



Photo courtesy Marie Schneider, Yukon Valley Farm



# The Plough Boy

A quarterly newsletter of the Yukon Agricultural Association

December 2014

## ACTING PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Alan Stannard



In October, I took on the role of acting president with the departure of our long serving president

Mike. I would like to

express the board's appreciation for Mike's years of dedication and service. I will continue as acting President until the elections during the AGM in the spring.

The Mayo Road land continues to be the main focus for the board since the completion of the conceptual plan, the next step finds us applying to GF2 and CANNOR for funding that will enable the YAA to establish a business case and building plans for the property. We hope that you will take the time to be involved. As we prepare for the upcoming AGM we ask all of you to please join us and help make it a success. It is difficult to effect a positive change to our organization when often we do not have a quorum at this very

important time. I also invite you all to consider serving as a member of the board.

On behalf of the Board I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

## PROJECTS

YAA undertook a number of projects this year, with a few still continuing into March. The board held a governance retreat, supported the Frog Food Festival, reprinted the Yukon Farm Products & Services Guide, completed the Conceptual Site Plan for the land lease, relocated a storage bin, and allowed a delegate to attend the Ag Ex Conference hosted by Farm Management Canada. Eight additional people attend the North of 60 Agriculture Conference as part of a producer incentive project, coming from Watson Lake, Dawson City, Mayo, and Haines Junction. Still in progress is updating the listings both in hard copy and on-line for the Yukon Farm Products &

Services Guide, wrapping up strategic planning and sending delegates to the Canadian Young Farmer's Forum Conference to be held the end of February in Ottawa. The major project for the coming year is developing a business plan and possibly engineered drawings to enable facilities to be built on the land lease. This is a critical time in the work of the Association, as so much rests on what takes place on the land that took so many decades on which to secure a lease. If you have project thoughts, please share them with your Directors.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

YAA Annual General Meeting & election of the Board of Directors-early May 2015-date To Be Announced.

Yukon Young Farmers Annual General Meeting and election of Executive-January 31, 2015. Whse. Public Library; 11am-2pm.

## SPOTLIGHT on MACHINERY-AERWAY AERATOR & VALMAR APPLICATOR

The YAA purchased the Aerway C-Flex Aerator & Valmar 1655 Applicator in 2009, and is one of five pieces of agricultural equipment available for rent.

### Why Aerate? Compaction is the enemy!

- Compacted soil has had the air space squeezed out by machine, animal feet or nature itself (rain). Root growth, therefore plant production is inhibited.
- Healthy soil contains a balance of mineral, air, water and organic matter. Approximately 1/4 of the volume of a healthy soil is made up of air pores.
- AerWay Shattertine technology refers to the twist and lean of the tine and the ability of the tine to lift the soil like a small spade, shattering the compacted layers and recreating the air space in the soil profile.
- Aerated soil is loosened soil with ideal air/water balance and an environment for maximum root growth.
- Soil tilth is the measurement of the balance between basic soil elements: mineral, air, water, and organic matter. The proper balance of these elements increases soil production by allowing efficient interaction of all the soil systems. Air and water balance in the soil is the key to good root growth.
- Compaction stresses plants because air and water are "squeezed" from the soil.

Biological and chemical activities which depend on air and water become severely restricted. Root growth is impaired, and crop production suffers.

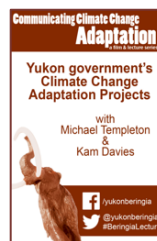
The aerator is available at non-profit rate of \$ 185/day. Rental arrangements, including showing proof of insurance for towing, can be made through the YAA office. The current caretaker is Mike Blumenschein. Thanks, Mike, for your assistance.



What do you know about permafrost on agriculture land in Yukon?

Effects of Melting Permafrost on Agriculture Capacity in Yukon (2 / 2) with Kam Davies YG Agriculture Branch, Energy Mines and Resources.

Talk Outline: EMR-Agriculture Branch researchers will identify challenges and barriers to agriculture on areas of changing permafrost conditions. The project will also examine challenges to the national agriculture capability classification systems as a result of changing permafrost conditions. Applying this information to the national agriculture capability ratings should increase the accuracy and consistency of the classification system within Yukon permafrost areas.



Streaming video - <http://new.livestream.com/yukonberingia/ccals05>

Start at 30:20 minutes. (Presentation recorded at Beringia Centre, Oct, 9 2014)

## CAN WE PREVENT TALL HAWKWEED FROM CREEPING UP ON US?

Andrea Altherr, YISC

Undesirable weeds threaten productivity on rangeland and agricultural fields in neighbouring provinces. The Yukon is in the fortunate situation of not needing to battle heavy infestations at this point in time. The Yukon Invasive Species Council (YISC) targets some of the nasty weeds in an early detection and rapid response program which relies on cooperation with people connected to the land.

Weeds or invasive species are often introduced to new areas by humans. Examples include, road side seeding, horticulture escapees and weedy seed used in agricultural projects. Most jurisdictions have noxious weed regulations that regulate species such as Orange Hawkweed, Perennial Sow Thistle and Creeping Thistle. The lack of Yukon regulations means that Yukoners need to act responsibly.

We can reduce the chance of introducing noxious weeds by using Canada Certified Number 1 seed and when importing hay only bring in Certified Weed Free Hay. Local farms and growers in Yukon are important to our livelihood. Taking the steps to act responsibly, by not seeding or importing a problem, is a good start. It is equally important to keep an eye on weeds growing on the land. By spotting and reporting nasty weeds early, we have a good chance of controlling them and preventing their spread. For more information on invasive species visit

[www.yukoninvasives.com](http://www.yukoninvasives.com)

## **KIDS ON THE FARM**

Shiela Alexandrovich 668-5964

Kids on the Farm is a program developed over the last two years aimed at getting all ages of school kids out onto farms. The program has been developed by Growers of Organic Food Yukon, GoOFY, and is open to all farms within an hour of Whitehorse that want to put together a school tour. To date, there are 8 participating farms, and there have been over 550 kids/teachers from kindergarten to grade 12 participate this season alone. Feedback is extremely positive.

Most tours are 1.5 to 3 hours long and address learning outcomes like soil, food security, ecosystems, etc. This is easily done through activities on farm: composting, planting, harvesting, animal care. The program addresses where food comes from, the career choice of farming, the work involved in farming, and a chance to experience a farm.

The program pays farmers for their time, including prep and cleanup, and schools provide a per head fee for all students. There is currently a 50% transport subsidy to help get students out to the farms.

GoOFY has had two trial seasons now, and evaluation has fine tuned the program to the point where we are ready to apply for longer term funding to enable this program to be ongoing. There is a hired coordinator for farmers and teachers, guide books developed for farmers and teachers and ongoing evaluation aimed at improvement. Our goal has been to develop a program that helps educate school kids about farming, work out the bugs and have continuing funding.

We are hopeful that we can achieve this through GF2 support. Let's see what the winter brings.

## **THE REAL DIRT ON FARMING**

booklet is designed to connect readers with the food they eat, and introduce some of Canada's farm families. This booklet provides basic facts on topics such as the difference between growing crops conventionally and organically, pesticide use, animal housing and animal welfare, environmental sustainability, technology used in farming as well as many other subjects that you have indicated are important to you. The goal of this book is to help Canadians make informed decisions about the food being served to their family.

<http://www.realdirtinfarming.ca/assets/docs/flipbook2014eng/#p=1>

## **YUKON YOUNG FARMERS**

With the help of Casey Langbroek and Guenette Bautz, the assembled YYF members developed a new strategic plan to take the group into the next few years. Core values, objective, purpose and one and three year action plans are now in place. Thank you to the participating members who made it all come together.

The AGM is scheduled for January 31, 2015, location and time TBD. Do you have an interest in serving on the executive for the coming year? Do you want your voice heard on agriculture policy at the territorial level? Do you want to network with outer young farmers and hear how they handle the challenges the north is known for? YYF may be your answer.

## **Contact Us**

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**Office Hours:** 8am-4pm,  
Monday-Friday

## **CONFERENCES**

Banff Pork Seminar

<http://www.banffpork.ca/index.shtml>

Jan 20-22, 2015 in Banff

[http://caar.org/news\\_item/the-caar-conference-registration-now-open/](http://caar.org/news_item/the-caar-conference-registration-now-open/)

Feb 18-19, 2015 in Kelowna

Sustainable Agriculture  
Conference

<http://www.uaf.edu/ces/ah/sare/conference/>

Mar 3-5, Fairbanks

North American Summit on Food  
Safety

<http://www.foodsafetycanada.com>

Mar 5-6 in Toronto

Advancing Women in Agriculture  
Conference

<http://www.advancingwomenconference.ca/2015west/index.html>

Apr 6-7 in Calgary

Canadian Poultry and Egg  
Producers Council Convention

<http://www.cpepc.ca/convention2014/convention2014.html>

Jun 15-17 in Toronto