how blueberries go straight from farm to frozen at Driediger Farms, then visited Westcoast lawn/EnviroSmart Organics where owner Daryl Goodwin demonstrated how they fill a vital and often overlooked need in the sector by turning food waste into soil.

Tour sponsors included BC Blueberry Council, BCfresh, BC Vegetable Marketing Commission, BC Greenhouse Growers' Association, Farm Credit Canada, Calais Farms, TerraLink Horticulture and BC Cranberry Marketing Commission.

### The 'AQUA Wetland System' "A new breed of constructed wetland"

AQUA Treatment Technologies Inc. designs and installs the 'AQUA Wetland System' (AWS) for tertiary treatment of many types of waste water including sanitary sewage, landfill leachate, dairy farm & abattoir wastewater, greenhouse irrigation leachate water & mushroom farm leachate water (i.e. manure pile leachate) and high strength winery washwater.

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The AWS has been approved for use by the Ontario Ministry of Environment through over 40 Environmental Compliance Approvals. Recently the Region of Niagara began approving the AWS for treatment of 'small flow' winery washwater i.e. < 10,000 liters per day. Other agencies who have issued approvals include Health Canada, USEPA and OMAFRA. Recent projects include:

- 1) treatment & re-use of greenhouse irrigation leach water at greenhouses in Niagara & Haldimand
- 2) treatment of winery wastewater at Greenlane Estates Winery & numerous other in Niagara
- 3) treatment of landfill leachate at sites in Pembroke, Niagara and Alabama

**For additional information please Contact Lloyd Rozema at: cell. 905-327-4571  
email. lrozema@aqua-tt.com**



**BLOGGER**

# Neither wind nor hail



**BRIDGET VISSER**

It is said that the most challenging aspect of boxing is keeping the gloves up. A strong cross or a stealthy jab are skills, but endurance is a must.

The Holland Marsh farmers have been duking it out with the prize-fighter Weather this

year. The area's been clobbered by wicked winds, an extended drought and as of July 8, a swath of hail. The environment, so necessary in producing a crop, hasn't been much of a friend.

Yet, there exists a strength as the damage is evaluated and



plans are made. I've seen farmers, battered but determined, stand up for round four.

It's not all lost. Some crops can recover. Time and work can

salvage broken plants. Resources and help are available. Next year will be a new year.

So. To all those battling the

elements and tiring; gather your grit and raise your gloves. The season is not over and we are all in your corner.

To follow Bridget's blog go to [www.thegrower.org](http://www.thegrower.org)

**WEATHER VANE**



"Cull deeper because the lower ones aren't going to make it." That's what George Lepp told his workers on July 20 as they hand thinned peaches near Virgil, Ontario in the midst of drought. With harvest days away, his goal was to size the remaining fruit with another last-ditch round of irrigation. Photo by Glenn Lowson.

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## PERSPECTIVE



## “I’m a fruit and vegetable ambassador”

OWEN ROBERTS  
U OF GUELPH

In the grocery store – in fact, in dozens of grocery stores across Ontario – you have cheerleaders wearing hats that say DIETITIAN.

More and more, they’re becoming an important link between you and consumers. Registered dietitians, day after day, face questions — some detailed, some fearful, some very confused — about what Canadian farmers grow.

In Ontario, Zehrs started an in-store dietitian program in 2011 with five dietitians. Now, that number has mushroomed to 75.

I met one recently, an enthusiastic recent University of Guelph graduate named Heidi Pola. She’s a Stratford native with a master’s degree in applied nutrition, who serves as a registered dietitian at two Zehrs stores in Waterloo.

Note: her degree is not in agriculture. And she is not from

a farm. Growing up, her house backed onto a cornfield, she says, but that’s about as close as she got to production agriculture.

Nonetheless, she’s on the front lines, bridging the gap between farmers and consumers, about food and nutrition. So are 75 of her colleagues across the Zehrs-Loblaw chain in Ontario.

Registered dietitians’ role is growing as consumers increasingly ask questions about food. Like Pola, they went to school and achieved advanced degrees to understand it.

They know its nutritional value, and know how it affects people – or how it doesn’t.

I’m not sure farmers have grasped how important dietitians, retailers and processors have become in determining why consumers buy, or don’t, how they view homegrown food and the kind of answers consumers receive about it.

Pola isn’t a grizzled veteran. She hasn’t heard it all, by any means. But she told me from her experience thus far, consumers are typically asking about three things: the benefits of local food, organic versus conventional food, and how to prepare food.

Here’s what she says.

First, when it comes to local, she’s a big fan. At peak production season, close to half of the produce in her stores is Canadian grown.

“When produce is harvested, it’s meant to be enjoyed right away,” she says. “There’s some value knowing the food is from close to home.”

As far as organic versus conventional food, she takes a nutritional rather than a philosophical approach.

And nutritionally, she says, there’s no difference. One is not better, or worse, than the other. “I say it’s a personal choice,” she says. “It may be a matter of what people can afford. But as a dietitian, I’m a fruit and vegetable ambassador. I’d rather see consumers buy conventional produce than not buy organic produce, because they can’t afford it.”

And what about GMOs?

“I am not concerned about GMOs,” she tells people. “The government makes sure they’re regulated. They’re considered safe.”

And the final question: What do I do with food once I get it home?

For many consumers, the problem is they do nothing with food when they get it home; about 20 per cent of what we buy ends up as waste. That means a huge opportunity exists for dietitians and others to help consumers learn how to prepare food.

In June, nutritionists were on hand as the Loblaw group put a 38-foot greenhouse on the road — with stops in Guelph, Kitchener and Cambridge, among others — to teach



Heidi Pola

customers about what some fruit and vegetables look like growing, such as cucumbers and tomatoes.

If you have a garden, you take this kind of stuff for granted.

But these days, despite urban agriculture and the like, more people don’t have gardens, than do.

And the more they learn about food from professionals such as Pola, the better.



## Challenges with MRLs and tariffs

Blueridge Produce, a major packer of highbush blueberries, says the industry is challenged with Maximum Residue Levels (MRLs) and tariffs in exporting abroad.

“The European Union (EU) has a really low MRL for very common products,” says Rhonda Driediger. “It’s a bit frustrating because we could be supplying a lot to the EU but often can’t because of the sprays we’re using for spotted wing drosophila. Canadian and American standards are currently eight parts per million and 10 ppm respectively for malathion but there is a staggeringly low tolerance of below 0.02 in Europe.

Driediger is hopeful that the import tariff on Canadian blueberries going into China, which receives about 20 per cent of Driediger’s frozen blueberries, will be lifted or at least greatly reduced. “It’s quite high and makes us uncompetitive,” she explained. “The interesting thing is there’s virtually no tariff on Chilean blueberries. Their

government negotiated a very good trade deal. It affects us because frozen Chilean product goes at a higher price therefore the packer and the grower make more money. Our tariff is going strictly to the government.

Hopefully that will be rectified over the next couple of years.”

Photo courtesy of Trevor Eggleton.

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## Let's show off the great things farmers are doing

MEL LUYMES

Last month, 50 government staff filed off the bus at Truly Green Farms in Chatham. They pulled plastic boots over their shoes, and made their way into a sweltering hot greenhouse. It had been an early morning and a long trip for many of them, but for civil servants who get caught in offices and meetings most days, there is nothing like seeing things firsthand – in this case, acres and acres of tomatoes under glass.

answered all of the participants' questions; they had nothing to hide.

Back on the bus, the tour stopped at Blake Vince's grain farm. Vince discussed soil and the importance of minimizing disturbance and maximizing diverse cover in field cropping systems. We disembarked the bus under a wind turbine, and while standing in a parched field listening to the steady "whoosh-whoosh" of the generator and blades, discussed the risks of innovation.

At lunch, we discussed

surrounding these important ecosystems.

Perhaps our civil servants left with more questions than answers, but that may not be a bad thing. They got their boots dusty and they saw firsthand the reality and complexity of the system that we work in every day. It's a system interwoven with many other systems, from economic structures and a cheap food policy to regulations and, of course, weather systems.

What I appreciated most about the tour was actually meeting the people who make policy decisions in our provincial ministries. They were not some faceless bureaucrats, they were engaged and enthusiastic. They asked questions, they listened, and they laughed.

The agricultural commodity groups are coming together under the banner Grow Ontario Together, a commodity collaboration that recognizes



Ontario government policy makers contemplate soil health at the farm of Blake Vince, as they seek to understand complex environmental issues.

On July 6, Farm & Food Care partnered with the Ontario Federation of Agriculture and the Christian Farmers' Federation of Ontario to run a day of farm tours for senior staff in the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) and the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change (MOECC). The objective was to showcase on-farm solutions for Great Lakes environmental issues – namely nutrient runoff – and so attendees were brought to farms in the Thames River watershed and on the shores of Lake Erie.

Along with tomatoes and glass, Greg DeVries and Hilco Tamminga of Chatham's Truly Green Farms took the group for a tour of the boiler room and water treatment facilities. Tamminga showed the group how they recycle nutrient water as many times as possible before discharging it to the municipal facilities. They

up-and-coming technology in agriculture and the rollout of the 4R Nutrient Stewardship program. What does applying the right source, at the right rate, in the right place and at the right time mean to farmers? Does it mean more time restrictions for fertilizer application? And more investments in equipment? Will it mean a loss of productivity?

Our final stop was in the Rondeau area, where the Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) have been working with farmers to construct wetlands on their properties. These wetlands control erosion and filter water before it runs into the Rondeau Bay.

While wetlands can be a great way to reduce phosphorus levels in Lake Erie, however, wetland construction is complicated. Farmland values, invasive species and permits are just a few of the many concerns

the need to take pro-active action to address nutrient enrichment issues in the Great Lakes. The objective of the group is to approach the issue of phosphorus collaboratively and in partnership with government and other interested stakeholders.

Trying to reduce the small percentage of phosphorus that leaves our farm operations to an even smaller percentage presents a number of challenges, as phosphorus is a natural element that moves with both soil particles and in water.

Government does not have all the answers but, then again, neither do we. And I suspect that we are going to get further ahead if we work with government staff than if we try to work against them.

*Mel Luymes is environmental program coordinator, Farm & Food Care Ontario.*

## COMING EVENTS 2016

- August 3 Controlled Atmosphere Clinic, Grand Rapids, MI
- August 4 Nova Scotia Fruit Growers' Association Summer Tour, Kentville, NS
- August 10 Potato Research Field Day, Elora Research Station, Elora, ON
- Aug 13-14 Perth and Carp Garlic Festivals, Perth and Carp respectively, ON
- Aug 13-17 International Strawberry Symposium, Quebec City, QC [info@nasga.org](mailto:info@nasga.org)
- Aug 17 Peak of the Market Family Fun Day, Winnipeg, MB
- Aug 17-18 North American Strawberry Growers' Summer Tour, Quebec
- Aug 18 Ontario Potato Field Day, HJV Equipment, Alliston, ON
- Aug 18-20 Quebec Produce Marketing Association Annual Convention, Montreal, QC
- Aug 20 Newmarket Garlic Festival, Newmarket, ON
- Aug 28 Haskap and Specialty Fruit Workshop, Simcoe Research Station, Simcoe, ON
- Aug 24 Ontario Biennial Grape Tailgate Tour, Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON 9 am-2 pm
- Aug 25-26 U.S. Apple Crop Outlook and Marketing Conference, The Ritz-Carlton, Chicago, IL
- Aug 28 Sudbury Garlic Festival, Sudbury, ON
- Aug 30-31 Bejo Seeds Open House and Demonstration Trials, Geneva, NY 10 am-6 pm
- Sept 2 Verona Garlic Festival, Verona, ON
- Sept 10-11 Stratford Garlic Festival, Stratford, ON
- Sept 13 Ontario Berry Growers' Association Annual Farm Tour, Barrie Hill Farms, Barrie, ON
- Sept 13-15 Canada's Outdoor Farm Show, Woodstock, ON
- Sept 14 Ontario Produce Marketing Association Annual Golf Tournament, Lionhead Golf & Country Club, Brampton, ON
- Sept 14 Grape Growers of Ontario Celebrity Luncheon, St. Catharines, ON
- Sept 18 6th Annual Toronto Garlic Festival, Artscape Wychwood Barns, Toronto, ON [www.torontogarlicfestival.ca](http://www.torontogarlicfestival.ca)
- Oct 3-4 Advancing Women Conference, Fairmont Royal York, Toronto, ON
- Oct 5, 6 Canadian Greenhouse Conference, Scotiabank Conference Centre, Niagara Falls, ON
- Oct 14-16 Produce Marketing Association Fresh Summit Conference and Expo, Orlando, FL
- Nov 1 Paper and Paperboard Packaging Environmental Council, annual general meeting, venue TBA
- Nov 4-13 Royal Agricultural Winter Fair, Direct Energy Centre, Toronto, ON
- Nov 11 Ontario Produce Marketing Association Gala Dinner and Awards Ceremony, Universal Event Space, Vaughan, ON
- Nov 21 Ontario Food Tourism Summit, Ottawa, ON

## RETAIL NAVIGATOR

## Components of effective packaging



PETER CHAPMAN

Packaging you develop for your food products should be one of the most effective sales drivers you have. It can also be one of the most expensive, frustrating and time consuming components of your business. If I had the dollars that I have witnessed being 'written off' for obsolete or useless packaging and labels, I might be relaxing on my own island as opposed to writing this newsletter.

**Merchandising**

As you prepare to design packaging for a new product or revitalize an existing product you need to visit the stores of your current and any potential customers. You need to understand how the products in your category will be merchandised. Do they stand them up on the shelf, lay them down or is the top the critical communication space? These are very important considerations for your design. Often you will be faced with two customers merchandising the category differently. If you are selling potatoes some retailers put the bags sideways and others leave them on the pallet.

Talk to your customers to understand if any changes to merchandising are coming. Packaging takes time and money to develop, don't waste either with packaging that will not sell the product from the shelf.

**Your unique selling proposition and brand promise**

The best place to sell your product is in the store. What are the top three things you need to convey to the consumer that will entice them to pick it up and put it in their shopping cart? List them and make sure they are part of your packaging. You can see on these lettuce packages they want you to understand they are 'Super foods.' It is clear and easy to read.

**Regulations**

One of the biggest challenges to developing effective packaging is to make it

compliant with all regulations. These regulations can be confusing and at times difficult to get definitive answers. If you are doing business in different countries you really have to be on top of the changes required.

In Canada the best place to start is with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA). Check out this link to get you started: [www.inspection.gc.ca](http://www.inspection.gc.ca)

There are many different sections, familiarize yourself with these sections.

1. Core labeling requirements
2. Claims and statements
3. Food specific labeling requirements

Claims and statements are becoming more complicated all the time. Often these are tied to your unique selling proposition so you need to ensure you are in compliance with the guidelines when you are making claims. For some claims such as GMO, the licensing body has its own guidelines.

When you are searching for a design firm, ask them some questions about these regulations and guidelines. If they do not know the answers, move on. The designer needs to have a good working knowledge of these regulations or you will spend money on a great design that can never be implemented or even worse, be implemented and then be wrong.

**Functionality for the product during shipping, in the store and at home**

One of the most important functions for packaging is to protect the product as it moves from your facility, through your customer's supply chain to the store shelf. You might start at the end of the line; the consumer who will use the product. What is important to them and how do you ensure your product will deliver?

This can include how the consumer opens the package, recipes you want them to follow, instructions for use, quality (refrigerated, frozen, fresh etc.) and perhaps the relationship between an inner and outer package.

When you develop the packaging, you also have to develop a shipping box. Make sure you have the correct components for your customers to get the product through the supply chain. This would include clear product description and case pack UPC if applicable. Remember you want warehouse and store employees to see your products as easy to find and efficient.

**On shelf, off shelf and on line**

Once you have determined the more functional components and regulatory requirements you need to shift your focus to the design of the packaging. My recommendation is that you consider three viewers of your packaging. How will they perceive it on the shelf, in an off-shelf display and in our new world, on-line?

**A process to follow**

You can use this process to design or revitalize your packaging. Perhaps not every section is applicable to your product but many are. More information to the consumer is better and if your item is a commodity, challenge the people in your business to what it should be saying to customers and consumers. Now you have a process, the challenge for you is to fit it all on the small space you have, in two languages!

*Peter Chapman is a retail consultant, professional speaker and the author of A la cart-A suppliers' guide to retailers' priorities. Peter is based in Halifax NS, where he is the principal at GPS Business Solutions. Peter works with producers and processors to help them navigate through the retail environment with the ultimate goal to get more of their items in the shopping cart. [pchapman@gpsbusiness.ca](mailto:pchapman@gpsbusiness.ca)*

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## FOCUS: STORAGE AND CONTAINERS

## Postharvest practices for 'Honeycrisp' apples

JENNIFER DeELL

In recent years, there has been considerable advancement in understanding the finicky and complex 'Honeycrisp' apple. Postharvest practices to obtain good fruit quality, reduce physiological disorders and extend the storage life of 'Honeycrisp' are reviewed below.

## Fruit maturity at harvest

Harvesting at optimum fruit maturity is extremely important for maximizing storage life and maintaining good apple quality. However, determining the optimum harvest maturity for 'Honeycrisp' is difficult. Standard maturity indices, such as internal ethylene concentration, starch index, soluble solids concentration and fruit firmness are not always consistent. Current recommendations suggest that harvest should occur when the ground colour begins to change from green to yellow and the starch index is around six (on the Cornell chart). There has been no consistent relationship of internal ethylene to harvest date and differences in maturity do not always exist among 'Honeycrisp' apples with varying levels of red colour. For example, brilliant red fruit can exhibit very similar internal ethylene concentrations, starch content, and firmness values as those having poor red colouration.

Harvesting at optimum maturity is the best way to achieve the characteristic flavour of 'Honeycrisp.' Immature 'Honeycrisp' harvested too early will not ripen properly and those fruit do not develop good flavour and quality characteristics. Conversely, late harvested or over-mature 'Honeycrisp' can develop fermentation products, such as ethanol and acetaldehyde, which cause undesirable flavours and poor fruit quality.



Picture-perfect Honeycrisp apples at harvest time.



Soft scald in Honeycrisp apples. Photos courtesy of Jennifer DeEll.

### In recent years, there has been considerable advancement in understanding the finicky and complex 'Honeycrisp' apple.

'Honeycrisp' harvested at advanced maturity are also more prone to several major disorders.

## Physiological disorders

'Honeycrisp' is extremely susceptible to physiological disorders and there can be substantial variation among orchards and trees.

Soft scald is a major chilling-related disorder that can develop in 'Honeycrisp.' It is characterized by sharply defined, irregularly shaped, smooth, brown lesions of the skin. Peel tissue is initially affected and then hypodermal tissue is damaged as the disorder continues to develop. Skin lesions are often then invaded by secondary pathogens, such as *Alternaria* or *Cladosporium*. Soggy breakdown is another major chilling-related disorder that can be found in 'Honeycrisp.' It is distinguished by moist, soft, brown, spongy

flesh tissue, which can form complete rings in severe cases. Both soft scald and soggy breakdown develop more in apples harvested at advanced maturity.

Senescent browning or diffuse flesh browning becomes more prevalent with extended storage durations and warmer temperatures. The fruit remains firm and there are usually no external symptoms. Advanced fruit maturity at harvest time also promotes this disorder.

Bitter pit may appear prior to harvest or during storage, and usually develops in the calyx end of the fruit. Pits are dark, sunken lesions at or beneath the fruit surface. The cause for bitter pit is a mineral imbalance in the apple flesh, associated with low levels of calcium.

Lenticel breakdown is characterized by darkened or black lenticels, or superficial small brown spots surrounding

the lenticels. The lesions may become sunken over time and allow for the invasion of pathogens. Fruit with advanced fruit maturity are more susceptible, as well as those in long-term storage. The disorder can be aggravated by various chemicals and coatings.

## Storage regimes

Prior to cold storage, conditioning at 10°C for one week is recommended to reduce the incidence of soft scald and soggy breakdown. Conditioning at warmer temperatures has been shown to substantially reduce acidity, which has also been noted within sensory evaluations. Bitter pit can develop more rapidly at warmer temperatures, so conditioning at 10°C is a compromise between bitter pit and soft scald development. After conditioning at 10°C for one week, 'Honeycrisp' is best stored in ambient air at 3°C.

Controlled atmosphere (CA) storage is not currently recommended for 'Honeycrisp' in Ontario. However, limited success has been observed using 3% O<sub>2</sub> and 1-1.5% CO<sub>2</sub> at 3°C. CA tends to substantially reduce greasiness, as well as maintain acidity. Severe internal browning can develop when 'Honeycrisp' is held in many of the standard or typical CA regimes used for other apple cultivars. 'Honeycrisp' tends to be very sensitive to CO<sub>2</sub>, so CO<sub>2</sub>-related disorders can easily develop (i.e. internal CO<sub>2</sub> injury with or without flesh cavities). However, delaying the establishment of CA storage for four or eight weeks has been shown to reduce these disorders.

## Postharvest treatments

Ethylene production, respiration, and greasiness can be reduced by 1-methylcyclopropene (1-MCP) on 'Honeycrisp.' 1-MCP tends to be slightly more effective when applied at the onset of the conditioning period at 10°C, compared to after that one-week period. However, always be aware of any CO<sub>2</sub> accumulation during the 1-MCP treatment, as this has potential to cause CO<sub>2</sub> injury. There is little loss of firmness in 'Honeycrisp' during storage, so any improved firmness retention caused by 1-MCP treatment is difficult to discern.

Diphenylamine (DPA) can reduce CA-related disorders in apples. DPA has been shown to reduce internal CO<sub>2</sub> injury (with or without flesh cavities) in 'Honeycrisp' stored in CA.

## Acknowledgements

Thanks to the Ontario Apple Growers, Apple Marketers' Association of Ontario, Les producteurs de pommes du Québec, AgroFresh Inc., and Storage Control Systems Inc. for their support; as well as to Norfolk Fruit Growers' Association and Pommes Philip Cassidy Inc. for their direct collaboration. Recent work pertaining to 'Honeycrisp' storage has been funded in part through Growing Forward 2, as part of the Canadian Agri-Science Cluster for Horticulture 2 and the Agri-Innovation program in partnership with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the Canadian Horticultural Council.

*Dr. Jennifer DeEll is fresh market quality program lead for horticultural crops, OMAFRA, based in Simcoe, Ontario.*

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**FOCUS: STORAGE AND CONTAINERS**

# What you need to know about labelling your produce

SARAH MARTZ

Ontario Regulation (O. Reg.) 119/11 Produce, Honey and Maple Products under the Food Safety and Quality Act, 2001 regulates the sale, packaging, labelling, transporting, advertising, and food safety of produce, honey and maple products in Ontario.

O. Reg. 119/11 requirements apply to produce produced in Ontario by non-federally registered producers. It also applies to produce that can be commercially grown or harvested in Canada but that is produced outside Ontario and imported into Ontario for repacking by non-federally registered producers.

**What needs a label?**

Every package or master container of produce requires a label. A package is defined as any bag, receptacle, or container of any size that may be used for sale to a consumer without repackaging, for sales to a consumer from a bulk display, or for bulk sales.

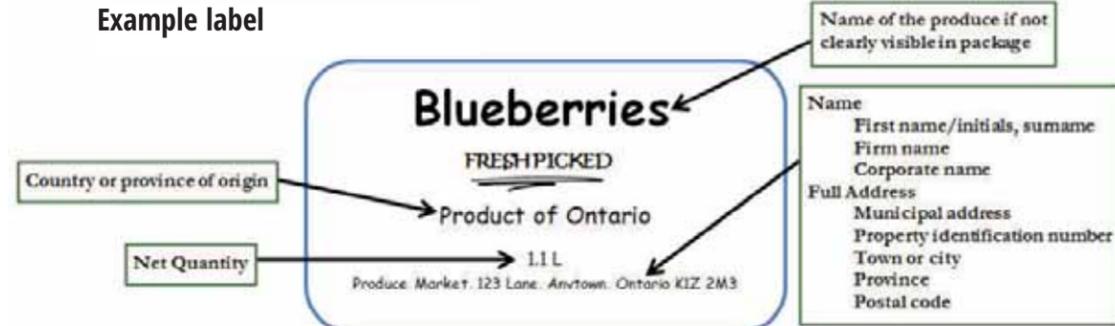
**What information is required on a label?**

Packaged produce offered for sale in Ontario by non-federally registered producers must be labelled with the following information. The information is required on both the individual packages and the master containers.

- the name and full address of the packer or the person on whose behalf the produce is packed
- the country or province where the produce was grown or harvested

► use the words “Product of/Produit de”, “Produce of/Produit de”, “Grown in/Cultivé dans” or “Province of Origin/Province d’origine” followed by the word Canada or the name of the province in which the produce was grown or harvested in Canada

► use the words “Product of/Produit de”, “Produce of/Produit de”, “Grown in/Cultivé dans” or “Country of Origin/Pays d’origine” followed by the name of the country where the produce was grown or



harvested in a country other than Canada

- if the produce is packed in a way that it is not readily visible and identifiable, the common name of the produce
- in the case of peppers, the word “sweet” or “hot”, as appropriate
- net quantity in metric units (required under Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act)

The labelling requirements outlined above are in addition to the requirements established in the Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act (Canada) and the Food and Drugs Act (Canada). For example, federal legislation sets out requirements for print size on labels. It is the packer’s responsibility to ensure labels comply with applicable requirements of both federal and provincial regulations.

False or misleading information on any produce label,

package or master container, in any advertisement for produce, or on any retail display sign for produce is prohibited by O. Reg. 119/11.

**Are there exemptions to labelling requirements?**

- Yes, exemptions exist. Labelling requirements do not apply to:
- packages of raspberries or strawberries that are packaged in the field in containers having a capacity of 1.14 litres or less
  - packages of produce that are packaged in a wrapper or confining band if the band is less than half an inch in width
  - master containers where the labels on the individual packages are easily and clearly discernible through the master container
  - packages of produce that are filled by consumers from a bulk display

**What resources are available?**

The Ministry has developed a toolkit to aid with the label content requirements for produce. To access the labelling toolkit as well as more information on labelling requirements please visit [www.ontario.ca/producesafety](http://www.ontario.ca/producesafety).

**What information must advertising and retail signage include?**

Advertising for produce, whether written or otherwise, must include the country or province in which the produce was grown or harvested. The country or province in which the produce was grown or harvested must also appear on or immediately over retail displays of produce regardless of location of the retail display (e.g. grocery store, farmer’s market, roadside stand).



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**FOCUS: STORAGE AND CONTAINERS**

# New cold storage facility features flow-racking system

*First-in, first-out flow ensures freshness for tender fruit*



Dave Lepp, director of operations, Vineland Growers' Co-Operative, shows off Niagara's peaches in a new 30,000-foot cold storage expansion.



Extra warehouse space is welcomed for corrugated packaging.

KAREN DAVIDSON

Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON – Vineland Growers' Co-Operative Ltd. has an enviable problem: estimating growth. As Dave Lepp, director of operations, recalls, "Back in 2010, the board of directors gave a five-year projection, but when I checked the actual volumes arriving at our doors, their production numbers were much higher than what was projected."

As the major distributor and marketer of Ontario's tender fruits, the Vineland Growers' Co-Operative needed to consolidate dry storage and cold storage space. They were renting three facilities to accommodate the need for large volumes of plastic containers and corrugated boxes. In some

cases, these packaging and netting materials were arriving in April and May, well ahead of the harvest season to ensure readiness.

"We can't depend on just-in-time delivery from ports as far away as Italy, Spain, China and the U.S.," says Lepp. "We make a lot of containers for our growers from our inventory."

So plans were set to build a 30,000-square foot facility in Niagara-on-the-Lake, doubling the size of the current operation. Design plans in 2015 have now been executed for the 2016 harvest. Box-making, basket-making, labeling and printing have been consolidated to the Virgil site in Niagara-on-the-Lake. In addition, four separate controlled-atmosphere rooms can now accommodate the Cold Snap pear crop.

"After harvest, Cold Snap

pears need to be put to sleep until they're required and packed between January and March," says Lepp.

From a food safety perspective, the new construction offered opportunity to create a clean and neat work flow. No wood or rough edges are to be seen. Pre-engineered, insulated panels are easy to clean. The production centre has more comfortable temperatures for employees working in the summer heat.

Three box-making machines and four basket formers have been installed. One of the new machines will make 5 lb. trays for both peach and nectarines.

One of the key features of the new facility is a pallet-flow

racking system – "a first-in, first-out" system that ensures freshness. All produce goes in one side of the cold storage room and comes out the other side.

"We won't lose dated product in this system," Lepp assures.

The cold storage is designed to hold 700 pallets of product that can be stacked three levels high. Each lane holds 10 pallets. Because Vineland Growers' Co-Operative ships 30 million pounds of fresh fruit per year, logistics like these become critical to fulfilling retailer orders.

Cold storage experts, Penn Refrigeration, were contracted to install modern cooling

technology specifically for fruit. All co-op members take the field heat out of their fruit at home farms before it's shipped by refrigerated trucks to the central facility for shipping. "The fruit comes in cold and it's our job to keep it cold," says Lepp.

The entire facility has been constructed with insulated panels so that dry storage space can be divided with interior walls to make way for more cooling space when required.

By far, the heaviest volume of fruit is in peaches, followed by nectarines, pears, plums, table grapes and some apricots and cherries. The new facility is literally just-in-time for peak season.

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**FOCUS: STORAGE AND CONTAINERS**

**New cold storage facility features flow-racking system**



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These plums are in cold storage, waiting for transport. Photos by Glenn Lowson.

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# ONvegetables



Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

## Common rust in sweet corn – to spray or not to spray?

ELAINE RODDY

Over the years, yield loss in sweet corn due to common rust infections have been well documented. Research in 2006 in New York suggested that on a susceptible variety every 10 per cent increase in rust severity reduced yield by 2.4 to 7 per cent in processing sweet corn and 3.0 to 6.2 per cent in fresh market (Shah and Dillard, 2006).

The rust disease itself is sporadic. It is most active in temperatures of 16° to 24° C, high relative humidity and a minimum leaf wetness period of three to six hours. Hot, dry conditions may stop an infection in its tracks, but as temperatures cool off in August/September the levels of disease may resurge in the later crop.

While many popular commercial varieties have good levels of tolerance to this disease, when it does appear, it

begs the question: “should I be spraying?” In the past we have used a spray threshold of six pustules per leaf. But it was often hard to characterize this level in an actual field setting. Shah and Dillard found that in a susceptible variety, rust treatments were cost effective and reduced disease severity when applied at 1-10 per cent infection.

University of Guelph researcher, Cheryl Trueman, studied rust thresholds in sweet

Treatment	Yield (doz/acre)			Yield (tons/acre)		
	Mature		Total	Mature		Total
	2013	2014		2013	2014	
Control	771.2 b	771.2 a	1152.7 a	3.19 d	2.87 a	3.95 a
Headline (1x)	831.4 b	863.6 a	1271.2 a	3.47 bcd	3.27 a	4.21 a
Quilt (1x)	879.6 ab	827.4 a	1233.1 a	3.83 abcd	3.03 a	4.12 a
Bravo (1x)	887.7 ab	859.5 a	1273.2 a	3.82 abcd	3.21 a	4.28 a
Bravo (2x)	895.7 ab	779.2 a	1233.1 a	<b>3.88 abc</b>	2.89 a	4.25 a
Vertisan (1x)	903.7 ab	811.3 a	1219.0 a	<b>3.95 ab</b>	2.90 a	4.19 a
Quilt (free)	<b>1036.2 a</b>	751.1 a	1239.1 a	<b>4.47 a</b>	2.94 a	4.45 a

Table 1, Total and mature sweet corn yield after treatment with fungicides at 3-5 per cent threshold for management of common rust, Ridgetown, ON, 2013 and 2014.

## Air pollution injury to vegetables



Figure 1 air pollution injury on watermelon

JANICE LeBOEUF

Diagnosing crop problems can often be difficult. Identifying disease, insect or

nematode problems is not always straightforward. And what about nutrient problems -- herbicide injury, soil compaction, and physiological problems? And then there's air

pollution.

Air pollution injury can manifest itself in many ways, depending on the pollutant, its concentration, crop species, crop growth stage, weather



Rust spores

corn, using the moderately susceptible variety “Temptation,” over a three year period from 2012 to 2014. She found that yield response to fungicides varied from year to year. In these trials, a single fungicide application at 3-5 per cent leaf area infected using Headline, Quilt or Vertisan can reduce disease severity on the leaves. Two applications of Bravo (applied at 3-5 per cent infection and 10 days later) also reduced disease severity.

Despite the reduction in disease severity, this did not translate into increased yield in 2014. In 2013, three of the treatments resulted in a yield increase (tons/acre). See Table 1, Total and mature sweet corn yield after treatment with fungicides at 3-5 per cent threshold for management of common rust, Ridgetown, ON, 2013 and 2014. Only the disease free treatment (Quilt applied

four times) resulted in an increase in the number of mature cobs harvested (doz/acre). However, this program may not be economical in a commercial operation. Based on the Ridgetown experience, in a moderately susceptible variety, it may not pay to spray. Spray decisions should be based on the susceptibility of the variety and the weather conditions at the time rust appears in the crop. Under hot, dry conditions it is less likely to become yield limiting.

However, if the forecast conditions are cooler and humid, then there will likely be a benefit to spraying susceptible varieties at the 3-5 per cent infection level.

*Elaine Roddy is vegetable crops specialist for OMAFRA, Ridgetown, Ontario.*

conditions, soil moisture, and more. Often, leaves of a certain age are affected, or just portions of those leaves that happened to be in the most susceptible stage at the time peak levels occurred.

Ozone is a common cause of plant damage. Plants can be damaged by long-term exposure to ozone concentrations of 50-80 parts per billion. In Chatham, for example, ozone levels have reached a peak between 50 and 70 parts per billion for 18 of the first 26 days of June. You can find these readings at [airqualityontario.com](http://airqualityontario.com).

Cucumbers, onions, peas, tomatoes and watermelons are some of the vegetable crops most sensitive to ozone. White beans are particularly sensitive and are often used as an indicator crop.

Sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides can also damage plants, but more significantly, combinations of these pollutants with ozone can cause higher

levels of injury. Some cruciferous crops and cucurbit crops are quite sensitive to sulfur dioxide. Other sensitive vegetable crops include onions, peas, lettuce, peppers, and tomatoes.

Another pollutant, peroxyacetyl nitrate, known as PAN, is known to affect tomatoes in Ontario. It causes a distinctive bronzing or glazed appearance of the underside of the leaves. PAN also injures spinach, Swiss chard and certain varieties of lettuce and beans. PAN is not emitted directly from pollution sources, but is formed by a chemical reaction between nitrogen oxides and other pollutants.

OMAFRA has a factsheet on the effects of air pollution on agricultural crops. Search for it online or visit [ontario.ca/crops](http://ontario.ca/crops) for more information.

*Janice LeBoeuf is vegetable crops specialist for OMAFRA, Ridgetown, Ontario.*

## BITS AND BITES

## Endangered species keep orchard pests at bay

LILIAN SCHAER

Smithville, ON — There is a delicate balance in nature between predator and prey. There are many natural pests, for example, that can threaten an orchard of fruit crops, but also many predators that can help keep those pests at bay. But what if the species helping to manage pest populations themselves become at risk?

That's where on-farm protection of species at risk by farmers and landowners and the Species at Risk Farm Incentive Program (SARFIP) come in.

SARFIP, delivered by the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association (OSCIA) provides cost-share funding for farmers to implement best management practices that help protect essential habitats of species at risk located on-farm. The range of possible activities under the program applies to orchards, croplands, grasslands, stream banks, shorelines, wetlands, and woodlands.

Peter and Mary Bosman of Lincoln Line Orchards, a family-run fruit farm in the Niagara Peninsula, try to work with nature as much as possible to keep their trees healthy.

They grow 15 apple and five pear varieties on their 65-acre orchard, as well as some peaches and plums, with about 80 per cent of their fruit being retailed through their on-farm store outside of Smithville. A partnership with FoodShare gets their small pears into approximately 250 Toronto schools through a snack program.

Last year, the Bosmans accessed cost-share funding through SARFIP to install bat boxes throughout their orchards as a way of providing habitats for the little brown bat, an endangered bat species in Ontario.

Bats are essential for maintaining healthy ecosystems as they eat a lot of insects, including farm pests, and little brown bats are one of only two bat species in Ontario that are known to use human structures, such as barns, attics and abandoned buildings, as summer maternity colony habitats.

Bat populations are declining around the world, including Ontario, often because of disappearing habitat. In Ontario, bats also face challenges from a disease called White Nose Syndrome (a fungus that thrives in cold, humid environments) which disrupts bats' hibernation cycles, burning up essential body fat supplies before the spring when they can begin foraging again.

"We're not sure how many there are in the area currently, but we hope we can attract them by giving them habitats in our orchards," explains



Bat box

Bosman. "Bats hunt insects and moths and if we can increase the bat population, they'll help us with natural insect control in the orchard."

Four bat boxes have been installed atop long poles throughout the orchard. Each box can hold up to 600 bats, and all are close to water sources – either the farm's ponds or Twenty Creek, which flows through the property.

To be eligible for SARFIP cost-share opportunities, Ontario farm businesses have to complete a third or fourth edition Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) workshop and have a verified complete Action Plan, as well as implement at least one SARFIP-eligible best management practice directly related to an action identified in their EFP Action Plan.

The Bosmans have previously completed projects through cost share programs delivered by OSCIA, as well as with Niagara Conservation, and are appreciative of funding programs such as SARFIP to support on-farm improvements.

"We have six children on our family farm and our grandson is the fifth generation, so we try to do what we can to be natural and support nature," says Bosman.

SARFIP is funded by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry through the Species at Risk Stewardship Fund, and the Government of Canada through the Habitat Stewardship Program for Species at Risk.

SARFIP is linked to the Canada-Ontario EFP supported by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs through Growing Forward 2, a federal-provincial-territorial initiative.

*Prepared for Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association by Lilian Schaer.*

## Did you know a quart basket may not be a quart?

REBECCA AMOAH

Did you know that the dark green plastic berry baskets advertised as one quart are not true quarts? These baskets hold less than one quart, or 1.14 litres, when filled level.

Ontario Regulation 119/11 Produce, Honey and Maple Products prohibits retailers from including any false or misleading information on any sign, label, package, or container of produce, including the amount of produce held in said package or container.

To avoid confusion and misrepresentation, ensure that you advertise your berries for sale by the basket, container, or unit, rather than by the quart. Consumers will be "berry" thankful for the clarity.



*Rebecca Amoah is with the Food Inspection Branch, OMAFRA.*

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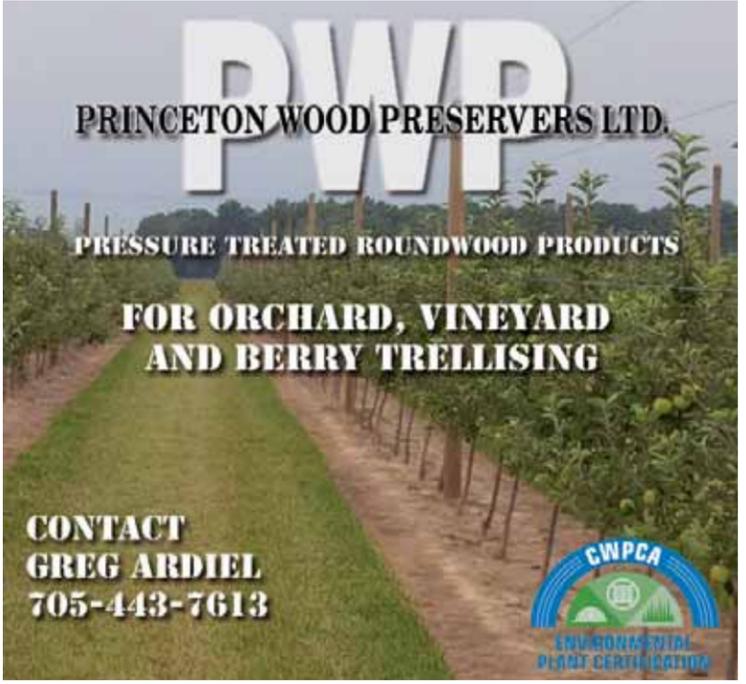


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REGULATED MARKETING

# Ontario growers of processing vegetables are puzzled about the government's objective to remove negotiating authority

KAREN DAVIDSON

Ontario's growers of 14 processing vegetable crops -- worth close to \$100 million in contracts -- are surprised at the provincial government's announcement to change their negotiating authority. The intent is to replace regulated marketing in favour of a free-market system. The Ontario Farm Products Marketing Commission (OFPMC) has announced a 45-day comment period ending August 12.

tomato processing in Leamington. Sweet corn acreage is holding its own while pea and bean acreages are down marginally following large crops in 2014 and 2015.

As Al Mussell, Agri-Food Economic Systems, concludes in his analysis of the industry, "the case that OPVG has performed badly is not immediately evident, as its contracted acreage levels have not declined precipitously and it appears not to have been subject to repeated disputes. Rather, contracted acreage has largely been maintained, in the



Photos by Glenn Lowson



The Ontario Processing Vegetable Growers (OPVG) negotiate contracts for processing crops such as tomatoes (\$50.6 million) sweet corn (\$8 million) and green peas (\$11.1 million). Cucumbers are also a relatively high value crop (\$11.1 million). See table 1.

OPVG negotiated contracts in 2016 with a total of 15 independent licensed processors and one green shipper. In several instances, only one or two processors represent the Ontario processor demand, indicating concentration in the marketplace. See table 2.

It is the case that contracted acreage of these 14 crops has remained stable since 2011. Cucumber contracted acreage is up in 2016 subsequent to a small crop in 2015. Tomato acreage has rebounded since the departure of Heinz from

face of major changes in some processing plants."

Toby Barrett, MPP Haldimand-Norfolk and opposition agriculture critic, has formally requested an extension of the comment period because farmers are in the midst of harvest. He has also asked for public hearings to gather feedback.

"This is a dramatic intervention into the present market and marketing process of 14 diverse crops -- crops that are highly perishable and cannot be stored or priced like corn or soybeans," Barrett wrote in a news release. "These are Ontario crops that in some instances have only one or two buyers for processing and crops that can vary year by year in yield and thus supply to the market."

Table 1 Ontario Processing Vegetables Area, Production, Value, 2015

	Acreage	Tons	Contracts	Contracted Value (\$million)
Beets	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Cabbage	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Carrots	N/A	49,450	16	5.9
Cauliflower	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Cucumbers	N/A	26,680	124	11.1
Green & Wax Beans	6,536	28,562	78	5.25
Green Peas	15,590	32,088	182	9.9
Lima Beans	3,081	4,727	32	2.2
Peppers	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Pumpkin and Squash	N/A	16,650	7	1.8
Sweet Corn	11,067	83,737	8.1	132
Tomatoes	10,639	447,300	95	50.6

Source: OPVG

N/A: Not available due to protection of confidentiality. Data on tons are a blend of actual and contracted tonnage

Table 2 Ontario Licensed Vegetable Processors

	Licensed Processors
Beets	Conagra
Cabbage	N/A
Carrots	Bonduelle, Campbell, Lakeview
Cauliflower	N/A
Cucumbers	Lakeside, Tomek's, Hartung Bros
Green & Wax Beans	Bonduelle, Southcoast
Green Peas	Bonduelle, Southcoast
Lima Beans	Bonduelle
Peppers	N/A
Pumpkin and Squash	Bonduelle, Harvest Pac
Sweet Corn	Bonduelle, Southcoast
Tomatoes	Highbury-Canco, Harvest Pac, Nation Wide, Conagra, Countryside, Sunbrite, Thomas Canning, Weil's

Source: OPVG

N/A: Not available due to protection of confidentiality

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## MINOR USE



## CRAIG'S COMMENTS

## Getting re-evaluation done right – the first time

CRAIG HUNTER  
OFVGA

One of the many “consultations” that the Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) sent out this year has to do with changing the process for re-evaluations of pesticides. On the surface, that is a laudable thing as the current process leaves a lot to be desired. It amused me that even such a consultation on change missed an opportunity to actually try to make some change by getting stakeholder input BEFORE producing the position paper. This reflects in large part what seems to keep the good ship PMRA heading into shoal water.

Another and related piece came from CropLife Canada who chooses to NOT want to harmonize our re-evaluation process with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in the U.S. There has been a long-standing desire by growers to get both new registrations and re-evaluations done as joint endeavours with the U.S. Admittedly, there have been issues in the practice to date but nonetheless, doing reviews in a common process is the right approach. It is better to fix the problems that are present today, than to just pitch that approach and “go it alone.” (Perhaps fodder for another column)

When the re-evaluation process was set up here in 1998, the EPA had already been underway with their re-registration process for two years. That made it impossible to start doing many joint projects due to the timing.

However, Canada did decide to have four streams, including one where they could work in concert with an on-going (joint) EPA review where the pesticide had common uses, common sources of active ingredients, and the issues were straightforward. The second stream was where some or much of the package needed Canada-only reviews. The third category was for when Canada could use available foreign reviews already done. (It has always interested me in how two nations could sometimes reach such different ‘opinions’ from essentially the same data.) Lastly was for ‘Special Reviews’ that until then had not been an issue, but have arisen since then with a vengeance!

The whole process was intended to review all 401 active ingredients registered at that time (that had not just been initially registered) over a 15 year timeframe. Then the process was to start over, but only for new data needs or new approaches that occurred since the last re-evaluation, or since an initial registration that occurred since 1998. Unfortunately, the first round has not yet been completed, while the second round has to start. (No ‘blame’ here due to unforeseen circumstances such as 32 ‘special’ reviews being added on without extra resourcing.)

In the meantime, in the rush to get the first round finished, it would appear that finishing “the process” became more important than ‘Getting it right the first time.’

Growers want to support re-evaluation as a means to continually reassure the public that what we are using to protect our crops has indeed met current regulatory oversight. We are NOT supportive of the work being done expeditiously if it misses or dismisses our input. We are also supportive of having as much as possible being done as joint work with EPA. This brings more resources to bear on the

task, it allows a common approach, it promotes common residue limits, common labelling, and affords growers a competitive equality in pesticide availability with our biggest trading partner. All of this while costing Canadians less to get it done. The price to doing this ‘right’ is to further change some PMRA policies and guidelines here and remove barriers to label changes, changes in sources of active ingredients, and other process barriers that registrants fear could delay U.S. product availability, and hence loss of U.S. sales down the road. If the delay is happening only for Canadian growers, it appears that registrants will accept that!

The whole re-evaluation process has a chance to be re-vamped but only if it is done right now! We can take advantage of the second round of work by doing it on a North American basis, but if our completion of the first round means we are even further behind the EPA work plan, we lose 15 more years and accept extra cost, more time, and risk uncoordinated work. This is just unacceptable, and not necessary!

In our brief to PMRA on their proposal to change their process, the most critical change was to get grower and registrant input at the very onset- not part way through the process as proposed.

If one can compare the current proposal to a landscaping job on your home, here is the situation: The landscaper (PMRA) decides what they are going to do to beautify your property, and starts to go about the changes before consulting you, maybe because you are away, and maybe because they don’t trust your opinions on your own property anyway. Then they actually bring in the backhoe and eliminate old trees and shrubs because in their opinion they no longer fit ‘the vision.’ Then they re-contour the property so it fits their mind’s-eye. Then they plant their



choice of new vegetation, install new sidewalks and patios, and then you come home to see their vision.

Your first impression of their ‘re-landscaping’ is ‘oh my god’ (or worse)! Your next emotional outburst is “What happened to the tree we lovingly transplanted from grandpa’s that our family all cherish dearly as a family heritage. Then comes the step by step review of what all has been done, (with the contractor fighting very inch of the way) and includes such facts as that you and your family hate the orange flowers liberally used in the new setting. They hate the new patio and where it is located. In fact there is little they do like about the ‘finished’ job. Now the ‘conversation’ moves along to -- when can all these changes be reversed, who is paying for the destruction of the family tree, can the patio be moved and re-engineered, and can it be done in the next month? And by the way, since we never authorized the work, it is at the contractor’s expense!

In that world, the contractor leaves and you are stuck with whatever they decided.

In our world, once the PMRA staff has created their opinions and written the re-evaluation proposal for comments, there seems to be little chance that substantive change will ever be contemplated, because they know best and

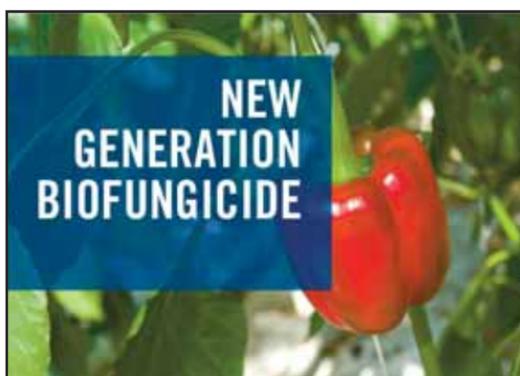
that is what was in the proposal. It can feel very intimidating to anyone writing a response when they feel nothing but despair about the outcome. All this when you know they missed a large piece, or used old and invalid data sources to reach the conclusions!

Getting grower and registrant input up-front is an important first step, but not the only one. Each piece that goes into a re-evaluation needs to be weighed and considered bearing in mind the potential effects, and what mitigation is possible/necessary to allow the use to continue. That is when further input can provide the path forward.

I fully suspect that the staff is following currently acceptable processes in the re-evaluation program. It is what’s in these processes that must be changed! Growers and registrants need and are willing to share the burden as well as being a bigger part of the solution. Every re-evaluation proposal should already have all our input and any further changes after initial publication should be very minor.

Then and only then can one say that there is a partnership at work!

Then the outcomes would be beneficial for all. Then Canada can take a seat at the bigger table where cooperation is not just a word, it is a commitment.



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MINOR USE

# European cherry fruit fly is detected in Ontario

In February 2016, an amateur entomologist submitted a photograph of a non-indigenous *Rhagoletis spp.* to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA). The photograph was taken in an urban park in Mississauga, Ontario in July 2015. In May 2016, the CFIA initiated a detection survey in the park and on June 27, 2016, the CFIA confirmed the detection of *R. cerasi*, the European cherry fruit fly, in association with invasive honeysuckle (*Lonicera spp.*) in this park.

The European cherry fruit fly is the most serious pest of cherries in Europe. Damage associated with this pest is caused by larval feeding in the fruit pulp, which can result in losses of up to 100 per cent if left uncontrolled. This pest may be introduced to new areas with fresh cherries or with soil or fruit from host plants grown in areas where this pest occurs.

available on the CFIA website at: [www.inspection.gc.ca/plants/plant-pests-invasive-species/insects/european-cherry-fruit-fly/eng/1467981423932/146798176931](http://www.inspection.gc.ca/plants/plant-pests-invasive-species/insects/european-cherry-fruit-fly/eng/1467981423932/146798176931)

Photo right: Figure 2. Female adult on cherry.

Photos courtesy of Coutlin R. / OPIE



Figure 1. Damage on cherry. Larvae exiting the cherry fruit (a) and exit holes (b).

*Rhagoletis cerasi* is a regulated pest to Canada, and is previously unknown from North America. Its natural geographical range includes central and western Asia and most of continental Europe. In Europe, the principle hosts of *R. cerasi* are cherry, including sweet cherry (*Prunus avium*), sour cherry (*P. cerasus*), black cherry (*P. serotina*) and mahaleb cherry (*P. mahaleb*) and honeysuckle (*Lonicera xylosteum*, *L. tartarica* and *L. alpigena*). This species attacks the fruit of its host plants but no other plant parts.

*R. cerasi* is subject to official control in Canada. The CFIA is carrying out additional surveillance to delimit the distribution of this pest.

Additional information is

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