

Ecological Farming in Ontario

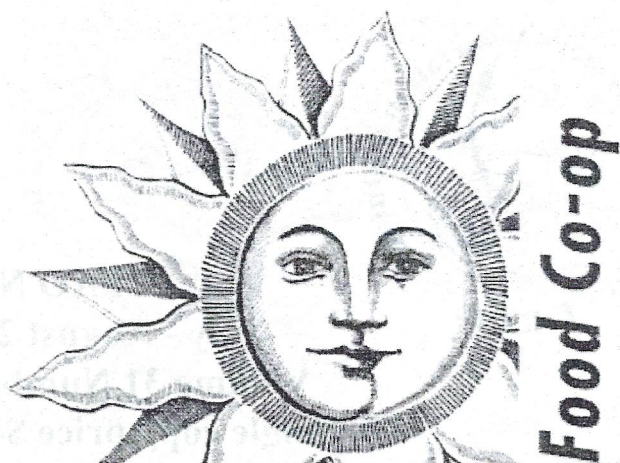


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EFAO News
July - August 2010
Volume 31 Number 4
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The Ark: Connecting to Community and Nature
The Organic Growth Challenge
Liquid fertilizer needed for organic tomato production
Advancing Ecological Farming Practice: New Workshops



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The Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario was established in 1979:

1. To develop and provide programs promoting the practice and advancement of ecological agriculture which maintains and enhances the health of the soil, water, crops, livestock, and the diversity of the environment.

2. To educate and increase the public's understanding of ecological agricultural methods like soil tillage, green manures, cover crops, composting, crop rotations, soil erosion control, and conservation practices by offering courses, seminars, conferences, farm tours, meetings, and publishing a newsletter and by collecting, researching, and disseminating information on this topic to the general public.

3. To bring together people who are concerned about ecological agriculture so they can share experiences, support each other and create community.

Activities: Conferences, courses and workshops on ecological farming methods, farm tours, newsletters, farm consulting, seed and stock exchange, and good fellowship.

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The Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario acknowledges the support from the Ontario Trillium Foundation towards our membership and educational services. The Ontario Trillium Foundation, an agency of the Ministry of Culture, receives annually \$100 million of government funding generated through Ontario's charity casino initiative.

ABOUT ECOLOGICAL FARMING IN ONTARIO

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Tell us what you are doing, farming or otherwise. Write a letter to the Editor. Help make the Ecological Farming in Ontario a farmers' journal. **Display advertising rates** are on the back page and **Stock Exchange rates** are on page 10. For **Stock Exchange** contact Karen Maitland in the EFAO Office. For other advertising and submission of articles contact Colin Isaacs, Ecological Farming in Ontario, Canadian Institute for Business and the Environment, 119 Concession 6 Road, Fisherville, Ontario N0A 1G0 tel: 905 779-0003, fax 416 362-5231 Email: colin@ecologicalfarming.ca.

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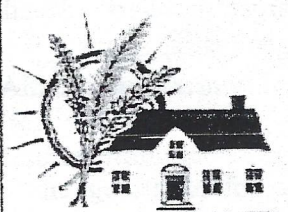
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Contact the Editor of Ecological Farming in Ontario with articles, pictures for this magazine and advertising copy (display ads, not Stock Exchange).
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The Organic Growth Challenge

by Hugh Martin, Organic Crops Production Program Lead, OMAFRA

For many years we have heard that most of the organic food consumed in Ontario and in Canada is imported. Some quote that 85% is imported but I do not know where that number originally came from or how accurate it is. I sometimes cite a more conservative number of 70-80%, but the true number is irrelevant because we agree it is too high. I have seen that 70% of the total food consumed is produced in Ontario. These stats get murky when considering whether the main ingredients were grown here? Are the lesser ingredients such as spices grown here? Was it processed here?

We also know that the organic market has been growing by 15-20% per year (or more) over the past 15 years with the exception of 2009 when data now suggests the sector only grew by 5% due to the economic recession. I fully expect this growth to recover and markets to grow by 10-15% per year in the future.

Organic food makes up approximately 2% of the total retail market but organic farm products only make up 1.3% of the total farmgate value of production in Ontario. The number of certified organic farms in Ontario is growing very slowly and the number of organic acres is growing about 10% per year.

If the retail organic food sector is growing faster than Ontario organic farm production this creates a market opportunity for organic farmers. If we currently import most of our organic food from other countries this enhances that opportunity. The challenge is how to take advantage of those markets. They are out there but it takes a lot of work to find them.

Price is a major issue, can you compete with your competition - local or import. You need to have fair prices and to keep your costs down. First know your cost of production and work to find efficiencies.

The best way to lower your cost per unit of production is to increase your yield. This is the time of year to analyse and look to potential ways to do that. Would a better variety increase yields. Could you reduce weeds by controlling them early and not letting weeds go to seed. Buying manure for the farm may increase yields in the long term to build your soils. Soil testing helps you to monitor your soil nutrient "bank account". A better piece of equipment may allow you to increase your production per unit of equipment

cost. You be the judge and set your own priorities on what is important to the growth and profitability of your business.

Quality should not be overlooked. Organic customers want it to look good and the products to be as good as your competition. Being organic is not an excuse for poor quality product. They are paying more and they expect more. Be careful not to damage the product at harvest and use excellent post harvest storage procedures to maintain the quality from field to the customer's shelf. Be observant of food safety and traceability good agricultural practices.

Labour costs are always an issue. Use your time and that of your staff wisely. Train them to work effectively.

Spend the time to market effectively. Have a good label and package as appropriate for the product and the market. Tell your story about the product to the customer. Would using Foodland logos or materials help you to demonstrate that your product is local in some of your markets? Are there other programs to help you promote your product.

Farm size depends on your business and family goals. About 85% of the organic product in the stores comes from the 15% of farms that are larger and most of these are family farms. Larger farms have economy of scale. They buy larger equipment to reduce their cost per unit of output. They can buy inputs for less and sell volumes into markets that smaller farms cannot. Processors and larger retails markets insist on buying from larger suppliers. Smaller farms however can work together to realize some of these advantages.

Your challenge is how to produce more organic food for the customers of Ontario.

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The Ark: Connecting to Community and Nature

by Heide Isaacs

Janice McKean and Art Wiebe run a 110 acre farm near Tiverton, 8 km. north of Kincardine on the shores of Lake Huron. Art said their story of their farm, The Ark, is a love story, "Janice and I were both single in the mid-90s but old friends and both gardeners. I courted her with aged sheep manure and we became a couple." They had a house in town but were blue skying a country home dream. It had to be 10 minutes from the Kincardine hospital so Art could continue his work as a medical doctor and they wanted that there should be a stream or river running through it. What they found was a farm just 5 minutes from the hospital, land which was an abandoned large gravel pit that had been operating in the 1950s. A farmer was grazing some of it but it could not support his livestock. Only 12 acres is A2 (has only moderate limitations restricting crops or requires moderate conservation practices) farmland. The rest is worse. Art said, "We are real champions of the underdog and see this as abused property we are turning around." They lived in town while they renovated the 140 year old farmhouse and cultivated the garden, which was so filled with rocks that the work came to be called Art and the dancing cultivator. Otherwise Art works off the farm. He is on the Board of Canadian Associations of Physicians for the Environment (CAPE), which has worked on pesticide issues, greening health care supplies, and asbestos. He is one of only two board members of a non-urban background. He may be the only Board member to say, "Daylight is fading and I have two horses to bring to the barn." He is also a member of the Society of Rural Physicians of Canada and a Fellow in Rural and Remote Medicine of the Society. Janice is an organic grower of market vegetables, operates a native flower nursery, and grows and plants native grasses, flowers, shrubs and trees for the restoration of the land.

Their farm participates in the Collaborative Regional Alliance for Farmer Training in Ontario (CRAFT Ontario) (see separate article on ecological farming principles). Interns who wish to learn how to become ecological farmers exchange labour for accommodation, hands-on practical experience and sharing of knowledge, both formal and informal. Interns are also encouraged to make connections with community and nature, "We encourage you to meet our neighbours (both two-legged and four-legged) and to engage in the life of our community. Our area is a tourist destination with many interesting features. We hope you will use your own creative skills and talents to help us all learn more about the interconnectivity of things. We practice slow food. We have a good library." The learning experience is diverse including according to The Ark's posting on the CRAFT website, "organic veggie market gardening, hospitality and food preparation, native plants

and passive greenhouse operation, Canadian draft horses (our herd numbers six), ecosystem restoration and sustainable living." They also have a managed forest plan which is a mixed forest.

The vegetable garden is a half acre but it expands as the compost heaps made each year are removed and bare ground is exposed to be turned into more garden. It has a very high fence enclosure to keep out the deer which are ever present. The vegetables were originally only grown for their own use but expanded with a little delivery service amongst friends, neighbours and communities. Janice said the farmers' market is dear to her heart. It has grown slowly but in a healthy fashion and is now in its fifth year. The food is of top quality; it isn't required to be organic but of the dozen vendors most are organic. There are no crafts or flea market items and most of the vendors live within 50 km. The market begins May 24 and ends with free coffee on Thanksgiving.

Janice says she supplies a couple of restaurants in Kincardine. The choice of restaurants is hers as her garden is of limited size and she doesn't want to expand the workload which is manageable. Both restaurants have real appreciation for her food and make for a good partnership. One she has worked with for many years. She supplies Mediterranean type products such as peppers, tomatoes, and eggplant but her speciality is her salad greens, a very complex mix of edible flowers, herbs and greens (Editor: see the cover picture for the eye delight.)

Native plants is just a hobby that is getting out of hand. They wanted to restore the property, developing some expertise as they started to grow their own plants. Soon they were producing more plants and found a market for them. Selling retail can be time-consuming as some potential customers can talk for two hours and never buy a plant. Janice says she buys many of Lorraine Johnson's book, 100 Easy to Grow Native Plants, and sells them at cost to those who don't know anything about native plants. Janice said, "Lorraine Johnson has such a gift for presenting native plants in unthreatening way." Although they make no profit on the book, it is better to have well-informed customers so, as Ken Parker of Sweetgrass Nursery used to say, you don't sell someone a cardinal flower to plant under a Norway Maple.

Some local farms with environmental farm plans buy native plants to plant along streams. Art says he when he retires he won't be playing golf. He wants to spend more time sharing the expertise they gained by making their own mistakes. Janice has also taught organic vegetable gardening at the

public library. They try to stay within 100 km. to ensure seeds are within their bioregion. Driving behind them in the fall isn't a good idea as they are constantly stopping for seed collection with many lunch bags under the seat for that purpose. For example, the prairie grasses are from a nearby reserve and swamp milkweed is from nearby. A very few of the native plants are brought from elsewhere and propagated if they grow in their environment. For example, some plants, such as blue wild indigo were bought at the North American Native Plant Society sale and lupins from OSC in Waterloo. They don't dig up any plants or bring in any plants, only seeds and then strict guidelines on leaving seeds for natural regeneration e.g. taking no more than 10%. They are members of the Western Ontario Region of the North American Native Plants Society which fosters formal and informal networking. Carolinian plants are a different region so for those and others plants they don't carry, they refer to other nurseries they are connected with. They are very conscious of endangered species such as butternut tree recovery but, despite all the laws, there is little enforcement.

Local contracts are preferred. For example, they had a contract to collect seed from Inverhuron Provincial Park which was restoring a camp area. Seed is cold stratified over the winter and producing 10,000 plants over the winter is feasible. The plants were then planted in the park. The contract is ongoing which helps with planning and scheduling of farm work. In another project over four to five years, the young woman they worked with in the park is coordinating tree planting for The Pine River Watershed Initiative Network. Jane is then providing plants for the next stage which is understory plants for the restoration. She is also doing some education. For example, Ripley Public School students are involved with the restoration. They have been out to the farm for education. Over three half days, they came to learn about native plant identification with the display gardens to study. They also were in the greenhouse potting up some plants to take back to nurse for another year. Art took them out for a walk to find amphibians and wildlife and they had a good day.

The greenhouse is a unheated hoop house, 48 feet long and 24 feet across. It is really good when things freeze solid because many native seeds require it for germination. The seeds are started in 3/4" spaces but as much as possible, are transplanted into 4" pots. They also have indoor lights where they grow bedding plants and heritage varieties of vegetable seedlings and the hoop house is a good place to harden these off. Seedlings are sold at the farmers' market.

For potting mix, they don't consider peat sustainable even though it has good features such as its staying power: it has mass and doesn't settle much. Instead they mix their own, shredding leaves and shredding old sheep manure which is very deep and dry in the barn. One of the reasons, they don't

sell trees and shrubs commercially is because it would require bigger pots and they don't want to move much of the soil off the land.

They have done bed and breakfast for 15 years. It is an easy business to shut down for periods of time as needed. They've made many wonderful friends over the years and deliberately try to structure it so people don't treat it like a motel for passing through. For example, people are asked to stay for at least two nights. When some visitors seemed to treat it like a motel, they put some snakes among the web site pictures and that seemed to be effective to discourage those who didn't want to get off the porch. There are five km. of maintained trails, and clear bounds to the property such as Lake Huron, a river, a highway, etc but some urban residents still seem to fear getting lost. It's a big farm house so they like to share the space. Three bedrooms is the limit as more bumps them up to hotel status. The rates are very inexpensive compared to other B&Bs. They try to connect with the people staying with them and have the people make links with the rural lifestyle, organic food, the native plant restoration and the natural area. Weddings and special events are also hosted at the B & B. At Christmas, their Canadian horses pull carts.

While Janice went off to finish some ginger snaps destined for the market, Art concluded the interview with EFO's editor by saying he has been reading Wendell Berry and shares the view that "Community is important to people's health. When we have a choice between local or organic, we'll choose local and we rarely sell at farm gate because the farmers market is so community orientated."

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CRAFT: Principles of Ecological Farming from CRAFT Web Site

Collaborative Regional Alliance for Farmer Training in Ontario (CRAFT Ontario) defines Ecological Agriculture according to the General Principles of Organic Production, as outlined in Chapter 1 of the Organic Field Crop Handbook, Second Edition, 2001, produced by Canadian Organic Growers. CRAFT farmers are not required to be certified organic, but they must farm and teach according to these principles.

The key statements from these principles are:

- PROTECT the environment, minimize soil degradation and erosion, decrease pollution, optimize biological productivity and promote a sound state of health.
- REPLENISH and maintain long-term soil fertility by optimizing conditions for biological activity within the soil.

- MAINTAIN diversity within, and surrounding, the enterprise, and protect and enhance the biological diversity of native plants and wildlife.
- RECYCLE materials and resources to the greatest extent possible within the enterprise.
- PROVIDE attentive care that promotes the health and behavioural needs of livestock.
- MAINTAIN the integrity of organic food and processed products from initial handling to point of sale.

Further details can be found on pages 3-5 of the Organic Field Crop Handbook.

CRAFT Ontario farms specifically reject the use of genetically engineered/genetically modified organisms in their practices. All farms in CRAFT Ontario are either certified organic or have adopted organic farming principles.

CRAFT is structured so that each regional node within the five regions (Kawartha, Kingston, North East Ontario, Ottawa, and South West Ontario Regions) serves as contact to answer questions. Some of the elements of the internship program are the same across all regions e.g. farms bring their interns to CRAFT-organized field trips and some elements are unique to that region depending on what the participating farms in that network decide to do.

CRAFT. <http://www.craftontario.ca/ecological-farming/>



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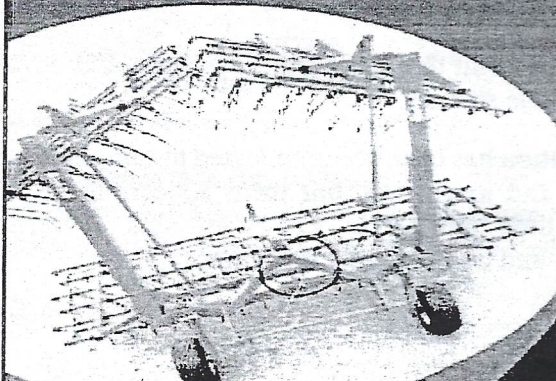
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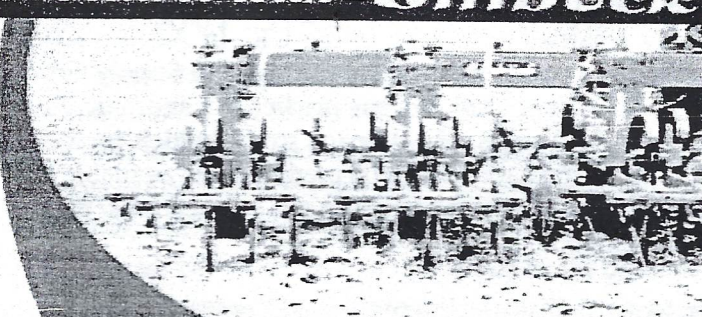
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Oil Supply Crunch: 2011-2015 by Rick Munroe

Concerns are mounting about peak oil, and there continues to be much debate over when the peak will be reached, whether a plateau can be sustained or whether the onset of decline would occur quickly, whether we will hit peak demand before we hit peak supply, etc.

There seems to be clear evidence that conventional oil production has peaked, since we have been stuck at around 74 mbpd for over half a decade (despite the incentive of record high prices).

There also seems to be growing consensus that global liquids production (currently around 86 mbpd) is likely to peak within the next decade and almost certainly at less than 95 mbpd. (Mainstream opinion a few years ago predicted no peak before 2030, with output at 130 mbpd.)

However, there are increasing warnings about an "oil supply crunch" within the next few years, not because of geological constraints, but because of under-investment. These warnings began almost two years ago, yet the mainstream media have rarely mentioned them, so the public remains largely unaware.

One of the first warnings came from the chief economist of the International Energy Agency, Fatih Birol in the summer of 2007 and then reiterated in Nov. 2007, cited here: <http://www.davidstrahan.com/blog/?p=73>

In May 2008 the Wall Street Journal ran an article entitled, Energy Watchdog Warns of Oil Supply Crunch: <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB121139527250011387.html>

This was followed by a study from Chatham House, a highly regarded think-tank in the UK. In August 2008, it published a paper entitled The Coming Oil Supply Crunch in which author Paul Stevens predicted a shortage within the next 5-10 years. His 40-page study (which includes a May 09 reaffirmation of his 08 prediction) is available here: <http://www.chathamhouse.org.uk/publications/papers/view/-/id/652/>

On Nov. 15, 2008 the International Energy Agency released its annual World Energy Outlook, which was something of a bombshell. The IEA, which had been quite dismissive of peak oil, suddenly warned, "What is needed is nothing short of an energy revolution... the era of cheap oil is over... time is running out..." It further warned, "Some 30 mb/d of new capacity is needed by 2015. There remains a real risk that under-investment will cause an oil-supply crunch in that timeframe" (WEO, Executive Summary, p. 7 Executive

Summary of the 2008 WEO is available here: http://www.worldenergyoutlook.org/docs/weo2008/WE02008_es_english.pdf

The release of the 2008 WEO was quickly followed by George Monbiot's recorded interview with Mr. Birol and this article in The Guardian (Dec. 08): <http://www.guardian.co.uk/business/2008/dec/15/oil-peak-energy-iea>

In August 2009 the IEA's chief economist again mentioned the likelihood of an oil supply crunch, this time indicating that it could occur any time after 2010: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/science/warning-oil-supplies-are-running-out-fast-1766585.html>

In October 2009 Global Witness in the UK released its Heads in the Sand study which addressed government inaction on peak oil. This study also warns of a potential 7 mbpd gap between supply and demand by 2015 (p. 7 & 36): http://www.globalwitness.org/media_library_detail.php/854/en/heads_in_the_sand_governments_ignore_the_oil_supply

In Dec 2009 the CEO of Petrobras made a presentation in which he predicted an oil supply crunch for 2012 and 2013 (see figure 6 here): http://canada.theoildrum.com/pdf/theoildrum_6169.pdf

In Feb. 2010 the UK Industry Task Force on Peak Oil & Energy Security (ITPOES) released its second report. ITPOES analyst Chris Skrebowski predicts a loss of spare capacity and a price spike "as early as 2012/2013 and certainly no later than 2014/2015" (p. 15). <http://peakoiltaskforce.net/>

Not long ago the Financial Times mentioned a crunch "in the middle of this decade" and blamed it on uncertainties caused by biofuels policies: <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/ea030306-26e8-11df-8c08-00144feabdc0.html>

I could go on, but you get the idea.... What we have tried to do is prove the point that these warnings are numerous and all from credible sources.

This information has been communicated to our politicians, bureaucrats and journalists, but there appears to be little awareness, little interest in examining this concerning information, and consequently no action.

More on this in the future.

Rick Munroe Howe Island, Ontario



EFAO News

July - August 2010

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



At times the EFAO board has been criticized for not being sufficiently forthcoming with information about our activities. Rather than being intentional it has been an oversight. We do hope to improve on this record. Now is a good time to start.

For months our past Treasurer Fran McQuail, while she was still in her position, was warning the board of our financial position in relation to some of our funding arrangements coming to a close. Unfortunately, some of us were a little like a lot of the population when it comes to issues like climate change and peak oil. We were hearing the words but not grasping the gravity of the situation.

Basically, the membership fees do not cover our costs of operation, even though as our present Treasurer recently commented, we do run a parsimonious (I had to look that up!) organization. In order to be able to provide the programs we have been providing we have had to rely heavily on funding, largely from Trillium. This funding has allowed us to enhance and enlarge our operations and our membership, among other things. The feedback we have received regarding these enhancements and enlargements has been very positive, and as a result we would like to continue this trend.

We have a dedicated and hard-working board that has really stepped up to the plate to try to secure new sources of funding. We run into a problem, particularly at this time of year, as all of the volunteer board are trying to farm, like the rest of our members. To this end the board has made the critical decision to hire an Executive Director, whose primary role will be to help us secure ongoing funding. This was a difficult decision for the board in that it presents as the proverbial "chicken and egg" scenario. You need funding to be able to hire an E.D. but an E.D. can be instrumental in securing funding.

The board has hired Michelle Jory as our Executive Director. As many of you will know Michelle has been our vice-chair on the board, so is very familiar with our activities. Michelle is in a time of transition in her farming activities and as a result was well positioned to take on this role. She is very highly regarded by the board and her enthusiasm and organizational skills will stand her in good stead as she takes on her new role. Michelle's primary role will be to seek out and secure funding.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our board and our Membership Services Coordinator, Karen Maitland, who are doing an absolutely stellar job on your behalf.

Will keep you posted.

Chris Litster

In This Issue **Stock Exchange**
appears on page 9 close to Events listing

ABOUT STOCK EXCHANGE ADS

For Stock Exchange ads, please send cheque for \$5 for one time or \$20 for four insertions made out to Ecological Farmers of Ontario and mail to Karen Maitland, Member Services Co-ordinator, Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario, 5420 Highway 6 North, RR5 Guelph, ON N1H 6J2. Please pay in advance or failing that by the deadline for the next issue. If we have to follow up, the price goes up! Items For Sale must be from your farm as this service is a benefit of membership. Email ad to info@efao.ca or call 519 822-8606. Advisory: With our limited time and resources, the EFAO is not able to verify the details or claim e.g. certified seed or registered stock, made in the Stock Exchange. Please check these details yourself before buying.

EFAO EVENTS

Harro Wehrmann Farm and On Farm Biodiesel Plant - Ripley

July 10th (Saturday) - 10 am to 3 pm. at 460 Sideroad 20 South, Huron Township, South West of Ripley.

The farm is a 750 acre mixed organic cash crop farm with a focus on processing oil seeds for vegetable oil and for biodiesel production. The morning will be a tour of the farm and after lunch we will tour the biodiesel plant. Bring a brown bag lunch. Phone 519-955-0386.

Steel in the Ignatius Centre Fields and Seeding Green Manure - Guelph

July 17th (Saturday) - 10 am - 4 pm at the Ignatius Centre, 5420 Hwy 6 N.

See what happens on one acre from field preparation to seeding! What is the difference between a tilling, cultivating, discing and scuffling?! In the morning, you will tour field crops at the Ignatius Farm by wagon tour and check out the various implements used to prepare those fields. During the afternoon, Farm Manager Lorne Jamieson, will demonstrate the use of these attachments, do some plowing, cultivating, seeding, tine weeding and discing on demonstration plots so that you can understand a full season of cultivation.

Cost: \$50 (EFAO members), \$70 (non members). To register: EFAO office, 1 877-822-8606 or info@efao.ca. This workshop is subject to cancellation so please register early. This event is co-sponsored by EFAO and FarmStart. All welcome.

FarmStart Skills Building Field Day Series

FarmStart, in partnership with EFAO and other organizations, is planning at least one farm tour a month from April to October, across Ontario. The format allows for a farm tour in the morning with an emphasis on how each enterprise contributes to farm business viability (10 am to noon), and then during the afternoon, the farmer demonstrates a particular skill used on their farm (2 hours after lunch). Networking: BYO bagged lunch; lunch time is for networking. Cost: \$20, or \$30 per family.

RSVP (required): admin@farmstart.ca or call Cherie Bauman (519) 836-7046 ext. 103. Please bring cash or cheque (made out to FarmStart) on the day of the tour.

DragonFly Farm Store and Direct Marketing Skills Building Field Day - Williamsford

July 26th (Saturday) - 10 am - 4 pm (see <http://www.dragonflyfarmstore.ca/>)

Still beginning farmers after 4 years, Cindy and Mike offer custom butchered beef, pork, chicken, turkey, along with other items such as maple syrup, honey, and soap on-line as well as at their on-farm store. In the morning, tour their grass based livestock production and learn how all their enterprises including their bees integrate to comprise their whole farm. In the afternoon, learn from their success through diversity and product packaging. One product can easily translate into many and then blossom with value adding or on-farm processing.

Bee-appropriate Care Workshop

August 14th (Saturday) at Wicklow Way Farm, Colborne This workshop will be lead by Brian Hamlin, a noted bee caretaker from Toronto who has worked with bees for over 35 years and all without chemicals and pesticides. Call the EFAO office for exact time, directions and cost.

Apple Orchard Farm Tour Skills Building Field Day, Part 2 - Guelph

August 21st (Saturday) - 1 pm - 4 pm at Ignatius Jesuit Centre, 5420 Hwy 6 North (Workshop)

Join us for an afternoon in the orchard at Ignatius Farm. During the spring tour, farm manager Lorne Jamieson introduced the practices employed in managing their organic orchard. You are invited for this second tour of the orchard at the beginning of harvest to learn about the farm's approaches to disease and pest management, harvesting, storage and more!

Garden Party Gardens and Berry Growing Skills Building Field Day - St. Agatha

August 28th or 29th - 10 am - 4 pm at 1528 Notre Dame Drive

Visit Theresa's Garden Party Gardens and understand how a public health approved kitchen can be set up on your farm. See various berry crops- several kinds of raspberries, gooseberries, some cranberries, elderberries, and blueberries. The afternoon will focus on strawberry propagation, as this is when strawberries are getting ready to set fruit for the following year.

Wicklow Way Farm Tour

August 29th (Sunday) at Wicklow Way Farm, Colborne Gregory and Elaina run a certified organic market garden specializing in heirloom tomatoes. They also have a CSA, bee hives and do monthly gardening workshops. Besides gardening topics this tour will likely give you some tips on how to add some value added products to your market stall such as smoked dried tomatoes and finishing salts as well. Call the EFAO office for exact time and directions

Other Events

Organic Meadow Summer Crop Symposium

July 14th at Rob Fleischauer's farm, Gadshill near Stratford. The day will feature corn plots comparing 3 different soil amendments, and oat plots comparing 3 different soil which organic consultant Ruth Knight will tissue test. Rob will also be showing off his new scuffler with rotary hoes that go down the row along with his spelt, buckwheat and soybean crops.

Rob is a long time member of and advisor for the Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario. All EFAO members are welcome to join the day. Please RSVP with Jenny Butcher at (519) 767-9694 or butcher@organicmeadow.com to get directions, exact starting time and ensure that you are counted for Lunch. Cost \$20.

Oxford Organic Growers Summer Tour - Burgessville

July 10th (Saturday) or Rain Date July 17th - 1pm to 3 pm at Bill Scheurman's farm, 345195 Quaker St. Composting demo at 3pm at Tom Boon's, 593780 Hwy 59. Call Tom Boon for more details (519) 424-3113.

Pastured Pigs and Poultry - Neudstadt

July 10th (Saturday) - 9:30am-5:00pm at Greenbeing Farm. This very popular workshop offered by Tarrah Young on her farm in Neudstadt will be offered twice this season, once in the summer and again in the fall. In case you are only interested in half of the course, 9:30-1:00 for poultry, 1:30-5:00 for pigs. This is part of the FarmStart Farm

Business Enterprise Series. Cost: \$100. To register: gayl@farmstart.ca and specify whole or half course (and which half!)

Central Ontario Draft Horse Workshop - Stirling

July 19th - 23rd

5 Teams 5 Teamsters, 40 hours hands-on driving! We will drive draft horses, 8 hours per day for 5 days. Wagons, farming implements and some logging. Breakfast and lunch on site. Share stories, laughs and good fun. A great vacation in the Quinte area. Some barn tours are set up for the group as well. Learn the art of driving draft horses, single teams, 3 & 4 horse hitches. One of a kind experience only offered in Stirling, Ontario. Go to <http://harderequipment.com/> for email registration.

Southern Ontario Draft Horse Basic Workshops - Sparta near St. Thomas

August 12 - 14 at Orchard Hill Farm

In this three day workshop you will learn basic skills such as feeding, grooming, hoof care, harnessing, hitching and driving one and two horses. You will get experience on various vehicles and field implements as well as an introduction to plowing with a riding plow. We will also do some logging in the woods. No previous horse experience is necessary. A \$50 deposit is required to hold your place in this workshop. The Level I workshop is limited to 6 - 7 participants.

For more information: Ken Laing, 519-775-2670 or kmlaing@orchardhillfarm.ca, www.orchardhillfarm.ca, Cost: \$500 plus GST, including meals. Accommodation available.

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418-838-6941

simon.villeneuve@ecocert.com

Manitoba and Points West

Tisdale, SK

306-873-2207

rusty.plamondon@ecocert.com

EFAO Office Notes by Karen Maitland

The market price lists on the website have been updated with the submissions I have received so far but I am quite willing to include more information if you have it. I will try to renew the page once or twice a season. The purpose of the site is to give newer farmers an idea of what others are currently getting for specific items in specific markets. This page is meant as a guide not a price setter. People do use this page quite frequently so the more information we can provide the better. Prices on items not currently listed are also welcome.

While we are on the topic of farmers markets, Andreas Boecker from the University of Guelph is conducting a direct marketing study with the goal of developing a support tool to assist farmers in their decision making when doing direct sales. The material coming from this study will be applicable to conventional and organic producers alike. Andreas and I have also talked about using some of the information collected to augment our market prices website page. A participant in the study would do four 30 to 60 minute surveys. The dates and choice of survey type (electronic, phone or paper) will be flexible. Benefits to participants include an assessment of their current marketing practices, insights from the study report and early access to the support tool. To participate, call Lina Urbisci (519) 824-4120 ext 58343 or Lisa Schoonderbeek at (519) 824-4120 ext 52538.

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Stock Exchange

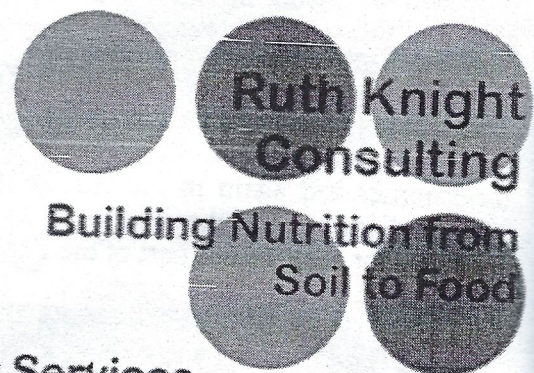
For rent: Farm, in whole or in part (near Guelph/Rockwood, Ont.): Hayfields already in hay (about 35 acres); pasture (about 33 acres, electric fence already in place); barn with 2 water bowls, suitable for cattle, sheep, horses. Contact Kathryn at 519-856-2806 or kaydean@rocnet.ca.

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Advisory Services

- Soil Fertility Plans for Organic and Biological Programs
- Transition Plans for Organic Certification
- Nutrient Management Plans
- Environmental Review Services

Ruth Knight

1786 Huron Bruce Rd
RR 2 Wingham ON N0G 2W0
Phone: 519-392-7036
E-mail: rknight@wightman.ca

Advancing Ecological Farming Practice new EFAO Workshops on the way

Seven new workshops are being developed to provide members (and the wider farming community) with an expanded range of topics to better meet members' expressed needs and interests. The workshops are part of new initiative to generate a full programme of ecological farming learning opportunities within a structured framework. The framework moves from the introductory level through foundation workshops, such as those on Soil Balance and Composting to specialized workshops for livestock, field crop, and market gardens at advanced level. Participants will be able to choose to follow a complete series or simply join individual workshops for their particular interest and/or level. In addition to the new workshops, several of the current ones are being updated. Funding for development of the new workshops is being actively sought and it is hoped that most of them will be offered by early 2011.

The workshop programme draws its strength from being part of EFAO's guiding tradition of farmer to farmer sharing of experience; this journal, the kitchen table meetings, the advisory service, the farm tours and the individual mentoring. This firm base combined with responsiveness to new knowledge, ideas and changing needs allows for a workshop programme that is dynamic, ongoing and relevant. To realize the potential, active member involvement will be essential. Suggestions for further workshops are welcome as are offers to assist in the development of individual workshops and to train as a facilitator.

In addition to the EFAO members orientated workshops, the development of two outreach presentations are in preparation. A one-hour session on farm energy, peak oil and climate change to conventional farmers; this as part of implementing EFAO's energy policy and increasing membership. The second public presentation in the planning stage is for Organic Consumers on, food agricultural issues and the why and the how of organic farming.

Current Workshops

Course * = To be updated	Level & Length	Description
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Composting	1 day Fdm	Composting biology & techniques for quality, application rates, includes green manures & special topics.
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Field Crop Rotation	1 day Sp In	Criteria & factors in planning organic field crop rotations. Development of individual plans.
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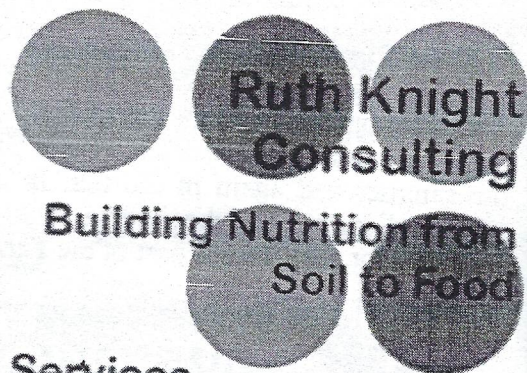
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Proposed New Workshops

Workshop	Level & Length	Description
Field Weed Management & Equipment	1 day Sp In	Organic field management of weeds, Species biology, Methods, Equipment.
Insects	1 day	Role of insects in organic agriculture and how to support beneficials while minimizing the impact of pest species
Pasture Management	1 day	The keys to making pasture a viable component of an organic livestock operation from species composition, grazing heights, and fencing options to rotation within the pasture and rotation of the pastures across the farm
Mixed Livestock	1 day	Organic husbandry of a diverse livestock population on a farm where infrastructure such as pastures and barns is shared across livestock species
Small Fruit	1 day	How to diversify an organic vegetable farm with small form fruit planting and understand the unique problems that these semi-permanent plants can create
Seeds	1 day	Correct seed saving and plant propagation techniques for maintenance of heritage and non GMO cultivars while lowering input costs at the same time.
Organic Consumer	Public presentation for consumers	Consumers want to know where their food is coming from. The workshop will discuss some of the issues facing agriculture and the why and the how of farming organically.
Energy on Ecological Farms	1 day EPOCC	Background information, energy, peak oil, climate change. Alternative energy technologies. Practices for achieving carbon neutral farming.
Energy on the Farm, Peak Oil and Climate Change.	1 Hour presentation	Peak oil, climate change, water interconnection. Cropping systems, Energy use & intensity. Food system energy costs. Alternative systems and energy balances.

For follow-up comments, suggestions and offers to get involved please contact the EFAO office.

**West Committee and Provincial AGM
coming up November 17, 2010
by Tony McQuail**

The Annual General Meeting of the Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario will be held in conjunction with the Western Committee Fall Forum on Wednesday, November 17 at Ignatius College just north of Guelph. Registration and visiting will start at 9:30 followed by a panel discussion from 10:00 to 11:30. The panel will be exploring ways that farmers can cooperate to support diversity in their operations, lower costs and address peak oil and climate change issues.

We are still looking for panelists so if you have experience in ways to share resources and work together as farmers please contact Tony McQuail, 519-528-2493 or mcqufarm@hurontel.on.ca <<mailto:mcqufarm@hurontel.on.ca>>.

Lunch will be from 12:00 – 1:30 to allow time for visiting. The AGM will run from 1:30 to 2:30 and will be followed by the farmers forum. This year we are looking at dividing the forum up by areas of interest such as organic cash crops, livestock, market garden etc. If you would like to suggest a specific topic area for the forum please contact Tony McQuail above.

The EFAO Energy Committee, which developed out of last year's Fall Meeting on Peak Oil, is working on ideas for a course and a 1 hour presentation on how farmers can respond to peak oil and climate change issues. While there are lots of challenges the switch to a more ecological agriculture offers some real solutions to them. We are working to develop a course that has good as well as bad news in it. To get involved with the work of the Energy Committee Contact Tony McQuail.

We hope by the time you are reading this you've been to a farm tour or two and that your hay is in and your crops are growing.

Have a great summer and see you in the fall.
EFAO West Committee.

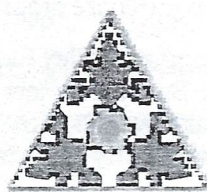
PS – your suggestions for winter kitchen table meetings would be welcome now as we begin thinking beyond November.

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**Organic and Fair Trade Certified
Logo: Farmer Co-op**

Farmer Direct Co-operative Ltd. (FDC), a farmer-owned business of 70 certified organic family farms in Saskatchewan, says it is the first business in Canada and the United States to receive domestic fair trade certification. FDC is now both certified organic through Pro-Cert Organic Systems (www.pro-cert.org) and certified fair trade through Quality Certification Services (www.qcsinfo.org) making FDC the first company eligible to carry the fairDeal seal on their members' products. Many farm workers in North America have little protection under labour laws. The fairDeal is a logo and seal indicating to consumers that the products have been produced using organic methods and farm work is subject to pay equity, living wages and other ethical standards. FDC supplies bulk organic grains in containers, truckloads, railcars and 25 lb. green bags for retail bulk bins.

Organic, Farmer-Owned Co-op First to Receive Domestic Fair Trade Certification. Press Release. Regina, Saskatchewan: June 07, 2010. www.farmerdirect.coop

**A Note of Thanks
by Michelle Jory**

Every two months, I imagine most of you (if you are like me) are very happy to see the latest issue of Ecological Farming in Ontario appear in your mailbox. Filled with many a useful and interesting article, upcoming events, and important news, our EFAO newsletter helps keep us connected with one another, and informed about what's happening in our broader farming community. Even my Mum snags it for a good read (and won't hand it over until she's finished), despite her very urban tendencies!

EFAO has been exceedingly fortunate to have Colin and Heide Isaacs, two longstanding members, editing the EFO newsletter for the last 7 years, and the Board, on behalf of all EFAO members, would like to take the chance here to thank them for their great work, enthusiasm and generosity in publishing it. They have been the hands (and minds) behind a number of improvements to our little publication giving us two more issues every year, bringing colour to the cover (to better show off members' lovely farms!), and computerizing the sorting of labels (no simple task!) to ensure Canada Post gets it out to all of us in a timely way. So again to Colin and Heide, thank you - your efforts are greatly appreciated, and we continue to look forward to checking the mail every other month.

EFAO Members' Corner

Memorial Notice

It is with much sadness that we learned of the passing of three EFAO members this spring, Alvin Filsinger, Dave McGuire and Wayne Dotzert. Dave was from Clarksburg where he raised sheep part time. Wayne was a dairy farmer from the Stratford area. Both families asked that memorial donations be made to the Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario for which we are very appreciative.

Alvin Filsinger was a founding member of EFAO. His friend Mike Larsson of Ottawa wrote a eulogy about him making a number of observations including:

- Alvin was born in October 1924. The family orchards were planted in the 1940s and 50s containing many heritage varieties. He supplied bagged apples to the Great Atlantic & Pacific (A&P) supermarkets shipping them by rail to all the states in the US until 1972.
- When Alvin was in the hospital he wasn't impressed with the meals.
- One of the highlights was the Lifetime Organic Hero Award by the Toronto Chapter of the Canadian Organic Growers given at the annual conference in 2008. (Editor: Alvin was recognized at EFAO's 25th anniversary celebration in 2004.)

Mike writes, "When I first met Alvin in 1993, I was one of his new applepickers and his new organic apprentice. He was nearly 70 years old, had already harvested over 50 apple harvests at the family orchards in Burlington or Ayton, had been farming organic for 40 years, and had been running a health food store for 30 years. I was in my physical prime and the only thing I could better him at was climbing trees." Mike interviewed him extensively over four years and hopes to write a book but says, "However the knowledge of apple farming that he took with him is irreplaceable. But Alvin always said that organics is about experimenting and research. He would always say that more research was needed for organic farming. His main concern was research about maintaining soil fertility and remineralization, and the nutritional content of the food produce. He always felt that the concern for cosmetically perfect organic fruit was wrong-headed. One of his famous sayings was "There's nothing wrong with a nice organic apple with a little insect mark on it ; my grandmother would have just cut the damaged part out with a knife ; those little bugs have the right to eat too...."

Flour PowerTM: Food and Fuel

Oilseed Works Inc (OSW) began in the 1990s when industrial hemp became legal to grow again in Canada. The company was active in working with Health Canada as the regulations changed. The first cold-pressed Hemp brand oil was produced in 1995 so 2010 is the 15th Anniversary of the brand. The company researched how to process high quality products from the hempseeds. Flour milling and oil extraction are done at low temperatures to preserve flavour and nutrition. Greg Herriott, general manager and co-founder of Hempola, said that when he first began using hemp for flour there was an excess of oil. Finding different options to deal with this oil led them to the creation of Flour Power products which include hemp oil, lip balm, and moisture cream. He also began using bio-fuel for tractors and for heating one of the buildings at Hempola Valley Farms. Biodiesel is the focus now. Cellulose in hemp has the potential for ethanol. The web site states, "For every pound of Flour PowerTM flour milled, we produce an average of half a litre of carbon neutral bio-diesel is made for our Flour Power farmers – food and fuel from the same harvest."

The Flour PowerTM brand applies to the system of growing, harvesting and processing to food and carbon-neutral bio-fuel. Food products include fine oils, blends, powders, salad dressings, pancake and brown mixes, flours, private label product development and custom processing of oils, powders and hulled/shelled seeds. OCPP certified oils are also available. Packaging ranges from 250 ml bottles, up to 1,000 litre totes and under contract, tanker loads. Now three speciality oilseed crops – hemp, flax and sunflowers are grown at Hempola Valley Farms and by other producers the web site says "many of which are members of the Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario." OSW is also experimenting with other oilseeds such as chia and grapeseed. Greg Herriott wrote to EFO in response to the article "When Fuel Hits \$10 per Litre," by Ken Laing in EFO Volume 31 Number 3 newsletter to say, "We are very interested to establish a farmer owned facility to further expand the influence of Flour Power and its inherent benefits across many pressing issues."

Flour Power received the City of Toronto's Food Policy Council's Local Food Hero award in 2009. An article in the March issue of Bio Energy Canada magazine on the food vs fuel debate highlights the company's effort to produce both food and fuel. Commercial bakeries buying the flour can also purchase biodiesel for their delivery trucks.

Hempola Valley Farms also has a farm store, participates in the Barrie Farmers Market and hosts the EFAO Farmers Market at the farm. The Hempola web site lists the retailers which carry Hempola products including Big Carrot and

Grassroots in Toronto and even a Rona Building Centre in Parry Sound. Products are also available directly from their online shop. Products includes Hempseeds, Edible Oils, Salad Dressings, Flours & Mixes, Protein Powders, Wood Finish and Personal Care.

Hemp, Sunflower, and Flax to Produce Food and Fuel. Web Site News. March 8, 2010. Bio Energy Canada Magazine

http://www.oilseedworks.com/index.cfm?pagePath=Flour_Power/News/Bio_Energy_Magazine&id=21304

Oil Seed Works Inc.

Oilseed Works / Hempola / Flour Power

2133 Forbes Road, R.R.#1 Barrie, Ontario, Canada, L4M 4Y8

Tel: 705-730-0405 Toll free: 1-800-240-9215 Fax:

705-730-0556 Email: info@oilseedworks.com

<http://www.oilseedworks.com>

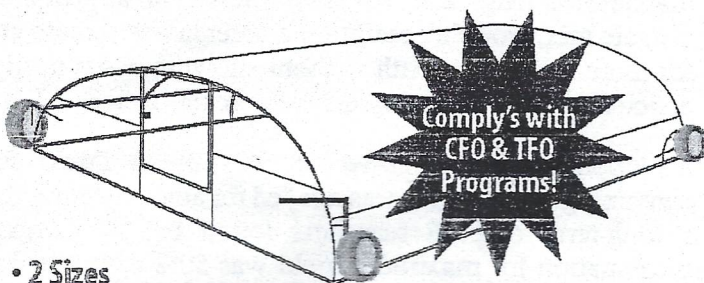
Directions by road from Toronto or Barrie: Take Hwy 400 or Hwy 93 Northbound to Forbes Road.

From Hwy 400 Northbound, take exit 111 at Forbes Road and turn left (east). Travel about half a kilometer along Forbes Road. HEMPOLA is the first farm on the right, before Dalston.

Farm Store Hours: Summer Sat. to Thurs. – 9am to 5pm
Fri. – noon until dusk. Barrie Farmers Market Sat. – 8am to noon.

EFAO Farmers Market at Hempola Valley Farms Fridays from mid-June until Thanksgiving weekend – 3:30pm until dusk.

Need a Pastured Poultry System that Works?



- 2 Sizes
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- Easy Anchoring System
- Enclosed With Tarp & Mesh
- 4' Galvanized Feeders, Hold 3 gal. each
- Size Neutral - Works For Small Flocks & Quota Holders

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Wheelbarrow Style Mineral Feeders

Organics Infrastructure

The George Morris Centre GMC Spring 2010 Newsletter contains an article about constraints on organic agriculture which would be well-known to members of EFAO. Among the issues mentioned are:

- while large retail supermarkets are introducing organic food into conventional stores, the volume and uniformity demand, centralized warehousing shuts out many small-scale organic producers in Canada. The result is that many organic products in the Canadian grocery stores are imported.
- Canadian organic farmers often supply niche markets: farmers markets, community supported agriculture, and restaurants.
- The lack of infrastructure means organic producers are limited. For example, the disappearance of small abattoirs means organic farmers have no access to meat processing for their organic livestock. Large facilities will rarely make the effort to ensure that organic meats are processed to organic standards. Co-processing in plants with excess capacity along with training of processors would increase Canada's processing productivity.
- Governments provide little extension support. Advice is provided by input suppliers who have little interest in farmers who buy few chemicals, pesticides or livestock drugs.
- Funding in agricultural research is commodity based and organics figures only in small amounts in any particular commodity.
- Organic agriculture is management-intensive and requires specific marketing, extension and research. Organic farms are holistic with less specialization and uniformity than commodity based farms.

For many members of EFAO the article rather states the obvious but for other policymakers in the agriculture area, the article itself may raise awareness. The George Morris Centre, based in Guelph, labels itself as "Canada's independent agri-products think tank" and is best known for its work with large corporations and government, unlikely allies for organic farmers.

Claudia, Schmid, Research Associate and Al Mussell, Senior Research Associate. Organics: No Growth without Appropriate Infrastructure. George Morris Centre. GMC Newsletter Spring 2010. (available by subscription only)

Transition Towns: Building Resilience for Climate Change

A number of groups are exploring the idea of Transition Towns which began in the UK in 2006. Groups are also located in Ontario, including Guelph, London, Barrie and Toronto in the west, and Ottawa and Peterborough in the east. A study group is now discussing the TT model for the city of Cornwall, Ontario. The groups address the question, "How can our community respond to the challenges, and opportunities, of peak oil and climate change?" and form links with existing groups, local government and other Transition initiatives. New groups are formed in key areas such as food, energy, transport, health, waste, economics, housing, education etc. Practical, highly visible projects are launched to build local understanding of resilience and carbon issues. While the goals remain the same, projects will differ within each community.

Once practical projects are underway, an "Energy Descent Action Plan" is created. This plan is designed to be implemented over 15 to 20 years and to coordinate a range of projects across all critical areas of life within the community. This 'road map' strives both to rebuild the resilience lost as a result of cheap oil, and to reduce carbon emissions drastically. As of 2009, many in the TT movement count global financial instability and the global food crisis as a third issue beside peak oil and climate change. The Transition concept is simple: in the face of coming disruptions, a community that has created its own greatest possible number of practical, local solutions will have a more resilient future.

To find your nearest Transition Town: www.transitiontowns.org. To reach our Cornwall area Transition study group contact: Susan Towndrow <stowndrow@cogeco.ca> or check the discussion at <http://transitionontario.ning.com/>

Note: A member of the group in Cornwall contacted EFAO President Chris Litster who replied, "EFAO is interested in this kind of initiative, however our board members are very much stretched these days with their commitments. What we would suggest is that we put a brief article in our newsletter. That way EFAO members could respond directly."

Liquid fertilizer needed to sustain organic tomato production

by Steve Harder for Organic Agriculture Centre of Canada

Tomatoes are the top greenhouse vegetable crop in Canada, with a value of nearly \$372 million in 2008. The size of the market makes tomatoes an attractive choice for organic producers. Yet there are differences between organic and conventional greenhouse tomato production - particularly the use of fertilizers - which commercial producers need to know.

This is where the work of researchers in Canada and China can help. David L. Ehret of the Pacific Agri-Food Research Centre in Agassiz, BC, is the lead author of the paper "Organic fertilizers for greenhouse tomatoes: productivity and substrate microbiology". One of the main purposes of the research was to find out if organic tomatoes could be grown using only "dry" ingredients such as compost and gypsum. If so, then production would be simplified.

But the researchers discovered the process for growing organic tomatoes is more like making a cake. "You have to have your dry ingredients and your wet ingredients to make it work," says Ehret.

The "wet" ingredients in this case are organic liquid fertilizers used to provide a nutritional supplement. Disadvantages of organic liquid feed can include a higher cost than conventional fertilizers and potential complications such as the plugging of drippers.

Yet with a typical North American greenhouse tomato crop in production for 10 months, producers need to know how long compost alone can sustain consistent growth. Compost derived from either yard waste or swine manure, along with supplemental organic calcium (Ca), potassium (K), magnesium (Mg) and sulphate (SO₄), in a peat-based organic mix, wouldn't maintain a greenhouse tomato crop for more than one month without showing tissue nutrient deficiencies and reduced yield, researchers found.

A supplemental fish-based or plant-based liquid feed containing nitrogen (N) was needed for adequate growth of a long-term crop. Researchers found the best organic combination for maximum yield was 50% compost from either yard waste or mushroom substrate, combined with a low concentration of liquid feed derived from plant sources. When this was done, yields were as high as those obtained from a conventional hydroponic system.

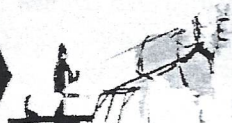
The value of this research to commercial organic tomato producers is that they now know they will need liquid organic supplements. Ehret doesn't think organic producers will be deterred by these findings.

For more information: 902-893-7256 or oacc@nsac.ca.

The Draft Horse Connection

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"The organic market has been growing by 15-20% per year (or more) over the past 15 years with the exception of 2009 when data now suggests the sector only grew by 5% due to the economic recession. I fully expect this growth to recover and markets to grow by 10-15% per year in the future."

Hugh Martin, Organic Crops Production Program Lead, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
 See story page 3 of this issue.



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