

Great Lakes CSA Conference 2008

Conference Proceedings

The conference proceedings were taken from the notes made by recording volunteers at all of the sessions. Many thanks to these volunteers – many who pitched in at the last minute – for making these proceedings possible!

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KEYNOTE PRESENTATION

Dan Wiens, CSA Farmer, Wiens Shared Farm, St. Germain South, MB

Dan's presentation started off the conference, creating a positive energy that carried through the rest of the event. His full presentation is available at www.csaconference2008.ca/proceed.html (English only). Highlights of his presentation follow.

Comparison of agribusiness versus agriculture

- Are we growing commodities or food for people?
- Have we created a broken system of agribusiness, where billions starve while billions are overweight?
- Wiens Shared Farm started as Dan and his family wanted to enter into a new system of agriCULTURE

CSA Farmers – the motivation

When asked, the majority of the farmers in the room were from the city originally, not from farming families. Dan suggests this is because there is something innate in people that require community, but the current agribusiness system doesn't allow for this. Thus people are attracted to CSAs and having an opportunity to know their farmer/farm. This is shown in the response to Dan's question to the audience on how many had trouble finding members for their CSA – very few hands were raised.

Some advice

- As a movement, we may be mature enough to err on the side of higher wages.
- Give the best to sharers/members – prepare produce and goods as if you are taking them to the market (clean, fresh and best).

Making food accessible

One of the realities of CSAs is that many cannot afford the price of a share. The Wiens farm started the Good Food Club to make produce accessible to those with low incomes. About 400 people pay \$5 toward a van which takes them from inner city Winnipeg and the farm on Thursday and Fridays. These folks help work on the farm (harvesting and preparing produce) in exchange for produce for their families. The van then takes the people and extra food back to the inner city where it is sold to the community at low prices. Funds raised at the market go toward winter food baskets and other community projects to help low income Winnipeggers.

THE BUSINESS AND MARKETING OF CSAs

Business Realities

Hillary Moore, CSA Farmer, Teamwork CSA, Almonte, ON
Chris Krucker, CSA Farmer, [ManoRun Farm](#), Lynden, ON

This two-part session looked at farm budgeting and record keeping. The sessions stressed that the more that you work on your budget, the better picture it can provide of the realities needed to achieve your goals.

In the first session, attendees split into groups to compare sample CSA budgets, looking at three questions. Some of the discussion points are presented below.

What do you find of note in the comparative budget chart? Are their trends/themes?

- more land doesn't mean you make more \$
- too many variables are untold in this pictures
- staff per acre is fairly consistent

What part of your farm finances and accounting practices are you proud of?

- planning for retirement
- living wages for interns so they want to return
- learning from others

What part of your farm finances and accounting practices do you want to change or improve?

- record keeping
- hiring an accountant
- keeping debt low
- using a software program
- tracking different farm enterprises separately

Key points from the group discussion that followed

- computer programs can help keep your accounts up-to-date – QuickBooks, Simply Accounting, Mind Your Own Business, Excel
- you can set your own share prices – don't compare with wholesale prices or stores
- include your members in discussions for determining share price so that they undertake your price
- looking at your budget can help see where you can reduce expenses and try to increase profit
- Hillary suggested revisiting prices each year, and costing out each item. She keeps a running total of the value of items in her shares to ensure that the share price reflected true value, and reports this in her November season summary.

The second session presented a more detailed look at developing a budget by looking at two key questions.

How much \$ do you have to make?

- how do you want to live?
- look at share structure and going prices at farmers markets
- begin this process early – January
- need to track throughout the year to be prepared to review and plan for the following year

How much will it cost to run the CSA?

- break-out costs into three categories:
 - durable costs (eg, machinery, greenhouses)
 - annual costs (eg, seeds, fuel, marketing, intern salaries)
 - personal costs (eg, what you get paid)

Suggestions

- work with an accountant (fees might be reduced if you have paperwork organized)
- keep track of bank and interest charges (can be written off)
- track resale items, even if the cost comes out to \$0
- plan on netting half of what you gross
- keep personal and business finances separate
- use the same categories for keeping track of your expenses as what the government lists as expenses on the farming tax form
- work toward grossing \$1/sq ft
- look at projected and actual expenses and actual income
- acquire things slowly so you are not getting into large debt
 - plan on when you are going to acquire/need large, expensive items

- plan on how you are going to pay back any debt
- need to be honest in putting your numbers together for a budget
- try to get in the habit of tracking what is going in and out on a regular basis
- consider getting a GST # if you are wholesaling vegetables
- you may be exempt from PST if you earn \$7000 in farm income and have joined a farm organization (NFU, CFA, OFA). (For the first 3 years, you can earn less than \$7000, provided you've joined an organization).

Hillary's full presentation from the second part of the business realities session, including sample calculations, is available at www.csaconference2008.ca/proceed.html (English only).

CSA Models

Doug Wylie, [The Carrville Community Garden](#), Thornhill, ON

Daniel Brisebois, CSA Farmer, [Tourne-Sol Co-operative Farm](#), les Cèdres, QC

Tom Waller, CSA Farmer, Elm Tree Farm, Arden, ON

This session looked at how different CSAs operate, from membership to distribution. There are many different CSA models and each farmer needs to experiment and find the best one for them.

Doug Wylie on the Carrville Community Garden approach

- collective approach to gardening
 - participants get vegetables in proportion to hours worked – currently 70 members on 2 acres
- structure (garden organization)
 - overall supervisor
 - individuals lead garden sections
 - volunteers state intended participation
- profits are not appropriated by one individual, rather they are put back into the program
- farm functions withing a community
 - market on site
 - school and adult learning centre

Daniel Brisebois on the Tourne-Sol Co-operative Farm approach

- worker owner co-op (5 members)
 - democratic (1 vote each)
 - salary based on hours worked
 - solid team; committed
- important to develop a common vision
 - all connected and willing to work due to investment in process (ownership)
- communication is key
 - blackboard, records
 - morning “update” meetings
 - fall meetings (review and plan)
 - spring meetings (set goals, schedules, vision for the season)
- clearly divide responsibilities
 - office and field time
 - people do what they do well

- opportunity to switch roles
- important to trust others to fulfil roles
- constantly improve skills and re-educate

Tom Waller on the Elm Tree Farm approach

- started with home deliveries
 - never had to market – always more demand
 - now mid-week CSA, Sat market, deliveries
- charge a fee for extras (drop off, for example)
- be firm on pick-up time –balance your convenience with customer convenience
- people want choice – pay attention and adjust to serve customer needs
- very satisfying to have people on the farm or donate food to foodbank
- respectful relationships with restaurants can be very rewarding

Discussion point

- Best basket types: rubbermaids, ones with snap-on lids, old bulb trays, square better than round

Member Retention and Recruitment

Martha Laing, CSA Farmer, [Orchard Hill Farm](#), St. Thomas, ON

Hillary Moore, CSA Farmer, Teamwork CSA, Almonte, ON

A discussion on how to grow CSAs and keep members. One key lesson – take advantage of pre-existing communities and networks, including:

- friends (and their friends and family)
- workplaces
- local stores (emphasize they'll get more traffic if a CSA pickup is there)
- community group/centre
- overflow from other CSAs
- local chambers of commerce
- “women with vision”

Martha Laing

- talk to community groups
- give enough food – not too much
 - focus on favourites and a few new items
 - excess food? People can “pick your own”
- start the season early when other farms aren't running yet – rhubarb, asparagus, greenhouse stuff
- presentation is key – nice signs, organized farm and pick-up area
- add extras like cut your own flowers
- share the farm -- encourage visits, hold work bees, offer working shares, host a CSA potluck

Hillary Moore

- start with people you know – have a coffee chat on CSAs and your farm
- have a good brochure – clear goals, philosophy, what to expect
- ask members to pass on your brochure and tell people about you
- get yourself in the newsletter go through how your program works with each member in person
- prepare an end of season report (finances, successes, failures) – include pictures

- conduct an end of season survey
- plan a January mail-out to ask people to re-join

Discussion highlights:

- be conscious of your market (CSAs might not work in areas with lots of backyard gardeners)
- natural health care workers will often promote you to clients
- get members to help out with newsletters, websites, etc.
- there is a cottager market (drop off at marinas, post offices)
- you can't be everything to everyone
- be open about what you are charging and why

Martha and Hillary's full presentations are available at at www.csaconference2008.ca/proceed.html (English only).

PRODUCTION METHODS, TIPS AND TRICKS FOR CSAs

Meat CSAs

Beth Osmund, CSA Farmers, [Cedar Valley Sustainable Farm CSA](#), Ottawa, IL

Beth discussed her experiences in operating a meat and egg CSA.

Cedar Valley Farm's sustainability definitions:

- responsible stewardship – raise animals in respect to nature
- sell food at its true costs – no subsidies to deflate prices
- make a living wage to raise a family – a wage comparable to the people that buy their food
- leave the land in a better condition than when they began

Began in 2003 as a vegetable CSA and farmers' markets. Slowly added eggs and meats. In 2007, moved to 70 regular shares and 78 meat shares (quarterly). In 2008, focus switched to all meat (a monthly assortment of pork, beef, chicken and eggs).

Currently have 175 active members at \$80/month plus \$5 delivery.

- offer 3, 6, 12 month shares
- shares include 2 – 3 cuts each of beef, pork and chicken, plus eggs (members can opt out of 1 type of meat)

Advantages

- year round income
- efficient use of time for delivery
- relationships

Challenges

- recruiting members
- building awareness
- customer education (picky) -- “I like only chicken.”

Delivery Locations

- at farmers market only once/month (good for marketing the CSA)
- complimentary businesses – coffee shops, wine stores (public exposure is better than having pick-up at members houses)

Member Recruitment & Communications

- brochures at delivery locations
- word-of-mouth
- internet
- group presentations
- ongoing communications – constantcontact.com – reminders, welcome message (with tips), monthly newsletters
- events – tours (free to members, charge \$20 to non-members, which is applied to share if they join), need to schedule to use time effectively; cook-outs; work bees; tastings; group tours for schools (\$200 for 2-3 hours)
- database – uses MS Access

Packing Shares

- cool bags (koldtogo.com)
- cuts cater to what people commonly want, including small packages

Other Considerations

- night guard for predator protection – solar red light
- production for poultry very similar to Joel Salatin model (*Pasture Poultry Profit*) - raise Cornish Cross
- production for pork- follow advice of a good local mentor, provide free choice of grain, forage and dirt – raise Hampshire x Duroc (piglets born quarterly)

Biodynamics

Cory Eichman, CSA Farmer, Saugeen River CSA, Durham ON

Cory presented an introduction to the concepts of biodynamic farming. A short summary follows. There are many resources available on-line.

Rudolf Steiner, founder of the biodynamics and himself a farmer, said biodynamic farming needed to respond to two questions: How can we feed our body and our soul? How can we do this for the 2000 years? In response, sustainability and nursing the whole being have been the driving ideas of biodynamics.

A healthy farm = healthy food.

The biodynamic farm is considered a “farm individual” as its fertility must be maintained in itself. To be able to give food the community -- “export” vegetables and animal products -- enough force must be drawn within the farm organism. Plants are seen as something that both grow and reproduce AND nourish other organisms. The force drawn within the food grown on a biodynamic farm is what nourishes our soul and spirit.

According to the biodynamic calendar, there are different periods, based on the moon phases, that affect plants' growth. There are different influences depending on the roots, leaves and fruits. For example,

Steiner suggested seeding must be done before full moon. Transplanting cuttings is best when the moon is in its descendant phase. There are planting calendars for different regions of the world.

There are many different biodynamic preparations that can be made on the farm to make the farm healthier. They are often applied on the field or in the compost. The preparations have different purposes within the farm organism.

Cover Crops and Rotation

Eric and Anne Nordell, Farmers, Beech Grove Farm, Trout Run, PA

Through a documentary video, Eric and Anne shared their experiences in using cover crop rotation, fallow and minimal tillage techniques to reduce weed pressures through. At several points they joined the session via conference call to answer questions.

The DVD and discussion covered tilling with horses, shallow tillage to avoid turning up weeds, farming without irrigation, crop rotation to reduce weeds, and using the “cover crop clock.”

Attendees at the session suggest that the DVD is a great resource. It is available from Eric and Anne directly.

Season Extension

David Cohlymeyer, Founding President, [Cookstown Greens](#), Thornton, ON
Doug Lendrum, Bittersweet Farm, Fall Brook, ON

This session looked at technologies to extend the CSA season. Both David and Doug suggested that by using these technologies, you can be a month ahead of other area farmers.

Doug Lendrum

- farms north of Perth, ON
- uses hoop houses
- hoops are made of 10' lengths of electrical conduct (1/2" size)
- attaches the hoop houses to the ground using rebar sunk 6" into the ground every 30" -- the hoops slide over the rebar
- “U” shaped fencing staples attached to wood base; 1 staple every second rebar fastens the hoops to the rebar; string is tied to the staple and zigzagged over the plastic to the next hoop
- 6 mil plastic (construction plastic) covers the hoops
- at the ends of the hoop house, plastic is left 3' longer; it is pulled tight and tied off to close the ends
- a raised bed system is used in most hoop houses
- lettuce crops are grown under these tunnels early in the season
- plastic is taken off during the winter, but the hoops are kept up

David Cohlymeyer

- grows greens, including spinach, turnips, radish, leeks and herbs
- uses four greenhouses, 25 x 250 ft, and also plastic tunnels with row cover and with plastic
- grows cover crops on his farm which he believes helps with flavour and shelf-life
- uses a 4 year rotation – 1 year on, 3 years off

- air is very important with greenhouse growing – need to have a good supply of circulating air (fans work) – try to mimic nature in that leaves should be moving and rustling in the breeze
- previously, watering every day was increasing salt deposits; now water heavily 1 x per week
- heats the greenhouses with propane
- greenhouses are outdoor hoop house type
- uses row cover for flea beetle protection for mustards
- shade cloth is needed for south-side in the summer
- the plastic or row cover is tied down into aircraft screws between the hoops

Seed Saving

Daniel Brisebois, CSA Farmer, [Tourne-Sol Co-operative Farm](#), les Cèdres, QC

This session looked at moving toward independence by learning how to save different kinds of seeds for your CSA.

Reasons to Save Seeds

- increase diversity
- save money
- adapt seeds to local conditions

Challenges to Seed Saving

- temperature
- humidity

Growing Seeds

- seeds tell you when they are ready
- select for flower stalk – single bud
- select for growing strength
- label seeds early in the growing process

Genetics of Seed Saving

- Self-Pollinating
 - 25-50 plants are best
 - 1-2 plants in a small garden
 - isolation: 15-20 ft
 - examples: lettuce, tomatoes and beans
- Out crosses
 - 100-300 plants are best
 - 20 plants in a small garden
 - isolation: 800-1500 m
 - examples: umbels, brassicas, squash is an exception

Details of Seed Saving

- keep them dry
- use window screens or spaghetti colanders to sift out seeds
- dry onion tops are ready when you see black seed
- store in a dry and cool place inside a paper bag or glass/plastic jar

- keep light from seeds
- allow air space around plants to facilitate drying

References Books

- *Seed to Seed*
- *How to save your own Vegetable Seeds*
- *Wisdom of Plant Heritage & Organic Seed Production & Saving*
- *Breed your own Vegetable Varieties*

Seed saving can be complex if you want it to be!

Small-scale Tillage Tools

Ann Slater, CSA Farmer, St. Marys, ON

Maureen Bostock, Sweet Meadow Farm, Balderson, ON

Ken Laing, Orchard Hill Farm, St Thomas, ON

Three experienced CSA farmers shared their tips on using hand tools and mechanical and horse cultivation.

Maureen Bostock on Tractor Tillage

- it is very important to maintain soil structure as much as possible, so...
 - don't till when it is wet
 - don't overdo it be tilling more frequently or deeper than necessary
 - prepare a bed relative to the type of seed (Maureen only uses the rotovator for small seeds like lettuce and carrots and she only works in the top 1-2 inches of soil)
- Maureen deals with weeds with a 1949 off-set Farmall with a belly-mounted toolbar -- allows her to see exactly what she's doing
- check out *Steel in the Fields* and Rodale's research on organic no-till using a crimper -roller

Ken Laing on Horse-Powered Tillage

- many regular tractor implements can be adapted for horses
- you can get on the land earlier with horses
- implements can be bought cheap
- 2 horses with a combined weight of 3000 to 4000 lbs in a 10 hour day can accomplish:
 - plow – 1-2 acres/day
 - disk – 5 acres/day
 - cultivate – 5-10 acres/day
 - harrow – 15 acres/day
- consider balancing your soil nutrient levels so that you can have less weed-pressure to begin with

Ann Slater on Walk-Behind Tractors and Hand Tools

- Ann grows on a heavy clay soil, so extensive, regular tractor tillage is not an option (compaction)
- this type of tillage is very flexible, allowing you to work in small sections and to prep dry spots earlier in the season
- it is also versatile, - not just a rototiller – there are many other implements available
- highly recommends a wheelhoe and colinear hoe

Presentations from this session are available at www.csaconference2008.ca/proceed.html (English only).

Managing Pests

Bob Garthson, Grafton, ON

This open forum session provided farmers an opportunity to share their experiences and exchange strategies for dealing with pest and disease pressures.

- Longer rotation can solve pest problems.
- carrot rust fly – plant late June
- earwigs – hose or board, avoid moisture, chickens or guinea fowl before planting
- slugs – better air circulation, ground up eggshells, wood ash, diatomaceous earth
- cabbage loopworm – companion planting, mulch, row cover, plant red cabbage in alternate rows, Bt
- rotting carrots – hill carrots in heavy soil
- swede midge – row cover, plant corps upwind from last year
- gypsy moth – traps, natural insect control
- hornworms – Bt
- downy mildew – spray raw or sour milk, good air flow, avoid mint family
- powdery mildew – spray horsetail tea
- potato beetle – eggplant trap crop, hooped row cover/light row cover, plant “dusky” variety, hand picking and vacuum
- early blight – copper sulfate, kelp tea drench
- damping off – chamomile tea on seedlings
- squash beetle – inject nematodes, dust buster
- rose bugs – neem oil

The suggested reading list from the session is available at www.csaconference2008.ca/proceed.html (English only).

LIVING AND WORKING ON THE FARM AND IN THE COMMUNITY

Land Access

Chris Krucker, CSA Farmer, [ManoRun Farm](#), Lynden, ON

Caitlin Hall, CSA Farmer, [reroot organic CSA](#), Moorefield, ON

Amy Darrell, [Everdale Organic Farm and Environmental Learning Centre](#), Hillsburg, ON

In this session creative arrangements that CSA farms can use to access a land base were discussed.

Chris Krucker

- renting land is a good option (affordable, close to big cities)
- try to “trade” with landlord (eg, 1 cow for dental plan)
- keep a good relationship with your landlord
- remember that with renting you can easily be out of your garden
- if you can't afford to buy a farm, you can still farm

Caitlin Hall

- farmers have land, tools and knowledge
- written agreements are important – include an “end agreement”

- work on a healthy/happy landlord/tenant agreement
- there is a plus side to squatting

Amy Darrell

- there are programs to link farms to land “LandLink” program
- there are many land tenure options (buy, rent, lease, trade)
- need to educate landlords on the advantages for land with organic gardens – taxes, property values
- the challenge is getting farmers to move to available land.
- affordable land is available
- website resources: www.farmstart.ca, www.farmlinkontario.ca

Training the Next Generation

Alvaro Venturelli, CSA Farmer, [Plan B Organic Farm](#), Branchton, ON and [CRAFT \(Collaborative Regional Apprentice Farmer Training\)](#), ON

Ali English, [FarmStart](#), ON

Harris Ivens, [Everdale Organic Farm and Environmental Learning Centre](#), Hillsburg, ON

This session looked at learning opportunities for new farmers in Ontario.

Harris Ivens

- young farmers need help with the business aspects of running a farm
- Farmers Growing Farmers offers a farm business planning course, farmer mentoring, land access and a new farmer network
- there are many resources available to new farmers: FarmStart, CRAFT, Farmers Growing Farmers, Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario, farmcentre.ca, Canadian Organic Growers, OMAFRA

Alvaro Venturelli

- CRAFT program currently has 14 farms involved, with a variety of farm operations
- meet once a month for farm tours and lectures for members
- helping immigrant groups access farm work and education
- pays living wages to interns, interns have choices in the direction of their training and careers

Ali English

- FarmStart supports viable farm businesses that are starting out
- Incubator farms – rent land/share tools at subsidized rates to allow new farmers to explore paths to starting up their farm
- Offer training and resources, including business planning courses and tours

CSAs in the Urban Context

Paula Lukats, Manager, CSA in NYC Program, [Just Food](#), New York, NY

Anne Levesque, former Food, Agriculture and Trade Coordinator, [Equiterre](#), Montreal, QC

Two “big city” CSA networks spoke on their structure and the services they provide to their membership.

Equiterre, Montreal

- CSA network in Quebec

- started 1995 with 1 farm member; 162 farms in 2008 feeding 10,800 families
- services to farmers:
 - links farmers with members
 - provide mentorship to new farms during first year of operation
- \$175 per year for farm to join

Just Food, NYC

- started 1995 with 1 CSA; 62 CSAs and 24 farms in 2008
- run an urban agriculture program, CSA program and community food education program
- provide a farmers summit for CSA farmers and a CSA conference for members and farmers
- also provide a newsletter

Using Volunteers

Heather Lekx, CSA Farmer and Intern Coordinator, [Ignatius Farm CSA](#), Guelph, ON

Martha Laing, CSA Farmer, [Orchard Hill Farm](#), St. Thomas, ON

Mike Everts, CSA Farmer, [Blackbird Gardens](#), Petoskey, MI

Three experienced CSA farmers shared ways they involve volunteers in their CSAs.

Volunteers can make a really good contribution if you have a strategy for including them and are committed to the community aspect of CSAs.

Heather Lekx

- for working shares, formal agreements and a sign-up process are a good idea
- working share for full value (at Heather's farm, 6 or 9.5 hours of work per week for 20 weeks (small and large shares respectively))
- 5 work sessions before the first vegetable pick-up to confirm people's commitment
- provide other volunteer opportunities for members

Martha Laing

- 42% of 160 shares are working shares; \$35 price reduction for 5 hrs of work during the season
- get to know your members and offer them opportunities to learn
- need to have patience and like people to use volunteers effectively
- *Martha's full presentation is available at www.csaconference2008.ca/proceed.html (English only).*

Mike Everts

- Blackbird garden runs 100% on working shares
- it is difficult to keep people coming through the entire season
- need to work to make it become “their” garden
- aim for setting a routine and building a foundation of skilled workers

ON-FARM ENERGY USE

Alternative Energy Strategies

Kim Delaney, Hawthorn Farm, Palmerston, ON

Peter VanderPost, Kestrel Farms, Thornton, ON

Garrett Wright, [Everdale Organic Farm and Environmental Learning Centre](#), Hillsburg, ON

Kim, Peter and Garrett discussed different strategies to incorporate alternative energy into a CSA farm. Key points from their presentations follow.

Kim Delaney on living on an off-the-grid farm

- “ghost devices” that draw electricity 24 hours a day use a lot of electricity (eg, VCRs, cordless phones)
- anything that produces heat requires a huge amount of electricity (eg, hair dryers, toasters)
- reusable hot-pit growing in greenhouses – in winter, dig a pit, run pipes through the pit, start a fire at one end and vent through pits at the other end – pipes heat the soil
- can use chickens to heat greenhouses by placing in the back

Peter VanderPost on off-the-grid farming

- buy all supplies from electricians and not sales people
- Grunföss Pump for water pumping uses 25% of the energy of most other pumps
- larger spinners for greenhouses purchased from restaurant supply stores are worth the investment

Garrett Wright on the Everdale Biodiesel Co-op

- biodiesel is not flammable
- biodiesel lends itself to use of second generation oils – this ensures that land is not taken out of active food production
- biodiesel as both lubrication and cleaning properties
- there are no harmful fumes – you can use biodiesel to heat a greenhouse
- Agri-Biofuels is producing a small-scale system for producing your own biodiesel

Horse Powered CSAs

Ken Laing, CSA Farmer, [Orchard Hill Farm](#), St. Thomas, ON

Ken discussed the role horses can play on CSA farms, sharing his extensive knowledge gained from using horse-power at Orchard Hill Farm.

Why are horses ideal on a CSA farm?

- Horses eat oats, which can be grown on your farm and are part of a good rotation plan.
- Horses eat a lot, but in turn provide a lot of compost to use on your farm.
- Horse machinery is simply and easy to repair.
- Can't buy horses on credit – no interest payments!
- Horses produce “baby tractors” -foals- which can be sold.
- Horses can go onto the field a bit earlier than tractors (less compaction).
- Need to give horses time to rest during the day, therefore you also get rest, time to think and to enjoy your day on your farm.
- They are self-repairing (versus a tractor).

- Horses feature full-time 4-wheel drive, and during short periods of time can exert 10X their pulling power.
- Horses are pleasant animals to work with (sensitive, intelligent).
- Can use a rare breed: more cost at the beginning, but you can get an increased revenue at selling and you are helping to preserve a rare breed.

Other points:

- Horses can provide a CSA a marketing edge by helping to distinguish your farm from others.
- Before buying horses for work in the field, make sure you have some previous knowledge of working with them – do not think that an old pair of horses will teach you everything.
- Some tractor equipment can be adapted for use with horses, especially when it can be hooked up behind a forecart. Most equipment is old, though some companies still produce horse implements. “Horse progress days” are good places to find out about new innovations. Amish and Mennonite communities are good places to look for equipment.

A full copy of Ken's presentation is available at www.csaconference2008.ca/proceed.html (English only).

CONFERENCE SCHOOLS AND WORKSHOPS

CSA MINI-SCHOOL

Emily Board, CSA Farmer, [Tourne-Sol Co-operative Farm](#), les Cèdres, QC
 Fran McQuail, CSA Farmer, [Meeting Place Organic Farm](#), Lucknow, ON
 Angie Koch, CSA Farmer, [Fertile Ground CSA](#), Kitchener, ON

See mini-school hand-outs and the Ontario CSA Primer at www.csaconference2008.ca/mini-proceed.html (English only).

PRESERVING FOR THE CSA WORKSHOP

Moe Garahan, Director, [Just Food](#), Ottawa, ON
 Roshan Aubin, [Just Food](#), Ottawa, ON

This session looked in detail at the requirements to preserve foods for sale/distribution as part of a CSA operation. Only low-acid foods were discussed.

Requirements under the Health Protection and Promotion Act and Canadian Food Inspection Agency regulations were discussed. Working with local health inspectors was also covered. This included details on running a safe kitchen environment. Food labelling was discussed.

Pricing and marketing preserved foods was also covered.

Those wanting more information should contact Just Food. Similar workshops are held by Just Food from time-to-time.

ONTARIO CSA FARMERS' WORKSHOP

Deborah Sexsmith, Farmer, [Sexsmith Farm](#), Fort Erie, ON

About 40 Ontario farmers attended this session, which considered options for working jointly on issues related to CSA in the province. At the end of the workshop, several farmers agreed to meet in early 2009 to further formulate what a “CSA network” might look like in Ontario.