



Native Agri Update

No. 400 August 2023

AGRICULTURE IS HERITAGE

Worth repeating, and as reported by Catherine Orth, Special to The Recorder and Times, at the recent announcement of funding for the Johnstown Port: "A vital part of agriculture is heritage," said Chief Edward Roundpoint, of the Mohawk Nation of Akwesasne.

"Agriculture to me is more than just growing crops. It's a vital connection to our land, our traditions, and our cultural heritage. For the Mohawk people of Akwesasne, the soil beneath our feet and the crops we grow are intertwined with our identity. They remind us of our responsibility to care for the Earth and all its inhabitants. Our ancestors practiced sustainable agriculture methods and honoured the natural rhythms of the land and it's our duty to carry forward this tradition."

FNWE

OPPORTUNITIES

Aiming to support First Nations women, the First Nations Women's Entrepreneurship Program (FNWE) was launched in 2022. The program offers a variety of services such as business planning guidance, coaching and the opportunity to apply for micro-loans and grants.

The FNWE Program and the Grant & Mentorship Program are accepting applications for agricultural/farm projects from First Nations women across Ontario.

The FNWE Program offers micro-loans and grants for projects up to \$15,000. The FNWE Program also provides participants with coaching, workshops, both online and in-person, and mentorship.

This program assists farm start-ups or expansions and the businesses can be either full time or part time.

The Grant & Mentorship Program offers participants a qualified mentor for a period of 6 months along with a grant of up to \$3000 for eligible farm business start up costs. This program also offers workshops and coaching. The Grant & Mentorship Program is available for those in business for less than 1 year or who are in the idea phase and have not yet launched their farm business.

FNWE Applications are accepted on an ongoing basis, but funding is limited.

For an application or for more information, call: 1-800-363-0329 or email: fnwe@indianag.on.ca

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IMPACTING YOUTH

IAPO is accepting application for our Seven Generations Lead position. Leading IAPO's First Nations Farming for Seven Generations program, the Seven Generations Lead will inspire First Nations Youth's interest in farming and agriculture by delivering First Nations Ag for Seven Generation lessons to students in grades 9 through 12. The program will be delivered both in classroom and online to First Nations classes across Ontario.

IAPO is looking for First Nations individuals with experience working in the farming and agriculture sector to facilitate delivery of the First Nations Agriculture for Seven Generations Program. This is a part time position.

This is a great opportunity for aspiring teachers who are in their final year of Teachers College, those who are already certified teachers, or those with relevant experience engaging with First Nations Youth with knowledge of farming and agriculture.

If you are interested in learning more about this position or the complete job description, email info@indianag.on.ca. If you wish to apply, please send your resume and cover letter to Jamie Hall, General Manager: jamie@indianag.on.ca

www.indianag.on.ca

Inside

Agribusiness	
Page	2
Market Information	
Page	3
Calendar of Events	
Page	3
Livestock Information	
Page	4
Crop Information	
Page	5
Other News	
Page	6

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Agribusiness

ALEXIOU FARMS ON FARM WORKHOP

On Wednesday August 16th, IAPO along with guests, had the privilege joining in on a on a farm workshop with John Alexiou. Alexiou farms is a commercial potato operation selling farm fresh potatoes to local grocery stores, food trucks, at farmers markets and at local camp grounds in the Beeton area. Along with potatoes, the farm also does some rotational cash cropping at their Cobden farm location.



John came to IAPO in 2018, at the age of 19 looking to grow and expand his farming operation, which at that point he had already been operating for 5 years. John started as a mixed farming operation at the age of 14, which included some livestock production, hay and straw cropping and growing potatoes. From this small start he has quickly grown and expanded his operation dropping what hasn't worked for him and expanding what has worked. This included a farm purchase in the Cobden area where he now does a rotational cash cropping instead of the small-scale livestock production. He was raising goats and sheep, and he found the animals to be a lot of work for the profits that he was receiving at the end of the day.

A lot of John's early success was due to him connecting, partnering and asking local farmers about their operations and what they did. Who better to ask than someone that has been operating in the area for years? He was able to work and partner with a local farm that has assisted him with the ability to use their larger equipment as needed which has been very beneficial on the cash cropping side. This allowed John to grow without needing to take on the tremendous burden of large equipment debt.



John currently grows 10 acres, and three varieties of potatoes annually along with the 100 acres of rotational cash cropping. For the potatoes John handles the whole production cycle. Cultivating, planting, spraying, harvesting, washing, packaging and then the sales and delivery. Alexiou Farms offers farm fresh potatoes from the ground to you or the store



in less than 24 hours, and in most cases in less than 12 hours. With no need for chemical spraying to inhibit sprouting as they will not be sitting in storage or the store shelves long.

You think only 10 acres of potatoes, why so little acreage for his potato production. Why not more?

On that 10-acre parcel John is looking to grow, in a good year 100 tons of potatoes. With new harvesting equipment, that is not too big of a concern to get them out of the ground as the harvester can work and dig pretty quickly. The work comes in the washing, sorting and sizing and the packaging of that many potatoes. Just to put it in perspective – 100 tons would be 20,000 10-pound bags. John washes, sorts, packages and delivers all of those potatoes with help from a small staff when they are available to assist him.



To be able to process that many potatoes in such a short season, the proper equipment is key to his success. John pointed this out on the tour, showing us all the various different sites he has for each stage of the process. John is on his 4th round of potato production equipment and harvesting equipment, expanding and growing efficiencies with every upgrade. He hopes to continue growing and getting larger as there is always bigger and better equipment out on the market. But with that said he is proud of where he is now and never even imagined he would get to be the size he is today.

One thing that John mentioned a few times while on the tour is to not be afraid to put the cart in front of the horse in terms of your agricultural operations and practices. John mentioned if he didn't take some risks and get some equipment, that at the time, he didn't think he could afford he would not be the size he is today. In his case, getting bigger equipment and some things that may have been considered a little too much to handle has only made him work harder and push himself to grow. He cautioned being smart with your decisions but also not to be afraid to push yourself.

John has the full support of his family that help him tremendously with his passion for farming and IAPO would also like to thank John and his family for their hospitality while we were at the farm. It was a great day spent learning with John.

Anyone interested in potato production or just looking to get some farm fresh potatoes, they should follow Alexiou Farms on Facebook or Instagram.

CL

Market Information

BEEF MARKET WATCH

Prices are courtesy of the Beef Farmers of Ontario Weekly Market Information Report for the week ending Friday, August 18, 2023. Changes in this chart reflect the difference in prices from the week of June 12th, 2023 to the week of August 14th, 2023. Weekly reports provide prices on a per cwt basis for the week but do not include Friday sale results.

Higher volumes of fed cattle sold this week, 283 fed steers and heifers sold through auction markets this week, up 94 head from the previous week and 81 more than the same week last year.

Fed steers sold from \$215.99-\$239.47 averaging \$228.43 down \$2.49 cwt from the week before and \$45.49 stronger than last year at this time. Fed heifers ranged from \$219.12-\$239.41 averaging \$231.66 up \$5.77 from last week but \$56.52 above year ago prices. Auction markets reported trade as steady to slightly higher this week. Holstein steers sold very strong.

The Ontario railgrade market held fully steady this week.

Higher receipts of fed/cull cows sold through auction markets this week at 2,202 head, up just 28 head from the week before and 368 more than the same week last year. Cows sold from \$101.44-\$149.47 averaging \$123.51 up \$1.22 cwt from the previous week and \$23.42 stronger than year ago prices. Cows sold on a good demand. 380 beef cows were reported this week, up 82 head from last week, averaging

\$136.92 down \$3.04 from the previous week's weighted average beef cow price.

Category	Price Range \$	Ave Price	Top Price	Change
Rail Steers	389			
Fed steers	214-236	226	266	-7.7
Fed heifers	223-238	232	255	-3.7
Cows	101-149	124	215	-3.8
Bulls	143-178	162	200	+1.2
Stocker steers				
700 – 799	303-371	336	411	+13
600 – 699	312-396	365	467	+20.8
500 – 599	339-437	394	473	+25
Stocker heifers				
700 – 799	258-316	292	360	+14.5
600 – 699	283-343	317	367	+23.3
500 – 599	277-378	334	430	+29.4

All prices are on a hundred pound basis (cwt)

BB

CROP MARKET

Adapted from Market Trends Report Aug Sep 2023 by Phillip Shaw GFO www.gfo.ca

Corn China has had weather problems in their corn growing region and this may be setting up for a less than stellar Chinese corn crop. At the same time over the last several weeks the futures price for corn in China has been rising quickly. At a certain point this could mean that China will need to import quite a bit of corn. With geopolitical tensions, this will likely be from Brazil, but it surely will depend on the lowest cash price available.

Corn prices have fallen based on US weather and a big production in the of-fing. The question is when will the low be in or will it simply be a harvest low in October? There is some thought among the analysts that the low in corn may come in late August or early September especially with the geopolitical concerns that we do have.

Seasonally, we know that corn prices tend to peak in early June and bottom out in early October.

Soybeans Soybeans prices are not af-

ected as much from the problems that we have in the Black Sea region. There is no hot and dry "heat dome of doom" coming in the next few weeks for American soybeans. August rains are always beneficial to soybeans and for the most part the crop has got what it wants. However, the USDA did cut back yield in their last report and any further deterioration in the crop seems unlikely but can never be taken for granted. Soybeans are the great liars and if there is some type of late season yield deterioration it will be stimulus for the soybean futures price.

Seasonally, soybean prices tend to peak in early July and bottom out in early October.

Wheat Russia continues to sell wheat at very low prices. This has been dominating wheat trade for the last several weeks amid all the turmoil in the Black Sea. This has been the dominant bearish factor on wheat prices as any rally has been taken back from the specter of a continued Russian wheat flow.

Wheat prices have dipped below \$6.85 a bushel a significant drop especially with all the quality discounts that are happening. It is always a little bit more difficult to export Ontario wheat in the best of times, but with quality concerns it has been more so. The shift in Ontario will soon take place for new crop wheat to be planted in Ontario.

Coming Events

- Sep 13** **FNWE Start Your Farm Business and Farm tour- RAMA**
For more info or to register: fnwe@indianag.on.ca or 1 800 363 0328
- Sep 16** **Manitoulin Island Farm Tour 9 a.m - 4:00 pm**
For more info or to register: info@indianag.on.ca or 1 800 363 0328
- Sep TBA** **Maple Syrup Workshop & Sugar Bush Tour**
Watch for updates at www.indianag.on.ca

Livestock Information

RAISING WEANER PIGS

This is the second of 2 articles on raising weaner pig.

Pasture can be used effectively for pigs. However, there are a few things to consider. First, pigs require really good fencing, particularly down low as they will try to dig under fencing and penning. Secondly, it is important to understand that pasture in a pig's diet is not the same as the role of pasture in a cow's diet. Pigs will enjoy and appreciate access to pasture but will not be able to survive on pasture alone. Pigs need access to a balanced ration that meets their requirements to remain healthy and productive. Be aware that pigs can cause pasture damage by rooting and wallowing. The term "rooting" refers to pigs using their snouts to dig up plants to get to the nutrient-dense roots.



A 2011 study found that pigs grazing forages in a crop-pasture rotation performed best when 50% of the energy requirements were supplied by grain and that the forages were grazed in the early vegetative growth stage. Managing pas-

tures is crucial when raising pasture pigs. Pigs tend to root and dig, and this is hard on pasture grasses. The following link has details on feeding pigs on pasture; [Forages for Swine - Pork Information Gateway \(porkgateway.org\)](http://porkgateway.org/Forages-for-Swine-Pork-Information-Gateway)

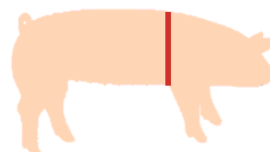
Preventing the spread of disease with your pigs is important. This includes following biosecurity principles. Biosecurity is any action that serves to protect people, animals and the environment from infectious disease, pests, and other biological threats. It includes the key steps taken to keep a disease out of your farm (e.g. having visitors wear plastic boots over their shoes before entering your farm), and the actions taken to prevent the spread of pathogens between groups of animals within your farm (e.g. feeding and caring for healthy animals first then handling animals in the sick pen). Biosecurity is a large topic and cannot be adequately covered in this article.

Tagging and tracking requirements of your pigs fall under PigTrace. PigTrace is an industry-led, government-regulated, live animal traceability initiative. Traceability programs give animal health and food safety officials the ability to trace issues to a specific location in the case of an animal health or food safety outbreak. Even if you only purchase and raise one or two pigs for your own use, you must be a part of the PigTrace program. Pigs going to slaughter at a Provincial abattoir must be tagged with an approved ear tag which are printed with either a 15-digit ID number that is unique to a specific pig or a herd identification number. Tags must be purchased through PigTrace (1-866-300-1825) or Ontario Pork (1-877-668-7675). More details on PigTrace can be found at: [PigTrace | Ontario Pork](http://PigTrace|OntarioPork)

You may want to know the liveweight of the pigs. Ever won-

dered how to weigh a pig without a scale? You can obtain a good estimate of a pig's weight by measuring its girth and length and doing some simple math. For weight of your pig in pounds: 1) Obtain a fabric measuring tape or a piece of string to use as a measure. If using string mark the dimensions on the string and then measure the dimensions using a steel tape measure. 2) Place the tape/string under the pig just behind the front legs and measure the circumference of the pig's girth in inches. This measurement is known as the heart girth. 3) Then measure the length of the pig along its back from the base of its ears to the base of its tail, again in inches. 4) To calculate the pig's weight, first square the heart girth to get the girth result. 5) Now multiply the girth result by the length and divide by 400. 6) You now have the weight of your pig in pounds.

HEART GIRTH
Measure the circumference
just behind the forelegs



LENGTH
Measure from the base of
the ear to the base of the tail



Moving and restraining your pigs. There may be times where you may need to restrain a pig. Examples include: ear tagging, closer examination of a pig for injury or illness or a treatment.

To catch and hold a pig under 45 pounds, approach calmly, herding into a corner if possible. Firmly grasp the one hind leg of piglet. Once you have caught the pig, lift from the pen floor by putting your other hand under the pig's belly. Rapidly transfer to holding the pig with both hands supporting the pig and pulled in snugly to your own body so the pig feels securely held. Pigs over 45 pounds become too heavy to lift and are generally corralled into a corner or alley using a pig board.



A pig sorting board is a durable, light weight plastic or plywood panel used to block the sight of alternative options while moving a pig so the pig goes the way the handler intends the pig to move. Pigs prefer lighted areas and can be herded more easily from dark to lighted. Pigs also have a strong escape instinct – ensure that areas for capture are safe and secure, with no small gaps to go through or under. When using a pig board, be prepared for the pig to attempt to go under the board as well as around them if startled.

When you transport your pigs in and out of your farm, keep the following in mind: Transportation of pigs should be conducted in a way that minimizes stress and suffering. Livestock selected for transport should be fit and healthy, be in good condition and able to stand without assistance for a period of time. Transport should occur either early in the morning or late in the afternoon. Floors should provide a non-slip surface that doesn't injure their hooves or legs.

Best of luck with your pig raising!

BB

Crop Information

GROWING GARLIC

source : https://www.canr.msu.edu/resources/producing_garlic_in_michigan <https://extension.psu.edu/growing-and-using-garlic> <https://www.ontario.ca/page/garlic-production>

Garlic is a cool-season crop that is planted in the fall and harvested in the following summer. It is in the same horticultural family as onions, shallots and leeks. In Ontario, the majority of garlic grown here is for the fresh market, either as the whole plant, fresh bulbs, green garlic or scapes.



Garlic rows covered in straw mulch (OMAFRA)

Garlic can be grown across the province, with the key factor that it be grown in well-drained soils. Soils with high organic matter, can produce excellent garlic due to their increased moisture and nutrient holding capacity. Soils containing sufficient organic matter are also less prone to crusting and compaction. Heavy type soils

like clays can hinder bulb expansion, especially if allowed to dry out, resulting in rough and irregular shaped bulbs. Intensive soil management practices are required on light sandy soils due to their low moisture-holding capacity. It is important to avoid soils that are prone to excessive frost heaving either due to high water tables or being subject to a lot of freeze-thaw activity. Areas of the field that have good snow cover are ideal, or mulch such as straw can be applied in the late fall to help insulate the soil. Once the winter has concluded, growers can remove the mulch to help warm up the soil, while other growers may be inclined to leave the straw through the season to help maintain moisture and provide weed control.

Because garlic is in the onion family, to avoid diseases and pests that are harboured by onion plants, a 3-year break or rotation is best.

Softneck vs. Hardneck

There are two types of garlic, softneck and hardneck. Below is a table that compares the two types.

Softneck	Hardneck
Does not produce scapes	Produces scapes
Conducive to making garlic braids	Not conducive to making garlic braids
Less winter hardy	More winter hardy
Harder to peel	Easier to peel
Smaller cloves	Larger cloves (often 4 to 8 around central stalk)
Longer storage life	Shorter storage life
White in colour	Purple skin pigment
Earlier maturing	Later maturing
Lower yielding	Higher yielding

Planting

Garlic is planted in the fall — ideally, three to six weeks

before the ground freezes. The goal is to get only root development before winter. If shoots do emerge shortly after planting, they will be killed back by the cold and the plant will have wasted energy. Three factors usually result in shoots emerging too soon; the cloves were planted too early, they were not planted deep enough or the cultivar is not well adapted to the area. For bulb production, cloves should be placed from 1-2 inches deep with the root plate down and the point up. Row width and spacing vary.

Before planting, bulbs must be separated into individual cloves. There is a direct correlation between clove size and resulting bulb size; small cloves produce small bulbs and large cloves produce large bulbs. Cloves too small for planting for bulb production can be eaten or planted for green garlic production.



Harvested scapes.

The scape is the plant part that produces the garlic “flower.” Scapes will emerge from the center of the plant in mid-June. They start out straight and curl as they elongate. To avoid yield reduction, scapes can be removed by hand either by breaking, cutting or pulling them from the plants. This should be

done after before they straighten out from their curl stage. Scapes are tender, similar to asparagus but will get coarse or tough if left too long.

Harvest

Garlic can be harvested for: scapes, green garlic and bulbs.

Scapes are ready for harvest when they have completed their circle. Once they start to uncurl, they get fibrous and unusable.

Green garlic is simply garlic that has been harvested prior to bulbing. This product has much the same appearance as green onions and can be used in a similar way in salads or cooking. It is milder flavored than bulbs. Green garlic from fall-planted bulbs is available from late April to early June, depending on the cultivar. Cloves for green garlic production can be those cloves too small for bulb production.

Bulb harvest will usually take place during July. Maximum yield and maximum quality are two different goals. Bulbs are harvested when 30 to 50% of the leaves have died back. This stage will allow for the best yields and best quality.

Garlic bulbs should be harvested when the weather is dry. In small plantings, it can be harvested simply by taking a shovel and loosening the soil next to the plants and pulling them out. Laying them on the ground and leaving them to dry for a few days in a windrow will help dry the soil on the roots. Several rows of garlic can be placed in each windrow. To minimize sunburn, hide the bulbs under the tops as much as possible. After field drying, tops and roots are removed before or after storage. Tops and roots are removed by hand, leaving 1/2 inch of the root and 1 inch of the top.

Garlic is a relatively easy to grow and has ready demand for fresh market production. Given the right soil, fertility, and moisture, it can be a very productive crop.

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Other News

SEED SAVING

source: <https://extension.psu.edu/saving-seeds-from-your-garden> <https://extension.unh.edu/blog/2020/10/how-do-i-save-seeds-next-years-garden>

Seed saving is a tradition for many, preserving each year's seeds of the most productive plants and crops to grow again the following year. You are working with the seed, saving seeds from plants that have the best traits like taste, yield, maturity date, disease resistance or other qualities.

Saving seed is quite simple, find a crop, vegetable or flower you really like, and let it grow to maturity and harvest the seed for planting next year.

Hybrid or Open-Pollinated?

For seed saving, it's important to work with open-pollinated varieties. Open-pollinated varieties produce offspring that are very similar to the parent plant as long as they self-pollinate or cross-pollinate with the same variety. Many open-pollinated varieties are "heirlooms" that have historically been passed down through generations.

It is important to know that not all vegetable or crop varieties are open pollinated. Seeds from a hybrid plant will produce seed that will not be as productive as the original hybrid. The plants will be lower yielding and likely lack some traits or characteristics of the hybrid. Seed packages or catalogues will indicate if the seed is a hybrid. .

Self-pollinating plants have "perfect" flowers that include both male and female parts, and the flowers are often constructed in a way that prevents pollen from other plants from entering. Cross-pollinating crops encourage pollination by other plants of the same species. In many cases, they have developed mechanisms that prevent them from pollinating themselves, such as having separate male and female flowers on the same plant or releasing pollen before the female parts of the flower are receptive to fertilization.

The seeds of self-pollinating plants will usually grow to closely resemble their parent because there is little pollen from other plant. However, the offspring of cross-pollinated plants have the potential of more diversity.

None of this comes into play if you are saving seeds from the straight species of a plant, not a variety. For example, some farmers will buy seed one year, to grow out and plant harvested or "bin run" seed in the next several years. before buying new seed again. This allows them to keep their seed close or similar to the variety they like.

Harvesting

The next key to successful seed saving is getting the harvest timing right. Different procedures apply whether you are collecting "wet" or "dry" seeds.

"Wet seeds" require slightly more work. Fruit such as tomatoes and cucumbers have wet seeds. These seeds have to be separated from the gelatinous medium in which they are encased. That medium contains germination inhibitors that prevent the seed from sprouting. The method that I use to do this is a mild fermentation. Place the gel and seeds into a small jar



Mild fermentation of "wet" seed

about half full of water. Swish the seeds and water around for a minute or two, then place the jar in a cool location to settle. Continue to shake the jar a few times a day for three to four days. (You are not on a schedule here, just swish it whenever you happen to walk by.) After three to four days, strain the solution through a fine mesh, leaving the seeds. Rinse to wash away any remaining gel. "Wet seeds" should then dry for at least one week.

"Dry" Seeds like peas and beans should be left on plants until their pods are brown and dry and their seeds are rattling on the inside. Remove the pods from plants and spread them out indoors in a dry place out of direct sunlight. After a couple of weeks, you can shell the pods seeds. Corn and sunflowers should dry down on the stalk.

Many flower and herb seeds can also be collected by waiting until flowers have fully finished blooming and seed heads turn brown. Lettuce seed can be harvested like this as well.

To store seeds after they are dry, package them in paper envelopes and label them. Jars work well for keeping seed as well. The seed must be dry to avoid going moldy.

As you are wrapping up your summer garden, try saving a few seeds. You will save money, preserve your varieties, and enjoy the satisfaction of growing plants entirely on your own.

BFP APPLICATION DEADLINE

IAPO will be accepting Beginning Farmers Program applications until October 15, 2023 for the 2023 2024 program year. Funding is provided through the Indigenous Economic Development Fund from the Ministry of Indigenous Affairs.

The Beginning Farmers Program (BFP) is designed to support new beginning First Nations farmers through all stages of farm business start up. The program has two distinct areas of focus: Workshops and Training as well as, Start Up Financing & Grants.

Participation in all workshops throughout the program is mandatory.

On approved projects, participants are eligible for financing up to \$50,000 and a 30% cost share grant. Applicants must contribute a minimum of 5% equity.

Participation is limited and selection will be based on applications submitted. For more information or an application, call 1 800-363-0329 or email info@indianag.on.ca.



Indigenous Economic
Development Fund

The views expressed in this publication are the views of IAPO and do not necessarily reflect those of the Province of Ontario.