

ISSUE # 107 – January 2015

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

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Business Strategy/Business Planning

Updated Programs and Services for Ontario Farmers Factsheet Now Available

[Programs and Services for Ontario Farmers](#) provides a summary of programs and services currently available to Ontario farmers that are funded by the Ontario and/or Canadian governments. Check with your commodity organizations for additional commodity-specific programs that may be available through your associations.

Changes to Rural Economic Development (RED) Program Application and Review Periods: Next Deadline (Extended) January 31, 2015

OMAFRA has made changes to the [RED](#) program application and review periods. **The current intake deadline is January 31, 2015** (extended from December 31, 2014). The ministry accepts applications on a continuous basis. Effective immediately, the application review periods are:

- November 1, 2014 to January 31, 2015
- February 1, 2015 to April 30, 2015
- May 1, 2015 to July 31, 2015
- August 1, 2015 to October 31, 2015
- November 1, 2015 to January 31, 2016

...and every three months thereafter.

Farming and Agriculture Apps Directory

Farms.com has created an online directory of agriculture apps that will help farmers quickly find the apps that will help them get the most out of their smartphone accessing information they want.

[More>>](#)

Jobs and Prosperity Fund

Ontario is focussing the Jobs and Prosperity Fund to further stimulate a globally competitive business climate in the province.

The [Jobs and Prosperity Fund](#) is providing \$2.5 billion over 10 years to enhance productivity, bolster innovation and grow Ontario's exports.

[More>>](#)

Financial Management

FBR 2015: Registration changes and online options

More than 44,000 eligible producers will receive their [Farm Business Registration \(FBR\)](#) package this month. The package contains a Registration Form, Invoice and important information for 2015, such as:

- Everyone is required to complete the Registration Form in 2015. Once completed this year, the Registration Form will not need to be completed again until 2020.
- The deadline to submit the Registration Form and pay the Invoice is March 1, 2015 to be eligible for the Farm Class Property Class Tax rate and for membership with an accredited farm organization.
- Producers can complete their Registration Form and [pay their fee online](#) quickly and easily. Producers will need their FBR number and web PIN, which can be found on the Invoice.

More details can be found in the mailed package or on agricorp.com.

FBR gives Ontario producers eligibility for the Farm Property Class Tax Rate, access to other government programs and membership in one of the three accredited farm organizations.

2015-2016 Advance Payments Program

[Application](#)

The Advance Payments Program (APP) is a federal loan guarantee program that helps crop, livestock, greenhouse and nursery landscape producers meet their financial obligations and benefit from the best market conditions by improving their cash flow throughout the year.

Under the APP, the federal government guarantees repayment of cash advances issued to farmers by the producer organization. These guarantees help the producer organization borrow money from financial institutions at lower interest rates. The producer organization issues producers a cash advance on the anticipated value of their farm product that is being produced and/or that is in storage.

Advance Rates: Product & Advance Rate List

For a complete list of available agricultural products, advance rates and available advance dates use our 'Product and Advance Rate List' below:

[2015-2016 Advance Payments Program Product and Advance Rate List.pdf](#)

2015 - 2016 Advance Payments Program Product Groups

Refer to the document below to locate the group number your product is in:

[2015-2016 Advance Payments Program Product Groups.pdf](#)

Changes to Farm Licence Plate Requirements

Starting January 1, 2015, vehicle owners wishing to purchase or attach farm plates to a new commercial vehicle over 3000 kg will need to provide documentation to demonstrate that they have a farm business.

Only those clients purchasing or attaching new farm plates to a vehicle will be required to show proof of farm business as of January 1, 2015. The new requirements will not affect any current farm plate owners who are renewing their farm plates.

What documentation do I have to show to prove I have a farm business?

Your Farm Business Registration (FBR) number is proof that you run a farm business. Any one of the following documents will prove that you have an FBR:

- A farm organization membership card;
- A Gross Farm Income Exemption Certificate;
- A letter from the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs Appeal Tribunal indicating religious exemption;
- A letter from Agricorp with your FBR number; or
- A letter from the Indian Agriculture Program of Ontario confirming that the producer has met the FBR eligibility requirements.

Why is the Ministry of Transportation making these changes?

Ontario's Auditor General (OAG), in its 2012 annual report on the Drive Clean Program and the 2013 annual report on ServiceOntario, noted an increasing number of vehicles with farm plates and was concerned that no verification is required to obtain farm plates. In both audit reports, the OAG recommended the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) review the requirements for obtaining a farm plate, to ensure that no abuse of the system was taking place.

As a result, MTO is implementing new requirements for issuing or attaching farm plates to a commercial vehicle. This will ensure that only qualified farmers obtain farm plates and receive the benefits associated with having a farm plate.

For more information:

About the Farm Business Registration program, please contact Agricorp. Their Contact Centre is open Monday to Friday, from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. and can be reached by calling 1-888-247-4999 or TTY: 1-877-275-1380. Their email address is: contact@agricorp.com.

About farm licence plates, visit a Service Ontario location near you or contact them at <https://www.ontario.ca/serviceontario> or by phone at 1-800-387-3445.

Human Resources

AALP Class 16 Recruitment

Applications for Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program (AALP) Class 16 are now being accepted.

Class 16 Recruitment webinars... on **Thursday, January 22nd from 12:00 noon to 1:15 p.m.** and again on **Thursday, March 5th from 8:00 p.m. to 9:15 p.m.** Individuals interested in participating in a webinar, please contact the ROI office at 519-826-4204 or email Lesley Bulman at lbulman@ruralontarioinstitute.ca to register/ get further details. Space will be limited for both of these webinars so they would encourage folks to contact the office/ register sooner than later.

[More>>](#)

Canada Summer Jobs Fund, Deadline January 30, 2015

Canada Summer Jobs funds the hiring of summer students by businesses with less than 50 employees and by not-for-profit and public sector organizations. For eligible businesses, the subsidy is 50 per cent of the adult minimum wage per student hired. For not-for-profit organizations funding is up to 100 per cent of adult minimum wage per student hired. Eligible summer students must be between the ages of 15 and 30, and continuing full-time academic studies.

Employers may be eligible for additional funding of up to \$ 3,000 per student with disabilities to accommodate the student in the workplace.

Deadline to apply: January 30, 2015

[More information and application guide](#)

Ecological Farming Internship Opportunities

[CRAFT Southwest Ontario](#) is your gateway to a farming internship experience that will change your life.

Position: Ecological Farming Internships

Location: Southwestern Ontario

Type: Full-time seasonal

[More>>](#)

Labour Market Information Research Survey

The Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council (CAHRC) has launched a Labour Market Information (LMI) research survey to examine Canada's agricultural workforce from every commodity and region. **The survey must achieve a minimum of 50 responses per province/territory to complete the regional analysis.**

Choose one of the three surveys designed for farm owner/operators, farm workers (family or paid) or agricultural organizations.

They need your help! By taking the time to complete a short 10 - 15 minute online survey you will be making sure your farm's needs are included in this important work that will help government and educators create policies and programs that will shape future farm labour requirements. Please complete the online survey at <http://www.cahrc-ccrha.ca/node/2166>

Production Management

Schedule of Noxious Weeds Changes Effective January 1, 2015

Effective January 1, 2015 nine weeds were added and nine removed.

[More>>](#)

microFIT Changes

Price Schedule Change

Please be advised that all active microFIT applications that have not received a Pending Connection status from the Applicant's LDC prior to January 1, 2015, will be subject to the new [FIT/microFIT Price Schedule](#).

microFIT Version Change

On January 1, 2015, Version 3.2 of the microFIT Program comes into effect. This new version, and associated program documentation, will be branded to reflect the merger of the OPA and the Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO). No other changes are being made to the microFIT Program at this time. All active applications that have not been set to Pending Connection status prior to January 1, 2015, will automatically be considered under Version 3.2.

[More>>](#)

Raw Leaf Tobacco Regulation Takes Effect January 1, 2015

Anyone who produces, processes, sells, buys, imports, exports or transports any varieties of raw leaf tobacco will be required to hold a raw leaf tobacco registration certificate.

How do I register?

Call the Ministry of Finance at 1 866 ONT-TAXS (1 866 668-8297) ext 16160 to register.

The raw leaf tobacco regulation, setting out criteria for a registration certificate and exemptions from the requirement to register, is available on the [Ontario's e-Laws website](#).

AgMaps Portal and Agricultural Information Atlas Application Help Tutorial Series

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) has a new series of tutorials to help you use the Agricultural Information Atlas (AIA), an online application that allows you to create custom maps and find agricultural information for Ontario. You can find the AIA link on the AgMaps Geographic Information Portal at ontario.ca/agmaps, the ministry's single access point for geospatial data.

The AgMaps Portal and AIA Application Help Tutorial Series provides step-by-step instructions on how to use the AIA for your farm or business. The audio/visual series helps with a range of topics - from navigating the application and creating layers on your custom maps, to creating tile drainage maps and nutrient management strategy farm sketches.

[More>>](#)

Risk Management

New Risk Management Toolkit available

The [Agri-food Management Institute](#) (AMI), in partnership with [Farm Management Canada](#) (FMC), has launched a toolkit to help farmers identify and manage business risks. The toolkit features a Risk Assessment Spreadsheet, Priority Matrix, and a Risk Management Action Plan template to help users identify high priority risks, their level of preparedness for each, and next steps for managing these risks. To receive a copy of the toolkit, contact Carolyn Dowling at 519-822-6618 or carolyn@takeanewapproach.ca. For more tools and resources, visit www.takeanewapproach.ca.

Conferences, Workshops and Seminars

[OMAFRA Dateline:](#)

OMAFRA Dateline is an online resource for use by interested individuals and organizations across Ontario. Events may be hosted by OMAFRA or other groups. The events posted on this site are aimed at sharing information of interest to agriculture and regional economic development clients. Please check the calendar regularly for upcoming events, workshops, conferences and meetings.

Growing Forward 2 Educational Workshops

Register on-line for Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) and Growing Your Farm Profits (GYFP) workshops by clicking on the link below to find dates and locations that suit you.

[More>>](#)

Food Safety Webinars

Looking to keep up to date on the latest food safety practices and help strengthen your Growing Forward 2 application? OSCIA is once again offering food safety webinars covering 6 different topics, taken from the comfort of your home or business - all you need is an Internet and phone connection. The workshops are open to all farmers, but have a primary focus on the horticulture industry. Contact foodsafety@ontariosoilcrop.org for details. Register at: http://registration.wildapricot.org/food_safety

Traceability Workshops

This free one-day workshop focuses on how you can gain a competitive advantage and improve your bottom line with your traceability system. Real life examples and business profiles focused on traceability best practices will be examined throughout the workshop.

At the end of the Maximizing your Traceability Investment Workshop you will be able to:

- Discover how to make your traceability investment work to your advantage
- Evaluate how you currently collect and manage Traceability information in your business
- Identify methods for improving your traceability system to gain added value through reduced costs, improved profit

margins and increased market potential

Register for these workshops at <http://registration.wildapricot.org/>

Biosecurity Workshops Announced for 2015

In this free, one-day commodity-specific workshop, an experienced veterinarian or crop specialist will show you the benefits of having an on-farm biosecurity program, and identify key practices, which will help you in increasing the biosecurity on your farm. Having a biosecurity program in place helps to protect the investment of your farm business.

The workshop is open to new and established producers. Farm families and management teams are encouraged to attend the workshop together. You will not be asked to share personal or financial details of your operation and there is no charge to attend.

Register for these workshops at <http://registration.wildapricot.org/>

2014-2015 Agriwebinar® Series – Farm Management Canada

Farm Management Canada has changed its webinar platform. Their new platform will allow users to access the webinar from any mobile device and to view the archive shortly after the live webinar.

Upcoming Webinars

Add Agriwebinar® to your Outlook or Google calendar by signing up for FMC's Event Calendar. All Agriwebinar® events are added to the calendar, which is automatically updated once you first sign up and set your preferences. [Click here](#) to learn more about FMC's event calendar.

Value-added course to help producers increase profits with new products or services

Take the OMAFRA course, Exploring Value Added Opportunities, to learn whether adding value to your products and services is right for your business. Participants will learn how to generate ideas for value-added opportunities, assess an idea's business potential, identify and manage risk and develop a plan to execute their idea. Choose one of three different formats that works best for you!

1. In-person, One-day Workshops

Connect in-person with other entrepreneurs and course facilitators. Lunch is provided at these sessions.

Tuesday, January 20, 2015 from 9-3 at the Stirling Rawdon Public Library, Hastings County

Registration: events@smallbusinessctr.com or 613-961-0590

Thursday, February 5, 2015 from 9-4 at the Sydenham Public Library, Frontenac County

<http://www.eventbrite.ca/e/exploring-value-added-opportunities-tickets-14946329875>

2. Three One-Hour Interactive, Facilitated Webinars

These sessions are taking place on February 24, March 3, and March 10 (all Tuesdays) from 12-1pm. Pre-registration is required. To learn more or register, please call 1-877-424-1300 or visit ontario.ca/e996

3. Self-Guided Online Learning

Want to work independently at your own pace? Access the full course online and work through the modules on your own at: <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/busdev/diversifyfarmbus/elearning.html>

The Farm Planner - Everdale

2014/2015 Course Schedule. All sessions run from 9:30 am until approx. 4 pm. There will be two courses running concurrently, one in downtown Guelph at 10 Carden Street and the other at the Black Creek Community Farm at the corner of Jane and Steeles in Toronto.

DATE	SESSION
Jan. 24, 2015	<i>Advanced Finances</i>
Feb. 7, 2015	<i>Regulations, Risk Management and Record Keeping</i>

Cost of the course is \$595. If the course has already started you can join late and sessions will be prorated accordingly. Cost sharing is available if you need help with registration fees. [Click here.](#)

[Detailed session descriptions.](#)

[Registration form.](#)

[Contact course facilitator.](#)

FarmSmart and SoilSmart 2015

A full line-up of presenters has been confirmed for the 2015 FarmSmart and SoilSmart agricultural conferences. On January 23, SoilSmart is a full day program with Ray Archuleta, USDA-NRCS, from Greensboro, N.C., Jeff Rasaweher, a farmer in Michigan and Ohio, Bill Deen, University of Guelph, and local farmers Earl Elgie, Dresden, and Ken Nixon, Ilderton.

SoilSmart is being held at the RIM Park Manulife Sportsplex, 2001 University Ave. E. Waterloo.

The FarmSmart Agriculture Conference is another full and exciting program of crops, soils, livestock, environment, business, marketing and general interest topics for the whole family including the fun youth program. The conference is being held on January 24 at Rozanski Hall, University of Guelph Main Campus, Guelph.

Go to <http://farmsmartconference.com/> or call 877-424-1300 for more information on both events.

[Challenge the Conversation 2.0](#)

Agri-food Management Institute offers course to strengthen communication skills among agribusiness owners and managers.

Challenge the Conversation 2.0 is a two-day course designed specifically to help agribusiness managers, particularly those who operate family businesses, become better bosses, business partners, spouses and parents.

The course is offered in partnership with [Juice Inc.](#), and starts on January 27, 2015 at the Delta Hotel in Guelph. Part two of the course will be held February 24, 2015 at the same location. The cost of the course is \$120.

To register, contact Carolyn Dowling before January 13 by email at Carolyn@takeanewapproach.ca or call [519-822-6618](tel:519-822-6618).

Agri-Food Management Excellence courses

Introduction to Risk Management using Futures and Options for Buyers & Sellers

January 27-29, 2015 in Guelph, ON

In today's increasingly competitive marketplace, downstream flexibility can be achieved in part by predicting and managing upstream risk. This comprehensive, three-day course focuses on practical application and is essential for any farmer or agri-business leader whose production (outputs) or raw materials (inputs) are commodity based.

[More>>](#)

FarmSafe 101 Interactive Workshops

Workplace Safety & Prevention Services

Attend this collaborative workshop and get started on your FarmSafe Plan.

Participants compare notes and best practices with their peers as they work together to initiate documentation like Standard Operating Procedures and health & safety policies.

Date: Tuesday, January 27, 2015

LOCATION: OGVG, 32 Seneca Road, Leamington

TIME: 9.00 am to 12.00 noon (Doors open at 8:30)

Date: Tuesday, February 5th, 2015

LOCATION: OMAFRA, 322 Kent Street West, Lindsay

TIME: 9.00 am to 12.00 noon (Doors open at 8:30).

PRICE: \$49 + tax

To register: Call Customer Care at 1 877 494 WSPS (9777)

[More>>](#)

Eastern Ontario Crop Conference

Kemptville, North Grenville Municipal Centre

February 10, 2015

Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Convention

Scotiabank Convention Centre, Niagara Falls

February 18 – 19, 2015

[More>>](#)

Focus on Farm Women

Focus on Farm Women – a day of timely information on issues affecting farm families in southern Ontario. Learn more about what matters and connect with other farm women

Thursday, February 26, 2015, Holiday Inn, Guelph

More information available at www.cafanet.com or by contacting Liz Robertson at info@cafanet.com or 1-877-474-2871.

Canadian Young Farmers' Forum National Conference

February 27 – March 3 Ottawa, ON

[More>>](#)

International Farm Management Association and Congress

The International Farm Management Congress takes place every two years in host countries around the world. A wealth of information from the world's leading experts in farm business

July 12-17, 2015

Quebec City, Quebec

Healthy Agriculture for a Healthy World

For this edition of the International Farm Management Congress, we have chosen a theme that is fundamentally important to the entire world: **Healthy Agriculture for a Healthy World**. With an increasing world population, an agricultural sector that is in good financial health, economically viable, environmentally sustainable and capable of supplying the necessary components for a healthy diet, will be crucial for our future.

The 20th International Farm Management Congress will offer a unique opportunity for participants to discuss the challenges and opportunities presented to the agricultural sector and its stakeholders.

We are now online! Visit www.ifma20.org

Thanks for reading the Ag Business Update.

Questions or Comments: contact the editor, John Molenhuis at john.molenhuis@ontario.ca.

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