



under the oak

Issue 2 Summer 2001

On The Fence Post

ACORN has now been in operation for eight months. Much of this time has been spent organizing the 2001 ACORN Organic Conference & Trade Show and preparing for next year's event, creating the web site, and laying the necessary groundwork to give this network of organic stakeholders a solid foundation.

Even though regional support and enthusiasm for ACORN and its activities has been overwhelming, it is clear that there will be many challenges in the months ahead. To meet its objectives, ACORN must continue to be financially stable, inclusive of all organic stakeholders, and active in the pursuit of solutions for the organic industry in Atlantic Canada. With an energetic Board of Directors and solid support from regional advisors and food producers and consumers, I feel ACORN is poised to do just that.

Best wishes for a healthy food supply,

Kevin Jeffrey, Executive Director
ACORN

ACORN News

First Annual ACORN Organic Conference & Trade Show A Success

The first annual ACORN Organic Conference & Trade Show held in Charlottetown in March 2001 was an unqualified success. Over 300 organic stakeholders from across Atlantic Canada attended the three-day event, including a strong list of government employees from the Atlantic provinces. Guest speakers Eliot Coleman from Maine and Ted Zettle and Gerry Poechman from Ontario headlined an impressive list of workshop presenters. Organic food gathered from all corners of the Maritimes was served at a buffet dinner for over two hundred people before Eliot Coleman's keynote speech on Friday evening. There were over thirty trade booths and over one thousand consumers attending the trade show portion of the event.

ACORN Web Site Almost Ready! www.acornorganic.org

The new ACORN web site will be up and running by September 1. This web site

will be ACORN's premier tool for providing information access and a forum for promoting the organic industry in this region. It will contain the following sections: About ACORN, News, Upcoming Events, Education, Research, Certification, Organic Marketplace (including a regional data search and a classified ad section), Projects, and Annual Conference Info and Registrations. The site will also offer links to other interesting organic sites, a Chat Room, and an On-line Store offering a wide range of organic publications and promotional items.

Perhaps the most exciting aspect of the web site will be the searchable database. All organic stakeholders in the region will be able to list/update their farms and businesses so they can be easily found by interested customers. This type of information access and grass-roots marketing should go a long (continued on page 2)

Inside:

- 2002 Conference
- OACC a reality
- PM's Ag. Task Force
- ACORN On-line store
- Funding status
- 2-day training seminars
- CSA manual coming

way toward moving the industry forward. Advertising on the ACORN site will be effective and affordable. Banner ads and classified ads (with or without photo) will be available at reasonable rates.

ACORN Board Elected At AGM In March

At the first ACORN Annual General Meeting, held March 18 in Charlottetown, ACORN's Board of Directors was formally established. The Board consists of two members of each of the four certification groups in the region, plus one member from the retail sector, one from the processing sector, and one member at large. The Board members elected in March were Clark Phillips, President (OCIA-NB); Mel Gass, Vice-President (OCIA-PEI/NS/NF); Rob Assels, Secretary (NSOGA); Raymond Loo (OCIA-PEI/NS/NF); Mike Hutton (OCIA-NB); Al Geddry (MCOG); Nedd Kenney (MCOG); Jennifer Scott (NSOGA); Robert Corey, Treasurer (Pioneer Organics, retail sector); Elaine Thimot (Clare Organics, processing sector); and Gail Smith (member at large, NOON). *Note: Al Geddry has recently stepped down and been replaced by MCOG rep Rob English.

Moncton To Be Location For 2002 ACORN Organic Conference & Trade Show

The second annual ACORN Organic Conference & Trade Show will be held in Moncton, New Brunswick at the Delta Beausejour Hotel. Conference committee

members Clark Phillips,



Robert Corey, Kevin Jeffrey, Susan MacKinnon, Claude Berthéleméne, and Claire Hanlon-Smith met in Moncton on July 24 to view several potential sites for the 2002 ACORN Conference. The Delta Beausejour was a clear favorite.

The 2002 ACORN Organic Conference & Trade Show will be held March 8-10. The format for this event will be similar to the first ACORN Conference held in Charlottetown March 2001: on Friday and Saturday educational workshops and the Trade Show will take place; an organic buffet dinner and keynote speeches will be held Friday evening; and an organic buffet breakfast and the ACORN AGM will take place on Sunday morning.

ACORN is considering partnering on the event with a consortium promoting the relationship between healthy food and wellness. This type of partnership linking organic producers and processors with consumers worked well at the 2001 ACORN event in Charlottetown.

All organic stakeholders and supporters in the Atlantic region are invited to attend. For more information contact ACORN or visit the ACORN web site. The planning committee for the 2002 ACORN Organic Conference & Trade Show consists of Clark Phillips, Rob Corey, Kevin Jeffrey, Susan MacKinnon, Claire Hanlon Smith, Claude Berthéleméne, and Roger Henry.

Memorandum of Understanding To Provide ACORN Funding Signed By Maritime Provinces

On December 19th, 2000 the governments of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and PEI signed a memorandum of understanding outlining their three-year funding commitment to ACORN.

ACORN's Board of Directors would like to thank these governments and their representatives for supporting our regional organic network in its efforts to build a comprehensive industry infrastructure.

Newfoundland Funding For ACORN Linked To Support From NOON

It has recently been determined that the Newfoundland government's funding for ACORN is linked to ACORN receiving active support for this initiative from the newly formed Newfoundland Organic Opportunities Network (NOON). According to NOON coordinator Gail Smith, NOON members want their fledgling organization to become well established and financially stable before endorsing financial commitment from the Newfoundland government for a regional network such as ACORN. Meanwhile, ACORN will continue to include Newfoundland in its sphere of influence, but will limit the scope of certain initiatives to the Maritime provinces. NOON contact info: tel 709.744.2815, fax 744.2811, email dgsmith@avint.net.

Prime Minister Creates Task Force On Future Opportunities In Farming

On March 29, 2001 the Prime Minister's Caucus Task Force on Future Opportunities in Farming was created. The group will evaluate long-term challenges and opportunities in the following areas:

- effective, sustainable programs that meet the needs of various regions/commodities;
- emerging products and niche markets;
- sustainability of rural communities;
- environmental sustainability and land stewardship. (continued on page 3)

ACORN has been invited to make a submission to the task force with ideas and solutions for the organic food sector. This submission will be delivered by Kevin Jeffrey when the Task Force meets on PEI September 7.

ACORN Publications and Products For Sale

ACORN has a variety of books, other publications, and promotional items for sale, and we will continue to offer new items as they become available. These publications and promotional products can be purchased by mail order, and soon they'll be available through e-commerce on our web site. Items include:

Books:

New Organic Grower, E. Coleman	\$35.
Four Season Harvest, E. Coleman	\$35.
Winter Harvest Manual	\$15.
Salad Bar Beef, J. Salatin	\$40.
Pastured Poultry Profits, J. Salatin	\$40.
You Can Farm, J. Salatin	\$40.
Contrary Farmer, G. Logsdon	\$20.
Genetic Engineering	\$12.
Growing Great Garlic	\$20.
Sharing The Harvest	\$30.
Soul of the Soil	\$25.
Seed To Seed	\$27.50
Backyard Market Gardening	\$27.50
Solar Gardening	\$30.
Organic Field Crop Handbook	\$40.
Organic Livestock Handbook	\$32.

ACORN Products:

Long sleeve shirt, natural (M, L, XL)	\$16.
Front Brim Caps	\$12.50
Full Brim Hats	\$12.50
Frizbees	\$3.
Cloth Shopping Bags	\$4.

Organic Agriculture Centre of Canada Becoming A Reality

Dr. Ralph Martin's efforts have finally paid off. He and other professors at the NSAC have promoted the concept of a national centre for organic agriculture to be created in Truro, and in July Agriculture and Agri-Food Minister Lyle Vanclief announced \$854,700 in federal funding for the proposed facility. Known as the Organic Agriculture Centre of Canada, it will be based at the Nova Scotia Agricultural College in Truro and will carry out initiatives in collaboration with colleges and universities across the country.

According to a federal news release, "A national centre for education and research in organic agriculture will help quench a growing thirst for knowledge in this fast-emerging sector and give Canada's producers an advantage over international competition. The national centre in Truro is designed to help industry reach expected growth targets. Producing organically demands detailed knowledge of the biological process and excellent farm management skills. The centre will ensure organic farmers and those interested in making the transition into organic production have the expertise they need and will also provide them with leading edge technologies."

Specifically, federal funding will help to develop at least four web-based courses in organic agriculture, which will be offered to students and farmers across Canada. Funding will also be used to conduct on-farm research across Canada on transition strategies to organic production. Market research will track consumer preferences for specific commodities and identify opportunities for producers. Funds will also go towards the cost of sorting and

cataloguing existing research, and the development of a help desk and newsletter.

"The NSAC is a great setting for this centre," said Dr. Bernie MacDonald, vice-principal of administration at NSAC. "We are very pleased to be playing a key role in this collaborative effort. Organic agriculture is offering new opportunities to Canada's sector and this new initiative should help ensure we make the most of them."

Mr. Vanclief also announced \$27,000 to help Canada's organic industry develop a strategy to focus on its priorities in the domestic market, and strategies for competing in international markets. The strategy will be coordinated by a team of partners, including the NSAC.

These two initiatives come on top of \$600,000 in federal funding for the organic sector announced by the Minister in early June, and \$1.3 million in support for regional organic projects, bringing total funding for organic agriculture to about \$2.8 million.

"Support for the organic sector is part of the Government of Canada's ongoing commitment to helping the sector diversify and pursue new growth opportunities," said Mr. Vanclief.

Federal funding for both the strategy and the Organic Agriculture Centre of Canada come from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's \$60-million-a-year Canadian Adaptation and Rural Development (CARD) fund. CARD is designed to foster the increased long-term growth, employment and competitiveness of Canada's agriculture and agri-food industry.



ACORN Profile - Organic Company Filling Need Created by Pesticide Regulations

In Nova Scotia the recent move by Halifax Regional Municipality to regulate the outdoor application of pesticides on residential and municipal properties has created opportunities in the organic industry.

This is just the latest in a series of events that have created momentum in Nova Scotia organic and green industry. In 1996 the whole province of Nova Scotia had started a solid waste diversion program with the goal of 50% reduction in five years. It has achieved its goal and created over 500 jobs and a whole new industry.

Halifax's recent move has resulted in innovation and new products. Gerald Thimot, general manager of Clare Organic Products Ltd, manufactured a new type of hydro-seeding and spraying machine after realizing that the features of existing machines were not adaptable to his line of certified organic products.

Mr. Thimot said he would be glad to manufacture hydro-spraying equipment for landscaper professionals, along with providing certified organic seaweed formula for use. Continuing, he explained that it is

possible there would be interest in the hydro-sprayer even outside of Nova Scotia.

The new hydro-spraying system can spray soil conditioners, compost teas, and other rich organic mixes and blends. The unique quality of this hydro-spraying system is that it can spray thick blends of soil conditioners for lawns and gardens.

Currently Clare Organic Products manufactures the Peat Plus line of certified organic products: potting soil, soil conditioner, and peat moss. After three years of trials and research and development with their seaweed formula, moving into a hydro-spraying and seeding service was the next logical step.

"There is a need for safe and natural products that are gentle on both the environment and people", says Mr. Thimot, "initially we will offer our spraying services Yarmouth to Halifax."

Clare Organic Products can be reached at:

tel: (902) 645-2773

fax: (902) 645-2861

Toll Free 1-877-470- PEAT

web site: www.clareorganics.com

Organic Agriculture Education Program Proposed

A comprehensive education program for organic agriculture has been proposed in a report prepared by Phil Ferarro, Institute of Bioregional Studies (IBS); Roger Henry PAg.; and Tedd Zettle (guest speaker at the 2001 ACORN Conference). The consulting team has outlined a comprehensive program that would establish a series of 2-day educational seminars similar in style to the Introduction To Ecological Agriculture seminars offered by the Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario (EFAO).

IBS proposes to operate this educational program on an ongoing basis, with their first 2-day seminars —Introductory & Advanced Certified Organic Farming— tentatively being held this spring in Moncton just prior to the ACORN Conference. These courses would be a good training opportunity for all new and transitional growers in the region.

CSA Manual To Be Released

Jennifer Melanson of Sunroot Farm (NS) will be completing a draft copy of a manual for anyone considering setting up or joining a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program. When complete the manual will be available at the ACORN store.

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