

British Columbia Organic Grower



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Letters & submissions to:
Cassandra Redding, Editor
7306 Old Stamp Mill Road
Vernon BC V1H 1N2
phone: 250-307-5705
fax: 250-260-4436
editor@certifiedorganic.bc.ca

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COABC
3402 32nd Avenue
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phone: 250-260-4429
fax: 250-260-4436
office@certifiedorganic.bc.ca

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Next Issue Deadline:
September 2, 2008

President's Letter

by Peter Johnston

Hello to everyone. Just a few days ago I remembered that I am always stressed at this time of year. Everything is growing very quickly, and everything needs to be done right now, or maybe tomorrow, or it will all be out of control, and probably will stay out of control forever. There just isn't enough time to do all the things that need to be done.

I had been thinking that maybe I was getting too old and should begin to think about retiring. I'm also fitting in several hours a day (most days) being COABC president and dealing with all the issues that keep coming up.

I'm also trying not to use any fossil fuel on the farm this year. It takes longer to cut down and hoe down cover crops and cultivate my beds by hand, but I've had a lot more earthworms since I stopped rototilling a number of years ago, and I know my soils and growing areas much more intimately. In the last few years I have used most of my farm fuel mowing for mulch.

This year, I'm learning that a scythed area looks just as beautiful as a newly mowed lawn - but so far most of our visitors haven't been quite so quick to appreciate it.

I'm also learning that cutting my grass from thigh or hip-height down to ankle-height, (rather than to mow from 4 or 5 inches down to 2 inches or less) allows a lot more grass to photosynthesize, which then grows back much quicker. When I say grass, I am including various clovers, and broadleaved plants and flowers that seem to thrive, rather than just survive, in this system.

I believe that small-scale, very intensive, human-powered farms will work very well here on the coast, where there is a large local market, very productive, but increasingly expensive, land, a long growing season, and what appears to be a lot of young (and not so young) people who want to farm.

I am reminded of the picture I saw once of a new housing estate (subdivision or development) in Britain, which had recently been built on farmland. Because of the relatively low productivity as a farm, and the backyard vegetable gardening that Britons commonly do, the production on the land actually went up after the houses were built.

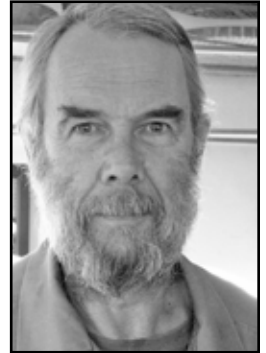
We are all becoming more aware that to avoid devastating climate change, we need to change the way we live and work and buy.

I also believe that the best way to live well on a farm is to minimize off-farm inputs and the out-put of money purchasing or collecting them. As organic producers, we have cut down on many of the fossil-fuel inputs like fertilizers and pesticides.

The growing cost of fuel will encourage reduction in its use, and maybe a reduction in the amount of machinery used. In some cases, the expense may encourage a return to smaller, human or animal-powered operations.

Remember - I hope this isn't the first time you've heard it - that by far the most harmful, climate-changing thing that we do is to travel. Even a short flight on an full, fuel-efficient aircraft has a huge effect. Several lifetimes of drying clothes outdoors, cycling to work, errands and play, and eating home-grown and local minimally processed food, can be undone by one flight.

We'll all have received, or will shortly receive, our \$100 climate-change rebate from the BC government. There are a growing number of suggestions on how to invest the money that will help slow climate change. See if you can find one that suits you. There is a wonderfully light aluminum-shafted scythe available for just over \$100.





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Report from the Administrator

by Karen Fenske

With summer comes the promise of juicy peaches, fresh raspberries with whipped cream, blueberries for smoothies, apples right off the tree for the lunch basket, and so much more. Those of us who are the consumers of your hard work and constant striving to provide healthy food for your neighbours, can never say thank you enough.

COABC has always been, and continues to be, involved in so many aspects of growing the organic sector. Like many organizations, we rely on the expertise and the initiative of those who are passionate for what we are trying to achieve. For anyone who would like to get to know COABC better, we currently have room in many specific areas. Please contact me at admin@certifiedorganic.bc.ca if you are interested in participating on one of the committees following:

The Capacity Development Committee will research and participate in implementing options which will ensure the sustainability of COABC, such as:

- Finding ways to increase the number of people who are producing organics, which would result in an increased amount of organic product available for consumers, through such strategies as technological change and building infrastructure
- Defining ways to increase the number of people making their living as organic growers and producers

Editor's Note

by Cassandra Redding

The main focus of this *BC Organic Grower's* summer issue is "animal welfare" and would not be so full of all things animal without the dedication of Rochelle Eisen. Rochelle, BC's Organic Extension agent, who helped pull this edition together.

This is a subject that needs to be talked about and examined as it pertains to the organic industry as the BC Agriculture Council (BCAC) announced in May "that agriculture in BC has taken its first step to address BC animal care issues in a collaborative and coordinated approach". The *Grower* is eager to coordinate to coordinate with this approach.

In this issue you will also find new articles that will help you in the world of organics - there are practical tips, updates on current events and happenings, and important notices on organic standards.

- Investigating the CVO program, Corporate Sponsorship Program, and government relations options

The COABC Events Committee will provide support to COABC events. (The 2009 Annual Organic Conference and AGM will run concurrent with the Pacific AG Show in Abbotsford in mid-February 2009. Therefore, the committee will need some local people to work with the Event Contractor and COABC Administrator.)

The Communications & PR Committee will support COABC communication and PR activities.

The Advocacy of Operators Committee will review advocacy issues that are brought to their attention by licensees to determine, if and, how COABC will proceed.

The Regional Standards Review Committee will be adapting our provincial standards to meet the Canada Organic Standards.

Enjoy this beautiful summer!



The *Grower* draws from a list of writers and experts, and welcomes ideas and submissions from you, the reader.

Please feel free to contact me or the COABC with suggestions or comments - anything you think needs to be written about and seen by members of the BC organic industry.

I hope everyone enjoys their summer and that the season brings a much-bountiful harvest. Look for your next *Grower* to feature all things "seedy!"

Happy Summer!





Dear Rochelle



Dear Rochelle,

I raise organic chickens and have a rodent problem, what can I do?

Ron in Burnaby

Dear Ron, All farms can have rodent problems, especially because many are inclined to having 'rodent friendly environments', often supplying places to nest, food to eat, and water to drink. Obviously, poultry operations can easily create the perfect situation for these opportunists. In fact, you don't have to be slovenly to have a problem, just slightly careless once or twice and before you know it - presto, you may need a 'pied piper' to solve the problem. However, it is possible, if you are persistent in gaining control, that you will get the upper hand and hopefully never lose the edge again. It is truly critical to have the best control possible, as not only can rodents transmit diseases, but they may gnaw electrical wires, nest in walls, and destroy insulation and its effectiveness. Overall, rodents just make life miserable.

Mainstream producers carefully rodent-proof their poultry buildings during the construction phase (using deep footing and long aprons, providing flush wall materials, and closing all cracks around openings such as vents, hookups, and holes for feed augers) and maintain that level of vigilance. Rodent-proof construction of organic poultry facilities (coops, houses, barns) cannot in itself alleviate the problem, as organic poultry require outdoor access, yet it surely would reduce the number of avenues and opportunities. If a building has not been sealed effectively, corrective action should be taken to block off all access points with a combination of coarse steel wool, hardware cloth, or sheet metal.

Around the immediate vicinity of poultry facilities it would be prudent to keep at least a four to five foot wide vegetation-free zone (including no over-hanging branches) and where possible, a 50-foot wide debris-free-zone. Such precautions will make it more difficult for both rats and mice to gain access, and will also eliminate hiding places and nesting sites that may be close by. Many people don't realize that both

rats and mice can scamper along wires, conduit, and any rough, building surface. Similarly, it would be helpful to make the four-foot wide area a water-free-zone, as rats need water daily, while mice need it at least every fourth day. Eliminating such opportunities will reduce rodent possibilities.

Building a water-filled moat around your operation will not be that effective if the culprits are Norway rats. Not only can they jump 3 feet vertically, they can jump 4 feet horizontally, as well as tread water for up to 3 days, and swim up to half of a mile in open water, and survive completely under water for about half of a minute.

To deal with an existing population you are going to have to resort to some kind of trapping program, such as live traps, water-filled buckets to trap mice and voles, lethal traps (i.e. snap-back, Vitamin D3* baited, electric shock, or glue boards). Glue boards are considered the least humane, but in some situations may be necessary to use.

As it has been explained to me, the water bucket system has two variations. The simplest would be something like a milk bottle buried in the ground nearly up to its neck. Peanut butter is smeared inside the bottle a few inches down from the neck and then mice and voles try to reach down for the food and fat, and fall into the bucket or jar.

A more elaborate system that works in houses (and maybe poultry barns) is to rig up a balance beam so that there is a ramp up to the peanut butter over the bucket. A mouse (or maybe a rat) goes up the ramp to eat the bait and the beam tips it into the bucket. The beam then falls back into the ramp position where it is ready to lure another rodent. Make sure there is more than enough water inside the bucket, so the rodent eventually drowns. The container also has to be deep enough so that the rodent can't jump out.

...continued on page 6

...continued from page 5

When it comes to lethal traps there is a lot of skill needed to be successful with any of these, especially if you are intending on catching Norway Rats. These rats will avoid any trap when they are initially set up because they can take up to a week to adapt to new objects. Mice and rats are also attracted to different baits (see the chart below for details), and you need to have the right size trap to deal with the offending specie. Be cognisant on where you locate and how you orientate your traps. The best scenario is to place them in dark corners, or next to areas where you have seen droppings or gnawing, and in most cases place traps perpendicular to walls with the opening of live traps against the wall and the trigger on snap trap, snapping towards the wall. The more traps that are put out, the more effective you will be (e.g. every 5-10 feet). It is critical to check and reset traps every morning. If trapping just can't seem to get the population under control, a last resort could involve using sulphur bombs in the burrows, but do realize these cannot be used inside buildings.

Once you do get the population under control (supposedly for every rodent seen there is another 25 in the vicinity), best to maintain your sanitation, and vigilance levels, and maybe buy some Jack Russell terriers. (People that have them swear by their rodent-catching ability.)

Lastly, I have heard about a few products that help repel rodents including "Plantskydd Deer Repellent" and something completely new called "Fresh CB". I have also read that a combination of pennyroyal/asafetida, mixed in with split peas, will work as a rodent birth control mix, but I cannot find any data to substantiate the effectiveness of any of these.

Oh, I have one last bit of trivia to share. Supposedly one rat per day produces 20ml urine and 30 droppings. If you have 100 rats on a farm then they would produce over 700 litres of urine and 1,095,000 droppings per year.

For further information read:

1. BCMAL Poultry Factsheet No.632.02 – Control of Rats and Mice on Poultry Farms
2. OMAFRA Factsheet AGDEX 400/680 – Rodent Control in Livestock and Poultry Facilities
3. NYS DEC and Cornell Cooperative Extension - Best Practices for Nuisance Wildlife Control Operators: A Training Manual

*Bell Laboratories the manufacturer of all Vitamin D3 rodenticide products in Canada has made a business decision to allow the registration in Canada for these products to expire December 31, 2008. Last sales will be September 30, 2008 and as of December 31, 2008 it will be illegal to use any that has been stockpiled.

Characteristic	Norway Rat	Mouse
Size (including tail)	42 cm (16.5 in.)	16 cm (6 in.)
Average weight (adult)	500 gm (18 oz)	20 gm (0.7 oz)
When active	nocturnal	nocturnal
Sight	poor (1.5m) (4.9 ft)	poor (1 m) (3 ft)
Smell, touch, taste	excellent	excellent
Hearing	highly accurate	highly accurate
Range from nest	45 m (148 ft)	9 m (30 ft)
Fear of new objects	3-7 days	.05-5 hours
Water requirements	daily	2-4 days without
Food per day	28 gm (1 oz)	3 gm (0.1oz)
Water	57 gm (2 oz)	3 gm (0.1 oz)
Favourite foods	rolled oats, meat, fish, vegetable oil	grains, rolled oats, sugar, raisins
Droppings	bean size	rice size
Minimum width for entrance (hole diameter)	12 mm (0.5 in)	6 mm (0.2 in)
Can chew through (given edge to gnaw on)	rubber, aluminum, cinder blocks, plastic, wool	same as rats

Events and Announcements

On-Farm Food Safety Program Certification

Starting in summer/fall 2008, the Canadian Horticultural Council ("CHC") will offer producer/packer certification to the On-Farm Food Safety ("OFFS") Program standards. The new certification program is open to suppliers who need to demonstrate to their customers that they are following the CHC OFFS manuals. Program participants will be required to pass a third party audit specifically based on the CHC manuals. The audit will be performed by a qualified auditor trained to understand the CHC Program and fairly and impartially assess a supplier's compliance with the requirements. As buyers become more aware of the CHC Program, demands for multiple OFFS audits are expected to decrease. The CHC will manage and oversee Program delivery. Auditing and certification will be outsourced to a separate, ISO-accredited certification body, QMI-SAI Global. The CHC will continue to maintain the national OFFS standards and updates to technical documents, under the scrutiny of the Canadian government OFFS Recognition Program.

For more information, or to enrol in this Program, please contact Natasha Balram, OFFS Project Officer, by phone at (613) 226-4880 ext. 215 or by email at nbalram@hortcouncil.ca.

Licensees: Please leave a message with Rochelle Eisen (extension@certifiedorganic.bc.ca 250.547.6573) if you need On Farm Food Safety certification and are unable to access it through other established venues.

Agricultural Career Focus Program

Funding has approved funding for the Agriculture Career Focus Program. <http://www.cahrc-ccrha.ca/CareerFocus.html> The Agriculture Career Focus Program offers employers an opportunity to receive a wage subsidy to hire skilled youth on a 4-10 month placement. Eligible interns must be post-secondary graduates, in agriculture. The Agriculture Career Focus Program is open to all businesses which are part of the economic sector represented by the Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council.

Under this program, The Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council (CAHRC) will provide a 30% wage contribution to a maximum of \$12,000 per intern for Canadian farm businesses hiring graduates for a minimum of four months or until March 31, 2009, whichever comes first. The program is available to Canadian businesses across the country conducting work in the primary agriculture sector, including

businesses that directly provide service to the on-farm sector.

The program runs from May 1, 2008 to March 31, 2009, and is designed to benefit both employers and new graduates.

A New Approach to Animal Care in British Columbia

The BC Agriculture Council (BCAC) announced in May "that agriculture in BC has taken its first step to address BC animal care issues in a collaborative and coordinated approach". The BCAC, along with representatives from BC livestock and poultry associations (including the COABC), have begun a strategic planning process to outline priorities and activities in addressing farm animal care issues in BC, and to propose a committee model to most effectively implement the plan. While this collaborative and coordinated approach is new to BC, several other provinces have long been addressing animal care issues in this way. Currently, industry-led animal care councils operate in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Ontario. These provincial councils lead and coordinate a variety of activities including the development of teacher/student resources, pro-active involvement with the media, the support of farm animal welfare research, and producer extension. While there may eventually be similarities between the activities of neighbouring provincial councils and those BC undertakes, it will be a priority that the strategic planning process identifies and addresses the animal care issues of particular concern in BC. The BCAC plans to have the new animal care strategy operational by the fall of 2008.

For further information please contact Christine Koch (BCAC) 604 866 7006, or Terri Giacomazzi (BCMAL) 604 556 3082

Quintox

Bell Laboratories the manufacturer of all Vitamin D3 rodenticide products including Quintox in Canada has made a business decision to allow the registration in Canada for these products to expire December 31, 2008. Last sales will be Sept 30, 2008 and as of Dec 31, 2008 it will be illegal to use any stockpiled.

Please contact Rochelle Eisen at extension@certifiedorganic.bc.ca or (250)547.6573, if this will have an impact on your operation.

Small Scale Biogas: Can it work in the Pacific Northwest?

by Chad Kruger, Craig Frear, and Shulin Chen

Rapidly rising costs for energy and agricultural inputs produced from non-renewable sources, pose a critical threat to the economic viability of North American farms. Small diversified and organic farms, while more insulated than chemically-intensive farms, are still not immune to the effects of volatile energy markets and stand to gain considerably from the use of renewable energy technologies on farm. In particular, energy technologies focused on waste biomass – or bioenergy technologies – hold great promise for efficiently and inexpensively treating organic farm wastes, reducing odour and methane emissions (a powerful greenhouse gas), providing nutrient-rich material for land application, as well as producing renewable energy for use on farm. Biogas technology, also known as anaerobic digestion, is a natural, biological process that has been used world wide for the treatment of wet, organic wastes and the production of biogas which is a form of renewable energy.

Anaerobic digestion (AD) or “biogas technology” is an existing natural, biological conversion process that has been proven effective at converting wet organic wastes into biogas (primarily methane) capable of producing relatively clean electricity while also alleviating many of the environmental concerns associated with the waste, such as odor, greenhouse gas emissions, and protection of soil and water quality. Most modern dairies utilize a lagoon system for animal waste storage, a practice that leads to large emissions of methane and nitrous oxide. Closed-system anaerobic digestion (AD) of the manure has the potential to eliminate most of the lagoon emissions while conserving more nutrients and producing renewable energy. Anaerobic digestion is a natural process in which organic matter in the manure is converted into methane by bacteria in the absence of oxygen. The methane is then collected and may be used to generate electricity, thermal energy, and even liquid fuel. In addition, the AD process creates potentially valuable co-products, such as the digested fiber and a liquid rich in nutrients which are readily available for plant uptake.

For the past four years, Washington State University’s Center for Sustaining Agriculture and Natural Resources (CSANR) has demonstrated the potential of biogas technology for converting dairy manure from concentrated animal feeding operations into valuable products such as renewable energy, fiber, and liquid fertilizer while reducing greenhouse gas

emissions and odour and improving waste management. There are several commercial-ready digester technologies, but they tend to be applied only at very large-scale operations. The goal of our research and technology development is to make this technology commercially viable at smaller scales (200 to 400 cows). During this process we have become very interested in the potential for this technology at much smaller scales, such as for small-farm or household use. Even though most small farms do not use lagoon technology, anaerobic digestion could still be a viable manure management technology that provides additional benefits such as renewable energy and nutrient maintenance. Many small, diversified livestock producers in Washington State have indicated significant interest in small-scale biogas plants – especially due to the potential for a high-quality renewable fuel to replace LP gas used for on-farm food processing (ie. goat cheese).

There are three basic designs of small-scale (household size) biogas plants in widespread use in the developing world. They are the Chinese Fixed Dome Digester (Fig. 1), the Indian Floating Dome Digester (Fig. 2) and the Taiwanese Polyethylene Tubular Digester (Fig. 3).

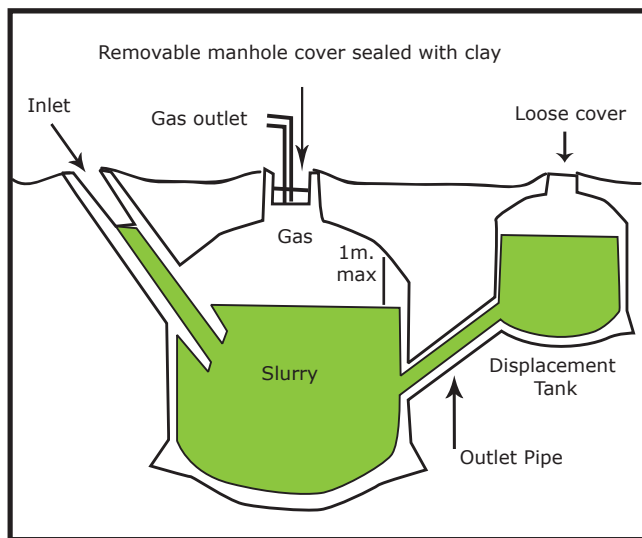


Fig. 1

These biogas plants have been used successfully throughout the tropical and sub-tropical regions of Asia. They are each very simple in their design, relatively inexpensive to construct, and each has its own advantages and disadvantages. Direct transfer of these technologies to the upper latitude, cold

climate region of the Pacific Northwest is likely to negatively affect the performance of these technologies without some degree of modification, such as selecting for bacteria that thrive at lower temperatures, improving bacteria retention, and designing for improved thermal insulation. We have initiated research to address some of these "engineering" questions.

Kruger received a B.A. in Philosophy and History (1997) and an Academic Certificate in Eointensive Agriculture Technologies (1998) from Northwest College in Kirkland, Washington, an M.S. in Land Resources (2003) and is a Ph.D. candidate in Land Resources from the Gaylord Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies at the University of Wisconsin - Madison.



Fig. 2

He was an Au Sable Graduate Fellow at the University of Wisconsin - Madison. His professional experience includes more than 10 years of experience in teaching, extension and research on the adoption of sustainable agriculture systems and technologies and administration of a research policy network. He currently serves as the Director of Outreach for the Climate Friendly Farming™ Project, which is researching agricultural practices and technologies that reduce agricultural greenhouse gas emissions, sequester carbon in soils, and provide renewable, biomass-based substitutes for fossil fuel-based products.



Fig. 3

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Farm Focus: A Day in the Life of the Farmer

This Farm Focus is on Woodshutts Farm near Kelvington, Saskatchewan.

Old habits die hard. I have learned this lesson slowly over the years as I have moved my farm to a certified organic ranch. My father farmed conventionally and I grew up learning through osmosis and four years of college, how to farm conventionally. We decided what we wanted to grow, we fertilized it with manmade products, and we killed off everything that wasn't what we planted. With the livestock, we chose the breed that grew the fastest, biggest and most efficiently. We seeded monoculture grasses that were guaranteed to put the pounds on, we corralled them in the fall, weaned the calves when they were six months old, and started them on the standard grain diet to put the pounds on.

I didn't challenge conventional wisdom until my father decided to retire. I detested spraying my crops and constantly handling the cattle to inject them with this and spray them with that. I loved farming, but I didn't feel at peace.

I began to challenge everything I had been taught. And so began the farms transition to certified organic production. Instead of constantly trying to mold the environment to fit our farming method, we learned that it was more advantageous to mold our farming method to the environment.

The land thrived; Buttercups, Ladies Slippers, and Tiger Lilies returned. Sloughs filled with water and the frog chatter became deafening. The ground is alive with bugs and worms. The cattle thrived. I have always treated my livestock humanely; our farm is

often referred to by the neighbours as the *Home for Convalescing Cows*. But when you embrace the spirit of what it means to live and farm organically, and not simply follow the letter of the Organic Standard, you open your mind to a whole new way of looking at things.

You don't just provide outdoor access; you make sure your livestock are not standing in a mud hole. You don't provide the minimum square foot per animal; you provide enough space until lice or mites are not an issue. You don't dangle toys to alleviate frustration and boredom; you allow them to exhibit their innate behaviour so this never becomes an issue. You don't add to their diet what you can get away with, just to gain that extra gram of meat.



Organic livestock farming is about providing an environment that embraces the needs of the animal. You prevent problems, rather than coping with them or always trying to simply medicate them. You put the animal's welfare before profits.

It was perhaps 27b who taught me the most about farming organically. 27b was born with a bum left leg that she would swing under her belly to give her the best support. Her left side muscles were underdeveloped. From the right side she looked like a fat cow. From the left ...well she looked awful. But she fought to live and we embraced her spirit.

She taught us about instinct and not fighting it. When she calved she would hide her calf in one corner of the pasture and graze in the other. We used to go get the calf, load it on the quad and drive it over to her to

save her the walking. Two hours later that calf would be right back where she had first put it and she would be daring us to touch it again. In her later years we tried to keep her at home to graze so that she didn't have to keep up with the herd but she always broke out and went back with them. Instinct. It is hard-wired and when you mess with an animal's natural instinct it becomes frustrated and frustrated animals can be destructive and dangerous and quickly unprofitable for your ranch.

A neighbour once remarked, "I look at your other cattle and they are good-looking cows. Why would you spoil your herd with this one?" 27b spoiled us. She produced eleven calves and almost always weaned the biggest calf at close to 700 pounds.

She taught us that you don't have to put your livestock in barns, as many as possible into as little a space as is technically allowable, and tamper with their diets, to be financially rewarded. Treat animals

Grain Mill Excitement

by Cara Nunn

A recent buy-out of the mill in Armstrong, BC has led to a lot of excitement. The mill is now operating under the name of Fieldstone Granary Ltd under the capable direction of Pat Holman, General Manager and Wolf Wesle, Technical Advisor. They have secured a strong market for spelt and some of the other grains such as Rye, Malting Barley, Spring Wheat and Flax. A grain seminar was recently jointly sponsored by Fieldstone Granary and North Okanagan Organic Association with assistance from COABC's Regional Seminar Series, to educate producers about this market and potential crop for organic farmers.

The seminars took place in Langley and Vernon, in an effort to reach the widest area of producers in the shortest amount of time. There was average attendance at the seminars, but many people who missed the opportunity contacted NOAA to receive more information and copies of the printed material. People who attended were apprised of the varieties that are needed to fill the current market and the overall ability of these grains to survive our climate.

The major barrier at moment to growing these crops organically is the availability of seed. Many at the coast felt that even with the strong market, it wasn't enough to make their farms viable, but they were open to the possibility of growing some of the grains as a rotational crop on their existing operations.

humanely, in their natural environment, feed them as close to their natural diet as you can and they will give you 11 more calves than you could have ever expected.

Our farm name is Woodshutts. We are located just outside of Kelvington which is in east-central Saskatchewan. We own 13 quarters of certified organic land and rent two quarters of certified organic land.

We raise certified organic cattle and the following certified organic crops: Oats, Winter Wheat, Winter Triticale & Red clover. We have also grown in the past, flax, wheat and barley, but not so much lately.

The operation consists of my sister and myself. My father has been retired for a number of years but still helps out when asked. My mother does all of the farm's bookkeeping.

Sandy Lowndes



Fieldstone Granary is excited to be starting the business in such an atmosphere of strength and growth. They are hoping to have a website set up soon to direct potential producers to seed sources and variety information, as well as establishing an extension agent to personally attend the operations to assist in the transition to organic grain production. Pat and Wolf are also keen on a cooperative equipment network where expensive equipment can be made available to small producers and shipping can be combined to reduce overall costs while maintaining a superior product.

There is only one catch - you must grow under an ISO accredited Certified Organic Program to provide grain to Fieldstone. They are however, willing to work with local non-ISO producers in production of green manure seed crops. For more information:

Fieldstone Granary Ltd.
4851 Schubert Road
Armstrong, BC
V0E 1B4
Phone: 250-546-4558 or
info@fieldstonegranary.com
Pat Holman - General Manager
Wolf Wesle - Technical Advisor

Look for upcoming seminars in the fall!

What We Can Learn From Listening to the Birds

by Anne Malleau

It is crucial that indoor bird environments are well maintained especially as they do spend a good portion of their lives inside. The two main areas in an indoor environment that can lead directly to problems with bird welfare are air quality and poor litter condition. How poultry pens are designed and laid out (position of heater, number of drinkers, provision of roosts, placement of pop holes etc.), stocking density, bird health, ventilation systems, and how seasonal differences are accounted for within the pen design (for example, to reduce drafts or cool the birds) are all factors that influence the condition of the litter.

The condition of the litter is directly correlated to air quality, which is an important welfare consideration for both the stockperson and the birds. Research has shown that poor air quality can lead to eye and respiratory problems in birds and that poor litter condition has a direct effect on the incidence of foot pad lesions, hock lesions, and breast blisters. Foot pad problems can sometimes go unnoticed because both feet can be affected, so abnormal gaits aren't spotted.

In addition to the areas listed above, poor litter condition can also be influenced by the type of feed provided. Feed with high levels of protein can result in an increase in uric acid excretion and wetter feces. Litter condition can decrease dramatically under this situation and increased foot, hock, and breast lesions can be found. In addition, ammonia levels also increase creating poorer air quality conditions.

While assessing litter quality and air quality is important, looking directly at how the bird is dealing with the environment is vital to maintaining welfare. This approach is referred to as 'outcome-based' or 'animal-based' because it looks out the outcomes as well as the inputs, and is a new area being incorporated into many on-farm assessments.

Some of the animal-based tools that the poultry industry in other parts of the world are currently using to feedback problems with litter management that impact bird welfare include:

a) In the UK, RSPCA's Freedom Foods scheme (www.rspca.org.uk) incorporates a 'dirty bird' scoring system into their on-farm assessment. During catching, a sample of birds is scored on a pre-set 0-3 scale,



and that information is fed back to the farm. The scoring system assigns a score to both the front and back of the bird.

b) Also in the UK, some large poultry processing plants score the foot pads of each bird on the line using digital technology that snaps a picture and assigns a score. This information is then fed back to the farm with other information collected by the plant.

c) In Sweden, almost all poultry producers (~97%) participate in their Animal Welfare Program. The program works by setting stocking densities for each farm based on an assessment of the standard of housing facilities, equipment, stockmanship, and management. Within the program, a Foot Health Program was established to address the incidence of foot pad problems on Swedish farms.

However, just because animal-based outcomes are being incorporated into on-farm assessments and information fed back from the slaughter plant, it doesn't mean that similar assessments can't be done on the farm by producers themselves throughout the rearing cycle.

Incorporating bird measures into a weekly assessment of your barn(s) can pay off not only in terms of bird welfare, but also in a better working environment for the stockperson, and a potentially bigger paycheck from fewer bird health issues and condemnations on the line.

Anne Malleau is the Director of Research and Education for the Animal Compassion Foundation, a 501 (c) 3 non-profit producer research and education organization created by Whole Foods Market, Inc.

Putting FLAWS Into Good Management

by Bill Cox

The apparently oxymoronic title highlights the acronym FLAWS, which is a good reminder for evaluating the basic elements of good management. Regardless of the size of flock or the production model being followed, the fundamentals of good management will provide the foundation for excellent flock health.

FLAWS, or (FLLAWSSS in an expanded form) refers to Feed, Light, Litter, Air, Water, Space, Security, and Sanitation, and attention to these elements is essential to good management. While all of these seem to be intuitive, the details can often be overlooked, even by the best of managers. So, when I visit a farm to assess flock health, the first things I observe are the FLAWS, using the acronym like a check-list to help me systematically review everything. This same approach can be used routinely by a flock manager reviewing the flock status.

1. Feed

All birds obviously need feed to sustain proper growth and production. However, just providing the feed does not always mean that the birds are eating it or that they are getting the right nutrition. Following are a few points to consider when assessing feed:

- Is the feed accessible to the birds; are the feed pans at the right height to allow access and is there enough functional space? The rule of thumb is that the rim of the feeder is at the height of the shoulders of the bird for most poultry. Remember, if the feeders are in an area that the birds avoid, then the total feeder space is reduced by that amount.
- Is the feed of good quality with little separation, if a mash, or a small proportion of fines, if pelleted? Separation of feed can lead to or be due to "high-grading", where birds pick out the most palatable ingredients. This can lead to a nutritional imbalance. Fines indicate poor pellet quality and tend to stay in the bottom of the feeder pan. Not only does this lead to feed wastage, but the dusty material can be of poor nutritional value and its accumulation can support the growth of mould or bacteria.
- Is there any mould in the feed or the feeders and feeding system? Many moulds produce toxins that can adversely affect the health of your birds. While the feed itself may not be mouldy, there could be clumps of old, mouldy feed caught up in corners of the feeding equipment.

- Is the diet properly balanced or is the right feed being used for the birds being fed? If the feed is a purchased diet, it is likely that the balance is correct. However, if the flock is of laying hens, it is important that they are on a layer diet, rather than a developer diet, due to the importance of proper calcium / phosphorus ratio.

- Is feed being well managed to prevent spillage and stored in a manner that does not attract rodents? If bagged, is it being rotated properly to ensure a constant supply of fresh feed to the birds?

2. Light

In nature, birds are normally stimulated to begin egg production by increasing daylight hours. Layer and breeding birds kept domestically are stimulated to produce eggs as they become mature by increasing the light period up to about 16 hours per day. To maintain egg production, daylight should be kept at 16 hours, even in the fall and winter, when daylight hours are shortening. During the time in which birds are stimulated by artificial light, it is useful to routinely check the timers, ensuring adequate daylight exposure.

The intensity of light will also have significant effects. When brooding chicks, light intensity of at least 20 lux and up to 100 lux is recommended to stimulate activity and encourage eating and drinking. The reflection of light on water is especially important to attract the young birds and start them drinking early.

Care should be taken to keep lighting quality optimum. It is beneficial to the flock to have even lighting, minimizing shadows and bright spots. Shadows are particularly important, because birds will tend to use such areas as refuge and nesting spots. For layers, this will result in excessive numbers of floor eggs, which will be more soiled than those laid in nest boxes.

3. Litter

Litter quality is another basic element important to bird health. Poor litter quality can indicate a number of deficiencies, including ventilation, temperature, diet, or gut health. Litter includes the bedding material, usually sawdust or wood shavings, and accumulated droppings. Straw is also used as bedding, but this substrate can support the growth of mould.

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Good quality litter is soft and homogeneous in appearance. There should be no crusts on top, which indicate excessive moisture.

Birds on good quality litter will have clean, healthy-looking feet. Poor litter, on the other hand, will attach to the feet, often forming balls attached to the tips of the toes (called toe-tags). The softened skin becomes vulnerable to cracking and invasion by opportunistic pathogens, leading to a condition called pododermatitis or bumble-foot.

Other characteristics of litter quality include:

- Good litter should not be too wet or too dry. A rule of thumb is that when forming a ball of litter, it should hold its shape but easily fall apart when released; if it will not form a ball it is too dry and if it forms a stable ball it is too wet.
- Wet litter will foster the growth or development of pathogens. Bacterial pathogens such as *E. coli* and *Salmonella* are encouraged by wet litter. Very importantly, sporulation of coccidial oocysts is favoured by wet litter and will significantly increase the challenge by this parasite.
- Ammonia is produced as a product of bacterial action on uric acid in the litter and this process is enhanced when the litter is too damp. Ammonia concentrations of greater than about 25 ppm, a concentration that is just detectable by smell, can have serious health effects on poultry. Ammonia is toxic to cells that form a protective layer to airways and can set up conditions favourable to respiratory disease. Furthermore, a high ammonia concentration is a significant irritant to the eye and can lead to inflamed or ulcerated cornea.
- Litter that is too dry, on the other hand, can create dusty conditions, which can also predispose to respiratory disease.

4. Air

Good air quality includes appropriate ambient temperature, minimal ammonia content, and minimal dust. While outdoor air is generally of good quality, many elements cannot be controlled. During periods of inclement weather or overnight, however, when birds are sheltered, some environmental controls may be required.

Correct air temperature is critical for chicks or poults and must be carefully controlled for the first few

weeks of a bird's life. Generally, air temperatures should be about 90° F when the chicks are first placed. As they grow, temperature can be reduced by about 5° per week to about 70° F, once the birds are fully feathered. Steady air temperature, good air exchange, and a minimum of drafts provide a quality indoor environment for poultry.

In poultry production, ammonia is the most important noxious gas component of indoor air. Ammonia is produced by bacterial action on the nitrogenous wastes in poultry droppings. Outside, there is good dilution and ammonia is unlikely to reach concentrations that may be harmful. When birds are housed, however, good air exchange is necessary to ensure that moisture is removed and excess gas is diluted.

5. Water

A source of good quality, accessible water is essential for the maintenance of good health. Good water quality includes low bacterial counts and low concentrations of harmful solids, such as heavy metals, or organic compounds. It is advisable for flock owners to have water quality tested routinely, at least annually, if it is from a well or natural surface source.

The drinking water system itself may also be a source of contamination. If the flock is drinking from hanging bell-style waterers or troughs, the water is usually contaminated with litter and feed very quickly, potentially leading to high bacterial counts. These drinkers should be cleaned daily. Closed watering systems, such as nipple drinkers, are very good tools for maintaining a constant supply of clean water. With time, the water lines will accumulate organic material that can foster the growth of bacterial contaminants; so, it is important to regularly flush the system. Depending upon the quality of water, a number of different products are available. For hard water, flushing lines with a descaling solution such as citric acid (800 grams per 128 gallons of water) between flocks is a useful practice. Sanitizers such as hydrogen peroxide at about 30 ml per 128 gallons of water or 30 ml per gallon through the proportioner can be used to flush water lines to minimize bacterial accumulations. Make sure the lines are filled and the disinfectant water mix is held in the lines for at least 10 minutes. After an appropriate contact time, ensure that lines are flushed well with fresh water prior to allowing birds access.

Available functional water space can be affected by a number of factors. As a general rule of thumb, there should be between ½ inch and 2 inches of wa-

tering space available per bird, depending upon the size and type of bird. For nipple drinkers, the limit is 15 birds per nipple, but fewer is preferable. If drinkers are not at the proper height, they may be effectively removed from bird access. A rule of thumb is that the rim of the bell style drinker should be at the level of the birds' shoulders; nipple drinkers should be over the birds' head such that they can easily access it with their neck extended and at a 45° angle, with feet flat on the ground. If nipple drinkers are not maintained well, they can plug up, effectively taking away drinking space from the flock. Nipple drinkers should be checked routinely and frequently to make sure they are all working.

6. Space

Space allocation for various bird types are dictated by the standards under which the birds are raised. However, it is important to look at the functional space available – that is the actual space used by the birds. If some of the space is not attractive, or is a deterrent to the birds, then density will effectively be increased. Regardless of the outdoor space available, if a shelter does not have enough functional space, housed birds may actually be overcrowded. On the other hand, in colder weather, the fewer birds present, the more added heat will be needed to maintain a comfortable temperature, so a good density balance indoors is necessary.

7. Security

Security includes procedures and barriers to keep predators and infectious diseases out. Birds that are kept outdoors are particularly vulnerable to predators, and it is important to provide barriers to such animals. In addition to the loss of individual birds, the stress associated with the predator's activity can impact the health of surviving birds. Ensure that secure fencing and, if necessary, overhead netting is adequate to keep out hunting animals. Trees or shrubs may be available in the range area as shelter or cover. However, it is important to keep vegetative cover away from the housing area so as to not encourage wild birds to nest nearby.

Lower shrubs should be kept clear of the ground so rodents are not attracted to the cover. The shelter should be secured and not have openings that will allow predators inside.

Security against infectious diseases is referred to as "biosecurity" and is an important concept in this age of increasing poultry populations. While biosecurity refers intuitively to keeping diseases out, it is also

important that these same procedures help to keep a potential pathogen from leaving a premise to infect another susceptible flock. There are several principles that guide the procedures needed to implement good biosecurity. The most important concept to consider is that people are the most common vectors of disease causing organisms. Therefore, the most basic steps revolve around that.

Some important elements to good biosecurity include:

- Allow people to have access to a flock only when it is necessary.
- If people are going to have contact with the flock, make sure that they follow procedures to minimize the chance of pathogens being carried in, including washing hands, wearing clean head cover, wearing clean outerwear such as coveralls over street clothing, and wearing farm-specific boots or disposable boot covers.
- If any equipment is being carried into the flock, make sure it is cleaned and disinfected.
- Make sure any vehicles entering the farm area are clean.
- Avoid bringing in birds from other farms into an existing flock. If birds must be introduced, isolate them from the existing flock for 30 days.
- Ensure that a good rodent control program is in place, including maintaining clean and neat conditions on the property that will discourage rodents.
- Keep good health records.

8. Sanitation

Excellent sanitation is required to prevent the accumulation of pathogenic or harmful organisms and to prevent their carryover to the next flock. There are many elements to good cleaning and disinfection.

General sanitation, while birds are present, is an ongoing process. Buildings and grounds around the buildings must be kept free of clutter. The ground around the perimeter of the barns or sheds should be kept free of tall grass, weeds, or plants. This kind of cover is excellent harbourage for rodents; if a wide area, at least 5 or 6 feet, is kept free of vegetation

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or tall grass, mice and rats will be discouraged from crossing from outside areas into the barns.

Equipment and supplies that are used during production should be kept clean at all times. Watering and feeding equipment should be inspected daily to ensure that it is clean. Frequently used tools could be kept as barn-specific instruments in order to reduce the amount of cleaning required.

When the flock is finished and the barn is empty, a thorough cleaning and disinfection should be done to provide a clean environment for the next flock. The following steps are critical in achieving that goal:

- Dry cleaning – This step includes the removal of all debris accumulation from walls, ceilings, ventilation equipment, floors, and even grounds, if there is significant build-up. All of this is removed with the manure and litter. Critical attention to this step makes all subsequent steps much easier.
- Rinse – All surfaces to be cleaned should be rinsed first. A thorough soaking and allowing time for some penetration makes removal of residual organic debris

much easier. If a thorough job has been done on the dry cleaning, then this step will be much easier to accomplish.

- Wash – All surfaces should be washed with soap or detergent and water; use hot water if possible, as this will significantly improve cleaning efficacy and reduce cleaning time. Wash the surfaces from top down – ceiling, walls, then floor.
- Dry – allow time for drying.
- Disinfect – Thoroughly cover all surfaces with an approved disinfectant and allow it to penetrate for an appropriate contact time. If necessary, the residual disinfectant can be rinsed off after the contact time.
- Dry – allow time for drying before placing new litter down and before allowing birds into the cleaned building. The longer a down-time allowed, the greater will be the reduction in potential pathogens.

*Bill Cox, DVM, Dip. Path.
Poultry Health Veterinarian,
Animal Health Branch,
BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands*

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The Animal Welfare Task Force- Finding Ways to Optimize the Welfare of Animals on Organic Farms

By Terri Giacomazzi BCMAL Industry Advisor Animal Care and Organic Livestock Interim Chair

The Animal Welfare Task Force (AWTF), a sub-committee of the Expert Committee on Organic Agriculture, is organized by the Organic Agriculture Centre of Canada (OACC) and composed of individuals interested in methods of organic livestock production that optimize animal welfare. Made up of producers, researchers, academics, and government extension specialists, the AWTF formed in 2005 under the direction of Dr. Ralph Martin, Director of the OACC.

Since its beginning, the AWTF has spent a considerable amount of time reviewing the Canadian Organic Production Standards and providing recommendations to improve the Standards with respect to animal welfare (covering every sort of topic imaginable from animal stocking densities to the tail-docking of piglets, to the use of electro-ejaculation on bulls). While some of this work with the Standards is on-going, the group is now focussing on additional activities including the creation of Fact Sheets related to specific animal welfare topics such as outdoor rearing of hogs and poultry, and pain management.

Some of this work is designed for inspector training to assess the on-farm welfare of animals - an area deemed extremely important in ensuring the welfare of animals on organic farms. The AWTF also provides an organic perspective to welfare discussions involving largely mainstream livestock and poultry groups such as the National Farm Animal Care Council <http://www.nfacc.ca/>, and to the Dairy Code Development Committee - a team undertaking the revision of the Dairy Code of Practice.

Future work of the AWTF will include making further recommendations to improve the Organic Standards to reflect current knowledge in animal welfare science, and new projects such as animal welfare education for livestock producers and organic inspectors.

For more information about animal welfare on organic farms, or about the AWTF itself, visit the following website: http://www.oacc.info/AnimalWelfare/aw_welcome.asp

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Organic Market Gardening Seminar

Sponsored by the Williams Lake Food Policy Council and the Certified Organic Association of BC

Williams Lake needs more locally produced food and the Williams Lake Food Policy Council is hard at work to help make this happen. A recent survey showed that many local food producers of Williams Lake are interested in learning how to grow more market garden foods and to grow them organically. So, with help from the COABC, an Organic Market Gardening Workshop was held Sunday, April 27, 2008 at the Blue Spoon Restaurant in Williams Lake.

This event was received with great enthusiasm - the attendance was over double what organizers had predicted, with 52 home and commercial gardeners registering. Approximately two-thirds of the attendees grow organically, although they have not secured certification. The other one-third of the attendees grow organically as possible but at times use chemical fertilizers or pesticides.

Rob Borsato and his wife Cathie Allen of Mackin Creek Farms were the presenters. They have been operating their 2.5 hectare (5 acre) farm since the late 1980's and quickly became Certified Organic producers in 1989. Since that time they have developed a thriving business, which includes their 'Box a Week' program and the Saturday Quesnel Farmer's Market.

Their information was nicely organized and held everyone's attention. Topics were diverse - for example Rob's perfected technique in composting horse manure to finished product in six weeks, to Cathie's demonstration on the best type of hoe to use and how to hold it correctly. The information was presented in a relaxed atmosphere with time throughout the day for questions and comments from the attendees, along with networking during the breaks. The Blue Spoon restaurant did a wonderful job of lunch and snacks at the break times. In keeping with the goal of using locally produced food, much of the food was from local producers, including organic salad and organic bratwurst.

The response from the attendees was extremely positive with most gaining ideas on how to grow more organically and more productively. Over twenty of the current home gardeners plan to start selling market garden produce in the future. *This is an important step to increasing local food production*

in Williams Lake and it is hoped that certification by some producers will eventually follow.

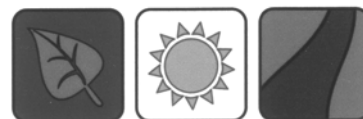
The feedback, regarding the presenters and the information as a whole, was most encouraging and perhaps one comment sums up the day the best: "two thumbs up"!!

SYNOPSIS

prepared by Debbie Irvine B.Sc.(Agr.)
Williams Lake Food Action Coordinator

Jerry Kitt

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The Five Freedoms on Organic Farms

by Geoff Urton

Organic farmers have a long history of using management systems that allow the animals they raise to perform natural behaviours. By prohibiting confinement housing systems such as battery cages and gestation stalls, organic farmers have also earned strong support from consumers who value animal welfare.

Having successfully codified this ethic into regional and now mandatory national standards, Canada's organic farmers are poised to pro-actively address other aspects of animal welfare.

Organic standards generally permit only those housing systems that provide ample freedom of movement for animals. The ability to exhibit natural behaviours is an important aspect of an animal's quality of life. However, an animal's well-being depends upon a number of factors, and the freedom to behave naturally is just one of them.

The Farm Animal Welfare Council (a British stakeholder group including producers, scientists, animal welfare organizations, and government reps) distilled these various factors into what they have dubbed the Five Freedoms, now an internationally recognized set of principles that outlines the needs we should provide to animals in our care.

The Five Freedoms can act as a useful guide when designing standards, inspecting farms, or making decisions about management practices to use. By considering how they can be incorporated into organic farming systems, the organic industry both ensures that the animals raised experience a good life and that consumers with animal welfare interests continue to support organic products.

The Five Freedoms in Organic Standards

The Canadian Organic Standard (COS) and the COABC standards address the Five Freedoms in a number of ways, by requiring resources such as sufficient space, access to food and water, and adequate bedding. The standards also address freedom from pain by prohibiting unnecessary surgical procedures such as tail docking of dairy cattle.

In addition, the COS has gone further and recommended that surgical procedures be performed in a manner that minimizes stress and pain. The COS also

clearly permits the use of anaesthetic drugs for surgical use, opening the door for producers to increase their use of pain relief.

However, the use of pain relief during routine procedures such as castration and dehorning is not a requirement. As you would expect, some producers use it, and others don't.

It would be naïve to expect that a farmer (or a pet owner, for that matter) can prevent their animals from experiencing any pain in their life. However, good protocols are available for certain regular management procedures, such as castration and dehorning, and in these cases, producers can plan to incorporate them to minimize the pain experienced.

While these practices may carry an additional cost and time commitment, the benefit in avoiding potential criticism from those outside the industry is well worth the effort.

Most producers who try using pain relief report that their eased conscience is more than enough reward, and very few choose to go back. For those who need a financial incentive as well, research has demonstrated that animals provided with pain relief during surgical procedures make significant weight gains compared to animals that receive no pain relief.

Five Freedoms

1. Freedom from Hunger and Thirst - by access to fresh water and a suitable diet

2. Freedom from Discomfort - by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area.

3. Freedom from Pain, Injury or Disease - by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment.

4. Freedom to Express Normal Behaviour - by providing sufficient space, proper housing, and company of the animal's own species

5. Freedom from Fear and Distress - by ensuring living conditions and handling which avoid suffering.

Providing an Assurance of Animal Welfare

by Geoff Urton

Each component of BC's organic certification structure has an important role to play in providing an assurance to consumers that animals on BC's organic farms are being raised humanely.

Standards content, Verification Officer training, Certification Committee expertise, and producer commitment are all critically important in providing this assurance.

Measurable Standards

The organic sector sets its own bar for standards of animal care in organic production. However, if that bar is not clearly defined, compliance with the standards is difficult to objectively assess. Accordingly, standards should incorporate objective and measurable criteria wherever possible.

Existing standards already include some of these measures, such as space allowance. As we move forward, additional objective and measurable criteria can be incorporated. Examples include air quality measures (e.g. amount of ammonia in the air), mortality rates, disease incidence, and body condition scores.

With more objective and measurable standards in place, Verification Officers are able to focus on documenting what they observe on a farm, rather than having to make subjective assessments of whether or not conditions are "adequate." This helps alleviate the pressure Verification Officers feel when forced to make difficult judgements, and allows them to maintain a positive working relationship with producers.

Flexibility and Outcomes

In some areas of the standards, flexibility is desirable in order to accommodate the vast variations in production systems. This gives producers the freedom to use practices that suit their operation and management style in order to "establish and maintain animal living-conditions that accommodate the health and natural behaviour of all animals" (an example from the COS). After all, different practices work well for different companies in other sectors as well.

This is the case with many of the COS requirements, which are not overly prescriptive. The critical concept is that whatever practices used should result in a good animal welfare outcome. For example, the COS states that "open-air runs shall be provided with protective facilities". The farmer is given flexibility regarding how they provide protection, as long as the

outcome of preventing harm to their animals from predators is ensured. If the Verification Officer and Certification Committee deem that the outcome is inadequate (e.g. too many mortalities from predation), the producer will need to make management or facility adjustments in order to satisfy the standard.

Producers can also measure other outcomes on-farm to assess the effectiveness of their practices. Examples include:

- monitoring ammonia concentration to assess air quality and adequacy of ventilation
- scoring animals for body condition, lameness, or other aspects of physical health.

Developing a relationship with a veterinarian will also help to identify and minimize health risks on-farm.

Assuring On-Farm Practices

Verification Officers and Certification Committees generally develop an intimate knowledge of the standards through their work. Assessing a farm's practices according to the less prescriptive standards often requires that difficult judgements be made. The inclusion of more specific requirements in the COS may make these judgements easier in the future.

As it is difficult for any one person to develop an expertise in every aspect of organic farming, the ability of a Certification Body to recruit Verification Officers and Certification Committees with a broad knowledge base is important.

Certification Committees should not overlook securing advice from animal welfare experts external to their committee. Veterinarians and researchers from UBC's animal welfare program may be helpful. Certification Bodies may even want to consider recruiting vets or scientists for their Certification Committees.

Most importantly, producers must buy in to principles of animal welfare and take the Five Freedoms (see page 19) into account when making decisions of what to do (and what not to do) on their farms. While providing high standards of animal welfare can be time-consuming and challenging, it is a critical part of the organic philosophy. The organic industry has already built a strong reputation for providing a good quality of life to their animals, and this consumer base will continue to grow as organic producers stay innovative in their animal care practices.

Animal Welfare in the Canadian Organic Standards

While some aspects of the COABC's standards are higher than the new Canadian Organic Standard (COS), the national standards feature a number of more specific requirements for animal care (see table of National Organic Standards below for a more complete list). Examples from the COS worth mentioning include the following:

- tail docking of cattle is prohibited
- forced moulting of poultry is prohibited

- open-air runs shall be provided with protective facilities
- for poultry, buildings shall be emptied, cleaned and disinfected between flocks
- protection from weather conditions during transport is required

Verification Officers and Certification Committees must take these requirements into account when evaluating farms under this new standard.

National Organic Standards (2006)*

Section	Content
6.6.2	The use of electrical stimulation or allopathic tranquilizers is prohibited.
6.6.3	The animals shall have suitable shelter against inclement weather conditions (e.g. wind, rain, excessive heat and cold) during transportation and before slaughter.
6.6.4	Efforts shall be made to transport animals directly from the farm to their final destination.
6.6.6	Animals too ill to be transported shall be suitably euthanized, without cruelty.
6.7.12	Injured, diseased or sick animals shall receive individual treatment designed to minimize pain and suffering, which may include euthanasia.
6.7.13	Forced moulting of poultry is prohibited.
6.8.1	The operator of an organic livestock operation shall establish and maintain animal living-conditions that accommodate the health and natural behaviour of all animals, including: (e) production techniques that foster the long-term health of livestock, especially where animals are required to provide a high level of production or rate of growth. (f) appropriate resting and bedding areas in accordance with the needs of the animal; (g) livestock housing shall have non-slip floors. The floor shall not be entirely of slatted or grid construction. Buildings shall have areas for bedding and resting that are sufficiently large, solidly built, comfortable, clean and dry. They shall be covered with a thick layer of dry bedding that can absorb excrement. Where bedding material is typically consumed by the animal species, it shall conform to the feed requirements of this standard.
6.8.3	The operator of an organic poultry operation shall establish and maintain poultry living conditions that accommodate the health and natural behaviour of poultry. Open-air runs shall be provided with protective facilities.
6.8.6	The keeping of rabbits in cages is not permitted.
6.8.8	Buildings shall be emptied, cleaned, and disinfected and runs left empty between flocks
6.8.9.1	The housing of calves in individual pens is not permitted without the approval of the certification body. When permitted, (a) calves may be housed in individual pens until three months of age, providing that they have enough room to turn around, lie down, stretch out when lying down, get up, rest and groom themselves; (b) individual calf pens shall be designed and located so that each calf can see, smell and hear other calves.
6.8.9.2	Calves shall be group-housed following weaning.
6.8.9.3	Calves over six months of age shall have access to the outdoors and pasture.
6.10	Pest Management — Pest management shall involve in descending order of preference: (a) preventive methods; (b) mechanical, physical and biological control methods; (c) the use of pesticides included in CAN/CGSB-32.311.
	*Subject to upcoming amendments. Space requirements have not been included as significant amendments are pending.

Dandelion: Friend or Foe

By Arlene Onderwater

Some people are strongly opposed to killing dandelions and espouse the natural remedies and beauty of these weeds calling them our "friends". On the opposite end of the spectrum there are those who take great offence and promote "chemical warfare". One city created an "Outdoor Maintenance Requirement" for homeowners and tenants to ensure residents comply with a minimum standard of lawn care. Anyhow the real question is what to do about the proliferous dandelion.

Of 28 responses to the question "Do you guys treat your lawns to kill dandy lions?" on the web Democratic Underground, 5 people said "treat with weed killer or do whatever it takes", 12 said: "do nothing" (leave them alone). 9 suggested natural alternative treatments and 2 were unknown. The in favour of elimination group suggested weed-b-gone (best painted on with a brush), another said they use a general Weed and Feed twice a year in the winter and again before spring and haven't had problems since. One says they "cuss them out", yet another advises "killing dandelions is bad luck". This same person says to "pick them and blow. If all the seeds come off in one puff your wish comes true." Guess they'd best wish for understanding neighbours!

Others advise against using chemicals for ground-water protection purposes, in the interest of better health and espouse the "au natural look". They recommend mowing, leaving dandelions alone, digging them out by hand (before they flower) or hiring young children to pick them at 3-5 cents each. A dandelion-weeding tool can be purchased (it looks somewhat like a fondue fork). One person has a pet desert tortoise that eats them (rabbits do also). A few said, "they're pretty" and like their yellow colour. Another suggested putting up a sign on the front lawn declaring their yard a "National Weed Protection Area" or "Wild Weed Preserve". They add, "if anyone gives you grief tell them it's your sacred responsibility to protect the genetic diversity of the neighbourhood ecosystem". Besides being a weed, do dandelions serve any worthwhile purpose?

Apparently dandelions have many health benefits. Having experimented making dandelion soup as a child (with a recipe from my Pioneer Girls' book), I found family and neighbours didn't appreciate my culinary skills. However, there are secrets to finding the least-bitter tasting roots. Pick them early in spring and YOUNG (pre-flowering) if you're using them for

soup, salad or cooked greens. Some recommend using a flavourful salad dressing (to hide the taste?!)

The dandelion is known as "King of wild grasses" in Japan. It has a bitter, slightly sweet taste. Dandelions are said to give the system 'strong potent energy', increase vitality, strengthen the heart and cleanse the small intestine or "be a good spring detox to cleanse kidneys and liver". It is also thought to be "good for sneezing, allergies, digestive and urinary tract problems" and "makes a natural expectorant" (naturally you want to SPIT it out!) The white juice inside the stem is recommended as a good wart remedy. See Granma's attic www.liferesearchuniversal.com/granmain.html for more tips on natural home remedies. I found a non-toxic home-made weed killer recipe from http://gardening-products.suite101.com/article.cfm/cheap_nontoxic_dandelion_killer

1 gallon (4 L) white vinegar
1 pound (454 g) table salt
8 drops liquid dish soap (I'd try a natural product first i.e. 7th Generation).

Mix vinegar and salt in pan on stove (grungy stainless steel pans will gain a like-new bright finish). Boil until salt dissolves. Add dish soap. Cool. Put in spray bottle. Spray plants with stream setting and aim directly into middle of dandelion rosette (avoid surrounding area or you'll kill your grass). Leave for 24 hours and 'voila', the dandelion problem should be eliminated.

Personally I'm thankful we don't have neighbours who get uptight about our dandelions. It appears we have learned to live tolerably alongside each other - weeds and all.

Article has been edited for length. Recipes may not meet organic qualifications.

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Organic Pig Production

By Brenda Frick, Ph.D., P.Ag.

To fully understand how to raise pigs organically, we first need to understand how pigs behave in a natural environment" claims Bert Denning, Business Development Officer with Alberta Agriculture. Feeding, housing and raising pigs organically depend on matching breeds to the environment and to the market, and then matching management to the needs of the animals.

According to Bert, "small scale organic pig production based on low cost grass based systems will have the greatest chance of success". He recommends using older breeds, feeding special local diets, and developing unique specialty meats. Using modern breeds and the same diets as the modern pig industry will result in commodity meat and poor prices.

Modern pig breeds were developed to maximize production in large scale confinement operations. These pig breeds are not as suited to being raised out of doors as older breeds. Some of the older breeds were bred for specific purposes, such as grazing apple orchards. A little research may be needed before selecting an ideal breed. Although the gene pool in Canada is small, Bert suggests using older breeds such as Berkshire, Large Black, Tamworth, Hampshire and Lacombe. Older breeds can be too fat for consumer preference. A solution is to use older breeds of sows, and lean modern breed boars (such as Yorkshire, Landrace or Duroc) to combine desirable traits.

Pigs, like us, and unlike cattle, have a single stomach and cannot digest cellulose well. Forages for pigs need to be leafy, with less stems and straw than a cow would enjoy. Older pigs can handle up to 70% leafy forages, but young pigs need more of the high quality grain and protein. Bert recommends rotational grazing on high quality pasture, supplemented with local grains and legumes. In winter, pasture can be replaced with young grass hay or silage. In pork production, "you are what you eat" seems to apply. The flavour of the meat depends on the diet of the animal. This can be the key to niche marketing.

Organic management depends more on prevention of health issues than on cure. According to Bert, "the key to healthy pigs is fresh air, good feed, and rotating the pigs through pastures so disease does not build up. Pasture rest and sunlight as a disinfectant is one of the best ways to control disease." Of

course, starting with healthy, parasite-free animals is also important. Reducing stress is also important to healthy animals. Letting pigs wean themselves, not crowding animals, providing lots of bedding, reasonable shelter, clean water and good nutrition, all help to keep a healthy herd.

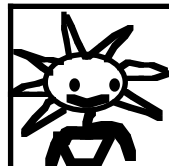
Rotating pastures quickly reduces the damage that pigs cause to hay Inad with their rooting, keeps fresh forage available, and also reduces disease. Pigs respond well to electric fences. For young pigs, a wire at 6 inches, and for larger animals, a wire at 12 inches is adequate. Pigs tend to chew through or dig under other fence types.

In summer, pigs need a mud hole or sprinkler to keep cool. They can't sweat, so this is good for more than piggy morale. In winter, some shelter is required. Tarp covered straw bale shelters with lots of fresh air and dry straw can be ideal.



Pigs can have more than two litters per year, of 8 to 12 piglets. A sow prefers to go off on her, build a nest and give birth away from the herd. She will need plenty of clean bedding, and in the winter, well insulated structures (or heat). The sow and piglets will return to the herd after a week or two.

Pigs can be very prolific. A single sow can produce 20 piglets per year. These can be ready for market at about 250 pounds in 7 months. This 5000 pounds of pig can be converted to nearly 4000 pounds of pork per year. Alternately, those 7 month old pigs can be bred, and produce their own litters before they are a year old. With such potential, a sound plan for butchering, processing and marketing is important.



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IOIA Basic Crops Training May 2008

by Deb Foote

What is the IOIA?

The International Organic Inspectors Association is a non-profit professional association of organic farm, livestock, and process inspectors. Originally founded in 1991 (as the Independent Organic Inspectors Association) the IOIA has nearly 400 members world wide, operating in over 20 countries and speaking some 25 languages.

The IOIA provides inspector training and networking services in efforts to bring consistency and professionalism to the organic inspection process. In addition, the IOIA publishes a quarterly newsletter and an annual membership directory. The directory lists all inspectors and apprentice members and includes detail such as their inspection experience, education, inspection training and language proficiency.

What role does IOIA play in British Columbia?

The rules are pretty clear here is what we agreed to:

BRITISH COLUMBIA CERTIFIED ORGANIC PRODUCTION OPERATION POLICIES AND MANAGEMENT STANDARDS VERSION 8 2007 Book 1 Annex 1 – 2.4.2 1) A certification body must use verification officers that are members in good standing with IOIA and are qualified for the assignment in regards to training and experience for inspecting crops, livestock and processing operations as appropriate.

BRITISH COLUMBIA CERTIFIED ORGANIC PRODUCTION OPERATION POLICIES AND MANAGEMENT STANDARDS VERSION 8 2008 Book 1 Annex 2 – 6.3.2 3) b) i: Verification Officers shall be members in good standing of the Independent Organic Inspectors Association. This requirement ensures that VOs

have relevant professional training or experience in compliance with the Quality Management System requirements.

Why did COABC sponsor training?

Over the course of 2007 the COABC Board of Directors engaged in numerous discussions regarding the inspector community in BC. Concern was expressed that there were not enough IOIA trained inspectors in the province and that it was the obligation of COABC to ensure that this was corrected. The directors asked Karen, the administrator, to take corrective action.

From my research there are 18 IOIA member inspectors living in or operating in BC. Of those I have

identified 4 who are not actively inspecting and 2 others who are contracting their services to another organic cause at present. That leaves 12 inspectors for 600 plus operators.

Notice went out to the Organic community in BC and subsequently across the country, announcing the training

program for the spring of 2008. Applications were submitted to the COABC who along with the IOIA representative (in this case Lisa Pierce - our trainer extraordinaire) scrutinized the applications to determine the eligibility of potential students. The IOIA has fairly stringent criteria for acceptance into their Organic Inspector Training courses, requirements include: minimum 1 year training (academic) and or 1 year experience in organic agriculture with knowledge of conventional agriculture practices.

Who attended?

As you might have figured out already, I was one of the participants in the program. The other participants included Gary Jones from Kwantlen's Horti-



culture Department, Ted Herrington (botanist), Gail Mowatt and Liz Sweezie from the PACS office, Chris Wells (an active participant on the "list serve" and newly entered into the Agroecology program at UBC) along with several graduates from various Agriculture programs: Amanda Brown, Nadene Sawyer and Antonin van der Lely from BC and Valeria Spezzano from way out in Ontario. CB Administrators who wish to make contact with the new crop of inspectors can contact Karen at the COABC office for more information.

What did we learn?

Even before arriving in Langley we had our work cut out for us. Karen sent out a package in late April which included a set of 9 pre-course assignments, a copy of the IFOAM/IOIA Organic Inspectors Manual as well as copies of CAN/CGSB 32.310-2006 and CAN/CGSB 32.311-2006 (better known as the Canadian Standards and Permitted Substances lists) along with the USDA National Organic Program Standards and Permitted Substances lists. In addition, there were a couple of other reference documents and handbooks all of which fed into the pre-course assignments.

The course was well organized and executed (I know I gave Lisa high marks in the course evaluation, and given the interaction through the week, I would suggest that I am not the only one who did). We had 5.5 days to cover a whole lot of material, including a 3-

hour written exam and another 3 hours spent doing a mock inspection (any one who scored high on the inspection is going to be an excellent inspector – it was a challenge to have 10 inspectors interviewing 1 farmer).

The course covered: Organic Systems Terminology, Working with the Canadian Standard, Inputs and the PSL, How to Conduct an Inspection, Crop Yield Calculations, Risk Assessment and OCPs, Biodiversity, IOIA Code of Conduct and Code of Ethics, Record Keeping and Conducting and Audit Balance, Effective Communications, USDA NOP compared to COR, and as noted previously a Mock Inspection and Inspection report.

The Outcome

The group of students who attended the program proved to be a highly enthusiastic lot and we are all anxious to get out into the community and to start inspecting. The next challenge we face is in either setting up to apprentice with one of the 12 to 18 members of the IOIA member inspectors who are operating in the province, or alternatively arranging to do 10 crop inspections along with a letter for a CB attesting that 10 inspection have been completed. It is our sincere hope that the CB administrators will ensure that we are given opportunity to get the experience required to complete this final stage of the process of becoming an IOIA member inspector. No doubt you will be hearing from those of us who receive a certificate of completion.

In closing, I would like to thank the good folks at Glorious Organic Cooperative, specifically David Catzel and Susan Davidson, for allowing us to conduct our mock inspection on their farm. The 3 hours David spent with us was a huge sacrifice considering the time of year (not to mention the fact that they will have to do it all over again in a couple of weeks with their real inspector).



Fresh Voices Winners

The aim of the “Fresh Voices” contest was to solicit new ideas to help COABC meet its mandate of “a strong and sustainable community, serving the evolving needs of the sector and the public for generations to come.”

First Place

by Gabriel Forbes

Like all small businesses, small farms must be wise about how they allocate time and energy in developing distribution and marketing strategies. Building a unique brand is a key part of these considerations, something relatively new in the world of agriculture.

This article highlights the crucial role that branding can play in promoting small farm products. Branding can result in increased sales and greater recognition for local food, and can play a critical role in engendering growth in local distribution partners such as farmers markets.

Distribution Chains for Small Farms

• Small farms generally distribute their products using one or more of the following methods:

- Farmgate sales
- Farmers markets
- Retailers
- Restaurants

In terms of time and money, the best of these options is farmgate sales. Farmgate sales don't require travel, time off the farm, or lower wholesale pricing. Unfortunately, many small farms are not easily accessible to the public, and many consumers won't make the extra effort to visit out-of-the-way farmgate stands on a regular basis.

A local farmer's market can overcome this challenge by providing a single centralized sales venue for many small farms. The time taken away from the farm, or the cost of additional help is compensated by the higher volume of sales possible at farmers markets. Increased attendance at the market also benefits the craftspeople who also sell at the market, and create a higher profile for locally produced food.

Symbiosis of Small Farms and Farmers Markets

Clearly farmers markets are an important venue for selling small farm produce. Consumers can plan a regular trip to the market to buy produce, and farmers can concentrate their selling effort during the short time-frame of the market. However, there are

obstacles to this ideal relationship. Often consumers don't attend farmers markets because they're not sure they will find what they are looking for, or might not return if they've been disappointed in the past.

For farmers, the sales generated may not be worthwhile compared to time taken off the farm.

Farmers opting out of the local market, and consumers going away disappointed can set in motion a negative cycle. In the end, both the farmer and the markets suffer.

Joint Branding for Farms and Farmers Markets

The best way to break out of this negative cycle is to use small farm brands more effectively.

For most small farms, consistent branding has already become part of their business plan for labeling, signage, and packaging. Many have even developed sophisticated branding techniques including logos and colour schemes.

Farms work hard to build their brand along with their reputation for quality food and specialized products. If farms extend their brand to farmers markets, both can benefit: customers know a certain farm will be represented at a market, and can be confident of what they will find there. The market gains a reputation of consistency that will keep customers coming back.

The end result is that more customers are willing to include regular visits to farmers markets in their shopping routine. Small farms are then able to sell more produce at the market.

Steps Toward Growing Farmers Markets Using Small Farm Brands

To get the maximum benefit out of joint marketing, only a small amount of extra effort is required from both farmers and market directors.

Small farms should continue doing what they had been doing previously, but with some added focus:

- Being diligent in building their brand.
- Seeking to increase the profile of their brand by sell-

ing through as many distribution channels as possible (particularly farmers markets).

- Educating customers on the seasonal availability of their products.

In turn, farmers markets should complement these efforts by:

- Featuring the brands of the attending farms prominently in advertising and signage
- Explicitly promoting local and organic food
- Providing directions to the farmgate stands of participating farms

An example of joint marketing appears in the form of the sample newspaper advertisement below. The main message of the ad is this: When you come to the farmers market, you can be assured of finding high quality, locally-grown food that you're looking for. Surely, this is something the timestrapped yet ethically motivated consumer will embrace.



Gabriel is a co-owner of Green Room Organics, a PACS certified organic farm in Gibsons. Gabriel and partner started the farm in 2006 with the goal of providing high-quality, locally-grown organic produce for the Sunshine Coast. Learn more by visiting <http://www.greenroomorganics.ca>

Second Place

by Melanie Sylvestre

For many years now, organic farmers have been changing social structures, community visions, labour regulations, ecological standards, and much more. Like a micro society, sustainable organic farms are full of new ideas and inspiration to improve the world. Yet, many challenges lay ahead and it is through a broader definition of profitability, cooperation instead of competition, education and land stewardship, that we will move toward a more sustainable and productive system.

Truly sustainable agriculture should, by definition, be based on principles of respect and mutual aid. We are sometimes tempted to look at productivity and profitability as something quantified in dollars only, but we need to look broader than that. The methods used by organic farmers to increase production and profitability shouldn't be based on the usual expansion game – bigger does not mean better. Instead, it should be based on the participation and the support of the community. By using methods such as paying decent living wages, profit-sharing, creating coops, land sharing, and building partnerships, organic farmers can create new standards of quality of life as well as increasing the quality of their product. Healthy farmers and workers grow better food.

Marketing can sometimes be a sensitive issue for farmers and not because it is a challenge to sell the product – everyone knows that local organic food won't stay in the field for long. The difficulty with marketing is to do so in such a way as to not affect your neighbours' markets and to always remain fair. In the Saanich Peninsula, I have seen how through communication and agreements small farms have managed to not harm each others' business, but in fact their partnerships have supported market expansion. Cooperation not competition needs to be the slogan of organic farmers.

Through cooperation, farmers can lower their stress levels and instead focus their energy on the state of their soil and the health of their plants and animals. While there are some good examples of this model, there is, of course, much room for improvement. These ways of marketing need to be protected against the bigger commercial mentality. Through direct marketing, cooperation, and other forms of mutual aid, we can continue to develop stronger systems all while benefiting the land and the community.

A truly sustainable organic farm should also be based on the sharing of knowledge and through training. While in Cuba recently, I had the opportunity to examine Cuban models of sustainable organic farming, which were developed because of limited energy resources. Cuba has managed to pass through a time of crisis by investing in a system of education for farmers and through the partnering of researchers with farmers. Innovation will continue to be very important here in BC as we face new regulations and as we begin to struggle with our own energy crisis. I have been lucky in my

...continued on page 28

...continued from page 27

time as a farmer in BC because I have had access to training and because farmers with more experience have always been willing to step up and offer advice. Food security groups are also playing a big role in the organic farming movement as they work to educate the public about the importance of local food. It is through these types of knowledge networks that we will grow stronger systems of profitability and production.

Most importantly, organic farmers must continue to be stewards of the land and water. Many organic farmers have transitioned from conventional farming and we know how hard it can be to bring the soil back to productivity and how fragile it is. As recent debates around the agricultural land reserve and the farm tax status have illustrated, farmers need to speak up about how important it is to preserve good land and how a farm is more than just dirt. Farms include forests, rivers, marsh, hills, and wild life. We have to promote, to educate and to share our vision with our communities and to stand up for the preservation of agricultural land.

As a young farmer, I know that I am a dreamer and an idealist, but I also know that organic agriculture exists because of dreamers and idealists. The path to sustainable agriculture is not necessarily an easy one. But with a few good (biodiesel) tractors, a good irrigation system, and lots of hands working together to weed the beds, we can get there.

Originally from Quebec, Melanie entered the organic farming world 5 years ago as the manager of a CSA farm. She moved to BC in 2005, in search of new experiences and quickly found the perfect farming match. She is now running her own small scale production and working as a part-time manager of a one-acre section for a well-established company called Saanich Organics.

Third Place

by John Ehrlich

High price of land, low profitability, meager return on investment, declining sources of labor, cheap foreign imports, the list goes on, as to what ails Agriculture. We hear this tune often, in most countries, in most rural communities, in the mouths of politicians and from academics, studying the problems of Agriculture. In particular, we hear it from farmers. We who are involved with the COABC must look at

the big picture, to truly create a strong and sustainable organic community serving the evolving needs of the sector and the public.

I contend that these are problems of political economy and to make all farming, and not just organics, successful for all those involved with it, we need to distance it from the realm of economics and politics and place Agri-Culture in its accordant place, to that of Culture, in the sphere of creative, artistic, and healing impulses. What does that mean to move farming away from the realm of the political and the economic and put it in the realm of culture? This is not a new argument; it is not my idea. I am merely a messenger with over fifteen years of farming practice, five years of apprenticeship training, and six years of academic training studying small-scale agriculture. By the way, I still can barely change the oil in my tractor, but I can grow good cabbages.

First, political economy is simply how communities make decisions on the production and distribution of goods and services. In mixed market economies or capitalist economies, the theory is that the free hand of the market will invisibly decide how cucumbers are produced and sold on the market; i.e., prices will rise and fall according to demand, and production will fill the niche of hungry consumers. Anyone who took Econ 101 knows it gets more complicated. The opposite of this is a command economy or socialist-communist system whereby an authority determines production; i.e., for the next five years we need 5000 cucumbers, plus 100 for my family.

In North America, we have a mish-mash of both systems, though with a preponderance toward the god of the marketplace, and neither has really served this being, Agri-Culture. Granted, this is debatable; most in North America have not suffered from major catastrophes, such as economic depression or starvation. Our bellies remain full, for the most part. In stark contrast to this picture of the bucolic farm fronting the factory farm, we have the biotech industry coming down the pike in a big way, and we have a predominance of fast food and chronic disease. We also have a situation that consistently propels people away from the country and into the city. In fact, we have had a mass migration, in Canada alone, of over seventy percent of the population, from the rural to the urban, just in the last fifty years.

No one politician said, "Son and daughter, leave here for the big city, now!" Was it an invisible force of the economy? Was it... "I am hungry, working on this ole

farm, and I need to go to the city for work and entertainment." Or, "My Daddy bought a new tractor, and no longer needs me."

In essence, when agriculture exists in the realm of political economy, we get the perversions of biotechnology, feedlots, and mass poultry houses, with invisible political and economic forces as they have existed for the last few hundred years.

What does Agriculture look like when political and economic concerns are not dominating factors, when the Cultural/Social begin to assert a stronger role in the life of Agriculture? One example and a very good one is CSA. You have heard it before, Community Supported Agriculture. CSA comes in all shapes and sizes, but the essence is based from the concept of mutual aid. A community needs the local farmer for food security and the farmer needs and feeds that community in return for financial and moral support. (And god knows, farmers need a lot of moral support these days.) When a community of a few hundred or thousand organizes itself around Agri-Culture, a proper reverence develops for the land and the farmer, a desire grows that defies the attitude of "I just want the lowest price for these carrots, because, I want to buy a big TV tomorrow." A wise old farmer, actually one of the major visionaries of CSA, Trauger Groh, once said that in the future, people will adopt farms, just as they adopt children today. They will care for them not as economic enterprises to monocrop, but as unique bio-systems that provide in as much as the ecological community (including people) serves them.

Another example is Land trusts, which effectively removes land from the speculative market (economy) and makes it available and affordable for long-term use by farmers. The Land Conservancy is playing a major role in this area.

When Agriculture gains its rightful place, and I paraphrase Trauger again, people will seek out the farms for education, recreation, or therapy. These are cultural/social impulses and must predominate, but not exclude the political-economic ones, if we are to sustain the being of Agriculture.

After completing university, John Ehrlich apprenticed for five years on organic and biodynamic farms back east and then began managing CSA farms. Currently he owns and operates, with his spouse Katy, Alderlea Farm in Duncan. It has been Demeter certified since its inception in 2003.

Husky Mohawk Community Rebate Program

COABC is involved with the **Husky Mohawk Community Rebate Program** in order to raise additional funds for the organisation. Husky forwards 2% of the loyalty card users' purchases to COABC in the form of a rebate. All COABC members were sent a card in 2005 and a small amount of members have been using the card resulting in an average rebate of \$125 per quarter. We still need more help to raise funds using this loyalty program.

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Natural T-shirts (Plain) S M L XL or XXL *	\$6.50	\$6.50	PST taxable		
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Letters to the editor are welcome. Letters must be under 500 words. We reserve the right to edit for length.

To the Editor:

It is unclear in the National Standards what defines unavailable for organic manure. This could mean that the operator has to buy it from the organic source and it is free from the conventional source, so that makes it unavailable. I also wonder about the vague restriction about manure from caged animals. It would appear from this that the organic industry has learned a few tricks from the conventional industry on deceiving the public and self-rationalization. Either an animal is caged or not caged. If it can turn around is not the point. The animal must be able to act in a natural manner (in the case of chickens that would include

scratching and dusting). I can appreciate the concerns of many, however, the integrity of the organic system and to farm organically means that we have to all work to protect the environment, the health of animals and the health of the people that buy our food. As an example, in the case of certified organic meat bird it would be a lot cheaper and we would get better weight gain, if we used animal proteins in our feed. Or, we could use conventional soy, which is more readily available than organic soy and is cheaper.

Brad Reid

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Property has many garden beds, ornamental rockery, established fruit trees, herbs and flower beds. Many accessory buildings including additional small cabin with loft, workshop, wood barn, greenhouse, tool shed and root cellar.

Additional large organically certified garden area with wide variety of fruit trees, soft fruits, herbs and vegetable beds that has provided year round produce and regular income from soft fruit secondary products in the past.

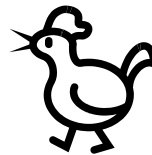
Also includes shared co-operative ownership of 160 acres old growth forest, with lake, trails, certified orchards and blueberry patch, potential for large scale organic production and exclusive access to adjacent waterfront Provincial Park and beaches on Galiano Island, BC.

For more information contact mich13mich@yahoo.com or 250-539-2958.

Compost from Organic Chicken Manure For Sale

Langley, BC

Available on farm by appointment or delivered



Compost from Organic Chickens and Custom Top Soil Available

- bulk loads 30 yards or more \$30 per yard + trucking
- pick up from farm \$40 per yard loaded
- 2 yard load delivered in the lower mainland placed anywhere on your yard \$200.00

Also available for retail sales:

Thomas Reid Farms certified organic chicken
Olera Farms certified organic raspberries IQF

**Brad Reid 604-308-8200
Fred Reid 604-309-6639**



*Have a bountiful
summer of 2008
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