



There are three enemies of personal peace – regret over yesterday's mistakes, anxiety over tomorrow's mistakes and ingratitude for today's blessings.

Winter

2008 Volume 8 Issue 1

As we head into 2008 we look forward to another exciting year for NBSCIA. We have a number of new projects underway and are looking for ways to move our association forward. The two new projects are under the direction of Dr. Bernie Zebarth of Agriculture and Agri-food Canada. One is to develop a soil nitrogen test which would be available to producers to determine the nitrogen available in the soil and the other is to look at a number of farms and to look at the movement of N, P and K on these farms. They will be looking at both livestock and non-livestock, organic and non-organic.

2008 NBSCIA AGM

“LOOKING FORWARD” is the theme for our annual meeting and workshop which will be held this year at the Memramcook Institute, February 28, 29 and March 1. We have invited a number of speakers to come and speak to us on a number of issues. We think we have developed an exciting program and look forward to hosting you during this time. The Farm of the Year banquet will be Friday, February 29th starting at 7:00 pm. Tickets are available from the provincial office. A complete program is attached at the end of the newsletter.

Farm of the Year candidates are:

Brother Stephan Hewitt – **Cistercian-Trappist Monastery of Our Lady of Calvary**
– Miramichi Soil & Crop

Beth & Arnd Barczyk – Barczyk Farm –
Chignecto Soil & Crop

John & Debbie Wesselius – Dairy Sweet
Holsteins Ltd. – Moncton Soil & Crop

Thomas and George Dalling – Rockcrest
Holsteins – Kings County Soil & Crop

Ted & Louis Wiggins – Shephard's
Garden – Central Soil & Crop

Fencing workshop held in Bathurst - Northeast Soil & Crop

On December 13th, as part of an ongoing effort to bring in knowledgeable speakers, a fencing workshop was held in the basement of the Bathurst agricultural building. Mr. Leonard Fraser explained many aspects of electrical fencing. Proper grounding of the system, post insulator types, the importance of lightening diverters, and understanding the rating numbers on your energizer are just a few of the topics covered. He also explained how portable fences aided in rotational pasture grazing and winter bale grazing.

Speaking with years of experience and a thorough knowledge of the topic Leonard answered all of the producer questions in this informal workshop. Lots of tools and gadgets were available for demonstrations.

Producers were invited to bring an energizer of their own for testing. Using a digital power meter Leonard illustrated the impact of 1, 2 and then 3 animals touching the fence on the power available to control the remaining herd.



Funny Signs

Automatic washing machine: Please remove all your clothes when the light goes out.

For anyone who has children and doesn't know it, there is a day care on the first floor.

Due to increasing problems with letter louts and vandals we must ask anyone with relatives buried in the graveyard to do their best to keep them in order.

New Stats Show Canada's Farm and Food Security Risks Deepen

By Wayne Roberts

In May Statistics Canada released three agricultural reports, all warnings of a food security system facing grave danger.

Don't expect any response from health officials. Lack of food security radar is par for the course in a country that has no food policy, and almost no medical or agricultural power brokers who respect food's centrality as a determinant of health. There's no inkling in official-land that the world is entering an era of scarcity and supply interruptions, which is why there needs to be a new focus on the basics of ensuring food availability in all locations. But the stats tell us that the days of food as usual and taking availability for granted are numbered.

One report, the Financial Picture of Farms in Canada, confirms the deep dysfunction of a \$42 billion a year farm economy in which 44.2 per cent of farmers lost money last year - a crisis level of failure in any industry, let alone one that produces goods essential to survival. Almost ten per cent of farms went out of business between 2001 and 2006. Less than half the remaining 230,000 farms put enough food on the table to keep the farmer working fulltime on the land; they subsidize their farm by working 40 hours a week or more off the farm.

The trend to family farm extinction comes through loud and clear in a second report, Snapshot of Canadian Agriculture. The average farmer is 52 years old, five years older than the average age in 1991, not exactly a time of life designed for backbreaking labor. Anyone young enough to try something else is getting out while the getting's good. Fewer than 30,000 farmers are under 35, a drop of 25 per cent since five years ago. Since that's the group most likely to have children, it's clear the days of the family farm, the basic institution in the ag industry across North America, are numbered.

Fewer and older farmers are working more land, since the average farm grew from 273 to 295 hectares since 2001. These demographics have no

future. Old farmers with bigger farms to run aren't looking for new crops that require a lot of bending and duck-walking, farm-transforming methods such as organic, or new and under-supplied market niches serving recent immigrants. Farmers that have just finished 40-hour weeks at their day job aren't looking for a chance to pick weeds and shoo-fly pests rather than apply herbicides and pesticides. And fewer farmers with fewer kids means local schools and retailers go under, as the small town infrastructure to support rural agriculture is hollowed out.

Another trend that spells food supply trouble has to do with concentration. Less than 6000 farms now account for 40 per cent of farm gate sales, a discomfortingly small number of places if 30 million people start wondering where their next local meal might come from. This is not a system designed with any regard for resilience, surge capacity, robust response to crises, or due diligence by politicians and health officials.

Alert health officials might also be alarmed by a second trend. There's little relation between what Canadian farmers grow and what Canadian health guidelines say people should eat. The government puts \$4.8 billion a year into programs that fund Canadian farmers, but there's no sign that one of those dollars is attached to any directive that environmental or dietary health goals be met.

About half the farms raise livestock of various kinds, beef cattle way out ahead, and about 40 per cent of farms raise field crops (wheat, hay, canola, feed corn, etc), much of which go to feed livestock or, more recently, fuel cars. Only 5.5 per cent of farms produce fruit and vegetables, promoted by health guidelines as the cornerstones of a healthy diet, to be eaten five to ten times a day. Sweet corn, tasty but devoid of many nutrients, takes up a quarter of the land devoted to fruit and vegetables, and potatoes, most destined for heart-dumb French fries and potato chips, take up much of the rest. The best fruit lands are devoted to grapes for wine, said to be good for the heart but bad for cancer, and displace apples and tender fruit, good for both.

You'd never know, in short, that Canada's food guide was drawn up by the same government and

paid for by the same taxpayers that fund and support contrary products in agriculture. Two solitudes, I think a novelist once described this Canadian trait.

Another trend is identified by the third Stats Can report, *Farming in Canada's CMAs (urban areas)*. Canada has the good fortune to have 35,000 farms within 33 urban districts, such as the Greater Toronto Area. With luck, these farms could feed the urban population during an emergency - think avian flu or SARS, for example -- that kept California, Florida and Chicago food trucks from crossing the border. It might even be wise to partially fund diverse farms near cities on an insurance principle. Why don't we pay food security insurance just as we insure against theft, fire and flood damage to property? Our money could go to keep farmers on near-urban lands, with an insurance fee supporting their efforts to grow diverse crops.

Instead, what grows near cities is what covers the high price of near-city land. Thus, we have a big increase in near-urban greenhouses, slightly more than half of which produce more veggies than flowers. Stats Can views on farms, includes landscaping nurseries on 69,000 acres that export irreplaceable topsoil and sod to city lawns. Horse farms account for most near-urban livestock, especially near Toronto and Calgary. Like most pets, the horses are raised for recreation rather than meat. The value-added of alcohol (one assumes

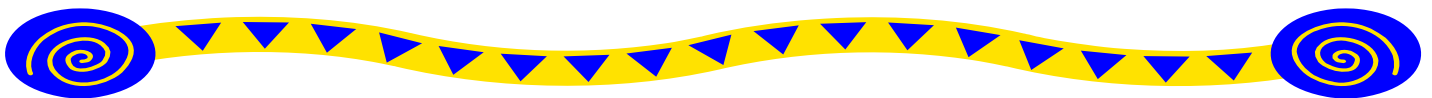
health officials weren't consulted about the ag definition of value-added) means climatically blessed areas near St Catherines and Kelowna are for wine, not tender fruit. There are almost no mixed farms and few dairy, poultry or egg farms near cities. Unless there's a big change in thinking about the food value of near-urban farms, cities are SOL in terms of a nearby food backup in case of emergency.

Canada's 3555 certified organic farms, 60 per cent new since 2001, seem like good news. The greatest portion of organic land is devoted to prairie grains destined for export to Europe.

Organic is the growth segment in food retail, with a 31 per cent increase from 2005 to 2006, according to a may poll of Canadian organic sales by Nielsen Company. Most of this, especially fruit and vegetables and processed goods, comes from California, so the premium prices go south.

To buck this trend, the recent Ontario budget gave \$200,000 to help all Ontario organic farmers fight the California competition in their home market. To put that in perspective, \$200,000 is half the estimated water irrigation subsidy for each and every large exporting farm in California, according to estimates by the Environmental Working Group.

For the people in charge of ag policy, some things never add up.



Helping Wetlands Compete with Wheat: Ecological Goods and Services in Agriculture

If the price of wheat was zero, farmers wouldn't allocate much land to wheat. Yet farmers face a similar choice when considering practices that provide biodiversity, carbon sequestration, and other ecological goods and services (EGS).

Ecological goods and services can be defined as the benefits that human populations derive, directly or indirectly, from healthy functioning ecosystems. Healthy agro-ecosystems provide numerous EGS, such as flood control, carbon sequestration, and wildlife habitat. EGS policies focus on providing public benefits that are not covered by existing markets or regulations. While there are few incentives for farmers to supply EGS, headaches abound when it comes to choosing policies and programs to fill these gaps. This article describes how federal and provincial ministries of agriculture are looking for ways of connecting farmer decisions with society's demand (and need) for environmental quality. There are good reasons to consider

policies on EGS. The agricultural sector has a huge land base that affects all Canadians through the quality of soil, water, air, and biodiversity. While markets provide incentives for agricultural goods, they rarely provide incentives for public goods or disincentives for environmental damage. This sometimes leads to overuse of resources and an under-supply of ecological services. For example, producers may drain wetlands for crops in spite of the significant benefits to society such as maintaining waterfowl habitat, sequestering carbon, or purifying water. However, there are also reasons to be careful about EGS policies:

- Risk of overpayment: Without the discipline of a competitive market, governments and the public want to be sure that they are getting measurable results in return for new public expenditures.
- Information gaps: On the scientific side, it is often very difficult to measure the environmental impacts of implementing particular farm practices. On the economic side, we often do not know how to value these services to society. How much is the public willing to pay for 100 hectares of wildlife habitat or a reduction in flood risk?
- Perverse side-effects: For example, annual payments to set aside a piece of farmland quickly get capitalized into the property value, raising start-up costs for new farmers and creating expectations for future government payments. A program that pays for restored wetlands could incite a landowner to drain a wetland in order to be eligible.
- Maintenance or incremental benefits: Should a producer who restores a wetland be rewarded, while one who did not drain one is not? But should landowners be paid to keep doing what they are already doing, with no new net benefit to the public?
- Polluter pay principle: In agriculture, it is often hard to draw the line between minimal environmental stewardship and positive benefits for the public. For example, should farmers be entirely responsible for their contribution to phosphorous in watercourses, or should the public support beneficial nutrient management activities?
- Equity: Many EGS, such as wildlife habitat, can be provided by non-farm landowners as well as farms, implying that non-farm landowners should also be eligible for any new incentives that are put in place. Furthermore, other sectors are often subject to the polluter pays principle and often receive less income support than agriculture.
- Multiple benefits: Many beneficial agricultural practices provide a bundle of benefits, such as a buffer strip along a waterway that increases wildlife habitat, sequesters carbon, purifies water, and reduces erosion. Integrating a variety of beneficiaries into one policy tool complicates administration and accountability. These complications create a messy stew for policy-makers. On one hand, many producers would like to receive regular compensation for actions on their land that provide environmental services. On the other hand, many governments are leery of EGS programs due to their potential cost, uncertain benefits, and other potential headaches.

Canada already has some programming that supports the provision of EGS from agriculture. For example, Environmental Farm Plans (EFPs), the National Farm Stewardship Program, and Greencover Canada all increase the environmental benefits flowing to society. Recognizing the increasing importance of EGS to the public, federal, provincial and territorial ministers created a federal-provincial working group to analyze EGS policy—without committing to a particular option. This initiative spawned a National Symposium on EGS in Winnipeg in 2006, eight pilot projects on innovative EGS approaches worth over \$4.5 million, a cost-benefit analysis of EGS options due in 2008, and other policy research. This initiative and the efforts of other policy organizations in Canada, such as the Canada West Foundation, have brought attention to new approaches that could link environmental demand with farm-level decisions. In addition to traditional acreage-based subsidy programs, policy-makers are analyzing options such as:

- greenhouse gas (GHG) offset trading, where producers who sequester or reduce emissions of GHG certify and sell credits to emitters in other sectors;

- reverse auctions, where public agencies would seek bids for environmental services from farmers on a competitive basis;
 - water quality trading, where beneficiaries of nutrient reductions support adoption of improved nutrient management by landowners; and
 - best management practice insurance, where producers receive compensation when their net income decreases due to adoption of environmental practices. During the next few months, federal and provincial departments of agriculture will be elaborating on *Growing Forward*, the new framework that will guide agricultural policy for the next five years. This initiative could include incentives that encourage the sector to take environmental action beyond what is required by regulation. Policy tools inspired by EGS are one way to bring farm-level decisions that affect the environment into line with ongoing decisions about market commodities. For information on agricultural EGS, consult www.agr.gc.ca/pol/egs-bse/index_e.php.
- By: Ian Campbell - AAFC




**Working Towards a Riparian
Health Strategy for
Atlantic Canada**



Atlantic Workshop
March 5-6, 2008
Moncton, NB

Check our website for complete program and registration form.
See you there!

www.ccse-swcc.nb.ca

Organised by the Eastern Canada Soils and Water
Conservation Centre and its partners

Funding for this workshop is provided by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Greencover Canada Program







Exclusive discount extended to members.

Mighty Fredericton has extended an exceptional offer to our association members. The basic design includes a 4 page website custom to your business at a cost of \$875 set up fee and \$40/mth. This is a 25+% discount or savings of approximately \$325. If you wish to have more then 4 pages they have agreed to help out and factor in a discount as well.

Our new website was designed by MightyFredericton.com and has received 11 000+ hits since launch (End of July 2007). For any questions or concerns please contact Darren McCarthy at 506-459-6664 or you can email at Darren@mightyfredericton.com. This is a great offer. The internet is the way of the future. A great example of a 5 page site www.ebbettfarms.com. Funding may be available through the provincial government to help offset the cost. Please see <http://www.gnb.ca/0027/0018-e.asp> and <http://www.gnb.ca/cnb/news/afa/2007e1291af.htm> for more information on funding.

Coming Events

January		
30 – Feb 1	Managing Excellence in Agriculture Conference Canadian Farm Business Management Council	Westin Nova Scotian Hotel, Halifax
February		
5 - 7	The Canadian International Farm Equipment Show www.torontofarmshow.com	International Centre, Toronto
19 - 21	IFAO Conference www.ifao.com	London, ON
20 - 21	Ontario Fruit & Vegetable Convention www.ofvc.ca	
21	Integrated Pest Management Update for Farmers	NSAC
21	Eastern Ontario Crop Conference www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/conferences/20080221.htm	Kemptville, ON
21 – 23	New York Farm Show www.newyorkfarmshow.com	Syracuse, NY
28- March 1	NBSCIA AGM “Looking Forward” www.nbscia.ca	Memramcook Institute, Memramcook
March		
11 – 13	Ottawa Valley Farm Show www.ottawafarmshow.com	Ottawa, ON
18 - 20	The Ontario Rural Council – “Leading the Rural Renaissance” www.torc.on.ca	Ottawa, ON
April		

Please send submissions to Susannah. NBSCIA 16 Gilks Road, Maugerville, NB E3A 8N4, phone: 454-1736, fax: 472-4718, email:nbscia@nbnet.nb.ca. Deadline for the next edition will be April 1, 2008.

LOOKING FORWARD

February 28 - March 1, 2008
Memramcook Institute, 488 rue Centrale
Memramcook

Sponsors to date

NBSCIA
ACAAF

Brookville Lime
Eastern Canada Soil & Water Conservation Centre

DRAFT

Thursday, February 28th

7:00 pm BUSINESS MEETING (delegates must attend)

Friday, February 29th

8:15 am REGISTRATION

8:30 am BUSINESS MEETING CON'T

9:30 am BREAK & VISIT BOOTHS

10:00 am WELCOME - John Robinson, *President NBSCIA/Fred Anderson, CSCIA President*

10:15 am GRAIN DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY UPDATE - *Joanna Adams, Atlantic Grains Council*

10:30 am SOIL HEALTH - *Heather Darby, University of Vermont*

11:15 am ECOLOGICAL SERVICES - *Ian Campbell, AAFC*

12:00 pm LUNCH & VISIT BOOTHS

1:15 pm STAYING AFLOAT IN CHOPPY WATERS - *Jerry Bouma*

2:00 pm TBA

2:30 pm Pellet Production - TBA

3:00 pm BREAK & VISIT BOOTHS

3:20 pm NO-TILL FARMING PANEL
Pat Toner, NBDAA
Nathan Phinney
Kier Miller
Stephan Hewitt

4:50 pm WRAP UP

6:00 pm HOSPITALITY SUITE

7:00 pm NBSCIA FARM OF THE YEAR AWARD BANQUET- *Sponsored by Graymont (NB) Ltd.*
Entertainment by: *“Three Z A Crowd”*

Saturday, March 1

8:30 am BUSINESS MEETING WRAP-UP *(if necessary)*

9:00 am *TBA*

9:30 am BREAK & VISIT BOOTHS

10:00 am BLUEBERRIES - *Dale McIsaac*

10:30 am Soil Health - *Heather Darby, University of Vermont*

11:15 am Community Energy Products - *Eban Otuteye, UNB*

12:00pm WRAP-UP

1:00 *Farm Tours*

Belliveau Orchards
Willie LeBlanc & Sons

Registration Information

	Advance		At the door	
	Member	Non-Member	Member	Non-member
Full registration	\$75	\$150	\$100	\$200
1 day	\$50	\$75	\$60	\$85
Banquet only	\$30	\$35	\$35	\$40

Full registration includes coffee breaks, lunch on Friday and the banquet.

Accommodations are available at the Memramcook Institute 758-2511 or 1-800-268-2511

Updates will be available on our website www.nbscia.ca

To register send the following information and your registration fee to:

NBSCIA 16 Gilks Road, Maugerville, NB E3A 8N4 or email:nbscia@nbnet.nb.ca

Name _____

Group/Company _____

Full _____ **Friday only** _____ **Saturday only** _____ **Banquet only** _____

Please make cheques payable to NBSCIA

Farm Tour - If you are interested in participating in a farm tour, please indicate which tour and how many people

___ **Belliveau Orchards**

___ **Willie LeBlanc & Sons**

Spa facilities available on site.