

# Fall growers' meeting

**January 2010**

On Nov 28, the Garlic Growers Association of Ontario had its regular fall growers' meeting in Woodstock. We had lots of updates on recent events, Garlic Festivals, the Clean Seed Research Project. Our booth at the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair and some needed changes to the Crop Insurance program.

Growers were reminded to watch for their Agri-invest forms for 2008 and to not miss the contribution deadline. We had a brief presentation from the 100 Mile market group which needs garlic for their customer stores. The Stratford Garlic Festival finally had a great weather day, which helped make it a success for all, and we look forward to making it a two-day festival in the not-too-distant future.

Recently at the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair during the second week of November we shared a booth supported by the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association in the "Journey To Your Good Health" display area. Al Spicer and I staffed the booth on the opening day and after the opening ceremonies the Duchess of Cornwall and our Agriculture Minister Leona Dombrowsky toured the exhibits. The Mounties brought the Duchess over to our display and I had the opportunity to show her many of the garlic products that we produce here in Ontario, and as well, we had a chance to talk about local food.

Garlic has been getting some very good press lately in some of the oddest places. In Serbia, garlic sales and prices have been skyrocketing, as well as in China. In both cases doctors are recommending garlic as a preventative for H1N1. You never know!

Becky Hughes and John Zandstra brought us up to speed on where the Clean Seed Research has been and where we hope to go with our project proposal under the Farm Innovation Program. We should have approval for this soon. As well, there is a research plot at my farm for a new seed treatment product so we will have results to report next summer. As a group we also discussed the future possibility of doing some research on companion crops to reduce the effect of nematodes and disease.

To help in the further development of our crop insurance program we examined planting rates and spacing, getting some surprising results. It would seem that plant populations vary from as low as 350 pounds per acre of seed up to 2200 pounds per acre. As well row spacings varied from as far apart as 42 inches, to as close as six inches, with a fairly consistent row spacing of four to six inches. I know a fairly common question that people ask is how close to plant.

I am not sure when this issue will get in readers' hands, but I shall take this opportunity to wish everyone a safe and happy holiday season.



*Mark Wales  
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