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Welcome to “ON Organic”

Hugh Martin, Organic Crop Production Program Lead, OMAFRA

Welcome to the November 2009 issue of ON Organic. While many are still finishing up harvest of late fall crops or fall tillage it is time to review the programs for winter courses and conferences and set your priorities for winter training. I have tried to list a number of them in this issue. Don't overlook the non-organic conferences that often have some organic speakers or other marketing sessions that are very valuable to organic farms. There are also the various programs to look at, especially the opportunities in Growing Forward which often require you to attend a course or information session to be eligible for the cost share part of the program. In addition to these events don't forget to check the courses and events offered by EFAO, COG and OCO this winter. Never be too busy to learn how to improve the your farm business.

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>

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Considerations for Free Farrowing Systems

by Greg Simpson, Swine Nutritionist, OMAFRA

Most lactation sows in North America are typically housed in some form of crate system. First introduced in the 1960's farrowing crates offered many advantages to producers: reduced sow fighting, lower piglet mortality, better pen hygiene, improved worker safety and higher performance. However, in moving to crates, studies have shown that sows now spend significantly more time standing inactive. This inactivity can lead to joint problems, muscular weakness in the legs and eventually impaired mobility. In addition, crated sows are unable to demonstrate normal behaviours such as nest building or rooting. This deprivation can lead to a number of disorders including chronic stress, depression and frustration, aggression, and abnormal and stereotypic behaviours.

Due to welfare concerns, in many European Union countries, crates systems are no longer permitted or are being phased out. In Canada, the certified organic and "humane" production systems also do not allow the use of crates and lactation sows must be housed in free farrowing systems or pens. However, there are two major issues for producers moving to these systems; increased pre-weaning mortality, due to crushing, and significantly higher labour requirements.

A recent Austrian study compared three types of free farrowing systems with regard to behaviour, health, performance and labour requirements. The trial was conducted from June 2005 to December 2006 in an Austrian commercial sow unit. The 600 sow herd was batch farrowed in a four-week cycle and piglets were weaned at 3 weeks of age. Three types of free farrowing systems were investigated:

- **Free System #1 (FS1, n=20):** 7.6 m², lying area with concrete floor, separate dunging area with slatted floor; anti-crushing bars, provision of a minimum of straw.
- **Free System #2 (FS2, n=23):** 4.9 m², rectangular, slatted floor, no provision of straw, anti-crushing bars and bars to direct lying behaviour of sows.
- **Free System #3 (FS3, n=24):** 4.2 m², trapezoid, slatted floor, no provision of straw, anti-crushing bars.

The behaviour of sows and litters was observed indirectly by means of a digital video recording system. Researchers examined sows' general activity (walking, standing, sitting, lying), time spent lying down and standing up, use of creep area and situations in context to crushing of piglets. In addition, labour requirements and production data (piglets born, piglets weaned per litter, weaning weight, pre-weaning mortality) were evaluated for each system.

The researchers found that in all three systems, the activity of sows was highest during the last 24 hours before farrowing, indicating nest building behaviour. Sows in Farrowing System #1 (FS1) were more active during the farrowing and lactation period compared to sows in the other two systems. In all three systems, changes in sow lying posture was the most dangerous activity for piglets and the centre of the lying area was the most critical zone. The majority of dangerous situations to piglets (60 to 80 %) were observed during farrowing and within 24 hours post farrowing. In Farrowing System #1 (FS1) fewer changes of lying postures were observed during the 24 hours before farrowing. No matter what type of flooring within the free farrowing system, slipping when standing up and lying down was frequent (35-45 % incidence) and did not differ between systems.

No statistical differences between the three free farrowing systems were found in the number of piglets weaned per litter (FS1: 8.87; FS2: 9.05; FS3: 9.29), in piglet loss (FS1: 23.12%; FS2: 20.96%; FS3: 19.09%) and in proportion of piglet loss due to crushing (FS1: 49.1%; FS2: 52.1%; FS3: 53.0%). The pen related labour requirements ranged from 41.9 (FS3) to 63.1 (FS1) minutes per sow over the lactation period.

Based on their study the researchers made the following recommendations to assist producers and direct future research efforts:

- Pre-weaning piglet mortality in the free farrowing systems investigated was high due to a high risk for piglet crushing. In order to minimize the crushing of piglets, the pen layout has to be optimized in terms of size, arrangement and micro climate of the lying and creep areas.
- Care at farrowing has to be adapted to free farrowing conditions. Restlessness and stress of sows must be avoided. Frequent interventions during and after birth provoke posture changes of sows increasing the risk for piglet crushing.
- The activity of sows prior to farrowing indicates nest building behaviour. An adequate amount of straw should be provided in this period.
- From an animal health and welfare point of view, fully slatted free farrowing pens with less than 5.0 m² and no provision of straw are not different than traditional crate systems.

Source:

Baumgartner, J. 2008. Welfare and economic aspects of non-crate farrowing systems. Internal report. Housing of farrowing and lactating sows in non-crate systems. Aarhus University, Copenhagen, Denmark. pp 37-38.



Growing Forward

Best Practices Suite

Growing Forward is a commitment by Canada's [federal](#), provincial and territorial government that supports the development and implementation of best practices in four key areas: Environment and Climate Change; Food Safety and Traceability; Business Development; and Biosecurity. Within each of the programs there are many learning opportunities, workshops and one-on-one sessions available to growers who wish to develop strategies to reach their business goals. If you are interested in exploring the programs under Growing Forward, please visit: www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/about/growingforward/gfontario.htm

The Business Development for Farm Businesses program is delivered locally by the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association. The program begins with a Growing Your Farm Profits workshop. This two-day workshop is free to Ontario farmers and farm businesses and does not require participants to share personal or financial information.

Growing Your Farm Profits workshop provides a planning process and resources to maximize your long-term farm business goals. For workshop details, please call 1-800-265-9751 or visit www.ontariosoilcrop.org/en/programs/gyfp091.htm

The cost-share opportunities that can be accessed after receiving sign-off on your action plan include:

1. Farm Financial Assessment
2. Agriculture Skills Development
3. Advanced Business Planning and Business Plan Implementation

The Agriculture Skills Development option provides cost-share to take farm-related training and skills development intended to support greater farm business viability. Occurring across the province, courses focus on:

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| • Marketing | • Production |
| • Financial Management | • Human Resources |
| • Social Responsibility | • Succession Planning |
| • Business Structure | • Business Strategy |

To explore these learning opportunities, please visit: www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/busdev/gfwdasdeligiblelist.htm

Both the Farm Financial Assessment and the Advanced Business Planning opportunities involve professional one-on-one consultation. The Business Plan Implementation cost-share helps to implement elements of the Advanced Business Planning. To learn more about the cost-share opportunities under the Business Development for Farm Businesses program, please visit: www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/about/growingforward/busdev.htm

The Environment and Climate Change program includes the Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) and the Canada-Ontario Farm Stewardship Program (COFSP). This program provides cost-share opportunities to improve the management of agricultural properties by adopting Best Management Practices (BMP) that contribute to water and air quality, improved soil productivity, enhanced wildlife habitat, or result in energy conservation. To find an EFP workshop in your area, please visit: www.ontariosoilcrop.org/en/programs/workshops/programscalendar.htm

A review of the COFSP has been initiated to ensure that the program continues to meet industry needs. As a result, the COFSP Project Proposal Applications for program year two (2010) are not available at this time. For program status updates, please visit: www.ontariosoilcrop.org/en/program_divide.htm

The Food Safety and Traceability Initiative (FSTI) program provides funding for the adoption food safety programs and traceability systems, and related equipment, training and certification. FSTI is delivered by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and has fully committed the cost-share funds for 2009-10. The next round of cost-share funding for FSTI will be available in 2010. Information sessions are expected to resume in early 2010. Applicants are encouraged to review program guidelines before submitting their applications. For program status updates, please visit: www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/about/growingforward/foodsafety.htm or call 1-888-479-3931.

Whether you are interested in improving your farm business' competitiveness; improving your farms' environmental performance or implementing a food safety or traceability system, visit the Best Practices

Suite of programs under Growing Forward at: www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/about/growingforward/gfontario.htm to learn how you can reach your business goals.

Growing Forward is a commitment by Canada's [federal](#), provincial and territorial governments that supports the development and implementation of best practices in four key areas: Environment and Climate Change; Food Safety and Traceability; Business Development; and Biosecurity.

Attention Organic Farmers: Don't Miss your Local Quest for New Farm Value—Value Plus™ Workshop this Fall/Winter

Are you looking for or do you have a business idea for your farm? Not sure how to make your idea a reality? Local Stakeholders along with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) are offering up to 10 *Quest for New Farm Value – Value Plus™* workshops throughout the province this fall and winter.

Over 2 days, the participant will identify their specific value-added idea, put their idea into action, evaluate market channels, learn the importance and components of a business plan, explore how to finance the stages of the business and manage risk. Workshop leaders include Ontario farm business owners, entrepreneurs and advisors who will share lessons learned and best practices.

Since launching the workshops in 2007, the Quest for New Farm Value workshops continue to receive positive feedback from participants who are looking to implement business ideas that are marketable, profitable and contribute to the long term viability of the farm operation", says Dorene Collins with the Business Management Unit of the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

Here's what some of last year's participants shared about the workshop:

"Invaluable - well worth the investment - very supportive and nourishing opportunity being with experienced like minded people"

"Great information on planning your business from start up to exit including growth opportunities"

"Wow, this was really well done ... One of the best seminars I've been to"

"Great course and many valuable contacts and ideas were gained"

Limited to only 25 registrants per location, interested participants are encouraged to register as soon as possible. Through the generous sponsorship of the Canadian Farm Business Management Council, OMAFRA and local stakeholders, the 2 day course is being offered at a low rate of \$75 per participant. Registration includes 2 fun-filled days of learning, work-book, related print resources, refreshments and lunch.

To register for a workshop nearest you visit: www.ontario.ca/agbusiness or call 1-877-424-1300.

This training opportunity is eligible for cost-share funding through the Growing Forward Business Development for Farm Businesses program. For more information on program requirements, please visit

www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/about/growingforward/busdev.htm or call 1-877-424-1300.

Workshops scheduled to date:

Location	Day #1	Day #2
Thunder Bay	Nov 18, 2009	Nov 19, 2009
Sudbury	Nov 27, 2009	Nov 28, 2009
Peterborough	Jan 30, 2010	Feb 6, 2010
Haldimand County	Jan 30, 2010	Feb 6, 2010
Middlesex County	Feb 22, 2010	Mar 1, 2010
Huron/Perth Counties	Feb 24, 2010	Mar 3, 2010
Alfred—French Language	March, 2010	March, 2010
Ottawa	Feb/March 2010	Feb/March 2010

Survey Results of Good Agricultural Practices

by Ian Young, University of Guelph

A questionnaire led by Ian Young, PhD student at the University of Guelph was mailed to 729 producers (of which 60% responded, which is a very high response rate). Also, 135 questionnaires were completed at 12 conferences (including 4 organic conferences) and workshops or over the internet.

Some of the findings are highlighted below:

- 66% of producers were growing fruits or vegetables
- 57% were raising livestock or poultry
- 29% were producing both fruits/vegetables and livestock/poultry
- 25% were participating in an on-farm food safety program

At least 80% of producers were using most recommended practices, including:

- Traceability and recording keeping
- Maintenance of equipment/buildings
- Cleaning and sanitation
- Appropriate use of chemicals and animal-health products

However, there were some practices that could be improved:

- Only 39% of producers were using a sanitizer in their post-harvest water
- Only 55% had written practices for tasks that impact food safety

Overall, producers that were participating in an on-farm food safety program and that were affiliated with organic groups were more likely to use food safety practices.

We found that niche-market producers in Ontario are using most recommended food safety practices. There are some areas for improvement though, such as water sanitation.

We encourage all producers to apply for a free copy of OMAFRA's food safety manual: "*Advantage Good Agricultural Practices*". You can use the manual to find out which practices you should be using based on the risks present on your farm. Call 1-877-424-1300 for more information about "*Advantage Good Agricultural Practices*" and to receive your free copy.

Finally, we thank all of the producers who responded to our questionnaire. The results will help us to support producers more effectively in the areas that need it most, through focused education and future funding programs.

For more information about this study, please contact Ian Young. Phone: 519-826-2347, Email: iyoung@uoguelph.ca.

Taiwan Recognizes COR

Taiwan has officially and unilaterally recognized Canada's Organic Regime. This means that farmers and processors certified to the Canadian Organic Standards do not require further paperwork in order to export products to Taiwan. With U.S. recognition of Canadian standards, this makes two countries who recognize Canada's regime as being equivalent to their own. Canada is still reviewing the Taiwan standards for equivalency.

Canada is in the process of reviewing the Europe Union's program and standards as a prelude to equivalency negotiations. So far the EU has answered the CFIA's questions concerning substances that are not listed on the Canadian Permitted Substances List.

From COG E-News <http://www.cog.ca/index.php?page=e-newsletter>

Darwin Mechanical Blossom Thinning Update

by Ken Slingerland, Tender Fruit and Grape Specialist, OMAFRA

Several peach orchards in Ontario were blossom-thinned in the Spring of 2009. Data was collected with positive results removing 30-40% of the bloom on average.

Goals of the project were to:

- Analyze and compare the effectiveness of the Darwin to remove peach blossoms using different orchard training systems, tractor speed, string orientation, rotation speed of the strings, etc.
- Record the economic benefit for thinning peaches comparing the Darwin to hand thinning
- Measure any differences in yield, fruit size and number of split pit fruit per tree
- Follow-up harvests and hand thinning times were recorded later on in the summer. Highlights include:
- At one site, a section of 5 trees from two rows was hand-thinned 5 weeks after bloom. The hand thinners from the Darwin row removed only 469 fruit compared to 743 from the adjacent hand row (37% less fruit needed to be removed). The average fruit weight of the Darwin- thinned fruit was 9.37 grams compared to 8.77 grams from the hand thinned row (6% larger).
- Thinning times at most sites were reduced by about 40% per tree.
- At one site, Garnet Beauty trained to open center in a side by side demonstration, produced almost exactly the same yields per 25-tree row, but the fruit size on the Darwin-thinned trees was 140 grams per fruit compared to 126 grams per fruit (an 11% increase). However, the number of split pit fruit was 4.7% compared to the hand thinning at 2.3% during an unusually wet growing season.
- At another site, "AllstarTM" peach was trained to a high density spindle vertically trained system in a replicated trial. Yields were almost identical per tree but fruit size was 159 grams for the Darwin treatment (18 strings at 180 rpm) and 145 grams for the hand-thinned treatment. The percent split pit fruit was almost identical 7.2% for hand versus 7.4% for Darwin. 3 other Darwin treatments with different string arrangements also had larger fruit but were over-thinned resulting in 9 to 18% less yield and 7.6% to 13.4% split pits.

Most of the results have been positive for growers using the Darwin in commercial orchards. Future peach trials will continue in 2010 as growers look forward to new technology to reduce labour costs in the orchard and increase profitability. Look for more information in newsletter updates and at the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Convention 2010.

Preliminary Study on the Effect of Horseradish Extract on Potato Common Scab

by Dr. Eugenia Banks, Potato Specialist, OMAFRA

Introduction

Common scab occurs in most potato-growing areas of the world. The causal organism *Streptomyces scabies* has many strains, and some strains of this bacterium are more aggressive than others. This variability may explain why the production practices recommended to control scab have been so inconsistent. Once scab is introduced into the soil, it will survive indefinitely, even in the absence of potatoes. Scab bacteria are introduced into healthy fields by planting infected seed, by spreading contaminated cattle manure, by spreading infected grade-out tubers in clean fields and by carrying infested soil on farm equipment. A soil pH from 5.5 to 7 is most favorable for scab development. A closely related species, *S. acidiscabies*, is acid tolerant and can produce lesions when potatoes are grown in soils with pH below 5. Scab does not reduce yield, but the lesions affect tuber quality rendering the potatoes unmarketable. Most scab infections take place at tuber initiation. The pathogen enters newly forming tubers through immature lenticels stimulating excessive cell growth and causing cell death. The pathogen produces thaxtomin, a toxin that is essential to produce scab lesions.

Scab symptoms vary greatly. In mild cases, there is only netting on the skin. More severe infection results in superficial or raised areas of rough, corky tissue. Pitted scab has cavities that may be as deep as a cm. Lesions also vary in size and shape. They may be few and scattered or may cover most of the tuber surface.

Many factors influence the incidence and severity of scab: soil pH, soil organic matter, bacterial species and strain, soil texture, soil temperature and soil moisture. The incidence and severity of scab varies from year to year and from field to field. In Ontario, there is usually more disease in sandy soils than in heavier soils. Warm, dry soils favor scab as does the addition of lime.

Management practices recommended to control scab rarely give consistent results. For example, some growers report 70 to 90 % control with fumigation in the fall using Chloropicrin while others report no control at all. There are varieties resistant to scab, but many of the varieties consumers demand are very susceptible to scab. A control method that is effective, reliable and affordable would be welcomed by potato growers.

2009 Scab Trial

This past season, I evaluated several materials to reduce scab incidence including horseradish extract. A potato grower from Ontario--Wally Vanderstelt - suggested that horseradish might have an effect on the scab pathogen. His suggestion was based on many years of field observations. The quickest way to test this was to extract horseradish juice, mix it with scab infested soil and grow potatoes in pots.

Material and Methods

Treatments

The trial consisted of two treatments:

- Treatment 1: Horseradish extract from the variety Big Top Western (3 pots)
- Treatment 2: Check (3 pots)

The pots used were 30 cm in diameter and 40 cm high. Holes were drilled in the bottom of the pots for drainage, and each pot was filled with heavily infested soil collected from a scab research plot. The soil moisture was 60% of water holding capacity.

Horseradish treatment

A juice extractor was used to extract 1.2 L of horseradish juice from roots. Then, 300 mL of horseradish juice was mixed thoroughly with the scab infested soil in each of 3 pots. The fiber remaining after the juice extraction was also mixed with the soil.

Check treatment

Instead of juice, 300 mL of water was mixed with the soil in each of the 3 check pots.

The pots were stored at 15°C for two weeks (May 15th to May 29th). On May 29, fertilizer was added to all the pots and a single, whole Yukon Gold seed tuber was planted in each pot. The pots were left in a corner of the scab research plot in Alliston and were not irrigated. The tubers were checked for scab on August 20-22

Results and Conclusion

Table 1 shows the results of this trial.

Rep #	Horseradish Treatment	Check
Rep 1	0.2 %	30 %
Rep 2	0 %	25 %
Rep 3	0 %	40 %

As expected, the tuber set was lower and the tubers were smaller on the potato plants grown in pots compared to the potatoes grown nearby in the scab field trial. Only one tuber in one pot from the horseradish treatment had scab, and that was a negligible surface lesion. Scab incidence in tubers grown in the check pots was high.

Further laboratory and field studies are needed to confirm that the results observed in pots can be applied in the field:

- Identify the isothiocyanates in horseradish and test them to determine if any are effective against scab.
- More practical field application methods should be evaluated e.g. incorporating crushed roots into fields prior to planting.

As mentioned before, a scab control method that is effective, reliable and affordable would be welcomed by potato growers. Horseradish might help to control this formidable foe?



Please note that these results are preliminary in nature; the use is not registered or being recommended by OMAFRA at this time.

Events

The True Value of Organic - COG PWW public forum and AGM

Date: Saturday, November 14, 10:00 am - 3:00 pm

Place: Willowells, 40 Blue Springs Drive, Waterloo

Speakers: Ellen Desjardins, Mario Fiorucci of the Healthy Butcher, and more!

Cost is \$30 (includes local, organic lunch and refreshments) or \$25 for COG members. Pre-registration is required (pay at door) at cogpww@sympatico.ca.

EFAO Eastern Regional Fall Seminar and EFAO AGM

November 14th - 10 am at the Branch Restaurant in Kemptville

Fall Reflections—COG Ottawa's AGM

Date: Sunday, November 29, 2009

Place: Sandy Hill Community Centre 250 Somerset Street E.

Time: 1:30–5:30 pm

Keynote Speaker: Michael Schmidt

Coffee, tea, and organic snacks will be provided by COG–Ottawa.

January 6-7 2010, 17th Annual Southwest Agricultural Conference - The Road Ahead for Agriculture

<http://www.southwestagconference.ca/>

January 6-11, 2010 Grey Bruce Farmers' Week

January 9, Sheep Day & Ecological

Afternoon at the Elmwood Community Centre Elmwood, Ontario (#38 Queens Street West)

January 20-22, 2010 Ag Info Days

Jan 21 Organic program at Georgian Downs, Innisfil

January 23, 2010 FarmSmart Agricultural Conference

Theme: Seizing Opportunities for Success

University of Guelph, Rozanski Hall

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/farmsmart/>

January 28-31, 2010 - 29th Annual Guelph Organic Conference

Theme: Our Canadian Organic Identity

University of Guelph see <http://www.guelphorganicconf.ca/>

Speakers, workshops, Trade Show, etc.

February 18, 2010 Eastern Ontario Crop Conference

Kemptville Campus, University of Guelph

COG Toronto Chapter, 4th Annual Organic Conference

Date: Saturday, February 20, 2010

Place: University of Toronto Conference Centre

89 Chestnut St., Toronto

Time: 9 am to 5 pm

February 24-25, 2010 Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Convention

Brock University in St. Catharines www.ofvc.ca (includes organic vegetable session)

February 27, 2010 Eco-Farm Day - Ramada Inn, Cornwall

Workshops, featured speakers, Trade Show <http://www.cog.ca/ottawa/ecofarmday/>

EFAO Courses and Events -

<http://www.efao.ca/pages/events.html>

COG Events Calendar

http://www.cog.ca/news_events/events-calendar/

OCO Events -

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

OACC Events -

http://www.oacc.info/Events/events_main.asp

Southern Ontario Development Program - Food and Beverage Processing

The federal government has just announced a new \$20-million investment for Ontario's food and beverage processing sector under the Southern Ontario Development Program (SODP). The federal funds will support projects submitted by small and medium-sized businesses involved in the manufacturing and processing of food and beverages.

This program will help existing food and beverage businesses with a proven track record that are looking to expand, modernize, innovate, and/or improve their competitiveness.

Preference and priority will be given to companies with less than 1000 employees with facilities in communities with less than 500,000 population.

Eligible projects will result in increased competitiveness, growth and productivity. They would include those that expand capacity, improve technology or equipment, provide access to new markets, develop new products or services, and/or promote the commercialization of innovations.

Applications for this funding, which is targeted at food and beverage processors, will be accepted starting today. FedDev Ontario will favour projects that can be started quickly and completed by March 31, 2010. Applications will be assessed based on merit and against SODP criteria, adjusted for this specific application window, and will be reviewed as they are received by the Agency.

For additional information on FedDev Ontario and to download an application form, please visit <http://southernontario-suddelontario.gc.ca/eic/site/723.nsf/eng/00163.html>

Funding Opportunities

50% off EMC Lean Training for all Ontario Manufacturers

Continuous improvement now costs less! The Ontario government and the Excellence in Manufacturing Consortium (EMC) have a great deal for all Ontario manufacturers: 50 per cent off the cost of Lean training at more than 50 hands-on sessions across the province. Lean training enhances productivity and increases profits by identifying and eliminating workplace wastes and ineffectiveness. For more information, course descriptions and locations, visit EMC's [website](#) or call 1-866-323-4362.

Gain Research Talent Through First Job Initiative

If you need academic research expertise to jump-start innovation at your company, check out the First Job initiative from the Ontario Centres of Excellence. The program helps companies gain leading-edge scientific knowledge for greater competitiveness and productivity. Successful applicants receive grants covering up to 50 per cent of a recruit's salary (to a maximum of \$40,000). Start-up companies are eligible for a grant of 80 per cent of a recruit's salary (up to \$50,000). For more information, visit the OCE [website](#).

Small Business Internship Program Fuels E-business

Would more active online marketing grow your business? Move your e-business project forward with financial assistance from Industry Canada. Small and medium-sized businesses (with less than 500 employees) are eligible for up to \$10,000 in financial support to hire a post-secondary student for 12 weeks to implement e-business practices and technologies. The Government of Canada will cover 75 per cent of the eligible wages and related expenses to carry out your project. The internship must be completed by March 31, 2010.

Applications guidelines and forms are online at www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/sbip-pspe.nsf/eng/home (click on "Forms"). The deadline for applications is December 21, 2009.

Grow with Southern Ontario Development Program (SODP) Support

The SODP invites small and medium-size businesses and other organizations to apply for funding for projects that will help them expand, modernize, innovate and/or become more competitive.

Capital projects are eligible for up to 50 per cent in funding for eligible costs. Other projects, such as marketing, training, and productivity improvement, are eligible for up to 75 per cent in funding for eligible costs.

Applications will be accepted until December 1, 2009. For more information and application forms, visit the SODP [website](#).

Electricity Incentive Retrofit Program (EIRP)

Get those applications in for Hydro One's EIRP — funding is limited and the deadline for both pre-approvals and post-installation rebates is December 31, 2009. Commercial, industrial, agricultural and institutional customers are eligible for this program, which encourages Ontario businesses to adopt energy-efficient technologies. There are rebates for installing specific technologies and also for custom projects. The maximum financial incentive is \$500,000. For more information, visit the EIRP [website](#) or email ERIP@HydroOne.com.

Ontario Market Investment Fund (OMIF) Promotes Local Food and Rural Economies

The Province continues to encourage Ontarians to buy local foods. Sixteen new projects have received funding through OMIF, including promotion of the Ontario Fresh Chicken brand, a marketing campaign for Ontario organic eggs and dairy products, and the launch of the Culinary Tourism Awards.

The four-year OMIF program has invested more than \$4 million in 79 projects to date, from trade events to marketing campaigns and industry research initiatives.

If you have a project that promotes consumer awareness of Ontario-produced foods and encourages people to buy local, the application guidebook and form is available online at <http://www.omafr.gov.on.ca/english/food/domestic/omif/omif.html>.

Food Industry Events

Nov. 18 — Canadian Council of Grocery Distributors' Ontario Conference, Toronto

If you are a supplier to the grocery industry, you won't want to miss this opportunity to get the latest industry news and forecasts. The conference features an industry update from The Nielsen Company, and retailer briefings from Loblaw Companies Limited, Metro, Sobeys and Walmart. General Rick Hillier will give the keynote presentation. More than 250 retailers will be in attendance with excellent networking opportunities during the day. The special registration rate of \$295 for small to medium-size Ontario companies who are not CCGD members has been extended to November 13th. [Register online](#) or call Jeanette Lee at 416-922-6228, Ext. 331 for more information.

Nov. 18 — Ontario Food Protection Association Annual Meeting, Mississauga

This event is a great opportunity for food safety professionals to learn more about cross contamination and evolving food safety issues. OFPA's annual business meeting will also take place. For more information, visit www.ofpa.on.ca (click on "Events") or email ofpa-info@worldchat.com.

Nov. 24 & 25 — Energy 2009: Lean and Green Conference, Toronto

Canada's premier energy efficiency conference provides the latest information and tools to increase your energy efficiency and maximize profits. Learn about new advances in industrial energy efficiency from Canada's top experts, industry leaders and energy efficiency suppliers. Choose from many workshops, panel sessions and plant tours, and plan to visit the expanded Energy Showcase/Trade Show. The event is co-hosted by Natural Resources Canada's Canadian Industrial Program for Energy Conservation and Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters. For more details and to register, visit <http://www.energy2009.ca>.

Nov. 26 — State of the Food Industry, Pearson Convention Centre, Brampton

Leaders in Canada's food and beverage industry will be addressing the challenges and predicting best strategies for the future at the Guelph Food Technology Centre's one day symposium. A panel of top CEO's will discuss the keys to future success in food and beverage processing, supply and services. Other sessions will cover information on Food Regulatory Systems, Planning for the Recovery, Achieving Success after the Crisis and Latest Consumer Trends, Analysis and Behaviour discussions. Dianne Buckner, a business journalist with almost 20 years of experience and host for CBC's Dragon's Den will address what factors make the biggest impact on success. For a full line-up of speakers and sessions and to register, visit www.gftc.ca.

Dec. 2 & 3 — Dollars to \$ense Workshops, Ottawa

These energy efficiency workshops from Natural Resources Canada will benefit both your organization and the environment. *Spot the Energy Savings Opportunities* on December 2 will help you understand energy basics and identify up-front savings opportunities. *Energy Monitoring* on December 3 focuses on measuring the success of energy management projects. Both are full-day workshops. For more information or to register, visit <http://oee.nrcan.gc.ca/industrial/training-awareness/index.cfm?attr=24>.

Training

New Partnership for Food Safety Education

Guelph Food Technology Centre has joined forces with the Royal Society for Public Health to deliver the internationally acknowledged Award Level programs, which provide

formal recognition for food safety knowledge and experience. Food Safety Management for Manufacturing (Level 4 Award) is offered December 7-11. The course is geared to managers in the food and beverage industry who want to expand their knowledge about food safety and food hygiene, in order to develop and implement food safety management systems. See <http://www.gftc.ca/coursereg/details.cfm?id=730> for more information and to register.

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