



ACORN

Atlantic Canadian Organic Regional Network
Issue 33, Summer 2009

President's Message—Organic Agriculture in a Changing Environment

[Disclaimer: Though written by Andrew Kernohan, president of ACORN for the ACORN newsletter, the following are merely the individual thoughts of the author and are not the views of ACORN or of its board of directors.]

THE NEW CANADIAN ORGANIC REGULATION, after much wrangling, has finally solidified the rules for organic agriculture in Canada. Unfortunately the amount of effort taken to produce it is indicative of just how resistant to change it is likely to be. Regulations that can evolve, though, may be just what organic agriculture needs if it is to survive. Ethical principles do not change, but the policies we derive from them need to change in response to changing historical circumstances. The ethical principles informing a benign, sustainable, and ecological agriculture are constant, but their implementation in organic standards and permitted substance lists must change in response to new environmental challenges.

Our present organic agricultural policies were implemented in response to environmental challenges identified in the early years of mechanical and chemical agriculture: the destruction of soil organic matter by continuous tillage, the overuse of soluble fertilizers, the health risks of pesticides for both people and wildlife, the animal welfare issues inherent in factory farming, and the ecological destruction caused by monoculture. Though most of these problems are still with us, new problems

have arisen. World population has increased drastically from two billion in 1950 to over six billion now. Crop production per person, which rose from the nineteen fifties to the nineties, is now declining; consumption has exceeded production in most of the years since 2000. Worse, the rising price of oil has made biofuels economically attractive and brought North American cars into competition with the world's urban poor for these same crops. Finally, the massive use of fossil fuels in this period has released enough carbon dioxide into the atmosphere to threaten dangerous climate change.

These new environmental challenges threaten our present organic policies in the following way. A principle can be a truly ethical one only if it applies to everyone; if I ought to do such and such, then everyone in similar circumstances ought to do the same. It is not clear, however, that our present organic policies can still apply universally. When the world population was two or three billion, it was possible to feed everyone organically, but now that the population has grown to over six billion, this is no longer so. In an alarming article in *Scientific American* a few years ago, the Canadian geographer, Vaclav Smil, pointed out that natural fixation of nitrogen by legumes does not produce enough biologically accessible nitrogen to provide the protein requirements of any more than four billion people. Growing legumes involves taking crop land



Beth and Matt, and big-sister Isla, are very pleased to announce that Maeg Mari McMahon Holmes was born on May 26th at 2:41AM. She was a healthy 7lbs12oz and 21 inches long and she continues to grow healthily and happily! Congratulations Beth & Matt! Beth and Matt would also like to thank everyone for all of the good wishes.

out of production for soil building or turning it to less productive animal production, and legumes do not provide the high levels of nitrogen that the new green revolution crop varieties are able to effectively utilize. The implication is that, effectively, more than two billion people are dependent on the Haber-Bosch process (the catalytic conversion of natural gas and atmospheric nitrogen to ammonia) to provide protein for their bodies. We have passed an environmental tipping point in the last half century, and if all farmers were to transition to organic methods then they could no longer feed everyone.

So what direction should organic agriculture take in response to the new food and population realities? It can maintain business as usual, but lose its ethical legitimacy through being a form of agriculture that only some farmers can adopt if everyone is to be fed. Or it could adopt policies that decrease the consumption of crops. Or it could adopt policies that enforce the recycling of nutrients taken from the land but which ultimately end up in the ocean via city sewer systems.

Consider these last two options. About one third of the world's crop production is fed to animals. If the

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2010 ACORN Anniversary Conference, Save the Date! March 4-6, Charlottetown, PEI

"WOULDN'T MISS IT," SAYS ONE FARMER in their evaluation forms of the 2009 ACORN Conference.

Don't miss your chance to be a part of ACORN's biggest event: ACORN's 10th Anniversary Conference in Charlottetown, PEI, March 4th -6th, 2010. Plans are already underway for next year's conference and they include a full-day Berry Symposium and a series of workshops about on-farm processing for value-added production. ACORN's 10th anniversary conference promises to be one of celebration, and we have a lot to celebrate! Make sure you mark your calendars!

The Rodd Charlottetown Hotel and Conference Centre will be hosting the Conference, and guests will be happy to note that they have a completed swimming pool, hot tub and sauna!

Call for presenters

Do you have an idea for a workshop that you'd like to lead? If so, please send us your proposal. Please include the draft workshop title, issues to be addressed, and your qualifications to lead the workshop. These will be reviewed by the 2010 Program Committee. Deadline to apply: July 31, 2009

Conference Program Committee

Do you live in PEI and want to help ACORN shape the 2010 conference? The committee meets by conference call and via email from July-February. If you'd like to know more or want to sign-up, contact Theresa at: admin@acornorganic.org or call 1-866-322-2676

President's Message

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whole world's population were to become vegan, then perhaps organic agriculture could produce enough crops from naturally fixed nitrogen to feed everyone. For a while. World population will likely go to nine billion before it levels off, and by then even chemical agriculture will be able to feed only a world of vegans. There will be benefits to agriculture without animals; much animal misery will be avoided and the world's production of greenhouse gasses will be down—a recent FAO report, *Livestock's Long Shadow*, argues that animal agriculture is responsible for fully 18% of these. It will be difficult, however, for organic agriculture to adapt to farming without animals. Many organic production systems are dependent on manure or compost, and many organic rotations involve soil building years where forage is grown for cattle. Freeing organic agriculture from animals will change its soul, and the corresponding changes in organic regulations will not be made easily.

The other, complementary, option is to recycle the crop nutrients that ultimately end up first in cities and then in the ocean. Nitrogen is not the only nutrient leaving the soil system. The world, according to another recent *Scientific American* article, is also running out of rock phosphate. Globally, only about 90 years worth of phosphorous remains, with only 40 years worth left in North America. Bringing crop nutrients back from cities to the land, and closing the nutrient circle, will increase the productivity of organic crop systems. On an OACC organized field crop tour to Quebec a few years ago, we observed many farms with a three year rotation of corn, soy, and winter wheat powered by raw chicken manure from nearby conventional confinement operations. Though these organic farms were parasitic on conventional farms, their yields were excellent. Such yields could equally well be attained with nutrients recycled from cities. Recycling urban nutrients will be a battle. Dangerous chemicals will have to be banned from urban sewers, ways of safely composting and using human sewage will need to be found, the consumer "yuck" factor will have to be overcome, and, yet again, organic regulations will have to change drastically.

The new Canadian Organic Regulation is an achievement, but it must not be understood in a fundamentalist fashion. It is not carved immutably on a stone tablet. It is a living document that will need to change, and change very considerably, in response to our new environmental challenges.

Implementation of the Standard

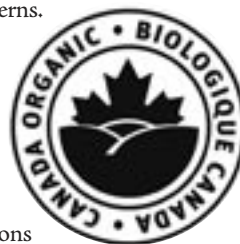
AS OF JUNE 30, THE NEW ORGANIC PRODUCT Regulations finally came into force. This will mean that across Canada we have one common standard for organic production, which is now enforceable (at least for provincial and national trade) and the new logo is available for use.

Although the standard is now law, the revision process is not over! A tremendous amount of revision was completed before the standard was released; yet there are still over 200 proposed changes on the future work-list for consideration.

The committee met in April to go over another round of proposed changes. These include:

- Prohibiting any use of nanotechnology
- Prohibiting the use of antibiotics for laying hens
- Deleting latex paint (as a tree seal for pruning) from the PSL
- Adding ferric phosphate (Sluggo) as slug control
- Adding probiotics and antioxidants for livestock feed
- Allowing synthetic amino acids for feed until October 2010, after which only natural sources would be permitted
- Adding or amending several different ingredients of interest to processors.

One contentious issue of interest for the Maritimes (parallel production) was not resolved on this ballot. This is the production of the same or visually indistinguishable crops as both organic and conventional. The 2008 standard prohibits parallel production, but numerous comments were received from Maritime producers and others across the country stating that prohibition was unrealistic and differs from other organic standards worldwide. There was not enough time to develop an amendment to go to ballot for this round, but hopefully in the next revision can address these concerns.



There is a good database of questions related to the standard here: www.cog.ca/faq

If you would like more details about the meeting or want to discuss concerns about the Canadian Organic Standard, please email me, your ACORN rep on the Standards Committee (roxannebeavers@yahoo.com). I'm happy to take your concerns forward or help you to submit comments.

Canada and U.S. reach agreement to create more opportunities for organic producers

OTTAWA, JUNE 17, 2009 — CANADA AND the United States have reached an agreement that will give organic producers access to more markets and make sure Canadian families can find more organic products in their grocery stores.

“We are working closely with our American neighbours to make sure we have clear, consistent regulations for our organic producers and top-quality standards for consumers,” said Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz. “This kind of cooperation keeps trade moving across the border while making sure Canadian families have clear, accurate information when they are choosing organic products.”

This agreement will allow Canada to export certified organic products to be marketed in the U.S. as organic without the need for additional American certification. Similarly, Canada would also deem imports of U.S.

organic products certified under their organic regime as meeting the Canadian requirements for organic products. Both the Canada Organic Biologique logo and the USDA Organic seal may be used on certified organic products from both countries.

Under this arrangement, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) has the ability to recognize certification bodies in the U.S. and ensure they are complying with the Canadian standards.

For more information on Canada’s organic products regulations and standards, please visit the CFIA website at: www.inspection.gc.ca

Canadian Food Inspection Agency
Media Relations: 613-773-6600

Megan Murdoch, Press Secretary, Office of the Honourable Gerry Ritz: 613-759-1059

ACORN Summer Students Excited to be a part of Organic Network

ACORN has hired us on as the two summer students to work in the Sackville office. Our names are Joni Fleck-Andrews and Alex MacDonald, both Mount Allison University students. We will be working for ACORN until the end of August. Aside from the general office work we have a number of projects we will be working on to strengthen the organic network in Atlantic Canada. You should all expect to begin hearing from us over the summer months if you haven’t already.

One of the two major projects we will be working on is a Google Maps display, a simple way to point consumers to their local organic options via the web. How it will work is that off of the ACORN website one would be able to look at a map of Atlantic Canada and visually be able to see the location of all the organic farms. When someone then clicks on the location of your farm some information will then pop up about the farm related to what you grow, your address and name. From there one could get directions, or take a look around at other nearby attractions if they were looking to make a day-trip out of their visit to your farm. In the end this will become a useful tool in helping people visually see how accessible it is to buy organic straight from the farms themselves. So stay tuned on this project, and we look forward to calling each and every organic farm over the next few months.

Our second major project ties into the first. We will be reworking the online organic database to produce a low cost, printable directory. This directory will not only help promote the consumption of local organic products but will also help promote cooperation and close contact among all of us.

Aside from these two projects we will be working on further promotion of organic agriculture using

both traditional media (like newspapers) as well as modern options like Youtube and Facebook. Whether we are calling you to update information about your organic operations or to help you with the promotion of organic agriculture, we both look forward to chatting with all of you involved in organic agriculture in Atlantic Canada.

Joni Fleck-Andrews
and
Alex MacDonald

Notes about Equivalency from OTA Canada

Since the organic standards between the U.S. and Canada differ in some areas, the equivalency agreement will also include some restrictions, mostly to respect Canadian organic standards. Products coming into Canada from the U.S. will not be allowed to come into Canada if they have been grown using sodium (“Chilean”) nitrate, a natural soluble nitrogen source allowed for restricted use under the National Organic Program of the U.S. Also, the U.S. will respect Canada’s prohibition on hydroponic growing of organic products, and any such products will not be allowed to be sold as organic in Canada. Finally, the U.S. will require data from organic livestock producers in the U.S. to monitor whether they meet Canadian livestock density rates under Canada’s organic standards. In return, Canada has agreed not to allow any organic dairy products to sell to the U.S. market if antibiotics were used in their production. (OTA in Canada, June 18, 2009)



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Transition Specialist Contract Extended

By Rupert Jannasch

ABOUT ONE YEAR AGO, I BEGAN A PART-TIME position as organic transition specialist with ACORN thanks to funding from the National Research Council's Industrial Research Assistance Program. The specialist's role was to assist new and existing growers wishing to become certified organic with guidance on developing organic plans, certification issues and practical production matters. This work involved visiting farms in all four Atlantic Provinces, presenting at workshops, holding meetings with grower groups and a variety of other tasks.

The position was recently extended to March 31, 2010. The job description remains almost the same except there will be more opportunity to visit existing organic farms considering expansion. Growers are encouraged to organize group meeting where common interests exist in topics critical to producing and marketing new certified organic products. Topics might include the usual suspects such as green manures/cover crops, grazing management, and composting, or, other subjects such as filling out certification applications, writing organic plans or using and sourcing some of the new pest and disease control materials (like Spinosad and Serenade). Plan early to try and organize a meeting this fall or coming winter.

I am also open to suggestions on developing some new resource documents. These should fill in gaps in the existing extension literature. For example, the ins and outs of temperature control for produce, from field to market, come to mind. There are certainly others.

As of June 30th Canada has a new Organic Products Regulation in effect. Products



labeled organic will have to meet the revised Canada Organic Standards through an accredited certification body. At the moment, the Regulation only covers trade between provinces and between countries; however, pressure is mounting that the same regulation be enforced for all organic trade provinces. Although some growers selling strictly within a province may choose not to become certified, the growing public awareness about the importance of the certification process means that marketing options for the non-certified growers may become quite limited. Furthermore, competitors that are certified still have recourse through the Canadian Food Inspection Agency if they believe a producer is misrepresenting their product as organic.

Along with the new Organic Regulation is an updated Permitted Substances List. Although

this list is comprehensive in scope, many individual products, especially brand names, do not appear on the list. This is understandable. Unfortunately, there is no complete list that producers can turn to. Certifiers have lists, as do some processors and ACORN, but none of these lists are identical, not all are shared and some are out of date. This makes the job of advisors and inspectors difficult and time consuming. Quite often questions must be referred to the certifier. Moreover, new products are coming on the market almost daily and many of these have ingredient lists containing either proprietary information or scientific names that require a chemist to interpret them. The best route is still to make certain with your certifier about the permissibility of a product. Beware of products listed under OMRI (Organic Materials Review Institute) because they may not be permissible in Canada.

The organic production standards have also been rewritten. More lenient rules for importing manure have given organic growers considerably more flexibility in obtaining fertilizer. However, caution is needed with high N fertilizers like chicken manure because repeated applications can lead to high levels of soil nitrogen and eventually weed problems. The other big change is greater restrictions on parallel production (i.e. the growing of the same conventional and organic crops on the same farm). If this applies to your operation, call me or contact your certifier and find out where you stand.

Hopefully I will see you on your farm sometime in the coming year.

Rupert

Have you seen this logo yet?

ACORN LAUNCHED A NEW PROMOTIONAL campaign directed to consumers in New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. In New Brunswick, 25,000 postcards were sent out in June in Fredericton's The Daily Gleaner and 20,500 were released in the Times and Transcript on the same day. Both papers have wide distribution in New Brunswick. In addition, in both New Brunswick and PEI, brochures featuring organic farmers and

their products were given to all of the certified organic farmers. ACORN also made posters for everyone to display at Farmer's Market stalls or otherwise that say "Local & Organic ... Better Together!" The materials coincide with the launch of a new website that directs users to featured organic producers and their profiles as well as ACORN's online directory. Make sure you check it out!
www.chooselocalorganic.ca



Who says farming is growing old?

By Joni Fleck Andrews

STEPHEN AND CINDY COUSINS, ALONG with growing organic crops, are also raising organic entrepreneurs. Their three children, ages 10, 14 and 16 are all starting their own farming ventures during their summer months away from school.

The youngest of the three, Daniel, is going into grade 5 in the fall and farming aside, enjoys biking, playing sports and spending time with friends. When asked what he would like to be when he grows up he responded, "I'd like to be a dairy farmer." This summer Daniel will have the opportunity to try his hand as a farmer by planting and harvesting 500 raspberry plants and a chance to work with livestock too by raising 200 meat chickens. Pretty impressive for a ten-year-old. But why would a young man like Daniel choose to pursue farming over the summer when others are playing soccer or gallivanting around town on their bikes? "I raise chickens because Dad used to but he gave me the responsibility of taking the job from him, says Daniel. "For raspberries, last summer while helping Dad plant his, I thought I'd like to try growing some of my own and so I am." When the raspberries are ripe he will be selling them to the PEI Preserve Company, which is a retailer of preserves, tea and other complementary products. His chickens will be sold to customers Daniel's father helped him find.

Fourteen-year-old Hannah is another young anomaly, preferring to spend her time outdoors either dirt biking, playing soccer, jumping on the trampoline and this summer, she'll also be in charge of growing strawberries, not to mention raising fifty turkeys. The turkeys she'll sell during Thanksgiving and Christmas. Customer's who purchase Hannah's turkeys will have them delivered right to their front door. The strawberries she hopes to offer to local restaurants and sell to the PEI Preserve Company. This is a teen going into the grade 9 in the fall. When asked about her motivation to cultivate strawberries and raise turkeys she says, "I knew I would make money. I also thought it would lead to good opportunities in future years." For someone who hopes to join the RCMP after High School, Hannah is well on her way to proving she is highly capable of holding a lot of responsibility!

How many sixteen-year-olds do you know who are involved in the High School band, on the Student Council, are proud athletes and who then decide to take up a summer career organizing a growing 30 Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) boxes each week? Naomi is the oldest of the three and will be going into grade 11 in September. By selling the CSA vegetable boxes she hopes to "bring the communities together and create a way for Islanders to support



local farmers," she says. "Each week I will have a stand set up in Charlottetown where all of my customers will come for pick-up" Naomi explained. Customers will have two options: a \$15 box of mixed vegetables that feeds 1 to 2 people, or a \$25 box of vegetables, which feeds 3 to 5 people. Besides herself, there are only two other farmers on the island who do this, which will hopefully give her a great advantage.

Until their individual ventures begin Daniel, Hannah and Naomi will be working directly for their father's farm, Shepherd's Farm; planting, weeding and maintaining produce. Evidently these three young people are ambitious, hard working and mature beyond their ages. Growing up around farming on PEI has acted as a positive influence and has taught them a lot about farming for their endeavors this summer.

So from everyone here at ACORN we would like to wish Daniel, Hannah, and Naomi Cousins the best of luck this summer. We're sure you'll make your family and the whole organic community proud.

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Grains Network Update

THIS YEAR THE OACC IS WORKING primarily in PEI (at Barnyard Organics) and NS (at the NSAC) on comparing winter cereals with spring cereal production and evaluating the nitrogen supply from pelletized poultry manure and red clover in cereals. In addition, we continue to explore white lupine and pumpkin production at the NSAC, and black currant production on PEI farms. We will provide results in the Maritime Organic Grains Network (MOGN) newsletter.

For more information about the MOGN call Andy at 902-893-8037. If you let him know when you will be in Truro, he might even be able to demonstrate the new

experimental flame weeder that has been built! Visitors are always welcome at the OACC/NSAC.

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Nova Scotia Agricultural College
Truro NS B2N 5E3
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Don't miss the Grains Tours and dates:
July 16, PEI, for more information contact Susan MacKinnon at 1-866-734-3276;
July 22 - NB for more information or to register contact ACORN 1-866-322-2676

Organic Cotton Business in Atlantic Canada

By Alex MacDonald

WHEN MOST CANADIANS THINK "ORGANIC", food is the first thing that comes to mind. However the global organic movement has moved beyond just food and now extends into other consumer products like personal care, pet food, and medical supplements. Textiles are the name of the game for Halifax's Laura Chenoweth. Organically grown cotton is now a major commodity in the global market and Laura is one clothing designer trying to help Atlantic Canadians make environmentally fashionable decisions.

Chenoweth's new clothing line is made of organic cotton, all grown and manufactured in India where Laura once worked creating home décor items. With the growing demand for more organically produced consumer products Laura's business has a great opportunity to grow further.

Chenoweth explains that the idea for her clothing line came into existence sometime after she began noticing the poor quality of clothing sold in Canada. She noticed that a large portion of cotton garments are being produced in China, and more often than not they are being made with genetically engineered (GE) cotton. With all of this in mind, Laura began researching the ins and outs of organic cotton, with the hope of creating her own quality clothing line. Of course, because cotton cannot grow in Canada Chenoweth recognized that she would have to search for her cotton supply internationally. She found out that the two largest producers of organic cotton were Turkey and India. With her previous work experience in India, it was the perfect match for Laura.

Chenoweth admits that it is sometimes a barrier to be producing clothing that comes from India. With the "Made in China" backlash in Canada and the United States many consumers have rejected the purchase of all "foreign products". To address this negative sentiment toward clothing from foreign countries Laura explains that the environmental benefits of organically grown cotton in India versus American produced GE cotton is hardly comparable. "The environmental and social benefits of buying organic cotton from India are profound. On the environmental side, the organic cotton is less of a drain on resources like water and being free of synthetic chemicals is safer for the farmers and their families. On the socio-economic side organic cotton offers farmers independence from the seed distributors and don't rely on their supply of expensive seeds on



a yearly basis," says Chenoweth on the difficulties many Indian farmers must overcome. Some feel these difficulties contribute to the large number of suicides in particular regions of India.

The occurrence of these suicides is believed by many to correlate with to the aggressive introduction of GE cotton. The GE cotton used in India requires more water, does not reproduce viable seeds, and is often irresponsibly farmed without crop rotations relying heavily on synthetic chemicals. These farming techniques have led to farmers accumulating large debt-loads and a dependence on multinationals like Monsanto who supply them with the seeds and chemicals. The increased debt incurred by the costly GE cotton is causing many farmers to resort to suicide, often by drinking the pesticides that GE seed distributors claimed would save their crops and increase their yields.

Whether you believe the correlation between GE cotton and suicides in India to be true, the sustainable farming practices that accompany organic cotton are contributing relief to the farmers of India. Relief to both the debt incurred as well as the relief in knowing that their farms are not full of toxic chemicals. Chenoweth speaks fondly of a woman she met in India, "I couldn't believe how happy she was. Happy to be alive and working her farm. Happy to not have to worry about her children's exposure to chemical pesticides and herbicides." When purchasing clothing we should all attempt to be mindful of this sad truth that a lot of the clothes we wear were produced using GE cotton in countries like China and India where families are exposed to the dangers of chemical pesticides and herbicides. So if not just for the environmental benefit that comes with responsible consumerism and purchasing clothing made with organic cotton than consider the families and children of those exposed to the chemicals necessary to make a pair of cotton pants or a t-shirt.

For those interested in how to purchase from Laura Chenoweth's clothing line a number of retail stores have been selling her line including P'Lovers in Halifax and Mahone Bay, Love Me Boutique in Halifax, and Flow Lifestyle Boutique in Amherst. Also a store in British Columbia and two more in Ontario will carry the Fall line of clothing. You can check out Laura's website which showcases some of her designs laurachenoweth.com.

For those of you that would like to know more about organic cotton the Organic Exchange organicexchange.org offers a wealth of information on organic cotton, global standards, what labels to look for and where organic cotton is grown.

Market Information from Atlantic certified organic producers

PRODUCE	Unit	Number of Farms	Lowest Price	Highest Price	Average
Lettuce (Head)	Per Head	6	\$1.50	\$3.00	\$1.92
Lettuce (Leaf)	lb	6	\$0.75	\$5.00	\$3.30
Spinach	lb	3	\$7.50	\$10.50	\$8.67
Radish	lb	4	\$1.00	\$3.00	\$1.81
Herbs	lb	11	\$1.00	\$3.20	\$1.98
Strawberries	Quart	6	\$2.00	\$5.00	\$3.83
MEAT	Unit	Number of Farms	Lowest Price	Highest Price	Average
Lamb	By the side	2	\$6.50	\$6.50	\$6.50
Whole Chicken	lb	6	\$3.00	\$6.60	\$4.90
Lean Ground Beef	lb	6	\$4.00	\$6.00	\$4.99
Bonless Round Roast	lb	6	\$6.00	\$9.10	\$7.14
Sirloin Steak	lb	6	\$6.00	\$10.49	\$9.06

What's the Buzz?

How your farm can be a bit more friendly

ACORN's RECENT ATLANTIC ORGANIC Berry Network's Pollination Forum & Farm Tour held June 12 & 13 in PEI was an exciting event for farmers and researchers alike.

With the advent of the worldwide decline in bee populations, pollination has become a hot topic. With



honeybees having been hit hard, relying so heavily on a single species suddenly seemed like an unsustainable, risky idea. Researchers in particular have become very interested in diverse and native pollinator species. That's why such an impressive gathering of speakers (a total of 8 guest speakers, which included Dr. Peter Kevin, Director of Research at the CANPOLIN Network and Professor in Environmental Biology at the University of Guelph) were keen to present their research to farmers who will apply it in their fields. Both groups had the opportunity to share their experience, questions and expertise in a full day forum of presentations and discussion. The Farm Tour, which took place following the full-day forum, was also a great occasion for farmers and researchers to gain some experiential education in the field.

"The purpose of the Forum was to link berry producers directly with experienced pollination researchers," says Alan Hicken, from PEI Organic Berries. "And I think everyone who attended left with some very valuable insight and new skills."

ACORN picked up on a few of its own tips to share that you can apply on your farm to help encourage sustainable pollination.

First of all, every one of the speakers emphasized the importance of considering the life-cycle of a bee. On a daily basis, a bee can travel as far as 6 km to find sources of pollen. They start the pollination process as soon as the weather warms up enough for them to emerge from their winter nesting site. In early spring, things are slow and the cool weather hinders their ability and the distance they are able to travel to find flowering plants. As spring progresses, more plants are in bloom and life for the bee is a bit easier. After spring however comes the long summer, where there are not quite

as many flowering plants blooming and it becomes more and more difficult for a bee to find sources of pollen as the crops they pollinated earlier that season begin their fruiting process. It is especially difficult for a bee that has built a hive near a one-time blooming crop (such as blueberries). During the rest of that season, the bee might have to travel really far to find sources of food.

According to speaker Steve Javorek, an important research biologist with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, you can encourage pollination by planting a diversity of flowering plants that cover the full season of pollination. This way, the bees and other pollinators can be persuaded to make a home in your fields. "Bees and other pollinators need to find sources of pollen at all times of the year, not just when your blueberry crop is in bloom," emphasizes Javorek.

Javorek displayed images of a test field site's map of bee resources throughout the full growing season. The feature demonstrated the importance of seasonal diversity, as at certain points in the summer it was evident that there would be a very limited selection available for a bee on the test field.

One interesting tidbit was the fact that one section of the test field remained bright with sources of pollen throughout the whole season. Interestingly, it turned out that the section was a bog. "Don't underestimate the importance of a variety of eco-systems on your farm," Javorek states.

Through several talks, wildflowers were cited as an important resource as well. Blooming throughout the season, they were recognized as important species on farms. Field edges were suggested as areas to encourage the growth of different flowering species, being careful to make sure there is always something in bloom. For apple production, lupines were suggested as an important crop as they bloom immediately after the apple blossoms, providing a consistent supply of food.

Nesting sites were also an important factor for encouraging bee populations to be at home on the farm. Different types of bees have different needs, some are ground nesters, and some prefer dry spots such as holes in trees or logs.

Bees will sometimes even make their nesting sites in old containers/debris lying around on farms. Rather than leaving waste lying around however, you can acquire different nesting boxes, some of which are designed to host various bee species, with different hole sizes to comfortably accommodate the wide variety of bees that pollinate our fields.

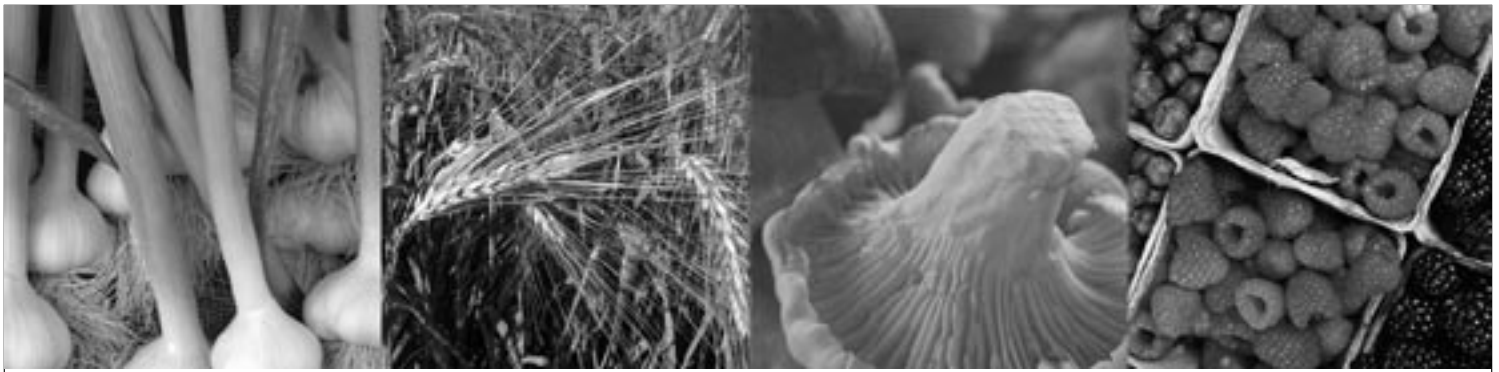
So consider leaving that old, dying tree in your field, or put up some bee boxes of your own. And who can argue with adding a colourful touch of wildflowers while attracting a variety of native pollinators to your fields, keeping them fed for the full season with mixed varieties of blooms? Also, if you were once considering reconstructing the wet, boggy area of your farm, I hope this article encourages you to think twice about the benefits of full farm diversity!

Bee Facts:

- There are approximately 800 bee species in Canada
- "Most 'bees' do not look like the stereotypical black and yellow-striped stingers" —Elizabeth Elle
- "Honey Bees are the 3rd most valuable domestic animal in Europe, the honey bee crisis is a big deal" —Cory Sheffield

Atlantic Canadian 'Blueberry Hit Team'

The Pollination Forum also served as an unofficial launch for the CANPOLIN Network's 'Blueberry Hit Team'! This means that for at least the next year, researchers from the CANPOLIN Network are pooling their knowledge and resources to concentrate on blueberry pollination issues in the Atlantic Provinces. This is big news for our berry producers! What is CANPOLIN? It's a new five-year NSERC Strategic Network that will address the growing problem of pollinator decline in agricultural and natural ecosystems in Canada. Researchers at 26 universities across the country are working with government agencies, NGO's and industry to deliver critical insights and sustainable solutions to the pollination problem.



Classified Ads

Responding to several requests, ACORN is listing important classifieds in our quarterly newsletter, let us know what you think!

OPPORTUNITY: Co-op Atlantic stores are launching a promotion for their organic feed: With each purchase of a bag of organic feed, customers have the opportunity to fill out a ballot to win more FREE feed. Don't miss this special offer—shop at Co-op Atlantic!

OPPORTUNITY: Hello, we have 25 acres in the Annapolis Valley near Wolfville and would like to partner with someone who is an organic (animal/plant) farmer. If you would like to partner or could help in finding a partner or sharecropper or other innovative partnership it would be greatly appreciated. Please email: murlin@eastlink.ca

FOR SALE: Canada's first certified organic pet bakery, makers of a wide range of dog and cat treats and foods. Sale of business includes all proprietary recipes, the business name, logo, website, and all bakery tools and equipment. Owner will work with buyer for minimum 6 months to ensure a smooth transition. Visit our website for more information (www.katiesfarm.ca) or call 902-845-2093. Reason for sale: owner retiring.

FOR SALE: Lavender Farm Cottage-Industry Business for sale in Nova Scotia. If you have a few acres of land close to Halifax or a main Hwy. and are interested in beginning a profitable business involving growing & selling lavender plants; harvesting the lavender and then manufacturing natural health care products, gourmet foods, aromatherapy products, etc. that already have a huge clientele then taking over our business may be just what you are looking for. Our business has been functioning since 2003 with a steady growth in sales of products and lavender plants. Reason for selling: In the next few years, we as a family, are working towards changing our life's work to serve with a Christian Ministry www.dawnforthe poor.org to help bring hope and develop livelihood skills for the urban poor in the overcrowded slums of Asia. Here is a list of some components we are offering for sale: Hundreds of certified organic, mature lavender plants to transplant onto your property; Hundreds of younger plants are also available; Transfer of our own knowledge planting and propagation of plants; Transfer of membership at the largest, year-round Farmer's Market in Nova

Scotia; Pine Hutch Storefront display units at Farmer's Market; Original formulas of our best selling product line (includes registration with Health Canada for cosmetics); Transfer of our knowledge in formulating these products; Transfer of well-known Online Storefront set up with e-commerce. There are other components we may be interested in selling. For more information contact carlsonlane@ns.sympatico.ca or check out our website at www.lavendercanada.com

FOR SALE: 20 x 40 steel hoop greenhouse for sale \$800.00. Located in Minto, extremely easy to disassemble. Elizabeth Crawford Thurber. Call 474-3033 or email: foodbank@nb.aibn.com

FOR SALE: Yellow eye edible beans and white pea edible beans. Certified by OCIA. Telephone Maurice Girouard 506-856-0172 or e-mail: mgirouar@nbnet.nb.ca

FOR SALE: RED POLL Bulls, aged from 6 months to 7 years. Prices start at \$750.00. Beautiful dual-purpose heritage breed, naturally polled. 95% of offspring will have same trait. Visit our website for more information www.pinnaclefarms.com and click on 'cattle' or call: 902-447-3600.

FOR SALE: Organic Farm. Land is certified this year. 80 acres of good cultivated land (with tile drainage) 70 acres of woodlot. Very large barn and 4-bedroom older farmhouse. Equipment and animals also for sale. Contact (902)742-2187 or cell#740-0309

OPPORTUNITY: We have farmland in Nova Scotia, about 50 min from Halifax and 30 min from Truro. We are not farmers, however we have about 125 acres of fields that have been farmland in the past, about 30 years ago. We are interested in finding farmers in the local area that are interested in using our land for organic farming. If interested, please contact us: Kim Arsenaault, Urbania, NS at donald.a@ns.sympatico.ca

FOR SALE: 50-acre organic farm in Margaretsville, NS. 1 acre of raspberries plus strawberries & asparagus. Completely renovated farmhouse plus 5 outbuildings

(one a 4 stall horse barn), 10 acres rotational grazing pasture. 10 acres hayfields. 20+ acres woodlot. Lots of photos and info at www.amysfarm.ca. Contact: 902-825-1732 or amysfarm@gmail.com.

OPPORTUNITY: I am looking for room & board on an organic farm in N.S. (Annapolis Valley area, between Middleton & Mount Uniacke). I am an active 66 yr old, who owned small organic hobby farm in the past. Besides paying rent, I can help with some of your chores. Please call (902) 461-4377; leave message for Sue.

WANTED: Buckwheat seed. Contact Tom Lask, 506.432.6467



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