

# Breaking Ground

(in Northeastern Ontario) Spring 2016

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

## Agricultural Soil Levels in Algoma

By Christine O'Reilly, RAIN Research Technician

In the past, sulphur (S) was not typically a limiting nutrient for agricultural production in northeastern and southern Ontario. Airborne sulphur emissions created acid rain and snow, which deposited upwards of 8 -13 kg/ha of sulphate (SO<sub>4</sub>) annually. In addition to reduced air pollution, commercial fertilizers are more refined and contain less incidental sulphur than older blends. There is growing interest in determining whether the sulphur status of agricultural soils across the province is adequate to meet crop requirements.

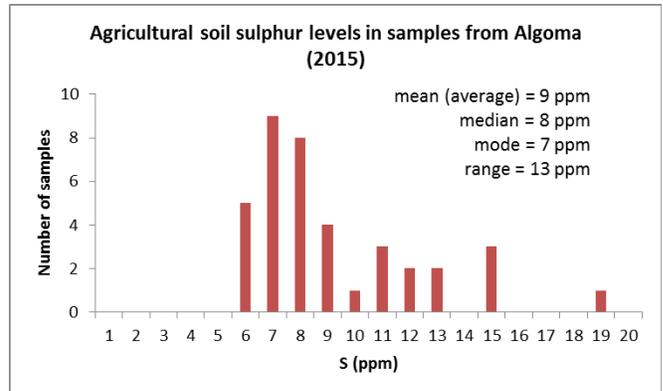
During the course of the Rural Agri-Innovation Network (RAIN)'s 2015 field research activities, 38 soil samples from 6 farms were collected across the Algoma District. These soils had an average of 9 ppm (parts per million) of S. Currently there is no accredited soil sulphur test for Ontario. However, A&L Canada Laboratories provided some guidance as to productive soil sulphur levels by ranking each value on a scale from very low to very high. All but the two highest samples were ranked as very low. One of the soils at 15 ppm was ranked as low, and the soil with 19 ppm rated very high (this location was near Essar Steel Algoma in Sault Ste Marie). This suggests an optimal range of 16 – 18 ppm of S, based solely on the index used by the laboratory.

Plants need sulphur to form amino acids, develop enzymes and vitamins, fix nitrogen (legumes only), produce seeds, and make chlorophyll for photosynthesis. The ratio of nitrogen to sulphur (N:S) in the soil can affect a plant's ability to take up the sulphur it needs. Healthy plant tissue typically has a N:S ratio of between 7:1 and 15:1. In western Canada, many growers apply nitrogen and sulphur in a ratio of 6 or 8:1 to prevent deficiency symptoms.

However, sulphur, like nitrogen, can leach from the soil in wet conditions. Leaching loss is not as big of a risk in the prairies and causes differences in recommended practices for nitrogen between western Canada and Ontario.

Research conducted at the Thunder Bay Agricultural Research Station observed that canola responded positively to elemental S, but the response was inconsistent. Another study looking at alfalfa observed that ammonium sulphate gave higher dry matter yields per hectare than either urea or ammonium nitrate. In the first year of the trial, alfalfa fertilized with the ammonium sulphate also had significantly higher protein content.

It is clear that there is a growing need for Ontario-specific sulphur recommendations. Understanding the levels of sulphur currently in agricultural soils is the first step to addressing the potential sulphur deficiencies of the future (references upon request).



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## Agricorp & GF2 Updates *By Steph Vanthof*

The Manitoulin Soil & Crop Improvement Association and the Manitoulin Cattleman's Association hosted an information day on February 24, 2016. Information was presented from Murray Emke, Neil Tarlton, Mary Scott & Barry Potter. Some info for producers:

**Agricorp** – In 2016, oats and barley can be insured separately (previously insured under spring grain) as they have different markets and valuations. In past years, USAB used to be based on the predominant crop from the previous year but producers now have until May 1<sup>st</sup> to pick the crop. Forage can be insured up to a revised harvested value:

Between \$100 - \$640/acre for hay and intensively managed pasture

Between \$25 - \$160/acre for pasture

Yields for Northwestern Ontario (as defined by Agricorp) (yield/acre, change from 2014) include:

Spring grain 2,719 pounds (+113%)

Corn 136 bushels (+114%)

Canola 2,113 pounds (+115%)

Spring wheat 55 bushels (+119%)

The pilot for flax continues into 2016 – in 2015, approximately 8,000-10,000 acres were insured across Ontario.

## Variable Rate Application on Potato Fields

*By James Found*

This year Poulin Potatoes will apply fertilizer using GPS satellite positioning and computer technology. Last summer a soil sampling crew from Synagri obtained soil samples from 600 acres of potato fields averaging one sample per hectare (2 Acres). Each sample location was given a GPS location to facilitate computer mapping of the soil variability. The resulting map will then be used to precisely dispense the fertilizer and lime during the potato planting process.

The expected benefits will be the saving of 20 to 30 Tons of fertilizer which will mostly offset the \$20 K cost of the intensive soil sampling, lab analysis and design of the precision dispensing program. Avoidance of over liming in particular is important. This error in the past has resulted in scabby potatoes which cannot be marketed. It has required seven years of alternative cropping to return a field to potato production.

**GF2 Cost Share** – Participating in GF2 workshops is now required to access GF cost-share funding – application guidelines will specify which workshop. Applications are now accepted during intake periods and are awarded based on merit. Costs cannot be incurred until after the approval letter has been issued, approximately 45 business days after the intake date. Read the application guidelines for specifics – go online for the latest version.

Thanks to the [Bank of Montreal](#) for sponsoring lunch!

## Season Extension Techniques for High-Value Horticulture

*By Neil Tarlton*

Inspired by the experience of North European countries where winters are harsh and severe, The winery "l'Orpailleur" adjusted its wine-growing method in order to protect vine stock from freezing by covering them in the fall and exposing them in the spring.

Ice wine is a very high value crop and can justify high cost methods in its production. Quebec producers do not have the advantage of an escarpment protecting them from cold winds as the Niagara escarpment producers do. Rather than pick the grapes directly off the vines, they pre pick the grapes storing them in nylon net tubes to desiccate as winter approaches. Though it results in another costly production process, it allows a greater quantity to be harvested, virtually eliminates bird damage and avoids the possibility of harvesting in deep snow conditions.



*Union Libre's (a neighbour of Orpailleur) have a related method of protecting their root stocks of grapes using micro tunnels of fabric.*

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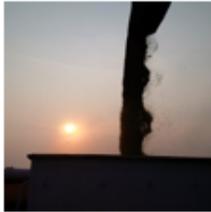
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# Breaking Ground (in Northeastern Ontario)

Fungicide trials on Oats at Marc McLean 2015/ prepared by Daniel Tasse OMAFRA

Field location: Kenabeek / Nlclay / tilled 50'  
 Variety: Deiter  
 Seeded: May 15th  
 Fungicide application: July 28th  
 Harvested: August 31st 2015  
 Header width : 24ft  
 Distance: 2,468 ft  
 2 measurements per treatment



## Message from OSCIA 1st Vice President

*Mack Emery*

As I write this at the start of the second week of March the snow is melting and water is running in this corner of the Northeast. It reminds us that spring is coming and even though there will still be wintry days planting season will arrive soon enough. Does your District Association have any Tier 1 projects planned for 2016? Make a point of checking that out and participate if you are able. There is up to \$1500.00 available to each Association for their use (or even in cooperation with another Association) so lets be sure that money is spent!

Treatments	Wagon weight lbs	Harvested area acre	Yield lbs/ac @13.5% lbs	Moisture %	Protein %	Bushel weight lbs	TKW grams
Twinline	6,060	1.359	4,260	15.2	10.9	49.5	62.1
	5,685	1.359					
No treatment	5,340	1.359	3,951	14.8	10.3	48.2	60.4
	5,500	1.359					
Folicur	5,430	1.359	3,925	14.8	10.3	48.6	59.4
	5340	1.359					

Conclusion: slight increase of 8% or 309 lbs with the fungicide "Twinline"

Thanks to Marike Patton with Bayer CropScience and John Kobler at NLARS

## 2015 Corn Silage Plots at Rivadale Farms / prepared by D Tasse OMAFRA New Liskeard

Site: Earlton / Ncl clay / tilled  
 Seeded: May 5-8th , 2015  
 Herbicide: Converge XT , Samco biodegradable plastic  
 Harvest Date: September 16th  
 Previous crop: Hay -Alfalfa  
 Population : 32,000 and 37,000



8 rows x 1,841  
 Feed analysis : A & L Lab

Hybrid	Population	Area harvested	Wet weight	Moisture at Harvest	Yield adjusted at 65% moisture		
DKC23-17	37,000	.845 acre	14,810 kg	67%	16.5		
PRIDE A4415G2	37,000	.845 acre	15,720 kg	69%	16.3		
PRIDE A4415G2	32,000	.845 acre	15,920 kg	68%	17.1		
PRIDE A4025G3	32,000	.845 acre	13,640 kg	64%	16.5		
PRIDE A4177G3	32,000	.845 acre	16,020 kg	64%	19.6		
Feed Analysis	DM %	C.P %	NDF%	ADF%	NEL (Mcal/kg)	Milk Yield	
DKC23-17	32.83%	9.44%	42.34%	22.27%	1.66	8,992	
PRIDE A4415G2	30.69%	9.07%	42.91%	21.77%	1.64	9,433	
PRIDE A4415G2	31.84%	8.75%	41.93%	22.43%	1.65	9,164	
PRIDE A4025G3	35.80%	7.72%	42.51%	21.44%	1.64	8,344	
PRIDE A4177G3	36.22%	9.56%	42.21%	21.11%	1.68	10,223	

The Northeast is in the preliminary stages of planning a "Crop Tour" event with one of the OMAFRA Crop Specialists for this summer. Keep posted for further information on that one.

As 1st Vice President of OSCIA I have the opportunity to host the Summer Directors meeting of OSCIA. This will be held August 14 to 16. I am planning to showcase farms and businesses in Sudbury and Manitoulin Districts to agricultural leaders from across Ontario who will be in attendance.

### Call for Nominations: Provincial Director for Northeastern Ontario Soil & Crop Improvement Association (NEOSCIA)

Duties will commence February, 2017

Time commitment outside of NEOSCIA is 1 hour (approx.) per month on conference calls, 2 to 3 days per year to attend Provincial Annual Meeting, 2 to 3 days per year to attend Summer Provincial Directors Meeting, 2 to 3 days per year for other possible committee meetings.

Position allows \$175.00 per diem/day while acting on behalf of NEOSCIA plus allowable expenses (mileage, meals, accommodation as required).

Please contact Dan Cook at [dancook@puc.net](mailto:dancook@puc.net) or (705) 272-3964 for further information or to submit a nomination. Job duties can be found at [www.farmonth.com](http://www.farmonth.com), Associations, NEOSCIA.

# Intensive Oat Management

By John Kobler, NLARS Research Technician

In 2014 we had many fields where oats had become flat, the technical wording would be, “severely lodged.” The growing season was wet right throughout the summer and this in turn provided adequate amounts of moisture to all of our Northern Ontario crops. Abundance of moisture, coupled with good soil fertility can be a contributing factor for creating a lodging problem, particularly to an oat crop. A discussion initiated at the local OSCIA meeting, and the general comment was that we needed to have some sort of Intensive Oat Management trial at the New Liskeard Agricultural Research Station. Clearly as farmers we also need to better understand how fertility effects our crops, particularly oats, and what could we do to help mitigate any of those lodging concerns.

In our experimental design we settled on three varieties of oats, Dieter - a traditional oat grown in our area, Morrison - a Quaker preferred variety, and Camden - a known high yielding oat originating from Western Canada. We had the opportunity to include two growth regulators, a product call Palisade from Syngenta and a product called Manipulator from EngageAgro. And we also had the opportunity to include one fungicide treatment a product called Twinline from BASF.

Past research has shown that excessive nitrogen (N) in our soils available to the plant during the growing season could be a factor for causing excessive lodging. To help simulate a lodging condition, via that fertility vector, we needed to look at applying various rates of additional nitrogen (N) in our experiment. The experimental design was rather large and we had to limit the number of nitrogen treatments to four distinct rates namely; 0N, 60N, 60N + 30N at flag leaf and 90N. The OMAFRA recommendation in the Agronomy Guide (Publication 811) calls for an application rate of 55N kg/ha of actual Nitrogen for an oat crop

The Intensive Oat Management trial was seeded May 14, 2015, two weeks later than we had hoped for. Unfortunately, later seeding dates inherently tend to have less lodging issues. This proved to be true for us in the fall of 2015 as we didn't see the severe lodging issues of previous year on any of the plots in our experiment.

Figure 1 shows the average overall yield that we attained for each variety individually, when we combine all the various treatments for each variety. Camden clearly turned out to be the highest yielding variety and Morrison was the lowest yielding variety in our experiment. Dieter was measured to be tallest variety with an average height of 106 cm. Both Camden and Morrison measured simpler at 90cm in height. Dieter had the highest lodging score as compared to the other two varieties. Farmers tend to shy away from taller varieties because they tend to be related to having potential lodging issues.

Interestingly, despite our late seeding date, we saw a response from each of the individual treatments. Those 4 nitrogen rates that we applied created a characteristic nitrogen response graph for each of the three varieties. Figure 2 shows the treatment r

Funding for this work was provided by NOFIA, Pepsico Quaker, BASF, Grain Farmers of Ontario, EngageAgro, Syngenta, Canterra Seeds, SeCan and OMAFRA/U of G Partnership Agreement.



response for Dieter oats and we can clearly see that Twinline fungicide was beneficial on the mid to higher rates of nitrogen. Out in the field, when we physically viewed the plots, at 0N the plant density or “canopy” was much thinner, resulting in a lower opportunity for disease pressure to have an effect.

In the Camden response graph, Figure 3, we see a lower benefit of using Twinline fungicide. Out in the field when we looked for actual physical disease pressure in the plots, Camden appeared to less susceptible than we would have thought, for a western variety in our area. Interestingly Camden had a visually thicker stem, and accordingly, Camden had the lowest lodging scores of those three varieties.

Figure 4 shows some benefit occurring from that single application of Twinline fungicide a crossed all rates of N for Morrison oat. This could be a varietal trait. (more susceptible to disease) Also, based on those lower yield numbers, there seems to be very little benefit from using a growth regulator on this variety.

Statistically if we look at all the interactions between treatments the amount of data that gets generated becomes rather large to be explained in a single article. At the risk of creating a complex graph, I created a graph showing each individual treatment response for all variety(s) lumped together. We can start to see some general trends as shown in Figure 5. Twinline fungicide clearly showed a benefit for all N rates levels, across the board for all plot data. (Remember regardless of Variety) However, the general trend for using a growth regulator appears to be that they are N rate sensitive.

We achieved the highest yield in this experiment from a combination of treatments. It was the treatment that included Camden Oat, at an N rate of 60N + 30N applied at flag leaf, and it included Twinline fungicide and Palisade as the growth regulator, where we achieved that highest yield of 6,294 kg/ha. Having said all this, in research we shouldn't draw too many conclusions with only one year of data. Therefore, we really need to be planning to execute this experiment again next year.

# Breaking Ground (in Northeastern Ontario) Intensive Oat Management (con't)

By John Kobler, NLARS Research Technician

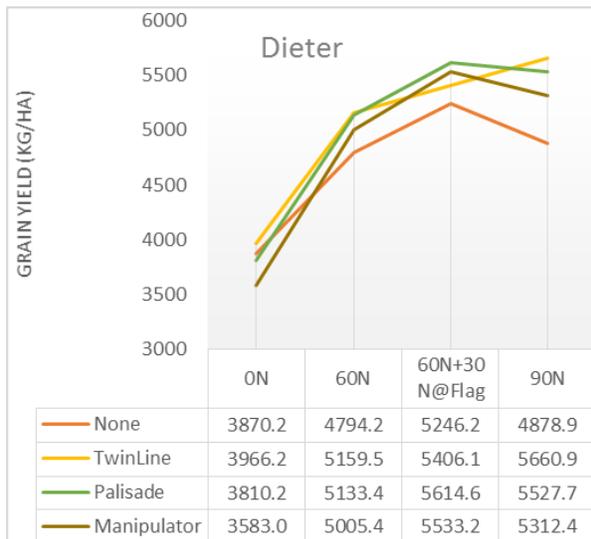


Figure 2: Treatment Response for Dieter Oat

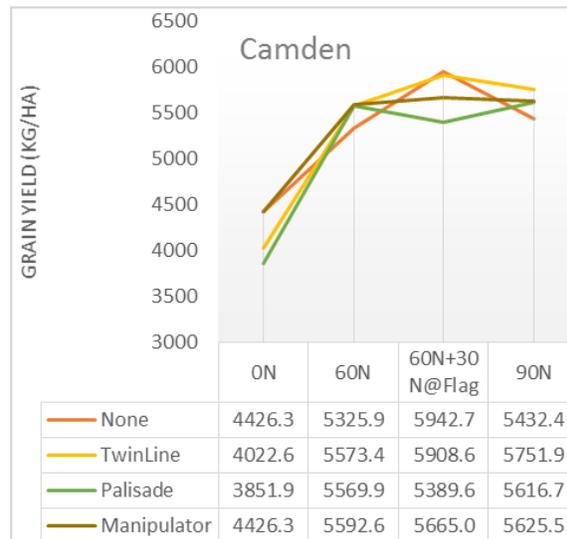


Figure 3: Treatment Response of Camden Oat

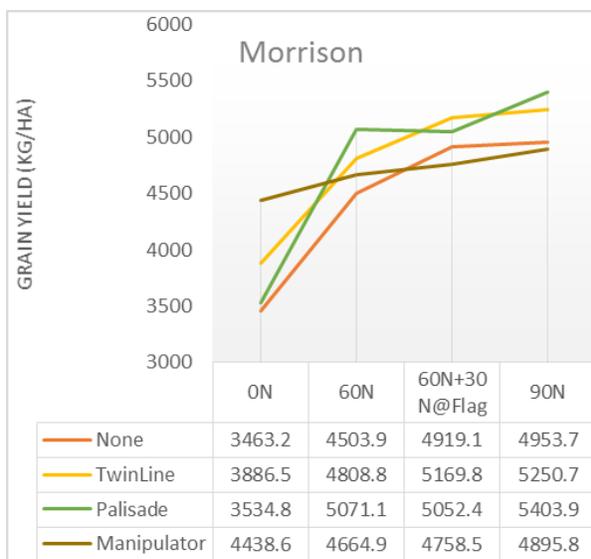


Figure 4: Treatment response for Morrison

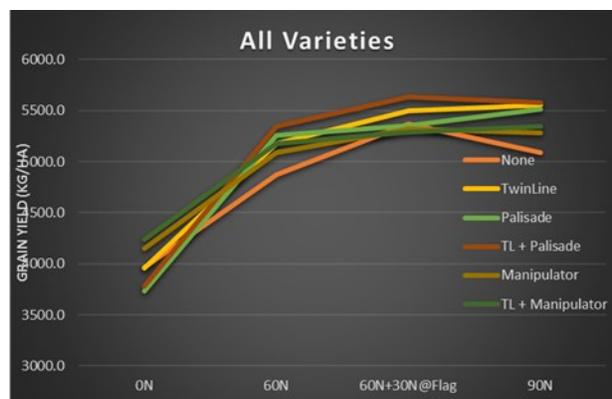


Figure 5 Treatment response across all varieties

Stay tuned for NOFIA's economic analysis of the different management options.

## Information for Farm Emergencies, adapted from OMAFRA Bulletin

Emergency events, such as barn fires, natural disasters and disease, can cause substantial loss to a farm operation, creating unique challenges for farmers, including the disposal of large volumes of deadstock.

Planning ahead can help alleviate some of the stress during an emergency. We encourage farmers to develop a contingency plan for emergency situations. Visit [ontario.ca/deadstock](http://ontario.ca/deadstock) for information on contingency deadstock planning and the regulation (Disposal of Dead

Farm Animals Regulation under the Nutrient Management Plan). Visit [ontario.ca/farmsafety](http://ontario.ca/farmsafety) for useful resources, including information on preventative maintenance for farm buildings and our book, "[Reducing the Risk of Fire on Your Farm.](#)"

OMAFRA [environmental specialists](#) and engineers can give you and your members and clients guidance on managing deadstock. You can also contact the Agricultural Information Contact Centre at [1-877-424-1300](tel:1-877-424-1300) or [orag.info.omafra@ontario.ca](mailto:orag.info.omafra@ontario.ca).



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# Breaking Ground (in Northeastern Ontario)

## EN/PS Agricultural Symposium *By Steph Vanthof*

Approximately 60 people attended the East Nipissing/ Parry Sound Federation of Agriculture Agricultural Symposium in Trout Creek on February 27, 2016. Len Davies spoke about the importance of succession planning within your agricultural operation.

The process of succession planning involves exploration (establishing whole family goals, building a family profile), evaluation (SWOT analysis, financial snapshot, developing a strategy) & execution.

Some tips before planning & during transition:

- ⇒ Communication is key, both during the planning and the transition.
- ⇒ The entire family needs to participate in strategic meetings, even the members who have no role/ interest in the farm.

- ⇒ Capitalize on identified weaknesses, even if that means outsourcing that aspect of the operation.
- ⇒ Complete a current financial snapshot, which can determine if there even is a need for succession, as well as a snapshot of where the farm will be during the transition.
- ⇒ During the succession planning, identify the tasks on the farm and who currently completes them. Identify who will complete them in the future and the date of transfer, listing any skills that need to be brushed up on before then.

Thanks to **Scotiabank** for sponsoring the event!

*‘Farm business succession is a journey,  
not an event’*

## The Western States, a cattle industry under stress

*By Neil Tarlton*

Cattle ranching in the western states of USA has hit the news recently. Cattle ranchers are in jail and there is an armed standoff in Oregon over grazing rights on federal land.

38 million of California’s 100 million acres of land are suited only to grazing cattle. Unlike the eastern seaboard, half of this rangeland is federal land. The drought of the last four years has resulted in a marked decline in the stocking rate that this land is capable of supporting. With its Mediterranean climate crops such as olives or almonds have replaced feed crops suitable for cattle finishing.

From “The California Rancher” Tim Koopmann, president of the California Cattlemen’s association has had to cull about half of his own herd down to 200 mother cows. State wide, approximately 140,000 mother cows had to be sent off for slaughter. This is from a state that ranks 4th in cattle numbers with - 5.2 million cows and calves. Rebuilding their herds in the future will be a steep road for many ranchers.

Cattle used to move into California for winter finishing with its warm winter climate. Now the trend is to move the cattle from California to mid-west states that have high quantities of corn and no pressure from the growing of tree fruit crops.

The California consumer is very sensitive to water conservation issues and the amount of water used by agriculture. Beef production is especially demanding. An average cow requires about three percent of its body weight daily in dry matter. An average mother cow needs around 12 to 18 gallons of water a day to sustain itself. Red meat consumption per capita in California has declined. Competition from Canada is also a factor. With the Canadian dollar at a low of \$0.70 to the USA dollar, Canadian beef is attractive for US finishers and processors. Competition with US beef production as it suffers from cost of production increases.



*Rangeland Alameda county 2015*

# Breaking Ground (in Northeastern Ontario)

## 2016 FORAGE AND SEED SHOW

### N.E.O.S.C.I.A. RULES AND REGULATIONS

This show is designated the Championship Show for the Earleton Farm Show

(All exhibitors from the North Eastern Ontario Region – NEOSCIA and North Western Quebec – are invited to participate.)

All exhibitors must be a 2016 paid up member of their respective Soil and Crop Improvement Associations.

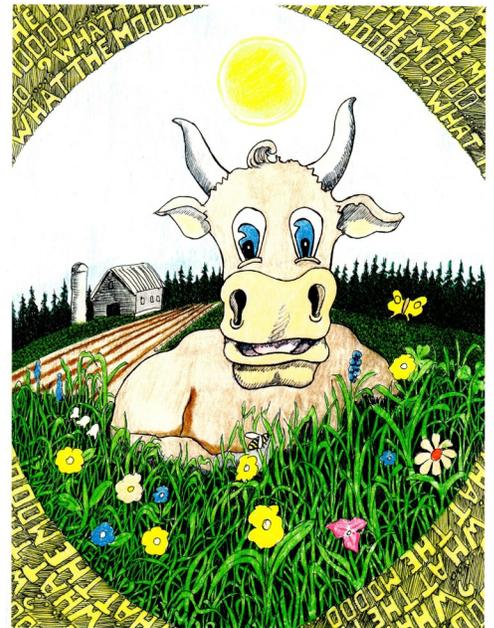
All exhibits must have been grown in 2015 by the exhibitor. All exhibits will become the property of the Show Committee.

Entries will be accepted up until **6:00pm on Friday, April 15<sup>th</sup>**, at the Earleton Recreation Centre (Hallway).

No exhibitor will be permitted to make more than one entry in any class, with the exception of Classes 26, 27 and 30.

The following classes will be available for competition:

- CLASS 1 - Hay, 75% legumes or more
- CLASS 2 - Hay, 75% legumes or more with analysis
- CLASS 3 - Hay, 75% grasses or more
- CLASS 4 - Hay, 75% grasses or more with analysis
- CLASS 5 - Hay, mixed (grass/legumes)
- CLASS 6 - Hay, mixed (grass/legumes) with analysis
- CLASS 7 - Hay, second cut 85% or more legumes
- CLASS 8 - Haylage (moisture 60% or less) 75% legumes or more
- CLASS 9 - Haylage (moisture 60% or less) 75% legumes or more with analysis
- CLASS 10 - Haylage, mixed grass-legumes
- CLASS 11 - Haylage, mixed grass-legumes with analysis
- CLASS 12 - Grass silage, 75% grasses or more (60% moisture or more)
- CLASS 13 - Grass silage, 75% grasses or more (60% moisture or more) with analysis
- CLASS 14 - Round or Square Bale Haylage with Laboratory Analysis
- CLASS 15 - Round Bale or Square Bale Haylage without analysis
- CLASS 16 - Cereal silage (long stem or chopped)
- CLASS 17 - Corn Silage
- CLASS 18 - Corn Silage with analysis
- CLASS 19 - Grain Corn A- Dry B- High Moisture
- CLASS 20 - Barley
- CLASS 21 - Barley, Pedigreed seed
- CLASS 22 - Oats
- CLASS 23 - Oats Pedigreed seed
- CLASS 24 - Wheat
- CLASS 25 - Wheat- Pedigreed seed
- CLASS 26 - Other Cereals (buckwheat, triticale, rye...)
- CLASS 27 - Pulse crops ( peas, edible beans, fababeans, lentils ...)
- CLASS 28 - Soybeans
- CLASS 29 - Canola Seed
- CLASS 30 - Forage Seed (Timothy, Trefoil, Clover, Alfalfa, etc.)



All entries must be prepared by the exhibitor and shown in clear polyethylene bags (available at the show) as follows:

- a) Hay: at least 16 cm (6") and not over 24cm (10") of any ordinary bale, or its equivalent of loose hay
- b) Big Round Bale Haylage: equivalent to Hay as mentioned in a)
- c) Silage or Haylage: 4 litres or one gallon
- d) Classes 18 to 26: 4 litres or one gallon
- e) Canola Seeds (class 29) and Forage seeds (class 30): 1 litre or one quart
- f) Classes 21, 23 and 25 must have Crop Certificate number written on tag.

All entries in Classes with Laboratory Analysis - The exhibitor is required to provide a Laboratory Feed Analysis of the sample from an OMAFRA accredited laboratory.

Judging will be based on 40% - sample visual evaluation

60% - results of Laboratory Analysis

All other existing rules and regulations apply to this competition.

In grain and forage seed classes, only varieties licensed for sale in Canada are eligible to compete.

It is the responsibility of the exhibitor to properly identify his or her exhibit and to enter it into the appropriate class.

The Committee reserves the right to refuse entry to any exhibit not meeting the above standards.

It is the responsibility of the exhibitor to properly identify his or her exhibit and to enter it in the appropriate class.

Any entry not meeting the above requirements will be refused.

The judge has the right to disqualify any exhibit not meeting the requirements of the class in which it is entered.

# N.E.O.S.C.I.A

North Eastern Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association

Serving the Northern Agricultural Community since 1966

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*Secretary/Treasurer:*

Neil Tarlton ..... (705) 692-7276

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Ministry of AGRICULTURE,  
FOOD and RURAL AFFAIRS



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*Beef Cattle Production Systems*

*Program Lead* ..... Tom Hamilton

Effective for the June issue of Breaking Ground, only **paid OSCIA members** will receive paper copies. Breaking Ground will still be available to everyone via email or on [www.farmnorth.com](http://www.farmnorth.com). If you would like to continue to receive your mailed copy, contact your district rep (adjacent) to renew your 2016 membership if you haven't already done so.

## Wildlife Damage to Crops

At the various farm meetings across the North I have attended over the last few months the issue of wildlife damage to crops has been a regular topic of discussion. Resolutions were passed at both Northern Caucus and OFA convention to pursue the issue with government. While past estimates from various sources indicate the damage is significant province wide, the situation in the North is evolving and we need some indication now as to what the real situation is.

We need to hear from individual farmers as to the challenges you are facing. To this end we have created a wildlife damage survey on [www.farmnorth.com](http://www.farmnorth.com). You can complete it online, or send by email or regular mail to NOFIA or myself. If you are able to provide pictures so much the better.

If we are able to obtain a wildlife damage profile this season for each district we will be in a much better position to develop and present proposals to government.

Please spread the message through your local groups and if you have any questions don't hesitate to contact me.

Mark Kunkel

OFA Director Northern Ontario

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[705-724-2594](tel:705-724-2594)

Completed surveys can be sent to:

NOFIA

PO Box 2976, New Liskeard, ON

P0J 1P0

[nofia.on@gmail.com](mailto:nofia.on@gmail.com)

