

FOOD DISTRIBUTION

Taking the pulse of the Ontario Food Terminal



The Ontario Food Terminal is at the heart of a complex food web. Bruce Nicholas, general manager, (second from right) and Gianfranco Leo, administration manager (far right) will be available to talk about some of the recent upgrades to the Etobicoke facility at the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Convention, booth 401. They are pictured here talking with cabbage grower Tim Weel, Stayner and friend at last year's convention. Photo by Glenn Lawson.

KAREN DAVIDSON

When the Ontario government issued its 2018 fall economic statement, one line perplexed the agrifood industry: A formal agricultural advisory group “will meet regularly to discuss issues that impact the industry, such as trade and provide input on crucial future decisions such as changes to the Ontario Food Terminal network.”

Why is there a focus on the Ontario

Food Terminal (OFT)? Are changes contemplated for just the Ontario Food Terminal or the entire food web reaching into the countryside? Why now?

Those questions remain to be answered as Randy Pettapiece, MPP for Perth-Wellington and chair of the new advisory committee, convened the first meeting on January 10. Agriculture minister Ernie Hardeman was present to meet the three vice-chairs: Keith Currie, president, Ontario Federation of

Agriculture; Norm Beal, CEO, Food & Beverage Ontario; Dave Bутtenham, CEO, Ontario Agri-Business Association.

Two weeks after that initial meeting, Pettapiece told *The Grower*: “It’s important for the province’s agricultural and business leaders to consider all the broader opportunities available to promote and support its success. We want to ensure the long-term success of the Ontario Food Terminal.”

As was pointed out to agriculture

minister Ernie Hardeman on a recent tour of the terminal, the economic importance of the central location can’t be overstated. Within a 15-minute drive of the downtown core, the 40-acre facility provides the freshest fruits and vegetables from the province and around the world to several million consumers.

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AT PRESS TIME...

CanadaGAP Advisory Committee announced

CanadaGAP has announced its Stakeholder Advisory Committee members for 2019. The new chair is apple grower Cathy McKay, Nature's Bounty. The volunteer committee serves a technical advisory role to the CanAgPlus Board of Directors, meets annually and holds teleconferences as needed.

The avoidable food-waste crisis

Nearly 60 per cent of food produced in Canada is lost and wasted annually says a landmark report conducted by Value Chain Management International for Second Harvest, Canada's largest food rescue organization. Released on January 17, 2019, the report garnered national headlines with the estimate that \$49.5 billion is lost.

Every year, approximately 35.5 million metric tonnes of food produced in Canada is lost and wasted. Of that, 32 per cent – equalling 11.2 million metric tonnes of lost food – is avoidable, and is edible food that could be redirected to support people in local communities.

The data was gathered from 700 frontline food leaders. For some, the most surprising news is that the vast majority – 86 per cent – of the lost and wasted food takes place in the food industry and not in households as

Area of Expertise	Appointee	Affiliated Organization
Food Safety	Eric Cheng	Star Produce
Small Fruit, Potatoes, Vegetables	Joanne Driscoll	PEI Horticultural Association
Food Safety, Small Fruit	Nadene Gurulé	AgriFina Services
Repacking and Wholesaling, Vegetables, Potatoes	Grant Hackman	Peak of the Market
Food Safety	Jeff Hall	Canadian Produce Marketing Association
Potatoes	Terence Hochstein	Potato Growers of Alberta
Tree and Vine Fruit	Stéphanie Levasseur	Au Cœur de la pomme
Food Safety	James Sefton	Sefton Food Safety Consulting/Coaching
Vegetables, Potatoes	Quinton Woods	Gwillimdale Farms
Chair, Board liaison	Cathy McKay	Nature's Bounty

previously thought.

Research behind the report identifies the root causes of food loss and waste:

- The acceptance of waste by the food industry as the cost of doing business, a belief sustained by low tipping and landfill fees;
- Conservative best-before-dates that lead to industry and consumers throwing away food that is still safe and edible;
- Pressure on producers to provide 100 per cent on-shelf availability and aesthetic perfection, particularly with fruits and vegetables, leading to over-production; and

- Reluctance in the food industry to donate safe, edible surplus food despite Good Samaritan legislation that already exists to facilitate donation.

The report provides more than 100 actions for industry, industry organizations and government to begin to quantify food loss and waste, address the negative economic and environmental impacts, and support community food programs. Link to the report here: secondharvest.ca/Research

The research was funded by the Walmart Foundation.

NEWSMAKERS

After more than a decade of leading industry associations, Canadian Centre for Food Integrity (CCFI) president **Crystal Mackay** is stepping down following the annual meeting at the end of April 2019. Stated Mackay: "I am committed to support this important organization and the public trust cause as I pursue my interests and passions for public speaking, communications and training and development." A search is underway to fill the role.



Crystal Mackay

The Prince Edward Island Potato Board has elected new chair **Jason Hayden**. He's a tablestock grower from Pownal. Joining him is vice-chair **Chad Robertson** and secretary-treasurer **John Hogg**. New directors are: **Craig Wallace, John Visser** and **Billy Cameron**. The remainder of the board comprises: **Harris Callaghan, Glen Rayner, David Francis, Mark MacMillan, Rodney Dingwell, Wayne Townsend**, and Young Farmer Representative **Kyle Maynard**.

Best wishes to **Colleen Smith**, who has left her role as executive director of AgScape, the organization that operates the Agriculture in the Classroom program in Ontario. She was well-known nationally for her passionate advocacy after completing almost 11 years of service. **Peter Hohenadel** is serving in a temporary capacity as interim executive director while the association conducts an executive search. He had just finished a five-year term as the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair's director of agriculture and food.

The Holland Marsh Growers' Association has returned **Quinton Woods** as chair. He is joined by **Ian Smith** as vice-chair.

Condolences to the Bosc family on the untimely January 10th passing of **Michèle Bosc**, the vice-president of marketing and administration for Chateau des Charmes winery. Located in Niagara-on-the-Lake, the trail-blazing winery had just celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2018. An engaged and passionate marketer, she had tweeted on December 31: "Thank you for sharing all of the ways that you enjoyed our wines over the holiday season - it is truly the best gift that we could receive. Cheers to 2019!"



Michèle Bosc

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INTERNATIONAL

UNITED STATES

Caulipower takes off

Los Angeles-based Gail Becker is CEO and founder of Caulipower which sells frozen cauliflower pizzas and cauliflower baking mix. Its genesis was making a gluten-free pizza crust to meet the needs of her two sons with celiac disease. When the creation took off, the marketing executive quit her job in 2016 to capitalize on the low-carb, gluten-free trend.

Caulipower has become a multimillion-dollar brand, with cauliflower pizzas sold in 9,000 stores in the U.S. including Whole Foods, Walmart, Safeway and Kroger. "One thing that we were very insistent on when we started our brand is that we reference cauliflower in the name," said Becker. "We want to celebrate the vegetable. We're not trying to hide it or sneak it in."

In September 2018, she launched a new umbrella brand, Vegolutionary Foods, in time for the Natural Products Expo. Her newest product is Sweet PotaTOASTS, a sister to the CAULIPOWER pizza.



COVER STORY

Taking the pulse of the Ontario Food Terminal

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Now worth a mint in real estate terms, the food hub is priceless. Its sprawling warehouses, commission houses, cold storage and farmers' market are considered one of the top three in North America in terms of produce volumes. The OFT now distributes more than two billion pounds of fresh produce from both local and global sources. One of its advantages is proximity to the international airport. There's one point above all: the Ontario Food Terminal doesn't require one single dollar of taxpayer's money to maintain and operate.

No one understands the arc of history better than Tom Komienski whose grandfather endured long trips from the Simcoe area to cramped facilities in downtown Toronto in the 1950s. When the tenants moved to what was then the western outskirts of the city in June 1954, a new era of productivity was unleashed. The Ontario government of the day made it all happen with the Ontario Food Terminal Act and the creation of the Ontario Food Terminal Board to construct, equip and operate a wholesale fruit and produce market as a public utility.

Without this critical gathering square in Toronto, it's doubtful that hundreds of businesses would exist today. Komienski and his family now grow a thousand acres of fruits and vegetables, with the ability to control marketing from a leased stall at the OFT.

"We still have the opportunity as growers to deal face-to-face with small mom-and-pop stores, farm markets, grocers and independents right across the province and through to the east coast," says Komienski. "It's a robust market every day that helps set the price for produce depending on quality and quantity. It's a real world market that reflects weather conditions."

Recent OFT upgrades have eased congestion and made loading and unloading more efficient. Those investments also enhance food safety, Komienski points out.

For those unfamiliar with the landscape of independent retailers, it may come as a surprise to what extent the OFT services business in the farthest reaches of the province. Take Sunripe Fresh Market for example. Owner Will Willemsen now operates three green grocer stores: one in his home base of Sarnia started in 1982 and two in London. He

travels three hours one way to Toronto three times every week to hand select top-quality produce for his upscale stores.

"If I didn't have access to the Ontario Food Terminal, I wouldn't be in business," says Willemsen, who now employs just under 200 people. "I arrive at 3 am to buy all my produce and have it transported back to my stores the same morning. I can shop for the very best that local producers have to offer."

What's appealing about the one-stop shopping is that new products are always popping up in this highly competitive market. Willemsen has added micro greens, medley cherry tomatoes and greenhouse-grown strawberries to his pick.

For Steve Bamford, CEO, Fresh Advancements, his company's proximity to the terminal is important for the fresh-cut fruit and vegetable business in Etobicoke.

"The Ontario Food Terminal is in a pivotal location that helps eliminate shrink in the food distribution system," he says. "Produce comes from all over the world and is handled in the most efficient way for retail grocers, food service and food manufacturers. Most of this food is turned around in a day."

Moving perishables is still labour-intensive. The OFT estimates that about 1,500 employees work in various capacities at the terminal itself. And when numbers are calculated for all the ancillary businesses -- trucking firms, computer services, janitorial -- on top of the primary producers, the number comes close to more than 170,000 people.

A large city like Toronto benefits from having a vibrant terminal at its heart. And fortunately, the metropolis is surrounded by Greenbelt-protected land that supports such perishables as tender fruit from Niagara and root vegetables from the Holland Marsh.

"My concern as a consumer is that if the Ontario Food Terminal is dismantled in any way, there will be a major chain reaction," says Bamford. "The immediate impact will be on the cost of goods. The central location is critical."

The horticultural industry's unease over the sudden spotlight on the Ontario Food Terminal stems, in part, from the 2018 election campaign in which the Conservative leader Doug Ford proposed an easing of restrictions on the Greenbelt. The public uproar about potential development of farmland forced a turn-around in 24 hours. However that brief



Recent upgrades to the Ontario Food Terminal have eased congestion and made loading and unloading more efficient.



L-R: MPP Randy Pettapiece, Ontario agriculture and agri-food minister Ernie Hardeman, Holland Marsh vegetable grower Rosario Riga and chair of the Ontario Food Terminal Board, Alison Robertson, are pictured on tour of the Ontario Food Terminal in November 2018. On January 22, 2019, Alison Robertson was informed that her three-year term as chairperson of the OFT board is not being renewed.

insight into the future premier's stance on land use is unsettling.

Those concerns continue to bubble with the introduction of Bill 66, Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act, an omnibus bill that champions "open for business" planning exemptions under Schedule 10. *The Hamilton Spectator* has reported that city planners are critical of the province offering municipalities the right to cut red tape, but potentially at the expense of current protections for the Greenbelt.

It doesn't take long to connect the dots between food

distribution and land use. The central location of the Ontario Food Terminal is pivotal to the food web that extends to the Greater Golden Horseshoe, the far reaches of the province and beyond. No one knows that better than Alison Robertson. Three years ago, she was a political appointee to serve as chair of the OFT Board. On January 22, 2019, she was informed that her term will not be renewed.

The Grower goes "Behind the Scenes" of this cover story and speaks with MPP Randy Pettapiece and Steve Bamford, CEO Fresh Advancements. To listen to the podcast visit www.thegrower.org/podcasts





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CROSS COUNTRY DIGEST

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Domestic consumption of blueberries is increasing

Balancing demand and supply is the quintessential challenge for growers. It's particularly vexing for highbush blueberry growers who are increasing acreage to serve the trend for plant-based foods. After all, American-based *Progressive Grocer* publication listed blueberries as one of the 10 superfoods for 2019 based on a survey of 1,300 registered dietitians. But it's a global market, and growers must be aware of macro and micro trends.

As Farid Makki explains, blueberry production has been increasing in North America and so has per capita consumption. According to Statistics Canada, Canadian per capita consumption for blueberries (fresh and frozen combined) has increased by 10 per cent between 2013 and 2017 to reach 1.85kg per person in 2017, while per capita consumption in the U.S. has increased by 30 per cent in the same time frame to reach 1.13 kg per person in 2017. Makki is the Agriculture and Agri-Food

Canada (AAFC) fruit sector specialist who tracks statistics for the fruit industry. He's based in Burnaby, British Columbia.

As blueberry production has increased, Canadian growers have turned to export markets to sustain profitability. But quality standards are high and competitors such as Chile have perfected their export game in shipping berries with 60 days of shelf life by ocean freight.

The U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council predicts that North American production will top 940 million pounds in 2019, with global production pegged at 1.9 billion pounds. The wild card is China and more broadly, Asia. Chinese tariffs are high at 30 per cent, while Korea is at 22.5 per cent. Vietnam is at 15 per cent; the Philippines follow at seven per cent. Canadian growers have a window to access the Chinese market but must send top-quality product. They are up against the Chileans who figured out how

Canada's Exports of Cultivated Blueberries (fresh & frozen) - Quantity (kg)

Quantity	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	5-Year Average
United States	43,281,400	47,738,935	50,445,359	48,184,171	48,781,903	47,686,354
Japan	1,411,010	1,922,251	2,475,509	2,371,292	2,465,873	2,129,187
Australia	553,749	703,814	810,423	1,436,369	537,426	808,356
China	1,125,160	1,029,179	404,502	478,810	363,767	680,284

Canada's Exports of Cultivated Blueberries (fresh & frozen) - Value (\$Cdn)

Canadian Dollars	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	5-Year Average
United States	145,115,606	156,156,354	198,581,062	179,129,697	203,203,321	176,437,208
Japan	5,676,316	7,112,899	9,947,365	9,418,001	8,904,688	8,211,854
Australia	1,668,946	2,114,330	2,894,057	4,942,117	1,982,435	2,720,377
China	3,976,397	3,569,288	1,448,822	1,597,804	1,787,609	2,475,984



to ship \$80 million (100,000 tonnes) of fresh blueberries to China in 2016.

AAFC colleague Peter Toivonen specializes in post-harvest physiology from his base in Summerland, BC. Taking a page from cherry exports, Toivonen says there are lessons for blueberries. To maintain

quality, growers should aim for temperatures as close to 0.5°C as possible from field to truck. This temperature is known to prevent decay that arises from fungal pathogens. There are many production practices that can be tweaked in the field. As reported in *Country Life in BC*, Toivonen suggests: harvest

techniques that minimize injury; rapid cooling and transfer to the packing house; selecting lots that have the best shipping potential. Something as simple as reflective tarps in the field can prevent exposure to sunlight and protect fruit.

NEW BRUNSWICK

No 2019 open house for Potato Accelerated Release Program

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Potato Accelerated Release Program is undergoing a modernization review process and, as a result, this year's Accelerated Release process has changed.

No new AR2019 selections will be released this year, and there will not be an Open House event in Fredericton, Guelph or Lethbridge in February 2019.

Information about how to

participate in the cash bid process for AR2017 Phase II selections is now available online at www.agr.gc.ca/potato-cultivars. Note that all cash bids for AR2017 potato selections must be received at AAFC's



Fredericton Research and Development Centre no later than 4:00 pm AST on Thursday, January 31.

Source: Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada January 16, 2019 notice

Airblast101 Grower Pesticide Safety Course

The Ontario Pesticide Education Program is offering five courses that combine the Airblast101 Course with the Grower Pesticide Safety Course. The cost of the combined Airblast 101-Grower Pesticide Safety Course is \$105, which includes copies of both the Grower Pesticide Safety Course Manual and the Airblast 101: A Handbook of Best Practices in Airblast Spraying. Certification requires the successful completion of an open book test.



Co-taught this year by Dr. Jason Deveau, Application Technology Specialist for the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and instructors of the Grower Pesticide Safety Course, these courses will include best practices for airblast sprayer calibration, optimizing spray coverage and reducing drift.

- Harrow, Tuesday, March 19
- Vineland Station, Monday, March 25
- Brighton, Friday, April 5.
- Clarksburg, Thursday, March 21
- Woodstock, Wednesday, March 27

To sign up for one of the dates, growers can go online at www.opep.ca or call 1-800-652-8573.



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OFVGA ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

Government consultations abound



GORDON STOCK
SENIOR POLICY ADVISOR &
GOVERNMENT RELATIONS,
OFVGA

This column is to keep you informed about the key issues that OFVGA is tackling on behalf of Ontario's fruit and vegetable farmers.

Provincial policy consultations

By the time the February 2019 edition of *The Grower* is published, the OFVGA will have completed submissions on two major Ontario government consultations that could be significant for fruit and vegetable farmers.

Bill 66, Restoring Ontario's

Competitiveness Act, is a broad bill that proposes numerous regulatory changes, including expanding the definition of agricultural workers under the Agricultural Exemption Protection Act to include ornamental horticulture and removing the requirement to display a poster with information on the Employment Standards Act in the workplace. More notably, amendments are proposed to make municipal development easier with the goal of job creation by removing protections and barriers to development. This could have implications for agricultural systems, land available for food production, and the environment if development goes unchecked. January 20 was the last opportunity to comment.

The province also closed its consultation for its made-in-Ontario environment and conservation plan on January 29. The plan generally aims to reduce waste, support good environmental actors and being harsher on polluters. With respect to agriculture, it mentions the opportunity for using soils as a carbon sink and to continue support for

improving agriculture's resiliency to climate change. In addition, the province has begun consulting on regulating large carbon emitters, which OFVGA is following closely.

All of OFVGA's submissions to government consultations can be accessed on the OFVGA website's news section.

Provincial budget consultations

The provincial government is currently wrapping up its consultations to get input from Ontarians about the upcoming provincial budget, which will be the first one for the new government since taking office last year. OFVGA representatives have had the opportunity to attend in-person sessions and a written submission will be completed in time for the February 8 deadline.

Topics that are of importance to the sector and the focus of OFVGA's submission include the Edible Horticulture Support Program, continuation of the Northern Fruit and Vegetable Program, continued support for the Self-Directed Risk Management Program, and ensuring that the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food

and Rural Affairs continues to be resourced sufficiently to effectively support the sector.

Agricultural Task Force

The provincial government has unveiled the members of the new Agricultural Task Force that was first announced in the Fall Economic Statement. Chaired by MPP Randy Pettapiece, the committee includes Keith Currie (Ontario Federation of Agriculture), Dave Buttenham (Ontario Agri-Business Association) and Norm Beal (Food and Beverage Ontario). OFVGA is looking forward to engaging with the task force and learning how our organization and our members can contribute. OFVGA will be working proactively to ensure that issues affecting the fruit and vegetable sector are brought forward.

Safe Food for Canadians Act

Some regulations under the Safe Food for Canadians Act came into effect on January 15, 2019 with others being phased in over the next 12 to 30 months. Food businesses that

import or prepare food for export or shipping into other provinces or territories will be required to be licensed through the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. OFVGA will be monitoring the rollout of the new regulations and compliance measures and how they impact growers, with an eye towards ensuring the measures actually increase the safety of our food supply.

Canadian Horticultural Council AGM

OFVGA representatives are preparing to attend the CHC AGM in March 2019. In advance of the meetings, OFVGA will be preparing and sending resolutions to help drive CHC priorities for the upcoming year. Ontario's key federal lobby issues are anticipated to include crop protection, labour and food safety.

For more information on any industry issues, please contact Gordon Stock, senior policy and government relations advisor, at gstock@ofvga.org or 519-763-6160, ext. 125. More detailed updates can also be found at www.ofvga.org/news.

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Explore the accelerated capital cost allowance for your farm

MARK WALES

2018 brought with it the usual weather and disease challenges which help us realize the continued need for effective Safety Net programs. Drought was a large part of the weather story until later in the season when rain and cooler weather prevailed. There were certainly late season excess moisture challenges for some crops to complete harvest.

2018 brought a number of political challenges and political change in Ontario. Trade and border concerns permeated the year, and a new provincial government in Ontario with an overpowering concern about deficits will possibly impact funding for programs in the future. Certainly the Ford government's examination of the books has held up non-BRM program funding and may put Year Two of the Edible Horticulture Sustainability Program in jeopardy.

Agri-Stability

The program continues to operate, but with the federal cuts in 2013, the program only covers 70 per cent of your reference margin loss once you fall below 70 per cent of your three-year average. Thus 70 per cent of 70 per cent means that the program only really guarantees 49 per cent of your historical reference margin in the event of a disaster. Nationally, only 34 per cent of farmers are enrolled in the program, and when you realize that Quebec has almost 100 per cent enrolment (you have to be in Agri-Stability to qualify for other provincial programs), that means that in the other nine provinces, fewer than 30 per cent of grow-

ers see value in being enrolled. In 2018, for the first time, you can enrol late in Agri-Stability but only if the provincial minister allows it, and you lose 20 per cent of any claim. With the late spring frost in the Maritimes which effectively wiped out the lowbush blueberry crop, those provincial ministers have allowed late enrolment.

Nationally, the Canadian Horticultural Council (CHC) is working as part of the Ag Growth Coalition to get government to allow better changes to the programs. This will be a work in progress for some time. The frustration of all is that government is refusing to put any additional money into programs to replace what they took away in 2013. That amounted to more than \$400 million nationally and at least \$100 million of which would have come to Ontario growers.

Agri-Invest

This program continues to have high enrolment (more than 75%) but since it is capped at a \$10,000 matchable deposit (reduced from \$15,000), it is simply one-third less effective.

Crop Insurance

For those commodities that have a good program, uptake is high and the programs work. However in horticulture, we have many commodities with no coverage or programs that need work.

Fresh Vegetable Acreage Loss Program

With 140 growers enrolled and more than 15,000 acres insured, this program continues to be effective for growers of the 40 crops that are eligible.

There is still the opportunity for many growers to take a look at this program and see how it could work for them. Rates are reasonable and it has many coverage options and will cover damage on as little as one acre.

Self-Directed Risk Management (SDRM)

This program continues to have high enrolment however with the six RMP/SDRM programs capped at \$100 million, our coverage declines each year as our industry's allowable net sales (ANS) increase. Horticulture is eligible for \$23 million out of the \$100 million program cap. With more than \$32 million of industry's ANS, the result is a prorated payment each year. The initial payment in fall 2018 was 50 per cent of eligible, or one per cent of your ANS. The final payment in May 2019 will likely only bring it up to 1.2 per cent.

The new provincial government has promised to add \$50 million to the six programs, but only in year three of its mandate which is 2021. When that does occur we will then have a fully funded two per cent of ANS program. We will be reminding them of their promise frequently!

Edible Horticulture Sustainability Program (EHSP)

The Edible Horticulture Sustainability Program was to be a two-year, \$30 million per year program to help deal with our competitiveness issues. We were not allowed to call this program help for the minimum wage increase, but guess what, that is our biggest issue.

Thus if it walks like a duck and quacks like one, the odds are pretty good about what it is.



The fall 2018 economic statement announced an accelerated capital cost allowance. New equipment such as this Spectrim system for sorting, grading and packing tender fruit, is eligible for accelerated depreciation measures until 2024.

The Year One payment was distributed in May 2018 before the election. We are busy lobbying for the Year Two payment in May 2019. This payment is seriously at risk, so do not hesitate to contact your MPP with a reminder that yes, the government froze the minimum wage at \$14 for now, but the damage was already done in going from \$11.43 per hour to \$14 per hour. That new cost to Ontario horticulture was \$300 million every year forever, so \$30 million for two years is small potatoes.

Small Business Tax Issues

In 2017, the federal

government rolled out a number of new measures that were meant to deal with professionals such as doctors and lawyers but would have resulted in massive collateral damage to agriculture.

The government wisely cancelled the new measures affecting capital gains and intergenerational transfer, and exempted farmers from the worst effects of passive investments and income sprinkling measures. We got a real win here as our message to the public was that these measures would kill the family farm, and the government was unable to prove us wrong.

Continued on next page

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Explore the accelerated capital cost allowance for your farm

Continued from last page

Specified Corporate Income (SCI)

Measures introduced in 2016 are now taking effect that will severely limit the amount that incorporated farmers can be taxed at the small business rate. The federal government gave a blanket exemption for agricultural co-ops from these measures. We are lobbying for the same exemption for all farmers. This hits any farmer who works with other farmers to group package or market farm produce, as well if you do business with a company where a family member is a shareholder or holds a management position. Check with your accountant about how these measures may affect you.

2018 Federal Fall Economic Statement

Accelerated Capital Cost Allowance

In the fall 2018 statement, the federal minister announced accelerated depreciation measures for all business. If you are engaged in manufacturing or processing, you can write off 100 per cent of capital purchases in the year you buy them. For all others, you are allowed to claim three times the normal depreciation that you could in your year of purchase. These measures are effective Nov 20, 2018 and run fully until 2024. These measures are a response to the U.S. corporate tax cuts announced for 2018.

Check with your accountant about how these can work for you.

Carbon Tax

The new government in Ontario cancelled the previous Cap and Trade program which means that fuel suppliers are no longer collecting the fuel surcharges as of August 2018. However Ontario is currently in non-compliance with the federal climate change regulations and we may or may not have the federal "backstop" applied to us on April 1, 2019. This would mean a carbon levy of around six cents per litre on gasoline and eight cents per litre on diesel and potentially five cents per cubic meter on natural gas and propane.

The provincial government recently announced an emissions reduction program which may or may not meet the federal requirements so that story has to play itself out yet. In addition with a federal election in October 2019, the future of climate change

planning is unknown.

2019 promises to be a year of political uncertainty both in Canada, the U.S. and the world. There will be impacts of some type either positive or negative to our farms. The weather of course always has the last word.

Mark Wales is chair, Safety Nets Section, OFVGA.



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2019 OFVGA chair's report



JAN VANDERHOUT
CHAIR, OFVGA

The past year has seen its fair share of change but none more impactful to the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association (OFVGA) and its members than the change in the ruling party of our Ontario government. It has become apparent that when governing parties change places, this has a profound impact on our lobby effort. Leading up to the June 7, 2018 election, we were dealing with predictable Liberal policies whether we agreed with them or not. Through the Liberal party's 15-year mandate it became somewhat predictable with the usual characters both elected and those hired as staff. Conservative policy is certainly showing itself to be something different both in philosophy as well as putting a whole new team of government staff in the halls of the provincial legislature. This has presented OFVGA with a challenge to

engage with the new powers that be and strive for the best possible outcomes.

The process of post-election relationship building began prior to the election in the early spring of 2018 as we engaged with key players of all political stripes. Meetings and conversations were held with government and opposition parties' key people to ensure OFVGA would be recognized no matter the election outcome while maintaining the relationships in place with the key ministries which affect our members. The focus was mainly on the ministries of agriculture, environment and labour because of the impact they have on the horticulture sector. OFVGA has worked closely with our lobby consultant McMillan Vantage through this process leveraging their connections within the three main parties.

Following the June 7 election, we began our efforts to cultivate significant relationships in the new Conservative government both with the politicians and their newly hired staff. With many new MPPs and a complete set of new ministers there are many new faces walking the halls of Queens Park and a large group of influencers who do not understand our sector especially when you consider the new political staff that were hired late last summer. This poses a challenge for OFVGA and agriculture as the

newly elected members and staff face the steep learning curve of governing. Fortunately, we have had the support of Minister Hardeman (OMAFRA) who has been eager to hear from industry leaders about how he can support us in our roles as farmers. OFVGA has had great success in having conversations with Minister Hardeman as well as meeting with Premier Ford who is eagerly supportive.

The current challenge is ensuring that our sector is clearly understood. Our needs, challenges and the opportunities we can provide must be communicated. We must show the government how they can help us to help them. This happens at a very fast pace as the government strives to hit the road running and we run alongside hoping to stay close to their objectives. McMillan Vantage continues to support us in this task by informing us of the direction of government and getting us to the right meetings with the correct people and most importantly having the correct messaging. Collaboration between OFVGA staff, MacMillan Vantage and the OFVGA board has been well tuned to keep growers on the right side of the changes coming from government.

It has become apparent that the Conservative government has a firm hand on the purse strings of the province with a goal of reducing the deficit while maintaining economic

activity and incentivizing investment within the province. The government is committed to reduce regulatory burden and curb government waste while creating employment in Ontario. OFVGA is committed to helping achieve those goals in whatever ways we can while improving the business climate of Ontario for our growers.

OFVGA has also been busy working with the Canadian Horticultural Council (CHC) on our federal lobby effort. We must rally behind CHC on the federal issues that impact our farm operations. OFVGA has been focusing on issues such as crop protection with the use on mancozeb and imidacloprid being in jeopardy while keeping a very close eye on federal rules which could have an impact on our access to a dependable labour force. OFVGA has also been instrumental in achieving an 80 per cent rebate for growers on the federal carbon pricing backstop for farm heating fuels.

Working with other provinces to impact federal policy is a critical part of our work as an organization. A strong relationship with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada is important to ensure producers are not overlooked at the federal level. As one of Ontario's newly elected directors at CHC, I am seeing first hand the importance of this federal organization and look forward to working in that organization ensuring

horticulture is recognized as an important sector in the Canadian economic landscape.

With the federal election coming up in October 2019, we at CHC are positioning ourselves to be influencers of the federal government whichever way the political winds might blow across the country.

The past year has been successful because we have worked well together as an organization and we have had the important and difficult conversations with the leadership of Ontario. We have not achieved all our goals, but we know that we were heard and are confident that we did our best. The coming year will not be quiet nor easy as OFVGA continues to support the governments of Ontario and Canada as they strive to make this land a good place to grow.

I have decided not to stand for the position of chair for the OFVGA for the coming year and would like to thank the board and staff for the work they have done through my tenure to make the OFVGA all that it is. It has been a great pleasure working with all of you and I would again like to say thank you for your support over the past two years. I will remain on the board and I look forward to supporting the incoming chair as together we make a difference for Ontario's fruit and vegetable growers.

WEATHER VANE



Pruning is well underway in Canada's apple orchards. Manus Boonzaier, farm manager for Algoma Orchards, is taking things in stride at Newcastle, Ontario. His crew is responsible for pruning 1,200 acres. Photo by Glenn Lowson.

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THE GROWER

Executive director's report



ALISON ROBERTSON
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, OFVGA

and the OFVGA cannot be asleep at the switch on any issues. Even though there is increased rural representation in caucus we cannot assume that our voices are being heard in the decision-making process. The reality is that there are many urban millennials walking the halls of Queen's Park who have key roles to play in policy development. As changes can happen quickly, with little true consultation, we need to be as informed, connected, prepared, and active as possible. With OFVGA staff working closely with McMillan Vantage we are being as strategic as possible to

get the results our members need.

OFVGA continues to pay the Canadian Horticultural Council (CHC) fees on behalf of all our sector members who pay container fees. In 2018, we paid \$205,603. Not only does Ontario have strong representation on the CHC board with two directors, but we also have an Ontario grower as president. OFVGA staff also work closely with CHC staff to ensure messaging between organizations is consistent. I am hopeful that with such representation and collaboration, Ontario will benefit from CHC's activities

and that the federal issues that affect Ontario growers are addressed strategically.

The school programs proved successful again this year. 2018 marks the sixth year of Fresh from the Farm, the healthy fundraising program. The program may be a victim of its own success as schools from right across the province participate and the logistics have become increasingly challenging. We will see how this program evolves but we are confident that the network between growers and schools has been established, and along with the best practices developed,

spin-offs throughout the different school boards could be developed. I would like to thank Dan Tukendorf and Sierra Harris for all their hard work on this program, ensuring its success.

This year marked the 13th year of the Northern Fruit and Vegetable Program. An expansion took place mid-2018, expanding the program into northwestern Ontario and First Nation communities. More than 400 schools and 77,000 students participate in the program. Dan Tukendorf has tackled the logistical challenges and made the program a huge success.

2018 proved to be another busy year for the OFVGA staff and board. Leading up to the provincial election, we were lobbying all three parties by communicating issues that affected Ontario horticulture. After the election, we were again actively introducing ourselves to the new ministers and their teams. It was an opportunity to once again share our key priorities and establish a trusted relationship with the new government while positioning ourselves as the "Official Voice of Ontario Horticulture."

The section chairs' reports provide detail on all the activities that OFVGA was involved in this past year. My report focusses on how we are positioning the organization to become more connected with government, lobby in a proactive manner and strategically work with our industry partners to address important issues.

It is imperative that we position the OFVGA at the forefront of issues that affect Ontario horticulture. Though the issues have been primarily provincial, we have also been active at the federal level. To ensure that the right meetings are secured and the best possible results are achieved, we have increased our staff so as to support our section chairs. Last year Gordon Stock joined our team as our senior policy advisor. Gordon has proven himself invaluable to the board, staff, and member organizations. Chris Duyvelshoff was hired to fill the crop protection advisor role. As our federal lobbying regarding the Pest Management Regulatory Agency has ramped up, Chris has become vital in supporting this file. In January 2019, Stefan Larrass joined the OFVGA staff. Stefan will give half his time to the Labour Issues Co-ordinating Committee (LICC) and the other half to the OFVGA. His background in safety nets and environmental issues, plus his role as the LICC labour specialist will enable the OFVGA staff to provide expertise and support to all the section chairs. This will also provide greater stability to the board as section chairs and directors change over time.

As we have observed, the current provincial government moves quickly on policy changes

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URBAN COWBOY

Farmers' mental health getting more of the spotlight



OWEN ROBERTS
U OF GUELPH

With 2019 still in its infancy, an unusually large number of major agri-food stories are already jockeying for the spotlight – potential changes to the national food guide, the emerging cannabis industry and the trans-Pacific trade deal, among them.

They all deserve some degree of attention. After all, food is one of our most fundamental needs, and its many facets – such as the way it's produced, and where we buy it and sell it – are getting more and more public interest.

But I believe the agri-food story most destined to grow throughout the year is producers' increasingly documented problems with mental health. This story includes the efforts being made to bring mental health problems to light, and the research and strategies needed to address them and promote awareness.

Through the fall of 2018, the federal government addressed farmers' mental health through the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food. The committee held hearings on mental health and will produce a report based on

the testimony of its members.

Then in early January 2019, Ontario threw its support behind the matter, with mental health being the first stop of the year in Guelph for provincial agriculture and agri-food minister Ernie Hardeman.

The momentum is there, and this is why: Mental health transcends commodities, income, production approaches and regions. If producers are facing undue pressure, some impact on the food system can and should be expected.

Research at the University of Guelph shows the problem has been growing for ages. Traditionally, mental stress stayed hidden, as farmers reluctantly accepted it as part of the job.

But as generations changed, vulnerability became socially acceptable and studies showed the problem was real – more farmers came forward with tales of depression and anxiety.

It turns out that despite the idyllic appearance of the farming lifestyle, it is marked by all kinds of pressure – and still, some hesitation at the farm level.

For example, in Guelph, Hardeman held a closed-door discussion with farmers, farm leaders and researchers. It was said to be closed because of the sensitive nature of the dialogue. Some farmers were telling him about their experiences, and while the industry as a whole has moved towards openness about mental health, it's still an individual matter.

After the meeting, Hardeman said his ministry was launching a public awareness campaign to highlight farmers'

mental health challenges and encourage farmers to reach out when they need help.

"Farming can be a tough business, one that sometimes takes a toll on farmers and their families and yet we all know people who have been reluctant to ask for help," he said. "We want to address the stigma that still surrounds mental health, and help people find the resources that can make a difference."

He said this effort was part of the government's commitment to invest \$3.8 billion over the next 10 years to develop and implement a comprehensive and connected mental health and addictions strategy – he called it the biggest commitment to mental health in provincial history.

Later, one of the farmers involved in the session, dairy producer Courtney Denard of Valleykirk Farms in Owen Sound, wrote this on Facebook:

"Yesterday...I sat down with a group of smart, brave and open people and had an honest conversation about farmer mental health. Our industry is in an epidemic. Too many people are suffering and too many farmers are committing suicide . . . I am hopeful the winds are starting to change and mental health in the ag sector can be given the attention it needs. So many lives depend on it."

The agriculture sector has huge issues on its plate as 2019 unfolds. But ultimately, it all comes down to farmers and their ability to produce food. Their health is Priority One.

COMING EVENTS 2018

- Feb 3-6 North American Strawberry Growers' Association Annual General Meeting and Strawberry Symposium, Wyndam Orlando Resort, Orlando, FL
- Feb 7 Potatoes New Brunswick Conference, AYR Motor Centre, Woodstock, NB
- Feb 12 Canada's Agriculture Day, Delta Hotel, Ottawa City Centre, Ottawa, ON
- Feb 12-13 British Columbia Fruit Growers' Association 130th Annual General Meeting, Ramada Penticton, Penticton, BC
- Feb 19 Berry Growers of Ontario Annual General Meeting, Embassy Suites, Niagara Falls, ON
- Feb 19 Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association Annual General Meeting, Sheraton on the Falls, Niagara Falls, ON
- Feb 19-20 PEI Potato Conference and Awards Banquet, Charlottetown, PE
- Feb 20 BC Tree Fruit Horticultural Symposium, Kelowna Trinity Baptist Church, Kelowna BC
- Feb 20-21 Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Convention, Scotiabank Convention Centre, Niagara Falls, ON
- Feb 20-21 Farmers' Markets Ontario 2019 Networking Symposium Scotiabank Convention Centre, Niagara Falls, ON
- Feb 21 BC Cherry Association Annual General Meeting, Ramada Inn & Conference Centre, Kelowna, BC
- Feb 22 Advancing Your Orchard Management Workshop, Moyer Orchards & Vineyards, Grimsby at 9:30 am and Thwaites Farms, Virgil, ON at 11:15 am
- Feb 23-March 3 Potahto Week sponsored by Peak of the Market, Winnipeg, MB
- Feb 24-28 International Fruit Tree Association Annual Conference, Rochester, NY
- Feb 27 Ontario Fresh Grape Growers' Annual General Meeting, Board Office, St. Catharines, ON
- March 1 FARMS Annual General Meeting, Delhi, ON
- March 4 Canadian Potato Council meeting, Halifax, NS
- March 5 Asparagus Farmers of Ontario Grower Information Day, German Hall, Delhi, ON
- March 5-7 Canadian Horticultural Council Annual General Meeting, Halifax, NS
- March 6 Ontario Potato Conference, Delta Conference Centre, Guelph, ON
- March 10-16 Canadian Agricultural Safety Week
- March 19 Airblast 101 Workshop, Harrow, ON To register: <https://bit.ly/2RLS59m>
- March 19-21 Minor Use Priority Setting Workshop, Gatineau, QC
- March 21 Airblast 101 Workshop, Clarksburg, ON To register: <https://bit.ly/2RLS59m>
- March 23 31st Cuvée Grand Tasting, Scotiabank Conference Centre, Niagara Falls, ON
- March 25 Airblast 101 Workshop, Vineland Station, ON To register: <https://bit.ly/2RLS59m>

RETAIL NAVIGATOR

Saskatchewan: one of the most homogenous markets in Canada



PETER CHAPMAN

Loblaw operated Western Canada from Calgary but now it is all operated from the store support centre in Brampton, Ontario.

Walmart has continued to expand the number of Supercenters in the province. Walmart operates the Saskatchewan stores from its national office in Mississauga, however as in many Walmart markets, stores do have some autonomy to ensure they meet the needs of consumers in the market.

Costco has three warehouses in Saskatchewan. The two stores in Saskatoon and one store in Regina are operated out of the Burnaby, B.C. Costco office. These warehouses offer similar assortments to warehouses in other regions.

Co-op stores continue to have a strong presence in Saskatchewan with the head office of Federated Co op in Saskatoon. Stores are supplied by Federated Co op and consumers have strong ties to this brand, especially in the

rural markets. Co-op continues to be locally owned and support local products and initiatives.

As Overwaitea expanded across Western Canada they opened six stores in Saskatchewan. The stores are similar to the Save On Foods stores in other markets. It is a conventional store offering with more focus on local.

The remainder of this column can be found at www.thegrower.org/authors

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. peter@skufood.com

In Saskatchewan our exploration of large land areas with relatively small numbers of consumers buying fresh fruits and vegetables continues. Certainly farming is a major part of the Saskatchewan economy. According to the Saskatchewan Department of Agriculture, more than 40,000,000 acres are in production. Obviously the vast majority is in field crops with only 9,000 acres dedicated to fruit and vegetables (including potatoes).

In Saskatchewan the two large cities make up just under half of the total population. In the entire province there are just more than one million people. After Saskatoon and Regina the population centres drop rapidly (see chart 1).

Population in Saskatchewan is much more homogeneous than many other Canadian provinces, with 98 per cent of Saskatchewan residents listing English as their first official language. This number is 75 per cent for the rest of Canada. In this list of languages spoken most often at home you can see the differences from the total country (see chart 2).

This market also has a median total income that is higher than the Canadian average. In 2015 the median total income in Saskatchewan was \$75,412 compared to \$70,336 for Canada. These consumers should have more disposable income for food purchases.

Customers influence the buying decision

All of the large food retailers have a presence in Saskatchewan, except Metro. Sobeys has been restructuring its business nationally and Saskatchewan has experienced changes as well. Sobeys and Safeway stores both operate in the province. The company also supplies some IGA stores, indicating plans to bring FreshCo to the western provinces as a discount offering.

Loblaw operates Real Canadian Superstores in Saskatchewan, as well as supplying the Extra Foods and No Frills banners. Previously,

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MAKING MOVES

RFPs: smart business tool or big waste of time?



JENNIFER MORRIS

RFPs (Request for Pricing) in the transportation world are nothing new, but in recent years there have been more and more companies turning to them as a business tool for a multitude of reasons. Below are the basics of what an RFP includes, the pros and cons and whether it may or may not be good for your business purposes.

At its most basic, a shipper or customer requests a transport carrier to give a rate for a particular lane or program of freight. Large RFPs can be the company's one large program or all of its transportation needs.

Typically there are a few reasons that companies may decide to do an RFP. New business has become available and the company's incumbents cannot service the new business. The company thinks there's too much spending on transport and want to verify the market rates they currently

have; or they have too many or too few carriers with this being a way to add new carriers or take out carriers that add no value.

Pros:

- Possible reduction in costs of transportation
- Increase of visibility to carrier list
- Helps with strategic planning for the future
- Introduction to new carriers or carrier capabilities

Cons:

- Extremely time-consuming
- Potentially costly
- Potential to lose some of your good carrier base
- Sometimes ends up a "race to the bottom" (cheap rates but extremely poor and inconsistent service)

The decision to do an RFP is an important one with the resources that go into it. Should a company decide to move forward with an RFP, below are some things to take into account.

Over simplifying the information

Ensure carriers are given enough information to properly and accurately quote on the business -- omitting details can only lead to unexpected costs and delays. Things such as program dates, shipper and receiver requirements for

lumping and appointments and shipping consistency are all things that should be communicated within a RFP. The more information that carriers have the more likely they can provide consistent service and accurate pricing.

RFI (Request for Information) sections

It is important to have an RFI section. This helps to collect information on the carriers bidding, including authorities and insurance. However, there is no need to include lengthy question sections. Some companies ask about the carrier's five-year business plans and for cash flow reports. Taking an interest in the success of your carriers is a good idea but these requests are a bit extreme. Make sure you know whom you are working with and maybe, with some carriers, set up times to meet and have candid discussions about their business if you want to build that kind of in-depth relationship.

Provide accurate data

Giving data on previous business or projections can really increase the potential of a successful RFP. However, when sharing data, it is important to ensure the data is valid and accurate. If there is a lane that shows five loads per week in the data and its turns into five

loads per month, this can cause issues with regular coverage and consistent pricing. Some companies choose to give previous data instead of projections as they are actual numbers that carriers can use to infer possible business in the future. Neither of these ways are particularly effective. Just make it known to the carriers which type of data they are working with.

Don't have endless rounds

Sometimes in an effort to either help carriers be more accurate or in an attempt to try to save even more, companies do multiple-round RFPs. In all honesty, more than two rounds and carriers will become alienated. After a second round the message becomes "We are not seeing the rates we want, regardless of the market rates, we want it lower." This is not the best way to build successful business partnerships with carriers. Two rounds give carriers an option to adjust rates they feel they may be able to do better on and to suggest possible round-trip programs to the company.

Have you saved?

Companies need not bid every year just because this is what they have always done. If you have not seen any service improvements, cost savings or time savings, don't do it again.

Maybe take a year's break and see if meetings with carriers can shed light on the transport side of the business. Maybe there is a reason that an RFP is not working for the business. There are a lot of businesses that do RFPs every year like clockwork but have they saved anything significant or seen service improvements regularly? It's unlikely. Resources are important to the business. Don't spend them unnecessarily on a tool that may not be working.

In the last five to 10 years, RFPs became quite popular especially amongst larger companies. They believed it was the best way to ensure they are paying fair market rates. However, in today's context, companies are becoming aware that maybe every year RFPs are a strain on the business and their growing partnerships.

Have you used an RFP in your business? Comment and let me know your thoughts!

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

**Re: Men in Motion cover story**

In 2019, how is it possible that this appeared on the front page of *The Grower*? Farmers in Motion would have been more appropriate.

Also, the implication that good leadership is a new concept is totally insulting. As a retired female farmer, I worked side by side with my crew in the asparagus and sweet corn fields for many long hours. I resent your inference that I used old, outdated, ineffective leadership techniques.

This is a disappointing step backwards for a generally informative, progressive farm paper.


I would appreciate your consideration of this concern.




*Noreen Lanning, BASc, BEd
Union, Ontario*




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Lobby efforts are laser focused on effects of minimum wage hikes

KEN FORTH

The ramifications of the completely inappropriate rise in the Ontario minimum wage to \$14/hour a year ago is now being realized. Combine that with all the other higher input costs and the fact that commodity prices did not rise or certainly not enough to offset these costs, and the conclusion is obvious: something must change!!

The good news is the new Ontario government did repeal Bill 148, (a business-killing Bill), to Bill 47, which somewhat returns Ontario to a form of common sense! Someone has seen the light!! The wage will not go to \$15/hour but will remain at \$14/hour for now.

The Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association (OFVGA) and Labour Issues Coordinating Committee (LICC) spent countless days on this file. Lobbying does work if you present a solution and a good reason for changes. Thanks to all involved in this one.

OFVGA and LICC will continue to work with the Ontario Ministry of Labour (MOL) to be sure that the point of view on horticulture/ agriculture issues is heard.

Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) rates for 2019 for our sector are down, from \$2.70 on every \$100 of insurable payroll to \$2.06. This is a result of a continuing reduction in farm accidents. Congratulations to you all.

Labour Issues Coordinating Committee (LICC)

Regarding minimum wage, MOL, WSIB, Bill 148 and Bill 47, LICC has worked very closely with OFVGA, and all of agriculture to address anything to do with legislation, regulation etc that affects labour on the farm. Our policy advisor for the last 15 years has now retired. Ken Linington did a great job for the agriculture industry and we thank him for his service. We have hired a new policy advisor, Stefan Larrass who started January 14, 2019. He has been involved with policy development with the Ontario Pork Board. This section chair is very excited about his appointment. He will work with LICC on labour issues as well as OFVGA on other policy developments.

LICC is now involved in two court actions as interveners, one involving a farm packing issue and the second by a union claiming the Agricultural Employees Protection Act contravenes the Constitution. This is the second time such an

action has been tried. This union simply hates farmers, and will do its best to destroy the industry. LICC, OFVGA, and most of the agriculture community are there to present the farm case on this and all issues. If they think we are going away we are NOT. To say the least, the action is inappropriate and a disgusting waste of our courts, our government and our industry's time.

Foreign Agricultural Resource Management Services

(FARMS) AND CanAg Travel Services

The Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP) is still in good shape, although it seems to get more complex by the day. In the last three years, the Canadian government has reacted to the misinformation supplied by groups out to destroy this program. The new rules implemented over the last few years are in response to the bad stories in the press, and government responded to ensure the safety of the

workers. Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA) integrity audits have been affected. I personally have been in the program for almost 50 years. We all value this program and want it to succeed. I believe the majority is going by the rules. If there are a small percentage who are abusing workers, they should never be allowed to participate in this program, again. They hurt us all.

There is good news. Most of the federal government department has changed to a

group of folks who want this program to succeed! A breath of fresh air to be sure. It's not going to get any less complex but I am hopeful that a degree of common sense will prevail.

Please check the FARMS website (www.farmsontario.ca) for rules and read the book sent to you every spring.

Ken Forth is chair, OFVGA Labour Section, chair, Labour Issues Coordinating Committee (LICC) and president, Foreign Agricultural Resource Management Services (FARMS).

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FARM & FOOD CARE

Farm & Food Care year in review



KELLY DAYNARD

As a member of Farm & Food Care Ontario (FFCO), the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association plays an integral role in the organization's success. FFCO was very grateful with OFVGA's decision in 2018 to increase to a top level Platinum membership. Many initiatives over the last year have benefitted growers directly.

COMMUNICATIONS & OUTREACH

The Real Dirt on Farming 2018

Following the release of the fourth edition of The Real Dirt on Farming in 2017, several distribution goals for the publication were met in 2018. The 12-page digest (now available in French as well as English) was inserted in the Globe and Mail, reaching 200,000 households across the country. It was accompanied by a full-page advertisement where readers were encouraged to share their questions and feedback with FFCO in an online survey. Of those surveyed, 70 per cent of respondents rated the publication

as informative to very informative, while 80 per cent of readers rated the information as credible to very credible. Copies have been mailed to elected officials across Canada including MPs and Ontario MPPs since the release, as well as every Registered Dietitian of Canada.

A milestone total of four million copies of The Real Dirt on Farming booklet have now been distributed to Canadians from coast to coast since the publication's inception in 2006. Farm & Food Care Ontario has plans to distribute the resource to municipal elected officials early in 2019 and will continue work on an initiative to include The Real Dirt on Farming in a mailing of the Toronto Star with the help of sponsors across Ontario including county federations of agriculture.

A full 60-page publication is currently available online at www.RealDirtOnFarming.ca. Hard copies may also be ordered from the website.

FarmFood360°

Farm & Food Care Ontario's popular FarmFood360° virtual reality technology gives Canadians access to immersive



Brian Gilroy and Kelly Ciceran of the Ontario Apple Growers hand out thousands of apples to Breakfast on the Farm guests.

virtual tours of working farms and food processing plants, all without leaving their homes or classrooms. In 2018, four new tours were added with four more currently in development including an Ontario fruit orchard. The tours were featured at the Farm & Food Care Ontario/Ontario Federation of Agriculture shared exhibit space at the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair where hundreds of families, students, and teachers lined up for the chance to tour a farm in 360 technology.

Breakfast on the Farm

More than 4000 guests and 220 volunteers participated in two Breakfast on the Farm events in 2018. Despite less than ideal

weather, 1600 people attended Farm & Food Care Ontario's June 23 event at Cranston Farms outside Hamilton to learn more about all kinds of Ontario farms from dozens of commodity groups and agribusinesses exhibiting that day. Another 2200 visited the Foster family's beef and grain farm on September 8, which was the biggest event that FFCO has ever hosted in Eastern Ontario. Appreciation goes to the staff and growers from OFVGA and its member organizations for bringing exhibits and volunteers to the two events.

Union Station

In celebration of the 20th annual Ontario Agriculture Week, October 1-7, FFCO brought together a dozen Ontario commodity groups to bring the farm to Union Station. This Toronto transportation hub sees 300,000 visitors daily, and that's where more than 40 volunteers and farmers held a pop-up event to talk food and farming, answer consumer questions, and most importantly thank them for buying local.

In the morning, breakfast sandwiches were passed out to early morning commuters, and in the afternoon a second group passed out all-Ontario snacks for the trip home. In total, more than 10,000 local food samples including apple slices and grape tomatoes were handed out along with thousands of resources and recipe cards. Several commuters took to social media to share their gratitude for the early morning surprise and the opportunity to meet a real farmer.

Real Dirt Road Trip

Farm & Food Care Ontario launched a new social media video series in 2018 – The Real Dirt Road Trip. This initiative will take viewers on a tour of Ontario farms that are less accessible or well-known to the average Canadian. The series

launched in July with a visit to Froese Vegetables Inc. and was followed by a tour of a poinsettia greenhouse in December. FFCO is continuing to seek suggestions for this project and has a goal of completing eight road trips and videos in 2019.

Farm tours

FFCO conducted five tours in 2018 – one for students from Fleming College's culinary program; two for food influencers out of Toronto and Ottawa and two for Registered Dietitians from SickKids Hospital, Toronto Public Health and Loblaws. In evaluations, more than 95 per cent of participants found the tour very valuable and nearly all would participate in future tours or recommend them to a colleague. Participants also expressed that opportunities such as the farm tour program assists them in their career as a Registered Dietitian by better preparing them to answer questions from clients about food or farming. Since 2004 when this farm tour program began, FFCO has conducted 123 tours for 3700 guests visiting 190 farms, food processing facilities and research stations. Horticultural stops on this year's tours included Tupling Farms Produce near Shelburne, the Ippolito Group in Burlington and Avonmore Berry Farm.

ENVIRONMENT INITIATIVES

Soil Best Management Practices Project

The Soil Best Management Practices Project, funded by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) was designed to develop and assess messaging strategies aimed at a farm audience related to soil best management practices (BMPs).

Continued on next page

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FARM & FOOD CARE

Farm & Food Care year in review



Registered dietitians working for Loblaw stores learn about spinach and lettuce processing during a tour of the Ippolito Group in Burlington.



David Philips of Avonmore Berry Farm talks about his crops to Ottawa food influencers in October.



Bert Tupling of Tupling Farm Produce welcomes Toronto registered dietitians to his potato farm and state-of-the-art processing facility in September.

The project involved four farmer focus groups with the objective to explore the attitudes and both economic and environmental values of farmers that impact their decision-making process related to specific soil BMPs. Through a better understanding of a farmers' underlying values, attitudes and factors that support their decision-making process, recommendations on how to better align messaging to those core values can be made.

Farm Environmental Council

In 2018, three council meetings, comprised of FFCO's Platinum, Gold and Silver members were held utilizing a new hybrid meeting template. The Farm Animal Care and Farm Environmental councils meet collectively in the morning for speakers of common interest and then divide to take a closer look into more special interest topics for each council. The meeting format has been well received and will be continued into 2019. Topics covered during the three meetings included speakers on glyphosate, pending impacts of changes to anti-microbial legislation, the challenges of crop protection products re-evaluation at PMRA and updates from the Ag. Sector Working Group on the ongoing farm fires issue.

These meetings are becoming a key venue in Ontario agriculture to bring together stakeholders from across our diverse industry to discuss issues of relevance to everyone and help shape the work that FFCO is doing in the areas of farm environmental sustainability and farm animal care.

TO LEARN MORE

To learn more about all of Farm & Food Care's animal care, environment and outreach initiatives, visit www.farmfoodcareON.org. Anyone interested in keeping current on Farm & Food Care Ontario initiatives can subscribe to the monthly e-newsletter by emailing info@farmfoodcare.org.

Kelly Daynard is executive director, Farm & Food Care Ontario

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High electricity prices continue to challenge horticulture



Photo by Glenn Lowson.

BRIAN GILROY

In the past year the Property Section was split into two sections: the Energy, Property and Infrastructure Section and the Environment and Conservation Section. This was done in response to the volume of policy decisions being made, in these areas that were having a significant impact on fruit and vegetable farming.

With a change in the Ontario government in 2018, one of its first actions was to repeal the Cap and Trade program. This was something that the Ontario Fruit & Vegetable Growers' Association (OFVGA) supported. We pushed for relief from the federal carbon tax, to limit the impact of carbon pricing on the cost of energy used to produce food. Some success has been achieved with farm diesel and gasoline classed as exempt and carbon tax on natural gas used for heating greenhouses will be rebated at an 80 per cent rate. Having access to natural gas is something that would dramatically improve the competitiveness of a number of farm businesses and something that the OFVGA lobbied for in our comments to the Ontario Government's Bill 32, "Access to Natural Gas." This was part of a general push for broader access to natural gas, electricity, water management and high-speed internet.

High electricity prices continue to challenge our sector

as refrigeration is essential to a large percentage of our crops. The reductions implemented in 2017 have helped but they were seen as stop-gap measures. A long-term solution for affordable electricity for food production needs to be found.

The bird damage mitigation work that the OFVGA had been involved with has been completed. Both the InvisiShield and kestrel projects had variable results with one main lesson learned: birds are very adaptable. Brock University has continued to try and monitor the kestrel nesting boxes as part of an Environment and Habitat Project.

In relation to investing in infrastructure we received some excellent news regarding a long-time request to government from our sector related to accelerated depreciation of capital expenditures. In simple terms, all capital items that are purchased are eligible for three times the normal depreciation in year of purchase as of November 20, 2018, and then normal write-offs going forward.

Thus a \$100,000 tractor which normally would have been eligible for half of a 30 per cent write-off in year of purchase of \$15,000, would now qualify for a depreciation allowance of \$45,000, thus no income tax on \$30,000 of income.

In addition there is a 100 per cent depreciation allowance for capital items used in manufacturing and processing. Growers who

are doing value-added and "possibly" preparation for market might be able to benefit from these provisions.

In response to the Environmental Bill of Rights (EBR) posting 013-2454, Agricultural Impact Assessment Guidance Document, the OFVGA provided input which supported the in-depth submission made by the Ontario Federation of Agriculture. The document required development within the Ontario Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, the Greenbelt Plan, the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan and the Niagara Escarpment Plan to complete an Agricultural Impact Assessment. It was hoped that the document would lead to the more thoughtful implementation of urban settlement boundary expansion, infrastructure and aggregate license applications, so fruit and vegetable farmers in the impacted area could thrive. We stressed the importance of early engagement with the agricultural community and asked that it be made clear that agricultural developments are exempt from completing an impact assessment.

On January 20, 2019 public input on the provincial government's Bill 66: Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness, will close. This is a huge bill with many parts including a very significant section on municipalities being given the authority through open-for-business bylaws and Ministerial approval to allow developments to be exempted from current development plans and policies. The pendulum had perhaps gone too far to the point of over regulation but there are great concerns about it swinging back too far in favour of no clear growth plan and patchwork development. The Ontario Federation of Agriculture will be submitting extensive feedback on this part of Bill 66 and it is anticipated that OFVGA will provide a letter of support. Our input will be focused on the need to protect sufficient agricultural land to ensure food security/sovereignty, the economic impact that food production provides, the importance of protecting our water resources and to prevent development that negatively impacts agricultural businesses.

Municipal regulations

regarding the use of farm houses for worker housing has been challenging for some of our members. We are looking at how we can help give farmers the tools they need to convert/zone a farmhouse to a worker housing unit or bunkhouse.

Property tax assessments continue to be ever increasing as property values increase. Efforts have been made to highlight the fact that farms often pay a higher percentage of the property tax bill when compared to the services that they receive. How rented land for agricultural uses is taxed is changing to a system whereby only the farmed land will receive the discount. All non-farmed land will be taxed at the higher rate.

Food safety is an area that fruit and vegetable farmers spend a significant amount of time and resources ensuring and complying with third-party audits. It is an area that has recently been included in the terms of reference for this section. As you all know CanadaGAP is the most commonly used program for the fruit and vegetable sector and one that was developed by farmers for farmers. The need to remain benchmarked to other food safety programs has meant that "upgrades" have and will happen. The good news is that with the roll-out of the new Safe Food for Canadians Act, for most of us CanadaGAP meets the new Act's requirements. Just implemented on January 15th, the Safe Food for Canadians Act license is required if you ship product across a provincial or international border. A visit to this website (www.inspection.gc.ca/mycfia) may be a good idea to make sure that you are compliant. Issues regarding labeling requirements for consumer packaging and additional audits and audit costs have been highlighted as problematic.

I had the opportunity to attend the CanAgPlus Annual General Meeting and elections in December, 2018 and the importance of maintaining strong grower representation on this Board will be imperative moving forward.

In the past year I have learned a lot but one of the things that causes me great concern revolves around the term: "Civil Society." As part of the federal

government's consultation process, it has committed to engaging groups who represent civil society. One such group, Food Secure Canada, was hired by the federal government to co-ordinate a number of cross-country consultations on a National Food Policy. With the primary goal of food security for all Canadians it is something that most of us would support. The problem arises when they are also focused on extreme positions opposing normal farming practices such as pesticide use and spreading misinformation about international farm workers.

The need to provide credible information about the realities of farming has never been greater and essential if we are to maintain and build public trust. This is the mission of Farm and Food Care Ontario, an organization that I have served as a director for the past few years. 2018 was a very productive year for F&FCO with the launch of the 4th edition of the Real Dirt on Farming Publication. A 12-page digest version was circulated in 200,000 *Globe and Mail* newspapers which carried a full-page ad encouraging people to learn the real dirt on farming and to fill out a survey. The full 60-page publication was sent to every MPP and MP as well as every Registered Dietitian. Plans are underway to get it to every municipal politician in Ontario as well. Since this project started, more than four million Real Dirt on Farming publications have been circulated! The team at F&FCO are very active and I wish there was space to list all of the activities but I will limit it to showcasing FarmFood 360, an immersive virtual tour of working farms and food processing facilities, two Breakfast on the Farm events attended by more than 4,000 guests, farm tours for food influencers and culinary students, a Union Station meet-the-farmer event and the list goes on.

Many thanks to all who have participated in these efforts to provide the growers' input as policies are considered, developed and introduced. To the OFVGA Board and staff, thanks for all that you do on our behalf.

Brian Gilroy is property section chair, OFVGA.

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Lobbying for effective environmental policy without compromising competitiveness

MIKE CHROMCZAK

2018 was a year of change, challenge and opportunity. The timely creation of the OFVGA's new Environment Section certainly put us in the right place with the right message at the right time. We began the year with a provincial government that made no apologies for their activist agenda and as the leading voice for horticulture in this province, the OFVGA wanted to ensure that decision-makers valued our stewardship record and consulted with us to ensure policy changes would not be detrimental to our industry.

In the spring of 2018, we saw a change in provincial government and our section was aptly renamed to reflect the Ministry of Environment's shift away from climate change in its name in favour of including conservation and parks. With this change brings an opportunity to forge a new relationship with policy makers and deliver our message directly to Queen's Park. In October Gordon Stock, Jan Vanderhout and I had the opportunity to meet face to face with the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, Honourable Rod Phillips, in his Toronto office. Our candid discussion was very productive and we left the meeting encouraged that the Minister gained a better understanding of our industry. We covered several topics that we will pursue in 2019, including:

- Carbon pricing and our opposition to the Cap and Trade model in Ontario. Following the meeting our chair, Jan VanderHout was invited to attend the official announcement of the repeal of Cap and Trade made by the Minister.
- The redundancy of the Ontario Pesticide Advisory Committee when considering the authority of the federal classification system under the Pest Management Regulatory Agency.
- The opportunity to streamline or eliminate requirements in the on-farm Permit to Take Water Program to reduce the cost and regulatory burden on farmers who want to apply for and maintain a permit to irrigate their horticultural crops.
- The scope of Environmental Compliance Approval (ECA) requirements affecting a farmer's ability to wash produce from the field and burdensome rainwater sampling requirements for greenhouse operations.
- The need for an internal culture shift away from the

traditional "compliance" approach we have all experienced from the ministry, toward a "service" approach that will foster collaboration and support competitiveness.

We look forward to working with the Minister and his staff in 2019 to help reduce the regulatory burden on our sector, and improve effectiveness of regulation and the competitiveness of Ontario's fruit and vegetable farmers.

2018 also saw the evolution of

Grow Ontario Together, the working group formed by several leading provincial ag organizations, now positioned as ECO-Ag (Environmental Collaboration Ontario) that "recognizes the need to provide innovative and transformational leadership to enhance environmental outcomes and support competitive businesses, a healthy environment – clean water and healthy soils – and strong communities." The diverse representation of farm organizations lends strength and

credibility to OFVGA's message as we "restore agriculture's trusted status as environmental stewards in the province."

By the end of 2018, the government announced the development of a Made-In-Ontario Environment Plan to counter the Federal Carbon Tax. The proposal to regulate "large" carbon emitters is ambiguous at the time of writing this report, however we are working diligently to comment on the plan and ensure that fruit and vegetable

production is not adversely impacted by the province's carbon pricing initiative. We will also seek an acknowledgment of our ongoing environmental contributions, including the sequestration of carbon.

Moving forward I will continue to be a proponent for efficient and effective environmental policy that doesn't compromise our competitiveness.

Mike Chromczak is environment and conservation section chair, OFVGA.



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Re-evaluations are top priority for crop protection

CHARLES STEVENS and
CHRIS DUYVELSHOFF

The past year has been another very active time in crop protection to say the least. While a staff transition occurred at Ontario Fruit & Vegetable Growers' Association (OFVGA), the ongoing re-evaluation program at the Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) was by far the major area of focus.

Crop Protection Advisor

This was a transition year for the Crop Protection Advisor role at OFVGA as Craig Hunter, a long-serving member of the OFVGA staff, retired at the end of June. Throughout his career spanning more than 40 years in crop protection, Craig left a huge impact on horticulture – perhaps none bigger than helping to establish and continuing to facilitate the Canadian Minor Use Program, resulting in numerous new registrations for growers.

Upon Craig's retirement, the OFVGA hired Chris Duyvelshoff as Crop Protection Advisor who started on September 4, 2018. Chris joined OFVGA following an early career in tree fruit extension and crop protection sales. It is certain there will be no shortage of work for the role in 2019!

OFVGA Crop Protection Committee

There were four meetings of the OFVGA Crop Protection Committee in 2018 which was higher than average due to several ongoing issues. Re-evaluation of mancozeb has been the primary item for discussion along with the neonicotinoids. The OFVGA would like to thank all of the participating members for their valuable contributions to this section over the past year.

Re-Evaluation Program

The re-evaluation program at PMRA continues to be the number one issue in crop protection across the country. Last year's report expressed concerns around several proposed re-evaluations including the

Group M fungicides. We have now mostly learned their fate, with all uses of ferbam, ziram, thiram (with some seed treatment exceptions), and metiram (except potatoes) being phased out over the next two to three years. Final decisions were also issued for captan and chlorothalonil, which included very restrictive limitations on the number of applications in certain crops and much longer re-entry intervals. This is making the current re-evaluation of mancozeb even more critical. Resistance management is in serious jeopardy without access to some of these Group M materials.

Mancozeb

The OFVGA and the Canadian Horticultural Council (CHC) successfully lobbied to have the PMRA retract its original final decision on mancozeb as published this past June 2018. The publication of this final decision was in violation of the Pest Control Products Act as a complete summary of the risk-reduction measures (including cancellation of uses) was not published in the original proposed decision consultation document from July 2013. Subsequently, the PMRA reissued a new proposed decision on mancozeb in October, which much to the objection of industry, indicated that all uses were to be phased out with the exception of greenhouse tobacco transplants.

Since this time, the OFVGA and CHC have been working with the Mancozeb Task Force (representing registrants) to support its continued registration. The OFVGA recently submitted comments presenting significant concerns with the risk assessment conducted in PMRA's proposed decision. There is plenty of supporting evidence that this assessment has been grossly overestimated. We remain optimistic. At the same time, the OFVGA has been working with various industry stakeholders to gather information on the critical needs of mancozeb by crop to help support a new label submission to PMRA by registrants. This work is expected to continue early in 2019.

In December 2018, a letter

was circulated among the OFVGA Crop Protection Committee to encourage growers to write to the federal Minister of Health and Minister of Agriculture on mancozeb and the challenges with the re-evaluation program. Thank you to the many growers who sent personal comments on the impact of mancozeb to their farm operation. It is hoped this will bring this matter to Ottawa's attention.

Neonicotinoids

Final decisions are also expected in 2019 for three key neonicotinoid insecticides including clothianidin, imidacloprid, and thiamethoxam. Imidacloprid was the first of these active ingredients to undergo re-evaluation with a proposed decision from November 2016 to phase out all agricultural uses. This was followed by proposed special-review decisions in August 2018 to phase out both clothianidin and thiamethoxam. Initially in response to the imidacloprid proposal, Agriculture and AgriFood Canada (AAFC) established the Multi-Stakeholder Forum on Neonicotinoids which had several objectives including to gather further environmental monitoring data, examine potential alternatives, and explore risk mitigation strategies. This has been a productive forum, in particular with respect to water quality monitoring, where a substantial new body of data has been obtained over the past two years.

The OFVGA made submissions to support the continued registration of these active ingredients for key horticulture uses. It should be carefully considered in the final decisions by PMRA that these products have replaced many older chemistries with higher relative toxicity, and have often reduced total required insecticide applications. The loss of the neonicotinoids would be a step backwards in pesticide risk reduction practices for many crops. We should know the final outcome of these reviews later in 2019.

PMRA Program Review & Stakeholder Engagement Unit



The current re-evaluation program at PMRA is not sustainable – as stated by senior PMRA officials themselves. The Pest Control Products Act requires that the PMRA perform re-evaluation of each registered crop protection material every 15 years to determine if uses are acceptable for current standards. Due to a number of new active ingredients registered in the 2000s, the program of scheduled re-evaluations is going to increase substantially over the next few years. There are 25 active ingredients currently scheduled for re-evaluation commencing in 2019, 34 in 2020, and 50 in 2021. Re-evaluation workloads are already exceeding available resources at PMRA and the future demand is unsustainable. The program simply cannot continue in its current form – even beyond the very significant concerns from industry.

To that end, the PMRA is initiating a review of the re-evaluation program that will seek to enhance stakeholder engagement, improve efficiency, and increase collaboration with international regulators on re-evaluation work. This past fall, the PMRA organized sessions with stakeholders across Canada to seek input on current challenges and successes of the existing program. Several OFVGA members participated in a productive discussion with PMRA staff in Guelph on December 3. Re-evaluation processes were highlighted from other countries, including the U.S., Australia, and Europe. These will be examined by PMRA to determine potential alternative models. One of the

key areas for review by PMRA is going to be around what triggers a re-evaluation. Rather than on a 15-year arbitrary timeline (unsustainable), are there specific science-based criteria that can be used to determine if and when an active ingredient needs to be reviewed? The PMRA will present its findings and options for changes to the re-evaluation process to stakeholders in late winter or spring of 2019. Further recommendations will be made in consultation with stakeholder feedback. The inclusion of a benefit analysis is a key recommendation from industry, as discussed further below.

A valuable addition to PMRA this year has been the establishment of the Agricultural Stakeholder Engagement Unit (ASEU) led by Terri Stewart. The ASEU was established by the PMRA in July 2018 specifically to enhance communication with minor use stakeholders. Its focus has been on regulatory issues and re-evaluations that pertain to minor use crops in Canada, which comprise a large segment of horticulture. Terri and her group have been extremely valuable to date on facilitating improved communications with PMRA, providing feedback on active re-evaluations, and suggesting the best ways to direct our efforts within the agency. The OFVGA once again commends the PMRA for creating this unit and believes that increased communication and engagement with grower stakeholders are a positive development for both the PMRA and the horticulture industry.

Continued on next page



Assail is a PMRA and EPA designated, reduced-risk, broad spectrum insecticide that doesn't breakdown in sunlight, making it an excellent choice for foliar applications. Assail is locally systemic and translaminar, giving it the ability to move readily within the plant to protect all sides of the feeding surface.

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CROP PROTECTION CANADA

Re-evaluations are top priority for crop protection

Continued from last page

The year ahead

It is expected that 2019 will be another very demanding year in crop protection with several key areas of focus for the OFVGA.

The review of the PMRA re-evaluation program will be the primary initiative for 2019. As mentioned above, inclusion of a benefit analysis in the re-evaluation program has been discussed numerous times by industry. Under the United States Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) must consider the benefits of use in making its regulatory decisions. When evaluating acceptable risk for product registration or re-evaluation, there must be consideration of “economic, social, and environmental costs and benefits of the use of any pesticide.”

In Canada, to date, we do not have consideration for the benefits side of the equation weighing in our re-evaluation decisions on crop protection

products. Protecting human health and the environment is indeed of critical importance. However, we should make regulatory decisions with a holistic view of crop protection – including an understanding of the benefits of use – to make the best possible decisions for Canadians. This is particularly important in light of the fact that registrations of new active ingredients have been declining. There were 18 registered in 2015-16, 10 in 2016-2017, and only seven in 2017-2018. We cannot continue to lose access to products if new ones are not coming along to replace them.

In order to accomplish this goal of improving the re-evaluation program, we will require additional efforts in Ottawa. With a federal election scheduled for October 21, as well as an anticipated statutory review of the Pest Control Products Act in 2020 – it is an opportune time to make some positive impacts moving forward. Please stay tuned, as the OFVGA will need input and support from all to help create the change that is needed!

Another key objective in the near future will be the development of a centralized

method of collecting current use information for all crop protection products. This is one of the main challenges faced by PMRA currently. Without updated use information, PMRA must assume the worst-case scenario – maximum number of applications X maximum label rate. This is not accurate in many instances. Instead, if current use information is available, then PMRA risk assessments can be made with what growers are actually using. Several digital systems now exist for collecting this type of information (e.g. Croptracker, Spray Hub, Ginseng Manager, etc.) that can potentially be utilized to generate updated use pattern information quickly. This only requires aggregate, non-personal data and does not need to identify a farm or specific locations. Having an industry summary of this information would be a huge advantage for growers, as an updated use pattern can make an active ingredient much more likely to successfully pass re-evaluation. Further discussions on data collection efforts will continue in 2019.

As regulatory pressure



Photos by Glenn Lowson

continues to increase on crop protection tools, growers must take every precaution to adhere to product labels. For example, one proposal to help mitigate risks to post-application workers includes the use of protective gloves when performing hand labour tasks. The PMRA must be confident that growers will ensure that workers use gloves when required for these tasks in order to implement this strategy. This may be the only potential option for maintaining certain product uses in the future. Governments

and public must be able to trust the industry in order to help retain product access.

Finally, the OFVGA wishes to thank the CHC, in particular Caleigh Irwin and Jason Smith, who continue to provide valuable contributions to support crop protection efforts on the national level!

Charles Stevens is crop protection section chair, OFVGA.

Chris Duyvelshoff is crop protection advisor, OFVGA.

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FEBRUARY 12

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MINOR USE

Orondis Gold potato fungicide to help protect tubers from pink rot and Pythium leak

Syngenta Canada Inc. is launching Orondis Gold potato fungicide which combines two systemic fungicides to suppress pink rot and Pythium leak. Each fungicide has a different mode of action to help manage resistance.

Pink rot is a devastating soil-borne disease that thrives in wet, poorly drained soils and can survive in soil for up to seven years. Just a few infected potatoes entering the storage bin can result in substantial losses, infecting healthy tubers and compromising marketable yield. That's why proactive management of the disease is important.

Orondis Gold potato fungicide is applied in furrow as part of a preventative disease control program. It combines the power of metalaxyl M (Group 4) with oxathiapiprolin (Group 49) – a new mode of action to suppress pink rot and help manage the development of resistance.

“Oxathiapiprolin is the only FRAC Group 49 fungicide on the market, and is a new mode of action against pink rot,” says Eric Phillips, fungicides and insecticides product lead with Syngenta Canada. “Applying Orondis Gold Potato in furrow gives growers a powerful new tool to help manage pink rot.”

Orondis Gold potato fungicide is crop safe, so producers can protect their potatoes from pink rot without sacrificing yield or quality, or putting undue stress on foliage, which is possible with some other foliar options used to manage the disease.

Orondis Gold also provides suppression of Pythium leak, which enters tubers through wounds or bruises that occur during harvest and grading.

“Pythium leak is another storage disease that can develop very quickly, especially if tubers have poor skin set or are harvested in wet conditions,” Phillips says. “Infected tubers may also be more vulnerable to secondary bacterial infections, putting yield at further risk. An Orondis Gold potato application in furrow can help preserve marketable yield going into storage.”

Orondis Gold potato will be available for the 2019 growing season in a co-pack containing 2 x 2.84 L jugs of Orondis Gold A 200SC fungicide and 2 x 3.56 L jugs of Orondis Gold B 480 L fungicide.

As per the labels, Orondis Gold potato should be applied at a rate of 3.2 mL/100 metre row of Orondis Gold A 200 C and 4 mL/100 metre row of Orondis Gold B 480 L. One case will treat 40 acres of potatoes grown using 36 inch row spacing.

To help manage resistance, growers making an Orondis Gold potato in furrow application

cannot make any subsequent Orondis Ultra foliar fungicide applications. See the product label for additional information. Growers can consider applying Revus fungicide in season to target late blight if Orondis Gold potato was used in furrow.

For more information about this fungicide, please visit Syngenta.ca, contact your local Syngenta Representative, or call our Customer Interaction Centre

at 1-87-SYNGENTA (1-877-964-3682).

Photo right: Pink rot showing the internal symptom (flesh turns pink when exposed to air) and the external symptom (Infected areas appear dark brown to purplish).

Source: Syngenta January 14, 2019 news release





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THE GROWER

FEBRUARY 2019

SECTION B

FOCUS: ONTARIO FRUIT AND VEGETABLE CONVENTION

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2019 show round-up

TRADE SHOW



For the early birds, trade show and convention hours run from 8 am to 5 pm. Show closes at 4 pm on the second day. Note: free parking! For those on social media, use the hash tag #ofvc2019 or Tweet @ofvc1.

EARLY-BIRD REGISTRATION

Save some money with the early-bird registration by February 13 at 6 pm. Go to www.ofvc.ca. Pre-registration includes complimentary drink tickets courtesy of the sponsors of the Farmers and Friends reception: N.M. Bartlett Inc and Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association.

FARMERS AND FRIENDS RECEPTION

Don't miss the Farmers and Friends Reception on February 20 from 5 pm to 7 pm on the trade show floor. Compare notes with your peers. Cheer the day's winners from The Great Ontario-Hopped Craft Beer Competition and the Sweet and Hard Cider Competitions. Enjoy a sampling of Ontario wines, craft beers, ciders and other beverages with locally prepared appetizers.

YOUNG FARMER FORUM

Toban Dyck wrote a column for *Maclean's Magazine* on August 13, 2018 to rave reviews. It wasn't his first journalist's gig. He's also writing for *Grainews*, the *Financial Post* and other publications. Farmers, 40 and under, will appreciate his unvarnished perspective from both urban and rural points of view. There's no cost, but do reserve your lunch-time seat for February 21. #youngfarmerforum19

Photo right: Toban Dyck

TASTING COMPETITIONS



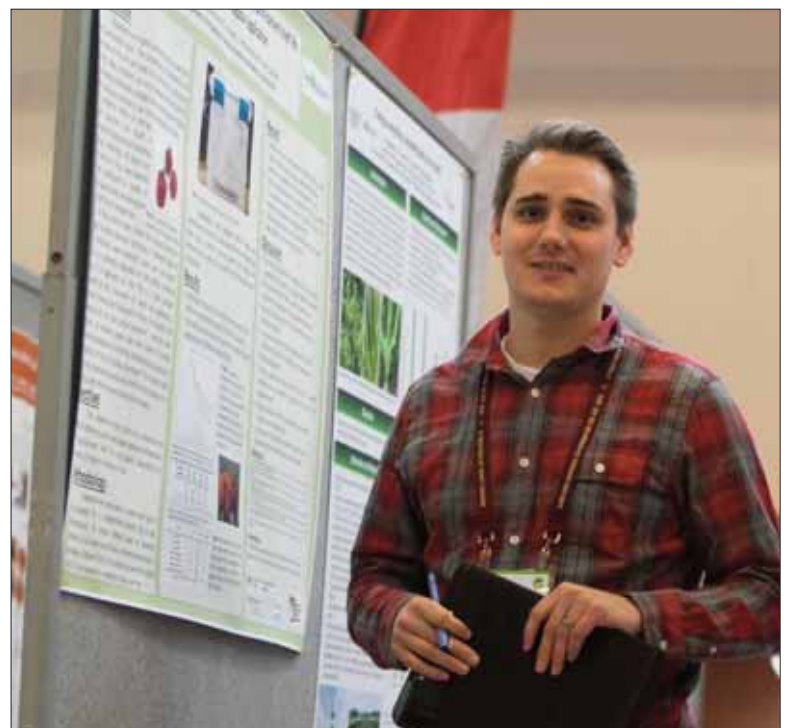
Sweet Cider and Hard Cider Competitions are capped at 15 entries for each class. Winners will be announced opening day, February 20.

EDUCATIONAL SEMINARS



More than 120 sessions have been scheduled with provincial, out-of-province, American and international speakers. Photos by Glenn Lowson

RESEARCH POSTER COMPETITION



This popular display features the research of the best minds in horticulture. Chair Dennis Van Dyck and his team will be judging the student competition. At press time, 15 of 20 spots were filled. Prizes are \$500, \$300 and \$200. For a link go to: www.ofvc.ca/posters.html
The regular poster display is chaired by Hannah Fraser (Hannah.fraser@ontario.ca).

THE GREAT ONTARIO-HOPPED CRAFT BEER COMPETITION



The hops industry has come a long way encouraged by the results of The Great Ontario-Hopped Craft Beer Competition. Organizers Jason Deveau, David Lauzon and Evan Elford have invited 19 teams to compete on February 20, 2 to 4 pm in Ballroom C. This year's featured style of beer is Specialty IPA-New England IPA. Criteria include: aroma, appearance, flavour, mouthfeel and overall impressions.

New this year is an Ontario malted-grain exhibition area and the return of live scoring for the audience. Go to www.onhops.ca to see if your favourite brewer is competing. Once again, BASF is generously sponsoring the competition.



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2019 show round-up

“OUTSTANDING IN HER FIELD” BREAKFAST PANEL – NEW!

In response to the demographics attending the show, OFVC is staging an “Outstanding in HER Field” event February 21 from 8 am to 9:15 am. A networking breakfast and panel presentation will offer perspectives in agriculture from three generations of women. They are: Nicole Judge, Spirit Tree Cidery; Lynda Van Casteren, Nicholyn Farms; Brooke Doyle, SouthPoint Equipment. The panel will be moderated by Karen Davidson, editor of **The Grower**. While pre-registration is required, there is no cost to attend the event. Room 223 will seat 100 guests.

#outstandinginherfield19

MEET THE BUYER

Is your pitch polished? This speed-dating version of Dragon’s Den offers the opportunity to pitch your produce or product to the senior buyers of major grocers. The event is slated for February 21 from 11:45 am to 1:30 pm in the Port Colborne Lounge. You must register in advance, at no charge, to reserve your place.

#meetthebuyer19



NEW APPLE VARIETY SHOWCASE



The Ontario Apple Growers are proud to showcase some of the newest apple varieties from different breeding programs planted in test orchards across the province. For a taste test, stop by Ballroom A on Thursday, February 21. Your crunch will be measured just outside the meeting room!

BERRY GROWERS OF ONTARIO PROGRAM

The Berry Growers of Ontario (BGO) which represents about 300 blueberry, raspberry and strawberry growers, is hosting its annual general meeting on February 19 at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Niagara Falls. This meeting is followed by the Ontario Fruit & Vegetable Convention on February 20 and 21. Note that the OFVC sessions require the purchase of a registration package. Scientists and berry experts will offer their expertise and research on a range of subjects including: managing strawberry anthracnose and viruses, labour management, innovative production practices and different marketing strategies.

CIDER COMPETITIONS

Ontario’s finest sweet and hard cider competitions will be held February 20 in the Port Colborne Lounge. Each competition will be limited to a maximum of 15 entries. Pre-registration is required. All ciders must be made from 100 per cent Ontario-grown apples.

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Organic market gardener expands business using Local Line platform

KAREN DAVIDSON

Local Line has been a major boost for organic market gardeners, Joe and Eraina Grootenboer. The couple has operated a 20-acre farm, River Bell Market Garden near Dresden, Ontario for seven years. The business has evolved from selling at farmers' markets to operating a weekly box program from their farm. Thanks to the new software platform of Local Line, they moved to a customized box program in 2018.

"The farmers' market model did not suit us," says Grootenboer. "There weren't enough sales to sustain us and too much effort goes into sales. The weekly box program is one size that's supposed to fit all and keep customers happy-ish. But with the customized box program online, we have moved the average box sale from \$19 per week to \$27 per week in one season."

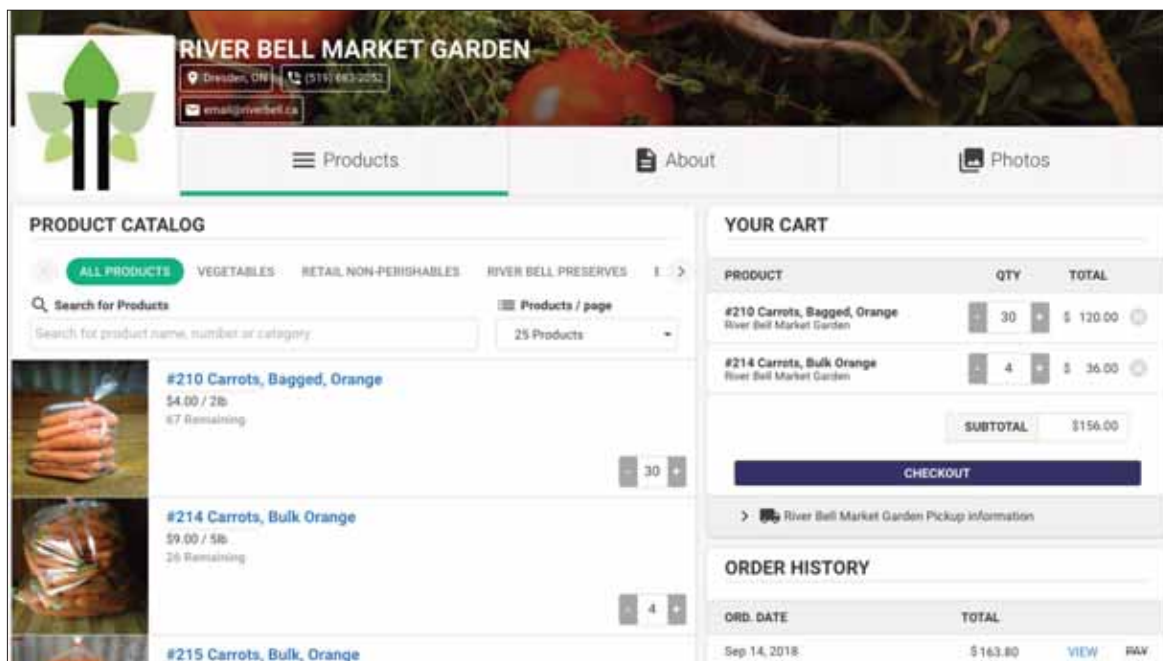
They can service their customer base of more than 300, thanks to the time-saving aspects of the interactive

software. It has helped to increase sales and organize fulfillment. The subscription is \$50 per month with no restrictions on the size of the fruit and vegetable list or the number of customers.

"Surprisingly it was more affordable than I expected," says Grootenboer. "Local Line's software made it possible for our company to take a giant leap forward in providing customer satisfaction."

In addition to offering customers more variety per order, in the case of an order mix-up, Grootenboer is able to work with that customer individually, by easily finding the specific order and customer information on Local Line and offering new product or a refund. This is impossible to do with a series of lists.

Providing personalized orders for their customers has helped them learn what customers want and in what quantities so that they can plan for the future. The lessons have been surprising. Italian eggplant always sells out. Beets continue to be significant. Tomatoes are in high demand, but



A home page of the River Bell Market Garden order page.

Grootenboer sees an opportunity to grow more peppers and eggplant. Kohlrabi is still considered a far-out adventure for some customers. Basic herbs have turned out to be quite profitable.

"The online shopping platform is the most important part, of course, but the customer accounting and reporting is essential for planning and



Joe Grootenboer, River Bell Market Garden, Dresden, Ontario.

distilling data for the near future and for next season," says Grootenboer. "Customer surveys are taken with a grain of salt. What customers say they want doesn't always translate into sales. If there's any shift for him in 2019, it's into more greens: mustard greens, Asian greens, cabbage. Collards, for example, are following the trend-setter of kale."

"It's still a balancing act," says Grootenboer. "I've just ordered seed from William Dam, Seminova and Seedway. I choose the smaller and medium-sized varieties. Large vegetables can get too heavy for the customized box. In our experience, households generally don't seek super-large items that might require several meals to consume."

Launched in 2015, Local Line now has more than 300 subscribers in five provinces and 19 states says CEO Cole Jones. There are about eight similar businesses in North America using software programs in this space.

"Some of our customers sell to 200 households while others sell to hundreds of restaurants," says Jones. "The software can handle 50 orders or 5,000 orders.

You can do away with those sticky notes and spreadsheets."

The Wilfrid Laurier University graduate is passionate about food systems and streamlining operations. The online platform allows his clients to track orders in real time, plan delivery routes or pick-up locations. Time is spent growing and preparing produce for sale, rather than in the distribution and collections end of the business.

"Our early years have been focused on architecting the software so that it works for everyone in the local food system," says Jones. "The program allows clients to segment packaging and SKUs, and even different price lists according to the type of client, wholesale or retail."

Local Line empowers growers to customize their produce offerings to an ever-demanding millennial and baby boomer customer.

Cole Jones and his team at Local Line Inc. are first-time exhibitors at the 2019 Ontario Fruit & Vegetable Convention. To learn more, stop by booth 831. Or go online to: <https://www.localline.ca/the-food-suppliers-guide-to-selling-online>

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FOCUS: ONTARIO FRUIT AND VEGETABLE CONVENTION

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Strawberry fruit rot prediction model to have pilot in Ontario

Production of day-neutral strawberries in Ontario is increasing as part of the berry industry's efforts to extend the growing season. However, these ever-bearing berries have different disease management needs than the traditional June-bearing strawberries.

Strawberry anthracnose has caused considerable crop losses for Ontario berry growers over the last several years; the fungus causes rot and makes the berries unsaleable. Treatment options are limited and fungicide-resistant strains of the disease have been found in the province.

A predictive model for strawberry anthracnose fruit rot was developed in Florida to help growers predict when they should and shouldn't be treating their berry crops. The model was validated under Ontario conditions in 2016 and 2017, but berry growers are hesitant to adopt the technology because of cost and unfamiliarity with the model.

Now, with funding support from the Canadian Agricultural Partnership, the Berry Growers of Ontario is field testing the model with commercial growers at five locations across the province.

"Through the Canadian Agricultural Partnership, we are helping to ensure that farmers have access to the tools and resources they need to predict and mitigate risks," said Lawrence MacAulay, federal minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food. "Collaborative, in-field testing is important to support the adoption of innovative approaches to crop management, while also looking towards the long-term sustainability and profitability of the sector."

"This model predicts when you should be treating your strawberries," said BGO executive director, Kevin Schooley. "We hope this will offer better control of the disease and reduce costs for growers through more targeted application. Based on our initial testing, we think it works, but now we're bringing it to the practical level and into the hands of growers to see if and how it works in the field."

The goal is to assess the costs and benefits of adopting this new technology, as well as promoting sustainable production through the use of disease-forecasting models to specifically target fungicide applications.

Participating growers will be sharing their experiences with the larger berry industry at the 2020 Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Convention.

"We're hoping to get grower comfort level with the technology and develop something that they'll have confidence in so we can do a better job of disease management," Schooley said. "Without the Partnership funding, we could maybe do two test sites instead of the five we are doing; it's important to test this across the province so we get a good sense of the benefit it will offer the industry."

This project was funded in part through the Canadian Agricultural Partnership (the Partnership), a federal-provincial-territorial initiative. The Agricultural Adaptation Council assists in the delivery of the Partnership in Ontario.

Photo right: Strawberry fruit rot

Source: Agricultural Adaptation Council January 21, 2019 news release



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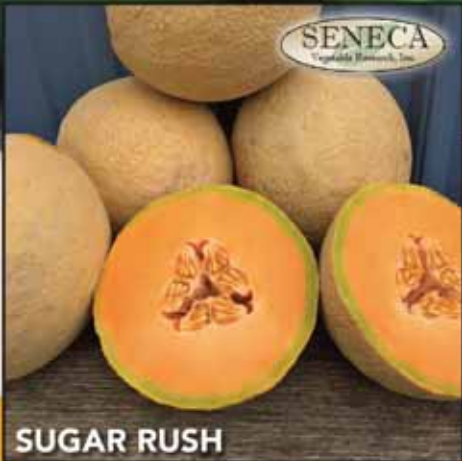
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Innovations continue to brew in the Ontario hop industry

A lot can happen in 10 years, especially when it comes to the Ontario hop industry. Just a decade ago, there were fewer than five commercial hop growers in the province growing less than 20 acres in total. Now, there are close to 65 growers and approximately 200 acres in production. That's what Evan Elford estimates after watching the industry evolve for the past nine years in his role as new crop development specialist with OMAFRA.

"I would say the majority of people [entering the industry] are growers who are either new to agriculture or looking at trying to specialize or try a new market," Elford says. As the industry expands, however, he says it's becoming a more

diverse mixture with more large-scale growers involved.

"Field crop producers who have hundreds of acres and have been growing field crops are also now looking at specializing in five or more acres of hops."

This could also explain the change in how producers are starting out. Elford says a decade or so ago, growers were starting with half an acre to two acres and increasing their production from there.

"Traditionally, what we'd see is people wanting to specialize on a smaller acreage because they can hopefully profit on a smaller acreage crop," he says. More recently, growers are starting to grow hops on a minimum of two acres and up to five acres and

expanding to 10 to 15 acres within the following three years.

As the size of hop operations continues to grow, each farm is specializing and growing fewer varieties to supply specific brewers. This means they can grow more of one type of hop to meet the demand of larger-scale craft brewers.

The expanding acreage also increases the demand for a mechanized harvest, drying facilities and pellet mills.

"Mechanized harvest has been really important for the commercialization of the crop in general," says Elford, adding that a few years ago there was only one mechanized harvester in the province and now there's more than seven along with three processing hubs.



Capital cost allowance changes now in effect

GORDON STOCK

2018 Federal Fall Economic Statement - Capital Cost Allowance (CCA) Changes

Disclaimer: The following information is intended to provide an update on policy changes outlined in the federal government's 2018 Fall Economic Statement

<www.budget.gc.ca/fes-eea/2018/docs/statement-enonce/fes-eea-2018-

eng.pdf>. The information should not be considered financial or legal advice. Please contact your accountant and/or business advisors or Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) to fully understand how these changes affect your specific farm operation.

The federal government has announced several changes to the CCA rules:

1. Accelerating capital cost allowance (i.e., larger deduction for depreciation) for businesses of all sizes, across all sectors of the economy, including farms, that are making capital investments

- Generally, all CCA categories are depreciated at three times the rate at which they were depreciated previously. For example, if a capital asset was previously depreciated at a rate of 30% annually, the depreciation rate would now be 90%.

- CCA categories have not changed.

- Effect of the first-year allowance in the following years:

- Accelerated depreciation will not change the total amount that can be deducted over the life of a property - the larger deduction taken in the first year in respect of a property will eventually be offset by smaller deductions in respect of the property in future years.

- There are differences in future year impacts based on whether the capital item is depreciated on a declining or

straight-line basis.

Example of how the accelerated CCA could benefit fruit and vegetable farms: A fruit or vegetable farm will benefit from the accelerated CCA as it replaces two aging tractors for \$200,000. In addition to increased efficiency from the technological advances incorporated into the new equipment, the farm will be able to deduct \$90,000 for tax purposes in the first year the equipment is used, compared with \$30,000 without accelerated CCA, or about \$16,000 in federal-provincial tax savings.

Gordon Stock is senior policy advisor and government relations, Ontario Fruit & Vegetable Growers' Association.

For more details, attend the Business Section of the Ontario Fruit & Vegetable Convention on February 20th at the Scotiabank Convention Centre, Niagara Falls, Ontario. Rick Wismer, MNP, will be giving an update on taxation in room 204.

For the full story visit www.thegrower.org



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A farmer's blog drills down on food waste



MORRIS GERVAIS

Are you trying to make the most of your local Ontario produce, to reduce your food waste, or to save a few dollars? There are many reasons to try and cut down on kitchen waste, but whatever your reason there are many ways to get the job done. From repurposing kitchen scraps into meals, regrowing

vegetables or even using those scraps as compost materials – it's not difficult to find a method that you can easily work into your lifestyle.

Recipes using kitchen scraps It's easy to throw out those little scraps of food that don't seem to have much value such as potato peels, parmesan rinds and old berries. We even throw away vegetable pieces such as broccoli stems, onion peels or

cauliflower leaves that we don't usually eat because most people don't know all the different ways you can use them. Once you start reusing those little kitchen scraps, you'll be amazed at how much you were throwing away before.

Some of the easier ways to use up those kitchen scraps include: flavoured salts (use leftover lemon peels, or herb stems), stock (can use up almost

any scraps), pasta sauce (can use scraps, or even the pulp from juicing), and bone broth (you can use frozen or fresh bones). There are many parts of vegetables that we usually discard that we can use in some unexpected ways. Cauliflower leaves or the outer leaves of Brussel sprouts can be crisp roasted and salted for a nutty healthy snack. Broccoli stems can be spiralized into noodles; potato peels make crispy thin fries; apple peels can be dried for snacks; and Swiss chard stems can be pickled. If you want to put a little more effort in, you can make jams from too-soft berries, or bread from old zucchini, squash or bananas. You can even make some tasty limoncello using leftover lemon peels, or a fruit shrub to be sipped in the hot summer months.

Grow your own local food

There are quite a few fruits and vegetables that you can use the ends of to replant and grow yourself, either indoors during the winter months or outside in your garden. This helps reduce your kitchen waste, continues the local food cycle, reduces your grocery cost and helps keep them on hand when you need them.

Depending on your garden set-up you may only be able to regrow window herbs, but even this small step can be rewarding. Another unexpected food you can grow indoors are mushrooms -- they love dark, cool and moist environments like your basement or under your sink. If you have a larger outdoor space you're able to set your sights higher and get a little more ambitious.

Vegetables with a base are usually the easiest to try and regrow such as lettuce, celery, and onions. Simply leave a good base on it and stick it into water, after some time you'll notice tiny white roots starting to grow and you can carefully transfer it into a pot or the ground.

Another way to continue the local food cycle at home is to collect seeds from vegetables such as pumpkins, peppers, bean sprouts, apples, peaches, lemons or chestnuts.

Germinating them is the first step, then plant them in your outdoor space!

Compost your local food scraps

If you have kitchen scraps that you can't repurpose, a great alternative to throwing them away is to create a home composter. Placing your composter in a sunny location with good drainage that is easily accessible year round.

Compostable items

- All vegetable and fruit wastes
 - Coffee grounds and paper filters, tea bags
 - Crushed egg shells
 - Grains
 - Corn cobs and outer husks
 - Anything made from flour (bread, noodles, pizza crusts etc)
- Non-Compostable Items (These items will attract rodents and maggots, will cause your compost to smell, and will create an imbalance in the breakdown process.)
- Any kind of meat or bones etc
 - Any part of a fish
 - All dairy products (cheese, butter, yogurt etc)
 - Grease or oils

Thinking local is good for the environment

According to a report from the Commission for Environmental Cooperation, every Canadian on average throws away 170 kilograms of food a year. That makes Canada one of the biggest food wasters on the planet, higher than both United States and Mexico. Buying local at farmers' markets, picking your own and repurposing food scraps are all ways to reduce food waste, while at the same time helping yourself and your family. We hope to see you back here at the farm soon to enjoy more delicious local Ontario produce.

Editor's note: This blog was posted January 16, 2019 by Morris Gervais, Barrie Hill Farm, Springwater, Ontario. It's an example of how on-farm marketers keep touch with their clientele over the winter and link current events such as food waste with the local food system.

The Ontario Farm Fresh Marketing Association holds its symposium on January 20 and 21 in Ballroom B, Scotiabank Convention Centre at the Ontario Fruit & Vegetable Convention held in Niagara Falls, Ontario.

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Motivating and retaining seasonal workers

KAREN DAVIDSON

With 140 seasonal workers, Brett Schuyler is all too familiar with the daily demands of managing a large labour force. Together with a management team, they support the activities of 600 acres of apples, 500 acres of cherries, 3,000 acres of cash crops and 500 ewes at Schuyler Farms near Simcoe, Ontario. At a seminar sponsored by the Agri-Food Management Institute and OFVGA in December 2018, Schuyler shared some of his learnings.

“Last year, we experienced an integrity audit by Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) and realized how vulnerable we are as an employer,” said Schuyler. “The audit process could have shut down our farm operation even though we had done nothing wrong.”

Schuyler Farms source labour through the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP). With more than 50 years of operation, the program is well run but other temporary worker schemes have given rise to bad publicity. The audit experience inspired more research on hiring practices as well as motivating and retaining workers.

“We’re looking at different options in who we hire and have experimented with young workers from Germany and Japan. They’re backpackers, broke and looking for work.”

These workers are usually 25 to 35 years of age. And they’re tech-savvy looking at job boards for casual work. That’s how Schuyler got in touch with 10 of these workers in the 2018 season. The experience benefitted both parties.

But the backbone of the labour force is SAWP workers. Thirty per cent of the 140 workers have returned for five years plus. Twenty-nine per cent were new to the program in 2018. Here are three new tools that Schuyler is deploying to motivate and retain these workers.

Create worker orientation video

An on-farm orientation video is in the works for the 2019 season to show what the bunkhouses look like and what the work entails. The intent is to share this video with potential workers before they leave the Caribbean. One common question is: Will I have my own personal room? No, it’s a bunkhouse with shared accommodation with comfortable living area, bathrooms and plenty of kitchen space.

One YouTube video is already available online with



Tamica Courtney, a seasonal worker from Trinidad, is featured in a YouTube video. She explains that she earns more in a week in Canada than in a month in her home country. Search YouTube for video titled ‘Interview With Farm Worker Tamica Courtney.’

Trinidadian Tamica Courtney. The 32-year-old explains how she can earn as much in a week as she makes in a month in her home country. She’s adamant that her children are going to be properly educated.

Retaining good employees starts with hiring good employees in the first place. “Don’t make them something they don’t want to be,” says Schuyler. “Just because they are great apple pickers, doesn’t mean they should be promoted to head of the crew. Find out how your employment fits their life goals.”

When interviewing prospective employees, Schuyler asks what they do back home. Do they operate a fruit and vegetable stand? Are they an entrepreneur? Do they drive a bus? Perhaps out of that conversation, you will find an employee that has a tractor/trailer license – a huge asset for the farm.

Set the terms for cell phone use

Every worker on the farm brings a cell phone to keep in touch with family back home. While the devices are not allowed in the field, they are used as two-way communication from farm managers. The WhatsApp messenger service is a free cross-platform messaging and Voice over IP service owned by Facebook. The application allows farm managers to send text messages.

“If it’s raining, it’s an easy way to get to everybody quickly to say we’re delaying start time to 10 am for example,” says Schuyler. “In reverse, anyone can get hold of me in real time.”

Demonstrate gratitude

“Good communication with employees show that they matter,” says Schuyler. “For the first time, we held a harvest dinner at the end of October 2018. The neighbours came and everyone was involved. I was amazed at the response.”

Small incentives such as gift

cards and lunches mean a lot on the farm. Off the farm, community events are also important. For the third year, the town of Simcoe held a “Carnival” downtown street event in 2018. As Schuyler explains, the event is evolving every year with local farmers donating money to the cause.

Plans are underway for the summer of 2019 when different country themes will be explored every Friday night in July.

Shutting down a main street with musical bands and food trucks creates a carnival atmosphere. Themes will explore Mexico, the Caribbean and Europe, giving a nod to the various cultures that contribute to the local agricultural economy.

“What rural small town can boast of this kind of community activity on a Friday night?” asks Schuyler. “It’s a draw for everyone.”

Brett Schuyler will be speaking at the Tender Fruit session at the Ontario Fruit & Vegetable Convention, Rooms 207 and 208 as part of a panel session titled: Improving Labour Efficiency and Reducing Production Costs at 11 am, Wednesday, February 20. He will be joined by growers Doug Darling of Sunnydale Farm and Kai Wiens, Kai Wiens Family Farm.



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The power of creating memorable moments in on-farm markets



Jenna Champagne sets up the beauty shot with a piece of barnboard and an antique honey pail.

KAREN DAVIDSON

What really happens when customers walk into your on-farm market? Are they greeted with smells of freshly-baked bread? Are they met with the sampling of a freshly-picked strawberry?

All of these cues resonate deep in the brain and differentiate the experience from other establishments. In 2017, a book called “The Power of Moments” was published to acclaim for marketers seeking an edge. Authors Dan Heath and Chip Heath explain why we tend to remember the best or worst moment of an experience, as well as the last moment, and forget the rest. They delve into why we feel most comfortable when things are certain, but we feel most alive when they’re not. And why our most cherished memories are clustered into a brief period during our youth.

Jenna Champagne took a page from this book and built upon her early success at Murphy’s Farm Market near Alliston, Ontario. Now entering her fourth season, the director of first impressions – yes that’s her title – is pulling out all the stops to grow the business. Here are four tactics that she will be sharing with the Ontario Farm Fresh Marketing Association at the upcoming Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Convention on February 20.

Make customers part of your family

This approach calls back to a childhood era when visiting a local farm or store was full of sensory experiences. It’s challenging to recreate those feelings, but once achieved, customers are hooked.

An emailed newsletter, once a month, is the modern way to keep in touch. Of a thousand subscribers, more than half open the e-newsletter says Champagne. During the summer months, it’s relatively easy to write about the various crops coming into season. But how do you maintain that relationship out of season?

“We’re going to talk about two new babies expected in our family in 2019,” says Champagne. “And we’re going to survey our customers about what they want in new products and events on the farm.”

Recreate the experience through social media

Photos evoke memories. By tweeting a photo and message once a day, five or six days a week, Champagne and her team keep the farm market alive in the minds of followers. In fact, there are now 800 Twitter followers who in turn retweet and tell their friends.

The 2018 season was busy in terms of

capturing photos through every phase of every crop. This archive will be deployed throughout the winter months. Hootsuite is a program used to organize various social media channels in advance.

Style your farm produce

With her graphic arts background, Champagne has natural talent in how food should look. She’s commandeered a light-filled corner of the lunch room to take photos and bought inexpensive props to make farm produce shine. The dollar store can be your go-to source for foam core and kitchen dishes. A slab of rustic barnboard immediately evokes that childhood memory of picking berries.

No expensive cameras are used. A smartphone, when used creatively, can capture all the detail that’s necessary.

Train front-of-house staff

All the e-newsletters and social media are for naught if the front-of-house is not aware of what’s being communicated to customers.

“If we’re featuring lemon cake on social media this week, then the staff need to be aware when customers come in looking for lemon cake,” says Champagne. “There needs to be a cohesive plan for the whole team.”

The staff is trained to upsell customers. For example, if a customer is buying a specialty butter, then offer a free loaf of bread to go with it. Or if lettuce is in the basket, then show the customer a new salad dressing.



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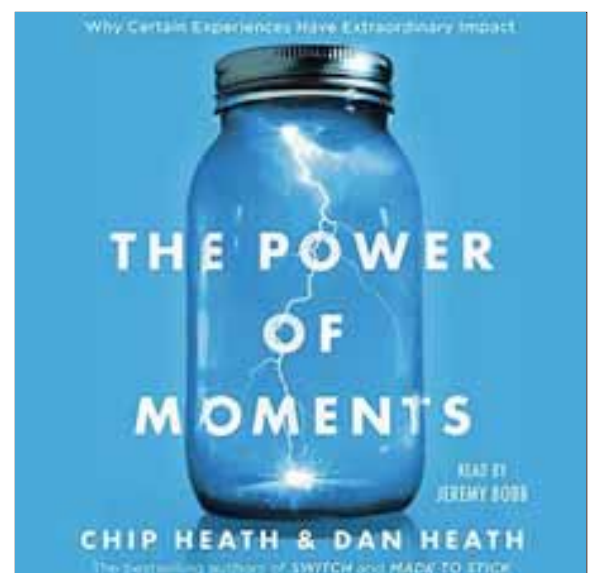


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Jenna Champagne will be speaking at the Ontario Farm Fresh Marketing Association Summit at the Ontario Fruit & Vegetable Convention, Ballroom B, from 3-4 pm, Wednesday, February 20.

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KAREN DAVIDSON

A new automated laser is successfully deterring birds after two seasons of use at the blueberry farm of Justin Meduri, Jefferson, Oregon. Savings for the 168 acres of blueberries have totalled \$100,000 USD and increased revenue by 33 per cent.

Justin Meduri, farm operations manager of Meduri Farms, Jefferson, Oregon told **The Grower** that he noticed a difference the first season when the technology was put to use in 25 acres.

“This is a pliable technology,” he said. “It can be put in any commodity.”

For five years previous to adopting the Agrilaser Autonomic, he had worked with one of the country’s top falconers. As a bird of prey, the falcon had been effective until Meduri learned about technology that could pay for itself in the first year of operation.

The automated laser is used at blueberry farms around the world such as John Benson in Australia and the blueberry research farm of Oregon State University in the United States. There are 6,000 users of the laser technology worldwide. Meduri was intrigued by the possibility of the laser and leased the systems for the season from June until October 2017.

The technology takes advantage of a bird’s natural instincts. Birds perceive an approaching laser beam as a predator and take flight to seek safety. Meduri Farms installed six Agrilaser

Autonomics equipped with solar panels at the outer areas of the farm projecting on the blueberry bushes.

“Previously we had to work hard to keep the birds away. Last year before the lasers, we experienced the highest damage incurred by birds ever. Now with the lasers, we don’t even have to worry about it - we simply have no issue anymore.” As a result of the bird deterrent lasers, Meduri Farms saves 578,713 lbs (262,500 kg) of blueberries each year valued at \$99,733 USD.

Bird damage across the United States

According to research done by numerous U.S. universities, American fruit growers lose tens of millions of dollars each year as a result of birds damaging crops and ineffective bird repelling methods. Oregon and Washington have the biggest blueberry crop damage caused by birds per hectare. The damage per hectare for blueberries equals to \$4,571 USD for Oregon and is calculated at \$11,238,095 USD for the entire state. Current yield-loss percentage due to bird damage in blueberry production in Oregon is the highest among other states and is on average 18.2 per cent. The birds responsible for damage to blueberry crops include American robins, European starlings and blackbirds.

Manufacturers of the Agrilaser Autonomic, Bird Control Group, will be an exhibitor at the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Convention to be held February 20 and 21 in Niagara Falls. Check out www.birdcontrolgroup.com or booth 1007.



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Evil weevils: pepper weevil and some commonly confused cousins

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Pepper weevil is an economically important pest of field and greenhouse peppers in southwestern Ontario. With limited options for control available to growers, the best chance of success hinges on early detection of the insect pest in the crop. Thus, if you grow peppers, include pheromone traps in the crop as part of your monitoring program. However, these pheromone traps can also attract other weevil species that are not pepper pests and may set off some unnecessary alarm bells. Here are some tips to help determine if what you have caught on your trap is indeed an 'Evil weevil' in pepper production.

You will need a hand lens or magnifying glass to be able to see some smaller details. A 15-20x magnification, or higher, is ideal. Some of the features may be covered in glue from the trap, so be prepared to

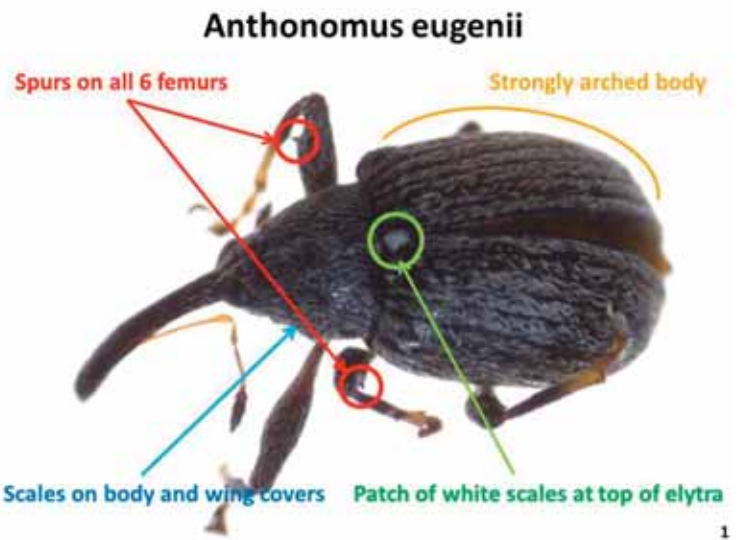
manipulate any suspects with fine forceps, pins, etc. *Anthonomus eugenii* (common name: pepper weevil): Pepper weevil is 2-3.5 mm in length and 1.5-1.8 mm in width with a strongly arched oval body shape. It can be mahogany brown to almost black in colour and its body and hind wings are covered in small white to yellow scales (fine hairs). It also has a small concentration of white scales at the top of the wing covers (elytra). Under close examination, small spurs can be observed on all six femurs (upper segment of the leg). It prefers peppers, but can also feed and sometimes reproduce on other Solanaceous species, such as eggplant and night-shades.

Anthonomus signatus (common name: strawberry bud/clipper weevil): The strawberry bud or strawberry clipper weevil is less than 3 mm in length and has an oval body shape, similar to pepper weevil. It is a dark reddish-brown colour and has a large

spot on each wing cover, which can be difficult to see on some specimens. It also has a concentration of white scales at the top of the elytra and a thin covering of scales over the entire body. As per its name, it is most commonly found on strawberries where it lays eggs in flower buds and then clips the buds from the plants.

Ceutorhynchus rapae (common name: cabbage curculio): The cabbage curculio averages 2.7-3.2 mm in length and has a rounder body shape when compared to pepper weevil. It has spurs on the hind-most femurs, which can be difficult to see. It is black with a thick covering of white scales over its entire body, making it appear greyer. The scales on the top (dorsal side) of the weevil are small and narrow, while the scales underneath (ventral side) are larger and wider. It is commonly found feeding on Brassica species such as cabbage, broccoli and mustard.

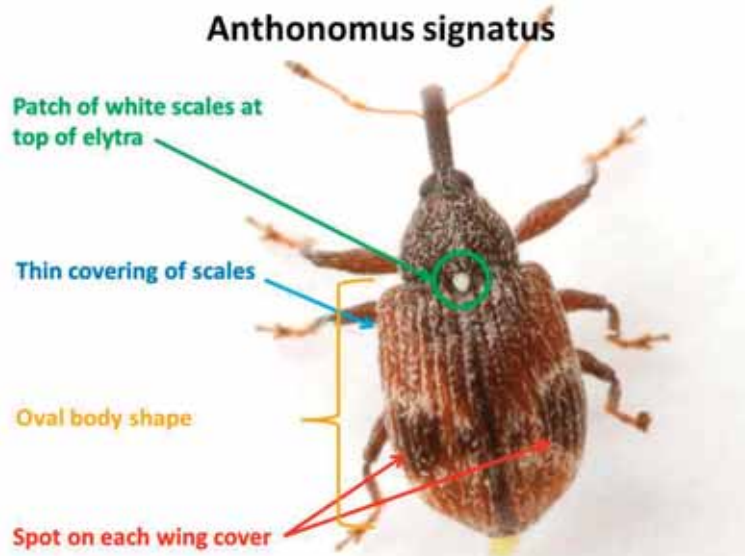
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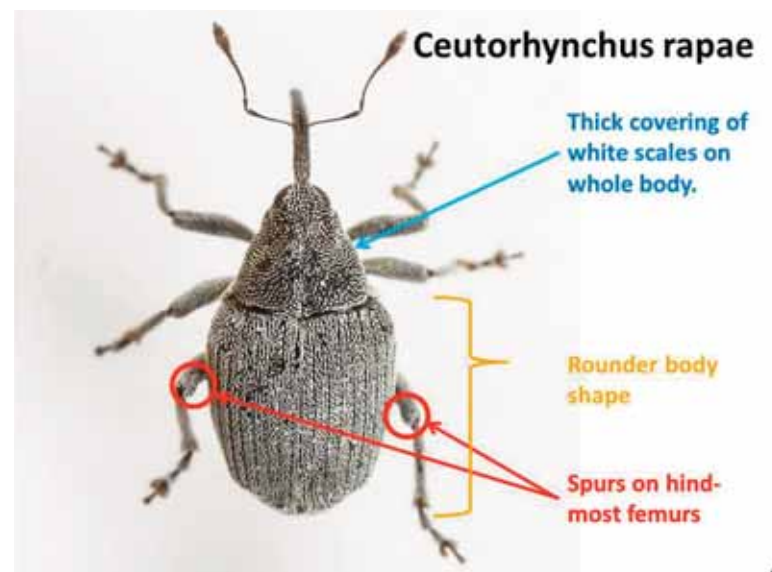
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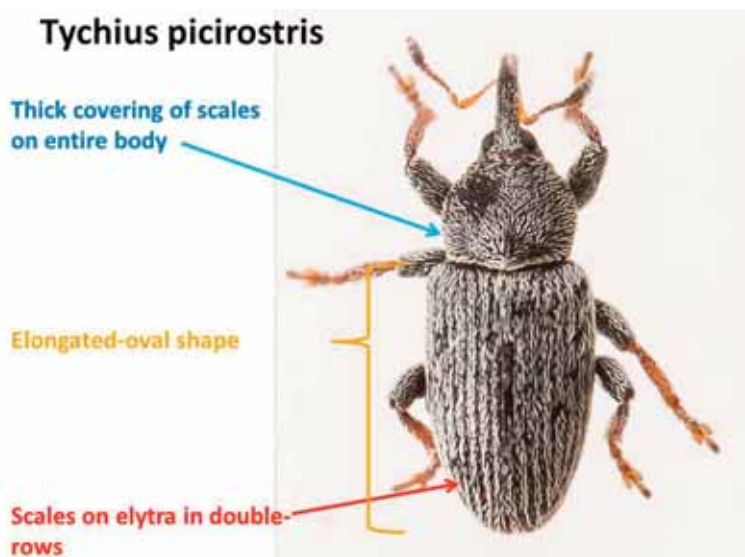
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5

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ON VEG NEWS

Chlorothalonil (Bravo/Echo) use changes for vegetable growers

Legend

New additional to label	Increase in REI ¹ (compared to 48 hours) ²
Reduction in the number of applications permitted	Decrease in REI (compared to 48 hours)

¹ REI: Restricted entry interval.

² Previous 48 hour REI for vegetable crops was derived from registrant technical information

DENNIS VAN DYK

In 2018, the Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) released its final decision on the re-evaluation of chlorothalonil products such as Bravo and Echo. Below is a summary table for the final use changes from the PMRA decision. Label changes will take effect as soon as amended labels are published by the PMRA and no later than May 10, 2020.

Dennis Van Dyk is a vegetable crop specialist for OMAFRA.

Evil weevils

Continued from last page

Tychius picirostris (common name: clover seed weevil): The clover seed weevil is 2.5-3 mm long and approximately 1 mm wide, with an elongated-oval body shape. It is dark greenish-brown to black in colour, depending on the age of the specimen. It has a thick covering of white scales over the entire weevil and the scales on the elytra are neatly organized into double rows. It is common in areas where clover species are present.

These are just a few examples of the many weevil species that could be found on pepper weevil pheromone traps. If you have a suspect weevil and would like confirmation or would just like more information on pepper weevil monitoring, control, etc., please contact:

Amanda Tracey (Vegetable Crops Specialist, OMAFRA) at amanda.tracey@ontario.ca, Cara McCreary (Greenhouse Vegetable IPM Specialist, OMAFRA) at cara.mccreary@ontario.ca, or Hannah Fraser (Entomologist – Horticulture, OMAFRA) at hannah.fraser@ontario.ca.

Picture credits: (1) Denise Beaton, OMAFRA, (2) Janice LeBoeuf, OMAFRA,

(3) <https://bugguide.net/node/view/1349936>, (4) <https://bugguide.net/node/view/1142835>,

(5) <https://bugguide.net/node/view/1059651>

Amanda Tracey is vegetable crop specialist for OMAFRA

Crop	Max Application Rate (kg a.i./ha)	Max Number of Applications	Retreatment Interval (days)	Activity	REI (days)
Asparagus	1.2 (dry flowable) 1.7 (solution)	3	14	Scouting	4
				All other activities	0.5
Cabbage	2.4	2	7	Scouting, thinning	2
				Hand weeding	1
				All other activities	0.5
Carrot	1.6	7	7	Hand harvesting	22
				Scouting	7
				All other activities	0.5
Celery, field	2	2	3	All activities	0.5
Celery seedbeds (greenhouse)	1.4	1	N/A	All activities	0.5
Cole crops: Broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower	2.4	1	N/A	Topping (Brussels sprouts)	5
				Scouting	5
				All other activities	0.5
Corn, sweet	1.6	2	10	Hand harvesting	18
				Mechanical harvesting	14
				Scouting	1
				All other activities	0.5
Cucurbit vegetables (Cantaloupe, muskmelon, honeydew, squash, pumpkin, watermelon, cucumber)	2.4	2	7	All activities	0.5
Onion (dry bulb)	2.4	2	7	Hand weeding	6
				Scouting	1
				All other activities	0.5
Onion (green bunching)	2.4	2	7	Hand weeding	6
				Scouting	1
				All other activities	0.5
Parsnip	1.4	7	7	Hand harvesting	21
				Scouting	5
				All other activities	0.5
Pea, dry	1.5	2	10	Scouting	1
				All other activities	0.5
Potato (seed)	1.2	3	7	Handset irrigation	23
				Roguing	19
				Scouting	3
				All other activities	0.5
Potato (table)	1.2	3	7	Handset irrigation	23
				Scouting	3
				All other activities	0.5
Tomato (not grown for processing)	2.4 and 1.2	2 (total)	14 (for applications at 2.4 kg a.i./ha) 8 (for applications at 1.2 kg a.i./ha)	All activities	0.5
Tomato (grown for processing)	2.4 and 1.2	9 (2 applications at 2.4 kg a.i./ha and 7 applications at 1.2 kg a.i./ha)	14 (for applications at 2.4 kg a.i./ha) 8 (for applications at 1.2 kg a.i./ha)	Scouting	7
				All other activities	0.5

Ontario's South Coast Wineries and Growers' Association endorses Marquette hybrid variety

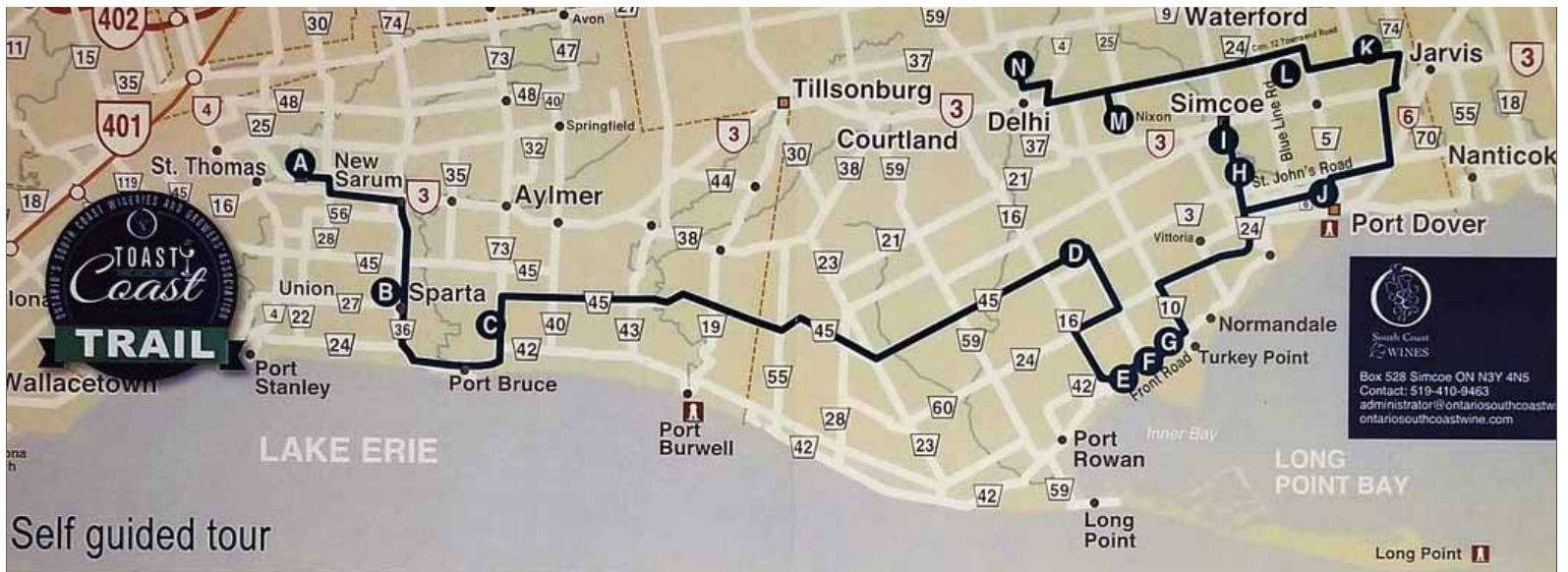
The Ontario South Coast Wineries and Growers' Association (OSCWGA) with 18 members, passed a resolution at its January 2019 annual general meeting to endorse the addition of Marquette and other hybrid varieties for designation in the Vintners Quality Alliance (VQA).

"As a board, we have a responsibility to support our members who grow varieties that are not currently on the approved list of designated varieties and that the quality of wine produced meets the standards set by VQA," says Nick Vranckx, president, OSCWGA. "The association does support the VQA system, and we also support the adherence to standards set out by VQA but we also recognize that other grape varieties will produce excellent wines in Ontario, particularly in our region."

The region is located on the north shore of Lake Erie. See wine route map.

"We are growers of Marquette grapes and have seen how well they have performed in our region over the last five years," says Anita Buehner, co-owner of Bonnieheath Estate Lavender and Winery. "We are continually complimented on the flavour and quality of our wines, and in particular, this is shown by the increasing level of sales of these wines to customers who visit our winery."

Vranckx has communicated the resolution by letter to the VQA.



Burning Kiln Winery

This news comes in advance of the grape and winery sessions at the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Convention. The winery session will be held February 20 in Room 205 of the Scotiabank Convention Centre. A full grape program will be held February 21 in Ballroom C. Topics include: spotted wing drosophila risks, vineyard mechanization, canopy management efficiencies and nutrition and soil health.



Marquette grapes at Hounds of Erie Winery



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