THE GROWER

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THIS LAND IS YOUR LAND

The Holland Marsh's centennial marks stewardship for the future

In the Holland Marsh, families have been carving out livelihoods since the muck soil was drained in 1925. This year, the 100th anniversary was marked with not only the annual carrot festival but a commitment to research best practices for managing soil and water. Here, Shane Singh and his wife Jennifer, along with their children Nathan and Lauren, pause for a moment in their field of leeks and lettuce near Bradford, Ontario. Photo by Paul Novosad.

KAREN DAVIDSON

On a hot and hazy summer's day, the Singh family is out in their leek field pulling volunteer pigweed. It's a menial task, but one that's familiar to the market gardeners in the Holland Marsh. For second-generation farmer Shane Singh, his story starts with his parents arriving from Guyana with star-bright hopes of a better life.

On a bitter winter's day in 1979, the family's down payment – and faith – was placed in a small, five-acre plot. Since then, the farm has grown to 40 acres on Canal Road that supports Shane, Jennifer, their two children, Lauren and Nathan, as well as Shane's parents. In many ways, the Singh's are not unlike the hard-working Dutch immigrants who first reclaimed the vast wetlands of the Holland Marsh in 1925.

The rich muck soil of Shane Singh's market garden grows leeks, lettuces, and radish, along with herbs such as dill, cilantro and parsley, sold to independent grocers through the Ontario Food Terminal and to local customers through the Bradford Farmers' Market.

"For the South American community, we grow bitter melon, flat-leaf spinach and hot peppers," says Singh. "Other produce includes radicchio, dandelion greens and Swiss chard."

Shane Singh and his family are emblematic of the many ways in which the Holland Marsh has evolved over the last century. They are the next generation of farmers growing new crops. Looking to the future, Jody Mott, general manager, Holland Marsh Growers' Association points out that the next decade will be critical for Ontario's 7,000-acre salad bowl. The area is designated as a specialty crop area within the Greenbelt, and although protected by Greenbelt legislation, responsibilities for care of soil and water weigh heavily on each of the Marsh's 126 farms.

Confronted by extreme weather, Holland Marsh growers have experienced seemingly continuous cycles of draining heavy rainfall or irrigating parched fields.

"In rare situations, muck farmers have done both within 24 hours," chuckles Charlie Lalonde, special projects manager for the Holland Marsh Growers' Association. He's looking at second-year results of a three-year project funded by the Clean Water Agency on seven Holland Marsh test sites. Silt socks, stuffed with switch-grass, are used to buffer water draining off the fields while instruments measure the profile and turbidity of nutrients in the drain water.

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AT PRESS TIME...

Infrastructure investments underway to improve produce trade

KAREN DAVIDSON

Fast tracking an expansion of the Port of Montréal at Contrecoeur, Québec, is but one piece of the heavy lifting underway for Canada to become a more responsive "can-do" trading partner.

The site is actually 45 kilometres downstream from the Port of Montréal. Once completed in 2030 at a projected cost of $2.3 billion, container capacity will be increased by nearly 60 per cent, adding another 1.5 million containers per year. A 675-metre wharf with two berths will be built to accommodate vessels from 39,000 to 75,400 deadweight tonnes. The project will also develop a seven-track rail yard, a container storage and handling area, an intermodal rail yard, support buildings, rail and road access, and a truck control area.

"Looking at ports in general, a lot of investment will be needed," said Tony Boemi, senior commercial advisor, Montreal Port Authority. He was speaking at the Canadian Produce Marketing Association (CPMA) Logistics Summit in Montréal on September 11. "If the supply chain is not good between ports and railways, it won't work."

Expanding on those comments was Keegan Donaghey, representing CN Rail. He shared a map of North America, depicting the spider web of routes that his transportation and logistics company can move temperature-sensitive cargo. Links to refrigerated trucks are crucial because they deliver goods the last mile.

Perhaps most surprising is how the Edmonton Airport (YEG) is ramping up its capacity for perishables. Pat McCarthy, Agri-Food Air Cargo Development, highlighted that by land mass, Edmonton is the largest airport in Canada with 7,000 acres at its disposal. Thanks to $300 million in federal/provincial funding, the airport is developing 2,000 acres for more cargo and logistics. There are no curfews and no restrictions on air cargo with 24/7 rapid customs clearance. Designated as a Foreign Trade Zone, YEG has the advantage of providing businesses the ability to import, store, process, and re-export goods without immediately paying customs duties and taxes.

With these features, McCarthy noted that Edmonton's airport is attracting cargo from Manitoba, British Columbia, Northwest Territories, Montana, Idaho and Washington state. Beyond that, the airport is proposing two rotations, Sunday and Wednesday, to Mexico City with widebody freighters.

During the Logistics Summit, Mexico was mentioned as a trading partner with increasing strategic importance. Ron Lemaire, CPMA president, quoted statistics that the U.S. remains Canada's top trading partner followed by Mexico. In 2024, Canada imported $4.38 billion in fresh vegetables, with 60 per cent from the U.S. and 24 per cent from Mexico. Greg Palmer, CPMA's vice-president, trade and market development, echoed that several countries are looking to source Canadian produce. Mexico is at the top of his list, increasing its purchases of potatoes and apples.

Source: CN Rail

David Karwacki, former CEO of Saskatoon-headquartered Star Produce, commented, " I believe ports, rail, airports will be important in the future – but I believe that data will be core. In the past, logistics teams have spent hours finding out where the load is. Times have changed. It's time to invest in infrastructure – not just physical – but in technology and communications."

NEWSMAKERS

Augusta Van Muyen

Grape Growers of Ontario and Farm Credit Canada have announced that Lincoln vineyard manager **Augusta Van Muyen** has been chosen by her peers as the 2025-2026 Grape King. The vineyard manager at Tawse Winery since 2021, she is the fourth female Grape King to be honoured since inception of the award in 1956. She is a member of the Grape Growers of Ontario's Next Generation committee and she sits on the board of directors of Farm and Food Care. She places great importance on sustainability and leaving the land better than she found it.

Donald Martel

Québec's new minister of agriculture, fisheries and food is **Donald Martel** (Nicolet-Bécancour). The 61-year-old, holder of a bachelor's degree in administration, replaces long-time veteran minister **André Lamontagne** who has been in the role since October 2018. The cabinet changes were announced prior to a provincial election that's promised by no later than October 2026.

Welcome to **Rachel Luo** who becomes policy and economic analyst at the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association effective October 6. She brings 10 years of experience in agriculture, specializing in research, data analysis and stakeholder consultation. In her previous consulting role, Rachel examined critical issues facing agricultural organizations across Canada, including many in the fruit and vegetable sector.

COVER STORY

The Holland Marsh's centennial marks stewardship for the future

The Holland Marsh is a quasi-industrial area that includes processing. We need to evolve or else we will have conflicts.

~ JENNIFER BEST

Continued from page 1

The objective is to determine whether there is excessive phosphorus or nitrogen and, if present, to curb flow into the watersheds that drain into Lake Simcoe. Growers are closely following the project to evaluate the effectiveness of grassed buffers.

"We've had disappointing results in 2025 because it's been a dry summer," says Lalonde. "It takes a large rain event to create measurable results."

On the political side of land stewardship, carrot and onion grower Avia Eek, a Township of King councillor, passionately advocates for the preservation of precious Marsh farmland. In her roles as the chair of the agri-food advisory committee for York Region and a director for the Lake Simcoe Conservation Authority, she's like the proverbial finger in the dike, holding back the urban flood. She's quick to point out that 50 acres of farmland have recently been lost to non-farming buyers.

"We can't make people farm," she admits. But farmland can be protected for agricultural use by establishing appropriate by-laws. Currently, to obtain a building permit, owners must show their farm business registration. That requirement alone has prevented construction of at least five non-agricultural buildings on farmland in recent years. But loss of viable farmland is not the only pressing local issue as increased urban traffic on rural roads pits impatient drivers against slow-moving agricultural machinery.

These issues are all too familiar to Jennifer Best, director of growth services, Bradford West Gwillimbury. Hailing from an agricultural community, she has rural planning in her blood. After just a year on the job, she's marshalling vested interests from two adjoining townships to harmonize zoning rules under the Greenbelt Plan, itself 20 years young this year.

Consultations with growers, municipal planners and the local drainage superintendent highlight broad land-use issues, ranging from migrant farm worker housing to residential development to accessory dwelling units to greenhouses. She explains that one of the thorniest issues is to align permits between two municipalities to prevent the start-up of non-agricultural land use.

"The Holland Marsh is a quasi-industrial area that includes processing," says Best. "We need to evolve or else we will have conflicts."

She goes on to point out the unique challenges of the Marsh. "We have dirt storms, so it gets dusty. We have narrow roads, so we get road rage. We have smells, so that turns off urbanites."

To her credit, Best is preparing a proposal for the Bradford West Gwillimbury Council to fund a university intern to research land-use regulation across a range of comparable municipalities. Such data collection would identify by-laws in place in Ontario's Niagara region or in Delta, British Columbia, for example, other areas of high-density horticulture surrounded by high-density population.

While that proposal and others work their way through the municipal system, Marsh growers are busy doing what they do best: harvesting, planting cover crops and planning for the generations of farmers to come in the next 100 years.

The Grower is "Digging Deeper" with Jennifer Best, director of growth services, Township of Bradford West Gwillimbury. Hailing from an agricultural community, her passion project is harmonizing land use rules in the salad bowl of Ontario: the Holland Marsh. If funding is granted, she wants to research how other municipalities in Canada are handling pressures from urban encroachment. This podcast is sponsored by Cohort Wholesale.

The Holland Marsh comprises 7,000 acres of muck soil, fed by 28 kilometers of canals that support $130 million plus in farmgate value. Carrots, onions and celery top the list. Photo taken at Visser Farms by Glenn Lowson.

A current soil-and-water management project of the Holland Marsh Growers' Association is looking at whether silt socks can mitigate any potential nutrient runoff into ditches which flow into the local watershed. Photo by Paul Novosad.

DYK? In 2024, Ontario remained the largest producing province of field vegetables, accounting for nearly 57.9% of Canada's total production of field vegetables, followed by Québec (more than 30.6% of production). Photo at Eek Farms by Glenn Lowson.

CROSS COUNTRY DIGEST

BRITISH COLUMBIA

New diagnostic tools better identify blueberry viruses

A Genome BC-funded research collaboration between the BC Blueberry Council, Simon Fraser University (SFU) and Phyto Diagnostics Company Ltd. has uncovered why standard tests sometimes fail to detect viruses in visibly sick blueberry plants. The findings will lead to new diagnostic tools that will help protect BC's blueberry sector that was worth $236 million in exports in 2020.

BC produces more than 90 per cent of Canada's highbush blueberries, a crop that in 2019 was the province's highest-value agricultural export. Growers face two primary viral threats: the Blueberry Scorch Virus and the Blueberry Shock Virus. Both are not harmful to people, but deal a significant economic blow to farmers.

Blueberry plants do not recover from the Scorch virus and infected plants must be removed, but they can recover from the Shock virus over time. Both viruses cause similar symptoms, making them hard to tell apart, so farmers rely on a standard diagnostic test, the ELISA (Enzyme-Linked Immunosorbent Assay) to help decide whether to rip out their plants.

But several years ago, sick plants began to test negative for both viruses.

"At the time, it was quite the black box," said Dr. Eric Gerbrandt, the project co-lead and research director at the BC Blueberry Council. "We took hundreds of samples from fields in the Fraser Valley in 2020 and up to 30 per cent of sick plant samples came back negative for the viruses that are known to affect blueberry bushes. These inconclusive results led to uncertainty for our farmers."

To tackle the problem, the research team, led by Dr. Jim Mattsson from SFU's Department of Biological Sciences and Dr. Gerbrandt, turned to genomic sequencing.

The team was able to get a high-resolution view of the viral landscape afflicting blueberry plants through the sequencing of viruses from infected plant samples across BC.

"This was a complex biological puzzle that traditional diagnostic methods couldn't solve," said Dr. Mattsson. "By applying the power of genomic sequencing, we discovered that both the Shock and Scorch viruses had evolved into new variants, which is why the diagnostic test wasn't successfully identifying the cause of the sick plants."

The sequencing also revealed four new viruses, previously undetected in BC fields. The researchers determined these viruses do not cause disease in blueberry plants and so are not a threat to BC growers.

"This work has vastly improved our understanding of the situation in the fields," Dr. Mattsson added.

With the new information, the team is developing updated diagnostic tools that they expect to be available by the next growing season. The tools include an updated ELISA test for the new viruses, as well as more sensitive PCR tests that can detect the lower virus levels of new variants of Shock and Scorch. The latter will supplement ELISA tests to reliably check for Scorch and Shock viruses in young plants before using them to grow new crops.

Blueberry shock virus. Photo by Carolyn Teasdale, ES Cropconsult

Blueberry scorch virus. Photo by Carolyn Teasdale, ES Cropconsult

"These findings have a big economic impact on the sector," said Dr. Gerbrandt. "These viruses are one of the most economically significant challenges we face, and this work has helped bring the importance of viruses to growers' attention so they can better manage infected fields."

"This project is a perfect example of how genomics can be a powerful tool for solving real-world challenges facing our industries," said Suzanne Gill, president and CEO of Genome BC. "By connecting researchers with industry partners, we're helping to turn a frustrating problem into a workable, data-driven solution that protects a vital part of our province's economy."

Source: Genome BC September 8, 2025 news release

NOVA SCOTIA

Nova Scotia drought reduces apple size and yields

KAREN DAVIDSON

Nova Scotia's Annapolis Valley has been in the news for all the wrong reasons this summer, with wildfires plaguing the area. For growers, the underlying drought has affected size and quality of apples.

"What started out as a great season is coming to a very disappointing and depressing apex," says Emily Lutz, executive director, Nova Scotia Fruit Growers' Association (NSFGA).

"Fruit size, quality, colour have all been negatively impacted by this exceptionally dry year. On top of crop loss, we are seeing tree collapse in certain regions and areas of orchard, including wilting and defoliation, to the point of tree death. Varying soil types, different irrigation levels and availability of water on-farm has meant growers have been weathering things in a wide range of ways, but some are reporting crop losses up to 50-60 per cent of what was expected."

As Lutz recently explained to CTV News, apples must meet certain size and quality specifications to be marketed. Growers are faced with tough decisions on whether to pick under-sized apples that have no market. And with no market, how to employ your picking crew?

Concerns will be focussed on tree health, replacement costs and long lead times of three to five years before achieving full production.

On the brighter side, Lutz is educating consumers that apples will be available, but just smaller: "They fit better in your lunchbox."

CANADA

From berries to potatoes, Canada's crops are going climate-smart

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada researchers are reimagining how we grow berries, potatoes, and forage crops to thrive in tougher, unpredictable conditions, such as those caused by climate change.

Whether it's berries bursting with flavour, potatoes grown for the perfect fries, or alfalfa that thrives in acidic soil, researchers are developing crops and tools that help meet the needs of farmers, processors and consumers. These breakthroughs combine cutting-edge science with field testing across Canada's diverse growing regions, ensuring innovations move from the lab to the field and onto Canadian tables.

Below is a snapshot of one key project.

Growing resilient, flavour-packed berry varieties for Canada: Building on a rich legacy of berry breeding at AAFC, Dr. Béatrice Amyotte (Nova Scotia) is on a mission to produce the next generation of berries – and it's no easy feat! These berries must be hardy enough for Canada's diverse growing climates, high yielding, resistant to disease, and perhaps most importantly, bear high-quality fruit bursting with flavour to delight consumer tastebuds.

Instrumental in launching three delectable new strawberry varieties last year, Dr. Amyotte is now diving into a massive trial to test 288 strawberry varieties. Collaborating with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Acadia University, she's searching for key traits that allow these berries to thrive across a range of environments while delivering bold, complex flavours that can boost perceived sweetness without increasing the sugar content.

As head of the Canadian Berry Trial Network, Dr. Amyotte has also brought together researchers and growers from Nova Scotia, Quebec, Ontario and British Columbia to test promising strawberries, blueberries and raspberries that are resilient, adaptable and ready for Canada's shifting climate. What's more, she's ready to start commercial testing of the first made-in-Canada blackberry variety that's hardy enough to thrive here. Her work is cultivating a future where berries are as tough as they are tasty and ready to withstand Canada's changing climate.

Source: Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

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Investigating new strategies to control Thrips parvispinus

AVERY JOHNSON

In commercial greenhouses, thrips are a major pest of both vegetables and ornamental crops. The primary thrips pest of greenhouse crops in Canada and worldwide is Western flower thrips (*Frankliniella occidentalis*). Most growers have been using biocontrol programs for some time now to manage these pests, as pesticide spray coverage is difficult with such small individuals.

Over the last decade or so, there has been a growing number of thrips outbreaks in Ontario greenhouses, exhibiting significant damage despite the historically successful biocontrol programs in place. Recent surveys of greenhouses in southern Ontario show that these outbreaks could be due to additional species other than the typical Western flower thrips that have been found present in Canadian greenhouses, including Onion thrips (*Thrips tabaci)* and *Thrips parvispinus*. Despite the similarities of these thrips species, they don't all respond the same way to biocontrol agents.

If all thrips outbreaks are treated with the same existing biocontrol programs without knowing what species is present, the program is unlikely to succeed. These species dynamics and biocontrol difficulties make finding alternative control strategies essential for managing thrips outbreaks.

My work focuses on both the behavioural control of the new and invasive pest *T. parvispinus*, as well as determining the overall genetic diversity of thrips species in Canadian greenhouse crops. *Thrips parvispinus* has achieved expansion in both geographic distribution and host range, spreading to five continents, including Africa, Asia, Oceania, Europe, and North America. The damage caused by *T. parvispinus* can be direct or indirect. Most direct damage results from pest feeding, while indirect damage is through the spread of plant diseases. The pest is not established in Canada but can be intercepted or detected on imported plant materials.

Thrips parvispinus have a few characteristics that make for a successful pest, including their small size, their tendency to reside in small, confined spaces, and lay eggs within plant leaf tissue. These traits allow the pests to go largely undetected in a crop and avoid contact with pesticide applications.

As of recently, only about five per cent of thrips management-related studies focused on semiochemical-based strategies. This gap limits the development of targeted and sustainable integrated pest management (IPM) strategies for this species, especially in controlled environments such as greenhouses. Chemical cues, particularly plant-derived volatiles, play a key role in host selection and avoidance behavior in many insect pests. When an insect starts feeding on a plant, the plant naturally produces chemicals, or volatiles, as a defense. In a crop, pests tend to avoid plants with these compounds, while beneficial insects (such as predators and parasitoids) follow them to find pests/prey. Other nearby plants can also recognize these volatiles, signaling them to jumpstart their defense systems.

These natural plant volatiles are typically produced when a plant is already under attack by a pest, but this natural reaction can be harnessed as a preventative control strategy. By releasing synthetic versions of these volatiles in a crop, thus upregulating the plant's defense systems, pest outbreaks could be prevented or reduced before severe damage occurs. Greenhouse trials have indicated that sweet pepper and tomato plants exposed to the green leaf volatile (Z)-3-Hexenyl propanoate ((Z)-3-HP) can have an upregulated defensive response against Western flower thrips. Although these volatiles have shown promise as repellents in Western flower thrips, no published data exists on the behavioral response of *T. parvispinus* to (Z)-3-HP.

This study fills a critical gap by providing experimental evidence of dose-dependent behavioral responses of *T. parvispinus* to (Z)-3-HP. This will be measured by quantifying how the presence of the volatile disrupts the thrips' normal feeding and egg-laying behaviours. Discovering whether these species respond similarly to this kind of management strategy could help determine how effective this tactic would be in a crop with unidentified thrips species.

For the genetics portion of my research, the current total number of *Thysanoptera* (commonly known as thrips) species in Canada is 147 identified established species, plus five that only occur indoors. It is estimated that a further 255 species may eventually be found in Canada. This is based on the presence of species in adjacent areas of the United States. Both the diversity and proportion of species found in Canada are understudied. For example, Onion thrips has been established in North America for more than a century, and Western flower thrips has been established in northeastern North America for more than 40 years, yet few published data are quantifying the presence and proportion of these species in Canadian greenhouses.

This project will also include collecting thrips samples from across Canada to evaluate the genetic diversity of thrips in Canadian greenhouse crops. The samples will consist of one-time collections from sites across Canada as well as periodic sampling from different greenhouse locations in southwestern Ontario and the Niagara region. Samples will be collected from the major vegetable and floriculture crops

grown in these regions. This is crucial for improving pest identification, monitoring, and management. Many thrips are morphologically similar, making identification difficult, while genetic analysis can reveal cryptic species, resistance traits, population structure, and the proportion of species present in each crop type and region. This will complement the first portion of my research. By discovering the species composition in Canadian greenhouse crops we can better implement targeted management strategies.

If you have been following along with this series, Research Tokking from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada in Harrow, Azimove invited you to participate in her ongoing research. I would also like to invite anyone with questions or mysterious thrips to reach out to me at avery.johnson@agr.gc.ca.

This research is a part of the projects -- Mitigation of the invasive pest, *Thrips parvispinus* and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada A-Base Project: Increasing Agro-Ecosystem Resilience using New Biocontrol Solutions for Invasive Pests. This project is funded by Crop Defenders, Koppert, and BioBee with collaboration from Vineland Research and Innovation Centre and OMAFA.

Her career path

KAREN DAVIDSON

Avery Johnson started her undergraduate degree in biological science at the University of Guelph with hopes of becoming a teacher in the future. She switched her major to environmental biology in her third year. A summer job in forages research further refined her interests.

"I definitely made a big change though, from outdoors to indoors and cows to insects," Johnson recalls. "I took an entomology course in my fourth year where I got to learn about the different orders of insects and how to identify them."

Thanks to the mentorship of Dr. Sarah Jandricic, the greenhouse floriculture IPM specialist for OMAFA, Johnson was converted to a "bug dork!" For two summers, she worked as a floriculture research assistant.

Currently working at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Harrow Research and Development Centre, she's excited to be in such a broad and women-dominated field. She works under the supervision of Dr. Roselyne Labbé.

OGVG earns Produce Business Marketing Excellence Award

Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers (OGVG), North America's largest producer of greenhouse-grown produce, has won the Marketing Excellence Award from Produce Business for its Greenhouse Goodness digital campaign.

OGVG's Greenhouse Goodness initiative featured seasonal landing pages and a multi-channel advertising mix of digital and print media. By focusing on engaging, content-driven storytelling, the campaign delivered a 450 per cent performance boost compared to the prior year's seasonal page results.

A central element was the Greenhouse Goodness microsite, which offered visitors:

- A user-friendly interface to explore greenhouse-grown vegetable benefits
- Easy-to-prepare recipes showcased in interactive tables
- Fun children's activities and educational posters
- Influencer spotlights bringing fresh produce into the spotlight

Social media channels such as Facebook and Instagram amplified reach, driving awareness and consumer interaction across platforms.

"Our growers work tirelessly to bring fresh, nutritious greenhouse vegetables to tables across North America," said Richard Lee, OGVG executive director. "Greenhouse Goodness was designed not only to highlight the quality of our produce but to inspire healthier eating by making greenhouse grown vegetables part of everyday meals."

Key campaign metrics included:

- 279,841 unique visitors to seasonal landing pages
- 323,885 total page sessions
- 977,537 tracked events—an average of three interactions per session

Source: Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers August 26, 2025 news release

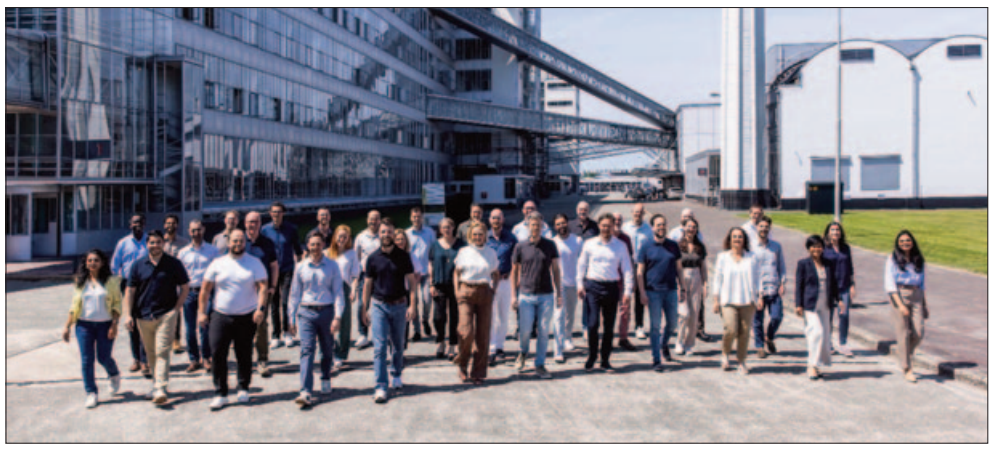
GREENHOUSE GROWER

Blue Radix wins AgTech Breakthrough award for automation solution of the year

Blue Radix has won the AgTech Breakthrough award for Indoor Farming/Nursery Automation Solution of the year 2025. AgTech Breakthrough is a leading market intelligence organization that recognizes top companies, technologies and products in the global agricultural and food technology markets.

"We're very happy and proud to be recognized by the AgTech Breakthrough Awards for our innovative AI-technology that empowers greenhouse growers with smarter, more efficient operations", said Ronald Hoek, co-founder and CEO of Blue Radix. "The need for smart, efficient systems in greenhouse operations has never been greater. Greenhouse growing is becoming increasingly complex, due to reduced crop expertise, climate challenges, sustainability demands, and rising efficiency expectations. Receiving recognition for the positive impact we're making in the lives of growers worldwide is very meaningful and reinforces our commitment to driving lasting change in the horticulture industry."

"With Autonomous Climate and Irrigation Control powered by Crop Controller, we make greenhouse operations more efficient, profitable, and scalable, creating high-performing greenhouses," Hoek explains. "Crop Controller is a proven and trusted AI solution at more than 100 commercial vegetable production locations worldwide. It operates in every climate zone, saving 80 per cent of manual climate computer work. With reliable three-day-ahead predictions, growers gain deeper insights, trust and enhanced predictability. This precise way of steering climate & irrigation greenhouse installations via full decision automation helps growers to manage up to four times more hectares, reduce energy



use by 13–18 per cent and water use by 10 per cent, and improve profitability. The system continuously analyses greenhouse data to optimize operations, increase yields, and takes action by steering the climate computer, following the grower's strategy. This is freeing up time for strategic decisions, labour and crop management and improves the growers' work-life balance. AI isn't replacing growers; it's helping them 24/7."

Read more www.blue-radix.com

Source: Blue Radix August 25, 2025 news release

Biobest introduces Entomatic handheld for precision dispensing

Biobest's new portable mite and insect dispenser, the Entomatic Handheld, is engineered for precision, speed, and user comfort, offering growers an efficient new tool for targeted biological applications.

Developed in partnership with Hortiworld, the Entomatic Handheld has been designed for use in confined or irregular growing environments. Its compact and ergonomic design makes it ideal for linear crops such as strawberries, greenhouses with narrow paths or rolling benches, ornamental nurseries with variable layouts, and small-scale operations ranging from high-tech facilities to low-tech systems.

"The unit is designed for focused, even distribution of beneficials such as *Phytoseiulus persimilis*, *Amblyseius cucumeris*, *Orius laevigatus*, and Franklinothrips," says Sam Gui, market development manager for high tech IPM at Biobest. "For applications involving *Amblyseius swirskii*, the Entomatic Handheld can also dispense our supplementary feed, Nutrimite simultaneously. Operators can adjust dosing rotator and fan speeds to suit various crop and application needs. The removable hopper lid also functions as a stand, adding convenience during refills.

"Designed for flexibility, the Entomatic Handheld provides accurate blanket treatments up to three meters wide, making it ideal for crops such as ornamental potted plants," says Sam. "By clipping on the snout attachment, operators can make precise applications in linear row crops such as strawberries, with the vertical slim design making it easy to turn and walk in narrow rows."

"With lower mite mortality than other handheld dispensers and reduced packaging waste through compatibility with bulk loose formats, the Entomatic Handheld underlines our commitment to sustainable, grower-friendly innovation. Whether you're operating a large-scale glasshouse or a compact ornamental nursery, this new tool offers the speed and accuracy needed to improve biological control outcomes."

The new Entomatic Handheld is now available through your local Biobest advisor.

Source: Biobest September 15, 2025 news release

GREENHOUSE GROWER

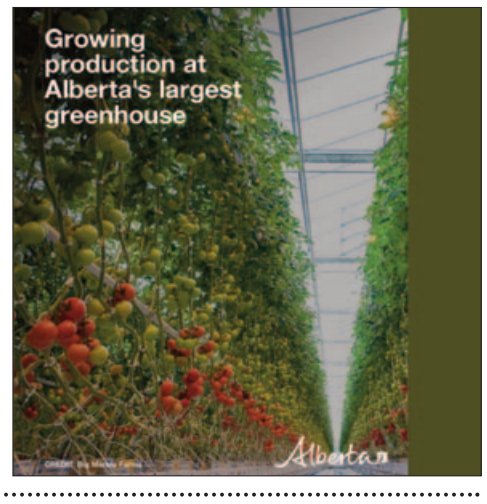
Big Marble Farms receives $2.2M Alberta grant for grow lights

Thanks to $2.2 million through Emissions Reduction Alberta, Big Marble Farms will be installing more than 5,000 horticultural grow lights at its Cypress County greenhouse near Medicine Hat, Alberta. The objective is to save almost $2 million in utility costs and produce 4,600 fewer tonnes of emissions.

"Alberta's farmers and food processors are leaders in finding new ways to grow more with less," says RJ Sigurdson, Alberta minister of agriculture and irrigation. "By supporting projects like this, we're helping greenhouse operators cut energy costs, stay competitive, and deliver fresh, local produce to families year-round. This grant to Big Marble will create new jobs and business opportunities while also putting more locally grown food on Canadian tables. I am confident that we will see more greenhouses choosing Alberta as their base of operations in the future."

"The horticultural grow lights will provide the greenhouse with up to 45 per cent more light than its current system, producing bigger crops without higher energy bills," says Ryan Cramer, CEO, Big Marble Farms. "

Big Marble Farms is currently home to more than 496,000 cucumber plants, 385,000 tomato plants and 47,000 grow lights. The Strategic Energy Management for Industry program is funded by the Government of Alberta and Natural Resources Canada. The program covers up to 50 per cent of eligible project costs for for-profit organizations and up to 100 per cent of eligible project costs for not-for-profits and Indigenous organizations.



Center for Horticultural Innovation rebrands as Biophi

The Center for Horticultural Innovation, a leader in horticultural research and development based in Leamington, Ontario, has announced a complete rebrand with a new name: Biophi.

The new identity captures Biophi's role as a forward-looking partner for the horticultural industry—analytical yet hands-on, pragmatic yet creative—reflecting its commitment to getting real-world solutions to market faster.

Founded in 2020, Biophi is a horticultural innovation hub dedicated to advancing research and development in controlled environment agriculture (CEA). With its applied research and industry-led collaborations, Biophi positions itself as the go-to partner for growers and suppliers alike—bridging research and application to transform challenges into scalable solutions.

As part of the transformation, Biophi has introduced a refreshed visual identity and updated messaging designed to highlight its commitment to research, collaboration, and industry-wide progress. The rebrand was developed in partnership with global design studio Bruce Mau Design (BMD), who repositioned Biophi as the industry's practical problem-solver through a new brand platform, name, tone of voice and visual identity. The stencil wordmark conveys agility and a 'ready-to-act' attitude, while the encircled monogram doubles as a mark of authority.

A predominantly white palette emphasizes science and precision, complemented by colours inspired by Biophi's own technologies such as LED lighting.

"Adopting the Biophi identity allows us to better represent who we are today: a collaborative hub accelerating horticultural innovation," says Matt Korpan, executive director of R&D Operations at Biophi. "This refresh tells our story as a future-facing problem solver, empowering growers and partners with real-world solutions."

For more information, visit www.biophi.ca

Source: Biophi September 18, 2025 news release

POTATO PRODUCTION

Potato Sustainability Alliance releases 2024 assessment report

The Potato Sustainability Alliance (PSA) has released its 2024 On-Farm Assessment Report, showcasing broad participation and measurable progress in sustainable potato production across the U.S. and Canada. The report shares results and insights from the PSA Program annual on-farm assessment, which supports growers in measuring and improving their management practices through a standardized, outcomes-based approach.

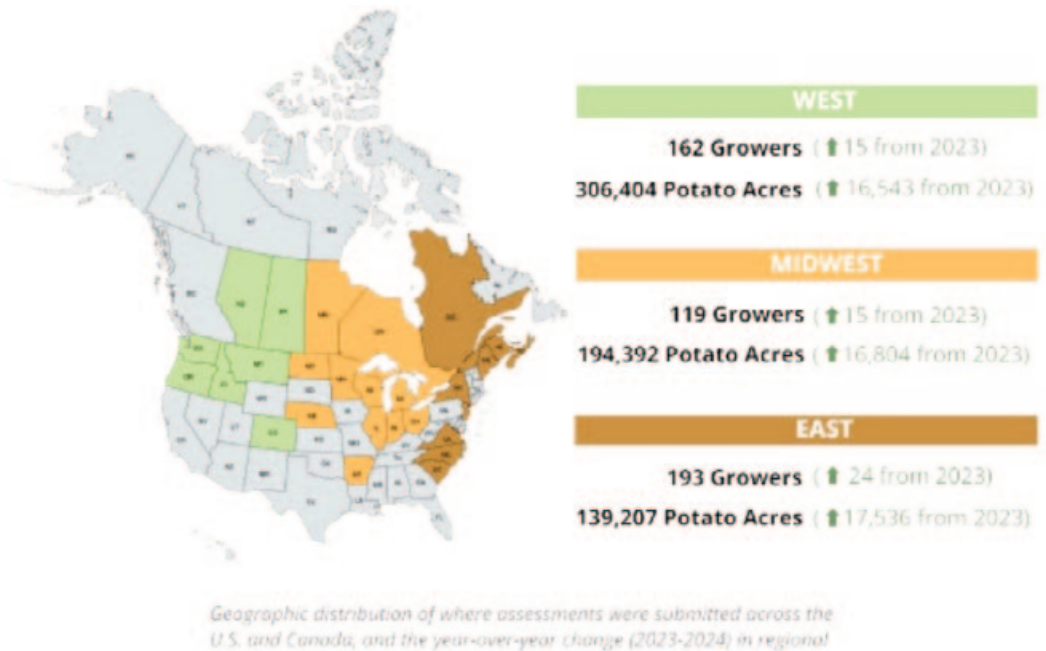
In 2024, a total of 474 growers, representing 640,002 potato acres across the U.S. and Canada, participated in the PSA Program.

"Participation in the PSA Program gives growers the opportunity to measure, benchmark, and share the sustainability efforts already happening on farms across North America," says Natalie Nesburg, PSA program manager. "By taking part, growers not only demonstrate leadership but also help shape industry-wide understanding of what sustainable potato production looks like today."

Growers receive immediate feedback on their sustainability performance and gain insights from other participants in their region through a personalized community benchmark report. The SOA Standard framework consists of six broadly applicable sustainable agriculture outcomes that result from the adoption of various management strategies, practices, and technologies: Optimal Production, Water Impact, Soil Health, Biodiversity and Habitat, Human and Animal Health and Community Leadership.

In this report, participating growers achieved an overall performance score of High, increasing from Medium in 2023. The High performance score reflects the broad implementation of advanced practices and technologies that promote long-term profitability, reduce risk, conserve natural resources and generate value beyond the farm.

"While this is a strong result, a high score signals progress, not completion. There are still valuable opportunities to improve and learn," notes Nesburg. "The level of adoption and collaboration across the value chain reflects a shared commitment to achieving long-term sustainability outcomes."



Geographic distribution of where assessments were submitted across the U.S. and Canada, and the year-over-year change (2023-2024) in regional participation and represented acres.

Key findings in the Soil Health outcome indicate 82 per cent of growers participate in projects that support and measure nutrient management for soil health (up 9% from 2023). Additionally, 50 per cent of growers adopted a new practice to reduce tillage and compaction at the field level in the past three years.

In the Water Impact outcome, data reflects that 99 per cent of growers who irrigate are using a crop production irrigation plan that has been optimized over time to consider long-term water availability and challenges in the area. Of the participating growers, 58 per cent collaborate with others in their area on watershed or aquifer initiatives to improve water quality (up 6% from 2023).

The report also identifies strategic opportunities for continued improvement. These are practices that are moderately adopted by 50-70 per cent of participating growers and are closely associated with higher performance scores. Examples include mapping sensitive environmental areas, enhancing biological pest control, and participating in knowledge-sharing networks. PSA will use these insights to guide the development of educational resources, peer learning opportunities and collaborative projects.

Source: Potato Sustainability Alliance August 13, 2025 news release

CHAIR'S PERSPECTIVE

OFVGA urges informed, responsible dialogue around seasonal workers

SHAWN BRENN

Recent political speculation about the future of Canada's Temporary Foreign Worker Programs (TFWP) has created uncertainty for Canada's agriculture and agri-food sector. It is especially concerning for fruit and vegetable growers, who depend on this reliable seasonal workforce to plant, manage, and harvest much of the country's produce. Without these essential international workers, Canadians would have difficulty finding locally grown fruits and vegetables on store shelves.

As Canada contemplates the future of its international labour programs, it's important to remember how they began — and their critical role in our food system. Seasonal or guest workers have long been part of the global workforce; when domestic workers are unavailable, countries open their doors to people from abroad seeking opportunities they can't find at home.

Guest workers from Italy, Greece, and Spain filled jobs in Northern Europe during the post-war economic boom. Canada welcomed its first seasonal workers in 1966, when 264 Jamaicans came to Ontario to help with the apple harvest, which laid the foundation for the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP), now one of Canada's longest-running and most respected labour programs.

Today, more than 30,000 workers from Mexico, Jamaica, Trinidad & Tobago, Barbados, and the Eastern Caribbean Islands come through SAWP each year to support Canada's horticulture sector. Thousands more arrive through the agricultural stream of the TFWP, forming the backbone of the workforce that grows, harvests, packs, and ships the fruits and vegetables Canadians rely on.

SAWP is not new or experimental, with 2026 marking 60 years of collaboration between growers, the federal government, and workers' home-country governments to continually refine and improve the program. Its collaborative structure is one of its key strengths. If an issue arises on a farm, the employer, worker, and liaison or consular staff from the worker's home country work together to find solutions or, if needed, help the worker transition to another farm. This problem-solving approach has stood the test of time, supporting positive outcomes for both workers and employers.

SAWP also lets participants move between farms when circumstances change or new opportunities open up. Many return to the same farms year after year, building skills, experience, and relationships that make them even more valuable to Canadian agriculture. The system benefits everyone involved. Workers play an essential role in Canada's food supply, and the wages they earn support their families and communities at home — remittances are a vital income source for many Caribbean and Mexican communities.

Despite this success, the program has faced increasing scrutiny as Canada grapples with housing shortages, strained public services, broader immigration pressures and youth unemployment. It's easy to blame temporary foreign workers for these challenges, but that oversimplifies complex issues.

Ending SAWP or the TFWP would not solve Canada's housing or infrastructure problems — and it would create new ones. These are jobs that, year after year, employers struggle to fill with Canadian workers despite offering competitive wages and good working conditions. They are also jobs that can't simply be filled by students during school breaks, for example, as employers need a reliable workforce throughout the entire growing season, which is much longer than school holidays.

Without international workers, many farms and food businesses would face crippling labour shortages, reducing domestic food production, increasing dependence on imports, and putting food security at risk.

Last year, the federal government began overhauling its temporary foreign worker programs for agriculture, aiming to merge them into a new national program that would also serve the seafood processing sector. The Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association (OFVGA) has been deeply involved in these consultations, advocating to retain SAWP's best features — especially its collaborative dispute-resolution model and worker mobility — while strengthening protections and supports for workers and employers alike. And through our More than a Migrant Worker initiative and traditional and social media, we continue to share accurate information about SAWP and other agricultural TFW streams.

As governments work through this redesign, it's crucial that public discussions about SAWP and the TFWP are informed, responsible, and grounded in fact. Rhetoric that vilifies workers or paints these programs as the root of unrelated problems risks undermining a system that has fed Canadians for generations.

I strongly encourage growers to engage with their federal Members of Parliament to reinforce how essential these programs are to Canada's food system — and why future changes must build on decades of accumulated policy experience. Canada's fruit and vegetable growers are proud to provide fresh, healthy food to Canadians — and to do so in partnership with the skilled, dedicated people who come here to work each season.

Shawn Brenn is a potato grower and chair of the Ontario Fruit & Vegetable Growers' Association.

WEATHER VANE

This Ontario scene at the Milton Farmers' Market showcases abundance, not only in garlic, but fresh greens such as kale. As families share a Thanksgiving table burgeoning with fresh fruits and vegetables, don't forget to toast the farmers and their temporary foreign workers who brought the harvest from field to fork. Photo by Karen Davidson.

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THE GROWER

URBAN COWBOY

New University of Guelph president calls horticulture the "vanguard" of innovation

OWEN ROBERTS

Horticulture will be central to an increased emphasis on innovation and entrepreneurship at the University of Guelph, says the institution's new president.

Dr. Rene Van Acker, named the university's 10th president in July 2025, says efforts are underway to build more opportunities and support for entrepreneurship, including through the Ontario Agri-Food Innovation Alliance.

The alliance is a government-university collaboration for research and education that brings together the University of Guelph, Agricultural Research and Innovation Ontario and the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness. The alliance provides a portion of the funding for the University of Guelph to manage a network of 15 publicly owned agricultural research stations, sites and investments across the province.

Van Acker sees horticulture as the "vanguard' of the alliance's entrepreneurial emphasis. Ontario produces more than 200 commodities, many of which are marketed as raw products or exported and processed abroad. Horticulture, which sports a wide, diverse group of commodities, has long been identified as a sector with significant value-added potential.

And that's Van Acker's hope. He's chuffed by initiatives at the university such as the Arrell Food Institute's Global Food Prize and, closer to home, the Feeding the Future exercise, in which university officials engage with stakeholders to determine priorities.

During the latest iteration of this program, involving more than 300 stakeholders, commercialization and market access was one of five key themes identified for action by the university and the agri-food sector. Participants said the university's strong track record in commercialization must be expanded, especially for small and medium-sized enterprises in the agri food sector, including farms. Mentorship, funding and clearer pathways for taking innovations from the lab to the marketplace were among the activities cited for more support.

Van Acker is enthused about the potential for entrepreneurism centred around the research stations, driven by faculty and staff expertise, involving students in the research process and supported by the communities that are home to the stations. Product and technology creation resulting from entrepreneurism leads to new jobs, an asset to any community, particularly as Ontario and Canada adjust to the changing geopolitical landscape.

In the alliance system, horticulture benefits broadly from advances brought forward throughout the system, including from the Ontario Crops Research Centre in the Holland Marsh, the Ontario Crops Research Centre near Simcoe and the Superior Plant Upgrading and Propagation (SPUD) unit at New Liskeard.

For its part, the SPUD unit supports farmers and the wider agriculture and food industry by offering testing for plant diseases and providing a stock of healthy plants to commercial growers across the province. It produces 10 per cent of the minitubers needed for seed potato production in Ontario. And it's the only source in Canada for garlic seed suited for the Ontario climate. Other commodities that benefit from research and development at the SPUD unit include strawberries, sweet potatoes, haskap berries and hazelnuts.

Last summer, the governments of Canada and Ontario announced they were committing $330,000 to SPUD, through the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership for a variety of capital and equipment upgrades there. Projects included improvements to the irrigation, air filtration, heating and control systems, increases to sterilization capacity and improvements to the greenhouse coverings.

The horticulture industry wants more. It's pressing for further investment in SPUD to make it a state-of-the-art operation, as vital as its livestock research-station counterparts in southwestern Ontario, such as the 175,000-square-foot Ontario Dairy Research Centre at the Elora Research Station.

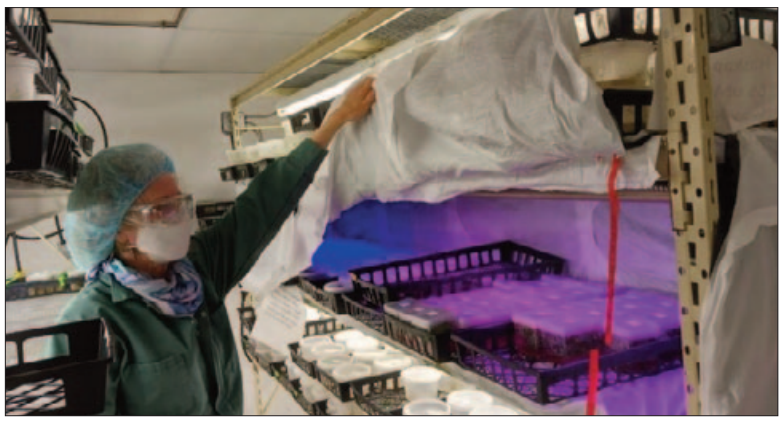
Van Acker understands that clean seed and propagation are a horticulture industry priority, having worked closely with the sector in past roles such as chair of the university's Department of Plant Agriculture, dean of the Ontario Agricultural College and vice-president of research, as well as interim president since last November.

He says further investment in clean seed and propagation facilities is under discussion.

"We know the industry needs this service and wants us to figure out how to make it happen," he says. "Until that's decided, we'll continue to make sure the facility at New Liskeard serves the sector and meets regulations."

Owen Roberts is a Guelph-based agricultural journalist and a past-president of the International Federation of Agricultural Journalists.

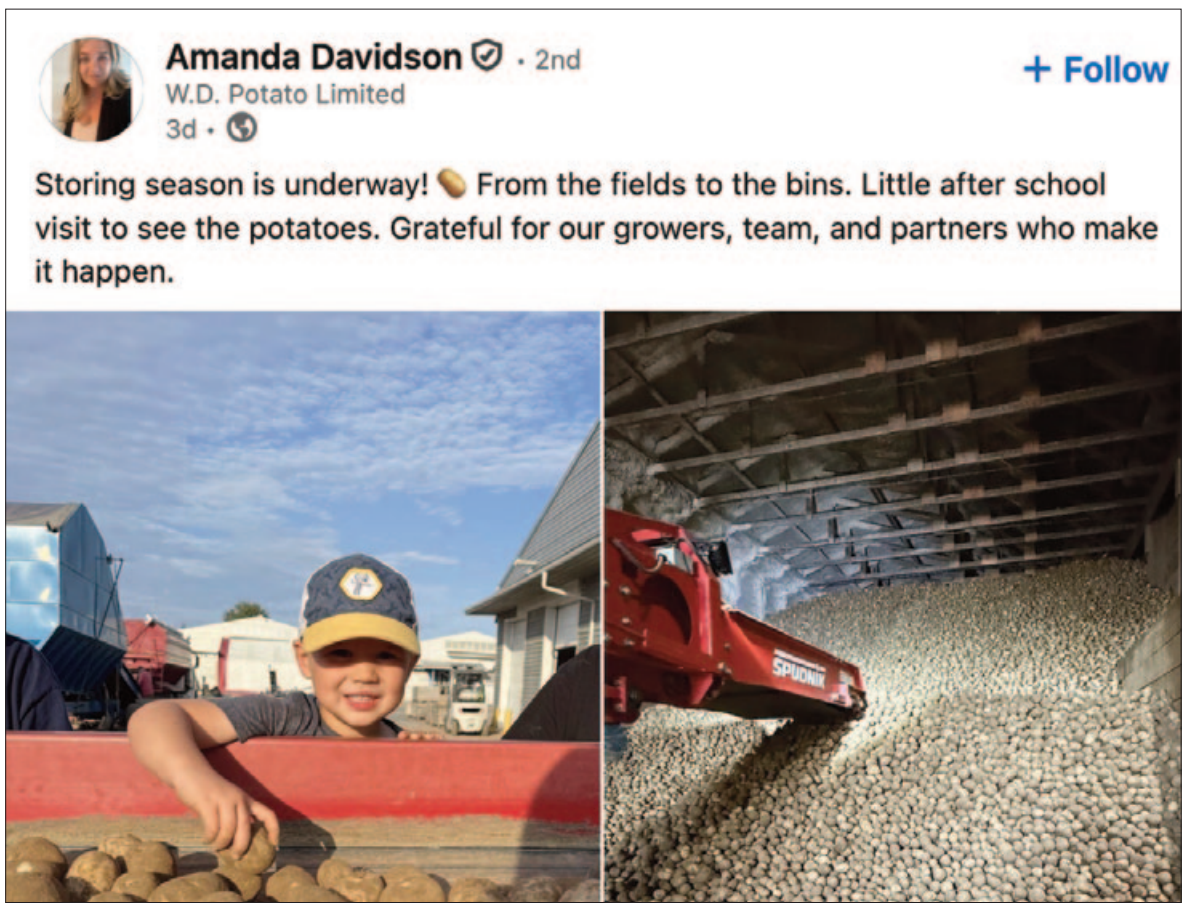
Dr. Rene Van Acker, University of Guelph president (R), visited the Ontario Crops Research Centre, Bradford, Ontario, earlier this summer and engaged with Trevor Jones, Ontario minister of agriculture, food and agribusiness. Photo by Karen Davidson.



SPUD unit in New Liskeard, Ontario.

BITS & BITES

Scene on LinkedIn

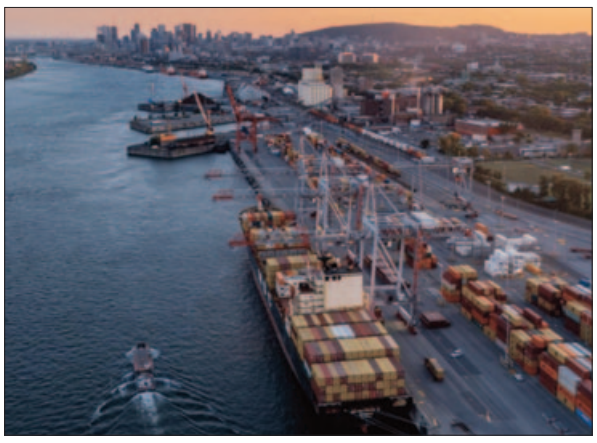


Did you know?

Canada's ports are reaching capacity. With even a small shift in trade flows, demand will outpace current infrastructure. Today, 75 per cent of Canada's exports go to the U.S. If only 6 per cent of this flow diversifies to international markets, Canadian ports will reach full capacity by 2030.

The announcement of the expansion of the Port of Montreal at Contrecoeur adds 1.15 million TEUs of new capacity in the St. Lawrence. Project completion is expected by 2030.

Source: Tony Boemi, senior commercial advisor, Montreal Port Authority



ONTARIO FRUIT & VEGETABLE GROWERS' ASSOCIATION

NOTICE OF MEETING

is hereby given that the

167TH Annual Members and Directors' Meeting

of the

Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association

will be held in person at Hilton Niagara Falls/Fallsview Hotel & Suites on Tuesday, February 17, 2026

Election of Directors of the Association will take place as well as dealing with resolutions and any other business that may arise.

AWARD OF MERIT

Award of Merit is our way of recognizing the outstanding contribution made by an individual or organization to our fruit and vegetable industry. This recognition may include the strategic leadership, technical input, and/or the dedication shown by this person or organization to our fruit and vegetable sector.

AWARD OF MERIT NOMINATION FORM AND REGISTRATION AVAILABLE AT WWW.OFVGA.ORG/AGM

COMING EVENTS 2025

Oct 6-12	Ontario Agriculture Week
Oct 8-9	Canadian Greenhouse Conference, Niagara Falls, ON
Oct 10	FARMtoberfest, Wilkommen Platz, Kitchener-Waterloo Oktoberfest, ON
Oct 16-18	Global Produce & Floral Show, Anaheim, CA
Oct 21-23	FIRA 4th edition of ag robotics and autonomous solutions, Woodland/Sacramento, CA
Oct 24	Ontario Pest Management Conference, Royal Botanical Gardens, Burlington, ON
Oct 28-29	Canadian Centre for Food Integrity Public Trust Symposium, Westin Toronto Airport Hotel, Toronto, ON
Nov 7-16	Royal Agricultural Winter Fair, Toronto, ON
Nov 9-15	Agritechnica, Hanover, Germany
Nov 18-20	Potato Growers of Alberta Annual General Meeting, Red Deer Resort & Casino, Red Deer, AB
Nov 19	Prince Edward Island Potato Board Annual Business Meeting, Charlottetown, PE
Nov 21	Prince Edward Island Potato Industry Annual Banquet, Delta Prince Edward, Charlottetown, PE
Nov 21	Ontario Produce Marketing Association Gala & Awards Night, Sheraton Fallsview Hotel, Niagara Falls, ON
Nov 23-25	Advancing Women Conference East, Sheraton Fallsview, Niagara Falls, ON
Nov 27	Farm & Food Care Ontario Harvest Gala, Delta Hotel & Conference Centre, Guelph, ON
Nov 27-29	Ontario Beekeepers' Association Annual General Meeting, Delta Hotel, Guelph, ON
Nov 27-30	Outstanding Young Farmers National Event, Sheraton Centre, Toronto, ON
Dec 3	CanAgPlus Annual General Meeting, Westin Hotel, Calgary, AB
Dec 3	Ontario Potato Board Annual General Meeting, Delta Guelph Hotel & Conference Centre, Guelph, ON
Dec 9-11	Great Lakes Fruit, Vegetable and Farm Market Expo, Grand Rapids, MI
2026	
Jan 4-11	Farm and Food Care Ontario Men's and Women's Curling Championship, Woolwich Memorial Centre, Elmira, ON
Jan 6-8	Potato Expo, Dallas, Texas
Jan 7-10	North American Strawberry Growers' Association Annual Meeting and Symposium, Holiday Inn Express, Savannah, Georgia
Jan 26-28	11th International Cool Climate Wine Symposium, Christchurch, New Zealand
Jan 27-29	Nova Scotia Fruit Growers' Association Convention, Old Orchard Inn, Greenwich, NS
Jan 28-30	Manitoba Potato Production Days, Brandon, MB
Feb 4-7	Fruit Logistica, Berlin, Germany

RETAIL NAVIGATOR

Do you really have a sales department?

PETER CHAPMAN

We have the privilege of working with primary producers from coast to coast. It is very interesting to see the different business models, and we appreciate the passion people have for their products. There are many different tasks required to build a successful food business.

- You need to determine what you will produce
- You need to figure out how you will grow it
- You need to develop the capacity to produce it
- You need to get it to market
- You need to sell it

Within each of these simple statements there are so many steps that require time, energy, expertise, money and passion. Unfortunately, we see so many businesses that put the vast majority of the effort into the first four statements. Yes, you need to develop products and have the ability to produce them. The reality is if you do not put the effort into selling it, you will not maximize the opportunity.

Sales are not the result of a great product. They need to be developed and managed. Yes! You can influence sales.

The difference between sales and marketing

We see many businesses that combine sales and marketing. We understand why, but you really need to see them as two different functions. Here is how we define these two functions:

Sales are the customer-focused part of your business. These people work with the retailers that issue the purchase orders. They are responsible for developing the relationships with retailers and distributors that result in the sales transaction. Some of their tools include trade spend and trade shows.

Marketing is the consumer-focused part of your business. Your professionals develop the campaigns to create awareness and build demand for the product from the end user. They do social media, mass media and public relations.

It is a reality that produce owners combine these functions as the business grows. You cannot afford to hire too many people early on. One of the biggest challenges with combining these roles is people gravitate to the marketing and avoid the sales. They see sales a result of good marketing. It is true -- good marketing will create demand, but if the product is not in the store and merchandised properly, you will miss a lot of opportunities.

Marketing is often more rewarding and more interesting to work on. It can be creative and if consumers like your product, they are nice to deal with. Customers (retailers and distributors) can be challenging and frustrating to deal with. Having your product properly merchandised where 30,000 consumers pass it every week in each store can deliver a lot better results that a social media post you do not control, on very crowded platforms.

Role of sales in your business

To ensure you benefit from the resources you dedicate to sales, you need to define the role and hold people accountable for results. We see it as very under-developed in the small- to medium-sized business space. The large consumer-packaged goods (CPG) companies and produce businesses dedicate a lot of resources to sales. There is a reason. They get a return on their investment. It is true they have more money to invest in this area, but they would only do it if they see benefits. You must figure out what you can do in your business.

What you cannot do is hope a great product and some good marketing will deliver sales. Retailers and distributors expect more than ever from suppliers, and you need to do some of the work they used to do. You need capable resources in place to do this work.

Sales budgets/targets

Your sales people need to work with the other parts of your business to determine what the sales targets are. This can be impacted by supply of raw materials, packaging you can afford, production capacity, stores you are listed for and several other factors. Your entire business should be aligned on the volume of product that is ideal for you to produce and sell. This should evolve from year to year as your business changes. Sales people should also be realistic about the amount they can sell. Perhaps you have capacity for 10,000 cases, but if you are only in 50 stores you probably will not sell that much. The business needs to be on the same page to deliver the right sales.

Customer relationships

Managing customers can be a huge challenge. They are demanding and some might say unreasonable. The reality is it is their store, so you need to figure out how to make it work. Your sales team needs to manage the relationships to ensure you have the best chance to do the volume, and you spend the right amount of money generating those sales. Compliance is a big part of this relationship. Your sales team needs to be clear on what customers expect and figure out how to work with the rest of your business to make it happen. Your sales team need to figure out category managers. Hoping your customer does not call, and everything is ok is not a viable strategy.

The Canadian Produce Marketing Association organizes an annual trade show along with its convention. These events are one way for sales people to connect with retail customers. Mark your calendar for April 28-30, 2026 for the CPMA's Convention and Trade Show in Toronto, Ontario.

Trade spend plan

You need to invest with your customers. There are many different options, and your sales people need to know every option and figure out which tactics work for your products and your category. This includes ads, discounts, in-store specials, locally grown programs, over and above merchandising, demos and many more.

Conduct your business has with customers and consumers

You need to know what is going on out there. Your sales team should be in stores, talking to employees and consumers. The information they can get is so valuable. There can be a perception that driving around and going in stores is a great way to put in a Friday afternoon. Not true. Store visits with a purpose can provide some very valuable information about your products and others in the category.

Trade shows

These are a part of our industry. A great sales team can build on existing relationships and develop new ones at trade shows. This is not standing behind a booth. This is being proactive, setting up meetings in advance, finding the right people who can be a partner to take your business to the next level, and being a great face for your business in the industry.

Managing channel partners

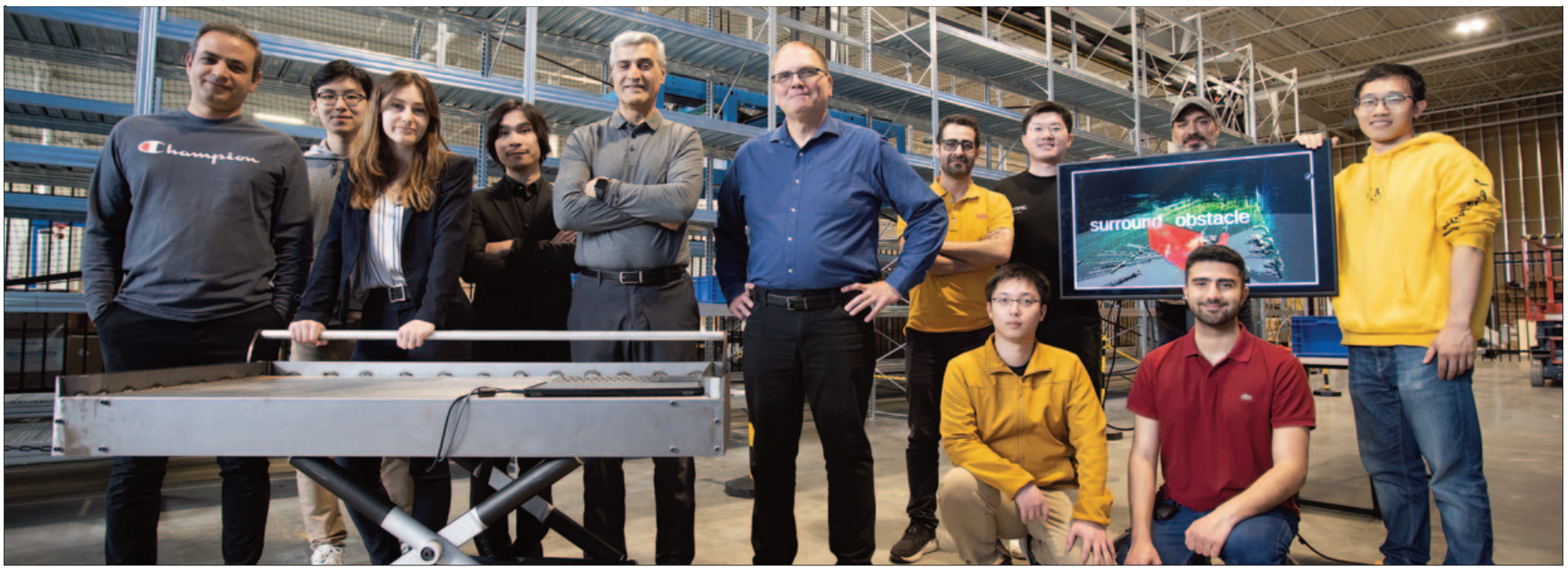
We see many businesses who believe once they find a broker and/or a distributor they do not have to focus on sales. Not true. These people can perform some of the tasks to allow you to scale your business or grow into new markets. Someone in your business still needs to own sales and manage these partners.

An effective sales team with the right goals and abilities can deliver great results for your business. They need to be accountable for what they own and deliver results to drive your business forward. Your customers will also appreciate the focus your sales team puts on their business.

Peter Chapman is a retail consultant, professional speaker and the author of A la Cart-a suppliers' guide to retailer's priorities. Peter is based in Halifax, N.S. where he is the principal at SKUFood. Peter works with producers and processors to help them get their products on the shelf and into the shopping cart.

FOCUS: START-UPS AND SMART TECHNOLOGY

A CableBot is cutting-edge automation for stored crops in controlled environments



Dr. Amir Khajepour, (centre) founder and president, started Reel-In Robotics in 2022. Next to him is John Van de Vegte, (right) general manager, who is bringing CableBot technology to horticulture. A team of University of Waterloo engineers bring varied talents to the project. Photos by Jeff Tribe.

KAREN DAVIDSON

Any sports fan is accustomed to seeing a Skycam, a cable robot used to position a TV broadcast camera over a playing field. But how does it work and what could its application possibly be for warehouse automation?

Thanks to Dr. Amir Khajepour, a professor at the University of Waterloo and director of the Waterloo Centre for Automotive Research, the concept of a CableBot is now being tested in Reel-In Robotics, a start-up in Kitchener, Ontario. An award-winning professor of mechanical and mechatronics engineering founded Reel-In Robotics to bring more than a decade of his research in cable robotics and a portfolio of related patents into real-world automated warehousing solutions. Upon meeting agricultural engineer John Van de Vegte, the company recognized the immense potential of applying its technology to the agri-food sector, an industry where automation can deliver transformative benefits.

"High-capacity automated warehousing systems using CableBots for 25 kilogram totes or boxes have been developed by Reel-In Robotics," explains Van de Vegte, general manager for Reel-In Robotics since August 2022. "I suggested that there was an opportunity with 1,000-kilogram crates where apple and carrot growers need to manage stored inventory."

Grocery distribution centres, for example, are using robotics to pick SKUs in vast warehouses. In these situations, the driver for adopting these systems are labour savings. But in agricultural storage warehouses, the driver is reducing food waste and improving food quality.

"How to manage large totes of different varieties, sizes and harvest dates becomes a multi-faceted challenge in controlled atmosphere environments," says Van de Vegte.

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's investment of up to $1.2 million under the Agricultural Clean Technology (ACT) Program – Research and Innovation Stream, matched by private investment, has enabled the company to develop made-in-Canada solutions for small and medium-sized enterprises that would not normally be able to afford CableBots. Take carrot growers, for example. As Van de Vegte explains, the challenge lies in removing different-sized carrots from storage -- cellos, jumbos, and super-jumbos -- and moving them through a wash line before packaging.

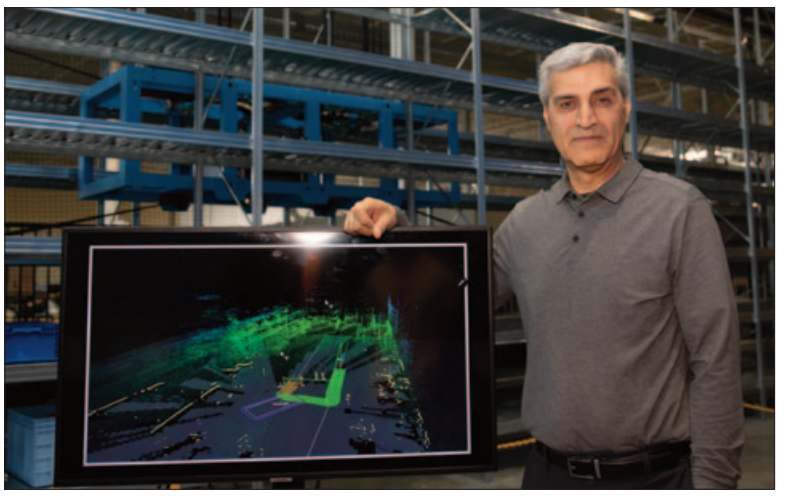
"You need the right mix of sizes to optimize the production line," says Van de Vegte. Traditional retrieval systems have been capital intensive. These new technologies promise a cost-effective solution.

In the fall of 2025, Reel-In Robotics will have a demonstration system installed with a third-party logistics supplier in Mississauga, Ontario. It's 30 metres long and 10 metres high, bigger than the beta model of 20 metres long and 5 metres high at the Kitchener testing site. In the first quarter of 2026, Reel-In Robotics will have a demonstration system up and running with an Ontario apple grower and processor. The true test will be exhibiting the simplicity and flexibility in a racking system.

The CableBot acts like a two-dimensional elevator, operating along warehouse aisles and forming the backbone of Reel-In Robotics' solution. Early on, the inventors realized that farmers and distributors needed more than a single robot; they needed a complete, integrated solution. To make this a reality, they expanded the team to develop a one-of-a-kind autonomous mobile robot (AMR), a warehouse control system, and other key modules for a turnkey automated warehousing setup. The AMRs take loads from the CableBot and handle all internal movement, ensuring heavy crates and boxes are transported safely and efficiently without any conveyor belts.

The CableBot can move at speeds of up to five metres per second and perform more than 200 picks of totes per hour. For heavier crates and pallets, this rate drops to around 50 per hour. Reel-In engineers together with Master's and PhD students from the University of Waterloo are working to increase the speed and efficiency of CableBot. Ready access to the university's talent pool has pushed the development forward at an accelerated rate.

With shifts in global trade, the moment is ripe for made-in-Canada technology that boosts the competitiveness of export-focused agriculture. Start-ups face the constant challenge of bringing innovations to market quickly, but Reel-In Robotics backed by its cutting-edge technology is confident it will achieve significant sales growth in 2026, helping farmers and distributors work smarter and faster.



We're entering a very exciting phase where our technology is moving from the lab to real-world use. Reel-In Robotics has the potential to transform warehousing and agriculture, opening the door to tremendous opportunities ahead.

~ DR. AMIR KHAJEPOUR

A two-dimensional elevator operates along warehouse aisles.

FOCUS: START-UPS AND SMART TECHNOLOGY

Less guesswork. more wins: how Vivid Machines is changing fruit farming

VIVID MACHINES **TORONTO, ON** **VIVID-MACHINES.COM**

Fruit farming has always been a mix of art and grit. But as pressures mount from labor shortages to tighter margins, growers are looking for tools that cut through uncertainty. Enter Vivid Machines, the Toronto-based agtech company on a mission to bring the precision of manufacturing to orchards and vineyards.

At the heart of Vivid's platform is the XV3 camera, a rugged, farm-tough device that mounts on any tractor or ATV. With each pass down the row, it captures real-time, GPS-linked images of every bud, blossom, and fruit. Using AI, Vivid turns that firehose of data into instant insights: how many apples are on each tree, how evenly a block is setting, and most recently, where disease is showing up. The results sync to the Prisma dashboard, where growers can forecast yields by size and weight, benchmark performance year over year, and plan crew moves with precision.

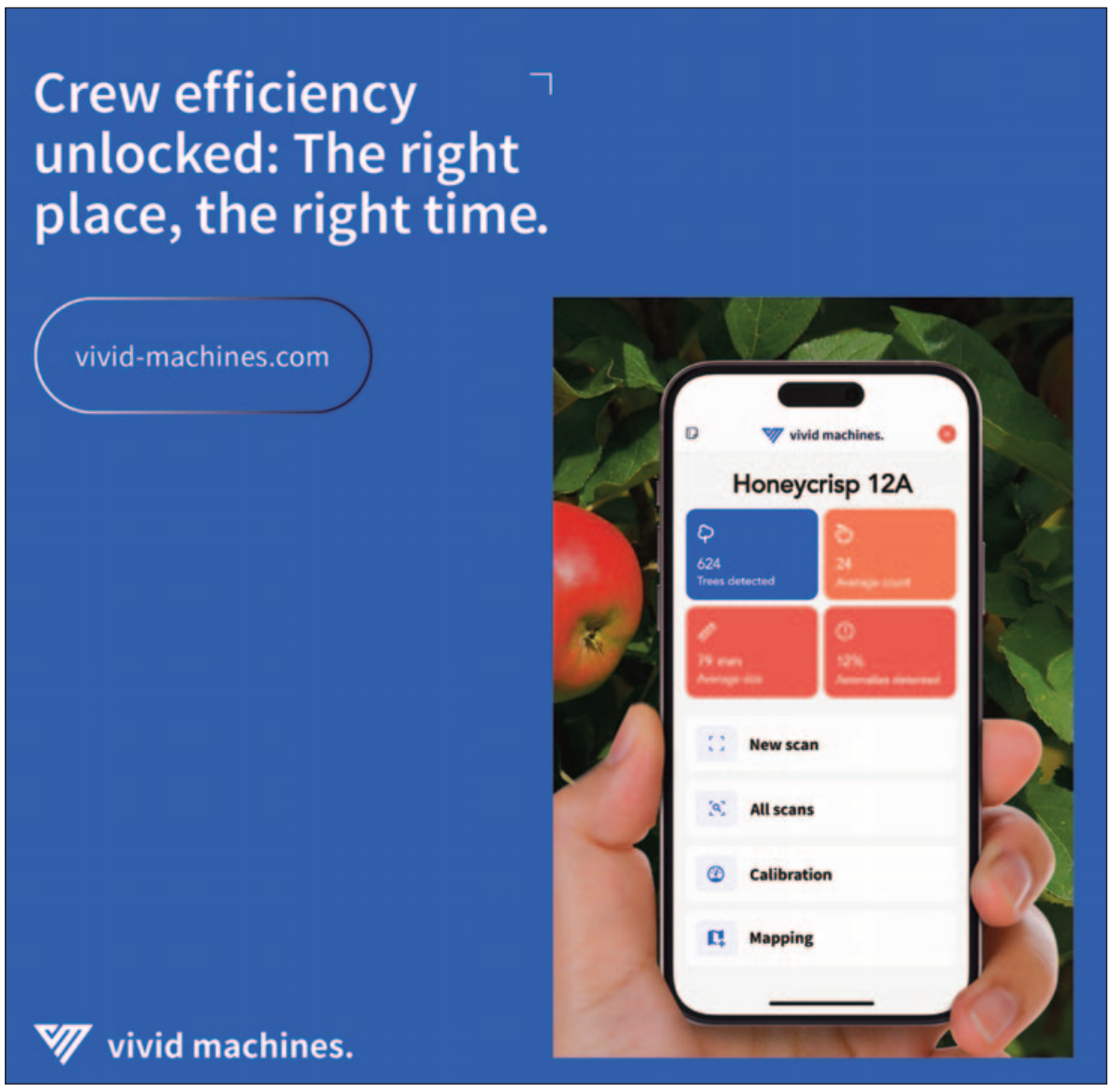
The payoff is big: Penn State researchers have shown that Vivid's data can reduce spray use by 40–50% when paired with variable-rate sprayers. That means healthier trees, better fruit, and higher confidence with buyers.

Growers across North America are using Vivid Machines technology to determine where to focus crews to hit their crop load targets more efficiently.

Marketers, too, see value. Early and accurate forecasts allow packers and retailers to plan promotions with certainty and reduce costly surprises at harvest.

Behind Vivid Machines are co-founders Jenny Lemieux and Jonathan Binas, who fused their backgrounds in design, farming, and computer vision to build what is now the world's largest fruit crop dataset. Their vision: give growers the same real-time intelligence that factories rely on - so every decision in the field is backed by data, not guesswork.

Today, Vivid is working with farms across North America, New Zealand and Australia, Argentina, and Europe. Whether it's dialing in thinning, reducing inputs, or giving marketers confidence months before harvest, the mission is simple: help fruit growers win more often, with less risk.



Take control of your greenhouse – visit booth 929

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Greenhouse growers face constant pressure: unpredictable weather, rising energy costs, labour shortages, and the need to deliver consistent, high-quality crops. Staying in control of your climate and irrigation—especially during challenging seasons—is key to protecting yield and profitability.

That's where autonomous growing makes the difference. With Crop Controller, climate and irrigation are no longer managed separately. The system uses AI and real-time data to adjust every five minutes—ensuring optimal temperature, humidity, light, and water delivery. It even forecasts conditions up to three days ahead, helping you plan proactively and avoid surprises.

Growers using Crop Controller report:

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- 80% less climate computer work
- More consistent crop quality and size
- Better work-life balance

You can manage up to 4 times more hectares per grower, reduce manual interventions, and spend more time in the greenhouse instead of behind a screen.

Get the personal support you deserve
Every Crop Controller installation includes support from an off-site Autonomous Greenhouse Manager. They help you structure your crop strategy, monitor performance 24/7, and align regularly with your team—so you're not on your own.

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Whether you're dealing with cold winters, humid summers, or fluctuating light levels, autonomous growing helps you stay ahead—season after season.

Visit us at Booth #929 during Canadian Greenhouse Conference and discover how Crop Controller can help you grow smarter, scale sustainably, and gain peace of mind.

FOCUS: START-UPS AND SMART TECHNOLOGY

LaserWeeders cut costs and increase yields in Canada

CARBON ROBOTICS **SEATTLE, WA** **CARBONROBOTICS.COM**

Across Canada, farmers are turning to laser weeding to cut weed control costs while increasing crop yield, quality and consistency. The Carbon Robotics LaserWeeder uses advanced AI and deep learning to distinguish crops from weeds and eliminates weeds with lasers. Already trusted worldwide, LaserWeeder has eliminated more than 30 billion weeds across more than 100 crops in 14 countries. With the new LaserWeeder G2, available in widths from two to 12 meters, laser weeding is now accessible to more farm sizes and budgets.

A peer-reviewed publication by Cornell and Rutgers Universities shows laser weeding can reduce weed biomass by 97% and boost crop growth by 30%. In another third-party case study, farmers in leafy greens proved that laser weeding cut hand labour by more than 80%, lowering costs nearly in half. In onions, trials delivered 85% larger grades and a 36% increase in firmness, boosting market value and storability.

"The LaserWeeder is a cutting-edge technology that actually works and delivers the promised weed control in true field conditions," says Gaël Dube-Laberge, vice president, farm operations, Vegpro, Sherrington, Québec.

"The service is exceptional—available both on-site and remotely—to support us and keep downtime to a minimum. After one season, our weeding labour was reduced by more than 50%, and daily operations are now easier to manage."

In Ontario, Québec, British Columbia, and Alberta, Carbon Robotics LaserWeeders are helping both conventional and organic vegetable and herb farms boost profitability. As demand for sustainable and labour-efficient solutions grows, Canadian growers are turning to the LaserWeeder as a scalable, chemical-free method that protects crops and soil health.

Visit carbonrobotics.com to learn more about laser weeding on your farm.

BITS AND BITES

Fresh produce industry addresses audit fatigue

Playbook tackles and streamlines sustainability reporting

The Canadian Produce Marketing Association (CPMA) has released a pivotal new report, "Making Our Own Playbook: An Industry-Led Response to the Challenge of Sustainability Reporting and Audit Proliferation". The report, which synthesizes findings from an industry workshop held in Montreal on April 8, 2025, confronts the growing challenge of "audit fatigue" and proposes a unified, industry-led framework to bring clarity, consistency, and value to sustainability assurance in the fresh produce sector.

The report identifies a critical issue termed the "Assurance Paradox": a state where escalating demands for sustainability verification from buyers, regulators, and stakeholders lead to a proliferation of audits and questionnaires. This systemic pressure consumes industry resources with the complex demands of reporting, distracting from the implementation of genuine environmental improvements. The result is a system where more auditing activity does not lead to better assurance and can degrade trust.

In response, the workshop findings propose the development of an Environmental Charter, a pre-competitive sustainability assurance framework built on several key principles. The Charter advocates for a metrics-first, not practices-first approach, shifting the focus to quantifiable, outcomes-based data that is valuable for both producers and buyers.

"Our members are deeply committed to sustainable practices, but they are increasingly burdened by a reporting system that is fragmented and inefficient," said Ron Lemaire, president of the CPMA. "This report is our industry's playbook for moving from a reactive to a proactive position. By developing a unified framework defined by the grower community, we can ensure that sustainability metrics are practical, relevant, and drive meaningful outcomes, turning the burden of reporting into a source of innovation and competitive advantage."

The report breaks down the proposed framework across five core sustainability pillars—water, energy, packaging, material use, and land management. It also draws critical lessons from successful models such as the Potato Sustainability Alliance (PSA).

"The workshop brought the 'Assurance Paradox' to life, with participants from across the supply chain expressing a clear and consistent message: they are consumed with reporting instead of focusing on lowering their environmental footprint," said Garland Perkins, principal at Fresh Endeavors Consulting and workshop facilitator. "The strategic shift to a metrics-first, outcome-based framework is critical to resolving this tension. It provides a path to transform reporting from a simple compliance exercise into a powerful tool for improving efficiency and driving real-world progress."

Wyatt Maysey, director of sustainability at Taylor Farms, a workshop sponsor, added, "As producers, we see the fragmentation of reporting requests firsthand. A harmonized, pre-competitive framework like the proposed Environmental Charter allows us to focus our resources on what truly matters: making tangible improvements in our fields and facilities. It enables us to provide credible, consistent data to our customers while using that same data to become more efficient and resilient. This is a win-win for the entire supply chain."

Six tips for improving control of Phytophthora capsici in tomatoes

Table 1. Yield (tons/acre) of tomatoes treated with different fungicides for management of Phytophthora fruit rot in Essex County in 2019. Applications started at fruit set before symptoms were observed. Three or Five fungicide applications targeting *P. capsici*, applied ~10 days apart reduced rots by 78%.

	Yield (tons/acre)[b]			
Program (product rate per Ha (ABCDE))[a]	Reds	Greens	Rots	Total
Control	33.8 a[c]	2.0 a	2.5 a	38.4 a
Orondis Ultra @ 600 mL + Phostrol 2.9 L (A)	33.8 a	2.7 a	0.6 b	42.1 a
Zampro @ 1 L + Phostrol 2.9 L (B)				
Torrent @ 200 mL + Phostrol @ 2.9 L (C)				
Orondis Ultra @ 600 mL (D)				
Zampro @ 1 L (E)				
Orondis Ultra @ 600 mL + Phostrol 2.9 L (A)	41.0 a	2.0 a	0.5 b	43.5 a
Zampro @ 1 L + Phostrol @ 2.9 L (B)				
Torrent @ 200 mL + Phostrol @ 2.9 L (C)				

[1] All treatments received the standard grower program which did not include fungicides with activity against *P. capsici*. Application timings A = June 29, B = July 9, C= July 19, D = July 29, E = Aug 10.
[2] Two 2 m sections per plot were harvested.
[3] Numbers in a column followed by the same letter are not significantly different at P < 0.05, Tukey's HSD.

AMANDA TRACEY

Harvest season, when the plants are under stress from heavy fruit loads, temperatures are dropping and fungicide programs completed for the year, is often the best time to look for signs of soil borne diseases that will continue to affect your fields in the future. *Phytophthora capsici* in tomatoes, peppers and also cucurbit crops, is one example of a soil borne pathogen that should be noted for future crops. In tomatoes, buckeye rot (on green fruit) can be caused by several *Phytophthora spp.,* which belong to the Oomycete pathogen group (water moulds) (Fig. 1). However, severe outbreaks of buckeye rot in tomato fields in recent years are largely attributed to *P. capsici*. This pathogen can also cause root and crown lesions leading to vine decline (Fig. 2) and, with late season and/or severe infections, turn ripe fruit into 'water balloons' (Fig. 3). Knowing which fields show symptoms of buckeye rot in past tomato crops is important to ensuring the management of this disease in the future. There are a few strategies growers can use to help manage *P. capsici* in fields with a history of the disease.

Here are six tips to help manage *P. capsici*:

1. Use a long crop rotation: Longer rotations will help reduce inoculum load. 'Longer' in this case means 4 to 5 years with nonhost crops and weeds (including but not limited to other Solanaceae and cucurbits). This can be difficult for many growers, but the viability of *P. capsici* resting spores (oospores) declines dramatically after this period.

2. Apply fungicides preventatively at early fruit set: In on farm strip trials conducted by Dr. Cheryl Trueman in 2018 and 2019, targeted fungicide applications began at early fruit set. This was around the last week of June or first week of July. Since it is unclear when infections are beginning, the strategy was to protect fruit early to delay infections as long as possible. Early applications also allow fungicides to better penetrate the canopy. In 2019, we compared 5 targeted applications vs. 3 targeted applications, and both strategies reduced buckeye rot to similar levels (Table 1). These trials were harvested in mid-September so even with this number of applications, and ending several weeks before harvest, there was still a difference in yield. It is unlikely that waiting until symptoms appear in the field, often in July, will result in good control.

3. Use a 10-day application interval: A 10-day interval resulted in a reasonable level of control in commercial strip trials in 2018 and 2019.

4. Use fungicides with activity against *Phytophthora capsici*: The fungicides used in our research (Table 1) were applied in addition to a standard program targeting diseases caused by fungi (like early blight, anthracnose, septoria), so the 'control' treatment in this case is just the regular spray program. Single site fungicides for buckeye rot will not control fungal diseases, but they will provide protection against other oomycetes like late blight (*Phytophthora infestans*). Resistance management is extremely important when it comes to products targeting buckeye rot. Rotating chemical families (FRAC groups) is imperative to extend the life of the products currently available.

5. Review your irrigation management: Growers should ensure their irrigation water is not a source of inoculum. Surface water sources, such as ponds and streams, can be tested for *P. capsici*. This can be an added cost, but it is beneficial to know if your irrigation water is spreading spores. For information or assistance with water testing, please contact Amanda Tracey (OMAFA Vegetable Specialist) at amanda.tracey@ontario.ca or 519-350-7134.

Method of irrigation is also an important factor. *Phytophthora capsici* can spread through splashing water from rain or overhead irrigation. When irrigating a susceptible crop, it is better to use drip irrigation to minimize the spread of disease.

6. Maximize drainage: *Phytophthora capsici* infects via a mobile spore called a zoospore. These swim in free water, including saturated soils. Improving drainage through tiling and/or growing in raised beds will remove excess

Amanda Tracey is vegetable crops specialist, OMAFA

Figure 1. Various degrees of buckeye rot severity on green tomatoes.

Figure 2. Buckeye rot (A) and stem lesions (B) caused by *Phytophthora capsici*.

Figure 3. *P. capsici* rotting the internal flesh of tomato fruit while the skin remains intact, creating 'water balloons'.

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CROP PROTECTION

PMRA registration and review activity update in 2025

CHRIS DUYVELSHOFF

The Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) of Health Canada is responsible for registering and reviewing crop protection products in Canada to ensure they meet standards for human health and environmental protection. This includes both the addition of new products to the marketplace by registrant companies as well as periodic reviews of existing products to ensure they continue to meet current standards. Existing products are reviewed every 15 years under the re-evaluation stream or upon identification of new critical information in the case of a special review. The following is an update on key active ingredients undergoing reviews or have been newly proposed for registration in 2025.

New registration activity

The Registration Directorate of PMRA is responsible for reviewing applications for new active ingredients in Canada. To date in 2025, a total of four new active ingredients has been proposed for registration: Flg22-Bt peptide, metamitron, cyclobutrifluram and fluoxapiprolin.

Flg22-Bt peptide represents a new mode of action in the class of fungicides known as host plant defence inducers. These substances interact with existing biological defence mechanisms to activate certain biochemical pathways and turn on genes in plants. It is comparable to boosting a plant's immune system to prepare for a future threat. There are several registered products already in this area such as acibenzolar-S-methyl (Actigard), Bacillus mycoides isolate J (LifeGard), and extract of Reynoutria sachalinensis (Regalia). These defence inducer substances can be either biological or synthetic in origin. FLG22-Bt peptide is synthetically produced but is also naturally occurring as a component of *Bacillus thuringiensis* or Bt. It is now registered in Canada as Vismax for Fusarium suppression on soybean seed and head blight of wheat and may potentially be expanded to other crops.

Metamitron is originally a herbicide used in Europe on crops such as garden and sugar beets. However, at some point, it was discovered that when applied at the right dose to apple and pear trees, it causes a temporary drop in photosynthesis which is enough for fruit thinning activity. It has subsequently been developed as a fruit thinning product for apple and pear under the name Brevis. Though not yet finalized, the registration of metamitron would be a welcome addition to the crop load management toolbox for Canadian growers of pome fruit.

Cyclobutrifluram is a new nematicide/fungicide belonging to both the Fungicide Resistance Action Committee (FRAC) group 7 and nematicide group N-3 products. Its closest relative would be fluopyram (Velum Prime). Initial proposed registration includes suppression of root-knot nematode on romaine lettuce and control of soybean-cyst nematode and Fusarium on soybean. Its registration is not yet finalized.

Fluoxapiprolin is the second entry into the class of fungicides under FRAC group 49 after oxathiapiprolin (Orondis). This group is very effective against the oomycete pathogens like late blights and downy mildews. Xivana Prime will be the initial product containing fluoxapiprolin and will expand access to FRAC group 49 to some new crops like grapes, providing a new mode of action for disease control. Its registration is not yet finalized.

Re-evaluation and special reviews

On the other side of PMRA, publication of several major re-evaluation and special review decisions has been delayed to beyond this fiscal year. Active ingredients that were planned for decisions in fiscal year 2025-2026 which are now delayed include: clothianidin (Clutch/Titan), chlorpropham (CIPC), fenamidone (Reason), spinetoram (Delegate), spinosad (Success), and thiamethoxam (Actara/Cruiser).

However, the active ingredients below have already had or are still expected to have review decisions published in 2025.

Abamectin (Avid/Agri-Mek/Minecto Pro) is an insecticide based on a soil-dwelling bacteria and is the only member of the Insecticide Resistance Action Committee (IRAC) group 6 products registered in Canada. An insecticide and miticide, Abamectin is registered on a range of outdoor and greenhouse vegetable and fruit crops. The final re-evaluation decision for abamectin was completed in July 2025 with all uses being maintained along with updated mitigation measures required. Label updates will now be undertaken by the registrant.

Chlorothalonil (Bravo/Echo) is a well-known broad-spectrum fungicide belonging to the multisite FRAC group M products first registered in 1967. It is registered on a wide range of fruit and vegetables for disease control. The product was proposed for cancellation on all food crops in a 2022 proposed decision – despite the fact that many crops still strongly rely on this product for key disease control and resistance management. A final decision is now expected in October 2025.

Novaluron (Rimon) is an insecticide from IRAC group 15. Initially registered for just apple and potato, this product has been a solution for numerous additional pest needs, and the label has been expanded via Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Pest Management Centre and the Minor Use Program for a range of indoor and outdoor fruit and vegetables. A proposed special review decision is expected in October 2025.

Prohexadione calcium (Apogee/Kudos) is a plant growth regulator used on apple, cherry and strawberry. It also is implicated in disease control in some situations. A proposed re-evaluation decision is expected in November 2025.

Though not yet finalized, the registration of metamitron (Brevis) would be a welcome addition to the crop load management toolbox for Canadian growers of pome fruit.

CROP PROTECTION

Purespray Green spray oil receives expanded label

JOSH MOSIONDZ

The Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) recently approved a minor use label expansion registration for Purespray Green spray oil for management of several insects on various fruit crops in Canada. Purespray Green spray oil was already labeled for management of insects and diseases on a wide range of crops in Canada. These minor use proposals were submitted by the British Columbia Ministry of Agriculture and Food (BCMAF) as a result of minor use priorities established by growers and extension personnel.

The following is provided as an abbreviated, general outline only. Users should be making insect management decisions within a robust integrated pest management program and should consult the complete label before using Purespray Green spray oil.

Follow all other precautions, restrictions, and directions for use on the Purespray Green spray spray oil label carefully.

Crops	Target	Rate (L product / specified L of water)	Application information	PHI
Grapes (Dormant)	Suppression of Scale & Mealybugs	20L in 1000L of water	Dormant to green tip, maximum of two dormant applications per year, interval 10-14 days, if summer spray applications are expected during the growing season. Use sufficient spray volume (1000 L/ha) to ensure thorough crop coverage. Do not apply just prior to or during freezing temperatures or rain.	Not specified
Grapes (In-Season)	Suppression of Scale & Mealybugs	10L in 1000L of water	Begin applications when crawler stages first appear. Apply every 10-14 days depending upon the pest pressure. Apply in sufficient water volume to ensure thorough coverage. Do not apply less than 1000 L water/ha (1% solution) as phytotoxicity may result Oil will remove the bloom on grapes. On grapes, do not tank mix oil and copper more than once per season. Do not use copper and oil together with fruit present. Do not use oil within 14 days before or after captan fungicide	Table Grapes: 14 days Wine Grapes: 12 Hours
Cherries (dormant)	Control of Spider Mites (including European Red Mite)	20L in 1000L of water	Dormant to green tip, maximum of two dormant applications per year, interval 10-14 days, if summer spray applications are expected during the growing season. Use sufficient spray volume (1000 L/ha) to ensure thorough crop coverage. Do not apply just prior to or during freezing temperatures or rain.	Not specified
Apples (dormant)	Control of Aphid Eggs	20L in 1000L of water	Dormant to Green tip up o 1 cm green Maximum of two dormant applications, per year, interval 10-14 days, if summer spray applications are expected during the growing season. Use sufficient spray volume (1000 L/ha) to ensure thorough crop coverage. Do not apply just prior to or during freezing temperatures or rain.	Not specified

For a copy of the new minor use label your local crop specialist, regional supply outlet, or visit the PMRA label site www.hc-sc.gc.ca/cps-spc/pest/registrant-titulaire/tools-outils/label-etiq-eng.php

Josh Mosiondz is minor use coordinator, OMAFA.

Bioline AgroSciences acquires Belgian expertise in aphids biocontrol

Bioline AgroSciences, a global leader in biological crop protection, has announced that Viridaxis, a Belgian company renowned for its high-quality parasitoids, is joining the Bioline Agrosciences group.

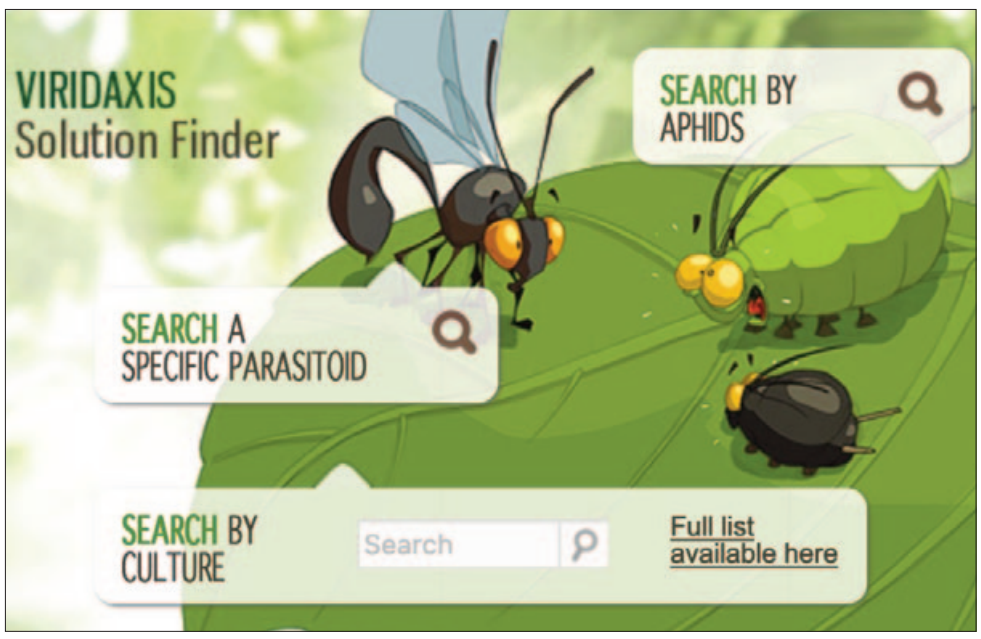
Viridaxis, a company with more than 20 years of experience, has developed a unique technology for the mass rearing of several parasitoids that efficiently control aphids on crops and is considered the world leader in this field.

This milestone significantly enhances Bioline AgroSciences'portfolio of biocontrol products. Aphids are among the most destructive agricultural pests, affecting a wide range of crops including vegetables, fruit trees, ornamentals, berries and other major specialty crops. Thanks to Viridaxis' specialized expertise, Bioline AgroSciences expands its capacity to deliver innovative, nature-inspired solutions that help growers.

"We are delighted to welcome Viridaxis employees to the Bioline AgroSciences group. Their unique skills and dedication have been at the heart of the success of the company and will be a very positive addition to the Bioline Agrosciences team," said Ludwik Pokorny, CEO of Bioline AgroSciences.

"We are thrilled to realize our first acquisition since Bioline Agrosciences joined Eurazeo Planetary Boundaries and their partner Aurae in February 2025. It's a natural step forward in our mission to accelerate the transition to sustainable agriculture — aligning perfectly with our strategic ambitions. Inspired by Nature, Designed to Perform," added Benoit Genot, chief marketing and innovation officer.

Source: Bioline AgroSciences September 4, 2025 news release



Corteva may separate into two different companies: Wall Street Journal

According to Wall Street Journal reporters Lauren Thomas and Patrick Thomas, agri-company Corteva may break its seed and crop protection businesses into separate entities.

Corteva is one of the largest global crop protection companies competing with Syngenta, BASF and Bayer.

The company was originally spun out of the DowDuPont chemicals behemoth in 2019. It supplies row crop farmers with seed for soybeans and corn as well as crop protection products. According to U.S. federal data, the company and its rival, Bayer, sell about 70 per cent of all corn and soybean seeds in the U.S. Its signature seed Pioneer is a legacy brand. It's also a supplier of insecticides, fungicides and herbicides to horticulture.

Observers speculate that separating Corteva's crop-seed unit from its crop protection business could help shield its seeds from future liabilities. Since Bayer acquired Monsanto's Roundup portfolio, it has been beset with lawsuits from those who claim the pesticide is a cancer-causing agent. Bayer has cited science that says the product is safe.

For Corteva investors, the deal has been profitable with Corteva's stock price shooting to more than $70 from $29 a share six years ago. The company reported about $17 billion in sales in 2024. Its seed business generated almost $9.6 billion in revenue, while the pesticide business had about $7.4 billion in sales.

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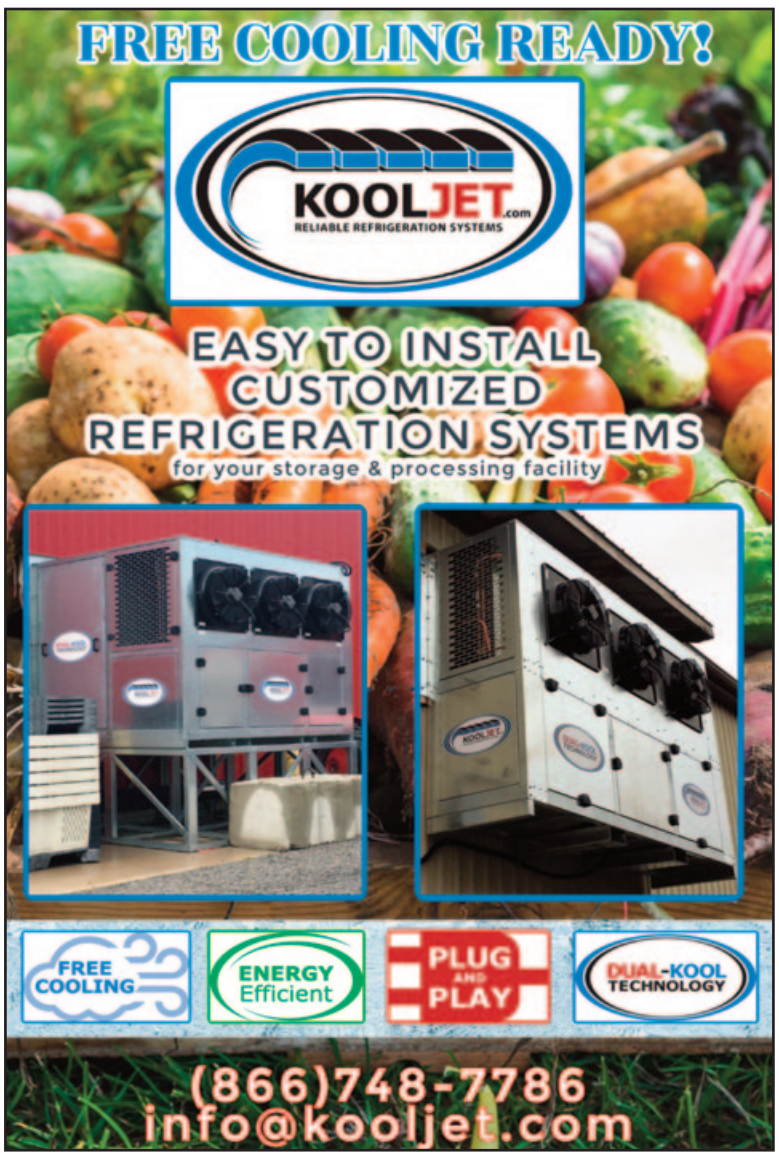

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