

# SOUTHWEST AGRICULTURAL CONFERENCE

## Southwest Agricultural Conference 2013

The 20<sup>th</sup> Southwest Agricultural Conference was held January 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup>, 2013 at the University of Guelph, Ridgetown Campus. The conference experienced record attendance again this year with just over 1400 attending the first day and over 1300 the second day.

The theme of this year's conference was "The Future of Agriculture" and presented topics from Glyphosate Resistant Weeds to Cover Crops are Cash Crops to What's up with the Weather to Farming Down Under. Topics on land prices, spraying, insects and diseases, soil testing, commodity marketing, social media and weed control were some of the other topics included this year.

The feature speakers were described as "excellent", "amazing" and "phenomenal". Celebrated humanitarian, Stephen Lewis, stirred the audience on the conference's first day with his knowledge of malnutrition in Africa and Canada. He challenged participants to continue "Feeding the World". On the second day of the conference, David Chilton, author & judge on Dragon's Den, entertained everyone by discussing "The World of Money". The audience kept laughing as Chilton explained how to be happy by living within our means. The crowd appreciated the knowledge & humour of each feature speaker & rewarded both with standing ovations.



The webcast of the sessions from two rooms on January 4<sup>th</sup> increased to eight locations this year. 115 participants at Kemptville, Thunder Bay, Sturgeon Falls and Thessalon enjoyed the program. In a partnership with the Grain Farmers of Ontario two new locations were added to the two they had last year and 77 participants took in the program at John Deere dealerships in Omemee, Walkerton, St. Isidore and Earlton. 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 a number of means.

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

- Value in Waste
- Sulphur Shortfall?
- Mistake Free Farming
- Drought Resilient Corn
- Manage Risk, Manage Volatility
- Myth Busting Nitrogen Research
- Bees: Pesticides, Science & Policy
- Picking Top Genetics
- Farm Windbreaks
- Conventional or Organic
- Glyphosate's Unintended Consequences
- Making Hay Pay

Once again the conference hosted a reception at the end of the first day. The Taste of Ontario reception featured meat, vegetables, fruit, 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.

**Event Contacts:**

Adam Hayes, OMAFRA, Ridgetown, [adam.hayes@ontario.ca](mailto:adam.hayes@ontario.ca),

Peter Johnson, OMAFRA, Stratford, [peter.johnson@ontario.ca](mailto:peter.johnson@ontario.ca)

Albert Tenuta, OMAFRA, Ridgetown, [albert.tenuta@ontario.ca](mailto:albert.tenuta@ontario.ca)

Visit our website [www.southwestagconference.ca](http://www.southwestagconference.ca) for conference information. A number of the presentations were recorded this year and are posted on the website under proceedings.

