

InFARMation

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Message From the Agriculture Branch

Season's Greetings. I hope you've all had a good Summer and Fall, and that your Winter is treating you well thus far. The following is a heart warming story on farming which we felt our readers would enjoy.

Love of the Land

To the very end of life, my father was a farmer. For Papa, there was nothing else; no other calling had any more value, worth or meaning than farming. He was as rooted into the black-loam earth that he farmed as were the crops that he raised year after year.

For Papa, farming wasn't a way of making a living or getting ahead financially. Farming was life. Farming gave him everything - food, clothing, shelter, hard work, leisure, love, children, grief, fear, danger, triumph, hope. The only act of infidelity for which Papa could have ever been accused and found guilty of was a love affair with mother Earth. And yet she could dash his hopes, change his mind, defeat his purposes. He loved her with a passion, and his greatest moments of triumph, his highest achievements, were those times when she would return a harvest so bountiful his barns couldn't hold it.

I admit my view of Papa has come off as a bit romantic, a bit flowered. But there would be no music, no literature, no medicine, if not first there was farming. Farming is the guarantee, the security, that gives us time to pursue all else.

Earl Doolsby - March 2004 Reader's Digest p.132

Overall 2004 was a productive year for agriculture in the Territory. Production levels in several communities were very good. Also, several Federal and Territorial funding programs were put in place for industry growth and development.

We are hoping and wishing that you have a great Christmas and the best to you in 2005.

David Beckman, Director



Young Leaders in Rural Canada Awards



Government
of Canada

Gouvernement
du Canada

The Rural Secretariat is seeking nominations of young rural Canadians for the second Young Leaders in Rural Canada Awards. Nominees must be 18 - 29 years old, and demonstrate outstanding achievements and contributions to rural, remote and northern Canada, at the local, regional or national level. A commemorative Award will be presented in each of the following categories: INNOVATION, LEADERSHIP and PARTNERSHIP.

The Awards are a Government of Canada initiative resulting from a commitment made at the 2003 National Rural Youth Conference held in May 2003 in Orillia/Ramara, Ontario. The recipients of the first Awards were announced at the 2004 National Rural Conference in Red Deer, Alberta in October, 2004.

Submissions must be received/post-marked no later than Monday, January 17, 2005. (Those received afterwards will unfortunately not be accepted or considered.) A person can only be nominated or self-nominate under one of the three Award categories. Groups or organizations are not eligible to be nominated.

ELIGIBILITY - The Young Leaders in Rural Canada Awards are open to young rural Canadians for their initiative at the local, regional or national level in rural, remote and northern Canada. Nominees or self-nominators must:

1. Have been between 18 and 29 years old in 2003 or 2004.
2. Have undertaken an initiative in 2003 or 2004 which demonstrates a commitment and contribution to the wellness of rural, remote and northern Canada.
3. Currently be living in OR is from a "rural" community.

All of the above criteria must be met for the nomination to be deemed eligible. A self-nomination must also be endorsed by a least two people AND one group or organization.

ASSESSMENT - Eligible submissions will be assessed by a Review Committee on the basis of a 1-2 page summary that justifies the nomination and fully supports how the individual meets the basic and category-specific criteria of the Awards (Specific criteria available at the webpage given below).

A submission may include supporting documents (e.g. letters of support, products and news coverage) not exceeding four pages on letter or legal size paper only. (Supporting documents are optional).

SUBMISSION PACKAGE CHECKLIST

- The submission package must include:

1. The completed nomination form [Self-nominators must obtain the endorsements of two people AND one group or organization. If this requirement is not met, the submission will be screened out and will not be considered.]
2. The 1-2 page summary that justifies the nomination and fully supports how the nominee/self-nominator meets the basic and category-specific criteria.
3. Any supporting documents not exceeding four pages on letter or legal size paper only. [Optional]

Your submission must be received/post-marked no later than **Monday, January 17, 2005**, either by e-mail, fax or mail to the following person:

Ms. Sylvie Chartrand
Rural Secretariat
Agriculture and
Agri-Food Canada
1341 Baseline Road
Tower 7, 6th Floor,
Skyline Building
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0C5
Toll free number: 1 888-781-2222
Toll free fax: 1 800 884-9899
E-mail: chartrs@agr.gc.ca



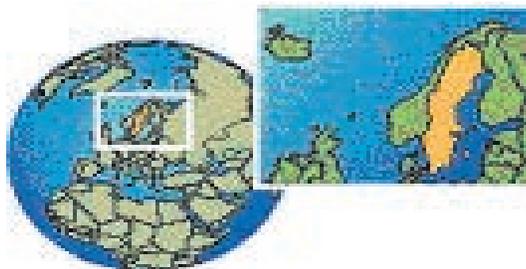
Each nominee or nominator will be notified of whether or not their application is eligible for consideration a few weeks following the nomination deadline.

For more info:

www.rural.gc.ca/dialogue/youth/callappel_e.phtml

Report on the Circumpolar Agriculture Conference - Umea, Sweden: September 2004

The 5th meeting of the Circumpolar Agriculture conference was held September 27 – 30, 2004 in the town of Umea, located on the east coast of northern Sweden. Yukon agriculture was well represented with delegates from First Nations, 4 – H Clubs, both the Organic and Yukon Agricultural Associations, game farmers, beef farmers and a greenhouse grower.



The Yukon contingent delivered four presentations and one poster at the conference including a well received film on the history of the Pelly River Ranch shown by the Bradley family. In total, over 40 presentations were delivered at the conference by 10 different circumpolar nations, on topics ranging from rural development to forages and animal production.

On the first morning delegates were welcomed by Caroline Trapp, president of the 120,000 member Swedish Farmers' Organization. Caroline set the stage with her "Vision of Agriculture in the North" in which she talked about issues that all northern agricultural areas could identify with. Sustainable growth, opportunities for youth and new businesses, agri-tourism and the concept of selling silence to urban tourists from southern markets and working with other northern resource sectors to meet local market needs were all included in her vision. Quality and originality will lead the way to a sustainable agriculture industry in the north.



John McGowan, from Canada, continued on in the next presentation emphasizing the value of communicating, "people learning from people" and sharing experiences regarding agricultural activities as a way of achieving agricultural growth potential in the north.

Two tours to local farms, processors, first nations herding reindeer and wilderness tourism areas were included in the conference package. One operation we visited combined tourism and agriculture in a "moose farm" where cheese was made from milking moose cows. Calves and breeding stock were sold to other similar operations and tourists came to see the animals up close, visit the on site museum, view films and listen to presentations on the mighty moose. The Swedish call them elk.

The Agriculture branch has copies of abstracts from all the presentations available at the branch.

Newfoundland and Labrador will host the next conference in Happy Valley – Goose Bay scheduled for the fall of 2007. Otto Goulding from Labrador was elected President of the association for the next three years and Tony Hill in the Yukon was elected North American Vice-President. Anyone interested in further information on past or up-coming conferences should contact Tony at 667-3417.

*Why did the tomato blush?
Because he saw the salad dressing!*



2004 Agriculture Photo Contest

Several pictures were submitted for this year's photo contest, all of which exhibited excellent attributes of agriculture in the Yukon. The selection for this year's winner was determined by a panel of judges at the Agriculture Branch. This year's winner, Sheila Smith, received a gift certificate for the Alpine Bakery.

WINNER

BURWASH GARDEN
Submitted by Sheila Smith



HONOURABLE MENTION

SUMMER HARVEST
Submitted by Simone Rudge



HONOURABLE MENTION

NORTH FORTY at the JUNCTION
Submitted by Merle Lien

North of 60° Agriculture Conference

The 17th annual North of 60° Agriculture Conference was held on November 6th at the High Country Inn, Whitehorse. Organic production was featured at this year's conference, with the theme being ***The ABC's of Local Organic Farming***.

The conference began with a presentation by Cathleen Kneen on the many reasons to buy local and organic. Supporting the local economy; paying the farmer directly for fresh, healthy foods; better nutrition; less additives; and reduced environmental costs both in producing and transporting imported foods were all reasons cited to buy from Yukon farms.

Cathleen's presentation was followed by a panel of local organic farmers who answered questions from the audience on marketing local and organic; the certified organic process; and the different marketing methods ranging from selling shares in farm production, to farmers markets, to wholesaling to the local retail outlets.

The afternoon session started with a presentation by Rochelle Eisen on the virtual world of organic farming, and providing Cyber-Help for Organic Farmers. Rochelle gave the audience an internet tour of sites providing information on organic production, regulations, news reports and sites where questions could be asked and answers provided.

Rochelle's presentation was followed by a second panel of local organic producers to answer questions and provide perspective on organic production in the north.

Brian Lendrum concluded the afternoon with a presentation on composting and why managing your compost pile is as important as any other aspect of organic vegetable production, "it really works!"

From all reports, speakers, producers and the audience enjoyed the presentations and interaction where information flowed freely. The Agriculture branch is grateful for the assistance provided by the Growers of Organic Food Yukon – GOOFY – for their assistance in setting the agenda and participating in the panel presentations.

Annual Yukon Grown Banquet

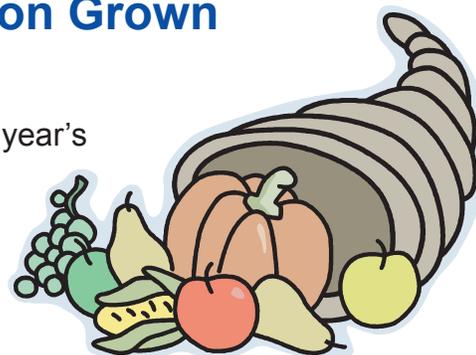
What a feast! This year's annual agriculture banquet was held at the Masonic Hall in Whitehorse.

The hall was an intimate venue (too small), but the only place available where we could bring in our own Yukon food and drink.

The caterer, Mary-El Kerr, went out of her way to purchase and prepare a feast of local organically produced foods. Conscious of the theme, Mary-El even brought in organic flour, milk and cream used in preparation of the food.

The following Yukon producers supplied foods for the banquet:

- Aurora Farms (Simone and Tom Rudge) - vegetables and herbs;
- Brian Lendrum and Susan Ross - turkey, vegetables and cheese;
- Joanne Jackson Johnson - carrots;
- Partridge Creek Farm (Del and Virginia Buerge) - beef;
- Shelia Alexandrovich - sunflower sprouts;
- Wild Blue Yonder (Heidi Marion and Garrett Gillespie) - veggies, turkey and ham; and
- Ying and Eric Allen - arctic char and fireweed honey.



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Dave Beckman, Director of the Agriculture Branch, was master of ceremonies for the banquet, and once again did a fine job of moving through a very full agenda. His jokes were even pretty good this year. There were two presentations of note and two awards presented at the banquet.

Two of the youth delegates from the Watson Lake 4-H club, Toby Reams and Celine Skerget, gave a terrific presentation on their recent trip to the Circumpolar Agriculture Conference (CAC) in Umea, Sweden. The second presentation was one originally presented to the CAC by Dick, Hugh & Wenda Bradley on the history of the Pelly River Ranch that covered close to a century of agriculture in the Yukon. When the film aired at the banquet, the Bradley's received a standing ovation from the crowd recognising the pioneering and dedication shown in their contribution not only to Yukon agriculture, but to the Yukon Territory.



Celine Skerget and Toby Reams from the Watson Lake 4-H Club make a presentation on the Circumpolar Agriculture Conference.

Following the Bradley's presentation, Yukon Commissioner, Jack Cable presented Hugh Bradley with the Commissioners award in recognition of his contribution to the Yukon. Bill Drury spoke on behalf of the Yukon Agricultural Association, who nominated the Bradley's for the award, explaining that while the award could only be given to one individual, it was meant for the Bradley family that have all contributed to the farm's success.



Energy, Mines and Resources Minister Archie Lang presents Steve Mackenzie-Grieve with the 2004 Farmer of the Year Award.

The second presentation was to honour this year's recipient of the Yukon Farmer of the Year Award. Steve and Bonnie MacKenzie-Grieve, were chosen by their peers who recognised the significant effort made by the couple to the production, business and marketing of Yukon Grain Farm products. Nominations came from both farm staff and long time Yukon farmers. In Steve's acceptance remarks he mentioned the help he received from other Yukon farmers, like Mike Blumenshine, which contributed to the farm's success.



Jack Cable and Bill Drury present Hugh Bradley with the Commissioners award.

*The shepherd took his cross-eyed dog to the vet.
The vet picked the dog up to examine him and said,
"I'm going to have to put him down."
The shepherd said "It's not that bad is it?"
"No," said the vet, "he's just very heavy."*

Soil Chemistry: Do Plants Prefer Alkaline or Acidic Soil?

Alkaline and acid are terms which refer to the pH of your soil. So what exactly does that mean? A little science lesson will be helpful — and I promise not too painful. Sometimes described as potential hydrogen, pH is a measure of the relative amounts of positively charged hydrogen ions (H⁺) and negatively charged hydroxide ions (OH⁻) in solution (soil, for example). A solution with a neutral pH has a balanced amount of hydrogen and hydroxide ions.

When the concentration of hydrogen ions increases, acidity increases, and when the concentration of hydrogen ions decreases, alkalinity goes up. Scientists measure pH on a logarithmic scale that ranges from 0.0 (most acidic) to 14.0 (most alkaline), with 7.0 being neutral. Don't worry if you can't recall the definition of logarithm; all you need to know is that each unit on the pH scale represents a tenfold difference in acidity or alkalinity.

For example, if lemons have a pH of 2.0 and oranges have a pH of 4.0, this means that lemons are 100 times more acidic than oranges.



You're probably wondering what all this chemistry has to do with your soil. Plant nutrients must be dissolved in the soil solution in order for plants to absorb them, and the pH of soil affects the solubility of minerals. Most vegetables and landscape plants grow best in soil with a pH of 6.0 to 7.5. When soil pH falls below or above this range, macro and micronutrients (i.e., nitrogen, phosphorous, potassium, iron, manganese, etc.) then become less available to most plants.

Each individual plant has an ideal pH range. Some plants, such as camellias and blueberries have an ideal pH range that falls on the acid side, while other plants, such as daylilies and hollyhocks, grow well in soils that range from slightly alkaline to slightly acid. If you have soil with a very high or low pH, you can alter it.

But, before you ever add an amendment, make sure to get a soil test and follow the lab's amendment recommendations. Liming (adding limestone) increases the alkalinity of soil, and adding elemental sulfur increases the acidity of soil.

Regular applications of compost have been shown to help bring soil pH into balance. And, of course, you can also work with what you've got and grow plants that thrive in the natural pH of your soil.

Adapted from Andy Weidmann. Oct/Nov 2004 Issue of Organic Gardening

CCIA Ear Tag Update

Starting in 2001, Canada embarked upon a mandatory national ID program. This program is administered by the CCIA (Canadian Cattle Identification Agency) and enforced by the CFIA (Canadian Food Inspection Agency).

The way the program was originally set to work was that all cattle which left their herd of origin, would be required to be ear tagged with traceable tags. As of January 1st, 2005, radio frequency identification (RFID) tags will replace the bar-coded tags. Producers who already have bar-coded tags for their cattle will not be required to replace them with the new tags. However, as supplies are used up, the new RFID tags should be implemented. Five different tags have been approved for use; therefore, confirmation of the type of tags ordered should also be verified.



? Plant Definitions ?

Definitions on the labels of the plants and seeds that we purchase can often be confusing. Here are some common defining characteristics.

Annual plants germinate, flower, set seed, and die during one season. Generally annuals are understood to be flowers and vegetables that you replant each year.

Hardy plants can withstand the climatic conditions of a particular area year-round, be they heat or cold.

Half-hardy plants can withstand some frost and sometimes even survive mild winters. Many of them perish in the heat of summer.

Perennial plants are those that live at least three years. The term is usually applied to flowers, but trees, shrubs, and certain vegetables (such as asparagus) are also referred to perennials too.

Tender plants die as soon as the temperature drops below a certain point, usually 32°F / 0°C.

Therefore: Annual and Perennial refer to a plant's life span; Tender and Hardy refer to the way temperature affects that life span.

Adapted from "Tender and Hardy" in Organic Gardening, October/November 2004.

InFARMation is...

A Yukon government newsletter published by the Agriculture Branch of the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources. If you would like to add your name to the newsletter mailing list, comment on an article or contribute a story, then please write to:

InFARMation
Department of Energy, Mines and Resources
Agriculture Branch
Box 2703 Whitehorse, YT Y1A 2C6
Phone: (867)667-3417
Fax: (867)393-6222
Email: tony.hill@gov.yk.ca

Or call Tony Hill at 867-667-3417, outside of Whitehorse at 1-800-661-0408 local 3417, or stop by the Agriculture Branch. We are located on the third Floor Elijah Smith Building.

Web site: www.emr.gov.yk.ca/agriculture

Classifieds



-Buffalo Meat for sale, aged tender and very heart smart. Naturally produced. Low in fat, cholesterol, and calories. Available by the side or 50 pound pack. Please call for current prices: 633-3388

-Elk Meat for sale. By the side, 50 pound box, or 25 pound box. Call for current prices: 668-1045

-Attractive Warm Norwegian Woolen Boots - 2 styles available - Call Barbara Drury: 668-1045

-Ford Elk Farms Ltd: 633-4342
- Lined Elk Hide Gloves
- Elk Velvet Antler Capsules
- Lean Elk Meat in 50pds. Assorted Packs

-Custom Land Clearing: 667-7844

-Yukon Hay for sale: 800 lb round brome hay bales. Delivery & storage available: 667-7844

-Yukon Horses for Sale: 667-7844
- 1 - 3 yr old Belgian / Morgan cross gelding. Started under saddle.
- 1 - 9 yr old percheron cross mare

-Rafter A Ranch. Local & long distance horse hauling. Buys and sells horses. What have you got for sale or what are you looking for? 667-7844

-Yukon beef for sale, no additives, grass finished: 667-7844

We are located in the Elijah Smith Building room 320. Stop by for a visit anytime.