

INFARMATION

Yukon Agriculture Branch Quarterly Bulletin

Fall/Winter, 2016

Volume 29 Issue 3

2016 NORTH OF 60 FARMER OF THE YEAR AND THE NOMINEES

The presentation of the Yukon Farmer of the Year Award provides an opportunity to bring attention to the efforts of farmers and farm families in our community. Five nominees were submitted for Farmer of the Year and a request to create a new legacy category and award for outstanding women in agriculture.

The 2016 Farmer of the Year Award recognizes Marie and Brynn Johnson of Naturally Northern Meats for their commitment to building capacity in the Agriculture industry by working countless hours to set up a new abattoir and meat cutting business in the Whitehorse area.

Following are excerpts from the nominations submitted for this year's award in no specific order, along with highlights of Marie and Brynn's nomination.

NOMINATION: SARAH OUELLETTE, SARAH'S HARVEST
Sarah's nomination speaks to how she has produced an extraordinary quantity of vegetables her third year of farming in Yukon, while working almost entirely alone on a small piece of land of about 0.25 hectares.

She supplied three retail outlets and three restaurants with weekly or twice weekly shipments between June and October, as well as special deliveries to individuals and groups: the Fireweed Community Market and occasionally to the Potluck Community Coop. Her regular customer base, established in her first two years, has been unwavering in its desire to have Sarah's products; a sign of just how good and reasonably priced her vegetables are. The revenues generated by this small piece of land are successfully commercial and no doubt will be again next year.

At the same time her commitment to organic practices and product quality are inspirational to those who observe her methods closely. Sarah has also found time to serve her community this year as secretary of Growers of Organic Food Yukon and as coordinator of the Kids on the Farm program. She is the kind of person who will bring Yukon agriculture to the attention of Yukoners, while putting the best food money can buy to their plates.



Marie and Brynn Johnson of Naturally Northern Meats accept Yukon's 2016 Farmer of the Year Award at the North of 60 Agriculture conference.

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MESSAGE FROM THE AGRICULTURE BRANCH

Season's greetings! It's been another busy year in the agriculture community and it's a good time to look back over the milestones and forward to what's on the horizon.

Fresh on Yukoners' minds was the election on November 7. I'd like to congratulate the new government and welcome the new Minister Responsible for Agriculture, Ranj Pillai. Minister Pillai has committed to invest in agriculture and move the Yukon towards a greater degree of food self-sufficiency and we look forward to working with him to deliver the government's mandate.

Looking back to May of last year, the Local Food Strategy for Yukon was released to encourage the production and consumption of Yukon-grown food. The strategy is designed to enhance six components of our local food chain: production, processing, distribution, access and availability, consumption and resource and waste recovery. Many collaborators developed the strategy and there are roles for individuals, farmers, communities and governments to implement the initiatives that will fortify our local food system.

On the industry side, there were notable developments in several sectors. Naturally Northern Meats opened their doors this fall providing slaughter and butchering services to livestock producers. Naturally Northern is licensed as an abattoir, providing a second option for producers to reach retail markets. Brynn and Marie Johnson (owners of Naturally Northern Meats), were chosen by their peers to be Farm Family of the Year for 2016 in recognition of the service they have provided. It's great to see the support from the farm community for this new business.

On the produce side, Yukon Grain Farm has doubled its vegetable cold storage capacity to capture more of the root crop market in the territory. The addition provides for separate humidity and temperature zones required for the storage of potatoes and other root crops in the same facility. This was a significant investment by the Grain Farm and goes a long way towards meeting Yukon's local food objectives.

We have heard of at least three farms that have, or are planning to, expand operations to produce more eggs in Yukon. In the Klondike, vegetable and livestock production is on the rise and we have had a couple of inquiries regarding milk regulations as part of investigations into the potential for small scale dairy operations.

There have been a few changes at the Agriculture branch as well. We have a new Administrative Assistant, Temesha Debler, since the beginning of September. This December both Kevin Bowers our Agriculture Development Officer for the past 15 years and Lyle Henderson, Assistant Deputy Minister for the past six years retired from the government to pursue new adventures. Our talented Agrologist Matt Ball has taken a new position with Yukon's Intergovernmental Relations branch. We wish these three guys all the best in their new pursuits and we will introduce you to the new recruits as soon as positions are filled.

From all of us here at the Agriculture branch, we wish you a festive close to the year and all the best in 2017.
Tony Hill, Director of Agriculture

NOMINATION: AL & CATHY STANNARD, MANDALAY FARM.
In the words of the nominator:
I really feel that this award should be given to someone who has set an example as a good farmer and good neighbor. I would like to nominate Al Stannard.

Al's nomination recognizes the hundreds of hours he has devoted to Yukon Agriculture. Al served as the YAA president for several years and he continues to serve the YAA as a committee member. His work on the Board as president was exceptional and he accomplished many things. Al's common sense and hard work served the board and Yukon Farming community well. In addition to his work with YAA, Al has spent many years battling to get his own farm up and running when others would have given up he persisted, and as a result his dream is coming true!

NOMINATION: GERRY AND ANN-MARIE STOCKLEY, THREE SLAVES FARM

Gerry and Ann-Marie were nominated by the 4-H Spirit Riders for graciously hosting the 4-H Spirit Riders summer camp. The 4-H nomination talks to how they took a week out of their busy hay season to educate 4-H kids about hay farming in Yukon. Throughout the week the 4-H members learned all there is to know about hay farming as part of an "Agricultural Hay Farming Boot Camp". The 4-H members learned about the operation of a hay farm through sharing of information and hands on activities. Every day built on the next with machinery identification, maintenance, safety, weed management (specifically fox tail), types of hay and (maybe most importantly) how to drive the tractors. The Stockley family provided an experience for the kids and this nomination comes in to Gerry and Ann-Marie because

they shared their time and love of farming.

NOMINATION: RANDY LEWIS, TR'ONDĚK HWĚCH'IN LEARNING FARM

Randy Lewis was nominated for his dedication and passion in supporting the development and implementation of Yukon's first year-round teaching and working farm with the Tr'ondĚk HwĚch'in (TH) First Nation. Over spring, summer and fall, 2016, Randy worked with the Tr'ondĚk HwĚch'in to substantially increase Yukon First Nation ability in food production, and to contribute to First Nations, and community food security and self-sufficiency.

As the farm manager and teacher, Randy worked with 20 local TH citizens and students on the development and implementation of the Tr'ondĚk HwĚch'in Farm School, to offer a safe, healthy environment, respectful of wellness and provide the opportunity for working on Traditional and Settlement lands, creating a more traditional experience. Randy worked to ensure that the initial infrastructure could be established, curriculum developed and resources set in place to launch a full growing season.

Randy sought to understand what inspired each student and aimed to actively engage them in a unique part of the agricultural process, from equipment maintenance and operations, to farm and land use planning, to growing and harvesting practices, to final packaging, marketing and sales of final products and produce.

NOMINATION: MABEL BREWSTER, HAINES JUNCTION, AGRICULTURE PIONEER

Mabel's nomination was brought forward as a request to consider a legacy category for those who have helped pioneer our industry and as an award for outstanding women in agriculture.

This nomination for Mabel Brewster, who passed this year, recognizes how Mabel inspired so many young people in the Yukon with her toughness, work ethic and love of farm animals. She always worked and taught with a no-nonsense approach, a twinkle in her eye and great sense of humour. Her garden (especially those broccoli and potatoes!!!) and greenhouse were always the envy, and she would pull local kids in to help her so they learned about Yukon farming.

Mabel also grew amazing hay and oat crops and did most of it on her own. As a single mom and grandma, she would allow help if you said you wanted to learn, but let it be known she could do it herself, she would have you know!

She was a hunting guide and outfitter and a trick rider. She was not only an inspiration for farming but for doing anything you love on your own in the Yukon as a woman. I thank her for showing me what was possible, and I am so thankful my daughters (and so many local girls) were lucky enough to see her in action and spend time on her farm.

2016 FARMER FAMILY OF THE YEAR MARIE AND BRYNN JOHNSON, NATURALLY NORTHERN MEATS.

Congratulations to Marie and Brynn Johnson. Their nomination talks to the service Naturally Northern Meats has provided, the huge affect this business has had on local agriculture production and ease of getting product to market. Marie and Brynn have accomplished this by pure determination and a ridiculous amount of work. Abattoirs have been an ongoing challenge for years in Yukon and Brynn and Marie have been managing to navigate all the hurdles and requirements while still working 16-plus hours a day.

One nomination speaks to how they have worked hard to set up the abattoir so producers have a reliable, quality, year-round place for slaughter and processing. They have nearly worked their way through a lot of necessary and important (and sometimes discouraging) regulations and obstacles. In the process they would ask how to do it correctly and persevere with a smile (all this with a first baby on the way). Brynn's dedication to ensuring the slaughter is done humanely, quickly and that the animals held there are comfortable and not stressed is worth mentioning. The way that Brynn always seems to want to improve the holding system and design so it is the best for the animals stands out.

Another nominator points to the financial risks taken by these two, and their dedication in building Naturally Northern Meats to meet the needs of the livestock sector. Others nominators recognize that this service enables them to access their markets on a year round basis.

**NORTH OF 60
AGRICULTURE
CONFERENCE**

This year's conference was held at Yukon College on November 5th, and the theme was "Getting our Local Food to Market". Reg Stewart is a Ranch Safety Consultant out of the Cariboo-Chilcotin region of British Columbia, and he kicked off the day presenting on how to safely handle your livestock. Reg's experience, ability to share stories, and approach to farm safety made safe animal handling and transport interesting. Reg had real life experiences to back up all the safety points he was trying to get across. Reg referred to the basic principles of livestock handling and how every time you handle an animal you are training it. The key reminders when working with animals is to let the cattle know you are there, move slowly and deliberately, stay alert and never turn your back on animals. Animals that have frequent gentle contact with people will handle better than animals with minimal or abusive handling. The three most common mistakes when it comes to handling animals are rough handling, excessive prodding and over crowding. Reg reminded us



to stay away from these mistakes and to give yourself time when working with animals. If the animal is getting stressed or frightened give the animal 20 minutes because frightened animals become unpredictable and makes the job more difficult.

When it comes to handling, sorting, and loading your animals, Reg referred to Temple Grandin's work on animal safety and Grandin's designs of chutes with very little distractions to the animal which allow gentle handling. The principles adopted for safe animal handling and chute design are available at www.grandin.com. Her website provides information and also

his knowledge from the recent Circumpolar Agriculture Conference (CAC) in Iceland. There is more about CAC on page 10 in this newsletter. Kimberly Joseph was the next presentation providing an update on the success of the Trondék Hwëch'in learning farm in Dawson. Kim gave a similar presentation to CAC and how it relates to the bioeconomy. Kim shared how her First Nation community relates to the land, the food it provides and the benefits the learning farm is having on the community and their food system. The Yukon Invasive Species Council participated in the conference to talk about their work and highlight the spread of perennial sow thistle. They shared their concerns with this invasive species moving into Yukon and how it is trying to get a foothold in rural and developed areas of the territory. Sow thistle has the potential to spread quickly on farmland and roadside areas where it can outcompete crops and native vegetation.

videos from Temple herself talking to the benefits of her approach and chute design. Reg also left a few copies of the Farm and Ranch Safety and Health Association Guide for Handling Farm Animals and Poultry. You can pick up a copy from the Agriculture branch.

The day finished with panel presentation from the Agriculture branch, Yukon Environmental Health and the Canadian Food Inspections Agency (CFIA), talking about the permitting and regulations involved in getting your product to market. This session was very well attended with over 30 producers in

For the afternoon session of the conference, Agriculture Research Technician Bradley Barton shared



Pamela Morgan of CFIA and Benton Foster, Environmental Health

attendance plus another 10 from different levels of government. This session was an “all hands on deck” approach to addressing the concerns of food safety and accessing different markets. Pamela Morgan from CFIA reminded us that all foods sold in Canada are subject to the Food and Drugs regulation. A statement like this can be intimidating when your audience is just trying to sell local products to a local market. Pamela was there along with Benton Foster of Yukon Environmental Health to help everyone understand the process, to make it easier and to let them know where to find help. During the panel discussion it was evident that there is a variety of legislation resulting in the sale of

food in Canada and the process can be complicated. To make it less complicated, Pam and Benton went through examples of some common Yukon products and what regulations apply to different levels of sale. This was a very helpful exercise as it made the process much simpler. Throughout the exercise they reminded everyone how the regulations work, where to find the information and whom to contact if they had questions.

Should you have questions yourself, contact one or more of the following:

- Agriculture branch, contact Jesse Walchuk @ 667-3043, jesse.walchuk@gov.yk.ca
- Yukon Environmental Health,

Benton Foster, 667-8370, benton.foster@gov.yk.ca

- CFIA, Pamela Morgan Senior Compliance Officer, Food Safety Tel: (250) 470-5177, pamelamorgan@inspection.gc.ca

A big thank you to Pamela and Benton for putting this information together and letting Yukon producers know they are here to help. If you want additional information on the presentation or to talk about how to get your product to market, contact Jesse at the Agriculture branch.

YUKON SPIRIT RIDERS 4-H CLUB BRINGS ENTHUSIASM TO NORTH OF 60 BANQUET

Yukon Spirit Riders 4-H club held a silent and live auction during the North of 60 Banquet and used the banquet to work on the leadership skills of a few of its members. On top of the energy this club brings to the event, Spirit Riders raised approximately \$4500 between the silent auction, live auction and an impromptu boot that was handed around for those looking to support 4-H. The boot raised almost \$600, thanks to the generosity of the crowd. The live auction was a definite highlight as a result of the auction skills of cowboy and conference presenter Reg Steward.



The fundraising will be used to support a field trip to Ottawa March 2017. The field trip is to build on 4-H foundations and agricultural education. Spirit riders will tour the RCMP barns in Ottawa, work with various RCMP members such as the farrier, the vet, and the drill leader. The participants will attend agricultural workshops at the Canada Agriculture and Food Museum and also work on a maple farm.

4-H is an international youth organization based in Canada’s agricultural roots. 4-H is focused on developing leadership and citizenship through communication events, judging, student exchanges combined with local club projects such as fundraisers and workshops to foster knowledge, leadership, citizenship and personal development.

Spirit Riders 4-H club focuses on horse programs to build on animal husbandry, safety, nutrition, health of horses, and learning to handle and ride horses to a high level of competency. Spirit Riders also focus on youth health and nutrition as per the 4-H pledge of Head, Heart, Hands and Health.

At the banquet the 4H’ers shared some of this year’s past activities and experiences in Spirit Riders. Presenters included senior members Malorie Hanson and Sarah Diment, along with junior 4-H-ers Bria Lemoine, Dannika Mikkelsen, Sidney Stahl, Laina Prentice and Marina Boulrice, lead by 4-H leader Joie McBryan.

THINGS CHANGE

KEVIN BOWER RETIRES, MATT BALL MOVES ON.

Kevin Bowers, Agriculture Development Officer retired in late November. Kevin worked with the Agriculture branch for 16 years, wearing many hats and working with a lot of different farmers in his years as the development officer. The following is a Question and Answer with Kevin as he moves on from the Agriculture branch and takes on new pursuits:

- When did you start your career with the Agriculture branch and government? Who hired you?
I started with the Agriculture branch in 2001 and was hired by Dave Beckman for the position of Agriculture Development Officer which I have maintained since my hiring. There was David Murray, Patricia Smith, Edward Lee, Tony Hill and shortly after I started, Matt Ball came on board as well Mary Lynn Drul was the Admin Assistant.

I started with Yukon Government in April, 1983 when I was hired as a seasonal Conservation Officer working in Ross River. Fall '83 I was hired on permanent, and was stationed in Whitehorse. I was also stationed in Haines Junction and Mayo and then back to Whitehorse over the next 18 years.

- As the Ag. Development officer, how many agriculture properties have you helped bring into title, and what is the smallest, biggest, most northern and/or southern property you have inspected?

I do not know the number of agriculture properties that went to title during my time with the branch. I do not recall the smallest parcel but would think it was 5ha if it was a stand-alone parcel as prior to the 2006 policy change, we had a non-soil base land program. The largest single parcel I believe may



Kevin Bowers handing over the Ag Development Officer keys to Jesse Walchuk. Who knew there were keys involved?

have been one of the old Jensen parcels which was around 92ha. The most northernly parcel that I approved was a parcel down river from Dawson approx. 25km. and the most southernly would/ could be a parcel of land on the Lubbock River.

- What has been the biggest challenge for clients when it comes to developing a piece of raw land for agriculture?

I think the biggest challenge that clients face is understanding and under estimating the magnitude of the work involved in turning raw land/bush into a productive piece of farm land.

- What strategies have you seen our land applicants adopt that you would consider good management practices when it comes to land development?

The investment in equipment and technology to improve the quality of work and make it more efficient. For example, round balers, bale wrappers, root rakes, rotovators and the quality of their kind of equipment.

- What changes/improvements have we made to the development requirements over the years?
Working with Agriculture Industry Advisory Committee to develop the Land Development Guidelines that are provided to new Ag clients to guide them when they are

developing farm land.

- Although your title is Agriculture Development Officer, what other activities have you championed with the Agriculture branch?

The use of the mobile abattoir for on-farm slaughter. Also the processing of country foods through the sausage workshops in many of the communities outside of Whitehorse and addressing food safety.

- What was your most rewarding experience working in agriculture and your biggest challenge?
Working with individuals who are passionate about farming and being able to assist them to realize their dreams.

The flip side of working with individuals to achieve their dreams is dealing with individuals who falter and lose their passion and struggle to get the job done.

- What activities are you planning to take on in your retirement?
Before retiring, I worked to set up three activities that interested me, trapping, placer mining and then farming. All three are seasonal with little overlap, which will allow me to focus on each during the course of the year, keep me busy and allow me to be flexible and do some travel.

• Anything you would like to add?
I have met some great people through my job including my colleagues at the Agriculture branch who enriched my life and whose company I will enjoy for years to come.

INTRODUCING THE NEW AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

Taking over for Kevin will be Jesse Walchuk. Following the same Q&A theme here is a quick introduction to the new guy.

• Where are you from?
I was born in Whitehorse and have spent my entire life in Yukon Territory. I have spent time in both Mayo and Watson Lake, but currently reside in Whitehorse.

• How long have you been working for YG?
I have been working with Yukon government in the Land Management branch for five years. I have carried out multiple roles with LMB including Assistant Lands Officer, Lands Officer and Special Projects Advisor.

Prior to Yukon Government I spent over a year with the YESA Board as an Environmental Assessment Officer in both the Mayo and Whitehorse Designated Offices.

• What is your agriculture experience?
I have roughly 12 years of experience working seasonally as a farm hand on our family farm. I've been involved in all aspects of farming, including field development, irrigation, equipment, fencing and harvesting. Major achievement has been the installation of a 100 acre center pivot irrigation.

• What skills do you bring to the Development Officer position?
During my time with Yukon government I have gained a sound understanding of lands legislation, development area regulations and policies which govern land development in the territory. I have also spent multiple years as a Yukon big game hunting guide primarily being carried out on horseback. My time while outfitting has further reinforced my love and respect for all wildlife and livestock and the farming industry that supports this lifestyle. In my spare time my wife and I also run a home based catering business which requires me to butcher handle and properly store meat.

• Anything else?
I am anxious to meet many of the individuals whom I have heard so much about over the years. People who have pioneered farming in Yukon and turned this industry into something viable in such a northern climate. I am also looking forward to meeting the entrepreneurs who are constantly innovating and coming up with new ideas for how to do things better or different.

• What is the story behind your dad's tractor?
When I was 18 years old I overheated and blew the engine in my dad's Case tractor while cultivating the field. For an entire year the tractor sat in the middle of the field while we cut and baled around it. My father could have easily moved the eyesore, but I think he did it as a reminder to me of what I had done. I suppose it worked, because I have not overheated anything since.



MATTHEW BALL TAKES ON NEW ROLE IN GOVERNMENT

After 15 years with the Agriculture branch as Research Technician and Agrologist, Matt is continuing his career with government as Intergovernmental Relations Officer.

The following is a message from Matt to the industry:

Dear farmers, dear friends, I have the opportunity to stay on with the Executive Council Office which unfortunately takes me away from the Ag file for a time. I have greatly enjoyed working together through the challenges we face in agriculture in the North. Our agriculture industry is growing stronger all the time because of the hard work and dedication of you all.

Everyone in agriculture is working towards the same goals: to run a business, to raise a family, to grow crops, raise livestock, to feed people. With everyone working together we can continue to build this incredible industry and achieve even greater results.

I look forward to working with you all in the future, I'm always around if you need anything.

Thank you,

THE CORNER LOT

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH THE IBEX LOTS?

On occasion, the Agriculture branch makes agriculture land available in planned areas. It's really great to see the interest for agriculture land. Here's the update in case you haven't heard what's happening with those IbeX lots? A question we get almost every day.

THE TWO 6 HA LOTS

These are near Km 1454, Alaska Highway. This is just on the opposite side of the highway from the Takhini Crossing Tourist pull out. The lots have been zoned agriculture and surveyed. In 2015 the lots went through a YESAA assessment and got a green light to proceed subject to terms and conditions. If you would like to see more information about this assessment, you can find it on the YESAB Online Registry (YOR) under project 2015-0058. Go to: www.yesabregistry.ca

The next phase of the project is to upgrade the access road. The current road which provides access to 3 other residential lots needs upgrading and an extension. Agriculture branch will start road work in the spring of 2017.

THE FOUR 65 HA LOTS

These are about 10 kms further down the road from the small lots. They are near km marker 1464, Alaska Highway. These lots have just completed a YESAA assessment (October 2016) and were also recommended to proceed with terms and conditions. You can view information about this assessment on the YOR under project number 2016-0117.

The next steps are rezoning the area to Agriculture, legal survey of the lots, and construction of two access roads. Once this has all been completed, we can release the lots.

Both areas (small and large lots) are planned to be released sometime during the summer of 2017. At this time, the lots will be advertised in the newspapers and on our website. If you are particularly interested, we can include your email on a distribution list and Ag branch will email you when we advertise. Please send an email to land.coordinator@gov.yk.ca to be added to the distribution list.

For more information about planned land releases and how the process works, please stop into the branch or visit our website.



Yukoners Bradley Barton and Leona Dargis at the annual Farm Management Canada Agriculture Excellence conference in Calgary.

YUKON AGRICULTURE RESEARCH PROJECTS

During 2016 there were four new Growing Forward 2 funded research and demonstration projects. The information generated by these projects is used to advance Yukon agriculture, demonstrate new practices and provide advice to Yukon farmers.

The projects include hardy apple trials in Southern Lakes, a survey study on local berry crop pollinators, Varroa mite control board demonstration for Yukon beekeepers, and updates on haskap cultivation and integrated pest management for our Yukon berry production guide. If you would like to learn more about these projects or have a research project idea contact Randy Lamb or Bradley Barton at the Agriculture branch.

THE LATEST BUZZ ON YUKON BEES

You may be surprised to learn that there are currently over 100 beehives managed in the territory, and the number is going up. At least 60 of those hives are a part of a large fireweed honey operation in the Watson Lake area, while the other hives are kept in Whitehorse, Haines Junction, Ross River and Dawson. In response to a growing interest in beekeeping north of 60, a two-part beginner course took place in April and September 2016. 20 people took part in the course funded through Growing Forward 2. A waiting list has been started for a potential future offering so if you are interested in adding your name to the list, please contact the Agriculture branch.

LOCAL FOOD AT ITS BEST!

Yukon College Culinary Arts program served up a dinner that showcased how delicious eating local can be at this year's North of 60° Agriculture banquet. This was the first time the annual banquet was held at Yukon College and the staff and students of the culinary program did not disappoint by creating a meal that featured something local in every dish. Check out this menu and who grew the product that was prepared and served:

Focaccia Bread made with local Triticale Flour and Herbs
Romaine and Baby Greens, Walnut Bacon Lardons, Bannock Croutons and Carrot Gorgonzola
Roasted Beet Salad with Shaved Brussel Sprouts and Goat Cheese
Smoked Potato Salad with Microgreens and Parsnip Ranch Dressing

Roasted Carrots, Parsnips and Celery Root with Kale
Roasted Potato Medley

Yukon Gold and Cheddar Cheese Perogies
Beef Cabbage Rolls with Roasted Tomato Sauce
Roast Leg of Pork with Black Currant Glaze

Banana Shortcake with Wild Blueberry Sauce
Haskap Shortcake with Strawberry Compote

- Potatoes & Carrots from Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Learning Farm
- Potatoes, Beets, Parsnips and Cabbage from Yukon Grain Farm
- Tomatoes from Yukon Gardens
- Brussels, Kale, Celery Root and Dry Herbs from Kokopellie Farm
- Triticale flour from Sunnyside Farm
- Beef and Pork from Circle D Ranch. Bacon made in-house
- Black Currants from Yukon Agriculture branch Research Farm
- Micro greens from Yukon College Culinary Arts program.
- Blueberries from Wild Things
- Haskaps from Yukon Berry Farms



Planning for the banquet at the college goes back a few years to when Tourism Yukon hosted an event there, identifying agriculture and local foods as a possible tourism opportunity. The lunch for that event highlighted local food and Yukon College's Culinary Arts programs ability to showcase the connection with ingredients sourced locally. Since this time the Agriculture branch have been in discussion on how to host the annual banquet at the college. Partnering with the Culinary Arts program creates many distinct advantages:

- Yukon Agriculture can showcase the quality of local food.
- Identifies to students the breadth of food that can be grown in the Yukon and the numerous farmers in the territory
- Brings Yukon agriculture into the classroom, allowing students to work with fresher, less traveled raw ingredients
- Provides an opportunity to create a culinary experience with foods from close to home
- Our future chefs start making the connection with the farmers and become the story tellers and ambassadors for local food
- The delicious dishes created by the college can inspire consumers, industry and government to bring Yukon agriculture products to their own tables

Gene Batten, Food Service Manager and Coordinator of the Culinary Arts program, along with Ryan Cumming, Culinary Arts Instructor and Teresa Kozakewich, Culinary Intern, did an excellent job of sourcing local product and featuring the Yukon College Culinary Arts Program. They championed the meal and used the event to bring Yukon products into the classroom. The menu and foods were inspired and sourced using the Yukon Products Guide (www.yukonag.ca/guide) .

Thank you to the staff and students for a terrific job sourcing local, making the connections with our famers, and making Yukon "field to fork" such a delicious experience.

**CIRCUMPOLAR
AGRICULTURAL
CONFERENCE 2016**
ROLE OF AGRICULTURE IN THE
CIRCUMPOLAR BIOECONOMY

The 2016 Circumpolar Agricultural Conference (CAC) was held in Reykjavik Iceland, October 6th to 8th. This conference is held every three years and succeeds the last meeting in Girdwood, Alaska which focused on Sustainable Agriculture and Food Security in the Circumpolar North. The Iceland conference continued the conversation around Sustainable Agriculture and broadened the theme to bioeconomy in the circumpolar region. This shift in focus redirects the conversation from food security to consumption and production, looking at achieving food and nutrition security in a sustainable and resilient way. This shift in theme was defined by one of the opening speakers, Arne Bardalen, Director of Research at the Norwegian Institute of Bioeconomy Research. Bardalen highlighted the importance of circumpolar agriculture and the North's role in addressing and adapting to climate changes. With the projected changes to climate, the North will face new possibilities for plant production with an extended growing season,



higher mean temperatures, broader diversity of crops and increasing potential for biomass production.

The first introductory session reminded all in attendance of the important role agriculture plays in our complex changing world. This session set the stage for the conference and the sharing of knowledge between those presenting and in attendance. The conference moved from a broad global agenda to more focused presentations from the different circumpolar regions. The abstracts for all the presentations are available online at www.caa2016.com in the conference booklet on the home page.

Some of the presentations or topics that stood out were:

- Biological solutions for arctic Agriculture (Using microbes to make crops more robust)

- Arctic brand, promoting attributes of growing at high latitudes.
- Development and consumption of functional foods in the north.
- High efficiency food production in a renewable energy based micro-grid system
- Northern cereals and new crop species for forage production.

Kim Joseph, Trondëk Hwëch'in citizen from Dawson, was Yukon's lone presenter at the conference. Kim greeted the audience in her traditional clothing and song. It was one of the highlights of the conference. Way to go, Kim! Kim presented how the Han Hwech'in adapted to survive in their corner of the circumpolar world and shared how traditional knowledge is adapting to the change in the bioeconomy of the Trondëk Hwëch'in.

There were also a wide variety of posters that added to the shared information between circumpolar regions. Yukon was well represented in the poster presentation with 3 different posters. Yukon Posters included:

- Towards productive fruit trees in Canada's Northern Boreal, from John Lenart and Kim Melton, Klondike Valley Nursery.
- Birch Syruping: Can this Industry Enter the Agriculture Conversation, Sylvia Frisch, Birch Hill Forest Farm
- The TH Farm School, Randy Lewis, Trondëk Hwëch'in



Teaching and Working Farm

In total, eight delegates from Yukon were in attendance at the conference with Growing Forward 2 supporting seven of the eight to attend. The conference provided the delegates with a renewed energy for the importance of agriculture in the circumpolar region. Although there could have been more time to share experiences the conference delivered on sharing the strategies for northern growing. The following is a list of who attended this year's conference. If you have any questions about the conference contact Bradley Barton at the Agriculture branch or ask one of the Yukon delegates when you see them.

- Randy Lewis, Vice president and Canadian Chair to the Circumpolar Agricultural Association
- Kim Joseph, Trondëk Hwëch'in
- Sylvia Frisch, Birch Hill Forest Farm
- Kim Melton, Growers of Organic Food Yukon
- John Lenart, Klondike Valley Nursery
- Mary Cheney, Producer/Consultant
- Bradley Barton, Yukon Agriculture branch

SLUG REMOVAL TIP:

Though not interested in alcohol, slugs love beer for its yeasty aroma. To trap slugs, place a smooth-sided cup half buried in the soil. Fill halfway with beer and leave overnight. Remove drowned slugs daily.

WATCH FOR GREY FIELD SLUG DEROCERAS RETICULATUM



Yukon Invasive Species Council would like you to watch out for the Grey Field Slug.

Origin: Europe

Recently Seen: Whitehorse garden

Mode of Transportation: Likely potted plant material

Current Level of Invasion: Low

IDENTIFICATION:

- 40-60 mm long slug
- Variable in colour – light to dark cream or grey coloured, with or without black spots
- Short ridge or “keel” on back of body,
- Produces white sticky mucus when disturbed
- Likes disturbed areas such as cultivated fields or roadsides

SIMILAR SPECIES IN YUKON:

- One native slug: the meadow slug (*Deroceras laeve*)
- smaller, darker coloured slugs that only secrete clear mucus

WHY TO WATCH FOR THEM?

- Slugs are identified as a nuisance by gardeners because of their feeding damage. Any sort of vegetation is at risk to slug damage. Slugs will destroy stems or growing points or reduce leaf area. Like all invasive species, these slugs have a high

reproductive rate!

- The effects of invasive slugs on native species and/or ecosystem health are virtually unstudied, unclear and merit further investigation.

REASONS FOR CONCERN:

- Eat broadleaf plants, grasses and fruit crops
- Major North American agricultural pest in field and horticultural crops
- Once established, they are very difficult to eradicate

HOW TO PREVENT SLUG INVASION:

- Inspect potted plants prior to introduction to gardens or flower beds
- Watch for mucus trails near damaged foliage

WHAT TO DO IF SIGHTED:

- Don't panic
- Remove all slugs if possible, checking under rocks and leaf litter
- Take photos and send to Yukon Invasive Species Council info@yukoninvasives.com or the Yukon Agriculture Branch agriculture@gov.yk.ca for confirmation of identification
- Please keep a frozen specimen, some slugs need to be dissected to be identified!

YUKON YOUNG FARMERS AGM

Yukon Young Farmers will be holding its 2017 Annual General Meeting at 1pm on Saturday, January 28th at the Westmark Hotel. John Lenart of Klondike Valley Nurseries will be the keynote speaker. Keep an eye on YYF's Facebook page for more details. After several busy years on the board, Krista and Tamara are stepping down and so is Brynn Johnson. Current member at large Mike Henderson has put his name forward as the new president. Darrin Sinclair and Stephanie Bourret are also willing to join the board. We need one more person to complete the executive. Are you 40 or under and ready to help promote Yukon farming and agriculture network with events, sponsorships and advocacy?

UPDATE FROM YAA

This fall the Yukon Agricultural Association's board of directors has been working hard on YAA's 2017-2021 strategic plan. Lyn Hartley facilitated several planning sessions which focused on strategic actions relating to internal and external communications, infrastructure development, and YAA's approach in influencing the territory's agricultural policies and procedures. A draft of the plan will be ready for members to review after the January 11th YAA board meeting.

The YAA Board wishes everyone a peaceful Christmas and holiday season.

For more information, to register for events or to become a member of YAA, please contact Jennifer Hall at the YAA office (668-6864).

CUSTOM CONTRACT SERVICES

All aspects of agriculture land development and rejuvenating including consultation services, land clearing, breaking, root cleanup and seeding.

Contact: Dave Andrew 867-334-3378 or daveandrewyukon@gmail.com

THANK YOU

Yukon Spirit Riders 4-H club thanks Castle Mountain Farm, Tracey and Kevin Bowers, along with Yukon Meat and Sausage for the donation of pork. The pork was auctioned off at the North of 60 Banquet as part of the 4-H fund raiser.

VETERINARY SERVICES PROGRAM

The Veterinary Services Program can help farmers take steps to improve the health of Yukon livestock. The program also helps Yukon veterinarians build their capacity for treating livestock, by also helping cover the cost of consulting with other experts on a range of livestock health issues.

HOW DOES THE PROGRAM WORK?

The program reimburses enrolled farmers up to \$1,000 per year to help cover:

- Veterinarian travel costs;
- Professional service and farm call fees; and/or
- Fees for phone consultations with the veterinarian, or for veterinarians to consult with other livestock health experts.

ELIGIBLE LIVESTOCK?

Eligible livestock species are: beef and dairy cattle, goats, sheep, poultry, swine, alpacas, llamas, yaks, elk, bison, rabbits, and fish.

Horses are not covered as they are not raised for food in Yukon.

For more information and how to enrolle:

www.emr.ca/infarm26

Contact Animal Health Unit

Phone: 867-667-5600

Toll-free: 1-800-661-0408

ext. 5600

Fax: 867-393-6263

Email: animalhealth@gov.yk.ca

INFARMATION is:

A Yukon government 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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outside of Whitehorse 1-800-661-0408 ext. 5838

Email: agriculture@gov.yk.ca

Online: www.agriculture.gov.yk.ca

Visit: Agriculture branch on the third floor, room 320 of the Elijah Smith Building, 300 Main Street in Whitehorse.