



October 2016 NEWSLETTER

Presidents Report

Another season has come to any end. Most of us are likely in the process of winterizing and cleaning equipment, finalizing invoices and balancing books. As we start to get an idea of how we fared this season, it is important to pay attention to how our costs changed this year compared to previous years.

As I write this president report, I am currently finishing an Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program (AALP) session in Toronto that explored provincial politics. Today we sat in on a question period where the opposition party brought up a case study of one individual farming operation that shared how rising hydro costs affected their business. This particular farmer told their MPP the exact percent increase in hydro cost, the cumulative dollar increase in hydro cost, and how the increase in hydro cost will change how they operate their business, which resulted in them downsizing. It was interesting to see that concerns shared with our local MPPs can get presented at the Legislative Assembly and can potentially shape future policy changes.

As you are finishing up balancing your books, I urge you to record key cost changes such as hydro and labour, and share these changes with your MPP. It is your MPP's duty to represent you. Calculating the specific change to your operating costs lets you give factual and precise feedback to your local MPPs about how policy changes affect your business, and also lets you justify price adjustments in order to maintain your current standard of living.

Looking forward to seeing everyone at the upcoming conventions this winter.

Kevin Howe, President

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From OBGA Headquarters

Well our work is done and now the final decision as to what direction this organization will take is in the hands of Ontario Berry Growers. I am talking about the proposal to form the Berry Growers of Ontario a new organization that will require all berry growers with 2 or more acres of blueberries, raspberries and strawberries to belong to the new organization.

All of you should have received a package including a ballot to cast your vote. The boards of the OBGA and the Ontario Highbush Blueberry Growers Association (OHBGA) believes they have put together a proposal that will

lead to strengthen the berry industry by providing stable cash flow to invest in research and marketing.

I would encourage everyone to vote. I believe that if we hope to have an organization representing berries in the future that it is critical for this change. I have worked with the OBGGA for more than 12 years and although I think we have done a good job the trend does not look good. Financially we have seen our income diminish as check-off and royalty income continues to decline.

Government dollars are not as available for research and marketing projects as they once were and those that are available command investment by the commodity group applying for the limited dollars. Some will say that the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. Or those with money can compete for these dollars and those without money for investment are left behind.

If you haven't done so already take that ballot out of the pile of mail and read through things and cast your vote. You have an opportunity to ask questions and get clarification. You will find contact information in your package.

We have talked about this at our last few annual meetings and we will talk about it again in 2017. The question is will be talking about your new organization or will be trying to figure out how to carry one with the old model.

I can't wait to see

All the best!

Kevin Schooley



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Achene Report

The Achene Committee has met twice this fall. There are some changes to the Committee Membership. Candy Keith is replacing Becky Hughes, and Denise Beaton from OMAFRA is taking Pam Fisher's position. As communicated earlier, both Becky and Pam are retiring as of the end of November. Brian Rijke has been added to the Committee. Brian and Tom Heeman are the Board representatives, and John Cooper and I are the Grower representatives. Adam Dale and Sandra Carther will continue to sit on the Committee, as well as the President of the OBGGA, which is currently Kevin Howe.

A meeting with the Dean of OAC and senior officials at OMAFRA has been scheduled for November 21st, to discuss the future of the SPUD Unit in New Liskeard, as well as the need for a berry research position at the University. There is a need for OMAFRA support, as they support building costs, such as heat, electricity, and some of the salaries.

There will be five strawberry varieties in the Verification Trials for northern varieties of strawberries for 2017. The raspberries in New Liskeard looked normal this year, and will continue to be trialed there for 2017. Southern strawberry varieties were recently shipped to Florida for verification.

As part of the Propagation Program, DNA testing will be done, but only on varieties that have been shipped in the past two years. DNA testing is normally done every two years. It was noted that plant orders from the Lab are down this year, and the reduction in testing will reduce costs.

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There has been communication with the CFIA regarding a proposed National Clean Plant Program. This would include several Canadian provinces. Also there is interest on facilitating a group effort for plant orders on varieties that are not currently available from propagators focusing on Guelph varieties.

On behalf of the Committee, best wishes are extended to Pam Fisher and Becky Hughes on their retirement, and we thank them for all the great work they have done for the Committee all these past years.

Best Regards

Andy Megens
Chair, Achene Committee

Coming Events

North American Berry Conference.
December 5, 6, 2016
Grand Rapids, Michigan www.nasga.org

Great Lakes EXPO
December 6-8, 2016
Grand Rapids, Michigan www.glexpo.com/

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

Save the Date!!

**Please save the date for Pam Fisher's
retirement party!**

Drop in to give your congratulations
Thursday December 1st 2-6pm at the
Greens at Renton.
969 Concession 14, Simcoe (north-east
of the Simcoe research station)
\$15 per person
RSVP and pay to Jacquie DeFields
(Jacquie.defields@ontario.ca 519-426-
7122) by November 21st.

We're looking forward to having you all join in celebrating Pam and her work as OMAFRA's berry specialist. Come drop in and enjoy visiting with Pam and friends. Bring your favourite memories of working with Pam (no gifts please).

Marketing Board Update

Information and ballots have been mailed. You should have received the package by now so please read through the information and cast your ballot.

If you have any questions please contact Jenn VanDeVelde, Steve Kustermans or Kevin Schooley. Contact information is included in the package.



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Integrated Management of Anthracnose in Ontario Strawberries

Mark your calendar for Wednesday February 22, 2017 to hear an update on this research project. This is an exciting project that the OBGMA has embarked on and we expect to have some very interesting results that will be presented by Michael Celetti from OMAFRA. This presentation will be part of the berry session at the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Convention.

The project has three objectives it is evaluating. The first is testing strawberries infected with Anthracnose for fungicide resistance to the active ingredients in Pristine and Switch. Fifty plus strawberry fruits infected with *Colletotrichum acutatum* collected from plots not sprayed with the active ingredients are currently being evaluated.

The second objective is to evaluate the effectiveness of the weather-based model developed from a Florida-based system by Weather Innovations (WIN) to predict anthracnose infection periods in dayneutral strawberries in Ontario. The weather-based model trial was planted in the spring at the Cedar Springs and Simcoe research stations and was evaluated over the summer of 2016.

The final objective is to screen newer June-bearing and dayneutral strawberry cultivars and the selection 403CA43 for tolerance to current isolates of *Colletotrichum acutatum* from Ontario. Plants of 38 newer cultivars and selections from Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia, Florida, California, Maryland and the Netherlands were grown from specific-pathogen-tested in vitro plantlets to screen for susceptibility to Anthracnose.

Anthracnose has caused millions of dollars in losses over the past 5 years in Ontario. We are optimistic that findings from this research project will help growers better manage this disease and reduce the economic impact of this disease.

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.



New Membership Rate

For the first time in over 12 years the membership rate has increased. At the 2016 annual meeting of the OBGA a resolution was passed to increase the price of membership to \$250.00 per year.

We have included a membership form for the 2017 season. Please return it as soon as possible and if you are leaving the berry industry in 2017 please let me know so your contact information can be removed.

If the Berry Growers of Ontario becomes a reality growers will be asked to provide acreage instead of paying a standard membership fee.



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OBGA Website

Have you been to the OBGA website lately? I encourage you to take a look at your farm listing on the site and make sure it is accurate. I recently went to the website and when I searched by location I found a farm located off the west coast of Africa. Technology isn't

perfect and there is always a chance of human error at our end.

Have you visited **the Growers & Members** section? This is an area we like to list items that might be of interest to our members. If you think of something that should be posted there please let me know.

The website was designed to be attractive to consumers but if there is something that would improve the site please let us know.

Becky Hughes Retirement

The OBGA would like to congratulate Becky on her impending retirement on November 30, 2016.

Becky has been a great asset to the Ontario Berry industry. Becky has not only managed the SPUD Unit in New Liskeard providing a source of clean plants for growers in Ontario and across North America but has been instrumental in many research projects over the years.

Becky is extremely organized in her work and has been a pleasure for members of the Achene committee to work with over the years. She will be missed at those meetings.

Becky and her husband John have purchased a home in Uruguay and plan to move there in 2017. If you are ever passing through Uruguay be sure to look them up.

NORTH AMERICAN BERRY CONFERENCE

At the Great Lakes EXPO, Grand Rapids Michigan, Dec 4-6, 2016

This year, growers can take advantage of a berry special opportunity. The North American Strawberry Growers Association (NASGA) and the North

American Raspberry and Blackberry Association (NARBA) come together to hold the North American Berry Conference in association with the Great Lakes EXPO. An opening reception on Sunday will be followed by joint and concurrent caneberry and strawberry educational sessions on Monday December 5 at the Amway Grand Plaza.

The registration fee for the conference is \$75/member and \$125/non-members if registered before Nov. 16, \$90/member and \$145/non-members if after Nov. 16 which includes lunch. Pre-registration through the Great Lakes EXPO is encouraged. It is possible to register at the door, but lunch is not guaranteed for those that do not pre-register. It is not necessary to register for the Great Lakes EXPO to attend the North American Berry Conference

Summary of the berry conference

Sunday, **December 4:** Opening Reception (7 P.M. - 9 P.M.)

Monday, **December 5:** Continental Breakfast & General Sessions (7:30 A.M. - 10:30 A.M.)

Session 1 (10:45 A.M. – Noon)

Caneberry

- Exclusion Netting and Harvest Frequency for SWD Management
- Sustainable Options for Disease Management in Caneberries

Strawberry

- Biofungicides and Organic Options for Disease Control in Strawberries
- Tackling Tough Weeds in Strawberries

Mostly Tunnels

- Choosing Tunnel Plastics to Meet Your Needs

- Potential Effects of Tunnel Plastics on Pesticides and Pest Management
- Approaches for Blackberry Production in High Tunnels

LUNCH, ANNUAL MEETINGS, BREAK (NOON- 2 P.M.)

SESSION 2 (2 P.M. – 3:30)

Caneberry

- The Expansion of Primocane-Fruiting Blackberry Production – From Idea to Reality
- Wholesale Production: What are Caneberry Shipper/Marketers Looking for? - Panel Discussion

Strawberry

- Managing Spotted Wing Drosophila in Strawberries – What Works - Rufus Isaacs
- Sprayer Technology
- Strawberry Varieties - Grower Panel

Mostly Tunnels

- Grower Experiences with High Tunnels

SESSION 3 (3:45 P.M. – 5 P.M.)

Caneberry

- Intensive Trellising Improved our Bottom Line
- Getting two crops from your Raspberries: Does it Make Economic Sense?

Strawberry

- What Facebook has Done for our Farm
- Technology/Smart Phone Apps: Growers Share What Works for Them Mostly

Tunnels

- Using High Tunnels for Organic Raspberry Production in Humid Regions
- Organic Berry Production: Grower Panel

On Tuesday the Berry Conference continues with full tracks of strawberry and caneberry educational sessions within the Great Lakes Fruit, Vegetable

and Farm Market EXPO itself. Two limited-registration workshops, “Getting Started in Raspberry & Blackberry Production” and “Create a Food Safety Plan for Your Farm – right here and now” will also be offered.

Learn more about these two berry organizations at www.nasqa.org and www.raspberrylackberry.com.
www.GLEXPO.com

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Four speakers address Spotted Wing Drosophila (SWD) at the International Strawberry Symposium, Quebec, 2016.

Pam Fisher, Berry Crop Specialist, OMAFRA

Spotted wing drosophila (SWD) is a new pest worldwide, causing unprecedented losses to berry crops in North and South America, Europe and Asia. Researchers from 4 different regions reported on this pest at the 2016 International Strawberry Symposium.

Justin Renkema, Gulf Coast Research and Education Center, in Florida, is looking at factors affecting survival of immature stages of SWD in strawberry fields. Typically, SWD larvae emerge from fruit, drop or crawl to the soil and pupate in the upper few mm of soil. Dr. Renkema found that sandy soils with normal (10%) or high levels (15%) of soil moisture favoured the successful pupation of larvae, however, when soils were very dry (0% soil moisture) very few SWD survived to form the next generation. In hot dry sandy soils of Florida, there was no benefit to removing unmarketable fruit from between the rows - the number of SWD in marketable fruit was the same regardless of field sanitation.

Vaughn Walton, Oregon State University, discussed the environments where SWD is found and showed it is highly adaptable to harsh climates. The availability of early nectar sources, such as honeydew on conifer trees, may increase survival rates of this pest in the landscape. Dr. Walton demonstrated that open pruning of blueberry bushes would reduce SWD populations substantially due to differences in humidity and temperature in the canopy of open pruned vs poorly pruned bushes. Another way to make the microclimate less favourable for SWD is the use of weed mat or landscape fabric as a ground cover. This forms a barrier to the soil where SWD pupate and reduces the survival of SWD due to lower humidity and higher temperatures at the soil surface. Dr. Walton also shared some long term studies on parasitic wasps in Korea that could be potentially used for biocontrol of SWD in North America.

Catherine Baroffio, Agroscope IPS in Switzerland, discussed SWD management in Switzerland where there are only two active ingredients registered for SWD control in berry crops. Growers use sanitation, mass

trapping, and exclusion netting to supplement SWD control in some crops. For sanitation, growers destroy infested fruit in a huge sealed vat where it is left to ferment before disposal. Raspberry growers improved control by shortening harvest intervals from 4 days to 2 days. Mass trapping, using an attractant developed in Switzerland, is promising for berry crops, but not for tree fruit. However, mass trapping requires very high numbers of traps throughout the season, focussing first on winter trapping in the woods, then adding traps every 2 m around the crop perimeter just as fruit begins to turn colour. Dr. Baroffio is also interested on the potential for food grade lime applied to fruit to discourage SWD from laying eggs. A great deal of information on Dr. Baroffio's research program can be found at :

www.drosophilasuzukii.agroscope.ch.

Growers typically spend 5,000-15,000 euros per ha on SWD control!

Miet Boonen, PC Fruit, in Belgium, reported on behalf of a large team of researchers, about the toxic and repellent effects of erythritol on SWD in the lab. Erythritol, a sugar alcohol and food additive, had a repellent effect on egg-laying SWD females, and was toxic to adult flies and larval stages when ingested. Although these initial lab studies are promising, field studies will be needed to clarify the conditions where this might be useful for SWD management.

Summary – researchers around the world are working to find ways to manage SWD in berry crops. In the future, low risk repellents, combined with mass trapping and natural enemies will be used in an SWD management program. Most researchers agree however, that a combination of strategies will be necessary for SWD control – don't expect a silver bullet.

OBGA and OFVC Berry Programs

The OBGA education committee has been working hard to develop another fantastic program for the upcoming two days of berry sessions February 21st and 22nd. The sessions will be held in Niagara Falls with the OBGA Annual meeting held at the Embassy Suites on February 21st and then we will move to the Scotiabank Convention Centre on the 22nd and join the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Convention.

We currently have speakers booked from Michigan, Florida, and Arkansas along with a collection of speakers from Ontario including OMAFRA specialists and fellow growers.

On February 21st there is a good cross section of talks that will be of interest to all members of the farm operation and then in the afternoon there will be a marketing track running concurrently with more technical production talks and then we will finish up the day with round table discussions with many of the speakers participating.

Book your hotel today! To ensure you get one of the fabulous Fallsview suites be sure to make your reservation sooner than later. 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

A complimentary shuttle service runs throughout each day from the Embassy Suites hotel to the Convention Centre. The special room rate of \$125.00/night plus taxes and includes

- free valet parking.
- free daily breakfast with cooked-to-order breakfast.
- two complimentary bar tickets per room, per night and complimentary snacks at the Manager's Reception.