



# OSCIA News...

June 2009

A NEWSLETTER TO UPDATE OSCIA MEMBERS,  
PRESIDENTS, SECRETARIES, TREASURERS, DIRECTORS,  
AND OMAFRA AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT CONTACTS —

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## OSCIA 2010 ANNUAL MEETING

**Date:** February 2 & 3, 2010

**Place:** Sheraton Fallsview  
Niagara Falls

## Message from the President

The weather this spring has been, needless to say, challenging. Some areas have experienced above average rainfall which has meant corn being planted later than normal and soybeans in some areas still in the bag. With the wetter-than-usual fall of 2008, there were cases this spring of fields of corn being combined, and right beside them, corn being planted.



*Murray Cochrane*

This spring, we signed a new three-year agreement with OMAFRA to partner in on-farm demonstrations and applied research. I would like to commend the local and regional associations for their enthusiasm in getting these projects up and going. It takes considerable time and effort for the co-operating farms, local associations with the assistance of OMAFRA staff, to design the proposal, implement the project, and tabulate the results. These efforts benefit the entire farming community with credible data.

We are anticipating that the next suite of programs under "Growing Forward" will be announced soon, and we believe there will be a strong uptake under the EFP program.

Since the inception of the EFP, over 35,000 farming operations in Ontario have participated. The farming community needs to be commended for their proactive approach to improving the environment. We look forward to working with OMAFRA on this continued successful program.

Once again, this year OSCIA participated in the Premier's Summit held at Queen's Park. The theme encompassed partnering, whether it be with research, agribusiness, retail, etc., to make your business stronger and more cost effective.

A new research outreach initiative called Knowledge Translation and Transfer (KTT) is designed to assist

researchers from OAC/U of G to extend research results to all sectors of the food chain. We look forward to providing input to OAC and OMAFRA staff to encourage more projects on the farm for demonstration and research purposes. There is potential for KTT to benefit members of OSCIA directly.

I encourage all members to take in the many field days and information sessions being held throughout the province this summer, and to bring along a friend or neighbour. I look forward to attending upcoming events throughout the summer and fall, and meeting with many of you. I wish all members a safe and successful summer. ♦

## 2009 Ontario Forage Masters Program

Two hundred and eight participants from 22 local associations entered the Ontario Forage Masters program this year. They are from Brant, Carleton, Dundas, Frontenac, Glengarry, Grey, Halton, Lanark, Leeds, Northumberland, Oxford, Peel, Perth, Peterborough, Renfrew, Russell, Simcoe North, Simcoe South, Stormont, Thunder Bay, Victoria, and Wellington.

Of the 208 participants, 24 are 4-H members who are part of a family that holds a membership in their local SCIA.

The sponsors - Pickseed Canada, Agri-Food Laboratories - are again offering valuable prizes to the top three winners from each local association.

A final provincial competition will take place this fall in conjunction with the third sponsor, the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair, to select an overall Ontario winner. This winner - the **2009 Ontario Forage Master** - will represent Ontario at the Forage Spokesperson Competition held as part of the American Forage and Grasslands Council conference to be held in Springfield, Missouri in 2010. A date for this has yet to be established.

Results from local activities will be forwarded to the contact persons for each local association as soon as they are available, usually in July and August. ♦



Visit the OSCIA website  
[www.ontariosoilcrop.org](http://www.ontariosoilcrop.org)  
new look coming soon!!

## OSCIA Annual Meeting

*A number of excellent speakers were featured at the 2009 Annual Meeting, whose presentations will be summarized in each issue of OSCIA News in 2009 by members of the OSCIA Regional Communication Coordinator team. Following is the second article.*

### “RESEARCHERS WORKING WITH FARMERS - The New Vision”

*John Shepherd, RCC, Golden Horseshoe Region*

Dr. Robert Gordon, new Dean of the Ontario Agricultural College, addressed the OSCIA delegates at the annual meeting held in Niagara Falls in February 2009. In his presentation, Dr. Gordon stressed that not only would he bring back the relationship that OAC researchers have traditionally had with farmers in Ontario, but under his



watch, those relationships would be enhanced. “We want to enhance our ability to inform the farm community,” he said.

Dr. Gordon said that connecting and reconnecting with the Ontario farm community is a priority for the OAC. Noting the college’s longstanding relationship with OSCIA, he said “We want to build on those traditional partnerships and relationships and we want them to evolve.” At the same time, he said, “We are anxious to establish new opportunities and new

innovations. Our goal is to support Ontario agriculture and the Ontario agri-food sector.”

“With the Ontario Agricultural College in year one of a new 5-year agreement with OMAFRA”, he said, “we must leverage that money as many times as possible.” He said we intend to establish new research clusters at the OAC and will employ a new approach when making faculty appointments. An example of this new approach is the merging of the departments of Land Resource Science and Environmental Biology to form the OAC School for the Environment. Lamenting the fact that in his opinion the linkage between OAC and agriculture in Ontario has been lost, he said his vision includes a greater extension role for faculty members and enhanced service to the industry. “Ours is a commitment to knowledge transfer,” he said.

Citing an example of farmers working with researchers, Dr. Gordon drew on his experience as Department Head and Dean of Research at the Nova Scotia Agricultural College. Working with the dairy farmers of Nova Scotia a

goal was established to have all dairy farms in the province in compliance with Canadian milk quality standards by 2006. The project started with an assessment study which determined that fully 40% of farms had detectable bacteria levels. From there, they set about correcting the problem on the 139 problem farms. Students undertook 139 individual case studies and developed specific recommendations for each farm. A summary of results revealed that 62% of problems were corrected using water treatment systems, 20% developed alternative water supplies, and 18% drilled new wells.

Dr. Gordon told delegates at the meeting that even though the University of Guelph is currently ranked 14<sup>th</sup> in Canada in research intensity, (money ÷ number of faculty members), 12<sup>th</sup> in the world by citations in agricultural science, and 14<sup>th</sup> in the world by impact in agricultural science, the weak link in the process is often the transfer of research to producers. "Production agriculture is still key to OAC agriculture research", he said, "but mine is a commitment to knowledge transfer".

Noting that there are many, many, exciting possibilities in the agri-food sector, Dr. Gordon said everything possible is being done via recruiting programs to make students realize the opportunities. "It is however, very expensive to maintain four campuses in the province," he said. (i.e. Guelph, Kemptville, Ridgetown & Alfred College) "To be successful, a staff of excellent, highly-connected faculty will be crucial."

Dr. Gordon, who took over as OAC Dean on August 01, 2008, earned a bachelor's degree in agricultural engineering and a masters degree in agricultural physics from McGill University. In addition he obtained a PHD in land resource science from the University of Guelph and holds an engineering diploma from the Nova Scotia Agricultural College (NSAC). He spent nine years at NSAC as a professor, department head and dean of research. He has served as the provincial climatologist for Nova Scotia and holds the Canada Research Chair in Agricultural Resource Management. He is also an adjunct professor of plant and soil science at the University of Vermont and Dalhousie University. He is an honorary research associate at the University of New Brunswick. ♦

*...and the third article.*

### **"2008 CROP REPORT & EMERGING TRENDS FOR 2009"**

*Cathy Dibble, RCC, Thames Valley Region*

OMAFRA's Ian McDonald and Keith Reid were the starting session of an excellent group of speakers at the 2009 OSCIA Annual Meeting in Niagara Falls in February. Ian and Keith summarized the 2008 growing season as very level...the majority of the province started with a cool month in May, but the rest of the season was very level. There was no lack of heat across Ontario, but we experienced no real spikes in

temperature either. Precipitation was also fairly steady, with more daily rains all season long than average, which mostly affected forage crops.

Trends in the forage industry indicate more producers are leaning towards large bales rather than small, are using more propionic acid preservatives, and are relying more than ever on baleage – possibly because of last year's wet weather. More cash crop producers are trying to grow hay for the horse industry, while livestock producers are expanding rotational grazing practices.

Corn production in the province in 2008 saw an increase in the average yield, with an amazing 168 bushels/acre. The ten-year average for production is 135 bu/acre, and the average yield has increased 1.9 bu/year since 1980. The new standard for counting heat units is to starting May 1 of the growing season. With increased input costs, cost-cutting measures are being used more frequently. Available tools on the [www.gocorn.net](http://www.gocorn.net) website include the nitrogen calculator and the manure nutrient calculator. The true cost of fertilizer is not the price per tonne, but rather how many pounds of grain or forage it takes to buy a pound of fertilizer (what we call the Price Ratio).



*Keith Reid, OMAFRA*

Trials indicate early weed treatment applications (3 leaf vs. 7 leaf stage) are affecting yield, and the critical weed-free period is at the 3-8-leaf stage. A new pest has caused significant damage in the western counties of Ontario in 2008. Western bean cutworm, seen in Michigan and Ohio over the last few years, has migrated to our province in 2008. This pest enters the plant at the side of the ear, and feed extensively on the kernels.

In cereal crops, the provincial wheat average yield has increased 1.1 bushels/acre/year, with the 2008 yield coming in at 81.5 bushels. Nitrogen trials are trying to determine optimal rates, and fungicide applications appear to increase optimal nitrogen rates.

Soybeans across Ontario averaged 43 bushels/acre in 2008. Since 1942, the average increase per year was .3

bu/acre, but the 20-year average increase is only .1 bu/ac. Breeding and agronomics research in the soybean industry are lagging behind since the majority of research dollars are focused on corn crops, although there are many trials assessing weed control in IP soybean crops.

All in all, 2008 turned out to be a very interesting crop year, with 2009 bringing new challenges and opportunities. ♦

### **Safety - trips and falls**

This issue of OSCIA News is providing some common causes of slips, trips and falls.

They include:

- messy, cluttered work areas
- tools, materials, cords, and other items lying on the floor or places where people walk
- poor visibility caused by inadequate lighting or burned-out bulbs
- not watching where you're going, or carrying something you cannot see over
- running or walking too fast
- spills and wet floors
- open drawers
- uneven, defective flooring, worn stairs
- failure to use handrails when using stairs
- not enough caution on ladders
- wearing shoes that are not appropriate for the work space or the job.

Staying on top of, and aware of, the above hazards will improve chances of avoiding injury.

Work safe - stay safe. ♦

### **SouthWest Crop Diagnostic Day**

The 15th Annual Diagnostic Day is an event that highlights current topics of interest. The goal of the day is to provide quality, state-of-the-art training in all aspects of crop production and management.

The event is being held July 8 and 9 at the Ridgetown Campus of the University of Guelph.

The Diagnostic Day is designed specifically to improve the problem-solving skills of seed, fertilizer and chemical industry personnel and agricultural consultants.

Individuals will have the opportunity to customize their Diagnostic Day experience.

Go to [www.diagnosticdays.ca](http://www.diagnosticdays.ca) for full program agenda, fees, and registration.

OMAFRA is presenting the event in co-operation with the University of Guelph Ridgetown Campus, with support from Soil and Crop Improvement Associations in southwestern Ontario. ♦

### **Prescott SCIA holds Seed/Feed Fair**

The Prescott SCIA held their Seed Fair on March 11 at the Alfred Community Hall. There were 50 entries in total, with 10 exhibitors.



Pictured in the photo at the event are Cecil Cass, Yves Bergevin, Nicholas Seguin, Luc Alarle, Rosaire Dupont, and Andre Pommerville (judge).

### **FREE BRUNCH 'Where Crop Farmers Meet'**

OSCIA is very pleased to partner with Bayer CropScience and Canada's Outdoor Farm Show to co-host a free brunch for OSCIA members and their buddies. Special features at the Show for 2009 include: Genuity(TM) Technology Expo; Celebrating Healthy Living; Canadian Energy Expo; Grober Young Animal Development Centre, and; Cover-All Dairy Innovation Centre.

Be sure to watch for Show Brochure along with VIP passes and brunch vouchers, which will be mailed to OSCIA members later this summer. ♦



#### **Soil Fact**

Soil is made from the weathering of rocks. It may take 100-1000 years to form one centimeter of soil.