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Welcome to ON Organic

Evan Elford, New Crop Development Specialist, OMAF & MRA

The rainy weather has delayed soybean planting in regions across the province this month putting a damper on the spring season, however, it's never too early to think about weed management and critical weed-free periods to minimize yield losses for common crops like corn (3-10 leaf stage) and soybean (1-3 trifoliates). For more information on critical weed-free periods please refer to the OMAF and MRA Pub 811 Agronomy guide: www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/pub811/12crop.htm.

In other news, the Organic Federation of Canada has applied to Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada for funding to complete a review and update of the COS from 2013-2015. For more information on the project and how you can support the review process, please visit the OFC's standards review page at: <http://organicfederation.ca/canadian-organic-sector-updating-its-production-standards>.

Also, mark your summer calendar with OMAF and MRA's Natural Enemies Workshop on August 7th at the Simcoe Research Station, 1283 Blueline Road, Simcoe. The afternoon workshop will be focused for field grown vegetable and specialty crop growers, scouts and agribusiness persons. A combination of classroom and outdoor activities are planned including monitoring for natural enemies and information on biological control and parasitoid projects. To register for the workshop, contact the Agriculture Information Contact Centre at 1.877.424.1300 or email: ag.info.omafra@ontario.ca

As always we welcome your comments and any suggestions for topics in the newsletter. Thank you once again to our contributing authors and to EFAO, OCO and others who pass along our newsletter on a regular basis.

Subscription to this newsletter is easy and free. For details go to the webpage:

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

The newsletter is also posted on the OMAF and MRA 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 OMAF and MRA Organic pages are linked from:

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

The ON Organic Team

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Julie Gamache – OMAF and MRA, Client Service Representative

Foraging Skills of Dairy Animals: Is foraging an acquired or innate skill? Science sheds some light on the matter

Mario S. Mongeon, Livestock Specialist, OMAF and MRA

When a group of dairy producers discuss pasture management, it does not take a lot of time for the discussion to diverge to foraging skills of dairy cows. There is a belief that animals should be exposed to pasture at an early age in order to gain experience that will be beneficial later in their productive life.

In fact, there are grounds for this belief. According to early work on foraging skills, researchers reported that ruminants exposed to pasture remember previous experiences. They learn to select specific forages and will select the same specific forages later in life.

Other studies conducted in the nineties reported that experiences obtained as a young animal affected diet selection, grazing behaviour and, animal productivity months or years later both in sheep and cattle. Furthermore, it was shown that ruminants exposed to pasture acquired their foraging skills at an early age and grazed more efficiently than animals that were not exposed to pasture. However, much of this research work was conducted in extensive, unimproved grazing systems, where animals were exposed to toxic plants as well as pasture that varied greatly in nutritional value. In North America, grazing dairy cattle pastures typically contain high-quality grasses and legumes. Investigating how early grazing experiences affect grazing behaviour or milk yield of dairy cows under these particular conditions was needed.

Furthermore, little was known on how long it takes for lactating dairy cows with no previous grazing experience as heifers to adapt to pasture under intensive rotational management systems.

To answer these questions, a three year project was conducted and came to an end recently. This study evaluated the carryover effects of dairy heifer grazing experience on behaviour and first-lactation performance as dairy cows. Holstein and Holstein X Jersey crosses were used for the experiment and were divided amongst 4 different treatments: 1-Heifers assigned to pasture as weaned calves as well as yearlings; 2-Heifers assigned to pasture as weaned calves but then housed in confinement as yearlings; 3- Heifers housed in confinement as weaned calves and then assigned to pasture as yearlings; 4- Heifers housed in confinement as weaned calves and as yearlings. During the third year of the project, all animals were assigned to summer pasture as lactating cows.

Several parameters were recorded including: dry matter intake, animal behaviour and activity using global positioning technology.

The first year of the experiment was simply to expose 2 groups of heifers to a grazing environment for 41 days. The other 2 groups of heifers were housed continuously in confinement.

During the second year, it was possible to evaluate the carryover effects of the grazing experience on current heifer grazing behaviour. The experienced heifers that grazed during the first year spent more time grazing on the first day than inexperienced heifers. This suggested that heifers with previous grazing experience remembered how to graze, because these heifers started grazing immediately upon exposure to the pasture during the second year. In contrast, heifers with no previous grazing experience exhibited a clear reluctance to graze on the first day. However, after only a few days, both groups behaved similarly.

On the third summer of the project, the animals were now lactating. Once again, it was possible to evaluate the carryover effects of the grazing experience on cow grazing behaviour. Cows that were previously exposed to pasture, either as a calf or yearling spent more time grazing on the first day than cows with no previous experience. Once again however, after 5 days on pasture, inexperienced cows showed the same grazing patterns as experienced cows.

In terms of milk production, on the first day on pasture, cows that had not grazed as heifers during the second year produced less milk than cows that had grazing experience as heifers during the second year. This was most likely caused by the lower percentage of the time spent grazing. However, average daily milk production during the whole study did not differ.

Results from this study show that experience early in the life of dairy heifers grazing high quality pasture does affect grazing behaviour and milk production but only during the first few days of exposure to pasture. However, cows with no previous grazing experience adapt relatively quickly to grazing and milk production recovers within a few days after first exposure to pasture.

Reference:

Assessment of heifer grazing experience on short-term adaptation to pasture and performance as lactating cows. F. Lopes , W. Coblenz, P. C. Hoffman, and D. K. Combs. Journal of Dairy Science. 96 :3138–3152 (2013)

Organic Crop Production Aids and Materials: 2013 Update

Evan Elford, New Crop Development Specialist, OMAF and MRA

Emergency Use Registrations for 2013

Pyganic: An emergency use registration has been approved for the use of Pyganic for management of Spotted Wing Drosophila (SWD) in stone fruits (apricot, sweet and sour cherry, nectarine, peach, plum, prune plums) and berries (strawberry, blueberry, raspberry, current, gooseberry, blackberry, grape) from June 1 to November 30, 2013. Pyganic is a biological pesticide with the active ingredient pyrethrin (a chrysanthemum derivative) and has previously been permitted for use in organic operations in Canada, however organic growers should always confirm product acceptability with their CB prior to application.

Entrust SC: An emergency use registration has been approved for the use of Entrust SC for management of Spotted Wing Drosophila (SWD) in stone fruit crop group and many berries from June 1 to November 30, 2013. Growers may be familiar with Entrust 80 W which is being replaced with a new formulation called Entrust SC. Entrust SC is a biological pesticide with the active ingredient spinosad (a bacterial by-product from the species *S. spinosa*).

Since Entrust SC is a new formulation, refer to the label

for the change in application rates. Organic growers are encouraged to contact their CB prior to application to confirm the product is permitted for use even if Entrust 80 W has previously been used.

Full Registration

Blossom Protect: As previously reported in the March issue of ON Organic <http://www.omafr.gov.on.ca/english/crops/organic/news/2013/2013-03a3.htm>, Blossom Protect is a biological pesticide now registered for use in Canada on apples and pears for the control of fire blight. Blossom Protect is certified for use in organic apple and pear production by the Washington State Department of Agriculture Organic Food Program in the United States, Ecocert, the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL) and InfoXgen in several European countries. The status of Blossom Protect for use in organic apple and pear orchards in Canada is not known at this time. Organic growers in Canada should contact their CB before applying Blossom Protect to confirm it is permitted for use.

Brown Marmorated Stink Bug in Ontario: 2013 Update

Hannah Fraser, Entomology - Horticulture Program Lead, OMAF and MRA

The first official detection of brown marmorated stink bug (BMSB) in Ontario resulted from a homeowner find in Hamilton during the fall of 2010. Since that time, there have been over 90 confirmed reports from homeowners in urban locations, and an established breeding population was identified in the Hamilton area in the summer of 2012. The majority of the finds occurred in Hamilton / Burlington in the fall 2012 and winter 2013 (adults move indoors in the fall to overwinter), but BMSB have also shown up in parts of the Greater Toronto Area, Newboro, Windsor, and most recently at a farm located in Cedar Springs (indoors). As public awareness about BMSB increases, there will most likely be additional finds and reporting in Ontario.

Early detection is critical for limiting damage from BMSB. The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food and the Ministry of Rural Affairs (OMAF and OMRA), together with the University of Guelph (Dr. Cynthia Scott-Dupree) and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (Dr. Tara Gariepy), will be conducting surveys across southern Ontario in 2013 and 2014. These surveys will assess the distribution and abundance of BMSB; identify habitats suitable for BMSB build-up and associated agricultural

areas at high risk for damage; and develop an inventory of BMSB natural enemies.

BMSB has a wide host range that includes agricultural crops such as tree fruit / nuts, small fruit, grapes, tomatoes, peppers, sweet corn, soybeans, grain crops and ornamentals. However, it will also feed and reproduce on many deciduous trees and shrubs commonly found in the landscape (Catalpa, Maple, Ash, Tree-of-Heaven, Lilac, Buckthorn, etc.) allowing numbers to build up in unmanaged areas. As BMSB moves between hosts during the season, this can create a risk to nearby crops. BMSB is often observed first at crop edges bordering woods, so be sure to include these areas when monitoring for other pests. Infestations can occur between June and September.

While BMSB has not been identified in any agricultural crops to date, growers should be on the look-out for their activity both indoors (overwintering adults) and outdoors (on crops and landscape plants). Early signs of infestation and crop injury have been missed in other areas. There are no organic pest control products registered for control or suppression of BMSB in Canada.

Brown Marmorated Stink Bug in Ontario: 2013 Update (Cont'd)

Hannah Fraser, Entomology - Horticulture Program Lead, OMAF and MRA

Thresholds for BMSB have not been established in the US, but as each feeding probe causes injury, there is very little tolerance in horticultural crops. For updates on BMSB pest management research efforts, visit www.stopbmsb.org.

Visit our website for more information and tips on how to distinguish BMSB from other stink bugs and similar-looking insects at www.ontario.ca/stinkbug. We are encouraging everyone to report suspect BMSB to the Agricultural Information Contact Centre (email ag.info.omafra@ontario.ca or 1-877-424-1300).

The best way to preserve specimens, and to prevent them from being crushed, is to place them in a small container with rubbing alcohol or vinegar. Good quality digital

photos, showing key features such as the two white bands on each antenna, can also be useful for identifying BMSB.

Funding for this project was obtained through the OMAF and OMRA / University of Guelph Partnership - Emergency Management Theme 2013/2014, with financial support from the Grain Farmers of Ontario, the Ontario Apple Growers, the Niagara Peninsula Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association, the Tender Fruit Producers and the Grape Growers of Ontario.

(See fliers on pages 8 & 9)

Funding Opportunities

Ontario Farm Innovation Program

OMAF and MRA is supporting the development and adoption of on-farm innovations that can increase the ability of farmers to respond to changing demands and opportunities and improve on-farm profitability. The Ontario Farm Innovation Program (part of Growing Forward 2 a federal, provincial, territorial agreement) will provide funding for applied research projects and on-farm demonstration projects that showcase new on-farm innovations. The program is open to non-supply managed farm organizations and to individual farmers in partnership with commodity organizations. OFIP is delivered by the Agricultural Adaptation Council (AAC). For more information please visit the AAC website:

www.adaptcouncil.org/program-details.php?id=0c4d8n5f1t2q

Growing Forward 2 - Helping You Reach Your Goals

Growing Forward 2 (GF2) is a comprehensive federal-provincial-territorial framework aimed at encouraging innovation, competitiveness and market development in Canada's agri-food and agri-products sector. In Ontario, farm, food and bioproducts businesses, collaboration and organizations can build their own plan and select opportunities to help grow their profits, expand their markets and manage risks.

With a focus on innovation, competitiveness, and market development, Growing Forward 2 programs are designed to help the industry capitalize on opportunities and contribute to the economy. Whether you are just starting out, or have been in business a long time,

Growing Forward 2 will offer practical and flexible programs that can help you reach your goals.

Growing Forward 2 Client Information Sessions

Sign-up for a Growing Forward 2 client information session hosted by our delivery partners in collaboration with OMAF.

For a list of session locations, dates and times and to register click here: [GF2 Client Information Sessions](#)

GF2 Client Portal - New Approach

Farm businesses, processors and groups can enrol for upcoming Growing Forward 2 programming through the [GF2 Client Portal](#). You only need to register once to get access to the full menu of programs and track submitted applications.

To receive regular Growing Forward 2 updates send us an email at growingforward2@ontario.ca.

For information on Growing Forward 2 Business Risk Management Programs visit [Agricorp](#).

Apply For Growing Forward 2 - Start Here [1. Create Your Profile](#)

New users need to register a user name and password to begin the application process.

[2. Apply](#)

Login to apply for Growing Forward 2 programs including education and funding.

Learning Opportunities

Certificate in Sustainable Agriculture

Date: July 8-11, 2013

Location: Delta Hotel, 50 Stone Road West, Guelph, Ontario

This four-day certificate course includes comprehensive presentations, hands-on exercises and your own set of take-home guidebooks. It also includes a human health workshop which is both entertaining and informative with each participant receiving a comprehensive "report card" on his or her own personal health.

The course teaches:

- Reducing chemical dependence & increasing fertilizer efficiency
- Accessing soil nutrient reserves
- Improving water management and soil structure
- Boosting both your health and the health of your livestock
- Acquiring simple strategies to combine with existing practices

About the presenter:

Graeme Sait is the internationally acclaimed author and educator who co-founded Nutri-Tech Solutions (NTS) 19 years ago. He has written hundreds of articles and a popular book "Nutrition Rules!". Graeme has formulated many of the soil health and human health products for which NTS is renowned. He is a powerful presenter who speaks at conferences and seminars around the globe and his inspiring presentations are often described as "life changing".

Tuition for the full 4-day course is \$860 + HST and includes daily continental breakfast, lunch, and one evening dinner as well as all course materials and Certificate testing. The class will run from 8am - 5:00pm each day.

For more information: Tel 855.247.6548 or Email marketing@agricultureolutions.ca.

Permit to Take Water (PTTW) Workshops

The OF&VGA will be hosting PTTW workshops in the OMAF and MRA Simcoe auditorium in 2013 and 2014. The format will be a half day session from 9am-12pm working through the application form in a group setting.

To register please contact: George Shearer, Tel: 519.763.6160 ex. 219

Registration fee: \$20.

2013 Dates:

- Oct 25
- Nov 29

2014 Dates:

- Jan 31
- Mar 28

International Maple Syrup Grading School

Date: July 9-10, 2013

Location: Cornwall, Ontario

For more information and registration please visit: <http://>

Conferences, Meetings and Tours

Ontario Maple Syrup Producers Summer Tour

Date: July 11-13, 2013

Location: Cornwall, Ontario

For more information please visit: http://www.ontariomaple.com/pages/summer_tour/

EFAO Summer Kitchen Table Meeting

Draft Horses – the Perfect and Profitable Fit with the CSA Garden

Date: July 17, 2013, 10am-4pm

Location: Orchard Hill Farm, St. Thomas

Demonstrations of mostly new and interesting horse machinery such as Pioneer plough, culti-mulcher, row cultivation in the CSA garden, treadmill, hay mower and tedder, etc. Hitching demonstrations from 1-4 horses for different jobs will also be covered.

For more information and to register please contact EFAO: outreach@efao.ca

EFAO Summer Farm Tours

Whitefield Farm Tour

Date: July 28, 3:00pm - 5:00pm tour, followed by a potluck
Owned by Blair and Jessica Morrison, Whitefield Farm is a new 80 ac mixed farm located in Lucknow, Ont., featuring organically raised CSA garden, pastured beef, chicken and eggs.

A new straw bale house built in 2012 features reclaimed and recycled materials, passive solar heating, imported wood cook stove, solar and horse power energy. Whitefield Farm is being developed with sustainability and self-sufficiency in mind and focused on creative solutions to the challenges of modern farming.

For more information on either tour and to register contact: info@efao.ca,

Tel: 519.822.8606 or 1.877.822.8606.

Conferences, Meetings and Tours (Cont'd)

OMAF and MRA Natural Enemies Workshop

Date: August 7, 2013

Location: Simcoe Research Station, 1283 Blueline Road, Simcoe, Ontario

The afternoon workshop hosted by OMAF and MRA will be focused for field grown vegetable and specialty crop growers, scouts and agribusiness persons. A combination of classroom and outdoor activities are planned including monitoring for natural enemies and information on biological control and parasitoid projects.

For more information and to register for the workshop, contact the Agriculture Information Contact Centre (AICC) at 1.877.424.1300 or email: ag.info.omafra@ontario.ca

North American Manure Expo

Date: August 20 & 21, 2013

Location: 413 Arkell Road, Arkell, Ontario

The 2013 Manure Expo will focus on precision manure management and will include commercial field demonstrations, educational sessions and commercial vendor displays.

August 20: Half-day bus tour featuring lagoon agitation equipment demonstrations, a stop at a dairy-based anaerobic digester, a tour of Husky Equipment in Alma, followed by supper at the Alma Community Centre. Buses will be departing from the University of Guelph – Arkell Research Station at 11:30 a.m.

August 21: Informative seminars on manure management – including compaction, valuing manure, precision management and technology demonstrations – plus see the latest and greatest in manure handling equipment, including demonstrations of solid and liquid manure spreaders plus composting equipment.

Attendance is free for both days but pre-registration is required. Tour Day has limited seating so register early to avoid disappointment.

For more information and to register please visit the website at: <http://www.agannex.com/manure-manager/manure-expo> or by Tel: 1.888.599.2228

2013 EFAO Bus Tour to Eastern Ontario & Quebec!

Date: August 22 – August 24

Visit 8-10 farms, a mixture of vegetables, dairy, cash crops, and on-farm processing.

Overnight stays in Ottawa & Cornwall

Highlights:

- Anaerobic digester
- Sunflower milling
- Cover crop research
- Organic dairy research
- On-farm dairy processing
- And more!

To register for the bus tour contact: info@efao.ca, Tel: 519.822.8606 or 1.877.822.8606 to hold your spot now!

McVean Farm Harvest Table, 2013

Date: August 25, 3 - 8pm

Location: McVean Start-Up Farm, Brampton, Ontario

All proceeds go to start-up farms, farmers and programs and services through FarmStart. Tickets are \$100.00 + HST each (all \$100.00 ticket purchases may receive a charitable receipt for \$50.00); \$50.00 + HST for farmers; \$50.00 + HST for children under 12; Babes in arms are free (under two years).

For more information please visit: www.harvesttable.ca or www.farmstart.ca.

To purchase your tickets please contact: Cherie Bauman, FarmStart Administration, email: cherie@farmstart.ca OR tel: 519.836.7046 ext.103

Canada Outdoor Farm Show

Date: September 10-12, 2013

Location: Woodstock, Ontario

For more information please visit the website at: www.outdoorfarmshow.com

2013 Bilingual Agricultural Workshops Day

Date: September 12, 2013

Location: Alfred Campus, University of Guelph

The second edition of the Bilingual Agricultural Workshop Day will be held in Alfred on September 12th 2013. This event is organized by OMAF and MRA and the University of Guelph-Alfred Campus.

One of the primary objectives of the day is to provide producers and industry stakeholders with useful and up-to-date information on dairy production practices, farm business management and research findings pertaining to the industry. A second objective is to bring stakeholders together under one roof to allow for an exchange of information between farmers, agricultural service suppliers, researchers and OMAF and MRA staff.

Conferences, Meetings and Tours (Cont'd)

Last year, one hundred and twenty people attended the event. We expect at least as many people this year. Simultaneous translation service will be offered to all participants again this year and presentations will be made in both English and French.

This year's agenda includes two formal presentations focusing on Biosecurity on the Dairy Farm and The High Immune Response Technology: Disease Resistant Genetics.

The rest of the program will be devoted to interactive workshops, networking and meeting researchers. Participants will be divided in small groups and each group will move from workshop to workshop every thirty minutes.

Four workshops will take place concurrently:

- Quinoa and Other Alternative Crops (Evan Elford, OMAF and MRA)
- Dairy Nutrition Clinic; Molds and Mycotoxins (Tom Wright, OMAF and MRA)
- Assessing Cow comfort in the Barn (Elsa Vasseur, University of Guelph)

- Developing a Heifer Selection Strategy Using Tools Such as Genomics and Sexed Semen (Mario Mongeon, OMAF and MRA)

Participant notes from last year:

"The workshops were great because they allowed us to have more personal and interactive relation with the presenters";

"I really liked the fact that there were workshops and we did not sit still all day";

"The manure reading workshop was very new to me and I will use this at home";

"I found it very efficient to go from place to place in small groups and the content was very interesting as well";

For more information please contact Mario S. Mongeon, OMAF and MRA 1.613.679.4288.

100th Anniversary International Plowing Match and Rural Expo

Date: September 17-21, 2013

Location: Perth County

For more information please visit the website at:

www.ipm2013.org/about.html

Links to ON Organic Information

Links to Organic Agriculture Information

Organic Council of Ontario (OCO)

<http://www.organiccouncil.ca>

Canadian Organic Growers (COG)

<http://www.cog.ca>

OMAF and MRA Organic Agriculture

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

Ecological Farmers of Ontario (EFO)

<http://www.efao.ca>

Organic Agricultural Centre of Canada <http://www.oacc.info>

FarmStart www.farmstart.ca

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

Ontario's Least Wanted: Report the Brown Marmorated Stink Bug

Help Protect Our Crops

The Brown Marmorated Stink Bug (BMSB) is an invasive insect pest from Asia. It is now established in parts of southern Ontario. Early detection in new geographic areas is important for limiting economic loss to Ontario agriculture.



Shoulders lack serrated edges, with a single spine below the eye (adults)



Underside of BMSB is paler than the top side and is speckled near the edges

Photo credit | Credit photo : Susan Ellis, Bugwood.org

A Nuisance to Homeowners

Adults often overwinter in human-made structures including homes and other buildings. In areas where populations are high, BMSB can become a major nuisance pest due to aggregations found indoors through the fall and winter.

Two white bands on each antenna are important distinguishing features. Mature nymphs have many of the same features as adults but lack wings

Rounded shoulder tips

Inward pointing white triangles on edge of abdomen

Adult

White band on legs

Nymph

Damaging Appetite

BMSB has a very broad host range that includes tree fruit, berries, grapes, vegetables, corn, soybeans, landscape trees, ornamental shrubs and garden plants. Feeding damage affects yield and marketability of commercial crops.

Photo credit | Credit photo : USDA-ARS

Don't Confuse BMSB with these Stinkers

None of these look-alikes have the two white bands on their antennae that characterize BMSB.



Photo credit: Gyorgy Csoka, Hungary Forest Research Institute, Bugwood.org

Western conifer seed bugs are longer and narrower than BMSB.



Photo credit: S.A. Marshall, School of Environmental Sciences, University of Guelph

Spined soldier bugs are beneficial stink bug species that attack plant pests. They have pointed shoulder tips.



Photo credit: Steven Valley, Oregon Department of Agriculture

Rough stink bugs (several species) are about the same size as BMSB but have heavily-toothed shoulders.



Photo credit: David Cappaert, Michigan State University

Brown stink bugs (several species) are smaller than BMSB and have serrated shoulders.

BMSB is an Excellent Hitchhiker

BMSB moves into new areas by hitching a ride in shipping containers, cargo and vehicles. It has been intercepted on a wide variety of trade goods coming into Ontario from infested areas. Populations of the stink bug tend to become established in urban areas first then disperse to agricultural crops.

Report BMSB Findings

If you think you have found BMSB, call the Agriculture Information Contact Centre at 1-877-424-1300 or send an email to ag.info.omafra@ontario.ca.

Visit ontario.ca/stinkbug for photos showing BMSB damage, management and findings in Ontario.