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Welcome to ON Organic

Evan Elford, New Crop Development Specialist, OMAF and MRA

Organic Week (September 21-28, 2013) is upon us and exciting events celebrating the organic industry are taking place across the province. To find out more about events happening in your area visit the website at www.organicweek.ca.

Also, the 2013 Atlantic Canadian Organic Regional Network (ACORN) Annual Conference and Trade Show is fast approaching and will take place on November 20-22, 2013. The conference will take place at the Delta Beauséjour in Moncton, New Brunswick and an early bird registration special is available until October 3, 2013. For more information about the conference and registration, please visit the [conference website](#) or refer to the events section of this newsletter.

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/index.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>

Why Value Systems are the Solution for the Ontario Beef Industry

Brian Pogue, Beef Program Lead, OMAF and MRA

Background

Production of beef in Ontario is much lower than required by the consumers of Ontario. In 2012 there were 626,598 beef animals harvested in Ontario plants for a total of 522,672,012 lbs on a carcass basis. The population of Ontario in 2012 was 13,445,408 and consumed 814,791,725 lbs of beef on a carcass equivalent.

There is a huge amount of beef imported from the USA and smaller amounts imported from other countries. Total imported beef into Ontario during 2012 was 401,472,267 lbs with a value of \$1,151,731,371.

Many consumers want to support their “local” farmers and so consumers want to quickly identify and be certain on what qualifies as “Ontario” beef. In order to increase the consumption of “Ontario” beef, it must be consumer demand that pulls it through. A push by producers will not work unless they can supply a better product at a lower price.

A Value System Provides a Plan for the Industry

From an eagle's perspective the beef industry appears to be disorganized, particularly when compared to other industries such as poultry and pork. Looking down into pastures or into pens of feedlot cattle, there are cattle of all colours and shapes, even in the same field and/or pen. In order to get some uniformity, calves going to auction marts are usually split into relatively small lots.

A value system would have a production protocol that would include a genetic plan and those cow herds involved in a value system would abide by the genetic program as part of the protocol for the Ontario branded product. A plan based on a value system would have a much different structure than is currently in place with the beef industry in Ontario.

Value Systems Could Satisfy Consumer Needs

The population in Ontario is very diverse with a large variation amongst groups of consumers. There are consumers who are health conscious so are looking for very lean meat, some who want grass fed beef and there are those who enjoy “quality” which generally translates to

flavour and juiciness. Most consumers are looking for an acceptable level of tenderness. With consumers having various needs, there would have to be various value systems developed.

Most consumers are price conscious, at least to a point. There are a significant number of consumers who will pay a premium over commodity beef, if the product fits their needs. This premium would be shared amongst the partners involved in the production of the product.

Complete Traceability and Information Flow

A value system would be based on a traceability system that provides for identification of meat back to an individual animal. This system can be used to gain consumer confidence as DNA could be used to verify that a cut of meat came from a specific animal.

A traceability system provides a network for sharing information with the various components of the value chain. This information could be used to find efficiencies in the value system through improving genetics and refining the protocol. In addition to improving efficiency, the information can also be used to improve the quality of the product, such as tenderness but most importantly consistency.

Sustainable Production

Many organic producers are selling their beef direct to consumers, in some cases just from the freezer in their basement. However there are some opportunities for producers to work together to add value and profit. A value system will result in the production of a consistent product; find efficiencies, and improve the product.

There are currently funding programs through Growing Forward 2 and the Local Food Fund which apply to both individual producers and/or groups who will collaborate. Check out the OMAF website for further details.

Grass Fed Conference

Sustain Ontario will be posting a Grass Fed Conference on Feb 26, 2014. Watch their [website](#) for more details.

Dealing with Pre-harvest and Storage Diseases in Apples

Kristy Grigg-McGuffin, Pome Fruit IPM Specialist, OMAF and MRA

With the frequent rains since petal fall, fungal pathogens, such as black rot and bitter rot infections have been observed in many apple orchards across the province this year. With harvest in full swing, take the time to consider management of these diseases and prepare for other storage issues that may arise. Since many storage issues are actually initiated in the orchard, careful thought should go into control at this level. Often pre-harvest symptoms are

not obvious and infection can come as quite a surprise when fruit is later brought out of storage.

Black rot (*Botryosphaeria obtuse*) overwinters in cankers on twigs, branches and trunk, as well as on mummified fruit. This often makes apple cultivars which retain mummified fruit, such as Gala, Honeycrisp, Cortland and Northern Spy more susceptible to infection, as well as trees damaged by winter injury or fire blight.

Dealing with Pre-harvest and Storage Diseases in Apples (Cont'd)

Late season black rot infection often appears just before harvest as black spots on the fruit associated with mummified fruit left from chemical thinners (Figure 1). Eventually, the lesions enlarge into a brown rot with concentric dark and light rings (Figure 2), which late in the season or in storage, may develop tiny pimple-like black pycnidia (Figure 3). The flesh of fruit infected with black rot remains firm, in contrast to several other apple rots and may increase storage decays after harvest, frustrating growers and packers alike.



Figure 1: Late season black rot infection appears as black spots on fruit associated with mummified fruit left from chemical thinners.



Figure 2: Black rot lesions enlarge with concentric dark and light rings.



Figure 3: In storage, black rot infected fruit remain firm and may produce tiny pimple-like black pycnidia.

Bitter rot, caused by the fungus *Colletotrichum gloeosporioides* and *C. acutatum*, overwinters in mummified fruit, crevices in the bark, and cankers. Typically, symptoms appear late summer to harvest. This year, spots on maturing apples have been observed across the province, particularly on Golden Delicious, Gala, Honeycrisp, Gingergold and Spy. Unlike black rot, the bitter rot fungus does not require fruit wounding to establish an infection and can directly penetrate the fruit skin.

Early infections on fruit appear as tiny, grey or brown spots that enlarge to sunken, dark brown lesions, often surrounded by a red halo (Figure 4).



Figure 4: Bitter rot appears as sunken spots, surrounded by a red halo. Masses of salmon-coloured spores are produced on the surface of the enlarged lesion.

Dealing with Pre-harvest and Storage Diseases in Apples (Cont'd)

Especially during wet or humid conditions, masses of salmon-coloured spores are produced on the surface of the expanding fruit lesions. A diagnostic V-shaped rot can also be observed progressing towards the core when infected fruit are cut open (Figure 5).



Figure 5: Bitter rot has a diagnostic V-shape rot progressing towards the core.

Blue and gray moulds (*Penicillium expansum* and *Botrytis cinerea*, respectively) are two important diseases of stored apples. Both pathogens require a wound to cause disease, which most frequently occurs during picking and handling operations.

Spores can survive long periods of unfavourable conditions, as well as from season to season on picking boxes, contaminated bins, storage walls and packing equipment. The pathogens may also invade fruit that are over mature at harvest or fruit held in storage too long.



Figure 6: Blue mould initially has tufts of white spores that turn blue-green.

The symptoms of blue mould begin as soft watery light brown areas around injuries or lenticels on the fruit surface. Fruit affected by gray mould is spongy, light to dark brown, and diseased tissue is not separable from the healthy tissue.

Blue mould initially has tufts of snow-white spores that turn to blue-green (Figure 6) and has a musty odour, while gray mould has fluffy white or grey mycelium and dark grey spore masses (Figure 7) with a “cedar-like” smell only in advanced stages.



Figure 7: Gray mould has fluffy white or grey mycelium and dark grey spore masses.

As you're getting your orchards ready for harvest, the following are some general management techniques to keep in mind to reduce postharvest fruit rots:

This Season

- **Handle fruit carefully during harvest** –bruised or wounded fruit are susceptible to storage diseases.
- **Harvest fruit at proper maturity** –the more mature, the more susceptible a fruit is to storage diseases.
- **Minimize inoculum sources** –use clean bins, remove damaged fruit before storing, limit the amount of soil and plant debris brought in and sanitize storage equipment.
- **Keep fruit cool after harvest** –warm temperatures encourage pathogens to grow.

Next Season

- **Practice orchard sanitation to remove inoculum sources** –prune out cankers or dead branches, and remove rotten or mummified fruit.
- **Dormant sprays of copper and sulphur** may help to reduce overwintering inoculum.
- **Apply calcium sprays** to improve fruit quality.
- **Prune** to increase air flow, promote faster drying time and ensure better spray penetration.

Avoid the Sting of Stink Bugs

Hannah Fraser, Entomology Program Lead, OMAF and MRA

The Brown Marmorated Stink Bug (BMSB) provincial survey 2013 has been underway since May. Overwintering adults were first detected at our hot spots in Hamilton beginning mid-June, and by early July, the first nymphs were found on buckthorn. Populations have been building ever since. We have been finding BMSB nymphs and adults (Figure 1) on a wide variety of common landscape trees and shrubs, as has been reported in the US. So far, we have only found breeding populations in localized areas in Hamilton.

BMSB numbers are at their peak by late August and early September. At this point in the season, most individuals will have completed their development and adults will be looking for any remaining food sources prior to overwintering. As a late-harvested crop, apples are at higher risk.

Early symptoms of injury, particularly in apples, can be difficult to detect (Figure 2). Sometimes white sugar crystal residues and / or a small hole can be seen in the centre of discoloured feeding sites. Older signs of stink bug damage appear as sunken spots, with corky brown tissue beneath the skin (Figure 3). Fruit that appears unblemished at harvest can come out of storage with brown spots and damage similar to that caused by bitter pit.

The following link has some excellent photos of stink bug damage in apple: <http://hudsonvf.cce.cornell.edu/scouting%20reports/BMSB%20Project/BMSB%20Alert%209-26-12.pdf>.

Here are some of the pre-harvest tips being recommended to growers in other production areas:

- **Scout orchard perimeters.** Injury is often greatest along wooded edges, especially those where preferred hosts are abundant ("Tree of Heaven", Catalpa, buckthorn**, etc.). Consider in-season monitoring of these hosts on your farm next year, as an early warning that

BMSB is established nearby.

- **Look up.** BMSB tend to prefer the upper canopy, so use a ladder to increase your ability to detect this pest when numbers are low.

- **Monitor often.** BMSB are strong flyers and can move from landscape hosts into crops very quickly.

There are no thresholds in tree fruit. BMSB can be difficult to detect, and it doesn't take many stink bugs to cause significant economic loss in apples.

Remember that there are other stink bugs capable of causing damage to apples. If you think you have found BMSB, please contact us immediately via the Agriculture Information Contact Centre 1-877-4524-1300 or email ag.info.omafra@ontario.ca. For more information on BMSB, visit www.ontario.ca/stinkbug and www.stopbmsb.org.

“*” Funding for the project “Assessment of the Distribution and Natural Enemies of the Brown Marmorated Stink Bug in Southern Ontario” was obtained through the OMAF and MRA / University of Guelph Partnership program Emergency Management Theme, with the financial support of the Grain Farmers of Ontario, the Grape Growers of Ontario, the Niagara Peninsula Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association, Ontario Apple Growers, and the Tender Fruit Producers Marketing Board. The BMSB Research Team includes Dr. Cynthia Scott-Dupree (University of Guelph), Dr. Tara Garipey (Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada), Hannah Fraser and Tracey Baute (Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food and Ministry of Rural Affairs), with the support of several other OMAF and MRA Agriculture Development Branch staff.

“***” Surveys in Ontario indicate buckthorn is a suitable and highly preferred season-long host of BMSB, supporting both nymphs and adults.



Figure 1: Brown marmorated stink bug nymph (left) and adult (right).

Avoid the Sting of Stink Bugs (Cont'd)



Figure 2: Early stink bug feeding injury may appear as discolored spots (left), with white sugar crystal residues and/or a small hole in the centre the feeding site (right). (Peter J. Jentsch, Cornell Univeristy Hudson Valley Lab)



Figure 3: Older signs of stink bug damage appear as sunken spots, with corky brown tissue beneath the skin (left). Injured fruit that appears unblemished at harvest can come out of storage with brown spots similar to that caused by bitter pit (right). (Peter J. Jentsch, Cornell Univeristy Hudson Valley Lab)

New OMAF and MRA Publications

Crops: The following publication is now available on-line and on CD and is no longer available in print format.

- [Crop Protection Guide for Nursery and Landscape Plants, Publication 840](#): This publication contains pest control guidelines intended for nursery growers, landscape professionals and arborists. A detailed host plant compendium makes this an easy-to-use resource.
- [Guide de Protection des Cultures de Pépinière et D'ornement, Publication 840F](#): La publication 840F contient des directives de lutte antiparasitaire à l'intention

des producteurs de cultures de pépinière et d'ornement, des spécialistes en aménagement paysager et des arboriculteurs. Un recueil détaillé des plantes hôtes en font une ressource des plus faciles à consulter.

Business: The following publication is a **NEW** publication available on-line only.

- [Direct Farm Marketing Business Resources](#) : This resource guide includes a series of case studies that covers a portion of the lessons to be learned in direct farm marketing.

New OMAF and MRA Publications (Cont'd)

- [Vente directe des produits de la ferme – Ressources pour les entreprises](#) : Le présent guide de ressources comprend une série d'études de cas qui couvrent une partie de ce qu'il est important de savoir dans le domaine de la vente directe des produits de la ferme.

- Reconnaître et maîtriser le stress : Guide des gens d'affaires : remplace 07-068.

Environment:

- **NEW:** Methane Gas in Hog Barns/ Le gaz méthane dans les porcheries (13-029/30)
- Considerations When Planning to Drain Land/ Points à considérer dans la planification d'un réseau de drainage (13-033/34) : Rev (90-156)
- Subsurface Drainage System Outfalls/ Bouches de décharge des réseaux de drainage souterrain (13-035/36) : Remplace 90-233, Tile Drainage Outlets

- Maintenance of a Subsurface Drainage System/ Entretien d'un réseau de drainage souterrain (13-037/38) : Remplace 87-062, Maintenance of the Drainage System

Now available in French:

- Les gaz dangereux dans les exploitations agricoles (13-026) : remplace 04-088 (Hazardous Gases on Agricultural Operations)
- *Loi de 2002 sur la gestion des éléments nutritifs* — Registres et renouvellements en vertu de la LGEN (13-028) : **NEW** (*Nutrient Management Act 2002*, NMA Records and Renewals)

The above factsheets and publications are now available from Service Ontario at www.serviceontario.ca/publications (unless otherwise noted). For a complete listing of OMAF and MRA products, please see our [online publications catalogue](#).

Funding Opportunities

New Directions Research Program

The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food and the Ministry of Rural Affairs (OMAF and MRA) is issuing a call for Letters of Intent (LOI) for the New Directions Research Program. The Program is an open, competitive research fund which enhances Ontario's agri-food sector through innovative research.

- **Project Duration:** Up to 3 years in length
- **Amount:** A maximum of \$200,000 per project (Includes indirect costs - new max. of 25%)
- **Deadline for submission:**

Wednesday, October 2, 2013 at 4:00 p.m. EST

We invite colleges, universities, research institutes, hospitals, industry, commodity groups, government agencies and private sector partners with demonstrated capacity to perform quality research to submit a Letter of Intent. Applicants outside the province of Ontario are eligible but must clearly indicate how their proposed research will benefit Ontario's Agri-food sector and rural communities.

New Directions is a flexible research program and its priorities shift annually Research Priority areas and their related research themes for the

2013-2014 Call are:

- Climate Change (Impacts and Adaptation)
- Rural
- Antimicrobial Resistance

For more information please visit the website at: www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/research/new_directions/index.html or call 1.888.466.2372 ext. 645541.

Local Food Fund

The Local Food Fund is a three-year initiative with funding of up to \$10 million per year to support innovative local food projects that reduce barriers to regional economic development; result in sustainable regional economic development; and have a positive impact on the Ontario economy.

The Fund will support projects in four categories:

1. Regional and Local Food Networks
2. Enhanced Technologies, Capacity and/or Minor Capital
3. Research and Best Practices Education, Marketing and Outreach

For more information and guidelines, please visit the OMAF and MRA website at: www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/about/localfood.htm

Funding Opportunities (Cont'd)

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.

Organisations and Collaborations:

The Agricultural Adaptation Council (AAC) is a delivery partner for two new GF2 programs for projects involving organisations and collaborations:

1. Capacity building – funding for skills development and training, assessments, planning, etc. More details can be found in the [Capacity Building Program Guide](#).
2. Project implementation – funding for implementation of

plans, applied research projects, etc. More details can be found in the [Project Implementation Program Guide](#).

For more information on these two programs, please visit the AAC website at: www.adaptcouncil.org.

Individual Producers:

The Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association (OSCIA) is a delivery partner for GF2 programs for projects involving individual producers.

- Capacity building – funding for skills development and training, assessments, planning, etc. More details can be found on their [website](#).

For more information on this program, please visit the OSCIA website at: www.ontariosoilcrop.org.

Other Programs and Services for Ontario Farmers:

OMAF and MRA has a full listing of programs and services for Ontario farmers on the website and in the Factsheet 'Programs and Services for Ontario Farmers'. For more information please visit: www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/busdev/facts/progserv.htm or call the OMAF and MRA Agricultural Information Contact Centre to request a hard copy of the Factsheet at 1.877.424.1300.

Risk Management Program Update

Deadlines Approaching for Production Insurance Plans

Agricorp offers Production Insurance for over 90 crops. As an organic producer, you may insure your crops under any of these plans. Specialized organic plans are available for winter wheat, winter spelt, soybeans, corn, processing sweet corn, fresh market cabbage and fresh market carrots.

It's time to renew or apply for the following Production Insurance plans:

- Winter wheat (including organic winter wheat plan) - Apply by November 1

- Organic winter spelt - Apply by November 1

- Asparagus - Apply by October 30

Fruit crops (includes grapes, apples, peaches, nectarines, pears, sweet cherries, sour cherries) – Apply by December 20

For more information on all plans including premium rates and plan details, please visit Agricorp.com or contact us at 1-888-247-4999.

Learning Opportunities

FarmStart Courses

Do you daydream of owning a farm, or are you already planning to start a farm business? FarmStart has 2 courses that will take you one step closer to your farming dreams!

1. Exploring Your New Farm Dream

Thinking about starting your own farm business? Want to learn more about the opportunities and realities of

ecological farming? The "Exploring Your New Farm Dream" will help you decide if this career path is the right fit for you.

The course aide's participants to set personal and farm goals, assess available resources, and ultimately determine if farming as a business rather than as a hobby, is what they want to do. The class is led by an

Learning Opportunities (Cont'd)

experienced facilitator with firsthand knowledge, and understanding, of what it takes to establish, and run a successful farm business. The program includes over 12 hours of classroom instruction, and a full day of farm tours. The course runs over five Wednesday evening sessions, and includes a weekend farm tour.

Next course offered in Kitchener

Date: Wednesday October 23, 30 & November 13, 20

Time: 6:30pm to 9:30 pm

Farm Tour: TBA

Location: Residence and Conference Centre, 99 Conestoga College Blvd, Kitchener. [View Map](#)

Registration: <https://farmstart.ticketbud.com/new-farm-dream-kitchener>

Course Fee: \$325 (+HST) per person or \$520 (+HST) for two people from the same "farm dream" (ex: family, business partners).

2. Digging into Farming

This course is for people who have already made a commitment to start farming in the near future.

The *Digging into Farming Course* is intended for prospective farmers who are ready to stop dreaming and start developing realistic goals, clarify their farm vision, evaluate their options, and to begin identifying the resources and knowledge they already have and those they need to acquire. You will come out of the course with a greater understanding of the different assets, skills and resources needed to launch a new farm business, access to a range of available resources and learning opportunities, and a broader peer group as well as connections to local and technical coaches, mentors and advisors.

Next course offered in Guelph 2013

Date: November 30th & December 7th – full days

Location: 10 Carden St., Guelph

Course Fee: \$200 (+HST) per person or \$360 (+HST) for two people from the same "farm business" (ex: family, business partners).

To apply: www.surveygizmo.com/s3/1292473/Digging-Into-Farming-Course-Registration-June-26-2013

For more information on FarmStart courses and program: contact Rebecca Hodges, FarmStart Training and Resources Coordinator at rebecca@farmstart.ca or 519.836.7046 x 105

Conferences, Meetings and Tours

Organic Week 2013

Date: September 21-28

Location: Multiple Locations across Ontario and Canada

"Canada's National Organic Week is the largest annual celebration of organic food, farming and products across the country. Hundreds of individual events showcase the benefits of organic agriculture and its positive impact on the environment."

For more information, please visit the Organic Week website at www.organicweek.ca

Biodynamic Farm Tour

Date: September 29, 2013 (3 - 6pm)

Location: Glencolton Farms, 393889 Concession 2, Durham, Ontario. Come and experience the farm, talk to Michael and Elisa about their experience with biodynamics and watch the milking. For more information please call 519.369.3578.

South West Hort Expo 2013 (Formerly Essex County Associated Growers)

Date: November 19-20, 2013

Location: Leamington Kinsmen Recreation Complex, 249 Sherk Street, Leamington, Ontario

For more information please visit the Essex County Associated Growers website at www.ecag.ca.

2013 ACORN Conference & Trade Show

Date: November 20-22, 2013

Location: Delta Beauséjour, Moncton, New Brunswick

The ACORN Conference has become noted over the past decade for its high quality educational and networking opportunities, attracting 400-500 people every year, and growing to become the largest organic agriculture event east of the Guelph Organic Conference. Over its three days, the conference offers nearly sixty workshops on all aspects of organic farm management. Please visit www.acornconference.org to view the conference program and register by October 3rd to take advantage of the early-bird special!

Catching the Wave - Guelph Organic Conference & Expo 2014

Date: January 30-February 4, 2014

Location: Guelph University Centre, Ontario

For more information please visit the conference website at www.guelphorganicconf.ca or call 519.824.4120 ext. 56311

Links to ON Organic Information & Staff Contacts

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Tom Hamilton	Beef Cattle Production	705-647-2087
Jack Kyle	Grazier Specialist	705-324-5855

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

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