



Images from the kitchen of Jan Couchie, Nish Dish catering, located on Nipissing First Nation.

Home-Based food business on the rise

By Lynn Moreau

Covid 19 has created challenges as well as opportunities for agricultural and food-related businesses in Ontario. Delivery-based food services are growing as a result of the pandemic and there has been an increased demand for locally produced foods. Regulatory changes by the Ontario government have created more flexibility for people to sell low-risk, home prepared foods. The *Health Protection and Promotion Act* and the Food Premises Regulation are the two key pieces of legislation governing the actions of home-based food businesses.

It has become easier to sell low risk foods under the changes to current regulations. Low risk foods are those that do not require refrigeration such as bread and baked goods, pickles, jams and preserves, cakes, brownies, muffins and cookies and dry goods. The preparation and sale of higher risk foods containing meat or fish such as casseroles and meat pies require more rigorous public health standards.

Home-based food businesses that prepare only low-risk foods are exempt from certain regulatory requirements, such as specified handwashing stations in food premises, compliance with commercial dishwashing requirements and food handling training certification.

Off-reserve, it is the role of the local Public Health Unit to inspect and certify a food related business. To open a

food premises, some of the key considerations are that all surfaces must be easily cleanable, non-absorbent and well-maintained, with a conveniently located handwashing sink. There must be a public-access door and sufficient dishwashing sinks. Adequate cold and dry food storage must be available and all foods must come from an approved source. Special rules exist for mobile food premises. You must be able to demonstrate an adequate water supply, sewage and garbage disposal and prepare and submit an illustration of your establishment. On reserve, Public Health Units do not have jurisdiction and facility inspections are completed by Health Canada.

Public Health Units offer a Food Handler Training program for free. Since the pandemic started, the program which is normally offered in person has been made available online at <https://ingoodhands.ca/> for a minimal fee. You can study and pass the course online, and become certified. After taking this course you will understand what causes foodborne illness and what steps you can take to prepare food safely.

Are you interested in starting your own home-based food business? If you require more information about regulatory requirements for your business, please feel free to contact me.



RESOURCES: Agriculture Programs

 <p>IAPO Business, Farm and Agribusiness Financing</p>	<p>INDIAN AGRICULTURE PROGRAM OF ONTARIO (IAPO) is pleased to inform you of the following dates and times for the upcoming workshops: Thursday Feb 11-7 pm: Intro to Maple Syrup Wed Feb 17-7 pm: From Sap to Syrup Thurs Feb 18-7 pm: Pulling it All Together To register for this session please email info@indianag.on.ca or call 1-800-363-0369 or visit the website at http://indianag.on.ca.</p>
 <p>Save The Dates 2021 ONTARIO Invasive Species Forum March 1-4, 2021</p>	<p>2021 ONTARIO INVASIVE SPECIES FORUM VIRTUAL. The forum is an opportunity for invasive species partners, stakeholders and practitioners across Ontario to come together and share information on the status of invasive species management. The forum will host discussions about best practices in invasive species management and strategies to implement going forward. <u>Date:</u> Monday, March 1 – Thursday, March 4, 2021 <u>Registration deadline:</u> Monday, Feb. 22, 2021 <u>Note:</u> This is a free platform. We will send instructions on how to login to participants in advance of the forum. <u>Cost:</u> Registration will be offered for this event on a “pay if you can” basis. For those who can and are willing to pay for this event will be \$25 + HST. For a complimentary registration, please use the promo code COMP2021. https://www.invasivespeciescentre.ca/events/ontario-invasive-species-forum/</p>
 <p>RAIN RURAL AGRI-INNOVATION NETWORK</p>	<p>The Sustainable New Agri-Food Products and Productivity (SNAPP) Program supports Northern Ontario agriculture and food producers, businesses, collaborations, communities and First Nations to create new products, enhance abilities for season extension, scale up productions or enhance productivity. INTAKE 2 open for applications ending March 5, 2021. Funding: Up to \$10,000 at 50% cost-share for individual applicants; Up to \$25,000 at 5% cost-share for collaborations of 3 or more. Contact: Cathy Bouchard at snapp@rainalgoma.ca or 705-942-7927 ext. 3135.</p>
 <p>NOFIA NORTHERN ONTARIO FARM INNOVATION ALLIANCE</p>	<p>Last call for survey responses! Thank you to everyone who has already responded. If you would like to please scroll down to the link to access the survey. Your input on how to improve the CAP program delivery in northern Ontario is appreciated.</p> <p>The Northern Ontario Farm Innovation Alliance (NOFIA) has partnered with the Ontario Soil & Crop Improvement Association (OSCIA) to conduct a study to determine the barriers to OSCIA-delivered program participation in Northern Ontario. Over the past few years, OSCIA has noticed lower participation numbers within these programs, such as workshops (Environmental Farm Plan, Grow Your Farm Profits, Biosecurity) and funding (Canadian Agricultural Partnership producer streams, SARPAL/SARFIP, etc.). The goal of the study is to determine the barriers to participation and develop recommendations to better serve northern farming communities with these programs.</p> <p>As part of the study, NOFIA is conducting a survey to gather insight on the program and help develop recommendations to better improve OSCIA's program delivery. In addition to this survey, there will be opportunities for participants to provide input on the Partnership in one-on-one interviews and/or round-table discussions. At the end of this survey participants will have the opportunity to provide contact information to be notified about these discussions. All personal information recorded will be kept confidential.</p> <p>A full report of the findings of this project will be made available in spring 2021. If you have any questions or concerns about this survey or the project in general, you can contact NOFIA at info@nofia-agri.com or 705-647-4782.</p>

The Future of Farming: Using fish to grow

By Lynn Moreau

Aquaponics is a system of aquaculture (fish farming) in which the waste produced by farmed fish supplies nutrients for plants grown hydroponically, which in turn purify the water. Simply put, the difference between hydroponics and aquaponics is that aquaponics uses fish to provide nutrients, and hydroponics is growing plants in water; using a soilless media made up of formulated solutions that provide nutrients to the plants.

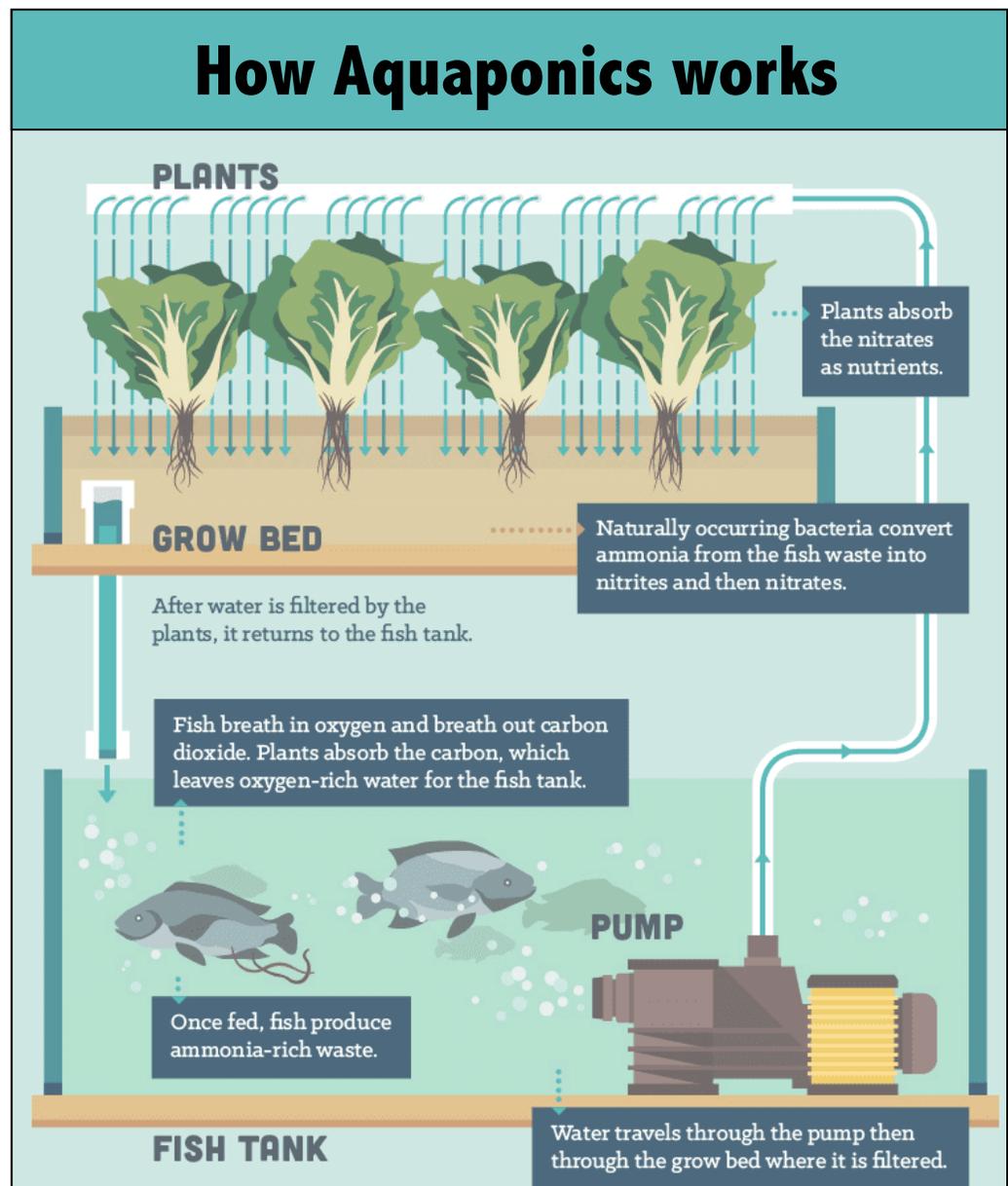
In many ways, aquaponics mimics a natural ecosystem. The waste product from fish is used to feed bacteria that are converted into a perfect fertilizer for plants, just like Mother Nature does in every aquatic ecosystem.

In an aquaponics system, no chemicals, pesticides or herbicides can be used, and nutrient rich water is continually recycled. An aquaponics system can be put anywhere; in a greenhouse, outside, in your basement or even your living room and can be scaled or adjusted to the size you need. There are a few different techniques; in deep water culture, plants are grown in holes in a foam raft that floats in the growing medium. This method is suitable for growing salad greens. In vertical aquaponics systems, plants are grown out of vertically placed pipes or towers containing a wicking material that holds the plant roots. NFT Systems, short for nutrient film technique, utilize PVC pipes through which nutrient-rich water flows. This method works well for plants that don't need support, such as strawberries. In aquaponics, you never need to replace the water. You may need to top up water lost from evaporation.

All hydroponics systems work on the same principle: plants grow in a sterile, soil-less medium that allows delivery of nutrients to the roots directly from a nutrient-enriched water solution. There

are many different types of aquaponics systems in use today. These may include wicking systems which utilize a sterile medium such as perlite which acts as a wick, drip systems which use hoses and drip lines to take nutrient solution to each individual plant, or ebb and flow systems which utilize pumps to periodically flood the growing medium. These systems are also scaleable in size. In a hydroponic system, water may need to be replaced occasionally as salts and chemicals can reach toxic levels in the water.

Both aquaponics and hydroponics offer advantages over gardening in soil. The growth rate on a plant grown in this manner is 30 to 50% faster than a plant grown in soil because the extra oxygen in growing mediums helps to stimulate root growth and nutrient absorption. The plant does not have to search the soil for the nutrients it requires. Environmental benefits include lower water use, no erosion of topsoil, no use of pesticides and less wastewater to erode water quality in our rivers and lakes.



EVENTS

ONTARIO INVASIVE SPECIES FORUM: The Invasive Species Centre is pleased to be hosting the 2021 Ontario Invasive Species Forum - bringing together invasive species partners, stakeholders and practitioners from across Ontario. Monday, March 1 - Thursday, March 4, 2021 Via GoToMeeting and GoToWebinar. Registration deadline, Monday, February 22, 2021

ANISHINABEK NATION LANDS, RESOURCES AND ECONOMIC FORUM
Save the Date: February 16-17, 2021

NORTHERN ONTARIO WOMEN
Funding for a Limited Time! A total of \$2,000 dollars of funding is available to Northern Ontario women business owners to take a course pertaining to their area of business. The deadline is March 31st. The NOW program will be launching a Digital Help Desk which will assist women-owned and women-led businesses in Northern Ontario in the areas of Digital Marketing, eCommerce, Website Management & SEO. For more information contact Northern Ontario Women <https://www.lambac.org/now/>

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

FARM STAFF
Where: Three Forks Farm on Manitoulin Island
On farm accommodation and meals available and can be negotiated based on experience.
Deadline: Feb 28th. Please send resume and cover letter to: eat@threeforksfarms.com
Mail to: 9 Douglas Road, Gore Bay ON P0P 1H0.
More info available at: <https://www.goodwork.ca/>

DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR
Indigenous Climate Action (ICA) is looking for someone with passion, who enjoys working on a team, setting precedents, and is committed to true Indigenous Climate Justice to support us in the administration and operation of our donor engagement strategies in a REMOTE, long-term, contracted position.
Email: sheila@indigenousclimateaction.com
Closing Date: Monday, February 8, 5 EST

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT COORDINATOR
The Lands and Resources Department of the Anishinabek Nation seeks an individual to assist and support the Anishinabek Nation to develop, manage, and update their emergency management plans. The focus of this work is emergency management concerning all hazards/natural disasters, including all activities and risk management measures related to prevention and mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery.
Where: Head Office, located on Nipissing First Nation, North Bay, ON
Deadline: Tuesday, February 16, 2021
Email: glenda.st-amour@anishinabek.ca



KIIN MIINWAA ENDADIZIWINAN LANDS AND RESOURCES

OVERVIEW: The Lands and Resources Department was established within the Anishinabek Nation in the spring of 2007. Currently, there are four program areas with staffing capabilities. These include: Water Resources, Minerals and Mining, Trapping, and Canada Ontario Resource Development Agreement.



LYNN MOREAU is a Lands and Resources Program Coordinator with the Anishinabek Nation where she is responsible for the Agriculture Portfolio. Originally from Callander, Ontario, Lynn now lives in Bonfield where she is co-owner of Green Legacy Farm with her husband Dean. Lynn holds an Environmental Science degree from Trent University and a Fish and Wildlife Technician Diploma from Sault College. Lynn can assist with funding application processes and has agricultural experience in vegetable and perennial growing, chicken farming, maple syrup production and aquaculture.

Makwa Giizis (Bear Moon)

The second moon of Creation is Bear Moon, when we honour the vision quest that began in the fall. During this time, we discover how to see beyond reality and to communicate through energy rather than sound. This moon also gives us a special teaching about the birth of bear cubs. In February, there is one morning when there is a heavy fog in the air and the traditional person knows that this is happening.



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