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## *ADAPT Council Industry Newsletter*

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### **Newsletter Subscription:**

*The ADAPT Council Industry Newsletter is a free news service distributed periodically (10-12 times per year). If you would like to receive an electronic copy or know of an organization or someone who would appreciate receiving this free newsletter, please reply with their email address and we will add it to our mailing list.*

*Thank you.*

*Phil Ferraro, Editor, Executive Director PEI ADAPT Council*

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### **Reviving The Matinee Tracks**

The roots of the harness racing industry run deep in the rich red P.E.I. soil. Scratch the success of the major Islanders who have excelled in the sport like the late Joe O'Brien, and the path often leads to a matinee track. In O'Brien's case, he guided his first horses around the track at the Prince County Exhibition oval in his native Alberton. Had that facility not been in existence, Wayne Pike said one of the country's harness racing legends may never have discovered his talent.

Pike is the executive director of the P.E.I. Harness Racing Industry Association. With funding help from the P.E.I. ADAPT Council (which administers the Canadian Adaptation and Rural development Fund in the province for Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada), representatives of that group are visiting matinee tracks in Ontario, Alberta and the United States to look at ways to grow and strengthen that side of the industry.

Harness racing is enjoying a revival in the province on the pari-mutuel side with a major expansion completed at the Charlottetown Driving Park to build an entertainment centre and a similar expansion slated for Summerside Raceway next year. However, Pike maintains "the matinee tracks are our feeder system—our roots in a sense and if the roots die, the plant can't be

healthy for very long."

The association's effort is a case of "back to the future" in a number of ways. In the late 1800's and early 1900's when harness racing was at the height of its popularity, there were over two dozen matinee tracks throughout the province. That number is now down to five— Pinette, Alberton, O'Leary, Kensington and Tyne Valley.

"Obviously the matinee tracks give young people coming into the industry a chance to drive and train horses," Pike said. "Since there are less formal rules than there are at pari-mutual tracks, there is also an opportunity to for fans to get much closer to the action."

Pike said they are looking at ways to enhance infrastructure so the buildings could possibly be used by other groups within the community as well as ways of enhancing the product on the track.

He said the a healthy matinee track system has the potential to bring new fans to the pari-mutual game. Pike added "if you lived in O'Leary let's say and you had no exposure to the harness industry— if you went to the matinee track in your community and liked it, then your opinion of the harness industry moves from neutral to positive."

If one of the drivers or trainer son the matinee track graduates to pari-mutuel racing at Summerside or Charlottetown "perhaps you would go down to see him in action ." Pike added "we feel this is an ideal time to revitalize interest in the matinee tracks because of what is happening at the pari-mutual level."

### **Identifying Organic Markets**

Over the past several years, the organic sector has been one of the fastest growing components of P.E.I. agriculture. To help ensure that continues, the P.E.I. Organic Producer's Co-operative has commissioned the George Morris Centre in Guelph to help identify potential new markets and the best way to capitalize on them. The P.E.I. Adapt Council (which administers the Canadian Adaptation and Rural Development Fund in the province for Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada), helped to fund the endeavor.

The study will wrap up in October, but Co-operative president Raymond Loo said the agricultural think tank has presented a preliminary report that contains some encouraging results. He said the demand is strong in soybeans and other vegetables and "meat is gaining importance very quickly as well as canola oil."

The provincial government has already issued a request for proposals to examine the possibility of building a canola extraction plant as part of its alternative energy strategy. Loo said the meal that would be left after the oil is extracted is rich in protein and could command a premium price in the marketplace if it is non-GMO and could be used for feed.

Loo said the centre surveyed company and individuals who are buying and selling on the international market and 88 per cent indicated there was an increasing demand for non-GMO products.

"We see a big demand for feed grains in the next year, particularly in the New England States," Loo said. "There is a big demand for barley and P.E.I. has an excellent climate for growing non-GMO barley in rotation with potatoes."

He said the interim study indicates people are willing to pay more for what they perceive as a positive value. The study indicates the growth in the industry will vary from crop to crop— some things like organic canola are much more difficult to obtain."

Right now, he said organic feed is in great demand and premiums have been as high as 50 per cent compared to the conventional variety. However, Loo explained that is a mixed blessing

since it also makes organic milk and livestock more expensive to produce. He is hoping the feed producers will still make a premium but that the cost will become more competitive over time. Loo said the study also indicates the industry should be looking at a different way of marketing, not only for the organic industry but agriculture as a whole. He said "we have to make sure producers are making money and not just the retail stores."

The study showed P.E.I. already has a positive image in the minds of many consumers, and there are a number of possibilities to increase organic production. Loo said the industry is trying to build towards the future and realizes it will take time for the market to reach its full potential.

## **Ideas and Opportunities**

### **Jump Start Your Business Workshop Designed by Doug Hall, Eureka! Ranch**

Sixteen small P.E.I. businesses now have the opportunity to work with two trainers who will help improve their odds for success. Let's make sure that some of these businesses are farms! The daylong program, based on what has worked for over 10,000 businesses, shows how you can

\* double your marketing success rate \* thrive, not merely survive \* work smarter, not harder, to grow your business More information is available at

<http://profitlearn.upei.ca/jsyb/> To

apply for one of the limited spaces, contact: Marg Weeks, ProfitLearn P.E.I. at 1-800-270-4795, email: [marweeks@upei.ca](mailto:marweeks@upei.ca)

### **Arc & Government of Canada Launch Biofuels Analysis Incentive Program**

In support of the Government of Canada's Biodiesel Initiative, the Alberta Research Council Inc. (ARC) has teamed up with Natural Resources Canada (NRCan) to create an on-line Biofuels Quality Registry.

Biodiesel producers and end-users can now register on the Biofuels Quality Registry Web site <http://www.biofuels.arc.ab.ca/>, an extranet site hosted by ARC, to have their products tested for quality. The site is established as the national database into which analysis results of candidate biofuels are entered.

This registry will help ensure that end-users have a quality product and producers have an option for quality control.

<http://www.newswire.ca/en/releases/archive/September2005/07/c6892.html>

### **Cereals as Fuel**

With the increasing price of oil for heating fuel and grain prices remaining low the use of cereals as a fuel is a possibility. The following article from the Irish farmers Journal provides some information concerning the use of fuels like wheat or barley to fire a furnace.

<http://www.farmersjournal.ie/2005/0528/farmmanagement/crops/feature.shtml>

### **Alternative Heating Sources**

Most of the work done in North America has looked at either corn or wood pellets as a fuel. However, some manufacturers will provide models

suitable for burning wheat, barley or rye. One such manufacturer is:

<http://www.americasheat.com/>

Another manufacturer, based in BC is:

<http://www.pinnaclestove.com/#mtpb150>

Another Canadian manufacturer of corn burning furnaces is:

<http://www.bosmanagri.com/>

### **Direct Marketing / Agri-tourism**

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[www.CanadianFarmersMarket.com](http://www.CanadianFarmersMarket.com)

### **Family Turns Wheat into Tasty Snack Treat**

What started out in 2002 as a summer project has turned one youth into a small businessman. Tim Weber, now 15 years old, developed River View Farm Wheat Snax, using kernels from his family's wheat crop to make the added value product.

<http://www.capitalpress.info/main.asp?SectionID=67&SubSectionID=792&ArticleID=19592&TM=26123.99>

### **North American Farmers' Direct Marketing Association**

21st Annual Convention

January 9-16, 2006

<http://www.nafdma.com/Texas/>