

SOUTHWEST AGRICULTURAL CONFERENCE

Southwest Agricultural Conference 2011

The 18th Southwest Agricultural Conference was held January 5th & 6th, 2011 at the University of Guelph, Ridgetown Campus. The conference experienced record attendance again this year with just over 1300 attending the first day and 1150 the second day.

The theme of this year's conference was "Harvesting Success from Research & Innovation" and presented topics from Future of Agriculture to Roots – the Foundation of Yield to the Quest for

300 bu Corn to Putting Ag Smarts into Smartphones. Back by popular demand were topics on manure, biomass, commodity marketing and weed control.

Dr. Alastair Summerlee, president of the University of Guelph, emphasized the importance of partnerships between researchers, industry and producers in his feature presentation on the first day of the conference. He noted that "The Time is Now" for everyone to work together to feed the world and make ours a better planet. On the second day of the conference, Paralympic Champion & World Record Holder, Chantal Petitclerc wowed the audience with her story of teamwork, sportsmanship, continuous hard work and determination. Gary Paling of the Farm Credit Corporation said as Master of Ceremonies to Chantal, "As Canadians, you've made us very proud" and the audience rewarded her with a standing ovation!

The webcast of the sessions from two rooms went to four locations again this year. 130 participants at Kemptonville, Sturgeon Falls, Thunder Bay and Thessalon 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 again as a large session room this year which helped to accommodate the large number of attendees. 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:

- Western Bean Cutworm
- Succession Planning
- Farm Beautification
- Managing Glyphosate Resistance
- Chop it, Bury it or Leave it?
- Local Food – More than just a Buzz
- Organic Matter Options
- Better Crops, Safer Water
- Farmstead Energy Options
- Strategic Soybean Management
- Large Scale Organic Production
- Making and Marketing Hay

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. A poster session was offered again. Posters were presented from the University of Guelph (professors and students), OMAFRA, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and others. The trade show once again attracted a large number of exhibitors.

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.