

Fiddlehop Farms Province's Largest Hops Producer



Jason Pelley was happy to answer questions at an Open House held on July 21st at his FiddleHop Farm location. (Harrington Photo)

By Linda Harrington

What are all those wires doing in the middle of the field? Motorists passing along Highway #4 from Glenholme to Folly Mountain, and many local residents, have been asking this question for awhile now.

FiddleHop Farms co-owner Jason Pelley was more than happy to answer questions about Nova Scotia's largest

hop operation at a recent open house. He and business partner Evan Price have been working on this rather unique project for the last two years.

Pelley says hops have been grown for 100's of years, with the US currently one of the biggest producers. Hops are used in brewing flavorful beers, a local source in high demand by microbreweries. This has lead to a partnership

with Garrison Brewing Company, of Halifax.

"The seasonal brew, 3 Fields Harvest Ale, is farmed by Nova Scotian hands and brewed with Nova Scotia products," Price said. "It is a true triumph of local commitment."

FiddleHop Farms is not following a typical planting pattern for hops, where rows are planted 8ft apart with plants spaced 2 ft apart. Instead the plants have been planted in 7 ft squares to allow more air to circulate, a process they hope will reduce mildew and mold from an over abundance of moisture.

The plants are allowed to grow about six inches in the spring and then are pruned back about mid-May. The hop plants are then trained to grow up strings which have been strung from aircraft cable stretched taut between the poles. The hops are harvested in September by cutting off the plant at the root base, a process that must be

completed within a few days while they are at their peak.

The hops is then used in what is know as "seasonal" beers. These are only available in Nova Scotia during the months of Sept. and Oct., and like the 3 Fields Harvest Ale, they have been known to sell out quickly.

Pelley looks at his hops production as a community effort, with a huge educational and research potential for students. "We strive for a low energy impact, green, organic farming operation," says Jason, who described how insect control and harvest is carried out by hand, with students often offering their assistance.

The "fiddle" part of FiddleHop Farms reflects the 12,000 fiddlehead crowns planted over 3 acres on the same property. This has been a "hands on" labor intensive project, as well. "We worked from dusk to dawn 4 days a week along the riverbank dig-

ging 2ft x 1ft holes," says Jason, "And 12,000 holes later we have a fiddlehead business, where we have the potential to produce anywhere from 1500 to 3 or 4 thousand pounds of fiddleheads, depending on the weather."

Many people took advantage of the Open House to wander throughout the FiddleHop Farm property getting a closer look at this unique operation, with Jason and Evan eager to answer any questions.



Jason Pelley finds a caterpillar on one of his hop plants. The insects are removed by hand before they can do damage to the plants. (Harrington Photo)



Too leafy for the table now! The tasty fiddleheads are long past harvest season but there is always next year. 12,000 plants are located along the riverbank at FiddleHop Farm in Glenholme. (Harrington Photo)

Harvest For Hunger

LOCAL COMMUNITY EFFORT HELPING END WORLD HUNGER



By Linda Harrington

Many hands are making light work! Several farmers in the Onslow to Great Village area have partnered with Masstown Market and Trinity United Church to create Harvest for Hunger Nova Scotia (H4H-NS). Farmers and agri-businesses are joining hands to harvest ten acres of corn and plan to donate all the proceeds to the Canadian Foodgrains Bank.

The mission of Canadian Foodgrains Bank is to end global hunger. Since 1983, the Foodgrains Bank has provided over 1.1 million tonnes of food to people in need.

Community growing projects, such as H4H-NS, are a unique way for people to contribute grain and other agricultural commodities to help people who are hungry around the world.

The Harvest for Hunger NS Project Team includes Ian MacHattie, AgriBioFuels Ltd, Truro - Chair; Rev. Gerry Kerr, Trinity United Church, Onslow - Vice Chair; Frank Hoyt, Trinity United Church, Onslow - Treasurer; Carl Crowe, Trinity United Church, Onslow - Church Representative; Laurie Jennings, Masstown Market; Rev. Dr. Randy

Crozman, United Church - St Paul & St Stephen, Kentville - CFCB NS Coordinator and Brenda Leenders, All Stirred Up Food and Nutrition Consulting, Truro - Public Relations.

Ten acres of corn make up Masstown Market's Captain Cob's Crazy Corn Cornundrum, which opened for the season on July 16th. The Masstown Market is donating \$1 from each admission to the Corn Maze along with signage and promotions.

Six local farmers volunteered to till, seed, and fertilize the corn. Jonathan Millen, J & B Millen Farm Ltd prepared the land and is donating revenue from harvest. Henry/Janet Eisses and Lauchie /Jolene MacEachern, Folly River Farms Ltd were involved with planting the corn. Tara Hill-Macmillan/Allan Macmillan, Charles Hill and Son Ltd looked after spraying for weeds. Fred/Anne Hamilton, Milferns Holsteins spread top dress fertilizer. Alan/Jennifer Porter, Belcher Holsteins Ltd are donating trucking at harvest time and Michael/Amanda Eisses have offered combining and expertise of a crop specialist.

Area agri-businesses have pitched in to help with Pioneer HiBred, Clarence Farm Service, donating the seed corn, Ian MacHattie, AgriBioFuels Ltd, will look after the drying and cleaning of whole corn to commercial grade, Clarence Farm Services, Purina Dealer are offering to receive, grind and sell the feed corn with M.B. Holdings Ltd. making sure the ground feed corn is delivered to the

buyer, free of charge.

The ten acre corn maze will generate 600 bushels of corn and this is expected to sell on the local market at \$8.30 per bushel and raise a total of \$5000.

Project Chair Ian MacHattie is thrilled with the overall support to date and he is hoping the general public will reach out to help, as well. "We can't all be farmers," he says, "But anyone can donate the equivalent of 3 bushels for \$25.00. This \$25 can make a big difference around the world! It can feed a family of 5 for 2 weeks or provide tools and seeds to a farmer."

MacHattie says the Project Team originally set a goal of donating a least \$10,000 to the Canadian Foodgrains Bank but they are hoping to double this and have now set their sights on \$20,000. "With the \$1 donation from each admission to the corn maze and revenue from an upcoming picnic we are aiming higher," he says.

A Select NS incredible Picnic is being held at Captain Cob's Crazy Corn Cornundrum on August 19th. Everyone is invited to an afternoon of family fun and fabulous food, celebrating the blueberry harvest while supporting Harvest for Hunger Nova Scotia. Enjoy buttery corn on the cob and scrumptious blueberry shortcake.



Maybe even challenge your friends to a three legged race.

This is the first year for Harvest for Hunger Nova Scotia's involvement with a community growing project. The immense community spirit and support has encouraged the Team to look into repeating the project again

next year. "Everyone can do just a little and make a huge difference in the end project," says Laurie Jennings. "You give what you are able to give, and help where you are able to help and a big project gets done with not a whole lot of effort from any one person or business. We hope this will encourage other areas to grow similar Harvest for Hunger crops."

You can donate your "bushels" by giving directly to Canadian Foodgrains Bank (H4H NS Project) at www.foodgrainsbank.ca, or locally at Captain Cob's Crazy Cornundrum at Masstown Market, or by sending a cheque to Trinity United Church (H4H NS).



Jonathan Millen harrows the corn field at Captain Cobb's Corn Maze in preparation for planting. Six area farmers are volunteering their time and equipment to support Harvest For Hunger Nova Scotia's community growing project. (submitted)



Some of the Harvest For Hunger Nova Scotia team members pose with Keke (who was visiting from Africa) at Captain Cobb's Corn Maze prior to planting. Farmers and area businesses are working together to raise money for the Canadian Food Grains Bank, who are responding to the food crisis in countries such as Kenya and Ethiopia. (submitted).

Think BACKUP...before trouble strikes!
Ask us for your best BACK-UP solution.

Failsafe
Computer Services
www.failsafe-computer.com

10 Dominion Street
893-2171
askus@failsafe-computer.com

COMPUTER & LAPTOP SALES
WIRELESS/ROUTER SECURITY
VIRUS & SPYWARE REMOVAL
CABLES & ACCESSORIES

Proudly Educating our Customers in Plain English

Scotia Metal Products Ltd

Metal Roofing & Siding

Made in Nova Scotia
Many Colours to choose from
Visit our showroom at
188 Joseph Zatzman Drive Dartmouth

902-468-7217
www.scotiametal.ca