

# ONFARM

## Launch and Stakeholder Workshop

**Tuesday February 25, 2020**

10:00 am to 3:00 pm

1 Stone Road West, Guelph  
Conference Room 1-3

On February 25, 2020, the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association (OSCIA) hosted over 80 participants representing more than 40 organizations and farms at the initial Stakeholder Workshop to launch the ONFARM program.

The event was moderated by Alan Kruszel, Past Chair of the Soil Conservation Council of Canada, and Past President of OSCIA. The purpose of the event was to introduce the agricultural community, included farmers, commodity organizations, government and non-government groups, and researchers to the ONFARM program.

The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) provided a welcome via Andrew Jamieson, Manager of Innovation Engineering and Program Delivery with the Environment Management Branch. Andrew spoke of OMAFRA's demonstrated commitment to advancing soil health and water quality knowledge, and how the objectives of ONFARM aligned with the outcomes of Ontario's Soil Health and Conservation Strategy, and mobilized the concept of Adaptive Stewardship Programming, as demonstrated through the cycle of:



Angela Straathof, Program Director with OSCIA, then introduced the attendees to the concept and objectives of ONFARM's Technical Working Group (TWG). As chair of the TWG, Angela will work closely with the members throughout the duration of the program, as they guide the technical priorities and research conducted in-field. The TWG members were introduced: OSCIA, Soil Resource Group (SRG), Maitland Valley Conservation Authority (MVCA), Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA), Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority (LTVCA), Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA), Essex Region Conservation Authority (ERCA), Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC), Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) and OMAFRA (non-voting members).

Don King, Principal with SRG, gave an overview of the work completed in Fall 2019, which included baseline measurements at each ONFARM Edge of Field site. Don introduced the plans for 2020's baseline property measurements, soil health parameters, and agronomic properties measured at the proposed 25 soil health sites on farms across southern Ontario.

Chris van Esbroeck, Environmental Stewardship Services Coordinator with MVCA, spoke on behalf of the participating ONFARM Conservations Authorities, giving an overview of historical water quality and quantity monitoring in the Lake Huron, Lake Erie and Lake St Clair watersheds. The monitoring of these properties in various Priority Subwatersheds projects (PSPs) began under the Great Lakes Agricultural Stewardship Initiative (GLASI) and will be continued through ONFARM.



Chris van Esbroeck of Maitland Valley Conservation Authority shares plans for the Conservation Authorities' ONFARM involvement.

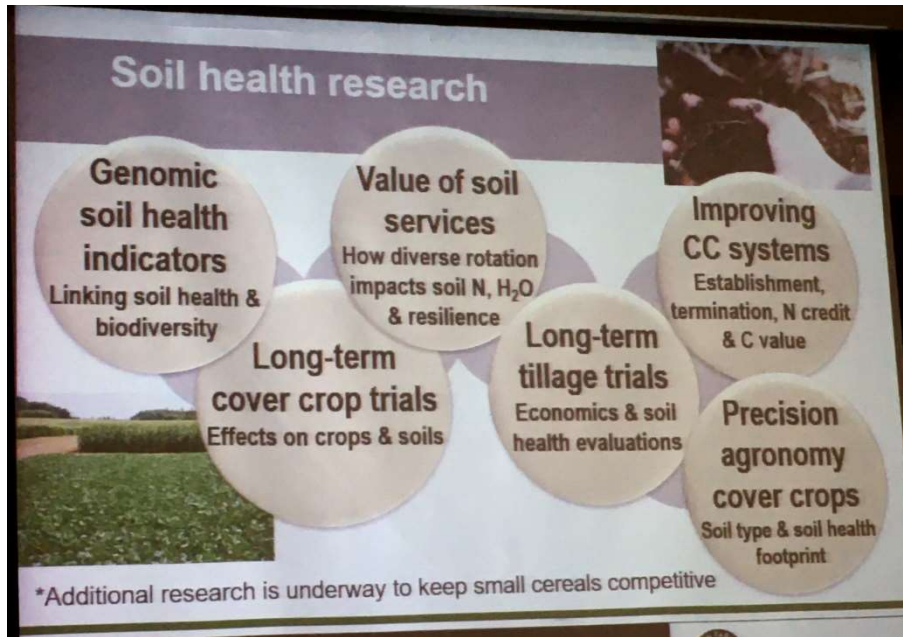
Participants were engaged throughout the agenda, asking questions of the presenters and encouraged to contribute by the host, Alan Kruszel. Stakeholder engagement is a key pillar of the ONFARM program, and the plans for how to prioritize that element of the program were shared by OSCIA's Applied Research Coordinator Andréa Dubé-Goss. As part of the engagement process, audience members were then invited to connect with folks at their tables, and share through posted notes their vision for applied research and soil health priorities in Ontario. This encouraged networking and discussion on what attendees has learned about ONFARM thus far.

Attendees then heard from representatives of commodity organizations, non-governmental organizations, research institutes (universities), and federal and provincial government partners regarding synergistic initiatives underway across the province. The complementary research initiatives described were:

- University of Guelph and Soils@Guelph – Dr. Claudia Wagner-Riddle and Cameron Ogilvie
- Trent University's Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems – Dr. Karen Thompson
- University of Waterloo's Biogeochemistry Lab – Dr. Merrin Macrae
- Grain Farmers of Ontario – Dr. Josh Cowan
- Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario – Ali English
- Tier 2 Applied Research grant – Jake Munroe
- Living Labs Initiative (AAFC) – Natalie Feisthauer
- OMAFRA Field Crop team initiatives – Ian McDonald



Jake Munroe, Soil Management Specialist with OMAFRA shares results from ongoing cover crop trials and OSCIA's Tier 2 Research Trials.



A slide from Dr Josh Cowan’s overview of Grain Farmers of Ontario’s soil health research program. Dr Cowan is GFO’s Manager of Research.



Cameron Ogilvie, Knowledge Mobilization Coordinator, introduces the audience to the Soils at Guelph initiative.

OSCIA looks forward to welcoming attendees of the Stakeholder Workshop back to the ONFARM Annual Research Forums. These will be held in February of each year through to 2023, and will be the opportunity for ONFARM Cooperators, researchers, and partners to share the results of their efforts and highlight the progress of the program.