

INFORMATION

Yukon Agriculture Branch Quarterly Bulletin

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MESSAGE FROM THE AGRICULTURE BRANCH

What a difference a year makes. A year ago we had just endured one of the coldest and wettest summers and this year we had one of the warmest. This fall has also been a bonus for many growers with the long frost free period stretching into the middle of September. Our last raspberry pick at the research site was on Friday September 11, the latest I can recall since the trial began in 2004.

Fall, like the start of a new school year, ushers in a new season for us at the Agriculture Branch. This year's annual conference and banquet are less than two months away. Together with the Canadian Farm Business Management Council, we will hold a farm diversification and value-added workshop on Friday, November 6, geared towards producers looking to add value to crops and products in an effort to capture profits along the distribution chain. On the Saturday of the conference, there is a forum for new entrants and young farmers to hear about training and educational opportunities and financial services and programs offered under the Growing Forward Agreement that can provide assistance in farm development. Of course, the second day wraps up with the annual North of 60° banquet featuring fine Yukon farmed foods, a chance to share stories with others in the industry and the annual Farmer of the Year award. Tickets for the banquet go on sale October 1st, so mark your calendars and plan on joining us.

Speaking of Growing Forward, on page 2, there is an article that profiles one of the many initiatives offered under this new program. We have funded over \$250,000 to a range of projects since the program was implemented in April of this year. Projects range from support for 4-H clubs, to education programs, farm business planning, assistance for the Fireweed Community Market and new cooperative equipment purchases by the Yukon Agricultural Association. A full description of the programs can be found on our website at www.agriculture.gov.yk.ca so check it out to see if these programs can help you with an agricultural project.

Later this winter we will be offering the Yukon Master Gardener course, holding policy and planning meetings with our industry advisory committee and working with both the research working group and the committee looking at improving meat processing infrastructure in the Yukon. The start of a new winter season and it looks like we are in for another busy year.

Looking forward to seeing you at the conference,

Tony Hill
Director, Agriculture Branch

GROWING FORWARD	2
N60 AGRICULTURE CONFERENCE	3
NOMINATIONS FOR FARMER OF THE YEAR	3
VALUE PLUS WORKSHOP	4
NEW AND YOUNG FARMER'S FORUM	5
AGRI-TALENT	5
ORGANIC EXTENSION VISIT	6
ELK HUNTING	7
CLASSIFIEDS/ANNOUNCEMENTS	8

NORTH OF 60 AGRICULTURE CONFERENCE
NOVEMBER 6 AND 7, HIGH COUNTRY INN

Growing Forward

Since the announcement of the new Growing Forward agricultural framework agreement in April of this year, the Agriculture branch has administered approximately \$250,000 in program funding to 33 projects. This marks a substantial increase in project funding when compared to the previous Agriculture Policy Framework programs offered between 2005 and 2008. Growing Forward programs are designed to support a profitable and innovative agriculture, agri-food and agri-based products industry that seizes opportunities by responding to market demands and contributes to the health and well-being of Canadians.

In these first six months there has already been uptake in all the program areas outlined in the Growing Forward agreement with the highest uptake being in the Enhancing Agricultural Opportunities initiative. Enhancing Agricultural Opportunities is designed to help diversify and strengthen agriculture in the Yukon. This includes the Market Development initiative which provides resources to investigate and capture new market opportunities and enhance the competitive capability of the industry. The Agriculture Development initiative is another option which provides funding to develop agricultural projects that enhance regional economic development and contribute to sustainability in rural communities. Some examples of projects funded under the Enhancing Agriculture Opportunities initiative include the Fireweed Community Market, Dawson City Community Garden, and Yukon Agricultural Association equipment rental program.

Over the next few editions of InFARMation we will be highlighting different Growing Forward initiatives. This month we are looking at the Business Planning and Advisory initiative, which is part of the Enhancing Agricultural Opportunities Program.

BUSINESS PLANNING AND ADVISORY INITIATIVE

The Business Planning and Advisory initiative helps producers conduct a farm business assessment with the support of a farm business advisor. The farm business assessment evaluates the current farm business situation and also assists in the development of an action plan for future farm activities.

To date, this Growing Forward initiative has already had a wide range of applicants. The applicants include those in the process of obtaining agriculture land, new entrants into the agriculture industry and established operations looking to improve profitability. Feedback has been positive and the farm business assessment has given producers the tools to make more informed decisions based on actual numbers.

Applying for a farm business assessment will provide access to a farm business advisor. This service includes development of a Farm Business Assessment and an Action Plan.

Farm Business Assessment: The farm business advisor will review past records and the current situation, discuss goals and objectives, and help producers determine their current options in

meeting their profitability goals. Each producer will receive a business profile, a statement of assets and liabilities, a farm business ratio analysis, an income and expenses statement for the previous three years, and other information related to the farm business.

Action Plan: Following the Farm Business Assessment, producers will work with the advisor to assess their options for increasing farm profitability and establish a plan to implement the option they have chosen. This service will result in financial planning (including cash-flow planning), projections of options and a written report. The cost of consultant services, valued at \$2,500, will be paid through the Canada-Yukon Growing Forward agreement. The producer will pay a fee of \$100 to the advisor.

This program will benefit all producers, including those who have been farming for years or producers that are just getting started. New entrants into Growing Forward programs may be required to do a farm business assessment to help them prioritize their needs before applying to other programs. The Farm Business assessment is confidential, and information from the assessment is property of the applicant. Those applying to this service will be required to fill out a questionnaire on the value of the services provided and how it has benefitted their operation.

For more information on funding available through Growing Forward visit the Yukon Agriculture Branch website at www.agriculture.yk.ca or contact the Agriculture Branch for the Growing Forward Programming Guide. Agriculture Branch contact information is available on the last page of this newsletter.

NORTH OF 60 AGRICULTURE CONFERENCE 2009

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 6 AND SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2009
HIGH COUNTRY INN, WHITEHORSE

GROWING YUKON AGRICULTURE

The opportunity for growing Yukon agriculture is now. Concepts such as the 100 Mile Diet and eating local have propelled public interest in Yukon Agriculture to a whole new level. The governments of Canada and Yukon have more funding available for industry than ever before. We are seeing more young people interested in a career in agriculture. Consumers want to know where their food comes from and we can grow some of it for them right at home. This year's conference is trying to connect the dots to facilitate the opportunities in Yukon agriculture.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 6

The conference kicks off on Friday at 9:00 a.m. with the Canadian Farm Business Management Council Value Plus Workshop, your path to farm success. See page 4 for more information on the Value Plus Workshop.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 7

Young (and New) Farmer's Forum 9:30 - 11:30 a.m.

This forum evaluates the challenges and opportunities that exist in Yukon agriculture. The forum will highlight the tools available to new farmers including some of the Growing Forward programs, the Canadian Farm Business Management Council resources, educational opportunities, Farm Credit Corporation loans and any others. There will also be an open floor discussion about the challenges and opportunities.

The new and young farmers forum will include a presentation from the Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council (CAHRC) on Agritalent the new online one-stop shop for training and learning programs in agriculture offered across Canada.

Growing Forward Programming 1:00 – 2:00 p.m.

Come by to learn about the new programs launched this spring, which programs work for you and how to best utilize the Growing Forward initiatives.

Greenhouse Technologies 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Meriam Karlsson is a Professor of Horticulture at the University of Alaska Fairbanks in the School of Natural Resources and Agricultural Sciences. She conducts research and develops guidelines for sustainable high latitude crop production in field, high tunnel, greenhouse, and controlled-environments. Meriam along with local greenhouse experts will be the guest speaker for a Greenhouse Technologies workshop Saturday afternoon discussing new technology and management strategies for greenhouses.

The conference is free of charge and open to all, please feel free to drop in for the morning, afternoon, whole day or even both days. For more information on the conference contact the Agriculture Branch. Agriculture Branch contact information is available on the last page of this newsletter.

NOMINATIONS FOR 'FARMER OF THE YEAR'

Is there a farmer or farm family in your community that has shown the kind of commitment and passion for agriculture that you feel should be recognized? With the Agriculture Branch's annual fall conference fast approaching this is your opportunity to nominate a producer or farm advocate, for the Agriculture Branch farmer/farm family of the year award. The award will be presented at the annual Yukon North of 60° Agriculture Banquet on November 7, 2009 at the High Country Inn in Whitehorse.

Nominations should be submitted in writing to the Agriculture Branch with a brief explanation of why the candidate(s) are worthy of the award. Nominations may link the nominee's contribution to agriculture or agri-business development in Yukon, assistance with the future of agriculture in Yukon, good farm management practices, development of any new or innovative ideas, or any other reason you feel your candidate should be chosen. The deadline for nominations is Wednesday, November 4, 2009, at 4:00 p.m.

There are many people who have made a contribution to agriculture in Yukon, let's share our stories. All the nominations must be in writing. Letters, facsimiles and e-mails will be accepted. The Agriculture Branch is located in room 320 of the Elijah Smith Building in Whitehorse.

Fax: (867) 393-6222

Email: agriculture@gov.yk.ca

VALUE PLUS YOUR PATH TO FARM SUCCESS

Looking to diversify what you grow and produce, add value your customers will appreciate, and capture new markets, better pricing and a stronger future? Don't miss the Canadian Farm Business Management Council's (CFBMC) Value Plus workshop, being held with the North of 60° Agriculture Conference.

This one day workshop will show you how to add value to your products, secure new markets and boost your financial results.

Yukon farmers are aware that traditional bulk, undifferentiated commodities farming conducted in southern Canada, does not fit our northern market. The Yukon market requires something different to make its operations more sustainable. To provide that something different, the Value Plus workshop looks at the proven approach of diversifying the farm's production base, adding value to what you can grow to capture a bigger piece of the marketplace and increase the profitability of your business. Value Plus, a national workshop program presented by CFBMC, is an ideal way to learn how to diversify and add value while managing risk. If you're new to the concept of value adding, Value Plus is the event for you. If you're already doing it, Value Plus is a source of great ideas you won't find anywhere else.

What is value adding?

Many people in agriculture talk about value-added this and value-added that, but what does it really mean? Here's a handy definition:

value adding is the creation and promotion of new features and benefits in a product or service. Once these features and benefits are recognized by the consumer, the producer can expand markets and increase profitability.

What you'll learn at Value Plus

The concept of value adding might be simple enough, but making it work takes time, creativity and strategy. After you attend the Value Plus workshop, you'll head home with inspired ideas and practical plans. You will know how to:

- identify promising value-added ideas
- assess your suitability to manage a value-adding enterprise
- refine the skills you need to succeed
- develop new products for value-added markets
- recognize and manage operational and financial risk
- create an action plan to move your business forward

A speaker committed to your success

Gary Morton is an entrepreneur, agricultural consultant and partner in a family-owned horticultural nursery in Nova Scotia's Annapolis Valley. For more than 25 years, he has provided innovative management, consulting and advice to agriculture-based businesses and organizations. Gary is the coauthor of the acclaimed and best-selling CFBMC publication, *Adding Value through Farm Diversification*. He believes passionately that Canadian agriculture's best future lies in reducing dependence on bulk commodities and adding value that consumers will pay for.

The CFBMC is the only national organization in Canada devoted exclusively to developing and distributing advanced farm management information. Supported by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and a growing number of private partners, CFBMC is fulfilling a significant role in nurturing a thriving Canadian agriculture industry. To learn more about the support and resources available through CFBMC, visit www.farmcentre.com.

Held as part of the North of 60° Agriculture Conference, the workshop is directed towards Yukon producers, but is open to all those interested in agriculture. The Value Plus workshop is Friday, November 6 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. There will be a break for lunch. There is no need to confirm your attendance, although this would be appreciated. To confirm your attendance or if you require any additional information please contact the Agriculture Branch (contact information is on page 8).



Cabbages from Grant and Karen in Dawson

NORTH OF 60 AGRICULTURE CONFERENCE 2009

NEW AND YOUNG FARMERS FORUM

The 2009 North of 60° Agriculture will be hosting a forum for new farmers, young farmers, and those interested in farming. The forum started as a young farmers working group to address the concern with the increasing average age of farmers (the average age for a Yukon Farmer is 51) and the lack of interest from young workers in the industry. It was evident the topics being covered by a young farmers' workshop would benefit more than just young farmers. Other groups such as new farmers, those interested in farming and farmers looking to transition their current operation to something new would also benefit.

AGRI-TALENT.CA

AgriTalent.ca database of agriculture training programs has been launched!

On June 10, 2009, the Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council (CAHRC) launched AgriTalent.ca - the first national on-line database of agriculture training programs.

AgriTalent.ca is an easy-to-use search engine for people looking for training in agriculture-related fields. Training resources range from full-time degree and diploma programs to continuing education courses. Each institution listing includes contact information, the number and type of programs offered, and a Web site address. Each course description includes the days/hours of instruction, method of instruction, program duration, and cost.

Put simply, AgriTalent.ca links people to institutions and training providers in Canada that offer programs in agriculture. Visitors to the website may browse by training subject, commodity group, or keyword in English or in French. AgriTalent.ca also features advanced search capabilities for users to combine keywords with training subjects, method of instruction, region of delivery, and commodity. The results of each search may be stored in an individual short list for easy reference.

The Council collected information on more than 1,000 agriculture-related courses from 228 training institutions from across Canada in order to develop AgriTalent.ca. This resource is a result of CAHRC's Inventory Database of Learning Programs project, which was recently completed.

Prior to its launch, AgriTalent.ca was tested by members of the Council's Board of Directors as well as CAHRC's education partners from the Canadian Agricultural Education Network. This on-line resource is expected to become an essential tool for youth considering a career in agriculture and for agriculture employers and employees who want to advance their skills and training. It is also expected to help guidance counsellors and educational institutions promote courses that are essential to some of the jobs available today in agriculture.

The forum is designed to deal with and discuss the challenges that new and young farmers face in the agriculture sector. We are all aware of the increasing costs of land, fertilizer, labour, and a slew of other inputs make it difficult to get into farming. But with the movement to eat local and also the concerns with global warming there may be no better time to get into farming.

The new and young farmer's forum also looks to discuss Yukon agriculture issues such as:

- Land availability
- Agriculture opportunities
- Training and education
- Farm business assessments plans
- Available funding for new farmers

The forum will finish with a round table discussion to add food for thought.

If you would like more information about the forum please contact Brad Barton at the Agriculture Branch (contact info on page 8) or come to the forum scheduled for 9:30 am, November 7, 2009 at the High Country Inn.



NEWS

BC ORGANIC EXTENSION
AGENT VISIT

On September 8, Rochelle Eisen gave a well attended talk at the Gold Rush Inn on the new Canadian Organic Standards and Regulations. Rochelle Eisen P.Ag. has a B.Sc. in Agriculture from the University of Guelph, and has completed over 4,000 inspections. She is currently working with the Certified Organic Associations of BC (COABC) as an Organic Extension Agent.

Rochelle Eisen's talk covered a variety of topics, including the difference between standards and regulations. The current organic standards are: Organic Production Systems General Principles and Management Standards and Organic Production Systems Permitted Substances Lists. These documents were established in 2006 and amended in 2008.

The difference between the standards and the regulations is spelled out on the Canadian Organic Growers (COG) website: "The Canadian Organic Standards are official national standards developed by the organic industry with the support of the Standards Council of Canada. The Organic Products Regulations (SOR/2006-338), published December 14, 2006 in the Canada Gazette (Extra Vol. 140, No. 6) make the Canadian Organic Standards legally binding. In order to be considered organic under the Organic Products Regulations, products must be certified organic according to the Canadian Organic Standards."

There was a discussion on how the regulations would be applied in each province, and particularly in Yukon, with regards to the use of the term "organic." There will be more about this in a future article in InFARMation on the Canadian Organic Standards and Regulations.

As well as discussing the standards, Rochelle Eisen talked about transitioning and the opportunities offered by making the transition to organic for growers and processors. At the moment, the standards govern only the growing and processing of a product that is grown and eaten by people. They do not govern cosmetics, pet food or aquaculture for example. Within the category of food and processed food, there is still ample opportunity to supply the BC market that currently imports a significant portion of organic food. A large percentage of that market (20%) could be supplied by products grown in BC. The bottom line for Eisen was how beneficial organic growing is to the economic and physical health of people, communities and the environment.



Peppers and eggplant from
Grant and Karen



Brian's veggies

While in Yukon, Rochelle inspected almost all the territories certified organic and transitional farms. For the past three years, our local inspector, Claire Desmarais, has completed annual inspections. With the new standards coming into effect, Rochelle also traveled here in June to familiarize Claire with what's new. There are currently four Yukon farms that are certified organic and three in transition: Aurora Mountain, Lendrum Ross, Rivendell, M'Clintock Valley, Vangel and Murphy, Bell, and Earth Wisdom Ranch.

Rochelle Eisen's visit was funded through the Agricultural Training initiative of Growing Forward, through Growers of Organic Food Yukon.

*Joanne Jackson Johnson
Chair, Growers of Organic Food
Yukon*

NEWS

ELK HUNTING FALL/WINTER 2009

This fall marks the first time in over 20 years that elk hunting will be allowed in the Yukon. These new hunting opportunities will not only allow Yukon residents an opportunity to put some great meat in their freezers, it will also provide permitted hunters a chance to work with landowners by removing and deterring elk that have become reliant on farm foraging to assist them through the winter.

In the past, and more specifically over the past three winters, an increasing number of the Takhini valley elk herd have made forays east of the Takhini River bridge into developed areas. The elk making these seasonal movements have been rewarded by finding farm fields used to grow domestic crops of hay and oats. Each year the elk have returned earlier and stayed later despite attempts to discourage them from doing so.

With hunting being added as an available tool to discourage elk from coming and staying in these developed areas, landowners and government officials are hoping that the combined effect will encourage these elk to remain in or near their historic core range.

For more information on the 2009 Elk Permit Hunt visit Environment Yukon's website at www.environmentyukon.gov.yk.ca and click on the 2009 Elk Permit Hunt. This webpage also holds a link to the elk draw results and permitted hunters. You can also get a list of the permit holders from Environment Yukon Client Services. Permitted elk hunters ready to work with agriculture land owners are encouraged to contact land owners directly.

HOW WARM WAS 2009?

After an unusually cold growing season in 2008 and a 2008-2009 winter that saw snow on the fields until late April the summer of 2009 turned out to be very warm.

The 2009 growing season was above average in terms of temperature and was even warm enough to mature wheat in the Whitehorse area. According to the agroclimatic capability tables, farmers in the Whitehorse area had only slight limitations to growing the full range of common Canadian crops this year, which means there was enough heat in 2009 for the production of grain and warm season vegetables. This is a contrast from last year, which had severe limitations to common agriculture crops due to very little heat through out the season marked by average June and July temperatures well below normal. In the last 10 years Whitehorse has only seen one season with more growing degree days than in 2009, that being the summer of 2004.

Central Yukon also experienced an above average growing season, highlighted by enough growing degree days to have supported the growth of the full range of common Canadian agricultural crops. It was even hot enough to grow corn to maturity, although some more heat could have been used to sweeten the cobs like the tasty corn from B.C. In central Yukon 2009 was warmer than 2004, although the summer of 2007 was the warmest in the last 10 years.

This warm summer was a dry summer. While the lack of rainfall presented some challenges to dryland producers, those using irrigation were able to take advantage of the extra heat for some of their crops. Although the extra heat does not increase yields in irrigated hay crops, it does help for getting the hay off the field.

Frost was the other weather story for 2009. A number of frosts in June and even July came with the open skies of early summer. The Whitehorse area experienced a severe frost on June 30, which set back a number of producers' gardens. However, the skies clouded over in late August trapping the warm air and extending the season before gardens saw their first killing frost. In fact, some areas did not experience a killing frost until mid-September this year, unlike other years which can see a killing frost as early as the middle of August.

Cheers to 2009. Let's hope we see a repeat in 2010.



Pumpkins grown by Paul and Toos

CLASSIFIEDS



HAY

Yukon grown hay, clean timothy brome mix, stored inside.
Phone: (867) 393-3477

HEAVY EQUIPMENT

Farm Tractor Deutz Dx 160, 3450 hours on the machine. Manual Four Wheel Drive, 160hp, 3pt. hitch, front end loader with bucket and grapple.
\$27,500
Phone: (867) 660-4124

UNIFOREST winch, 6 ton hydraulic skidding winch with remote control and PTO shaft, 80m 1/2" cable with 5 jocker hooks. \$7,000
Phone: (867) 660-4124

Rock-O-Matic TM12
12' Rock Picker, \$3,000 OBO
Phone: (867) 667-2252

MISC

6 boxes of 28,000 lb baling twine. \$90 will deliver.
Contact Merv.
Phone: (867) 634-2666.

2" Banjo poly self-priming centrifugal pump with 6 HP Briggs engine. 11700 GPH and has never been used. Cost \$600 new, for sale \$300 OBO.
Phone: (867) 633-4379.



Carrots from Mary and Rolland

ANNOUNCEMENTS

RENTAL EQUIPMENT

Yukon Agriculture Association has a new no till seed drill and an aerator available for rent. For more information contact the Yukon Agricultural Association (867) 668-6864 or admin@yukonag.ca

ORGANIC VERIFICATION OFFICER

Seeking an individual with membership in IOIA (International Organic Inspector Association). If you are interested please contact Claire (867) 393-1949 or Matt at the Agriculture Branch.

UPCOMING 2009 NORTH OF 60° AGRICULTURE CONFERENCE

Mark your calendars, this years conference is going to be held Friday, November 6, and Saturday, November 7, 2009.

LOOK FOR IT. BUY IT.



InFARMation is:

A Government of Yukon newsletter published by the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, Agriculture Branch. If you would like to add or remove your name from the newsletter mailing list, comment on an article or contribute a story, please feel free to contact us.

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