

April 2008

NORTHWEST LINK

Thunder Bay * Rainy River * Kenora Districts

Northwestern Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Associations

AgriInvest

AgriInvest accounts help producers protect their margin from small declines. AgriInvest replaces the coverage for margin declines of less than 15%, previously covered by the Canadian Agricultural Income Stabilization (CAIS) program.

Each year, producers will make a deposit into an AgriInvest account, and receive a matching contribution from federal and provincial governments. Producers will have the flexibility to use the funds to cover small margin declines or for risk mitigation and other investments.

How does AgriInvest work?

After completing the application, producers will receive a notice indicating how much they can deposit to their account. Producers can deposit up to 1.5% of their Allowable Net Sales (ANS*) into an AgriInvest account and receive a matching government contribution. For example, a producer with \$100,000 in ANS could deposit up to \$1,500 and federal and provincial governments would make a matching contribution totaling \$1,500.

* ANS is sales of allowable commodities (and Production Insurance payments) minus purchases of allowable commodities in a year.

Why participate in AgriInvest?

Producers have the flexibility to use the funds for risk mitigation and other investments. The program is bankable, as producers will be able to easily predict the government contribution to their account each year.

Who Can Apply

Individuals, partners in a partnership (except in Quebec), co-operatives, corporations, estates, trusts, limited partnerships (except in Quebec), and landlords in a joint venture are eligible to participate. To be eligible, you must have been engaged in the business of farming and reported sales of eligible commodities for tax purposes.

Status Indians farming on reserves in Canada who do not file a tax return are also eligible to participate in AgriInvest.

How to Apply

Producers do not have to provide additional information in order to participate in AgriInvest. For individual producers, the application will be harmonized with the tax form in most provinces. In Quebec and for corporations, the application will be harmonized with the AgriStability application.

Deadlines

September 30, 2008 - Deadline to submit the 2007 AgriInvest application without penalty.

December 31, 2008 - Deadline to submit the 2007 AgriInvest application with penalty. If you miss the September 30, 2008 deadline, you can still submit the form until December 31, 2008. However, the ANS used to calculate your maximum matchable deposit will be reduced by 5% for each month (or each part of the month) that your application was submitted late.

90 days from the date of your Deposit Notice - Deadline to make your 2007 AgriInvest deposit

Program Information - Contact

AgriInvest Administration, P.O. Box 3200 Station Main, Winnipeg, MB R3C 5R7

Telephone Toll free: 1-866-367-8506

Hours of Operation: 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. CST, Monday to Friday

Fax (toll free): 1-877-949-4885

Website: <http://www4.agr.gc.ca/AAFC-AAC/display-afficher.do?id=1200410437197&lang=e>

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.

Award of Excellence!

The Dryden & District Agricultural Society was the proud recipient of the 2007 Award of Excellence in Agriculture and Food Education.

The award was presented at the Ontario Association of Agricultural Societies annual convention, held February 21-23, 2008 in Toronto.

In addition to winning this award, it was requested that the Dryden & District Agricultural Society present this local project to the delegates.

The Dryden & District Agricultural Society in partnership with "Agriculture in the Classroom, Dryden" had hosted an agricultural education event in the spring of 2007, for students in Grades 2 - 4 to celebrate the Agricultural Society's 100th Anniversary.

The event was a tremendous success with over 800 students and educators.

The Dryden & District Agricultural Society and "Agriculture in the Classroom" gratefully remembers each organization and volunteer's initiative to make this event a showcase for modern agriculture and an extraordinary experience.

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Email: lindat@tbaytel.net

Annual Kenora District Soil and Crop Meeting

The Annual Kenora District Soil and Crop meeting to be held this April 12, 2008. The location will be at the Oxdrift Hall 10:00am-3:00pm. We are still in the process of booking speakers and we are accepting suggestions as to whom we might ask. We are having a speaker talk about the Co-Gen operation in Fort Frances, also a presentation on Agriculture in the Classroom, an educational event held in Dryden last May.

Federally Funded Cull Breeding Swine Program

On February 25th, 2008 the Government of Canada announced the Cull Breeding Swine Program to help the industry to restructure by facilitating the reduction of the breeding herd. The \$50 million program is to be delivered through the Canadian Pork Council.

This program has yet to receive Treasury Board authority. It is expected, however, that this will occur shortly such that a funding agreement between the Government of Canada and the

Canadian Pork Council can be completed and program participation details can be announced.

Details will also be available on our web site, www.cpc-ccp.com.

Canadian Pork Council

International Stock Food Co.

Cambridge, Ontario



1-877-473-2474



Erik Johansson, your ISF Sales Agent serving the Thunder Bay area, 807-577-2685 (res)/807-627-5247 (cell)
In the Stratton area, call Bob Leblanc, 807 487-2671

MORE TIME TO APPLY FOR \$600 MILLION AGRINVEST KICKSTART FUNDS

The Government of Canada is committed to ensuring all farmers are aware of the \$600 million AgriInvest Kickstart program and have enough time to apply. The Honourable Gerry Ritz, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board announced today that the deadline for applications has been extended to April 14, 2008.

“This Government is delivering new, simpler, predictable and bankable programs for farmers.” said Minister Ritz. “This extension will ensure farmers have enough time to learn about AgriInvest and the money available to kickstart their accounts.”

To assist producers in the transition to the new suite of business risk management programs, the Government of Canada is providing a one time contribution of \$600 million to kickstart AgriInvest accounts.

The majority of producers do not need to apply to the program and have already received a letter explaining their AgriInvest Kickstart benefit. Producers who have not received a letter need to apply by the April 14 deadline.

For more information or to obtain program forms, producers can call, toll free, 1-866-367-8506 from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. CST, Monday to Friday, or visit the program

Web site at www.agr.gc.ca/agriinvest

Tips from the TIP (Towards Increased Profits) Report

*By John Molenhuis
Business Analysis and Cost of Production Program Lead*

How is your farm doing financially? Comparing your farm's current performance against your past performance and that of other similar operations is an important step in increasing profits. Another way to describe this is internal and external benchmarking. Identifying your areas of strength and areas that require further investigation can help you focus your management time where it will have the greatest benefit.

For the fourth year, the Towards Increased Profits (TIP) report has been sent to over 11,000 Canadian Agriculture Income Stabilization (CAIS) participants. Using the CAIS information, the report presents a financial analysis that compares your farm's performance to its previous five year average and to other similar farms in your sector. If your farm is significantly different than the sector average in any one expense, TIP flags it and this may be something you want to investigate further.

TIP recipients are strongly encouraged to take advantage of the Canadian Farm Business Advisory Service (CFBAS) for a more complete accrual based farm financial analysis. A qualified private-sector farm business advisor will review your farm records and work with you to develop a financial plan to meet your business goals. Reach them toll free at 1-866-452-5558 or visit the website at www.agr.gc.ca/renewal for more information.

If you were in CAIS for the 2006 program year and did not receive a TIP report you can request yours by calling the Agricultural Information Contact Centre at 1-877-424-1300.

Giving farmers a choice

Providing farmers and their spouses opportunities to access skills assessment and training to improve their farm profitability and net family income is the primary goal of the Canadian Agricultural Skills Service (CASS). This valuable program is being extended and new applications are strongly encouraged.

CASS provides qualified applicants with no-cost access to a professional advisor who will meet with you and focus on understanding your existing skills, your plans and goals, and provide you with a clear path on how to achieve them.

Financial benefits range from \$8,000 - \$16,000 for qualified participants, depending on average net family income and other eligibility requirements. Established producers, beginning farmers and farm spouses with a net family income of less than \$45,000 a year can qualify for CASS benefits.

The CASS program is here to assist you in acquiring the skills required to meet your goals. If eligible, CASS funding is available to pay for specialised training and associated expenses. The CASS Skills

Assessment Advisor can help you find the most appropriate training for individual needs. CASS participants have taken training in a wide range of areas, including, but not limited to:

- A/Z training
- Commodity marketing
- Book keeping and accounting
- Hospitality training
- Farm diversification (eg. organic agriculture, working with new commodities)
- Goal-setting and business planning

CASS was developed to give farm families a choice about their future. Participants have used the program to increase their on-farm skills in areas such as business management, marketing, human resources management, and developing new production opportunities. Farmers and their spouses can also use the program to develop off-farm and supplemental income.

Now is the ideal time to apply to the CASS program. Contact the CON*NECT CASS Centre right away to start the application process. Take advantage of the winter months to participate in available training to help you increase your net farm family income. Look ahead and work with a Skills Advisor to plan your training activities for the fall **now**, before courses fill up.

For more information about CASS eligibility, the application process, or any other questions, please contact the CON*NECT CASS Centre toll-free at 1-877-830-0200 or check out the CASS website at www.ontario.ca/cass.



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Monsanto Scholarship

Monsanto Canada has released details of its 2008 Opportunity Scholarship program for grade 12 graduating students from farm families who plan to pursue post-secondary education in agriculture or forestry.

2008 Monsanto Canada Opportunity Scholarships are available to eligible students entering their first year of post-secondary education in agricultural sciences or forestry at a recognized Canadian educational institution. In 2008, Monsanto will award approximately 50 to 60 deserving students with a \$1,500 scholarship to help pay for their studies. Entering its 17th year, the Monsanto Canada Opportunity Scholarship Program has awarded almost \$1 million to thousands of deserving students since the program's inception in 1991.

"Our scholarship program continues to grow and it is certainly one of the most rewarding programs we provide through our corporate giving program," said Trish Jordan, public affairs director with Monsanto Canada. "Every year we are impressed by the achievements and commitment of the students who apply and it is terrific to see the very best and brightest wanting to pursue careers in agriculture or forestry."

Monsanto Canada Opportunity Scholarships are available to students who meet the following criteria:

- Students must come from a family farm and/or forestry background with confirmed plans to enroll in their first year of post-secondary education in an agricultural sciences or forestry program;
- Students must have demonstrated academic excellence, leadership capabilities, and a keen interest and involvement in their rural community;
- Students must submit a completed application form, which includes an essay that outlines what area of agriculture or forestry they would like to work in and why;
- All completed application forms must be post-marked no later than May 16, 2008.

Scholarship application forms and posters in both French and English were distributed to high schools, 4-H Clubs, provincial and federal agriculture offices, farm retail outlets and seed companies.

Application forms are also available from Monsanto's CustomCare® line at 1-800-667-4944 or they can be accessed online at www.monsanto.ca.

Tax Deferral Program

(Prescribed Drought Region)

Under this program, owners of breeding livestock in designated areas who are forced to sell all or part of their breeding herd due to drought conditions, are eligible for a one-year tax deferral on income from those sales.

The deferral allows eligible farmers to defer income tax on the sale of breeding livestock for one year to replenish breeding stock in the following year. In the case of consecutive years of drought designation, producers may defer sales income to the first year in which the area is no longer designated. Eligible farmers will be able to request this deferral when filing their income tax returns.

Grower Pesticide Safety Course

Thunder Bay

April 2008

Please call 1-800-652-8573 to register.

Progressive Farm Safety Day.

Get ready for another Safety Day Awareness. This day is for children ages 6-14 and will be held at "The Dell" in Murillo, on Saturday, April 26, 2008. The guest speaker is a volunteer from Farmers with Disabilities from Manitoba. And the small group sessions will include Tractor Rollover, Grain Safety, Hidden Hazard Awareness, Farm Equipment Safety, Lawnmower Safety, and First Aid Kits.

Pre-registration cost will be \$5.00 per child with a family rate of \$15.00 if more than 3 children register. Register on April 20 to 26, 2008 the cost will be \$15.00 per child. So register early, space is limited Pick up a registration form at the Spring farm Conference, T-Bay Feeds, or T-Bay co-op and return them with payment to Wilma Mol, address is on brochure.

Please call Wilma Mol with any questions. 473 5105.

Moving?

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

The Growing Capacity Program

Deadline for Application is April 2008.

Program details are for new position required by an industry partnership to address Industry. Overall the point of the program is to provide funding for SALARY (yes SALARY) and other HR costs for a led solutions to Emerging Issues. Funding available is up to \$100,000 per year for four years. \$ 4 Million has been allotted to this program.

Complete details are in the attachment but here are some highlights

GCI Objectives and Principles

GCI funding is intended to help Ontario's agricultural and agri-food industry address emerging issues by growing their human resource capacity. Proposals developed by organizations to be funded under GCI should contribute to the following objectives:

- ☞ Foster increased long-term growth, employment and competitiveness of Canada's agriculture and agri-food industry;
- ☞ Promote self-reliance of the agricultural and agri-food sectors; and,
- ☞ Foster greater co-operation, strategic alliances and partnerships among individual companies, segments of the industry and rural stakeholders.

Eligibility Criteria

The following are the criteria that need to be met to qualify for GCI funds:

- ☞ Funding will be granted for new positions that address CanAdvance Pillar 1 objectives of "Industry-led Solutions To Emerging Issues."
- ☞ Grant funding is to be used for a limited period to help the industry and stakeholders adapt to changes and to capture new opportunities.
- ☞ Positions must be new and not part of existing operations. Funding will not be provided for on-going activities such as accounting, administration, reception, management, etc.

✂ Positions must avoid causing negative impact or competitive advantages to existing Ontario production, processing and marketing activities.

✂ Positions must not duplicate, overlap or replace federal and provincial programs.

✂ Funding will not be used as direct income support to producers or processors, or to support ongoing activities.

✂ Funds should contribute to initiatives which will be economically viable and self-sufficient. An emphasis will be on collaborative ventures.

Funding Assistance

✂ All funding will be in the form of grants.

✂ Maximum funding of \$100,000 per annum (unless extraordinary circumstances are demonstrated). Higher levels of funding may be provided for projects which involve partnerships of two or more organizations.

✂ Projects must be completed within 4 years.

✂ Preference will be given to projects which demonstrate fair cost sharing.

✂ Direct or in-kind financial support signifies a vested interest and commitment to the project by the applicant and project partners.

✂ Long-term self sufficiency should be demonstrated as preference will be given to projects that will be economically viable and self-sustaining after the funding period.

✂ Benefits to the agriculture and agri-food industry and to the public must exceed costs.

Eligible costs for GCI funds are limited to the following:

✂ Salaries & Benefits (supporting documentation or quotes required)

✂ Travel within Provincial Guidelines

(http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pubs_pol/hrpubs/TBM_113/b_e.asp)

✂ Technology Transfer

✂ Incremental costs of setting up an office for the new HR position:

✂ Office supplies

✂ Office furniture, phones

✂ Computer*/printer*



Demystifying soils holds key to farming viability, ecosystem health

Soil is a unique combination of the simple and complex - plain as dirt to the eye, yet in reality a sophisticated blend of elements vital to ecosystem health. Today, understanding this true nature of soils and the long-term implications of soil management practices is more critical than ever, say soil conservationists.

This is necessary to both keep soils productive for industries such as farming and to address broad environmental issues such as greenhouse gas emissions.

Amiro and fellow soil conservationist Peter Gamache discuss these effects and the importance of long-term research to manage them, in a new feature story available on the Soil Conservation Council of Canada (SCCC) Website at www.soilcc.ca.

In agriculture, getting producers on side with the concept of long-term thinking is critical, says Gamache, a team leader with Alberta Reduced Tillage Linkages, a program that works with Alberta farmers to increase the adoption of sustainable production systems. There are many agricultural producers who want to conserve soils, says Gamache. But in order to do that, they also need to survive economically.

Low tillage benefits are a good example that long-term thinking is key to understanding the full value of conservation practices, says Gamache. "From our experience, most farmers who switch to minimum tillage practices do see some changes in their soils in the first three, four, five years. But it's really in the seven-to-ten year range where the major benefits kick in – you see a much healthier, much more productive and sustainable soil base."

The latest thinking in soil science is pushing for more studies of soils and related systems on a macro-level basis, to capture more of the true nature of soils and their broad impact.

For the full story, "Blazing a trail for a new soils mindset," visit the SCCC Web site at www.soilcc.ca. SCCC is the face and voice of soil conservation in Canada. A national, non-governmental, independent organization, it was formed in 1987 to provide a non-partisan public forum at the national level for soil conservation.

Using a grassroots approach combined with the scientific, technical and practical experience of its members, it works with government and private industry, individuals and non-government organizations to address soil degradation and facilitate exchange of information across Canada.



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Contact: Wendy Cooke

The 2008 RMP Handbook is available on the Agricorp website –
pdf version go to <http://www.agricorp.com/en-ca/programs/rmp/rmp-handbook.asp>
online version go to <http://www.agricorp.com/en-ca/programs/rmp/>

Eat Local Campaign for the 2008 growing season

The Eat Local Food movement is increasing in local areas around the globe. Buying locally strengthens regional economies, supports family farms, provides delicious, "fresh-from-the-field" foods for consumers, preserves the local landscape, and fosters a sense of community. But a local food system consists of many elements including different farms, producers, and food consumers. In order to support a viable and sustainable local food system, an Eat Local Brochure is being produced for the Thunder Bay area.

If you are a food producer and would like to be a part of this campaign with a cost of \$25, register at http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=sJx215p5D0Go5RS9aG3Dyg_3d_3d

Upcoming Dates

April 1, 2008
First Day of EARS

April 10, 2008
Semen Order
Call Kim Jo 482-2863

April 14, 2008
7:30 p.m.
4-H Leader's Meeting – Barwick Hall

April 16, 2008
7:30 p.m.
RRCA Director's Meeting

April 26, 2008
Spring Cattle Sale (Regular + Bull Sale)
Call Clayton Teeple 487-1465 for any information!

Upcoming Sale Dates

April 26, 2008
Spring Cattle Sale
Stratton Sales Barn

September 6, 2008
Cattle Sale
Stratton Sales Barn

October 4, 2008
Cattle Sale
Stratton Sales Barn

October 25, 2008
Cattle Sale (Featuring a Cow Sale)
Stratton Sales Barn

Please call Clayton Teeple for any information. We are looking forward to our upcoming Sale Dates. We have nearly completed over \$300 000 in barn renovations and we will be one of the few Sales Barns with RFID reader equipment. This should improve our markets – currently all age verified cattle are showing slightly improved prices!

Crop Diagnostic School

For the information on the crop diagnostic school in Carmen MB.
<http://www.cropdiagnostic.ca/>

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Recent Winnipeg Cattle Prices

Volume of cattle sold has been increasing on Friday sales but remaining low on Tuesday sales. Prices were fairly steady to the previous month. Here are the price ranges for steers for the past month at Winnipeg Livestock Sales to March 20.

Over 1000 lbs.	\$	NA	
900 – 1000 lbs.	\$	70.00 -	81.75
800 – 900 lbs.	\$	75.00 –	85.25
700 – 800 lbs.	\$	80.00 –	93.50
600 – 700 lbs.	\$	85.00 –	104.00
500 – 600 lbs.	\$	90.00 –	108.00
400 – 500 lbs.	\$	95.00 -	110.00
under 400 lbs.	\$	95.00 -	109.00

Slaughter cow and bull prices were fairly steady to last month. Here are the price ranges for cows and bulls to March 20.

Choice Strs. & Hfrs.	\$	76.00 –	80.00
Select Strs. & Hfrs.	\$	NA	
Cows Dry Fed	\$	39.00 –	51.50
Good Fleshed	\$	35.00 –	44.50
Lean	\$	20.00 –	40.00
Good Bulls	\$	39.00 –	62.00



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TBARS 2007 Research Results

Presentation – Main Points


Dr. Tarlok Singh Sahota CCA

- Weather: Rainfall (May-September) during 2007 was a little (13mm) lesser than in 2006, but a lot lesser (126cm) than in 2005. In 2007, May was relatively cooler and except June all months were dry. Mean monthly maximum or minimum temperatures during 2007 were more or less similar to those during the previous two years. CHUs in 2007 were higher by 111 units than 2006 and by 41 units than 2005.
- Spring wheat: *Megantic* (BS00-708 till 2006) lagged behind *Sable*, *Quantum* and *Norwell* in two years (2006 & 2007) average grain yield.
- Feed vs. Malting barley: *Chapais*, *AC Klinck* and *Brucefield* had similar but higher grain yield (mean 2005-2007) than *Legacy* and *Conlon*. *AC Klinck* recorded the highest straw/biomass yield. If the seed was costly, reducing seed rate by 25% maybe advisable, otherwise go for normal seeding rate.
- Spring oats: *AC Rigodon* had consistently high grain yield for the last 5 years!
- Amongst the spring cereals, oats (*AC Rigodon*) equaled wheat (*Sable*) in grain yield, but lagged behind wheat in straw/biomass yield (mean 2005-2007); barley (*Chapais*) had the lowest grain/straw yield. Cereal yields and grain protein contents were higher with liquid dairy manure + fertilizers without deducting contribution of N, P & K by the manure from the fertilizers. Deduction of NPK contribution by manure didn't reduce yields as compared to deducting only N contribution from the manure. This means that it was primarily deduction of N that was making the difference in yields. *The practice of applying both manure and N fertilizers could therefore be encouraged. It would be economical at the prevailing grain prices. In fact the protein premium alone will meet the cost of N.*
- Application of Zn@14kg/ha appeared to improve spring wheat grain yield (mean 2005-2007), though the impact wasn't significant probably because of low yields.
- Spring wheat grain yield or total post harvest N with urea, were no different than that with ESN. However, nitrate N was higher with urea and ammoniacal N was higher with ESN (Environmentally Smart Nitrogen or polymer coated urea). There was a lack of response to N application @40-120kg/ha in wheat.
- Timothy yields with application of urea or ESN were similar. However, N/Protein content, which improved with increasing rates of N application from 35-105kg/ha, was higher with ESN than that with urea. Residue N was also higher with ESN or ESN + urea blends than that with urea.
- *Seeding winter wheat on August 25 or September 5 resulted in higher grain yields than earlier or later seedings.*
- Split application of N in fall and spring, in different proportions, or application of entire N in fall or spring had no significant effect on grain yield or protein content in winter wheat (mean 2006 & 2007). Fall applied ESN had an edge in winter wheat grain yield over fall or spring applied urea at the same rate (110kgN/ha).
- Varying soybean populations (150,000-300,000/acre in Gaillard and 120,000-360,000 in 90A01) didn't affect the soybean yield significantly. On an average, Gaillard and 90A01 had similar yields. In good rainfall year, such as 2005, increasing soybean population from 150,000 to 300,000 had increased grain yield.
- Partial (21%) substitution of urea N with ammonium sulphate (AS) or ESN didn't affect silage corn yield. However, forage quality with urea + AS (79:21 on N basis) seemed to be better than that with urea alone or with urea + ESN. Urea + AS left the top 30cm soil richer in nitrogen and sulphur at the end of the season.
- On equal N basis, silage corn yields with digested and undigested liquid dairy manure were similar, but higher than that with fertilizer (urea) N.
- *NK711MF*, *8925MF*, *Macon* and *Guardspan* are some of the better yielding alfalfa varieties. However, the latter two had greater yield stability between/over the years (2005-2007).
- Combined application of ammonium sulphate @30kgN/ha and boron @1.125 or 2.25kg/ha

increased alfalfa yield by ~1t/ha/yr, protein yield by ~300-400kg/ha/yr and net returns by \$560-800/ha/yr i.e. a return of \$8.2-10.2/dollar/year invested in N/S & B fertilizers (mean over 2005-2007). *In persistence and maximum yield trial (2005-'07) too, S and B had major impact on alfalfa yield!*

- In another experiment (2005-2007), alfalfa yield increased with increasing rates of sulphur application from 10-30kgS/ha, but with potassium@35-105kgK₂O/ha, alfalfa yield exhibited a diminishing returns after 70kgK₂O/ha.
- *Galega* (a forage legume from Scandinavian countries) yield was only ~40% of that from alfalfa. However, feed quality of *Galega* seemed to be a lot better than that of alfalfa. In pure stands, orchard grass and timothy yields were only 67% and 75% of alfalfa yield, respectively. Mixed stand of orchard grass and alfalfa gave higher yield than alfalfa alone or its mixed stand with timothy.
- *Second application of wood ash, but not lime, after two years, further improved alfalfa yield. Phosphate, potassium and micronutrients availability was more with wood ash than that with lime!*
- Comparison of wood ash and solid dairy manure revealed that wood ash had an edge over manure in alfalfa yield. Wood ash increased soil pH, P, Ca, Zn, Mn & B more than manure, whereas, the reverse was true for available K & Mg!
- Nitrogen and potassium appeared to have higher impact on alfalfa yield than phosphorus and manganese (2005-2007). The nutrients effect was better pronounced in the first harvest year than during later years. *Nitrogen alone or with phosphorus and potassium improved protein content in both the cuts!* Fertilizers increased organic matter and availability of P and K in the soil, but not of secondary and micronutrients.

Please note; where not mentioned in the text, N = nitrogen, P = phosphorus, K = potassium, Ca = calcium, Mg = magnesium, S = sulphur, Zn = zinc, Mn = manganese and B = boron.



Alta Genetics Inc.

Willem Vellinga
Alta Dairy Representative

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Ordering OMAFRA Publications

Beginning March 3, ServiceOntario will be taking over the distribution of all OMAFRA publications. This will include factsheets, paid publications Best Management Practices Books and soil maps.

The change is a result of an OPS-wide initiative to centralize the delivery of all government publications. Stakeholders will be able to call one number to order any government publications – they do not need to contact each separate ministry.

Clients can order publications through the ServiceOntario Publications website at www.ServiceOntario.ca/publications. They can also contact ServiceOntario Publications by phone at:

- 1-800-668-9938 or 1-416-326-5300
- Fax (613) 545-4223

TIME TO SEND MONEY!

If you are an individual subscriber to Northwest Link, it's time to renew. Send \$5 to Linda Turk, RR#1 Kakabeka, Ontario, P0T 1W0. Cheques should be made payable to "Northwest Link". If your address has changed this would be the time to let us know

2008 Ontario Forage Masters Program

Plans for the 2008 Ontario Forage Masters Program are well under way, with guidelines distributed to local associations in February.

The sponsors - Pickseed Canada and Agri-Food Laboratories - are again offering valuable prizes to the top winners from each local association.

For a listing of prizes, the guidelines, and how to enter, you are encouraged to contact your local association president or secretaries, who have recently received complete details.

The guidelines will also be posted on the OSCIA website in the near future.

The deadline for local associations to submit entries to the provincial office is April 18, so don't delay. Contact your local association secretary today.

OSCIA News

Spring Farm Conference TBDSCIA

April 2, Kakabeka Legion, 10am-3pm

Wilma Mol – Reports on Thunder Bay projects with Environmentally safe nitrogen and micro essential fertilizer

Ray Dowbenko – The benefits of using ESN
Al Scholz – AgVision – Emerging Trends
- Building Farm Relationships

Dan Froehlich – Precision Agriculture:
Crop Development and Production

7:30 p.m. Evening Program

Al Scholz – Farm Business Relationships

Christina Mol – Circumpolar Conference 2007

Matt Baughman – Experience with
Community - Supported Agriculture

April 3, Kakabeka Legion, 10am-3pm

Darcy Hunter – Tractor Tires Traction vs. Compaction

Brian Hall – Canola 101

Dan Froehlich – Precision Agriculture

Geri Kamenz – President, OFA

Dr. Tarlok Singh Sahota – Band Aid solutions
for winter-killed Alfalfa fields

Brian Hall – Short Season Soybeans

USEFUL CONTACT INFO

CROP RESEARCH STATIONS

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

Thunder Bay Agricultural Research Association
807-475-8404 (telephone & fax)
Email: tbars1@tbaytel.net

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Cover Crops' Ability to Carry N to Subsequent Field Crop Results

This project has been funded by the Adaptation Council of Canada (Cord IV Fund) and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. OSCIA is cooperating with the University of Guelph and OMAFRA to address the possibility that where manure is applied to Ontario fields in the summer or early fall, cover crops such as oats could sequester Nitrogen and relay it into the corn crop the following year.

Results summarized by Greg Stewart, OMAFRA, show that while some nitrogen sequestering occurs in the fall, August-seeded cover crops did not appear to a) increase available soil nitrate the following June or b) improve corn yields in situations where the crops were relying on manure as the only N source, when compared to a no-cover-crop situation. Cover crops did not appear to have any significant yield enhancement to the subsequent corn crop. This observation is drawn from a fairly wide range of growing conditions and fertility regimes in 2007.

This project compared manure application on 10 farm cooperator fields across Ontario. Results indicate that the average nitrogen credit for these manure applications was 41 lbs/ac. At a nitrogen price of 0.52/lb, the value of that manure credit would be a savings in nitrogen fertilizer costs of \$21.32/ac. Even in the absence of cover crops induced Nitrogen savings, producers should be attentive in taking manure credits into account in order to improve profitability and reduce over application of nitrogen fertilizer.

There may be longer-term benefits to having cover crops in rotations. Benefits may include: soil organic matter additions, soil structure improvements and weed suppression in the post-harvest period. These other potential benefits could not be measured in short-term duration of this project (one cropping sequence).

Payback From Good Soil Management

by Adam Hayes, Soil Management Specialist, Field Crops, MAFRA, Ridgetown

Do you know the benefits or payback from managing your oil well? It is often difficult to compare the benefits of your food soil management of a field to a neighbouring property with poorer soil management. There can be a lot of variables between the two fields and yield comparisons may not always be reliable.

Reduced Impact From Adverse Weather

The goal of good soil management is to develop a healthy soil. Good soil quality will help "even out" the seasons. This means that adverse weather or other crop stresses will not have as great an impact on yield as on soils with poor soil quality.

Organic Matter

A big part of what makes a soil healthy is the amount of organic matter. Organic matter plays a role in soil structure, nutrient cycling and water holding capacity. Research has found that as soil organic matter level increases from one to four percent, there is a significant increase in biological activity in the soil, and an even greater improvement in soil structure. That additional organic matter will also cut the soil erosion potential by about one-third. It is hard to put an actual dollar figure on these, but they do contribute to increased yields.

Improved Nutrient Recycling

Research shows that on a degraded sandy loam soil, a 0.5% increase in the soil organic matter will result in a 15% increase in nutrient holding ability. Increases in organic matter will also increase the availability of many essential micronutrients. As the cost of fertilizer continues to climb, holding on to nutrients can reduce the amount of fertilizer applied, saving input costs. Higher soil organic matter levels can also increase the amount of available nitrogen. A good example of this is the reduction of nitrogen rates for corn on well managed soils. Some growers are able to reduce their nitrogen rate to 100 lbs/ac or less. With a crop removal of 240 lbs/ac for a 150 bu/ac crop, the soil (largely from the organic matter) is providing 140 lbs N/ac or more for the crop. With increasing nitrogen prices, that can be a significant payback.

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HARRY STEINER
Owner

Water Holding Capacity

Research also shows that on a sandy loam soil, a 0.5% increase in organic matter will provide a 12% increase in the water holding capacity of the soil.

This means that a crop would go a week longer before it would suffer moisture stress. For those irrigating crops, it would add a day or two before irrigation would be required. This can translate into real dollars in yield or fuel savings for those using irrigation.

Water Infiltration & Pore Space

A good quality healthy soil will have improved water infiltration and more pores for air exchange. This is the result of good soil structure and a wealth of soil life, including the activity of the large earthworms. Good pore space can lead to improved root growth. Improved infiltration can make the soil fit to plant earlier in the spring. An abundance of soil life can assist in root and plant health by keeping diseases and pests in check.

Yield, Yield, Yield

The final good news story is that good soil management can pay off directly in increased yield. Studies have shown that soils that have adequate organic matter and fertility levels will yield 10% more than soils with low organic matter and adequate fertility. The yield benefit was even higher if the low organic matter levels made the soils more prone to moisture stress or reduced emergence due to crusting. The payback from good soil management due to increased yields, earlier planting, potential improvements in nutrient use and better drainage can be significant.

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Reader Survey

1. How much of the Northwest Link do you read?
 Some A Little Most All of it
2. How would you rate the format of the Northwest Link? (e.g., ease of reading, finding information)
 Poor Fair Okay Good Excellent
3. In general, how would you rate the length of the Northwest Link?
 Poor Fair Okay Good Excellent
4. Would you prefer to receive the Northwest Link by mail or electronically?
 Mail Electronic (please provide email information below)
5. Rate the amount of Soil and Crop information provided in the Northwest Link:
 Poor Fair Okay Good Excellent
6. Rate the amount of Local information provided in the Northwest Link
 Poor Fair Okay Good Excellent
7. How often have you visited the OMAFRA website as a result of information in a bulletin?
 Rarely Sometimes Often
8. How often have you ordered OMAFRA resources or signed up for a course as a result of information in a bulletin?
 Rarely Sometimes Often
9. How often do you share information from the Northwest Link at meetings with organizations?
 Rarely Sometimes Often
10. Do you share your copy of the Northwest Link with others?
 Rarely Sometimes Often
11. If you do forward the Northwest Link to others, estimate the number of people on a monthly basis.

12. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements concerning the Northwest Link: 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree
Timely 1 2 3 4 5
Provides useful information 1 2 3 4 5
Influences on farm decisions 1 2 3 4 5
I get what I need 1 2 3 4 5
13. Overall, how satisfied are you with the Northwest Link?
 Poor Fair Okay Good Excellent

Draw Entry

Name: _____

E-Mail Address: (for electronic mailing of Northwest Link only)

Return to: Linda Turk, RR1, Kakabeka Falls, On. P0T 1W0 or at your local Spring Farm Conference.
DEADLINE FOR SURVEY RETURN: APRIL 15.

