

SOUTHWEST AGRICULTURAL CONFERENCE

Southwest Agricultural Conference 2010

The 17th Southwest Agricultural Conference was held January 6&7, 2010 at the University of Guelph, Ridgetown Campus. The conference experienced record attendance again this year with approximately 1200 attending the first day and 1100 the second day.

The theme of this year's conference was "The Road Ahead for Agriculture" and presented topics from Nematodes – Good, Bad or Ugly to Snake Oil or Wonder Product. Other sessions included Getting Ag Smart with Smartphones, Performance Planters!, Managing Increased Residues and Dollars from the Sun. Back by popular demand were topics on manure, bioenergy, commodity marketing and weed control.



Crystal Mackay (Crystal Clear Communications, Rockwood, Ontario), the Wednesday feature speaker, said we have a lot to be proud of being in agriculture and that we are the face of farming. We need to get the message out to the public and be an upbeat dedicated professional. The feature speaker on the second day was David Okerlund (Iowa USA). David's key message was on change. We need to be constantly looking for ways to change what we are doing. Learning to approach change positively gives us a different outlook on life and helps us to find better ways of doing things and reach the next level of success.



The webcast of the sessions from the two lecture theatres was expanded to four locations this year. A total of 110 participants at Kemptville, New Liskeard, Thunder Bay and Bruce Mines enjoyed the program. The sessions were well received and it is a great way to deliver this high quality program to those who may not wish to travel to Ridgetown or who may not have the same access to speakers.

The format of the conference 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. The livestock pavilion was added as another large session room this year which helped to ease the crowding issues from previous years. Additional parking also helped to accommodate all those pickups!

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

- Better Cover Crop Options
- Nitrogen Management Strategies
- Air, Water, Temperature & Tillage
- Dollars with Dry Beans
- Defining Soil Management Zones
- Focus on Costs
- Farm Gate Marketing
- Build a Healthier Soil
- Glyphosate Stewardship
- Top Yielding Soybean Tips
- Tweak Your Combine

Once again the conference hosted a reception at the end of the first day. The Taste of Ontario reception featured meat, vegetables, fruit, honey, mead, wine, beer and spirits from southwestern Ontario.

Registrants attending the Conference had an opportunity to visit the Industry Trade Show which showcased 70 exhibits.

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



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Visit our website

www.southwestagconference.ca for
conference information. A number
of the presentations were recorded
this year and are posted on the
website under proceedings.