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Welcome to ON Organic

Evan Elford, New Crop Development Specialist, OMAFRA

We hope you enjoy this month's edition of ON Organic with information on Chick Days and biosecurity kits for small flock poultry as well as strawberry production using low tunnel organic systems. Also included in this month's newsletter is the preliminary listing of IPM scout training courses offered each spring by OMAFRA. Be sure to sign up and learn more about applying integrated pest management principles in your crops this year. In addition, please note the details for the upcoming Organic Council of Ontario AGM on March 27, 2015 in the Meetings and Events section of the newsletter.

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!

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>

Chick Days and a FREE Biosecurity Kit for Your Poultry

Al Dam, Provincial Poultry Specialist, OMAFRA

It is hard to believe that Spring is coming and soon it will be time for chick, poult or pullet orders for the coming growing season. With that in mind it is also time to start thinking about Biosecurity for your birds. It does not matter if you have 60,000 Birds or 6 birds, your birds are an investment... in money, time and emotion and you want to do everything you can to keep them safe and healthy.

What is Biosecurity? It is actions that you can take to prevent and detect disease in your poultry and keep them healthy. In December of 2014 we had a small outbreak of Highly Pathogenic H5N2 Avian Influenza in BRITISH COLUMBIA. From December 2nd to 19th, there were 12 infected premises both commercial and backyard and all had to be destroyed by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency.

What can you do to keep your birds safe?

1. Prevent Contact with wild birds and other animals. Not only wild birds, but other vermin such as mice, rats, skunks and raccoons. This also applies to your dogs and cats, etc. With organic production this means having proper netting or bird wire up to prevent wild birds from feeding in your feeders and waterers. This included keeping bird species separate. DO NOT have turkeys, pheasants, peacocks or other gamebirds in pens or pasture areas that chicken have been on. Chickens can harbour histomoniasis (Blackhead) which is a protozoa parasite that can exist for long periods of time in the soil.
2. Keep you premises clean- you can harbour pathogens and parasites in soil, litter and other organic matter, thoroughly clean pens, feeders, waterers and other equipment including the shovels you clean with... This includes keeping yourself clean too! Using a good surfactant (soap) will help remove the organic matter on whatever you are cleaning and then followed by an approved disinfectant. Refer to your certification body to ensure you use an approved disinfectant.
3. Know your birds and spot signs of sickness. Depending on feathering, it might be needed to occasionally pick up birds to feel how well fleshed

they are to determine body condition. Also, a drop in water consumption is often the first indicator of your birds becoming ill. Finally, if they become ill, do you have veterinary care available if needed?

4. Limit exposure to visitors. It is always a source of pride to be able to show off your birds, but visitors can easily be a vector for disease to get into your flock. Better to have fewer visitors, take precautions if you need to have someone visit and use a visitor log to record who has visited, when and for how long. This is not only to protect your birds but to give you a trace back and a warning ability to others that have visited in case your birds do get sick.
5. Keep new birds to your flock separate at least 28 days. This quarantine period will allow you to monitor these new birds for developing sickness. This also applies to birds that you have taken to shows or exhibits.

If you want more information about biosecurity, OMAFRA has a FREE Kit called "Keeping Your Birds Healthy, Biosecurity Basics for Small Flocks." It is meant for the non- quota bird holders in the province, but if you have a commercial poultry operation, the concepts still apply to you, too! It explains the concepts of biosecurity, cleaning and disinfection, disease identification, management and control, vermin control, deadstock management and much more. There are factsheets, posters, pamphlets, a weatherproof restricted entry sign, a logbook for visitors and a CD with electronic versions of the above and much more.

Chick Days are coming soon this spring so educate yourself with these FREE kits by calling OMAFRA's Agricultural Information Contact Centre toll free at 1-877-424-1300.

Day-neutral Strawberry Season Extension Using Low-tunnel Organic Production Systems

Guest Authors: Steve Poppe and Esther Jordan, University of Minnesota, Emily Hoover, Emily Tepe, Andy Petran and Jack Tillman, U of M, Dept. of Horticultural Science

Availability of locally grown strawberries is extremely limited in the Upper Midwest, primarily due to the short growing season. Fruit is an important part of a healthy diet, and while there is an expressed interest in having greater access to locally grown strawberries, lack of suitable varieties and production systems has prohibited growers from being able to fulfill this need in our region.

For the last two years, our main objective was to conduct day-neutral strawberry trials using a low tunnel organic production system. To make fresh, locally grown strawberries available for an extended season, we established six day-neutral strawberry cultivars in raised beds using plasticulture with and without tunnels. We harvested day-neutral strawberry fruit from mid-July through mid-October 2013/2014 at the West Central Research and Outreach Center (WCROC) Morris site, the University of Minnesota St Paul campus site, and two farmer-cooperator sites.

A second objective was to work with current and potential growers to educate them on these new strawberry production methods. The third objective was to evaluate our success at increasing strawberry production in the Upper Midwest through collaboration with partner organizations. If successful, this new method of growing long-season strawberries may help increase the number of strawberry growers in the Upper Midwest, increase yields and therefore availability of locally grown strawberries from June through October.



Figure 1: Low tunnel organic strawberry production systems used by the University of Minnesota research team.

Traditional June-bearing strawberry varieties in Minnesota have a baseline yield of 5,500 pounds/A. Preliminary data from USDA low tunnel trials calculated yield for day-neutral varieties varying between 9 632 - 21 280kg/ha (8 600 - 19 000 lb/ac) (Lewers, 2012). Average 2013-2014 yield under low tunnels was 19 174 kg/ha (17,120 lb/ac) at the St. Paul site and 24 398 kg/ha (21 784 lb/ac) at the WCROC site; both within the USDA benchmark and exceeding June-bearing strawberry varieties in Minnesota.

In order to determine individual size of fruit (g) of each cultivar, we randomly chose 20 berries per treatment at each harvest in 2013 and 2014. At WCROC, the average berry weight (g) across six cultivars for both years under the low tunnel was 16.45g, while the non-low tunnel averaged 15.22g. At St. Paul, the average berry weight (g) across six cultivars for both years under the low tunnel was 12.98g, while the non-low tunnel averaged 12.42g. By comparison, 2010-2011 data from the WCROC June-bearing variety trial shows the average berry weight was 11.45g per individual fruit. After two years of research, the six day-neutral cultivars are proving to have larger individual fruit size when compared to June-bearing strawberry trials in Minnesota.

During the 2013 late summer/fall picking season at the WCROC site, we tasted a noticeably sweet strawberry. We randomly took brix/sugar levels during the picking season of all six cultivars in the low tunnel and non-low tunnel treatments. The results showed an average brix level of 7.6 between late July and early October in both low and non-low tunnel treatments. To compare these brix levels, we also randomly took readings in our 2013 WCROC June bearing variety trial between late June and early July; the results showed an average brix level of 7.7. This comparison shows that day-neutral cultivars are just as sweet as June-bearing cultivars commonly grown in Minnesota.

For step-by-step instructions on constructing a low tunnel system for strawberry use, or for more information on the project, please visit our low tunnel strawberry blog at the UMN Commercial Fruit website, <http://fruit.cfans.umn.edu/category/strawberries/low-tunnel-strawberry/>. We will continue with this research project 2015-2016. Steve Poppe can be contacted at poppesr@morris.umn.edu.

IPM Scout Training Workshops for 2015

Here are the updated IPM scout workshops available for those who will be scouting horticultural crops this year. To register contact: Agricultural Information Contact Centre at 1-877-424-1300

Workshop	Date & Time	Location	Workshop Leader	Materials Needed	Follow-up Field Training
Introduction to IPM	Apr 29 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.	Conference Rm 2 and 3 1 st Floor, 1 Stone Rd., Guelph	Denise Beaton	Lunch on your own Handouts provided Have to pay for parking	
Tomatoes & Peppers	May 1 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.	PSC 002 in the lower level of the Pestell Building at Ridgetown Campus.	Janice LeBoeuf	Lunch on your own Handouts provided	http://www.ridgetownc.uoguelph.ca/aboutus/campusmap.cfm
Lettuce, Celery, Onions, Carrots	May 5 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.	Conference Rm 1 on 1 st floor, 1 Stone Rd W, Guelph	Marion Paibomesai	Handouts provided Lunch on your own Have to pay for parking	
Tender Fruit	May 8 9:00 a.m. to noon	Vineland Rittenhouse Hall	Wendy McFadden-Smith	Bring Laptop Lunch on your own	
Grapes	May 8 1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.	Vineland Rittenhouse Hall	Wendy McFadden-Smith	Bring laptop Lunch on your own	
Apples	May 11 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Following with orchard visit	Auditorium Simcoe OMAFRA Resource Centre	Apple IPM specialist	Handouts provided If possible bring copy of Pub #360 & 310 Lunch on your own	
Strawberries and raspberry (blueberry training upon request)	May 13 9:00 a.m. sharp to 3:00 p.m.	Auditorium Simcoe OMAFRA Resource Centre	Pam Fisher	Required: OMAFRA Publication #360 <i>Guide to Fruit Production</i> \$20 Lunch on your own.	Spotted wing drosophila ID training provided at workshop
Sweet corn, Peas and Beans	May 14 9:30 a.m. to noon	Ridgetown	Elaine Roddy	Lunch on your own	
Cucurbit Crops	May 14 1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.	Ridgetown	Elaine Roddy		
Cole Crops	May 15 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.	Large Boardroom, 401 Lakeview Dr – Unit 1, Woodstock Woodstock OMAFRA Office	Marion Paibomesai	Handouts provided Lunch on your own	
Asparagus	May 21 8:45 a.m. to Noon	Webinar*	Elaine Roddy	Sign up for the webinar through Ag Information Contact Centre	
Potatoes	May 29 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.	1 Stone Rd, Conference Rm 3, 1 st floor, Guelph	Eugenia Banks	<i>Potato Scouting Manual Provided</i> <i>Recommended:</i> OMAFRA publication #823; <i>Potato Field Guide</i> Lunch on your own Have to pay for parking	Field training dates TBA
Ginseng in field workshop	June 4 1:30 p.m. to 4p.m.	TBA	Sean Westerveld Melanie Filotas		

IPM Scout Training Workshops for 2015 (Cont'd)

***Webinar meeting : Asparagus IPM Scout Training / Elaine Roddy**

Date: Thursday, May 21, 2015

Time: 8:45 am

- Within 15 minutes of meeting start time, go to:

<https://omafra.webex.com/omafra/j.php?MTID=ma5d3a430aaf1c3ed91147f0385c4c106>

- Login by entering your name and e-mail address

- If required, enter the **meeting password: omafra**

- For the audio component, join the teleconference: 416-212-8013 or Toll free 1-866-633-1033 / Pass Code 1931240

To ensure that you can successfully join the meeting online, please join a test meeting at <http://www.webex.com/test-meeting.html> at least one day in advance.

For more information contact:

Margaret Appleby, IPM Systems Specialist, OMAFRA Brighton, 613-475-5850

Email: margaret.appleby@ontario.ca

Resources

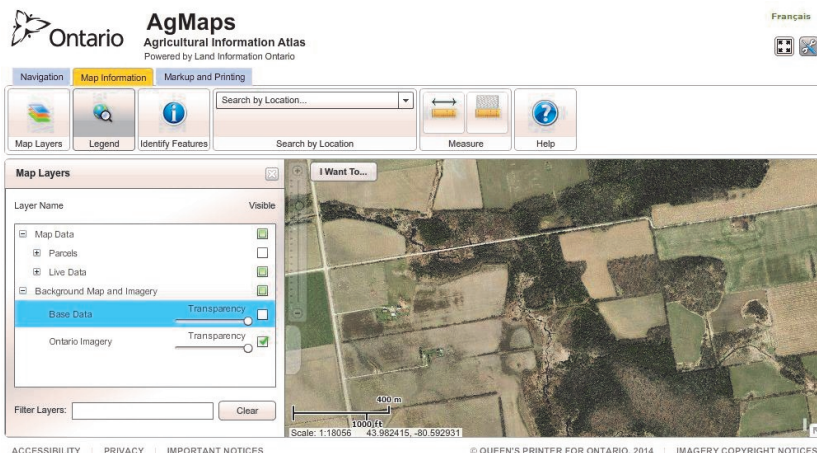
NEW! AgMaps Portal and Agricultural Information Atlas Application Help Tutorial Series

Just launched!

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) has a new series of tutorials to help you use the Agricultural Information Atlas (AIA), an online application that allows you to create custom maps and find agricultural information for Ontario. You can find the AIA link on the AgMaps Geographic Information Portal at ontario.ca/agmaps, the ministry's single access point for geospatial data.

The AgMaps Portal and AIA Application Help Tutorial Series provides step-by-step instructions on how to use the AIA for your farm or business. The audio/visual series helps with a range of topics – from navigating the application and creating layers on your custom maps, to creating tile drainage maps and nutrient management strategy farm sketches.

Find the 13 tutorials on the [OMAFRA website](http://ontario.ca/agmaps).



For more information, contact the
Agricultural Information Contact
Centre at 1.877.424.1300 or
ag.info.omafra@ontario.ca.

Resources (Cont'd)



Looking for Information on Cover Crops?

Cover crops have a lot of places where they can fit in horticultural crop rotations. Before late planted crops like pumpkins to provide weed suppression. After early harvested crops like peas or snap beans to cover and protect the soil while enhancing soil structure. After winter wheat to suppress resistant weeds in the rotation or as a part of the overall crop rotation to suppress nematodes in preparation for planting strawberries.

Looking for more details on how a cover crop can fit, herbicide concerns or the basics on a particular cover crop species? There is an improved version of the Purdue Midwest Cover Crop Field Guide available now. The pocket guide, released Monday (Sept. 22), is produced by Purdue University and the Midwest Cover Crops Council. The first cover crops guide was released in February 2012. The updated guide is in response to the increasing interest in cover crops in the Midwest and to requests for additional information.

"All this new information will help farmers better choose appropriate cover crops for their situation and better manage the cover crops they grow - all for

greater potential benefit for their soils and cash crop growth," said Eileen Kladvko, Purdue professor of agronomy.

The updated guide features seven new topics:

- Getting started in cover crops.
- Rationale for fitting cover crops into different cropping systems.
- Suggested cover crops for common rotations.
- Cover crop effects on cash crop yields.
- Climate considerations including winter hardiness and water use.
- Adapting seeding rates and spring management based on weather.
- "Up and coming" cover crops.

There also is more information about herbicide carryover, manure and biosolids applications, and crop insurance issues (note: US crop insurance issues). There has been a significant contribution from Ontario research to the new material, particularly in the area of herbicide carryover (Dr. Darren Robinson, University of Guelph- Ridgetown campus)

The guide's second edition is available at Purdue Extension's The Education Store at www.the-education-store.com. Search by the name of the publication or product code ID-433.

A link to a video clip of Purdue University agronomy professor Eileen Kladvko explaining the benefits of cover crops is available at <http://youtu.be/2NlyQeZ8jxQ>

Conferences, Meetings and Tours

Tree Fruit and Fresh Grape Worker Safety Workshops

The following upcoming workshops are FREE to Ontario tender fruit, apple and fresh grape growers.

Workplace Safety and Prevention Services will lead the workshops and take growers through how to:

- Assess health and safety at your operation
- Develop and maintain health and safety policy and procedures at your operation
- Access resources found in our Health and Safety

Program for Members

Please register for the one in your area:

- March 19, Newcastle, 9:00-11 am
- March 25, Clarksburg, 9:30-11:30 am
- March 31, Kingsville, 2:00-4:00 pm
- April 1, Simcoe, 9:00-11:00 am
- April 2, St. Catharines, 2:00-4:00 pm

Pre-registration is required and space is limited.

For more information: Please contact Sylvana at 905-688-0990 ext. 231

Conferences, Meetings and Tours (Cont'd)

EFAO Workshops: Finding the Balance: Soil Testing & Soil Amendments for Organic farmers

This day long workshop is an in-depth look at all three aspects of your soil: physical, chemical and biological. It will assist you to understand what the numbers and terms on your soil test mean. We will then help you to appreciate what amendments are available to balance your soil for better quality crops and yields. We will look at soil health and how it can be improved.

Date: March 23, 2015, 10am - 4pm

Location: Ravenna Hall, 628299 Grey County Rd 19, Blue Mountains

Price: Member Single Registration - 1 Individual(s) - \$50.00

Non-Member Single Registration - 1 Individual(s) - \$70.00

Please bring a packed lunch to this event.

For more information: Contact EFAO at

T:1.877.822.8606 E: info@efao.ca

Tree Training Demo Day

Join us for a tree training demo with Dr. Terence Robinson, Cornell University March 30th and 31st in Niagara

Monday, March 30th:

- 10 am - High Density Pear Session, Thwaites Orchards, Niagara-on-the-Lake
- 12 noon - Lunch at Rittenhouse Hall, Vineland
- 1:00 pm - Apple Tree Training, Johnson Farms, Fenwick
- 2:30 pm - Apple Tree Training, Moyer Orchards, Grimsby
- 3:30 pm - Apple Tree Training (including Trellis Talk with Hugh Fraser), Mountainview Orchards, Beamsville
- 4:45 pm - Dwarf Sweet Cherry (tunnel), Ridgeview Orchards, Grimsby

Tuesday, March 31st:

- 9:00 am -High Density Sweet Cherry (UFO System), Forrer Farms, Niagara-on-the-Lake
- 10:00 am - High Density Sweet Cherry, The Fruit Shack, Niagara-on-the-Lake
- 11:00 am - High Density Pear, Fedorkow Orchards, Niagara-on-the-Lake

For more information and to register: Contact Sylvana at 905-688-0990 ext. 231 by March 20th

and indicate which day you will attend and if it will be the morning or afternoon session.

EFAO Workshops: Moveable Greenhouses and Wind Watering

Drumlin Farm, in Puslinch, Ontario, installed two movable greenhouses in 2014. It immediately became evident that watering was going to be a problem, so far from sources and electricity. Through experimentation, we have developed a movable system, that, when in place, waters the desired greenhouse with just the turn of a lever!

We will show you our system, and discuss how you can do the same with yours. This will also work with filling livestock water tanks, and other uses.

Please wear appropriate footwear and clothing. Rain or shine.

Date: Monday, April 6, 2015

Location: Drumlin Farm, 4565 Watson Road South, Puslinch

Price: Member Single Registration - 1 Individual(s) - \$10.00

Member Family Registration - \$20.00

Non-Member Single Registration - 1 Individual(s) - \$15.00

Non-Member Family Registration - \$25.00

Join us for a potluck at 12 noon, the tour will run 1 to 4pm.

For more information: Contact EFAO at

T:1.877.822.8606 E: info@efao.ca

Organic Council of Ontario (OCO) Annual General Meeting 2015

Date: March 27, 2015

Time: 12pm-4:30pm (Registration 11:30am)

Location: The Waterloo Inn, 475 King Street North, Waterloo, Ontario

Price: FREE for current OCO members – please RSVP; \$45 for non-members

For more information: Email

jacob@organiccouncil.ca or Tel 519.827.1221

Full agenda and details coming soon to the website www.organiccouncil.ca

Links to ON Organic Information & Staff Contacts

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OMAFRA Field Crop & Livestock Staff

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Tracey Baute	Entomologist, Field Crops Prgm Lead	519-674-1696
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Bonnie Ball	Soil Fertility Specialist	519-271-9269
Adam Hayes	Soil Management Specialist	519-674-1621
Vacant	Corn Industry Program Lead	519-824-4120 x54865
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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

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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
Vacant	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
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John Molenhuis	Business Analysis & Cost of Prod.	613-475-9472
Paul Bowers	HR Management Program Lead	519-826-3254
Jennifer Stevenson	Business Finance Program Lead	519-826-4350

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

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Northern Ontario

Regional Office:

1-877-424-1300

www.ontario.ca/omafr