



# OSCIA PROVINCIAL NEWSLETTER

March 2020 Edition

## Message from the President – Stuart Wright



After becoming President at the 2020 Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association Annual Conference in London in early February it certainly has been an exciting time not only for myself but the entire Association. With new programs providing new opportunities in the near

future, planning is underway to maximize their effectiveness. I have great confidence in the abilities of our human resources here at OSCIA to help make ONFARM and hopefully Living Labs a tremendous success.

I want to express my gratitude to office and field staff for their tireless efforts in responding to the overwhelming participation in the latest Canadian Agricultural Partnership Program intake. I am well aware of the hours and hours of work it takes to serve our growers efficiently as they pursue Best Management Practices that bring value to our farms and our greater environment.

We are all looking forward to a regional training session in March that will bring together Executive, Provincial Directors, Regional Presidents, Regional Communication Coordinators and various staff to hone the necessary skills to keep the Association vibrant and engaged. There will be renewed focus on our Strategic Plan as it is important to periodically re-examine our goals and priorities in an attempt to remain relevant to our members and the greater agricultural community.

I have been travelling a little these last few weeks. First, I attended the Eastern Ontario Crop Conference in Kemptville. Thanks to all who made this impressive event the success that it was. Next, I visited Georgian Central Region taking in the Dufferin County Annual General Meeting (AGM) which I found interesting and gained good feedback from.

While I can't promise I will make it to every region, if you see me in yours please come and say hello and if you have any suggestions for the betterment of OSCIA I would be more than happy to discuss them with you.

Have a safe and productive spring season. As one of my first acts as President I would love to guarantee that it will be better than last but I'm not sure if I can swing that. I will be thinking positive though and invite you to share that attitude with me.

Stuart Wright

OSCIA 2020 President

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

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#### Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association

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## 2020 OSCIA Board of Directors

The 2020 Board of Directors was introduced at the annual conference in London in early February 2020.



Back row (L-R): Harold Rudy, Paul Hagey, Andy van Niekerk, John Poel, Deanna Nemeth (OMAFRA), Mark Burnham, Steve Sickle, Stefan Szeder, and Phil Oegema

Front row (L-R): Birgit Martin, Chad Anderson, Warren Schneckeburger, Stuart Wright, Les Nichols, Andrew Graham, and Eleanor Renaud

Find your Regional Board member on our website here:  
<https://www.ontariosoilcrop.org/oscia-executive/>

## 2020 OSCIA Soil Champion

The Soil Champion is an annual award that recognizes strong advocates of sustainable soil management. Individuals from one of two general groups can be nominated:

- 1) Those engaged in practical agriculture in developing, using and promoting management that contributes to the sustainable productivity of the soil; or,
- 2) Research or extension professionals whose work demonstrates a commitment to advancing soil health and productive sustainability.

This year OSCIA is proud to announce a very worthy Soil Champion, Conservation Specialist, Anne Loeffler.



Anne Loeffler (left) accepting the Soil Champion award from 2020 OSCIA President, Stuart Wright.

You can find the news release, along with others on the OSCIA website: <https://www.ontariosoilcrop.org/news/>

## OSCIA Soil Health Graduate Scholarship

Established in 2014 in partnership with the University of Guelph, OSCIA is proud to present an annual Soil Health Graduate Scholarship to a deserving student.

This scholarship is in the amount of \$10,000 and is to be used towards research focusing on soil health. The recipient is selected by the University of Guelph and is presented their scholarship at an evening awards ceremony.

Each year we invite the previous year's winner to present their initial findings at the OSCIA annual conference. As well, we invite the newly awarded recipient to the annual conference, to be introduced and welcomed to OSCIA.

The 2019 OSCIA Soil Health Graduate Scholarship was awarded to Gordon Bell (pictured on left with 2019 OSCIA President, Les Nichols).



Previous scholarship winners include:  
 2018 – Hannagala Jeewan Kumara  
 2017 – Pedro Ferrari MacHado  
 2016 – Jordan Graham  
 2015 – Jaclyn Clark

## Q & A

### Online payment options

**Question:**

Is there a more streamlined and secure method of accepting credit cards for payments at the local and regional level?

**Answer:**

Yes. OSCIA is launching a new Membership platform as part of the OSCIA website and moving away from a third-party service provider for a membership site. The membership platform uses PayPal, which is an online payments system that supports online money transfers and serves as an electronic alternative to traditional paper. PayPal accepts all major credit cards from Visa, Mastercard and American Express.



## Wireworms Have Multi-Year Impact - Syngenta

Wireworms can persist in soil for years and affect several different crops. Soybean growers need to be aware that wireworms can stress the early-season crop through their below-ground feeding habits.

Wireworms are the larvae of click beetles. While the adults don't damage crops, their presence is a strong indicator of a wireworm problem. Adult click beetles overwinter in the soil and emerge in the early spring, laying hundreds of eggs throughout the soil down to a depth of 15 cm. The larvae hatch within three to seven weeks and spend the next three to five years feeding on roots and germinating seeds.

"It's difficult to differentiate wireworm and white grub damage in soybeans, unless you find the physical culprit nearby," says Abhi Deora, Seedcare Technical Lead at Syngenta. "Wireworms will feed through the cotyledons, whereas grubs feed only on the roots." In both cases, the damage can be devastating to soybean stands.

### Wireworm baits

Although wireworms never come out of the ground, it is possible to scout for them using a baiting technique. While baits can be a good resource, Deora cautions the possibility of the false negative. "These pests love to sit where the moisture is, so they will go down in the soil until they find it. If you don't have enough moisture in the top layer of the soil, your bait trap might give a false negative result. Wireworms may also not come to the bait trap if other food sources are present, such as volunteer plants, from the previous season." For this reason, it's best to keep your seed protected from the pest.



Image: Wireworms. The tan or copper-coloured worms are cylindrical and hard-bodied. They vary in size from 1 to 3 cm in length (½ to 1½ inches) and have three pairs of legs near the head end.

### Management tips

Scout fields to identify wilted plants or gaps where there are areas of dead plants. Dig around the plant to look for feeding damage and insect larvae, to confirm the cause of the damage.

Wireworms can be monitored in the fall (or in the early spring for later-planted crops) using bait stations. A count of 0.5 to 1 wireworm per bait station indicates a potential problem.

### Protect your soybeans from below-ground feeding

Early-season protection against pests like wireworms is critical to give your soybeans a strong start. Fortenza® is a

new non-neonicotinoid soybean seed treatment that is applied as a commercial seed treatment to protect soybean seeds and seedlings from below-ground insect feeding. It's formulated with cyantraniliprole (Group 28 insecticide) for control of seedcorn maggot, European chafer, June beetle larvae and wireworm. Even under heavy insect pressure, Fortenza helps producers build a strong soybean stand with faster, more uniform growth.

What other pests could be lurking below ground in your soybean field and putting your young crop at risk? Visit [soymasters-east.syngenta.ca](http://soymasters-east.syngenta.ca) for more information.

**Always read and follow label directions.** Fortenza® is a trademark of a Syngenta Group Company. ©2019 Syngenta.

## Don Hill Legacy Award Announcement

Ruth and Marilee Hill introduced the inaugural winner of the Don Hill Legacy Award in early February at the OSCIA annual conference. This annual award will recognize an individual farm business who demonstrates innovation and ingenuity to effectively address an environmental risk associated with soil, water, air or biodiversity on their farm. On-line entries can be received up to December 1<sup>st</sup>, when the winning entry will be selected. The winner will receive their \$1,000 prize at the annual conference in February.

A Lambton farm innovator, Mark Lumley is the winner of the 2020 award, and his daughter Olivia accepted the award on his behalf.



L to R: Olivia Lumley, Ruth Hill, Marilee Hill and Bennett.

Mark's innovation has made it possible for him to use a seed-placed tank mix of liquid fertilizer and the fungicide Quadris in sugarbeet production.

More details on the award as well as the entry form has been added to our website and is available at:

<https://www.ontariosoilcrop.org/association/don-hill-legacy-award/>.

Media release available on OSCIA website titled 'Lambton farm Innovator recognized with Don Hill Legacy Award'

## Sandhill Cranes a big problem for some Ontario producers – ongoing research funded by OSCIA

Sandhill cranes have been causing significant crop damage in northeastern Ontario, and resolutions from Nipissing and Sudbury SCIA's in 2016 and 2019 asked OSCIA to do something about it, including advocating for a hunt. As a result, an update was provided at the 2020 OSCIA annual conference on the OSCIA-funded research that is being conducted by the Canadian Wildlife Service and Environment and Climate Change Canada (CWS-ECCC).

Chris Sharp, population management biologist with CWS-ECCC, says that the concerns brought forward by OSCIA members haven't fallen on deaf ears. "...this work is a direct result of those resolutions," he says.

Sharp says that Sandhill cranes had virtually been wiped out in the early 1900s due to overhunting and habitat loss, but in recent years their numbers and range of migration have increased and it is estimated that there are 14,000 migrating through central and northern Ontario, causing significant crop damage to corn, cereals and potatoes. The problem, however, is regional: "For most producers, they don't know what a Sandhill crane is, and they likely don't care what a Sandhill crane is. But for some farms in Ontario Sandhill cranes are the number one offenders," he says. "We are conducting research to inform and enhance mitigation strategies so that when a producer calls us about how to handle a Sandhill crane conflict, we can provide them with science-based information," he says.

While various groups have advocated for a hunting season, that's not a practical solution, says Sharp. A hunt couldn't start before September 1, after they've raised their young—and in most cases, the damage has already been done or the crop is already off. Instead, Sharp recommends on-farm mitigation tactics such as hazing or scaring birds (without the use of firearms or aircraft, requiring a special permit); modifying farm practices to reduce the exposure or severity of the conflicts; and use of lure crops or refuge fields. Sharp notes that there are non-lethal seed treatments, that aren't yet available in Canada, that could be promising in mitigating damage. (A resolution was passed at the 2020 OSCIA AC to support the licensing of these seed treatments.)

Sharp detailed the ongoing research that the CWS-ECCC is conducting, which will help researchers identify risk factors for damage and provide large-scale movement data for Sandhill cranes. In 2019, more than 70 cranes were caught and fitted with GPS transmitters on their legs, which will transmit their ongoing location within a 5-meter accuracy. The migration data collected over a three to four-year period will help inform researchers about exactly where, and when, the birds are migrating, which can help inform science-based mitigation strategies going forward.

Written by Mary Feldskov, Heartland Regional Communication Coordinator

## The Innovator – News from the Grassroots

With this being the last newsletter under the current format, I wanted to take this opportunity to provide the membership with an update on OSCIA's new communication direction.

On February 4<sup>th</sup>, the new online newsletter was presented at the OSCIA Annual Conference and will be known as "*The Innovator – News from the Grassroots*". As the name suggests, *The Innovator* will provide stories about how farmers solve problems on their farms and use innovative practices that facilitate responsible, economic management of soil, water, air and crops.

Newsletter Benefits:

- Access for *all* members, to information across Ontario.
- Local content from your region.
- Leverages OSCIA's IT infrastructure for improved communication.
- Frees up Regional Communication Grant dollars to help support knowledge transfer activities regionally.
- Regions can continue to generate sponsorship dollars.
- Sustainable production of newsletter with room for growth.



To ensure we continue to meet the needs of our membership and foster the relationships with local industry partners, regions will be provided with a landing page within the e-newsletter template to display regional sponsorships, upcoming events, local articles and more. Each region will have the ability to customize their content and update their pages as often as needed. Regions that already have a website may choose to redirect their landing page to their website for consistency.

Members will receive "*The Innovator – News from the Grassroots*" quarterly via email starting in June. For those who don't have access to reliable internet, a printed copy can be requested by the Region.

We thank the RCCs for their hard work and dedication to the newsletter over the past years and look forward to the future with a successful roll-out of *The Innovator* this Spring!

Written by Phil Oegema, Thames Valley Provincial Director