



# ACORN

Atlantic Canadian Organic Regional Network  
Issue 30, Fall 2008

## Organic Regulation Implementation Delayed!

LAST MONTH, CFIA AMENDED THE CANADA Organic Products Regulation to extend the start date to June 30, 2009.

The original date had been December 14, 2008, but due to the delayed release of the revised organic standard and the forthcoming revisions of the organic regulation (yes, a second one), CFIA thought it best to just sit tight for a few months more.

CFIA has already started industry consultations on the new organic regulation, meeting with Atlantic Canada stakeholders in early September. While there was nothing that raised serious flags, several issues and discrepancies were noted by the group. The Gazette process of the new regulation is expected in the next several months—and we'll keep you posted on that, as there is a comment period.

When the regulation does come into force, recognized organic producers and processors who meet the regulation will be able to use the new organic logo, but must meet the other labeling requirements. Products

that fail to meet them will be issued letters of non-compliance from CFIA during the implementation phase.

The new regulation applies to all agricultural products that are sold inter-provincially or internationally (including imports). For products that are only sold in province, organic claims must meet the Canada Labeling Act. This means that if a person makes an anonymous complaint/inquiry to CFIA about something that says it's organic but is not certified, CFIA must investigate. CFIA will then ask the seller/grower to prove it is organic (ie. by showing a standard and growing records), otherwise to cease and desist making the claim.

The Organic Federation of Canada and many local and regional organic organizations would like to see individual provinces create or endorse the national regulation, making organic claims part of the provincial agricultural laws; however, that is a lengthy process.

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## Are you interested in joining the ACORN Board of Directors?

ACORN WILL HOLD IT'S ANNUAL GENERAL Meeting on February 28<sup>th</sup> in Truro, NS. There will be at least one board vacancy, so if you would like to be considered, we'd love to hear from you and we can tell you more about the role of our directors. Nominations will be taken from the floor.

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## Save the Dates—February 26-28<sup>th</sup>, 2009!

ACORN's 9<sup>th</sup> Organic Conference:  
"Good for You, Good for the Planet"  
in Truro, Nova Scotia

Read more about it on Page 7...

# Getting Inspired in Toronto

By Beth McMahon

ON OCTOBER 6 AND 7, ACORN AND Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada held its first organic educational mission to Toronto. With 22 in attendance and participation from each Maritime Province, as well as positive feedback, it was a great success.

Our group was provided complimentary passes to the Ethnic & Specialty Food Show, which also includes the All Things Organic pavilion. While being a relatively small show of about 100 booths, participants were able to gain an appreciation of product development, marketing, and food opportunities. Several producers in the group also met with US-Canada trade commissioners, while others made some new buyer contacts.

On Tuesday, the group traveled by charter bus to four distinct stores: Pusateri's Fine Foods, which was a very up-scale grocery market with up-scale pricing (including \$480/lb coffee!).

Next on the list was The Healthy Butcher, another independent store which was born out of a desire to source local organic meats. The store practices a whole animal philosophy, using all parts of carcasses in its sales. The team of skilled butchers and a intuitionist also create value-added products, including

smoked and brined selections, sausages, pates, and more for its wide variety of meats (including many wild meats, like elk).

At The Culinarium we met owner Katherine, who explained the store's commitment to only offering Ontario made products sourced from the growers and processors. With samples of bitch syrup and Ontario grown peanuts, our group was impressed.

For lunch and a store tour, we gathered at The Big Carrot, which is Canada's oldest and largest health food cooperative. The Big Carrot is extremely impressive, with almost exclusively organic products and true commitment to good food.

To conclude the day, we took a quick visit to the Riverdale Farm for the weekly organic farmers market. Set right in a park, it provided a nice backdrop to meet face-to-face with other farmers and to share insights.

That night, most people departed back to the Maritimes, some with new sales contracts and others with new ideas for creating and marketing a greater variety of organic products in our region.



The Healthy Butcher offers a full line of organic grocery options to its customers, including meats, produce, milk, cheese and dry goods.



Participants of the noon hour organic orchard walks visit the Organic Honeycrisp block here at the research station (formally AFHRC) on Sept.11/08. The tree they are looking at in the foreground that is partially defoliated by the Redhumped caterpillar. Not a common pest of apple but very damaging when present. It can be controlled organically by BT. Most of the trees in this block are in great shape except a few that were damaged by deer feeding before we got the deer fence installed.

## Noon Hour Orchard Walks

By Sonya Shaw

GROWERS, RESEARCHERS, AND INDUSTRY partners gathered for four noon-hour field meetings during the 2008 growing season to share information on all aspects of organic apple production.

The first meeting was held on May 8th at Robert Peill's well established (10 year +) scab resistant organic block in Starrs Point to discuss apple scab and insect control. On June 12th at Rob Smith's farm in Aylesford, we observed young orchard and talked about crop load management as well as calyx insect control options.

The next meeting was held on July 17th at Richard Hennigar's organic block in Sheffield Mills. The main topic was maggot control, but we also observed several unconventional techniques of low input methods of vegetation control.

The last meeting of the 2008 growing season was held on September 11th at the Atlantic Food and Horticulture Research Centre. Here the group observed a variety trial converted to organic production in 2006 as well as a newly planted organic Honeycrisp research block.

All are welcome to attend these informal meetings and we will plan to have another set next growing season. For more information, contact Sonya at [shaws@agr.gc.ca](mailto:shaws@agr.gc.ca) or 902-679-5721.

# ACORN Connects Farmers and Chefs

By Theresa Richards (Theresa@acornorganic.org)

RESTAURANTS PRESENT AN OPPORTUNITY for farmers to sell their products to a clientele that will fully appreciate the flavour, appearance and quality of the food. In recent years, ACORN has been receiving more and more phone calls from chefs and restaurants looking for local organics, and consumers looking for places to eat out that support a sustainable meal.

To better understand the needs of chefs, ACORN conducted a survey in early 2008. It concluded that chefs are willing to pay a premium for local organic products: with 43.5% claiming they would pay up to 11-20% premium and 34.8% indicating that they would pay a 21-30% premium. Most chefs were adamant that they were looking for local and organic, and willing to create seasonal menus to support their food system.

In addition to premium pricing, farmers save marketing time by working with restaurants, as they don't have to spend the 6-8 hours that it takes to work at a market, but sell directly to the restaurant via an order (telephone, fax, etc) and simply pack and deliver.

Last fall I began working with ACORN on its Farmer-Chef project, creating marketing tools for farmers that specifically targeted restaurants and chefs. These included farmer profiles, product listings and availability and also a brochure for restaurants. Originally, this was a pilot project open to all Nova Scotia certified organic farms. The success of this project led ACORN to search for means to extend the project to the other provinces. Canadian Organic Growers offered ACORN funds to continue the project in the New Brunswick area.

In addition to writing farmer profiles and product listings in NB, I have been actively pursuing chefs and restaurants in the Fredericton area, assessing the possibilities and interest for local organic menu additions. I am focusing on Fredericton as a pilot location for the second phase of this project, which is to actively engage with local chefs and restaurants. I chose the city because of the proximity to farmers, as well as the excellent dining in the area that can only be improved with a touch of local organic flavours! The chefs and restaurants I have met with so far have been very enthusiastic and are happy to hear that ACORN is attempting to bridge the gap between farmers and restaurants.

Our primary goal is establishing ACORN as the network contact for sourcing and using local organics in the Atlantic Provinces. ACORN already has the local organic directory—listing all farms that are certified organic—and the “Choosing Local Organics” brochure is also a good resource. I have also created a checklist for farmers about “Cultivating a Farmer to Chef Relationship”. The checklist will soon be posted on the website along with other relevant information about Farmer-Chef partnerships. Already, we've heard from participating farms saying this resource has helped significantly in how they approach restaurants.

We still have a lot planned for this project: I will continue making the rounds around the province of New Brunswick to meet and interview all the farmers interested in pursuing marketing opportunities with restaurants.

A major event that we are very excited about is Fredericton's first *Farmer-Chef Symposium* from 9 am to 4 pm on Tuesday November 4<sup>th</sup>. This will be a chance for local farmers and chefs to initiate local and

seasonal food networks by fostering collaboration and direct marketing opportunities while learning the ins and outs of how to create a partnership from experienced farmers and chefs. We are very lucky to have Chef Christian Aerni, from Rossmount Inn in St-Andrews as our keynote speaker for the event. Chef Aerni recently represented New Brunswick at the Canadian Chefs Congress, and here's what *Toronto Star* had to say about him afterwards:

*It wasn't a contest, but a rough survey of the crowd showed a clear favourite: Chef Christian Aerni's open-faced, pickled herring sandwiches from New Brunswick. Aerni, owner and chef at Rossmount Inn in St. Andrews-By-the-Sea, brought herring caught in weirs in the Bay of Fundy's Passamaquoddy Bay. He layered the filets with fingerling potato, a radish vinaigrette and shortnose sturgeon caviar farmed in New Brunswick, and served them on 12-grain pumpernickel from Speerville Flour Mill with a smear of Armadale Farm butter. (September 24, 2008)*

Chef Aerni has long been committed to local, authentic culinary options, and we are excited to have him involved in the Farmer-Chef project. There will also be a panel discussion on “best practices” for both farmers and chefs, a talk from Fredericton Tourism about marketing opportunities, and a session on “demystifying the farm and chef experience”. Following the local lunch, there will also be chance for farmers to set-up a small display with samples of their products, photos of the farm and their profiles and sell sheets if they have them! This will be an opportunity for one-on-one connections—where chefs are encouraged to browse and sample farm products and displays.

Furthermore, we are working to expand the project to PEI and I hope to visit Island farms soon. We've already received considerable support from Tourism PEI and other Island organizations. I am also planning to catch the rest of the Nova Scotia farmers who are still interested in having profiles developed. The plans don't stop there either, so keep checking in with ACORN to stay posted and in the meantime, check out the “local organic profiles” that are being added to the website!

## ARE YOU...

a New Brunswick Farmer  
18-40 years of age?

## ARE YOU...

interested in shaping the  
future of NB Agriculture?

## ARE YOU...

looking for a place to share  
and build partnerships?

## PLAN TO ATTEND the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual General Meeting of the

### New Brunswick Young Farmers Forum (NBFF)

Where: Oakland Farm Lodge,  
65 Oakland Farm Lane, New Maryland

When: 1:30 pm – 6:00 pm, November 21st, 2008

Please RSVP by November 14th, 2008

Email: [alliance@fermenbfarm.ca](mailto:alliance@fermenbfarm.ca), subject NBFF AGM

Phone: 506-452-8101 Fax: 506-452-1085

# Extend the shelf life of your produce

By Ron Khosla, as featured in *Growing for Market* newsletter

WHEN WE STARTED OUR OWN MIXED vegetable operation in an abandoned 40-acre corn field, there was no shade, much less a walk-in cooler. We didn't think it would matter much. After all, our goal was to provide the freshest possible produce to our CSA members. We'd wake up early enough to harvest everything we planned on distributing that same day. What could be better than "just picked" greens, lettuce, tomatoes and squash?

It wasn't until some members started complaining that our mesclun seemed to go bad in their refrigerators faster than the week-old stuff from California that we began to look more closely at what we were doing. We realized that our responsibility to high-quality vegetables didn't end once the product left our farm gate. Many of our customers were keeping our vegetables around for days (and even weeks) after we thought they would be consumed.

We learned that how we handle produce before, during and even minutes after harvesting makes a huge difference to the long-term quality. Deterioration happens for a number of reasons including temperature, loss of water, physical damage, disease microorganisms and even natural ripening processes. Now we try to take those factors into account from the very start. Ironically it has, in most cases, actually increased our harvest efficiency time-wise—and the increase in flavor and shelf-life definitely makes it worthwhile.

In addition to giving out higher quality produce that will last longer in our customers' fridges, we can also now comfortably spread our harvest out over more days (meaning we can handle larger CSA distributions with less labor!)

## *Before the harvest*

Our post-harvest care actually starts a few days before our harvest with one thing we have some control over: water. We make sure that there is enough soil moisture before we harvest leafy greens and lettuce. Often this means irrigating before we harvest—but not right before we harvest, because we don't want to be picking wet leaves. We do the same thing with carrots—irrigating enough that we don't have to fork the carrots too much before they'll slide

easily out of the soil, reducing physical stress on the carrots and our backs.

For other crops like tomatoes and melons we take the opposite approach and reduce or stop watering altogether as we near harvest time to concentrate flavors. There's only so much we can reduce water on some heirloom melon varieties because harvests can be quite spread out, but that's definitely not the case with tomatoes! We grow our tomatoes in open-sided high tunnels so we have perfect control over how much water they get, which allows us to coordinate our pickings for peak flavor. It's a surprisingly persistent myth that tomatoes ripen better on the vine than off. In fact, on hot days, tomatoes won't ripen as well or evenly on the vine as they do off. If you don't believe me, try a blind taste test with your customers! What does matter with flavor is how much water you've given your tomatoes the day or two before harvesting. We cut down on drip irrigation 50 hours before picking and stop watering altogether 36 hours before, then start up again immediately after picking. If you've tasted the difference between tomatoes harvested just after a rain storm, versus after a few days of dry hot weather, you already know what a difference this can make. Although we grow several heirloom varieties each year, we've found we can impressively concentrate the flavor of our hybrids to the point that customers don't necessarily prefer heirlooms to hybrid varieties when given the choice.

In a complete turnaround from our earlier "just-picked" snobbery, we find that timing harvests based on weather and water actually leads to better long-term quality of our produce. For example, I'd rather harvest lettuce three days early than during a rain that's predicted for our distribution day! Same with cilantro and other more delicate crops. Some varieties of broccoli are especially susceptible to fungal disease from rain water sitting in the heads... but we really LIKE those varieties, so may harvest them days earlier than a distribution, too.

## *During harvest*

The most important thing to remember is that the quality of your produce is not going to improve once it's off the plant. Small inden-

tations on tomatoes or diseased spots on our Swiss chard get worse looking every day. We cull poor-quality produce in the field rather than having to sort through it up in the barn where it can make a whole tub look bad. We fill tubs only loosely, rather than "packing them in" even if it means more trips in and out of the field, and we minimize stacking of crates in transport if we're worried that one might fall into another, bruising leaves. When we do find bruised leaves up at the barn, we pull them out immediately, BEFORE they go into the cooler.

I pick squash with jersey-cotton gloves, but my wife Kate has beautiful, soft womanly hands so she can pick 'em bare handed. We've seen what punctures and scratches can do to summer and winter squash over time—and we remind ourselves we aren't just picking for the quality over the two days before distribution, but for the next 10 days our customers might be keeping them in their refrigerator.

Vegetables are never tossed into crates, and crates are never tossed down. If we have helpers, they are taught the importance of the "gentle touch" when they're grabbing produce. Because we pick our tomatoes at "first blush" they get less bruised even if they get stacked a little high in the harvest containers. Still, we prefer not to let our hybrid tomatoes get stacked in the crates more than two layers deep, and heirloom varieties are layered flat with nothing on top of them. We pick them into the same crates they'll be stored in to minimize handling damage.

For lettuce and leafy green crops we try to harvest when it's cooler. That used to mean harvesting early in the morning, but now we balance that with our concern over nitrate toxicity. Nitrates build up overnight in leafy vegetables—especially in the spring and fall here in the Northeast—and it's advisable to pick after at least four hours of sunlight, especially if it was cloudy the day before. That means we pick our greens and lettuce in the evening before a distribution if we can. Often we have too many hours of harvesting to do, so we have to pick in the day, but we bring down tubs of wet sheets that we drape over the crates while harvesting and stack the tubs in the shade of our harvest trailer. As the sun

climbs higher, we take turns driving up to the cooler every 30 minutes to minimize the time the crops sit in the sun.

### *Temperature control*

The chart at the end of this article shows optimum storage temperatures for a selection of crops. Even if you can't reach the perfect temperatures, if you get nothing else out of reading this article, I hope it's how critically important it is to get crops down towards their optimal temperatures as soon as possible once they are off the plants. Also remember that the effects of temperature are additive. The most damage occurs immediately after harvest, because the crop is often even hotter than 77 degrees from sitting out in the sun. But even after you've cooled them down, they are going to heat up again at your farm stand, and then in your customers' cars on the way home. All those sub-optimal times add up together to destroy the quality of your produce, so it's essential that you control what you can control—especially in that first 30-60 minutes immediately after harvest.

In the case of especially sensitive crops like strawberries, it's also a question of marketability. We used to desperately rush around trying to line up customers for our flats of strawberries each spring before they went "gross." It was so frustrating that we considered dropping the whole crop. Now we regularly sell three- to four-day old strawberries that look much better than the one-day old strawberries we used to sell.

Some crops are "hydro-cooled" which for us means they are gently sprayed with cold well-water. If you have helpers, it's really important to alert them to how much damage they can do directing a high pressure stream of water at your crops. Stronger crops like heartier kale and collards, turnips, carrots, and beets might get sprayed down, but we don't do that for lighter greens, lettuce, basil, cilantro, or other crops that might hold the water, causing other types of decay problems. Instead, we make sure they are packed lightly into harvest crates, and we spread the crates out only one layer deep on the cooler floor to maximize their access to the cold air. They stay like that for the 30 minutes it takes us to come up with the next trailer load of veggies—then they are stacked up or placed on wire mesh shelves and the new load of veggies are spread out on the cooler floor. Whether you are hydro-cooling or air cooling, it's critical to get the core temperature of your produce down as quickly as possible to maintain quality and nutrition.

### *Walk-in coolers*

Getting crops cooled down fast is something we can control, but as diversified growers, we may have to maintain our coolers at a compromise of temperatures. Trying to keep eggplants, peppers, lettuce and chard in the same cooler means you sort of have to pick a middling temperature or you'll end up with chilling injuries to sensitive crops (like cucumbers, peppers and eggplants) which can do lots of damage to your crop quality in a very short amount of time.

We started out with one home-built, walk-in, cooled with a modified low-cost window air conditioner down to a "compromise" temperature of 42-45 degrees. We lowered the temperature more in the fall or early spring when we were picking cold-loving crops like strawberries, broccoli and cabbage. That actually worked quite well. Now we've graduated to running two home-built coolers maintained at different temperatures (and still running on modified air-conditioning units but now controlled by the commercially available "CoolBot" available from [www.storeitcold.com](http://www.storeitcold.com)). The ATTRA.org web site offers construction plans and a materials list for another option: the USDA designed "Portacooler" which also runs off a modified air conditioner you can build yourself. However you cool your product, it's important that the temperature they are stored at be consistent, to minimize the likelihood of condensation forming on the surface, reducing quality and providing another vector for disease organisms.

### *Post-harvest moisture*

As mentioned earlier, moisture control starts even before harvest with irrigation, but it doesn't end there. In our cooler right now, we have a 10-pound bag of young summer squash loosely tied at the top. We packed them up for a local restaurant over two weeks ago and they never came to pick them up. We intended to throw them out, but we didn't get around to it. That bag of squash is sitting just across the aisle from several shallow, ventilated crates of squash we picked just four days back. We intended to cover that squash with wet sheets because the crates allow air to come in on all four sides drying out the squash quite rapidly. What's interesting about this is that the 14-day old squash looks and feels much more fresh and "just picked" than the 2-day old squash!

Just a small percentage of water loss will reduce the quality and crunch of your produce. Even if you use a humidifier, the cold air in a cooler just can't hold as much water as warm air, and things are going to dry out. So (normally)

when we pick into black bulb crates, we throw a wet sheet over the crates to keep things moist and spritz it regularly OR line the crates with plastic garbage bags that are open enough to allow air flow, but closed enough to keep more moisture in.

Many farmers use low-cost Rubbermaid crates that seal up tightly and do a great job keeping moisture in, but the complete lack of air and standing water that builds up at the bottom of the tubs creates dangerous conditions for bacteria and fungal growth. The tubs also break down in just a few seasons of sun exposure. It's more cost effective and safer to spend a bit more money on "real" harvest crates that will last for many years and are designed to maintain a good balance of moisture control and airflow. That being said, I have to admit we still have a dozen Rubbermaid tubs in regular use BUT I poked holes in the bottom and keep the tops off.

### *Communicating with your customers*

Even if you are doing everything right, you also need to take the time to tell your customers what THEY should be doing to keep your produce fresh once they get it home. What's the point in taking all the care you do and then seeing someone pack their bags into a 100-degree car while they go off for an hour of U-Picking and then errands around town. We threaten our members with immediate expulsion from the CSA if they don't take veggies home and promptly place them in the fridge. We also explain the value of the "crisper" drawers in the fridges (higher humidity!) or tell them to keep things wrapped in (frequently washed) wet rags or partially closed plastic bags. Some of our CSA members swear by re-useable semi-breathable plastic produce bags, but we've never had a chance to try them.

When we started farming, the quality of produce available from our local big-box grocery store was pretty miserable. It wasn't that hard for us to compete. Just the fact that we offered local produce seemed to make people think we were heroes! But the same increased customer awareness and appreciation of "real food" that continues to drive more people to farmers' markets and CSAs around the country is impacting what we see selling in the grocery stores. Our local Stop & Shop now sells non-mealy and tasty heirloom tomatoes and disturbingly sweet organic carrots next to an impressive selection of gourmet and fingerling potatoes.

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# Natural Beekeeping

By Shannon Jones

BEEKEEPERS AND HONEY ENTHUSIASTS FROM around Nova Scotia gathered together for a 2-day course on Natural Beekeeping at Windhorse Farm on September 20 and 21st. The instructor, Ross Conrad, is one of North America's leading natural beekeepers and author of *Natural Beekeeping: Organic Approaches to Modern Apiculture* (published by Chelsea Green). Topics discussed at the course included: Colony Collapse Disorder, Nontoxic Varroa Mite control, Apitherapy, Harvesting and extraction of honey, and Hive Overwintering.

Ross paraphrased Charles Dickens by saying "it is the best of times and the worst of times for beekeeping": There is a renaissance in beekeeping and more people than ever before are getting involved. People want to do something to help the honeybee. However, diseases among the honeybee population have increased dramatically, and the treatments commonly being used are no more than a temporary crutch.

A big issue for beekeepers in Nova Scotia right now is the Varroa mite. While they don't want the bees to become overwhelmed with mite infestation, they also don't want bees that need their constant intervention to survive. The more time the bees spend living with the mites, Ross Conrad reasoned, the better chance they have to develop ways to live with the mites. Formic and oxalic acids are recommended as non-toxic treatments for mites that don't build up in the hive or make the bees dependent. While both acids are quite caustic and must be used with care, they are naturally occurring in the hive and in nature.

Ross discussed ways the hive can be honoured as a whole organism to increase the long-term health of the bees and allow them to deal with pests themselves rather than becoming overwhelmed and diseased. Some of these include allowing them to fully express themselves by making their own honeycomb as a form of purification (rather than being supplied with one), and allowing them to swarm.

Human reduction of the usage of pesticides (which have been found in samples of beeswax and pollen) and GMOs (genetically modified organisms) are also keys to helping the health of the honeybees. Another way the health of the

bees is jeopardized is from farmers extracting too much of the hive's honey and feeding the bees sugar syrup or corn syrup so they can survive the winter. However, neither sugar nor corn syrups have the nutritional value of honey and don't contribute to the health of the bees in any way.

Ross also stressed the importance of state of mind when working with bees. One shouldn't think of bees as just a way to make money, but see them as teachers. Bees collect what they need from the Earth, and in doing so don't harm a single leaf or kill anything. They improve the world with their method of harvesting.

Another concept brought to light was that of bees as healers. Honey is an effective treatment for infections, wounds, and burns. Apitherapy (using the venom from the bee's stinger) was mentioned as beneficial for Arthritis, Multiple Sclerosis, and other degenerative diseases.

A key benefit of the course was the opportunity to get together with other experienced and beginning beekeepers to network and get to know one another. Attendees enjoyed the sunny weather and beautiful setting at Windhorse Farm to boot.

To watch a video of Ross about natural beekeeping, visit [www.chelseagreen.com/authors/ross\\_conrad](http://www.chelseagreen.com/authors/ross_conrad)

*Windhorse Farm is a sustainable forestry and farming project in New Germany, NS.*

## Extend the shelf life

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Linda Hildebrand, who started Food Bank Farm, was our "farm mentor" and among the many words of wisdom she imparted to us was that any individual customer will buy from us for a year or two because they appreciate our philosophy, personality—or maybe just the fact that we're local. After that, we really need to be showing a solid difference in value from what they can get elsewhere. A big part of that is remembering that it's not just how good the crop looks when they pick it up from the farm, but how it well it keeps until the days later that our customers actually consume it.

Ron and Kathryn Khosla own and operate Huguenot St. Farm in New Paltz, NY, a 200-member CSA and wholesale operation. Ron invented the "CoolBot" device to convert an air-conditioner to a walk-in cooler compressor for his own farm a few years ago. He can be contacted at [ron@storeitcold.com](mailto:ron@storeitcold.com).

*Growing for Market is the only national publication for small-scale, ecological farmers who grow vegetables, fruits, herbs, flowers, and plants for local markets. It is published monthly, features practical farmer-written articles about food and flower growing, selling at farmers markets, Community Supported Agriculture, and selling to restaurants, supermarkets, and florists. E-Issue Subscribers can access the electronic version of Growing for Market from this web site for \$30 per year. [www.growingformarket.com](http://www.growingformarket.com)*

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Web: [www.greenhouse.com](http://www.greenhouse.com)

# ACORN 2009 Organic Conference Shaping Up!

## *Advanced CSA Workshop Announced*

On Thursday, February 26th, the 9th annual ACORN Conference will start with a half-day advanced workshop on Community Supported Agriculture.

The day will feature Jean-Paul Courtens and Jody Bolluyt, of Roxbury Farm. Roxbury is a community supported farm, one of the largest in North America, and the first to have a community in New York City. They grow vegetables, herbs, and grass fed animals for over 1000 shareholders representing over 1050 families in four communities—all on 225 acres in Kinderhook, New York.

Jean-Paul and Jody will discuss their particular model and how they grew the CSA from just 30 members in 1991, to where they are today. Roxbury also relies on its members to organize sub-groups for membership drives and distribution—a model that Atlantic Canada could utilize. The workshop will also discuss alternative models, pricing, and production.

Registration for the workshop will be open January 2009.

## *Going Organic?*

On Friday, February 27th, the ACORN Conference will offer a full stream of workshops for producers thinking about going organic.

Starting out the day, will be ACORN's Organic Transition Specialist and certified organic farmer, Rupert Jannasch. Rupert will provide the basics of how to start the transition to organic.

Rowena Hopkins and Roxanne Beavers are back by popular demand to discuss record-keeping

for the organic audit trail. These organic inspectors and certified organic farmers understand the pressures of small farms and have plenty of ideas to reduce the pain of paperwork.

Concluding the day is the very important consideration of Cost of Production. Join Jamey Coughlin and Mark Bernard for a nuts and bolts approach to determining if your farm can (or is) covering its costs.

## *Lunch with John Anderson*

Don't miss your lunch date with John Anderson on Friday, February 27th. John will be joining us from Kingston, ON, to talk about "Building a strong family farm business".

John is a "Family Farm Succession" expert and has worked across Canada helping family farms plan for their futures. Sponsored by the Canadian Farm Business Management Centre, this talk could help protect your farm for future generations.

## *Cynthia Barstow Attending ACORN Conference*

As the acclaimed author of the Eco-Foods Guide and President of Seed to Shelf marketing, ACORN is very pleased to host Cynthia Barstow at its next conference.

On Saturday, February 28th, Cynthia will discuss how organic agriculture projects benefits our food system and how to improve consumer awareness of the efforts of farmers and provide a premium back to those who protect our earth.

Cynthia also provides an unparalleled familiarity with natural products consumer behavior

and will speak about opportunities for organics in uncertain economic times, with the assistance of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.

Cynthia is an adjunct faculty at the University of Massachusetts where she teaches food and natural products marketing. She is a frequent speaker and writer for industry publications including The Natural Foods Merchandiser. She is currently on the board of Protected Harvest and the Biodynamic Farmland Conservation Trust.

## *Season Extension for Growing Profits*

On Saturday, February 28th, there will be a full series of conference workshops on high tunnels, and growing great greenhouse tomatoes, peppers, and cucumbers.

Join local experts Av Singh and Josh Oulton, who will start off the day with a discussion of high tunnels and greenhouse variants. If you've ever wondered how to set-up a high tunnel, or if they are "worth it", then this workshop is for you.

Following the workshop, join seasoned local growers like Tim Livingstone of Jolly Farmer, who will divulge his secrets for growing great tasting tomatoes.

Bring photos of your own greenhouses, stories and questions. This will be an interactive workshop for growers to discuss strategies and share from one another!

## **Want to Exhibit at the Trade Show?**

It's time to book your space for the ACORN Trade Show. It will take place Friday and Saturday, February 27 & 28, 2009 in Truro.

The trade show gets hundreds of visitors through its doors, as it's always free admission. And since this is the first time ACORN has held the conference in Truro, there's sure to be many new faces (and customers).

Rates start at \$175 for members for a 6' table. Space is limited and it sold out by December 1<sup>st</sup> last year, so don't delay. Contact us for an exhibitor package today!

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# It's the Season for Learning:

REACT 2008 website at [www.react2008.ca](http://www.react2008.ca), or contact the Project Office at 902-625-5486.

Nov 17<sup>th</sup> Market Gardening with Joyce Kelly at the Farm Centre, Charlottetown. Free admission. Starts at 7pm. To register or for more details, contact [email@organicpei.com](mailto:email@organicpei.com) or call 902-894-9999.

Nov 26-28<sup>th</sup> Organic Maple Production in Grand Falls/Bath, NB. Featuring Joël Boutin, the technical advisor for a Quebec maple syrup producers group, with in-classroom and sugarbush site learning. If you are interested in this workshop or wish to obtain more information, please contact Yvon Poitras (506-458-8889, [yrp@nb.aibn.com](mailto:yrp@nb.aibn.com)) or Claude Berthéléme (506-453-3046, [claud.bertheleme@gnb.ca](mailto:claud.bertheleme@gnb.ca)). You must register for the workshop by November 17 by contacting the N.B. Maple Syrup Association.

December 4-5<sup>th</sup> Nova Scotia Food Security Network & Truro's Living Earth Council's second gathering in Debert, NS. Workshops on mapping food security, affecting policy change, distribution of local food, poverty/hunger, food miles and gardening. For more information: [nsfoodsecurity@gmail.com](mailto:nsfoodsecurity@gmail.com)


Dec 8<sup>th</sup> Blueberry Production with Melissa Mullen & Allen Hicken. Free admission. Starts at 7pm. To register or for more details, contact [email@organicpei.com](mailto:email@organicpei.com) or call 902-894-9999.

December 15 & 16: Gary Zimmer (Midwestern Bio-Ag, WI) will be in PEI to talk about soil. Cost is \$30 or \$25 for PEI COPC members. To register or for more details, contact [email@organicpei.com](mailto:email@organicpei.com) or call 902-894-9999.

Up-coming: There are many more workshops planned for the New Year, including: How to Build a Successful Farm Apprenticeship Program; Organic Berry Production; and possibly, an organic inspector training course!

Don't forget ACORN's organic conference in Truro, February 26-28<sup>th</sup> too!

**Soil Matters Workshop**  
with Fred Magdoff, 9:30am-4:00pm  
November 10<sup>th</sup> in Charlottetown, Farm Centre, PEI  
November 11<sup>th</sup> in Moncton, Fetates Inn, NB  
November 12<sup>th</sup> in Truro, NSAC, NS  
November 13<sup>th</sup> in Kentville Research Station, NS



In the last of ACORN's "Building the Soil" workshop series Fred will address:

- application of ecological principles to agriculture and organic matter (what it is and its importance)
- soil testing (confusion over results and interpretation)
- ecologically based soil health management

Pre-register by calling 1-866-322-2676 or email [info@acornorganic.org](mailto:info@acornorganic.org). Cost is \$25 for members.


Workshop is sponsored in part by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada through Maritime ACAAF Councils.

Fred Magdoff is a recently retired professor of plant and soil science at the University of Vermont in Burlington and co-author of "Building Soils for Better Crops".

Nov 4<sup>th</sup> Fredericton Farmer-Chef Symposium featuring keynote speaker Chef Chris Aerni from the Rossmount Inn in St-Andrews. Hosted by chef Ray Henry (one of Canada's top chefs) at the Frogmore Mansion, 35 Coulter Court, in downtown Fredericton. This event is an opportunity for chefs and restaurants to initiate local and seasonal food networks by fostering collaboration and direct marketing opportunities with local organic farmers. \$25 registration; \$20 for two or more members from the same business; free for farmers (includes lunch). Sponsored by ACORN and Canadian Organic Growers. Please contact Theresa Richards to RSVP or for more information regarding this event at [theresa@acornorganic.org](mailto:theresa@acornorganic.org) or 1-866-322-2676.

Nov 7 & 8<sup>th</sup> REACT 2008—the Rural Energy Action Conference and Trade Show at the Port Hawksbury civic centre, featuring Thomas Homer Dixon. Workshop topics on energy conservation and local food initiatives (including ACORN). Registration information is available by visiting the

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