

BENCHMARKING

Big investments tame labour costs, improve grape quality



What does the future hold for the grape industry? An Ontario benchmarking report ranks government regulation and cost of compliance as the biggest business hurdle in the near future, with rising input and labour costs as the second biggest concern. These findings likely echo the concerns of all horticultural producers. As growers tackle these issues in their own individual ways, Thomas Oppenlaender, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, shows how new harvesting equipment enhances grape quality in the vineyard and lowers labour costs. Photos by Glenn Lowson.

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Happy New Year Flower quiz pg 22



KAREN DAVIDSON

In the haste of harvest, Thomas Oppenlaender takes a moment to assess his Chardonnay vineyard and the future of the grape industry. While the Niagara escarpment shelters tender vines, it can't protect against a competitive business climate.

To mitigate those risks, particularly rising labour costs, his business partner Tim Andrews has purchased a New Holland harvester. Its claim to fame? It can separate the grapes from petioles and stems with an

on-board optimal sorter.

"This machine is a step above what currently exists," says Oppenlaender. "Already, the wineries are tasting a difference in the grape juice."

What a year to launch a new harvester. "The 2016 season produced one of the most phenologically ripe harvests ever in Ontario," says Oppenlaender.

The \$400,000 investment is as large as the lumbering machine imported from France. The machine is capable of harvesting 1.5 acres per hour. When the speed and quality of

harvest are compared to hand-picking, there is no doubt that quality gains will be noted at the crush pad. Growers want to maximize quality along with tonnage which averages just over three tonnes per acre.

Ontario's grape growers and winery owners are taking a methodical and analytical approach to their future. In the first annual Ontario Wine and Grape Industry Performance Survey conducted in 2015, there were 42 growers and 106 wineries participating. Wineries represented 95 per cent of all Ontario-made wine and the 42

grape growers represented 25 per cent of acreage under vine. While that benchmarking survey is being repeated for 2016, the same themes will likely rise to the top of the list.

For wineries in all size categories, the major constraint is infrastructure such as tank capacity, crush, fermentation and bottling. As Oppenlaender explains, these factors impact growers in terms of when wineries call for harvests to be delivered depending on ripeness.

Continued on page 3

AT PRESS TIME...

Admire under fire

On November 24, Health Canada proposed a phase-out of the neonicotinoid imidacloprid, most commonly known by the brand name Admire. This insecticide is commonly used for managing Colorado potato beetle, an insect which chews the foliage of potato plants.

Health Canada says the levels of the pesticide being found in waterways across the country is harmful to aquatic insects, such as mayflies and midges. The phase-out may be extended to five years if there are no alternative pest-control products.

Health Canada has launched a 90-day comment period and will hold stakeholder forums.

Reviews on two other neonicotinoids have also been launched, namely clothianidin (Titan) and thiamethoxam (Actara).

“Growers are concerned about implied trade disadvantages if residue limits are not also revoked on imported commodities from nations who do not also restrict use, if the Pest Management Regulatory Agency moves ahead on their proposal,” says Craig Hunter, Research and Crop Protection, Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers’ Association.

Yes to Berry Growers of Ontario

Ontario’s berry growers – strawberry, raspberry and

highbush blueberry— have voted in favour of forming Berry Growers of Ontario. The vote was conducted between October 31 and November 14, 2016.

The positive outcome was confirmed by Geri Kamenz, chair of the Ontario Farm Products Marketing Commission on December 15. The commission sent ballots to 765 growers. Of that number, 94 ballots were cast and 74 per cent voted in favour of the proposal. The growers who cast a positive vote represent 82 per cent of the berry acreage.

If the newly formed marketing board is approved by the provincial government, then the amalgamated group would have the powers to collect fees for the purposes of market development and promotion, research and government relations. This board would not have pricing powers.

Kamenz explains that the vote is part of an ongoing process of gathering public commentary and developing the regulatory package which could take six months. In all probability, the regulatory structure would be in place for the 2018 growing season.

“We take great pride in seeing a sector evolve to serve the growers and the value chain in the context of a successful Ontario industry,” says Kamenz.

For more detailed background, go to: thegrower.org/news/vote-be-held-form-berry-growers-ontario

CPMA’s podcast forecasts issues for 2017

The Canadian Produce Marketing Association (CPMA) recorded its year-end podcast on December 15 with four journalists, reviewing the issues that resonated most in 2016. Topics ranged from Canada’s weather extremes to GMOs, global trade, the impact of value-added produce in retail to what’s in store for 2017.

Ron Lemaire, president of CPMA, chaired the podcast, interviewing the following: Karen Davidson, *The Grower*; Meagan Kashty, *Canadian Grocer*; Greg Johnson, *The Packer*; Marieke Hemmes-de Rijke, *FreshPlaza.com*.

What’s the forecast for Canada in 2017?

“For all the media focus on the United States and global affairs, I still think that domestic issues will pose the biggest threat to the Canadian horticultural industry in 2017,” predicted Karen Davidson. “No one really knows what the impact of carbon taxes or cap-and-trade will be. Growers are increasingly frustrated with the disconnect between government policies and the business reality on the ground. Agriculture has the capacity to generate more jobs, but there are finite limits on financing the changes to get there.”

The podcast will be posted by year-end at: cpma.ca/grow/resources/produce-talks-the-cpma-podcast

NEWSMAKERS

Congratulations to **Andrew and Jennifer Lovell** of Keswick Ridge, New Brunswick and **Dominic Drapeau and Celia Neault** of Ste-Francoise-de-Lotbinière, Quebec, recently named the winners of Canada’s



Outstanding Young Farmers 2016 competition. Andrew and Jennifer Lovell are first-generation market garden farmers from New Brunswick. The Quebec winners are third-generation dairy and field crop farmers. Horticulture was well represented this year with honourees **Adrian and Jodi Roelands**, innovative vegetable propagators from Lambton Shores, Ontario.

Ontario’s new deputy minister of agriculture, food and rural affairs is **Greg Meredith**, effective January 9. Since 2010, he has been the assistant deputy minister, strategic policy, for Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC). He’s held many executive positions within AAFC including farm financial programs, communications and consultations. Prior to agriculture, Meredith has worked in several federal departments including Correctional Services, Global Affairs and Industry Canada. He holds Masters Degrees in Business Administration and International Affairs and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science.

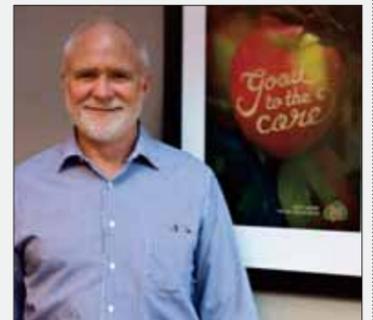
The Ontario Potato Board held its annual general meeting on December 7, re-electing **Glen Squirrell** as its chair and **Harry Bradley** as vice-chair. Bert Tupling is a newly elected director. Other directors include: **Shawn Brenn, Isaiah Swidersky** and **Homer VanderZaag**.



Glen Squirrell

The Canadian Corrugated and Containerboard Association has announced that **Allen Kirkpatrick** is now the executive director. Formerly with Norampac, a division of Cascades Canada Inc., Kirkpatrick has held various industry positions over the last 38 years. He takes over from **David Andrews** who has retired.

The BC Tree Fruits Cooperative has hired **Stan Swales** as Chief Executive Officer effective November 28, 2016. Swales re-joins the Cooperative and brings with him more than 30 years of industry experience. He started in the industry in 1985 at Okanagan North Growers Co-Op in Winfield where he spent 20 years in various roles. From there, he moved to Growers Supply Co. Ltd. as general manager for a decade. Most recently, he has been with BASF Canada as a business representative. Swales replaces **Alan Tyabji**, who had served as CEO since November 2012. BC Tree Fruits Cooperative is owned by 500 local grower families with its offices based in Kelowna.



Ontario’s Agricultural Adaptation Council has announced its 2016-2017 board of directors. Newly elected chair is **Kelly Duffy**, representing agribusiness/retail/food processing. Horticulture is represented by tender fruit grower **Ray Duc** and vegetable grower **Jason Verkaik**.

Farm and Food Care Ontario welcomes **Joel Porter** as the newly-hired vice-president of development and member relations. He comes from the charitable and non-profit organization sector, focusing his 26 years of experience on relationship management.

Condolences to the family of **Cecil (Bill) Carsley** who passed at the age of 80 on November 22, 2016. He was well-known in the horticultural industry as a past general manager of the Ontario Food Terminal and a recipient of the Award of Merit from the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers’ Association.

Ontario’s agricultural industry is saddened with the sudden passing of **John Vander Burgt**, 61, the victim of a car accident on November 19. He was a shareholder of A & L Labs and founder of Bluewater Crop Care and Consulting, based in Dashwood, ON.

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COVER STORY

Big investments tame labour costs, improve grape quality

“This machine is a step above what currently exists. Already, the wineries are tasting a difference in the grape juice.”

~ THOMAS OPPENLAENDER

Continued from page 1

When it comes to most reported business challenges, wineries and grape growers are on the same page. They totally agree that government regulation and cost of compliance are the top hurdle. Next comes access to viable retail markets, rising input costs for labour and land, gross margin on sales through the LCBO and grape supplies. Those stickler issues are for the Grape Growers of Ontario (GGO) to tackle through the Red Tape Challenge consultation which ends January 31, 2017.

“Overall, we’re growing,” says Debbie Zimmerman, CEO, Grape Growers of Ontario.

As the GGO website explains, for the first time in the last 30 years, grapes are the

most valuable fruit in Ontario in terms of farm gate value. Grapes comprise 35 per cent of the total farm value of Ontario commercial fruit crops.

Increased growth is linked to the switch in acreage to higher-valued viniferas, which are in strong demand by Ontario wineries and consumers.

The majority of new plantings have been with vinifera varieties. Over the last several years, growers like the Oppenlaender’s have invested more than \$125 million in expanding vineyards to supply wineries’ demands for more premium grapes.

The results of the Red Tape Challenge – expected in July – will coincide with negotiations for grape prices with the wineries for the 2017 season. The benchmarking study – with its updated financials -- will be a timely bargaining tool.

AT PRESS TIME

Canadian wine brands sold to pension fund

Constellation Brands, Inc. a leading beverage alcohol company, has announced that it has completed the sale of its Canadian wine business to Ontario Teachers’ Pension Plan, the largest single-profession pension plan in Canada. The transaction, which includes Canadian wine brands such as Jackson-Triggs and Inniskillin, wineries, vineyards, offices, facilities, and Wine Rack retail stores, is valued at approximately C\$1.03 billion.

The company received cash proceeds, net of repayment of outstanding debt, of

approximately C\$765 million, subject to post-closing adjustments. The sale of the Canadian wine business aligns with the company’s focus on driving higher growth, higher-margin business activities, and its capital allocation strategy, which includes returning value to shareholders through cash dividends and share repurchases, and making select, value-creating acquisitions while operating at a targeted leverage ratio.

Source: December 19 Constellation Brands news release

CHALLENGES FACING THE ONTARIO INDUSTRY 2015

Respondents were asked to rank up to 5 challenges impacting their business from a list of 15 challenges developed by the Working Group. Based on rank and frequency of responses received, the top 5 challenges for grape growers were identified.



Source: Ontario Wine and Grape Industry Performance Study, by VQA Ontario and Deloitte.



This new harvester optimizes the quality of grapes by separating material other than grapes – MOG – from the Chardonnay varietal. These grapes will arrive at the crush pad without the stems and petioles that can lend an unwanted vegetal character to the wine. Thomas Oppenlaender (L) and harvester owner Tim Andrews give instructions to the driver.



Clean grapes are dumped into a waiting bin for transportation to the winery.

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CROSS COUNTRY DIGEST

ALBERTA

Lethbridge's potato processor to increase capacity significantly

Cavendish Farms plans to build a new potato processing plant in Lethbridge, Alberta which will create demand for another 9,500 acres of potatoes. Expect sod to be turned this spring and for the plant to be operational by 2019. This gives the industry time to plan for major expansion.

The December 12 announcement, made by company president Robert Irving, capped off a milestone year for the Alberta potato industry celebrating its 50th anniversary.

"An opportunity like this comes along once in a lifetime," says Terence Hochstein, executive director, Potato Growers of Alberta, based in Taber. "This new facility will allow the younger generation to expand if they want."

Access to irrigated acres in southern Alberta won't be a limiting factor



explains Hochstein. In the last 10 years, Albertan farmers have increased the efficiency of irrigation with variable rate technology and pressurized water pipelines which eliminate the need for

pumps. The expansion does not mean tearing up native ground. Rather, farmers will switch up their four-year rotations of wheat, canola, peas, barley and sugar beets to include more potatoes.

Southern Alberta has proven to be a dependable home for processing potatoes. Old Dutch and Pepsico-Frito Lay operate here. Two other plants -- McCain's near Coaldale and Lamb-Weston near Taber -- also do business in this fertile area, tapping supplies from about 40,000 seeded acres. Once the new Cavendish Farms' plant is built, growers could expect acreage to expand to almost 50,000 acres -- an 18 per cent increase. Cavendish Farm's output will be about the same as Lamb-Weston's.

Almost four years ago to the day, December 10, 2012, Cavendish Farms announced its purchase of the frozen potato business of Maple Leaf Foods Inc. in Lethbridge. The transaction has gone well. French fries and chips haven't lost their crunch.

MANITOBA

Peak of the Market marks 75th anniversary



With roots going back to 1942, the Peak of the Market farmers' cooperative has survived not only World War II but weather wars as well. In 2017, the grower-owned cooperative celebrates 75 years

with fresh stories about the 20 families now growing vegetables today.

"It's not often that businesses survive this long, so it's good that we take a moment to honour the history," says Larry McIntosh,

president and CEO, Peak of the Market. "We had our best year in 74 years," he said, commenting on the 2016 fiscal year ending June 30. Peak of the Market earned \$105 million dollars in sales for 2015/2016.

"We saw growth in many crops in most of the markets we deliver to," he says.

The cooperative continues to seek growers for specific crops including: Brussels sprouts, eggplant, green onions, radishes, napa and Taiwan cabbage and turnips. Conversations are underway for the 2017 crop year. Trials continue with sweet potatoes that might mature in the Manitoba climate. Okra is another crop of interest.

Cold storage expansion is underway at the Winnipeg headquarters with the \$1.3

million project nearing completion in March 2017. More energy-efficient cooling coupled with gravity-fed racking will make the operation more

competitive for year-round storage of root crops.

For more information on 2017 festivities, go to: www.peakmarket.com



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CROSS COUNTRY DIGEST

NOVA SCOTIA

Wild blueberry industry faces big crop, poor prices

Eastern Canada's big crop of wild blueberries has outstripped demand, causing prices to plunge from 50 cents per pound in 2015 at processing plants to 30 cents per pound in 2016. Poor prices may result in growers choosing to idle land next year.

Costs of harvesting are 15 cents per pound, without factoring in fertilizer costs or rented beehives.

"The latest 2016 crop topped 300 million pounds," reports Peter Rideout, executive director, Nova Scotia Wild Blueberry Growers' Association. "That's a big increase from the 225 million pounds recorded in 2013."

Quebec had a record crop due to favourable winter conditions in 2016 and a slow snowmelt that meant dangers of frost were past before flowering and pollination. Although Nova Scotia had the driest summer in 70 years, wild blueberries responded well to late rains in August, resulting in good weight and size. Virtually all of the crop is quick frozen for export

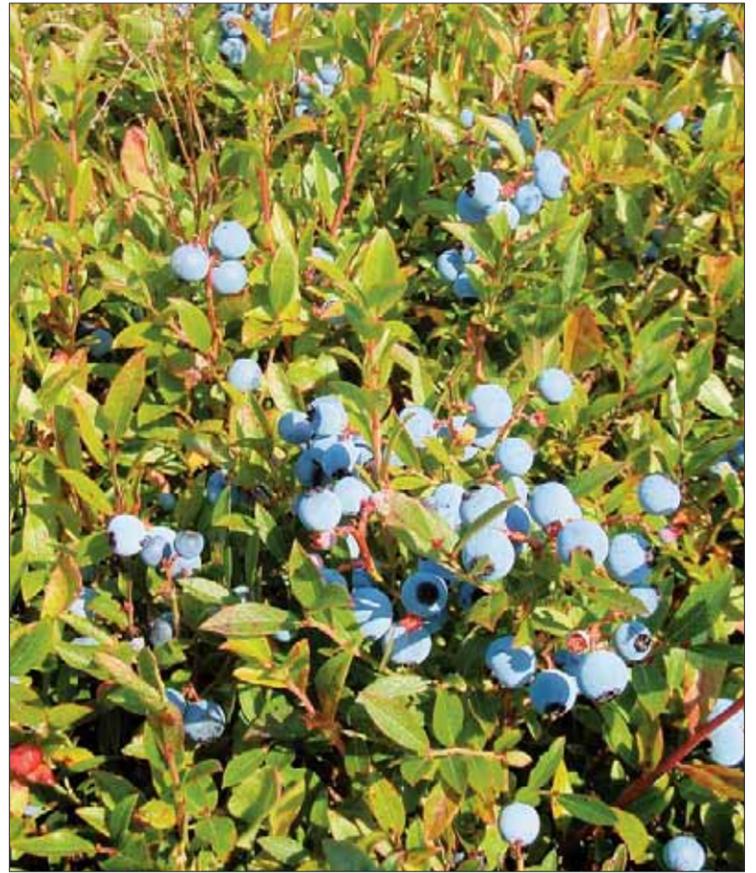
as ingredients in value-added food.

In Nova Scotia alone, there are 44,000 acres of wild blueberry cultivation managed by a core of 250 to 300 growers. Agricultural exports from Nova Scotia were worth \$100 million in 2015.

"This is a very important industry to our rural economy, and everyone feels the downturn," says Rideout. "There's no way to sugar coat the situation."

Trade agreements will continue to be important in Europe, the United States and Asia where there are already solid business relationships. With the signing of the Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement (CETA), there is an open door for more value-added business in ingredient lines. Perhaps a dried fruit product could be developed for wild blueberries.

Domestically, there may be more room for growth among food manufacturers such as yogurt makers. But without major exports, the coming year looks less promising.



PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Discovery of sewing needle in PEI potatoes stumps police

In late November 2016, yet another incident of potato tampering was reported to provincial police, causing Giant Tiger stores to recall PEI potatoes. A sewing needle was found in a dish of cooked potatoes, after the potatoes had

been peeled and cooked at a local home.

Metal pieces and needles were first discovered in PEI potatoes in 2014. The federal government has helped island growers by funding \$1.5 million to purchase metal detection equipment.

The provincial government also supported with \$500,000 for on-site security assessments and training. Several cases of metal objects found in potatoes in Atlantic Canada have not been solved.

The ongoing crimes are against the safety reputation of Prince Edward Island's largest agricultural commodity, with farmgate receipts of \$250 million annually.



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

You have from February 3-23, 2017 to submit an application for the next intake of funding assistance. Don't miss out – only two intakes remain under *GF2*.

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ENROL YOUR FARM BUSINESS
- 2

ATTEND A WORKSHOP
- 3

APPLY FOR FUNDING ASSISTANCE





LENDING

Practical advice on managing your banking relationship

KAREN DAVIDSON

If it's not already self-evident, the relationship with your bank has changed over the last few years and will likely change more. Rob Hall is a former vice-president, agriculture, Central and Atlantic Canada for TD Canada Trust and former executive with Meridian Credit Union and Desjardins. Now, he offers advice to agricultural and business clients as president of his own consulting company, Bankspeak. As guest speaker of the Ontario Potato Board's annual general meeting, he shared some myths that may sound familiar and some advice that may be prudent for 2017.

Myth 1. Banks understand agriculture.

Today, senior banking executives understand only what's in the newspapers and mainstream press. Their knowledge isn't that good. Farm Credit Canada is an exception.

Myth 2. Your bank is your friend.

Your "banker" might be, but your "bank" isn't. Today, bankers work for the interest of their shareholders, not their customers. Bonuses are based on selling certain products and

product mixes.

Myth 3. I have lots of security so getting a loan shouldn't be a problem.

Think again. Your land might be worth \$20,000 per acre but security is the last thing that bankers look at. Bankers look at cash flows.

Myth 4. My bank will work with me if I have a problem.

That depends, if it's in their best interest. At the branch level these days, bankers want new business and relationships. They want to lend more money, even if you don't need it. But when there's lots of administration and "handholding" then the bank will move you to a special loans unit.

Myth 5. I am in the bank's special loans unit -- they are going to foreclose on me.

Not necessarily. You may be technically in default, but if you are making your payments, the bank will be loathe to do anything. For example, if for every dollar of payments, your bank requires that you have net income of \$1.10, and you don't, they are likely to put you on notice but not take action. However, understand that the bank gets twitchy if payments

such as property taxes are in arrears.

Myth 6. My banker says that I'm getting the best deal they can offer.

Everything is negotiable. Push back on that assumption and question the fees.

Myth 7. My banker says he/she has the ability to make the decision.

Very few lenders have any material discretion left anymore. This is now driven by regulatory oversight where there must be a separation between sales and credit operations.

Myth 8. All decisions are made on facts in a business-like manner.

Bankers are human. If someone in the decision chain had a bad experience 20 years ago with a similar farm story -- or heard about a story from his/her friend at another bank -- the decision could be tainted.

Myth 9. The prime rate is the same across Canada.

TD Prime is not TD Mortgage Prime is not RBC Prime is not FCC Prime etc. Read your documents carefully for the actual prime rate of your

individual bank.

Myth 10. When I speak to my banker, he/she understands what I am saying and can clearly communicate internally.

This is a big assumption when bankers don't understand the acronyms and agricultural language. A good example that Hall provided: A VP of credit once asked "What's a gilt?" The answer: A virgin pig.

Myth 11. My banker understands his/her bank's documents and can explain what I am signing.

The chances are good that they haven't even read the document themselves. Be cautious on relying on their representations -- speak to a lawyer or trusted advisor.

What are the trends going forward?

- turnover in staff is accelerating
- timing in approvals may take two weeks to a month
- fewer people who understand your business (or business in general)
- bankers' margins are getting squeezed. They are building small business units, administered by bank branches. This is essentially portfolio lending or

scorecard lending.

- as you are borrowing more money under these programs, bankers will have less knowledge of your business
- less personalized service
- more costs if you are a large borrower
- more regulations/oversight. This is happening a lot in credit union systems right now. Anticipate more mergers of small credit unions.
- if you are a "good" borrower, anticipate more pressure to buy other services (that you may or may not need) such as VISA cards, mutual funds.

Some advice on dealing with these trends

Ensure you know more than one person in your bank. Look at the ages of your contacts and anticipate retirements. What happens if your branch manager or area manager is downsized? Shop around if possible. Banks do become complacent. Have a back door if you need it.

Question requests. If the bank wants five reports every month, ask why. Ask why the bank needs security on all the property. Don't encumber all of your property.

Hold your bank accountable by communicating in writing.

Farm Credit Canada doubles amount of credit to young farmers

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Farm Credit Canada (FCC) is increasing its support for young farmers, doubling the amount of credit available under the FCC Young Farmer Loan.

"A big focus of FCC's mandate is to provide innovative financing products and knowledge to assist the next generation of Canadian farmers," said Michael Hoffort, FCC president and CEO. "Changes to the Young Farmer loan recognize the rising cost for young farmers to become established in the industry."

In addition to doubling the credit limit to \$1 million from \$500,000, FCC has lowered the possible minimum down payment required for a Young Farmer Loan to 20 per cent from 25 per cent of the value of the loan, which supports the purchase or improvement of farmland and buildings. This potentially makes more working capital available to qualified producers, under age 40, as they look to enter the industry or grow their business.

FCC will continue to offer a variable lending rate at prime plus 0.5 per cent, as well as offer a special fixed rate if producers choose that avenue of

repayment. No loan processing fees are charged on the Young Farmer Loan, which was introduced in 2012.

"Our customers benefit when we effectively manage risk at every stage of their business lifecycle, whether they are just beginning to pursue their dreams or preparing to leave the industry," Hoffort said. "Our lending decisions are based on sound business plans, strong relationships with our customers and taking the time to understand their business."

The loan fills a gap in the marketplace by enabling young farmers to access the credit they need to get started and grow in the industry. In 2015-2016, FCC overall approved more than \$2.5 billion in financing -- including the Young Farmer Loan -- to farmers under age 40, representing more than one-quarter of the \$9 billion in disbursements last year to help customers expand or start their operations.

FCC is Canada's leading agriculture lender, with a loan portfolio of more than \$28 billion.

Source: Farm Credit Canada news release

POTATOES IN PERSPECTIVE

For potato growers, the question is how much to plant, how much to insure



KAREN DAVIDSON

Cambridge, ON -- Table talk at the recent Ontario Potato Board's annual general meeting was all about comparing harvests after last summer's drought.

Chairperson Glenn Squirrell said, "It appears that the summer crop was off by about 30 per cent in some areas. As a result, pricing was stronger this summer than in the past. Food for thought – it took a 30 per cent reduction in supplies to move the table market to a reasonable level. What happens next year when we plant the same acreage of potatoes but return to normal production levels?"

As of November 2016, the Ontario Potato Board recommended a per cwt tablestock price of \$22.50, a price that was set earlier in September 2016. Overall, Ontario's potato market for 2015-2016 was valued at just over \$69.4 million.

Industry observers expect there will be higher interest in crop insurance for 2017. Only about 30 per cent of Ontario's potato crop was insured in 2016, compared to about 80 per cent in other provinces.

This coming winter, the process council will be negotiating five process agreements according to Harry Bradley, process chair. "This will be a challenging set of negotiations as we continue to be challenged by the availability of potatoes from surrounding areas," he reported. "On a positive note, the continued low value of the Canadian dollar increases the value of Ontario potatoes contracted for the U.S. market and puts imported product from the U.S. at a disadvantage."

The United Potato Growers of Canada (UPGC) no longer enjoys the financial support of two potato-producing provinces. Both New Brunswick and Ontario have left this umbrella

group which reports monthly stocks on hand, movement, prices, conditions and outlook. This means that real-time statistics from these two provinces are not part of the UPGC national report. As reported by Statistics Canada in the table to the right, New Brunswick's and Ontario's seeded acreage represents 24 per cent of the national total.

Statistical table 2016
Area and production of potatoes (imperial measures) Canada and provinces

2016	Seeded area	Harvested area	Average yield	Production
Canada	346,827	342,409	307	105,172
Nfld/Labrador	--	--	--	--
PEI	89,000	88,700	290	25,723
Nova Scotia	1,774	1,600	270	432
New Brunswick	47,629	4,700	305	14,335
Quebec	41,761	41,514	287	11,914
Ontario	34,800	34,750	190	6,602
Manitoba	65,914	64,000	350	22,400
Saskatchewan	6,000	5,900	250	1,475
Alberta	52,300	51,557	388	20,012
British Columbia	7,249	7,000	315	2,205

Total Canadian seeded potato acres is down from 355,338 acres in 2013 to 346,827 in 2016 – a reduction of 8,511 acres. This is in response to decreasing potato consumption.

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ONTARIO FRUIT AND VEGETABLE GROWERS' ASSOCIATION

Board briefs



The “Sold-Out” sign for modern town homes is an ironic commentary on the century-old stone house about to be moved from Milton, Ontario.

The OFVGA board met December 15, 2016 prior to the Annual General Meeting to be held January 10-11, 2017 at the Holiday Inn Toronto International Airport, Toronto, ON. The top issues are reported here.

Harold Schooley, chair, research section

Precision Agriculture

Ontario Agri-Food Technologies is applying for Agricultural Adaptation Council funding to develop Ontario’s first comprehensive, open, agri-food data collection and innovation platform to advance precision agri-food technology applications.

The goal of this project is to equip Ontario farmers with innovative decision support tools that enable them to use data generated on the farm for decision-making that leads to a more competitive cost structure.

This also provides benefits for researchers, ag organizations, and government staff by empowering them to make better decisions regarding resource allocation.

Agricultural Soils Health and Conservation Strategy

The Ontario Soil Health and Conservation Working Group continues its strategy development process. A soil health strategy is expected by summer 2017. Expected deliverables are: updated soil maps, benchmarks for soil health, improved understanding of soil greenhouse gas emissions and best management practices for mitigating them, best management practices for soil health and the education and training of all involved.

Ontario Edible Hort Research Workshop: From Priorities to Projects

Jan 19, 2017 Quality Inn,

Woodstock 8:30 am – 2:30 pm

The purpose of this meeting is to bring growers and researchers together to communicate research issues and needs, discuss the research funding process and where to access funding. Bring your list of research priorities with you!

For enquiries contact:
Rosanne Ranieri at
Rosanne.ranieri@
vinelandresearch.com or
905-562-0320 ext 830.

Brian Gilroy, chair, property section

The land use planning reviews, that have been taking place in Ontario over the past three years, have been extensive. Added to the review was a proposal to expand the area controlled by the Niagara Escarpment Commission (NEC). Affected municipalities and land owners have reacted to this news with a lot of questions and deep concern. Buses of

concerned individuals travelled to Queens Park to try and get a meeting with the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry, Kathryn McGarry.

The meeting did not take place but the message may have been received. From unofficial sources, the Minister’s Office has stated that the proposed expansion did not originate from her office. From recent reports, any expansion of the NEC control area will not happen in the foreseeable future.

As chair of Farm and Food Care Ontario, I’ve had a busy

few months working through some growing pains with the organization. Farm and Food Care has gone national and introduced the Canadian Centre for Food Integrity. I am confident that we have the right people in place and the need has never been greater to have all farmers and related sectors building public trust in food and farming!

To quote from Theodore Roosevelt:

“No one cares how much you know until they know how much you care.”

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

More life to the pear story

We enjoy receiving The Grower in our office and it was nice to see the recent article about pears (Evolution: still life in the pear category, December 2016). However, there is a slight correction that needs to be made in the article. You state “These breeding efforts started by Dr. David Hunter at Agriculture Canada’s (AAFC) Harrow research station...”

The pear breeding efforts that led to the release of the current group of varieties was actually started by Dr. Harvey Quamme. Then when he transferred to the AAFC research station at Summerland BC, I took over the

program and built on the work that Harvey had started. Then in 1988, I transferred to Summerland and Dr. David Hunter continued the program.

Tree fruit breeding, and especially pears, is a long-term project and all fruit breeders benefit from the work done by our predecessors. It is gratifying to see work that was started in the 1970s finally paying off and benefitting the Canadian fruit growers.

*Frank Kappel, Ph.D
General Manager
Summerland Varieties Corporation
Summerland, BC*

I am very happy for the industry to see the pear line-up on the front page of the December issue. Finally the announcement of a new team, as if it were the front line of the Leafs at outset of new season.

I have been retired from V.Kraus for three years now but had always been in favour of getting the news out about new Ontario fruit varieties. My last

two years in the booth for Kraus I managed to find some Bounty pears, well before it was named, to hand out at the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Convention in February. And it was something that growers/owners of the variety should really have been doing for years prior. But the industry has not been overly proactive that way. I recall one Toronto retailer remarking after taking a bite of



Photo by Glenn Lowson

the pear at the show and commenting, “Wow, I could sell this for \$7 a pound at my stand in Toronto” Would that I had followed up on that with a name and location.

Your December article comes, I would think, with growers but also VRIC's input, but perhaps limited somewhat to those with vested interests. For those growers not in a position to be

part of the tree propagation and fruit production of the so-to-speak “taken” varieties or the good, new, to-come selections of pears, apricots, peaches, nectarines and plums, it might be good also to mention, for one, the Harrow/Vineland pears such as Harrow Delight and Harrow Sweet, for example, that do not come with controlling right-to-grow issues. Harrow Sweet is a

late pear and one that would probably benefit from an early pick and short storage but one that appears to be a multiple-time pick, so seemingly very suitable for pick-your-own sites.

Again, congratulations on your pear article.

*Harry A. de Vries
Mount Hope, ON*

OUTREACH

Fresh from the Farm- Healthy fundraising for Ontario schools



DAN TUKENDORF

The Ontario-based Fresh from the Farm school fundraising program completed another successful campaign at the end of November. 2016 was the fourth and largest year to date of the program that provides schools with an alternative to traditional fundraising programs. Schools are provided with fresh Ontario-grown root vegetables and apples with 40 per cent of all sales going back directly to each school. In addition, the program connects students to Ontario agriculture, helps increase access and consumption of Ontario-grown

fruit and vegetables along with helping support Ontario growers.

In 2016, the program was expanded to also include schools in the Greater Toronto area, parts of Eastern Ontario, Grey-Bruce and Huron counties. More than 370 schools across Ontario participated selling almost 900,000 pounds of fresh fruit and vegetables raising more than \$350,000 for schools.

Planning is already underway for the 2017 campaign with details to be released this spring. For more details and updates check out www.freshfromfarm.ca.

Dan Tukendorf is program manager, OFVGA.

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Growing understanding



JAN VANDERHOUT
VICE-CHAIR, OFVGA

organic produce because they think it has not been sprayed with pesticide. As farmers, we know this might not be so and that we can set consumers straight. Well not so fast.

We need to listen to the perceptions of consumers and hear why they make specific choices. Only then, should we explain why we make our choices. The key is to find common ground, common values. That's listening respectfully. All of us want to give our families the best.

Let's keep this principle in mind when talking to your child's teacher or hockey coach, the bank teller, the neighbour at church, the cashier at the grocery store, the person cutting your hair, friends, family and so on. We need to share why locally-grown produce is our clear choice, why it is a healthy choice and why it is a responsible choice socially, environmentally and nutritionally.

I am sometimes surprised at the perception people have towards our hiring of guest workers. I wish they understood how important Canadian employment is to the workers and their families back in Mexico and the Caribbean. I wish we could show the public the examples of the farm workers who have put their children through university

Who among us would not eat the food we grow? Or feed our produce to our family? Who would knowingly ruin the land on which we depend for our living? Who would not treat their employees with the respect and dignity they deserve? Certainly no one with the intention to succeed in this business, that much is certain. In fact we take our integrity so for granted that we assume that everyone trusts us farmers like we trust our own food.

In 2017, less than two per cent of Canadians are farmers. The lack of interaction with the rest of society means that the public's understanding of food production is quickly declining. Misconceptions about GMOs, organics and pesticides are ruling the day. Some consumers actually choose



Photo by Glenn Lowson

allowing them access to better paying jobs and an escape from poverty.

I wish everyone could see the satisfaction of the workers who have saved up over the years and bought a house, property, or business in their home countries raising their standard of living for the rest of their lives. Wouldn't it be great if the public could hear why workers sign up for farm work, year after year, and how much

they depend on these jobs to support themselves and their families.

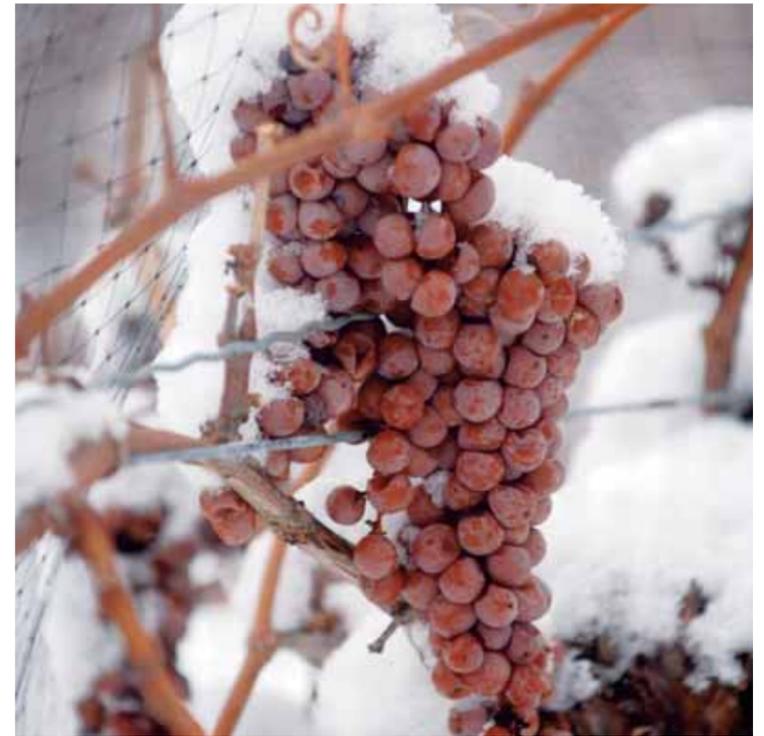
As producers, we have a great story to tell about nutrition – how half a plate of fruits or vegetables at every meal can promote good health. To get that produce to consumer tables, we we feed our crops at the right time with the right amount of nutrients at the right stage of development.

I hope we all take the

opportunity to host a tour of our farm when we can. Whether it is a group of students, journalists or political leaders, it is great when they can see first-hand where some of their food comes from.

This year, let's all make an effort to strategically share some of the goodness of the country, straight from the farm.

WEATHER VANE



Ontario's ice wine grape harvest started 21 days early this year, with many fields done before the holidays. Thanks to Bill George, past chair of Grape Growers of Ontario, for sharing his perspective of the grape harvester.

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PERSPECTIVE



Collaboration and cooperation at home will distinguish 2017



OWEN ROBERTS
U OF GUELPH

several leading farm groups, including the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association, joined hands to form the one-for-all, all-for-one Grow Ontario Together. It's described as "a collaboration of agriculture organizations that recognize the need to work together – with each other, with the public, with environmentalists, with municipalities, concerned citizens and with governments." This coming together happened months before the U.S. election; at the time, it was the province these groups were most concerned about. Now, compared to Trump, the province looks docile.

Most lately, concerns have been raised about the possibility

of Trump's presidency causing food prices in Canada to rise in 2017. The thinking is that he's threatened to deport illegal immigrant workers, which will have a huge impact on farm labour. Fruit and vegetable growers, who rely on these workers so much for manual labour, may feel it more than any other producers.

Canada struggles mightily with farm labour problems, too. At an outlook event in November at the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) headquarters in Guelph, panelist Alison Robertson, executive director of the OFVGA, expressed her concerns about the farm labour situation.

The sector, she said, "is on an unsustainable path."

At the outlook event, a potential solution put forward to the chronic labour crunch was robotics, particularly in greenhouses. Robertson says robots could allow a farmer to focus less on manual labour, and more on creating value.

Next door to the OMAFRA headquarters, at the University of Guelph, progress is being made on robots for greenhouses, ones that could offer consumers information they're coming to expect with many other commodities – like "smart" greenhouse tomatoes, in which each piece of fruit has its own production history and nutritional profile, based on



coding from the robot that nurtured it and harvested it.

This kind of research is needed to help prepare the sector for the challenges that not only lie ahead, but are in fact here now.

Here's to a prosperous and collaborative New Year.

Almost everyone would agree Donald Trump is not recognized as a calming, uniting force. But in a curious way, his presidency may be part of what's going to drive Canada's agri-food sector towards new levels of cooperation in 2017.

Like other countries, we're worried about how much Trump's extremism could fracture trade, turn exports on their heads and send our agri-food sector reeling.

And that realization may be what sparked the unusual effort I saw towards the end of the year to let bygones be bygones, face our competitors and move ahead.

To start with, the province's biggest general farm group, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA), extended an olive branch to one of the province's most influential commodity groups, Grain Farmers of Ontario (GFO).

The federation's new president, Keith Currie, called Ontario's agri-political scene fractured, specifically mentioning the strained relationship between the federation and the grain farmers. He said it needed fixing, and stressed the need for togetherness by all groups if the sector was to heal and advance.

A little earlier, GFO had done some reflecting of its own. It turned heads with its unusually restrained response to a federal government proposal to phase out a neonicotinoid called imidacloprid. The organization said it couldn't argue for evidence-based decisions by federal regulators on one hand, then criticize them for such decisions on the other.

This all followed the provincial environment minister admitting at the OFA's annual convention that he used too heavy a hand when dealing with farmers over the neonicotinoid matter, which resulted in a court challenge and some of the most acrimonious feelings I can remember between farmers and the province. He apologized and offered to work together more.

And earlier in the year,



Some lessons learned crawling around carrot washing machines

BRUCE KELLY

As has been reported in this magazine in the past, Farm & Food Care Ontario has been working on projects with vegetable growers, fruit washers and irrigators to help them make informed decisions about water use, identify opportunities for recycling and minimize the amount of water coming from facilities that might need to be treated. We have worked with a number of growers around the Holland Marsh as well as in Alliston, Leamington and Niagara regions - almost anywhere that vegetables or fruit are irrigated or washed.

When you talk about water, three issues invariably come up: the drought, your water source and how much water you use. The recent project focused on water use, with an intent to reduce usage through recycling and using the minimum required to get the product clean.

How much water does a vegetable tumbler use? For those not in the carrot business, it is worthy to note that many root

vegetables are washed in barrel wash tumblers, 10 to 12 feet long. Carrots, for example, are conveyed or flumed in one end and come out the other end of the tumbler clean and ready to eat.

Water enters most tumblers through a bar with holes spraying down on the vegetables. But how much water does it take to run the machine? The spray bar, with holes inside the machine, will take all the water you give it, which is often much more than it really needs to get the product clean. Many of the newest machines incorporate a recycling tray underneath to catch the cleanest water near the end of the tumbler and use it for the first-rinse or a pre-soak tank, reserving potable water for only the final wash stage. This drastically reduces the amount of fresh water used by the machine but our measurements show that even the newest equipment with a recycling tray installed will use more water than is needed unless carefully monitored and regulated.

How do you measure water use? This seems like a simple question. A flow meter on the

well or supply can tell you how much water you are using overall and is useful for monitoring for permit purposes, but this only works for the whole facility. We have found that there are flow meters that can be installed on individual water lines. They're called rotameters and are big sight gauges with floats riding inside on the current flow rate to a machine. The red ball rides inside a calibrated cylinder that can help easily manage the water flow to a machine.

For smaller equipment like a peeler or small tumbler that runs off a garden hose-style fitting, a low-cost flow meter from Canadian Tire or Lee Valley can be used to monitor the flow and cost less than \$50.

Case study: A carrot tumbler with recycling capacities was running about 100 liters/min when we first measured the flow. After the rotameter was installed, staff could see at a glance what the water flow was. They were able to turn the flow rate down under 50 liter/min and still achieve the same wash quality and line speed. A 50 per cent savings in water has reduced the burden on their well and helps their settling pond system work much better. By giving the machine operator an easy way to monitor flow, they can keep water use down to agreed-upon rates.

Most water is regulated to vegetable washing machines by a ball valve, which makes a poor flow regulator. Any tiny change in the handle position results in a big change in flow rate. A tip is to add a second ball valve. Use the first as the regulator

and set it to the appropriate flow - leaving it in that position at all times. Then use the second to routinely turn the flow on and off. In combination with a flow meter, this will give a consistent flow without requiring constant adjustments every time the water is turned on.

For more information on water flow assessments or water measuring equipment suitable for your situation contact bruce@farmfoodcare.org or visit the Holland Marsh Growers' Association website at www.hollandmarshgold.com

Bruce Kelly is environmental program manager for Farm & Food Care Ontario.



This photo shows two types of metres - a rotameter (flow meter) and a portable meter.

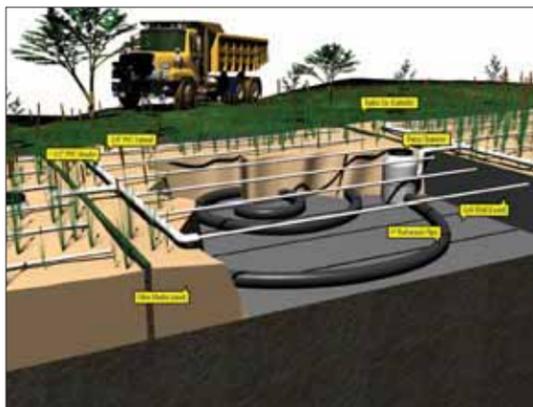
COMING EVENTS 2017

- January 4-6 Potato Expo, San Francisco, CA
- January 10 Ontario Apple Growers' Annual General Meeting, Holiday Inn Toronto International Airport, Toronto, ON
- Jan 10-11 Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association Annual General Meeting, Holiday Inn Toronto International Airport, Toronto, ON
- Jan 17-19 Empire State Producers Expo, Oncenter, Syracuse, NY
- Jan 23-24 Nova Scotia Horticultural Congress, "Building Blocks for Tomorrow's Farms, Old Orchard Inn, Greenwich, NS
- Jan 24 Nova Scotia Fruit Growers' Association Annual Convention, Old Orchard Inn, Greenwich, NS
- Jan 24-26 Manitoba Potato Production Days, Keystone Centre, Brandon, MB
- Jan 26-28 Horticultural Growers' Short Course, Lower Mainland Horticulture Improvement Association together with Pacific Agriculture Show, Tradex Exhibition Centre, Abbotsford, BC
- Jan 26 - 29 Guelph Organic Conference and Trade Show, University Centre, Guelph, ON
- Jan 31-Feb 1 Ontario Processing Vegetable Industry Conference, Four Points by Sheraton, London, ON
- Feb 2 BC Fruit Growers' Association Annual General Meeting, Penticton Lakeside Hotel, Penticton, BC
- Feb 8 - 10 Fruit Logistica, Berlin, Germany
- Feb 9 Simcoe AgKnowledge Day, Bond Head Golf and Country Club, Bond Head, ON
- Feb 15 B.C. Tree Fruit Symposium, Trinity Baptist Church, Kelowna, BC
- Feb 15 AAFC Potato Selection Release Open House, Fredericton, Guelph and Lethbridge, www.agr.gc.ca/potato-cultivars
- Feb 21 Ontario Berry Growers' Association Annual General Meeting, Embassy Suites Hotel, Niagara Falls, ON
- Feb 22 Farmers Markets Ontario Annual General Meeting, "Your Market Success - Taking it to the Next Level," Scotiabank Convention Centre, Niagara Falls, ON
- Feb 22-23 Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Convention, "Innovations to Grow By," Scotiabank Convention Centre, Niagara Falls, ON

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

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

For additional information please contact Lloyd Rozema at 905-327-4571 or email lrozema@aqua-tt.com



RETAIL NAVIGATOR

How retailers justify listing fees



PETER CHAPMAN

It is very expensive to build stores and put fixtures in. Retailers see listing fees as a means to recover costs that they incur up front to build and operate stores, where a supplier's items are sold.

It is also true that listing fees are now part of the profit model in today's retail environment so until they are replaced by something else, they will always be there. For some time, retailers have charged suppliers a listing fee and since then the practice has continued to escalate.

What listing fees buy for suppliers

Essentially, a listing fee will get you the shelf space you agree on for a year. You have one year to prove the item will perform and that it deserves the shelf space you are 'renting.'

That does not mean you don't have to do anything for a year, it means your product will probably not be de-listed for a year. You still must support the item with the promotional program and everything else you can afford, to generate the sales you need to stay on the shelf.

It is unlikely an item will be

de-listed within 12 months of paying listing fees. If the retailer did this, I would go back to ask for some of the listing fees back.

Are all listing fees created equal?

The short answer to this question is - NO.

As with any fee you are asked to pay you should negotiate. There is no printed schedule with listing fees. It really is different by retailer, by department, by category. Experience is the best resource to understand if the fees you are being asked to pay are realistic. In the past we only experienced these fees in the center of the store, however they are now in place throughout the store. Somewhere the merchandisers in fresh produce realized they could command the fees as well.

There are a number of factors that will impact listing fees:

- 1) The number of stores and which formats you want your item to be on the shelf.
- 2) The department where you will be in the store.
- 3) Where you are merchandised



within the category.
 4) The strength of the retailer's control label offerings in the category. If they have strong items, you will have to pay more. They do not want to lose the sales and profit they generate on their items.
 5) The strength of your item. If you have a great unique new item they want they will be much more willing to negotiate. If it is just replacing something else you will pay more.
 6) The competition in the category will influence the fees. Right or wrong, if you are competing against a big company with deep pockets the retailer will charge more because your competition can pay more. This is a frustration for many suppliers as they try to develop and list items. It is

interesting because they blame the retailer when in fact it is the other suppliers who are paying to keep them out.

Peter Chapman is a retail consultant, professional speaker and the author of A la Cart-A suppliers' guide to retailer's priorities. Peter is based in Halifax N.S. where he is the principal at GPS Business Solutions and a partner in SKUfood.com, an on line resource for food producers. Peter works with producers and processors to help them navigate through the retail environment with the ultimate goal to get more of their items in the shopping cart.
pchapman@gpsbusiness.ca

For the full article visit www.thegrower.org



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- Upright plant habit



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- Attractive, large ear size
- Excellent field holding ability
- Strong, beautiful plant
- Glossy, full kernels

FOCUS: GRAPES, VINEYARDS AND BERRIES

Management of mealybugs in vineyards

WENDY McFADDEN-SMITH

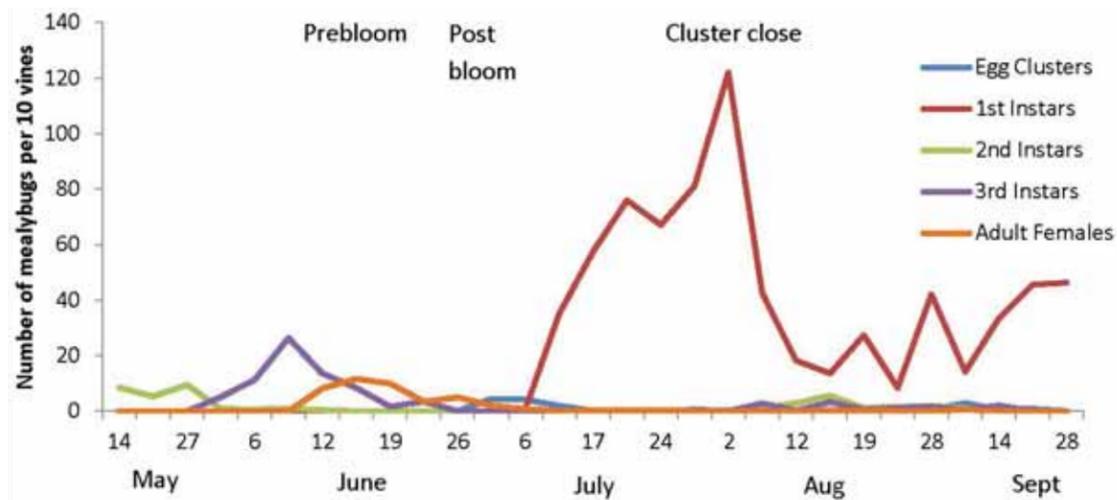
Grape mealybug is a vector of grapevine leafroll associated virus. The insect overwinters as young instars under the bark of vines and resumes development in the spring. When a grape mealybug feeds on an infected vine and then moves to an adjacent healthy vine and feeds, it can transfer some of the virus to the healthy vine and infect it.

The best way to determine whether you have grape mealybugs is to peel back the bark and look for them. The first thing to look for is the white egg masses that were laid last year. These are different from spider nests which are more wispy and webby while mealybug egg masses are more clumped in appearance and may have some yellowish-green fungal growth on them. Examine the egg masses for the presence of first instars, which are very tiny and dark salmon orange-pink in colour. You are more likely to see second instars which have moved away from the egg masses. These are a lighter salmon colour and

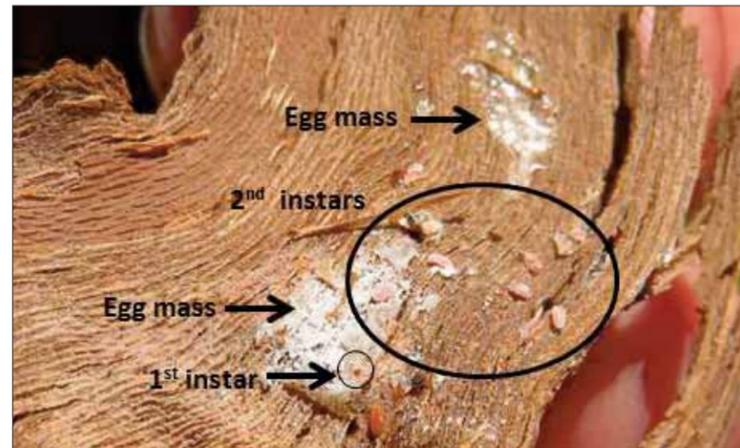
move a lot faster. As the mealybugs go through their stages of development, they become larger and lighter coloured. The adult females are coated in white waxy scales. You may also see a lot of ants if there are mealybugs present as they feed on the sugary secretions mealybugs produce.

The graph shows weekly counts for mealybugs in a heavily infested Cabernet Sauvignon vineyard in 2014. Under Ontario conditions, it appears that mealybugs go into the winter as 1st instars (red line). These develop into 2nd instars by early May and gradually develop into 3rd instars (purple line) and then adults (orange line). The adult females lay clusters of eggs (blue line) which hatch to produce a new batch of 1st instars (red line). The 1st instars are the most efficient vectors of grapevine leafroll virus and are the easiest to kill with insecticide so those are the ones we target. 1st instars first started to develop at fruit set with peak populations at cluster close.

While mealybug crawlers can move only short distances on



their own (between neighbouring vines in the row), they can be picked up by wind and moved to adjacent rows or even adjacent vineyard blocks. Mealybugs can be spread physically on equipment, field crews and tools, and by natural dispersion by birds, animals and wind-blown infested leaves. Address mealybug- and virus- infested, or "high-risk," blocks of vineyards at the end of a work schedule. This could help to avoid spread to other areas. In some grape-growing areas, harvesters are responsible for moving mealybugs from vineyard to vineyard but in Ontario by the time harvest starts, mealybugs are once again under the bark of trunks.



Because the majority of mealybugs are deep under the bark of vines, it is difficult to use products with contact activity to control them. Therefore, the most effective product is Movento because it moves in the vascular tissues of the vine. When applied to foliage after bloom, it moves into the trunk where mealybugs are feeding. Applying it before that time will not result in good movement into the vascular tissues in the trunk because the vine is sending most of its sugars into developing leaves. If you are applying Movento to manage both phylloxera and mealybug, use the prebloom timing for phylloxera and make a second application 30-45 days later.

Development of mealybug is very much dependent on temperature, as is the growth of grapevines, so cool weather in the spring may delay mealybug development: it's best to time the spray relative to vine development rather than the calendar. It takes some time for the Movento to move from leaves to the trunk where the mealybugs are feeding. The best timing for a Movento spray to target the 1st instars as they emerge is just after bloom. A second spray should be applied 30 days later to target the remaining 1st instars as they emerge.

The Movento label states a maximum of 920 mL/ha per season with a rate of 365-585 mL/ha per application. It is registered for control of phylloxera and mealybug and suppression of scales. In trials last year, single full canopy applications of Movento at post bloom at rates of 365, 420 or 460 mL product per ha did not significantly reduce the number of mealybugs in counts done in August. A single application of

500 mL/ha post bloom reduced the number of mealybugs compared to the untreated check. We also tested double applications post bloom and 30 days later with the following combinations: 365/365 mL, 500/420 mL, 420/500 mL and 460/460 mL. The greatest reduction in mealybug populations was achieved with a seasonal total of 920 mL/ha split over two applications. It didn't matter how this was split up post bloom and 30 days later. We will continue to fine tune the rate and timing in research trials in 2016.

Fruit Lecanium scale is the other vector of grape leafroll virus that has been identified in Ontario vineyards. It may be found exposed on canes or under the bark at this time. Young scales are tannish brown and as they mature they become darker brown. Scales are not as good at transmitting grape leafroll virus but they can still contribute to its spread. Some vineyards that were scouted last year had higher populations of scale than mealybug while others were the reverse. Sprays of Clutch, Assail or Malathion will kill exposed scales but there are lots more hiding under the bark so the effect will be minimal. Movento is registered for suppression of scales on grapes. The timing and rate are the same as for mealybug.

This article first appeared in ONFruit. Subscribe to the blog by going to: ONFruit.wordpress.com and entering your email address where it says "Subscribe by email." You will receive email notification when new articles are posted.

Wendy McFadden-Smith is OMAFRA's Horticulture IPM specialist focussing on tender fruit and grapes.



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FOCUS: GRAPES, VINEYARDS AND BERRIES

Understand the land to produce wines with character

KAREN DAVIDSON

The chains of office sit well on Jamie Quai, Ontario's 2016 Grape King. It's safe to say that Quai du Vin Estate Winery is no longer the biggest little winery no has heard of. The award shines a light on the 22-acre vineyard south of St. Thomas, Ontario, part of the Lake Erie North Shore appellation. It's only the second time in 61 years that the award has been endowed to a grape grower outside the Niagara Peninsula.

For those familiar with the history of the provincial grape industry, this award rewards excellent vineyard management and knowledge of the grape-growing industry. To qualify for a nomination, the vineyard must be at least 10 acres in size.

Thanks to the foresight of parents Roberto and Lisa and to his grandparents who first planted vines in 1972, Jamie Quai grew up on the farm and after his academic career, is now co-proprietor, vigneron and winemaker. The vineyard was a surprising venture in those days, surrounded by cash crop and dairy farms south of St. Thomas,

Ontario. But the quest for the right piece of property – clay loam soil at the top of a moraine within seven kilometres of Lake Erie – was a keen bet on future success.

"We haven't invested in wind machines," says Jamie Quai, "because only three times in 44 years have frosts economically damaged our vines. I believe in the technology, but we don't need it here due to our elevation. Our bud break is typically six to 10 days after Niagara."

It's that close observation of local conditions and detail that has earned the respect of fellow growers. When judges visited the site last July, they noted a number of key attributes.

First, the Quai family and their employees have been fine-tuning varieties, starting with a replant program in the 1980s. For example, rather than buy Baco Noir grapes from fellow growers, they have nurtured several small blocks of Baco Noir.

"We've done a better job of thinking about what we're going to produce for the market," says Quai. For example, about an acre and a half closest to the winery is devoted to Aurore, a white grape hybrid that's not well known in



Jamie Quai, Quai du Vin Estate Winery, Ontario's 2016 Grape King, is pictured with the white varietal Seve Villard, near St. Thomas, Ontario. These vines were planted by Quai's grandparents in 1978, a symbol of generations of hard work. Seve Villard is a minor hybrid used for blending in production. Quai gravitated towards the science of viticulture and winemaking when he studied Oenology and Viticulture at the Cool Climate Oenology and Viticulture Institute at Brock University.

“ I think the last ten years were about defining who we are. I think the next ten years will be defining what we're not. There are defined limits to what we can do well.

~ JAMIE QUAI

Ontario. There might be only 50 acres in all of the province, but for Quai's money, the varietal is a good example of how to take a \$10 bottle of wine and improve it to \$14.

Aurore is a challenging grape due to its thin skins and propensity to split with excessive rains. During the last seven years, Quai has tamed its high acidity levels and brought the varietal into balance.

"We were overcropping this grape," explains Quai. "By changing the four-cane trellis system to a vertical shoot system, I cut the yield by 30 per cent but allowed more sunlight into the canopy. There's now more flavour."

Consistent yields of 4.2 to 4.4 tonnes per acre are now achieved, a common standard with hybrids. No chemical manipulation is required in the wine-making. Labour committed to this vineyard has doubled, however the payoff is in a higher price point on the wine.

"Good wine is easier to sell than bad wine," quips Quai.

Other management practices captured the interest of the Grape King judges. Quai works hard at

biodiversity, encouraging a neighbouring apiary to locate beehives in the vineyard. While beehives are not needed to pollinate grapes, they do play an important part in the ecosystem, foraging on the permanent sod of white clover planted between the vines.

This practice has prompted a rethink of the entire spraying program and its timing. For example, Quai outfits his airblast sprayer with a "donut" – a wooden donut placed on the back of the fan to lessen the air volume while spraying. This technique is helpful in the early season to control fast-moving mist of spray droplets.

"Where possible, we use gentler spray treatments," says Quai. Rather than use a systemic spray every two weeks, he rotates between a systemic and contact spray.

Over the years, the clay soil has been a boon for water retention as well as nutrients. Organic matter is measured at anywhere between 2.5 to 4 per cent in the vineyard. No granular fertilizers have been used in the last eight years. "Earthworms are the best regulator of nutrients,"

says Quai. "Micro-nutrients are added if necessary."

Quai's intimate knowledge of his vineyard is enhanced with knowledge obtained from trial programs. Every year, several rows are donated for research to trial new sprays and techniques.

Being awarded Grape King 2016 has bestowed additional benefits. "This is incredible validation and has reinforced our customers' pride in the product," says Quai. The winery produces about 2500 to 3000 cases of wine per year, sold mostly through the on-farm winery. However, first deliveries of a VQA Signature White were delivered to the Liquor Control Board of Ontario last fall.

"With grocery retailing of wine in the future, we want to know how the LCBO system works," says Quai.

With characteristic insight, Quai talks about the future of the Ontario grape industry. "I think the last 10 years were about defining who we are. I think the next 10 years will be defining what we're not. There are defined limits to what we can do well."



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FOCUS: GRAPES, VINEYARDS AND BERRIES

Future Nova Scotia wines will be positioned to meet the market

KAREN DAVIDSON

The Nova Scotia wine industry is rising on the tides of consumer favour. The Tidal



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has taught me to go back to the output of each vine."

Sparkes is one of the driving forces in the Nova Scotia industry, bringing his pan-Canadian business and marketing experience to the area in 2011. With around 300 acres under vine with Jost, Gaspereau, Mercator and contract grower vineyards, he

that 49 per cent of Nova Scotians drink Nova Scotia wine at some point during the year.

That's a base to work from. He wants to build a stronger beachhead in Atlantic Canada and in the New England states. Still wines are really not a big export number in Canada – it's about 100,000 cases -- so there's a lot of room to grow.



What a recipe for pairing with the brininess and richness of seafood.

Most of the 70 grape growers are never far from the waters of the Bay of Fundy, at most about 12 miles. So the combination of salty breezes and rolling terroir contribute to a distinct cool-climate region like no other in Canada.

"2016 was the best harvest we've ever had in my experience in this industry," says Carl Sparkes, owner of Devonian Coast Wineries, referring to the hot, dry summer. "Our yields varied by varietal, but we were 20 per cent ahead of our five-year average. Tonnage by acre is misleading though. Our viticulturist Jonathan Rodwell

and his wife Donna now have five seasons of data under their belts.

"We've inherited 30 years of experimentation in the industry," says Sparkes. "But not all vines are where the market is going in the future. High-acid red grapes must be sweetened and the market is not there for that. I've taken an aggressive position with our own as well as growers' vineyards that we need a replant program."

The vision is for cool-climate, crisp, aromatic whites that pair well with local seafood. Sparkes is pragmatic about the business, forecasting that more marketing needs to be done to capture the domestic market. He's upbeat that surveys show

While the cachet of international sales may appear alluring, Sparkes is leery of the marketing investment required to educate the Chinese market to get beyond red wines and ice wines.

Next step, for him, is to rip up some acreage and replace old red hybrids with new white ones. He is planning 20 to 25 acres replanting for the next two years.

"It's a tough call to ask growers to pay the whole shot of replanting," he says. That's where the Winery Association of Nova Scotia's strategic plan asks for some government funding support.

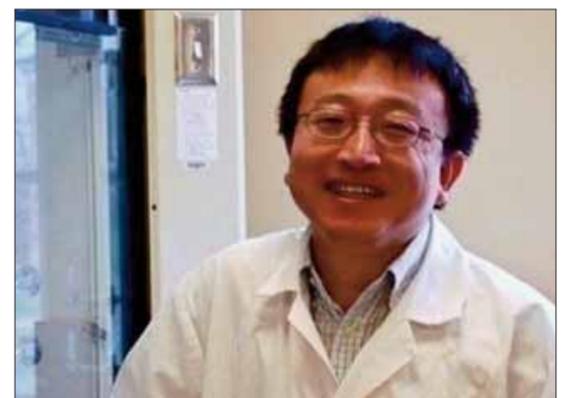
New wine research lab opens in Nova Scotia

Nova Scotia's grape industry is maturing with infrastructure designed to hone the science and craft. In March 2016, the federal and provincial governments announced \$487,960 over two years for a new wine research lab at Acadia University, Wolfville. Officially called Acadia Laboratory for Agri-Food and Beverage (ALAB), it's now up and running and is headed by Dr. Anthony Tong.

"My research focuses on flavour and fragrance analysis of different wines," says Tong. "In a cool climate such as Nova Scotia, there's not enough time for grapes to come to full maturity, so we tend to have more acids and less sugar in our wines. We're looking to the change of flavouring compounds during the fermentation process and investigating ways to improve the quality."

Potential research partners include food scientists, dietitians, biochemists, plant physiologists and producers of food and beverages.

"Having access to lab facilities here in Nova Scotia has been identified as a priority by the Nova Scotia Wine Development Board," said Keith Colwell, Nova Scotia agriculture minister when the lab opened. "They know this will help to build knowledge and expertise right here that can help the industry grow."



Dr. Anthony Tong

Currently, there are 23 wineries and 94 grape producers in Nova Scotia. The province's wineries produce about one million litres of wine annually with sales of \$15.4 million in 2015.

Early in 2017, Tong expects to have a service list published so that local growers can track such characteristics as organic acids, brix, sugar profile, volatile organic compounds and phenolic compounds. For more information, go to alab.acadiau.ca.

FOCUS: GRAPES, VINEYARDS AND BERRIES

Berry breeding: the new model



SUKH KAHLON

For more than 50 years, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) operated a successful berry breeding program at the Agassiz Research and Development Center (ARDC) in British Columbia (BC). When it was announced that the Agassiz program would be terminated and the breeder position would no longer be funded after 2012 -- with the view of centralizing all berry breeding activity in Kentville, Nova Scotia -- BC berry industry leaders voiced the need for the continuation of the program. A successful breeding program was seen as vital to remaining globally competitive, and to take advantage of export opportunities.

The Fraser Valley produces 95 per cent of Canada's high-bush blueberries, 70 per cent of raspberries, and is a significant producer of strawberries with total farm gate value for the three commodities exceeding \$200 million. With such a large presence of the berry industry in BC, the berry commodity groups felt they needed a berry breeding program that could respond to their regional needs. In fact the berry groups have identified berry breeding as the single most important research priority for the industry. The industry sees genetics research vital to addressing yield improvements, disease resistance, extending harvest windows, and adapting to climate change. Genetics is also fundamental in improving quality characteristics such as taste, firmness, handling, storage, and shelf life.

The berry groups came together under the umbrella group Lower Mainland Horticulture Industry Association (LMHIA) to

negotiate a new life on the breeding program at Agassiz. It was to be a 'new model' -- with industry providing the leadership and direction -- while AAFC contributed facilities and technical assistance. In 2013, the industry hired a berry breeder, Dr. Michael Dossett through a funding partnership with AAFC under the Agriculture Innovation Program.

Dr. Michael Dossett continues to work out of AAFC in Agassiz using the existing facilities. He is making significant progress in developing new varieties for BC. His work involves both germplasm development and cultivar finishing. BC growers collaborate by evaluating varietal selections and by providing sites for field trials.

The commodity organization make a 25 per cent contribution to the funding model to sustain the program.

A berry breeding committee, made up of industry members, has provided direction. Priorities for new cultivars are set based on industry needs as identified by each commodity group. The raspberry industry for example has focused on developing varieties that allow for machine harvestability, have firmness, root rot tolerance and resistance to raspberry bushy dwarf virus.

While the berry breeding committee is trying to address the needs of the regional industry, it is actively seeking partnership and collaborations with industry, government and academia nationally and internationally. Dr. Dossett has been working with the Quebec strawberry and raspberry industry to trial our varieties in Quebec. He also has ongoing projects to develop genomic resources and markers for breeding with scientists in Washington and Oregon. As the

program evolves, there will be greater focus to tie in with AAFC national priorities, collaborations with academia, and developing opportunities to launch projects with other berry growing region of Canada. The industry would also like to see more collaboration with the Kentville Research and Development Center with respect to germplasm work.

The second part of plant breeding is protecting intellectual property, and commercializing promising varieties. A commercialization entity, BC Berry Cultivar Development Inc., has been established (BCBCDI). It has replaced the berry breeding committee in managing the breeding program. In the long run, the entity expects to generate revenue from sales royalties to help support the program.

For now, as we are so early in the innovation continuum, the industry will continue to rely on government funding for support, and very much values its partnership with AAFC. The arrival of new scientists at ARDC is a positive development as it enhances capacity at the Center. The industry is very supportive of bringing new resource to the Center so that regional agriculture community research priorities can be met.

The 'new model' of berry genetics research, with industry leadership and a focus on maintaining and developing partnerships with government, academia, and other Industry players, has the structure to be responsive to user needs. There is a sense of urgency to develop berry varieties based on market needs to give a competitive edge to the berry industry in the Fraser Valley.

Sukh Kahlon is chair of the British Columbia Berry Cultivar Development Inc and a B.C. raspberry and blueberry grower.

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Raspberry cultivars for high tunnel production

ERIC HANSON AND
JOSH MOSES

Growers in the Upper Midwest and Northeast United States need raspberry cultivars with improved production and/or quality. Cultivars developed for production on primocanes in the fall may also offer opportunities for floricanes production (double cropping). Double cropping is of particular interest now because the summer floricanes crop often is too early for severe infestation by spotted wing drosophila.

We have grown newer raspberry cultivars in containers under a high tunnel to more rapidly assess their potential. Plants are being grown in a Haygrove high tunnel in Benton Harbor, Mich. using three-

gallon plastic Gro-bags filled with a 70 per cent composted pine bark and 30 per cent peat media. Each bag is irrigated multiple times a day with a 0.5 gph emitter and fertilized via fertigation with a complete soluble fertilizer delivering 100 ppm nitrogen. The tunnel is covered with Luminance THB plastic from late April until harvest concludes in late October. Plants are over-wintered by either placing them in a cooler on site or stacking the plants on their side in the uncovered tunnel and covering the pile with a thick row cover. Several cultivars were pruned completely for primocane fruiting only. A smaller group of cultivars were pruned for double cropping by retaining two floricanes per plant. Plants are supported by sandwiching canes between

Effects of cultivar on primocane berry weight, appearance (1=unsalable to 5=excellent), and percentage of berries that were soft or leaky, or moldy, after 48 h at 18°C. Berries were grown in pots under high tunnels in southwest Mich., 2016. Most are means of four replications on each of four dates.

Cultivar	g/berry	Appearance	% soft/leaky	% moldy
BP-1	2.3	2.9	10.1	11.3
Crimson Night	2.4	3.6	10.9	5.9
Double Gold	2.7	3.7	11.4	2.8
Josephine	3.6	2.9	8.7	5.8
Imara	2.7	3.6	4.1	4.3
Kwali	3.4	4.4	3.7	1.6
Kwanza	3.8	4.2	0.8	2.3
Nantahala	3.0	2.0	16.4	20.8
Vintage	2.5	3.0	7.6	13.7

Floricanes (FL) and primocane (PR) yields (g/plant) from potted raspberries in high tunnels, Benton Harbor, MI. Plants spacing was 1.5 x 6 feet.

Cultivar	2015			2016		
	FL	PR	Total	FL	PR	Total
Encore	430	--	430	1140	--	1140
Imara	--	--	--	1230	1720	2950
Josephine	600	300	900	1050	1220	2270
Kweli	--	--	--	1560	1680	3240
Kwanza	--	--	--	1430	930	2360
Nantahala	440	300	740	640	1120	1760
Nova	510	40	550	1240	550	1790
Prelude	340	--	340	820	1260	2080

horizontal lines of twine running down each side of the row at different heights. Fruit were picked by hand two to four times per week. Fruit were weighed and subsamples were held for 24 to 48 hours at 18°C in high humidity. Fruit were then rated for appearance, weighed, and sorted into marketable, soft or leaky, and moldy.

RESULTS

CRIMSON NIGHT (NY 2012). This is a red raspberry variety that produces unique deep red fruit with very good flavour that may have value as a specialty product. It is reported to be very productive in high tunnels, and is suggested for farm marketers and homeowners. Harvest time is similar to Heritage. In southern Michigan tunnels, berries had an attractive uniform dark colour and shape, and glossy surface. Drupelets were small and flavour was mild and pleasant. Primocane harvest appeared later than Heritage.

DOUBLE GOLD (NY 2012). This variety was released primarily for its unusual golden champagne-coloured berries and is suggested for farm marketers and homeowners looking for a unique colour. Berries in southwest Michigan tunnels were very attractive, uniform in

shape, with a pleasant flavour, but somewhat soft. Primocane harvest was very late.

IMARA (The Netherlands). This new variety appears to ripen in the mid-season. In southwest Michigan tunnels, berries were very firm with a uniform medium red colour, glossy surface and excellent flavour. Primocane and floricanes yields were high and berries from both seasons had an excellent shelf life.

KWELI (The Netherlands). This is a newer early to mid-season type. In tunnels in southwest Michigan, berries were very firm with a uniform medium to darker red colour, excellent flavour, and very good shelf life. Kweli produced high yields of both floricanes and primocane fruit, and has promise for double cropping.

KWANZA (The Netherlands). This is a late season new variety. In pots under a southern Michigan tunnel, plants were very productive and vigorous. Berries were very large, round, and lighter red with a glossy surface. Drupelets were larger, giving berries a coarse appearance. Flavour and firmness were very good and berries had an excellent shelf-life. Since the primocane crop is late maturing, Kwanza may have limited value

in short season areas unless grown under tunnels.

NANTAHALA (NC 2010). Nantahala is late season type with large, light to medium red berries, with a dull finish and excellent flavour. In pot culture under tunnels in southwest Michigan, berries were relatively susceptible to gray mold and powdery mildew. Primocane fruit may mature too late for good yields in field plantings. Some doubling of fruit may occur in tunnels.

BP-1 (Italy). This is a new early variety. Observations from potted plants in a southern Michigan tunnel indicate berries have a nice flavour but are somewhat dark and soft, with a tendency to crumble. Canes were short and branched so the floricanes production potential is probably low.

VINTAGE (OR 2013). This new type appears to mature in the late season. In pot culture in Michigan tunnels, yields were low to average. Berries are a very attractive bright, medium red colour, with excellent flavour and uniform shape.

Eric Hanson and Josh Moses are with the Department of Horticulture, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI

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BERRY FOCUS

Berry meetings in February

Don't miss these opportunities to be informed! The Ontario Berry Growers Association Annual Meeting on Tuesday, February 21, 2017 at the Embassy Suites and the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Conference on February 22-23, 2017 at the Scotiabank Convention Centre, are both in Niagara Falls. The program agendas are now posted on line at OFVC.ca.

Two days of berry programming with grower panels, guest speakers and round table discussions will

bring you up-to-date on what berry growers need to know. On the third day, February 23, programs on Specialty Berries, Nematodes and Soil Pest Management will be of interest to berry growers. Please register for the OBGGA annual meeting and the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Conference separately.

For more information, see www.ofvc.ca and contact the Ontario Berry Growers Association by email info@ontarioberries.com or phone 613-258-4587.

A few program highlights for the Ontario Berry Growers Meetings Feb 21-22

Here are some of the guest speakers for this year's berry programs in Niagara Falls.

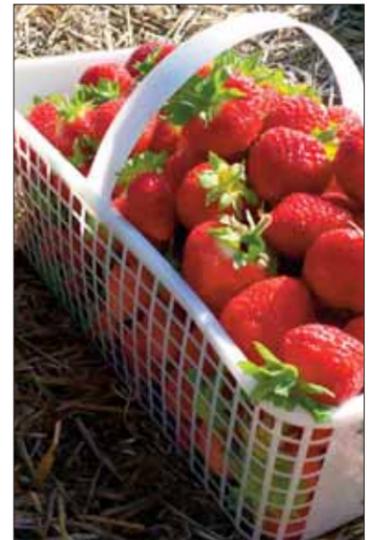
- Justin Renkema is an entomologist with the Gulf Coast Research and Education Center in Florida. Justin began his career here in Ontario working on Spotted Wing Drosophila. He will be speaking on thrips, spider mites and cyclamen mite management in strawberries.
- Susan Chan is an entomologist with Farms at Work, near

Peterborough. She has a passion for pollinators and will be speaking about creating habitat for bees and beneficials around your farm.

- Amanda McWhirt is a horticulture extension specialist at the University of Arkansas. Her recent research on sustainable soil management for berry crops will convince you that investing in soil health is practical and rewarding.
- Randy Beaudry is a researcher at Michigan State University whose research focuses on improving post-

harvest quality of horticultural crops. Always an entertaining speaker, Dr. Beaudry will make sure you are up-to-date on what's important for excellent berry quality and shelf life.

These are just a few of the speakers who will be joining berry growers for the two-day program on Feb 21 and 22. For more information see www.ofvc.ca



Denise Beaton is the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs crop protection specialist.

Learning the lingo - what is an MRL?

DENISE BEATON

We use a lot of acronyms in our daily life! You may have heard "MRL" before, especially if you grow an edible crop. But do you know what it means?

MRL stands for "Maximum Residue Limit," which refers to the maximum amount of pesticide residue that may remain on food after a pesticide is applied as per label directions and which can safely be consumed.

When you apply a pesticide to a crop, a residue may still remain on that crop at harvest time. Health Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) reviews studies that show residue levels found in food (raw and processed) when the pesticide was used according to label directions. The PMRA assesses whether the food with these pesticide residues can be safely consumed. The PMRA sets the MRL well below a level that may cause harm to human health. The MRL is specific for every pesticide-crop combination and is regulated by the PMRA through the federal Pest Control Products Act. Until an MRL is established, the PMRA uses a default MRL of 0.1 ppm.

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) is responsible for enforcing the MRLs established by the PMRA. The CFIA conducts an Agricultural Chemical Residue Sampling Program that involves monitoring and compliance. Every year it tests about 10,000 samples of imported and domestic fruits and vegetables for pesticide residues.

OMAFRA's Food Inspection Branch also conducts an annual Produce Food Safety Monitoring Program which involves collecting Ontario-grown fresh fruits and vegetables and testing them for pesticide residues and pathogenic organisms (e.g., *Listeria monocytogenes*, *E. coli* O157:H7). Samples are randomly collected from retail points of sale across the province including roadside stands, farmers' markets,

wholesalers and farm gate sales. About 250 samples are analyzed for more than 500 agricultural chemicals and compared to Health Canada's MRLs. A risk-based approach is used to determine the type and number of commodities collected. Factors taken into consideration include consumption patterns, cooking patterns, outbreak data and history of non-compliance. Chemical non-compliance triggers notification letters and potentially an on-farm visit by a Risk Management Specialist depending on the outcome of a risk assessment. Ministry staff work with the grower to determine the source of the contamination and to implement preventive measures. Summaries of Food Safety Monitoring Program results can be found at www.ontario.ca/producesafety.

Applying a pesticide at a higher rate or applying too many applications or too close to harvest are some scenarios that can lead to a violation of an MRL (residues that are too high). No one wants a violation. If you decide to apply a pesticide, it is important that you follow the most current label directions, because labels can change.

When exporting your food product, you need to be aware of the importing country's MRLs because their MRLs may be different than our Canadian MRLs. Know which pesticides have lower MRLs or no established MRLs. You may want to avoid using these pesticides and choose an alternative.

There are various ways you can find MRL information:

- Search PMRA's MRL database at <http://pr-rp.hc-sc.gc.ca/mrl-lrm/index-eng.php> This database provides information on established Canadian MRLs. You can search by individual pesticide-commodity combinations or by multiple pesticides and crops. In this database, you may find MRLs for certain pesticides or uses that are not registered for use in Ontario (Canada). These MRLs

are for food products that are imported into Canada and that may contain these pesticide residues. It does not mean you can use that pesticide on that particular crop here. Always refer to the current Canadian pesticide label for uses allowed in Ontario (Canada) (PMRA label search database: <http://pr-rp.hc-sc.gc.ca/lr-re/index-eng.php>).

- Global MRL Database at www.globalmrl.com

This database provides free access to U.S. MRL information. Check with your grower organization for other countries' MRL information as they may have access.

- Agricultural Chemical Companies can provide MRL information for their products. The companies' contact information is found on the pesticide labels, company websites and in our OMAFRA crop protection guides.

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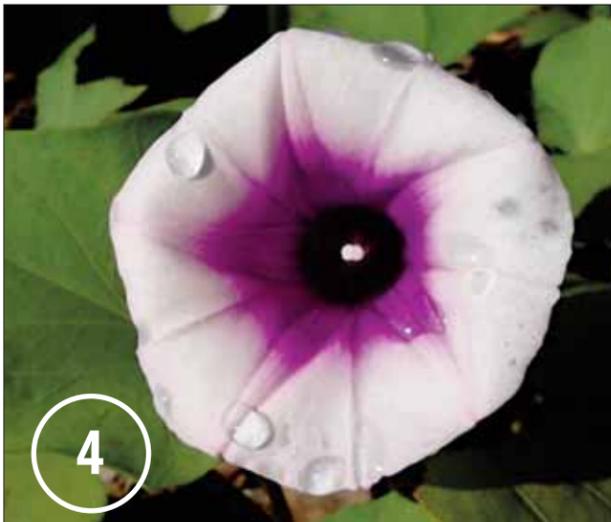
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POLLINATION

Ontario launches plan to protect pollinators

The Ontario government published its Pollinator Health Action Plan on December 16. The action plan outlines strong steps Ontario will take to help pollinators thrive, including:

- Restoring and protecting one million acres of pollinator habitat across the province
- Supporting new pollinator health research
- Collecting more data to better monitor managed honey bee colonies and wild pollinators, and to track neonicotinoid levels in the environment
- Consulting to modernize the province's legislative framework on beekeeping, which may include modernized tools for pest and disease management

The plan builds on the province's ongoing work to protect pollinators, including providing production insurance for beekeepers and reducing the use of neonicotinoid-treated seeds in the agricultural industry. It also supports the work being done by Ontario farmers to protect the environment, including pollinators, through on-farm Environmental Plan Projects.



Some additional context:

- Ontario's pollinators include wild bumblebees, managed honey bees, solitary bees, butterflies and moths, some beetles and flies.
- Ontario is home to more than 400 bee species, which are the most common pollinators.
- On July 1, 2015, Ontario became the first jurisdiction in North America to protect bees and other pollinators through new rules to reduce the number of acres planted with neonicotinoid-treated corn and soybean seeds by 80 per cent by 2017.
- Ontario farmers have completed more than 23,900 on-farm Environmental Plan Projects since 2005, including projects such as building wind breaks and planting cover crops to boost pollinator health. The province and the federal government have invested \$99 million to support these plans.
- Many crops such as apples, cherries, peaches, plums, cucumbers, asparagus, squash,

pumpkins and melons rely on pollinators.

Photo courtesy of Jamie Quai

Source: Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food, and Rural Affairs.



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Dealing with the aftermath



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In light of recent events, it behooves us to look back in time for guidance. No matter how horrific the atrocities were during WWII, the allies worked with the new leaders of those former enemy nations to rebuild their economies. Even when the Berlin airlift had to be instituted to get supplies into a freezing and starving city, the U.S. and U.K. 'victors' gave mightily when they too had needy folks back home. Britain had even harsher rationing after the war than during it. Coal was hard to find and a coal miners' strike didn't help, yet coal by the ton was flown in to Berlin nonetheless. It was hard for many cold Londoners to fathom that British coal could be sent to Berlin, while they too were in need.

It may not have been 'forgive and forget' but it was recognition that life had to go on, that not everyone was culpable for the awful things that happened in the war, and that men, women and children of beaten nations were nonetheless still vulnerable.

So too it is with the current political climate of Canada, when it comes to government regulatory challenges. There are many vulnerable amongst us including farmers who stand to lose many vital pest control agents, and for seemingly less than acceptable reasons. There are going to be some drawn out and heated battles over the approaches taken, the data used, (some will say mis-used) and the whole climate of re-evaluation. It will matter not

who ultimately 'wins' or 'loses' in the final outcome. What matters more is that we will all have to continue to work together down the road. There will always be more re-evaluations and more issues to resolve. It is always much better to work in a friendly, respectful, and collegial manner to accomplish more. When current events lead to a breakdown of this working as a team, everyone stands to lose.

The ultimate loss could become staggering if as a result of the current situation, Canada becomes a tiny island in the international pest management world.

Just imagine what would occur if registrants walked away from further investment here if/when our system, for better or for worse, regains its old reputation. Not so long ago, when I went to international meetings, Canada was decried as an extremely unpredictable and slow place to attempt new registrations. We were last on the list, or never made it onto the list of places to register a new active ingredient. A lot of hard work changed that around, and Canada is considered a leader today in global registrations. Or at least up until a short time ago.

So what has happened and what needs to change? In a nutshell, workloads built up and timelines were not being met. Complex reviews made things even worse. The Canadian court system ruled that more than 30 'special reviews' needed to be done because our law said so, notwithstanding these activities had already been recently reviewed here. We were hoisted on our own petard.

Things got out of hand, data was pouring in before, during and too often after deadlines. Much of it was missing critical deadlines, so all of a sudden (it seemed like overnight) final versions of reviews were created hastily and began hitting the streets, and they were contentious to say the least. (It really proved the old adage that while there is seemingly never enough time to get it right, it

can always be done again later.) Growers and registrants were gob-smacked by the many proposals that came out in 2016 and the short timeframes for responses -- often required from the same people, and they became understandably quite irritable as a result.

The response by PMRA was then to offer up changes to the re-evaluation process, but only for new reviews starting after Dec. 1st 2016! Since then even more contentious proposals have come out (of the blue in some cases) that could 'sink the ship' unless major changes are made to them. The court of public opinion doesn't hold out much hope of that under the current regime.

So, we are at an impasse. Each 'side' will hold its ground and it will become politically adversarial, like 30 years ago. Nobody actually wants that to happen, but just like negotiating a union contract, the heels have already got dug in- on both sides. Growers stand to lose major control products for reasons that are hard to accept to be scientifically valid. The PMRA has put a (actually several lately) proposal to cancel a slew of uses based on their summations and calculations of data that so far have not even been openly shared with stakeholders. This defies the promise of the revised approaches including transparency, and at the very least that needs to be corrected.

If it does indeed get political, there become visible 'winners' and 'losers.' Animosity may linger a long time and affect other work down the road. Growers will continue to live in uncertainty about what is available to use next week and next year. They will be concerned about what the effect will be for their pest control programs, what resistance issues may arise, and whether by using alternatives they will freeze themselves out of foreign markets, and/or risk the crop if the alternative is weaker.

That is a lot to consider. It is even worse to consider when

you have no faith that the process leading to that situation was fair, the data was created and analyzed fairly, that the interests of all (everybody) were considered in the process, and that the proposals could bring all players to a respectful acceptance.

If the shoe is on the other foot, it is often difficult for managers to rein in their enthusiastic staff and it may create hard feelings there as well if their work is re-examined. After all, the conclusions of their reviews were approved originally by someone in authority. It is assumed they followed the policies laid out internally. The use of worst case scenarios and cherry-picked worst case data was agreed upon. The most sensitive species were selected as the proverbial 'canary in the coal mine' for toxicity ratings. (Even though there was no proof offered that such species actually exist in each and every site where data was collected.) In other words, how can anyone assail the conclusions- they are perfect (in their own minds' eyes at least).

Therein lies the problem: The rock and the hard place. One or both sides need to change positions on some or all of the conclusions. Past history tells me that is going to be tough to accomplish. The folks who created the document also are the ones to review the comments, accept or deny them, and create the final outcome. That smacks of at

least a vested interest, and possibly a conflict of interest.

Maybe what is needed in cases like this are teams of qualified external third-party reviewers to do a review of the whole approach to the work. Maybe both antagonists can accept any outcome better if it came from someone else besides each other.

Regardless, when the final outcomes of the current passel of re-evaluations do come out, there will be angst somewhere. It is going to take a lot to overcome the feelings that have been engendered through and by this process. We have to get it right, or the consequences for Canada are serious indeed.

And, there will be a lot more coming down the road as the second round of re-evaluations is starting even before round one is complete.

In the longer term we will all be much better off if a solution to this mess leaves all parties in a position to move ahead. Yes, we will need to work together, but healing the proverbial wounds would be a long drawn-out process, and it is so needless when if, by working together now, we don't even need that healing because we reached agreements together in the first place.

In the aftermath of war, nations trade: yes. But healing of wounds and fading of memories often takes a generation or two. Preventing the war in the first place means having no aftermath to fret about.

Flower quiz answers

From page 22

1. Pears (Denis Cahill)
2. Field peppers (Glenn Lowson)
3. Blueberries (Glenn Lowson)
4. Sweet potatoes
5. Hops
6. Raspberries



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MINOR USE

News MRLs for blueberry exports to EU

The European Union has established Maximum Residue Limits for Quash fungicide, containing metconazole, on blueberries, potatoes, and other crops.

Lowbush blueberry growers in eastern Canada who export to the European Union (EU) can now use Quash fungicide, containing metconazole, to control key diseases with the recent establishment of Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs) for metconazole.

Quash (metconazole) is a Group 3 fungicide, developed and registered by Valent Canada, Inc., that delivers preventative and curative control of

mummyberry and anthracnose, and suppression of phomopsis in highbush and lowbush blueberries. Quash moves into foliage with locally systemic and translaminar activity providing preventative and curative control.

“Quash offers growers an economical option for controlling the most devastating disease affecting Canadian blueberries,” says Sabrina Bladon, eastern marketing manager for Nufarm Agriculture Inc. “The EU MRLs offer lowbush blueberry growers an additional approved tool for their resistance management fungicide program.”



An important part of an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program, Quash delivers broad-spectrum disease control of economically important diseases in one low-use rate. Quash provides good residual activity, protecting blueberries during the

infection period. Quash is also registered for use on a range of crops including potatoes and canola. For more information, consult the complete product label at www.nufarm.ca/product/quash/
Source: Nufarm news release

BIOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT

Spotted-Wing Drosophila: focus of Canadian webinar series

Spotted-wing drosophila (SWD), first identified in Canada in 2009, is an invasive species resulting in lost revenues for fruit growers. A national technical working group (SWD-TWG) has been championing research and communication since 2012. It's a partnership between the Canadian Horticultural Council and AAFC's Pest Management Centre.

While the first webinar has already occurred for Nova

Scotia and Quebec (December 13, 2016) three more sessions are scheduled for January and February across Canada. Growers are invited to participate by phone. The two-hour webinar will focus on tree fruits in mid-January, berries in mid-February and wrap up in late February with novel technologies. These regional and commodity-specific webinars address the different experiences across Canada and the research that's

been accomplished to date.

“There's been lots of global work done on this pest, but it's important for our growers to know the regional work that's been done across Canada,” says Tracy Hueppelsheuser, entomologist for BC's Ministry of Agriculture. “Our intent, through these webinars, is to share what has been learned, identify the gaps we still have in knowledge and management and determine what the next steps are towards sustainable

management of this pest.”

The discussion in these forums will be useful to inform funding requests under Growing Forward 3.

Registration will be on a first-come, first-served basis. For details on final dates and times, please contact Tracy Hueppelsheuser, BC Ministry of Agriculture or Leslie Farmer, Pest Management Center – AAFC or look to www.thegrower.org for updates as available.



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BITS AND BITES

Dispute Resolution Corporation answers a question about cross-docking

Q. We are a Montreal buyer trying to resolve a claim with a freight contractor who cross-docked a load in Michigan without our prior consent. The FOB load arrived on schedule with bad temperatures. We stamped the Bill of Lading (BOL) “received under protest” due to warm temperatures and secured a timely CFIA inspection.

The results of the inspection show that the product failed to meet good arrival guidelines. After handling the product, we presented our losses to the freight contractor, but they will not honour the claim as the temperature recorder download only registered warm temperatures when the load was cross-docked.

We explained to the freight contractor that there is no evidence the load was loaded warm at shipping point, they

broke the cold chain, and we have warm product which failed DRC Good Arrival Guidelines due to temperature related defects. Do they have grounds to refuse the claim?

A. (Answer provided by Jaime Bustamante, Trading Assistance Officer)

Cross-docking is a common practice used due to some carriers not being able to cross borders or to save costs by partnering a long haul carrier to

a major distribution point with a regional carrier. Unfortunately, cross docking may break the cold chain and, in some cases, cause the load to lose its identity.

In our opinion, because the load was cross-docked without the buyer's consent, the freight contractor does not have a valid objection. Not only does the freight contractor not know what temperature conditions the product was exposed to during unloading and re-loading but the carrier delivered warm

product without evidence of product having been loaded warm.

It is imperative that regardless of whether cross-docking is agreed upon, a procedure is established ahead of time to document temperatures when unloaded and reloaded, to maintain the cold chain and to maintain the identity of the load. Once unloaded most products are difficult to positively identify and because the shipper is responsible for

approving any truck it loads; putting the load on another truck likely removes any potential claim with the shipper. In addition, it is also essential that parties are made aware of cross-docking and that it is agreed to in advance.

While in this case you may have recourse with the freight contractor, as an FOB buyer you do not want to lose the right to claim damages against a shipper whose product is not loaded in sound condition.

Labour and health issues

Did you know that Canada's fresh produce industry needs another 29,000 workers? Did you know that Canada is the only G7 country without some form of national fruit and vegetable health/nutrition policy?

These were the key issues that industry leaders from the Canadian Produce Marketing Association (CPMA) and the Canadian Horticultural Council (CHC) discussed with more than 50 parliamentarians and civil servants in Ottawa last fall. Both issues are critical for the industry and have severe implications on the cost and quality of produce for the Canadian consumer.

“Currently, the horticulture sector needs an extra 29,000 workers to function properly,” added Keith Kuhl, president, Canadian Horticultural Council. “The federal government needs to recognize that Canada's agricultural industry relies on temporary foreign worker programs to get workers it can't find in Canada, and that these programs need to improve.”

“As the only G7 country without some form of national fruit and vegetable health/nutrition policy, we believe that it is time the federal government act to ensure that Canadians are consuming the recommended amount of servings as outlined in Canada's Food Guide,” stated Sam Silvestro, chair, CPMA. “A balanced diet rich in fruits and vegetables is a cornerstone of good health and an important line of defense against chronic disease and excess weight.”

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