

# *Since 1977* **FARMVIEW**

A newspaper with something for everyone | October 2025 | Volume 48 #10



2025 Jersey Ontario Ambassador Elizabeth Creighton of Bath, representing Maplevale Jerseys, with 5-year-old Glenholme River Calling, at the Ontario Summer Show.

**Inside this Issue: Trust is not on residents' radar re: proposal by the DND · OSCIA Farm Day & Tour · Farmland Lost is Food Lost · History & Haunts in the Black Creek Pioneer Village  
Plus more coverage of Shows and Fairs!**



# AGcalendar

Farm View's Ag Calendar is free to non-profit agricultural groups, up to a maximum of 40 words. All others are invoiced at \$25 per month. Please note the format of the listings below and submit your item by mail or email, in a similar fashion. Submission deadline is the 14th of the month for the following month's issue.

## October 10th & 11th: Elmvale Fall Fair

On Thanksgiving weekend, the Flos Agricultural Society, hosts one of its most popular events, the Elmvale Fall Fair, at the Elmvale Arena (14 George St.). Midway, livestock shows, tractor pulls, live music, fun for everyone!

**For full details see the ad on page 7.**

## October 14th: News and Advertising Deadline

The advertising and news deadline for the November issue of Farm View is **Tuesday, October 14th.**

## October 22nd: Program announcement for E.D.G.E.

Elmvale District Garden Enthusiasts meet on Wednesday, October 22 at Elmvale Legion 7 John St. at 7 pm.

Master Gardener, Kevin VanAndel will present "Sharp, Shine and Fall Clean Up." Guests are free.

## October 24th: CFFO Hosts Harvest Dinner

Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario (CFFO), Cental Ontario District hosts the Harvest Dinner on Friday, October 24th at Schomberg Community Hall.

For information please call 705-424-0968. Invite your friends and neighbours to attend this great event of fellowship, food, family and farming.

## October 30th: SCFA Annual General Meeting

Simcoe County Federation of Agriculture Annual General Meeting will take place on Thursday October 30th at Living Faith Presbyterian Church in Baxter. **More details in the ad on page 11.**

## November 27th: CFFO Hosts Education Days

The Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario (CFFO) announced upcoming Education Days. The Education Day in Barrie will be held on Thursday, November 27, 2025. **More information can be found in the article on page 12.**

## 2025 St John's United Church Potato Pancake Breakfast

By John Morrison

On August 9, St John's United Church, Alliston hosted their 50th Potato Pancake Breakfast. Quite an accomplishment. The Alliston Potato festival started in 1973, but because of COVID, it was suspended for two years. Hence our 50th anniversary serving our potato pancakes which everyone remarked how good they tasted.

Bright and early Saturday morning, the volunteers started putting tables and chairs out, got the grills up and running, the pancake batter mixed, coffee urns filled, juice boxes and other condiments in place for the 7:30 start.

We started selling tickets at 7:30. There was a steady line of customers. We sold 1073 tickets, a lot of pancakes, and by 10:00 o'clock we were sold out of dry pancake mix. Everything went smoothly with the odd hiccup.

As other years we had great volunteers, both from the congregation and our outreach personnel. The 4-H and their supervisors as well as high school volunteers did a great job. I want to thank them for their help and youthful enthusiasm. Like all churches, our congregation is a little older and without the youthful volunteers, it would be very difficult hosting this very important part of the Potato Festival. People come for our pancakes than go and cruise the main street looking for bargains. We are, a very important event for the Festival.

As in other years, we will be donating our profits to worthy causes in our community.

For more on the event, see last month's edition of Farm View.

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## Railfence Books

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Paisley's Pumpkin (pg 12)  
by Carolyn J Morris  
Illustrated by Richard McNaughton

**Oct 4 Farm to Fork**  
**Queensville Farm Supply**

**Oct 8 Blue Heron Books**  
**Uxbridge**

**October 10 & 11**  
**Elmvale Fall Fair**

**Oct 18 & 19 Harvest Fest**  
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**November 7 - 16**  
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**Details on our website.**

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# Trust is not on residents' radar re: proposal by the DND

Story, photographs by Don Beaulieu

Reporter's note:

*I have been asked directly, by the Department of National Defence, to **NOT** identify anyone from the Department of National Defence as I include information they specifically said; nor may I attribute a direct quote to a particular person from the DND. I must refer to all their personnel as a "DND representative".*

## The basics of A-OTHR

As part of Canada's North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) modernization plan, DND is investing in a new Northern Approaches Surveillance System (NASS) to significantly expand NORAD and the Canadian Armed Forces' (CAF) situational awareness of objects approaching and entering Canadian airspace from the north. NASS will include the Arctic Over-The-Horizon Receive (A-OTHR) system that will provide early warning radar coverage and threat tracking.

The A-OTHR capability will be in Southern Ontario and will extend NORAD and the CAF's situational awareness into the Canadian North and the North Atlantic.

Over-the-Horizon Radar can conduct surveillance at far greater ranges than regular radar technology as it bounces radar beams off the ionosphere to see around the curvature of Earth. The A-OTHR system needs to be in Southern Ontario to meet NORAD surveillance requirements.

## The town hall meeting

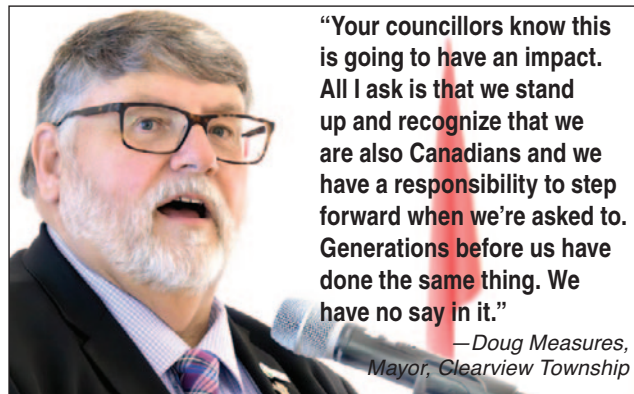
A town hall meeting was held in Creemore on Wednesday, September 10, 2025 to discuss, primarily, the receiving site purchased in Clearview Township: 2225 Sideroad 15 & 16. This site has been described as preliminary and is not large enough to accommodate a full-scale receive site. A second site is also part of the plan, as is a second transmit site. One transmit site has already been designated in the Muskoka area.

To begin the town hall meeting a DND representative presented a slide show and explained the why's and how's of the basic physics of this system requiring transmit and receive sites needing to be in southern Ontario. It seemed to make some sense, but then the question and answer period opened up. Concerns abounded with many attempts to obtain absolute answers which never came, time after time.

Clearview Township Mayor Doug Measures addressed the packed house (over 200 people) at the Station-on-the-Green, welcoming everyone while expressing his concern, citing agriculture as the number one economic activity in the township. His initial response upon hearing about this project was: "I see we are going to lose agricultural land once again." He spoke of how every township council has done their best to mitigate loss of agricultural land to development, adding: "This threat to agricultural land is not something that we, as your municipality, have any say in." There was a note of defeat in his voice.

## Question and answer

Many of the concerns expressed by members of the community centred around electromagnetic emissions aimed toward themselves and their properties. In response, one



DND representative explained: "It is a type of electromagnetic emissions are around us all the time... We've got radio waves flying around us at all times; LED lights, some power bars, some computing equipment. All these things are already emitting the types of emissions that we are talking about on this system".

When pressed to offer numbers regarding strength of the incoming signals, a DND representative responded: "There are a number of numbers. Some of them we can't share because they refer to the sensitivity of the system." Explaining the path of the reflected signals, this DND representative offered the summation of: "They are very faint by the time they get back". The word "faint" was used liberally by the DND folk.

When questioned about this site prone to being a target during a time of war, that concern was not abated by being informed of a "Perimeter and secured fence on site". We later learned there would be lighting on the fence to aid monitoring.

One very concerned attendee wanted to know how large an area would be exposed to these "faint" signals. He had explained at some length the potential health effects of what we may generally consider innocuous devices. He was looking for a precise figure. The response he got showed the DND is more concerned about other signals interfering with their equipment.

A DND representative replied: "I don't want to give you a number right now. One of the challenges of the receive site is trying to make sure we eliminate all the other sources of radio frequency noise in the area".

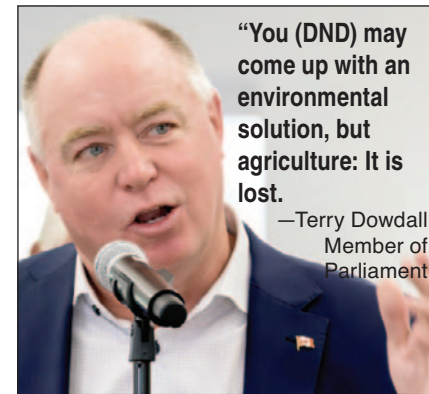
In response, the citizen advised the DND: "I will put you all on notice at this time. If the levels on my property were to exceed what is considered by the Building Biology Guidelines to go into the level of severe, which is over 19 micro-watts per metre squared, as a result of this project, I consider any man or woman involved in allowing that to happen to be a trespass by way of harm. That would include voting for the project, providing permitting or any other vested interest, project manager and so on. Anyone to be involved in the creation of this harm by way of microwave radiation I would consider that to be a trespass by way of harm, from myself and those under my care. ...That's the notice I put forth at this time".

Clearview Township Deputy Mayor Paul Van Staveren took time to make it clear that the final stage, beyond this "preliminary" site of 711.7 acres will require a total of 4,000

acres. This left the assembled citizens wondering how that will be achieved. DND representatives could not say for sure how or where they would accomplish that end goal. More land, people and lives will no doubt be effected. No indication of compensation for displaced or inconvenienced residents could be pried from any of the DND representatives.

When asked why this receive site is located in habitable, arable land, the answer didn't seem to make sense to many folk.

"The positioning associated with this system, where it needed to be to ensure we could see into the Arctic. The unfortunate aspect



associated with that is, that puts the system around the 46th parallel, i.e. southern Ontario.

"If you look across Canada, this really is the only area where we can install that system and be able to see at that range."

The 46th parallel is 79 kilometres

north of the preliminary site in Clearview Township. This site is closer to the 44th parallel. The 46th parallel falls across the top shoreline of Manitoulin Island. If one goes north of the 46th parallel the same distance as the preliminary site is south of it (79 kilometres), one would be in Temiskaming Shores. The population is far more sparse in the regions along the 46th parallel, which we were told, is the prime latitude.

There was a question asking how long it took to install a similar system in Australia. This was the DND's answer: "We're trying to build as quickly as we can and the timelines to deliver the Stage 1 system are aggressive while we also make sure we follow correct procedures and keep people informed."

MP Terry Dowdall had a few hard questions for the panel. One of which was: "You have said, on the record, you want to have more land. Will the project go forward with just the property that you have today and if it doesn't, is expropriation a part of the plan?"

DND representative: "Sir; so Stage 1 of the capability parcels that have been acquired we are moving forward with the development of those two parcels. Siting analysis, as I mentioned, for the full solution is ongoing, we put out that survey, we're gathering information from other sources, all that will be sent up to the leadership and at some point, that siting decision will be made. But until then, we are moving forward with those two parcels we have acquired."

MP Dowdall; "I would hope the government would plan ahead and know that if that's all they're getting, is the project dead?"

DND: "The project is moving ahead with those parcels that we have and that will put into place a capability."

MP Dowdall: "So the government does not need to acquire any more land for the existing unit to work?"

DND: "The full scope of the project, sir, are those two full-up radars, including two transmit sites and those two full receive sites, that's the full scope of the project. But at this time we don't have the land for that."

MP Dowdall: "So if you don't acquire the land, what's going to happen to the project?"

DND: We're directed to move forward with the Stage 1 capability with those two parcels. That's the direction we have.

Rumblings went through the hall about MP Dowdall's question not being answered. Another DND representative attempted an answer but indicated the MP's question was not being understood.

DND: "I think your question is; Given that we're moving forward with the Stage 1 capability, your question is 'Is that capability good enough?'"

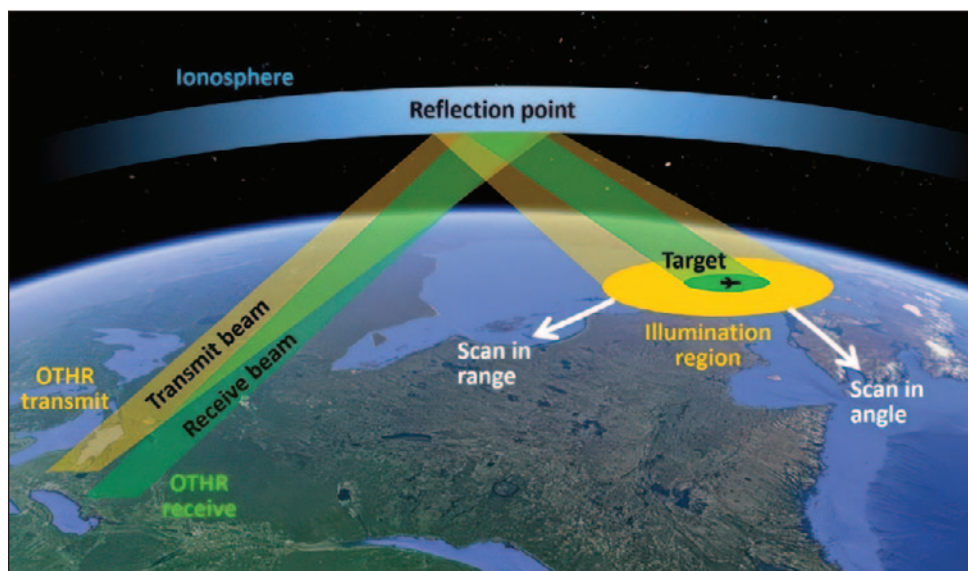
Audience: "No it's not".

DND continued to talk about Stage 1 with the audience interrupting with "You're taking our farms, that's what we are worried about" while the DND representative repeated "For Stage 1 we will be proceeding with the two parcels that we own." Another DND representative added "For Stage 2, that siting analysis, those assessments are continuing. That siting decision hasn't been made."

This circular "conversation" was ended by the master of ceremonies, calling on another question, so, no resolve.

Another simple, but direct question seemed to baffle the panel. A resident asked who ordered this project; who signed off on it? What office did this come from? Not one DND representative seemed to understand the question.

Residents received no indication that any inconvenience or relocation costs would be offered if such became a reality. No DND representative would suggest nearby property values would change.



This image is taken from a DND online site explaining the Arctic Over-the-Horizon Radar Program. It is the same diagram handed out in print at the town hall meeting. It has the transmit and receive locations reversed, according to the plan told in Creemore. The receive site should be the one below Georgian Bay (yellow band) and the transmit site should be north of Prince Edward County (green band).



OPINION

SCFA Calls on DND to Halt Arctic Radar Project to Protect Prime Farmland in Clearview Township

The SCFA has submitted the below draft letter on letter-head to the dept of defence denouncing the Artic Over the Horizon Project.  
 Farm owners and farm businesses are encouraged to submit letters in their own words, or use this draft as a shell to also denounce this project and its effects on prime agricultural land in Clearview township.  
 Please contact the SCFA at [simcty.fed.agriculture@outlook.com](mailto:simcty.fed.agriculture@outlook.com) for the information on where to direct your letters.  
 The sooner this letter is submitted the better as work is beginning on this project.

“The Simcoe County Federation of Agriculture (SCFA) strongly urges the Department of National Defence (DND) to halt any further acquisition of prime agricultural land for the Arctic Over-the-Horizon Radar Program receiving site.  
 While we recognize the importance of national defence, this cannot come at the cost of one of our most valuable and irreplaceable assets—farmland. Prime agricultural land is a non-renewable, strategic resource. Once developed, it is lost forever. In Simcoe County, this land feeds our province, sustains farm families, drives our rural economy, and supports environmental health. It must not be sacrificed.  
 This is not unused or vacant land—it is actively producing food and providing essential ecological services such as carbon storage, water filtration, and flood control. Developing this land undermines food security, economic resilience, and climate action.  
 We further call on DND to immediately halt all development studies and project-related activities on the prime farmland that has already been acquired. Proceeding with work on these lands only deepens the harm and precludes meaningful alternatives. These activities must be paused to allow for a full reassessment of siting options that do not involve the permanent loss of irreplaceable farmland.  
 There are other options. We strongly urge DND to demonstrate national leadership by committing to preserve all remaining prime farmland in the project area. Use lower-quality lands, existing federal properties, or reconsider siting. Simply put, no additional prime farmland should be lost to this project.  
 The consequences of continuing to sacrifice prime farmland extend far beyond the local community. Every acre lost weakens Canada’s ability to produce food domestically, increasing reliance on imports and exposing our food system to global uncertainties. As a federal institution charged with protecting Canadians, the Department of National Defence must recognize that safeguarding farmland is also a matter of national security. By protecting this vital resource, DND

can lead by example—demonstrating that long-term food security and defence priorities are not mutually exclusive but are deeply interconnected.  
 Ontario’s farmers are already losing 319 acres of farmland every day. DND has the opportunity—and responsibility—to set a precedent that security and sustainability can go hand in hand. Protecting farmland is protecting Canada.  
 We are prepared to work collaboratively to find solutions that meet national objectives without permanently destroying farmland. But the first step is clear: stop any further purchases of prime agricultural land—and halt development activity on land already acquired.”

**Editor’s Note:** For details on the Arctic Over-the-Horizon Radar Project’s receiving site plan, see the article on page 3.



Loretto’s Sky-High Show: Bob and Rita Webber’s Sunflowers Hit 22 Feet (and Counting!)

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- STEWART’S EQUIPMENT in Cookstown and Stayner
- THE UPS STORE in the Barrie Cedar Pointe plaza

The Farm View is delivered to these business between the 25th and 29th of each month and copies are available while supplies last. If you would like the Farm View mailed directly to your home, one year subscriptions can be purchased for \$45.00. Contact Roslyn at 705-722-0138, by mail 8 Luella Blvd Minesing, ON L9X 0W7 or email [farmview@on.aibn.com](mailto:farmview@on.aibn.com).

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Farm View invites letters to the editor. They should be fewer than 300 words and deal with a single topic affecting farmers. All letters must be signed, including your full name, address and daytime phone number. All letters are subject to editing for brevity. Please no phone calls.

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In memory of  
 Jill Beischer

Farm View attempts to present a forum for varying points of view from the agricultural community. Editorial opinions are freely expressed by individual authors.

“Burn down your cities and leave our farms, and your cities will spring up again as if by magic, but destroy our farms and the grass will grow in the streets.”

*W.J. Bryan*

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## Farmland Lost Is Food Lost: Protecting the Soil That Sustains Us



By Leah Emms  
OFA Member Services Rep.  
1-866-660-5511  
Leah.Emms@ofa.on.ca  
www.ofa.on.ca

You know as well as we do: farmland is a finite, irreplaceable resource. Once it's gone, it's gone for good. And we're not just losing soil—we're losing the ability to grow food locally, to support farm families, and to keep rural economies strong.

We also know this loss impacts more than food production. You manage land that helps protect water sources, store carbon, and support biodiversity. When farmland is converted to other uses, these environmental benefits are erased. Yet despite all of this, farmland is still too often viewed as "available" land—first in line for development.

We share your frustration. You work hard, invest in your operations, and contribute to your community—only to see decisions made that undervalue the land you depend on. And while you continue doing your part, it can feel like others don't see the urgency.

That's why OFA continues to push hard for farmland to

be recognized as the number one protected land use in Ontario. Stronger land-use planning is needed at every level of government. Municipalities must be supported—and expected—to direct growth into already developed areas, rather than pushing into agricultural zones. Sprawl is not a solution to growth; it's a permanent loss of capacity.


We also know that awareness alone won't stop development. We need coordinated policy action, smart planning, and sustained public pressure. Through our Home Grown Ontario initiative, we're working to build stronger connections between consumers, decision-makers, and the farmers who grow their food. We're telling the story of why protecting farmland matters—economically, environmentally, and socially—and we're making sure that agriculture is seen as essential infrastructure, not a temporary land use.

You've done your part. Now it's time for the broader public and elected leaders to do theirs. OFA will keep advocating—for better policy, stronger protections, and real recognition of what farmland means to Ontario. But we need your continued voice and support, whether it's at a local planning meeting or by sharing your story with your community.

Farmland is more than just where we work and live—it's where our future begins. It's the foundation of our food system, the heart of our rural communities, and a critical part of the solution to climate and environmental challenges. If we want a future where farming in Ontario is viable for the next generation, the time to act is now.

Let's keep working together to ensure that Ontario remains a place where farms—and farmers—can thrive.

**Editor's Note:** See the article on page 3 and the letter to the Department of Defence on page 4 opposing the Arctic Over the Horizon Project. We encourage you to write in and share your concerns.




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# Summer Show Stars: Ontario's Finest Dairy Cattle on Display

Story and photos by Cathy Hamill-Hill

The 28th Annual Summer Show in Lindsay continues to be a highlight of Ontario's dairy cattle scene, second only to the Royal Winter Fair.

Photo at right: Mike Phoenix from Greenbank is seen showing Hi-View-Corners Show Sophie in the Junior 3-Year-Old class. Sophie, a talented young Jersey, is sired by Jacob's Show Time.

Photo below right: Representing Fraeland Farms from Fergus, ON, Steve Fraser proudly presents his home-bred cow, Fraeland Crushabull Antastasia, sired by Oh-River-SYC Crushabull-ET.

Photo below left: Melyssa Sargent from Enniskillen Jerseys, Enniskillen, ON, is pictured with her family's home-bred cow, Enniskillen Prada Sue 644, which captured first place in her class.

The show continues to showcase the dedication and excellence of Ontario's dairy breeders, with impressive animals and proud exhibitors on display.





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Elmvale Fall Fair, Hosted by Flos Agricultural Society, 14 George St., Elmvale, ON - [elmvalefallfair.com](http://elmvalefallfair.com)



# Summer Farm Day and Tour: *Guest speaker session synopses*

Report & photographs by Don Beaulieu

It is a custom of the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association that the first vice president hosts the annual Summer Farm Day and Tour. That meant this year's event was hosted by Andy and his wife Lori Van Niekerk on their farm south of Stayner, Ontario. Van Niekerk's family has been operating the farm since 1957 with Andy buying it in 1996. Larry, their dog, has been on the farm for four years.

Van Niekerk is a crop advisor, as he says "...I do a lot of 'what ifs'" on his farm, among many formal small plot trials including third-party marketing trials. He admitted that following strict protocols for the trials is important, "The really fun ones are the ones where you make a mistake." He explained that really; "There are never any mistakes in agriculture, only learning opportunities and more test plots."

Punctuated with his dry humour, Van Niekerk offered insights to his work, particularly with trials. He stressed that there is more to growing crops than NPK (nitrogen, phosphorous, potassium). He believes the three important contributors to soil productivity are "...soil structure, soil biology and soil chemistry".

OSCIA President Eleanor Renaud addressed the attendees, saying they are in for two days (the next day involved a bus tour, see page 9) of innovation and exploration under the canopy of research.

Executive director for the OSCIA Kerry Wright was invited to address the crowd. She spoke of growing up with her chef father, before there were celebrity chefs. While her family enjoyed his cooking, she quoted him: "We are not the heroes here. The people out on the farms are the heroes. They are growing the food to allow us to make amazing meals". Wright extended that to the soil and appreciating what the OSCIA is doing to help farmers maintain high quality soil on their farms.

## Managing resistance

The first guest speaker of the day was Brittany Lacasse, manager of Stewardship and Sustainability for CropLife Canada.



**Hosts Lori and Andy Niekerk with their dog Larry. Larry was more interested in the "Thank you" package than facing the camera. There may have been dog treats in there.**



**"Agriculture is one of the biggest drivers in the country for our economy."**

*—Eleanor Renaud, President OSCIA*

Lacasse explained that her presentation was intended to show how her company's research "...can be applied through knowledge transfer and how we're communicating the research results to farmers".

She continued to explain that CropLife Canada is a national trade association representing manufacturers, retailers, developers and distributors of pesticide and plant bio-technology innovations, with 44 member companies. They advocate "For a positive domestic regulatory environment based in science". We also like to advocate for the role of plant science education and sustainable outcomes and how agriculture contributes to sustainability as well as having a global rural space trading system".

She provided an enlightening presentation on causes and mitigation to resistance in a variety of situations.

## Great Lakes YEN

Joanna Follings, a cereal specialist with OMAFA (Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness). She is a part of the Great Lakes Yield Enhancement Network (YEN) team in Ontario. She explained the beginning of YEN began in the United Kingdom about 15 years ago. Currently, Michigan State University, Michigan Wheat Program, Grain Farmers of Ontario, University of Guelph and OMAFA have come together to bring the programme to our province.

A question and answer segment featuring Van Niekerk, being one of the newer participants, was very popular.

## Building resiliency with cover crops

This was another very detailed presentation by Dr. Laura Van Eerd, professor at the University of Guelph. She was excited to share what has been going on "in my long-term experiment". She works with something like a mini-farm: "What we can do is compare no cover crop control to the same cover crop planted in the area and follow cover crop yields over time".

That simple explanation was followed, of course, by a lot of details from carefully controlled and monitored plots, demonstrating a variety of definite benefits and inter-relationships.

## Living Lab Ontario

Farmer engagement and research liaison with OSCIA Owen Ricker gave the crowd an introduction to Living Lab Ontario. Owen works to ensure trial information is accurately recorded and shared with the appropriate researchers.

His first order of business was to explain just what Living Lab is about: "A living lab is a farm innovation project that is supported by research. Our objective is to mitigate climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and by increasing carbon sequestration". There are three principles followed. 1) User-centred innovation. 2) Partnerships. 3) Real-life context.

As with all presentations, the details contained in Ricker's talk were far too much to include here but provided OSCIA members with a ton or so of insight.

## Methane & liquid manure

Stephen Burt works with Living Lab Research and Agriculture and Agrifood Canada in methane measurement and mitigation, co-ordinating activities.

The amount of methane released by manure of dairy cattle and swine is measured by laser. Some of the caveats of such methods, wind for example, were discussed and the adjustments necessary were explained.

The science involved, as with all aspects of farming these days, is amazing as is the technology that provides the details and co-relates the results. The information gathered is a great base for determining not just sources, but improvements, many of which are making their way into farm processes today.

Research covers different geographic regions, storage methods and animals. Best practices continue to get better.

On-farm tours of plots in Van Niekerk's fields were a part of the day and included cover crops, trial strips versus plots, soybean variety, nitrogen efficiency and more. Lunch was provided by Valley Farm Market.



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# OSCIA Farm Tour Showcases Innovation From Soil to Shelf

Report and photos by Roslyn Watkins

On a beautiful Saturday this past August my husband Shawn and I boarded the bus at Andy and Lori Van Niekerk's farm and joined fellow members for an inspiring farm tour organized by the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association. Throughout the day we visited a variety of farms, each stop offering fascinating insight from knowledgeable hosts who shared their expertise with passion and pride. From cutting-edge research to long-standing family traditions, every speaker reminded us of the innovation, resilience, and dedication that drive Ontario agriculture.

## Miller's Dairy: From Barn to Bottle

Miller's Dairy is more than just a farm—it's a full-circle dairy and crop operation that keeps every step of production close to home. The 800-acre farm is home to Jaylon Jerseys, a 100% purebred herd of 120 milking cows and an equal number of young stock. All of the animals' feed is grown on the farm, with extra corn, soybeans, and wheat sold as cash crops.

The business is owned and operated by John and Maureen Miller, who have created a unique system that keeps their milk on the property from cow to carton. Jaylon Farms owns the land, crops, and cattle, selling milk to Dairy Farmers of Canada. Miller's Dairy then purchases that milk back from Dairy Farmers of Canada—but it never actually leaves the farm. Instead, it flows underground from the milking barn directly to the on-site bottling facility just a short distance away.

The operation employs 15 people, including six who work in the processing plant. Each week, Miller's Dairy bottles and sells about 21,000 litres of milk.

During a tour, visitors saw the vintage equipment used in processing. Much of it was sourced from a dairy equipment farm in South Carolina. The vintage equipment includes an ice cream maker weighing 1,500 pounds that originally belonged to John's mother's family.



**John Miller of Miller's Dairy**

The tour also included the modern milking barn, where an automatic system milks 120 cows twice a day—a process that takes about two hours. As John explained, Jersey milk is especially prized for its higher calcium content compared to other breeds.

Reflecting on the journey from farming to processing, John called it a “pretty wild ride.” But he also noted that the effort is worthwhile: “People in rural areas get local, get quality, and don't mind paying for it.”

## Ontario Crops Research Station: Innovation in the Holland Marsh

The Ontario Crops Research Station has been at the heart of agricultural progress in the Holland Marsh since its beginnings in 1946. Originally established as a University of

Guelph research station, it later operated as a government facility before returning to the university's oversight.



**Research technician Kevin Vander Kooi answers the many questions from the group.**

For nearly three decades, research technician Kevin Vander Kooi has been a steady presence at the station. Since 1996, he has focused on soils and vegetable crops, with carrots and onions forming the core of the research program.

The Holland Marsh, often called Ontario's “vegetable basket,” produces an astounding 40% of Canada's carrots and onions. Its rich muck soil is the foundation of that success, though it is a diminishing resource. Around the station, muck soil runs three to four feet deep, but Vander Kooi notes that depth varies widely across the fields.

The 10-acre research farm currently uses about eight acres for trials, as salts leaching from the nearby highway limit productivity on part of the land. Much of the work at the station centers on phosphorus management, with researchers striving to reduce fertilizer use while maintaining strong yields.

Innovation is also a priority. Now in its third year of testing, a Naïo agricultural robot is being used at the station as part of ongoing studies into how new technologies can be adapted to the Marsh's unique conditions.

From soil health to robotics, the Ontario Crops Research Station continues to play a vital role in supporting farmers in the Holland Marsh—helping ensure this world-class growing region remains productive for generations to come.

## Beattie Farms: Six Generations Strong in Simcoe County

Beattie Farms has been growing potatoes in Simcoe County for generations, and today the legacy continues with Tyler Beattie, who proudly introduced himself as the 6th generation on the land.

The farm tour began with a look at the impressive harvesting equipment—capable of digging 45,000 pounds of potatoes in just five minutes. Tyler also highlighted the scale of their irrigation system, which pumps 4,000 gallons of water per minute. This past summer, during the long heat spell, the system ran continuously for four weeks to protect the crop.



**Tyler Beattie of Beattie, John Farms Limited**

Storage is another feat in itself. Beattie Farms harvests about 5 million pounds of potatoes that are carefully stored in their specialized “potato hotels.” With 11 of these storage facilities on site, each building is designed to keep potatoes in top condition for months after harvest.

Visitors also had a chance to see the washing machinery, a key step in preparing the potatoes for market. Tyler explained that potatoes are planted in a three-year rotation,

which helps maintain healthy soil and consistent yields.

But potatoes at Beattie Farms aren't just destined for the dinner table. The farm is also home to Beattie Distillers, a premium farm-to-bottle operation producing potato-based vodka and gin. In fact, Beattie's was the first distillery to make gin entirely from Canadian potatoes, adding a unique chapter to the family's long agricultural history.

From the field to the glass, Beattie Farms showcases how tradition, innovation, and passion for agriculture can thrive together.

## Purple Hills: Pioneering Cannabis Farming in Ontario

Just north of Barrie, Purple Hills Cannabis Farm stands as one of Ontario's pioneering hemp and cannabis operations. Founded in 2013 by Peter Miller, together with his wife and his aunt and uncle, the farm was among the first in Canada to secure a federal license. What began as a one-acre plot—“fenced to the teeth,” as Peter describes it—has grown into one of the province's top-quality cannabis brands.

In the early days, Health Canada officials made weekly inspections, reflecting the uncertainty around this new industry.

But as Peter explains, over the years regulations have eased as authorities came to recognize “it is just farming.” For the Millers, farming has always been in the blood—the family has worked this land since 1952.

The road to stability, however, was far from smooth. Purple Hills partnered with several large-scale companies over the years, navigating a market that was first tightly restricted and then suddenly flooded. Today, ownership has come full circle, with Peter and his wife once again at the helm.

In 2017, Purple Hills became the first farm permitted to produce cannabis outdoors in Ontario. Inside, they maintain mother plants and clones, while outdoors they cultivate roughly 45,000 plants by hand—no seed drills, just careful planting. Over time, they have trialed hundreds of genetic varieties to determine what thrives in the local environment.

Peter emphasizes that outdoor growing has many advantages over warehouse production: “Trying to recreate Mother Nature in a warehouse is very difficult. Growing outside, a lot of problems naturally solve themselves.” Without the use of pesticides, nature provides its own solutions—ladybugs eliminate pests, then disappear once their work is done.

Weather plays a crucial role in success. A wet season during the vegetative stage followed by a dry spell during flowering is ideal. In 2024, the farm needed no irrigation, but this past summer's heat demanded plenty.

Purple Hills' fields are filled exclusively with female plants, essential for producing high-quality flower. From those plants, the farm produces a wide range of products, all crafted with best-in-class manufacturing practices.

From its tightly fenced beginnings to its role as an industry leader, Purple Hills reflects both the challenges and the promise of cannabis farming in Ontario—rooted in tradition, driven by innovation, and sustained by resilience.



**Peter Miller of Purple Hills**



# Sunderland Fair Favourites in Motion

Story and photos by Cathy Hamill-Hill

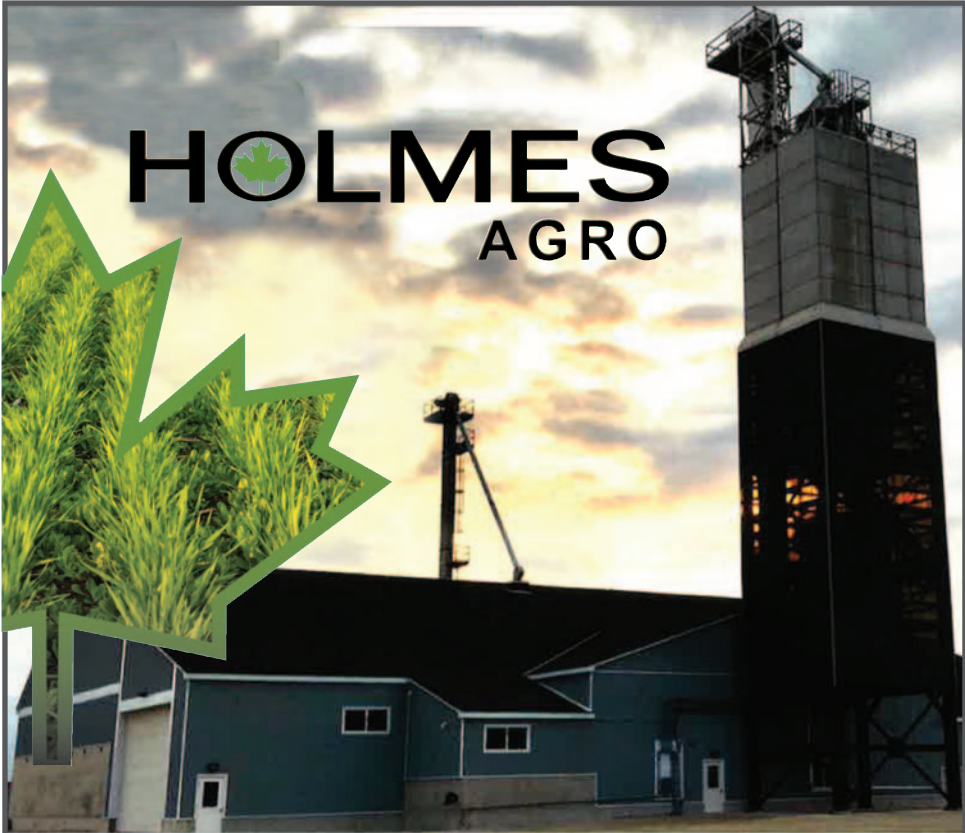


This is Briar Smith of Sunderland with a Charloais crossbred calf in the Sunderland Fair Beef Cattle Show. Briar is 9 years old.



Pictured above is Becky Vissers from Bowmanville getting in a practice run for the Carriage Class. She is driving a cart being pulled by her Haflinger horse named Carissa. The Carriage Class highlights both the skill of the driver and the responsiveness of the horse, and Becky's focus during practice reflects her dedication.

To the right is what a first-place winner looks like in motion during a Draft Horse Show line class. This is Stephen Lewis of Terragold from Cannington with his Clydesdale which won the class. The pair moved with confidence and style, showing off the breed's trademark strength and elegance.



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# Barrie Fair Highlights Cattle, Sheep, Piglets, and Young Farmers in Action

Story and photos by Cathy Hamill-Hill

The Barrie Fair once again brought the local agricultural community together, showcasing talented farmers, livestock, and dedicated volunteers.

**Photo at right:** May Bradley from Kawartha Lakes is pictured showing Speckle Lane My Moonshine, a striking black Speckle Park cow. This Canadian breed, originating in Saskatchewan in 1959 from Shorthorn and Aberdeen Angus crosses, continues to impress judges and visitors alike. My Moonshine is home-bred from Speckle Lane Farm and was a highlight of the beef cattle show.



**Photo center:** A wide variety of agriculture was featured at the Fair. Lauren Cowan from Innisfil is pictured with her Southdown yearling ewe at the Sheep Show, demonstrating skill and care in handling her flock.



**Photo far right:** No fair can happen without volunteers, and Lisa Peterson from Innisfil was on hand at the Barrie Fair Education Centre. As a pork producer and Past President of the Essa and District Agricultural Society, she shared the joys of raising free-range pigs. Her sow and 12 energetic piglets were a crowd favourite, often delighting visitors with playful "zoomies" around the pen.

**Photo bottom far right:** Young farmers are the future of agriculture, and six-year-old Luke Hoskin was on display showing his family's Charolais, Cocoa.

From home-bred cattle to playful piglets, the Barrie Fair offered a vibrant snapshot of local agriculture, highlighting the dedication, knowledge, and joy that farmers of all ages bring to the community.



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**Simcoe County Federation of Agriculture  
Annual General Meeting**  
 Thursday October 30th, 2025

**Guest Speaker:**  
**Kelly Swift Jones**  
**Simcoe County Museum Curator**

at Living Faith Presbyterian Church in  
 Baxter, ON

Tickets are \$25.00 per person

Doors open at 5:15PM

Guest Speaker at 5:30PM

Dinner at 6:00PM

AGM meeting to follow dinner

All OFA members in good standing in the  
 Simcoe County area are invited to attend.

**Register on [Eventbrite.ca](https://www.eventbrite.ca) under**  
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 Annual General Meeting"





## The Sun Catcher's Light

My sister Rev. Erin asked me if I would share with all of you a recent message shared with my residents and families at the Long-Term Care facility I support as their Spiritual Care Coordinator. We spoke about how this message can be either deep or light on the surface depending on what people need to hear when reading it. I hope this message finds you all well and savoring the last few weeks of summer! We sure have had a lot of sun this summer and that summer sun is what led me to this message!

I was at home one afternoon doing my least favorite household chore: washing dishes! I know some people find doing dishes relaxing; I have yet to get to that point! I honestly have to schedule time to do dishes and I mentally prepare myself to get through it. On the window above my sink, I have a sun catcher. While I was washing dishes, a sunbeam caught my sun catcher and it scattered colors across the counter. I found myself distracted, which honestly happens a lot while trying to get through the dishes. This day though, I noticed that the colors shifted with the smallest of movements. A tilt of my head, a step to the side—any movement—and suddenly the pattern changed. Sometimes the red blazed brightly, sometimes the blue deepened, sometimes they all blurred into soft edges, and in that moment, I found myself going down the rabbit hole of reflection, stumbling across this month's message.

Standing at the sink, getting through the dishes, I thought about how life is so much like a sun catcher's prism. A situation, a challenge, even a relationship can look one way from a certain angle, but if we take the time to shift our perspective, the picture can change entirely. What once seemed hopeless may reveal a glimmer of possibility. What once seemed clear-cut may suddenly appear more complex. And what once felt painful may begin to make sense in the light of understanding.

Looking even deeper, I realized that if we look at our own lives, our own spirituality, we can learn a lot from sun catchers, and in many ways we are the prisms of a sun catcher. We are vessels for a single, pure light, a divine spark that reveals itself in many colors as it passes through the adventures of our lived experiences. There is joy as a beautiful bright yellow, grief as deep purple, growth as vibrant green, and passion as fiery red. Even the blurred colors—uncertainty, regret, and anger—are part of the spectrum and each color belongs. Each shade is part of the same light. The sun catcher has no judgment of the colors; it simply reveals them. And maybe this is the work of the soul: to hold up our prism, to let the divine light within us show itself, and to say: "All of this is me. All of this belongs."

I encourage you to embrace this vision of the sun catcher's prism and honor the divine within yourselves and in each soul you encounter. When we learn to see ourselves this way, as living spectrums, we begin to see others this way too; not as one flat color, but as beautifully complex beings, each lit by the same sacred light. Light is always more than what we see at first glance. The light we see in a moment is never the whole story. Shift your view, and you'll find colors you didn't know were there. Sometimes we just need to move, change our angle, and look again, and in doing so, we discover the full beauty of the spectrum, in ourselves and in others.

I wish you a light-filled fall full of multi-colors and minimal dishes! Shine bright, my friends!

In Gratitude,  
The Soul Sisters

Reverend Erin Wilson and Reverend Kelly Blakely  
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SOUL SISTERS CELEBRATIONS

## Harvests of gratitude: From ancient fields to North American Thanksgiving

By Don Beaulieu

The oldest festivities recognizing what we would refer to as Thanksgiving, revealed by archaeology, go back to Neolithic harvest rituals. This means 10,000–5,000 BCE (Before Common Era). This is connected to the rise of agriculture in the Fertile Crescent, where people began seasonal harvest festivals.

The Fertile Crescent occupies parts of Iraq (the core of ancient Mesopotamia, between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers), Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Palestine, Jordan, Kuwait (sometimes included at the southeastern end), Egypt (Sinai and Nile Delta are often linked with it, although some maps exclude Egypt), Turkey (southeastern part, near the headwaters of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers), and Iran (western edge, especially near Mesopotamian lowlands). This area is also referred to as the cradle of humanity. Archaeological evidence at sites like Çatalhöyük (Turkey) shows communal feasting tied to the agricultural cycle. While it was not the popular Thanksgiving we know, these events served the same basic purpose: giving thanks for food security. Many of us today consider thanks for other good fortunes and health, as most of today's population is not directly connected to agriculture and direct harvesting of food.

Circa 3000 BCE, there is evidence of Egyptians celebrating the annual flooding of the Nile River. This flooding guaranteed fertile soil and abundant crops. Offerings were made to Osiris (the Egyptian god of afterlife, death, resurrection, fertility, and often associated with agriculture); communities feasted in gratitude for the harvest.

In Greece, it was around 1000 BCE that Demeter's festivals began. Demeter was their goddess of grain. Festivities included rituals, sacrifices, and communal meals—essentially a harvest thanksgiving.

Romans began honoring Ceres, their goddess of agriculture, with festivals tied to agriculture as early as the 5th century BCE, and autumn harvest rituals to her likely developed alongside spring festivals soon after. These festivities included games, music, and feast-

ing—closer in spirit to our modern Thanksgiving.

Long before European contact, many Indigenous North Americans held harvest ceremonies.

The Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) gave thanks with multiple festivals throughout the year, including a Green Corn Festival in late summer.

The Wampanoag had long-standing ceremonies of gratitude for successful crops and hunts.

Indigenous peoples of the Great Plains partook in rituals such as the First Fruits ceremonies, which involved thanking the Creator and spirits for sustenance.

Vikings made it to the shores of North America around the year 1000. They didn't have a single holiday called Thanksgiving. The Norse/Vikings had autumn harvest rituals and feasts of gratitude with offerings, toasts, and big communal meals which all echo the same themes.

As for post-Columbian (Christopher Columbus) celebrations in North America, Florida saw some of their earliest thanksgiving-like events on the continent. In Florida (1565), Spanish settlers at St. Augustine held a Mass of thanksgiving with Indigenous Timucua people decades before the famed Plymouth/Pilgrims stories took place.

In Newfoundland (1578), English explorer Martin Frobisher held a thanksgiving service after surviving harsh voyages.

Plymouth, Massachusetts (1621): The "First Thanksgiving" story of Pilgrims and Wampanoag sharing a three-day harvest feast is the most widely remembered, but it was part of a much older human pattern.

It is easy to grasp the relationship of thanksgiving being related to the first agricultural societies, where people held harvest rituals of gratitude. In North America, Indigenous ceremonies of thanks predate colonial thanksgivings by millennia.

While our modern Thanksgiving certainly has specific cultural roots, the act of communal gratitude for food and harvest is as old as farming itself.

## CFFO Announces Education Days

The Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario (CFFO) announced upcoming Education Days to be held in four different locations across Ontario including Alvinston, Ancaster, Barrie, and Kemptonville. The day-long event will feature special guest speakers and industry experts focusing on two main topics: "Financial, Succession and Estate Planning for Farming Families," and "Agriculture in the Global Markets – Our Dependency on Trade and our Marketing Tools."

Everyone from the agricultural community is welcome to attend. Registration is required.

The Education Day in Barrie will be held on Thursday, November 27, 2025.

For more information, check the CFFO website, [www.christianfarmers.org](http://www.christianfarmers.org), or contact the CFFO Toll-Free: 1-855-800-0306, or email: [info@christianfarmers.org](mailto:info@christianfarmers.org).

The Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario (CFFO) is an Accredited Farm Organization representing the interests of over 4,000 farm families in Ontario who are called to the vocation of farming. CFFO policy promotes economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable farming, advocating that farmers receive fair returns for their production and stewardship efforts.



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# History and Haunts in the Pioneer Cemetery at the Village at Black Creek

## Village stories

by Andrew Hind

Most of the two dozen buildings at the Village at Black Creek in Toronto – one of Ontario's premiere recreated pioneer communities – have been moved to the site from other locations across the city and throughout York Region.

But among the handful of attractions original to the site is one where history and haunts blend in equal measure.

Set at the rear of the Village at Black Creek Pioneer Village, shaded by trees and in the shadow of Fisherville United Church, is a modest cemetery. About a dozen humble plots, each marked with a simple headstone of weathered granite, sit among shrubbery and trees. There's a sense of sacred tranquility about the cemetery, a fittingly respectful atmosphere for the final resting place of pioneer settlers who once lived upon the land now occupied by the living history museum Village at Black Creek.

Unlike most of the sites at the Village at Black Creek, the cemetery has always been here. It was established in 1859 to serve the farming hamlet of Kaiserville (named in honor of the founding Kaiser family), located at the crossroads of Steeles Avenue and Jane Street. The cemetery was adjacent to the Town line Church, a modest log house of worship attended by Methodists. The first known interred person was Michael Stong, a son of Daniel and Elizabeth Stong.

The church closed in 1884 but remained in use as a Sunday school for many years afterward. Eventually, the aging building fell into disrepair and was torn down. The last burial in the Kaiserville Cemetery was Frank Boynton, who died in 1927.

When the Village at Black Creek Pioneer Village was founded, its organizers realized they

needed to acquire a historic Church to represent pioneer-era worship. They found an ideal candidate in the Fisherville United Church, built in 1856, and placed it where the Kaiserville Church once stood.

But the presence of a holy building hasn't prevented at least one ghost from rising from his grave in the adjacent graveyard. Lore says that this restless entity is the spirit of a lonely child, somehow separated from his family in death. He spends considerable effort drawing attention to himself, perhaps to assuage his aching loneliness. He sometimes manifests as a spectral orb or a shadowy figure flitting among the time worn burial stones and sometimes even appears briefly to play hide-and-seek. This half-pint haunt also plays poltergeist pranks on unwary adults, playfully tugging on the clothes of unsuspecting people or pinching exposed skin. One guest even reported the sensation of a small hand in hers.

We know virtually nothing about this lad, except for the fact he must have lived in Kaiserville, died sometime during the 19th century or very early 20th century, and was buried within the cemetery. Sadly, his identity eludes us because his and many other grave markers had been destroyed or rendered illegible by the time the Village at Black Creek was founded.

The thought of all the experiences this child never got to enjoy in life is deeply saddening. Even more heartbreaking is the thought that he may never enjoy rest and may never be reunited with his family.





**Harvest Dinner**  
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### 2025 Cookstown Agricultural Society Bursary winners!

Essa Township is proud to announce the recipients of the 2025 Agricultural Scholarships! Each winner has been awarded a cheque for \$2,000 to support their continued education in agriculture.

Applicants were required to meet the following criteria:

- Live in, or be a recent resident of, Essa Township
- Be a Grade 12 student or a recent graduate within the past two years
- Have been accepted into a full-time agricultural program at an accredited university or college starting this fall
- Demonstrate a strong interest in agriculture, community involvement, rural issues, leadership, and scholastic achievement

This year's scholarship winners, from left to right are Aislynn Kell, Lauren Cowan, Jaiden van Kolschoten, and Isabella Cullen. They have shown exceptional dedication

to both their studies and their community. Their passion for agriculture and commitment to rural development exemplifies the future leaders of our township.

The awards were proudly presented by Dorothy Lange, Director, and Mike Elines, President, celebrating the achievements of these outstanding young individuals.





Photo by Andrej Baca

### South Simcoe County 4-H Poultry Club shows at the Beeton Fair

Report by Emery Samson

On September 13th we were at the Beeton Fair doing our achievement day show with our poultry or waterfowl 4-H projects. Everybody looked amazing in their showmanship attire. The poultry and waterfowl all looked amazing. Thanks to the volunteers, Beeton Agricultural Society, 4-H Club Leaders and parents everything went well. Hope everyone enjoyed the Beeton Fair and will be back in 2026.

More 4-H on page 19!



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# Draft Horse Power on Display at the Essa National Show

Story and photos by Cathy Hamill-Hill



The Essa National Draft Horse Show featured some impressive hitches and riding classes, showcasing the strength and versatility of these gentle giants.

Pictured in the top left photo is a Unicorn hitch, which means there are three horses hitched to the wagon. This hitch is owned by Kim Smith of Westwin Shires and Clydesdales. The driver is Mike Beuerman of Drumbo, ON and the assistant driver is Don Lowes of Princeton, ON.

In the top right photo is a gorgeous six-horse hitch owned by Peter and Laura Maher of Hyjak Belgians from New Lowell, ON. The driver is Jeff Robins of Thorold, ON, and

the assistant driver is Alli Maher of New Lowell, ON.

Pictured at the bottom right is beautiful six-horse hitch Terragold, owned by Sherry and Stephen Lewis of Cannington, ON. Owner Sherry Lewis is driving, and the assistant driver is Mira Dewar from Poplar Hill, Nova Scotia.

In the bottom left photo, the horse is owned by Katie Fleming and ridden by Esther Penders of Burford, ON. Between the hitch classes, the crowd at the Essa National Draft Horse Show was treated to another display of draft horse versatility.



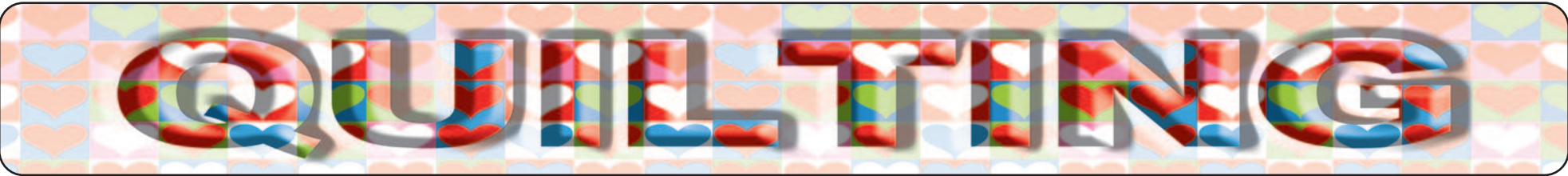
- Happy -  
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# Kempenfelt Quilters' Guild Welcomes Innovative Approach to Quilting

By Janis Hamilton

Quilt guilds, as I've mentioned before offer quite a range of activities, speakers, workshops and friendship not to mention the treats at breaktime. I belong to 2 guilds and recently at the night guild (Kempenfelt Quilters' Guild-Barrie) we had one of the best speakers who inspired us all. Mandie Eddie from Jane Street Quilts, Bancroft area presented a timely topic of "No Waste, Quick Finish" approach to quilting. This certainly sparked my interest, as I do have cupboards of fabric to turn into quilts to be shared with others.

**Here is a brief outline directly from Mandie with her permission and thanks for her input.**

"I had owned a fabric store in Cayuga in the 90's and after retiring from a career in enforcement I went back to my love of quilting. I worked for a couple of years in a fabric store both as customer service and as a long arm instructor, I saw the confusion and angst when purchasing quilting fabrics. There had been an upsurge in quilting during COVID and as a result of demand - the cost for fabric rose over 25%.

I decided to develop "No Waste - Quick Finish" (copyright 2023, 2024, 2025) When people went back to work after COVID not only were they stretched for time - but the cost of things had soared, and they were now short on cash.

Quilting is great therapy - but when you spend a lot of money on fabric and then 30% of it is leftover because either the pattern was not designed to make the best use of fabric - or the customer purchased "just a little extra" - it now leaves you with a stash - which we say we will use - and often instead of getting used up - it sits hidden in a bin, under the bed - in closets, in the attic or buried in the yard lol!

And when you are back to work - you may only have 30 - 45 minutes in the evening to sew - which although great therapy - means that instead of taking 3 weeks to make a quilt - it now takes 3 months.

The "No Waste - Quick Finish" patterns are designed to take no longer than 6-8 hours to complete. So, an hour after work each day and a few hours over the weekend means you can have a beautiful quilt created in short order! The "No Waste - Quick Finish" Kits are all pre-cut - and this means you do not have to choose the fabrics - they are all colour coordinated and cut for you - so all you have to do is SEW!

I often bring 3-4 quilts done with the same pattern and show how different each kit can look. I focus on using lots of pictures in each pattern - quick finish techniques - fully described in each pattern and have videos on my website (all less than 2 minutes long) that show the technique, so it is easy to "see" being completed.

The benefits of "No Waste - Quick Finish" patterns and kits:

- easy instructions to follow
- step by step with pictures
- focus on quick finish techniques (fast HSTs 8 at a time) (half square triangles)
- strip quilting methods (sewing sets of blocks or strips together without stopping)
- assembly using nesting techniques (one seam goes one way and the other goes the opposite way)
- quick pressing methods (fingers work well for this or a small roller for wallpaper seams does a great job.)

Kits are pre-cut; instructions are backed up online. The sizes of squares are based on fabric width - using full width of fabric.



My latest pattern is Elbows up Canada - a "No Waste - Quick Finish" Pattern in 3 sizes - full size quilt can be completed in 8-10 hours and lap in 4-6 hours.

You can access all these patterns and kits here: [www.janestreetquilts.com](http://www.janestreetquilts.com)

Any questions can be directed to [info@janestreetquilts.com](mailto:info@janestreetquilts.com)

I'd certainly recommend you check out her website and her videos as she mentioned are less than 2 minutes and are full of tips! An interesting idea came from her presentation using "wide backs". Usually, this fabric is used for the back of the quilt as it is 108 inches. They range in price from \$30-40/ metre. Each half metre equals 2.25 m of regular quilting fabric. That's \$15-\$20 vs \$45 for the same in regular fabric. (price usually \$20/m). You can also use wide backs for smaller quilts. You can get 2 lap quilts measuring 50 x

60" out of 1.5 m of a wide back. This would cost \$60 for 2 quilts vs \$60 for just one quilt. Another use of the wide back is to use any leftover fabric to baste your quilt. Fewer joins and much quicker assembly.

One more tip she offered - if you are using a wide back or simply the width of fabric on regular quilting fabric, don't be afraid to alter the sizing of the pattern to save a lot of fabric heading into your "stash" bin. Where a piece measures 8 1/2" (of any width), cutting WOF (width of fabric) will yield four pieces from one strip, leaving you with an 8" scrap. If you reduce the block size slightly to 8 1/4", you will get five pieces from one strip and only have a 3/4" scrap.

Below is another site I found to give you time saving tips. <https://blog.onlinequiltmagazine.com/2025/03/05/10-quilting-hacks-to-save-time-and-fabric/>

By putting these tips into practice, we can enjoy more time for baking, gardening, or simply reading with a cup of hot chocolate as the fall breezes settle in. And don't miss the quilt show listed below!

Waterloo County Quilters' Guild  
"Piecing Together 40 Years" Quilt Show  
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# From the announcer: It's a labour of love

Story and photo by Cathy Hamill-Hill

The owner of the strong, clear voice, from the announcer box at the Essa National Horse Show, who told the crowd about local Katie Fleming being featured in the USA publication "Draft Horse Journal" is a man that fully dedicates his life to the Ontario draft horse world.

Barry Burchill met the draft horse when his Mom married a "great step-Dad" that came with Clydesdale horses. The family showed from 1975-1983.

In 1980, Barry went to work full-time and was a draft horse show spectator. In 1995, he started as a "go-along" he says, with a show draft horse operation that went to all the big shows including the Royal Winter Fair, and shows in Michigan and New York. Along the way, he met people who shared their knowledge, helping him learn everything it takes to bring a draft horse team into the show ring. He also did Ringman work in the show ring and draft horse auctions.

"The horses were getting taller all the time, and I'm not. The physical work involved became a lot.

It happened that an Ottawa area announcer was looking to semi-retire," Barry explained adding that announcing was a natural interest. As a Freemason, he had long ago learned how to speak- with no fear- in front of big crowds. He credits this also for his memory ability as Freemasons need to remember rituals word for word.

He transitioned easily into the Announcer position while keeping his full-time job as a Mechanical Inspector. The word got out there and now he is up to 14 shows per year. One of the shows this year is near Sarnia which is a 7 hour drive each way.

Announcing classes is just part of the job, according to Burchill. He does homework before each show. He keeps a diary listing information he needs to know about each draft horse owner and each hitch (wagon and horses) that is com-



Barry Burchill, in action announcing at the 2025 Essa National Horse Show held at the Essa Agriplex.

ing to a show. At the Essa National Horse show, there was a hitch he did not know so he made sure before the show to go find out their information and have that included in his diary so he would be ready when they came to the ring. Information that he wants to know often needs to be found- and he goes to all the social gatherings he possibly can with the Ontario clubs of the Clydesdales, Belgians and Percherons. He reads the "Draft Horse Journal" cover to cover looking for information he can use here in Ontario.

"I guess I do put some time and effort into being the announcer I am but the draft horse people are a wonderful group, more like a big family- it's a labour of love."

Photos from the Essa National Horse Show can be found on page 15.

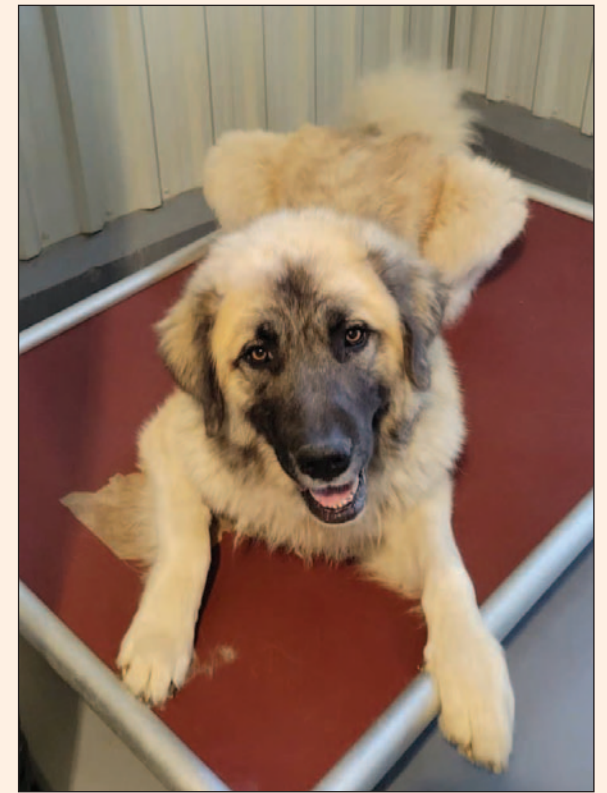
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# Lights, Costumes, Candy & Caution

By Dennis Gannon

Halloween is the second most decorated season of the year, overshadowed of course by Christmas. In October many people like the spooky season and get creative with decorating their homes. With Halloween occurring on a Friday this year there will be lots of fun for the young and old alike. Let's keep it safe by following these safety tips.

Start by checking any lights. Ensure that they do not have any bare or loose connections. Lights should be certified by a recognized organization like CSA. When lightning jack-o-lanterns use battery operated candles or a small flashlight. Remember to keep your jack-o-lantern away from combustibles such as cardboard or curtains. Pumpkin carving can be fun and the tools used are sharp. Consider having young children draw a design on the pumpkin and a responsible person cut it out.

Costumes are always interesting and lots of creativity goes into making them. Face painting is safer than wearing a mask. If the costume requires a mask then have the child pull it down just before they get to the door. Masks can obscure vision and make it difficult to see. Long flowing costumes can become a trip hazard. Short costumes are often a better choice. Think about adding reflective tape for better visibility. Before purchasing a costume check that it is flame resistant and fits well. Flame resistant does not mean it's fire proof. Halloween temperatures can vary

greatly from year to year. Consider finding a costume that fits over warm clothing. Pirates and witches carry swords and brooms. Hard or rigid accessories can cause injuries so find ones that are constructed of soft or flexible materials.

Trick or treat in groups is a safe way to travel. Use sidewalks whenever possible but if you must walk along the shoulder of the road, walk facing traffic. Cross only at intersections and carry a flashlight to warn motorists of your location. Think about having a trick or treat route and go only to homes where the outside lights are on. Remind children never to go into the homes of strangers or vehicles.

Candy is dandy but it must be checked by an adult before eating. Toss out any candy that appears to have been opened. For young children small hard candy can cause choking.

Let's not forget about pets. If your pet is going out with you, have a costume that is comfortable and safe. Examine that the ID tags are updated and secure on your pet. Some pets may be agitated by ringing doorbells or knocking on the door. Keep them in a quiet secure area until the trick or treaters have finished for the evening.

Have fun and stay safe this Halloween. Some fire departments open their doors for trick or treaters and have great handouts. Check if your local fire department invites people and drop by.



## TURKEY DAY WORD SEARCH

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A A E I T C C C G N C F G G U C K Y R G  
S R E S A I C E R G R R E R U Y E A O U  
U M E R T T D T A B D I I A Y E G D C G  
G C A F B I R F F R L E P T K K R I B R  
S B O Y M N U E R U F N E I C R R L U A  
L O I R G F R C T H T D L T K U U O O C  
U E U P N U I N C I E A P D G O G B V O  
F R V N C A C V A T B O A E S B S S G U  
A M A E A D E O I G U F Y U V T S S I S  
L E U V S L U B P G S R C U U B R I N E  
T A R O S S L H N I S D K F A A H Y G V  
U L K P E N B R I E A K F R C O A P C D  
I U E H R E N N I D E I N C M L I C Y G  
K U C A O I F S M B N R H A I N F F O V  
D V K Y L K B R N G N N G O H D T P D R  
S Y R L E P Y P U B D G U K G T E D A K  
R A L D K I T F G P U S R Y M L S R V A  
B R F A M I L Y A R D P V S R B B I O B

Find the words hidden vertically, horizontally, diagonally, and backwards.

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BISCUITS  
BRINE  
CASSEROLE  
CIDER  
CORNBREAD  
CORNUCOPIA  
DINNER
- ENTERTAIN  
FAMILY  
FRIENDS  
FULL  
GRACIOUS  
GRATITUDE  
GRAVY  
GREEN BEANS
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# TD Tree Days returns to the Nottawasaga Watershed this fall



This September and October, the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority (NVCA) is working with TD Friends of the Environment Foundation to deliver four TD Tree Days events in Mono, Angus, Wasaga Beach and Creemore.

With events planned for September 20, September 27, and two on October 18, NVCA invites families, individuals, groups and other volunteers to join forces to restore natural areas, improve wildlife habitat, and enhance water quality through the planting of native trees and shrubs. These events also provide a meaningful opportunity for participants to connect with their local environment and learn more about the role trees play in keeping rivers, streams, and wetlands healthy.

“Tree planting is one of the most impactful ways to support a healthy watershed,” said Sarah Campbell, Aquatic Biologist at NVCA, and coordinator of this year’s events. “TD Tree Days brings people together to make a lasting difference for our communities, wildlife, and water.”

Native trees and shrubs planted at these events will help filter runoff before it enters waterways, provide shade to keep stream temperatures cool for fish, and create important habitat for local birds and other wildlife. Beyond their ecological role, the plantings also help naturalize landscapes for future generations to enjoy.

Since launching in 2010, TD Tree Days has engaged thousands of volunteers to plant more than 550,000 trees across Canada and abroad. This fall, TD volunteers and community members across the Nottawasaga watershed will plant nearly 1,000 trees as part of the pro-


gram. “TD Tree Days are a wonderful example of how communities and organizations can come together for nature,” added Campbell. “The trees planted this fall will support the Nottawasaga Watershed for decades to come.”

NVCA is now booking for 2026 tree planting and stewardship projects. Landowners interested in planting trees and shrubs along streams or wetlands on their property can contact NVCA at 705-424-1479 to arrange a site visit and learn about available funding. Volunteers interested in tree planting and other environmental projects can visit [www.nvca.on.ca](http://www.nvca.on.ca) to

## South Simcoe Sheep Club Prepares for GNE Show with Fun and Fellowship

Report by Olivia Livingston

The South Simcoe Sheep Club had their 7th meeting on Wednesday, September 17. The club worked on a club display for our upcoming show at the GNE. We were even able to connect with some of our club members away at school! After some crafting, members of our club took part in a friendly game of football. It was a great time for all to connect again before our next show and make an awesome display for our club! Thank you to Leo Atkinson for planning such a fun meeting and hosting!




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## After The Chores: Fair Memories

By Cathy Hamill-Hill



My Mom, my brothers and my Sweetie are all sick of Fairs. The reason is me. They all say they are "faired out."

How one can be tired of Fairs, I do not understand. Each one, each year is different.

I have been to Sunderland Fair starting in 1999. This year there was an exceptionally great announcer at the horse show that read a bio from each of the carriage horse competitors. Horses ranged from miniature to the mighty Clydesdales. One of the competitors was fulfilling a "retirement dream." That is was Fairs are all about, making good memories for dreaming. How can anyone get tired of dreaming?

This year I've seen both sides of competitors. At one show, a class was missed and the exhibitor demanded the class was re-done again. The judge's answer with a full day of judging on a list in front of him was a justified no. Missing a class is how most of us learn how to not miss classes ever again. The exhibitor went into an angry huffy rant, then packed up and then left the Fair in protest. At the opposite with competitors, at the Ontario Summer Show, a man was talking intently to a young person holding on to a Holstein. I admit I was doing some intentional eavesdropping as I heard this, "Now, you remember to have fun out in that ring. And I love you."

I showed dairy goats for many years. One show family from years ago had a hobby of stealing. That fall was a bad grain harvest and straw was in very short supply. The Fair had a stack of bright, clean straw in the show barn from an extremely giving, generous local farmer. The Fair board needed it to bed down the next day's livestock shows. My Dad cared for his vehicles as if they were all out of the showroom, his old vehicles were highly maintained and sparkling. So it was a huge upsetting deal when he found he had left the truck lights on and he was sure he hadn't even had them on. Everybody but the one family scrambled to find a vehicle to boost the old, shiny truck that had been left unlocked. While all this was going on, the family of thieves left, along with every single bale of straw in the show barn.

One of the exceptionally good from people now happens at many dairy goat shows. One lady from Pontypool makes it her goal to make a child's day special. She asks the caregivers first and then she gives the child her quietest kid. The look of absolute awe on the selected child's face who has often likely never once seen a goat up real close, as they take the goat's collar. The next step is introducing the goat to the child as in first names. Next, is the trip around the ring, the owner lady on one side giving "Grandmotherly" encouragement and the child that often now is absolutely strutting with newfound special recognition. Pictures are taken and the child gets the ribbon as a souvenir of the experience. A lot of extra effort for only the non-prize reward of making a memory for an unknown child, happens at a Fair.

I was the Sunderland Fair Secretary for one decade. I met the worst of people like the guy I allowed him to set up in a busy corner in the first evening despite not having the right paperwork. He said he would pay for his spot tomorrow- and I never saw him again. Another tried to join in the parade in his food truck and said on the Fair office phone "Don't worry about it. I can get past her." The reason we can all eat Fair food and not get sick is because Fair vendors are strictly regulated with site inspections. This "her" was grumpy from being sleep deprived and did not appreciate the attitude said, "You can sing and you can dance for me. You are not getting in here. You missed the food vendor deadline." I also met the best in my decade, the food truck that sent in the essential paperwork early, would waive payment when she saw my identification badge.

At a Fair, a friend said he needed to hide for a while. He had a display at the Fair with LaMancha goats. He was repeating over and over that LaManchas have no external ears, it is their breed type and they hear fine. He decided to have some fun and waited until he saw a very dressed up woman coming to his display. He quickly got down on his knees and starting patting the straw looking down intently. The woman asked what he had lost. He said, "I lost the goats' ears!" and went back to searching. She said she better help, and she got in the pen in her fancy clothes and also started patting down straw for the lost ears. The friend had to admit that this was a JOKE because he couldn't stop from laughing. The woman now covered in straw got extremely mad. He hid in the barn with my show goats for the next hour or so.

I'm so not tired of Fairs.

### **Did you know?**

The Ontario Association of Agricultural Societies has a very informative website where you can look up all the Fair dates and locations.

Visit <https://ontarioagsocieties.com> and start planning your fall Fair route!



## MPP Dunlop shares a message highlighting agricultural investments

As we move into October and embrace the harvest season, it's an important time to reflect on the strength and resilience of Ontario's agricultural community. Farmers, producers, and processors across Simcoe North and throughout the province continue to play a vital role in ensuring food security, supporting local economies, and driving innovation in the agri-food sector.

This fall, I am proud to highlight a recent investment that will further strengthen agriculture in Ontario, the government's commitment to expanding agri-food research. Funding has been directed toward projects that focus on sustainability, efficiency, and new technologies, ensuring that farmers have the tools they need to stay competitive in a global market. By advancing research into areas such as soil health, crop productivity, and sustainable practices, we are helping to prepare our sector for the future while supporting today's farm families.

These investments are not only about improving yields or protecting our land, they are also about ensuring long-term prosperity for rural communities. Ontario's agri-food industry is one of the largest employers in the province, and research-backed innovation will help secure those jobs while opening new opportunities for growth.

As I meet with farmers, processors, and agricultural leaders across Simcoe North, I continue to be inspired by the dedication and hard work that goes into every harvest. October is also a time to give thanks for the abundance of food we enjoy, made possible by the efforts of our local producers.

I look forward to continuing to work alongside the agriculture community to support innovation, sustainability, and growth. Together, we are building a stronger, more resilient agri-food sector, one that will continue to thrive for generations to come.

## Ab Carroll Introduces Pre-Sorted Cattle Sales at Cookstown Stockyards

Synopsis by Andrej Baca



Ab Carroll is starting to auction "Pre-Sorted" cattle, a concept first introduced in western Canada. From September through December, producers and buyers alike will benefit from this innovative method of auction, which is designed to improve efficiency and maximize value compared to traditional single, mixed, or small-lot sales.

Ab Carroll is particularly focused on helping smaller producers who may have only five, 10, or 20 cows. By combining cattle from multiple producers into pre-sorted lots, sales have shown an increase in overall price, benefiting both the sellers and the buyers. Buyers are offered lots ranging from a preferred size of five animals up to 20, grouped according to weight, sex, and appearance. This careful sorting ensures that each lot is uniform, which attracts competitive bidding and accelerates the auction process.

The lots are described in a pre-show catalog, allowing buyers to review and select their preferred lots ahead of time. This preparation encourages aggressive bidding while helping buyers who travel long distances to fill trucks quickly with minimal weight loss. Pre-Sort sales also allow the sales staff to proactively contact buyers with lots that match their preferences, giving producers the best chance to achieve top prices. A Pre-Sort batch from a single producer is sold as an "owner lot by name," giving recognition to individual producers while still allowing for the efficiencies of combined lots.

Looking ahead, Ab Carroll plans to explore breed-specific Pre-Sort sales if it proves beneficial to both producers and buyers. Cattle need to arrive by 11 PM Wednesday night, when they are RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) tagged and sorted into their respective lots.

There is no extra charge for Pre-Sort. Using a sophisticated computer system capable of handling multiple simultaneous transactions, Cookstown Stockyards ensures that every sale is accurate, transparent, and efficient.

At the conclusion of the sale, the system automatically divides proceeds so each producer is paid for the exact weight of cattle they contributed. Each statement includes RFID tag numbers, so producers can track the weight, lot group, and sale price of each individual animal. This method not only pro-

vides clarity and fairness but also reduces the time cattle spend in the ring, minimizing stress while ensuring they are promptly returned to feed and water.

Pre-Sort auctions represent a significant step forward in livestock sales, offering value, efficiency, and convenience for both buyers and producers. For more information, contact Ontario Stockyards Incorporated, 3807 Highway 89, Cookstown, Ontario, Office: 705-458-4000, Ab Carroll, Manager/Auctioneer.

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## Worth a Chuckle... and life lessons

by Aunt Hazel

### 1st Grade proverbs

A first grade teacher collected old well known proverbs. She gave each child the first half and had them finish it.

Don't bite the hand that... looks dirty.  
A penny saved is... not much.

Children should be seen and not...  
spanked or grounded.

When the blind leadeth the blind...  
get out of the way.

When in Rome... order pizza.

Absence makes the heart... grow  
fonder... of snacks.

Better late than... pregnant.

Great minds think... they're awe-  
some.

If at first you don't succeed... blame  
someone else.

A bird in the hand... probably has  
cooties.

When the going gets tough... take a  
nap.

## Agricultural Anecdotes from Farmer Tim

As summer fades and the air turns crisp, communities across the country prepare for a tradition as old as the harvest itself: the fall fair. To some, it's an excuse to indulge in cotton candy and midway rides. To others, it's the chance to bring home a ribbon for a prize pumpkin or a perfectly baked butter tart. The rides, livestock shows, and exhibits are amazing to behold, but fall fairs hold a deeper significance—they are the heartbeat of rural communities, serving as a bridge that connects rural and urban.

For the farmer, the fall fair is more than a celebration—it's also a recognition. It's the one time of year when their hard work is put on display for neighbours, friends, and strangers alike to enjoy. A dairy cow clipped and washed to perfection, a sheep trained with care, and a grain sheaf tied perfectly are not just exhibits; they are symbols of a year of dedication and long days in the fields and barns. The ribbons awarded aren't just for show; they are a testament to the skill, patience, and pride that farming requires.

Fall fairs also serve an important role in education. For many children from urban centres, a fair might be their first opportunity to see a calf, touch a goat, or ask a farmer where their milk comes from. In a world where food often seems to appear on grocery store shelves by magic, these moments are important and powerful. They foster understanding, appreciation, and respect for the people who grow and raise our food. Without that connection, the gap between rural and urban life only widens—a bridge can only stretch so far.

Recently, I had the honour of judging the Ambassador program at a local fair. Any of the contestants would have

made a great ambassador, and I was impressed with them all. When we asked what their major concern was for agriculture, each of them had the same answer—urban sprawl. However, I encouraged them to look past the negatives and see how they can make the most of the growing towns and cities by inviting them to the fair for a deeper understanding of what agriculture is all about.

Of course, we can't forget the community. Fall fairs have long been gathering places where neighbours reconnect, youth showcase their talents, and families make memories that last a lifetime. They strengthen bonds, build pride, and remind us that even in a fast-paced world, tradition is still alive and well.

In our fast-paced world, we are lucky to have fairs to slow us down. They invite us to enjoy the smell of apple fritters, hear the rumble of the tractor pull, and reminisce about a time gone by. They remind us that it doesn't matter if we are rural or urban—we all share in the bounty of the harvest.

As communities continue to grow and change, the fall fair remains a touchstone of who we are and where we come from. It's not just about rides and ribbons—it's about relationships, respect, and the rural spirit that nourishes us all. So, this year, when the fairgrounds open, take the time to walk through the barns, talk to the farmers, cheer at the tractor pulls, and taste the local food. You won't just be supporting an event—you'll be helping keep a tradition alive that connects us all. Rural or urban, you are all welcome at my harvest table this fall.

Farmer Tim farms in Southern Ontario and has been sharing his stories through social media for many years. Tim is quoted saying

"All farmers need to get their stories out there and have fun while they do it!"

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South Simcoe  
4-H Association



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- Access to technology (i.e. computer and printer) as well as Internet

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- Approximately 40 hours per month completing job responsibility on behalf of the Association
- Attend Association meetings and special events.
- Attend 4-H Ontario teleconferences related to the position
- Complete criteria to become and maintain volunteer in good standing status

Please submit a cover letter and resumé by October 31st to: [southsimcoe4h@gmail.com](mailto:southsimcoe4h@gmail.com)

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28, Unit is located at Stewart's  
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