



November 2017

# OSCIA PROVINCIAL NEWSLETTER

## Message from the President - Mack Emiry



I think Fall is my favourite season and it probably has something to do with the completed harvest and many fine weather days with fewer insects buzzing around. I suppose looking forward to a time on the farm when it is less busy also helps.

The Soil and Crop Executive and Directors have kept busy with various activities since the last newsletter. Peter and Suzanne McLaren hosted the summer directors meeting and tour in the Ottawa-Rideau Region. They were most gracious hosts and had lined up a tour which showed various agricultural operations and agriculture related industries. These opportunities in different Soil and Crop regions serve to highlight the tremendous diversity of agriculture in Ontario.

Staff was busy at the OSCIA/OMAFRA tent at the Canadian Outdoor Farm Show in September. An added feature to the OSCIA section this year were displays featuring soils and farming activities in six different OSCIA regions. These displays can now be used by the regions for meetings and other events going forward.

A new promotional banner measuring 6'x3' has been prepared and distributed to all 11 regions for use at any county or district events. Also on the promotion side, the special price for gate signs was so successful that the stock was quickly depleted. Gate signs and window decals are still available, albeit at the original price.

The Executive discussed the grant structure for 2018 and beyond. Tier 1 and Tier 2 projects have been very successful and will continue. The current Tier 2 research projects are in the final year of the 3-year approval. In anticipation of funding being available, the call for new Tier 2 projects will go out early in 2018. Submissions will be received for consideration by March 15, 2018. Successful projects will thus have more time to prepare for establishment for the 2018 crop season. All of this is, of course, is dependent on funding being available for a new 3-year program. Look for the final reports on the current Tier 2 projects at the OSCIA 2018 Annual Conference in London.

Details of the agenda for the OSCIA Annual Conference are being finalized. Keep tuned for some interesting speakers and

topics. Consider attending to represent your local association. This may be the last year for a while at the London location as delegates will be given the opportunity to vote on an "East of 400" location for 2019.

Local annual meeting season will soon be starting. This is an opportunity to see the results of in-field research projects and other activities. Plan to attend because your county and district associations need your involvement!

Until next time.....

Mack Emiry, OSCIA President



A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER, ISSUED  
ALONGSIDE 11 REGIONAL NEWSLETTERS AND  
OMAFRA CROP TALK, TO UPDATE SOIL AND  
CROP MEMBERS

## In this Issue

- o Message from the President
- o Forage Masters Regional Winners
- o Canada's Outdoor Farm Show
- o Member Profile
- o Welcoming OMAFRA Specialists
- o Inter-Seeding Cover Crops
- o New Horizons: Ontario's Draft Agricultural Soil Health and Conservation Strategy

### Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association

1 Stone Road West, Guelph ON N1G 4Y2  
Phone: (519) 826-4214 or 1-800-265-9751  
Fax: (519) 826-4224

Website: [www.ontariosoilcrop.org](http://www.ontariosoilcrop.org)



## Forage Masters Regional Winners

OSCIA members will know that a fresh new format for the Forage Masters Competition was introduced earlier this year. The competition centered on the completion of a self-assessment booklet that ranked current forage practices as “Best”, “Good” or “Needs Improvement”. There were 45 questions in total covering aspects of forage establishment, harvesting, storage, and feeding. Participants answered only the questions that applied to their farm. The responses were submitted to the Guelph office by the deadline and were subsequently scored and tallied.

Opinions on the new format covered a broad spectrum. Some expressed concern over the time required to complete the self-assessment and the paperwork involved—especially over a spring and early summer period that presented many weather challenges. There were others who pined for the inclusion of judges that would visit each site to score the stand and were hesitant to throw support behind an alternative approach. Others expressed full approval with the on-line option and recognized the new format provided a better snapshot of practices displaying strong management skills and those areas requiring more attention.

Although participation numbers fell below expectations, the committee responsible for the re-tooling was enthusiastic about the high caliber of the submissions received and remain resolved to see the competition grow in future years. Don Oliver, Director for East Central and Chair of the Committee said, “We have listened to concerns and ideas expressed by members on the new format. The new Forage Masters Competition has a solid foundation to work from and we’ll continue to introduce changes that lead to greater participation across all eleven regions.”

We are very pleased to declare the first-place winners for 2017. Each will be awarded a \$150 seed certificate from General Seed Company at an upcoming SCIA meeting:

**Heartland Region**  
Doug Johnston, Maplevue Farm, Perth County

**East Central Region**  
E. Gordon, Kilty Farms, Peterborough County

**Georgian Central Region**  
Harold Zettler, Z5 Farm, Bruce County

**Golden Horseshoe Region**  
Larry Davis, Daveland Farm, Brant County



The final stage to determine the provincial Forage Master Champion is the Speaking Competition. Competitors will speak at the OSCIA Annual Conference in London the evening of February 13, 2018. The speaking competition is sponsored by ProRich Seeds Inc. Each participating regional winner will be given up to 20 minutes to make a presentation on their forage program. Delegates will vote by secret ballot to determine the overall winner, who will be introduced after a panel discussion and question period. It promises to be an informative and exciting evening of events!

*Written by Andrew Graham, Executive Director*



## Member Profile

In October, OSCIA launched a new social media campaign designed to highlight young, enthusiastic members in our organization. Each month, a region will be chosen to select one member they wish to highlight at the provincial level. That member will be interviewed and showcased on all OSCIA social media platforms.

**Member Profile**

**Favorite Crop:** Corn

**Why did you become a member:** *My dad is a long time member of OSCIA and he encouraged me to attend our local SCIA meeting. Not long after joining, a few of my cousins and I got nominated to sit as directors on our local board. After serving as a director for several years, I am now the 2nd Vice-President for Northumberland SCIA.*

**Advice to young farmers:** *Don't be scared to get involved, lots of people do it! Being part of OSCIA is a lot of fun, and it's a great opportunity to network.*

**Next Step:** *We are building a new grain system that includes 2 new elevators, a wet bin and a dryer. I also registered for a farm data management system. I'm pretty excited about both!*

**Travis Greydanus**  
Age: 27  
Acres: 3,200  
Commodity: Cash Crop  
Local SCIA: Northumberland  
Grafton, ON

*By Brittany Roka, Association Development Advisor*



## Welcoming OMAFRA Specialists

**Christine O'Reilly** is the new Forage and Grazier Specialist with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA). Originally from Huron County, Christine was a member of the local 4-H Beef Club. She is a University of Guelph alumnus, with a bachelor's degree in Bio-Resource Management and a M.Sc. in Environmental Science. Following graduation in 2014, Christine worked on livestock farms in the United Kingdom, and obtained a certificate in Grassland and Forage Crops Agronomy. She also worked as a research technician with the Rural Agri-Innovation Network in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario.

Christine is currently based out of the Lindsay office and is available to assist producers with questions relating to grazing and forage crops and can be reached at 705-324-5855 or christine.oreilly@ontario.ca. Christine is the primary OMAFRA contact for the Quinte and Northwest Regional Associations and the alternative contact for East Central and Northeast.

**Sebastian Belliard** is the new Soil Management Specialist with OMAFRA's Field Crops unit. Based in Kemptonville, his territory includes Eastern Ontario and parts of Northern Ontario.

Most recently, Sebastian worked with OMAFRA's soil survey to renew soil maps in Ottawa and Peterborough, digging over a hundred soil pits for classification. He was a co-owner of a profitable diversified farm business in Peterborough where he furthered his soil management knowledge and built experience in cropping practices, rotation planning, cover crop integration, and business management. Prior to that he was a research assistant with the Soil Ecology Research group at McGill. Sebastian also spent time with the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute and worked in Quebec monitoring horticulture pests.

In his current position, Sebastian will work on various soil management and soil health-related projects and issues, including tillage systems, making cover crops work, and the Ontario Soil Health Assessment, as well as organizing workshops with local experts and researchers to bring soil knowledge to local producers. As many who have met him have experienced, Sebastian is a soil nerd at heart and looks forward to helping growers who share this interest explore all that is yet to be known about soil and answer soil-related questions on their farms.

*Written by Christine O'Reilly & Sebastian Belliard*

## Canada's Outdoor Farm Show

Local Soil and Crop Improvement Associations from across the province took advantage of a grant opportunity to showcase their commitment to the topics of soil health, water quality and pollinator health at the 2017 Canada's Outdoor Farm Show.

A walk around the display area gave show-goers a real feeling for the range of Ontario agriculture. People saw how the approach from each area changed to suit local geography, climate, and the interests of the local associations. For example:

Elgin County, known for hands-on work and demonstrations, was outside of the tent showcasing a soil pit. This demonstrated infiltration through micropores in the soil profile using diluted paint.

Huron County, known for its demonstration farm, created a video explaining a soil health assessment that had recently been completed.

Quinte Region brought forward a video for call-to-action about agriculture in the area.

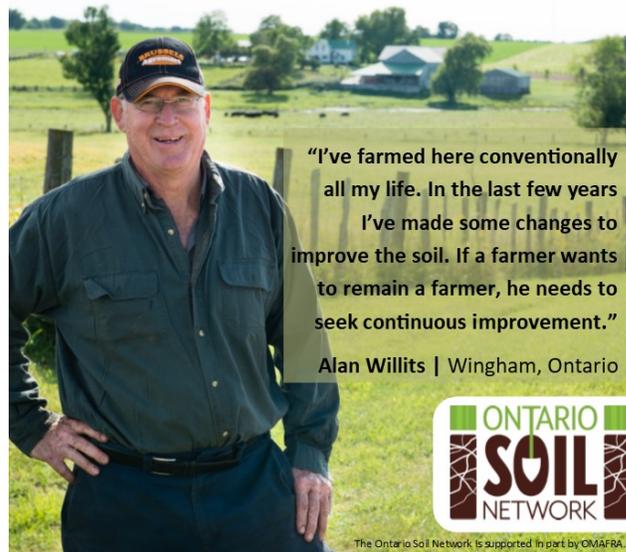
The North East Region created miniature soil monoliths to show the differences in northern soils, while the North West Region focused on pollinator health, and some of the unique opportunities pollinators have in that area.

Chatham-Kent brought their Environmental Farm Plan dioramas to highlight environmental actions on the farm.

Thank you to all the local associations who participated in the 2017 Farm Show. The show was a great success, and we could not have done it without you.

*Written by Karen Jacobs, Programs Coordinator*

## Improving the farm. Let's talk soil.



"I've farmed here conventionally all my life. In the last few years I've made some changes to improve the soil. If a farmer wants to remain a farmer, he needs to seek continuous improvement."

Alan Willits | Wingham, Ontario



The Ontario Soil Network is supported in part by OMAFRA.

**Join the conversation.**  
Sign up for grower chats this winter at [ontariosoil.net](http://ontariosoil.net)

## Research in Progress: Opportunities for Inter-Seeding Cover Crops into Corn Preceding Soybeans

Jaclyn Clark is the first recipient of the Soil Health Graduate Scholarship Fund and is currently an M.Sc. candidate in Plant Agriculture at the University of Guelph, studying with Bill Dean and David Hooker. She is looking to enhance the resiliency of the corn/soy cropping system by investigating opportunities for inter-seeding cover crops. Her approach is based upon the premise that corn and soybeans dominate the agricultural landscape and there is evidence for concern in the literature regarding these simple rotations. The introduction of cover crops into a corn/soy rotation has the potential to add some needed diversity to this type of system.

The objectives of Jaclyn's work are to: 1) Quantify the impact of inter-seeding cover crops on silage corn, grain corn or soybean yield; and 2) Analyze above ground biomass achieved by cover crops singly and in combination, as well as drilled and broadcast.

Cover crops were drilled or broadcast at the 4-6 leaf stage. They were overwintered, terminated with glyphosate and no-till soybeans planted the following spring. Silage dry matter, grain yield, and cover crop and weed biomass were the measured parameters.

As of February 2017, Jaclyn's work covered two field seasons (2015 and 2016) on three sites in Elora, Ridgetown, and Trent. Investigations included two harvest treatments of silage corn and grain corn. The five cover crop treatments were: Annual Ryegrass drilled, Red Clover drilled, Annual Ryegrass plus Red Clover drilled, Annual Ryegrass plus Red Clover broadcast, and control (no cover crop).

Yield results indicated that, while silage dry matter and corn grain yield varied by location, no cover crop treatment effect was noted. At the Ridgetown site, soybean yields did not change with timing of corn harvest nor cover crop treatment. These results are similar to research performed in the U.S. midwest.

In terms of biomass, more biomass was measured in silage corn than grain corn. This was more pronounced at the Ridgetown site, likely as a result of poor cover crop establishment in 2015 caused by 8 dry weeks in August. At the Ridgetown site in 2016, inter-seeded cover crops had higher biomass than broadcast, likely due to lack of moisture in the dry 2016 growing season.

Jaclyn's work concluded that inter-seeding was used successfully and without a negative impact on corn grain or silage yield. The degree of cover crop establishment, and ultimately biomass accumulation, was affected by the competitive interference of corn and dry conditions following planting. However, spring cover crop biomass was greater following silage corn than grain corn.

Jaclyn also shared that while biomass is not a comprehensive measure of cover crop success, current resources to evaluate cover crops are limited, particularly with respect to published

data about soil biota and cover crop impacts. Farmer practice with cover crops is outpacing the research, and some catch up from the research community is needed. In order to facilitate this, there is a need for ongoing and continuous working relationships between all of the stakeholders: producers, research scientists, extension workers, policy makers, insurance providers, conservation organizations, and more.

Watch for more of Jaclyn's work as she completes her M.Sc. and continues her career in Ontario agriculture.

*Written by Janice Janiec, Golden Horseshoe RCC*



## New Horizons: Ontario's Draft Agricultural Soil Health and Conservation Strategy

The PDF of the draft strategy can be accessed directly at: <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/landuse/soil-strat-2017.pdf>

Healthy soil is the basis for a strong, sustainable agri-food system. Wise management can ensure that soil is fertile and full of the living organisms that are essential to grow food and other agricultural products. That's why Ontario is committed to working with Indigenous communities, farmers, industry and community partners to develop a strategy that will sustain and support healthy soil so our land can be productive today and well into the future.

The Ministry would like to hear your thoughts and feedback on the draft strategy. Your input will help guide the development of a final Soil Health and Conservation Strategy for Ontario which will be released in spring 2018.

### How to participate

Your feedback on the draft strategy is welcomed by December 30, 2017. For ways to submit comments visit: <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/landuse/soilhealth.htm>

### Open Houses

The Ministry also invites you to join OMAFRA Soil Staff to talk about the Soil Strategy at one of their public open houses. Pre-registration is not required at these drop-in events:

November 22	St. Isidore
November 27	Woodstock
November 28	Dover Centre
December 14	Codrington
December 15	Flesherton

Exact locations and times of these events can be found at <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/landuse/soilhealth.htm>

*Information provided by OMAFRA Staff*

