



# ACORN

Atlantic Canadian Organic Regional Network  
Issue 38, Fall 2010

## Harvest Greetings!

WHAT A MONTH THIS HAS BEEN FOR everyone! From the peak of the season, to the completion of many CSAs, to Canada's first Organic Week, the mission to All Things Organic and so much more. Are you tired yet?

But there's still much work to be done, like garlic planting and getting beds ready for the winter. Of course, there's also the benefit of cold weather meals, such as hearty soups and stews, to fend off the season's dampness.

ACORN has also been keeping very busy and we've included lots of project updates inside the issue. We've also included many photos, as a picture is worth a 1000 words (now, just imagine how long this would be if we tried to describe everything!).

Hope you enjoy this issue—thanks for your continued membership and support.

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PS. Please pass this issue onto a friend/neighbor and encourage them to join ACORN too!

## The Greater Implication of Genetic Engineering

Guest editorial by Sally Bernard, Barnyard Organics

ON MOST FARMS I THINK IT'S A SAFE BET that practicality wins over idealism 99% of the time. On our family farm, as a child it was no exception. I remember picking and squishing potato bugs (and hating it) but I also remember that when the bugs got too bad, shaking the burlap bag of ambiguous white powder onto the plants with the careful instructions, "Don't put your hands in your mouth" and "Clean yourself up when you're done." So when a magical, mystical variety of potato came along that repelled bugs, who was first in line!? I don't really remember much about planting, digging or eating them because it just wasn't a big deal. "GMO" didn't mean much then and if it meant not having to worry about potato bugs in the garden, what could possibly be bad about it?

Or, what about all these "RoundUp Ready" soybeans and canola? If it means less pesticides overall, shouldn't we be embracing them instead of rejecting them? And since it's been pretty well established that the world is going to be facing a serious food shortage in the future, doesn't it make sense to produce a fish that grows twice as fast in half the time?

This is where practicality takes a backseat to harsh reality.

Genetic modification is new and although every 'new product' is backed by 'scientific evidence', there simply hasn't been enough time or enough studies done to truly know the long-term effect of GM products on ourselves or our environment. Everyone has heard the arguments against GMO's, so I won't reiterate them, but I would like to take this opportunity to highlight two greater problems related to genetic engineering, whether you care about what's in your food or not.

1) *Seed saving*. This simple and since-the-beginning-of-time practice carried out by every farmer of the past (and some of the

*continued on page 2*

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# Responses to Tom Lask's editorial on *Why Certify? Why Not?*

"I am a small-scale producer, so small in fact that virtually all my current production goes to my own family's needs. I am also concerned not to harm my family with synthetic pesticides or fungicides, and hence am philosophically attuned to the organic movement.

My problem – and I suspect that I am far from alone – is in the rigidity which perforce flows from any attempt to define (and certify) any particular agricultural practice as acceptable or prohibited. I am in no way damning those who feel the need to do so; indeed if one establishes a "standard", and a certification process attesting to adherence to it, there is absolutely no alternative.

For me, however, rather than whether it appears on some list drawn up by a certifying body, the choice of an input is based on what amounts to a risk-benefit assessment of the particular situation and proposed solution. If the producer of a vegetable I buy in the local farmers' market is willing to tell me what he has sprayed on his produce, and is able to justify to me this regimen, I as a customer will be perfectly satisfied. Essentially he is providing me with the information I need to make a reasoned decision as to whether his produce is likely to cause me harm, or whether the risk of such harm is so low as to justify the benefit of whatever the intervention was."

—David Maxwell, NS

"Attached please find the provincial criteria for "free range" turkey in Nova Scotia. I agree with Mr. Lask's comment about obtaining identification. We began issuing laminated licenses in 2009 so the consumer can readily see that the producer is licensed and the birds will or have been processed by an inspector at a recognized licensed (by the province) processing facility. If in the future you have questions about turkey, please feel free to contact the NS Turkey Marketing Board."

—Sonya Lorette, NS

*Note: In Nova Scotia, there is a provincially regulated system for free-range poultry, which doesn't exist in other Atlantic Provinces. It is not based on organic standards.*

*continued from page 1*

## The Greater Implication of Genetic Engineering

present), is being threatened on a daily basis. It doesn't attract the kind of public attention that many other international trade policy points do, but Canada's farmers ability to save their own seed is actually on the table as a negotiating factor in agricultural trade. This means that we would no longer be allowed to save a section of our best soybean seed from one year to plant the next and we would have to buy new seed from a certified dealer every year. And in some cases, we do buy new seed. New seed certainly has its benefits. But if we are required to show receipts for our seed prior to selling any product, to prove that we didn't save our own seed, it takes away a fundamental right and a major economic savings for farmers. I could rant about the importance of saving seed, but the point of this is that GMO products directly affect that seed saving ability. And, in the case of the GMO salmon, 99% are sterile. The reproduction of all living things is a natural and necessary element of survival.

2) **Labelling.** To keep this short and simple; if GMO's are not a problem and the science exists to prove it, why don't we have label-

ling that allows consumers to make their own choices. The EU has established rules regarding GMO labelling and thresholds and I am frustrated that none of our governments have forced the hand of the food production companies here in North America. As eaters, it is a basic human right to know where our food comes from, if we care enough to look. As it sits today, there is no way to find out that your beloved Heinz ketchup or 99% of the cooking oil (canola) in your cupboard, or those super easy Campbell's soups or some delicious microwave popcorn all come from or contain significant amounts of genetically engineered organisms. It might not stop you from eating any of that stuff (or it might), but wouldn't you like to have the choice?

You can Google GMO's until you turn into a three-headed frog and you will find lots of studies (some legit, some questionable) as to the long-term effects of genetic engineering on our world. The truth is, nobody really knows the long-term effects. But we know the short-term problems and as informed consumers, it's our job to push for regulations, whether we think that GMO's are a benefit to society or not.

I can't stand alarmists and hyperbole, but this seems to be an issue that is quickly slipping from our grasp. Once this door is open, it can never be closed, so lets make sure we want to answer it.

—Sally

PS. One way to be sure to avoid GMO's is to eat organic. The first principle of organic production (COP 1.4.1) is "when producing or handling organic products, it is forbidden to use any of the following substances or techniques: a) all materials and products produced from genetic engineering as these are not compatible with the organic principles and therefore are not accepted under this standard." Can't you just see a little Monsanto executive squirming and shrivelling up with each reading and enforcement of that? Mwahahahahah.

To respond to this guest editorial or contribute your own, write ACORN at [admin@acorn-organic.org](mailto:admin@acorn-organic.org).



## Canada's first Organic Week

"CANADA'S FIRST NATIONAL ORGANIC WEEK was a great success!" exclaimed Chef Dianna Linder of Café Maplethorpe in Bedeque, PEI, echoing thoughts from all across the country.

Canada's premiere National Organic Week started on Thanksgiving weekend and finished on World Food Day. Organic Week was initiated by the Canadian Organic Growers (COG) and the Canada Organic Trade Association (COTA) to celebrate the thriving organic sector in Canada.

"We are astounded by the response from Canada's organic sector," said Mathew Holmes, COTA. "We really didn't know what to expect when we started planning."

With over 50 different events that occurred across the country, ACORN led the charge in Atlantic Canada and was pleased to see that our region hosted a lion's share of the activities to rave reviews.

Chef Dianna Linder told ACORN it was a sell-out crowd for both dinners they held to mark Organic Week and she already has ideas flowing for 2011.

Across the Strait in New Brunswick, young and enthusiastic Chef Jesse Vergen, of the Saint John Alehouse, offered an all-organic twist on a classic "burger and beer". He went so far as to search out new organic potato options, testing the different Whaelghinbran Farm varieties to discover their inherent best uses. "They were so delicious and popular that we've decided to adopt some of these organic treasures into our regular menu."

"Organic Week was a great excuse to talk to people about what organic means, and a great way to feature the organic options we already have available," explains Chef Vergen.

Similarly, at Ryan Duffy's in Halifax, Nova Scotia, long-time organic supporter Chef Chris Velden celebrated Organic Week with a

fantastic four-course organic menu option available for the entire week. Chef Velden created the menu to highlight products from the farms that he regularly works with, "It was a great opportunity to showcase the fact that we source our food from local organic farmers," he said. "I think there should be more than one organic week in a year, we can't seem to get enough opportunities to make more people aware."

In addition to the fifteen food service venues that were eager to take part, Atlantic Canada's Organic Week celebrations included over 10 farm tours, a wine tasting, pear butter workshop and Falls Brook Centre's barn dances to name a few.

Canada's first Organic Week was an overwhelming success this year and it's exciting to hear, not a week later, that people are already excitedly discussing their plans for next year's Organic Week activities (which will likely be held in September). Stay tuned for more details from ACORN...

## Organic Transition Assistance

ACORN'S TRANSITION SPECIALIST AND Coordinator are available to assist with your transition to organic production. Help can be provided in different ways: telephone and email communication, site visits for transitional farms, kitchen table meetings, and workshops and talks to small groups. This service is offered at no charge through a contribution agreement with the National Research Council's IRAP program.



Transition Specialist Rupert Jannasch, P. Ag (organic farmer and inspector)

Rupert can be reached at (902) 633-2358 or [rjannasch@ns.sympatico.ca](mailto:rjannasch@ns.sympatico.ca) for assistance with:

- Understanding and interpreting the Canadian Organic Standard and Permitted Substances List, and other relevant organic standards
- Assisting with production issues for both horticulture and livestock
- Pest and weed control options
- Designing rotations
- Choosing cover crops and green manures
- Nutrient balances and fertility management
- Finding appropriate equipment
- Promoting on-farm food safety (including handling and storage)
- Sourcing organic seed, fertility and pest control inputs, and organic ingredients

Transition Coordinator Roxanne Beavers, P. Ag (organic farmer and inspector)

Roxanne can be reached at (902) 843-2318 or [roxannebeavers@yahoo.com](mailto:roxannebeavers@yahoo.com) for assistance with:

- Understanding and interpreting the Canadian Organic Standard and Permitted Substances List, and other relevant organic standards
- Developing your organic system plan and/or completing your organic application
- Setting up a record-keeping system appropriate for your operation that meets the needs of your certifier
- Sourcing organic seed, fertility and pest control inputs and organic ingredients

ACORN is working to support all interested farms in reaching their organic goals. Pass this information on to your friends and neighbours!

# Local & Organic Campaign Now in Nova Scotia

IF YOU ARE A CERTIFIED ORGANIC producer or processor in Nova Scotia, your newsletter package is much larger than normal: we have included delivery of new brochures and a weather resistant sign that feature the Local & Organic Better Together branding.

With assistance from the Nova Scotia AFID program, ACORN was able to complete its rollout of the campaign, which has already launched in NB, PEI and NL last year with Organic Federation of Canada funding.

During Organic Week, the Local & Organic logo was also used in advertising in The

Coast, as well as on table tent cards provided to all organic restaurant partners.

ACORN will also have new banner stands created with the message on them, available to members in Nova Scotia who wish to use them at events and create greater awareness. All photos and information on the brochures and banner are from Nova Scotia, further raising the profiles of real local and organic farmers.

If there is a special event—or you want to create one—let us know and we'll send you the banner to use. It's very easy and really makes an impact!



## Local & Organic Signs

If you are a certified organic producer or processor and would like additional signs, they are available for purchase from the ACORN office at a cost of \$5/each (shipping is extra, if required). These signs are intended to be used to highlight local and certified organic products only. These colourful weatherproof signs are perfect for roadside stands and farmers markets!

## Nova Scotia Organic Survey—Please Complete!

THE ORGANIC SECTOR IN NOVA SCOTIA is undergoing a strategic planning process this fall. This will include a Nova Scotia sector-wide survey, followed by a series of regional meetings, culminating in a strategic plan.

As part of this process, we need your input. This survey's purpose is to solicit your opinions about the organic sector in Nova Scotia and to gather relevant information that will aid in the development of the Strategic Plan. The survey results will inform us about the state of the sector, provide a sector profile, identify opportunities and issues affecting the organic sector, and help us to serve you better.

A steering committee is being put in place, and the process is being championed by the Organic Council of Nova Scotia (OCNS). Partners in the process include the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture and the Kings Regional Development Authority, with collaboration from Agrapoint, Farmers' Markets of Nova Scotia and ACORN.

If you would like to complete the survey on-line, visit <https://surveys.gov.ns.ca/TakeSurvey.aspx?SurveyID=mlKH1936>

All data and information collected in this survey will be maintained as confidential, and will be presented only in an aggregated format so that individual respondents cannot be identified.

If you have any questions or require further information, please contact:  
Claire Hanlon Smith  
Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture  
Telephone: 902-893-4491  
Email: [hanlonca@gov.ns.ca](mailto:hanlonca@gov.ns.ca)

ACORN Note: You might feel that another survey isn't going to change anything or make a difference, but we know better and have proof that these do lead to significant impacts.

Earlier this year, ACORN-NB completed a similar exercise in New Brunswick and the organic sector was very engaged in the process. As a result, the NB government has revised its organic funding program to include funding for infrastructure, soil amendments, and even cost-sharing of organic certification costs for all farmers and processors! ACORN-NB is continuing to work on the provincial organic strategic plan too, and the document helped validate our case when applying for project funding.

So, if you are organic, have been, or would consider it, please fill out this survey and get involved!



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# Organics on Parliament Hill

AN IMPORTANT CONCLUSION TO THE nation's first Organic Week was "Canada Organic on the Hill" event at Parliament on October 18<sup>th</sup>.

This event was organized by the Canadian Organic Growers and Canada Organic Trade Association in order to raise the profile of the organic sector in Canada. Further, it was critical to celebrate the accomplishments and to develop an increased awareness among politicians that organics are an important, thriving segment of the food trade in Canada.

To start the day off, more than 25 organic sector leaders (farmers, businesses and associations) met at the Chateau Laurier to meet and hear presentations by a prominent Canadian environmentalist, government relations expert and CBC journalist. Over the course of the day, participants met directly with nine members of Parliament who sit on the House Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food.

Beth McMahon, ACORN Executive Director, met with two MPs—Hon. Wayne Easter (PEI) and Hon. Mark Eyking (NS). "Both MPs provided us with considerable time and understanding of organics," said McMahon. "They each suggested approaches for furthering the organic sector and government support, which we will certainly follow up on."

The sector delegates then found time to attend Question Period in the House of Commons (always entertaining!) and regrouped for a CFIA Canada Organic Office presentation.

To top off the day, a three-hour all-organic reception was held at Parliament Hill. The capacity-crowd of MPs, Senators and staff raved about the affair. Organic sector repre-

sentatives were also quite active to meet and discuss pertinent issues with guests. The reception ended the day with a clear message about what our sector is all about: healthy, organic (and delicious!) food.

This will undoubtedly be an annual event, ensuring that direct dialogue with national decision makers is continued.



*Beth McMahon, Matthew Holmes and Tom Manley (far right) with Hon. Wayne Easter in Ottawa.*



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# Resources – Tools for Market Gardeners and Small Farms

ROXANNE BEAVERS PREPARED THE FOLLOWING for an on-farm workshop held in August. If you have any questions, please contact her at roxannebeavers@yahoo.com

## HAND HOES

**Collinear Hoes:** 70-degree angle between handle and blade. Use sweeping motion to cut smallest weeds below surface. (Lee Valley, \$55, 2 blades of 4" and 6")

**Loop Hoes:** Good for very small spaces—3" (between rows of baby greens). Best for small weeds. (Lee Valley, \$40)

**Stirrup Hoes:** Oscillating double-edged blade. Work well with push-pull motion. Good for larger weeds.

**Dutch Hoes:** Also called scuffle hoe, a loop of flat metal used to slice larger weeds below surface.

**Pulling/Half moon hoes:** Cuts larger weeds and can move soil.

## WHEEL HOES

**Earthway High Wheel Hoe** (Veseys - \$130) Comes with 3 standard tools: a 5-tine cultivator, a mouldboard plow and a twin-end furrow plow. All metal construction, reasonable price, BUT high centre of gravity makes

it feel flimsy and effort is wasted compared to smaller diameter wheel hoe.

**Glazer Wheel Hoe** (Johnny's, US\$350): Small diameter wheel hoe, inflatable wheel and wooden handle. Can be used set to centre mount or it has an offset option. Also can use different attachments: 3 tooth cultivator, different width hoes, and hillier.

**Valley Oak Wheel Hoe** (US \$300 and up): Small diameter wheel hoe. Different attachments available and blade can be ordered from 5" to 18". Adjustable height, choice of steel wheel or tire.

**Planet Whizbang Wheel Hoe Plans:** DIY Uses oscillating stirrup blade. Build it yourself. [www.planetwhizbang.blogspot.com/](http://www.planetwhizbang.blogspot.com/)

**Flame Weeder:** From \$50-150 US plus propane tank. [www.flameengineering.com](http://www.flameengineering.com)

## SEEDERS

**Earthway Seeder** (Veseys - \$160): Good basic starting seeder for market gardeners. 6 plates included, others available online. Works well for many seed types (not mustards or pelleted seeds) but accuracy is not great—thinning required.

## Planet Jr.

Classic seeder—sometimes found used—heavy and accurate. Can be tractor mounted as well. Range of different seed opener sizes.

**Jang AP 1 Seeder** (Willsie Equipment - \$375) New, Korean made seeder getting rave reviews. More accurate than Earthway—uses little rollers (not plates). Can be tractor mounted.

**Johnny's 4 row** (US\$240) or **6 row Seeders** (US\$550) Closely spaced accurate seeders great for baby greens. Needs to have level, weed and rock free seedbed. Small-med seed.

## OTHER RESOURCES:

ACORN Website: [www.acornorganic.org](http://www.acornorganic.org) Has some online presentations and handouts from annual conferences.

**Steel in the Field:** A Farmer's Guide to Weed Management Tools. 2002. Sustainable Agriculture Network Handbook Book 2. Edited by Greg Bowman. [www.sare.org/publications/steel/steel.pdf](http://www.sare.org/publications/steel/steel.pdf)

**The New Organic Grower:** A Master's Manual of Tools and Techniques for the Home and Market Gardener. 1995. Eliot Coleman, Rodale Press.

## Estimated equipment needs for various sizes of vegetable farms

Scale in acres	1-3	4-6	7-10	20 +
<b>Seed starting</b>	Small hoop house, grow lights, planting trays	1,000 sq. ft. greenhouse, cold frames, field tunnels, planting trays	(in addition to above) Additional cold frames, planting trays	2,000 sq. ft. greenhouse
<b>Power source and tillage</b>	rototiller or walking tractor, custom work	35-40 hp tractor, with creeper gear, power steering, high clearance	40-60 hp tractor, chisel plow, spader	80 hp tractor with loader bucket and forks, compost spreader
<b>Direct seeding</b>	Earthway seeder, Cyclone seeder	Planet Jr. plate seeder	Stanhay precision belt seeder with belts	Nibex or Monosem seeder
<b>Equipment</b>	Back-pack, sprayer, irrigation, tools	1-row transplanter, irrigation, more tools	2-row transplanter, sprayer	Irrigation, bed shaper, mulch layer
<b>Cultivation</b>	Wheel hoe, hand hoes, digging forks, spades	Cultivating tractor (IH Super A or IH 140)	Tool bar implements: beet knives, basket weeder	Sweeps (Besserides) Budding finger weeders, flame weeder, potato hillier
<b>Harvesting</b>	Field knives, hand boxes, buckets, carts	Potato digger, bed lifter, wagon, more boxes, buckets	More field crates	Asa lift, harvest wagon
<b>Post-harvest handling</b>	Bulk tank, canopy, packing containers	Roller track conveyor, hand carts, walk-in cooler	Barrel washer, spinner, pallet jack	Wash line, larger cooler, packing shed and loading dock
<b>Delivery</b>	Pickup with topper or van	Cargo van	1 tonne truck with refrigeration	Refrigerated truck

# Linking Organic Knowledge: Let OACC Help You

THE ORGANIC AGRICULTURE CENTRE OF Canada (OACC) was established nine years ago, with a vision of promoting sustainable and science-based organic agricultural systems supporting healthy Canadian communities. In short, we are here to help you, the practitioners of organic agriculture in Canada. Some of you may already know us, some of you may need a gentle reminder about us, or maybe we haven't yet made your acquaintance. Regardless, OACC wants to remind you of the resources that are available to you. No need to make a trip to Truro to visit the OACC offices (although you are always welcome!), we provide an abundance of information with a just a few taps of the keyboard and clicks of the mouse.

The OACC website is a veritable on-line library of organic resources. We invite you to visit [www.oacc.info](http://www.oacc.info) and explore the extensive list of extension materials, newspaper articles, research abstracts, animal welfare information and more. We aim to collect organic resources from across Canada and

around the globe, and make them accessible to you on the website. Interested in the effects of organic agriculture on biodiversity? Want to learn how to produce blueberries organically? Need some help interpreting the new organic standards as they pertain to animal welfare? You'll find it all! Searchable and indexed by resource type, category or province, information is easy to access. The website is also the go-to place to find out more about the recently announced Organic Science Cluster.

The OACC Organic Friends' E-zine highlights the new materials posted on the OACC website each month, making it easy for you to stay even more in-tune with recent happenings, new research results and extension materials. If you haven't already signed up, we invite you to visit our website or e-mail [oacc@nsac.ca](mailto:oacc@nsac.ca) to join the over 14,000 people already on our mailing list.

Established to provide an on-line meeting place for organic farmers in Canada to

discuss topics of interest, share details on on-farm trials and experimentation, communicate and collaborate with fellow farmers, and share success stories or frustrations, the OACC Discussion Forum is our newest on-line tool and resource. This venue will also provide organic researchers in Canada with insight into the research needs and desires of organic farmers. Visit today, explore the discussions, and sign up for an account to share your thoughts and perspectives with the organic community of Canada at <http://www.oacc.info/phpbb3/>

## Labelling of "Certified Organic"

ACCORDING TO THE CFIA CANADA Organic Office, all labels and packages that fall under the Canada Organic Products Regulations, should not include the words "certified organic".

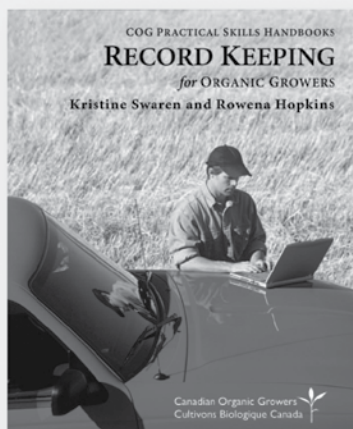
At a meeting in Ottawa on October 18<sup>th</sup>, CFIA told sector representatives that there should be no modifiers to the word organic, which could imply/confuse consumers into thinking it's better than a product that just states "organic".

"The only way a food product can be organic is if it is certified, so it's redundant," said Valeriya Staykova, Lead Auditor for the Canada Organic Office.

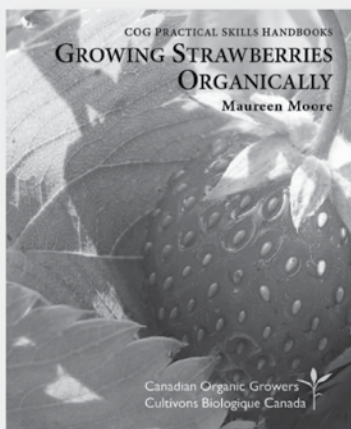
If you meet the Canada Organic Products Regulation, your product is also entitled to use the new Canada Organic Logo. This logo is available in colour or black & white. It is available from your certification body.

For direct marketers, why not consider making up a sign for your farmers market stall or farm stand? Consumers are being told to look for the logo, so let's show them it at the local level too.

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# My Summer Vacation

By Beth McMahon

OUR VACATIONS OFTEN RELATE TO WORK, so when the opportunity to travel to Quebec City for the Organic Value Chain Roundtable and then into New England came up, we packed up the family and made a trip of it. During the two weeks, I was struck over and over by the reverence that food and farms have in our neighbouring States and la belle province.

Quebec, of course, is well known for its artisan cheeses and agrarian culture. We took the highway “less travelled” and passed organic farms and beautiful fields along the way. Just before Quebec City, the government-run tourist centre off the highway even featured local farm products for sale—demonstrating just how central local food is to the Quebecoise.

In Quebec City, I was giddy, discovering Canada’s oldest grocery store in St Jean, just outside the Old City gates. JA Moisan opened in 1871 and now provides a glimpse into the past—wooden floors, tiny rooms leading into other tiny rooms, and a wide array of local and imported products. It was delightful!

Into New England, we were particularly impressed with Vermont’s food and farm community. We stayed for a night at South Valley Farm (organic CSA and u-pick strawberries), learning of the organic farm situation in that region. For the next couple nights, we stayed in Brattleboro with friends who belonged to the farm CSA and were active in the town’s local food co-op.

Oh, the food co-op stores were remarkable! Almost all local and organic, the co-ops stocked fresh produce, dairy, baked goods, beer and wine—it was simply heavenly. The Co-op in Brattleboro (pop. 8200) was so successful, it was just about to break ground on a new building with over 14,000 square feet of retail space (low impact and energy efficient too). See more at [www.brattleborofoodcoop.com](http://www.brattleborofoodcoop.com).

Of course, Vermont is known for its cheeses, and that is well deserved. The apple-wood smoked mozzarella was a highlight, as was Grafton’s sage infused cheddar served with pumpkinseed butter (kind of like apple butter).

The Grafton cheese factory and store was also located in Brattleboro ([www.grafton-villagecheese.com](http://www.grafton-villagecheese.com)). Established as an agri-tourism model, they featured details about the cheese making process and large windows to watch all the action (a delight for our 3-year old, Isla). Grafton’s store was also inspiring, offering wonderful local condiments, wines, micro-brewed beers and Brattleboro roasted organic coffee. I couldn’t help but imagine how amazing it would be to have more of these types of agri-tourism facilities in the Maritimes.

On the last leg of our trip, we stopped off at the Kingston Farmers Market in NB—something I’ve wanted to see for years. With the opportunity to take a ferryboat to the market, we knew the extra time would be well worth

it to Isla. The market was bustling with activity and included three ACORN member farms—Waelghinbran Farm (Clark Phillips and Susan Tyler), Cedar Lane Farm (Terry and Monique Mierau) and Chestnut Acres (Andrew and Jodi Giberson). All displayed their Local & Organic: Better Together signs too—making it easier for customers to locate organic products.

During the trip, I was wishing you were all able to see the independent retailers and taste the unique food and beverage products we came upon. It was good to reflect and understand how our own food movement is building towards an equally vibrant and rich food region. We’ve still got a ways to go, but I’d say we’re on the right track!



Independent local food retailers were plentiful in New England.



Beth at the Kingston Farmers Market with ACORN Board member and organic farmer, Terry Mierau (Cedar Lane Farm).



## Market Gardener Tip: Filling out the Organic Application

DURING A RECENT PHONE CONVERSATION, an organic market gardener offered me this practical tip for reducing the paperwork burden:

“On my organic farm application, I fill out “mixed vegetables” in the section that asks what is grown and acreage (if you have fields scattered around, you list the fields separately i.e. Field A .5 acres mixed veg, Field B 2 acres mixed veg etc.). You don’t have to itemize every vegetable. For my seed log, I use the seed purchase orders.

I use three catalogues and if the seed isn’t available as certified organic, I use untreated conventional. Of course, you must choose catalogues that have a good selection of organic seeds. It is also good to have verification that the seed companies do not handle GMO seed (i.e. Safe Seed Pledge), so there’s no unintended cross-contamination (these may even be in the catalogues).

I have all the catalogues on file. These serve as my three sources verified, thereby avoiding a lengthy seed search document. ACO also has a short form to fill-out, documenting what seed is not available.”

Editor’s Note: This advice has been reviewed and approved by ACO and OCIA-NB certification bodies.

Do you have any advice on certification or paperwork? Let us know, call 1-866-322-2676 or email [admin@acornorganic.org](mailto:admin@acornorganic.org)

## Organic Farmers from Nova Scotia Nominated for Canada’s Outstanding Young Farmer of the Year Award

JOSH OULTON AND PATRICIA BISHOP, Taproot Farm of Port Williams, NS, were named the Atlantic region’s Outstanding Young Farmers in March. Having established a robust organic farm (certified by ACO) over the last few years, Patricia and Josh are demonstrating that the Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) model can succeed in the region.

With an initial business model based on 100 CSA members, Josh and Patricia signed up 200 members plus a waiting list. They now distribute to 108 families every week of the year, with another 100 families added in during the summer months. Most recently, the couple used the concept to purchase a new “community supported van” for their business!

Josh, who is an ACORN board member, and Patricia, an active voice on local and organic farming and involved in numerous organiza-

tions, are passionate about farming. Together they have established clear, defined goals for their operation in 2010 and beyond. Along with their three children—Izaak, Lily and Frank—they are living their dream to farm for themselves, their children and the health of their communities.

On Friday, November 26, two national awards for “Canada’s Outstanding Young Farmers” will be announced in Victoria, BC. We wish them well on this award and in future endeavours!

*Celebrating its 31<sup>st</sup> year, Canada’s Outstanding Young Farmers’ program is an annual competition to recognize farmers that exemplify excellence in their profession and promote the contribution of agriculture. Open to participants 18 to 39 years of age, who make the majority of income from on-farm sources, participants are selected from seven regions across Canada.*

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## National Meeting on Organic Extension

IN AUGUST, ACORN’S EXECUTIVE Director, Beth McMahon, travelled cross-country to attend a meeting in Banff with other Canadian organic organizations to discuss the need for greater organic farming extension and coordination.

“What was striking to me is how good we’ve got in Atlantic Canada for organic extension. We take it for granted that there are knowledgeable and passionate people available to provide advice to organic farmers for free. This isn’t the case in most parts of Canada,” said McMahon.

In Atlantic Canada, each province has an organic specialist, as well as ACORN’s two transition specialists, Roxanne Beavers and Rupert Jannasch.

Outcomes from this two-day meeting included the development of a directory of extension materials, so the sector avoids ‘recreating the wheel’. A directory of extension personnel and listserv email service for extension providers has also been achieved. Finally, the Canadian Organic Growers have submitted a project application for a national organic extension program, which if approved, would provide phone and email guidance, workshops and some on-farm consultations across Canada (ACORN would be Atlantic Canada’s regional partner).

“It was an excellent meeting, where Canada’s organic organizations really came together for the first time,” notes McMahon. “It is critical that we share information and strategies if the organic community wants to develop further.”

# ACORN Members Attend Boston's Expo East and All Things Organic

FROM OCTOBER 13-16, OVER 20 REGIONAL companies and industry delegates attended Expo East/All Things Organic Conference and Trade Show in Boston.

The educational mission was organized by the Canadian Organic Trade Association, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, ACOA, the Maritime Departments of Agriculture, Boston Consulate, and ACORN.

Business participants included Speerville Mill, Red Soil Organics, Springbrook Cranberries, Vanco Farms, Kentdale Farm and many more. Companies all attended for various reasons—from looking for new export markets, to inspiration for local market opportunities.

In addition to the 1500 trade show booths at the show, there were many workshops related to organic market trends and issues, as well as an inspiring keynote by Stoneyfield Yogurt's founder and "CE-Yo" Gary Hirshberg. (Note: If you haven't seen Gary's film Food Inc., go watch it now!).

The Maritime group also hosted their own trade show table, featuring products from

mission delegates, as well as some companies that couldn't attend. ACORN created new rack cards to feature the export-ready commodities the region has to offer—potatoes, berries, cranberries, maple and value-added goods.

"Our table ended up being a central meeting place for the group," said Beth McMahon, ACORN Executive Director. "Actually, our group really seemed tight by the end of the few days together; there was real comradery."

Rose Halliday, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, found the show was more than an opportunity to meet with buyers, but also a chance to gather market intelligence.

"We can go to a show, but what's really out there on the shelves? So we decided to do a specific store tour to three different types of stores that feature organic products," she said. "The bus was full."

Dwayne Coffin, Vanco Farms, also enjoyed the show and retail tour.

"You always come back with some new ideas on packaging, different varieties that people

are looking for, those sorts of things," said Coffin. "There's nothing like actually going to a show, or the actual marketplace, and seeing what's around you, or what's there."

Amanda Walsh, Red Soil Organics, found making face-to-face connections with buyers of great value too. "I met distributors who prefer buying from the East over California, as well as a larger Ontario buyer who distributes into the Maritimes. I was also able to show them our packaging and get direct feedback on it. I'm glad I attended."

All business delegates from the Maritimes also met with New England market expert Tim Sperry before and during the mission. The businesses will now receive a "best practices" document tailored to their individual needs, helping them further build markets in the US.

ACORN would also like to follow-up on this mission with full market study on Atlantic Canada organic sector and opportunities. The last study was conducted in 2003, and of course, quite a bit has changed since then.

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Participants in the Atlantic Canadian educational mission to Boston for Expo East/ All Things Organic.



Former PEI Premier and new Canadian Consul General for Boston, Pat Binns, welcomed Canadians to the workshop on the New England marketplace.



While in Boston, Beth McMahon stumbled upon the Organic Valley cross-country campus tour, where more than 1300 organic grilled cheeses were served up to Harvard students in one afternoon.

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“We get farmers and businesses contacting us for market information for their business plans,” said Beth McMahon, ACORN Executive Director. “Unfortunately, we don’t have many current statistics or sales figures specific to our region.”

ACORN will continue to work diligently to provide greater opportunities for Atlantic Canada’s growing organic community. Stay tuned for more on this and future educational missions. The next All Things Organic and Expo East shows will be held in Baltimore, Sept. 21-24, 2011.

## ACORN Organic Conference: March 10-12, 2011

Fredericton’s Lord Beaverbrook Hotel (Crowne Plaza)  
 Pre-conference Young Farmers Forum  
 Workshops on CSAs, garlic, compost tea, poultry, goats,  
 succession planting, business and marketing.  
 Saturday workshops for organic families  
 Seedy Saturday  
 General registration will open in January.  
 Trade show registration will open November 1<sup>st</sup>.

For details, please contact ACORN at [admin@acornorganic.org](mailto:admin@acornorganic.org) or 1-866-322-2676.

# CSA Network Update

DID YOU KNOW THAT ACORN HAS A “virtual network” for all interested CSA farms and providers in Atlantic Canada?

Using a new web-based technology called “Big Tent”, members are able to share ideas and photos. Activity has been quiet over the summer, but we expect things will pick-up now that many CSAs are almost done for the season.

ACORN has also launched a CSA member survey for any CSA farm that wants to be involved. This survey is to be distributed to CSA members for feedback. Survey results will be sent to individual farm/CSAs, as well as compiled and sent to the group.

“We thought this project would help farmers reduce their workload, as well as provide CSA members with a communications tool that was more anonymous, so they could provide very honest responses,” said Beth McMahon, ACORN. “For farms that are doing their own surveys, we’re asking if they can send us a summary, which can be used in the final report.”

Findings of the whole project will also be released generally, helping the emerging CSA movement to better understand trends and consumer expectations. There will also be a discussion on the findings at the ACORN conference.

There is no cost to be a part of this network or to take part in the survey. If you want more information, call Beth at 1-866-322-2676 or email [admin@acornorganic.org](mailto:admin@acornorganic.org).

## Congratulations Scotsburn Co-op!



Co-op Country Stores of Atlantic Canada would like to congratulate Scotsburn Co-op on becoming a newly certified organic feed mill! Looking for certified organic feed? Stop into your local Co-op Country store and check out our selection of organic feeds.



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Visit: [www.co-opcountry.com](http://www.co-opcountry.com) or email: [qualityorganics@co-oponline.com](mailto:qualityorganics@co-oponline.com)



## Scholarship created for Newfoundland organic pioneer—Jon Lien

MOST PEOPLE WILL KNOW JON AND THE Lien Farm, not for Jon's legacy as a researcher or conservationist, but as Judy's partner in opening the first certified organic farm in Newfoundland, along with the Organic Farm.

"The achievements of the Lien Farm would not have been possible without the passion that Jon had for the development of the farm, where he built greenhouses and a swedish barn

and cleared some land for animals with an axe, his tractor and chain saw—refusing to hire an excavator to come in and rape the land, only to recover it for a vegetable garden and a space dedicated for the goats, ducks and chickens," said long-time friend, Melba Rabinowitz.

To honour a man whose achievements will have impact for generations to come, the Dr. Jon Lien Memorial Scholarship Fund has

been chosen as a fitting way to build one more lasting legacy. All friends, colleagues and former students of Jon are invited to help make this scholarship a reality. Donations (tax receipts provided) can be sent to: Dr. Jon Lien Memorial Scholarship Fund Alumni Affairs and Development Memorial University of Newfoundland St. John's NL, A1C 5S7

## Organic Standards Workshops in Nova Scotia

DID YOU KNOW THAT THE CANADIAN ORGANIC STANDARDS HAVE been revised again? Want a refresher on the standards? ACORN wants to keep you up-to-date!

Roxanne Beavers, organic farmer/inspector and ACORN voting member on the Canadian Organic Standards, will be offering the following workshops on organic standards:

Monday, Nov. 15 (1-3pm) in Annapolis Royal, NS  
Monday, Nov. 15 (6-8pm) in Kentville, NS

Wednesday, Nov. 17 (10-12pm) in Truro, NS  
Wednesday, Nov. 17 (2-4pm) in Tatamagouche, NS

Thursday, Nov. 18 (6-8pm) in Antigonish, NS

Cost is "pay what you can" for ACORN members or \$10 for non-members. Pre-registration is required, as copies of the standards will be provided.

Please call ACORN at 1-866-322-2676 or email [admin@acorn-organic.org](mailto:admin@acorn-organic.org).

These workshops have been funded in part by the Nova Scotia Agri-Foods Industry Development Fund (AFID).

Don't live in NS? A webinar on standards is planned for early December.

## Cultivating Your Future

*Exploring New Opportunities in Value Added Agriculture Conference*

You're invited to join us for this one-day value-added conference bringing the agricultural sector together to exchange ideas, make valuable contacts, develop new skills, and advance your value added product ideas.

**November 18, 2010**  
**Old Orchard Inn, Greenwich, NS,**  
**8 am - 4 pm**

**Space is limited. Register early at**  
**[www.acsbe.com/agriculture](http://www.acsbe.com/agriculture) or contact us**  
**at 1-877-232-2723 or [acsbe@acadiu.ca](mailto:acsbe@acadiu.ca).**  
**\$40 per person, lunch included.**



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