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Welcome to ON Organic

Evan Elford, New Crop Development Specialist, OMAF & MRA

This month the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Convention will be hosting an 'Organic' session on Wednesday, February 19 from 9:30-11:30 am. This year the focus will be on organic pest management. Eric Gallandt from the University of Maine will start the session with an overview of weed management practices with both research and on-farm experiences for vegetable producers. Melanie Filotas and Jason Deveau, specialists with OMAF and MRA, will follow with information on organic disease management and application of organic products for fruit and vegetable farmers.

Organic growers interested in using biopesticides more efficiently may also want to attend the 'Biopesticides - Making Them Work in the Field' session from 2-4 pm taking place after the morning 'Organic Session'. Invited speakers from research, extension and the biopesticide industry will be presenting their tips and suggestions on how to use these products most effectively. For more information and to register, please visit the OFVC website at www.ofvc.ca. We look forward to seeing you at the conference in Niagara Falls!

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>

The ON Organic Team

Evan Elford – Editor, OMAF and MRA, New Crop Development Specialist

Jack Kyle – OMAF and MRA, Grazier Specialist

Hugh Berges - OMAF and MRA, Manager Horticultural Technology

Katie Meagher – OMAF and MRA, Marketing Specialist

Mario Mongeon – OMAF and MRA, Livestock Specialist

Melanie Filotas - OMAF and MRA, IPM Specialist for Specialty Crops

Jacque De Fields – OMAF and MRA, Client Service Representative

Julie Gamache – OMAF and MRA, Client Service Representative

Achieving Optimum Pasture Results

Jack Kyle, Grazier Specialist, OMAF and MRA

It is at the beginning of the pasture season that you can take the steps to optimize pasture performance on your farm. Pasture is the lowest cost feed source available, and the opportunity for improved production is significant on most farms. A well-managed pasture will be very competitive with any other crop use that you might consider for that land base if the forage and livestock are both well managed with a good rotational system.

The key to maximize both forage and livestock production is to manage the forage for optimum forage growth and optimum bite size for the animals grazing.

To get optimum growth from the forage plants they need to be in a rapid growth state for as much of the growing season as possible. Maintaining a grazing forage height between 10 cm (4 inches) and 30 cm (12 inches) will allow the plants to maintain good growth and capture all the available sunlight to drive photosynthesis. This plant height will maintain a substantial root system that will be able to gather water and nutrients from the soil throughout the summer and minimize a summer dormancy period should hot dry weather occur. To maintain this level of forage growth the pasture manager needs to move livestock to fresh grass every couple of days. If too much pasture is offered at a time, then selective grazing will take place and the less desirable plants will not be grazed, become mature and over a number of years, dominate the pasture.

After a plant is grazed it needs time to rest and re-grow, this is the key point of pasture management -- rest and recovery.

Maximizing bite size is the key to good animal productivity. Cattle bite at a rather constant rate and for about 8 hours each day. As the pasture manager you have control of the bite size. Providing pasture that is the optimum size for the animal to bite (10-30 cm) is the first big step to maximize intake. The second step is to have fresh forage on offer at all times. Livestock are not going to eat forage that has been laid on or fouled with manure or urine. The longer the animals are in a given paddock, the greater the percentage of forage in that paddock that is going to be unpalatable because of what has been done to it, thus the importance of frequent moves to fresh pasture.

Fencing is the tool that allows you to manage your livestock to provide re-growth time for the grass and manage the quality and quantity of forage available for your livestock. Perimeter fences need to be substantial enough to keep your animals where they belong and to give you piece of mind to sleep at night.

Fences to sub-divide the pasture into paddocks do not need to be elaborate; single or double wire electric fence works very effectively. If there is need for a larger or smaller grazing area, these fences can be easily repositioned.

Animals that have adequate quantities of quality forage available will not place nearly the challenge on fences that hungry animals will. Cattle are creatures of habit and if they know that you are going to provide fresh grass later today or tomorrow, they will patiently wait – the job of the pasture manager is to not challenge their patience!

Moving livestock to fresh pasture every 1-2 days will optimize the quality and quantity of forage available for your livestock. This frequency of moves will minimize the animal's opportunity to take a second bite from the plants and will help to prevent over grazing which greatly diminishes plant growth. It is important to have enough paddocks that your livestock do not return to a paddock until the plants have fully recovered from the grazing. This depends on growing conditions but generally takes about 20 days in May and early June and about 30-45 + days in July and August.

Having enough paddocks is the key to a good grazing operation with 10 to 12 being the minimum required to have a good system. Ideally there will be about 30 paddocks for each group of livestock that you are managing. Experience has shown that those producers who have this number of paddocks are the most satisfied with their systems and consistently achieve excellent results.

With attention to detail, you will have animals consuming large quantities of high quality forage to attain optimum growth throughout the growing season. These steps will give you a very successful profitable grazing system.

Organic Options for Spotted Wing Drosophila Management

Pam Fisher, Berry Specialist, OMAF and MRA

Spotted Wing Drosophila (SWD) is an invasive, direct pest of berry crops and other soft skinned fruit. In just a few years this pest has permeated all of the major fruit growing regions in the USA, British Columbia, and Eastern Canada.

Spotted wing drosophila is a serious problem because it lays eggs in fruit as the fruit is ripening. SWD eggs, larvae, and pupae are present in the fruit at harvest. Fruit loses its integrity and breaks down early. The pest has multiple generations a year and populations build up very quickly. Late-season fruit, such as fall-bearing raspberries, blueberries and day-neutral strawberries, are almost sure to be infested with SWD unless growers actively manage this pest.

Control of SWD is a challenge for organic as well as conventional growers.

Organic insecticides: Insecticides are an important part of an SWD management program; weekly applications can provide SWD control while fruit is ripe and ripening.

We anticipate an emergency use registration for the insecticide ENTRUST SC on berry and stone fruit crops for SWD control in 2014. Entrust (spinosad) is very effective for SWD and is acceptable in most organic programs. However, there will be limitations on the number of applications per season, which means you might not have enough applications to protect crops with a long harvest period. Also, Entrust (insecticide group 5) should not be used repeatedly because resistance management is a concern. It is important to alternate insecticides from different groups. In California, SWD has already developed resistance to the organic insecticide Pyganic, when this insecticide was used repeatedly.

Organic Options for Spotted Wing Drosophila Control

Cont'd

Pam Fisher, Berry Specialist, OMAF and MRA

Watch for updates on emergency use registrations of organic products for SWD control at www.Ontario.ca/spottedwing. Insecticides alone will not provide adequate SWD control, and researchers are actively searching for more sustainable options. Many other management practices must be incorporated into an SWD program.

Harvest schedules: The most important management strategy for SWD is to harvest frequently and thoroughly. Ideally all ripe fruit should be harvested every day or two. On pick-your own farms, where harvest is seldom thorough, growers should send workers in after the customers, to clean up the field. By adjusting harvest schedules to accommodate thorough and frequent harvest, growers have found good SWD control in raspberries, and day neutral strawberries. However, this is not a very practical option for blueberries or blackberries which are picked once or twice a week.

Removing over-ripe or damaged fruit: Removing unmarketable fruit from the field can reduce the build-up of SWD, but the cost-benefits of this expensive management practice are not really clear. However, in organic settings, where insecticide options are limited, removing unmarketable fruit can pay off (Figure 1). This waste fruit should be buried daily at least 30 cm deep, or held in sealed containers for a few days.

Post-harvest cooling: Cooling to 1.6°C (35°F) degrees immediately after harvest will slow the development of SWD in harvested fruit. If fruit is held for three days at this temperature, many eggs and small larvae will die. However, once SWD has laid eggs in fruit, shelf life is compromised because the surface of the fruit has been damaged. Post-harvest cooling should be used together with immediate marketing of fruit.

Crop management: SWD populations are favoured by moderate temperatures and high humidity. Growers can influence SWD populations by making sure crops are pruned to facilitate airflow, reduced humidity around the crop canopy, and ease of harvest. Prune brambles and install trellis systems (Figure 2). Blueberries should be pruned to open up the canopy. June-bearing strawberries should be renovated as soon as possible after harvest. Runners should be clipped on day-neutral strawberries to reduce crop debris on the beds.

Ground cover management: Dropped fruit can be a source of SWD flies. Factors which favour desiccation of fruit, such as short grass, dry cultivated soil, or landscape fabric, could help to reduce SWD emergence from fallen fruit. Landscape fabric as a ground cover can also make it possible to rake dropped fruit up from the ground and dispose of it. Use of trickle irrigation, instead of overhead sprinklers, can help maintain a dry environment in the crop alleys and reduce humidity around the planting.

Management of wild hosts: SWD has many wild hosts (i.e. mulberries, honeysuckle, brambles, pokeweed, dogwood, buckthorn, pin cherry) that are common in Ontario landscapes. These wild hosts are important habitat for pollinators and other beneficial insects. It is not practical or desirable to remove all wild hosts around your farm fields. However wild blackberries and wild raspberries should be removed where possible, or mowed below the fruiting zone each spring.

Biological control: SWD has few natural enemies. Wasps parasitizing SWD have been identified in Ontario and elsewhere in North America, but biological controls are not providing economic control at this time. Most parasites of drosophila do not seem to be adapted to find this new invasive species, and parasitism rates are low, 1-2%. Research is underway in areas of Asia where the pest is well established to identify predators and/or parasites. Other researchers are studying the efficacy of biopesticides, with little success so far.

Exclusion: Exclusion of SWD from the crop canopy has been tried on a small scale for blueberries, and could also be used in high tunnels. The netting used to exclude SWD is commercially available, has a very fine mesh, and is heavier than bird netting. It must be installed over a structure that is sturdy enough to hold the extra weight. The bottom edge of the netting must be trenched in at ground level, or installed to prevent any gaps between the ground and the net. In addition, doors must be kept closed, something difficult to do when pickers are moving in and out. Negative side effects from reduced light and ventilation can be caused by the netting. Research is continuing on this option for SWD control.

For more information: For current and extensive information on Spotted Wing Drosophila, please see our website at www.Ontario.ca/spottedwing.

Growers can also listen to a recorded webinar by Dr. H. Burrak at North Carolina State University and Dr. V. Walton of Oregon State University, "Biologically Based Organic Management Strategies for Spotted Wing Drosophila". Some of the information in this presentation was used in the writing of this article. <http://www.extension.org/pages/70121/biologically-based-organic-management-strategies-for-spotted-wing-drosophila>



Figure 1: Removing over-ripe and unmarketable fruit from the field can help reduce SWD populations.



Figure 2: Crop management can affect SWD damage. Although total yields might be higher in the planting on the left, SWD will be easier to manage in the field on the right, where trellising is used to facilitate harvest. Landscape fabric as a ground cover can help desiccate fallen fruit.

How to Prepare for and Respond to a Product Recall

Wayne Du, On-Farm Food Safety Specialist, OMAF and MRA

Having an effective recall system in place is essential to removing contaminated food products from the supply chain quickly and preventing foodborne illness. Are you ready to conduct a product recall? Here are some helpful tips.

Preparing for a recall

- Identify and record contact information for local regulatory authorities and relevant parties such as the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), inspectors, your suppliers and buyers, commodity organizations, emergency personnel and veterinarians.
- Have the production information and supporting records organized and handy in the event of a recall.
- Perform a mock recall to test the effectiveness and efficiency of your recall system.
- Ensure you can identify, locate and recall 100% of affected product within 48hrs.

Responding to a recall

If a problem has been identified within your operation or with your product, and a recall needs to be initiated, notify the CFIA immediately with the following information:

- A detailed description of the nature of the problem.

- Details of complaints received and any illnesses reported.
- The name or brand of the product, product description and quantity and lot number(s) of the product affected.
- Label(s) of the product(s).
- Distribution of the product.
- Dates of the product distributed.
- Contact information of your operation's recall coordinator for both working and off- working hours.

Notify your buyers and other relevant parties of the situation immediately.

Although producers do everything they can to ensure safe quality products, recalls can and do occur. Being prepared for a recall will help save your time, overall costs to your business and most importantly it will ensure the safety of consumers.

For more information on food recalls, refer to “**Food Recall and Emergency Response**” on the CFIA website or attend our free online workshops on recall. Visit us at: www.ontario.ca/foodsafety or call: 1-877-424-1300 for the workshops.

Interested in Using Biopesticides? Check out the OFVC!

Melanie Filotas, IPM Specialist - Specialty Crops, OMAF and MRA

Several biopesticides are now registered for use on organic crops when other management techniques fail to adequately control pests. However, effective use of these products depends on the user having a good understanding of what they are and how they work, as their action and use can be quite different from more traditional products such as copper or sulphur.

Growers interested in learning how to use biopesticides more effectively may be interested in attending “Biopesticides: Making them work in the field”, a session to be held at the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Convention at the Scotiabank Convention Centre in Niagara Falls next Wednesday, February 19th from 2-4pm. Invited speakers from research, extension and the biopesticide industry will be presenting their tips and suggestions on how to use these products most effectively. The session features:

Liette Lambert, Quebec Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAPAQ) “Biopesticides – Experiences in Quebec”

Matt Krause, Bioworks, inc. “Biopesticides for management of root and foliar diseases”

Claude Dubois, AEF Global “Effective fungicides for strawberry, apple, grape and other crops”

Mary Ruth McDonald, University of Guelph, “Biopesticide use in Ontario vegetables – a researcher’s perspective”

For more details, visit www.ofvc.ca. Registration is also available on site.

Funding Opportunities

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

Growing Forward 2 Funding Assistance Program for Producers, Organizations and Collaborations

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

Areas of Focus for GF2 Funding Assistance

Producers, organizations and collaborations can apply for funding assistance in six focus areas, with an emphasis on innovation:

- Environmental and Climate Change
- Assurance Systems (Food Safety, Traceability and Animal Welfare)
- Market Development
- Animal and Plant Health
- Labour Productivity Enhancement
- Business and Leadership Development

Capacity Building Funding Assistance

Cost-share is available to support eligible clients to acquire additional skills, to undertake in-depth assessments and audits, and to develop business plans.

Building capacity helps prepare clients to apply for further cost-share to implement a project. Applications for capacity building funding assistance will be accepted on a continuous basis.

Some examples of Capacity Building activities are:

- Cost-share fees for qualified consultants (e.g. Professional Engineer) to conduct an assessment.
- Produce a written report and plan that provides recommendations for implementing improved irrigation and fertigation management BMP's (e.g. field and greenhouse operations).
- Energy Use Assessment for existing farm buildings that will reduce the dependency on power and fossil fuels and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Prevention plan for Wildlife Damage - help reduce crop, livestock or property damage caused by managed wildlife species.
- Market Assessment, Marketing Plan, Communication Material Design.
- Integrated Pest Management Planning.
- Cost of Production Assessment.
- Succession Plans, Expansion Plans, Human Resources Plan, Business Plan.

Implementation Funding Assistance

Clients may be eligible for cost-share for projects that help to achieve their business goals. Applications for project implementation will be reviewed and assessed based on merit. Having a detailed business and/or workplan, budget and applicable permits and approvals in place prior to submitting an application will increase your success in securing cost-share.

Individual farm businesses may be eligible to receive up to \$350,000 over the five-year program (April 1, 2013 to March 31, 2018)

Producers are strongly encouraged to attend a free capacity building workshop such as Canada-Ontario Environmental Farm Plan (New 4th edition) and Growing Your Farm Profits.

Please visit the GF2 website at: www.ontario.ca/growingforward2

OMAF and MRA have 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.

Learning Opportunities

Seed-Saving Webinar: The Fundamentals of Seed-Saving

Date: Wednesday, February 19, 2014

The Bauta Family Initiative on Canadian Seed Security will be providing its first-ever national webinar series in 2014, The Fundamentals of Seed Saving, starting Wednesday, February 19!

Throughout 2014 we will offer 4 webinars in English and 2 in French, with seasonally relevant content on topics from seed crop planning to equipment, quality assurance, and marketing. The

webinars will be offered free of charge across Canada.

Planning Vegetable Seed Crops: Wednesday, February 19, 2014
Featuring:

- Patrick Steiner of Stellar Seeds, BC
- Michelle Smith of Northwind Farm, NS
- Daniel Brisebois of Tournesol Cooperative Farm, QC

Learning Opportunities

Topics:

- Knowing seed crops & lifecycle patterns, isolation distances, and population sizes;
- Sourcing appropriate seed stock and integrating seed production onto your farm; and
- Using and marketing seed crops: intended use and prospective buyers.

For more information and detailed schedules, please visit the following www.seedsecurity.ca and www.everdale.org.

Urban Fruit Propagation Workshop

Dates: March 9th and 16th (separate workshops)

Time: 9am-4:30pm

Location: Toronto

Workshop leaders: Ken Taylor and Phil Collins

Learn what fruit grows well in the GTA - in your backyard, balcony or rooftop garden.

Join us for this one-day intensive workshop where you will learn the basics of urban orchard design, four methods of fruit tree propagation, and how to collect, store and root fruit cuttings. Learn about exotic varieties like pawpaw, persimmon, Asian pear, & heartnuts.

For more information and to register, please visit the website at www.foggyriverfarm.eventbrite.com

EFAO Kitchen Table Meetings

There are numerous Kitchen Table Meetings taking place through the winter. Please visit the EFAO website for more information at www.efao.ca

C.R.A.F.T. (Collaborative Regional Alliance for Farmer Training in Ontario) Internship Opportunities

Fulltime Seasonal and Other Organic Farming Internships in Ontario.

If you're ready for a full, hands-on experience that will immerse you in ecological farming then you've come to the right place. CRAFT Ontario is your gateway to a farming internship experience that will change your life. Whether your dream is to have your own organic farm one day or just want to learn some food growing and hands-on skills that can be applied in other careers and lifestyles, a farming internship is a powerful experience that will equip you with the tools and insights to make a real difference in the world. Each CRAFT farm operates independently and offers its own internship with individualized agreements around such things as living and eating arrangements, stipends, work hours, and training methods. **For more information** please visit the website at www.craftontario.ca

Conferences, Meetings and Tours

Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Convention (OFVC)

Date: February 19 & 20, 2014

Location: Scotiabank Convention Centre, 6815 Stanley Avenue, Niagara Falls, Ontario

- Organic session will include Eric Gallandt (University of Maine): A systems perspective on weed management: cultivation, rotation, cover crops, and the weed seedbank.
- Jason Deveau, OMAF and MRA: Application of organic amendments and pest control products.
- Melanie Filotas, OMAF and MRA: Late Blight, Downy Mildew and Invasive Insects – What's an Organic Grower to do?

Biopesticide Session "Biopesticides – Making them work in the field", to be held in the afternoon after the organic session.

Topics include:

- Liette Lambert (Quebec Ministry of Agriculture): Biopesticides: Experiences in Quebec.
- Matt Karuse (Bioworks, Inc.): Biopesticides for management of root and foliar diseases.
- Claude Dubois (AEF Global): Effective fungicides for strawberries, apples and other crops.
- Mary Ruth McDonald (University of Guelph): Using biopesticides in Ontario vegetables – a researcher's perspective.

For more information please visit the website at www.ofvc.ca

Eco Farm Day, 2014

Date: February 22, 2014

Location: The Ramada Inn, 805 Brookdale Ave, Cornwall, Ontario

Advance registration available online or by mail.

Registration fee includes lunch:

- Regular Adult – \$56.50 (\$67.80 at door)
- COG/Organic Meadow Member – \$45.10 (\$56.50 at door)
- Student – \$28.25
- Senior – \$33.90

For more information and a complete conference brochure, please visit the website at www.cog.ca/ottawa/eco-farm-day

COG Toronto 8th Annual Organic Conference

The Organic Vision: In Search of Change

Date: Saturday, February 22, 2014 9:00am-5:00pm

Location: University of Toronto Conference Centre, 89 Chestnut St., Toronto

Registration: \$65 (\$85 after Feb. 15); COG members, seniors and students \$55 (\$65 after Feb. 15)

For more information and registration please call 647.367.7706 or visit the website at www.cogtoronto.org.

Links to ON Organic Information & Staff Contacts

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Adam Hayes	Soil Management Specialist	519-674-1621
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Christine Brown	Nutrient Mgt Field Crops Prgm Lead	519-537-8305
Brian Hall	Canola & Edible Bean Specialist	519-271-0083

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Jaydee Smith	Swine Prod Systems Program Lead	519-674-1542
Mario Mongeon	Livestock Specialist (Bil)	613-679-0937
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Brian Lang	Dairy Cattle Prod Systems	519-537-8786
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Ron Lackey	Feed Ingredient & By-product Specialist	519-271-7407
Vacant	Sheep & Goat Specialist	613-258-8299
Brian Tapscott	Alternative Livestock Specialist	519-846-3400
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Brian Pogue	Beef Cattle Program Lead	519-826-5106
Nancy Noecker	Beef Cow/Calf Specialist	613-258-8476
Delma Kennedy	Sheep Specialist	519-846-3398
Steve Naylor	Aquaculture Specialist	519-826-3172
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

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



Growing Forward 2

A federal-provincial-territorial initiative

Food Safety Workshops for Producers

Looking to keep up to date on the latest food safety practices and find out how Growing Forward 2 funding assistance can help you reach your goals? Join us for any or all of the workshops listed below, covering a variety of important food safety topics.

All workshops are online, taken from the comfort of your home or business - all you need is an internet and phone connection.

Workshop Topic	Dates Offered	Time
Worker Practices	January 15, 2014	12:30 – 2:00 pm
Cleaning and Sanitizing	January 29, 2014	12:30 – 2:00 pm
Pest Control, Building Maintenance and Visitors	February 12, 2014	12:30 – 2:00 pm
Recall and Traceability	February 26, 2014	12:30 – 2:00 pm
Soil Amendments	March 12, 2014	12:30 – 2:00 pm
Pre and Post-Harvest Water	March 26, 2014	12:30 – 2:00 pm

To register for our online food safety workshops, call 1-877-424-1300
More details available when you call or at www.ontario.ca/foodsafety

