

# Dunvegan Gardens

384 Gregoire Drive • Fort McMurray, AB • T9H 3R2

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Landscape: (780) 743-1050

Jan. 30, 2008

To Planning & Development, all city representatives and municipal residents of Fort McMurray that are either approving or may have concern, please forward letter as this letter is only a report of what we envision in constructing over the next three to five years. Permits permitting. Think of it in terms of Agritainment or enjoyment you and your family and friends may enjoy together;

## Current:

A larger greenhouse for the production and sale (retail) of Bedding Plants and all that they relate to (Chemicals and Fertilizer needed for the sustainability of your plants, Tropical, Pots, Lawn Ornaments-concrete, metal and wood based, Lawn Furniture, Spring Giftware and all Season Giftware. Lawn Maintenance Equipment for the home owner or contractor to purchase (Stihl, Husqvarna, John Deere).

Nursery that can house both small to very large calliper species for resale and Landscape Installation. Vegetable and Fruit stand for the sale of both locally grown as well as imported produce.

Possibly pet supplies and a system of Bulk Bins that could house 20-30 different topsoil, rock and landscape products that can be used to beautify yards in residential and commercial applications.

Facility will have Bathrooms for the public: Women – 3 stalls, Men – 2 stalls, 2 uprights.

An Office with a few rooms as well as a staffroom and upright cooler for vegetables will be added in the retail facility.

New additions to greenhouse will be used for delivery bays, storage and overflow of plants.

Heating to be propane and other fossil fuels as there is currently no natural gas line out that way. Water to be trucked and held in holding tanks on the farm with some runoff caught by holding tanks for reuse.

Short Term:

Mini Golf Course  
Batting Cages  
Playground System for Kids  
Ice Cream Shop

Long Term:

Farm Experiences  
Climbing Wall & Go Cart Track:  
Petting Zoo  
Hay Rides  
Campground

Agritainment sums up what we are hoping to build at our farm giving people of this community another option of what they can do to entertain their kids and have family time. As well we hope to educate kids in the process of food production as at this time our community does not have a facility or farm for their viewing.

Sincerely,



Brad Friesen Hort. Dlp. NCSO,  
Secretary

WAS TOLD NO LANDSCAPE PLAN NEEDED AS  
most over his trees, grass or crops (60 Acres)  
Buildings 42,000 sqft +/-

# Farm markets riding high on agritainment

Lehnert  
Editor

Farm markets are doing quite well, thank you, and while they're not driving Wal-Mart out of business, Wal-Mart's not driving them out, either.

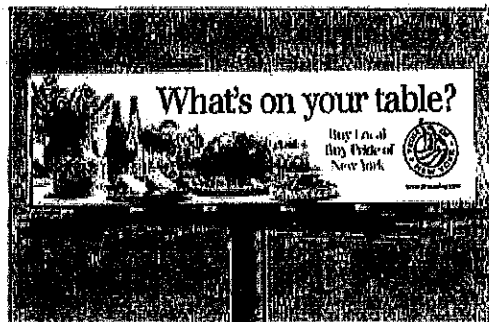
In fact, the level of enthusiasm for direct farm marketing is increasing across the United States, compelled by different forces in different regions.

In the East, the driving force is "buy local," said Ben Vitale, who is involved in farmers' markets as a career and in a market on his own farm. Whether the food is from California, China or Chile, people are showing their distrust of foods of distant or foreign or unknown origin.

"Food safety is a growing issue. During the spinach recall last year, our farmers sold out of spinach," Vitale said. "It wasn't spinach they were afraid of, it was spinach from far away."

Vitale is executive director of the Central New York Regional Market Authority, a combination terminal market and farmers' market in Syracuse. It serves 10 wholesalers and has more than 360 vendor stalls for retail.

On the side, he grows about



In the East, "buy local" is the buzz — witness the new promotional billboard from Pride of New York. In the Midwest, the emphasis is on destination and entertainment. The photo at right is from Edwards Orchards in northern Illinois. Operated by Ken Hall and his family, Edwards Orchards will be a stop on the North American Farmers' Direct Marketing Association bus tour Feb. 15-17.

11 acres of produce with his wife, Sharon, and markets it from their farm market. They sell what they raise and offer no entertainment.

"We might have thought about it at one time, but now, we have no interest," he said. "We'd need

more space, more staff and more energy. It's a whole different ball of wax. Labor is a big issue, and getting bigger."

Nor is he enthusiastic about organic production. His customers don't demand it.

"The organic trend is becoming

less important," he said. "But locally grown is becoming more important."

## The lure of agritainment

Meanwhile, not that many

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# FRIENDS

Continued from page 1

miles away in the Midwest. Steve Tennes tells a different story. He operates the Country Mill near Charlotte, Mich., with his family. Last year he was elected the first president of the newly formed Michigan Farm Marketing and Agri-Tourism Association (Ml-FMAT).

Tennes sees agritourism as a logical evolution, both for the farm families who entered farm marketing more than a generation ago and for people who have a connection with farming and are now looking to reconnect — perhaps in a less laborious and more fun way.

While Tennes has 31 acres of apples he wants to sell each year, he thinks his customers come to the Country Mill more for the experience. He doesn't want them to put the Country Mill into the same category as the grocery store.

"You don't go to Disney World with coupons," he said.

The Country Mill specializes in creating an experience. People come to pick apples or pick their own pumpkins. They pet animals. They fill a jug with ice-cold cider from a dispenser that looks like a "cider barrel" — after watching the cider-aking process and seeing the juice flow from crushed apples.

"Our business is different," he said. "I try not to put us in the same box as them."

By "them," he means the big box stores. "We won't sell what Wal-Mart does," he said. "If we find Wal-Mart selling the same brand of caramel apple dip that we do, we'll change and find another vendor. We don't want our customers to compare prices. You don't want to play that game."

So, while apple juice costs about a dollar a gallon more at Country Mill, you see it made and jug it yourself — and you can't do that at Wal-Mart.

Similarly, he sells pumpkins by the pound, not by the piece as Wal-Mart does.

a farm they can go visit.

Tennes' parents started his farm. His dad, Bernie, was an agricultural engineer at Michigan State University who retired early and started Country Mill — and recently relinquished management to his son. Tennes believes it's no coincidence that so many successful farm markets have many family members involved and many years

of business experience. Family gives that warm feeling that draws customers

"They can feel it. They like the history, the story of the place," Tennes said.

Tennes is just finishing year two of the three-year transition process to organic production on about half of the farm.

He found that his customers — "particularly the ladies" — were interested in organics. He found that organic customers seemed more interested in the farm and the food, and he believes they will be more loyal in the future.

While organic production is more difficult, the marketing side is easier, he said.

He can have kids in the orchard — including two young ones of his own — and can allow people to come in to pick apples and pumpkins, and he doesn't need to deal with re-entry intervals and signs telling people about dangerous pesticides.

But producing organically does change management practices. You can't afford to produce fruit you can't sell. Organic production creates sort-outs that can't just be thrown away.

"You want to have a cider press," he said.

At the same time, Country Mill does not pasteurize cider, so rotten apples and drops are not used in the making, because they might shorten shelf life or change the flavor. Other sort-outs

use bait. This year, Country Mill sold drops and apples with rotten spots for \$50 a 20-bushel box and sold every apple in the orchard.

The trend to farm-provided entertainment is a major one, Tennes said.

A key issue facing agritourism is making sure local zoning authorities recognize them as agricultural enter-

## "You don't go to Disney World with coupons."

— Steve Tennes, the Country Mill

prises. Ml-FMAT has a committee working to develop a list of Good Agricultural Manage-

ment Practices (GAMPs) for farm markets and to make sure they fall under Michigan's Right to Farm Law. In Michigan, such practices have been defined for most agricultural enterprises and put into regulations that protect farms from nuisance lawsuits and other social pressures. Ml-FMAT is working to ensure that local authorities clearly understand the Right to Farm includes farm market operators.

### Regional influences

Charlie Touchette, who has a farm in Massachusetts, has been executive director of the North American Farmers' Direct Marketing Association since 1998.

Buying local is enjoying a revival along the East Coast, he agrees, and agritourism is growing wildly in the Midwest. But other regions are undergoing other trends.

On the West Coast, it is farmers' markets rather than farm markets seeing the growth, he said. While the East and Midwest are witnessing a reconnection between customers and farmers, the Western tradition is for farmers' markets to be a place where people come together, often from longer distances.

The ethnic diversity of the West and the diversity of foods that goes with it make farmers' markets a cornucopia. Randi MacNair, manager of the Farm-

and vice president of the California Federation of Certified Farmers Markets, agrees with Touchette that the West is farmers' market country "a staple, not a trend."

"We kind of love them out here," she said. "More and more of them are popping up every day."

California has about 500 farmers' markets, the most of any state, but they're popular in Washington and Oregon as well — even though it's cooler up north. California's markets prosper, she said, "because we can run them year round. Customers know they can come any time and find produce."

Even in areas where markets are seasonal, as in New York, there are more than 300 farmers' markets, and the common denominator is the face-to-face contact between customer and farmer, she said.

"They can talk to people who grow their food," she said. "This direct contact provides the ultimate in traceability."

The South, Touchette said, is a place where all the trends of the other areas are working to find traction. The South was profoundly affected by crops like cotton and tobacco.

"Tobacco is the influence on the South that plays directly to direct farm marketing," he said. "All these years they've been growing cigarettes, when they could have been growing fruits and vegetables."

With the waning of tobacco, the South is drawing on the experiences of everybody else — the East, West and Midwest — in creating new enterprises. These include farm markets, farmers' markets, agritourism and a growing base in wholesale production, including cooperative auction markets to serve smaller growers.

"If you've ever wished you had a chance to do it all over again, look to the South," Touchette said. "Farmers there

# FARM MARKET

## Working without a plan is working without a net

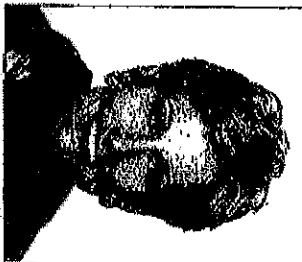
By Jane Eckert  
Eckert Agrimarketing

If you keep doing the same old thing, you are going to keep getting the same old results.

That old truth could be amended. The only thing I can think of that's worse than doing the same old thing is to keep on not doing anything!

The Food Policy Institute at Rutgers University recently released a one-year study of the potential for agritourism development in New Jersey (commissioned by the New Jersey Department of Agriculture). Based on the responses of the farmers interviewed, 13 percent of them have developed a formal business plan and 33 percent create an annual marketing plan.

Let me say that differently: 87 percent of New Jersey agritourism operators don't have a business plan and 67 percent



Jane Eckert

have to understand these basics to move forward. Here we go.

What is a marketing plan?

The major goals of marketing are to make customers aware of your business, motivate them to visit you and encourage

them to buy more when they do. So, you need to think about what you want people to do, plan how you are going to persuade them and decide how you are going to budget your marketing dollars to reach the most likely prospects.

This can be done in a variety of ways, but first we need to be realistic and decide how much money we will spend on these efforts. We need to establish an annual marketing budget.

There is a pretty wide range of how much farms are spending on marketing, but in general, most agritourism businesses spend between 3 percent and 10 percent of their gross sales. So, if you have sales of \$100,000, you should be spend-

ing a variety of promotional strategies like contests, parades, community booths, maps, tourism cooperative efforts, sponsorship of local teams, hiring a publicity person, hosting a lo-

cal nonprofit event, cross-promotion with other businesses and more.

Once you have the complete list of 2007 expenditures, it's time to really think about what works and what doesn't. Now that you are not in the middle of harvest, do the expenditures still make sense?

It just seems so right when that representative calls or shows up at the farm in the middle of harvest. He or she starts telling you how much more money you can make by just taking out a larger ad, or buying more time spots, or by hosting a club's event. So without a plan, you make quick decisions - and sometimes, when you look back on them, they weren't very

come your way later in the season. But by setting a budget, you will have consciously prioritized your expenditures and you have a plan to make each dollar count.

**The major goals of marketing are to make customers aware of your business, motivate them to visit you and encourage them to buy more when they do.**

Another advantage of a written plan is that you need to evaluate where you spent your money every year and try to do a better job next year. The plan gives you a "yardstick" by which to measure success. If you are like the New Jersey farmers, they rated "marketing" as the biggest challenge to their business. They simply did not have the experience and didn't know what to do or how to go about it. The written plan is your starting point.

I urge you to spend time becoming better informed about the marketing choices and tactics that could work for your farm. Attend winter farm meetings, go to local workshops, read market-

don't have a marketing plan. It appears they relied on "marketing through trial and error," and going with their gut, or they let the local media reps talk them into something. In other words, they chose to do nothing!

Does this sound like you? I'm quite sure these New Jersey statistics are representative of the industry throughout North America. If you are guilty as charged, let's change that, beginning today. Let's start mapping out your marketing plan for 2008.

We will begin with the basics. If you have heard me say this before but you still don't have a marketing plan, please know that I'm not fond of saying the same of thing. But I am quite fond of farmers and helping them grow their businesses, and as an agmarketer, I know that you

ing between \$3,000 and \$10,000 annually to promote your business. Of course, there are farms that spend an even greater percentage, especially newer farms just starting to establish their reputation.

Now, take out a tablet and write down how much you want to spend next year based on your projected sales volume. It will probably help you to look back at what you spent this year and where it was spent. Pull out the books or go to your computer and write down all of your expenditures by category. If you haven't been doing this, you'll probably be surprised at where you spent some of this money.

The list you come up with will probably include your Web site, brochures, flyers, postcards, postage, media (including newspaper, TV, radio), road signage, newsletters, banner ads on the Internet and a

smart choices.

So now, when things are calmer and you have time to think, take that list of 2007 expenditures and start making a written plan of how much you want to spend on these categories in 2008.

Allocate the money in a planned and well-thought-through effort. For instance, in the New Jersey report, 94 percent of farmers said they advertised in local newspapers, yet only one-third of them viewed this media as very effective. If it's not effective, spend your money in other ways.

The reality of what works for you might not work for the next guy. Sure, trial and error is often part of the equation. We don't always know what is best without trying something new, so it's important to leave some dollars for new, "to be determined" opportunities that might

ing books or participate in seminars held by local business organizations. This year, get off the farm and educate yourself about this much needed skill - marketing.

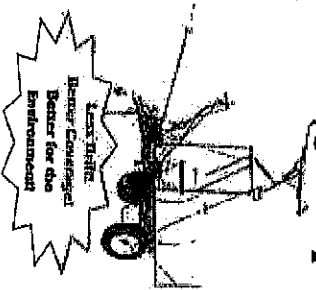
P.S. My compliments and appreciation to the New Jersey Department of Agriculture for commissioning this research. The report includes 11 extremely worthwhile categories of proposed recommendations for addressing the future needs of the state's agritourism industry. Good luck to them!  
*Jane Eckert, a national speaker, author and agritourism expert, is principal of Eckert AgriMarketing (www.eckertagrimarketing.com), a firm that helps farmers sell products directly to consumers and develop their operations into tourist destinations. She can be reached at 314-862-6288 or jane@eckertagrimarketing.com.*

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## Eckert AgriMarketing

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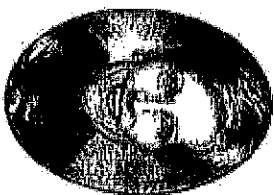
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THE GROWER



# PERSPECTIVE

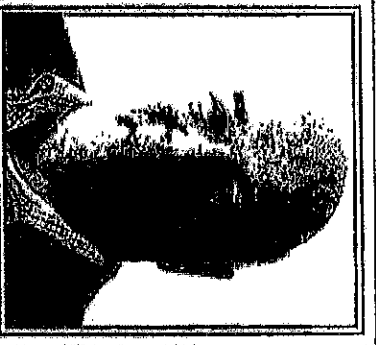


SPROUTING A NEW

## Perspective is everything

Everyone knows that a different perspective usually provides more clarity and understanding.

A recent visit to Miami, Florida, on a Canada-South Florida Agri-Business Trade Mission really opened my eyes to what a great trade relationship exists between Canada and the U.S. Most Canadians know that over 85 per cent of our exports go the U.S., but the details are what make this statistic so fascinating.



*Denton Hoffman  
Asparagus/Ginseng*

network with the South Florida businessmen and do some real business.

Gord Surgeoner had worked for some time to put this mission together. I had met Professor Steve Colyer, from Miami's Dade College, this past winter at the Fruit and Veg

conference at Brock in St. Catharine's — he is their Program Director of Export Readiness and Training.

Both Colyer and Surgeoner got me excited about this opportunity to meet genuine buyers — the actual guys with the authority to cut the deals with you — face-to-face. Time passed, until it was July in Florida.

It had sounded way more appealing in March, to tell the truth, but having just been through an asparagus season, that at least to me, seemed like a disaster with inadequate buyer representation

## Increase Revenues in Best Season with More Sales Per Person

Continued from page 6

willing to brave the crowds at the store.

Again, inside your market may get very crowded during the high season. Look at a prep area or a storage area. Can you use that space to give the crowd some breathing room and help the traffic flow?

### PUMPKIN PRICES

Maximize the value of the pumpkin crop by charging per pound, not per pumpkin. This means you have to have a scale, but ultimately it will pay off.

Most of you can easily raise your price-per-pound on pumpkins.

Why? Visitors come to our farms during the fall for a special experience, not to get cheap prices on pumpkins grown on the property. I've seen pumpkins go for as high as 55 cents a pound at a farm outside a large city.

### FOOD CONCESSIONS

In general, food concessions during the fall season can generate \$2 - \$3 in incremental sales per person. Look at your numbers and see how they compare.

Food concessions are one of the biggest selling opportunities on the farm. Often farmers think opening concession stands is too inconvenient. It does take a little planning and executing, but is well worth the trouble based on incremental sales they bring.

Even visitors who have a fixed idea of what they are willing to spend money on at the farm do not usually think of food costs within that context. After all, they're going to get hungry and have to eat somewhere... so it might as well be with you.

### FALL DECORATIONS

This is a category for growth in most farms. You're already selling pumpkins, but today consumers are decorating their yards and their homes beyond just pumpkins.

Consider beautiful displays and sales of bundled Indian corn, colorful gourds, bundled corn stalks, painted pumpkins, straw bales and fall mums. These kinds of products are a natural for fall sales and can positively affect incremental sales.

### ACCEPTING CREDIT CARDS

Incremental sales often depend on accepting credit and debit cards at as many registers as possible. Today's customers travel with very little cash and often leave their checkbooks at home. You sure don't want them leaving your farm empty-handed because you don't accept credit cards.

These are just a few possibilities for achieving incremental sales. Look around your operation and get ideas of how to maximize the possibilities. Remember, just a slight increase in sales per person means you truly can get the best from your best season.

*This article reprinted with permission from Great American Publishing. Jane Eckert, a national speaker, author and agri tourism expert, is principal of Eckert AgriMarketing (www.eckertagrimarketing.com), a firm that helps farmers sell products directly to consumers and develop their operations into tourist destinations. She can be reached at 314-862-6288 or at jane@eckertagrimarketing.com.*

# COMPANY PROFILE



## **DUNVEGAN GARDENS (AB) LTD. BUSINESS PLAN 2008 - 2009**



# Renaissance, not Retirement

Local numbers were of particular interest to us. Florida sold 7-million in orange juice and 2-million in tomatoes to Canada (2005 figures); the state bought 141-million in softwood lumber and \$133-million in newsprint. Our Canadian snowbirds spend about \$1.6-billion seeking out the warm Florida sunshine each winter.

By the time our Consul General, Marcy Grossman, had finished outlining the trade relationship, and how really terrific Canadians are, etc., the scene had been set to

and a ginseng market that needs expansion beyond Asia. I didn't want to overlook any potential sales opportunities, so I packed my bag for heat, humidity and potential hurricanes and went.

The Florida Foreign Trade Association, in conjunction with Ontario Agri-Food Technologies, mutually convened this meeting between Canadian and American buyers and sellers of fresh and processed fruit and vegetables in order to expand the trade partnership in agri-business - by way of

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peak. But it doesn't last forever. A 17 year old girl may skate her way to an Olympic Gold Medal. How good will she be at 35?

It was only in the days when you got shot in the saddle by an errant knight in armor, or the life expectancy was 35 that people died at the height of anything. Now, with life expectancies of 70-80 years, we are likely going to last past our peak.

Retirement is only considered

unpleasant if we lack purpose.

If you expand your world there are an infinite number of things that are fascinating. The expansion of our world is truly the work of retirement. This is the renaissance of man. I invite you to share it.

What I'm talking about is preparation for the inevitable—your plans for retirement. And retirement is not trimming grass, or going down to Palm Springs, to play golf.

*Retirement is renaissance.*

It's a time of renewal and transition from success to significance. It is a time of mentoring people and giving back.

Retirement is to celebrate you "students." If you can't prepare your management to revitalize your business, then you have failed. If you think retirement is impossible and nobody else will follow you...that's tragic. I would like to remind us that no matter what we do, we cannot insulate our lives from those who will follow us.

The world will be better of when you have explained what you know to those who must follow. Your final glory is in the achievement of your students. They need and want you. The future will thank you and remember you.

## A Sanctuary for frustrated farmers

*Continued from page 6*

efforts to achieve a more level international playing field for Canada's producers and processors. And they reaffirmed their support for pressing for significant market access improvements for Canada's exporters, as well as producers' right to their own chosen marketing systems.

The ministers agreed the provinces and industry play a key role in supporting Canada's effective participation at the world trade talks, and proudly announced several provincial agriculture and agri-food ministers along with some farm sector representatives would accompany federal minister Chuck Strahl to the negotiations in Geneva, Switzerland.

But things went sour fast. Mistrust was long evident between most participants, and the talks collapsed almost before they started.

The frustration mounted. The Ontario Federation of Agriculture issued a news bulletin headlined "Farmers want to see cash," with President Ron Bonner reminding politicians that farmers have suffered through several years of devastatingly low commodity prices.

Later, he called on farmers to influence the

political process by getting active in their riding associations.

"Help select the women and men who will carry the party banner during elections," he urged. Doing so gives farmers the opportunity to influence messages about the agri-food sector and help decide who will be carrying those messages, he added.

Publically, the federation isn't eyeballing any particular party. It just wants farmers to get active somewhere. Anywhere. Everywhere.

Bonner says grassroots involvement in party-level political activism reaches policy makers of all stripes. It's a way to get farm issues publically debated and to get non-farm people tuned into the sector.

Farm leaders will increasingly mobilize the rank and file as the provincial election nears, and the possibility (albeit remote) of a federal election lingers. Farmers have a tradition of being political leaders—just after the turn of the 20th century, the United Farmers of Ontario were a driving force, the largest party in Ontario legislature.

Those were different times, but there's no question farmers want more influence again, and politics is their target.

**An Open Letter to Leona Dombrowsky, OMAFRA Minister**

**Foodland Ontario is significant to our industry**

*Dear Minister Dombrowsky:*

Ever since its inception "Foodland Ontario" has played a very significant role in the marketing of fresh Ontario grown fruit and vegetables. Large in-store displays of homegrown produce emphasize both the availability and seasonality of our products. Over the years the "Foodland" logo has become one of the most highly recognized and trusted symbols in the market place. It has been successful because since the beginning it has focused on one thing and one thing only "Fresh Ontario Fruit and Vegetables."

Today there is a lot of consideration given to "Branding Ontario" for all Ontario grown products.

The OFVGA certainly endorses such an initiative, but believes we should not confuse Branding Ontario with Foodland.

*Continued on page 8*