



Two new Haskap cultivars released

Haskap, or blue honeysuckle, is a flavourful fruit high in antioxidants and vitamins, frost-tolerant and winter-hardy, ripens early, has few pests and has potential to be mechanically harvested.

It almost sounds as if the fruit was tailor-made for a climate just like Saskatchewan's.

That's because it was.

Dr. Bob Bors of the University of Saskatchewan (U of S) recently completed a project to improve haskap breeding and production, funded by the Agriculture Development Fund (ADF) of the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture.

After handling thousands of seedlings and making multiple crosses of different haskap cultivars from Russia, Japan and the Kuril Islands, Dr. Bors was able to successfully release two new registered haskap cultivars – named Tundra and Borealis to the market.

Tundra is well suited to commercial production, with fruit that are firm enough for mechanized harvesting, but nice to eat. Borealis has larger and tastier fruit than Tundra, but not as firm, so it is better suited to a U-pick operation or home gardens.

If you decide you'd like to try growing haskap, you need to know a few things about the crop. Haskap requires cross-pollination to produce fruit. Two different cultivars that are not directly related but have similar flowering times are required before haskap will produce fruit. Borealis and Tundra are too closely related to pollinate each other, so another, not-too-closely-related cultivar is required. Dr. Bors says that a new, superior pollinator will likely be released to propagators by the end of 2010.



Thanks to Dr. Bors' efforts, the U of S Fruit Program now has one of the world's best collections of haskap genetics.

During Dr. Bors' recent sabbatical, he traveled all across Canada to find haskap growing in the wild. He collected nearly 700 native Canadian haskap clones to augment his collection and to add diversity to his breeding stock. The U of S Fruit Program now has one of the world's best collections of haskap stock.

With assistance from an ADF grant awarded in 2008, Dr. Bors will use the plants and seeds he collected on his sabbatical to continue crossing and testing haskap until at least 2011. With a strong breeding program and diverse genetics in the breeding stock, there are sure to be even better cultivars released in the future.

The Agriculture Development Fund provides funding to help institutions, companies and industry organizations carry out research, development and value-added activities in the agriculture and agri-food sector. The results produce new knowledge, information and choices in technologies, techniques and varieties for farmers, ranchers, processors and input

suppliers, to improve the competitiveness of Saskatchewan's agriculture sector.

In 2010, the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture provided \$5.7 million for 44 ADF research projects.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Visit the Saskatchewan Agriculture website at www.agriculture.gov.sk.ca under the heading "Research"; or
- Visit the University of Saskatchewan's fruit website at www.fruit.usask.ca.

SASKATCHEWAN FORAGE COUNCIL DEMONSTRATES STOCKPILE GRAZING



by *Andre Bonneau, BSA, PAg*
Forage Management Specialist
Agriculture Knowledge Centre

In mid-2009, the Saskatchewan Forage Council applied for and received funding through the Agricultural Demonstration of Practices and Technologies (ADOPT) program to perform demonstration projects. One of those projects demonstrates stockpiling perennials for winter feeding.

The premise of the project was to demonstrate how winter feeding costs can be reduced by encouraging livestock to harvest their own feed. The cost of winter feeding tends to be dominated by cutting, baling and moving forage rather than the forage itself.

To stockpile forage for fall or winter pasture, Saskatchewan producers have commonly left late summer growth standing, neither grazing nor haying the field. However, exposure to the elements gradually reduces the quality of standing stockpiled forage over the winter, while alfalfa tends to lose its leaves very soon after the first killing frost. By swathing the alfalfa/grass mixture, we can potentially preserve both the quality of available forage and potentially increase total forage utilization.

Three sites in the province were selected: Lanigan (Western Beef Development Centre), Biggar and Ituna. At each site, a grass-legume forage mix was stockpiled using both the standing stockpiled method and by swathing. Over the winter the forage will be tested for quality loss and waste will be assessed. Animal performance will also be

evaluated. Once changes in yield and quality have been determined, we can evaluate whether the cost of cutting and baling would have been recovered.

The Lanigan site was grazed in early fall of 2009, while the Biggar site was grazed in January, 2010. The Ituna site will be grazed in late winter or early spring. A full report will be available later in 2010.

The ADOPT program accelerates the transfer of knowledge to Saskatchewan producers and ranchers. The program, funded under the Science and Innovation section of the federal-provincial Growing Forward Agreement, provides funding to help producer groups evaluate and demonstrate new agricultural practices and technologies at the local level. The results of successful trials can then be adopted by farming operations in the region.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Contact the Moose Jaw Regional Office at 1-866 457-2377; or
- Contact the Saskatchewan Forage Council at (306) 966-2148.



Swath grazed grass-alfalfa blend near Biggar, SK.

