

INFARMATION

Yukon Agriculture Branch Quarterly Bulletin

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MESSAGE FROM THE AGRICULTURE BRANCH

What a difference a year makes. It's a farmer's market day in June and the forecast is for light winds, sunshine and a record high temperature of 29°. Last year, we had just suffered through two days of wet snow and it never really got much better for the remainder of the summer. It's going to be nice to hear the farmers complaining about the heat and lack of rain again.

The Canada-Yukon Growing Forward program has been signed and the Agriculture branch is now taking applications for project funding. Growing Forward replaces the Agriculture Policy Framework (APF) agreement and will be in place until March 2013.

What is Growing Forward? It's a suite of initiatives to help farmers and the Yukon industry capture market opportunities, improve skills and knowledge, implement systems aimed at stewardship of the environment and the safety of foods produced here and offers programs to proactively manage risks associated with farming in the north. Information on eligibility requirements and program details are inside the newsletter and a full programming guide can be picked up at our office or downloaded from our website www.agriculture.gov.yk.ca. Many thanks to the Yukon industry representatives that spent hours of their time helping us to develop the programs that are included in this agreement.

Another project that a joint industry/government committee has been working on is research to clearly define the current challenges in red and white meat production and processing in the Yukon. This research is being conducted by Malloch Graham & Associates and we are hoping that this will provide the background required to make decisions on how to develop facilities that will enable growth in the livestock sectors. The consultants report is due later in June and will be available through the Yukon Agricultural Association for those that may be interested in its recommendations.

That's all for now. Have a great summer!

Tony Hill
Director
Yukon Agriculture Branch

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GROWING FORWARD



NEW CANADA-YUKON PROGRAMS AVAILABLE

We now have available new agricultural funding for the next four years - Growing Forward. The focus of Growing Forward is to “work together to build an innovative and profitable agriculture and agri-food sector.”

An agreement signed in April between the governments of Canada and Yukon laid the groundwork for the continued support of agriculture in the territory through programs aimed at meeting the needs of Yukon’s farming community.

The objectives of Growing Forward are:

- Building a competitive and innovative agricultural sector.
- Ensuring the sector contributes to society’s priorities.
- Being proactive in managing risks.

A competitive and innovative sector

- Expand the sector’s capacity to innovate by offering support for commercialization and innovation, developing a bioeconomy strategy, and creating science clusters to deal with priority areas.
- Improve government regulatory performance by improving the approval processes for veterinary drugs, novel foods and food additives, and by offering science and other support to help the industry to research and gain

approvals for health claims and new minor-use pesticide products.

- Facilitate industry success in global and domestic markets by supporting industry-led marketing strategies, creating a Canada branding strategy, providing market intelligence and services for exporters, and acting to maintain and improve market access.
- Enhance the sector’s capacity to adapt and succeed by helping entrepreneurs evaluate their performance and plan the futures of their businesses.

A sector that contributes to society’s priorities

- Enhance food safety by supporting and recognizing food safety systems, and by helping producers adopt systems where markets demand it.
- Enhance environmental performance by researching agricultural practices that improve environmental performance.
- Supporting the adoption of management practices that create benefits or reduce risk in priority areas, and disseminating knowledge and information on environmentally sound practices, and measuring the sector’s environmental performance.

A sector that is proactive in managing risks

- Prevent and prepare for risk by completing an animal and plant biosecurity strategy, and by implementing biosecurity and traceability systems.
- Reduce producer business risks by improving the risk manage-

ment program suite including AgriStability, AgriInvest and AgriRecovery.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Agriculture Training Program

- Provides support for the presentation of agricultural courses, seminars, workshops, conferences and any other activities that will develop the human resource capabilities of Yukon agricultural agri-food and agri-based products industry, as well as diversify or add value to existing Yukon agri-businesses.
- Provides support for eligible applicants to attend agricultural courses, seminars, workshops and conferences.

Agriculture Internship and Mentorship Program

- Provides opportunities for established members of the Yukon agricultural and agri-food industry to hire new entrants to the industry as agricultural interns in their agri-business.
- Provides new entrants to Yukon agricultural and agri-food industry with an opportunity to access agricultural and agri-food industry mentors.

Market Development Initiative

- Provides resources to investigate and capture new market opportunities and enhance the competitive capability of the industry. This includes activities such as marketing and agri-food promotional activities; market development strategies; participation in marketing events; supporting marketing organizations

GROWING FORWARD

including farmers' markets and agri-tourism ventures.

Agriculture Development Initiative

- Provides funding to develop agricultural projects that enhance regional economic development and contribute to sustainability in rural communities.
- This includes developing under-used agricultural resources, expanding commercial development of agriculture, introducing new technologies and processes, and further developing regional agriculture and country food opportunities in rural Yukon.
- The initiative supports community gardens, farmers' markets, and agriculture infrastructure such as cold storage, grain storage facilities, or processing kitchens.
- Supports activities that encourage the commercialization of agri-based or native country foods.
- The initiative may be used to support other activities such as purchasing equipment and facilities, hiring third-party labour and consultant services for professional, technical and analytical support.

Business Planning and Advisory Initiative

- Provides access to consultant services to review past records and financial situations, discuss objectives, and help determine current options in meeting profitability goals.
- The result will be each project receiving a business profile, a statement of assets and liabilities, a farm business ratio analysis, an income and expenses statement from the previous two

years, projections, and other information related to the business.

Reclamation of Yukon Land

- Assists with the reclamation of Yukon land which has been impacted through agricultural activity and which poses a hazard to the environment or wildlife. This includes activities such as removal of abandoned fences, vehicles, debris and garbage piles on agriculture titles and grazing leases.

Underutilized Land Initiative

- Improve the utilization of existing, titled farm land that was developed for agricultural use prior to April 1, 2003, and has not been used for agriculture for several years.

Food Safety Strategies Initiative

- Funds the presentation of and participation in food safety and Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) training courses, workshops, seminars and conferences, and activities that create and support partnerships with governments and national producer organizations in the development of food safety strategies and standards.
- Supports activities that facilitate the adoption of Good Manufacturing Practices and international standards such as HACCP or ISO 22000 in non-federally registered food processing plants.
- Provides professional consultant services that provide technical and analytical advice related to the development of food safety systems that assist with compliance with food safety standards and regulations and that implement traceability systems.

- Acquisition of special equipment required to implement food safety systems and standards on farms and in food processing facilities, and equipment required for food traceability initiatives.

Circumpolar Education Exchange Initiative

- Provides opportunities for farm managers, workers, youth and service providers to participate in information exchange with other circumpolar agricultural regions. This includes sponsorship at circumpolar agriculture conferences, such as Circumpolar Agriculture Conference 2010.
- Emphasis will be placed on information exchange that provides for the sustainability of circumpolar agriculture, including travel for presentations, information gathering, network development, youth development or other activities that contribute to the development of circumpolar agriculture, such as accommodations, meals and conference registration fees.

Wildlife Damage Prevention Program

- Provides assistance to protect high-value crops and pasture lands from damage by wildlife.
- Funding is provided to install approved wildlife fences or to use wildlife deterrents. This includes purchasing a guardian dog or hiring a contractor with herding dogs to herd wildlife away from crop areas to more preferred areas.

For complete details please visit the Agriculture Branch website at www.agriculture.gov.yk.ca or pick up a copy of the guide at the Agriculture Branch office.

(see back page for office location)

WEED CONTROL

COMMON CHICKWEED

Mechanical: Tillage can manage chickweed effectively, but different approaches are required for different situations. Shallow tillage is recommended in spring to encourage weed growth. It should be followed by a second tillage to remove the weed seedlings before seed-set. Autumn tillage will prevent seed production and overwintering, but plants should be deeply buried in the soil. Mowing is generally ineffective because the stems are so prostrate many flowers will be missed.

Herbicides: Numerous herbicides can be used to manage this plant. Before applying herbicides, read the label for full use and precautionary instructions.

Cultural/Preventive: Common chickweed cannot compete with vigorous plant stands. Strong perennial crops can be used in rotation to suppress chickweed.

Vigorous annual crops can be produced by increasing seeding rates and by delaying seeding until emerging chickweed is managed. Similarly, thorough summerfallowing (spring and autumn) with repeated, deep tillage will give annual crops a competitive advantage.

FIELD HORSETAIL

Mechanical: Deep cultivation may give short-term control, but cultivation may enhance the spread of this plant by moving tubers and fragmented rhizomes. Shallow cultivation is not advised. Mowing before spore production can reduce spread potential.

Fire: Burning of fertile stems can prevent spore production but will not injure the deeply buried rhizomes.

Herbicides: Few herbicides are registered to control horsetail. Dichlobenil is used for control in woody ornamentals, orchards, nurseries, berries, and shelterbelts. Amitrol provides control in non-cropped areas and shelterbelts, and MCPA formulations provide top growth control in grass pastures and cereals. Before applying herbicides, read the label for full use and precautionary instructions.

Cultural/Preventive: Improved drainage and vigorous, perennial grass cover will reduce horsetail in pastures and hayfields. Mulching with porous landscape fabrics or black plastic effectively controls this plant, but sawdust or bark mulches are ineffective (BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries 1996).



SHEPHERD'S-PURSE

Mechanical control: Small infestations can be hand-pulled or tilled. Frequent cultivation of summerfallow or unplanted areas will bring seeds to the surface and maximize germination. Repeated harrowing may be required in infested fields before reseeding.

Herbicides: Numerous herbicides are available for control of shepherd's purse. Their selection depends on the crop and environmental conditions. Before applying herbicides, read the label for full use and precautionary instructions.

Cultural/Preventive: Monitor disturbed areas for new outbreaks. Maintain strong perennial stands in pastures.

If necessary, reseed deteriorating stands. Prevent seedset on established infestations by mowing or herbicide application.



For more information on any weeds or weed control please contact Matt Ball at the Agriculture Branch.
(see back page for contact information)

WEEDING 101

ORGANIC HERBICIDES...
WEEDS BEWARE?

Throughout agricultural history, we have been trying to control unwanted vegetation that seems to spring up and outcompete food or fiber crops. As Ralph Waldo Emerson put it "a weed is a plant whose virtues have not yet been discovered." Nonetheless they must be dealt with which usually means countless hours weeding. Some organic weed fighting alternatives have shown promise and are commonly available when needed.

VINEGAR:

Some home gardeners use vinegar as a herbicide, and some garden stores sell vinegar pesticides. United States Department of Agriculture scientists offer the first scientific evidence that vinegar may be a potent weed killer that is inexpensive and environmentally safe - perfect for organic farmers.

Researchers Jay Radhakrishnan, John Teasdale and Ben Coffman in Beltsville, Maryland, tested vinegar on major weeds - common lamb's quarters, giant foxtail, velvetleaf, smooth pigweed and Canada thistle - in greenhouse and field studies. Vinegar is used as a foliar spray, and a 5-10% solution can kill 85-100% of weeds in the first 2 weeks from germination, while a stronger solution is needed to kill older plants. A bottle of household vinegar is about 5 percent concentration.

The 20% solution was very effective on young plants, killing top growth in two hours. Spot spraying of cornfields with 20 percent

vinegar killed 80-100 percent of weeds without harming the corn, but the scientists stress the need for more research.

Spraying vinegar over an entire field becomes quite expensive. But the cost could be reduced by 50 percent or more if vinegar is applied only to local weed infestations, such as may occur in the crop row after cultivation. The researchers used only vinegar made from fruit or grain to conform with organic standards.

BORAX:

Borax has been used by organic farmers for some time, but scientific evidence to back up its effectiveness is conflicting. Borax contains boron, an essential micronutrient, used at high concentrations, boron can also be toxic to plants. Although it appears to be relatively effective against some weeds, others show low mortality when treated. Research shows borax to be ineffective when applied as a powder, but more effective when applied in liquid form.

Boron tends to have low mobility in soil and may accumulate in plants, especially grasses, so borax should be used with caution. (Saskatchewan Agriculture development, 2004).

CORN GLUTEN MEAL:

This substance is a product of the wet milling process of corn. Corn gluten meal can act as a pre-emergent herbicide by inhibiting root formation during germination. While partially effective against many plant species, it is practical for turf situations where crabgrass, barnyard grass, foxtails (*Setaria* spp.), dandelion, lambsquarters,

pigweed, purslane and smartweed are targets. It is safe to use on established turf but cannot be used during turfgrass establishment as it will stunt or inhibit root growth of the turfgrass plants.

Research shows 50-60% control can be achieved in the first year when applied at 20 lbs per 1000 ft², while control may improve with subsequent applications. Currently it is sold as a dry product under various trade names, including Dynaweed, Safe 'N Simple, Earth Friendly, W.O.W.!, Corn Gluten Meal Herbicide, and Propac. It has mainly been sold as a powder form, but a granular form is also available. Application rates vary from 12 to 20 lbs per 1000 ft² depending on the intended use (Saskatchewan Agriculture development, 2004).

Organic herbicides are relatively non-selective, inducing a higher level of difficulty in application compared to conventional selective herbicides. Therefore using organic herbicides is most effective in spot specific application. Organic herbicides should be used with other forms of weed control to maximize their potential.

When weeding, the best way to make sure you are removing a weed and not a valuable plant is to pull on it. If it comes out of the ground easily, it is a valuable plant. ~Author Unknown

NEWS

EQUINE ASSOCIATION OF YUKON

By now you may have heard of this new organization, which was formed in March 2008. One of the main objectives of the Equine Association of Yukon (EAY) is the development of equine sport as well as other equine-related activities and infrastructure in the Yukon. In January 2009 four people volunteered to hold the following executive positions: President - Jody Mackenzie-Grieve; Vice-President - Jaime Hanna; Secretary – Tracey Andrew; Treasurer – Vibeke Coates.

The executive have been very busy the last two months researching and preparing all the documentation required to apply for funding to do both English and Western Equine Canada rider level testing, which is the first step towards Equine Canada coaching certification. There has also been research into the Certified Horsemanship Association (CHA) program as there are currently many certified CHA instructors in the Yukon.

Membership in the EAY is through member clubs. Therefore if you are a member of Yukon Horse and Riders Association, you are automatically a member of EAY.

Meetings to date have been to discuss the coaching programs and the funding application. Anyone is welcome to attend the meetings, however the date for the next meeting has not been set, pending the results of the funding application.

For further EAY information, please contact any of the executive members:

Jody Mackenzie-Grieve: 393-4788

Jaime Hanna: 393-2508

Tracey Andrew: 667-7844

Vibeke Coates: 633-3012



WHY ORGANIC CONFERENCE AND PRESENTATION BY STEVEN SNIDER

On February 28, Growers of Organic Food Yukon hosted “Why Organic,” a one day conference in the Alpine Bakery meeting room. About thirty folks formed an appreciative audience for guest speaker Steven Snider, from New Norway, Alberta.

Steve Snider is a second generation organic farmer, Young Farmer of the Year in Alberta in 2003 and current president of Going Organic Alberta, the province-wide organic organization.

Snider’s reputation preceding him, he was invited to speak during the mid-winter season, to inspire Yukon growers. And he didn’t disappoint. Snider is a consummate farmer (he bought a combine at the age of 16 and went out doing custom work). He is a true professional, very organized and businesslike. But attendees also discovered that he is a warm and generous guy, willing to answer all questions and spend time talking to individuals.

Snider’s presentation was about growing grain and legumes, but

many of the methods could be extrapolated to Yukon production. He talked about seed treatment--applying seaweed, fish emulsion and inoculant to seeds before planting to provide micro-nutrients and enzymes as the seed germinates.

He talked about waiting for the first flush of weeds and using a rod weeder to pull them before seeding. Snider also talked about using plough-downs and crop rotations, to help with weed problems. All of this takes paying close attention to the crop and the soil, as well as being very disciplined. Timing is everything!

Snider’s marketing stories were also inspiring. Selling his whole rye crop to Japan where there is zero tolerance of any kind of contaminants including other seeds, in the rye. Snider also operates a mill (Little Red Hen Mill) where seeds are cleaned and grain is ground.

For more information please contact Joanne Jackson Johnson President Growers of Organic Food Yukon (867) 660-5128

NEWS

AGRICULTURE DEMONSTRATION DAY AND BARBEQUE

Date: Wednesday August 5, 2009.

Time: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

It is that time of year again. Come out to the Agriculture Branch research farm located in the Gunner Nilsson and Mickey Lambers Research Forest just north of Whitehorse. The initial thrust of the research farm when the gates opened in 1988 was to test a wide variety of crops in the Yukon. Over

the years the site has assessed crop varieties, soil conservation techniques, economics of production, soil enrichment practices, and irrigation optimization.

For 2009, the Agriculture Branch research and demonstration projects include:

- Raspberry orchard yield and fertilizer evaluation
- Fall seeded spring wheat
- Forage demonstration
- Oilseed evaluation
- Smooth brome grass optimum nitrogen rate study

Please come join us in celebrating 20 years of research and demonstration, and take a tour of the research farm. We will be barbecuing Yukon Grown, Yukon inspected and Yukon processed bison burgers. With some good warm weather there also may be raspberries to pick.

The new no till seed drill and aerator available for rent through the Yukon Agriculture Association will be on site.

The site is located on the corner of the North Klondike Highway and the Hotsprings Road.

Hope to see you there,
Agriculture Branch.



Photo: Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources Brad Cathers attends the 2008 Demonstration Day.



YUKON GROWN MATERIALS

The Agriculture Branch, in partnership with industry, has developed a new Yukon Grown logo and Yukon Grown guidelines.

Yukon Grown guidelines:

For livestock production, Yukon Grown is defined as follows: livestock or the meat or meat products derived from livestock that was born and raised in the Yukon, and/or has spent a minimum of 51% of its life in the Yukon and/or has lived in the Yukon for no less than one complete year.

For crop production, Yukon Grown is defined as plants or plant material and the products derived from these plants that originated from a Yukon source and/or were imported from an outside source and grown in the Yukon for no less than 51% of its life cycle and/or is a plant that continues to grow and be nurtured in the Yukon for no less than one complete year.

If you sell locally produced agricultural goods please call the Agriculture Branch to pick up some marketing materials, including stickers, bags, and tattoos.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

FIREWEED COMMUNITY MARKET & KITCHEN
"WE'RE ABOUT MORE THAN GOOD FOOD"

The 2009 Fireweed Community Market is held every Thursday evening from 3 p.m. to 8 p.m. continuing through to September 17, 2008. The market is located in Whitehorse at Shipyards Park.

The Fireweed Market Kitchen located in Shipyards Park in the Frank Slim Building is still open and serving a variety of foods and drinks. Each day offers something different. The kitchen is open from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday to Friday

For more information please visit www.fireweedmarket.yukonfood.com

TIME TO SAVE ON FERTILIZER COSTS

Ordering in bulk can help. Contact the Yukon Agriculture Association to learn more about how the YAA fertilizer bins can save you money. Contact the Yukon Agricultural Association (867) 668-6864 or admin@yukonag.ca

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



Photo: No till seed drill

UPCOMING 22ND ANNUAL NORTH OF 60°
AGRICULTURE CONFERENCE

Mark your calendars, this years conference is going to be held Saturday, November 7th, 2009. Details to follow in the Fall edition of InFARMation.

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, \$3,000.00 OBO
Phone: (867) 667-2252

LIVESTOCK

HERITAGE PIG BREEDING STOCK
Available early September. Tamworth or Large English Black. \$120.00 each.
E-mail: tom@yukonfood.com
Phone (867) 393-4628

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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