



The Messenger

OSMA and the Industry

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Out and About: June Recap

Wonder what OSMA gets up to in a month? Here are the highlights of where we were representing you!

June 17 – Climate Change Meeting

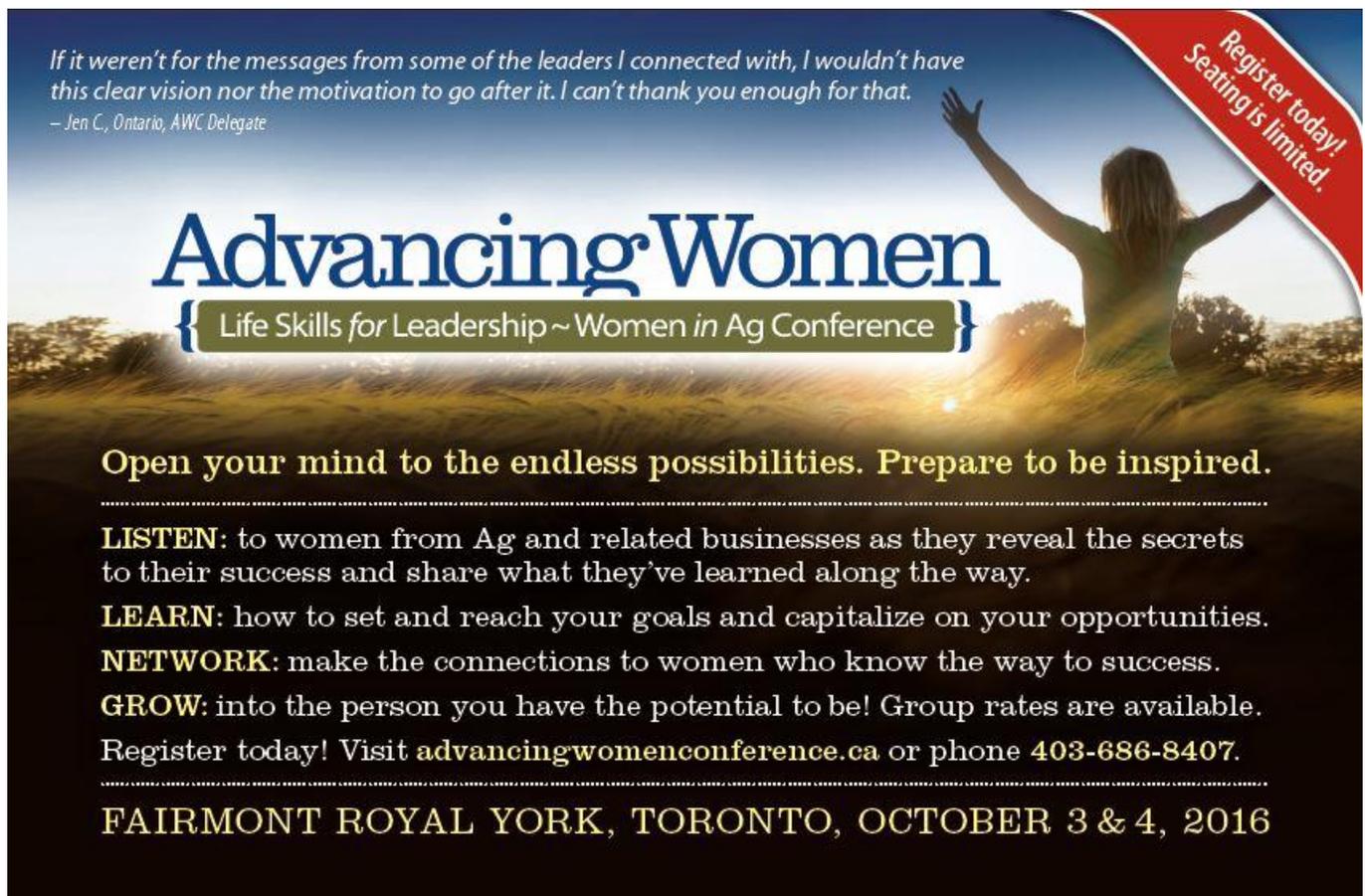
June 20 – Ontario Agricultural Sustainability Coalition Leaders Meeting

June 21 – Canadian Animal Health Coalition Board Meeting

June 22 – Market Access Working Group Meeting

June 23 – GenOvis Meeting

June 24 – Growth Strategy Meeting



If it weren't for the messages from some of the leaders I connected with, I wouldn't have this clear vision nor the motivation to go after it. I can't thank you enough for that.
– Jen C., Ontario, AWC Delegate

Advancing Women
Life Skills for Leadership ~ Women in Ag Conference

Open your mind to the endless possibilities. Prepare to be inspired.

LISTEN: to women from Ag and related businesses as they reveal the secrets to their success and share what they've learned along the way.

LEARN: how to set and reach your goals and capitalize on your opportunities.

NETWORK: make the connections to women who know the way to success.

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Register today! Visit advancingwomenconference.ca or phone 403-686-8407.

FAIRMONT ROYAL YORK, TORONTO, OCTOBER 3 & 4, 2016

Register today!
Seating is limited.

National Survey Shows Farmers Need and Want Mental Health Help

Owen Roberts, Real Agriculture

No one is saying farmers aren't tough.

But when it comes to mental illness, it turns out they have the same vulnerabilities as everyone else – and more.

A mental health literacy training program and mental health emergency response model for Ontario farmers are being created now, following early results of a study that shows producers are experiencing problems on the job.

The study, led by University of Guelph population medicine professor Andria Jones-Bitton, reveals that stress, anxiety, depression, emotional exhaustion and burnout are all higher among farmers than among other populations

She and the Ontario Veterinary College AWARD2E group — an acronym for Advancing Wellness and Resilience in Research and Education — started out studying mental health among veterinarians. The scope of the problem grew as it became clear producers too had issues.

And now, after analyzing more than 1,100 responses nationwide to her online stress and resilience survey (conducted from last September to this January), she has data that shows significant levels of mental health problems exist among producers.

For example, 45 per cent of the respondents who participated in the survey were classified as having high stress.

Another 58 per cent were classified with varying levels of anxiety. And 35 per cent with depression.

Overall, that's 2-4 times higher than farmers studied in the UK and Norway.

Other signs of mental health problems revealed by the survey are equally concerning to Jones-Bitton.

Significant numbers of farmers said they had high levels of emotional exhaustion (38 per cent) and cynicism (43 per cent). And resilience, popularly believed to be a strength among producers, was actually shown to be lower among two-thirds of the respondents than it is among a comparative US population.

“Some of the producer comments leave little doubt about the impact their job and culture is having on them,” she says. “One said, ‘We are not invincible, but we feel we must be’. Another said, ‘What makes me the most upset is that I have everything I dreamed of — love, family and a farm — and all I feel is overwhelmed, out of control and sad’.”

“We can do better by our producers,” Jones-Bitton says.

Indeed, in agriculture, a stigma — weakness, mainly — is associated with mental health treatment. So it followed that the survey showed 40 per cent of respondents said they'd feel uneasy getting professional help “because of what people might think.”

Another 31 per cent said seeking professional help could stigmatize a person's life. Fewer than half believe there is adequate mental health support from the industry.

But producers haven't thrown in the towel. For example, more than three-quarters said professional mental services can be helpful in times of struggle, and almost as many said they would seek out such help. Interestingly, about two-thirds said getting help does not constitute weakness.

Buoyed by this interest and enthusiasm for help, Jones-Bitton is starting to take some action. “There are positive attitudes among farmers about getting help, so that's what we're trying to do,” she says.

With support from the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, she's building a team of producers, industry, veterinarians and mental health professionals to create, deliver and evaluate a mental health literacy training program for farmers.

Part of this program will be designed to train people to recognize and respond to mental distress, and reduce stigma around mental health issues in Ontario's agricultural sector.

As well, the team will create a mental health emergency response model. It's a result of issues raised in the mental health survey and elsewhere about the impact of agricultural emergencies on producers.

Jones-Bitton says the way such emergencies affect livestock and the economy is well known. But that's not the case when it comes to the effect of emergencies such as the PED virus and avian influenza outbreaks, which Ontario farmers lived through in the recently.

So, the mental health project she's undertaking will address the experiences of farmers during agricultural emergencies, as well as everyday occupational stresses.

Plus, it will document help-seeking behaviours, motivations and barriers, and explore perceived ideals for mental health programming.

"We need to do something," she says. "Farmers want help, and we're going to find ways for them to receive it."

Managing Forages in a Dry Year

While all of the dry weather this past month has been ideal for making quality hay, forage yields have been down slightly. With July upon us, it is time to consider how to maximize the remaining growing season and get the most from the forages that are available.

It is very important to manage pastures to avoid overgrazing. Rotational grazing should be utilized and managed so that pastures have a chance to rest, recharge and maintain their root reserves so that they are ready to grow again when there is moisture present. If a pasture is grazed down before the next one is ready, it may be beneficial to start supplementing hay. As a rule of thumb, pastures should be 10-12 inches tall when the animals go in, and there should be 4-6 inches left when animals are removed from the pasture. Starting supplementation, or utilizing a hay field as pasture, to allow the pastures enough time to recover, will increase dry matter yields over the course of the season.

In times of tight inventory, it can be very economical to re-evaluate forage harvesting, storage and feeding practices. In some systems over 50% dry matter loss can occur between the field and what is eaten. When making hay, it is important to try to minimize the number of times that hay is handled, as every time hay is worked, high quality leaves fall off and wheel traffic causes some damage to the plants. It is also important to get the forage off of the field as quickly as possible and into proper storage. Leaving hay in the field longer than necessary can reduce regrowth. Putting the forage into storage as soon as possible can significantly reduce the amount of dry matter that is lost, significantly increasing the amount of usable dry matter harvested. In some older feeding systems, the animals waste a significant amount of forage, and finding more efficient ways of feeding is often a very economical way to extend your forages.

Planting a cereal crop following winter wheat, or another cereal, provides a good way to incorporate cover crops and increase production on a field. One of the easiest cover crops to grow would be oats, oats and barley, or, if higher protein content is desired, triticale or peas can be added to the mix. The cereal should be planted in early August with 50 lbs of Nitrogen and will be ready to harvest in 6-8 weeks. It should be cut when the oats are heading out and harvested as baleage or silage because the cool weather and shorter days in the fall, will make drying very difficult. Planting a cereal crop following winter wheat, has increased benefits for the soil as it will provide a cover to help stabilize the soil and prevent erosion over the course of the fall. Another useful cereal for forage is fall rye, it can be planted in August or September and provide forage in the spring or fall. It is more winter hardy than wheat and produces more growth, and if saved for spring pasture or forage, it will provide ground cover all winter to help maintain snow cover on the field and reduce erosion. Fall rye should be planted in mid August-early September for fall grazing and up to the end of September for spring forage. In the spring if it is planted on well-drained soil it can provide early pasture, or it can be cut for hay in the middle of May and followed with a soybean crop.

More information on dealing with dry weather can be found online at:

<http://www.omafr.gov.on.ca/english/crops/weather/adverseweather.html>

Noise Regulations Change for Farmers in Ontario

As of July 1st 2016 all employers in Ontario, including farmers, are required to comply with new workplace noise regulations under the Occupational Health and Safety Act. The [legislation](#) states that farmers and other employers shall ensure that their employees are not exposed to hazardous levels of noise. Hazardous noise, according to the legislation, is 85 dBA or louder, for a time period of approximately eight hours. Examples of 85 dBA are illustrated below. This legislation does not apply to self-employed farmers with no employees.

What this Means to Farmers

This results in additional responsibilities for farmers to ensure safe working conditions for their employees.

Key changes:

- Farmers shall take reasonable measures for the circumstances, to protect workers from exposure to hazardous sound levels.
- Noise protective measures may be engineering controls (altering work environment), work practices and, where required and permitted, hearing protection devices.
- Measurements of sound levels in the workplace (for the purpose of determining appropriate protective measures) shall be done without regard to the use or effect of hearing protective devices.
- Employers should ensure that workers are not exposed to hazardous sound levels of 85 dBA, for eight hours.
- Except for certain circumstances, employers shall protect workers from exposure to hazardous sound levels without requiring workers to wear hearing protective devices.
- Protective hearing devices are not to be used as a primary means of protecting hearing only in the certain circumstances listed below.
- Where practicable, clearly visible warning signs shall be posted at every approach to an area in the workplace where the sound level regularly exceeds 85 dBA.

The Use of Hearing Protective Devices

Hearing protective devices shall be used if other forms of protection such as modifying equipment, absorbing noise, or changing frequency of noise cannot be achieved due to:

- not in existence or are not obtainable;
- not reasonable or not practical to adopt, install or provide because of the duration or frequency of the exposures or because of the nature of the process, operation or work;
- rendered ineffective; or
- are ineffective to prevent, control or limit exposure because of an emergency.

Training and Instruction on the Use of Hearing Protective Devices

If hearing protection devices are provided employers shall also provide adequate training and instruction on the care and use of the device including its limitations, proper fit, inspection and maintenance and if applicable the cleaning and disinfection of the device.

Selecting Hearing Protection Devices

When selecting hearing protection devices consider:

- sound levels to which a worker is exposed;
- the reduction provided by the device; and
- The manufacturer's information about the use and limitations of the device.

A hearing protection device shall be used and maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

Summary of Changes

In situations where noise levels are hazardous farmers shall consider the particular circumstances of the situation and use engineering controls, safe work practices and in certain circumstances, provide employees with proper hearing protection devices and necessary training for how to use.

<http://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/>

<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/r15381>

Grasslands Stewardship Program Now Open to Producers Across Ontario

The Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association, in partnership with Environment and Climate Change Canada, is pleased to announce the availability of the new Grassland Stewardship Program (GSP), the first program offered in Ontario under the Species at Risk Partnerships on Agricultural Lands initiative. This unique funding program is now accepting applications until July 5th under the first intake, with a second intake scheduled to close August 15th.

A new program for Ontario's farmers, the Grassland Stewardship Program encourages producer actions that support healthy farm habitats for bobolink and other grassland birds. "Unlike most other programs we offer, the Grassland Stewardship Program is delivered using a competitive bid process. This allows farmers to customize their application to fit their farm and financial needs, and gives us the assurance that we are funding projects with the most beneficial impact for grassland birds," said Gord Green, President of OSCIA.

The competitive bid process may be new to some, but is a proven model that saw success in the Grassland Habitat Farm Incentive Program, which funded critical farm-habitat projects in past years. Revitalized for this program, GSP is accepting bids for five Best Management Practices that are critical to conserving grassland bird habitat: Control of Encroaching Trees and Shrubs through Mowing; Pasture Rejuvenation; Incorporating Delayed Grazing in Rotational Grazing Systems; Native Grassland Restoration; and Forage Harvest Management (Delayed Haying). Both single and multi-year projects are eligible under Native Grassland Restoration and Forage Harvest Management categories.

"With grassland birds being so particular about their habitat, this program allows us to support projects that meet the needs of the birds and the producers, while selecting for optimal farm habitat that will mean the most to these sensitive bird populations," expressed Christine Schmalz, Environmental Programs Manager at OSCIA.

Another new aspect of the GSP is Conservation Agreements between funded producers and Environment and Climate Change Canada, signed for up to three years. These agreements aim to provide habitat protection for sensitive grassland birds while providing producers a funding guarantee for multi-year projects. Applications for GSP are entirely digital and must be completed online. To apply, visit the OSCIA website at www.ontariosoilcrop.org/oscia-programs/sarpal/gsp.

Funding for the Grassland Stewardship Program is provided through Species at Risk Partnerships on Agricultural Lands (SARPAL), an Environment and Climate Change Canada initiative. GSP is delivered by OSCIA.

For more information on the Grassland Stewardship Program, visit the OSCIA website or contact OSCIA directly at 226-706-8668 or SARPAL@ontariosoilcrop.org.

The Bio of Food

Mike McMorris, Bio, General Manager

Today's consumer is more and more interested in knowing about their food. That may include where it came from, something about the farmer and/or processor that produced it, specific production practices along the way, nutritional composition, etc. More than that though, they have moved beyond wanting the story of food, they want a biography.

Humans are storytellers at heart. Before we developed an alphabet, our stories were oral and were passed from one generation to the next. In today's world, with a growing cynicism of consumers and multiple communication channels, a story simply doesn't meet expectations. Consumers want proof and the only way to provide that proof is to document data and information along the supply chain. That collection of documentation for a particular item is in effect its own biography.

There will always be a market for products without a story but that market will continue to shrink and price differences between products with a bio and those without can be expected to increase. Just think of any other market

segment beyond food and how even the simplest biography (a brand name) can impact market demand and price. By adding more information to your product, the discriminating consumer is more likely to consider purchasing that item.

A recent survey by the Canadian Centre for Food Integrity found that 21% of respondents feel that the Canadian food system is headed in the wrong direction while another 50% are unsure. This is a sobering finding and yet it presents a wonderful opportunity: 50% of consumers are waiting to be shown that everyone along the food supply chain is doing their part to build consumer trust. Specific concerns identified by consumers related to production practices (particularly animal welfare), faith in inspection systems (particularly food safety) and trust of specific sectors (particularly food retail and government) within the supply chain. As the old saying goes “A chain is only as strong as its weakest link” and so everyone along the supply chain should take the results seriously.

Businesses along the supply chain have different challenges in effectively capturing data and managing information to be more successful. There are several systems available to help do that. When considering these systems for your own business, be sure to ask these ten important questions:

1. Does it allow me to capture data **easily** and in **real time**?
2. Is my **data safe** should my computer malfunction?
3. Can it be **customized** to meet my own business needs and preferences?
4. Is there a **support** team available when I need help?
5. Does the system do more than collect data by creating **valuable information**?
6. Can I easily **share data** with those that I want to connect with?
7. Is it **web-based** so that updates are not a problem?
8. Can I use it on my **smart phone**?
9. Can I use it **out of internet range**?
10. What does it **cost**?

Too often people start with question #10. Another old saying is that “You get what you pay for” and while cost is obviously a consideration, you need to ask questions 1-9 first to be able to determine value.

Ensuring that you provide a bio on your product, whether that is an animal, a crop, or a finished product is your way of providing transparency to consumers. More and more, consumers demand nothing less... they want a biography.

Upcoming Events

For more information on any upcoming events please visit the OSMA website at: www.ontariosheep.org/Events.aspx or contact the OSMA Office at 519-836-0043.

July 7 **OSMA Board Meeting**

July 16 **District 3 Summer BBQ:** Come join us for a catered event coupled with a great speaker. Jason Emke will be joining us to share his personal and professional experience with Farm Expansion. Graciously hosted by Follings Farm, 2348 Line 37 RR#1, Stratford, ON N5A 6S2. **Please RSVP by July 1st to one of our board members: Ian VanBlyderveen 519-424-3894, Susan Tyler 519-868-4908, Sandi Brock 519-319-1914, or Ron or Lorraine Follings 519-274-5155 or 519-274-5156**

July 17 **Western ON Lamb Producers Summer Meeting:** Beginning at 3pm, potluck supper at Jamie Heffer’s cabin - 42258 Howick Turnberry Road, (turn onto Keiffer Lane) Wingham, ON. **RSVP by July 8, 2016 to westernontariolambproducers@gmail.com or call 519-392-8624**

Aug 10-14 **Canadian National Sheepdog Championships:** to be held in Woodville, ON. For more information visit <http://www.ontariobordercolliclub.com/obcc-home>

Aug 13 **Rideau Focus 2016:** Hosted at Breezy Ridge Farm, Georgina, ON. <http://goo.gl/Hwt7gx>

Other Organizations and Reference Information

Victoria County Sheep Producers

Third Wednesday every month starting at 7:30 Oakwood Elevators (Taylor Road, Oakwood)
Membership is \$20 per farm per year. Contact: Peter Craig at pdcraig@outlook.com

Western Ontario Lamb Producers

District 2 and 3, for more information email westernontariolambproducers@gmail.com

Southwestern Ontario Sheep Farmers

Meetings 4th Thursday of the month: January to April

Coldstream Community Centre; 10227 Ilderton Road, 519-666-2423

Chair – Wendy McGowan, 519- 657-5197, Secretary – Geraldine Pennings, 519-764-2455

DISTRICT	CONTACT	INFORMATION
Dist 1	Dave DeKay at 519-666-0626 or dmdekay@isp.ca	http://osma_district_1.tripod.com/
Dist 2	Matt Zehr at 519-363-2029 zehr.matt@gmail.com	
Dist 3	Sandi Brock at 519-263-2325 brocksandi@hotmail.com	District 3 Facebook Page
Dist 4	Jay Mycroft at 905-957-1114 or jay.mycroft@xplornet.com	Meetings tentatively to be held the 3 rd Wed. of the month at 7:30 at Ancaster Fairgrounds (630 Trinity Rd, Ancaster)
Dist 5	Dianne Orr at 519-928-5302 or orr7@sympatico.ca	Check out the District 5 Facebook Page!
Dist 6	Karen Harvey at 905-729-3196 or pkharvey@zing-net.ca	
Dist 7	Judy Dening at 705-324-3453 or theshepherdsgate@xplornet.com	
Dist 8	Michelle Voskamp at 613-848-8972 or secretary@osmadistrict8.ca	Meetings are normally held on the 3 rd Thurs of every month at 7 pm at Napanee High School. District 8 Facebook Page
Dist 9	Tyler Armstrong at 613-433-8255 or pinnaclehaven@gmail.com	
Dist 10	Christine Power at 613-686-1892 or christine.power@ic.gc.ca	Check out our Facebook page!
Dist 11	Debra Garner at 705-563-2761 or bill.debgarner@gmail.com	