



What's New

Grower Group Network

The August 18th 'Grower's Group Network' conference call on 'Your Farm's Water Quality' was a success with good attendance and excellent information presented to growers.

If you would like to listen to a taping of this conference call, it is available as a download, for a limited time, at <http://certifiedorganic.bc.ca/audio/waterquality.htm>. The PowerPoint which was viewed at the same time is found at <http://www.certifiedorganic.bc.ca/rcbtoa/training/waterggnPPT.pdf>. Excellent resources relating to this topic, can be found on 'Cyber-Help, On Farm Food Safety' page, <http://www.certifiedorganic.bc.ca/rcbtoa/training/foodsafety.htm>

With the success of this session further seminars are planned.

FALL SEMINAR SERIES

Sponsored by COABC

As part of our service to growers to provide educational opportunities, COABC and Organic Extension Services are planning a *Fall Seminar Series*, to take place in November. So far, international speakers are lined up to discuss:

- Organic vegetable production, using stock free (animal free) farming methods which are achieved through green manures and crop rotations, and
- Integrated weed management, using innovative weed control methods.

Watch for more details about this informative seminar series on e-news, the listserve and at the COABC events website <http://www.certifiedorganic.bc.ca/infonews/events.php>.

Water Advisories.

Ministry of Environment water advisories regarding low flow conditions in the Thompson-Nicola and Okanagan regions for the Nicola and Okanagan Rivers. See further notice on our website.

<http://www.certifiedorganic.bc.ca/infonews/kyi.php>

Water levels are reportedly dropping rapidly in streams and aquifers due to low winter snowpacks and extremely dry weather patterns in the spring and summer. While there currently appears to be a temporary reprieve in some areas, weather predictions for the remainder of the summer are calling for continued hot, dry conditions. Some streams have already reached their lowest flows on record for this date.

Communities, businesses, agriculture, ecosystems and individuals in these regions will all be impacted as water supplies decrease. The Province has been working with local governments and industry on an action plan to manage the impacts of declining water availability, and may consider imposing mandatory water extraction restrictions using the provincial Water Act and federal Fisheries Act to address water use. However, we are told that the Province remains optimistic that successful voluntary actions could avert the need for such measures.

For more information about B.C.'s water supply situation and about helping communities, industry and agriculture deal with drought, please visit the B.C. government's drought web page at

http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/wsd/public_safety/drought_info/index.html

Water is a critical resource for agriculture and conserving water is everyone's responsibility, even more so in times of water shortage.

COABC Represented at Ministers Roundtable

COABC president Brad Reid attended the BCAC roundtable with Agricultural Minister. Below is an overview by BCAC

Minister's Round Table Meeting with BCAC Member Organization Representatives:

On August 10 representatives from across agriculture had the opportunity to meet with the new Minister of Agriculture and Lands, the Honourable Steve Thomson. The Minister said that under the current economic climate the challenge for government and industry is how to move forward and strategically address issues without significant fiscal resources. Agriculture can be assured that they have a minister who will listen, understands agriculture, who will work tirelessly on agriculture's behalf, has an open door for agricultural associations, and has strong allies in Cabinet and with other MLAs.

Under the round table format, each sector identified the top issues for their sector to the Minister. On behalf of the BCAC, Garnet Etsell, the Chair of BCAC identified declining farm income as the number one priority for BC farmers. Other issues that were mentioned by several sectors were:

- Carbon tax impacts and mitigation
- Labour supply and the importance of WALLI-2
- Importance of BCMAL industry specialists and research
- Meat regulations' impact on local production
- Expansion of the definition of farm products to include other farm activities
- Regulations that act as barriers
- Regulated marketing
- Animal care
- Attracting youth into farming and succession planning

The Round Table concluded with discussions on how industry and government can best work together strategically and move forward. The three main priority areas that were identified were declining farm income, branding BC product, and raising the profile of agriculture. Addressing farm income will start with some sector-by-sector analysis and meetings. BCAC and ARDCORP will consider options on how best to work with its government and industry partners on branding BC products, with one possible option being the revitalization of the Buy BC program. BCAC will also be holding an Ag Day in Victoria during the fall sitting of the Legislature, with a clear focus on increasing the profile of agriculture.

The Council would like to thank the many agricultural representatives that attended the Round Table and made the meeting such a success. We look forward to working with our new Minister of Agriculture and Ministry staff to address and resolve the many issues facing BC agriculture.

Canadian Agricultural Loans Act

The Canadian Agricultural Loans Act (CALA) program is a financial loan guarantee program that gives farmers easier access to credit. Farmers can use these loans to establish, improve, and develop farms; while Agricultural co-operatives may also access loans to process, distribute, or market the products of farming.

For more information see the website

<http://www4.agr.gc.ca/AAFC-AAC/display-afficher.do?id=1177344219813&lang=eng>

Agricultural Flexibility Fund

The Agricultural Flexibility Fund (AgriFlexibility) is a five year (2009-2014) \$500 million fund. Its objective is to facilitate the implementation of new initiatives, both federally and in partnership with provinces, territories and industry that will improve the sector's competitiveness and will help the sector adapt to pressures through non-business risk-management measures that will reduce costs of production, improve environmental sustainability, promote innovation and respond to market challenges.

For more information see the website

<http://www4.agr.gc.ca/AAFC-AAC/display-afficher.do?id=1247082294164&lang=eng>

Webinar capacity

Organic Extension Services with the help of the COABC are looking to develop webinar capacity in conjunction with the Canadian Farm Business Management Council. There will be a fee to host a webinar however it is a great way to connect international speakers with local producers and processors. More information will be provided to the CB's.

Call for Research Proposals - Canadian Seed Grower's Association

The Canadian Seed Growers' Association has a call for proposals for research out with a deadline of Oct 15. They identified certified organic seed production as a priority area. Max. research grants are \$16,500 for one year, with possibility of renewal for one or two years. See complete announcement below.

Andy Hammermeister, Manager of Organic Agriculture Centre of Canada, in Nova Scotia ahammermeister@nsac.ca 902-893-8037 is interested in hearing from anyone who is interested in applying for these funds to avoid competing applications. Also he is interesting in hearing from parties interested in having OACC facilitate such research for them.



Ongoing

Sponsorship Program

Who do you connect with in your daily life that may be interested in sponsoring the COABC? Health professionals, organisations that want to make an environmentally friendly statement, distributors etc...If you or a contact is interested in supporting the COABC contact Sarah Clark at admin@certifiedorganic.bc.a or (250) 260-4429.



Interesting!

Film Recommendations

When you finally get a chance to sit back and put your feet up check out these film recommendations which were made on the listserv:

The world according to Monsanto
Food Inc
Back gold
Food fight
Tortilla soup
Baraka

The future of food
Life running out of control
We feed the world (title comes from the sales slogan of Pioneer seeds).
The one straw revolution



Conference / Events

Kamloops 2010 - COABC Conference and AGM

March 5 -7, 2010
Kamloops BC

What better way to connect with others in the organic sector than by attending the COABC conference. There will be presentations, workshops, opportunities to connect and of course deliciously good organic food at the banquet.

Save the date and make a plan to attend the 2010 COABC Annual Conference and AGM

September 20th - Okanagan Organic Festival

The 4th annual Okanagan Organic Festival will be held on Sunday September 20th, 2009 at Summerhill Pyramid Winery, 4870 Chute Lake Road, Kelowna from 11am-5pm

Keynote speaker will be Percy Schmieser.

For more information see their website <http://www.okanagangreens.ca>

September 27th – NOOA Farm Tour at Helmut and Heidi Lang's, Lumby

Helmut and Heidi have been raising sheep and cattle for the last 15 years. They are focused on trying to preserve the dwindling African breeds of sheep and on developing the disease resistance of these sheep. They also raise chickens, turkeys, pigs and livestock protection dogs as well as produce apples, nuts and ornamental trees. To round it all off they have a lovely vegetable garden to provide potatoes and other produce.

The tour starts at 2 pm and will conclude with a pot-luck of barbequed lamb and beef. Please bring plates, cutlery and chairs and be prepared for some beautiful scenery.

October 21st - Feeding the Future:

Stories and Images from the New Frontier of Food and Agriculture

Michael Ableman, celebrated author of "Fields of Plenty", is coming to Centennial Theatre in North Vancouver on Wednesday, October 21, 2009 at 7:30pm to speak on Feeding the Future: Stories and Images from the New Frontier of Food and Agriculture.

Tickets: \$10, available from the Centennial Theatre Box Office at 604-984-4484 or www.centennialtheatre.com

Michael will inspire us with his stories and powerful photographic images of individuals who are using community land, backyard gardens as well as urban farms for creating socially and ecologically responsible ways of growing food. For more information please go to www.ediblegardenproject.com

For Ride Share information:

<https://online.ride-share.com/en/my/event.php?id=162>

Presented by Vancouver Coastal Health (North Shore), North Shore Neighbourhood House and the Edible Garden Project.

October 30th and December 7th – Value Plus Workshop

Value Plus™

Discover a New Crop of Opportunities for Your Farm

Attention all rural based entrepreneurs who want to learn how to tap into new value added opportunities from idea to market.

The Canadian Farm Business Management Council (CFBMC), in partnership with the B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, Business Development Program and the Small Scale Food Processor Association, is holding a two day workshop that is ideally suited to anyone wanting to start a new farm-related enterprise or to diversify an existing operation.

The two-day Value Plus™ – A Quest for New Farm Value workshop is facilitated by Gary Morton, co-author of Building Added Value Through Farm Diversification.

For only \$85.00 for both days learn to take a value-added idea and follow it from conception through the development process to finding a specific niche in the marketplace. **(\$30 for additional farm participant)**

Workshop Dates: Friday October 30, 2009 & Monday December 7, 2009
Time: 9am to 4pm
Location: Abbotsford Agriculture Centre, Room 131
1767 Angus Campbell Road
Abbotsford, BC V3G 2M3
To Register: BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands
1767 Angus Campbell Rd.
Abbotsford, BC V3G 2M3
Tel: 604 556-3057
Email: Jennifer.Curtis@gov.bc.ca

Learn to grow seed: Organic Seed Alliance fall events

Contact: Organic Seed Alliance, 360-385-7192, jadyne@seedalliance.org

This September and October, farmers and gardeners in the Pacific Northwest can learn to grow seed, steward heirlooms, and create new varieties. Living in one of the best seed growing regions in the world, Pacific Northwest growers can produce a bounty of high quality seed for home use or for sale. Whether you are interested in continuing the 10,000 year old tradition of seed saving for your home garden or in diversifying your farm income by producing seed commercially, you can what you need to know at an Organic Seed Alliance fall event.

The Organic Seed Alliance (OSA) will host three seed events in September and October. OSA is a national leader in organic seed research, education, and advocacy based in Port Townsend, WA. On September 12 and again on September 26, OSA will host a workshop covering basic seed saving and variety improvement concepts for gardeners and farmers. On October 9-10, OSA will host an advanced course covering the fundamentals of organic seed production and variety improvement for farmers. All events will be held at WSU Port Hadlock and are supported by WSU Jefferson County Extension. Please see the Organic Seed Alliance website (www.seedalliance.org), or call 360-385-7192 for more information.

September 12 or September 26 ~ Port Hadlock, WA

Title: Seed 101

Description: Learn to grow seed, steward heirlooms, and create new varieties at this class for Pacific Northwest gardeners and farmers. Whether you've saved seed before or are complete beginner, this is a great chance to learn about seed and connect with other seed savers in our region. We will cover basic seed concepts including timing of planting, ideal population sizes, preventing cross-pollination, selecting for improved varieties, seed maturation and harvest, and seed cleaning techniques.

This event is sponsored by the Organic Seed Alliance and WSU Jefferson County Extension. Registration is \$50 and includes lunch. You must register at least 7 days in advance to be included in the lunch order. Please call 360-385-7192 or e-mail jadyne@seedalliance.org to register or for more information.

Date and time: choose either September 12 or September 26. 9:00am–3:00pm

Location: Spruce Room, WSU Port Hadlock, 201 W. Patison (on Highway 19)

October 9-10 ~ Port Hadlock, WA

Title: Fundamentals of Organic Seed Production and Variety Improvement

Description: Learn the fundamental skills to produce seed and develop and adapt seed varieties for your organic farm conditions at this workshop hosted by the Organic Seed Alliance. Organic Plant Breeding Specialist Dr. John Navazio will discuss such topics as: the biology of seed production, choosing appropriate seed crops for your system and climate, maintaining the genetic integrity of varieties with appropriate population sizes and isolation distances, conducting variety trials, simple and effective breeding techniques such as mass selection and progeny selection, and processing and marketing seed.

This event is sponsored by the Organic Seed Alliance and WSU Jefferson County Extension. Registration is \$150 and includes lunch on both days. Please call 360-385-7192 or e-mail jadyne@seedalliance.org by September 29 to register and be included in the lunch order.

Dates and times: Oct 9th 8:00am-5:00pm and Oct 10th 9:00am to 4:00pm

Location: Spruce Room, WSU Port Hadlock, 201 W. Patison (on Highway 19)

Keep in Mind



If you change your address or contact information send it to your CB office as soon as possible so that you don't miss out on receiving a BCOG and other materials.

Feel free to send questions regarding the New National Standards to the Organic Extension Agent,

Rochelle Eisen at extension@certifiedorganic.bc.ca

Cyber-help <http://www.certifiedorganic.bc.ca/rcbtoa/index.html>