



# IN THE TRENCHES

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## From the President's Desk

Greetings LICO Members,

It's now late November, and the farmers have been harvesting between rain and wet snow. The yields seem to be decent in most parts of Ontario; with any luck, the crops will be off for the year in a couple more weeks. As the cold and wet sets in, I'm sure we are all looking forward to the holiday season and some down time with our families and friends.

In preparation for the annual LICO convention in January, we request that LICO members take some time over the holidays to send in pictures for a slideshow presentation during the banquet. All pictures new and old are welcome; please forward high resolution shots to [turveyj@gmail.com](mailto:turveyj@gmail.com) by **January 12<sup>th</sup>**. For those who ordered LICO coats and have not yet picked them up, they will be available at the convention for your convenience. Kirsten has put together the Spouse/Guest Program that will no doubt be entertaining, so be sure to sign up! Franklin has finalized the agenda and by now John will have the complete convention registration packages to you. There will be WHIMS training and the Red Cross course available this year as well; while you can register at the convention for these courses, you can save time and money by pre-registering by **January 6<sup>th</sup>**.

We are very fortunate to Franklin and John for working hard to keep things interesting year after year, so if you haven't thanked them recently, please do so in January.

In an effort to keep things fresh, there will be a couple of additions to the newsletter in the future. We are adding a free "Buy/Sell" section for members to list industry related equipment that

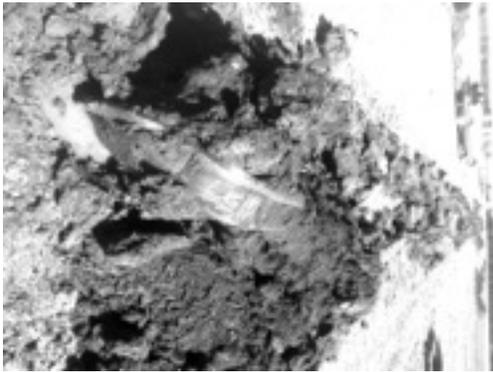
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## From the President's Desk - (Cont'd. from Pg. 1)

they are either looking to sell or needing to buy. Also, there is a new "Shots from the Field" section. The first submission is from Keith Jaques. Keith is sharing a shot he took back in April of 2014 when he unearthed an early 70's snowmobile someone buried west of Petrolia. Please send your pictures and advertisements to [jjohnston@gto.net](mailto:jjohnston@gto.net) for the next addition of "In the Trenches."

As we wind up the 2017 season, daylight becomes a premium, so please continue to work safely. I'm looking forward to seeing everyone in 2018 to celebrate 60 years of LICO!

Jamie Turvey



## OMAFRA Report - Sid Vander Veen

At a LICO Board meeting earlier this year, some board members posed a number of questions to me. I addressed these questions at the meeting and am repeating the answers in this newsletter for the LICO membership.

### *Isn't the protection of tile drainage contractors the purpose of the Agricultural Tile Drainage Installation Act?*

No it is not. The purpose of the Agricultural Tile Drainage Installation Act is to protect farm owners by ensuring that contractors were held accountable for their workmanship.

The Ontario Farm Drainage Association (OFDA), the predecessor to LICO, was organized in 1958. One of the main objectives in the OFDA charter was to promote good workmanship. The OFDA made several presentations to the provincial government requesting the establishment of a "Master Drainage Contractor" license and a system of licensing. They weren't successful so from 1964 to 1967, they created and financed their own inspection program. Because this inspection program lacked legislative authority, it had limited success.

In 1969, OFDA again proposed a system of drainage licensing to the provincial government and were successful in getting their attention. Legislation was drafted by government lawyers in consultation with a committee of tile drainage contractors. The legislation was passed in 1972 and was first implemented in 1973. So the OFDA (LICO) was instrumental in establishing the content of the current Agricultural Tile Drainage Installation Act.

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## **OMAFRA Report - (Cont'd. from Pg. 2)**

In summary, the Agricultural Tile Drainage Installation Act was implemented at the request of LICO's predecessor, the Ontario Farm Drainage Association to address contractor workmanship issues. If you want to know more about your organization's history, the letters and briefs that OFDA presented to the provincial government will likely be in the LICO historical records.

***We don't think OMAFRA has been clear on their position on tile crushers. Are tile crushers acceptable or not?***

I addressed the subject of tile crushers in the September 2011 issue of the LICO newsletter.

Many contractor are incorporating tile cutter/crushers onto their plow. This feature allows the end of the pipe to be cut and crushed without the operator leaving the machine. This feature is attractive because it is much faster than installing endcaps on the end of the pipe. However, Publication 29, the Drainage Guide for Ontario is the technical document for tile drainage contractors in Ontario. The Guide, developed in cooperation with LICO, requires endcaps to be installed on the end of pipes.

It is assumed that the crushed pipe end would be sealed by ground pressure and would not allow sediment movement into the pipe. However, we are not aware of any research that confirms this assumption. If it is verified that the pipe ends are sealing fully and aren't allowing sediment to enter the pipe, then the practice of crushing pipe ends will be recognized as an accepted practice.

In the interim, while we are not endorsing the crushing of pipes as a substitute for endcaps, we are not actively pursuing it as a work deficiency. However, if there is a complaint about the workmanship of a tile drainage contractor, and if the inspection identifies that the cause of the complaint is sediment entering the pipe through the crushed pipe end, then we will follow the recommendations as set out in the Drainage Guide.

***Does OMAFRA consider GPS to be an acceptable method of controlling grade?***

OMAFRA licenses machines; we do not license the grade control system. Section 11 of the regulations under the Agricultural Tile Drainage Installation Act states the following:

- (1) Except in the case of machines that, in the opinion of the Director, are used solely for demonstration purposes, every machine shall,
  - (a) be capable of excavating a trench or laying tile to a grade that does not deviate from the grade established by the drainage work plan by more than,
    - (i) 15% of the internal diameter of the tile where the diameter is eight inches or less, or*
    - (ii) 10% of the internal diameter of the tile, where the diameter exceeds eight inches; and**
  - (b) for the purpose of excavating trenches, be equipped with a wheel, chain or other device capable of excavating a trench that exceeds the diameter of the tile to be installed by at least six inches.**
- (2) For the purposes of subsection (1),
  - (a) the grade deviation allowed by clause (a) of that subsection is subject to the conditions that such deviations,
    - (i) occur on a gradual basis over a distance of not less than thirty feet, and*
    - (ii) do not occur consecutively above and below the established grade within a distance of 100 feet; and**
  - (b) the trench width mentioned in clause (b) of that subsection shall be measured at a level above the trench bottom equal to the diameter of the tile.**

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## **OMAFRA Report - (Cont'd. from Pg. 3)**

It is this criteria that we measure against. The regulations require us to test the end product (the installation of the pipe) to ensure that it is being installed properly regardless of whether GPS, laser grade control systems or grade stakes are being used.

***We notice a number of unlicensed contractors installing tile drainage. What is OMAFRA doing to enforce the licensing requirements?***

As indicated at the LICO Board meeting, we have hired two individuals, Chris Allan and Zach Smith temporarily to assist with the backlog of work. While they have been appointed as inspectors, their work has been focussed primarily on processing the backlog of grant applications. However, this has allowed Andy Kester to do more inspections this year. If you are aware of an unlicensed tile drainage contractor, please report it to me and we will follow up.

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## **New Horizons - Ontario's Draft Agricultural Soil Health and Conservation Strategy - Peter Johnson, Environmental Advocate**

Ontario's soil health strategy is out and looking for input. It is an excellent document, which is no surprise: Don Lobb was on the committee.

There is a tremendous amount to digest in the 56 page document, but the 4 basic ideas are all good: long term research to determine better soil management practices, updating and improving soil maps (we are far behind many other jurisdictions here), tracking soil health over time (are we actually gaining?), and soil knowledge, so that we don't just treat soil like dirt. The document calls for funding for long term research, something that is sorely lacking and often impossible to find, so political will is required to actually fulfill the goals of the strategy. We will see.

**What does the strategy mean** to someone that installs drainage tile? Actually, quite a lot. While drainage tile isn't specifically mentioned, soil aggregate stability, compaction, reduced tillage and using cover crops feature strongly in the document. All of these are impacted by good drainage, and aggregate stability through reduced tillage RELIES on good drainage to make it possible. Indirectly, the document strongly supports the value of good water management through tile drainage. It means a lot to all of us.

**What do you need to do?** I encourage you to look at either the full document, or the summary posted on the LICO website [www.drainage.org](http://www.drainage.org), then provide your comments by December 31<sup>st</sup>. Be sure to include in your comments that many of the objectives in the document are not possible without good drainage. I will be commenting on behalf of the LICO organization, but it takes many voices to be heard. Be one of those voices.

We should all **be proud** that our industry helps Ontario agriculture to be productive and profitable, and that we can also help improve soil health. Making your voice heard serves two purposes: to ensure the soil health is recognized as a critical part of agricultural sustainability, and that drainage is an essential part of achieving the healthy soils we need. Spend a few minutes, support our industry and the healthy soils we all need!

Draft Strategy at <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/landuse/soil-strat-2017.pdf> Comment at [Ontario.ca/ebr](http://Ontario.ca/ebr) registry number 013-1373 Or email comments to

## 60<sup>th</sup> LICO Convention Lamplighter Inn, London. January 23 – 25, 2018

The 60<sup>th</sup> LICO convention is fast approaching. Below are the highlights of this year's program.

### **Soil Compaction: The Role of Tile Drainage**

Soil compaction is being recognized as a more serious restraint to crop yields than previously thought. And the recovery can take longer than expected. **Peter Johnson**, LICO's environmental advocate, will discuss both the positive and negative effects that installing tile drains has on soil compaction.



### **Phragmites: the invasion of a non-native plant**

Invasive Phragmites has become the scourge of waterways and wetlands across North America. It crowds out native species and reduces the habitat and food for wildlife leading to clogged drainage ditches as well as affecting crop production. **Steve Ford** of the Ontario Phragmites Working Group will talk about this nasty invader and how tile drainage contractors can combat its advance.

### **Lubrication and lubricants: what has changed**

The correct choice of lubricants is important for the long life of the engine and other components of drainage construction equipment. **Richard Habsh** of WH Lubricants will talk about the changes to lubricant requirements with the moved to the lower emission engines.



### **Canada Ontario Lake Erie Action Plan:** Jenn Richards, OMAFRA .

Canada and Ontario have committed to reducing by 40% the amount of phosphorus entering the Great Lakes. The Action Plan being developed will be a roadmap as to how these reductions will be met. Agriculture in general and tile drainage specifically will have a significant role to play.

**Impacts of Land management practices on phosphorous losses.** Kevin McKague OMAFRA and Chris Van Esbroeck, University of Waterloo will talk about what land management practices will reduce the amount of phosphorous that leaves the farm.

**Fraud in the workplace: stories from the trenches;** Mike Glavin, Corporate Investigations Services, London. Fraud is always a hazard when running a business, such as employees falsely claiming injury to go on workmans compensation. The stories of these investigations will be interesting to anyone running a business.

**The Drainage Forum:** New this year will be time set aside for an open discussion of any and all concerns that contractors have regarding their business of draining land in Ontario.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January 22 - 25, 2018

January 21 - 24, 2019

LICO Conference

Best Western Lamplighter Inn

591 Wellington Rd,

London, Ontario N6C 4R3



2018 Contractor Courses

January 8 - 12, 2018 - Primary Drainage Course

February 5 - 15, 2018 - Advanced Drainage Course

February 26 - March 2, 2018 - Agriculture Erosion Control Structures Course

Marden Community Centre

7391 Marden Road,

Guelph, Ontario N1H 6J2



**LICO would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your family all the best for the holiday season and the year to come.**