Kestrels are tops as crop cops

Eight nesting pairs of kestrels, most with maximum clutches of five eggs are exciting growers and researchers this summer in Ontario’s Niagara peninsula. Larger than a robin and smaller than a hawk, the kestrel is making a tentative comeback.

“Ian Frensch has a nesting box kit for sale and we want to get the word out to increase the uptake of them,” says Brian Gilroy, chair of the property section for the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers’ Association.

Kestrels are a predator of starlings and other birds which pock fruit in their prime. Having kestrels nesting in proximity of orchards and vineyards is a natural way to control not only pesky birds but insects, mice and voles.

Last year, the project was honoured with a Regional Premier’s Award for Agri-Food Innovation Excellence. The $5,000 is reinvested this year to continue bird deterrent research with Brock University.

Nesting box kits are available for sale at a cost of $55 through Nesting Box Kits Ltd. Contact: Dr. Ian Scott at (519) 953-6682 or ian.scott@agr.gov.ca.

Impact of wage hikes

Farmers and small business owners are urged to testify at public hearings regarding the impact of wage hikes.

“Please don’t make us roadkill on the political highway.”

The second week must apply by July 10. Those wishing to present on the second week will be July 17 to 21 in London, Kitchener-Waterloo, Niagara, Hamilton and Toronto. Presenters who can not appear in person can make a presentation via teleconference.

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Wanted alive!

Colorado potato beetles are what Dr. Ian Scott has in mind for a national survey on tolerance with Brock University.

Growing numbers of beetles, Colorado potato beetles, are consuming potato plants. The beetles are a major pest and cause damage to the potato crop.

The United Fresh Produce Association has honoured Peter Quiring with its FreshTEC Achievement award for his contributions to the greenhouse industry over the last 20 years.

Originally a fabricator of greenhouses before becoming a grower, Quiring has pioneered many technology advancements in controlled environments. NatureFresh Farms is based in Leamington, Ontario with another greenhouse in Delta, Ohio.

Peter Quiring, NatureFresh Farms

Nova Scotians have re-elected a Liberal government including Keith Colwell, minister of agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture (Preston-Darmouth). Formerly from a New Brunswick farm which dates back to the 1700s, Colwell is well respected for his support of the horticultural industry, specifically a replant program.

The Ontario Hop Growers’ Association has elected its new board including Albert Wintseveen as president. Joining him are: Hugh Brown, past president, Steve Kiraz, vice-president; Rob Rombouts, secretary; Ian Cheater, treasurer, Kathy Dingwell, director; Dean McCuskey, director; Dean Workman, director; Catherine Crawford, director. Current membership stands at 103 members.

The U.S. secretary of agriculture Sonny Perdue has announced the creation of an undersecretary for trade and foreign agricultural affairs in the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Perdue made his first trip to Canada on June 5 to meet with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada minister Lawrence MacAulay.

Brothers Duffy and Jordan Kniaziew were profiled in the Toronto Star and Metro News on June 5. Their greenhouse-grown strawberries are perfect for date night. Owen Roberts, director, research communications for the University of Guelph and a columnist for The Grower, is authoring a 22-week series called The New Farm. Here’s a link to the story: http://ow.ly/41td30cp8Wc.

Duffy (L) and Jordan Kniaziew

Peak of the Market has announced two new hires. Bethany Alard joins the team at Winnipeg head office as quality control manager, bringing a background in quality assurance in various roles in meat, bread and cheese production and processing facilities. Duane Hood joins the team as Calgary distribution centre manager, with more than 25 years of warehouse, logistics and distribution management experience.

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Bridget Visser has joined Stokes Seeds as a sales representative in the Bradford, Ontario area. She was formerly responsible for communicating the water project results for the Holland Marsh Growers’ Association. She is also a blogger for the GTA site, http://ow.ly/30cp8Wc.


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