



## Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association

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### Media Release Sickle Heads Up OSCIA for 2023

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For immediate release



Elora, ON – The 2023 slate of Provincial Directors for the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association (OSCIA) was introduced in early February at their annual meeting. Stepping up as president for 2023 is Steve Sickle from Brant County.

OSCIA is a unique not-for-profit grassroots farm organization. Over 50 county and district associations encompassed by 11 designated regions make up OSCIA's network of members. The diverse membership of over 4,000 has a significant presence in all agricultural areas of the province and across all major sectors. The OSCIA mandate is to facilitate responsible economic management of soil, water, air and crops through development and communication of innovative farming practices. OSCIA is farmers actively seeking, testing, and adopting optimal farm production and stewardship practices. The organization focuses squarely on producer education and has been delivering

stewardship programming to Ontario producers for 33 years. Their top research priority is soil health.

Steve, Amanda, and family farm on the rolling hills characteristic of the north end of Brant. The farm grows corn, soybeans, edible beans, winter wheat and hay and follows either a no-till or plant green system to keep topsoil in place. The 25-cow beef herd helps to utilize cover crops as feed. Cattle are grazed for upwards of ten months, which saves hay costs and machinery start-ups.

He has been involved in Brant Federation of Agriculture, Brant Beef Farmers, Ontario Soil Network, and the agriculture advisory council for the county. Steve's involvement in Soil and Crop stretches back many years, and he has worked on the Golden Horseshoe Regional Board for more than a decade.

Sickle Farms is dedicated to soil health, environmental stewardship and progressive production methods. Steve truly believes the soil is in better shape now than when his father Bill purchased the land, and will be in top shape when and if the couple's children, Kara and Ethan decide to take over the farm.

"I have been mentored by many Soil and Crop members over the years," says Steve. "What I've learned has helped to improve my operation financially and environmentally. I'm honoured to be named

president for 2023 and look forward to working with others to introduce new ideas that will serve the needs of our members and keep the organization moving forward.”

The full list of the 2023 provincial Board of Directors are:

Steve Sickle – President (Golden Horseshoe)	Phil Oegema – 1 <sup>st</sup> Vice (Thames Valley)
Eleanor Renaud – 2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice (Ottawa Rideau)	Andy Van Niekerk – 3 <sup>rd</sup> Vice (Georgian Central)
Warren Schneckenburger – Past President	Ian McDonald – Honorary President 2023
Birgit Martin – Northeastern Ontario	Dave Schraa – Northwestern Ontario
Chad Quinlan – St. Clair	Alan Kruszel – Eastern Valley
John Poel – Heartland	Brady Jones – East Central
Gord Speksnijder – Quinte	Allan Thompson – Golden Horseshoe

The Association also brought attention to its award winners for 2023. The OSCIA Soil Champions are Nick Stokman in the producer category, and Christine Brown in the research/extension category. Jake Kraayenbrink was the recipient of the Don Hill Legacy Award for his tanker adaptation for in-crop application of manure and cover crop, and the \$10,000 OSCIA/OAC Soil Health Graduate Scholarship winner is Zachary Buchanan. Zachary is a Masters student in Environmental Sciences at University of Guelph, researching the effects of 4R nutrient management practices and cover crops on nitrous oxide emissions from agricultural soils.

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