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# FARMS

NIAGARA REGION - ONTARIO'S ORCHARD

ISSUE 6 / SEPTEMBER 2024



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Reduce waste



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A 'Grand' event

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# NIAGARA FARMS

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## ‘A real farm experience’: Richardson’s welcomes students and the public this fall

*James and Kirsten Richardson run a mixed crop operation ‘off the beaten path’ in Dunnville*

**By Luke Edwards**

As he cleans the dirt and debris off a tomato, deciding which box to place it in, James Richardson is taking advantage of seven generations of family farming experience.

“I’m just cleaning them off and then sorting them. This one’s a number three, so we’ll cut that up and put it in the freezer,” he said. The number threes aren’t quite the right quality to place in the family’s on-farm market that’s “just off the beaten path” in Dunnville, but it’ll be perfect to freeze and use in a soup or chili sauce over the winter.

Among other things, it’s the yellow tinge around the stem that signifies to Richardson that it’ll have a hard core.

Richardson Farm and Market is gearing up for the busy fall season, where they’ll be welcoming school groups throughout the week and the general public on Saturdays to visit the farm and learn about what goes into growing the food we eat.

“We’re more about real farm experience and educating people than just entertaining,” Richardson said.

The COVID-19 pandemic taught people the importance of food systems, Richardson said, which convinced the seventh generation Dunnville farmer to focus their agritourism efforts on education over entertainment.

While taking a wagon ride throughout the property, visitors will learn about the history and the work that goes into growing and harvesting produce.

They’ll even get in on the action, as Richardson’s offers pick-your-own pumpkins, and more recently, apples.

“We want to provide healthy food to our community and a place to learn about agriculture,” Richardson said.

Richardson took over the farm in 1997, with his wife Kirsten getting involved a few years later when they got married.

But the family farm has deep roots. His ancestors arrived as Mennonites from Germany in the 1600s, settling in the Vineland area. Then Michael and Barbara Rittenhouse moved down to

Dunnville in 1819, building a small farm not far from where the current market stands.

There’s no trace of that initial home, but the area is still steeped in farming history.

Family members have branched off since then. Richardson has cousins who farm dairy cattle, and his father had beef cattle. In fact, Richardson said his dad was the first person in Ontario to use slatted floors in his barns.

“He went on a Junior Farmer exchange to England and saw that progression of the industry, and when he got back decided he was going to put slatted floors in the barn,” Richardson said.

Richardson continues that mixed use mentality, starting with maple syrup in the spring before getting into various fruit and vegetable crops like strawberries, tomatoes, sweet corn, raspberries, pumpkins, and most recently apples.

The apple trees only went in a few years ago, but some are starting to bear fruit.

Richardson said the visits and wagon rides help teach people about farming and what exactly goes into it. For instance, he said people will often see a farmer spraying a field and instantly think it’s something bad. But they could be spraying a wide range of products, such as garlic or molasses, calcium or other nutrients.

Richardson’s children help a bit on the farm, though he’s said none have yet to show a firm interest in taking over. However, he admits it wasn’t until he was in his mid-20s that he decided he wanted to follow in his dad’s footsteps, so there’s still time.

“We figure we’ve got to keep doing this for 10 years or so, at least,” he said.

The Richardson’s market is open year round, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. from Monday to Friday, and 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturdays. Inside, customers can find fruits and vegetables, maple syrup, along with jams, pies, and other goodies.

Tours run in September and October on Saturdays. For more information visit [richardsonsfarm.ca](http://richardsonsfarm.ca).



The Richardsons’ fall raspberry crop is looking strong this year. ~ Luke Edwards photos



The Richardson’s market remains open year round, selling fruits and veggies, as well as baked goods.

**Front page photo: James Richardson planted a few rows of apple trees to add to the mixed crop offerings they have at their Dunnville farm. Richardson’s will once again be opening the doors to visitors this fall as they provide educational tours as well as pick-your-own pumpkins and apples.**



# Let Second Harvest help maximize your harvest this fall

Organization looking to involve more farmers to help reduce food waste

By Luke Edwards

No farmer grows food to watch it simply go to waste.

But often when it's perishable food and there's a time component attached, otherwise perfectly fine fruit, vegetables, meats and dairy products can go to waste. That's where organizations like Second Harvest Canada come in.

"We just want to make sure it gets to where it needs to go," said Lori Nikkel, CEO of Second Harvest, which is Canada's largest food rescue organization.

Nikkel said the organization tries to be a one-stop shop that connects people who have excess food, with those who need food. Food banks might come to mind first, but Nikkel pointed out there are many more charities across Canada that have a food component.

"Instead of having a bunch of different connections we'll be your connection," she said.

The organization collects food from businesses right along the food chain, but Nikkel said they could really use the support of more farmers. Their main areas of focus are dairy, proteins and produce, types of foods that food banks and other agencies struggle to find.

"Protein is like gold," she said.

As much as Second Harvest seems to be - and in some ways is - an organization that provides food for people in need, Nikkel has a slightly different point of view.

"We really are a food waste reduction organization. We really see this as an environmental imperative that food should never end up in a landfill," she said.

Research and data has become a focus of the organization in recent years. While Second Harvest has been around for decades, Nikkel said it began morphing into its current version about seven years ago. At the time she said few people were talking about food waste, and there was even less data to help people make informed decisions.

So Second Harvest went out to try to get better numbers. With the help of a consultant, they found that in 2019, 58 per cent of food produced for Canadians (meaning

either grown here for domestic consumption or imported from elsewhere to be eaten here in Canada) was wasted.

"A lot of that is totally preventable, it doesn't have to be wasted," Nikkel said.

Ultimately, she said it's not the failing of any one person or sector.

"Nobody should point fingers at anyone, it's a systems problem," she said.

With affordability becoming more front of mind, along with environmental concerns, Nikkel said food waste has become more of a talking point. However, change remains slow.

Currently, Nikkel said there are only a few farms - about a dozen - that they work with. However, she sees potential.

"When a farmer gives, there's a ton of food," she said.

Second Harvest's first priority when accepting food is to keep it local. Donors can use an app, though Nikkel said they're also just as happy to have a phone conversation to sort out details. Second Harvest's expertise means they'll know who locally would be best suited to receive whatever it is a farmer has to donate. They could then use their own team, or organize third-party logistics to get the food to where it needs to go.

"Call us one day, we're there the next," Nikkel said.

They can also offer tax receipts for donations or provide other support for farmers who she knows are supremely busy.

Nikkel said they've started incorporating some circular economy ideas into their model as well. For instance, they'll help sort through seconds and less prime produce, sending the appropriate pieces of fruit and veggies to a charity, while returning the rest to the farm to use for compost.

"Farmers are the nicest people on the planet, they will always try to give you what they have," she said.

Any farmers interested in donating food this fall, or any time, can learn more at [secondharvest.ca](http://secondharvest.ca), use the Second Harvest app, or call Maureen Kirkpatrick, foodraising manager for Ontario, at 437-424-3103. 🌱



Second Harvest is Canada's largest food rescue program, and its CEO is encouraging more farmers to sign up to donate excess food. ~ Second Harvest photos

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## An apple a day

Just about everyone has heard the old saying espousing the benefits of apples.

And though an apple a day may not in fact keep the doctor away, the fruit does offer many health benefits including being high in fibre, antioxidants, and being heart healthy.

They're also pretty tasty and incredibly versatile.

From the classic pie to a tasty addition to your main course, apples offer it all.

Here are a few recipes from Foodland Ontario to try as local apples come into season.



### Apple Stuffed Chicken Breasts

#### Ingredients

- 2 tbsp (25 mL) vegetable oil
- 1/2 cup (125 mL) diced Ontario Onion
- 1 tbsp (15 mL) finely chopped fresh Ontario Rosemary Leaves
- 1 large clove Ontario Garlic, finely chopped
- 2 cups (500 mL) peeled, diced (1/2-inch/1 cm) Ontario Apples (McIntosh, Idared or Empire)
- 1-1/4 cup (300 mL) Ontario Apple Cider
- 3.5 oz (100 g) Ontario Goat Cheese (Chèvre), crumbled slightly
- 4 boneless, skinless Ontario Chicken Breasts (about 150 g each)
- 1 tbsp (15 mL) cornstarch
- Salt and pepper

#### Instructions

In large skillet, heat 1 tbsp (15 mL) of the oil over medium heat; cook onion, stirring often; for 5 minutes or until softened. Stir in rosemary and garlic; cook for 1 minute. Stir in apples and 2 tbsp (25 mL) of the apple cider; cook, stirring occasionally, until apples are softened. Let cool slightly. Stir in goat cheese just until combined.

Slice chicken breasts in half horizontally almost but not all the way through; open like a book. Divide filling among breasts; fold back over and press to seal. Wipe skillet with paper towel. Add remaining oil and heat over medium-high heat; brown chicken lightly on both sides, turning carefully. Remove to plate.

Whisk cornstarch into remaining apple cider. Add to skillet and cook,

stirring until thickened slightly. Return chicken to pan; cover and simmer for 6 to 8 minutes, or until chicken is no longer pink inside, basting occasionally with sauce. Season with salt and pepper to taste.



### Curried Apple and Onion Soup

#### Ingredients

- 3 tbsp (45 mL) butter
- 2 Ontario Onions, chopped
- 1-1/2 tbsp (22 mL) curry powder
- 4 cups (1 L) vegetable or chicken broth
- 2 Ontario Apples, diced
- 2 tbsp (25 mL) apricot jam
- 2 cups (500 mL) 2% Ontario Milk
- 1 cup (250 mL) 35% Ontario Whipping Cream
- 1 tbsp (15 mL) Ontario Honey
- 1/2 tsp (2 mL) salt
- 1-1/2 tbsp (22 mL) cornstarch
- 1/4 cup (50 mL) cold water
- 1 tbsp (15 mL) fresh lemon juice
- Salt and pepper
- 1/4 cup (50 mL) chopped Ontario Chives
- Thinly sliced Ontario Apple

#### Instructions

In large pot, melt butter over medium heat. Add onions and cook, stirring occasionally until onions are soft, about 6 minutes. Add curry powder and cook, stirring constantly for 1 minute. Stir in broth, apples and jam. Cover and bring to boil. Reduce heat and simmer, uncovered for 10 minutes.

Transfer soup to blender or food processor, in batches if necessary, and purée until smooth. Return soup to pot over medium-low heat. Add milk, cream, honey and salt.

In small bowl, stir cornstarch with cold water until smooth. Stir into soup and bring to simmer, stirring constantly, until thickened. Stir in lemon juice. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Serve garnished with chives and apples.



### Pork and Apple Stew

#### Ingredients

- 2-1/2 lb (1.2 kg) lean stewing pork, such as shoulder, cut in 1-inch (2.5 cm) cubes
- 1/3 cup (75 mL) all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp (5 mL) salt
- 1/4 tsp (1 mL) pepper
- 1/4 cup (50 mL) (approx) vegetable oil
- 8 thin slices prosciutto, chopped (about 3 oz/75 g)
- 3 Ontario Onions, chopped
- 5 cloves Ontario Garlic, minced
- 2 cups (500 mL) Ontario Apple Cider
- 1 tsp (5 mL) dried rosemary, crumbled
- 1/2 tsp (2 mL) dried sage
- 5 large Ontario Cooking Apples (such as Northern Spy), peeled and thickly sliced
- 3 cups (750 mL) diced peeled Ontario Rutabaga
- 1 large greenhouse tomato
- 1/2 cup (125 mL) chopped fresh parsley

#### Instructions

In large bowl, toss pork cubes with flour, half of the salt and the pepper. Set aside.

In large skillet, heat 1 tbsp (15 mL) of the oil over medium heat; cook prosciutto, onions and garlic for 5 minutes. Remove with slotted spoon to large Dutch oven or flameproof casserole.

In batches, add pork to same skillet and brown over medium-high heat, adding more oil as needed and removing each batch with slotted spoon to Dutch oven.

Add cider to skillet and bring to boil, scraping up any brown bits from bottom of pan; pour over pork. Stir in rosemary, sage, remaining salt, 3 of the apples and rutabaga. Cover tightly and bring to boil. Transfer to 350°F (180°C) oven; bake, stirring occasionally, for about 2 hours or until pork is very tender. (Stew can be prepared to this point, cooled, covered and refrigerated for up to 1 day; reheat gently before continuing.)

In small, heavy skillet, heat 2 tsp (10 mL) oil over medium-high heat; sauté remaining 2 apples until tender-crisp, about 3 minutes. Peel, seed and chop tomato. Stir into cooked stew along with sautéed apples and parsley.



### Traditional Ontario Apple Pie

#### Ingredients

##### Crust Ingredients:

- 6 cups (1.5 L) cake and pastry flour or 5-1/2 cups (1.4 L) all-purpose flour
- 2 tsp (10 mL) salt
- 1 lb (454 g) lard
- 1 tbsp (15 mL) vinegar
- 1 Ontario Egg, lightly beaten
- cold water

##### Filling Ingredients:

- 1/3 cup - 1/2 cup (75mL - 125 mL) brown or granulated sugar
- 1 tbsp (15 mL) all-purpose flour
- 1/2 tsp (2 mL) cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp (1 mL) nutmeg
- 5 cups (1.25 L) sliced, peeled and cored Ontario Apple
- 1 tbsp (15 mL) butter or non-hydrogenated margarine

#### Instructions

In large bowl, combine flour and salt. Cut in lard with pastry blender or 2 knives until mixture resembles coarse meal. In a 1 cup (250 mL) glass measure, combine vinegar and egg. Add enough water to make 1 cup (250 mL). Gradually stir liquid into flour mixture, adding only enough liquid to make dough cling together. Gather into a ball and divide into 6 portions. Wrap and freeze or refrigerate unused portions.

Roll out a portion on a lightly floured surface. If dough is sticking, refrigerate 1 to 2 hours. Fit pastry into a 9-inch (23 cm) pie plate. Trim edge, leaving a 1/2-inch (1 cm) overhang. Combine sugar, flour, cinnamon and nutmeg and toss with apple slices. Place filling in pie shell and dot with butter or margarine.

Roll out another portion of pastry and place over filling. Trim top edge of crust, leaving a 1/2-inch (1 cm) overhang. Tuck overhang under bottom edge of the crust. Press together and flute edge. Cut several slashes as steam vents in top crust. Bake in preheated 425°F (220°C) oven for 15 minutes. Reduce heat to 350°F (180°C) and continue baking for 35 to 45 minutes or until fruit is tender and pastry is golden brown.





# Wainfleet hosts annual Niagara County Holstein Show

**By Luke Edwards**

Holsteins from Niagara and Haldimand were on full display last month as the Niagara County Holstein show came to Wainfleet.

Ribbons from several categories were up for grabs at the Aug. 21 show.

Here's a rundown of the top performers.

Premier Breeder: 1st - Feederlane Farms, 2nd - Brookturn Holsteins, 3rd - Matthew Roszell

Premier Sire: 1st - Walnutlawn Sidekick, 2nd (tie) - Farnear Delta-Lambda-ET and Stantons Chief-ET, 3rd - Brabantdale Alongside

Premier Exhibitor: 1st - Feederlane Farms, 2nd - Brookturn Holsteins, 3rd - Matthew Roszell

Junior Breeder: 1st - Brookturn Holsteins, 2nd - Feederlane Farms, 3rd - Royal Lynn Holsteins

Junior Premier Sire: 1st - Farnear Delta-Lambda-ET, 2nd - MB-Luckylady Eye Candy-ET, 3rd - Stantons Chief-ET

Junior Exhibitor: 1st - Brookturn Holsteins, 2nd - Feederlane Farms, 3rd - Gracehaven Holsteins, Royal Lynn Holsteins

Breeder's Herd (three animals from the same breeding unit, exhibitor must own at least one): 1st - Brenda Roszell (Premier breeder and premier exhibitor banners)



Owen Jansema enters the show ring with his young heifer. ~ Luke Edwards photos

Life production 70,000 KG: 1st - Brookturn Dempsey Pleasant, 2nd - Feederland Chelios Taboo

4-year-old: 1st - Dougford Sidekick Jessa (Windview Holsteins), 2nd - Feederlane Drop-Taboo

*Continued to page A7 →*

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→ **Continued from page A6**

kick Muffin

Senior 3-year-old: 1st - Feederlane Sidekick Twix (honorable mention)

Junior 3-year-old: 1st - Brookturn Mirand Valerie P (Reserve grand champion), 2nd - Karnvilla Warrior Loretta Red (Feederlane Farms), 3rd - Marshville Victorious Rusty (Matthew Roszell)

Winter 2-year-old: 1st - Feederlane Unix Mary, 2nd - Quality Diamondback Lulu (Brookturn)

Spring 2-year-old: 1st - Windview Sidekick Jeepers, 2nd - Brookturn Chief Lucky

Summer 2-year-old: 1st - Marshville Viral Jiji (Matthew Roszell), 2nd - Feederland Alongside Tarot

Fall yearling in milk: 1st - Jan158 Crushabull Fire (Best udder and grand champion, Braeholme Holsteins). Junior Breeders Herd: 1st - Brad Eggink, 2nd - Brookturn Holsteins, 3rd - Art De Boer

Fall Yearling: 1st - Kingsway Lambda Becca (Braeholme Farms)

Winter Yearling: 1st - Feederlane Fuel Macaron

Spring Yearling: 1st - Royal Lynn Victor Milly (4-H champion - reserve), 2nd - Feederlane Alpha Nutmeg, 3rd - Feederlane Alongside Tofu

Summer Yearling: 1st - Royal Lynn Chief Jubilee, 2nd - Marshville Chocochip Bae (Matthew Roszell), 3rd - Crovalley Lambda Avid (Almacres Holsteins)

Fall Heifer: 1st - Brookturn Eye Candy Lotus (4-H champion, junior champion) 2nd - Intense Lemagic Anika (4-H champion - honorable mention, Krestlink Holsteins, Trikrest Holsteins), 3rd - Brookturn Chief Velveteen.

Winter Heifer: 1st - Extramile Dollar 4 Ur Thoughts (4-H champion - reserve, junior champion - honorable mention), 2nd - Brookturn Eye Candy Lassie, 3rd - Valiant Lambda Shanghai-P RC (Gracehaven Holsteins, Royal Lynn Holsteins)

Spring Heifer: 1st - Windview Lambda Lavender (Trustmore Farms, Windview Holsteins), 2nd - Alderberry Bullseye Frosty (Rick Alders), 3rd - Spierdyke Actionman Beauty

This year and last year's 4-H calf class: 1st - Avery Jansema, 2nd - Paige Zaya, 3rd - Abigail Knutt, 4th - Kaylee Hart, 5th - Charlotte Cousineau.

Schomberg's Devin O'Hara judged the show. 🌿



**Charlotte Cousineau holds onto her heifer at the Niagara County Holstein Show.**



**As any cattle farmer knows, sometimes the animals don't want to behave, and these young showmen worked to control their young cattle.**



**Competitors were all vying for one of the ribbons at the Niagara County Holstein Show.**



**A couple younger animals inspect each other before the show begins.**



## AT THE MARKET

# Vince's European Deli takes market goers around the world

By Luke Edwards

Those looking to travel on a tight budget could simply hit up any one of the several markets where Vince's European Deli can be found each week.

Run by Vince Piterna out of Niagara Falls, he specializes in Italian calabrese but his market booths are a veritable United Nations of cured meats and cheese.

"We have something for everyone, we've got German, Hungarian, Polish. We even have Ukrainian, all over the world," said Pete Hoogenberk, who has used his gift of gab to chat up customers at markets for 15 years, helping Piterna sling salami.

Vince's can be found at markets from Fort Erie to the GTA.

It's been a lifelong passion for Piterna, running the family business.

While they specialize in Italian, Hoogenberk admits his favourite might be the Hungarian, specifically one he calls the Angry Hungarian, which has a surprising but not overpowering level of heat.

They also sell a variety of cheeses, specializing in asiago but again, getting creative. For instance, Hoogenberk said they have a mango papaya that is often met with curious looks but a quick sample wins them over.

"It really shouldn't work but it does...it's bizarre, it's a perfect balance of sweet and salty," Hoogenberk said.

Find Vince's at your local farmers' market. 🌿



Pete Hoogenberk has been helping Vince Piterna sell his cured meats at farmers' markets across the region for 15 years. Vince's European Deli can be found at several markets in Niagara and the GTA. ~ Luke Edwards photo

To nominate a local vender for our monthly "AT THE MARKET" feature, contact Luke Edwards at [luke@granthaven.com](mailto:luke@granthaven.com)

## September is a great month to visit farm and farmers' markets to stock up on Niagara's bounty

By Michelle Seaborn

August is a strange month. It starts and ends with a holiday weekend, we celebrate peaches in Winona and then the Canadian National Exhibition roars into Toronto for the last two weeks of the month and before you know it, the month is gone and kids are headed back to school.

Some would have you believe that summer is over. Not true. Take a walk down the rows of tables at any farmers' market and see tables loaded with every imaginable vegetable and fruit: Field tomatoes of numerous varieties, cucumbers and peppers to name a few.

If you are interested in putting some vegetables away for the winter, many will store well in the freezer after a short blanching, others like

potatoes, onions, cauliflower, brussels sprouts, will last quite a while in the cooler drawer of your refrigerator. September will bring broccoli, carrots, cauliflower and multi-coloured corn, lettuce and cabbage, as well as onions, corn and potatoes in great numbers.

The first varieties of apples are early this year, you will see Gala, and MacIntosh and soon Honeycrisp will be available. Bartlett pears were being harvested at the end of August on many farm orchards.

There are loads of plums still available and some everbearing strawberries. And we haven't quite said goodbye to peaches yet, as some freestone peaches will grace many markets as will the 'donut' peaches which have been pop-

ular over the last couple years. September often brings cooler evenings, warm days and a sense of harvest everywhere.

Fields will suddenly appear bare after their crops have been cut, bales of hay and straw decorate the countryside. September is a great month, truly the last of the summer and soon to welcome the first colours of fall. It is a great time to get outdoors and visit some of Niagara's many farmers' markets or find a pick-your-own farm and stock up on all the things that make up Niagara's bounty. We hope to see you at the market!r 🌿

Michelle Seaborn is the Grimsby Farmers' Market manager





# Ontario provides \$1.6M for more Foodland Ontario bins

*Project is a 50-50 cost sharing endeavour with the Ontario Tender Fruit Growers*

**By Niagara Farms Staff**

Provincial funding will seek to help customers better identify produce grown locally.

The provincial government has announced \$1.6 million in funding over four years to help the Ontario Tender Fruit Growers purchase display bins with the Foodland Ontario logo. The goal is to get more of these bins in grocery stores and shopping centres to highlight where locally grown produce is sold.

Niagara West MPP Sam Oosterhoff said the project will be a particular boost to Niagara growers.

“Niagara is home to some of the best tasting tender fruit in the world,” he said.

“This branding initiative will help direct consumers to local product in the produce aisle, supporting tender fruit growers across our region.”

It’s a cost-sharing project with the Ontario Tender Fruit Growers that sees each side contribute 50 per cent of the funding to the entire project.



**Provincial funding will help ensure more Foodland Ontario bins will be seen in stores across the province, directing customers to where they can find locally grown produce. ~ Luke Edwards photo**

“Many purchase decisions are made at the point of sale, so these bins will help consumers source the best fruit available while supporting our farmers and strengthening our provincial economy,”

said Rob Flack, minister of agriculture, food and agri-business.

According to a press release, the branded bins will increase in-store product visibility, secure shelf space during peak seasons,

and create demand for Ontario grown fruit.

“On behalf of our local growers, I extend our sincere appreciation for this support,” said Phil Tregunno, chair of Ontario Tender Fruit Growers.

“This marketing campaign is essential for Ontario growers to achieve shelf space that is front and centre at retailers across the country,” added Matthew Eckler, vice-president of sales and marketing at Vineland Growers Co-operative.

According to the province, the tender fruit farmgate value for fresh market and processing sales accounted for more than \$85 million last year. The Ontario agriculture and food sector supports nearly 900,000 jobs and contributed just over \$50 billion to the Ontario economy last year.

Foodland Ontario is the consumer marketing program of OMAFA and has been around since 1977. It produces an availability guide to let consumers know what locally grown produce is available throughout the year. 🌱

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# Sharing her joy of cooking: Mary Anne Neufeld show how to keep it local at the market

*Annual cooking demonstration utilizes variety of fruits and veggies found at the Grimsby market*

**By Luke Edwards**

When market season is in full swing, it can be overwhelming for the novice cook to find a full meal at a local farmers' market.

But as Mary Anne Neufeld once again showed last month, it doesn't have to be that hard. The Internet can be a wonderful tool, and failing that, there's a wealth of knowledge just sitting at markets waiting to be utilized.

"Ask the vendor how they would prepare it, or for their favourite recipe," Neufeld recommended as she ladled some bowls of beef stew and prepared an arugula salad with grilled peach and blueberries during a special event held at the Grimsby Farmers' Market last month.

Neufeld was back for another cooking demonstration, which she's done annually at the market for several years.

Using as many items as she could from the market, Neufeld created the dishes to give market visitors some inspiration. She searched the Internet for some help and then adapted what she found to what was available.

The resulting stew and salad turned out well, with several curious visitors trying out a bowl.

"It's got a nice little punch to it," Neufeld said of the stew, adding she was even able to find some of the spices included at the market.

Traditionally, her demonstrations were veggie focused, so this year she added the salad to give the fruit producers some love.

With people putting less of an attention on home cooking - focusing more on eating out or quick meals - Neufeld said her demonstrations



Mary Anne Neufeld was a special guest at a market day in Grimsby last month, using ingredients mostly found at the market to make a complete meal. ~ Luke Edwards photo

aim to get people thinking more about home cooking.

"Cooking is my joy, my pleasure," she said, adding she hopes her events pass some of that passion on to others.

Neufeld said the Grimsby community and those who come to the market are great supporters of local produce.

"They're good supporters of the market and I know the vendors really appreciate it," she said.

Here are the recipes Neufeld made.

## **Slow Cooker Beef Stew**

### **Ingredients:**

- 2 ½ pounds of stewing meat and ¼ cup of flour for coating
- ½ teaspoon each of black pepper, garlic salt and celery salt
- 3-6 tablespoons of olive oil
- 3 tablespoons of cold butter, separated
- 2 cups of diced onion
- 4 cloves of garlic, minced
- 1 cup of high-quality cabernet sauvignon, or merlot
- 4 cups of beef broth and two beef bouillon cubes
- 2 tablespoons of Worcestershire sauce
- 3 tablespoons of tomato paste
- 5 medium carrots and a pound of Yukon gold potatoes, peeled and cut into chunks
- 2 bay leaves and 1 sprig of rosemary
- 1 cup of diced summer squash or zucchini, sliced mushrooms (optional)
- ¼ cup of cold water and 3 tablespoons of cornstarch

### **Instructions**

1. Cut meat into one-inch cubes, sprinkle with black pepper, garlic salt and celery salt
2. Toss to coat, sprinkle with flour and toss again
3. Heat 3 tbsp of oil in a skillet over medium-high heat. Add meat in batches, browning about 45 seconds per side. Add oil as needed and transfer browned meat to slow cooker.
4. Reduce heat to medium, add 1 tbsp of butter. Cook onion for five minutes, add garlic and cook another minute. Transfer to slow cooker, scraping up bits stuck to the bottom of the pan with a silicone spatula.
5. Add remaining ingredients except cornstarch and remaining butter.
6. Cook on low for 7 ½ to 8 hours, or on high for 3 ½ to 4 hours.

*Continued on page A11* →



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Mary Anne Neufeld offers up a bowl of her slow cooker beef stew to a visitor at the Grimsby Farmers' Market.

→ **Continued from page A10**

7. Remove bay leaves and rosemary sprig. Combine ¼ cup of cold water and three tbsp of cornstarch, slowly add to stew, stirring to incorporate.
8. Turn off the heat, and swirl in remaining 2 tbsp of cold butter.

**Grilled peach, blueberry and goat cheese arugula salad**

**Ingredients:**

*For the dressing*

- 4 tablespoon of olive oil
- 2 tablespoon of white or golden balsamic vinegar
- 1 teaspoon honey
- Sea salt and crushed black pepper to taste
- For the salad
- 3 ripe peaches, cut in half with pits removed

- 8-10 cups of fresh arugula
- 1 cup of fresh blueberries
- 1/3 cup of almonds
- 2 ounces of fresh goat cheese or feta cheese

**Instructions:**

1. Wish together dressing ingredients in a small bowl or jar
2. Lightly brush peach halves with the dressing. Place, cut side down, on a grill that's been pre-heated to high. Grill for about five minutes or until peaches are soft and have grill marks. Remove from grill, let cool and then slice.
3. Place arugula, sliced peaches, blueberries, almonds and goat cheese in a salad bowl. Drizzle with dressing, gently toss and serve. 🌿



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# Network a 'matchmaker' of sorts for greenhouse industry

**By Luke Edwards**

When faced with a big issue, it's reasonable to expect a big solution is required.

However, spend a few hours with Rita Sterne and another option becomes apparent. Throwing a suite of solutions at a problem may be easier and, in the long run, more effective than hoping for that one big fix-it idea. Sterne is the manager of the Greenhouse Technology Network (GTN), and it's her job to connect the people and groups who are going to develop that suite of solutions that will make Ontario's greenhouse industry viable well into the future.

"I'm kind of like a matchmaker, in a strange kind of way," Sterne said.

The "suite of solutions" idea isn't something that Sterne came up with herself. She heard it in presentations from other experts. But it's something she thinks applies to southern Ontario's greenhouse sector.

The GTN got off to a somewhat rocky start, forming right around the time of the COVID-19 pandemic arriving. Funded through the Federal Economic Development Agency of Southern Ontario, the network overcame those early pandemic-related hurdles and now includes five main partners: Niagara College, the University of Guelph, Vineland Research and Innovation Centre, Brock University and the University of Windsor.

Using those partners, as well as her own professional network, Sterne connects those in the greenhouse sector who have identified a challenge with those who might be able to offer a solution.

Hence, she's a matchmaker of sorts.

"We're looking at the entire value chain," Sterne said.

That could be connecting Niagara College with Quick Plug, to help the rooting substrate developer create a plug media that allows for faster rooting of cannabis cuttings. It could also be U of G researchers helping MetaFLO Technologies with work it's doing to create an algae-based, organic polymer for use as a biostimulant that could help farmers increase yield and lower production costs.

Getting the wide breadth of knowledge that the five partners possess was huge, Sterne said. And there's room for more.

"We try to be as fluid as possible," she said, adding that including diverse groups from Indigenous and other communities is also an intriguing option.

Getting the University of Windsor on board as one of the partners beyond the three founding members of Niagara College, VRIC and the University of Guelph was also big, Sterne said.



**The Greenhouse Technology Network's steering committee at a tour earlier this year of the new research greenhouse being built at Niagara College. ~ Submitted photo**

She envisions a future where the entire greenhouse sector of southern Ontario is working in tandem to develop new solutions.

"The only reason we have a greenhouse sector is because we innovated," she said. "The answer is to make sure we keep innovating."

Networking, while beneficial, can only go so far, Sterne said. That's why she's also excited about the work being done to bring a new research greenhouse to Niagara College, which will be a hub for the Horticultural and Environment Science Innovation Centre. It'll provide space to conduct research in controlled environments, something that's currently needed but a challenge to find since operators are working on tight timelines and tight budgets.

And though it's perhaps beyond her current scope of work, Sterne said she'd love to see a demo greenhouse to help inspire the next generation of workers and experts.

"We need engineers and scientists and data people," she said, adding a lot of young people

don't realize the opportunities that exist in agriculture and greenhouses.

Local postsecondary institutions do a great job educating youth, but there's no guarantee those young people will stay in Niagara when they graduate. Getting out there and showing people the interesting and exciting work that's available through things like a demo greenhouse will help, she argues.

The network was able to get their funding timeframe expanded to next spring, since the pandemic meant it got off to a rocky start.

Sterne foresees tons of opportunity in a GTN 2.0, assuming they can find the funding. In the meantime, she'll continue playing the role of matchmaker, connecting those in the greenhouse industry who can help each other.

For more information on the network visit [greenhousetechnetwork.ca](http://greenhousetechnetwork.ca). 🌱



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# Just peachy: Niagara celebrates the classic stone fruit

**By Luke Edwards**

The Niagara region is known for many things, and one of them was on full display last month at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Peach Festival.

An annual event, Old Town welcomed thousands of visitors to walk Queen Street, while trying out all kinds of peach-inspired treats. Others simply picked up a basket of the iconic stone fruit to take home with them.

It was one of a couple major peach festivals in the region. Up the QEW a little ways, the Winona Peach Festival also took place in late August. 🍑



Jovanie Swaby, from Sam's Peach Haven, behind a table full of peaches. ~ Luke Edwards photos



Erlar Martin was serving up fresh corn on the cob to go with all the peach treats at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Peach Festival.



A few pieces of antique orchard equipment were on display at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Peach Festival.



Michael Johnson, from Lepp Farms, helps some customers pick out some peaches to purchase.



There were peaches as far as the eye could see at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Peach Festival.



# Celebrate 'Honey Bees and Maple Trees' at this year's Wainfleet fair

**By Luke Edwards**

The Wainfleet fairgrounds will be a hive of activity later this month.

Each year the fair's organizing committee selects a theme and this year that theme is Honey Bees and Maple Trees.

"We thought it'd be an opportunity to highlight the importance of pollinators and their activities," said Dan Bath, first vice president of the Wainfleet Agricultural Society, which is organizing the annual fair.

"A lot of the things we do have been annual traditions we do year by year for decades so there's always that to look forward to but the last few years we've had some new booths and new types of entertainment," Bath said.

That includes a new goat show as well as a Shania Twin, a premier Shania Twain cover act that Bath said has a lot of people excited. In recent years organizers have put an emphasis on getting bigger musicians for the Friday evening concert, Bath said, and Shania Twin will follow up on last year's performance by the Practically Hip, which Bath said was well received.



The demolition derby will return to the Wainfleet Fair this month. ~ Ashley Moore photos

The fair kicks off Thursday evening, Sept. 19, with a parade at 6 p.m. Opening ceremonies, the 4-H dairy show, and antique tractor pull all kick off at 7 p.m.

Friday sees a full day of activity, including school tours, various entertainers, the 4-H rabbit judging and cavy show, an 8 p.m. tractor and truck pull, as well as entertainers Shania Twin (5:30 to 7:30 p.m.) and Josh Edwards (6:30 to 8:30 p.m.) taking the stage.

More entertainment takes place over Saturday, along with a pet show at 9 a.m., baby show from 9:30 a.m. to noon, sheep shearing at 11 a.m., and a pancake breakfast from 9 to 11 a.m.

The ATV expo and mud bog runs throughout the day. In the afternoon visitors can take in the Wainfleet's Got Talent show from 2 to 4 p.m., pumpkin carving at 3 p.m., corn eating contest at 5 p.m.,

and the demolition derby starting at 6 p.m.

While there are many things to look forward to, Bath said there's one thing he's especially excited to see again.

"I definitely look forward to a lot of the exhibits, particularly the giant pumpkins," he said.

Various ticket options are available. Visit [wainfleetfallfair.com](http://wainfleetfallfair.com) for more details.

Bath said they're also looking to round out their volunteer team,

and will be accepting new volunteers right up until the event gets underway.

"It does take quite a lot of people to run the fair, everything from helping out with parking and taking tickets at the gate to helping out with odd jobs through the arena," he said, adding volunteering with the fair is a great chance for kids to gain their community service hours. Those interested in volunteering can visit the website for more information. 🌱



Visitors to the Wainfleet Fair will be able to meet and greet some furry and fun animals.



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# West Lincoln chamber awards to recognize township's leading farm operations

*Nominations now open chamber business awards*



**Brian Thiessen, from Boyle Tractors, and Emily Rozema, from Mingle Hill Farms, were last year's winners in the agricultural categories at the West Lincoln Chamber of Commerce's Business Awards ceremony. Nominations for the two ag-related categories are now open. ~ West Lincoln Chamber of Commerce photos**

**By Niagara Farms Staff**

Two agriculture related awards will be handed out later this year when the West Lincoln Chamber of Commerce holds its annual Business Awards night.

Last year the chamber created all new categories for the awards ceremony in an effort to better reflect the community. Two of the awards are geared towards West Lincoln's agriculture sector, and will be returning this year.

"As some of the earliest businesses created in West Lincoln, agriculture continues to be an integral and important part of our municipality," said Steven Vanderzanden, a member of the chamber board of directors and local farmer. "These awards celebrate our strong agri-businesses that demonstrate excellence in their fields as they continue to innovate and work hard to add to the growth and rich history of our community."

The Agricultural Excellence Award celebrates innovation, recognizing farms and agricultural businesses that use innovation to promote best farm practices, animal husbandry, and soil health to achieve long-term sustainability and reduce environmental impacts.

The Agri-Related Award honours a business that works with the agricultural community in West Lincoln to support the sector. Examples could be tractor sales or repairs, or feed sales.

"We were excited last year when we created new categories to reflect every type of business that operates in our community," said chamber president Janelle Van Halst, adding the new categories provide an opportunity to specifically recognize agricultural business as well as businesses that don't have a brick-and-mortar building.

Along with the new categories introduced last year, the 2024 cel-

ebration includes other tweaks and features that organizers hope will make the night the biggest and best ever. A new format includes an expanded networking reception, with complimentary wine, coffee, tea and hors d'oeuvres.

The enhanced program will also include a panel discussion with local business leaders.

Smithville Highlands is the title sponsor this year, and several others have joined on as well, including BCM Insurance and Premier Equipment.

"We are so appreciative of our sponsors who make a huge contribution to the success of our Chamber events," said Charis Ramkissoon, executive director of the chamber.

The event isn't just for business owners, Ramkissoon added, saying it's a community event and all are welcome to celebrate some of the best West Lincoln has to offer.

"The goal of the business awards is to come together to demonstrate our appreciation for the efforts and impact of all local businesses on our community," she said.

Other categories beyond the two agricultural awards include: Community Impact, Community Impact Non-Profit, Sustainability, New Business, Solopreneur, and Spirit of the Chamber.

Nominations are open and will remain so until Sept. 30. For more information on the awards and criteria, visit [westlincolinchamber.com/businessawards](http://westlincolinchamber.com/businessawards).

Tickets are also available for the awards night, which takes place Friday, Oct. 25 at Vieni Estates Winery, 4553 Fly Rd. It starts with a 6 p.m. reception, with the program running from 7 to 9:30 p.m. Tickets are \$50 for chamber members and \$60 for non-members. Visit the above website for more ticket information or sponsorship opportunities. 🌿

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# A wholesome day on the farm

**By Luke Edwards**

Atop his 1949 Massey Harris, Johnny Hutchinson paid homage to history, of both the iconic farm brand and his own family.

Hutchinson, from Ridgeway, has been competing in tractor pulls for nearly 20 years. He got into the hobby from his dad and the family still owns a few tractors, all from the Massey production line.

But while he loves the competition, and he loves his Massey tractors, it's something else Hutchinson loves most about being at events like the Grand River Antique Society's annual show.

"The people are the best," he said.

Held nearly (thanks to COVID-19) every year since 1983, the show is a huge draw for rural types or anyone who loves a peaceful day on the farm, and learning a bit about how things were once done.

Angelika Morwald, second vice president of the society, said this year's event was once again a success, thanks largely to the small but determined workforce of volunteers.

"They really worked hard and did the job of five or six people," Morwald said.

Already living in a world where it's tough to find volunteers, Morwald said they also had to deal with a couple of key members who had to drop out last minute due to personal reasons. But the rest stepped up to ensure the weekend went as smoothly as possible.

The antique tractor pull was one of the main draws, welcoming competitors like Hutchinson with their vintage farm machines.

On top of that were some displays and educational demos, including Jerry Kelleher showing kids and adults alike what goes into sheep shearing. Originally from Ireland, Kelleher said he's been shearing sheep for over 40 years and does it all over Niagara and Haldimand.

"It's just something I've always done," he said after guiding a freshly shorn sheep back into the trailer. "I like the people, you meet so many great people."

There are a surprising number of sheep farmers both big and small in the area, Kelleher said, which keeps him busy.

"It looks easy, but it's not," he said. Shearing requires a mix of speed and precision. A good shearer needs to be able to get through 15-20 sheep an hour, but also ensure a nice, clean shear.

This marked the second year since the show moved to the Wheatley farm from its original location up the road on Bruce's Landing, and the new site seems to be a hit, Morwald said.

"It's a very wholesome environment," she said of the event as a whole.

For more information visit the Grand River Antique Society Facebook page. [🌿](#)



Visitors take a photo of some of the antique equipment on display. ~ Luke Edwards photos



You didn't have to go too far to find someone wanting to talk about antiques at Wheatley Farm last month.



Haldimand Mayor Shelley Ann Bentley (right) and Haldimand Norfolk MPP Bobbi Ann Brady race on custom made John Deere tricycles.





# Grand River Antique Society hosts annual show



The antique tractor pull was a major draw.



Plenty of antique tractors were on display and in use for the tractor pull.



The Grand River Antique Society's annual show gave families a chance to learn about agriculture and history.



Haldimand Mayor Shelley Ann Bentley (above) and Haldimand Norfolk MPP Bobbi Ann Brady found a unique way to introduce themselves to the crowd



Jerry Kelleher has been shearing sheep his whole life and still loves it.

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# ‘There’s a real spirit’: Ker Church celebrates a small but mighty community

**By Luke Edwards**

Either way you look at it, the success of a tiny church in rural West Lincoln is the result of a strong foundation.

About 20 years ago an anonymous donor gave a sizable donation to Ker Church on Twenty Road. It helped restoration work at the time, with enough money leftover for a few more projects in the following years. It was a lifeline for a small church that helped ensure the strong bones of the building would be supported for years to come.

Then, a few years ago the church congregation took a bold step, striking out on its own as a single charge mission. The members wanted to be a community hub, and thought the move would help accomplish that goal. But it also meant they were on their own.

Kind of.

One day recently, Wendy Veldmand went out to get the mail. In the box she found an envelope and inside the envelope a note and a cheque. Veldmand and company would only describe the cheque as very substantial, and accompanying it was a note that told Veldmand the donor assumed she’d know what to do with it.

“You start crying because you can’t believe it,” Veldman said, recalling that day when the anonymous donor struck again.

Knowing the overwhelming feeling it gave, she wanted to pass it on. So one-by-one the next time at church she brought people in to show them the donation.

“We were all very appreciative,” added Janice Robinson.

It’s just one example of how the community has continued to support the building nearly 200 years after it was first built.

“There’s a real spirit here that people enjoy,” said Sylvia Nicholls.

Ker Church has a relatively rare architectural style for the area, Veldman said, unlike the typical A-frames one might expect to find. When the first round of restoration work was done two decades ago, the church congregation learned that structurally, it was sound. The skeleton remained strong.

The building’s only half the story, though.

**Continued to page A19 →**



**Ker Church has been a staple of Twenty Road in rural West Lincoln for more than two centuries. ~ Luke Edwards photos**

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**An anonymous donor left a sizable donation to Ker Church 20 years ago, and returned recently with another. Eventually the congregation learned it was Bob Ross who was the donor. He met his wife Doreen at the church.**



→ Continued from page A18

“You can always have the building, you can’t always have the people,” said Marilyn Stewart.

That’s what gave them the courage to strike out on their own a few years ago. In addition to donations from Bob Ross, they’ve had support elsewhere. Such as when Fred Veldman turned a moment of vandalism into art. After one of the historic amber stained windows was smashed, Fred began creating stars from the broken glass and selling the ornaments to support the church.

It’s been an ongoing effort that continues to be popular.

Then there was the surprise bequest the church received from a long forgotten member.

“We didn’t even know him, but he left us in his will,” Veldman said.

Each time they receive one of these surprises, it just reinforces the idea that there’s something special and something worth preserving in the small rural church, the members say. Many of the local farming families kept it going for decades and decades before the members that make up the current congregation came along, and that inspired people like Stewart, Robinson, Veldman and Nicholls to keep it going.

But the goal is to expand beyond those who have always come to Ker. They took a big step in hiring Minister Mary Jo Patterson for 10 hours a month, to give a more formally trained addition to the community devotions the church members started offering when they became a single charge mission.

Additionally, Veldman said they’re open to offering other community events or space to group for one-off events or ongoing meetings. While they may be the caretakers of the property the group says it’s open to all.

The church will be hosting a few events this fall, including its annual anniversary service on Sunday, Sept. 8 at 10 a.m., with a special service led by Rev. John Biddell and lunch afterwards. On Sunday, Oct. 27 guest speaker Cheryl-Ann Stadelbauer-Sampa will speak at 10 a.m.

And finally, a popular annual event, the November Christmas on the Twenty event is planned for Sunday, Nov. 17. It includes an afternoon of baked treats, Christmas cheer and musical entertainment. 🌿



River Patience represents the next generation of congregation members of Ker Church, which remains a small but mighty group.



Richard Merritt and Cooper Rentals helped with restoration efforts at Ker Church, by providing the lift.

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# Member of Romagnoli's 'A-Team' recovering after heart transplant

*Jose Gilberto May Cauich developed complications from Chagas disease as he was working on Beamsville farm*

**By Luke Edwards**

They knew he was strong, but there are some challenges that even the toughest people can't overcome.

Fortunately, as he rests back home in Mexico, Jose Gilberto May Cauich has passed the first hurdle, undergoing a successful heart transplant last month in Mexico City.

"To have spirits that high and withstand it," Irene Romagnoli said, "It was a miracle he was able to be strong enough."

May had been coming to the Romagnoli farm for about 15 years as a temporary foreign worker. He'd spend his summers working on the Beamsville farm to provide crucial labour the farm couldn't find domestically. The work allowed him to provide a better life for his family back home.

He'd become one of the key employees on the farm, said Jack Romagnoli.

"Some guys become part of the A-team. He was definitely on the A-team," Jack said.

A few years ago May began experiencing some health issues. Then, as he was coming to Canada for another summer of work, May's heart was so weak he didn't have the energy or strength to get off the plane.

Doctors eventually diagnosed him with chronic Chagas disease and the parasite that causes the disease left May with a failing heart. He stayed with the Romagnolis, but was unable to work. Last year the Romagnolis along with Quest Community Health Centre, Niagara Community Legal Clinic, and the Migrant Workers Support Project at the Niagara Folk Arts Multicultural Centre, joined forces to launch a fundraising campaign to support of May, who has a wife, mother and two elementary school aged children in Mexico who depend on his income to survive.

The community managed to raise about \$50,000, Jack said, and while it wasn't a cure



**Jose May Cauich received a heart transplant last month in Mexico. Before complications of Chagas disease affected his health, he spent 15 years working at Romagnoli Farm in Beamsville, providing summer help as a temporary foreign worker. ~ Submitted photo**

for his failing heart, it helped the family in their time of need.

Hope was dwindling as May's health deteriorated and a transplant seemed unlikely. In late July, however, they received news that May had a confirmed donor, and the 53-year-old underwent transplant surgery in mid-August.

May spoke with the Romagnolis shortly after his transplant.

"He was feeling optimistic, like he got a second lease on life," Jack said.

Recovery will be difficult, and there's always the risk his body will reject the organ.

"He's got a long road ahead," Jack said.

Jack said organizations like Quest are a wonderful addition and provide a valuable service. It provides primary health services to TFWs through clinics and on-farm visits throughout Niagara.

"Quest is well worth having," said Jack.

A post from the Niagara Folk Arts Multicultural Centre, which organized a GoFundMe campaign to support the family, about a week after his surgery said he was continuing to recover in the ICU, but was in stable condition.

"Thank you all for your prayers and support...We continue to pray for his complete and speedy recovery," the post said. 🌱

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# Prince of Wales set to return with 10-horse race

*Owners of last year's champion looking to repeat at Fort Erie Race Track*

**By Niagara Farms Staff**

The Prince of Wales Stakes will see 10 horses run the historic oval track in Fort Erie to compete for the second leg of the OLG Canadian Triple Crown.

Nominations for the Fort Erie Race Track's signature event closed late last month with a near-full field of 10 horses, including two from Al and Bill Ulwelling: Jokestar and Pierre. The Ulwellings won last year's race with their horse Velocitor.

"We can't wait to get back to Fort Erie and compete in the Prince of Wales," the duo wrote on social media.

Kevin Attard is the trainer for both Ulwelling horses. He'll also have two other horses that are under his watch - X-Men Racing's Airosa and Bedard - competing in the race. Horses trained by Attard won three previous times, in 2007, 2021 and again last year.

Prolific trainer Mark Casse has two of his own trained horses competing, Essex Serpent and Midnight Mascot. A win for one of his horses would put him in second place for most career trainer wins at five. Only Gordon McCann, who trained seven Prince of Wales winners between 1951 and 1967 would have more.

Rounding out this year's nominations is: No More Options for trainer Zeljko Krmar, Passioned for trainer Justin Nixon, Vitality for trainer Harold Ladouceur, and Wyoming Bill for trainer Catherine Day Phillips.



**After winning the Prince of Wales Stakes last year with Velocitor, owners Al and Bill Ulwelling are looking for a repeat victory this year and have nominated two entries. ~ Michael Burns Photography photo**

The Sept. 10 race day will also feature two \$100,000 Ontario Sire Heritage Series stakes - The Lake Erie Stakes and the Rondeau Bay Stakes. Two \$30,000 cup races will also take place, the Molson Cup and Le Cinquieme Es-sai Cup. The first post is scheduled for 1 p.m.,

with the Prince of Wales Stakes expected to take place around 5:30.

Woodbine will host the final leg of the triple crown on Sept. 29.

For more information about the event, visit [www.forterieracing.com/prince-of-wales](http://www.forterieracing.com/prince-of-wales)

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# Four days of fall fair fun in Caledonia

## By Niagara Farms Staff

Caledonia is ready to celebrate the harvest with its annual fall fair later this month.

The 152nd edition of the fair runs from Thursday, Sept. 26 to Sunday, Sept. 29 at the fairgrounds on Caithness Street.

Things kick off on Thursday from 4 to 10 p.m. with a mix of performers taking to the three stages throughout the afternoon and evening. Global Pet Foods' Superdogs will be showcased at 5 and 6:30, and there will be a cool and classic car cruise in the horse ring from 6 to 9 p.m.

Friday and Saturday runs from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., with more entertainment throughout, and on Friday there will be additional Superdogs shows, as well as an elementary school youth spirit rally (10 a.m.), youth horse show (11 a.m.), high school challenge (5 p.m.), and Bonestock

Mini and Straight Stock Demolition Derby (7:30 p.m.).

Dairy cattle will enter the ring for a show at 11:30 a.m.

Saturday will see the Haldimand 4-H Club's achievement day (9:30 a.m.) and goat show (10 a.m.). There's also a heavy horse show at 9:45 a.m.

Destruction returns in the evening, with the Pro Stock and Junk Run demolition derby at 7:30 p.m.

Sunday once again starts at 10 a.m., closing up for the day at 6 p.m. A miniature horse show takes place at 11 a.m., with a beef cattle show taking place at the same time in the cattle ring.

A touch-a-truck event runs from noon to 5 p.m.

Please note the midway has unique hours on Friday (2 to 10 p.m.) and Sunday (noon to 6 p.m.).

There will also be chances to meet local farmers, get up close with farm animals at Squire McKinnon's barn, and have ag-related fun in the kids zone.

Tickets are available online or at the gate. Advance tickets can be purchased online up until Sept. 11 for those who want to save a few dollars. Otherwise, admission will be \$15 at the gate, \$10 for seniors, or \$5 for kids kindergarten to Grade 8. Kids three and under get in for free.

Cheaper entry is available Thursday: General admission is \$10, or \$5 with a non-perishable food donation to the Caledonia and District Food Bank. Children in Grade 8 or younger get in for free on Thursday.

For more information visit [caledoniafair.ca](http://caledoniafair.ca). 🌱

## Applications open for Sustainable CAP funding

### By Niagara Farms Staff

Food producers, processors and service providers can now apply for government funding to help enhance food safety and stimulate growth.

Officials with the federal and provincial governments announced last month a new pool of funding through the Sustainable Canadian

Agricultural Partnership. Applications for funding in the Food Safety and Growth Initiative opened up in late August and will remain open until Dec. 1, 2025 or budgeted funds have been allocated.

All told the two levels of government will be investing up to \$5 million.

"Our government is committed to working with smaller businesses in Ontario's agriculture and food industry to help them ensure food safety so they can increase sales and expand," said MPP Rob Flack, Ontario Minister of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness. "Investments through the Food Safety and Growth Initiative will allow smaller food businesses to improve their operations so they can grow and compete in Ontario and outside our borders."

Small businesses can apply to the program and receive 50 per cent of the eligible costs up to \$75,000 per project, which could include developing or improving food safety and traceability programs, upgrading related equipment or technology, assessments by qualified third parties, or implementation of internationally or nationally recognized food safety programs. Food industry businesses with fewer than 100 employees are eligible to apply.

"It is vitally important that our farmers and food processors have access to the latest tools and resources they need to continue to produce their top-quality goods," said MP Lawrence MacAulay, federal Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food. "This investment in technology and equipment upgrades will help folks prevent and quickly address food safety risks and keep their operations on the cutting edge."

Industry reps applauded the announcement.

"We commend the federal and provincial governments for their

partnership and support. This investment will build resiliency in our food system by supporting businesses advancing their food safety systems. This is good news for everyone," said Kevin Schinkel, president of Meat and Poultry Ontario.

Chris Conway, CEO for Food and Beverage Ontario, pointed out food and beverage processing is the largest manufacturing sector in Ontario, and is overwhelmingly populated by small businesses with more than 90 per cent of the more than 4,000 companies fitting the bill.

"This announcement supports the sector by improving food safety systems, equipment, standards and training. In turn, this will help food and beverage operators adapt to market and consumer needs as well as grow their businesses," Conway said.

Sustainable CAP is a five year, \$3.5-billion investment by federal, provincial and territorial governments, with a focus on building competitiveness, innovation and resiliency in the country's agriculture, agri-food and agri-based products sector. It includes \$1 billion in federal programs and activities and \$2.5 billion that's cost shared 60-40 between the federal and provincial/territorial government.

For more information about OMAFA programs and services, contact the Agricultural Information Contact Centre (AICC) by phone at 1-877-424-1300 or by email at [ag.info.omafa@ontario.ca](mailto:ag.info.omafa@ontario.ca). 🌱



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# Though still concerned OFA pleased with progress on proposed tax changes

By Luke Edwards

Fears among the farming industry over changes to the federal government's capital gains tax has been somewhat alleviated by a new announcement.

In a statement issued last month, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture said it was pleased to see farmers become eligible to apply for the Canadian Entrepreneurs Incentive (CEI), which will reduce capital gains taxes paid when certain business owners decide to sell their business.

"While the OFA continues to have serious concerns about the increase to the capital gains inclusion rate, we are pleased that the federal government has responded to our feedback and made changes that will allow Ontario farmers to access the Canadian Entrepreneurs' Incentive," the statement reads.

In the spring budget the federal government announced the capital gain inclusion rate would increase from one half to two thirds on anything over \$250,000. The change sparked fears in agriculture circles, with farmers worried about the increase tax they may have to pay if, for instance, they sold their farm.

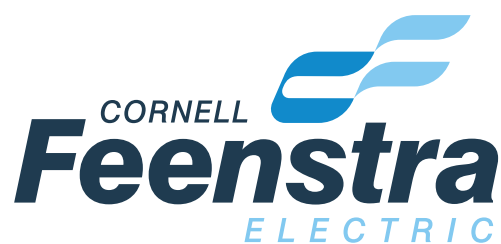
By including them in the CEI, farmers will be able to apply to the program and have their capital gains inclusion rate reduced to one third for up to \$2 million in lifetime capital gains.

The changes are in response to consultations the federal government has had with affected parties, like the OFA.

In addition to the CEI, the federation said the "increase of the lifetime capital gains exemption is appreciated at a time when many farm operators are looking at transition plans or exit strategies for their farm businesses."

The federal government is increasing the exemption from \$1 million to \$1.25 million.

Consultations on the capital gains tax and lifetime capital gains exemption were set to continue until Sept. 3. 🌱



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# Robots make life a little easier for father and son at Silverholme Farm

**By Luke Edwards**

Since June John DeBoer and his son Brandon have afforded themselves the occasional luxury of sleeping in all the way to 6:30 a.m.

It was something they couldn't really do before that, as they had to be up each day for the 5 a.m. scheduled milking of their roughly 60 Holstein cattle at Silverholme Farm.

"In the old barn, it was five in the morning, five at night, so you're tied up all the time," said Brandon.

Last month Silverholme showed off its new barn that includes a full robotic system and all the latest gadgets that make life a little easier for the farmers, and more comfortable for the animals. An information day organized by Norwell Dairy Systems, the company the DeBoers used to help plan and build the new barn and install the systems, brought out dozens of interested people for a tour.

While it's a big investment, DeBoer said some of the improvements will pay for itself in time. The barn features a new cross-ventilation system that blows cool air from side to side in the barn as opposed to front to back. Large curtains in the middle direct the cooler air down onto the cattle, meaning they stay nice and cool no matter the temperature outside.

In fact, DeBoer said he hopes to have an open house next year, ideally during a hot spell so visitors can see just how effective the ventilation system is.

Without proper cooling, the animals quickly begin producing less milk, meaning less revenue for the farm. And it can take a couple weeks following a hot spell to get them back up and producing at high levels.

Frank van Lith is a herd management advisor with Norwell. He grew up on a dairy farm himself, and was able to stay in the industry with his current job helping people like DeBoer



A few of John DeBoer's dry cattle munch down on some feed. ~ Luke Edwards photos

as they set up new technologically advanced systems.

"It's all about efficiency," he said.

That starts with the feed. The farm has a robot whose job is to ensure feed is always available for the cattle. Throughout the day it'll head out and use an auger system to push feed closer to the stalls to make sure it's in reach of the cattle.

From there, using a modified guided flow system, computers can identify which cattle have been milked, and which will be due for milking soon, and guide them to the appropriate spaces in the barn. Cow brushes are placed throughout to help keep the cattle as comfortable as possible.

There's a brief training period where the cows get accustomed to the robotic milking system, but DeBoer said it was pretty quick. In no time they learned that when it's time to get milked they head to the system.

An identification system confirms which cow it is and lets them in. A 3D camera system finds the udder, cleaning and disinfecting the teats before drawing the milk.

The system detects the rate of milk coming out from each corner, detaching once it drops to a certain rate set by the farmer. The milk is then sent to a holding tank and gets picked up every two days.

Even the cleanup is controlled by robots. A system, called Barn-E, regularly sweeps through the pen, cleaning up manure, which then gets pumped out to a manure pile behind the barn.

All the while, computer systems are tracking and compiling all kinds of data, and can warn the DeBoers when there's a potential issue, such as a potential mastitis infection.

Other data includes feed intake, milk production and more. Van Lith said each system

**Continued to page A25 →**



Earlier this summer John DeBoer moved his cattle into a new hi-tech robotic dairy barn.



This OptiDuo feed refresher takes regular trips to make sure the feed is within reach of John DeBoer's cattle in his new robotic dairy barn in St. Anns.



→ **Continued from page A24**

can be tailored to the needs and wants of that farmer.

“It’s giving us piles of information on screen,” he said.

Though it’s a huge investment, John said it’s been a wonderful addition since it’s just him and Brandon running the farm. His dad passed away back in 1983, leaving the farm to two of John’s brothers. One later got out of farming and John came in, leaving John and Fred to run the farm. But then Fred died a few years ago. Brandon quit school and came to help out his father on the farm.

Construction on the new barn began early in the fall last year. The cattle moved in on June 19 and quickly adjusted to the new system.

“It’s just made life easier for both of us,” said John. The flexibility allows them to focus on the other areas of running the farm, while also allowing them the aforementioned occasional sleep-in to 6:30. 🌱



*Brandon (left) and John DeBoer say installing robotics in their new dairy barn has given them some flexibility and peace of mind.*



*Nelson van Klaveren, account manager with Norwell, in front of one of the robotic milking systems the company helped install at John DeBoer’s St. Anns barn.*

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**It’s common for cattle to be a little unsure when a new robotic milking system is installed, but in John DeBoer’s experience, they quickly adapt to the new routine.**

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# AG EVENTS ON THE HORIZON

Labour Day marks the unofficial end of summer, even though fall doesn't technically arrive until later this month. Nevertheless, fall ag events are now happening, with many harvest festivals, fall fairs and other excitement. Here are just a few ways to get out and enjoy some ag-related things this fall:

**SEPTEMBER 6 TO 8,  
SEPTEMBER 12 TO 15  
SEPTEMBER 19 TO 21  
SEPTEMBER 26 TO 29**

### FALL FAIR SEASON

As summer starts to wind down fall fairs will start taking place. The **West Niagara Fair** kicks things off on **Sept. 6-8**. **Binbrook** then hosts its fall fair **Sept. 12-15** and is followed by the **Wainfleet Fall Fair** on **Sept. 19-21**. And finally, the **Caledonia Fall Fair** returns **Sept. 26-29**.

**SEPTEMBER 10 TO 12**

### OUTDOOR FARM SHOW

Not too far away, Woodstock will be hosting Canada's Outdoor Farm show from Sept. 10 to 12. With demonstrations of displays of equipment, as well as areas geared towards growers and producers of all sorts, the event promises something for every type of farmer. For more information, visit [outdoorfarmshow.com](http://outdoorfarmshow.com).

**TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10  
STARTING AT 7:30 P.M.**

### HAMILTON/WENTWORTH OFA REGIONAL MEETING

OFA Members in the Hamilton/Wentworth region are invited to a meeting at the Ancaster Fairgrounds on Tuesday, Sept. 10 at 7:30 p.m. The fairgrounds is located at 630 Trinity Rd. South, Jerseyville.

**SEPTEMBER 6 TO 8  
SEPTEMBER 13 TO 15  
AND  
SEPTEMBER 20 TO 22**

### GRAPE AND WINE FESTIVAL

Another popular harvest event in Niagara is the annual Grape and Wine Festival, which runs for three weekends in September and includes two parades in downtown St. Catharines, wine and entertainment at Montebello Park and several wineries joining in with events of their own. Visit [niagarawinefestival.com](http://niagarawinefestival.com) for more details.

**SATURDAYS THROUGH  
OCTOBER BEGINNING  
SEPTEMBER 30**

### FALL FUN AT RICHARDSON'S

The Dunnville farm celebrates the season with pumpkin picking, wagon rides, a corn box and straw jump. Wagon rides begin on Sept. 30, running Saturdays through October from 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Pumpkin picking is also available Saturdays in October. Visit [richardsonsfarm.com](http://richardsonsfarm.com) for more details.

**OCTOBER 1 TO 5**

### INTERNATIONAL PLOWING MATCH

A year before it comes to Niagara, the International Plowing Match and Rural Expo travels to Kawartha Lakes this fall. The 2024 version will run from Oct 1 to Oct. 5. Surrounding the match itself, there will be a wide collection of entertainment, fun and ag-related activities. For more information visit [plowingmatch.org](http://plowingmatch.org)



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# Try something different this fall



**By Jeff Helsdon**

Outdoorspeople love their time in nature, but often tend to partake in the same activities each fall.

Be it hunters, anglers, hikers or birders, many fall into a routine. With all the opportunities that Southwestern Ontario has to offer, try something different this fall.

From what I've seen at the launch ramps when the Lake Erie walleye fishing is on, there is no shortage of anglers who are taking advantage of the numerous walleye to add to their freezers. Along the way, they pick up some steelhead (rainbow trout) as well. Catching a good-sized steelhead is always a thrill. Now, imagine the

fun catching those fish on lighter rods in the river. There are many rivers on both Lake Erie and Lake Huron with steelhead or salmon runs to take advantage of.

There is nothing like the thrill of tying into a muskellunge. Known as the King of Freshwater Game Fish, these large predators are also known as the fish of 1,000 casts for their elusiveness. The good news is trolling for muskies has a better success rate, and fall is prime time as they feed to prepare for winter. Lake St. Clair and the Niagara River are known for their muskie fishing, and Long Point Bay is gaining a reputation for muskie fishing. Not comfortable with bringing a fish four feet long into the boat? Try going with one of the guides who have great success.

Southwestern Ontario has many opportunities for upland game hunting. Having a cackling male pheasant take flight from under your feet is heart-stopping excitement, and one that ends up with fine eating. There are several spots for pheasant hunting, ranging from the well-known Pelee Island, to Norfolk County, Fingal Wildlife Management Area in Elgin County and Hullet Marsh near Clinton.

The majority of duck hunters pursue puddle ducks because they are more easily accessible and require less equipment. Hunting for diving ducks is a whole other game, and one I would recommend hiring a guide for. Large numbers can be found on Lake St. Clair, Rondeau Bay and Long Point Bay. Even if the hunting is slow, one of my favourite things about this type of hunting is seeing the huge number of birds at peak migration – the clouds of ducks is a sight to behold.

A few years ago, several individuals in the outdoor community put a lot of effort into having a dove hunt in Ontario. These birds are popular for hunting in the United States and people pay thousands of dollars to hunt doves on their wintering grounds in South America. But it hasn't taken off here. Typically done with decoys from a blind like duck hunting, but over a field, I have plans of hunting field edges with my dog this season.

Fall turkey hunting is a different sport than pursuing male turkeys only in the spring. It's also a good way to learn more about turkeys, their calls and interactions with each other. And a bonus is the fall turkey woods is a lot less crowded than in the spring.

For some reason small game hunting isn't as popular as it used to be. My grandfather and uncle talked of doing weekly jackrabbit drives in Oxford County in the 1950s and 60s. While jackrabbit numbers aren't what they once were, rabbit and squirrel populations are healthy.

Opportunities also abound for hiking, bird watching and butterfly watching in the fall across Southwestern Ontario. Fall colours add another element to any hike. It's prime time for bird watching and Southwestern Ontario is on the migration corridor for many species. The Lake Erie shoreline is used by migrating raptors and the lake's three points – Long Point, Rondeau and Pelee – are used for crossing the lake by birds. Catching peak butterfly migration is a little trickier, but seeing a whole tree filled with monarchs is awe-inspiring. Best times to catch them are late in the day or the morning.

Make a vow to yourself, or your companion in the outdoors, that this fall you are going to try something different. 🌿

Jeff Helsdon is an award-winning outdoor writer, a columnist for Ontario Out of Doors and writes for several other outdoor publications.

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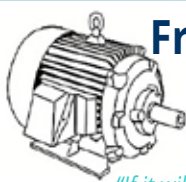
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## Considerations & Advice When Shopping For Poly Septic Tanks

Picking the right septic tank can be a daunting task, especially if it's not a process you've gone through before. We've put together a guide to help cover the basics, such as what a septic tank does, what size you should consider, installation options, and long-term maintenance tips to help ensure you get the most out of your investment. The full article can be found at [ontarioagra.ca](http://ontarioagra.ca).

### Understanding the Basics

Septic tanks are the first step in the process of sewage conditioning in a subsurface disposal system. A septic tank is an underground chamber through which domestic wastewater (sewage) flows for basic sewage treatment. The treated liquid is commonly disposed of in a septic drain field. Den Hartog plastic septic tanks are made of high-density polyethylene and often called poly septic tanks. They're becoming increasingly popular because they are lighter than concrete alternatives, easier to install, and more affordable to buy. **With proper installation, environmental factors, and maintenance, poly septic tanks can have a lifespan of over 30 years.**

### How to Determine the Right Size Poly Septic Tank for Your Home

You can find a thorough breakdown of the Ontario building code, calculation tools, and more on our blog post 'How to Calculate the Right Size Septic Tank'. Below is a condensed version with some of the basics to help you get started.

**House Size:** As a general rule, your square footage can be a guide to help you assess what size septic tank you need. The minimum requirement in Ontario is 3,600L (950 USG). A 1,000 USG Poly Septic Tanks can service houses up to 1,500 square feet.

**House Occupancy Rate:** Simply put, the number of people living in your home will influence your septic tank needs. The average person produces an estimated 150 Litres (40 USG) of wastewater daily.

**Additional Wastewater Producers:** If your property has any additional features that produce wastewater, be sure to include them in your calculations so that your septic system can be maintained efficiently. Some examples are additional toilets, bathrooms, showers, multiple kitchens or multi-unit houses, hot tubs and pools.

### Additional Factors to Consider

Properly installing your poly septic tank will minimize the risk of future complications or damage. Factors such as your soil type, landscaping, and maintenance routine will all help to ensure your septic tank is trouble-free for decades. We hope that this brief guide will help you to feel more comfortable and knowledgeable about the process of researching, installing, and maintaining your next poly septic tank. You can find additional resources on our website, or you can visit us in store, call, or email our team.

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