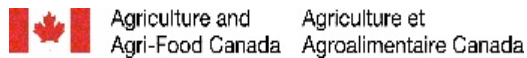




PEI ADAPT Council Agri-Newsletter



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Focus on the Future

**PEI ADAPT Council Annual General Meeting and Conference Friday, March 13, 2009
Rodd Charlottetown Hotel, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island**

Since 1999, the PEI ADAPT Council has been a 'pathfinder' for new ideas and sustainability. This conference will feature presentations of successful, innovations that are occurring on Prince Edward Island and across Canada.

It is an opportunity to capture the inspiration of the moment, network with progressive leaders and focus on the emerging issues that will define the future of agriculture and agri-food on Prince Edward Island.

To Register call: The PEI ADAPT Council: 368-2005

Toronto Food Policy, Director, Wayne Roberts to Speak at PEI Adapt Council Annual General Meeting.

Programs like Alternative Land Use Services (ALUS) in place here on Prince Edward Island are on the cutting edge of public policy transformation that some believe will produce significant benefits for the agricultural community and for society as a whole.

That's the main theme author Wayne Roberts with the Toronto Food Policy Council will explore at the P.E.I. ADAPT Council's annual general meeting March 13 at the Charlottetown Hotel. Roberts is the food policy council's coordinator, and the author of the recently acclaimed book "The No Nonsense Guide to World Food."

Roberts spent the past two summers working on Prince Edward Island farms through the Worldwide Opportunities on Organic Farms program — more commonly known as WOOF. Roberts said the ALUS program, which pays producers an annual fee for five years to keep sensitive land out of production, has even earned the stamp of approval from the World Bank.

During his talk he is also expected to make the case for an extended Maritime-wide purchasing policy for governments and public institutions.

The Toronto Food Policy Council is a citizen body made up of 30 food activists and experts widely considered to be one of the leading food councils in the world. Roberts helped coordinate the city and community wide collaboration that produced Toronto's Food Charter and Food and Hunger Action Plan. He also influenced Toronto's award-winning official plan with his pamphlet, "The Way to a City's Heart is through its Stomach."

Before working for the Food Policy Council, Roberts completed a PhD and seven books. These include the bestsellers: *Get A Life!*; a manual on green economics; and *Real Food For A Change*, which promoted a food system based on four ingredients: health, joy, justice and nature.

This expert has chaired the influential Coalition for a Green Economy for 15 years, and is on the Board of the U.S.-based Community Food Security Coalition, and Food Secure Canada.

His speaking engagements take him around the world promoting strategies that combine food security, community empowerment, environmental improvement, social equity and job creation. Toronto's NOW Magazine named him one of Toronto's leading visionaries of the past 20 years, and in 2002, he received the Canadian Environmental Award for his contributions to sustainable living.

Editor of Manitoba Co-operator to Speak at ADAPT Council Annual General Meeting
Award-winning agricultural journalist Laura Rance will address the annual meeting of the P.E.I. ADAPT Council in Charlottetown on March 13 on the fascinating subject of 'Natural Systems Agriculture.'

Rance, who is also editor of the Manitoba Co-operator, said "I will talk about some of the interesting developments in the area of natural systems agriculture, and how some farmers are profiting through a partnership with nature, and how some researchers believe it is the way of the future." Rance says husbandry practices such as zero-tillage, intercropping, and holistic management are not only improving the farmer's bottom line, they are helping the environment. But, she is disappointed by the scarce funding for research in this vital area. "In my view, we need to stop treating the soil like dirt," she said. "Agriculture needs to engage the public and enlist its support for research."

For 28 years Rance has reported on farm and rural issues in daily and weekly publications. Her knowledge of agriculture is rooted in a childhood spent growing up on one of the first generation of zero tillage farms in Manitoba.

Rance became editor of the Manitoba Co-operator in February 2007 after it merged with Farmers' Independent Weekly, a publication she and six partners operated since 2002. She is also a weekly freelance

business columnist for the Winnipeg Free Press and the Brandon Sun.

She works from her home on a small acreage near the community of Carman, about an hour outside of Winnipeg.

Between 2000 and 2006, Rance was one of the organizing members of the Agriculture Renewal Alliance, an ad hoc coalition that received funding through the Manitoba Rural Adaptation Council to host a series of conferences exploring rural adaptation alternatives in Manitoba.

The conference series, Recapturing Wealth on the Canadian Prairies, explored options beyond industrial agriculture as a strategy for rural economic development.

The Prince Edward Island ADAPT Council annual meeting is slated for March 13 at the Charlottetown Hotel. Conference registration is free, and is open to anyone with an interest in the future of Prince Edward Island's agricultural and agri-food production. However, pre-registration is necessary as space is limited. Please pre-register before March 6th by calling: 368-2005 or by email: adapt@pei.aibn.com.

Achieving Brand Recognition:

A Workshop for Selling Outside the Commodity Market

This branding workshop was designed to assist Atlantic farmers, food and beverage processors, distributors, brokers and those who work with them to broaden their knowledge of marketing, specifically branding.

Each of the speakers brought their own unique perspective about branding, agriculture, and opportunity to this workshop. The following is a brief overview of their contribution.

Elmer MacDonald - Chair PEI ADAPT Council - Introduction and Welcome

Changes occurring in the commodities market have been a roller coaster ride of consolidation resulting in flooded markets and cheap food. With so many competitors able to produce commodities cheaply, small markets like PEI need to begin to look at alternative ways to capitalize on what we do best, produce quality foods.

The PEI Commission of the Future of Agriculture reports that farmers must become pioneers, pathfinding new opportunities in agriculture for which branding unique qualities of distinctive products for 'niche' markets could help with this fresh start to revitalizing PEI's agriculture.

Wayne Jagoe - CEO The Belton Group - Fredericton, New Brunswick.

Wayne, author of "Eat This" of which he contributed copies to participants, in his dynamic presentation encouraged attendees to focus on their uniqueness. His message was that through branding the producer/processor must give the consumer a perceived difference of service or product. It should be easy for the consumer to tell others about you and your product.

He emphasized that producers need to pay attention to small details. If it is hard to write something unique about your farm, operation, or product, then you need a better product or service. He stressed that the brand must convey a promise and a sense of trust. Wayne recommended creating and following a check list of the message, the promise and how you follow-up on the delivery of your commitment to the consumer demands/needs.

Michael Clancy - Creative Director Brandworks, Toronto, Ontario

Michael, with his diverse creative background, gave the attendees a crash course in the importance of finding solutions to their consumers problems. Products need to inspire and attract the passion of the consumer. Business needs to 'Liberate' the consumer by telling a story, making them say, 'Wow.' It must be easy to differentiate and deliver on the promise. Consumers don't buy things, they buy solutions. A product must provide a

solution (i.e. convenience, nutrition, experience)

Using current consumer trend data from Yankelovich Trend Monitor on line (www.yankelovich.com) Michael presented an interesting array of trends; 47% of consumers are worried about the future; 61% say it is hard to find something unique; 75% want to slow down and focus on the quality of life; 73% support local rather than large multi-national companies.

The main characteristics of good branding include: Integrity, Imagination, Emotion, Caring and Responsiveness to Change. Other key mentions were a brand should target an attitude not a demographic and you must be visible on the Internet.

Ron Dehmel - Dehmel Sales and Marketing , Summerside, PEI

Ron brought to the group practical food marketing information. His knowledge of how to get a food product into a grocery store hit hard with the realities of doing business with large retailers.

Food product launches are expensive; \$350,000 - \$400,000 to launch an Atlantic Canada marketing campaign (3-5 year payback). This includes in-store fees for shelf space, flyers, demo's, POS and IRC coupons, samples, in-store features, listing fees, plan-0-grams and shelf facing, out of stocks, and late fees. All cost money, most of which will go to the retailer.

If you are not planning on making this marketing investment in your product it will likely get lost on the shelf and lose it's position in the grocery, and no matter how good it is it will likely not be renewed.

Ron also offered the following tips, sell your strengths by differentiating your product and spend money on packaging and design (first impressions sell)

Susan Winkelaar - Brand Canada Representative - Agri-Food Canada - Ottawa

Susan gave the attendees a great overview of brand Canada, its purpose, uses, and the products most likely to benefit from the program. She directed everyone to the brand Canada website and indicated it had some good tools for developing brand recognition:

www.brandcanada.agr.gc.ca

Ann Worth - Director of Operations - COWS, Charlottetown, PEI

Ann entertained the crowd with the history of COWS and its philosophies. She identified the tangible (taste + nutrition) aspects of the COW brand as being easily duplicated and the intangible (emotional + social benefits) as being not easily duplicated and eliciting loyalty. It is through branding that the intangible value is created in the product.

Some of the branding techniques that have made COWS so popular are their ability to make COWS an experience for customers. They value their staff who then become part of the brand with their excited, helpful and friendly attitudes. Management always solicits opinions and ideas from all employees. COWS mitigates risk but tries new things so they don't stagnate. A partnering strategy is also part of their success. They create value chains with tourism departments, distributors, and other who help to get the product to the customer.

John Rossignol - Owner and Founder Rossignol Winery - Little Sands, PEI

John had a unique perspective to offer the attendees. That of the small estate winery, local in nature and lifestyle. John portrays Rossignol Winery as a lifestyle that is ‘quaint, fun and lively.’ He certainly is a testament to the business value that can be realized from the movement towards ‘Slow Food’ and ‘Buy Local’.

John runs a farm which produces fruit for his wine production. He does not grow enough himself so he purchases what he needs from other PEI growers. He then processes grape wine and fruit wine at the winery, which he then sells in his own little retail shop and to PEI liquor stores.

He has consistently offered a quality award winning product to his customers.

Kate MacDonald-Butler - Director - Anne of Green Gables Licensing Authority - Toronto, Ontario

Kate told the audience about the Anne of Green Gables Licensing Authority and its ability to offer Anne of Green Gables licenses to producers. This enables the producer to put the Anne logo on their product. This can be a great benefit to help brand your product in markets all over the world, and especially Japan.

There is no royalty fee if the product is made on PEI, however off Island companies must pay a royalty.

Ted Soudant - President - Field Gate Organics, Ontario

Ted is a highly motivated ‘can do’ type of organic beef producer. He and some fellow certified organic beef producers in Ontario were having trouble getting their products seen in large grocery stores. So they combined forces and started processing and retailing their products into their own shop. Producers own the farm, processing plant and retail stores. They quickly began to offer other products and since inception they have built a substantial business.

Ted estimates it cost about \$200,000 to develop a logo. Field Gate Organics have worked hard to produce a top quality product. Customers know that and know what it means when they see a Field Gate Organics logo. They know their product was produced from ‘a way of life they can trust’. Their logo now conveys this message instantly.

Angela Santiago - CEO - Little Potato Company - Edmonton, Alberta

Angela brought an interesting story to the workshop. Her father, who is a farmer, remembered ‘little’ potatoes from his childhood home in the Netherlands. Angela thought the idea had merit and so did their consumers. The idea grew from 1 acre to 2000 acres with value chain partners in Canada and California to provide year-round continuous supply. Their potatoes carry the slogan ‘Potatoes with Personality’ and are available in distinctive packaging all across Canada.

From the beginning they have had clear customer focus. They offered unique varieties originally from the Netherlands but now from many other regions to differentiate their product. They highlight the individual attributes of each variety clearly on their packaging. They use on-going public relations with newsletters and a web site. Angela feels her product has a distinctive brand which gives the product momentum.