



Welcome to "ON Organic"

Hugh Martin, Organic Crop Production Program Lead, OMAFRA

Welcome to the March 2009 issue of ON Organic. This issue discusses certification and the new regulations as well as some articles from other newsletters. This marks the 12th monthly issue of this newsletter. We would like your opinion on the newsletter. Here is a link to a short survey to encourage you to tell us what you like about the newsletter and how can we improve the newsletter at http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=nT1N6nJlQH8URmkBMRv1aw_3d_3d and I hope you can send us some thoughts, I value your opinion.

Thanks to Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario (EFAO) and Organic Council of Ontario (OCO) for forwarding this on to their email lists, and I encourage you to share it with other colleagues who may find it useful. As always I welcome your comments by email or when we see each other at various meetings this winter.

Subscription to this newsletter is easy and no cost. For details go to the webpage: <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/subscribe/index.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>

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The ON Organic Team

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New Pesticide Regulations

Ontario's cosmetic pesticides ban will take effect April 22, 2009. The requirements of the ban are detailed in Ontario Regulation 63/09 and the *Pesticides Act*, which was amended by the *Cosmetic Pesticides Ban Act*, 2008.

There are a number of changes in the *Pesticides Act* which now has 11 schedules of pesticides instead of the six categories before. These are defined and explained in the Backgrounder document found at <http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/en/news/2009/030401mb.php> or full information is at <http://www.ontario.ca/pesticideban>.

Farmers, as defined in the regulation, can purchase and use pesticides in Classes 4, 5, 6 and 7 without a licence (Grower Pesticide Safety Course Certificate). Licensed vendors will require uncertified farmers to present a Farm Business Registration Number or to sign a self-declaration form to authorize the purchase of Class 4 pesticides for use in their agricultural operation.

Class 4 includes agricultural products such as sulphur, copper, insecticidal soap, oils, Entrust, Dipel, Serenade, Trounce etc. Class 5 includes domestic formulations for some of these products.

Class 8 domestic products (includes rotenone, pyrethrin, and spinosad) are banned for cosmetic use. The new regulations are in effect April 22, 2009 and farmers who have been using domestic products containing rotenone, pyrethrin, or spinosad products will be unable to purchase these domestic products after that date. Commercial formulations of pyrethrin (example Trounce) and spinosad (Entrust, GF-120) can continue to be purchased by farmers.

Questions on the Cosmetic Pesticides Ban should be directed to the MOE Public information Centre at 1-800-565-4923.

New Organic Products Regulation

By Hugh Martin, Organic Crop Production Program Lead, OMAFRA

As indicated in the revised February newsletter the revised Canada Organic Products Regulation was introduced in mid February. There is a 75-day comment period on this regulation which will end on April 29th, 2009. For more details you can see the article from the February newsletter at: <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/organic/news/2009-02a2.htm>

Or go to the CFIA webpage for organic at: <http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/fssa/orgbio/orgbioe.shtml>

The revised Regulation is posted at: <http://www.gazette.gc.ca/rp-pr/p1/2009/2009-02-14/html/reg1-eng.html>

The new revised standards are currently available at: http://www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/cgsb/on_the_net/organic/index-e.html.

Certification – 'Tis the Season for Applications and Organic Plans

By Hugh Martin, Organic Crop Production Program Lead, OMAFRA

Hard to believe it is mid-March already. If you are renewing your organic certification, your Certification Body (CB) will likely hope to receive your application for renewal before April 1. The standards require you to include in your application your Organic Plan which is a production plan for the year. The CB will review the various inputs and procedures you are using to make sure they conform with the Canadian Organic Standards. The Organic Plan also includes various farm maps, rotation plans, farm monitoring records, and other documents as appropriate. In preparing your plan, last year's plan will be very helpful, and if you did it on computer last year, that will likely reduce your time this year.

For some CBs the application form is the organic plan. For some CBs they have key points of information that must be supplied and whether you use their form or not is not important as long as all necessary information is given to them so that they can review your application in time to assign an inspector to proceed with the inspection. For most renewals you should apply before April 1. You must apply well before your 12 month certification expires so that you can be inspected before your certification expires and when the crop to be certified is still growing in the field. For transition you must apply more than 12 months prior to the harvest of your certified crop and be inspected when the transition crop is still growing in the field.

The Organic Plan is also very useful as a record of your activities. For traceability purposes you need to have a plan of what you expect to do, and a record of what you actually do during the season. Both your plan and your records should be as complete as possible so that you can prove your organic practices.

In your application make sure to inform the CB where your crop will be sold so that they can determine whether it needs to be certified to Canadian, US (NOP), European, Japanese or other standards. In the future we are hoping for international agreements on equivalency with other countries but these are not yet in place.

As the year progresses make sure to keep your CB informed with changes you make to your Organic Plan, so that you do not get surprises at your next certification renewal.

Organic Statistics

By Hugh Martin, Organic Crop Production Program Lead, OMAFRA

According to recent statistics as compiled by Anne Macey of COG there were 3,782 certified organic farms Canada in 2007 and 669 certified organic farms in Ontario.

This includes 101,000 certified organic acres in Ontario, up 23% from 2005. The acreage is 48% grains (soybeans, spelt, wheat, corn, etc), 40% hay/pasture and cover crops and less than 5% is planted to certified organic fruits, vegetables and herbs.

Estimates on the size of the retail market for organic vary from \$1.5-2 Billion for 2008 in Canada which is about 2% market share of the total retail food market.

Nielsen (2008) estimated that 48% of the organic food sales in large grocery stores are purchased by 5% of the organic consumers. 60% of consumers buy some organic foods.

Connecting with Consumers

By Dorene Collins, Marketing and Customer Service Program Lead, OMAFRA

At a recent workshop of direct farm marketers, a speaker emphasized the point that in uncertain times people flock to what they know. Another way of interpreting this is that people are looking for what is real and authentic – a relationship that can be trusted. Since farmers rank in the top three of trusted professionals in Canada, there's a lot going for the farmer who has a direct connection to the consumer. This has been supported lately with the growing interest in local food systems and the desire by the consumer to understand the origin of the food they purchase and eat.

Farmers' markets and farm shops are experiencing growth as consumers seek out the story of where their food is coming from. A recent study by the Ontario Farm Fresh Marketing Association reveals that on-farm markets reported considerable growth over the last two years, and that 60% of on-farm markets surveyed derive over half of their total farm income from direct on-farm marketing and over one-third estimate they serve between 5,000 to 24,999 customers in a season. It is estimated that the 750 on-farm markets in Ontario host approximately 8 million on-farm customers annually. Although these may be repeat visits, this statistic is incredible in understanding the just how many Ontarians are visiting and purchasing goods directly from a farm each year.

Is this interest and growth a passing phase? With an aging and increasing population in Ontario I believe it is a growing opportunity for farmers as consumers seek out authentic relationships and experiences to meet a variety of changing lifestyle needs particularly those focusing on health. Time and time again I read how freshness of the product and the opportunity to support the farmer continue to trump price as a factor in choosing to buy at the farm gate or farmers' market.

Remember, what a farmer may think as ordinary is considered extraordinary to 98% of the population. With an increasing urban population, the desire to reconnect with the land (without owning a farm) is a very real desire and farmers willing to work directly with the public have a competitive advantage.

Helpful resources:

Visit the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) - Business Management Unit website at: <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/busdev/agbusdev.html>

Subscribe to our OMAFRA Agricultural Business Update Newsletter at: <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/busdev/news/index.html#agbus>

*Dorene Collins is Marketing and Customer Service Program Lead with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.
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Conference Explores the Science and Business of Functional Foods

“An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure”- a tried and true statement that can certainly apply to human nutrition. Ideally, where should that ounce of prevention come from, our food or supplements? What will consumers shop for in five years time? As Canadians become more aware of the important connection between health and food, they are shopping for foods that are functional; foods that will enhance their health and help in lowering the risk of chronic disease. Moving towards a preventative model for health care, that includes exercise and the consumption of functional foods, can help offset rising health care costs.

Australia is a world leader in adopting a preventative model of health care that promotes functional foods. Is this a model Canada could adopt as well? How will the consumer want to shop for their food in five years? These are questions that will be explored at the Food *meets* Function Conference the science and business of functional foods being held on June 17 and 18, 2009 at the Best Western Lamplighter Inn and Conference Centre, London, Ontario.

A combination of plenary speakers and breakout sessions will allow participants the opportunity to learn about the latest innovations and cutting-edge research in functional foods. Food value-chain members, dietitians, researchers and health care professionals will benefit from examining the present and future needs of consumers, discussing how to educate a broader consumer base, and investigating opportunities to generate alliances and strategies within the functional food value chain.

For program and registration information on the Food *meets* Function Conference go to www.foodmeetsfunction.ca or call the Agricultural Information Contact Centre toll free, 1-877-424-1300 (within Ontario) or 519-826-4047 (outside Ontario).

From OMAFRA Newsletters

Soil pH - When is High Too High?

By Anne Verhallen - Soil Management Specialist/OMAFRA

It's funny how soil pH is often one of the last things considered when trying to diagnose problems in the field or on a crop. Typically we work our way through all the possible pests, both insects and disease, we might consider pesticide applications - not enough, too much or even

pesticide residues, we will take tissue tests to look at the nutrients whether there is not enough fertility or too much, we may even consider lightning strikes before we look at soil pH. Soil pH though is one of the early signs of soil health problems. It is a test that is easy to do. There are even quick tests or portable pH meters that are quite accurate compared to the lab test.

Let's take a step back here. pH is a measure of acidity. The scale goes from 0 to 14 with 7 being neutral. Acids are below 7 while above 7 is considered alkaline. Typically most Ontario soils are in the range of 6 to 8 for pH. Many of our soils in southwestern Ontario are calcareous based and tend to have pH readings around 7 and above, particularly the clays and loamy soils. However, even in clay soils we can have pockets of lower pH. Many sandy soils have a low buffering capacity and tend to have lower pH.

From OMAFRA Hortmatters Newsletter, for full article go to <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/hort/news/hortmatt/2009/02hrt09a1.htm>

Cold Hardiness and Fruit Trees

By Leslie Huffman, Apple Specialist, OMAFRA, Harrow

Recent extremes in cold temperatures have caused concerns for fruit growers, and much speculation about how much cold before fruit crops are damaged. Cold hardiness is an amazing process and understanding what it is and how it works may help explain why it varies so much.

What is cold hardiness: It is the ability of plant tissues to withstand extremes in cold temperatures. It is a complex physiological process that begins in early fall, and progresses until bud break in the spring.

From OMAFRA Orchard News, for full article go to <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/hort/news/orchnews/2009/on-0209a3.htm>

Fungal Trunk Diseases: A Threat to Aging Vineyards?

By Wendy McFadden-Smith - Tender Fruit and Grape IPM Specialist/OMAFRA

Grapevine trunk diseases are often overlooked in Ontario due to their slow development relative to the more common and pressing disease targets of annual spray programs (powdery and downy mildews and bunch rot). Trunk diseases are caused by pathogens that grow only in mature wood and are almost always associated with old, large pruning wounds which act as the point of entry for fungal spores. They subsequently grow, decay the wood and slowly kill the vines. Several fungi are known to cause trunk diseases in grapevine. *Eutypa dieback* is the main trunk

disease problem of wine grapes grown in temperate regions and the one historically recognized as an occasional problem in Ontario vineyards, especially in vineyards over 10 years of age. *Phaeoacremonium aleophilum* and *Phaeoconiella chlamydospora* cause trunk diseases variously known as Esca, Petri disease, black measles, and "black goo". They are common and serious pathogens in California and parts of Europe. These fungi have previously been found in Virginia, Pennsylvania, and New York, although the extent of the problems that they might cause in the region has yet to be determined. A systematic survey of grapevine trunk diseases has not been conducted in Ontario.

From OMAFRA Tenderfruit Newsletter, for full article go to <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/hort/news/tenderfr/tf1303a4.htm>

Grower Workshops: Introducing the New and Improved Apple IPM Manual

Kathryn Carter, Pome Fruit IPM Specialist

The Ontario apple IPM team including OMAFRA specialists, University of Guelph and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada researchers have spent the last few months rewriting the OMAFRA publication 310, Apple IPM guide.

Highlights of some of the new content in the publication include information on:

- monitoring
- thresholds for new products
- activity of beneficial insects in orchards
- integrated weed management
- soil compaction
- new and emerging pests such as apple leafcurling midge
- using models to time the application of different insecticides for oriental fruit moth and codling moth

Workshop dates

- April 7 Ruthven, Mastronadi Winery, 1193 Road 3 East, Kingsville
- April 8 Simcoe, OMAFRA office, 1283 Blueline Rd, Simcoe
- April 9 Vineland, OAG office, 1634 South Service Road, St. Catharines.
- April 15 Clarksburg, Marsh Street Community Centre, 187 Marsh Street, Clarksburg, Ontario
- April 16 Colborne, Keeler Centre 80 Division St., Colborne

More information on these workshops will be posted in

March on the OMAFRA website at: <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/conferences/index.html>.

Adding Legumes to Pasture

Jack Kyle - Grazier Specialist/OMAFRA

A pasture containing significant level of legume plants has a number of advantages over a pure grass pasture. Legumes provide nitrogen to promote grass growth, provide high quality forage, and some of the legumes are deep rooted and have some tolerance for the warm dry conditions we generally experience in August.

Productive pastures require regular maintenance. Rotation is one very effective way to improve pasture productivity. Improving the species mix in the pasture is also important. Legumes are the most beneficial species to include in a pasture sward.

There are many advantages to including legumes:

- Legumes add nitrogen to the soil that encourages grass growth as well as supporting legume growth.
- Legumes have more consistent production during the mid summer period. The grasses grow well during May and June but July and August production is decreased. Legumes, particularly alfalfa and trefoil, continue to grow during July and August.

Legumes hold their feed quality longer than grass species. This assists in keeping the pasture quality more consistent throughout the summer grazing season.

The four most common legumes used in Ontario pastures are: alfalfa, white clover, trefoil and red clover.

From OMAFRA Virtual Beef Newsletter, for full article go to <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/livestock/beef/news/vbn0209a4.htm>

Getting the Cows Ready to Calve and Re-breed

Barry Potter - Livestock Specialist/OMAFRA

It's the most wonderful time of the year. No, I am not talking about Christmas, but that magical time when the cows begin to drop their calves. And like any Christmas, preparation before the day comes helps make it a truly special time.

The dairy industry talks a lot about transition cow management, the three weeks prior to calving to the three weeks post calving. This is a very critical period in the cow's life. For the beef industry, if we extend the transition period, from two months prior to two months post calving, we can manage the most critical period of a cow's life smoothly.

There are three things to consider in transition beef cow management: sorting, nutrition, and health. The sorting

should occur about 60 days prior to calving. Evaluate your cows for body condition score. To see excellent images of both dairy and beef cows, go to this resource on the Ontario Farm Animal Council website: www.ofac.org/pdf/body%20condition%20score.pdf.

From OMAFRA Virtual Beef Newsletter, <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/livestock/beef/news/vbn0209a6.htm>

New Publications

Canada Pension Plan Financial security is a very important consideration for retiring farmers. This factsheet on the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) provides information on the retirement income and the disability and survivor benefits. Available on the OMAFRA [website](#).

Guide to Cost of Production Budgeting Cost of Production (COP) budgeting consists of estimating the costs associated with an enterprise and the expected revenue. This Factsheet outlines the process and use of COP budgeting for farm-level decision-making.

For Vegetable Growers: March often brings windy weather, which may cause lost soil and wind erosion damage. Based on lost soil organic matter, nutrients and the sheer loss of soil and its properties, each wind storm may cost about \$13/acre. Read (or listen to) more in “Wind Erosion”, now online at <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/updates/soundadvice/mar09r1.htm>
<http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/updates/soundadvice/mar09r1-w.mp3>

For Specialty Crop Growers: Spring can't be far away... The Maple Production Report is being posted weekly with updates on sap flow, and helpful tips on managing your trees. Read these reports or sign up for our subscription service at <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/updates/maple/index.html>

For Field Crop Growers: Budgeting is important in these times of volatile prices and inputs. Crop budgets are a management tool to estimate costs and evaluate cropping alternatives. Choose from either online or printable budgets for these field crops: Hay, Barley, Canola, Beans, Corn, Oats, Flax, Soybeans and Wheat, plus Organic Crops. <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/busdev/facts/pub60.htm>
<http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/busdev/facts/pub60.pdf>

See also <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/products/newpubs.html> for new publications and products from OMAFRA.

Understanding the New Canadian Organic Regime

Farmer Standards Training Sessions

Are you a certified organic farmer? Find out about key changes to the recently published Canadian Organic Standards and how these changes will impact your farm enterprise. The sessions will provide an overview of the Canadian Organic Regime, the principles of organic production, the key components of the crop and livestock standards, the Permitted Substances List and labelling.

There are numerous sessions being held across Canada in March and April.

Remaining Ontario Dates;

[Thunder Bay, March 11](#)

[Elmwood, March 14](#)

[Kingston, March 17](#)

For more information go to <http://www.cog.ca/CanadianOrganicStandardsTraining.htm>

The Organic Council of Ontario's 3rd Annual General Meeting

It's that time again - Come one, come all to the Organic Council of Ontario's 3rd Annual General Meeting.

- Panel discussion addressing issues regarding the Non-GMO Project.
- Question and answer session on the new Canadian Organic Regulations by the Canada Organic Office.
- Growing Forward – New Federal-Provincial Agriculture Program
- Cooperative development presentation by the Ontario Cooperative Association
- Updates on the Ontario Organic Sector, OCO board elections, and networking opportunities.

Date: March 25, 2009

Where: Victoria Park East Golf & Country Club,
1096 Victoria Road South, Guelph, ON

When: 9:30 am - 5 pm

Registration: Open to all members and non-members.

This event is FREE to OCO Members and \$30.00 for non members. Includes organic lunch and refreshments.

Please **RSVP** at 519-827-0497 or katy@organiccouncil.ca by March 16th.

Ontario Forage Council Profitable Pastures 2009

This 3-day conference will be held

- Tuesday March 31st at Drumbo Agricultural Hall,
- Wednesday April 1st in Elmwood Community Centre and
- Thursday April 2nd at the Stirling Lions Hall.

We are excited about our speaker Steve Kenyon from Busby, Alberta.. They currently run approx. 1500 head and manage more than 4000 acres. By using extended grazing techniques, they are able to pasture cattle year round. Steve's presentations will include "Economics of Grazing" and "Understanding How Grazing Works."

His vast experience will provide a practical take home message.

The cost is just \$35 and includes hot beef dinner
Pre-registration is required for this event by March 27th
call 877-892-8663 or 519-986-1484.

For more info check out our revamped website @
www.ontarioforagecouncil.com

Université de Guelph-Campus d'Alfred is holding its 5th Annual Conference on Organic Dairying and Dairy Research

It is with great pleasure that Université de Guelph-Campus d'Alfred invites you to the 5th Annual Conference on Organic Dairying and Dairy Research which will be held April 2nd and 3rd 2009.

This year, our main speakers are: **Alain Villeneuve**, DVM, Ph.D., B.Sc. (Bio.) and **Marina (Nina) von Keyserlingk**, Ph.D., B.Sc.

For more information, please go to the following link:

http://209.87.235.146/upload/Pages_from_depliant-produitiere-Anglais.pdf

There are also a number of other Organic Events scheduled for this winter. Go to the following links for more details:

EFAO - http://www.efao.ca/pages/courses_workshops.html

COG - <http://www.cog.ca/events.php>

OCO - <http://www.organiccouncil.ca/content.sz?cid=34>

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.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/organic/organic.html>

Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario (EFAO)

<http://www.efao.ca>

Organic Agricultural Centre of Canada (OACC)

<http://www.oacc.info>

Agricultural Information Contact Centre: 1-877-424-1300

E-mail: ag.info.omafra@ontario.ca

Northern Ontario Regional Office: 1-800-461-6132

www.ontario.ca/omafra

ON Organic Subscriber Survey

Here is a link to a short survey to encourage you to tell us what you like about the newsletter and how can improve the newsletter at http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=nT1N6njlQH8URmkBMRv1aw_3d_3d or fill out the form below. I hope you can send us some thoughts, I value your opinion.

1. How do you receive the newsletter?

Direct email Forwarded from another subscriber

2. How many monthly issues have you received

More than 6 3-6 issues Less than 3

3. Indicate the words that would describe our business

Organic Crops Livestock Producer Processor Input supplier Government

4. What content do you find useful?

Feature articles
 Article summaries with links to full article
 OMAFRA programs
 Events
 New Publications
 Other

5. Overall how do you rate the "ON Organic" Newsletter?

Excellent 5 4 3 2 1 Poor

6. How can we improve the newsletter?

Please return survey to Hugh Martin:

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