



ENVIRONMENT YEAR IN REVIEW

2014 has been a busy year for the environment team at Farm & Food Care. This issue of Environment News recaps some of the accomplishments over the last year.

WATER ADAPTATION MANAGEMENT AND QUALITY INITIATIVE

The Water Adaptation Management and Quality Initiative (WAMQI) is Farm & Food Care's major environmental initiative with \$1.5 million in funding to support 29 demonstration and applied research projects that showcase innovative technologies and solutions for agricultural water use efficiency activities related to adapting to climate change and land based projects such as fertilizer trials on new crops and innovative wastewater treatment systems. The WAMQI project will wrap up in March of 2015 but is hoping for an extension into 2015 for new projects.

ENVIRONMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

Farm & Food Care environment staff works under the direction of its Environment Advisory Council which provides an open forum for input, ideas, dialogue and proactive discussion of on-farm environmental issues. The Council discusses current agricultural environmental issues in Canada and provides insight into how Farm & Food Care can be part of the discussion and develop practical solutions. The goal is to keep ahead of the curve of these issues wherever possible, and react as necessary. Topics discussed by the council at its quarterly meetings in 2014 have included: honey bees and neonicotinoid pesticides, Soil erosion, nutrient management, tillage practices, source water protection and agricultural water use efficiency and conservation. At each meeting, subject area experts are invited to join the meeting to provide insight on agenda items.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATIVE RAIN, HAIL AND SNOW NETWORK (CoCoRaHS)

CoCoRaHS enables individuals to record and upload rain gauge data to a central website. The data is then accessible for printing customizable reports for farms and is made available to the public and industry professionals. CoCoRaHS is now the largest provider of daily precipitation observations in the United States. CoCoRaHS has more than 1,000 volunteers across Canada and has just signed up 50 schools in the Northwest Territories. CoCoRaHS is seeking more Ontario farmers and weather watchers to sign up and submit data to this national project. www.cocorahs.org/

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UPCOMING EVENTS & MEETINGS

⇒ **Niagara Flowers Greenhouse Farm Innovation Tour**
December 10, 2014

⇒ **Environment Advisory Council Meeting**
February, 2015

⇒ **Farm & Food Care AGM**
April 14 & 15, 2015, Milton, ON

Niagara Farm Innovation Tour

Join Farm & Food Care December 10 for a unique tour of two Ontario flower greenhouses and the Vineland Research and Innovation Centre. Guests will see innovations in environment that provide growers with great quality plants, while reducing negative environmental impacts. The cost of the tour is \$40, and OMAF staff are free (use code ffc14).

Register here: flowersfarminnovationtour.eventbrite.ca

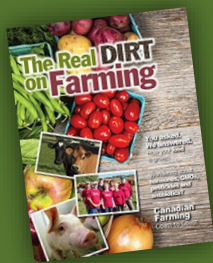


FARM & FOOD
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The Real Dirt on Farming

The third edition of The Real Dirt on Farming has now been published and can be viewed online at www.RealDirtonFarming.ca. Copies can be ordered from the same website.

The 2014 edition has been updated with new content, photos, statistics and farmer profiles. It is the Farm & Food Care Foundation's goal to distribute one million copies of this across Canada in the next two years.



FARM INNOVATION TOURS

Farm & Food Care has organized and hosted five bus tours this year profiling innovation in animal welfare and the environment on farms and at agribusinesses across the province. These tours have provided industry, academia and government a unique opportunity to see innovations on Ontario farms that are part of the future of agriculture. The goal of the tours is to connect people policy makers to innovations in environment and animal welfare in Ontario agriculture. December 10 marks the final tour of 2014, in which attendees will visit two Niagara Region flowers greenhouses and the Vineland Research and Innovation Centre.

ONTARIO PESTICIDE SURVEY

Farm & Food Care continues to manage the Ontario Pesticide Survey on behalf of the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. All Ontario field crop, vegetable, fruit and specialty crop farmers are asked to fill out a confidential, anonymous survey of pesticide use. Surveys have been conducted every five years since 1973 and are used to track trends in pesticide use. Government, commodity boards and researchers use the information to help improve minor use pesticide registration lists, work toward safer use of pesticides and to understand trends in use and the types of pesticides used. The survey is totally anonymous, with only county and crop information recorded.

The survey will track all field and horticulture crops and the pesticides used, acres applied and also acres where no pesticides are used. All farmers and custom spray applicators are encouraged to help fill out the survey of products they used during 2013 and 2014. To participate in the survey, visit www.ontariopesticidesurvey.ca. The deadline to submit data is February 13, 2015.

BEE HEALTH

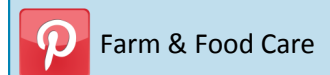
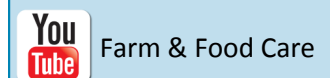
As is the case with all major issues that Farm & Food Care focuses on, the issue of bee health or neonicotinoids has been one where Farm & Food Care has played a supporting role to the efforts of its commodity partners. In response to requests from its members, a new fact sheet on bee health was produced and distributed through Farm & Food Care communications channels. Farm & Food Care also partnered with Grain Farmers of Ontario for two media tours in 2014 for Toronto and Ottawa food writers and addressed the issue with the 125 influential guests.

UNCONTROLLED ELECTRICITY AGRICULTURE WORKING GROUP

The Uncontrolled Electricity Agriculture Working Group is a coalition of members from Farm & Food Care, Ontario Federation of Agriculture, Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario, interested farmers, electrical experts, and consultants. The working group intends to address uncontrolled electricity issues in the province of Ontario by bringing together stakeholders, academia, Hydro One and policy makers to direct research into the scope and causes of uncontrolled electricity in order to develop solutions for electrical distribution systems.

As the demands for electricity have grown and the load placed on the capacity of the wires has increased, the amount of electricity that uses the ground as its return path back to its source (rather than the primary neutral) has increased, causing unintended and often unpredictable consequences. This working group is working closely with Hydro One and Waterloo North Hydro to address the issues of using the earth as a return path and mitigating the un-intended consequences this can cause, particularly on livestock operations. This group has had several "on farm" visits with the partners and is working on some case studies to see how the impacts can be reduced.

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