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News

Included in this newsletter is

Around the Region

National Christmas Tree Flyer

Writing Contest

Press Release

Dates to Remember

EI Letter Template

Dear Members:

Our association has been working on a couple of items and issues.

It was suggested at field day we do a writing contest for kids. At the director's meeting we decided to go forward with this idea. The writing contest is open to elementary kids ages 5-13 and is asking the kids to send in a picture with their story of them getting their real tree. What makes their tree "the perfect tree". I have included a copy of the all the details in the OCT News. I am sending it out to schools and school boards this week, but ask you to also let kids know about it.

I have included a copy of the press release sent out to the media on National Christmas Tree Day along with the flyer we have been using.

There is changes coming to UI benefits, which will affect all agriculture sectors. Depending on who we speak to we seem to getting mixed messages as to how this will affect us. No two answers seem to be the same. At the Canadian Christmas Tree Growers Association's, AGM we talked about being unified on this topic with the government. We have put together a template of a letter being sent out to Members of Parliament on behalf of all Christmas Tree Farmers across Canada.

Reminder:

If you need changes to your information on our website please send them to me immediately.

Merry Christmas

Around the Region --Ontario

August 24-25th

the Canadian Christmas Tree Growers Association held their Annual General Meeting and Field Day in Abbotsford BC. We worked hard on various events each province was dealing with, then moved on to working on the Constitution, logos, etc. Members from BC, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia were present. The CCTGA was approached by the delegates from Ontario to declare December 8 as National Christmas Tree Day. National Christmas Tree Day will allow our industry to promote "farm grown real" Christmas trees. Next years location has been set for Ontario. This will be open to all to come to our province.

We visited a seedling plant, then had an opportunity to visit and tour two farms in the area. It was a long day but very interesting to see how other provinces work in the industry. During our visit to BC the president of the CCTGA was hospitalized which turned out to be more serious. Mr. Loewen has now come home and is still recovering slowly at home. Our thoughts and prayers go out to him.

On Sept. 6-8 our association was asked to participate in the agriculture fair in Uxbridge, Ontario. We started out with a tree competition. We were able to talk to people for three days on the real Christmas tree industry. Kids were given pencils, colouring sheets, etc. It gave our executive director Shirley Brennan a chance to get out and talk about the industry and encourage families to create a memory this Christmas season, by going out and getting a real Christmas tree.

On Sept. 15th the CTFO held their annual Field day. This year it was held in Eastern Ontario at Cedarhill Christmas Tree Farm in Pakenham, Ontario. Our hosts were Paul and Ria Ralph. The day turned out to be sunny and beautiful. We had a chance to hear the history of this farm and have a tour. Everyone was encouraged to share in their thoughts and ideas regarding growing of trees. Paul Ralph shared lots tips and concerns with us. It was very interactive as there was no question Paul did not answer. When most of the men went on to the pruning demonstration and the women participated in the wreath and urn demo. Mr. Don Carmen from J&D farms helped out with the pruning demo. Don prunes with shearers and Paul showed other ways to shear. Many people had hands on with this demo. Ria Ralph was the demonstrator for the wreaths and sprays. Joyce Pedde of Pedde Tree Farm showed us how to make large beautiful urns. Thank you to everyone who helped us with this. Ria and her staff Emmie and Hanah made us a delicious lunch. These girls are amazing young ladies not only as cooks, but as workers. They always have a smile on their faces and offered assistance whenever and wherever needed.

We had two, three generation families present for Field day. Bill, Shane, and Caleb Sloan and

Bill, Michael and Mitchell Bagg. Never too early to get the younger generations involved.

In the afternoon we concentrated on field preparations, soil and choosing the right species. We were able to have Jaye Aikens from ACC Financial speak to us regarding an Advance payment program being put together for Christmas tree farmers in Ontario and Canada .

Our last item on the agenda included a brain storming session on Marketing. What works, what doesn't, what you do, what we want to do. Our message is we sell an experience not just a product. It is important for our association to all have the same message in mind. Some of our farmers sell Christmas Trees and you can come and take a walk and enjoy being outdoors and enjoy the time you are spending with family. Others have more bells and whistles. But we all sell Christmas Trees. We are the last harvest of the year and our harvest creates the most memories. Our meeting was over about 4 pm. A great day was enjoyed by all. Paul and Ria Ralph, put on a very informative program and showed us all such hospitality. Our association is made up with very positive, passionate people. On Friday night Sept. 14th Paul's mother passed away. She was 103 years young. Paul and Ria did not let very many people know as they wanted to focus on the day we had worked hard to organize. Thank you Paul and Ria, and please know our prayers are with you.

Shirley Brennan

Executive Director



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/CONTACT

us @

Christmas Tree Farmers of Ontario

Executive Director, Shirley Brennan

9251 Country Rd. 1 Palgrave, On L0N 1P0

Toll Free Number 1-800-661-3530

Office Number (905) 729-1043

Fax Number (905) 729-0548

Email: ctfo@christmastrees.on.ca

Web site: www.christmastrees.on.ca

Bill Sloan – President (519) 695-3121

Fred Somerville – Vice President (705) 435-6258

Don Robitaille – Past President (705) 533-3779

Brad Clements – CCTGA Rep. (905) 878-6576

Robin Briggs – (613) 835-2955

Stan Davis – (905) 648-1776

Doug Drysdale – (705) 424 -9719

Brian Horton – (905) 888-1738

Gary Thomas – (613) 489-2314

Jim Watson – (905) 679-9000

Hubert Will – (519) 647-2648

Resource Directory

These contacts are supplied to help put you in touch with information sources.

Todd Leuty, RPF

OMAF Agroforestry Specialist

(519) 826-3215 todd.leuty@omafra.gov.on.ca

Agricultural Information Contact Centre-Ont.

1-877-424-1300 ag.info@omafra.gov.on.ca

OMAF Web site

www.gov.on.ca/OMAFRA

CTFO Electronic Library

For members only – www.christmastrees.on.ca

Canadian Christmas Tree Growers Association

www.canadianchristmastrees.ca

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**“National
Christmas
Tree Day”**

**Saturday,
December
8th**

Your best Christmas memories probably involve a real tree. There’s something special about a real tree – the aroma, the beauty, the fun of decorating it. Keep the tradition alive. This year treat yourself and your loved ones to a real Christmas tree.



Kids, Santa needs your help!

This year, Santa is showing his Christmas Spirit, by displaying a beautiful, fresh Real Christmas Tree.

Santa wants you to show your Christmas Spirit too, by displaying a Real Christmas Tree in your home.

Send a picture of your Real Christmas Tree along with your story about why the tree is special to you.

Just follow the steps below.

Sponsored by:



1st Prize \$100 to the winning entrant and \$100 to the charity or school of their choice

2nd Prize \$75 to the winning entrant and \$75 to the charity or school of their choice

3rd Prize \$50 to the winning entrant and \$50 to the charity or school of their choice



Step 1: Read Rules and Regulations.

Step 2: Fill out entrant

information and sign consent (Please print):

Child

Name: _____

Birthdate: _____

Parent/Guardian's

Name: _____

Parent/Guardian's

Email _____

Mailing

Address _____

Phone

Number: _____

Statement of Consent:

_____, the parent or legal guardian of _____, have read and understand the rules and regulations of the contest, agree to the terms set forth for participation, and give my permission for my child's entry in this contest.

Parent/Guardian

Signature: _____

Step 3: Real Tree Information

Tell us where you obtained your Real Christmas Tree....

____ We cut down the tree ourselves , or had someone cut it, at a tree farm

____ We purchased our tree from a tree lot run by a non-profit group like Lions Club, Boy Scouts or a church group

____ We purchased a pre-cut tree at a tree farm

Name of farm/organization and city where purchased/acquired:

Step 4: Share your photo(s)

Please attach a photo of you and your family next to your Real Tree. Color or B/W photos are acceptable. (NOTE: photos will become the property of the Christmas Tree Farmers of Ontario and will not be returned.)

Step 5: Tell us your story

On a separate sheet of paper, please tell us why your Real Christmas Tree and its decorations make it the "Perfect" Real Christmas Tree (300

words or less) and mail it to CTFO. Your story must be neatly handwritten or typed. Incomplete or illegible entries will be disqualified.

Step: 6: Mail entry forms (this document), photograph and story to:

Christmas Tree Farmers of Ontario

9251 County Rd. 1

Palgrave, Ontario L0N 1P0

Deadline is Jan.1, 2013

Official Rules and Regulations

The Christmas Tree Farmers of Ontario , Help Santa find a Perfect Real Christmas Tree Contest begins November 15, 2012 and ends December 31, 2012. Complete the printed entry form and mail it to Christmas Tree Farmers of Ontario, 9251 County Rd. 1 Palgrave, Ontario L0N 1P0. Incomplete entries are void. The CTFO assumes no responsibility for lost, late, misdirected, illegible or mutilated entries.

Eligibility: This contest is open only to Ontario residents aged 5-13 that display a Real Christmas Tree(not artificial). The entry must be the original work of the entrant. Employees of the CTFO or the immediate families of the Board of Directors are ineligible.

Judging: Winners will be selected by a judging panel comprised of members of the Board of Directors of the CTFO. By participating, entrants agree to be bound by the Official Rules and the decisions of the judges, which shall be final and binding in all respects. Odds of winning depend on the total number of eligible entries received for each category. Winners will be announced on February 28th 2013 and winners will be notified by email and Canada Post.

Entry Categories: To ensure fairness, entries will be classified and compete within 2 age categories as follows: Category 1 - age 5-8 and Category 2 – age 9-13.

Prizes: There will be First, Second, Third place prizes handed out. First place is \$100.00 and \$100.00 to the charity or school of their choice. Second place is \$75.00 and \$75.00 to the charity or school of their choice. Third prize is \$50.00 and \$50 to the charity or school of their choice.

General Conditions: All entries become the property of the CTFO which retains the right to use and publish their legal name, written submission and photos both online and in print, or any other media, in connection with the contest.



For More Information:

Shirley Brennan

(905) 729-1043 (voice)

(905) 729-0548 (Fax)

ctfo@christmastrees.on.ca

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Celebrate National Christmas Tree Day

Palgrave, Ontario – While Real Christmas Trees have been around for more than 500 years, this year marks the first nationwide celebration of this iconic holiday symbol.

On August 24th, the Canadian Christmas Tree Growers Association passed a motion declaring Saturday December 8th as National Christmas Tree Day. The motion was supported by provincial associations from British Columbia, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia and was passed unanimously. It is supported by Christmas tree growers in the wholesale sector as well as the Harvest your Own sector.

The Canadian Christmas Tree Growers Association along with the provincial associations encourage the celebration of Christmas Trees on that day. It also reaffirms the environmental benefits of Christmas Tree farms and recycled Christmas Trees, and celebrates the joy Christmas Trees bring to families across Canada.

Fresh, farm-grown Christmas trees may be purchased from Harvest your Own or Choose and Cut Farms, or retail lots. This year, more than 1 million Real Christmas Trees are expected to be purchased in Canada this coming season, and equally seedlings will be planted for a new harvest. The Christmas Tree Industry employs thousands of workers, not only in the farm setting, but also in transportation and retail.



Important Dates to Remember!

1. **National Christmas Tree Day**
Dec. 8, 2012
2. **Canadian International Farm Show**
Feb. 5, 6, 7, 2013
3. **Canadian Christmas Tree Growers Annual Meeting**
Sept. 13, 2013
4. **Ontario Christmas Tree Farmers Annual Field Day**
Sept. 14, 2013

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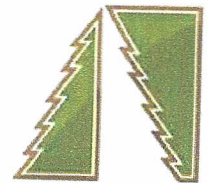
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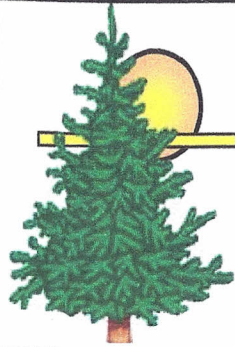
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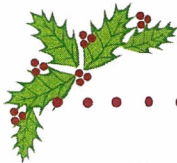
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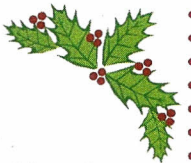
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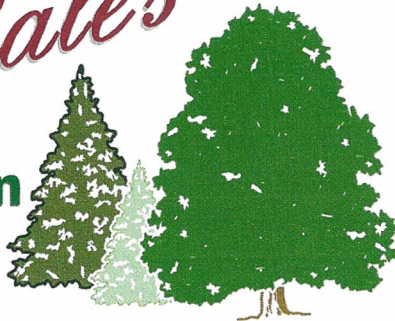
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This is a Template for EI Letter from Christmas tree producers, to send out to their MP's regarding the changes to the EI benefits and how it will affect our industry.

Date

Mr / Ms XXXXXXXXXXXXX
YYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYY
YYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYY
YYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYY

Dear XXXXXXX

The Christmas tree sector is writing to request clarification on proposed changes to management strategies for the employment insurance program in Canada. We are appreciative of the recent announcements from the federal government that the voice of farm commodity groups like ourselves has been heard, considered, and will be acted upon. The production of our crops is a vital component of the rural fabric of Canada, and we are very conscious of the impact EI changes might have upon many of our highly valued and highly trained employees.

As noted in earlier letters, there is also concern about statements that EI will be more highly integrated with the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program (SAWP). Farmers must now advertise work availability before access to the SAWP can proceed. We always aspire to hire Canadian workers, but the location of our farms and the nature of our work often will preclude many potential workers from participation. The industry does have a concern that workers might be asked to seek unrealistic employment during our off-season, exasperating a rural to urban migration. Our steady workers seek as high a level of full employment as possible, and our farms do what is possible to provide steady work, often at extra expense to our operations.

We ask that clarification be provided as to how EI rules will work for farm operations, both in terms of what it will mean to our Canadian employees, and - as an extension - how it is considered the new rules might impact our access to foreign labour. We always feel it important to remind our regulatory personnel that safety and training issues are always a paramount concern, and high employee turnover during peak agricultural activity is a very significant issue. Crops must be planted or harvested within extremely tightly defined time frames. In our case, the very nature of the Christmas

season absolutely defines our labour needs. To assure fresh, healthy trees the harvest cannot be moved forward to accommodate labour availability.

The Christmas tree sector, like many agricultural commodity groups, is able to provide significant summer student work and close to full time, year-long work for a great many rural residents. The difficulty is providing productive work over the winter (January through March) for our steady employees, and then accessing enough farm labour during the intensive spring planting / summer shearing season. Our wholesale producers are additionally challenged to secure adequate short term fall harvest assistance; this peak need is particularly problematic. Many large farms sub-contract labourers from other farming commodity operations for this peak need. It works well, with many of the trained labourers returning season after season. Our very significant concern is that rural labour may be frustrated by the requirement to travel too far for winter jobs that are difficult to find at the best of times, and vacate the significant jobs that do exist, actually adding to the need for immigrant labour while at the same time reducing the tax base in rural areas that already struggle to maintain public infrastructure. We know these explanations have been considered, and for this we thank you.

As mentioned at the outset, we are extremely appreciative of the intent of the government, especially as to comments about hearing commodity group concerns, and ask that an update be provided as to how EI changes will impact our employer / employee relationships.

Sincerely,

XXXX

