

INFARMATION

Yukon Agriculture Branch Quarterly Bulletin

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MESSAGE FROM THE AGRICULTURE BRANCH

It's amazing what warm dry weather will do when it arrives at the right time. For hay farmers, those warm days leading up to the Discovery Day weekend provided the window needed to finish harvesting a good crop. Vegetable and small fruit growers saw crops size up and start to mature and grain growers watched heads filling and straw colours fading from green to gold.

I visited the Fireweed Community market on the Thursday of that warm spell and noted at least four vendors selling carrots and at least four more with other fresh produce for sale. I was also able to purchase fresh eggs (I arrived early), locally produced goat cheese and could have had an early meal of locally raised elk or bison. Speaking with vendors and consumers it was apparent that the social connection between the two groups and each other was a big part of what makes the market experience so enjoyable. Combine that with a warm, sunny afternoon, good food and shopping and it all works out to be an experience you want to be part of.

The Federal Minister of Agriculture, Chuck Strahl visited the Yukon in early August, taking the opportunity to meet with producers and learn about farming and farm issues in the north. The meetings went well and even though Minister Strahl was moved from Agriculture to Northern Affairs the following week it was a good opportunity to have him get to know us and understand the role agriculture plays in developing the Yukon economy.

Minister Strahl is being succeeded by the Honourable Gerry Ritz. Minister Ritz was first elected to Parliament in 1997, and was re-elected in 2000, 2004 and 2006. Minister Ritz was formally Secretary of State for Small Business and Tourism and has also served as the Chair of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-food. Minister Ritz is a former farmer and contractor from Rosetown Saskatchewan.

Coming this fall, on Saturday November 3, will be the 20th Annual Yukon Agriculture conference and banquet. To celebrate our twentieth year we are planning a bigger event than in the past few years with an expanded number of conference topics ranging from the new organic regulations to the Yukon Agriculture Multi-Year Development Plan. There will be entertainment at the banquet and some featured speakers at both events. The conference and banquet will be at the High Country Inn in Whitehorse so be sure to contact either Darlee or Mary Lynn at 667-5838 to register and purchase your banquet tickets.

Best regards

Tony Hill
Director Agriculture Branch

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NORTHERN AGRICULTURE

CANADA'S NEW GOVERNMENT UNDERSCORES THE IMPORTANCE OF NATIONAL WATER SUPPLY EXPANSION PROGRAM (AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD CANADA NEWS RELEASE)

WHITEHORSE, Yukon, August 7, 2007

The Honourable Chuck Strahl, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, and the Honourable Archie Lang, Yukon Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, highlighted the benefits of a \$220,000 contribution towards agricultural water supplies in Yukon at a ranch along the Takhini River. The Yukon government's contribution is \$110,000, including \$90,000 in-kind support.

"The relationship between Yukon farmers and the land is one that is built on tradition and sound environmental stewardship," said Minister Strahl. "Through this program, Canada's New Government is building on this tradition and helping to develop the local agriculture industry by helping to create, protect and secure sources of quality and reliable water."

Through the Program, successful applicants are receiving technical and financial assistance for three types of water projects: Tier One, individual on-farm water supply projects; Tier Two, multi-user water supply infrastructure; and Tier Three, water-supply related strategic initiatives and studies to benefit larger areas and groups of agricultural water users.

"The Yukon government is pleased to partner with the Federal government to assist Yukon's agriculture industry in securing water supply," said Minister Lang. "Whether the funding is used to drill wells or develop irrigation systems, this infrastructure program will help many Yukon farmers and ranchers improve their economic viability and environmental sustainability."

The announcement took place at the Rafter A Ranch owned by Dave and Tracey Andrew. The installation

of an alternative watering system, a project assisted under Tier One of the program, will help the Andrews increase their livestock.

The Canada-Yukon Water Supply Expansion program is being administered under the authority of the National Water Supply Expansion Program, a \$60 million national agricultural water program. The program was developed to help strengthen Canada's agricultural sector by providing financial and technical assistance to producers to protect, develop and enhance rural water supplies nationally.

For additional program information, please contact the Yukon Agriculture Branch at (867) 667-5838 or toll free at 1-800-661-0408 (ext. 5838); Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) at (780) 349-3916 or the AAFC Client Service Centre at 1-800-667-8567; or visit the Program's Website www.agr.gc.ca/h2o.



Photo: Federal government announces importance of national water supply program at Rafter A Ranch. From left to right: Dave Andrew, Tracey Andrew, Federal Minister Chuck Strahl and Territorial Minister Archie Lang

NORTHERN AGRICULTURE

NOMINATIONS FOR 'FARMER OF THE YEAR'

Our annual fall conference is on the horizon and, as in past years, the Agriculture Branch is calling for nominations for Farmer (or Farm Family) of the Year. The award is to be presented at the annual agriculture banquet on November 3, 2007 at the High Country Inn in Whitehorse.

Who put in the effort to stand out this year? Who treats their animals with an extra bit of TLC? Who has gone above and beyond as a neighbour?

Nominations should be submitted in writing to the Agriculture Branch with a brief explanation of why the candidate(s) are worthy of the award. Nominations may state their contribution to agriculture development in the Yukon, development of agri-business, assistance to the future of agriculture in Yukon, good farm management practices or any other reason you feel your candidate should be chosen. The deadline for nominations is Wednesday, October 31, 2007 at 4:00 p.m. This will allow time to compile the nominations, select a winner, engrave the award and collect a little background information.

There are many people who have made a contribution to agriculture in Yukon over the past year. All the nominations must be in writing and signed by the nominator(s). Letters, facsimiles and e-mails will be accepted. We are located in room 320 of the Elijah Smith Building in Whitehorse.

Fax: (867) 393-6222
Email: marylynn.drul@gov.yk.ca

NEW REGULATIONS FOR ORGANIC PRODUCTS INDUSTRY

New regulations have been brought in by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada to protect Canadian consumers and support the growth of the organic products industry. The *New Organic Products Regulations* will protect consumers against false organic claims and will govern the use of a new Canada Organic logo. The purpose of the regulations is not only to protect against deceptive and misleading claims on organic products but to strengthen the organic industry's capacity to respond to international and domestic market opportunities.

The regulations are being phased in and come into force on December 15, 2008. Products certified as meeting the revised Canadian standard for organic production and that contain at least 95% organic ingredients will be permitted to use the Canada Organic logo. Following the phase in period, it will be mandatory that all organic products be certified for interprovincial and international trade. Canada joins more than 40 other countries worldwide with organic regulations.



More information on the new regulations will be presented by Claire Desmarais organic inspector at The North of 60° Agriculture Conference Saturday, November 3rd, 2007 at The High Country Inn.

For a copy of the regulations and information on the Organic Production Systems, General Principles and Management Standards, visit the Canadian Organic Growers website at www.cog.ca and click on Organic Standard and Regulations under All About Organics tab.



Photo: Recently cut hay field at Eldorado Game Ranch, along the Takhini River

SCIENCE & RESEARCH

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 2006 FOOD STATISTICS
(ADAPTED FROM STATISTICS CANADA AGRICULTURE DIVISION)

Canadians were eating more cereal products, yogurt, pork, beef and poultry on a per capita basis, according to the 2006 snapshot of food available for consumption. On the other hand, they preferred less milk and sugar, and fewer oils, fats and vegetables in their diet. The amount of other key products available for consumption, such as eggs, fish, cheese and fresh fruits has remained stable in general.

Cereals rise to a record

Total cereals available from the food supply, amounted to a record high 61.0 kilograms (kg) per person in 2006, up from 60.3 kg in 2005. These grain-based products include pasta, bakery products and cereal-based snacks. Cereal popularity rose rapidly during the 1990s, gaining over 20 percent during that time. Generally, consumption has stabilized since then.

Canadians continue to incorporate rice into their diet, eating 6.7 kg annually in 2006, nearly double that of 1990.

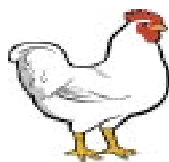
Less sugar in the diet

People were not dipping into the sugar bowl as often in 2006 and considerably less than past decades. In 2006, Canadians were spreading a little more honey while pouring a little less maple syrup.

More meat

The amount of beef available for consumption rose from 13.6 kg per person to 13.9 kg. Although there has been some fluctuation, the amount of beef available from the food supply has been more stable after trending down from the mid-1970s to the early 1990s.

The amount of pork available rose modestly from 9.5 kg to 9.7 kg following a 13.5 percent decline the previous year. Domestically, pork faces competition from both the beef and poultry sectors. Canadians export more pork than they consume, because of high external demand and favourable exchange rates. Exports of pork meat are 44 percent higher than the total available for consumption in Canada.

**Poultry keeps on climbing**

Poultry consumption, which has been climbing over time, inched up in 2006 to reach 13.4 kg/person. Canadians chose poultry more often in 2006 such that compared to 1976, they ate 71 percent more.

Eggs, fish and cheese remain popular

Each Canadian ate approximately 12.3 dozen eggs in 2006 or almost 3 eggs per week. This is similar to the prior year level.

The quantity of fish available for Canadian consumption remained stable when compared to recent times resting at 6.5 kg per person in 2006. Fish demand appears to be fairly steady this decade despite the fact that it fluctuates a little from year to year.

The amount of cheese Canadians demanded stabilised at 9.9 kg per person in 2006.

Although 2006 data indicated that Canadians may enjoy their ice cream, they ate a little less in 2006 or 5.8 litres per person. This is down 24 percent from a decade ago.

At the same time yogurt continues to gain in popularity due in part to the development of tastier and innovative new products. Canadians ate 4.9 litres of yogurt on average in 2006, up 3.4 percent from last year and more than double the level from a decade earlier.

Milk consumption dips

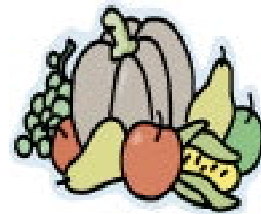
Milk continued its long-term downward trend falling 0.6 percent in 2006 to 58.7 litres per person. Though Canadians are aware of the fat content of their milk, they still like their table cream. A favorite with coffee, drinkers reached for 2.1 litres of table cream in 2006. The level was nearly four times greater than ten years earlier.

Fruits unchanged and vegetable consumption is down

The amount of fresh fruits available remained virtually unchanged from 2005 at 37.6 kg per person. Compared to a decade ago, the total has risen 12.2 percent. At the same time, the use of processed fruits (canned, frozen or dry) jumped 5.2 percent to total 8.0 kg/person in 2006.

On average, fresh vegetables available for consumption dipped to 37.8 kg in 2006 (excluding potatoes), 2.5 percent fewer than the previous year. Popular vegetables include carrots, onions, tomatoes and peas. Generally, fresh vegetables available climbed from the early seventies and then stabilised at levels first attained in the mid-nineties. It is now over 50 percent higher than it was in 1970.

Total potato consumption is included in the total fresh vegetables despite the fact that they may be consumed



SCIENCE & RESEARCH

as french fries or potato chips. Recently, experimental data has been incorporated into the program that displays the different ways that the spud is processed before being sold. In total, consumption of this hearty vegetable has been declining in recent years to stand at 28.8 kg/person in 2006, down from 33.8 kg per person in 1996. Potato exports crept up 1.9 percent in 2006. Exports, particularly those of frozen french fries, soared to a peak in 2004. They remain more than twice what they were a decade ago.

Of the total potatoes available, 45 percent were cooked from fresh potatoes while 55 percent were processed into products such as frozen french fries or potato chips. In 2006, each Canadian ate 15.8 kg of potatoes that had been purchased fresh, down 1.7 percent from the previous year. The quantity of potatoes processed waned marginally.

Oils and fats decline

The amount of oils and fats available for consumption, including

butter, margarine, salad dressing and cooking oils, is down a substantial 13.2 percent from the peak in 1998.

Canadians devotion to coffee remained strong.

No surprise to Yukoners, coffee is still a favorite. Coffee lovers drank 86 litres in 2006, up 6.5 litres from 1997, the most recent low. The enjoyment of traditional and specialty coffees available from a number of coffee shops has fuelled coffee use.

Calories available eases

The calories available from the food supply declined by 0.5 percent in 2006. The amount of energy available for consumption has declined modestly this decade after rising fairly rapidly during the nineties.

Many reasons can account for the increase of energy disappearance in Canada from 1993 on. In the early 1990s Canada was just coming out of a recession, people had discretionary money to spend

again. With the ease of drive-thru restaurants and the demands of everyday life – long days in the office, transporting children to hockey practice, music lessons, etc. people increased their frequency of buying meals from restaurants, especially fast food establishments. Another possible reason may be the influence of American culture on Canadian society and the integration of the North American food industry.

Just for Laughs:



A farmer was milking his cow. He was just starting to get a good rhythm going when a bug flew into the barn and started circling his head. Suddenly, the bug flew into the cow's ear. The farmer didn't think much about it, until the bug squirted out into his bucket. It went in one ear and out the udder.

2008 YUKON MASTER GARDENER COURSE COMING IN FEBRUARY

The Yukon Master Gardener Course is going to be held again this winter.

This training course involves forty hours of instruction and provides a broad background of horticultural topics. Class subjects include plant botany and physiology, soils, outdoor and greenhouse gardening, lawns, house plants, bulbs, herbs, pests and pest control, and ornamentals. The prerequisites for becoming a Master Gardener include a familiarity with Yukon Gardening conditions and a commitment to return forty hours of volunteer time by providing gardening information to others. Volunteer time may include garden clinics, home garden visits, teaching basic gardening classes, working with youth and adult groups interested in gardening, writing newspaper articles, or organizing community garden events.

We have the option of running the course over three full weekends, or two nights a week over eight weeks, or five days straight through the week.

This will be a certificate course with a final exam to be written on the last day. The cost of registration is \$125.00 + GST and includes the Yukon Gardeners Manual, other written materials and approximately 40 hours of instruction. Space is limited to 25 people.

To express interest in the course please phone the Agriculture Branch at 667-5838 or email matthew.ball@gov.yk.ca.

TIPS & TRICKS

ENHANCING WINTER SURVIVAL OF PERENNIAL HORTICULTURE CROPS
(ARTICLE ADAPTED FROM ROPIN THE WEB PREPARED BY ROBERT SPENCER)

Many horticulture crops are perennial, with a significant amount of the total production returns achieved beyond the first season. Ensuring that crops survive the

harsh winters will protect against lost investments.

Generally over-wintering of all plants involves the same basic guidelines:

Use hardy plant material

Plant species and cultivars vary in their relative hardiness; their ability to withstand cold winter temperatures. Careful consideration must be made prior to selection of varieties or cultivars.

Ensure excellent plant health

Throughout the growing season plants that are healthy and have minimal stress are generally less susceptible to winter injury. Proper practices include:

- Ensuring that plants are well established if transplanted (up to 6 weeks before soil freeze up).
- Ensuring adequate moisture throughout the growing season.
- Avoiding excess applications of fertilizers, especially late in the summer.
- Ensuring plants are healthy and free from disease and pests.

Ensure that plants have acclimated prior to harsh winter conditions

Acclimation involves the gradual shutdown of plant parts and an overall increase in the ability to withstand decreasing temperatures. The following factors can affect the ability of a plant to acclimate.

- Plants that are not native or have

been bred in a different climatic region, may be adapted to longer frost free periods or greater heat units and may not react to environmental signals and acclimate prior to winter.

- An excess or un-timely application of nutrients (particularly nitrogen) may result in a resurgence of growth late in the season or a failure of plants to acclimate.
- Excess water (irrigation or precipitation) late in the summer may result in late acclimation of plants.

Prevent desiccation and moisture stress

Many types of winter injury are a result of a deficiency of moisture in plant tissues. Desiccation leading to winter injury can be prevented by:

- Ensuring that there is adequate moisture in the root zone. Roots of many plants are active to soil temperatures of 5°C. A slow and heavy application of water should be applied after deciduous trees have lost their leaves, prior to covering strawberries and prior to freeze up of the soil. Roots are not active once the soil is frozen so watering is not necessary.
- Protecting plants from winds using shelterbelts. This can also increase snow accumulation, which may insulate plants.

Protect sensitive plant parts from extreme temperatures

Plant parts are not equal in their ability to withstand extreme winter temperatures. Despite the ability of many plants to acclimate, some damage can occur if additional protective measures are not taken. These can include:

- The use of snow fencing and shelterbelts to reduce winds can

help build up an insulating snow cover, protecting plants.

- Using straw or bark mulches to cover whole plants or root systems.
- Protecting root systems in pots i.e. container-grown nursery crops require winter protection that insulates against the cold temperatures, such as covering with snow, straw, insulating foam etc.

Protection of sensitive plant parts from temperature fluctuations

Winter damage often occurs when temperatures fluctuate or when there are rapid and extreme changes in temperature. When conditions improve (i.e. increase in temperature), plants begin to lose their acclimation, which leads to a resumption in growth and the emergence of sensitive plant parts. If cold winter conditions resume after a period of warm conditions, plant injury can occur. This is particularly a problem in flowering tree or shrub species (e.g. Saskatoon berries).

Bright winter sunlight can cause localized warming of plant tissues, triggering water flow, which can later freeze and the ice crystals cause tissue damage. Protection of susceptible plant parts can be accomplished using paints or trunk wraps. Mulches can protect plants by buffering temperature fluctuations. Mulches should be left in place until spring air temperatures have stabilized (i.e. frosts have passed).

The use of any type of over-wintering strategy should be adjusted based on suitability for the plants and cropping system. Some crops may require special winter care.



TIPS & TRICKS

THE ADDED VALUE

(ADAPTED FROM THE CANADIAN FARM BUSINESS MANAGEMENT MARKETING CARAVAN)

The romance of having a coffee from a comfortable couch inside a relaxing upscale coffee house is a great example of adding value to a simple product. Take the coffee bean for example:

- The farmer grows the coffee bean which costs a few cents a cup.
- The product costs a bit more packaged and sold in the grocery store.
- The service of delivering a hot cup costs a dollar.
- But the new added value is in the experience of the upscale coffee house and can go for as much as five dollars.



The question is: How does the farm find that added value that the coffee house is able to capture? Last spring an agriculture marketing caravan rolled through Whitehorse trying to answer the added

value question by looking at how to develop, market and sell quality valued added products and experiences. What they were really trying to hit home is that the traditional farm only gets a few cents for the bean and the farm needs to diversify to find that extra value. If the farmer grew the bean, packaged it, offered the gourmet coffee and experience of an upscale café and provided tours of the farm, each step would add value to the core business.

Yukon growers may not be able to grow coffee but this model can be adapted to the products we have. The caravan presenters provided examples of traditional farms diversifying their core business to capture that added value. Some key areas where farmers from other parts of the country found success were in:

- On-farm retail
- Niche market development
- Agri-tourism

Ranches are moving from just raising horses to Agri-tourism and offering accommodations, food and beverage service, events, tours, equine services, and even weddings.



Vegetable farms are moving from simple vegetable production to produce stores, farmers market sales, u-pick, greenhouse, café, and processing.



Honey operations are offering more than just honey. They are moving into processed products such as candles and lip

balm and are opening up specialty stores and offering farm tours.

Each thriving business has its key strengths. The business models presented by the caravan showed how strengths overlap. These strengths included:

- Diversifying the business, offering more choice.
- Adding Value to the product, or further processing the raw product.
- Providing quality products and good customer service.

- Offering a sense of health and wellness
- Offering an authentic experience that feels good.
- Providing a life style choice for the consumer.
- Building customer relationships, the sense that their business is appreciated

The strengths for these business approaches line up with some market trends we are experiencing today. The general market trend is moving towards food safety, organic food, convenience, niche and global markets, specialty services and product branding. Baby boomers are creating their own trend by having increased leisure time by retiring, and are looking for ways to spend their free time. The boomers tend to be very nostalgic and are renewing their interest in authentic rural experience which opens up tourism opportunities.

By diversifying the farm and focusing on key market opportunities to provide that added value, the consumer will be willing to pay more for the products and services instead of "just a few cents for the bean."

The Canadian Farm Business Management Council has published a book, "Building Added Value through Farm Diversification", that can be borrowed from the EMR library located in the Elijah Smith Building or copies can be purchased directly from them by visiting their web site at www.farmcentre.com.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

20TH ANNUAL NORTH OF 60° AGRICULTURE
CONFERENCE
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 3RD, 2007
HIGH COUNTRY INN

Come to the High Country Inn on Saturday, November 3rd to celebrate the 20th year of the North of 60 Agriculture Conference. This year we will be focusing on the future of Yukon Agriculture. We will be discussing the Agriculture Policy Framework which is coming to a close March 31, 2008 and where we are headed with programming, the new organic regulations coming into effect next year, the analysis and results of the multi year development plan, genetically modified organisms, and marketing. Speakers from around western Canada will be joining us for the seminar. The seminar is free and will begin at 8:45 am.

The seminar will be followed by the Yukon Local Grown Banquet. Banquet tickets are available from the Agriculture Branch front desk. Tickets are 18\$ each. Call 667-5838 to reserve your tickets. The banquet will feature food from local producers and music from a local band. The doors open at 6:00 pm with music and cocktails. Dinner will be served at 7 pm.

FARMER OF THE YEAR

Enter your nominations at the Agriculture Branch for Farmer (or Farm Family) of the Year by Wednesday October 31, 2007 at 4:00 p.m.
The presentation will be made at the Banquet.

CLASSIFIEDS



Farm Machinery for Sale

- Hesston 1130 haybine (their top of the line model) \$14 500.00
- Agshield Recon 200 Hay Reconditioner (cuts drying time in half) \$8 500.00.

For more information contact Dave at Rafter A Ranch. 867-667-7844

Beef & Pork For Sale

Beef by the 1/4 and pork by the side for sale cut. Call Jerry Kruse, McCabe Creek Farm 867-537-3458.

Stock Rack for pickup truck,

paid \$1800 will sell for \$750, call Marc and Lina Tremblay 867-456-4299 after 6pm

Microchip Reader - Riley Identification System

Mini, portable reader/scanner with 10 injectible transponders \$150

call Marc and Lina Tremblay 867-456-4299 after 6pm.

Abattoir

To book the mobile abattoir or for information phone Art Lock at 867-393-4978



InFARMation is...

A Government of Yukon newsletter published by the Agriculture Branch of the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources. 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.

InFARMation

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Online: www.emr.gov.yk.ca/agriculture