

SOUTHWEST AGRICULTURAL CONFERENCE

Southwest Agricultural Conference 2015

The 22st Southwest Agricultural Conference was held January 6th & 7th 2014 at the University of Guelph, Ridgetown Campus. The conference was sold out for the first time with over 1350 registered for each day. The weather reduced attendance a bit the second day. The weather in the mid-western U.S. prevented 3 of our speakers from attending. They were still able to present



using video or teleconference facilities to give their presentation.

The theme of this year's conference was "Rising up to the Challenges" and presented topics from Maximum Corn to Making Precision Management Work to Building Soils to the Soybeans the Next Level. Topics on beneficial insects, spraying, diseases, nitrogen, edible beans, sprayers, strip tillage, commodity marketing, social media and weed control were some of the other topics included this year.



The feature speaker on the first day was Dr. David Kohl. He covered a wide range of topics from the importance of having goals to what to watch for in the global economy. On day two Greg Johnson, the tornado hunter from Saskatchewan shared some amazing stories and pictures of tornados and other weather phenomenon. He showed video of them chasing a 4 kilometer wide tornado where a large truck dropped in front of them. He believes the fear is your friend and it has served him well over the years.

The webcast of the sessions from **four** rooms on January 7th was sent to **7** locations this year. Participants at Thunder Bay, Sturgeon Falls and Thessalon enjoyed the program put on by OMAFRA and OSCIA Regions. In a partnership with the Grain Farmers of Ontario participants took in the program at John Deere dealerships in Omemee, Walkerton, Earlton and Truro, Nova Scotia in cooperation with the Truro Agromart. The sessions were well received and it is a great



way to deliver this high quality program to those who may not wish to travel to Ridgetown or who may not have the same access to speakers.

The format of the conference is

seven 50 minute concurrent sessions plus the feature speaker so it is a full day of learning! The presenters are a mix of farmers, researchers, government extension staff and agriculture industry personnel. The goal of the conference is to bring in the best speaker possible for a topic, by a number of means.

Here is a sample of the more than 40 sessions that were offered concurrently over two days at the conference:

- Soybeans: The Next Level
- Windbreaks Work
- DIY Tiling
- Variable Rate Seeding
- The U.S. Farm Bill and You
- Phosphorus Losses from Cropland
- Protected Nitrogen
- Wicked Weeds Next Door
- Red Clover and Beyond
- Big Data
- Persistent, Pernicious & Poisonous
- Hay Making & Marketing

Once again the conference hosted a reception at the end of the first day. The Taste of Ontario reception featured meat, vegetables, fruit, wine, beer and spirits from southwestern Ontario. The trade show once again attracted a large number of exhibitors.

At the feature speaker session the first day SWAC recognized Peter Johnson for his tireless efforts as program committee chair putting together excellent programs, bringing in the best speakers which contributed to several years of record breaking attendance. He has been a strong team player and has always had the best interests of the conference at heart. Even before his time as chair, as a member of the program committee, he would push the committee and previous chairs to stretch the boundaries on program topics. Pictured at right Peter receives a picture from the conference co-chair Earl Elgie and colleague Ian McDonald.



The conference is a cooperative effort between the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, the Southwest Soil and Crop Improvement Associations, many agribusiness supporters and Ridgetown Campus, University of Guelph.

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Visit our website www.southwestagconference.ca for conference information. A number of the presentations were recorded this year and are posted on the website under proceedings.