



OSCIA News...

March 2008

A NEWSLETTER TO UPDATE OSCIA MEMBERS,
PRESIDENTS, SECRETARIES, TREASURERS, DIRECTORS,
AND OMAF CROP TECHNOLOGY CONTACTS —

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OSCIA 2009 ANNUAL MEETING

Date: February 3 & 4, 2009

Place: Sheraton Fallsview
Niagara Falls

Message from the President

As the winter of 2007-2008 draws to an end, we look forward to the upcoming spring season. Most of the province has had adequate moisture (even those areas hit with severe drought) and with commodity prices the best they have been in years, we look forward with optimism to this year's growing season.



Pat Lee

The past winter has been a busy time for OSCIA. Your Executive attended many annual meetings across the province and will continue to be available as the year continues.

The provincial annual meeting was held at the Sheraton Fallsview Hotel in Niagara Falls. We were able to provide excellent and knowledgeable speakers such as Kevin Hursh (Hursh Consulting and Communication Inc., Saskatoon) – **'Let the Good Times Roll'**; Dr. Jane Johnson (ARS.USDA, Morris Minnesota) – **'A Matter of Balance: Conservation and Renewable Energy – How soil quality is affected by removal of biomass'**; Doug Johnston (Perth County), **Ontario Forage Master**, and; Dr. Ralph Hardy (President, National Agricultural Biotechnology Council, Ithica, NY) – **Future Effects on Producers from Fuelling our Bio-Fuels Industry**.

Each county was well represented by enthusiastic delegates participating in question opportunities of speakers and those who gave reports. An informative presentation was given by OMAFRA's Peter Johnson and Scott Banks on crop production, followed by a lively comment period. County and regional groups presented the results of their Major and Partner Grants.

The Grant Guidelines for 2008 have been prepared and distributed, and we encourage counties and regions to submit projects. Regions should take note of the one-time Education Grant available this year only.

A very successful Canada-Ontario EFP program continues into 2008. Office staff continue to be very busy processing claims and issuing cheques. To the middle of February, 11,428 projects have received \$49,480,567 in

federal dollars. It appears that only a small percentage of farmers will not have completed their proposed projects.

We are pleased to hear that our federal and provincial partners have supported continuation of the EFP with new details of the cost-share opportunities to be released shortly. The 'Growing Forward' program is anticipated to have new opportunities for producers. We also look forward to our continued partnership with AAFC, OMAFRA and the Ontario Farm Environmental Coalition as we enter the next five-year series of programs.

OSCIA, in cooperation with OMAFRA and with funding from AAFC through the Ontario Agricultural Adaptation Council has just concluded a series of workshops in seven locations across Ontario to pilot test a new approach to engaging farmers in the '**Growing Your Farm Profits**' business planning project. An evaluation report of the workbook, workshops and process for 'Growing Your Farm Profits' will be provided later this spring. This will provide direction for a potentially expanded program delivery with this self-assessment, adult education and training program. The OSCIA Directors feel that the business side of managing our soil, water, air and crops is of great value while at the same time, dedicating resources to production issues.

On behalf of OSCIA, I wish you a safe and successful planting season. A little cooperation from the weathermakers would be welcome as well. ♦

OSCIA Annual Meeting

The OSCIA Annual Meeting in February was well attended by members, executives of the local associations, provincial government crop specialists, and agri-business.

The theme of this year's meeting was "*The Bio-Economy Effects on Soil/Crop Management*".

A number of excellent speakers were featured whose presentations reflected this theme. Their presentations will be summarized in each issue of OSCIA News in 2008 by members of the OSCIA Regional Communication Coordinator team. Following is the first article.

"OPPORTUNITIES FOR FARMERS TO PROVIDE BIO-AGRICULTURE FOR THE FUTURE"

- Neil Moore, RCC, East Central & Quinte Regions

According to Dr. Ralph Hardy, President, National Agricultural Biotechnology Council, Ithica, New York, "Farmers Feed & Fuel Cities" is the motto that should be used to promote the role of agriculture in the 21st Century. Agriculture can provide society with food, feed, and fiber, and at the same time



provide part of fuel, energy, and chemical requirements.

There are positive megatrends that will influence agriculture.

The age of Biology - GMO – we are just skimming the surface of this potential. As the human genome and DNA sequencing is perfected, there will be opportunity to use biology to introduce synthetic chromosomes to design crops to meet specific uses. Expanding market potential in China is huge.

Petroleum is a finite resource and watch price change after the peak production is reached.

Greenhouse Gas and Global Warming – we need to reduce net CO₂ emissions and agriculture is the solution as we reduce our environmental footprint. Agriculture also provides sustainability, but corn will be a small piece of bio fuels.

Technology investment requires an integration of research, product development, and regulation activity. In the US there are 3 centers of research for the biotechnology industry - the presence of government mandates and subsidies provides investor security. 20th century was fossil based and 21st will be a hybrid of fossil and bio sources.

Healthy foods - topics include organic, GMO, Omega 3, vitamins, anti-oxidants, food allergies, and natural food toxicant issues.

The Road Forward:

- the past - commodity crops used for food, feed and fiber
- the present - commodity crops used for first generation of energy chemicals and materials
- the present efforts - new biomass crops/trees and residues for next generations of energy chemicals and materials
- future - new food/feed crops with improved healthfulness.

Agriculture has the solution for the 21st century and to be successful, producers should focus on value added, by sharing in the products being produced through co-operatives that are mainly owned by producers, not just producing biomass crops. ♦

Be sure to watch for additional summaries of speakers in future issues of OSCIA News.

OSCIA Seed Fair Grants

OSCIA is sponsoring pedigreed seed fairs/shows during the fall and winter of 2007/2008.

OSCIA is providing up to \$300 each to ten local association pedigreed seed fairs/shows. The grant will promote the growing of certified seed as a preferred farm management practice.

To date, grants for the 2007/2008 season have been approved to Grey, Renfrew, Stormont, Dundas, Dufferin, Prescott, Middlesex, Nipissing West, and Glengarry. ♦

Membership

OSCIA continues to look for new opportunities to create extended value for membership, and to support the good work of the local associations. Increasing membership by 10% across the province was a goal the provincial Executive set for 2005-2008. With joint efforts from the local/district associations, regional associations, and provincial association, the goal of increasing our 2005 Membership value by 10% has been reached.

Congratulations for everyone's efforts to keep OSCIA as a vibrant grassroots association!

This winter, OSCIA members benefited from receiving discounts at regional events.

- \$10 off South West Agriculture Conference, Ridgetown, Jan 3-4, 2008; or \$10 rebate towards the purchase of a 2008 membership. **(72 new members registered, 2008)**
- \$15 off Farm\$mart Conference, Guelph, Jan 19, 2008, or non-member admission rate includes OSCIA membership. **(139 new members registered, 2008.)**
- \$5 off Eastern Ontario Crops Conference, Kemptville, Feb 21, 2008.
- Free admission to the East Central Farm Show, Lindsay, March 5-6, 2008.

2008 will continue to be an active year of regional events that support OSCIA's goals, and provide our members with information and advantages.

- \$15 off Soil Management Day, August 19th, Guelph area.
- \$15 off Farm\$mart Farming Systems Expo, Elora, July 3-4.
- Free Admission (vouchers to be provided) to Canada's Outdoor Farm Show, including the Bayer CropScience "Where Crop Farmers Meet" – VIP Brunch September 9, 10, 11.

A flyer outlining the benefits of being a Soil and Crop member is available in French and English for local associations to print and use as a promotional tool for new members. Please contact Deanna Deaville in the provincial office for the file to be sent to you. (800-265-9751 Ext 64219) ♦



Hot off the Press!

A copy of all the project reports from OMAFRA and OSCIA is available in the 2008 **Crop Advances** publication. A copy was provided to each delegate who attend the OSCIA Annual Meeting in February, and one copy has been sent to the secretary of each local association to share with members at meetings.

Local/regional association secretaries can order additional copies from the provincial office at a cost of \$12.00 for the hard copy, and \$3.00 for a CD. (Plans are under way to post these reports to the OSCIA website.) ♦

OSCIA Supplies

Supplies are available to local associations through the OSCIA office in Guelph.

Among items available are:

"*Freddy's Friends*", a 14-page story/colouring children's book about forages. Created by the American Forage and Grassland Council, this is one of the first of many plans to educate children about forages.

Local associations may order Freddy's Friends for an upcoming event where children will be present. They are provided free of charge.

OSCIA Farm Gate signs, an aluminum pre-drilled gate sign measuring 5" x 17.5" with OSCIA name and local member designation. This sign is available in English and French. Local associations may order these signs to present to a member who has helped out in some way. They can also be purchased by the local associations for resale to their members. The signs are \$10 each.

Rain gauges are also available to local associations for distribution to their membership. The style in stock are the round type, calibrated in millimeters.

Please contact Evelyn Howse at the Guelph office should you wish any of these items. ♦

2008 Ontario Forage Masters Program

Plans for the 2008 Ontario Forage Masters Program are well under way, with guidelines distributed to local associations in February.

PICKSEED
good things growing...

AGRI-FOOD LABORATORIES

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

For a listing of prizes, the guidelines, and how to enter, you are encouraged to contact your local association

president or secretary, who have recently received complete details.

The guidelines will also be posted on the OSCIA website in the near future.

The deadline for local associations to submit entries to the provincial office is April 18, so don't delay. Contact your local association secretary today. ♦

Fertilizer BMP Grant

This project is supported by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (Advancing Canadian Agriculture and Agri-Food Program Fund), the Agriculture Adaptation Council (CanAdvance Fund) contributing \$40,000, and The Fertilizer Institute Grant contributing \$10,000. Support is provided by the Ontario Agri-Business Association, Research and Environment Committee, the Certified Crop Advisers, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, the participating local Soil and Crop Improvement Associations and Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association. This project is a great example of partnership and leveraging funds to achieve worthwhile results at the grassroots level.

The objectives of these grants are to: 1) reduce the potential of nutrient loading in the environment and 2) provide an opportunity to create a niche market product. This is a three-year grant (2006, 2007, 2008). Approved projects are:

1. Micro Essentials@SZ Trial – *Thunder Bay SCIA*



2. Sulphur and Zinc Micronutrients to Improve Corn Yields – *York SCIA*
3. Examining the Effect of 15-15-3 Sidedress Fertilizer Applied at Planting by Adjusting Rates – *Essex SCIA*
4. Fertilizer Application Methods – Nitrogen Placement for Canola Effects of Sulphur on Canola Yields – *Nipissing West SCIA*
5. Starter Fertilizer for Corn on Livestock Farms – *Oxford SCIA*
6. Nitrogen Rates on Hard Red Winter Wheat – *Grey SCIA*
7. Demonstrate the Effectiveness of Fertilizer/Lime on Low Fertility Soils for Energy Crops – *Algoma SCIA*
8. Solid Manure Compared to Composted Manure – *Norfolk SCIA*



Photo: Chris Brown, OMAFRA

9. Economic Return of Lime vs. Fertilizer on Low pH, Short Term Rental Land – *Niagara North SCIA*
10. ESN Controlled Release Fertilizer – *Renfrew SCIA*. ♦

Cover Crops' Ability to Carry N to Subsequent Field Crop Results

This project has been funded by the Adaptation Council of Canada (Cord IV Fund) and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. OSCIA is cooperating with the University of Guelph and OMAFRA to address the possibility that where manure is applied to Ontario fields in the summer or early fall, cover crops such as oats could sequester Nitrogen and relay it into the corn crop the following year.

Results summarized by Greg Stewart, OMAFRA, show that while some nitrogen sequestering occurs in the fall, August-seeded cover crops did not appear to a) increase available soil nitrate the following June or b) improve corn yields in situations where the crops were relying on

manure as the only N source, when compared to a no-cover-crop situation. Cover crops did not appear to have any significant yield enhancement to the subsequent corn crop. This observation is drawn from a fairly wide range of growing conditions and fertility regimes in 2007.



This project compared manure application on 10 farm co-operator fields across Ontario. Results indicate that the average nitrogen credit for these manure applications was 41 lbs/ac. At a nitrogen price of \$0.52/lb, the value of that manure credit would be a savings in nitrogen fertilizer costs of \$21.32/ac. Even in the absence of cover crops induced Nitrogen savings, producers should be attentive

in taking manure credits into account in order to improve profitability and reduce over application of nitrogen fertilizer.

There may be longer-term benefits to having cover crops in rotations. Benefits may include: soil organic matter additions, soil structure improvements and weed suppression in the post-harvest period. These other potential benefits could not be measured in short-term duration of this project (one cropping sequence). ♦

Planning a Successful Meeting

OMAFRA offers a Fact Sheet on Successful Meetings. Following are a few tips printed from that Fact Sheet that may assist local and regional associations in planning upcoming meetings:

Before the Meeting:

1. Define the purpose of the meeting - a clear purpose is required for every meeting.
2. Plan the agenda as an outline of the topics to be discussed at the meeting. The chair should consult the secretary, treasurer and committee chairs when planning the agenda and organizing the materials and resources - ensure that critical items are discussed first, with the appropriate time allowed.
3. Send out the agenda and background information prior to the meeting. This will remind people of the meeting, ensure important issues are not overlooked and help members focus on the issues and be prepared to discuss them.
4. Ensure all reports and information are available. Confirm that the required person or a suitable alternate is available to attend the meeting and make a report.

TIP: Schedules are busy and fill up quickly, so keep your members aware of meeting dates well in advance.

For more information, you may access the OMAFRA Fact Sheet: Successful Meetings through their website at www.omafra.gov.on.ca. ♦

OSCIA Membership Display

OSCIA has revamped and revitalized the OSCIA membership display which is available to local associations for meetings and events.

Please contact Evelyn Howse at the Provincial Office (1-800-265-9751) if you wish to borrow the display.

Growing the Margins:

**Energy, Bioproducts
and Byproducts from Farm
and Food Sectors**

April 2 - 5, 2008

conference and exhibition

**To be held at the London Convention
Centre, London Ontario**

**Growing the Margins will offer a special
one-day tour of several renewable energy,
energy conservation and other projects
relevant to the conference, followed by two
days of plenary sessions and concurrent
technical sessions tailored to audience
interests.**

**Further conference information may be
found at www.gtmconf.ca.**

**OSCIA WEBSITE
VISIT US AT
www.ontariosoilcrop.org**