

March 2009

NORTHWEST LINK

Thunder Bay ★ Rainy River ★ Kenora Districts

Northwestern Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Associations

Canadian Organic Growers Workshops

Laura Telford, executive director

On June 30, new rules will be unveiled that will provide consumers with the assurance they need that foods carrying the word “organic” are produced and processed according to strict organic standards. Currently, Canada’s organic farmers and processors follow voluntary standards and there is no government oversight to penalize companies making fraudulent organic claims.

In the lead up to June 30, the organic sector has been upgrading the organic standards which are referenced within the new Organic Products Regulations. Changes were required by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and the Standards Council of Canada. A number of other changes were also made to harmonize Canadian standards with those of our major trading partners.

Under the current voluntary system, many Certification Bodies and provinces have maintained their own organic standards. After June 30, all players be on the same page as they adopt the national organic standards.

Because of the large number of recent changes to the organic regime and to the standards, Canadian Organic Growers (COG) has developed a new training program, in association with its industry partners - the Organic Trade Association and the International Organic Inspectors’ Association, to get Certification Bodies operating under the new regime, organic inspectors, processors and farmers up to speed on the new system and rules.

As a result of the new organic rules and a more recognizable logo on organic foods nationwide,

we expect increased demand for organic food and an increase in the number of conventional farmers

considering organic production as an option. For this reason, COG and its Ontario partner, the Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario have also developed new training materials for farmers considering or in transition to organic farming.

If you’re considering organic farming, or just want to get some of your questions answered, join us March 10th for a one day workshop on the transition process. Cost is \$50 + GST and includes lunch and snacks, a free copy of COG’s transition book – *Gaining Ground, Making a Successful Transition to Organic Farming* and a one-year introductory membership in COG (includes our quarterly magazine).

If you’re already farming organically or just want to find out about the new rules covering organic production, join us for a one-day workshop on Understanding the New Organic Regime on March 11th. Cost is \$25 + GST and includes lunch.

Visit www.cog.ca/shop to register.
<http://canadagazette.gc.ca/partI/2008/20090214/html/regle1-e.html>

Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program

The application deadline for this excellent program is quickly approaching. Pick up your application package from Bill Groenheide or Peggy Brekveld and submit it before March 13, 2009 to the Centre for Rural Leadership.

Applications are also available online at:
<http://www.aalp.on.ca/application.aspx> or can be

obtained by contacting Centre Rural Leadership office at 519-826-4204.

Nutrient Management Software Training

How to Prepare a Nutrient Management Strategy and Plan (Using NMAN)

Learn the features included in the latest release of NMAN in this workshop March 24 & 25 in Thunder Bay.

To register (\$95 for producers \$70 per person for additional members of farm or farm family) contact Nutrient Management Branch at OMAFRA 1-866-242-4460.

Pre-registration is required. If there are not sufficient registrations by March 10 the course will be cancelled.

The Farm Line – New Home, New Manager, Improved Service!!

Eastern Ontario – “Congratulations and best wishes for continued success” was definitely the message heard by those attending the official opening of The Farm Line Support Service on January 23rd. In operation since November 2000, the provincial head office was moved to Perth late last year as part of restructuring undertaken by the Board of Directors. Thanks to a \$200,000 grant from the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, the process will result in the strengthening and enhancement of the services being offered to farm and rural families in Ontario.

Officially opening the office in a traditional ribbon cutting ceremony, OMAFRA representative, Gary McTavish, Regional Manager of the Eastern Region, congratulated the Board of Directors for keeping the office in Eastern Ontario. Most head offices for agricultural services are located in Western Ontario.

Scott Reid, MP for Lanark, Frontenac-Lennox and Addington, acknowledging that the difficult times

farmers have been experiencing can lead to safety and health related problems, congratulated The Farm Line on their continued efforts to provide assistance. David Shostal, who represented Randy Hillier, MPP for the same riding, provided an update on the work Randy’s committee: Partners with Rural Ontario, is doing to research the “unintended consequences of government action”.

Also in attendance and offering their congratulations were John Fenik, Mayor of Perth; Aubrey Churchill, Reeve of Drummond North Elmsley; Bob Fletcher, Mayor of Lanark Highlands; along with representatives of the Ontario and Lanark Sheep Producers; National Farmers Union of Ontario and Lanark; Ontario Federation of Agriculture; and the Lanark County Federation of Agriculture.

The Farm Line provides friendly, bilingual peer-to-peer support and referral to qualified professionals when required. “Sometimes it’s a lawyer, or a doctor or counsellor; sometimes a caller just ‘needs someone to talk to’, but there is always an appreciation for the opportunity to speak with some one who understands the problem,” says Shirley Munro who will be managing the new office. Munro joined the Help Line almost three years ago as Research Coordinator and has provided her expertise in most aspects of the administration including telephone volunteer.

The free, anonymous and confidential services are provided by committed volunteers. Board members stressed to politicians The Farm Line faces an ongoing challenge to secure stable funding to cover the operating expenses such as recruitment and training of volunteers, maintaining current resources, the toll-free telephone line, to mention only a few. “This is a health related service. As such, government has a social responsibility to provide funding,” states interim Chair Debra Pretty-Straathof.

If you would like more information about The Farm Line you can call 613-264-8175.

Workshop Series

Farmers Markets Ontario (FMO), in cooperation with *The Centre for Rural Leadership*, is offering the following workshop series in Thunder Bay:

Meet the Media: Getting Their Attention on Your Terms! March 21

Create a Memorable Customer Experience! March 28

Each is a 3 hour workshop with registration of \$20 with a hot meal and workshop materials included. To register or for additional information please contact Farmers Markets Ontario at 1-800-387-3276.

For Rainy River and Kenora District members of Farmers Market Ontario FMO is offering the following assistance:

- Organize car pools of at least four people per car and we will reimburse the car owner at the rate of 40¢ per km, return mileage.
- Free hotel accommodation (two to a room) at Thunder Bay on the **Saturday** night. Hotel location to be determined.
- \$20 per person meal allowance for meals enroute
- \$20 workshop fee **waived**

Call Catherine Clark at FMO today!
Tel: 1-800-387-3276 or email fmo@farmersmarketontario.com and we will handle the rest including the pre-payment of your hotel room!

Moving?

Please let us know your new address before you move so you will not miss a single issue of Northwest Link.

**Send your articles to: Jeffrey Burke, 50 Pokki Rd, RR 1 Kakabeka Falls, ON, P0T 1W0
Phone/fax 807-933-0570
Email: jjburke@lakeheadu.ca**

Upcoming Dates –

4-H Awards Night

March 6, 2009

Stratton Millennium Hall

7:00 p.m. – Dinner

Members and Volunteers FREE – all Family & Friends are welcome!

Please call Kim Jo to confirm attendance (we need to tell the caterers how many to cook for!)

482-2863

Semen Order

March 10, 2009

Call Kim Jo

482-2863

RRCA Director's Meeting

March 18, 2009

Stratton – 7:30 p.m.

Announcement~

Once again I am collecting Names and Numbers for those of you who are interested in taking the Quality Starts Here / Verified Beef Production Workshop

It is a simple 2 hour course. Once you have completed this, you are eligible for the \$5.00 credit per calf once you age verify your calves!

Call Kim Jo if you have any questions or if you would like your name added to the list.

482-2863 or kjherefords@xplornet.com

Each Monday you can tune into a “new and exciting” topic on your computer (I would say dial-up might be difficult – I have satellite and it is just satisfactory) – www.agriwebinar.com They have different speakers each week – I have tuned into a few – it is at 11:00 a.m. our time each Monday and runs for 1 hour. It is a great way to stay at home but still here some new information.

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Rural Agriculture Co-ordinator

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EDITOR'S NOTE: Local information depends on organizations providing information to the editor for publication. If you send it we can publish.

This newsletter is published monthly except for the month of December. Articles should be submitted by the 15th of the month prior to the publishing month. Material in this newsletter is based upon factual information believed to be accurate. Action taken as a result of this information is solely the responsibility of the user. We reserve the right to edit articles.

For Sale

Massey Ferguson 43 double disc seed drill
26 run, 6: spacing, fert. and grass seed boxes c/w hydraulic cylinder and hoses, add-on hitch to pull packer, shedded, excellent condition

Brillion P-10 packer c/w hydraulic cylinder and hoses

White 252 20' tandem disc, 20" blades, notched front, plain rear, spring assist fold-up wings

Harrow bar 40', 12 sect harrows, manual hang-up

Case International 3640 rd. baler
4' x 6' soft core, gathering wheels, exc condition, shedded

Harold Ingebrigtsen, Dryden
Phone: 807-937-5884

Founders Museum and Pioneer Village

The Founders Museum and Pioneer Village has become the location of choice for many agriculturally oriented meetings in and around Thunder Bay. The facility is operated by a volunteer Board of Directors and ongoing maintenance is done by volunteers as well. The museum is always looking for new members and new volunteers.

More information can be obtained about this organization at the link below:
<http://wwwFOUNDERS.ca/>

Rainy River Cattle Protocol Sale

As calving season approaches and the cattle industry is still not back to what it used to be, producers must look towards more viable options to producing and marketing their cattle. At the Stratton Sales Barn we are planning on hosting a protocol sale for calves. The protocol sale will entail:

Min of 3 Weeks Prior to sale

- Castrated
- Dehorned
- Ear Tagged (Rainy River Raised Tags); unless from outside of RR district then tagged with Orange tag
- Dewormed

Also to meet the sale, calves must be

- Age verified
- Spring Vaccination
 - Option 1 – Ultrachoice 8 + Somubac
 - Option 2 - Vision 8 Somnus
 - Option 3 - Covexin Plus + Somubac (for bull calves castrated in fall)
- Fall Vaccination (min 3 weeks prior to sale)
 - Resvac 4 / Somubac
 - Option 1 - Ultrachoice 8
 - Option 2 - CovexinPlus (if bull calves castrated in fall)
- Receipts of Vaccines presented – signed and dated by Veterinarian
- Notification of Participation two weeks prior to sale

Recommendations

- Cows to Vaccinated with

- Bovishield Gold 5 VL5
- Ultrachoice 8

4 Piece tags (RFID, Dangle and two Buttons) are available from Jeff Hyatt at 807-482-3983
RFID Tags should be placed correctly, if they are placed to far up in the ear, they may not read in the RFID reader at the Sales Barn; tags should be placed as shown.

New or Revised Factsheet

The following new or revised products now available from ServiceOntario Publications at www.serviceontario.ca/publications

08-051: Preparing Business Plans, Agdex 811; replaces factsheet 99-011

Wood Ash Available

Thunder Bay Farmers are invited to apply for wood ash to be used as a soil amendment. There is a large stock of ash available. If we don't use it, we'll lose it. Please call Linda Turk 577-4787 or email lindat@tbaytel.net for an application or renewal

Fall Consignment Sale

The Holstein Breeders Club of Thunder Bay is pleased to announce the return of its fall consignment sale. The club will host the sale on Sept. 17th at the farm of Harold and Leann Streutker. All local dairy farmers are encouraged to consign cattle to the sale. Consignments can consist of calves to milking cows. Any questions please contact any member of the sales committee.

Henry Streutker 473-9527
Martin Schep 577-2455
Devin Jaspers 628-2276
Jed Blekkenhorst 935-2318
Harold Streutker 577-8097

It's Time to Renew

This is your last issue!

Those who subscribe directly may renew their subscriptions by sending \$6.00 and up to date postal or email information to:

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Agriculture in the Classroom, Dryden, Ontario

Dryden Dairy Education Program

2008 Report

We are looking back on another year with an assortment of new and repeating activities.

Our involvements in the community and schools are comprised mainly of classroom presentations, loaning of resources and participation with events organized by other local organizations.

Amazingly, we are still receiving inquiries from teachers, about hosting another “Agri-Connections” event, for which we have received the “2007 Awards of Excellence” at the OAAS Annual Convention in Feb. 2008. I was able to attend the convention and present our event to delegates at a seminar during the convention.

We also received a nomination for the Dryden & District Chamber of Commerce “2007 Business of Excellence Award”, in the education category.

During the year, we set up and guided 3 Chick Hatching Projects in area elementary schools, which fit perfectly with the Ontario Natural/Applied Science Curriculum for Grades 1-3.

I was able to implement Dairy Farmers of Ontario’s “Power4Bones” program in two Grade 5 classes. This program is geared for Grade 5 students, is curriculum ready and includes 7 pre-formatted sessions. As a teacher requested, I edited the Power4Bones program to fit the Health Curriculum for Grade 7 and 8 and was able to do all the presentations to the classes.

Other volunteers and I were able to participate in Dryden High School’s Grade 9 “Soil A thon” project. This ongoing class project deals with soil and environmental topics and includes presentations from perspectives of different stakeholders.

We keep an extensive and up to date assortment of written materials, media resources, children’s books and hands-on activities, which are loaned to

educators if it is requested. These resources are mostly used to enhance and compliment a teacher’s compulsory resources or incorporated during our presentations.

Due to the small local agricultural community, we possibly will have to eliminate educational Farm Tours. These tours have been very popular with teachers, parent volunteers and students and were a great tool to showcase and teach about modern farming. We did organize one tour, which had to be cut short due to inclement weather.

Our partnership with the Dryden & District Agricultural Society has proven to be the correct move for logistical reasons, access volunteers and their talents, and to stay informed on local agricultural and social trends, events and issues.

In the past year we have participated with a political information meeting, agricultural commodity meetings and social gatherings, Kenora District 4H Association, City of Dryden Community Garden project, the local Food Link Network, Health Unit and the Dryden & District Agricultural Society’s annual fair.

It is our mission to continuously participate with efforts of agricultural awareness initiatives and to assist teachers to educate students about agriculture and food issues.

It is not easy to determine, if our efforts are making a positive difference in the “big picture” of food production and public understanding / education of agriculture, but for now, it is too valuable to let go!

It is encouraging to know, that several teachers have already inquired about a Chick Hatching project in their classrooms for this spring and other hands-on activities for students. Several resources also have been signed out to teachers already.

We will be participating in the annual “Open Barn” at Egli’s Sheep Farm, on April 11, 2009 and a district gathering of youth in Dryden, which will be organized and hosted in early summer by the Kenora District 4H Association.

Thank you to Peter Brunner, Roger Griffith and family (Robin Hill Farm), Jack and Bryan Rhyner (Green Acres Dairy Farm), Scott Caston, the Dryden & District Agricultural Society and the Rainy River Dairy Producers for their continuous support!

Submitted by:

Christel Kamm, Sec./Treas.

Agriculture in the Classroom, Dryden

Dryden Dairy Education Program

Pre-seeding Nitrate Nitrogen Test can save some dollars!

Dr. Tarlok Singh Sahota CCA

Do all your fields have similar nitrate nitrogen (NO₃-N)? Do you think all your fields will need similar amounts of N application for a particular crop? If you think yes, you are mistaken. After all why do we apply fertilizers? To supplement soil nutrients to a level that is conducive to an economic optimum yield without impacting the environment. It is therefore essential to know what the nutrient content of a field is before deciding upon the rates of nutrients application. Most farmers go for basic soil test package that gives them an estimate of phosphorus (P) and potassium (K) content in the soil. There is a need to test nitrate N as well because by and large it is the form in which crop plants take N from the soil. N content in different fields could vary with the previous crops (legumes/non-legumes), fertilizers/manures applied to previous crops, crop yields and residual N after crops' harvest. At TBARS, Thunder Bay, we have observed that a field with previous crop (oats) applied with recommended rate of N (no manure application) had 8.2 ppm nitrate N (32.8 kg N/ha; ppm x 4 = kg/ha), in 0-30 cm soil, the next spring, whereas, a field with silage corn as a previous crop, applied with liquid manure and recommended amount of N had 26 ppm N (104 kg N/ha) in 0-30 cm soil. Cereals (mean over barley, wheat and oats) response to recommended rate of N (70 kg/ha) in the first field (8.2 ppm nitrate N) was 1,117 kg/ha (= 16 kg grains/kg N), whereas, there was no response to applied N in the second field (26 ppm nitrate N). Both the fields were in the adjoining (similar) plot ranges. Don't you think that in the latter case, at current prices of urea N (\$1.30/kg), we could have saved \$91/ha (= 70 kg x \$1.30/kg)? This, compared to the direct cost of

nitrate N test (\$1.5/ha; assuming 25 acres unit for soil sampling), is a significant amount. If someone grows 100 acres of cereals, there is a potential of saving over \$3,600.

In spring wheat, in a plot range with pre-seeding nitrate N test of 12 ppm (48 kg N/ha), response to 40 kg N/ha was 506 kg grains/ha (= 12.65 kg grains/kg N), and to 80 kg N/ha was 418.2 kg grains/ha, which equals 5.2 kg grains/kg N. This is a breakeven point for N application to spring wheat at \$1.30/kg N and \$260/tonne grains. Under the fluctuating/uncertain grain prices, it would be safer to apply 40 kg N/ha to spring wheat than applying 80 kg N/ha.

Apart from nutrient content in soil, it is also important to know how much nutrients are removed by crop plants so that the nutrients are replenished adequately to maintain soil fertility. See the following table for N removal by cereals per tonne of grains (kg/ha) at TBARS, Thunder Bay.

Spring cereals	Grain	Grain + Straw
Barley	17.8	23.3
Wheat	24.0	33.7
Oats	20.2	35.3

While planning for N application rates, it will be reasonable to assume at least 5 tonnes grain yield/ha for barley. N removal by barley at this yield will be 116.5 kg/ha, whereas only 70 kg N/ha is recommended for barley (in northwestern Ontario). Where from the rest of the N comes? It could come from soil (left over from previous crops, plant residues, dead earth worms/microorganisms, wild life excreta, fertilizers/manures, N held by clay and organic matter, and N in lower soil layers – 30-60 cm and 60-90 cm for which no nitrate test is done,) and air (fixation by legumes/leguminous weeds such as clover, trefoil or even volunteer alfalfa, free living soil bacteria such as azotobacter, and dissolved N in rain?). How much N could be there in deeper soil layers (30-60 cm and 60-90 cm)? In

our research plots (4-5 experiments over two years), nitrate N content in 30-60 cm soil varied from 26% to 43 % (average ~35%; it may be safe to assume 30%) of nitrate N in the top 0-30 cm soil. Nitrate N in 60-90 cm was either 50% of/or same as that in 30-60 cm soil. As the crops grow, they can draw nutrients from deeper soil layers. Based on these assumptions, let's see how much nitrate N could be in the soil in a spring barley field with a pre-seeding nitrate N test of 8.2 ppm:

Soil – 0-30 cm: 32.8 kg/ha (8.2 ppm x4)

Soil – 30-60 cm: 9.8 kg/ha (30% of N in 0-30 cm)

Soil – 60-90 cm: 4.9 kg/ha (50% of N in 30-60 cm)

Fertilizer N: 70.0 kg/ha

Total (Soil + Fertilizer): 117.5 kg/ha. This more or less equals N removal by barley (116.5 kg/ha; see paragraph 4). It may therefore be logical to assume that fields having more than 8 ppm pre-seeding nitrate N would require less than 70 kg fertilizer N/ha. Our experience also shows that if the pre-seeding nitrate N is 25 ppm or more, spring cereals wouldn't respond to N application. In fact going by these calculations, N application to spring barley may not be required even if pre-seeding nitrate N test is 20 ppm. Why waste N and dollars on N then? It is quite probable that silage corn applied with manure and fertilizers and crops such as alfalfa and soybean could have residual nitrate N equal to 25 ppm or more (~2-3 times more than the residual N after cereals, especially those which didn't get a manure application).

Limited time for field operations and seeding in spring is a constraint in taking pre-seeding soil samples. Though ideally, soil samples should be taken before seeding, other options could be explored to overcome time constrains. These could be seeding without application of N or using MAP (11-52-0 at recommended rates of P application) at seeding and taking soil samples after seeding. Cereals take 3-4 weeks after seeding to initiate crown roots (which are close to

soil surface and can absorb top dressed N) and tillering during which time nitrate soil test results could be available to decide if N needs to be applied to spring cereals or not and if needed, how much? The principle/practice can be extended to other crops (and areas based on location specific research) as well, and certified crop advisors or researchers/specialists in your area could be of help.

The bottom line is that pre-seeding nitrate N tests could not only save a lot of dollars, but also minimize potential impact of agricultural practices on environment!

OSCIA WEBSITE

VISIT US AT

www.ontariosoilcrop.org

Thunder Bay Spring Farm Conference

**Tuesday, March 31, 2009 in the evening and
Wednesday, April 1 and Thursday, April 2,
2009**

Some featured speakers on this year's agenda include:

Brian Lang from OMAFRA on Robotic milking and Robotic calf feeding

Len Davies on Succession Planning and Business Planning

Gerald Poechman from CFFO

Dr. Tarlok Sahota, TBARS

Tom Jackson of BMO Nesbitt Burns Inc.

Bill Groenheide and Peggy Brekveld from AALP

Local Producer Panel Discussion on Fertilizer

Thunder Bay Beekeepers

Food Security Research Network on Blueberries, Vegetables and Beef

Mark Carson, Gencor, Herd Reproduction Analysis

and Much More! Exhibits will be on display.
Detailed brochures will be coming out later
in March.
Hope to see you there!
If you have any questions call Jason Reid @935-
3224

Grazing School

March 7, 2009
10am to 3pm at Founders Museum on Hwy 61
Speakers from the Rainy River District include
Amos Brielmann and others
This is for anyone interested in wanting to
maximize their pasture profitability.
Rotational grazing and fencing systems can be
applied to many types of livestock (beef, dairy,
sheep etc.).
Hot beef lunch will be served.
Cost is \$ 5.00/person
Hosted by the Thunder Bay Community Pasture
and Thunder Bay Cattlemen's Association
If you have questions call Marianne @622-7169

Thunder Bay Cattlemen's Board of Directors 2009

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Thunder Bay Community Pasture Annual Meeting

March 26, 2009
at the Stanley Tavern at 8pm
Hope to see you there!
If you have questions call Marianne @622-7169.

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USEFUL CONTACT INFO

CROP RESEARCH STATIONS

Emo Agricultural Research Station:
807-482-2354 (telephone & fax)
Email: kbliss@uoguelph.ca

Thunder Bay Agricultural Research Association
Director of Research and Business
Dr. Tarlok Singh Sahota, CCA
Telephone 807-475-1373 Fax 807-475-1313
TBARS website (www.tbars.net)
Email: tarloksahota@tbaytel.net

NORTHERN ONTARIO REGIONAL OFFICE

Caldwell Township Hall Building
Hwy 64, Box 521, Verner P0H 2M0
Telephone: 1-800-461-6132 Fax: 705-594-9675
Mary Ellen Norry Car, Regional Manager,
North
Email: maryellen.norrycar@ontario.ca

EMO OFFICE

P. O. Box 210, Highway 11, Emo P0W 1E0
Telephone: 1-800-461-6132 Fax: 807-482-2864
Gary Sliworsky, Agricultural Representative
Email: gary.sliworsky@ontario.ca

THUNDER BAY OFFICE

Suite B012, 435 James Street, Thunder Bay, P7E
6S7
Telephone: 1-800-461-6132 Fax: 807-475-1313
Rudy Buitenhuis, Agricultural Representative
Email: rudy.buitenhuis@ontario.ca

NORTHERN ONTARIO SPECIALISTS

Barry Potter, Livestock Specialist, New
Liskeard
Telephone: 1-800-461-6132
Email: Barry.Potter@ontario.ca

Rudy Buitenhuis, Interim Ag Business
Management Specialist,
Telephone: 1-800-461-6132
Email: rudy.buitenhuis@ontario.ca

Visit OMAFRA on the internet at [www.ontario.ca/
omafra](http://www.ontario.ca/omafra)

Growing Your Farm Profits

Planning for Business Success

OSCIA Delivers Business Planning Workshop

Where do you see your farm business in 5, 10 or 20 years? Do you have a plan that will help you reach your business goals? Do you know where to begin?

The Growing Your Farm Profits workshop can help you identify, plan for and reach your business goals. Similar to the Environmental Farm Plan, you will complete a self assessment for your farm business. The workshop will cover the following 8 areas of business management:

- Marketing
- Production
- Financial Management
- Human Resources
- Social Responsibility
- Succession Planning
- Business Structure
- Business Strategy

The workshop facilitator will then help you identify your top priorities, develop an action plan, and provide direction regarding industry resources to aid in implementation. You will not be asked to share personal or financial details with the facilitator or other participants.

Past participants report that the workshops helped them develop realistic action plans for achieving their business goals. Some of the activities they plan to carry out include:

- *“Improve record-keeping to better understand my business.”*
- *“Learn more about direct marketing.”*
- *“Determine if the commodity I’m selling is the most profitable in my area.”*
- *“Meet with an advisor to develop a written succession plan”*

The workshops are available free of charge however space is limited. Register today by contacting the local OSCIA Program Representative:

Richard Trivers at 274 2930, cell: 276 0589, or by visiting www.ontariosoilcrop.org.

Local Workshops: Day 1 - March 19 - 9:30 - 3:30 - Rosslyn
Day 2 - March 20 - 9:30 - 3:30 - Rosslyn
Day 1 - March 25 - 9:30 - 3:30 - Emo Legion
Day 2 - March 27 - 9:30 - 3:30 - Emo Legion

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