



Small Is Big at Canada's Outdoor Farm Show

If variety is the spice of life, then farming can be hot (and interesting) whether it is big or small!

In addition to the traditional large crop and livestock farms, the past decade has seen a steady increase in smaller farms catering to the growing consumer demand for niche market and organic produce.

"This year we have rearranged the real estate on the North Mall to make way for a larger offering for those producing market vegetables and organics in response to the local food "buy local buy fresh" demands," says Doug Wagner, Vice-President of Canada's Outdoor Farm Show.

A garden plot has been planted in the new Organics and Market Vegetable Expo located on North Mall. The plots will feature organic corn and soybeans, yard-long beans, grain and vegetable amaranth and rainbow Swiss chard. "These plots are small and won't feed an army," adds Wagner, "but they are meant to get people interested in alternative horticulture and to start asking questions about new and potential markets."

A number of companies will be demonstrating equipment specifically designed for organic and horticultural production, including small-scale agricultural equipment for intensive vegetable production, weeding and special mowing applications. "Sometimes visitors get overwhelmed by the sheer size of the large equipment," says Wagner, "so we are making sure we showcase small and demonstrate the versatility of these machines."

The Organics and Market Vegetable Expo will also feature mini-seminars on important related topics. One of the speakers will be Don Ross, a well-known author in eastern Ontario who has helped establish "Local Flavours," a group of 120 members who assist in developing markets for local producers. Other topics will include how to brand product, mixing agri-tourism with food production, and new developments in organic production.

"The Organic Council of Ontario will be highlighting the opportunities and breakthroughs the organic sector is making in agro-ecology, green technology and profitability," says Jodi Koberinski, the Council's Executive Director. "We will also be on hand to inform farmers about the new Foodland Organic designation which identifies Ontario-produced organic foods."

This new horticultural component at the Organics and Market Vegetable Expo, when added to the existing demonstrations and displays in the areas of sheep, goats, poultry and green energy, makes Canada's Outdoor Farm Show a "one stop shopping spot" for anyone considering farming on a smaller scale. "You can learn about organics, watch a sheep dog herding demonstration, see the newest in goat feeding technology and learn how to grow biomass all in one visit," explains Doug Wagner, "and then enjoy Ontario-grown produce for lunch."

Canada's Outdoor Farm Show will be held September 13, 14 & 15, 2011 at Canada's Outdoor Park in Woodstock, Ontario. For more information, visit www.OutdoorFarmShow.com