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# ST. CLAIR REGION SOIL & CROP NEWS



Southwestern Ontario

March 2008

Serving Kent, Essex and Lambton County Soil & Crop Members

## Message from the Provincial Director of St. Clair Soil & Crop

*New Year, New Prices, New Constitution for Soil and Crop!*

The realignment change has gone through with a majority vote and we are in for a few small changes. There will only be eleven districts and eleven directors by the 2009 annual meeting. St. Clair region, which is made up of Essex, Kent and Lambton, will have one director instead of one and a half. Representatives of the St. Clair Board will be getting together in March to start changing the constitution to reflect this realignment. This will have very little impact on the general membership.

I hope that we will communicate as a group and not as independents. The sharing of ideas and knowledge will greatly benefit us all and working with a greater area, we get a better picture of how agriculture is changing.

Get that equipment ready, set your sights on making a dollar and help out by doing some plots or trials with your local soil and crop association or try participating in a district trial!

Henry Denotter, St. Clair Region and Provincial Director



Winter Farm Scene Courtesy of K. Gladstone

## Upcoming Events

2008 Farm Safety Assoc. Annual Conference and Meeting, Niagara Falls, ON - March 16-18, 2008 (Hilton Fallsview)

London Swine Conference, London, ON - April 1 & 2, 2008 (London Convention Centre)

Growing the Margins Conference, London, ON - April 2-5, 2008 (London Convention Centre)

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Thank-you to the following sponsors for this edition:

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Your contributions help to make this newsletter possible!

# Comments from the Counties

## Essex County News—

### Eric Olson

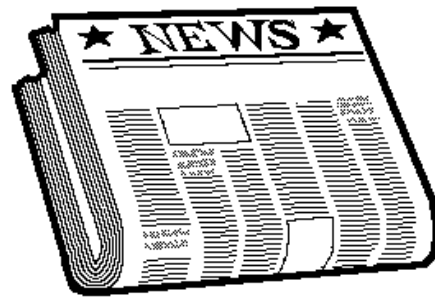
Hasn't winter just been wonderful this year? We don't usually get a snow covered blast down in the great southwest ('Banana-Belt') but this year we have certainly had one.

After attending the Annual Meeting in Niagara Falls with Brian Hyland, I learned quite a bit about the OSCIA and was thrilled to be there.

Essex is working on our demonstration farm and ICAT plots for 2008. With the weather having turned warm in the middle to last part of February, it looks like it will be a wet month - at least until March.

Due to medical reasons, I will leave this update short and sweet for now and catch up later in the next edition of the newsletter.

Eric Olson, President Essex  
Soil & Crop



## Lambton News—Ernie Kramer

As a new year rapidly turns to spring, I would like to challenge all soil and crop members to continue to keep informed and improve their cropping strategies so that our soils and environment will be sustained. Lambton Soil and Crop's Annual meeting held on January 11th was very well attended. Thank-you to everyone who was there and made it a success. Congratulations to the recipients of the Lambton Outstanding Farmer of The Year award—George and Agnes Dickenson.

At our first Lambton Directors meeting held in 2008, we discussed various projects and ideas for the upcoming cropping year and we invite any Lambton producer to help us out by volunteering to put in a plot or sending in any data on experiments or variety plots that you have put in. Peter Johnson is always looking for data. On behalf of the directors of Lambton Soil and Crop, I would like to thank Les Douglas for his leadership as President over the past two years.

This year will be challenging but also exciting and if we work together we will meet those challenges and be successful.

Ernie Kramer; President Lambton Soil & Crop

## Kent County News—

### Ed VanDeWynckel

Well, Winter is still hanging in there. There are lots of meetings and other things happening. Commodity prices are at all time highs (almost) and livestock prices are in the pits. What extremes!

We have a couple of new executive on our Board - Ralph Brodie, 1st Vice and Bryan Brodie, 2nd Vice. There are also a couple of new names as Directors on the Board as well. Welcome Dave Derynck and Ken McLarty!

We are trying to put together a new project and will hopefully get it going soon. We are also trying to plan a few events for members to participate in. If you have any ideas, don't hesitate to let the Board know.

Ed VanDeWynckel, President Kent Soil  
& Crop



## Monsanto kicks off 2008 scholarship program

**(Winnipeg, Manitoba – Tues, Feb. 26, 2008)** -- Monsanto Canada today 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 last week. 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](http://www.monsanto.ca).

All applications will be reviewed by an independent panel of judges and winning entries will be announced in September 2008.

Through its corporate giving program, Monsanto Canada seeks opportunities to support associations or programs with a focus on science and agricultural education; agricultural awareness; leadership and development opportunities for rural youth; and farm safety. Between \$300,000 and \$400,000 annually is provided to charitable and community groups across the country through Monsanto Canada's corporate giving program.

For more information contact:

**Trish Jordan**  
**Monsanto Canada**  
Ph: 204-985-1005

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## **KENT COUNTY SOIL AND CROP IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION**

### **2007 ANNUAL BANQUET AND MEETING**

The Kent County Soil and Crop Improvement Association (KSCIA) held their 2007 annual banquet and meeting on Wednesday, December 12th, 2007 from 6:00 - 9:30 p.m. at Smitty's Restaurant in Chatham, Ontario. Thanks to all who attended and helped make this another successful event!



**GUEST SPEAKERS: Dr. David and Margaret Campbell**  
**"Canadian Aid in Chernobyl - Agriculture in Belarus"**

Dr. David and Margaret Campbell gave an informative presentation on "Canadian Aid in Chernobyl - Agriculture in Belarus". They have travelled to Belarus on numerous occasions, bringing with them gently used clothing, household items, blankets, garden and hand tools and recently seeds so that the villagers can plant crops. They also have raised enough money to purchase a tractor in Belarus. The KSCIA as well as individual KSCIA members made a donation to help out with the Campbell's mission to help the people of Belarus create a better economy.

## 2008 CANADIAN AGRICULTURAL SAFETY WEEK

March 12—18, 2008

“Manage More Than Just Your Back!” is the 2008 Canadian Agricultural Safety campaign theme with a focus on sprains, strains and falls.

[www.casa-acsa.ca](http://www.casa-acsa.ca)

Check it out! Conservation Ontario has just posted their first newsletter available for subscription at:

[http://www.conservation-ontario.on.ca/news/March\\_bulletin\\_web.htm](http://www.conservation-ontario.on.ca/news/March_bulletin_web.htm)

## KENT COUNTY SOIL AND CROP IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION - 2007 CONSERVATION FARM OF THE YEAR



Left to Right: Jack Robertson, Water Management Supervisor—Lower Thames Valley Conservation; Audrey and Kees Poppe; and, Ed VanDeWynckel, President—Kent Soil and Crop Improvement Association.

Kees is a graduate of Ridgetown College, Ridgetown, Ontario (1971) with a diploma in Agriculture. He is also a graduate of Dordt College, Iowa USA where he obtained his Masters of Swine majoring in International Development.

Kees worked in Bangladesh for 4 years in Agriculture extension and research to improve cropping systems through the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (C.R.W.R.C.)

Kees started farming full-time in 1982, while finishing his Masters degree. He married Audrey in 1985 and has 2 sons, Preston (19 years old) currently attending Dordt College studying Ag. Business and Nolin (17 years old) who is in grade 12 at Chatham Christian High School.

Kees' father, Peter Poppe still helps out with the planting and harvesting on the farm to this day. They currently farm 750 acres of mixed grains (field corn, soybeans & wheat) and vegetables (tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers & sweet corn). After harvesting the cucumber crop, he seeds down the ground with a mix of oil seed radishes, vetch and rye. The roots from the radishes grow down to a depth of 3 feet which helps to build up nitrogen in the soil. They also try to seed down most sand hills with rye.

Kees claims not to be a "no-tiller" but more of a "minimum tiller/conventional farmer" which saves soil erosion of land in the fall. He is quite concerned about soil structure and growth. Kees also practices using hog and cattle manure from neighbouring farmers using the solid cattle manure on sand hills and liquid hog manure which is injected for nutrient management. The Poppe's have planted wind breaks on several farms over the years and continue to do so today. They have a few small woodlots where they are in the process of making selective cuts for woodlot management.

Kees and his family have participated in the Environmental Farm Plan twice which has helped them to plug six wells. This past year, Kees was also a participant of Nitrogen Calculator Testing.

**CONGRATULATIONS TO KEES & AUDREY POPPE & FAMILY ON THEIR  
2007 CONSERVATION FARM OF THE YEAR AWARD!!!**

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# Essex Soil & Crop Improvement Association

360 Fairview Avenue Suite 311  
Essex ON N8M 1Y6

## Essex Soil and Crop Improvement Association Annual Meeting

The Essex Soil and Crop Improvement Association (ESCIA) held their 2007 annual meeting on Thursday, December 6, from 9:00 am. to 3:00 pm. at St. John's Hall in Woodslee, ON. An interesting and informative schedule was planned that benefited both full-time and part-time farmers. Current issues in agriculture were the emphasis of the meeting with displays from various government organizations, agricultural suppliers, local retailers and equipment dealers. Mike Cowbrough, Weed Specialist with OMAFRA, spoke on 'Weed Updates'. In addition to the guest speaker, updates were also provided on Improving Yield of Second Year Soybeans/Essex County ICAT. The meeting concluded with the nominations and election for 2008 ESCIA Directors Committee. Should you require further information, please contact Michael Dick at (519) 776-5209 ext. 369.

## ESCIA 2007 Conservation Farm Award



**Congratulations to ESCIA 2007 Conservation Farm Award Winner  
Tony Unholzer and Malden Valley Farms!**

(Presenting Tony with the award were Michael Dick, Secretary-Treasurer ESCIA,  
Henry Denotter, Provincial Director and Marc Rivest, 2007 President ESCIA.)

This award is presented each year to the farming operation which best displays conservation minded farming practices. The farms are graded on tillage practices, crop rotation, chemical use and storage, knowledge of fertility programs, BMP's and overall farm maintenance. The winner is determined by a committee of Directors from the ESCIA.

Features of Malden Valley Farms include: no-till cropping; crop rotation including corn, soybeans, wheat under seeded with clover and hay; ditch bank protection by buffer strips; rock chutes and tile outlet protection. Other features include windbreaks, a woodlot and a pond. Tony has been farming for over 50 years and has been incorporating many of the modern conservation practices into his farming operation. Malden Valley Farms has an Environmental Farm Plan.

The Essex Conservation Farm Award is sponsored annually by the Essex Soil and Crop Improvement Association, the Essex Conservation Club and the Essex Region Conservation Authority. Nominations for the 2008 Conservation Farm Award are being accepted from now until September 6, 2008 with the winner to be announced at the 2008 ESCIA Annual Meeting. For more information on how to nominate an individual, please contact Michael at 776-5209, ext. 369.

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# Lambton Soil & Crop Improvement Association

*“Working Together to Improve Lambton County Soils and Crops”*

## Lambton Soil and Crop Improvement Association Annual Meeting

The Lambton Soil and Crop Improvement Association held their 2007 annual meeting on Friday, January 11th, 2008 from 9:00 am. to 3:00 pm. at the Brooke Alvinston Community Complex. This event was very well attended. Guest speakers included Mike Cowbrough, OMAFRA; Horst Bohner, OMAFRA; Alan Butler, Environmental Farm Plan; Bryan Boyle, OMAFRA; Frank Backx, Hensall Co-op; and, Peter Johnson, OMAFRA.

## LSCIA 2007 Outstanding Farmer of the Year



### **LSCIA award for Outstanding Farmer of the Year goes to George and Agnes Dickenson**

**(Left to Right are Dave Parks, Parkland Farms; Norm Giffen, Chairman St. Clair Conservation Authority; Agnes and George Dickenson, Recipients; and Ernie Kramer, Vice President LSCIA).**

George and Agnes were quite overwhelmed and honoured to be chosen for this award. For the Dickenson's, this is a family affair. Their family consists of one son, Joe and two daughters, Barb and Pat who contribute to the farming operation and local community. All three have graduated from College with backgrounds related to agriculture. This is something to be proud of for such a young family—their accomplishments are many!

George is a third generation farmer at this location. His grandfather bought the farm in 1933 and George's father was a full-time farmer. George and Agnes farm about 500 acres and almost all is no-till. They grow corn in 20 inch rows, soybeans and wheat are also grown in rotation. Hay and pasture is grown on highly erodible and marginal land. 48 cows are milked in a small parlour setup. Livestock is fenced out of water ways and run off is controlled. George has taken the Environmental Farm Plan in Lambton. With the help of a local agronomist, soil testing is done regularly, manure is sampled and tested as well. The corn calculator, pre-side dress and nitrogen tests are all used.

On behalf of the members and directors of Lambton Soil and Crop, we would like to offer our congratulations to George, Agnes and family for their contribution to their community and county.

We would also like to take this opportunity to mention the support we have received from Parkland Farms and the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority for their continued support of this award. Thanks also to Chad Anderson for his time and assistance.