

Heartland Regional Soil & Crop Improvement Association

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

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OSCIA

Mission Statement

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

For more information visit www.ontariosoilcrop.org

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Farm Family Innovate and Adapt to New Technologies

Whitelaw Farms Ltd, Fergus

Whitelaw Farms Ltd is located north of Fergus and includes 2 generations of Whitelaws - Robert and Edith and their son Doug and his wife Sandy. The Whitelaws' operation has been effective at adopting technology and innovation that fits the goals of conservation, efficiency and profitability.



Whitelaw Farmstead

Adopting Innovative Technology

In 1963 Robert and Edith Whitelaw built the first 800 head finisher barn in Ontario that was self cleaning, auto feeding, and auto ventilated. Using Beatty Brothers technology and financial backing they built a 36' by 160' par-

tially slatted floor barn north of Fergus. The feeding system automatically dropped the feed from the ceiling onto the floor. The manure was all liquid.

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Edith, Robert and Doug Whitelaw

In 1971 Robert and Edith purchased the Whitelaw home farm from Robert's father. In 1973 they moved the finisher barn to the home farm on to a new foundation and installed new gutters. In 1988 they renovated the same feeder barn again to install wet-dry feeders for use of high moisture corn replacing the floor feeding and installed full concrete pen partitions. The incentive for Robert to implement new feeding and housing technology was to improve the grades on his pigs and reduce labour for feeding and manure handling thereby adding profit to his operation.

In 1971 Robert and Edith purchased the Whitelaw home farm from Robert's father. In 1973 they moved the finisher barn to the home farm on to a new foundation and installed new gutters. In 1988 they renovated the same feeder barn again to install wet-dry feeders for use of high moisture corn replacing the floor feeding and installed full concrete pen partitions. The incentive for Robert to implement new feeding and housing technology was to improve the grades on his pigs and reduce labour for feeding and manure handling thereby adding profit to his operation.

Livestock Focus Impacts Crop Production

As the livestock operation expanded and was consolidated onto the home farm, the Whitelaws purchased more acreage to utilize the manure from the livestock. Hog production is now the primary focus of this operation and crop man-

agement is focused primarily on managing the manure that is generated by the 20,000 pigs per year. A new sow barn was built on David's farm in 1994 for 1000 sows and currently holds 900. They finish 2/3 of their piglets and sell 1/3 in the open market. Some of the piglets are finished on contract with other producers. Robert spends a third of his time trucking. For efficiency and bio-security the Whitelaws haul all of their own feed, crops and hogs. All of this is done with one truck and the use of a wash bay. The only truck that comes into the yard at the home farm is the oil truck.

While both Robert and David manage the crop production, David takes the lead on the hog production along with 3.3 paid employees. Robert spends a third of his time trucking. Edith pays the bills and David's wife Sandy does all of the computer work, keeps the hog records and pays the employees.

The current land base of 1000 acres is all owned with 800 acres workable on a medium loam soil which is all tiled. Manure is applied to all of the land every year. They have not purchased any fertilizers since 1994. Manure is surface applied and incorporated with tillage within 24 hours. The Whitelaws have been practicing various forms of conservation tillage



The Original Feeder Barn Relocated and Renovated

(Continued from page 2)



The Whitelaws' Multi-Purpose Truck

and have not plowed since 1980. Currently the primary tillage tool is a disc-disc-ripper. They use this tool to chop the corn stalks and incorporate the manure in the fall. The secondary tillage is a soil finisher with a one row disc. They use a John Deere 1223 No-till planter for the beans at 15" and the corn at 30". All of the field work; manure application, tillage and planting, is completed by Robert and David. The equipment investment is therefore made to get over a large acreage in a timely manner. They can plant 15 acres per hour because they do not apply fertilizer at planting.

The crop management has evolved over time as the livestock focus of the farm has changed from hogs as well as finishing cattle and a cow-calf enterprise to just hogs. The crop rotation used to consist of 1/3 crop, 1/3 pasture and 1/3 hay. Barley was grown to feed the sows and the straw was used to bed the dry sows and cattle. As the barns were converted to liquid manure and the sows were put onto complete prepared feed, barley was replaced with corn. Also corn takes up more nutrients than barley thereby allowing greater utilization of the liquid hog manure. This re-

sulted in a corn and soybean crop rotation. The manure that cannot be accommodated by the crop production on the Whitelaw land base is transferred to neighbours. They have an agreement with a neighbour to spread manure and get paid for the manure. To reduce the phosphorous loading on the fields they have incorporated the use of phytase in the feed. This enzyme increases the efficiency of phosphorous use in the pig thereby decreasing the phosphorous levels in the manure by approximately 30%. They have experienced a decrease in phosphorous levels in the fields allowing them to match manure use to crop requirements.

Compaction and Erosion

Compaction is always a concern in a situation where heavy manure application equipment has to pass over a large land base in a limited window of opportunity. To reduce compaction the Whitelaws have implemented a couple of strategies. All tractors and the combine are stripped of extra weight and upgraded with low compaction radial



The Beef Feeder Barn Converted to a Sow Barn in Foreground

tires. All field equipment is 4 wheel drive or front wheel assist to reduce slippage. Some compaction problems occurred when corn followed corn. The ripper equipment is designed to rip through the com-

(Continued from page 3)

pacted layers. The ripper also hills the soil up allowing it to dry earlier in spring and for water to infiltrate better. The 9,000 gallon manure tank is attached to the tractor with a ball hinge between the rear wheels of the tractor so that the weight of the load is distributed on to the tractor as well as the tanker. The tanker is pulled with an articulating JD 9300. To stretch the opportunity to spread manure the Whitelaws have this year included winter wheat for the first time in 20 years into the crop rotation. The added crop in the rotation benefits the soil and other crops as well.



Looking to the Future

While Robert and Edith went over newspaper clippings and magazine articles they related alot of history and memories of their years in farming. They certainly have enjoyed several excursions to United States and joked about getting in the car and driving according to the "Cracker Barrel map". While Doug is ready to hold with his current position and work at improving his operation, Robert and Edith are ready to wind down their activities in farming somewhat. However Robert is still ready for a challenge and has aspirations to explore the feasibility of an anaerobic digester for the manure on their farm.

Special thanks to Robert, Edith and Doug and their family for giving their time to this article and to Wellington Soil and Crop for nominating this family for the newsletter profile.

Communication Coordinator

That warm March sunshine reminds us that spring is here and soon we will be ramping up the pace to get onto the land and participate in the earth's regeneration.

Th winter has been filled with informative meetings. The FarmSmart conference in January had a record number of participants and positive feedback on the speaker line-up. The young students and their families that participated in the university tours and special programs were especially positive. So, for all of the members with young people, take note and make plans to attend FarmSmart as a family in 2007.

Wellington, Perth and Huron hosted annual meetings or producer meetings. Look for the local association news for details.

The OSCIA annual meeting in Feb at Niagara Falls was a great opportunity to review many of the joint OMAFRA and OSCIA research projects

Plans have been made for several research projects in the Heartland region. Horst Bohner will continue with the regional study on soybean seeding rates, row widths and drill versus planter. See the summary of research results from 2005.

The Heartland region is participating in a demonstration project of farm use of bio-diesel. See the bio-diesel article for more details. As part of this project we are planning a regional activity. Look for details of summer meetings in the June issue.

Have a safe and successful spring season.
Cheers Ruth Knight



Comments from the Provincial Director

“Agriculture is on the threshold of a Renaissance” said Bruce Archibald, Deputy Minister of Agriculture in Ontario. In our globally competitive world we must differentiate ourselves and seize our competitive advantage. He and others speaking at meetings this winter have looked toward “health and nutrition”, agriculture’s ability to produce energy and our stewardship of the environment as major themes in our future.

It is a hard year to think about the future as many are struggling with the present but it is only if we can see hope in the future that it all makes sense. If we can offer answers to the problems of the Ontario public maybe we can capture more of the budget and their food dollars. Agricultural researchers are now working closely with medical scientists to see where we fit in. Can we be paid better for a safe, traceable, secure food supply that offers health benefits? How do we sell best what we have to offer or offer what is needed? In a present world where 49% of Torontonians were not born in Canada, why do we think the same food products will be needed? As labour shortages are experienced further immigration is expected to fill these positions. Are we capturing these market opportunities? We are well positioned in Ontario with good land, diverse production and processing businesses, and a large affluent market nearby.

Researchers and both governments are recognizing the need for

change and the ability to attract new partners – read as more funds. There is change happening and a climate developing where innovation can grow. They talk about rebuilding capacity for research.



Research is a cost of doing business that gives us a competitive advantage. Research is now developing products for car manufacturers, fuels from waste products, pharmaceuticals through biotechnology and more products every day. The commercialization of these products and how we can benefit from them is the current challenge. The opportunity of being first is that there is no trail to follow.

Every farm meeting seems to have speakers about wind energy, anaerobic digesters or bio-diesel/ethanol production. Energy costs in the European Union are now making alternative sources feasible. Our energy costs are still low but now that hydro meters can run in two directions, “home grown” alternatives are becoming attractive. Even the USA is aspiring to become energy independent. Bill Horan, National Corn Growers Assoc, from Iowa had a strong take home message at the OSCIA Annual Meeting. While investors

in the bio-diesel plants were making 50% return on their money, soybean growers were receiving the same price for their product. We may need to “own” more of the value chain in order to be paid for our product. Today we can conserve energy with each dollar saved going to our bottom line.

We have always been good stewards of the land, water and air. OSCIA has been a leader in this field bringing programs to the producer to help us document just what is being done. We may need innovative ways of being recognized and compensated for this service to society.

The message of the current financial crisis is being heard. It is a credit to producers and their organizations that they have been able to work together toward a common good. Partnerships have been forged that will continue to benefit agriculture for many years to come. If we truly are on the verge of a renaissance we want to be quick to embrace the changes and to establish that we are indispensable. As Bill Horan pointed out “it is no longer who you know but rather who knows you and what you can offer”.

Keeping informed is more of a challenge as information explodes before us. Hopefully OSCIA can be one source for you and can provide a forum for discussion through events and on our web site.

Joan McKinlay
OSCIA Provincial Director

Comments from the Regional Chair

On December 12 to 14th Monsanto organized a trip to St. Louis for a tour of their head office and research centre. Along with myself, a ‘humble dirt farmer/teat-puller from the suburbs of Kenilworth’ were a number of growers and ag-industry personnel from southern Ontario. Dan Wright (no relation), who is the Trait Marketing and Stewardship person for Monsanto, led the group.

The research centre is located on the outskirts of St Louis. Monsanto made a corporate decision a few years ago to get out of the pharmaceutical business and sold the property to Pfizer. Monsanto rents space for the growth chambers that are necessary for plant research. These chambers can simulate almost any climatic situation and I’m sure they contribute to this building’s annual \$3 million electrical bill.

Our tour guides were retired Monsanto employees with an excellent knowledge of the facility. They showed us how what appears to be tiny blobs in a plastic container, grow into actual plants in environmentally controlled growth chambers. They stressed that there is constant monitoring and testing to make sure that the desirable traits are truly being transferred and no undesirable traits find their way through.

The second day we visited the Monsanto headquarters. This complex of buildings is used for administration as well as research. It was made clear to us that Monsanto is committed to educating

the public about genetic modification. At this facility the focus is on Crop Analytics which is the study of individual characteristics of mainly seeds. An example of this would be high oil corn. The researchers study this on a single seed basis.

Monsanto people are most enthused about low lineolenic soybeans that do not require hydrogenation. This trait decreases processing and is lower in trans fats making it a good source of healthier oil. Other areas being worked on are drought tolerance, cold tolerance, nitrogen utilization and some feed related traits like high lysine corn. Some technology can take 8 – 10 years from conception to market and could cost from \$50 to \$100 million to develop.

All this information was a little overwhelming for me so the rest and relaxation portion of the tour was appreciated. Monsanto took us on a tour of St Louis that included the Budweiser brewery and the Gateway Arch. We rode to the top-over 600 ft in the air and got a splendid view of the mighty Mississippi. It’s mind boggling to think of the countless tonnes of corn, soys and wheat that barges move down this massive river. Next we took in a hockey game between the Pittsburgh Penguins and St Louis Blues.

These social activities gave us a chance to meet other people on the trip. I met Jim Hutchinson, a retired OPP officer who now works for Monsanto as an

“auditor”. He visits farms and checks if the amount of Roundup Ready seed bought corresponds with the number of acres planted. Jim’s job is one more reminder that record-keeping is more important than ever.

I would like to thank Dan Wright and fellow Monsanto employees - Gary Lannin and Eva Muscat for their kindness and hospitality. It can’t be easy herding a group of farm boys around the big city.

In closing, since returning from this trip I have more questions that I will pose for further thought or discussion if you wish. Will farmers benefit from new technologies such as low lineolenic soys and high lysine corn to the same levels as processors and feed companies? How can farmers be sure that the technology charges we are being asked to pay are fair and reasonable? What charges will be associated with the use of new technologies in the pipeline?

Yours respectfully Stuart Wright
Heartland Regional Chair.



Perth County Soil and Crop Improvement Association

The Perth Soil and Crop Improvement Association hosted their annual meeting in Milverton on January 12, 2006. The meeting was successful with 140 people in attendance. After enjoying a delicious hot meal the attendees were treated to an inspiring presentation by Carl Hiebert. In his slide presentation titled "Gift of Wings" Carl provided a very different perspective on many common scenes. Carl photographs are shot from an ultra light aircraft. The lessons from the photographs are a direct analogy of Carl's philosophy- "how we choose to look at life is critical and our attitude toward what we see makes all the difference." As a further extension to this, Carl adds -"we cannot control what happens only control how we deal with it."



Carl Hiebert – "Gift of Wings"

Carl's own life is living truth to these words. In 1981 Carl suffered permanent paralysis in his legs from an accident. While in hospital Carl realized that his attitude needed to change. After a record rehabilitation period and 5 years of preparation Carl set off from Blackmouth Beach, Nova Scotia with an eighteen member ground crew and himself in an ultra light aircraft. After 58 days with 163 hours of flight time over 5000 miles they arrived in Vancouver for the 1986

World Expo. It sounds daunting, but Carl never had to fly 5000 miles at once, just 120 miles to the next airport. After experiencing setbacks and risks, no one had ever flown an ultra light aircraft through the Rockies Mountains, Carl has many life lessons to share. Carl accepts that risk taking involves fear. However, it is not the fear the risk taker focuses on but the goal and the courage to keep going. During the trip to Vancouver the ultra light was involved in an accident and sustained some damage. Carl's spirits were not dampened for long. He acknowledged that when we take risks to achieve we push ourselves past our comfort zone. Occasionally we will experience setbacks but that is okay. It is the journey not the destination that provides the enjoyment. In his summary statements Carl encouraged his listeners to do 3 things: 1) choose to look at things in a positive way, 2) believe in your dreams and 3) take risks.



James Coneybear – Forage Competition Winner

Forage Master Competition prizes were given out to Ralph DeWitt, Doug Johnston and James Coneybear. Reports were given by Keith Black - OSCIA Provincial Director, Horst Bohner - OMAFRA Specialist, Ruth Knight - Heartland Communication Co-ordinator, David Connery - Agri-corp, and Mary McIntosh - EFP Co-ordinator. The next annual meeting will be held at the Milverton Recreation Complex on Thursday, January 18th, 2007.

Huron County Soil and Crop Improvement Association

Huron County hosted a producer meeting on December 6th, 2005 at Holmesville. The title of the meeting was "Marketing to Improve Your Bottom Line" The attendance included about 50 producers and 20 agribusinesses. The following is a summary of some of the speakers.

Peter Charlton Farm Credit Canada (FCC), London In Huron County land values have leveled off mostly due to commodity prices and the stressed hog and beef industries. The European immigration into Huron has softened and land prices have decreased.

Research of recent sales has determined that soil type and topography make a difference. Good tilled land in Huron County increases land prices 1-2%. Grassed waterways and buffer strips are considered to be added value to the cropland. Land along highway 21 is trading higher due to the lake affect and the warmer climate. Sales along major routes such as highways 21, 86, and 87 command a higher price because of location.

Land prices in areas of Huron County are: south central \$4200 per acre, west \$4500 per acre and McKillop area \$3400 per acre. Prices depend on the enterprise. Peter's bottom line – If you are thinking of relocating get research information on land values.

Heather Moffat - Agricultural Marketing First Heather posed the question to the audience "Does your marketing plan need improvement?" To develop a good marketing plan Heather suggested that we can rely on price probability, seasonal patterns and supply and demand. We should attack the things that hold us back. We need to develop discipline, recognize where our risk lies and create a network of reliable resources. A good marketing plan needs to be written down on paper and then you need to commit to it by placing open orders for your objectives. Farmers find it difficult to follow the easy stuff of marketing because change is required and with change comes fear. Fear that prevents us from seeing and understanding the real risks.

Frank Backx—Hensall District Co-operative

Frank provided a global picture of commodity markets. Corn and soybeans had record yields and large carryouts at the end of 2005. Use of corn for ethanol is putting a big demand on corn supply. It is predicted that 10% of soybeans will be displaced by corn by-products such as distillers grain. The cost of energy is a big factor in growing corn making it less and less profitable. The increased consumption of animal protein has resulted in a world increase in soy meal consumption. The avian flu will dampen recent increases in soybean demand and increase corn exports in China. Wheat acres continue to decline in US which is less of a world competitor against Russia, China and the EU.

The biggest thing harming agriculture is the value of the Canadian dollar. The trend is an upward and there does not appear to be an end in sight. The US dollar is suffering from the \$700 Billion deficit that looms over the US economy. Crude oil and natural gas are affecting fertilizer and fuel prices.

Producer Panel A lively panel discussion was held with producers Bev Hill, Jeff Allan and Stephen Miller with Colin Reesor as the moderator. Stephen Miller's marketing approach is helped by the fact that he built storage 10 years ago. This allows him to move the product 24 hours a day. He doesn't store into the summer and finds May, June and July good times to sell something that he will ship after the fall. Jeff Allen has installed more storage this year as well. Bev Hill admitted that he has access to more information than most people but considers himself a bad marketer. He suggests what is needed is a written marketing plan that is simple and fits with your personality. He provided an example of incremental selling. Corn that was sold 1/3 in Apr, 1/3 in May, and 1/3 in Nov based on 10 year average would net \$3.38 /bu versus selling on the 10 year average in November at \$3.26 or December at \$3.26/bu. He realizes that many farmers have a concern with selling in April or May. He suggested that you can cover yourself by buying a call option. Buy one that expires when prices tend to be higher such as in February. Bev suggests that on an average you can't go past May if you are going to make money storing corn.



Wellington County Soil and Crop Improvement Association

Wellington SCIA hosted their annual meeting on **December 2nd** at Wellington Place in Fergus. A great line-up of speakers provided the members with information and entertainment.

Marketing -Corn and Soybeans Victor Aideyan Farms.com Victor put the audience into the marketing frame of mind by pointing out the reason we are in the business of agriculture is to make profit. The moment we get into agriculture as a business we have to make marketing decisions and these decisions impact our financial well being. The job of farming is not done until the crops or livestock are sold.

To determine the price to sell, use cost of production (COP) to determine target sale price for each crop. Put together a marketing plan and set sales volumes at predetermined target prices as early as during the pre-planting planning period. Set market price flags that will prompt sales and stick to them.

Sellers need to understand the behaviour of the buyers to make marketing/ selling decisions. The historical seasonal variability in corn futures prices from 1975 to 2005 indicate the best prices occur from January to April. The prices go down towards July and experience a short up in September. Through the harvest, prices fall to the lowest prices between October and December. Producers have a general idea of what their ground will do, so book to your insurance level. By early July the best prices will be behind you.

The seasonal variability of soybeans has changed. The 5 year trend has changed from the 15 and 30 year trend because of Brazil's soybean production. There is a premium price in August ahead of harvest then prices go to the lowest in October and November. July and September are a good time for selling soybeans and then the price goes down into the pits.

In conclusion, Victor asked the participants "what do you have to lose?" This may be different from what you have done before, but you can change, innovate and do better. Marketing is something within the control of the producer; we don't have to wait for government to find a solution.

Neil and Marie McGavin of Walton presented a video and commentary of their trip to South Africa. In February 2005 they visited a number of farms and agri-business safari tours. Their lively presentation was flavoured with Neil's famous humour.

Global Positioning System (GPS) Farmer Panel Discussion "Pros and Cons of Different Systems"
Chaired by: Paul Van den Borre, Agra-turf J.D.
Panel members: John Winger on Trimble, Brian Smith on EZ Guide, Greg Kitching on Green Star and Dennis Frey on Cultiva Guidance System and Trimble Light Bar.

The whole concept of GPS is to know location. For people who are performing performance trials or testing field treatments, the GPS allows them to return to the same location. The use of a yield monitor on the combine reduces the need for a weigh wagon and records the results in minutes.

The common applications producers have used the GPS equipment are to map fields to determine accurate acreage, use hand free steering to drive straight and reduce operator fatigue, and create accurate layout for special crops such as ginseng gardens.

A common complaint with all of the systems is the loss of accuracy when the unit is close to a heavy wooded area and the lag when going up and down slopes. Also there can be a GPS drift depending on the position of the satellite but this can be corrected with a correction signal which may be free or pay for service.

Various software packages allow the operators to build a database over time. Information such as yield maps, soil analysis, and nutrient application can be overlapped. For custom applicators the additional software provides an opportunity to keep spray records and equipment usage.

Hands free steering systems were considered great for combining and spraying however the cost can be a stumbling block. For those who may think that GPS may benefit their operation there is 50% cost share funding available from the Environmental Farm Plan program.

Waterloo County Soil and Crop Improvement Association

Heartland Regional Soil and Crop Improvement Association was successful in receiving a grant to complete an on-farm demonstration project on biodiesel. Cribit Seeds of Waterloo will be a co-operator in the project. This is one of six projects that will take place in the next year across Ontario.

The purpose of the projects, sponsored by Natural Resources Canada, is to evaluate the use of a biodiesel blend at a B5 level (5% biodiesel and 95% petrodiesel) in farm equipment. The trials will identify best practices and potential challenges for on-farm handling and storage of biodiesel, equipment maintenance as a result of the use of a biodiesel blend and the benefits or disadvantages. Data related to emissions and equipment performance will be collected and compared to 100% petrodiesel use.

Cribit will be using biodiesel in a number of their tractors and other equipment that are dedicated exclusively to biodiesel blend. The fuel consumption, maintenance and repairs will be documented.

As part of this project Heartland will be organizing a summer educational event that highlights the biodiesel project and other topics of interest. Watch for notices in the newsletter and local papers for updates.

Heartland Regional Soil and Crop Improvement Association is excited to be part of this project and to be chosen to participate in this research.

A Few facts about Biodiesel The following are excerpts taken from OMAFRA Infosheet titled "Biodiesel Use on the Farm".

Biodiesel is made from a variety of bio products such as vegetable oils (soy, canola, etc.), animal fats, and recycled food-based products including restaurant grease. It can be blended at any concentration with petroleum diesel and used in any diesel engine with little or no modification to the engine or fuelling infrastructure.

Biodiesel is considerably less flammable than petroleum diesel. It is problematic using biodiesel in very cold weather so a 5% blend and an additive are rec-

ommended. Biodiesel has a higher cetane rating, better lubricity than petrodiesel and slightly more energy per litre than No. 1 diesel and slightly less energy than No. 2 diesel.

The environmental benefits of biodiesel are many. It is non-toxic and totally biodegradable. Spills will degrade faster than diesel fuel.

Pure biodiesel produces approximately 64 to 92 percent fewer greenhouse gas emissions compared with petroleum diesel, depending on the oil or fat used in its production. A 20 percent blend of biodiesel with petroleum diesel (B20) produces approximately 12 to 18 percent fewer emissions, and a 2 percent blend (B2) produces 1 to 2 percent fewer emissions. This makes biodiesel useful in addressing climate change concerns. Also by utilizing waste products for the production of biodiesel, waste is diverted from landfill sites where they may have produced methane gas, which contributes to climate change.

Biodiesel also offers air quality benefits including lowered hydrocarbon, carbon monoxide, particulate matter emissions. There are conflicting research results regarding the impact of NOx emissions.



Coming Events and Info Sources

APRIL 2006

4 Ontario Farm Animal Council & AGCare
Joint Annual Meeting, Guelph Place; 492 Michener Road http://www.ofac.org/annual_meeting/agm2006.php

4 The Secrets of Soil Life, An Introduction to Soil Microbiology & Your Soil Food Web
Registration 9:30, 10 am - 4 pm, Lions Hall, 40 South Street West, Elmira. Speaker Dr. Elaine Ingham, President, Soil Foodweb Inc. Advance \$100, Student, \$90, Door \$125 www.globalrepair.ca, email: sales@globalrepair.ca

5/6 Quad County Farm Forum in Tillsonburg
www.specialtyfarms.ca/Current_Issue.htm?ID=2892

MAY 2006

JUNE 2006

9-11 Great Canadian Outdoor Expo, Woodstock
<http://www.greatcanadianoutdoorexpo.com>

JULY

5 FarmSmart Expo, Elora Research Centre, organized by OMAFRA, Golden Horseshoe Regional and Heartland Regional SCIA, and University of Guelph

SEPTEMBER

12-14 Outdoor Farm Show Woodstock <http://www.outdoorfarmshow.com>

19-23 International Plowing Match & Rural Expo, Peterborough County <http://www.plowingmatch.org>

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

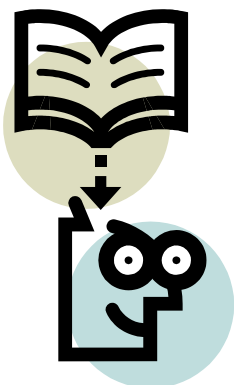
Ontario Pesticide Education Program Ridgetown College, University of Guelph
1-800-652-8573 <http://www.ridgetownc.on.ca/OPEP/GrowerTraining/courses.cfm>

Ontario Grain and Oilseed Program

For further information contact Agricorp - Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Phone: 1-888-247-4999 Fax: 519-826-4118 www.agricorp.com The Ontario Government announced on Monday, March 6, 2006 that it will deliver \$125 million in immediate financial assistance to farmers. In mid-April 2006, farmers will receive immediate assistance under the Ontario Grain and Oilseed Program and the Ontario Edible Horticulture Crop Payment. Agricorp will deliver these programs on behalf of the Government of Ontario. The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs' \$125 million financial assistance strategy will provide: \$80 million for grain and oilseed producers to offset their losses on the 2005 crop. \$35 million for producers of edible horticultural crops to offset past losses. \$10 million for an Ontario livestock and poultry traceability system to assist the province's agri-food industry to strengthen emergency management and market opportunities. Eligibility The Ontario Grain and Oilseed Program will compensate Ontario grain and oilseed producers for losses experienced on their 2005 crop. Producers who planted and harvested eligible grain and oilseed crops in 2005 are eligible for this benefit. Application Deadlines Producers enrolled in the Market Revenue Insurance Program for the 2004 crop year and who: Have reported 2005 eligible crop acreage to Agricorp, including Production Insurance, will automatically receive this benefit. Have not reported 2005 eligible crop acreage to Agricorp, must contact Agricorp at 1-888-247-4999 to provide acreage and yield information by May 1, 2006. Producers not enrolled, including new farmers in 2005, must complete an application form. The application form must be submitted to Agricorp by May 1, 2006.



Question and Answer Corner



Do you have an idea for a field research project? Do you have a challenging question from your operation that you would like to discuss with other members?

This section of the newsletter is included to stimulate discussion and interaction between members.

We are interested in hearing what you have to say. Write a letter or an email, with your ideas and we will post them here for other members to review. Likewise, if you have a response to something you see posted here send us a note.

Send your ideas to Ruth Knight, the newsletter editor at the address listed on the back cover. Thanks for participating.

Heartland SCIA / OMAFRA Research 2005

The following is a summary of some of the 2005 joint Soil and Crop /OMAFRA research projects conducted by Horst Bohner, OMAFRA.

Seed Treatment Effects on Soybean Yield

2006 is the first year that the insecticide seed treatment Cruiser will be available on soybeans in Canada. This product will control soil insects like seedcorn maggot and wireworm as well as early infestations of bean leaf beetle. There has been speculation that soybean aphids could also be controlled. Ridgetown College, OMAFRA, and the SCIA conducted 30 trials over the last two years comparing:

- 1) Untreated check
- 2) Max/Apron (fungicide check)
- 3) Max/Apron + Cruiser
- 4) Max/Apron + Gaucho (low rate)
- 5) Max/Apron + Gaucho (high rate)

In 2004 there was a 3 bu/ac yield gain to the Max/Apron over the untreated check but no additional gain to the use of the insecticides. In 2005 there was no yield gain to the Max/Apron or the insecticides over the untreated check. The difference in the results is probably because the spring of 2004 was wet while the spring of 2005 was dry. Aphids were reduced early in the season but control did not hold long enough to make any significant yield improvements. Insecticide seed treatments work well to control early season insects but do not adequately control soybean aphids. These trials will continue in 2006



Reducing Soybean Seeding Costs Through Lower Seeding Rates and Precision Seeding

This trial compared plant stands and final yields of 7" and 15" width rows on various soil types at 2 planting dates. All trials were no-till. The treatments compared, seeding rates at 150, 175, 200 and 225 thousand seeds per acre. The trial for 2005 included 12 sites with 2 replications. The highest yields resulted from the following three seeding rates:

Seeds/ac	Row width	Plants/ac	Yield bu/ac
225,000	7"	165,301	47.6
200,000	7"	142,959	48.1
200,000	15"	152,362	47.6

The lower yields resulted from the following four seeding rates:

Seeds/ac	Row width	Plants/ac	Yield bu/ac
175,000	7"	127,808	45.9
150,000	7"	101,406	45.1
175,000	15"	135,274	45.6
150,000	15"	110,434	45.4

The key messages are: caution this is one year data, 150,000 plants/ac at harvest provides best yield, 15" rows yield the same as 7" rows, the increased seeds/ft/row provided better emergence, wider rows may provide the advantage of reduced damage from tracking and more air movement to reduce disease pressure.

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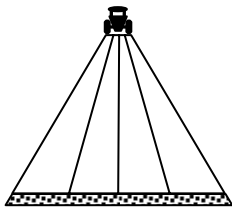
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