BC Organic Grower

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British Columbia **Certified Organic**

COABC, #8A, 100 Kalamalka Lake Rd.
Vernon BC V1T 9G1

President's Message

by Deb Foote

For many people the beginning of the summer season means young lambs, wrestling with stubborn weeds, or gearing up for the beginning of the Farmers Market. As a handler, my first sign of the season came recently when, passing through the receiving area, I noticed a PO (purchase order) for Red Leaf Lettuce cut to one of our local suppliers. I know that this is only the beginning of my favourite season, when all the wonderful produce that you, the growers provide becomes available.

For me it all starts with cherries. I remember in my early days with Wild West taking my son Brendan on a vacation to Christina Lake in early July. He was almost 5 at the time (he turns 23 in August). I remember traveling through Christina Lake when I was 11 or 12 with my family and recalled the lake being so warm it was like a bathtub. Brendan loved to swim so I thought a few days there would be a lot of fun. It rained, probably the only rain they had all summer, the tent leaked...we didn't have any fun. That is until we got to the Rothe's farm in Oliver, where we were greeted by the beloved matriarch of the family, Sophie, who feed us and gave us buckets to pick cherries in. We picked cherries and ate them until our tummies ached. We learned how to moderate our intake over the years but for me today I still look to the first cherries as a harbinger of the season to come.

When Brendan was an infant and I was living in Terrace I kept a fairly diverse garden. I grew all sorts of vegetables and herbs (both culinary and medicinal) and sold some of the surplus through the Food Coop I was involved in. It was like another lifetime. In the19 years I have been with Wild West my gardening has been restricted to containers and flower beds.

Since we bought our house back in 1997 I have been waging a battle with buttercups that have been entrenched in my front flowerbed. Every year I would dig them out (or so I thought) only to have them reestablish their roots even deeper than the year before. The flower bed in question is shaded from the sun for the majority of the day and every year I would buy a new and unique shade loving perennial. Every year a part of the ritual involved in removing the buttercups included gently resurrecting the precious perennials.

This year I decided enough was enough, I tore out the old landscaping ties, dug out all of the soil that the buttercups had rooted in and started from scratch. I built a new wall using those amazing mortarless bricks. Brought in some clean top soil and bought a few new plants. It has been a challenge to finish the project given the weather - long work days - tradeshows and so on. However last weekend, (the weekend after the Victoria Day weekend) I finally finished planting. Now only time will tell if I have been successful in eradicating the buttercups.

I know that my challenge with buttercups is nothing like the challenges that you face every day as growers. There are risks involved with producing food that you have no control over. With Organics we know that those risks are in some ways greater than the risk conventional growers face. Your dedication and commitment astound me. Keep up the good work, we need you! You are an important part of your local economies. May you all have a prosperous season. Happy Growing!

organicdeb@shaw.ca

What's Up at COABC? *by Kirsten Kane*

The Canada Organic Initiative and Supply Management Projects are going great guns under the diligent watch of Paddy Doherty (see page 12). Certainly these are some of the more news and noteworthy activities of COABC right now, but I also want to let you know about some other things happening around the homestead at the moment.

We are pleased to announce that we have hired Paula Luther, Vancouver nutritional consultant with extensive experience in event and project coordination, specifically in the area of food, as co-ordinator of the 2006 AGM and Conference. We have formed an AGM 06 committee and listserve to liase with Paula. The AGM will take place as usual the last week of February somewhere in the Fraser Valley. The venue and theme of the event will be among the first decisions made, so watch for developments.

Also on the events horizon will be the first Organic Food Awards (see page 26), tentatively scheduled for mid-late November in Vancouver. Lionel Wilson, an experienced events co-ordinator, has been contracted to carry out the planning and execution of the event. COABC members will be receiving much information shortly on how their products/farms are to be considered for recognition.

Project-wise, there is a lot happening. In July the revised Regional Production Seminars proposal will appear before the Organic Sector Development Program. This is a project that will create a series of production related seminar tailored to the needs of the different CBs or regions of BC the areas' licensees. Several CBs have indicated support for the project, and once the funding is in place, they will be contacted to arrange the details of their seminar.

COABC and BCMAFF are working closely together on a number of projects. BCMAFF secured funding for a co-op student to carry out a multi-pronged needs assessment of a few different parts of the BC Organic Sector. Jeff Nimmo will be surveying livestock (particularly sheep) producers to determine barriers to production, as well as working with those in the Producer-Distributor-Retailer chain to identify key problem areas that need to be addressed. Further, Terri Giacomazzi and Susan Smith of BCMAFF and I are working on ways to create opportunities to bring organics to the conventional sector, by means of a series

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Letters & submissions to:
Cathleen Kneen, Editor
S6 C27 RR#1
Sorrento BC V0E 2W0
phone/fax: 250-675-4866
cathleen@ramshorn.ca

Advertising (rates & copy) & non-member **subscriptions** ($20/year plus $1.40 GST) to:
COABC
3402 32nd Ave.
Vernon BC V1T 2N1
phone: 250-260-4429
fax: 250-260-4436
office@certifiedorganic.ca

For general information or to contact your local Certifying Body, call the office – or check our website:
www.CertifiedOrganic.bc.ca

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Layout & Design: Rebecca Kneen
gael@ramshorn.ca

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of seminars ("Organics 101") at the Pacific Agricultural Show and Horticulture Forum, and tentatively, an Organic Dairy Symposium in the fall in the Fraser Valley. COABC is delighted to be working so closely with BCMAFF, who is committed to assisting the BC Organic Sector expand and meet the needs of producers.

COABC's Environmental Farm Planning Program is going well. An annual report has been delivered to BCAC indicating that in 2004, 10 workshops attended by 118 farms were held, with more done in 2005. Elaine Spearing, Rochelle Eisen, and Rosie Smit are the Organic EFP planners, and may be contacted through the COABC office. Derek Masselink of Pender Island will be doing Organic EFPs for COABC as well (see page 5). Be sure to watch the COABC website for details about any upcoming workshops, and contact the office to arrange for your own Environmental Farm Plan. It is the goal of this program to have an EFP for every farm in the BC Certified Organic program.

As usual, the Organic Sector Development Program is receiving many request to review proposals purporting to fulfill the needs of the COABC strategic plan. The OSDP has recently granted funding to a couple of very interesting research proposals: a project to examine various methods of controlling Flea Beetles in potatoes and brassica salad greens (see page 7), and an on-farm composting project carried out in the Lower Mainland by researchers from UBC.

The next deadline for proposals is July 22. Please visit the Organic Sector Development Program page of the website (under COABC Services) for application details, to view a list of projects funded under the OSDP, or to find reports generated from various completed projects.

Speaking of the COABC website, I am pleased to report that we are currently working to improve the new site, and make it exponentially more user-friendly. A mock site is under construction, and it will replace the existing site once its completed. A dedicated Web committee is providing constant feedback on the process, and our Webmaster, Rob Korbynn, is working hard to make sure that this site will more than meet the needs of all users. You will see elsewhere in this publication an invitation to submit a 'meet your farmer' profile for the website (see page 21). These rotating profiles have replaced the member web pages that were a feature of the database of the old site, and are fun and economical. Be sure to have your farm included, as this is one of the more popular features of the new site.

The COABC office, always a busy place, has noticed an increase in calls regarding certification, definitely a good thing as more and more farmers wish to convert to organic production, and those new to farming wanting to start off on the right foot.

The COABC bookkeeper, Janice Casling, will be taking an extended holiday over the next few months, and so all checkmark inventory and books will be shipped from the office from the time being. Contact the office as usual to order your bags, ties, or stickers, and bear with us as we adjust to a new system for doing the invoicing – Kristy and Janice have devised an elaborate communications network with Janice doing her work from Holland, and Kristy producing and distributing the resulting paper.

If you have had the time to tear yourself away from the fields and orchards to read this, I hope you are pleased with what you have found. Please feel free to contact me at any time if you have questions about any of the above, or wish to discuss issues or activities that you feel COABC should be involved in. ✓

EFP Useful to Organic Farmers

by Derek Masselink

The Canada - British Columbia Environmental Farm Plan Program is designed to help farmers identify existing and potential environmental risks on their farms. With the help of an EFP Advisor, producers who enroll in the program develop a plan to action to reduce the identified environmental risks on their farms.

The federal and provincial agencies and BC agricultural organizations involved in the development and delivery of this program have deliberately chosen a "carrot" approach to encourage producers into compliance with existing federal and provincial environmental legislation.

For starters the program is voluntary. The BC Agriculture Council is working with 10 delivery groups including the COABC to help encourage participation. All facilitating Planning Advisors are required to sign a confidentiality agreement ensuring what they observe on the farms they visit stays private unless the producer asks for additional help or wants to apply for funding to address any outstanding issues. The Program is free. Information available to participating farmers is vast, particularly in relation to environmental legislation, liability issues, risk assessment and potential mitigative methods. Finally, the Environmental Farm Planning Program offers the possibility of providing funding to help farmers and producers with the implementation of strategies aimed at reducing environmental risks on their farms.

Many of us in the organic sector were initially sceptical that the Environmental Farm Panning Program would not go far enough to address on-farm environmental issues, particularly those often found associated with conventional farming systems. We also wondered what the Program could possibly offer producers following the organic principles.

I must admit I shared this scepticism. However, after the Environmental Planner Advisor training program I can see five key elements that make the EFP relevant to organic producers.

Farm-related Environmental Legislation

I have yet to come across another set of documents that so clearly provides both an explanation of the existing relevant environmental legislation that applies to farm systems in British Colombia and allows you to see how your farm measures up. It is important to point out that most farms, organic ones included, are contravening one or more environmental laws. In most cases these producers are completely unaware of this infringement and potential source of liability. Unfortunately, this lack of knowledge does not protect them from liability.

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EFP Useful ...continued from page 5

Systems Approach

The Environmental Farm Planning Program allows a producer to assess the environmental health of their entire farm system.

Outside Assistance

The Planning Advisor can act as another pair of eyes and in some cases a sounding board to help with the assessment of the farm system.

Assessment Tools

The Program's nutrient and water management and riparian health assessment tools are continually being upgraded and improved, although the nutrient management tools are currently only applicable to large forage or crop systems.

Influence

By participating in the program, asking questions and challenging current protocols or existing policies, we as organic producers can affect and strengthen the laudable environmental focus and goals of the Environmental Farm Plan Program. I believe that the strength of our participation may also affect our ability to influence the future formulation and implementation of agricultural and environmental policies.

Sure, the Environmental Farm Plan Program could be better, it could suggest stronger, more sustainable actions to reduce on-farm environmental risks and it could take more of a regional systems approach to farm planning. But it is a start and from my perspective it is a step in the right direction – and it offers a lot to organic producers.

For program Information or assistance with your EFP, call:

On Vancouver Island and the Islands, Derek Masselink (250) 629-6934 dmasselink@cablelan.net

On the mainland, Elaine Spearing (250) 747-3237 elaines@quesnelbc.com

More COABC Environmental Farm Planning Workshops are planned for the fall, watch this space for dates.

COABC has an agreement with the British Columbia Agriculture Council to be a delivery group for the Canada-British Columbia Environmental Farm Plan Program. Brochures describing the program can be obtained from the COABC office.

Research on the Front Line

by Andy Maganga

The Organic Sector Development Fund and participating producers are funding a research project to investigate the problem of flea beetles with the aim of finding integrated organic methods of dealing with the pest.

To date the consultant, Ecorational Technologies of Kamloops, has received a lot of input from organic producers, consultants and pest management specialists regarding potential methods of managing flea beetles. The key areas of interest to participants are as follows:

* Life history observations e.g. species composition, # of generations per season, alternate hosts and levels of combined damage when flea beetles are present together with the more problematic pest such as the Colorado Potato Beetle (CPB) in Kamloops

* Cultural practices that could prevent or reduce infestations including perimeter and in-row trap crops, row covers, mulching against tuber flea beetle (interior only), cultivation, shading and other methods of reducing plant stress due to heat and/or dry conditions

* Evaluation of effectiveness of Entrust (Spinosad) for use when cultural methods are unable to provide adequate control.

Initial observations, discussions and available literature have revealed the following:

A producer in South Okanagan has managed to suppress tuber flea beetle using straw mulch. This is supported by a study conducted in Germany that found mulch to reduce the prevalence of Potato Virus Y, which is vectored by aphids.

Flea beetles show phototactic responses to specific wavelengths of light and will move from shaded to lit areas of the field at certain times of the growing season.

Conventional Brassica vegetable producers have obtained satisfactory control using 2-3 rows of a trap crop planted along the perimeter of the field early in the season before the main crop. Flea beetles are killed on the trap crop or destroyed with the crop before the main crop is planted.

Fewer flea beetles have been reported in cleanly cultivated fields compared to weedy areas.

Denser planting reduces damage per plant but may increase overall beetle population.

Row covers have been found to provide the best protection followed by Spinosad in two recent US studies. A fine netting from Europe is available from one participant for comparison with Reemay.

Mustard and chinese cabbage appear to be very attractive to flea beetle. Mustard could be used as a trap crop and/or in proposed test plots.

Tracy Heuppelsheuser, Minor Use Registration Coordinator, is assisting with obtaining a sample of Entrust and advising on minor use registration requirements.

Dr. Soheil Mahmoud, Chemistry Department at Okanagan University College, is interested in conducting laboratory studies with potential new botanical products.

The first round of trials at the four host locations will focus on the following:

The effect of a crop barrier (and associated shading) with or without Reemay on flea beetle populations affecting brassica seedlings at Sudoa Farms/Notch Hills Organics in the South Thompson region.

Comparison of Reemay, Fine Netting, Rotenone and a discriminatory (highest) dose of Entrust at Wildflight Farms in North Okanagan.

Effect of cultivation, in-row and perimeter trap crop and combined trap crop and row cover on flea beetle populations at Glenvalley Farms.

Effect of cultivar and spraying for Colorado Potato Beetle with Entrust on latent flea beetle populations and crop damage at Thistle Farms.

Study Procedure for Sudoa Farms

The perimeter of the entire field surrounding the test plots will be cultivated to reduce but not eliminate flea beetle infestations. A future

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Research... continued from page 7

trial may involve shading similar to the ginseng system. Sampling will be conducted weekly from crop establishment to harvesting.

Layout of Study Plots at Sudoa Farms

Cultivated with no host crop nor crop barrier	Cultivated with no host crop nor crop barrier	Non-host crop barrier	Non-host crop barrier	Non-host crop barrier
Host crop without Reemay	Host crop under Reemay	Host crop under Reemay	Host crop without Reemay	
Cultivated with no host crop nor crop barrier	Cultivated with no host crop nor crop barrier	Non-host crop barrier	Non-host crop barrier	

Study Procedure at Wildflight Farms

Fifteen plots (3 X 20 ft) each of both Arugula and Potatoes have been established in three beds for Arugula and two beds for potatoes. One bed of potatoes containing two rows per bed will be mulched while the other will not in order to quantify the effect of mulching. The two rows of potatoes within each bed consist of two varieties, "Warba" (an early variety) and "Island Sunshine". This allows us to determine the effect of variety on damage levels. Arugula beds will receive one of the following treatments: Reemay, European Netting, a discriminating dose of Entrust (100g/Ha), untreated check or a Rotenone check. If Entrust is found to be effective, dose-response studies will be conducted.

Study Procedures at Thistle Farm

Nine potato test plots (6ft X 4 ft) separated by 12 ft cultivated buffers have been established. Buffers may later be planted with a non-host crop. The perimeter of each plot is lined with a plastic trench to reduce beetle movement between plots. To determine the effect of controlling Colorado Potato Beetles on flea beetle infestations, three of the test plots will be treated with Entrust, three by flaming and three will be left untreated. Beetles will be monitored before treatment and after 24 hours, 48 hours and weekly after treatment. Damage will be determined at harvest.

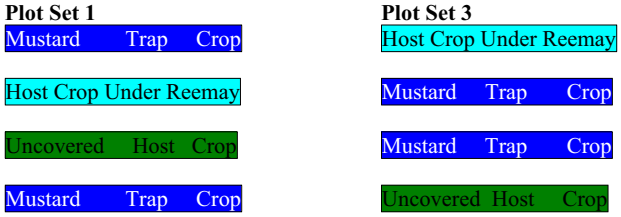
Other existing plots on the farm will be monitored to determine the effect of variety and flaming on beetle populations and damage.

Flea Beetle damage to radishes

Study Procedures at Glen Valley Organic Farms

Life history characteristics of flea beetles affecting potatoes and Brassicas will be investigated by systematic counts at specific locations in the field to determine seasonal population trends. The relative proportion of large and small beetles on white sampling cards will determine the number of generations realized during the growing season. These counts will be supplemented by regular counts of beetles on host plants. In addition to life history studies, the effect of in-row and perimeter trap cropping with or without Reemay will be investigated. Four sets of plots will be lined up along the width of a field bed (to eliminate the confounding effect of aspect) and replicated at least 3 times. Each set of plots will be separated by either a non-host buffer crop or cultivated areas at least 5 m in width. The trap crop will be established at least two weeks before Brassica or potato host crop. After evaluating the effects of trap cropping on beetle populations, the plot will be used to investigate Entrust and other suggested test materials that could be used as a last resort.

Layout of Study Plots at Glenvalley Farms



Funding for this project is provided by OSDP and participating producers. Producers wishing to contribute funds or otherwise to the study can contact Andy Maganga, 250-314-3749 or by email at *maganga@ecorational.com*. Your contributions will either accordingly reduce the financial burden on participating producers or enable further investigation. Contributors will be provided with regular updates on the study and a copy of the final report. ✓

The Little Buggers... Flea Beetles

by Cammie Harbottle

a reflection on Linda Gilkeson's workshop at the COABC conference, Feb. 2005

The flea beetle appears to have adapted quite successfully to organic agriculture. Species have evolved to feed on almost every major vegetable crop and collectively seem to outsmart us farmers, decimating our seedlings and munching their way through our crops from greens to potatoes. No matter how hard we try to manage and control the flea beetle populations, it seems that they are always a few steps ahead of us.

Linda Gilkeson began her workshop at the *Seeds for the Future* conference by emphasizing that in dealing with any problem insect a positive identification is always the first step. Following that, a system of integrated pest management including a combination of techniques and close monitoring and an understanding of the life history of the insect is important.

Photo from www.ext.nodak.edu/extpubs/plantsci/pests/e1234w.htm

There are several species of flea beetle specific to various crops including cabbage/crucifers, potatoes, eggplant and corn. Flea beetles typically have one generation per year although some years will see a partial second generation. The adult flea beetle over-winters underground or in the plant litter and perennial weeds surrounding or in the field itself. As soon as the fields begin to warm, usually late April/ early May, the adults emerge, mate, and lay their eggs at the base of the plants/seedlings. The eggs hatch within a week to ten days and the larvae head down to the roots to feed. Approximately three weeks later they emerge from the soil as adults and begin to feed on the leaves of the plants.

Leaf damage typically appears as a peppering of tiny 'shot-holes'. Depending on population size, damage can vary from a few holes to complete devastation of the foliage. However, in any leaf crop for market even a few holes are too many.

Root damage may become evident in stunted, weaker plants and slowed development. Potato damage appears as corky tracks on the surface and a brownish/black spreading into the flesh just below the surface.

Numerous cultural practices and methods of flea beetle control were discussed and evaluated during the workshop (and Linda didn't think that we could spend 1 1/2 hours talking about the flea beetle...). Because the most affected crops seem to be those in the Cruciferae/ Brassica family, and because the flea beetle is both mobile and winter-hardy, crop rotation is limited in its practicality and effect.

Weed control both within and around crops and fields, specifically the cruciferous weeds, was suggested, possibly even spraying the bordering areas with rotenone as that is most likely where the flea beetles will be hiding.

The use of row cover (Remay, Agribond, or a fine nylon mesh) has both positive and negative aspects. However, when put onto a bed before seedlings emerge or immediately following transplanting of seedlings into clean (flea beetle-free) soil and sealing the row cover with soil it can be quite effective. This technique can result in leggier, wimpier greens and tops due to reduced light but removing the cover a week before harvest can help to green and thicken up the leaves. Making sure that transplants are healthy and strong and reducing their stress will also help them to grow through damage in their first stages of growth.

Planting trap crops such as Chinese Southern Giant Mustard or Giant Green Crispifolia (Brassica juncea var. crispifolia) or radishes, 'Daikon' or Snow Belle' bordering the crop for harvest was also discussed. The possibility of spraying these sacrificial crops with rotenone or

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another botanical pesticide rather than the crop itself was a suggestion as well.

Leaving the ground bare and eliminating host plants were both mentioned as possible control methods however neither were deemed as practical or favorable as the majority of market crops are crucifers/brassicas and a bare field is exactly what an organic farmer does not want.

Rotenone was the only botanical pesticide discussed at any length and an application of rotenone followed immediately by sealing the bed with a row cover has been found to knock the flea beetle back significantly.

In controlling the damage of the potato flea beetle, crop rotation is essential and planting the tubers early may give them a chance to form before the flea beetle population is big enough to do significant damage.

Although talk of flea beetles consumed the majority of the workshop, a few suggestions were thrown out at the end for dealing with carrot rust fly and cabbage root maggot.

Erecting exclusion fences around a carrot crop was suggested as an effective measure in keeping out the rust fly and still being able to keep an eye on both weed and carrot growth. Exclusion fences can be made from nylon window screen supported by posts 90cm high with an overhang or 10cm towards the outside of the fence. The overhang can be supported by horizontal braces reaching out form the posts. This has been found to be effective as long as there have been no carrots, parsnips, or wild carrots growing in the soil within the past year.

Another suggestion for both carrot rust fly and cabbage root maggot was to use a fine screen/polyethylene mesh as a sealed row cover. The positive side it that the screen does not trap the heat, the crop and weeds are visible through it for monitoring, it has a ten year life span, keeps out the deer and the dogs and has been found to provide 100% control! The only negative side is that this wondrous material is not available in North America and must be imported from Europe (see Resources if you want to get your hands on some).

Hilling the carrots after the first weeding works well in light, sandy soil because the rust flies do not like to lay their eggs in a fine soil/ash (this also prevents green shoulders). However, in a heavy/clay soil the flies will find their way between the lumps making it a less efficient barrier.

In any management system monitoring of problem and beneficial insect populations, insect damage, and environmental conditions is very important. As is careful planning, record keeping, the evaluation of effects and efficacy of treatments and of course, the communication and idea sharing that happens between growers at and following workshops such as this.

Resources

Garden Insects of North America. Whitney Cramshaw, Princeton University Press. 2004

Diseases and Pests in Vegetable Crops of Canada. Howland, Garland, Seaman.

For more info and to order polyethylene mesh, contact Hermann Bruns, Wildflight Farm: wildflight@jetstream.net

Taking Action Against Pests

by Linda Edwards

Organic tree fruit growers have launched two more research projects to address pest problems, beginning with apples.

Rosy apple aphid (Dysaphis plantaginea) often causes more damage in organic apples than any other pest. This is particularly the case for young trees. This insect over winters as eggs on the apples. As soon as they hatch, they burrow down into the fruit and leaf clusters and start feeding. While feeding they inject a toxin into the leaves which is translocated to nearby fruit causing them to become deformed and to remain very small. Heavily attacked trees will not bear fruit the following year. After 5-7 generations on the apples, the rosies leave - usually around the end of June - for a summer alternative host. They return in the fall to lay their over wintering eggs.

Some years are worse than others but there is always some damage. Predators and parasites sometimes build up and reduce their numbers. However, it seems that because of the copious amounts of honey dew these insects product, the biological controls prefer to feed on other kinds of aphids and turn only to rosy apple aphids when everything else is gone. By that time the damage is already done. Is there some way to find out which bio control is the most effective and introduce or somehow encourage them?

We have tried purchasing and introducing Aphidoletes but found that blocks that had introductions did not clean up any faster than ones that didn't. We are assuming that if the weather isn't conducive to naturally occurring ones being effective, introduced ones don't do well either. The alternative summer host is narrow leaf plantain. Perhaps cultivating it up or planting competing crops to reduce it would help control the aphids. The thing is, though, that several of us have looked at a lot of these plants over the summer months and have never found any rosy apple aphids on them

Is there another host in our area? Are the ants we see on the trees with the aphids just there for the honey dew or are they somehow adding to the problem by driving away predators? We need to know a lot more about this insect than we do. Amanda Brown, a UBC entomology student who has just completed her BSc and will undertake graduate work to get a MSc. in the near future is using this summer to collect some preliminary data. The Ambrosia growers will pay her expenses. Then

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we will assist if necessary to help her financially carry out research on this pest.

The second project deals with organic cherries. The organic cherry growers are very happy that Entrust is now registered and that the research they initiated and paid for to assess the bait attractant form of spinosad (GF-120) last year is in the queue for registration. However, this product will not make it through all of the paperwork and review needed to be available for this season.

There are a number of unanswered questions for the growers in regard to the actual implementation of cherry fruit fly control with these new products. When do you use Entrust and when do you use GF-120 ? How can we minimize the number of spray? Can we just treat 'hot spots' with GF-120? How big should such a treatment area be?

Because the active ingredient is registered (the spinosad in Entrust), the cherry growers are able to carry out a small project this year comparing control of cherry fruit fly with Entrust only, with GF-120 only and with a combination of the two. Applications will be made only when trap counts indicate the presence of the CFF.

So how does this research get done? Some of it - especially the organizing - is done by volunteers. However, all expenses and hiring of people to actually do the work comes from money collected by paying a levy based on production. The cherry growers as members of the Okanagan Kootenay Cherry Growers Association all make a voluntary payment of $0.25/box. The Ambrosia organic growers have a mandatory levy of $1/box. These funds are then used to get matching funds from the provincial and federal governments and the Organic Trust. The experience even with the mandatory levy is that it is very worthwhile - you don't miss the money nearly as much as you appreciate the benefits. ✓

Canada Organic Standard News

by Paddy Doherty

Organic Studies

The CFIA Organic Task Force has completed a number of studies relative to the organic regulation (Cost/benefit analysis, Accreditation body comparison study). Joe Southall has told me that these reports are being translated and that once all the government privacy issues have been worked through, he will be happy to post them on the OTF webpage: *www.inspection.gc.ca/english/fssa/orgbio/otfgtspbe.shtml*

Joe explained that making government documents into public documents is a lengthy and tedious process, but he is committed to providing as much information to the organic sector as possible—he added that he has no hidden motive for keeping this information from the rest of us.

Canada Standard

I continue to be impressed with the perseverance of the current members of the Canada Organic Standard Working Group. While many in the organic sector are heartily sick and tired of the standard revision process, the Working Group (WG7) has been doggedly toiling through the three parts of the Canada Organic Standard.

A new appointee to WG7 from Table Filière (Jean Duval) has really helped expedite the review. Jean is familiar with the Canada and the Quebec standard, he understands the need

to achieve consensus, and he is as anxious as the rest of us to complete the process.

The WG7 now has the daunting task of reconciling all the comments from the ballots of Parts 1, 2, and 3 of the Canada Organic Standard. The current WG7 members are:

Paddy Doherty - Chair

Gail Lynch - acting secretary (chair of CGSB Organic Standard Committee)

Janine Gibson - Canadian Organic Growers

Anne Macey - COABC Accreditation Board

Wally Hamm - Pro Cert Organic Systems

Randy Preater - Canadian Seed Institute

Clark Phillips - Atlantic Canada Organic Region Network

Angela Bilkhu - Canadian Food Inspection Agency

Mike Leclair - CFIA Organic Task Force

Genevieve Blain - Option Consommateurs

Jean Duval - Table Filière

The status for the three parts of the standard seems finally to be resolved:

1 Part one is the Canada Organic Standard, which will be referenced in the coming organic regulation

2 Part two is a non-regulatory guidance document. The Guidance document provides insight regarding specific details of the standards in order to ensure consistent application of the Canada Standard across all jurisdictions. The guidance will be posted on a website and may be incorporated with the standard into a user's manual.

3 Part three is the permitted substances list. The PSL will be managed by a third-party —perhaps the Expert Committee on Organic Agriculture or the Organic Agricultural Centre of Canada. It is envisaged that the PSL will be amended and reviewed at regular intervals.

The Working Group has reviewed all three documents two and three times and narrowed the troublesome issues to a small number. Consequently, WG7 is working to ensure that all regulatory language from Part 2 is transferred to Part 1. We intend to finish our work with Part 1 and send the amended version to the entire Canada Standard Committee (42 members) for review and will thereafter act according to the wishes of the committee. Depending on the availability of the members of the working group, we are hoping to have the revising process over by the end of June.

Inspector Training

The OTF has told us that they want to see a uniform and comprehensive training program for organic inspectors. The OTF has arranged for a meeting of an inspector training sub-committee to meet in Winnipeg (June 8, 9th) to discuss how inspector training will be operated in the coming organic regime. Members of the sub-committee: Wally Hamm, Janine Gibson, Monique Shultz, Gary Lean, Paddy Doherty, Lee McFadyen.

Low-Risk Working Group

Linda Edwards has been sitting on a "Low-Risk Working Group" of the Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) of Heath Canada.

National Standard continued on page 14...

National Standard ...continued from page 13

This working group is striving to expedite the approval process for 'benign' pesticides. This would be substances such as baking soda, vinegar, cayenne pepper, garlic and plant oils.

They are developing a policy on how to handle these substances in a different manner, so the substances can be added to the PRMA list, and consequently made legal for use in Canada. We are fortunate to have an organic farmer and scientist of such high calibre working on our behalf on such a tedious and bureaucratic process. If you use or know of the use of any substances in this category and want to find out more about the process, please contact me.

Next Steps

I'll be attending the meeting in Winnipeg, and otherwise I'll be working hard on the Canada Standard. I've done nothing about the representative organisation concept and the process seems to be stalled, without someone (me) able to put effort into it. I have spoken with Wally Hamm about the need for such an entity and how we might develop the ORC more formal organisation—this idea seems to have the most promise. As most of government slows dramatically during the summer holiday season, I may be able to devote time to the organic representative organisation proposal during the next few months.

Please note that Bone Meal is currently prohibited in the Canada Standard. If you have questions or concerns about this substance or any other substance or practice, please contact Paddy Doherty at 250-747-3287.

Abbatoir Regulations - Update

by Cathleen Kneen

Concerns raised by the Island Farmers Alliance-BC Food Systems Network working group on Meat Regulation seem to have reached a listening ear in the provincial government bureaucracy. In a meeting with officials from the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries and the Ministry of Health, the working group was told that the guidelines for implementation of the new Regulation will be flexible wherever possible in order to encourage and maintain small-scale, locally-focussed abattoirs.

Two new projects will help to ascertain just where flexibility may be required. The first is a Guidebook to the Regulation which will explain to both producers and processors what is expected of them and what resources are available to assist. The Guidebook will be available on-line with appropriate links.

The second project goes by the title of Planning Tools. It will include:

• a "self-assessment guide" including a guide to financial planning for an abattoir and a specification sheet on approved construction materials;

• a "development guide" which will include a complete list of activities required to upgrade/develop a licensed abattoir and processing facility and a list of useful information materials and contact people ;

• "business plan templates" which will outline potential abattoir scenarios, based on currently existing operations, and show what would be required (and the costs) for each one to be approved. These templates will be vetted by the BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) and Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) so operators can use them with confidence as a base for their financial planning. Final approval for each upgrade or new build proposal will have to be sought directly from BCCDC. The scenarios will cover large and small scale

plants, both fixed and mobile, for red meat and for poultry.

Both these projects are expected to be completed by September, giving farmers and processors one year before the implementation of the new Regulation to make the necessary adjustments.

In the meantime, anyone wanting an assessment of their facility to learn what may be required for it to become federally or provincially inspected and licensed can go to the BCCDC Web site at *www.bccdc.org/content.php?item=14>4* and fill the application form for a free assessment visit. The contact person is Brian Cosens from the CFIA office in Burnaby, (604) 666-1087, *cosensb@inspection.gc.ca*.

Both of these projects address the concerns about facilities. The other set of issues in the Regulation is related to inspection. The Regulation calls for every animal killed for meat in the province to be inspected by a licensed Inspector pre- and post-mortem. While this is important to assure the safety of meat entering the general market, the working group believes that it is both too costly and unnecessary for micro-scale local operations selling meat directly to the ultimate consumer. There is already an exemption from the whole Regulation for meat which is slaughtered for personal and family use by the producer. The group is proposing that effective ways be found to address the inspection requirement for very small and/or remote facilities. It also proposes that custom killing for the owner of the animal be exempted. If such slaughter takes place in a mobile or stationary abattoir, the facility would need to be licensed but the meat would not need to be inspected. Such a facility might be limited to custom killing.

The group would like more input from Certified Organic members to ensure that their particular interests are being addressed. If you have any suggestions or are willing to work on any of the issues, please contact Cathleen Kneen, *cathleen@ramshorn.ca*, phone 250-675-4866.

Organic Management of Pneumonia in Sheep

by Dr. Peter Stockdale, Ravenstoft Farm

Sheep, like all middle to large sized mammals, are walking ecosystems that are inhabited by an array of other organisms. This is particularly true of their respiratory systems. From their noses to the depths of their lungs they harbour insect grubs, worms, bacteria and viruses. There is a great deal of variation in the likelihood that they will cause pneumonia. Some cause acute disease while others cause chronic progressive disease. Many of these organisms live in an uneasy state of truce with their hosts and do not cause disease unless factors such as poor nutrition and crowding suppress their immune systems or different organisms or strains infect them. Many of these microbes exist as different strains which can vary greatly in their ability to produce disease. Some of these organisms take a long term insidious approach, rather like blackmail, while others are short term smash and grab artists that cause grievous bodily harm or murderers that kill more or less quickly.

The organism that is the commonest cause of pneumonia in sheep on farms in British Columbia is now called *Mannheimia(M.) haemolytica* but until recently was named *Pasteurella (P.) haemolytica*. These organisms can often be isolated from apparently healthy sheep but are commonly isolated from their pneumonic lungs at post mortem examination.

This disease is almost certainly the result of domestication of sheep and cattle. The ancestor of modern sheep was the wild sheep of the Zagros Mountains, on the present day border of Iraq and Iran, now called the urial (*Ovis orientalis*). This animal was domesticated about ten to twelve thousand years ago. The ancestor of *M. haemolytica* was present in those sheep and we postulate was very similar to those we can

isolate from wild sheep such as Bighorns or Thinhorns today. About six thousand years ago cattle were domesticated in the same area, the Middle East, and were often grazed in association with sheep as can still be seen in that area today. It is now thought that *Mannheimia* was transmitted from sheep to cattle and became another of their respiratory organisms. Once in cattle *Mannheimia* picked up genetic material (DNA), from another bacterium already in cattle, called the "leucotoxic gene". This gene protects the microbe from its host's defences by killing protective white cells.

The now altered *Mannheimia* with its newly acquired leutoxic gene was then transferred back to sheep from cattle. This altered *Mannheimia* is the one responsible in large measure for pneumonia in sheep in this province. Initially it is believed that the altered organism was highly pathogenic to domestic sheep but that during the last four or five thousand years domestic sheep have been selected for resistance to the disease as the susceptible animals died. However wild sheep in North America are still very susceptible to disease caused by *M. haemolytica*.

Although present day domestic sheep are fairly resistant to *M. haemolytica* their resistance can be reduced by factors such as poor nutrition, crowding, cold, wet weather etc. Introduction of newly bought animals that have different stains of the organism can also precipitate pneumonia.

Pneumonia can be reduced possibly to a level where none is seen by managing the flock to mitigate the factors mentioned above.

It is important to provide good food with adequate protein levels. Sheep require higher levels of protein than cattle or horses and therefore need better quality hay. They should be regularly checked for body condition score which optimally should be 3 where 0 is emaciation and 5 is rolling fat.

They should have protection from bad weather available. They are very capable of dealing with dry cold conditions but are highly stressed by lengthy exposure to cold wet weather. This is particularly true of hair sheep, originally from tropical or subtropical countries and fine woolled sheep from arid or semi arid countries. Many breeds of sheep from the U.K. have been selected for survival under cold wet conditions, especially the mountain breeds, and have fleeces that shed rain well. Wind and rain breaks provide good shelter and sheds open on three sides allow good ventilation. Poorly ventilated barns crowded with sheep are commonly associated with low grade chronic pneumonia as well as acute outbreaks. However where many sheep are crowded together on fast growing pastures pneumonia may emerge.

It is advisable to close the flock in order to reduce the introduction of outside sheep to a minimum. Thus stock should be bought from farms that have a history of little pneumonia and of known disease status and , once flocks are established, introductions in the form of rams from flocks of minimum disease status should be minimized. This can be achieved by

Sheep continued on page 18...

Sheep ...continued from page 17

using rams from your own flock by devising a selection index and using the best of your ram progeny for those years in which you do not buy in rams.

Although a great deal of work has gone into developing vaccines against Mannheimia for sheep their efficiency is still questioned. The use of antibiotics is of value in the face of individual and flock pneumonia. These drugs are continually being upgraded and new ones developed and the most useful ones can generally be ascertained from your local veterinarian. However treated sheep lose their organic status.

Nevertheless good and preventative management is still the most likely effective way in which pneumonia in sheep can be reduced, controlled or prevented. ✓

Organic Sector Projects

by Kirsten Kane

The Organic Sector Development Program exists to support projects which reflect the COABC's Strategic Plan and provide benefits to the whole organic sector in BC. The next deadline is July 22. A letter of intent should be submitted to Kirsten Kane, OSDP Co-ordinator at least two weeks prior to the deadline.

Gidelines for letters and more info about the OSDP is available at:
licensees.certifiedorganic.bc.ca/organic-sector-initiative/index.html

Following are some of the current projects funded through the OSDP. Please contact Kirsten to discuss these or any ideas for proposals at the COABC office.

On-Farm Composting and Soil Nutrient Management

The desired objective/outcome of this proposal is to undertake and disseminate on-farm demonstration research project results to help producers define Best Management Practices (BMPs) for poultry litter-based composts in crop-production which meet or exceed BC Provinicial "Code of Agricultural Practice for Waste Management" and Organic Certification regulations for soil nutrient management and the CFIA code of Practice for natural fertiliser use and food safety

Flea Beetle

The purpose of the proposed field study is to investigate the effectiveness of suggested control measures against flea beetles. The study will commence with thorough review of previous and on-going studies and producers observations. Trials will be conducted at four locations, two in the North Okanagan, one in the South Thompson and one in the Fraser Valley region.

In British Columbia organic farms, flea beetles were mentioned as the main pest problem in a survey conducted in early November 2004. This survey asked subscribers to COABC email list

to prioritise their pest management research needs. Discussions with producers following the survey indicated a need and interest in investigating various control measures against this pest.

Small Farm Seed Workshop (Vancouver Island)

The main goal of the workshop is to educate and empower farmers in order to allow organic producers to relinquish their dependance on conventional seed sources. Currently, most organic farmers are still buying a large portion of their vegetable seed from conventional sources and almost all of their cover crop seeds from conventional sources. As the standards move towards making organic seed mandatory, farmers will have more and more need for saving their own high quality seeds.The workshops is meant to help organic growers relinquish their dependance on conventional seed sources, and also help them with breeding new varieties of plants and helping keep old strains alive. With a focus on small farm production, the workshop will cover areas that many growers do not even consider.

Organic Wine Production Workshop

These workshops aim to demonstrate solutions to some of the major obstacles facing grape growers who wish to convert from conventional to organic practices.

Leafhopper control is probably the most problematic insect pest control issue in organic viticulture systems, since this pest tends to increase in numbers under organic management.

There are a number of approaches to managing this pest. Beneficial insects, organic sprays, leaf removal, mechanical approaches and mass trapping with sticky tape or boards are some of the options that will be presented and discussed. Researchers from California, Washington and BC will share their experience and participate in a panel discussion following the presentation by a couple of BC growers.The second workshop will present various options on vineyard floor management. Weed control is one of the management practices in organic vineyards that require a very different approach. Mechanical solutions, mulching and flame weeding will be presented to the audience, to demonstrate that there are solutions that can fit a variety of circumstances.

A number of cover crops and their contribution to plant nutrition, soil fertility and disease management will be introduced, emphasizing their positive contribution to the soil and the health of the plant.The overall objective is to demonstrate

Organic Projects continued on page 20...

Organic Projects ...continued from page 19

that organic viticulture is feasible and profitable and that there are a number of innovative solutions to the most common problems.

Cherry Fruit Fly

Conduct research to facilitate licensing in Canada of pesticide approved for organic cherry production. The results of the research will determine the efficacy of the product against CFF. and if it is effective, provide the data necessary to get it registered in Canada.

If this product continues to prove effective and can be registered in Canada, it will make organic cherry growing a much more viable economic possibility.

The few that are currently growing organic cherries are struggling to do so. Every year, the numbers of infested cherries increases and the fruit either has to be picked early (and is never as large or sweet as it otherwise would be) or is culled. The majority of growers are members of the Cherry Growers Association and support this project wholeheartedly. There are many growers who are certified organic growers for other crops who will put their cherries into organic transition as soon as there is an organic control product. There are also a number of conventional organic cherry growers who will also enter organic transition if such a product were available.

For conventional growers and their neighbours, the substitution of this product for organophosphates and carbamates will be a huge improvement in air quality, human health risks, the health of their cherry trees and good neighbour relations.

Click Beetle

This project proposes to develop pheromone click beetle traps which will be used to monitor the numbers and spatial distribution of this pest. to aid in organic management of pest to grape buds. It is proposed that research be conducted by Simon Fraser University and Phero Tech inc. to identify the specific identities and blends of pheromone components that could be sued in developing monitoring/control devices for this pest in vineyards.

Class Action Dismissal is Appealed

The Saskatchewan organic farmers are appealing the decision of Judge Gene Ann in May which denied them class certification under Saskatchewan's Class Actions Act. The farmers are seeking compensation for losses due to contamination of organic fields and crops by Monsanto's and Bayers' genetically engineered canolas.

Jeremy deBeer of the Faculty of Law, University of Ottawa, commented on the judge's decision that the judgment contained groundbreaking conclusions about the legal liability of agrichemical corporations for the unwanted spread of GMOs, even though this was only an application for certification as a class. "For example," he says, "it was held that there was no duty of care owed to organic farmers to prevent or warn of inevitable contamination. It was determined to be 'plain and obvious' that the farmers' tort claims for negligence, strict liability, nuisance and trespass had no reasonable prospect of success. This conclusion was surprising, as it seems to contradict academic literature and expert commentary on point. Also, most claims under Saskatchewan's former and current Environmental Management and Protection Act and the Environmental Assessment Act were rejected, based upon technical interpretations of these statutes."

deBeer also states that the judgement's statement that there was no 'identifiable class' of plaintiffs or sufficient common interests "are in apparent conflict with the latest word from the Ontario Court of Appeal about the applicable legal benchmarks."

"For now," deBeer adds, "this decision represents one of the few judicial authorities on point anywhere in the world. No doubt the profound implications of this case will continue to attract local and global attention."

Arnold Taylor, president of SOD and chair of the Organic Agriculture Protection Fund Committee, said "We want to have our day in court. Nothing has changed - I still can't seed canola. This year conditions on my farm are perfect for putting canola into my rotation, but I can't get canola seed that is not contaminated by GMOs, and even if I could, I can't guarantee that it won't get contaminated by wind-blown GMO canola pollen or seed."

Plaintiff Dale Beaudoin is determined to see this legal action through. "We have to take this bull by the horns and wrestle it down. This GMO canola hasn't just hurt a handful of us. Other organic farmers want to grow canola, and it could have been a real attractive market for us. We are in this for the long haul."

For more information please contact:

Arnold Taylor, Chair, OAPF Committee, phone: (306) 252-2783 or (306) 241-6125

Marc Loiselle, Research Director, OAPF Committee, phone (306) 258-2192 or (306) 227-5825

For details of the class action suit, please see http://www.saskorganic.com/oapf/index.html

Website Promo Opportunity!

Our 'Meet your Farmers' spotlights have become the most popular feature of the new COABC website, and we think it would be great to have all licensees featured in this way!

If you would like to have your farm/business featured in the "Meet Your Farmers" section that cycles regularly on the website, please send the COABC office a 75-100 word paragraph about your farm or business (include family details, philsophy,etc if you like). Also include one photo which will posted along with your text. Please send your submissions by email or post to COABC. Your farmer spotlight will be free of charge until January 1, 2006 when the price will become $15/year for this feature. You can check out some established spotlights on the COABC website at www.certifiedorganic.bc.ca . Click on 'Meet Your Farmers' to see the operations that are currently in rotation on the site.

Those licensees who had 'member webpages' on the old COABC site will find that their page has been recently converted to a spotlight.

Please feel free contact the COABC Office for more information on this fun new opportunity.

Meet your Farmers!

Standards Review Committee Update

by Abra Brynne

The Standards Review Committee (SRC) has had two meetings since the COABC AGM in February. After heading up the SRC for two years, Lee McFadyen facilitated her final meeting with a review of the past year's work and outstanding issues for the benefit of both old and new members of the SRC. Abra Brynne and Rebecca Kneen agreed to jointly take on the role of Chair of the Committee for the coming year. Lee's leadership and knowledge shared generously during her time on the SRC were gratefully acknowledged.

The work plan of the SRC for this year will be somewhat determined by what happens with the national organic standard program. A subcommittee was therefore struck to determine the implications for our own provincial standard and certification programs, report back to the SRC at the June meeting, and then adjust the work of the SRC accordingly. Outstanding submissions and questions posed to the SRC were postponed until our June meeting, to be informed by the update on the national situation.

Abra Brynne agreed to draft a Submissions Response Policy so that any certification body or individual who submits a request or proposal to the SRC will receive a consistent and timely response regarding the status of the proposal in the review process, including reasons if it is rejected. Proposals are studied by the SRC and maybe a special subcommittee; decisions are circulated to COABC membership, comments are reviewed by the SRC and the proposal may be revised accordingly, and then the final version is submitted to the COABC Board for ratification.

The SRC is still considering full standards on Organic Land Care, Body Care, and Aquaculture; the Seed Production Standard has been added this year. A subcommittee has been struck to review it and make a proposal to the SRC. An update on the status of each of these standards will be in the next report to the Grower.

Low attendance by Certification Body representatives on the SRC continues to be a problem. If attendance does not improve, the SRC Co-Chairs will approach the COABC Board and request that a call be made for additional members, as was agreed upon at the COABC AGM. In order to facilitate participation in the conference calls by having predictable dates, Committee members agreed to hold them on the fourth Tuesday of the month. Please note that there will not necessarily be a conference call each month, particularly through the summer months.

Another concern is communication between the SRC and COABC members on proposed changes to the standards. We would like to expand beyond our current reliance on the COABC website and the BC Organic Grower to convey this information, so that sectors directly affected by a proposed change are sought out for input and comments. Suggestions are welcome on how this can be best achieved. ✓


Congratulations to Gunta and family
on the birth of their new baby boy!
We at Jerseyland, on behalf of
other organic producers, applaud the efforts
of the British Columbia Minister of Agriculture,
Hon. John Van Dongen, for his efforts to resolve the
ongoing marketing board issues that have devastated so
many of us in organic dairy, chicken, turkey and eggs.
Without strong leadership at BCMAFF the marketing boards
would have continued their dictatorship over our organic farms.
We also appreciate the efforts expended by so many.
To name a few:
Richard Bullock - Chair FIRB, George LeRoux &
Kathleen Gibson - Specialty Production Consultants,
COABC Specialty Implementation Committee -
Gunta Vitins, Brian Hughes, Brad Reid,
Ric Llewellyn, Paddy Doherty
and the many others working in the background
for all their support.
LET'S FINISH THIS ONCE AND FOR ALL !
Jerseyland Organics
Box 1468 • 2690 Almond Gardens Road
Grand Forks BC V0H 1H0
Ph: (250) 442-8112 • Fax: (250) 442-8737
Farm: (250) 442-8683
email: jersylnd@sunshinecable.com
YOGUR

J&G Farm Profile

by Tristan Mennell

When Gurmail Dhaliwal emigrated from India to Canada in 1972, he had only a vague notion of what lay ahead. "In ten days we are travelling to New York for our son's graduation from medical school." Gurmail tells me. "I have never been to New York. I can hardly believe it."

Gurmail and his brother Jagmail and their wives Gurdip and Gurpreet are now partners in J&G Farm, a prosperous (74 acres) orchard in Cawston. They grow organic apples (10-15 varieties—Gurmail says he can't keep track of them), peaches, pears, apricots, and plums. They also grow 7 acres of non-organic cherries. Gurmail says the market is healthy and they intend to stay in the orchard business for a long time yet. Though one of the five farm kids is going into medicine, there is definitely a future on the farm for some of the other four.

On his arrival in Canada, Gurmail worked for non-organic orchardists in the Okanagan. "My brother and both our wives come from a farming area in India," says Gurmail, "so farm labour came pretty natural to us". The Dhaliwals then worked in sawmills, saved their money, and in 1984 bought what became the basis for their present orchard.

"It was hard at first. We were raising our families and paying for the farm and since we were farming conventionally, the prices were poor." But the whole family worked together, providing most of the labour required on an orchard. They were able to cut costs and to expand their orchard. Eventually the Dhaliwals became interested in organic farming.

"Gurdip was being affected by the chemicals we were using," Gurmail explains. "This is what made me look to organic farming." Attracting pickers was harder when he used chemicals, Gurmail points out, because they are also affected by chemicals, and prefer to work in an organic orchard. "And the kids, of course", Gurmail adds. "You can never be sure what they are up to. It's much better to know your orchard is safe for children."

Gurmail explained that orchard farming was not a radical concept for the Dhaliwals because this is the way they farmed in India. "Not now", he says, "but when we grew up Indian farmers used hardly any chemicals". When they needed help, organic farmers in the Similkameen were quick to assist fellow organic farmers.

Top: Gurpreet Dhaliwal (left) and Gurdip Dhaliwal (on the ladder) thinning Ambrosia.
Left: Mr. and Mrs. Dhaliwal walking in the cots with two grandchildren: Amit (left) and Ruby (right, back). Amit is Gurmail and Gurdip's son. Ruby is Jagmail and Gurpreet's daughter.
Photos by Tristan Mennell

"The COABC has been very supportive," Gurmail told me. "When we were having difficulty shipping apples to the UK, the COABC was able to fix the problem quickly. It's good to belong to a community of organic farmers. It was worth it to switch."

J&G Farm now employs 10 to 15 people through the growing season. The whole Dhaliwal family lives on the farm, including Jagmail and Gurmail's parents. "Life is good here," Gurmail adds.

Gurmail Dhaliwal in the orchard.

Celebrate organic farmers, processors and handlers! Enjoy yourself! Great Food! Wonderful drink! Congratulations!

BC Organic Harvest Awards

Vancouver, November 2005

Join us in celebrating the growth of the BC organic industry at the First Annual BC Organic Harvest Awards. This inaugural celebration will take place in Vancouver in late November. The event is designed to recognize industry leaders who have made a difference and those who are launching innovative concepts to increase our industry's growth. The awards will feature superb organic cuisine, fine wine, a distinguished guest speaker and memorable entertainment.

For more information regarding the BC Organic Harvest Awards and sponsorship opportunities, please call Lionel Wilson at (604) 737-7515, or email lionel@maverickmarketing.ca

Congratulations! Celebrate organic farmers! Enjoy yourself! Great Food! Wonderful drink!

Aquaculture Discussion Continues...

An example of the level of discourse in which Directors engage: excerpts from an E-conversation between Lee MacFadyen and Peter Johnston on applying an organic standard to aquaculture.Used with permission.

Lee: Peter stated that fish farms are 'feedlots'. From this could you say that outside the net pen schools of fish are 'feedlots'? I don't think this is black and white. Schools of fish may stay in one area for a considerable amount of time when the conditions are right. Oceans function differently to terrestrial habitats. The fish farm could become a 'feedlot' unable to absorb its waste but part of the ocean function is to absorb and cleanse waste. So, it all depends on numbers and length of time.

Peter: I call them feedlots because they bring in essentially all the food that the fish eat—though there might be some slight bulk or nutrient in the water that flows through them. They bring in the food and the fish convert it into larger bodies; no primary production takes place .... All farms produce something new, usually plant material that grows (from soil, air and water). Organic farms are supposed to use rotations, cover crops, etc. to produce and enhance soil fertility. Some farms rely on bringing in a large part of their soil amendments and nutrients, but all of them produce them. Some farms ... also have animals that convert the produced feed into larger bodies.

Lee: I do not agree that no primary production takes place. We saw incredible biodiversity at Yellow Island. These lives were not being harvested, but thrived on the nutrients produced by the fish husbandry, cycled the nutrients and further contributed to the nutrient cycle. Weeds are not usually harvested either, but they thrive on the nutrients put down to feed the crop and will return excess nutrients to the soil. I wonder how many tons of fish fertilizer is spread onto land by farmers adhering to organic principles? This is waste from wild harvests, processed, and used as feed for vegetable and fruit crops....

Peter: .... If all the feed is brought in, it's a feedlot, pure and simple. It isn't evil on its own. And it isn't a farm....

Lee: ... Peter's most important point is 'It isn't evil on its own'. Fish farmers practise animal husbandry, exercising due diligence, otherwise their animals do not thrive. Those who have chosen to husband using organic principles may be on the leading edge—just as those who chose to apply organic principles to other crop production were on the leading edge back in the 1940's. ✓

Classifieds

CELEBRATE YOUR ORGANIC COMMUNITY! The Organic Islands Festival 2005 is BC's largest organic lifestyle fair. July 9 and 10, 2005, The Gardens at the Horticulture Centre, Victoria. www.organicislands.ca or (250) 656-8123.

APPLEWOOD FARM Fruitstand and Garden Center 991-Hwy 95 Golden BC. Naturally grown veggies, herbs and flowers, conventional and organic fruit in season. We have cold drinks, ice-cream, homemade hemp and ''ordinary'' bread, candy and souviners, Jonsered saws, parts and clothing, perennials, annuals, shrubs and trees. Come wander through our gardens. open June 15- 9 till 9—daily. Phone # 250-344-4618 & 250-344-2297 Also see us at the Golden Farmers Market through the summer

ASK FOR ORGANIC is a community based, sustainable enterprise that will serve consumers and suppliers of Certifed Organic products. Visit <http://www.askfororganic.com> for more information and to get involved. Contact rod@askfororganic.com

SEED GARLIC Certified organic seed garlic. Over 20 cultivars for fall planting. Rocamboles, porcelains, purple stripes and other varieties. See our 2005 catalogue online at <http://www.garlicfarm.ca>www.garlicfarm.ca or ask for a free 4-page b&w catalogue. Boundary Garlic, Box 273, Midway, BC V0H 1M0 ph: 250 449 2152, email garlic@garlicfarm.ca

PARTLY RENOVATED BUS on small organic farm, has electricity and part kitchenette, Very rustic and needs work but fairly quiet and private. Email <mailto:ediblelandscapes@sunshine.net>ediblelandscapes@sunshine.net or call (604) 885-4505 for details and terms

Organic grapes

As part of the two day Viticulture and Enology conference on July 25-26 the BC Wine Institute is organizing a half day workshop on organic grape growing issues on the morning of July 26. Admission for the workshops and the trade show is $30. Topics covered are Organic Leafhopper Control and Organic Floor Management (cover crops, weed control). For more information call Hans Buchler 250 498 2786 or email hbuchler@vip.net

Letters to the Editor

Letters to the editor are welcome. Letters must be under 500 words. We reserve the right to edit for length.

To the editor:

Given the recent (marriage?/ co-habitation?/ alliance?) between COABC and COG, and the imminent introduction of a national organic standard, it seems that the next few months, during the season when all of us producers shine brightest with our amazing local organic products, offer an opportunity for us to raise the profile of our vocation by communicating directly with Jane Q. Public through the local media outlets in our regions. With members located throughout the province, we, the farming members of the individual CBs that make up the COABC, are in a unique position to speak directly with our neighbours in straightforward language that will cut through rhetoric and will inspire even the sceptical in our communities to reconsider the many and varied benefits of a world without chemical farming.

There is no template in my pocket for this. I personally am an extremist who is willing to work for as long as it took us to get into this quagmire (50 - 75 years, I would guess) to get us out and back to what is at least potentially sustainable agricultural system.

What I propose is that in every town or region that has a local community newspaper and or radio station, at least one member of each CB write a brief letter to the editor simply requesting that the reader/listener go to the COABC web site and check it out. Check out what organic means. Check out who organic farmers are, where they are, what they grow, why they grow it the way they do.

And, without berating or evangelizing, suggest to the reader/listener that they consider joining COABC/COG and supporting the development of an agricultural system that works with nature, rather than against her.

Something like that, anyway; you know, whatever words work for you.

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Letter ...continued from page 27

It seems to me that, were COABC licensees to write such letters all over the province, say in the month of August or September, that the Bored Directors might be able to develop a media campaign targeted at the major regional newspaper and electronic outlets and we could sweep the province clean of the scourge of chemical farming.

Or at least get a few new members and some good publicity.

You could be the person to write to your local newspaper. It would take 10 minutes. Is the planet worth it?

Stephen Gallagher

Letters to the Editor

To the Editor:

"RODEOS" conjures up "good ol' boys", lassos, branding irons in the campfire and lots of beer ... now does that sound like sound organic principles?

Rodeos are using animals for entertainment - nothing more.

We're sorry for ranting, but it is rodeos that brought us to dairy instead of beef. When we lived in the Chilcotin we saw rodeos there every weekend, all summer, every year - the animal abuse and suffering was tragic. The weekend "branding" parties, castrating and branding baby calves with all the neighbours partying and drinking was no better, same crowd.

Then in 1985 we moved to the Kootenays and found a much kinder and considerate mentality as it relates to animal care. The next transition was to a more aware environmental stand on farming and subsequently to the fledgling organic group - the COABC. We have grown with the COABC, admittedly we don't agree with all the directions taken but ee have felt welcome and a part of this great community.

We have been staunch supporters of the COABC, and we are executive members of our local group, BOPA. We have been active in promoting organics to our dairy industry throughout Canada, speaking at conferences in Guelph, Red Deer and Vancouver about organics and dairying and our great organization and the standards for organic farming (including animal welfare issues).

Then along comes the proposal for COABC to put up a booth at the Cloverdale Rodeo. We were shocked, then dismayed and then angry. We felt betrayed. This is not a responsible activity for a organic association. After listening to BC Almanac CBC radio show about the Cloverdale rodeo and the predominantly negative call-ins from around this province it was clear we are not alone.

In the end, COABC did not have a booth, apparently because there was insufficient volunteer support. I think this is the " silent majority" speaking out by their non-participation, that this is not something that they wish to support.

I ask the Directors of the COABC to recognize the inappropriateness of any support of rodeos and have a clear policy in place to prevent such a travesty from ever re-surfacing: a policy for the Event Planning committee that bans rodeo events from their calender. Rodeos such as the Calgary Stampede, the Williams Lake Stampede and the Cloverdale Rodeo are predominately professional rodeo circuit events with a small fair thrown in the soften the menu. These are not to be confused with the IPE (Armstrong Fall Fair), the Rock Creek Fall Fair and others that are clearly community Fairs that happen to have a side show of some rodeo/gymkhana events. Although we support these Fairs and most of what they stand for; they are not featuring rodeo as their mainstay, and we will personally work to discourage the rodeos at those Fairs in our own ways.

Our membership in and support for the COABC depends on core issues like Humane Animal Standards and this organization's commitment to them.

Ric & Vickie Llewellyn, Jerseyland Organics ✓

Meet Your Directors

BCARA–Les Bohna

I am currently employed as a Grower/Manager for a large modern greenhouse operation in Abbotsford, producing red peppers for BC Hothouse. I also co-own and operate Murray Creek Organic Farm in Langley. Strawberries are our main crop on the farm along with tomatoes and hay. I am also contracted with serveral other farms as a crop/IPM consultant.

I have been both a director for the BCARA and COABC since March 2004. I am currently serve on several agriculture committees such as the Research and Development Committee and Industry Development Committee for the BC Greenhouse Grower's Assoc. and the Environmental Farm Plan and AGM 2006 committies for the COABC.

FVOPA–Harvie Snow

Harvie and Susan Snow run Snow Farms in Surrey. The family has been producing over 85 different organic vegetables for 9 years. They have a unique arrangement with the Municipality of Delta and the Delta Wildlife Trust to lease 60 acres of prime farmland with the proviso that the land is farmed organically. Harvie has been the COABC director for FVOPA for several years.

BOPA–Sonia Stairs

My husband and I grow seed garlic on the family cattle ranch. A few years ago a relative gave us some garlic and it did so well that before we knew it we had almost a quarter acre of different kinds of garlic. Drought conditions meant cattle ranching was pretty dismal and so we decided to try the garlic business. We already gardened organically and so it was a sensible business step to become certified organic. BOPA is our local certifying body and offers us the service we need at an attractive price since it is mainly volunteer run. We sell our seed garlic through our website www.garlicfarm.ca and our catalogue. Garlic is so fascinating that it has taken over much of our life.

IOPA–Ron Pither

Ron has 30 years of experience in organic, co-operative, private, community and fair trade food system development in BC, Central America and Cuba. He works with and mentors a wide variety of groups for global ecological sustainability and food security . He and Nikki Spooner produce seasonal salad mixes and fresh market vegetables at Varalaya Farm on Mayne Island

KOGS–Jeremy Lack

Jeremy and Nette Lack run Mad Dog Farm in Castlegar. The farm consists of mixed vegetables and fruit. Jeremy is new to the COABC Board this year.

LEOGA–Sarah Martin

Having been raised in the Yukon, I had very little experience with agriculture and food production. Hunting, gathering and shopping were the traditional methods of providing sustenance for one's self and family.

In 1998, my partner Karl Eriksen and I came home to Mariposa Organic Farm with our two young children. I was welcomed by the stunning setting, tracts of wild land, the abundant diversity of food, and I was extraordinarily blessed with the opportunity to work with and learn from my mother-in-law Lee McFadyen, a matriarch of organic farming in our valley.

Today, we produce over a dozen varieties of winter squash on the farm. We also grow field cucumbers, eggplant, tomatoes, parsley, basil, peppers and a great variety of other food in our gardens. We have a 3000 sq ft greenhouse in

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which we produce out-of-season Long English cucumbers, tomatoes, and early greens.

PACS–Tony Cetinski

Tony, Nancy and Katie Cetinski live and breathe on Suncatcher Farm in Kelowna, growing 5 acres of mixed vegetables. Our farm is one of the oldest in the Valley, entering it's 120th year of continous production, growing local food for local folks.

Tony is in his second year as a PACS representative on the COABC board of directors.

NOOA–Hermann Bruns

I've been operating our 20-acre market garden in Mara with my wife, Louise, for the past 11 years. We are certified by NOOA from day one. I have been involved on both NOOA and COABC boards in various capacities for the past 10 years from setting up the office in Vernon to initiating the website. Currently I am one of the members of the OSDP committee. When not gowing and selling produce, I like to take our two kids hiking, mountain biking, canoeing and, in winter, we spend almost every weekend cross country skiing.

PACS–Deb Foote

Deb was raised in Terrace BC where she resided until 1985. Participation in the maintenance and harvest of the family garden was an expectation of all of 7 children in her family. This was Deb's first involvement with Organic Foods (and a window into the future though she did not know it at the time).

As Grocery Purchasing Manager at Wild West Organic Harvest, one of Deb's key areas of responsibility is acting in the capacity of Organic Certification Administrator, ensuring that products are correctly identified for both Produce & Grocery listings. Deb is currently President of COABC.

PACS–Gord Forbes

Gord, along with his family in Oliver, manage 35 acres of mixed farm including fruit trees, ground crops, animals, bees and berries. The family has always looked to diversify their operation and is now expanding into the value-added sector with the addition of a new processing kitchen this spring. Gord and his brother Steve distribute their produce as far as Revelstoke to Vancouver and the Sunshine coast, attending many farmers markets. Gord is serving his first year as a director with COABC.

PACS-Marla Limousin

My husband, 2 children and I have tended Nature's Way Farm in Courtenay since last September. Nature's Way is a berry farm, growing primarily blueberries, strawberries and raspberries; we also grow seasonal vegetables and cut flowers. We wholesale, retail from the farm gate

and at two local farmers markets

When I am not farming I work in Canada's High Arctic, where I have lived and worked for 25 years as a Landscape Architect. This juxtaposition of chosen streams (farming-fertile land, design-tundra) allows me to build on the Inuit belief that humans are only the caretakers of the earth, there is no ownership, and to incorporate also Buckminster Fuller's design concept of 'spaceship earth', in my understanding of the organic community.

SOOPA–Hans Buchler

Hans resides in Oliver where he operates Park Hill Vineyards. He has been the COABC representative for SOOPA for many years. Hans has worked with the BC Wine Institute, Grape Growers Association, and is also a Director on the BC Agriculture Council. He also serves on the Board of the OSDP.

STOPA–Dieter Dudy

Dieter and Deb Kellogg operate Thistle Farm located on the west side of the scenic North Thompson River Valley just 16 kms north of Kamloops. They also operate a C.S.A (community sustained agriculture) program and since 1998, have provided farm to door delivery service throughout Kamloops.

Bio-Dynamic–Jasmin Schellenberg

Jasmin and Felix emigrated from Switzerland in 1979 to settle on Rafter 25 Ranch in the Chilcotin valley which they run with the help of their four daughters. Until 1994 they raised cattle for the commodity market. In 1995 they sold all their farm machinery and since then have eliminated chemical fertilizers and worked to reduce the feeding period from an average of 150 days to a maximum of 40 days.

The farm sells 'pasture to plate' beef, lamb, pork, and processed meats. They use guardian dogs to protect their livesotck. They also raise horses and run retreats on the farm. This is Jasmin's first year on the COABC Board of Directors.

Consumer/Environment Rep - BC Food Systems Network–Lee Fuge

Lee fills the Board position created for the BC Food Security Network. Lee's many years of experience in natural foods retailing gave her the opportunity to work with organic farmers and processors.

She lives in Victoria, where she works to promote food security in the community through membership on the Board of the Moss Street Market; promotion of a community garden policy for Victoria; and participation in public meetings and events promoting "buy local" and other sustainable food and agriculture practices. She is a member of the steering committee of the Capital Region Food and Agriculture Initiatives Roundtable (CR-FAIR), a food security network which is currently promoting the adoption of a Food Charter in the Capital Regional District.


Principles of Organic Farming and Processing as determined by the International Federation of Organic Agricultural Movements (IFOAM):
Produce food of high quality in sufficient quantity.
Interact in a constructive and life-enhancing way with natural systems and cycles.
Consider the wider social and ecological impact of the organic production and processing system.
Encourage and enhance biological cycles within the farming system, involving micro-organisms, soil flora and fauna, plants and animals.
Develop a valuable and sustainable aquatic ecosystem.
Maintain and increase long term fertility of soils.
Minimise all forms of pollution.
Create a harmonious balance between crop production and animal husbandry.
Produce fully biodegradable organic products.
Process organic products using renewable resources.
Use, as far as possible, renewable resources in locally organised production systems.
Give all livestock conditions of life with due consideration for the basic aspects of their innate behaviour.
Promote the healthy use and proper care of water, water resources and all life therein.