

# Strawberry Devastation

*Continued from page 1*

shipped to Florida. The fall shipment of plants did not do well in Florida this spring, causing major financial loss for southern farmers, also.

"They were a mess and it cost growers there a lot of money. Nobody new. We would never have shipped them if we knew there was a problem," says Millen. "Great Village has always had a good reputation with growers South of the border, and we will have a good one again."

Agricultural specialists from as far away as Oregon were brought to Nova Scotia to take a look at the problem. "The Department of Agriculture has certainly been a big help getting to the bottom of this quickly," he says.

It appears an extremely high count of strawberry aphids last year may have led to the "perfect storm". "Because of the high concentration of strawberry fields in this area, the aphid was able to get populated," says Millen. This year's fields will be monitored closely, with scouting and trapping monitored by the Department of Agriculture. Any action necessary, to prevent this happening again, will be implemented immediately.

All June-bearing plants in the Great Village area have been being removed. "The strawberry aphids feed only on strawberry plants, so we are removing the food source," says Millen. "There will be no June berries grown in this area, no u-picks and no road-side stands." At Millen Farms it has taken two weeks to remove all the plants from just under 100 acres.

Curtis Millen recommends backyard gardeners in the Great Village area do the same, saying, "It is a risk to the industry to leave any June-bearing plants at all."

The fields will sit for a while and then replanted with a day-neutral variety of strawberries (frequently called ever-bearing). Day-neutral plants form their fruit buds during any day length from May to October. The June-bearing (or short day

variety) form their fruit buds in the fall, and only produce fruit in the spring, when there are longer days. These are the more traditional plants, often grown in straw.

Fresh strawberries from the newly planted day-neutral varieties will be ready about the end of July or first of August.

This adds another complication for Millen Farms Ltd. Their second main crop is wild blueberries, and they will be ready for harvest about the same time as the crop of strawberries. Busy time on the farm, but the fall should be a bit quieter. "It was recommended that we not ship any nursery stock this year, so Millen Farm's will not be shipping to the US," says Millen. Nursery stock is usually harvested and shipped in September/October.

Millen Farms is one of the largest strawberry growers in the Province and along with other area growers represents about 40% of the \$17 million dollar industry.

"This is a huge financial hit for the Great Village region," says Millen, adding he expects a full recovery by next season. "Farmers are always dealing with Mother Nature. This is a little but rougher than we are used to."



Curtis Millen, of Millen Family Farms, stands before some of his 100 acres of strawberry fields. Every plant in these fields had to be removed and replanted. These fields should have been producing berries in about two months, but it will now be late July or early August before the sweet juicy fruit are ready for harvest. (Harrington Photo)



Curtis Millen holds one of the strawberry plants being removed from fields in the Great Village area. The plant leaves should have been much larger this time of year but growth was stunted by a combination of two virus, mutating in to one. The virus does not effect the actual fruit, only the plants. (Harrington Photo)



It took two dozen workers over two weeks to remove all the June-bearing strawberry plants from nearly 100 acres at Millen Family Farms. No u-picks or roadside stands in Great Village area this summer. (Harrington Photo)



Allison "Bubba" MacLeese of New Prospect is at it again.

Some thought the home inventor had run out of ideas when his ironing board fence was complete.

It was then followed by the windmill and the ironing board people and now a giant swing with a "Try Me" welcoming sign.

Now people are thinking, "What will come next?"

(Lawrence R. Nicoll Photo)

**GLENHOLME GENERAL STORE**

Open 8-8 Weekdays | Open 9-8 Weekends

Mobile Phone Cards  
Long Distance Airtime  
Hunting Licences  
Groceries & Snacks  
Gifts & Cards

**Spend a Toonie, Get a Movie**  
2-day Rental, \$1<sup>74</sup> + tax = \$2<sup>00</sup>

Fishing Licenses \$26.73 & \$6.57 for the elite.  
No licenses for Bass yet this year. The book states the same as before "no license is required to angle in tidal waters".

**662-4510**

**My Favourite Pet**

Emily Prescott, East Montrose Road, is proud of the three Great Pyrenees puppies born on the farm to the two working dogs, which protect the family's livestock from Coyotes. Emily will receive a \$20.00 Gift Certificate from The Shoreline Journal and Clarence Farm Services.

**3 GREAT PYRENEES**

**CLARENCE FARM SERVICES LIMITED**

"Your Pet Nutrition Centre"  
65 Industrial Ave, Truro  
Phone 895-6366

Honour your Loved Ones with a Celebration of Life

**Colchester Community FUNERAL HOME**

Trust the professionals who care at your locally-owned and operated community funeral home.

512 Willow Street, Truro • (902) 895-5587 • COLCHESTERCOMMUNITY.COM

**Maritime Auto Parts**  
greenparts

Greenparts = Smart Parts = Smart People

Truro Area: (902) 662-2321  
maritimeauto.com

Canada Wide

**1-800-565-PART**

MARITIME AUTO SALVAGE - Nova Scotia