



August 2012 NEWSLETTER

Presidents Report

What an interesting year. That is a term that has been used a lot around our farm because how else can you describe a year with weather conditions like 2012 has brought. While every year has its opportunities and challenges this year has brought strong demand and sales opportunities and the challenge of Mother Nature's lack of cooperation. The hot, then cold, then hot weather in the spring meant instead of the nice gradual ramp up and then down in production, our season ramped up in a hurry, and then collapsed only to gradually ramp up again. Talk about a marketing nightmare...

While one can dwell on the fact that production on many farms was only 40-80% of normal (from what I've heard), I couldn't help but notice the increased media attention, public excitement and anticipation for this year's season. It's clear there continues to be an increased interest in local berries. I believe that everyone of you should be commended for not giving the bad news sound bite that the media always looks for, that 3 seconds proclaiming a crop failure or write off that can ruin the season for the province. Kudos to you for projecting the positive image the public expects and wants to see from their local farmer.

The great saving grace for many farms has been the opportunity everbearing strawberries have given growers. On our farm we transitioned between June and everbearing strawberries, never missing a day of picking between the two crops. Another positive about 2012 is it has shown growers the potential yields that are possible off a year old field of day neutral strawberries when we have a warm winter. This has also been a year where drip irrigation proves its value and saves us from the drought conditions much of Ontario is facing. The 75% water saving benefit has never been more valuable than this year when many ponds would have been emptied weeks ago. Every time I drive past our cornfields and other cash crops in the area I am thankful for the buried treasure we have under our fields.

Now as we settle into August fall raspberries have started, blueberries are nearly finished (early) and the Ontario consumer is experiencing 'sale' prices on California strawberries normally reserved for June. Our new focus as growers has to be increasing public awareness of Ontario berry crops to increase on farm sales and sales of Ontario product in grocery stores. While we have experienced a strong growth in everbearing sales on farm each year they still represent a fraction of daily June sales. I dream of a day when berry sales in August and September rival those in June (more on that inside). It may be too much to ask for but I'm a marketer and everyone needs goals right?

It's a well-known fact (crazy how bad news can reach so many people so fast) that there will be poor apple crop this fall. This will leave many people looking for fresh fruit alternatives and I will be making every effort to replacing Ontario fruit with Ontario fruit. The worst thing that could happen is the consumer replaces Ontario apples with foreign apples and we as a province lose out on those sales. Whether you promote a box of Ontario berries for the first day of school or a nice berry crisp for Thanksgiving, I'd strongly recommend that we as an industry not miss this opportunity to expose Ontario consumers to this new(er) fall fruit alternative. Looking forward to seeing all of you at the Twilight meeting in Delhi and Simcoe!



Will Heeman
President

From OBGA Headquarters

A challenging growing season to say the least. "A year to forget" was a quote I heard from a grower just yesterday. All you can do as growers is adapt to the conditions you cannot control and do the best with the tools you have available.

We have a great lineup for our annual twilight meeting on September 12th and I hope many of you can make it to share stories from this fabled summer.

We will be heading back to Niagara Falls in February and the conference committee is now looking for ideas for topics and speakers for this meeting. I am sure there will be at least one weather related discussion.

The OBGA has been active on Facebook and Twitter this year as well as promoting our website through Google Adwords. I cannot believe the reach of this new form of advertising. We have some great numbers to share with you in upcoming newsletters and at our annual meeting. I would like to thank Erin my summer assistant for keeping on top of the social media and your president Will Heeman for all of his valuable input and coaching.

I am really looking forward to seeing many of you at the Twilight Meeting as I think we have a nice combination of stops. Since we are serving food it is important that you let me know that you are coming

All the best!

Kevin

Achene Report

The Achene Committee has not officially met since April but members of the committee along with other grower volunteers have met at the Verification trials for strawberries and Raspberries. We will have a complete report on the verification trials after our meeting in September.

Sincerely,
Paul Watson
Achene Committee Chair

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Strawberry & Raspberry Plants

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

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Spotted Wing Drosophila Pest Alert

The spotted wing drosophila (SWD) is an invasive vinegar fly from Asia that was first identified in California in 2008. Since then, it has rapidly spread throughout most fruit producing regions of North America and several European countries. Surveys coordinated by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) in 2011 and 2012 have detected this pest across southern Ontario. Environmental conditions including a mild winter have favoured the survival and seasonal population build-up of SWD in 2012.

Unlike most vinegar (aka small fruit) flies that lay their eggs in damaged or decaying fruit, SWD females attack healthy immature fruit that is beginning to ripen. As a result, affected fruit contain eggs or larvae at harvest. Injury to fruit caused

from oviposition of eggs under the skin of fruit also allows the entry of plant pathogens that can promote rapid breakdown. Crops at risk include tender fruit (cherry, peach, nectarine, plum, apricot, other), berry crops (raspberry, blackberry, blueberry, strawberry, sea buckthorn, other) and some grape varieties (primarily table grapes). While early crops may escape injury due to lower population pressure, SWD numbers build as the season progresses, making late harvested crops such as fall raspberries, blueberries, blackberries and day-neutral strawberries at high risk. ***Growers in southern Ontario should assume SWD is present in their area and should be using several management techniques to reduce economic injury.***

SWD is a manageable pest. Important practices include harvesting early, clean and often, as well as cull pile management. Wild raspberry, blackberry, blueberry, mulberry, honeysuckle, dogwood and other non-crop hosts near field borders act as reservoirs of SWD, and their management may be warranted to limit migration into crops. There are several insecticides registered as Emergency Uses for 2012; make sure to rotate between chemical classes and watch for label restrictions and PHIs. OMAFRA has developed web-based resources where growers can obtain more information on SWD including a real-time map of pest activity. For more information visit www.ontario.ca/spottedwing.

2012 Trap Catch Data (interactive map)

<http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/facts/swd-catches2012.htm>

Monitoring for SWD
<http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/facts/swd-monitor.htm>

Management
<http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/facts/swd-management.htm>

Emergency Use Registrations
<http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/facts/swd-registrations.htm>

Membership

Erin did a thorough cleanup of the membership this past summer. We continue to lose members to retirement and to some who decide to go out of the berry business. The good news is that we gained several new members this year and hopefully we will be able to continue on this trend. Our promotion at the convention in Niagara Falls and non members being attracted to our website and our activity on social media has been the main reason for the addition of new members.

Research

Adam Dale to Retire

The University of Guelph has been actively trying to reduce its staff numbers and Adam was presented with a deal that was too good to turn down. Adam will officially retire at the end of the year. The good news is that Adam has a series of projects that are ongoing and has some great technical staff on board so he will continue to work with his technicians and other berry researchers to finish

off the projects that have been started.

Growers should take every opportunity when speaking to elected officials or government staff to express their concern with the loss of yet another researcher. We as a group have to pressure government and the University of Guelph to replace this research position. With the retirement of three berry breeders in Canada over the last 6 months we are left with only Andrew Jamieson as a plant breeder.

Adam not only was our breeder but he was a spark to research in many other areas and coordinated many trials. Adam touted day neutral strawberries more than 20 years ago and many of us thought he was crazy but he truly is a visionary and forward thinker.

We are happy that he will remain involved in the industry for at least a few more years and I think it will be hard to get berries out of his thoughts for a long, long time.

Food Safety Snippets

“Your Business Advantage”

On Farm Food Safety: Your Business Advantage Training Workers on Food Safety

Training workers on Worker Policies is an important part of each growing season, especially when you have new workers. Remember: “if they don’t know it they won’t do it”. Worker Policies cover *worker practices, hand washing, clothing and footwear, and injuries and illness.*

Worker practices require:

- Workers to make use of designated areas for eating, drinking and storing food.
- Workers to refrain from smoking, chewing tobacco, chewing gum and spitting in or around food handling and storage areas.
- Workers to avoid wearing jewellery, nail polish, badges and pins.

Food safety practices keep agri-food businesses competitive, productive and sustainable. For more information, visit the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs website at www.ontario.ca/goodagpractices or call us at 1-877-424-1300.

On Farm Food Safety: Your Business Advantage Water Quality

Water quality varies depending on the water source. While a best practice is to always test your water, it is especially important to test your irrigation water if you are sourcing from a pond or other open water source. The most accurate way to take a sample is directly from the irrigation system. Allow the system to run for a few minutes then collect the sample from the end of the drip line or emitter using a sterile container provided by a laboratory accredited to perform microbial water testing. Refrigerate the sample and have it tested within 24 hours. Make sure the lab knows that your sample is irrigation water and not drinking water because there are different standards/guidelines for each! Food safety practices contribute to competitive, productive and

sustainable agri-food business. For more information on this fact sheet visit the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs website: www.ontario.ca/goodagpractices, click “factsheets/infosheet”, or call us at 1-877-424-1300.

Dry Weather Information

Visit the OMAFRA website for links to information on dry weather and low water conditions. Go to www.ontario.ca/z832.

Ontario Vegetable Crop Updates

The Ontario Vegetable Crop Updates are now available in a new format on the OMAFRA blog ONvegetables.com. New name, new look, same great information! New articles on commercial vegetable crop production will be posted throughout each week on our blog. For those of you who prefer the pdf format, we will send out a weekly email update with a file containing all of the articles from the previous week. If you were on one of the Vegetable Crop Updates email lists, you should continue to receive the weekly email notifications and pdf files. Due to the merger of several email distribution lists, if you find you are receiving several copies each week please feel free to email us and we will fix the problem.

If you prefer to be notified immediately each time a new article is posted on the blog, you can sign up for email notifications (they will show as being from Wordpress) or

the RSS feed at
<http://ONvegetables.com>.

OBGA Promotional Items

There are still supplies of promotional items available if you would like to order any. We have a supply of the poly bags that can be picked up in Simcoe, Bowmanville, Kemptville or the Toronto Food Terminal. They can also be shipped.

If you are planning on taking in the Twilight Meeting I could bring along an order for you and save you the cost of shipping.

We had very little intake on the personalized posters. Hopefully you have taken some great photos and will have more time to get this organized for 2013.

Are you receiving the Berry Bulletin?

The Berry Bulletin is an update on crop conditions and pest issues for Ontario berry growers and agronomists.

Published by Pam Fisher and other OMAFRA specialists weekly in the growing season, the Berry Bulletin is available on line, at:
<http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/updates/berry/index.html>.

On-line postings are available for 4-6 weeks. Members of the Ontario Berry Growers Association can receive the Berry Bulletin by fax or email, from the OBGA office. If you are not receiving the bulletin please contact the OBGA office at

info@ontarioberries.com or 613-258-4587

Organic Strawberry Production Manual

The University of California Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources just published a brand new **Organic Strawberry Production Manual**. The 160+ page manual is designed for perfect for growers, pest control advisors, consultants, marketers, industry professionals, and others interested in the organic growing and certification process. Chapters include detailed information on production, disease and pest management, postharvest handling, marketing, and the organic certification process.

More information and a sneak preview video about this manual can be seen at
www.ucanr.edu/strawberry.

November Meeting in New Liskeard

The Achene committee will be having a meeting in New Liskeard in November and would like to invite OBGA members on a tour of the facilities that are operated by Becky Hughes and her colleagues.

The date has not been set but keep this opportunity in mind as the season should be well behind us at that point. More information will be shared as it becomes available.

OBGA Twilight Meeting
Wednesday September 12,
2012
Delhi/Simcoe
Cost: \$15.00 per person

This year's Twilight Meeting will have a slightly different format than the past few years. We have added an additional stop at Vanden Bussche Irrigation that growers can choose to visit prior to the farm tour. The schedule will be as follows

3:00 Meet at Vanden Bussche Irrigation Head Office at 2515 Pinegrove Road (at Hwy 3), Delhi, ON N4B 2E5 Marc Vanden Bussche to provide a tour of the new facilities and show the latest in irrigation developments. For those who have

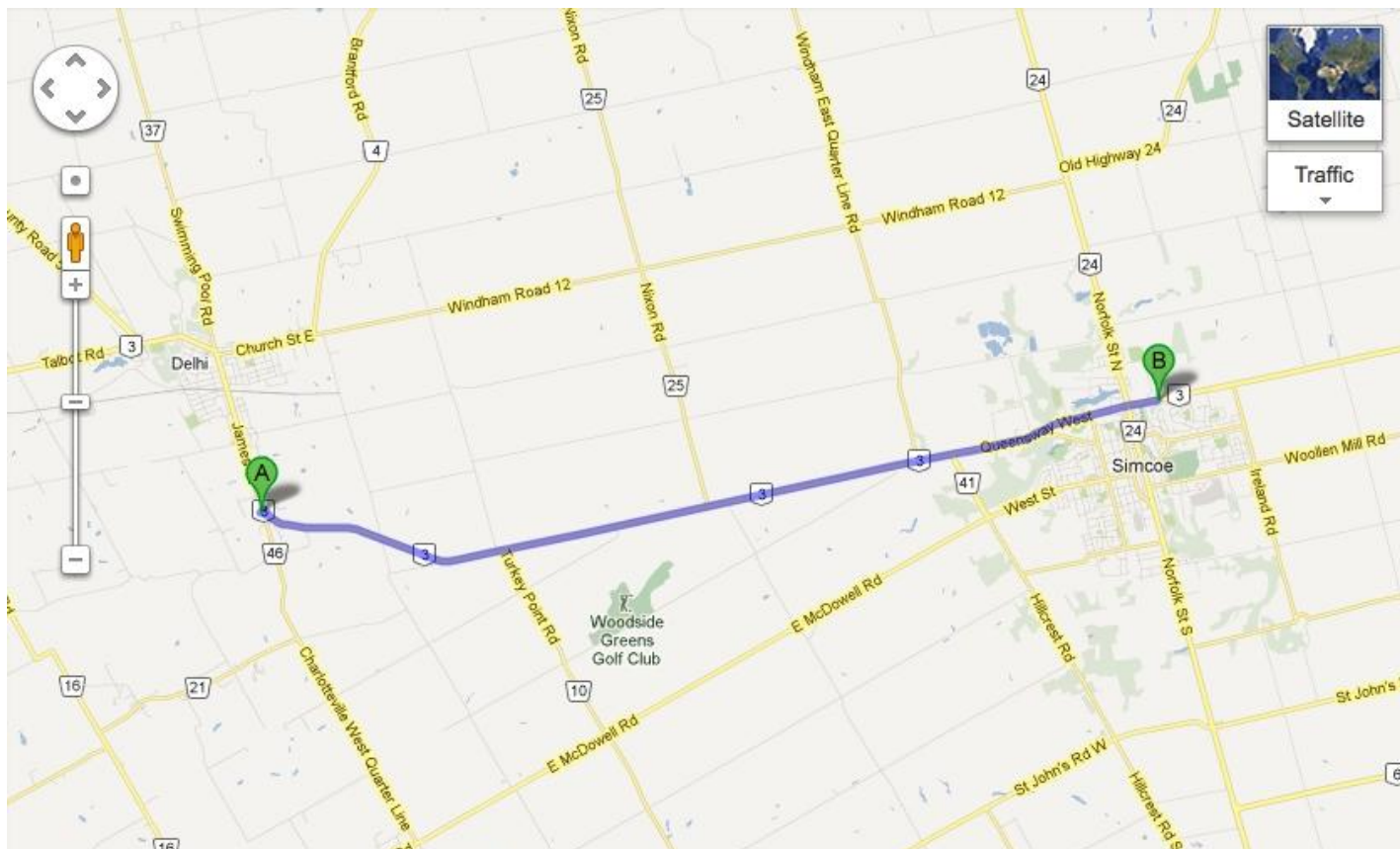
suffered through drought conditions this year the timing is great

3:45 Travel to Kent Kreek Berries
3173 Hwy #3 West, Simcoe, N3Y 4J9

4:00 - 6:00 Tour of Kent Kreek Berries from hosts Paula and Jeff Zelem

6:30 Cross the road for Supper at the Vanden Bussche Farm

Please contact Kevin at the OBGA office if you plan on attending. A meal is being planned and we want to make sure we have enough food for all. 613-258-4587 or info@ontarioberries.com



OBGA Promotional Items Order Form



Name: _____

Farm Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Item	Quantity	Price Per Item	Total Price of Item
Strawberry Brochures		\$10.00/ per 100	
Raspberry Brochures		\$10.00/ per 100	
Blueberry Brochures		\$10.00/ per 100	
OBGA Place-mats		\$5.00/ per 100	
Reusable Strawberry Bags		\$1.15 each	
Reusable Strawberry Bags with logo (OBGA or yours)		\$1.50 each Minimum order 50	
Biodegradable Clear Poly Bags with Colour OBGA Logo		\$26.00/per case of 1,000 bags	
Recipe Pads – 4 different recipes in colour		\$5.00/per package of 4 pads (each with 50 recipes)	
OBGA Post Signs		\$10.00 each	
OBGA Bib Apron		\$11.90	
OBGA Lap Apron		\$9.40	
HST Tax (13%):			
Final Total :			

**Please note that the cost of shipping is not included in the total price of your items!