



ONTARIO BERRY GROWERS ASSOCIATION

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November 2010 NEWSLETTER

Presidents Report

Greetings

At the time of writing we are approaching that time of year when fall herbicides need to be ready in the chemical storage for strawberries, raspberries and blueberries. The wet changeable weather has persisted in Eastern Ontario this fall, making timeliness in fall tasks a challenge. Several frosts and cooler temperatures have helped to start the dormancy process. Those of you who have been involved in the fall agritourism business will now be able to breathe a sigh of relief and turn your attention to other tasks like straw mulching and ploughing.

Don't forget to mark your calendars for our conferences in St. Catharines. The two conferences run consecutively on February 22nd and 23rd. This year's lineup of speakers promises to be just as informative as last year. This is a great opportunity to network with your peers and pick up that new idea or solve that problem that will make your life easier and your business more prosperous.

As we approach the winter months, most of us can look forward to much deserved rest and relaxation. Hope to see you all in St. Catharines in February.

Best Regards,

Paul Ralph

From OBGA Headquarters

As we get past Halloween most farm markets and crops are finished for the season and growers can finally take a breath. That is until they realize

herbicides need to be applied and straw. My field season has been over for a while and now I switch gears and am either attending meetings or planning meetings or attending meetings to plan meetings.

Our format for our annual meeting in St Catharines remains unchanged. We will meet as an association on **Tuesday February 22nd** at the Four Points and then have an additional berry day on Wednesday as part of the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Convention. I hope many of you took my advice and booked the Sheraton early. I have heard that rooms are pretty scarce unless you want a more expensive suite. Perhaps you can treat yourself to a suite.

The program is being developed and we have lots of good ideas and speakers in mind. It is not too late to provide some suggestions for us. Feel free to contact me here at the office. Hopefully I won't be at a meeting!

All the best!

Kevin

OBGA Annual Twilight Meeting

The OBGA would like to thank Dan and Jeff Tigchelaar and their families for hosting the annual twilight meeting.

We had over 50 people take part in the meeting. Dan and Jeff led us on a walking tour of the farm and we were able to see plantings of different ages. There were lots of questions and our hosts did not hesitate to answer as many as they could.

The prevalent variety at this farm was Albion planted on black plastic. They have been experimenting with some of the new University of California releases but still prefer Albion at this time.



We also would like to thank Hernder Estates Winery for donating wine for the event. OBGA member Norm Charbonneau should also be noted as he not only brought sweet corn for everyone but even stood over a boiling cauldron to make sure it was cooked just right.



We were treated to a wonderful meal and there was a great deal of networking going on during the evening.

The past two twilight meetings have been very well attended and hopefully this trend will continue in 2011. If you would like to host the event or can suggest a farm that would be a good site please let us know!

Achene Report

There is not a lot to report for Achene. Plant inspections at our only propagator

licensed under the Ontario Plant Propagation Program Strawberry Tyme Farms went well this summer and they passed with flying colours.

We have sent a letter to CFIA and also talked with them about Ontario propagators being able to export raspberry plants to the United States. It is looking very promising and hopefully this winter it will be possible to start exporting. For many years we have been able to bring raspberry plants to Canada from the US but not the other way around.



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Verification trials on strawberry and raspberry plants went well this summer. These trials are to verify that there are no problems with the plants that are coming out of the micro-propagation lab that the OBGA has in New Liskeard. It is just one other way the plants are checked to ensure that berry growers have the best possible plants available to them.

We are looking for a new grower representative for the Achene committee. The committee is made up of 2 government representatives, 2 OBGA representatives (directors of the OBGA), the President of OBGA, and 2 grower representatives. Often the 2

grower representatives are also directors because it is difficult to get growers to sit on the committee, but if you think that you have time and this might be of interest to you please give me a call. It is always nice to have people from outside the board to be involved. It often gives us a different perspective on certain things. It usually involves about 4 half day meetings per year.

Sincerely,
Paul Watson
Achene Committee Chair

Buying Ontario Berry Plants

The Ontario Berry Growers Association (OBGA) has operated a recognized Plant Propagation Program for many years. The program is based on plant growers purchasing clean planting stock from our tissue culture lab in New Liskeard. Upon receiving these clean plants propagators must then follow a strict set of guidelines developed by the Achene committee of the OBGA in consultation with experts at OMAFRA, University of Guelph and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency.

As part of the requirements plant growers fumigate the land being utilized to grow plants at all stages of the program prior to planting. Nematode testing must be done in the fall to ensure the soil meets the requirements set out in the guidelines. Field inspections are done twice each growing season on both strawberries and raspberries. The inspector monitors for signs of insect, disease and virus and also makes sure that the plantings are being grown to the specifications of the propagation guidelines.

In 2009 and 2010 only one plant propagator in Ontario was inspected and met the plant propagation guidelines. That farm is Strawberry Tyme Farms in Simcoe Ontario. The OBGA strongly recommends that you

only purchase plants from a grower that produces plants under a recognized provincial or state program.

Many of our berry varieties are grown under license agreements and growers who purchase those plants are required to pay royalties. These royalties are very important as they are returned to the inventor of the variety so that further breeding and research can be funded. In addition to royalties Ontario propagators have collect a \$5/1000 check-off fee that goes to the OBGA to fund research and promotion activities. Again the only farm in Ontario to submit royalty and check-off fees for the past two years is Strawberry Tyme Farms. To protect yourself from purchasing illegal plants you can ask your propagator to include a statement that the plants were produced within the terms of their license agreement.

If you have any questions about the Ontario Plant Propagation Program feel free to contact the OBGA office.

Grower- Supported Research, a Poll

Adam Dale
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Simcoe Research Station
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More and more government funding agencies are asking for matching dollars when organizations apply for funds for research. This has been a concern of the Executive of the Ontario Berry Growers Association for a number of years.

So, at the last Annual Meeting in February 2010, I was asked to do a poll of members at the business meeting. I promised to report the results and here they are.

Members were asked four questions, and one response was allowed per farm. Questions were not circulated before the poll, and after each question the replies were collected before the next question was asked.

The questions asked were as follows:

1. What one piece of research would you feel would help your farm become more profitable? The audience was also told that if they felt they did not need research to say so.
2. If you were asked to contribute some dollars to help fund the research you had identified in the first question, once and once only, how much would you contribute?
3. If, after you had contributed the first time, you were asked to contribute for a second year, how much would you contribute?
4. If we came back, for a third year how much would you contribute?

On the research topics, 24 replies wanted new varieties, 15 wanted pest and disease management research, 6 wanted crop management research, and one wanted economic information.

Under new varieties 10 wanted new varieties and the others gave more detail. These included strawberries (4), dayneutrals (3), and disease resistance (1). No one said that they did not need research. Dayneutrals, were to be northern adapted, high yield, with greater consistent production. June-bearing strawberries were to be late, with eye appeal, flavor, shelf life, larger berries for 6 weeks, and roundup resistant.

Under pest and disease management two-thirds specified weed management/herbicides. The others were root weevil management, pest control (2), black root rot and new organic products.

The crop management topics were: alternatives to straw, dayneutral research, June-bearers- plastic in cool climates, raspberries under tunnels, growing under tunnels, strawberry protocols for longer season- plug plants of both dayneutrals and June-bearers.

One grower wanted costs and returns for dayneutral strawberries.

Funding showed considerable support for a one time contribution with repeated contributions at half the level of a one –time contribution. The amount of the contribution varied from nothing to \$10,000. The details are given in the table below.

Funding Amount	Number each Year		
	First	Second	Third
\$20,000			1
\$10,000	1		
\$5,000	2		
\$2,500	1	1	1
\$2,000		1	2
\$1,000	6	6	3
\$1,250	1		
\$1,500	1	1	1
\$600	1		
\$500	7	6	
\$300			1
\$250	1	2	3
\$100	6	7	3
\$75	1		
\$50	4	1	1
\$35	1		
\$30	1	1	
\$25		2	1
\$0	1	3	3
Don't know	1	2	1
% of savings	1		1
see q.2/3		2	3
conditional		2	2
money back			1
even less			1
Total			
Amount	\$36,540	\$16,330	\$12,425
# of Responses	37	37	29

These results are a snapshot, but I feel that it represents the concerns of the members. What I did not expect was the very strong support for breeding. I had expected more concern with pest and disease management. Also, I had expected the financial support to drop in the second and third years, but it did not drop as much as expected.

Funding support indicated by individual members of the Ontario Berry Growers Association.

Pre-mulch weed control options for strawberries

Pam Fisher and Kristen Callow, OMAFRA and Rob Nurse, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

Late fall is an important window for weed control in matted row strawberries. The time-frame is before the ground is frozen and before mulch is applied in November or December, but after plants are dormant. Herbicides applied at this timing will prevent weed-seed germination next spring. The herbicide you choose depends on the spectrum of weed control, soil type, previous applications and herbicide tolerance of the varieties in your fields. Traditionally, Sinbar or Devrinol were used at this pre-mulch timing. Growers now have two more choices for this late fall application: Chateau and Goal. If you choose one of these newer herbicides before mulching, you can use Devrinol and Sinbar at other timings, when they can be targeted for specific weed problems.

Remember that each of these herbicides has residual soil activity that will affect germination of cover crops for some months after application. If next year will be the last harvesting year for your planting, see the product label for plant-back restrictions.

Frequently asked questions about pre-mulch herbicide application:

Can I tank-mix these herbicides?

Herbicides can be legally tank-mixed as long as all products are registered for use in strawberries. However, if the tank-mix is not listed on the herbicide label, the grower must accept the risks of increased crop injury and/or reduced weed control which could result from the mixing. When tank-mixing herbicides it is important to make sure that there is no overlapping of mode of action; that the spectrum of weeds controlled by each product is complimentary and that all products are still being applied at their registered timings and rates. For example, a grower might tank-mix Sinbar and Devrinol if both field pansy and common groundsel are problems. However, tank-mixing two “hot” herbicides, such as Sinbar and Chateau, would be considered risky.

How do I know when strawberries are dormant? Dormancy in strawberries is a moving target. It is affected by the variety, as well as changing daylength and temperatures. An old rule of thumb for when to apply mulch is after several hard frosty nights but before snowfall. As plants become dormant, strawberry growth slows down and foliage flattens out. Colour is not always an indication of strawberry plant dormancy, but some varieties will turn red in the fall when they are dormant. When plants are dormant, there should be no new growth coming from the crown. A rule of thumb for safe Chateau application is to apply it after American Thanksgiving, in late November.

Can I apply Chateau in spring? NO! Do not apply Chateau or Goal to matted row plantings in spring. Strawberry plants are not dormant in the spring. Root growth begins again when soil temperatures are 5-10 C.

Product information	Weeds controlled	Strengths	Weaknesses	Comments	Max #/yr	Re-entry interval
Devrinol 50 DF (napropamide) PCP# 25231 Group 15	Annual grasses and some annual broad-leaved weeds including chickweed, groundsel, purslane, pigweed, common ragweed, lamb's-quarters.	Strawberries are very tolerant to Devrinol; phytotoxicity is minor when registered rates are used.	Breaks down in sunlight. Weed control can be sporadic and is improved by immediate incorporation with irrigation or rainfall.	Provides no activity on emerged weeds. This herbicide can also be safely applied after mulch is removed in spring, when it is most effective for groundsel suppression.	1	12 hours
Sinbar (terbacil) PCP# 10628 Group 5	Annual grasses and some annual broad-leaved weeds including chickweed, mustards, prickly lettuce, henbit, purslane, pigweed, common ragweed, lamb's-quarters	Economical, providing control of many winter annuals and mustards (especially when low rates are used at Labour Day timing)	Can cause severe injury to strawberry plants, especially on lighter soil types. Varieties such as Annapolis, Mira, Kent are especially susceptible, but many more varieties can be injured.	Higher rates may damage strawberry roots and foliage. Apply in at least 300 L of water /ha and ensure the product is washed off leaves with a light rain or irrigation after application. On lighter soil types, Sinbar damage from the fall application frequently shows up in the spring when new strawberry roots grow into Sinbar residues in treated soils.	3	12 hours
Chateau Herbicide WG (flumioxazin) PCP# 29231 Group 14	Annual broadleaved weeds such as pigweed, ragweed, lamb's-quarters, nightshade, dandelion, plus several other hard to control weeds.	Provides residual activity for several months against many hard to control weeds in strawberries.	Does not provide effective control of most annual grasses. Causes spotting and damage to strawberry foliage on non-dormant plants.	Requires soil moisture for activation. Binds tightly to soil particles and can be moved on blowing soil or flooded soils. Do not use on fine-textured soils.	1	12 hours
Goal 2XL (oxyflourfen) PCP # 24913 Group 14	Purslane, nightshade, pigweed, buckwheat, lamb's-quarters, field pansy, and oxalis (common wood sorrel).	Provides excellent control of several difficult strawberry weeds and seems to have a broader spectrum than is suggested on the label.	Does not provide effective control of most annual grasses. Causes spotting and damage to strawberry foliage on non-dormant plants.	Days to harvest interval is 150 days. Prevents weed seed germination but will also control small weed seedlings (2-4 leaf stage) Do not apply to sandy soil.	1	24 hours