



Breaking Ground

(in Northeastern Ontario)

SPRING 11

A Publication of the North Eastern Ontario Soil & Crop Improvement Association (NEOSCIA)

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Promoting "Local" Food Consumption

by Graham Gambles, NEOSCIA Regional Communication Coordinator



A cross-section of the Temiskaming Agri-Food industry met at the Elk Lake Eco Resource Centre on January 26 to discuss the means available to increase the sales of local food products. Attended by more than two dozen participants, the discussion mainly revolved around the theme of "opportunities and challenges" presented by the growing interest in buying "local". A highlight of the event was a "local lunch" that was wholly grown in the Temiskaming area - except for the tomatoes! (Note that everyone can have the opportunity to enjoy this meal by visiting the Earleton Farm Show on April 8 & 9. The Centre will be preparing these products for your enjoyment at the canteen this year!)

The group first looked at the limitations of selling on the "Global" scale. It requires a huge land base for an individual or cooperative, requires large capital inputs for start-up, must be prepared to make "just in time" deliveries, must compete with other larger farms who are the price setters, must work with a middle-man (distributor) and must be prepared to be cut out of the system on short notice if someone else on the other side of the country (or world) can supply the product cheaper. Agricultural products are no more than a commodity, similar to iron ore, timber, and oil.

On the other hand, local food supply is very personal. It refers to the products that the general population consumes at home, three times per day. Traditionally, these (limited) products are only available at Farmers Markets, for a relatively short time during the summer and fall. The opportunity - and challenge - is to expand the public availability of these products while increasing both the range of products and the length of the season in which they are available. It is an entry point for new or "hobby" farmers in the area.

A number of opportunities came to the fore during the discussion. Locally, there

Continued on page 5

NOTE: **Sponsors/Advertisers needed for coming year. \$500 for 4 issues!**

This newsletter is published 4 times per year. Articles can be submitted in either English or French and should be submitted to the Communication Coordinator (see below). Please supply translation, if available.

Material in this newsletter is based upon factual information believed to be accurate. Action taken as a result of this information is solely the responsibility of the user. We reserve the right to edit articles.

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OBITUARY

Morley Shepherdson

A long time spark-plug in the agricultural community died suddenly of a massive heart attack on the afternoon of Saturday, January 15, 2011. Morley Shepherdson was out driving around New Liskeard with his wife Frances, and had just pulled into a gas station when he suffered the attack. He was 78.

Morley, who had just given up the position of NEOSCIA secretary-treasurer on December 31, 2010, still held a similar position with the Temiskaming Crop Coalition at the time of his death. A workhorse in the Christian and cultural communities as well, he was on the executive of many other organizations as well. There is no question that his organizational skills, his kindness, his humanity, and his dedication to all aspects of his community will be sorely missed.

During the past year and a half, Morley was instrumental in handling the NEOSCIA finances while this organization employed a "FedNor Intern" to the benefit of everyone in northern agriculture. In addition, his secretarial skills and sage advice were always of benefit to the groups executive over the years. The OSCIA head office staff in Guelph also appreciated his efficient work style and they send their condolences.

WILDLIFE CONFLICT

The Ontario government is proposing an agriculture-wildlife conflict strategy as part of the implementation of the province's Strategy for Preventing and Managing Human-Wildlife Conflicts in Ontario (2008).

This proposal has been posted for a 45 day public review and comment period starting February 25, 2011. If you have any questions, or would like to submit your comments, please do so by April 11, 2011.

To view the Regulation Proposal, please see:

<http://www.ebr.gov.on.ca/ERS-WEB-External/displaynoticecontent.do?noticeId=MTEyMzkw&statusId=MTY4NTgy&language=en>

For further background, please visit:

http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/policy/brm_wildlife/wildlifepaper.htm

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AALP Graduate, Paul Schoppmann

By: Janet Parsons, NEOSCIA President

Paul Schoppmann of Rocky Hill Charlois Farm in St Charles is a 2009 graduate of the Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program (AALP). He has embraced the experience and has moved into positions of leadership in the agricultural community and beyond. Paul gives much credit to the AALP program "The Advanced Agriculture Leadership Program is undoubtedly structured to enhance one's ability to analyse, debate, research and be receptive of all issues pertaining to the global agricultural infrastructure."

Paul and his wife Diane purchased the farm in 1985 while Paul was working for INCO for another 24 years while Diane was caretaker of the farm. In 2002 when BSE hit, the focus of the farm business changed from the purebred charolais herd to producing and marketing hay to the local equine market. Paul explains his strategy for marketing hay: "The main criteria for my hay business has been to replace any hay bales that the customer is dissatisfied with. We inspect the bale in question and provide a replacement. We have replaced approximately a dozen bales over the last ten years." Paul will be a speaker on solar power at the Earlton Farm Show on Sat., April 09/11.

Paul has only kudos for the AALP course and makes this statement "This course has without a doubt helped me in implementing some very forward looking decisions for the future." The Schoppmanns have installed four microFIT projects. "It's the way to go", says Paul. "When we were in Germany with AALP we saw how they worked. Paul is part of a group of farmers installing 26 microFIT projects in West Nipissing and East Sudbury and has been instrumental in getting the project off the ground.

Whether it's farm diversification, community development, or agriculture politics, the AALP program addresses the issues. The 48 day AALP program is delivered over the course of 19 months, creating learning opportunities that combine instruction and practical application, distance education, international travel, and dialogue with each other as well as with today's business, government, industry and community leaders. Paul encourages anyone interested in the Advanced Agriculture Leadership Program to contact the ROI office at (519) 826-4204 or check the website.

Algoma Soil & Crop 2010 Annual Meeting

by Sharon Lane, NEOSCIA Correspondent



Guest Speaker, Ben Bartlett, spoke on "Planning your Pastures" at the ASCIA Annual meeting. Bartlett, a specialist in grazing and pasture

planning, has travelled extensively outside the Upper Peninsula of Michigan to Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Argentina.

He started off his presentation by defining success, planning and grazing.

- "Success: Making progress towards what you want from life."
- Planning: Creating expected outcomes from 'written' predetermined activities'
- 'Grazing: Resource conversion: Sunlight to grass to animal protein... for YOUR benefit'

Bartlett says that success starts with a goal. It is a direction not a destination. Planning is only necessary if you want something different than what you have. Grazing if you are in the livestock business is the most important factor. Over 50% of the cost in raising livestock is in forage, and the quality of the forage has a major impact on the productivity of the herd whether it is pounds gained, milk produced or quality of wool. According to Bartlett, grazing provides lower cost and higher quality forage.

North American graziers are not using new technology or new knowledge to their advantage but are spending money on more fertilizer to get a higher yield. They need to work with the their soil and appreciate what creatures are in the soil. Bartlett says that the good news is that there is lots of room for improvement. Farmers can learn from the Aussies who use satellites to track forage yields and plan field rotation, from the British who have societies that visit farms to see best practices, and New Zealanders who keep track of their pasture numbers. North Americans don't plan their grazing. There are various grazing systems and each has benefits and costs. Bartlett says that animals will eat the best and leave the rest to the last.

Before planning the grazing, a farmer needs to know the key factors in grazing: the plants, the grazing stock and people involved. What the farmer does now (January and February) impacts on

next year. Does the farmer need a plan? Bartlett says no if he is happy with his current situation, but he does if he wants to change in any way. Bartlett suggests that the farmer have a plan for each of his weak links; for example, if he wants to extend his grazing season by 30 days, he might fertilize his hay field by applying nitrogen to the field on August 1. Bartlett gave concrete examples of goal setting.

He mentioned that New Zealand and Australian graziers do not put up hay. Hay will last for years. A 1000 lb round bale of hay costs about \$75 but \$40 of fertilizer is used. If the farmer grazes, he gets the fertilizer free. He suggests that farmers buy hay rather than put it up themselves.

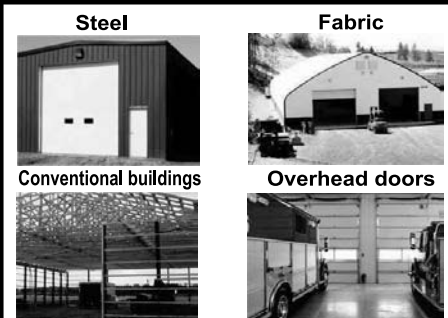
Bartlett ended his presentation by saying improvements in grazing will come from using existing knowledge since "use of technology has plateaued." Farmers were urged to want a change, to make a plan and to put that plan into action.

BURSARY!

District 12, Northeastern Ontario Horticultural Association, offers an annual bursary of \$500 to a student entering a program of horticulture or floriculture at an accredited college or university. Contact Lynn Coutts at 705-303-9360 or e-mail granny.turtle@hotmail.com



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2009 Temiskaming IPM Awards



Attached photo of Sean Mackey and James Franks accepting the Event of the Year Award from Ontario Minister of Tourism, Michael Chan.

The 2009 Temiskaming International Plowing Match has yet another accolade winning the prestigious Event of the Year by the Tourism Industry Association of Ontario (TIAO). The City of Temiskaming Shores proudly nominated the I.P.M. and for the first time, an event held in Northern Ontario was selected Event of the Year. Receiving the award on behalf of the Temiskaming I.P.M. Committee is Sean Mackey and James Franks at the Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corporation (OTMPC) Tourism Summit Gala held in Huntsville on November 8, 2010.

"It was an honor and a privilege for James Franks and I to accept the award on be-

half of the board and the 1500 volunteers." Said Sean Mackey, IPM Committee member who accepted the award from the Ontario Minister of Tourism Michael Chan. "A special Thanks to the city of Temiskaming Shores for the nomination. This is the first time an event in Northern Ontario has ever won the award and it once again puts Northern Ontario in the spotlight. The Temiskaming IPM was definitely the talk to the summit."

The Chairperson of the 2009 Temiskaming International Plowing Match, Carman Kidd made the following comments, "It was a privilege to be part of a group of volunteers, who took on the tremendous challenge of hosting an event of this magnitude. This event showcased all that is great about this area and its residents, to the rest of the world. This is truly a testament to the people of N.E. Ontario. I would like to thank the selection committee for this is truly an honour to have been selected for this award."

Chris Milner, Director of Northern Partnerships, OTMPC suggested that, "OTMPC and its Northern partners were privileged to be able to participate in

the event as exhibitors in the tented city. Although this was the first time that the event was held in Northern Ontario, I trust that the success will mean that it will return to the north again in the future. It is memorable events such as this that increase awareness of Northern Ontario and all it has to offer."

Ontario's Minister of Tourism, Michael Chan, provided the following words of congratulations to the winners of the award. "On behalf of the Government of Ontario, I would like to congratulate you on receiving the Event of the Year Award at the 2010 Ontario Tourism Summit for the 2009 Temiskaming International Plowing Match. This Event played a key role in promoting our province as a premier tourist destination and demonstrated leadership in the industry."

"The City of Temiskaming Shores was proud to submit the 2009 Temiskaming IPM for this award as we felt that the volunteers behind this event created a legacy for our area. We are extremely happy that the event was chosen by the Tourism Industry Association of Ontario (TIAO) as the provincial winner for the Event of the Year. It is extremely gratifying when an award like this is chosen by your peers in the tourism industry." Stated James Franks, Economic Development & Funding Coordinator for the City of Temiskaming Shores.

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Breaking Ground (in Northeastern Ontario)

Promoting "Local" Food Consumption

Continued from page 1

is never enough eggs to meet demand. Similarly, there are never enough vendors at the Farmers Market. With the advent of the day-neutral strawberry, our cooler climate can produce this crop from May to October for both local demand and even for southern Ontario (where hot summers limit the growth of the fruit). Same goes for garlic, which recently has become a high value, high demand product. There is a growing demand for organic products such as flour, which is already produced in Temiskaming.

The success of the Foire Gourmande every August in Ville Marie indicates that there are at least 50 active producers in a region that surrounds our inter-Provincial boundary. However, the opportunities for the general public to directly purchase these goods (beyond the event) remain limited. It is clear that we have the people who are capable to produce these food products, but we come up short in the sales and marketing aspect of the Agri-Food industry. But times are changing. For example, for the first time in 35 years, Bison du Nord (of Earlington) now has a local retailer of their products while the venerable Thornloe Cheese Factory now has an agreement to supply Walmart. At a Provigo store in N.W. Quebec, the owner sold over \$800,000 in regional foods in 2009.

The issue of what is "Local" needs to be determined. Is it strictly a distance thing as declared in the "100 Mile Diet"? Can it be limited to a District? Perhaps Temiskaming or Manitoulin? Maybe restrict it to a

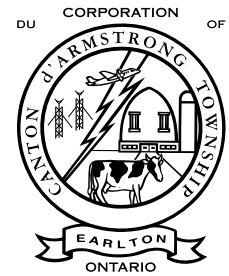
Provincial region - say all of Northern Ontario? How about inter-provincially? North Eastern Ontario plus North Western Quebec? The decision needs to be made soon, before interested parties begin to apply for government assistance in the re-development of the local food chain.

In the meantime, the Earlington Farm Show will offer Temiskaming residents the opportunity to meet their local suppliers of agricultural products. The "Lions Hall" on the main floor of the Earlington Arena will be dedicated to making "local food" connections from 10 am. to 9 pm. on Friday, April 8. Producers, primarily from the New Liskeard Farmers Market, will be available with a number of products for the general public to enjoy.

More importantly, the public will be encouraged to "contract" orders for delivery later in the season. (A bushel of cucumbers for pickling in August? A dozen ducks for the freezer in September? Free-range Thanksgiving turkey? A lamb for Easter?) Representatives from Green Temiskaming will be available to keep records and maintain a long-term one-point link between the public and the co-operating farmers.

It was pointed out at the Elk Lake meeting (and in virtually all literature on the development of local markets) that success is dependent on the establishment of a "Personal Relationship" between the grower and the consumer. To this end, a former vendor at the New Liskeard Farmers Market will act as "Hostess" for the event. She will ensure that personal introductions are made between the producers and the individuals from the public.

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CROP TALK

Volume 11, Issue 1

OMAFRA Field Crop Specialists — Your Crop Info Source

March, 2011

Table of Contents

1. What Corn Yield Do I Use for the N Calculator ?
2. Comparing Herbicide Programs in Identity Preserved (IP) Soybeans
3. "Boron on Trial" for Spring Canola Growers
4. Does Early Planting Along with Late Maturing Varieties Increase Soybean Yields?
5. GMO Alfalfa
6. Temporary Field Storage of Manure in Winter
7. Planning for the 2011 Grazing Season
8. So Long and Thanks!
9. Good Soil Structure Essential for Optimum Crop Growth

Brought to You by the Following OMAFRA Crop Specialists

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What Corn Yield Do I Use For the N Calculator?

by Keith Reid, Soil Fertility Specialist, OMAFRA

Many of you will have harvested more corn per acre last fall than you ever had before. Some of you will be wondering whether you should just use that yield number in figuring out your N recommendations. After all, we know that corn removed a lot of nitrogen, and with high corn prices you don't want to miss out on any yield.

The reality is that, while yield is one component of the N requirements for your crop there are a lot of other factors that are just as important. Simply adding more N will not overcome too much or too little water, or a soil that just doesn't allow good root development. The yields in 2010 came from more efficient use of the nitrogen that was already in the soil, so there were fewer losses to the air and water than normal. While there was increased uptake, there was also increased return to the soil of the nutrients in the crop residue, so this big crop did not "empty out" the soil reserve.

Going forward into the 2011 cropping season, you should increase the yield number you use in the corn N calculator, but only by the extent it increased your average yield. In other words, if you had been growing 140 bushel per acre corn on average, and in 2010 you harvested 200 bushels of corn, your average yield for the past 5 years would increase to 155 bushels of corn. This will increase your N recommendation by about 12 pounds per acre (13.4 kg/ha).

Shooting for higher yield goals than this would be like buying lottery tickets, except the potential payout is only about what you spent on the tickets and the chances of winning are about the same as the lottery. Gradual increments will keep your expenses in line while matching your N applications to what the crop needs.



Ministry of Agriculture,
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Comparing Herbicide Programs in Identity Preserved (IP) Soybeans

by Mike Cowbrough, Weed Specialist, OMAFRA & François Tardif, Clarence Swanton and Peter Sikkema, University of Guelph

Field studies at Elora and Woodstock have evaluated soybean herbicide treatments based on their weed control efficacy and the yield protection they provided. Important differences were found among those treatments (Table 1).

Table 1. Average visual control of broadleaf and grassy weeds and soybean yield (bu/ac) with various herbicide programs in 2009 and 2010.

Treatment	% Control		Yield (bu/ac)
	Broadleaves	Grasses	
Conquest + Valtera*	88	97	46.1
Boundary (PRE) followed by Reflex + Pinnacle + Assure II (POST)*	94	100	45.0
Dual II Magnum + Sencor + Lorox	89	100	44.8
Broadstrike RC + Boundary*	89	99	44.5
Conquest	80	88	44.5
Pursuit + Valtera*	90	92	44.1
Pursuit	75	80	44.0
Broadstrike RC + Dual II Magnum	77	96	43.5
Frontier (PRE) Cleansweep (POST)	80	100	43.4
Boundary (low rate)	81	97	42.4
Boundary (low rate) + Classic*	85	98	41.4
Cleansweep	73	90	40.6
untreated	0	0	14.7

*Not labeled tank-mixes, but may be used under the memorandum by the Pest Management Regulatory Agency regarding the use of unlabelled tank mixes. Contact the manufacturer of each product first before using to identify if they support the proposed tank-mix.

Weed species present in field trials: barnyard grass, crabgrass (Large), foxtail (green), witchgrass, lamb's quarters, mustard (wild), pigweed (green and redroot), ragweed (common), vetch (tufted).

Notes: Pigweed populations existed in the trials that were resistant to group 2 herbicides (e.g. Pursuit, Pinnacle, Classic, Broadstrike RC) and lambsquarters populations that were resistant to triazine herbicides (e.g. Sencor).

Strategies for Managing Grower Identified "Worst Weeds" In IP Soybeans

Tufted Vetch

It is extremely difficult to control a perennial legume plant in an annual legume crop. Of all herbicide programs tested, Boundary applied pre-emergence followed by Reflex + Pinnacle + Assure II provided the highest level of vetch control, albeit less than 80% visual control, the minimum level of control for a weed to be listed on a product label. (Table 2)

Table 2: Control of Tufted Vetch in soybean with herbicide programs evaluated in 2009-2010.

Treatment	Tufted Vetch Control %
Boundary (PRE) followed by Reflex + Pinnacle + Assure II (POST)*	74
Broadstrike RC + Boundary*	67
Dual II Magnum + Sencor + Lorox	62
Pursuit + Valtera*	59
Conquest + Valtera*	52
All other treatments	Less than 50

Nightshade

The challenge with nightshade is that populations exist that are resistant to Broadstrike RC and Pursuit. The emergence pattern of nightshade also presents a challenge in that generally it has two peak emergence periods beginning in mid-May and then again in mid-June and can germinate and survive in low-light environments such as a soybean crop canopy. Therefore "two-pass" strategies have proven more consistent at controlling nightshade. (Table 3)

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<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/croptalk>

Table 3. Comparative control and range in control of nightshade with herbicides applied in soybeans.

Soybean treatment, herbicide concentration, rate and application timing	Control (n=3)	Range in Control
Lorox Liquid (480 g/L), 1.8 L/ac (PRE)	99%	98-100%
Dual II Magnum (915 g/L), 0.7 L/ac (PRE) followed by Reflex (240 g/L), 0.4 L/ac + Turbocharge 5 L/1,000L (POST)	98%	94-100%
Dual II Magnum (915 g/L), 0.7 L/ac (PRE) followed by Blazer (240 g/L), 1 L/ac (POST)	97%	90-100%
Dual II Magnum (915 g/L), 0.7 L/ac (PRE) followed by Basagran Forte (480 g/L), 0.9 L/ac (POST)	94%	85-100%
Broadstrike RC (80%), 35 g/ac + Dual II Magnum (915 g/L), 0.58 L/ac (POST)	89%	78-99%
Dual II Magnum (915 g/L), 0.7 L/ac (PRE)	87%	76-93%

Common Ragweed

The biggest challenge with ragweed is that populations resistant to Broadstrike RC, Classic, FirstRate and Pursuit exist and are quite widespread. As with nightshade, “two-pass” strategies are more consistent at controlling common ragweed. (Table 4)

Table 4. Comparative control and range in control of common ragweed with herbicides applied in soybeans

Soybean treatment, herbicide concentration, rate and application timing	Control (n=4)	Range in Control
Boundary (PRE) followed by Reflex (240 g/L), 0.4 L/ac + Turbocharge 5 L/1,000L (POST)	98%	95-100%
Boundary (PRE) followed by Blazer (240 g/L), 1 L/ac (POST)	98%	96-99%
Reflex (240 g/L), 0.4 L/ac + Turbocharge 5 L/1,000L (POST)	81%	75-87%

Sow-thistles

Perennial sow-thistle is more tolerant to herbicides than annual sow-thistle, but they are both extremely difficult to manage. The expectation should be that you will not get 100% control. All herbicides evaluated were extremely

variable in their control of these two species as shown in Tables 5 and 6. It is possible to achieve acceptable control when populations are low and environmental conditions are ideal.

Table 5. Comparative control and range in control of annual sow-thistle with herbicides applied in soybean

Soybean treatment, herbicide concentration, rate and application timing	Control (n=5)	Range in Control
Classic (25%), 14 g/ac + non ionic surfactant 2 L/1,000L (POST)	95%	75-100%
FirstRate (84%), 8.5 g/ac + non ionic surfactant 2.5 L/1,000L + 28% UAN 25 L/1,000L (POST)	90%	69-100%
Blazer (240 g/L), 1 L/ac (POST)	88%	65-100%
Basagran Forte (480 g/L), 0.9 L/ac (POST)	86%	33-100%
Cleansweep + 28% UAN	84%	53-100%
Reflex (240 g/L), 0.4 L/ac + Turbocharge 5 L/1,000L (POST)	81%	46-100%

Table 6. Comparative control and range in control of perennial sow-thistle with herbicides applied in soybean

Soybean treatment, herbicide concentration, rate and application timing	Control (n=4)	Range in Control
Cleansweep + 28% UAN	85%	60-100%
Blazer (240 g/L), 1 L/ac (POST)	82%	64-100%
Basagran Forte (480 g/L), 0.9 L/ac (POST)	81%	61-94%
Classic (25%), 14 g/ac + non ionic surfactant 2 L/1,000L (POST)	79%	51-100%
FirstRate (84%), 8.5 g/ac + non ionic surfactant 2.5 L/1,000L + 28% UAN 25 /1,000L (POST)	76%	53-100%
Reflex (240 g/L), 0.4 L/ac + Turbocharge 5 L/1,000L (POST)	74%	54-84%
Pinnacle (75%), 6 g/ac + non ionic surfactant 1 L/1,000L (POST)	73%	45-86%

Key Learnings From Comparative Trials

- “Two-pass” strategies offer the most consistent level of weed control.
- “One-pass” soil applied herbicide programs offer less risk than “one-pass” postemergence herbicide programs since escapes or performance issues are more easily controlled.

This project was funded in part by the Grain Farmers of Ontario and through Growing Forward, a federal-provincial-territorial initiative. The Agricultural Adaptation Council assists in the delivery of several Growing Forward programs in Ontario. The assistance of OMAFRA through the OMAFRA/University of Guelph Partnership is also acknowledged.

“Boron on Trial” for Spring Canola Growers

by Brian Hall, Edible Bean & Canola Specialist, OMAFRA

There has been a great deal of debate about the need for boron on spring canola. It is well documented that boron plays a critical role in proper canola pollination and seed set. This has created quite a bit of interest from growers who have been experimenting with foliar boron applications at early-flowering. Also driving this interest, were the results of an on-farm trial by the first winner of the Canola Yield Challenge in 2005, Ray McCabe of Shelburne. Ray achieved the highest yields in treatments in which boron was included.

Western Canada Results

However, Dr. Rigas Karamanos, a canola fertility expert based in western Canada, concluded after reviewing all the research on boron in canola that there is little evidence that supports the use of boron in canola. Dr. Karamanos also supported OMAFRA’s recommendation that the current boron soil test is of no value in assessing the boron status of soils.

Conditions That Favour Boron Deficiency

Ontario soils contain sufficient boron to meet the needs of most crops. Canola and alfalfa both have a high requirement for this micronutrient. Deficiencies in Ontario have only been seen in alfalfa. As management practices and genetics move the yield bar higher in canola and alfalfa, the removal of boron from soils is increasing.

In the soil, boron moves with soil water, so it is subject to leaching. Sandy or gravelly soils, soils with very high pH (pH > 8.5), and low organic soils are prone to low boron levels. Soils east of the Niagara escarpment are particularly prone to be low in boron. Boron shortages on clay and clay loam soils are rare. Organic matter is an important source of boron. Under dry conditions, release of boron from organic matter and the movement in soil water is reduced.

Deficiency is more evident on droughty soils under dry conditions. Excessive applications of sulphur have been shown to lower the boron levels in canola plants by reducing the uptake of boron through the roots.

Temperature At Flowering

In a 2007 – 2008 study by Dr. Hugh Earl, University of Guelph, boron applied at early-flower improved yields by 5.7% in 2007, but only marginally in 2008. He summarized the reason for the different response between years, may be related to temperature during flowering and early-pod fill. Canola is a cool season crop, and it has been recognized that 29°C is a critical temperature for canola during flowering (Figure 1). High temperatures interfere with proper flower formation, pollination and results in increased pod abortion. While 2007 was a much more stressful year, with high temperatures during flowering, 2008 had no days over 30°C during pollination. In a 2010 controlled temperature greenhouse study, Dr. Earl was able to show that boron can help mitigate the effects of high temperatures during flowering, reducing pod abortion.

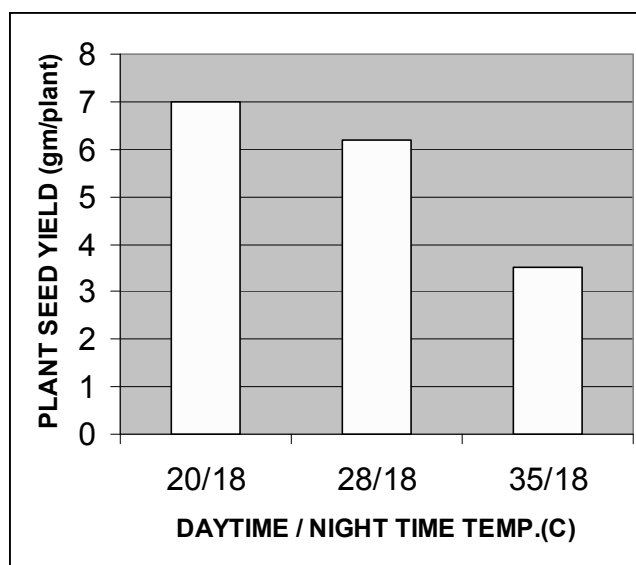


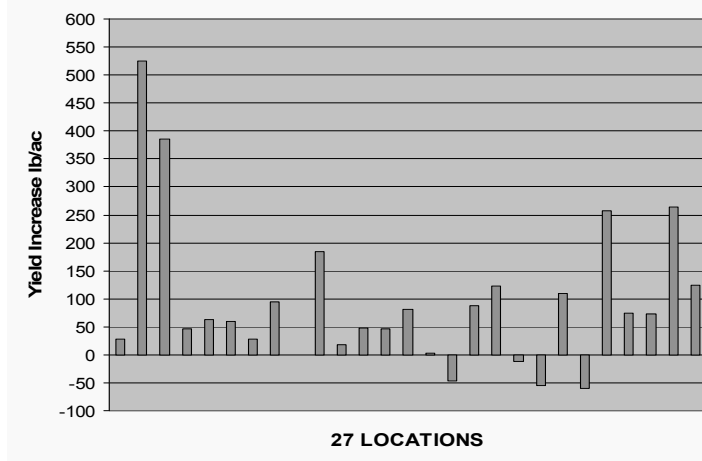
Figure 1. Daytime - Night time temperature impact on canola yield.

Note: Exposure to daytime / night temperatures of 20/18, 28/18, 35/18 °C for 10 days. Seed yield in grams per plant.

Ontario Field Trials Support Foliar Boron Application

In a 3 year (2008-2010) on-farm strip trial, foliar boron applied at early-flower increased yield by 94 lb/ac (3.5%) over the check (Figure 2 – Canola Yield Response To Foliar Boron). Boron application improved yields 78% of the time and improved returns 40% of the time (using a product cost of \$5.50/ac + \$10/acre application). Trials were field length with 2 replications. Favourable weather during the growing season in all three years of the trial, offered little stress to canola resulting in above average to phenomenal canola yields (1 – 1.6 t/acre).

Figure 2: 2008-2010 Canola Yield (lb/ac) Response to Foliar Boron



Options For Applying Boron

Banding or seed row placed boron can be toxic to plants, and is not recommended. In alfalfa the recommendation to correct a boron deficiency is to broadcast 1 - 2 kg/ha of actual boron, applied annually. The benefit of broadcast and incorporated boron in canola has not been tested in Ontario. If boron is to be applied foliar in canola, the recommended rate is 0.3 – 0.5 lb/ac (0.34—0.56 kg/ha) of actual boron.

Many other field crops have low boron requirements and can be injured by boron applications. Most notable are the grass family, dry beans, cereals, soybeans, corn, and peas. If these crops are to follow in the rotation, do not apply boron the previous fall, or exceed the recommended rate in the previous alfalfa or canola crop.

Manure can also be a source of boron. Manure applied to sandy areas or other suspect areas can also provide organic matter. Boron should not be applied with a herbicide, without first consulting with a specialist.

If you are interested in participating in a foliar boron trial on canola, contact Brian Hall, OMAFRA at 519-271-0083 or by email: brian.hall@ontario.ca

Does Early Planting Along With Late Maturing Varieties Increase Soybean Yields?

by Horst Bohner, Soybean Specialist, OMAFRA

Traditionally, growers plant soybean varieties that will reach maturity based on the projected crop heat units (CHU) for their particular area. This practice is usually

combined with planting soybeans in mid-May. One management strategy that consistently leads to higher yields is early planting. Another strategy may be to plant late maturing varieties for a given area. With the introduction of CruiserMaxx seed treatment, higher plant populations can often be achieved under more stressful conditions, making it possible to plant earlier.

Can combining these two management strategies lead to a larger yield increase than using either independently?

An OMAFRA project is currently underway to test the yield benefits while using these two management options in soybean production. The results from 2010 were very encouraging. The yield response of 3 soybean varieties was measured for

- an early planting date (April 15 - May 5),
- a normal planting date (May 6 - 20) and
- a late planting date (May 21 - June 5).

Varieties were chosen over a range of maturities, ranging from full season maturity up to a full season plus 400 CHU's maturity. Sites were chosen from various heat unit areas from Chatham to Quebec.

2010 Results

The 2010 growing season was exceptional. April was warmer and drier than usual allowing very early planting dates at some sites. With above average temperatures and timely rains throughout the year, yields were very high. There were no significant insect or disease pressures at the test locations. Early planting combined with the great growing season meant that early planted soybeans had outstanding yields. However, the late planted plots also had above average yields.

The yield results for the trials are summarized in Table 1, showing the yield advantage gained for each variety and each planting date. The overall yield loss from later planting across all sites is shown at the bottom of the table.

In this single-year study, the advantage to planting earlier was about 3 bu/ac more than a normal planting date, and 10 bu/ac more than a late planting date. Keep in mind that the late date was before May 26th for some of the sites.



Photo taken June 22, 2010 showing a soybean plant with 7 trifoliates that was flowering. This is ideal for maximum yield.

Table 1: Summary of Yield Results for Early Planting Date and Long Day Soybean Varieties

Location and Seed Variety			Planting Date (2010)		
ELORA			29-Apr	20-May	15-Jun
Treat-ment	Variety	Seed Trt ¹	Bu/ac	Bu/ac	Bu/ac
1	2760RY	UN	68.7	66.4	52.7
2	2760RY	CR	70.6	65.0	56.1
3	2960RY	CR	71.3	68.3	55.7
4	3111RY	CR	71.8	67.7	48.4
		Average	70.61	66.85	53.21
		Yield Loss		-3.76	-17.40
SEAFORTH			29-Apr	16-May	25-May
1	28-10RY	UN	51.30	50.10	43.60
2	28-10RY	CR	54.40	47.40	47.50
3	29-60RY	CR	56.50	54.70	51.00
		Average	54.07	50.73	47.37
		Yield Loss		-3.33	-6.70
ST. HUGUES			13-May	24-May	9-Jun
1	28-10RY	UN	59.58	53.43	48.30
2	28-10RY	CR	61.40	54.78	49.58
3	29-60RY	CR	61.60	60.30	56.50
4	29-10RY	CR	56.58	53.18	54.08
		Average	59.79	55.42	52.12
		Yield Loss		-4.37	-7.68
AYR			24-Apr	4-May	21-May
1	28-10RY	UN	69.40	70.00	63.90
2	28-10RY	CR	73.00	71.80	65.40
3	29-10RY	CR	76.50	74.60	74.40
		Average	72.97	72.13	67.90
		Yield Loss		-0.83	-5.07

Location and Seed Variety			Planting Date (2010)			
CDL²			26-Apr	13-May	23-May	
Treat-ment	Variety	Seed Trt ¹	Bu/ac	Bu/ac	Bu/ac	
1	28-10RY	UN	55.10	58.10	51.50	
2	28-10RY	CR	56.30	58.70	53.80	
3	29-60RY	CR	61.90	45.80	60.60	
		Average	57.77	54.20	55.30	
		Yield Loss		-3.57	-2.47	
CHATHAM			20-Apr	17-May	4-Jun	
1	31-11RY	UN	99.40	90.60	69.60	
2	31-11RY	CR	105.9	88.80	58.70	
3	33-10RY	CR	102.6	91.60	67.90	
4	RC3125	CR	96.30	94.40	68.30	
		Average	101.05	91.35	66.13	
		Yield Loss		-9.70	-34.93	
RIDGETOWN			29-Apr	26-May	12-Jun	
1	31-11RY	UN	50.63	50.22	41.50	
2	31-11RY	CR	50.32	50.73	43.45	
3	33-10RY	CR	46.98	48.40	41.91	
4	RC3125	CR	43.68	45.07	39.34	
		Average	47.90	48.60	41.55	
		Yield Loss		0.70	-6.35	
KEMPTVILLE			24-Apr	7-May	17-May	
1	2760 RY	UN	67.24	65.13	70.14	
2	2760 RY	CR	62.07	69.65	66.13	
3	2960 RY	CR	79.58	85.16	89.23	
4	3111 RY	CR	95.02	90.21	89.31	
		Average	75.98	77.54	78.70	
		Yield Loss		1.56	2.73	
ALL SITE AVERAGE			Total Average Yield	67.52	64.60	57.78
Yield Loss				-	-2.91	-9.73

¹UN = no seed treatment, CR = cruiser maxx seed treatment

²CDL = Coteau-du-lac, Quebec.



OSCIA NEWS

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

Table of Contents

Message from the President
OSCIA 2011 Annual Meeting
OSCIA Membership Benefits
Lake Simcoe Clean-up Fund
Seed Bytes
CSGA Annual Meeting
NEW OSCIA Member Benefit

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E-mail: oscia@ontariosoilcrop.org

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**OSCIA 2012
ANNUAL MEETING**
Mark the Dates NOW
February 7 & 8, 2012

Message from the President - Max Kaiser



One week into being “President” and I am tasked to write my “Message”. I can assure you: it is truly humbling to take this position with OSCIA. As much as I have been sitting on the Executive committee for three years already, to take the helm of an organization so connected and with such a history is

rather exhilarating.

In looking forward, it seems a good idea to consider the history. OSCIA was initiated by the (then) Department of Agriculture and the Ontario Agricultural College in 1939 to provide extension opportunities to the farmers of this province, while at the same time, connecting research to the farms so as to make it all the more useful and valuable. Seventy-two years later and we are still there, still filling that role and working hard to ensure the future of those very goals.

It seems that when we look at our Strategic Goals, which this Board reaffirmed this past year, we are challenged to vision out 5 to 10 years or more and postulate where the Organization will be then. As I said at the banquet in Niagara Falls, for an Association that is already innovative and leading within the industry, this can be a bit daunting. However, now I realize that our role in the future needs to be what it is now, and what it has always been.

I wouldn't want to miss opportunities to provide value to the membership, nor to track emerging

trends and further our knowledge and understanding around them. But, our core goal is to be the toolbox that our government and research partners go to. We have the tools and the hands to make research relate to the farm, as much as we can also provide guidance to researchers.

We talked a great deal about KTT (Knowledge Translation and Transfer) recently, but truly this is what we have always done and precisely how our partners view our contributions.

Through partnerships, we pursue field trials and research like the current Biomass initiative, which includes OPG (Ontario Power Generation) as one of our partners. The various ideas are shared across the countryside about what crops to grow and how to manage the biomass both in the field and processed before finally putting the end products to use. While the focus here is around growing fuel for energy, a lot of information will be gleaned to apply to other end uses as well.

I am eager to pursue the year ahead, as President of OSCIA, and all that may come with it. Last year proved to be a reasonably good year at the farm level, and I go into this year with hope and positive thinking... the glass is half full and going up!

I look forward to working with this year's Executive and the provincial staff. As well, I will take every opportunity to promote all the good we provide in agriculture and encourage all of you to do the same. ♦

2011 OSCIA Annual Meeting Speakers

Cathy Dibble - Lead RCC

Crop Highlights from 2010 and Key Issues for 2011

Keith Reid and Mike Cowbrough, OMAFRA

The OSCIA Annual Meeting was held in Niagara Falls on February 8 & 9, 2011. Keith Reid and Mike Cowbrough were the first presenters at the 2011 Annual Meeting. New for this year, all attendees at the meeting were given "clickers", an electronic method of surveying the crowd during the presentations. Results were displayed on-screen immediately during the sessions, resulting in good feedback and a few chuckles throughout both days. When polled on which brand of pickup truck

producers at the meeting drove, 3% of the respondents replied "John Deere!", and 5% of the crowd thought Peter Johnson caused the greatest economic loss to Ontario soybean growers, compared to weed control, variety choices, planting dates or compaction issues. The correct answer is actually late planting, and it is estimated that costs producers \$100 million in yield.

Keith started the session comparing weather trends from 2009 to 2010, noting that on average 2010 was only 1.7 C warmer as recorded at the Elora Research Station and rainfall recorded was very close in both years but depended on what part of the growing season you look at. 30% of the room guessed this correctly.

Mike stepped in to mention that most of the corn in the province was in the ground early in 2010 but the majority of the crop did get hit with a hard frost around May 5-7. However, most of the corn pulled through without replanting and Mike still recommended producers plant early if the ground is fit. Mike noted that Greg Stewart has been running some trials on plant populations, and it appears that planting at 31-32,000 seeds/acre results in higher yields. The majority of the producers in the room plant at 30-32,000. The provincial corn yield average was an amazing 172 bu/acre for 2010, and in the Ontario Corn Committee performance trials (small plots) three varieties yielded over 300 bu/acre! The results from the performance trials are available at www.gocorn.net.

Keith came back to talk fertilizer price comparisons over the last ten to twenty years, and asked the crowd how they would be handling their fertilizer program with these higher prices. Fifty-five percent of the room responded they would follow soil test recommendations more closely. He recommended producers look at the cost in terms of how many pounds of corn it takes to buy a pound of fertilizer. Keith noted that in trials at the Elora Research Station indicated starter fertilizer with potassium (K) showed good response even when K was broadcast.

Mike then highlighted provincial winter wheat yields from 2010, with the provincial average reaching 82.3 bu/acre, one full bushel more than the trendline yield predicted. SMART Wheat trials with fungicide and various N application rates are

showing some yield bumps, and the trials will continue in 2011. The 2011 winter wheat crop was planted in good conditions last fall. Keith asked the crowd if they thought these bigger yields required more fertilizer, which really breaks down into two questions: Do continuously bigger crops require more fertilizer to maintain fertility levels, and would these crops have yielded even higher if extra fertilizer had been applied? In 2010, it these high yields resulted from good soil conditions and excellent weather in most areas of Ontario. Good soil conditions result in larger plant root systems enabling more efficient nutrient uptake, and good weather produces better use of nutrients. In other words, the crops likely needed less P&K in 2010, but may have responded to higher nitrogen rates.

For 2011, Keith and Mike stressed the idea of not farming for last year. Look at the long term averages for your farm, and don't count that 2011 will be anything like 2010! Keep watching your fertility, plant early when the conditions are right, keep an early eye on weed control follow good agronomy practices. Walk early and walk often!

The full presentation from Keith and Mike, including data charts and photos, is available for download from the OSCIA website at <http://www.ontariosoilcrop.org/2011ampresentations.htm>

- Attend local meetings with keynote speakers addressing local issues
- Opportunities to contribute as a leader at the local, regional or provincial association level
- Influence research agendas through farmer representation on 15 Ontario Agricultural Research Committees and 2 coalitions.



Lake Simcoe Clean-up Fund



On February 22, 2011 in Keswick, Joan McKinlay, OSCIA First Vice President, joined other dignitaries in bringing attention to the environmental projects that will be supported through round six of the Lake Simcoe Clean-Up Fund. As part of the investment, OSCIA will receive \$940,000 towards the Lake Simcoe Farm Stewardship Program, delivered in association with the Canada-Ontario Environmental Farm Plan.

Those speaking at the event included (left to right) Joan McKinlay, OSCIA; Patrick Brown, Member of Parliament for Barrie; Richard Simpson, Chair of Protect and Preserve the Environment of Lake Simcoe (PROPEL); and the Honourable Peter Van Loan, Canada's International Trade Minister and Member of Parliament for York-Simcoe. *(Photo provided by Environment Canada)*



Membership Benefits

- \$10 off Southwest Agricultural Conference
- \$15 off FarmSmart Conference, Guelph
- \$5 off Eastern Ontario Crops Conference, Kemptville
- Free Admission to the East Central Farm Show
- \$15 off Soil Management Day
- \$15 off FarmSmart Diagnostic Day, Elora, July, 2011
- Access on-farm demonstrations and applied research trials
- Receive quarterly newsletters with information on local trial results, upcoming crop tours, summer and winter annual meeting details, details on cost share programs available
- Opportunity to participate in the Ontario Forage Masters program
- Network with other progressive farmers in your area at meetings, bus tours and twilight tours

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

www.ontariosoilcrop.org

Check out what is new!

**Seed Bytes - Harold Rudy , Secretary
Manager, OSGA**

Seed Inspection Service, Is Change in the Air?

Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) has recently confirmed that:

- There will be no changes to programs or services until we have solutions that are mutually agreeable to all parties involved.
- CFIA is planning to explore alternative service delivery options with industry regarding the delivery of the seed certification system.
- CFIA will continue to work cooperatively with industry.
- All options regarding the alternative service delivery mechanisms for seed crop inspection will proceed through an industry-government working group (IGWG) which includes the Canadian Seed Growers' Association (CGSA), the Canadian Seed Institute (CSI) and the Canadian Seed Trade Association (CSTA).

For progress on the 'Seed Program Modernization, go to:

<http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/plaveg/seesem/consult/consulte.shtml>

A pilot project will be conducted for the 2011 cropping season on Certified soybean seed crop inspection in Southern Ontario. This project will build on the current system in place for hybrid corn and hybrid canola where individuals are trained, evaluated and licensed by the CFIA. Check out the details:

<http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/plaveg/seesem/20110217inde.shtml> ♦

Attention Seed Growers!

CSGA Annual Meeting

July 6-9, 2011

Sheraton Hamilton Hotel

Book your room NOW!

New OSCIA Member Benefit

**Anne Howden Thompson, RCC,
Golden Horseshoe**

As farmers gear up for the 2011 crop year there is a brand-new tool in the industry toolbox geared to helping farmers reduce their agricultural chemical input costs. Savvy Farmer (www.savvyfarmer.com) is an online database that lets farmers pinpoint the right treatments for their field or orchards at the

lowest possible price.

In recent years there has been a proliferation of both generic and private label products and companies entering the crop protection market. Control options are increasing in both number and complexity and Savvy Farmer have harnessed all of the information into one spot, wanting to become the farmers' "one-stop information shop".

"We developed Savvy Farmer to help farmers save money and make better choices when it comes to pest control," says Warren Libby, a former crop protection industry executive and the president and co-founder of Savvy Farmer.

At the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association (OSCIA) Annual General Meeting in Niagara Falls last month Libby reported that over 100 crop protection products have lower prices in 2011 compared to previous years. "There are some really sizable savings to be had, as long as you are aware of what is going on," he said.

But Libby says the real "guts" of the program is the ability of a farmer to be able to custom-design a treatment for any particular field. "If you put your sprayer in, it will automatically populate your calibration so you don't have to do that," he says. Details can be further fine-tuned by employing the advanced filters option. "If the price per acre is more than you want to spend you can crank down the rate and re-calculate," he says.

Smartphone mobile applications for are currently in the development stages and expect to be launched this spring.

OSCIA have partnered with Savvy Farmer, offering special subscription discounts for OSCIA members. OSCIA members won't want to miss this opportunity! Register online at www.SavvyFarmer.com.

	Advanced Version	Pro Version*
Annual Subscription	\$199	\$399
OSCIA 2010-2011 Member Discount	30%	30%
Net price for OSCIA members	\$139.20	\$279.30
Discount code	OSCIA-A-30	OSCIA-P-30

Does Early Planting Along With Late Maturing Varieties Increase Soybean Yields?

According to the findings so far, the simple answer is yes. Yes, planting early with later maturing soybean varieties can increase a producer's chances of a higher yielding soybean crop. "Early" planting can have a 3 bu/ac advantage over a "normal" planting time and nearly a 10 bu/ac advantage over a "late" planting window. This is a significant improvement considering it costs nothing to plant early.

On average, the longest day varieties yielded more than the adapted varieties. However, these results are less clear, more site year data will be necessary to confirm this. In some cases, the adapted variety was still the best yielding as long as it was planted early. The findings so far showed that planting a very late maturing bean past the middle of May will result in significant yield reductions and is not recommended.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to Monsanto Canada Inc. for their contribution to this project and acknowledgements to AAC, GFO and the U of G for their support.

GMO Alfalfa

by Hugh Martin, Organic Crop Production Program Lead, OMAFRA

In January 2011, the USDA deregulated the planting of genetically modified alfalfa. The current trait of interest is for tolerance to glyphosate, also known as Roundup Ready (RR). It is expected that RR alfalfa will be planted in the USA in 2011. The RR alfalfa trait was approved for use in Canada in 2005, but has not yet been commercialized for use on farms. Currently in Canada, there are no registered varieties of RR alfalfa, and glyphosate is not registered for this use on alfalfa. However, eventually it will likely be grown here as well. To understand the potential risks, we need to understand how alfalfa is currently grown and how GMO (genetically modified organism) alfalfa may potentially spread.

Limited Utility of This Trait In Ontario

In Ontario, most alfalfa is planted in mixtures with 10-30% perennial grasses. Grasses are planted to improve feed value, harvestability, and palatability for the livestock. RR alfalfa is only appropriate for use in pure alfalfa fields, which has not been the general preference of producers in Ontario. Spraying a typical hay field with glyphosate would kill all perennial grasses. The current practices of underseeding alfalfa mixtures with cereals for establishment, and short rotations of less than 3 - 4 years

for the hay crop reduces the usefulness of this type of herbicide trait.

In the future we will likely see more types of GMO alfalfa introduced that may include increased yields, improved winterhardiness, or improved digestibility or other feed traits. These traits may have greater usefulness and potential for commercialization in Ontario.

Potential For Genetic Contamination Within Alfalfa Fields

A primary concern of GMO alfalfa is pollen drift and the pollination of non-GMO alfalfa plants. RR alfalfa will likely see its greatest utility in intensively managed alfalfa fields that are harvested in a 3-5 cuts per year system before the crop flowers. This early cutting would eliminate pollen spread. For seed to be produced the alfalfa would have to remain standing for another 4-6 weeks after flowering. This could happen if the pollen spreads to feral alfalfa plants that are growing outside the field boundaries. Feral alfalfa should be eliminated near seed fields where this is a risk. Care also needs to be taken at seeding to avoid seed spills of GMO seed and allowing seed to be spread into non-harvested areas.

Alfalfa plants are "autotoxic". If an alfalfa plant produces seed and that seeds falls to the ground it will not likely be able to produce a healthy plant within about 15 cm of an existing mature alfalfa plant. Adjacent grass plants in the stand also outcompete these new alfalfa seedlings. This reduces the chance of pollen from another field creating GMO plants within a non-GMO field.

Potential For Genetic Contamination In Seed Production

Most of our alfalfa seed is produced in western Canada or USA. The main concern will be to ensure the purity of the non-GMO seed. Isolation distance guidelines for alfalfa seed production will need to take this into account, as will other seed handling practices. Most alfalfa pollination is by leaf cutter bees that do not travel as far as honey bees.

Manage Potential Risks

Organic prohibits GMO. Organic farmers must manage their farms to reduce the chances of GMO in their organic products. Similar to pesticides, GMO's are part of the farm environment, and we must learn how to manage any potential issues arising from their use.

Another article discussing this issue is **Understanding Roundup Ready Alfalfa** by Dr. Dan Undersander, University of Wisconsin at: http://hayandforage.com/Understanding_Roundup_Ready_Alalfa_revised.pdf Other articles on biotech alfalfa and coexistence of genetically engineered traits are available on the National Alfalfa & Forage Alliance website at: <http://www.alfalfa.org/CSCoexistenceDocs.html>

Temporary Field Storage of Manure In Winter

by Christine Brown, Nutrient Management Lead – Field Crops, OMAFRA

The opportunity to get bedded-pack cattle manure was too good to pass up. But now as the field in front of me is a sea of white with deep drifts, one question arises, “Where is the best location to temporarily store the manure?”

Temporary field storages are an alternative to field applied manure on snow covered and frozen fields. Temporary field storages can be a great solution to limited barn storage of manure and can also be a time saver during the busy spring season for transporting manure. However, when the snow is deep and the ideal place for a temporary storage may not be easily accessed, what are the options?

There are guidelines that help determine the best place for temporary storages. They are in place to minimize the risk of contaminating water sources and also to help prevent complaints from local residents.

1 How solid is the manure?

The more bedding in the manure, the greater the dry matter content and the less likely the manure will move.

2 Is the manure nutrient rich?

The more concentrated the nutrient content of the manure (ie from broilers), the more risk that some of the nutrients will move through leaching or volatilization. Concentrated manures would ideally be stored until field application on a concrete pad, where runoff is collected or prevented through coverage.

3 Where are the field tiles located?

A tiled field is not the best location for a manure pile. Temporary storages should have at least 3 meters (10 ft) between the edge of pile and the nearest tile drain. Storages should also be located away from exposed bedrock.

4 What is the soil texture?

Sandy or light textured soils (Hydrologic group A soils) are risky for temporary storages. Infiltration in the spring will increase the risk of nitrogen leaching.

5 Distance to neighbours or watercourses.

No one likes a manure pile beside their property, especially if there are odours or flies associated with the temporary storage. It should take about 2 to 3 minute to walk to a temporary storage from the edge of a field (100 m from edge of field or 125 m from the nearest residence).

6 Distance to water or surface inlets.

We all know that manure needs to stay out of water, whether a river or water course, a catch basin or areas where water flows or floods during spring melts. A 3 minute walk (~150 m) to get to the water source ensures that there is adequate distance to minimize risk of nutrient contamination.

8 Should the temporary storage be covered?

Covering a storage is much easier said than done, and usually isn't very practical for short term storages. However, covering a storage with a tarp would be warranted when there is increased risk for an adverse effect. For example, tarping a temporary storage of heavily bedded broiler manure with a high concentration of nutrients, will ensure that the nutrients will still be in the pile at the time of field application.

9 How long is “temporary”?

Although it seems obvious, manure piled in the field as temporary storage should be applied to the field to meet the upcoming growing season's crop needs. In a few cases, temporary storages have been in place until grain harvest. In those situations, extra precautions should be taken to ensure that environmental risks (including odours and insects) are minimized.

Temporary field storages are regulated under the Nutrient Management Act. Farms not phased in to nutrient management regulations are encouraged to follow the guidelines. Information regarding the specifics of temporary manure storages can be found on the OMAFRA website at: <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/engineer/facts/10-039.htm>.

Planning For the 2011 Grazing Season

by Jack Kyle, Grazier Specialist, OMAFRA

What will the 2011 grazing season be like? If past years can provide any guidance, at some point it will be too dry, too wet, too much forage to graze and not enough forage to graze. A little bit of planning and preparation at the beginning of the season can pay big dividends by the end of the year.

Budget Grazing Inventories

The first step is to take inventory of what you have and what you need. Estimate the pounds of grazing livestock you will have each month. They will require about 3% of their body weight in dry matter each day.

Now estimate how much production you will get from your pastures. A very good to excellent pasture should produce 5,000 lbs of dry matter per acre. However, 60% of this will come in May and June, and the remaining 40% over the following 3 to 4 months.

Do you have enough feed to get you through to the end of October? What about November and December?

Example Budget

Table 1 budgets for 100 ewes weighing 150 lbs, and 150 lambs weighing 30 lbs at the beginning of the grazing season and gaining 1/3 of a lb per day. You can substitute your own numbers using this example.

This budget assumes the lambs are eating forage.

Although they maybe getting more of their energy from milk, the ewe will be eating slightly more forage to produce that milk. It is important to determine the total pounds of animals that are on the pasture. Their daily pasture forage requirement (dry matter basis) can then be calculated as 3% of their body weight.

The Table estimates the pasture production based on monthly totals. This will vary from field to field and to a certain extent on the weather. Note these numbers are estimates and each farm will vary. Use your own assumptions.

Strategies

As we can see in this example, June has a lot of pasture available. This could be made into hay or if well managed, provide carryover for July and August.

In August, we have a major shortage. How can you meet the requirement?

- Feed hay made in June,
- Graze the second growth on hay fields,
- Plant an annual crop to supplement (sorghum-sudan, turnips, cereals, corn). These annuals could also be used for September and October pasture.

Moving the lambs to a feedlot in August or September

could also have a significant impact on the amount of pasture required.

A rotational grazing system that moves livestock every day or two leaves a good residual amount of forage in the field. This maintains a strong root system that will help “drought proof” your pasture, resulting in improved July and August production.

The quality of the pastures will vary and adjustments will be required. By moving livestock quickly in the times of rapid growth (May and June) you will leave significant forage behind which will be grazed in July and August, thus helping to balance the demand.

With a feed budget you have the beginnings of a great pasture season and can be prepared to make adjustments as you go.

Refer to “Budgeting and Measuring Pasture Production” at: <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/crops/field/news/croptalk/2010/ct-0910a7.htm>.

Table 1 – Calculation of Monthly Forage Pasture Requirements

	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov
100 ewes @ 150 lbs	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000
150 lambs @ 30 lbs, ADG .33 lbs	5,250	6,750	8,250	9,750	11,250		
total body weight (lbs)	20,250	21,750	23,250	24,750	26,250	15,000	15,000
3% of body weight (lbs) = pasture dm required per day	607	652	697	742	787	450	450
Pasture dm production per acre	1200	1800	1000	500	600	300	
acres to meet requirements	15.7	10.9	21.6	46.0	39.4	46.5	Stockpile

So Long, and Thanks!

by Keith Reid, Soil Fertility Specialist, OMAFRA

On February 15th of this year, I embarked on a new adventure with the Agri-Environment Services Branch of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, as the Manager of Soil Nutrients and Greenhouse Gases for Eastern Canada. I’m excited about the new challenges, but also sad to be closing a fulfilling chapter in my life with OMAFRA. During the past 22 years, I have been privileged to work with an unparalleled group of colleagues, both within the Ministry and among the many farmers and industry agronomists. Nothing I have accomplished has been without the support of many people. I’m particularly grateful to those of you who “have your boots dirty” for your willingness to question, to challenge and to teach me, so that I could continue to contribute to your success in a meaningful way.

So what profound message can I leave with you as I head out the door? Always keep looking for better ways to do what you do, but don’t forget the basics and don’t accept anyone’s claims at face value. Work together to test new ideas, and make sure you test them carefully enough that you can be confident in the results. As the tag line on my email has said for the past few years, “Always keep an open mind...but not so open that the breeze blows through.”

While I am moving to a new job, in a different branch of government, I will be dealing with many of the same issues. I will also be striving very hard to work collaboratively with my provincial colleagues, and with organizations like OSCIA. In other words, while I am moving, I’m not moving very far. I look forward to seeing many of you again in the future.

Good Soil Structure Essential for Optimum Crop Growth

by Adam Hayes, Soil Management Specialist, OMAFRA

The question is often asked, “What can I do to improve my crop yields?” Obviously there are a lot of factors that contribute to crop yield, but the soil the crop is growing in has a big influence. There are a lot of aspects of the soil that impact crop growth including soil texture, drainage and fertility. One thing that interacts with these and other aspects is soil structure. A well structured soil can produce tremendous crop yields. Consider the crop growth in a field that has recently been taken out of pasture, grass, or some other area that was recently brought into crop production. That soil may have higher organic matter levels, but it also usually has very good soil structure.

Soil Structure

Soil texture refers to the percent of sand, silt and clay in a soil. Soil structure describes the arrangement of the organic and mineral particles into aggregates (clumps of soil) or granules of different shapes, sizes and porosities. Soil scientists describe a desirable soil structure as one that is composed of aggregates that are:

- water stable, do not collapse when wetted
- porous
- variable in size, ranging from small (1 mm) to large aggregates (2 to 5 mm).

Soil structure impacts crop growth in many ways. A well structured soil will be porous, and that allows air into the soil, water to move through the soil and roots to grow more easily. A good structured soil is also more resistant to wind and water erosion and soil compaction. A soil with poor structure is more prone to crusting. Soil compaction can cause a loss of structure and impact root growth and water movement.

Larger Aggregates

The percentage of larger aggregates is a measure of soil structure. Research has shown that sod and hay crops greatly increase the percentage of larger aggregates (continuous sod 85%, second year hay 74%). Continuous corn had a low percentage (22%) of larger aggregates. Corn and oats in rotation were intermediate at 52% and 56% respectively.

Aggregate Stability

Aggregate stability is another indicator of soil structure. It is one of the measures in the Ontario soil health assessment project. Table 1 shows the aggregate stability from several situations in long term tillage and rotation plots.

Aggregate stability measurements on the long term tillage plots at Elora (silt loam) were:

- 57% for no-till,
- 42% for fall chisel plow,
- 26% for fall moldboard plow,
- 48% for fall offset disc and
- 47% for spring tandem disc (twice).

Table 1. Wet Aggregate Stability—Long term tillage and rotation research plots

Location (soil texture)	Rotation	Wet Aggregate Stability	
		Conventional till	No-till
Delhi (sandy loam)	continuous corn	65	80
	soybean - winter wheat	71	80
Ridgetown (clay loam)	continuous corn	15	44
	corn - soybeans	22	35
	corn – soys - winter wheat (RC)	30	49
	continuous soybeans	15	56
	soybeans - winter wheat	29	70
Elora (silt loam)	alfalfa – alfalfa – corn - corn	48	60
	continuous alfalfa	79	72
	continuous corn	19	58
	corn – corn – barley (RC) – oats (RC)	33	60
	corn – corn – barley - oats	29	44
	corn - soybeans	23	39
	corn – soybeans - winter wheat (RC)	43	45
	corn – soybeans - winter wheat	36	48

The moldboard plow, chisel plow and fall offset disc were cultivated and packed in the spring before planting.

Improving Soil Structure

So how can soil structure be improved? Soil particles are held together by the clay and organic matter in a soil. Crop residue breakdown, excretions from various forms of soil life, root growth, dry cracking, and freeze thaw of soils, all contribute to the formation of soil structure. Adding a variety of organic materials to the soil will encourage soil life and produce more of the “glues” that hold soil particles together. Growing a variety of crops in rotation will add organic matter. The roots, especially cereal and grass crop roots, will help in soil structure formation. Reducing tillage will also reduce the breakdown of aggregates and soil structure.

Jack Kyle – *Grazier Specialist*

by Sharon Lane, NEOSCIA Correspondent

Jack Kyle's topic was "Managing Flies on Pasture" at the Algoma Community Pasture Annual Meeting. Mr. Kyle explained the various problem flies, what harm they can do and how to control them.

The Horn Fly spends its entire life cycle on cattle. The eggs are laid in fresh manure, and the adults feed on the animal's blood so it become anaemic and loses weight as tail switching takes time away from grazing.

The Face Fly doesn't bit the animal but feeds on the animal's secretions. The concern is that it can spread pinkeye, which is costly to treat.

The Stable Fly bits and irritates the animal so that it doesn't gain weight and produces less milk.

The Warble Fly or Gad Fly lays eggs on the animals' legs, and they ingest the eggs by licking themselves. The larvae damage the meat and ruin the hide as they travel through and out of the animal.

Both Deer and Horse Flies bit and irritate the animals but have a short life span and don't stay on the animal. They do create a painful welt and cause weight lose, reduce milk production and injuries if the animals panic.

Mr. Kyle says that it is important that more attention be paid to the younger animals than the old ones, as they are more susceptible to irritation.

Fly Control Tips –

- Get rid of egg laying areas such as manure piles and wet vegetative composting areas by turning the piles often to aid in decomposition
- Use rotational grazing
- Spread the manure so it dries and is incorporated more quickly
- Encourage dung beetles and other beneficial insects; dung beetles help the manure to dry
- Use insect repellents containing permethrin or pyrethrins
- Use Fly Tags – Horn flies often develop a

resistance to pyrethroid so switch back and forth with insecticides.

- Put Oilers & Dusters near the mineral feeder.

Provide shade to allow the animals to get away from the flies

Studies have shown that de-worming affects dung beetles and other beneficial insects. Mr. Kyle suggests that farmers look at the chemicals in the de-wormers before using them. They may be killing the good bugs. He recommends spraying cattle with a hand sprayer especially in a community pasture.

Mr. Kyle also talked about "Profiting from Pastures". The dry matter produced, the dry matter consumed and the type of animal grazing influence potential returns. Grass is a "solar panel" as it captures sunlight. Using nitrogen and planting legumes can accomplish thick, broad-leaf grass. A good grazing system is to have manure on the pasture, as this is nutrient recycling. To judge whether there is enough grass for grazing use the 'rubber boot test'; if the grass reaches from the top of the toe to your pant leg, there is enough.

Cattle need good quality feed to gain weight. If fresh grass is of high quality and they take big bites, they gain weight. To make sure that there is fresh grass, have a higher number of animals in the spring or clip grass or make hay. Late oats, barley or sorghum can be pastured as could corn from mid-August to Christmas and forage rape, fall rye or turnips in October and November.



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Geothermal Heating in the Farmhouse

by *Graham Gambles, NEOSCIA Regional Communication Coordinator*

The farmhouse has been traditionally heated by wood stoves and furnaces. However, heat was inconsistent and the work involved became taxing as the owner became elderly. These issues were removed when farmers switched to home heating oil, propane, and even electricity during the recent decades. Today, the price increases on these alternative heating sources encourage the farm owner to search for another alternative fuel for farmhouse heating.

Robert French, living in the Powassan area (Nipissing District) found his ideal alternative in a geothermal home heating system. This is his third winter on total geothermal, and he could not be happier! He replaced his historic oil and wood heating complex with a "Water Furnace" ("Envision" model) system and found that the soil heat in his area to be sufficient for year-around geothermal use. The electrical heating back-up system contained within the geothermal unit has never been used, and although the wood stove back-up was also retained, it has never been used for additional heating either.

The farmhouse temperature is set for a continuous 68 degrees F, 24/7, throughout the heating season. The system maintains this level on its own, no matter the outdoor temperature or wind speed. Robert finds that maintaining a constant

temperature results in more even heating throughout the house. If he wanted, he knows that he could maintain the heat in the mid 70F range. This is quite remarkable, considering that the house was built in the early 1930's of standard 2x4 construction and regular insulation. The only upgrades are additional ceiling insulation and foam-insulated basement walls.

The heat collector piping system was installed in a neighboring field, taking up an area about 100x75 feet. Trenches in clay soil (dug 6 to 8 feet apart), go down to a depth of 6 or 7 feet. It is above the water table. A continuous flexible "plastic" pipe system is laid on each side of the trench, and connects to a main header line that feeds the house. An "antifreeze" fluid is continuously pumped through the pipes, collecting heat from the soil that is about 43F. at this level all year long. The only problem with installing this system came when the piping crossed under the driveway that was originally built over a stone ridge. At this point, the pipes are only 2.5 feet below surface, but are protected by being placed in a metal rack that is covered by 6 inches of styrofoam insulation. About 2.5 feet of gravel was placed above this to maintain the driveway. There have been no problems with this installation over the initial 3 years of operation.

The piping goes into the basement where the heat collector furnace system sits in a 4x6 foot room. It uses the same duct work as the previous oil heating system. The fan runs constantly, but is quieter than the one on the previous system. The geothermal system also provides all of the hot water for the house. It has the capability to provide air conditioning as well, and it does work - however it has not been needed to any extent in the past 3 summers!

Mr. French admits that the cost of the system was steep - about \$30,000. However, he believes that it will pay for itself in about 7 or 8 years. Even sooner if heating oil rises in price drastically! Although the system requires electricity to keep the pumps running, Robert believes that any increase in electrical costs will be negligible compared to potential increases in oil costs. Should a new house be required some day in the future, the piping system would be reconnected directly to that building, thereby maintaining the value of the investment.

He has had a lot of public interest in his geothermal system, and a neighbor installed a similar unit this past fall. For more information, feel free to contact Robert French at 705-724-6904.

Algoma Community Pasture Annual Meeting Business

by *Sbaron Lane, NEOSCIA Correspondent*

The group is looking at getting a grant to erect a roof over the stock pens to place solar panels on to generate power. Ross MacLeod reported on biosolids trials and harvest and regeneration trials on alder. Ross explained that boiler ash as a biosolid from St. Mary's Paper is being used on a test plot of oats. The biosolid should add more moisture to the sandy soil as well as phosphorus and nitrogen. Heavy metal might be a problem. The Ministry of Agriculture will do a nutrient management study. Eventually St. Mary's wants

to sell their biosolid. Right now it has to pay a "tipping fee" to dispose of it.

Ross also explained that the Rural Agricultural Innovation Network (RAIN) wants to partner with groups like Algoma Community Pasture for a 3-year pilot project that it has funding for. RAIN wants to do small research trials locally. At the end of the project, any improvements done on the 5-acre plot would belong to the partner. A motion to send a letter of support to RAIN from Algoma Community Pasture was passed.

Dave Trivers, OMAFRA, reported on the bedstraw trials at the Cochrane farm.

Members were reminded that milestone would kill legumes like alfalfa and clover for four years after spraying. It was suggested that field management by crowding out the bedstraw with other plants works. Jack Kyle mentioned Kathy Voth's technique of training livestock to eat weeds. She explains how this is done in her recently released book, *Cows eat Weeds*.

Algoma Renewable Energy Workshop

by Sharon Lane, NEOSCIA Correspondent



Peter Gagnon, Simply Superior Services; Laurence MacKay, Northern Lights Energy Systems; Pierre Belanger, Techno Metal Post; Dr. David DeYoe

Bud Wildman, chair of Renewable Energy Alternative Development (READ), opened the workshop and explained that READ was cooperating with the Innovation Centre in Sault Ste. Marie and had received sponsorship from FedNor and funding from Innovation Initiatives Ontario North (IION) to sponsor a renewable energy strategic exercise. Mr. Wildman introduced Dr. David DeYoe from the Innovation Centre.

According to Dr. De Yoe, the end results will be that the area will be self-reliant with clean, green, recyclable energy. At the moment the organization is looking at renewable, recyclable and alternative energy such as solar, wind, and geothermal and the interest in Central Algoma. The group wants to identify opportunities with green and clean energy and look at some of the regulations. The hoped for outcomes include knowledge of local and

regional assets, a list of "do-able" both short-term and long-term, and tools to do due diligence on people coming in.

The first presenter, Peter Gagnon from Simply Superior Services, Sault Ste. Marie talked about Energy Conservation. North Americans, who are the "energy hogs of the world", use 50% of all energy usage in the world. Sustainable energy depends on improving efficiency, conservation and renewable energy. Grants up to \$1875 are available in Ontario till March 31, 2011 for home insulation. Energy efficient homes will save energy, money and reduce carbon input to the environment. Peter said that 60% of the energy usage is to heat homes. The Home Energy Saver program is on the Internet for people to use.

Laurence McKay, from Northern Lights Energy Systems Ltd., St Joseph's Island, discussed the Ontario Power Authority

Renewable Energy Micro Feed-in Tariff Program. Laurence has 25 years experience in solar and wind power. The MicroFIT Program for 10kw or less is the Ontario government's program to buy solar energy for the next 20 years at a fixed rate. Prices are guaranteed for 20 years at 80.2 cents per kilowatt-hour for rooftop PV panels, 64.4 for ground mount and 13.5 for wind.

Laurence explained that there are some risks with the program so he recommends that people do their research.

Contract goes to new owner if property is sold

Cells are connected so if one cell is shaded 25%, then all cells are reduced by 25%

Only one manufacturer for Micro-inverters and those inverters can't be repaired

Equipment to install solar system is a tax write-off but income from sale of power is taxable

Be aware of the Domestic Content Rule; if price on equipment is too low, then it might be a "red flag" that it is not Ontario produced or sourced

Laurence's advice on wind power is "go big or go home".

Finally, Pierre Belanger from Techno Metal Post from Hearst spoke on geothermal energy. This system uses the ground temperature to heat or cool water and antifreeze in the ThermoPOST or pipe. The mixture takes the temperature from the ground as it circulates in the posts. In the summer, the system cools the buildings, and in the winter, it heats them.

The ThermoPOST system is energy efficient, adapts to moist soil and is good in small areas. Drawbacks are that it does rely on electricity to pump the mixture through the pipes and to run a fan. The pipes have to be below the frost level (5 feet), and it needs a backup system.

From this workshop, READ hopes to form a team to "engage in the strategy process and provide ideas and insight" to "improve local living, create new business opportunities and attract investment."

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NOAFEM holds 9th Annual General Meeting

ALGOMA DISTRICT - On February 26, NOAFEM held its 9th annual general meeting at the Community Hall in Sowerby. The Board of Directors for 2011 and the executive was elected. NOAFEM welcomes new directors Judy Hughes and Amy Hallman while Neil Tarlton, Edith Orr, Debora Kirby, Ken Lane, Pat Marcotte, Sharon Lane and Paul Schoppmann were re-elected. NOAFEM extends a sincere thank you to Janet Parsons who has volunteered her time for the past two years. Neil Tarlton was re-elected to the position of President, Hank Allen is Vice President and Pat Marcotte Secretary/Treasurer.



The agenda included a presentation by Sharon Lane of her visit to agricultural areas of Germany in the fall of 2010, followed by a tour of the newly reconstructed 12-sided Round Barn next to the hall on Basswood Lake Road. This site will be used as an event centre while a second barn located on Brownlee Road in Thessalon contains a gift shop where local artists feature their work. One of the unique components of the barn is the fact that light and air can penetrate through the walls. There are 3 Round Barns in Ontario with two of them situated in Algoma District.

The competition for students attending colleges in Northern Ontario featuring culinary programs was launched. This competition encourages chefs-in-training to meet and work with Northern Ontario producers and develop recipes that featuring their products. The competition will wrap up in the spring of 2012.



"Living in the Country"

Rural Expo 2011 - April 8 & 9
Upstairs at the Earlton Farm Show

featuring ~ **90 minute Canning Workshop**
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Friday April 8 – 7 pm & Saturday April 9 – 10 am
Learn the most current recipes and techniques to can
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Workshop –
\$25 – includes admission to trade show
or
\$50 – includes a Bernardin Canning Kit
(value approx \$75)
and admission to trade show

FUN for your family – Grow Your Giant Pumpkin

Inside this issue of *Breaking Ground* you will find your giant pumpkin seed in a growing guide prepared by successful growers in Northern Ontario. HAVE FUN with this project and enter your giant pumpkin during the 2nd or 3rd week of September at one of the following locations:

1. Central Manitoulin Public School
2. Desbarats Farmers' Market
3. Anderson Farm Museum Fall Fair, Lively
4. New Liskeard Fall Fair
5. Powassan Farmers' Market

Watch for more details or check the website!

A Look Back in Time: NEOSCIA Award Of Merit 2005 Morley Shepherdson



Born at New Liskeard on March 30, 1932, Morley was “lucky” number seven in a family of eleven children. Raised on the farm

by his pioneering parents, Morley was always involved in sheep, cattle and crop production. In 1951, he married Frances Edwards of Englehart and raised four children. Eventually, he spent a total of 41 years on his own farm operation, including 17 years in partnership with his son, Darwood.

But Morley had interests beyond farming, and this is why he is being honoured here today. He was always willing to accept leadership roles in farm organizations such as the Soil & Crop Improvement Association, the sheep producers, and the Temiskaming Cattlemen’s Association. He also strayed into community organizations, some of which we will identify shortly.

His ability to communicate may have been initiated with the Junior Farmers organization. In 1949, at the age of 16, he was the winner of their local speaking competition. He’s been speaking ever since!

For instance, let’s look at his background in the Cattlemen’s Association. He was a director for Temiskaming in the period 1969 through 1991, and continued on as the Secretary-Treasurer until 2003. He was President of the Ontario Association in 1979-80, and was President of the Canadian Cattlemen’s Association in 1989-90!

While he was with this association, he became a Charter Member of the “Northern Cattle & Stocker Sales”, and struck with it for 42 years. He was a founding member of the “Beef Information

Centre”. He became a leader in the genetic evaluation program, both provincially and nationally. With this experience, he became the first non-governmental person to become President of the “National Advisory Council”, an organization dealing with livestock genetic research work in Canada.

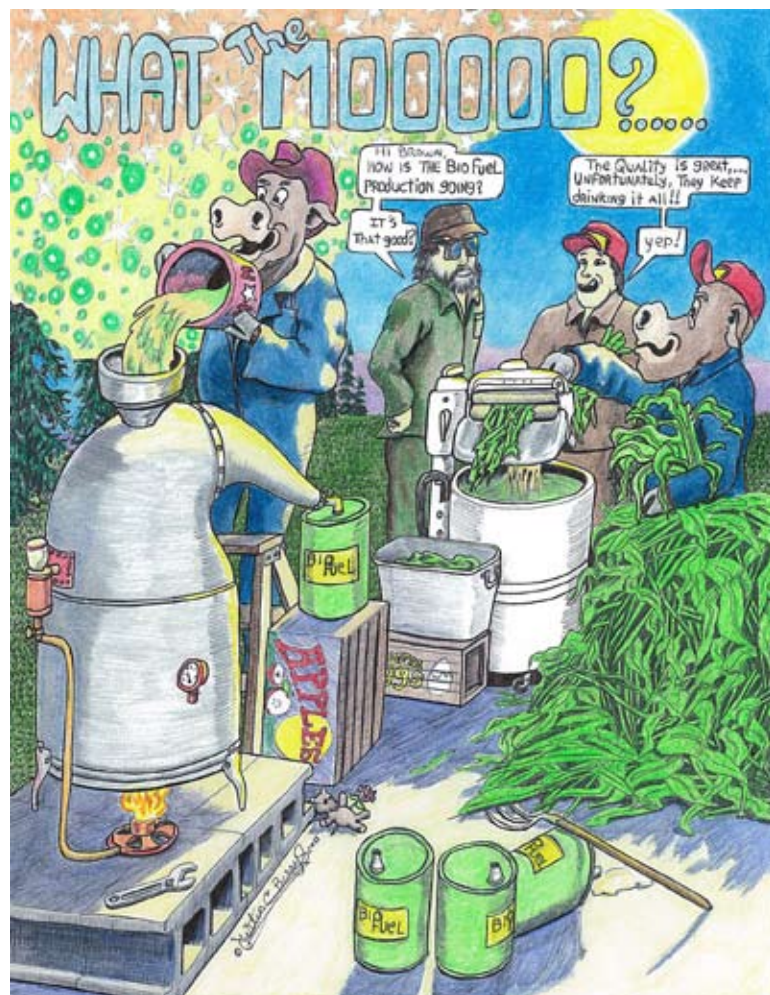
And as we said earlier, he liked to speak! He was a guest speaker for numerous farm organizations all over Canada and the USA. He also represented Canada in five countries at conferences on beef exporting in Australia, New Zealand, and the United States. His willingness to become involved as a leader in northern agriculture gave him the opportunity to directly influence top bureaucrats, Prime Ministers, and even the President of Japan!

For these efforts, in 1989 he received the “Centennial Award” from the Province of Ontario for his outstanding contribution to agriculture. This was followed in 1990 with his induction into the New Liskeard Secondary School’s “Hall of Fame”, now located in the Temiskaming & District Secondary School.

Currently, just to keep his hand in the agricultural game, he is the Administrator for the “Temiskaming Agricultural Development Association”, commonly known as “TADA”. He is also the Secretary-Treasurer of the Temiskaming Crops Coalition, which includes the Temiskaming Soil and Crop Improvement Association.

But as we said earlier, he also contributes to community organizations as well. Since his teenaged years, he has been actively engaged in his Church in administrative roles, teaching classes, and on speaking assignments. These activities continue even today. In addition, he worked for the local Boy Scouts and for “Camp Quality”, a regional camp for children with cancer.

Morley also has an artistic side! He plays the viola in the “Temiskaming Strings Ensemble”, sings with, and is President of the “Temiskaming Community Choir”, and is Chairman of the “Temiskaming Music Festival” Committee. A well-rounded individual indeed!



This month's artwork comes from Justin Burre of Englehart. View more of his work at <http://justin-burre.tripod.com>