

Southwest Agricultural Conference 2016



The 23rd Southwest Agricultural Conference was held January 5th & 6th, 2016 at the University of Guelph, Ridgetown Campus.



The conference was sold out ahead of the registration deadline for the first time, with over 1,350 registered for each day. The weather was excellent this year so travel for the speakers and participants was not a problem compared to the previous 2 years.

The theme of this year's conference was "Building Tomorrow's Agriculture" and presented topics from Intensive Corn Management to Profitable Precision to Buried Alive and Survived to Cover Crop Crazy. Topics on insects, variable rate spraying, fungicides, nitrogen, edible beans, apps, 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 David Sax. He talked about how cupcakes became a food trend, how food trends get started and what to watch for. On day two, retired Major General Lewis MacKenzie received a standing ovation for sharing his experiences overseas and effective leadership. He explained how he was able to make the best of bad situations and showed that it is necessary to go against the grain at times.



The webcast of the sessions occurred again this year on January 6th and was sent to 5 locations. Participants at Thunder Bay, Earlton, Sturgeon Falls and Thessalon enjoyed the program put on by OMAFRA and Soil and Crop Improvement Associations. Once again it went to 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:

- Maximum Soybeans
- Trees for Profit
- Soil Life Diversity
- Agricultural Remote Sensing
- Planter Maintenance
- 504 Corn!
- Social Media Minefield
- Building Organic Matter
- Making Cover Crops Work
- Pesky, Problematic Pigweeds
- Market Strategies
- High Tech Organic Cropping

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.

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.

