

Since 1977 **FARM** **VIEW**

A newspaper with something for everyone | January 2026 | Volume 49 #01



Inside this issue: Forage Focus Webinar coverage; drought and drones • Fun Farm Science • Transitional Organic explained; plus contributions from all your favourites—Fire Safety, After the Chores, Farmer Tim, Soul Sisters, and Village Stories.

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.

January 7th - 12th: 2025 Grey Bruce Farmers' Week Conference and Trade Show

Registration is open for the Grey Bruce Farmers' Week Conference and Trade Show. The conference will be held January 7th to the 12th. Many fascinating speakers and presentations! Topics covered are beef, dairy, goat, sheep, horse, and crops day! **Full details can be found on page 12.**

January 14th: News and Advertising Deadline

The advertising and news deadline for the **February** issue of Farm View is **Wednesday, January 14th.**

January 27th - 28th: Guelph Organic Conference

Celebrating 45 Years of Growing Together 2026 Guelph Organic Conference!

Whether you're a farmer, producer, advocate, or just passionate about organic food, this event is your chance to be part of Canada's leading organic movement. Visit <https://guelphorganicconf.ca>

February 10th to April 9th: Winter Webinars & Courses

Grey Ag Services schedule of winter webinars and courses can be found on their website www.grayagservices.ca or by calling 519-986-3756. More information on page 19.

Join the South Simcoe 4-H Association for its annual Rally Night and discover what's in store for 2026. The event will take place on February 8, 2026, at the Angus Recreation Centre (8529 County Rd. 10, Angus, ON, L0M 1B2). Attendees are invited to the gym from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. to explore the clubs planned for the 2026 season. Skating will begin at 6 p.m.

Essa Historical Society Receives Generous Donation



Last month Earl Elliott [left], on behalf of Ivy Orange Lodge [No.450], presented the Essa Historical Society with a generous donation to assist with the work of the society in promoting the history of Essa Township. Accepting the cheque for the society is President John Beischer. Essa Historical Society is a group of dedicated volunteers whose main objective is to recognize, maintain and preserve the history of the 'garden' township of Simcoe County. Former and present members of the EHS have produced many books and calendars, as well as coordinating plaque installations at historical locations throughout the township. The EHS meet once monthly and welcome new member volunteers who share an interest in preserving the important history of Essa township. For any inquiries John can be reached at 705-726-5308.

Celebrating Innovation in Ontario Agriculture: Don Hill Legacy Award Accepting Applications

The Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association (OS-CIA) is now accepting applications for the Don Hill Legacy Award, presented annually to an Ontario farmer or agricultural business that demonstrates outstanding innovation and ingenuity in addressing environmental challenges.

Generously supported by Ruth Hill & Family, the award honours those that have successfully applied creative solutions to reduce environmental risks related to soil, water, air, or biodiversity on farms. The recipient receives a \$1,000 cash prize and the opportunity to share their innovation with peers.

Award Details

- **Eligibility:** Open to Ontario farm businesses with a verified Environmental Farm Plan (within the last five years).

- **Evaluation:** Submissions are evaluated for originality, adaptability, environmental effectiveness, cost-efficiency and safety.

- **Submission & Recognition:** Winners are announced at OSCIA's Annual General Meeting on Feb. 3, 2026, profiled in its Innovator magazine and on its website, and may be featured in agricultural media.

For more information or to submit an entry, visit ontarioilcrop.org/oscia-don-hill-legacy-award.



Pictured above is Don Hill, a former soils and crops specialist and past OSCIA President. Don was a tireless advocate for the Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) in Ontario. His dedication to promoting sustainable farming practices and helping farmers discover practical, creative solutions to environmental challenges continues to inspire the agricultural community. The Don Hill Legacy Award carries forward his passion for environmental stewardship and innovation.



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Forage Focus Presents: From Drought Challenges to Drone Solutions for Forage Management

By Cathy Hamill-Hill

Forage and Feed Risks in a Dry Year

Drought conditions and minimal rainfall made the 2025 summer a challenging season for farmers across Ontario. "Some people are still drawing (moving) water in for live-stock," reported Christine O'Reilly, Forage and Grazing Specialist with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness. O'Reilly is based out of Lindsay.

"We are not through the (drought) summer yet," she said explaining that the corn crops harvested under such extreme conditions needs to be carefully monitored.

"The risk of silo gas and nitrates is a serious health risk," O'Reilly said explaining that normally plants turn nitrates into protein in the plant. In a season like last summer, the "plant can't turn all the nitrates into protein and the high nitrates stay in the plant." Nitrates can quickly cause lung damage to humans.

"The nitrate test is not typically included in standard forage testing, it is worthwhile to have this test added in," O'Reilly strongly advised. She added, "Work with a nutritionist to balance rations, dilute nitrates and 'stretch' (feed inventory) supplies if needed."

Dry silage can catch fire. "If possible, feed corn silage during January or February, when the cold weather lowers the risk," she explained.

With little rain, the crop yields this year are down. This means that it is critical that feed put away for winter has as little damage as possible as it could be hard to replace.

"Hay should be stored under cover, or in a barn or shed or under a secure tarp. Bales should rest on a well drained base," she advised adding, "store bales off the ground". She suggested using wood pallets as an option to prevent bales from drawing up moisture from the ground. She added that "regular checks are important" of bailed or bagged hay stored outside. "Tape up holes, it is re-

ally, really important to keep air out," she stressed. Storing the outside bales in an area that does not have long grass is important. "Tall grass is a covering for rodents, rodents create holes in bagged hay," she explained.

This is not a good year to try bale grazing, according to O'Reilly. "Bale grazing causes a lot of waste. Use a feeder to reduce waste," she said adding "promptly remove spoiled feed from feeders." She clarified that if spoiled feed mixes in with the "good stuff" it will be considered all bad and animals will just leave it creating waste.

It's important to recognize that a summer like 2025 could happen again. Being prepared for a drought is training livestock for electric fencing. O'Reilly explained that drought conditions can cause the fencers to fail, "When an animal touches it (the electric fence) because they are touching the ground, the (electric) current goes through the animal into the soil and the soil moisture carries it back to the ground rod which is wired to the energizer. The problem in dry years is that there is not enough moisture in the soil, it can fail. If livestock really respect electric fence, they will never touch it," she said.

Crop insurance in the future should be considered. O'Reilly clarified there are two types of programs to tap into for insurance, one option is for rainfall amount insurance for existing stands and there is a new one for new seedlings including cover crops. Both warrant a conversation with Agri-Corp to determine which is best for individual operations when another drought happens.

Drones in the Spotlight at Forage Focus 2025

Forage Focus 2025 included an evening webinar one of the newest advancements for forage care, the Drone.

Agricultural drones cost about \$50,000 for a brand new unit that can be used for planting and spraying applications across the entire farm. The cost seems high at first

glance, but the advantages for operating a drone on the farm is significant, explained Adrian Rivard, President of Drone Spray Canada.

"Don't just take our shiny (advertising) brochure at face value, trust the dairy farmer," said Rivard, explaining that his business partner, Mike Verhoog is also a dairy farmer. Between the two, they have operated a drone over 50,000 acres of forages and crops- and counting.

Drone ownership is not mandatory as hiring custom drone work can be done, in certain areas. Verhoog does custom work with his drone. "I have a \$600 minimum charge," he explained adding that it takes as much time to "do 10 acres as 50 acres." He says that covering 250 acres in one day is not that unusual now and "we should be up to 500-600 acres soon in a day in the future."

Drones being used on fields are rapidly gaining popularity because drones have distinct advantages. No soil compaction "unlike tractors or atvs, drones don't damage crop or forage stands," Rivard explained adding that "there is no crop loss with drones, aerial spraying avoids trampling." A few inches of rain might stop a tractor going into a field but the drone won't touch the field meaning "increased yields from healthier forages from timeline interventions and accurate management."

Verhoog began using a drone five years ago- and admits, "I sort of fell in love with it." He says with land prices where he farms being extremely high, "every corner needs to pay." With a drone, accessing every corner is possible, he says adding there are so many different possibilities with drones, "I planted (with my drone) rye into standing corn. The corn is now off (harvested) and the (rye) crop looks great," he reported. He adds that in his alfalfa stands, he can, with his drone, seed any patches that didn't grow well as drones have the ability to work in small specific parts of a field.

Frost seeding is another common use for drones. "Drones are extremely accurate, there are scales on them," Rivard explained adding that there are lower costs because of the extreme accuracy eliminating waste of time or products.

Drone operators must be licensed- and included in this education to be licensed is learning how to safely share air space.

Both Rivard and Verhoog work at Drone Spray Canada (DSC). DSC began in 2020 and it began as applicators. It worked with field applications, research and imaging. Just four years later, in 2024, DSC became an authorized dealer "supporting growing adaptation by growers and applicators." In 2025, the Blenheim location was opened with a new show room.

"We work to empower and educate more people on how to use drones effectively," Rivard explains.

DSC is a full wrap around operation for drones offering sales, parts and support for the drone operator. There are also contacts here to find custom drone operators. DSC can be reached at: Fly@DroneSpray.ca

Forage Focus is a three night webinar series that runs in early December each year, with the purpose of bringing fresh ideas and new research results to Ontario forage producers across the ruminant, livestock, and commercial hay sectors.

These webinars usually provide CEU credits for Certified Crop Advisors and KSE credits for farmers with On-Farm Climate Action Fund applications in the Rotational Grazing category.

Recordings from the 2025 Forage Focus Webinar Series are now available on our YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/@ontarioforagecouncil>





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EDITORIAL

Farm View Celebrating 49 Years and Looking Forward



Roslyn Watkins
Publisher/Editor
Farm View Newspaper
farmview@on.aibn.com

As we ring in the year of 2026, I find myself not only celebrating personal achievements as a new year begins, but truly celebrating this newspaper.

The Farm View is proudly independent—owned and operated for 49 years. The first 43 belonged to my father, John Beischer, and since April of 2020, the responsibility (and privilege) has been mine. In an era of shrinking newsrooms and disappearing local papers, that longevity is something worth pausing to appreciate.

The Farm View is fully funded by advertising dollars, with no government assistance. Quite simply, it exists because local businesses believe in it. If you’ve been thinking about advertising, give me a call—this is where I’d add a smiling, cheesy-face emoji if this were a text or email. More importantly, I offer my sincere thanks to the advertisers who keep this newspaper in production, issue after issue.

I am equally grateful to our writers and columnists. Their insight, experience, and storytelling make for an engaging read and keep Farm View fans looking forward to what’s next.

As we begin a new year, you’ll notice a few layout updates. Contact information for agricultural services has moved from the masthead to the Ag Business Directory, along with a few additional organizations and OFA information. The “Where to Find It” list to the right on this page has also been refreshed to better serve readers.

I do my best to have The Farm View delivered to businesses between the 25th and 29th of each month, but winter weather—and the mail—can sometimes cause delays. If you’re on Facebook, I post updates there on delivery schedules and when each issue becomes available online.

In this edition, webinar coverage begins with the Forage Focus series, held each December. The next two months will bring strong coverage of Grey Bruce Farmers’ Week (it’s not too late to attend!) and the SouthWest Agricultural Conference. Farm View is pleased to sponsor these events and to share the latest information on products, research, and solutions available to today’s farmers.

I am also really enjoying Don Beaulieu’s new column, Fun Farm Science, alongside our long-standing feature columnists. Their work continues to add depth, curiosity, and perspective to our pages.

As you step into the new year, I hope you have something to challenge yourself with—or perhaps something that simply feels like a well-earned treat. In this issue, The Soul Sisters remind us to slow down, to extend grace to ourselves and others, and to reflect with appreciation on the year behind us and the one ahead.

Wishing you all a very happy, healthy, and hopeful New Year!



Taking Five After Deadline

A little while ago I posted this photo on the Farm View Facebook, of my number one, Rocky, enjoying a well-deserved rest after a long day of newspaper production. I’m fortunate to have company while working on each edition of the Farm View, and Rocky is always close by through long hours, tight deadlines, and last-minute changes. It’s a reminder of how much our animals mean to us, whether they are house pets or beloved animals in the field and in the barn.

—Photo by Roslyn Watkins

DEADLINE for the February Farm View is January 14th.

Farm View is available at the following agricultural businesses.

ALLIANCE AGRI-TURF in Ivy, Bolton, Fenelon Falls, Baxter and Lindsay
BARRIE KOA (Seasonally)
BRADBURY SMALL FAMILY FARM INC.
BRADFORD GREENHOUSES GARDEN GALLERY, Barrie
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LEGACY FUNERAL AND CREMATION SERVICES INC in the Barrie Cedar Pointe plaza
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SOBEY’S in Angus and Bradford
STEER ENTERPRISES
STEWART’S EQUIPMENT in Cookstown and Stayner
THE UPS STORE in the Barrie Cedar Pointe plaza

The Farm View is delivered to these businesses between the 25th and 29th of each month, with copies available while supplies last.

If you would prefer to have The Farm View mailed directly to your home, one-year subscriptions are available for \$45. For more information or to subscribe, contact Roslyn at 705-722-0138, by mail at 8 Luella Blvd., Minesing, ON L9X 0W7, or by email at 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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Visit us on the web: www.farmviewonline.com

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The publisher shall not be liable for slight changes or typographical errors that do not lessen the value of an advertisement. The publisher’s liability for other errors or omissions in connection with any advertisement or for omitting to publish an advertisement is strictly limited to publication of the advertisement in any subsequent issues or the refund of any monies paid for the advertisements.

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

2026 ADVERTISING RATES

Full Page.	\$995./month
2/3 Page.	\$775./month
1/2 Page	\$525./month
1/3 Page	\$395./month
1/4 Page	\$310./month
1/6 Page	\$205./month
1/8 Page	\$150./month
1/16 Page	\$100./month
Business Card	\$88./month
Ag. Business Directory	\$700./year

Please visit www.farmviewonline.com or call Roslyn at 705-722-0138 for rate reductions based on frequency.
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Organic Council of Ontario (OCO): The Voice for Organics in Ontario Growing Organics from Field to Fork at the December Virtual Farmer Coffee Meet

Synopsis by Andrej Baca

The Organic Council of Ontario (OCO) is a membership-based, non-profit association representing the organic sector across the province. Serving as the voice for organics, OCO advocates for farmers, businesses, and consumers while working to build a stronger, more sustainable food system. Its work includes hosting Canada's largest organic conference, promoting public trust in organic products, and connecting shoppers with local organic brands.

OCO's December 2025 Virtual Farmer Coffee Chat Webinar, moderated by Dr. Erica Shelley, brought together three Ontario farmers to discuss their operations and shed light on the meaning of Transitional Organic.

Steve D'Alimonte, owner and operator of Piccolo Farm Organics (PFO), began farming after completing the Ignatius Farm Immersion Internship in 2021. He launched PFO in 2022 on a third of an acre in his backyard, focusing on Italian vegetable varieties commonly used in traditional cuisine. Since then, the farm has expanded to include prepared food products such as vegetable-infused pastas, pestos, tomato sauces, and focaccia.

In 2024, PFO began leasing land at Ignatius Farm to expand production and launch a subscription program offering a mix of fresh vegetables and prepared foods delivered directly to customers. While not certified organic, PFO follows organic and regenerative farming practices. Its products are available at several Guelph retail locations and through Mamma Earth Organics.

David Mazur-Goulet co-owns and operates Heartbeet Farm with Kate Garvie in North Augusta, approximately one hour south of Ottawa. The certified organic farm feeds more than 200 individuals and families through its CSA program, farmers' markets, online sales, and food bank donations from June through December.

Mazur-Goulet holds diplomas in Entrepreneurship and Green Business Management from Al-

gonquin College and a certificate in sustainable vegetable production from the University of Vermont. He also serves as Local Treasurer for the National Farmers Union and participates on national and provincial committees. During the off-season, he supports small businesses and non-profits by improving their digital communications.

Tim Lyon, owner-operator of Main Street Urban Farm in Kingston, is a year-round urban farmer who delivers produce by bicycle, rents greenhouse space, and sells at farmers' markets and to local restaurants. Lyon also produces hot sauces and vegan, gluten-free meal packages served on reusable ceramic plates that customers return for sanitizing and reuse.

During the webinar, the speakers explained the concept of Transitional Organic.

When you see the Certified Organic label, you're looking at a farm that has followed the Canadian Organic Standards for years. But what does it mean when a farm is transitioning to organic?

Transitional Organic refers to farms that are in Canada's mandatory three-year period of switching from conventional to organic practices. During this time, farms still have to follow the Canadian Organic Standards and commit to practices without specific synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, GMOs, or prohibited inputs, but are not yet able to label their product as certified organic. For livestock farmers, the transition must be just as committed with changes also needed in feed and water, housing, health care, and management to meet organic standards.

During this time, a transitioning organic farm has already made the decision and necessary changes to operate organically. The expectation during this time is that you're operating in accordance with the standards even without certification. Farmers must operate organically for the entire three-year period to be eligible for certification. Because the three-year rule applies

to land and operations that grow organic products, newly transitioned organic processors are exempt from this rule.

This transition period can be a challenging time for farmers. Yields can temporarily drop, weeds and pests may become harder to manage, the high capital investment required for transitioning may not be covered by profits generated during this time, and farmers cannot yet capture the organic price premiums. Though this can seem daunting, premium pricing associated with certified organic products can offset some of these losses once the transition period is over.

That's why recognizing and supporting transitional organic products is so important. Despite not being able to sell their products as certified organic, often these producers or processors will identify themselves as committed to organic, or in-transition.

When you buy from transitional farms, you're helping:

- Reduce barriers to organic certification
- Support soil health and ecological practices
- Encourage more farmers to make the shift to organic farming
- Improve the welfare of livestock
- Strengthen the future of local, sustainable food systems

In Ontario, transitioning farmers are essential to the growth of our organic sector. As more people choose organic, these farmers connect us to healthy, delicious food while safeguarding land and water for future generations.

Save the Date: The 45th Annual Guelph Organic Conference takes place January 27-28, 2026 at Guelph Farmers' Market (42 Carden Street, Guelph, ON & 2 Gordon Street, Guelph, ON)

Organic Council of Ontario (OCO)
232-5420 Highway 6, GUELPH ONTARIO N1H 6J2
(519) 827-1221

A message from MPP Jill Dunlop

As we usher in the new year, I want to send my warmest wishes to everyone in Simcoe North and across Ontario's agri-food community. The start of 2026 brings fresh opportunities, renewed energy, and a shared commitment to building stronger, more resilient farms and food businesses.

I'm pleased to highlight a recent development that stands to benefit the entire agri-food sector, a nearly \$24 million investment in a new food processing facility, the first of its kind in Canada for non-GMO soymilk powder. This project will not only create good, paying jobs and strengthen Ontario made exports, but also reinforce the value of Ontario grown crops, benefiting farmers and processors from fields to shelves.

This announcement reflects a larger vision for a competitive, innovation, driven agri-food sector. As we look ahead, collaboration between producers, processors and communities will be key to seizing new markets and adapting to global challenges.

At the same time, I know that the new year can bring its share of uncertainty. As the Minister of Emergency Preparedness and Response for Simcoe North, I believe supporting the agri-food sector also means helping it weather any storm, whether economic, environmental, or logistical. As we enter winter and plan for the seasons ahead, I encourage you to think ahead to ensure operations are secure, supply chains are supported, and local communities stay connected and resilient.

But beyond business and preparedness, this is also a time to celebrate community, family and tradition. I hope the year ahead brings you strength, prosperity, and meaningful connections. Whether you're planting seeds, running a processing facility or simply enjoying farm life with loved ones, thank you for your dedication, innovation and care.

Let 2026 be a year of growth and optimism. I look forward to working with you to support agriculture, build strong local economies and nurture vibrant rural communities across Simcoe North.

Wishing you a joyful new year filled with health, hope



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Experimental Acres program driving sustainable farming forward in Grey County



Grey County's Experimental Acres program has wrapped up its third successful season, supporting six innovative on-farm projects in 2025. The program provides a micro-grant to Grey County producers who design an on-farm trial to test practices which may improve sustainability or build soil health on farms.

Participants from both the Grey and neighbouring Dufferin County programs gathered in early November to share outcomes, successes and learnings from their projects. These insights can help shape practices in 2026 and beyond.

Grey County projects included a variety of different operations, spanning from a small one-quarter-acre fruit project to a large 240-acre cash crop project. The overarching purpose behind all projects was to improve sustainability and soil health on trial areas by implementing ideas which could be replicated across additional acres or other farms in the area.

2025 Grey County projects included:

- A cow-calf and cash crop producer looking at ways to rejuvenate worn-out fields and provide additional forage for grazing during late

summer months, with the intent to compare warm-season annuals, cool-season annuals and warm-season perennials.

- A cow-calf and cash crop producer attempting to broadcast turnip into fields of established wheat and red clover or triticale and red clover. The goal was to evaluate a low-cost method of seeding cover crops into fields which would provide extended fall grazing for cattle post-cereal harvest.

- A fruit and medicinal plant grower comparing the impact of biodiversity on soil quality and fruit nutrient values by monitoring apple trees from a permaculture guild and a neighbouring lawn.

- A dairy and cash crop producer assessing the outcome of hay seeded directly following wheat harvest in a field where wheat straw was spread before being raked back into rows for baling. The project looked at minimizing volunteer wheat swaths and producing a uniform hay stand with minimal intervention.

- A cut flower grower conducting soil testing to monitor the level of nutrients added to garden beds by rotating turkeys across them, also noting if turkeys could lower pest pressure on plants in the area.

- A producer establishing a new fruit orchard comparing soil microbial activity between ramial and grass mulch to evaluate the capacity for soil building and plant health.

Grey County Experimental Acres projects are funded by Grey County as part of

the climate action plan, *Going Green in Grey*. The program supports Action 3 in the plan, "Capacity Building in Sustainable Agricultural Best Practices."

A full report outlining the design, purpose and outcome of each project can be found at <http://www.grey.ca/experimental-acres>. Over the three years that this program has operated, projects have been carried out on close to 450 acres. Momentum generated by successful projects means that practices are applied to additional acres every year, creating a snowball effect from each small initiative. Experimental Acres has become a heartening success story—showing how a supportive program structure and very small funding amounts can capacitate major change. With each project completed, the County is carried one step farther towards meeting climate plan goals, delivered with the impact of concrete actions.

The public can learn more about the Experimental Acres projects online at <http://www.grey.ca/experimentalacres>. A new video on Grey County's official YouTube page provides an overview of the Experimental Acres program and interviews with Grey County's 2025 participating farmers.

If you would like more information about the Experimental Acres program, please reach out to Emily McKague at Grey Ag Services at info@greyagservices.ca or 519-986-3756, or to Linda Scott Swanston at Grey County at linda.scottswanston@grey.ca

Preventing Carbon Monoxide Tragedy

By Dennis Gannon



In December of 2008, the unimaginable happened to a family of 4 in Woodstock Ontario. The entire family succumbed to carbon monoxide poisoning in their home. A husband and wife along with their son and daughter were found in the house when the wife failed to report for work. The uncle of the female was at the time a firefighter and felt compelled to act to ensure this never happened again. It took a number of years of lobbying but in the end the Province of Ontario enacted the Hawkins- Gignac Act which required residential properties to install carbon monoxide detectors.

Carbon monoxide is an odourless, invisible tasteless gas and can be deadly. Unfortunately people still perish from carbon monoxide poisoning and not that too long ago, several in this area.

Carbon monoxide is produced when fuels such as natural gas, propane heating oil and wood are used for heating, cooking, barbecuing and when vehicles, generators or portable fuel burning heaters are used. When exposed to carbon monoxide it may cause headaches, loss of consciousness, nausea, confusion and if the exposure is long enough, death.

There are simple steps to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning. Have your fuel burning chimneys and vents cleaned and inspected by a qualified professional. Vents blocked by snow and ice need to be cleared regularly. Charcoal, propane and gas bbqs should only be used outside, never in the house or a garage. The same goes for portable gas generators. If you keep your vehicle in a garage make certain that the garage door is open when starting the vehicle and remove it promptly.

The Ontario Fire Code has been updated as of January 1, 2026. While there were previous requirements in place, several new

ones have been added. In a residence, a carbon monoxide (CO) alarm must be installed if the home has a fuel-burning appliance, a fireplace or wood stove, an attached garage, or is heated by air from a fuel-burning appliance that is not located within the home.

A CO alarm must be installed adjacent to each sleeping area

and new now, on every storey of your residence including storeys that do not have sleeping areas.

Owners of the building, whether owner occupied or rented, are responsible for complying with the requirements under the Fire Code. Similar to smoke alarms, it is against the law for anyone to remove the batteries or to tamper with a carbon monoxide alarm.

There are a number of options for CO alarms. They include hardwired, battery operated and plug in devices. A number of manufacturers have combined Carbon Monoxide alarms with a Smoke Alarm into one unit making it simpler to install. It is important to note that while they may be only one unit, there is a different sound or alert for each. Everyone should know the difference.

When purchasing a carbon monoxide alarm look for either a CSA, ULC or a ETL label. These labels ensure that the unit is tested and certified to Canadian standards.

CO alarms require maintenance and should be checked like a smoke alarm monthly. Like a smoke alarm they must be replaced in accordance with the manufacturer instructions and they have a label on them indicating when to do so.

Many fire departments across Ontario have a supply of CO alarms that they can provide for a household in need. If you have any questions about carbon monoxide alarms or issues please contact your local fire department.

If your CO alarm sounds, get everyone out of the house immediately and call 911. Your life could depend on your actions.

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Turning the Page on a New Year and the Future of the Family Farm



By Leah Emms
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www.ofa.on.ca

Happy New Year!

Now that the rush of the holiday season is behind us, another season begins for farmers, meeting season. As we turn the page on a new year, it is the perfect time to reflect, plan ahead, and consider one of the most important but often overlooked aspects of farm business management: farm transition planning.

Did you know that less than 20 percent of farm families have a formal transition or succession plan in place to protect their assets? Despite the years of effort, sacrifice, and investment that go into building a successful farming operation, many families delay succession conversations simply because they seem overwhelming or emotionally difficult. We understand that even thinking about getting started in the transition planning exercise can be overwhelming. Yet the need for these discussions has never been more urgent. The average age of farmers in Ontario continues to rise, and the value

of farm assets, including land, equipment, and quota, has grown dramatically over the last decade. With so much at stake, having a clear plan in place is essential to ensure a smooth and fair transition to the next generation.

In recent years, financial institutions, commodity groups, and farm organizations have worked hard to raise awareness around this issue. The Ontario Federation of Agriculture, for example, featured best selling author and speaker Dr. Tom Deans as the keynote speaker on the second day of the OFA Annual General Meeting and Convention. He delivered an engaging and insightful presentation on the importance of starting transition planning early and involving the right people in the process. Those looking to watch the keynote presentation can go to the 1:20:22 mark of the Annual General Meeting Day 2 livestream, and the full livestream recording is available on our website. And believe me when I say that it will be worth your time to hear his message. <https://ofa.on.ca/silence-is-the-great-destroyer-of-our-wealth-keynote-presenter-talks-importance-of-succession-and-wealth-transition-at-ofa-annual-meeting/>

While many families begin by talking to their accountant, a successful transition plan requires a village of professionals. Lawyers, accountants, financial advisors, transition coaches, and tax specialists each play a unique role. Wills and estate documents are critical pieces of the puzzle, but they are only one part of the larger strategy. Families may need to explore potential capital gains implications, consider tax efficient structures, evaluate business viability for the next generation, and ensure that both farming and non farming children are considered fairly.

Every farm and every family is unique. That is why starting early, gathering the right team, and keeping communication open are key ingredients for success. As overwhelming as it seems, start the conversation with your family today, or at least speak to a trusted advisor sooner rather than later. As Dr. Tom Deans reminded us, "Silence is the great destroyer of our wealth."

And do not forget to check out the OFA Member Benefit Partner, Farm Life Financial, for your free first consultation. You can also watch their video featuring real life case studies on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=196q305WV->

Wishing you a productive winter meeting season and a successful year ahead as you plan for your farm's future.

Soul Sisters Celebrations Entering the New Year with an Open Heart

As the new year arrives, I tend to find myself pausing in a quiet moment between what has been and what is about to unfold. This pause feels especially important this year because change is already gathering around me. Some changes are expected and planned, while others seem to rise from places I did not anticipate. There are shifts in relationships, shifts in responsibilities, and shifts within my own spirit as I grow and outgrow different parts of myself. It is a sensitive place to stand, knowing that the year ahead has asked me to release certain things and welcome others I cannot yet see. There is something sacred about this soft turning of time. It feels a little like this past summer when I was standing at the edge of Killbear Park with my family while the sun was setting over the wide waters of Georgian Bay stretching before me. The rocks were warm with memory from the great day behind me and the steady flow of water carrying every possibility the future might hold. Every new year invites reflection, but this one seems to ask for something more honest and more tender. It asks for presence.

Over the past year I learned that spiritual growth is rarely loud. It does not always announce itself with certainty or perfection. Often it comes as a whisper in the middle of a restless night or as a calm breath during a difficult conversation. It comes in the quiet recognition that I am still learning how to love well, how to live with intention, and how to trust what I cannot see. In reflecting on these lessons,

I realize that the new year offers a chance to step into deeper authenticity.

This year I want to walk forward with a more open heart. Life moves quickly and it is easy to rush past the sacred moments that exist within ordinary days. The sunrise that slowly colors the sky. A warm drink shared with someone who understands my spirit. The gentle stillness that settles over a room when I finally allow myself to rest. These moments are small gifts that carry the presence of something greater. When I take time to notice them, I feel anchored and guided.

Most of all I want to nurture gratitude. Gratitude is a quiet companion that transforms even difficult seasons. It reminds me that growth can rise from struggle and beauty can appear in unexpected places. When I choose gratitude, I find strength to keep moving forward even when the path is uncertain. Gratitude brings me back to the truth that I am guided and supported in ways I do not always recognize.

As I enter this new year, I do not make grand resolutions. Instead, I make room. Room for grace. Room for patience. Room for wonder. I want this year to be shaped by deeper connection to myself, to others, and to the sacred presence that moves gently through every moment. The new year stands before me like an open door. I step toward it with gratitude for the lessons behind me and hope for the blessings ahead.

What will you make room for this New Year? How do you plan to enter 2026?

Happy New Year.

In Gratitude, The Soul Sisters
Reverend Erin Wilson and Reverend Kelly Blakely
Soulsisterscelebrations@gmail.com



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South Simcoe 4-H Marks Achievement Days

By Isabella Cullen



The South Simcoe 4-H members who participated in a 4-H achievement day program at the Barrie Fair, Beeton Fair and the Great Northern Exhibition were treated to supper and a night out by the Agricultural Societies. Thanks to the Cookstown Agricultural Society, Barrie Agricultural Society, Beeton Agricultural Society and Collingwood Agricultural Society for inviting us.



The South Simcoe 4-H Association hosted a Heyday for all their membership on Sunday November 30th which was well attended. If you are interested in joining 4-H register with 4-hontario.ca now for 2026 season. Rally Night for 4-H South Simcoe is Sunday February 8th. Check out the South Simcoe 4-H webpage for more information.

Thank You to the Leaders Behind 4-H

By Isabella Cullen

As the 4-H season comes to an end I'd like to shine the light on the people that make 4-H all possible, our leaders. The term leader is someone who inspires or helps others to achieve a goal, our leaders do much more than just that. Whether it be planning a meeting, providing snacks, giving pointers on how to show a project animal or how to judge, they give 100% even after a full day's work. As a junior member I'd always participate in the activities for my own enjoyment but as a senior member who sees all their efforts in making activities fun, I participate and hope they see how grateful we are for them and their mentorship. 4-H is this amazing opportunity that I hope every kid tries, it builds confidence, leadership and dedication. But it isn't necessarily 4-H that builds these skills but rather the leaders. They are the ones guiding us and helping us prepare for shows, the ones supporting our triumphs and teaching us about good sportsmanship, the ones who even after work, show up with a smile on their face and show us true dedication. I am proud to say this program has helped me be the person I am today but I owe it to my leaders, who taught me how to get here. So as we prepare for the 2026 4-H season I want to take a moment to thank all the 4-H leaders out there, for believing in and supporting the dreams of the 4-H youth. Words can not express our gratitude for the time, energy and knowledge you share with us. We are all looking forward to 2026.

Thank you!

North Simcoe 4H craft report

Photo and article by Donna Vander Heyden



Pictured here are North Simcoe 4H Christmas crafters with some of their designs. From left to right are Reese M, Brooklyn C, Abby W, Olivia L, Megan O, Isabelle S and Rachel M. Absent from the photograph is Josie M.


The North Simcoe 4H Christmas Craft Club wrapped up its final weekend with the members making an arrangement of foraged greenery and birch with some embellishments of ribbons, fresh flowers and baubles.

The club met over 3 weekends and the members worked on

several projects. They stained long, pine boards, with some members making them into farm signs or Christmas signs and some made jean racks. There were lots of items to create with and members made wooden block trees and snowmen, greeting cards, clay sculptures and various paper crafts.


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Fun farm science: Ant farms exposed

Presented by the curious Don Beaulieu

In the forests of Central and South America, some of the world's most industrious farmers aren't humans. They are ants. And their methods are nothing short of remarkable.

Fungus first

Meet the leafcutter ants, nature's original horticulturists. These tiny agriculturists don't eat the leaves they so industriously cut. Instead, they haul them back to their underground gardens, meticulously chewing them into a nutrient-rich pulp. On this leafy canvas, a special fungus (*Leucoagaricus gongylophorus*) thrives, producing tiny, nutrient-packed structures that sustain the ant colony. In this subterranean farm, every ant has a role, from leaf-harvester to garden-tender, ensuring optimal temperature, humidity, and hygiene for their fungal crop.

These ant farms predate human agriculture by tens of millions of years.

But the story doesn't end with fungus.

Bacterial bodyguards

Enter the next layer of sophistication: bacteria. Certain ant species have evolved a chemical defense system, cultivating beneficial bacteria on their own bodies. These microscopic allies, primarily *Pseudonocardia*, produce antibiotics that fend off parasitic fungi threatening the garden. In effect, the ants run miniature pharmacies on their cuticles, carefully grooming and spreading these bacteria to maintain a healthy fungal crop.

Leafcutter ants have been practicing agriculture for over 50 million years and their bacterial partnerships have co-evolved for more than 20 million. Their intricate

Leafcutter ants can carry 50 times their body weight back to the nest.

systems of leaf-farming and microbial management make them the planet's earliest farmers.

So next time you see a line of ants marching along a forest floor, consider this: within those tiny bodies are centuries of agricultural wisdom, miniature gardens, and living medicine cabinets. They are proof that even the smallest creatures can run some of the most complex farms on Earth.

Causing human farmers problems

A single mature colony may number in the millions and harvest hundreds of kilograms of vegetation each year. For crops like citrus, coffee, cacao, eucalyptus, corn, and vegetables, that kind of activity can mean overnight defoliation.

"These ants don't nibble," one agronomist quipped. "They clear-cut."

Leafcutter ants don't eat the crops they remove. Remember, they carry leaves underground to feed a cultivated fungus, their primary food source. The result, however, is the same for farmers: stripped plants, weakened trees, and in the case of seedlings and saplings, complete crop loss.

What makes leafcutters particularly difficult to manage is their scale and resilience. Colonies can last decades, with queens living 10 to 20 years. The fungus gardens they depend on are buried deep underground, often spreading through complex tunnel systems that make direct control difficult. Simply killing foraging ants rarely solves the problem.

A complicated pest

Despite their reputation, leafcutter ants are not villains by nature. In forests and uncultivated landscapes, they play a surprisingly beneficial role. Their extensive tunneling aerates soil, improves drainage, and redistributes nutrients. By selectively harvesting plants, they can even increase plant diversity over time.

This dual role of being destructive in fields and beneficial in ecosystems has made them

a challenge for modern agriculture to manage responsibly.

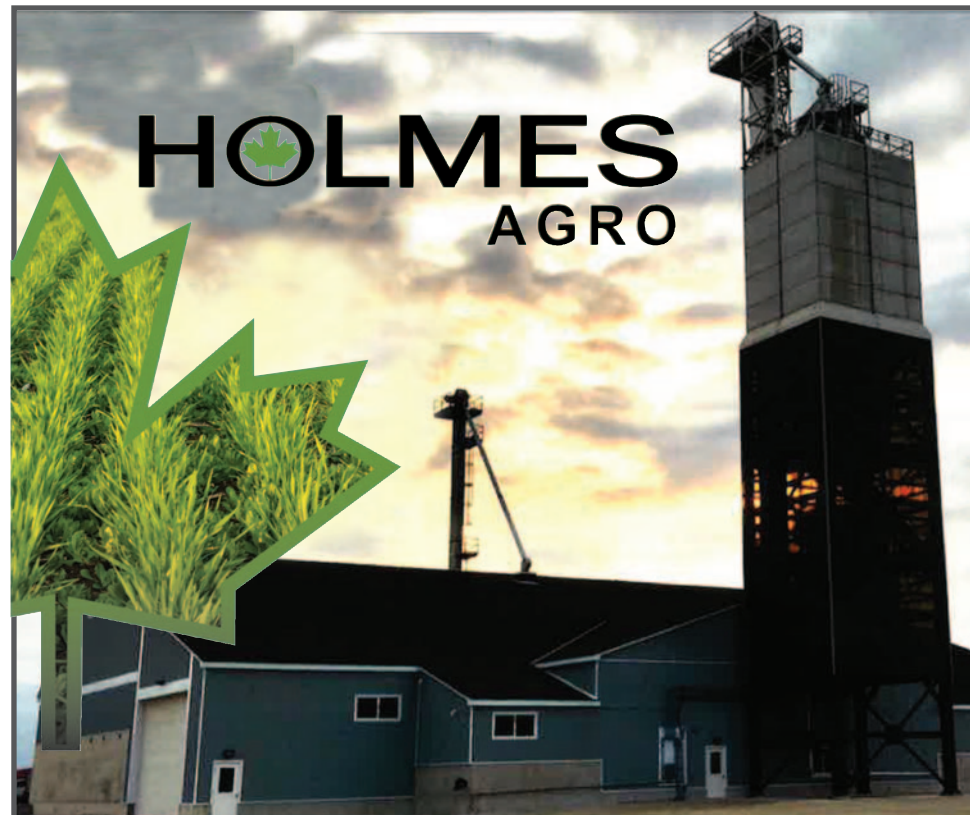
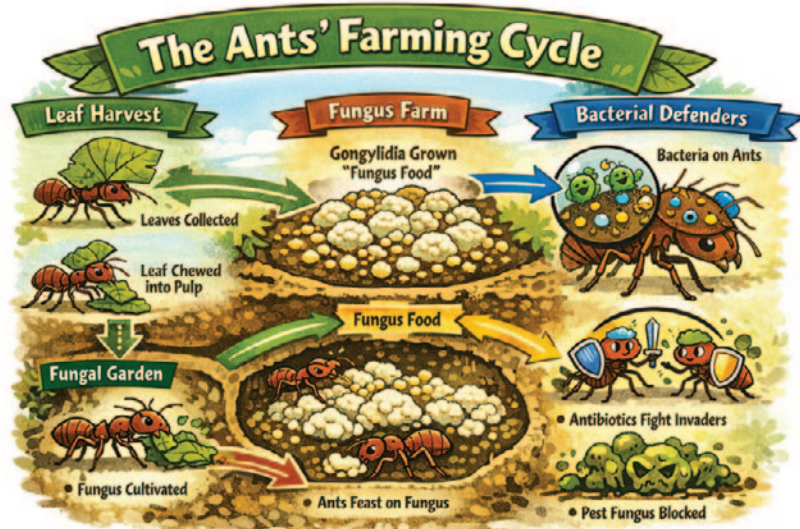
Managing, not eliminating

Today's best practices focus on control rather than eradication. Farmers increasingly rely on targeted baits that disrupt the ants' fungus rather than broad insecticides, along with biological controls and integrated pest management strategies. The goal is to protect crops without damaging surrounding ecosystems.

In many ways, the conflict between ants and farmers is less about pests and more about competition.

As one researcher put it, "They're farmers too. They're just very good at it."

The bacteria on ants' bodies produce antibiotics only where needed, preventing fungal invaders without harming the ant's beloved crop.



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Meet the Advertiser: True North Mechanical

A Trade Revisited, A Future Taking Shape

Article and photo by Roslyn Watkins

As a young man, after reviewing the curriculum of many skilled trades, Shawn Watkins of True North Mechanical, found himself drawn to HVAC-R (Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning and Refrigeration). “It was the most complex,” Shawn recalls. “I enjoy working with my hands and I love the challenge of figuring out why something isn’t working and fixing it.”

The original company was started up with a good friend early on in both their careers. Shawn remembers long hours and lots to learn. Doing that with a good friend by his side made the process enjoyable. At the time, Shawn was also working full-time at Georgian College as an HVAC technician and, with his wife, raising three young children. With limited time and many responsibilities, Shawn knew he needed to choose a career path that would not only challenge him intellectually but also provide stability for his growing family. Georgian College proved to be the right fit, offering both opportunity and long-term value. Which led the business True North Mechanical to be put on hold, but in the past year, an unexpected and meaningful opportunity arose. The family’s youngest son, Harry, now 15, expressed an interest in learning the HVAC trade. Seeing his son’s curiosity and enthusiasm sparked Shawn’s decision to reopen the business — this time with a new purpose.

“I enjoy the time spent with Harry, teaching him the trade,” Shawn says. “It’s nice to see his interest, and he isn’t standing idle. If I don’t need his help at the moment, he picks up the broom.” Those small moments, Shawn notes, are just as important as the technical lessons.

While the foundation of the trade remains the same, much has changed since the business first operated. One of the most noticeable differences is the cost of running a business today, particularly the price of equipment. “Many things have changed,” Shawn explains. “The HVAC industry has

drastically changed in the past 10 to 15 years. Equipment has become much more energy efficient, but with that, the complexity of the equipment has also changed.”

Reopening the business has been met with strong support from friends, family, and the wider community, with referrals and job opportunities helping the business gain momentum. “It’s nice to be able to offer quality, knowledgeable service while staying competitive in the market,” Shawn says.

This time around, advertising has been part of the plan, and Shawn is grateful for the response. “I’d like to thank the Farm View readers for putting their trust in me.”

From a customer service perspective, Shawn continues to provide honest information on the equipment he is servicing. If it can be fixed, he will fix it. He will give you your best options and best pricing.

With decades of experience, a renewed passion for the trade, and the next generation already showing interest, this reopened business is once again building a future — one job, and one lesson, at a time.

Shawn can be contacted by phone/text 705-828-3394 or email truenorthmechanical@icloud.com.



Shawn Watkins (left) of True North Mechanical shares his HVAC-R expertise with his son, Harry (right), as the family business reopens with a renewed purpose — combining decades of experience with hands-on learning for the next generation.

The Meet the Advertiser series is a complimentary news article for Farm View advertisers. If you are interested in being featured, please contact Roslyn Watkins at farmview@on.aibn.com.



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After The Chores: Winter

By Cathy Hamill-Hill



Winter arrived here and it remains my least favourite season of the year.

Winter is certainly here this year, in all its

misery. All the water taps in the barn but one frozen useless. We carry 95 gallons of water in about 5 days. We carry small portions so we make a lot of trips to the 95 gallon water tank. The sheep drink the most as somehow a heated outside water trough makes them want to empty it as much as possible when I'm carrying it there by the bucket.

The hay bale goes into a feeder outside. In the nice months, carrying hay is like carrying a bundle of perfume. Hay smells wonderful and hay carrying is not at all a job. Enter winter and the hay now gets snow covered in the feeder. I have to wear protective gear of waterproof gloves, a hoodie pulled up and a heavy coat zipped to the top or I'm wearing freezing cold snow. Wind is another issue as fighting strong winds and hay is not good. I often have my hair full of stray hay and need to add hay hair picking to my list of chores.

Water buckets freeze overnight in the barn meaning I have to whack the bucket against a post to break up the ice. These days with the extra chores, my strength has gained a few notches. I whacked the bucket a bit I thought against the post per usual on frozen day one this year. The thick ice smashed leaving me with a face full of icy water first thing in the morning. I so do not enjoy winter.

Freezing rain is the most dreaded of all in winter for all

of us. Sheep hate freezing rain when their wool becomes one big wind chime. Covered in ice, the sheep huddle into a clump of sad by the gate tossing their heads making their chime noises. I do my best to get the sheep in before the icing starts to avoid seeing and hearing that winter misery. Monitoring the weather network in winter is done every few hours when a system is coming through.

Winter in a town setting is actually fun. I got to live it for two easy winters. We lived on a Regional road which means the road is plowed all day- and all night long. We only had a short circular lane. If the tiny lane way got full, we just easily shoveled it out to a clear road. Our winter life was so easy that one morning at 4:00 a.m. Sweetie left in his small commuter car to go to work. About 5:00 a.m. I was awoken and totally freaked out as I saw a shadow of a person coming into the bedroom I was in. Sweetie had to come home as the roads to his work were all closed by the police as being unsafe in the storm.

Last winter saw the lane blocked here whenever there was a west wind over 10 km an hour which was nearly every day all winter. This year a kind person gifted us a well used snow fence. This fence was heavy and was not at all pretty when we got in the spring. The same fence is the most beautiful sight now, it goes across the yard here and Sweetie placed it exactly right. The snow fence is heavily drifted in with snow. The snow fence is one of life's blessings right up there with purring cats and country Fairs. This snow fence represents kind people that care enough to actually step in with action- and it's a small block against winter's wrath.

I wish winter was over.

Grey Bruce Farmers' Week Celebrates 60 Years in 2026!

Grey Bruce Farmers' Week (GBFW) returns for its 60th anniversary from January 7–12, 2026, marking six decades of agricultural learning, connection, and community. This long-standing conference and tradeshow will once again be held in person at the Elmwood Community Centre, with the option to livestream from home.

The 2026 program features 6 commodity days starting with Beef Day, Dairy Day, Goat Day, Sheep Day, Horse Day, and ending with Crops Day. There is no Ecological Day, but sustainability themes have been woven throughout the week! In true GBFW fashion, the in-person experience includes a hearty hot roast beef dinner, plus goat and lamb served on their respective days! Pies once again will line up the dessert tables in addition to Chapman's ice cream bars (Thank you, Chapmans!) - because nothing inspires great networking like great food! Attendees can also pick up exclusive 60th Anniversary

GBFW swag throughout the week.

Registration Details

Tickets can be purchased online at GBFW.ca. Livestreaming tickets must be pre-purchased online, and it is recommended that attendees purchase in-person tickets online as well. For those unable to do so, cash, cheque, and debit are accepted at the door for in-person attendees. In-person registration for each day begins at 9 am. Prices include HST:

• \$50 per day (in-person or livestream)

• \$120 for any 3-day bundle

• \$160 to livestream the full week

2026 Keynote Presentations

• On Beef Day, Anne Wasko, Market Analyst, Gateway Livestock, Alberta, will deliver Beef Market Outlook

• On Dairy Day, Dr. Jodi Wallace, Veterinarian/Dairy Farmer, Ormstown Veterinary Hospital, Quebec, will present Improving Dairy Herd Fertility – Genomics and Beyond

• On Goat Day, Jelle Vogels, Division Manager – Canada, Vitalvé, Netherlands; and Maksym Baranok, Small Ruminant Specialist, Vitalvé, Canada, will jointly present the keynote Maximizing Return Over Feed

• On Sheep Day, Justin Woodward, Partner, Good Energy Partners, will present Solar Grazing; and Steven Rosvold, Owner/Operator, Floating S Ranch and FSR Stock Dogs, Manitoba, will present Training and Using Herding Dogs on Your Livestock Operation

• On Horse Day, Dr. Ian Bishop, Veterinarian and Owner, Northern Equine Veterinary Services, will delve into Equine Dentistry

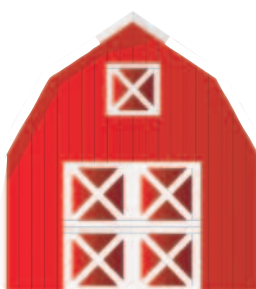
• On Crops Day, Cody Hammer, Transportation Enforcement Officer, Ministry of Transportation, Waterloo District; and Ryan Nichols, Enforcement Supervisor, Ministry of Transportation, Waterloo District, will present Road Safety in the Agricultural Industry

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NVCA Board Pushes Back on Proposed Mega-Regional Model

The Board of Directors of the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority (NVCA) unanimously endorsed a resolution and wrote to Environment Minister Todd McCarthy outlining its concerns with the province's proposed regional consolidation of Ontario's conservation authorities.

NVCA Chair and Councillor Jonathan Scott said the Board supports the Province's goals of efficiency, service modernization and fiscal prudence, and noted that NVCA has already delivered many such improvements.

"We are committed to working with the Province on genuine modernization," said Scott. "Our concern is not with the objective, but with the scale and structure of the proposed 'Huron-Superior' consolidation model."

The Province's draft boundaries would merge seven conservation authorities across 1,400 kilometres and 78+ municipalities, ranging from Thunder Bay through Northern Lake Huron and into fast-growing regions of Southern Ontario in the Greater Toronto Area.

"Such a configuration risks undermining the local accountability that is central to effective watershed management," Scott continued. "Conservation authorities were created by municipalities and remain funded and governed locally. Decisions about permitting, floodplain management and watershed planning work best when they reflect local site conditions and municipal growth patterns."

Scott also noted that the proposed model combines communities and watersheds with little shared hydrology or infrastructure reality. "A single administrative structure spanning the GTA, Northern Ontario and rural regions is unlikely to be nimble, and may make it harder for builders, farmers and municipalities to get timely advice that keeps housing and infrastructure projects on schedule," he said. "From a common-sense perspective, it seems inherently unrealistic to have the GTA and Thunder Bay in the same region."

While reiterating that the NVCA Board of Directors does not support amalgamation, Scott stressed that the Authority aims to be constructive. "If the Province continues to explore consolidation, there are more coherent alternatives," he said. "A model focusing on consolidating Georgian Bay-area authorities would better reflect shared geography, reduce transition costs and maintain the local accountability our municipalities rely on."

"We welcome further dialogue with the province," Scott said. "We believe there is a path to improved service delivery that is efficient, cost-effective and grounded in the realities of Ontario's diverse watersheds. NVCA stands ready to contribute to that work."

For more information about the proposed boundaries for the regional consolidation of Ontario's conservation authorities, including an interactive map, visit the Environmental Registry of Ontario.

Agricultural Anecdotes from Farmer Tim

Farm Feelings

There's a special kind of feeling that comes from living this life — one that words can never quite capture. As I milked my cows tonight with the cold winter rain coming down outside, I tried to put that feeling into words...

It's standing in the same field where I once dropped a single seed into the soil, watching it grow strong under the sun, fighting through drought, frost, wind and rain to finally mature into a crop ready for harvest. It's the quiet satisfaction that only comes from knowing you helped life happen.

It's the middle of the night in the barn, kneeling beside a cow as she brings a newborn calf into the world. Your day was long and exhausting, but you had a heart full of gratitude when you saw that little one take its first breath and wobble to its feet.

It's the smell of fresh-cut hay drying under perfect skies after weeks of waiting and worrying. It's the rush of relief when the last load of grain beats the rain home.

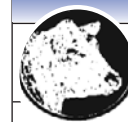
It's the pride that fills your chest when a cow you raised from a baby, one you poured years of care and patience into, stands in the show ring and earns that red ribbon — not because of the prize, but because you know the story behind her.

And when winter settles over the farm, it's the deep peace of hearing the cows chew their cud in a warm barn while the wind howls outside. It's knowing they're safe, the harvest is in, and you've done your part for another season.

Farming isn't just work. It's a way of life, a test of faith, and a love story between people, animals, and the land. There are days it breaks you, and others that fill you right back up. But through it all, there's no place I'd rather be.

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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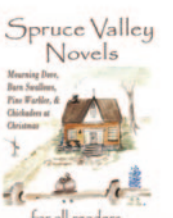
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Music SEEN in farm country

By Don Beaulieu

Farm View country boasts myriad live music venues and performing opportunities. Here is a look at a few examples around Georgian Bay.

The final couple of months in 2025 exemplified the variety of talent we have around us, often found in smaller communities and small venues. Many individual venues, restaurants and bars present the best of local performers. We are also blessed with organizations, often grassroots, community orientated, which present shows offering a variety of musical genres, from individual acts to evenings of variety.

One popular organization is the Small Halls Festival Series of Clearview Township. In short; they provide the best of rural living, contemporary art, live music, culinary delights and family-friendly activities. Events run in September, October and November.

In November of 2025, at the Nottawa Memorial Community Centre, a number of top local musicians were featured in the Songwriters That Rock concert, the final installment of the 2025 year of Small Halls Festival. The audience enjoyed local professional male songwriters plus their performing, song-writing daughters.

Even the master of ceremonies duties featured a father-daughter duo. The combination of mentor fathers and aspiring daughters of notable skill, filled the hall with not just amazing music, but an air of love and support which wafted over the audience.

In the realm of locally presented purely professional talent: The final presentation of the 2025 season for the Collingwood Music Festival featured a hilarious presentation by Toronto ensemble Broadway which features vocalists Heather Bambrick (familiar to some via JAZZFM, as well as to jazz fans in general), vocalist Julie Michaels, Kylie Martin and vocalist/pianist/arranger and re-arranger of songs Diane Leah. For this performance they had some of the best musical support from George Koller on bass

and Ben Wittman on drums. This event took place at First Presbyterian Church in Collingwood.

Broadway is self-described as: "From Gershwin to Gaga, four of Canada's finest musical theatre, cabaret, and jazz artists doing Broadway their way! It's Broadway!" The combination of musical prowess and humour was a rare and delightful occasion.

Another local entity provided an insightful event, at St. John's United Church in Creemore. The Purple Hills Arts & Heritage Society presented John Allen's (CBC fame) story "J. S. Bach's Long Walk". It is a story of Bach's younger years, forming and guiding his future musical career, as we know it. Allen's story was supported musically by more of Toronto's best players. Allen narrated, sang and played trumpet with the accompaniment of Jamie Parker on piano, Joseph Phillips on vocal, stand-up bass, 8-string classical guitar and viola da gamba, Rebekah Wolkstein also sang and offered some marvellous solo Bach on her violin. Adding dynamic vocals and percussion was Patricia O'Callaghan.

The value of grassroots level enthusiasm and ability to present the highest calibre of talent many of us are not able to travel to hear, is an important part of our local arts opportunities.

For the local closet

musicians who sing in the shower, maybe run through some tunes on their guitar in the acoustics of the washroom or play the piano when no one else is home, there are many opportunities, in all the towns around us. These are the musical jams and the open stages (often called "open mic") evenings. Aspiring musicians have the opportunity to get used to an audience (they are always supportive, as are the house bands with the jams) and quell those butterflies. There is no other way to get used to an audience, other than getting up in front of them. Most often, it is surprisingly inspiring.

For the audiences of these events, there is the chance to hear some otherwise well-hidden talent, of potentially amazing proportions. Some talent, especially those taking to the open mic events, are often new or returning to a craft they have strayed from, often for decades. The age range of performers varies, but all have much in common. Unexpected collaborations are formed, offering a vision and desire to keep playing, improve one's abilities and continue sharing their art.

In November, this writer was contacted by Melissa James, a performer from the United Kingdom, who was travelling to Wasaga Beach and Toronto. James wanted to perform while she was in Wasaga Beach, ahead of her Toronto recording sessions. We wound up with her performing at The Iron Skillet on a Tuesday evening. Not much notice could be given, the gig wasn't confirmed until about one week before that date. In the end, this stunning singer/guitarist from the U.K. ended up in one of our local restaurants. James was accompanied by Neil Hendry (Toronto) on guitar and to add to the local aspect, Collingwood blues man Ryan Patterson. Overall, jazz, gospel, blues, folk and more genres were presented in a rare opportunity. Wasaga's

own David Grossman, known for mortgages and music, warmed up the audience's ears for this special evening. All this was somewhat unexpected, but showing support for music in our community.

Perhaps this year, we can have a list here on the opportunities for local talent to perform. Some events stop during the winter, but others keep on. Here are just a few; this is in no way a comprehensive list and is light on details, but this may give budding musicians the urge to start looking at what may be happening in their hometown.

Thornbury has an open mic at the Corner Café. Wasaga Beach

has Wednesday evenings at The Hive. Watch for an open mic starting back up in Barrie at C'W Coops in Barrie. There are a couple of excellent jams in Barrie, at Malone's Pint House and at Wickie's Pub. Elmvale has a Thursday night jam at The Palace Tavern. And there are more. So, basically, no excuses to keep playing in your closet, washroom or barn! Many more towns and venues than mentioned here offer opportunities to perform. Often, open mic performers end up performing professionally and forming working bands.

Lotsa folk in our rural communities have a wide range of talent outside of their daily work lives. You are encouraged to share your music, poetry, storytelling, magic, dancing, comedy in your community and bring some smiles to neighbours faces. Spread some joy and make some new friends and no doubt, be entertained yourself!

If performing isn't your thing, but you enjoy live entertainment, seek out local theatre or other performance groups in your neck of the woods. Some of these bring in talent from all directions so you don't have to drive to a major centre to hear some of the province's or country's best talent who have gained reputations around the world's stages.



Successful and dynamic artist from the U.K., Melissa James made an unexpected performance in Wasaga Beach. It was "ears to the local online ground" to catch this one.



Masters of Ceremonies for the "Father and Daughter" concert, Jason and Helen Murphy.



One of the three "Father and Daughter" duos in Nottawa: Ella and Chuck Baker.



Popular radio personality Tom Allen's story of "J.S. Bach's Long Walk" at St. John's United Church in Creemore. From left to right, Jamaie Parker on piano, Joe Phillips (voice, bass, classical guitar, viola da gamba), Rebekah Wolkstein (vocals, violin), Patricia O'Callaghan (voice, percussion) and Tom (writer, producer, voice and trombone).



Broadway, also some of Toronto's top musicians, on stage at First Baptist Church in Collingwood in the final performance of the Collingwood Music Festival's 2025 season. From left to right are Diane Leah, Heather Bambrick, George Koller, Julie Michaels, Kylie Martin and Ben Wittman.

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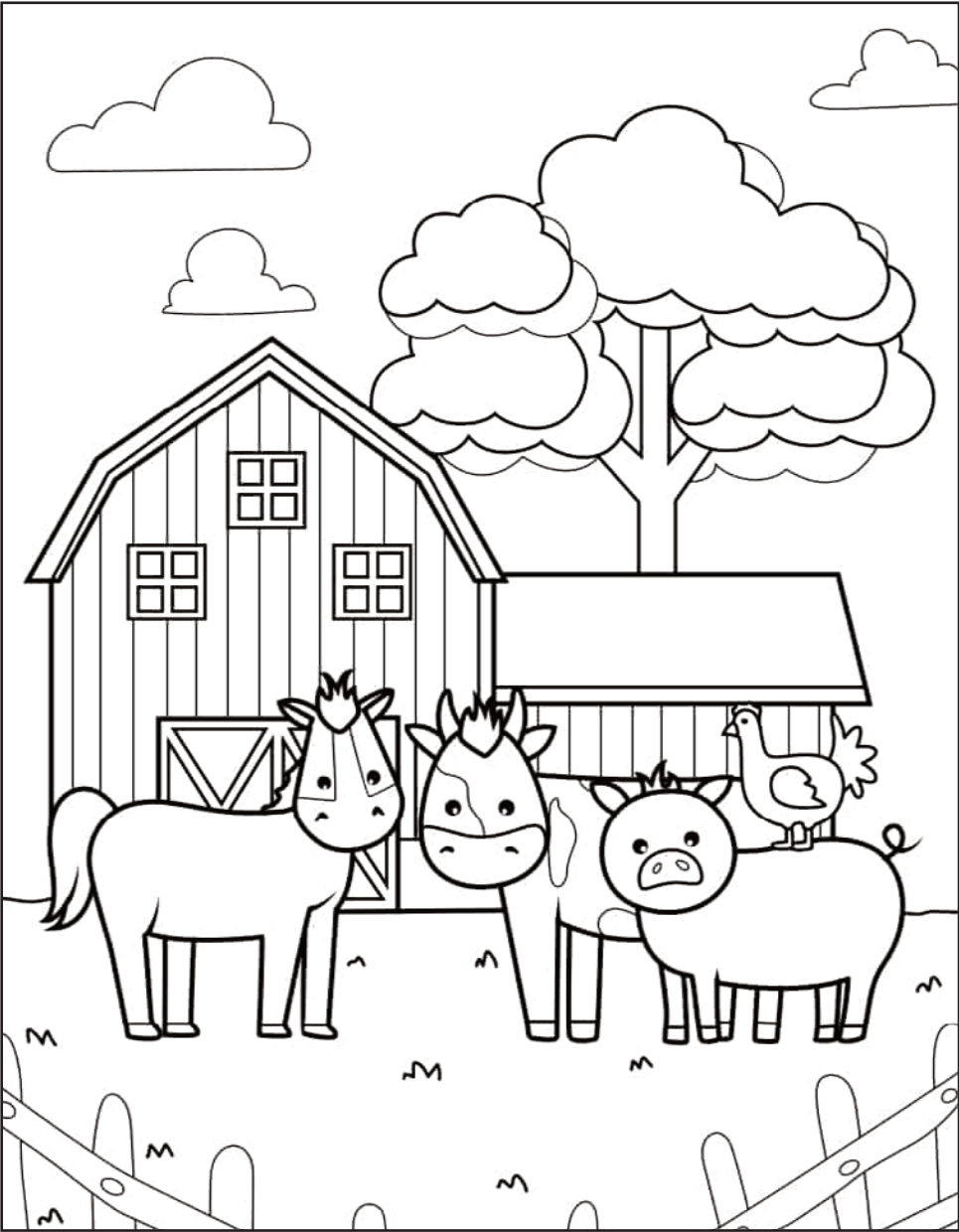
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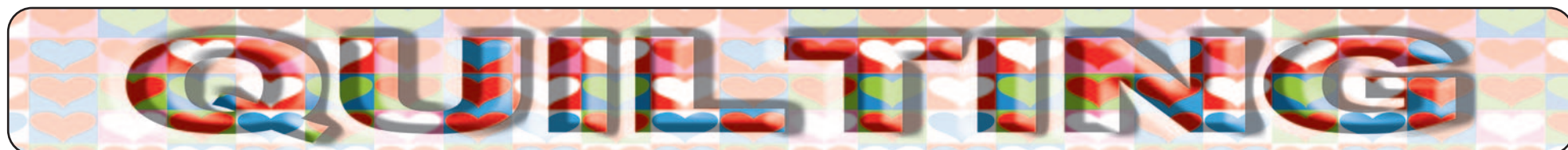
GAMES & PUZZLES WORD SEARCH

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

WORDS

- BANANAGRAMS
- BINGO
- BRAIN TEASER
- CHECKERS
- CHESS
- COMPUTERS
- CROSSWORD
- CRYPTOGRAM
- DEXTERITY
- HIDDEN PICTURE
- JIGSAW
- LOGIC
- MATHEMATICAL
- MAZE
- PLAYING CARDS
- PUZZLE
- SUDOKU
- SUMS
- TETRIS
- UNO
- VIDEO GAMES
- WORD SEARCH
- WORDLE



Sew What's Next? Welcoming 2026 with Fabric and Imagination

By Janis Hamilton

Well, we made it through 2025 and are now headlong into 2026. So, what are your sewing plans for you and those you love to sew for? Some may be adventuring into the world of quilting while others may want to sign up for classes and challenge yourself with new concepts you haven't tried yet.

Now, if you are new to quilting, January is a great time to start, and there are sites to guide you through the process. One such website offers 41 free easy patterns to get you started. The link says 35 but there are really 41 free patterns. No, you don't have to do all of them, but with the photos you can easily choose the ones you would like to try. Just right click on the link on their website and it will take you right to the information. Depending on your computer it may say open hyperlink or just take you directly once you right click. Don't be afraid the computer can be your friend and save you time typing for searches. Not if you are reading the hard copy of this fabulous newspaper of course, it won't work you will have to type the link, but you could go on the paper's website and then start clicking.

<https://www.allpeople-quilt.com/quilt-patterns/35-free-quilt-patterns-beginners>

Here is another one and although it looks like it's for crochet and knitting patterns, there are a lot of valuable quilting help and techniques to get you started from the basic supplies to how to finish your first project.

<https://sarah-maker.com/> <https://sarah-maker.com/quilt-patterns-for-beginners/>

Now for those who have refilled bobbins more than you'd like to admit you may be wanting to challenge yourself with something new.



Paper Piecing: Not as difficult as many will tell you. I found the placement of the first piece gave me pause when I first started, but now it is quite easy. Paper piecing is exact, the points are perfect and it just looks like the pattern was really difficult but it is not. If you were at the Artisan and Quilt show this fall at the Simcoe County Museum you may have seen Korleen Smith demonstrating paper piecing using freezer paper. I have not done this but after watching her demo I'm going to try it. The benefits are you don't have the foundation paper to rip off the finished blocks, and the paper is reusable, so it saves time and money. I found a site that walks you through the process with detailed photos. So, if this piques your interest have a right click and off you go learning something new. Again, this free pattern is included. <https://bryan-housequilts.com>

If you want a hands-on approach, then consider inquiring at your local quilt shop what courses they will offer in the future. Many will be offering new techniques, new ideas with tools that will make your job easier. Country Concessions in Cookstown, Thimbles and Things in Orillia and Hummingbird Sewing in Barrie are just some of the shops that always have classes listed on their websites. Maybe ask a friend to join you and you will be well rewarded with new skills and meet other like-minded fabric obsessed folks. A great way to give yourself a break from shovelling snow. If you still prefer to work alone and from home check out the local library. The quilting books are endless and so are the ideas with great photos to walk you through the process. Or

if you don't mind learning on your computer, check out online classes. They will vary on pricing and skill set of course. Many You Tubes are also available so narrow your search for what might interest you and your skill level.

Another fun way to enjoy quilting is to invite a friend over to sew for the day. Maybe have a project in mind like a tote bag. You will find great fellowship as you sort out any problems you have in completing the project and probably enjoy a great lunch together as well.

Valentines will soon be here so don't miss a chance to make a table runner or even a wall hanging to mark the occasion. Maybe even just sew a small heart quilt



on a card for that special someone. But if you have more time, check out the 25 heart ideas here <https://www.my-goldenthimble.com> Another site has larger projects and all free patterns <https://ilovequiltingforever.com>

January can be a long month and if the snow starts climbing up your window sill and you need some relief, I can't stress enough how quilting will help relieve that stress... well unless you are snowed in and you've run out of fabric but remember measure twice and cut once so check to make sure you have all you need to have a relaxing day behind that sewing machine. I wish you well in whatever endeavour you choose.

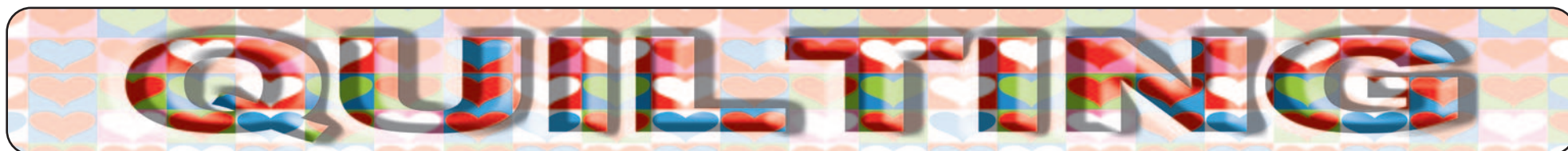
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Giving Tuesday Success at Quilting Corners Guild

Story and photos provided by Senora Baldry

Giving Tuesday at Quilting Corners Guild was certainly a success. Quilts of Comfort, quilted stockings and pillow cases were the main event and shared with our community partners: My Sister's Place (MSP), Matthew's House Hospice, The Good Samaritan and the Alliston Foodbank (AFB). We also gave cheques to MSP and the AFB from the proceeds of our quilt raffle. Members stepped up, as always, and gave generously to a mini food and toiletry drive for MSP and socks and hand warmers for SHIFT. This was all topped off with a few rounds of QUILTO, our version of bingo, to raise funds for the Foodbank. Thank you to everyone for their creativity, participation and generosity. Have a safe and joyous festive season.



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Catherine Myers: The Grit and Courage Behind Myers' Corners

Village stories

by Andrew Hind

Myers' Corners was named – how in 1833 he bought a lot on what today is the northeast corner of Yonge and Victoria streets in Stroud, how he created a prosperous farm, how his commanding presence helped shape local affairs.

Far less ink has been spent writing about his mother Catherine Myers, whose strength, courage, and determination – guts, if you will – overshadowed anything her son accomplished. If not for her impressive character, there would have been no David Myers and no Myers' Corners.

Catherine Myers originally hailed from the vicinity of Stone Arabia, New York, where she was born Catherine Wolff in 1775. Her parents, Johan and Anna Elisabeth Wolff were of German descent. They were hardworking farmers content to work the land and raise their family who remained aloof from the fighting of the Revolutionary War.

Then tragedy struck.

On an otherwise ordinary day in 1780, Catherine heard yelling and screaming. Looking from the home out into the

yard, she watched British-allied Indigenous warriors kill and scalp her parents, grandparents, and her ten-year-old sister Valentina. The eldest Wolff child, 13-year-old Margaret, led Catherine and another sister, Maria, into a bedroom and hid the three of them under a bed. While Margaret, Catherine, and Maria lay still within the cabin, shivering in fear, the warriors slipped away as quietly as they had come.

Incredibly, there was a miracle amidst the bloody carnage. Catherine's grandmother, though scalped and badly wounded, had somehow survived. She would recover and raise the children.

Catherine married Captain Joseph Myers, a Revolutionary War veteran. It wasn't a happy marriage as Joseph was drunk much of the time. Catherine was pregnant with a third child when her husband up and left her. He committed suicide a few years later.

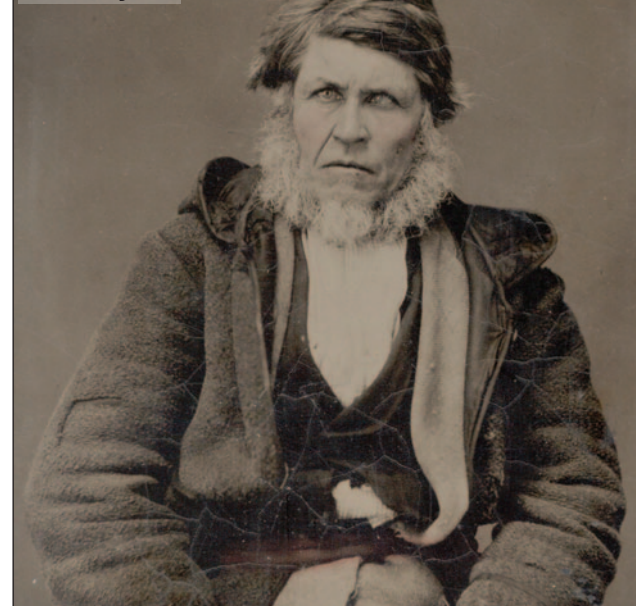
In 1806, Catherine married again to George Frederick Hanning Wernecke (later anglicized to Warnica). In 1815, the family moved to Canada and initially lived in Markham Township before making a final move to Innisfil in March 1825. Innisfil was a true wilderness at the time. The nearest neighbor, David Soules, was six miles away and the land was covered by dense forest. Catherine faced the hardships of pioneer living with stoicism.

She likely watched with pride as her son David established a farm of his own and lent his name to a crossroads hamlet

that grew up around it.

Catherine finally found peace in Innisfil, where she died on Sept. 24, 1838, surrounded by a husband, children and grandchildren, and a bountiful farm —her reward after many long years of hardship.

David Myers



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AGRICULTURAL SERVICES

Christian Farmers Federation
of Ontario,

Central Ontario District:

info@christianfarmers.org

1-855-800-0306

christianfarmers.org

Grey Ag Services:

519-986-3756

info@greyagservices.ca

OFA Members Service Representative:

Leah Emms 1-800-668-3276

email: leah.emms@ofa.on.ca

Lisa Hern 1-877-343-5444

email: lisa.hern@ofa.on.ca

OFA Zone Director for Peel, Simcoe and
York:

Paul Maurice: 705-427-3126

email: paul.maurice@ofa.on.ca

OFA Zone Director for Dufferin County:

Mark Reusser: email: mark.reusser@ofa.on.ca

Simcoe County Federation of Agriculture

705-726-9300 ext 1224

simcty.fed.agriculture@outlook.com

York Region Federation of Agriculture

york@ofa.on.ca

Dufferin County Federation of Agriculture

sherri.dfa@hotmail.com

Peel County Federation of Agriculture

peelfederationofagriculture@gmail.com

Ontario Soil & Crop Improvement
Association

1-800-265-9751

oscia@ontariosoilcrop.org

Farm View CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING

email: farmview@on.aibn.com

Free classified word ad's can be mailed, emailed or faxed by the 15th of the month for the next month's issue. Telephone orders are invoiced at \$15 for the first 25 words. Ad's run for one month only and must be re-submitted each month to be repeated. Mailing information is on page 4.

COMING EVENTS

SOUTHWESTERN ONTARIO PORK CONFERENCE

Mark your calendars and plan to attend the 62nd annual Southwestern Ontario Pork Conference on Wednesday, February 18, 2026, at the University of Guelph, Ridgetown Campus. This year's conference is "Let's Talk About Pork" with new ideas in competitiveness, benchmarking, and so much more!

"It's all about keeping the producers informed in a social environment and providing a place for industry reps to visit with their customers" says Darren Sloan, chair of the 2026 SWOPC Planning Committee.

The conference is very fortunate to have industry sponsors to help bring such a great program to the area producers. Conference attendees should plan to spend time visiting industry partners at the conference trade show area while enjoying complimentary coffee & refreshments before the program begins at 4:00 pm.

The 2026 conference program features "ROI – It's All That Matters!" with feature speaker Dan Bussieres; "Maximizing Manure Value – Transforming Animal Waste Into Field Profit" with Christine Brown; and "Producer Profile" with John and Dirk Homan of Hihojo Farm. Rounding out the lineup are a producer panel Q&A, "Building a Sustainable Workforce," with Scott Leystra, Cam Farrell, TJ Klopp, Phillip Wiedrick and Mark Chambers, and "Health Talk – Improving Your Performance" with Ryan Tenbergen.

Please join the SWOPC planning committee at our annual event with the latest and most up to date pork production information that you can take back to your operation. This conference has lots to offer and all pork producers should plan to attend.

Registration opened December 1, 2025. Conference information, sponsorship opportunities, and registration can be viewed at <http://www.ridgetownnc.com/about/swopc>. Registration includes all the day's activities plus a delicious pork dinner!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Reporter goes through stage, after stage...

Farm View's reporter Don Beaulieu continues to host an open stage in Wasaga Beach in 2026. Beaulieu has hosted thousands of open stage evenings over the decades. The excitement and pleasure of introducing and hearing new talent every week "...is something I live for" he says.

He says "Some of the quietest, most unassuming folk become absolutely dynamic when they hit the stage. Those surprises are awesome!"

Beaulieu operates a professional sound system that will have any singer/musician sounding their best. Many performers appreciate his attentiveness to sound and to making performers feel comfortable.

There is no limit to the age or ability of talent, no auditioning. Sign-up for a time on stage when you arrive. Beaulieu thanks The Hive Restaurant & Pub in Wasaga Beach for allowing him to present this opportunity to the community each week.

OPEN STAGE
Wednesdays
6 to 9 p.m.
Hosted by Don Beaulieu

Bring us music, poetry, stories or comedy!

at **The Hive** Restaurant and Pub
1441 Mosley Street, Wasaga Beach

Seating reservations required:
705-429-2773

Performer questions: Don at don@donshots.ca

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Happy Birthday to Shawn,
an amazing husband and dad!



Thank you for being my constant support, my favourite date, and the very best company at Farm View events and everywhere in between. I'm so grateful for your love and your patience, we are so lucky to have you—today and always!

COMING EVENTS

2026 Grey Ag Services Winter Courses Updated

The full winter course schedule is live, and registration is officially open. This winter's course lineup spans practical farm skills, livestock health, dairy and goat production, regenerative and soil-focused agriculture, flower farming, small space landscaping, composting, sewing basics, and equine care—offering something valuable for producers of all kinds.

View courses by visiting the Grey Ag website & sign up in whichever way is easiest for you: Call 519-986-3756, email info@greyagservices.ca or online <https://www.greyagservices.ca/courses-webinars>

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International Super W4 farm tractor.
22 x 32 or 22 x 38 Dion Threshing Machine.
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FREE ADS

WANTED, church organist
St Georges Anglican Church in Utopia is currently seeking a person proficient in piano and organ to lead our choir during Sunday morning service 9 am. We are a small congregation and the remuneration would be in the form of a monthly honorarium. To discuss this opportunity further, please call Sandi Schneider at 705-424-5735.

Purebred Bluefaced Leicester
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Wanted straw chopper for John Deere 4400 combine. Call 519-338-2688 Harriston area.

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11-12 x 26 tractor chains \$275.00

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Free Classifieds

Free classified word ads (maximum of 40 words) are for non-profit individuals and farm groups. Ads can be mailed or emailed. They must reach us by the 15th of the month before the next month's issue. Telephone orders are invoiced at \$15 for the first 25 words. Word ads run in one issue only and must be re-submitted each month to repeat. For mail-in ads, use the space below to neatly print out your FREE classified word advertisement.

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Stewart's Equipment Stayner Location:
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ON, LOM 1S0 **705-428-3132**

Erin Location:
9410 Wellington Rd 124, Erin,
Corner of 124 & 24 ON,
NOB1T0 **519-833-9616**

Cookstown Location:
4321 Line 13, Cookstown,
Corner of 27 & line 13 ON,
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Snow: it's a fact of life in Canada. Removing it quickly and efficiently is critical for Canadians, so Kubota recognizes the importance of providing snow removal operators with cold-weather tested equipment that can help them to keep the country moving.

Used Equipment


Kubota M110
hours ua: 2350, 4wd, cab/heat/air, 2 sets of remotes, 540 rpm, front and rear wipers, 13.6r24 fronts, 18.4r34 rears, horst lasb4200w915 wing blade, In Erin. **\$78,000**


Kubota MX540HSTRC
hours showing:564, diesel, 4wd, rops with canopy, one remote, 3rd funtion hydraulic loader, ss q/a , 72" bucket, bh92 backhoe 18" pin on bucket, 540 pto, industrial tires, In Stayner. **\$57,800**


Massey Ferguson 235
hours showing: 891.3, gas, 540 rpm, open station with no rops, loader and bucket , 6:00 x 16 front tires, 13.6 x 28, Unit is located at Stewarts Equipment in Erin. **\$5,800**


Case 570MXT
5151.4 hours ua, cab with heat, 4wd, with loader, 12x16.5 front tires, 17.5x24 rear tires, bucket and pallet forks, horst lasb400010 blade, and bauman 2260h sander, In Erin. **\$36,900**


Daewoo MG200-III
hours showing: 1124, original one owner! 4wd, loader, cab with heat and air, side mirrors , 20.5r25 tires, Unit is located at Stewarts Equipment in Erin. **\$78,500**


Can-am Defender XT
528.9 klm showing, cab enclosure with heat, camo unit, front bumper, front windshield wiper, manual dump box, winch, Unit is located at Stewart's Equipment in Erin. **\$18,850**


Kubota BX2680
hours showing: 242, diesel, 4wd, 540 pto, turf tires, hydrostatic trans, loader, manual quick attach with 48" bucket, work lights, rear wheel weights. Unit is located at Stewarts Equipment in Cookstown. **\$18,200**


Caterpillar IT14G
8761.7 hours ua , 2006 , cab with heat and air , 17.5r25 tires , auxilliary hydraulics , bucket with cat it24 quick attach, Unit is located at Stewart's Equipment in Erin. **\$63,900**


Kubota L4310
Hours showing: 1847.60, 4wd, open station w/foldable rops, 540 rpm, one remote, glide shift, 8-16 fronts, 14.9-24 rears, grill guard, kubota la682 loader with bucket, Unit is in Erin. **\$14,900**


Kubota L4060
1,380.5 Hours, Cab/Heat/Air, Radio, Diesel, 3 Range Hydrostatic Trans, 4wd, 2 remotes, 540 PTO 9.5-32 Rears, 8-16 Fronts,bauman 1040h spreader, and hla lasb3600 v blade, In Erin. **\$24,900**


Case Maxxum 125
hours showing:458.5, 4WD, cab/heat/air, 14.9r28 fronts, front fenders, 18.4r38 rears, 2 remotes, 16x16 auto shift, fender mounted switches, 540 rpm, metal plessis snow blade **\$126,900**


John Deere 6110M
hours showing: 1251.6, 4wd, diesel, cab/heat/air, 24x24 trans, forward and reverse hyd. shuttle, 2 remotes, 540 rpm, buddy seat, loader ready, 420/70r24 fronts, 480/70r38 rears, **\$86,900**

STEWARTSEQUIP.COM

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Follow Us



WITH OUR THANKS as the New Year begins

We're truly grateful for readers like you,
and wish you all a very happy and prosperous year.

From all of us at Farm View

Bringing you agricultural news since 1977

Serving the Agricultural communities of Simcoe and Dufferin
Counties and the Regions of York, Peel and Muskoka.
As well as farm communities in Grey, Bruce, Victoria,
Durham, Wellington and Haliburton Counties.

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is proud to
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Community
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