



# HMGA News

The newsletter of the Holland Marsh Growers' Association - Volume 6 - February 2010

## What's Up for February . . . Part Two

- As some of you know, the HMGA held a water-taking permit session in December that was a huge success. Because of that, we are holding another on February 18<sup>th</sup>. The time is 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the St. Mary's Community Hall in Bradford (off Fredrick Street) which is the same location for the last meeting. All of those who missed the last meeting should be attending this session. There is a certain amount of irony that attached with this newsletter is the letter from the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority and a map which is a key to being able to get a near "hassle" free permit but all farmers still must fill out their forms and submit and file with the Ministry of the Environment (MOE). All of this is being done so that the idea of one permit for the entire system is the approach in the future.
- The Canadian International Farm Show takes place from February 17 – 19 at the International Centre in Toronto. A chance to see what the latest technology is available that can't be found at Alex's shop.
- Lake Simcoe's Regional Conservation Authority is offering a Free Stewardship Workshop (see attachment) on Monday, February 22 at the Schomberg Library. This is information only – and something similar will again be planned for March with farmers.
- Interested in what Value Chain Management is all about? There is an opportunity to learn more about what is involved, what you can do to make a difference – and the real world application of tactics to improve the bottom line. There are still openings for individuals/companies to attend the last country-wide session in Kitchener, Ontario at the Delta Hotel on March 5, 2010. Contact information for the session is through Joan Brady ([joan.brady@FoodNetOntario.ca](mailto:joan.brady@FoodNetOntario.ca)) by calling 1-888-537-3163 or going to [www.farmcentre.com/workshops](http://www.farmcentre.com/workshops).
- And finally, something for the end of March – March 26<sup>th</sup>, to be precise. Nottawasaga Futures is holding an information session at the Club at Bond Head running from 4 – 9 p.m. (with a free supper) looking at Green Energy Opportunities and then going into break out sessions working on the South Simcoe Agricultural Plan. All are not only encouraged and welcome to be there – but should also know that the Holland Marsh Growers' Association is involved through a number of projects. Your participation is much appreciated. Keep the calendar date open.

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## Miller Sideroad Waste Facility Opens to Farmers

In light of the particularly difficult year in dealing with culls and other agricultural waste, King Township and its staff have graciously allowed for the opening of the Miller Sideroad dumping facility to farmers with the Holland Marsh Growers' Association. The site has a long-standing history with marsh farmers – and will be open beginning SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 20 from 8 a.m. until 1 p.m. – and then open for five Saturdays following that for waste removal from our farm operations.



# HMGGA News

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The only time that it will NOT BE OPEN is when the site becomes too wet (early thaws or rain). Other than that, it will be available to those farmers seeking to remove culls and other agricultural waste from their properties. We encourage all farmers to do so rather than leave the remains of this season in your property. The HMGA is also working towards a program for next season using containers that will ship agricultural waste out of the area for use in either composting or digestion.

The dates the Miller Sideroad facility will be open on Saturdays (from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.) are: **February 20<sup>th</sup>, February 27<sup>th</sup>, March 6, 13, 20, and 27<sup>th</sup>**

## **59<sup>th</sup> Annual Muck Conference . . .**

Mark this on your calendar – March 24 and 25 – as the 59<sup>th</sup> Annual Muck Vegetable Growers' Conference returns to the Holy Martyrs of Japan Parish Centre for two days of discussion, debate, and dialogue on research, improvements on the canal system, and what is taking place for farmers working in the Holland Marsh and area – as well as other parts of the province and even some out of province visitors. The Holland Marsh Growers' Association will be the chair for the morning of the 25<sup>th</sup>, and two presentations on what has been happening with the association will be conducted on the 24<sup>th</sup>. As always, lunch is free.

## **Back at the CRFA Show . . .**

The HMGA is once again going to the Canadian Restaurant and Foodservice Show from March 7 – 9 at the Direct Energy Centre (where the Royal is held) to represent the interests of farmers in the area and open up new opportunities. The foodservice sector is larger than most think and a vital component in helping find new venues for our products. Visit if you can and be a part of this to see what you can do to help.

## **Farmer Insight Sought . . .**

The HMGA is encouraging anyone interested to contact a group of Georgian College students doing a research project requiring farmers to fill in an on-line survey (yet to be posted).

Anyone interested in assessing potential partnerships between Simcoe County food service providers and local farmers should e-mail their willingness to participate to [simcoeculinary@gmail.com](mailto:simcoeculinary@gmail.com) or contact Jamie Reaume, HMGA, at 905-251-6786. This is a project that could, again, find hidden opportunities.

## **Follow up on Labour Session . . .**

Jim Ross, the assistance to MP Rick Dykstra, who was the chair of the Labour discussion session in January, is seeking comments via e-mail. If you were at the meeting and have not yet been able to provide comments, please get them in as soon as possible. Following up on these meetings is vitally important – so it is in our best interests to do so.

## **Peaker Plant Update . . .**

The Holland Marsh Growers' Association will be a participant at the upcoming Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) hearing, scheduled for 10 days to begin on March 30. This is a long process, filled with experts on both sides of the fence whose arguments will likely cancel each other out. That leaves the opportunity for real world experience, often lacking in a computer model generated world. Both Jamie Reaume, on behalf of the HMGA, and Doug Van Luyk, as a farmer and property owner, will be providing testimony.

As always, stay tuned.

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## Holland Marsh Hoe-Down . . .

Sometimes things are done because of necessity – other times, because of the challenges and complexities that develop. The Holland Marsh Hoe-Down, which also celebrated the Greenbelt's fifth anniversary, was an example of showing what could be done from an agricultural perspective. Too often, as farmers, we are challenged about local, defining local, and what can we do because we live in Canada. The Hoe-Down, well attended given the severity of the weather that night, was 90 per cent local food and function, held at the Waterstone Estates on Dufferin – just on the edge of the Holland Marsh. It was a very well done event – but highlighted something from the farmer end that goes, too often, unnoticed: it is completely doable to have a function in the middle of winter, at the end of January, with only local produce and still have a great meal. There wasn't anyone who complained about the food (it disappeared), the carrot cake (it disappeared), or the drink – the remains of which were auctioned off at the end of the night. Our thanks to those who attended and to the Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation which provided funding to show what is completely possible.



The HMGA will continue to be active in the community – and in developing relations with stakeholders in all arenas: political, retailer, local, or community because together, we are making a difference, and an example that is being watched very closely by those within the industry and government.

If you haven't filled out your membership form, do so – and give it back to Herman Gasko. We're working for you.