

INFORMATION

Yukon Agriculture Branch Quarterly Bulletin

Winter 2010

Volume 23 Issue 4



MESSAGE FROM THE AGRICULTURE BRANCH

Seasons greetings! As usual, the past year brought a full slate of events for the Yukon agriculture industry and it's time to reflect on a few of those milestones.

Uptake in the Canada-Yukon Growing Forward program continues to grow with a record 73 transfer agreements providing funding to industry projects between April 1 and October 1, 2010.

Two pilot projects were conducted to investigate the use of the mobile abattoir for poultry processing. Although the jury is still out on the economic feasibility to use the unit for poultry, a better understanding of how efficiency could be created was gained as well as recommendations on improved best practices.

The capture of eight feral horses that had been posing problems on the Alaska Highway stirred up a wave of public opinion in the fall of 2010. By capturing these horses, the safety of the horses and public travelling the Alaska Highway was improved. Good homes were found for all eight of the horses.

Alice Boland, Manager of the Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nation gardens and greenhouse, was strongly supported by the community to become Yukon Farmer of the Year for 2010. Alice was recognised for her 11 years of dedication and enthusiasm for community gardening in Carmacks and the contribution the community gardens have made towards wellness and nutrition.

This is a small sample of the agriculture community's highlights for 2010. Other industry highlights for the year included work conducted by the Potluck Co-op and the Canadian Centre for Community Renewal (CCCR). The Potluck Co-op hosted a situation mapping day to find links in the supply chain and CCCR published a research report looking at strengthening Yukon local food production.

New initiatives planned for 2011 include the development of an agriculture land linking service, connecting property owners of idle agriculture lands and the next generation of farmers looking for lands to farm (page 5). A small expansion of the Agriculture Branch research and demonstration facility is planned to make more efficient use of the new pivot irrigation system and we are also entering our 25th year as a branch of the Government of Yukon, so watch for a big event around conference time next fall.

On behalf of all of the staff at the Agriculture Branch, we wish you a festive close to 2010 and all the best in the New Year.

*Tony Hill
Director, Agriculture Branch*

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2010 YUKON FARMER OF THE YEAR

There was a terrific response to the call for nominations this year and four good candidates were put forward by industry for consideration. All four are first time nominees and include both long time contributors to Yukon agriculture and new producers who are bringing new energy to the industry.

ALICE BOLAND – 2010 FARMER OF THE YEAR

Alice was nominated for her long and passionate contribution to the community of Carmacks through the Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nation community greenhouse. In fact, Alice received the most nominations the Agriculture Branch has ever seen for a single candidate.

The Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nation community greenhouse has been operating for 11 years and is a model of success for all First Nations and community gardens.

Alice has been involved in this project from the very beginning. Nominators often referred to her commitment and passion for agriculture, living and breathing all that has to do with the cultivation of produce. Alice’s success at producing food for her community has led to overwhelming community support for the Little Salmon/Carmacks gardens and greenhouse. The greenhouse is part of the community, providing jobs, training opportunities and education in gardening and composting. Fresh produce is often donated to elders, single parents and diabetics in the community. The rest of the produce is for sale to the community.



Minister Patrick Rouble presenting Alice Boland with the Farmer of the Year award. Congratulations Alice, on being selected by your community to be the Yukon Farmer of the Year for 2010!

RAY FALLE - NOMINEE

Ray is a second generation farmer, having taken over (with his wife and business partner Vanessa) the Sourdough Sodbusters sod farm from Ray’s parents, Al and Irma. With Ray at the helm, the farm is adding a new venture in the beef industry.

Ray is credited with improving the company’s sod product through experimentation with seeding and fertilizer rates. Customer service is also a source of pride for Ray’s operation. Nominators noted that Ray takes time to educate customers on how to achieve the best results for their new grass, providing tips on installation and continuing right through to the best ways to fertilize and mow their instant lawns.

In the community it has been noted that every year sod is donated to help with Habitat for Humanity projects. Both Ray and Vanessa have been active members of the Yukon Agricultural Association (YAA) and have represented Yukon at national young farmer’s forums.

JOANNE JACKSON JOHNSON - NOMINEE

Joanne has a certified organic farm in the McClintock Valley where for the past 17 years she has developed a market garden, chicken tractor and hay farm.

Neighbours have watched Joanne tend her garden and move her chicken pens across her hay field, improving both the soil health and quality of her chickens. And despite the fact that Joanne holds several university degrees and is a professional photographer – she has found her true vocation in organic farming.

Joanne is very active in the agriculture community as chair of Growers of Organic Food Yukon (GoOFY), a director of the YAA, a member and participant of the Fireweed Community Market Society, a member of the poultry producer’s cooperative, and in assisting the Agriculture Branch on the Growing Forward project evaluation committee.



“The contribution that Alice makes – along with all of Yukon’s farmers – is one that Yukoners reap the benefits of through access to local products and healthy foods produced right here in our communities.” - Energy, Mines and Resources Minister Patrick Rouble.

CAIN VANGEL - NOMINEE

Cain started farming on a country residential lot within the City of Whitehorse. What started out as a small garden and a few chickens has grown into a farm venture with pigs, bees, and a dairy cow or two. This year Cain raised 1,600 chickens and 250 turkeys, all certified organic and did all this while developing a farm parcel in the McClintock Valley.

Over the past few years Cain has taken a cheese production course, food safety training and is currently working on a farm business assessment.

Cain is also actively involved in the community. He is a keen member in GoOFY and represents GoOFY on the Agriculture Industry Advisory Committee. He participates in the poultry producer’s cooperative, sits on the Yukon Agriculture Adaptation Council and is currently a director and treasurer for YAA. As well, Cain has represented Yukon at the national young farmer’s forum.

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Practical and flexible programs for your farm.
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INTRODUCING THE NEW CHIEF VETERINARY OFFICER

The Yukon government now has a Chief Veterinary Officer (CVO) to lead the new animal health program. Dr. Mary VanderKop joins us from the prairies, where she most recently worked as the surveillance veterinarian for Saskatchewan’s agriculture department.

The CVO focuses on issues that extend beyond an individual farmer which could affect public health or food safety. This includes controlling or preventing disease transmission between animals and monitoring for disease.

There will also be a field veterinarian hired in the next few months who can provide front line response to disease issues, but not routine veterinary care. Together, the field vet and the CVO will assess risks to the health of all Yukon animals and put in place programs to help keep healthy populations healthy.

Dr. VanderKop spent time in veterinary practice before specializing in pathology (the CSI side of animal medicine) at the Western College of Veterinary Medicine in Saskatoon. After 16 years in the Alberta animal health laboratory system dealing with disease control, she obtained a Master’s degree in public health and began working in surveillance.

“I look forward to assisting the livestock farmers here in Yukon, especially in key areas of disease management, food safety and biosecurity,” VanderKop says. “My mandate is to address animal health needs in all areas – environment, agriculture, animal welfare, community services and public health.”

The animal health program benefits humans as well, she notes. “There is growing recognition around the world of the links between human health and the health of animals, both wild and domestic,” she says. “Significant human diseases of the past decade, such as SARS and influenza, have been linked to animal sources.”

For now, Dr. VanderKop is focused on getting the Animal Health Unit fully staffed and enhancing the surveillance programs already in place in Yukon. She has already met with several agriculture groups and farmers and is committed to sharing information.

You can reach Dr. VanderKop by e-mail at mary.vanderkop@gov.yk.ca or phone (867) 456-5582 (1-800-661-0408 ext. 5582) if you have any questions about how the new animal health program might help the health and welfare of your livestock.



NORTH OF 60° AGRICULTURE
CONFERENCE AND BANQUET

With the 23rd annual North of 60° Agriculture Conference and Banquet finished it is time to reflect. The two day conference held November 5th and 6th was well attended and the banquet sold out for another year. The event is doing well and is a great opportunity to celebrate Yukon agriculture and food, and to highlight the industry.

The conference kicked off on Friday, November 5th, with an evening forum for new farmers. The New Farmers Forum exceeded expectation as noted by the number of new and existing farmers in the room to discuss agriculture opportunities and how to make your agribusiness a success. The evening was designed to be an open floor discussion but the enthusiasm of the panel took over. The panel was made up of conference presenters. Their excitement about Yukon agriculture can only mean there are some tangible opportunities in Yukon and ways to succeed.

The forum brought together new farmers and helped formalize a new farmers group. The next steps will be to continue to work with this group to foster the sharing of ideas and to provide a support network for Yukon's new farmers.

After Friday's forum the conference moved into Saturday with some big expectation and the presenters did not disappoint. Saturday started with a presentation titled *Why Do a Farm Business Assessment?* by Larry Lindquist, a farm business consultant. This presentation walked through the process of doing a farm business assessment using a fictitious Yukon farm family looking to go from a backyard

farmer to a full 12,000 bird a year broiler producer. The farm business assessment involves a review of past records and a farm's current financial situation. From there, future objectives are discussed to help determine current options in meeting profitability goals. Feedback after the presentation showed it opened the eyes for many producers on the importance of doing a financial simulation before making a dramatic change to your operation.

So you want to be a Poultry Farmer was the next presentation. Jake Davidson of Bar-D Agri Ventures in Manitoba presented the essentials of poultry farming and the key difference between poultry operations. One of the key points from Jake's presentation happened the day before when the presenters did a farm tour north of the city at one of our feed suppliers, the Yukon Grain Farm. Jake found that we already have good supplies of poultry feed in Yukon and there is some great potential for including more of what we grow into the feed. The presentation went on to identify the different nutritional needs for different operations to maximize your potential profits and improve the health of your flock.

Jake also did a talk on horse nutrition later in the day. This presentation concentrated on the details of providing the proper nutrition based on your horses need, i.e. if you have a sedentary animal you don't feed it a race horse's diet. Jake's presentation focused on the horse's digestive track and how an understanding of the digestive system gives you a better understanding of how to best feed your horse. He also highlighted six key components to a horse's diet: water, protein, carbohydrate, fat, minerals and

vitamins, and how these nutrients are used by the horse and how your feeding regime affects the utilization of these nutrients. Jake's presentation was excellent and provided a lot of detail in a very simple manner. If you have any horse nutrition concerns please contact Jake by e-mail at jake@bardagriventures.com or phone (204) 874-2257.

Right after lunch when you traditionally fall asleep, we had a presentation from Phil Kaspari that not only kept people awake, it let us know that agriculture in Yukon is in good standing. Phil talked about the Alaska agriculture industry, and where they have seen some growing pains and what is doing well. His slides highlight the beautiful backdrop of Alaska agriculture and his stories made us feel more connected to our Alaskan neighbors. Alaska agriculture has seen successes in niche markets and failures trying to create commodities markets similar to those in the south. The presentation validated the uniqueness of northern agriculture and the importance of doing things a little differently.

Continued on page 11



Photo from the Circumpolar Agriculture Conference farm tour.



YUKON AGRICULTURE LAND LINK

Connecting the next generation of farmers to existing agriculture parcels

This winter, the Agriculture Branch is piloting a new service called the Yukon Agriculture Land Link. The seed for this service was planted at the New Farmers Forum that was held as part of the North of 60° Agriculture Conference this fall. Feedback from the forum identified that accessibility of land for new producers is a challenge. To help meet this challenge, the Agriculture Branch is launching the Yukon Agriculture Land Link.

What is the Yukon Agriculture Land Link?

The service is an opportunity to connect landowners looking for alternative uses for their idle agriculture property and land seekers looking for land to start their agriculture farm enterprise.

Why is it needed?

For new farmers, the high cost of land is seen as a barrier to getting started. Connecting new farmers with landowners may provide an entry level alternative while providing a way to establish a business track record. For landowners, connecting with land seekers provides them with the opportunity to improve land utilization, increase the value of their farm land and/or provide an income stream.

What activities are covered?

The relationship between land owners and land seekers can span a wide range of opportunities as long as it is agriculture related. It could be as simple as connecting horse owners with grazing land or making a portion of underutilized land available to a new farmer. It could also be something more complex, such as the transition of ownership of a farm enterprise over an extended period of time. Whatever relationship is settled on, the parties will be responsible to communicate what the arrangement will be, and how it will best serve the expectations of both parties.

The Agriculture Branch's role

The Agriculture Branch will be starting to enroll those interested in the Yukon Agriculture Land Link right away. The branch will be collecting the names of owners and seekers and will facilitate linking the two together. As contact information is gathered, the Agriculture Branch will exchange this information between parties based on compatibility. Only those enrolled in the service will have access to the information.

How to enrol in this service

Interested landowners and land seekers can register with the Yukon Agriculture Land Link service by e-mailing: agriculture@gov.yk.ca or by calling (867) 667-5838, toll free in Yukon 1-800-661-0408 extension 5838. Please forward your contact details along with the following information:

Landowners with an agriculture land opportunity:

- Define what kind of arrangement you are interested in. This could include leasing, partnerships, mentoring or fill in the blank with your own idea;
- Farm description including its current state, soil types, infrastructure and equipment available; and
- Acreage available for new farmer. This can be a small piece of the property or the majority of your property.

Land seekers desiring agriculture land:

- Outline of experience, willingness to farm and a general farm plan; and
- Land and equipment needs.



TERRA MADRE 2010

By Simone Rudge, Aurora Mountain Farm

In October 2010, I was lucky to be one of seven Yukoners nominated to attend Terra Madre, the world meeting of food communities in Turin, Italy.

The opening ceremonies took place on Thursday afternoon with a procession of representatives from each of the countries attending. What an amazing sight to see all those flags and know that so many people all over the world share our concerns about global food systems and care enough to come together to talk about alternatives.

After registering, we were told where to find the bus that would take us to and from our lodgings in Oulx, near the French border, for the duration of the conference. Organizers for this conference arranged transportation, meals and accommodation for all 6000+ delegates in the area surrounding Turin. Our group consisted of about half of the Canadian delegates along with three young Italian volunteers. The 1.5 hour morning and evening bus ride provided a great opportunity to network with other farmers, chefs, and food activists from across Canada as well as find out more about the local food movement in Italy – Km Zero – which focuses on sourcing food from as close as possible. I love the name, because to me, that sounds like starting right in your own backyard.

I'd like to take you on a guided tour of just our first day at Terra Madre. On Friday, the morning sessions focused on policy. Since Slow Food is a whole philosophy for a good, clean, and fair life, it is important to share information on all aspects of the movement.

To ensure everyone is working towards a common goal, it is helpful to talk about what each member or convivium believes is the role of the organization and what networks are possible and desirable with others working towards similar ends. The issues were separated into eight main topic ideas focusing on social systems, energy, biodiversity, shared resources, rights, education, traditional knowledge, and well-being.

Some of the insights gained at these policy meetings were presented at the closing ceremonies. The philosophy of Slow Food is that it stands at the crossroads of ecology and gastronomy, ethics and pleasure. The Slow Food association believes in the concept of neo-gastronomy – recognition of the strong connections between plate, planet, people and culture.

The Terra Madre conference is held next to and in conjunction with Salone del Gusto, an amazing (and HUGE) trade show of food producers from across Italy and around the world. Instead of joining the other delegates for lunch, we spent the lunch hour touring and sampling at Salone del Gusto which provided an opportunity to talk with farmers, vintners, brewers and distillers, bee keepers, cheese makers, butchers, and food processors as well as to taste (and buy) their products.

Taste education is an important part of the Slow Food movement. Outside the session rooms, workshops were set up to share information and educate delegates between sessions. There was opportunity to taste many of the heritage apples of Italy as well as honey from around the world. An experienced apiarist (beekeeper)

guided participants through the varieties starting with the mildest clover honey and working up to the strongly flavoured Castagna (chestnut) honey well known across Italy.

Exercises in taste education included identifying samples of salty, sweet, umami (savory), bitter, and sour; identifying aromas and intensity of aroma; touch sensitivity and textures; sounds; and even ordering blended colour tones. Participants were able to work through the materials in a workshop setting and copies of the text were available for those who might want to host workshops when they got back home.

In the afternoon, we joined the sessions going on in the "Youth" area. The youth contingent was particularly active and energizing (and very welcoming of us older farmers). We spoke with members of a worldwide youth food movement working from the ground up to educate and share the politics of good, clean, fair food. Facilitators were really encouraging people to become active in supporting each other by sharing food sources as well as sharing ideas for opportunities for sharing food.

Many have been working with local farmers or chefs. They discussed creative ways of complying with health regulations while hosting potluck events or "eat-ins," as well as ideas for supporting individual food production with "guerrilla gardening," and local food production through "farm mobs" and "sell-ins." In many ways the activism and enthusiasm was reminiscent of the '60s hippie movement but with this current movement focused on the politics of food. The workshop facilitators had some really practical advice about waste management



for big food events as well as clever ideas using dinner theatre to educate about food issues.

After our busy first day, it was great to get back to our lodgings and share in a typical Italian meal. As we ate, we were looking forward to the next three days when we would be attending sessions on social programs in agriculture and food; on fair pricing; the role of research in supporting the use of sustainable practices; less meat/better meat – focusing on grass-fed meat and humane slaughter; continuing to make connections with other farmers, producers, and food activists, and, of course, more Salone del Gusto.



Photo of the Salone del Gusto, a trade show for food producers from across Italy and around the world.

POTLUCK COMMUNITY CO-OPERATIVE

By Heidi Marion

The Potluck Community Co-operative began as a group of people wanting better food. We want to recognize ingredients on labels and we want to know where our food comes from. We want to invest our food dollars in local food, for example the eggs from Earth Wisdom Farm, beef from Farmers 3, and broiler chickens from Cain Vangel and Michelle Murphy. When local food is not available, we want to buy regional food from BC or Washington that has been grown using regenerative farming practices. We want a better choice of the food we eat and to support the development of food sovereignty in Yukon.

We see expanding food agriculture and small gardens as the way forward in addressing food security concerns. We believe that when we support local businesses, such as when we buy vegetables from Susan Ross and Brian Lendrum's farm, we are not only choosing local, but we are not buying imported food. Having local food all year is a lofty goal, but it is the only way we can achieve food security.

We formed a co-operative. When we went public, we got about 70 local eaters investing \$100 each in the co-op right away. This told us our work is relevant to many, and provided us with the cash evidence that helped us get funding. Our goal is 100 founding members. (Memberships will be adjusted for the various member types like low-income, producer, etc. before we actually have something to sell.)

We saw that we needed new information about both agriculture in Yukon and our prospective customers. How many people would buy food like us? Should we open a health food store? Should we have a box program? Do most people want to shop online? Do people prefer retail, or food pick-up, or do they want to have small satellite food centers weekly in their community's school gym? There are many ways other food co-ops have shaped themselves, and models abound. But which one would be right for us?

Part of our research was done, coincidentally, over the past summer by Melisa Zapisocky. Melisa worked for the Canadian Centre for Community renewal to put a finger on the state of food security in Yukon (see page 9). Now that we know where we stand, our co-operative took the first step toward fortifying our local food system by charting its course. On Saturday, November 20, we met with members of groups involved with food agriculture, gardening, retail and government to chart our course forward.

The other part of our work this winter is to produce a feasibility study and a business plan. By the spring, we should know what form our co-operative will take, and how big it can afford to be.

Our long-term goal is to be profitable, and to invest in local agriculture. Right now we have a lot of work ahead of us. We are focused on the information gathering that will fill our winter. We are still welcoming founding memberships. At our upcoming AGM we will be adjusting our by-laws to have memberships accessible to all.

For more information on the Potluck Community Co-op, go to www.potluckcoop.ca or contact the potluck co-op by e-mail at info@potluckcoop.ca or phone (867) 668-5871.

CIRCUMPOLAR AGRICULTURE
CONFERENCE

The Circumpolar Agriculture Association along with Bioforsk (Norway's institute for agricultural and environmental research) hosted the 7th Circumpolar Agriculture Conference in Alta, Norway in early September. This year's conference objective was to further enhance the understanding of "Circumpolar Agricultural and Land Use Resources – Prospects and Perspectives for Productions and Industries." The conference was divided into four thematic areas, focusing on:

- climate change – challenges and opportunities,
- unique qualities in circumpolar products,
- traditional knowledge as a basis for new business development, and
- rural tourism in support of multifunctional agriculture.

The opening address by the organizers highlighted that agriculture is changing rapidly and there are more changes coming. The world food situation is rapidly being redefined by financial crisis, climate changes, high energy prices, globalization and urbanization. The role of agriculture and food production has been given renewed global attention.

Agriculture in northern Norway, like agriculture in all far northern latitudes, is facing great challenges but also opportunities due to the global climate change situation which seems to affect northern areas the greatest. Norway has the northernmost agricultural activity in the world due to a mild climate along the coastline and in the valleys, even up to 70°N in Finnmark. To combat the climate change challenges so far north,

Norway is working to be more aware of how farming will be affected and how farming will need to adapt.

Norway's agriculture industry has identified that quality aspects such as clean, natural food and healthy animals and plants should be focused on as competitive advantages for northern agriculture. As well, topics such as genetic resources and biodiversity, landscape preservation, food security and safety, cultural heritage and rural viability should also influence new possibilities in northern multifunctional agriculture.

There were 10 delegates from Yukon at this year's conference, representing the diversity of Yukon's agriculture community. Each representative brought back their own perspective and learnings from the conference and attendees have been working to disseminate the information from the conference. The following is a list of key topics or ideas from the conference:

- Research into the understanding of the beneficial properties associated with northern agriculture. Bioforsk has done research into the effects of the longer day length and different light spectrum associated with northern agriculture and how this contributes to some crops having properties that are potentially healthier due to the increased amounts of vitamin C, antioxidants, and glucosinates found in the plant.
- Impact of climate change and agriculture potential and downfalls. An increase in temperature is allowing for more variety of agriculture products, but on the negative side this increase in temperature also brings insect, weed and invasive species concerns.

- The need to develop food security and build capacity in a sustainable way. The concept of one agriculturally sustainable family/community at a time. A shift back to remote communities producing more of their basic food requirements.
- Exchange of information with regards to traditional knowledge and northern medicinal plants. The idea of using the colours of food to help influence the way you eat and the health benefits you receive from this.

For more information please refer to the Circumpolar Agriculture website www.caa-cac.org and click on "Conference 2010" on the left side of the webpage.

GoOFY representative and poster presenter Lisa Werther, did an excellent job summarizing the conference in her report which is available on the Agriculture Branch website (www.agriculture.gov.yk.ca).

Information about the conference can also be shared by just talking to one of the Yukon delegates:

- Jeanne Burke, Artic Health Research Network
- Chad Gubalal, Agriculture Research Committee
- Bonnie Dalziel, Seniors Gardening Group
- Ingrid Wilcox, Educator and Columnist for What's Up Yukon
- Randy Lewis, Circumpolar Agriculture Association North American Vice President
- Bev Gray, Aroma Borealis
- Rick Tone & Ralph Mease, Yukon Agriculture Association
- Lisa Werther, Growers of Organic Food Yukon
- Tony Hill, Agriculture Branch

The Yukon delegation was funded by the Canada/Yukon Growing Forward agreement.



YUKON FOOD FOR THOUGHT

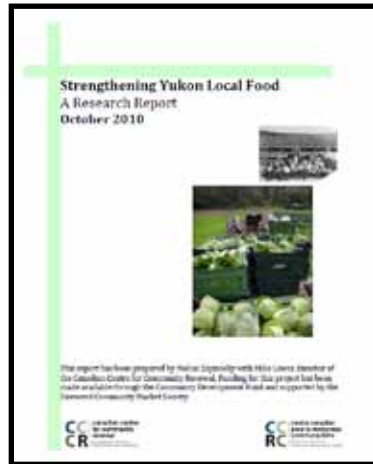
Melisa Zapisocky and the Canadian Center for Community Renewal helped build a picture of the Yukon food system this summer with her research report “Strengthening Yukon Local Food.” Zapisocky visited and worked on a number of farms in the Whitehorse and Dawson areas gathering information and examining Yukon agriculture and its food network. She noted that our local food system has many challenges, but also offers glimpses of the many opportunities our industry has. Zapisocky’s review of Yukon’s local food system provided a fresh perspective of our industry and some food for thought.

The following is adapted from Strengthening Yukon Local Food.

In Yukon, many of the requisite components of a food system are barely visible. The report’s recommended strategies could realistically test whether there is the mettle and capacity among Yukon people to get better organized to take a strategic step forward.

A long-term strategic vision that will strengthen the linkages between the multiple food system ‘pieces’ with firm and aggressive steps towards immediate and focused action are needed. Already, proactive consumers – the so called engaged eaters – are finding meaningful and intentional ways to access local, regional and organic food. Many are working to build new options and partnerships from the grassroots up, including farmers markets, buying clubs, a food co-op and community gardens/greenhouses. This research and the models it offers will benefit those on the ground who already are in the thick of it and will help further build momentum around building a sustainable Yukon food system. The report contributes to

understanding of the current Yukon situation and provides ideas of a way forward that will be strategically useful.



“Growing in the Yukon environment is not for the faint. Yet, many stick with it and love what they do.”

This report outlines some of the challenges, including:

- specific Yukon production models,
- overcoming climatic conditions,
- looming succession issues,
- building and improving the connections of local food value chains,
- increasing production capacity, and
- increasing awareness of the importance of local food production.

Opportunities for farmers:

- who capitalize on the value chains,
- with the entrepreneurial spirit to capture niche markets,
- seek technological advantages,
- investigate alternate markets, and
- add value to their product.

One of the key opportunities is building a dedicated and loyal audience that is willing to pay the true cost of food production. It is a small percentage of consumers that

will rely on farm-gate sales or buy whole chickens or sides of beef. A select audience is proud of the fact they support local, organic food and creative avenues will continue to emerge where consumers connect with producers.

Another suggestion is to examine un-tapped markets such as local meat, eggs and vegetable retail as well as value-added products. It is important to note that these are only ‘opportunities’ if the product matches the farmers capacity, knowledge and resource base (including land and infrastructure).

There is also the opportunity to grow to match the capacity of the market. Here it is important to figure out ‘what makes sense’ with your personal and business goals in mind. For example, if a new farmer has capacity to wash and package salad mix (romaine, etc) there appears to be an opportunity to contract with mining camps to provide the value-added product.

Farm succession is also upon us, with older farmers retiring and new people wanting to farm. Agriculture land is expensive to access or tends to be located in less desirable areas. It is important that new farmers see the benefit of good soil quality, which takes many years to build and help to keep arable and ‘developed’ land in agricultural capacity for the years to come. Would existing farmers lease out extra acres at an affordable rate? There may be enough interest to create a virtual ‘match-maker’ database to link up land holders with interested farmers. See the Yukon Agriculture Land Link article (page 5).

The full report is available online at: fireweedmarket.yukonfood.com or if you would like a printed copy please stop by the Agriculture Branch.



EQUINE ASSOCIATION OF YUKON

Equine Association of Yukon is the umbrella organization for the horse clubs in Yukon. It is fairly new; incorporated as a society in March 2008. On April 8, 2010, Equine Association of Yukon became affiliated with Equine Canada, making it an official Territorial Sport Organization (TSO), governed under Yukon's *Recreation Act*. As a TSO, the association is responsible for the development of coaches and officials as well as athletes. The affiliation with Equine Canada gives a direct communication link with the National Sport Organization through the Equine Canada Provinces/Territorial Council, which allows Yukon to participate and have an active voice.

Yukon riders benefit by having local access to structured and standardized English and Western riding instruction. The Equine Canada "Learn to Ride" program is self-paced and student/coach led.

Yukon Horse and Rider Association and Watson Lake Riding Association are member clubs and receive some financial support for events and participants in local horse shows. Equine Yukon is also able to support these clubs in their applications to the various funding agencies.

Equine Association of Yukon has individual memberships available with similar benefits to membership in Horse Council BC and/or Alberta Equestrian Federation but at a much lower cost. The major benefit is liability insurance as well as personal accident insurance for the horse owner. Optional insurance is also available as well as a reduced rate to *Prairie and Pacific Horse Journal*.

Individual members are valuable assets to Equine Yukon. As the membership base grows, the association will be able to deliver more programs tailored to our local horse owners and riders. Current funding comes from the Yukon Recreation Advisory Committee and has been used to deliver a National Coaching Certification Theory Program and Equine Canada Rider Level Testing.

Possible events to take place this winter and spring are Horses 101 for new horse owners, First Aid for Horses, and spring fitness training for youth riders.

The Board of Directors of Equine Yukon consists of volunteers. The next AGM will take place in January at the Sport Yukon building, date and time to be announced. Please contact Vibeke Coates if being a board member appeals to you. Your investment of ideas, skills and a small amount of time will be sincerely appreciated.

Individual membership forms for 2011 are available at The Riding Arena, C&D Feeds, The Feed Store, Sport Yukon, and the Yukon Agriculture Branch. For more information about the "Learn to Ride" programs and/or membership forms, please contact: equineyukon@gmail.com or Vibeke Coates at (867) 633-3012

INDOOR RIDING ARENA
"a hidden treasure"

The Indoor Riding Arena, located at Mile 7 on the North Klondike highway, is exploding in popularity with the horse community as more and more riding enthusiasts learn about the "balmy" 4°C indoor conditions. The large heated arena is attached to a five stall barn where horses are groomed and tacked up before riding. The viewing lounge above the barn that looks into the arena is a great place to relax in front of the fireplace and watch the riders.

Most people when they come out to see the place are just blown away by how great it is. Riders are happy to be able to use their horses for 12 months, instead of 5! One youngster was quoted as saying she "loves the arena even more when it's -30 outside!" The arena is developing a great sense of community for horse owners. All kinds of riders are coming out to use the facilities and each bringing a little something to make it more special, including jump standards, a bridge, and other "props." And everyone chips in to help keep it clean and tidy.

The Riding Arena is a center of activity with recreational riding, jumping, visiting clinicians, lessons, horse boarding and more. For information and rates please visit www.theridingarena.com or call Sharon Jensen at (867) 667-2030.





NORTH OF 60° AGRICULTURE Conference and Banquet continued...

We would like to thank all the presenters and those who attended for making the conference such a success. We received some excellent feedback with regards to the conference and are still open to any additional comments. We will be using the feedback to hopefully improve on next year's conference and provide topics that are relevant to the industry's needs.

The banquet got underway with Minister Patrick Rouble addressing the agriculture community on the industry successes for 2010. After dinner Randy Lewis and Jeannie Burke presented their experiences and learnings from the 2010 Circumpolar Agriculture Conference held in Norway and Alice Boland was presented with the Yukon Farmer of the Year award. Judging by all the smiling faces and full stomachs the evening was seen as another accomplishment for 2010.

Thank you to all those who contributed to the meal and banquet:

- Lendrum Ross Farms, Susan Ross and Brian Lendrum
- Yukon Grain Farm, Steve and Bonnie Mackenzie-Grieve
- McClintock Valley Farms, Joanne Jackson Johnson
- Aurora Mountain Farms, Tom and Simone Rudge
- Yukon Meat and Sausage
- The Farm Gate, Cain Vangel and Michelle Murphy
- Westmark Hotel and staff
- Silver Ravens Band
- Mary Lumbers

The conference and banquet is funded in part through the Canada/ Yukon Growing Forward agreement.



DO I NEED A WATER LICENSE FOR MY AGRICULTURE PROJECT?

Adapted from a Yukon Water Board information sheet

When you are starting to develop a farm development plan, you will also want to consider whether you need water. Most often, water is required to either irrigate crops or raise livestock for commercial purposes. You may want to research what water source is available, how far away from your property it is, how you will access it, what other users may depend on that water source, and how much water you may require for your enterprise.

Depending on the type of project you plan, you may need a water license. The Waters Regulation, Schedule 10 (go to www.yukonwaterboard.ca) provides a list of activities that will require a type B or a more complex type A water licence. The most common triggers for a water licence for an agricultural undertaking are

- use of more than 300m³ of water per day;
- construction of a structure across a watercourse 5 m or more in width at ordinary high water mark at point of construction;
- all deposit of waste; and,
- watercourse training, if you need to construct, for example, an instream reservoir for your pump intake.

In the majority of cases, an agricultural project requires an assessment under the *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act (YESAA)*. You are encouraged to start both the YESAA process and the water licensing process at the same time to avoid unnecessary delays. Once your application has all relevant information and a decision document is issued by the Yukon government, the Yukon Water Board will initiate its public comment period (usually 2 - 3 weeks) and then a decision will be made by the Yukon Water Board whether to issue a licence or not and with what terms and conditions.

Water licences can be issued for a maximum of 25 years.

If you are unsure whether your specific circumstances require a water licence, phone the Yukon Water Board at (867) 456-3980 and the staff will be able to help you. In some cases, they will also consult with a Water Inspector who will make the ultimate determination whether a water licence is required.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

YUKON MADE STORE

Open 11 am to 5 pm Tuesday to Saturday, Frank Slim Building, Shipyard Park. You can find the work of over 20 local artisans as well as information about the outdoor market and a library for the Growers of Organic Food Yukon and information about the Yukon Food Processors Association production of nutrition facts panels for local products.

More information is available through email yukonmadestore@yukonfood.com

FIREWEED MARKET KITCHEN

There is still a daily offering (11 am to 4 pm) of food and drinks, but the focus has changed from local food to supporting skill development. The kitchen is now operated daily by Challenge through a joint project with Mental Health Services.

The kitchen is still available for processing or workshops, however the Fireweed Community Market Society will be cancelling their contract with the City of Whitehorse at the end of March to allow Challenge to apply for full responsibility.

The kitchen is located in the Frank Slim Building, Shipyard Park. For more information please call the Fireweed community market office at (867) 393-2255 or send an email to fireweedmarket@yahoo.ca.



MERRY CHRISTMAS from the Agriculture Branch staff and here is to a new year with timely rains, warm weather and a bountiful harvest.

YUKON MASTER GARDENER COURSE

The Yukon College is now administering the Yukon Master Gardeners course. The course still provides northern examples with a focus on management that is effective for cold climates. A series of instructors deliver the course, giving you a broad background in plant botany, physiology, taxonomy, soils, compost, outdoor gardening, greenhouse management, lawn care, houseplants, pests and pest control, medicinal plants, woody perennials and ornamental horticulture. The course is presented in partnership with the Yukon Agriculture Branch.

The course will be held evenings and weekdays on Tuesday and Thursday 6-9 and Saturday 9-4 Starting Tuesday, March 29 to Tuesday, April 26, 2011
Course Reference Number: 20258
Cost: \$250 GST: \$12.50
Contact the College for more information (867) 668-8800 or 1-800-661-0504



INFARMATION IS:

A Yukon government newsletter published by the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, Agriculture Branch. If you would like to add or remove your name from the newsletter mailing list, comment on an article or contribute a story, please feel free to contact us.

Agriculture Branch Contact Information:
Energy, Mines and Resources
Agriculture Branch
Box 2703, Whitehorse, YT, Y1A 2C6

(867) 667-5838 | Fax: (867) 393-6222
toll-free outside of Whitehorse
1-800-661-0408 ext. 5838

E-mail: agriculture@gov.yk.ca

Online: www.agriculture.gov.yk.ca

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