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Breaking Ground

(in Northeastern Ontario) Winter 12-13

A Publication of the North Eastern Ontario Soil & Crop Improvement Association (NEOSCIA)

Minister McMeekin Visits Temiskaming



MPP John Vanthof and OMAFRA Minister Ted McMeekin discuss the future of NLARS

Acting on an invitation from Timiskaming-Cochrane MPP John Vanthof, Ontario Agricultural Minister Ted McMeekin visited the New Liskeard Agricultural Research Station (NLARS), toured Timiskaming farmland, and met with industry representatives on November 22, as part of a 2 day event. The activity was initiated, based on concerns over the future of NLARS under the mandate of the University of Guelph, a topic that was discussed at the Temiskaming Agricultural Innovation Forum a month earlier (see accompanying story on page 17).

MPP Vanthof made it clear to all that the community believes that the future of the 90 year old facility may be at risk as public funding is drying up during the provincial economic downturn. Everyone involved would like to be part of a proactive approach that would be of benefit to all parties. In this case, the Ontario government owns the land while the University operates it (primarily with OMAFRA flow through money). There are other partners such

as commodity organizations that help fund specific projects. The benefits go (mainly) to northern producers while about a dozen employees work and live in Timiskaming.

Vanthof, supported by community agricultural leaders, proposed a "vision" where the Station would become a "Centre of Northern Agricultural Research & Innovation". It would be a partnership involving OMAFRA, the University of Guelph and other educational institutions, regional agricultural commodity groups, and private partnering.

For his part, McMeekin recognized the importance of NLARS to the farm community and the North as a whole. He mentioned his awareness of the quality and importance of the research that has been done to date in livestock, agronomy, and horticulture. In conclusion, he offered to give the community working group about 2 years to come back with a business plan that builds on the merits of the operation, involves more partners, and meets the needs of OMAFRA and the region.

This newsletter is published 4 times per year. Articles can be submitted in either English or French and should be submitted to the Communication Coordinator (see below). Please supply translation, if available.

Material in this newsletter is based upon factual information believed to be accurate. Action taken as a result of this information is solely the responsibility of the user. We reserve the right to edit articles.

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Go to GeoVisage, <http://geovisage.nipissingu.ca> for Currant and Historical Weather Data

Algoma Soil & Crop Improvement Ass'n & Algoma Cattlemen's Ass'n Summer Tour – August 1

By Sharon Lane, Regional Correspondent to Breaking Ground

ASCIA and ACA Summer Tour was held August 1 at Colliverbrook Farms owned by Dave and Matt Seabrook in Little Rapid. The canola trials were sponsored by Ontario Canola Growers and the Co-operative Regionale De Nipissing-Sudbury Ltd.

The canola trials used two Roundup Ready varieties of canola and two different fertilizer applications. The seed was planted May 6, and the plants were patchy at first, probably due to the lack of rainfall. Calibration of the seed drill is important because the seed is expensive at \$12 per lb. Five lbs. of seed was used per acre. The plants were larger if fewer seed were planted. Canola needs to be in early and up early because there is a yield loss at 26 degrees C. The flowers abort. The application of nitrogen was the same for all plots but sulphur was different. There seemed to be no difference in the plots. Canola needs plenty of nitrogen, so since the soil get depleted of nitrogen, canola can only be planted in the same plot every 4 years. The lack of rainfall this summer will affect the yield.

*Guest Speaker - Barry Potter
(OMAFRA) - Livestock Specialist*

Matt Seabrook introduced the guest speaker, Barry Potter. His topic was "Emergency Feed Strategies and Extending the Grazing Season". Barry prefaced his presentation by mentioning that in the New Liskeard area cattle were off pastures by July 26. Barry's advice was that if farmers have no pasture left, sell cull cows and yearlings. His suggestions included the following if farmers want to improve grazing in a dry year:

- Plant oats for the fall; it takes 60 days for forage and 30 days for grazing.
- Plant turnips for grazing of the tops. Later after freeze-up, they

will be sweet and the cattle will dig them up.

- Plant kale, another crop that provides quick grazing.
- Baled and fed corn stocks to cattle, but the nitrite content increases if they have been frozen.
- Feed straw to cattle and supplemented with pellets.
- Use sorghum for silage or used in August for grazing. If used after a frost, nitrite might be a problem as it can cause poisoning.
- Plant millet for pasture.
- Baled and used soybeans for forage.
- Used canola either whole or crushed.
- Wean calves, and feed for dry cows can be reduced to 20 to 25 lbs. per day.
- Try rotational grazing. Graze quickly and then let the grass grow back. Barry recommends moving the cattle every 12 hours, as this will increase grass growth.
- Analyzed hay quality each year. The farmer can then calculate the amount of hay needed for each animal. Grains are cheaper than corn to produce and can be used as a supplement.
- Fertilize for a second cut of hay. Planting legumes in the hay field will increase the nitrogen content 30-50%.
- Chopping hay increases consumption by 40% in windrows and feeders.

Barry concluded his presentation by saying that the best way is to feed cows on pasture if possible.

Dave Trivers, OMAFRA, announced that a study of the bobolink in unharvested hay fields in Algoma is being done on Centre Line near Bruce Mines.

COMING EVENTS

TCC/TSCIA/Grain Growers District 15 Annual Meeting

January 18, 2012, (9:30 am) Holiday
Inn, Temiskaming Shores

"Growing the North"

planned for March 15 & 16, 2013 in Kapuskasing
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Articles on "Growing the North..." Inaugural
Agricultural Symposium or « Pour la croissance du Nord »
Premier colloque agricole can be found on page 6.

Nitrogen and Sulfur for Canola

New Liskeard
Agricultural
Research
Station



By John Rowsell and John Kobler

Objectives

- Determine the limitations on the most economical rate of nitrogen imposed by the level of sulfur fertilization thereby maximizing the returns from N and S fertilizer application on Ontario-grown canola
- Determine whether the source of S (gypsum or ammonium sulfate) impact the above
- Evaluate the S soil test as a method of predicting the response of canola to S supplementation.

Site Characteristics

	Soil Type	Soil Series	0-15cm			
			pH1	Organic Matter (%) ¹	Phosphorus ^{1,2} (ppm)	Potassium ^{1,3} (ppm)
NL2011	clay	New Liskeard	6.5	6.6	26	249
V2011	silt loam	Wolf	6.7	6.3	12	75
NL2012	clay	New Liskeard	7.5	5.6	26	164
NL(V)2012	clay	New Liskeard	6.9	4.9	11	179

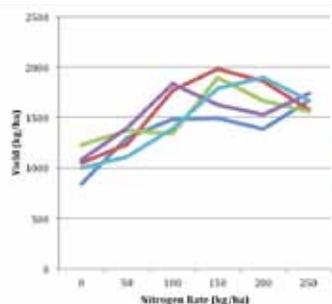
Trial Locations		
Name	Location	Year
NL2011	New Liskeard	2011
V2011	Verner	2011
NL2012	New Liskeard	2012
NL(V)2012	New Liskeard	2012

A trial was seeded in Verner in 2012 but was lost to flea beetles. It was reseeded in New Liskeard and noted as NL(V)2012.

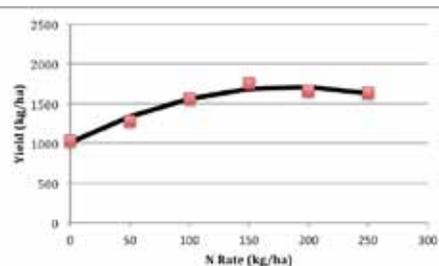
Experimental Design

- 6 N rates (0,50,100,150,200,250 kgN/ha) applied at planting as Ammonium Nitrate. Rates reduced in Ammonium Sulfate treatments to compensate for the N from the AmS
- 3 S rates (0,15, 30 kgS/ha) as either Ammonium Sulfate or Calcium Sulfate (Gypsum)
- Factorial expt with 4 replicates

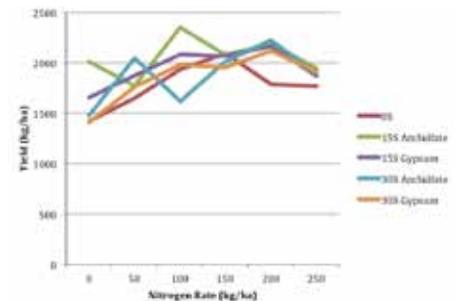
New Liskeard 2011



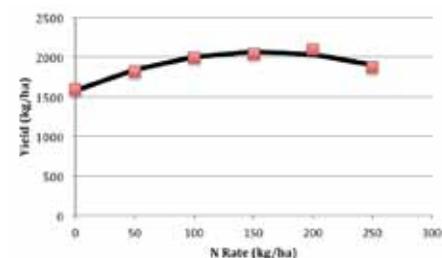
- Both sources of S produced similar results
- Highly significant relationship between N rate and Yield
- Significant response to N but not S
- No interaction between N Rate and S Rate
- Increasing N caused decreased tissue S concentrations



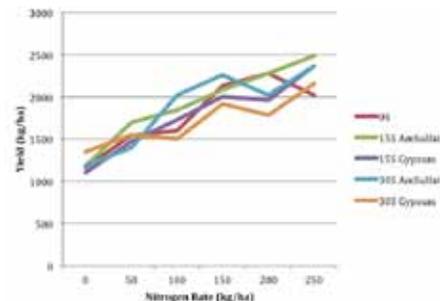
Verner 2011



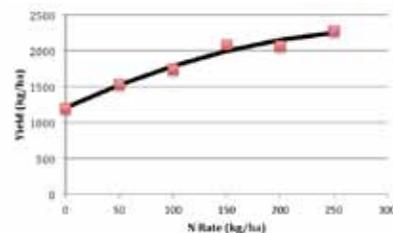
- Both sources of S produced similar results
- Highly significant relationship between N rate and Yield
- Significant response to both N and S
- No interaction between N Rate and S Rate
- Increasing N caused decreased tissue S concentrations



New Liskeard 2012

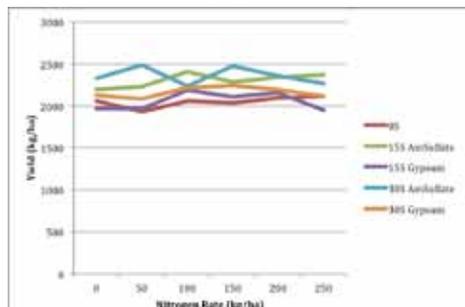


- Both sources of S produced similar results
- Highly significant relationship between N rate and Yield
- Significant response to both N and S
- No interaction between N Rate and S Rate
- Neither S nor N treatments changed tissue S concentrations

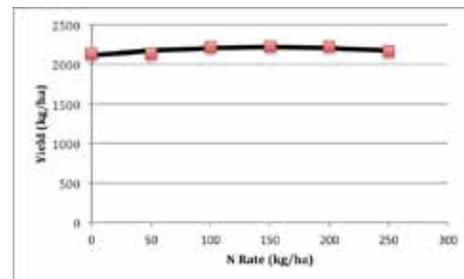


Breaking Ground (in Northeastern Ontario)

New Liskeard (V) 2012



- Increasing N reduced tissue S in 30kgS/ha AmS treatments only
- Significant relationship between N rate and Yield
- Significant response to S but not N, highest yielding test
- **No interaction between N Rate and S Rate**
- Tissue S concentrations lower than other tests



Soil Test and S Response

Sulfate S (ppm)

	Rep	0-15cm	15-30cm	Total
NL2011	1	15.7	8.2	23.9
	2	8.2	9.2	17.4
	3	8.2	10.3	18.5
	4	6.6	6.3	12.9
V2011	1	6.1	5.1	11.2
	2	6.6	5.9	12.5
	3	6.9	6.1	13.0
	4	5.3	5.6	10.9
NL 2012	1	18.9	9.1	28.0
	2	7.0	6.9	13.9
	3	7.5	7.2	14.7
	4	6.1	6.2	12.3
NL(V) 2012	1	5.5	5.7	11.2
	2	6.2	6.0	12.2
	3	5.1	5.1	10.2
	4	6.6	5.9	12.5

Most Economical Rate of N (kgN/ha)							
S Rate and Source ¹	Price Ratio	0S	15kgS AmS	15kgS CaS	30kgS AmS	30kgS CaS	All S Treatments
	1	162	161	158	159	181	164
	1.5	145	145	140	142	157	145
	2	127	129	122	125	133	127
	2.5	110	113	104	108	108	109
	3	92	97	86	91	84	91
	3.5	75	81	68	74	60	72
	4	57	65	50	56	36	54

¹Data pooled across all trials

At a price Ratio of 2.5, our best estimate of the Most Economical Rate of N is about 110kgN/ha.

Conclusions

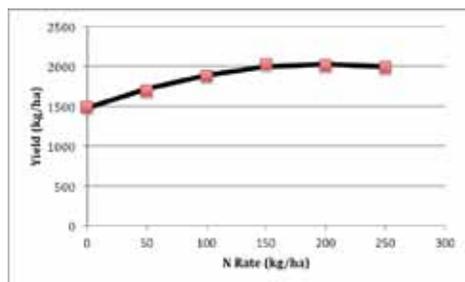
- Sulfur did not limit the response to nitrogen
- 15kgS/ha was sufficient
- No interaction between N rate and S rate
- S soil test did not differentiate nonresponsive sites from responsive sites.
- Ammonium Sulfate and Calcium Sulfate produced similar results

Acknowledgements

Funding provided by the Agricultural Adaptation Council, Farm Innovation Program through the Ontario Canola Growers Association

Nitrogen Response

Since there was no interaction between N and S, N treatments could be pooled across N treatments.





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Le Centre Laitier du Nord



Dairy Centre of the North

invites Everyone to the Farm
Show & Conference

April 8 & 9, 2011
at the Earlton Arena

*"If you carry your childhood with
you, you never become older."*

- Abraham Sutzkever

"True affluence is not needing anything."

- Gary Snyder

*"A father carries pictures where
his money used to be."*

- Unknown

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*"A New Year's resolution is something that
goes in one year and out the other."*

- Unknown

*"Every private citizen has a
public responsibility."*

- Myra Janco Daniels

"Those who trust us educate us."

- T. S. Elliot

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“Growing the North...” Inaugural Agricultural Symposium

Hosted by the Northeast Community Network (NeCN)

The Northeast Community Network (NeCN) is an incorporated, regional, not-for-profit organization comprised of communities from Constance Lake to Matheson, including Timmins and all communities in between and our goal is to encourage the diversification of the northern economy. We strive to achieve this through the promotion of collaborative economic development and are currently focusing on promoting agriculture in northeastern Ontario.

In an effort to increase awareness of both existing and potential agricultural developments in the area, the NeCN has created a special task force whose main priority is to organize an Agricultural Symposium dubbed “Growing the North” planned for March 15 & 16, 2013 in Kapuskasing. The Symposium will host visitors from across our region, neighboring districts and other parts of Ontario. Attendees will include producers, consumers, investors and entrepreneurs, agri-businesses, Federal and Ontario government representatives and many more.

The Symposium events and activities will include developmental and informational

workshops, networking opportunities, as well as keynote speaker Ron Bonnett, President of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, who will provide attendees with a “big picture” to changes in the agricultural frontier and provide inspiration to all to continue “Growing the North”. Other well-known speakers and individuals hosting various workshops will advise, teach and educate attendees in many areas related to farming.

If you would like any more information on the event or, to register, please contact us! Kate is available to answer any questions, receive any comments, and act as a point of contact for the NeCN.

Please, don't forget to bookmark March 15th and 16th, 2013 on your calendar and stay tuned for more information!

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SYMPOSIUM HIGHLIGHTS

Climate Change in the Northern Claybelt Region: How agricultural practices will be affected

Opportunities in Northeastern Ontario: A Panel Discussion



Success Stories in the North!

Financing Your Future: A Snapshot of Available Resources to Expand and Maintain Your Operations.

Co-operatives: A Viable Business Model

Commodities and Cash Crops *featuring* success stories from Northern Ontario

« Pour la croissance du Nord » Premier colloque agricole

Tenu par le Réseau communautaire du nord-est

Le Réseau communautaire du nord-est est un organisme régional sans but lucratif constitué en personne morale qui dessert les communautés entre Constance Lake et Matheson, en passant par Timmins. Il vise à encourager la diversification économique du Nord-Est ontarien par la collaboration, et se concentre présentement sur la promotion du secteur de l'agriculture.



Afin de mieux sensibiliser la région au développement agricole, tant réel que potentiel, le Réseau a mis sur pied une équipe de travail dont la priorité est d'organiser un colloque sur l'agriculture, « Pour la croissance du Nord », qui se déroulera les 15 et 16 mars 2013 à Kapuskasing. Le symposium compte attirer des visiteurs du Nord-Est ontarien, des régions voisines et d'ailleurs en Ontario. On y attend aussi des producteurs, des consommateurs, des investisseurs et des entrepreneurs, des agro-entreprises, des représentants des gouvernements provincial et fédéral, entre autres invités.

Les organisateurs du colloque prévoient la tenue d'ateliers de développement et d'information et des occasions de réseautage. Le conférencier d'honneur Ron Bonnett, président de la Fédération canadienne de l'agriculture, offrira aux participants un aperçu des transformations agricoles et nourrira l'inspiration « Pour la croissance du Nord ». D'autres conférenciers réputés et spécialistes de diverses facettes de l'agriculture présenteront des ateliers afin de donner des conseils et d'éduquer les participants.

Si vous voulez en savoir plus sur l'évènement, si vous souhaitez vous inscrire, communiquez avec nous. Kate Spacek, coordonnatrice régionale du Réseau répondra à vos questions, recevra vos commentaires et vous servira de contact pour le Réseau. N'oubliez pas d'inscrire le colloque des 15 et 16 mars 2013 à votre emploi du temps!

FAITS SAILLANTS DU COLLOQUE

Changements climatiques dans la Grande Zone argileuse : effets sur les pratiques agricoles

Occasions dans le Nord-Est ontarien : discussion entre spécialistes

Histoires à succès du Nord

Financer votre avenir : aperçu des ressources offertes pour la croissance et le maintien de vos activités

Les coopératives : un modèle de fonctionnement viable

Produits de base et cultures commerciales : histoires de réussite nord-ontariennes en vedette

Timiskaming Agricultural Innovation Forum



University of Quebec new research facility at Notre-Dame-du-Nord

On October 24th & 25th, over 80 participants and registrants gathered in Temiskaming Shores to discuss how we can attract agricultural entrepreneurial development into the North-East region, thereby ensuring sustainability of the local agricultural economy.

It was agreed that the primary driver was credible research, and all recognized that the continuation of the New Liskeard Agricultural Research Station (NLARS) was essential, possibly in a new format. This would require enhanced private and public sector partnerships as well as the economic support of area farmers and agri-processors. "Innovative Initiatives Ontario North" (IION), based at Nipissing University, would be an identifiable partner. The research should be directly beneficial to northern farm problems and have a clearly identified financial benefit to this client. It would also collaborate with the newly constructed "Recherche Agroalimentaire de l'Abitibi-Temiscamingue" in nearby Notre Dame du Nord, Quebec.

Field research opportunities such as the 2012 local trial of "corn under plastic", (refer to the summer 2012 issue of *Breaking Ground*) could be expanded to other crops such as soy and white beans, and the research could be partly supported by entities based in S. Ontario, such as Guelph Food Technology and "Bioenterprise Centres".

A new emphasis must be put on land clearing, as well as tile and municipal drainage both here and in the Cochrane District, as this region takes advantage of the global warming trend.

To meet "local food" initiatives, farmers markets (or similar outlets) must operate

Continued on page 24

Potential for Wild Blueberry Production in Northern Ontario

By *Graham Gambles, NEOSCIA Regional Communication Coordinator*

One of the priorities for the 2012 NEOSCIA Saguenay bus trip was to evaluate the extensive history of managed wild stands of blueberries in northern Quebec and determine the potential to develop a similar farm activity here in the North-East. We did not have to travel far to get positive proof!



About 30 km north of the border town of Notre-Dame-Du-Nord, is Bleuetiere du Montreuil, one of the newest wild blueberry farms in Quebec, producing since 2009. Almost half of the 1700 acre site is active and 50% of the fields are harvested in rotation on alternate years. In 2011, about 750,000# of blueberries were machine harvested from 350 acres. The crop was destined for the international freezer trade, and valued at \$.32 per pound. (No hand picking for fresh fruit.) After harvest, the crop was shipped by truck to Saguenay (for processing) as the mature blueberry industry at that centre has financed this new operation. The operation employs one local person full time, plus 2 people from Saguenay. There is also part time work for others at harvest.

The site sits next to the Ontario border, and straddles Quebec highway #101. The soil is classified as being of the "Wendigo" soil series, consisting of a partly stony phase. Topography is flat to gently rolling. This huge block of soil extends due westward into Temiskaming, almost to Englehart, and runs along the border northward to Kirkland Lake and Matheson. (Note that Wendigo soils are found throughout the NEOSCIA region, with major blocks in the Algoma, Sudbury, Nipissing and Parry Sound Districts, extending into Muskoka as well. There are also other large masses of "Podzol" soil series, such as the Phelans and Dokise of the Sudbury basin, plus the Abitibi and Pyne of the Cochrane District.

Developed directly from a cleared section of mixed forest that had a good undergrowth of two varieties of native blueberry plants, it took 5 years to reach full production. Management is basic, hand clearing the fields of wood and stones, spraying weeds, applying fertilizer (17-7-7 @ 185#/ac, plus Boron and

Sulfur). Fields are mowed to the ground in the fall after harvest, then fertilized and sprayed (Pronon) for weed control in the spring. Fruit buds are set in the fall. No fertilizing or spraying occurs in the following year, but bee hives (protected from bears by electric fencing) are introduced when flowering starts at a density of 1000 hives on 350 acres. Mechanical harvest starts about the third week of July with equipment brought in from Saguenay. This site gets an earlier jump on the season as the Saguenay harvest does not start until August. (Hand harvest, could start 2 weeks earlier at both locations.)



Based on this management, the best sections can produce 3,500# per acre. The 2012 drought was not expected to affect this year's yield, but could reduce development of the plants that are part of next year's cycle. Both bears and birds provide some feeding losses, but loss to human predation is the greatest problem on the unfenced fields. Frost causes damage in lower swales during bloom, (early June) but has never destroyed all the crop. This is due to the fact that much of the sandy soil surface is bare and allows for heat to come out of the soil during cold snaps. The heat is caught in the bell shaped flowers that hang down, protecting the essential fruiting organs.

The operator is also developing a second site, a bit further south on the Quebec side of the Ontario border. It would be influenced by the moderating climatic effects of Lake Temiskaming on the west. The operator says that hand-picked fruit from Quebec currently sells for \$3.00/# at the farm gate. (Note that wild blueberries sold for \$7 to \$10/litre in Ontario roadside stands in 2012, depending on location, and that 1L of wild blueberries weighs about 1 pound.)

(For more information on wild blueberry production in Ontario, search Google for "Ignace Wild Blueberries".)



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- Leroy Brownlow



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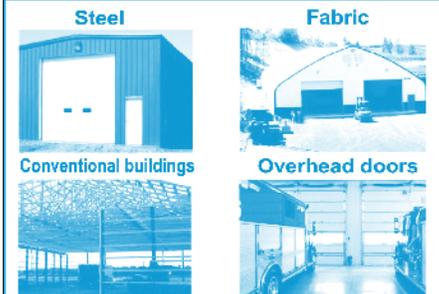
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Royal Agricultural Winter Fair – 2012

NOAFEM can again report on a successful presence at the Royal from November 2 – 11, 2012. Thank you to the 22 members who were able to send product and participate in this year's event where sales were in excess of \$12,000. As usual the knitted wool, mohair and alpaca products proved popular as were the little lambs, and new quilted items. Jams, jellies and pickles featured **WILD** fruits this year. NOAFEM's uniform labeling on food jars were an attractive addition and looked attractive on the display shelves. The numbers of visitors to the 2012 Royal were down from previous years but visits from our regular customers and interest in the products made our efforts successful.



Jonathan Gerber's garlic, grown in Warren, is a sought after product selling about 6 bushels this year.



Ken Lane welcomes customers in NOAFEM's Boreal Harvest booth at the 2012 RAWF.

It is always a pleasure to see NOAFEM's members who maintain their own booths at the Royal. This year they included **Meadowview Alpacas, Tall Trees Curlies, Mountain Maple Products, Johnston's Cranberry Marsh** and **Poschaven Farms**.

It is always a pleasure to greet visitors from Northern Ontario who stop at the booth to say hello. Thanks to our volunteers who spent time in the booth and made the 12 hour days more bearable: Ken and Sharon Lane, Pat Marcotte, Neil Tarlton, Cathy Cooper, Ron and Mary Ann Cooper.

Have you noticed NOAFEM's new email address?
noront.agrifood@gmail.com

Labelling

Here is a sample of the product labels and nutrition information that NOAFEM prepares for members by request. These colourful labels provide the required information and added interest to the display shelves. Approximately 1,000 jars of jams, jellies, preserves, pickles and relishes were sold in the booth this year.

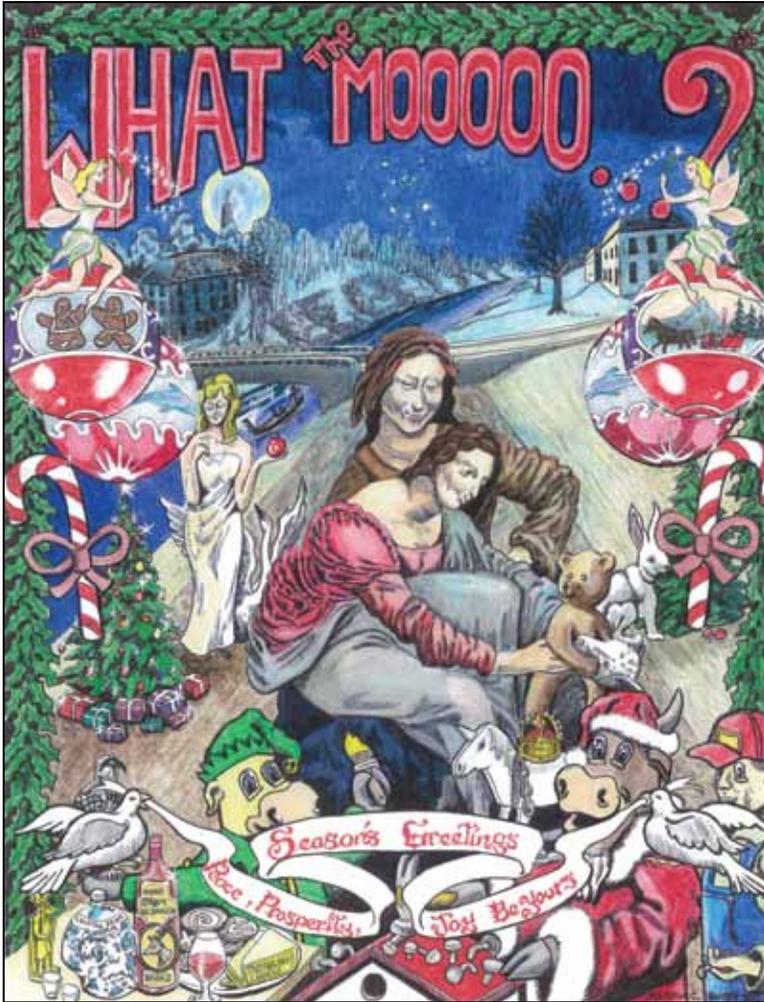
Strawberry Rhubarb Jam Confiture Fraise/Rhubarbe

Prepared by –
 Barb's Jams & Jellies
 RR#4 North Bay ON P1B 8G5



Best before –

Nutrition Facts Valeur nutritive		Strawberry Rubarb
Per 1 Tbsp.(15 ml) / Par 1 cuiller (15 ml)		Ingredients Sugar / sucre Strawberries / fraises Rhubarb / rhubarbe Pectin / pectin
Amount	% Daily Value	
Teneur	% valeur quotidienne	
Calories / Calories	63.2	
Fats / Lipides	0 g	
0%		
Carbohydrates / Glucides	16.3 g	250 ml
	Sugar / sucre 16.1 g	
Not a significant source of other nutrients Source negligence d'autre elements nutritifs		



Timiskaming Agricultural Innovation Forum

Continued from page 17

year 'round while investment in storage, processing facilities and distribution centers must occur. This would be beneficial in developing access to markets beyond the north, and even internationally. To this end, a pilot project to develop a "Temiskaming Local Food Marketing Strategy" should be undertaken to help agri-entrepreneurs identify their consumer target market and distribution networks at the earliest stage.

Comments were made on the eligibility criteria and delivery mechanisms of both Federal and Provincial funding programs. The prevailing opinion was that programs should shift their focus from "job creation" to the benefits of "wealth generation" and to "new technology and innovation". Equal access, flexibility, clarity of guidelines and

consistency of review are the priorities in these programs. Locally, the NGO known as "TADA" (Temiskaming Agricultural Development Association) would be a key player in the collection and disbursement of flow-through funding.

To achieve the identified goals, the consensus of participants agreed that a "Temiskaming District Committee" of volunteers be formed to develop the "terms of reference". The core of the members would come from TADA, with support from other volunteers in the area. The committee will begin to sit in early December so that funding applications can be made before the end of March.

For the full (23 page) summary of the event, contact Lorne Hillcoat of "Temfund" (lhillcoat@temfund.ca)

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**Temiskaming Crop Coalition
& GFO Annual Meetings**

January 18, 2013, 9:30 a.m.

Holiday Inn Express, Temiskaming Shores

Cost: \$20 (includes membership and meal)

Primary Speaker: Horst Bohner (OMAFRA
Soybean Specialist)