

THE AGMAG

Chatham-Kent's Agriculture and Outdoor Living Magazine Winter 2019 - Issue 9



Five Tips to Prepare

Your Farming Business For Success....PG. 5

Labor of Love

Maizex Seeds Inc....PG. 6

A Message from

Mayor Darrin Canniff....PG. 16

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welcome

Welcome to the 9th issue of **The AgMag!** Here we are in 2019, starting yet another year!

The International Plowing Match (IPM) that took place in Chatham-Kent this past fall is now a proud memory for our community. Its success is thanks to the many volunteers who worked long hours to make it happen. We hope that you had a chance to get out to the IPM and experience it first-hand.

It really just seems like yesterday that we were all talking about Y2K and here we are ... 19 years later already. As we fast-forward from then until now, we can see that a lot has changed over the past two decades and certainly, many changes have been seen in the agricultural world.

As you read through some of our stories within this issue, we hope that you not only learn something new about our local agricultural businesses, but that you learn about many of the businesses that support our farming community.

We are extremely lucky to live in an area that grows so many varieties of the produce that we serve daily at our tables to our friends and families. For that, we would like to say to our farmers, "the keepers of our land," we salute you!

BIG THANKS go out to all of our advertisers, our contributing writers, and to you, our readers. Without your support this publication wouldn't be possible.

Until our next issue... we wish everyone a peaceful, healthy, happy, and prosperous year!

Sincerely,

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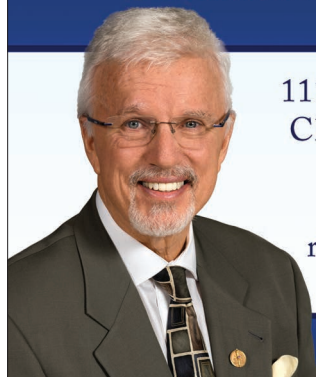
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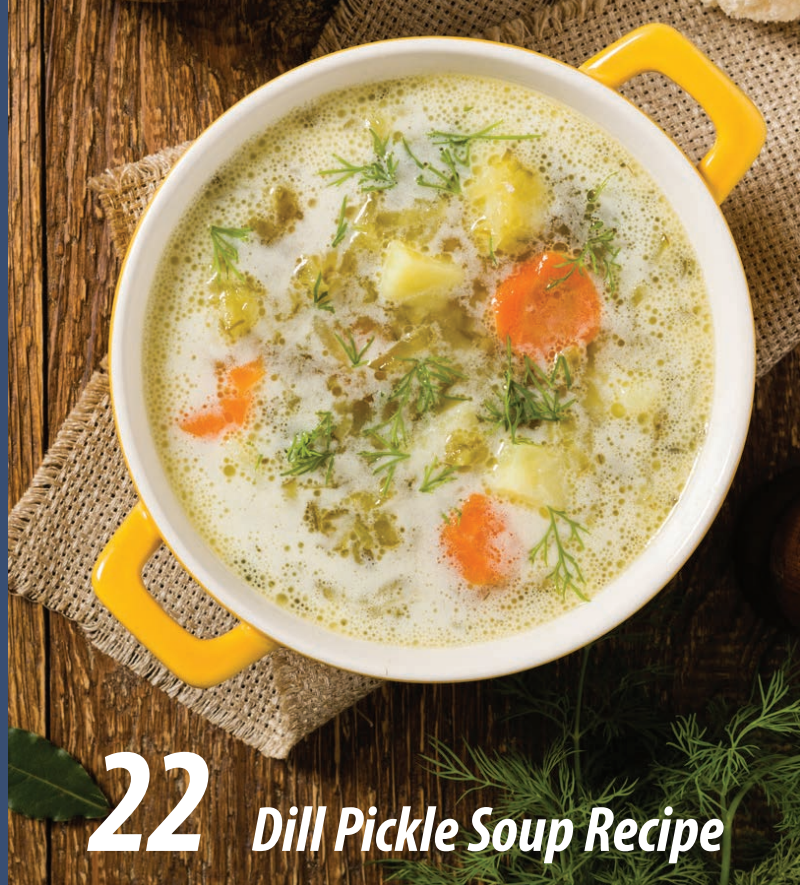
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*"In seed time learn,
in harvest teach,
in winter enjoy"*

-William Blake, 1757 - 1827



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Five Tips to Prepare Your Farming Business for Success

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There's no better time like the start of a new year for business owners to review and update business plans to ensure their operation is on track with its goals. This is particularly important in agriculture where price swings, changing farm structures, and adverse climate issues are increasingly adding more complexities to farming businesses. Preparedness with a formal business plan is critical to stay focused and successfully weather the changes.

Whether you want to grow or preserve the value of your farming business, here's a list of essential considerations:

1. *Understand your costs. It's important to understand your cash flow needs and keep a strong balance sheet for business stability. Keeping a good handle on costs and having a clear picture of your financial position will help minimize losses, drive more profit, and give you more financial flexibility when unforeseen circumstances arise.*
2. *Consider your risks and opportunities. Develop contingency plans to mitigate risks and quickly leverage new opportunities. Explore insurance options, lock in positive commodity margins, and talk to your business advisor at your local financial institution to learn about solutions that are available to support your business growth and contingency plans.*
3. *Lay out clear goals. Consider goals in the context of four categories: financial, operations, marketing, and people. For example, do you want to plan for an early retirement? Do you want to grow your operation? Do you want to diversify with new marketing channels? Share those goals with your family members and teams so everyone is aligned and driving toward the same outcomes.*
4. *Use professionals to fill in skills gaps. Often, operators may be strong on the big picture-side of the equation but can benefit from external advisors in specialized areas such as agronomy, production, or marketing.*
5. *Periodically review your business plan. Markets, environmental conditions, and even your people are subject to change, having a significant impact on your farming business. Revisit your business and financial plans on a regular basis throughout the year (i.e. quarterly) to make adjustments and ensure it's still relevant.*

A business plan serves as a critical roadmap for farming businesses and their long-term success. For more resources to help you start your business plan, visit www.rbc.com/chartyourcourse or speak with your local RBC Agriculture Banking Specialist.

about the cover



Labor of Love



From left to right: Jessica Burger, Blake Ashton, Shawn Winter, Brenda Baute, and Dave Baute

Maizex Seeds Inc.

The Bautes met at the University of Guelph in the fall of 1977; Brenda grew up in Smiths Falls, south of Ottawa, and Dave on the family farm near Jeannette's Creek near the mouth of the Thames, where they live today. It was not long after spending time together they realized they had each met their match.

Dave worked several years for King Grain before starting Maizex. The first years of the new company they focused on producing seed corn for the US wholesale market (Maize for export....Maizex.) The small company began selling seed to Ontario farmers under the Maizex brand in the early 90s. Today Maizex has a national presence selling Hybrid corn seed in virtually every province and has grown

over the last 33 years to become the largest Canadian owned Hybrid Corn Business.

Brenda has always had a natural talent for managing finance, a role which she shares with an administration staff to this day. The Bautes' understand the surest way to success in business is to grow at a consistent pace and to grow income faster than operating expenses. That may sound like a rather simplistic strategy but it has certainly worked for the owners of Maizex.

Growth has been driven by a spirit of innovation and a management style that empowers and supports the good people that work for



and with the company. Strong, long lasting, honest relationships with their employees, dealers, seed growers, and multinational suppliers is critical. Maizex has been able to keep up with the consolidations and new technologies in the fast-paced world of modern production agriculture. Dave and Brenda are all too aware of the importance of the success of their customers. They feel that it is virtually impossible to grow if your customers are not profitable and if the people who share in your vision do not share in your success.

Brenda and Dave have three adult children who are passionate about their own journeys of discovery and adventure. Of all they have accomplished they are most proud of the strength of their children.

An important part of a successful growth strategy involves having a plan for succession or transition of the business. People dependant on Maizex need to know what their future holds. Over the last few years, the management team have weighed their options carefully, and Maizex Seeds has recently entered into a joint venture with La Coop fédérée, the largest Canadian and farmer-owned agribusiness. La Coop fédérée has successfully grown their Elite seed brand over the last 22 years and the two companies, Maizex and Elite, are in the process of merging. This joint venture will operate as Maizex Seeds and Mr. Baute will be the President and CEO for the foreseeable future. The intent is to more than double the production capacity of the business in the near term to facilitate the needs of the new enterprise.

Hybrid corn for the joint venture is being sold across Canada under the Maizex Brand and the soybean line ups will be represented under the Elite brand. The merger of two equals reflects the foundation of Maizex.

In addition to building a seed company, Dave and Brenda also own and operate a farm operation. Soiex Farms Inc. has grown from the 250-acre family farm that Dave grew up on with his four sisters, working with his father Frank to a 2700-acres enterprise today. Soiex produces seed corn, seed soybeans, and winter wheat.



Being farmers they understand and are grounded in the importance and responsibility of the role they have in today's changing world. They also have a clear understanding of the challenges of modern food production cycle. Farming is no easy task when so much is dependent on the more frequent extremes of weather and the ever-changing risks of fluctuations of our climate.

All of us involved in agriculture are acutely aware and constantly humbled by the risks and uncertainty that come with being farmers. The 2018 crop year has been the most challenging in recent memory across North America with some extreme quality issues with corn here in Southwestern Ontario. Our industry working together will continue to innovate and evolve to continue to produce safe, quality, healthy food for generations to come thanks in big part to hardworking, innovative people like the team at Maizex.

The Bautes have made it clear that no success story is complete without acknowledging the importance of co-workers, mentors, families, and friends who have helped bolster their confidence with their knowledge and encouragement. "This business has never been easy, but that doesn't mean it can't be fun."



*This article was written and submitted by:
Dave Baute, President / CEO
Maizex Seeds Inc.*

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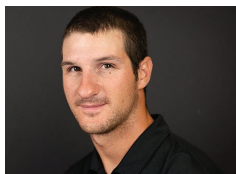
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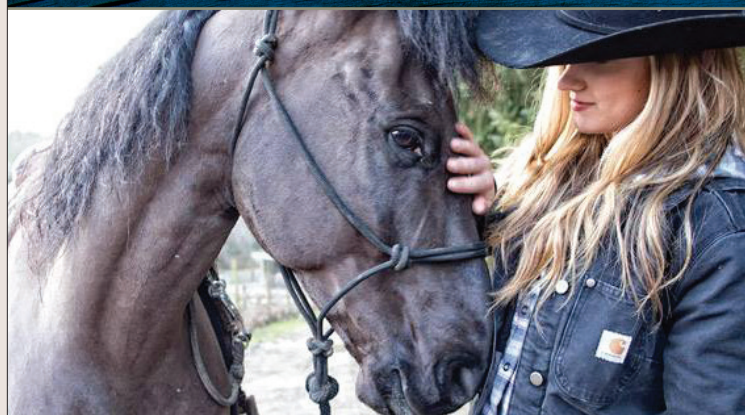
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Everyone who lives in Chatham-Kent knows we grow corn, but did you know there are various types of corn? The most common are flint corn (often known as Indian corn), dent corn, sweet corn, popcorn, and seed corn.

Flint corn has a hard outer shell and kernels with a range of colours from white to red and is used mostly in decorations.

Dent corn is commonly referred to as field corn or commercial corn. This corn is often used as livestock feed and is the main kind of corn used when making industrial products such as ethanol, corn sugar, and corn syrup, as well as various foods. It can be either white or yellow.

Sweet corn is often eaten on the cob or can be canned or frozen. Sweet corn is seldom processed into feed or flour. Sweet corn gets its name because it contains more sugar than other types of corn.

Popcorn, a type of flint corn, has a soft starchy center covered by a very hard shell. When popcorn is heated, the natural moisture inside the kernel turns to steam that builds up enough pressure for the kernel to explode. When the kernel explodes, it forms the white starchy mass that we like to eat.

There is another type of corn grown in Canada, but only in Southwest Ontario and primarily Chatham-Kent. This is seed corn, which are the kernels of corn saved from one year's harvest for the next year's planting.



Chatham-Kent farmers grow over 70 different types of crops and our farmers are world-class producers of various types of seed crops, including seed corn. Our growing region has an exceptional combination of climate, soils, production expertise, and infrastructure. We have a long growing season, which means many frost-free days, as well as consistent heat accumulation and rainfall.

Corn plants will pollinate themselves if left on their own, which is called self-pollination. This is accomplished through the tassel, which contains the male flower spreading pollen. This pollen is “caught” by the female flowers, which are the silk part of the corn plant that eventually produce the corn kernels.

Seed corn producers, however, want to prevent self-pollination. What they want instead is to ensure cross-pollination between the two varieties of seed corn selected for their field. Hybrid seed corn is produced by crossing two different inbreds of corn, called hybridization. The two inbreds used in this process are referred to as male (the plant responsible for producing pollen) and the female (the plant that produces the hybrid seed). To ensure the purity of the cross or hybrid, the tassels are entirely removed from the female rows, which ensures all the pollen for producing the seed crop comes from the male rows.

Most of the detasseling is done in two steps. The field is first detasseled by a machine and then manually. A detasseling machine called a “cutter” goes through the rows of corn to be detasseled and cuts off the top portion of the plant. This is done to make the field more uniform so that a “puller” machine can come through the corn field one or two days later and pull the tassel out of the plant by catching it between two rollers moving at a high speed. This removes the majority of the tassels.

Detasseling machines typically remove 60-85% of the tassels in a seed corn field. However, detassellers also need to walk through the field in order to ensure the field is 99.5% clear of female tassels. This walking up and down the corn rows, or passes, may have to be done a number of times until the field passes inspection.

This inspection is generally carried out by older students with detasseling experience and then followed up by company accredited field staff or an official from CFIA (Canadian Food Inspection Agency) for final closing of the field.

If detasseling is done too early, it can damage the plant. If detasseling is done too late, there is a risk of self-pollination.

Every summer in Chatham-Kent, hundreds of students are employed as detassellers, starting when they are about 13-14 years old. It’s a very tough job, as they have to work in all types of weather conditions. They end up with blisters, cuts, sunburn, and insect bites, but it teaches them the value of hard work and the experience looks great on a job resume. All four of our children went through

this summer ordeal. At that time, they did not really thank me, but hopefully they now realize the importance of this job training experience.





Chatham-Kent is also home to the office of the Seed Corn Growers of Ontario, whose principal mandate is to work with the individual seed corn companies to negotiate production contracts that not only make their growers competitive, but also provide incentives to produce excellent seed. They work to ensure their growers are provided with the best information and programs to maintain and broaden their seed corn production skills.

Chatham-Kent is home to four of the five seed corn companies in Ontario. They are C&L Seed Production, Maizex Seeds, Pioneer Hi-Bred Production LP (DuPont), and Pride Seeds.

Seed corn is a high value crop for our farmers. The past five year average of Ontario seed corn sales were \$23 million, which generated \$44 million in economic impact at the farm gate level. There are also additional economic impact from seed corn processing, trucking, and distribution.

On top of all this, did you know that Chatham-Kent is the number one producer of seed corn in all of Canada? There are so many opportunities ahead in our agriculture sector, and this is another example of how Chatham-Kent really does "grow for the world!"

*Photography provided by:
Krystle VanRoboys, Photographer
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This article was submitted by:

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-THE AGMAG



Agriculture in CK

A Message From Mayor Darrin Canniff

Agriculture is one of the industries that we can all be proud of as residents of Chatham-Kent. Our agricultural community is not just a leader in Southwestern Ontario, but the entire nation. The term “we grow for the world” is underscored by the fact that we are the number one producer of tomatoes, seed corn, pumpkins, carrots, cucumbers, Brussels sprouts, sugar beets, and green peas, and a top producer of many other crops.

I had the privilege of Co-Chairing the 2018 International Plowing Match with Leon Leclair, a very passionate farmer and friend from Dover. The friendships I made in the agricultural community over the three years of planning the IPM are ones that are truly special to me. The International Plowing Match experience will always remind me that amazing opportunities can be realized when members of both the urban and rural communities work together.

As your new mayor, I would like to take the opportunity to thank all of our residents who are involved in agriculture in CK; agriculture is not just a key economic driver of our area, but is also such a source of pride for both rural and urban residents.

I have heard about an urban and rural divide over the years, but what I have seen recently is an amazing community of passionate agriculturists, entrepreneurs, and residents coming together to celebrate a sector of our community that makes Chatham-Kent truly world class.

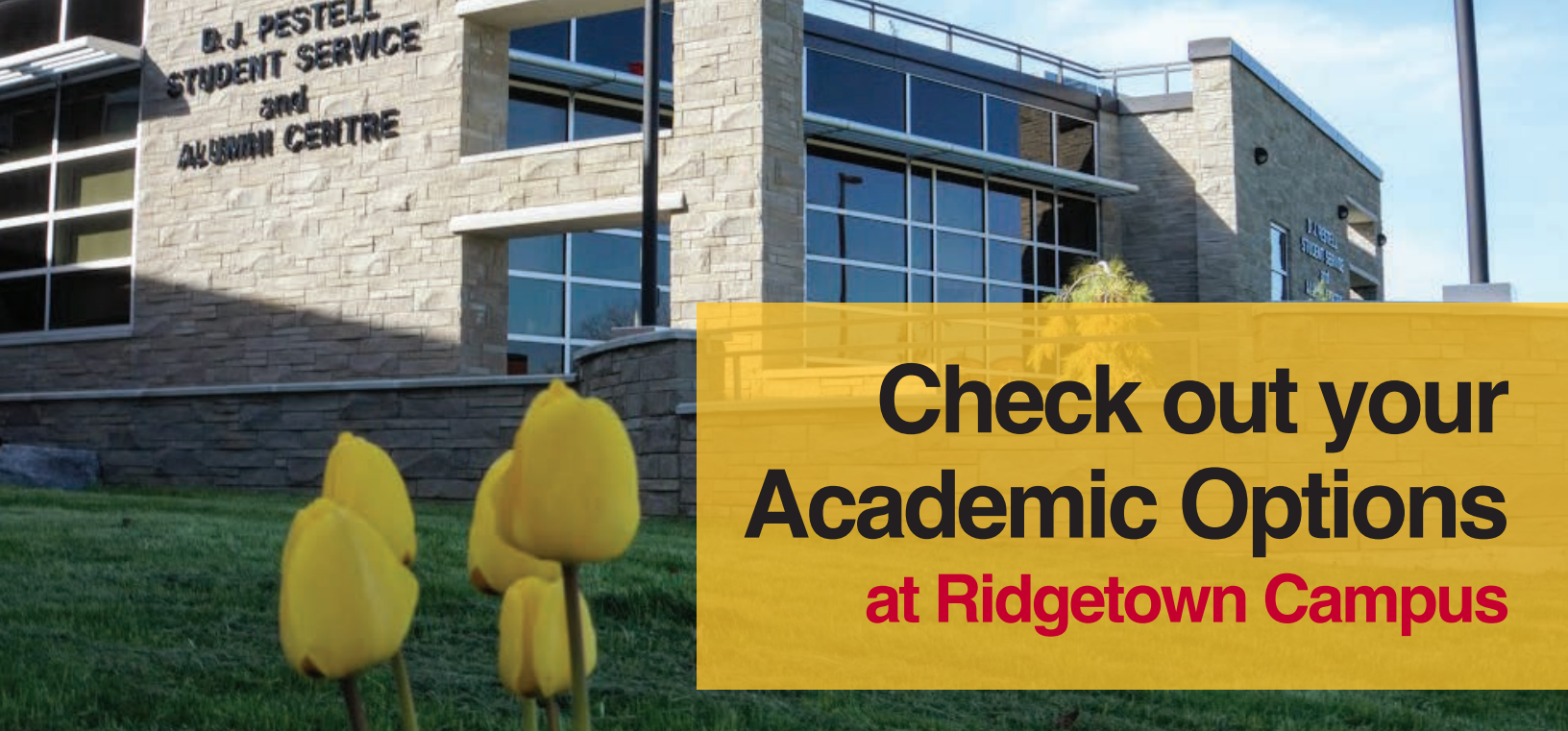
I encourage any members of the agricultural sector to share your thoughts, concerns, and ideas with myself and your new 2019 Chatham-Kent Councilors. You are a credit to our community and we wish you all success in 2019. I look forward to working with everyone involved in the agricultural sector over the next four years. Congratulations to all who have been involved in creating this issue of the AGMag; I look forward to the many issues to come.

Darrin Canniff

Mayor of Chatham-Kent

Darrin Canniff





Check out your Academic Options at Ridgetown Campus

If you are interested in learning more about one of these programs, register today to attend an upcoming Applicant Information Day.

Tuesday March 12, 2019

FOR APPLICANTS TO THE:

- AGRICULTURE DIPLOMA
- ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT DIPLOMA
- HORTICULTURE DIPLOMA

PLEASE PRE-REGISTER BY:
Tuesday March 5, 2019

LOCATION: Rudy H. Brown Rural Development Centre
Ridgetown Campus
120 Main St. E, Ridgetown, ON

Friday March 29, 2019

FOR APPLICANTS TO THE:

- EQUINE CARE & MANAGEMENT DIPLOMA
- PERFORMANCE HORSE HANDLER CERTIFICATE

PLEASE PRE-REGISTER BY:
Friday March 22, 2019

LOCATION: Regional Equine & Agricultural Centre of Huron (REACH)
169 Beech St., Clinton, ON

Monday April 1, 2019

FOR APPLICANTS TO THE:

- VETERINARY TECHNOLOGY DIPLOMA
- VETERINARY OFFICE ADMINISTRATION CERTIFICATE

PLEASE PRE-REGISTER BY:
Monday March 25, 2019

LOCATION: Rudy H. Brown Rural Development Centre
Ridgetown Campus
120 Main St. E, Ridgetown, ON

YOUR PRE-REGISTRATION OPTIONS:

ONLINE: ridgetownc.uoguelph.ca | **EMAIL:** rcampus@uoguelph.ca
PHONE: Call our Student Recruitment Co-ordinator at 519-674-1500 ext. 63256



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CAMPUS**

TO GET TO RIDGETOWN CAMPUS:

Ridgetown Campus is located 6 KM south of Hwy. 401 (Exit 109) on County Rd 17 and 6 KM north of Hwy. 3 (at Morpeth). We are in the town of Ridgetown, midway between London and Windsor, Ontario.

TO GET TO REACH HURON:

REACH Huron is located at 169 Beech Street in the town of Clinton, ON. It is 45 minutes north of London on Hwy. #4.



Local Certified Organic Garlic

 **NOBLE**
organics
Grown with Integrity

Noble Organics

It was a picturesque treed property where one of our sons would raise his family and home my horses. Growing garlic wasn't originally on our agenda when we purchased the 20-acre homestead in the autumn of 2016. Several months were spent, with the help of family & friends, grooming the overgrown fencerows and pastureland. Becoming aware that we had a surplus of good land, we began to explore ideas to utilize the acreage.

In our research, we learned that the Ontario garlic industry was all but decimated in the late 1990s by the influx of cheap soft neck garlic from China. Production dropped from approximately 4000 acres to just 300 acres within 3 years, devastating the industry. It was reduced to become a niche market of small growers under an

acre with just a handful of larger growers, marketing to CSAs, farm markets, gate sales, and festivals.

However, we also discovered that interest in local garlic has grown along with the local food movement today.

We reached out to experts in the field at the University of Guelph, attended a field day presented by the Ontario Garlic Growers Association open to area growers willing to share their knowledge, and travelling to a workshop in British Columbia at Rasa Creek Farm.

The soil composition on the farm, fertility, and optimal climate for growing garlic, and a bonus of having been unfarmed conventionally



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Storage

Within every clove is a pleasure of complex flavours and abundance of benefits. But to access this goodness, care need be taken in the handling of your garlic bulbs, starting with proper storage.



contributed to our decision to pursue growing organic garlic and seeking certification through ProCert.

Our first step was to source out and purchase our supply of organic seed stock, which was difficult to find. We chose to test 5 varieties on a quarter acre. We once again called on naïve family and friends to help us “crack” the bulbs into cloves and primitively handplant the resulting 4000 cloves of hardneck garlic around Thanksgiving. We were excited to see the embryonic shoots peek up through the light cover of snow. Growing under organic conditions, we were constrained in our weed management... which translated into a lot of hoeing come spring and summer!

Scaping, that is, the removal of the flower stalk to direct the energy to the bulb came in June. Garlic scapes are a tender, mild, green-garlic tasting delicacy that is gaining popularity.

In July, the bulbs were harvested using a tractor and an undercutter, the plants pulled by hand, bundled, and strung on repurposed tobacco wagons to cure in a well-ventilated building, monitored for heat and humidity. Following this process came the preparation of the bulbs for market. The cutting of the leaves and beards, cleaning and sorting the bulbs. Any friends and family to be found? Thankfully, yes.

We were fortunate to receive an introduction of our company at the 2018 International Plowing Match through Abstract Marketing, who developed our logo, Noble Organics, and our website.

This fall we have planted a full acre, with the hopes to yield 35 – 40,000 certified organic bulbs. Much of the crop is Ontario's most popular Porcelain variety called Music, along with a Marbled

purple stripe variety and two zesty Rocamboles. We introduced a recyclable mulching and dripline system to decrease weed pressure and control water in the soil.

Growing garlic on a significant scale is not for the faint of heart. With each cautious increase in production, we will concentrate on the mechanization of equipment to increase efficiency as well as focus on storage to keep garlic quality longer into the off-season.

Being aware of the various elements in growing a certified organic product, such as approved soil amendments, weed and disease control, and even transportation will create an additional challenge.

In conclusion, even though the Ontario garlic industry is steadily growing, in Canada we still import over 68% from China. The opportunity is here, the consumer is willing.

The Knight family is excited to be a small contributor to the local food supply, providing healthy Ontario grown certified organic garlic.

Noble Organics... Garlic grown with Integrity.



*This article was written and submitted by:
Lucy & Rob Knight*



Veritas Farm Business Management

Supporting farmers in Chatham-Kent since 2011

“It is only the farmer who faithfully plants seeds in the Spring, who reaps a harvest in the Autumn” B.C. Forbes.

Success in agriculture requires commitment, hard work, dedication, and a certain amount of luck. It also requires experience, knowledge, innovation, and collaborative relationships. Veritas Farm Business Management was established in 2011 to help support farmers in Chatham-Kent to increase their profitability via higher yields, improved efficiencies, and greater insights into their cost of production. Agriculture is an industry that is constantly evolving to meet changing needs of customers, and adapting to new technology and unpredictable weather conditions. Veritas is dedicated to being an integral part of this evolution.

The current offerings from Veritas focus heavily on Precision Agriculture (P. Ag.) which includes the collection, analysis and deriving insights from data that is generated from modern farm equipment. This data isn't just an average for each field but rather, it is layers for each individual field that describes and measures the variation across the field. From lower yields on a clay hill to record breaking yields in the perfect loamy areas – these layers paint the picture of how each field performs.

The role for the team at Veritas is to not only assist in collection of these data layers but also in the analysis and interpretation of these data layers – particularly how they interact with each other. This is achieved using statistical analysis software to measure the return on investment (ROI) of the existing farming practices and products used. This information can then be used by farmers (and those that support them with advice) to evaluate their current practices against other options.

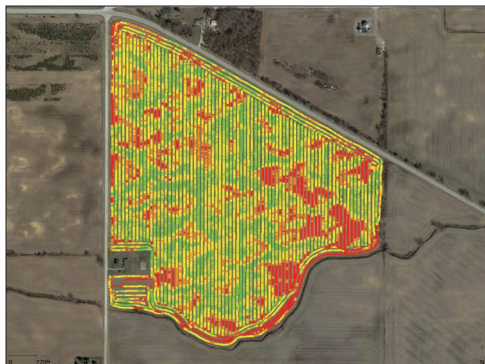
Of the various data layers – yield maps are the most common and well known. Many modern combines are equipped to measure the yield in real time and to map that data. For machines that are not equipped, there are a variety of after market options that are available that will allow yield data to be collected.

In addition to yield monitor equipped combines, there is a strong relationship between yield and a combination of light interaction (absorption and reflection) from plants. The most common combination is the Normalized Difference Vegetative Index (NDVI). This measurement is captured using specialized cameras and offers over 90% accuracy to the relative yield.

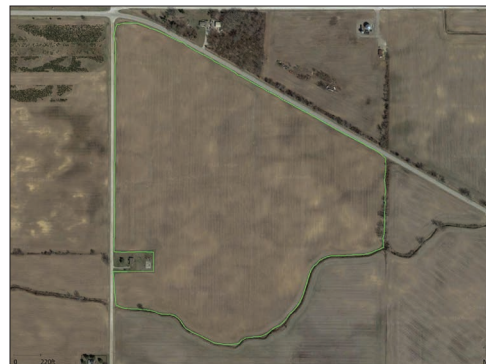
The cameras required to capture the data required to determine NDVI can also be mounted onto an unmanned aerial system ...



Near Infra-Red drone image



Actual yield data



Bare ground image

commonly known as a drone. Yes, as cool as mapping yield data or looking for statistical correlations are – being able to utilize a drone to create a simulated yield map takes the cake.

Drones have become more common in agriculture over the last five years. Initially the value proposition of drones was not always clear, and many early adaptors began utilizing the technology in order to discover what the ROI could be. The cost of drones has decreased dramatically as well as services that allow for custom drone flying, which make it easier to create solutions that provide a positive ROI.

Along with mounting a camera able to measure NDVI, it is also possible to mount equipment that can measure the elevation with sub-millimeter accuracy and surface temperatures.

The elevation data can be used to determine optimal drainage patterns as well as soil loss from water erosion. Thermal imagery on its own has limited value but plant disease models are now being developed that require the temperature of the crop canopy. Drone mounted sensors are the cutting edge of the evolution of the agriculture industry, and Chatham-Kent based Veritas Farm Business Management is heavily involved.

For the last 18 months, Veritas has been collaborating with a company from Israel (Green Eye Technologies) to utilize drone imagery to power artificial intelligence (AI) technology to autonomously

identify and count various weed species, rocks that can damage equipment, and littered garbage that can have an impact on food safety.

The advancements in the agriculture industry have and will continue to revolutionize how food is produced. However, the lynch pin for continued improvements in the industry will continue to be the farmers who drive and demand innovation to improve their operations.



This editorial (along with the photos) was written and submitted by:

*Aaron Breimer, Manager
Veritas Farm Business Management*

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Dill Pickle soup

INGREDIENTS:

(Makes 8 cups)

- 2 tbsp butter
- 2 cups peeled chopped potato
- 1 cup peeled chopped carrot
- 1 cup peeled chopped onion
- 1/2 tsp pepper
- 2 tbsp flour
- 4 cups chicken stock
- 1/4 cup The Pickle Station dill pickle juice
- 1 cup chopped The Pickle Station dill pickles (Baby Dill)
- 3/4 cup half & half cream
- 1 tbsp dill weed (fresh is better)

INSTRUCTIONS:

On medium heat, melt butter in saucepan. Add next four ingredients and cook, partially covered, for 8-10 minutes until vegetables start to soften. Sprinkle with flour and stir for one minute. Increase heat and slowly add 1 cup stock. Heat until boiling and thickened. Add pickle juice and remaining stock. Cook, stirring often, until boiling then reduce heat. Simmer, covered, until potatoes are tender. Add cream, pickles, and half the dill. Cook until hot, but not boiling. Garnish with remaining dill and fresh ground pepper. Enjoy!



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