



Native Agri Update

No. 345, March 2014

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*IAPO's 30th Anniversary
1984 - 2014*

IAPO PARTNERS WITH AALP



For the next twelve months, IAPO has partnered with the Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program (AALP) on a First Nations youth engagement project that will help highlight opportunities for IAPO to connect with First Nations youth in rural Ontario. Ultimately, the goal will be to develop ways of linking First Nations youth with all the opportunities First Nations farming and agriculture have to offer.

As reported in the 2006 census, 45.8% of First Nations community members are under the age of 25 and the need to provide First Nations youth with meaningful economic opportunities is immense. Many bright, young and talented First Nations youth have underutilized skills and face limited economic prospects, higher unemployment and lower incomes. Creating a better future with opportunities is everyone's responsibility and First Nations agriculture and farming can be part of the solution.

As highlighted many times, agriculture and farming offer many diverse opportunities ranging from crops to cattle and maple syrup to market gardening. The overall agricultural economy continues to be quite positive and at a community level, local food production continues to grow in importance. For many communities, local food and farming help provide healthy food choices, supporting food security and sovereignty.

Youth Engagement

To help create meaningful economic opportunities for First Nations youth, we need to go further than just identifying the opportunity. We need to create ways of linking

youth to food production and farming so they can learn and fully appreciate all the sector has to offer. From this perspective, youth can move forward considering farming and agriculture, as one of hopefully many career or business opportunities they have to take advantage of.

AALP looking for Community Input

Offered by the Rural Ontario Institute to agriculturists across Ontario, AALP focuses on leadership capacity development by providing diverse learning opportunities. As part of the program, participants working in groups, undertake Issue Analysis Projects working in a consultative role with organizations to address important issues relating to farming and agriculture. As part of AALP's youth engagement project, AALP team members Gabrielle Ferguson, Myron Gerber, Jutta Spletstoesser and Claire Cowan will be reaching out to contact community members. The AALP team would like to get to know and understand the opportunities and issues relating to First Nations youth and youth engagement. Please welcome the AALP team and share your comments and insights with them.

If you would like to know more about the project or to provide your comments and ideas on youth engagement contact Jen @ 1 800 663 6912 or jen@indianag.on.ca. *JH*

IAPO'S Annual General Meeting

You are cordially invited to the Comfort Inn in Markham, Ontario to attend IAPO's Annual General Meeting on Monday April 28th, 2014 at 1:30 pm. For more information contact Jen at 1 800 663 6912 or jen@indianag.on.ca.

Inside

Agribusiness	Page	2
Market Information	Page	3
Livestock Information	Page	4
Crop Information	Page	5
Calendar of Events	Page	6
Other News	Page	6

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Agribusiness

SAP'S FINALLY RUNNING – FOR NOW



Maple syrup production began Tuesday, March 11 in many parts of Southwestern Ontario reports Todd Leuty, Agroforestry Specialist with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food. The first run was short lived as cold temperatures returned the following day for the

remainder of the week. So far this spring has not been favorable to maple syrup production. All is not lost yet as a normal crop can still be achieved in a span of a few days if ideal weather conditions enhance the sap flow. As April approaches hopefully we get great weather for an outstanding crop for 2014.

DM

THINK SAFETY AND BE SAFE!

Source—Rejean Pommainville, Director, Ontario Federation of Agriculture

There is nothing like a testimonial to emphasize the need to be safe on the farm. This is a true story that changed a farm business and the everyday lives of this farm family.

“It’s often the routine jobs we don’t think of as dangerous, that can be the most hazardous. Something as simple as climbing up the side of a wagon of square bales can change your life forever. That’s what I did five years ago during hay season. Something I’d done many times without thinking twice, until I fell almost nine feet from the top of the wagon to the ground. The impact of the fall shattered my heel. After 14 screws, surgery, a few plates and a significant recovery time, I’m back farming. But the accident changed everything for myself and my family. I was a dairy farmer when the accident happened, but then I couldn’t keep up with the physical demands, so we sold the cows and now run a cash crop operation.”

“The impact of a farm injury can be devastating, and not just on the person injured. It takes a toll on emotions and the economics of a farm. The simple truth is that most injuries are predictable and preventable. Knowing what to look for and how to control hazards on the farm goes a long way to preventing injuries or even death. And in my case, taking the extra time to complete the



job safely – rather than getting caught up in the rush – is a valuable part of a farm safety plan.”

ADJUSTING PLANTING PRACTICES TO PROTECT POLLINATORS

Source OMAF

The Ministry of Agriculture and Food has published an information sheet to increase awareness and suggest practices that farmers can adopt to protect honey bees and other pollinators. A significant number of bee kill incidents were reported by Ontario beekeepers during the planting season in 2012 and 2013. The Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) of Health Canada investigated these incidents and determined that the majority of them were found to be associated with the planting of corn and soybeans with neonicotinoid seed treatments used to control certain insect pests. Studies have shown significant levels of neonicotinoid concentrations are exhausted from negative vacuum planters during planting and may be susceptible to leaving the fields via drift. In 2013, research conducted in Ontario and elsewhere found that flowering plants and trees may be important foraging sources for bees and are a potential source of exposure to contaminated dust around fields during planting. To view the entire article go to www.gocorn.net.

ARE YOU COVERED?

“1,300 Pigs Perish in Ontario Barn Fire”, headlines similar to this one always attract my attention. I think not only of the animals lost but also of the effects of such a tragedy on the farm business and the family. Having served as a board member of my local farm mutual insurance company for over 20 years, I was involved in many such tragic losses on the farm. Some of these losses involved livestock, others involved loss of farm machinery and others involved human injury or loss. Farm fires, wind events and losses from other perils are completely unpredictable. I can recall a farmer who suffered a loss of 15 cows from just one lightning strike. The cows were huddled under a tree seeking protection from an approaching storm. This was a tragic loss but fortunately the farmer was insured. It is troubling to everyone one involved in a farm property loss when it is discovered that there is no insurance or inadequate insurance coverage. It would be fair to say that a large percentage of insurers do not know what value of insurance is carried on their farm assets. In such circumstances the insurance agent often becomes the villain, when in fact the farmer bears the responsibility for the contents of the farm insurance policy.

Hopefully, the farm business attached to the loss mentioned in the headline above had adequate insurance coverage. In having adequate coverage he chose to protect his business and his family’s standard of living. Ensure that you and your family have adequate insurance coverage in 2014.

DM

Market



Beef Farmers of Ontario

BEEF MARKET

Prices are courtesy of the Beef Farmers of Ontario Weekly Market Information Report for the week ending March 20, 2014.

Beef and cattle prices keep climbing! Again rail grade prices, fed steers, cull cows and replacement steers and heifers are steady or dramatically stronger from last month.

It was Gold Medal time in a number of categories last week.

Fed steers set a new average weekly high of \$150.50. Fed heifers set a new high last week. The Ontario rail grade weekly average price maintained a new record set last week at \$248 for steers and \$247 for heifers. Cull cows peaked at \$92.28. Replacement steers 400 to 800 lbs. and heifers 400 to 700 lbs. reached record prices.

Send open cows to market. Last month a 1350 lb. cow was worth on average \$1,039 before trucking and salebarn costs. This month she is worth \$1,246. To take advantage of current and projected strong prices keep all cows carrying a calf. It appears that the U.S. and Canadian cowherds are not yet expanding. This encourages limited supply of calves and beef.

ML

Category	Price Range \$	Ave Price	Top Price	Change last month
Rail Steers	246-250			Steady
Fed steers	142-159	151	166	+6
Fed heifers	126-152	142	164	-3
Cows	78-104	92	145	+15
Bulls	89-116	104	138	-1
Stocker steers				
700 – 799	137-192	176	208	+33
600 – 699	146-211	189	224	+34
500 – 599	153-219	194	233	+42
Stocker heifers				
700 – 799	124-167	155	184	+12
600 – 699	132-182	166	200	+11
500 – 599	145-187	171	201	+19

All prices are on a hundred pound basis (cwt)

CROP MARKET

Excerpts taken from March 19th, 2014 Grain Market Commentary by Todd Austin, GFO

CORN: This will be the first year in many that we witness large corn stocks carried into the next crop year. The large corn carryout has continued to influence the corn market, as corn has not gained as much upside as the wheat market. It has missed out on the large downside movements as well.

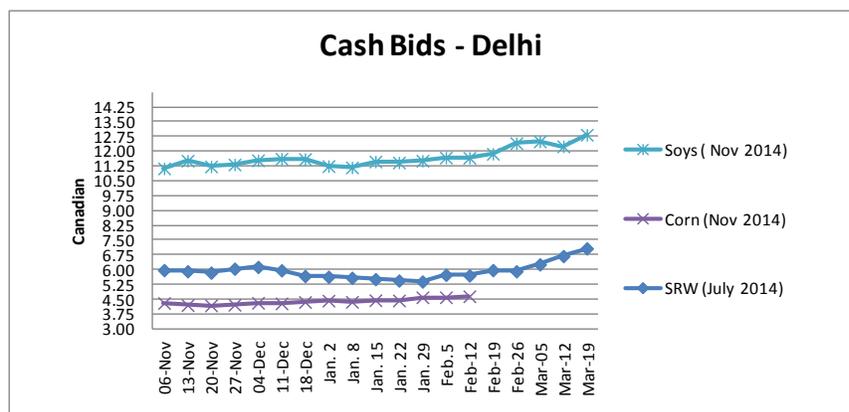
Corn has been trading in sync with wheat as the tensions in the Crimea region affect both corn and wheat, which are both major exports of this area.

SOYBEANS: Soybeans continue to take their support from supply and demand; they continue to climb on signals of tightening US stocks. Demand from domestic US processors has increased versus last year at this time and exports

continue to outpace the USDA's exports for this year. China had increased US purchases and cancelled Brazilian acquisitions to insure the inflow of beans to their country. This is keeping projected US carryout very tight this year.

WHEAT: Recent Egyptian wheat ten-

der has helped support prices, in addition to the fact that part of the purchase was with US origin wheat. Dryness in major wheat growing areas in the US is also supporting higher prices as the wheat crop in areas such as Kansas have crop ratings falling during the past week.



Livestock Information

COLD WEATHER BIG BIRTH WEIGHTS

Most farmers would agree that this winter has been colder than usual. Some would declare it an old fashioned winter, the coldest in 20 years etc. It can also impact late winter and early spring calving. Nebraska research shows a colder winter means larger calf birth weights. It goes as far as to suggest that there is a 1:1 relationship. For every one degree drop in Fahrenheit temperature, there is a one pound increase in calf birth weight. In a six year study the coldest winter was 11 degrees colder than the warmest with calf birth weights 11 pounds heavier on average. In another study, fall born calves were about five pounds lighter in weight on average than spring born calves.

This difference is believed to be related to blood flow in the cow. In warm temperatures body heat moves to the body extremities like the skin to dissipate heat. In extremely cold temperatures, blood flow shifts from the extremities to the internal organs such as the heart and liver. It also increases blood flow to the fetus, providing more nutrients like glucose in particular. As well cows tend to consume more feed during colder temperatures.

This is useful information leading up to calving this spring. Mature cows may have difficulty calving a newborn that is ten pounds heavier than usual with a normal presentation. Where there is an abnormal calving, a few extra pounds can increase the difficulty. First calf heifers as usual, need to be observed more closely and assistance provided as needed. Be prepared for more challenges this calving season. It may not happen! Let me know what you experience. *ML*

MANAGING THE GOOD TIMES

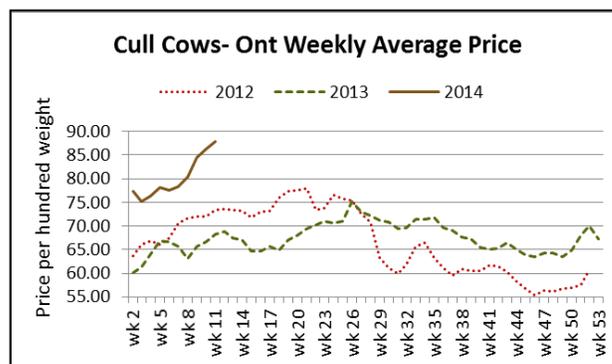
Affordable feed, scarce calves, a weak Canadian Loonie, new trade agreements and others have contributed to \$2.00 calves and \$1.50 fed steers. By all estimations, the good times will continue for three to four more years. How do we spend this new found wealth? In times of falling prices cow-calf farmers get their costs in line. In times of rising prices it is tempting to let the costs rise accordingly. If we are not careful we can be left with the same profit as with lean times. Good managers will use this opportunity to get their farm business in order. We know that cattle and beef prices will come down. They always do. Here are some things to consider when there are more dollars available to better position your farm for the lean times:

Reduce debt. Use this time to pay down loans, credit at the feed and seed dealer etc. Put the farm business in good financial shape to weather the tough times.

Repair equipment. Catch up on repairs to equipment that have been postponed or cobbled up. This includes replacing

bald tires, frayed drive belts, round baler belting or maybe some engine work.

Check the handling facility. Replace broken boards, weak posts, a headgate or consider a tub. A smooth functioning handling facility saves time and reduces stress and is the most valuable piece of equipment on the farm. *ML*



The graph illustrates the escalating cull cow weekly average price. Courtesy of Beef Farmers of Ontario

Cull cows and keep back heifers. Cull cow prices continue to hold their own averaging \$88/cwt last week, that's \$1,118 for a 1,350 lb. cow before trucking. Ship out older cows and cows with poor feet and legs or with a nasty disposition, especially if they lose calves during spring calving. If hay is plentiful, feed them until grass time and pasture for 60 days before marketing. Cows will have more weight, look more appealing and the price is usually higher in June and July. With cull cow income to help cash flow, consider retaining heifers for breeding.

Expand. While this isn't the ideal time to expand in this cycle, it still should pay with the expectations of long-term price strength. The rebuilding of cow herds in North America will be slow. Expanding the herd spreads out overhead costs such as insurance, repairs and interest payments and increases profits per cow with a reasonable weaning rate. For producers in a position to increase cow numbers by purchasing breeding stock or retaining heifers, consider the **IAP0 Herdbuilder Program**. Financing is available for both options, repayment terms are flexible and the interest rate is competitive. Call us for details at Stirling 1-800-363-0329 or Lambeth 1 800 663 6912. *ML*

Fun Farming Facts



True or False - The corn grown in Ontario produces enough oxygen every year for every person who lives in Ontario.

Answer: True

Crop Information

SOYBEAN FERTILITY

Source: *agAnytime*

- Soybean yield potential is genetically determined but actual yield potential depends on environmental conditions and management practices.
- Higher levels of soybean production may require higher levels of some nutrients to achieve yield goals.
- A soil test can indicate whether a field or area of a field requires additional fertilizer to reach a critical value.

Table 1. Average Nutrient Removal (lbs/bu) by Crop

Crop	N.	P ² O ⁵	K ² O
Corn	0.9	0.38	0.27
Soybeans	3.8*	0.84	1.3

*N from nitrogen fixation and soil removal.

Source: International Plant Nutrition Institute.

Although fertilizing before planting soybeans is not a common practice, on a per bushel basis, soybean can use more nutrients than corn (Table 1). Each bushel of soybean harvested per acre removes approximately 3.8 pounds of nitrogen (N), 0.84 pounds of P²O⁵, and 1.3 pounds of K²O (Table 1). Additionally, yield levels illustrate how fertilizer rates can be affected (Table 2). Soybeans provide approximately 50% of the nitrogen required for growth through N-fixation; however, higher levels of soybean production may require higher levels of some nutrients to achieve yield goals.

Table 2. Average Nutrient Removal (lbs/bu) by Crop

Soybean	P ² O ⁵	K ² O
30 bu/A	25.0	42.0
40 bu/A	34.0	56.0
45 bu/A	37.8	58.5

Importance of Soil Test - Even when a soybean plant does not exhibit symptoms of nutrient deficiency, there may still be an underlying problem. A soil test can indicate whether a field or area

of a field requires additional fertilizer to reach a critical value. When soil test values are below a critical value, a crop often responds to additional fertilizer. The farther below the critical value the soil test is, the more likely a yield response is achievable.

Soil tests should be done every two years to monitor nutrient levels. In no-till systems, nutrient levels should be monitored more closely because nutrients may become stratified in the soil and not accessible to the plant. The best time to sample soil is in the fall. Soil sampling to assess soybean cyst nematode (SCN) population densities can be done at the same time.

Soil PH - At soil pH levels between 5.5 and 7.0, nutrients such as N and phosphorus are most available to the plant.

Maintaining soil pH levels in this range should optimize the microbial breakdown of crop residues and symbiotic N fixation. Soils where the 0- to 8-inch surface pH is 5.8 or less and the subsoil pH is 6.0 or less can benefit from lime application. A soil pH of 6.5 should be targeted.

Minor Nutrients - Boron, calcium, iron, molybdenum, sulfur, and zinc are some of the more important minor nutrients involved in plant processes such as photosynthesis, N-fixation, and protein synthesis. Availability of these nutrients is often dependent on soil pH levels and deficiencies can limit yield potential. Tissue tests can confirm deficiencies. Foliar fertilizers to correct deficiencies may be an option.

Yield Goals - The past ten years have brought changes in crop production, such as increased yield potentials, partially due to advancements in genetics. While soybean maximum yield potential is genetically determined, actual yield potential depends on environmental conditions and management practices. In the past, nutrient levels remaining in the soil after corn production may have been adequate for soybean production purposes. As yield expectations for corn and soybeans increase, it becomes more important to monitor soil fertility and account for nutrient removal by the previous crop.

EVALUATING WINTER WHEAT

Source: *agAnytime*

Injury to wheat during severe winter weather is less common than it was years ago. Over the years, the winter hardiness characteristic of wheat has been improved and good management practices have reduced winterkilling of wheat.

Stand evaluation should focus on plant population and plant health. Winter dormancy breaks at or above 39°F soil temperatures; therefore, evaluations can start after about 10 to 14 days of warm weather. When evaluating the stand, plants per square foot, stand uniformity and number of tillers should be measured.

Optimum plant stands for maximizing yield potential is in the range of 23 to 30+ plants/ft². Plant stands of roughly 15 to 22 plants/ft² can return yields close to full yield potential when conditions are ideal. If the number of plants per square foot is determined to be 15 or above, tillering can compensate for poor stands. If plant stand counts are below five to ten plants/ft², destroying the wheat stand and planting another crop may be justifiable.

Use a yard stick or tape measure and count the number of plants along a three foot distance at four to five random field locations to determine plant population.

Calculate the average number of plants and multiply by four and divide by the row width in inches to determine plants/ft². (Example: 44 average number of plants x 4 divided by 7 inches = 25.1 plants/ft²).

Prior to destroying a wheat crop, contact Agricorp for a crop inspection to determine other options.

Other News

HANDLING MAPLE SYRUP

Here are the recommended best practices for food safety when processing maple syrup.

Equipment

All equipment for handling and storing sap and syrup should be TIG welded stainless steel or food grade plastic for food safety reasons. Food grade plastic is a dense low porous material unlike the usual porous plastic. Lead contamination is a health concern. Buckets and boiling pans with lead soldering are discouraged. Avoid older stainless steel pans, tanks, fittings and pipes where seams and joints are held together with lead solder. Aluminum buckets are used where sap is collected regularly.

Finishing



Syrup should be at least 66 degrees Brix or 66% sugar when finished. Some prefer 67%. Syrup above 68% sugar, will crystalize in the container on the bottom and sides. Syrup below 66% sugar will spoil more quickly. It will reach 66% sugar when the boiling temperature is 4°C above the boiling temperature for water. Check each day for the boiling temperature of water as it will change.

Bottling, Storing

To extend shelf life and reduce microbial buildup heat to 82°C before packaging. Filter using clean synthetic fibre filters to remove mineral sand and microbial contaminants. Filters should be washed, rinsed, air dried without detergent cleaners or sanitizers that might add chemical residues or odours. Larger operations use a filter press. Cap the container quickly and set container on its side to sterilize the cap. Store in a cool dry location.

Lot Coding

Each batch of syrup will be a little different in colour, finishing temperature and handling. If for any reason mold or other contaminants like lead appear it is helpful to be able to identify and pull the containers from the same batch as the identified sample. Use a code or other identification for each batch. It may be as simple as a number or the date. This way only the containers from the same batch need to be pulled rather than taking the year's production off the shelf. *ML*



PREPARING YOUR VEGETABLE GARDEN

Planting vegetable seeds starts with making sure the seed bed is fit for planting. For lighter coarser sandy soils often a quick hoeing or cultivation maybe all that's needed. For heavier soils types or those with some clay in them, the timing and amount

of preparation is more important. These soils need to be worked up when they are dried out enough crumble with cultivation. Too wet, the soil sticks to hoes and implements, too dry and they break up into blocky hard pieces. Often a couple of light passes with a hoe or cultivator is the best approach. Whether you're working with lighter or heavier soils the goal is the same - a firm fine seed bed to ensure good seed to soil contact. Good seed to soil contact makes sure the newly planted seed gets adequate moisture from the soil to start germinating.

When it comes to planting, generally larger seeds are planted deeper. Seed guides and packages are a great place to check for depth, as well as spacing information. For smaller gardens and raised beds, planting by hand is most practical. For larger plantings, there are numerous seeders or planters available for use either by hand or tractor mounted. Here are couple of lower cost planters:



Earthway Seeders are a great first step to small scale mechanization. The light aluminum frame and plastic seed hopper makes it light, yet sturdy enough to withstand seasons of planting with proper care. The seeder comes with a variety of interchangeable seed plates, allowing you to match plates to seed size. The seeder works great from small seeds like radish and beets to

larger seeds such as corn and beans. Earthway seeders are available through seed companies and hardware stores.

Planet Jr Seeders are designed primarily for tractor mounted applications but can be set up like Earthways. More substantial with a cast metal frame and wheels, it is built for commercial use. The Plante Jr. comes with a variety of seed plates and a larger seed hopper, perfect for larger plantings. These seeders are available through farm machinery dealers who focus on horticulture. *JH*



Calendar of Events

Apr. 12 - FNA/SNFA AGM at the Sour Springs Longhouse in Ohsweken from 8 am to 12 pm.

Apr. 19 - Maple Syrup Festival, to be held in Wikwemikong.

Apr. 28 - IAPO AGM to be held in Markham at the Comfort Inn at 1:30 pm.

Apr. 30 - AgriStability 2014 invoice due.

May 1 - AgriStability Insurance (forage, soybeans, corn) - deadline to apply or make changes.

Please contact us if you have an item for the Calendar of Events.