

LEADERSHIP

Spearheading change with asparagus allies



Juggling multiple demands comes naturally to Rebecca Compton. For the last two years, she has chaired the Asparagus Farmers of Ontario through a challenging marketing period. This spring, she has high hopes for a quality crop. While managing 60 acres and an on-farm retail outlet, Big Red Barn near Delhi, Ontario, she encourages her young children – Sable and Anson – to be at home in the field. Photos by Glenn Lawson.

KAREN DAVIDSON

Asparagus grower Rebecca Compton knows when it's time to call a friend. Or two.

Last year, she found herself in the eye of a perfect storm. The growing season of competitor U.S. regions was late and asparagus was flooding the market, flattening prices. Besides her own 60 acres near Delhi, she was the newly elected chair of the Asparagus Farmers of Ontario. The bottom line? The profitability of an industry with farmgate value of \$30 million was at stake.

"There was too much crop at low prices," recalls Compton. "The increase

in transportation costs as well as minimum wages going to \$14 per hour didn't help."

The local asparagus season is a precious six to eight weeks in length. So time was not on their side. Compton and her fellow directors called an emergency in-season meeting on May 29, inviting wholesalers and growers to face the market turmoil together.

"Putting all those people in the same room at the same time was risky," says Compton. "It could have totally blown up. But instead of looking at each other as competitors, they came together as collaborators."

Former chair Ken Wall offers some perspective. A series of unfortunate events impacted the Ontario market.

Two states – Washington and New Jersey -- experienced cold springs and came into the market at end of April, about three weeks later than usual. Peru air freighted an unexpected six million pounds, double normal patterns, into Miami and Tampa. All the usual markets for Ontario asparagus were plugged – western Canada, the American mid-west and the eastern seaboard.

This unprecedented situation was compounded by record volumes in Ontario. Wall recalls that in his own Sandy Shore packing house, volumes exceeded the norms of 125,000 to 150,000 pounds a day. "We were blown away by the volumes of 250,000 to 300,000 pounds in a day – there was no storage space. We were jammed."

The result was that asparagus growers had to mow down some of their fields for lack of a profit in the marketplace.

"2018 was a big, ugly year," says Wall.

When the season ended, Compton and her board analyzed all the factors and came up with a consensus view – to enhance market penetration here in Canada. It was based on Wall's travels to Germany where the population consumes five pounds per capita in the spring stretch from April to June. In contrast, North America consumes 1.7 pounds per capita over 12 months. Going forward, Ontario's 95 asparagus growers intend to grow the market domestically.

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AT PRESS TIME...



Be prepared for unwanted visitors on the farm

Trespassing on farm property is a growing concern for Ontario farmers. From rural trail hikers detouring into a pasture to ATV drivers ruining crops, farmers have dealt with all types of unwanted visitors who leave varying degrees of damage. The latest threat to farmers, especially livestock farmers and transporters, is the increasing risk of activists trespassing, invading, breaking into barns and harassing farmers, their families and employees.

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) is reminding all Ontario farmers to be aware of these ongoing threats and take precautions to prevent, or at least mitigate the consequences of any trespassers that threaten regular farm activities, farmers, their families or employees.

OFA is encouraging all farm-

ers to be prepared for unwanted visitors on your farm by:

- Post No Trespassing signs and any necessary biosecurity signs to clearly mark private property.
- Lock all building doors and vehicles. Remove keys from tractors and equipment and store them somewhere safe.
- Monitor visitors and watch for suspicious vehicles or activities on or around farm property.
- Consider adding video surveillance to barns or high traffic areas of the farm.
- Train family and employees how to respond to unwanted visitors and situations that would require calling police.

OFA is working with agricultural industry partners to raise awareness of this serious on-farm issue and lobby the provincial government to ensure the safety of Ontario's farm families and their employees. Keith Currie, OFA president, is asking for stronger enforcement of animal activists who are conducting these illegal and

threatening activities. Farmers, their families and employees are becoming increasingly frightened and frustrated.

OFA reminds farmers to be prepared and call police if necessary.

"We're all facing this threat of activists and trespassers together. And we're asking farmers to add their voice to an online letter campaign that will send a letter directly to your MPP to register your concern for the growing threat of animal activism," says Currie.

Add your voice by visiting actnow.ofa.on.ca. Follow the simple instructions to sign your name to a letter that urges the provincial government to deliver better police protection and stronger enforcement against animal activists to ensure the safety of farms, families and employees.

Photo by Glenn Lawson.

NEWSMAKERS

Two new faces will be attending the federal-provincial-territorial ag minister's conference in Quebec City on July 18-19. Alberta's new agriculture minister is **Devin Dreesen** (Innisfail-Sylvan Lake). One of the cabinet's youngest ministers at 31, he was policy advisor to former federal ag minister **Gerry Ritz** from 2008-2015. His family farms grains, canola and pulses near Pine Lake.



Bloyce Thompson is adding extra roles to his daily routine of milking Holstein cows. He is Prince Edward Island's new minister of agriculture and land, justice and public safety and attorney general. "I'll get a lot done before breakfast," he quipped to *Maclean's Magazine* who is profiling him in its June issue. He toppled the previous premier **Wade MacLauchlan** in the riding of Stanhope-Marshfield, not far from the city of Charlottetown.



Anne Fowlic, who helmed the Canadian Horticultural Council for 17 years, has been appointed to the External Advisory Committee on Regulatory Competitiveness. This committee, which reports to the Treasury Board, will bring together business leaders, academics and consumer representatives from across the country. Their role will be to advise the government on regulatory competitiveness and innovation.

Tina Singal is the new head of the Agricultural Stakeholder Engagement Unit at the Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA). She began her PMRA career in 2007 as a human health evaluator and then moved into re-evaluation coordination and risk management. Over the years, she has been involved with promotion of post-application mitigation measures and improvements to the re-evaluation program.

Ontario's attorney general **Caroline Mulroney** took time from her busy schedule to visit **Kirk Kemp**, co-owner, Algoma Orchards and neighbouring growers in mid-May.



L-R: Eric Kemp, Don Rickard, Byron Kemp, Caroline Mulroney, Robert Vandermeer, Kirk Kemp, Charles Stevens, David Piccini, MPP Northumberland-Peterborough South, Courtney Stevens.

The Canadian Centre for Food Integrity has hired **John Jamieson** as its new president and CEO. Most recently Jamieson served as deputy minister of agriculture and fisheries, and deputy minister of rural and regional development in Prince Edward Island. He was also past executive director of the PEI Federation of Agriculture. He begins his new post on June 17.

A shout-out to apple and blueberry grower **Charles Stevens** who successfully trekked to Mount Everest Base Camp at 17,500 feet altitude on April 23. He is currently chair of the Ontario Apple Growers and chair of the OFVGA crop protection section.

NECTAR

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COVER STORY

Spearheading change with asparagus allies

“It took leaving the farm to really miss it. I realized that agriculture is my place and that food and feeding people are my calling.”

~ REBECCA COMPTON

Continued from page 1

To that end, the association held a strategy development workshop in July 2018. A Fresh Asparagus Advisory Committee was struck in March 2019 that included some new players such as representatives from a local retailer, Foodland Ontario and the Ontario Produce Marketing Association.

“I’m more optimistic than most and willing to try new things,” says Compton. “All of these folks don’t normally talk together but we were impressed with the information sharing that happened.”

The 2019 season is now well underway with normal wholesale prices of \$60 to \$70 per case (28 lb). The association plans some new as well as expanded marketing initiatives. The strategy is to leverage

friends in the produce circle who are already supportive of the “local food” movement.

In-store sampling will be on offer for 40 days at Toronto locations. Online recipe videos will be available throughout the season. Local culinary colleges are participating in cooking challenges.

The popular Asparagus tour that brings food writers and bloggers from the Greater Toronto Area to an asparagus farm will be expanded from 24 to 50 seats this year. Welsh Brothers, who grow both conventional and organic asparagus will be on hand to demonstrate field picking and packing.

In other words, don’t take consumers for granted. Remind them of the taste and health benefits of local asparagus.

These are challenging times



Mexican workers sort and grade asparagus on a relatively new packing line.

for Compton, who is in partnership with her parents Ed and Sandy DeHooghe. She’s a full-time mother to four-year-old Sable and two-year-old Anson while managing the on-farm retail outlet: Big Red Barn. Her husband operates an off-farm business.

Compton’s career path was not preordained, because she grew up as a seventh-generation farmer. In fact, her undergraduate degree is in psychology from the University of Western Ontario. She topped up the degree with a Masters in Communication. Her career took off in Alberta’s oil patch with jobs in human resources, marketing and communications. After five years of ever-increasing responsibilities, she listened to the drumbeat of her heart calling her back to the farm.

“It took leaving the farm to really miss it,” says Compton. “I realized that agriculture is my place and that food and feeding people are my calling.”

Rebecca Compton’s story is not unusual these days. As the 2016 Census of Agriculture proved, there is a rising new generation that has highly educated female farm operators. Many are under 40 managing complex agricultural operations. In 1996, females represented 25.3 per cent of farm operators. By 2016, that proportion had risen to 28.7 per cent, accounting for 77,830 female farm operators in Canada.

Coaxing these women into leadership positions is important for agriculture. “Rebecca is a bright light with communications skills par excellence,” says Wall. “We’ve encouraged her to bring her kids along to

meetings. If we don’t, we’ll scare away the next generation of leadership.”

The Grower goes “Behind the Scenes” of this cover story to speak with Rebecca Compton, Delhi, Ontario. She talks about life as a farm operator and chair of Asparagus Farmers of Ontario. To listen, visit www.thegrower.org/podcasts.



INTERNATIONAL

Worrying signs in the geo-politics of food trade

Canada faces imminent threats to its agri-food system from the growing global trade turmoil and the sudden decline of the rules-based international accords, says a new report from Agri-Food Economic Systems, an independent Canadian economic research organization. The U.S.-China conflict and simultaneous epizootic outbreak in China’s swine industry demand integrity in the international trade systems to mitigate fallout, integrity that has suddenly declined.

“The global situation with regard to staple food products, notably meat and oilseeds, is deteriorating,” says Douglas Hedley, Agri-Food Economic Systems associate and co-author of the report. “The spread and implications of African Swine Fever (ASF) in China will seriously impair global meat

supplies and spark food price inflation - especially in China. Meanwhile, the implied reduction in Chinese feed demand sharply limits any upside for soybean and canola prices, amid burdensome stocks.”

The U.S. and China are engaged in an escalating trade war over a range of long-standing issues that are irritants for the U.S., which have not been resolved to the satisfaction of the U.S. through World Trade Organization (W.T.O.) dispute resolution processes.

“Ordinarily, resolution of this situation would be a positive for Canada, with the U.S. standing up for international institutions”, says Ted Bilyea, Agri-Food Economic Systems associate and co-author of the report. “But the situation today is very different. It could result



in a China/U.S. agreement which is self-contained and preferential; this could signal the beginning of the end for the W.T.O.”

“Through its actions against China, the U.S. is creating a trade crisis that could be used to force needed W.T.O reforms,” says Mike Gifford, former chief agricultural trade negotiator for Canada and co-author of the report. “However if this is not the U.S. strategy, and the U.S.

increasingly relies on power leverage rather than the rule of law, we run the very real risk of the international trade system progressively unraveling.”

“China is a hybrid state/capitalist economy; the multilateral trade rules were designed for market economies,” says report co-author Al Mussell, Agri-Food Economic Systems research lead. “China appears intent on growing through its hybrid

economic structure, but is vulnerable to food security and inflation. China’s response to its food situation, and its resolution of trade tensions with the U.S., will be historical inflection points for Canadian agri-food and the global economy.”

The New Geo-Political Economy of Food report can be accessed at www.agrifoodecon.ca

CROSS COUNTRY DIGEST

BRITISH COLUMBIA

BC Tree Fruits Cooperative to build state-of-the-art packing facility

The 400-member BC Tree Fruits Cooperative is in an upbeat mood with plans to purchase 85 acres in Kelowna. The “One Roof” strategy is to consolidate all operations says CEO Todd McMyn.

“This purchase signals our commitment to the industry, our growers, our staff and the Valley and will give us the ability to compete on a global scale moving forward,” said McMyn, referring to the Okanagan Valley. The May 7

news release indicated that the cooperative will sell its property in Penticton. Both transactions were to be completed by May 31, 2019.

The cooperative’s management team will be working closely with all levels of government over the near future laying the framework for the new facility located on Old Vernon Road in Kelowna. When complete, the “One Roof” plan will consolidate all of the cooperative’s northern facilities



into this new facility, which will house state-of-the-art apple, cherry, pear and soft fruit packing lines as well as office

space, cider operations and a “destination” cidery.

No date is available on start of construction.

NEW BRUNSWICK

Soil-borne diseases have large impact on potato yields

Declining soil quality and widespread presence of soil-borne diseases are the two major factors influencing yield limitations in Canada’s potato growing regions according to Dr. Bernie Zebarth, an Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) soil scientist. At the conclusion of a five-year, industry-led study looking at declining potato yields, Zebarth says improving potato cropping systems will go a long way to increasing soil quality and suppressing pathogens.

In 2013, potato industry stakeholders engaged with Dr. Zebarth, other AAFC research scientists as well as provincial and academic collaborators, to help understand the causes of declining yields and find out if the trend can be reversed.

“Potato production is hard on soil quality,” says Dr. Zebarth. “Frequent tillage, short potato rotations and soil erosion can all reduce soil organic matter, and the potato crop adds little organic matter back to the soil. When soil quality is low, the potato crop suffers because there’s less aeration and biological activity, and soils don’t have the same capacity to hold water or take up nutrients. Poor soil quality can also reduce drainage, a condition which is compounded in wet spring weather. The result is poor early growth or seedpiece rot.”

Researchers looked at a variety of methods to enhance soil quality including compost, nurse crops and fall cover crops. These methods were shown to enhance soil quality by increasing and preserving organic matter. However, better soils didn’t necessarily result in increased yields in the short

term.

Scientists were surprised to discover that soil-borne diseases have a much larger impact on potato yields than previously thought. The main culprit is the Potato Early Dying (PED) disease complex.

PED is caused by the fungal pathogen *Verticillium dahliae* which causes Verticillium wilt. When root-lesion nematodes are also present, this makes a devastating combination for potato plants and can cause substantial yield losses. Zebarth says there is some evidence that PED symptoms can be minimized in healthy soils.

“Better cropping systems and good agronomic practices can help suppress soil-borne diseases, and at the same time build healthy soils,” says Dr. Zebarth. “When soils are healthy, the micro-organisms may be able to better compete with the pathogens and can lessen their impact on the crop.”

Zebarth says this study has identified the major barriers to reversing declining potato yields and given scientists and industry a path forward toward finding solutions. Developing new cropping systems that both build soil quality and suppress soil-borne pathogens is one of the best ways to improve potato yields in Canada.

Moreover, the study has paved the way for new research into better understanding these soil-borne pathogens and how they behave; developing new diagnostic tools and developing practical management strategies.

Source: *Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada*



These mustard plants are being tested by AAFC researchers as a rotational crop species to increase soil health and suppress soil-borne diseases in potato rotations.



Best wishes to Dr. Bernie Zebarth, AAFC research scientist who officially retired on May 29, after almost 30 years of work in both British Columbia and New Brunswick. Others will continue this work in various specialties: Louis-Pierre Comeau, soil organic matter specialist; Dahu Chen, plant pathologist; Cameron Wagg, integrated cropping systems specialist.

His parting words of wisdom are worth sharing. At a grower meeting, the audience was grappling with the notion of return on investment for various soil conservation practices. What’s the cost of seed? What’s the yield increase?

“I am not sure any soil conservation practice can meet that bar of return on investment,” says Dr. Zebarth. “With crop protection inputs, it’s very logical to think that way. But it’s not the same for soil. If you think of soil as part of farm infrastructure, perhaps as much as 50 per cent of the value of a farm operation is in the land. The soil does not generate direct income but it allows you to generate income. You have to invest in that infrastructure on an on-going basis to sustain the farm operation.”

CROSS COUNTRY DIGEST

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Majority of Prince Edward Islanders support the potato industry

Editor's note: Summarized from a report by Ryan Barrett, research and agronomy coordinator, in the March/April issue of Prince Edward Island Potato News.

More than four years ago, in November 2014, the Prince Edward Island Potato Board contracted a local firm to survey consumers about public sentiment toward the potato industry. For growers, it's easy to be distracted by negative headlines or social media posts. The thought was to dig deeper into a more representative vein of consumer opinion.

In 2018, the survey followed one of the toughest harvest seasons on record.

In the intervening years, the Board had engaged in proactive communications with fellow Islanders, sponsoring events and reaching out to media. The hope was that investing in the bank of good will would pay off over the long term.

"The results indicate to us that the majority of Islanders is very supportive of the potato industry and is empathetic to the issues facing our industry," said Ryan Barrett. "While we must continue making tangible efforts to communicate with Islanders about the industry and improving the environmental sustainability of potato production, the grand majority of Prince Edward Islanders is on our side and want the best for our industry, which they acknowledge is very important to the provincial economy."

Some of the 2018 survey highlights were:

- Only half of Islanders think that potatoes are produced from family farms, with 43% feeling that potatoes are largely produced by corporate farms. These numbers are largely unchanged from 2014.

- 85% of Islanders feel that potato farmers are very responsible, responsible or somewhat responsible in being good stewards of the land, working to minimize environmental impacts. This is a slight improvement from 2014.

- When people were asked about the two most important issues facing the PEI potato industry, respondents answered environmental sustainability and climate change (20%); pesticides and chemicals (19.5%) and water availability/irrigation (15%). The answers

were in a different order in 2014: pesticides and chemicals (22%); product tampering (15%) and environmental sustainability and climate change (9%).





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CROP PROTECTION

Tomato Brown Rugose Fruit Virus identified in Ontario

The Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers (OGVG) is communicating to all members that the Tomato Brown Rugose Fruit Virus has been positively identified in Ontario. This virus primarily impacts tomatoes, and to some extent peppers, in both greenhouse and field operations. The association is unaware of the specific location(s) at which it was confirmed and is working with crop protection partners to further understand the specific origin of these incidents.

“In discussions with local and international researchers, it is our understanding that this virus can be effectively managed through strict on-farm biosecurity measures that aim to isolate, destroy and limit the spread of the disease,” says Dr. Justine Taylor, science and government relations manager, OGVG. “It is critical that you continue to enforce strict biosecurity practices at your farms and packing sheds.”

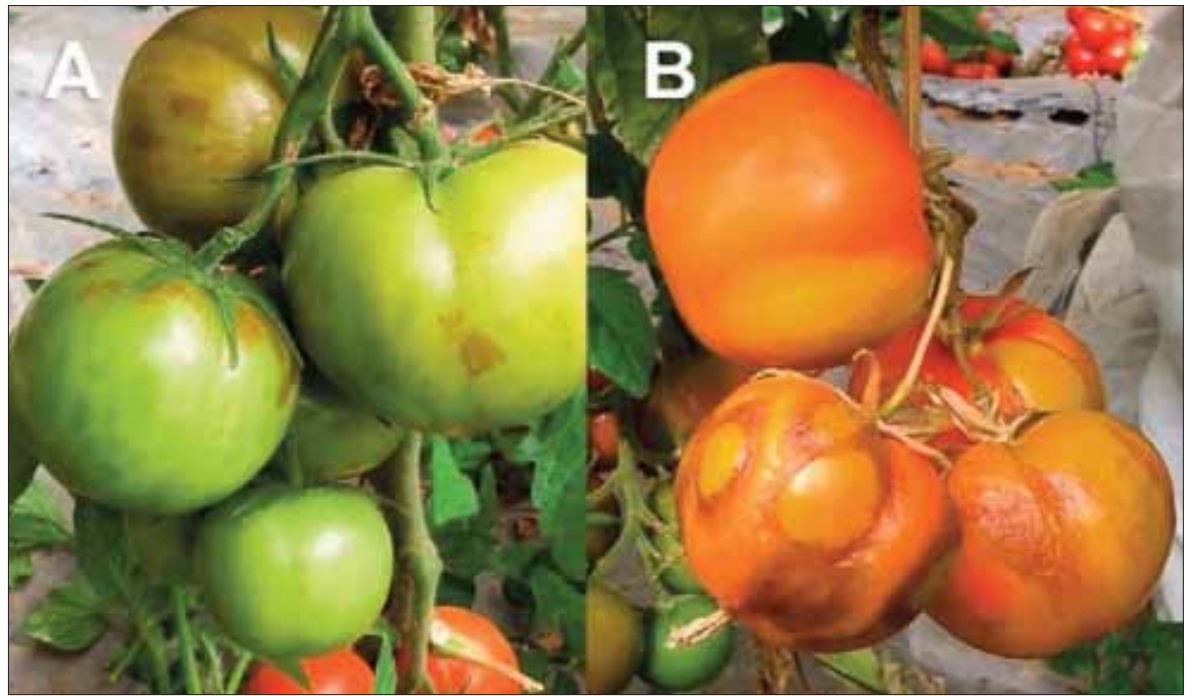
The most up-to-date

technical information, including biosecurity protocols, is available here. While the virus can be carried on seeds, it can also be mechanically transferred on farm equipment and tools such as shears, carts, containers, clothing, etc. Restrict access to the crop to necessary individuals and ensure strict sanitation and hygiene measures are followed by all visitors and workers. Use the utmost caution when accepting materials from outside the greenhouse operation, especially if they originated from another farm or have previously been in contact with produce.

OGVG and OMAFRA hosted multiple workshops in mid-May to inform growers of the most up-to-date and effective protocols.

Lastly, it is important to note that this virus does not pose any human health or food safety risks. Assure customers of this fact.

The five key facts to



Tomato Brown Rugose Fruit Virus causes tomatoes to be unmarketable.

communicate to customers are as follows;

- The Tomato Brown Rugose Fruit Virus (ToBRFV) is a disease that predominately impacts tomato plants and to some extent pepper plants, leaving the fruit damaged and unmarketable.
- It was first detected in Israel in 2014 and is devastating to

crops and challenging to control/eradicate when not acted upon swiftly.

- It has been detected in several regions since, including Europe, Mexico and the U.S.
- It can be effectively managed through strict on-farm biosecurity measures
- It is not harmful to human health nor does it pose a food

safety risk

Contact Niki Bennett for technical information on biosecurity protocols. Contact Joseph Sbrocchi or Justine Taylor for information related to other matters.

Source: Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers communiqué to members May 9, 2019.

ONTARIO'S LOCAL FOOD WEEK JUNE 3-7

Rhubarb in demand



KAREN DAVIDSON

Rhubarb and strawberries are a match made in culinary heaven. But in recent months, at least in Ontario, rhubarb has been scarce in markets that specialize in local fare.

“Blame it on last year’s hot summer,” says Brian French, one of the province’s few commercial growers of the vegetable. The fifth-generation farmer from Lennox Farms, Melancton, Ontario, explains that the perennial plant usually spends two years in the field before being transplanted to one of three 10,000 square-foot hothouses where it is grown in the dark and forced for early spring markets.

Not enough energy was stored in the roots in the summer of 2018, therefore yields were down in the late winter/early spring of 2019. Normally, French would harvest in a range of 10,000 to 12,000 pounds of winter rhubarb per hothouse. However those volumes were shaved to about 8,000 to 9,000 pounds per hothouse this past winter.

“I was fielding 10 calls a day,” says French, but couldn’t fill the demand.

Consumers must wait for the field crop that lasts from mid-May to about July 10. Lennox Farms devotes 35 acres to summer rhubarb. The timing of tart rhubarb synchronizes with sweet strawberries.



Interestingly, French will harvest a late rhubarb variety, Crimson Red, in late August 2019. The objective is to sell rhubarb to match the increasing volumes of day-neutral strawberries that are available right up until frost. Two acres are planted for the first time to meet this evolving demand.

Ever the entrepreneur, French transformed 12,000 pounds of rhubarb last year, using a portable cider press. He is making rhubarb juice for local wineries and cideries, but also for his own on-farm retail market. Look for a new product: rhubarb and strawberry juice!



OFVGA ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

Lobbying in advance of the federal election



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.

Federal lobbying

OFVGA representatives spent May 7 in Ottawa supporting the Canadian Horticultural Council and the Canadian Produce Marketing Association's "Farm to Plate" spring lobby event. The event included meetings with Members of Parliament, political staff, and Senators on three key issues: food policy for Canada, financial protection for produce sellers, and crop protection.

The event was the sector's final push for these key issues in advance of the fall federal election. The messaging was intended to educate and encourage all political parties to ensure these issues are built into their election platforms.

Financial protection

OFVGA continues to push for implementation of financial protection in Canada to protect growers. In the U.S., the Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act (PACA) licenses buyers of produce to ensure that those who sell produce receive payment for their products. It also established legislation that protects produce sellers when buyers fail to pay and become insolvent. Many aspects of PACA are addressed in Canada through the Dispute Resolution Corporation; however, payment protection when a buyer becomes insolvent is a significant gap that remains.

To address this financial risk, the industry has been lobbying the federal government to implement legislation that would enable fruit and vegetable farmers to have priority access to an insolvent

buyer's cash, inventory and accounts receivable related to the sale of fresh produce. The request does not require government to backstop losses and comes with the possibility that Canadian farmers could regain reciprocal priority access in the U.S. under PACA.

As this is a key issue for the OFVGA, while in Ottawa, OFVGA representatives had a specific meeting with staff from federal Agriculture Minister Bibeau's office, with a focus on explaining the need and benefits of a PACA-like trust for payment protection for fruit and vegetable farmers in Canada. The intention is to continue to build support for the legislation with the goal of it becoming a priority for the government after the fall election.

Self-Directed Risk Management Program

The Self-Directed Risk Management (SDRM) Program is part of Ontario's Risk Management Program (RMP), which also has components for livestock and grain farmers in Ontario. In recent months, OFVGA has met with the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs Ernie Hardeman who has outlined an intention to explore options to expand and enhance RMP to better support farmers and producers in managing risks that are beyond their control, such as changing costs and market prices. The Minister's goal is to transition to an insurance-like program by 2021.

The OFVGA will be learning more about the Minister's plans in the coming months and will be working closely with ministry officials and OFVGA member organizations to ensure any changes to SDRM balance the needs of the industry with the government's goals. The Minister has confirmed that no changes to SDRM are being made for 2019.

For farmers who participate in SDRM, you can contact Agricorp to receive account details if needed. Farmers are reminded that government SDRM contributions are taxable when deposited, not when they are withdrawn. As funds left in SDRM accounts from this year or previous years do not earn interest, there is incentive for farmers to withdraw the funds so they can be put to use.

AgriStability deadline extended

AgriStability protects producers from large declines in



The Farm to Plate spring lobby event in Ottawa. L-R: Rebecca Lee, Jocelyn St-Denis, Agriculture Minister Marie-Claude Bibeau, Ron Lemaire, Bill George, Ken Forth, George Gilvesy

their farming income caused by production loss, increased costs or market conditions. The federal government announced in May that the deadline for AgriStability participation has been extended to July 3 for all participants. This was one of the measures announced by the government in support of western canola farmers who are facing trade disruptions.

A second initiative

announced was increasing the loan caps under the Advanced Payments Program (APP), which is a federal loan guarantee program which provides farmers access to low-interest cash advances. For 2019, the advance caps have been increased from \$400,000 to \$1 million for all commodities, with the first \$100,000 remaining interest free. Advances are repaid as the

producer sells their agricultural product, with up to 18 months to fully repay the advance.

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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CHAIR'S PERSPECTIVE

Working for Ontario growers in Ottawa



BILL GEORGE JR.
CHAIR, OFVGA

Ken Forth is the chair of the trade section and Mark Wales heads the safety nets section.

Annually, we participate in the Fall Harvest event hosted by CHC and Canadian Produce Marketing Association (CPMA) where we meet with federal politicians and bureaucrats to draw attention to issues important to growers. And for the last several years, we've been part of the CPMA and CHC spring outreach day as well – the last event before the federal election just took place in Ottawa in early May.

Currently, our national priority issues are crop protection, financial protection for growers, and labour, particularly access to seasonal workers. We didn't specifically discuss labour this time, choosing instead to focus on the other two issues.

Access to safe, effective crop protection products is vitally important to our industry. The Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) is responsible for regulation, registration and re-evaluation of all crop protection products, and we believe strongly that it should

use a competitiveness lens as part of all regulatory decisions.

It's important that PMRA and the Pest Management Centre have essential funding so that the decisions they're making are based on thorough scientific reviews and data-based conclusions – and that innovative technologies can be reviewed and approved for use by growers.

Hastily-made decisions about crop protection products can have a long-term detrimental impact on not just growers, but also the Canadian economy. There are currently more than 350 re-evaluations and special reviews of crop protection products either under review or to be started by PMRA in the next 10 years.

We've also asked government to consider joint registrations and re-evaluations that would not only harmonize product access across North America, but would also reduce duplication and ease the burden on PMRA.

We recognize that as science and technology evolve, it may become necessary to de-register certain uses or active

ingredients, but it's essential that those decisions are based on evaluation of Canadian science and Canadian data.

Another key issue is that of financial protection. As growers, we face weather and climate challenges and pressures related to regulation, trade, competitiveness and more. There is a lot of uncertainty in the business environment we work in, but there shouldn't be any uncertainty about getting paid once our produce is sold.

Unfortunately, Canadian growers aren't effectively protected under current bankruptcy and insolvency legislation. In fact, produce farmers are one of the few groups in Canadian agriculture without financial protection.

Before 2014, Canada had preferential access to the U.S. Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act dispute resolution process, meaning Canadian companies were treated the same as U.S. companies when pursuing a non-payment claim in the United States. There is no similar mechanism in Canada, so the access was revoked, leaving Canadian

growers facing tremendously high risk when selling fruits and vegetables south of the border.

Our ask of government on this issue is not for money rather it's for enabling legislation that would ensure growers get paid in the event a buyer becomes insolvent. We've brought this issue forward with the current government and are now working with all major parties to get this issue into their election platforms.

Throughout our day in Ottawa, we met with senators, government bureaucrats and staff, but our most high level meeting was with our new agriculture minister, Marie-Claude Bibeau. It was a great opportunity for us to bring forward issues affecting the produce industry and we appreciated her willingness to meet with us and learn more about Canada's edible hort sector.

Nationally, we're stronger together. Horticulture needs a strong voice in Ottawa and by working in partnership with CHC and CPMA, Ontario's team is helping ensure that voice is heard.

WEATHER VANE



These two Mexican workers, Cecilio Lara Rosales (L) and Alejandro Tecuapacho, have both harvested asparagus for 30 years at the farm of Ed and Sandy DeHooghe near Delhi, Ontario. They show obvious enthusiasm for their work and friendship as teammates. Without the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program, the farm would not be transitioning to the next generation. See cover story. Photo by Glenn Lawson.

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THE GROWER

URBAN COWBOY

Room for growth in horticultural land values



OWEN ROBERTS
U OF GUELPH

of 4.9 per cent.

Gervais said overall, buyers are making “strategic investments.” Many of 2018’s sales involved lesser quality land, because very little top-quality land was available or affordable. So producers made strategic decisions to buy land that was maybe not as good and needed improving...but at least it was for sale, and in line with the underlying productivity of the land.

FCC doesn’t collect data specific to horticultural land.

However, Gervais says his economic intuition suggests that horticultural land values are indeed following the trends stated in the land values report.

To validate his hunch, he looked at gross receipts for fruits and fresh vegetables in Ontario.

“Receipts are one of the main drivers of land values, no matter what sector you’re looking at,” he says. “The growth in receipts for fruits and fresh vegetables in Ontario mimic the growth in overall crop receipts in Ontario . . . in fact, receipts in horticulture

do not seem to flatten in recent years like it has been the case for grains and oilseeds – so there’s still some growth. If you look at the regions in Ontario for which there is a large concentration of horticultural production, I would suggest that the data we report does apply to horticultural land.”

On the horizon, FCC is expecting more modest increases in land values. Gervais speculates they’ll likely be about half of the average boost experienced in 2018.

Right now, the main influence

expected on the national land value average in 2019 is the canola crisis on the prairies, which could make for a very difficult year. FCC says producers anticipating a land-value slowdown in their region are urged to note that such a phenomenon can increase risk.

Land values, it says, must be in synch with variables such as net income, interest rates, commodity prices and productivity.

And with receipts driving land values, we’re in for an interesting year.

Farm Credit Canada’s (FCC) annual land values report is considered the industry standard. The organization’s chief agricultural economist and vice-president J.P. Gervais and his team look from coast to coast at farmland sales and trends, for a national perspective on what’s happened in the past year.

Barring drastic and unforeseen circumstances – such as the standoff with China over canola – it’s a good bellwether for what’s to come. It can help producers planning to buy or sell land manage risk, by knowing where markets have been and where they’re likely headed.

The 2018 annual report was released in April, showing that, on average, farmland values are continuing to trend upwards.

FCC says the value of Canadian farmland jumped 6.6 per cent in 2018. That’s less than it was in 2017, and the lowest recorded growth in eight years.

In Ontario, land values rose 3.6 per cent. That’s actually about half as much rise as FCC saw nationally, but it may not be as dramatic as it sounds, says agricultural economist Prof. Brady Deaton at the University of Guelph.

He says there’s considerable variation in farmland values within Ontario, depending on the location and the quality and quantity of farms coming up for sale in the farmer’s area.

Many Ontario farmland owners are non-farmers, particularly in regions close to the Golden Horseshoe. In these areas, the appreciation of farmland values is entangled with the growth and wealth of urban areas.

And in Ontario, overall farmland prices are already among the highest in Canada. That means land didn’t have as much room to increase, compared to some places elsewhere in the country.

For example, Quebec had the highest average increase, at 8.3 per cent. Not far behind was Saskatchewan and Alberta, which both experienced land value increases of 7.4 per cent in 2018, and British Columbia, with values rising 6.7 per cent.

Nova Scotia was the lone province to record a decrease in average farmland values, a drop

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EVENTS

Ontario to host IFTA summer apple tour



Chris Hedges, treasurer of the International Fruit Tree Association is looking forward to the summer tour to be held July 21-24 in Norfolk County and Georgian Bay areas of Ontario. Here, he's seen in his apple orchard near Vanessa, Ontario. Photo by Glenn Lawson.

KAREN DAVIDSON

For the first time since the early 1990s, Ontario will host the International Fruit Tree Association (IFTA) Summer Study Tour to be held July 21-24, 2019. Apple and cherry growers will be expecting 150-200 visitors to the Norfolk County and Georgian Bay areas.

IFTA is highly regarded for its world-class research, teaching and travel to advance knowledge and inspire innovation. Any of the Canadian board members – Lisa Jenereaux, Nova Scotia or Hank Markgraf, British Columbia or Chris Hedges, Ontario – would attest to the building of a global community of tree fruit professionals.

“We are looking forward to hosting visitors from major American apple-growing states such as Washington, Michigan, New York and Pennsylvania as well as Quebec, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick,” says Chris Hedges, one of the hosts who will be showcasing apple storage facilities.

Highlights of the tour will include:

- Tree architecture transitions/orchard systems
- Intelligent Fruit Vision demonstration
- Apple production under super structure

Latest technology at FutureTEC Zone

United Fresh 2019 Convention and Expo will boast 24 top ag tech companies on the show floor, the FutureTEC Zone, June 11-12, 2019 in Chicago. These are start-up companies in the early commercialization stage. Ten of these companies will deliver five-minute TEC Talks at a nearby stage, offering a glimpse of their business models.

Here is a sampling of participants:

Aerobotics – provides world-leading pest and disease management systems for tree crop protection using drone imagery and artificial intelligence. The software, Aeroview, allows growers to identify early stage problems in orchards. Used in conjunction with a Scout App on a smartphone, growers are able to locate problem areas on a tree-by-tree basis.

Dynium Robot – The company's autonomous driving system uses vision systems to identify orchard rows, enabling tractors to navigate without depending on GPS. The system also provides agronomic information on crop yield and disease pressure.

Fresh Chill Solutions – This ag technology is used in the rapid cooling and continuous supply

including cement posts

- Management and economics of modern orchard systems including Wafler-tip system
- Simcoe Research Station – University of Guelph NC140 rootstock trials
- Crop load management

This is the first time for the Intelligent Fruit Vision system to be demonstrated in Canada. The company is a joint venture, formed between Technology Research Centre (TRC) and Worldwide Fruit Ltd. A technology development and commercialization business, TRC develops vision-based technologies and commercializes them through joint ventures and spin-out businesses.

Worldwide Fruit Ltd is the largest wholesaler of fruit to the UK and EU markets. Worldwide Fruit uses a grower scorecard to increase yields, by extracting detailed yield and grade-out information. When analysed, this data can help identify root causes of problems. Fruit Vision technology is an extension of that support, helping with crop analysis and forecasting. This system will be demonstrated at the farm of Chris Hedges, Vanessa, Ontario.

For details on how to register, go to: www.eventsquid.com/event.cfm?id=6359.



chain tracking process for fresh food.

Motorleaf – This Montreal-based company uses artificial intelligence to automate harvest yield estimates and disease scouting in tomato and pepper greenhouses. The data can supply insights into growing conditions that cause skin cracking and blemishes in vegetables.

RipeTime – This company has developed patented technology that measures and reports in real-time the level of ethylene in post-harvest operations. Operators can prioritize load-out operations.

Source: *United Fresh Produce Association May 20, 2019 news release*

COMING EVENTS 2019

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| June 3-7 | Ontario's Local Food Week |
| June 8 | Garlic Growers of Ontario Field Day, Farm of Norm de Groot, Wroxeter, ON |
| June 9 | Ontario Agricultural Hall of Fame Induction Event, Country Heritage Park, Milton, ON |
| June 10-12 | United Fresh Expo, McCormick Place Convention Center, Chicago, IL |
| June 21 | Ontario Produce Marketing Association Taste of Summer Event, Megalomaniac Winery, Lincoln, ON |
| June 22 | Farm & Food Care Ontario Breakfast on the Farm, Jobin Farm, Tecumseh, ON |
| June 24-26 | International Blueberry Organization Summit 2019, Sheraton Vancouver Airport Hotel, Richmond, BC |
| July 18-19 | Annual Conference of Federal-Provincial-Territorial Ministers and Deputy Ministers of Agriculture, Quebec City, QC |
| July 19-21 | International Cool Climate Chardonnay Celebration, Niagara Region, ON |
| July 20 | Glen Road Organics presents Organic Matter Matters with Dr. Elaine Ingham, Woodville, ON |
| July 21-24 | International Fruit Tree Association Summer Study Tour, Norfolk and Georgian Bay areas, ON |
| July 25 | Canadian Horticultural Council Apple Working Group, Sheraton Hotel, Hamilton, ON |
| July 28-Aug 1 | 103rd Potato Association of America Annual General Meeting, Delta Winnipeg, Winnipeg, MB |
| Aug 1 | Nova Scotia Fruit Growers' Association Summer Tour |
| Aug 3 | Food Day Canada |
| Aug 14 | Peak of the Market Annual Family Fun Day, Winnipeg, MB |
| Aug 16-17 | Carrotfest, Downtown Bradford, ON |
| Aug 20-21 | North American Strawberry Growers' Association Summer Tour, Pittsburgh, PA |
| August 21 | Ontario Potato Research Field Day, Elora Research Station, Elora, ON |
| August 22 | U.S. Apple Association Crop Outlook and Marketing Conference, Chicago, IL |
| Sept 10 | Berry Growers of Ontario Twilight Tour, Thames River Melons, Innerkip, ON |
| Sept 14 | Farm & Food Care Ontario Breakfast on the Farm, Barrie, ON |
| Sept 16-18 | United Fresh Washington Conference, Grand Hyatt, Washington, DC |
| Sept 17-21 | International Plowing Match, Verner (Municipality of West Nipissing), ON |
| Sept 19 | What's Growin' On, Vineland Research and Innovation Centre, Vineland Station, ON |
| Oct 5 | Soupfest, Ansnorveldt Park, Bradford, ON |
| Oct 9-10 | Canadian Greenhouse Conference, Scotiabank Convention Centre, Niagara Falls, ON |
| Oct 17-19 | Produce Marketing Association Fresh Summit, Anaheim, CA |

RETAIL NAVIGATOR

How to develop a consumer profile



PETER CHAPMAN

A successful food business has many components. You need great products that deliver your value proposition. You need consistent production to keep your customers happy. You need qualified people who can fulfill their role in production and the other parts of your business and you need resources dedicated to sales.

If you hear me speak at a conference or an event you will hear me say: "Success in this industry is not just about making great products to sell; it's about selling the great products you produce."

Most of the producers I meet are very focused on production. Passion and depth of knowledge in this part of the business is what they see as invaluable. It is true you need great products and without them you have no business. However, you also need to ensure there is infrastructure within your business to sell all of the great products you are producing.

We have developed a process to get more of your products in more shopping carts more often. We call this process CART and over the upcoming months I will share the process to help you sell more. There are four essential ingredients in this recipe for success:

Consumers
Alignment with your customers
Retail plan to sell your products
Trust with consumers and customers

It has to start with the consumer

One of the great things about the food industry is that consumers shop regularly and they vote at the cash register every time they are in the store or shop on line. You need to understand consumers who buy your products.

You need to have a solid profile of who they are. This is the only way you can determine if your product is relevant, the right size, in the right package or perhaps even the right level of processing. How can you determine any of these things if you do not know who will buy the product or who is buying

the product?

Retailers do not have the level of depth they had about consumer insights and categories are often too broad for category managers to really understand consumers like you should. A thorough understanding of who your consumers are and why they buy your products will set you apart from many other suppliers.

Who is buying your products?

There are many questions you should ask about the consumers who are buying your products. Perhaps you have considered some of these before and incorporated them into the size you sell or the packaging you use.

You need to think about demographics such as: Age, gender, household composition, education, income and where they live.

You also need to think of other factors that define consumers such as:

What interests do they have?
 What other products would they buy?

Where would they go for information about your business or products?

When and where do they make the decision to buy?

How important are issues of sustainability to them? Will they only buy in environmentally-friendly packaging and would information about food waste impact the purchase decision?

You can learn about many of these attributes by going to stores and watching who buys what. You can also find information in trade publications, industry associations and by participating in research projects. In my opinion these are all great resources but there is nothing better than watching consumers shop in a store. You can learn so much.

There are many factors to consider and attributes you should think about when defining your consumer. This profile should never be final, as consumers are constantly changing. You should review the profile periodically to ensure it is still relevant with consumers in the market. Challenge different people in your organization to add to the profile. They might see it a bit differently than you do.

When you have a profile of your consumer, include it in your decision-making. Certainly you have other factors to consider such as what can you afford, what can you produce, what your customers (retailers & wholesalers) want but the consumer needs a voice in your



decision-making process too. When you have a solid profile you will make consumer-focused decisions, which always have a better chance of success.

If you have any questions about developing a consumer profile please give me a call at (902) 489-2900 or send me an email at peter@skufood.com.

WHAT'S IN STORE?

Sensory-friendly shopping

Recently I visited our local Sobeys store on a Sunday evening. When I entered the store I stopped because I questioned whether the store was open for business. The

lights were low and in some cases turned off, there was no music and the usual 'noise' of a grocery store was muted. Then I remembered that every second Sunday Sobeys offers sensory-friendly shopping.

This is an initiative Sobeys has created in conjunction with Autism Nova Scotia to provide a shopping environment more welcoming to people challenged with the regular atmosphere within the store. These are the types of initiatives you need to mention to your category manager or other people at Sobeys to show you are in their stores and see some great things happening to respond to today's consumer. You will not get

more products on your next purchase order but you will develop the relationship, which is important too.

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. skufood.com





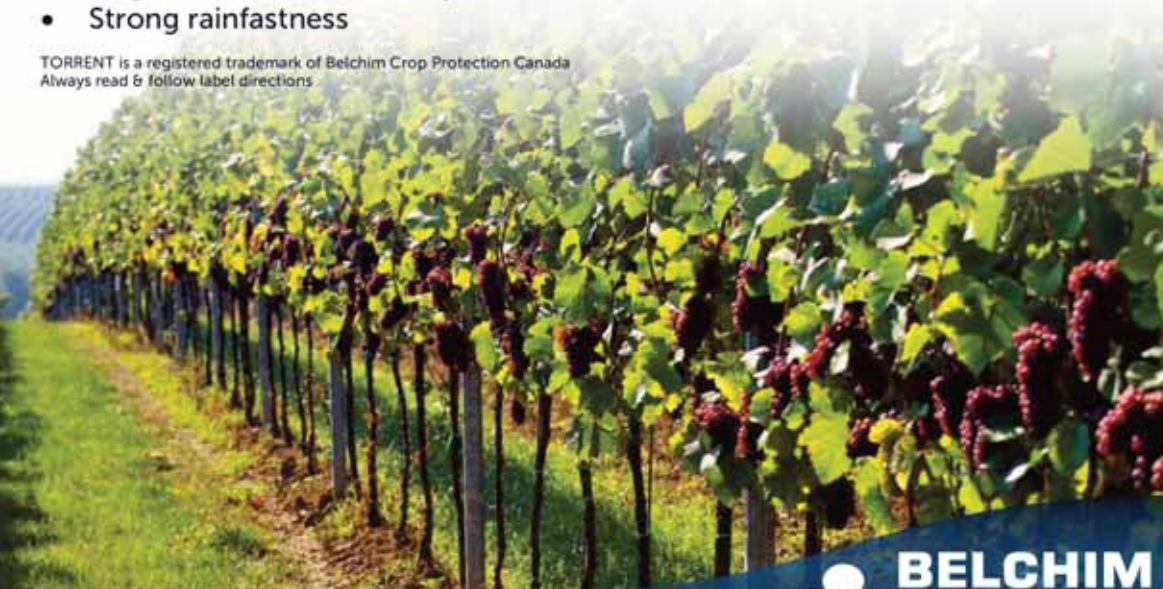



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FOCUS: LOGISTICS & TRANSPORT TECHNOLOGY

Industry disruptors are shaking things up



JENNIFER MORRIS

Since the focus of this month is Logistics and Transport Technology, it's a good time to look at disruptors in the industry.

First, what is a disruptor in an industry? Well, it is simply to create a product, service or process that pushes the existing market leaders of a particular industry and eventually replaces them at the top of a given industry. Disruptors are often seen as outsiders and even idealists rather than people who may have been in that particular industry for a long time. Often disruption comes the way of technological advances but not always -- sometimes a change to the typical business plan is all it takes to disrupt an entire industry.

Disruption is good for the economy and the industry that it affects. If your industry experiences disruption,

everyone will be affected. It is far better to embrace the advances than fight them.

The most dangerous phrases in business are "that's the way we've always done it" and "if it's not broken don't fix it." These are such old-school views. Welcome the disruption or even better, be the disruptor. Here are some companies that are working to disrupt the world of transportation.

Tesla

The Tesla Semi is an all-electric battery powered Class 8 transport truck. With claims of a 500-800km range and a 25 sec acceleration to 100km/hr, this truck will be able to compete with its diesel-consuming counterparts.

The Tesla Semi will also come with Tesla Autopilot, which is the semi-autonomous driving feature from the company. This will help prevent driver fatigue as well as optimize driving, including supporting automatic platooning. This truck will need much less maintenance and Tesla is offering a million-mile guarantee to ensure value. It also runs quieter and has zero CO2 emissions. This truck will definitely shake up a few industries when it is produced.

Tesla unveiled the Tesla Semi at the end of 2017. Originally Tesla had planned to start production in 2019 but the



Tesla Semi



Port-Liner electric barge

president of Automotive noted they will not begin until 2020. The Tesla Semi prototypes have been spotted regularly in California and Nevada going through road testing.

Nikola

In April 2019, Nikola unveiled the Nikola Two, a hydrogen fuel cell electric Class

8 transport truck. The Nikola Two boasts an 800-1200km range, double the acceleration of a stock diesel tractor and a 15-20 minute refill time. These trucks also feature up to 1,000 horsepower and 2,000 ft-lbs of torque. Due to using hydrogen for power, these trucks produce zero carbon emissions.

Nikola also addressed the lack of infrastructure for hydrogen refueling at the unveiling and suggests it will be heavily investing to place up to 700 stations by 2028. There are currently more than 13,000 Nikola trucks on order. Nikola also announced a battery-electric vehicle option for urban, short-haul trucking, which would compete directly with the Tesla Semi.

Amazon

Described as the "Uber of Trucking," Amazon quietly launched a beta test last year for its online service that matches truck drivers with shippers. The service also helps Amazon better maintain its existing network of carriers and promotes the cargo-matching process. The online tool allows shippers to get instant quotes on the loads they are looking to ship. Currently, this service is only available for shipments between five states: Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, Maryland, and Connecticut.

Currently hundreds of carriers are already using the service, and Amazon only allows approved trucking partners to participate in the program. Amazon is rating out, on

average, 20-30 per cent below current market rates. This pricing is definitely going to raise a few brows and could cause more issues than good in an industry that has little to no regulation around pricing and driver pay.

Definitely larger players in this market such as CH Robinson and XPO Logistics are watching this development.

Port-Liner

A Dutch company named Port-Liner is building two all electric barges, that are set to launch this autumn. The inaugural sailing will be in the Wilhelmina Canal in the Netherlands.

Each ship is capable of carrying 280 containers and is meant to replace over-the-road transport in the Netherlands to start. The company has developed battery-pack technology that houses the batteries in a container so this would help with retrofitting already operational ships.

The goal is for the battery packs to be charged by Eneco, a sustainable power company, who sources solar power and other renewable energy sources.

These are just a few of the possible disruptors in the transportation industry, and more companies are working to be more and more innovative every day. The important thing to keep in mind is to adapt with these companies rather than fighting the inevitable. What do you think the next big disruptor will be?

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FOCUS: LOGISTICS & TRANSPORT TECHNOLOGY

In conversation with Alexandre Montpetit, Montreal Port Authority

KAREN DAVIDSON

The port of Montreal is a little told story, but should be better appreciated for its growing importance in global trade.

“We are talking about an increase of 200 per cent in five years, and 115 per cent in 2018 alone,” says Alexandre Montpetit, manager of growth and development for the Montreal Port Authority. He shared some of these facts at the recent Canadian Produce Marketing Association conference and trade show in Montreal. He offers more insight.

Q. What are the top five fresh fruits or vegetables being shipped?

A. Citrus, berries (blueberries, cranberries), potatoes, avocado, bananas.

Q. To what extent has the Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement (CETA) spurred more transatlantic business?

A. With more than 55 per cent of our volumes tied to northern Europe, CETA will continue to be a major growth driver in the coming years. CETA has had a positive impact for us. We saw a 3.7 per cent growth in trade between the Port of Montreal and the European Union between January to November 2017 and January to November 2018.

We have always been a leader for trade with Europe, as we are the gateway for Europe to the industrial heartland of North America. We are actively working at promoting the opportunities tied with the new CETA agreement to consolidate our presence in the European markets.

Q. Is the port of Halifax a competitor to you? Or are most perishables coming to Port of Montreal — for easier transport to consumer markets?

A. No, we both have our regional markets for fresh produce.

Q. Are there any fresh fruits or vegetables being shipped from Montreal to offshore destinations?

A. Blueberries, cranberries and potatoes.

Q. Can you give an example of a fresh fruit from say the Mediterranean or Northern Africa and give our readers an idea of the transit time?

A. Clementines average 10 to 15 days transit time from Mediterranean or Northern Africa.

Q. What technologies are being used at Port of Montreal to speed up unloading?

A. We have developed a vision of innovation to position ourselves as a smart port. Because the future and the competitiveness of the Port of Montreal also depends on innovation. For example, we have joined the TradeLens system developed by IBM and Maersk. More information here:

www.port-montreal.com/en/piexpress-apm-tradelens-en.html#n1

Another example, in partnership with Centech, the Port of Montreal created in 2018 the first port innovation accelerator in North America. More info here: www.port-montreal.com/en/piexpress-apm-innovation-portuaire-en.html#n1

In terms of fluidity, we work tirelessly to improve it, because



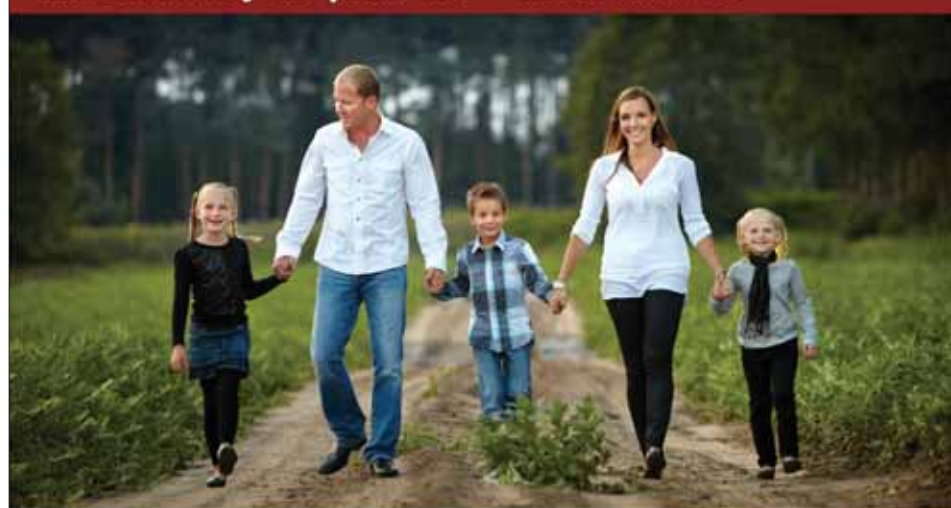
it is a key element for the performance of a port. We have developed a web application for truckers so they can better plan their trip to the port and know the processing times at the

terminals in real time. We are also working with our partners on various direct road access projects to get to the port efficiently.



Getting to know
SCOTLYNN

“We want to be the company that our customers, employees, and community are proud of.” – Scott Biddle, CEO



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Scotlynn Fort Myers, FL office



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Scotlynn has seven locations in Canada and the United States, and was listed as one of the 5,000 fastest growing companies in North America in both 2016 and 2017

For more information visit www.scotlynn.com

FOCUS: LOGISTICS & TRANSPORT TECHNOLOGY

Refrigerated containers: a specialized sector experiencing rapid growth

Volumes of containers transiting through the Port of Montreal's docks are constantly increasing. But those in refrigerated containers are not only increasing, they are exploding.

At the forefront of this evolution, the Hunt family business, headquartered on Notre-Dame Street, provides storage, repair, maintenance and rental services for refrigerated containers.

"At first, we were talking about 50 refrigerated containers a week," says Yanik Espey, vice-president of the company co-founded by his father in 1985. "Today, we are still at full capacity with some 800 containers refrigerated ashore every day. And the company has opened offices in Toronto, Calgary and British Columbia."

The cold chain across the oceans

Exotic fruits, blueberries, Canadian potatoes, wine, cheese, Christmas trees, meat, cosmetics and medicines are among the many products that use this type of equipment to cross the oceans.

And the containers follow the seasons. Fruits and vegetables are imported during the cold seasons, then at the end of the summer, it is the local products that go on the export path.

"Consumption habits are changing," explains Espey. "We consume and import more and more. The main products affected by this growing demand are wine and cheese imported from Europe, with which trade ties have recently been strengthened thanks to the entry into force of the Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement (CETA). And on the export side, it seems that local products, such as apples and strawberries are increasingly finding their way into foreign markets."

Changes in refrigeration

With "refrigerated" containers, it should be noted that there are both heating and refrigeration, since these containers make it possible to maintain the contents at a constant temperature. A



cargo of wine will suffer from both intense heat and cold and must therefore be protected from temperature fluctuations. Each product has its own recommendations.

Each container is equipped with a temperature control system, capable of maintaining temperatures from -30°C to +30°C and must be permanently supplied with electricity. It connects to train cars as well as ships, trucks or

terminals, where it is powered by diesel generators or a connection system. Hunt Réfrigération is currently undergoing major renovations to completely switch from diesel to cleaner and quieter electrical systems.

"We have the objective of being 100 per cent electric by the end of the year," says Espey.

Source: Port of Montreal

Powerful software programs enable high-performance delivery rates

KAREN DAVIDSON

Delivering perishables has become a science, supported by multiple software programs. But communications skills are still integral to streamlining all the moving parts.

"We try to give the driver every opportunity to succeed," says Brad Mitchell, vice-president, Scotlynn Commodities, Vittoria, Ontario. He's got the tips and technology to back up that statement. The company operates 300 tractor-trailers, all less than three years old, to earn its reputation for 99.1 per cent on-time performance. The fleet

delivers across North America 365 days a year.

"A lot of communication and effort goes into achieving that performance number," says Mitchell. Scotlynn's performance metrics allow for a 15-minute variance at shipping and receiving locations, and forgives delays caused by severe weather or Acts of God.

The company operates on a drop-switch schedule which means drivers drop a loaded trailer and switch to an empty for the next leg of the trip. Less than 30 minutes is spent on the transition rather than waiting for live unloading into a cooler or warehouse.



Photo by Glenn Lowson

A year ago, the United States mandated electronic logging devices (ELD) to hold drivers accountable for their hours of service on the road.

Handwritten entries in a log-book are no longer accepted. In Mitchell's opinion, this requirement is a positive in maintaining safety. This requirement gives drivers more time to drive and less time on paperwork. ELDs will become mandatory in Canada in December 2019.

Several software packages now streamline efficient deliveries. For the Scotlynn Group, the heart of its system is McLeod Software. The Alabama-based company is a leader when it comes to software for trucking dispatch operations management, freight brokerage management, fleet management, document imaging, workflow and electronic data interchange (EDI).

Complementing this software is PeopleNet, a Trimble company. This Minnesota company

uses cellular and GPS data to provide information for location tracking, dispatch messaging, ELD management, and equipment performance tracking.

On-trailer software called iBright allows Scotlynn Commodities to have 24-hour access to all refrigerated units. The system allows home base, if needed, to change the set temperature with the driver in motion. It shows how much fuel is in the tank and when and where the doors are open or closed.

With this robust set of software technologies, Scotlynn Commodities is in demand for highly perishable commodities such as lettuce, citrus and berries.

"We are a transporter of choice for berries – strawberries, raspberries, blueberries and blackberries – because of our reliability," says Mitchell. Berries represent one of the highest-valued commodities in produce in North America.

Rounding out the software

suite is BorderConnect, a web-based portal that allows cross-border deliveries to be pre-cleared before reaching the U.S.-Canadian border. All the electronic data is in hand at the border to match with the driver's manifest.

The two biggest variables in produce delivery are unexpected traffic delays and holidays. On any given day, there is no entry point in Ontario that is better than another, says Mitchell, pointing out that day-to-day, one border crossing may be better than another depending on weather or traffic.

Layered on top of the software, people connections still make the business hum. Scotlynn staff phone growers at least two hours in advance of a pickup to ensure a smooth transition from cold storage to truck.

Not unlike the airline business, dispatchers at Scotlynn Commodities scan computer screens and see moving dots on the North American map. It's an industry that never sleeps.

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Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

Managing new pests requires a team approach

ELAINE RODDY

A number of years ago a grower called me in the early fall to tell me that he had a bad outbreak of powdery mildew in his pumpkin crop. As a result, he said, a large proportion of the fruit was rotting in the field. This immediately didn't click for me, as powdery mildew will impact size, maturity and the integrity of the handle, but it doesn't cause the fruit to rot. Something else was going on. Powdery mildew is usually a disease that I can diagnose and recommend treatments for over the phone. In this case a field call was warranted.

Walking into the field, I almost immediately knew that I was dealing with something out of the ordinary. The fruit was essentially rotting from the inside out; small round lesions on the rind appeared to be the entry point, leaving the skin intact and a nasty mess of pumpkin "soup" on the inside. It was nothing like *phytophthora*, *fusarium*, anthracnose or any of the other pathogens that typically cause rots in pumpkin crops. While there was powdery mildew on the leaves, I was certain it was in addition to, not the cause of the problem.

My mind thought back to the previous year's Great Lakes Vegetable Working Group Annual Meeting. The GLVWG members come from Ontario, Michigan, Ohio, New York, Indiana, Illinois etc. We meet once a year to (surprise, surprise) talk about vegetables, our research projects and pest management challenges. At the meeting a researcher from Illinois made a presentation on a disease called bacterial spot (*Xanthomonas cucurbitae*) that was taking a big toll on the processing pumpkin industry. It was with a sinking feeling in my stomach that I realized that these symptoms were identical to the ones he described. The sinking feeling was because he reported field losses of up to 90 per cent with approximately 80 per cent of the fields surveyed showing infection. In this case, advance knowledge of the pest gained during the GLVWG meeting proved to be invaluable.

New school molecular identification

Due to the advanced state of decay and the complicating presence of powdery mildew, this wasn't a good candidate for a routine analysis at the University of Guelph Pest Diagnostic Clinic. Ridgetown Campus researcher, Cheryl Trueman, in collaboration with Dr. Paul Goodwin, School of Environmental Science, suggested isolating a pure culture of the bacteria and running a 16S RNA sequence to confirm the presence of *Xanthomonas sp* bacteria, as well as a second gene, to specifically identify *X. cucurbitae*. This was done at University of Guelph Lab Services and confirmed a match to *X. cucurbitae*.

First report

This was a first report for Ontario. At this point we had no idea if it was a "one of" or something that had been present for some time and simply not identified. The main sources of infection are soil residue and seed borne. With some initial support from Hort Crops Ontario (the funding of which is provided by the proceeds of the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Convention) we were able to conduct field surveys as well as research on seed sterilization techniques. The good news at this point was that although we did find some other cases, it was not widespread in commercial pumpkin fields in Southwestern Ontario. We also had good success with identifying potential seed sterilization techniques (and a few unsuccessful ones too) for growers who save their seed.

Interested in Seed Disinfestation Strategies? Visit <https://onvegetables.com/2015/05/05/seed-disinfestation-strategies-for-saved-pumpkin-and-squash-seed/>

Not done yet

Ontario has substantial fresh market, processing squash and processing pumpkin industries. They all had questions about susceptibility, the impact it could have not only on production but also on storage,

not to mention questions about control.

Funding for these answers would come from the OMAFRA University of Guelph Agreement (Ontario Agri-Food Innovation Alliance) -- a \$70 million per year partnership that helps to fund applied research on agricultural issues in Ontario.

At this point the Fresh Vegetable Growers of Ontario and the Processing Vegetable Industry also began to support the ongoing research projects. Support from the grower associations helps to keep the research focussed on the information that matters most to industry. It also gives us a venue with whom to share the results.

During the development of a research project, the team must find a balance between conducting efficacy trials to identify short-term management solutions while also moving the body of research forward in new directions. These results are often longer term and don't provide the instant gratification of product registrations. Nevertheless, they are an important component of sustainability, resistance management and stewardship.

Results do not always produce immediate solutions

From 2015 to 2019, efficacy trials and variety trials were conducted at the University of Guelph – Ridgetown Campus. Products for the efficacy trials were selected in consultation with the researcher from Illinois, the chemical companies as well as OMAFRA's minor use co-ordinator, Jim Chaput. It was important that we select products that had the potential to be effective, as well as meeting the requirements of the minor use registration system. There is no sense in researching something that is ultimately not eligible for registration.

Unfortunately, three years of replicated trials on a number of potential bacterial control products failed to identify any effective solutions. This might seem like a failure. Obviously, we want to find solutions that work to control this potentially devastating pest. However, there is a level of confidence in being able to say with experience that something does not work. When we have a problem



Figure 1. Small, round, waxy lesions. If the lesion penetrates through the outer rind, significant internal rots will occur.



Figure 2. Severe internal rots cause by *X. cucurbitae*.

in a commercial field it is all too tempting to throw everything at it in the hopes that something works. But it doesn't make economic sense to apply products unless they are providing a financial return on the investment.

For me, some of the successes of the projects were less tangible. I gained experience and confidence in identifying symptoms of the disease early in its development. DNA sequencing is an awesome tool, but it is expensive and for most crop advisors and growers nothing beats a good photographic library of symptoms and access to real life experience. We also confirmed that we can successfully inoculate trials on campus, which is critical to the success of efficacy trials. Too often we attempt to conduct research on a pest only to have it not appear in the plots.

Varietal response and impact on storage were the last two questions we needed to answer. After testing a wide variety of pumpkins, we found that while they all get foliar symptoms, the

fruit rots are most impactful on the jack-o-lantern types. Even small lesions on these pumpkins will cause substantial losses in storage. For these pumpkins, aggressive culling at harvest is essential. Pie pumpkins, minis and specialty types are less likely to collapse, making them a better candidate for storage, even if there is a low level of infection in the field.

In the greater scheme of things, pumpkins and squash are minor crops in Ontario. However, to the growers they represent significant markets and a relatively high cost of production. New pests come with a whole lot of questions, even if they have been extensively studied in other jurisdictions. It illustrates the importance of having a team that can bring together field experience, diagnostics, research and technology transfer, all to stay one step ahead of new, and potentially invasive, pests.

Elaine Roddy is vegetable specialist for OMAFRA.

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CROP PROTECTION

Frequently asked questions in application season



CHRIS DUYVELSHOFF
CROP PROTECTION ADVISOR,
OFVGA

With another growing season upon us, most of the annual applications of crop protection products will happen over the next few months. Product re-evaluation decisions of this past year resulted in big changes to restricted-entry intervals (REI) and pre-harvest intervals (PHI) for some products. The crop protection column has taken a different format this month to address some common questions regarding REI and PHI.

Restricted-Entry Intervals

A restricted-entry interval (REI) is the period of time that farm workers, or anyone else, must not perform tasks in treated areas after a crop protection product has been applied. This time allows residues and vapours to dissipate to safe levels for work to be performed. The product label may specify a number of different REIs depending on the crop or activity.

Where does the label REI come from?

The REI found on a product label is specified by the Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) during its review based on several factors. It is not supplied by a registrant during product registration.

What factors influence the length of an REI?

The calculation of an REI involves many factors such as product rate, number of applications, application interval, crop, and the specific activity. Certain activities involve higher contact with the treated crop which results in a longer REI being applied for these activities.

What happens if there is no REI on the product label?

Some product labels do not have an REI indicated for all or some of their registered uses. If no REI is specified on the product label, the minimum REI of 12 hours applies.

Can anyone enter a treated area before the REI is finished?

There are specific restrictions for early restricted-entry to a treated area. No one can enter a treated area for the first four hours after an application. After four hours, a certified applicator can enter a treated area using the same personal protection equipment (PPE) as the mixer/loader as required on the product label plus a respirator.

No hand labour activity can be performed during this time, however, short term entry for operation, movement, or repair of field equipment such as irrigation and frost protection is permitted. This early restricted-entry is limited to one hour in any 24-hour period.

If an REI is longer than 12 hours, anyone can enter a treated area after 12 hours without PPE unless otherwise required on the product label. However, activities involving contact with the treated crop or soil cannot be performed until the specified REI is complete.

Can the REI on the product label be reduced?

It can sometimes be possible to have a shorter REI approved on a product label. This will usually require a change in the product use pattern or the generation of new data supporting a lower REI. New data supporting a specific crop factor for high-density orchards is one example that has resulted in lower REIs on some product labels.

Pre-Harvest Intervals

The pre-harvest interval (PHI) is the minimum amount of time between the last application of a crop protection product and when the crop can be harvested. The PHI ensures that residues in the treated crop will not exceed the maximum residue limit (MRL) at harvest.

Why are the REI and PHI so different on some product labels?



labels?

As the REI is based on the protection of people performing tasks in the crop while a PHI exists to respect MRLs at harvest, the duration of these intervals can sometimes be quite different.

What happens if the REI for harvesting and the PHI are not the same on the label?

When the REI for hand or machine harvesting and the PHI are different, the longer of two intervals must be followed to ensure that both protection of people working as well as residue limits are achieved.

What happens if there is no PHI on the product label?

Some product labels do not have a PHI indicated for all or

some of their registered uses. If no PHI is specified on the product label, then a crop may be harvested at its maturity without delay. This can result when residues are not expected to be found on the crop following product application. Herbicide treatment prior to crop emergence is one example where this sometimes occurs. Even if no PHI is specified on the label, any REI restrictions for harvesting must still be followed.

Can the PHI on the product label be reduced?

It can sometimes be possible to have a shorter PHI approved on a product label. This will often require new residue data indicating the new use pattern will still respect MRLs.

Colorado potato beetle survey

Colorado potato beetles are what Dr. Ian Scott has in mind for a five-year national survey on tolerance levels to selected registered insecticides. He's a research scientist with the London Research and Development Centre at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC).

He is looking for approximately 150 "live" beetle adults and larvae per sample site. If you have a few you can

spare, please contact him and he will arrange for someone to come immediately to your farm and take some beetles off your hands. If you are outside of southwest/south central Ontario, a collection kit will be sent that can be returned by overnight courier (pre-paid) to AAFC London, Ontario.

Please contact Ian Scott at ian.scott2@canada.ca or Sophie Krolkowski at sophie.krolkowski@canada.ca



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MINOR USE

Sivanto Prime insecticide label expanded

JIM CHAPUT

The Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) recently announced the approval of an URMULE registration for Sivanto Prime insecticide for control of leafhoppers on hops in Canada. Sivanto Prime insecticide was already labeled for use on a number of crops in Canada for control of several pests including aphids on hops.

This minor use project was submitted by the Ontario Hop Growers' Association as a result of minor use priorities established by growers and extension personnel.

The following is provided as an abbreviated, general outline only. Users should be making pest management decisions within a robust integrated pest management program and should consult the complete label before using Sivanto Prime insecticide.

Sivanto Prime insecticide is toxic to aquatic organisms, bees and certain beneficial insects and non-target terrestrial plants. DO NOT apply this product to blooming crops or weeds while bees are actively visiting the treatment area. Application during the crop

blooming period, and when flowering weeds are present may only be made in the early morning and the evening when most bees are not foraging. Minimize spray drift to reduce harmful effects on bees in habitats close to the application site. Do not contaminate aquatic habitats when spraying or when cleaning and rinsing spray equipment or containers.

Flupyradifurone is persistent and may carry over. It is recommended that any products containing flupyradifurone not be used in areas treated with this product during the previous season.

Flupyradifurone and its transformation product difluoroacetic acid demonstrate the properties and characteristics associated with chemicals detected in ground water. The use of flupyradifurone in areas where soils are permeable, particularly where the water table is shallow, may result in ground water contamination.

Follow all other precautions and directions for use on the Sivanto Prime insecticide label carefully.

For a copy of the new minor use label contact your local crop specialist, regional supply outlet or visit the PMRA label site <https://www.canada.ca/en/health->



Leafhoppers on hops

[canada/services/consumer-product-safety/pesticides-pest-management/registrants-applicants/tools/pesticide-label-search.html](https://www.canada.ca/services/consumer-product-safety/pesticides-pest-management/registrants-applicants/tools/pesticide-label-search.html)

Jim Chaput is OMAFRA minor use coordinator, Guelph, Ontario

Protecting grapevines from pests

Canadian researchers have produced a new resource for grape growers to help reduce viticultural pests using environmentally sustainable practices.

The Guide to the Key Arthropods of Vineyards of Eastern Canada examines both insect and mite pests, and beneficial species found in vineyards of Eastern Canada, and how to optimally manage both. The authors are: Jacques Lasnier, Wendy McFadden-Smith, Debra Moreau, Patrice Bouchard and Charles Vincent.

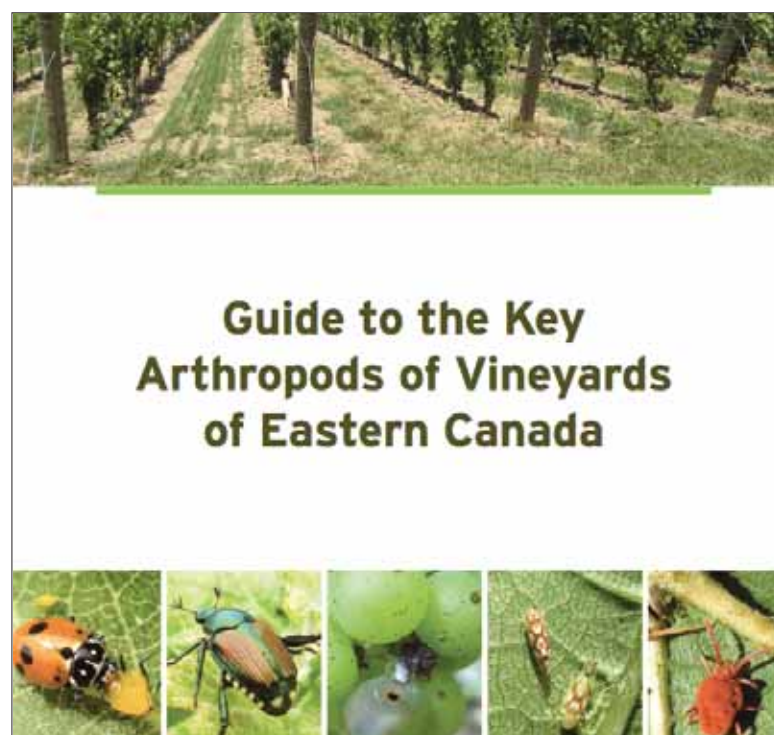
This comprehensive 114-page guide, available as a free download in English and French, is created in a field-sized format to help growers identify the pests in their vineyards and make informed decisions about how to best protect their grapes. Better understanding the numerous beneficial insects present in the vineyard will

enable sustainable production and reduce reliance on chemicals.

The Canadian wine industry contributes \$9 billion each year to the Canadian economy through its impact on agriculture and tourism.

Arthropods from left to right, book cover: Adult coccinellid *Hippodamia variegata* eating an aphid, Adult Japanese beetle on vine, Grape berry moth damage on fruit, Adult Eastern grape leafhopper *Erythroneura* comes on vine, Adult acari *Allothrombium lerouxi* on vine

Source: Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (Pest Management Centre), May 13, 2019 news release



Chateau herbicide label expanded for garlic

The Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) recently announced the approval of a minor use label expansion registration for Chateau herbicide for control of labeled weeds on garlic in Canada. Chateau herbicide was already labeled for use on a number of crops in Canada for control of several weeds.

This minor use project was submitted by the national minor use program at Agriculture and

Agri-Food Canada, Pest Management Centre as a result of minor use priorities established by growers and extension personnel.

The following is an abbreviated, general outline only. Users should be making weed management decisions within a robust integrated weed management program and should consult the complete label before using Chateau herbicide.

Crop(s)	Target	Rate (g/ha)	Application Information	PHI (days)
Garlic	Labeled weeds	280 – 420 depending upon soil type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply prior to weed emergence. Apply prior to emergence of garlic, and within 3 days after planting garlic. Apply only once per growing season. 	N/A

Chateau herbicide is toxic to aquatic organisms, small wild animals, certain beneficial insects and non-target terrestrial plants. Do not apply this product or allow drift to other crops or non-target areas. Do not contaminate off-target areas or aquatic habitats when spraying or when cleaning and

rinsing spray equipment or containers.

There are significant precautions and detailed directions for use on the Chateau herbicide label; follow these carefully.

For a copy of the new minor use label contact your local crop specialist, regional supply outlet

or visit the PMRA label site: <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/consumer-product-safety/pesticides-pest-management/registrants-applicants/tools/pesticide-label-search.html>

Manzate Max fungicide registered in Canada

UPL AgroSolutions Canada announces that the Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) has granted registration for Manzate Max liquid fungicide for use on fruit, including apples, potatoes and vegetable crops. Manzate Max is a soluble concentrate formulation of Manzate fungicide, a market leader in providing superior protection from a broad spectrum of key diseases.

Manzate Max is a multi-site protectant fungicide (FRAC M3) that

prevents pathogenic organisms from adapting and mutating. After 50 years of use, fungal strains have not developed resistance to Manzate, making the product an important component of a disease management program.

“Growers of fruit, potato and vegetable crops need tried-and-true crop solutions with positive resistant management profiles to rotate into their disease control programs,” says Trent McCrea, portfolio marketing manager, UPL AgroSolutions Canada. “Manzate

has earned a reliable reputation over the years as a solid performer, and we’re pleased to bring this new formulation of a trusted ally to the market.” Manzate Max will be available in limited quantities during its introductory season.

Manzate Max is available in a variety of crops, including apples, potatoes, field tomatoes, carrots, celery, onions, grapes, melons, lentils, wheat and others. It provides effective control of early and late blight in potatoes; rust and scab in apples; and many other diseases such as

leaf spot, anthracnose, downy mildew, Alternaria leaf spot and more.

For more information, contact your local UPL distributor or sales representative. For additional information about Manzate fungicide, click <http://www.upi-usa.com/canada/fungicides-ca/>

Source: UPL April 29, 2019 news release

HONEYCRISP

Too Much Bitter Pit? Too Little Storage and Shelf Life? Talk to Us...



The Right Information. The Right Products. The Right Programs.

Reducing Bitter Pit in Honeycrisp while increasing storability and shelf life requires more than just the right product, it requires the right information. The right information builds a complete nutrient program that is required to successfully grow this challenging variety and realize its significant profit potential.

Agro-K Can Show You...

- Which forms of calcium reduce bitter pit rather than increase its potential
- How the right nutrients at the right time can reduce bitter pit and increase storability
- Which nutrient mixes improve size without increasing bitter pit
- The appropriate spray intervals for foliar calcium
- To achieve the right nutrient ratios for less bitter pit and better shelf life
- How to design programs to help manage crop load
- How to take into account various soil situations
- The intelligent way to design a soil nutrient program

Talk To Agro-K For The Right Information, Right Products & The Right Program For Honeycrisp.

Your local source in Ontario and Atlantic Canada for Agro-K products



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