



OSCIA News...

September 2005

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

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OSCIA 2006 ANNUAL MEETING

Date: February 7 & 8, 2006
Place: Sheraton Fallsview Hotel
Niagara Falls

Message from the President

It is September already - where did the summer go? New continuing high temperature records have been established throughout Ontario, and I am sure that some low rainfall records have been set as well.

Where I live, south of Ottawa, it was a hot summer with adequate rainfall. The wheat crop was average to above average.

Soybean and corn yields are expected to be above average, but I do not get too excited until it is all harvested. Less than an hour's drive from my farm, one sees what most of Ontario looks like due to the extreme lack of rain. For example, in Prince Edward County, the wheat yield was less than half of the average yield. This summer, I have been able to tour and attend Soil & Crop meetings in the regions of Eastern Valley, Ottawa Rideau, East Central, Georgian Central, Heartland, Thames Valley and Golden Horseshoe. The lack of rain has impacted parts of all of these regions. However, it is amazing how well many crops have survived under the dry conditions.

As we are into the Fall season, I would ask those of you who have various crop trials and projects on your farm, that after harvest, to input the results as quickly as possible to the appropriate destination, such as the Ontario Field Trials On-line.

Do your best to attend your county annual meeting as much good information is shared by local Soil & Crop members, as well as by OMAFRA, field staff, and guest speakers. Furthermore, it is beneficial to get together with fellow farmers to socialize, encourage and support one another. This is what OSCIA is about – doing various projects and sharing the results. Often we learn something new that can be implemented or incorporated into our farm. Nevertheless, there can be an occasion when a project may not provide the expected results and we learn what not to try on our farm.

As President, I will attend as many local county annual meetings as my schedule permits.



Kevin Ferguson

My main goal for OSCIA this year is to increase membership numbers. This is not an easy goal to achieve. Deanna Deaville, our Special Projects Coordinator, John Finlay from OMAFRA, our office staff and the OSCIA Executive have been helping me with ideas on how to achieve this goal. We are making progress and will have some information to share at annual meeting time.

Wishing each of you a good and safe harvest. ♦

Responses to Resolutions

Responses that have been received to the resolutions passed at the OSCIA Annual Meeting held in February are entered onto the OSCIA website.

To access the resolutions on the website, go to www.ontariosoilcrop.org and click on the "Resolutions" button. ♦

Ontario Forage Masters Program

Pickseed representatives are currently tabulating the results of the 2005 Ontario Forage Masters Program.

The local winners will be announced through the local contact person. A chart showing the top three places in each local association will be sent to each participant as well as posted on the OSCIA web site. ♦

Deputy Minister Retires

On August 25, over 400 colleagues/friends celebrated the retirement of Dr. Frank Ingratta, Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. Frank's career spanned 33 years with the ministry. Frank served a brief term as ex-officio on the Board of OSCIA. We wish Frank all the best on his retirement from the ministry. ♦

OSCIA Grant Application Deadlines

The deadline for submitting the 2005 **Grant Applications** (claims) to the provincial office is November 30, 2005.

Although the deadline is a few weeks away, local and regional associations are encouraged to submit applications (claims) for projects that are complete. ♦

The love of farming is a seed that once sown, never dies.

- Anonymous

Growers Shown How Innovative Cropping Systems Help the Bottom Line

- Deanna Deaville, Special Projects Co-ordinator

On Thursday, September 1st, 2005, OMAFRA, in cooperation with the Wentworth and Brant Soil and Crop Improvement Associations, hosted the Cropping Innovation Review. Great weather and a good crowd were present for the plot tour which highlighted Beneficial Management Practices (BMP) which can increase the bottom line and reduce Greenhouse Gas emissions.



Greg Stewart, Corn Industry Program Lead, OMAFRA, discussing pros and cons of tillage equipment. Photo: Adam Hayes, OMAFRA

Greg Stewart (OMAFRA) discussed how to reduce the risk of over-applying nitrogen where manure is used by utilizing nitrogen budgets, manure testing and soil nitrate testing. This will reduce the potential for nitrate leaching and nitrous oxide emissions. Approximately 80 farm producers were shown several tillage-systems equipment used by some local farmers. The pros and cons of the various systems were discussed as well as the benefits to the soil, and how to adjust for various soil conditions.

Dr. Bill Deen (University of Guelph) showed participants late-summer planted cover crops of oats, oilseed radish, peas, alfalfa, red clover, fall rye, and discussed each crop's germination and growth. He also discussed the N holding potential, and timing of N release for spring-planted crops and how they could be used to reduce nitrous oxide emissions.

Greg Stewart and Ian McDonald (OMAFRA) walked through corn plots with different rates and timing of nitrogen applications (split application, and various rates of N application to corn). They talked about how to calculate your most economical rate of applying nitrogen compared to applying for the highest yield. Precision

systems such as end-row markers were discussed, as well as one-pass equipment that can conserve fuel.

Other topics discussed included Poncho insecticide trials and the new nitrogen rate calculator. Most of the BMPs covered have the potential to provide cost savings as well as help the agriculture industry to reduce Greenhouse Gases.



Ian McDonald, Applied Research Co-ordinator – Field Crops, OMAFRA, showing corn plots with different rates and timing of nitrogen applications. Photo: Adam Hayes (OMAFRA)

The tour stopped at a number of the demonstration sites of the Ontario Greenhouse Gas Mitigation Program (OGHGMP) coordinated by OSCIA. The day was partially supported by the OGHGMP which is funded by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada through the Soil Conservation Council of Canada. ♦

Highlighting Research at the University of Guelph

This article is the first of a series providing information on current research at the U of G. This article has been prepared by a student writing program in the Office of Research.

Phosphorus in phytate from grain-based pig feed doesn't dissolve well in water. Instead, it attaches to clay particles and accumulates in soils in a way that's unavailable to plants. Erosion and runoff from farms puts this phosphorus-rich mud into waterways, causing eutrophication (lake aging due to excess nutrients) that results in algae overgrowth, lower oxygen content and fish kills.

And phytate is a problem for pigs, too: it prevents the digestive tract's absorption of minerals such as calcium, iron, zinc and potassium. Farmers often supplement feed with extra minerals, but it's expensive and can cause undesirable side effects, including excess acidity,

poor absorption and ulcers. These minerals can also pass through pigs, ending up on land and in waterways.

Dr. Duane Falk, Department of Plant Agriculture, hopes that low-phytate barley – created by the United States Department of Agriculture – can alleviate these phosphorus woes. There are still problems, though. Currently, low-phytate barley seeds usually contain hulls (seed coats), which drag down nutritional value because they don't provide much energy or protein. Hulls also take up space, so barley with hulls is more expensive to process, transport and store.

That's led Falk to try breeding the low-phytate character into barley without hulls. To do this, he's identifying high-yielding hullless barley types with low phytate levels. By measuring levels of soluble phosphorus in seeds, he can figure out the phytate content.

Researchers elsewhere have also produced low-phytate corn and soybeans. Falk says barley stands out because its low-phytate varieties don't experience the loss of vigour or growth as corn and soybeans do.

“Soon we'll use this barley for pigs,” says Falk. “But eventually it may be suitable for cattle, turkey, chicken and even people.”

Other approaches to phytate control include supplementing feed with phytase – a naturally occurring enzyme that breaks down phytate – and developing animals (such as the Enviropig, which was created by University of Guelph researchers) with phytase in their saliva.

Falk is collaborating with Prof. Kees de Lange, Department of Animal and Poultry Science. This research is sponsored by the Oat and Barley Council of Ontario and the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.



Prof. Duane Falk, Department of Plant Agriculture, is working to improve barley for better animal health.

OSCIA Summer Directors' Meeting

The OSCIA Summer Directors' Meeting was hosted by 1st Vice President Keith Black on August 28-30. Keith and his wife Barb, along with daughters Vicky and Heather organized three days' events for the OSCIA Directors and their families in Huron County.

The Directors held their business meeting on Monday while the spouses, past presidents, and families toured the local area.

Local association executives are encouraged to keep in touch with their provincial director so that updates can be communicated to the membership.



Pat Lee, Alvin Brooks, Allan & Betty Brown are shown by their tour guide the many types of beans processed by the Hensall District Co-operative, which was one of the stops on the bus tour.

OSCIA Awards

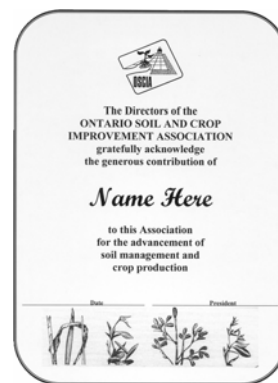
Soil and Water Conservation Farm Award:

The purpose of this award is to recognize, reward, and acknowledge farmers who practice excellent soil and water management on their farms, as well as provide high profile to the basic principles of conservation. This is a resin all-weather sign measuring 16" x 19".



Recognition Certificate:

This certificate is designed to recognize individuals in your community who have contributed to the organization. When requesting the certificate, please indicate the recipient's name and date of presentation. This is a paper certificate, suitable for framing, measuring 8½" x 11".



These awards are ideal for presentation at the annual meetings. Both are available by calling Evelyn Howse at the Provincial Office (1-800-265-9751). Please allow 2 weeks for preparation and shipping time. ♦

Coming soon - a new look for OSCIA's website.....

Watch for a new and exciting revamped website for Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association.

Great photos – easy to navigate – a members-only section providing the latest information on technological advances for today's producer. ♦