



October 2015 NEWSLETTER

Presidents Report

As I write this it is a busy day around Canada. It is Election Day and the Blue Jays are up for game 3 of the ALCS. It's also sunny and nice and that means a fall day to get things done. Unlike the Blue Jays, or the government, farmers do not have the luxury of long periods of time between successes. Around here, we often talk about the 5 year cycle – 1 in every 5 years will be the one...we hope. 2015 was a successful berry year in Delhi. Here in the South we had one of our best day-neutral harvests on record with consistent yields and excellent quality. We harvested 141 days in a row and we still may pick over the next few days. Our June-bearing crop was plentiful and our summer raspberries topped out yields. However, our fall raspberries did not fare as well. We had our lowest yields ever recorded and quality was tough from the outset. From around the province I have heard a variety of very different outcomes to the past season. Blueberry growers faced severe winter kill injury and many berry growers saw losses due to late frost. Our industry continues to be plagued by weather, virus and disease issues and, as in horticulture, a great amount of uncertainty from year to year.

One program to be aware of amid the uncertainty is the new incentives from the Ontario Government regarding Cold Weather Mitigation.

The province will share up to 35 per cent of the cost of weather mitigation equipment and growers can be eligible to receive up to a maximum of \$31,500 per project. Growers may apply for funding from October 22 to November 5, 2015 through the Ontario Crop and Soil Improvement Association. There will be later intakes available for this program as well. Please investigate how this can help you on your farm – many of the season extending/saving weather techniques that berry growers can use are eligible in this program.

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Now is also the time to start to consider the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Conference, as well as, the Berry program and OBG Annual General Meeting on the Tuesday before. This is always a few great days for growers and a real opportunity to share and learn

from the industry. We are continuing to work with the proposal to the Farm Products Marketing Commission and hope to have some concrete details at that meeting. I encourage all growers to attend and let your voices be heard.

I would like to send a big Thank you to the whole crew at Heeman's for a very successful twilight meeting! With such a diverse and successful operation, there was truly something for everyone. Thank you again for the generous hospitality.

I trust you all voted; we will all be cheering for the Jays and I look forward to your season's stories in February!

Sincerely,

Jenn VanDeVelde, President

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From OBGA Headquarters

It was great to see many of you at the Twilight Meeting at Heeman's. It was the best attended Twilight event since I started working with the OBGA with more than 80 in attendance. The only problem was that there just wasn't enough time to visit with everyone. Hopefully we will have another big crowd out to our meetings in Niagara Falls.

The Heeman family provided a great tour and we were treated to a wonderful dinner that was sponsored by Engage Agro and NM Bartlett. Thanks to everyone for making this event so successful.

We are planning now for our two days of berry sessions in Niagara Falls as part of our Annual General Meeting and the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Convention. The good news is we have more ideas than we have time slots for. If you ever have an idea for the berry session send it on over. I start collecting ideas the day after this year's event is planned.

Your board of directors is back to regular meetings and the marketing board proposal is one of our major areas of focus. We hope to have something close to a final draft as possible at the end of our meeting in early November.

Please read the final note on membership fees which can be found at the bottom of page 8.

All the best!

Kevin Schooley

Achene Report

The Achene committee will meet in November to review summer activities and start to plan for the coming year.

We have entered into a new agreement with a breeding company from the Netherlands representing some of their strawberry cultivars. It will be interesting to see if there is any interest and success with these varieties. Historically there has not been a lot of success with European strawberry varieties but lately there have been a few that show more promise.

There is always lots to discuss at our first meeting after summer so there should be more to report in the next issue.

Best Regards

Andy Megens
Chair, Achene Committee

Fruit Wanted !

Kawartha Country Wines is looking for the following types of berries for winemaking, so they don't have to be clean picked. We'd like 1000 pounds of each.

- Black Currants
- Saskatoon Berries
- Northern Kiwis
- Gooseberries
- Strawberries
- Sour Cherries

If you have at least 400 pounds of Black Currants, Gooseberries, Northern Kiwis or Saskatoon Berries we'd still be interested in hearing

your quote.

We can be reached at kawarthawinery@sympatico.ca or by phone at 705-657-9916



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Mark Your Calendars

Southeast Strawberry Expo
November 16-18, 2015
Concorde, North Carolina
<http://www.ncstrawberry.com>

North American Strawberry Growers Association Annual Meeting and Conference. January 7-9, 2016
Savannah, Georgia www.nasga.org

OBGA Annual Meeting
February 16, 2016
Embassy Suites, Niagara Falls, ON
www.ontarioberries.com

Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Convention
February 17, 18 2016
Scotiabank Convention Centre, Niagara Falls, ON
www.ofvc.ca

Developing F1-Hybrid Seed-Propagated Dayneutral Strawberry Cultivars

Becky Hughes, University of Guelph,
New Liskeard Agricultural Research
Station

Traditionally Ontario growers have produced June-bearing strawberries that are harvested for a 4-6 week period. However, many strawberry growers are including dayneutral strawberries in their production systems. Dayneutral strawberries can be harvested over an extended season resulting in fresh local berries for up to 6 months depending on the climate and production systems.

At present, Canadian growers are faced with several challenges in their efforts to grow dayneutral strawberries. The cultivars currently grown were bred in California and, therefore, are not well suited to the Canadian climate. Canadian-adapted cultivars are required which are winter-hardy, adapted to our climate, have high yields and can fruit as long as possible. Developing new cultivars is a long-term project. In the short-term, recommendations are required to maximize production and reduce costs using the existing cultivars and new production techniques.

We are addressing these concerns in a project under the Industry-led Research and Development Stream of the Agri-Innovation Program Federal Growing Forward 2 initiative. Research for this 5-year project is being conducted at three University of Guelph sites in Ontario, Cedar Springs Research Station and Simcoe Research Station both

located in southwestern Ontario and the New Liskeard Agricultural Research Station located in northeastern Ontario. Our objectives include:

1. Develop and evaluate dayneutral F1-hybrid cultivars and selections
2. Develop strategies for substrate culture of dayneutral strawberries
3. Develop production recommendations for dayneutral strawberries in high tunnels and outside for a variety of climates

In this article we will describe our research to develop F1-hybrid seed-propagated strawberries. This research is led by Dr. Adam Dale at the Simcoe Research Station.



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Hybrid seed-propagated strawberries are a radically new approach, as strawberries are normally vegetatively propagated. F1-hybrid production involves crossing inbred parents to produce hybrid vigour similar to hybrid corn production. Seed propagation of dayneutral strawberries can be done reliably in Canada overcoming the problems experienced in Canada with dayneutral vegetative propagation.

Seed-propagated strawberry cultivars have many advantages. First plants can easily be produced for planting at any time of the year and these plants produce fruit 40 days after planting. As they are from seed not runners, the plants start out free of aphid and nematode-borne viruses. Seed can be germinated and grown without overhead irrigation reducing the chances of anthracnose infection. And last but not least, seed-propagated cultivars can be bred that don't produce runners reducing labour costs in the field.

To make F1-hybrid seed-propagated strawberries practical requires an efficient and economic seed production system. Most strawberry cultivars are hermaphrodites where the flowers contain both male and female functions enabling them to flower, self-pollinate and bear fruit. Hermaphrodite inbred lines would have to be hand pollinated to make F1-hybrid seed. As part of this project, genetically female lines are being developed as these can be pollinated by insects/wind making seed production inexpensive.

To make a hybrid you need inbred parent plants. However inbred

plants demonstrate severe inbreeding depression, so a carefully designed production system is needed to overcome these challenges. Propagation and handling systems for these inbred parents are being developed. Becky Hughes, New Liskeard Agricultural Research Station has developed a system to maintain inbred parents in tissue culture. Toktam Taghavi at the Simcoe Station is working with Fafard et Frères Ltée to evaluate the effects of substrate and fertility on pot-grown inbred plants.

AIP strawberry project update in Simcoe. Looking at substrate trial with U of G researchers, & project sponsors.



This research is funded by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada under the AgriInnovation Program Industry-led Research and Development Stream, the Ontario Berry Growers Association, Fafard et Frères Ltée and the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food/University of Guelph partnership.

Overwinter coverage now available for strawberries

Ontario strawberry producers can now apply for enhanced coverage under the Production Insurance plan that covers losses during the winter month. The 2016 strawberry Production Insurance plan provides protection against a number of adverse weather conditions, including winter injury and wildlife. This enhanced coverage offers peace of mind to producers during the winter months for both Dayneutral and June-bearing varieties.

To enroll in Production Insurance for 2016

If you would like to enrol for 2016 but did not have Production Insurance in 2015, contact Agricorp by **November 20, 2015** to complete an application and choose your coverage. An Agricorp adjuster will visit you to discuss your coverage, finalize your eligibility, and determine your premium deposit. Premium deposit payment is due December 20, 2015.

If you are renewing your Production Insurance in 2016

You will receive your strawberry renewal package in mid-November that outlines your coverage and options for 2016. Be sure to review your responsibilities and the coverage shown on your renewal notice. Your coverage will reflect the coverage you chose last year. A premium deposit is required and is due **December 20, 2015**. Contact us to make changes to your coverage.

In the spring, an adjuster will visit your farm to underwrite and calculate your final average yield. You will receive your final invoice at that time.

The remaining premium balance is due May 15, 2016.

For more information or to enrol, call Agricorp at 1-888-247-4999. For more information on Production Insurance plan for strawberries, including plan details, please refer to the Agricorp website. [Production Insurance for Strawberries](#)

GF2 for Fruit & Veg Producers – Do you have an eligible project?

Growing Forward 2 is accepting another round of applications from November 16 to December 7. You might have a food safety project for your produce operation that could be eligible for funding.

Consider sending in an application if you are looking to improve food safety for your fruit and/or vegetable farm. You may be eligible if you have a project that will contribute to:

- Your operation being ready to obtain an audit to a national or international food safety program.
- Laboratory documentation validating your cleaning and sanitation procedures and/or acceptable water quality and/or acceptable pathogen levels in compost.
- Building upgrades that prevent food safety risks from occurring (e.g., shatterproof lighting, cleanable surfaces, air curtain to separate incompatible areas).
- Equipment that will immediately reduce a food

safety risk (e.g. bin washer, knife sanitizer, automated sanitation chemical dispenser, water treatment equipment).

Growing Forward 2 has established projects that address food safety through worker practices, pest control, pre and post-harvest water, soil amendments and cleaning and sanitizing as the highest priority.

Do you have a food safety project in mind? **Contact Christine Card for more information at (519) 826-3337 or christine.card@ontario.ca**

Cold Weather Mitigation Support for Growers

The government of Ontario announced that it will be providing financial support to fruit and specialty crop growers to help them ensure the survival of their apples, tender fruit, berries, and specialty crops.

- The province will share up to 35 per cent of the cost of weather mitigation equipment and growers can be eligible to receive up to a maximum of \$31,500 per project.
- Growers may apply for funding from October 22 to November 5, 2015 through the [Ontario Crop and Soil Improvement Association](#).

Q1. What crops does this funding cover?

This financial support is for apples, tender fruit, berries and specialty crops such as perennial crops like lavender and ginseng.

Q2. What financial support is available?

The province will share up to 35 per cent of the cost of weather mitigation equipment. Growers can be eligible to receive up to a maximum of \$31,500 per project.

Q3. What equipment is eligible for funding?

This support will help cover the costs of weather mitigation equipment, such as portable or fixed wind machines, heating and air movement devices, insulating devices, overhead irrigation systems, and crop covers.

Q4. How do growers apply for this funding?

Growers may apply for funding through the [Ontario Crop and Soil Improvement Association](#), which administers the program.

Q5. What is the deadline to apply for funding?

The first intake is from October 22 to November 5, 2015. More intakes are planned for the coming years.

Influence of Environment, Cultivar, Mulch Color and Planting Date on Dayneutral Yield

John Zandstra, Adam Dale, Toktam Taghavi and Becky Hughes. University of Guelph

Previous work in Ontario with dayneutral strawberries has demonstrated the value of warming (black, black on white) mulches in the cooler climates of Northern

Ontario, and cooling (silver, white on black) mulches in the warmer climate of Southern Ontario. In order to further evaluate methods to extend the production season of dayneutrals, trials were completed in 2009-2010 at New Liskeard and Cedar Springs to evaluate the influence of crown establishment and mulch color on dayneutral production.

Plots of bare root Albion and Seascape were established on raised beds covered with white, black, or brown plastic mulches in outdoor beds at New Liskeard in early May and June, and Cedar Springs in early April, May, and June. The trial was established outdoors as well as in the high tunnels at Cedar Springs. Only Albion plug plants were available that fall, and these were planted in September at both sites.

There were no consistent interactions between mulch color and planting date at either site. Yields were not influenced by mulch color at New Liskeard in either 2009 or 2010. Crowns planted in May significantly out-yielded June-planted crowns in the year of planting, but not in the second year. Overall, there were no significant yield differences between mulch color or planting date in New Liskeard when the 2 years were combined. Earlier plantings tended to yield better, likely due to the limited growing season in the north. Yields in the 2nd year peaked 10 days earlier with May vs. June-planted crowns.

At Cedar Springs, second year yields were particularly interesting. In both outside plots as well as in the tunnel,

June-planted crowns significantly out-yielded the earlier plantings; this affect was more apparent in Seascape than Albion, and was as much as a 40% increase. Peak yields occurred at the same time, but with both cultivars the yields per week were greater and the peak lasted longer with the June-planted crowns. Why this occurred is not clear. There were no significant yield affects in response to mulch color in either year at Cedar Springs; the summer of 2009 was relatively cool which likely contributed to this.

Clearly, there are environmental factors that influence dayneutral development and production that we still do not completely understand. Work on dayneutral production systems continues at New Liskeard and Cedar Springs.

OBGA Membership

Please find a membership form included in this mailing and try to return it as soon as possible. If you are getting out of the berry business or are not renewing your membership please let Kevin know.

Membership Rates “Notice “

At the last board meeting a motion was passed to increase the cost of membership by \$75 to \$225 per year.

Membership rates have remained the same for almost 15 years. At the 2016 Annual General Meeting on February 16, 2016 an increase in the price of membership will be discussed and voted upon.