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Welcome to “ON Organic”

Hugh Martin, Organic Crop Production Program Lead, OMAFRA

The New Year, 2009, is here. For some there is some uncertainty as a result of world economic issues of the past few months, but for most farmers it represents a new start to our annual quest for a better year than last year. Time to review last year's financials, plan this year's crops and to start marketing the products of your 2009 efforts. Part of that quest is to attend sessions and do your research on potential changes that will work on your farm for this year and beyond.

Thanks for your support this year for this newsletter. I hope you enjoy it. Thanks to Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario (EFAO) and Organic Council of Ontario (OCO) for forwarding this on to their email lists, and I encourage you to share it with other colleagues who may find it useful. As always I welcome your comments by email or when we see each other at various meetings this winter.

Subscription to this newsletter is easy and no cost. For details go to the webpage: <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/subscribe/index.html#organic>

The newsletter is also posted on the OMAFRA website at: <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/organic/news/news-organic.html>

The French version of these newsletters is available at: <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/french/crops/organic/news/news-organic.html>

The OMAFRA Organic pages are linked from <http://www.ontario.ca/organic> and <http://www.ontario.ca/biologique>

The ON Organic Team

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Guelph Organic Conference

This is the 28th year that there has been an organic conference held in Guelph. This year the Theme is “O” is for Opportunity.

During the 1980's the conference was organized by Guelph university students as a sustainable or alternative agriculture conference. During the 1990's it grew into a much bigger event focused on organic food production and marketing. As it has grown during the past decade it has become the premier organic conference in Canada with many of the leaders Canada's organic sector attending either as speakers, exhibitors or to attend one of the many meetings that take place in Guelph during the 10 days around the conference.

The conference will attract 1,500 to 2,000 people to one of the various sessions making it one of the largest agricultural conferences in Ontario and one of the largest and oldest organic conferences in North America. With over 70 speakers and 170 exhibits in the Trade Show there is lots to see and do. Saturday, January 24th is the highlight day with the largest agenda of speakers and Trade Show but Friday has some key sessions on very detailed topics, vegetables, Social Research, Organic Research, and the Friday forum, while Sunday has eight speaker sessions and is a more relaxed time to visit the Trade Show.

When new organic farmers approach me to learn more I always suggest they attend the conference and one of the main advantages is to see the breadth of the sector in Canada and to network with other people who are making it work and are willing to share their ideas. We are past the pre-registration date, but come and register at the door.

28th Annual Organic Conference, January 22 – 25, 2009, U. of Guelph, Univ. Centre (workshops, training, seminars)
Jan 22, 2008 –The Great Lakes Grass Energy Symposium (by REAP)
Jan 22-23, 2008 Courses (by EFAO)
Jan 23, 2008 – 6th Annual Social Research in Organic Agriculture
 Organic Research Symposium
 Growing Certified Organic Vegetable Seeds
 Efficient Organic Market Garden Production
Jan 24-25, 2008 – Speakers, Workshops, Trade Show

For further details, visit <http://www.guelphorganicconf.ca/>

Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Conference

The 2009 edition of the Ontario Fruit & Vegetable Convention, Canada's premier horticultural show, will take place on February 18 and 19 at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ontario. Highlights include:

- Speakers from across Canada and the United States
- Two full days of learning sessions covering key horticultural issues
- Great networking opportunities with fellow growers and industry experts
- Trade show featuring industry leading suppliers
- Fine Food & Wine evening reception
- BONUS! Pre-register and receive FREE Lunch and Fine Food & Wine ticket
- Sessions including: Apples, Berries, China, Direct Farm Marketing, Energy, Farmers' Markets, Grapes, Organic, Pest Management, Tender fruit, Vegetables, Winery and many more (sessions subject to change).

Pre-register by February 10 and receive a FREE lunch and ticket to the Fine Food & Wine evening reception on February 18. On-site registrations will include Sessions and Tradeshow access only. To speed up on-site registration, please download a registration form and fill it out before arriving.

For full details go to: <http://www.ofvc.ca/>

Organic Session - On Day 2, February 19, 2008 there will be an Organic Session at the OFVC conference. Topics that day include:

- **Organic Who, What, Why?** - Hugh Martin, OMAFRA
- **Managing Natural Enemies** - Anna Fielder, Michigan State University
- **Rotations for organic vegetable production** - Dr. Kristian Thorup-Kristensen, University of Aarhus, Aarslev, Denmark
- **Transition to Organic** - Garry Lean, International Organic Inspectors Association

2008 Farmer Survey Results - Ontario Research Needs Summary

In the winter and spring of 2008, the Organic Agriculture Centre of Canada (OACC) conducted a research needs survey of organic producers across Canada. This document is a summary of the results of all Ontario respondents of the research needs survey. Readers are encouraged to review the national survey summary for a more detailed analysis of results from the whole country.

In Ontario, over 832 surveys were distributed to organic producers, including uncertified producers who defined themselves as using ecological or organic methods, with a response rate of 17.7%. The top research needs in this survey will be used to inform a prioritization process for research projects in the various producer sectors.

Ontario Report -<http://www.oacc.info/Docs/SurveyReports/OntarioResearchNeedsSurveySummary%20Final.pdf>

National and other provincial reports
http://www.oacc.info/ResearchDatabase/res_strategies.asp

FarmLINK Ontario

Every now and then you run across an innovative idea that you have to pass on. For a number of organic farmers one of their first barriers is to get a land base on which to establish themselves and produce their crops or livestock. Money is often a very limited resource for the new farmer and they find it difficult to buy land. This new approach tries to match new farmers with experienced farmers who may be interested in some new land arrangements.

Three organizations, Kawartha Heritage Conservancy, Ontario Farmland Trust, and FarmStart have launched FarmLINK Ontario, a web-based initiative to connect new farmers with land, mentorship opportunities and resources of all kinds.

At the heart of the website is a Matchmaker tool, which brings together new farmers who are looking for land and/or mentorship with farm owners who have land available and/or expertise to share. If you are interested, visit www.farmlinkontario.ca to check it out, create an account and a farm listing or farm seeker profile, search through lists of available farm opportunities and the profiles of farmers looking for land! If you have any

questions about using FarmLINK's on-line MatchMaker tool, please contact Ali English at farmlink@farmstart.ca or at 519-836-7046 ext 104, who will help you access this program over the phone.

Over the next year, [FarmLINK Ontario](http://www.farmlinkontario.ca) will also grow to include an online resource collection for new farmers, established farmers, and all farmland owners. So it's a great time to send in your comments and ideas for us to consider as we work to make FarmLINK as useful as possible. You'll find a feedback form on the website, or call 519-836-7046 ext 104.

- [Kawartha Heritage Conservancy](http://www.kawarthaheritage.org/), <http://www.kawarthaheritage.org/>
- [Ontario Farmland Trust](http://www.ontariofarmlandtrust.ca/), <http://www.ontariofarmlandtrust.ca/>
- [FarmStart](http://www.farmstart.ca/) <http://www.farmstart.ca/>

OACC Symposia

Last Fall the Organic Agricultural Centre of Canada organized two symposia with a number of noted speakers from across Canada. These were titled:

Organic Agriculture Symposium: Fundamentals for Professionals

Part I: Introduction to Organic Agriculture

Part II: Organic Production Systems

There was a wide range of topics and speakers including several from OACC, prominent organic farmers and other members of the organic food sector across Canada. I encourage you to check out some of the powerpoint and video files that are online.

You can access the proceedings from these sessions at http://www.oacc.info/Symposia/proceedings_2008.asp

Acronyms For the Organic Sector

By Hugh Martin, Organic Crop Production Program Lead, OMAFRA

An acronym is an abbreviation formed using the initial components in a phrase or name. Government is often accused of having lots of acronyms but most sectors have their share. Here are a few of the ones I use.

OMAFRA – Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (www.ontario.ca/omafra)

AAFC – Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (http://www.agr.gc.ca/index_e.php)

OVCRT – Organic Value Chain Round Table (http://www.ats.agr.gc.ca/value_chain_roundtables/organic_e.htm)

OCO – Organic Council of Ontario (www.organiccouncil.ca)

COG - Canadian Organic Growers (<http://www.cog.ca>)

EFAO – Ecological Farmers of Ontario (www.efao.ca)

OACC – Organic Agriculture Centre of Canada (<http://www.oacc.info/>)

ECO A – Expert Committee on Organic Agriculture (http://www.oacc.info/ResearchDatabase/res_priorities08.asp)

OFC – Organic Federation of Canada (www.organicfederation.ca)

COS – Canada Organic Standard

CGSB – Canadian General Standards Board (www.ongc-cgsb.gc.ca)

SCC - Standards Council of Canada (www.scc.ca)

CFIA – Canadian Food Inspection Agency (<http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/toce.shtml>)

COO - Canada Organic Office

COR – Canada Organic Regulation (<http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/fssa/orgbio/orgbioe.shtml>)

OCPP – Organic Crop Producers and Processors, now known as Pro-Cert Canada or OC/PRO Canada (<http://www.ocpro.ca/>)

Ecocert – EcoCert Canada (http://www.ecocertcanada.com/eng/index_eng.html)

QAI - Quality Assurance International (<http://www.qai-inc.com>)

OCIA - Organic Crop Improvement Association (<http://www.ocia.org/>)

CSI - Centre for Systems Integration – (<http://www.csi-ics.com/>)

SBDFG – Society for Biodynamic Farming & Gardening (www.biodynamics.on.ca/ or <http://www.biodynamics.com/>)

IOIA - Independent Organic Inspectors Association (<http://www.ioia.net/>)

OMRI - Organic Materials Review Institute (<http://www.omri.org/>)

NOP – U. S. A. Dept. of Agriculture National Organic Program (<http://www.ams.usda.gov/nop/>)

CHFA – Canadian Health Food Association (<http://www.chfa.ca/>)

OTA – Organic Trade Association of North America (<http://www.ota.com>)

SARE - Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education (<http://www.sare.org/>)

ATTRA - National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service formerly known as the "Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas" project (<http://www.attra.ncat.org/>)

The List of Agriculture, Food and Rural Organizations in Ontario provides a list of acronyms for most of the other organizations in Ontario <http://apps.omafra.gov.on.ca/scripts/english/rural/thelist/default.asp>

FBII Funding Available

The second Call for Proposals for the \$3 million Food and Beverage Industry Innovation Fund has been announced.

The Fund is designed to provide Ontario's food and beverage processing industry with support to remain competitive and invest in new/innovative processes and products, and skills development, beyond that of normal, ongoing commercial activity.

It is jointly funded by the Government of Ontario and the Government of Canada and both individual food and beverage processing companies and sector associations may apply. As a result of the first Call for Proposals (CFP) in the fall of 2008, the Agricultural Adaptation Council approved \$1.3 million worth of FBII funding for 26 projects.

The current Call for Proposals closing date is 4:30 PM on Monday February 23, 2009.

Please use the following reference documents to assist in writing your proposal: <http://www.adaptcouncil.org/aac-current-programs/docs/FBII-CFP-II.doc>

The application and other documents can be found at <http://www.adaptcouncil.org/apps/fbiif.asp>

You can receive a maximum of 50% of a project up to \$50,000 (and project costs cover most everything except land/building acquisition and major capital). I encourage you to consider this Fund for your innovative projects.

Ontario Market Investment Fund (OMIF)

What is it?

The Ontario Market Investment Fund is a \$12-million, four-year fund targeted to promote consumer awareness of Ontario-produced foods and encourages Ontarians to buy locally.

Eligible Applicants Include:

- Strategic alliances between individuals, businesses, farmers, processors, community organizations, including not-for-profit, and/or municipalities.
- Agriculture and food industry associations in Ontario, including the food retail and the foodservice industry.
- Groups comprised of two or more partner organizations or businesses, including at least one food producer or processor.
- Individuals or individual businesses are not eligible to apply as sole applicants.

What Qualifies?

Innovative market research, communications and/or marketing projects that encourage Ontarians to buy locally-produced foods may qualify. Applicants must complete one project prior to applying for additional project grants. However, multiple-year applications that are continuous in nature will be considered, to a maximum funding of \$100,000.

What is the Benefit to Your Company?

You could receive up to 50 per cent of the project's eligible cost. Grants of up to \$100,000 per approved project are available. Funding from other provincial programs will be considered in calculating the level of investment.

Eligible expenditures include:

- Market research designed to increase understanding of consumer and trade channel demands and sector capabilities.
- Advertising and promotional materials.
- Project management costs related to the delivery of the project.
- Payments are based upon the receipt of paid eligible invoices along with proof of payments. Funding from other levels of governments is not eligible for cost-sharing.

For Example...

Market Research: projects that will improve the understanding of, and access to, market opportunities for Ontario local foods such as emerging opportunities in developing ethnic markets or consumer demand for region-specific food products.

Development of Market Opportunities: creating local food networks linking farmers, food processors, retailers, institutional food service companies, restaurants, culinary tourism events and consumers that will encourage Ontarians to buy locally.

Communication Initiatives: projects that build capacity and develop skills within local food networks, commodity organizations and other stakeholder groups for the promotion of Ontario foods through marketing campaigns.

Consumer or Trade Events: culinary tourism events that build business relationships between the food service sector and producers.

How do I Apply?

Applications are accepted on an ongoing basis and may be submitted either online at www.ontario.ca/omif, electronically by email to the Ontario Market Investment Fund at omif.omafra@ontario.ca, or in hard copy, (one unbound copy) to:
Ontario Market Investment Fund
Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
1 Stone Road West, 4NW
Guelph, Ontario N1G 4Y2
Please allow up to eight weeks for the review of your application.

Where Can I Find More Information?

Check out the program guidelines at <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/food/domestic/omif/guidelines.htm>.

Call: 1-888-588-4111

Fax: (519) 826-4336

Email: omif.omafra@ontario.ca

We're Here to Help

To find out how the Business Development Branch at OMAFRA can provide you with knowledge, connections, and resources to help you grow your business, call toll-free at 1-888-466-2372 extension 64474 or e-mail foodinvest@ontario.ca. For information about this program and others, as well as our branch, visit www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/food.

Have You Heard About the SMART Program for Food Processors?

Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters' (CME) new SMART Program provides small and medium-sized manufacturers an opportunity to earn up to \$50,000 each to help them become more innovative, productive and competitive. Created by CME and backed by a \$25-million investment from the province of Ontario, the SMART Program focuses on three key areas that will help Ontario manufacturers get ahead: LEAN manufacturing and process improvements, information and communications technology and energy efficiency/environmental reduction. Upcoming are workshops that provide an overview of the program and answer questions (a few of the next dates below) but for more details and ongoing seminar dates check out www.cme-smart.ca :

[Wallaceburg, ON - Jan. 7, 2009 \(morning\)](#)

[Windsor, ON - Jan. 13, 2009 \(morning\)](#)

[Vaughan, ON - Jan. 20, 2009 \(morning\)](#)

[Burlington, ON - Jan. 22, 2009 \(morning\)](#)

[Brampton, ON - Jan. 23, 2009 \(morning\)](#)

[Sarnia, ON - Jan. 28, 2009 \(morning\)](#)

[Belleville, ON - Jan. 29, 2009 \(morning\)](#)

[Markham, ON - Feb. 10, 2009 \(evening\)](#)

EMC—Peer-to-Peer Food Sector Consortium and Online Network

Hot off the Press! Excellence in Manufacturing Consortium (EMC) launches Peer-to-Peer Food Sector Consortium and Online Network for Food & Beverage Manufacturers & Processors.

Your Ontario company could benefit from the peer-to-peer consortium resources, best practices and competitiveness strategies offered by EMC. The 3-year, \$4.09 million project will help Ontario's food and beverage sector organizations, processors and related food sector supply chain manufacturers across the province. As an added benefit to small town and rural companies, cost rebates are available for some of the deliverables found below. Ontario's food sector companies will be able to enhance their global competitiveness, enterprise-wide capabilities and access to world-class knowledge network resources.

Food Sector Manufacturing Network deliverables:

- **Deploy EMC Food Sector Manufacturing Network consortium** with professionally facilitated, sector specific Strategic Interest Groups (SIG's).
- **Deploy Online Food Sector Peer-to-Peer Knowledge Networks** utilizing next generation Web 2.0 technologies, to access collaborative resources, online forums, blogging and networking, and continuous improvement contacts, etc.
- **Full Access to All EMC Member Resources and Value-Added Services:**
In 2008, a 100 employee member received over \$243,000 in ROI (cash in their pocket) through full participation in EMC programs, plus the economic gains made from the continuous improvement efforts engaged through EMC!
- **Provide Food Sector Training Cost Rebate to Rural Entities:**
Provide Rural Ontario Sector Manufacturers & Processors with significant cost rebates for onsite Lean & Continuous Improvement / Advanced manufacturing training, including coaching and implementation costs - with a simplified admin/application process.
- **Provide Food Sector Internship Cost Rebate to Rural Entities:**
\$500 per new hire payable after 3rd month of employment. Simplified administrative process for claiming funds.

EMC has simplified the application process for Ontario food sector companies. It only takes a phone call or e-mail to get started. This is a terrific opportunity for your organization to access the tremendous resources delivered through EMC's consortium model and the newly launched 'Food Sector Manufacturing Network' Initiative.

To participate in this initiative, please call Bren McKeachnie - EMC Senior Community Development Manager at 866-323-4362 x228 or email bmckeachnie@emccanada.org.

For general information on EMC go to <http://www.emccanada.org/documents/emcontario>.

New Publications

Available through Service Ontario Publications
<https://www.publications.serviceontario.ca/ecom/>

2009 Field Crop Budgets, Publication 60 is now available at <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/busdev/facts/pub60.pdf> The 2009 field Crop Budgets include organic corn, soybeans, oats, barley, winter wheat and spelt.

Canada Pension Plan

Financial security is a very important consideration for retiring farmers. This factsheet on the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) provides information on the retirement income and the disability and survivor benefits. Available on the OMAFRA at <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/busdev/facts/08-045.htm>

Programs and Services for Ontario Farmers

This 20-page factsheet provides summary and contact information for 64 programs and services available to Ontario farmers that are funded by the Ontario and/or Canadian governments. Available on the OMAFRA at <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/busdev/facts/08-037.htm>

Guide to Cost of Production Budgeting

Cost of Production (COP) budgeting consists of estimating the costs associated with an enterprise and the expected revenue. This Factsheet outlines the process and use of COP budgeting for farm-level decision-making. Available on the OMAFRA at <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/busdev/facts/08-055.htm>

Best Management Practices Agroforestry Series Volume 2: Establishing Tree Cover, BMP 21

This latest book in the BMP series focuses on beneficial practices to establish new tree plantings on the farm, including windbreaks and other reforestation projects.

Training

GFTC Sustainability Series

A partnership with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs enables GFTC to offer a 50% discount to food and beverage companies registering for workshops in the Sustainability Series.

January 20, 2009 - Best Practices for Energy Management
Gaining control over energy usage and expenses by profiling energy data and identifying energy-saving opportunities will enable the development of a plan for implementing energy management solutions. This one-day training program will explore sustainable energy management within the food and beverage industry.

Future Sustainability Sessions:

- March 23, 2009 - Understanding Life Cycle Assessment in the Food and Beverage Industry
- May 28, 2009 - New Technologies for Environmental and Energy Management
- September 28-29, 2009 - Stepping into Green: Environmental Management for the Competitive Food and Beverage Industry
- October 21-22, 2009 - Stepping into Green: Sustainable Packaging Design

For more information, please visit www.gftc.ca or contact Denise Horseman at 519-821-1246 ext. 5068 or e-mail Denise at: dhorseman@gftc.ca.

Growing Your Farm Profits

Growing Your Farm Profits is the place to start planning for your business success. The two-day workshop will give you the tools needed to assess your current farm management practices and understand how proactive planning can influence effective decision making. For more details and a list of resources see: <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/busdev/gvfp/index.htm>

Workshops are delivered locally through [Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association \(OSCIA\)](http://www.ontariosoilcrop.org/). Please contact them for upcoming dates and locations near you <http://www.ontariosoilcrop.org/> or call 1-800-265-9751

Growing Your Opportunities

2009 Value Plus™ — Quest For New Farm Value 2-Day Workshops

You Will Benefit From These Workshops By Learning How to:

- Identify, find and evaluate new value added ideas
- Put your ideas into action using the seven step value added development process
- Connect with the right market channels
- Find innovative ways to market your products and services
- Build a business that can support your new idea
- Create a dynamite, but simple business plan
- Finance the different stages of your new ventures
- Save time and money in the development process
- Price your products properly
- Manage your risk

Workshop days will be held one week apart. To host a Growing Your Opportunities-Value Plus Workshop or to register as a participant please visit www.ontario.ca/agbusiness or call 1-877-424-1300

Events

ECO Farm Day 2009

The Canadian Organic Growers present ECO Farm Day 2009 on February 27-28th, 2009. This year's theme is "The Business of Farming from Field to Fork!" This conference will be held at the Ramada Inn in Cornwall Ontario. Eliot Coleman is their feature speaker this year. Banquet and Gala on February 27th, and Excellent program of workshops on Saturday, February 28th.

Go to www.ecofarmday.ca or call 613-932-7925 for details.

There are also a number of other Organic Events scheduled for this winter. Go to the following links for more details:

EFAO - http://www.efao.ca/pages/courses_workshops.html

COG - <http://www.cog.ca/events.php>

OCO - <http://www.organiccouncil.ca/content.sz?cid=34>

March 8-10, 2009 - CRFA Show, Direct Energy Centre, Toronto

Continuing with last year's initiative to combine the Canadian Food & Beverage Show and HostEx trade show, the Canadian Restaurant and Foodservices Association is again hosting the CRFA Show. The CRFA Show is a leading industry event designed to be the greatest buying forum in Canada for the foodservice and hospitality industries. For details on attending or exhibiting at the CRFA Show go to <http://www.crfa.ca/tradeshows/crfashow/>.

If you're at the show, come and visit OMAFRA staff at Booth 346.

Links to Organic Agriculture Information

Organic Council of Ontario (OCO)

<http://www.organiccouncil.ca>

Canadian Organic Growers (COG)

<http://www.cog.ca>

OMAFRA Organic Agriculture

<http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/organic/organic.html>

Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario (EFAO)

<http://www.efao.ca>

Organic Agricultural Centre of Canada (OACC)

<http://www.oacc.info>

Agricultural Information Contact Centre: 1-877-424-1300

E-mail: ag.info.omafra@ontario.ca

Northern Ontario Regional Office: 1-800-461-6132

www.ontario.ca/omafra