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Welcome to ON Organic

Evan Elford, New Crop Development Specialist, OMAFRA

We hope you enjoy this month's newsletter with information on finishing beef cattle on pasture, an overview of a market research project from the University of Guelph focusing on production system characteristics such as organic, and an update from the Organic Agriculture Centre of Canada on the recent launch of the Organic Science Cluster II.

As always, we want to hear from you! Are there livestock, crop or business management issues you are facing or would like to learn more about? Please let us know so we can address it for you (and others) in an upcoming newsletter!

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 no cost. For details go to the webpage:

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

The newsletter is also posted on the OMAFRA website at:

<http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/organic/news/news-organic.html>

The French version of these newsletters is available at:

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

The OMAFRA Organic pages are linked from:

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

The ON Organic Team

Evan Elford – Editor, OMAFRA, New Crop Development Specialist

Jack Kyle – OMAFRA, Grazier Specialist

Hugh Berges - OMAFRA, Manager Horticultural Technology

Katie Meagher – OMAFRA, Marketing Specialist

Mario Mongeon – OMAFRA, Livestock Specialist

Melanie Filotas - OMAFRA, IPM Specialist for Specialty Crops

Jacquie De Fields – OMAFRA, Client Service Representative

Julie Desrosiers – OMAFRA, Client Service Representative

David Lauzon – OMAFRA, Client Service Representative

Can I Do That On Grass?

Jack Kyle, Grazier Specialist, OMAFRA

With increased interest in grass fed beef, people ask if it is possible to fatten cattle on pasture without grain supplementation. The answer is yes, with a few conditions. When grass finishing animals remember that the market is generally not looking for as much fat cover as normally found on grain finished animals. If you are not looking to finish cattle but rather achieve maximum growth on pasture the same pasture management principals will apply.

First and foremost, what is the quality of the pasture? To achieve optimum production you need lots of good quality pasture. However, unlike with stored forages and grains, often producers don't have an accurate quality assessment of their pastures. This is because pastures grow and are utilized directly by the animal without ever being formally harvested or analyzed.

Stored forage and grains have a known quality and energy level – either from feed analysis or from a long consistent history of grading standards and nutritional analysis. Although it is often produced on farm, you still have a good indicator of the feed quality, especially in the case of grains.

With pastures, there is a wide range in species make up, including any number of mixtures of legumes and grasses, with each species having a different feeding value. There is also the maturity factor – pastures may range from lush and vegetative to those which are mature and woody. Obviously, the lush and vegetative pastures will provide much higher quality feed, and you will have far greater

success cattle on this than a mature, woody pasture. This range in quality has a tremendous effect on animal performance, especially with livestock requiring more than a maintenance ration.

In a research project conducted at the Ontario Agricultural College in the 1960's, forage quality at various stages of growth was determined. For alfalfa, the range was from a high of 20.8% CP (crude protein) and 70.6% IVD (in-vitro digestibility) in the younger plants to a low of 15.6% CP and 60.1% IVD in the more mature plants. For Orchard grass, the protein ranged from 13.3% to 6.6% and digestibility ranged from 74.7% to 51.8%, showing a decrease in value as the plant matured. Timothy and brome grass showed similar declines in quality as orchardgrass (Table 1). When the digestibility of forage decreases, the intake also declines. This comes as a double hit because the animals are eating less of a lower quality feed, resulting in poor performance. To finish well, cattle will need high intakes of quality forage. If pastures are managed to be grazed when the plants are in the vegetative state, with maximum animal intake, excellent growth and production results are achievable.

The second condition required to successfully finish on pasture is good pasture management. How do you manage your pastures and your grazing to achieve these results? Staging the pastures to create a wedge of forage with the last pasture grazed being the thin edge of the wedge and the next pasture to be grazed is the thick end of the wedge.

cont'd

Table 1: The effect of advancing maturity on the quality of four forage species.
From Research Review of Forage Production Crop Science OAC 1983, R.S. Fulkerson

	Vernal Alfalfa*		Climax Timothy		Frode Orchardgrass		Saratoga Bromegrass	
	%IVD	%CP	%IVD	%CP	%IVD	%CP	%IVD	%CP
Boot	70.6	20.8	70.9	10.6	74.7	13.3	75.1	13.4
Heading	65.9	17.7	64.1	8.9	71.2	11.0	69.1	10.0
Flower	63.0	16.7	56.6	6.9	61.3	8.2	59.4	6.7
Early Seed	60.1	15.6	53.1	5.7	51.8	6.6	59.7	5.8

*Alfalfa – medium bud, very first flower, full flower, early seed

Can I Do That On Grass? Cont'd

If animals are moved every one to two days they will always have fresh high quality forage available that will meet the nutritional requirements for excellent growth.

To support pasture finishing, pastures should be maintained with forage grasses in the boot stage and legumes in late bud to early flower stages. By maintaining and monitoring this “wedge” you will have the opportunity to adjust your grazing program to maintain quality pasture from May through to October.

This example shows the available feed in animal days per acre for each of the 12 paddocks. The animals will start in paddock 1 and by the time they get to

paddock 12, the first one will have regrown to provide abundant high quality forage (Figure 1).

Perennial pastures have minimal input costs and very low maintenance cost when compared to annual crops, stored forage

or grain crops. By maintaining quality pasture throughout the grazing season, you create the lowest cost feeding program, while still achieving gains comparable to any other feeding program. It is the dollars you have left that determine your profitability, not the gross revenue. Well managed pastures are an opportunity to have a profitable bottom line and access a niche but growing market for grass fed beef.

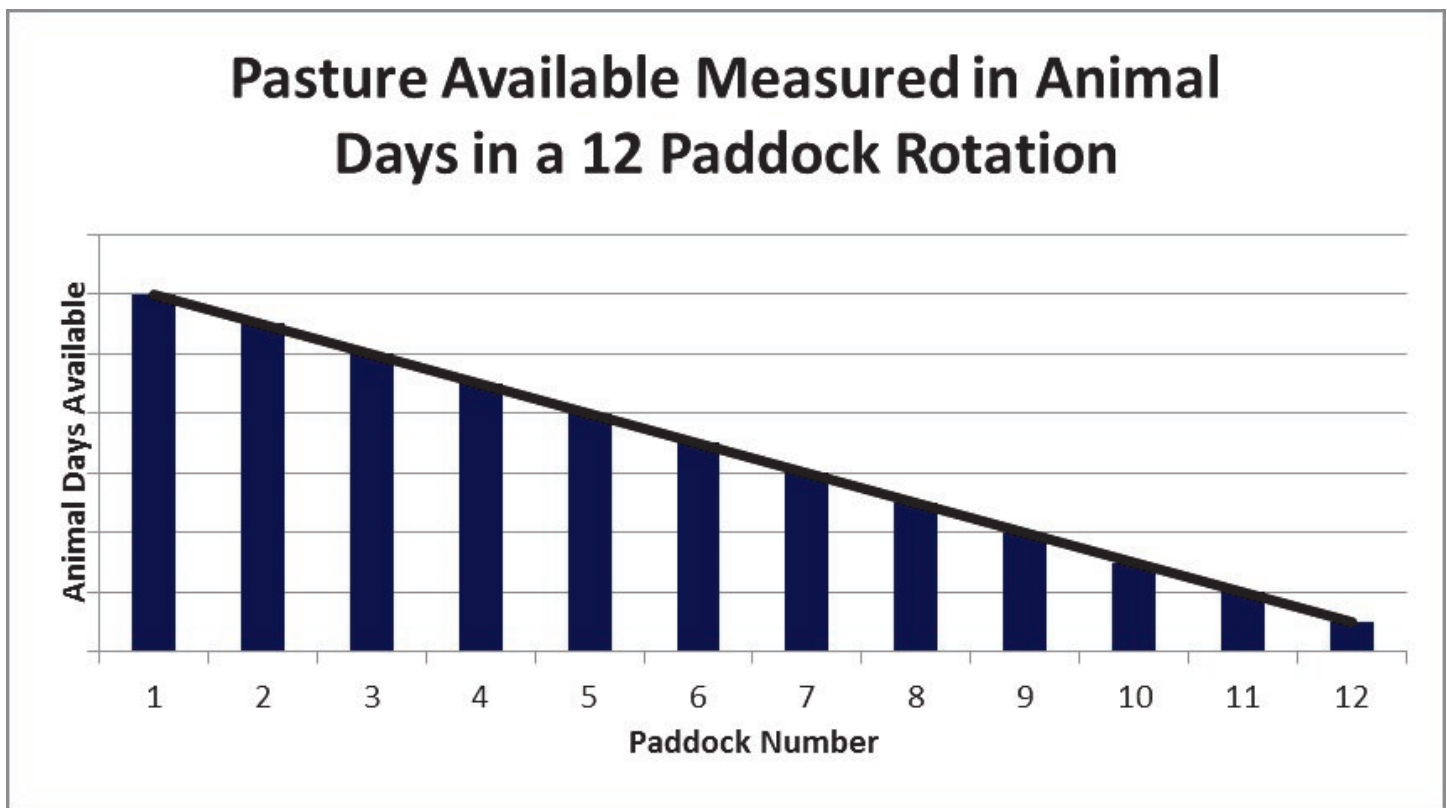


Figure 1: Illustration of the wedge technique for pasture management. Animals come out of paddock 12 (the thin end of the wedge) when the forage is sufficiently grazed and moved into paddock 1 (the thick end of the wedge) where there is ample supply. Animals will rotate through the 12 paddocks so that while one is being grazed the other 11 are in a state of regrowth. Ideally, by the time animals have grazed through paddocks 1-11, and are ready to be back in paddock 12, it will have regrown enough to be the thick end of the wedge again.

Whither Local Food: how context matters in the local food discussion

Guest Authors: John Cranfield, Kelvin Tsang and Yihong Zheng¹, University of Guelph

Increasingly we hear about food products differentiated by their characteristics or their underlying production system. Examples include functional foods, organically produced foods, locally produced foods, and foods that reflect enhanced social responsibility, such as enhanced animal welfare. While markets for these foods are relatively immature, their growth potential speaks to future opportunities for the Ontario agri-food sector.

For producers to seize this opportunity, it is important for them to be able to position their product in the right market, at the right price and with the right amount of promotion. We undertook research to discover new information that can help to inform aspects of the marketing mix for producers of locally produced organic foods. These foods included two fresh products (Gala apples and tomatoes) and three processed products (a pork tenderloin, whole grain bread and aged cheddar cheese).

Using these foods, we designed a consumer choice experiment where respondents had to indicate whether they would buy a version of one of these products. The different versions of the products that respondents could choose from differed across a number of key attributes. These attributes were: nature of the production system (i.e. conventionally produced, organically produced but not certified, certified organic), price, distribution channel in which the product is available (farmer direct, independent grocery store, grocery chain), and distance between location of production and the consumer. Such an approach allows us to measure consumer preferences across the product attributes and from this, calculate willingness to pay for the various attributes.

These choice experiments were conducted using a nationally representative, on-line survey implemented using Ipsos' i-Say consumer panel. A variety of approaches were undertaken to ensure that respondents' had access to information about the various attributes, and that respondent choices

were not affected by hypothetical bias. Over two thousand people from across Canada completed the survey.

A number of questions were asked so that we could understand what was important to respondents when buying locally produced or organically produced food products. Regardless of whether we asked about locally produced or organically produced foods, the three most important factors were price, taste and freshness. Interesting, the three least important factors were fairness, tradition and convenience.

Analysis of the choice data suggested that product price and distance between point of production and the consumer adversely affected demand. In particular, as price increased, respondents were less likely to say they would buy the product. The same was true for distance. The latter is important as it says that consumers have a preference for locally produced foods. Moreover, premiums for "local" were higher for fresh products than for processed products, but premiums associated with "localness" fell as the distance between production and consumption increased. Certified organic products commanded a higher premium than products that were conventionally produced or organically produced but not certified as organic. Premiums for certified organic were also higher for fresh products than processed products. Lastly, availability through farmer direct sales (e.g. CSAs or Farmers' markets) or independent grocery stores did not affect choice, while availability through grocery chains did increase the probability of choosing the product.

Differences in the premiums associated with local and organic certification across the two product classes (that is, fresh products versus processed products) speaks to the importance of penciling out margins associated with marketing local and organic products. As well, the apparently limited role of alternative distribution channels points to potential complexities in channel selection.

¹The authors are Professor, former MSc student and MSc student, respectively, in the Department of Food Agricultural and Resource Economics at the University of Guelph. The financial support of the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs is gratefully acknowledged.

Official Launch of the Organic Science Cluster II (2013-2018)

From The Organic Agriculture Centre of Canada

Official Launch of the Organic Science Cluster II (2013-2018)

[From The Organic Agriculture Centre of Canada](#)

The Organic Science Cluster II is an industry-supported research and development Endeavor initiated by the [Organic Agriculture Centre of Canada](#) at Dalhousie University in collaboration with the industry applicant, the Organic Federation of Canada. OSCII is supported by the AgriInnovation Program of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Growing Forward 2 (GF2) Policy Framework (a federal-provincial-territorial initiative) and over 65 organic sector partners.

Executive summary

The Organic Science Cluster II (OSCII) focuses on innovation, competitiveness and market development to ensure Canadian organic producers and processors have the tools and resources they need to continue to innovate and capitalize on emerging market opportunities.

Organic agriculture in Canada is a federally regulated and inspected production system driven by growing consumer demand domestically and internationally. It is a model of food production that is guided by principles of sustainability in terms of environment, resources, economics and animal well-being. As such, the research and development priorities for organic agriculture may span all commodity groups and applies to the entire value chain, from production through to the consumer.

Organic Science Cluster II consists of industry-led research and development and its outcomes are centered on competitiveness, market growth, adaptability and sustainability. This will be accomplished by using innovation to drive 'ecological intensification' through the following Themes:

[Theme A: Field crops: Optimizing productivity and competitiveness through adaptable systems for field crops](#)

[Theme B: Horticultural crops: Advancing the science of vegetable, fruit and novel horticultural crops](#)

[Theme C: Crop pests: Innovation in sustainable pest management strategies](#)

[Theme D: Livestock: Optimizing animal health and welfare for productivity and quality](#)

[Theme E: Value Adding: Adding value to capture markets through innovative processing solutions](#)

Innovation, the application of knowledge generated by science that leads to an improvement in the way things are done or a product being diffused into the marketplace, is needed for the organic sector to be competitive and to grow and prosper. Innovation may address barriers constraining production, increase efficiency of production by reducing cost, or support capturing new opportunities. OSCII includes a number of examples of innovation: crop breeding for improved cultivars, reduced tillage systems under organic management, use of biological soil amendments to improve plant health, development of new management products and practices for pests of crops (insects, diseases and weeds) in field and storage and livestock (diseases and parasites), technological advances in greenhouse and high tunnel production, management targeting optimization of the nutritional value of crops, the use of advanced processing techniques to develop value-added products such as nutraceuticals, improved methods of meat preservation, and utilization of waste byproducts to enhance productivity.

OSCII will help producers capture opportunities by supporting the development of emerging and juvenile organic production in Canada that is responding to market demand including: hops, nutraceuticals, sprouts, ornamental potted plants, and poultry.

OSCII is supported by over [65 contributing](#) partners on 37 Research Activities. OSCII includes over [170 collaborating researchers at over 36 institutions](#) across Canada.

Learning Opportunities

Nutrient Management eLearning Courses

We heard your requests!

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs has online nutrient management courses!

Our training courses give learners the tools to safely manage nutrients while protecting the environment. Take our courses to become a government-certified Nutrient Management Planner or Consultant.

Our eLearning format allows you to learn on your own time and at your own pace. The newest eLearning course – Introduction to Nutrient

Management – provides a basic understanding of nutrient management best management practices. This course will be of interest to a wider audience beyond those who require certification.

Visit the [University of Guelph Ridgetown Campus](#) website for more information on in-class and online nutrient management training options.

Contact the University of Guelph Ridgetown Campus for more information:

Toll Free: 1-855-648-1444

Email: mmcdonal@uoguelph.ca

Organic Seed Workshops, 2014 – Presented by Everdale

As part of their work for The Bauta Family Initiative on Canadian Seed Security, Everdale is offering a special series of organic seed production workshops in 2014 across Ontario.

Wednesday, August 27	Integrating Seed Production into Market Gardens	Matchbox Garden & Seed Co.
Wednesday, August 27	Build Your Own Small Seed Winnowing Equipment	Farms at Work and The Cottage Gardener
TBA	Growing and Selecting Seeds for World Crops	TBA
Wednesday, September 10	Rogueing and Selection (CRAFT Interns Only)	Whole Circle Farm
Thursday, September 11	Integrating Seed Production into Market Gardens	Fare Well Farm
TBA	Diversified Heritage Grain Production	Paul Spence
Wednesday, September 17	Integrating Seed Production into Market Gardens	Saugeen River CSA
Wednesday, September 17	Harvesting, Cleaning, and Processing Wet and Dry Seed	Hawthorn Farm
Wednesday, September 24	Fundamentals of Seed Production	Guelph Centre for Urban Organic Farming
Saturday, September 27	Seed Production Trials and Selection	Everdale
November 7-9	ECOSGN 2014: Seed Connections	Sainte-Anne-de Bellevue, Quebec

For more information on seed workshops near you, please visit the Everdale website at: <http://everdale.org/workshops/organicseed/> or contact Aabir Dey, Regional Coordinator for the Bauta Family Initiative on Canadian Seed Security for Ontario at 519.855.4859 ext.103; email: aabir.dey@everdale.org.

Conferences, Meetings and Tours

EFAO Eastern Region Farm Tour Series

August 21: The Multi-Generational CSA at Covenant Farm

Other EFAO workshops and tours:

Grass Fed Beef and Environmental Stewardship Tour

Date: Monday August 25, 2014

Time: 2:00 pm - 5:00 pm

Location: YU Ranch, 460 Plowman's Line, Tillsonburg

Farm Tour: Cover Crops & Crop Rotation for Market Gardens. NEW DATE!

Date: Thursday August 28, 2014

Time: 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm

Location: Patchwork Gardens. 4649 Milburn Rd, Battersea

For more information on these and other EFAO tours, please visit the website at www.efao.ca/upcoming-events/.

Ontario Organic Roadshow – Presented by the Organic Council of Ontario

OCO is proud to be part of Canada's new "Think Before You Eat" Campaign. Organic remains the best choice to reduce exposure to pesticides and GMOs. Products sporting the Canada Organic Logo have met or ex-



ceeded rigorous standards and are third-party inspected annually. Great tasting, fresh organic fare from Ontario's best companies!

The Ontario Organic Roadshow will support producers and retailers to share the good news of organics, including helping people find foods that are both Local AND Organic- better together.

In addition to samples and information on pioneers and innovators, OCO will bring the latest information and insights on organics with our 10 minute power presentations throughout the Roadshow. And look for the first in our Think Before You Eat video series "Think Animal Welfare". To be a part of the Roadshow as a host or a sponsor, please contact event

coordinator Jennifer Berman Diaz
marketing@organiccouncil.ca

Dates and Locations:

September 7, Feast of Fields, King City
September 13, The Stone Store Guelph
September 14, Southbrook Vineyard, Niagara
September 20, Organic Garage, Oakville
September 21, Organic Garage, Vaughan
September 27, The Big Carrot, Toronto
September 28, TBD
October 4, TBD
October 17-19, Delicious Food Show, Toronto
October 24-25, Nature's Emporium, Newmarket

For more information, please visit the OCO website at:
www.organiccouncil.ca

Biodynamic Garden Tour

Quarter acre residential biodynamic vegetable and flower garden tour.

Date: September 7, 2014

Time: 1-5 PM

Location: Simcoe, Norfolk County.

Tour will be held at the residence of Zeb Landon & Laurie McGregor, 14 Simcoe Blvd. Meeting the challenges of shade, soil, and weather will be discussed.

For more information please contact Laurie at 519.426.9021 Laurie McGregor - Treasurer Society for Biodynamic Farming and Gardening in Ontario 519-426-9021

Canada's Outdoor Farm Show

Date: September 9-11, 2014

Location: 744906 Oxford Road #17, Woodstock, Ontario

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

Organic Week, September 20-28, 2014



For more information about Organic Week 2014, please visit the website at www.organicweek.ca.

Conferences, Meetings and Tours Cont'd

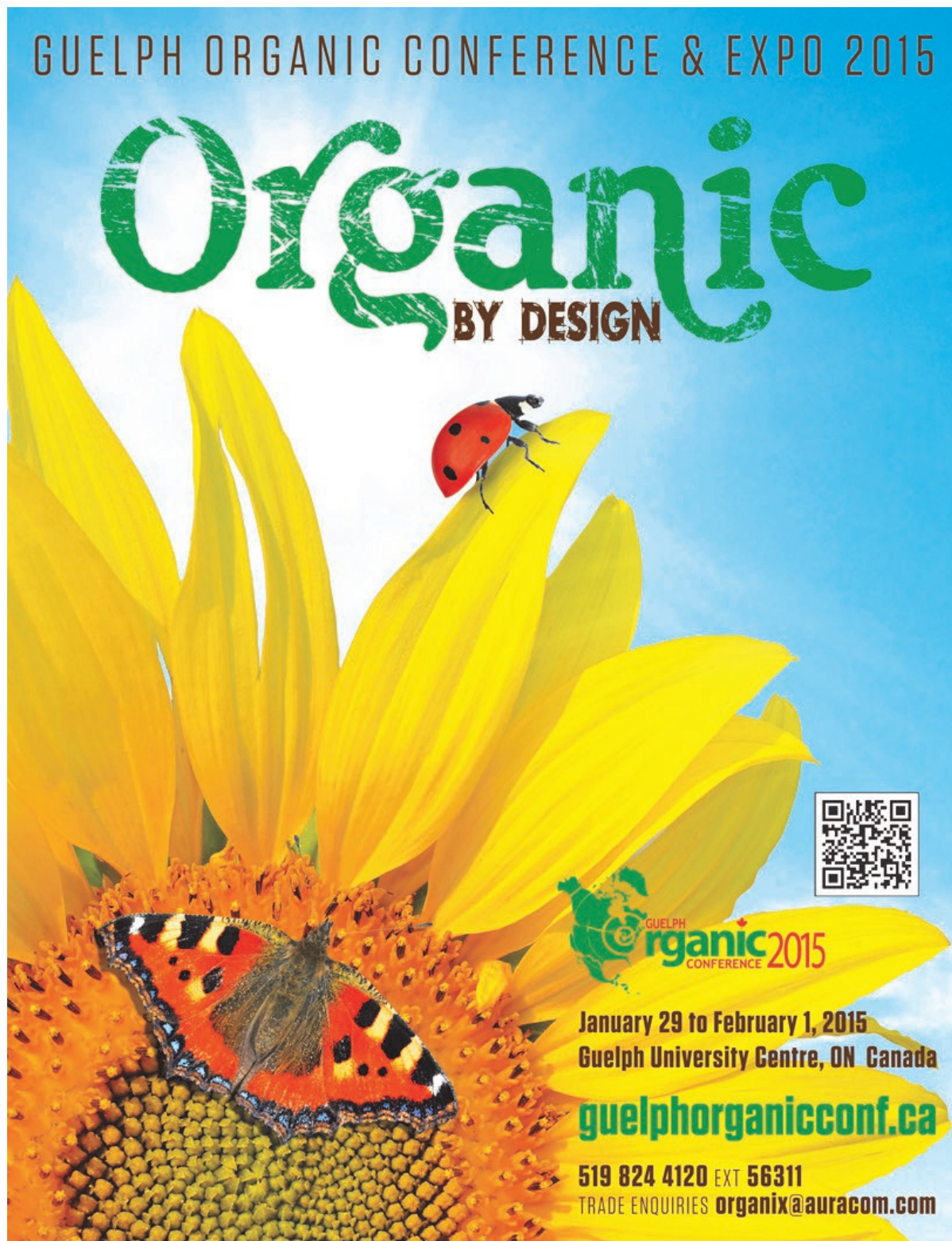
Organic by Design

34th Annual Guelph Organic Conference

Date: January 29-February 1, 2015

Location: University of Guelph, Guelph, Ontario

For more information please visit the website at: <http://www.guelphorganicconf.ca/>



GUELPH ORGANIC CONFERENCE & EXPO 2015

Organic
BY DESIGN





January 29 to February 1, 2015
Guelph University Centre, ON Canada

guelphorganicconf.ca

519 824 4120 EXT 56311
TRADE ENQUIRIES organix@auracom.com

Links to ON Organic Information & Staff Contacts

OMAFRA Horticulture Staff

Horticulture Technology

Mike Celetti	Pathologist, Hort Crops Prgm Lead	519-824-4120, x58910
Jim Chaput	Minor Use Coordinator	519-826-3539
Hannah Fraser	Entomologist, Hort Crops Prgm Lead	905-562-1674
Kristen Obeid	Weed Mgt Hort Crops Prgm Lead	519-738-1232
Christoph Kessel	Nutrition, Hort Program Lead	519-824-4120, x52480
Deanna Németh	Nutrient Management Planning Spec.	905-562-1170
Anne Verhallen	Soil Management Specialist	519-674-1614
Vacant	Organic Crop Production	519-826-4587
Denise Beaton	Crop Protection Program Lead	519-826-6594
Jason Deveau	Application Technology Specialist	519-426-8934

Horticulture Crops

Marg Appleby	IPM Systems Specialist	613-475-5850
Eugenia Banks	Potato Specialist	519-826-3678
Wendy McFadden-Smith	Tender Fruit & Grape IPM Spec.	905-562-3833
Jennifer DeEll	Fresh Market Quality	519-426-1408
Pam Fisher	Berry Crop Specialist	519-426-2238
Janice LeBoeuf	Vegetable Crop Specialist	519-674-1699
Elaine Roddy	Vegetable Crop Specialist	519-674-1616
Kathryn Carter	Tender Fruit & Grape Specialist	905-562-1639
Leslie Huffman	Apple Specialist	519-738-1256
Kristy Grigg-McGuffin	Pome Fruit IPM Specialist	519-426-4322
Marion Paibomesai	Vegetable Crop Specialist	519-826-4963

Greenhouse, Agroforestry & Specialty Crops

Jim Todd	Transition Crops Specialist	519-426-3823
Melanie Filotas	Specialty Crops IPM Specialist	519-426-4434
Sean Westerveld	Ginseng & Medicinal Herbs Spec.	519-426-4323
Evan Elford	New Crop Development Specialist	519-426-4509
Wayne Brown	Greenhouse Floriculture Specialist	905-562-4141, x179
Graeme Murphy	Greenhouse Floriculture IPM Spec.	905-562-4141, x106
Shalin Khosla	Greenhouse Vegetable Specialist	519-738-1257
Gillian Ferguson	Greenhouse Vegetable IPM Spec.	519-738-1258
Pam Charbonneau	Turfgrass Specialist	519-824-4120, x52597
Jennifer Llewellyn	Nursery Crops Specialist	519-824-4120, x52671
Todd Leuty	Agroforestry Specialist	519-826-3215
Mahendra Thimmanagari	Crop Bioproducts Specialist	519-826-4593

OMAFRA Field Crop & Livestock Staff

Field Crops

Horst Bohner	Soybean Specialist	519-271-5858
Ian McDonald	Applied Research Coordinator	519-482-5129
Peter Johnson	Cereals Specialist	519-271-8180
Albert Tenuta	Pathologist, Field Crops Prgm Lead	519-674-1617
Tracey Baute	Entomologist, Field Crops Prgm Lead	519-674-1696
Scott Banks	Emerging Crops Specialist	613-258-8359
Gilles Quesnel	IPM Field Crop Program Lead (Bil)	613-258-8250
Bonnie Ball	Soil Fertility Specialist	519-271-9269
Adam Hayes	Soil Management Specialist	519-674-1621
Greg Stewart	Corn Industry Program Lead	519-824-4120 x54865
Michael Cowbrough	Weed Mgmt Field Crps Prgm Lead	519-824-4120 x52580
Joel Bagg	Forage Specialist	705-324-5856
Christine Brown	Nutrient Mgt Field Crops Prgm Lead	519-537-8305
Brian Hall	Canola & Edible Bean Specialist	519-271-0083

Livestock

Tom Wright	Dairy Cattle Nutritionist	519-824-4120 x56281
Jaydee Smith	Swine Prod Systems Program Lead	519-674-1542
Mario Mongeon	Livestock Specialist (Bil)	613-679-0937
Albert Dam	Poultry Specialist	519-824-4120 x54326
Brian Lang	Dairy Cattle Prod Systems	519-537-8786
Doug Richards	Swine Grower-Finisher Specialist	519-482-3133
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
Chisptoph Wand	Beef Sheep & Goat Nutrition	519-824-4120 x53670
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
Marlene Paibomesai	Dairy Specialist	519-846-3401

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

<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:

1-877-424-1300

www.ontario.ca/omafra