



Fresh Facts

Providing knowledge and leadership to grow the farm fresh experience.

Happy Birthday to...

For years Leslie Forsythe, Forsythe's Family Farm, and I have adamantly chosen not to do birthday parties at our farms. Strom's tried them back in 2004 and found them to be a disaster! Kids everywhere, parents thinking we were Chucky Cheese and just an all around stressful event for my 'Type A' personality. Ironically enough Leslie and I both added birthday parties to our farm line-ups in 2010. And to our mutual surprise, we are both looking to expand those venues in 2011.



So, why the sudden change? The rainy weekends of October 2009 were our final push to try birthday parties again in 2010. Have a dreary weekend and birthday parties still come.

A few other details fell into place as well:

- ⇒ We opened our Harvest Fun Area in 2008 and saw the potential to have a controlled area for parties to experience the farm.
- ⇒ Our bakery makes specialty pizzas which was an easy way to add a meal package.
- ⇒ During the November 2009's OFFMA bus tour, I fell in love with Valleyview Little Animal Farm's sheep cupcakes and we created our own pumpkin cupcake for parties (which customers saw and wanted to buy, who are we to say no, and on our first Saturday we sold 50 cupcakes in less than 3 hours at \$2.50 a piece).

So, needless to say, I am so excited about our March 2-day workshop put on by *Birthday Party University*. In these two days you will learn:

- to market your parties effectively,
- to create add-ons that will increase your bottom line,
- the secrets of birthday party operations,
- how to develop a team of heroes, and
- to leave a WOW factor (just to name a few).

If you do birthday parties or are thinking about adding them don't miss this workshop – contact Cathy today! A great idea to start off the new year.

Amy Strom
OFFMA President



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MEMBERSHIP NEWS

The Top 10 Reasons Why You Should Continue to be an OFFMA Member

It's always good practice to review the reasons you are a member of Ontario Farm Fresh and to recognize the significant benefit you derive from being a member of the association. Here's a quick refresher.

10. Ontario Farm Fresh members share information freely about their business experiences with other members. Ontario Farm Fresh offers a free classified service for members to search and sell items related to this industry.
9. Ontario Farm Fresh actively exhibits at consumer shows to interest the general public in our "Find a Farm" web site to increase consumer awareness of and traffic to your farm.
8. Ontario Farm Fresh publishes 10 newsletters a year to keep you up-to-date with the on-farm marketing trends.
7. Ontario Farm Fresh provides a catalogue of marketing resource materials and products to enhance your on-farm market business as well as free-subscription to the Fruit & Vegetable Magazine.
6. Ontario Farm Fresh effectively represents your interests to all levels of government on Farm Marketing issues.
5. Ontario Farm Fresh provides educational & networking opportunities in the form of workshops on a broad variety of marketing topics and bus tours to local and out-of-province farm market and agri-tainment destinations.
4. Ontario Farm Fresh provides access to consultants to help improve your direct farm marketing business.
3. Ontario Farm Fresh sponsors your listing in Harvest Ontario publication and website including special OFFMA-only icons.
2. Ontario Farm Fresh oversees direct farm market research for your long-term benefit.
1. Ontario Farm Fresh is your voice for your pick-your-own farm, on-farm market, CSA or agri-tainment operation.

Classifieds

FOR SALE: White Meadows Farms has been growing popping corn for the last couple of years. We have a large quantity, of cleaned, quality mushroom pop, popcorn kernels in 50 lb. bags for \$28/bag plus shipping costs. For more info or to place an order, e-mail: info@whitemeadowsfarms.com

WANTED: Soft ice cream equipment for yogurt and ice cream, as well as any experience offering ice cream in this format. Please contact Ted Klassen at 519-738-6086 or info@klassenblueberries.com

WANTED: I am looking for a greenhouse to do some custom propagation work for me in spring 2011. Thanks, Eric Hambly, Siloam Orchards, Uxbridge, mail@siloamorchards.com

Can't find that newsletter you thought had a golden nugget for you. Go to the OFFMA website at OntarioFarmFresh.com All newsletters are archived in the 'members only' section for easy reference.

Career Focus Program

At AAFC, the Career Focus Program will contribute \$864,000 annually to projects that employ recent graduates in agriculture, agri-food, agri-food science and veterinary medicine. Each project will be eligible to receive up to **\$20,000** in matching funds. The program will help create some 80 agricultural internships for graduates across the country. Each internship may last up to 12 months. The minimum duration is four months, but internships must last long enough to provide meaningful experience to the employee. For additional information visit www.agr.gc.ca/careerfocus or call 1-866-452-5558.

*Shoot for the moon.
Even if you miss, you'll land among the stars.*

10 Tips for Time Management in a Multitasking World

By Penelope Trunk, Brazen Careerist

Time management is one of those skills no one teaches you in school but you have to learn. It doesn't matter how smart you are if you can't organize information well enough to take it in. And it doesn't matter how skilled you are if procrastination keeps you from getting your work done.

Younger workers understand this, and time management is becoming a topic of hipsters. One of the most popular blogs is Lifehacker, edited by productivity guru Gina Trapani, and her forthcoming book by the same name is a bestseller based so far on pre-orders.

So here are 10 tips to make you better at managing your work:

1. Don't leave email sitting in your inbox.

"The ability to quickly process and synthesize information and turn it into actions is one of the most emergent skills of the professional world today," says Mann. Organize email in file folders. If the message needs more thought, move it to your to-do list. If it's for reference, print it out. If it's a meeting, move it to your calendar.

2. Admit multitasking is bad.

For people who didn't grow up watching TV, typing out instant messages and doing homework all at the same time, multitasking is deadly. But it decreases everyone's productivity, no matter who they are. "A 20-year-old is less likely to feel overwhelmed by demands to multitask, but young people still have a loss of productivity from multitasking," says Trapani.

3. Do the most important thing first.

Trapani calls this "running a morning dash". When she sits down to work in the morning, before she checks any email, she spends an hour on the most important thing on her to-do list. This is a great idea because even if you can't get the whole thing done in an hour, you'll be much more likely to go back to it once you've gotten it started. She points out that this dash works best if you organize the night before so when you sit down to work you already know your most important tasks of the day.

4. Check your email on a schedule.

"It's not effective to read and answer every email as it arrives. Just because someone can contact you immediately does not mean that you have to respond to them immediately," says Dan Markovitz, president of the productivity consulting firm TimeBack Management, "People want a predictable response, not an immediate response." So as long as people know how long to expect an answer to take, and they know how to reach you in an emergency, you can answer most types of email just a few times a day.

5. Keep web site addresses organized.

Use book marking services like del.icio.us to keep track of web sites. Instead of having ran-

dom notes about places you want to check out, places you want to keep as a reference, etc., you can save them all in one place, and you can search and share your list easily.

6. Know when you work best.

Industrial designer Jeff Beene does consulting work, so he can do it any time of day. But, he says, "I try to schedule things so that I work in the morning, when I am the most productive." Each person has a best time. You can discover yours by monitoring your productivity over a period of time. Then you need to manage your schedule to keep your best time free for your most important work.

7. Think about keystrokes.

If you're on a computer all day, keystrokes matter because efficiency matters. "On any given day, an information worker will do a dozen Google searches," says Trapani. "How many keystrokes does it take? Can you reduce it to three? You might save 10 seconds, but over time, that builds up."

8. Make it easy to get started.

We don't have problems finishing projects, we have problems starting them," says Mann. He recommends you "make a shallow on-ramp." Beene knows the key to creating this on-ramp: "I try to break my own projects into chunks, so I am not overwhelmed by them."

9. Organize your to-do list every day.

If you don't know what you should be doing, how can you manage your time to do it? Some people like writing this list out by hand because it shows commitment to each item if you are willing to rewrite it each day until it gets done. Other people like software that can slice and dice their to-do list into manageable, relevant chunks. For example, Beene uses tasktoy because when he goes to a client site tasktoy shows him only his to do items for that client, and not all his other projects.

10. Dare to be slow.

Remember that a good time manager actually responds to some things more slowly than a bad time manager would. For example, someone who is doing the highest priority task is probably not answering incoming email while they're doing it. As Markovitz writes: "Obviously there are more important tasks than processing email. Intuitively, we all know this. What we need to do now is recognize that processing one's work (evaluating what's come in and how to handle it) and planning one's work are also mission-critical tasks."



Top Ten 2011 Food Trends Compiled by the Food Channel

Our values have changed in recent years. We now value different things than we did before the economy slumped, jobs became a precious commodity, and technology turned out to complicate our lives as much as it gave us shortcuts. Sure, for years we talked about simplicity, sometimes under names like 'local' or 'social consciousness', or 'green'. Ironically, just as a good writer understands that writing fewer words is harder than a lot of words, removing things from our lives is harder than adding to them. And, yet, we see that the 2011 Food Trends are about embracing what may be a little more difficult, because it has proven its value.

Farming. Diet and exercise. Venturing out into new tastes and flavours. Finding our food identity in the kitchen, in the halls of government, and in technology. We value things that are, if not exactly close to us, are at least close to the little guy. The new food simplicity is about putting value on the independent grower, on the person who is striving to make a difference—one farm, one person, one business at a time. In 2011, the consumer is all about buying from a business that is dedicated to creating a quality product, dedicated to doing the right thing, regardless of the size of the business or the number of products they produce.

1. The Canning Comeback

Food preservation has a rejuvenation. They used to call it “putting up,” as in putting up tomatoes or corn for the winter ahead. Maybe your grandmother still refers to it that way. What it means of course is canning, pickling, and preserving—and more and more folks will be getting into it for a number of reasons. One major one is the concern for food safety. The recent scares over contaminated tomatoes, peanut butter, and eggs have driven people to take more control over what they put on the table.

2. Men in Aprons

A gender role reversal is bubbling up in the kitchen. The slumping economy has hit men harder than women, with job losses in

traditionally male fields such as finance and construction. Women, on the other hand, are employed in fields that are expected to flourish in the years ahead. It's left many couples with a new balance of power: female breadwinner, male bread buyer (and baker). The rise of the Sheconomy, as TIME magazine calls it, and it's expected to last for a while. For every two guys who graduate from college, three women do. The recession is only part of it. Men have been influenced by macho chefs on TV's cooking shows, where it's all about culinary competition, achievement and triumph. Plus, what guy doesn't love a cool new gadget or tool? And there are lots of those in the kitchen these days.

3. Local Somewhere

Support a local grower ... anywhere.

Politicians say that all politics is local. It's becoming more and more evident that the same is true for food. This trend understands that mindset—that it's all about eating local, but that local goes beyond a geographical definition. The new local is really about the independent spirit that causes entrepreneurial people to develop new food products, open new restaurants, and bring new food ideas to life.

4. Don't Ask, Don't Tell

Sometimes we don't want to know the nutrition numbers. Politicians on the local, state and federal government level are stepping up efforts to legislate healthier eating. These well-meaning efforts have led to calorie counts on restaurant menus, bans on trans fats, and a war on sodium. They've also brought about a backlash. Let's face it. Some things we just don't want to know. We're okay having pamphlets on nutrition being available, but do we really have to have the calories and fat listed in bold type on the menu right next to our favourite megaburger? For many, it's just another example of the growing Nanny State, and the answer is simply “No, thanks.”

5. Appetite for Food Apps

Discount eats make the new smart phone apps delicious. Just as the adorable antics



of cats have become the unexpected stars of the Internet, food has become the dominant attraction of smart phones. It seems like there's a new mobile food app popping up every time you start to feel hungry. You can shake your phone on Urbanspoon to create a slot machine effect that spins neighbourhood, cuisine type, and price to help you find a restaurant; VegOut helps you find one with lots of vegetarian choices; and Open Table not only locates restaurant choices using GPS technology, but also lets you know if there are tables currently available. But it's the instant 24/7 availability of mobile grocery coupons and restaurant deals on smart phones that consumers will really grab onto in the coming year.

6. Small is the New Big Business

Getting closer to the customer. Go ahead.

Look closely at the pizza in the photo. It's not food styled. It's not machine produced. And yet every ingredient on this pizza is real. This is a big business pizza that laid down the gauntlet after listening to its customers. As anyone who works for a big corporation knows, the bigger your brand, the larger a target you may become. In today's world, a corporate mindset might be bad for business.



7. Fresh Every Day

Rediscovering the butcher, baker and cheese maker. We see American food shoppers going about their marketing a bit more like our European counterparts in the coming year. People will be returning to the neighbourhood butcher shop to pick up fresh meats and grabbing their specialty breads and pastries at the corner bakery or bakery-café, and shopping on nearly an everyday basis for the evening meal. Yes, the large supermarkets and everything-under-one-roof big box stores will still get the lion's share of our grocery dollars, but the increased popularity of farmers markets has whetted our appetite for locally-sourced foods and one-on-one personal

attention.

8. Chefs in Schools

Living up to their pledge, chefs join the cafeteria crews. This will be the year we finally get really serious about feeding our children healthier, better quality foods. We're no longer just talking about childhood obesity, we're doing something about it. Jamie Oliver came with TV cameras to the "unhealthiest city in America" and showed what a difference one person can make. In 2011 thousands of chefs will be working with school districts to get better, fresher foods on the kids' trays.

9. Discomfort Food

Eating your way out of your comfort zone. In some ways, we've grown accustomed to a topsy-turvy world and are embracing food that accentuates that. However, at other times, we find the situation just a little bit unnerving. This trend is about consciously trying new things that stretch our food vocabulary and experience.

10. Eating for Sex and Other Things

Looking for foods that keep you young, strong and active. It's no secret that Americans are reaching retirement age in record numbers, now that the Baby Boomers are starting to hit their mid-sixties. And, as they have since they first began to walk, boomers will influence nearly everything in 2011, including foods. As Mintel reports, many boomers will continue to work—and they'll demand foods that provide the energy and vitality to get them through the day. And, as sales for Viagra prove, boomers want to stay in shape for night time activities, too. Look for more food products to make bedroom performance claims in the years ahead. Nutmeg, for one, has gained a lot of press recently for its reputation as a female aphrodisiac.

To view these trends in more detail or have a peek at the Top Ten Foods to Watch, go to www.foodchannel.com

How can you take advantage of these trend predictions? What can you change on your farm to be ready to move with the times?

Creating Experiences on your farm

By Cathy Bartolic, OFFMA

Yes, I know we are into January and on the surface this may look like the perfect story for the December newsletter, but I also know many of you are in the middle of intense planning for the upcoming year, so here is an idea or two you may want to consider.

The Mountsberg Conservation Area started Christmas Town (aka the North Pole) two years ago. Last November, my sister took her two children, Ryan 7 and Rachel 5, to visit Santa Claus at the North Pole. You need to remember that at their age, they totally believe that they were indeed visiting Santa. The entire program was very well done and it was an incredible experience for everyone.

In 2010, the program ran from November 19th to December 24. It consisted of a 15 minute wagon ride into the forest where the Conservation staff had refurbished their maple syrup buildings to create the 'Elf Academy', the 'Reindeer Flight School', as well as Santa's Cottage. The distance from the road and the parking lot, enhances the illusion that you are actually visiting Santa at the North Pole. As you walk through the workshop, you see toys being wrapped and letters addressed to various children. Because the names of the children who are attending are required during pre-registration, the staff is able to make sure that they can see their names among the pile of letters....very magical.

Once you get to Santa's Cottage, you will be greeted by Mrs. Claus who has been baking cookies and invites you into the cottage to enjoy some cookies. Santa is in another room. Each family can visit with Santa privately and get pictures taken with him as well. The kids have time to ask questions and pass along their Christmas wish list.

When the Mountsberg Conservation Area introduced this program in 2009, their phone lines jammed and they were unable to handle the phone ticket sales. In 2010, they introduced online ticket sales and their website crashed when ticket sales started on November 19th. They have a limited amount of seats available (9,000) and according to their website, the demand was more than twice the available spots. Several people booked and

paid for a private wagon which consists of 28 people and costs \$400 + HST.

This experience took approximately 2 hours, and I know Rachel and Ryan will be talking about it for years to come. If you are looking for a Christmas activity, you may want to look at the pros and cons of creating a Santa experience on your farm.

We are in the age of the 'Experience Economy'. People want to experience something that is unique and special. Something they can't get from the mall. Something they can tell their friends about. Here are a few other ideas to consider:

Pastry Workshop

Do you have a bakery? Do you make your own pies? Do you have people who are interested in making their own pastry or tasting different kinds of pastries?

Pruning Workshops

More and more people are looking at growing their own food including fruit. Many are not sure what to do after they plant those apple trees in their backyards. Have a pruning workshop and sell them a few more trees for their backyard orchard.

Build a Bear Workshop

A few years ago, we experienced this activity on one of our annual bus tours. Can you find someone to bring the equipment and offer this on your farm?

Canning/Jamming Workshop

Now considered a lost art, people are eager to find out how to preserve their own food again.

Remember people are willing to pay for these experiences and the chance to learn these skills. I participated in a mushroom workshop last spring for \$100. We learned about shitake mushrooms, created 2 mushroom logs we were able to bring home and had a lovely sampling of various mushroom dishes. The first workshop was filled in no time and the second one was also at capacity and everyone had a great time. Too often we take for granted the things we do on a regular basis. But we need to put ourselves in our customers' shoes. What are they looking for that we can provide and where else would they be able to get this kind of an experience?

2010 Admission Fees for Christmas Town

Children (ages 1–14yrs)
\$12 + HST
Adults \$17 + HST
Private Wagon (up to 28 people) \$400 + HST

Quest for New Farm Value – Value Plus™

Winter Workshop Series

Since 2005 the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) along with a number of agriculture and rural community partners have offered an exciting workshop series to help farmers and rural entrepreneurs turn ideas into value added business opportunities. Quest for New Farm Value – Value Plus™ workshops involves two days of finding, creating and evaluating new product and service ideas. Highlights also include weighing the options of value adding which may include:

- Changing the distribution system for your product or service
- Changing the product itself
- Changing the packaging or labeling
- Exploring niche or specialty markets
- Diversification
- Branding products
- Introducing a value added service

Perhaps the most important part of the workshop is the introduction and overview of the key components of a business plan. This includes a marketing plan, financial plan, human resource plan and production plan. The following business plan tips are also highlighted in the workshop:

- Keep the plan simple, but raise the bar and challenge yourself.
- Present your vision and start with the end result in mind.
- Be market not production driven in your focus.
- Be realistic in your financial projections. (Use best case, worst case and the most likely scenarios.)
- Involve your team in preparing the plan as they will be part of the implementation.
- It's a living document; integrate it into your daily farm operations.
- Have hands-on involvement in the creation, and use advisors to confirm your assumptions.

What participants said about their experience at the workshop?

“I was pleased with this workshop because I will be expanding my business. Dreams become reality. It was the push I needed.”

“I enjoyed the practical exercises and the fact that it wasn't only lecture format - good networking and personalization.”

“Great information on planning your business from start up to exit including growth opportunities.”

“Great course and many valuable contacts and ideas were gained.”

Don't miss the opportunity to take part in Quest for New Farm Value – Value Plus™ workshops this coming winter. Dates and locations are currently being confirmed – check the website often for a location near you:

Batawa	February 1 st and 8 th
New Liskeard	February 3 rd and 4 th
Eastern Ontario	February 8 th and 15 th (French Language)
Frontenac (Verona)	February 10 th and 17 th
Bond Head	March 2 nd and 9 th

For agendas and registration information please visit: <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/busdev/conference/buswkshpmktg.htm>

Or contact the following Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) staff:
 Dorene Collins, 519-826-3166 or email: dorene.collins@ontario.ca
 Carl Fletcher, 519-826-3235 or email: carl.fletcher@ontario.ca



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2010-11 OFFMA Board of Directors

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Dorene Collins, OMAFRA
(Advisor to the Board)

Upcoming Events

- January 22 **FarmSmart Agricultural Conference**, University of Guelph, Guelph, ON
Go to uoguelph.ca/farmsmart for additional info
- January 29-30 **2011 Guelph Organic Conference**, University of Guelph, Guelph, ON
www.guelphorganicconf.ca
- February 4-10 **2011 North American Direct Farm Marketing Association Convention**, Hyatt Regency Baltimore, MD, go to www.nafdma.com for further info
- February 8-10 **Canadian International Farm Show**, International Centre, Mississauga
torontofarmshow.com
- February 22 Pre-convention Workshop with Hugh McPherson, **A Goal Without a Plan is a Wish**, details to follow
- February 23-24 **Ontario Fruit & Vegetable Convention**, Brock University, St. Catharines,
www.ofvc.ca
- March 8 & 9 **Birthday Party University**, Inn at Huff Estates, Prince Edward County,
contact the OFFMA office for further info.
- April 4-8, 2011 **Bus Tour to UK**, contact Cathy Bartolic at 905-841-9278 –SOLD OUT,
but a waiting list being created

OMAFRA Workshops and Courses

Growing Your Farm Profits, 40 workshops being offered until March 31, 2011: <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/busdev/gyfp/index.htm>

Quest for New Farm Value – Value Plus workshops, 10 workshops to be offered up to March 31, 2011: <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/busdev/conference/quest/index.html>

WHAT? Pre-Convention Workshop— **A Goal Without a Plan is a Wish**—A day with Hugh McPherson

WHEN? Tuesday, February 22, 2011

WHO? Hugh McPherson is the Maze Master at Maize Quest. Each year he welcomes thousands of guests to the Maize Quest Fun Park built on his family's farm in York County, PA. He also helps farm clients around the world build mazes and entertain guests. Hugh brings life, enthusiasm and energy, with a different take on business, to any meeting of the minds.



WHY? Ever find you can't get everything? You are battling procrastination? You see your dreams slipping away with time? Attendees learn how to make their goals magnetic, and then use magnetic goals to create energy that pulls them to the finish line.

and

Attraction Balancing: How to Choose What to Add

Everyone likes adding new attractions, but how do you know what to add? Hugh will teach attendees to evaluate their current attractions, identify the demographic they serve, and choose attractions to meet the needs of future customers.

Don't leave 2011 to chance, design a plan that works! Start by attending this workshop.