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## *ADAPT Council Industry Newsletter*

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### **Prince Edward Island Chef/Producer Retreat Doing More Business Together**

In the restaurant trade, it is considered smart marketing to feature local products on the menu. Despite that fact, P.E.I. producers have enjoyed limited success in selling the fruits of their labours to the food service industry. A seminar planned for February is hoping to change that. With \$6,000 in financial assistance from the P.E.I. ADAPT Council, which administers the Advancing Canadian Agriculture and Agri-Food program in the province for Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada) the Culinary Institute hopes to bring together farmers and restaurant owners and manager to discuss how they can do business better.

"Quite often, one of the major problems is restaurant owners simply don't know where projects are available locally," said Dave Harding, manager of the institute, which is part of the Atlantic Tourism and Hospitality Institute at Holland College.

For those in the restaurant trade, he said some of the major issues to be discussed at the forum include food safety, traceability and supply. On the production side, he said there are concerns about such things as whether the price will be competitive with other potential markets.

"Having local products in restaurants is a win-win for everybody involved,' Harding said. "We want to look at making that happen on a more frequent basis than is now the case."

In some cases, he said some producers are used to selling direct on a cash basis. However, he added most restaurants prefer to be invoiced.

He said the session will not be geared to the general public but rather targeted to those who will most benefit namely producers and restaurant managers, owners and staff. The agenda will

include presentations from both sides of issue followed by a general discussion of the issues. "The meeting is really only a first step in what we hope will be a long-term dialogue," he said. "There could be several things come out of the meeting— one suggestion might be to develop a directory so restaurant owners would know where to access local product. Harding said it is all too often it is easier to access product from outside the province than it is from down the street or around the corner. He said that is especially true for products that might be considered exotic or unusual. While it is not an agricultural product, he pointed to oysters as an example saying "it is easier for us to get oysters from Toronto than it is from P.E.I.— those are the types of problems we hope to address." While there will be little in the way of samples available since fresh local products are understandably limited during the winter, Harding said farmers will have opportunities to pitch their products one on one to restaurant managers and owners. "Hopefully this will result in an explosion of fresh P.E.I. products in restaurant next summer," he said.

### **Organics Now a Major Growth Sector of the P.E.I. Economy**

Organic production is now one of the fastest growing sectors of the P.E.I. agricultural economy. However, the growth experienced in P.E.I. pales in comparison to what is happening in Europe and Asia. To help the Island organics industry get a better handle on what is happening worldwide, the P.E.I. ADAPT Council provided \$2,000 to help the P.E.I. Certified Organic Producers Co-operative send a delegate to the 2005 World Organic Congress in Adelaide, Australia.

Ellen Trainor was one of 1,000 delegates from 72 countries across the globe. She said the week long event covered 360 topics touching on virtually every aspect of organic production.

"It was a real eye-opening experience," said Trainor.

The Emerald native is quickly becoming well versed in the organics industry. The UPEI student also won an internship at the Falls Brook Centre in rural New Brunswick— a sustainable human development and resource organization. The six month internship was split between the centre and office of the International Federation of Organic Agricultural Movements (IFOAM) in Bonn, Germany.

Founded in 1972 with the loft goal of ensuring a sustainable future for organic agriculture worldwide, IFOAM has developed the standard that are the basis of virtually every organic accreditation program throughout the world.

Trainor said one thing the experience has taught her is just how far behind North America is compared to the rest of the world. This continent accounts for only 2.7 per cent of world organic production, compared to 34 per cent in Latin America, 29 per cent from Europe and 21 per cent from Africa.

"Where I live in Germany, there are seven shops selling organic food within walking distance of my apartment," she said.

All told, Europe has 6.5 million hectares in organic production on 170,000 farms. Canada, United States and Mexico have a collective total of 1.5 million hectares. Worldwide, she said the organic industry is valued at \$25 billion (U.S.).

Trainor said Switzerland has been one of the most successful countries on the globe in moving to organic production. Since developing a co-ordinated strategy in 1980, she said the number of organic farmer has grown from 800 to over 6,000 and 10 per cent of the country's agricultural acreage is organic.

"It is really a picture of what can happen here," she said.

Trainor said many other European countries are also setting five year plans to move to organic production. Germany wants to have 20 per cent of its farmland organic by 2010. She said the top markets for organic products are now United States, Germany and the United Kingdom. She said IFOAM is now developing a guarantee system designed to allow for easier movement of organic goods between countries. If a country is following the basic production guidelines of IFOAM, it will receive the organization's seal that will be recognized by all other countries. Canada is now in the process of developing national organic guidelines that will meet the standard of the world body.

February 28-March 2, 2006 First International Organic Apple and Pear Symposium, Wolfville, NS. More information available at: <http://www.oacc.info/AppleSymposium/>

March 2-4, 2006 Sixth Annual ACORN Organic Conference and Trade show Organic Prosperity-Rooted in Community, Wolfville, NS. More information coming soon at [www.acornorganic.org](http://www.acornorganic.org)

### **The Grains of Life - New Uses for Grain-based Products**

Farmers are finding that cooperatively processing and marketing adds value to the staff of life.

#### **WHEAT**

The food staple of about 35 percent of the world's population. And in America, the food eaten more than any other. In fact, food has been and will likely always be the major focus of wheat production. Only a fraction of U.S. wheat — less than five percent — is currently used for industrial purposes. Wheat's key components, starch and gluten, hold the best new uses potential. And wheat straw is showing up in decorative and industrial boards.

“Wheat is one of the most under-researched raw materials around because it's too easily used in bread,” says Doug Ohlemeier, marketing specialist for the Kansas Wheat Commission. “But the properties that make wheat suitable in food products also make wheat functional in nonfood industrial applications.”

#### **Farmers in food processing WHEAT PRODUCT CO-OPS**

If wheat is a valuable food, then added value lies in processing it into products America loves. The 1990s saw a rising tide of producers investing in cooperatives to add value to wheat. To become members, farmers invest equity and deliver a portion of their crop to the co-op.

Formed in 1991, Dakota Growers Pasta Company of Carrington, N.D. is the third largest pasta maker in North America. Owned by 1,100 farmer members, the

co-op employs almost 500 people between its Carrington mill and pasta plant, Fargo distribution center and two Twin Cities plants, which DGPC purchased last February. “We now have an annual capacity of 470 million pounds of dry pasta,” says DGPC’s Liz Reinhiller. After another Carrington mill is completed in March, DGPC will be milling 12 million bushels of durum wheat annually.

### **Sticky and strong GLUTON AND STARCH PRODUCTS**

Midwest Grain Products of Atchison, Kan., America’s largest wheat gluten producer, has developed many gluten and starch-based products used in food processing, adhesives, films, coatings, personal care products and food service containers. On the food side, “Pasta Power” increases the strength, firmness and cooking tolerance of pastas and noodles. “Wheatex” is a meat extender or replacer in vegetarian products.

The company also produces Polytriticum biodegradable resins derived from wheat protein and starch blended with biodegradable polyester. These resins can be used to make disposable utensils and many other products currently made from plastic. Midwest Grains received seed money from USDA’s Alternative Agricultural Research Center to commercialize biodegradable plastics.

### **StarchTech Products Packing with wheat STARCHTECH PRODUCTS**

StarchTech, Inc. of Golden Valley, Minn. markets three wheat and cornstarch-based products, all commercialized with AURI’s help. Its “Clean Green” packing peanuts have been accepted by the packaging industry. Biodegradable packing peanuts now account for about 20 percent of the entire loose-fill packaging market.

The company also manufactures degradable plastic resins for injection molding. The resins are being evaluated by customers for use in cutlery, golf tees, ball markers, sod stakes and turf tacks. The company’s latest wheat starch-based product is “Vent Seals,” a patented safety product that prevents fecal contamination in poultry and pork processing.

### **Cheaper plastics WHEAT-BASED BIOPLASTICS**

The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that the United States produces 11 billion pounds of plastic wastes per year. At Kansas State University, scientist X. Susan Sun is blending wheat starch with polylactic acid to make degradable bioplastics more economical.

Fully biodegradable synthetic polymers such as polylactic acid have been

available since 1990, but they are two to ten times more expensive than petroleum products. Blending wheat starch with synthetic polymers could dramatically reduce costs.

### **Kitty litter from wheat Making cats purr CAT LITTER FROM WHEAT**

Cat litter is a one-billion dollar industry in the U.S. Small bird and animal litter add another 400 million. So several companies are setting their stakes in these growing markets with environmentally friendly, biodegradable, flushable litter made from wheat.

Pet Care Systems of Detroit Lakes, Minn. started marketing scoopable cat litters in 1992 and, in 1998, utilized 75 truckloads of nonfood-grade wheat. The company markets throughout the United States and Canada and also exports to Europe, Asia and the Middle East. Pet Care finished a new processing plant in 1996 with help from AURI and a development package from the City of Detroit Lakes. Sales have grown from \$57,000 in 1993 to more than a million dollars in 1998.

Heartland Products of Valley City, N.D. began producing a wheat-based cat litter in 1994. The company sells Heartland Wheat Litter throughout the U.S. in 1,000 stores; California is its number one market.

### **Wheat Fragrance AROMATHERAPY PILLOWS**

Nature's Place of Fargo, N.D. uses red wheat for relaxation. Kimberly Kraemer, owner of the nature store, says wheat is an ideal grain for her Aroma Relief Pillows. "Wheat is a heavier grain so it helps the pillows conform to peoples' bodies. Wheat also holds heat or coolness and it absorbs and holds the essential oils we use for fragrance," Kraemer says. The aromatherapy pillows may be microwaved or refrigerated to reach a desired temperature.

Interest in the pillows is taking off "like crazy," selling at gift shops and nature stores throughout North Dakota and Minnesota, Kraemer says. "I like promoting an agricultural product from the Upper Midwest."

### **Hard as Cement WHEAT-BASED CONCRETE**

Lightweight concrete products such as exterior panels for high-rise office buildings may soon be made with wheat starch. The USDA-ARS and Artlo Industries of Perris, Calif. entered into a cooperative agreement in October to develop, test and commercialize wheat-based concrete. Artlo manufactures custom pre-cast concrete products. In addition to building materials, wheat-based

concrete may be used in ornamental fountains, benches and planters.  
Expect biotech breakthroughs

## **BARLEY**

Minnesota ranks fifth nationally in barley production, with 580,000 acres planted in 1997. Most barley is used for feed or the malting industry. There is some new interest in using hull-less varieties for food products because, like oats, barley has a high soluble fiber content.

### **Barley Boards**

#### **BARLEY AND PLASTIC LUMBER**

Steve Raguse, a barley farmer with a knack for mechanical engineering, developed a process to make a durable, rodent- and moisture-proof plastic lumber from ground barley grain and recycled plastic. AURI helped him prove the process and now Raguse markets the boards directly from his Wheaton, Minn. shop and has one distributor. “We’ve had positive results with up to 40 percent barley,” Raguse says. “The market is just coming into its own. People are more accepting of plastic lumber for decks and marine uses.”

## **OATS**

Conventional oats’ fibrous hulls do not have much feed value. But new “naked oats” varieties have thin, paper-like hulls that thresh free during harvesting, leaving only the groat in the combine hopper. The groat is higher in metabolizable energy than corn, says Michael McMullen, oat researcher at North Dakota State University. The naked oat variety “Paul” produces about 99 percent naked kernels, with 17 to 19 percent protein and 7 to 9 percent oil, making it a valuable livestock feed.

The cosmetic industry has found new uses for oats, which studies show can help heal problem skin. An example is the Aveeno skin care line produced by a division of S.C. Johnson & Sons.

OatsCreamOne new product that AURI helped commercialize is OatsCream,<sup>®</sup> an all-oats treat similar to soft-serve ice cream. Several Twin Cities food co-ops and Whole Foods Market have started dishing up the soft-serve and distribution recently expanded into Madison, Chicago and Milwaukee. OatsCream is particularly popular among the lactose intolerant and consumers interested in heart-healthy foods. American Oats, Inc. of Minnetonka, Minn. has a U.S. patent and international patents pending.

## **PEI ADAPT to Host National Issues and Opportunities Meeting March 12 - 13, 2006**

The PEI ADAPT Council would like to invite you to our combined Annual General Meeting and national 'Issues and Opportunities' meeting on Monday March, 13 2006 at the Confederation Centre in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island.

This year's theme 'Adapting to Changes in the Way We Do Business,' will highlight special invited guest speakers including:

Fred Kirschenmann, Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture;  
Tom Henry, Editor Small Farm Canada magazine;  
Jeannie Cruikshank, Vice President, Canadian Council of Grocery Distributors;  
Carolanne Nelson UPEI/PEI Bio-Alliance Network;  
Matt Hardy Maritime Soy craft and PEI farmer, and  
Ann Worth, Agri-food export consultant.

The format will include a formal, yet brief, early morning business meeting followed by stimulating presentations and discussions on production and marketing issues and opportunities. The afternoon sessions will delve into the area of emerging issues, research and food policy developments.

In the evening, ADAPT will host a gourmet banquet and showcase featuring Island made foods along side displays highlighting recently completed projects to which the ADAPT Council contributed.

This meeting will provide an excellent opportunity for you to network with industry stakeholders to help foster a new vision of our agricultural future. Registration is free and is open to anyone with an interest in the future of agriculture and agri-food production. However, space is limited; we request that you contact the ADAPT office to confirm that you are planning to participate.

**Adapting to Changes in the Way We Do Business**  
**PEI ADAPT AGM & National 'Issues and Opportunities' Meeting**  
**March 13 -14 2006**  
**Confederation Centre**  
**Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island**

**Monday March 13**

8:30 - 10:00 a.m.

**PEI ADAPT AGM :**

ACAAF Executive Directors, Chairs and Board Members

9:30 a.m - 10:00 a.m.

**Issues and Opportunities Public Registration**

10:30 a.m. - 12:00 noon.

**Production and Marketing Issues and Opportunities -  
'Strategies for a Sustainable Future'**

Fred Kirschenmann, Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture  
Tom Henry, editor Small Farm Canada magazine; 'Farm  
Marketing: What Works Isn't Always What Feels Right'  
Q&A/Discussion

12:00 - 1:00 p.m.

**Lunch**

**'Challenges of Developing On-farm Value Added Products'**

Speaker: Matt Hardy, Maritime Soyocraft & Farmer (Tentative)

1:00 - 2:30 p.m.

**Food Policy Issues and Opportunities - 'What's in Store'**

Jeannie Cruikshank, Canadian Council of Grocery Distributors  
Ann Worth, Agri-Food Export Consultant  
Dr. Carolanne Nelson, UPEI Research, & Bio-Alliance Network  
Q&A/Discussion

2:30 - 2:45

Nutrition Break

2:45 - 3:15

Atlantic Agriculture Leadership Program

'The Agri-Food Revolution in China'

3:15 - 4:30 p.m.

Issues and Opportunities in a Sustainable Food System

Speakers Panel: Fred Kirschenmann, Tom Henry, Matt Hardy

6:00 - 8:00 pm

**Banquet PEI ADAPT Project Showcase**

7:00 - 9:00 pm

**Entertainment**

Scott Parsons Jazz Trio

## **Tuesday March 14**

9:00 - 12:00

**NATIONAL ACAAf ADAPTATION COUNCIL  
MEMBERS ONLY  
ACAAf Program Issues and Opportunities**

1:00 - 5:00 p.m

**ADAPT Project Tours**

### **Come Hear Fred Kirschenmann at the PEI ADAPT's Issues and Opportunities Meeting in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island March 12, 2006.**

Fred Kirschenmann has been the director of the famed Leopold Center for many years and has put it front and centre in thinking and action about sustainable farming. His recent address at the Royal Winter Fair inspired many with his message on what he calls, "Agriculture of the Middle," which he says holds out hope for good farm lives as well as sustainable farming practices and high quality food.

His dual background, in both agriculture and academia has provided him with a well informed, international perspective on innovative farming strategies.

Though raised as a farmboy, he spent a portion of his adult life teaching philosophy at university. After returning to the farm he retained a philosophical approach to life that is frequently captured on radio and print media. He's a fine speaker and we are fortunate that he has found the time and energy to come to Prince Edward Island with a message that will help bring together various interest groups that are needed to advance a sustainable food system on Prince Edward Island and all across Canada.

## **Issues and Opportunities**

### **Farmer-owned Brands?**

The paper lays out the economic arguments in favour of the establishment of farmer-owned brands in midwestern agriculture and presents four case studies based on successful efforts in this area in the United States and European Union. The Studies show that the brands can be profitable for farmers and emphasize the importance of restricting the supply of any successful brand.

<http://www.agmrc.org>

### **Alley Cropping Produces Two Crops in the Space of One**

Alley cropping is the cultivation of food, forage or specialty crops between rows of trees. It is a larger version of intercropping or companion planting conducted over a longer time scale. Alley cropping can provide profitable opportunities for row crop farmers, hardwood timber growers, nut growers and Christmas tree growers.

<http://www.aftaweb.org/entserv1.php?page=1>

### **Blue Skies for Blueberries**

This article profiles the industry, examining its current economic status as well as blueberry cultivation and the fruit's popularity worldwide. VISTA is published by Statistics Canada and contains several short articles highlighting statistical insights on themes relating to agriculture, food and rural issues. In addition, there are current indicators of agricultural activity, a list of subject matter contacts and a schedule of upcoming statistical releases.

<http://www.statcan.ca>

### **2002-2003 Canadian Vegetable Situation and Trends**

According to Statistics Canada preliminary data, the 2002 vegetable (excluding potatoes and greenhouse) cultivated area decreased almost 9% compared to revised 2001 statistics to an estimated 120,000 hectares of which 96.2% were bearing. The area harvested for processing vegetables declined 6% to about 60,000 hectares in 2002, while area harvested with vegetables destined for the fresh market decreased more than 8% to about

55,000 hectares. Ontario has over half of the cultivated vegetable area in Canada, while Quebec has 33%.

<http://www.agr.gc.ca/misb/hort/>