



IN THE TRENCHES

June 2009

"Drainage Doesn't Cost - IT PAYS!"

www.drainage.org

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From the President's Desk

Fellow Members:

They say the older you get, the faster time goes by. I don't know about you but I can remember the first job we did this spring and it only seems like it was just last week and here we are in the middle of June. Who would have guessed that we would have a wet fall and spring back to back? To me it only re-enforces the need of our industry for the farming communities' success.

I had a very interesting situation happen to one of my customers on the May long weekend. He had hired a contractor to spread manure on another farm he owns. Someone had called the Ministry of Environment on the holiday Monday to report an environmental spill in one of the streams that crosses this farm. The OPP were also contacted to report a road hazard. The police were the first to arrive and wondered where the road hazard was. The contractor and the police located a lump of soil containing a few corn stalks. Removing this lump of soil satisfied the officers and they left. When the two MOE officers arrived, they did a visual field survey and commented that they wished more spills were this easy to access. Set backs for all waterways were good and there was no evidence of manure in the stream. After hearing this, the owner made a simple request. He wanted a copy of the report they would be completing. He thought this would confirm good farming practices on his part. Their response was; "I don't think we need to do one." I find this totally unacceptable! Why it is when we have something positive like this and it shows that the farmer is following the rules there is no reporting, but when the situation is reversed you can be assured that it will be reported in all our local papers for all to read? It would only be fair to all taxpayers that the MOE request the name of the caller and if a false report is made then that person would be responsible for all the costs of the investigation. Talking with a few neighbours the following weekend, a comment was made that he had heard that a farmer was shut down because of a manure spill. If the rural community assumes guilt, what does the urban community think?

On a more positive note, it looks like we all are going to have a busy fall. With the weather we have been having it can be very frustrating, but remember, there is no better salesman than a wet field!

Thank you,
Gerald



Oxford Beefs Up Project Funding – (Excerpts from Ontario Farmer, April 21, 2009)

Wetland creation and woodlot management are included in Clean Water Project funding

Oxford has expanded the funding available under the region's Clean Water Program to include grants for woodland and wetland improvements.

The program will assist those that create wetlands, like swamps, marshes and ponds for wildlife, protect existing wetlands with buffer strips, plant lure crops like native grasses to attract wildlife to these wetlands, install wetland drain structures, beaver baffles, or water level control devised for those areas, control invasive species.

Eligibility hinges on completing an Environmental Farm Plan.. Topping the list of all projects funded last year were erosion control structures. For more information, visit www.cleanwaterprogram.ca

Note from Ross W. Irwin

Well, they don't make land no more, nor do they make farmers. Contractors are well aware of the changes in their work areas. Data from the Census taken in 2006 is now released and confirms what agricultural people already knew - there are fewer farmers and farms are larger.

They counted only 178,575 farmer people in Ontario, just 1.5 percent of the entire population. Back in 1931 one-third of the population lived on a farm. According to the count a farmer was 51 years old, ten years older than the average for the work force. Seniors represented 11 percent of the farm population.

Water Work Timing Exceptions Granted – (Excerpts from Ontario Farmer, April 12, 2009)

Recent exemptions have been granted to the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR)'s In-Water Work Timing Guideline, which have been halting or delaying drainage projects across the province.

One Major change is that approval for work on a municipal drain is good for two years rather than just one.

The first criteria for exemption under the guidelines may be granted if, "it's clearly demonstrated that the project is of an urgent nature due to public safety hazard."

The second criteria is if it's "clearly demonstrated by proponent that there will be no negative impact to fish or fish habitat during critical life stages." Two examples are spawning and nursery.

A Fisheries Timing Window Exception must be completed and submitted to the CA. Other requirements from other environmental agencies and/or government bodies must still be obtained.

"A perfect summer day is when the sun is shining, the breeze is blowing, the birds are singing, and the lawn mower is broken."

James Dent

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:

Sharon Bond Phone: (519) 837-0169
15 Milson Crescent
Guelph, ON N1C 1H1 E-mail ssbond@rogers.com

Lines from Lambton - Dean Hodgson

We are off to a very slow start here in Lambton County this year. Both farmers and tile drain contractors have been stymied by the cool, wet weather in the spring of 2009. Sugar beet farmers got some of their crop in during a small window of time in April but by May 1st, less than half the crop was in the ground. Less than 25% of the corn was planted by May 1st and none of the soybean crop. Not much spring grain is planted in Lambton County anymore but even that was behind schedule. The ground was just too wet and cold and though there were some drainage contractors out doing drain repairs it has been a slow spring for any drainage work. But farmers are a resilient bunch and somehow, in between rains, frosts and downright floods, they have managed to get their crops in the ground once again. By May 24th, tractors, seed drills, sprayers and cultivators were roaring up and down the Lambton County farm fields and it was truly amazing to see the results. Although some of the heavier land was not really fit by the end of May, we find much of the planned corn crop was in the ground. About 75% of the soybeans have been planted. We don't know what planned percentages of sugar beets, canola and spring grain was actually planted but we suspect much less than the planned acreage. Most of the fall wheat is now looking very good with some warmer days and the nitrogen turning most fields a lush, dark green. Possibly 30% of the wheat planted last fall has been nuked and is now planted to soybeans. Many of the wheat fields suffered terribly through the wet, freezing and heaving last winter and it is surprising how much of the wheat flourished despite this strange spring weather. Pasture and hay fields however, have been growing by leaps and bounds. Much of the grasses are heading out but the alfalfa is lagging far behind at the end of May.

Meanwhile our drain contractors have been left spinning their wheels. It has been just too wet. We see Ken Jaques working on a small job east of Mandaumin. We heard some contractors such as Philips, Mater, McGee and the Dupuis Bros. have been working in the lighter soils down south but so far have found no one actually tiling. Tile trucks have been moving but slowly, as the farmers are preoccupied with all their seeding problems. Once the crops are all in, the fields dry and the farmers remember all those wet spots that held them back; this could yet turn into a great year for tile installations. Crop prices are firm and farmers are optimistic.

We've been told that Frank Rombouts, up in Warwick, has bought a new Bron Plough to speed up operations. Frank is always on the go and I haven't been able to talk to him but with all the big jobs he does, he will put the big plough to good use. If that new plough can keep up to the pace set by Frank Rombouts, it will be well worth the money he paid for it.

Allan Jardine, my former employer, says work is off to a slow start this spring but he relayed some good news about one of his best customers. Ralph Ferguson, prominent farmer and former MP for Lambton-Middlesex, has been elected to the Ontario Agricultural Hall of Fame. Ralph and his family operate a mixed farm on land settled by his ancestors in the 1800's. Ralph Ferguson has spent his life as an advocate to improve farm income. Probably his most famous work was his paper on 'Compare the Share', comparing farm gate prices to those of the 'Super Market' conglomerates. Ralph will be inducted into the Agricultural Hall of Fame on June 14 /09.

An article in the Ontario Farmer states the South Nation Conservation Authority has charged the Municipality of South Stormont for repairing a municipal drain without permission. This case was to go to court in Cornwall on May 20th. Whatever became of democracy in our country when these bureaucrats are given all this authority but with no responsibility? It seems almost a crime that as we approach the 65th anniversary of D-Day we have public servants dictating to our rural citizens. We thought our soldiers won the war protecting democracy from tyrannical control of an autocratic government. This is not about fish and wildlife; it is about a lust for power, to dominate the rural community. Everyone knows it is the responsibility of the municipality to repair damaged drains so farmers can grow crops to feed our country.

(Continued Page 4)

Lines from Lambton – (Cont'd. from page 3)

Apparently this repair work had dragged on while the Township waited for permission, which never came. The farmers who suffered from this drawn out dispute should step in and sue the employees of the SNCA who were responsible for delaying the repairs. Perhaps if these bureaucrats realized they would be held responsible, they would become more cooperative and work with rural communities to solve problems rather than just issuing stop work orders. Most farmers are protective of our land, water and environment and would willingly work with officials if it were not such a confrontational atmosphere. At present we have too many rules and regulations but not enough common sense.

Some sad news from Warwick Township this spring with the passing of former tile drain contractor, Sherman Williams. Sherman had been suffering from health problems the last few years and he passed away on April 3/09. Sherman Williams was in the tile drainage business for over 50 years in Lambton County. He started digging with an old Buckeye wheel machine back in the 1950's but he was the first to operate a laser controlled drainage plough in Lambton County. Sherman built his own plough in 1969 and led the way as most area contractors had followed his lead to using the trenchless method by 1980. Sherman was a former president of the Ontario Farm Drainage Association and was an advisor to Allen Griffin and myself when we started into the farm drainage business in 1963. Sherman and his wife Sue were also members of the Lambton County Historical Society and we will all miss him at our monthly meetings.

ADS Hancor Announces Expansion Plans – (ADS Newsletter, June 8, 2009)

HILLIARD, Ohio - Advanced Drainage Systems, Inc. (ADS), the world's largest producer of corrugated high-density polyethylene (HDPE) pipe, today announced several growth initiatives.

ADS has entered into a joint venture agreement with Tigre S. A. (Tigre) for the South American market. Tigre is the premier manufacturer of PVC pipe and fittings in Latin America.

In North America, ADS' expansion efforts will generate the opening of two new state-of-the-art manufacturing facilities located in Canada, plus the purchase of Century Plastics, Inc. of Minnesota.

ADS announced plans to open two new manufacturing facilities in Canada, one in Ontario near Heidelberg and one in Quebec near Drummondville. "We are making this significant investment in these two plants to capitalize on the growth opportunities we see in Canada," stated Mr. Chlapaty. "We realize that to be considered a major player in the drainage pipe business, we need to be producing our pipe locally, and these two plants are proof that we are serious about being a Canadian producer of HDPE pipe.

"The facility in Central Ontario is strategically located and will serve both the agriculture and storm sewer segments of our business," Mr. Chlapaty continued. Plans for the Quebec operation call for a pipe manufacturing plant and setup similar to the Ontario facility. Both plants will produce the full line of single and dual wall corrugated HDPE pipe. Both facilities are scheduled to open this summer and will immediately expedite job-site delivery time. There will also be more ADS area engineers on-site to assist project designers and contractors coordinating with design engineering and customer support departments.

OMAFRA Drainage Coordinator's Report – Sid Vander Veen

Navigable Waters Protection Act: The Navigable Waters Protection Act (NWPA) is a federal law that protects the public's right to navigate. As a result of this legislation, a proposal to build structures such as bridges, dams or docks in navigable waters will require a NWPA approval. The NWPA has the authority to prohibit the construction of certain work and also has the authority to demand that structures be modified to accommodate navigation. For example, the size of some access crossings on municipal drains has been increased to allow for public navigation.

Last month, the Transport Minister announced steps to modernize the Navigable Waters Protection Act. The Minister released a Ministerial Order outlining criteria for determining classes of minor works and minor waterways under the Navigable Waters Protection Act. As a result, under certain criteria activities such as erosion control work, docks, boathouses and winter crossings do not require approvals under the NWPA. In addition, Section 12 of the Minister's order makes the following statement:

Artificial irrigation channels and drainage ditches, other than ones created or built in whole or in part from a natural body of water, that have an average width of less than 3.00 m are established as a class of navigable waters for the purposes of subsection 5.1(1) of the Act.

Subsection 5.1(1) of the NWPA indicates that a work may be built or placed in a navigable waterway without approval if the work falls within a class of works, or the navigable water falls within a class of navigable waters.

If you want to read the full Minister's Order, you can find it in the following website: www.gazette.gc.ca/rp-pr/p1/2009/2009-05-09/html/notice-avis-eng.html

Tile Loan Program: The 2009/10 Tile Loan Program was announced to municipalities on June 12, 2009. 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 16, 2009, 91 tile drainage businesses are licensed along with their 167 machines. Of the 167 machines, 108 are ploughs, 50 are wheels and 9 are chains. A total of 340 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

Artificial Drainage System Website

Do you need to know what drainage systems currently exist in your area? Working with the Ministry of Natural Resources, OMAFRA has produced a Rural Drainage Mapping Website that shows the network of municipal drains and also tile drained land in the province. Here is the website link: www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/landuse/gis/map_drain.htm.

Tile Drainage - “the Art and the Science” – Ross W. Irwin, 2009

An art is a skill in performance or experience in the systematic application of knowledge of tile drainage.

Science is the systematic or organized body of studied knowledge with respect to tile drainage.

What are the several aspects of art and science applied to an on-farm drainage project?

The first decision is an art where the farmer’s experience makes him recognize some or all of his farm would benefit from improved drainage. This decision also includes an approximation of the cost and the benefits to him of doing the work, and time lines for the work. Input to his decision may include information from the local community (looking over the fence and talking to neighbors).

The next decision is also initially an art. “Will my soil drain?” The initial answer is again based on local community input and experience. County soil maps can assist in making his decision and are available to the farmer to provide a scientific analysis of his problem. A warning here - soil texture (internal drainage) can change over short distances in some parts of the province.

Is there an outlet for the drainage water? Is it a legal outlet? The farmer probably knows his preferred location for an outlet. However, it is here the farmer should rely on the experience and advice of his local LICO drainage contractor and municipal drain inspector to confirm his opinion.

What is the most cost effective efficient drainage system? This decision is based on the experience of the LICO drainage contractor.

What field design will meet the drainage objectives? An art based on the experience of the LICO drainage contractor. The physical layout is highly influenced by topography but experience is needed to fix on a final effective design.

Spacing and depth of tile drains is defined as science and is based on the characteristics of water flow in the soil. The LICO drainage contractor will confirm his experience through the science in the Drainage Guide for Ontario. Economics is also an important factor in this decision.

Effective installation is an art based on the LICO drainage contractor’s experience, with some guidance from the Drainage Guide for Ontario.

Review - did the project work? Were the farmers objectives achieved? Are changes needed?



LICO congratulates Ross and Doreen Irwin on the occasion of their 60th wedding anniversary at an event held in their honour May 2, 2009.

Food for Thought - Don Lobb, Environmental Advocate

Legislation, by-laws and regulations in recent years are effectively changing land tenure from private to public ownership. The implications are immense!

Farmers, like the rest of society, want clean water, clean air and healthy forests, wetlands and wildlands. Protecting crop land rests with the 2% (±) of Ontarians directly involved in food production, plus the few who act in support roles. Pride in ownership and a desire to pass on productive land and a healthy environment to the next generation has resulted in agriculture that is both highly productive and increasingly sustainable.

Farmers have led the way in adopting new land management practices, new crops and other new technology. While food production has increased dramatically, Statistics Canada data shows that Ontario farmland has decreased by more than 25% in the past 40 years. Compared to 75 years ago, the result has been a real increase in forest area and forest quality along with more wetland and wildlife habitat. This is easily confirmed by comparing old aerial photos with current ones. Wildlife populations continue to increase as do sightings of uncommon species. The quality of water in most rivers and streams has improved substantially. Even well managed municipal drains have more aquatic life than natural woodland streams. Agriculture has made good progress.

Why has this not been recognized by those who influence legislative agendas?

Legislation increasingly reflects societies disconnect from food production realities. Examples are: Federally – The Fisheries Act 2007 and The Species at Risk Act; and Provincially – The Clean Water Act 2006, The Amended Conservation Authorities Act, The Endangered Species Act 2007 and The Cosmetic Pesticides Ban Act 2008. Now the Province encourages municipalities and regions to include Significant Woodlands and Wildlife Habitat Protection in their revised Official Plans. All of this legislation is written to allow control of the countryside far beyond its stated purpose. What is the real objective?

Justification for legislative control over land and land management is strong on perception and rhetoric and short on science and acknowledgement of the evidence at hand. For example, in proposed Ontario regulation, science is virtually removed in decisions about pesticides. This will impact food production. Compensation has not been provided for in legislation where land use is to be restricted because of water issues or endangered species. The public interest prevails over the needs of the food producing landowner. Thus, a program like A.L.U.S. (Alternative Land Use Services) appears to be a trap where landowners are encouraged to create habitat; however, if an endangered species arrives the owner may lose use of land around the site – without compensation.

The list of concerns and questions go on. Is the application of the Fisheries Act to outlet drains mostly about supporting the sports fishery? The impact on cropland food production appears to be irrelevant. Why create multiple layers of legislation for species protection? Why create new legislation where existing legislation could address the expressed goal of drinking water protection? Why is regulated control favoured over education and rewards? Why is the accused assumed to be guilty until he or she can prove their innocence; e.g. The ESA (Endangered Species Act) 2007? This is unusual in a democracy.

Should we be concerned about objectives?

None of this legislation makes food production or the protection of cropland a priority. Clearly, the legislation fails to recognize that food is the first human need and its price or availability determines what money is available for all of our other needs, including environmental protection. Can we afford legislation that brings confusion and a loss of farmer incentive to manage land responsibly?

(Continued Page 8)

Food For Thought - (Cont'd. from Page 7)

Food matters!

Are we experiencing creeping Marxism as special interest groups take charge of the rural landscape through agenda-driven legislation? The Marxist experiment has been tried. We know the results. If our landowner property rights are eliminated, what incentive is there to protect the soil for our children and their children? Why would we do the right thing and plant trees or protect habitat or an endangered species?

Are we prepared to defend a food production system that works?

Canada and Ontario Invest in Environmental Stewardship on Farms - (OMAFRA Press Release, June 22, 2009)

The Growing Forward Environmental and Climate Change program will support farm environmental and stewardship projects.

The program, to be delivered by the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association, will offer farmers environmental farm planning educational workshops that promote the adoption of best management practices for soil, water, air and biodiversity. It will support farmers' continued efforts to implement environmental improvement projects, such as:

- The use of global positioning system technology to improve pesticide and nutrient application
- Improved manure management
- Planting vegetated buffer strips in riparian areas to protect water quality, and water well upgrades.

Canada and Ontario will provide \$42.3 million over the next four years for the program.

Missed Tile Connections During Municipal Drain Construction

Don Weir, Drainage Superintendent, attended the June 6, 2008 meeting of the Land Drainage Committee to discuss tile connections on municipal drain projects. All Engineers include in their specifications details on how tile connections will be completed and paid for during construction of a tile municipal drain. Don noted that a Drainage Superintendent has a problem dealing with missed tile connections that are discovered after the contractor has completed drain construction and left the construction site.

Don noted that tile drain construction specifications do not cover missed tile connections. The difficulty faced by the Drainage Superintendent is determining who should complete the missed connections and who should pay.

The Land Drainage Committee considered the problem and is recommending the solution below. If you have any comments on this solution please let your executive know before **September 1, 2009**.

Missed tile connections that are found during the warranty period for the contract shall be completed by the Contractor and shall be paid at the amount set out in the specification and/or contract. No additional payment will be allowed for missed tile connections beyond the contract amount. The Contractor is not responsible for completing missed tile connections that are found after the warranty period for the contract has expired.

Agricultural Soil Erosion Control Contractor Course Held – Kevin McKague, OMAFRA

Sixteen (16) contractors attended the full 10-day Agricultural Soil Erosion Control Contractors Course offered by OMAFRA on March 2 – 13, 2009. The course provided in-depth training in identifying erosion control problems in the field and in using OMAFRA's recently published Publication 832 (Agricultural Erosion Control Structures – A Design and Construction Manual) to design common erosion control structures. Structural measures covered included grassed waterways, chute spillways, grade control structures, pipe inlets, rock rip rap, low-level ditch and stream crossings, and water and sediment control basins (WASCoBs). Publication 832 may be ordered directly at any time through the Publications Ontario website: www.publications.serviceontario.ca.

Course participants worked through numerous example problems to become confident in using the information and design sheets provided in Publication 832 to design the various structures described in the manual. Cost-share programs available to assist with financing on-farm erosion control measures (e.g. Environmental Farm Plan) often request that structural practices to be built be designed in accordance with Publication 832.

On the final day of the course, participants wrote an exam to demonstrate their skill in designing these structures in accordance with Publication 832. Upon successful completion of the exam, each participant then qualified to receive an **Erosion Control Contractor Certificate of Achievement**. All participants in the 2009 course were successful and, at their request, may be listed at the following OMAFRA website as being **Certificate Holders**.

<http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/engineer/facts/soilerosioncontractors.htm>

It is important to note that it is also possible to become a certificate holder without having to attend the full 10-day course. Contractors who have completed earlier offerings of this course (held in the late 1980's and 1990's) and who feel confident designing erosion control structures using Publication 832 can ask to write the exam. To date, four (4) contractors have requested and successfully obtained their certificate in this way. Those who have never taken earlier versions of the course, however, do not have this option.

OMAFRA is currently working on a software version of Publication 832. The **AgErosion** software will be windows based and assist in completing the Design Sheets for the various structures covered in Publication 832. It is anticipated that this new tool will reduce design time and the potential for common calculation errors that are possible using the manual methods described in Publication 832. Plans are also underway to have this software link to the new OMAFRA Drainage website to assist users in estimating watershed areas and determining peak flows from watersheds they identify. The target is to release this software prior to next year's course.

For further information on the course, or writing the exam independent of the course, contact Kevin McKague, OMAFRA engineer (Woodstock), at 519-537-8491 or e-mail him at kevin.mckague@ontario.ca.

A little known fact....

The first testicular guard "Cup" was used in Hockey in 1874 and the first helmet was used in 1974.

It took 100 years for men to realize that the brain is also important.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January 20 - 21, 2010

LICO Conference

Best Western Lamplighter Inn
591 Wellington Rd.,
London, Ontario N6C 4R3

LICA Summer Meeting

July 15 - 18, 2009

Holiday Inn—Airport
Des Moines, IA
(630) 548-1984

Soil & Water Conservation Society
Annual Meeting

July 11 - 15, 2009

Dearborn, Michigan

Canadian Water & Wastewater Association

Conference on Water Efficiency & Conservation

October 13 - 16, 2009

Victoria, B.C.

e-mail: itsui@cwwa.ca



McGuinty Government Marks First Anniversary Of Endangered Species Act - (OMAFRA Press Release, June 25, 2009)

Editor's Note: Government propaganda on Species At Risk - note where the money is being spent!

Western Golden Horseshoe landowners and organizations have come together to help protect rare and endangered species.

Twenty volunteer stewardship projects in the Halton, Brant, Hamilton, Haldimand-Norfolk and Niagara region are being supported with almost \$700,000 from the province's Species at Risk Fund. These projects are unique because organizations and landowners work together to protect habitat and raise local awareness for species at risk. Projects include:

- * constructing a new fish ladder on the Credit River
- * updating a survey of snake populations
- * developing a model for grassland restoration for the aggregate industry.

Ontario's Endangered Species Act, which came into effect a year ago, makes the province a North American leader in species at risk protection and recovery.

Stress

A lecturer when explaining stress management to an audience, raised a glass of water and asked 'How heavy is this glass of water?'

Answers called out ranged from 20g to 500g.

The lecturer replied, 'The absolute weight doesn't matter. It depends on how long you try to hold it. If I hold it for a minute, that's not a problem. If I hold it for an hour, I'll have an ache in my right arm. If I hold it for a day, you'll have to call an ambulance. In each case, it's the same weight, but the longer I hold it, the heavier it becomes.'

He continued, 'And that's the way it is with stress management. If we carry our burdens all the time, sooner or later, as the burden becomes increasingly heavy, we won't be able to carry on.'

'As with the glass of water, you have to put it down for a while and rest before holding it again. When we're refreshed, we can carry on with the burden.'

'So, before you return home tonight, put the burden of work down. Don't carry it home. You can pick it up tomorrow. Whatever burdens you're carrying now, let them down for a moment if you can.'

So, my friend, put down anything that may be a burden to you right now. Don't pick it up again until after you've rested a while.

