



Vol. 1

Date: January 2004

## Table of Contents

- **Black Currant Research in Alberta**
- **Did you know.....?**
- **Program Highlights for the Ontario Berry Growers Conference**
- **Fertigation Workshops**
- **2004 Excellence In Agriculture Conference T**
- **Ten Reasons to Attend the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Conference**

### **Black Currant Research in Alberta**

*By Pam Fisher, Berry Crop Specialist, OMAF*

Recently I attended the Alberta Horticulture Congress in Edmonton. One of the speaker sessions featured three research updates on black currants.

There are well over 300 acres of black currants planted in Alberta. Black currants are a highly productive crop with more juice per acre and a higher source of vitamin C than oranges. There is considerable interest in this relatively new crop.

A three year project on integrated crop management started in 2002. This collaborative project involves a grower group (Prairie Natural Processing Inc) , the Alberta Research Center and Alberta Agriculture Food and Rural Development. The objectives of the program are to compare performance of different cultivars, compare the effect of mulches on plant growth, quantify the responses to N fertilization, and assess yield benefits of drip irrigation. A pest survey, research on pest monitoring techniques and minor use registration work is also in progress.

Results so far are preliminary but interesting. Dr. Ken Fry reported on pests of black currants in Alberta , which include spider mites, aphids and the currant fruit fly. Currant fruit fly can be

monitored using yellow sticky boards baited with ammonium acetate. Traps should be placed in the canopy at approximately the same height as the crop. The cultivar Titania seemed especially susceptible to spider mites and perhaps to currant fruit fly as well.

Researcher Chris Neesor is looking at the response of black currants to nitrogen, by comparing plots fertilized at 0, 50, 100, and 200 kg/ha of nitrogen. So far a positive dose response to N has not been observed. (The planting is on a rich soil with 6 OM). Black currant plantings did respond well to black mulch however, and to a lesser degree, to wood chip mulch.

James Dill is an irrigation engineer who has recently set up a large drip irrigation trial on black currants and saskatoons. Look for good information to come out of these projects in the next few years.

### **Did you know.....?**

#### **Resources at OMAF for Export Markets**

The implementation of the U.S. Public Health Security and Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Act of 2002 (also known as the Bioterrorism Act). provides the FDA with new authority to protect the U.S. food supply against terrorist acts and other threats. Does this affect Ontario farmers? It might, if you export products. Get the details from **The Ontario Agri-Food Exporter**, a newsletter for exporters of Ontario crops.

<http://www.gov.on.ca/OMAFRA/english/food/export/exporternews.htm>

The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food offers a wide range of export services geared to assisting Ontario's agriculture and food producers and processors with their export marketing efforts. <http://www.gov.on.ca/OMAFRA/english/food/export/index.html>

#### **Resources at University of Guelph for Food Product Development**

Guelph Food Technology Center is not-for-profit organization which helps food companies and food entrepreneurs improve their profitability by helping them develop new products, design new processes, train their staff, and implement food safety and quality systems.

How does GFTC help clients?

Free, confidential, initial consultations

Conducts projects on your behalf, ie designing or modifying products, processes of packaging.

Helps design HACCP and food safety programs

Provides educational opportunities, newsletters, etc.

For more information: <http://www.gftc.ca/>

## Program Highlights for the Ontario Berry Growers Conference

**Jan 13-14, 2004 - Elmhurst Inn, Ingersoll**

Pre-register at the OBGGA office: 519-426-1533

Details at <http://www.ontberries.com/2004CONFERENCE.htm>

### **January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2004**

- *Grower/farm feature* - Dan Rivett, Becker's Berry Patch
- *Nitrogen Fertilization in Strawberries* - Dr. Bernadine Strik, Oregon State University
- *Irrigation and Water Management Issues* - Rebecca Shortt, OMAF
- *Food Safety: Initiatives from your Competition* - Sandra Jones, OMAF
- *Winter Injury in Berry Crops: What we Learned in 2003* - Bob Tritten, Michigan State Univ.

Round table topics

1. *Strawberry Varieties*: Dr. Adam Dale, University of Guelph
2. *Fungicides and Diseases*: Michael Celetti, OMAF
3. *Water Quality and Food Safety*: Sandra Jones, OMAF
4. *Plastic Lids for Strawberry Quarts*: Rusty Smith, Manitree Fruit Farm, Blenheim
5. *Technology to Help you Irrigate*: Rebecca Shortt, OMAF
6. *Adapting Equipment*: Murray Becker

### **January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2004**

- *Breeding Resistance to Tarnished Plant Bug* - Dr. Adam Dale, University of Guelph, Simcoe
- *Ontario Berry Plant Propagation Program*: Becky Hughes, University of Guelph, New Liskeard
- *Nutrient Management in Raspberries and Blueberries* - Bernadine Strik
- *In-store Promotions, Foodland Ont. Update*- Denise Zaborowski, Foodland Ontario

Hot Topics in 2003

1. Morris Gervais - *Media Fiascos*
  2. Kevin Schooley - *Herbicide Injury on Strawberries*
  3. Paul Watson - *Plasticulture Tool for Planting Strawberries*
  4. John Cooper - *Lifting Irrigation Tape*
  5. Alan Sullivan - *Using Row Covers in the Fall*
  6. Fred and Sharon Judd - *No-till Planting & No-till Runner Control*
- *Whole farm planning: Long-term Rotations for Berry Growers* - Kevin Schooley, KS Consulting
  - *Weed Control and New Machines* - Leslie Huffman, OMAF
  - *Raspberry Production, Details That Pay Off* - Pam Fisher, OMAF
  - *Saskatoon Production and Pitfalls* - speaker tba

## **Fertigation Workshops**

### **"Making Good Choices to Save Money & Optimize System Performance"**

OMAF irrigation specialist Rebecca Shortt has organized two fertigation workshops for berry and vegetable growers, Feb 16 and 17, 2004. Guest speaker Ted Van der Gulik , irrigation specialist with the BC. Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food., will be the main presenter.

Each workshop will cover

- Introduction to Fertigation, - advantages/disadvantages, - system design & operation
- Fertigation Safety, - cross connection control
- Developing your fertigation program (emphasis on strawberries Feb 16, tomatoes and peppers Feb 17)
- Injection Equipment and Options
- Fertilizer Selection
- Calculating Injection Rates

February 16, 2004 - Woodstock OMAF office

February 17, 2004 - Wallaceburg Oakes Inn, Wallaceburg

Registration : \$55.00 (\$51.40 + \$3.60 GST)

To register, and for more information, contact the OMAF Agricultural Information Contact Center

1-877-424-1300

**Registration deadline:** February 6, 2004

**Bring your calculator and a pencil !**

## **2004 Excellence In Agriculture Conference**

**Feb. 26<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> - Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario**

Plan now to be in Niagara-on-the-Lake on February 26-28, 2004 for the 4th annual Agricultural Excellence Conference hosted by the Canadian Farm Business Management Council. Consumer based agriculture will be the focus of several presentations by reputable speakers from the U.S. and Canada. Visit <http://www.farmcentre.com/English/conference/2004/index2004.htm>

Or contact Gail Vent at 1-888-232-3262 ext. 26 or email [gail.vent@cfbmc.com](mailto:gail.vent@cfbmc.com)

## Ten Reasons to Attend the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Conference

Feb 18-19, 2004 - Brock University, St Catharines

1. **Season Extension for Berry and Vegetable Growers** - Feb 18, 2:00 -5:00 p.m.  
*Greenhouse, high tunnels and row covers for off-season production*
2. **Building Soils** - Feb 18, 9:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.  
*How to build a healthier soil , and why it pays off*
3. **Food Safety Workshop** - Feb 18, 9:30 a.m. -11:30 a.m., and 2:00 - 4:00 p.m.  
*Water quality and testing, record keeping, and components of a worker hygiene program*
4. **Keeping the Workforce Strong** - Feb 19, 2:00 p.m.- 4 p.m.  
*This excellent program for employers includes guest speaker Gregorio Billikopf Encina, Labour Management Farm Advisor, University of California*
5. **Direct Farm Sales** (Ontario Farm Fresh Marketing Association) - Feb 19, 9:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.  
*Keep up with the latest marketing ideas and topics*
6. **Poster Session:** *Research projects summed up in poster format for quick and easy scanning*
7. **Trade Show:** *More exhibitors than ever!*
8. **Sprayer Technology:** *Drop in and see how new technology can help you*
9. **Weed identification:** *Drop by, test your skills, and talk with the specialists*
10. **See for yourself!** Visit <http://fruitveggie.hortport.com/Dispstpg.htm?ID=1267> for the complete program and registration form.