

Take one it's...FREE

THE AGMAG

C-K's Agriculture and Outdoor Living Magazine

SPRING 2014



 **THOMPSONS**
CELEBRATES
90 YEARS!
PG.11

Welcome

Welcome to The AgMag 2014

WOW, what a winter!! Some said it was a good old fashioned winter, others said it was one of the coldest winters in years, but the consensus was it was the winter that just kept on giving. Spring just couldn't come quick enough for most of us and now that it's here, people just can't wait to get outside and get into the dirt.

With this issue of The AgMag we hope you enjoy reading some of our articles and learning about some of the wonderful businesses and farming industries we have all around us here in Chatham-Kent. As you flip through the pages you'll notice how many businesses are celebrating milestone years serving our community. Our cover feature, Thompsons, celebrates 90 years; Profota's Farm Equipment, 65 years; and TVF Farms Inc., 50 years! These are big anniversaries and should be celebrated, we congratulate you all.

We hope you enjoy this issue of The AgMag, and we thank all of our advertisers again this year for making this publication possible. We also thank all of our contributing writers for sharing their insight and product/service knowledge in the articles within.

We wish everyone a safe, healthy, and bountiful season.

Let the 2014 season of CK's agriculture and outdoor living begin!

Sincerely,

Andrew Thiel, *President*

Mark Requena, VP / Website Development / Photographer

Grant Smith, IT Specialist

Lisa Persyn, Graphic Designer

Candice Cottingham, Graphic Designer

Nancy Schlereth, Sales Manager

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CK Residents and Businesses.*



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THOMPSONS CELEBRATES 90 YEARS!



THOMPSONS



Cover shot taken at: Thompsons Blenheim facility
Cover photography provided by: Mark Requena Photography
www.markrequenaphotography.ca

The Art of the Outdoors. Naturally

Wayne Michaud and Nature's Pride Landscape Group

Since 1999, Wayne Michaud, Owner of Tilbury's Nature's Pride Landscape Group, has been proud to oversee the marriage of art and nature, one client at a time. A Pain Court, Ontario product, Wayne has seen area backyards as his canvases since high school, when he built on his carpentry and construction background while working alongside a local landscaper. In the years since, Wayne - now a certified horticulturist - has continued to perfect a meticulous attention to detail. "Anybody can landscape," he often says, "but the difference is in the detail."

Today, Nature's Pride's business ethos reflects a commitment to maintaining strong one-to-one customer relationships. A happily married father of three, Wayne sees Nature's Pride as an extension of the values that he holds dear in his family life. After all, "It does become very personal when you have somebody working on your property. It's all about client relations," he elaborates. "We take things to heart and pride ourselves on our relationships with our clients." To this day, Wayne still counts his very first client as one of his regulars.

Over the past decade-plus, Wayne has observed a number of homeowners across Chatham-Kent and Essex County expressing a desire to expand their living spaces into the areas outside of their homes. "People are looking for resort-type vacations in their own backyards," he explains. To this end, Nature's Pride regularly performs start-to-completion design-build projects that incorporate livable, luxurious pieces like outdoor kitchens, decks and fences, and tranquil water features. As much work as possible is always done in-house.

True to its name, Nature's Pride makes every effort to proudly use natural products and sustainable methods, whenever possible. On any given day, this could mean using real, naturally sourced rocks, mulches, and other materials, or battery-powered equipment to eliminate noise and harmful emissions. "We're trying to have less of a footprint," Wayne emphasizes.

Wayne's staff also, and perhaps most importantly, prides itself on its professionalism. "Integrity is a big, big thing," Wayne stresses, numbering fairness and regular communication among his company's core values. Of course, in landscaping, professionalism always also means cleanliness - both after and during the job. "We won't leave your property looking like a war zone," Wayne promises, at any time during a project, no matter its size.

Wayne's flexible, highly skilled staff can accommodate virtually any landscaping project in a way that is sensitive to any homeowner's budgetary and aesthetic concerns. Importantly, this staff still includes Wayne, who regularly finds the time to do hands-on work himself. Although his growing team is currently comprised by a number of exceptional landscape professionals, Wayne stresses that "Nature's Pride is always looking for even more new talent."

If you are considering expanding or beautifying your living spaces, a more comprehensive list of Nature's Pride's services is available on its website, at www.naturespride.ca.

Wayne Michaud
owner





Ford F-Series is Canada's Best-Selling Truck for 48 Years!

Victory Ford Lincoln Sales

WE COULD TELL YOU WHY YOU SHOULD DRIVE A FORD BUT YOU MIGHT THINK WE'RE A LITTLE BIASED...SO WE ASKED FRANK LETOURNEAU, LOCAL BUSINESSMAN AND OWNER OF A FORD F350 HEAVY DUTY VEHICLE, TO TELL YOU WHY HE DRIVES A FORD!

FRANK, CAN YOU TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT WHO YOU ARE AND YOUR BUSINESS?

Frank Letourneau, 'Natural Habitat Restoration Specialist'. "I work for and along-side many avenues of the Ontario Ministry, mainly at the municipal level. My work carries me throughout southern Ontario from the Bruce Peninsula to Windsor. I own and operate one of the sole ground-spraying operations in Ontario whose purpose is to eradicate phragmites from coastal lake regions, marsh areas, ditches, and drains, and return these lands to the natural habitat they once were."

FRANK, WHY DID YOU CHOOSE FORD?

An excellent package deal with rebates made the price very attractive. (There wasn't another truck on the market to match the incentives of the Ford.)

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN DRIVING A FORD?

Since 2008 - F150 was our first Ford pickup. Two years later we advanced to a F250 then progressed to a F350.

TELL US FRANK, WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE FEATURE ON YOUR F350?

It is a work-horse with excellent towing capabilities and good mileage, and is very dependable. This is exactly the truck we had been seeking and plan to stay with.

ANY FINAL COMMENTS YOU'D LIKE TO ADD FRANK?

This truck makes me happy and has made me money!! I depend on this vehicle to be extremely road worthy - to take me into very isolated and far-off places! My wife really enjoys the ride too and is amazed, for a heavy duty pickup that it rides so smoothly, not to mention what a good-looking, classy truck it is!



Frank Letourneau (Left) and Jeff Ameel (Right)

THE AGMAG

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5 Questions

with **DAWN BETANCOURT,**
PRESIDENT OF THOMPSONS LIMITED



Dawn Betancourt, President of Thompsons Limited



Dawn Betancourt was a 27-year veteran of The Andersons Inc., having served in a variety of capacities within the Grain Group. She began her career as a grain originator/merchandiser in 1987. Dawn managed the company's Indiana grain operations for many years, before being named Director of Sales for the Grain Group in 2008. She most recently served as Vice President of the Western Region, before being named President of Thompsons Limited in September 2013. Dawn earned her Bachelors Degree in Food Systems Economics and Management from Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI. Subsequently, she earned an Executive MBA from Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH. Dawn is married with two children aged 16 and 19.

AS PRESIDENT OF THOMPSONS LIMITED WHAT CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES DO YOU ANTICIPATE LEADING THIS COMPANY INTO ITS 9TH DECADE?

The world is changing fast, technology, data, efficiency, service expectations, market intelligence, and opportunities to name a few. The markets are global. Thompsons' job is to take that global information through technology and make it pertinent to the local environment. Our quest is to disseminate what the global markets are bringing to us and make it of value to the consumer. Producers want customized solutions to global issues. It's not cookie cutter. If we can do this well the opportunities that will be available for the company will be great. Customers will look to those that provide value and bring it in a fashion that makes their jobs easier.

DURING YOUR CAREER IN AGRICULTURE WHAT ARE SOME OF THE BIGGEST INNOVATIVE CHANGES YOU HAVE SEEN?

There have been many, auto steer, on-line marketing, the movement of data/information via Twitter, social media and the ability to get word out quickly, variable rate everything, data management and how to use it and for what.... The list goes on, and is really exciting to think about. The people have gotten so accustomed to technology, both the customer and the employee, that we have to think about the implications of technology with every decision we make.

CHATHAM-KENT TRULY IS A "HIDDEN SECRET," WHAT HAVE YOU FOUND TO BE YOUR GREATEST DISCOVERY IN THIS AREA?

One thing that has surprised me is the ability for this area to grow many different crops because of the climate created here between the lakes. This provides a lot of opportunities for Thompsons to diversify and produce products that end users need. I also enjoy the lake front and the people. The lakes provide so much opportunity for sport and fun, then combine that with the people in the area who are truly work hard, play hard people and you have quite a nice/fun match.

HEADING UP A LARGE COMPANY LIKE THOMPSONS LIMITED REQUIRES A LOT OF DEDICATION AND TIME, HOW DO YOU DISCONNECT?

I don't very well.... But I do like to exercise and run. I would say running 4-5 miles on a warm sunny evening or first thing in the morning as the sun comes up is about the best medicine for me. I also try really hard to get away once a year to a warm, tropical area with my family. Nothing is more relaxing than that.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOURSELF IN ONE WORD?

Motivated.... I'm not sure I can describe myself in one word, but I am a "call it like I see it" type of person and people know what I'm thinking. I'm certainly a decision maker with the ability to challenge people with my goal being to help them be better managers/people in the future. If I can help people "get outside their comfort zone" or try something for the first time, we will all grow in the long run. Ask my daughter, I ask her almost daily, "when is the last time you did something for the first time?..."

*Photos in this article by:
Mark Requena Photography
www.markrequenaphotography.ca*

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www.profotasfarmequipment.com

Still Enjoying the Ride...

Profota's Farm Equipment Inc. celebrates 65 years!

Since 1949, Profota's Farm Equipment Inc. has been a family owned and operated business. The late Charles T. Profota started the business which repaired vehicles and farm equipment while also selling gas and food. It was not until 1955 that Profota's began to offer a wide variety of agricultural equipment and service, when they expanded by including a David Brown tractor dealership.

In the late 1970's Profota's Garage became Profota's Farm Equipment Inc. and has been owned and operated by Bill Profota ever since. Growing up in the family business, this has always been a part of Bill's life and he has continued to maintain it as a dependable family operated business.

Through the years, Profota's Farm Equipment Inc. product lines have grown to include McCormick and Landini Tractors, Farm King/Allied, MS Gregson and Hardi Sprayers, Bush Hog, Kuhn Krause, Kongskilde, RJ Equipment, Unverferth, and Penta, as well as other product lines. Bill's family not only services the rural farming community but the urban community as well with a line of reliable Husqvarna Garden and Forestry products, which is celebrating 325 years this year!

Profota's is a proud supporter of many events and sponsorships, and a staple business in our community.

Waddick Fuels Now Offers Ultrapure DEF...

Available in jug, drum, tote, and bulk!


Waddick Fuels has chosen the Ultrapure DEF because it stands out from the rest: it meets the stringent aus 32 purity and concentration standards, is api-certified, is well known throughout the industry, and can be found across North America.

Currently **Waddick Fuels** carries the Ultrapure DEF product in 9.46 L JUG, 208 L DRUM, 1250 L TOTE, and BULK.

Waddick Fuels has entered the bulk DEF world as they are currently building a tri-axle truck for only DEF. This should be on the road in early 2014. Until finished, they are able to serve you with totes and transfer pumps. Also, their offices will have bulk storage containers available for existing drums or totes to be refilled (while the customer waits). Another way Waddick Fuels is assisting their customers is that they will also have an extensive assortment of dispensing equipment. Please contact one of their sales team listed below to find out more about their new Ultrapure DEF product, pricing, and/or equipment.

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PHONE: 519.776.5248 CELL: 519.965.6195


AL LANGFORD – PETROLIA OFFICE
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Direct From the Farm to Your Table

Chatham-Kent Table

*Photos submitted by: Russell Carter
Article supplied by: CK Table Steering Committee*

ANNUAL FESTIVAL STARTED IN 2012 BY LOCAL FARMERS

Since 2012, the Chatham-Kent Table (C-K Table) has been organizing an annual festival hosted by Chatham-Kent farmers and culinary artisans focusing on locally-grown and produced ingredients. The inaugural event in 2012, hosted at River Bell Market Garden in Dresden, received over 100 guests in attendance. The second event, held on Sept. 21, 2013 at Parks Blueberries near Bothwell, was another success. Guests enjoyed an exclusive night of savoury dishes featuring locally grown and produced ingredients. Guests were served by the very farmers who grew and produced each tasting. The unique focus of the event, farmers and the passion for their work, attracted the interests of culinary magazines, travel writers, and food bloggers. Their reviews of the festival garnered great praise and exposure for the region of Chatham-Kent.

ABOUT C-K TABLE

C-K Table is a collaborative group of farmers, culinary artisans, and volunteers passionate about showcasing the variety of foods grown and produced in Chatham-Kent. A portion of the proceeds from the festival goes towards Growing Chefs Ontario, a school-based initiative for building food literacy and cooking programs for children in Chatham-Kent. This festival also serves to promote a new area of focus for the region, agricultural tourism (agri-tourism).

THE C-K TABLE FESTIVAL

The C-K Table festival is a chance to celebrate and showcase the community of Chatham-Kent. This festival is a chance for the community to come together and see the great things happening in the region. The festival also increases the awareness of fresh, local foods available in the region through connections with local producers. Guests at the festival have a chance to mingle

with the farmers involved in the festival and the farmers have a chance to talk about their work and passion.

THE FESTIVAL WORKS TOWARDS:

- Promoting the agricultural heritage and advantage of Chatham-Kent.
- Showcasing the variety of producers and products in Chatham-Kent.
- Recruitment and support of farmers focused on innovation and specialty markets.
- Encouraging partnerships between farmers, culinary artists, and consumers to buy local food and support local businesses.
- Increasing the economic development of the region by attracting visitors/tourists to Chatham-Kent.



Enter to • WIN • DINNER — FOR 2 — TO THE 2014 Chatham-Kent Table

Event Date:
September 7, 2014

Ballot Entry:
A. Thiel Marketing & Graphic Design Inc.
159 King St. West, Downtown Chatham

Online Entry:
Email: info@athielmarketing.com with
"C-K Table Contest" in subject line.
Please include your name, address, and phone
number in the body of the email.

Contest Draw:
July 18, 2014

Dig In, Eat Fresh, & Buy Local *A family business since 1964*

"DIG IN, EAT FRESH, & BUY LOCAL" is our motto as we celebrate our 50th year in the cucumber grading industry. TVF Farms Inc. / The Pickle Station, located in Chatham-Kent, is proud to announce that we now have our own line of pickles.

All of our pickles are locally grown and packed in Canada. Once Bick's and Strub's left the province, we felt a need to provide a local product on the shelf, and this seemed like such a natural fit with our cucumber operation. We currently have three varieties; Papa Dill, Baby Dill, and Sweet Mama, with visions of expanding the family.



It's been an exciting journey marketing in stores around the province and we are excited to see where this will take us.

You can purchase the pickles at our farm office, Roesch Meats and More, The Paper Pickle Co., Park's Blueberries & Country Store, The Glasshouse, Sarah's Farm Market, the Wednesday Market on highway 2 and other various places around the province.

Help us celebrate our anniversary by supporting local; we are certain if you like pickles, you will love ours.




The Pickle Station / TVF Farms Inc.
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Increase Property Value by Design...

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We often think about the type of investments we should be pursuing and how to get the most out of them. One doesn't often think of landscaping as a return on investment, but with Rural Roots Landscape and Design Inc. it is, and a good return at that.

A professional landscape designer can be your investment advisor. A professionally designed landscape blossoms with curb appeal, finds a balance in its trees and shrubs to the surrounding landscape, and enhances your property's greatest features. A well-designed landscape is often a last thought, but it is a visitor's first and lasting impression.

A homeowner can get a 100 to 200% recovery value on their home through a well-landscaped yard according to Money Magazine. This means you can get the same value or a return of double on the investment you made in your landscape. That being said – some aspects of a landscape are certainly more valuable than others. So, what exactly is it that is important to retain and gain value?

Trees offer a great return on your investment. Plant a tree and watch your asset come alive as it grows from season to season. Larger, more established trees can raise property value up to 20% according to Landscape Ontario.

Hardscaping including patios and walkways also increase the

value of your home and can have a return of up to 12% according to *househunting.ca*. Concrete pavers can be a great investment for your property. They can last a lifetime and, depending on the manufacturer, can offer a lifetime guarantee, even transferable with ownership. Concrete pavers have a high initial investment but a low cost when repairs need to take place. If settling occurs, it is easily repaired, offering an attractive advantage over poured or stamped concrete, which is susceptible to cracking and settling.

In addition to the value of a well designed and installed landscape is the personal satisfaction brings you, your family, and your friends. Outdoor living spaces are very popular and give home owners an escape, a place to relax, and a great entertaining space. An outdoor living space can be as simple as a secluded outdoor room with an overhead structure such as a pergola, or as elaborate as an outdoor kitchen with a pizza oven and a fireplace.

To get the most from your outdoor investment remember an excellent design is where it starts. A professional designer will understand your site and personal style, and can help raise the value of your property.

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THOMPSONS



INNOVATIVE LEADERS, FOR 90 YEARS!



In 1924, Wesley G. Thompson founded W.G. Thompson & Sons Limited. The company now known as Thompsons Limited is an agri-business located in Blenheim, Ontario. Thompsons commitment to serving customers and partners with integrity, loyalty, and respect has established and sustained long-lasting relationships for generations. Thompsons continues to offer producers customized, advanced agronomy solutions – helping farmers produce more bushels, more efficiently using innovative technologies.

Over the past 90 years Thompsons has built and expanded grain handling and processing facilities to include 12 modern elevators, 11 retail farm centers, 2 seed processing plants, 5 bean processing plants, and a wheat processing plant. In the United States, Thompsons owns a state-of-the-art dry bean processing facility in East Grand Forks, Minnesota.

Thompsons contracts with both growers and food processors to match supply and market demand for quality food grade products. Thompsons exports food products to over 30 countries worldwide and was the first grain elevator in the world to achieve an SQF Level 3 designation.

Dawn Betancourt, President of Thompsons holds a UAV used to identify in-season production issues, giving customers another layer of data to help manage crop production.



THOMPSONS

2 Hyland Dr. Blenheim, ON N0P 1A0
1.800.265.5225 | thompsonslimited.com



Above Image, Left to Right: Mike VanDamme, 'Rosie', Henry Laevens, Charlie VanDamme, Theresa VanDamme

Keepers of the Land...

Our farmers

*From the desk of: Mr. Kim Cooper, Economic Development Officer
Agriculture Specialist, Municipality of Chatham-Kent*

What is agriculture all about here in Chatham-Kent? What does agriculture look like to each one of us? Is agriculture about the 84% of our total land mass here, which means that of the 2 500 square kilometers that comprise Chatham-Kent, 2 100 of those are for agricultural uses? Is it the 74 000 acres of soybeans we grow, or the 11 000 cattle we raise? Maybe agriculture is about the 25 acres of grapes we grow to produce our award winning wines?

Perhaps the agricultural sector in Chatham-Kent is the 15,000 acres of wheat we grow? Or maybe it's the 100 000 pigs that are raised or the 9 000 acres of tomatoes that are grown? What about the

thousands of quail which are raised and shipped out of Chatham-Kent every week or the 37 million pounds of bell peppers grown every year in our expanding greenhouse sector?

Whatever agriculture looks like to you, perhaps it's not so much about the various products we grow or the animals we raise. Agriculture in Chatham-Kent is really about the people who make up this sector. It's all about our 2 000 or so farmers who farm the land, raise the animals, research the crops, check the weather, update their equipment, and innovate their farming practices.

Our farmers are independent entrepreneurs, each running their own business. And no two farms are the same.

Farming is unique – it's a business for sure, but it's also a way of life. Agriculture here in Chatham-Kent is in fact big business. It's a \$3 billion sector, and is one of, if not the leading, economic drivers here in our community.

Our Chatham-Kent farmers significantly add to our economy. For every dollar they earn in gross sales, they spend approximately 92 cents in operating expenses, which would include machinery, seed, fertilizer, and so many other areas where their dollars go. As the price of fuel, land, and other essentials outpace the income they earn, our farmers must become ever more efficient and productive in order to stay in business.

Our farmers are educated and becoming even more educated. In Canada, there are approximately 200 agricultural colleges. Here



in our community, the University of Guelph Ridgetown Campus continues to provide cutting edge research for our agricultural sector. Every year, the Southwest Ag Conference is held at the Ridgetown Campus and brings together over 1,300 farmers to learn and explore the latest in agricultural research and technology. Our farmers are continually taking courses and participating in workshops to assist them in their business.

Agriculture is about jobs. In Canada, there are three jobs waiting for every graduate of an agricultural education program. And it's just not for the guys. Our agribusiness sector presently has a ratio of 55% female and 45% male workers.

Our farmers are efficient. One hundred years ago, a farmer produced enough food for about 10 people and Canadians spent 50 cents of every dollar earned on food. Today, a farmer produces enough food to feed well over 120 people and our food costs have gone down, enough that for every dollar we earn, we spend less than 11 cents on food.

Farmers are so efficient today that one acre of wheat makes enough bread to feed a family of four for 10 years. Now that's efficiency. Our farmers have considered themselves to be stewards of the earth for a long time. There are many farm practices which are aimed at protecting the environment while at the same time allowing our farmers to be profitable. Farmers have been developing "Environmental Farm Plans" for many years in order to ensure that care for the environment is a daily consideration on every farm.



Above Image, Left to Right: Don VanRoboys, Murray Gervais

Our farmers are also very much aware of the resources they use. Farmers use 50 000 fewer gallons of water to grow an acre of corn today than in 1990.

Most of our farmers use crop protection products to control weeds, insects, and diseases. These are expensive tools to use so farmers are financially motivated not to over-use these products. Today's farmer relies on integrated pest management, which means using

*Photos in this article by:
Krystle VanRoboys Photography
www.krystlevanroboys.ca*



the right tool at the right time, to ensure that they are managing pest pressures in their fields in the most effective way possible. In fact, over the past twenty years, our farmers have significantly reduced their use of crop protection products.

The majority of our farmers today embrace modern technologies as part of their operations. By using the most innovative practices available to them, farmers can produce more food while minimizing the environmental impact. As a result, today's farming operations are more sustainable than ever before.

Agriculture is about the crops, animals, technology, and research. But it's more about the people. Our farmers. Dedicated. Keepers of the land. Innovators. And best of all, our neighbours right here in Chatham-Kent.

You can follow Kim Cooper on

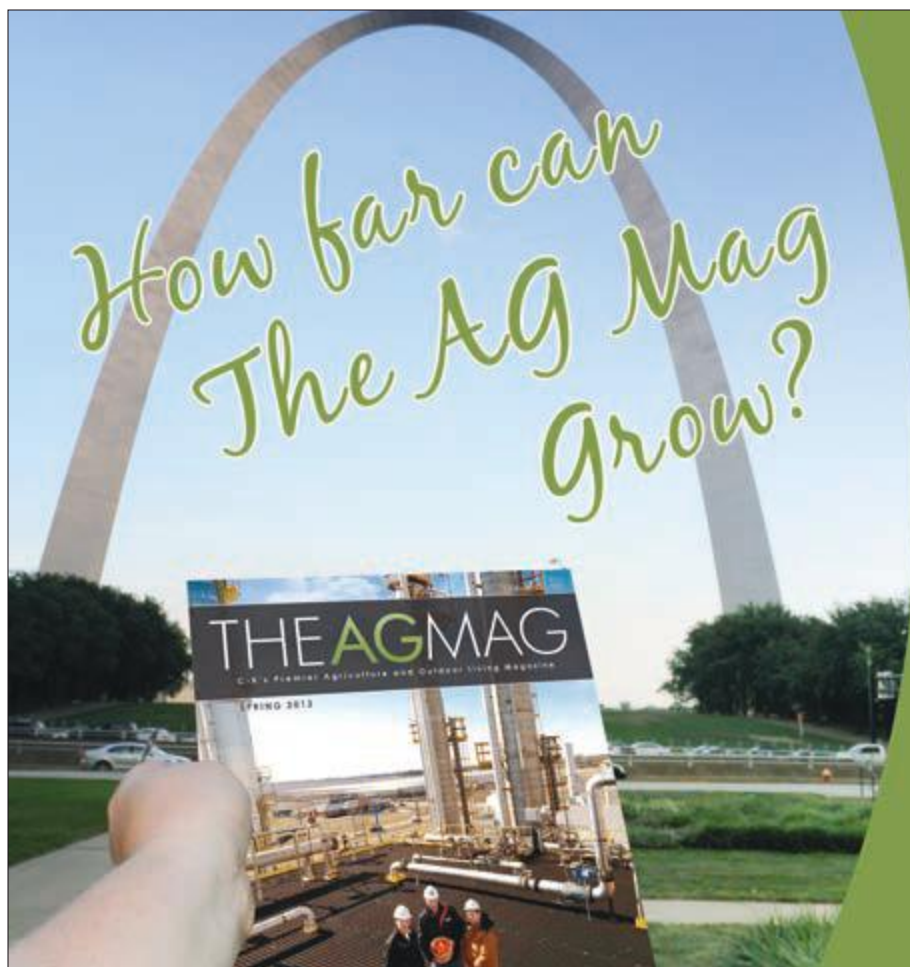


@theAGguy





truly thankful...



Where will you take us?

With this issue of The AgMag, help us to promote our community and the fact that "We Grow For The World."

Please take an extra copy of The AgMag along with you and snap a shot (you can even make it a selfie) with the magazine in hand wherever you may find yourself in this province, country, or world!

Be sure to pass the magazine forward so others can see what we have to offer here in Chatham-Kent.

Let's think BIG and promote our community to the world!

Email us your photo, your name, and your location, and we'll make you part of our next issue. Let's see just how far The AgMag can grow!!!

Please email to: info@athielmarketing.com
And in the subject line please note:
"How far can The AgMag grow?"

The ownership and management of Truly Green Farms would like to say a big thank you for all the support we have received over the past couple of years with the establishment of our new greenhouse operation. Hard work and dedication made this project a reality and we thank the community of Chatham-Kent as a whole for all the words of encouragement and support that have been expressed.

To the Council and staff from Economic Development and the Municipality of Chatham-Kent we sincerely thank you for the guidance and support that was demonstrated from the very beginning. Truly Green is an example of how municipal government and private business can work together to bring a new concept to a reality.

Truly Green would not have been established if it were not for the shared vision with GreenField Ethanol. All involved knew that there was synergy to be had in linking an ethanol plant to a greenhouse. Every challenge was met with a solution.

Looking forward to more great opportunities in Chatham-Kent as Truly Green continues to grow.

In Chatham-Kent, we grow for the world.

*Charles & Jennie Devries
Greg & Jennifer Devries*

*Hilco & Ann Tamminga
Phil & Janice Bultje*

The Truly Green Family!



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Bob Kennedy has built his successes on honest, reliable service. "We won't simply sell you equipment," Bob states, "but rather make you feel a part of the Water Elite family." We are small enough to care yet large enough to have buying power so you always get the best value for your money.

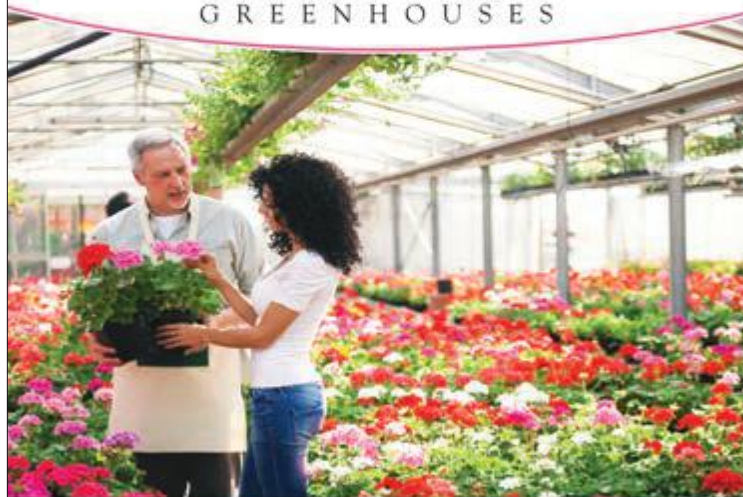
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Rob Murphy has been installing and servicing equipment for over 16 years with Water Elite so you can feel secure in knowing that if or when your system needs servicing that a seasoned veteran is there for you. His knowledge and expertise is a huge asset to Water Elite and ultimately to YOU!

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The Beet Grows On...

Editorial and photos submitted by: Jason Fox

Sugarbeet production strong in Chatham-Kent

This year will see the 19th crop of sugarbeets planted locally since the reintroduction of the crop in 1996. Sugarbeets have a long and important history on local farms and the story of their return after 30 years is a true success story.

The success of those early crops and the hard work of the OSGA have led to the prominent place sugarbeets hold on many area farms today, with over 100 growers growing over 10 000 acres of sugarbeets in Chatham-Kent and Lambton County.



Sugarbeets are an early planted crop, usually starting in late March, and once established, they become a very hearty and resilient plant. At harvest, the root of the sugarbeet plant weighs about .5 – 1.5 kgs and is about 18% sugar. The sugarbeets are dug by machine and are piled on the ends of the field or are hauled by tractors to the piling yard (storage facility) in the former Dover Township. The beets are stored at the piling yard until they are shipped to the refinery in Michigan over the winter. All of the local sugarbeets are grown for the Michigan Sugar Co-op – each grower owns shares in the company, and each share gives them the right and obligation to grow an acre of sugarbeets each year.

Given the progressive nature of farmers in our area, it is no surprise that they have brought many innovations to sugarbeet production that are now widely used by the growers in Michigan and across

Sugarbeets had been a well-known and widely grown crop in the area from the early 1900's until the mid-sixties when the Dominion Sugar refineries in Wallaceburg and Chatham closed their doors (1960 and 1968, respectively). By that time, growing sugar in Canada had become uncompetitive compared to the heavily subsidized sugar flooding the world market. So, by 1968, the once widely grown crop disappeared from the farms of Chatham-Kent.

the sugarbeet growing regions of North America. Possibly the most important of these is “field piling” sugarbeets. This allows growers to pile the sugarbeets on the ends of their fields to be picked up later by semi-trucks which are loaded while on the road with a specialized machine. This innovative shipping method is now used in many beet growing regions to improve road conditions and safety as well as further enhancing the grower's competitiveness by reducing trucking costs.

Chatham-Kent is well known for its productive farms and innovative farmers, and these factors brought the area to the attention of Michigan Sugar Company in the mid-nineties. It was a particularly difficult time in farming, and growing beets was a tough sell to farmers in Michigan – the Michigan Sugar Company was having trouble finding enough sugarbeet growers. But given the strong US dollar at the time, sugarbeets were an attractive crop for Canadian growers.

Much as they were in the past, sugarbeets have returned and are once again an important part of the local economy and of more

In 1996, when the opportunity for a new, profitable crop presented itself, an AD-HOC Sugarbeet Growers Committee was formed, chaired by Brian Fox, a local farmer, to help take advantage of it. By early 1997, this committee had evolved into the Ontario Sugarbeet Grower's Association (OSGA) with the mission of “promoting profitable sugarbeet production in Ontario.” There were many challenges between the first, trial crop of 350 acres in 1996 and the first commercial scale crop of 3000 acres in 1997. But true to their innovative nature, 68 local growers accepted the challenge and the risk of growing that first commercial crop.



than 100 local grower's farms. To put the scale of local sugarbeet production into perspective, the next time you sit down for a cup of coffee think about this: on average, each and every acre of sugarbeets grown locally produces enough sugar for 1,350,000 packets of sugar. If you'll pardon the pun, the return of the sugarbeet industry is a pretty sweet success story.



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If you choose to wear Carhartt, then you're wearing a legend as it has been producing rugged outdoor wear since 1889. The Carhartt name stands for the best in rugged outdoor clothing. If you're working outdoors in all weather conditions, then you are most likely not a stranger to the Helly Hansen line. This clothing features fibre-lock that traps body heat for extra warmth and rain gear to help keep you dry.

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Communities in Bloom

Deeply rooted in Chatham-Kent

The Municipality of Chatham-Kent is proud to be entered in the International Communities in Bloom (CiB) competition in 2014! Maintaining a top 5 Bloom rating the first time we were entered at the international level last season verifies just how deeply rooted the CiB program is in Chatham-Kent (CK).

To be as successful as we have been in CiB requires a community to have exceptional involvement across all sectors of society; its citizens, municipal staff, elected officials, schools, service groups, industry, and businesses, and in each of the six judging criteria:

1. Tidiness
2. Environmental Action
3. Heritage Conservation
4. Urban Forestry
5. Landscape (which includes 500,000+ acres farmland)
6. Floral Displays

Though agriculture may not be an obvious CiB fit at first glance, with 84% of CK used for farming purposes, the efforts of our farming operations and rural homes contribute greatly to both our residential and our business scores in virtually all of the CiB judging criteria.

CiB always proudly highlights to the judges the use of cover crops, crop rotation, no-till planting, nutrient management, participation in the Ontario Environmental Farm Plan, our natural restoration and reforestation projects, and CK's Buy Local, Buy Fresh Campaign.

Our agricultural community not only impresses the judges annually with the variety of crops which serve as "beautiful ground cover," but with the "high level of roadside maintenance in the vast rural area". They are pleased to see how seriously those in the agricultural industry take "being good stewards of the land" and we are always complimented for having "an extremely tidy municipality".

CK CiB would like to thank all those who present an aesthetically pleasing farm, home, or business front. This positive image not only impresses the judges, but it makes CK more appealing to visitors and investors, and very importantly to our own residents. Help us unearth these Fabulous Front Yards by nominating your favourite CK garden. It can be large or small, a home or business, in town or in the country. If it is visible from public property and it catches your eye, call or email CK CiB with details of your nomination today!

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Moving to their current location in Jan 2000, Bill employs 2 full-time factory-trained technicians, which have been with him ten plus years, one seasonal part-time and the occasional co-op student.

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Editorial and photo submitted by: Nancy Schlereth

Farmer Spotlight...

Stan Wonnacott

Stan Wonnacott was born on September 4, 1922 in Raleigh Township, the son of Frederick and Annie Wonnacott. He was born into a farming family and definitely born with farming in his blood. From the time he was a young man he had a keen interest in every aspect of farming which manifested into many decades bearing the farmer title.

Wonnacott farms was one of the first farms to use a machine tomato harvester in Chatham Kent. Stan chose to use a smaller machine initially that had a limited capacity (5 to 8 tons per hour) and was very pleased with its performance. In 1979, Wonnacott farms harvested their eighth crop of tomatoes and at that time Stan and his sons grew a total of 69 acres between them. As time went by and his farm land grew, the harvester quickly became a staple in the Wonnacott Farms operation.

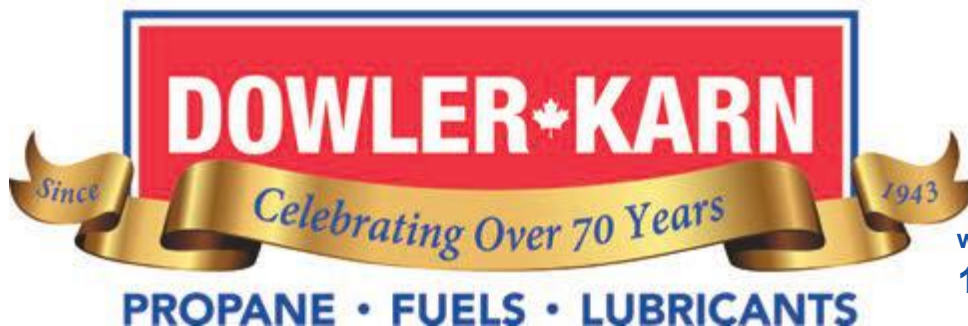
Over the years Stan acquired numerous titles, from President of the Kent Junior Farmers in 1950; President of the Kent Soil & Crop Improvement Association in 1962, to the appointment of the Bank of Montreal Agricultural Advisory Panel in 1987...just to name a few. Through years of hard work, careful planning, and strong farming skills it was no surprise that he was granted induction into the Kent Agricultural Hall of Fame on November 1, 1995.

Stan has lived his entire life along a stretch of the Thames River in three different homes all built side by side, all still standing. The first home he was born and grew up in. The second he built when he married his wife Betty (deceased) and where they raised their two sons John (deceased) and Wayne. This is the home where Stan achieved his most important title of all: Stan Wonnacott & Sons! The third was his retirement home and remains his home today where he enjoys the frequent visits from his son, daughter-in-law, 4 granddaughters, his grandson, 3 great-grandsons, and his great-granddaughter.

Stan is a respected man in this community and has made a difference in Chatham-Kent agriculture. Thanks Stan for your years of hard work and contribution to our farming community!

"It is only the farmer who faithfully plants seeds in the Spring, who reaps a harvest in the Autumn."

- B. C. Forbes



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grilled veggie kebabs



Prep Time: 15 minutes
Cook Time: 10 minutes

Total Time: 25 minutes
Yield: Serves 4

Ingredients:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 small yellow squash, sliced | 3 tbsp olive oil |
| 1 Bermuda onion | juice of 1 lemon |
| 4 mushroom caps | 1 tbsp Dijon mustard |
| 1 red pepper, cut into 8 pieces | 1 tbsp chopped fresh basil |
| 1 green pepper, cut into 8 pieces | 1 tbsp chopped fresh parsley |
| 2 zucchinis, sliced | 2 cloves garlic, minced |
| 10 cherry tomatoes | 1/4 tsp salt |
| 2 tbsp red wine vinegar | 1/4 tsp black pepper |

Preparation:

Mix olive oil, vinegar, lemon juice, mustard, basil, parsley, garlic, salt and black pepper together in a small bowl. Place cut vegetables in a resealable plastic bag. Pour marinade over vegetables, toss and seal bag. Let sit in refrigerator for 2-3 hours. Preheat grill. Place vegetables on skewers alternating as you go. Reserve marinade to brush vegetables as they cook. Place kebabs over a medium flame and cover. Cook for 10-12 minutes, brushing with marinade every 3-4 minutes. Remove from grill when veggies are brown and tender.

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