

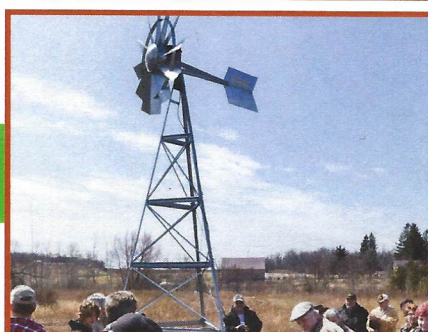
Ecological Farming in Ontario

www.efao.ca

July - August 2015 • Volume 36 Number 4



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Wind Watering
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Ecological Farmers
OF ONTARIO

Interning at EFAO: Part 2

New Membership Rates

Let Them Eat Grass

Organic Price Tracker

**OBA Advisory:
Small Hive Beetle**

**FOUR Pages of
Events Listings!**

Stock Exchange

When We Don't Talk

Addressing mental health in farmers

Did you know that American farmers are four times more likely to commit suicide than the general population?

After reading that statistic noted by author Jonathan Safran Foer, I've been asking myself, "Have I ever had a discussion about mental health with my fellow farmers?" and "Have any of the farm organizations that I am a part of brought issues of mental health in farming communities to the fore-front?"

And the answer I have is: Rarely. Sure, I might have missed some important conversations, but the mental health of farmers is generally not being talked about.

And that's not helping our cause.

Farmers are proud people, and sometimes isolated people. I remember descriptions of "burn-out" during my second internship on an organic farm. Burn-out was described as what happens to a person after working hard for the whole farming season and completely exhausting themselves in every way. That farmer, I remember well, encouraged us to take time for ourselves, read books, stretch, take Sundays off, etc. She would even reprimand us (sort-of) if we weren't doing so. Basically she was encouraging all the interns to partake in self-care.

ECOLOGICAL FARMING IN ONTARIO DISPLAY ADVERTISING

Display advertising space is available in six sizes, in many cases with the option of either horizontal or vertical orientation. We offer a 20% discounted rate to member advertisers who commit to, and prepay for, a year of advertising (six issues).

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STOCK EXCHANGE - CLASSIFIEDS

The Stock Exchange helps connect farmers and community members to sell and source livestock, seed & feed, land, equipment, and opportunities/services. Stock Exchange ads run in each issue of the newsletter and are posted on the EFAO website. Stock exchange postings cost \$10 for EFAO members, \$20 for non-members and \$15 for more than one issue. Deadlines are the same as for other newsletter content. Visit <https://efao.ca/stock-exchange/> or email editor@efao.ca to place an ad.

Disclaimer: EFAO is not able to verify details or claims made in Stock Exchange postings (e.g. regarding certified seed or registered stock). We encourage you to check these details yourself before buying!

ABOUT THE ECOLOGICAL FARMERS OF ONTARIO

Established in 1979, the EFAO was formed by a small group of farmers around their shared commitment to sound farming practices like cover cropping, crop rotation, planting green manures, composting, soil conservation, timely and appropriate tillage, good livestock management, promoting biodiversity, and avoiding the use of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides. Our work remains rooted in the practical application of these same sustainable farming methods, which in turn remain at the centre of ecological or organic farming, and are the foundation of certified organic production standards today.

For more than 35 years, EFAO has provided essential mentorship and training for both new and established farmers. By promoting farmer-to-farmer knowledge sharing, learning opportunities, and creating supportive community around good food and farming, we strive to maintain and enhance the health of the soil, crops, livestock, the diversity of the environment, and our rural and urban communities.

EFAO is a registered charity with the Canada Revenue Agency. Tax receipts will be issued for donations of \$25 or more. Charitable registration # 88074-6532-RR001

For new memberships and renewals, to receive our events bulletins and e-news, to register for events, post a stock exchange or display ad, use the advisory service, or just get in touch with us about anything, visit www.efao.ca, or contact:

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Tell us what you're doing, farming or otherwise. Write a letter to the Editor. Help make Ecological Farming in Ontario a farmer's journal! Submit articles, photos, opinions and news to editor@efao.ca.

Moving? Don't risk missing a single issue of Ecological Farming in Ontario – log in to your online profile at <https://efao.ca/your-profile/> and update your address. Or contact us at info@efao.ca or 519-822-8606.



Ecological Farming in Ontario

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Bethany Klapwyk (cover story) and her partner Seb Ramirez are the two upstart organic farmers behind Zócalo Organics, a small farm near Guelph. When not in the field Bethany writes stories, articles, songs, and poetry with a focus on ecology, mental health, farm-related social justice issues, and more.

Hugh Martin (pgs. 5 and 10) is an organic consultant, inspector, and chair of CGSB Technical Committee. He is also EFAO's current Treasurer.

Dianne Ellis (pg. 11) is an artist and educator who specializes in creativity and holistic living. Dianne can be reached at www.theheartmindcoach.com or theheartmindcoach@gmail.com

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Editor's Message

by Fiona Campbell

When I first moved to my farm in July 2008 it was a dream come true. For years I'd thought about (and then planned) a move to a piece of land and trees where I could grow my own food, raise my children, contribute to my community. Make a difference.

At first it was everything I'd hoped for. Every morning I'd awake to a sense of wonder and disbelief that I actually got to live here. I'd taken the leap from city to country and landed on my feet.

Every day offered a new opportunity for growth and learning -- whether it was in the soil, the woodlot or the barn. I read books, went to workshops, and asked questions -- my

quest for knowledge and experience was insatiable.

It took about six months for the realities of farm life to set in: the relentless work and spiralling costs, the never-ending to-do list, livestock losses and voracious pests, weather events and, of course, a steep learning curve.

I'll be celebrating my seventh year on the farm this month. And I still wake up every morning with a sense of wonder that I get to live here. But I also appreciate that in the past few years I stopped taking care of myself. I'd succumbed to exhaustion, burn out and even depression.

Recognizing this was the first step to getting well again. Then I started talking. Opening up and realizing I

wasn't alone gave me the strength and confidence to make different decisions -- scale back, ask for help and stop being so hard on myself.

So I'd like to acknowledge and thank Bethany Klapwyk who had the courage to write and share our cover story this month, "When We Don't Talk" about her own struggles with mental health.

Perhaps you'll see yourself in her words, or perhaps you'll see someone you know or love. Either way, it's time for us all to start talking.

cheers,



editor@efao.ca

Save the Date!

**This year's Ecological Farmers of Ontario Conference
December 3-5, 2015 in London, Ontario**

**300 participants and over 30 workshops
on market gardening, livestock, soil, seed saving, field crops and more.**

**Help us shape this conference!
What do you want to learn about? Who do you want to hear from?
Here's how you can participate:**

ADVISORY COMMITTEE: We're looking for members to set the conference program. Time requirements include some emailing and 1 phone call in late July.

PROGRAM IDEAS: Send along your ideas for workshop topics and speakers whether you join the committee or not, through our online Suggestion Box at conference.efao.ca/suggestion-box/.

ARTWORK: We're requesting proposals for artwork to illustrate this year's conference!

To get in touch contact Ali English (ali@efao.ca or 519-822-8606 x 104)

Keep an eye on the newsletter and website as our conference unfolds.

A practical conference for ecological farmers. by ecological farmers!

Board Perspective



by Hugh Martin

Who are the farm organizations that represent your interests as an ecological farmer?

EFAO is the obvious choice but how is our organization different from other organizations in Ontario? The purpose of farm organizations is to represent the interests of farmers and others who produce food. They represent their members when discussing agricultural policy with governments and other organizations. Some farm groups work to educate and have training sessions to help farmers reach their production goals of profit, safe food production and environmental protection.

EFAO has close relationships with many of the other organic/ecological/sustainable organizations especially FarmStart, Organic Council of Ontario, Sustain Ontario, Canadian Organic Growers, and National Farmers Union, among others. This helps us to coordinate activities and to share some administration costs to be as efficient as possible.

A primary role for EFAO is farmer training; often this is farmers training farmers. In the summer we organize farm tours where members and others can visit farms to learn tips on how to farm better. We can always learn new ideas. Often one new idea per event can pay for the time and cost of the tour. EFAO has a strong tradition for these tours over the past 35 years. We have a busy schedule this summer. (Turn to pages 14 – 17 for the details!)

help people share ideas and learn new things. This past year we also had a very successful EFAO conference. There are plans to repeat that conference this December – watch for details.

EFAO is a charitable organization, which is an encouragement to allow interested parties to make donations to help sustain the organization. The main issue is that charitable organizations are not able to lobby government. Non-charitable organizations, such as Organic Council of Ontario, often take the lead in our sector when working with government on policy issues.

Raising the profile of organic and ecological production with consumers is another role for some organizations but for the most part some other organizations such as Organic Council, Canadian Organic Growers, and the Canadian Organic Trade Association have many strengths in that area.

You are also represented in Ontario by one of the three general farm organizations (OFA, CFFO or NFU), but their priorities are often much broader than those of EFAO members. These organizations also tend to be able to lobby government on various issues.

Most farmers pay mandatory check-off fees to the various commodity organizations, but organic and ecological farmers often feel that their interests are not well understood or represented by those groups.

- We need organizations like EFAO to represent your interests.
- EFAO staff and board members need to know YOUR priorities.
- We need you to participate in events organized by EFAO.
- Elections for board of directors will be next fall, and you can join a regional or topical committee at any time. Consider getting involved. Due to natural turnover on the board last winter there is renewed interest with an excellent board for EFAO.
- Most of all renew your membership and encourage others to get involved.

EFAO has been your organization for 35 years. Let's keep it strong.

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Interning at EFAO: Part Two



My name is Cannelle (yes, yes it means cinnamon in French!) and I've been interning at EFAO for three months. In Toulouse, in the South of France, I study agronomy and I will specialize next year in ecological farming. In fact, I'm in a gap year, so during this one year I stopped my studies to focus on internships. Thus, after two internships in France

I came here to finish my year.

During my internship I helped Cherie and Ali organize events by contacting the farmers hosting the tours and the participants. (Some of you have probably received some of my emails.)

I also wrote the articles dealing with the story of EFAO that you can find on the blog or on Facebook.

Eventually, I did a variety of work including some design to improve the website, the flyer and some other documents. But you won't see this work before fall! (Shh... it's a surprise!)

Oh, I forgot to tell you that I'm also a kind of farmer! In France, I have two hens (who have a very high egg production, probably around 310 eggs/year/hen) and a three square meter "market garden," which hard-

ly produced the amount of potatoes I put into the ground last year.

My stay in Guelph ends the 9th of July, and I really enjoyed working with the EFAO team. The staff and the farmers are very motivated and it gave me a good example to relate in France!

I found it very funny that since I'm in Canada, farmers tell me that in Europe we are very good at ecological farming, because European farmers tell me the same about Canada. I think there are very good ideas on both sides of the Atlantic, and according what I saw here during some of the tours I attended, you are quite on the ball!

All of you have wonderful ideas. I wish you all the success you deserve and good luck for the season. ✎

Pest Management Exam:

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New Membership Rates and Benefits

Below, please find the membership rates and benefits, as of September 1, 2015

Newsletter Subscription Only: \$50/year

- ✦ Subscription to bi-monthly Ecological Farming in Ontario print Newsletter
- ✦ Notice about upcoming ecological farming events through the E-News bulletin

Individual/Farm Membership: \$75/year or \$130/2 years

- ✦ Farmer-to-farmer knowledge sharing & support
- ✦ Discounted rates on EFAO farm tours and workshops
- ✦ \$75 discount on annual EFAO Conference
- ✦ Access to our free Phone/Email Advisory Service
- ✦ Access to our subsidized On-Farm Advisory Service
- ✦ Subscription to bi-monthly Ecological Farming in Ontario print Newsletter
- ✦ Notice about upcoming ecological farming events through the E-News bulletin
- ✦ Listing in our online Producer Directory
- ✦ Free online and E-news listings in our Stock Exchange – NEW!
- ✦ Discounted listings in our print Stock Exchange
- ✦ Access to small print advertising in print newsletter
- ✦ Member discounts and services apply to all farm members, including employees and interns
- ✦ Access to digital “Member of EFAO” logo – NEW!
- ✦ Voting rights

Business Membership: \$250/year

- ✦ Full membership as listed above
- ✦ 30% discount on large format display advertising in our print newsletter (6 issues/year and over 400 subscribers)
- ✦ 30% discount on advertising in our annual conference program (over 300 participants) – NEW!
- ✦ Additional copies of our newsletter at cost
- ✦ Business profile in a welcome email to mailing list (1000 subscribers) – NEW!
- ✦ Logo included on scrolling business member feature, visible on each website page – NEW!
- ✦ Business name, description and link on Business Members web page – NEW!
- ✦ \$150 discount on trade show booth at annual conference – NEW!

Sustaining Membership: \$250/year

Full one year Individual/Farm Membership (as listed above) plus acknowledgement in our newsletter. By purchasing a sustaining membership you will provide EFAO with vital resources to build capacity, develop programming and continue offering services to our members across the province.

Sustaining Membership Honour Roll

We would like to take the opportunity today to thank: Owen Goltz, Nick Greenacre, Chris Krueger, Ken & Martha Leung, Tom Mowbray, Nutri Spring Farms, Dan & Janet

When We Don't Talk

Talking openly about mental health in farmers is the first step to getting help

by Bethany Klapwyk

continued from pg. 1

These are the same things I tell our interns now when they start working with us, but I'm starting to believe that we're going to have to do a lot more in our farmer-training protocols if we want to have a new generation of farmers surviving the stresses of farming today. Not only are we going to need to be prepared to deal with the stresses relating to climate change and farm economics, we also won't make it through the inevitable "hard times" without talking about these struggles.

... I'm starting to believe that we're going to have to do a lot more in our farmer-training protocols if we want to have a new generation of farmers surviving the stresses of farming today.

Learning to take care of one's self is challenging, no matter the scenario. I remember the feeling of shame I experienced when, come fall of that internship, I was on my way to "burn out". I wasn't supposed to "burn-out"!

The season had exhausted me,

things had been stressful in whole new ways, and I had felt isolated.

Lucky for me, I made it to the end of the internship feigning more energy than I actually had and proceeded to catch up on much-needed self-care in the winter. I vowed that the coming year I would be even more prepared for the stress of the season.

However the next two seasons proved even more challenging, especially in the fall of each year as the days began to shorten. This past fall, shortly after getting married on the farm of my dreams that my amazing now-husband and I moved to a few months earlier, I was burnt out. This burn out and physical exhaustion was accompanied with the second most serious bout of depression I have ever experienced, and I was ready to throw in the towel on my so-called "amazing new life". Howling to the wind like a lone wolf I admitted my defeat; I would have to leave the farm and learn to improve my mental health in a career less demanding.

Farming around the world is characterized by high rates of stress. Poor subsistence farmers have always felt the stress of trying to feed their families, especially through dry seasons, floods, or winters. With climate change, and increasing competition from multi-national corporations every situation for the small-farmer around the globe is becoming increasingly difficult.

The *National Post* recently published an article trying to revoke the link between rising farmer suicides in India and the introduction of GM (genetically modified) cotton in 2002. They say it is unfair to "blame the giant company for contributing to over 290,000 suicides by Indian farmers over the last 20 years."

To me, the point of the Indian farmer suicide epidemic is simple--small farmers competing with bio-tech companies adds another stressor to the already complex and stressful situation of farming in monsoon country. What many say happened is that once GM seeds were introduced many Indian farmers would only receive loans to buy seed if it was GM seed. This was because it was believed that the GM seeds would give the greatest yields. But then countless farmers found the GM crops failed, and their debts increased.

"The problem with GMO seeds in India is that they are often not bred for that area, for rain-fed agriculture, so they fail more frequently," says Dr. Vandana Shiva, an advocate for Indian farmers.

Suicides would take place in India without GM seeds, but it's obvious that they exacerbate the problems and this issue helps shed light on a striking reality-- family farmers are being pushed to their edge and beyond every day around the world.

In Canada we are going to need to address the increased epidemic of mental health issues that plague young people if we want to have young farmers. According to the Canadian Mental Health Association by age 25 approximately 20% of Canadians will be diagnosed with a mental health illness. I turned 25 last year and in my 24th year was (secret revealed) diagnosed with Anxiety and Depression. That was when I asked myself the question, "Can someone living with a mental health illness, diagnosed or not, really make it on the farm?"

During my first year of University my physical health and mental health shifted drastically -- my digestion was failing, I had severe infections, and I ended up for sustained periods of time in the hospital. Unable to catch up with my studies I dropped out of university, and decided to do something "adventurous, but not too crazy". I landed on an organic farm in Florida with my best friend where we volunteered for three months.

My digestive health continued to struggle, but working outside every day, being in the company of kind people, and eating organic food had me feeling better than

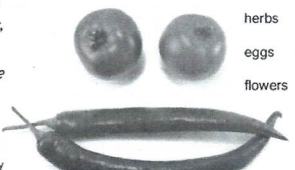
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continued from pg. 8

in the meditative and physical work, and in the community of the farm. It was that goodness that kept drawing me to the farm year after year and that eventually led me to become a farmer.

So is the farm good for mental health?

Fast-forward to this fall: lucky for me I was able to pause, both literally and figuratively. I was able to spend time recollecting myself. I found a way to remember my commitments to the land, to myself, and to my community. For me it really is those commitments that have allowed me to take responsibility for my place in struggles and triumphs.

And like any proud farmer I was ashamed to talk about what I was going through because I knew my farm-life looked dainty and bucolic from the outside. (And because my personal life is so intricately connected with my business.) In many ways I needed to confront the realities of farm-ownership, incredible debt, and do some emotional maturing. (Don't we all?)

I believe most aspects of farming are very good for mental health. The fresh air, the farm-work, and the support of community (which corporate farming has tried to rob us of). As for my struggles this fall and early winter, I listened to my mother-in-law and did "100% of what was possible" every day, even if some days that meant doing very little.

A 2005 survey of over 1,100 farmers across Canada (conducted by www.ruralsupport.ca) revealed a few interesting things about the mental health and stress levels of Canadian farmers:

- Almost two-thirds of Canadian farmers are feeling stressed on their farms. One in five farmers describe themselves as being "very stressed" while almost half describe themselves as being "somewhat stressed"
- The biggest stressors are commodity prices, BSE (not as relevant now), and general farm financial stress
- The notion of pride and farmers' independence was found to be the most important mentioned reason farmers did not seek more help in deal-

important to farmers when seeking help for stress and mental health issues

- Awareness of the Farm Stress Line is generally good. Roughly two-thirds of Canadian farmers are aware of the Farm Stress Line (a confidential telephone counselling, support and information service for farmers and rural people)
- 9 out of 10 farmers feel that if they were to seek professional help for their stress that they would prefer for that professional to be knowledgeable about agriculture
- 35% of farmers reported that if they made the same amount of money as they had that year in the following years they would go out of business

In my world being a farmer doesn't mean being a super-hero, being incredibly physically strong, ignoring harsh realities, or not grieving hardships. It means facing incredible challenges and deciding to face them again and ASKING FOR HELP in the process.

And it means communing with the farm itself, looking to the land for some

of the more complicated questions that arise in the psyche. Indeed for some people the best thing to do is to leave the farm, but for many farmers around the world that is not an option (or desire).

Like so many people I want to be healthy, but for me that's not my ultimate aspiration. I aspire to be a healthy farmer, and I want to help others who have struggled with mental and physical ailments to be farmers, too! ✍

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Ruth Knight

Let Them Eat Grass

The Organic Standard as it relates to livestock pastures and outdoor access

by Hugh Martin

During the past two years the Canadian General Standards Board (CGSB) Technical Committee (TC) on Organic Agriculture has been working to review and revise the Canadian Organic Standards and I hope the revised organic standards will be published this fall. The most recent version is currently being balloted until July 19th, 2015 and TC expects it will be passed.

A copy of the proposed standards is available online at <http://www.organicfederation.ca/>. There may still be some slight changes.

One of the issues that has had multiple discussions during our review is the commitment of organic to livestock pastures and outdoor access and how to make this requirement stronger.

One of the issues that has had multiple discussions during our review is the commitment of organic to livestock pastures and outdoor access and how to make this requirement stronger.

Pasture is seen as a behaviour requirement for livestock especially for ruminants as part of their feed ration. Pastures are part of the certified land of the farm and must meet requirements of at least 36 months transition and no prohibited substances being used in the pasture production system.

This also includes pastures used for swine and poultry which in some cases are largely in the farm yard areas. Appropriate buffer zones (8 metres) must be maintained to keep organic livestock away from non-organic crops.

Herbivores shall have access to pasture during the grazing season and access to the open air at other times whenever weather conditions permit.

Calculated on the basis of dry matter intake, the consumption of grazed forage by ruminants that have reached sexual maturity shall represent a minimum of 30% of the total forage intake. Consumption of grazed forage shall rise above 30% during high forage growth periods.

A minimum of 0.13 ha (0.33 ac)/animal unit shall be devoted to grazing (animal units for each species are defined in the standards, for example one animal unit = one cow or one bull, or four ewes and their lambs).

Livestock (including poultry) are expected to have access to outdoors whenever weather permits, unless it

would compromise the soil, water or plant health of the pasture area (due to wet soils for example), or it would jeopardize the health and safety of the animals due to stage of production.

Access to outdoors has been a controversial topic over the years. Both Canada and USA have improved their standards to require that livestock must go out to pasture rather than just having a door where they can watch it from.

In our new poultry standards for example there have been some changes that poultry barns must have an adequate number of popholes evenly distributed along the length of the barn with access to the pasture.

Pophole sizes and number are specified for layers, broilers and turkeys. Popholes shall be within 15 metres of various locations in the barn. Barn-raised meat chickens must have outdoor access after they are 25 days of age and turkeys by 8 weeks of age.

Previous standards have also included that outdoor runs are of adequate size and are vegetated. This would include rotating areas and reseeding them as appropriate to allow them to regrow. ♣

Hugh Martin is an Organic consultant, inspector, and chair of CGSB Technical Committee.

News about the Organic Price Tracker

From the Canadian Organic Growers: The Organic Price Tracker (<http://www.organicpricetracker.ca/>) is an online tool serving as an easy-to-access resource where farmers can find regional price information, helping new farmers establish their prices while helping experienced farmers better understand the market for local organic products.

We are currently expanding the tool to include price information from the farming community in Ontario, while continuing to keep the Maritimes up to date, and are hoping to expand this project throughout Canada in a near future. If you're an organic farmer and would like to help us build this resource,

Wind Watering and Moveable Greenhouses

A visit to Drumlin Farm gives this newbie farmer some tips for her own greenhouse

by Dianne Ellis

If you've always wondered whether you could learn how to become an organic farmer, then wonder no more. Gerry and Sue Stephenson, owners of Drumlin Farm -- a certified sustainable organic farm and CSA near Aberfoyle, Ont. that now offers hands-on farm life courses -- remember what it's like to have the desire to farm but no idea of how to start. Little do they know that the Stephensons have begun to pave the way for the rest of us to fulfill some, if not all, of our own farming dreams.

Case in Point

My husband Sean and I just got our own greenhouse with only some notion of how to use a windmill to irrigate our raised vegetable beds. So at Drumlin Farm, along with 23 other men and women on a cool spring day, we donned our mud boots and followed the marshy trail towards the greenhouse demonstration site.

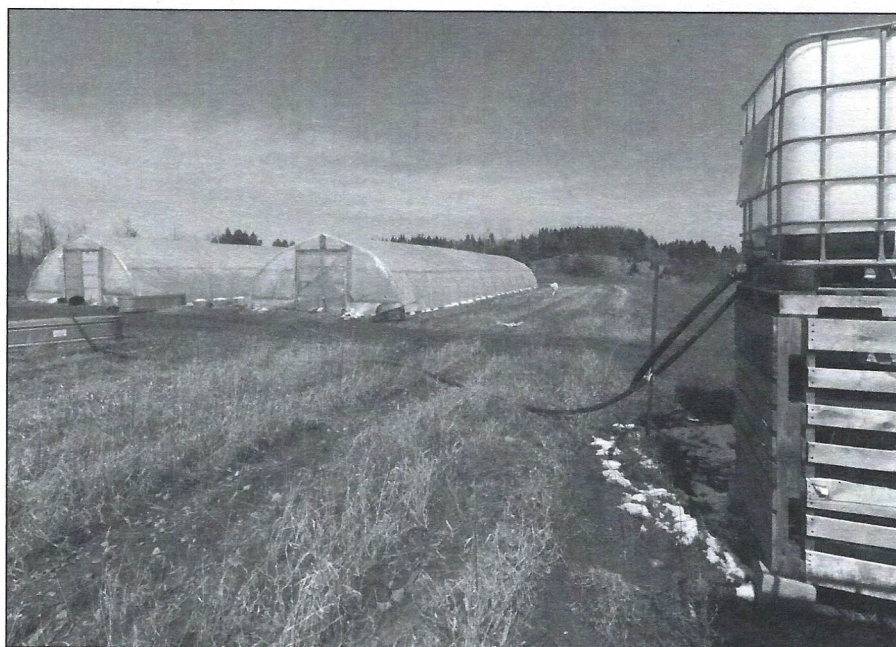
Gerry believes that learning should always be an experiment, so since he's "finally figured out" watering, he's now able to teach us! With a 16ft. tall Koenders windmill in place, soon they hope to be able to "attach electricity [to access] blowers, lights and perhaps heat, this year." Gerry adds, "When Drumlin Farm decided to add growing greenhouses to our overall plan, we were determined to make them off-grid."

You'd think learning the technical details of setting up an off-grid wind watering moveable greenhouse would be the first step. But Gerry thinks that comes later, because first it's about research and self-reflection.

To start, consider these five things before you set up an off-grid wind watering moveable greenhouse:

1) Ask yourself is it worth spending the money? Be efficient because it's all about fixed cost.

2) Account for regular crop rotation



A tank feeds water to the moveable greenhouses

3) If farming a small area use a well and try to avoid using city water at all cost. But if you don't have any choice but to use city water, make sure you get rid of the chlorine first.

4) Use well water, not pond water, for inside your greenhouse because it doesn't meet the organic code.

5) Consider a solar powered pump that works in wells. A solar powered pump costs the same to run as it would a windmill, depending on your wind access area.

There are two companies worth mentioning that specialize in this area: www.greenenergy.ca and Northern Wind & Arizona Sun.

Now, why a moveable greenhouse, you might ask?

A moveable greenhouse isn't for everyone. In fact, we learned that this method wouldn't work for our present set up, but could work for us next year. But if your aim is to have fresh vegetables year-round, then use a moveable greenhouse during winter production of your vegetables which then easily segues into what vegetables you grow during the summer. A good source of information is Gerry's mentor, well-known Maine author Eliot Coleman who wrote *The New Organic Grower*, a book that teaches how to experiment and prepare for winterized organic farming, among other things. (Additional books for your research library should also include Coleman's *Year-Round Production Using Deep Organic Techniques* and *Unheated Greenhouses* and *Organic Vegetables from Your Home Garden All Year Long*. Read all about them here: <http://www.fourseasonfarm.com/books/>)

Like the Stephensons, we also found that not all research was applicable to our needs as newbie farmers. They often found they had to double check their research and in some cases, had to use a cross application of traditional farming methods with organically certified techniques. For instance, who knew that bulk buying hydrogen peroxide, insecticidal soap or vinegar, requires a government issued Pesticide Application Certificate? But as avid learners, Gerry and Sue maintain

Regional Report

Planning, Rogueing and Selecting for Seed Crops in Market Gardens

April 15, 2015

By Henrike Thies

The fact that 75% of the world's seeds are already lost and that just 10% are available today shows people the importance of saving seeds. The EFAO, in partnership with The Bauta Family Initiative on Canadian Seed Security, Seeds of Diversity and USC Canada, aims to develop seed variety and make seeds available to a broader community.

The workshop was attended by a very mixed audience, which made me, a beginner in seed saving, feel very welcome. After Aabir Dey introduced the topic, Kim Delaney from Hawthorn Farm presented.

Kim, with her considerable experience, was a great teacher to us and explained everything as simply as possible. She began with a step-by-step explanation of how the seed production on her farm works.

I learned that there are four different categories of seed, depending on preference to climate, as well as that in southern Ontario we are located in the 5th climate zone. This is why, when deciding to enter into seed saving, it is a good idea to start with those that are easiest to grow in your region.

Another important fact about seed saving is to know the isolation requirements of each plant, so open pollinators cannot cross with each other. It is important to know the Latin names of your plants to make sure that you are not creating a new variety by accident. (In regards to the Latin name of plants, I found out to my surprise, that chard and beet is the same plant!)

Crossed seeds may be infertile, not produce to type, or have an inferior taste. "Seed is always variation," said Kim, and the possibility



Participants learn from expert seed grower Kim Delaney of Hawthorn Farm as she discusses seed crop planning techniques and crop specific selection strategies.

The focus of this workshop was on radishes, peas, beans, squash, peppers, cucumber and beets, and Kim did not forget to share some of her practical experience, such as how to plant peas, the easiest way to harvest them, or how to save lettuce seeds that often get ruined by rain as they dry very slowly. She also introduced systems of isolation that can be useful whenever crop production comes together with seed saving.

The second part of the workshop was dedicated to rogueing (removing plants with undesirable characteristics from fields) and selecting, which is important to keep the variety true to its characteristics, but let them have a slight diversity in traits as well. Rogueing and selecting has to be repeated throughout the season, preferably before flowering. One important quote I remember Kim saying was "Know your plant."

Kim explained in great detail the specific criteria for the seed types covered in this workshop and everybody was encouraged to ask questions throughout. The result was that seed saving beginners like myself got an honest impression of the challenges experienced growers are already facing.

... seed saving beginners like myself got an honest impression of the challenges experienced growers are already facing.

It was very interesting to hear about which traits are dominant and recessive on each plant and when rogueing is most successful.

As I listened to Kim, I remembered my grandma, who had a self-sufficient garden, not harvesting the fruits of the most beautiful plant of each culture to save those seeds for the next year.

It was such a great opportunity to learn about this subject during my stay here in Canada, and I feel prepared to start more seed saving in Germany when I get back to my own garden.

Notes From The Office

by Ali English

It continues to be an exciting time around the office.

First off, we'd like to thank the Robert and Moira Ideas Foundation, a fund within the London Community Foundation, for the very generous endowment that we recently received. Robert and Moira were long-time EFAO members that often attended events and meetings, and had a certified organic farm near London, Ontario. This annual endowment will go towards supporting some of the organization's core operating expenses (i.e office, admin, staff), making a significant contribution towards EFAO's long-term sustainability.

As you will notice on page 7 of this newsletter, we have also been working on the new membership rates and benefits that will take effect at the beginning of our new fiscal year, September 1, 2015. As an organization funded by members, for members, membership fees are what ultimately sustain our work. They are a large part of what has allowed us to thrive for 35 years without depending solely on grants.

We are pleased to announce our

greatly expanded business membership, which provides businesses new ways of engaging with EFAO and highlighting their work, while also supporting the development of new EFAO programs and services in the coming year. These include a mentorship program, increased activities in Eastern Ontario, and online resources such as an internal members' directory and a discussion forum.

And finally, we are thrilled to officially announce the date and location for our next Ecological Farmers of Ontario Conference: this coming December 3-5, 2015 in London! The conference is presented in partnership with FarmStart, The Bauta Family Initiative on Canadian Seed Security and Everdale, and the Local Organic Food Co-ops Network. We invite you to help us shape the program by participating in our advisory committee and/or by sending in your ideas for workshops and presenters to our online "Suggestion Box". There will be plenty of ways for getting involved over the coming months, so please stay tuned to your e-news and newsletters for updates! 🐦

Pest Advisory

Via Ontario Beekeepers Association (OBA): Small hive beetle advisory in Niagara Region

Earlier this month OBA was notified by OMAFRA that inspectors reported small hive beetle (SHB) 'in a single bee yard in Niagara Region, outside of the existing SHB quarantine area in southwestern Ontario. A small scale beekeeper in Niagara has tested positive for the presence of SHB. These colonies do not move within or out of province for pollination services.'

As we understand it, this beekeeper did not depopulate his hives or destroy equipment.

Up to now, the primary containment strategies have been quarantine in Essex and part of Chatham-Kent, and depopulation with compensation for the affected beekeeper for outbreaks outside of the quarantine area. The compensation fund has now been depleted and we have been informed that it will not be renewed.

We know that there is growing concern in the beekeeping community that the SHB has, in fact, expanded beyond what is currently reported. We are not able to confirm this, as only OMAFRA has the authority to inspect or report on pests and diseases.

However, OBA is anticipating that at some point, if not now, efforts to contain SHB through quarantine and depopulation could outgrow their effectiveness. We are currently in the process of reviewing options and recommendations to OMAFRA for the next steps in containment and treatment of the pest. In the meantime we are not supporting depopulation without compensation.

We encourage all beekeepers to follow the guidelines put forth by OMAFRA, including checking for the presence of SHB in your honey bee colonies on a regular basis and reporting any finds to your bee inspector. This is im-

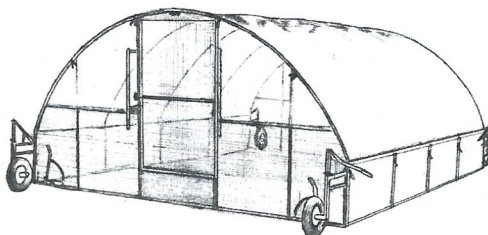


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EFAO Events Listing

JULY

July 6: Field Day – Organic Potato Trials at Laepple Organic Farm

1:30 pm - 4:30 pm

2298 Bleams Road, Petersburg

Offered in partnership with The Bauta Family Initiative on Family Seed Security

Linda and Fritz Laepple at Laepple Organic Farm operate a mixed organic farm in Petersburg, Ontario. They are currently trialing new varieties of organic potatoes as part of a participatory organic breeding project. Come for a tour of their farm and learn about how organic potatoes are bred, developed, and integrated into a mixed organic farm operation

Cost: \$10/person for members; \$20/person for non-members. Two “pay what you can” places. Please contact admin@efao.ca

July 7: Field Day - Growing Diversified Heritage Grains at Ironwood Organics

1:00 pm - 4:00 pm

446 Lower Oak Leaf Rd., Athens Ontario

Offered in partnership with The Bauta Family Initiative on Family Seed Security

Chris Wooding farms landrace cereals in eastern Ontario. Having grown steadily for the past 10 years, Ironwood Organics now consists of 170 acres, and includes small-scale production of heritage wheat, oats, rye, buckwheat, and barley. In addition to stone ground flour and rolled oats, they also supplies their own grains to Gananoque Brewing Company and Dominion City Brewing. The farm is further diversified with a small hops yard, a vegetable CSA, nut orchard, top bar bees and some forest permaculture. Come for a visit on this truly innovative organic farm and learn how to integrate growing diversified grains on your farm operation.

Cost: \$10/person for members; \$20/person for non-members. Two “pay what you can” places. Please contact admin@efao.ca

July 8: Field Day - Growing Diversified Heritage Grains at “Against the Grain Farms”

10:00 am - 12:00 pm

2147 Jennings Road RR # 2 Mountain, Ont.

Offered in partnership with The Bauta Family Initiative on Family Seed Security

Against the Grain Farms is a farm that is transitioning towards growing ecological diversified grains by trialing dozens of varieties of barley, wheat, corn, quinoa, and other heritage field crops. They are currently working on building their capacity to grow diversified grains on 50 acres, while also rehabilitating the land, developing pollinator projects, and using their farm as a teaching area for how alternative crops can be grown. Come see how you can transition your farming operation to include diversified grain crops.

Cost: \$10/person for members; \$20/person for non-members. Two “pay what you can” places. Please contact admin@efao.ca.

July 8: Field Day - Growing Diversified Heritage Grains at Castor River Farm

1:30 pm - 4:30 pm

2696 9th Line Road, Metcalfe

Offered in partnership with The Bauta Family Initiative on Family Seed Security

George Wright of Castor River Farm first grew his own crop of oats with his father in 4H at the age of 13. Who knew that oats would become his main cash crop 30 years later? For the last 20 years he has been growing grains organically and selling them at his local farmers’ market for the last 5 years. He mills about 12 different grains into flour right in front of his market customers. Come for a tour of Castor River Farm, as George describes the equipment he adapts and his crop rotation to demonstrate strategies of growing good quality diversified heritage grains in ecological farming conditions.

Cost: \$10/person for members; \$20/person for non-members. Two “pay what you can” places. Please contact admin@efao.ca

EFAO Events Listing

July 11: Field Day - Indigenous Plant Talk and Tour

1:00 pm - 4:00 pm

Wheatley Woods - Native Plant Nursery and Garden Centre, 2448 Essex Road 14, Wheatley

Discover Marjan and Craig Willett farm. Nursery and garden centre products including indigenous trees, shrubs, perennials, grasses and vines, fruit shrubs, nut and fruit trees. Native Plant Nursery and Garden Centre, a herd of yaks, chickens, guinea fowl, restored pond area, with good birding opportunities.

Join us for talks on conservation, permaculture and native species, and a tour through the ecosystem of diversity maintained by the Willetts. Bring your own binoculars.

Cost: \$20/person for members; \$25/person for non-members. Two "pay what you can" places. Please contact admin@efao.ca

July 15: Field Day - Linking Soil and Water Conservation - Emerging Ideas

1:00 pm - 4:00 pm

Red Mill Farm, 2379 Road 133 (Perth South), just north of St. Marys

In Recognition of the International Year of Soil join EFAO members and friends for a "Linking Soil and Water Conservation - Emerging Ideas" farm tour and discussion. Ingrid Vanderschot and Paul Battler of Red Mill Farm will give a tour of their newly installed mixed orchard which uses key-line design principles. Mari Veliz, Healthy Watersheds Supervisor, Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority will talk about how Best Management Practices (BMPs) can improve soil health and water quality and which BMP's are most effective, based on an evaluation of community developed watershed plans implemented in Huron County. Mari's presentation will help ecological farmers better evaluate their own farm practices and approaches in protecting our soil and water.

Cost: \$10/person for members; \$15/person for non-members. Two "pay what you can" places. Please contact admin@efao.ca

TBD: Field Day - Squash Seed-Saving: How to Hand Pollinate Squashes

9:30 am - 12:00 pm

Whole Circle Farm, 8786 Wellington 50, RR#3, Acton

Whole Circle Farm is a holistic farm growing over 100 varieties of vegetables for their CSA members and community. In this special workshop hosted by Whole Circle Farm and Seeds of Diversity Canada, come learn all about saving seed from different varieties of squash and how to tag and hand pollinate the different varieties the farm is saving seed from this year. Whole Circle Farm is now a member of the collaborative seed network, Seeds of Transition, growing seed for farmers in their region and for Hawthorn Farm Organic Seeds.

Cost: \$10/person for members; \$20/person for non-members. Two "pay what you can" places. Please contact admin@efao.ca.

July 25: Farm Tour - Introductory to the Four Season Cover Crops for the Small Scale Intensive Market Garden

2:00 pm - 5:00 pm

5499 Second Erin Line RR #3, Acton

Offered in partnership with FarmStart.

Small intensive market gardens have particular challenges when trying to capture the advantages of cover crops. Kaj and Cathy Hansen use rye, oats, field peas, buckwheat, tillage radish and red and white clover, alone or in combination throughout the growing season to help maximize soil health, minimize irrigation, control erosion and suppress weeds on their 1/2 acre market garden, which has been continually cropped for 28 years. The tour will include some experimental plots. Rain or Shine.

EFAO Events Listing

Cost: \$40/person or \$68/family (2) for members; \$50/person or \$85/family (2) for non-members. Two "pay what you can" places. Please contact admin@efao.ca

July 29: Field Day - Ventry Hill Farm Day

10:00 am - 3:00 pm

146397 Southgate 14 RR#2, Dundalk

Paul De Jong and Kim Inglis of Ventry Hill Farm currently farm 700 acres and milk 100 cows, as well as care for a small laying flock, and five pleasure horses.

In the morning we will tour the farm and dairy, including a pasture walk with OMAFRA grazer specialist Jack Kyle. In the afternoon we will be doing a crop tour, and will be joined by Michael Freiesleben, bio-chemist and micro-biologist at the University of Waterloo and agricultural consultant, who will provide insights on making haylage, packing silos, soil biology and testing, as well as nutritional information. Small scale market gardening demonstrations will also take place in the afternoon for those with that interest. Families are all welcome! For the kids there will be some animal care and gardening fun. Lunch will be provided.

Cost: \$10/one adult & up to 2 children under 12 for members; \$15/one adult & up to 2 children under 12 for non-members. Two "pay what you can" places. Please contact admin@efao.ca.

AUGUST

Aug 9: Farm Tour - Choosing the Beekeeping Equipment that's Right for You!

1:00 pm - 4:00 pm

1006 8th Concession West, RR#3, Puslinch

Offered in partnership with FarmStart.

Alison Van Alten spent 15 years working for the Ontario Beekeeping Association Tech-Transfer program conducting honey bee research. During this time she started her own business, Tuck-

time since 2010. Alison sells a variety of honey and beeswax products at the Guelph Farmers Market, and in the surrounding area. She also specializes in selling bees to beekeepers, using her background as a researcher to select disease resistant stock.

During this tour Alison will focus on considerations in selecting equipment for your hives as well as for harvesting honey, when you are starting out and as you grow your operation. Alison will also share useful resources and suppliers for getting started. Weather permitting we will open a hive. If you have a veil we recommend bringing one, as well as a long sleeve loose fitting shirt.

Cost: \$40/person or \$68/family (2) for members; \$50/person or \$85/family (2) for non-members. Two "pay what you can" places. Please contact admin@efao.ca.

Aug 16: Field Day - Terra Verde Homestead tour **1:00 pm - 4:00 pm**

Terra Verde Homestead, 9473 Sideroad 7, RR#1, Conn

Trees are an essential part of any ecological farm plan, with the potential to mitigate climate effects, increase crop yields, and provide valuable habitat. Or, trees can be a crop in their own right.

Rob Johnson, farmer at Terra Verde Homestead and Restoration Ecologist, propagates and plants trees on his farm, Terra Verde Homestead, for all these purposes. Participants will have the opportunity to see the farm's use of silvopasture, agroforestry, and permaculture principles and get hands-on experience propagating trees from seed or cuttings. Throughout this tour Rob will also discuss choosing appropriate trees for your climate, planting tips, and disease and pest management.

Cost: \$10/person for members; \$15/person for non-members. Two "pay what you can" places.

EFAO Events Listing

Aug 23: Farm Tour - Establishing an On-Farm Goat Dairy

1:00 pm - 4:00 pm

8102 Wellington Rd 109, Hwy 109

Offered in partnership with FarmStart.

In 2001, starting with a herd of 20 goats, Katie began to experiment with cheese and soap making. In 2005, she was granted her provincial license for a goat cheese processing plant and River's Edge Goat Dairy was born. In 2008 Katie made her first of many visits to the Vermont Institute of Artisan Cheese to further perfect her techniques. Katie has since won several awards for her products and entrepreneurship, and River's Edge now produces over 50,000 litres of milk each year. Their delicious goat cheeses, meat, soaps and creams can be bought at the farm and at the Guelph Farmers' Market. During this tour Katie will talk about the necessary equipment and investments required for starting an on-farm goat dairy, and lessons learned from her own experience!

Cost: \$40/person or \$68/family (2) for members; \$50/person or \$85/family (2) for non-members. Two "pay what you can" places. Please contact admin@efao.ca

Aug 26: Field Day – Seed Production in Market Garden Operations

9:30 am - 12:00 pm

Saugeen River CSA, 314399 Highway 6, Durham

Offered in partnership with The Bauta Family Initiative on Family Seed Security.

Cory Eichman operates Saugeen River CSA and has been a skilled biodynamic for a number of years. Cory helped start up Seeds of Transition, a collaborative seed production effort through a number of neighbouring farmers and Hawthorn Farm. Come for a tour of Cory's farm in the morning and learn some techniques of how to efficiently integrate seed production into your market garden operation.

non-members. Two "pay what you can" places. Please contact admin@efao.ca

Aug 26: Field Day – Techniques and Equipment for Seed Harvesting and Cleaning

1:30 pm - 4:30 pm

RR 3, 5961 5th Line Minto, Palmerston

Offered in partnership with The Bauta Family Initiative on Family Seed Security.

Come for a workshop with Kim Delaney at Hawthorn Farm Organic Seeds to learn best practices quality vegetable seed. At this workshop you will learn all about, seed harvesting times and techniques, drying, and cleaning methods; equipment needs and sources, relative to your scale of seed production; and equipment sharing and collaboration with other seed growers.

Cost: \$10/person for members; \$20/person for non-members. Two "pay what you can" places. Please contact admin@efao.ca.

Aug 30: Introduction to Pastured Poultry Workshop

9:30 am - 4:00 pm

Green Being Farm, 221788 Concession #14 RR#1 Neustadt

Presented in partnership with FarmStart

Looking to raise poultry and make some money at it? Join us for this very popular and in depth workshop offered by Tarrah Young from Green Being Farm. Tarrah, who raises chickens and turkeys on pasture, will explain her system from day-old chicks and poults to the finished product. Topics to be covered include brooder design, feed requirements, bird health, marketing, and calculating sale prices based on the cost of production.

Cost: \$75/person or \$135/two for members; \$95/person or \$170/two for non-members

**Interested in attending one of these events?
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