



# IN THE TRENCHES

September 2006

**"Drainage Doesn't Cost - IT PAYS!"**

[www.drainage.org](http://www.drainage.org)

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## From the President's Desk

Fellow Members,

Hope everyone has found enough work to keep busy. We are pretty well halfway through the good working months, it's hard to believe.

Two issues I would like to cover in this message are The Clean Water Act, and Health and Safety.

John Johnston and Don Lobb put together a presentation for the travelling government committee, hearing submissions from the public about the Clean Water Act. John presented the brief in Peterborough August 25/06. The brief was well done and both should be thanked for an outstanding job. I was watching the news the other night. They had a hearing in Walkerton that day. The local TV stations interviewed some citizens, and I couldn't believe what their thoughts were about the Clean Water Act. One person came across that the water comes from rural Ontario so they should bear the costs. Another person commented on the problem in Walkerton, and the government, should do what ever it takes, not to have another Walkerton. Obviously, there are a lot of different opinions out there. Most are to do whatever it takes, without even understanding what really happened, and to logically think of the solution. Again, we all better take this issue seriously. To say nothing will be a shame. It will affect all of us, especially in the pocket book, and how land is used in the future. We need to talk to our government officials to change the Act as written, and people's perception.

The second issue is Health and Safety, as it pertains to us. We have been used to doing our work with no one really watching us. Today, that has all changed, and now the farmers are regulated by the Occupational Health and Safety Act. We need to be more diligent in the way we conduct business in a Health and Safety aspect. There are a lot more inspectors out there, they are now watching and visiting more of us than ever before. Two years ago we had a visit from an inspector on a municipal drain site. He looked the operation over, and before he left I had a Stop Work order handed to me. I had to have a mechanical engineer approve the tile shoe, the boom to hoist tile and the guards on the machine. In order to lift the Stop Work order I needed to have the engineer's document approved and stamped and copies to the Ministry of Labour. In 2005 I had the inspector come to my place of business because I had been red-flagged for too many Worker's Comp claims. I had three claims of minor occurrences, all of which were just common sense, stupid incidences, it didn't matter. He did an audit of our shop, office and field procedures. I was written up for minor violations, and given a certain time.  
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## From the President's Desk *(Cont'd from Page 1)*

to comply. I had quarterly visits for that year. I think after the last visit we were in compliance because I haven't seen anyone since last December. If you haven't been visited yet, you will, in all likelihood, be at some point and time. Guys please, make sure you are complying. The way we worked before is changing drastically. Just be aware of what could happen if you are not complying. Its time all of us in this industry did what the law requires, whether it is way overboard or not. Think about it.

Finally, it looks like Frank Kains is going to have a great program again at this years' convention. Make sure you register early. If you were not there last year, you really missed out. Don't miss out again, please plan to attend.

In closing, I hope we all have good weather this fall, and a good end to the year. Look forward to seeing you at the convention.

Your President,

Steven Cronsberry



## Birth Announcement

Becky (Howie) Curran, the OMAFRA Clerk who looked after licensing tile contractors for years, had a baby boy - Joshua Edward - in August.

## The Old Man, The Boy and The Donkey

An old man, a boy and a donkey were going to town. The boy rode on the donkey and the old man walked. As they went along they passed some people who remarked it was a shame the old man was walking and the boy was riding.

The man and boy thought maybe the critics were right, so they changed positions. Later, they passed some people that remarked, "What a shame, he makes that little boy walk."

They then decided they both would walk! Soon they passed some more people who thought they were stupid to walk when they had a decent donkey to ride. So, they both rode the donkey.

Now they passed some people that shamed them by saying how awful to put such a load on a poor donkey.

The boy and man said they were probably right, so they decide to carry the donkey. As they crossed the bridge, they lost their grip on the animal and he fell into the river and drowned.

The moral of the story?

If you try to please everyone, you might as well Kiss your ass goodbye!

Have A Nice Day and Be Careful With Your Donkey.

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**Note:** The articles from Now Magazine are examples of the type of information circulating in major urban areas. Take careful note of the attitude being expressed.

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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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## **Saving The Planet One Drop At A Time – Wayne Roberts, Now, July 27– August 2/06, Vol. 25 No. 48**

### **How replanting the way we do agriculture will save us from sucking the earth dry**

Raise a glass to your host, wet your whistle, then pause for a second to recall that the solid foods you're about to dig into embody 1,000 times more water than is in your glass. We could go further. Your dinner has sucked up about 10 times more H<sub>2</sub>O than was used all day at work, and 10 times more than you poured, showered, laundered, hosed and flushed to meet your daily household needs.

This is the world of "virtual water" that we, with our bodies that are 72 per cent water, live in. And by 2025, if UN experts have it right, two-thirds of the world's people will lack a clean source of the life-sustaining liquid.

In the real world, solids, liquids, energy and space earth, water, fire and air, as the ancients had it are just different ways life's vital juices morph. But in the world of economics and politics, each force is a separate economic sector, with a separate government department, a separate customer base and separate ideological flair.

That's why our mind's eye doesn't "see" the water in food-- the 3,000 litres a day per person it takes to make edibles under the current agricultural regime.

When water is blue (or, rather, when it looks like it's blue in a lake) or falls from the sky, it is almost universally recognized as having sacred qualities that make it a "public good." It's considered that we share this precious resource in common, and it is generally owned or closely regulated by the public sector, not put up for sale to the highest bidder.

But when water is in an edible container that imparts extra flavour and nutrients what we commonly call food it is no longer considered sacred, but has become a private good or commodity that is barely regulated.

We had enviro campaigns for clean water and air legislation decades before we had campaigns for clean food, and we have lefty campaigns against water privatization centuries after food was privatized.

Because water and the water that's virtually in food exist in two mental solitudes subject to two different standards, we seldom recognize that all food issues including economic development, trade, environmental, social and ethical issues linked to food are just disguised water issues.

This understanding is central to the new paradigm around water that's emerging in global debates. It comes via the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and Development Program (UNDP) and at the Stockholm-based International Water Institute.

The long-overdue shift among global experts, who now plan on the basis that food and water are intimately linked, comes from the cold shower of thinking ahead to the looming scarcity.

The new worldview includes Asia, where problem-plagued irrigation systems prop up high-volume rice production. It also focuses on Africa, where drought-ridden drylands render high-production agriculture almost impossible. The new generation of planners see an urgent need to develop ways to get "more crop for the drop."

The new view begins with the understanding that agriculture is the 900-pound gorilla of water management and water pollution. According to a 2004 FAO report, 3 per cent of the world's water is used by cities, 4 per cent by industry and 93 per cent by agriculture. This sector pays minimal water bills and is responsible for jeopardizing ecosystems by altering the flow of rivers and damming waters for irrigation.

Likewise, farming is the leading polluter of water. In ideal circumstances, agriculture would be a healthy element in the hydrological, or water, cycle. Rain would fall on a pasture, a cow would slurp up the water when it popped up as grass, the cow would answer nature's call, and its manure and urine would be welcomed by tens of thousands of tiny creatures that feed on the rot that enriches soil.

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## **Saving The Planet One Drop At A Time** – Wayne Roberts *(Cont'd. from Page 3)*

But over the past 50 years, agriculture has changed the way the water cycle works. This is mainly because of radically increased amounts of meat, especially beef, that have been produced for what's called "the livestock revolution" the increased consumption of meat and dairy products by people who abandon traditional plant-based peasant diets in favour of Americanized diets.

To produce 1 kilogram of boneless beef, according to a definitive 2004 UNESCO study on the "water footprint of nations," it takes 6.5 kilograms of grain, 36 kilograms of roughage (coarse grains and pasture) and 155 litres of drinking water.

Since the grains and roughage also require water, there's enough to float a destroyer before a steer gets to the slaughterhouse. One hamburger, according to the UNESCO report, embodies 2,400 litres of water, the unsung source that does it all for you.

It's not like this water returns to the water cycle as pure as it started. Rain that falls on a pasture may seep into the water table or flow into a creek laced with toxic pesticides as well as livestock urine and manure laden with residues from antibiotics and other drugs.

Steers dump 40 kilograms of manure for every kilogram of meat left behind. Plopped on wide fields, that's fine. Unloaded into creeks, the manure overloads water systems with nitrogen, organics, drug residues and pathogens that can't be absorbed. That's why livestock are frequently sources of water-borne disease.

"Minimizing the amount of water taken to produce food must now become a priority of global food policy," say the British vegetarians who sponsor Compassion in World Farming.

Those who want to be mindful of the Age of Virtual Aquarius can choose water-efficient crops. For carbs, potatoes (at 500 litres of water per kilogram) beat out wheat (at 900 litres) which beats out rice (at 1,910 litres). Aquarians can learn to alternate servings of potato gnocchi with pasta. Brown ricers will mourn the loss of their moral superiority, just as wine drinkers (120 litres a glass) will regret their loss of social standing to beer guzzlers (75 litres).

Aquarian ag officials will promote pasture-raised over grain-fed livestock and look to cities as prime livestock habitat. We already have livestock in the city. They're called pets. Unlike edible livestock, they're mostly carnivores and therefore heavy-duty water users in their own right.

They need to be counter-balanced with herbivores that can turn urban "waste" (veggie scraps and "wet waste") into both fertilizer and protein instead of garbage. Herbivores can also crop grass and weeds that otherwise have to be cut by lawnmowers, among the worst polluters on the planet. Here, Bessie! Fetch, Bessie!

I've dealt with a lot of drips in my life, so I'm grateful to at last have a cause that lets me dream I can save the world one drip at a time.

## **AMAZING BUT TRUE ...**

If all the salmon caught in Canada in one year were laid end to end across the Sahara Desert, the smell would be absolutely awful.

Fortune's graffito of the week (or maybe even month):

Don't Write On Walls!  
(and underneath)  
You want I should type?

A help wanted add for a photo journalist asked the rhetorical question:

If you found yourself in a situation where you could either save a drowning man, or you could take a Pulitzer prize winning photograph of him drowning, what shutter speed and setting would you use? - Paul Harvey

## Lines from Lambton - Dean Hodgson

Tiling contractors are busy once again in Lambton County after a bumper wheat harvest was finally completed. The harvest started quickly with record yields but was delayed into August by frequent wet periods. All county crops are looking great as a result of this summer's warm weather mixed with timely showers. Corn, soybeans, sugar beets, small grains, there are even some fields of sunflowers, all are looking terrific and some farmers are harvesting their 3rd cut of hay. So far, except for crop prices, it has been another great year for farmers in Lambton County.

Talking with Larry Mansfield of Bruce Tile and Ron McFarlane of Ideal Tile, both saying it has been extremely busy since the wheat harvest. Although it had been slow all spring the inventory was now moving quickly out of both plants.

We miss Phil McNally roaming the roads as he always had plenty of news. Wish him luck in his new enterprises.

Frank Rombouts recently completed another big project for Gary Robbins on LaSalle Line in St. Clair Township. Gary had purchased the whole mile between Kimball and Tecumseh Roads, in the former Moore Township, expanding his already large farming operation. Gary has found that Frank Rombouts always provides him with a quality installation.

Allan Jardine landed a big contract with Union Gas, installing all the tile drains on a 10 km. stretch of new pipeline. This combined with his regular farm customers has been keeping him busy all year.

Most contractors worked at wrapping up small projects this year before the wheat harvest but now all full time contractors are busy hustling from job to job.

However, many of the small and part-time contractors are not getting too involved so far this year. There are various reasons ( aging ? ) but mainly the high cost of operating a business in these days of escalating prices.

Glen Stevens of Oil Springs, who is connected with the Lyle and Arnold Syers Drainage business, says the high costs of fuel, insurance, licenses, taxes and permits make most of the small jobs losing propositions.

Roy Elliott of Enniskillen recently celebrated his 80th birthday and just hasn't bothered getting his Buckeye into gear because of low returns from these small jobs.

Harvey Ferguson, recovering nicely from heart surgery, is keeping busy working around his shop but is steering away from taking on any tiling contracts ( so far ).

At the other extreme we see Allan Griffin of Sarnia, 4 years past his 80th birthday and still going strong. During the hottest days of July, right after wheat harvest, Allan was hard at work installing several runs in some moist areas with his 1968 Speicher Trencher. With some help from their grandson, Graham, Allen and Melba are still cashcropping 250 acres on the pioneer homestead settled by the Griffin family in 1851.

Had an enjoyable visit with Ross and Velda McFarlane at the Steamthreshers Reunion in Forest on the Aug.18-20th weekend. Brought back memories of the good old days when Ross and Velda operated McFarlane's Tile Yard in Forest. The McFarlanes always strived to supply their customers with quality product and service. We always enjoyed the team atmosphere of working with the McFarlanes. Ross was always looking for ways to improve service, always questioning us in the field about any problems and discussing methods for solving situations arising on the job.

It seemed that Ross McFarlane worked day and night upgrading his tile yard. Over the years they changed from loose tile, to pallets and finally to plastic. But Ross always had a friendly smile and time to discuss any of our concerns. We always left the Forest Tile Yard with a feeling of satisfaction. Those were the good old days when everything seemed to work out as we hoped. ( It was great to be young.)

Meanwhile Velda worked tirelessly in the office, trying patiently to keep the books in order for some of us who were a little careless with the paperwork. However, when the jobs were done and a rainy day came we would straggle into her office with our scraps of paper. Eventually Velda would straighten out all our confused figures and we would be merrily on our way.

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## **Lines from Lambton - Dean Hodgson (Cont'd. from Page 5)**

Ross and Velda worked hard at their chosen profession and were very successful. They sold their prosperous business to the Big " O " while they were still young enough to enjoy the fruits of their labours. They have had many years of just golfing and traveling yet they still greet you with a big, friendly smile. They have had a good life and it was great to discuss some of our happy memories with them.

Also met Robt. Robinson of Ailsa Craig at the Steamthreshers. Although not from Lambton County, Robert is a very interesting fellow who has helped us out on several occasions in the past. Robert told me of the proud feeling everyone had at Milton when Ross Irwin was inducted into the Agricultural Hall of Fame. As Robert said, Ross Irwin certainly deserves the honour for all his efforts and achievements for drainage, agriculture and society as a whole. For those of us who have been involved in agriculture and drainage over the past 40 + years we especially respect Ross for all his contributions. Truly he will be known as the " Father of Farm Drainage in Ontario".

We just wish he would write the history of farm drainage in Ontario in his spare time.

## **Water - Now, July 27 - August 2, 2006, Vol. 25 No. 48**

Nature's most treasured gift, meant for the whole of creation, is being stolen, squandered and sullied. Here's how we can make water holy again.

NOW's five-point plan

### **1 Make water a human right**

Former vice-president of the World Bank Ismail Serageldin said, The wars of the 21st century will be fought over water. He should know. He's leading a wave toward the mass privatization of the world's most precious resource. Global supplies are drying up. World demand for water is doubling every 20 years, twice the rate of population growth.

### **2 Adopt a real storm management plan**

Our inability to manage stormwater and runoff from rain is costing us billions in both infrastructure and environmental costs. Poisoned water bodies, contaminated drinking water, the spread of disease and beach closures from sewer overflows have become regular occurrences in Toronto.

### **3 Boycott bottled water**

Bottled water companies are sucking up huge amounts of water from rural springs and municipal supplies - and paying next to nothing to do it. The Ministry of the Environment has already given bottled water companies permission to pump a staggering 1,800 billion litres a year out of underground aquifers. In Canada, bottled water consumption is big business, growing by 20 per cent a year and surpassing that of coffee, tea, apple juice and milk. To add to the ecological and health fallout estimates are that more than 800 million pounds of virgin plastic water bottles are discarded every year.

### **4 Create national standards for clean drinking water; keep water services in public hands**

Our national water standards haven't been updated since 1987. A Clean Water Act has been introduced, but large areas of the province remain outside protected areas designated in the act. Twenty-two per cent of Canadians have no public sewage treatment, and another 19 per cent have crude treatment, posing risks to public health. The exorbitant costs of replacing deteriorating infrastructure are leaving municipalities vulnerable to the privatization of water systems. Hamilton, Halifax, Moncton, Vancouver and Nanaimo are a few of the cities that have gone down the privatization road, with disastrous consequences.

### **5 Ban water exports and diversions; protect water habitat**

Less than 2 per cent of Great Lakes water is renewable. Water has become a tradable commodity - defined under NAFTA as a service and an investment. Already, a thirsty U.S. is putting pressure on us to open the taps to huge water exports.

## **OMAFRA News - Sid Vander Veen, Drainage Coordinator**

**Tile Loan Program:** After 3 months of operation, farmers have borrowed approximately \$1 million through the Tile Loan Program. By comparison, at this time last year, farmers had borrowed over \$1.8 million through the program for tile drainage work. I suspect that this drop in loan activity is related to the slow down in tile drainage activity this year.

**Municipal Drains:** For tile drainage contractors who work on municipal drain projects, here are some helpful hints:

- When contracted to construct a municipal drain, follow the contract specifications (which are extracted from the engineer's report) as closely as possible. For up to one year after the construction of a drain, landowners have the right to appeal on "quality of construction". Essentially, if the "as-built" drain does not comply with the specifications in the report adopted by by-law, landowners have good grounds for an appeal. In one case, a tile drain was installed about 0.3m (1 foot) too high and after a hearing, the Tribunal ordered that the tile be re-laid. The total cost of reconstruction was shared between the engineer and the contractor.
- If for some reason, you cannot construct the drain according to the contract specifications, contact the engineer or the engineer's construction supervision representative. Only deviate from the contract specifications if you have written direction from the engineer to do so.
- On occasion, the owner of the property on which you are working may not understand the "communal" nature of a municipal drain and the legal existence it has. They may request you, the contractor, to make changes for their own specific purposes. It may be as small as changing the location of a culvert or as large as changing the size of a tile drain. In any case, don't do it. If a landowner wants changes, direct him or her to the engineer or municipal representative supervising the work. If you get direction to make a change from the
- Occasionally, a property owner will request a contractor to do some work on his or her property that is unrelated or indirectly related to the municipal drain project. This can be done as a "side contract" provided:
  - The extra work won't force you to deviate from the municipal drain specifications.
  - It will not affect your schedule for completing the municipal drain work.
  - The cost of the extra work is charged to the landowner, not to the drain.
  - You inform the construction supervisor of the request for additional work.

**Fisheries Act:** A word of caution to contractors: Don't assume! Just because an existing watercourse is a tiny ditch or waterway that flows only during snowmelt and rainfall event, don't assume that you can modify it as you see fit to improve operations for your farmer client. From recent experiences, it appears that DFO (Department of Fisheries and Oceans) staff consider almost all watercourses (regardless of their size, watershed area or the frequency of flow) to be fish habitat and therefore subject to the federal Fisheries Act. The penalties under the Fisheries Act are significant, so you need to be careful. If in doubt, the local Conservation Authority is your first point of contact regarding the Fisheries Act.

## **Application of the Fisheries Act - John Johnston**

The federal Fisheries Act was passed to control fisheries in our oceans but is now being applied to plow furrows and grassed waterways as well as to ditches that were created to drain farmland. I agree that it is important to protect fish and fish habitat, but the current application of the Fisheries Act goes far beyond what is practical. This is just another form of government expropriation without compensation to the farmer. We need to remind people that good cropland drainage and a healthy fishery are compatible. After all we have been draining Ontario cropland for more than a hundred years and there are still fish in the outlets and even in some tile! We cannot be doing that bad of a job. Talk to and write your federal member of parliament and tell him what you think. Talk to your OFA representative and let him or her know as well. The governing party in Ottawa received plenty of support from rural, agricultural Ontario - I wonder if they really know what their bureaucrats are doing! Don't wait for someone else to do this important communication for you. You count - more than you think - with your local MP.

## **Letter from VanGorp Drainage - Jason VanGorp, August, 2006**

In June 2006 while working on a road bore in London we experienced an eye opening accident. The job involved setting up for a 100-foot drill using 20" diameter steel pipe. The road bore preparation procedure is similar for every job with a few case-specific adjustments.

The incident took place when it was time to lay the pipe down in the trench. The 2 laborers on the job neglected to lay the belt over the bore machine tracks. So when the time came to lift the bore pipe, in order for it to be welded onto the existing casing, they wedged two by fours under the first pipe to elevate it enough to wrap a chain around it. The weight of the pipe on the two by fours caused the wood to break while the workers had their arm under the casing. One of our staff members suffered a broken arm while the other had some minor bruising.

This incident led to an investigation by Ontario's Ministry of Labor. The general contractors responsible for the work also imposed a work stoppage on our crew. The stoppage was lifted once we provided the general contractors with a Company Safety Policy signed by the president. The Ontario Farm Safety Association was a valuable resource as they provided us with a book called Sample Templates for your health and safety program (from WSIB Ontario). This book provided important information on the proper layout of Company Safety Policies. We were able to produce the Company Safety Policy in three days and returned to work the forth day after the accident. Our hope is that the new safe measures implemented during these 3 days of lost revenue will prevent further losses in the future.

Initial costs of this accident are high and we expect more expenses as we pay staff members to continue to upgrade our safety measures. Future actions include updates to Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) required on all areas where fuel or compressed gases are stored, warning signs will be posted in all potentially dangerous areas, a review of labeling of hazardous areas including equipment and chemicals will be conducted. We will also carry out weekly safety meetings to review issues specific to current jobs.

This incident has been a valuable (and expensive) learning experience for our company. It has taught us to be more aware of hidden dangers on the job site and to investigate these dangers at the beginning and end of everyday (as site conditions change). We now know that there is never too much that can be done to increase workplace safety. Preparing a business to be as safe as possible has a high price tag initially, however maintenance costs are reasonable and the savings associated with reduced workplace injuries are worth the initial expense.

## **AAFC: A New National Land and Water Information Service Ottawa, Ontario - (CCN Matthews - June 2, 2006)**

The Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food announced today that Canadians now have access to agri-environmental maps, data, tools and expertise through a new Web portal developed by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC).

"The Service will assist landowners and planners, community groups, the agriculture industry and different levels of government in understanding and applying geographic information to encourage responsible land-use decisions."

Examples of decisions that will be supported relate to protection of ground and surface water, adoption of soil stewardship practices, cost analysis in implementing appropriate fencing around riparian areas, proper planning of agricultural and rural development, environmental monitoring and reporting and emergency response.

The bilingual one-stop Web portal gives users access to existing geospatial data and tools within AAFC through a recognized point of entry. It is expected to be fully operational in 2009. Additional information is available at [www.agr.gc.ca/nlwis-snite](http://www.agr.gc.ca/nlwis-snite).

## **Respecting Rainwater – Now, July 27 – August 2, 2006, Vol. 25 No. 48**

### **Five things you can do to harness the life-giving power of heaven's gift**

Toronto isn't exactly blessed with rainfall. We receive, on average, 695 millimetres a year. Roads, sidewalks, parking lots, roofs. Toronto may have its share of parks and green space, but an astonishing 70 per cent of the city is covered by hard surfaces. As a result, only half of the rain that falls is absorbed into the soil. Instead of replenishing the water table, rain that falls on hard surfaces gathers pollutants and carries the toxic cocktail directly to our rivers and waterfront. Rainwater travelling over hard surfaces picks up heat and speed - it takes barely 30 minutes for rainwater to travel from your yard to local rivers in a rainstorm, hastening erosion and warming water temps in rivers so that fish that rely on cold water habitats can't survive.

The lack of permeable surfaces and the increase in the number of extreme rainstorms are combining to overwhelm our sewer system, prompting flash floods and spilling raw sewage directly into waterways. This happens, on average 70 times a year. Five things you can do

1. **Disconnect your downspout** and reroute stormwater to a permeable surface like your front lawn or flower bed.
2. **Collect and store rainwater** in barrels and use it later to nourish your trees, lawn and garden.
3. **Naturalize** Replace hard surfaces with natural groundcover (think native plants, hedges and bushes; they use less water and are easier to take care of).
4. **Go chemical free** most of the pollution in our water is not from single large sources but from many smaller ones - like the crap you throw down your drain, or the mad gardener across the street with the grass obsession who insists on squirting weeds with a bottle of Killex. It all ends up polluting our waterways. Even the stuff you toss in landfill eventually seeps into the water table.
5. **Use less** Ninety-seven per cent of all available water on earth is saltwater, 2 per cent is frozen in the icecaps, and part of the remaining 1 per cent is too far underground to use. So conservation is key.

## **Plenty of Uncertainties Remain As Farmers Await Clean Water Act -** (Excerpts Ontario Farmer, July 25, 2006)

Two big questions remain: what will farmers be required to do and who will pay.

One piece of good news for farmers is that they are unlikely to face any new demands for five years because it's going to take at least that long for the planning process to come up with detailed watershed plans indicating who needs to do what and when.

There will be a limited set of public hearings with a legislative committee at Toronto, Cornwall, Peterborough, Bath and Walkerton from August 21 to 24.

The Liberal government wants the bill to be passed into law this time and the timetable calls for implementation of regulations before the end of the year.

Those who have properties and business that there are close to municipal wells or surface-water intakes will be under the closest scrutiny.

Anything that they want to do on their properties will probably be governed by a new set of municipal permits.

Property owners will have to prepare plans to show how they intend to meet requirements.

## **Worker Hit When Bucket Falls From Backhoe - OHS CANADA - July August, 2006**

An Alberta construction company and supervisor face almost a dozen charges following the injury of a worker struck by a backhoe bucket that fell inside the trench where he was working. The IGL Canada (Western) Ltd. employee was working in a trench at an Edmonton construction site on May 28, 2004 when the bucket of a backhoe operating nearby fell off the vehicle and hit him, says Chris Chodan, a spokesperson for Alberta Human Resources and Employment (AHRE). Just what caused the bucket to detach from the backhoe is expected to be "revealed during court proceedings," Chodan says. Chris Keeping, director of health and safety for RW Tomlinson Limited in Ottawa, could not comment on the case in question, but recommends performing a "circle check" before doing anything else. "If he has to change his bucket during the day, or had a break, then he should just step out to make sure that the pin is secure," Keeping says. Warping or splayed ends on a pin attaching the bucket to the backhoe, for example, are indications the equipment is not being properly maintained, he says. Telltale signs that a pin may be warped or "working itself out" include, "having to pound it in with a lot of force," or the bucket appears "looser than normal," Keeping explains.

**Ontario laws, like those in Alberta, require that loads not be carried over worker's heads, he points out. Employees should be standing outside the limit of the farthest reach of the backhoe bucket and supervisors should be enforcing that.**

Nine charges have been laid against IGL Canada, and two against supervisor James Rollison, Chodan says. The company charges cite, among other things, the failure to do the following: ensure the manufacturer's specifications were readily available and work was done in accordance; work was done by a competent worker; and workers were trained in the safe operation of equipment. One of the two charges against Rollison alleges knowingly making a false statement to an officer engaged in an investigation, Chodan says.

## **Reflections From Ross Irwin**

I have been reflecting on the past. A few notes I made year ago sort of shows how things develop and push you along, even though you are not aware of where you are going. This is a short story on water.

Hurricane Hazel came to Guelph in 1954 and caused my chimney to leak. Of greater consequence was the loss of a good friend who worked for the CNR and drowned near Markham as he foolishly walked up the track to warn an incoming train of the failed bridge. A few days later an engineering colleague and I decided to tour the stricken area examining and reporting on the failure of farm ponds spillways. The information collected was used to write the Farm Pond bulletin.

Hurricane Hazel also flooded the Holland Marsh. After it dried out I was persuaded by Lyman Chapman of the Ontario Research Foundation to take over his ground water monitoring program at the Research station. The Holland Marsh became my main research concern for 20 years. I was principally concerned with the preservation of the organic soil and monitored its loss. There were also a host of government committees worried about the area.

An offshoot of the work at the marsh was concern about the design of drainage pumping plants in the province. I looked at what existed and with Metro Sass we established some design criteria for farm size pumping stations.

The Ontario Department of Agriculture was interested in animals and crops. When the Drainage Acts came up for review in 1962 I was the sole person in the Department having an interest in same. The Ontario Farm Drainage Association had just been formed three years before. Anyway, I became an instant expert in drainage law for the Department. That brief experience led to a long but wonderful lifetime mucking about in the legal area where I had little experience.

So, you roll with the punches and take whatever life presents to you. Drainage in 1954 was not in my plan for life. Events decided differently.

## **Letter from Roth Drainage Limited – Dennis A. Erb, Vice President, August 30, 2006**

Over the past four or five years our company has had a few minor injuries such as a sprained ankle, a minor bruise, sand in the eye and a fall which resulted in a broken arm. Because in my mind we have had only one injury, which resulted in significant time off in recent memory, it was somewhat of a shock to find out we are considered a high-risk company concerning safety and can expect four personal visits from the Department of Labour each year.

On the first visit our shop was inspected. The deficiencies which needed to be attended to were guards around the electrical panel, yearly inspection and certification of the overhead crane, implementation of an electrical lock-out system and shields on everything and if we continue painting our own equipment, we would be required to install a proper paint booth. This, of course, would not have been economically feasible and we disposed of any paint products. All employees (including part time or summer) require WHMIS training. WHMIS data sheets for all WHMIS products used, and eye wash stations had to be installed.

We also had a Department of Labour visit to our jobsite, which was precipitated by an injury to a supplier's driver, which occurred on our site. Even though no one from our company was involved or witnessed this incident, since it was on our jobsite we are responsible. This inspector was mostly interested in policies and procedures. We must have on site Form 1000 for all subcontractors or suppliers on our jobsite, we must complete a Notice of Project for any project over \$50,000.00, an emergency procedure had to be implemented and recorded and kept on site, washroom facilities had to be made available, and shields had to be made and installed on the wheel trencher before work could continue.

At this moment we think we comply, or at least until next visit.

So far the cost in actual parts, engineering certification fees, alterations to equipment and the building, and the time involved in drawing up procedures, forms, etc., is upward of \$15,000.00 and is sure to go up. At the moment, the burning question is where the extra funds will come from to cover these costs.

Our company does want to have a safe work environment. Some of the safety requirements were valid, however, some of the requirements seemed to be not only unjustified but extremely time consuming and hard to see the benefits.

## **Clean Water Act Update – Don Lobb, September 6, 2006**

The Clean Water Act, Bill 43, is now under review prior to its introduction for third reading where it will be debated and then become law in Ontario.

Through the past two years we have participated in every step of the process in an attempt to influence its final form so it would not simply become a burden on rural Ontario. We have worked with and consulted with the Drainage Superintendents, the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers – Land Drainage Committee, the Ontario Farm Environmental Committee (and its many member organizations) and more recently, a group representing the aggregate industry, the mining industry, the golf industry, the Chambers of Commerce and others. Clearly we have common concerns. On August 25, John Johnston presented those concerns on behalf of LICO to the hearings of the Standing Committee on Social Justice.

We now have just two opportunities for influence. The first is for each of us to contact our Member of Parliament immediately with our concerns so they can contribute to an informed debate. The second and less effective opportunity is to make recommendations as the process of regulation development continues.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

September 13-15, 2006  
16th Annual Composting Council of  
Canada Conference  
Hamilton Convention Centre  
Hamilton, Ontario

September 19-23, 2006  
International Plowing Match & Rural  
Expo  
Peterborough County

January 24-26, 2007  
LICO Conference  
Best Western Lamplighter Inn  
591 Wellington Rd., London, Ontario N6C 4R3

NOTE: 2005 Municipal Directories are still  
available.



## Rainfall Leaching Not So Dramatic – Ontario

Farmer, August 1, 2006

If one inch of water is capable of moving nitrogen down three inches through a lighter soil profile, how much will be left for the crop after a three or four-inch downpour?

Actually the impact isn't as dramatic as it appears, says OMAFRA irrigation specialist Rebecca Shortt. Speaking at a recent Crop Diagnostics Day at Ridgetown College, Shortt said the key factor is not the amount of rain but the amount that actually infiltrates into the soil.

It takes a lot of rain to have one inch of water soak into the soil, Shortt explains. Typically, two-thirds of the rain that falls on bare ground evaporates back into the atmosphere. One quarter runs off to ponds or nearby watercourses, while just nine per cent gets down to where the plants can use it, she said.

While the rate of infiltration varies depending on soil type, soil condition, residue etc. on average a torrential six-inch downpour will only amount to a half an inch of infiltration. "It means you're not losing that much nitrogen," Shortt said.



### PASSING - Maitland, Kevin

Son of LICO Member Bert Maitland, died in an industrial accident August 25, 2006. He was 46 years old. Kevin Maitland, of Tree Mend Us Tree Service, fell about 15 metres while working on a tree in the backyard of a house in Ottawa.

## New Opportunities – Don Lobb, September 6, 2006

In late June I participated in a No-Till conference in Ukraine, which was organized for farm owners and operators from Europe and north-western Asia. One of the speakers, Dr. Jim Cooke, Washington State University (USA) talked about the most important developments in world food crop production increases. These included (1) hybrid corn in the 1930's (followed by other crops); (2) the introduction and use of commercial fertilizer – particularly nitrogen; and (3) the introduction of herbicide, and new and safer insecticides and fungicides. Each brought crop yields to a new plateau. Dr. Cook emphasized that the next and probably the only remaining increase will come from "improved soil moisture management". We know that soil moisture, too much or too little, at any time in a plant's life will limit its ability to produce. Water is the first and most critical limiting factor in crop production.

In arid regions, this means using systematic windbreak installations and using practices like no-till so crop residue can protect the soil from moisture loss. That moisture may come in the form of snow melt, rain, or irrigation. In humid regions, like southern Ontario, the challenge is greater on much of our cropland because we first need to reduce soil moisture with subsurface drainage to allow early planting for maximum light and heat use, to allow deep root development for maximum nutrient and moisture retrieval through the drier part of the growing season and to minimize the potential for root diseases. At the same time moisture must be preserved for use during the dryer part of the growing season. The use of no-till results in reduced soil surface moisture loss and more favourable soil temperature during the hot dry part of summer. The collection and re-use of drainage water in combination with no-till may give farmers the opportunity to maximize water use efficiency and reach that new yield plateau Dr. Cooke referred to.

The role of Land Improvement Contractors in soil moisture management will become more technical and more site specific as the focus shifts to the development and installation of water management systems.