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P.E.I. Vegetable Growers Selected as Canada's Outstanding Young Farmers for 2009

OTTAWA, ON. - Greg and Tania MacKenzie, owners and operators of MacKenzie Produce in Stratford, PEI are Canada's Canada's Outstanding Young Farmers for 2009.

The young farm couple won the National title at the prestigious Canada's Outstanding Young Farmer Program during the National Event in Ottawa, Ontario this past weekend.

When opportunity knocks, you answer. Greg and Tania put that philosophy to work and became owners of MacKenzie Produce, a 115 acre cole crop vegetable farm in Stratford P.E.I. Greg grew up on a small beef farm but found his calling one day when he went to help out at a friends' vegetable farm. Greg stayed and worked his way up to farm manager at Balderston Produce and after ten years was presented with the opportunity to purchase 75 acres of the cole crop production, warehouses and farm house. Greg and Tania were excited to become their own boss.

Since taking ownership in 2003, the MacKenzies have made many upgrades to the farm which include: joining the storage and grading warehouses, constructing a new loading docks, grading rooms and a new refrigerated warehouse to store produce year round instead of renting warehouse space. When Greg and Tania took over they renamed their business Balderston MacKenzie Produce in order to retain markets. By 2007, the confidently changed the farm name to MacKenzie Produce to become their own identify. Cabbage, broccoli, turnips, cauliflower, and turnips were the main produce marketed by Balderston Produce. However, since then Greg and Tania have increased their acreage to 115 acres and added peas, beans, pumpkins, gourds and

cucumbers to their production. Cabbage is now the main crop grown and is stored and marketed year round. In 2008, they started direct marketing from their farm and have started a delivery service to local stores and restaurants as well as supplying all of the Chinese restaurants in Charlottetown year round.

Greg and Tania's three young children aged 4-12, all love helping out on the farm. The MacKenzies volunteer with sports activities and donate vegetables to local suppers and food hampers. Greg is the Treasurer of the PEI Horticulture Association and they are both active in their church. At MacKenzie Produce, quality is always the first priority.

The MacKenzies were chosen by a panel of judges from a group of seven regional finalists. The couple shares the title with Grant and Colleen Dyck of Niverville, Manitoba.

Celebrating its 30th year, Canada's Outstanding Young Farmers' program is an annual competition to recognize farmers that exemplify excellence in their profession and promote the tremendous contribution of agriculture. Open to participants 18 to 39 years of age, making the majority of income from on-farm sources, participants are selected from seven regions across Canada, with two national winners chosen each year. The program is sponsored nationally by CIBC, John Deere, Bayer CropScience and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, and supported nationally by AdFarm and Canadian Farm Business Management Council.

For more information on the Atlantic program please visit: www.oyfatlantic.ca. For more information on the National program please visit: www.oyfcanada.com

Online Certificate in Food Security: Assessment and Action

Audience: The Target Audience of this course include anyone interested in food security and/or working on community-level food security projects.

Objective: The Overall Objective of this certificate in Food Security: Assessment and Action is to provide students with the tools and knowledge to support food security initiatives in their community.

Starting Date: 17 March 2010 Ending Date: 17 July 2010

Language: English

Description

This specialization is offered as part of the Masters program but students will also receive a Joint Certificate from the UOC and the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). The specialization is an extension of the FAO's Distance Learning course in Food Security Information for Action. In this specialization students are introduced to the concepts and tools used in food security analysis. As a starting point, students will consider food security and its relationship to vulnerability, hunger, malnutrition and poverty. Guidelines on how to interpret and use conceptual frameworks for analyzing food security are then reviewed. Other topics include: guidance in assessing different kinds of information systems related to food security analysis; designing, writing and increasing the impact of food security reports in different contexts; commonly used methods to assess food availability at regional, national and local levels.

This specialization is taught by an international team of individuals with extensive field

experience. With this training, students will understand food security and be better prepared to undertake and support food security work in their communities.

For more information see:

<http://theglobalonlineuniversity.uoc.edu/new-global-courses/food-systems-culture-and-society/spcilization-certificate-in-food-security/>

Petri-Pork

Do you care if your sausage never had a chance to squeal?

It's a question green-minded grocery shoppers may one day be faced with if a group of researchers in the Netherlands figures out how to exercise the test-tube-grown pork they've got lazing around in petri dishes so the meat will toughen up – and taste – as though it had been raised on a farm.

Part of a government-funded group called the In Vitro Meat Consortium, the Dutch scientists are attempting to produce meat while doing away with the farm altogether – a bold departure from the general run of research into ways to stem the harmful atmospheric emissions caused by industrial livestock farming.

See the full article by Jessica Leeder ; Globe and Mail; Wednesday, Dec. 09, 2009 at:

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/climate-change/petri-pork-project-aims-to-reduce-emissions-by-forgoing-the-farm/article1395115/>

Grass Fed Cows Reduce Methane Production While Increasing Omega-3 Content of Milk

by Neil Reynolds, for the Globe and Mail; Wednesday, Dec. 09, 2009

The United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization has reported that livestock-related GHG emissions produce 18 per cent of "the global-warming effect." More than one-third of these emissions (38 per cent) comes from the bellies of the beasts. Another third (34 per cent) comes from the production of hay, grasses and corn, and soy. The transportation of dairy cows and bovine products causes less than 2 per cent of emissions. All said and done, the belching of cows produces 77 million tons of methane gas emissions a year - almost as much (speaking of food production) as rice fields.

The methane is a product of fermentation. In the cow, this process takes place in the animal's first stomach, which explains why most of the gas is emitted frontward as burps rather than backward as flatulence. In the rice fields of Asia, it takes place when water cuts off the supply of oxygen to highly organic soil. (In the rare South American hoatzin, it takes place in the throat, which explains why the bird is known as the stink bird.)

But back to Danone. Beginning in 2006, the company began a pilot project on 600 French dairy farms to measure the impact of diet on methane emissions of cows - primarily by replacing corn and soy silage with alfalfa, flax and grasses. Encouraged by the results, it rolled out the project to its associated farms in other countries. Five months ago, Stonyfield Farm, a Danone-associated dairy products company based in New Hampshire, reported its revolutionary finding: The revised diet reduced methane emissions by an average of 12 per cent in tests on 15 Vermont farms (with

reductions on some farms reaching 18 per cent). At the same time, it increased the omega-3 content of milk by 30 per cent, decreased the level of saturated fats, increased the quantity of milk in absolute terms - and appeared to make the cows more contented than ever.

For the complete story see:

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/commentary/belching-cows-and-the-greening-of-big-business/article1393697/>

‘Pathfinding with Perennials’

By Wes Jackson and Wendell Berry; New York Times; January 4, 2009

The extraordinary rainstorms last June caused catastrophic soil erosion in the grain lands of Iowa, where there were gullies 200 feet wide. But even worse damage is done over the long term under normal rainfall — by the little rills and sheets of erosion on incompletely covered or denuded cropland, and by various degradations resulting from industrial procedures and technologies alien to both agriculture and nature.

Soil that is used and abused in this way is as nonrenewable as (and far more valuable than) oil. Unlike oil, it has no technological substitute — and no powerful friends in the halls of government.

Agriculture has too often involved an insupportable abuse and waste of soil, ever since the first farmers took away the soil-saving cover and roots of perennial plants. Civilizations have destroyed themselves by destroying their farmland. This irremediable loss, never enough noticed, has been made worse by the huge monocultures and continuous soil-exposure of the agriculture we now practice.

To the problem of soil loss, the industrialization of agriculture has added pollution by toxic chemicals, now universally present in our farmlands and streams. Some of this toxicity is associated with the widely acclaimed method of minimum tillage. We should not poison our soils to save them.

Industrial agricultural has made our food supply entirely dependent on fossil fuels and, by substituting technological “solutions” for human work and care, has virtually destroyed the cultures of husbandry (imperfect as they may have been) once indigenous to family farms and farming neighborhoods.

Clearly, our present ways of agriculture are not sustainable, and so our food supply is not sustainable. We must restore ecological health to our agricultural landscapes, as well as economic and cultural stability to our rural communities.

For 50 or 60 years, we have let ourselves believe that as long as we have money we will have food. That is a mistake. If we continue our offenses against the land and the labor by which we are fed, the food supply will decline, and we will have a problem far more complex than the failure of our paper economy. The government will bring forth no food by providing hundreds of

billions of dollars to the agribusiness corporations.

Any restorations will require, above all else, a substantial increase in the acreages of perennial plants. The most immediately practicable way of doing this is to go back to crop rotations that include hay, pasture and grazing animals.

But a more radical response is necessary if we are to keep eating and preserve our land at the same time. In fact, research in Canada, Australia, China and the United States over the last 30 years suggests that perennialization of the major grain crops like wheat, rice, sorghum and sunflowers can be developed in the foreseeable future. By increasing the use of mixtures of grain-bearing perennials, we can better protect the soil and substantially reduce greenhouse gases, fossil-fuel use and toxic pollution.

Carbon sequestration would increase, and the husbandry of water and soil nutrients would become much more efficient. And with an increase in the use of perennial plants and grazing animals would come more employment opportunities in agriculture — provided, of course, that farmers would be paid justly for their work and their goods.

Thoughtful farmers and consumers everywhere are already making many necessary changes in the production and marketing of food. But we also need a national agricultural policy that is based upon ecological principles. We need a 50-year farm bill that addresses forthrightly the problems of soil loss and degradation, toxic pollution, fossil-fuel dependency and the destruction of rural communities.

This is a political issue, certainly, but it far transcends the farm politics we are used to. It is an issue as close to every one of us as our own stomachs.

Wes Jackson is a plant geneticist and president of The Land Institute in Salina, Kan. Wendell Berry is a farmer and writer in Port Royal, Ky.

A Farmer's Guide to Energy Self-Reliance: helping farmers increase energy self-reliance and profitability

The Farmer's Guide to Energy Self-Reliance is a tool to help farmers increase energy self-reliance and profitability. Reducing operating costs and finding new sources of revenue can give farms the edge they need to compete in the marketplace. In addition, farmers have a long tradition of being stewards of the land. Investing in renewable energy and reducing energy use are important steps to protecting the land, air, and water. This guide offers suggestions that fit into three interrelated categories: improving energy efficiency, using biomass, and utilizing other renewable energy sources such as wind and solar. The suggestions outlined in this guide do not cover every aspect of energy use, but are a starting point. Energy management is not easy. However, there are many benefits to it. This guide is intended to serve as a resource to help farmers increase profits while decreasing some of the harmful environmental effects of farming. The Guide includes energy investment tips that cost \$0, \$100, \$500, \$5000, \$25,000, \$100,000 up to \$500,000.

See: <http://www.agenergysolutions.org/site/>