

Growers of Organic Food Yukon Regular Meeting

Sunday, October 4, 1:00pm, Room 2605, Yukon College

Attendance: Simone, Tom, Claire, Cain, Joanne, Allan, Joan, Jodi, Brian, Susan, Peter, Enrica, Janece, Meagan. Regrets: Laird Hebert.

Meagan Christie gave a brief introduction about the Yukon Conservation Society. The YCS has taken the initiative of looking into the possible connections and benefits there can be in having a representative for agriculture much the same as they do for other sectors of the Yukon (ie: fisheries, mining or forestry). YCS does lobby work and research into issues. They can see a tie to supporting a sustainable process and are examining ideas than can support us.

Call to order-additions to agenda: 1:15

Correspondence:

Garret doing work with the City Landfill. Mentions working toward organic compost and also using the ball mill for milling and balancing soil nutrients.

Reports:

Financial – Simone

Approx \$8k in the bank, \$4k assigned, \$8k outstanding in receipts.

COG – Brian

Nothing to report.

AIAC - Shiela/Tom

Nothing to report, meeting later this month

FCM- Joan

Good season, new office manager, kitchen with 4 days a week Thai food and Challenge group on Thursday, contact the store (or Carolyn and Susan) for answers regarding the 12 days of Christmas. Fireweed Market Survey is complete and results are online.

Joanne has asked the Ag Branch to update links on their website.

Poultry Processors-Susan, Leslie

Nothing to report, meeting coming up

OFC-Claire Desmarais

Reported that Matt was contacted about offering an Organic Master Gardener course...Matt suggested adding to the existing presentation, as he didn't think there was sufficient capacity for a stand-alone course. Beyond that GoOFY would have to lobby. Joanne – ask past attendees if they want an organic offering. Simone-look at the Organic gardening manual and see if it will work. Claire to contact COABC to find information on it. Steve Snyder did talk as well as Garret at the last master gardener course. Instructors could be local growers if an organic component was introduced. A lot of participants do not seem to want to learn about chemical treatments and would enjoy a more sustainable approach.

Seed saving workshop: No funds from COABC to bring up an expert Patrick Steiner- Stellar Seeds. Sounds like a good Feb/March event. Tried to get into this North of 60 ag conference, but Patrick can't make it then. Brian mentioned the different steps involved, growing, propagating, saving and sharing of seeds. Start planning for perhaps a multi-staged workshop. Jody has volunteered to look into it.

GoOFY has funding committed to remain a member of OFC for 4 years..\$3300/year. AGM Nov 10 by teleconference. Working on getting copies of the standards for free. There is an organic processing inspectors course in January at Assiniboine Community College (<http://public.assiniboine.net/Default.aspx?tabID=84&prgID=69>) Members would like it if Claire attends. She will apply and let us know.

Old Business:

306.1 Legume study

Brief review: 5 yr project on 6 different legumes. Based on soil tests and whether or not amendments will help legumes grow more effectively. Garret originally proposed that soil nutrients were the limiting factor- more so than ground temperature. Brian has to submit the final interim report. Then interim payment will be released. Between now and March we'll have to find someone to compile all the data that was collected. See how much use there is from the data and how much value there is in the organic regime using legumes.

Brian suggested a selection committee to choose from applicants. Needs to be objective but also some ag experience. They must have some subjective capacity. Simone suggested asking the 3 technicians first to avoid a steep learning curve.

Matt had suggested he could write something up. We do have the funds so we can hire someone to write the final report. Joanne suggests advertising for the position. Brian will spearhead the final push.

Jodi- final year report mentioned that there were differences with amended plots on several farms. Weather was an issue this year with flooding, heat, moisture, frosts. The yields for amended crops at Lendrum Ross were big. Soil samples are being sent in. Brian is sending a letter to Kinsey to fast track the results. Jodi has some left over supplies. Tom will send out a list of left over supplies from the project if anyone wants some of it. Jodi will send Tom the list to post. A committee to choose the candidate to write the final report will be made up of Brian, Joanne, & Enrica.

406.3 Infarmation and other articles

Joanne will write up something about the new standards. Joanne also wrote something about Rochelle's visit. Joan writes farming/gardening articles for what's up Yukon:

(http://www.whatsupyukon.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1514:frost-to-frost-how-to-beat-jack-at-his-frosty-game&catid=125:september-24-2009).

Tom writes a quarterly column for How's Business.

(http://howsbusiness.whatsupyukon.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=119&Itemid=60)

Rick tone was interviewed for an article in the Western Producer. Brian spoke about the relationship with environment and how important the ties are between the environment (environmentalists) and agriculture (farmers). Discussion related again as to how YCS and GoOFY could collaborate. All agreed we have similar issues regarding growing food and farming sustainably.

906.1 Regular discussion on farm issues.

Continuing.

907.1 Poultry processing website

Continuing.

108.3 Chapter review and questionnaire – still needs to be done-Tom.

Once again, discusses pros and cons. It was mentioned that perhaps GoOFY is more of a benefit to COG than COG is a benefit to us. Create a letter of pros and cons and distribute for more comments.

1108.1 Report on multiuse/abattoir-Susan and Leslie

Susan gave a brief report on the Meat Processing discussion paper that was produced in late July. Her comments reinforced the fact that to move forward some sort of processing facilities are required. The discussion paper clearly lays out the fact that there is no justification for the facility as presented. The paper lays out about nine more steps required prior to any further motion on this particular project. The YAA has worked out some sort of agreement for leasing/owning land originally thought of to house this multi-use facility. Susan has also elaborated that her role as she sees it is as a producer representative on the committee not as an overt supporter of any facility in particular. She would like any comments on the discussion paper to be forwarded to her for her upcoming meeting.

Issues brought up by members include the idea of legislating against any farm gate sales, everyone was fervent that this would only drive any industry underground or kill it all together. Seems to be some sort of drive to produce 10% of a market share as opposed to a smaller more realistic production. The numbers don't all make sense and where they arrived at some of them was questioned. Joanne mentioned the new mobile abattoir operator has suggested he could do poultry as well. It was divided on whether to wait for some sort of public cooperative to become established with a poultry abattoir or to provide support for a private entrepreneur. That will be left up to individual producers.

If anyone requires a copy of the Meat Processing discussion paper, contact Tom who can forward a PDF copy.

New Business:

909.1 Reminder to think about Farmer of the Year nominations

Remember those farmers in the outlying communities.

909.2 GoOFY representative for AIAC meeting Oct 28

Joan volunteered to go. She was asked to mention an Organic Master Gardener course. Also submit a report on GoOFY activities for the past year.

909.3 Should YTG sign on for national organic regulations?

Claire outlined the issue currently being looked at down south. She suggests waiting until Manitoba deals with their signing before we make a step forward.

909.4 Letter of support for Icy Waters poultry processing facility.

It was decided that GoOFY will not submit a letter of support. Rather individual poultry producers can do so.

909.5 Date for AGM

Enrica and Peter have offered to host the AGM at their house on November 15. Directions will follow

909.6 Peoples' Food Policy Project

Tom outlined the National project that was initiated by Food Secure Canada and is being carried on across

Canada. Pamphlets were handed out regarding the ideas of food sovereignty.

909.7 Urban Garden Co-op-Laird Herbert

Forwarded to the next meeting.

Email list to members

Next Meeting: following the November 15 AGM

Adjournment Brian moved to adjourn the meeting at 4:10pm, meeting was adjourned