

Heartland Regional Soil & Crop Improvement Association

Serving members of soil and crop improvement associations in the counties of Huron, Perth, Waterloo and Wellington

Volume 6 Issue 2

JUNE 2006

OSCIA

Mission Statement

To communicate and facilitate responsible, economic management of soil, water, air and crops.

For more information visit www.ontariosoilcrop.org

Inside This Issue:

Heritage Family Farm Sees Future for Family in Farming	1
Comments from Provincial Director	5
Comments from Regional Chair	6
Comments from Communication Coordinator	6
Perth SCIA	7
OMAFRA Research	7
Biodiesel Project	8
Coming Events & Info Sources	9
EFP Schedule	10
OSCIA News	
OMAFRA Crop Talk	

Heritage Family Farm Sees Future for Family in Farming

McLagan Farms, Mitchell

The first of the McLagan family, William James McLagan came to Canada with his parents in 1853 to settle at Lot 15 Conc 6 of Logan Township (north of Mitchell). In 1873 William purchased Lot 19 Conc 7 of Logan. In 1883 the 60x80 barn was built. This was the first large bank barn put up in the area. The barn raising involved 100 men to place the heavy timbers. The hay barn was built in 1892. The red brick house was built in 1897 for a total cost of \$2500. The telephone was put in the house in 1910 and hydro in 1924.



McLagan Farmstead—Pioneers 1853

William and Sarah Ann had six chil-

dren. Their son Harvey McLagan and his wife Annie bought Lot 18 & 19 Conc 7 in 1912. They raised 8 children. Their son Keith began farming

(Continued on page 2)

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(Continued from page 1)



Keith and Ilene McLagan

with his father Harvey in 1940. In 1952 Keith and Ilene were married. Ilene McLagan, formerly Fanson grew up on a mixed farm at Munroe. Ilene trained as a teacher and taught in Logan, Hibbert, Fullarton and Wallace from 1944 to 1952. In 1957 Keith and Ilene bought the home farm at Lot 19 & West half of Lot 18 Conc 7 of Logan. They have a family of four – James, John, Agnes and Margaret.

James and John graduated from Centralia College in 1973 and 1975 and returned home to dairy and cash crop farm with their father. The land base expanded as the sons purchased their own farms. James and Karen were married in 1976 and own Lot 17 Conc 6, north part Lot 16 Conc 6 and north part Lot 18 & 19 Conc 6 of Logan. John and Mary were married in 1981 and own Lot 14 Conc 6 and Lot 14 Conc 7 and south part Lot 14 Conc 8 of Logan. The total acreage under McLagan Farms is 700 acres.

Dairy Operation

The dairy herd has averaged about 40 milking cows over the last 40 years. The price of quota is one of the reasons the dairy operation has not expanded, however the McLagans have increased the milk quota by small amounts 3 times in the past 10 years.

John and James decide on the cow herd management and rely on the dairy specialist from the feed mill to set up the rations and analyze the feeds. The dairy feeding program includes haylage with free choice dry hay and grain ration in the milk parlour. At the

present time they rely on purchased feed-pellets, cracked corn or flaked corn. Time and costs do not warrant the storage and mixing of feed rations from home grown feedstock but that could change if a full time person was available in the barn. The crops grown for the livestock include corn silage, hay, haylage and straw.

4 H Tradition

Involvement in 4-H has been a long tradition with the McLagans. Keith has been a 4-H leader for 30 years. James and John were active in the 4-H Dairy Club and brought their calves into the milking herd as their own cows. The family has shown cattle in Perth County. James has also been to shows in London, Michigan and Wisconsin with his in laws (Downiedale Farms).

Making Changes

Keith and Ilene have not had to seek out changes but relied on James and John to bring their ideas. In the last 30 years they have set up the milking parlour, the milkhouse and changed the loafing barn to 3 rows of free stalls. Bucket milkers were used until the pipeline was installed in 1975. They have added a machinery shed and expanded the equipment by purchasing a combine and no-till machinery.

Cropping program

The McLagans crop approximately 600 acres of their own and custom plant and combine an additional 700



The McLagan Homestead

(Continued from page 2)



Case International 955 Planter with Coulter Cart

to 800 acres. 25% of the crops are used for the livestock and 75% for cash crop. In 1988 the McLagans tried no till planting beans into corn stalks with the purchase of their first JD750 no till planter. They have not plowed since 1991. They experienced a challenge planting into wheat stubble and found that the shallow tillage from a coulter cart made it easier to go into the wheat stubble. They purchased the coulter cart in 1998. The corn and soys are planted with the 11 row Case International 955. It plants the corn at 30" rows and the soys at 15" rows. A JD 750 no till planter is used for some of the soys as well as the spring grains and winter wheat.

Corn

Round-up ready corn is planted followed by a burn down herbicide. A post emergent herbicide is used at the 3 to 5 leaf stage if needed. Liquid starter 6-24-26 is used at 5-6 gal per acre on corn with some zinc if needed. Depending on previous yields and soil tests nitrogen is applied to the corn at 120 to 140 lb of N per acre. This is split between planting using 15-20 gal per acre 28 % N and side dressing with 28% for the balance.

Wheat

Winter wheat is planted after soybeans or white beans. A single spring application of urea or 28% is applied. Phosphorous and potassium may be added with the nitrogen on the wheat if indicated by soil test results. Fungicide may be applied at heading if needed. The wheat straw from the home farm is baled into small squares or large round bales. The remaining straw may be left in the field.

Beans

McLagans grow Round-up ready and IP soys. In the last couple of years James has hired someone to scout the soys. Although James has treated for aphids or spidermites only a few times in the past couple of years, losing more than half of the yield in 2002 to aphids makes James cautious about insect and disease outbreaks. Soybeans are planted with 3.5 to 4 gallons of 6-24-6 starter with the early soys treated with Vitaflow 280. White beans are no till planted into corn stalks using 3-4 gallons of 6-24-6 and 10 gallons of 28%. He has experienced very little disease problem in the whites.

GPS Technology

James uses GPS technology and auto steering. He uses the Greenstar software to record field and crop data along with a palm pilot with Field Mate installed.



Sprayer Unit and Tractor with Auto Steer

(Continued from page 3)

Marketing

James uses a mix of marketing tools for the cash crops. He checks the markets daily and reviews the Corn Producers Association market report emails. The whites are sold on the Pool or by contract, the soys are forward contracted, some hard red wheat is forward contracted and he uses puts and calls for the corn. James uses the OMAFRA budget sheet to figure out his cost of production (COP).



Information Sources

James gets new ideas and technology from attending FarmSmart and his involvement with his local Perth Soil and Crop. His participation with the research plots at the Perth demonstration farm keeps his information current. He attends the Southwest Ag Conference occasionally and has been a featured speaker there. His son Kevin brings new knowledge about financial planning and accounting from his involvement in a financial institution.

Decision Making

When asked how they make a decisions Ilene said she sees these little conferences taking place during morning milking times when at least 2 or 3 of the partners are at the barn. Jim tends to be the management leader and consults the others. Each partner owns their own farm but all of the farming activities are pooled together and financed from one joint bank account. James makes the decisions about crop varieties and crop protection plans and talks over the marketing with John and Keith. Major decisions such as purchasing equipment involve all 3 partners.

John's main focus is in the barn. James starts the morning milking and John always does the evening milking. John looks after the heifers in the barn at his home farm. John's wife Mary worked at University Hospital in London as a trained nurse. While working there she contracted a disease which has left her disabled for 16 years. This has made John's involvement with the farm more closely focused around his home and the barn. During the period of Mary's illness and lengthy hospital stay several changes in the farming operation took place by necessity to simplify labour requirements. The round baler was purchased for hay and straw to reduce the labour costs of small bales. It was during this period that James became convinced that no-till technology would simplify looking after milking and field work.

Future of agriculture

Keith has seen many changes to farming in his lifetime. He experienced farming with small acreage involving a great deal of manual work or assisted by horses. Now he sees machinery with auto steering, robotic milkers and videos in the barns. Keith and Ilene admit while they don't use a computer and have not found the need to, they see a time when people won't be able to do without some technology like computers. They have seen a time in their households that didn't include bathrooms, hydro, telephone, television or radio.

John and Mary see family members continue to be involved into the future and a possible expansion of the dairy. James also sees a future that may include an expansion of the dairy. James son Kevin is 25 yrs old and is interested in milking as well as his daughter. John's son Eric is 17 yrs old and also interested in milking cows. They have shown 4-H calves and have put cows into the herd. Over the next couple of years it will be interesting to see how plans develop on this heritage family farm.



Special thanks to the McLagan family for giving their time to this article and to Perth Soil and Crop for nominating this family for the newsletter profile.

Comments from the Provincial Director

We found an idea of excellence on Monday night in the McDonald's at Barrie. The Simcoe-Muskoka Health Unit had ideas on parenting that they wanted to deliver to parents in the region and beyond. They had detailed 10 clear points on how to have your children behave well and had printed them on an attractive placemat to be used at this favourite family spot. While waiting for food or kids, parents are a captive audience. What a stroke of genius! Provide your good product, when people have time to receive it and where they will naturally come in contact with it. Marketing at its finest!

The 10 points on the placemat, while addressing child behaviour, were squarely aimed at the parent. In a nutshell they said to treat your child and all others with respect in your voice at all times, have reasonable expectations based upon their abilities and to give them clear positive directions, recognize good behaviour rather than criticize wherever possible and to remember to have them well rested and well fed. An interesting one worthy noting was to treat animals, pets and all people with respect so that your children will see the consistency. The one clear message was that your behaviour as a parent will affect how your children behave. I must say that the parents in that particular restaurant were some of the best behaved that I have seen for a long time. Not rocket science but messages we need to hear over and over again both as parents - and as employers of farm help.

The new Health and Safety regulations come into effect this summer. We need to familiarize ourselves with the changes as they are in place to protect employees and everyone on the farm. If we think



of these as physical safety protection then we can think of the Health units "placemat information" as protection for the mind. You set the pace for the farm and its work environment. If you can help everyone on the farm to be happy, to feel rewarded by their work and your recognition for doing things right, you will have gone a long way in creating a safe productive workplace for everyone. The word "thanks" as well as clear communication will work wonders.

The events of the past year, crop prices and weather all take their toll. It is far too easy to "fox-hole" ourselves by burying ourselves in the work of the farm. It is especially important during those times to attend events and to see that we are in this together. A saying that has stood by me is that

"Life is never as good as you hope, or as bad as you fear". The strength of the Soil and Crop always has been to bring people together to foster discussion and to try new ideas.

There are a lot of things happening. The 2006 Forage Masters is active in 22 counties with 204 participants, 34 of which are 4-H members. Pasture groups have formed in some of the counties, inquire for information. Biodiesel projects are on the go. It is interesting just how many people

are already using biodiesel in their operations. Check with a local supplier for more information on this. County and major grant projects will be in the ground now. We will learn more about these over the summer. Consider having a Soil and Crop specialist attend a morning crop walk in your area. It is a good way to get local information for everyone.

Mark July 20th on your calendar to attend the Hay Demonstration day at Mel Brower's near Marsville in Dufferin county. There will be machinery demonstrations and a trade show and lots of other farmers. Check this newsletter out for other events planned in your area. Hope to see you there.

Joan McKinlay
OSCIA Provincial Director

Comments from the Regional Chair

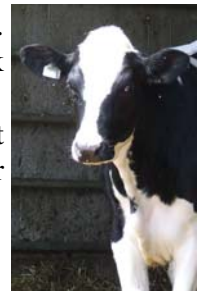
I hope that this edition of the Heartland Regional newsletter finds you with a little time to read and enjoy it. With any luck your seeding will be finished, most of your spraying completed and for dairy farmers at least, first cut hay taken care of. Hopefully before second cut and wheat harvest there will be time for family first and then time to turn your thoughts to soil and crop issues.

A key challenge in the coming weeks will be finding an appropriate person to participate in the Clean Water Act initiative. These candidates will participate in Working Groups or the Source Protection Planning Committee whose decisions could have significant impact on our farming operations. If you live in the Ausable-Bayfield or Maitland watershed, have some knowledge of watershed issues and a commitment to the continuation of fair and reasonable agricultural practices, your input could be crucial. Please call me or the Heartland communication coordinator as soon as you can (phone # on back cover).

Don't forget about FarmSmart Expo coming up July 12-13 at the Elora Research Centre. This is a fantastic event planned with you in mind by the Golden Horseshoe and Heartland Regions that contains valuable information for all farmers. It is never too early to start thinking about your County Annual meetings. Perhaps at FarmSmart Expo you will see something or meet someone who will give you a great idea for a topic or speaker. After a very cold day in year 1 and two very hot ones in year 2, I have a feeling this year's Expo Days are going to be just perfect. Hope you can make it.

I wish good weather and good luck for the rest of the cropping season. And remember, work hard but work SAFE!

Yours respectfully Stuart Wright
Heartland Regional Chair



Comments from the Regional Communication Coordinator

Don't let this summer pass without attending some of the events that are featured in this issue and the list of coming events.

FarmSmart Expo July 12 and 13 is an excellent opportunity to get out and do some problem solving in the field. The 13th is for 4H and other young folk. You don't have to be a 4H member to attend.

Perth SCIA is hosting a twilight tour on the afternoon of the 13th. See details in the Perth report. Check out the article on what the OMAFRA staff have planned in the demonstration plots. The feature article this month is the McLagan family. James McLagan has a lot to do with the Perth Demo farm so attend the twilight tour and ask him more about his operation.

Craig Martin at Cribit Seeds is the cooperator on the BioDiesel demonstration project. We visited him a couple of weeks ago to see how things are going with the biodiesel.

There is a research plot with the cooperation of Bayer CropScience and OSCIA at Milton J Dietz in Seaforth. Bayer is researching Option 1,2,3 herbicide.

As the Heartland Communication Coordinator I will be participating in some local Greencover projects with Maitland and Upper Thames Conservation Authorities. Look for reports on these projects in September.

Heartland Regional Committee is discussing plans to organize a tour to take in some of the research/ demonstration projects as well as visit the Biox facility in Hamilton where they will manufacture Biodiesel. This will take place in mid to late August. Watch for details. If you are interested in putting forth your ideas give me a call.

Have a great summer Ruth Knight

Perth County Soil and Crop Improvement Association

Perth County Soil and Crop Improvement Association will host its Twilight Tour on Thursday, July 13th at the Perth Demonstration Site. Perth SCIA and Huron Tractor invite everyone to attend a tour of Perth Soil and Crop demonstration farm and attend their GPS Solutions workshop. Learn about the benefits of guidance and auto steering products from John Deere, Outback and other name brands. Enjoy a complimentary beef on bun dinner. Discuss demonstration farm plots with OMAFRA staff and end with an upbeat message about “Stress on the Farm”.

Highlights

- 4:00 GPS Solutions Workshop
- 5:30 **Complimentary** Beef on Bun Dinner
- 6:30 Demo Farm Tour
- 8:00 Guest Speaker Gabriele Del Bianco of Innerfit Centre, Goderich Topic: Stress on the Farm



The Perth Demonstration Farm and Huron Tractor are located on Perth Rd #44 East of Bornholm (hwy #23—5 miles north of Mitchell to Bornholm and east on #44)

Contact person: Thelma 519-271-5190

OMAFRA Research Projects at Perth Demonstration Site

The following is a short list of the research trials that are taking place at the Perth SCIA Demonstration Site. Some of these trials are taking place throughout Heartland Region with other cooperators as well.

Corn Yield versus Drying Cost with Greg Stewart

Questions?

- 1) How much yield gain can a grower expect as he or she moves to longer season, higher harvest moisture hybrids?
- 2) Do these higher heat unit hybrids produce enough additional yield to pay for the additional drying costs, even when drying cost are high and corn prices are low?

Demonstration plots at the Perth Demo farm this year involved planting three hybrids (CHU ratings of 2550, 2775 and 3000) at two densities (24,000 ppa and 34,000 ppa). Our intentions are to have three harvest

dates for each hybrid and density combination: October 20, November 30, and March 30. At each harvest date we will calculate returns from yield less drying charges.

Soybean Trials with Horst Bohner

We are conducting 4 soybean trials at Perth Demo Farm

1. Row Width/ Population Study (Reducing Soybean Seed Costs)
2. Seed Drill versus Planter
3. Planting Date
4. New Soybean Inoculant Technology

Wheat Trials with Peter Johnson

There are sulphur trials, planting date trials, and row width trials for clover establishment at Bornholm.

Biodiesel Demonstration Project

The entire fleet at Cribit Seeds has been running on 2.5% biodiesel since the spring. Craig Martin of Cribit Seeds said there has been no noticeable difference in the performance of the engines running on biodiesel. He hopes to move up to 5% biodiesel.

The only concern has been availability of biodiesel that meets the parameters of the project. The funder Natural Resources Canada (NRC) requires that the biodiesel be Canadian sourced fuel. Bob Peden who is the Director of the Central Ontario Energy Alliance was happy to report that a supply from Rothsay meets the standards and is now available. We are all still awaiting the supply from Biox in Hamilton when they get into full operation. Biox will be making biofuel from canola, animal fat or soy oil. Rothsay currently makes their biodiesel from rendered fat.



Bob Peden and Craig Martin

From the Cribit Seeds fleet a JD 8300 and JD 4555 will be included in the study. A dynameter test was completed on the tractors at the beginning of the study and will be performed at the end to determine if biodiesel changes the performance. An analysis of oil from regularly scheduled oil changes will be completed to determine if there is any mechanical wear in the engine during the study period.

The overall objective of the project is to promote biodiesel and make farmers aware of any benefits or con-



JD 4555 to be used in the performance study

cerns with use of biodiesel in farm equipment. The project is funded by Natural Resources Canada and coordinated between Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association.

While supply from an Ontario or Canadian source is currently an obstacle for this project and those who are already convinced to use biodiesel, a market demand also has to be established to make it feasible as well.

There are also some constraints to improving the quality of biodiesel. While manufacturers try to improve these aspects and find feedstocks that reliably produce a quality product, retailers are confident to work with 5% biodiesel.

The 5% biodiesel raises the cloudpoint by 1 degree C. (the higher temperature at which diesel starts to gel in cold weather). The cloudpoint is dependent on the feedstock used to manufacture the biodiesel. This project does not include the use of any diesel conditioners. So for the cooperator in Heartland Region as well as the ones in Eastern and Northern Ontario the performance results of biodiesel in winter will be comparable.

You can learn more about the biodiesel project by contacting Craig Martin or attending the Cribit Twilight tour in July. Call 519-664-3701

Coming Events and Info Sources

JULY

- 5,6 Southwest Crop Diagnostic Day**, Ridgetown
Contact: OMAFRA Agricultural Information
Contact Centre 1-877-424-1300 or Ridgetown
Resource Centre 519-674-1698. <http://www.diagnosticdays.ca>
- 9 Ecological Farmers Tour Sunday, 1:00 p.m.**
L & M Farm, Murray Sharp 1362 Naylor Road
Dawn-Euphemia Township, Lambton County
Certified organic cash crop farmer and seed
grower. Crops to see include wheat, soybeans,
oats and clover for seed. Call 519-692-3665 for
more information.
- 12 FarmSmart Farming Systems Expo**,
(diagnostic days) Elora Research Station ,
<http://www.ontariosoilcrop.org/cms/en/AboutOSCIA/Membership/FarmSmart.aspx?menuid=45>
- 13 4H FarmSmart Farming Systems Expo** for
Ontario Rural Youth
- 13 Perth SCIA and Huron Tractor Twilight
Tour & GPS Management Solutions** Demon-
stration Farm and Huron Tractor are located on
Perth Rd #44 East of Bornholm (hwy #23 - 5
miles north of Mitchell to Bornholm and east on
#44) 4 pm GPS Solutions, 5:30 Beef on a Bun,
6:30 Demo Farm Tours, 8 pm Guest Speaker
Gabriele Del Bianco of Innerfit Centre,
Goderich Contact Thelma 519-271-5190
- 15 Ecological Farmers Tour Saturday, 1:00
p.m.** Long Alley Farms, home of Saugeen
Country Yogurt Ingo Huesing 423810 Conces-
sion 6, West Grey, between Markdale and Dur-
ham, 5 km east of Edge Hill School. This is a
50 cow biodynamic dairy farm. Crops include
mixed grain, grain corn, hay and pasture for
feed and soybeans as a cash crop. Almost all
milk is processed on the farm, tour of process-
ing facility if interest. Call 519-369-3410 for
more information.

- 20 Ontario Forage Expo** on the farm of Mel and
Wilma Brouwer at Marsville, Dufferin County
Co-sponsored by Ontario Forage Council and
Georgian Central SCIA Contact the Ontario
Forage Council 1-877-892-8663

AUGUST 2006

- 8-10 Empire Farm Days**, Seneca Falls, NY <http://www.empirefarmdays.com>
- 9 Oxford SCIA Bus Trip in the Huron
County** at the farm of Don Nott near Clinton
and closing the day with a play at the Huron
County PlayHouse in Grand Bend. For reser-
vations: Albert and Christine Renkema 519-
475-4391 or alstein@execulink.com.
- 21-24 Innovative Farmers Assoc. of Ont. Bus Trip**
2006, Niagara, ON - New York Pickup-up
Stops London 6 am, Woodstock 6:30 am, and
Milton 7:30 am Members of IFAO \$350, Non-
members \$400 based on double occupancy
Contact: ifao.com or Jim, Lorraine House 519-
769-2443.

SEPTEMBER

- 12-14 Outdoor Farm Show** Woodstock <http://www.outdoorfarmshow.com>
- 19-23 International Plowing Match & Rural
Expo**, Peterborough County <http://www.plowingmatch.org>

OCTOBER 2006

NOVEMBER 2006

- 8-9 OMAFRA Outlook Conference**, Delta Chel-
sea Hotel, Toronto Contact: Scott Butler
OMAFRA, Guelph, 519-826-3771,
scott.butler@omafra.gov.on.ca
- 28,29 Forage Focus 2006** - 28 in Winchester, 29 in
Shakespeare.

**Critical Dates for Nutrient Management Septem-
ber 30, 2006:** Deadline for existing large livestock
farms (300 Nutrient Units or greater) to complete all
approved on-farm projects, pay all invoices and ar-
range for final inspection, submit claims for final
payment.

Contacts

Executive:

Stuart Wright—Chair

RR 2 Kenilworth ON N0G 2E0 (519-848-5493)

John Poel—Vice Chair

RR 1 St.Mary's ON N4X 1C4 (519-229-8704)

Keith Black—Prov Director (Perth, Waterloo, Huron)

RR 1 Belgrave ON N0G 1E0 (519-357-1092)

Joan McKinlay—Prov Director (Wellington)

RR 1 Ravenna ON N0H 2E0 (519-599-6236)

County Association Directors:

Huron—John Vander Burgt 519-236-4025

Perth—John Poel 519-229-8704

Waterloo—Craig Martin 519-648-3707

Wellington—Laurence Helmuth 519-638-2101

OMAFRA Contact:

Horst Bohner-519-271-5858

horst.bohner@omafra.gov.on.ca

Regional Communication Coordinator:

Ruth Knight-Secretary / Treasurer / Editor

1786 Huron Bruce Road

RR 2 Wingham ON N0G 2W0

519-392-6654 rknight@wightman.ca

OSCIA Provincial Office

1 Stone Rd West Guelph ON N1G 4Y2

1-800-265-9751 web www.ontariosoilcrop.org

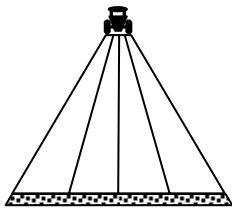
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Heartland Regional Soil and Crop Improvement Association

c/o Ruth Knight

1786 Huron Bruce Road

RR 2 Wingham ON N0G 2W0