ON Organic

JULY 2009

Welcome to "ON Organic"

Hugh Martin, Organic Crop Production Program Lead, OMAFRA

Welcome to the July 2009 issue of ON Organic. The final version of the new federal organic regulation is now in force and I have included a number of links to information about it. We also have put out a number of crop articles from our different OMAFRA crop newsletters on various issues which I have linked in for your interest.

Thanks to Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario (EFAO) and Organic Council of Ontario (OCO) for forwarding this on to their email lists, and I encourage you to share it with other colleagues who may find it useful. As always we welcome your comments.

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.ontario.ca/organic and http://www.ontario.ca/biologique

In This Issue...

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Organic Products Regulations – they are official!

By Hugh Martin, Organic Crop Production Program Lead

The final Canada Organic Products Regulations (OPR) were implemented on June 30, 2009. They also include the new Canada Organic logo. The regulations require mandatory certification to the revised National Organic Standard for agricultural products represented as organic in international and inter-provincial trade, or that bear the federal organic agricultural product legend (or federal logo).

The Organic Products Regulations are part of the Canada Agricultural Products Act http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/C-0.4

The Organic Products Regulations can be found at: http://canadagazette.gc.ca/rp-pr/p2/2009/2009-06-24/html/sor-dors176-eng.html

The National Organic Standards are available at (total cost is $60+GST) http://www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/cgsb/on_the_net/organic/index-e.html

The CFIA Canada Organic Office (COO) website has been updated to include information on the Regulations and the Equivalency Agreement as well as other essential details: http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/fssa/orgbio/orgbioe.shtml

Includes

- List of Conformity Verification Bodies (CVB)
- List of Accredited Certification Bodies (CB)
- Canada/US Equivalency Determination or Import/Export Agreements
- Canada Organic Regime: Draft Stream of Commerce and Enforcement Policy
- Canada Organic Regime: A Certified Choice
- Questions and Answers - *Organic Products Regulations 2009* (these will be updated regularly)

Most if not all of the producers will work with their existing certification bodies much as before. The CFIA list of accredited CBs is linked in above. All CBs are now assessed and monitored for accreditation by the Conformity Verification Body who recommends to the Canada Organic Office who should be accredited by the CFIA. There are 5 CVBs and since some of them work in other countries the list of accredited CBs is now quite long and includes organic certification bodies from around the world. Most if not all of the certification bodies that are currently certifying organic operations in Ontario are now accredited to the new regulations.

US Canada Equivalency Agreement

The United States and Canada reached an agreement in June 2009 to allow foods certified organic to be sold in both countries. The agreement takes effect immediately.

The equivalency does have some exceptions:

- For products going to the US from Canada note that agricultural products derived from animals treated with antibiotics shall not be marketed as organic in the United States (this affects dairy mostly).
- For products coming into Canada from the US there are three exceptions
  - Agricultural products produced with the use of sodium nitrate shall not be sold or marketed as organic in Canada
  - Agricultural products produced hydroponic or aeroponic production methods shall not be sold or marketed as organic in Canada
  - Agricultural products derived from animals must be produced according to livestock stocking rates as set out in CAN.CGSB-32-310-2006 (Amended October 2008)

Under the agreement all organic foods being exported from Canada to the US must be certified to the Canadian Organic Products Regulations.

Canada is the largest export market for U.S. organic products and USDA estimates that more than 75 percent of Canada's organic consumption comes from the United States. Estimates of the total market for organic products in Canada range from $2.1 billion to $2.6 billion per year

Frequently Asked Questions on Canada/US Equivalency on the CFIA -COO website: http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/fssa/orgbio/orgbioimporte.shtml

Information on Canada/US Equivalency on the USDA - NOP website: http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSv1.0/ams.fetchTemplateData.do?template=TemplateN&navID=NationalOrganicProgram&page=USCanadaDeterminationofEquivalency&leftNav=NationalOrganicProgram&description=US-Canada%20Determination%20of%20Equivalency&acct=nopgeninfo

Information on Canada/US Equivalency on the Organic Trade Association website http://www.ota.com/equivalency.html

Food Safety and Traceability Information

By Giselle Vanneste, Food Safety Training Specialist, OMAFRA

If you are looking for Food Safety and Traceability information look at the updated OMAFRA website - www.ontario.ca/foodsafety

It includes:

- Funding programs available such as the new Food Safety and Traceability Initiative
- the *Advantage Good Agricultural Practices* food safety program
- Food safety for the agriculture sector
- Traceability in the agri-food industry
- Food Safety for the Food Processing Industry including the *Advantage* programs for processors resources, examples from industry and benefits of the program
- Regulatory compliance support in the agri-food sector

For questions on Food Safety and Traceability, please email advantage@ontario.ca or call our toll-free food safety and traceability help line at 1-866-641-3663.

OMAFRA Newsletter Articles

There is Value in Wheat Straw!

By Peter Johnson, Cereal Specialist/OMAFRA Stratford

The value of straw is often a hotly debated question and as wheat harvest approaches it would be a good time to discuss the situation. Straw has value from both the nutrients removed and the organic matter addition it will return to the soil. Table 4-6, Straw Nutrients, from OMAFRA the Field Crop Agronomy Guide, shows the range of nutrients that straw may contain. Straw nutrient concentration can vary greatly - straw from hard wheat varieties will generally contain less (approximately 2.75 lb/tonne or 1.25 kg/tonne) nitrogen than soft wheat straw (Falk, 2005). Potash concentration varies tremendously in straw, as potash is readily leached from straw by rainfall after maturity. The only accurate way to determine nutrient value is through an analysis.

There is added debate about whether the nitrogen component should be included in the value of straw. The carbon:nitrogen ratio of straw is quite high (80:1), which would require additional nitrogen for breakdown by soil organisms. Thus, many growers do not add nitrogen into the value calculation. Using average nutrient concentrations, straw value can be calculated using the formulas shown in Table 4-6.

Table 4 - 6. Straw Nutrients

	Nutrient Kg/tonne (lb/tonne)		
	Mean	**Minimum**	**Maximum**
Nitrogen	7.0 (15.4)	4.2 (9.2)	10.7 (23.5)
Phosphorus (P_2O_5)	1.6 (3.5)	0.9 (2.0)	3.0 (6.6)
Potassium (K_2O)	8.4 (18.5)	4.0 (8.8)	21.2 (46.8)
Johnson, 2003/2004 and Falk, 2004/2005			
Straw value $/tonne (P and K only) = $/tonne MAP x 0.003 + $/tonne potash x 0.014 Straw value $/tonne (N,P,K) = $/tonne urea x 0.015 + above To change value to cents/pound, divide answer by 22.05			

The value of the organic matter that straw returns to the soil is much more difficult to calculate. There is no doubt that the organic matter value is extremely significant. Estimates range from at least equal value to the nutrient removal, to estimates that removal of four high-yield straw crops could reduce soil organic matter by 0.1%. This 0.1% organic matter could be capable of holding up to 4.4 cm (1.75 in.) of available water for crop growth. In dry seasons, this amount of water might result in an additional 0.24 t/ha (3.5 bu/acre) of soybeans, or 0.88 t/ha (14 bu/acre) of corn yield. While these are simply mathematical estimates of the organic matter impact, they drive home the point of just how valuable that component can be and something you should consider your straw value.

For full article go to http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/field/news/croppest/2009/08cpo09a3.htm

Getting Wheat Bins Ready

By Helmut Spieser - Engineer, Field Crop Conditioning & Environment/OMAFRA Ridgetown

Wheat fields are just starting to turn and one can see that the heads are no longer green. Combines can be seen in farm yards with all the panels open looking all the while like a big bird readying for takeoff. Yes, getting the combine ready is necessary but equally important is making sure your storage bins are ready for the new crop of wheat. We talk about this every year and then months down the road we deal with storage problems that in some cases are as a result of poor or inadequate bin preparation.

When you unload the bin in preparation for receiving wheat, it's only part of the job. Congratulations on getting the bin empty by the end of June. If the next thing you do is put wheat in the bin you missed a critical part of a good storage protocol. You need to get the bin ready for the wheat, which with any luck will happen in July. This means getting the inside of the bin as clean as possible.

First Golden Rule of Grain Storage *- Never put new grain on top of old grain!*
Second Golden Rule of Grain Storage *- Wear an N95 or N99 dust mask when handling grain to protect yourself from fine dust and mould spores!*
Third Golden Rule of Grain Storage *- Never run the fan in an empty bin if it will lift the floor!*

Preventative Maintenance Checklist

- check for water leaks, in the roof, around vents and hatches, around wall penetrations and where the bin wall meets the concrete floor
- check that inner door panels close and latch properly
- check that the roof hatch closes and latches properly
- check that slide gates on the unloading basket(s) operate smoothly and close completely
- check that the slide gate is tightly connected to the slide handle
- check that the auger tube is tightly connected to the unloading basket
- check caulking between the wall stiffeners and the aeration floor
- check electrical control boxes and evict all rodents
- service the fan motor as outlined by the manufacturer
- run the unloading auger to see that it works and unload any rodent nests
- replace worn belts on the unloading auger(s)

Investing time now to fully prep the bins before wheat harvest means you are good and ready. Do it now. Don't wait until next month. Preventative maintenance is always easier when you are not rushed and the bin is empty not half-filled or completely full.

Go to the OMAFRA CropPest newsletter for the full article http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/field/news/croppest/2009/08cpo09a2.htm

Checklist for Being an Organic Farmer

By Hugh Martin - Organic Crop Production Program Lead/ OMAFRA

The following are some of the basic requirements for organic farms:

- Only used inputs that are listed on the "Permitted Substances List" of the Canadian Organic Standard on the field during the past 36 months (prior to harvest) of the organic crop;
- Do not use genetically modified inputs (seed, inoculants, etc.);
- Must have a farm plan detailing inputs and practices for each field and livestock group;
- Maintains excellent field records and daily journals to permit traceability of the farm products and on-farm practices;
- Does not grow the same crop as organic and non-organic, unless it is visually distinguishable;
- Maintains an identification system for distinguishing organic and non-organic crops, livestock and products during production, processing, handling and storage;
- Soil fertility and biological activity of the soil is maintained by using crop rotations, incorporating plant and animal matter (cover crops) and animal manure as appropriate according to the farm plan;
- Manure management practices should minimize soil and water degradation;
- Crop pest management enhances crop growth using preventative methods and uses a combination of cultural and mechanical methods, and botanical and biological measures when necessary;
- The operator shall establish and maintain preventative health care measures;
- Livestock shall be managed responsibly with care and respect. Stress shall be minimized in all handling practices;
- Organic livestock operations shall establish and maintain animal living-conditions that accommodate the health and natural behaviour of all animals;
- Organic livestock shall be fed organic feeds and have access to the outdoors whenever weather conditions permit. Herbivores must have access to pasture during the grazing season (minimum 30% of total forage intake);
- An organic system must maintain the organic qualities of the product from production, preparation, storage, handling and labelling, to point of sale;
- Processing methods can be mechanical, physical or biological (e.g. fermentation and smoking) and minimizes the use of non-agricultural ingredients, food additives and processing aids;
- During the transition to certified organic, the operator should apply for certification to an accredited organic certification body at least 15 months prior to harvest of the organic products;
- Protect the environment, minimize soil erosion and soil degradation, and maintain water and air quality as much as possible;
- Encourage biological diversity within the farm system; and
- Recycle materials and use renewable resources whenever possible.

This is a very brief synopsis of over 60 pages of the organic standards and on using organic farm practices. For more details, refer to www.ontario.ca/organic.

From OMAFRA CropTalk newsletter
http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/field/news/croptalk/2009/ct-0609a5.htm

Soil Erosion - This Year More Than Most

By Ian McDonald - Applied Research Coordinator; Adam Hayes - Soil Management Specialist/ Field Crops/OMAFRA

Did you notice all the soil erosion this spring? It is concerning, and it makes one wonder if we are forgetting all the important lessons we have learned. It did not seem to matter whether it was no-till or tilled ground, erosion was definitely increased this spring.

Why Did It Happen?
The conditions in late winter and early spring set the stage for increased soil erosion potential. Even growers that had soil erosion measures in place experienced erosion they hadn't seen for years. There were several thaws where the top few centimetres of soil had thawed, followed by significant rainfall events that carried saturated soil away. Two significant rain events in mid-spring dropped 37 mm (Apr. 25) and 28 mm (Apr. 30) in the London area. Rivers were full of brown water. Rills and gullies were everywhere in newly worked fields and some that were planted. Rain events of these severities can be more than no-till and residue cover can protect, where there is significant overland water flow. Many soils were overly wet this spring, increasing the overland flow and making soils more prone to erosion. Wherever there was some slope, significant water collected, resulting in the movement of soil and formation of rills.

Lessons Learned
We have to continue to be diligent in managing our soil resource. Although we can say that these heavy down pours are infrequent, they do happen. It doesn't take many of them to lead to significant soil loss. Climate change researchers predict more severe rainfall events and possibly less snow cover, so, we may see this scenario more often. Soil loss not only reduces crop productivity, but also impacts the environment. Contamination of surface water sources can result when fertilized, planted and sprayed fields suffer massive rill and overland water flow. These events can quickly raise the ire of the public and cause problems.

Keeping the Soil in Place
Landowners, who have worked hard to put soil conservation measures in place, need to ensure the maintenance is kept up. Grass waterways should not have been reduced in width over time. Consider additional measures to address new problems. For example, even winter wheat fields planted no-till into soybean stubble were suffering erosion this year. A living cover crop has the ability to buffer against erosion because the active root system and ground cover holds soil and reduces the punishing aspect of downpours. However, excessive concentrated flows are more than this can handle, so some method of diverting the water may be necessary. For landowners who have not implemented a full soil conservation program, there are also management options that can be implemented to reduce erosion potential. These options include grassed waterways, buffer strips, drop inlets, rock chutes, drainage, water and sediment control basins, crop rotation, reduced tillage and cover crops. Producers need to evaluate the topography of their fields. There are many fields that should have grassed waterways or water and sediment control basins, but are bare soil from fence row to fence row. Aggressive fall tillage that occurred last year likely contributed to the problem. Very few fields are planted to cover crops. Many soil conservation measures do not require much extra effort or expense. Grants are available through the Environmental Farm Plan and Conservation Authorities to help cover the costs.

Soil loss is a very visible cost that we don't assign enough value to. Our soil resource is critical to our long term productivity and wealth as a province and a nation. If we don't take care of it, increasing public interest in environmental issues could bring unwanted attention or restrictions. More effort has to be taken by producers to save this valuable resource for the prosperity of themselves and the public.

For full article go the OMAFRA newsletter CropTalk http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/field/news/croptalk/2009/ct-0609a8.htm

Why Some Cabbage Looper Control Programs May Not be Working

By Gillian Ferguson - Greenhouse Vegetable IPM Specialist/OMAFRA

Cabbage loopers infest greenhouse vegetable crops every year, either from annual migration of adult moths from the south or from populations that have carried over from the previous year. The major strategy for managing looper populations in greenhouse vegetables is the use of the biological control agent, Bacillus thuringiensis subsp. kurstaki, also referred to as Btk which is marketed as Dipel®, Foray®, and Bioprotec®. Btk is a bacterium that uniquely forms protein crystals when producing spores, and it is the protein crystals that are the toxic component of Btk. After a looper ingests the spores and crystals of Btk that have been applied to the foliage, the crystals dissolve in the alkaline medium of the stomach. Within 24 to 48 hr, the dissolved crystals cause the stomach wall to break down and the spores begin to invade the body. The looper then dies from the combined effects of starvation and tissue damage, resulting in a happy grower. However, there are some mitigating factors that could result in less than perfect control when using Btk against loopers.

One such factor could be the presence of resistant populations that have either migrated from outdoor populations, or that have overwintered in the greenhouse. Work done at the University of British Columbia (UBC) by Alida Janmaat and Judith Myers between 2000 and 2002 in greenhouse vegetable crops, revealed the existence of cabbage looper populations that were resistant to Btk. In those greenhouses where the most resistant populations were found, growers had reported poor control using Btk. Also, the total amount of Btk applied bore a strong relationship to the level of resistance measured. Fortunately, however, lab studies by the UBC researchers also found that this resistance was unstable. They found that resistance generally declined in the absence of Btk exposure, so that rotation with another product having a different mode of action was associated with a decrease in resistance. This study reinforces the need to reduce reliance on a single strategy. It also emphasizes the need for a thorough cleanup at the end of the season to ensure that there's no carryover of resistant populations from one season to the next.

Another factor that must be considered in the effectiveness of Btk is the interval between applications because the toxicity of Btk declines with time as a result of the effects of the environment. Field studies done in the late 1970s at the California Polytechnic State University concluded that it is the combined action of sunlight, leaf temperature, and vapour pressure deficit that contributes to decay of Btk. Under greenhouse conditions, however, there is some protection afforded by the greenhouse cover. The amount of light protection from the cover would depend on the wavelength that is transmitted. The California study indicated that light wavelengths greater than or equal to 400 nm have the greatest killing action on Btk spores. Work done in BC greenhouse vegetable operations by the same UBC workers mentioned above, indicated that the toxicity of Btk at 5 days after application was similar or slightly reduced, when compared with toxicity at 1 day after application. Toxicity had declined to 50% at 9 days after application.

To conclude, the results of the studies reported in this article indicate a few key factors - (1) a thorough end of year cleanup is essential for eradicating resistant populations and preventing carryover, (2) rotation during the season will help reduce the buildup of resistance, (3) extended intervals between Btk applications will result in reduced mortality, and (4) IPM principles need to be upheld wherein as many strategies (e.g. light traps, pheromone traps, other biocontrol agents) as possible should be in place to maximize suppression of looper populations.

For full article go to OMAFRA Greenhouse Growers Notes newsletter at http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/hort/news/grower/2009/07gn09a1.htm

Mechanical Blossom Thinning - Dream or Reality

By Ken Slingerland - Tender Fruit & Grape Specialist/ OMAFRA

The tender fruit growers need to reduce labour costs in order to remain efficient and profitable. According to the OMAFRA publication "Establishment and Production Costs for Tender Fruit in Ontario 2006 Economic Report, the cost for thinning fresh market peaches contributed $500 per acre to the overall variable costs. There are 6,374 peaches and nectarines in the province (Ontario Tender Fruit Tree Survey 2009). The peach and nectarine industry could realize a savings of approximately $1.6 million if mechanical blossom thinning could reduce 50% of the crop and therefore 50% of the labour costs. Currently, all tender fruit must be hand thinned since there are no chemical thinners available in the foreseeable future.

The success of the spring trials could not have been possible without the support of Matt Peters, M.N. Bartlett Inc. The company purchased two Darwin mechanical thinning machines this spring and cooperated with the thinning investigation and growers demonstrations. The funding was provided from Vineland Research and Innovation Centre through the Orchard and Vineyard Transition Fund and further supported by the Ontario Tender Fruit Producers' Marketing Board and the Apple Growers of Ontario.
Is it possible to mechanize fruit thinning in the orchard. There are many issues and questions that need to be answered:

- Can we get all the trees thinned in time during the bloom period? Answer - it can do about 10-15 acres per day depending upon tractor speed and orchard design.
- Is it cost effective? Answer - yes - payback could be in 1-2 years depending upon number of acres
- Is mechanical thinning effective on trees not yet pruned? Answer - yes - but not likely as good as pruned trees
- Will the machine thin enough? Yes - but always need to adjust tractor speed, number of strings, rpm of strings, timing of bloom
- Is it possible to over-thin? Answer - yes - same as above

Eight peach growers, one plum and four apple growers participated in thinning trials this spring. The results to date have been positive. Data collected at each site included; blossom counts pre-thin using the Darwin mechanical thinning machine and Control (hand thinning). Blossom counts were done shortly after using the Darwin. The desired goal was to reduce approximately 40-50% of the peach bloom.

The first trial involved mature Japanese plum trees that were tall and vigourous. 24.1% of the Early Golden bloom 25.0% of the Shiro bloom was removed. Since this was the first attempt, a few limbs were broken and not enough blossom thinning

was achieved. Harrow Diamond trees at approximately 10-20% full bloom were also mechanically thinned. Trees that were un-pruned averaged 47.3% blossoms thinned and pruned trees averaged 46.3% blossoms thinned. The thinning was consistent but the un-pruned trees may still be carrying a larger crop since the Darwin might not have penetrated the inner canopy.

In another observation of standard pruned Harrow Diamond trees, the Darwin vertical thinner removed 56.8% of the blossoms from the sides and the horizontal Darwin removed 68.4% of the blossoms from the top. Most of the grower demonstrations for peach achieved the desired thinning affect of around 40-50% blossom removal.

Other replicated trials involved Dr. John Cline and Debbie Norton, from the Department of Plant Agriculture, University of Guelph using grower sites that had spindle trained trees at one site and central leader trained trees at another site. Intensive data such as fruit counts and size grading will be collected at these two sites throughout the growing season and reported later in the fall.

Many factors are involved in how many blossoms the Darwin can remove. Factors include the numbers of rows of strings, how many strings per row, the rpm of the rotation of the drum holding the strings and the tractor speed. In Europe, the tractor typical travels 8-10 kph for apple systems but 4-5 kph was the desired speed for peaches in Ontario orchards. Future peach and other tender fruit orchards will have to develop new strategies such as the vertical shape to achieve the greatest benefit of mechanization. The orchard architectures would then allow growers to increase the number of rows per acre to increase overall orchard efficiency. Other benefits of mechanical thinning have been the increase in fruit size which affects grower profitability as well as reducing labor costs. Look for more information in newsletter updates and the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Convention 2010.

For full article go to OMAFRA TenderFruit and Grapevine newsletter at http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/hort/news/tenderfr/tf1305a2.htm
The Pennsylvania Orchard Thinning Video - http://www.abe.psu.edu/scri/

Marketing Impacts Your Farm Business Success

By John Bancroft - Market Strategies Program Lead/ OMAFRA

The marketing of your cattle or beef has a direct impact on your overall business success. In fact, one of the biggest mistakes made in running a business is producing a product without researching if there is an actual market for it. Success comes in finding ways to encourage the market to choose your product first. Marketing is an ongoing process of understanding your customers/buyers needs and striving to fulfill those needs better than your competition. Marketing is everything that happens before and after the sale that facilitates both current and future sales transactions with your customer/buyer. Unless you have a good knowledge of the sector you operate in, and how your product fits into that sector, it is difficult to focus on anything other than production. Changing consumer demands, local and global competition and other market forces have resulted in the business of agriculture moving from being focused on production to being market focused.

Understanding the marketplace is the first step in positioning a successful product for profit. Market research or an analysis of the marketplace is vital before starting a new business, introducing a new product, maintaining your existing business, or discovering why the demand of your product is declining. Knowing and anticipating your customer's/buyer's needs is important. The challenge for producers is to stay ahead of the curve to anticipate and prepare for marketplace changes.

Through the market planning process, the five P's of marketing need to be considered. The task is focusing on the answers from the marketplace/customer to the various questions posed. The opportunity becomes establishing a customer relationship as opposed to just making a sale. Here are the five P's with some sample questions with cattle or beef being the product:

- Product - How does your product satisfy the customer's needs?
- Positioning - What is unique about your product compared to your competitor and how does this create a target market for you?
- Place - What is the place or distribution channel that makes your product available to the customer? Are there alternatives?
- Price - The price of the product must balance the value or benefit to the customer with profit or return to the seller and be competitive with the competition. What are the price risks and are there opportunities to manage price risk?
- Promotion - What information and methods can be used to promote your product?

Marketing should focus on the objective(s) you want to achieve in your marketing plan. Market planning will consider what and how much is produced, when it will be available to market, where it will be sold, and the cost to produce it. Understanding the strengths and weaknesses of the marketing channels available is a key step in market planning. These factors impact the business plan through the cash flow. A

marketing plan is like a road map since it provides the details, responsibilities, and actions for marketing your cattle or beef. This minimizes the guesswork and emotion when making key marketing decisions.

So what can be done to facilitate marketing? Besides the prior items discussed, the following list has seven action points to consider:

- Develop and maintain an understanding of your market trends, impacts, and how it functions
- Explore and evaluate alternative market opportunities
- Assess your marketing skills and abilities to define your training needs
- Determine your cost of production and profit margin
- Foster and build relationships within the value chain
- Develop a network of market information resources and services
- Benchmark and monitor your marketing plan

If you are looking for marketing resources, check out the marketing section at www.ontario.ca/agbusiness. Further marketing resources are also listed under the Grow Your Farm Profits section.

Funding Programs (from the OMAFRA Food Bulletin)

NRC-IRAP: Small Project Accelerated Review Process (ARP)

The National Research Council of Canada, through its Industrial Research Assistance Program (NRC-IRAP), is helping small and medium-sized enterprises grow by providing funding for business, technology and market-oriented support.

The Small Project Accelerated Review Process (ARP) provides grants of up to $50,000 to cover 75 per cent of consulting costs and 100 per cent of internal labour for projects that address technology, business and market-oriented needs.

Eligible firms must be incorporated and for-profit with 500 or less full-time employees; have a separate legal status and operate in Canada; and have the objective to grow and generate profits through the adoption, development and commercialization of innovative or technology-driven products, services or processes.

For more information, including a list of eligible projects, contact your local Industrial Technology Advisor or contact NRC-IRAP at 1-877-994-4727.

Canadian Dairy Commission Matching Investment Fund

Your idea for a new and innovative dairy product may be eligible for funding from the Canadian Dairy Commission's (CDC) new Matching Investment Fund (MIF).

The CDC has committed $6 million over three years to encourage growth and innovation in the manufacture and use of Canadian dairy products and ingredients. Funding is available for product development activities, such as consultations with experts, product analysis, trials and technology transfer, industrial scale tests, facility retrofitting, sample preparation and packaging techniques.
The maximum CDC contribution per project is $50,000 for consultations and $250,000 for product development. This funding must be matched in cash or in kind by the participating companies. Eligible applicants include dairy product manufacturers, processors and food technology centres.

For more information or to apply, download the MIF Program Guide, which includes a Project Summary Form for initial application, from www.MILKingredients.ca. The program guide is also available by calling 1-866-366-0676, or e-mailing the program administrator at ingredients@agr.gc.ca. MIF applications will be accepted from August 1, 2009 to July 31, 2012, subject to available funds.

Small Business Internship Program (SBIP)

The Small Business Internship Program provides small and medium-sized businesses (SME's) up to a total of $10,000 to hire a post secondary student intern to assist them in their adoption of information and communications technologies to increase their productivity and competitiveness.

The SME negotiates the salary of the intern, and the benefits they may receive. Once the 12-week internship is over, the Government of Canada will reimburse 75 percent of their eligible costs, up to a total of $10,000. The SME gets the information and communications technologies help they need to grow their business, and the student gets valuable on-the-job experience.

The Small Business Internship Program seeks to improve the competitiveness of SME's by supporting businesses to actively market on-line and improve their competitiveness with e-business practices and technologies.

To be eligible for this program, your firm must:

- be a small or medium-sized enterprise with less than 500 employees;
- be incorporated;
- wish to enhance your e-business capability.

This program will put 20 interns in 12-week positions to help companies get online sales and marketing projects operating. The government pays 75% up to $10,000 for a 12-week position.

For more information or to apply, go to http://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/sbip-pspe.nsf/eng/home.

REMINDER: AIME Initiative — Achieving Innovation & Manufacturing Excellence
Helping manufacturers become more competitive and innovative is the goal of the Achieving Innovation & Manufacturing Excellence (AIME) Initiative, a partnership of the Yves Landry Foundation and the Government of Ontario.

Grants of up to $50,000 are available for training projects that lead to advancements in innovation within the Ontario manufacturing sector.

Due to the popularity of this program, interested companies should submit an application as soon as possible.

More information and application forms are available on the Yves Landry Foundation website.

GFTC Sustainability Services
Sustainable business practices are not only good for the environment they're good for your bottom line. Greening your processes and products can help your organization use resources wisely, save money and build a stronger brand image.

The Guelph Food and Technology Centre (GFTC) is making it easy for the food and beverage industry to go green by offering sustainability services that include training; strategic management consulting; and energy, environment and packaging efficiency assessments.

OMAFRA's sponsorship provides the Ontario food and beverage industry with a 50 per cent discount on GFTC sustainability services and course registrations.

For more information, visit GFTC's website or contact Cher Brethour at cbrethour@gftc.ca or by phone at (519) 821-1246, Ext. 5062.

New Publications

Best Management Practices, Deadstock Disposal, BMP 22E NEW

09-025: Nutrient Management Act, 2002, Deadstock Disposal Options for On-Farm, Agdex 729/400 NEW

08-059: Record Keeping for Non-Profit Organizations, Agdex 057 NEW

08-061: Effective Committees, Agdex 057; replaces 94-015

08-063: Developing Policies and Procedures for Volunteer Organizations, Agdex 050 NEW

09-021: Grassed Waterways, Agdex 751 (revised factsheet)

Events

New Crops, Old Challenges - Tips and Tricks for Managing New Crops!

Simcoe Vegetable and Alternative Crop Open House
August 18, 2009 at 1:30 pm (*Rain date Thursday, August 20, 2009*)

Crops featured include: Chia (salvia grain), bitter melon, kohlrabi, luffa, celtuce, gobo (Japanese Burdock), goji, tomatillo, gourds (bottle, hairy, winter), yard long beans, edamame, skullcap, fenugreek, calendula, edible chrysanthemum, tahtsai, ethnic varieties of eggplant, peppers, cucumber, basil, sweet potatoes.

Other plots and hands-on demonstrations on alternative crops:

- Pest management and sprayer technology: discuss with provincial specialists
- Cover crops: opportunities to save your nitrogen dollars
- Current nitrogen research conducted by the University of Guelph

Enjoy refreshments, meet with other producers and take the opportunity to talk with University of Guelph staff and OMAFRA specialists.

Please RSVP by August 14th by calling 519-426-7127 Ext. 323
August 19-20, 2009 - Ontario First Nations Agri-Food Conference, University of Guelph, Guelph, Ontario Details at http://www.indianag.on.ca/Agenda-Conference-revised.pdf and Registration form at http://www.indianag.on.ca/5-Registration%20-%20Conference.pdf

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.ontario.ca/organic

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