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Welcome to “ON Organic”

Evan Elford, New Crop Development Specialist, OMAFRA

During this past month the first Canadian Organic Science Conference took place in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The conference was organised by the Canadian Organic Science Cluster and was hosted by the Organic Federation of Agriculture (OFA), the Organic Agriculture Centre of Canada (OACC) and the University of Manitoba. A range of current projects in organic agriculture were presented at the conference by researchers from across Canada and around the world. Topics included soil fertility and quality, livestock health and welfare, as well as practices for horticultural crops, field crops and greenhouse production. We hope to highlight some of these research topics over the next few months but if you are interested in reading more about the individual projects presented at the conference please visit the OACC website at www.organicagcentre.ca/COSC.

Thank you once again to our contributing authors and to COG, EFAO, OCO and others who pass along our newsletter on a regular basis.

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/newsorganic.html>

The French version of these newsletters is available at:

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

The OMAFRA Organic pages are linked from:

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

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Starting the Grazing Season

Jack Kyle, Grazier Specialist, OMAFRA, Lindsay

"When can I start my cattle on pasture?" This question runs through everyone's mind as spring approaches. If you turn cattle out too soon, the grass will not support the livestock. Once the grass is set back at the beginning of the season, it will be less productive throughout the entire grazing season. If you leave it too late to let the animals out to grass, you use more stored feed. Hay is about twice the cost of pasture, so this has a significant impact on the pocket book.

Grass Condition At Turn Out Is Important.

Initial grass growth is very slow. The new small leaves can produce only small amounts of energy from photosynthesis. Plant energy comes mainly from root reserves. Cool temperatures are also limiting growth. A rule of thumb often suggested is to wait until the grass plant has three leaves before starting to graze. When the plant has reached the 3-leaf stage, the photosynthesis in the leaves is providing sufficient energy to support the plant. The plant will then be able to recover from the grazing and rapidly grow new leaves.

Increase Dry Matter Intake

To achieve optimum performance on pasture, the grazing animal must be able to get a mouth full of palatable, nutrient rich food with each bite. If the bite is small, it will take more bites to get the required nutrition. This is likely to result in less than optimum performance. Cattle spend about one-third of their day eating, one-third ruminating and digesting the feed, and then rest the remaining one-third. For cattle, these three time periods each total about 8 hours. Sheep will spend about 12 hours eating. It takes longer to digest low quality forage than high quality forage.

The lower the quality of the forage they are consuming, the more time they need to spend ruminating. This increased ruminating time is at the expense of the eating and resting time.

If we have a grazing season with abundant to excessive moisture, the grass will be lush but full of moisture. The animal will then need to consume more pounds of pasture to get the same amount of dry matter intake as they would with normal grass moisture levels. Therefore, in a year of abundant growth it is very important to do every thing you can to encourage intake. Ideally we want to get animal dry matter intakes of about 2.5% of body weight. It takes about 1.75% of body weight dry matter intake to keep the animal alive. The extra intake over and above this provides the growth and weight gain. If you think about your own eating habits, we want the animal to have "second helpings" at every meal. When do we have second helpings, either we are really hungry or the food tastes really good! Having quality forage that tastes great is the easiest way to increase intake and maximize performance on pasture.

Managing the available forage throughout the grazing season to provide for big bites of high quality nutritious forage will optimize livestock performance. Start the grazing season on the right foot with grass that is growing well and yet be able to get to all your pastures before they start to mature and the forage quality diminishes.

Refer to the pasture section of the forage page at <http://www.omafr.gov.on.ca/english/crops/field/forages.html>

Downy Mildew of Basil – Organic Management Strategies

Sean Westerveld, Ginseng and Medicinal Herbs Specialist and Melanie Filotas, Specialty Crops IPM Specialist, OMAFRA; Catarina Saude and Mary Ruth McDonald, Department of Plant Agriculture, University of Guelph

Downy mildew is a new disease of field and greenhouse basil. Caused by the fungus *Peronospora belbahrii* (a different pathogen than the one causing downy mildew in other vegetable crops), basil downy mildew first appeared in Switzerland in 2001 and has since spread to numerous countries in Europe, Africa, North and South America. It was first reported in Ontario field basil during the 2010 growing season, with most reports occurring towards the end of the growing season. Although basil downy mildew is not toxic to humans, it renders basil plants unsightly and unmarketable.

This disease can be spread by wind and by marketing infected leaves. It can also be spread on contaminated seed, which may explain reports of the disease from greenhouses that have not previously had basil.

Consequently, it is important to closely monitor transplants for symptoms of the disease prior to planting in the field, where large numbers of spores can be spread great distances on wind. Basil downy mildew has caused significant crop losses since it first appeared in Ontario. Its first occurrence in Ontario basil fields has always been late July or early August, although it can occur much earlier in greenhouse basil.

Organic management of any downy mildew can be very difficult. Downy mildews are very aggressive and can spread rapidly. They are caused by oomycetes, fungus-like organisms that are often called water moulds. Because they are not true fungi, they are not easily controlled by the same cultural or other practices used to manage other fungal diseases, such as powdery mildew.

Downy Mildew of Basil – Organic Management Strategies (cont'd)

There are no pest control products (organic or conventional) registered in Canada for the management of basil downy mildew.

Homemade pest control products, such as compost teas, are not recommended, in part due to food safety risks associated with applying these products to a fresh market crop, and also because these products have not proven effective for control of basil downy mildew.



Picture 1. Basil downy mildew first appears as yellow/chlorotic sections of the leaf confined by the leaf veins.

Over the past two years, trials have been initiated to identify methods to prevent, reduce or delay this disease. The first trials, conducted by OMAFRA staff in 2010, included a limited survey of different basil varieties for relative susceptibility to the disease. Starting in 2011, a larger research project was initiated at the University of Guelph to compare a wide range of basil varieties and to evaluate organic pest control products.

The studies compared many types of basil including, Genovese, bush, purple, thai, and spice. The only type of basil that did not develop symptoms was spice basil. While spice basil has some uses, it is not an acceptable alternative to the common basil. Almost all other



Picture 2. The underside of affected leaves develop purplish/grey spores in the morning with a fuzzy appearance.

varieties of basil had nearly 100% of leaf area damaged by early September. The exception was the sweet basil variety 'Medinette', which had 40% of leaf area affected by the same date. While this level of disease is still not acceptable for market, the disease development was slower on this variety, which may

extend production by a couple of weeks.

Three organic products were also tested in 2011 for control of the diseases, including one based on an extract of giant knotweed (*Reynoutria sachalinensis*), one based

on sesame oil, and one based on the bacteria *Bacillus subtilis*. None of these products are currently registered in Canada for control of downy mildew on basil. The products did not significantly reduce disease compared to an untreated control. However, there was a slight increase in total yield of basil with the *Bacillus subtilis* product. Research is continuing this winter to evaluate a wider range of organic control options.

Several cultural management strategies appear to help reduce or delay the development of this disease in Ontario basil fields. Basil planted in an open site and exposed to the prevailing winds tends to have delayed onset of the disease. Wider plant spacing will also encourage good airflow around the plants, which will also reduce disease, as long as weeds are controlled between the plants. Growers should avoid overhead irrigation, especially after the middle of July. Note that these techniques do not appear to completely prevent the occurrence of the disease, however they can sometimes delay onset of symptoms long enough to allow for an additional harvest. Ensure you buy your seeds from a reputable supplier. Seeds should not be collected from fields in which downy mildew has occurred. The disease is less severe when growing conditions are hot and dry.

Growers should continually scout their fields for symptoms of downy mildew. As soon as the first symptoms appear, growers should consider harvesting because the crop will likely be unmarketable within a few weeks.

However, once leaves are infected with downy mildew, it takes at least a week for symptoms to develop. As a result, seemingly healthy leaves at harvest may develop symptoms

post-harvest. This is not an issue for dried basil, as long as drying occurs as soon as possible after harvest.



Picture 3. The sweet basil variety 'Medinette' appeared to be less susceptible to basil downy mildew based on one year of research.

By combining cultivar choice, purchase of high quality seeds or transplants, site selection, and spacing organic growers can delay the onset of basil downy mildew. Research is continuing to test a wider range of basil varieties and organic pest control products. Funding for this project is being provided by the Production Systems and Emergency Management themes of the OMAFRA/ University of Guelph Partnership.

Pruning for Uniformity

Leslie Huffman, Apple Specialist, OMAFRA

High density orchards have remarkably uniform trees. This uniformity leads to similar pruning needs in various areas of the tree. Making the same cut, tree after tree, is very easy to teach to your workers. Take an opportunity to watch a pruning crew working on a platform - the tasks in different areas of the tree are divided, with each worker making basically the same cut. Efficiency in pruning comes when a worker seldom pauses to make a decision.

We've been looking at many high density orchards, trying to learn how to grow trees in the newer systems like Tall Spindle. Think about what you observe in trees in new orchards:

- a single tall, straight leader
- no scaffolds with a diameter greater than 50% of the leader
- upper parts of the tree narrower than the bottoms
- light penetration into the tree
- singular branches grown as individual columns - no branching allowed
- laterals or scaffolds growing horizontally with moderate annual growth
- fruiting area throughout the entire tree
- fruiting area exposed to the sun (and within easy reach of pickers)
- strong fruiting structures with a mixture of fruiting and resting spurs fed by short dards (short branches around the spurs)

Each of these features is desirable in conventional orchards as well as high density trees, because they lead to calm trees growing high yields of quality fruit. For this reason, we should strive to make our conventional trees as uniform as possible, and increase the efficiency of pruning.

High density orchards have a higher proportion of fruiting wood compared to older orchards. One principle of some high density systems is removing stronger wood each year. This practice can also work in conventional trees, gradually increasing the amount of fruiting wood in your trees. Start by removing a large scaffold in the top of each tree. Plan to continue removing scaffolds each year over a 3-5 year period. This will encourage smaller fruitful wood to grow in these open areas, and eventually shift the tree to more fruit & less wood.

While many growers have planted new high density orchards, most are still managing acres of conventional trees, and will continue for a while yet. Adopting the practice of whole scaffolds removal, singulating all scaffolds, and pruning to allow sunlight penetration, will make older orchards more productive and efficient. Until all those new orchards come into production...

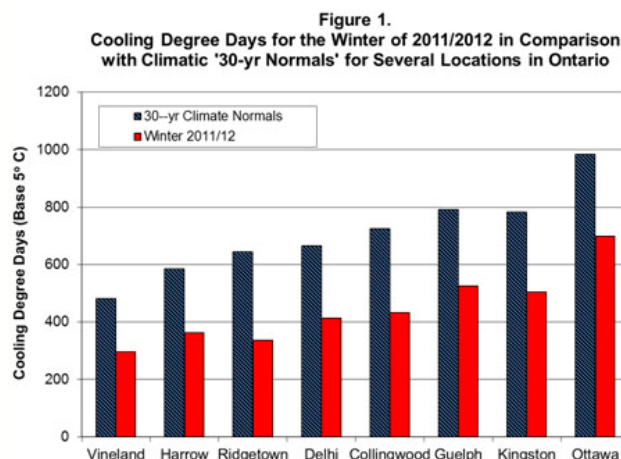
From OMAFRA Orchard Network Newsletter

Carry-Over Effects of Mild Winter Temperatures on Apple Yields

Dr. John Cline, Associate Professor, Pomology University of Guelph, Simcoe

It didn't come with great surprise that Ontario's prognosticating rodent Wiarton Willie has forecasted an early spring. Although spring hasn't yet arrived on the calendar, the weather suggests otherwise. Low snowfall levels and unseasonably warm weather have made dormant pruning much easier for Ontario apple growers. Some might be wondering what effect the atypically warm winter temperatures have and will have on the 2012 growing season - specifically fruit growth, development, and yield. Understandably, relatively little attention has been devoted to answering this question in Canada in the past. However ten years ago, in 2001-02, we were faced with even warmer winter temperatures.

How much warmer than 'normal' has the winter of 2011-12 been? To answer this, I calculated the number of cooling degree days (similar in concept to growing degree days except it is an expression of the total cold accumulation below 5°C) for eight apple growing locations throughout Ontario from October 1, 2011 to January 31, 2012. (Fig.1). These data indicate that the total accumulation of 'cold' is approximately 52-71% of 'normal', depending on location. That is to say that we are 39-48% warmer than the 30-year average. For example, the total cold accumulation in Ottawa this past winter is comparable to that typically experienced in Delhi in a 'normal' year. Furthermore, the total cold accumulation in Vineland and Harrow has been approximately 60% of that 'normally' experienced. While these observations clearly support the phenomenon that our climate is becoming warmer and weather more variable, has this 'warm' winter been detrimental in terms of tree fruit production?



OMAFRA Articles & Updates (cont'd)

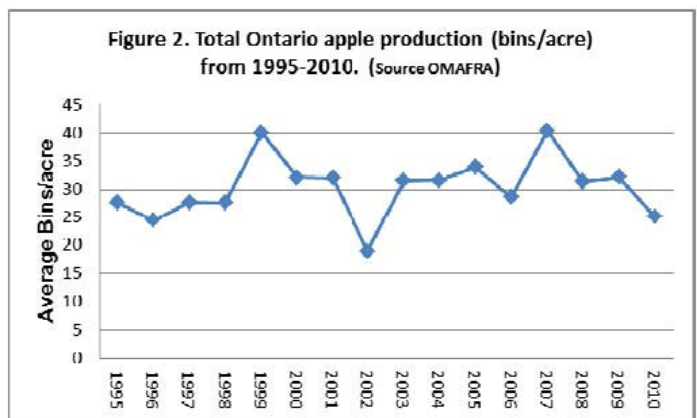
The horticultural literature in Europe has noted that winter climatic conditions can be a major source of variation in annual apple and pear yields. Apple trees can be affected by an atypically warm winter by above average early spring temperatures prior to bloom. This results in higher heat accumulation and advanced phenology (bud development) resulting in earlier blossoming and a greater risk of frost. This occurred in the warm winter and spring of 2001-02. Early bloom may also result in poor pollination because of unfavourable weather and bee activity during blossoming. These factors combined will result in lower fruit set and reduced yields.

Less is known about the negative effects of warmer conditions during late fall, winter and early spring. It is well recognized that the most important physiological process for a temperate fruit crop during the winter period is hardening dormancy. After trees drop their leaves in the fall, they go into a state known as dormancy. As the winter progresses the trees go into another state known as rest, during which they cannot grow even if environmental conditions are favorable for tree growth. Exposure to cool temperatures is necessary to overcome this period of rest, after which normal bud break and growth can begin once growing conditions are favorable. The minimal necessary duration of chilling length for any particular variety is known as the chilling requirement for that variety. Temperatures effective in satisfying the chilling requirement normally range from 0°C to 10°C, with the optimal temperature being approximately 5°C. Southern Ontario typically receives well in excess of the 1,750 chilling hours required for several of the fruit species grown here. However, species and even cultivars within a species vary significantly in their chilling requirement. Apples typically require from 800 to 1700 chilling hours to overcome rest.

Growers may be wondering how many chilling hours have been acquired this past winter in the temperate fruit production regions of Ontario. The "Utah" model, the most conservative of the three, indicates that we have acquired 1106-1427 chilling hours up until January 31st. Regardless of what model is selected, it is almost certain that sufficient chilling hours will be obtained by the conclusion of spring in spite of the unusually warm winter. Research on pears in Europe, indicates that warm temperatures during October can increase fruit yields the following year. However, if temperatures remain warm into November, then yields begin to decline. Early dormant season temperatures (October and November) can play an important role in determining the pear blossom date in the spring. These changes to the flowering date are caused by thermal control of bud development. Warm temperatures in the autumn may result in slower flower bud development and prolonged

flowering the subsequent year. This autumn-induced delay in bloom may reduce the risk of spring frost to pear flowers.

The effect of warm autumn temperatures on slowing bud development has not been observed in apples, or indeed in later ripening pear varieties. However, apples, which generally flower later than pears, may see reduced benefits from warmer temperatures in October, simply because they have a reduced potential for being exposed to spring frosts. Nevertheless, we hypothesize that relatively warmer temperatures during the dormant and 'rest' period, which would almost certainly cause greater respiration and consumption of carbohydrate reserves in the tree roots and structural wood, may result in a 'energy' crisis at flowering. The consequence of this would be reduced fruit set and possibly reduced fruit cell division and growth.



So, based on this information what can growers expect for this coming season? Apple growers will have to wait a few months to see what the weather brings during bloom. However, the three-month outlook provided by Environment Canada as of February 1, 2012 indicates continued above normal temperatures. Looking back at the yields following the warm winter of 2001-02 (Fig. 2), they were the lowest since 1995. While other factors such as the widespread spring frost and drought experienced that year had a large effect on overall production and clearly confound any winter weather effects, it is difficult to discount the negative effect a winter might have on production. In some regards, let's hope Wiarton Willie is wrong!

From OMAFRA Orchard Network Newsletter

OMAFRA Articles & Updates (cont'd)

Maple Production Post Season Work

Todd Leuty, Agroforestry Specialist, OMAFRA

Many syrup producers are now finishing the maple syrup processing season for 2012 and will begin with post-season cleanup. An excellent manual and guide for maple syrup producers on post-season cleaning can be found in the new Best Practices Manual that is available from the Ontario Maple Syrup Producers Association. The manual itemizes a detailed and modern cleaning processes, which is acceptable to food processing industries.

Washing, cleaning and sanitizing of all sap and syrup processing equipment should be a priority for all producers as soon as possible. It is best to wash sap tanks, sap tubing collection systems, buckets, evaporator flue pans and finishing pans as soon as possible after the season is complete. Where sugary sap residue, syrup residue and residue from defoaming agent is allowed to dry out, it will be far more difficult to clean the equipment. To minimize the amount of work in cleaning, wash up the equipment as soon as possible. Use scrub brushes on equipment and rinse with warm or hot potable water.

Where cleaning and sanitizing chemicals are used, producers should ensure that cleaning chemicals are listed by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency as acceptable for this purpose and are available from maple equipment dealers.

In the sugar bush, it is also important to remove spiles from maple trees before trees begin spring growth. Spiles should be removed as dormant buds begin to grow and new leaves expand. Most new wood growth and healing over of tap holes in maple trees will occur in spring and early summer. Leaving spiles in the trees during the growth of new wood will prevent proper healing of tap holes.

Re-useable spiles can also be washed and sanitized soon after the sap collection season is finished, to make proper cleaning easier. Spiles that are disposable should be collected and disposed of properly. Some equipment manufacturers and dealers may accept used disposable spiles back from producers for recycling purposes of plastics.

From OMAFRA Maple Production Agriphone Report, March 12, 2012

Survey for Horticultural Producers

On behalf of the Canadian horticulture sector, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Horticulture Value Chain Roundtable (HVCRT) is conducting a survey to validate the results of research conducted on the industry's skills requirements and the training and education available to the horticulture value chain in Canada. The results of this survey will help us confirm the direction for future efforts related to helping Canadian academic institutions and other educational organizations enhance their capacity to train and develop horticulture sector employees.

Your commitment to distribute this survey to your members and partner organizations would be greatly appreciated as the better the participation, the more successful our initiative will be and this will benefit us all. We realize that each association has a preferred communication mechanism to their membership (email, newsletter, website, etc) and we would ask that consideration be given to distributing our invitation to participate through what you believe would be the most timely and effective manner.

Our questionnaire, to be completed in the months of February, March, and April 2012 using an online process will take no more than 15 minutes to complete and participants can be assured that their responses will remain completely anonymous.

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please contact: Tom Baker, HR Committee, The Ontario Greenhouse Alliance (TOGA), tebaker10@gmail.com to obtain further information.

To fill out the survey;

English: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/236FYRZ>

French: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/WZSP3JV>

From OMAFRA Connects Newsletter (Eastern Ontario Region)

OMAFRA Food Safety Snippets

New Intervention to Control Bacteria on Surface of Beef

Don Blakely, On-Farm Food Safety Specialist, OMAFRA

New research shows that *E. coli* on the surface of a cut of beef or carcass can be effectively eradicated by a short burst of low voltage alternating current. Even on heavily contaminated samples the technique was shown to deactivate bacteria. Beef processors are presently using several other types of interventions to reduce pathogens on carcasses but *E. coli* still manages to survive and through cross-contamination be the number one issue in marketing safe beef products. This new intervention offers a quick and easy approach to achieve safe beef and is inexpensive to adopt. It is also not to be confused with irradiation therefore will be very acceptable to the consumer.

New Study Suggests MRSA Strain May Originate From Food Animals

Wayne Du, Pork Quality Assurance Program Lead - Food Safety Programs, OMAFRA

MRSA is an acronym for methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*, which is a bacterium that is multi-drug resistant, known as a superbug. There is no direct linkage established between human MRSA and the ones from food animals. This however, may change based on a very recent study.

According to a new study led by the Translational Genomics Research Institute located in Phoenix, Arizona,

USA a strain of MRSA, CC398 has jumped from food animals to humans. The study suggests that MRSA CC398 probably started as a non-resistant (antibiotic-susceptible) strain in humans before it spread to food animals where it subsequently became resistant to several antibiotics. The new finding could have implications to current antibiotic use practices in livestock and poultry production. For further information visit: <http://mbio.asm.org/MRSA>

Clocks move ahead...Spring is here! Are You Ready?

Colleen Haskins, On-Farm Food Safety Program Lead, OMAFRA

The “a-typical” winter of the past few months, has presented much warmer temperatures. These warmer temperatures may invite Spring earlier, causing the production season to sneak up on us. Are you ready? It's time to think about getting your equipment ready for the new season. Calibrating critical equipment such as field sprayers is imperative to ensure you are delivering the correct amount of product to your crop. Ensure you have the calibration procedure and appropriate recording documents available to properly document the task. Staying on track and keeping a step ahead helps manage your operation efficiently, and reduces additional demands during very busy times.

For more food safety information or resources, visit our website at www.ontario.ca/foodsafety or call us at 1-877-424-1300. Food safety question? Ask us.

Risk Management Program Update

Production Insurance Update – May 1, 2012 Organic Deadlines

It's that time of year again and Production Insurance (PI) deadlines for spring-seeded crops are fast approaching. Agricorp offers PI coverage for both organic and conventional crops. Here are some PI options for your organic crops:

- Specialized organic plans are available for organic corn, organic soybeans, organic fresh market carrots, organic fresh market cabbage, organic winter wheat and organic winter spelt. Proof of certification is required to receive a claim payment at the organic claim price.
- The forage rainfall plan works equally well for both organic and conventional producers. New for 2011, a new coverage option is being piloted for hay that covers excess rainfall during your intended harvest period.

- As always, other crops or crops in transition can be insured under the general production insurance plans.

The deadline to apply for organic corn, organic soybeans and coverage, without winterkill, for organic winter wheat and organic winter spelt, and the forage rainfall plan is **May 1, 2012.**

For more information on these plans please visit www.agricorp.com or contact us at 1-888-247-4999.

AgriStability Commodity Code Changes for 2011

To avoid delays in processing AgriStability and AgriInvest 2011 forms, participants and agents should refer to the [revised 2011 commodity code list](#). Commodity codes are used to identify sales and purchases of specific commodities on program forms. Changes to these codes

Risk Management Program Update

have been made in an effort to simplify reporting requirements for producers and to remove duplicate or redundant codes.

Details Available for 2012 RMP Livestock Plans

Enrolment information is now available on www.agricorp.com for livestock producers who want to participate in the 2012 [Risk Management Program \(RMP\)](#). Renewal packages were mailed in February to producers who participated last year. Current participants have until March 16, 2012 to make any changes to the coverage outlined in their renewal. Livestock producers who are interested in signing up for RMP for the first time can apply online or contact Agricornp for more information. Applications for new customers are also due on March 16.

New applications and changes to existing coverage can be made by phone, mail, fax or online by visiting www.agricorp.com and clicking Online tools.

Keep Your Receipts Handy for RMP

Starting in 2012, participants in the RMP plans for livestock are required to report their livestock sales, either quarterly or semi-annually, so that Agricornp can determine payment. Producers should keep their sales and purchase receipts or production records in a convenient place so they can easily fill out their sales reports.

What do you need to report?

Depending on which livestock categories you are enrolled in, you may need to report the following information:

- Date of each sale
- Total number of head sold and breakdown by type (heifer or steer, grain-fed or milk-fed)

- Average sale weight for each sale (individual sale weights required for grain-fed veal)
- Weight type (live, rail or carcass)
- Origin of sold animals (number raised from birth and number purchased)
- Purchase date and average purchase weight
- Point of sale including name of auction, private treaty or broker
- Number sold as breeding stock (cattle and hog only)

When do you need to report?

Sales reporting deadlines are quarterly for all livestock categories except cow-calf and sheep, which are semi-annual.

Sales reports will be mailed and made available on www.agricorp.com in April for quarterly categories and in July for the semi-annual categories.

Save time, go online!

In April, you will be able to submit your sales report online by visiting www.agricorp.com and clicking **Online tools**. By completing your sales report online you will receive a confirmation number immediately. You will also be able to save an electronic copy for your own records.

For more information

For more program details, refer to your 2012 Handbook – RMP for livestock, available on www.agricorp.com and mail in your renewal package, or contact Agricornp at 1-888-247-4999, Monday to Friday from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Funding Opportunities

Ontario Rural Summer Jobs Service - \$2/Hour Hiring Incentive

The 2012 Ontario Rural Summer Jobs Service is now [accepting applications](#) from eligible employers who plan to create summer jobs for rural youth. Eligible businesses and community organizations in rural Ontario can receive a hiring incentive of \$2 per hour to create student employment.

The application deadline is April 16, 2012.

What Qualifies as a RURAL Business?

If your business or organization is located in a town, small city or rural township with a population of 100,000 or less, you are eligible to apply to this program.

How Does the Rural Summer Job Service Work?

- Employers can benefit from the program for up to 16 weeks. To qualify, the student employment must be created sometime during the six month period from April 1st to September 30th, 2012.
- The maximum available per position is 35 hours/week x 16 weeks = 560 hours. 560 hours x \$2/hour = \$1120 per full time position.
- The goal of the Rural Summer Jobs Service is to help local employers create jobs which enhance the skills and work experience of students in rural Ontario while helping employers advance their operations. The program provides a hiring incentive to employers who can create jobs for students between the ages of 14 and 30 who intend to return to school in the fall of 2012.

Funding Opportunities (cont'd)

Application Process:

There are two ways to apply for the program:

1. Employers are encouraged to use the on-line application www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/rural/rsj/onlineappform.pdf.
 - The online application form takes less than 10 minutes to complete and ensures that your information is uploaded quickly and accurately.
 - After completing the form, simply type your name in the signature field. This is considered an electronic signature for the purpose of this contract.
 - Click submit and you're done! There is no need to print the application and send it in.
 - You will receive a confirmation email after hitting the submit button.
 - **The application deadline is April 16, 2012.**
2. Alternatively, if you can not use the online application process, you can print the application form and mail or fax it in. See below for address and fax number.

Rural Summer Jobs Service
Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Rural Affairs
1 Stone Road West, 4th Floor NW
Guelph, Ontario N1G 4Y2
Fax 519-826-3398

Applicants can expect to receive confirmation stating the number of approved positions by the end of May 2012. All eligible employers who have submitted a completed application form will be awarded at least one position. A representative of the 2012 Rural Summer Jobs Service will contact all employers who have submitted an incomplete or ineligible application form by telephone, e-mail, fax or mail.

For more information please visit www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/rural/rsj/index.htm.

2013 Nuffield Farming Scholarship Applications Open

The Canadian Nuffield Farming Scholarship Trust is accepting applications for their 2013 program. Applications are due by **April 30, 2012** and forms can be downloaded from the Nuffield Canada website at <http://www.nuffield.ca>. Three scholarships of \$15,000 each are available for 2013. Nuffield Farming Scholarships are awarded to enthusiastic individuals, with a passion for agriculture and a desire to expand your knowledge, pursue new ideas and to share your findings with others. Applicants should be in mid-career, be between the ages of 30 and 45 (although exceptions are made) and must have a minimum of five years agricultural business or farming experience plus the management

ability to step away from their current duties. The Scholar must travel for a minimum of ten weeks, with a minimum leg of six consecutive weeks. Scholarships are not for those involved in full-time studies or for the purpose of furthering research projects.

"The Canadian Nuffield Farming Scholarship provides innovative Canadians with the funding to travel internationally to expand their personal horizons while exploring agricultural issues and opportunities in a global context," said Barb Stefanyshyn-Cote, Chair and 2003 Scholar. "We are focused on developing the practical, managerial and commercial capacities of each scholar to enable them to be better farmers, business managers and leaders and to make a significant contribution to the future of Canadian agriculture." The scholarships are awarded to men and women who are judged to have the greatest potential to create value for themselves, their industries and their communities through the doors which will be opened and the opportunities provided for life-long learning and improvement. The scholarships are awarded on the strength of the applicants' vision, enthusiasm and determination to pursue their goals. A Nuffield Farming scholarship is a life changing experience. Scholars receive a 'golden key' to the best production, management and marketing systems in every corner of the world. In addition to embracing the 'world's best' in agriculture, scholars gain life-long friends from around the world, and a deep understanding, and global perspective, of the politics, cultures and challenges of world agriculture. A key part of the scholarship is the opportunity for winners to study a topic of interest to themselves throughout their travels. Scholars must complete their project within two years of winning the award and are expected to produce a written report and present their findings at the Nuffield annual general meeting as well as to others in their industries. Canadian Nuffield Scholars are also required to participate in the Contemporary Scholars Conference (CSC) where they will meet with scholars from other countries including the United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand and France to exchange ideas and experiences, and join a network of people who are at the cutting edge of primary industry. Applications must be received by April 30, 2012. Application forms are available from the Nuffield website www.nuffield.ca. For more information on Nuffield Canada, visit www.nuffield.ca or for questions about the international element, visit www.nuffieldinternational.org.

For more information: Rod Bradshaw Secretary, Nuffield Canada secretary@nuffield.ca 403-224-2633 or Karen Daynard Program Manager Email: karen@nuffield.ca Phone: 519-836-2583

From OMAFRA Connects Newsletter (Region of Brant, Haldimand & Norfolk)

Crop Planning for Organic Vegetable Growers - Webinar

Hosted by the Canadian Organic Growers

Date: April 10 & 12, 2012

Time: 6:30-8:00 pm

For more information please contact Tegan Renner at 226-251-3012

Digging into Farming

Hosted by FarmStart

A three day course for new farmers who are at the stage of business planning. The course introduces participants to the different elements of starting and managing a new farm business: business goals, production, marketing, financial management, human resources, social responsibility, land access, business structure and regulations. On Day 1 each topic will be presented and key questions and issues discussed. On Day 2 a panel of successful farmers will present their first hand experiences and lessons learned in these different areas and participants will be introduced to critical resources and advisors that can help with farm planning and start-up. Day 3 will review relevant regulations and key financial documents (i.e. cash flow, income statement, statement of net worth) and guide participants in developing a New Farm Development Action Plan that outlines their next steps to making their farm dream a reality!

Dates:

Peterborough Course

Day 1: Sunday April 15, 2012

Day 2: Wednesday April 18, 2012

Day3: Saturday April 21, 2012

Guelph Course, Ignatius Farm

Day 1: Saturday May 5, 2012

Day 2: Wednesday May 9, 2012

Day 3: Saturday May 12, 2012

Cost: Free of charge

For more information please contact Ali English, FarmStart Training and Resources Program Manager at ali@farmstart.ca or 519-836-7046 x104.

Cheese Making Technology Short Course

Date: April 30—May 4, 2012

Location: Department of Food Science, University of Guelph

Learn the scientific and technological principles of cheese making through interactive lectures, and apply them in hands-on cheese making laboratories.

For more information and registration please visit <http://ennect.com/e1483> or call 519-824-4120 ext. 52183

Permaculture Design Course

Date: July 22 - August 4,

Location: Caledon

The Permaculture Design Course is a 13 day (72 hour minimum) intensive program combining theory and practical activities. Through lectures, discussions, slide shows, field trips, and hands-on learning, participants learn the basic permaculture design principles and develop the skills to design and implement sustainable systems. There will be a wide variety of topics covered by Gregoire Lamoureux (experienced permaculture instructor) and invited guest teachers, tours to local sites, and opportunities for hands on learning as well as practice of the design principles.

Cost: \$988 early registration by June 10 for the 13 days.

This includes field trips, access to onsite facilities, and a course manual. (\$1088 after June 10) Additional Costs: \$390 for 3 delicious, organic, home-cooked meals per day. \$140 for a campsite and outdoor facilities OR \$210 for trailer accommodation and outdoor facilities OR \$420 for a room in Greenhaven and indoor facilities (if available) OR ask about commuter rates if living or staying nearby.

For more information or to register please contact Brenda Dolling at 519-942-4010 or email bdolling@wholevillage.org.

Grain Farmers of Ontario Annual Conference

Date: March 19, 2012

Location: London Convention Centre

For more information please visit www.gfo.ca or

Tel 519-767-9713 Email: info@gfo.ca

Ontario Biodynamic Society AGM

Date: March 31, 2012

Location: Durham Town Hall, Durham, Ontario

For more information please view the website at

www.biodynamics.on.ca

Fruit & Veg Organic XPO

Date: July 12 -14, 2012

Location: St. Williams, Ontario

This year the Canada's Fruit & Veg Tech X-Change will feature an organic category to educate both organic and non-organic producers on the size and scope of the sector, and the exceptional products and services offered to support on-farm organic activities.

The Organic Council of Ontario (OCO) and National Farmers Union (NFU) are supporting partners for the event and will be onsite to provide guidance to both existing and new organic producers.

Willsie Equipment will provide live demonstrations of their organic tillers and Underhill Farm Supply will exhibit a plot of radish root to showcase the application of natural soil aeration and organic matter regeneration.

A "Meet the Buyers - Broker Brunch" will take place on opening day, with a chance to meet organic buyers such as Whole Foods Market. Immediately following, the Organic Council of Ontario will be holding an informal seminar on farm transition to certified organic.

For more information please visit the website

www.fruitvegtechxchange.com/organic

Canada's Outdoor Farm Show

Date: September 11-13, 2012

Location: Woodstock, Ontario

For more information please visit the website

www.outdoorfarmshow.com or call 519-822-2890

Toll free:1-800-563-5441

International Plowing Match and Rural Expo

Date: September 18-22, 2012

Location: Roseville, Ontario

For more information please visit www.plowingmatch.org

or call 519.631.1234 Toll free: 1.800.661.7569

Email eventadmin@plowingmatch.org

BioFach America - All Things Organic

Date: September 20-22, 2012

Location: Baltimore, Maryland, USA

For more information please visit

www.biofach-america.com

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 of Ontario (EFO)

<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