

ONTARIO DAIRY FARM HOSTS VIRTUAL NORTH AMERICAN MANURE EXPO

By Lilian Schaer
CONTRIBUTOR

A well-known Perth County dairy farm will host the North American Manure Expo this year—even though the event itself will be held virtually.

The annual conference had originally been scheduled for summer 2020 to be hosted by the Johnston Family at Maplevue Farms near Listowel, Ont., but was postponed by a year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The fifth-generation family farm, which will be the hub for the field demonstration portion of the event this year, is owned and operated by Doug and Dave Johnston and their families. The Johnstons milk 75 cows and crop 1,500 acres and are well known for their proactive approaches to soil health and management, with integration of livestock manure playing a key role in their system.

“Our theme this year is *Professionalism in Nutrient Management*, and we’ll be featuring a great combination of the latest innovations, as well as presentations from some of the leading voices from Canada and the United States in the manure and nutrient management space,” says Christine Brown, field crop sustainability spe-

cialist with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA).

Brown is one of the event’s co-chairs, along with Andrew Barrie and Dave Bray.

The 2021 edition of the North American Manure Expo will take place on Aug. 25 and 26, with a virtual trade show opening on Aug. 23. Along with field demonstrations, the event will feature tours of area farms, panel discussions and pre-recorded presentations featuring some of the industry’s leading experts. Presentation topics not scheduled for Aug. 25 and 26 will become part of a weekly webinar series with live question and answer opportunities between speakers and participants.

The farm tours will feature in-storage aeration systems, dairy compost pack barns, managing water for beef barns near watercourses, compost facility, biosolids utilization and the University of Guelph’s (U of G) dairy, beef and soil facilities.

Dr. Claudia Wagner-Riddle from U of G will discuss ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through manure management.

Custom manure applicator Adrian Gunten-sperger from Seaforth, Ont., John Molenhuis, cost of production specialist at OMAFRA, and Rick Martens, executive director of the Minnesota Custom Applicators’ Association, will talk about how to determine the real cost of han-

dling manure and when hiring a custom applicator makes sense.

Glen Arnold from Ohio State University and Larry Bearinger from Ontario will address how to maximize a growing season and in-crop manure application using drag hose systems. The University of Wisconsin-Madison’s Rebecca Larson, along with John Deere’s Frank Weber and Julia Romagnoli, will look at how tracking and adjusting the nutrients on-the-go in manure can lead to more uniform application.

Merrin Macrae from the University of Waterloo will lead a session on phosphorus and manure with other agenda topics covering compaction and safe manure transportation.

Field demos will take place at the Johnston Farm featuring the latest equipment and technology and will be made available in video format on Aug. 25 and 26.

“Although we can’t offer Ontario hospitality and gather in person this year because of the pandemic, we’ve worked hard to put together a well-rounded manure expo experience that will still offer a quality educational experience to participants,” Brown says. “We are looking forward to hosting and touring some of the newest innovations virtually from the Johnston farm.”

The North American Manure Expo is an annual event that marks its 20th anniversary this year. It has previously been hosted in Wisconsin, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, Indiana, Iowa, Nebraska and Pennsylvania. It was first held outside of the United States in 2013, when the event came to Ontario and was hosted at U of G’s research station at Arkell, just outside of Guelph, Ont.

To register for this year’s event, visit www.manureexpo.ca.

For information about manure stewardship and long-term nutrient management options, visit <https://www.farmfoodcareon.org/timing-matters/>.



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