

SOUTHWEST AGRICULTURAL CONFERENCE

Southwest Agricultural Conference 2008

This year marked the 15th anniversary of the Southwest Agricultural Conference held January 3&4, 2008 at the University of Guelph, Ridgetown Campus. The Conference partnered with the Agri-Food Innovation Forum this year broadening the speaker program. The conference experienced record attendance this year with 2050 attending over the two days.

The theme of this year's conference was "Innovative Farming Solutions" and presented topics from Innovation on the Back Roads to Innovative Financing. Other theme related topics included New Weed Management Tools, Pyrolysis and Commercializing Agri-Food and Health. Back by popular demand were topics on biodiesel, wind energy and net metering, energy savings on the farm and energy crops.

Alex Avery of the Hudson Institute talked about global food demand doubling by 2050. Global population is declining but as more people become affluent they will want more.



They will consume more meat, clothing and energy. There is an opportunity as they will export high value foods and import grains. The second feature speaker Donna Houghton of Syngenta Crop Protection discussed the risks and benefits of pesticide use.

The format of the program is seven 50 minute concurrent sessions plus the feature speaker so it is a full day of learning! The presenters are a mix of farmers, researchers, government extension staff and agriculture industry personnel. The goal of the conference is to bring in the best speaker possible for a topic, by whatever means.

Here is a sample of the more than 40 sessions that were offered concurrently over two days at the conference:

- Rhizobotany: the Root of Agriculture
- Early Planting Pays Right?
- The Challenges of Growing Organic Corn
- Manure Application BMPs
- Biofuels; Corn and Soybean Outlook for 2008 and Beyond
- Demystifying Farm Succession
- Putting Local Foods in Local Markets
- Weed Management of RR Corn and Soybeans
- Corn and Soybean Fungicides
- East Meets West Insect Pests
- Advanced IPM for Vegetable Production

Crop Advances: Field Crop Reports

For the second year in a row the conference hosted a reception at the end of the first day. The Taste of the Southwest reception featured meat, vegetables, fruit, honey, mead, wine, beer and spirits from southwestern Ontario.



The conference is a cooperative effort between the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, the Southwest Soil and Crop Improvement Association, many agribusiness supporters and Ridgetown Campus, University of Guelph.

Event Contacts:

Tracey Baute, OMAFRA,
Ridgetown,

tracey.baute@ontario.ca

Adam Hayes, OMAFRA,
Ridgetown,

adam.hayes@ontario.ca

Albert Tenuta, OMAFRA,
Ridgetown,

albert.tenuta@ontario.ca

Visit our website www.southwestagconference.ca for conference information.

Images from the 2007 Southwest Agricultural Conference



Moving to the next session, double digit temperatures



Growing your own nitrogen session



A session in classroom of the Rural Dev. Centre



Radio broadcast from the conference



Trade show in the Rural Dev. Centre gym



Marketing strategies for 2007