

# INFORMATION

## Yukon Agriculture Branch Quarterly Bulletin

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### MESSAGE FROM THE AGRICULTURE BRANCH

September 16<sup>th</sup> was the last day for the Fireweed Community Market on the Whitehorse waterfront and like most market days this summer, it was very well attended by residents keen to get fresh produce, canning ingredients and other harvest bounty. The new venue worked well for consumers providing a buffer from the parking area that made it safer for kids and easier on their parents with the market experience much more relaxed and social. The community market is a great success, providing consumers an opportunity to support and buy local products and offering producers an opportunity to find out first hand what those consumers want to buy.

I also had the pleasure of visiting the Dawson City farmers' market on a Saturday morning in late August this year and the quantity and quality of the produce for sale was really impressive. Customers were lined up for the opening at 10 a.m. and for the first hour or so there was a frenzy of sales. I saw camp cooks, restaurant owners and consumers carting away top quality fresh peas, eggplant, squash, carrots, cabbage, broccoli and for the ones that arrived early enough – fresh corn on the cob! John Lenart arrived with boxes of Yukon grown apples for sale and for a while it was hard to imagine that this was happening north of the 64<sup>th</sup> parallel.

On the way up to Dawson we toured the Carmacks Community greenhouse to see all the fresh produce that they had for sale and on the way down from Dawson, we picked up beautiful fresh chickens from McCabe Creek Farm. While in Dawson I was pleased to see that both of the grocery stores stocked and advertised Yukon grown products and when I returned to Whitehorse I was equally pleased to see fresh bunches of local carrots prominently displayed at Extra Foods. Each year, there seems to be a little more local production and consumers are keeping pace, eager to buy all that is being offered for sale. It is good to see the farmers, retailers and consumers supporting the development of the local industry and investing in the local economy.

September 16<sup>th</sup> was also the day that I arrived back from the Circumpolar Agriculture Conference, held just north of the 70<sup>th</sup> parallel in Alta, Norway. A group of Yukon delegates attended, shared information and learned from other agriculturalists about everything from traditional plants and herbs to the effect of grazing on sub-arctic plants to a concept for marketing Arctic Quality as a common agricultural brand. There will be more on this in the next issue of the newsletter when we get back on Yukon time.

On a final note, mark your calendars for the North of 60° Agriculture Conference and Yukon grown banquet to be held in Whitehorse on November 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>. Details inside and I look forward to seeing you there.

Tony Hill  
Director, Agriculture Branch

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## NEWS

## NOMINATIONS FOR 'FARMER OF THE YEAR'

Is there a farmer or farm family in your community that has shown the kind of commitment and passion for agriculture that you feel should be recognized? This is your opportunity to nominate a producer or farm advocate, for the Agriculture Branch Farmer/Farm Family of the Year award. The award will be presented at the annual Yukon North of 60° Agriculture Banquet on November 6, 2010, at the Westmark Hotel and Conference Centre in Whitehorse.

Nominations should be submitted in writing to the Agriculture Branch with a brief explanation of why the candidate(s) are worthy of the award. Nominations may link the nominee's contribution to agriculture or agri-business development in Yukon, assistance with the future of agriculture in Yukon, good farm management practices, development of any new or innovative ideas, or any other reason you feel your candidate should be chosen. The deadline for nominations is Wednesday, November 3, 2010, at 4:00 p.m.

There are many people who have made a contribution to agriculture in Yukon, lets share our stories. All the nominations must be in writing and signed by the nominator(s). Letters, facsimiles and e-mails will be accepted. We are located in room 320 of the Elijah Smith Building in Whitehorse.

Fax: (867) 393-6222  
Email: [agriculture@gov.yk.ca](mailto:agriculture@gov.yk.ca)

## 2010 CIRCUMPOLAR AGRICULTURE CONFERENCE, NORWAY.



Yukon delegation scales the North American exhibit at the Tromso Botanical garden while attending the 2010 Circumpolar Agriculture Conference in Norway. From left to right – Ingrid Wilcox, Rick Tone, Tony Hill, Bev Gray, Ralph Mease, Jeanne Burke, Randy Lewis.

Feedback and reports on the conference will be included in the next edition of InFARMation.

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## NEWS

## THE 2010 NORTH OF 60° AGRICULTURE CONFERENCE GROWING YUKON AGRICULTURE PART II, UNDERSTANDING YOUR AGRI-BUSINESS.

Westmark, Whitehorse

Friday November 5<sup>th</sup> and Saturday November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2010

Last year's successful conference looked at agriculture opportunities in Yukon, adding value to your farm products and northern greenhouses. This year's conference is looking to build on that success by addressing some of the challenges to Growing Yukon Agriculture. The conference hopes to stimulate producers to thinking about their farm business in different ways by learning from others, analyzing their business and understanding their customers.

For banquet details see page 5.

### FRIDAY NOVEMBER 5<sup>TH</sup>

#### NEW FARMER'S FORUM 5:00 – 7:00PM

We know we can produce more local food but can we market it? Come and have some pre dinner snacks with the Agriculture Branch and meet this year's presenters, while having a round table discussion about the challenges new Yukon farmers are having in today's market: What are our markets? Where are the gaps? What may be our best options for success? The Agriculture Branch will kick off the round table discussion with a presentation on the top ten enterprises according to the Multi-Year Development Plan and how we can develop these markets.

We ask you to please confirm your attendance to the New Farmers Forum. Please contact the Agriculture Branch through the information below if you are interested in attending.

### SATURDAY NOVEMBER 6<sup>TH</sup>

Saturday's conference topics are open and you do not have to pre-register.

#### WHY DO A FARM BUSINESS ASSESSMENT

Larry Lindquist, B.Sc. (Ag), P. Ag., Lindquist Professional Services, (Edmonton, Alberta)

Larry Lindquist presents a Yukon specific case study, which looks at the financial implications of expanding a hypothetical broiler business from a small 400 bird a year operation to a 12,000 bird a year operation. The focus of this presentation is how a farm business assessment works and how you can use it.

#### POULTRY NUTRITION

Jake Davidson, P.Ag., PAS, Bar-D Agri Ventures, (Minnedosa, Manitoba)

Find out why poultry nutrition is so important and why your layers have a different rations then your broilers. The basic around poultry feed management.

#### THE LOW DOWN ON ALASKA AGRICULTURE

What are our neighbors in Alaska doing? What has the Alaska agriculture industry tried over the years to be sustainable? How have Alaskan producers built value-chains and accessed local markets? What hasn't worked well and what are the impediments that were too hard to get around? What areas are being investigated now and what are the emerging opportunities?

#### HORSE NUTRITION

Jake Davidson, P.Ag., PAS, Bar-D Agri Ventures, (Minnedosa, Manitoba)

Find out how to best nourish your horse. Jake will cover the basic concepts, forages vs grain, vitamins trace minerals and additives, etc. This session will also benefit all our hay producers; find out what your customer maybe looking for.

For further information please contact Agriculture Branch at 867-667-5838, toll-free: 1-800-661-0408 ext. 5838 or email [agriculture@gov.yk.ca](mailto:agriculture@gov.yk.ca)

## NEWS

## YUKON PRODUCER PROFILE

Yukon has some interesting and unique farm operations that (maybe) not everyone knows about; for that reason we are adding a new column called Yukon Producer Profile. In the past, we have highlighted producers who have won the Farmer of the Year award; this new segment will allow us to feature a variety of Yukon's amazing producers more regularly. With the producer profile we have the opportunity to showcase producers and the products they offer. We are hoping this will allow for an exchange of ideas, create links between producers and possibly increase business opportunities.



## ISABELLE'S QUAIL FARM

Isabelle Lefebvre is offering a niche product to the Yukon market with her quail eggs. Her small operation is located just north of Whitehorse where she is raising about 50 button quails (also known as Japanese quail or Coturnix) mostly for their eggs, and to a lesser extent as meat or even pets. Isabelle's birds are between the ages of three weeks to just over a year. She has 20 hens laying at the moment, which produce around 18 to 20 eggs a day.

The quails' diet consists mainly of duck starter, oyster shell and greens. Isabelle prefers the duck crumbles instead of chicken or turkey because the duck starter she uses is not medicated and her baby quails are very hardy and they don't need antibiotics as part of their feed, but they do need a very high protein diet so duck or game bird food is perfect.

Button quails reach maturity at a very young age; females will start laying at about six weeks. The birds are very easy to manage; in fact, they are so easy to manage that last winter Isabelle actually kept three females in the house in a small cage, supplying eggs all winter long.

This past spring, Isabelle purchased her own incubator and is raising all of her own birds. She keeps all of the females and a few males for reproduction, selling the other males as meat birds. She is also able to supply birds to interested customers and has even sold some of the birds as pets; kids just love them!!

However, Isabelle's core business is the eggs. Although these eggs are quite small (10-12 g.), they are seen as a delicacy and, according to Isabelle, are packed full of useful trace elements and vitamins that will help us stay healthy. Her marketing brochure promotes quail eggs as having several health benefits as well as containing higher levels of protein, vitamins A, B1, B2, iron, potassium, phosphorous and calcium than chicken eggs.

With health benefits, tasty little eggs, birds that are cute, easy to keep, good egg producers, and to top it off the meat makes for a delicious meal sounds like a win, win operation!

We thank Isabelle for sharing this information about her quail business. If you want to find out more information about Isabelle's operation or to buy eggs you can contact her at 867-667-7324 or e-mail [pierisa@northwestel.net](mailto:pierisa@northwestel.net)

We will be looking for more volunteers or even suggestions of producers we can feature in InFARMation. Please contact the agriculture branch at 867-667-5838, toll-free: 1-800-661-0408 ext. 5838 or e-mail [agriculture@gov.yk.ca](mailto:agriculture@gov.yk.ca)



## AGRICULTURE DEMONSTRATION DAY AND BARBEQUE

The Agriculture Branch hosted the annual demonstration day on Wednesday, August 4, 2010.

It was a perfect day to be outside talking about agriculture and enjoying some good Yukon elk burgers. We would like to thank all who came out and also a thank you goes out to Yukon Agriculture Association and to Growers of Organic Foods Yukon for their displays.

Over 50 producers and their families came out, including Energy, Mines and Resources Minister Patrick Rouble and a few of our local news people. It was a great chance for all to get out and discuss how our year was making out and what challenges we are facing.

The research farm tour was well attended and we were able to share the work we are doing and get some feedback with regards to the ongoing research.

Thanks again for supporting us, hope to see you there next year.

## NORTH OF 60° AGRICULTURE BANQUET

The North of 60° Agriculture Banquet is scheduled for Saturday evening November 6<sup>th</sup>. The banquet will feature a delicious Yukon Grown meal prepared by the chefs at the Westmark Hotel. Energy, Mines and Resources Minister Patrick Rouble will present the annual Farmer of the Year award. A presentation on the Circumpolar Agriculture Conference held in Norway this September will be made by attending delegates together with a slide show of the northern Norway farming regions.

Highlights for the Yukon Grown meal include:

- chicken from Michelle & Cain Vangel,
- pork from Aurora Mountain Farm,
- Lendrum Ross goat cheese,
- potatoes from Yukon Grain Farm,
- raspberries from the Agriculture Branch, and,
- more as we continue to source Yukon Grown food.

Pick up your tickets in advance at the Agriculture Branch front desk. Where else can you go out for full course dinner for \$20 per person! The banquet is at the Westmark Hotel and Conference Centre in Whitehorse and guests are welcome at 6 p.m. to catch up and trade stories. Dinner will be at 7 p.m.

For people attending the conference & banquet from outside of town, the Westmark has a Yukon rate.

For more information and to buy banquet tickets, please contact the Agriculture Branch: Room 320, Elijah Smith Building, 300 Main Street, Whitehorse Telephone: (867) 667-5838, toll-free: 1-800-661-0408 ext. 5838, e-mail: [agriculture@gov.yk.ca](mailto:agriculture@gov.yk.ca)

## TIPS AND TRICKS

YUKON AGRICULTURE'S  
RASPBERRY ORCHARD.

## 9 YEARS OF RESEARCH

The Yukon Agriculture Branch has been operating a raspberry orchard just north of Whitehorse at the Research Farm. First planted in 2002, it took a few years to mature and produce enough raspberries for harvest. We just finished harvesting the raspberries for 2010 and can report that the orchard produced the highest yields yet. It is amazing what a timely heat wave in August can do for raspberry yields - and also for the appearance and flavour, as noted by repeated comments from pickers with regards to the plump sweetness of the berries.

The Agriculture Branch has been collecting data from the 1,000 m<sup>2</sup> orchard to evaluate the commercial viability of a raspberry orchard and to assess:

- raspberry varieties;
- economics of production; and,
- best management practices for irrigation and fertilizing.

The orchard was planted with three varieties of raspberries, including Souris and Boyne, common varieties grown in Canada, and an Alaskan-developed variety, Kiska, a cross between commercial and wild varieties. Over the last five years of production, the Agriculture Branch has collected some valuable information with regards to expected raspberry yields for these varieties.

Over the years, the Kiska has out-produced the other varieties with yields more than double that of the Souris or Boyne canes. A 1000 m<sup>2</sup> Kiska orchard would average approximately 148 to 185 kg of total production compared to Souris or Boyne which would average around 60 kg in the same five year period. This year our best year to date and a Kiska orchard would have yielded between 240 to 308 kg for 2010, which is a lot of jam. Compare this to our worst year, 2008, which would only yield 67 to 112 kg of Kiska berries, and much less from the Souris and Boyne canes. The difference between the 2010 and 2008 yields really highlights the importance of weather to the raspberry orchard. This year saw a very timely heat wave in mid-August which helped to ripen the berries and produce a bountiful harvest, compared to our coolest year in 2008 which was also our lowest producing year.

Our management practices looked at varying levels of fertilizer and although we saw differences in production depending on fertilizer application, the results from this year reversed what was becoming a trend. The first few years saw higher yields with lower levels of nitrogen fertilizer, but in 2010, we saw that the higher level of fertilizer resulted in increased yields. It looks like more work will be required to further understand these results.

The Agriculture Branch has used the data from the orchard to calculate the economics of production. This calculation is based on rough estimates of expenses from our production cost and compared to modified costs based on a BC fact sheet on planning for profits. When calculating for profits we looked at different raspberry selling prices and also compared a picked and packaged product versus a u-pick product management strategy.

The selling prices we used for our evaluation included:

- An estimated wholesale price of \$1.50/lb
- \$3.00/lb middle price based on a published BC roadside price
- \$4.50 premium price, estimated maximum price for a Yukon grown product

Using these selling prices and estimated expenses we calculated hypothetical profits for our orchard. These calculations found that our small orchard would not be able to generate a profit selling to the wholesale market. If you move the price up, we found over the last five years an orchard hypothetically growing only Kiska, would generate a small profit selling raspberries at a premium \$4.50/lb for a picked berry sold directly to the customer, or a u-pick operation selling berries at \$3.00/lb. The following table 1 is a summary of profits expected from a small 1,000 m<sup>2</sup> orchard.



## TIPS AND TRICKS

Year and operation	Raspberry selling price	Estimated Research Farm profits
5 year average, pick and packed	\$4.50	\$200 to \$750
5 year average, u-pick	\$3.00	\$300 to \$1,100
2010 picked and packed	\$4.50	\$1,000 to \$1,800
2010 u-pick	\$3.00	\$900 to \$1,950

Over the five years we have had a lot of happy pickers come and pick raspberries. Unfortunately we are

not able to sell the raspberries and verify the prices we are using to calculate profits. This type of market information would have to be verified, although we do feel confident we are in the right neighbourhood with regards to expected selling prices. This information is a good starting point for a cost analysis if you are looking at starting a raspberry enterprise. Also a raspberry operation would want to look at value-added products such as jam, raspberry juice or maybe raspberry wine to help generate more farm income from your raspberry orchard.

We would like to thank all our pickers who have helped us collect the data for this evaluation. Now that we have five years of good analysis, it is time to re-evaluate the orchard.

Over the next few years we will be moving the orchard to a new location adjacent to the existing site. We hope to continue with a smaller raspberry orchard and we will be looking to extend our research into either new varieties, different fruit bearing trees, different management practices, and/or ornamental trees.

We will be working with our Research Committee to guide any new research. If you have any ideas you would like to see researched please contact the Agriculture Branch at 867-667-5838, toll-free: 1-800-661-0408 ext. or e-mail [agriculture@gov.yk.ca](mailto:agriculture@gov.yk.ca)

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## RAIN & WATER DEFICITS

It was another mixed year for rain, as always we had little in the spring and substantial amounts into the fall. For some locations, there were timely showers through the summer, alleviating moisture stress. For 2010, the rain gauge at the Research Farm recorded from early May to mid-September 140 mm (5.5 inches). An evaporation/transpiration meter collects data at the Research Farm. In the years of data collection this meter shows that we experience between 320-410 mm (12-16 inches) of evaporation. Evaporation causes water to change from a liquid to a gas and move from the soil into the atmosphere. The transpiration of water moves moisture through the plants from the roots through small holes in the leaves (stomata). This moisture movement allows for cells to access water and nutrients from the soil. Water stress occurs because plants are unable to access soil moisture at a high enough rate for the transpiration of a given day, quite often this manifests as wilting. Different plants have much different crop water requirements.

Smooth brome grass hay can withstand crop watering below the evaporation/transpiration of a given season. Therefore through May to mid-July, a smooth brome grass stand should receive at least 150 mm (6 inches) of water (both rain and irrigation). 150 mm equals 160,000 gallons per acre.

On the other side, some vegetable crops such as cabbage require over the evaporation reading at 450 mm (18 inches) of water. 450 mm equals 480,000 gallons per acre.

It is always a good idea to have a rain gauge on your farm; the rain may fall on one side of a valley and not the other. Have a notebook handy to keep track of the amount of rainfall and the amount of irrigation water added. Along with the temperatures and fertility this will give you the information needed for future crop management decisions.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

## ABATTOIR

The mobile abattoir is available for inspected slaughter services of cattle, hogs, bison, elk, goats and sheep. The mobile abattoir can also provide inspected transportation of the meat to a processor for further processing. To book the mobile abattoir or for information phone Art Lock at (867) 393-4978.

## YUKON MADE STORE

Open 11 am to 5 pm Tuesday to Saturday, Frank Slim Building, Shipyard Park. You can find the work of over 20 local artisans as well as information about the outdoor market and a library for the Growers of Organic Food Yukon and information about the Yukon Food Processors Association production of nutrition facts. More information is available through:  
yukonmadestore@yukonfood.com

## FIREWEED MARKET KITCHEN

Open weekdays for lunch, Frank Slim Building, Shipyard Park.

The kitchen is also available to rent for processing or teaching. For more information please call the Fireweed community market office at 867-393-2255 or send an email to:  
fireweedmarket@yahoo.ca

## 12 DAYS OF CHRISTMAS MARKET

From Friday, December 10<sup>th</sup> to Tuesday, December 21<sup>st</sup>, the Old Fire Hall at the end of Main Street.

From stunning jewellery, fine art, and unique crafts, to quality prepared foods and personal care products – hand-made by over 25 Yukon artisans. For more information contact:  
fireweedmarket@yahoo.ca

## CLASSIFIEDS

ARE YOU A YOUNG FARMER OR A NEW FARMER.

The Agriculture branch is looking for new and young farmers to be part of a working group, looking at the challenges with regards to starting new agriculture venture.



Contact the Agriculture Branch with your name, and e-mail to join this group. Contact information below.

## INFARMATION IS:

A Government of Yukon newsletter published by the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, Agriculture Branch. If you would like to add or remove your name from the newsletter mailing list, comment on an article or contribute a story, please feel free to contact us.

## Agriculture Branch Contact Information:

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