Adam Thomson with freshly harvested hops

craft brewers because you need to know what the craft brewer is looking for..."

Good hops, he says, could be worth \$15-\$20 per lbs. With "reasonable management," he says, a grower should be able to produce 1,000 lbs. of dry hops per acre.

Brennan, an out of work television cameraman, jumped in to the industry after he and his wife toured a brewery and learned of the province's perennial shortage of domestic hops.

"I sent them an email and said I'll grow hops for you," he told Ontario Farmer. The reply was that his was the 50th offer; and no one had yet followed through.

"I took that as a challenge."

With eight acres of hops in cultivation, Brennan knows that mechanization is paramount.

But he says, most Ontarians were trying to resurrect old machines which Europe had mothballed in the 70s and 80s.

The price plus the idea of old technology held no interest for Brennan who set out to design his own machine, and came instead upon the hop harvester being produced at Rochester, New York.

"John, the manufacturer had solved a lot of the problems I was having and I couldn't build one cheaper than he was selling his for," Brennan says.

Today Scott Denyer, Dominion City Brewery's assistant has come. He points out the tiny, yellow lubulin grams in each hop, explaining that is the gold nugget; the pearl of today's harvest.

"Hops are the spice of the beer;" he says, "the salt and pepper of it."

Most Ontario-produced craft beer uses pelletized hop, Thomson says, simply because fresh crop is not available.

Also on hand is John Graham of Campbellford's 25 year old Church-Key Brewing Co., whom Thomson expects in the future Lot 17 could also supply.

Adam handles the social media stuff; the marketing, while Fred studies emerging trends, attends field days, experiments with nitrogen and constantly is on the watch for disease and bug damage.

With other crops growing on his ancestral farm and semi-retirement to enjoy Thomson isn't planning to fill the Ontario market himself anytime soon.

And on this beautiful September day with the hops coming off mostly clean, there's always a little handstripping to do, and time for a break to savour another Dominion City Brewery offering.

How was last year's 'Land is Strong?"

A smile crosses Thomson's

"I did try it," he says.

"It was quite acceptable."

Malawi needs food

Malawi has been hit by floods and drought that have left more than 2.8 million people without enough food this winter.

The United Nations' World Food Program has launched an appeal to meet the crisis that will be worst from October to March. The floods early this year were the worst in living memory in

Malawi, washing away homes and food stocks, and ruining fertile land.

Some crops managed to withstand the floods only to succumb to intense dry spells in the following months, making survival even more difficult for the most vulnerable, says the UN team that assessed the situation.

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