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Fall was a time of excitement in Saskatchewan organics, with highlights being the release of Lon Borgerson's report recommending a goal of growing organic to 10% of producers by 2015, and SAF's hiring of a full time organic specialist, Chantal Stumborg.

Below is a brief review of my activities this past fall:

I met with organic groups and people concerned with organic research and extension:

- ✓ I attended 4 Organic Connections meetings. We have confirmed November 16-18, 2008 at the TCU place in Saskatoon. We will run 4 streams of programming: Farming, Energy, Lifestyle and Connections. Farming will include some of the traditional weeds and soils work, and some emphasis on niche market areas as well. Energy will be focused on reducing agricultural energy use and finding green alternatives. Connections will include meetings for various groups of like minded people, for instance poultry producers, vegetable growers, and what we are calling matchmaking, to bring together grain buyers and sellers, end product producers and chefs, and so on. The Sunday event will be a "Taste of Organic" with organic food tasting, fashion show, and perhaps even an iron chef competition.
- ✓ I attended the event in which Lorne Calvert accepted Lon Borgerson's report on the opportunities for organic agriculture. This report has been widely read, and generated much enthusiasm.
  - ✓ Barb Cox Lloyd, of the Business Mentorship Institute read of the need for peer mentoring for transitional producers. We discussed the program that they offer, and how it might fit with what we know about the preferred learning methods for organic farmers.
  - ✓ St. Peter's College is looking at developing a sustainable agriculture program. Several of us met for a brainstorming session and the emphasis was decidedly on organic production, with local marketing and small scale sustainable approaches to all aspects of rural living. Planning is well underway with the intent to launch the program in September.
- ✓ I traveled to Regina to meet with the new Organic Specialist, Chantal Stumborg. I also met with the SAF steering committee to continue work on a survey of organic needs to be used in association with the SAF research workshop and my regional needs assessment process.
- ✓ Livestock
  - ✓ I helped Craig Klemmer to arrange university facilities for the Saskatchewan Organic Livestock/SAF workshop "Organic Nutrition Balancing and Cost Analysis for Livestock Producers"
  - ✓ I attended the Organic Livestock Value Chain workshop and talked with Gene Kessler about SOL's activities and activities.
- ✓ Vegetables
  - ✓ I attended the vegetable and greenhouse growers' conference. Ken Fry and I discussed the manual section that he is authoring. I connected with Glen Sweetman, Greenhouse Specialist with SAF and he agreed to advise on the manual process. I talked with Tim Ouellette about the opportunities where tourism and organics overlap. There are many exciting possibilities.
  - ✓ I worked with Connie Achtymichuk, Vegetable Specialist from SAF and Bryan Kosteroski, SCCD Value Chain Specialist to bring together a group of organic vegetable growers to consider joint branding/marketing
- ✓ I worked with OCIA's standard committee to reach a limited understanding of nanotechnology so that they could address the issue in their organic standards.

## News from OACC Prairie Office, September through November, 2007

- ✓ I met with Canadian Wheat Board staff Donna Youngdahl, Patty Rosher and Blair McCann, and Growers International's Mark Gimby. CWB now has an organic fund for research and market development.
- ✓ I attended meetings of the SAF/OACC steering committee, OCIA "All Chapters" and International board, and a national extension network. I chaired OCIA RnE board meetings.

I prepared articles for the *Western Producer*

- ✓ "Organic Fertility: Are Green Manures Enough" on nutrients other than nitrogen
- ✓ "Plant Larger Seeds for More Competitive Crops" on Steve Shirliffe's and Chris Willenborg's recent research
- ✓ "Building Community to Support Agriculture" on Community Supported Agriculture

I prepared contributions for other media

- ✓ "Organic Primer for Gardeners" for *Prairie Gardener*, on the principles of organic as well as the basics of gardening organically
- ✓ "News from OACC at UofS" for the fall *SOD newsletter*
- ✓ The article "Economic and social impacts of organic production systems" by Rod J. MacRae, Brenda Frick, and Ralph C. Martin was accepted for publication in *Canadian Journal of Plant Science*
- ✓ Interview guest on *Michelle Hugli Show* on News Talk radio on Thanksgiving
- ✓ Photo of "Peas on Earth Organic Market Garden" accepted in OCIA photo contest for calendar

Research

- ✓ I met with the steering committee for the organic vegetable project at CSIDC. Results from 2007 show successful production for most crops, excluding cole crops, using compost, hand weeding and no pesticides. We will now begin to discuss protocols for the next few years on this project
- ✓ I worked with Sukhdev Malhi and Darwin Leach of AAFC Melfort to determine an organic acceptable source of gypsum for the organic amendment trial. I met with Malhi to discuss further potential of this project, and the possibility of applying for additional funding. I attended a meeting about TwinN, facilitated by Sherrilyn Phelps, of SAF, to determine the barriers to introduction of the product, and to determine interest in research on the product as an organic fertility amendment.
- ✓ I interviewed Don and Donna Kizlyk, organic market gardeners from Fosston for the SOD manual
- ✓ I worked with Keri Sharpe from AAF and Heather Mason, OACC Alberta on an organic livestock feed proposal, submitted for the Organic Sector Development Fund in BC
- ✓ I visited with Alison Nelson from University of Alberta. She is looking at mycorrhizal associations in wheat and their influence on wheat performance and quality. I serve on her advisory committee. She has completed the final field season for her project, though greenhouse trials are ongoing. I also visited with Andy Hammermeister from OACC head office (who was there in Edmonton for the AIC conference) and Heather Mason, OACC Alberta to brainstorm about prairie activities for OACC. While in Edmonton I toured Organic Roots and Planet Organic.
- ✓ I did a peer review for an article submitted to Canadian Weed Science Society.

I attended to the usual administrative matters, staff meetings, emails, and financial reporting. During the University CUPE strike I have been working primarily from home. During this time, it is easiest to contact me by email ([organic@usask.ca](mailto:organic@usask.ca)) or by cell phone at 306-260-0663.

[Acronyms: UofS = University of Saskatchewan; OCIA = Organic Crop Improvement Association; OCIA RnE = Research and Education board of OCIA; CSIDC = Canada Saskatchewan Irrigation Diversification Centre; AAF = Alberta Agriculture and Food; SOD = Saskatchewan Organic Directorate; AAFC = Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada; SAF = Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food; AIC = Agricultural Institute of Canada; SOL = Saskatchewan Organic Livestock; SCCD = Saskatchewan Council for Community Development]