



# OSCIA News...

November 2010

A NEWSLETTER TO UPDATE OSCIA MEMBERS,  
PRESIDENTS, SECRETARIES, TREASURERS, DIRECTORS,  
AND OMAFRA AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT CONTACTS —

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## OSCIA 2011 ANNUAL MEETING

**Date:** February 8 & 9, 2011  
**Place:** Sheraton Fallsview  
Niagara Falls

## Message from the President



*Barry Hill*

In my last letter I was happy to point out the tremendous efforts put forth by the local associations in producing excellent workshops and summer field day events for their members. Volunteers are the lifeblood of this organization and we can't thank them enough.

So too with our OSCIA Board members, who continue to volunteer but with additional commitments added to their already busy farm life. Since we reduced the number of Directors sitting on the Board, we have at the same time raised the bar of expectations for their involvement in the organization.

OSCIA Board members are assigned to represent the organization on 15 Ontario Agricultural Research Committees and 3 agricultural coalitions. Oftentimes our representative is the only farm voice at a table of academic and industry research experts. For this reason alone we need to have aggressive, experienced farmers as our representatives. Hardly a week goes by without a meeting report coming through our e-mail system.

Each month the OSCIA Executive hold a teleconference with the full Board, where activities are discussed, minutes reviewed and any issues can be aired. The Directors are provided with a handbook which is intended to help with the performance and administration of their regional and provincial duties.

At our strategic planning sessions, held on three occasions over the last two years, support to local associations was identified as a high priority item. Consequently steps to assist the locals are under way. We are beginning with the issue this week of a Local Association Handbook, filled with useful information for the local executives and secretaries to manage their interactions with both members and our OSCIA office in Guelph. We look forward to your feedback to make this book a strong link in our chain of operation.

The Regional Communications Coordinators, so critical in our link to you and to the dissemination of OMAFRA

information, have been supported by providing them with a voice in Guelph, a lead RCC to help ensure that all issues are addressed and that all RCCs are equipped with the skills and resources they need to do the right job for their region.

We continue to devote resources to our website. Just this week we added another link, this one to the Ontario Invasive Plant Council. Look under the "About OSCIA" tab on our website task bar and you will find 32 links to resources and organizations important to your farm. We even have a weather link.

Try what I do each morning: with that first cup of coffee, while the house is still quiet, I log onto OSCIA, (I have it as my home page), link to the markets, (I added my favourite market link), check the weather and the top news stories field which is constantly updated on our website.

In the future, I hope to share some of the involvement the Executive has with university and government agencies, as well as direct contacts with the OMAFRA Minister's office.

For now, let me close by wishing for you a safe and successful harvest season. ♦

## 2010 OSCIA Annual Meeting Speakers

*A number of excellent speakers were featured at the 2010 Annual Meeting, whose presentations have been summarized in each issue of OSCIA News during the year by members of the OSCIA Regional Communication Coordinator team. Following is one of those summaries.*

### **"NEW TECHNOLOGIES ON THE HORIZON" – Adam Hayes & Hugh Martin, OMAFRA**

*as summarized by Krista Gladstone, RCC, St. Clair*

At the 2010 OSCIA Annual Meeting that was held in Niagara Falls, Adam Hayes, Soil Management Specialist, OMAFRA Field Crops, and Hugh Martin, Organic Crop Production Lead, OMAFRA Horticulture, offered some insight into new technologies in agriculture.

Adam Hayes started off by discussing soil health issues. Why do we even assess soil health? There are many reasons for this, including targeting management practices to address soil constraints, quantifying soil improvements from implementing new or modifying current soil management practices, facilitating applied research and assisting with land valuation (putting a value on soil health).

The Cornell Soil Health Assessment looks at the physical, biological and chemical properties of soil. Using various equipment including a penetrometer and megadripper, the Cornell researchers looked at physical properties such as surface and subsurface hardness, aggregate stability and available water capacity. Biological properties that were looked at included organic matter, active carbon, potentially mineralizable nitrogen and root health rating. Chemical properties

included pH, extractable phosphorus, extractable potassium, magnesium, manganese and zinc. OMAFRA soil management specialists are evaluating the test for Ontario soils. In 2009 samples were taken from the long-term tillage and rotation plots at Ridgetown and Elora in cooperation with David Hooker and Bill Deen of the University of Guelph. In 2010 samples will be taken from farms across the province. Following that, the data will be analyzed to see if the assessment will work for Ontario.

Adam also updated the group on the recent changes to the Non-Agricultural Source Materials (NASM) framework. On September 18, 2009, the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs jointly announced new rules and guidelines for applying non-agricultural source materials (NASM) to farmland. These changes to the management of non-agricultural source materials are designed to strengthen the rules and remove overlapping approval processes for farmers and generators of NASM. They will also ensure that all nutrients are managed in an environmentally responsible manner.

Basically, there are two types of prescribed materials: Ag Source Material and Non Ag-Source Material (which includes yard waste, fruit and vegetable peels, food processing waste, pulp and paper biosolids and sewage biosolids). All of these materials are regulated under the Environmental Protection Act. Some of the changes to the framework include NASM generators being allowed to remove NASM Nutrient Management Strategy requirement from their operation, remove 240 days NASM storage requirement, and broker certification is not required to transport NASM. A plan will now need to be developed for each site that NASM materials are applied to as well an odour classification system will be implemented affecting setbacks.

There will be a 5-year transition period for these changes to take effect that will be broken down into two stages. Stage 1 changes will take effect immediately upon filing of the regulation and consists of general requirements that establish the framework. The general requirements are needed to transition to the requirements of the new system for managing NASM which take effect at stage 2 on January 1, 2011. The OMAFRA website is in the process of being updated with this information. Michael Payne, Environmental Specialist with OMAFRA, is the resource person for this topic.

Adam also updated the group on some exciting new software developments. Mike Cowbrough, Weed Management Field Crops Program Lead, OMAFRA, has been developing two new websites related to weeds and weed control.

[www.weedinfo.ca](http://www.weedinfo.ca) was designed to be an ever-growing knowledge base of weed information. Combining biological and identifying characteristics of top interfering species along with new emerging research articles, media, and control options, weedinfo.ca provides the tools to make informed risk-reducing weed control decisions. Adam gave a brief tutorial on how this new

website works. This easy-to-use tool should be an effective resource for producers and agri-business. It is also available in smart phone format at [m.weedinfo.ca](http://m.weedinfo.ca)

[www.weedpro75.com](http://www.weedpro75.com) is an online herbicide selection tool that focuses on profitability and environmental stewardship. In 4 simple steps, registered herbicide options are presented which best match your chosen weed spectrum. You can sort through these herbicide options and determine the best match based on your priorities as a producer. It is also available in smart phone format at [m.weedpro75.com](http://m.weedpro75.com)

Hugh Martin presented an update on organic crop production. Basically, it is a blend of modern techniques and traditional wisdom. Hugh announced that certified organic regulations have now been passed and a new Canadian organic logo has been developed. Imports are now regulated and they must meet Canadian organic standards and regulations. Most people don't realize that the majority of organic produce in Canadian grocery stores is imported from the USA.

Crop rotation is essential in organic crop production. It is imperative that organic farmers effectively manage soil fertility and health while employing strict weed management. Many organic farmers use manure or compost to control their soil fertility. Cover crops are also used.

Crop health and crop competition must be closely monitored. To control insects and disease, many organic farmers use biopesticides including plant extracts such as oils/pyrethrums/etc., biological controls including microorganisms, and other methods such as hydrogen peroxide, sulphur, copper, insecticidal soaps, pheromones, etc. Resistant crop varieties are also key to managing these pests. Weed management in organic crops is difficult but can be obtained. The number one tool for effective weed management in organics is time management and the ability to manage weeds before they get ahead of you!

All of the management strategies listed above must be applied in a time-sensitive fashion. There has been some discussion about no-till in organic crops. Research is ongoing in this area but has not yet been perfected.

For further information on Organic Agriculture, please go to:

<http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/organic/organic.html>

### **Seed Bytes - New Online 'Seed Locator'**

*- Harold Rudy, Secretary Manager, OSGA*

Starting in late November, the Canadian Seed Growers' Association (CSGA) will have established a user friendly, searchable data base of all pedigreed seed growers in Canada. It will list pedigreed seed crops produced in the current year for varieties that are eligible for sale in

Canada. This online seed directory will be the go-to source to find Certified seed. This service is provided free to CSGA members growing pedigreed seed and will provide a direct link to each grower's website. Look for the 'Seed Locator' in the weeks to come at the CSGA website: [www.seedgrowers.ca](http://www.seedgrowers.ca) ♦

### **Farm Business Management Benchmarking Study**

*- Mick Terpstra, Program Manager, Farm Business Management, OSCIA*

OSCIA is partnering with IPSOS Forward Research Inc. to conduct a baseline evaluation of awareness, familiarity and usage of farm business management programs and tools among Ontario farmers. IPSOS will contact producers to participate from an OSCIA eligible list as well as an IPSOS producer database. The OSCIA eligible list is made up of producers who have completed an enrollment form for the Business Development for Farm Businesses program.

The study includes six focus groups of eight to ten producers to be held across the province later in November. IPSOS will be contacting producers in early November seeking their participation.

IPSOS will contact a sample of producers in January for a telephone interview that will be approximately 20 minutes in duration. The interview will also include a few questions regarding the producers experience with the Business Development for Farm Businesses program.

The study will also evaluate the types of business management activities producers plan to complete by reviewing action plan summaries on file with OSCIA.

Participation in the study will provide great insight into the types and extent of business planning activities that are being undertaken by farmers. This information will be extremely useful in identifying ways to better meet the needs of the agricultural community. Information collected will be kept strictly confidential and analysis will be conducted and reported on an aggregate basis.

OSCIA wishes to thank producers in advance for their participation. Your contribution will be a critical component in the success of the study.

The study is made possible by the Agriculture Management Institute (AMI) with funding made available through Growing Forward, a federal-provincial-territorial initiative. ♦

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## Benefits for OSCIA Members

This fall and winter, the provincial Director for your region will be providing an overview of membership benefits and future opportunities to benefit members.

In response to a recent recommendation by the OSCIA Membership Committee, the Board passed a motion of support of their proposal to increase the membership fee per member from \$5 to \$7.50. The motion will be voted on by the delegates at the annual meeting on February 8, 2011, with a resulting change to the OSCIA Constitution for the membership year 2012.

The benefits to members are many, and local associations are asked to reflect on these benefits. Suggestions for future opportunities to support the local associations and members will be most welcome. ♦

## Local Annual Meetings

Need a gift idea for your local annual meeting? What about an OSCIA vest and matching hat?



Double-sided fleece vests with the OSCIA logo embroidered, and embroidered OSCIA hats are available for your local association to use at upcoming winter meetings as gifts for a special member or speaker, or as fundraising items at upcoming local annual meetings. Also available are OSCIA member gate signs and Tru-Chek rain gauges.

These items are available to local and regional associations on a cost-recovery basis by contacting the provincial office. ♦

## ATTENTION SEED GROWERS

Watch for the notice of the OSGA Annual Meeting coming to your door in November.

The meeting is taking place on Tuesday, December 7 at the Four Points Sheraton Hotel in London.

## Promote Your Local Association

OSCIA has four stand-up displays that highlight the grassroots involvement, membership, and activities of local Soil and Crop Improvement Associations.

These displays work well as a group, and can also be very effective when displayed individually.

This item can be provided to local and regional SCIA's by contacting the provincial office. ♦



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