

Welcome to "ON Organic"

Hugh Martin, Organic Crop Production Program Lead, OMAFRA



Welcome to the August newsletter of ON Organic. Once again we have a wide range of information for organic farmers and food producers. This issue includes links to some research summaries, links to some current articles relating to the diseases resulting in part from the cool wet conditions this summer. There is also a number of articles and links of interest to the broader food sector.



Thank you to our growing list of subscribers and those who pass it on to your colleagues, especially EFAO, COG and OCO.

To subscribe to this newsletter or to find us on the web, go to the webpage:
<http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/subscribe/index.html#organic>



The French versions of these newsletters are available at:
<http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/french/crops/organic/news/news-organic.html>

As always I welcome your comments
(hugh.martin@ontario.ca)

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The ON Organic Team

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Combine Cleaning Procedure

When harvesting organic crops it is very important to make sure the equipment is clean, especially when moving from non-organic to organic fields (for example custom operators). As the first priority use combines that are dedicated to organic production only. If that is not possible use combines that are dedicated to non-GMO crops. When that is also not possible take the time (may need several hours) to clean out the combine very well. Here are some ideas:

1. Consult the Owner's Manual on cleanout procedures, access doors, component disassembly, and safety procedures.
2. Choose a suitable location for the cleanup.
3. Collect appropriate safety gear – eye protection, dust mask, gloves, hard hat, ear protection.
4. Evaluate appropriate cleaning equipment for each area: Air compressor with wands; shop vac; leaf blower; large tarp; broom/whisk broom/steel brush; screw driver; other tools as needed.
5. Run discharge auger two minutes or until grain tank and auger are clean.
6. Drive combine across end rows to dislodge grain before moving to cleanout area.
7. Remove grain head making sure to safely secure the feeder house with cylinder stops.
8. Move combine to cleanout area.
9. Place tarp under combine to capture the grain being removed.
10. Inspect and clean cab roof.
11. Lower feeder house and clean inside and outside. Pay special attention to areas where grain or weed seeds may catch.
12. Raise feeder house and clean stone trap and remove all material.
13. Clean grain tank, remove grain from top and bottom augers, ledges, corners. Consider flushing unloading auger with other material such as wood chips.
14. Clean the cylinder or rotor and concave threshing area and separating area by opening all access doors identified in owner's manual and removing all material.
15. Clean the straw walkers (if equipped), open all access doors. If you must enter this area consult owner's manual on safety precautions and use a rubber mat or carpet to lay on.
16. Clean tailings and grain elevators by opening bottom access doors and removing grain and empty and cleaning the moisture sensor if equipped.
17. Clean the cleaning shoe area by removing chaffers and sieves for easier access, or opening and closing the sieves several times to loosen debris and remove grain. Access and empty lower grain cross-augers as far as possible.

18. Clean rear axle, chopper and spreader areas to remove all grain and plant debris.
19. Replace all safety shields, making sure all elevators have been reassembled and all doors and openings are closed and fastened.
20. Clean the grain platform by removing stems and grain from cutter area, under platform auger and reel. Check inside auger area via inspection plates if present. Clean under side shields.
21. Clean the corn head by removing all stalks, ears and loose grain. Lift chutes and vacuum to remove grain and other plant debris.
22. Consider flushing combine with the next grain crop to clean the unloading auger before collecting grain from the field.

(Adapted from Combine Cleanout Procedures for Identity Preserved Corn and Soybeans, Iowa State University, 2003.)

Pesticide Risk Reduction in Soybean Production

Study by Darren Robinson and Mike Gladstone (University of Guelph - Ridgetown Campus), and Andy Hammermeister (Organic Agriculture Centre of Canada)

Introduction

In field crop production, farmers may be hesitant to move to organic or other reduced pesticide practices due to challenges in weed management. Soybeans in particular can be a difficult crop to grow during the transition phase: weed pressure often increases in years two and three of transition. The priorities in weed management for soybeans are weed resistance in zero-till systems and the need for a systems approach to weed management.

Conclusions

Soybean is a difficult crop to grow during the transition phase from conventional to organic. These trials showed that with the exception of fields with low weed infestation, soybean grown during the transition phase will likely require very high input costs. If a price-premium can be guaranteed for 'transitionally-grown' soybean, the additional cost might be justified. The high price of soybean in the current market also provides an excellent opportunity for transition to organic while reducing financial risk.

It is important to remember that the purpose of this research was to demonstrate to growers the potential disadvantages of growing soybean during the transition phase rather than the development of weed management practices.

Environmental Impact Quotients (EIQs) for the Integrated Weed Management and Conventional fields were always higher than for organic soybean production, but varied by the degree of weed infestation.

Field days offered good opportunities for growers to observe differences between low, moderate and high weed infestations and the likely outcome of growing soybean during the transition phase. Two growers who participated in the trial have expressed interest in transitioning a portion of their farm into organic production.

Full report at http://www.oacc.info/Docs/TechnicalBulletins08/TechnicalBulletin36web_risk.pdf

The ABC's of Organic Dairy Production (CRAAQ 2007)

Presentations from the Dairy Cattle Symposium, Thursday November 15, 2007, Drummondville, QC

Over the past few years, organic farming has been increasing throughout the world. It has rapidly evolved and it is now a type of farming which holds its rightful place in the world and it is recognized as a forward-looking approach and suitable for all types of agricultural productions. Some of the factors contributing to this expansion are consumer demands for organically produced products, reconsidering the soundness of industrial production systems, and concerns regarding the environment.

The appeal of producing an added-value product, of decreasing production costs and of farm self-sufficiency are also avenues which have lead to organic farming. We mustn't disregard the philosophical beliefs that often accompany this type of farming, as they often weigh heavily in the decision process when converting to organic farming. Organic farming seeks to support human beings and their environment. It aims to create a global ecosystem that works to maintain a balance between the soil, plants, animals and humans.

Full Report (16 pages) at http://www.oacc.info/Docs/CRAAQ/089_106_Labrecque_L_e.pdf (PDF 884 kb)

Access the Research Presented at the First Organic Research Symposium

The first [Organic Research Symposium](http://www.oacc.info/Docs/CRAAQ/089_106_Labrecque_L_e.pdf) was co-hosted by the Organic Farming Research Foundation (OFRF) and Midwest Organic & Sustainable Education Service (MOSES) February 21-23, in conjunction with The Upper Midwest Organic Farming Conference. You can access summaries of the research presented through this pdf file (68 pages): http://ofrf.org/publications/pubs/moses-ofrf_symposiumproceedings.pdf

The file includes research summaries on each of the following topics:

- Weed management in organic systems
- Issues in organic vegetable and fruit production
- Issues in organic livestock systems
- Soil, seeds and systems
- Pest and disease management in organic systems
- Economics of organic systems

The report also offers four summaries of student research and 17 poster presentations.

<http://www.new-ag.msu.edu/issues08/7-09.htm#3>

Financial Measures That Strike A CORD

By John Molenhuis – Business Analysis and Cost of Production Program Lead/OMAFRA

It may be hard to imagine but there are some people that do not find financial analysis particularly appealing! Part of the problem may be that there are so many different financial measures to choose from that it is hard to know which ones to use. If you are looking for some quick 'hits' there are some key ratios, the 'A CORD', that can reveal a lot about your operation.

First let's separate financial measures into four main categories: financial efficiency, liquidity, profitability and solvency. Financial efficiency refers to how successful the business is at using its assets to generate income. Liquidity assesses your ability to pay your bills as they come due. Profitability is well known and measures how well the business is able to generate a profit. And finally, solvency determines how much you are relying on debt to finance the business.

By category, here are my top five ratio picks and how they are calculated:

Efficiency:

Asset Turnover = Gross Farm Sales divided by Total Assets

Liquidity:

Current Ratio = Current Assets divided by Current Liabilities

Profitability:

Operating Profit Margin Ratio =
(Net Farm Income + Interest Expense) divided by Gross Farm Sales

Return on Assets = (Net Farm Income + Interest Expense) divided by Total Assets

Solvency:

Debt to Equity Ratio = Total liabilities divided by Equity.
From OMAFRA Virtual Beef newsletter

<http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/livestock/beef/news/vbn0708a4.htm>

Articles from Other OMAFRA Newsletters

Still Time for Nematode Reducing Cover Crops

By Anne Verhallen, *Soil Management Specialist/OMAFRA*

Now that we are past the half way point of summer you will get only limited growth from planting warm season grasses like pearl millet and sorghum sudan. However, there is another option. Michael Celetti of OMAFRA has been working with mustard as a nematode control, in particular hot mustard (variety Cutlass) with good success. The key is to work the live, green plant material into the soil. As the stems and leaves break down they release materials that are very similar to fumigation chemicals and similarly kill the nematodes.

Mustard is in the brassicae family which means it is related to cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli and oilseed radish. Late summer and early fall are an ideal time to plant mustard for nematode suppression. The nematodes become more active in the upper levels of the soil in the moist, cooler soils of fall. Also the cooler temperatures will help to reduce the tendency of the mustard to bolt or go to seed before achieving much top growth.

From HortMatters, for full article go to:

<http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/hort/news/hortmatt/2008/19hrt08a1.htm>

Managing Cover Crops Profitably, 3rd Edition

<http://www.sare.org/publications/covercrops.htm>

"Managing Cover Crops Profitably" explores how and why cover crops work and provides all the information needed to build cover crops into any farming operation. Revised and updated in 2007, the 3rd edition includes new chapters on brassicas and mustards, six new farm profiles, as well as a comprehensive chapter on the use of cover crops in conservation tillage systems. Updates throughout are based on more than 100 new literature citations and consultations with cover crop researchers and practitioners around the country. Appendices include seed sources and a listing of cover crop experts.

"This is the best book I have ever read. It uses science to explain complex concepts, lays out options for different systems and climates, and allows innovative farmers to digest the information and make their own intelligent decisions. Thank you for the practical advice, acknowledgement of complex tradeoffs, specifics, details and conclusions."

Wolfgang Rougle, Twining Tree Farm, Cottonwood, Cal.

Bacterial Disease Situation: Tomato & Pepper

By Janice LeBoeuf, *Vegetable Crop Specialist/OMAFRA*

With the stretches of rainy weather and storms in southwestern Ontario earlier this season, bacterial disease is widespread in the tomato and pepper crops. In tomatoes, bacterial speck is most prevalent to this point. This pathogen develops best at cooler temperatures than bacterial spot, and our speck populations are resistant to copper bactericides. It is difficult to reliably distinguish bacterial speck and bacterial spot symptoms on tomato foliage. If fruit lesions can be found, bacterial speck lesions are small and superficial (can usually be scraped off with a fingernail). Bacterial spot lesions, in contrast, may start out with a white spot or halo, but then become large and scabby.

From Vegetable Crop Update, see full report at:

<http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/hort/news/hortmatt/2008/18hrt08a2.htm>

Wet Weather and Disease Development in Cool Season Crops

By Kristy Grigg, *Vegetable Crop Specialist/OMAFRA*

Many growing regions have been hit hard with heavy rains, hail and high humidity over the past few weeks. These conditions have been ideal for the development of diseases, such as leaf blights and entry of decay (rot) organisms, in most cole crops, roots, bulbs and leafy vegetables. In addition to the downpours or hail causing splashing of soil-borne diseases and pelting injury on foliage, heavily saturated soils allow for the hasty spread of root and bulb diseases. With little relief from this wet, humid weather, the risk of prolonged leaf and root wetness, and hence incidences of infection remain high. It is essential to do as much as possible to avoid significant losses due to disease development. So, be on the look out in your fields for any signs or symptoms of infection, remove excess surface water by digging trenches and catch basins, if needed, and practice proper field sanitation techniques to avoid the risk of spread or contamination.

From Vegetable Crop Update, see full report at:

<http://apps.omafra.gov.on.ca/scripts/english/crops/agriphone/article.asp?ID=1610#wet>

Aluminum Soil Test Foils Growers

By Christoph Kessel – *Horticulture Crop Nutrition - Program Lead/OMAFRA*

Occasionally, on some soil reports, you may find aluminum reported. Each season there are questions about whether or not there should be any concern about the levels reported. It is true that available aluminum (Al³⁺) can be toxic to plants. But aluminum is found in several different forms in the soil,

depending on the soil's pH. These other aluminum forms are not considered to be toxic to plant growth. To tell if aluminum could be a problem, check the reported soil pH. From Tender Fruit and Grape Vine, see full article at: <http://www.omafr.gov.on.ca/english/crops/hort/news/tenderfr/tf1206a3.htm>

Black Rot of Cole Crops in Wet and Humid Weather

By Michael Celetti, Plant Pathologist - Horticulture Crops Program Lead/OMAFRA

Black rot is a serious bacterial disease of cole crops worldwide. With the hot, humid weather experienced in Ontario recently, cole crop growers should be vigilant at monitoring for Black rot in their crops this summer. Hot (25-30°C) and humid weather favour the multiplication of the pathogenic bacteria, however water splashing is required for disease spread, infection and development. The disease is more severe and widespread in fields that either receive a frequent early morning shower, frequent heavy rains or are over head irrigated during heat waves. In fact, black rot bacteria counts in the atmosphere around infected crops are highest during periods of rain. Early prevention will protect the crop from later infections, which provide an entrance for other pathogens that result in storage rot problems later. The pathogenic bacteria that cause black rot are often introduced into a field of cole crops on infected transplants, but they can also survive on cruciferous weeds and in contaminated crop residues left in or on the soil from previous years. From HortMatters, see full article at: <http://www.omafr.gov.on.ca/english/crops/hort/news/hortmatt/2008/17hrt08a1.htm>

Bacterial Diseases in Beans

By Elaine Roddy, Vegetable Crop Specialist/OMAFRA

In snap beans it can be difficult to distinguish between halo blight and common blight in the field. Halo blight is most active when temperatures are in the 10-20°C (61-68°F) range. Infected plants also develop water-soaked and necrotic lesions surrounded by a yellow halo. Under cooler temperature conditions, halo blight may cause the entire plant to become yellow or chlorotic. Warm temperatures are less favourable for the spread of this disease.

Common blight prefers warm, humid conditions and temperatures of 25-30°C (77-86°F). Water soaked lesions appear on the under side of the leaf. As the lesion develops it becomes brown and necrotic, often surrounded by a yellow border. Under favourable weather conditions, the lesions will grow together, giving the crop a burned appearance. From Vegetable Crop Update, see full report at: <http://apps.omafr.gov.on.ca/scripts/english/crops/agriphone/article.asp?ID=1601#bac>

Connecting Retailers and Ontario Food Makers

Grocers Offer Special Sessions and Pricing for Ontario-Based Producers and Processors

The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) and the Canadian Council of Grocery Distributors (CCGD) are pleased to offer two sessions designed to help Ontario food firms increase their sales to large Ontario retailers. If you are an Ontario-based producer or processor (or one of their associations) and you have never been to a CCGD Ontario Conference, now is the time to register and attend the November 19, 2008 session. You can access a special rate of over 40% off (\$295.00) that gives you:

- November 19th - access to the full conference program in Toronto that includes virtual store tours and strategic discussions led by key executives from each of Ontario's three biggest grocery retailers: Loblaw, Metro/A&P and Sobeys. The full program details will soon be available at: <http://www.ccgd.ca/home/en/EventsOntProgram.htm>
- On September 23rd, a special ½ day program is offered for new CCGD Ontario Conference attendees to help prepare them for the conference and the opportunities it offers to understand what retailers are looking for and how to prepare to meet buyers' expectations. This pre-session will be held at the OMAFRA offices in Guelph on Sept 23rd. Here you can meet the buyers in produce, meat, and packaged goods and gain marketing insights in a smaller group setting dedicated to maximizing sales of Ontario product.

For a registration form, please call Jeanette Lee at CCGD - 416-922-6228 ext. 331 or email her at jlee@ccgd.ca.

Wal-Mart New Ontario Supplier Fair - Wednesday, Sept. 24, 2008

Wal-Mart is putting more emphasis on buying local and is interested in meeting potential new suppliers. It has a special interest in food products. If you are an Ontario supplier interested in selling products to Wal-Mart/Sam's Club then plan on attending the new supplier fair in Mississauga. The morning will feature an overview of the Wal-Mart supplier relationship, the latest on Wal-Mart's sustainability efforts and a description of opportunities for new products. The afternoon will provide a chance to pitch your product in a guaranteed "one-on-one" meeting with a Wal-Mart or Sam's Club buyer. You can choose to attend only the morning session to gain a better understanding of what Wal-Mart is looking for and how it operates. To reserve your seat and for more information, please email: supplierfair@ontario.ca. You will be sent a package of information and a registration form. There will be a

registration fee of \$100 per person. Seating is limited so you are encouraged to register early. This event is also open to categories other than food.

PROFIT & Street Smart Help Exporters

The New-to-Exporting Seminar, PROFIT (Program to Raise Ontario Foods International Trade) is designed specifically for those new to food exporting to the USA. Whether new to exporting, or have colleagues who need export training, this program is an outstanding opportunity. This two-day seminar is critical in assisting an organization to build its export strength. Featuring industry speakers and key contacts that know the export process, PROFIT will prepare a company for what is needed to succeed in the US market. This affordable course, specific to the needs of the food industry, is ideal for:

- New Marketing staff
- Inside & Outside Sales
- Shipping & Logistics staff
- Marketing/Sales Support staff
- Skills upgrade and development
- Anyone involved in the export process.

Also available is a September 23rd event for firms with specific expertise called "Street Smart" that is focused on introductions between pre-qualified buyers with specific interests and export-ready sellers. Contact your sector specialist at <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/food/staff/export.htm#sector> or goexport@omafra.gov.on.ca for information on upcoming trade events.

Foodland Ontario/Pick Ontario Freshness

Please support and encourage Ontario's eaters to Look for the Foodland Ontario symbol when shopping. It's an easy way for folks to identify Ontario foods in grocery stores and farmers' markets, and a great way to ensure that we can all pick Ontario freshness

<http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/about/pickontario/index.html>. For recipes and more information on Foodland Ontario go to: <http://www.foodland.gov.on.ca/>



Funding Programs

Export Market Access, A Global Expansion Program for small to medium-sized businesses

A new funding program, Export Market Access, is available to help small and medium-sized Ontario-based businesses access and expand their growth in new foreign markets that are beyond the U.S. Companies must have 5 or more employees and annual sales of at least \$500,000 and have been in business for a minimum of 2 years. Companies can qualify for a grant covering up to 50% of eligible costs in developing export sales. Assistance is available in four areas:

1. Direct Contacts (international trade shows, fairs, exhibitions, and incoming and outgoing trade missions);
2. Marketing Tools (development of electronic media, promotional materials, and generic branding material);
3. Market Research; and
4. Foreign Bidding Projects.

The \$5 million program is funded by the Ontario government and is administered by the Ontario Chamber of Commerce. Companies do not need to belong to the Ontario Chamber of Commerce to apply. For more program details or to apply visit www.exportaccess.ca.

Funding for Businesses Based in Eastern Ontario

The Eastern Ontario Development Fund has two streams of funding; one for businesses, the other for economic development offices, business associations or NGOs. In both cases, the maximum grant is \$1.5 million per project. For companies: to qualify, businesses must have at least 10 employees and a great project idea, with a minimum investment of \$500,000 that will create at least 10 new jobs in the next 5 years. For approved projects, the Fund will provide up to 15 per cent of project expenses for new technologies, new equipment, or skills training for employees. For Economic Development/associations/NGOs: projects must secure investment, enhance investment attraction and lead to job creation over the next 6 years. The Fund will invest up to 50 per cent for economic development projects valued at \$100,000 or more. This fund excludes the City of Ottawa in its definition of "Eastern Ontario". The rural communities within the City of Ottawa that have fewer than 100,000 residents are eligible for this fund.

Municipalities designated as Eastern Ontario are: Kawartha Lakes, Haliburton, Peterborough, Northumberland, Hastings, Prince Edward, Renfrew, Frontenac, Lanark, Leeds & Grenville, Ottawa (excluding the City of Ottawa), Prescott & Russell, Stormont, Dundas & Glengarry.

For more information, including criteria, application forms and program contacts visit www.ontario.ca/easternfund or call 1-866-909-9951 <http://www.ontario.ca/easternfund%20or%20call%201-866-909-9951>.

Ontario Market Investment Fund

The Ontario Market Investment Fund was announced on July 30. This brand new program is designed to fund projects that promote consumer awareness of Ontario-produced foods and encourage Ontarians to buy locally. The province is making a total of \$12 million available over four years through the Ontario Market Investment Fund to help promote consumer awareness of Ontario-produced foods and to encourage Ontarians to buy locally.

Grants of up to \$100,000 are available to strategic alliances among, for example, individuals, businesses, producers, processors, and community organizations including "not for profit" and/or municipalities. Agriculture and food associations, including retail and food service associations, can also participate.

Groups should include at least one producer or food processor. Projects can fall under the headings of Market Research, Development of Market Opportunities, Communications Initiatives, and Consumer or Trade Events. Projects are cost-shared, with the provincial government investing up to 50 per cent towards the eligible costs.

Eligible Projects

The Ontario Market Investment Fund will support innovative market research, communications and/or marketing projects that encourage Ontarians to buy locally-produced foods. Examples of eligible projects include:

- Market research - projects that will improve the understanding of, and access to, market opportunities for local Ontario foods such as emerging opportunities in developing ethnic markets or consumer demand for region-specific food products.
- Development of market opportunities - creating local food networks linking farmers, food processors, retailers, institutional food service companies, restaurants, culinary tourism events and consumers that will encourage Ontarians to buy locally.
- Communication initiatives - projects that build capacity and develop skills within local food networks, commodity organizations and other stakeholder groups for the promotion of Ontario foods through marketing campaigns.

- Consumer or trade events - building business relationships that work to develop new markets for Ontario foods via industry or consumer focused promotional activities.

Funding

Projects are cost-shared with the provincial government investing up to 50 per cent of the project's eligible cost. Grants of up to \$100,000 per approved project are available. Applicants must complete one project before applying for additional project grants. Projects may span more than one year.

Eligible expenditures include, but are not limited to:

- Market research designed to increase understanding of consumer and trade channel demands and sector capabilities
- Advertising and promotional materials
- Obtaining expert services to help develop local food networks

Project management costs related to the delivery of the project.

For more detailed information please visit the website at : www.ontario.ca/omif or phone 1-888-588-4111 or email: omif.omafra@ontario.ca

Co-operative Development Initiative

Funding is available by the federal government to help develop co-ops and to research and test innovative ways of using the co-operative model. Funding will likely range from \$5,000 to \$75,000 per project, per year. There are two main program components:

1. Advisory Services to provide expert assistance to groups wanting to start new co-ops or to better manage existing ones.
2. Innovation and Research projects to study and demonstrate how co-ops can be used successfully in new ways.

The program is open to individuals, groups - including businesses - and communities.

For more information, please visit http://www.agr.gc.ca/rcs-src/coop/index_e.php?s1=init&page=intro or phone 1-888-781-2222.

Regulatory

New Food Labelling Initiative for Canada - Defining "Made in Canada" and "Product of Canada"

On July 15, 2008 the Government of Canada announced the new labelling guidelines for the use of these claims. The revised guidelines will take effect December 31, 2008 and apply when using the following claims on the label:

Product of Canada - When the label claim "Product of Canada" is applied, all or virtually all of the significant ingredients, components, processing and labour used in the food product must be Canadian. Food products claiming "Product of Canada" must contain very little or no foreign content, with the exception of minor food additives, spices, vitamins, minerals and flavouring preparations.

Made in Canada - The "Made in Canada" claim may be used when the food product is manufactured or processed in Canada regardless of whether the ingredients are imported or domestic or a mix of both. However, this claim must always be qualified with either "Made in Canada from domestic and imported ingredients" or "Made in Canada from imported ingredients". To use these qualified claims, the last substantial transformation of the product must have occurred in Canada. The intent is to recognize the importance of value-added by Canadian ingredients and processing.

Other Qualified Claims - Qualified claims for other food products that do not meet the new Product of Canada and Made in Canada guidelines may continue to be used. In particular, Roasted in Canada, Packaged in Canada, Distilled in Canada, Processed in Canada, etc. could be used provided that they are not false or misleading. However, use of Product of Canada and the qualified Made in Canada claim is encouraged for those products that meet the guidelines in order to provide consistency and clarity for the consumer.

For more information please visit the CFIA's website at www.inspection.gc.ca or call them at 1-800-442-2342/TTY 1-800-465-7735.

Ministry of Labour Introduces New Safe at Work Initiative That Will Affect All Employers in Ontario

Accidents and fatalities in the workplace are unacceptable. The Ontario Ministry of Labour (MOL) in June introduced a new four year initiative for workplace safety.

Called "Safe at Work Ontario", the goal of the plan is to reduce workplace injuries and fatalities and improve an organization's health and safety culture. The Ontario

Ministry of Labour has the responsibility and mandate to enforce the OHSA. Under the Safe At Work Ontario strategy the ministry will be focusing its enforcement resources in areas where needed to enforce requirements under the OHSA through inspections, and as required, orders and charges under the act may be used to enforce the law. Firms can find out if they are likely to be targeted for more frequent inspections and what strategies the food industry has to work with the government to reduce accidents (and rates) - details on the strategy and how to get your firm-level assessment are available at:

<http://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/sawo/index.html>

OCO Provides New Funding for Organic Production Clubs

The Organic Council of Ontario is initiating a pilot project for the development of Organic Production Clubs in Ontario that will provide funding for new and existing groups of organic farmers who meet to learn more about their organic farming operations. This funding is part of \$200,000 provided in March 2008 by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) to support the growth of the Ontario organic sector.

Producer Production Clubs are composed of organic producers in a region who come together periodically to share their production experiences and learn about new developments. Also referred to as Study Clubs, these groups enable experienced organic producers to transfer knowledge to new entrants, and provide a needed support system for organic producers.

The Organic Council of Ontario will provide up to \$2500 per club for educational activities relating to organic production. This funding has the overall goal of promoting the long-term viability of organic farming in Ontario by connecting farmers in a supportive learning environment. Groups may engage speakers, discuss farm management or production issues, initiate tours and engage in other learning activities at their meetings. Applications are being accepted until October 30, 2008. Clubs will begin meeting in 2008.

"This funding will assist farmers in accessing current, focused and relevant information about organic farming" said Kim Thorne, OCO's Executive Director. "A developed, organised system of farmer to farmer communication has proved highly successful in other jurisdictions and we are excited to be able to support this type of initiative in Ontario".

Members and non-members of the Organic Council of Ontario are eligible to apply for funding. Additional eligibility criteria and application forms can be found on the Organic Council of Ontario's website at www.organiccouncil.ca or by calling the OCO Office at 519-827-1221.

Free Online Course Offerings to Help Build Your Business

To continually enhance the competitiveness of small and medium enterprises (SMEs), GS1 Canada, with the financial support of the Government of Ontario, has established the GS1 Knowledge Centre, a source of supply chain and business education to help Ontario food producers and processors sell more effectively to their markets. The GS1 Knowledge Centre provides business owners with the practical information they need to launch their venture, compete effectively and continue to adapt to complex, constantly changing market demands.

Each of the 12 courses offered by the GS1 Knowledge Centre is available as both a classroom workshop and an on-demand module – you can register for the online module at no charge. To get more information about GS1 Knowledge Centre workshops, click on the topics below or please email knowledgecentre@gs1ca.org (please supply your name and the name of the course(s) that interest you).

Title	Classroom	Online
Introduction: Journey to Supply Chain Excellence	Inquire	Online
Evolution from the Bar Code to the Electronic Product Code (EPC)	Inquire	Online
Understanding the Fundamentals of EPC/RFID	Inquire	Online
The Business Case for EPC/RFID Technology	Inquire	Online
Integration: Building Capability Together	Inquire	Online
Tracking and Tracing in the Supply Chain - Market Trends	Inquire	Online
Organization: Managing People, Skills and Change	Inquire	Online
SME Human Resources	Inquire	Online
Standards: Adopting the GS1 Global Language of Supply Chain	Inquire	Online
Technology: Choosing the Right Tools for Trade	Inquire	Online
Commercialization: Application Groupings and Use Cases	Inquire	Online

Events

Ontario Food and Beverage Processing HR Summit September 29 & 30, 2008

Mark Your Calendars: Monday evening, September 29 and Tuesday, September 30 will see Ontario's first-ever Food and Beverage HR Summit: "Destination Excellence" at the Old Mill in Toronto. The first evening will feature after dinner speaker Roger Martin, Chair of Ontario's Task Force on Competitiveness, Productivity and Economic Progress. The following day's program will include the unveiling of

resources to successfully source, engage and keep your most valuable asset - your employees - to help you achieve and keep your competitive advantage. The morning will be kicked off with a keynote presentation by award-winning Global Vice-President, Human Resources, McCain Foods Ltd., Janice M. Wismer, who will be sharing issues and strategies for effectively recruiting and retaining a topnotch workforce. Early bird pricing in effect until September 2. For more information or to access a registration form, please visit the "Alliance of Ontario Food Processors" website at <http://www.aofp.ca/Events/Listings.aspx>.

ADVANTAGE Series of Food Safety Training - 2008/2009 Series

The popular "Advantage" Series of Food Safety Training for Food Processors has a series of upcoming workshops and seminars for the rest of this year and into 2009. Developed by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, this highly regarded series of food safety programs covers topics such as:

- Developing HACCP plans (Dec. 3 - Guelph)
- Developing Good Manufacturing Practices (Oct. 23 - Guelph)
- Developing Traceability Plans (Jan. 15 - Guelph)
- Preparing for Internal Advantage Certification Audits (Jan. 14 - Guelph)

There are also two workshops being held in London (Sept. 10) and Kingston (Sept. 23) which provide an introduction to the "Advantage" series of programs - Ontario's HACCP and GMP programming for farms and food processors. For more information on the Advantage series and other food safety information, please visit <http://www.omafr.gov.on.ca/english/food/inspection/haccp/events.htm> or call toll free 1-866-641-3663 or e-mail advantage@ontario.ca.

Canadian Health Food Association (CHFA) Expo East September 11-14, 2008

Metro Toronto Convention Centre, North Building
Toronto, Ontario, Canada
For more info go to <http://www.chfa.ca/>

Great Lakes Community Shared Agriculture Conference November 21-23, 2008

Seeding the Future – Growing Together!
Geneva Park Conference Centre, Orillia, ON
For more info go to <http://www.csaconference2008.ca/>

The Community Shared Agriculture Conference endeavors to generate support for small community-based farm operations. Workshops and presentations will focus on practical techniques, tools and resources specific to organics and CSA farming. Topics include production, marketing and financial aspects of running a CSA operation. A CSA mini-school will be offered to novice farmers or existing farm operators interested in switching to a CSA program.

Production Insurance for Organic Wheat and Spelt

Yield declarations for the 2008 crop are due by Monday September 1, 2008 for those growers enrolled in Production (Crop) Insurance for Organic Wheat and Organic Spelt with Agricorp. Refer to the Production Insurance factsheet for Fall-Seeded Grains and Oilseeds (http://www.agricorp.com/en-ca/uploaddocuments/d1330+2008_Fall_Seeded_G_and_O_eng.pdf). Details for the organic wheat and spelt program for 2009 will be announced in September.

Links to Organic Agriculture Information

Organic Council of Ontario (OCO)

<http://www.organiccouncil.ca>

Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario (EFAO)

<http://www.efao.ca>

Canadian Organic Growers (COG)

<http://www.cog.ca>

Organic Agricultural Centre of Canada (OACC)

<http://www.oacc.info>

OMAFRA Organic Agriculture

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

Agricultural Information Contact Centre: 1-877-424-1300

E-mail: ag.info.omafra@ontario.ca

Northern Ontario Regional Office: 1-800-461-6132

www.ontario.ca/omafra