



ONTARIO BERRY GROWERS ASSOCIATION

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April 2010 NEWSLETTER

Presidents Report

I would like to thank the Program Committee members, Pam Fisher and Kevin Schooley for putting the Convention Program together. It takes a lot of hard work, and I thank them for that. I would also like to thank all the speakers; some of them traveled a great distance to make their presentations, for without them the convention would not have been possible.

This being my last report as President of the OBG, I want to thank Kevin and the Board of Directors for making my task easy. Two years ago I was a bit reluctant to take this position on, but my friend Lee Etherington, the outgoing President at that time told me that I had nothing to worry about; Kevin would take care of everything. And that certainly has been true.

The Board of Directors has had a busy year. But there are also many others that help make the Ontario Berry Growers Association what it is. The Achene Committee, Becky at New Liskeard, the researchers at Simcoe and Cedar Springs. I was at both Simcoe and Cedar Springs this summer and it was enlightening to see the extent of the work being done there.

Also impressive is the age of our membership. So many of the other farm organizations see a much older membership.

This bodes well for us - we need new ideas, vigour and inspiration. For strawberries the OBG has embarked on an emphasis on day-neutral production, but we must not forget that the greatest part of our membership grow June-bearing.

The day-neutrals will not be for everyone, but they will be for some. And of course we wish to build on the Buy Local campaign.

We need to embrace new technology, and as we face the hurdles that are sure to come, we need to consider them as opportunities.

Hopefully we all left the convention a little wiser, with inspiration and motivation to take us through another season.

Here is wishing for a healthy and prosperous season for all.

Regards,

Andy Megens

From OBG Headquarters

The meeting season is pretty well behind us. We had a good crowd at our annual meeting as well as our berry day as part of the OFVC. The Strawberry School held east of Toronto saw several new or want to be berry growers which is positive for our industry and association. Next year we will host a raspberry school so if you have any suggestions don't be afraid to pass them along.

We have several marketing and promotion activities that you will read about so make sure you take advantage of many of the subsidized materials that will be available. We are excited about the new partnership opportunity with natural dairy products and our Strawberry Festivals. It is great to have the Dairy Farmers of Canada and Gay Lea Foods on board.

All the best!

Kevin

Achene Report

As Many of you know Norm Charbonneau and I have switched positions and I will leave my role as the OF&VGA rep and now become the chair of the Achene Committee.

I want to thank Norm for all his efforts and dedication to the Achene Committee. There was a lot accomplished during his time as chair.

Achene will continue to manage the propagation program and will look for new varieties for berry growers. We have a few challenges ahead of us dealing with government legislation that prevents shipping of propagative material but hopefully we can resolve the issues in front of us.

I will try and keep you updated on our activities and accomplishments.

Thanks
Paul Watson
Achene Committee Chair

Black Root Rot of Strawberries

Michael Celetti, Plant Pathologists,
Horticulture Crops Program Lead,
OMAFRA, University of Guelph.

Black root rot of strawberries is a very complex and serious disease that has been report in strawberry fields around the world. Several pathogenic organisms have been associated with the disease; however, the soil-borne fungus *Rhizoctonia fragariae* is probably the most frequently isolated pathogen from strawberry roots exhibiting symptoms of black root rot. Several studies conducted in Connecticut clearly show that the root lesion nematode together with *Rhizoctonia* cause more severe black root rot symptoms than either organism alone. Other studies

conducted in California have shown that water mould pathogens such as *Pythium* interact with *Rhizoctonia* to cause severe black root rot symptoms. Environmental factors have also been associated with this disease include soil compaction, excessive water and drought.



Black root rot affects primary feeder and perennial roots of strawberries. Often symptoms are not evident until a year or two after planting. Infected roots develop black lesions on the surface which eventually extend into the interior tissue resulting in the entire infected root becoming black and rotted inside and out. Symptoms are often difficult to diagnose because the epidermis of strawberry structural roots, which eventually develop into water conducting perennial storage roots, turn black which may be mistaken for black root rot. However, healthy perennial roots are white inside when cut opened. Infected plants with compromised roots appear wilted and stunted particularly around fruiting time when there is a lot of demand from the roots for water and nutrients. Other root rot diseases such as red stele and *Verticillium* wilt can also cause similar above ground symptoms, so never assume that wilted stunted

plants are caused by black root rot. Regardless of the cause, compromised root systems of strawberry plants grown in a perennial production system often result in low vigour, increased winter injury and eventually crown death.

So what can growers do to manage this disease? Once the disease has become established and plants exhibit symptoms, there is nothing growers can do to save the crop. Management of black root rot begins with avoiding the disease and keeping plants healthy and vigorous from transplanting through to harvest. Always inspect the roots of transplants obtained from nurseries and never plant strawberry transplants that have root rot symptoms. Fumigating fields prior to planting and avoiding planting in fields with compact soils will reduce the risk of black root rot developing. Planting cover crops such as pearl millet and oriental mustard that are not host to *Rhizoctonia* and suppress root lesion nematodes will also help reduce the risk of black root rot developing. Avoid planting strawberries in the same field for 2-3 years has also been shown to reduce the incidence and severity of black root rot. Some strawberry cultivars such as Brunswick, Bounty, Cabot and Cavendish have been found to be tolerant to black root rot and should be selected for planting in fields with a history of the disease.

There are no fungicides currently registered in Ontario for treating plants to prevent Black root rot, however, recent research supported by the Ontario Berry Growers Association indicates that drenches with new fungicides look very promising for black root rot control. A submission to the Pest Management Regulatory Agency for a minor use registration of products for drenching to manage Black root rot is being assembled.

The Berry Bulletin

Have you been receiving the Berry Bulletin produced by Pam Fisher? As part of your membership the OBGAs sends out this series of bulletins during the summer months. Included in the Bulletin are crop updates, issues and solutions for berry growers.

The Bulletin is emailed out from the OBGAs office and is faxed to those who do not have email. If you have not received it in the past please contact the OBGAs office and provide contact information to have it delivered to you. If your email address has changed recently please let the OBGAs office know. I have several email addresses that bounce back when sent. I have a list and will be calling members soon for updates. Kevin



Strawberry & Raspberry Plants

Your **ONLY** supplier of strawberry & raspberry plants grown under the guidelines of the **'Ontario Plant Propagation Program'**

All plants grown by us are treated with the Amino Acid **'PHCA'** which helps kick start the plants in the spring when planted.

A followup fertility program which includes **'PHCA'** is highly recommended to maximize the potential of the plant.

Also available - Blueberry Plants, Blackberry Canes, Yellow, Purple & Black Raspberry Canes, Asparagus Roots, Rhubarb Roots, Horseradish Roots.

R.R. #2 Simcoe, ON Canada N3Y 4K1
Phone: 1-519-426-3099 Fax: 1-519-426-2573
www.strawberrytyme.com



Ontario Agricultural Sustainability Coalition (OASC)

To all Ontario Farmers:

The Ontario Agricultural Sustainability Coalition (OASC) came together last fall to deal with the crisis facing many sectors of our industry. It consists of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, The Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario,

Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association, Ontario Pork, Ontario Cattlemen's Association, Ontario Veal, The Ontario Sheep Marketing Agency and Ontario Grains & Oilseeds.

Our concern with the financial stress on our farms is mutual. We all agree on the solutions to the current problems, being:

- Implementation of the Business Risk Management Program we have developed as available for all commodities that approve;
- Retroactive Implementation of the BRMP to January, 2009; and
- Retroactive Implementation of AgriStability reforms for 2008 and 2009.

These investments in agriculture in Ontario will provide needed cash to stabilize our farm businesses and sustain our industries in the years to come.

WE CANNOT WAIT FOR ANOTHER ROUND OF CONSULTATION BY GOVERNMENT. Minister Mitchell understands this. Our job is to ensure her colleagues across Ontario and in the federal government understand the urgency of the situation here in Ontario.

Business Risk Management programs have always been a shared responsibility involving the provincial and the federal government. The province's share is 40% with the Government of Canada contributing 60%. It is important that we convince both levels of government of the need for these immediate changes.

The OASC member organizations are working hard and with a unified voice to secure these necessary changes to stabilize and sustain a vibrant farm sector in Ontario.

Sincerely,

Bette Jean Crews, President
Ontario Federation of Agriculture
Wilma Jeffray, Chair
Ontario Pork
Brian Gilroy, Chair
Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association
Judy Dirksen, President
Ontario Veal
Curtis Royal, President
Ontario Cattlemen's Association
Markus Wand, Chair
Ontario Sheep Marketing Agency
Henry Stevens, President
Ontario Christian Farmers Federation
Leo Guilbeault, Chair
Ontario Grains & Oilseeds



The advertisement features the Haygrove tunnels logo at the top, which includes the word 'Haygrove' in a serif font and 'tunnels' in a script font. Below the logo, the text reads: 'Low Cost Multi-bay Tunnels', 'Tractor Accessible', '3 Season Protection', 'Field Scale Tunnels', and 'Over 4,000 Acres Sold!'. A black horizontal bar with the white text 'ENGINEERED AND BUILT BY GROWERS' is positioned below the main text. At the bottom, there are two columns of contact information: 'Canadian Sales Strawberry Tyme Farms, Inc. RR2, Simcoe, ON, Canada N3Y 4K1' and 'Phone 1-519-426-3099 www.haygrove.com styme@kwic.com'.

Promotional Materials

We have in stock promotional brochures for strawberries, raspberries and blueberries. The brochures have been improved and are quite attractive. The cost of the brochures is \$5.00 per hundred which is half of the cost of production.

The OBGA received funding from the **Ontario Market Investment Fund**. This program is a shared cost program in which the OBGA pays half of the costs of the promotional activities.

Fresh from the farm

Strawberries



- The farmers of Ontario -

" Making it easy to add fresh fruits & vegetables to your diet."



www.vhqfoods.ca



OBGA Placemats

We have sold out of OBGA placemats and have several thousand on back order. I will be revising the format and having another 20,000 printed. The cost is \$5.00 per hundred. Growers have several ideas for using these as a marketing tool. Some provide them to groups having berry socials, some are used on farm in the market or restaurant area and others have provided them to local businesses such as coffee shops to help promote the farm. There is an open section where you can stamp your farm information.

Organic Guides Available!

The **2010 Production Guide for Organic Strawberry**, NYS IPM Publication No.226, is now available online at http://nysipm.cornell.edu/organic_guide/strawberry.pdf. This guide was written and edited by Juliet Carroll, Marvin Pritts, and Cathy Heidenreich with contributions from Kerik Cox, Greg Loeb, Andrew Landers, Paul Curtis,

Michael Helms, Courtney Weber, Laura McDermott, Elizabeth Thomas and Teddy Bucien.

In addition, the **2010 Production Guide for Organic Blueberry**, NYS IPM Publication No.225, is now available online at

http://nysipm.cornell.edu/organic_guide/blueberry.pdf. This guide was written

and edited by Juliet Carroll, Marvin Pritts, and Cathy Heidenreich with contributions from Kerik Cox, Greg Loeb, Andrew Landers, Paul Curtis, Michael Helms, Laura McDermott, Elizabeth Thomas and Teddy Bucien.

In total, there are 11 organic guides currently available from NYS IPM at http://nysipm.cornell.edu/organic_guide/.

Two other organic fruit guides are available, for apples and for grapes.

Nuffield Canada Selects Sarah Megens and Shane Eby as 2010 Scholars

Scholars to study issues related to policy and new industry development.

Sarah Megens

Hailing from an 80-acre mixed farm near Stratford, Ontario, Sarah Megens has successfully combine her passion for politics and the environment and an educational background featuring international development and public relations, to lead to a career in local food systems development and agricultural land preservation.

Sarah served for over two years as project manager of Hamilton Eat Local, an experience which led her into a Master's degree in Rural Planning and Development at the University of Guelph. As a graduate student, Sarah's current research focuses on linking local food and agricultural policy to farmland preservation mechanisms, with a specific focus on Ontario's Greenbelt.

Sarah intends to extend her exploration of the connection between local food system and agricultural policy with farmland preservation models at the global level through her Nuffield Canada Farm Research award. She intends to visit the European Union and the United States in her quest to develop policy models that will strengthen local food economies and agricultural land preservation policies in Canada.

***Sarah is the daughter of Andy (our past president) and Pam Megens.**

Congratulations Sarah!

OBGA Post Signs

OBGA post signs are available to all members. Most members received the signs two years ago. If you are a new member and have not received a sign please contact the OBGA office. If you would like to purchase additional signs they are \$10 plus shipping.

Report From the OF&VGA

As a new director I have used the first two meetings to get my mind around the issues of the OF&VGA. There are always lots of business items to deal with at the table; I will try to cover a few that are important to the OBGA.

First I thought I would like to bring the members up to date on their 2008 Ag invest installment. According to Mark Wales the safety nets coordinator, the producers claiming as proprietor should have their options notice and their payment. The producers that claim as corporations should expect their options notice as soon as April and their payments 6 weeks later.

The other issue is the container toll redistribution moneys that the OF&VGA holds for the OBGA (\$4650). We should come up with a plan for a project to get that money to work for the organization. The last issue that I want to bring to the attention of the organization is the

OF&VGA is going through a strategic planning process. I do believe that the results of the process will help the board of director set priorities for the staff and through the reporting model set up by the facilitator we will be able to track the progress of the objectives of the plan. The plan is set up under three main goals

1. Improve member services
2. Improve business environment
3. Effective lobby effort

We were asked to bring these three goals back to our respective commodities and ask for two objectives to work on this year, per goal.

I have some ideas but I don't want to submit until the OBGA board has a chance for input. Again I think this process is a very effective way for individual commodities to set direction for OF&VGA staff on an annual basis. AS I mentioned above we will be able to track the progress through the reporting chart.

In closing if any one has any input on this or any other topics for me to take to the OF&VGA please contact me at hiberryfarm@bmts.com.

Thanks
Norman Charbonneau

Publication 360

As a membership benefit we will be mailing a copy of OMAFRA's **Fruit Production Recommendations** to all paid up members. You should see this arrive via mail within the next few weeks. Once your membership is paid we will send a copy out.

It's true, the Weeds are already Growing! Resources for Weed Management and Identification

Kristen Callow, M.Sc., OMAFRA Weed Management Program Lead - Horticulture

2010-2011 Guide to Weed Control, Publication 75

This guide has been the definitive source of weed control information for more than 50 years. It has the latest information on managing weeds in all crops and agricultural situations. In addition to the valuable information usually found in this book, this revised edition now contains:

- Chapter tabs for quicker referencing
- A number of new products and tank-mixes in various field and horticulture crops
- Updated Weed Control Rating Tables
- The latest information on confirmed populations of herbicide resistant weeds in Ontario.
- Information on diagnostic labs that will test for herbicide resistance.
- Improved re-cropping (plant back) tables, with lab contacts to perform field bioassay tests.

Publication 75 also provides you with updates on integrated weed management, application technology and safety precautions. This is an excellent supplement to the information found on commercial labels.

How to order Guide to Weed Control - Publication 75

To order copies of Publication 75, Agdex 640, Price \$15.00 + GST:

- Visit ServiceOntario Publications website at www.ServiceOntario.ca/publications

- Contact ServiceOntario Publications Contact Centre at:
1-800-668-9938
416-326-5300
TTY 1-800-268-7095

Ontarioweeds.com

If you are trying to identify a weed, find the newest information on herbicide resistance and other emerging issues in weed management you need to visit ontarioweeds.com.

Ontarioweeds.com was designed to be an ever-growing knowledge base of weed information. Combining biological and identifying characteristics of top interfering species along with new emerging research articles, media, and control options, ontarioweeds.com provides the tools to make informed risk-reducing weed control decisions. Ontarioweeds.com is a powerful search tool, simply type in the name of a weed (common names, botanical name, or Bayer code) to access information for that specific weed, or better yet, if you don't know the name of the weed that you need information on, simply search using descriptive terms such as "yellow flower", or "thistle."

Once on an actual weed information page, all the information for that specific weed is displayed, including reference illustrations and photographs.

If you still cannot identify the weed species you can send a picture into ontarioweeds.com by clicking on the Weed I.D. Services tab on the left tool bar. However, proper identification is greatly dependent on the quality of the photographs submitted (see "[Rules for submitting photos](#)") and completion of the form provided on the site. This site does not guarantee the accuracy of its online weed identification services and as such users requiring a higher degree of accuracy should contact a pest diagnostic clinic within their geographic area.

Resistance Testing: If you see unusual weed escapes report them!

If you are seeing:

- A weed species that should have been controlled but is healthy while other susceptible species have been controlled.
- A weed control failure even when the correct herbicide rate was used and it was applied at the appropriate weed stage and under favourable environmental conditions.

Then stop a potential problem from getting worse. If you see weeds that you suspect are resistant, report them by calling:

1-877-424-1300

Agricultural Information Contact Centre

By taking advantage of this toll-free number, suspicious weed species will be tested for resistance by the University of Guelph. Any information obtained from this service will allow weed researchers to develop control options for resistant weed populations.

Listing of all available weed resources, including books, videos, courses and software can be found at:

http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/facts/info_resourcesweed.htm

CHC Food Safety Manuals

The OBGA has a very good supply of Food Safety Manuals from the Canadian Hort. Council. Manuals are available in both French and English. If you would like a copy sent to you please contact the OBGA office.

School Delivery Program

The OBGA is looking for a small number of farms to deliver strawberries and/or raspberries to schools in September and early October. This program is part of

our Ontario Market Investment Fund project. The OBGA has funds to help support this program but the final details of how the funding will be spent has not been decided. If you are interested or want to know more contact the OBGA office.



Get Fresh Strawberry Festival 2010

The OBGA is very excited to announce our new sponsors for the 2010 Strawberry Festivals. We now have the **Dairy Board of Canada** and **Gay Lea Foods** as the primary sponsors of this province wide event. Growers have asked for a natural product and we now have this perfect match of Ontario Strawberries and a Real Cream product.



Festival Description

The 4th Annual **Get Fresh Strawberry Festival** is a simultaneous province-wide celebration of the strawberry in 23 separate communities across Ontario. **June 25th – June 27th.**

*Note: Dates are flexible but need to be decided sooner than later. The south west and Muskoka may run a week earlier or later based on weather.

Grower or community groups each host an individually styled strawberry festival under the '**Get Fresh**' media supported brand and offer a Gay Lea / 100 % Real Milk Tasting Centre to sample 'fresh, local, delicious, nutritious Ontario strawberries'.

Festivals are encouraged to present 'everything strawberry'.....plain, with whipped cream, on shortcake, with dripping chocolate, with cream, sprinkled, jammed, jellied, baked or barbequed with teriyaki sauce and honey.

Further we encourage festivals to invite exhibitors that support the '**Buy Local – Eat Fresh**' green platform and compliments their unique interpretation of celebrating the strawberry.

The festivals activities can be opened with ribbon cutting, complete with dignitaries, and may range in size and scope from a 'boutique' strawberry and art exhibit, to an elaborate 'theme park' style event complete with infrastructure and impending traffic jam.

All festivals receive a personalized **Get Fresh Strawberry Festival** branded promotional package which includes corporate and local (your) sponsor recognition.

Objectives:

- 1) **Promote** strawberries at the optimum time
- 2) Establish **media** worthy event...Province wide, but local attention
- 3) **Position** berries, local produce and farm....healthy...buy local – eat fresh
- 4) **Sell** more berries
- 5) Increase **demand** for local berries
- 6) Increase or maintain **price** point (supply / demand)
- 7) **Educate** the consumer

- 8) Develop **Brand** awareness (to your farm)...healthy fun for whole family
- 9) Create **publicity** conduit for other farm activities
- 10) Make more **money**

Each farms 'turn-key' package includes:

- 'Get Fresh' individual website within www.berryfestivals.com
- Grower hyperlinks back to their own website
- 'Get Fresh' posters
- 'Get Fresh' t-shirts
- 'Get Fresh' street signage
- 'Sponsor' Tasting Centre signage
- 'Sponsor' Tasting Centre staff uniforms
- sample press release
- sample dignitary invitation
- sample exhibitor invitation
- sample exhibitor contract
- media consulting services
- shared media promotion and exposure
- 'Sponsor' Tasting Centre product: whipped topping
- 'Sponsor' discount coupons

*Some adjustments to packages can be made given enough lead time.

Marketing strategy:

If we can get you to try a fresh, sweet, delicious tasting Ontario strawberry just once, we have earned a consumer for life.

Positioning 'GET FRESH' Strawberry Festivals

Our objective is to increase public awareness to the arrival, and superiority, of fresh local Ontario strawberries by throwing a celebration in 20 plus locations simultaneously around the province.

Promoting local Ontario strawberries through touching and tasting educates the public to identify the physical

difference and superior taste of a local home-grown strawberry. Festivals increase sales at grower 'farm gates', pick-your-owns, farm markets and in grocery stores.

Our 'Buy Local – Eat Fresh' theme also helps counter the low price-point dumping of inferior imported strawberries into local grocery stores at precisely the time our local berries come into bloom.

Establishing local strawberry superiority increases demand in-turn helping growers maintain a higher price point in all sales channels.

The Tasting Centre at each festival is our touch-point tactic to fulfill our marketing strategy which is based on the fact that 'all berries are not created equal' and that

'...if you try a fresh, sweet, delicious tasting Ontario strawberry just once, we have earned a consumer for life'.

Farm Participation Requirements

Mandatory:

- Fee \$500 per farm to the OBGA
 - helps pay for signs, t-shirts, website, shipping etc.
- Covered Tasting Centre
- Two designated Tasting Centre staff – we supply the golf shirts
- Refrigeration (cooler with ice works)
- Promote the festival
- DISTRIBUTE THE COUPONS (that is how the sponsor tracks the events)
- Take pictures of Tasting Centre

Optional:

- Develop your festival with your own theme and personality
- Plan to expand every year.
- Invite exhibitors
- Invite a cow or have a local dairy display
- Open festival with ceremony
- Invite local service clubs to participate (pancake breakfast)

Daily number count of attendance
Stock Gay Lea whipped cream in your Farm Market

Summary

Each festival has its own look and feel but all are promoted under one provincial banner.

“The whole is greater than the sum of its parts”

Although growers may compete on some level, the publicity generated by working together has a combined effect., as in, 'one drop of water in the ocean raises the level of all boats'.

It is more likely media will cover the local aspect of a provincial event than a single (for profit) farm event /location.

The festivals give us a platform to celebrate Strawberries and promote our farms as local produce comes into bloom. There is a halo, or residual effect of advertising at the beginning of the season.

Positioning ourselves as healthy nutritious local and having the best tasting berries both educates the public to identifying our berries, increases demand and therefore price.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact Kevin Schooley at the OBGA office.

This is an exciting opportunity with a natural fit of Ontario Strawberries and Real Cream. Please confirm your participation as soon as possible.

***The festivals do not have to be an elaborate affair. Each Festival takes on its own personality and can be as big or small as you like. This is the 4th Annual and the growth of the festivals has been because of the success growers have had!**