



IN THE TRENCHES

June 2008

"Drainage Doesn't Cost - IT PAYS!"

www.drainage.org

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From the President's Desk

Fellow members:

Here we are June 11, 2008 - we are half way through another year. The spring was quite busy but very short; winter just would not let go this year.

I would like to touch on our newsletter In the Trenches. I do not hear a lot of feedback either good or bad. The LICO executive and I would like to know what our members think about our newsletter. Are you happy with the contents of the newsletter? Would you like it less often or more often? What would you like to see in the newsletter? How often do you read the newsletter? Is it being sent to appropriate people? If you could please send us your thoughts, that would be most helpful in preparing this document.

The agricultural industry appears to be on the rebound. The grain food shortages across the world have resulted in increased crop prices which benefits many other industries outside the farming community. The problem is that most city living people do not realize this. A lot of these people just do not know anything about farming. They go to their grocery store pick up milk, eggs, bread, fruit, meat, etc., and they do not have clue where it comes from. Then some of these same people are in, or get into positions of influence and start introducing new laws and regulations to our environment that have a direct impact on the agriculture community with no regard.

Do not get me wrong, we all want clean water, fresh air to breath, protection of endangered species, but common sense has to be part of the equation, and we first have to determine the issues, find the root cause of any problems and then collectively come up with the corrective action. I believe we need to push harder as an organization and educate the non-farming community on the benefits of agriculture and make them understand that the very food everyone requires to live is a result of the agricultural community. Agriculture has been with us from the beginning of time.

Thank you.

Your President,
Chris J Groot



Summer is a promissory note signed in June, its long days spent and gone before you know it, and due to be repaid next January.
— Hal Borland

Walkerton Drainage Company Sold to Armtec Income Fund - Ontario Farmer ,

March 25/08

Bruce Tile, a leading producer of farm drainage tile in Ontario, has sold its machinery, plant equipment and inventory to Armtec Infrastructure Income Fund, a publicly traded income trust on the Toronto Stock Exchange.

Located in Walkerton, Bruce Tile's assets were sold to Armtec for \$9.5 million. Armtec, located in Guelph, is also a leading manufacturer of farm drainage tile and the sale will mean further consolidation in the tile manufacturing business.

Bruce Tile has been in business since 1974 and had a 27,000 square foot tile manufacturing plant just outside of Walkerton. In addition to plastic farm drainage tile, the company produced drainage material and piping for highway and municipal roads, building trades and also provided filter cloth for corrugated pipe.

In a news release announcing the purchase last week, Armtec said the acquisition would play out well for the company.

"Our acquisition of these assets strengthens the Armtec division's competitive position in Ontario's growing agricultural drainage market," said Charles Phillips, the president and CEO of Armtec.

"With the improvement in the agricultural markets expected to continue in 2008, Armtec's investment in this business will broaden our market presence in this important market."

Armtec has sold plastic tile in Ontario for more than 30 years through its Big "O" division.

Drugs found in Ontario water: Study - Toronto Star March 24, 2008

HAMILTON – A new study reports finding traces of painkillers and other drugs in drinking water from 15 southern Ontario cities.

The places are not identified but all are said to be within easy reach of Environment Canada's National Water Research Institute in Burlington.

Most compounds were reduced to trace or non-detectable levels after passing through water treatment plants, but the researchers say the fact any chemicals were found is a sign of potential exposure to many more.

The study, by University of Waterloo researcher Mark Servos, appears in the current issue of the Water Quality Research Journal of Canada.

Compounds detected include painkillers such as ibuprofen, cholesterol-lowering drugs and the common household antibacterial agent triclosan.

This study follows recent U.S. findings of a vast array of pharmaceuticals in the drinking water of at least 41 million Americans.

A spokesperson for the Ontario Environment Ministry says results of a study it conducted on water from 17 municipal plants are under review and will be released "sometime this year."

If you have articles, events or notes of interest you wish to add to this newsletter, please send your submissions (not more than 225 words) to the following:

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Lines from Lambton - Dean Hodgson

Here we are near the end of May and summer is still holding off. The farmers here in Lambton have been on the land since mid-April but the cool weather has kept everything moving at a slow pace. As the soil dried out in April the sugar beet farmers were the first to start seeding then the more optimistic corn producers. However, no one has been in a hurry because the cool nights kept the soil from warming.

Eventually we were into May and farmers on the lighter soils had their crops coming along very well but the heavier soils in the southwest of the County were much slower. By late May most of the corn and about 75% of the beans were in the ground. But the cool weather is slowing growth. Most of the fall wheat came through the winter very well except on some of the heavier, flatter soils in Enniskillen and Dawn Townships where there seems to be 20-30% losses in many fields. Some of the worst fields were sprayed but because of the high input costs many farmers are living with what Mother Nature has provided.

Up in Arkona we hear many of the orchards suffered serious frost damage in the first part of May. Although it was not a real killing frost it has growers watching anxiously to see what the final damage will be. Many apple farmers have been bulldozing their orchards because of the damage in the marketplace caused by all the cheap imports from China. Much of this imported fruit is sold in our friendly grocery stores as Canada # 1 produce. Who is negotiating these Free Trade agreements?

The tile drain contractors got off to an early start this spring. The soil is in great condition for springtime and everyone is busily catching up with very few lost days. The high tile prices don't seem to scare farmers who have planned to tile but there still seems to be a feeling that tile can be installed at the old prices in spite of all the rising costs.

I was talking with Larry Mansfield who is still operating out of the Dresden Tile Yard after the sale of Bruce Tile to their competitor, Armtec of Guelph. Larry finds his new employer is carrying on the business as before and is quite pleased with the whole arrangement. Tile sales have been moving along briskly and Larry feels it will be a good year for the contractors. I had lunch with Phil McNally who has retired from his job as farm tile salesman. Phil has a new home on the St. Clair River at Port Lambton and after a winter of ice-fishing is looking forward to a summer of fishing and boating. Port Lambton is a wonderful spot to retire as they say the breeze at the bend in the river has a cooling affect, which everyone in the village enjoys. However, like me, Phil feels he would like to do some part-time work to stay connected with the farm tile industry. But we find most employers want you there each and every day, which would take all the fun out of this independent retired life.

There was a good picture of our friend Dave Wideman of Parkhill in the March 17 issue of the Ontario Farmer as Dave cruised the Farm Show looking for bargains. I did not get to the Farm Show this year and missed seeing all the familiar faces.

There has been a lot of news in the city papers about the corn in ethanol driving up the price of food in the grocery store. Blame the farmer is an old story when the price of fuel is the true cause of all the problems. If the price of fuel wasn't so high we could all keep driving these big gas-guzzlers and the Big Three Auto makers would not be laying off all their employees. Maybe we could blame this onto the farmers for not buying more trucks.

As pointed out by one farmer interviewed on TV there is only 10 cents worth of corn in a \$2.50 box of corn flakes. So even if the price of corn doubled it would not explain the rapid rise in food prices. Bob Friesen, of the CFA, stated at \$5/bu. for wheat the farmer collects 11 cents per loaf of bread. So even at \$10/bu. cost per loaf should only be 22 cents. The cause of rising prices is the cost of transportation. The big city news reporters do not seem able to grasp the complicated mathematics, nor do they want the truth.

(Continued Page 4)

Lines from Lambton *(Cont'd. from Page 3)*

If we add up all the fuel costs to transport that grain from the seed dealer to the farmer, from the farmer to the elevator, from the elevator to the manufacturer, finally to the grocery shelf the real cause of rising food prices is fuel. The problem is squarely at the feet of the government who refuse to control greedy oil companies squeezing excess profits from the helpless taxpayers. Read the financial pages and see that the profits of these multinational corporations are criminal.

However, there is food for thought. This rapid escalation in the price of food just because of a small shortage shows just how much power farmers really have over the economy. Hopefully for everyone we never have a real catastrophe in worldwide agriculture.

The farm and rural communities just seem to go from one crisis to another, with a lot of help from our governments. The Clean Water Act is giving more and more power to the Conservation Authorities while they are transferring more and more of their responsibilities onto the municipalities. This, of course, is the local taxpayer and the farmer. The Ontario Farmer has been following a story in Eastern Ontario where the local Conservation Authority has repeatedly delayed the repair of a collapsed culvert blocking a municipal drain. Why would the Drain Superintendent not just go ahead, repair the drain and fight these bullies after the fact? Rules, rules and regulations. What ever became of common sense?

So far this spring the weather is pointing toward another dry year. Water levels in the St. Clair River are still about a foot lower than a year ago. At last report the International Joint Commission has decided it will be best to study the problem a few more years before making any decision on action. At a meeting April 29 /08 at Port Huron, Michigan, the US Army Corp of Engineers reported the Lake Huron level at 577 feet above sea level. The long-term average is 578.7 feet and so the level this spring, after a record snowfall, is 20" below average. Where all this water is going is the really big question. Lake Huron is close to all time lows after all the snowfall that melted and flowed into its tributaries last spring.

But out on the farm they just keep working and seeding, even though the better crop prices are being offset by spiraling input costs. But it is this optimism that keeps farmers booking more work with their drainage contractor and our whole world just keeps turning.

Essex Man Wins Backhoe At Rodeo – *(Excerpts from the Essex Community Press, March 26, 2008)*

Essex resident Nick Market took first place in the Case Backhoe Rodeo in Las Vegas, NV, March 11.

He won a brand new backhoe valued at about \$120,000.

A backhoe rodeo is a competition where backhoe operators take their machine through a series of delicate maneuvers. The exercises are like obstacle courses for the bucket.

Market took first place in the Southwestern Ontario regional backhoe rodeo.

For that win he received a miniature limited edition 580 Super M series 50th Anniversary Edition, a jacket, a hat, a \$500 Visa gift card and two tickets to Vegas to compete in the North American championship.

Market, 52, has been in the construction business since he was a teenager.

The Case Backhoe Rodeo Series began with 4200 contestants competing in regional qualifiers last year. Traveling to Las Vegas for finals were 77 champions.

Case presented Market with his new backhoe at Kucerera Construction Equipment in Tecumseh.

Occupational Health and Safety - (excerpts from the March 2008 issue OHS & WSIB from Heenan Blaikie by Cheryl Edwards)

The need for ongoing assessment and review and tightening of corporate “due diligence” cannot be overstated. Court-developed occupational health and safety due diligence standards are extremely high. Without regular and ongoing attention these standards will not be met for purposes of avoiding corporate or individual “criminal” convictions, and for purposes of avoiding OH&S regulatory convictions. We suggest that organizations assess whether “due diligence” is in good shape by starting with the following questions derived from established Canadian due diligence cases. If a serious accident occurred:

- Could you show that workplace hazards have been thoroughly assessed by competent personnel, and as necessary, by expert external resources? If the workplace hazards are not static, could you state that there was an assessment of the work area before the work involved in the accident commenced?
- Could you produce a written health and safety policy or procedure for the activity involved in the accident? This is increasingly a standard expected by the Courts.
- Could you show that supervisors, and individuals in the work area in question or who performed the task in question, have had thorough training on company policies, and demonstration if necessary of safe work practices and procedures?
- Could you show that workers involved in the area or task in question are regularly retrained in safe work procedures and/or there are regular reminder meetings (safety meetings, to reinforce safe work practices)?
- Could you show that there was supervisory monitoring on a regular basis of the task involved in the accident, to ensure it was being performed in compliance with procedures and safe work practices?
- Could you show that communication of risks for new equipment or new work conditions occurs before work starts?
- Could you establish that safe work practices and policies and procedures involved in the incident were enforced as necessary with discipline?

Law Requires Septic Inspections - (Excerpts from Ontario Farmer, April 15, 2008)

Mandatory on-site maintenance inspections of private sewage systems will now be written in law under the Clean Water Act 2006, according to provincial government documents.

When the Clean Water Act was proposed, opponents claimed that it would result in government forcing private residences and farms to have their wells and septic systems inspected with mandatory costly improvements being mandated, while the government denied that was the case.

The first inspections on a home-by-home, farm-by-farm basis, will take place within the areas formally identified as being of greatest risk of water source contamination, such as near a municipal well.

The documents also note that, "regulations would also govern on-site sewage maintenance inspection programs established by the principal authorities, that would apply to all areas within the jurisdiction of a principal authority not covered by mandatory programs."

Field Tile Irrigation Stabilizes Yield, Recycles Nutrients - (Excerpts from Ontario Farmer, March 18, 2008)

While pests, disease and fertility get most of the press, the real yield robber for corn and soybean growers in most years is Mother Nature's habit of turning off the water tap at the critical stage of crop growth.

The idea of supplying water to Ontario's field crops is getting more and more attention of late.

Cargill agronomist Pat Lynch said, "We need to look at our water management...to utilize water better through drainage and sub-irrigation."

Larry Brown spoke about his work with using field tiles and man-made wetlands as a way of recycling water and nutrients to the crop during the dry months of summer.

Researches like Drs. Chin Tan and Craig Drury of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's research station ant Harrow have been working with different approaches to so-called sub-irrigation since 1991.

A lack of water during key times can easily cut yields by 25 or 30 per cent. The nitrogen you applied in anticipation of a normal crop is sitting there, unutilized until it's washed down the field tile with the arrival of the fall rains.

The idea is to store water coming from drainage tile in ponds, reservoirs or wetlands adjacent to the field then irrigate from that water source when necessary.

Brown says an effective sub-surface drainage/irrigation system should be laid out at closer spacings than the existing drainage tile.

Agriculture Canada's Chin Tan says utilizing field tile water can give you three times as much water as surface runoff alone. And there is less evaporation loss.

Tan and Drury have documented 90 per cent yield increases in corn and 50 per cent in soybeans through sub-surface irrigation in drought years.

Drury says the studies have shown that between two-thirds and 90 per cent of the total phosphorus lost from fields goes out via the field tile, not by surface runoff. There is also considerably more nitrate lost through the tile than by surface runoff.

You'll need an area with a deep layer of heavy clay to act as a liner, Lynch says. One acre of water storage may be enough to see a 100-acre field through a dry spell.

Nitrogen Overwhelms Waterways - Ontario Farmer March 18, 2008

More and more nitrogen runoff entering the environment is having a serious impact on natural ecosystems, a new study has found. United Press International reports the study by scientists from a number of American universities as well as the U.S. Forest Service says the nitrogen-rich runoff prevents streams and rivers from filtering out nutrients before they can reach lakes and coastal ocean regions, where they can cause noxious algal blooms and lead to oxygen depletion and death of fish and shellfish.

Editor's note - Does this not sound like the "demon" phosphorous from the 1970's? What next?

Why Drainage Is Important To Me – Don Lobb

I started farming in the fall of 1961 on a 105 acre lot that Dad rented to me. It was good land, mostly Harriston Loam with some patches of Huron Clay Loam. This was great land for growing alfalfa and pasture. There were a couple of fields that were a little slow to dry up in the spring and a few wet spots on hillsides.

Through the '60s, crop production changed rapidly. White beans, wheat and corn became the crops of choice as better varieties were available and new pesticides made weed and insect control quick and easy. I began growing soybeans in 1967 and by the end of the '70s they were an important crop on the farm.

Over the years the farm size increased and so did tillage and soil erosion. The pressure increased to do field work on time because timing is so critical in successful crop production. What allowed my farm to grow and be profitable and to maintain its productivity was drainage.

As crop production intensified and became my principle source of income, I could not afford to work around wet spots or delay planting on fields that were slow to dry up in the spring. Wet fields at harvest time, particularly for corn, were a huge problem. Spring harvest was not an option because the snow coming off Lake Huron would flatten the crop. The same was true for soys. During the late '60s and through the '70s I first drained the wet spots and then I participated in three municipal drain projects so that outlets were no longer an issue.

By the end of the '70s, soil erosion and loss of organic matter was evident. Cross slope cropping was not really helpful in reducing runoff and grass water ways just trapped the soil that was running off the fields. We needed to keep the soil in place.

No-Till crop production could do this. I found immediately that the system worked well where drainage was good, but was a disaster on imperfectly drained soil, particularly clay soil. Dave Inglis (Bruce Tile) arrived on the scene and over time systematically drained all of my problem areas. Those difficult to manage soils when properly drained produced no-till crop yields that were on average higher than the conventional tilled check strips. This was true for corn, soybeans and wheat. During the last 15 years that I farmed, oat yields (grown for seed) went from 70 bu. per acre to 140 as drainage and no-till allowed planting sufficiently early to avoid normal disease cycles.

The benefits went far beyond yield. Runoff water leaving the fields was virtually clean. As tillage was reduced, worms and other soil fauna life increased and organic matter increased.

Where I previously used grass waterways, I installed water and sediment control basins and made use of drains to slowly remove the water. Soil erosion was further reduced and more land was available for crops.

Drainage allowed me to increase crop yield, reduce soil erosion, reduce organic matter loss (less tillage) and improve the quality of water that left my farm. For me, good farming began with good drainage!

“Seagull Manager” - A manager who flies in, makes lots of noise, craps on everything and then leaves.

“Assmosis” - The process by which some people seem to absorb success and advancement by kissing up to the boss rather than working hard.

“Salmon Day” - The experience of spending an entire day swimming upstream, only to get screwed and die in the end.

“Ohnosecond” - That miniscule fraction of time in which you realize you made a BIG mistake.

Culvert Clearing Creates Major Flap – (Excerpts from *Ontario Farmer*, April 20, 2008)

A blocked municipal drain in South Stormont that is flooding property has OMAFRA and the municipal government on one side and the South Nation Conservation Authority and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources on the other, locked in a year-long dispute as to who has the legal authority to clear the obstruction from the ditch.

The job has been estimated to require about two hours of work with a high hoe.

Hart, who is from a dairy farm, knows the importance of good municipal drains. The fact that the local CA and MNR are now demanding fees and the involvement of consultants for what has always been a municipal council responsibility has her infuriated. “It’s craziness,” she says.

The conservation authority wants the town to pay a fee, plus hire consultants.

Sid Vander Veen, OMAFRA drainage coordinator, agrees with the South Stormont Council that they do not have to comply with the CA demands. In an Oct. 15, 2007 letter, he states that the maintenance and repairs of municipal drains are their “statutory obligation” under sections 74 and 80 of the Drainage act.

“Since municipalities have a statutory obligation to keep municipal drains maintained and repaired, the regulations should not apply to these drainage activities” he wrote.

The Minister of Natural Resources Donna Canafield wrote that the conservation authorities have not been overstepping their authority and they have been acting within their legal rights.”

The cost of municipal drain work – which is taken off the affected farmers taxes – will now shoot through the roof noted Hart. “Now you’re going to have to call the conservation authority for every one of them, have them study it and get their permission.” she said. “The CAs want to be in control of culverts.”

Trillium Grant Funds Three-Year Project to Protect and Enhance Wetlands – (Excerpts from *Ontario Farmer*, May 13, 2008)

A \$225,000 grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation will be used over the next three years to protect and enhance wetlands within Middlesex and Huron counties, focusing in the Ausable River watershed.

The Healthy Headwaters Wetlands Initiative will help protect wetlands through the enhancement of floodplain habitat; creation of wetlands through small impoundments; livestock exclusion fencing; excavated wetlands; and the creation of conservation buffers.



“Rest is not idleness, and to lie sometimes on the grass under the trees on a summer’s day, listening to the murmur of water or watching the clouds float across the sky, is by no means a waste of time.”
— John Lubbock

Student Wades Through Data and Water Channels - (Excerpts from *At Guelph*, March 26, 2008)

Belinda Ward-Campbell, along with Prof. Rob McLaughlin, has found some surprises in streams that may help farmers resolve long-standing disputes with biologists trying to protect fish habitat.

That research follows a paper published this spring by McLaughlin along with former master's student Katie Stammler and co-supervisor Nicholas Mandrak in the Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences on the effects of rural drain maintenance on fish habitat.

To work properly, drains need to be routinely cleared of vegetation. That often pits farmers and drain superintendents against fisheries biologists with the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) who view these waterways as valuable habitat under the Fisheries Act.

Ward-Campbell says her field studies since 2006 in southwestern Ontario indicate that along with vegetation, fish species repopulate the dredged channels more quickly than expected; drains are much like ordinary creeks and streams.

"I'm still wading through the data, but it appears they're recovering in a relatively short time," she says. "Fish are coming back, and the numbers and kinds of fish found in a system return to normal in about a year." That echoes work done earlier by Stammler.

Idyllic Yamaska Is Canada's Filthiest River - (Excerpts from *theStar.com*, May 19, 2008)

Phosphorous, ammonia, nitrates help make idyllic Quebec waterway Canada's worst. Environment Canada gave the Yamaska an anemic 27.1 out of a possible 100 points.

The silty Yamaska, which flows out of Lac Brome in the Eastern Townships, meanders lazily across the plains of the Monteregie region, traversing some of the most fertile farmland in Canada before splitting into the St. Lawrence River about 75 kilometres east of Montreal.

Biologists say the main culprits are phosphorous, ammonia and nitrates - the results of pesticide and fertilizer runoff and the animal waste from the area's intensive and industrial-scale agriculture. Long-term pollution problems have caused genetic mutations in the bullfrog population.

In the Yamaska watershed, scientists say one of the big problems is pigs (in the rural municipality of Les Maskoutins, for example, there are 80,000 inhabitants and 800,000 pigs). On the Bayonne side, the issue is chickens, who produce so much manure it is exported to other parts of the province and beyond as fertilizer. In both cases, the manure is often spread on local cornfields, whose yield is transformed into pork and chicken feed.

Municipal and provincial officials insist that while there are pollution problems, the situation is improving and the toxicity levels are generally within acceptable norms.

Several experts point to the same set of factors: the rapid development of the St. Lawrence Valley from the 1960s onward, increasing sophisticated farming techniques that maximize yields, new fertilizers, genetically modified grains, agricultural subsidies, and an emerging ethanol market.

All of it stoked by decades of government policies aimed at developing an agricultural sector that can compete on a global scale.

Editor's Note: They have pushed all of the environmental buttons in this article published in the urban media. We have an uphill battle ahead of us.

Land Owners Fighting Over Drainage - (Excerpts Ontario Farmer, April 8/08)

A farm, which is designated agricultural land, was purchased by a large dairy producer from an older neighbour. The new owner immediately cleaned the ditches and tile drained the land.

Another non-farming neighbour who liked the ponding of water on his property, mainly caused by a backed-up beaver dam, was upset when the opened municipal drains and nearby tiling took water off his property and called the Conservation Authority, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the City of Kingston.

The Conservation Authority deemed the tiled property as wetland and ordered \$20,000 worth of bulldozing and high hoe work to put water back on the property.

The area has been amalgamated with the City of Kingston and the fact that these ditches are named municipal drains means nothing to city government, nor the Conservation Authority.

The CA ordered the study done and a firm from Picton came out and did elevation readings, looked at the ditches and before they issued their report - which sided with the farmer's version of the land designation - the CA "sent out letters threatening court" if the land wasn't returned to wetlands.

When the report arrived two weeks after their threatening letter, "the CA didn't like the study that was done, they wanted another one".

Steven Knechtel, general manager of the Cataraqui Conservation Authority, hopes that this situation, "will be resolved fairly soon".

"I recognize that the beaver dam was aggravating the situation, but I don't believe there were wetlands there because of the beavers," said Knechtel. The property was not officially designated wetlands before, he said. However under law the CA have the power to make that determination on their own.

Any farmer looking to tile drain land and/or clean out ditches needs to be aware, "that approval has to be obtained," from environmental officials, even if the land is zoned as agriculture, Knechtel said. "There could be consequences without approval."

Supervisor, Company Fined in Ontario Trench Death - Safe Supervisor, May 2008

A supervisor at a Canadian concrete contracting company was fined \$5,000, plus a 25 percent victim fine surcharge, after a worker died in a trench collapse in July 2006. The supervisor's company was also fined a total of \$150,000.

Tony Garofalo's Concrete Works Ltd. Was waterproofing basement walls at a home in Niagara Falls, ON, and its workers had dug a trench along the side of the house for the job. The trench collapsed while a worker was inside it, burying the person under soil. The employee could not be resuscitated.

An Ontario Ministry of Labour investigation found that the trench did not have shoring or a support system, nor was it sloping as required. The company pleaded guilty to failure to shore or support an excavation, while supervisor Antonio Garofalo pleaded guilty to failing to ensure that access to and egress from a work area below ground was provided from stairs, a runway, ramp or ladder.

OFA Memo Suggests Other Routes To Compensation Preferred – (Excerpts from Ontario Farmer, June 10, 2008)

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) is advising its agriculture representatives on Source Water Protection Committees to give up the battle to have compensation included in the terms of reference for land affected by the Clean Water Act.

Martha Harris is the source water protection project manager at the OFA.

While the agriculture representatives were pushing hard to have compensation included in the terms of reference Harris wrote, “it is not appropriate that that terms of reference delineate how property owners obtain financial assistance or incentives.”

Any inclusion of financial instruments should complement the Drinking Water Stewardship Program, she noted.

There are other financial instruments available, such as the Environmental Farm Plan, that “leaves it wide open,” rather than restricting compensation for land affected by just the Clean Water Act, she noted.

Editor’s Note: Members should contact their local OFA representative to determine what OFA is thinking. Does OFA have other promises from the Province or have they given up?

OMAFRA Drainage Coordinator’s Report – Sid Vander Veen

Tile Loan Program: By letter dated April 29, 2008, the 2008/09 Tile Loan Program was announced to municipalities. If you want a copy of this letter, please let me know and I’ll arrange to have one sent to you. The loan interest rate remains at 6% and the loan limit continues to be \$50,000 per farmer per year. Please direct your farmer clients to their local municipalities to apply for the loan. Remember, they must apply for the loan before performing the work.

Agricultural Tile Drainage Installation Act: As of June 9, 2008, in the province of Ontario there are --87 licensed tile drainage businesses using ---163 tile drainage machines. Of the 163 machines, 104 are ploughs, 50 are wheels and 9 are chains. A total of 339 individuals have a valid machine operator’s licence. We will be posting a list of licensed tile drainage contractors on our website in the very near future (www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/landuse/drainage.htm)

Submitting Digital Tile Drainage Record Data

OMAFRA has recently acquired software that allows us to convert LATEK “*.gps” files to ESRI shape file format. Also, in addition to ESRI shape file format and LATEK “*.gps” files, OMAFRA can now accept tile drainage record digital data in georeferenced “*.dxf” file format. Please contact Bob Steiss with any questions or for more details on submitting your tile records data digitally.

Artificial Drainage System Website

OMAFRA is currently working with website developers on obtaining the approvals, from the various GIS information owners (i.e. agencies responsible for the maintenance of specific GIS data layers such as roads, woodlands, etc), to retrieve and load the various GIS data layers on to a GIS mapping website. Once all the data is in place, the web site design and construction will commence with testing of the site scheduled to take place in the fall.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January 20 & 21, 2009

LICO Conference

Best Western Lamplighter Inn

591 Wellington Rd., London, Ontario

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Passings

Piper, Russell (Rusty) - On Saturday, April 26, 2008, in his 78th year. Long time member of the Ontario Drainage Tribunal, and the Federation of Anglers and Hunters, avid supporter of the drainage industry.

Sensible Observations

Advice for the day: If you have a lot of tension and you get a headache, do what it says on the aspirin bottle: "Take two aspirin" and "Keep away from children." --Author Unknown

"If a woman has to choose between catching a fly ball and saving an infant's life, she will choose to save the infant's life without even considering if there is a man on base." -- Dave Barry

"A study in the Washington Post says that women have better verbal skills than men. I just want to say to the authors of that study: "Duh." --Conan O'Brien

"Remember in elementary school, you were told that in case of fire you have to line up quietly in a single file line from smallest to tallest. What is the logic in that? What, do tall people burn slower?" --Warren Hutcherson

"Suppose you were an idiot. And suppose you were a member of Congress.. But I repeat myself." --Mark Twain

"You can say any foolish thing to a dog, and the dog will give you a look that says, 'My God, you're right! I never would've thought of that!'" --Dave Barry

"Everybody's got to believe in something. I believe I'll have another beer." --W. C. Fields

How To Stay Young

1. Try everything twice. On Madams tombstone (of Whelan's and Madam) she said she wanted this epitaph: Tried everything twice...loved it both times!
2. Keep only cheerful friends. The grouches pull you down (keep this in mind if you are one of those grouches).
3. Keep learning: Learn more about the computer, crafts, gardening, whatever. Never let the brain get idle. 'An idle mind is the devil's workshop.' And the devil's name is Alzheimer's!
4. Enjoy the simple things.
5. Laugh often, long and loud. Laugh until you gasp for breath. And if you have a friend who makes you laugh, spend lots and lots of time with him/her.
6. The tears happen: Endure, grieve, and move on. The only person who is with us our entire life is ourselves. LIVE while you are alive.
7. Surround yourself with what you love: Whether it's family, pets, keepsakes, music, plants, hobbies, whatever. Your home is your refuge. Dance around the house naked.
8. Cherish your health: If it is good, preserve it. If it is unstable, improve it. If it is beyond what you can improve, get help.
9. Don't take guilt trips. Take a trip to the mall, even to the next county, to a foreign country, but NOT to where the guilt is.
10. Tell the people you love that you love them, at every opportunity. I love you, my special friend.
11. Forgive now those who made you cry. You might not get a second time.