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Welcome to "ON Organic"

Hugh Martin, Organic Crop Production Program Lead, OMAFRA

This month there are a variety of articles from various sources that I have linked in to help keep you up to date. I would also like to remind you of two OMAFRA programs that you should look at to see if they apply to you, these are the Premier's Innovation Awards (application deadline Dec 1, 2008) and the Ontario Market Investment Fund.

Thanks to Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario (EFAO) Organic Council of Ontario (OCO) for forwarding this on to their email lists, and I encourage you to forward it on to other 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> or
<http://www.ontario.ca/organic>

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
Linda Cooper – OMAFRA, Client Service Representative

Planting the Seeds for More Agri-Food Innovation

Premier's Innovation Awards Program Invites New Applications

The five-year, \$2.5-million Premier's Award for Agri-food Innovation Excellence, announced as part of the 2006 provincial budget, recognizes that farmers have always been innovative in the running of their businesses and will foster even greater innovation across the province's Agri-food sector.

There will be up to 55 regional award winners annually, with a cash prize of \$5,000 each. From these winners, a Minister's Award of up to \$50,000 and a Premier's Award of up to \$100,000 will be selected.

For more information go to:

http://www.omafr.gov.on.ca/english/premier_award/index.html

Ontario Market Investment Fund

The Government of Ontario is committed to working with farmers, industry and local food networks to help Ontario families get local Ontario food onto their kitchen tables.

The \$12-million, four-year, Ontario Market Investment Fund was announced in the 2008 Ontario Budget and is targeted to promote consumer awareness of Ontario-produced foods and encourages Ontario to buy locally.

The Ontario Market Investment Fund will improve consumer access to locally produced foods by supporting industry and local food network marketing and coordination efforts.

For more information go to: <http://www.omafr.gov.on.ca/english/food/domestic/omif/omif.html>

Environmental Farm Plan Workshops

The Environmental Farm Plan Program (EFP) is an excellent program to help farmers identify their environmental weaknesses and potential solutions (including funding programs) to help them address areas of environmental risk.

To participate in the EFP program you must register in advance with your OSCIA Program Representative. You may choose the workshop location that is more convenient for you. There is no registration cost for attending the

workshops. Refreshments often provided in the morning, may include lunch.

If you are interested in participating in a workshop but the present schedule does not meet your needs, please call your Program Representative and further workshops will be planned according to needs and demand

For a list of EFP workshops and Regional Representatives go to www.ontariosoilcrop.org/cms/en/Programs/Workshops/ProgramsCalendar.aspx?menuid=60

This listing may not be complete. Please check with the Program Representative for your county/district for exact information on workshop dates and locations.

Minimal Composting of Beef Cattle Manure Reduces Antibiotic Levels

Composting beef cattle manure, even with minimal management, can significantly reduce the concentrations of antibiotics in the manure, according to an [Agricultural Research Service](#) (ARS) pilot study. The scientists found that composting manure from beef cattle could reduce concentrations of antibiotics by more than 99 percent.

As found at www.newfarm.org, see full report at: <http://www.ars.usda.gov/is/pr/2008/080922.htm>

Organic Farm Performance in Minnesota 2007

By Dale Nordquist, Ron Dvergsten, and Meg Moynihan

This report summarizes the individual farm financial results for participants in the Minnesota Organic Farm Business Management Project for 2007 with comparisons to 2006 performance. Whole farm information and enterprise costs and returns are reported. The year-end analysis of the individual farms was completed by Minnesota Farm Business Management Education Program instructors or by Minnesota Farm Management Associations. A total of 65 farms participated in the program for 2007, down slightly from 71 in 2006. Of those, 45 were "total organic," meaning that all of the agricultural products produced on the farm were produced under organic certification, and 20 were "partial organic," having both certified organic and non-organic production.

For the full report from U of Minnesota go to (39 pages pdf 790K) <http://www.finbin.umn.edu/docs/orgfarmbusmgmt08web.pdf>

Articles from Other Newsletters

Post-harvest Quality Initiatives and Resources

By Pam Fisher - Berry Crop Specialist/OMAFRA

I recently attended a webinar sponsored by the University of California and the California Strawberry Commission. The webinar included 6 presentations from specialists in the industry on food safety and post harvest quality. The target audience for this initiative was buyers of California strawberries. However, there was some useful information and reminders for growers as well. Here are some of the take home messages from the Webinar.

You can view the presentations and read more the Postharvest Technology Research & Information Centre, UC Davis website.

From the Ontario Berry Grower, for full article go to: <http://www.omafr.gov.on.ca/english/crops/hort/news/allontario/ao0608a3.htm>

The Steps to Organic Certification

By Hugh Martin - Organic Crop Production Program Lead/OMAFRA

If you decide to become an "organic" food producer the next step is to decide if you need to become "certified organic". After June 30, 2009 all organic food producers in Canada will have to be certified if they are selling organic products outside the country (export) or outside of their province (inter-provincial). Currently there are no "intra-provincial" regulations for producers within Ontario who are selling to customers within Ontario, however many stores, processors and food buyers may request products be "certified organic" for the benefits of their business.

The main reason to become certified is to assure your customers and buyers that your operation has been inspected and that your products meet the requirements of the Canadian organic regulations and the related standards. Being certified will cost farmers approximately \$500-\$1000 per year depending on the size and complexity of their farm. The fees for food processors tend to be higher depending on size and complexity of the operation. The other cost of certification is the paperwork for the application and to satisfy the certification body (CB) and inspectors that you are managing your business in a way that can verify that you are in compliance with the standards and can document the audit trail on products to show their traceability and your ability to maintain the organic integrity of the product.

From OMAFRA Hort Matters newsletter, for full article go to: <http://www.omafr.gov.on.ca/english/crops/hort/news/hortmatt/2008/23hrt08a3.htm>

What Happened To My Garlic? Dealing With the Microscopic Culprit

By Kristy Grigg, Vegetable Crop Specialist/OMAFRA

I have received numerous calls and samples from garlic growers this season, all asking the above question. And after laboratory analysis, the answer for most: stem and bulb nematode.

Unfortunately, these microscopic worm-like organisms can feed in or on the bulbs of garlic, resulting in significant yield reduction. Many growers who contacted me didn't realize they had a problem with this pest until the end of the season when they started harvesting their bulbs. Traditionally, it is recommended to scout for stunted young plants or any signs of chlorosis or swelling. Since these symptoms can sometimes be overlooked, it's best that growers take a preventative approach to nematode management by carrying out soil and bulb testing.

This is a great time of the year to have your soil tested for the presence of this pest. In general, nematode populations tend to peak in May-June and September-October. The tools are simple: a soil core probe or a narrow bladed shovel and a bucket. If you've got these, you are ready to begin!

From OMAFRA Vegetable Crop Update, for full article go to: <http://apps.omafr.gov.on.ca/scripts/english/crops/agriphone/article.asp?ID=1635>

Surround WP Crop Protectant expanded for use against leafhoppers on dry beans, potatoes, carrots, strawberries, raspberries and leafy vegetables (crop group 4) in Canada

By J. Chaput - Minor Use Coordinator/OMAFRA;
L. Cass - AAFC-PMC/Ottawa

The Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) recently announced the approval of a minor use label expansion for Surround WP Crop Protectant (kaolin) for reduction in damage from leafhoppers on dry beans, potatoes, carrots, strawberries, raspberries and leafy vegetables (crop group 4, including celery, lettuce, parsley and spinach) in Canada. Surround WP Crop Protectant, a novel, barrier film, pest management tool, was already labeled in Canada for reduction in damage from insect pests of pome fruits and tree nuts, leafhoppers on grapes and cucumber beetles on cucurbit vegetables and has been a welcome addition to the IPM toolkit for both organic and conventional producers.

From OMAFRA Hort Matters Newsletter, for full article go to: <http://www.omafr.gov.on.ca/english/crops/hort/news/hortmatt/2008/23hrt08a5.htm>

Articles from Other Newsletters (cont'd)

The Control of Apple Maggots in Organic Orchards with GF-120 NF Naturalyte* Fruit Fly Bait

By Julia Reekie and Eric Specht Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Kentville, Nova Scotia Kathryn Carter, Margaret Appleby and Hannah Fraser Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs Ken Wilson and Lindsay Pink, Ontario

The apple maggot (*Rhagoletis pomonella*) is indigenous to North America and is especially widespread in eastern Canada causing fruit damage and economic loss. It is a quarantine pest and infested apples have little or no market value.

For organic orchards, the only registered control product is Surround®, a kaolin clay powder, serving to deter but not actively killing the maggot flies.

GF-120 Naturalyte* fruit fly bait is a relatively new organic insecticide (0.02 % spinosad) which has the potential to control apple maggot.

Six field trials using different rates of GF-120 (1.5 L/ha, 2.25 L/ha and 3.0 L/ha) were conducted in the summer of 2007 in organic orchards located in two Canadian provinces, Nova Scotia and Ontario; the efficacy of GF-120 was assessed by comparing its performance to the level of apple maggot control achieved by Surround®.

From the Organic Agricultural Centre of Canada website, for full article go to:
http://www.oacc.info/ResearchDatabase/res_naturalyte_bait.asp

Access to Pasture Rule for Organic Livestock (USDA NOP Proposed)

The “access to pasture” standards are always widely debated in organic standards and implementation, especially as they apply to large livestock operations. Recently the USDA National Organic Program released it proposed rule on the topic. Details of this are posted on the Northeast Organic Dairy Producer Association (NODPA) website.

For details go to <http://nodpa.com/rule.shtml>

OACC E-zine

Each month the Organic Agricultural Centre of Canada emails its E-Zine newsletter which shows what is new on the OACC website including articles, research, events etc. The November issue is now available.

You can find it at http://www.organicagcentre.ca/FriendsE-zines/new_welcome.asp

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>

2008 Events

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

Limited seats, Registration is filling fast.

<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.

Jan 22-23, 2008 Courses (by EFAO)

Jan 22, 2008 –The Great Lakes Grass Energy Symposium (by REAP)

Jan 23, 2008

- 6th Annual Social Research in Organic Agriculture
- Organic Research Symposium
- Growing Certified Organic Vegetable Seeds
- Efficient Organic Market Garden Production

Jan 24-25, 2008 – Speakers, Workshops, Trade Show

For further details, visit <http://www.guelphorganicconf.ca/>

Other Organic Events are also listed at: EFAO -

http://www.efao.ca/pages/courses_workshops.html

COG - <http://www.cog.ca/events.php>

OCO - <http://www.organiccouncil.ca/content.sz?cid=34>

OACC - http://www.organicagcentre.ca/Events/events_main.asp

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