

THE NEXT GENERATION

Millennials grow cooperatively to compete globally



Several important statistics stood out at the January 12 Ontario Apple Growers' annual general meeting. About one-third of the province's 16,000 apple acres has been planted in the last decade. Twenty-six per cent of the plantings are to popular, value-added varieties of Gala, Honeycrisp and Ambrosia. In the last five years, 1100 acres were planted to Gala. Another indicator of rejuvenation is a group of 20 young apple growers. As part of last summer's Ontario Apple Growers' summer tour to Essex County, many of them gathered to learn the latest technology at the Fruit Wagon, Harrow, Ontario. In the front line of this group, from left to right is, Luis Ruiz, Ian Parker and Richard Feenstra. Photo by Glenn Lowson.

INSIDE

Regulation burdens, energy top list of grower concerns Page 6

Flower quiz returns Page 16

FOCUS: Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Convention Section B



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KAREN DAVIDSON

Information is liquid. That's how Brian Rideout describes this age of information overload, cascading from multiple sources. He's one of about 20 young Ontario apple farmers, mostly millennials, who share experiences in a loosely structured group.

While he's 46 and a generation X'er, he fits in easily. He didn't grow up on a farm but he's comfortable bridging the baby boomer farmers such as his father-in-law, Rusty Smith, Blenheim, Ontario. Rideout helps manage Manitree Fruit Farms, with 300-plus acres of apples, tender fruit and squash.

Technology exchange is crucial to competing in the global apple industry that has been revolutionized in the last decade with new varieties (Honeycrisp), high-density trellis systems (tall spindles) and more targeted crop protection products.

"Pruning is no longer about cutting off branches but about how to grow branches," says

Rideout. The philosophy has changed to thinking about where the branches will grow and how fast for the best quality. Other growers such as Gerbe Botden, Thornbury, Ontario agree that many factors are involved in precision thinning to optimize the crop load.

Botden, 24, is a second-generation grower at Botden Orchards, who remembers the first organized meeting at Ontario Apple Growers' annual summer tour of the Georgian Bay area two years ago. Since then, the group has met two or three times a year to discuss best practices in establishing a new orchard, pruning techniques and how to access government grant programs. He's actively engaged in 400 acres of Red Prince, Honey Crisp, Ambrosia and McIntosh varieties grown under a high-density system.

As the group moves forward in 2016, Botden is also participating in cross-border events such as the International Fruit Tree Association's (IFTA) meetings in Grand Rapids, Michigan on February 6-12.

“

No one wants to lose the shirt off their back. By sharing information, you have each other's backs.

~ Ian Parker

”

The common thread with all of these young growers is their strong regional ties but willingness to pursue knowledge in other geographies.

Ian Parker, 25, is learning the apple industry from Charles Stevens, Wilmot Orchards, Newcastle, Ontario. "What I like about this young farmers' group is that we're not competing against neighbours but rather competing against the world," says Parker. "No one wants to lose the shirt off their back. By sharing information, you have each other's backs."

For example, apple maggot was an aggravating pest a couple years back. The group shared information on spraying strategies as well as how to keep workers engaged while waiting

for re-entry intervals to lapse.

Parker points out that Ontario has several apple-growing regions. Sharing information about thinning strategies can be very beneficial to growers in different regions. If a specific region is having unusual weather during thinning time, then it's advantageous to share how that situation is handled.

Finetuning crop protection is a common link between all these growers. "For me, I was overwhelmed by the world of chemistry," says Parker, "but after four years, I feel more confident about what to spray and when. I realize I'm not the only one struggling to keep up."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

AT PRESS TIME...

Federal ag minister visits Washington



L-R: Tom Vilsack, Lawrence MacAulay

Federal minister of agriculture and agri-food Lawrence MacAulay visited his U.S. counterpart Tom Vilsack on January 14. The meeting was timely after a major trade irritant was removed in December. That's when Canada obtained World Trade Organization authorization to impose retaliatory surtaxes on U.S. exports to Canada worth \$1.054 billion annually as a result of harm caused by American Country of Origin Labelling (COOL) requirements for beef and pork. The U.S. has agreed to repeal its COOL legislation.

In a joint statement with Chrystia Freeland, minister of international trade, MacAulay said, "Canada will monitor implementation of the repeal to ensure discrimination against Canadian cattle and hog exports is removed expeditiously in the U.S. market. It is our hope that no retaliatory

action will be needed in future." If the U.S. had not agreed, the Canadian government had threatened a number of retaliatory taxes against such produce as fresh apples and sweet cherries imported from the U.S.

CPMA podcasts prove popular

The Canadian Produce Marketing Association produces podcasts throughout the year on various subjects of interest to the horticultural food chain. Jason Gurley, CPMA manager education, took a different approach for the year-end 2015 podcast, inviting members of the produce media to participate.

Moderated by CPMA president Ron Lemaire, the two-episode podcast, included: Karen Davidson, *The Grower*, Canada; Karen James, *Grocery Business*, Canada; John Groh, *Produce News*, U.S.; Tom Karst, *The Packer*, U.S.; Matthew Ogg, *Fresh Fruit Portal*, Chile. The podcast has proven popular with more than a thousand downloads. The following topics were covered: sustainability, food trends, changes in international trade, technology impacts, marketing trends and predictions for the big stories in 2016. For this in-depth discussion, go to: <http://ow.ly/WL996>

Editor's note: turning over a new leaf

This is a historic month for *The Grower*. With this issue, a refreshed logo graces our cover page as well as new fonts.

As graphic designer Carlie Melara, explains, "We have a strong brand but want to make it modern with a "G" that is more fluid and flowing towards a leaf that is more ambiguous. The leaf is no longer that of an apple, but could be associated with a strawberry or cherry."

The font was chosen to improve readability and to reflect the fact that despite being printed on newspaper, we aspire to be a news magazine. These changes are synchronized with a new website that will be launched February 17 at the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Convention.

The new website is designed to be truly mobile-friendly for those readers who operate from their 4X4 truck cabs and are constantly on the move. We are organizing content so that minor use registrations and label extensions, for example, are published in real time. Look for videos. Look for more bloggers -- experts who will blog from across Canada. Look for more reports live from trade shows.

This is a close-knit industry. To be part of this new platform, talk to advertising sales rep, Herb Sherwood at 519-380-0118. And if you have any comments, please contact Karen Davidson. Email editor@thegrower.org. How can *The Grower* be more relevant to you?

NEWSMAKERS

Eugenia Banks, the Ontario government's potato specialist for 25 years, was honoured with the Award of Merit at the recent annual general meeting of the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association. For more details, see page 5.



Eugenia Banks

Jason Verkaik, Carron Farms, remains chair of the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association (OFVGA) for a second year. He is joined by vice-chair **Jan VanderHout**, representing greenhouse vegetables and the following directors: **John Thwaites**, tender fruit; **Mac James**, potatoes; **Norm Charbonneau**, small fruit/berries; **Ken Van Torre**, ginseng; **Kenny Forth**, fresh vegetables; **Bill George Jr.**, grapes; **Charles Stevens**, apples; **Mike Chromczak**, asparagus; **George Gilvesy**, greenhouse vegetables.

The OFVGA section chairs remain unchanged: **Brian Gilroy**, property; **Ken Forth**, labour; **Charles Stevens**, crop protection; **Mark Wales**, safety nets; **Harold Schooley**, research, **Adrian Huisman**, Canadian Horticultural Council.

OFVGA sponsored eight young growers to the recent annual general meeting. They included: **Adrian Jacques**, Asparagus Farmers of Ontario; **Nathan Makarenko** and **Nick Weening**, Holland Marsh Growers' Association, **Henry Su** and **Jamie Lucas**, Ontario Ginseng Growers' Association; **James Zabek**, Grape Growers of Ontario; **Dylan Wiens**, Niagara Peninsula Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association; **Kevin Howe**, Ontario Berry Growers' Association.

Alison Robertson has been appointed chair of the Ontario Food Terminal board for the next three years. Most recently, she was project manager for the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association and is now executive director of the Agri-Food Management Institute.

Farm & Food Care Ontario has hired **Tracy Hussey** for the role of executive director. She replaces **Crystal Mackay** who has transitioned to the new national chief executive officer position for Farm & Food Care Canada. Hussey brings more than 20 years of experience working in the food industry, a hospital environment as well as family medicine. A registered dietitian by training, she has a Masters of Health Sciences degree from McMaster University.

The 2016 Arysta Golden Apple Award was presented to Norfolk County farm leader **Murray Porteous**, Lingwood Farms, Simcoe, Ontario. The family operation is comprised of 750 acres of apples, pears, sour cherries and 100 acres of asparagus. The award is presented annually to a recipient who has made outstanding contributions to the Ontario apple industry.

Houweling's Group of Companies has appointed COO **Kevin Doran** to the additional role of president. He joined the company in late 2014. **Casey Houweling**, CEO and corporate grower for the company will continue to focus on continued development and adoption of innovative, sustainable technologies for 200 acres of greenhouses located in Delta, BC; Camarillo, California; Mona, Utah and Loveland, Colorado.

Appointments to the CanadaGAP Stakeholder Advisory Committee for 2016-2017 have been made by the CanAgPlus Board of Directors. The Committee meets annually to provide input, advice and recommendations on the technical components of the CanadaGAP Program. The following members will serve on the Committee for the next two years. Their areas of expertise are listed along with affiliated organization. **Jay Anderson**, potatoes, Potato Growers of Alberta; **Mariana Black**, tree and vine fruit, B.C. Tree Fruit Cooperative; **Chris Burr**, program implementation for vegetables and potatoes, B.C. Vegetable Marketing Commission; **Joanne Driscoll**, multi-commodity expertise/program development, P.E.I. Horticultural Association; **Nadene Gurule**, small fruit, Berryhill Foods; **Grant Hackman**, program development, vegetables and potatoes, Peak of the Market; **Stephanie Levasseur**, other relevant expertise, Au Coeur de la pomme; **Mary Shabatura**, vegetables and small fruit, Shabatura Produce/Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers. Committee chair is **Stephanie Lariviere**, board liaison, greenhouse, Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers.

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COVER STORY

Millennials grow cooperatively to compete globally

CONTINUED FROM
PAGE 1

Brian Rideout says that smart sprayers have been found lacking in their durability and adaptability to high-density apple orchards. Tower sprayers that can deposit spray droplets more directly to 12-foot trees are now under investigation. Multiple-pass sprayers that can mow grass and spray at the same time are also of interest.

This millennial generation is very tech-savvy, taking full advantage of the Fruit Tracker program that's been developed by the Ontario apple, tender fruit and grape organizations. In addition, Rideout says every farmer has a favourite weather app. Downloaded from Apple's iTunes, the Storm weather app uses Google Earth to zoom in on areas as precise as concession roads. It features high-definition radar, advanced storm tracking and real-time severe weather alerts. "I can tell whether a storm will hit me in 15 minutes or an hour," says Rideout. "That allows me to pull workers out of the orchard or to pull my

sprayer."

Another app is Wind Meter by Going Apps LLC. It helps to gauge proper spraying conditions. His third favourite is an app for measuring fields which is called Measure Your Land by MYL Light. This is helpful in calculating precise spraying rates for specific blocks.

What does the older generation think of all this? Leslie Huffman, retired Ontario apple specialist, sowed the seeds for this group. "I am very pleased to see this Young Growers group moving ahead and continuing to provide links for young growers from all districts in Ontario. And I like that they perceive that rather than competing against each other, they are forming a team."

There are some basics worth repeating, such as how to set up a tractor to avoid flat tires in the orchard. Or how to add some sugar to your spray tank so that you're attracting beneficial insects. This is old-time lore that doesn't always appear in 2016 scientific literature.

Ontario Apple Growers have provided administrative support to this fledgling group,



Two generations of apple growers from the Georgian Bay Fruit Growers compare notes at the 2015 Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Convention. Left to right: Kyle and Brad Oakley, Marius and Gerbe Botden. Both Kyle Oakley and Gerbe Botden are members of the Young Apple Growers. Photo by Denis Cahill.

sponsoring a lunch meeting, for example, at this month's Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Convention. The association is not organizing an Ontario summer tour but rather encouraging all growers to attend IFTA's regional study

tour from Rochester to Geneva, New York from July 18-21.

Ian Parker is looking forward to a better production year in 2016. It's now time for the group to start capturing local information in a spreadsheet that's shareable.

"How did we manage apple maggot two years ago? How did a new miticide stand up to insect pressure last year? Our management strategies should be shared so that we're a stronger industry," says Parker.

INTERNATIONAL

EUROPEAN UNION

EU extends Russian sanctions

Geopolitics continues to disrupt trade patterns in Europe, with sanctions against Russia extended another six months to July 31. Italy was in favour of opening dialogue with Russia, but was outvoted by its colleagues in the European Union. The sanctions result from the ongoing presence of Russian troops in eastern Ukraine.

With the slump in global oil prices, Russia's economy is suffering. The situation is further complicated by the relatively recent development of western governments working more closely with Russia to find a solution to the Syrian war after terrorist attacks in Paris and the downing of a Russian jet in Egypt.

Source: Wall Street Journal

NETHERLANDS

Greenhouse acreage declines

Statistics Netherlands reports that 2015 vegetable acreage dropped by 198 acres to 11,732 acres. Acreage has steadily declined from a peak in 2010.

The largest decrease is in cucumbers followed by tomatoes. However, eggplant acreage rose for the first time in five years and strawberries under glass showed strength.

Demand for cherry tomatoes is under pressure, while loose and truss acreage remains stable. Pepper acreage is status quo, however the distribution between colours has changed with more demand for red peppers, less for yellow and green.

Consolidation continues with 4,130 horticultural companies in 2015 versus 8,600 a decade ago.

Source: HortiDaily.com

GERMANY

New products at Fruit Logistica



Vegetable seed breeder Hazera is presenting new varieties at Fruit Logistica 2016. The company, based in both Israel and the Netherlands, works with growers, processors and retailers to bring new products to market.

For example, the company has worked with Dutch grower TB&S on Tinty, which combines red cabbage with the shape and taste of a green pointed cabbage. While a red cabbage has harder and stiffer leaves, this variety has thinner and softer leaves as well as a mild, sweet flavour.

Source: FreshPlaza.com

CHILE

Cherry crop to drop significantly

Despite Chile's signature on the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) this month, the deal won't change the damages of bad weather. Rains and spring frosts last September through November, devastated the cherry crop. And extremely hot temperatures of up to 36°C in December didn't help. The Cherry Committee of the Fruit Exporters Association of Chile (Asoex) predicts that volumes for the 2015-2016 season will decrease by 28 per cent when compared to the previous season.

As of early January 2016, Chile had exported 13,222 tons of fresh cherries to different target markets, a significant loss when compared to the 42,620 tons exported in the previous season.

Source: FreshPlaza.com

NEW YORK STATE

Cornell: Institute for Food Safety

A \$2 million state grant will help establish an Institute for Food Safety at Cornell University. It's to be located at the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station in Geneva, New York.

Cornell scientists and extension experts will address outbreaks of foodborne illness and focus on food-safety related issues through applied research, outreach and training. The timing couldn't be better with increased demands from the Food Safety Modernization Act. Betsy Bihn, a researcher specializing in reducing microbial risks to fresh fruits and vegetables, will have a leadership role. Her background is in reducing risk from contamination in the field, during harvest and during transport.

Source: Cornell University

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CROSS COUNTRY DIGEST

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Replant program proves popular

The first year of British Columbia's \$8.4 million, seven-year replant program for treefruits has gone well with 200 acres of apples, 20 acres of cherries and various other treefruits completed in 2015. That's according to Carl Withler, BC ministry of agriculture industry specialist for tree fruit and grapes.

The provincial government pays about one-third of the cost, equal to \$3.50 per tree or \$2.50 per graft. By the time growers pay to install irrigation, trellising and tie-ons, the cost is close to \$14 per tree. Most of the funds went to the replanting of apple

orchards, primarily Ambrosia and Honeycrisp varieties. The remainder went to cherry orchard plantings, adding to the sizable 4,500 acres already planted and coming to full production.

"I expect the replant program to be oversubscribed in 2016," says Withler, as growers analyze long-term trends and realize the benefits of renovation to meet high-value markets. Replanting requires a soil test which leads to composting and liming to amend soil tilth. Most of the replanting has occurred in the Okanagan and Similkameen

valleys, with funding partnerships at the Summerland Varieties Corporation, the provincial government, IAF and administration by the B.C. Fruit Growers' Association.

So far, January 2016 temperatures have been "normal" for the apple-growing regions and pruning is proceeding at a good rate.

Photo right: (L-R) Fred Steele, president of BC Fruit Growers' Association, replant grower Avtar Boparai, and B.C. minister of agriculture Norm Letnick. Photo courtesy of Carl Withler.



PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

PEI Potato Board announces revised potato disinfection program

The Prince Edward Island Potato Board has announced a new plan for potato disinfection for the province, collaborating with industry members, the Prince Edward Island Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, as well as the scientific community. Additionally, the Board believes that this plan meets the needs of potato farmers and addresses concerns voiced after the previously announced changes to the potato disinfection program. This plan has the following main components:

1. Effective January 1st, the

Prince Edward Island Potato Board takes over responsibility for disinfection services offered at the Borden-Carleton Inspection Station. Disinfection services will be available at this location for any trucks moving potatoes. As a transition measure, provincial staff will assist with disinfection services at the Borden facility until March 31, 2016.

2. The PEI Potato Board will host a series of winter workshops across Prince Edward Island to provide potato farmers, packers, and other industry partners with all the necessary infor-

mation to perform disinfection. These workshops address biosecurity, Bacterial Ring Rot (BRR), and practical approaches to achieving top-notch cleaning and disinfection on farms. A standard disinfection log book and certification form will be provided to farmers to record disinfection activities as supporting documentation to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) and other interested parties. Furthermore, support will be offered through the Canada-PEI Growing Forward II programs to assist farmers with the purchase and installation of disinfection

equipment.

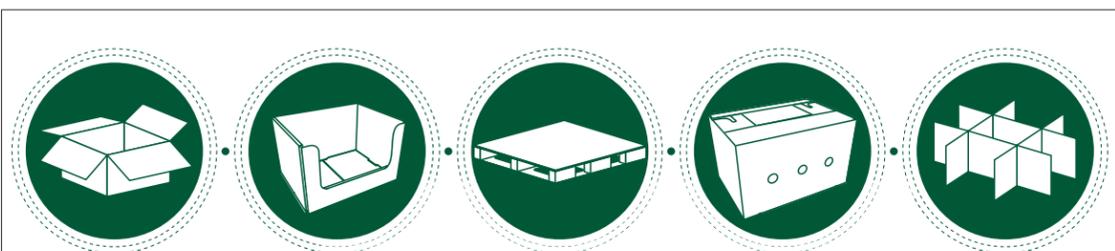
3. Some private businesses have contacted the Board to indicate their availability to provide third-party disinfection services. These businesses will also be offered standard forms to record that disinfection services have been provided.

4. The PEI Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, through the Plant Health Act, will retain regulatory responsibility for oversight of PEI potato farms (both seed and non-seed) if BRR infection occurs.

5. The PEI Department of Agriculture and Fisheries will continue to provide dedicated cleaning and disinfection services under contract with CFIA for potato wart-regulated land. The Prince Edward Island potato industry worked with both levels of government over many years to bring Bacterial Ring Rot to the point of functional eradication, and it is important

that growers maintain on-farm biosecurity measures to protect against potential sources of infection.

CFIA regulations require that all trucks transporting bulk seed potatoes must be cleaned and disinfected before being loaded. The new disinfection strategy continues to meet these requirements and reassures buyers of Prince Edward Island seed potatoes that there will be no disruption in disinfection service. Prince Edward Island potatoes will continue to meet or exceed federal regulations. Greg Donald, general manager of the Prince Edward Island Potato Board, noted that the plan ensures biosecurity for the seed sector, the foundation of the Island potato industry. Through a collaborative approach with multiple experts and industry partners, this approach maintains or enhances measures to prevent outbreaks of potato diseases such as Bacterial Ring Rot.



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MANITOBA

McCain Foods to upgrade Carberry potato processing plant

For Manitoba's 120 potato growers, the Carberry plant is the destination for about 430 million pounds annually. This year, they are pleased that federal ag minister Lawrence MacAulay and provincial ag minister Ron Kostyshyn have announced a \$380,000 investment to increase efficiency and reduce waste. These funds total half of the total cost.

New equipment will reduce potato and canola oil waste by 900,000 pounds and 800,000 pounds per year, respectively.

McCain Foods Canada has already invested more than \$30 million in other improvements over the last decade, including a \$23 million waste water upgrade.

Manitoba is Canada's second-largest potato producer after Prince Edward Island. In 2015, 67,000 acres of potatoes were grown in Manitoba. Eighty per cent of potatoes processed in Manitoba are exported to the U.S.

Source: *Potatobusiness.com*

OFVGA AWARD OF MERIT WINNER

DR. EUGENIA BANKS

Ontario potato specialist honoured for 25 years of service

Niagara Falls, ON -- Eugenia Banks is happiest in the field with potato growers. But she made a big exception to attend the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association annual general meeting on January 12. That's where she was honoured for her 25 years of provincial government service to the potato industry. True to form, she flew out the next day, not wanting to miss Potato Expo 2016 in Las Vegas.

Banks came to Canada from Chile in the 1970s to pursue advanced education in plant pathology. She studied under the late Lloyd Edgington at the University of Guelph and was awarded her PhD in Plant Pathology. Fortunately, she stayed and Ontario potato growers were the beneficiaries of her talent. She was hired by the Ontario ministry of agriculture as an IPM specialist for potatoes in the '80s and then she accepted the combined position as overall potato production and IPM specialist when Sam Squire retired in 1995.

She has been a tireless advocate for the potato industry, working in the trenches – literally – to combat Colorado potato beetle. As Craig Hunter, OFVGA research, explained in his award address, “She worked with industry representatives to secure the registration of Admire insecticide when we were down to flamethrowers and plastic-lined ditches as all the pest control products of the day had failed.”

“Where would growers have been without that tool -- one still widely and effectively in use today?” Hunter asked rhetorically.

Her annual field trials helped growers to see new varieties that were correctly identified as having resistance, not tolerance to common scab, and new equipment that has allowed growers to achieve better yields and higher quality.

In 2008, the U.N.-declared International Year of the Potato, Eugenia Banks was the ideal spokesperson. The Toronto Star's food editor pursued her to a storage shed near Alliston Ontario to see her array of test varieties. This treasure trove of potatoes were so new that they had numbers, not names.

Her new potato varieties have been showcased to growers at an annual August field day.

She also coordinates the annual Ontario Potato Conference, packed with nine presentations from North American experts. Her ability to convene international experts speaks to her reputation well

beyond provincial borders. In 2013, HZPC, one of the largest seed and potato breeding companies in Europe, awarded Potato Woman of the Year to her at a Netherlands event. She was cited for her Potato Field Guide and technology transfer through variety trials.

It's important to note that Eugenia Banks is not in retirement. In fact, the Ontario Potato Board has hired her to

organize the 2016 Ontario Potato Conference for March 1 in Guelph.

Since 1947, the OFVGA has annually recognized industry leaders and those who have made significant contributions to the industry. Congratulations to Dr. Eugenia Banks, 2016 Award of Merit winner.

Photo Right: Eugenia Banks is pictured at a spray clinic near Alliston, ON.



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ONTARIO FRUIT AND VEGETABLE GROWERS' ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Regulatory burdens and energy costs top list of grower concerns



Nature Fresh Farms, headquartered in Leamington, Ontario, expects to harvest its first crop of tomatoes in late February at its new Delta, Ohio facility. The second phase and third phases are already under construction for completion later this year, bringing total Ohio acres to 45.



Electricity costs are on every Ontario grower's mind as bills increase for heating greenhouses and cooling long-term storage. Green power sources, such as wind turbines, have been controversial because they do not always produce energy when needed, then the stored energy is discounted to out-of-province buyers. Photo by Glenn Lowson.

KAREN DAVIDSON

Niagara Falls, ON -- Ontario growers face an ever more burdensome regulatory environment which is particularly onerous for smaller operations. Some of the additional concerns for 2016 and future

years are in the following chart: The political and regulatory landscape was summarized by government relations specialist Bliss Baker, Maple Leaf Strategies, who spoke to the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association annual general meeting, January 12.

"Environmental legislation dominated the latter part of the last session with resources stretched for the Ontario Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change (MOECC)," said Baker. "With the waste diversion file and prospects of cap and trade in

the next session, MOECC staff will be stretched for capacity." When the new legislative session starts February 16, the Ontario government will be starting budget consultations. "The deficit will still drive everything at certain points," he predicted. "The government has so far escaped making any tough decisions, partially due to new revenue tools and the sale of Hydro One assets. However the days of avoiding major cuts may be numbered." Arthur Potts, parliamentary assistant to Ontario agriculture minister Jeff Leal told the audience: "There is no indifference to growing the agricultural sector. This is not a rural issue, but an Ontario issue.

Don't think we're not interested in deficit reduction." On the positive side of the ledger, Bliss said that the Ontario government views the greenhouse sector as a driver for growth and jobs. However, George Gilvesy, chair of the Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers, responded during the question-and-answer period. He said that the government term "leakage" does not adequately describe the multi-million dollar investments that Ontario companies are making south of the border to build new greenhouses.

ISSUE	START DATE
PROVINCE OF ONTARIO	
Ontario consultations for cap and trade, waste diversion legislation	February 2016
Noise protection for all workers exposed to 85 decibels or higher	July 1, 2016
Small-sized business (50 employees or fewer) employer contributions to Ontario Registered Retirement Plan	January 1, 2019
Reductions of 40 per cent (from 2008 levels) in phosphorus loading into Lake Erie	By 2025
Risk assessment project for Ontario greenhouses	2016

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

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ONTARIO FRUIT AND VEGETABLE GROWERS' ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Regulatory burdens and energy costs top list of grower concerns

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

“There is no confrontation with this government because the decision-makers have evaluated the entire policy environment and walked across the border with their investment dollars,” said Gilvesy. “Those dollars are gone for good for Ontario.”

It’s not just a case of high electricity costs comparable to U.S. jurisdictions, Gilvesy said, but the looming legislative agenda of more costs downloaded to employers.

Federally, Baker says he is watching several key initiatives. They include: health food policy, innovation funding allocation, agricultural trade interests, Growing Forward 2 replacement, Canada Pension Plan enhancement as well as climate change and soil conservation initiatives.

Here are the resolutions passed at the OFVGA annual general meeting which addressed regulatory and energy issues.

Resolution 2016-02 – that OFVGA lobby the government of Ontario to establish an agricultural electricity rate comparable to those of geographically close provinces and states. **PASSED**

Resolution 2016-07 – that Ontario municipalities stop large-fill sites from being placed on class 1, prime agricultural land. **PASSED**

Resolution 2016-08 – that OFVGA immediately lobby the Ontario government to work collaboratively with the sector to help achieve the goal of reduced phosphorus in the Great Lakes tributaries or where applicable through education, investment in innovation and risk-based regulation that is both protective of environment while allowing the sector to remain competitive through reduced financial burden to growers. **PASSED**

Resolution 2016-09 – that the OFVGA lobby the Ontario government to undertake a full Regulatory Impact Assessment of the proposed cap and trade program to assess the economic impact on the agricultural sector and to grant fuel and electricity distributors an initial exemption from cap and trade requirements on fuel delivered for use in agriculture **PASSED**

Resolution 2016-10 – that OFVGA lobby the Ontario government to continue to work with the greenhouse sector to

put in place programs that allow growers to access competitively priced electricity, allowing the sector to grow and innovate through lighted 12-month production in Ontario. **PASSED**

Resolution 2016-11 that OFVGA lobby the Ontario government to take a more fulsome view of economic development that ensures the mandate of the provincial energy regulators directly supports the premier’s growth

challenge to both agri-food and to the economy in general. **PASSED**

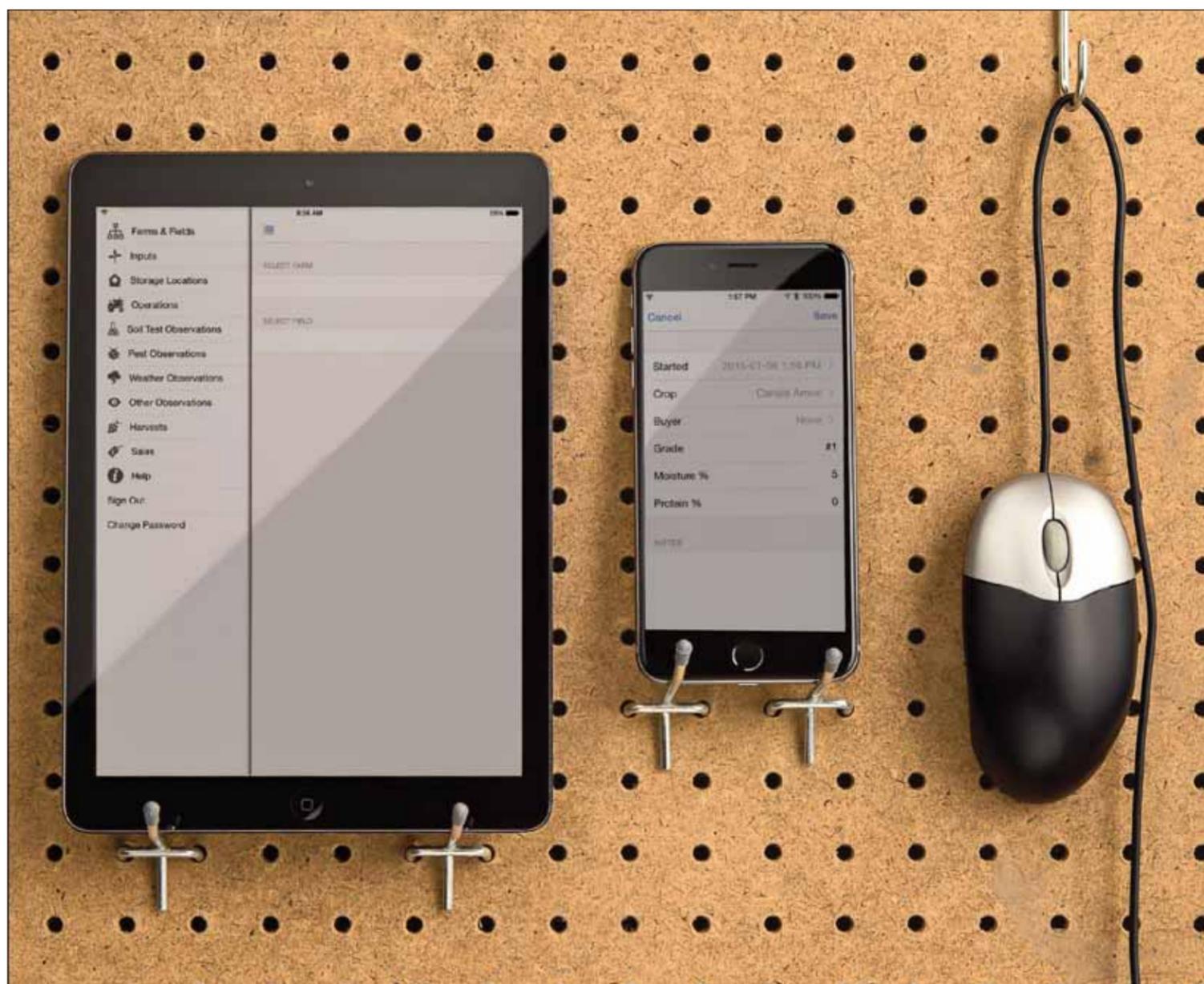
Resolution 2016-12 – that the OFVGA lobby the Ontario government to recognize the unique labour challenges faced by the fruit and vegetable sector and ensure any changes to the Employment Standards Act do not negatively impact the sector’s international competitiveness and economic viability. **PASSED**

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF ONTARIO ELECTRICITY

	Nov. 19, 2008	Nov. 19, 2015
Ontario demand	434,000 MWh	351,000 MWh
Cost to ratepayers	\$28.4 million	\$47.5 million
Exports	24,600 MWh	75,000 MWh
Export revenue	\$1.6 million	-\$.2 million
Kilowatt hour rate	6.02¢/kWh	10.7¢/kWh
Percentage increase per kWh		77.7%

SOURCE: IESO

NATIONAL POST



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ONTARIO FRUIT AND VEGETABLE GROWERS' ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Environmental regulations dominate the legislative agenda

BRIAN GILROY

The environment has been very high on the action priority list of the Ontario government over the past year. The number of Environmental Bill of Rights (EBR) postings that dealt with proposed regulations impacting agriculture was overwhelming.

The work on the Great Lakes Protection Act has been relatively calm this past year. The Great Lakes Guardian Community Fund continued to provide funding for local projects to help protect and restore the Great Lakes. As yet, I am unclear as to the goal date to which the Lakes are to be restored. The water focus has been on phosphorus reduction in Lake Erie. The target is to reduce phosphorus loading by 40 per cent by 2025.

This is a fairly lofty goal for a number of reasons. Number one, for me, is the fact that phosphorus is challenging to measure and there are three different types of phosphorus. Agriculture uses phosphorus and is part of the problem but, Ontario agriculture is working hard to improve on a relatively good track record when

it comes to nutrient management.

The greenhouse sector has participated in the Nutrient Management Act for one year -- a positive first step for all of horticulture. Holland Marsh growers have been the first sector to participate in the program, Smart Water Assessments which focuses on minimizing water use in vegetable washing. This is coordinated by Farm and Food Care and financially supported by the province. It is hoped that this funding will continue and be expanded to other horticultural sectors.

Recently, the Ontario government has proposed a Cap and Trade program to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This shift to a low-carbon, circular economy is a significant structural change in how Ontario does business and the impacts of this transition have not been assessed. The impact on farm businesses -- which have been unable to pass increased costs on to their buyers -- may drastically reduce our ability to compete here at home and in the global marketplace. Initial information is that fuel costs will increase 3.6 cents a litre as the program is introduced. We

have also been told that there will be no offsets or credit given for normal farm practices that sequester carbon.

If the proposal is accepted, our hope to benefit from the environmental goods and services that we farmers provide to society, will go unrealized. The Cap and Trade program will be similar to what is currently operating in California and is being introduced in Quebec. The need to help agriculture transition to a low-carbon economy will be imperative if we wish to maintain our food security and the economic benefit we provide.

It has been recommended that agriculture receive a proportional share of the proceeds from the Cap and Trade program for transitional activities. The reason this point is of such importance is that most fruit and vegetable growers have been financially challenged by rapidly increasing input costs. Labour, food safety and electricity have seen the most significant cost increases over the last few years. Electricity rates have gone up exponentially and there appears to be no end in sight for further increases. I am unsure what can be done to

provide some type of relief to a sector that is highly dependent on electricity. Something needs to be done if we want fruit and vegetable farming to remain viable. Perhaps, a lower agriculture rate?

The government has continued to state that plans to increase the availability of electricity and natural gas to rural Ontario continue to progress. Agriculture needs access, if we are to grow our farms, as challenged by our premier.

Recently I attended a session hosted by the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) which is updating its valuation process for farmland and farm buildings. This is a normal practice for property values to be updated every three to five years and is to be completed early in 2016. The market analysis is 95 per cent complete for the 222,870 farm properties in the province and only uses farm sales to bona fide farmers. Due to problems with low farm sales in some regions, to allow for reasonable comparison, the geographic regions are being reduced from 220 currently to 170 in 2016. MPAC is also proposing that this

extensive updating of property values move to a frequency of every six to eight years.

A new building cost manual for structures is also being developed. The Douglas Cost Manual has been used by Ontario insurance companies for a number of years and will be the basis for MPAC's new manual. The impact that this will have for some fruit and vegetable farmers could be significant. The good news is that there is still time for input on the changes to the property and structure values and feedback to MPAC is encouraged. A detailed MPAC assessment methodology guide for agricultural property is also being developed.

On December 7, 2015 the province released the report: Planning for Health, Prosperity and Growth in the Greater Golden Horseshoe: 2015-2041. A positive in the report is the inclusion of farmland preservation and support for agricultural investments and our industry's viability.

Brian Gilroy is OFVGA chair, property section.

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ONTARIO FRUIT AND VEGETABLE GROWERS' ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Review workplace health and safety standards

Horticulture is labour-intensive. The Foreign Agricultural Resources Management Service administered the paperwork and flights for almost 18,000 workers in Ontario last year. This number didn't include almost 2,000 transfers. As Ken Forth, OFVGA chair of the labour section reported at the annual general meeting, more than 9,000 workers had been processed for 2016. That's an excellent start to smooth operations for what will be the 50th anniversary of the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program.

"Growers, keep up the good work on early Labour Market Impact Assessment applications," said Forth. "Your order needs to be in at least 14 weeks before you need workers."

One of the new requirements for workplace health is the Ontario ministry of labour requirement that all workers

must wear noise protection guards for workplaces in which there is noise above 85 decibels. For a gauge on what that means, hear.net.com says that city traffic inside a car registers about 80 decibels, a power mower registers 107 and a power saw registers 110 decibels. Sustained exposure to 90-95 decibels can cause permanent hearing damage. That regulation comes into effect July 1, 2016.

Guest speaker Elizabeth Mills shared some of the work that her organization performs in the horticultural sector. As president and CEO of Workplace Safety and Prevention Services (WSPS), she pointed out that falls from heights are the most worrisome out of a list of 10.

Work is underway for a risk assessment project with greenhouses. In workshops

Risk Rank	Category	Situation or Condition that could result in injury or illness OR What could keep you up at night?	Risk
1	Working form Heights	Lack of Fall prevention program	10.39
2	MSD's	Overexertion, repetitive strain, bending and twisting, pull force	9.70
3	Working form Heights	Falls from heights (E.g. repair shading, glass lighting, removing product from overhead such as hanging baskets, whitewashing, replacing glass, vent work)	9.69
4	Working form Heights	Changing the room polyurethane (fall hazard)	9.56
5	Occupational Disease	Lack of Heat stress/stroke program	9.00
6	Environmental	Substance abuse in the workplace	8.94
7	Occupational Disease	Heat stress/stroke	8.86
8	Slips, Trips & Falls	Improper railing for second level storage	8.86
9	Working form Heights	Working in gutters of glass roofs	8.75
10	Slips, Trips & Falls	Slips, Trips, and Falls	8.25

Source: Workplace Safety and Prevention Services

conducted with greenhouse employers and employees last fall, the two groups identified the top ten risks – independently. That's good news for everyone to be on the same page.

"You have already communicated to workers what

the risks are," said Mills. "Now you're ready to start on solutions."

A greenhouse industry guide will be developed for safety, based on more industry consultations this month. In turn, that guide will be used to train ministry of labour

inspectors.

WSPS has more resources on its website, www.wspss.ca/farmsafety Specifically, look for Spanish resources (Seguridad Agricola) and online courses for orienting new agricultural workers to health and safety issues.

Expect reduced premiums for crop insurance

MARK WALES

Because the Ontario Agricultural Commodity Council (OACC) meeting was rescheduled until December 14, I do not have the most recent statistics from Agricorp on Crop Insurance and AgriStability so what was reported in November is still the most current. I attended a meeting on December 7 in regards to the Fresh Vegetable Acreage Loss program and may have some further updates.

SDRM

As of Nov 22, 2015 all application notices for SDRM had been sent out, which was 2,562 notices for a total possible request of \$28.5 million. In 2014 2,393 notices were sent out for a total possible request of \$28.56 million so no real change there. So far, for 2015, 736 producer requests had been received for a total of \$11.5 million, and of those 642 had requested withdrawals. In total for 2014 1,987 producer applications triggered matching government funds of \$23.42 million. This included the extra \$2 million allotment of unused funds as per the commodity sharing agreement.

Given strong livestock commodity prices it could be expected that SDRM would receive the extra \$2 million for the 2015 program as well, but we will not know for certain until after April 30, 2016.

Agricorp

In total across programs,

more than 4,000 farmers have chosen direct deposit which helps reduce administration costs and thus benefits everyone. There will be continued promotion of this option.

Crop Insurance

In general the program year is winding down, however parts of Ontario still have substantial corn to harvest which is being held up by lack of storage for a larger than normal crop. There will be premium increases next year for some tree fruit crops as a result of frosts, but overall -- and I stress overall -- the Crop Insurance fund is healthy and many crops will see premiums reduced.

Ontario Registered Pension Plan (ORPP)

The Ontario government continues to move forward with phased implementation of ORPP starting in 2017 for large employers, 2018 for medium and 2019 for small, with full implementation by 2020. They have indicated they will be using the CPP earnings exemption threshold of \$3,500, and have made no decision yet on a blanket exemption for non-resident workers which would benefit our sector substantially.

Growing Forward 2 Non-BRM

At the recent OACC Tech Committee meeting, we had a lengthy and long overdue update on programs. For year one and year two, only 29 per cent of producer projects were approved. So far in year three,

with the process streamlined the approval number is up to 72 per cent, however there are far fewer applications being received so this number must be viewed with some skepticism. As of August 2015, there had been 253 projects by Organizations and Collaborations approved for a total of \$24.6 million.

As of August 2015, there had been 2,981 Producer projects approved for a total of \$32.21 million of which almost 1,000 were for PED. As of August 2015, there had been 592 Processor projects approved for a total of \$28.6 million, 50 per cent of which were for labour productivity enhancement.

It appears that given the experience of the first two years, many producers are not wasting their time applying because of a continued frustration with the process. This results from going to a merit-based evaluation which is inherently complicated for everyone. We agreed that there needed to be discussion at OACC about whether we want dedicated funding for certain programs such as Environmental Farm Plans in GF3 or not. If we do, then that message has to be repeated constantly during the run up to GF3. If not, then we live with a complicated system that tends to frustrate producers.

CFA Business-Risk Management Working Group

We had an update by Jason Bent on the recommendations of this working group.

They focussed on two that

have been asked for since 2006. These are elimination of the Agri-Stability viability test, and allowing the better of the five-year average of the Olympic average.

Diversified Operations

There has long been a recognition that diversified farms receive fewer program payments due to calculation methods which effectively penalize producers for being diversified. The working group has looked at models to solve this and presented what appears to be a very workable concept. It requires data to run different scenarios from OMAFRA. The staff at the meeting were unwilling, however, to communicate the request further up the chain.

The model is referred to as the "AgriStability Commodity Spot Loss Coverage" and rather than separating out components

of the farm business by reference margin, separates them out by inventory-adjusted revenue and uses a five-year average. The model can account for structural change as we all know that cropping programs can change as the business evolves.

Large Building Energy Audit

There has been no Environmental Bill of Rights (EBR) posting yet. The Ministry has indicated it will not be posting citizen's information for public viewing as originally proposed. However the ministry still seems determined to move forward with the rest of what is clearly a bad idea.

Mark Wales is OFVGA chair, safety nets section. This report was presented at the annual general meeting, January 13.

The power of perception



JASON VERKAIK
CHAIR, OFVGA

OFVGA extremely busy this past year.

Consultations

The primary purpose of the OFVGA is to lobby the government on behalf of Ontario's horticultural farmers. The premier issued a challenge in 2013 to the agriculture and food sector to add 120,000 jobs and double its annual growth rate. This past year had the Minister of Environment and Climate Change (MOECC) with 20 public consultations and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNR) had 35 consultations. This is unprecedented!

In this extensive list, some examples included: Great Lakes Protection Act, Cap and Trade, Greenbelt review, Large Building Energy Reporting. Our staff has been diligently responding to all relevant consultations. We continue to work with lobby firm Maple Leaf Strategies and are satisfied with the opportunities this company brings to our lobby effort. We have personally met with Premier Kathleen Wynne, Minister of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs Jeff Leal and the Environment and Climate Change Minister Glen Murray on multiple occasions. We have been very engaged with government staff as well. There is a significant structural change in how Ontario does business. As we support the premier's challenge and a healthy environment, everything we lobby for is the viability and sustainability

of our farm businesses.

Competitiveness

The rise in minimum wage to \$11.00 and the subsequent rise to \$11.25 based on the consumer price index, along with food safety and traceability, Environmental Compliance Approvals (ECAs) for wash and rain water, and other red tape requirements have added costs to producing food. We are challenged to pass these costs on to the consumer. Our competitiveness with other global and Canadian jurisdictions has been significantly reduced. In light of this, we have asked the government for an innovative production fund to mitigate some of these added costs which are beyond our control. Our ask for this fund is meant for primary producers to help invest in more efficient technologies that will lead to sustainability. If you have any examples of equipment or technologies that might help you personally on your farm, please send your ideas to us. We continue to enforce the point that our competitiveness as an industry needs to be at the forefront of any new policy that is made by the government. For example, we are lobbying to have non-resident workers exempt from the new Ontario Retirement Pension Plan (ORPP)

Collaboration

We continue to request that the government collaborate with us on all issues and policies that

affect the sustainability of our sector. Funding from the provincial government for our joint Northern Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program is about \$1.2 million. This is used to bring healthy snacks to students and facilitate an awareness of fruits and vegetables, promote healthy eating and bring a positive change in consumption patterns. The Fresh for the Farm fundraising program has seen incredible growth and positive uptake in many schools. This program has expanded to multiple regions in Ontario and promises to grow. A special thank you to Alison Robertson for her passion and professionalism around these programs.

We continue to explore other mechanisms to fund the OFVGA and monitor the increasing use of reusable plastic containers (RPCs). We have experienced great collaboration from our board as we work together to respond to the issues of the day in what unites us all.

The financial position of the OFVGA is still strong and shows, as a whole, we are growing in business. The surplus of revenue over expenses has allowed us to return \$274,170 to our commodity members through our research and marketing program. The percentage of distribution is based on equivalent financial contributions to the OFVGA and is reviewed on a year-by-year basis by the OFVGA Board of Directors in relation to revenue over expenses.

We also continue work with other farm and marketing organizations to strengthen our agriculture lobby. The Canadian Produce Marketing Association's program -- Half your Plate -- is a great message that half of every meal consists of fruits and vegetables. While we continue to promote healthy eating, it helps with our lobby efforts and our ability to positively promote healthy habits that can reduce the burden on our health care system. We continue to monitor "social licence" around agriculture and educate the government about our modern horticultural production systems to help protect our ability to farm.

Change

With a new federal government, we will continue to monitor promises made, such as resolving financial protection similar to the PACA trust in the U.S. We work with the Canadian Horticultural Council to ensure that lobbying with the previous federal government and the work involved with the new government brings about satisfactory legislation and a reinstatement to our preferred status under the PACA trust.

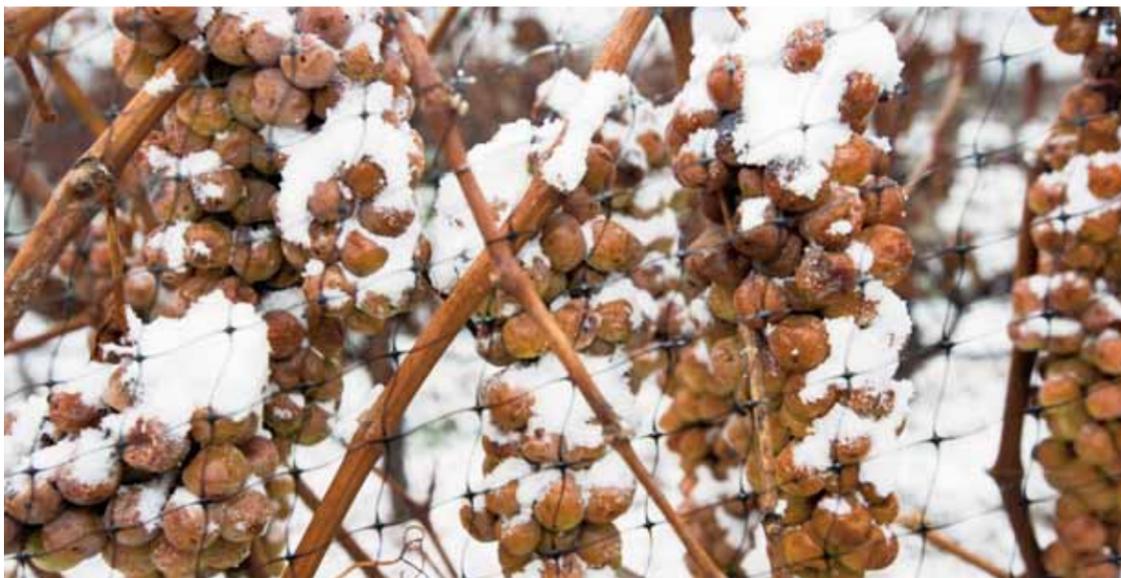
It has truly been an honour to serve as your OFVGA Board of Directors Chair for 2015.

Editor's note: This is shortened version of the report presented to the OFVGA Annual General Meeting on January 12.

Climate

My predecessor stated last year that he hoped the elusive perfect growing season would develop this past season. I continue to share in his hope. Spring started off very dry, then we also had a late spring freeze that challenged some crops, some areas hurt more extensively than others. As we prayed for rain, June came and so did the rain. In my area of the Holland Marsh, we had 450 mm of rain within the month. After that, the season became dry again for an extensive period with little rain over three months. This put stress on multiple field crops. As we wait for this elusive perfect growing season, the variability in weather has been noticed by many in our provincial government and around the world. The unification at the COP21 Paris Climate Conference, alongside our provincial government's development of an overarching environmental policy, has kept the

WEATHER VANE



Ice wine harvest temperatures of -8°C finally arrived in the Niagara peninsula in early January. Photos courtesy of Grape Growers of Ontario/Denis Cahill.



STAFF

Publisher: Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association
Editor: Karen Davidson, 416-557-6413, editor@thegrower.org
Production: Carlie Melara, ext. 221, production@thegrower.org
Advertising: Herb Sherwood, 519-380-0118, advertising@thegrower.org

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OFFICE

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

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THE
GROWER

PERSPECTIVE



I'm looking to local food for health benefits in 2016



OWEN ROBERTS
U OF GUELPH

You've likely heard some tasty – and not so tasty -- food trend predictions for this year, above and beyond higher prices for food.

For example, according to futurists, you might find yourself snacking on, among other things, a helping of insects ground into powder. They're touted to be low-cost, environmentally sound and nutritious. And in a powdered form, they'd be easy to slip into a variety of

other dishes. What a way to surprise your dinner guests!

As well, for the first time, you might also be dining on Ontario-raised shrimp -- which an entrepreneur has received provincial support to develop, in a converted pig barn – as an alternative to imported shrimp raised under questionable environmental conditions.

It's part of what University of Guelph agri-food economist Sylvain Charlebois calls choosing values over value, making food choices on the basis of your own values about animal welfare, food production or ethics, versus choosing food mainly on price, which has traditionally been the driver for most people.

Of course, when you choose not to buy food from struggling farmers in developing countries, you're making a value decision there as well. It's a gray area, unless exporters can tell compelling stories about food coming from a sustainable coop or production system, one that

truly supports farmers.

For me, the waning days of 2015 ended with a call from my long-time family doctor in Fergus, drawing my attention to some recent blood work results. They showed that for the first time, my cholesterol was rising. It's still controllable by exercise and diet, but it needs to be addressed, now.

I know what to do, exercise-wise. But fortunately, cholesterol had never been a dietary concern. So with that in mind, where was I to turn?

Well, when it comes to food with potential health benefits, it turns out Ontario farmers have the prescription I need. And I don't have to look far.

The list, supported by research studies, starts with fruit and vegetables. Tomatoes, for example, help with cholesterol, and are also renowned as superb antioxidants.

Brightly coloured berries – blueberries, raspberries, strawberries and cranberries, among them -- likewise have numerous



Fruits and vegetables help bust cholesterol.

health-related properties including cholesterol control. So do beans, carrots, apples, nuts, garlic, fish, grapes, and to some extent, the end product of fermented grapes, wine.

In fact, my daughter and son-in-law, who farm near Thamesville, are major producers of a significant cholesterol-lowering staple food -- soybeans. They and about 28,000 other Ontario farmers have made soybeans the province's biggest cash crop.

Earlier in 2015, the Ontario Grain Farmers organization, which represents soybean, corn and wheat growers, expanded by becoming officially affiliated with another of the best cholesterol-lowering crops on

the face of the Earth -- oats.

Other important cholesterol-controlling commodities predominantly come from other parts of Canada, particularly canola oil and salmon. In fact, only a few of the often-mentioned commodities for lowering cholesterol come from abroad, such as matcha tea, avocados, dark chocolate and olive oil. And of course, a variety of food products from Canadian farms, such as lean meat and a host of other commodities, have additional roles in health maintenance.

As nutrition experts repeatedly say, it's all about balance.

Now, I'm waiting to hear what they have to say about insects.

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Rented farmland and the environment

MELISA LUYMES

In Ontario, more than four million acres of farmland is rented, leased or share-cropped, representing 35 per cent of the total farmland. This number has been steadily increasing, up from 23 per cent in 1975. These landlords include active farmers, widowers, retired farmers, local governments and investors. In southwestern Ontario, nearly half of farm landlords are non-farmer investors or investment companies.

Beyond the political and economic repercussions of land rental, this trend also has consequences on the environment. Do farmers treat their rented fields with the same care as their own? Research by Brady Deaton and graduate students at the University of Guelph show that farmers in Ontario are not as likely to make the cash investment to plant cover crops or apply manure to rented land. They are likely, though, to use no-till at the same rate because the equipment investment has already been made.

If rented fields aren't well cared for, they could be more prone to soil erosion and surface water issues, and this affects more than just the owner and renter. But is poor soil management the fault of the landlord or the farmer? And where are opportunities to improve?

I would argue that the responsibility for soil health lies with both parties and that there are opportunities to strengthen soil conservation on rented land through creating more awareness and through adding environmental stipulations to land leases. I'd like to see rental agreements go beyond the price per acre and begin to put value on the time and inputs farmers use to improve soils.

Deaton's research shows that well over half of farmland rental agreements are based on nothing more than a handshake and that there are no agronomic practices stipulated in the majority of agreements.

Could rental agreements stipulate the application of manure to a field, and even the timing of that application? What if cover crops and soil testing

were mandatory, or what if landlords hired agronomists to assess the farming practices on their rented fields? That would be a game changer.

And perhaps specific environmental stipulations will be secondary, because we know that the longer a farmer feels he or she can rent a field, the better the field will be treated. For the farmer, short-term rental agreements conflict with the fact that soil health and economic benefits of agricultural best management practices are only realized in the long term.

Building organic matter and soil fertility require a long-term perspective and a one-year lease simply can't encourage good practices such as longer crop rotations or cover crop use. Ideally, land rental agreements would be three to five years and reviewed annually to discuss management decisions and adjust rent if needed. Any landlord would understand this because land is a big investment and it just makes good business sense to conserve it.

For the next two months, Farm & Food Care is working on a project focused on just this topic, funded by the Great Lakes Agricultural Stewardship Initiative (GLASI). Our goal is to encourage environmental practices to be incorporated into land rental discussions and agreements. We are creating case studies and resources for landlords and farmer-renters to have this important discussion on soil health and farmland rental.

In horticulture, there is interesting research coming about no-till and cover crops and for fruit and vegetable producers, these environmental issues around farmland rental may be even more pertinent. And the times are changing so perhaps we will soon see the day when land is rented to the farmer with the best environmental practices and not the one who can write the largest rent cheque.

If you have any comments or a rental story of your own, Farm & Food Care is still looking for farmers and landlords to be featured in this project's case studies. Please contact Mel Luymes at mel@farmfoodcare.org or (519) 837-1326 x291.

Melisa Luymes is environmental coordinator, Farm & Food Care Ontario.

COMING EVENTS 2016

- February 2 Eastern Ontario Drip Irrigation Workshop, Grenville Mutual Insurance, Kemptville, ON
To pre-register kevinschooley@bell.net
- Feb 2-3 Ontario Processing Vegetable Conference, Four Points by Sheraton, London, ON
- Feb 3-5 Fruit Logistica, Berlin, Germany
- Feb 9-10 Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Annual General Meeting, Best Western Lamplighter Inn, London, ON
- Feb 4 AgKnowledge Forum 2016 Water Technology Information Lake Simcoe, Holland Marsh Growers' Association Water Forum, Bond Head Golf Course, Bond Head, ON
- Feb 6-12 59th Annual Conference International Tree Fruit Association, Grand Rapids, MI
- Feb 10 Potato Selections Release Open House at AAFC, Guelph, ON – simulcast with Fredericton, NB and Lethbridge, AB
- Feb 16 Growers Supply Annual Horticulture Meeting, Oliver Community Centre, Oliver, BC
- Feb 16 Ontario Berry Growers' Association Annual General Meeting, Embassy Suites Hotel, Niagara Falls, ON
- Feb 17 Ontario Farm Fresh Marketing Association Annual General Meeting, Scotiabank Convention Centre Ballroom B, Niagara Falls, ON
- Feb 17-18 Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Convention, Scotiabank Conference Centre, Niagara Falls, ON
- Feb 23 B.C. Cherry Association Annual General Meeting, Rutland Centennial Hall, Kelowna, BC
- Feb 24 B.C. Tree Fruit Horticultural Symposium, Trinity Baptist Church, Kelowna, BC
- Feb 25 Canadian Association of Farm Advisors' Focus on Farm Women: Bringing It All Together Conference, Springfield Golf And Country Club, Guelph, ON
- Feb 26-27 International Potato Technology Expo, Charlottetown, PE
- March 1 Asparagus Farmers of Ontario Grower Information Day, German Hall, Delhi
- March 1 Ontario Potato Conference and Trade Show, Delta Hotel and Conference Centre, Guelph, ON
- March 2-4 Western Fair Farm Show, Entertainment Centre, London, ON
- March 2-4 North American Raspberry and Blackberry Conference, Williamsburg, VA
- March 3-4 AMI presents Food Entrepreneurs: Building Ontario Innovation One Product at a Time, Georgian College Barrie Campus, Barrie, ON

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RETAIL NAVIGATOR

Post mortems take your game to the next level



PETER CHAPMAN

November and December are critical months in food retail. The stores are full of product and the sales and sell-through impact the retailers' ability to deliver overall results. There is another level to winning the sales battle over the holidays. There is so much work put into building a great plan and executing at this time of year, the morale within the stores and the office really is impacted by holiday sales. Suppliers should understand this. Although you can't change what happened in 2015, you should start planning for the 2016 holidays now. This is the best time to do a post mortem while it is fresh in your mind.

Why they are so important

There are a number of reasons to do a post mortem:

1. Assess your performance
2. Determine what worked really well
3. Determine what you need to change
4. Determine what you would like to see your customers change
5. Demonstrate to your customer that you want to make this as successful as possible for both parties

Where to start

The best place to start your post mortem is with two things: your 2015 results and your 2016 plan. The actual results from

the previous year are most important because they are facts and it is also how the retailers will be judged. I suggest you look at your item sales from the beginning of November through to the end of December. Depending on the lead times for items and shipping to the retailer, the time frame might be earlier than this. Ultimately you want to understand what moved through the stores during these eight to nine weeks.

Set up four columns on your spreadsheet:

2014 actual	2015 plan
2015 actual	2016 plan

Review your item sales in each of these columns to assess the season. You can add percentage variances if it helps you assess the performance.

What went well?

Once you have an idea of the sales numbers, you need to review the quantitative and qualitative positives from the season. The sales are critical but there are other important factors. Perhaps you had a production issue but because you were proactive and called the category manager they worked with the supply chain to get the product into and out of the warehouse quickly so it hit the stores on time. This is just as important as a sales increase. It speaks volumes to your relationship with your customers.

You should include any notes from store visits. If your new packaging looked great in the store or the department managers you talked to said consumers were talking about your product -- great! Include these valuable insights.

What do you need to change?

We can always improve. Where are the gaps for your business that you see from the sales results and other observations? Perhaps your competitor introduced a product that impacted your sales or the

expensive shipper you invested in never made it to the floor. Make sure you include solutions, not just the problems.

What would you like to see your customers do differently?

You don't control the retailer but if you can demonstrate that a different action on their part would benefit both of you, then it should be in your post mortem. Often retailers do things without understanding the impact on suppliers. The impact of a late purchase order or an ad that gets printed wrong can be a huge issue.

Build your plan for 2016

Take the information you have been compiling and build a quick plan for 2016. It is a long way off but you need to start somewhere and the best time is while all of this is fresh. Plan the sales and make note of what you would like to see happen again, what you would like to change and what you would like to see your customer change. Share your post mortem. Category managers are busy and they don't always do the things they should. Completing a holiday post mortem could be one of those things. I encourage you to share your post mortem with the category manager. They might not even respond but they will see it and they will understand you take the holiday selling period as seriously as they do. When you do have a meeting to plan 2016 you already have the groundwork in place. Now is the time to pull the information together and get ready for the end of 2016. If you have had success with post mortems or if you have any questions please give me a call at (902) 489-2900 or send me an email at pchapman@gpsbusiness.ca.

The other side of the desk



Get to know the operations people at the retailers

We all get focused on the category managers and the buyers when we are working with retailers. There is no doubt they are the most important decision makers. You should expand your relationship to include the retail specialists and operations people within the retailers as well. They see products in the produce department every day and they are interacting with consumers regularly. Fresh products have so many critical points where quality is impacted. These people can tell you what your items look like when the consumer takes them home.

Do not take too much of their time because they have a job to do. If you develop a relationship where you can have a conversation about your items and how they are performing this is very valuable.

What's in store?

Teddy bears and peanut butter

Prior to the holidays Kraft distributed this special package with a Gund teddy bear and Kraft peanut butter. For \$14.99 the consumer got the 500g jar of peanut butter, the bear and \$2 worth of Kraft peanut butter coupons.

This accomplished a number of things for Kraft:

1. Delivered good value without discounting peanut butter
2. Distributed coupons to bring the consumer back for another purchase
3. It is an in/out item so it will get merchandised on an end or somewhere away from the regu-

lar shelf giving Kraft incremental space.

This could be an opportunity for your business, if it is, now is the time to prepare for next year. You will need to pull together the offer, get the retailers to agree to carry it, generate item numbers and depending on who you are, offer some incentive to the retailer to give you the space.

This is an example of taking advantage of holiday shopping traffic to sell an item that has nothing to do with the holidays.

Next month

We have spent a number of months devoted to the relationship with the category managers and your retail customers. Next month we will begin a new series of articles devoted to increasing your sales. This should be a top priority in your business and we will start with how to interrupt the shop and get your products in the shopping cart. If you have some topics you would like to see covered in upcoming issues please give me a call at (902) 489-2900 or send me an email pchapman@gpsbusiness.ca.

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.
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ONvegetables



Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

Vegetable Sessions at the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Convention

Specialty Vegetables – Wednesday, February 17th 2016	
9:30 am	Get Ready Ontario: Vineland Sweet Potato Varieties Coming to Market Dr. Valerio Primomo, Vineland Research and Innovation Centre
10:00 am	High Tunnel Production of Organic Specialty Vegetables Dr. Youbin Zheng, University of Guelph
10:30 am	Where Do We Go from Here: A Fresh Look at Okra and Eggplant in Ontario Dr. Viliam Zvalo, Vineland Research and Innovation Centre
11:00 am	Lessons Learned: Successes and Failures in Specialty Crops in Ontario Dr. Jim Todd, OMAFRA
Vegetables – Wednesday, February 17th, 2016	
2:00 pm	Fostering Soil Health for Reduction of Risk Associated with Physical and Biological Stress Dr. George Bird, Michigan State University, USA
2:30	Bacterial Disease Management: Beyond the Sprayer Janice LeBoeuf, OMAFRA
3:00	Insect Management in Sweet Corn, with Updates on Bt Varieties and Corn Earworm Control Dr. Richard Weinzierl, University of Illinois, USA
3:30	Fusarium Diseases of Vegetables Brian Collins, University of Guelph
Vegetables – Thursday, February 18th, 2016	
9:30	Managing Cucurbit Insects: Don't Over-Do It and Cause More Problems Dr. Richard Weinzierl, University of Illinois, USA
10:00	Cover Crop Residue Management in Squash Dr. Dan Brainard, Michigan State University, USA
10:45	Fungal Disease Management in Pumpkins and Squash: Too Many Choices? Elaine Roddy, OMAFRA
11:30	Open Question Period OMAFRA Vegetable Specialists, Agricorp and Vegetable Session Speakers
Growing Garlic Potential – Thursday, February 18th, 2016	
2:00	Challenges and Successes in California Garlic Production Tom Turini, University of California Cooperative Extension, USA
2:30	Fertility Management for Optimizing Garlic Yields Crystal Stewart, Cornell University Cooperative Extension, USA
3:00	Disease and Insect Pests of Garlic in Ontario Michael Celetti and Marion Paibomesai, OMAFRA
3:30	Panel: Marketing Garlic in Ontario Jackie Rowe, The Garlic Box; Peter McClusky, Toronto Garlic Festival; Warren Ham, August Harvest

Do you want to increase crop yields by 10-15%? Plant a windbreak!



JENNIFER JARVIS

Did you know that windbreaks:

- increase crop yield, improve soil moisture distribution over fields and reduce soil loss?
- provide shade and shelter for livestock?
- minimize spray drift and odours?
- decrease the amount of snow drift onto driveways and roads?
- enhance biodiversity and wildlife habitat?
- can generate alternative income?

Windbreaks have many benefits for farmers and rural landowners, and more than make up for the loss of land they use. Fall is the perfect time to start planning for a spring planting. Here are some things you need to do to get started:

- Do a site assessment where the windbreak will be planted.
- Decide on the tree species you would like to plant based on why you're planting a windbreak and your site's characteristics.
- Develop a planting plan.

• Confirm the number of trees you'll need and place your tree order. You can order trees through nurseries and some conservation authorities.

• Prepare the site by marking out in-row and between-row tree spacing, tilling, mulching, mowing and/or band or spot spraying, and placing black plastic mulch over the area to control weeds.

The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) has many resources to help with windbreak planning. Visit our website to watch our four windbreak videos on planning, planting, maintenance and windbreak successes. Our free Best Management Practices book, "Establishing Tree Cover," provides a step-by-step guide for planning and planting a windbreak.

For more information about windbreaks and for help with planning a windbreak, contact your local conservation authority.

Jennifer Jarvis is OMAFRA stakeholder communications and marketing advisor

Software program helps Ontario farmers prevent soil erosion

JANICE LeBOEUF

The Revised Universal Soil Loss Equation (RUSLE2) is a software program designed to help farmers estimate the potential for soil erosion under different land management and cropping practices. The software overcomes many of the limitations of the previous USLE equation.

Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) staff has adapted the RUSLE2 for Ontario farmers by incorporating climate, soil and management practices common to the province.

We have created five interactive tutorials to help you use RUSLE2 for Ontario. The easy-to-follow audio/visual guides give step-by-step instructions on using RUSLE2 to help you assess the cropping and tillage practices you use on your farm.

Find out how you can prevent soil erosion from your fields! Visit the OMAFRA website to watch the tutorials and to download RUSLE2.

Do you have questions about RUSLE2? Contact the Agricultural Information Contact Centre at 1-877-424-1300 or ag.info.omafra@ontario.ca.

See the video tutorials at ontario.ca/ce4i.

Janice LeBoeuf is vegetable crops specialist, OMAFRA.

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VEG FOCUS

Three problem weeds for asparagus

ELAINE RODDY

The website, Ontario CropIPM, contains the full range of pest management information for many vegetable crops, including asparagus. Many users do not realize that it is also home to weed galleries, herbicide injury information and critical weed control period information. The following are excerpts from the weeds and herbicides section of Ontario CropIPM.

Eastern black nightshade (*Solanum ptycanthum* Dun.)

Eastern Black Nightshade is often mistaken for pigweed seedlings. Eastern black nightshade is distinguished from other weeds as it is an annual plant that has thin, oval to diamond shaped leaves, small umbels of white flowers on the side of stems and black berries when mature. Eastern black nightshade is an annual reproducing only by seed.

The hypocotyl (stem below cotyledon) is hairy and can be green or maroon. The cotyledon leaves are oval, smooth and green on the upper surface, maroon on lower surface. The leaves are alternate (one leaf per node), oval or diamond-shaped and pale green, soft and nearly translucent. Young pigweed leaves can be distinguished by a shallow notch at the tip.

The stems are erect, five to 100 cm (2-40 in.) high, very branched in the upper part of

the stem and mostly hairless. Eastern black nightshade flowers from June until late autumn. The flowers are small and usually grouped together in a small umbel of two to five flowers. The petals are white and may or may not be tinged with purple. They resemble potato flowers but are smaller (9-15mm) in diameter. The fruits are black berries that are first green and contain many flat seeds. The berries are reputed to be poisonous

Best control options: Chateau, simazine (trade names Simazine, Princept Nine-T and Simadex) and Callisto are the top-rated asparagus herbicides for nightshade control.

Field bindweed (*Convolvulus arvensis* L.)

Field bindweed is a perennial reproducing by seed and by a persistent, extensively spreading underground root system.

The cotyledon leaves are opposite, round and notched at the end. The leaves are alternate (one per node) with short or long stalks. They are commonly arrowhead-shaped with two basal lobes and smooth margins. Occasionally they are long and narrow, or broader and nearly round except for the two basal lobes.

The stems are slender and smooth or very finely hairy. They are usually twining or curling; they lay prostrate on the ground or grow up any nearby object.

Field bindweed flowers from



Eastern black nightshade

mid-June until autumn. The flowers form on long stalks from axils of leaves, always with a pair of small, narrow, green bracts on the flower stalk some distance below the flower. The flowers have five small green sepals and a white to pinkish funnel-shaped corolla 2-2.5 cm in diameter when fully opened

The seedpods are roundish, about five mm long containing one to four seeds each of which is about three mm long, pear-shaped and three-angled with one side rounded and with tiny grayish bumps

Best control options: controlling field or hedge bindweed is a challenge, because of its extensive, perennial root system. Because bindweed grows in patches, a systemic herbicide with glyphosate (eg. Roundup) can be effectively used as a spot spray. The key is to wait until bindweed shows first bloom (bud to full bloom), and use a two per cent solution



Field bindweed

(2L Roundup in 100L water). Established patches usually take at least two applications in subsequent years for complete control.

Horsetail (*Equisetum arvense* L.)

Horsetail is a perennial plant. It never has flowers or seeds but reproduces by spores and by aggressive horizontal underground stems (rhizomes). The rhizomes are dark brown or blackish, spread out for long distances and are often one m below the ground surface. It is an intense competitor and can severely suppress crops and other plants.

In early spring the shoots are ashy-gray to light brown, unbranched, hollow, jointed stems. Each node (joint) is surrounded by a toothed sheath. The tip of stem ends in a brownish, spore-producing cone. After the cones have shed their spores (early May) these light



Horsetail

brown stems wither and die down. At the same time, the second type of shoot emerges from the ground. These shoots have green, slender, erect, hollow stems. They are leafless but have whorls of six to eight branches at nearly every node. Each branch may branch again with whorls of smaller branches. **Best control option:** Sandea is labelled for horsetail suppression. Use maximum labelled rates for best results. A non-ionic surfactant or crop oil concentrate should be used with post-harvest applications. Contact with asparagus fern may cause temporary yellowing. Crop injury will be minimized and weeds will be controlled more effectively when applications are made with drop nozzles to direct the spray below the fern to allow for more complete coverage of target weeds.

Elaine Roddy is vegetable crops specialist, OMAFRA

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FLOWER QUIZ

Identify these flowers

The Grower's popular flower quiz returns with photos gathered over the past growing season. While we think of fruit trees with the most extravagant blossoms, vegetables are not to be outdone. Thanks to our freelance photographers, Denis Cahill and Glenn Lawson, for making this quiz possible. Answers on page 18.



BITS AND BITES

WaudWare adds new feature to Produce Inventory Control System (PICS) software

According to the Federal Department of Agriculture (FDA), in the final regulations of the new Food Safety Act, importers of food into the U.S. have to have their suppliers approved by a certified third party/auditor. The third party/auditor will need to conduct food

safety audits and issue certifications regarding the foreign facilities and the foods they produce.

WaudWare has added a feature to its Produce Inventory Control System (PICS) software that helps customers track these certifications. This new

feature is called the Vendor's Approval Document. It helps businesses in the fresh produce industry keep track of vendor certification documents and it can be set to warn users when a Purchase Order is issued to a vendor for which there is no approval document on file.

The Vendor's Approval Document feature saves produce businesses time and improves productivity.

Source: WaudWare news release

Celebrating greenhouse produce in the foodservice sector

The Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers (OGVG) has announced that food-service unit manager, Michael Tuinstra of Dana Hospitality LP who runs the cafe at the Blount Canada Ltd. location in Guelph, has been selected as the winner of the second OGVG Celebrating Ontario Agriculture promotion and display competition.

OGVG engaged more than 20 universities and business dining locations throughout Ontario, providing tool kits, recipes and merchandising material. These resources were created to support menu initiatives, promotions and displays during Celebrating Ontario Agriculture Week.

Working with OGVG resources, Tuinstra launched five colourful displays utilizing OGVG produce. His culinary team also introduced several new recipes that feature Ontario greenhouse cucumbers, peppers and tomatoes throughout its menu.

"OGVG is pleased to be a part of this promotion with Ontario hospitals and cafeterias and we look forward to working with foodservice partners in the future," said George Gilvesy, chair of OGVG. "In a competitive market new partnerships that support our produce in the foodservice marketplace will help sustain Ontario greenhouse vegetable growers."

Dana Hospitality LP is a Canadian-owned food service provider. Their culinary team takes great pride in using fresh, locally-sourced and nutritious ingredients, preparing meals from scratch every day. Their goal is to transform the food service experience.

Source: Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers news release



ADAMA adds new products to 2016 portfolio

ADAMA Canada has announced the addition of two new products to their lineup.

Hotshot, ADAMA's new co-pack, is the ideal glyphosate tank-mix partner for pre-seed burn-off to control a wide range of annual broadleaf weeds including Group 2 & 9 resistant kochia, volunteer

canola including glyphosate resistant, wild buckwheat, dandelion and narrow-leaved hawk's beard. Hotshot consists of the active ingredients bromoxynil and florasulam, and when it's combined with glyphosate, it creates a weed resistance tag team that controls early season weeds. This product is available in

Western Canada.

Squadron, a broad spectrum herbicide registered for grass and broadleaf weed control in a wide range of crops, most notably lentils, peas, chickpeas, fababeans, soybeans and potatoes. Powered by the active ingredient metribuzin, Squadron is an excellent

resistance management tool. This product is available in both Eastern and Western Canada.

These products hit the market in early 2016.

Source: ADAMA news release

Houweling's to enforce intellectual property rights

Houweling's has announced that it is strengthening its commitment to the pursuit and

enforcement of its intellectual property rights by increasing applications for patent

protection worldwide and diligently enforcing its existing patent rights.

As a leader in the greenhouse industry, Houweling's has developed many novel advancements in greenhouse technologies and has invested considerable time and resources into ensuring that Houweling's remains on the forefront of greenhouse development and crop production. To this end, Houweling's has obtained patent protection for its novel greenhouses, air/gas distribution systems and closed loop air drying systems. Throughout the years, Houweling's has continually enforced its patent rights against infringers attempting to misappropriate or otherwise "piggyback" on Houweling's protected technology. Houweling's intends to continue to enforce its patent rights against any and all infringers, in both the United States of America, as well as in foreign jurisdictions such as Europe,

Australia, New Zealand, Israel, Canada and Mexico. Houweling's will also vigorously defend any challenges to its patents worldwide and will exhaust all avenues of appeal against such challenges.

Houweling's commitment to defending its intellectual property rights mirrors its commitment to the development of new and innovative technology.

Houweling's Group is an industry leading greenhouse vegetable grower, propagator and marketer with operations in Delta, BC, Camarillo, CA, Mona, UT and Loveland, CO. A year-round grower, with more than 200 acres of greenhouse farms, Houweling's produces fresh and flavorful tomatoes and cucumbers sustainably.

Source: Houweling's news release



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MINOR USE



CRAIG'S COMMENTS

Local solutions work best

CRAIG HUNTER
OFVGA

I was listening to a guest speaker early in the New Year as he explained the concept of local sourcing of a seed supply to produce seedling plants for repopulating areas in a given eco-zone. He went on to explain that his company not only raises plants for sale but also sells seeds to those who want to plant on their own. His competition sources seeds from wherever they can, and sells them indiscriminately and at a lower cost because their sourcing is obviously cheaper. He showed the sites where they have collected seeds for everything from trees, to wild flowers to grasses across Ontario. (I believe they also go further afield.) The key is that they ensure that the location of the buyer and where the seeds originate get matched up and they custom-sort to ensure they get seeds sourced locally for them.

This company is obviously passionate about local environment renewal, and willing to go the extra mile to ensure the best suited species are being sourced and used. The fight continues to deal with invasive species that have been introduced, either deliberately in planting 'mixtures' or inadvertently by illegal or other means such as coming in via mail order seeds sourced from around the globe. Invasive plants dislodge and often out-compete local plants, at a great loss to a natural environment. Control of invasives is costing millions of dollars, but their impact is in the billions!

Using local well-suited solutions to problems is not new. However, the expedient use of so-called solutions found anywhere (else) continues unabated without due regard to their ultimate cost or net benefit.

As usual, I have a few examples.

Regulations intended to prevent the spread of exotic organisms would seem to be a good idea. It is the definition of exotic that Canadian officials seem to have a problem getting their noggins around! Pesticide and plant breeding trials to control certain endemic plant diseases require that the disease be made present and abundant in the trials to ensure a discriminating difference between

treatments. In the case of certain high value crops, the trials are located well away from areas of production to ensure no spread can occur. Likewise, if the disease organism is highly virulent, the plants on site are top killed and all residue is burned or destroyed to ensure no spread. These disease organisms are highly regulated by importation rules, as well as careful site-specific protocols. No problem so far.

In the case where the disease is already widespread locally and faced every year by growers, one would think there would be some exceptions made. That is where the problem arises. The same rules are being applied, notwithstanding that they were never intended for such a circumstance. If a plant breeding company wants to collect white mould sclerotia from a seed cleaning plant, and then use them to 'seed' plots prior to evaluation of new varieties for resistance, they face a huge regulatory burden. It could take more than a year to do the paperwork and get all the permissions.

On the other hand, if a farmer had a bad case of mould, and all the sclerotia ended up in windrows behind the combine, and if he rented out that site for the trial, it would not be regulated! If he drove the combine to a nearby farm and unloaded the hopper into a gravity wagon along with lots of sclerotia, and if that wagon just happened to tip over in the right spot, that would move the sclerotia where it is needed, again with no paperwork needed. What does it take to get the paper-pushers to lighten up, apply the rules where they were intended, and get out of the way of practical and progressive science?

Another example centres on how the provincial government set standards for their 'Toxic Substances Bans and Phase-out List' allowable levels of 'pollutants,' including for several pesticides. My understanding is that the task was assigned to a junior scientist, who pored through the existing standards

sourced from anywhere else. The levels chosen were the most conservative found for each pollutant, regardless of the source of the standard or the underlying data to support it (if that in fact existed). This may not have been the worst thing, if it had just been used as a starting point. However, that list became 'THE list! There was no further local data sourcing, no additional Ontario-based research commissioned, no ground proofing, and certainly no impact analysis done. We have had to live with those 'standards' in the absence of local evaluation. The scary thing is that there may be other similar examples that emulate this approach that was allowed in the 1980s.

A similar situation exists federally where the government relies on the outcomes of an industry-government task force on worker exposure to pesticides. This group used the existing results of the many trials looking at pesticide exposure that they had had to conduct in prior years. All this data was pulled together, and has become the 'go to' resource for new or re-newed registrations. All of this is good, as far as it goes. However, while the exposure studies may well have been entirely accurate, they are totally dependent upon the research protocols underpinning the methodology. Herein lies the problem!

Crop production practice has changed mightily in the 30-plus years since some of these studies were conducted! Without any named person to be in charge of the data, it may continue to be used indiscriminately by registrants and government staff alike! Sadly, data owned by a 'group' falls down almost as soon as it is collated. 'Someone' should be keeping the database up to date, but 'someone' doesn't exist! Just one example is the 'factor' used to consider worker exposure to pesticides when moving irrigation pipes. With the cost of labour these days, most operations have moved on

to center pivots, travelers, trickle, solid set systems, and very few still move pipe regularly in a field by hand. Even then, if pipe has to be moved, it is done during a dry time on the farm. Hence, less pesticide is getting used at that time anyway. Given that it is in fact irrigation pipe, I would think that the irrigation water would cleanse the pipe and remove most of whatever residue may remain on it and the crop. However, the factor adjudged to be in play for worker exposure to pesticides for irrigation is very high- almost the highest of all farm chores, including mixing and loading! Surely this factor needs to be looked at in light of modern practice?

If we were to take a page out of the Minor Use book, one would see that research protocols are developed every year, with the help of those familiar with current crop production practice. This ensures validity of the results. Unfortunately, these results could be scuttled when old exposure models from a by-gone time are subsequently used to decide on the allowable use pattern. Fortunately for us, the folks at the Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) 'get it' and have allowed some changes. In addition, the Pest Management Centre updates the Crop Profiles to show current field practice. I wish I could be as confident about other 'models' based on old ways and old thinking.

Local solutions for local problems are a good idea. They do need to be tempered with broad oversight and use of good data wherever it can be sourced, as long as it is field-tested at the local level before implementation! The key is to get the solution that fits locally. Too many problems that were intended to get fixed end up being made worse from a lack of understanding, a lack of local input, and overzealous attention to 'rules' instead of desired outcomes.

Thank goodness some people get it!

Answers to flower identification quiz, page 16

1. Field cucumber
2. Greenhouse pepper
3. Jerusalem artichoke
4. Peaches
5. Greenhouse cucumber
6. Blueberries
7. Hazelnut flower
8. Sour cherries



(Photo by Linda Grimo)

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MINOR USE

Looking back, looking forward on the crop protection file



CHARLES STEVENS

Two issues seemed to dominate our time this year, but in spite of that there were many hot items to deal with throughout. The trade-related issues associated with Maximum Residue Level (MRL) differences around the world have led to a national MRL working group tied to major commodities including horticulture. These have had a profound effect on several commodities traded offshore, and with the outcomes of the Trans Pacific Partnership trade deal could have an even more pronounced effect. The second issue, of course, was the first Global Minor Use Priority setting meeting. Canada had a major role in planning and carrying out this effort that many called a success.

The MRL Taskforce has been able to secure access to a global MRL database from Bryant Christie Inc. This detailed database provides existing MRLs in every possible foreign trade destination. It also has the proposed but not yet promulgated changes, and the simply proposed changes. These in turn allow a producer and exporter to plan pesticide use, or to know where to avert pesticide use for trade. The taskforce has also documented the Canadian and all foreign trade destination MRLs for a selected group of commodities. These are now being shared with each registrant as a first step in defining a path forward to eliminate the differences, especially where the non-detect level exists elsewhere against a positive MRL here. This is a work in progress of vital importance as our registration system continues to provide new uses. Trade barriers related to MRLs effectively curtail the use of some of these pesticides.

The Global Minor Use meeting was the first ever to set priorities leading to registration projects. Three were selected

this year, and the work will be done on all the “rep. crops” so the registration packages that ensue will allow setting global MRLs by crop group. This is a huge step up for value to growers both for use and for trade. The three projects are tropical fruits, greenhouse lettuce and leafy greens in the field. These will provide diverse benefits around the globe.

Plans are already in the works to have the next such meeting in late 2017. Stay tuned!

Of course there were other issues during the year. Charles and Craig met with Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) officials to deal with re-registration issues on several pesticides where proposed re-entry limits threatened to effectively eliminate their use. This meeting was followed up in summer with a field visit by three PMRA staff to orchards in the Newcastle area to see first-hand what the orchard configurations are today, and the kinds of exposure actually being encountered while thinning. They were impressed by their observations. We now await the revised outcomes of the re-evaluations.

PMRA has listened to our concerns about the need for growers to contribute to the CODEX process. They invite our input on possible active ingredients to include in their nominations. In turn they will provide us with the outcomes of their company discussions on these nominations, and show what they actually provide, plus the outcomes of the meetings. This whole process has allowed us a better insight into the process, albeit a very frustrating one with a four-year backlog!

This year the Canadian Minor Use meetings went very well. We will have more than 40 projects, plus several joint projects shared with IR-4. These are valuable collaborations that lead to common data, common submissions, and ultimately common registrations and

MRLs. There was also a workshop on bacterial plant disease that was quite valuable to all attendees. Another such workshop is planned for next March, likely on resistance management for pesticides.

Ontario provided several candidates to the annual Grower Requested Own Use (GROU) pesticide import program nomination process. These have been submitted to PMRA and we still await their decisions on which will qualify. This whole program has had less uptake than in the past, no doubt related to the dollar value. We will continue to be vigilant in price monitoring.

We attended the first OMAFRA forum on bee health in September. This was the first one to focus on what needs to

The Global Minor Use meeting was the first ever to set priorities leading to registration projects... The three projects are tropical fruits, greenhouse lettuce and leafy greens in the field.

be done to actually help the bees in a positive way. There were very few growers in attendance, and the dominance was by groups who have no actual experience with bees, but lots of ideas on what they feel needs to be done! We await further opportunities for our input as the major users of bee pollination services.

Charles chaired the annual OFVGA Crop Protection meeting in November that had a strong attendance. The season review by each commodity group was valuable, as were the updates on various pests by OMAFRA staff. Given the loss of the old meeting structure when OMAFRA had production and research meetings annually to do this, the meeting fulfills a valuable niche of information sharing.

Lastly, Charles and Craig attended and participated in the NAFTA Technical Working Group meeting on pesticides in November. Here the focus was on MRLs, bees and minor use. Craig also provided information on the problem of ‘inadvertent’ residues that arise when growing root crops in the soil once treated with organo-chlorine

insecticides such as DDT chlordane and dieldrin. Because of their very long half-lives they remain in the soil and could cause MRL issues elsewhere.

In addition to this group of insecticides, many new registered products are showing long (three- to four-year) half-lives. While nowhere as significant, these residues could become an issue as detection equipment can show levels down to parts per trillion. (That is one part in a million times a million parts!) This may be a problem down the road and needs to be fixed now before that happens.

There were lots of other issues that arose during the year, and several problems in pest control we will all have to deal with down the road. We have a great rapport with PMRA these days, and also work closely with CropLife Canada on these problems. It will not be easy, but the framework exists to deal with problems as they arise.

Charles Stevens is OFVGA chair, crop protection section. This report was presented at the annual general meeting, January 13.

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Photos by Denis Cahill.

Early bird registration ends February 9 at 6 pm.
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www.ofvc.ca

By the numbers:

- 2,000+ growers
- 125+ speakers
- 30+ first-time exhibitors

2016 show round up

COMPETITIONS



Anita Buehner, Bonnieheath Estate Lavender and Winery, delivers her entry, Folkin' Hard Apple-Cherry Cider. It went on to win the 2015 Specialty Class for Hard Cider.

AT PRESS TIME

The trade show is sold out with almost 30 first-time exhibitors. "The trade show is repeating last year's record-setting size," says Glenna Cairnie, OFVC executive coordinator. Early-bird registration discounts end February 9 at 6 pm. Save time and money by pre-registering online at www.ofvc.ca. For those who tweet, use hashtag #OFVC2016 and follow @ofvc1.

INNOVATION PRODUCT DISPLAY

See exhibitors' new products for 2016. They include: Cadman Mini 1000 Series Traveller irrigation; Fracture fungicide; Lambert peat moss; Sercadis fungicide; Tornado automatic floor scrubber; Tritoflex Instant-Set Liquid Rubber, Priwen grape fungicide.

TRADE SHOW



Glenna Cairnie, OFVC executive coordinator, manages last-minute details for a smooth show opening. Photos by Denis Cahill.

SPEAKERS



Michael Celetti, OMAFRA plant pathologist and Cathy McKay, Nature's Bounty apple orchardist, prepare to speak at last year's fireblight seminar.

MEET THE BUYER

This popular speed-dating session is set for February 18 at 8:30 am, available at no charge to OFVC attendees who register for this event. Expect to meet with buyers from: Costco, Gordon Food Services, Loblaw, Longo's and Walmart Canada.

STUDENT POSTER COMPETITION



At the deadline, a flood of entries arrived for this year's student poster competition organized by OMAFRA's Jason Deveau and Hannah Fraser.

"We have 16 students from the most diverse base we've had in the competition's history," says Deveau. He cites entries from the University of Guelph, Vineland Research and Innovation Centre, Western University, University of Waterloo and McMaster University. Topics are diverse, ranging from the latest information on the invasive brown marmorated stink bug to carrot rust fly research and peach cooling treatments.

The top three winning posters receive cash awards of \$500, \$300 and \$200, generously sponsored by Brock University's Cool Climate Oenology and Viticulture Institute.

"The calibre of this competition is not to be missed," says Deveau. "All posters are displayed in the Scotiabank Convention Centre atrium before entering the trade show area."

BASF RAISES A GLASS TO CRAFT BEER

Entering its fourth year, the Great Ontario-Hopped Craft Beer Competition brings together Ontario's hop producers and the brewing industry. It also helps introduce the next generation of the province's brewers to the hop growing community, and promotes the use of locally grown hops.

For the first year, BASF Canada is a sponsor. In addition to crop protection products for hops and malting grains, BASF's innovative products are also used in beer processing, bottling and packaging.

"Sponsoring the Great Ontario-Hopped Craft Beer Competition is a great way for BASF to continue its support of the horticultural industry, and the growing hops market specifically. The event is already a tremendous success and we are looking forward to working with the organizers and our customers to enhance it even more," says Scott Hodgins, horticulture brand manager with BASF.

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A great opportunity to connect and see what's new



JOHN KELLY
EXECUTIVE VP, OFVGA

The Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Convention (OFVC), to be held at the Scotiabank Convention Centre in Niagara Falls, is the premier event in Ontario for horticultural producers to see what's new, learn about new technologies, visit the multitude of booths and talk business with many suppliers. More importantly, we see this event as a great opportunity for growers to talk with each other and key influencers in the industry in an effort to stay ahead of the competition. If you have not registered for this convention, you can do so at www.ofvc.ca.

The Ontario Fruit & Vegetable Growers Association

(OFVGA) strongly supports participation at the OFVC through a variety of ways, including having **The Grower** as the main media sponsor for the event. **The Grower**, in particular, sees this show as a mainstay in Canadian horticultural production and with almost 200 exhibitors, the show is a great place for growers to meet with suppliers and stakeholders to the sector.

Not only is this show attended by producers from across the country and those from international jurisdictions, there is also a large contingent of government personnel who are there to see first hand what is impacting the sector. The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs has six booths detailing many different programs for horticulture. The Vineland Research and Innovation Centre will also be showcasing world crops, sweet potato trials and apple developments. This is a great venue for growers to bring forward those opportunities and challenges to the larger audience.

The list of speakers at this event is large and diverse, with a huge range of topics covered. This diversity will no doubt



(L-R) George Shearer, OFVGA water specialist, Karen Davidson, editor **The Grower** and Herb Sherwood, advertising sales representative, **The Grower**. Photo by Denis Cahill.

The Grower, in particular, sees this show as a mainstay in Canadian horticultural production and with almost 200 exhibitors, the show is a great place for growers to meet with suppliers and stakeholders to the sector.

provide interest to all growers who are looking at new specialty crops, pest management, marketing, soil health, sustainability, business development and more.

The OFVGA encourages

attendees to visit us at our location, to chat with Karen Davidson and Herb Sherwood with **The Grower** and also with George Shearer and Dan Tukendorf from the OFVGA. Booth 710 is located just by the

Café where you will also have a chance to win certificates to The Keg.

Here's to a successful convention!

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Tips on how to renovate your marketing plan

KAREN DAVIDSON

There's nothing like travel to get a fresh perspective of home. For on-farm retailing businesses, this is especially true because home and work are often the same place.

Every year, Cathy Bartolic, executive director of the Ontario Farm Fresh Marketing Association (OFFMA)

coordinates an annual tour. Sometimes it's to provincial locations and other years, such as 2015, her members went to British Columbia. For OFFMA vice-president, Nicole Judge, Spirit Tree Estate Cidery, "The smallest things can make the biggest difference."

At one B.C. farm, the owner put up bulletin boards in the bathrooms publicizing coming events and promoting gift

baskets. With a captive audience, business increased. This tactic worked much better than putting up signage at the cash register.

"Tell your farm story," says Judge. "I don't think we've done as good a job as possible in our own operation. That's why we're removing the artwork in our ciderhouse and replacing with canvas prints, using photography of all the seasons

on the farm and our family."

She has sourced three-by-four canvas prints at Costco for a reasonable price.

This renewed focus on branding is also playing out in a new emailed newsletter that features upcoming events such as their farm's Cider Maker Dinner Series at Caledon, Ontario. To build her mailing list, she's putting a box by the cash register that invites

business cards for a draw. The prize? An apple pie from their on-farm bakery.

Planning content for a newsletter can be onerous for some. Judge has overcome this hurdle by profiling suppliers such as the locals who make ginger syrup and spice blends.

Judge is one of the OFFMA speakers at the OFFMA session, starting at 9:30 am, February 18. She'll be sharing more ideas under the topic: "What can we learn from B.C. direct farm marketing industry?"



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Bull Pen: agriculture's answer to the Dragon's Den

Want to pitch an idea for a new food product? Here's your chance to get some feedback at the OFFMA's program, February 17.

It's a clever spin from the CBC's Dragon Den where entrepreneurs pitch their ideas to a panel of judges. Kevin O'Leary, the acerbic financier, will not be appearing, but do expect some noted marketers on the panel of judges. They are Jennifer MacKenzie, a food writer and cookbook author, Jesse Lauzon, Springridge Farm and Denise Zaborowski, Foodland Ontario.

The idea is to encourage food innovation and to tap the brain trust of the OFFMA members. There are two entries to date.

Planning for growth



Joe Calhoun, author of the ebook "Prioritize" is the guest speaker for a day-long seminar hosted by the Ontario Farm Fresh Marketing Association (OFFMA). It's scheduled for February 16, Marriott Gateway to the Falls. Both OFFMA members and non-members can attend. For registration, contact 905-841-9278 by February 8.

FOCUS: ONTARIO FRUIT AND VEGETABLE CONVENTION

WWW.OFVC.CA

Deleafers: another tool to fight disease and manage grape maturity

KAREN DAVIDSON

Deleafers have come a long way. The objective is to prevent leaves from shading grape bunches so that they mature with appropriate brix levels. According to Niagara-on-the-Lake grape grower, Kevin Watson, deleafers are an extremely important tool to achieve harvest quality under differing climatic conditions.

“Put it this way, we buy a lot of grapes and we wouldn’t consider buying a red vinifera grape if it wasn’t deleafed in a timely way.”

The technology has improved over recent years. A decade ago, a deleafer acted like a lawn mower, tearing complete leaves off the vine and in some cases bits of the cane. This was a very aggressive approach. The advent of rollers was an improvement, but again, some of the tiny grapes would be caught up in the process. Today, deleafers are more sophisticated, shooting air through the leaves.

extreme weather patterns and uncertain harvest schedules from year to year, earlier maturation translates to money in the bank when selling to wineries. An increase in brix usually means that acidity levels have decreased.

“I’ve known other growers who had grapes rejected due to high acidity,” says Watson. “In cooler years, it’s important to achieve the taste profile and to get the crop harvested as soon as

possible.”

What was once a pioneering practice is now commonplace among grape growers, albeit with more sophisticated equipment.

Photo right: Joe Pillitteri, Lakeview Vineyard Equipment Inc., is one of the purveyors of grape deleafers, who exhibits at the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Convention. Photo Denis Cahill.



“

Put it this way, we buy a lot of grapes and we wouldn’t consider buying a red vinifera grape if it wasn’t deleafed in a timely way.

~ Kevin Watson

”

An air compressor powered by a hydraulic motor shoots out air like popcorn. The effect is that holes are blown through the leaf so that only the veins remain. The result is that the remainder of the leaf dries up and falls off. The cane does not overcompensate by growing new leaves.

As Watson explains, by the time that leaves are two months old, they shade the maturing grapes too much. Removing these leaves, just after bloom and before bunch closure, and then again at veraison, opens the grapes to more sunlight. Another advantage is that grapes are less prone to disease exposure such as molds and mildews. Opening the canopy minimizes botrytis.

Deploying a deleafer can make a big difference in harvest quality. Watson reports an increase of one to two points in brix levels of grapes which have undergone deleafing compared to those without deleafing. With

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Farmers' Markets Ontario celebrates 25th anniversary

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This is a milestone that deserves celebration of all that's been accomplished. Certainly one achievement is that farmers' markets can legally sell Ontario VQA wine. Another is the MyPick verified markets.

This year's OFVC program features marketing consultant Tracy Lamb and registered dietitian Lois Ferguson on Feb 17. Their interactive workshop will highlight 25 food trends, tips or facts that can help marketers in 2016.

"There's a lot of competition these days for a share of the consumers' time and food dollars," says Tracy Lamb. "This session will help you understand what today's consumers are looking for: what food experiences and products they are seeking out, what motivates them to buy, what will keep them coming back for more. We hope to give you insight on how to sell more at market and beyond."

Lois Ferguson offers a taste of the trends.

Vegetables are heroes

Once over-cooked and placed at the side of the plate, vegetables have now moved to centre stage. Hot veggies for 2016: kohlrabi, escarole (a variety of endive) and kalette (a brand-new vegetable, blooming with the best flavours of kale and Brussels sprouts). Have fun with spiralized veggies which can be demonstrated at the market. Suggest to consumers that spiralized vegetables can be served instead of pasta. It's an innovative way to get kids to eat

more veggies. In fact there are entire cookbooks and blogs dedicated to spiralizing. Veggies best suited are butternut squash (squoodles?), carrots, turnips, beets and zucchini.

Trust and transparency

Farmers' markets have an advantage because they provide the perfect place to interact with customers and build relationships. Customers want transparency and honesty and want to connect with who has produced their food. Farmers' markets can leverage this trend

for the benefit of both vendors and customers.

Farm-branded for added value

Customers appreciate authentic artisan items such as farm-branded cheeses, breads, pickles, sausages, jams. Home-made kits with all the ingredients to make a recipe have a special appeal.

Plan to attend this Farmers' Markets Ontario Networking Symposium on February 17, Ballroom D, Main Floor. It is scheduled for 9:30 am to noon.

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Bright future predicted for farmers' markets



British Columbia's minister of health, Dr. Terry Lake, is pictured third from left with coupon recipients at the Kamloops market. Jon Bell, president of the B.C. Association of Farmers' Markets is at the far right. Photo right: A sample of the B.C. Farmers' Market Nutrition Coupon.



KAREN DAVIDSON

As climate changes, will consumers change? That's a question which is more pressing this winter as consumers adjust to sticker shock on cauliflower that retails for up to \$8 per head. California's vegetable basket has been struck by not only drought but extreme weather patterns resulting from El Nino. Florida's citrus industry is suffering from an insect-transmitted disease called citrus greening for which there is no cure.

Reflecting on this new reality, Jon Bell, president of the B.C. Association of Farmers' Markets, thinks that climate change is a two-edged sword. With longer seasons, Canadian farmers can shift what they grow and for how long. But along with that wider window, comes different disease and insect pressures. If farmers can adapt to these challenges, then those who grow for farmers' markets will do well.

Farmers' markets are proliferating in British Columbia with the provincial market association now representing more than 125 markets and more joining every year. This year's spike in food prices may cause consumers to value their food purchases more highly and to search out more locally-produced food. They may be willing to pay more for "local" with an understanding that the dollars are circulated in local economies.

"We're in for a good turn," predicts Bell, referring to the success of farmers' markets in general. "Consumers, I think, will base their decisions on costs as well as personal values. That's what is making farmers' markets thrive."

The popularity of farmers' markets in British Columbia, for

example, is translated into a new selling feature for real estate agents. For an increasingly urbanized culture, proximity to a farmers' market is now a symbol of community.

Bell, now retired from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, is a producer of early-season greens, rhubarb, garlic and potatoes for the Sechelt Farmers' and Artisans' Market, an hour north of Vancouver. He sees these trends being played out every week.

"The farmer at a market has now become the face of agriculture to the Canadian

consumer, who shops weekly for local food product," he says. He regularly educates consumers about how food is grown but also how to store and prepare. Waste can be prevented by properly storing fruits and vegetables upon arrival home from market.

Part of the trust in farmers' markets is a B.C. program called Market Safe. Vendors take a one-day course on food safety to receive a certificate. "Because we have a lot of isolated communities in the north, we now have an online program where vendors can be

certified," says Bell.

Winter markets are also springing up. There are apples, root vegetables and greenhouse-grown vegetables as well as preserves on offer.

In new trends, Bell points out British Columbia's success with a pilot program that started in 2007: B.C. Farmers' Market Nutrition Coupon Program. Community groups partner with their local farmers' market and those in need. Low-income, new mothers and seniors receive \$15 of coupons per week for the market season. The coupons are valid at participating markets and can only be used for fresh produce, meats, fish and dairy, but not processed foods. With the B.C. ministry of health funding the project, the latest statistics show that 3,000 households were reached in 48 communities in

2015.

Targeting these in-need groups has shown positive benefits to the extent that private businesses and new funders have also donated to boost their community profile. While the program rollout is constantly being finetuned, it continues to expand in scope and visibility.

"I've seen two seniors, coupons in hand, come to the market and make tradeoffs," says Bell. "One will say she'll buy the \$3 green beans if the other one buys the \$3 carrots. Then they'll share. The benefits go far beyond nutrition to the social interaction."

Jon Bell is a guest speaker at the upcoming Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Convention. He'll be part of "The Future of Farmers' Markets" at 1:30 pm, February 17, Ballroom D.

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Exhibitor gallery



Sweet potato fries for snacking

If there's a popularity contest for best booth at the upcoming Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Convention, it might be Vineland Research and Innovation Centre. That's where convention goers can pick up samples of sweet potato fries.

It's an innovative way to publicize the real-world results from Valerio Primomo's research on sweet potato varieties that will mature in Ontario's short seasons. The Vineland researcher will be speaking about his trials on February 17, 9:30 am.



New seeds on offer

Rupp Seeds will be showcasing an entire line of vegetable seed, including two new Rupp gourds — Gizmo and Hoargarth — and three new pumpkins: Bayhorse Gold and City Gold with powdery mildew resistance and Sirius Star, a new white pumpkin.



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Investing in frost protection

As extreme weather patterns continue to disrupt normal growing seasons, growers are investing in frost protection.

"In recent years, there's been lots of damage in apples, grapes and blueberries," says Hugh Fraser, a consultant for Outside-the-Barn Farm Solutions. "There are fixed-in-place wind machines that pull warm air down from above and portable equipment that blows air vertically, or horizontally. It's an area where growers have lots of questions."

The Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Convention is hosting a Frost Protection session on February 18 at 2 pm. Robert Evans, now retired from the USDA, will be starting with "Frost Formation, Measurement and Passive Strategies to Avoid Damage." Next, Michael Wisniewski, USDA, will explain "Using Infrared Thermography to Visualize the Freezing Process and Assess the Performance of Frost Protection Measures."

Hugh Fraser will speak about airflow machines and heating equipment for frost protection. "This is both science and art," he says. "It's important to understand how frost is formed and how well your machines can work. Starting machines too early or running them too long costs money."

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AgroHaitai Ltd has introduced many unique varieties to commercial growers across North America. The new varieties in 2016 include Chinese cabbage 'CR Napa King F1', 'CR Mini Top F1' and Shanghai Pak Choy 'Toy Green F1', 'Wa Wa Qing', Winter squash 'Scarlet Asia', Radish 'Green Top' and many more.



Orchard and vineyard supplies

Niagara Orchard & Vineyard Corporation is the largest independent orchard and vineyard supply company in Ontario. It supplies fertilizer, crop protection materials, containers, trellising materials, greenhouse and landscape items.

More research needed to translate data from unmanned aerial vehicles



Photo courtesy of Muck Crops Research Station.

Unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) have become popular in the last couple years to take aerial photographs of fields. The idea is to get a bird's eye view of early disease or insect damage or water and draining damage. Analysing and translating that evidence into actions that have an economic benefit will take more time.

"Digital photographs are very good for assessing differences in soil type, drainage, weeds and crop growth," says Mary Ruth McDonald, University of Guelph's research program director for plant production systems. "In true colour photos, it's easy to see crop damage as a result of excess water or poor drainage."

She explains that near infrared images can be used to calculate the normalized difference vegetative index (NDVI). This index gives a leaf area index, which indicates how much of the soil is covered by leaves. At the Muck Crops Research Station, work is still needed for early detection of disease and insect damage.

In research conducted over the last two years, McDonald says that octocopters work best because they don't need room to take off and land. They can hover and change heights easily. They are best for photographing research plots in compact areas such as the Holland Marsh.

Many growers such as Charles Stevens, OFVGA chair of the crop protection section, are following these research developments. As major equipment manufacturers sell equipment with precision data capabilities, Stevens cautions that the aggregated data may grant unparalleled knowledge to big business. In the future, as the analysis capabilities improve, he suggests that like-minded growers band together to buy an octocopter to bring costs down. "In this way, you also own the information," says Stevens.

The upcoming Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Convention is hosting a Precision Ag seminar on February 17.



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Storage, chilling injury and mealiness in peaches



Peaches and nectarines in storage trials.

JENNIFER DeELL

Chilling injury is a major limiting factor in the life of stored peaches. This can lead to several end-of-market quality concerns and result in plenty of consumer complaints. Loss of flavour generally precedes any visual symptoms of chilling injury, which are mealiness, lack of juiciness, flesh browning, flesh translucency, and/or failure to ripen. These fruit quality characteristics can quickly lead to unhappy consumers and lack of return purchases.

The greatest expression of chilling injury occurs after storage at temperatures ranging from 2 to 8°C, during subsequent ripening at room temperature. Therefore, the poor fruit quality issues associated with chilling injury are most often experienced by the end consumers, and not by growers or shippers. The range of temperatures between 2 and 8°C is known as the “killing temperature range” for peaches because of its severe adverse effect on fruit market life.

Chilling injury is genetically influenced and it's triggered by a combination of storage temperature and duration. Symptom intensity and the onset of its development vary among cultivars, cultural practices, fruit maturity at harvest, postharvest handling,

growing location and seasons. In collaboration with the Ontario Tender Fruit Growers, we began a four year project in 2014 to investigate the susceptibility of Ontario grown varieties to chilling – “Reducing Incidence of Chilling Injury/Mealiness in Ontario's Peaches and Nectarines.”

During the first year of study (2014) the following varieties were evaluated: Vivid, Redhaven, Harrow Beauty, and Glowingstar peaches, plus HW109 and Fantasia nectarines. During the second year of study (2015) the same varieties (except Harrow Beauty) were again evaluated, along with Allstar and Coral Star. Chilling injury developed in all varieties and the major symptoms were no flavour, lack of juiciness, and severe mealiness, but many fruit also exhibited flesh browning, bleeding, or translucency. Fruit from later harvests tended to be more susceptible to chilling injury, while HW109 nectarine appeared to be the least chilling sensitive.

Another three-year project was started in collaboration with the Ontario Tender Fruit Growers in 2015 – “Ontario Stone Fruit Harvest and Cold Chain Best Management Practices.” One objective was to investigate the effects of postharvest coatings on peach quality. During the first year of study (2015) Scholar 230 SC



Chilling injury and mealiness in 'Glowingstar' peach.

fungicide, Peach Nectarine & Plum Lustr 251 and 282, and DeccoNatur 550 were evaluated, as well as the effects of water spray and/or brushing. It was first determined that lab-scale trials were comparable to larger on-site trials at grower packinghouses.

In a separate preliminary experiment during this past season, the effect of temperature conditioning on peach mealiness was also investigated. Redhaven, Coral Star, and Glowingstar all showed substantial reduction in chilling injury when fruit were held for one or two days at 10°C prior to cold storage at 0°C for three weeks. Furthermore, fruit

from this temperature conditioning regime appeared to maintain similar firmness as those placed quickly into cold storage at 0°C.

For more information on these projects and chilling injury in peaches, plan to attend the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Convention in Niagara Falls. I will be presenting the results of these studies on Wednesday February 17 at 3 pm – Understanding Mealiness in Peaches. This will be followed with a presentation by my postharvest colleague Dr. Chris Walsh from the University of Maryland – Peach Storage and Mealiness. Dr. Walsh has more than 25 years of experience in

this area of expertise.

Thanks to the Ontario Tender Fruit Growers, Matt Peters and N.M. Bartlett Inc. for their support, and Lorie Walker, Cathy Mous, Melissa Westaway, and Kathryn Carter (OMAFRA) for their technical assistance. These projects were funded in part through Growing Forward 2 (GF2), a federal-provincial-territorial initiative. The Agricultural Adaptation Council assists in the delivery of GF2 in Ontario.

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

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Brock's grape and wine research centre boosts Ontario's economy

A new study shows that Brock University's Cool Climate Oenology and Viticulture Institute (CCOVI) contributed more than \$91-million and the equivalent of 307 jobs to Ontario's economy in 2014-15.

Conducted by the management consulting firm MDB Insight, the economic impact study found that investments in CCOVI's industry-driven research and education are translating into job and business growth across Ontario.

CCOVI is an internationally recognized research unit focused on addressing the needs of Canada's grape and wine industry. The only research centre of its kind in Canada, CCOVI's activities range from complex laboratory research to in-the-field programs that alert grape growers to imminent threats from severe weather.

Its director, Debbie Inglis, says the economic impact is a culmination of the programs and services that CCOVI has developed and transferred to the industry over the past decade.

"The size of CCOVI's impact on the industry demonstrates that the institute's combination of research, outreach and education activities are not only being used, but also embraced by the industry they were designed for," she says.

Of the \$91-million overall impact, CCOVI's research programs and services contributed an annual economic impact of more than \$86 million in 2014-15.

To gauge its impact, the consultants evaluated CCOVI programs and services in seven categories: grapevine cold hardiness, ladybugs, new wine styles, Icewine, CCOVI services, workshops and seminars, and conferences. These programs provide both knowledge and hands-on tools or processes that the industry can use.

The study also directly attributed more than \$4.7 million worth of economic impact to Brock's investment in CCOVI and government-and-industry supported research and development.

For Brock's senior



Photo by Denis Cahill.

administration, the results illustrate the importance of partnerships between universities and communities around them.

"This report highlights CCOVI's significant impact on Ontario's grape and wine industry," says Brock president Jack Lightstone. "It shows how Brock's commitment to partnership is transforming the university's innovative research into real-life solutions that benefit communities across Ontario and

CEO of the Winery and Grower Alliance of Ontario: "The new economic impact study carried out by a well-recognized consulting company demonstrates the short and long term importance of CCOVI to the wine and grape industry and community at large."

Bill George, chair of the Grape Growers of Ontario: "Cool climate viticulture has its own unique advantages as well as challenges. This economic impact study validates the importance of CCOVI to Ontario's economy and the grape and wine industry."

Allan Schmidt, chair of the Wine Council of Ontario: "CCOVI's newly published Economic Impact Report demonstrates the important role research contributes to Ontario's grape and wine sectors. This informative report will aid wineries and growers in future business decision-making, which benefits the entire industry."

The full report can be found here: <http://brocku.ca/flipbook/ccovi/2014-2015/cia/>

Canada."

"At the heart of Brock's culture of research leadership is our commitment to co-creating new knowledge with our community partners," says vice-president of research Gary Libben. "Together, we mobilize our knowledge, skills and creativity for the betterment of Niagara and beyond."

Local industry organizations have welcomed the report:

Patrick Gedge, president and



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Alert to Ontario berry growers: two days, two registrations

PAM FISHER

The Ontario Berry Growers' Association annual meeting is scheduled for February 16 and the Berry Session is scheduled for February 17 at the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Convention. Both held in Niagara Falls, they are jam-packed with information regarding the fast-paced berry industry. From social media, fungicide resistance management, and mulching

alternatives, to new varieties and new products for pest control, this program will keep you informed, connected and profitable. There will be two grower panels plus four speakers from the U.S., Alberta and Nova Scotia. The sessions are organized for opportunities for discussion. This is what keeps growers coming back to this program year after year.

Feb 16, 2016 : Ontario Berry Growers' Association Annual Meeting, Embassy Suites,



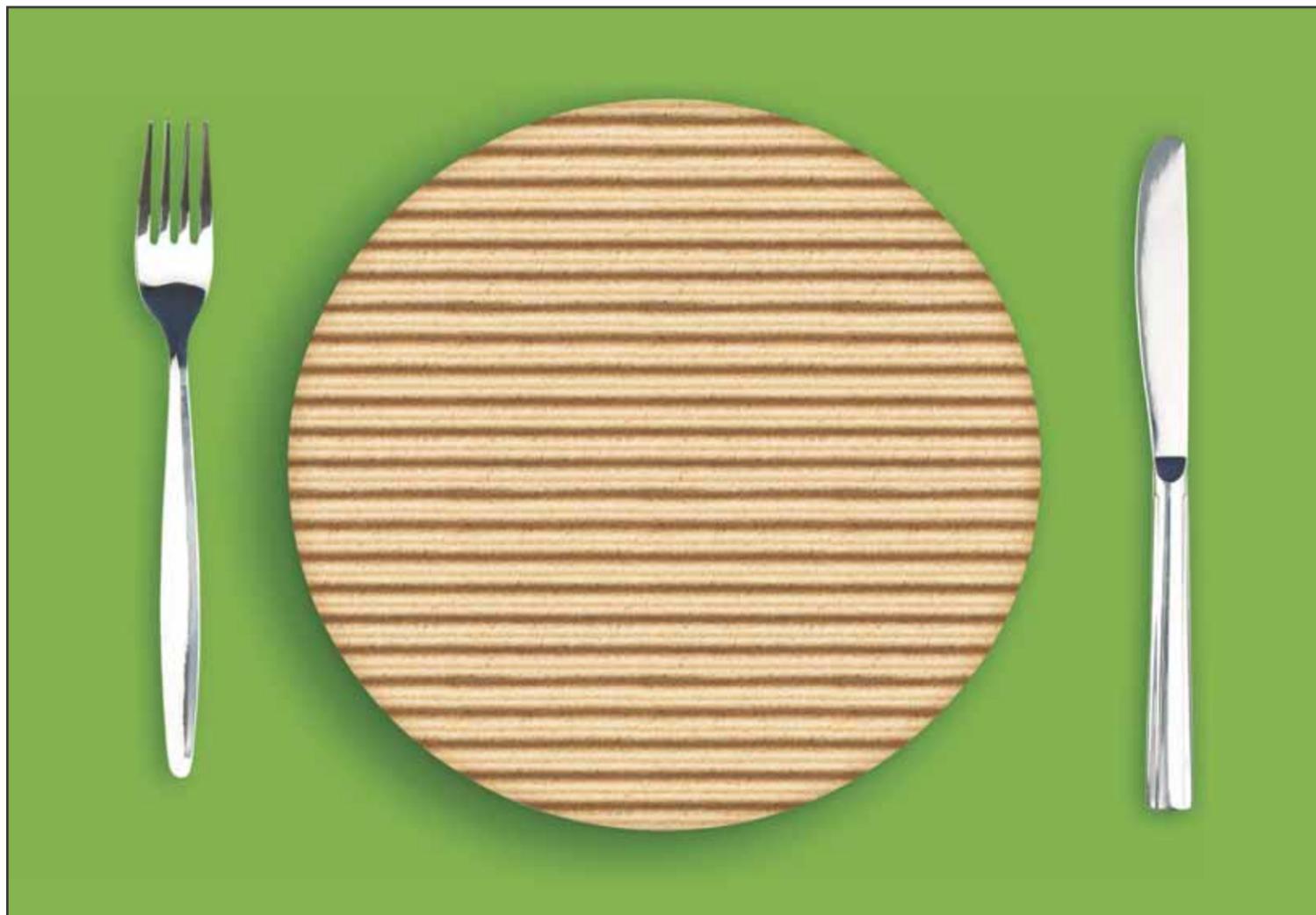
Niagara Falls , ON register at info@ontarioberries.com.

Feb 17, 2016: Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Convention, Scotiabank Convention Center, register at www.ofvc.ca

Pam Fisher is Ontario's berry specialist.



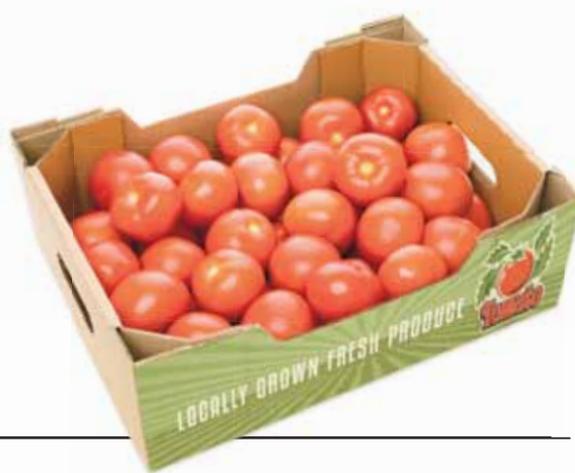
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Bird and Wildlife Management Program



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We all love birds and wildlife but sometimes they are a very costly nuisance to Ontario fruit growers. At the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Convention Thursday Feb 18, in Niagara Falls, fruit growers can get the latest research updates and insights on how to manage deer, turkeys, and birds and other wildlife problems on their farms. The program will feature several guest speakers including Dr. Catherine Lindell, from Michigan State University, and Dr. Paul Curtis from Cornell University, who have recently completed a USDA-funded project on limiting bird damage to fruit crops. Dr. Jim Willwerth from Brock University will share his findings on new technology to reduce bird damage in grapes. Fruit producers have identified bird and wildlife damage as a critical issue that needs more attention! This program is designed to bring recent research results and successful management strategies to Ontario growers.

Don't miss this and other sessions at the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Convention www.ofvc.ca

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