



# OSCIA News...

March 2005

A NEWSLETTER TO UPDATE OSCIA MEMBERS,  
PRESIDENTS, SECRETARIES, TREASURERS, DIRECTORS,  
AND OMAF CROP TECHNOLOGY CONTACTS —

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## ONTARIO FORAGE MASTERS

**ENTRY DEADLINE - APRIL 22**

**CONTACT YOUR LOCAL**

**ASSOCIATION TO PARTICIPATE**

## Message from the President

I am looking forward to my term as President of OSCIA. It is a wonderful opportunity as well as a great responsibility for me. I will do my best to fulfill the duties and responsibilities of the position. I want to thank the counties of Lanark, Renfrew and Ottawa Carleton for electing me as their Director, and the Provincial Directors for their confidence in me.



*Kevin Ferguson*

For those of you who do not know me, our farm is located in Carleton, and consists of 550 acres and an additional 350 rented acres. We grow corn, soybeans and spring wheat on a one-year rotation for each crop. All of our crops are no till. My wife Ethel not only helps with the farm but also works full time with the Canadian Space Agency. We have two grown children; Sarah, who is currently enrolled in the animal science program at the University of Guelph and, having an accounting background, helps with the farm bookkeeping; and Andrew, who works full time as a mechanical technologist with GasTOPS in Ottawa, and participates in all farm activities during his spare time.

For those of you who were not at the 2005 OSCIA Annual Meeting, I would like to share a few of the comments that I made concerning OSCIA - the best-kept secret in Ontario! OSCIA must be a best-kept secret, because we have only 4,000 members. Corn producers and soybean growers each have over 20,000 members. The general farm organizations, the OFA, Christian Farmers, and National Farmers Union combined have approximately 49,000 members. Why does OSCIA have only 4,000? What do we have at OSCIA that we want to tell? We are a grassroots organization. We administer programs for and in partnership with OMAF, AAFC, OFA, SCCC and many others, e.g., EFP. We develop and administer our own ideas, such as ICAT.

I think we are best known for conducting on-farm plot trials, e.g., nitrogen rate comparisons in corn to determine the most efficient application for crop benefit, financial benefit and environmental benefits. We have a great network across the province: eight provincial office

staff; nineteen provincial directors; eleven regions, each with a communications coordinator and field representative who deliver EFP workshops. Because of this structure, we can – and have been able to – deliver information quickly and effectively through workshops to the farm community at large and also to targeted groups. We are a well-respected organization in Ontario because of this.

What are the challenges to voluntary membership? Farm numbers are declining. Farmers are busier than ever, and much stress exists on family farms. In the area that I represent, it seems that each year I come across someone who does not know about OSCIA.

Recently, our membership has requested that we be less involved in politics and more involved in plot work on our farms. I believe we have been able to do some of this in 2004, and it is my desire to do more in 2005. I agree we need to do more of what we do well. If we don't, we will be left in the dust of others who do. We have a great success story to tell, let's tell it! In sharing our story, we will spread the word with the hope and expectation to reap new members. ♦

### ***NMFAP: Pay Attention to the Correct Dates!***

The province's Nutrient Management Financial Assistance Program (NMFAP) offers attractive cost-share opportunities to existing large livestock farms (i.e. 300 Nutrient Units or more) who must be in compliance with the Nutrient Management Act by December 31, 2005. Arrangements have been made to combine financial assistance from the federal government, through the environment programs of the Agriculture Policy Framework, so that 75 per cent of a farmer's total eligible costs of implementing a project could be covered. Project Eligibility Guidelines for NMFAP and the application form can be obtained from the OSCIA Guelph office, local Program Representatives, or downloaded from the OSCIA web site at [www.ontariosoilcrop.org](http://www.ontariosoilcrop.org).

Eligible producers for the NMFAP must pay strict attention to the application process and critical dates:

#### **APPLICATION PROCESS AND CRITICAL DATES**

##### **1. Complete a Nutrient Management Strategy**

To be eligible for NMFAP funding, the applicant must complete a Nutrient Management Strategy (NMS) and submit it to OMAF Nutrient Management Branch by **March 31, 2005**. The applicant can complete the NMS on their own, or secure the services of a certified nutrient management consultant for assistance. For more information, contact the OMAF nutrient management toll-free line at 1-866-242-4460 or email: [nman@omaf.gov.on.ca](mailto:nman@omaf.gov.on.ca); or further information is

available on the OMAF web site [www.gov.on.ca/omaf](http://www.gov.on.ca/omaf) under the Nutrient Management button.

Upon arrival of the NMS, OMAF will issue the applicant a 'Record of Approval' with a unique identifier number. (Note – If a manure storage is the planned project, a Nutrient Management Plan (NMP) must be submitted to OMAF by March 31, 2005.)

##### **2. Submit a NMFAP application and obtain 'Conditional Approval'**

Complete a NMFAP Project Proposal Application and submit it to the local OSCIA Program Representative by **July 1, 2005**. A copy of the Record of Approval must accompany the application. A separate NMFAP application must be submitted for each project. The OSCIA Program Representative will review the application for completeness, and then forward it to the OSCIA Guelph office for review. Written 'conditional approval' of funding notification will be provided to the applicant by OSCIA Guelph which may include a request for further information about the project. The applicant is responsible to obtain all necessary permits relating to the specific project and provide assurances as required by OSCIA.

Note: For applications related only to equipment modifications to replace high-trajectory manure irrigation guns, only a completed NMFAP Project Proposal Application needs to be submitted. There is no requirement for a NMS.

##### **3. Gaining 'Final Approval' for the proposed project**

Once the applicant has provided all the requested assurances to OSCIA regarding required permits and plan approvals, a final eligibility screening is conducted. If successful, the applicant will receive from OSCIA Guelph a 'project approved for completion' letter for the project proposal.

##### **4. Final Inspection and submitting the Claim Form for payment**

Complete the approved project, pay all invoices, and contact the local OSCIA Program Representative to arrange a final project inspection before **December 31, 2005**. At final inspection, the OSCIA Program Representative will verify completion, collect copies of invoices with proof of payment, and sign off on the Claim Form. Proof of payment constitutes a full signature on the invoice by the vendor, which states 'payment in full' or a copy of both sides of the cancelled cheque.

The completed Claim Form and copies of all invoices will be submitted by the Program Representative to OSCIA Guelph for processing and issuance of cheque. ♦

## Getting the Most Out of Your Corn Crop: Practical Tips to Maximize Herbicide Efficacy and Effectiveness

So you've made your herbicide selection for the 2005 growing season. You've thought about potential weed challenges, your crop rotation and soil type. Now, how do you ensure that you get the maximum benefit from your weed control program?

# BASF

One thing you know for sure is that for your corn crop to have a fighting chance to grow and thrive, it needs a good, strong start. Although there are elements such as the weather, which can't be controlled, for those you can, what should you consider?

### Early Weed Control

First, early weed control is critical. Research conducted in Ontario by several weed researchers reinforces this fact. It is well documented that your corn should be kept weed free through the early part of the season. As far as when weeds should be removed, recent research supports that irreversible yield losses can start to occur if weeds are not controlled within two and half to three weeks after emergence. You really can't control your weeds too early - it is best to lay a solid foundation for getting your corn crop off to a good strong start.

### Season Long Control

If you are planning to control weeds early, it is necessary to use a herbicide with a residual component. A residual herbicide applied early will clean weeds out for the critical period and keep out late germinating types as well. This protects your crop well into the growing season. MARKSMAN® is an example of a herbicide with a proven track record of control of a broad spectrum of weeds. It also has a wide window of application giving growers the flexibility to apply the herbicide when they need it. Applied early, it is particularly effective in controlling tough to kill weeds like velvetleaf and also provides excellent extended residual control of other late germinating, deep-rooted annuals.

### Resistance Management

Another consideration in your operation is resistance management. Thoughtful planning can help maximize the effectiveness of your weed control program from one year to the next. Most soil applied corn herbicides are a good way to control Group II resistant weeds like ragweed, pigweed and nightshade. These programs also provide excellent control of crabgrass and yellow foxtail which can become a problem with repeated use of the same class of post emergent corn herbicides.

Most soil applied corn herbicides (except atrazine) have been used for a number of years with no resistance developed. This is likely due to a combination of factors including the chemistry itself and use of multiple modes

of action in these programs. By using tank-mixes, MARKSMAN® and FRONTIER® being one example, you get the benefit of more than one mode of action at work on the weeds, thereby reducing the risk of resistance developing.

### Drift Reduction

An additional consideration when applying your herbicide is to look at options that reduce the risk of drift injury to neighbouring crops. Soil applied corn herbicides can help with this problem because they are typically applied before sensitive crops are planted. As well, the right nozzle selection for your sprayer is important. Coarse sprays are less likely to drift than fine sprays. And, most soil applied herbicides can be sprayed using low drift nozzles and low water volumes as target coverage is not as critical as it is with post emergent herbicides.

### **SUBMITTED BY TREVOR KRAUS, TECHNICAL SPECIALIST, BASF CANADA**

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### **Corn Silage Data Required**

AGRICORP is reviewing the corn production insurance plan including parameters for corn silage and is looking for farms which have conducted corn silage trials and would like to provide input on yields and the conversion to grain corn equivalents. Please contact Lindsay Barfoot at AGRICORP if you have been conducting field variety trials of corn silage: [Lindsay.barfoot@agricorp.com](mailto:Lindsay.barfoot@agricorp.com) or 1-888-247-4999

## **Ontario Forage Masters Program**

Guidelines for the 18<sup>th</sup> Ontario Forage Masters Program have been released.

**PICKSEED**  
good things growing...



The sponsors – Pickseed Canada, International Stock Food, and Agri-Food Laboratories – are again offering valuable prizes to the top three winners in each local Soil and Crop Improvement Association.



For The Way You Farm...

**AGRI-FOOD LABORATORIES**

NK Seeds continues to sponsor the program as well, contributing to the financial costs that are involved.

For a listing of prizes, the guidelines, and how to enter, you are encouraged to contact your local association president or secretary. Deadline for entry is April 22. ♦

## **2005 OSCIA Annual Meeting Presentations – Trends in Food Production**

*- Ruth Knight, Regional Communication Coordinator,  
Heartland Region*

At the OSCIA Annual Meeting, we heard from several speakers on the big picture view of trends in agriculture. There were some recurring themes from three of the guest speakers:

- consumers are seeking opportunities to purchase foods that are more than just commodities;
- consumers are looking for healthy, safe food and they identify with certain farming practices;
- these concerns can create a food system with an opportunity for producers to receive recognition and compensation for adopting environmentally and socially responsible practices.

### **Doug Anderson, Director, Syndicated Products & Services, Decima Research Inc.**

#### **- Trends in Food Choices**

Public opinion polls suggest that consumer choices related to food reflect a conscious effort to improve health as well as provide ease and convenience in preparation. Consumers value food choices ahead of exercise. Trends show that consumption of fresh fruits has increased 11%, fruit juices 23% and vegetables 7%. Oils and fats have decreased. Fish consumption has increased but is still less than other meats. The boomer population (born 1946-1964) makes up the largest percentage of population and they are health conscious and significantly affluent to demand more diversity for healthy eating.

Polls indicate that pesticides and GMO foods are concerns that reflect food choices. The confidence in organics continues to increase. Recent expansion of organic products into larger retail grocery stores has made organic foods more accessible and more mainstream, with the perception that organics are healthier and more nutritious.

### **Dr. Terry Daynard, Associate Dean, Research & Innovation, University of Guelph**

#### **- Exciting New Agri-Food Research**

From a research perspective, consumer and societal trends suggest opportunities to focus on new markets, rather than producing commodities at greater volumes into depressed markets.

The key areas of research focus as follows:

1. **Healthier, Safer Foods:** Obesity is the top health issue. There are demands for healthier food with reduced food safety risks. These are major market opportunities.

2. **New Major Markets:** Includes bioproducts, renewable fuels, petrochemicals and auto parts.
3. **Niche Markets:** These provide the best opportunity for individuals and translate into a challenge for research planning in the area of specialty crops as well as organic agri-food.
4. **Environment:** This includes emphasis on nutrient management, byproduct waste management, reduced input usage and climate change.
5. **Rural Ontario:** This area is very challenging as rural Ontario is not homogenous and government policies for it are ambiguous.

### **Lori Stahlbrand, Food Policy Analyst & Project Leader of Local Food Eco-label Project - Crop Possibilities on Our Doorstep**

A local food eco-label provides benefits by identifying a regional food system as well as providing premium prices to farmers to adopt environmentally friendly and socially responsible food production. Groups in Waterloo and Toronto have already made a linkage between local producer and consumer groups in a limited way by adopting a US 'Food Alliance' model that was established in the Pacific North-West in the mid-1990s. In the US, there are 225 certified farmers in the program on 2.2 million acres. Sodexo (the world's largest food supply service with annual sales of \$5.5 billion) purchases from these producers with consistent demand and confidence in their production methods.

In Ontario, Food Alliance, through food service suppliers, supplies University of Toronto, York University and Ryerson, as well as numerous corporate cafeterias. The City of Toronto alone has a food budget of \$300 million and has adopted as one of its principles to "adopt food purchasing practices that serve as a model of health, social and environmental responsibility".

For Food Alliance certification, a score of 70% compliance through a point system is required for farmers to meet standards in 5 areas: pest and disease management, soil and water conservation, wildlife habitat, human resource development, and humane treatment of animals. Thirteen acutely toxic pesticides and genetically engineered crops are prohibited. Eco-label standards are developed by stakeholders and verified by an independent inspection organization. ♦

#### **Please Participate in Our Survey!!**

Please fill it out online at

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=50623925310>.

You may also complete and fax a copy which is enclosed with this newsletter.

Thanks for taking part! Your views are important to us.

## Hybrid Selection is the Single Most Important Factor Affecting Profitability

- Julia Williams, Provincial ICAT Coordinator

During these times of depressed commodity prices, a strong Canadian Dollar and rising input prices, one of the most important decisions you can make on your farm is what corn hybrids to plant. "This decision is the single most important factor affecting profitability", according to Darin Grimm of Kansas, a speaker at the recent IFAO Conference. Too often we are swayed by emotional and political reasons when making our crop input buying decisions. There is no room for emotion in today's marketplace – each and every farmer needs to evaluate their business management skills and make decisions that will positively affect their bottom line.

Seed companies want to see their customers profit. Work closely with all your seed suppliers to ensure you are planting the best possible suite of hybrids for your operation and don't be afraid to make changes if better choices are available.

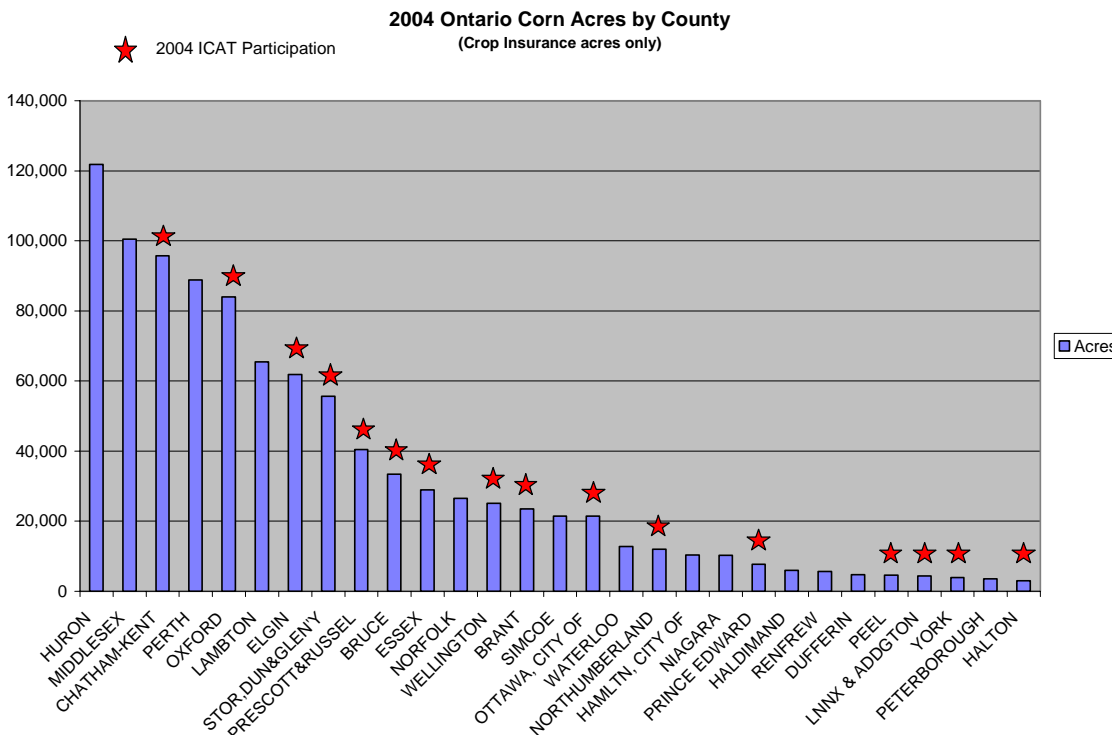
Take a look at the big picture. Sales programs are important, but a bag of seed that costs \$10.00 less in the beginning, but yields 10 bu/acre less in the field, results in a loss of 2.7 acres x 10 bushels = 27 bushels x \$2.50

= \$67.50. Now lets assume you purchase 20 bags of this less expensive hybrid for a saving of \$200.00. Those 20 bags plant 55 acres x a 10 bushel yield loss = 550 lost bushels at \$2.50 = \$1375.00 (not including losses as a result of stand and moisture).

How to I know what the best suite of hybrids is for my operation? Do your research; conduct on-farm trials to evaluate new genetics, participate in, and take advantage of the ICAT Corn Trials in your area, check out the OCC Corn Performance trials and seed company data and most importantly talk to your seed suppliers. Ask questions, ask to see multiple site, multiple year data – results from one plot have limited value.

The following graph represents the larger grain corn producing counties across Ontario. The bars with a star indicate those counties with an ICAT program in place. Those counties wishing to become involved with this on-farm hybrid evaluation program should contact Julia Williams, Provincial ICAT Co-ordinator.

Plans are under way for the 2005 ICAT Program. If you would like to start a corn hybrid evaluation program in your county and would like more information and to order planting kits, please contact Julia Williams at [cattleco@look.ca](mailto:cattleco@look.ca) or (519)822-1972. ♦



Plans are underway for the 2005 ICAT Program, if you would like to start a corn hybrid evaluation program in your county and would like more information and to order planting kits, please contact Julia Williams at [cattleco@look.ca](mailto:cattleco@look.ca) or (519)822-1972.