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This update is designed to provide you with concise, up to date agricultural business information with links to where you can find the details.

Growing Your Opportunities Workshops

The focus of these workshops is to advance the agricultural and food sector by exploring industry trends, farm business success stories, new marketing ideas and strategies to adapt to today's changing agriculture and consumer markets.

This one day workshop will provide farmers, farm business advisors, local economic development, municipal staff, local food processors and retailers with ideas, examples and resources to help accomplish their business goals.

For agendas and registration information please visit:

<http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/busdev/conference/index.html>

or contact the **Agricultural Information Contact Centre 1-877-424-1300** or the following Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) staff:

Dorene Collins Tel: 519-826-3166 or email: dorene.collins@omafra.gov.on.ca

Carl Fletcher Tel: 519-826-3235 or email: carl.fletcher@omafra.gov.on.ca

Locations and Dates:

Simcoe	January 25
Renfrew	January 31
Orangeville	February 25
Essex/Kent	March 2
Huron/Perth	March 21
Hamilton	March 28
Elgin/Middlesex Oxford	March 30
Greater Napanee Area	March 2006
Northern Ontario	Winter 2006

2006 Managing Excellence in Agriculture Conference

The Canadian Farm Business Management Council is pleased to present the **2006 Managing Excellence in Agriculture** conference. It is a leading edge professional development and networking opportunity for farmers and farm families. It involves engaging speakers, thought provoking breakout sessions, and relationship building networking opportunities. Industry and government are welcome to attend.

Topics will include:

Communication Skills for Family and Business
Farm Business Structures
Comprehensive Business Risk Management

Workshops:

Value Chains
World Energy Markets

Mark your calendar!

The conference will be held at two locations;

Kananaskis, Alberta February 1-3, 2006

Saint-Sauveur, Quebec February 15-17, 2006

For more detailed agenda and registration information, call toll free at **1-866- 492-1171** or visit the visit the conference website:

<http://farmcentre.com/english/conference/2006/index.htm>

New Agricultural Management Courses Soon Available

The OATI Learning Group, with support from Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) and Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) through the Agricultural Management Institute (AMI) program under the Agricultural Policy Framework (APF), has created a series of new agricultural management courses, which will be available to producers and farm advisors in early 2006.

New Courses

Some of the courses will be offered via the unique and innovative CFBMC AgriWebinar web-classroom mechanism. Producers and farm advisors from all across Ontario will have access to the new agricultural business management courses right at their home or office computer through this web classroom environment. Participants will have live audio and video, and direct communication with the instructor and other classmates. This unique new web technology works over dial-up connections, as well as high speed connections. Each course is delivered one evening per week, over 5 to 6 weeks.

Web-classroom Courses

The new web-classroom courses are being offered as follows:

- (1) "Managing for High Performance" (human resources management). This course will be offered **Thursdays from 7:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. on January 12, 19, 26 and February 2, 9, 16.**
- (2) "Introduction to Commodity Marketing." This course will be offered **Tuesdays from 7:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. on January 10, 17, 24, 31 and February 7, 14.**
- (3) "Intermediate Commodity Marketing." This course will be offered **Tuesdays from 7:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. on February 28 and March 7, 14, 21, 28 and April 4.**

- (4) "Introduction to Farm Succession Planning." This course is geared towards farm advisors but producers are welcome to participate. It will be offered **Wednesdays from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. on February 22 and March 1, 8, 15.**

Cost

The cost for the web-classroom course is \$199 + GST with a \$100 refund from the AMI program for the first 22 participants in this introductory session only, who complete the course and its evaluation. Future offerings will not have the \$100 refund. All courses have a minimum of 12 participants and a maximum of 22 participants, so book early.

Advanced Succession Planning for Farm Advisors

There is a fifth course called "Advanced Succession Planning for Farm Advisors" is an intensive, interactive and multi-disciplinary course will be offered as a one and half day classroom course in mid-late May 2006.

Professional Development Continuing Education Credits

Applications have been made for Professional Development Continuing Education (CE) credits. Advocis and CAFA have already agreed to grant CE credits for these courses. Please check the OATI website at www.oati.com for current information about these CE from other professional organizations as they become available, and also for further details on the content of these courses.

Contact

For further information about any of these courses or to register contact Lee Davis at davis@oati.com or (519) 763-3160 or 1-800-668-6284, extension 222.

Thanks for reading the OMAFRA Business Update. If you have any questions or comments about this email update contact the editor, Rob Gamble at rob.gamble@omafra.gov.on.ca.

Looking for more information? Visit the OMAFRA website at <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca> or the Business Development site at <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/busdev/agbusdev.html>