



OCTOBER 2014 NEWSLETTER

Presidents Report

The beep beep beep of the morning alarm clock...for me this is met with sheer dread. I'm not a morning person. I remember the early days when I used to spend weekends visiting the farm. Everyone would be up and going at 6am and I was slowly stumble downstairs around 11. Once I took on the all-encompassing job of being a farmer, I had to learn to work with those early morning alarms. There are so many things we face that require change, growth and acceptance. While I would still love a lazy 11 am morning, I have grown a respect for what can be accomplished when you start at 6.

We are currently working through some growth and change within OBG. As berry growers in Ontario we have recognized the need be our own voice, create our own funding opportunities and take responsibility for the future of the industry. The OBG is currently working through a proposal that will be made to The Ontario Farm Products Marketing Commission. We are proposing a system which will lead to all berry growers contributing a fair and equitable amount based on the acreage they have in production. This funding collected will go directly towards marketing and research activities for Ontario berries. There is absolutely no disputing that Ontario requires stable research funding to maintain projects, breeding and activities that directly affect the Ontario grower. Under the current model there is no opportunity to create such funds.

The proposal of an Ontario Berry Growers local board will in no way

impact how you currently market and sell your fruit. OBG would provide a much more diverse and clear marketing plan for all berry crops in Ontario on the growers' behalf, but your individual sales, records and prices will not be affected under the new system. You can expect to see short and long term research projects laid out. Research priorities will not only be set, but will be tackled. We will continue to advocate for berry growers at the provincial and national levels. You will see streamlined and targeted marketing – we know our berries are better, the rest of Ontario should know too!

We will continue to work with this project and the commission. You can expect and full and detailed update at the Annual General Meeting in Niagara in February. I encourage all growers to attend and let your voices be heard. The AGM is a great event for berry growers and we are planning another strong lineup of topics.

I would also like to extend a HUGE thank you to everyone at Josmar Acres – they truly outdid themselves at the twilight meeting in September. They were gracious hosts and it was extremely enjoyable catching up with other growers and seeing the diversity at the DeBlieck farm. (The food was also to die for!)

I welcome your input. I want to hear your concerns. I want to ensure we build a system that works towards stability in the Ontario Berry industry. As a group of growers let us come together, take our fate into our own hands and create a plan for success. Action and change breed success...just look at what the beep, beep, beep of the

alarm clock has done for me.

Available daily at 6am,

Jenn VanDeVelde, President

From OBGA Headquarters

Things are slowing down for most growers and here in eastern Ontario we had a killer of a frost a few weeks ago. It has been pretty mild since but that won't bring things back to life that were killed by the frost.

It's time to start thinking of meetings and which ones to attend. As you know it's not always the speakers who provide the best knowledge it is often the conversation you have with a fellow grower where you can learn some pretty valuable information. I have always been impressed with berry growers and the willingness to share experiences and knowledge.

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We have started to plan for our annual meeting in February as well as the additional berry day at the Ontario Fruit

and Vegetable Convention. If you have any ideas or would like to hear a specific speaker be sure to let me or one of your board members know.

We will be getting presentations that will summarize research projects that are ongoing here in Ontario in mid-November. The number of projects continue to shrink as few projects are done these days without contributions from industry and we as an association have limited funds. Some tough decisions may have to be made as we cannot maintain all the projects.

Hopefully the growing and marketing season has been a good one. The weather didn't have too many extremes across the province but as always there were times when things were too wet or too dry and mostly too cold.

I look forward to seeing many of you in February and please send me your ideas to make our annual meeting a great success.

All the best!

Kevin Schooley

Achene Report

The Achene committee will be meeting prior to the next board meeting on November 5th. The committee will continue to look at the plant propagation program and the many varieties that are presently available for sale. The sale of plants is critical to the survival of the program. Presently tissue culture plants of northern and southern varieties are sold to several nurseries throughout North America and these plants often find their way to other locations around the world.

The OBGA continues to have a good relationship with the University of Florida and we are often the sole supplier of

new strawberry varieties when they are released.

Thank you

Thank you to the OBGA for the beautiful floral arrangement you sent in memory of my dad. Thanks also to the many friends who sent messages and words of sympathy. Your thoughtfulness was very much appreciated.

Pam Fisher



National Raspberry and Strawberry Research and Promotion Council Update

The latest rumour is that we should hear very shortly the outcome of the raspberry proposal as it is set to be sent for a decision within the next few weeks.

The strawberry proposal is still being reviewed by the panel and hopefully it will be submitted for a decision soon.

If you have any questions feel free to contact Kevin at the OBGA office.

Developing Production Recommendations for Dayneutral Strawberries

University of Guelph – Simcoe, New Liskeard, and Cedar Springs (Ridgetown)

One of the objectives of the recently funded Ontario Berry Growers - AAFC AgrilInnovation Program project was to “increase the profitability of dayneutral strawberry production by improving the winter survival of less adapted cultivars, shifting/extending the harvest, increasing yields and reducing costs. Several field trials have been established at the New Liskeard Ag Research Station, and the Cedar Springs Research Station (Ridgetown Campus) to meet this objective.

The first set of trials were established in the spring of 2013 inside tunnels and outdoors at both Cedar Springs and New Liskeard and are investigating plant survival, harvest season, and yield in response to varying amounts of winter cover and winter cover removal timings. Treatments included no winter cover, 30 g or 40 g row covers removed when high tunnels are able to be covered (typically 01 April in Cedar Springs, 01 May in New Liskeard) and 30 g or 40 g winter covers removed at first blossom. Straw and 40 g winter cover was an additional treatment at New Liskeard. The cultivars Seascape and Albion were used. Visual impressions of plant growth and development in the spring of 2014 suggested that all treatments were similar. Regardless of the cold weather over the winter of 2013/14, adequate snow cover likely provided good insulation.

The second set of trials were established outside at both locations in the spring of 2014 and are investigating the timing and amount of runner removal on harvest distribution, harvest efficiency/recovery, yields, plant growth and production costs using Seascape and Albion. Runners were removed at several intervals (removed 1 time only; removed 3 times and removed weekly) and compared to a control with no runner removal. The amount of time required to remove runners, and well as harvest the fruit was recorded for each plot. Runners were also counted and weighed. The data will be used to complete an economic analysis of runner removal timings.

OBGA Twilight Meeting

Close to 50 people showed up at Josmar Acres for the annual twilight meeting. We had to deal with less than ideal weather conditions but our hosts were prepared with a covered wagon to keep us dry.

You are greeted by a very clean well stocked farm market boasting fruits and vegetables from the farm as well as from neighboring growers. We did see fruit from two other OBGA members so it was nice to see things being kept close to home. Across from the market is a beautiful pond that recently had been dug out and had the edge rimmed in stone and a wonderful fountain in the middle.

Our farm tour passed by several crops including strawberries and raspberries of course but we also saw lots of apples, sweet corn, tomatoes and other vegetables.

Josmar Acres also produces fertilized eggs for the broiler market and thus has a good supply of poultry manure. Plant

growth observed in all of the new strawberry plantings was amazing which was accredited to some fertile and well-structured soils on the farm. At Josmar PYO remains an important marketing avenue for berries.

The evening closed with a phenomenal meal with so many food choices it was hard to try everything. And of course for dessert blueberry cheesecake and strawberry shortcake was served.

Special thanks to the DeBlieck family for hosting the tour. Jos and Marge have three of their children back working on the farm and from what we saw it looks like the future looks good.



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SWD Update

With OFIP II funding from the Ontario Berry Growers Association and the Ontario Highbush Blueberry Growers Association we continued with a regional monitoring program for SWD in 2014. Using the information from our monitoring program we were able to provide regular updates to growers on SWD populations in their regions. This year we hired a student in the Brighton

office and put greater emphasis on monitoring for SWD in eastern Ontario. We confirmed that SWD is a problem throughout the province. Although populations east of Toronto built up later than those in southern Ontario, the patterns of fruit infestations were similar. Summer red raspberries became infested towards the very end of the harvest season, and at were less risk in the east. Blueberries and fall bearing raspberries were infested about a week later in eastern Ontario compared to southern Ontario. A full report of the SWD project will be available in a few weeks, and shared in newsletters and presentations throughout the winter.

Meanwhile, last month I had the opportunity to attend the Northeastern Spotted Wing Drosophila Working Group Meeting at the Hudson Valley Lab in Highland, New York. It has been three years since this informal group formed and this was the third meeting. A lot has been accomplished and learned in this time. However, basic questions about the behaviour of this pest remain unanswered. Researchers still do not know for sure if SWD overwinters in northeastern America or if it re-infests our regions every year. Here are some highlights of reports and discussion from this meeting:

- Research continues on attractants and baits for SWD traps. The best home-made bait is an apple cider vinegar plus yeast/wheat bait. Several commercial baits have been developed and have been tested, including the Suzuki bait, the Trece lure and Kumbucha tea. Each product has its pros and cons and we are still looking for a strong, attractive bait for SWD that does not attract other fruit flies and sap beetles. Until we get a more selective bait, it is not practical to sift through the large volumes of insects trapped, in order to identify the first SWD

on a farm.



- Exclusion netting has been tested for SWD control in both Quebec and in New York. When exclusion netting is used properly it is an effective way to control SWD on blueberries (Figure 1). However, at present this method of control seems prohibitively expensive.
- Other researchers are looking at an “attract and kill” strategy for SWD control. Researchers are testing various attractants that will lure SWD to an insecticide bait. These could be applied to around the field to attract and kill SWD. This research is very promising, but still far from commercial use.
- Several researchers have tried mass trapping of SWD without success.
- Harvest management and postharvest management are very important for SWD control. When nights are warm (i.e. over 16F) SWD populations increase rapidly. Picking daily and maintaining a cold chain as harvested fruit moves through to market is very important. When harvested fruit is cooled and kept cool for 2-3 days, most SWD eggs and small larvae in fruit are killed.
- SWD infestations are higher on fruit in lower canopy. Spray

coverage is really, really important.

I also attended the thesis defense for Lisa Emiljanowicz, a master's student at the University of Guelph, who looked at the life cycle and biology of SWD in the lab.

LISA M. EMILJANOWICZ, GERALDINE D. RYAN, 1 AARON LANGILLE, AND JONATHAN NEWMAN

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(2014); DOI:

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1603/EC13504>

Development, Reproductive Output and Population Growth of the Fruit Fly Pest *Drosophila suzukii* (Diptera: Drosophilidae) on Artificial Diet.

One of the take-home messages for me from Lisa's presentation was the fact that at any point in time, only 8% of the SWD population is in the adult stage. That means that for every 8 adults in traps, there are at least 92 SWD eggs, larvae or pupae in fruit! No wonder traps are not that effective at predicting the populations! You will have a better chance of finding the first SWD by floating fruit in salt water and looking for larvae.

A Local Board for Ontario Berry Growers

Your board of directors continues to work on the proposal that will be submitted to the Ontario Farm Products Marketing Commission.

Jenn provided some good information on the project in her presidents' report but it is important to realize that government dollars continue to shrink and few if any programs provide full funding for projects whether they be for research or promotion.

The Quebec berry growers have mandatory membership and their association has been able to do things we don't have the funding to do. Our model is presently cheaper than what a Quebec grower would pay but most boards run on similar numbers including Ontario Apples and Asparagus Growers of Ontario.

The model continues to have small changes made to it and if it receives approval by the Commission we will be able to spell out every detail.

If you have any questions or want some highlights of the proposal feel free to contact one of your board members.

The right sized sprayer for the job

Dr. Jason S.T. Deveau, Application Technology Specialist

In June (2014), I was invited to Durocher Farm in New Hampshire to see their new airblast sprayer. In years previous, spotted-wing drosophila was a significant pest in this two acre high bush blueberry planting. Since



purchasing their new sprayer, they haven't had any trouble. That's quite an endorsement!

I'm not sure what I expected, but it wasn't this tiny Italian-made Carrarospray (Figure 1). Designed to be pulled behind vehicles without PTO, this 400 litre airblast featured adjustable air

deflectors, and was powered by a Briggs & Stratton four-stroke engine. It even had a trash guard, a “kick-stand” and a clean water tank for hand washing.

The value of such a small sprayer in blueberries was immediately obvious. It fit beautifully between the bushes, so the potential for physical damage to the berries was nil. The pull-start motor burned very little fuel and compared to a full-size sprayer, made less noise. The sprayer was pulled (in this case) by a mower, so the grower not only sprayed, but mowed his alleys at the same time.

However, the best feature was the two-foot diameter fan and deflectors – here’s why:

When I participate in sprayer workshops or help operators with coverage and calibration issues, it almost always comes down to matching the air to the crop canopy. In the case of grape, cane and bush crops, we struggle to choke back the air. Gear-up Throttle-down, fan gear and blade pitch are often brought into play. Exhausting those options, we’ve even had sprayer operators speed up to reduce the blow-through.

In this case, the air speed and volume was sufficient to displace the air in the blueberry canopy and replace it with spray-laden air with minimal blow-through. Combined with an appropriate spray volume and distribution over the boom, the results were excellent coverage and high efficiency.

Want to see the sprayer in action?
Want to hear from the grower himself?
Then go to www.sprayers101.ca to watch our short video:

<http://sprayers101.ca/calibration/adjust-the-direction-of-the-air-stream>

Thanks to George Hamilton (UNH Cooperative Extension), Kitt Plummer (Durocher Farm), Kerry Hoffman-

Richards (Penn State Pesticide Education Program) and Chazzbo Media for making this video possible.

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AVAILABLE

PLEASE CONTACT BERT ANDREWS at
Cell 905-691-2672 for further follow up

**PRISM SG Label Expanded for use on
Weeds in Highbush Blueberries
through the Minor Use Program**

Amanda Green- Weed Management
Program Lead- Horticulture, OMAFRA

PRISM SG (rimsulfuron) herbicide is now registered for use on highbush blueberries that have been planted for at least one growing season and are healthy and vigorous. Apply PRISM at early post emergence as a single application of 60 g/ha in a spray volume of at least 100 L/ha (recommend spray volume is 140-190 L/ha) with a recommended surfactant found on the label. If you are applying PRISM as a banded treatment (50% of the area or less) you can apply it twice per year provided that you don't exceed 60 g/ha per year.

Use PRISM as a directed spray application, giving complete coverage of weeds while minimizing spray contact with blueberry plants. PRISM is registered to control redroot pigweed, barnyard grass, yellow foxtail, green foxtail, fall panicum, witchgrass and quack grass. The pre harvest interval is 21 days.

This is just a general outline of the herbicide please consult the label for further use instructions and precautions before using PRISM SG herbicide



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February 3-6, 2015

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This year's theme is reflected in the **workshop topics** of Water-Use Efficiency and Nutritional Management; Production Physiology: The Science behind Day-Neutral Plant Performance; Alternatives to Soil Fumigation; Pesticide-Resistance Management; Breeders' Workshop – Assays, Strategies and Cooperative Evaluations; and Soil Fumigation Post-Methyl Bromide.

The **tour** on Feb. 6 includes visits to nearby Univ. of California research facilities; commercial farms with conventional, organic, and tunneled substrate production of berry crops; and an insectary that raises beneficial insects. The tour ends with a reception on the beach at our hotel.

Please reserve the dates of **February 3-6, 2015** for the **8th North American Strawberry Symposium (NASS)** – three and a half days of workshops, research presentations, poster sessions, and other special events. The Program Committee is committed to **making this a world-class research symposium for growers, scientists, and industry suppliers**. We eagerly look forward to seeing you in Ventura.

See the NASGA website: <http://www.nasga.org/> for information on mail-in and online registrations, additional program details, opportunities for industry, organization and agency sponsorship, and information on many nearby attractions.