

April/May 2007

NORTHWEST LINK

Thunder Bay * Rainy River * Kenora Districts

Northwestern Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Associations

This newsletter is published monthly except for the months of April and December. Articles should be submitted by the 15th of the month prior to the publishing month. Material in this newsletter is based upon factual information believed to be accurate. Action taken as a result of this information is solely the responsibility of the user. We reserve the right to edit articles.

Factsheets

A Mixed Farm Example: Your Livestock Operation Under the Nutrient Management Act, 2002, Publication 831; free to Ontario residents (max. 10 copies); \$10.00 non-residents. [Agdex 400 for OMAFRA on-line products catalogue]

07-005: CREATING AND IMPLEMENTING A HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN, Agdex 823; New, free factsheet.

The following bilingual CD, which contains over 300 OMAFRA Factsheets and more, is now available:

OMAFRA FACTS PLUS 2007/COLLECTION AUGMENTÉE MAAARO 2007

The CD sells for \$5.00 and replaces the former editions (2006 and 2005); the order is AF137.



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POT 1W0
807-577-4787 (voice), 807-577-4459 (fax)
Email: lindat@tbaytel.net

Enhanced Health Protection from BSE

Bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), commonly known as mad cow disease is spread when cattle consume feed products contaminated with proteins from infected animals.

In infected cattle, BSE concentrates in certain tissues known as specified risk material (SRM). As a public health protection, these tissues are removed from all cattle slaughtered for human consumption. To prevent BSE spread among cattle, the Government of Canada banned most proteins, including SRM, from cattle feed in 1997. To provide further animal health protection, as of July 12, 2007, SRM are also banned from all other animal feeds, pet foods and fertilizers.

Removing SRM from the entire animal feed system addresses the risks associated with the potential contamination of cattle feed during production, distribution, storage or use. Applying the same measure to pet food and fertilizer materials addresses the possible potential exposure of cattle and other susceptible animals to these products.

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) requires that SRM be identified and appropriately managed until disposal. Permits are required for anyone handling, transporting or disposing of SRM, including:

- cattle producers;
- abattoirs;
- renderers;
- fertilizer, pet food and feed manufacturers;
- waste management facilities; and
- transporters.

This broad-based system maintains continuous control over SRM until it no longer poses risks to animal health. With opportunities for BSE spread minimized,

Canada is accelerating its progress toward the eventual eradication of the disease from the national cattle herd.

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Requirements for Canadian Cattle Producers

Beginning July 12, 2007, enhanced animal health safeguards come into effect to help eliminate bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), or mad cow disease, from Canada. Certain cattle tissues capable of transmitting BSE, known as specified risk material (SRM), are banned from all animal feeds, pet foods and fertilizers. There are also requirements for Canadian cattle producers who handle, transport or dispose of cattle remains.

SRM are defined as:

- the skull, brain, trigeminal ganglia (nerves attached to the brain), eyes, tonsils, spinal cord and dorsal root ganglia (nerves attached to the spinal cord) of cattle aged 30 months or older; and
- the distal ileum (portion of the small intestine) of cattle of all ages.

SRM are not permitted in food for humans.

SRM Transportation Requirements

Cattle deadstock and raw SRM remaining on a farm's premises are not subject to any specific Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) requirements. On-farm disposal methods must respect municipal and provincial/territorial regulations. All material, including any composted cattle remains, must stay on the premises.

A permit issued by the CFIA is required to move SRM in any form, including cattle deadstock, from a farm's premises. As well, a visible stripe must be applied down the backs of carcasses containing SRM, and raw SRM must be dyed.

A CFIA permit is also required to transport edible carcasses containing SRM for cutting or processing. Carcasses of cattle older than 30 months of age must be stained with a meat dye to mark the spinal cord or vertebral column. Eviscerated carcasses of cattle younger than 30 months of age that no longer contain the intestine are considered free of SRM and, therefore, are not subject to CFIA transportation requirements.

Records of all SRM and deadstock movement must be kept for 10 years.

This information must identify:

- the name and address of the transporter;
- the date of movement;
- the name of the dye used;
- Canadian Cattle Identification Agency or Agri-Traçabilité Québec tag numbers;
- the combined weight of SRM and carcasses considered SRM, as well as the number of carcasses; and
- the destination.

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Feeds and Livestock Feeding

The feed ban continues to apply. Most proteins derived from mammals remain banned from feed for ruminant animals, such as cattle, sheep, goats and deer. These proteins, which are known as prohibited material, may be fed to chickens, pigs, horses and other non-ruminant livestock species. Packages of feed containing prohibited material carry the following warning statement:

"Feeding this product to cattle, sheep, deer or other ruminants is illegal and is subject to fines or other punishments under the Health of Animals Act."

On July 12, 2007, all feeds containing prohibited material must be free of SRM. As this date approaches, livestock producers should completely use up all feed present on farms and purchase only feeds identified by retailers or manufacturers as free of SRM.

Producers must keep records of feed and feed ingredient purchases for two years that include:

- the supplier's name and address
- the date of purchase; and
- the amount purchased.

Additional Information

For information about handling or disposing of SRM, contact the CFIA at 1-800-442-2342 or visit www.inspection.gc.ca/bse.



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Agricultural Education, Awareness and Appreciation Days

In celebration of the Dryden & District Agricultural Society's 100th Anniversary, plans are underway to host an agricultural education event in Dryden, on May 16th and 17th, 2007.

Agricultural Education, Awareness and Appreciation for agriculture and food production is the main focus, which will be presented to Grade 2 - 4 students, their educators and parents.

The general public will also have a chance to view the displays and browse the activity stations on the evening of May 16th.

We are very fortunate to have the committeemen of the local Ministry of Natural Resources, the Dryden & District Museum, the NorthWestern Health Unit, the City of Dryden Park Dep., Egli's Sheep Farm and all local agricultural organizations.

Over 800 participants are registered for the two day event, with classes from as far away as Ear Falls and Sioux Lookout.

All "hands-on" activities have been selected to fit with the learning expectations for the Grades 2 - 4 Curriculum and will be carried out in an "outdoor classroom" setting.

We will have a farm animal and modern machinery display, pioneer activities, wool washing and spinning presentation, planting bedding plants activity, soil & water conservation methods activity, healthy eating and nutrition presentation and several other hands-on activities related to promote an understanding for agriculture and farming.

We are very fortunate to have received funding through P.A.C.E. "Local Initiative Fund" to assist in covering some of our expenses. Additionally, we have the generous support from a local Pizza Restaurant to assist with offering a free and healthy lunch to all participants.

We are excited and at the same time cautious to keep organizing this first time event, unite as a farming community and use this tremendous opportunity to present a pro-active and unbiased view into modern agriculture.

Contact:

Christel Kamm
For Dryden & District Agricultural Society
and "Agriculture in the Classroom", Dryden, Ont.

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YOU ARE INVITED

Ministry of Northern Development and Mines/Grow and Strengthen Northern Business Dialogue

HOW CAN ONTARIO GROW AND STRENGTHEN NORTHERN BUSINESS?

The Northern Development Councils (NDCs) would like your input.

Northern Development and Mines Minister Rick Bartolucci has asked the NDCs to bring forward recommendations to Grow and Strengthen Northern Business.

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www.selectsirescanada.com

Ben Bilker
Area Representative

493 English Settlement Rd, RR#4
Trenton, ON K8V 5P7
Cell: 613-847-6267
Home/Fax: 613-475-2346
email: bbilker@reach.net

The NDCs reviewed recommendations from over 100 reports by industry, communities, governments and research institutions and have identified seventeen proposed strategies. The NDCs now invite you to provide input on these strategies through a dialogue session (or alternatively an online survey). You are invited to rate how important each strategy is to growing and strengthening northern business, provide comments and identify your top priorities as well as provide general comments.

An opportunity to provide input is scheduled for:

In preparation for the dialogue session, please follow the "Growing and Strengthening Northern Business" link at the NDC website www.ndc.gov.on.ca <<http://www.ndc.gov.on.ca/>> . You can also call (705) 564-7016 to find out more about how you can provide input on proposed strategies to improve business in Northern Ontario.

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The Northern Development Councils want to hear from all Northerners and especially local governments and government associations, economic development commissions and research organizations, sector/industry associations and training boards, northern business owners and entrepreneurs, educational institutions, labour groups, government programs (CFDCs, Enterprise Centres, etc) and other community based initiatives (women's groups, social economy groups).

The NDCs will use your input to prepare recommendations to the Minister.

They hope to focus recommendations on strategies that northerners identify as having the greatest potential to create opportunities or address needs in Northern Ontario. Please join the NDCs in their efforts to Grow and Strengthen Northern Business.

In order to provide input, you may also print the survey from the website www.ndc.gov.on.ca <<http://www.ndc.gov.on.ca/>> or pick up copies from your local Ministry of Northern Development and Mines office <http://www.mndm.gov.on.ca/mndm/nordev/where_e_ap> and submit

- * in person to any MNDM office,
- * by mail to the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines, 159 Cedar St., Suite 601, Sudbury On, P3E 6A5,
- * by fax to 705-564-7597, or 1-866-649-5249 (toll-free in Ontario)
- * by e-mail to NDCinput@ontario.ca.

The northern dialogue on strategies to Grow and Strengthen Northern Business will run until April 22, 2007.

Jane Gillon
Northern Development Officer
Regional Economic Development Branch
Ministry of Northern Development & Mines
922 Scott Street
Fort Frances ON P9A 1J4
(807) 274-5320
(807) 274-4438
jane.gillon@ontario.ca
www.mndm.gov.on.ca

Crop Budgets – this 1-page errata sheet will be included with every order for Pub 60; it can also be ordered separately (item number 01210100E60E).

07-003: Paying Wages to Farm Family Members,
Agdex 823; replaces factsheet 06-063.

06-111: Groundwater – An Important Rural Resource, UNDERSTANDING GROUNDWATER,
Agdex 716/552

Wet Harvest Leaves Soil Erosion Challenges for this Spring and Beyond!

*-Adam Hayes and Anne Verhallen, Soil Management Specialists,
OMAFRA*

The fall of 2006 will probably go down as one of the most difficult harvest seasons for a wide range of crops. In Ontario, there are numerous fields with deep ruts, compacted sections or even fields that were not harvested as winter closed in. A common question this winter has been what approach to take to rehabilitate these fields. Some growers used light fall tillage in between rain storms to fill in and cover over any damage. Others have left the ruts to mellow over winter, whether by plan or because the soil was just too wet. In some cases this spring this means we are looking at using tillage to repair ruts in no-till fields and certainly more primary tillage than many fields/areas have seen for a while.

The greater use of tillage and the reduction in cover cropped acres due to wet planting conditions means that we have more fields bare this winter and less crop residue will be covering and protecting fields. The potential for all types of soil erosion; wind, water and

tillage, is much greater this year. It will be critical to maintain as much residue as possible on the soil surface during tillage operations and to use the least amount of tillage possible to achieve good crop establishment.

Well we've been here before. In the winter of 2005/2006 the PFRA commissioned The Soil Resource Group to review the current knowledge on soil erosion in Ontario. Much of the soil erosion research dates back to the 1970's and '80's. This is the data that helped to push forward funding and support for erosion control measures like reduced tillage and no-till, windbreaks and erosion control structures. Current programs like the Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) have their origins in this early erosion work. There is a value in looking back – our soils have not changed, they may have improved under the last 15 to 20 years of reduced tillage but like the saying goes, "Those that ignore history are doomed to repeat it".

Research has shown that you can expect a 23 to 30 bu/acre loss of productivity on average for corn when 15 cm of soil has been lost due to erosion. Erosion has a direct on farm cost that was estimated for Ontario to be upwards of \$68 million and an additional \$100 million annually of off-farm damage due to sediment.

Soil erosion is often a matter of soil that has been rearranged within a field. Hills and slopes have lost nutrient rich topsoil while low areas have accumulated deep deposits of this moved soil. The result, a field with inconsistent fertility and water holding ability that is less productive overall and less resilient to stress. This is a concern in any year but will become more of a concern in the future. The climate change models suggest that we can expect to see more extreme and unpredictable weather. We are more likely to see more heavy thunderstorms and extended periods of either drought or wet conditions. We can expect to see more soil erosion because of what climate change will bring in terms of rainfall intensity.

We can expect that weather changes are only part of the pressures that climate change will bring to bear on our soil resource. The interest in renewable fuels will force some crop rotation changes and can be expected to leave less crop residues in many cases. Now is the time to take another look at what we learned about preventing soil erosion in the 1980's to ensure a productive future!



Cover crops and crop residues are some of the keys to preventing wind erosion. Wet fall conditions in 2006 prevented much cover crop planting

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Upcoming Cattle Sales Dates:

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or Clayton Teeple 807-487-1465

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In the Stratton area, call Bob Leblanc, 807 487-2671

07-009: RODENT CONTROL IN LIVESTOCK AND POULTRY FACILITIES, Agdex 400/680; replaces Factsheet 86-036.



Ruts and heavily compacted areas from the fall 2006 harvest will need some careful tillage to get those areas ready for spring planting.



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07-007: CONSTRUCTING A FARM BUILDING IN ONTARIO, Agdex 713; replaces Factsheet 06-039.

Upcoming events and dates

April 18, 2007

RRCA Directors Meeting
7:30 p.m.

April 19, 2007

OCA Regional Meeting
Thunder Bay - Travelodge
11:30 a.m.

April 28, 2007

Spring Cattle Sale
Stratton Sales Barn
Contact - Russ Richards 807-487-2472
Clayton Teeple 807-487-1465

May 1, 2007

RRFA Directors Meeting
7:30 p.m. - Stratton

May 12, 2007

RRFA Spring Dinner

May 16, 2007

RRCA Directors Meeting
7:30 p.m.

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Bill Gibson Memorial Award

The Bill Gibson Award is presented annually at the Rainy River Federation of Agriculture Spring Dinner.

It is presented to a Rainy River Federation member judged to have contributed significant volunteer efforts towards the betterment of agriculture in the Rainy River District. The recipient can be nominated by any member of the Rainy River Federation of Agriculture.

Nominations should include - Name of nominee, reasons for nominating and name of nominating party. Presentation of the award will be made at the Rainy River Federation Spring Dinner - please watch for the date.

Please mail your nomination - to Linda Armstrong
Box 22, Sleeman, ON P0W 1M0

Past Recipients:

- 92 - Linda Armstrong
- 93 - Shirley Morrish
- 94 - Ken McKinnon
- 95 - Mike & Betty Zimmerman
- 96 - Ralph & Jackie Hunsperger
- 97 - Kristine Carpenter
- 98 - Don & Adrian McCulloch
- 99 - Kim Jo Bliss
- 00 - Tom Morrish
- 01 - Archie & Eleanor Weirsema
- 02 - Allan & Shirley Teeple
- 03 - Telford Advent
- 04 - Gibson Brothers - James & Robert
- 05 - Ken Fisher

Recent Winnipeg Cattle Prices

Prices on feeders have increased in the last month. Volume has been increasing somewhat as well. Here are the price ranges for steers at Winnipeg Livestock Sales to the end of March.

Over 1000 lbs.	\$ 85.00 – 99.50
900 – 1000 lbs.	\$ 88.00 – 104.75
800 – 900 lbs.	\$ 85.00 – 110.00
700 – 800 lbs.	\$ 90.00 – 116.25
600 – 700 lbs.	\$ 95.00 – 126.50
500 – 600 lbs.	\$ 100.00 – 134.50
400 – 500 lbs.	\$ 104.00 – 139.00
under 400 lbs.	\$ 105.00 – 140.00

Slaughter steer and heifer prices were slightly higher in the past month. Here are the price ranges to the end of March.

Choice Strs. & Hfrs.	\$ 80.00 – 91.00
Select Strs. & Hfrs.	\$ 79.00 - 84.75
Cows Dry Fed	\$ 29.25 – 40.50
Good Fleshed	\$ 25.00 – 34.00
Lean	\$ 14.00 – 29.50
Good Bulls	\$ 25.00 – 43.00

2007 Rural Summer Jobs Service

The 2007 Rural Summer Jobs Service is now accepting applications. You can download the necessary forms at:

<http://omafra.gov.on.ca/english/rural/rsj/2007appform.htm>

All eligible employers who have submitted a completed application form will have at least one position approved. An approval letter stating the approved number of positions and the Employer Claim Form will be mailed to all successful applicants after the application deadline of May 31, 2007.

A representative of the 2007 Rural Summer Jobs Service will contact all employers who have submitted an incomplete or ineligible application form by telephone, e-mail, fax or mail.

From April to September, the Rural Summer Jobs Service program helps students ages 14-24 find jobs in rural Ontario to enhance their skills and gain valuable job experience. Opportunities exist for businesses and community organizations in rural Ontario to receive a \$2 per hour wage subsidy to hire students for up to 16 weeks.

Important Dates

May 31, 2007: Deadline for submission of Employer Application forms

September 30, 2007: Last day for subsidized employment for student positions

October 15, 2007: Deadline for submission of Employer Claim forms

Employer Applications/Contracts can be mailed or faxed by May 31, 2007 to:

Rural Summer Jobs Service
Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Rural Affairs
1 Stone Road West, 4th Floor NW
Guelph, Ontario N1G 4Y2
Fax (519) 826-4336

This program is part of the Ontario government's Ontario Summer Jobs strategy, which invested over \$51 million in 2006 to assist over 56,000 students across Ontario.

More Information

For the Rural Summer Jobs Service program call 1-866-306-7827 or e-mail rsjs.omafra@ontario.ca.

For the government's Ontario Summer Jobs program, visit the Ministry of Training, Colleges and

Universities site or contact the Employment Ontario hotline at 1-888-387-5656.

Protect Your Horse From The West Nile Virus *West Nile virus in Horses*

West Nile virus is spread to humans and animals by mosquitoes. Most horses do not show outward signs of the virus, but for the horses that do get sick, as many as 1-in-3 die. Typical signs of an infected horse include:

- Lack of co-ordination
- Stumbling
- Weakness in the legs

Horse Vaccine

A vaccine is available to control West Nile virus in horses. The vaccine requires 2 injections 3-6 weeks apart followed by an annual booster. For full protection, give shots 2 months before mosquito season.

Talk to your veterinarian about a vaccine program to protect your horse.

Protect yourself and your horse

- Keep horses stabled between dusk and dawn when mosquito activity is high.
- Avoid using barn lights during the evening and overnight.
- Get rid of pools of standing water on your property, such as low-lying areas and puddles around the barn, used tires, and manure storage areas.
- Empty water troughs weekly.
- Wear light-coloured, long-sleeved shirts, long pants and socks when outdoors.
- Use an insect repellent to protect yourself and your horse. Follow directions.

For more information about West Nile virus contact your veterinarian.

Guide to Tracking 2006 Government Program Payments

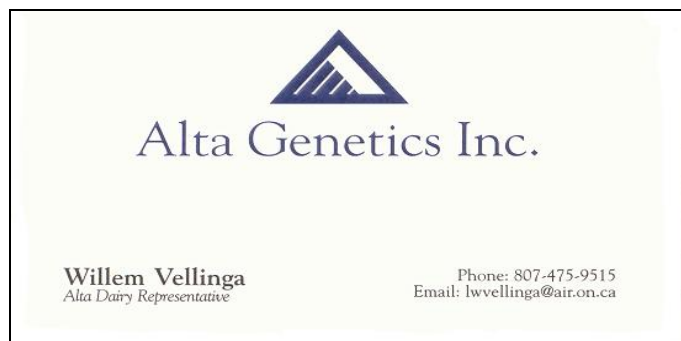
An update to the Guide to Tracking 2006 Government Program Payments is now available on the OMAFRA website at:

<http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/busdev/facts/2006-payments.htm>

The updated guide includes including payments issued in October through December 2006

A PDF version is available at:

<http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/busdev/facts/2006-payments.pdf>



Worried about Weed Control?

By Christina Mol BSc (Agr) Research and Extension Intern Thunder Bay Agricultural Research Station

Spring is here in the Northwest. Seed and fertilizer have already been ordered. The machinery is just waiting to get into the fields. What about the weeds that will have to be battled through the upcoming crop season?

Typically, if you know that a weed was an issue in a particular field last year, it is likely to be an issue this year too. Weeds that are left to go to seed in the fall will add to the weed seed bank. Even if you did some major tillage on that piece of land, these existing weed seeds will germinate. Crop rotation plans should take this into account before seeding begins.

Scouting is the art of walking through a field to check weeds, insects or diseases. Pick a random pattern that covers most areas of the field. Some people take a zig zag pattern but try to get most areas such as low spots, or hills. I used to draw an outline of the field and mark heavy weed pressure areas. I would also write down all the weeds I saw in the field and stage (# of leaves). If there was an unidentifiable weed, I would take it to someone who could help with identification. Scouting for weeds at or before planting time can help in weed control decisions. Knowing the weeds in the field will narrow down the search for the right herbicide options.

Timing is the key to successful weed control. Weeds will decrease yields by the time corn is at the 6th leaf stage and the soybeans at 3rd trifoliate stage. No

critical period has been established for cereals but most herbicides are not recommended to spray beyond the 5th leaf. Younger, smaller weeds are easier to kill than the larger mature weeds.

For **Round-Up Ready corn or soybeans**, there is an optimal time to spray these crops. I have seen some fields where growers decided to wait and make the glyphosate (group 9) (be it Round Up Weathermax, RT540, Credit, or which ever one you use) give a better bang for their buck. Even though the glyphosate takes down huge weeds, the corn will have been robbed of nutrients, moisture and light that those weeds were using. But going too early will also have disadvantages. Since glyphosate will only kill weeds that are out of the ground, a second flush of weeds might occur after any precipitation. You can do a second application of glyphosate or you could think of adding a tank-mix herbicide to glyphosate. In corn, atrazine (group 5), Banvel (group 4) or Marksman (a pre-made tank-mix of atrazine and Banvel) can be added to glyphosate for extended weed control. In Round-Up Ready soybeans, Guardian (a pre-made tank-mix of glyphosate and Classic (a group 2 herbicide) could be used. Or you can create your own similar tank-mix by adding Pursuit (group 2) to glyphosate.

Tank-mixes hit weeds with two modes of weed killing action and eliminate the need for second application of an herbicide. Use of a single chemical in a rotation could lead to issues with weed resistance. Some farmers in the area use glyphosate for their burndown (in fall or spring or both), and also in-crop for their round-up ready corn or soybeans. This could have future resistant weeds without a solution. By changing the type of herbicide, you are changing the response of the weed and breaking down its resistance strategies.



Wild oats is an issue in cereals (e.g. barley). This one is hard to control because it is a grassy weed in a grassy crop. One option is to plant a non-grass crop in wild oat infested field (e.g. soybean) and a grass killer (Select, Poast, Assure, etc) to control it. Or if you decide to put a cereal back into that field, you will have to choose a more expensive grassy weed killer such as Achieve, Hoe-Grass, etc.

Record the herbicide usage for each field. Some herbicides can remain in the soil and cause damage to other crops in the rotation. If you grow any type of vegetable crop, be especially cautious. For example, Pursuit, Assert, and atrazine are not recommended in rotations that include potatoes. In a dry year, these issues can be worse. Moisture is a requirement for the microbes that break these chemicals down.

If you plan your crop rotation in advance, you should know what type of weeds could be an issue. Make sure you plan your weed control options before it is too late. This will avoid situations when your retailer has to order a product and get it to you a week late and a dollar more. Do not wait until the last minute.

Feel free to talk to others (e.g. Mike Cowbrough, Weed Control Specialist, OMAFRA, at its hot line 1-888-466-2372 ext 6-4230) for advice. OMAFRA's Publication 75: Guide to Weed Control is an excellent resource as is the OMAFRA website: <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/insects/weeds.html>. Call the manufacturer's toll-free line to help with rate calculations, timing or tank-mixes. Talk to your retailer to create an herbicide plan to ensure that the chemical is available when you need it.



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"Farm to Fork" –growing and marketing organic food

Written by Graham Saunders for the Food Security Research Network.

Demand for organic foods has become commonplace in recent years in Canada. Indeed, "natural" food grown without pesticides and synthetic fertilizers has experienced the most growth in the modern food industry. However, information tended to be out of date and based on incorrect assumptions according to Rosalie Cunningham, a food researcher with the Alberta government.

She noted in a talk given at Lakehead University on March 2nd that old information and thinking that the Canadian market was a smaller version of the United States was misleading. The US had not experienced rapid growth recently and seemed to be more related to higher incomes than in Canada. She then gave a factual and entertaining talk about how demand for organic food has resulted in major changes in this part of the food market. She detailed acreage devoted to organic crops in western Canada and where increased interest comes from.

In Alberta, nearly 200,000 acres (80,000 hectares) are certified organic and used mainly for livestock. In Saskatchewan, the land area is about twice this and used for crops, livestock and market gardens.

Rosalie cited a survey that suggested that about half of organic food purchases involve regular or occasional buyers. About 22 per cent of those surveyed stated they never buy organic food. Females younger than 55 are the most consistent purchasers, followed by males 34-55.

A key component is . . . children. This is not surprising because the main reasons given for buying organic food are health and avoidance of chemicals. People in British Columbia, Quebec and Ontario have the most interest in organic food.

People ranked health, taste and convenience as their considerations when buying organic food. A few people experimented with organic food for the "experience".

There are trust issues. How do customers know that organic growers really do abide by "organic" and "certified natural" standards?

Grocery shops, all sizes, are the most popular sources of organic foods (47 percent). About 30 per cent of people buy directly, from farms and markets. Health food stores have 17 per cent of the market. Discount stores have, at present, a small share of organic shopping.

Interest in organic food by Walmart and other large-scale marketers certainly confirms that organic food is in the mainstream of food marketing in Canada. Walmart is opening "Supercentres" across Canada and promises a wide variety of organic foods.

However, organic food production is more labour intensive and involves additional costs. Rosalie expressed her doubts that Walmart could cope with 25 per cent higher costs and still follow its policies of undercutting other suppliers.

More interest in organic food often translates into buying food locally, something we have witnessed in the Thunder Bay area. Ms Cunningham noted some of the challenges for local growers. Grocery stores and restaurants required consistent supply – sometimes local weather can interfere.

More interest in healthy and local food does provide opportunities for people in agriculture, though small or large-scale enterprises tended to do best. In her experience, the middle scale was more difficult.

Ms Cunningham's talk was organized by Mehdi Zazef (Lakehead University Faculty of Business) and Thunder Bay's Food Security Research Network.

For more information please contact

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Deadstock Disposal

- submitted by the Thunder Bay District Veterinary Services Committee

At present, the City of Thunder Bay landfill will accept deadstock. In order to keep the dump operating efficiently, they request that the following points be taken into consideration:

1. Phone ahead - call the landfill in advance so a loader is present and the animal can be covered immediately; Call 767-9472/625-3392 and ask for the lead hand.
2. A fee is charged based on the weight of the animal(s).
3. The landfill prefers not to have large number of animals at one time due to the difficulty in backfilling. * Just a reminder when transporting deadstock - ensure that the load is covered and secured and all provincial regulations are adhered to!

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What should be the right approach to apply fertilizers for crop production?

Dr. Tarlok Singh Sahota

The objective of a fertilizer application program is to optimize agronomic yields without damaging the environment. Fertilizer industry recommends three approaches to fertilizer application; cation saturation ratio (CSR), nutrient build up and maintenance and nutrient sufficiency. Out of these, the latter two are usually followed, primarily because most nutrients, e.g. nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P) sulphur (S), boron (B), chlorine (Cl) and molybdenum (Mo) aren't taken up by crop plants in cationic form, which makes CSR approach redundant for these nutrients.

A basic soil test is fundamental to applying fertilizers. In both nutrient build up and maintenance and nutrient sufficiency approaches, it is admitted that the crop response to a nutrient will be maximum in a soil testing low in that nutrient and the response is unlikely if the soil test is high for that nutrient. OMAFRA specialists and University of Guelph researchers normally recommend nutrient sufficiency approach that advocates application of nutrients at a rate that results in an economic optimum yield. This approach is profit/and crop oriented and may result in gradual build up of soil nutrients. Agronomy Guide for Field Crops, an OMAFRA publication, has nutrient recommendation tables based on accredited soil tests (amount of available nutrients in the soil designated as low, medium, high, very high or excessive). Since agricultural systems are often more complex than what we think of, nutrient response can vary with the management practices (including choice of crop varieties) and weather factors. Under favourable weather conditions, there is a possibility of getting economic response at rates higher than those recommended under nutrient sufficiency approach. Advocates of nutrient build up and maintenance approach therefore recommend to apply fertilizers to bring nutrients in the soil to a level at which the crop yields aren't limited. Thereafter, nutrients can be applied to each crop, equivalent to its removal, to maintain the soil test levels. The approach is often referred to as fertilizing the soil (rather than crop) and may require high initial investment in fertilizer application. However, there is no demonstrated advantage of applying fertilizers to soils that test high in nutrients. Moreover, this approach isn't applicable

to nutrients such as N that can be lost from the soil through leaching, denitrification and volatilization.

Some of the soil testing laboratories are recommending the application of nutrients even in soils that are very high/or excessive in some nutrients. This doesn't make economic or environmental sense. Such laboratories may be serving the interests of the fertilizer industry more than those of the agricultural industry. This, I believe, isn't intentional. A Thunder Bay farmer's soil test report from fall 2006 indicates that the soil is very high in P (47 ppm) and excessive in K (288 ppm). The accredited soil lab, in its report, has recommended 53 lb P/acre and 20 lb K/acre for alfalfa (4ton/acre). Whereas, at the Thunder Bay Agricultural Research Station, Thunder Bay, we have observed that there isn't much alfalfa response to P and K in soils testing just about high in P and K. I would therefore recommend the grower(s) not to apply P and K fertilizers in fields testing very high or excess in P and K till the soil test comes down to at least 25 ppm P and 150 ppm K. At these soil tests, P and K are just about high. This could be applied to all soils testing very high/or excess in P and K and to all crops all over the province. However, the threshold values of P and K could vary with the crops and may be checked from the Agronomy Guide for Field Crops. *The basic approach is not to fertilize soils that are very high/or excess in P and K till the soil tests come down to just about high.* By doing so, farmers can take advantage of both the approaches of fertilizer recommendations (i.e. nutrient build up and maintenance and nutrient sufficiency). This will require soil testing every 2-3 years, and keeping records. Though McCollum (1991) reported that without P additions, 16 to 18 years of corn and soybean production would be needed to deplete soil test P from 100 ppm to agronomic threshold level of 20 ppm (fine sandy loam soil at a depletion rate of ~5 ppm/year).

It may be worth mentioning that apart from environmental risks, excess P can bind micronutrients, such as zinc and manganese, rendering them unavailable to crop plants. Excess K in soil often leads to its luxury consumption and interferes with the uptake of magnesium by crop plants. Excess K in forages can result in metabolic disorders, such as Tetany (deficiency of calcium and some times magnesium), in all ruminants and increased incidence of milk fever and retained placenta in dairy cattle (dry

cows). Therefore, why apply P and K to soils very high/or excess in these nutrients and invite problems?

'Fertilizer' in this note refers to both organic (e.g. manure) and inorganic fertilizers!



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URGENT: The Thunder Bay Shelter House is in desperate need of meat and ground beef. If you could spare one of those "golden arch" type of cows or one side please make the usual arrangements. An appointment at Thunder Bay Meats. Let Arie Grootenboer know fair value, trucking and other costs. The Shelter House will send you a donation receipt. You may also if you prefer deal directly with the Shelter House. They very much appreciate all the Meat/Beef donations and thank everyone involved.

New Resources help First Responders with
Barn Fires and Livestock Traffic Accidents

Barn fires and traffic accidents become more complicated when farm animals are involved. Three new resources were released at the Ontario Farm Animal Council (OFAC) meeting today to help equip emergency personnel with more information on what to do in emergencies with livestock or poultry.

“Today very few people have any experience or training for dealing with livestock and poultry, and that includes those who are called to the scene of an accident or a barn fire,” stated Crystal Mackay, Executive Director of OFAC. “People and animals can be in danger without proper training equipment and planning to deal with terrified or injured animals.”

OFAC is working on training and information that can help personnel responding to these emergencies, for human safety, animal welfare and general good for the industry. Two new fact sheets were added to the

existing resources for emergency personnel on the topics of “Barn Fires Involving Livestock” and “Livestock on the loose at accident scenes”.



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The fact sheets cover such topics as:

- Tips and hints for containing animals at an accident
- Animal behaviour
- Considerations for different types of barn fires
- Questions 911 dispatchers should ask

The fact sheets are the latest steps in OFAC’s efforts to provide enhanced educational opportunities for emergencies dealing with livestock, including a complete guide and information on the Canadian Food Inspection Livestock Transport Emergency number. A third article has been written for livestock and poultry farmers for prevention and response to barn fires on their own farms.

OFAC held two sold out workshops in Ontario for first responders to livestock transportation emergencies this past fall, and a third will be held later this week in Barrie, Ontario. A similar workshop focusing specifically on poultry emergencies was held in February.

Mackay said that each of the workshops drew more than double the attendees than were expected. This, she said, shows that there is a desire to learn more about the issue. Said Mackay, “It’s important that those responding have the tools and information they need to deal with farm animal-related emergencies.”

The fact sheets and courses were developed by Jennifer Woods of J. Woods Livestock Services, Alberta. Woods is a leading expert on livestock handling and emergencies who has offered her training across North America. Woods is trained and

certified in Large Animal Rescue and has been assisting on accident scenes since 1998.

All the resources on livestock emergencies, including the new fact sheets are all available on OFAC's website at www.ofac.org or by contacting the OFAC office at (519) 837-1326. The Ontario Farm Animal Council is the voice of animal agriculture representing Ontario's livestock and poultry farmers and associated businesses on the issues in animal agriculture.

For more information:

Crystal Mackay, Executive Director, Phone: 519-837-1326 email: cmackay@ofac.org



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THUNDER BAY CAREER FAIR

Regional Career and Job Fair 2007 takes places at Lakehead University Hangar on Tuesday, May 1, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Wednesday, May 2, 2 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Thunder Bay Federation of Agriculture will have an exhibit there to inform students about careers in agriculture and related occupations. Volunteers are needed! If you can offer two hours of your time on

either of those two days, please call Linda Turk (577-4787) or email (linda.turk@ofa.on.ca) to let her know the time you're available. This is a great opportunity to talk with young people about their futures.

SCHOLARSHIP

Thunder Bay Federation of Agriculture is once again sponsoring a scholarship for a student who is finishing high school and going on to college or university in September. For details or an application form, please call Trudy Reid at 935-3224.

SPRING FARM CONFERENCE

A successful Spring Farm Conference took place at Kakabeka Legion on April 4 and 5, and a good roster of speakers drew a large audience for the two-day event. Thunder Bay Soil & Crop Improvement Association organizers deserve congratulations for a well organized event that provided plenty of useful information for the season ahead.

SPRING AG DAY

Kenora District Soil & Crop Improvement Association hosts a Spring Agriculture Day on Saturday, April 14, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., at Oxdrift Hall. Dr. Tarlok Singh Sahota of Thunder Bay Agriculture Research Station is one of the featured speakers; there will be a lunch and doorprizes.

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Thunder Bay Agricultural Research Association
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Dr. Tarlok Singh Sahota
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Email: tarloksahota@tbaytel.net

MCGUINTY GOVERNMENT HELPS OPEN NEW MARKETS FOR FARMERS

The McGuinty government is strengthening Ontario's
agri-food sector by investing in cutting-edge research
that will find new ways to use farm and forest
products in the auto sector, Premier and Minister of

Research and Innovation Dalton McGuinty announced today.

"By investing in innovative technologies, we can turn homegrown ideas into homegrown jobs," said Premier McGuinty. "These initiatives will help make Ontario a world leader in bio-based automotive manufacturing and help us protect our environment for generations to come."

The McGuinty government is investing over \$5.9 million in the Ontario BioCar Initiative, a research project to turn Ontario's harvest — such as wheat, corn, soybeans and forest biomass — into viable materials for the auto industry. The government is also investing \$255,000 in the Ontario BioAuto Council to help move these emerging technologies into the marketplace and attract jobs and investment.

"The key to success is how fast and how economically we can make these materials match the performance of the existing plastics, composites and metals," explained Mohini Sain, who will lead the BioCar project at the University of Guelph, where he is an adjunct professor. "This research will make sure Ontario stays on the forefront of this emerging area."

"We will ensure Ontario is positioned to capture a substantial share of what is projected to be a \$50-billion global market for bioplastics by the year 2015," said Ontario BioAuto Council Executive Director Terry Daynard.

"Ontario farmers are among the most creative and innovative in the world," said Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs Leona Dombrowsky. "By supporting bio-based research, we can help farmers pursue exciting new markets, create jobs and build prosperity in our rural communities."

Investing in innovative research and commercialization is the latest example of how the McGuinty government is working on the side of rural communities to strengthen Ontario's economy.

Other initiatives include:

Investing over \$910 million in farm income stabilization and support programs

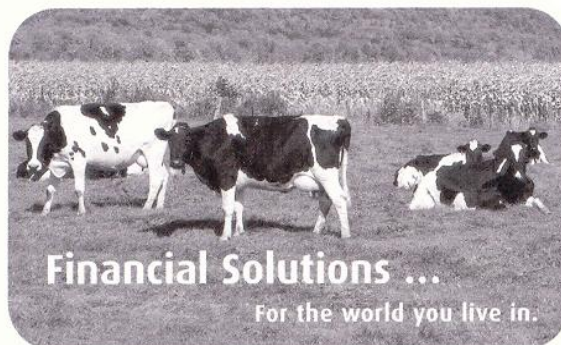
Creating a \$520-million Ontario Ethanol Growth Fund to support the construction of ethanol plants that will build opportunity and create jobs in rural communities

Investing \$188 million through Move Ontario to repair and upgrade rural roads and bridges

Investing \$40 million annually in agri-food research and innovation.

"To succeed in today's economy, we need to develop new ideas and turn those ideas into exciting new products and services that we can market to the

world," said Premier McGuinty. "By investing in research and innovation, and the skills and knowledge of our people, we can ensure Ontario remains the place to be for years to come."



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06-113: Groundwater – An Important Rural Resource, MANAGING THE QUANTITY OF GROUNDWATER SUPPLIES, Agdex 716/552

06-115: Groundwater – An Important Rural Resource, PROTECTING THE QUALITY OF GROUNDWATER SUPPLIES, Agdex 716/552

06-117: Groundwater – An Important Rural Resource, PRIVATE RURAL WATER SUPPLIES, Agdex 716/552

07-017: ANAEROBIC DIGESTION AND THE STANDARD OFFER PROGRAM, Agdex 770

07-015: Programs and Services for Ontario Farmers, Agdex 871; replaces factsheet 05-083.

06-119: DECOMMISSIONING AND/OR RECOMMISSIONING EXISTING NUTRIENT STORAGE STRUCTURES, Agdex 729: New colour Factsheet.