

PROFILE

Frequent flyer earns bonus points for good taste



Oleen Smethurst is known for her quest for flavour. As assistant vice-president, general merchandise manager for produce, Costco Canada, she jets all over the world from Berlin to Bogotá, meeting with growers and seed suppliers. Here she's sampling the 2019 crop of Gingergold apples with Kevin Martin, president, Martin's Family Fruit Farm, near Waterloo, Ontario. Photos by Glenn Lawson.

KAREN DAVIDSON

How many Aeroplan points has Oleen Smethurst earned in the last year? That offbeat question is a window into one of the most travelled women in Canadian produce.

As assistant vice-president, general merchandise manager for produce and a 28-year veteran of Costco, Smethurst meets growers where they live. She's at ease sliding out of a pickup truck and at home talking with vineyard pickers. She's honed her listening skills since she started ordering produce in 2005.

"When I started, I had no idea that we sourced produce from more than 25 countries," says Smethurst. "Growers have taught me produce. They have

mentored and educated me."

Fast forward and she's part of a 30-member produce team that regularly visits the Fruit Logistica trade show in Berlin, Germany. She is motivated by the quest for flavour. This might sound simplistic, but that singular insight drives the search for ever more tasty varieties that hold their shelf life.

A decade ago, the produce industry was grateful for the capacity of Canadian greenhouses to produce beefsteak tomatoes out of season. Since then, the search for flavour has evolved, starting with seed companies. Smaller tomatoes pack more flavour, says Smethurst, and they account for an entire new category of snacking tomatoes.

Members of the Costco team now visit select hothouse seed companies

twice a year in Holland, Spain and Italy to taste test new varieties and to share directions in consumer preferences. The third meeting brings everyone together in Leamington, Ontario to give the thumbs up on final selections.

"This has been a game changer for us," says Smethurst. "It's a massive challenge to get the best of everything. But in the greenhouse tomato category, by presenting flavour, we see the results in sales."

In a similar way, during a trip to New Zealand, Smethurst fell hard for the Smitten apple. It's known for its complex aromatics as well as ability to hold its crunch.

Searching for these gems is motivated by another factor: diversifying source of supply. Weather can disrupt shipments.

Smethurst is sleuthing new growing regions to guarantee supplies. She also notes that more growers are adopting new growing techniques such as row covers and high tunnels to protect produce.

"Columbia, for example, as well as Ecuador, will be powerhouses down the road," predicts Smethurst. When truck freight from California to Montreal is compared with shipping vessels from offshore to Montreal, the surprise is the competitiveness of costs. This is how quickly the global produce industry is changing, from the perspectives of trade agreements, technology and environmental footprint.

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Ontario Food Terminal protected PG 7

Seed & rootstock PG 14

AT PRESS TIME...

Safe Food for Canadian Regulations phased in

Although the Safe Food for Canadians Regulations (SFCR) came into force on January 15, 2019, certain requirements are being phased in over 12 to 30 months. Effective January 15, 2020, all SFCR requirements will apply to the fresh fruit and vegetable sector.

It is important to be aware that Regulations Amending the Agriculture and Agri-Food Administrative Monetary Penalties Regulations (AAAMP) were published in Canada Gazette II on April 9, 2019 and there is a direct link to the SFCR requirement for a Dispute Resolution Corporation (DRC) membership.

A non-compliance to the requirement for DRC membership as set out under subsection 122(2) of the SFCR falls under Item 6 of the AAAMP Regulations. This is classified as a serious non-compliance and the CFIA is able to issue an AAAMP of up to \$10,000.

The DRC's core work is business-to-business commercial dispute resolution for fruit and vegetable transactions. Membership is more than good business and provides protection on your transactions as well as regulatory compliance.

For additional information on who is subject to the requirement for a DRC membership, contact the DRC Help Desk (613-226-4880) or visit www.fvdrc.com/sfcr/

Cannabis edibles launched October 19

One year after the legalization of recreational cannabis, the category has been expanded with the launch of edibles. It really has not been expanded much yet because it will be a few months before the products are available to consumers and each province has its own regulations surrounding sales.

What does this mean for the food industry? In its 2018 Cannabis Report, Deloitte estimated the total market for marijuana in 2019 would be \$7.17 billion of which 60 per cent -- \$4.34 billion -- would be legal and medicinal. When edibles are legalized, expectations are they will add another 50 per cent to the volume being generated in the legal market.

This is based on the evidence from Colorado state. Overall, the cannabis category will equal close to \$10 billion. This would be close to the total sales of produce at retail in Canada says Peter Chapman, retail consultant, SKUfood.com.

"One would think the money must come from somewhere so watch for products in your category that might impact your sales," says Chapman.

OFVGA booth at the Royal

This year's Royal Agricultural Winter Fair runs from November 1-10 at

Exhibition Place in downtown Toronto. In the spirit of bringing the country to the city, the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association (OFVGA) has organized a booth within the Farm to Table Discovery Zone, Hall B.

OFVGA's project manager Dan Tukendorf explains that the exhibit includes a large market-style fresh fruit and vegetable display as well as three large video monitors showcasing various farming and packaging activities. Product sampling is a popular aspect as various commodity groups staff the booth throughout the fair. During the five school days, more than 270 schools representing 14,000 students visit the fair.

Here's the schedule:

Friday, Nov 1 - Apple Marketers Association of Ontario

Saturday, Nov 2 - Sunday Nov 3 - Ontario Apple Growers

Monday, Nov 4 - Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Assoc.

Tuesday, Nov 5 - Holland Marsh Growers

Wednesday Nov 6 - Ontario Potato

Thursday, Nov 7 - Fresh From The Farm School Fundraising

Friday, Nov 8 - Sunday, Nov 10 - Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers.

NEWSMAKERS

The October 21 federal election changed the electoral map in Canada with a minority Liberal government. **Marie-Claude Bibeau**, the federal agriculture and agri-food minister won her Quebec riding of Compton-Stanstead. **Dave Epp** will be representing the Ontario riding of Chatham-Kent-Leamington. The first-time MP has more than 30 years' experience representing farmers in a political capacity, previously serving on the board of directors of Agricorp and the Ontario Processing Vegetable Growers.

Congrats to **Dr. David Wolyn**, winner of the University of Guelph 2019 innovation award. He's been a game-changer for the asparagus sector in breeding Millennium. The variety has significant yield improvements, stand longevity and disease resistance.



A 35-year-old employee of Quebec's ministry of agriculture, fisheries and food died in an accident while filming at La Perle Rouge Farm, a cranberry operation in Shawinigan. That's about halfway between Montreal and Quebec City. Her scarf got caught in moving machinery.

The World Potato Congress has welcomed **Greg Donald**, general manager of the PEI Potato Board since 2009, as a new director. The 11th World Potato Congress will be held in Ireland May 31-June 3, 2021.

The Prince Edward Island Potato Board has elected four new directors. They are: **Becky Townshend**, a processing representative for the Montague-Souris District; **Mark MacMillan**, a processing representative for the Charlottetown District; **Donald Stavert**, a seed representative for the Summerside District; and **John Griffin**, a tablestock representative for the West Prince District.

Congratulations to **Rodney Dingwell** and **Gilbert W. Allen**, two of four 2019 Atlantic Agricultural Hall of Fame inductees with horticultural roots. Nominated by the PEI Potato Board, Rodney Dingwell is a seventh-generation farmer who took up the reins of a mixed farm at Marie, PEI. Over the years, he has provided leadership to the PEI Vegetable Growers Co-Operative, PEI Potato Board, the local soil and crop association and many others.

Nominated by Horticulture Nova Scotia was Gilbert W. Allen from Nova Scotia. His career spanned Agriculture Canada research at Kentville to a farming career in Billtown. Allen's true passion was certified strawberry plants and raspberry canes. In 1975, he grew the first crop of strawberry plants in Canada for export to Florida for the winter strawberry industry.


Katie Goldenhar is the new pathologist for horticulture, Ontario ministry of agriculture, food and rural affairs. Most recently, she worked for Syngenta Canada as a field biologist for horticulture and turfgrass, responsible for crop protection and seed care for these crops across Canada. She will be located at the University of Guelph effective November 4, 2019.




Condolences on the passing of **Leo Baribeau**, 73, co-founder of The Star Group. From his beginnings in Edam, Saskatchewan, he aided in the founding of Star Produce, now The Star Group. He retired in 2006. His many industry contributions included: chair, Canadian Produce Marketing Association, chair of the Canadian Horticultural Roundtable. And he was a familiar face on many national, international, and provincial fruit and vegetable boards and task forces. Baribeau received the CPMA Lifetime Achievement Award and The Packer Canadian Produce Person of the Year award in 2004.




The Grower is proud to announce that freelancer **Glenn Lowson** has won bronze, feature photography category, in the annual awards contest of the Canadian Farm Writers' Federation.


Published as the October 2018 cover, the photo captured the humanity of seasonal agricultural worker Steadley Stephenson at the apple farm of John Ardiel, Clarksburg, Ontario.







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COVER STORY

Frequent flyer earns bonus points for good taste



“When I started, I had no idea how many countries we sourced produce from. Growers have taught me produce. They have mentored and educated me.”

~ OLEEN SMETHURST

Photo left: Oleen Smethurst speaks with a harvester of Coronation grapes at the farm of John Thwaites, Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON.

Continued from page 1

The Port of Montreal, working to become a ‘smart’ port, experienced 115 per cent increase in deliveries in 2018 alone, according to Alexandre Montpetit manager, growth and development.

The focus on global suppliers is not at the expense of Canadian growers who are also highly regarded for the quality and flavour of produce.

“We like to source in Canada for as long as possible,” says Smethurst. “Whether it’s potatoes or tomatoes, we like to have year-round supplies.”

She also cites excellent quality of stone fruits, apples, carrots, onions and asparagus.

“We don’t know all the growers so that’s a missing link for some commodities,” she says. “There are some awesome Canadian companies out

there.”

Smethurst is shouldering extra responsibilities this year as chair of the Canadian Produce Marketing Association (CPMA). One of the defining roles is chairing the new Plastics Packaging Working Group, spurred in part by the federal government’s declaration to ban single-use plastics by 2021.

“This is a mammoth endeavor,” reports Smethurst, after several meetings. “There is a disconnect between the packaging companies, the recyclers and the municipalities.”

An interesting fact, says Smethurst, is that the produce industry accounts for only four per cent of packaging waste. The introduction of top sealing has contributed in a major way to reducing package waste. But it’s daunting to educate consumers on how much has already been done. The crux of the

matter is that recyclers don’t have a home, at a profitable price, for what they convert.

As leaders on this issue, CPMA is researching what is working and what is not in various jurisdictions, domestically and globally. Its task force members are meeting with packaging companies to ferret out the right alternatives. The danger, Smethurst warns, is that the drive for change shouldn’t come at the cost of changing too quickly to something that doesn’t work long term.

“We need to work through this intelligently,” she says.

And with that quote, Smethurst is off to Italy. Ciao!

The Grower goes “Behind the Scenes” of this story and speaks with Oleen Smethurst, assistant vice-president, general merchandise manager for

produce, Costco Canada. She samples the tastiest fruits and vegetables around the world . . . and in Canada. She shares what trends to watch and how searching for flavour and reducing plastics are the defining issues of her current tenure as chair, Canadian Produce Marketing Association.



Saladitions: in good health

For nearly 50 years, Martin’s Family Fruit Farm has been growing apples. Today, the Waterloo-Ontario business is using its 700 acres of apples as a springboard for more healthy foods: dehydrated apple chips and this fall, a salad topper.

Based on the success of the healthy snack, now ubiquitous from Costco Canada to Starbucks, the company is launching “Saladitions” with three mixtures of gluten-free, dehydrated fruits and vegetables to replace bread-based croutons on salads.

“We experimented with other snack

ideas but settled on creating a truly healthy salad topper, using all-natural ingredients,” says Kevin Martin, president, Martin’s Family Fruit Farm.

“There really wasn’t anything quite like it on the market and the clean ingredient deck is very much on trend with discerning shoppers. We are adding crunch to salads -- and more -- without bread or other fillers.

Saladitions were officially launched in October 2019 at the Produce Marketing Association’s Fresh Summit in Anaheim, California. Three varieties include:

• **Crunchy Harvest Mix** – a mixture of

apple, sweet potato, beet, pumpkin seeds and onion flakes

• **Citrus Pepper Mix** - a combination of apple, sweet potato, salted pumpkin seeds and beets, with a dash of white and black pepper as well as natural citrus oils; and

• **Zesty Fruit Medley** - a blend of apple, pumpkin seeds, dried cranberries and dried cherries

The development phase took 15 months from start to finish. Martin explains that some of the initial trials collaborated with the Food Innovation and Research Studio (FIRSt) team at

George Brown College. The branding work and some of the early business-to-business marketing were revealed at the Canadian Produce Marketing Association trade show in April 2019.

A great idea always involves some challenges in execution.

“The first issue was developing the cleanest ingredient deck possible while still creating unique flavour blends,” says Martin. “Second, sourcing raw product besides apples was a bit of a learning curve especially as we want to deal with other Ontario and Canadian producers as much as possible.”

What’s next? Another snack product may be in the works.

“What is important though is that we stay focused on truly healthy products that feature our compelling brand story,” says Martin. “We all know by now that the younger generations of shoppers are looking for wholesome products that are also in line with their values, whether it be sustainability, fair trade or just plain ethical business. We want to provide solutions for people, not just sell food to customers. It’s not a huge change in mentality for us, but we really do want to play a small role in partnering for change.”

Look for Saladitions in major grocers in time for the holiday season or sooner.



CROSS COUNTRY DIGEST

MANITOBA

Potato harvest stalled in mid-October

Table 1. Weather Data – Oct 1 (Tuesday) to Oct 7 (Monday), 2019. (MB Ag Weather Network)

Region	Max Temp (°C)	MinTemp (°C)	Rain (mm)	Season Rainfall (% of normal)	Sept Rains (% of Normal for Sept)
Altona	18.9	0.7	18.3	125	
Austin	19.1	0.1	19.6	118	
Bagot	20.0	-1.8	18.6	104	
Carman	19.4	-0.4	19.5	112	
Carberry	18.7	-1.0	11.3	146	
Cypress River	19.0	0.0	20.6	119	
Glenboro	19.4	0.1	12.7	138	
Holland	19.3	0.0	19.6	118	
Portage	19.7	-0.7	16.3	108	
Somerset	18.3	-0.8	15.4	112	
Shilo	18.5	-0.8	13.0	148	
St. Claude	19.1	0.4	12.1	114	
Treherne	18.7	-0.5	15.2	142	
Winkler	20.2	1.1	21.7	115	

The Thanksgiving weekend snowstorm in Manitoba stalled potato harvest after a frustrating month of extensive rains. The western areas of the province received close to 140+ per cent of normal rainfall according to Vikram Bisht, Manitoba potato and hort crops specialist.

“Potato harvesting has stalled due to continued rains and now snow,” he reported October 15. “About 65 per cent of the crop has been harvested in the province.

Soils are near saturation, even up to 120 cm depth in many areas.”

“There are still 18,000 to 20,000 acres of crop to harvest,” said Dan Sawatzky, general manager, Keystone Potato Producers’ Association on October 18. “In the Carberry and Portage la Prairie areas, some growers have only 30 per cent of the crop in the bin. We need some dry days before frost ends the season.”

This assessment refers to acres of potatoes destined

for processing plants. About 56,000 acres are contracted in Manitoba for processing. A greater percentage of the table and seed crops are harvested.

“We are in worse shape than last year at this time,” said Sawatzky, recalling the 9,000 to 10,000 acres of potatoes left unharvested in 2018. “It’s challenging to give much information at this time,” said Sawatzky. “A survey will be conducted later in the 2019 season.”



At Douma Farms Ltd near Portage la Prairie, this windrower and harvester were caught with only half of the field of potatoes harvested before the Thanksgiving storm. Photo courtesy Debbie Jones, Gaia Consulting, Manitoba.

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Buy BC program accepting applications

The Buy BC program was revitalized in 2018 and is now touting some of its success stories.

In the Fraser Valley, G&D Growers are introducing freeze-dried B.C. blueberries to consumers. A healthy snack product, the blueberries are processed locally, with no preservatives or additives, and no added sugar. With \$36,703 in

Buy BC funding, the fourth-generation family farm is focused on expanding its customer reach on Vancouver Island, northern B.C. and the Okanagan.

“In an ever-changing world of food security, it has become increasingly important to consumers to identify countries of origin,” said Jatinder Dhaliwal, G&D owner. “The

Buy BC program has been a great tool for us to help customers identify locally grown blueberries. The assistance of the program will help us establish a market where we can get more value for our blueberries.”

Cloverdale Country Farms is a locally owned, all-natural and organic specialty grocer showcasing each season’s unique, locally grown fresh fruits and



vegetables. With \$35,519 in Buy BC funding, the Surrey-based business is promoting to customers the benefits that come from fresh, local, quality crops.

“We believe that fresh, wholesome foods are the foundation of a healthy life, family and community,” said Randy Sihota, Cloverdale Country Farms owner. “We are thankful for the support we have received from our customers over the years and now with the Buy BC funding, we will be increasing our social media and marketing efforts to welcome more people through our doors.”

“Love in, love out” is the philosophy of Grown Here Farms, as they believe that what goes into how a product was made is just as important as what comes out. The business has an organic farm in Cawston. With \$30,000 in Buy BC funding, Grown Here Farms is increasing awareness of its B.C. grown, organic products through its in-store demonstrations and net-zero trike-delivery in Vancouver.

“We provide our customers with fresh, local products from small, family farms, using

sustainable transportation,” said Krystine McInnes, Grown Here Farms founder. “We have a great story to tell and the Buy BC funding is helping us reach more consumers with our positive message.”

The Buy BC Partnership Program provides \$2 million per year until March 2021 to help eligible applicants with their marketing efforts using the Buy BC logo on their products or promotional materials. Since the inception of the Buy BC program in 2018:

- 178 B.C. companies have certified products;
- 115 B.C. companies have received cost-shared funding; and
- 58 B.C. companies now have a licence for promotional materials.

From Oct. 1, 2019 until Nov. 29, 2019, applications are being accepted for the next round of funding. The provincial government’s Buy BC Partnership Program is delivered by the Investment Agriculture Foundation of British Columbia. For application details, visit: <https://iafbc.ca/buy-bc/>

Source: BC Agriculture Ministry

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CROSS COUNTRY DIGEST

NOVA SCOTIA

CropLife Canada has released a new doc series

Real Farm Lives, a documentary web series about the realities of modern farming in Canada, returns for another season to help bridge the gap between farmers and consumers.

“We know Canadians have questions about food production and farming practices. That’s why we go straight to the source in Real Farm Lives,” said Pierre Petelle, president and CEO of CropLife Canada, the association behind the series. “We’re excited to build on the success of season one and continue connecting Canadians with real farmers who can help them better understand the complexities of modern farming and the challenges and innovations involved in feeding a growing population.”

Weather, insects, weeds and diseases all impact the crops and livelihoods of Canadian farmers. Real Farm Lives, which first launched in 2018, explores the role

plant science technologies such as GMOs and pesticides play in protecting the food we eat.

Season two introduces viewers to new faces, places and crops, featuring families from Alberta and Nova Scotia. Philip and Katie Keddy, Lakeville, Nova Scotia grow strawberry plants and are the largest sweet potato producers east of Ontario.

“My parents built this farm from the ground up and Katie and I couldn’t be prouder to follow in their footsteps,” said Philip Keddy, Charles Keddy Farms Ltd. “As farmers, we’re only two per cent of the population in Canada so we feel it’s our duty to share our stories whenever we can to help people learn about where their food comes from.”

With moments of celebration, frustration, and perseverance, Real Farm Lives reveals the pride and passion that drives Canadian farmers.



Back row: Charles & Doris Keddy. Front row: Philip, Charlie Jr., Ben and Katie Keddy. Photo courtesy of CropLife Canada.

For more information on Real Farm Lives and to watch all the episodes, visit www.realfarmlives.ca.

Source: October 8, 2019 news release

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

“Open Farm” event attracts 14,000

Despite the havoc of Hurricane Dorian the week before, Prince Edward Island’s agriculture community pulled together for the 18th Open Farm event on September 15, 2019. There were 25 farms participating, from market gardens to wineries, to fruit and vegetable farms.

This event is organized by volunteers under the auspices of the PEI Agricultural Awareness Committee. It’s a non-profit organization explains Robin MacLeod, administration coordinator, so

creative ways are found to publicize the event. Postcards are printed with all the farm stops across the Island. Local radio stations are pivotal in reminding families of the outing.

Barnyard bingo was a new tactic this year to engage parents and kids. An icon for each farm was developed for each square of the bingo card. Each farm received stamps and inkpads so that event participants could receive recognition of their attendance on the

bingo card.

Two potato farms participated: Farm Boys Inc, Arlington and the Keenan family at Rollo Bay Holdings, Souris. Thanks to their hospitality, visitors were able to hand-dig a bag of potatoes.

Bryan and Kyle Maynard, Farm Boys Inc., screened educational videos prepared by the PEI Potato Board. The Keenan family displayed old and new tractors, while also offering a tour of the packing line.



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WATER RESOURCES

Complex issues surface in Columbia River Treaty negotiations

KAREN DAVIDSON

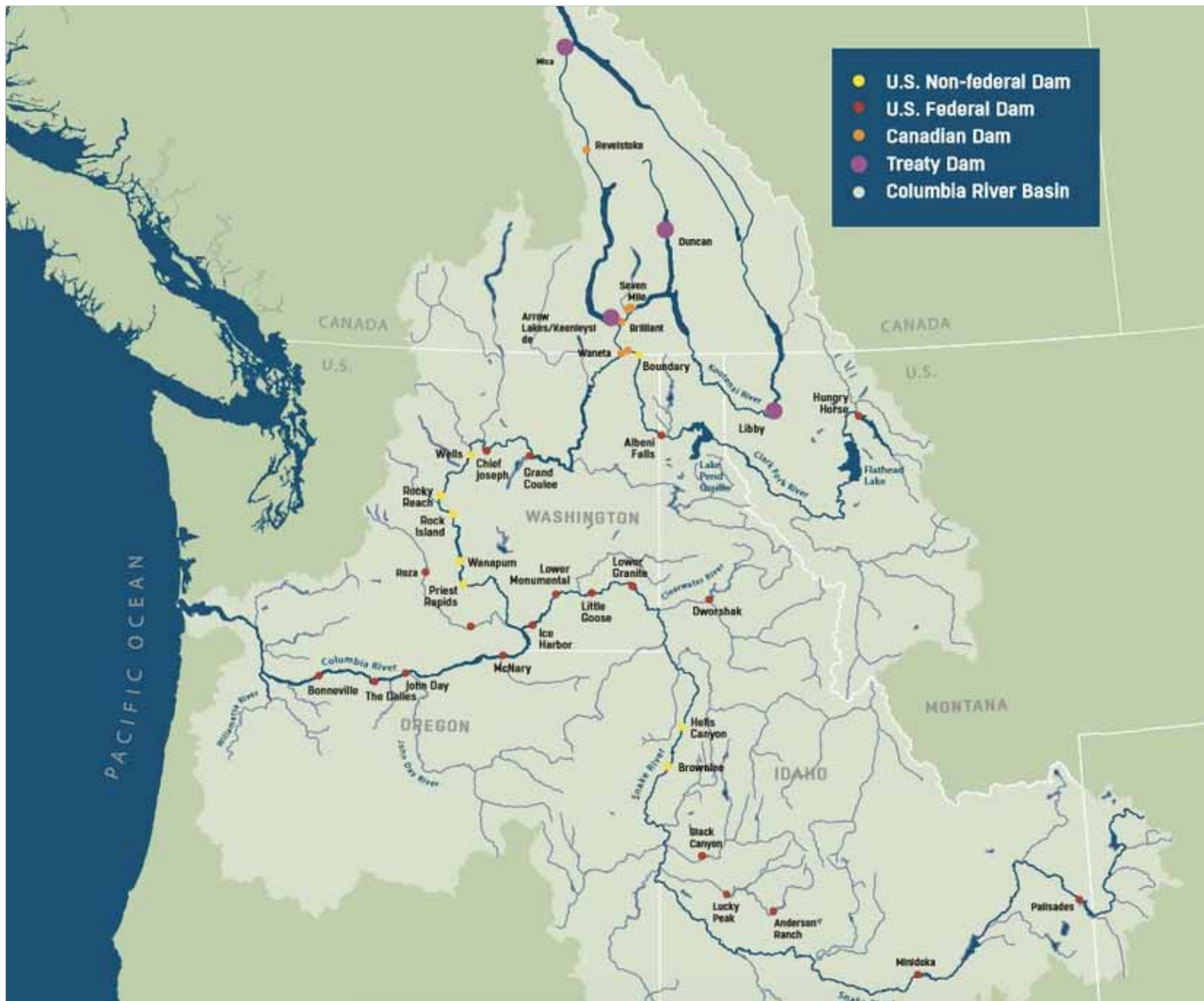
By 2024, Canadians and Americans must decide how to share the resources of the fourth-largest river in North America: the Columbia. Negotiations have been underway since May 2018, a signal of the economic and ecological impact of the river that snakes its way from the headwaters in British Columbia's Rocky Mountains to the mouth at the Pacific Ocean some 1,243 miles away in Oregon.

Under review is how flood risk is managed through a series of dams on both sides of the border as well as how to ensure a reliable and economical power supply. Not least is the opportunity to recommend new concepts of ecosystem improvements spanning a watershed the size of Texas. The original Columbia River Treaty was ratified in 1964, with Canada's promise to build three dams: Duncan, Keenleyside and Mica. The U.S. built a fourth dam called the Libby. As of September 2024, either country has the right to terminate the treaty with 10 years' notice.

Those in B.C. agriculture are keeping a close eye on the modernization of the treaty. Glen Lucas, general manager of the BC Fruit Growers' Association was one of 300 who attended the 6th International Columbia River Transboundary Conference staged in Kimberley, British Columbia from September 12-14.

"We used to be told that the treaty had nothing to do with agriculture," says Lucas. "But American agriculture has grown massively after the treaty. We have observed water flows meant for hydro-electric dams that were diverted for agricultural use."

Lucas points out that a diverse array of produce, from potatoes to fruit trees, depend on the irrigation waters



The watershed of the Columbia River encompasses British Columbia and six states: Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, Utah, Wyoming. Two-fifths of the water course lies in British Columbia.

We used to be told that the treaty had nothing to do with agriculture. But American agriculture has grown massively after the treaty.

~ GLEN LUCAS

stemming from the Columbia River. Those states are direct competitors to British Columbia, particularly in tree fruit. Interestingly, the Okanagan River, a reliable source of water to the fruit and grape industries in British Columbia, flows south of the border and into the Columbia River in Washington State.

Obviously, when the Americans call for water flow to charge their hydro-electric dams, Canada must comply. But Canada has the right to pose the question: are your own reservoirs empty?

"We're able to shape the water flow," says Lucas. "We're not saying there should be a

change in water flow to U.S. agriculture. But the compensation package for that water needs to be competitive. At present, the B.C. government is compensated by the U.S. for the benefits of hydroelectric power. The amounts are more than \$100 million annually and has been as much as \$300 million.

"It's an embarrassment of riches," says Lucas. "We would like to see some of that money go back to the communities in the Kootenays where flooding caused by the dams inundated bottomlands. They have never recovered."

Other fundamental shifts in appreciation of habitat have evolved over time. There were

no thoughts given to the impact of the dams and their effect on the salmon runs on the river. No fish ladders were built.

"At the time, the Canadian government said there was no commercial fishery in that area, but no one asked the Indigenous people who relied on salmon for a food source. This was not just ignorant but criminal."

Today, Indigenous groups are engaged. In fact, the conference's agenda specifically addressed reintroduction of salmon to the river, an acknowledgement of not only a historical food source for Indigenous peoples but the very essence of traditional fish

habitat. Invasive species were discussed as well as climate change.

The history and geography of the Columbia River serve as a primer for future water negotiations between Canada and the United States. Oil and gas tend to make the headlines of the day but water will be the currency of the future.

As Lucas points out, the original Columbia River Treaty was negotiated by the B.C. government of the day. But decades later, the Canadian government has officials at the table.

"We're determined that agriculture's concerns get addressed in these talks," says Lucas.

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EMPLOYMENT ZONE

Ontario Food Terminal protected



New loading area at Ontario Food Terminal

The Ontario government has announced special protection for the Ontario Food Terminal (OFT), the country's largest wholesale food terminal. The 40 acres in Etobicoke will be named a provincially significant employment zone, protecting it from potential condo development. It's estimated that 100,000 jobs are related to the site which has undergone millions of dollars of upgrades in recent years.

A provincially significant employment zone must meet one or more of these criteria:

- they play a strategic economic development role locally and provincially
- they are located near major transportation infrastructure, such as highways
- they support industrial uses that may be vulnerable to conversion for other uses, such as residential development, and
- they have a high concentration of employment or significant employment potential.

Zones that are designated as employment areas in official plans cannot be changed from employment uses without provincial approval.

"Designating the Ontario Food Terminal as a Provincially Significant Employment Zone will help ensure its long-term viability and certainty," said Steve Bamford, vice-president of the Toronto Wholesale Produce Association. "Committing to the Food Terminal at its current location and as an employment zone will help everyone at the terminal prosper and grow."

Last year, 23 new loading docks were opened for buyers to accommodate larger trucks and tractor trailers. An additional 12 docks were opened in August 2019. "These docks provide the buyers with a large area to assemble their loads in a heated space," says Gary da Silva, OFT operations manager. "They can load their trucks quicker and more efficiently – a change that's proven to be very positive for the market."

A cold storage receiving/shipping area and compactor are scheduled to be opened by end of 2019.



Provide Agro now offers a wide range of Freilauber vineyard equipment including, pre-pruners, trimmers, leaf pullers and more. Freilauber has more than 25 years' experience in the development and production of equipment for viticulture, fruit cultivation and tillage.

The roller hoe (right) is used for herbicide-free control of weeds in fruit cultivation. It first loosens the ground along the vine row in a strip of about 55cm, while the earth then buries the weeds.



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Ontario Berry Grower

Ministry of Agriculture,
Food and Rural Affairs



Strawberry virus management- how are we doing?

ERICA PATE

Strawberry viruses came onto the Ontario radar a few years ago when viruses began reducing field's vigour and yields. Instead of fruiting for three to four years, growers were only getting one or two years of harvest. Fields would be in good shape heading into dormancy but then in the spring there would be little vigour and a disappointing crop. Viruses were seriously affecting Ontario strawberry fields and virus management was implemented.

Strawberry aphids are the main vector of strawberry virus diseases in Ontario. Aphids are present through the season and require regular control. In 2014, growers began managing for aphids in earnest to protect their fields from viruses with regular insecticide applications. A virus survey was conducted in 2015 to determine the level of viruses present on Ontario farms. After a few years of regular aphid management we began to hear from growers that field health was improving and fields were lasting longer. It

seemed like aphid management was working, so in 2017 we conducted a follow-up survey at the same farms that participated in 2015 to evaluate how well our management program was doing. Was there any reduction from 2015 to 2017?

In 2017, we found there was a slight reduction in the incidence of viruses present compared to 2015. The incidence of strawberry vein-banding virus and strawberry yellow edge virus declined in 2017, which are both transmitted by aphids. However, strawberry mottle virus and strawberry polerovirus are aphid-transmitted as well, and the incidence of these viruses increased. The good news is that the incidence of plants infected with more than one virus declined at five of the six participating farms. Virus symptoms usually show up when there is more than one virus present, so this suggests that there would be less damage at these farms in 2017. Although the improvements were not as much as we anticipated, this survey does suggest that the IPM strategies are having a

small positive effect on virus management in strawberry production.

We continue to see improved field vigour and longevity, but it is very important that growers do not forget how vital virus and aphid management is throughout the season. Make sure to stay on top of aphid monitoring and management through the season and protect your crop. Without a plan to manage aphids, strawberry fields will continue to decline from virus diseases.

Managing viruses and strawberry aphids:

Begin by reducing inoculum. Remove older fields that may be infected with viruses. If possible do not plant new fields next to older fields, and begin with clean plants from an accredited plant grower. Once plants are established, begin to monitor for aphids and continue monitoring through the season.

Aphid control is necessary once they begin to fly and can move to new fields spreading virus. The flight period begins when the aphid population builds up -- monitor weekly to



Strawberry field

follow the population trends. There is a list of registered products for aphid control in Publication 360. Maintain aphid control through the season in both bearing and non-bearing fields. In a well-managed field aphid numbers should be consistently low. Plan to include an insecticide three to five times in your pest management program next year.

Whichever product you use it is important to get good coverage. Make sure to slow down and increase the spray volume.

Monitoring strawberry aphids:

To monitor for strawberry aphids next spring, check the underside of new leaves and look for the pale, green bodies. Strawberry aphids can be distinguished from other aphids by knobbed hairs all over their bodies. A hand lens or microscope is necessary to see the hairs. Strawberry aphids can be winged or wingless. It is the winged form that needs to be controlled. Collect 60 new, partially folded leaves and count the number of aphids per leaf. Currently there are no

economic thresholds developed, but growers should aim to keep the population below 15 aphids/60 leaves. Monitor weekly.

Identifying strawberry viruses:

Symptoms are usually found when there are two or more viruses present. There are a variety of symptoms, including low vigour, mottling, interveinal chlorosis, asymmetrical leaves, patchy fields, and stunted fields and plants. These symptoms do not always mean there are viruses present and can be similar to herbicide injury, cyclamen mite damage or nutritional deficiencies. If you see these symptoms in your field and suspect viruses send a sample to a diagnostic lab to confirm.

Growers cannot be complacent about strawberry viruses. While we have a better understanding of this pest now and tools to control the vector, without vigilant management viruses could still seriously affect your yields.

Erica Pate is fruit crops specialist for OMAFRA.

Spotted wing drosophila research update

ERICA PATE

A team of researchers from Michigan State University (MSU) recently published their results in Environmental Entomology, reporting on seven years of monitoring spotted wing drosophila (SWD). This team of entomologists from Rufus Issac's lab at MSU has been trapping SWD consistently at the same blueberry farms for seven years, and have used this data to examine the conditions that affect spotted wing drosophila activity. They found that SWD activity is predictable based on environmental conditions, and were able to use this information to develop a model to predict SWD activity through the season.

Over the seven years, trends emerged in the annual life cycle of SWD, including the effects of winter and spring temperatures on SWD populations. Multiple studies have found that winter temperatures affect SWD activity, and that colder winters will suppress SWD activity in the summer. Led by Heather Leach, lead author on this study, this team found that the number of days below freezing had the strongest correlation to first catch in the spring, and a strong influence on the population growth through the season. Spring temperatures also strongly influence first catch and population growth. Cold winters and

cold springs lead to lower levels of SWD and slower population growth, compared to warm winters and springs, which can lead to high SWD activity, fast population growth, and a challenging year for managing SWD. The third factor influencing SWD activity is the previous season's SWD population. SWD emergence and population growth will likely be slower in the spring following a year with a low population.

This team of researchers found that a predictive model using these factors (winter and spring temperatures and the previous season's population) can be used to determine SWD activity and trends. While they looked at other factors that could affect SWD activity they found that these factors had the biggest influence on predicting SWD activity.

Leach points out that this information can be particularly useful for crops that ripen as SWD populations really begin to increase, such as late June-bearing strawberry varieties, summer fruiting raspberries, and blueberries. We can use this information in Ontario where SWD management for blueberries, summer-fruiting raspberries, and June-bearing strawberries does not necessarily begin at the same time every year. As we learn more about SWD life cycles and factors that influence emergence we will be better equipped to determine when and how to manage this pest.



OFVGA ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

With the federal election complete, the focus returns to provincial priorities



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 election

At the time of writing, Canadians are just days away from heading to the polls, so the outcome of the federal election is not yet known. If the polls are any indication, which party forms the next government will be uncertain until the ballot

counts are tallied.

Regardless of whether we have a new government, or the country maintains its current party representation, there will certainly be change within many ridings, and which Members of Parliament (MP) will be tapped to lead key files, such as agriculture and food.

Alongside the Canadian Horticultural Council, the OFVGA will be working hard to educate new and returning MPs about the importance of the fruit and vegetable sector, and what the sector needs to be competitive. It will be important to establish a strong foundation for a productive working relationship over the next four years.

Ontario government returns to Queen's Park

Ontario's Members of Provincial Parliament (MPP) are set to return to the Legislature on October 28, after an extended break that coincided with the federal election. Although MPPs were busy visiting stakeholders and participating in photo ops

during the break, we anticipate a fast-moving fall session to allow the Ontario government to move forward with its aggressive agenda, including red tape reduction.

The OFVGA will be working to keep up with relevant proposed legislative changes and ensure our asks are heard. November 26 will see our second day at Queen's Park this year, which will allow for us to educate MPPs on the sector, promote some key red tape reduction ideas and position OFVGA as a trusted partner of government. These conversations will be especially important as the government begins its planning for the next provincial budget.

Environment & conservation

During October, OFVGA representatives had a productive meeting with Minister Yurek's staff to discuss specific red tape issues such as the Blue Box Program, Conservation Authorities, pesticide classification, water taking permits and environmental compliance assessments.



OFVGA conducted meetings in October that concerned water taking permits and environmental compliance assessments. Photo by Glenn Lowson

Minister Yurek took on the environment file in June when Minister Phillips was promoted to the Ministry of Finance.

OFVGA representatives were encouraged by the discussion and the willingness of staff to investigate solutions to concerns raised. As a next step, a meeting is being scheduled with Minister Yurek to follow up on progress.

Growers are encouraged to contact the OFVGA should you have specific experiences that you would like to share with respect to obtaining water permits, meeting requirements for Environmental Compliance

Approvals, or working with your local Conservation Authorities. These specific examples can help narrow the specific regulatory changes to reduce red tape, but also enhance the sector's environmental performance.

Want to see an issue highlighted here, or learn more about an industry issue? 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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THE INNOVATION REPORT

2019-2020

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CHAIR'S PERSPECTIVE

Why we need the next generation of farm leaders



BILL GEORGE JR.
CHAIR, OFVGA

many years of being held just after the Christmas holidays, our annual general meeting now takes place in February in conjunction with the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Convention. Ahead of that meeting, our member associations hold their annual meetings where they elect directors and develop resolutions.

Fall is a great time to give some thought to becoming involved in farm politics, or perhaps encouraging a younger member of your family or your farm's team to consider volunteering their time to make a difference for fellow growers.

So many individuals I see around the board tables of the organizations I'm involved with have been there for the last 15, 20 or even 25 years, and I include myself in that group. That's why it's so important for us to encourage new people, particularly younger farmers, to become involved.

The boards of provincial farm and commodity organiza-

tions are where many policy decisions are made that directly impact the future direction their industry is going to take. That's why new and different opinions are vital, especially from younger farmers who have different experiences and thought processes that can help influence what's happening around those board tables.

In the bigger picture, our farm leaders are ultimately the people who represent us in lobbying governments, helping secure funding programs, ensuring agriculture's voice is heard in lawmaking, and even participating in international trade negotiations.

I understand that time is a major barrier, particularly for younger farmers who are busy balancing building their own businesses with growing families. It can be tough to head off to a grower meeting in the evening after a long day in the orchard or field, but there are ways to become involved that don't require the same time commitment that a leadership

role in a provincial farm organization does.

The first step to getting involved is participating in meetings at the local level or with your commodity organization. Listen to the discussions and participate in the resolution process by speaking up and voicing your opinion. Volunteer to serve on a committee, help with a local event or let your name stand for a local director position.

I was 24 when I was first elected to the grape board, committing to two meetings a month and gradually growing into the role of a director. It helped me build capacity on the farm to fill in during an absence, and let me become familiar with issues I was passionate about and wanted to become more involved with.

How to attract those new people remains a challenge all farm groups grapple with. At OFVGA, we sponsor young growers to attend our annual meeting for the first time so they can get an idea of what the

organization is about. Ontario Apple Growers have a young grower group, and Grape Growers of Ontario have established a new committee for younger growers. Other commodity organizations are offering training programs to prepare their sector's next generation of leaders.

In short, we're doing our best to support the involvement of younger growers – and if there are things you think we should be doing to that end, but aren't, please let us know.

Ultimately, your own farm business takes precedence and you have to make sure that's looked after, but if you have the luxury of carving out some time for something new, I encourage you to consider taking an active role in the future of your industry, however small a step you might be comfortable starting out with.

We need your ideas, your perspectives and your leadership in our fruit and vegetable sector in the months and years to come.

Another winter is just around the corner, and in farming, that means meeting season will kick into high gear. Most farm organizations hold their annual general meetings, as well as policy and education events over the fall and winter because that's when our members are least busy with planting, harvesting and all other kinds of warm weather tasks.

The Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association (OFVGA) is no different – after

WEATHER VANE



Alphonso Fraser, St. Vincent, is picking Bosc pears for the fourth year at the farm of Art Moyer, Grimsby, Ontario. He's just one of thousands of seasonal agricultural workers who are heading home after a job well done. Horticulture relies on these workers to bring fruits and vegetables to the marketplace in Canada. Photo by Glenn Lowson.

STAFF

Publisher: Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association
Editor: Karen Davidson, 416-557-6413, editor@thegrower.org
Advertising: Carlie Melara 519-763-8728, advertising@thegrower.org

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OFFICE

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

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THE
GROWER

URBAN COWBOY

This vertical farm is a down-to-earth business



OWEN ROBERTS
U OF GUELPH

For ages, I've associated vertical farming more with science fiction than food production.

I guess I should know better. After all, I work at the University of Guelph, where I've watched world-renowned controlled environment pioneer Mike Dixon develop his food-for-space-travel research program for 30-plus years. Some of the approaches to vertical farming and his cosmic crop production are similar – high density, high automation, almost zero waste and perpetual harvest, among them.

Still, something about growing crops in an artificial

environment here on Earth, in trays stacked on top of each other, in urban industrial buildings other than greenhouses, just seemed other worldly. Like a cross between *The Jetsons* and a scenario George Orwell would dream up.

But I've changed my mind. After touring Guelph's new vertical farm, GoodLeaf Farms, I see real down-to-earth possibilities for vertical farming, particularly for growing microgreens and "baby" vegetables. True, it's unconventional. But the produce grown there is loaded with nutrients, certified safe by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (an inspection crew was leaving as I was arriving), and just what consumers are craving -- new kinds of foods and food experiences.

So with all that in mind, I believe vertical farming is poised to find its place in Canada's farmscape.

GoodLeaf was founded by entrepreneur Gregg Curwin and now has investment from McCain Foods. Its 45,000-square-foot, three-storey, fully automated and fully enclosed farm is located in a new industrial plaza in southwest Guelph, adjoining a string of

other buildings. The company claims this facility is the most automated vertical farm in North America.

From the outside, GoodLeaf's farm is as modest and unassuming as its light industrial neighbours, distinguishable mainly by its corporate logo and attractive glass entry.

But inside, it's a different story.

Behind a full-length glass observation wall, microgreens and baby greens abound. They grow in six-foot-long permeable trays (called "benches") on numerous levels, inside a huge climate-controlled 30-foot-high growth chamber.

Temperature and humidity are watched with an eagle's eye to maximize growth and prevent plant disease.

"We create perfect conditions," says Juanita Moore, executive director of operations. "Inside, it's always a nice spring day."

Light is provided by high-efficiency LEDs, mostly red and blue (other colours are screened out because they don't contribute to maximum growth). It's not a natural look, by any means. But the plants



sure like it.

Benches are programmed to move hydraulically through the chamber as the plants mature. Irrigation systems beneath each bench deliver water and nutrients as needed. GoodLeaf filters and reuses about 95 per cent of the water it takes in, and recycles the plant growing medium for second-life use in landscaping.

Continuous electronic monitoring takes place for density, flavour and other key attributes.

Once it's seeded, humans never touch the crop. Baby arugula and kale will grow from start to finish in 18-20 days, 365 days a year.

The company chose to develop its farm in Guelph to take advantage of proximity to major markets, and to capitalize on closed-systems expertise at the university. In fact, the company's master grower and

horticultural scientist, Jeff Huber, is an environmental biology graduate from Guelph, and a visiting researcher there specializing in controlled environments.

Huber cut his scientific teeth in Dixon's research facility. And while GoodLeaf isn't farming inside a rocket ship to Mars, much of what's been learned about growing food for space travel can be applied at GoodLeaf, and vice versa.

GoodLeaf claims that the taste of microgreens is intensified. I agree. We added some to a green salad, and they popped off the plate with flavour, let alone freshness.

It's a very impressive operation. GoodLeaf products are now at 170 stores in Ontario, including many Zehrs, Loblaws, Longos and Sobeys locations.

And it looks like they, and vertical farming, have arrived.

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ENERGY

Potential energy cost savings for Ontario greenhouses



With more than 1,300 megawatts of greenhouse load seeking to connect in Ontario by 2025, the Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO) is calling for proposals for innovative projects focused on reducing electricity demand from indoor agriculture. Total available funding is up to \$2.5 million. IESO will accept proposals from November 18, 2019 to February 14, 2020.

That's part of the news from the Green Energy Profile Study released by the Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO) in early October. It shows there is potential for energy efficiency to help manage increasing electricity demand in Ontario's greenhouse sector while reducing costs for greenhouses.

In Kingsville-Leamington alone, electricity demand is

expected to increase by more than 200 per cent from 2018 to 2026. Vegetable and fruit greenhouses are the largest driver of growth across the province, while cannabis is starting to have an impact as growers ramp up their operations.

The IESO, with support from Enbridge Gas Inc. and the Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers, (OGVG) collaborated with Ontario's agriculture sector to produce the Greenhouse Energy Profile Study. The study summarizes how energy is used across sub-sectors and regions in 2018 and forecasts energy use and savings potential from 2019 to 2024.

"Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers was pleased to participate with the IESO and other stakeholders," says Nathan Warkentin, energy and environment analyst, OGVG.

"Access to energy infrastructure and competitive rates is a key piece of the puzzle and will enable our members to grow fresh, high-quality food year-round and contribute to meeting healthy eating and food security goals across the province."

The Save on Energy Retrofit program, available through the IESO, can help greenhouses better manage their energy use and reduce monthly electricity costs through incentives to upgrade various equipment and lighting.

The IESO is inviting proposals through its Grid Innovation Fund from November 18 to February 14, 2020, for innovative indoor agricultural projects that have the potential to cost-effectively reduce electricity demand from facilities during local and

provincial peak periods.

Community engagement is critical to understanding future electricity needs, and the IESO has been active in the Windsor-Essex region to ensure the electricity system is set to handle new growth. Earlier this year, the IESO requested Hydro One develop a new

transmission line from Chatham to Leamington that will increase electricity supply to the area.

Source: Independent Electricity System Operator October 22, 2019 news release

COMING EVENTS 2019

- Nov 1-10 Royal Agricultural Winter Fair, Exhibition Place, Toronto, ON
- Nov 6-9 North American Strawberry Growers' Association European Tour, Netherlands and Belgium
- Nov 10-16 AgriTechnica, Hanover, Germany
- Nov 13-14 Canadian Centre for Food Integrity Public Trust Summit, Saskatoon, SK
- Nov 15 Ontario Produce Marketing Association Annual Gala, Universal Event Space, Vaughn, ON
- Nov 19-21 Potato Growers of Alberta Conference and Tradeshow, Cambridge Hotel and Conference Centre, Red Deer, AB
- Nov 20 PEI Potato Board AGM, PEI Potato Board office Charlottetown, PE
- Nov 22 Quebec Potato Convention (bilingual), Convention and Exhibition Centre, Lévis, QC
- Nov 26 OFVGA Fall Lobby Day, Queen's Park, Toronto, ON
- Nov 27 Asparagus Farmers of Ontario Annual General Meeting, Hungarian Hall, 9 am, Delhi, ON
- Nov 28 Canadian Agricultural Hall of Fame induction ceremony, Fairmont Le Chateau Frontenac, Quebec City, QC
- Nov 28 CanAgPlus (CanadaGAP) annual general meeting, Red Shores, Charlottetown, PE
- Dec 3-4 GrowCanada Conference, Calgary, AB
- Dec 4 Garlic Production and Pest Management Workshop, 1 Stone Road, Guelph, ON
- Dec 4 Ontario Potato Board Annual General Meeting, Delta Hotel, Guelph, ON
- Dec 4-8 Canada Outstanding Young Farmers Recognition Event, Delta Fredericton, Fredericton, NB
- Dec 5 Fresh Vegetable Growers of Ontario Annual General Meeting, OMAFRA office, Woodstock, ON 9:30 am
- 2020**
- Jan 14-15 National Potato Council Expo, Las Vegas, NV
- Jan 14-15 Canadian Fertilizer Products Forum, Ottawa, ON
- Jan 28-29 Nova Scotia Fruit Growers' Association Annual General Meeting, Old Orchard Inn, Greenwich, NS
- Jan 29-30 Ontario Processing Vegetable Industry Conference, Four Points by Sheraton, London, ON



NOTICE OF MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the
Annual General Meeting
of the
FRESH VEGETABLE GROWERS OF ONTARIO
will be held in the town of
Woodstock, Ontario
at the
Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
December 5, 2019
9:30 am

Election of Directors of the Association, discussion of financial reports and any other business that may arise will take place.

Lunch will be provided.
Meeting details will be posted to the FVGO website as they become available.
www.freshvegetablesontario.com
To register for the meeting please call the FVGO office, 519-674-1500 ext.63592
or email mmcdonal@uoguelph.ca

RETAIL NAVIGATOR

10 ways to support your customer without discounting your product



PETER CHAPMAN

When I suggest to producers and processors that they need to support their customers (retailers) more, they roll their eyes and shake their heads. Perhaps they are thinking just because I worked for a retailer, I think they should empty their pockets and spend more money. Not the case.

Support and developing relationships can be so much more than just spending money. Yes, you do have to spend money on listing fees, ads, in store specials, promotions and loyalty programs but so does everyone else. Like it or not, that is how the industry has been built. Retailers own stores and to get your products on the shelf there is a price to pay. Depending on which category you compete in, there are different expectations.

Differentiating your offering is possible and you should be able to improve the relationship and spend a bit less. Here are 10 opportunities for you to support your customer that are not discounting your product.

1. Educate the category manager

Category managers are overworked and they do not have the time to get away from their desks and learn as much as they would like to. Make it part of your job to educate them about your category and the overall industry. Find articles, photos and information about the category.

Offer a tour of your facility. They will not always say yes but you should always offer. If they do make the time, use the chance to do more than talk just about what you are doing. Help them learn more.

2. Tell consumers where to find your products

Any chance you get you should tell consumers where to find your products. If you have a U-pick operation, put up a sign that says if you enjoyed your experience today you can find our products at ABC store every week. Consumers will not come to your U-pick every week, so let them know where to find your products and

promote your customer(s) at the same time.

3. Promote your customer(s) within the industry

Often you will get asked to be a part of an interview about what is happening in the industry, such as being interviewed by *The Grower*. Mention your customers by name and share something positive. It does not have to be an emotional testimonial but you can bring them into the conversation.

4. Offer to host specialists or department managers

The category manager might not be able to get to your farm or plant but your hospitality can go beyond your first point of contact. Often the employees who travel to stores and department managers in the stores have meetings and they like a free spot to conduct them. Offer a tour, lunch and then they can use the rest of the day for their meeting. It is also great to give them a small parcel of product (if they can accept it) to remind them of their visit.

5. Provide food for their next meeting or training

Retailers have a lot of meetings and they constantly have to train staff on new initiatives. If you offer to provide some fresh produce or other products it can be a demo for you and an opportunity to reduce expenses for them. Take five minutes to explain why yours are better and what you are doing in your business.

6. Understand and exceed service level targets

There is a lot of talk within retailers right now about service level and inventory. Make sure you understand their expectations then put the processes and plans in place to exceed their expectations. Your customers would see this as one of the most valuable examples of your support.

7. Share expertise not directly related to your products

To be great in the food industry today you need to have strong people in food safety, logistics and if you are a regional vendor you know the local market better than your customer. Find opportunities to share some of the expertise you have and develop relationships beyond the category manager.

8. Promote your customers to your social media community

Always remember your customers are in a battle every week for traffic in their stores or online. Use the power you have

within your own social media network to promote your customers. If you are doing a demo at a store or they use your product in a theme display, shout about it. Remember to tell your community where they need to go to find your products.

9. Share your learnings from a trade show or event

Employees at retailers do not get to travel as often as they would like. If you are at an industry event or trade show, share what you learned, some of the trends you picked up and perhaps even a couple of speakers who were really insightful. You can also send them a few photos from the stores you visited. They like to be knowledgeable within their business and your insights can help with that.

10. Support their charity initiatives

This one might cost money but it should be going to a good cause. Every retailer has a charity



Share your learnings from a trade show or event such as the Ontario Fruit & Vegetable Convention.

they have affiliated their business with and when you can support it there will be opportunities to see them away from the office. They each do it differently so make sure you know where their focus is and be ready to participate.

It is possible to support your customers without reducing your price. Certainly these initiatives do require resources and perhaps some product, but they are all effective opportunities to support your customer and build the relationship. All category managers are different, so determine where their focus is and how you can support them.

If you have any questions

about supporting your customers better please give me a call at (902) 489-2900 or send me an email at peter@skufood.com.

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 online 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.

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Peppers are popping hot at farmers' markets

KAREN DAVIDSON

Any pepper vendor will ask: sweet or heat?

Pepper heat is based on capsaicin, the compound that causes a burning sensation in your mouth. Fortunately, pepper varieties are rated in Scoville heat units (SHU). Bell peppers are rated at zero whilst the Carolina Reaper scores 2.8 million SHU. Best to wear plastic gloves when removing the seeds of this scorcher.

"We've become a specialist in peppers growing more than 40 different varieties," says Andrew Radcliffe, a third-generation grower. He provides a Scoville heat rating chart

when selling at nearby Innisfil and Bradford farmers' markets so that customers can gauge what pepper should go into hot sauce or a salsa.

He and his family operate Lakeview Gardens and Garden Centre near Lefroy, Ontario. For the first six months of the year, it's all about bedding plants, but once they're out the door, a 20-foot by 100-foot greenhouse is dedicated just to peppers.

The peppers are a natural extension of other greenhouse-grown produce such as tomatoes, cucumbers and eggplant. Planted in late June, peppers can put up harvestable fruit by mid-August.

"The Red Ghost variety

really got us into the hot pepper category," says Radcliffe.

This variety— with a long, tapered point — has lots of heat for making hot sauce. The red habanero pepper, Rey Pakal, is popular for making salsa. The Dante jalapeno is another favourite.

What's new is a dehydrator that Radcliffe has used to dry excess inventory. He plans to sell dried peppers for \$2 per 100 grams in the indoor markets leading up to the holiday season.

"Customers like the dried peppers because they can control how much they use," says Radcliffe. "There's no waste."

These pepper varieties are sourced from Stokes Seeds.



The gems at roadside stands

Smart marketers are always looking for the next big thing. Maureen MacSween found the next small thing for her Quiet Acres roadside stand near Niagara-on-the-Lake. She sells a sweet red pepper that is perfect for stuffing with goat cheese.

Scoop out the plentiful seeds, rinse, and stuff with a

spoonful of goat cheese. Then bake at 350°F for 30 minutes.

"Actually I like to use Boursin cheese," says MacSween as she was closing her stand in mid-October. Her clients — tourists, chefs and B & B owners — have been successful freezing the peppers to use as appetizers for special events.

The Stokes Seeds catalogue

advertises the Right on Red mini sweet pepper. MacSween sells a two-litre basket of these peppers for \$6. Sales are brisk when she has a "sell sheet" that explains how to use the peppers.

Photo right: Right on Red mini sweet pepper



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FOCUS: SEED & ROOTSTOCK

CCOVI tackling climate change challenges with research vineyards

Two research vineyards filled with thousands of grapevines are being used by Brock University's Cool Climate Oenology and Viticulture Institute (CCOVI) to help Canada's grape growers and wineries.

CCOVI partnered with two commercial grape growers to plant the St. Catharines and Niagara-on-the-Lake vineyards that are being used for a clone and rootstock evaluation program of the main VQA grapevine varieties in Ontario.

"We are looking at the best plant material for Ontario's industry, not only now, but moving forward with climate change uncertainties," said Jim Willwerth, CCOVI senior scientist. "Cold hardiness, fruit composition, wine quality and general vine performance will be examined, so that the industry knows the best combinations to use for our core grape varieties."

Since July 2018, more than 4,000 vines have been planted between the two vineyards. One vineyard has a heavier clay soil and the other sandy soil to represent different vineyard conditions found in Ontario. There are five different grapevine varieties and up to 16 clone and rootstock combinations for each grape variety.

Planting was initially delayed because it was difficult to get certified disease-free and true to type grapevines in Canada. Starting with healthy, clean plant material is critical for this project to evaluate the best performing plant material under Ontario conditions.

"For the research we are doing there is no sense planting dirty or infected vines. Clean vines are difficult to get, so we had to wait an extra year to make sure we had clean vines to plant," said Bill Schenck, one of the commercial grape growers involved. "When you are planting a vineyard, the initial cost of grapevines is rather cheap compared to costs to manage the grapevines in the years that follow. Considering the length of time the grapes are in the ground, you want to make sure you are starting off on the right foot."

After an exhaustive search, certified clean plant material was sourced three years ago from outside Canada. Half of the certified grapevines were planted in July 2019? in collaboration with Huebel Grapes Estates and the support of Schenck and another grape grower, Erwin Wiens, who are each allowing the use of two acres of their land. The other half was planted last July.

Planting and management of the research vineyards was funded through the Natural Sciences and Engineering

Research Council of Canada Collaborate Research and Development grant program in partnership with Ontario Grape and Wine Research Inc.

"The material is all certified, so we know these vines are true-to-type and are healthy," said Willwerth. "The Canadian Grapevine Certification Network (CGCN) is now working tirelessly to establish a domestic clean plant program and this is extremely important so that growers can access clean materials from nurseries so they

know the vines they are planting are the healthiest and are going to be as productive as possible."

Plant performance outputs from this research trial will inform CGCN of the grapevine combinations that should enter the domestic clean plant program.

For a video, go to: <https://youtu.be/YcE6en8NWM4>

Source: CCOVI August 28, 2019 news release



RAISING THE BAR

Carbonado Gold, the newest powdery mildew tolerant Rupp pumpkin variety. It produces gorgeous dark orange, round fruit, with a firmly attached black handle that fills a 40 count bin.

CARBONADO GOLD



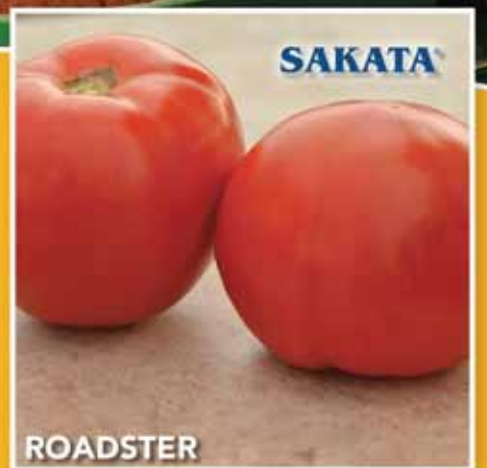
SIGNATURE XR

Signature XR is part of the IFSI Reserve™ collection, giving this 72 day bicolor phenomenal eating quality. An attractive husk and great ear size make it a great choice for quality driven fresh markets.



BOMBITA

Bombita is a new, hot cherry pepper from DP Seeds. It is the perfect shape for pickling, stuffing and processing.



ROADSTER

Roadster, from Sakata, is a determinate large to extra large round tomato with minimal blossom end scar, smooth, firm fruit and exceptionally high eating quality.

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FOCUS: SEED & ROOTSTOCK

Tissue culture lab helps to clean viruses



KAREN DAVIDSON

In recent years, nursery operators have observed

breakdown of apple rootstocks. Out of a thousand trees, the loss might be as high as 200 to 300 trees in some varieties. The reasons seem inexplicable but

they surmise that stresses such as disease and viruses play a role.

“Historically, new rootstocks are made from stool beds or cuttings from the mother plant and that leaves a wound for potential entry by a fungus or virus,” explains Markus Weber, Plantigro, Ruthven, Ontario. “We are assuming that trees are becoming more stressed by drought and climatic conditions.”

“Grafting and budding also open an entry point for disease to enter,” continues Weber. “So we’ve taken our rootstocks to the tissue culture lab that’s been set up at Harster Greenhouses, Dundas, Ontario. We’re trying to clean up material before starting the process again.”

Cleaning rootstock can take up to a year explains Andre Harster, owner of Harster Greenhouses, who oversees five full-time and one part-time staff in the tissue culture lab. Initially, the rootstock undergoes treatment to eliminate all pathogens then clones are created in the laboratory. It can take five to six months to create new genetic material. Then another four to five months is needed to grow a rooted tree in the greenhouse. The cost for this laborious process is about \$2 to \$3 per finished rootstock.

“We see a big market for this tissue culture service,” says Harster. “There’s a big demand for clean apple rootstock in Canada.”

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FOCUS: SEED & ROOTSTOCK

New seed varieties for 2020

NORSECO SEEDS



Onaida onion - Dark skin, very nice round shape, large bulb, and a high yielder. Ninety-eight (98) days in maturity and small necks that cure down well, making June an easy storage date.



Navedo carrot - Interesting new variety. This hybrid has Emperor genetic mixed with Berlicum blood leading to a high uniform crop of long, straight, smooth roots well filled to the bottom, giving a higher yield.



Traverse onion - It has a strong root system that allows for good growth, even in adverse conditions. High uniformity of round bulbs with good skin and small necks. Long term storage.

For more information visit www.norseco.com

SEMINOVA



Cash Machine - Prolific, producer of uniform medium-dark green fruits with light flecking and small blossom scar. The upright and semi-open structure of the plant allows for good harvesting. Excellent disease package.



Provider - A high yielder of great quality dark-green peppers on a strong structured plant, with excellent leaf coverage. The fruit set is well suited for those looking for extended harvest. HR: Xcv:0-10, PVY:0-1, Tm:0. IR:TEV



Volcano - A smooth, very uniform, cylindrical shoulder-shaped carrot with rounded tip. The well buried root prevents green shoulders and provide good tolerance to first frost. The strong foliage attachment facilitates good harvesting. Length: 8-9 inches; Diameter: 1 1/2 to 1 3/4 inches. HR: Alternaria, Powdery Mildew. IR: Cavity spot, Silvering, Frost.

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In green beans, PHARAOH is a new exclusive Seminis variety available only from Stokes Seeds. PHARAOH is a 3-4 sieve bean with an upright plant habit that harvests cleanly and approximately 80% of the pods retain their peduncles. Pods are dark green and straight. Broad disease package helps protect yield potential and quality.



CATALYST XR is a new GOURMET SWEET™ BRAND sweet corn variety. This extra-early 66-day bicolor sh2 corn features good ear size, strong tip fill and outstanding kernel colour. The earliest supersweet available, CATALYST XR has resistance to Common Rust. Ideal for a fast entry to early fresh market.



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FOCUS: SEED & ROOTSTOCK

New seed varieties for 2020

RUPP SEEDS



Carbonado Gold – is a 100-day mid-size hybrid pumpkin. Growers will produce a multitude of uniform, round 16-18# pumpkins with heavy ribbing and a strong handle. It offers growers intermediate resistance to powdery mildew. Here are just a few comments from trial cooperators: “Showed good resistance to PM”, “Consistent in size and shape”, “Gorgeous”, “Best in plot!”, “Very uniform nice pumpkin.”



Signature XR is part of the IFSI Reserve collection, giving this 72-day bicolor sweet corn phenomenal eating quality. An attractive husk, excellent holding ability in the field, strong husk cover, and great ear size make Signature XR the choice for quality-driven fresh markets.



Desperado is a new 53-day green bean from Syngenta. It is a robust variety that produces high yields of high-quality straight pods, with strong consumer appeal. It is well adapted for heat and stress tolerance.

For more information visit www.ruppseeds.com

AGROHAI TAI



Squash-Tetsukabuto F1 - Japanese type squash. 90~100 days. Round fruits in black or dark green colour, with deep orange interior, 5~6 lb. Firm flesh, nutty and sweet. Mainly used for rootstock for watermelon, melon and cucumber. Pollinators are required to grow squash. Five plants of Tetsukabuto need one plant of pollinator.



Cabbage-Summer Dish F1 - Flat type. 60~70 days from transplanting. Early heading, uniform, flat /oblate head, excellent shape and is 4~5 lbs. Tolerant to heat and bursting. Crispy and sweet taste. Good for spring, summer and fall planting in Canada / Northern U.S. Sensitive to Black Rot. It is not good for planting in warm and humid areas or seasons.



Oriental Melon-Golden Giant F1 - Korean type. Early maturity. Oblong fruits in yellow colour with white strips when ripe. Thin skin. Avg. 2.5 lbs. White flesh is crispy, sweet, with brix 14~16. 3~4 fruits per plant. Disease resistant.

For more information visit www.agrohaitai.com

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Oneida onion- Long storage term onion. 103 days. Strong yields and sizes well.



Istanbul carrot- Very uniform cello/slicer. Roots are long and slightly tapered. Strong and upright tops. Very good early yields. Very high quality interior with deep orange indistinguishable colour. 75 days.

For more information visit www.seedway.com

SEED & ROOTSTOCK

Phytelligence shuts down due to intellectual property dispute over Cosmic Crisp apples



Cosmic Crisp apple.

KAREN DAVIDSON

Behind the launch of Cosmic Crisp apples in the U.S. market is a casualty of its breeding development: Phytelligence. The first agricultural technology company to be born out of Washington State University (WSU), Phytelligence went into receivership on September 25, 2019. The company was based on a novel propagation method that used a nutritious gel to help fruit trees mature faster with higher survival rates.

It is an unfortunate demise to the company started in 2012 based on the work of WSU

professor Dr. Amit Dhingra. He served at the company's chief science officer. The company foundered because of a legal dispute with Washington State University.

Phytelligence claimed that WSU unjustly blocked the company from commercializing Cosmic Crisp, a highly anticipated apple that's a cross between Honeycrisp and Enterprise. In a countersuit, WSU alleged that Phytelligence improperly sold 135,000 Cosmic Crisp trees to a grower without a license.

In July 2019, a judge dismissed Phytelligence's case against WSU. It's a stark ending to a company that had raised \$23 million from investors and had employed 100 at its peak.

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SEED & ROOTSTOCK

Vineland partners with Eminent Seeds

“It’s a significant step toward making the results of our tomato breeding program widely available to participant growers and the entire industry.”

~ IAN POTTER

Vineland Research and Innovation Centre (Vineland) is one step closer to bringing flavour-packed Ontario greenhouse-grown tomatoes to Canadian consumers.

Vineland has partnered with Eminent Seeds to produce and distribute the seeds for the first three varieties of greenhouse-grown tomatoes-on-the-vine (TOVs) developed by the research and innovation centre with input from consumers and growers alike. The Netherlands-based company, chosen after an intensive vetting process, is a trusted leader in breeding and marketing high-performing and unique varieties of tomatoes that can be grown all over the world.

Eminent Seeds will work closely with Vineland to ensure the widespread release of seeds to Canadian greenhouse growers to produce the first commercial crop of these new TOVs with improved flavour and production traits in 2020.

The Netherlands-based company specializes in growing, selecting and developing specialty tomatoes, sweet peppers and chili peppers. Its

track record goes back for more than 35 years in the breeding station in the area of Westland in the Netherlands. Since 2014, Eminent Seeds has been using classical breeding techniques to create a new generation of varieties with their own distinct colours, shapes, sizes and flavours.

“We now have a commercial outlet for the varieties Vineland has been developing,” said Ian Potter, Vineland’s president and CEO. “It’s a significant step toward making the results of our tomato breeding program widely available to participant growers and the entire industry.”

“There’s synergy on both sides of this partnership and that’s what makes it work,” said Peter Van Duin, managing director of Eminent Seeds. “This is about having these seeds available in the right quantity at the right time without compromising on seed health.”

Vineland’s new varieties have been more than six years in the making, thanks to a valued research partnership with Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable



Growers (OGVG) to develop hybrid varieties of greenhouse tomatoes with new and differentiated flavour profiles.

The new varieties have been bred to suit Canada’s unique greenhouse growing conditions with disease resistance characteristics growers expect. They also boast higher yields than the varieties currently grown in Canada for commercial production. Consumers have also been heavily involved in the process, providing Vineland researchers with input on preferred aroma, taste and texture. That information was used to guide Vineland’s tomato breeding program.

“This delivers on Vineland’s mission to improve the economic viability and competitiveness of the Canadian horticulture industry,” Potter said. “We have partnered with a qualified and reputable collaborator to deliver results and impact.”



(L to R) Peter Van Duin, managing director, Eminent Seeds and Ian Potter, president and CEO, Vineland Research and Innovation Centre



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NOTICE

is hereby given that the
161st Annual Members and Directors' Meeting
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Election of Directors of the Association will take place as well as dealing with resolutions and any other business that may arise.

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CROP PROTECTION

Minor Use update from U.S. IR-4



CHRIS DUYVELSHOFF
CROP PROTECTION ADVISOR,
OFVGA

More than 48,000 registrations for minor use crops have been developed through IR-4 since its inception.

Keeping up-to-date with the activities at IR-4 is important to Canadian horticulture for two key reasons. Firstly, introductions of new crop protection materials, whether conventional or biological, are often done at IR-4 before similar announcements are made in Canada. It is an important look into what new technologies may offer potential solutions for Canadian minor use priorities in the coming years. Biological crop protection products were again common in the presentations in 2019. There were also several new conventional active ingredients discussed along with a promising RNAi-based technology.

Secondly, there is also an established history of cooperation between the Canadian MUPP and IR-4 leading to more efficient and effective research, and ideally quicker registrations. As data generated on either side of the border is acceptable to both American and Canadian regulatory agencies, there is no need to completely duplicate projects and trial resources can be optimized between countries. A total of 57 conventional projects were selected for priority at the 2019 IR-4 annual meeting.

The crops and target pests of relevance to Canadian horticulture are noted in the

side table. There should be good opportunities to collaborate with U.S. researchers on some of these projects from a Canadian perspective. Attending the meeting from Canada were also representatives from the Pest Management Centre of Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada (AAFC-PMC) -- who collaborate with IR-4 staff regularly -- the Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA), the Canadian Horticultural Council (CHC), and the Canadian greenhouse vegetable sector.

A new category of research was also created in 2018 at the IR-4 program called integrated solutions. The objective of integrated solutions is to explore conventional and biological crop protection tools in combination for pest management needs. It is a reflection of the increasing role that biological products are having both in conventional and non-conventional production systems. In addition to providing biological tools for organic production, integrated solutions also aim at providing residue mitigation and resistance management options for conventional growers.

The integrated projects of importance for Canada selected this year are noted in the side table. These priorities for 2019 are no doubt also significant challenges for their respective growers in Canada. While any integrated solutions developed in the U.S. may not be totally applicable to Canada due to

Representatives from the Ontario Fruit & Vegetable Growers' Association (OFVGA) attended the 2019 IR-4 Food Use Workshop in Baltimore, MD in September to stay updated on the U.S. minor use system.

Established in 1963, the IR-4 program facilitates the registration of conventional and biological crop protection products on both edible horticulture crops and minor non-food crops in the United States. The program is the counterpart, and far older sibling, to the Minor Use Pesticides Program (MUPP) in Canada. Although the IR-4 uses a different process to establish its final priorities, ultimately, it must also get down to a limited list of 'A' priority projects. The priority projects are then pursued for further research to establish efficacy, crop safety, and/or residue information to support product registration.

US IR-4 priority pest management projects relevant to Canadian horticulture by crop and target pest selected at the 2019 annual meeting in Baltimore, MD.

Crop	Target Pest(s)
Basil, Dill	Weeds
Beets (garden)	Rhizoctonia, Cercospora
Blueberry	Mummy berry, Botrytis, Anthracnose
Broccoli	Alternaria
Carrot	Rhizoctonia
Cucumber (greenhouse)	Gummy stem blight
Ginseng	Alternaria
Hazelnut	Weeds
Herbs (greenhouse)	Botrytis
Hops	Powdery mildew
Lettuce (greenhouse)	Botrytis
Mint	Nematodes
Mustard greens	Weeds
Onion	Botrytis
Pepper (greenhouse)	Botrytis
Plum	Bacterial canker
Radish	Rhizoctonia
Strawberry (greenhouse)	Botrytis
Sugarbeet	Mites
Sweet potato	Weeds
Tomato (greenhouse)	Botrytis, Fusarium

Integrated solutions pest management projects relevant to Canadian horticulture by crop and target pest selected at the 2019 IR-4 meeting.

Crop	Target Pest(s)
Apple & pear	Fire blight
Apple & pear	Bitter rot
Brassica leafy greens (e.g. kale)	Weeds
Root & tuber vegetables (e.g. rutabaga)	Cabbage maggot
Sweet corn	Corn earworm

product availability differences, it may lead to some new ideas for Canadian growers.

IR-4 has been a very successful program in the U.S. and it is always a worthwhile

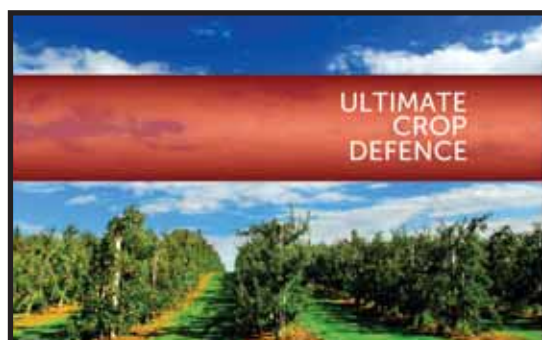
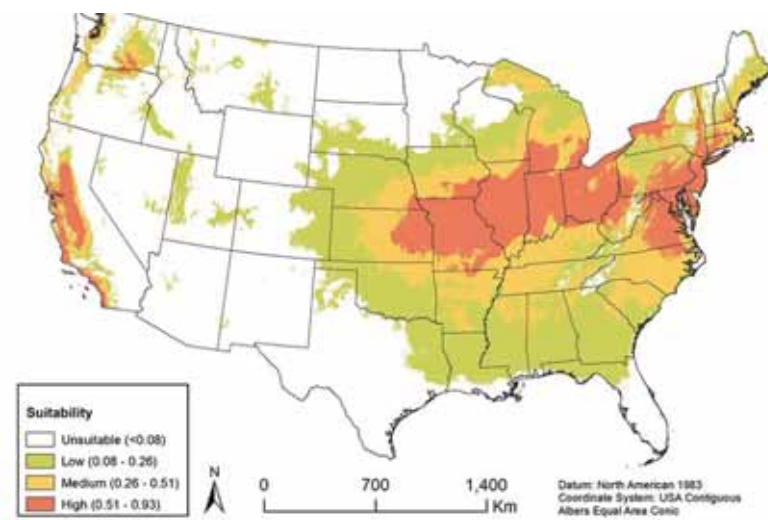
trip to stay connected south of the border. Find out more on the IR-4 website at www.ir4project.org/.

Potential distribution of spotted lanternfly in the United States

In the October 3, 2019 edition of *Entomology Today*, a research report shows large swaths of the United States and beyond are likely to be vulnerable should the spotted lanternfly continue to spread. While its preferred host is tree of heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*), the spotted lanternfly has been reported to attack more than 70 plant species, including grapes, apples, cherries and several other fruit and timber tree species.

The Grape Growers of Ontario and OGWRI are working with the scientific community as they monitor Ontario for the presence of this pest.

Researchers at the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Xinjiang Institute of Ecology and Geography in China studied climate data in the host ranges of the spotted lanternfly (*Lycorma delicatula*) to model what other locales offer potentially suitable habitat for the invasive insect. In the United States, their findings show most of New England and the mid-Atlantic states as well as parts of the central U.S. and Pacific Northwest are vulnerable to establishment of the spotted lanternfly if it finds its way there. (Image originally published in Wakie et al 2019, *Journal of Economic Entomology*)



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