



Welcome to another edition of Hort Snacks e-newsletter, the last of the 8th season. Winter appears to have arrived for good in most areas, although the weather has been surprisingly mild so far (knock on wood).

November and December are busy months, whether in terms of travel for conferences, workshops or other events or in preparation for holidays or the busy time of the first few months of the New Year. There is planning, organizing and a general rush to get this or that done. With the proximity to the growing season, it is a great time for reflection on the past season. With our tendency to organize and plan in these months, it is also a great time to take that enhanced focus and channel it towards next season adjustments and tweaking.

In this edition, you'll find it full of posters for coming events that you might find useful. Take the time to find a course or two that will give you a nugget or kernel of knowledge that will give you that edge in the coming year. Among the other miscellaneous articles and factoids in this edition, hopefully you'll find something that triggers creativity or gives you the spark of an idea.

As we approach a universal holiday season, we wish each of you and your families all the best for the New Year and the every success in the future.

Rob Spencer/Dustin Morton Commercial Horticulture Specialists
 Alberta Ag-Info Centre, Alberta Agriculture and Forestry
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FEATURED WEBSITES

The Owl – Focused on Alberta’s Economy
 (A daily piece by ATB Financial experts)

[The OWL](#)

The Real Dirt on Farming
 (Answering your questions about farming in Canada)

<http://www.realdirtontfarming.ca/>

In this edition of Hort Snacks

▪ Featured Website	.....1
▪ Things to Do / Things to Think About	.....2
▪ Mental Snacktime – Rest and Recuperation	.....2
▪ Q&A	.....2
▪ Upcoming Conferences / Workshops	.....3
▪ Extension Event Posters	.....4
▪ Some random points from recent conferences	.....14
▪ Using Seasonal Events to Promote	.....15
▪ Deep Thoughts – Innovation & Success; Perseverance vs Futility	.....16
▪ Insect of the Month – Hawthorn Lace Bug	.....17
▪ Disease of the Month – Blackleg of Potato	.....18

THINGS TO DO / THINGS TO THINK ABOUT THIS MONTH

- Take advantage of this “slower time” opportunity and visit with fellow producers
- Reflect on how the past season went
 - What worked?
 - What didn't?
 - What could have been done?
 - How will you improve next year?
 - What is one thing that you will add next year?
 - What is one thing that you will drop next year?
- Reflection sets the course for the future. Take the time to reflect on those who've assisted in making your business what it is today (e.g. family, suppliers, advertisers, customers, etc.) → CALL THEM / EMAIL THEM / Let them know
- Ensure your plant / seed orders are in
- Renew your annual association memberships

NEWSLETTER USE RESTRICTIONS

Please feel free to share all or portions of this newsletter with other interested parties.

If you want to use content from this newsletter in other media, please request permission before doing so.

Q&A

Mental Snacktime – Rest and Recuperation

“The most important thing about recovery is to pass the message on.” – Maurice Gibb

“Dedicating some time to meditation is a meaningful expression of caring for yourself that can help you move through the mire of feeling unworthy of recovery. As your mind grows quieter and more spacious, you can begin to see self-defeating thought patterns for what they are, and open up to other, more positive options.” – Sharon Salzberg

“Art is recuperation from time. I lie back convalescing upon the prospect of a harvest already at hand.” – R. S. Thomas

“The object of convalescence ought to be to turn our attention to life: at other times, simply to our tasks!” – Friedrich Nietzsche

“I go on working for the same reason that a hen goes on laying eggs. There is in every living creature an obscure but powerful impulse to active functioning. Life demands to be lived. Inaction, save as a measure of recuperation between bursts of activity, is painful and dangerous to the healthy organism- in fact, it is almost impossible. Only the dying can be really idle.” – H. L. Mencken

Q: Do you have a restful or recuperative activity that you rely on each year to recharge your batteries?

A: Not really.

A: I wish... Looking for ideas.

A: My year goes into Jan/Feb with vegetable sales then I begin work for AB AG for 2 months while starting the greenhouse. At best I get to sleep in more often and be at home in my office. Otherwise there is no downtime/holidays for this horticulturist.

Next Month's ? → [It's a new year! What are you planning that is going to make this one different than previous ones?](#)

Upcoming Conferences / Workshops

December 2016

- **Marketing Essentials for Local Food Workshop** (Tentative)
Dec 1, 2016 – Stony Plain, AB
- **2016 North American Strawberry Growers Association (NASGA) and North American Raspberry and Blackberry Growers (NARBA) Joint Meetings**
Dec 4, 2016 – joint reception – Grand Rapids, Michigan
Dec 5, 2016 – educational sessions – Grand Rapids, Michigan
Dec 6, 2016 – educational sessions with GLEXPO 2016
- **Great Lakes EXPO Farm Market Bus Tour**
Dec 5, 2016 – Grand Rapids, Michigan
<http://bustour.greatamericanmediaservices.com/>
- **Great Lakes Fruit, Vegetable and Farm Market Expo**
Dec 6-8, 2016 – DeVos Place Convention Centre – Grand Rapids, MI
www.glexpo.com
- **Explore Local Webinar – Get It Off The Shelf: Putting Your Business Plan in Action**
Dec 7, 2016 – [Registration link](#)
- **Getting into Retail Workshop**
Dec 8, 2016 – Lacombe, AB
- **Hort Snacks To Go Webinar – Season Extension**
Dec 12, 2016 – [Registration link](#)
- **Marketing Essentials – Intro to Marketing**
Dec 15, 2016 – Stony Plain, AB – [Coming Events](#)

January 2017

- **Potato Expo 2017**
Jan 2-6, 2017 – Moscone Center West Marriot Marquis – San Francisco, California, USA
www.potato-expo.com
- **Closing the Gap – Creating a More Profitable Business**
Jan 11, 2017 – Airdrie Ag Centre – Airdrie, AB
- **Hort Snacks-to-Go Webinar – Carrot IPM**
Jan 16, 2017 – [Registration link](#)
- **Adding it Up: Getting a Handle on Your Greenhouse Financials**
Jan 17-18, 2017 – Red Hat Coop Boardroom - Redcliff, AB
- **Agronomy Update 2017**
Jan 17-18, 2017 – Lethbridge Lodge – Lethbridge, AB
Ropin' the Web (www.agriculture.alberta.ca) – Coming Events
- **Local Foods – On-farm Retail Tour**
Jan 18, 2017 – Southern Alberta
- **Scotia Horticultural Congress 2017 – “Building Blocks for Tomorrow’s Farms”**
Jan 23-24, 2017 – Old Orchard Inn Convention Centre – Greenwich, NS -
<http://www.horticulturens.ca/index.php/events/scotia-horticultural-congress/>
- **Adding it Up: Getting a Handle on Your Greenhouse Financials**
Jan 24-25, 2017 – Lacombe Agriculture Building - Lacombe, AB
- **Manitoba Potato Production Days**
Jan 24-26, 2017 – Keystone Centre – Brandon, MB
www.mbpotatodays.ca

Upcoming Conferences / Workshops

January 2017 continued

- **48th Annual Northwest Agricultural Show**
Jan 24-26, 2017 – Portland Expo Centre – Portland, Oregon, USA
www.nwagshow.com
- **19th Annual Pacific Agricultural Show**
Jan 26-28, 2017 – Tradex Exhibition Centre – Abbotsford, BC
www.agricultureshow.net
- **Pricing Principles Workshop**
Jan 24, 2017 – Agri-Food Business Centre - [Leduc, AB](#)
Jan 26, 2017 – Airdrie Ag Centre – [Airdrie, AB](#)
Jan 31, 2017 – TBD – [Grande Prairie, AB](#)
- **36th Annual Guelph Organic Conference & Expo**
Jan 26-29, 2017 – Guelph University Centre, Guelph, ON
www.guelphorganicconf.ca
- **Hort Snacks-to-Go Webinar – Drip Irrigation**
Jan 30, 2017 – [Registration link](#)
- **FarmTech 2017**
Jan 31 – Feb 2, 2017 – Edmonton Expo Centre at Northlands – Edmonton, AB
www.farmtechconference.com
- **Human Resource (HR) Essentials**
Jan 31, 2017 – Airdrie, AB

February 2017

- **Human Resource (HR) Essentials**
Feb 1, 2017 – Stony Plain, AB
- **32nd Annual North American Farm Direct Marketing Association (NAFDMA) Convention**
Feb 3-9, 2017 – Mystic, Connecticut, USA
<http://www.farmersinspired.com/Convention/>
- **Getting Into Farmers Markets**
Feb 8, 2017 – Parkland County, AB
Feb 9, 2017 – Airdrie, AB
- **Explore Local Webinar – Marketing Your Story**
Feb 15, 2017
- **Organic Alberta Conference**
Feb 17-18, 2017 – Lacombe, AB
- **Ontario Berry Growers Association Annual Meeting**
Feb 20, 2017 – Niagara Falls, ON
www.ontarioberries.com
- **Ontario Fruit & Vegetable Convention**
Feb 21-22, 2017 – Scotiabank Convention Centre – Niagara Falls, ON
www.ofvc.ca
- **Hort Snacks-to-Go Webinar – Hydroponic Lettuce**
Feb 27, 2017 – [Registration link](#)

SAVE THE DATE

The **Alberta Farm Fresh School (From Farm to Market)** is set for March 2-3, 2017 at the Pomeroy Inn & Suites in Olds, AB (on Olds College campus). This conference is offered jointly by Alberta Farm Fresh Producers Association (AFFPA) and the Alberta Farmers' Market Association (AFMA)

Watch www.albertafarmfresh.com for details.

A half-day **Strawberry Production Workshop for New Growers** will be held before the School (on March 1).

There will also be a **Strawberry Industry Roundtable** the Wednesday evening (March 1).



invites you to:



Getting Into Retail

This one day workshop is designed for those who are interested in transitioning into retail sales beyond the traditional farm direct market channels. You will learn:

- if your business is ready for retail sales
- how to make connections with retailers and brokers
- how to present your products to buyers
- how to get your product to the retailer
- how to get into and stay in the retail game
- how to make sure your product will stand out for retail customers

Content for the Day

Setting the Stage

Discover the scope of the retail market, market drivers and the pros and cons of accessing this market opportunity.

Know Your Customer

Everyone is not your customer. Explore strategies to identify your target market, reach customers and ensure your business is ready to expand.

Getting Started

Everything you need to know before you even start selling retail in terms of packaging, labels, regulations and safe food handling practices.

Experiential Speakers

Two producers from the horticulture and prepared food industries will share their retail channel insight in a fireside chat style conversation.

Registration and Information

Date: Thursday, December 8, 2016

Registration deadline: December 1, 2016

Location: Agriculture and Forestry Building
5030 50 Street, Lacombe

Time: 8:45 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Cost: \$25 includes GST
Lunch and refreshments provided
Payment options: Visa, MC or cheque

**To register call:
1-800-387-6030**

For More Information:

Delores Serafin
Alberta Agriculture and Forestry
780-427-4611
delores.serafin@gov.ab.ca





HortSnacks-to-Go: 2016/2017 Webinar Series



To register call Dustin Morton
at 780-679-1314 or email at
dustin.morton@gov.ab.ca

October 17 (3 PM MST) –

Barb Stefanyshyn-Cote, Black Fox Farm & Distillery

Barb and her family operate Black Fox Farm and Distillery, a cut flower farm and distillery located just outside Saskatoon, SK. Barb discusses how they got started, the trials and tribulations of cut flowers, and what they've learned along the way.

November 21 (3 PM MST) –

Amanda Thomsen, Kiss My Aster

Amanda is the thrifting, Ryan Gosling loving punk behind the gardening blog 'Kiss My Aster'. This renowned author, speaker and garden diva will be discussing ways of making your garden centre Kiss My Aster-proof to ensure your clients come back year after year.

December 12 (3 PM MST) –

Adithya Ramachandran, Kaleidoscope Gardens

Adithya and Jennifer own and operate Kaleidoscope Gardens near Dundurn, SK. This small farm has invested heavily into season extension and will be discussing how they've used it to open up their market to new crops and extend the season of traditional crops.

January 16 (3 PM MST) –

Rick Peters, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC)

Rick is a research scientist studying fungal diseases of carrots and other vegetable crops in Prince Edward Island. He will be looking at the ins and out of integrated pest management in carrots from seed to harvest and everything in between.

January 30 (3 PM MST) –

Rebecca Shortt, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs (OMAF)

An expert in irrigation management, Rebecca will discuss irrigation scheduling with drip irrigation and how to get the most bang for your buck from your irrigation system.

February 27 (3 PM MST) –

Bob Purton, Kangro Gardening

Kangro Gardening is a five acre market garden just outside Yorkton, SK. Bob's transition to hydroponic lettuce production was not without challenges and he'll discuss his approach as well as his successes and failures.

March 20 (3 PM MST) –

Suzanne Wainwright-Evans, Buglady Consulting

Suzanne has been working with biological control agents for nearly 20 years and is well known in the greenhouse industry. She'll be discussing some recent trends she's seen in greenhouse pest control as well as perennial issues everybody deals with in their operations.



Pricing Principles

Moving to Retail

Planning on selling to retail? Expand your understanding of the costs related to setting a profitable price.



Attend this workshop if you are looking to:

- Price your products for profit
- Understand the components of pricing for the retail market
- Understanding retail buyers needs

Registration Information

Dates: January 24, 2017

Agri-Food Business Centre
6547 Sparrow Drive, Leduc, Alberta

January 26, 2017

Agriculture Centre
97 East Lake Ramp NE, Airdrie, Alberta

January 31, 2017

Grande Prairie, Venue TBC

Time: 9 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Registration starts at 8:30 a.m.

Cost: \$25 per person

(includes snacks, lunch and GST)

To register
call the **Ag-Info Centre** at

1-800-387-6030



OCTOBER 12 (9 AM MDT)
BEING THE BEST: LESSONS IN MARKETING FROM NAFDMA BC 2016

Marketing excellence is a treasure worth sharing. Every stop on the 2016 North American Farm Direct Marketing Association (NAFDMA) convention tour uncovered another marketing gem in the B.C Lower Mainland’s world class farm direct and agri-tourism industry. Through stories and pictures Karen Goad and Christine Anderson with Alberta Agriculture and Forestry will explore some of the innovative marketing strategies and offer insight into overcoming common industry challenges.

Refer to the **PREVIOUS WEBINAR link on page two to view.**

NOVEMBER 9 (9 AM MDT)
EXPLORE LOCAL FOOD MARKETS

Where should you sell your product? Farmers markets, CSAs, farm store, food service? What’s the perfect market for you? Elaine Stenbraaten with Alberta Agriculture and Forestry will explore the advantages and disadvantages of local food markets and how to choose the best fit for your products and your business.

Refer to the **PREVIOUS WEBINAR link on page two to view.**

DECEMBER 7 (9 AM MDT)
GET IT OFF THE SHELF: USING YOUR BUSINESS PLAN

A business plan is a written description of your business future, what you plan to do and how you plan to do it. It will help you obtain different resources, hone your abilities and increase profitability and assets in three to five years. Regardless of the business challenges you face, you need to keep your business moving forward. Jan Warren with Alberta Agriculture and Forestry will share tips and actions for entrepreneurs to stay on track developing their process to fulfilling their dreams!

Explore
 Local
 2016-17
Webinar Series

www.explorelocal.ca

It’s no secret, running a farm direct business means paying attention to many moving parts that often take you out of the field and into the office. That’s why we are hosting a series of webinars for producers and processors that will help build savvy marketing and staffing skills.

Register for any of these webinars by clicking on the following link:

<https://albertaagriculture.webex.com/albertaagriculture/onstage/g.php?PRID=bebc5c756363aa2eaa53031dec47b65b>

Webinars are 60 minutes in length and include Q&A time.

*When registering, change time zone to Denver; there is not a choice for Alberta.

JANUARY 11 (9 AM MDT)

MARKETING MEATS

While beef is one of the top three local food items purchased, there is still a strong un-met consumer demand according to the 2016 reports on local food demand in the Calgary and Edmonton regions. Learn how established farm direct meat marketers incorporate marketing best practices into of their meat business.

FEBRUARY 15 (9 AM MDT)

MARKETING YOUR STORY: LEPP FAMILY FARM

Charlotte Lepp from Lepp Farm Market in Abbotsford, BC will share how she has incorporated their farm story into all aspects of their very successful farm retail operation. Discover how creating a brand around your unique story can help you connect with customers and build loyalty and trust in your business.

MARCH 8 (9 AM MDT)

HUMAN RESOURCE (HR) ESSENTIALS

Are you struggling to hire the right people? Would you like to learn effective strategies to boost employee performance and retention? This one-day workshop offers a practical, hands-on approach to your most challenging HR management issues. Denise Burrell of the Performance Group Inc. has delivered numerous HR training programs. Denise is known for her ability to draw on workshop participants' experiences to make material relevant and meaningful.

APRIL 12 (9 AM MDT)

ALBERTA HEALTH SERVICES FOOD REGULATION

Learn the ins and outs of the Food Regulation as it applies to food sold at Alberta approved farmers' market. A public health inspector with Alberta Health Services will share the requirements you need to meet in order to legally sell your food products.



Webinar Series 2016-17

www.explorelocal.ca

Webinars are 60 minutes in length and include Q&A time.

*When registering, change time zone to Denver; there is not a choice for Alberta.

Register for any of these webinars by clicking on the following link:

<https://albertaagriculture.webex.com/albertaagriculture/onstage/q.php?PRID=bec5c756363aa2eaa53031dec47b65b>

PREVIOUS WEBINARS can be viewed on the Explore Local website under subject areas.

For more information contact:

Cindy Cuthbert,
Alberta Agriculture and Forestry
Email: cindy.cuthbert@gov.ab.ca
Phone: 780-538-5287 (for toll-free calling in AB, dial 310-0000, then the number)



2016-17 Coming Events At-A-Glance

www.explorelocal.ca/events

The following table shows Explore Local upcoming events in date order. For more information about the event and for registration information, visit the Explore Local website and click on the Events tab.

Event Name	Date	Event Type	Location
Being the Best: Lessons in Marketing NAFDMA BC 2016	WED OCT 12 9 AM MST/MDT	Webinar	N/A
Getting Into Farming	TUES OCT 18	Workshop	Airdrie
Explore Local Food Markets	WED NOV 9 9 AM MST/MDT	Webinar	N/A
Get It Off the Shelf: Putting Your Business Plan to Work	WED DEC 7 9 AM MST/MDT	Webinar	N/A
Getting Into Local Foods	THURS NOV 23	Workshop	Parkland County
Getting Into Retail	TUE Dec 8	Workshop	Lacombe
Marketing Essentials: Intro to Marketing	MON Dec 12	Workshop	Stony Plain
Troubleshooting Shelf Life	TUE JAN 10	Workshop	Lacombe
Closing the Gap: Creating a more profitable business	WED JAN 11	Workshop	Airdrie
Marketing Meats	WED JAN 11 9 AM MST/MDT	Webinar	N/A
On-Farm Retail	WED JAN 18	Tour	South of Calgary
Human Resource (HR) Essentials	TUE JAN 31	Workshop	Airdrie
Human Resource (HR) Essentials	WED FEB 1	Workshop	Stony Plain

The following table shows Explore Local upcoming events in date order. For more information about the event and for registration information, visit the Explore Local website and click on the Events tab.

Event Name	Date	Event Type	Location
Getting Into Farmers' Markets	WED FEB 8	Workshop	Parkland County
Getting Into Farmers' Markets	THUR FEB 9	Workshop	Airdrie
Marketing Your Story: Lepp Family Farm	WED FEB 15 9 AM MST/MDT	Webinar	N/A
Turning Complaints into Compliments	WED MAR 1	Workshop	Olds
From Farm To Market (Farm Fresh School)	THUR-FRI MAR 2 - 3	Conference	Olds
Human Resource (HR) Essentials	WED MAR 8 9 AM MST/MDT	Webinar	N/A
Marketing Essentials: Intro to Marketing	THUR MAR 9	Workshop	Camrose
Marketing Essentials: Telling Your Story	THUR MAR 16	Workshop	Stony Plain
Getting Into Local Foods	TUE MAR 21	Workshop	Lethbridge
Getting Into Local Foods	WED MAR 22	Workshop	Airdrie
Getting Into On-Farm Sales	TUE APR 4	Workshop	Leduc
Troubleshooting Shelf Life	TUE APR 11	Workshop	Airdrie
Food Safety at the Farmers' Market	WED APR 12 9 AM MST/MDT	Webinar	N/A
Marketing Essentials: Intro to Marketing	WED APR 12	Workshop	Airdrie
Marketing Essentials: Telling Your Story	WED APR 19	Workshop	Airdrie

Strawberry Production Workshop

March 1, 2017 – Pomeroy Inn & Suites at
Olds College (4601 46 Ave) – Olds, AB



This workshop provides new or potential strawberry producers with a detailed outline of all aspects of strawberry production in Alberta. Sessions include information on the production of June-bearing and day-neutral strawberry types, including establishment, maintenance and harvest of strawberries.

11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. registration

Lunch: 12 – 12:40 p.m.

Sessions run 12:45 to 5:30 p.m.

Register: 1-800-387-6030

Registration deadline:

February 21, 2017

Cost = \$20/person (plus GST)

Lunch and snacks provided

Potato Post-Harvest Management



This workshop will provide fresh and seed potato growers with in-depth information on potato storage design and management, as well as pre-harvest, post-harvest, in-storage and post-storage disease management information. This will increase their capacity for prolonged quality potato storage, as well as reduce losses that occur in storage or in the post-harvest process.

March 7, 2017 – Coast Lethbridge
Hotel & Conference Centre – 526 Mayor
Magrath Drive South – Lethbridge, AB

March 8, 2017 – Lacombe
Memorial Centre – 5214 50 Avenue –
Lacombe, AB

March 9, 2017 – Hazel Bluff
Community Hall (9 km west of Westlock on
HWY 18) – Westlock, AB

8 a.m. registration
Sessions run 8:45 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Register: 1-800-387-6030
Registration deadline: February 28, 2017
Limit of 2 registrants per farm operation

Cost: \$15/person (plus GST)

Lunch and snacks provided

Each farm operation will receive a binder of
resource information.

Problem Pests in Horticulture Crops



This workshop will provide rural landowners, market gardeners, garden centre owners and those that work to support these groups with information on the identification and management of a range of current problem pests (diseases and insect pests) that affect fruit, vegetable, potato and tree/shrub crops in Alberta. Participants will build their knowledge and capacity to pass on this information to others.

March 14, 2017 – Airdrie
Agriculture Centre – 97 East Lake Ramp NE
– Airdrie, AB

March 15, 2017 – Lacombe
Memorial Centre – 5214 50 Avenue –
Lacombe, AB

March 16, 2017 – Strathcona
County Community Centre – 401 Festival
Lane – Sherwood Park, AB

8 a.m. registration
Sessions run 8:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Register: 1-800-387-6030

Registration deadline: March 6, 2017

Cost = \$10/person (plus GST)

Lunch and snacks provided

Some Random Nuggets from Alberta fall Horticulture meetings

Over the past few weeks, I've attended a couple of different meetings around Alberta, where I took in a few speakers that shared some good information. Here are some things that I picked up.

Lynn Switanowski – Creative Business Consulting Group (www.cbc-group.net)

Lynn spoke on things that customers are using social media for that business owners need to know, so that they might better and more effectively reach them.

- You need to tell a story every day – this allows you to engage your customers
 - Create compelling content
- Figure out who your customers are and how they like to communicate with you
- Consumers will look on the internet for information on the products that you sell, before contacting you – be the expert (or appear that way)
 - Are you reachable? Is your website mobile optimized?
- Customers use their mobile devices throughout the entire shopping experience
- Social media advertising is cheaper in terms of dollars but takes time
- It is important to engage with your customers throughout the day
 - Weekends are the busiest social media days

Peter Chapman - Getting More Potatoes in the Shopping Cart

Peter drew upon his many years of experience to list a number of retail realities and current retail trends that growers can learn from.

Realities:

1. Retailers are in the business of filling shopping carts but they don't care what is in there
2. Retail landscape continues to change or evolve – from traditional chains to large or specialty
3. We build big beautiful stores in Canada – the average store carries 35000 SKUs; the average household buys 260/year
4. Products must be relevant
5. Retailers think that prices are too high and that producers are using inflation to drive up prices – there are some levels of mistrust

Trends:

- Bricks and mortar vs on-line
- Discounting
- Loyalty programs
- Control label (retailer brand names)
- Consumers are using mobile phones, are concerned about health and wellness, convenience, being informed and local
- Markets and consumers are changing
- Consumers have been trained to search for value

Cherilyn Nagel – Advocacy in Agriculture – Engage in the Conversation

Cherilyn went from being a dance instructor in the tropics to being a pulse farmer, wife and agricultural advocate. She passionately spoke on the importance of speaking up to gain back the trust that has been lost (due mostly to saying nothing to consumers). With most Canadians 2 generations or more removed from the farm, it is critical to acknowledge the legacy that comes from agriculture and share our passion for agriculture with those around us. There is a dichotomy between Modern Agriculture and the Age of Information, where people are going on-line for information, to a range of sources. One of the key take-home messages that Cherilyn shared was that farmers need to be available in the places where consumers are looking for information.

Jon Montgomery – Building Self-Efficacy Value (SEV)

Jon spoke eloquently about the importance that attitude plays in accomplishing what we set out for.

- Celebrate small victories in new things to prevent from becoming overwhelmed
- We must recognize that we have absolute control over nothing else in life but the attitude that we choose to have every day.
- We can't control outcomes but we can control how we feel about them by what we invest and the attitude we choose to carry.
- By watching others doing what you want to do, it makes your goals feel more accessible. Give some legs to your dreams and be inspired by those around you!
- It's impossible to not get better yourself while helping others achieve their potential.

Using seasonal events / holidays to promote your farm or farm products

Holidays are a central part of the lives of most people, with many family traditions and activities moulded around the different seasons and the holidays that are a part of them. Holidays would include Christmas, New Year's Eve, Valentine's Day, Canada Day / July 1st, Halloween, Thanksgiving and a few more (including some culturally specific ones). Each holiday comes readymade with one, two or more themes built in and many images and symbols that can be picked up in your farm operation. As agricultural producers, holidays represent excellent opportunities for you to capture the attention of your customers, and give you a chance to promote your farm and your farm's products.

The key to effectively using these events is to find the holiday themes that interest your customers and then connect them to your farm and what you have to offer. It should be noted that not every operation is geared towards pairing with certain holidays, due to season length, product offering, etc. And that is ok. But there are some easy connections that you might want to think about taking advantage of.

Consider the following examples of potential options for promoting your farm.

On-Farm Themed Events

Depending on your farm set-up, you may or may not be in a position to offer too many of the winter-centric celebrations. If you have an on-farm store or on-farm facilities, you might consider offering festive holiday dinners or luncheons. In the summertime, you could offer BBQs or picnics to go with other activities. You might integrate a themed activity or two into the on-farm activities that you host or already specialize in. It is important to highlight what you have on your farm. If you have livestock, you might have a Nativity scene at Christmas time. For Christmas / Valentines / New Years Eve consider trying snow or bale mazes, hay rides or photography. For Easter, maybe try Easter egg hunts or an Easter petting zoo (chicks, bunnies, etc.). Create events with the intent of having them repeat yearly, so people know to look for them after the initial offering.

On-Farm Decoration / Promotion

You can easily create displays that match or tie into the seasons and the holidays. The degree or amount of effort that you go to will depend on what you like and what you have to offer. You can offer holiday specific promotions and featured products to help draw people in.

Product Offerings

It is relatively simple to integrate products or crafts from your farm (or partner with neighbours) into the festivities. If you'd prefer not to have people on the farm, you can connect or partner with a caterer or a neighbouring farm, with your product(s) featured into the event (e.g. your great root vegetables or your delicious frozen fruit).

If you create any sort of value-added products on your farm, you have the opportunity to offer those products as gift ideas throughout the season. By decorating them slightly differently (colour, packaging, etc.), you can use a similar product for a range of holidays. For example, jams or jellies could be promoted anytime. Or, perhaps you could have holiday specific products (spiced ciders or specially flavoured sauces for certain menu items, etc.). At any time, there is the chance to help your customers know how to use your edible products, by providing recipes (whether as a handout, a decorative card or in a recipe book).

If you want, consider growing or creating a product specifically for individual holidays. Greenhouse producers (of ornamental crops, mainly) have the ability to do this easily, producing specialty flowers (e.g. lilies, poinsettias) or arrangements (e.g. baskets, etc.). Vegetable growers can produce specialty squash or gourds or certain varieties of vegetables for use in specialty foods.

Simplicity

Some of the best things that you do can be very simple and quite small. It doesn't have to be a massive endeavor. Maybe consider trying out a one-time product offering at a winter market, that links back to your regular season stuff.

Bottom Line

Use the holidays to draw in customers (and their friends and families) or remind them that you are there and that you have something (or even MANY things) to offer. Your creativity will stick in their minds. As a precaution, remember to be safe (for you, your employees and your customers) and to make sure that whatever you offer (event, products, etc.); the returns are greater than the costs.

Deep Thoughts – Innovation and Success - Perseverance vs. Futility

In recent conversations and while listening to several motivational speakers, I have noticed a common theme: successful figures and what they had created or accomplished. One example involved the person that created Velcro®, which came about after finding burs in his dog's fur. Another example was the men who created Post-It® Notes, combining one man's desire for reusable page markers with another's work on glue. Another recent example was an Olympic Gold Medalist. There are many examples in the world of motivated, visionary and/or creative people that have taken an idea or a goal, developed it and then ran with it, to great success. We celebrate those success stories. In my years of working with producers of all types, I've continually been impressed by the ingenuity and innovation of the people I've come across.

In photography, you can change how something looks by shifting the contrasts (or the tones) of the image. By creating stark contrasts, you sharpen the lines and can see certain things clearer than when things are presented in shades. In life (you pick the area), when you make a study of contrasts, you can sometimes gain interesting perspectives and insights.

Shift the contrast and consider the previous examples. If we look at them solely as successful ventures, we perhaps fail to recognize the challenges that were overcome, the failed experiments, or even the luck (if you believe in it) that was necessary prior to success. It took 10 years to create Velcro®. The Post-It® Notes success hinged on the fact that the glue was a weak adhesive, as opposed to the desired outcome, a super-adhesive.

You might, at this point, be wondering what the point of this article is, compared to the title of it. While innovation and success can, and are, great goals, consider the subtle contrasts between the personality traits that drive, or are associated with, innovation.

Perseverance is defined as:

- Steadfastness in doing something despite difficulty or delay in achieving success
- Continuing in a course of action without regard for discouragement, opposition or previous failure
- Persistent determination to adhere to a plan or direction

Perseverance is a quality that you'd probably agree is useful in driving towards innovation and success. However, consider other words that are synonyms for perseverance: persistence, tenacity, pertinacity, insistence, constancy, endurance, obstinacy, stubbornness. I'd postulate that as you go from the front of the list to the end of it, you're seeing a shift in contrast.

Perseverance is considered admirable and desirable. Stubbornness is perhaps less desirable. But it is a subtle difference. Apply this to a quest for innovation or even to something as simple as a production practice, marketing idea, etc. on your farm operation. In plain and simple terms, we might work hard to achieve success in an area or to bring a great idea to fruition, pushing past the obstacles, the brief challenges and the little hiccups that typically occur. But at what point does perseverance become stubbornness and then slip into futility? At what point should you abandon what was beautiful in concept, but not worth it in practice (even if only temporarily)? It takes a shift to see things in stark, crisp contrast and be able to either adjust or walk away.

Thomas Edison, the famous inventor on the 19th century, offers some interesting perspective on where you might draw the line. Edison is recorded as having said "*Many of life's failures are people who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up*" (1877) and is attributed as having said something along the lines of "*I have not failed 10,000 times. I have not failed once. I have succeeded in proving that those 10,000 ways will not work. When I have eliminated the ways that will not work, I will find the way that will work.*"

Granted, he succeeded. And maybe over 100 years ago, it was easier to push forward to innovation, despite many failures, whereas today, we have to succeed quickly or move on.

Where do you draw the line? It isn't a cut and dried answer, by any stretch. The line depends on whether you have the time and/or resources (economic, emotional, etc.) to push through to success. You will have to decide. Use your own, personal tally system to find an answer to whether you are persevering or stubbornly persisting in a failed venture.

INSECT OF THE MONTH

Hawthorn Lace Bug

Corythucha cydoniae

Species affected: Saskatoon berry and other plants in the Rose family (apples, hawthorn, pear, cotoneaster, etc.); other species may affect Saskatoon, chokecherry, etc.

Life Cycle:

- Overwinter as adults (Two generations per season)
- Black eggs are laid in clusters on the underside of leaves in early spring
- Nymphs emerge and feed on the underside of the leaves after about 3 weeks
 - 5 instars; 1st generation of adults emerge in midsummer, 2nd in fall
- Feed by piercing leaves and sucking out plant juices

Symptoms:

- Stippled or mottled leaves with many lace bugs present
- Feed in large numbers
 - leaves may be stained with their excrement
- Adults are small bugs which appear to be covered in lace
- Nymphs are dark brown to black and covered in varying amounts of spines

Monitoring:

- Not required, but can be detected while scouting for other insect pests

Management:

- Not typically required, as do not typically cause economic damage
 - *In recent years, damage is more common and more severe on a number of different hosts – this may necessitate a need to look more closely at controls/management than in previous years.*
- May be controlled during chemical applications for other registered pests



Hawthorn lace bug nymph



Hawthorn lace bug adults

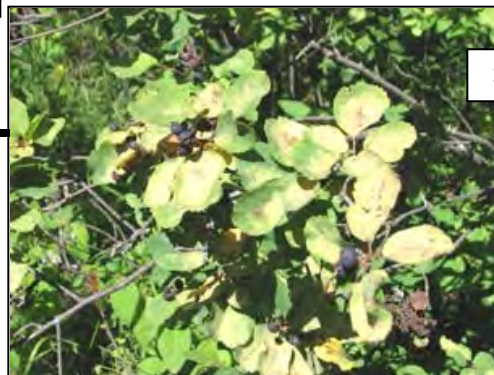


Lace bug injury on Saskatoon berry – yellowing / stippling

Photos by Robert Spencer



Evidence of lace bugs on leaf undersides – nymphs, adults, frass and stippling of leaves



Severe leaf stippling and discoloration

[Pest Management Regulatory Agency \(PMRA\) – Electronic Label Search Engine](#)

Search the database for electronic labels

Blackleg of Potato

Causal Organism: *Erwinia carotovora* subsp. *atroseptica* OR *Petrobacterium atrosepticum* OR *Petrobacterium carotovorum* var. *atrosepticum*

New Dickeya Blackleg: *Dickeya dianthicola*

Crops Affected: potato

Disease Cycle:

- Bacterial pathogen
- Typically affects stems and tubers
- The pathogen resides in the tuber lenticels and in wounds (or on crop debris, in some situations)
- Favourable conditions at planting, followed by warm weather will trigger disease development
- Stand loss may occur if seed pieces are decayed, or the disease may move into the plant via the vascular system, in established stands
 - Infection can occur in the soil or during harvest
- Seed tubers are the primary source of inoculum
 - Other sources of inoculum include infested soil and irrigation water
 - Aerial stem rot comes from bacteria on crop debris, entering through wounds or leaf scars
 - The pathogen is also spread by insects or irrigation water
- Dickeya blackleg is a more aggressive pathogen than the typical blackleg pathogen
 - It can cause infections at lower inoculum levels, can spread more easily through the vascular system and develops at higher temperatures

Symptoms:

- Plants may have a stiff, upright growth habit and may be stunted
- Water-soaked black lesions are observed on infected stems
 - Stems have inky black lesions that begin at the rotting seed piece, reaching up the entire stem
 - Lesions darken and merge together, as the infection moves up the stem
 - Vascular tissues can be discoloured, in addition to the decaying pith tissues
 - Plants may be completely rotted at the base of the plant
- Leaves may turn yellow and leaflets can roll upwards at the margin
 - Leaflets and the entire plant can wilt and collapse
- Tuber symptoms vary
 - Inky-black sunken lesions develop at the stem end of tubers, with tissues gradually turning grey, then black
 - Black-walled irregularly-shaped cavities extend through the centre of the tuber
 - Lenticels may be sunken (up to ¼ inch in diameter) and brown to black in colour
 - The sub-lenticel tissues may be dry and brown

Conditions Favouring Disease Development

- The disease can be present in both wet and dry weather, although symptoms can vary and the location of symptoms will vary (wet = entire plant; dry = mostly belowground)
- Typically, warm, moist conditions will allow disease to develop, in field or in storage
- Cooler, wet temperatures in spring will allow for disease infection, with warm temperatures after emergence speeding up and encouraging further development

Management:

- It is critical to use clean seed, as this will influence initial development
- Sanitization of any cutting equipment may reduce mechanical disease spread
 - Seed treatment may be appropriate for reducing disease
 - Using whole seed versus cut seed may be beneficial
- Ensure soil conditions are favourable for rapid emergence and healthy plant growth
 - Avoid poorly drained, cool soils
 - Avoid irrigating prior to plant emergence
- Encourage rapid leaf drying and reduced canopy densities, if possible
- Follow a good crop rotation
- Post-harvest handling
 - Harvest once tubers have a good skin set, once vines are completely dead
 - Avoid bruising and wounding of tubers during harvest and post-harvest handling
 - Encourage wound healing in pre-storage
 - Maintain suitable cold storage conditions

A useful article on Blackleg and Dickeya Blackleg – [Dickeya: A New Major Threat to Potato Production in North America](#) – SpudSmart article