



January 2017 NEWSLETTER

Presidents Report

There are quite a few things going on in the berry industry that we can be optimistic about. First off, we will soon become a marketing board, which means that everyone who grows strawberries, raspberries and blueberries will now pay an equal and fair fee that will go towards marketing, research and lobbying efforts for our industry, as opposed to the previous voluntary association where you might pay more, or less than your neighbour, who might not pay any fee at all.

Pam Fishers position is also being filled which will be a huge benefit to the industry. I can't count the amount of times where our farm was in a panic about a new pest or new disease or virus. The amount of times that Pam has come to our farm to assess the disease, insect, or virus damage. She would always provide us with helpful information, or at the very least would ease our minds and give us the optimism we needed to get through the season. Without Pam, I am not sure I would have the opportunity to farm strawberries and I can't thank her enough for her years of dedication.

A third thing that I am optimistic about is from recent meetings with the University of Guelph where we met with Renee Van Acker to discuss filling a berry crop researcher position. We have been told that there will be a position filled that will oversee 'Specialty Crops' and they are open to having our input when they start interviewing candidates. We are unsure whether this will be a position that looks at breeding and plant genetics, or physiology and crop health. This position will align nicely with our new

board structure, which will now have stable and reliable funding from membership and acreage fees and will allow us to help fund new research projects with a new researcher.

Hopefully you have made plans to attend the upcoming AGM in Niagara on February 21st and 22nd. I will not be able to make it this year because I will be travelling to Vietnam, Thailand, and China for the AALP International Study Trip. I helped with brainstorming speaker sessions and topics for this year's AGM and am sad that I will be missing it, we have some excellent speakers lined up!

Until next time,

Kevin Howe, President

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From OBG Headquaters

I was away on vacation in Mexico when I got the message from Jenn VanDeVelde that Ontario growers

supported the proposal to form a new organization under the Ontario Farm Products Marketing Commission. It must have been quite a relief for Jenn who worked tirelessly on this file after taking it from outgoing president Will Heeman. She is a great spokesperson for our industry and I wish to thank her for carrying on with this effort even after her term ended. Lots of work still ahead getting things in place.



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Please have a look at the agenda for the upcoming berry sessions in Niagara Falls and if you haven't booked a room please do so before all the nice Fallsview rooms are booked.

I was invited to speak at the International Soft Fruit Conference in the Netherlands and leave tomorrow. I look forward to seeing what they are doing in Europe. It seems we often take advantage of their experimentation and implementation when it comes to improving our berry production systems. I will write an article for the next newsletter with my findings. NASGA is hoping to plan a tour of berry production in Europe for this coming November so hopefully I can make some contacts to further that agenda.

I like to remind growers to order plants at this time of year. I have talked to a

few propagators and they are either sold out or running low of some varieties. The Canadian dollar is going to cost growers extra money when purchasing plants that originate from the US. Unfortunately growers don't often have much choice especially when purchasing day neutral strawberry plants or blueberry plants.

I look forward to seeing many of you in Niagara Falls in February. If you have never been to this event it is definitely worth participating in. We have two great days of berry sessions planned and the trade show at the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Convention is top 3 in eastern North America.

All the best!

Kevin Schooley

Achene Report

The Achene Committee met last, via conference call on Jan. 3rd. Succession planning continues to be a topic at our discussions. Pam Fisher's position will be filled in the near future. However, there are no new updates regarding filling positions at New Liskeard.

All New Liskeard lab plant orders are on schedule for spring delivery, Including European varieties from Fresh Forward

Ontario Verification Trials will again take place at Heeman's this year with five strawberry varieties being sent there. Adam Dale will visit Florida at the end of February, and assess the Southern Verification Trials there.

There is some work being done to develop a Clean Plant Program for Canada, and the OBGA is staying involved in the process.

Licensing agreements for Summer Daisy and Summer Flavour are pending

at this time. Without going into particulars some more work needs to be done before proceeding with this.

The Committee will meet again via conference call prior to the Annual General Meeting, so more news to come.

Best Regards

Andy Megens
Chair, Achene Committee

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Marketing Board Update

As you now know the proposal was endorsed by Ontario growers. More than 70% voted in favour and of those who voted this represented greater than 80% of the acreage.

What does this mean to growers?

It is business as usual for growers in 2017. We will continue to operate the OBGA as we have in the past.

There is a great amount of work that needs to get done prior to starting the

new local board. Regulations have to be written and those have to be approved by the provincial government. Bylaws need to be put in place and the Commission will need to appoint a board of directors.

The OBGA fiscal year end is October 31st. The hope is that everything will be in place so that the OBGA can wrap up all of its financial affairs by its year end and then a transition can be made to the new organization. There are only two possible dates for posting the new regulations with the government and the next one is July 1st so hopefully we can continue to work with Laurinda Lang and accomplish what is needed to get that done.

Mark Your Calendars

Coming Events

Mid Atlantic Fruit and Vegetable Convention

January 31-February 2, 2017
Hershey, Pennsylvania

North American Farm Direct Marketing Association Convention

February 3-9, 2017
Mystic, Connecticut

OBGA Annual Meeting

February 20, 2017
Embassy Suites, Niagara Falls

Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Convention

February 21, 22 2017
Scotiabank Convention Centre, Niagara
Falls

www.ofvc.ca

North American Strawberry Growers Association Summer Tour

August 15, 16, 2017
Minneapolis, Minnesota

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First Strategic Business Plan for Berry Growers of Ontario

The OBGA was awarded funding for the development of an industry strategic plan. A description of the project is below.

A comprehensive strategic analysis and plan for development of Ontario's berry sector (blueberries, raspberries and strawberries as the principal crops) has not been done in the past generation.

Such a plan is needed in order to identify the opportunities for growth and the actions to advance those opportunities as well as identify the threats and risks faced by the sector and how they can be managed proactively.

Berry Growers of Ontario will be a new organization, taking the place of two voluntary predecessor organizations, Ontario Berry Growers and the Ontario Highbush Blueberry Growers' Association.

As a new organization, a strategic business plan will serve as its key planning document, to be used by the Board in ensuring that it is following best practices in addressing sector priorities, and to be used by staff as the Board's statement of direction in respect of priorities and actions to be carried out. The strategic business plan will enable performance objectives and targets to be set so that is a measurable basis for assessing BGO's success.

This project therefore will begin with a strategic business planning process in which there is extensive input sought from growers and value chain partners in order to determine the highest priorities of the organization and the actions necessary to address them accordingly. Following this consultation phase of the project, the key deliverable of the project is a strategic business plan that will document the direction set by the Board and staff together. As well as serving as a key reference for evaluating the Board and staff's performance, it will also support a corresponding allocation of resources, both in respect of time and funding, to undertake the priority actions identified in the plan.

The draft strategic business plan will be presented to the Board of Directors and discussed with them and refined with further input. The Board will formally accept and adopt the plan as its direction for the first full year of operation as well as setting a longer term direction for multi-year projects and actions. Once the plan has been formally accepted by the Board, it will be made available in the public domain through BGO's website.

This project was funded in part through *Growing Forward 2*, a federal-provincial-territorial initiative. The Agricultural Adaptation Council assists in the delivery of *Growing Forward 2* in Ontario.



Membership Renewal

Thanks to all of the farms who have sent in their membership payments for 2017. If you haven't done so have a look for the membership forms and send them in as soon as possible.

I will be sending out reminders starting mid-January so hopefully my mailbox is full over the next few weeks.



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Agri-Food Innovations Recognized

Once again OBGA members were recognized for their innovative spirit. You can read about Willowtree Farm below.

You might also have noticed the Premier's Award went to a greenhouse strawberry producer Orangeline Farms for their innovation into year round strawberry production. This operation has been researching this for some time and has attended some of our workshops to gain more information on the growing of strawberries.

Willowtree Farm

Kelty McKay's new fundraising program for local schools and sport clubs offers boxes of seasonal produce from her farm for students and teams to sell. More than just a fresh approach to raising money, the program educates young Ontarians on food literacy and promotes a healthy lifestyle in the community. In 2015, four schools and two local dance teams benefited from the food box fundraisers. Meanwhile, McKay has not only developed an innovative new revenue stream but has also added new clients to her existing community supported agriculture business, as satisfied fundraising customers return to get their hands on more Willowtree Farm veggies.



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OBGA and OFVC Berry Programs

Please Remember!

The OBGA and OFVC are separate events and you must register for each separately.

Book your hotel today! To ensure you get one of the fabulous Fallsview suites be sure to make your reservation today. Reservations can be made online by visiting www.ofvc.ca under the Attendee section or by calling 905-356-3600.

When making a reservation be sure to let them know you are with the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Convention



Ontario Berry Growers Association – Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Convention Berry Program

Tuesday, February 21, 2017 – Embassy Suites, Niagara Falls

| | | |
|----------|--|--|
| 9:00 am | Introduction and Welcome | |
| 9:10 am | Berry Production and Marketing on our Farm - Grower Profile | Jenn and Dave VanDeVelde, Wholesome Pickins, Delhi, Ont. |
| 10:00 am | Fruit Tracker – a New Tool for Berry Growers | Matt Deir, Dragonfly Information Technology |
| 10:45 am | Labour Efficiencies for Horticulture | John Van de Vegte, OMAFRA |
| 11:15 pm | Farm Labour update - Hot topics and Upcoming Issues | Ken Linington, Labour Issues Coordinating Committee |
| 11:45 am | OBGA Price Survey | Kevin Schooley |
| 12:00 | Marketing Board Update | Jenn VanDeVelde |
| 12:15 | Annual Meeting | |
| 1:45 pm | Hot New Crops | Evan Elford, OMAFRA |
| | Marketing Track- Chairperson, Erica Pate, Farm Marketing Specialist, OMAFRA | Production Track – |
| 2:00 pm | Consumer Motivation Survey results- Kelly Ward, Foodland Ontario | Thrips control in strawberry – Insecticides and biocontrol methods – Justin Renkema, Gulf Coast Research and Education Center, University of Florida |
| 2:30 pm | Food Bloggers – get them working for you – Ted Willey, Norfolk County | <i>Monitoring Soil Moisture – How to avoid the “Too little Too Late” approach to irrigation – Rebecca Shortt, OMAFRA</i> |
| 3:00 pm | Staging and presenting your product - panel – Erin McLean, Luke Charbonneau, Kelty McKay | Does your sprayer need a nozzelectomy? – A case study in strawberry- Jason Deveau, OMAFRA |
| 3:45 pm | Round tables | |
| | 1. Evan Elford | Hot new crops |
| | 2. Ken Linington | Farm labour updates – Q and A |
| | 3. Marketing Round Table- how to run an effective PYO operation | |
| 5:00 pm | Adjourn | |
| 7:30 pm | OBGA social time and refreshments | |



Ontario Berry Growers Association – Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Convention Berry Program

Wednesday, February 22, 2017 – Scotiabank Convention Center, Niagara Falls

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|--------------|---|--|
| 9:25 am | Introduction and Welcome | |
| 9:30 am | Substrate and Environmental Factors on Greenhouse Strawberry Production | Toktam Taghavi, University of Guelph |
| 10:00 am | Approaches to Soil Incorporated Amendments for Berry Crops | Deanna Németh, OMAFRA |
| 10:30 am | Sustainable Soil Management for Berry Growers | Amanda McWhirt, University of Arkansas |
| 11:00 am | Post Harvest Strategies for Berry Crops | Randy Beaudry , Michigan State University |
| 12:00 - 2:00 | Lunch and Visit the Trade Show | |
| 2:00 pm | Chateau Herbicide for Berry Crops - using it safely | Maria Dombrowsky, Nufarm |
| 2:30 pm | Management of Two Spotted Spider and Cyclamen Mites in Strawberry | Justin Renkema , Gulf Coast Research and Education Center, University of Florida |
| 3:00 pm | Validating an Anthracnose Fruit Rot Forecasting Tool for Strawberry Grower in Ontario: What We Learned In 2016 | Michael Celetti, OMAFRA |
| 3:30 pm | Fitting Habitat for Pollinators and Beneficial Insects into your Farmscape | Susan Chan, Native Pollinator Program, Farms at Work |
| 4:00 -5:00 | New Varieties – panel Sandra Carther, Carther Plants; Adam Dale, University of Guelph; Nate Nourse, Nourse Farms; Frederic Laforge, Luc Lareault Nursery | Chaired by OMAFRA berry crop specialist |