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Welcome to “ON Organic”

Hugh Martin, Organic Crop Production Program Lead, OMAFRA

I want to thank EFAO, COG and OCO for helping us to circulate the newsletter through their email groups. This issue has a wide mix of production information, business programs, and fall and winter courses and conferences of interest to organic food producers. I encourage you to forward it on to colleagues who may find it useful. I welcome your comments on the newsletter.

Subscription to this newsletter is easy and no cost, for details go to the webpage:

<http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/subscribe/index.html#organic>

The newsletter is also posted on the OMAFRA website at:

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

The French version of these newsletters is available at:

<http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/french/crops/organic/news/news-organic.html>

The OMAFRA Organic pages are linked from:

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

The ON Organic Team

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Update on New Canada Organic Product Regulation

by Hugh Martin, Organic Crops Production Program Lead

The Canada Organic Office (COO) of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) has announced that implementation date of the new regulations will be June 30, 2009. This is approximately a 6-month delay from previous announcements. During this time we expect there will be a revised regulation introduced and a 75 day comment period on that regulation (includes a new Canada Organic logo). <http://canadagazette.gc.ca/partII/2008/20080917/html/sor279-e.html>

Under the regulations the COO will be accrediting Certification Bodies and Conformity Verification Bodies (formerly Accreditation Bodies) for the new organic regime in Canada. The Organic Trade Association has a preliminary list of those bodies on their website <http://www.ota.com/otacanada/abcb.htm>. Note the list is not finalized and subject to change.

During the past 18 months there has also been efforts underway to revise the Canada Organic Standard. There are many edits and clarifications within the standards and some additional substances within the Permitted Substances List but in most sections I would not expect organic producers and processors to see major changes but there are some changes. These new standards are expected to be introduced in a few months. Stay tuned.

Your Pest Priorities

by Hugh Martin Organic Crops Production Program Lead

I am looking for your biggest problem pests (includes insects, diseases, weeds, etc.) Each year we try to determine what are the big pest issues that producers are having the most problem to manage. Organic producers sometimes have fewer tools to manage these problems but in some cases there is information or research that can be improved to help.

Let me know what is your biggest pest problem – insects, diseases, weeds, etc and which crop (or livestock) it is in.
OR

Let me know of a pest problem that you have reduced or eliminated and how you did it.

Send your responses to Hugh Martin Fax 519-826-4964 or hugh.martin@ontario.ca

Reminder - Crop Production Insurance for Organic Winter Wheat and Spelt

by Hugh Martin Organic Crops Production Program Lead

In the last issue I gave you some information on this program for this fall. See <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/organic/news/2008-09a2.htm> for more details or contact Agricorp at www.agricorp.com or at 1-888-247-4999.

The claim price for 2009 is \$11.29 per bushel for organic winter wheat and \$0.48/kg for organic spelt. Note the Planting Deadlines for areas with greater than 2700 heat units is Oct 31, and Oct 20 in areas less than 2700 heat units. Areas East of Belleville were before Oct 10 and Oct 1 respectively. You must apply for insurance before November 1, 2008.

Premier's Innovation Awards Program Invites New Applications

Innovators in the province's agriculture and food industry are encouraged to apply for awards under the Premier's Agri-Food Innovation Excellence Award program, now accepting applications until December 1, 2008.

The \$2.5-million, five-year program (currently in its third year) was established to recognize innovators who contribute to the success of Ontario's agri-food sector.

The awards program includes the Premier's Award (up to \$100,000), the Minister's Award (up to \$50,000) and up to 55 regional awards of \$5,000 each.

Program applications must be received by December 1, 2008, and will be reviewed by two independent panels made up of representatives from across Ontario's agri-food industry. Additional information and application forms are available on the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs For more information go to http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/premier_award/index.html or call 1-877-424-1300.

Soil Testing and Maintaining Soil Fertility on Organic Farms

by Hugh Martin, Organic Crops Production Program Lead

A basic principle of organic farming is to maintain soil fertility. Organic certification encourages the organic operator to do regular soil testing and analysis to monitor levels of nutrients and to document the need to apply appropriate nutrient inputs when required. The need for environmental sustainability as well as the relatively high cost of purchased nutrient sources suitable for organic systems, means it is very important where possible to try and minimize nutrient losses from the soil, especially when using manures and compost, and build a crop rotation that optimizes the use of nitrogen that is fixed by legumes. The challenge is to close the nutrient cycle loop as much as possible.

How to take a Soil Test

The OMAFRA factsheet: Soil Sampling and Analysis for Managing Crop Nutrients <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/engineer/facts/06-031.htm> gives a good general perspective of how to take a soil test. You can take them yourself or there are numerous crop and soil consultants in Ontario (including some that work specifically with organic farms) that you can hire to take the samples and interpret them for you. In Ontario there are several Accredited Soil Testing Laboratories that can do the analysis. They are listed on the OMAFRA webpage at <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/resource/soillabs.htm>

What tests need to be done?

The basic soil test includes the most important tests to be done. The basic test usually includes phosphorous, potassium, magnesium, and pH. An organic matter test is also important to have included. Nitrogen is not analyzed since it fluctuates over the year and a current soil test is not a good predictor of the nitrogen status of the soil for the next growing season. Other micronutrients, and cation exchange capacity (CEC) are also sometimes done and are optional (additional costs) to the basic test at most labs. In general most micronutrient and CEC tests are less reliable than the basic test parameters in predicting crop nutrient needs and deficiencies for the coming season.

Interpreting the Soil Test Report

Most labs will give you a report that will list the parts per million (ppm) for each nutrient tested according to the lab processes they used. They will usually give an interpretation on how much conventional fertilizer is needed but since organic farmers do not use conventional fertilizer, farmers may need some assistance to help interpret the analysis. Some labs may give organic recommendations, ask your lab if they can provide that service for your needs.

If you are using the same lab as in past years or the labs are using the same methods, you should be able to compare the numbers from one set of test reports to the next. An important part of the interpretation is to look for trends from one test to another. Most nutrients change slowly. Some changes may be due to differences in the way the soil test was taken or in the recent weather before the test was taken. Your primary goal is to maintain your soil fertility and to build the soil fertility as needed.

For organic farms, pH is the first thing to look at and if it is low (below pH 6.0) the report will usually recommend either calcitic lime or dolomitic lime. Dolomitic lime usually costs slightly more (depending on availability in your region) but it is important to use it if magnesium is low – common on sandy soils). Most conventionally available agricultural limes can be used on organic farms but check with your certification body (CB). A pH of 6.5 to 7.0 is ideal but it is impractical to reduce the soil pH when soils test higher than that. For more information see: Soil Acidity & Liming <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/pub811/2limeph.htm>

Next I always look at the phosphorous (P_2O_5) values. Different crops have different P_2O_5 requirements. Soils contain a lot of phosphorous but there is only a very small percentage (1-2%) that is available for crops to use. The Olsen or sodium bicarbonate lab test has been found to be the most reliable predictor of availability for plant uptake under Ontario conditions. For most crops, P_2O_5 values over 20 ppm indicate a good level of P_2O_5 in the soil and response to added phosphorous is less likely. On soils with P_2O_5 levels below 12 ppm the soil productivity is often limited by a lack of phosphorous and will likely improve with additional phosphorous being applied. Rock phosphate has sometimes been used to add phosphorus to the soil but it has very low availability and especially under higher pH may not be cost effective. Livestock manures and compost are usually the most economical means to add P_2O_5 to the soil.

Similarly potassium (K_2O) is important to look at on the soil test report. In Ontario the ammonium acetate test has been used with the most accuracy over the range of Ontario conditions. Soils with values above 120 ppm typically will have low response to added potassium, but this will vary with the crop being grown. Generally if the soil potassium values are below 80 ppm crops will respond to added potassium. Potassium can be added with naturally mined potassium sources such as potassium sulphate, sulphate of potash magnesium or potassium chloride but care should be taken to get the product that is approved for organic farms by your certification body. Livestock manures and compost are also a very economical way to add K_2O to the soil.

Magnesium is an important macronutrient and in Ontario is usually adequate on most clay and loam soils but is often in short supply on low pH and sandy soils. If soil levels are above 60 ppm there is usually not a high level of concern unless high levels of potassium fertilizers are being added to the soil. Dolomitic limestone is the most economic source of adding magnesium. Sulphate of potassium magnesium can also be used in fields where magnesium is low but pH is above 6.5.

Calcium is usually adequate on clay and loams soils in Ontario since many of our soils have been created from high calcium bedrock. Some sandy soils, especially those with low pH are low in calcium and in those cases either calcitic or dolomitic limestone are good sources of calcium as well as to amend the soil pH.

Cation Exchange Capacity (CEC) is sometimes calculated for the report and is a reflection of the soils ability to hold cation nutrients in the soil (potassium, calcium, magnesium, ammonium). As the clay content, and organic matter content increase in soil the CEC will increase. On high pH soils, tests will sometimes over estimate the CEC due to the presence of free lime in the soil. Base saturation and cation ratios are also sometimes calculated to evaluate nutrient needs but university research in North America research has not shown these tools to be accurate predictors of which nutrients are economical to add to improve crop performance.

Maintaining good soil organic matter (SOM) levels is the best way to maintain a good CEC. Cover crops, livestock manure and crop residues all help to maintain SOM levels. Frequent tillage and soil erosion are known to deplete SOM. Organic matter levels change very slowly. Good SOM levels are in the range of 3% for sandy soils and 5% for clay and loam soils. Changes greater than 0.2% per year as shown on the report may be indications that the soil sample was taken at a different depth or some other problem in the test exists. Sandy soils will generally have lower SOM levels than clay and loam soils.

There is an array of micronutrients that can be analyzed in a soil test. For most crops there is limited research on how interpret these values to accurately predict deficiencies in the crop and on how to correct them. Using visual symptoms as an indicator of deficiency or using leaf tissue analysis is usually more reliable for most micronutrients. Farm manures and composts are a good source of most micronutrients. For specific micronutrient fertility inputs consult the Organic Standards and Permitted Substance Lists, and your input supplier or crop advisor.

NOTE: Before applying any input to certified organic farms make sure it is approved by your certifying body.

For More Information:

Soil Fertility Handbook, OMAFRA Publication 611 <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/pub611/p611order.htm>

Managing Crop Nutrients, BMP 20 (order number BMP20E) - http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/environment/bmp/crop_nut.htm

Soil Management BMP 20 (order number BMP06E) See it online at:

<http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/environment/soil/soilmgmt.htm>

Local Food for Local Tables Conference

Growing Food Security for Southwestern Ontario

When: Thursday November 27, 2008

Where: Brescia University College,
1285 Western Road, London, Ontario

Are you looking to get more involved to bring locally grown food to consumers? Come out to the Local Food For Local Tables Conference in London on November 27, 2008 at Brescia University College in London to take in a wide array of innovative ways to bring locally grown food to local communities.

For organizations, individuals, farmers, food retailers, distributors, and processors, join like-minded people sharing stories, challenges, strategies, and successes to encourage and facilitate local buying and growing of food. Come and hear engaging success stories, innovations and be a part of networking and conversation opportunities towards the development of a food system plan for our region.

Check out the complete conference agenda and registration details at www.lcrc.on.ca The conference cost is \$40.00 (lunch included.) Registration deadline is November 14, 2008. For more information, contact Mary Yanful at 519-432-1801 ext 300, or email mary@lcrc.on.ca

Help build our local food system for southwestern Ontario by heading to London on Thursday, November 27th for the Local Food For Local Tables Conference.

The Local Food For Local Tables Conference is sponsored by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada through the Agricultural Adaptation Council's CanAdvance Program, Brescia University College, FoodNet Ontario, King's University College of The University of Western Ontario, City of London, Middlesex County and Middlesex London Health Unit. This is a co-operative effort among: Brescia University College, City of London, Council of Canadians, Elgin St. Thomas Public Health, FoodNet Ontario, Hunger Relief Action Coalition, London Community Resource Centre, Middlesex London Health Unit, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, Post Carbon London, and interested community members.

Advantage Good Agricultural Practices - Current Workshop Opportunities

Currently, the ministry is offering on-farm food safety workshop opportunities geared towards the horticulture industry. Any of the following workshop topics can be scheduled upon your request and can be tailored to any group size. To arrange for a group meeting or be placed on a waiting list for the next available workshop, please contact us at 1-866-641-3663 (FOOD) or advantage@ontario.ca.

Workshop Topics:

Irrigation water - 1 hour

Do you wonder about the quality of your irrigation water and its potential effect on food safety? Do you want to know how to take a water sample from your pond? Where do you send your water sample and how do you interpret the results? This session will provide you with the do's and don'ts of taking a water sample, a list of labs that test water, a demonstration on how the water test is done, what the test results mean and some advice on how to protect your water source.

Post harvest water - 1 hour

Do you wash your produce with recycled water? This session will discuss the risks of using poor quality water, pros and cons of some commonly used sanitizers, factors that can alter the effectiveness of sanitizer and ways to monitor sanitizer levels.

Hygiene and Hand Washing - 1 hour

Do you have workers that need good hygiene and hand washing training? This session will provide you with tools and advice on how to teach your workers proper hygiene and hand washing.

Manures and Composts - 1 hour

Do you use manure, compost or compost teas? This session identifies the potential risks to ready to eat crops, issues with making compost, and the do's and don'ts on applying, handling and storing manure and/or compost.

Can't find a workshop to suit your needs? Let us know and we'll find a solution that is right for you. For more information on *Advantage Good Agricultural Practices* or to order a copy, call the Agricultural Information Contact Centre at 1-877-424-1300 or visit our web site at: www.ontario.ca/good-ag-practices.

Articles from Other Newsletters

Irrigation Water Quality

Lindsay Arthur - Applied Research Coordinator - On-Farm Food Safety/ OMAFRA

Do you produce crops that are consumed fresh? If so, do you use surface water to irrigate these crops? Or has your buyer requested irrigation water quality records? If you answered yes to these questions, then read on.

It is important to know what you spray on your crops. History tells us that water is an excellent source for disease, either directly through drinking, or through using water in food production. Bad bugs can exist in our water, and poor quality irrigation water has caused a number of food borne outbreaks.

OMAFRA has done research on irrigation water and strawberries and found that irrigation water, which exceeded the guideline of 100 coliform forming units (cfu) of *E. coli* per 100 mL of water, transferred *E. coli* to the berries. What does the presence of *E. coli* mean? Feces! The presence of feces on our food is not a good thing, particularly as pathogens come from feces.

To avoid contaminating your crops with bad bugs from irrigation water we recommend that you test your irrigation water for quality.

From Ontario Berry Grower newsletter, for complete article go to: <http://www.omafr.gov.on.ca/english/crops/hort/news/allontario/ao0508a1.htm>

Roots: The Basis for Production

Janice LeBoenf - Vegetable Crop Specialist/OMAFRA

A frequent question during a wetter than usual growing season is "Why are we seeing blossom-end rot? Isn't it a dry-weather problem?" Blossom-end rot, where the tissue on the blossom end of the tomato (or pepper) breaks down, is generally associated with dry spells, but the reality is much more complicated.

Although blossom-end rot is an extremely common problem, which has been studied for over 100 years, the exact causes - or how to reliably prevent the problem - is not yet understood. Most sources explain it as triggered by a temporary lack of calcium in the blossom-end of the fruit as it is developing. Since calcium moves with water in the plant, this is usually thought to be caused by interruptions in the water supply to the fruit and not so much by an overall calcium deficiency. However, many other factors seem to influence the problem as well. In fact, there is now some thought among scientists that low calcium levels in the fruit are not the trigger for blossom-end rot at all.

From Hort Matters, for the complete article go to <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/hort/news/hortmatt/2008/22hrt08a1.htm>

New Crop Cover Information Site Launched!!

The Midwest Cover Crop Council (MCCC) has recently launched its own website. The website features a wealth of cover crop information through various state and province pages, links to extension and research reports and information on individual cover crops. You can put in your two cents on your experiences with cover crops through the cover crop survey tool! The survey is helping to feed the development of the Cover Crop Selector, an online, regional cover crop tool.

If there is more Ontario cover crop information that you would like to see on the site contact Anne Verhallen, OMAFRA Soil Management Specialist at 519-674-1614 or anne.verhallen@ontario.ca or Christine Brown, OMAFRA Nutrient Management Specialist at 519-537-8305 or christine.brown1@ontario.ca

Midwest Cover Crops Council (MCCC) is a diverse group from all aspects of agriculture from research and extension to producers and crop input suppliers. They have been working together since 2006 to address soil, water, air, and agricultural quality concerns in the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins (including Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Manitoba, Michigan, Minnesota, North Dakota, Ohio, Ontario, and Wisconsin) through increased adoption of cover crops in all production systems.

Check out this new cover crop site at <http://www.mccc.msu.edu/>

Wet Conditions: Common Problems for Medicinal and Culinary Herbs

With the wet conditions over the past year, many diseases are showing up on crops that have not had any major disease problems in the past. For many low-acreage crops such as medicinal and culinary herbs there is minimal information on the diseases and disorders that can affect the crop. Furthermore, growers have few options for chemical controls. However, there are cultural strategies that can be employed to minimize the impact of these diseases.

From Ginseng and Specialty Crop Report, for complete report go to <http://apps.omafra.gov.on.ca/scripts/english/crops/agriphone/article.asp?ID=1630>

Living with Parasites "Take Control" – Topics include: the effects of parasites on sheep health and production, important worm facts for Ontario producers, current principles of worm management, drenches and drench resistance, new strategies for parasite control, *Cysticercus ovis*, and managing coccidiosis through prevention. Keynote speakers will be Dr. Neil Sargison (Royal School of Veterinary Studies, Scotland), Dr. Silvina Fernandez (Ontario Veterinary College) and Dr. Alain Richard (Alpharma – France). The cost is \$42 prior to November 5 and \$57.75 thereafter. Sponsored by OMAFRA with support from OSMA (Ontario Sheep Marketing Agency) and Alpharma Animal Health.

2008 Events

October 22	Export Market Access Seminar
October 20–24	Manufacturing Excellence
October 23	Canadian Business Leadership Forum
October 26–27	Grocery Innovations Trade Show/Access Ontario & Pick Ontario Freshness booths
November 4	McMaster Manufacturing Research Institute – Manufacturing Optimization Workshop
November 7–16	Royal Winter Fair
November 13	Outlook Conference
November 20–21	Ontario Food Protection Association Conference

More upcoming training courses too....

Funding Program—New Announcements

Sustainability Services (see below) for the Food and Beverage Industry

Adapting your processes and products for sustainability can save you money, help build a stronger brand image and improve your resource utilization. In partnership with OMAFRA, GFTC is offering sustainability services and course registrations to the Ontario food and beverage industry at a 50% discount. There is no application process or rebate program; if you are a part of the Ontario Food and Beverage industry you are eligible for the discount.

The following sustainability services are available from GFTC at a 50% discount.

Assessment Services

GFTC environmental engineers and analysts will conduct a thorough assessment of your facility with respect to energy, water, waste, packaging and emissions. Based on the assessment, they will advise you on your opportunities and risks. For a list of the areas covered go to GFTC's web site at www.gftc.ca.

Consulting Services

GFTC will assist you in building sustainability into your strategic plan. Successful integration of sustainability involves the following steps:

1. Building a vision and developing goals
2. Gaining buy-in from internal and external stakeholders
3. Establishing management systems to implement the vision
4. Benchmarking and measuring to continuously improve the system

GFTC consultants will assist you through all stages of integration ensuring a smooth transition. Expert consultants are also available to demystify carbon assessments, and to provide speakers to educate employees and stakeholders on sustainability.

Training Services

GFTC training will provide you with the tools you need to merge environmental management with productivity improvements, giving you a competitive edge in today's growing green market. The following courses are part of the Sustainability curriculum at GFTC which are being subsidized:

- Stepping into Green: Environmental Management for the Competitive Food and Beverage Business
- Stepping into Green: Sustainable Packaging Design
- Best Practices for Energy Management
- Understanding Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) in the Food and Beverage Industry
- New Technologies for Environmental and Energy Management

Key Notes

2009 Excellence in Manufacturing Consortium (EMC)~Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) Safety Group – Saving manufacturers workplace injuries and dollars.

The Bottom Line You Save Could Be Your Own!

The Safety Group program is an innovative approach that the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) is taking to eliminate workplace injuries and illnesses.

The program rewards firms that incorporate prevention measures into their daily business and EMC is wrapping up another year for its Safety Group initiative, benefiting EMC members with millions in potential premium rebate dollars through continuous improvement in health and safety. To get started in the safety group, EMC members contact the Safety Group Administrator, Amanda Doman adoman@emccanada.org or telephone 1-866-323-4362. For general EMC membership information, please visit www.emccanada.org.

Ontario Ministry of Labour Safety Blitz Targets Industrial Workplaces

The Ministry of Labour announced in August that as part of Ontario's ongoing efforts to help reduce workplace injuries, inspectors will be "blitzing" industrial workplaces over the next month to help eliminate specific hazards that could lead to falls. Inspectors will look for fall hazards at heights, such as on any platform, raised floor, mezzanine or ladder. This will include checking for fall arrest equipment, guardrails and the use of inappropriate procedures such as climbing up shelving or working on storage racks. They will also check for proper use of portable, extension and step ladders. This initiative is part of the province's new Safe At Work Ontario Blitz Strategy announced in July. For more details go to <http://www.labour.gov.on.ca>.

October 22 - Export Market Access Seminar

Holiday Inn Oshawa Whitby Conference Centre - Export Market Access is an initiative of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce (OCC), with support and funding from the Government of Ontario. If your company has five or more employees and annual sales of \$500,000 or more, you may qualify for a grant covering up to 50% of eligible costs to develop export sales. To learn more, plan to attend the EXPORT MARKET ACCESS SEMINAR on Wednesday, October 22, 2008 from 7:30 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. at the Holiday Inn Oshawa Whitby Conference Centre, 1011 Bloor Street East. The Keynote Speaker is Len Crispino, President & Chief Executive Officer, OCC. View the attached registration form for more details and to register for this event. If you're unable to attend the seminar, you can look up the program at <http://www.exportaccess.ca>.

October 23 - Canadian Business Leadership Forum 2008 - Toronto

Now in its fifth year the Canadian Business Leadership Forum shares first-hand accounts of successful strategies and leadership initiatives that teach attendees new skills and innovative ways of thinking. The day-long program will inspire, motivate, and help deliver competitive advantage to your organization. Speakers include RIM co-CEO Jim

Balsillie, GE President & CEO Elyse Allan, and Richard Florida, Martin Prosperity Institute. For more information go to <http://site.canadianbusiness.com/leadershipforum/>.

October 20 - 24 - "Good to Great" Manufacturing Excellence Conference, Toronto

Supported by the Greater Toronto Marketing Alliance (GTMA), 2,500 practitioners will attend the largest ever Lean Manufacturing Conference in North America. It will be "right up the alley" for operations leaders who have a direct impact on productivity. 9 International Keynotes, 70 Best Manufacturing Practices, 50 Audited Plant Tours, 40 Workshops, and structured Best Practice exchanges will help companies meet current competitive challenges. Go to <http://www.ameconference.org/> for details and registration.

October 26 & 27 - Grocery Innovations Trade Show

Toronto Congress Centre, Dixon Road, Toronto
The Canadian Federation of Independent Grocers is proud to present Grocery Innovations Canada 2008: Canada's premier grocery conference and trade show. More details can be found at <http://www.groceryinnovations.com/index.html>. The Business Development Branch will be exhibiting at the show. Come and visit us at Booth 710 next to the Access Ontario Pavillion and also check out the Pick Ontario Freshness booths. OMAFRA supported the Alliance for Ontario Food Processors in putting together their display for this event, as a way to help them reach out to independent retailers and get the products from Ontario's firms into buyers and eater's hands. Our HACCP Advantage colleagues will also be at the show in Booth 711.

November 4 - Workshop on "Manufacturing Optimization"

MMRI is co-sponsoring a one-day conference "Manufacturing Optimization: The Next Generation" to promote adoption of technology in manufacturing, and collaboration to improve productivity and profitability. This year's conference will be held at the University of Toronto on November 4, 2008. Presentations from invited guest speakers shed light on current industry issues such as recycling of materials, green strategies for manufacturing, optimization of machining processes, advancements in processing technology and materials. More information can be found at <http://www.manutechnet.com>.

The seminar is a full day program, and will be held Tuesday, November 11th in Atwood at the Elma Memorial Community Centre, and again on Thursday, November 13th in Napanee at the Napanee Lion's Hall.

To register, please contact OMAFRA's Agricultural Information Contact Centre at 1-877-424-1300. The agendas and registration form are available on the Ministry website at <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/livestock/sheep/20081111.htm>

November 20 & 21 - Ontario Food Protection Association (OFPA) Annual Fall Conference, Mississauga Convention Centre - Food safety outbreaks and recalls in Canada are in the media, and on the minds of consumers and food businesses. Attend the OFPA 50th Annual Fall Meeting for receive insight and information several food safety experts. More details can be found at <http://www.ofpa.on.ca/>

November 13 - Outlook Conference

The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs invites you to join the 2008 Outlook Conference, taking place at the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair in Toronto on November 13, 2008. Featuring world-renowned speakers and thought-provoking panel discussions, this year's conference will focus on future directions and opportunities in the agri-food sector. Topics will range from economic and environmental challenges to future technologies and consumer trends.

Speakers include:

- Robert Vos – United Nations: Director of the Development Policy and Analysis Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs
- Marion Nestle – New York University: Paulette Goddard Professor in the Department of Nutrition, Food Studies, and Public Health
- Kristian Borch – Technical University of Denmark: Senior Scientist, Department of Management Engineering
- Tima Bansal – Richard Ivey School of Business, University of Western Ontario: Director of the Centre for Building Sustainable Value
- Molly Anderson – Wallace Center: Project Manager, and Consultant. Coordinating Lead, Author on the North America/Europe section of the International Assessment of Agricultural Science and Technology for Development
- Ronald Wright – author of A Short History of Progress

Early bird registration is \$350. Registration cost includes admission to all sessions, all meals (breakfast, lunch and dinner) and health breaks, one-day general admission to the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair, and conference materials including conference proceedings.

Please visit www.ontario.ca/outlook2008 for more information and to register. For Registration-related questions, please contact Sarah Wilson. Email: sarah.wilson2@ontario.ca. Telephone: (519) 826-4101.

November 7 – 16 - Subsidized space available for agri-food innovators at the 2008 Royal Winter Fair

The Royal Agricultural Winter Fair returns to the Exhibition Grounds for its 86th year from November 7th to November 16th, 2008. A celebration of all things "country", The Royal is the largest combined agricultural, horticultural, canine and equestrian event in the world, attracting over 350,000 people, including 25,000 school children annually. The RWF is currently searching for innovative agri-food products and companies to showcase in their new Innovation Marketplace, a new exhibit area where smaller, entrepreneurial and not-for-profit organizations can exhibit for a special lower price. Housed within the Agri-Food Innovation area, the marketplace has been created in response to visitor feedback. In 2007, the Agri-Food Innovation highlighted new technologies and products including kitchen countertops and flooring, clothing and car parts made from crops and sources of alternative energy. Visitors to the Fair were intrigued and expressed an eagerness to buy these products and get more information about these new technologies. The problem was that many of the companies and not-for-profit organizations responsible for these innovative products and ideas are small and relatively new. They don't yet have the resources to fully participate with an exhibit space for the ten days of the Royal. This year, the Royal aims to eliminate those difficulties by offering exhibit space for special discounted rates to companies and not-for-profit organizations that fit within the Innovation Marketplace parameters:

Products and/or services must meet the following criteria. Be innovative and reflect contemporary scientific information.

1. Showcase renewable energy, agriculturally-based bio-products or environmental technologies or be a new healthy locally-produced food product.
2. Relay information about the importance of the agriculture and food sector to the Canadian economy. Within this Innovation Marketplace, companies and organizations will also be allowed the ability to exhibit for either half of the Fair (five days) or for the full ten days. The amount of financial assistance will be dependent upon the situation of the company or not-for-profit organization and will be evaluated on case-by-case basis. Funding may also available to help cover accommodation, staffing and/or mileage costs.

Companies or individuals wishing more information and application forms are invited to call Karen Daynard at 519-836-2583 or kdaynard@royalfair.org. Application forms will also be available on the Royal's website at www.royalfair.org. A limited number of exhibit spaces are available. There are only three booths left in the agri-food innovation section of the display.

More Training

Guelph Food Technology Centre (GFTC) Workshops and Events

For more detailed information on the GFTC events listed below and other GFTC programs please visit www.gftc.ca or contact Denise Horseman at 519-821-1246 ext. 5068 or e-mail Denise at: dhorseman@gftc.ca.

November 3 to 4 Stepping into Green – Sustainable Packaging Design

This workshop is also eligible for a discount of 50%. You'll learn how to approach sustainable package design by participating in a targeted design exercise. And you'll hear how other companies have successfully implemented sustainable packaging. After this day, you'll be on the way to taking control of this key focal area of environmental waste. Location: GFTC, Guelph

November 18 to 21 Fundamentals of Wheat Flour Properties

The University of Guelph's new Cereals Chair, Dr. Koushik Seetharaman, will facilitate an intensive, hands-on workshop that covers the fundamentals of wheat flour properties, as well as new technologies and trends in flour quality, nutrition and utilization. Location: GFTC, Guelph

Northern Ontario Agri-Food Education & Marketing Inc. presents 'Growing Your Opportunities Conference – Capturing Local Food Opportunities in Northern Ontario' Saturday, November 29th, 2008 in Sudbury. Key note speaker Margaret Webb, Author of 'Apples to Oysters – A food Lovers Tour of Canadian Farms'. For more details and registration visit: <http://norontagrifood.org/pdf/gyoconference-Oct08.pdf> or call 1-705-694-4396

Growing Your Opportunities *Quest for New Farm Value* workshops:

A two day workshop series for farm and rural based entrepreneurs seeking new and expanding marketplace opportunities, up to 15 workshops will be held across the province in 2009.

The workshop offers an interactive environment to assist participants: Find innovative ways to market their new or existing products and services; Create a dynamic but simple business plan; and explore pricing, profit margins and financing a plan. Visit : www.ontario.ca/agbusiness or 1-888-466-2372

Growing Your Farm Profits

A two day workshop series to help farmers assess their business and develop an action plan. It covers all aspects of an operation, including how to develop a business strategy, marketing, production, human resources, financial management, social responsibility, succession planning and business structure and then set next step action plans for improvement. Visit : www.ontario.ca/agbusiness or 1-888-466-2372

Great Lakes Community Shared Agriculture Conference

Seeding the Future – Growing Together!
November 21-23, 2008
Geneva Park Conference Centre, Orillia, ON
<http://www.csaconference2008.ca/>

Annual Organic Conference, January 22 – 25, 2009, U. of Guelph, Univ. Centre (workshops, training, seminars)

Theme – “O” is for Opportunity. Workshops and large trade show. This conference is annually attended by 1,500 to 2,000 people from all segments of the organic food value chain. For further details, visit <http://www.guelphorganicconf.ca/>

New Factsheets

OMAFRA Factsheet - Options for Farmers Dealing with Financial Difficulties, Order Number 08-033

Even the best-managed business can experience financial difficulties when market prices decline, part of the farm business fails to generate the expected profits, or financing arrangements are inadequate. This Factsheet is aimed at helping farm business owners make decisions about the future direction of their business. It outlines some options farm businesses experiencing financial difficulties can choose as well as what farm business advisory services are available.

Available online at <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/busdev/facts/08-033.htm>

Managing Crop Nutrients, BMP 20, Order number BMP20E

This Best Management Practices book (2008) is a general but detailed primer on meeting the nutrient demands of your crops without wasting resources or risking loss to ground and surface water. This is a resource for nutrient management planning:

- explains what crop nutrients are
- where they come from
- and how they move through soil, plants, water and air
- shows why and how to test soil and manure as the best means to determine what nutrients your crops need
- provides BMPs for nutrient application, to ensure you apply the right rate at the right time in the right place.

You can order at http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/environment/bmp/crop_nut.htm

Production Recommendations for Greenhouse Floriculture (OMAFRA Publication 370)

To order go to <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/pub370/p370order.htm> (\$20 each)

Links to Organic Agriculture Information

Organic Council of Ontario (OCO)

<http://www.organiccouncil.ca>

Canadian Organic Growers (COG)

<http://www.cog.ca>

OMAFRA Organic Agriculture

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

Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario (EFAO)

<http://www.efao.ca>

Organic Agricultural Centre of Canada (OACC)

<http://www.oacc.info>

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