



IN THE TRENCHES

From the President's Desk

EXECUTIVE

PRESIDENT

Jamie Turvey
(519) 535-4423
jamie.turvey@ads-pipe.com

PAST PRESIDENT

Matt Williams
(519) 291-0767
williamsdrainage@xplornet.com

VICE PRESIDENT

Jason Van Gorp
(519) 521-9086
jason.vangorp@gmail.com

DIRECTORS

Ken McCallum
(519) 440-7996
KenMccallum1187@gmail.com

Denis Keupfer
519-276-9292
kuepferfd@hotmail.com

Robert Hall
(519) 421-0036
robh@rwfbron.com

Secretary Treasurer

John R. Johnston
231 Dimson Ave, Guelph, ON
N1G 3C7
(519) 836-1386
jjohnston@gto.net

Convention Coordinator

Franklin Kains
(519) 775-0153
kains@golden.net

Environmental Advocate

Peter Johnson
(519) 318-2040
peter.johnson@bell.net

Greetings LICO Members,

With one of the wettest springs in recent years behind us, the wheat has come off and the tiling machines are laying pipe again. The upside of all that rain is that it does the job of promoting future farm drainage for us!

August has been a busy month. On the 12th, I traveled with a group of LICO contractors to attend Michigan LICA's Field Day in Peck, Michigan. In conjunction with Michigan LICA members, the Cook family conducted a great tiling demonstration. On August 22nd and 23rd, fellow Executive members Matt Williams and Robert Hall joined me to represent LICO at the 2017 Summit on Canadian Soil Health in Guelph. Hosted by the Soil Conservation Council of Canada, the event included a Pre-Summit Tour on the 22nd, during which we visited research sites in Elora, Bornholm, and St Marys. Soil remediation and landscape restoration, along with reduced tillage, were some of the topics within the Soil Health and Care theme. The 23rd consisted of a number of speakers; most notable for LICO members would be Dr. David Lobb, who spoke about the cost of soil degradation as it pertains to agriculture and the economy. David's father, Don Lobb, also spoke at the event. Don's premise was that the industry may benefit from referring to farm tiling as "Subsoil Water Management" instead of "Drainage." As Don noted, "drainage" is typically associated with disposal, and this is not a positive association when it comes to water quality.

By all accounts, the Fall season is just around the corner and there is a positive buzz in the marketplace. Plans are underway for a very busy season that will continue until the ground freezes. Let's hope that mother nature is on our side as we play catch up from a slow beginning. Please be sure to work smart and stay safe as the days get shorter.

Before we know it, Fall will be over and the LICO convention will be here! I look forward to celebrating LICO's 60th anniversary with you in January. Complimentary LICO jackets are now ready for pick up at Foris Signs in Innerkip, Ontario. They will also be available at the convention.

As always, if there are issues that need to be addressed, please do not hesitate to reach out to me or any of the other members of the Executive.

Best regards,
Jamie Turvey

OMAFRA Report - Contractor Courses on Erosion Control and Agricultural Drainage - Tim Brook and Jim Ritter

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) offers contractor courses in the areas of erosion control and agricultural drainage during the winter of 2018.

2018 Contractor Courses

Contractors who require the drainage courses to upgrade their operator licence under the Agricultural Tile Drainage Installation Act will be given priority provided registrations are received by the deadline. However, enrolment is limited so please register early to ensure your spot. Registrations from other individuals will be considered if space is available.

Registration Deadlines:

Primary Drainage Course: **December 8, 2017**

Advanced Drainage Course: **January 12, 2018**

Agricultural Erosion Control Structures Course: **February 9, 2018**

To obtain additional information or to register for any of the following courses, visit the University of Guelph Ridgetown Campus's website at <https://bdc.ridgetownc.com/takecourse/drainage-courses/> or call 519-674-1500 ext. 63273.

Agricultural Erosion Control Structures Course

The purpose of the Agricultural Erosion Control Structures Course is to help contractors recognize and analyze soil erosion problems on agricultural lands. This course is specifically designed for holders of a Class "A" Machine Operator Licence (drainage licence), or those who have completed the Primary Drainage Course or a survey course at a college, university, etc. This course prepares participants, not only to do their own designs, but also helps them recognize which situations require more specialized professional design.

AgErosion is a software application that was produced by OMAFRA to assist qualified individuals engaged in the design of agricultural erosion control structures. The software application was developed as an aid to facilitate the use of OMAFRA's Agricultural Erosion Control Structures: A Design and Construction Manual (Publication 832). Course participants use the software after receiving a hands-on demonstration. Participants who take this course and successfully pass the examination will receive the AgErosion software by mail with their Certificate of Achievement.

The Agricultural Erosion Control Structures Course is a five-day course, which includes the time to write the examination, and will be held **February 26-March 2, 2018**, at the Marden Community Centre just north of Guelph. Depending on the number of registrations, participants may be asked to supply their own laptop for the computer software training component of the course. The course instructors will be Jim Ritter and Kevin McKague.

Primary Drainage Course

The Primary Drainage Course provides learners with the knowledge and skills necessary to understand common surveying terms, establish drainage slopes, grade changes and depths, and ensure installations comply with the Drainage Guide for Ontario. As per Regulation 18 of the Agricultural Tile Drainage Installation Act, the primary course includes instruction and practice in surveying and in the principles that apply to the installation of drainage works. This course is one of the mandatory requirements for an

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operator to upgrade from a Class "C" to a Class "B" Machine Operator Licence. Course topics include:

- roles, responsibilities and requirements
- measuring
- design
- installation

The Primary Drainage Course is a five-day course, which includes the time to write the examination, and will be held from **January 8-12, 2018**, at the Marden Community Centre just north of Guelph. Please note that this course is being held before the LICO convention. The course instructors will be Tim Brook and Andy Kester.

Advanced Drainage Course

The Advanced Drainage Course provides learners with the knowledge and skills required to assess, plan and design agricultural sub-surface drainage works. Learners will gain an understanding of tile drainage design so that design and installation will comply with the Drainage Guide for Ontario. As per Regulation 18 of the Agricultural Tile Drainage Installation Act, the advanced course includes instruction and practice in the design of drainage works. This course is one of the mandatory requirements for an operator to upgrade from a Class "B" to a Class "A" Machine Operator Licence. Course topics include:

- roles, responsibilities and requirements
- site assessment
- preliminary design
- legislation and the environment
- drainage system design
- construction and materials
- existing systems
- cost estimates and post construction records

Successful completion of the Primary Drainage Course is a pre-requisite for the Advanced Drainage Course. It is a nine-day course, which includes the time to write the examination, and will be held **February 5-15, 2018**, at the Marden Community Centre. The course instructors will be Tim Brook and Andy Kester.

The Silent Treatment

A man and his wife were having some problems at home and were giving each other the silent treatment. Suddenly, the man realized that the next day, he would need his wife to wake him at 5:00 AM for an early morning business flight.

Not wanting to be the first to break the silence (and LOSE) , he wrote on a piece of paper, "Please wake me at 5:00 AM ." He left it where he knew she would find it.

The next morning, the man woke up, only to discover it was 9:00 AM and he had missed his flight. Furious, he was about to go and see why his wife hadn't wakened him, when he noticed a piece of paper by the bed. The paper said, "It is 5:00 AM . Wake up."

Men are not equipped for these kinds of contests.

The Nightmare: Roots Plugging Tile - Peter Johnson Environmental Advocate, LICO

Yes, a nightmare. Unfortunately, this nightmare has become a reality.

There have been more challenges with crop roots plugging tile in the spring of 2017 than I have ever heard before. It seems like 10 times the normal number of reports, and calls are still coming in. We expect canola and daikon radish (tillage or nitro radish are common trade names) to plug drains: but we don't expect big trouble from wheat roots. Unfortunately, in the summer of 2016, with no rainfall and RECORD wheat crops, wheat roots found moisture wherever they could, including tile drains.

The result: A lot of frustrated farmers and a lot of hours spent with the backhoe digging and fixing. We can't have this happen every year or growers will quit growing winter wheat and cover crops. The data around wheat is clear: if you want the highest yields, tile, grow wheat and grow cover crops. So wheat roots plugging tile needs to be prevented.

Why is this happening? Let's start with the fact that it is not just wheat roots plugging tile. There is genetic confirmation that cereal rye roots (winter rye), planted as a cover crop after wheat, have plugged tile this spring. Amazing! Cover crop rye roots plugging tile, planted in early September. You wouldn't think there would be enough time to grow roots to the tile. Cereal rye, winter wheat, daikon radish, canola: apparently will all plug tile.

The solution must come from you, the tile installers. Roots will not grow in air: if tiles are installed perfectly, once the excess water drains, the tile will be full of air. Roots will die before they can build to levels that will cause a problem, and plugging should be a non-issue. Older installations, before the advent of sub-centimetre elevation lasers, will continue to be a concern. But new installations should definitely be able to minimize this risk.

2016 was an anomaly: a record lack of rainfall, yet new record wheat yields. 2017 looks unlikely to repeat this problem, except for a band along Lake Erie, where the drought of 2016 is repeating. For most of the province, it is not a lack of rainfall, but excess rainfall that is the problem this year. The chance of roots going to tile should be near zero. 2017 should be a return to more "normal" conditions.

Regardless, we need to keep roots out of tile, both for producers and for our own sanity. So here is your chance: tell me what and how you are working to solve this issue. Matt Williams (Williams Farm Drainage) tells me he uses external connections, and then tapes them, versus internal connections, and doing so reduces the amount of trapped water that roots can find in tile during a drought. (Duct tape Matt??). Cool. There must be other great ideas. Let me know how or what you do to prevent roots in tile, and we will report all the ideas and options in a future article. (email: peter.johnson@bell.net)

With the innovation in this group, I'm sure there are ideas to prevent this becoming a common occurrence. We need growers to keep growing wheat, and cover crops are the way of the future. Our tiling systems need to work with those realities. Get me those great ideas so everyone can do the best possible job, and keep aiming for that perfect job of installation!



Give to us clear vision that we may know where to stand and what to stand for - because unless we stand for something, we shall fall for anything. *Peter Marshall*

Summit on Canadian Soil Health 2017 - Don Lobb, P.Ag.(Hon)

This event was presented in Guelph, Ontario, on August 22-23, 2017, by the Soil Conservation Council of Canada. The focus of the Summit was "Soil Degradation – Costs, Consequences and Opportunities for Change". Nearly 200 attendees had the opportunity to take part in an in-depth assessment of issues, activity and technical gaps associated with the degradation and care of agricultural soils.

The speakers made many points that must be considered by politicians, policy makers, scientists, extension and conservation professionals, the agricultural industry and farmers. The following are some of the important messages delivered.

- Conservation agriculture provides an opportunity to create a legacy of healthy living soils that will form the base for future food security; however, this must be supported by the broader society.
- The direct on-farm cost of soil erosion is more than \$3 billion annually through loss of crop productivity. This assessment is based on the cumulative effects of wind, water and tillage erosion.
- Much research is focused on water security and climate instability; however, the real monster in the room is declining soil health.
- Sustainable soil management is not only determined by soil productivity but also by off-site impacts; e.g. influence on water quality.
- Soil aggregation responds quickly to changes in land use and management practices and is therefore a relevant and sensitive soil health indicator. Loss of soil aggregates results in wind and water erosion, lost water infiltration, carbon storage nutrient supply and a degraded root environment.
- Soil biological communities provide nutrient cycling, disease suppression, pesticide degradation, carbon sequestration and the ability of the soil to resist or recover from stress events. Practices that alter the soil impact these.
- There is growing evidence of benefit from diverse crop rotations and cover crop use, particularly when no-till is used.
- When soil structure was improved before going to no-till, no yield drag was observed.
- We need to manage the terrestrial biosphere (topsoil) to grow carbon back into the soil where much of it came from.
- The key requirements to tillage reduction are good drainage, crop rotation and organic matter. It is nearly impossible to restore productivity on seriously degraded soil.
- Biologically active healthy soil improves productivity and profitability.
- Landscape restoration is an effective counter-measure to tillage erosion and pre-empts precision crop management.
- Soil/water management can be enhanced through strategic use of trees and plants/residue, and precision agricultural water management and cycling systems.
- For soil care program delivery, many challenges remain, such as the diversity in motivational triggers among producers.
- We need incentives that provide real long-term financial advantage to serious soil caretakers. If the advantage is there, farmers themselves will seek out information and advice, and they will perfect beneficial soil care practices.
- Soil is a critical natural resource. Thus, soil care demands support by all of government – not just agriculture.
- Soil degradation is an outcome of choice – we know how to control it and the consequence of not doing so.

Video presentations from the Summit will be available soon at www.soilcc.ca.

Jack Riddell Inducted into the Agricultural Hall of Fame

JOHN (JACK) KEITH RIDDELL (1931 -)

Jack Riddell's background in agriculture and agribusiness served as the perfect training ground for a future Ontario Minister of Agriculture.

He received his B.Sc. (Agr) from OAC in 1957, and then served as Assistant Agricultural Representative in Hastings and Essex Counties. He next served as Assistant manager of the Ontario Stockyards before moving to Saskatchewan Agriculture as a Livestock Specialist.

Upon his return to Ontario, he raised sheep and cattle on 200 acres in Huron, and also taught high school agriculture. He later owned and operated a Livestock Sales Barn and worked as an auctioneer. Throughout all these iterations, he became concerned about the long-term viability of the family farm in Ontario and was inspired to run for the Ontario Liberals in 1973 in Huron-Middlesex. He was elected, and as Agriculture Critic for the party, he dealt with a number of issues including foreign ownership of agricultural land and the unfair demands of discounts and allowances from the suppliers to the food industry.



In 1985, Jack Riddell became Minister of Agriculture and Food and his innovation and vision for agriculture led to the introduction of over 30 new agriculture programs for farmers, nearly doubling the agriculture budget. He introduced the Ontario Family Farm Interest Rate Reduction program to reduce interest payments which had climbed to over 20%.

During Jack's tenure as Minister, OMAF headquarters were moved to Guelph; the Farm Start program was implemented; a tripartite income stabilization agreement was signed with the Federal government and producers; and Right-to-Farm legislation was passed. He then formed an Agricultural Caucus Committee consisting of rural MPPs analyzing rural issues in order to develop long-term policies to sustain a viable agricultural industry in Ontario. One of those policies was a \$30 million Land Stewardship program focused on soil conservation initially, and kickstarting the conservation movement on Ontario farms.

Certainly, John (Jack) Keith Riddell effectively used his knowledge of Ontario agriculture to implement many programs that have helped to sustain and advance the agriculture sector throughout the Province.

As a tribute to his many contributions to Ontario agriculture, Jack Riddell is being inducted into the Ontario Agricultural Hall of Fame.

2017 Nominated by: Land Improvement Contractors of Ontario

Success

The road to success is always under construction. *Lily Tomlin*

Success is not the key to happiness. Happiness is the key to success. If you love what you are doing, you will be successful. *Albert Schweitzer*

You can't climb the ladder of success with your hands in your pockets. *Arnold Schwarzenegger*



Passings

FERGUSON, John "Harvey" - Passed away peacefully in CEE Hospital, Petrolia, in the early hours of Friday, April 28th, in his 82nd year.

Harvey was the much-loved husband of Julie Kelly for almost 30 years. He is survived by sisters Inez and Wayne Gare, Helen Pearen, and brother Lloyd and Donna Ferguson and their family.

Harvey is also survived by a special step-daughter, Katharine and Barry Currie, and his dearly loved grandson, Ethan.

Harvey was predeceased by parents John and Ruby (Lampman) Ferguson, brother Eugene, an infant brother, and brother-in-law Verne Pearen.

He was born, raised and spent his years in the Petrolia area residing for many years on LaSalle Line, where he had his cattle farm and drainage contracting business. Harvey was one of the first drainage contractors in Lambton County, laying hundreds of miles of both agricultural and municipal tile.

Harvey was a longtime, proud member of Burns Lodge, Wyoming, the Lambton Shrine Club, the Mocha Shrine, and was a founding member of Island View Hunt Club, where he went each fall for as long as he was able.

When he wasn't working, Harvey thoroughly enjoyed his card games with his circle of friends. He fought long and hard against failing heart and lungs but kept daily activities as he was able.

Interment in Wyoming Cemetery. Donations may be made to St. Joseph's Hospice (www.stjosephshospice.ca), London Health Sciences Foundation (www.lhsf.ca), or CEE Hospital Foundation(www.ceehf.ca). Memories and condolences may be shared on-line www.needhamjay.com.

TAIT, John Earl - Passed away surrounded by his family on Monday, May 8, 2017.

He was the beloved husband of Plonie (nee van Poelgeest) for over 56 years.

Loving father of Jim (Moir), Lazett (Guy), Lori (George), Barbara (Phil), Kim (Hugh) and Mike (Jen).



Grandfather of Christa, Jesse, John, James, Janine, Andrew, Natalie, Erika, Tyler, Jayson, Rachel, Amelia and Sam.

Great grandfather of Blayne, Trent, Colten, Jonah, Serenity, Kaden, Henry, Charles and Emma.

Great great grandfather of Braxton.

Brother of Robert (deceased), Dora (deceased), Agnes (deceased), Margaret, Douglas, Walter, Stephen (deceased), Willard (deceased), Jeanne (deceased), Grant (a.k.a. Archie), Saundra, Susan (deceased), Ielean (a.k.a. Croke) and Bruce.

Although John was a man of few words, he had a talent for embellishing a tall tale to tell his grandchildren.

John was passionate about his tile drainage business which he established and operate as a means of providing for his family. He was a true innovator in the tile drainage industry with his design and manufacturing of the Tait Plow being recognized internationally.

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

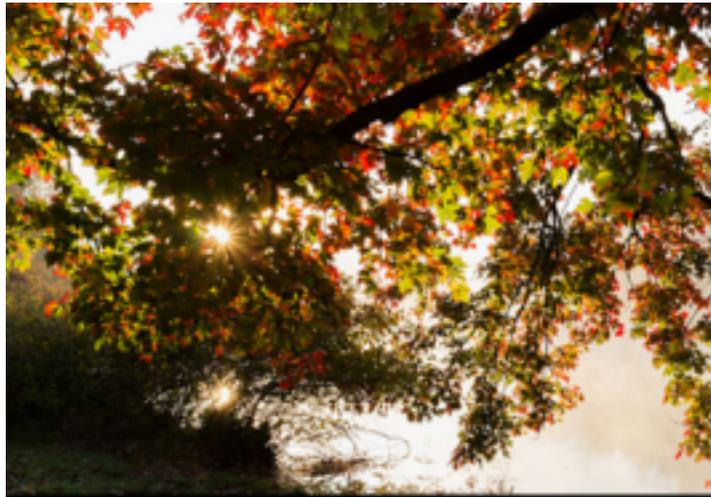
February 26 - March 2, 2018 - Agriculture Erosion Control Structures Course

Marden Community Centre

7391 Marden Road,

Guelph, Ontario N1H 6J2

Take time to give thanks.



"FOR EACH NEW MORNING
WITH ITS LIGHT,
FOR REST AND SHELTER
OF THE NIGHT,
FOR HEALTH AND FOOD,
FOR LOVE AND FRIENDS,
FOR EVERYTHING THY
GOODNESS SENDS."

- RALPH WALDO EMERSON