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Welcome to “ON Organic”

Hugh Martin, OMAFRA Organic Crop Production Program Lead

Welcome to the first issue of OMAFRA’s newest newsletter – “ON Organic”. I look forward to your comments on this new venture. I am sure as we go forward we will continue to make changes to respond to your comments on the newsletter. My hope is to send it out monthly.

ON Organic is intended to be a newsletter to keep you up to date on numerous issues, sources of information, programs, and events to assist you with your organic production and marketing needs.

There will be numerous contributors to the newsletters including OMAFRA staff and University of Guelph researchers. Some articles will also be referenced from other sources. Stay tuned.

Send your comments to Hugh Martin (email: hugh.martin@ontario.ca or phone 519-826-4587.

The first couple issues of this newsletter are being sent out to members of the Organic Council of Ontario (OCO), the Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario (EFAO) and Canadian Organic Growers (COG). I thank them for their co-operation and apologize for some of you receiving it multiple times.

The ON Organic Team

Hugh Martin – editor, OMAFRA, Organic Crop Production Program Lead

Jack Kyle – OMAFRA, Grazier Specialist

Dorene Collins – OMAFRA Customer Service and Marketing Program Lead

Helen Prinold – OMAFRA, Client Account Officer (your link to the organic food industry)

Hugh Berges – OMAFRA Manager Horticultural Technology

Crop Budgets for Organic

Hugh Martin, OMAFRA, Organic Crop Production Program Lead

Each year OMAFRA publishes sample crop budgets for a number of crop and livestock enterprises. The 2008 Crop Budgets include sample crop budgets for Organic Grain Corn, Organic Soybeans, Organic Winter Wheat, Organic Fall-Planted Spelt, Organic Spring Barley, and Organic Oats. These crop budgets will help you to determine your costs of production for each of the crops and to calculate the gross margin for each crop. Gross margin is the net revenue after paying variable costs (yield x price – costs). These costs normally do not include land costs or the owner/operator labour.

<http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/busdev/facts/pub60.htm>

The Crop budgets are also available on the web as Excel spreadsheets to be more interactive.

<http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/busdev/bear2000/Budgets/oeb.htm>

New Fruit and Vegetable Publications

Vegetable Production Recommendations 2008-2009

Fruit Production Recommendations 2008-2009

These publications have been revised this winter and are now available for \$20 per copy (plus GST). While many people think of them as descriptions on how to use various pesticides for these crops there is a lot more information there that organic growers can use. Topics include: Water Management, Season Extension Techniques, Planting dates and rates for each crop, Food Safety and Storage, and details on each insect and disease known to be common issues on each crop. Descriptions include “Identification information”, “Period of Activity”, “Thresholds”, and some “Management Notes” on how to manage the pests. Details on how to use pest management products that are appropriate to organic are also included in the guides.

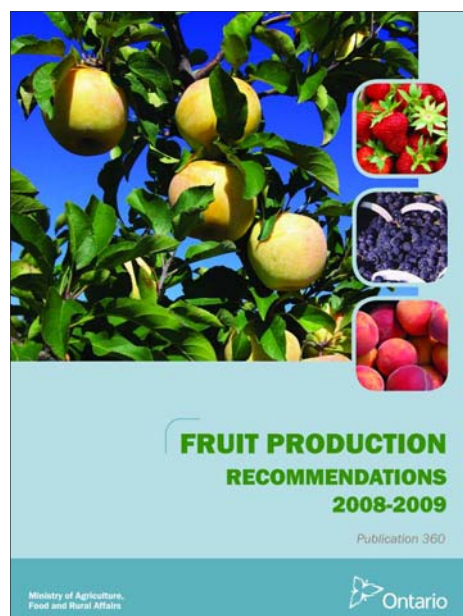
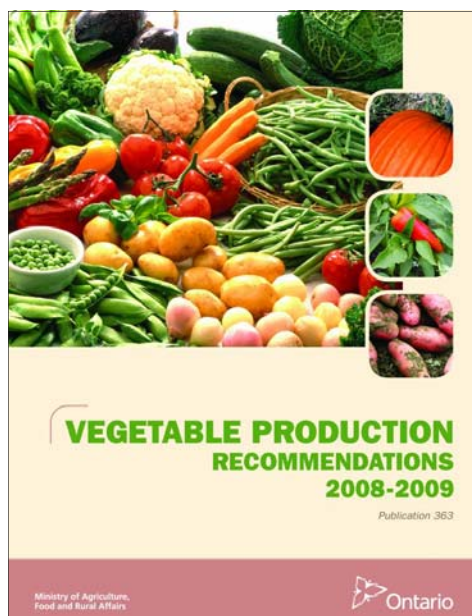
View the table of contents on the OMAFRA website at:

Fruit - <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/pub360/p360toc.htm>

Vegetable - <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/pub363/p363toc.htm>

To purchase a copy:

- Available at any OMAFRA Resource Centres or ServiceOntario Information Centres (find locations at www.serviceontario.ca; click *ServiceOntario Centres* on the left under *Contacts*).
- Order one online at www.ServiceOntario.ca/publications
- Order one by calling ServiceOntario by phone (Monday – Friday 8:30 -5:00) at 1-800-668-9938



Recent articles from other OMAFRA newsletters

Soil Moisture Monitoring Tools: A Comparison and Soil Moisture Monitoring Equipment Suppliers

By Anne Verhallen, *Soil Management Specialist* - Here are two related articles on monitoring soil moisture for irrigation purposes showing the various methods and tools available. Everything from the feel test to various fancy electronic gizmos and recorders. The full article is available in the Jan 2008 OMAFRA HortMatters newsletter found on the web at: <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/hort/news/hortmatt/2008/01hrt08.htm>

Managing Problem Deer Populations

By Kathryn Carter - *Pome Fruit IPM Specialist*/ OMAFRA; John Gardner - *Apple Specialist*/ OMAFRA—Deer damage to young non-bearing and mature apple trees can be troublesome. Smaller more compact apple trees in higher density plantings make a greater proportion of the tree canopy available for browsing by deer. Feeding on soft tender shoot tips and terminal growth as well as fruit buds in winter and early spring often results in an acute reduction in bearing surface, and changes in tree shape. Smaller trees can be damaged or destroyed by rubbing of antlers to remove velvet, in a process called 'horning'. This type of injury is usually seen in orchards from September to mid-November. Controlling deer damage in orchards can work where an integrated approach is used, which includes regulated hunting (with authorization), scare devices, repellents and fencing (conventional and electric). For a given deer density, the potential for economic damage can be often greater on large plantings than on small ones, as a result large areas often require more substantial fencing designs to achieve a level of protection similar to small areas. Nursery trees in large blocks can require exclusion fencing to ensure recovery of quality nursery stock if there are large herds in proximity to these young trees. The full article is available in the Dec 2007 OMAFRA Orchard Network newsletter at: <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/hort/news/orchnews/2007/on-1207a2.htm>

Biological control of root weevils in strawberries

By Pam Fisher - *Berry Specialist*/ OMAFRA; Hannah Fraser - *Entomology Program Lead (Hort)*/ OMAFRA; Dr. Jeff Tolman - *Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada*—There are limited options for management of root weevils in berry crops. No successful monitoring program has been developed and there are few chemical options. Root weevils are causing damage at an increasing number of locations in Ontario and losses can be devastating in infested fields. A team of researchers across Canada is currently studying the situation in several provinces, in an attempt to develop IPM strategies for monitoring and control of this pest. Meanwhile, growers need immediate

options. Beneficial nematodes are commercially available, although very expensive (ie \$400-\$600 per acre). Application conditions are very specific and control has been very sporadic in the past. A new strain of nematode has recently become available in Ontario, which is more cold tolerant and perhaps better suited for our conditions.

The full article is available in the Ontario Berry Grower Newsletter January 2008 issue:

<http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/hort/news/allontario/ao0108a1.htm>

Update on the effect and extent of nematode suppression with cover crops

By Michael Celetti - *Plant Pathologist Horticulture Crops*/ OMAFRA; Pam Fisher - *Berry Specialist*/ OMAFRA; Anne Verhallen - *Soil Management Specialist -Horticulture*/ OMAFRA; Leslie Huffman - *Weed Management Horticulture Program Lead*/ OMAFRA

Root lesion (*Pratylenchus penetrans*) and northern root knot nematodes (*Meloidogyne hapla*) can cause significant damage to many crops and have a wide host range including many weeds native to Ontario. Strawberries are particularly sensitive to damage cause by these nematodes. Nematodes can also provide infection sites for disease-causing fungi which further reduce yields. Planting cover crops such as marigolds, pearl millet, and certain hot mustard cultivars has been shown to reduce plant parasitic nematode soil populations below economic thresholds without affecting beneficial soil-borne organisms or the environment. Although these cover crops reduce nematode populations, some are difficult to seed, manage and the reduction in nematode populations may not last over the period a perennial crop such as strawberries is grown.

The full article is available in the Ontario Berry Grower Newsletter January 2008 issue:

<http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/hort/news/allontario/ao0108a2.htm>

Tax breaks for small private companies

Law firm Gowlings reports that industrial research by small and medium-sized businesses received a boost in the Federal Budget through an expansion of the scientific research and experimental development tax credit. The tax credit of 35 per cent will now be available to eligible private companies on their first \$3 million in spending, up from \$2 million under previous rules. And companies will now be eligible for at least part of the tax credit if they have a taxable income of \$700,000 or less, and taxable capital of \$50 million or less instead of the current \$15 million or less.

Health Check Criteria

The Health Check criteria published by the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada are based on Canada's Food Guide. As a result of updates to the Food Guide, Health Check has revised its criteria accordingly - with a number of changes. Licensees who need to reformulate their product(s) have until December 28th, 2009 to meet the new criteria. All new products entering the program must reflect the new criteria immediately. The new criteria are posted on the Health Check website at <http://www.healthcheck.org/en/join-health-check/nutrient-criteria-grocery.html>

Funding Programs NRCan ecoEnergy Retrofit Incentive

Since April of last year, small and medium sized manufacturers have benefited from the federal ecoEnergy Retrofit Incentive to tackle the high cost of process energy. The program offers up to \$10/gigajoule of estimated energy saved per year for retrofit projects to a maximum of:

- 25% of project costs, or
- \$50,000, or
- the achievement of a simple one-year payback (whichever is lowest),
- with a corporate maximum of \$250,000 over four years.

What's more, this incentive can be stacked with other federal, provincial, municipal or utility funds where projects optimize energy use and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

To start the process, you must sign up with the CIPEC Leader initiative. CIPEC (Canadian Industrial Program for Energy Conservation) has over 1,000 industrial members, including more than 150 Ontario food and beverage processors. As a CIPEC Leader, your company will gain access to a number of benefits:

♦ eligibility for ecoEnergy Retrofit Incentives ♦ eligibility for ecoEnergy Assessment Incentives ♦ eligibility for Process Integration Study Incentives (\$50,000) ♦ a 33% discount for Dollars to \$ense workshops ♦ access to NRCan's Industry Officers and an invitation to attend quarterly energy managers meetings with other energy-conscious managers from your sector ♦ access to technical guidebooks, case studies and more ♦ access to on-site customized energy workshops for your facility ♦ a free subscription to Heads Up CIPEC, a monthly newsletter that keeps you informed of national energy conservation program funding opportunities and industrial energy efficiency actions across Canada.

For more information, visit the NRCan website at <http://oee.nrcan.gc.ca/corporate/retrofit-summary.cfm>

Functional Food and Natural Health Products Directory

Functional Food and Natural Health Products Directory An online Functional Food and Natural Health Products Directory for Ontario has been launched by MaRS Landing. If you would like to showcase your company to this fast-growing market, visit the MarS Landing website to sign up. There is no cost to join the Directory - http://www.marslanding.ca/ffnhp_default.aspx

News Release - New Funding Promotes the Competitiveness of Ontario Food Manufacturers

A new \$3 million provincial funding initiative will help put the food processing industry on a firmer footing for the future. Ontario's food and beverage processors will be able to access new technical, advisory, training and environmental sustainability programs designed and delivered by industry experts. The focus will be on innovation and skills development, and the overall objective is to help companies increase their competitiveness and reduce costs.

Funds will be distributed as follows:

- The Alliance of Ontario Food Processors will receive \$2 million to design and deliver a program to encourage innovation and productivity in the food processing sector. Program components could include expert advice on adopting new technologies, skills training and competitiveness research for the food sector.
- The Guelph Food Technology Centre will receive \$1 million to carry out environmental and energy audits at food plants, and training programs for plant managers to implement the changes recommended in the audits.

Any food company or sector across Ontario can approach these two organizations to discuss funding and advice. The strategy was developed by six industry associations: the Alliance of Ontario Food Processors, the Ontario Food Processors Association, the Association of Ontario Chicken Processors, the Ontario Dairy Council, the Wine Council of Ontario and the Ontario Independent Meat Processors. You can follow-up directly with these groups for more information.

Ontario Training Resources

Searching for training providers? These two not-for-profit organizations can help:

- The Excellence in Manufacturing Consortium (EMC) is a consortium of manufacturers whose mandate is to optimize learning, expertise and resources for its members, thereby improving their global competitiveness as world-class businesses. For a list of their training opportunities and to find out more about the organization, visit the EMC website at <http://www.emccanada.org/Content.cfm?C=7012&SC=1&SCM=1&MI=2439&L1M=2439>
- The Guelph Food Technology Centre (GFTC) is a non-subsidized (except for initial start-up costs that were covered by the Province of Ontario) not-for-profit food technology centre. It provides confidential technical solutions, training, consulting and auditing to the Canadian agri-food industry on a fee for service basis (discounted to members). It specializes in research and development, product development, packaging, shelf-life, food safety, quality, and productivity improvement. For information on upcoming training opportunities, visit the GFTC website at <http://www.gftc.ca/index-e.cfm>

GS1 Knowledge Centre

According to a recent Statistics Canada report, there is a close link between productivity growth in Canadian businesses - particularly manufacturers - and the use of advanced technologies. The report indicates that companies that adopt technology gain improvements in productivity and market share relative to their peers, making their organization more efficient and competitive.

GS1 Canada, in partnership with the Government of Ontario, has designed 12 online modules to meet the business needs - and busy schedules - of small and medium enterprise (SME) owners and their staff.

Courses include:

♦ The business case for Electronic Product Code/ Radio Frequency Identification (EPC/RFID) ♦ Track and trace technology ♦ Technology: choosing the right tools for trade ♦ Recruiting, motivating and retaining high-performing employees ♦ Commercialization: application groupings and use cases ♦ Processes: linking information flow and work flow Thanks to Government of Ontario sponsorship, registration is free for these modules. For more information, visit the GS1 Knowledge Centre website at <http://www.gs1ca.org/home.asp>

Link to Organic Agriculture information

OMAFRA Organic website

<http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/organic/organic.html>

OMAFRA Sources of Crop Inputs

<http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/resource/sources.html>

Enhancing Beneficial Insects with Native Plants

This is one of the best sites with information about various species of beneficial insects and plants to attract insects.

<http://nativeplants.msu.edu/>

Who Owns Organic

For those who like to keep up with this maze of companies in who are part of the organic map, Dr. Phil Howard, who is now at Michigan State University, updated his information in Jan 2008. It can be found at

<http://www.msu.edu/~howardp/organicindustry.html>.

Tri-State Organic Conference

Purdue University, Michigan State University, University of Illinois, and Ohio State University jointly offer a **free** interactive video conference series presented by researchers, organic farmers, and extension educators. This is a **free** series of topics including: Hoophouse and High Tunnels, Cover Crops and Fertility, Insect and Disease Management for Organic Vegetables, Organic Poultry Production, Intro to organic Markets and Certification, Beginning Organic Farming and Introduction to Marketing. Presentations are offered as video (need high-speed internet), Powerpoint or document downloads. <http://tristateorganic.info/>

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