

Editor's corner

By Laurence Tisdall

Welcome to 1990. May this next year be your most prosperous and resource efficient ever!

We are beginning our third year of existence and have almost doubled our membership since last year. This brings us to an important subject - it is renewal time for a large percentage of our membership. Don't procrastinate - get those fees in or you'll miss the exciting new developments in sustainable agriculture. You will also miss the opportunity to be part of an association which is helping to change the face of agriculture forever. That was not just a flip comment, increasingly we are hearing from people from all over North America who are looking to REAP-Canada for answers. They especially appreciate the "Systems Approach" to agricultural production and the fact that our assertions are backed by scientific on-farm research.

As you can see, the REAP newsletter has developed into a small magazine. You will notice that we are going commercial by encouraging corporate and private sponsorship through advertising. The revenue thus squired will make possible a larger and even more informative REAP quarterly. The interest in resource efficient agriculture has been greater than expected, even by our ever enthusiastic advertising manager, Tomas Nimmo. I hope you, our members, will support our advertisers. This quarterly is quite eclectic in nature. The feature article on Profitable Pasture Management is by Dr. Ann Clark of Guelph University. It presents Unintegrated approach to pasture management and brings out some important points concerning marketing. Though REAP does not generally discuss marketing strategies, it is obvious that understanding trends and reacting to them will make for much more profitable farming. Flexibility is a trait often lacking in producers. It has long been known that farmers tend to have an aversion to trying out new crops and/or different cropping techniques. "Seeing is believing" as the old adage says, however "Let the neighbor try it first. If it works for him maybe then (after everybody has made some snide comments about a friend of a friend trying similar novel approaches to agriculture and ending up in the poorhouse) I will try it". If you are a member of REAP - Canada it is obvious that you do not fall into the above category, but still, any change can be like taking a step into the unknown which can be unnerving. Which is why REAP-Canada on-farm research, field days and conferences are essential to the spreading of resource efficient farming practices. With your support we will endeavor to do on-farm research in as many places as possible and will participate in as many conferences as possible. Eventually the message will get around that if you're going to "make it" in agriculture you must be resource efficient and develop sustainable practices which are not going to deteriorate your land.

REAP is taking part in many upcoming conferences (See Upcoming Events). If one happens to be in your area we would like to meet you personally. In fact if you really want to get involved in REAP-Canada, our Annual General Meeting will be held on February 3~ during the joint Guelph Agricultural Alternatives - REAP-Canada Sustainable Agriculture Conference in Guelph. Elections will be held (members present will constitute a quorum) and half the board is up for re-election. Any questions concerning REAP-Canada's functioning and direction will be answered at this meeting. I hope many of you will make a point of being there

REAP-Madonald, the student branch of REAP-Canada at Macdonald College, is holding its fourth annual REAP conference on the very topical subject of sustainable vegetable production. This section of agriculture has been largely neglected in terms of the development of sustainable and environmentally sound methods of production.

Thanks to all those who have answered our reader's survey and for your encouraging remarks. We appreciate the feedback. Have a Happy New Year.

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