

The Olympians of farm journalists visit Canada

KAREN DAVIDSON

Guess who's coming to dinner? For a week?

Connoisseurs of farming and food flew from around the globe to savour Ontario's harvest for a few brief days in mid-September. The Canadian Federation of Farm Writers (CFWF) played host to 250 colleagues from 34 countries in a choice of tours to Lake Huron, Lake Erie or Lake Ontario. Owen Roberts and Lilian Schaer, congress co-chairs

and well-known to our readers as columnists in *The Grower*, led many volunteers who organized tours that started in Guelph and ended with a rendez-vous in Niagara Falls.

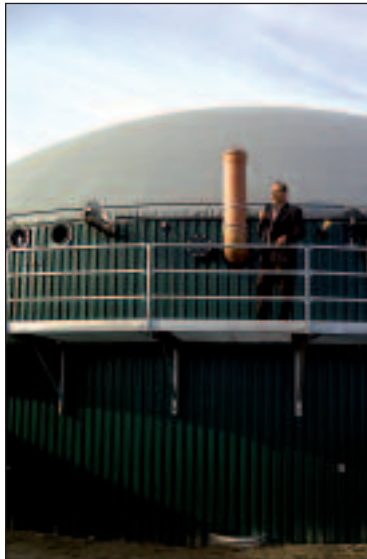
This is the first time that the International Federation of Agricultural Journalists (IFAJ) congress has been hosted in Canada since 1967. Thanks are owed to many farm organizations, including the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association, for helping to sponsor this once-in-a-career tour.



Dean Tiessen, president, Pyramid Farms Ltd, had a dramatic backdrop of miscanthus to show global reporters, explaining how 28,000 tonnes of "elephant grass" and wood are pelleted and used for fuel to heat 37 acres of his family's Leamington, Ontario greenhouse. Besides sequestering carbon, the 1,000 acres of billowing grass is ground cover for pheasants. During the media scrum, a deer made a guest appearance, underlining his message of sustainability.



Mike Tiessen (right) of Prism Farms answers questions from American journalist Paul Queck on the life cycle of Campari tomatoes under 10.5 acres of double poly film and 7.2 acres under glass. He also showed a test trial of miscanthus chips which are being used as a growing media for tomato vines. It is very promising for greenhouse cucumbers as well.



Look way up! That's Art Schaafsma, director of University of Guelph Ridgetown College, talking about the benefits of the new anaerobic bio-digester on campus. At a farm-scale size of 250 kW, it's designed to convert agricultural and food industry biomass to biogas. Greenhouse wastes are contemplated as one potential source. The biodigester is located at the Centre for Agricultural Renewable Energy and Sustainability (CARES).



Look into the distance! That's field tomatoes that reach almost all the way to the Sun-Brite and H. J. Heinz tomato paste and juice plant in Leamington. Harvest is expected to be 90 to 95 per cent of the contract at 42 tons per acre according to John Mumford, Ontario Processing Vegetable Growers. A late spring dampened tonnage targets.



Dust did not deter farm journalists from snapping photos of field tomato harvesting. Reliable yields and quality are needed to keep food processors in the area. A new water "lifeline" built by Leamington Area Drip Irrigation Inc. draws water directly from Lake Erie. Built by 13 farmers, the 36 kilometres of pipeline now waters 2,500 acres. In the future, greenhouses may be added to the water network to fulfill year-round capacity.



GREAT LAKES
EXPO
FRUIT, VEGETABLE & FARM MARKET

MICHIGAN
GREENHOUSE
GROWERS EXPO



The PREMIER show for fruit and vegetable growers, greenhouse growers and farm marketers!

- 4,200 people from 34 states and 5 Canadian provinces attended in 2010
- Informative education program for growers and farm marketers – 56 education sessions and workshops over three days
- Large trade show – 380-plus exhibitors covering four acres of exhibit space
- Pre-conference bus tour for farm marketers on Monday, Dec. 5

WWW.GLEXPO.COM

DEC. 6-8, 2011

DEVOS PLACE CONVENTION CENTER
AND THE AMWAY GRAND PLAZA HOTEL

GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

**One registration fee covers both
conferences and the trade show!**

Online registration starts Sept. 27.

**Register by Nov. 11 to save
on registration fees.**

**Visit GLEXPO.com for registration,
program and other information.**

**Call 734-677-0503 for registration
questions or to receive registration
and program information by mail.**

**Call 616-794-0492 for information
on exhibiting in the trade show.**