



# ACORN

Atlantic Canadian Organic Regional Network  
Issue 21, Summer 2006

IT'S A QUIET TIME IN THE ACORN OFFICE, as you are all busy with the growing season. It seemed that for a while that it would never stop raining, but the sun has now made itself known and I hope all your farms and gardens are benefiting from it and making up for lost time.

The summer is ACORN's season for catching up on neglected paperwork and files, as well as planning and getting a head start on up-coming projects. We've also hired a student for 12-weeks through a federal summer job creation grant to help with some of these initiatives (meet Nicole on page 3).

Some of the on-going projects we have include the certification body study, preparation for the 2007 conference and trade show, up-dating our databases, and work on the federal regulation. New projects underway include creating a sustainable funding plan for ACORN, fall development workshops, and developing a new resource directory. I won't go into specifics in this column, but you can read about all of these initiatives inside the newsletter.

As these are my last couple months before I take maternity leave, I'm trying to get as much done on our projects to make the transition as smooth as possible for the acting Executive Director (see page 3). I'm due mid-September and I'm just so excited to meet this new little babe. So, this will be my last newsletter for the next several months, and I want to wish you all a very prosperous harvest and year ahead,

Beth

## Life on the Road

By Alan Stewart, ACORN President

I HAVE COME TO REALIZE THAT THERE IS no final destination on the road to Organics. Like life itself, it is not the destination that is as important as the trip along the way. The elusive destination is not just around the next corner. For those of us who have been in the business for over fifteen years, we would not have dreamed that people in the Maritimes are eating as much organic food as they are now. That's the good news, the bad news is that most of it is not produced in the Maritimes. Organic farmers and mainstream consumers are traveling on different paths.

I certainly think that the demand for organic food was very predictable. In the Maritimes, we have the benefit of observing what is happening to the west of us with respect to trends in food and lifestyle. You would think that this lead-time would allow government and the industry to take measures to allow local stakeholders to take advantage of the "movement" once it hit the Maritimes. What is disappointing is that not enough stakeholders picked up the ball back in the eighties and nineties. There were just a few carrying that ball, and it would have been nice to have a hand or two from government or the conventional sector as well. To be sure, those hands are there now, and they are welcome. The organic scene in BC and QC is further advanced than ours because government and industry participated to a higher degree at the earlier stages.

That is all water under the bridge. Where do we go now? One of the goals of the ACORN board of directors is to help rectify this imbalance in producing and purchasing patterns

that now exist. Simply put, local stakeholders have to capture more of the organic food dollar that is being spent. As an organization it is ACORN's role to do everything in its power to shine a bright light on Maritime grown organic food. Beside the publicity piece, there are two main associated challenges; distribution and new organic farmers/processors. Of course it is easy to highlight problems, it is another thing to actually do something about them, and that's why we are working on initiatives to help address the situation on the road before us.

As individual growers and processors there are things that we can do. There is no question that the organic industry needs government help. One thing that each of us can do to allow that to happen is to contribute the statistical information that ACORN asks for from time to time. Facts and figures are the fuel that fires the government money machine. We as individuals should also support any initiative that is trying to address the distribution challenges. This is a daunting exercise and will require a lot of sacrifice from both suppliers and distributors along the way. As always, we should be good ambassadors of organic agriculture. Our emphasis should be on quality and relevant products—consumers purchase based on quality first. When an organic farmer or processor is seen to be having success in producing quality organic food, someone outside the tent perks up and starts looking inside. We need more organic farmers inside our tent.

In the end, I feel that good old fashioned Maritime perseverance will win the day. Once everyone connected to farming realizes how large a role that organic agriculture can play in revitalizing our rural economies, the will to make this happen will give us that final push toward our destination.

# Certification Body Study Update

ACORN IS LEADING A FEASIBILITY STUDY on the creation of a locally based organic certification body. This study was requested by the two local certifying bodies (MCOG and NSOGA), as they look to the requirements of the impending national organic regulation (where “organic” would require being certified by an accredited organization). ACORN secured funding from ACOA and the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture, and hired Gardner Pinfold Consulting to research options for local certification, consult with industry, and produce an implementation plan.

In May, there were five meetings held across the Maritimes on creating a new, accredited certifying body—Moncton, Fredericton, Charlottetown, Truro, and Wolfville, with call-in options for those in Newfoundland and Cape Breton. These meetings saw the participation of over 70 regional stakeholders, with almost equal participation from each Maritime Province and producers representing all five active certifying bodies.

Bob Fraser, of Gardiner Pinfold, led the meetings; providing an overview of the study to date, along with five potential scenarios. The options included ACORN forming an arms-length accredited certifying body; the currently unaccredited certi-

fying bodies would become accredited; provincial government would accredit or certify; contracted services of an out-of-region certifying body would be obtained; or do nothing. Participants were then asked to comment on these options. According to Fraser, the following points were common throughout the consultations:

## AREAS OF CONSENSUS:

- Regional control and influence on national standard is important.
- ACORN should encourage all regional provinces to negotiate same Memorandums of Understanding with the federal government, so that each province has similar ground rules when it comes to the organic regulation.
- It would be good to have an Atlantic-based certifying body (not much support for contracting out certification)
- System must be affordable recognizing that certifying costs will rise for the currently unaccredited organic producers.
- Small producers should be protected and allowed to sell product in their own province.
- Consumer recognition is important.
- Important to ensure whatever model is pursued will be feasible.
- Status quo is not an option

Gardner Pinfold has taken these viewpoints and is preparing a summary of each of the options discussed, which will play a key role in the design of a business model for an Atlantic based Certifying Body.

We are now eagerly awaiting the release of the draft organic regulation, to ensure that the study’s end result is realistic. It is not known exactly when the regulation will be released; however, it is hoped to be very soon. In the meantime, Gardener Pinfold is working with two accreditation groups, developing estimates for what it will cost a new certifying body to accredit, and is continuing to assemble case studies on various certifying body models. The study is to be completed by September 2006.

If you have any questions, or would like to provide your input on the study, please email [admin@acornorganic.org](mailto:admin@acornorganic.org) or you can directly contact Bob Fraser, at [rfraser@gardnerpinfold.ca](mailto:rfraser@gardnerpinfold.ca).

## Update on the Organic Regulation

YES, IT’S BEEN A SLOW PROCESS AND SOMETIMES it feels that we’re not much closer to having a national regulation than we were a couple years ago, but progress is being made.

There has been significant work done on creating an official industry body that will liaise with the government on the regulation. This new organization’s tentative name is the Canadian Organic Regulatory Council (CORC) and it is currently comprised of provincial representatives and one national trade organization, including:

- New Brunswick: Clark Phillips, interim rep for organic sector in NB
- Nova Scotia: Angela Patterson, President of the Nova Scotia Organic Growers Association (NSOGA)
- Newfoundland and Labrador: Mike Rabinowitz, Newfoundland Organic Operators Network (NOON)

- Prince Edward Island: Raymond Loo, PEI Organic Producers Cooperative

According to CORC’s minutes, “A defined mandate is now proposed for the organic council. That mandate will be limited to representing the organic industry while working with provincial, territorial and federal governments as partners on national organic regulatory issues”. The by-laws for the new organization are still in the works and they hope to have them ratified in November 2006. Danielle Schami is the coordinator CORC and she can be reached at [dschami@primus.ca](mailto:dschami@primus.ca).

The Quality Systems Manual (QSM) is now in draft form, which will provide the backbone to the regulation (the QSM is over 200 pages and the regulation is only about 10 pages!). In June, Beth McMahon (ACORN) attended meetings in Ottawa to provide comment on

the document, along with eight others from the organic industry. There were no glaring problems with the QSM; however, many details were discussed which will need to be reconsidered. When comments from this industry meeting have been incorporated into the manual, it will be translated and posted for public consultation.

The actual regulation is still under legal review, with over 15 drafts being completed to date! One of the main hold-ups is the cost recovery aspect of it—who’s going to pay and how much? We were hoping to see the regulation pre-published by the end of June, but it’s anyone’s guess as to when this will happen. Paddy Doherty, coordinator of the Canadian Organic Initiative, wrote in his May report, “There is good support for the organic regulation throughout upper management of the CFIA and AAFC (including the Minister of Agriculture) so though I am feeling anxious, I am still confident we will see a completed regulation soon”. Cross our fingers!

## ACORN's Acting Executive Director

AS MANY OF YOU HEARD FIRST HAND at ACORN's annual conference, Beth McMahon will be taking maternity leave this fall. For a small non-profit organization, which is based out of McMahon's Sackville home office and uses her personal office equipment, finding a suitable replacement was a bit of a logistical challenge.

"My job at ACORN is also quite demanding," says McMahon, "particularly in the Fall and Winter months, when the certification body study will be wrapping up, a new directory being created, and there will be several regional workshops, the conference, and trade show taking place. This is also the time for our annual audit and when the sustainable funding plan is to be completed."

After careful consideration and review, the ACORN board of directors offered the position to Matthew Holmes, a literal "internal candidate". While having excellent credentials and experience with the local organic community, Holmes is also Beth McMahon's spouse.

"This is a critical time for ACORN and in hiring Matthew, the organization will continue to operate seamlessly. There's no phone, email, or address changes required and Beth's knowledge and experience will be retained," stated Alan Stewart, ACORN President.

Many of you may already be familiar with Matthew Holmes, who has played a key organizational role in the past two ACORN conferences. Holmes is also a contributing editor and Atlantic correspondent for the Canadian Organic Growers magazine. In addition to his organic involvement, Holmes has worked in senior communications and policy development for the federal government and York University, and is currently on a research contract with the Tantramar Heritage Trust.

"This is an ideal situation and I am confident that Matthew will be able to transition to ACORN without any difficulty", McMahon commented. "Not only does Matthew have an active interest in organics, but he has the technical skills that this job requires—he's an excellent communicator and writer, which we need for all our funding proposals and work with the government funders, and he's also done payroll and knows our accounting software. That's a tough combination of skills to find for a temporary position."

Holmes is now looking forward to the challenge that ACORN will offer him, "I'm familiar with many of the projects that are currently in the works and recognize that the coming year will be very busy; however, I've always enjoyed a challenge and I'm looking forward to working for ACORN and its membership."

Matthew Holmes will officially begin his work at ACORN on September 1<sup>st</sup>.

## ACORN Organic E-News Celebrates

AS OF JUNE 1<sup>ST</sup>, ACORN BROKE THE 700 mark for its email contact list! This means that each month, we reach over 700 people (and many more, as some emails go to businesses) to share information on organics in Atlantic Canada.

Do you get our monthly email newsletter? If not and you have an email address, drop us a note and we'll sign you up. Or if you know someone who'd like to get regular news and events relating to organics, please let them know too—it's free!

Let e-news help you get your message out: If you have an organic event happening (ie. open farm day) or something newsworthy that you'd like to promote, let us know. We are also happy to list your classifieds—Looking for equipment? Have a job posting? Selling livestock? Let ACORN help you get your message out to the organic community.

Send your announcements and news by the 25th of each month to get it in the next e-news (which go out on the 1st of each month) by emailing ACORN at [admin@acornorganic.org](mailto:admin@acornorganic.org)



## Meet our Summer Student

Hi, I'm Nicole Heighton, and on June 19th I began work as ACORN's Project Coordinator for the summer term. I am from Pictou, Nova Scotia, and attend Mount Allison University, where I'm completing a major in mathematics.

For the rest of the summer, I will be working on various projects to promote local organic agriculture, including writing organic producer profiles, helping with the newsletter and e-news, working on the 2007 trade show, and much more. Already, I have completed several projects that I hope you will find beneficial:

First, I compiled a list of hundreds of alternative health care practitioners in Atlantic Canada. I contacted every one by phone to discuss the possibility of sending them an information package about organic agriculture, including our local resource directory, a newsletter, and brochures. A total of 76 health care practitioners were interested and many were very enthusiastic about receiving this package, as they believe this information could be beneficial both to them and their clients.

After these information packages were compiled and sent, I began my second major project, which involved reviewing the supplier information on the Grower's Database (Input's Database), to ensure it was current. After attempting to visit many websites, searching for new websites, and verifying phone numbers and location information, the directory is finally up to date!

One other current project of mine is translating some information from the ACORN website, so that there will soon be easily accessible information for those who speak French. It won't be all the information that's on the website, but it will provide basic information on organics and ACORN.

I'm really enjoying working for ACORN this summer, and I am very appreciative of the chance I have been given to learn more about local organics.

## Farm Profiles

ONE OF THE PROJECTS THAT NICOLE, OUR summer student, is working on is creating detailed profiles for each of the certified farms in Atlantic Canada. Some of you may have already had a profile done in previous years or been contacted, but this summer we're trying to get as many completed as possible.

We're then going to put these profiles up on the ACORN website for everyone to read—you may have seen the "Featured Organic Producer" on the ACORN website, well we thought it would be great if we could feature all local organic farms!

"Putting a face on the food we eat" is becoming a very important method for creating strong customer relationships, and this is one thing that ACORN can help you do. We understand that you might not want to "toot your own horn"—but we can do it for you.

Profiles will include a short history of the farm, why you are organic, where you sell your products, challenges, future plans, and any anecdotes that you may want to include. Nicole will conduct the interviews, write up the profiles, and then we'll send them back to you for the final "seal of approval". And if you have a photo, we'd love to include that too.

So far, we've already got over 20 profiles completed—and we hope that when you hear from us that you'll take a moment to answer some questions and be part of this free marketing opportunity. You'll be hearing from us shortly!



*Matheson Century Farm's Sunflower U-Pick*

## Moving the Family Farm Forward

MATHESON CENTURY FARMS HAS KEPT UP with the times. With environmentally friendly farming practices, an interactive aspect that invites people to enjoy the panoramic view from the market garden, and an attractive, resourceful website, this farm is on the cutting edge. Now run as a multi-family farm by three brothers, Matheson Century Farms has been a fixture on Prince Edward Island since before Confederation.

The farm took root in 1840, when brothers Neil and Archibald Matheson arrived on PEI from the Isle of Skye, Scotland. The brothers were first settled in Heatherdale, until Neil's son and daughter-in-law made their journey to Forest Hill. With everything they owned packed into a two-wheeled wagon and pulled by a single horse, they persevered. Using nothing but an axe, stumping hoe, and sense of determination to clear dense forest and build a home, the Matheson's farm and hard-working attitude have now been passed on through six generations.

Brent, Floyd, and Calvin Matheson took the farm over from their father in 1996. Each of the brothers, with help from their own children, now operates separate aspects of the farm.

"When the kids were young they were interested in growing things," says Brent, describing the humble beginnings of the market garden. "We did a fall focus for Halloween and decorating. Just fun and playful, with pumpkins and

gourds." The market garden expanded from there. It is now about an acre, and is home to a large selection of organic squash, gourds, pumpkins, beans, cucumbers, chives, carrots, broomcorn, rhubarb, and "U-pick" sunflowers and cut flowers.

In 2005, the market garden of Matheson Century Farm was first certified as organic for by Maritime Certified Organic Growers (MCOG). "We were looking for ways of getting an edge, of reducing costs of input," explains Brent. "Having less impact on the environment was always in the back of our minds. Some of our friends are involved in organics, so we checked it out."

Brent admits that the process of becoming organic wasn't exactly easy. "Transitioning certainly was a learning process. We've only started, so I'm sure the learning curve will continue to be quite steep."

He cites both weed management and marketing as challenges. "We do a lot of marketing through farm gate sales. Just learning what varieties to plant, what people do want—everything is still a learning process."

Although his main focus is still on squash, Brent is also trying "U-pick" cut flowers. Visitors can stroll through the zinnias, gazinias, daisies, nicotinas, asters, and black-eyed susans while enjoying a view of Forest Hill, one of the highest points on PEI.

"We continue to look at what to grow and what our best sellers are, what types of produce people are asking for, and what we could provide," says Brent.

The Mathesons may expand organic certification to the rest of the farm sometime down the road, but for now they are only concentrating on the market garden. According to Brent, "we're just dabbling to find out the best mix."

Fresh garden produce from the Matheson Century Farm can be found at Campbell's Irving in Dundas, PEI, and at the Mathesons' farmgate. Visit Matheson Century Farm online at [www.mathesoncenturyfarms.com](http://www.mathesoncenturyfarms.com).

## Farmers Markets of Nova Scotia Looking for More Local Organic Products

FARMERS MARKETS IN NOVA SCOTIA ARE looking for more organic vendors.

"Both Dartmouth and Upper Stewiacke need more variety of--especially--organic produce," says Don Black, Farmers Markets' of Nova Scotia Cooperative (FMNS) Coordinator.

"Our Dartmouth market has the kind of physical facility and municipal support that we see as the future for Farmers' Markets in Nova Scotia," says Black.

"The biggest disadvantage the Dartmouth faces is, ironically, the presence of the Halifax Farmers' Market just across the harbour. As a long-standing market with the biggest vendor and customer base in the province, the Halifax market acts like a magnet, both for vendors and customers, leaving the Dartmouth market at a disadvantage in attracting either."

"What it needs to attract more customers are more producers, specifically organic producers," observes Black.

"If we could establish the presence of 3-4 new organic growers (or secondary producers of organic products) through the 2006 season, we could use the July Celebration of Fresh Local Food to do a promotional blitz throughout Dartmouth, focussed on the organic growers, to raise the public profile of the market, and give people reasons to shop there."

At the Stewiacke Valley market, there is a real supply shortage of local produce. Market coordinator, Brandi Oderkirk, sent out an urgent appeal to FMNS last week looking for more vendors.

Ideas were circulated about driving a truck up from Halifax or from Truro to supply the market with local food. "I'm thinking there has to be a way to do this, and if we take it on, it will lead to something worthwhile. I know everyone is very busy, but please take a minute to think about this," appealed Black.

If you would like to become involved in this, please contact Don Black at [dblack@chebucto.ca](mailto:dblack@chebucto.ca) or (902) 423-9005.

## Local Organic Farmers Affected by Rainy Weather

IN EARLY JULY, SEASPRAY ATLANTIC Organic Farmers Co-op sent a notice to its customers informing them that home and restaurant delivery would no longer be available. There just isn't enough supply.

"Due to the poor growing conditions, with excessive rain and wind; there has been multiple crop failures and suspension of planting schedules. These conditions have drastically reduced availability of fresh produce," wrote Allison Grant, coordinator of the farmers group.

In the month of June, rain precipitation for Nova Scotia is almost double of what it normally is, with over 170 millimetres. "These conditions have put a huge financial strain on the producers of our organic community," says Grant.

"It's a bit of a catch-22 for organic farmers, who are working to build their customer base and trying to keep costs reasonable. But when crops are being washed away and tractors can't work on the waterlogged land, farmers must fairly reflect their costs and prices will go up," stated Beth McMahon, ACORN Executive Director.

"What is equally unfortunate is that there are customers who are demanding local organics, but we don't have the product to sell them," says McMahon. "Interest in organic food is only growing, and if they can't get it locally, then it will just end up being imported to the region."

Already, about 80% of the region's organic producers sell directly to the consumer, but this is only a tiny fraction of what's being consumed.

For the time being, SeaSpray advises its customers to "support your local organic producers, pay a premium price and feel satisfied that you are supporting your community. This will bolster your local economy while rewarding the efforts of organic farmers doing their best to protect this earth and provide the healthiest of food to nurture your families."

And so, with fingers crossed we can now only hope that the rest of the season may shape up to be a better month weather-wise for local farmers and that our supply will grow to meet market demands.



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# Wetland Birds Find Ally in Organic Farm's Waste Treatment

By Laura Jean MacKay

***“Now, in our wetland... there's about 40 ducks... we actually have a nesting pair of Canada Geese.”***

—Terrance Boyle, T.E. Boyle Farm and Forestry, Nova Scotia, from July 6, 2004 interview

WITH HIS BROTHER RONNIE, TERRANCE BOYLE manages more than 450 acres of agriculturally productive land and a large woodlot, on the north-eastern shore of Nova Scotia near Tracadie. T.E. Boyle Farm and Forestry mixes a variety of innovative farm practices, including raising sheep and beef cattle, commercial compost manufacture, greenhouse production for market, forest woodlot management and crop production. The Boyle brothers share a particular interest in potatoes and heritage wheat.

Prompted by an interest in animal waste management in 1999, with the design expertise of Brian Ives at Nova Aquaculture, Terrance and Ronnie decided to construct a wetland on the farm to create a more ecological approach to dealing with farm waste. They enhanced the existing wetland characteristics of a low-lying area of marginal farmland; creating a series of ponds and seven winding channels, through which manure-enriched water could flow.

Prior to construction of the wetland on the Boyle property, significant amounts of nutrient rich water flowed into streams reaching the Atlantic Ocean, causing nutrient enrichment and eutrophication of the adjacent coastal area.

Following the construction of the channels and ponds on the farm, cattle waste now deposits in a ditch, through which a controlled flow of water sweeps along into the wetland area, where plants along the channels make use of the cattle waste nutrients in the water for growth. The winding channels slow the flow of water, allowing nutrients to

precipitate out of the water; create silt and build along the banks of the channels. The water takes about 36 hours to travel from the ditch through the channels. The winding design of the channels provides more “water's edge” footage than a square pond perimeter would, allowing more area for plant growth. The plants used by the Boyles include cattails and 14 other plant varieties based on their ability to uptake nutrients found in the Boyle Farm's cattle waste, silage and compost.

One of the primary benefits of a wetland is its ability to support plant growth that removes nutrients from the water, ultimately resulting in cleaner water that will have adverse effects on natural ecosystems. Regular testing of water emerging from the Boyle wetland shows reduced biological oxygen demand (BOD) meaning that bacterial levels have decreased and plants have successfully removed nutrients for the water. Water entering natural streams is much cleaner than before the wetland construction.

Research shows that carefully constructed wetlands are capable of trapping 50% of dissolved phosphate, 70% of dissolved nitrates, and 30-40% of dissolved organic nitrogen, phosphorus and carbon from fertilizers and other farm runoffs.

Wetlands are covered with water all or most of the time. They are not considered to be firm land, nor are they considered to be water bodies. Since the 1800s, there has been a large-scale conversion, in Canada and elsewhere, of wetlands for agricultural use, usually through some form of drainage. In Atlantic Canada, wetland drainage for agricultural use is estimated at over 20 million hectares or 65% of coastal marsh areas. Construction of wetland on the Boyle Farm and other farms now suggests the enhancement of pollution control through the use of low-lying wetland areas as a better use of that particular land than draining for traditional farming purposes.

Attention to a diversity of water depths in the construction of the Boyle wetland created

different habitats and increased abundance of associated species. Globally, wetlands are recognized as among the most biologically productive ecosystems, providing breeding, nesting and wintering habitat for migratory birds and shorebirds, such as ducks, geese, swans, cranes, gulls and sandpipers. Many predators such as kingfishers, owls and ospreys feed on the smaller birds in wetlands. Terrance Boyle comments, “ You do notice quite a different variety of species of birds, ... and the little birds... I don't want to say hundreds, but there's an awful pile of them around there.”

Farmers in Canada should be encouraged to take a stewardship role in conserving water quality and biodiversity. In the United States, valuation of the vital functions of wetlands along streams and rivers for pollution control is estimated to be in the range of \$95 per acre per year. Recognizing an ecological responsibility shared with farmers, a current program through the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture supports a percentage of costs associated with farmland wetland construction. Farmers may also be able to share ecological responsibility with consumers by marketing and labeling their products as produced in an ecologically sensitive manner. And they may be able to reap a premium for these goods, which are likely undervalued in Atlantic Canada.

Other benefits to farms gained through construction or restoration of wetlands include flood prevention, as rates of water movement are decreased. Reduced flooding means reduced soil erosion. Placing land in permanent plant cover also reduces air pollution by decreasing wind erosion. Wetlands, previously “reclaimed” for farmland prove much more valuable when their ecosystem services are used to create better farming practices.

This article is produced through the support of Mountain Equipment Coop's National Environment Fund, Ecology Action Centre (EAC), HelioTrust and the EAC Food Action Committee. Originally published in EAC's winter 2005 edition of *Between the Issues*.

# OACC is Five and Counting

By Ralph C. Martin, Ph.D., P.Ag.

FIVE YEARS AGO, IN BADDECK, NS, THE Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada Minister Lyle Vanclief, announced a \$1 million grant for the founding of the Organic Agriculture Centre of Canada (OACC). OACC has been based at the Nova Scotia Agricultural College and links organic knowledge, across Canada, between farmers, students, consumers, university and AAFC agricultural researchers and extension specialists. An Advisory Board with members from all Canadian regions has guided OACC.

Today, the OACC website ([www.oacc.info](http://www.oacc.info)) receives 5 million hits per year and many are from dial-up computers, an indication that rural Canadians, associated with many agricultural practices, are finding the site useful. There are many organic organizations in Canada and OACC complements them with its unique focus on research and education at the university level, pertaining to organic agriculture. Organic research provides an opportunity for scientists to investigate unmasked systems (no synthetic pesticides and fertilizers) under biological and climatic variability and to develop methods that will benefit conventional farmers as well as organic farmers.

In efforts to link key people addressing questions in organic agriculture, OACC has been instrumental in initiating discussions between those in production with others at the processing, distribution and marketing levels. An OACC goal is foster research within the

context of supplying products characterized by well-balanced nutritional content linked to healthy soil.

Since 2001, thirteen OACC web courses have been developed in English (9) and French (4). Those interested in improving their knowledge of organic production, markets and impacts tend to be thinly spread across our large land mass of Canada and the internet provides an opportunity to link students, regardless of location.

The OACC vision, "to strengthen the science and practice of organic agriculture in Canada", has been the guiding light for all activities of our unique educational and research organization. Today Canadians are spending over \$1.3 billion annually on organic food and yet only 15% is Canadian. Why can't our farmers and processors provide this food for us?

The work of OACC is intended to enhance respect for soil, plants, animals, air and water, thereby contributing to respect for people and the planet. In partnership with many individual and organizations, OACC expects many more birthdays to celebrate research and educational support to the organic sector in Canada.

Ralph C. Martin, Ph.D., P.Ag is the Founding Director of OACC. He welcomes your comments at [oacc@nsac.ca](mailto:oacc@nsac.ca) or at 902-893-7256. OACC news articles are archived at [oacc.info](http://oacc.info) one month after publication.

## Celebrate OACC's 5<sup>th</sup> Birthday!

All are welcome to help us celebrate at our OACC Field Day on July 27, from 1:00-3:30 pm. Meet at the NSAC Library parking lot by 1 pm, and from there, vans will take participants to field trial sites.

Highlights will include:

- Feed protein crop options: mixed grains, lupin, faba bean, soybean
- Variety trial: soybeans, lupins, flax, carrots, broccolli, canola
- No-till soybean
- Fingerweeding demonstration
- Organic seed treatments
- Organic field crop production and greenhouse gas emissions
- High value horticultural crop rotation study
- Wireworm traps
- Perennial grasses for biofuels and soil carbon storage
- Weed management in organic highbush blueberry production
- Soil health in organic potato production

And of course, there will be a yummy organic birthday cake!!

For more information, see [www.oacc.info/Events/oacc\\_fieldday\\_2006.html](http://www.oacc.info/Events/oacc_fieldday_2006.html) or call 902-893-7256

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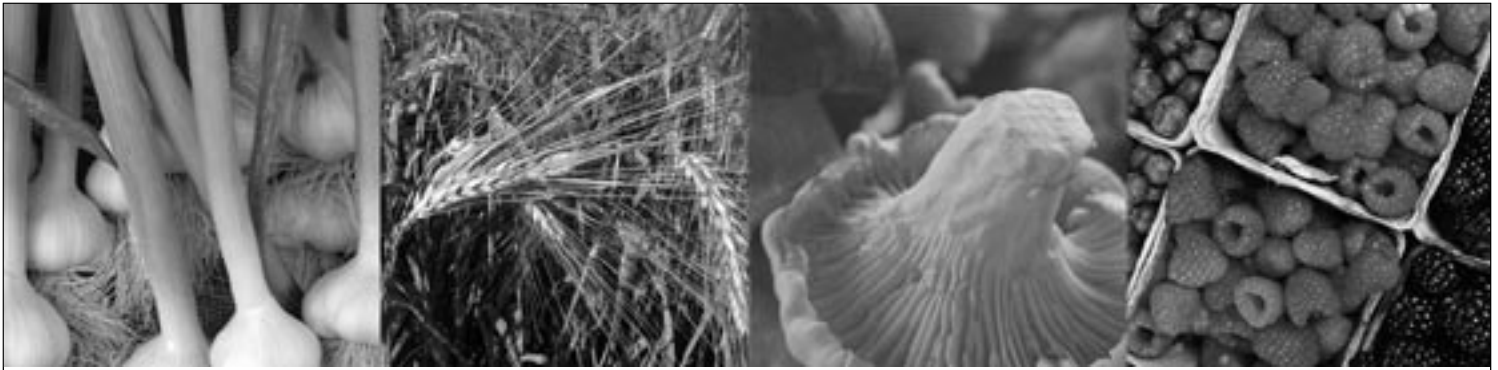
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Toll-free: 866-277-0577  
[info@chanterelleinn.com](mailto:info@chanterelleinn.com)  
[www.chanterelleinn.com](http://www.chanterelleinn.com)

- \*Quiet, chemically-free retreat overlooking St. Ann's Bay
- \*Licensed dining room serving organically and locally produced food whenever and wherever possible
- \*9 elegantly furnished rooms, featuring natural fibers, organic soaps
- \*Close to many attractions and outdoor activities on the Cabot Trail.



## Fall Organic Workshops

ACORN IS PLANNING A SERIES OF WORKSHOPS for late Fall (November/December) 2006, which will take place in each Maritime Province. The proposed one-day workshops include:

- Transitioning to Organic Agriculture
- Soil Health and Fertility
- Organic Pest Management

While these topics have been addressed at previous conferences, we believe that providing much more in-depth information and education will be very beneficial to both new and experienced organic farmers. Please stay tuned for further dates and information in the next newsletter.

## Audited Financial Statements

EARLIER IN THE YEAR, WE HAD SOME accounting program challenges and our 2005 audit was not ready for the Annual General Meeting in March. These problems have just been resolved (all 2005 data had to be re-entered!) and our audited report should be out in August. If you would like a copy, please let ACORN know and we'll email it to you in PDF (it would be too much information to print and send to each of you). The 2004 audited statement is also available in electronic format, if you'd like that too.

## Volunteers Needed at Up-Coming Public Events

VOLUNTEER AT ACORN'S INFORMATION TABLE and get free passes to the best events of the year:

AgriFest—A Celebration of agriculture, food and the outdoors! will take place August 10-13, 2006, in Canning, NS. This is a big event, with lots of workshops, demos, research and exhibitors. For more information see [www.agrifest.com](http://www.agrifest.com)

Healthy You Health and Wellness Show is another big event you won't want to miss, September 15-17, 2006, in Halifax, NS. For more information see [www.healthyyoushow.ca](http://www.healthyyoushow.ca)

Atlantic National Exhibition's Horticultural and Agriculture Exhibition takes place August 29-September 1st, in Saint John, NB. With over 10,000 visitors, it's a great way to make new contacts.

Please send us an email right away with your availability, as we need to start planning. Call ACORN at 1-866-322-2676. Help us get the word out on local organics!

## Organic Job Opportunity

A member driven organic certification body is seeking an individual to provide administrative and office support on a part-time basis.

The candidate will have a working knowledge of organic standards and certification procedures. Responsibilities include, but are not limited to maintaining the membership list, communication with members, financial administration, preparation of Board correspondence, organization of the AGM, public relations and liaison with three provincial organic agricultural representatives.

The Administrator will provide an office, which has provisions for emails and faxes.

Please forward applications to the MCOG address by July 31, 2006:

Maritime Certified Organic Growers Co-Op Ltd  
471 ch. Marc Comeau Rd  
Meteghan River, NS B0W 2L0  
1 800 737-1755  
Fax/télécop: (902) 769-0141  
EMail/Courriel: [al.simone@ns.sympatico.ca](mailto:al.simone@ns.sympatico.ca)

## Open Farm Day

ONCE AGAIN, THE ATLANTIC PROVINCES will be promoting Open Farm Day on Sunday, September 24, 2006. This is an opportunity to get free publicity and invite your customers out to experience the organic difference. ACORN will also publicize your farm event if you tell us about it, but you must register ASAP:

- In Nova Scotia, contact Ruth Grant at 902-893-6598.
- In New Brunswick, contact the APANB at 506-452-1085
- In PEI, contact Jennie Palmer at 902-675-4351
- In Newfoundland, visit [www.nr.gov.nl/agric](http://www.nr.gov.nl/agric)