



# Native Agri Update

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[www.indianag.on.ca](http://www.indianag.on.ca)

## LOOKING AHEAD

Looking ahead in 2018, the overall outlook for farming continues to be optimistic. Across the sector, there are lots of interesting stories worth keeping an eye on.

### Community Initiatives

There are numerous initiatives underway supporting local food production and learning opportunities. In Six Nations, Our Sustenance, offers a variety of educational opportunities, as well as activities aimed at improving the community food security including a greenhouse, community garden, Six Nations Farmers Markets and the Good Food Box ([www.oursustenance.ca](http://www.oursustenance.ca)). In Saugeen First Nation, another initiative is The Saugeen RED Tree Program. Started in 2013, the program focuses on community food production using traditional and modern techniques of the permaculture and community gardening.

While interest continues to grow for community based initiatives, the challenge most face is securing adequate funding.

### Small Flock Poultry

Following years of rigid marketing restrictions, the Chicken Farmers of Ontario introduced several new avenues for those seeking to get into smaller scale production. Under the Artisanal program which was launched in 2016, producers can produce between 600 and 3,000 birds annually without quota. Last year, CFO approved 30 new Artisanal producers. For those looking for bigger opportunities, CFO offers the Local Niche Market program allowing producers to start chicken farming between 1,000 and 10,000 quota units.

### Beef Farming in the North

Looking at the longer term, an initiative by the Beef Farmers of Ontario is look-

ing to create big opportunities for cow calf beef production in the North. Their initiative has garnered the support of OMAFRA who is working to convert Crown land into farm land to support northern beef herd expansion. Just recently, OMAFRA announced an initial plan for the creation of eight two thousand acre beef farms in the clay belt near Kapuskasing. As exciting as the initiative is, it is unclear how First Nations farmers, entrepreneurs and communities will be able to participate and fully realize the opportunity.

### Organic Foods

Demand for organic foods continues to grow. As recently reported by the Canadian Organic Trade Association, the organic food and beverage market has grown from \$2.8 billion in 2014 to \$4.4 billion in 2017. As well, it's reported that Ontario has the largest market share of organics, followed by British Columbia.

## CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

Nominations are open for IAPO's Board of Director from three Districts:

- London Bruce District
- Brantford District
- Peterborough District

Nominations will be accepted from qualified members until March 18, 2018.

Directors serve three year terms and are responsible for helping guide IAPO's success. In addition to Board related duties including: attending quarterly Board meetings, conference calls, and correspondence, Directors play an important role in member and community engagement.

If you are interested in nominating a Director, or being nominated as a Director, contact the Stirling IAPO office for nomination forms at 1-800-363-0329 or [info@indianag.on.ca](mailto:info@indianag.on.ca)

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# Agribusiness

## OPPORTUNITIES IN AGRIBUSINESS

Often when we think of agriculture our minds go straight to production and the farm, but what about the people that are needed to keep the producers operating. The problem is there are so many fields of agribusiness that are being overlooked and understaffed. The need for transportation, testing facilities, veterinarians, mechanics, and the list goes on, is at an all-time high.

### Producers Warned about Veterinarian Shortage

source: Owen Roberts [www.realagriculture.com](http://www.realagriculture.com)

If you have a sick animal, there's no such thing as a "timely" veterinarian shortage. But the current situation, which is seeing fewer veterinary service hours available and much more demand expected, is particularly worrisome.

In Ontario, there are currently 130-140 Ontario practices seeking to hire a veterinarian. That's three times the historic number. It's even worse in some rural and remote areas, where veterinarians – particularly for livestock – are already in limited supply.

The demands on existing veterinarians has grown, especially in the last 18 months. New regulations governing veterinary oversight of antibiotic use come into effect next year. Specifically, veterinary antibiotics that were previously available over the counter will now require prescriptions, as the industry takes steps to reduce antibiotic use and fight resistance. Prescriptions can't be written unless the veterinarian has actually visited the farm to diagnose the situation. That means more work and more time on the road for veterinarians.

Another contributing factor to the shortage is the changing nature of the veterinary workforce. Research in the veterinary sector suggests that recent graduates typically devote about 1,500 hours annually to veterinary practice. That's about 500 hours fewer than the industry has been accustomed to.

Now, it's not all gloom and doom. Despite the whirlwind the profession is in, interest in veterinary science and medicine remains high. Applications across all accredited veterinary colleges in Canada, were up six per cent this year.

### Mechanic Shortage Affects Dealers

Source: Michael Raine [www.producer.com](http://www.producer.com)

The business of fixing farm machinery is getting an overhaul. The industry says machinery dealers across Western Canada would employ 1,000 more mechanics today if they could get them. The shortage is causing business issues for dealers and service delays for producers.

The Canada West Equipment Dealers Association polled its membership and found a need for 450 mechanics and parts persons in Saskatchewan alone. The industry has an eight percent turnover and an aging workforce, putting even more

strain on farm machinery dealers. They have been lobbying provincial governments to increase the numbers of student training seats in their post-secondary schools.



Jim Wood, vice-president of agriculture at Rocky Mountain Equipment, said extra training seats are important, but the need is so great that he needs far more than what a doubling in students can deliver. The need for

skilled trades in manufacturing is limiting many of his members' abilities to expand their businesses. Wood said the entire industry is having problems finding employees. "We haven't done a great job of selling ourselves as an industry at home. Young people don't think of ag as a sexy career."

"Ag is a great place to work. There are long-term opportunities that might not have been there a generation or two ago. Today larger companies are offering careers with upward growth opportunities and good wages. We haven't sold that to them and are paying the price right now.

## 2018 BEGINNING FARMER PROGRAM

IAPO is pleased to announce the return of the Beginning Farmers Program (BFP). The multi year program is designed to support new beginning First Nations farmers between the ages of 16 and 40 through all stages of farm business start up.

Eligible farm businesses include: livestock, crop, vegetable, fruit, maple syrup, honey, floriculture and nursery production, mixed farming and aquaculture. Potential applicants are encouraged to contact IAPO if they are unsure whether their new farm business idea qualifies.

Eligible participants will be able to access financing and grants to finance their new farm business. Eligible costs include livestock, equipment, machinery, materials, inputs, building costs, storage etc. On approved project, participants are eligible to receive a 30% grant to a maximum of \$15,000

From business planning to implementation, participants will be supported by mentors and IAPO staff regularly providing help and guidance including farm visits.

### Applications accepted until March 16, 2018

Applications are available from IAPO and will be accepted until March 16, 2018. Participation is limited and selection will be based on applications submitted.

### Applicant Eligibility

Applicants must have Indian Status and be between the ages of 16 and 40 years and must contribute a minimum of 5% equity.

For more info, including complete eligibility requirements or an application, contact 1-800-363-0329 or [info@indianag.on.ca](mailto:info@indianag.on.ca).

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# Market Information

## BEEF MARKET WATCH

Prices are courtesy of the Beef Farmers of Ontario Weekly Market Information Report for the week ending Thursday February 8, 2018.



Changes here reflect the difference in prices from the week of December 7, 2017 to the week of February 8, 2018. Weekly reports provide average prices for the week but do not include Friday sale results.

Rail grade and fed cattle continue to show strength from December, cull cows are stronger and bulls have dropped in price. Stocker steers and heifers have generally weakened marginally.

Rail grade steers are up \$8 and fed steers and heifers are up \$7 to \$10. For rail grade steers this is an increase of \$20/cwt compared to October, 2017.

Cull cows appear to be reversing the downward fall trend being up \$3 and bulls continue lower at \$8.

Stocker steers are even to \$4 lower depending on weight category. Stocker heifers are even to \$3 lower depending on weight category.

Jan.1, 2018 livestock inventory numbers for the U.S. show an increase of 8% for cattle on feed total with an 16% in-

crease for heifers on feed indicating a possible slowing down of herd expansion in that country.

Category	Price Range \$	Ave Price	Top Price	Change
Rail Steers	247-250			+8
Fed steers	135-152	145	157	+7
Fed heifers	135-154	146	162	+10
Cows	53-73	63	133	+3
Bulls	81-101	91	148	-8
Stocker steers				
700 – 799	180-204	191	225	even
600 – 699	185-223	208	238	-3
500 – 599	195-234	220	247	-4
Stocker heifers				
700 – 799	139-170	163	190	-3
600 – 699	157-184	175	204	Even
500 – 599	163-201	184	214	-2

All prices are on a hundred pound basis (cwt) *ML*

## CROP MARKET

Excerpts from *Monthly Market Trends February March 2018* by Phillip Shaw GFO [www.gfo.ca](http://www.gfo.ca)

**Corn** Corn has been sort of a whipping boy over the last couple of years with its onerous supplies. However, at this time of year leading into spring and summer there usually is a seasonal rally. In the last five years we've seen rallies of over \$.50 a bushel during this time frame. Who is to say that 2018 will be any different?

In Brazil it's raining on the soybean harvest, but that also means that some corn planting will be delayed or eliminated altogether. Seasonally, corn futures tend to trend up into June.

**Soybeans** Hot dry weather is impacting Argentinian soybean production, which was reflected in the latest USDA numbers. On the other hand Brazil numbers were actually increased for soybeans with rains pounding down on their harvest. It goes without saying in the next few weeks these weather variables will continue to impact soybean futures prices.

\$10 November 2018 futures prices cannot be ignored. This is a significant price based on all of the bearishness in the soybean complex, especially looking at that 530 million bushels ending stocks number.

Seasonally, the soybean market tends to trend up June.

**Wheat** The wheat market has been stronger over the last few weeks mainly based on the dry conditions in the US southern Plains. This has been impacting the HRS market and likely will con-

tinue until rain takes that all way. Being watchful of the US drought Monitor during this time will be insightful to market conditions.

US wheat is always very susceptible to the value of the US dollar, which has been in in a weakened position for the last several weeks. Recently it has shown a tendency to rebound, which will surely affect US wheat exports. In the February USDA report, US exports were decreased pushing wheat ending stocks back up over 1 billion bushels.

### Coming Events

#### Mar 3 - Sustainable Farming Workshop & Seed Exchange

All Saints' Church, 10am - 3:30 pm, contact IAPO to register 1-800-363-0329 or [info@indianag.on.ca](mailto:info@indianag.on.ca)

#### Mar 5 - Six Nations Farming Meeting—Crop Outlook & Beef Update

St. Peters Church, 6 - 8pm, contact IAPO to register 1-800-663-6912 or [graham@indianag.on.ca](mailto:graham@indianag.on.ca)

#### Mar 6 - Onieda First Nation Food and Farming Meeting –Maple Syrup and Bee Keeping

Oneida Community Center, 6– 8pm, contact IAPO to register 1-800-663-6912 or [graham@indianag.on.ca](mailto:graham@indianag.on.ca)

# Livestock Information

## IMPROVING PASTURE QUALITY WITH FROST SEEDING

Establishing legumes in hay and pasture fields can be a challenge due to cost of working soil and planting conventionally, rough stony pastures limiting equipment use, or uncertainty about long-term availability of a particular piece of property.

Frost seeding is a quick and inexpensive way to improve the quality and quantity of hay and pasture fields. Legumes are the seed of choice with their ability to withstand cold wet conditions and provide a higher quality feed while adding nitrogen to the soil. Legumes provide a second hay crop and midsummer pasture growth.

Broadcast legume seed in late winter ideally with snow still on the ground. The night-time freezing and daytime thawing action in the soil encourages good seed to soil contact. The time to frost seed will vary depending on farm location and winter pattern. Often this is during the month of March and even later in more Northern areas. Seeding into a sparse stand will give best results.

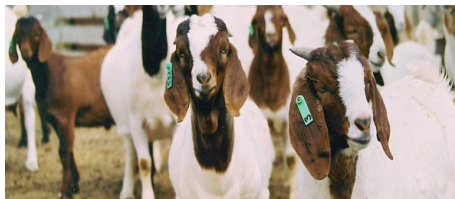
Red clover and alfalfa work best for hay fields with red clover establishing more quickly the first year. Legumes are higher in feed value compared to grasses particularly for protein and energy content. They also fix nitrogen from the air and share it with grass plants. Take a first cut early to provide light to the frost seeded young seedlings. Legumes are more evident after the first cut following seeding.

For pasture conditions, birdsfoot trefoil and white clover are commonly used with a touch of red clover. Consider about 5 lbs per acre of trefoil, about 2 lbs of white clover since it has a very small seed size along with 5 lbs of red clover. Trefoil usually comes on stronger in the second year. Trefoil grows well under a variety of conditions, reseeds itself and doesn't cause bloat. Keep in mind a pasture with more than 50% alfalfa and clovers can result in bloat. Trefoil is one legume that doesn't contribute to bloat. As with hay fields, red clover will establish more quickly. Managing the pasture will help to establish new legumes. Graze the frost seeded areas early and for a short period of time to remove the top growth competition allowing sunlight to reach the young seedlings. Bring livestock back when seedlings are well established for a second light grazing.

- For hay or pasture conditions, consider applying phosphorous in late summer to encourage new plant establishment.
- Frost seeding is done by hand with a broadcaster or with spreader on an ATV or snowmobile.
- Frost seeding hay and pasture fields can be a low cost way to increase productivity for livestock farmers.

## AN INTRODUCTION TO MEAT GOATS

Goat meat is known as chevon and is in greatest demand during religious holidays particularly Christmas and Easter. Goat meat is the most widely consumed red meat in the world. Ontario has about 50% of the goat population in Canada. There is strong demand for Ontario produced chevon.



Goats are hardy animals requiring basic housing. Often existing buildings can be renovated or when necessary shed type structures can be built. Protection from wind and precipitation are important. Electric fence is respected by goats and ideal for pastures. Secure fencing is important and a challenge with goats.

Hay and pasture make up the bulk of a diet for meat goats with some grain fed. Good quality forage and clean feeders will keep goats satisfied. Goats will consume a wide variety of plant material but not tin cans!

They are docile, social animals and bond well with owner's family members. They also get along well with other animals around the farm. Because of their small size and gentle nature simple structures are adequate for handling and treating goats. Their gestation period is about 5 months. New born kids must receive their mother's colostrum for antibody protection. Often a doe will birth 2 or more kids at a time.

Adult females are called does, males are bucks, young goats are kids. The Nubian is a dual purpose milk and meat breed and is a popular meat breed. The Boer goat is mainly a meat breed and often crossed with the Nubian and dairy breeds for meat production.

There are operations of various sizes from the small hobby set up to large commercial businesses. There are many possibilities with a small investment required at start-up. Goats from meat farms often sell live at a weight between 35 and 75 lbs usually at a local salebarn or special sales before holidays. They can be harvested at provincially or federally inspected plants and the meat sold at the farm gate or at a local farmers market.

According to Statistics Canada, in 1991 there were about 11 goats per farm on average while in 2016 the average was 41. Meat goats are a good addition to a present farm operation or a farm start-up.

If you are interested in meat goat production contact IAPO for further information. You can check the following websites as well: Canadian Meat Goat Association at <https://canadianmeatgoat.com/>, Ontario Goat at <http://www.ontariogoat.ca/>

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# Crop Information

## GROWING POTATOES FOR MARKET

### Part 1 of 2

Source/adapted from: OMAFRA Vegetable Production Recommendations, A Guide to Growing Potatoes in your Home Garden, Michigan State University, <https://www.motherearthnews.com/real-food/when-and-how-to-plant-potatoes>

Potatoes are easy to grow, and are well suited for Ontario soils and weather. Potatoes thrive in a sandy loam and a cooler climate.

Seed potatoes are easily sourced through mail-order garden companies or from local garden centers and hardware stores. (Avoid using supermarket potatoes, they have probably been treated with chemicals to inhibit sprouting, so they may not grow well.) For larger quantities contact input suppliers or contact a seed potato grower directly. You can get seed availability information from the Ontario Seed Potato Growers Association, 109 Hutchison St. Alliston, L0M 1A0.

For farm gate or market sales, the abundance of varieties and characteristics make potatoes an excellent market choice. One of your first steps is to decide what to grow.

### What to Grow

There are many different types of potatoes to choose from:

- **Tablestock: White Flesh** - very early to medium early  
Jemseg, Eramosa, Envol, Superior, Onaway, Cherokee
- **Tablestock: Yellow Flesh** - early to mid season  
Adora, Yukon Gold, Fabula
- **Tablestock: Red Skin** - early-late  
Norland, Chieftan, NorDonna
- **Dual Purpose: Pre-Peel and Tablestock** - midlate to late  
Shepody, CalWhite, Goldrush, Kennebec
- **Gourmet or Specialty Market** - midlate to late  
All Blue, German Butter Ball, Banana



All Blue Potatoes



Banana/Fingerling Potatoes

Images:<http://www.johnnyseeds.com/vegetables/potatoes/russian-banana-potato-tubers-2874.htm>, <https://www.burpee.com/vegetables/potatoes/potato-all-blue-prod000845.html>

### Planting Time

Your next step is to determine the recommended planting time for your climate. Since it takes potatoes two to three weeks to emerge from the ground, the earliest you should plant seed potatoes is two weeks before your last anticipated frost date.

See page 6 or <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/facts/climzoneveg.htm>).

### Seed Preparation

For smaller plantings, consider chitting or green sprouting. Chitting is the process of aging seed in the light to control sprout growth, resulting in earlier emergence and sizing. Seed can be chitted with florescent lights or natural daylight. Short stubby, dark green sprouts are desirable. It will take about two weeks to chitt in natural light at about 20 degrees C/ 68 degrees F, so plan ahead.

Your potato seed will come in the form of a tuber. Depending on the variety it may be a small tuber (1-2 inches in diameter) or a large tuber. The small tuber can be planted whole, however the large tuber should be cut into block-shaped, 2-2.5 oz. seed pieces. The seed piece should have at least one "eye" per section. Avoid planting seed pieces the same day they are cut. Allow the seed pieces to heal over for 3-4 days, ideally at a temperature of 10-15 degrees C and high relative humidity of 90-95%.

### Seed Spacing & Depth

- Plant near ground level and cover with 2-3 inches of soil
- 30-36 inch rows
- 8-13 inches apart - use wider spacing for varieties with heavy tuber set, smooth tubers, resistance to hollow heart and a low numbers of off-shaped tubers

For smaller plantings, 5 pounds of seed potatoes should plant 40 feet of row with 12 inches between seed pieces. For large scale plantings, you'll need over 3000 lbs. of seed potatoes per acre.



Image source: <https://www.istockphoto.com/za/photo/allotment-vegetable-garden-with-potato-plants-growing-with-mounded-soil-gm493245475-40361390>

You can expect to harvest 3-5 pounds of potatoes per potato plant.

Watch for Growing Potatoes For Market, Part 2 - Fertilizing, Pests and Pest Control, and Marketing Options in the next edition of Native Agri Update.

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# Other News

## COMPARING TREE SIZE AND SAP FLOW

Maple syrup producers often find some trees produce more sap than others. This is particularly evident for those using buckets. While there are a number of reasons for this result, tree size does have an impact on yield.

Keep in mind healthy tapping is strongly recommended. This means not tapping a tree less than 10 inches in diameter, 1 tap up to 18 inches and 2 taps for anything larger. These guidelines apply to vacuum systems especially.

Research at the University of Vermont provides some interesting results on tree size and sap yield. As most know, small trees produce small amounts of sap and research shows a 1 inch increase in tree diameter results in 2 U.S gallons more sap per tap per harvest season. A 5 inch tree produced less than half the sap of a 10 inch tree. Another reason to only tap trees 10 inches or larger! If there is a selection of trees in a bush to choose from consider tapping the larger trees and leaving the 10 to 15 inch trees as an example for another year or two of growth. For a vacuum system this means fewer, more productive taps and the ability to maintain a higher vacuum level on the line. For producers with buckets it means more efficient use of available buckets, less effort and distance travelled collecting with a larger volume at each stop.



Producers with a young bush may be limited to smaller trees in the short-term. It is also suggested that a thick stand of young trees should be thinned out to encourage faster growth of the remaining trees.

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## GROWING TRANSPLANTS

The days are getting longer and March is just around the corner which means for those who would like to grow their own vegetable transplants it's time to begin to plan the summer garden. Certainly many vegetables such as corn, beans and squash will do best by seeding them directly into the garden. However other vegetables such as tomatoes and peppers require a longer growing season and will need to be planted into the garden as transplants. Depending on what you are seeding, typically transplants need to be started anywhere between 4 to 10 weeks prior to planting.

Ontario Frost Dates

Location	Last Frost	First Frost
Hamilton	May 1-10	October 11-20
Kingston	April 21-30	October 1-10
London	May 1-10	October 1-10
Parry Sound	May 21-31	September 11-20
Peterborough	May 1-10	September 21-30
Sudbury	May 11-20	September 21-30
Thunder Bay	June 21-31	September 11-20
Timmins	June 1-10	September 11-15
Windsor	April 11-20	October 21-31

Seed Catalogs are an excellent source of information for the vegetable gardener providing information on the plant growth habit (height and area requirements), ideal garden location (sun, partial sun, shade and moisture requirements), and the average number of days to maturity. All seed companies provide guidelines regarding the number of weeks prior to the last frost date to start transplants. Many gardeners will target a transplanting date one week after the average last frost date for their area to allow for those years with a later spring frost.



Once you've decided what to grow, you'll need to set up the area for starting the transplants. Containers can be anything from a Styrofoam cup to a purchased starting kit or recycled old planting trays. No matter what you choose, the containers must have holes for drainage and trays to catch the excess water. Growing seeds in individual cells helps to reduce root disturbances at transplanting time. If reusing old seed trays make sure to sterilize them by washing with a solution of 1 part chlorine bleach to 10 parts water and thoroughly dry them before filling with growing medium. It is best to purchase a commercial growing mix for starting transplants.

**Damping off** is the most common disease known and can attack a seed before it germinates however is best recognized as a rot at the base of the plant causing irreparable wilt. Sterile containers, proper drainage, watering plants from the bottom, good air circulation and not overwatering all help to prevent this disease from attacking transplants.

**Step-by-step procedure for growing transplants**  
(adapted from: Penn State Extension – Starting Seeds Demystified)

- Fill containers to within ¾ inch from the top. Level and firm growing mix, moisten. Note: do not press the mix into the container too hard.
- Sow the seeds to a depth of about two times their diameter, leaving very fine seeds uncovered, label your containers as you plant. Moisten the surface with a fine mist. Place the tray in a warm place, not in direct sunlight, most seeds germinate at soil temperatures of 18 to 22°C.
- Once seedlings emerge, place the container in a bright south-facing window, or under a fixture equipped with fluorescent growing lights. Leave the seedlings under the lights for 14-16 hours each day. Do not overwater: allow drying between watering, being careful the seedlings don't wilt. If growing in a window be sure to turn your containers to help your transplants to grow straight.
- Fertilize young seedlings every week. Dilute fertilizer to half strength for the first few weeks and gradually work up to full strength. Most growers use 10-52-10 for transplants.
- If you need to thin your seedlings, nip some off at the soil line with scissors. If necessary, transplant overcrowded seedlings to individual pots after they have at least one set of true leaves. Grasp the seedlings by the leaf to avoid damage to the stem.

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