



# Fruit-ful Innovation: Adding Value to Non-traditional Crops

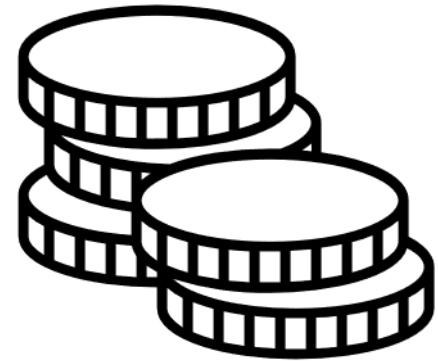
Evan Elford, OMAFA New Crop Development Specialist  
2024 NEVFC, Manchester, New Hampshire, USA

# Overview

- What adds value to farm products?
- Examples from Ontario Farms
- Considerations for supplying large-scale processor(s)



# What adds value to farm products?



Points adapted and modified from "Adding Value to Farm Products", Fruit & Vegetable Magazine, March 2008.

Janice McGregor, Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

1

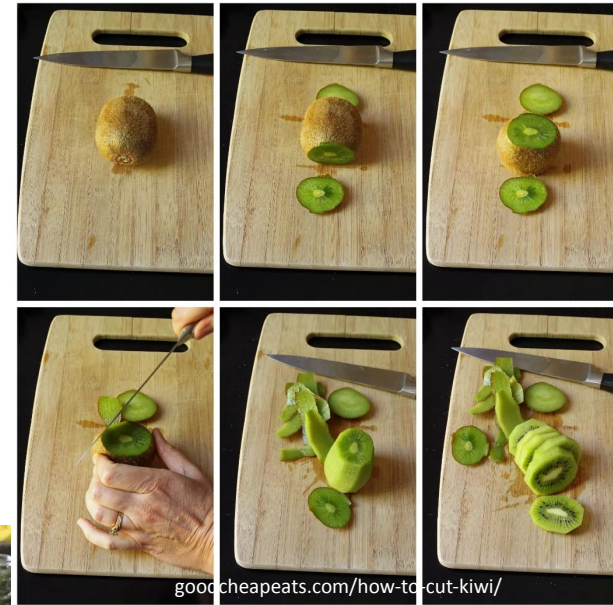
# Species & Variety Selection

## Species (e.g., Fuzzy kiwi vs. Kiwiberries):

- Peeling, cutting, scooping, clean up, etc. vs. no preparation, kid friendly, easy to take along, no clean up, flavour!

## Variety (e.g., Haskap)

- Flavour, firmness/shelf life



**1**

Species & Variety Selection

**2**

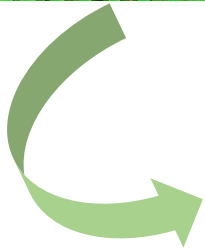
Cleaning

Cooling

Cooking

Grinding

Churning





# HASKAP CAMERISE

**A berry with a  
sweet tangy zing!**



*Home / Shop*

## Frozen Haskaps

**\$9.00**



SKU: 7020

We are unable to deliver frozen products  
Pick up by appointment at farm only  
Click "Contact Us"

[Contact Us](#)

Choose Pkg Size

- 450g
- 2kg
- 10kg

1

Species & Variety Selection

2

Cleaning

Cooling

Cooking

Grinding

Churning

3

Combining

Culturing

Extracting



**1**

Species & Variety Selection

**2**

Cleaning

Cooling

Cooking

Grinding

Churning

**3**

Combining

Culturing

Extracting

**4**

Handcrafting

Packaging

Distributing



# Handcrafting



Fill-A-Bag  
of Buds  
(organza bags on table)  
\$3.75

Premium Lavender Buds  
Le Jardin des Lavandes  
Bellevue, WA

# Packaging



# Distribution



<https://wholesale.100kmfoods.com/>



**1**

Species & Variety Selection

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**4**

Handcrafting

Packaging

Distributing

**5**

Information

Education

Entertainment

Certification

# Information & Education

Recipes, signs around the farm, and labelling (nutritional, regional, UPC production system (e.g. organic))



<https://ginsengontario.com/>



# Entertainment: Farm beautification for festivals



# Entertainment:

Sunflower festival, corn maze, other events with timed ticketing



# Example: Haskap

Functional Food: fresh & frozen berries, juice, wine, preserves







<https://borealfamilyfarm.ca/berries/>



<https://plaidshirtfarms.com/shop/>

# Example: Sea Buckthorn

Functional food





**TheHealingArc Inc.**

DISCOVER THE HEALING POWER OF SEA BUCKTHORN



# EVERSPRING

F A R M S



<https://www.blisterpackag.com/food-blister-packaging/>

# IQF and freeze-dried products



# Example: Elderberry



# Example: Hops

Culinary: brewing (beer, hard cider), non-alcoholic beverages (hop waters), hop asparagus, flavourings



Liked by ontariodestinations and others

sparklinghopwater We support local hop growers, including our friends over at @hayhoehops who grow all of the hops used in our Cascade and Chinook Sparkling Hop Waters. By sustainably sourcing our hops from local farmers we're reducing greenhouse gas emissions while using some of the highest quality and best tasting hops we could find anywhere!



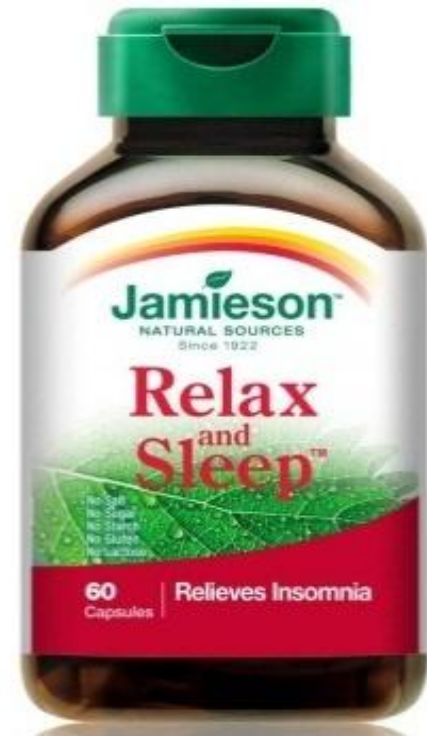
Ornamentals: e.g., potted plants sold for home gardens, dried hop garlands





Medicinal: e.g., sleep aids (pillows, tea, capsules)

Cosmeceuticals: e.g., hand creams



# Entertainment/agritourism/events: On-farm breweries, weddings, etc.

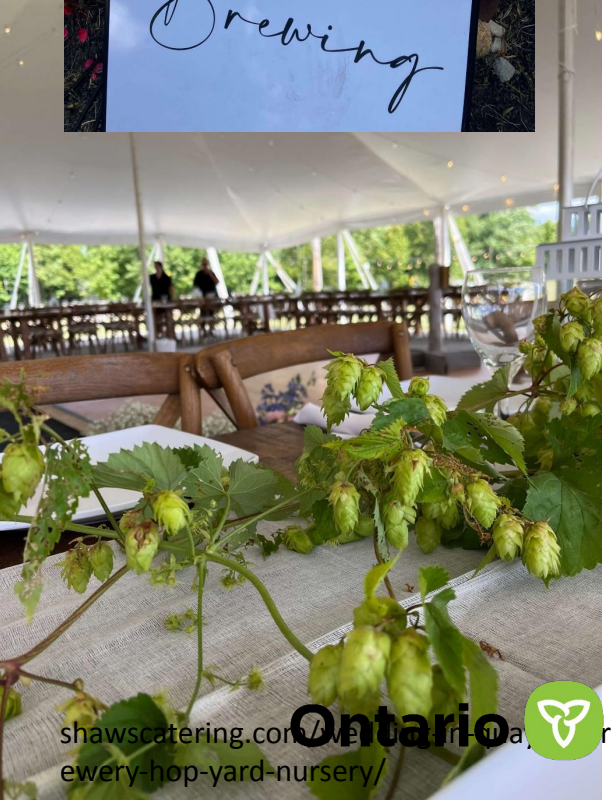
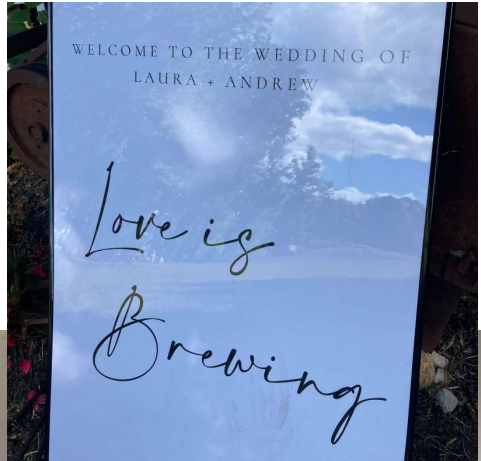
noel.stpierre  
Quayle's Brewery

Follow ...



noel.stpierre  
Quayle's Brewery

Follow ...



# Adding Value: Foods for Health

- A **functional food** is similar in appearance to, or may be, **a conventional food**, is consumed as part of a usual diet, and is demonstrated to have physiological benefits and/or reduce the risk of chronic disease beyond basic nutritional functions.
- A **nutraceutical** is a product **isolated or purified from foods** that is generally sold in medicinal forms not usually associated with food. A nutraceutical is demonstrated to have a physiological benefit or provide protection against chronic disease.
- A **Natural Health Product** (NHP) includes: Probiotics, herbal remedies, vitamins and minerals, homeopathic medicines, traditional medicines such as traditional Chinese medicines, other products like amino acids and essential fatty acids



# Considerations for Nutraceuticals and Natural Health Products

1. Market need
2. Can you grow the crop?
  - Climate, Agronomics, Farm Resources/Infrastructure, Regulations
3. Processing & Packaging
  - Specialized equipment, potable water (and water disposal), licensed/inspected facilities, (typically, the more processed the product, the higher the investment costs)
4. Sales & Distribution
  - Labelling and claims (e.g., monograph), pricing (high value crop, unique product), farm market regulations (sales), liability (products/farm market/agritourism), equipment (refrigerated trucks).



<https://healthsnap.ca/jamieson-relax-and-sleep-60-capsules>

# Adapting to Markets: Hazelnuts

Publication 863

## Guide to Hazelnut Production in Ontario

Ministry of Agriculture,  
Food and Rural Affairs

Ontario 



[www.advantagebrantford.ca/](http://www.advantagebrantford.ca/)



<https://i.ebayimg.com/images/g/cEsAAOSwkn1j~2h9/s-l1600.jpg>

Ontario 



100 g  
Chai Hazelnuts  
\$12.00



[www.jewelsunderthekilt.com/](http://www.jewelsunderthekilt.com/)

# Considerations for Supplying Large-scale Value-added Processors

- Need large supply and usually do not deal directly with multiple individual growers (need an aggregator, etc.)
- Typically require further processed ingredients (ie. not the raw/fresh or frozen fruit) (e.g., powder, oil, etc.)
- These further processed ingredients need to be standardized to meet certain vitamin/mineral/nutraceutical contents
- Food safety and traceability certification/documentation is required

# Selling to a Value-added Processor

- Create a portfolio of products marketed towards processing.
  - E.g., sell sheets, white papers, and exposure through food ingredient magazines, websites, or even ingredient trade shows.
- Guaranteed market, but usually lower price point
- Don't invest heavily without a contract or back up plan
- Time developing the industry (years) and legwork by individual personnel (liaison).
- May need multiple levels of government, academia, and industry involved to develop a large-scale supply chain
- May need one producer who is willing to take the lead on investment for aggregation, processing, certification, and delivery to the processor.



## But remember:

- Established industry can scale up but is difficult for non-traditional crops with a steep learning curve for growing and with no/limited aggregation or supply network.
- In event of crop failure, you may be stuck trying to meet a contract that you can't supply.
- The market may disappear without your control (international pressures/unforeseen circumstances).

# Summary (1)

Value-adding alternative crops:

- Immature marketing systems
- May have high labour requirements
- Difficult to obtain financing
- Limited access to information
- Lack of consumer knowledge

But...

# Summary (2)

Opportunities exist!

Do your background research first and think outside the box!

- Find and understand market niche/gaps
- Many opportunities but no silver bullet
- Objectives and fit for the farm (crop type & market)
- Non-traditional crops are typically higher value/can be grown on smaller acreage
- Lend themselves to value-adding



**Thank you!**

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