



Breaking Ground

(in Northeastern Ontario)

SUMMER 11

A Publication of the North Eastern Ontario Soil & Crop Improvement Association (NEOSCIA)

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What's New in Horticulture at NLARS

Becky Hughes, University of Guelph, NLARS

Protected Culture



Researcher Becky Hughes (right) explaining the trials in the high tunnel to Timiskaming-Cochrane MPP David Ramsay, Denis Bonin and Temiskaming Shores Mayor Carman Kidd, left to right

In 2010 a 3-bay high tunnel was constructed at the New Liskeard Agricultural Research Station with funding from the Agricultural Research Institute of Ontario and the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund's Emerging Technology Program. High tunnels have been used in Europe for the last 10-15 years to extend the growing season and expand the variety of crops that can be grown in an area. We are currently seeing these protected-culture systems being introduced in southern Ontario and Quebec. These low-cost structures extend the growing season and modify the growing environment on a field scale.

Even though our high tunnel was installed in August, the yields of a number of dayneutral strawberry cultivars grown under the high tunnel last year were double that of the same cultivars grown outside. Research trials are underway comparing production inside and outside the high tunnel.

Expanded Research in Berry Crops

With the addition of the high tunnels in New Liskeard, we are currently working with researchers from the University of Guelph in Simcoe and Ridgeway, Laval University, PQ, the University of Florida GCREC and the Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives on a series of research projects on dayneutral strawberry and protected raspberry production. Funding has been obtained from the Clusters Initiative of the Growing Forward Canadian Agri-Innovations Program administered by the Canadian Horticultural Council, the Farm Innovation Program through AAC, several agri-businesses and industry groups including the Ontario Berry Growers Association.

The current dayneutral strawberry trials in New Liskeard include a cultivar trial, a trial comparing overwintering treatments and one looking at different plant types and sizes, and the effects of blossom removal. In all these trials we are comparing the treatments in the high tunnel and outside. Raspberry trials with fall-bearing and summer-bearing cultivars will compare production in the high tunnel to that outside in the open and outside covered with rain shelters.

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NOTE: **Sponsors/Advertisers needed for coming year. \$500 for 4 issues!**

This newsletter is published 4 times per year. Articles can be submitted in either English or French and should be submitted to the Communication Coordinator (see below). Please supply translation, if available.

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.

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OBITUARY

Andre Lemay



It is with sadness that I share that OMAFRA retiree, André Lemay passed away on Monday, May 2, 2011 at the age of 66. André is survived by his wife Yolande, daughter Mélanie, son-in-law Anthony Ridi, treasured granddaughter Ella and father Ovila. A funeral mass in celebration of André's life will be held on May 7, 2011 at St. Joseph Roman Catholic Church, Orleans. Memorial contributions to the Canadian Cancer Society would be appreciated by the family. Further information is available at www.mcgarryfamily.ca

A dedicated and highly respected member of the Ontario Public Service for 30-years, André readily shared his knowledge and leadership as an Assistant Agricultural Representative, Prescott County (1974 – 1978); and as an Agricultural Representative in Cochrane South (1978 – 1979), Sudbury District (1979 – 1984), Russell County (1984 – 1996) and Nipissing, Parry Sound, Sudbury and Muskoka Districts (1996 – 2004). His expertise in farm finance and hay cost of production and marketing gained him recognition across Ontario and in Quebec. André is remembered by OMAFRA – North Region as a friend and mentor.

Please keep André's family in your thoughts and prayers.

What's New in Horticulture at NLARS

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Garlic Stem and Bulb Nematode

The Garlic Growers Association of Ontario recently received funding from the Growing Forward Agricultural Biosecurity Program for a two-year project on "Preventative Measures and Management Practices for Stem and Bulb Nematode in Garlic".

The objectives of this project are to: determine the extent of stem and bulb nematode infestation in garlic across the province and identify the prominent race(s); verify that the nematode-free, virus-tested seed production system developed by the SPUD Unit, NLARS in 2010 is repeatable; and educate growers on the spread, symptoms, biology and control of this pest including the use of nematode-free seed.

This project is led by University of Guelph researcher Becky Hughes and involves a team of researchers from across the province. For more information visit www.garlicgrowers.on.ca and click on Directions under the 2011 GGAO Annual Field Day.

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Putting the AgSmarts into Smartphones: *The Basics*

By: Ian McDonald, OMAFRA

Have you ever sat in your farm or business office and been frustrated with the fact that you really need or want to be somewhere else? Smartphones allow a farmer to address much of the office side of farming and business while out doing the farming. Farmers need no longer be tied to the desk to complete tasks like record management, financial management, marketing, information gathering, task tracking, system/building monitoring, remote control of equipment and devices, etc. Think of a Smartphone as "An Office In Your Pocket".

Although often thought of as a tool for the high end business types, this thinking is changing as we see the proliferation of these amazing devices into everyday life and businesses. Who more so than farmers and their advisors spends less time in the office yet needs to stay on top of vital issues that should keep them chained to the desk.

Many farmers have said that they don't need a SmartPhone, but do they really understand the features and power that are contained in that little device? The next time you run over that cell phone or drop it in the manure tank, the sales person at the local mobile device retailer is likely going to try and talk you into one. Sure it means more money for them, but more importantly it probably means more money for you!

A cell phone is only slightly different from a landline (that's an office phone for you neophytes to the cell phone world). It lets you talk to people, usually only one person at a time, and sending short text messages.

The SmartPhone that you carry on your hip today has more computer capability to the old paper weight clunker sitting in the office that you bought for big money only a few years back. A SmartPhone has almost unlimited utility in what you can do with it, although it's not a universal wrench or a hammer. Sure, you can communicate with it like any other phone. But these devices can text, email, search the web, store and record field and other data, remotely monitor and operate equipment, act as a GPS, take pictures/video among other things.

Tools in a Smartphone

- Phone/sms text
- E – Mail
- Voice recorder
- Camera
- GPS Capability
- MP3/Audio
- Apps & Web Access

Biggest Issues to Deal With Up Front

1. What SmartPhone do I buy?

This is a tough question to answer because people like different gizmos that are parts of these devices. Essentially any of the devices do the same thing albeit maybe in slightly different ways.

The best thing is to ask the kids, neighbors, input suppliers or other contacts what they use and their likes and dislikes. You might quickly see what features meet your needs and steer you in a certain direction.

2. Which operating system do I want?

The choices are iPhone, Blackberry, Windows Mobile, Treo and Android

This is somewhat tied up with question 1 depending on the platform. If you want an iPhone, there really is only one so the decision is easy. If choose the Blackberry or Windows Mobile route, there are a number of distinct phone choices you can make.

3. Which network do I choose?

This comes down to 3 things; Coverage, Cost and Features. The first two are the biggies. Again talk to contacts in your area about what provider they use and are they satisfied. Each provider says their best (where have you heard that before) but the truth is it depends on the location and this coverage issue between providers changes constantly.


Cost is more problematic to figure out. There are two components to it, as well as all the little incidentals that seem to get added to the monthly bill. Be sure to research this thoroughly. The cell phone

component is similar to what you have been dealing with on your cell phone. Check your old bills to determine the number of minimum minutes you use per month and set that as a target. The bigger unknown is the data charges associated with web browsing and other features that are the heart of the SmartPhone. With this you might have to fight for an open contract for a few months that lets you get a feel for how much data use you are going to incur. This is advisable even though it will be more expensive. Once you have signed that contract they can be hard to change. Watch out for the over usage charges and other hidden charges. Make the sales person really inform you on what to expect on the bill.

4. Are they durable enough?





How many cell phones have you destroyed? Between dropping them, getting them wet, covered in mud or grease, we have heard a lot of stories of cell phone misfortune. This may be more costly with a SmartPhone. They often come cheap with the phone/data package you purchase from the provider, but they are expensive units. Check on the providers replacement policy.

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Putting the AgSmarts into Smartphones: The Basics

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The other thing is just normal wear and tear. With big screens (everything is relative), little keyboards and buttons, open ports (plugs), are they going to stand up. Moisture and dust are the worst enemies of electronics so at least try and protect the darn thing.

Features of the Features Phone

A phone is a phone, is a phone, is a phone. The phone feature allows you to communicate with anyone you want, as long as they turn their blasted phone on, or are nearby to answer it. It allows you to stay in touch with family and employees, order parts and custom operations, get answers to questions from neighbors, suppliers or advisors.

Probably the most important feature of a phone in the field is safety. We are covering big acreages these days, often remote from our home location and usually by ourselves. If something happens and no one is around to see it, you could be waiting a long time for help. This feature only works if you have the phone with you. If you get out of the cab to fix something and get trapped, the most sophisticated SmartPhone in the world isn't going to be able to help you if you can't reach it. So, keep it on you at all times.

Essentially it works just like any other phone but while you can talk to someone, you can also be typing information about your call into the phone for later recall.

Email

Now why on earth would I need email out in the field? Well how about some examples that show the value of this. Say you are talking to your crop input supplier about getting a field sprayed with roundup after your have been scouting and find it's high time for it to be sprayed. You call up your supplier and tell him what field, what product, what weed stage and when you need it done. A few weeks go by and you drive by that field to see that the weeds are overgrowing the crop and your next door neighbors conventional corn field is looking very sad! Oh, Oh, did the applicator hit the wrong the field? What recourse do you have when you don't have any record of your conversation with them other than your "recollection"? Well how about after completing that phone call with them to discuss details of the spray operation, you sent them a quick email to confirm the details of the conversation. I always ask them to respond to the email to be sure they received and read it. Now you have a record of your conversation and you are protected if something goes wrong, but probably more important, the extra communication upfront prevented the error from happening in the first part.

Email is also a great tool when you need information. Your advisor is not picking up the phone. You send him/her an email with a brief description of what you are asking and get a response that again you

don't have to remember what they told you in the phone call, you have it in an email. This is often quicker too, especially if some of your contacts are long winded and you hate to phone knowing your going to get tied up for several minutes. If you ask specific questions in your email your replies will likely be short and to the point and you don't get dragged into side conversations. Nobody will type essays especially if they are responding from another SmartPhone (awkward keyboards really).

Emails also integrate with other features of the SmartPhone, namely camera/video recorder and GPS functions which we will describe shortly.

Camera/Video Recorder

Too many examples of people catching family, friends, enemies and strangers in compromising situations have diluted an understanding of the real value of this tool. It's not just a toy.

We should all know this weed!



Say you're in the field and you see something that you just don't know what it is? A

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weed, insect or something funny showing up with the crop in that low spot over there. Instead of trying to describe it to your advisor, or worse have to wait for them to come and see it, you can take a picture or video of it and immediately email it to them so that they can advise you. Another example is you are out at a tillage demo and dad was too busy to tag along and you are really impressed with how this one implement works the ground. Well, dad ain't here and he still pulls the purse strings, so how are you going to convince him to take your advice. Well, just make a video of the scenes and features that you can then show him and get him excited without even having been there.

But who knows what this weed is?



In another case you have a bearing go

on the combine and you need to get it replaced. It's off an ole unit and you can't find a number. Instead of trying to describe it to your equipment parts guy, take a picture and send it to them. No sense driving all the way to the dealership if they don't have the part.

GPS Capability



Many of the newer SmartPhones have pretty good GPS capability. You can identify fields, mark features like tile drain outlets, identify where weed or insect problems are and then be able to find your way back to this point. A good example of using this feature is if you identify a broken tile drain in a field, you can take a picture showing the problem and tag the GPS coordinates to the picture. Email the picture to your drainage contractor and they can come right to the spot to make the repairs without you having to take

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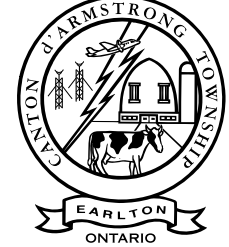
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any more time on the issue.

Audio/MP3 Capability

Now why on earth would this be of any value to me? Most people think of this function as only being for playing music. Well in today's modern world with lots of excellent commentary out there, do you want to have to depend on their timelines or your own. As an example, lots of people follow Peter Johnson and his Cropline but goodness gracious it's not everyday that I have a straight 20 minutes to listen to his rant. More frustrating is when I am tight for time and I want to hear what he has to say about growing hemp and I have to patiently wait till he gets through all those mundane crops like corn and soybeans, and oh yes, better not forget wheat.

How about then signing up for the Cropline podcast which you can setup to push out to you? The newest version shows up on your device and you listen to at your chosen time and location. Better still, you can jump right to the important hemp content right from the beginning.

There are many sources of commentary and more and more of its available with an agricultural flavor. News items, marketing talks etc are becoming more common place. Have a good book that you haven't had time to read. How about listening to it while you sit in your enhanced environment cab and let the auto steer do most of the work. It's also possible that you can put text books on your device but this concerns us a bit that you'll get so absorbed you won't hear that buzzer/alarm go off as you near the end of the field.

Web Browsing and SmartPhone Applications

This is where the real power of the SmartPhone comes from. You can search the internet from a SmartPhone just like you can from the office computer. Savvy companies have adapted their web pages to be read efficiently by SmartPhones. It's not quite as user friendly an experience as with your office computer because you are constrained by screen geography, but its getting better all the time.

"Apps" is a new word in the SmartPhone world. Its really just short for "Application" but the acronym has really caught on. Apps are little pieces of software that reside in your SmartPhones memory and

perform a very specific task quickly. For example in the absence of an App, if you want to get weather information you have to open your browser, type in a url web address, or search words, wait for the system to find the main page and then navigate to the right page in the website. This takes time and equally important it is using up "bandwidth" aka data, which is costing you money. If you have an app for the weather on your computer it does things like continuously update the weather right on your device. To click on the App icon and are immediately taken to the information you are after. No fuss, no mess and little data usage!

You can find Apps for almost anything and more and more ag related companies are developing Apps for their customers. Banking, weather, news, markets, equipment purchase, cultivar pickers, herbicide selectors, weed identifiers, you name it and you can find an App for it with more arriving daily.

Market information is a great example of the power of SmartPhones in being "game changers" in agriculture. If you're busy and away from the office, maybe you only get to check the market prices a couple of times a day. A SmartPhone with the right App, has continuous market information being pushed out to your SmartPhone, so you have almost instantaneous access to market prices. Catch the right trades and you can probably pay for your entire years SmartPhone costs.

Wrapping It Up!

Having a cutting edge SmartPhone may seem an extravagance at first glance, but producers don't have the luxury of being disconnected from those "office" or management responsibilities. Many SmartPhones now come with operating systems that allow mapping or record keeping software to be uploaded. And with the cost of a smart phone becoming increasingly affordable, it may represent the most powerful and cost effective technology on the farm, which is pretty impressive for an item that fits in your pocket.

Web and App Stuff

- Weather – forecast and radar
- Markets
- Yellow Pages
- News

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Integrating Remote Sensing, Visualization, and Weather Station Data – An Update

The Departments of Geography and Computer Science and Mathematics at Nipissing University are continuing to develop a web-based system for integrating new technologies for decision support. At present, a user interface has been developed that integrates remote sensing imagery and data visualizations from weather station sensors. Measurements of soil moisture, rainfall, air and soil temperatures, humidity, and other key environmental variables acquired from weather stations are collected into a database management system. The database can then be used for displaying historical data graphically, and for statistical analysis for decision support.

The interface currently consists of thumbnail imagery of an entire region (e.g. Temiskaming Shores, Verner). Specific areas of interest can be magnified by moving a small window across the thumbnail. Users can also select an area of the imagery from which to display environmental data from weather stations. Different time series can be shown on the same graph, allowing historical comparisons (e.g. rainfall from a given period in different years) to be made. Additionally, useful statistics, such as maximum, minimum, average, etc., are displayed for each selected period. Producers will also be able to share critical data sources, such as digital photos, for pinpointing disease outbreaks, for determining crop health, and for assessing general agricultural conditions. By choosing specific regions on the map, photos from that area can be displayed. The current prototype interface is shown below.

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Putting the AgSmarts into Smartphones: The Basics

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- Banking
- Twitter/Facebook
- Information!
- New ag apps here or on the way – mobile weed diagnostics (Pioneer, Dekalb, etc)

Smartphones - Links for Farm Applicable Software and Sites

Agricultural Markets_Farms.com

<http://mobile.farms.com/markets> This is a free service from Farms.com. You can customize the information you receive, but for most producers the 'Grains Overview' will be a good starting point.

GFO Smart Sell

<http://www.gfo.ca/sellsmart.aspx>

Weather Environment Canada offers a mobile version of current conditions and weather forecasts. Start at <http://gc.ca>. (The Government's Mobile site) and choose Weather.

The Weather Network has a mobile app that is stored on your phone to make it easy to get up to date weather information. Start with this site on your home computer <http://www.theweathernetwork.com/mobile/applications> to get instructions in how to download from your phone.

The Weather Channel (US) Mobile - <http://www.weather.com/mobile/> OMAFRA Resources Baute BugBlog keeps farmers up to speed on everything from soybean aphids and slugs to bean leaf beetles and western bean cutworm. Access it at <http://bautebugblog.com> Weed Specialist Mike Cowbrough has put together two excellent resources for weed identification and control. <http://m.weedinfo.ca> offers a library of information on weeds in Ontario.

<http://m.weedpro75.com> allows you to input which weeds you want to control and spits out a list of herbicide mix solutions.

OMAFRA CropLine Podcast

<http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/cropline/index.html>

News/Sports

Many of the large papers and TV networks have mobile sites that allow you to access their information from your smartphone. Here are a few of our favorites.

TSN

<http://m.tsn.ca> CBC – <http://m.cbc.ca>

National Post – <http://www.nationalpost.com/m>

Globe and Mail

<http://m.theglobeandmail.com>

Bloomberg Business

<http://www.bloomberg.com/tvradio/mobile.html>

Miscellaneous YellowPages Directory

Search the App Store/App World for 'Yellow Pages' or <http://mobile.yip.ca/tour/>

Mobile Banking

Royal Bank can be found at <http://www.rbc.mobi>. Check with your bank website for similar options.

YouTube

Search and watch videos at <http://m.youtube.com>

Google

your best friend for searching for other resources and applications <http://www.google.com>

Agronomy Apps

<http://www.pioneerobilesite.com/mobile/> <http://dekalbmobile.ca/>

Smart Phone Information for Farmers

Farming with a Smartphone

<http://insideag.blogspot.com/2009/04/calling-all-farmers-your-smart-phone-is.html>

CNN article: Smart Phones on the Farm -

<http://edition.cnn.com/2009/TECH/07/02/twitter.farmer/>

What is a Smart Phone?

http://smartphones.about.com/od/smartphonebasics/a/what_is_smart.htm

Smartphone Buyers' Guide

<http://www.technobuffalo.com/about/smartphonebuyersguide>

Cell Phone Reviews -

<http://www.cellphones.ca/>

Smart Phone Reviews

<http://reviews.cnet.com/best-smartphones/>

Steve Punter's Southern Ontario Cell Phone Page

<http://www.arcx.com/sites/>

Canadian Wireless phone Forums

<http://www.digitalhome.ca/forum/showthread.php?t=57249>



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2011 Giant Pumpkin Growing Challenge –

Join the fun and grow your pumpkin!



2010 Champion Giant Pumpkin Grower Jeff Warner with his winning entry at the New Liskeard Fall Fair. Jeff's Giant Pumpkin weighed in at 636 lb.

Have you planted your pumpkin seed? During April 2011, NOAFEM distributed almost 1,500 giant pumpkin seeds throughout Northern Ontario. Although it is not a requirement to enter your pumpkin in the competition nor does it have to be grown from the seeds that were distributed, the challenge to grow a bigger one is REAL! The rules are simple:

1. Your pumpkin must be grown in Northern Ontario
2. You must bring your pumpkin to one of the 5 designated weigh-in sites in September
 - Desbarats Farmers' Market
 - Powassan Farmers' Market
 - CMPS Fall Fair in Mindemoya
 - New Liskeard Fall Fair
 - Anderson Farm Fall Fair in Lively

3. You must pay the \$2.00 registration fee

What are winning secrets? Dedicated growers tell us that using well composted manure mixed with really good soil; keeping the plant well watered and some suggest feeding treats such as milk, beer or ginger ale makes the difference when growing the really BIG one.

The 2011 Green Expo

Friday July 22nd from 2 pm – 6 pm

Saturday July 23rd from 9 am to 2 pm

Johnson Township Community Centre in Desbarats
 Features – **Living in the Country Expo**
 canning, safety, and life skills workshops
 Highlight – local meal on Friday night

Welcome to Northern Ontario's Agriculture!

2011 *Boreal Harvest* and *Your Farm Directory* publications have been distributed throughout Ontario. Rural Northern Ontario yields a wonderful range of visual and tactile experiences for your family to enjoy. *Boreal Harvest* invites you to learn about the North's ample selection of produce, products and art while *Your Farm Directory* encourages everyone who either lives or travels in Northern Ontario to sample northern local products and visit our farmers' markets.

Why buy local?

When purchasing from local farms, quality and freshness are guaranteed in the products you choose:

- ✓ local produce is picked fresh and tastes best
- ✓ encourages healthy eating
- ✓ helps to better understand where food comes from
- ✓ reduces transportation and the need for packaging

Where can you find local products?

- at your local farmers' markets – 20+ in Northern Ontario
- ask for it at your supermarket
- visit the local producer / farmer

Did you know there are 3,016 farms in the 11 Districts of Northern Ontario?



Northern Maple spent two days at the Station Mall in Sault Ste Marie in support of local agri-producers and interacting with mall customers. Eleven local farm businesses promoted their business. When you choose to buy locally, you are helping to create Northern Ontario jobs and improve the local economy.

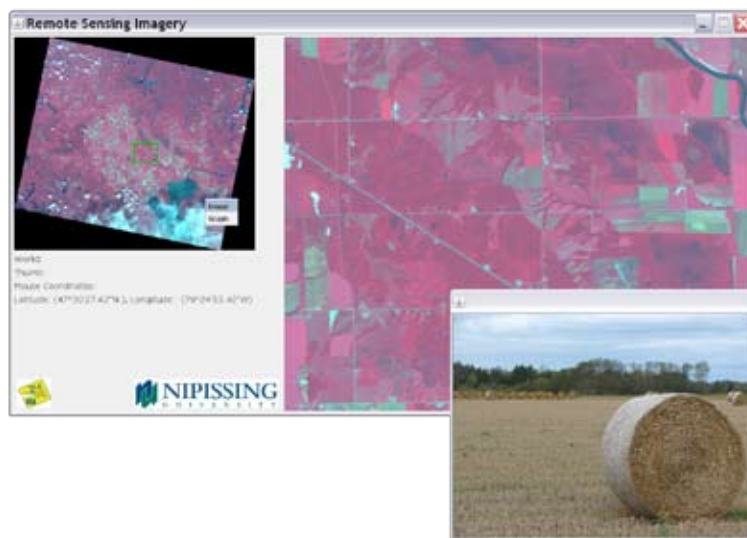
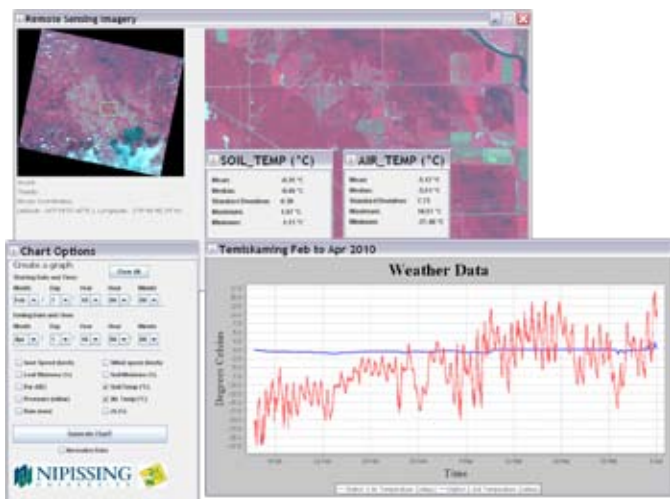
Integrating Remote Sensing, Visualization, and Weather Station Data – An Update

Continued from page 22

For this web-based service to be useful, it must be as easy to use as possible. The development group is continually exploring new ways to make interacting with the system better. The services were designed using proven software engineering technology so that changes and improvements can be made quickly. Research into human-computer interaction (that is, making software intuitive and useful) is also being employed. However, one of the best ways to ensure that the needs of the producers are met is for them to use

will continue to work closely together throughout all phases of development. Meetings and discussions with members of the agricultural community have resulted in valuable constructive information and suggestions. Positive feedback from future users has been very encouraging. Continuing collabora-

tion and community input are expected to ensure a successful and intuitive tool to support increased productivity and improved decision-making. For specific questions regarding this software, please feel free to contact Dr. Mark Wachowiak by phone (705-474-3450 ext. 4115) or by e-mail (markw@nipissingu.ca).



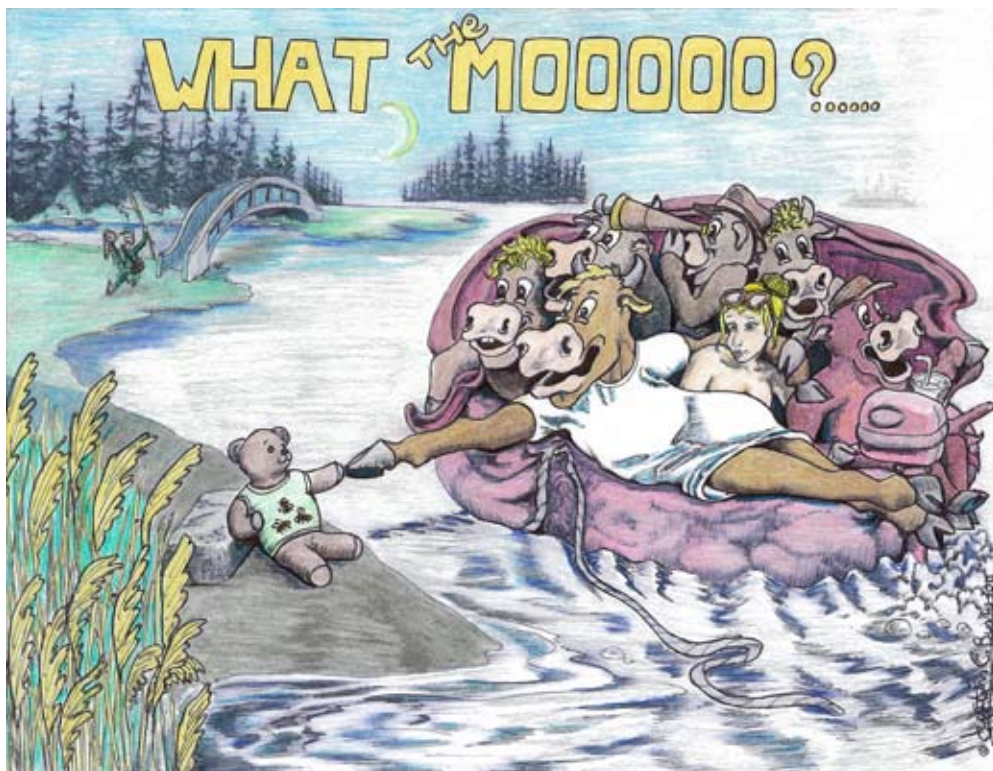
Producers will have the ability to upload digital photographs associated with specific geographical areas.

Prototype Software – Users can magnify specific regions by moving a selection box along a thumbnail image. Users can also display time series for environmental variables by selecting time periods of interest. Helpful statistics for the selected time series are also provided.

the services and to provide feedback and suggestions.

The group is currently working on many enhancements. These include making the tools available as web services through the Internet. It is also addressing the challenges of on-line tools, such as ensuring quick access to images and visualizations. Better ways of visualizing the remote sensing imagery, including contrast enhancement and brightness control, are also being implemented. Communicating and sharing ideas will be facilitated through an interactive forum with a blog option, which is being developed.

Nipissing University and its partners



This month's artwork comes from Justin Burre of Englebart. View more of his work at <http://justin-burry.tripod.com>