

THINK GREEN!

2024



Hay As A Cash Crop - Forage Focus Tour is Dec 6th (pg 2)

CFGGA Conference Comes To Guelph This December (pg 2)

President's Report (pg 3)

General Manager's Report (pg 4)

Mapleseed Pasture Award Winners (pg 8)

Research Update (pg 10)



FORAGE FOCUS 2024 & CFGA CONFERENCE



Held in conjunction with the CFGA Annual Conference in Guelph this year, Forage Focus is a day-long tour with stops at hay production hubs, where you'll learn more about the markets available to Ontario hay producers.

This is an excellent opportunity for those looking to expand their operation, as well as those thinking about getting started with hay production.

AGENDA - December 6, 2024 at 9:30am

Stop 1: Marcrest Hay Storage in Gorrie

- See hay dryers and innovative hay storage

Stop 2: Marcrest Manufacturing

- Tour where the Bale Baron is made
- Lunch provided by Marcrest Manufacturing

Stop 3: Marhaven in Drayton

- See Chinook hay dryer and the Hay Press
- Panel discussion on opportunities present for hay producers
- A trade show will be held at this location

Cost: FREE! But registration is required.



More information available at: onforagenetwork.ca/ontario-forage-council/forage-focus

For sponsorship or trade show information, please email admin@ontarioforagecouncil.com.



Roots to Success
The Foundation of Resilient Agriculture
15TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Les racines de la réussite
Les bases d'une agriculture résiliente
15E CONGRES ANNUEL

#CFGA24



Ontario Forage Council is pleased to be partnering with the Canadian Forage and Grassland Association (CFGA) for the 15th annual CFGA conference, being held at the Delta Hotel in Guelph this year, from December 3-6. This year's theme is **Roots to Success: The Foundation of Resilient Agriculture**.

During this not-to-be-missed three-day event, attendees will learn about exciting and cutting-edge happenings in the forage sector and gain valuable information and inspiration for anyone involved in the forage and grassland sectors across the country.

Don't miss the great events like the **Hay Exporter and Marketer Social**, and the **Young Farmer Forum Luncheon**.

More information available at: www.canadianfga.ca/en/events/conference-2024/



For sponsorship information, please email info@canadianfga.ca.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By Birgit Martin



Hello Ontario forage producers!

2024 has been a busy year for the Ontario Forage Council and more is still on the way this year! The highlights of the year so far include:

- 3 Profitable Pastures webinars in March that you can find on our YouTube channel youtube.com/@ontarioforagecouncil
- Multiple pasture walks (from Amherst Island to Grey County, Simcoe County and Dufferin County) with videos posted to our YouTube channel. Two of the walks were on the farms of our Mapleseed Pasture Award winners, JPD Angus in Simcoe County and Riverview Ranch in Dufferin County. Congratulation again to both the Chalmers and Swidersky families on their awards!
- Forage Expos in both Huron County and Eastern Valley that showcased forage equipment to great crowds. Pictures are on our website. onforagenetwork.ca/ontario-forage-council

Yet to come this year is Forage Focus with its theme “Hay as a Cash Crop”. It will be a day long tour to hay production hubs looking at hay bundling, drying and pressing equipment and sites. It’s a free event but you have to register. Go to our website to find the registration link.

Finally, this year Ontario is hosting the Canadian Forage and Grasslands Association annual conference in Guelph December 3-6. This year’s theme is “Roots to Success – The Foundation of Resilient Agriculture”. This event will bring together policy, research, extension and producers with a diverse agenda. A special producer rate is available for farmers in Ontario and Quebec, so check it out and register at canadianfga.ca.

Hope to see you in December!

UPCOMING EVENTS

onforagenetwork.ca/events

- Find upcoming events
- Submit an event

GREY BRUCE FARMERS' WEEK

Beef - Dairy - Goat - Sheep - Horse - Crops - Ecological
An Ag Conference for Everyone!

January 8th - 14th 2025
www.gbfw.ca

In-person at the Elmwood Community Centre and Livestreamed.

Subscribe to The Forage Update

Stay up-to-date on what's happening at the Ontario Forage Council and get your forage industry news and event updates!

ONFORAGENETWORK.CA/SUBSCRIBE

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

By Patricia Ellingwood



2024 has been an exciting year for the Ontario Forage Council! I won't delve into the details of the events; that would spoil the whole newsletter for you! But, as you peruse the pages of event summaries, and

acknowledgements ahead, I would like you to note all the great people who brought this informative programming to hayfields and pastures this year. Each and every activity on the Council's agenda was a collaboration of thoughts, ideas, and actions.

A huge thank you to the OFC Members, and Board of Directors; Birgit Martin (Chair)– OSCIA, Joe Dickenson (Vice Chair) – Independent, Terry Nuhn (Past President) – Nuhn Forage, Joan McKinlay – OFC Communications, Christine O'Reilly - OMAFA, Roger Boerson – DFO, Donna Hancock – University of Guelph, Jim Whitley - BFO, Scott Fisher – Mapleseed, Michael Richards – OSF, Lawrence Levesque – Speare Seeds. Another big thank you to our Grazing Mentors; Birgit Martin, Joe Dickenson, Anita O'Brien, Dean Cober, and Mike Swidersky.



Thank you to the many OMAFA staff members that support our activities. To our multiple event hosts, including Huron and Eastern Valley Soil and Crop Improvement Associations, their staff members, trade show participants, sponsors, and all other hands that came together this past year, THANK YOU!

A final thank you to Rebecca Vito who joined the OFC staff as Executive Assistant last year, but quickly became our Communications Specialist and an integral part of the team! Rebecca has worked with Joan McKinlay to revamp not only this publication, but to also to initiate the monthly Forage Update! She is responsible for our active social media and YouTube presence, so please check out our pages, watch our videos, and reach out if you have something to share!

Through each collaboration, another unfolds, and OFC has been hosting joint meetings with the members of the Conseil Québécois des Plantes Fourragères (CQPF) to investigate expanding those collaboration opportunities with our neighbors in Quebec. We have also reached out to the Manitoba Forage & Grassland Association (MFGA) and are now jointly sharing event information and news to expand our reach, and opportunities for our producers across all three provinces! Check out our website for updates!

It has been a pleasure to work with so many passionate people to bring these activities to life, and I look forward to the exciting and new projects and collaborations we have planned for 2025. Stay tuned!



Follow us on Facebook!

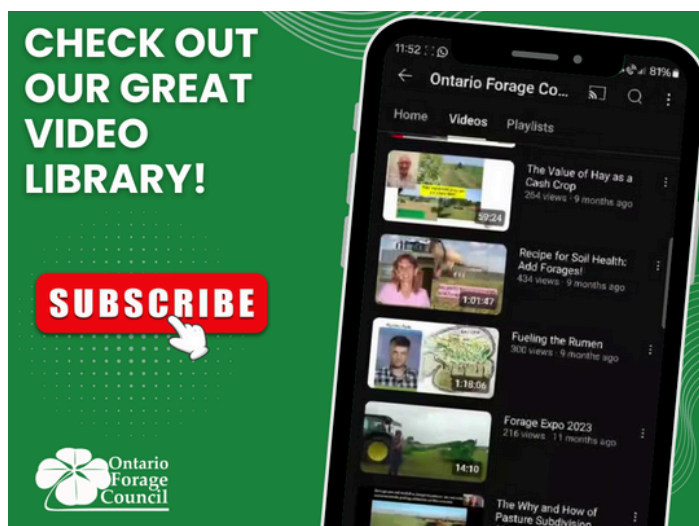
facebook.com/ONForageCouncil

FORAGE FOCUS 2023

Continuing with the success of the last few years, Forage Focus was once again held as a webinar series in December. Geared towards bringing new ideas and research to Ontario forage producers and the commercial hay sector, this event once again hit the mark with three excellent presentations and a bonus presentation:

- **Fueling the rumen** with Matt Groen
- **Recipe for soil health: Add forages!** with Chris Brown
- **The value of hay in crop rotations** with Pat Lynch
- **Who is the Ontario Hay & Forage Co-operative and what is export hay?** with Fritz Trauttmansdorff

Feedback from the event was very positive, with all respondents in a post-event survey saying they had improved knowledge as a result of attending Forage Focus. That's what we like to hear!



PROFITABLE PASTURES 2024

Record registrations set the tone for a fantastic Profitable Pastures webinar series in March of 2024. The goal of this event to bring fresh ideas and research results to Ontario grazing managers.

This year's presentations were:

Getting started with rotational grazing with Joe Dickenson - Aimed towards those who are new to rotational grazing, Joe provided examples of different systems and the basic tools you might need.

Predicting cattle performance from pasture with James Byrne - To get the most out of your pastures, it's important to think about them from the animal's perspective. James discussed his

method for doing just that.

The best money spent on the ranch with Dallas Mount - Dallas discussed the various uses of profit and how to make decisions that will increase your profit and improve your operation.

All presentations can be found on our YouTube channel where they've quickly become some of our most popular videos!



WATCH ON YOUTUBE

youtube.com/@ontarioforagecouncil



Forage Focus and Profitable Pastures are a partnership between OFC & OMAFA.

ADVANCED GRAZING MENTORSHIP PASTURE WALKS

From a tornado warning, to a trip on the Amherst Island ferry, and a whole lot of incredible information and camaraderie, this year's Advanced Grazing Mentorship Pasture Walks had something for everyone.

In partnership with Farmers for Climate Solutions and the Canadian Forage and Grassland Association, OFC hosted four pasture walks focusing on different aspects of rotational grazing. Topics included tips and tricks for fencing, different ways of moving animals between pastures, and discussions on water systems. Christine O'Reilly from OMAFA helped attendees think more critically about what is happening to their pasture plants and how long they need to recover.

The Grazing Mentors for these events included Mark Ritchie, Anita O'Brien, Dean Cober, Mike Swidersky, Joe Dickenson, Michaela Stoneman and the Chalmers family, and Birgit Martin.

Videos from the 2024 pasture walks will be available to view on our [YouTube channel](#) over the winter. Subscribe to be notified when videos are released. The 2023 pasture walk videos are already available.

Find more information, including blog posts from a couple of attendees on our website, onforagenetwork.ca/ontario-forage-council/advanced-grazing-mentorship-program



Continue your learning with the Advanced Grazing Systems online course.

Head to farmlearninghub.ca to get started for free.



Forage U-Pick
Canada's interactive forage species selection tool

Now Canada-wide and bilingual

upick.beefresearch.ca

The advertisement features a background image of a herd of cows in a green field under a blue sky. The text is overlaid on this image, with the website URL at the bottom.

FORAGE EXPO

Our Forage Expo events were a big success in 2024! These events gave over 500 attendees the chance to see the latest forage equipment, watch field demos, attend the trade show, and network with other producers.

The temperature was hot enough to make you melt on July 4th in Gorrie for the **Huron County Forage Expo**, but that didn't keep people away. Fifty pieces of equipment were registered for the event, ranging from mowers, rakes, and tedders, to mergers, balers, and harvesters. Equipment demos kept the field busy all day and then attendees were invited to check out the hay dryers across the road.

Eastern Valley Forage Expo in St. Isidore was thrown a curveball in the days leading up to the July 12th event when the rain from Hurricane Beryl passed through, leaving fields completely saturated. Showing the typical creativity and ingenuity of farmers, alternate plans were made for site setup and parking, while in-field demos were cancelled. Equipment reps kept the day going with engaging presentations and mowers eventually made it into the field for demos in front of eager attendees.

At both locations this year a Firefighter Experience night was held to provide local first responders with the opportunity to see the equipment up close.



**ONTARIO HAY
MARKETING FORUM**



Contact our members
for all your hay needs
bit.ly/ontariohay

Thank you to our partners: OMAFA, Huron County SCIA and Eastern Valley SCIA.

MAPLESEED PASTURE AWARD - SHEEP

WALKERTON FAMILY RECEIVES 2024 MAPLESEED SHEEP PASTURE AWARD



Steve and Lisa Ernewein and family of Meadowbrook Family Farm in the Brockton/Walkerton area are the recipient of the 2024 Mapleseed Sheep Pasture Award. The award, sponsored by Mapleseed, the Ontario Forage Council, and Ontario Sheep Farmers, was presented today at the Ontario Sheep Farmers Annual General Meeting in Cambridge. For their exceptional pasture management while running a highly involved multi-faceted enterprise, Meadowbrook Family Farm received a cash award of \$250 and a bag of forage seed, courtesy of Mapleseed.

The Erneweins' Meadow Brook Family Farm operation includes approximately 1100 ewes in total. More than 800 ewes make up the meat flock which are Dorset/Rideau cross. They also milk more than 300 British Milksheep/Lacaune cross ewes for their milk production. On the grazing cycles the dairy herd is always grazing the highest quality portions of pasture out of the approximately 240 acres of grazing area. They are not organic certified but use "organic practices". The meat flock is on a year-round

accelerated lambing syllabus, lambing 100-150 per month. The dairy generated 50,000 liters of milk this year and the goal is to take that to 100,000 liters over the coming year. The Angus/Limo beef operation is utilized as part of the dual species parasite control in conjunction with clean and safe grazing practices.

"Meadowbrook Family Farm is an excellent example of a self-sustaining pasture ecosystem."
-Patricia Ellingwood, Ontario Forage Council

Nominations are open for the 2025 Mapleseed Beef Pasture Award until November 30th. Send the name of a deserving producer, with a couple sentences about why you're nominating them, to admin@ontarioforagecouncil.com.

See previous winners on our website, <https://onforagenetwork.ca/ontario-forage-council/mapleseed-pasture-competition/>.

Go Forages.ca

A resource designed to aid Ontario's hay and biomass growers & livestock producers

**Production information
Latest research results
Decision support tools**

Ontario HAY LISTINGS

A FREE RESOURCE FOR BUYING & SELLING FORAGES

ONFORAGENETWORK.CA/ONTARIO-HAY-LISTINGS

MAPLESEED PASTURE AWARD - BEEF

JPD ANGUS WINS 2024 MAPLESEED BEEF PASTURE AWARD



The Beef Farmers of Ontario, Mapleseed and the Ontario Forage Council, sponsors of the Ontario Mapleseed Pasture Award, are pleased to announce that the Chalmers family of JPD Angus of Oro-Medonte in Simcoe County are the recipients of the 2024 Mapleseed Pasture Award. The award was presented today at the Beef Farmers of Ontario Annual General Meeting Banquet in Toronto. For their environmental improvements and exceptional pasture management, JPD Angus received a cash award of \$500 and a bag of forage seed, courtesy of Mapleseed.

At JPD Angus, the Chalmers family currently raise 60 cow-calf pairs, 20 yearling heifers and 20 yearling bulls on 120 acres of rotationally managed acres. They utilize rotational grazing as a method to both minimize damage to root systems on dry soil, and to maximize the number of cow-calf pairs per acre. While their well-drained soil has adequate moisture in the spring and fall, special attention is given to rest periods to preserve root structures and ensure pasture health and regrowth.

On the main farm, Lori and her husband Darryl manage the maternity pens, a handling barn, and 50 of the total pastured acres. Their sons Evan, Owen and Nolan all reside at home and serve in various roles on the farm – Evan manages the day-to-day operations, Owen is the lead mechanic and repair specialist, and Nolan helps with whatever needs to get done.

“We’ve been farming here since 2008. It’s a true family effort”, says Lori Chalmers.

Lori and Darryl’s daughter Michaela and her husband Chris Stoneman manage the larger group of cattle at a nearby property, which consists of 70 acres of pastureland. Michaela and Chris also take the lead with promoting their herd genetics by showing cattle at local fall fairs and the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair.

“It is a wonderful example of a beautifully manicured well-cared for farm, where the cattle get to live their best life.” - Scott Fisher, Western Ontario Sales Manager with Mapleseed.

Nominate a beef producer for the Mapleseed Pasture Award

Deadline for nominations is November 30th

Mapleseed PARTNERS IN INNOVATION Ontario Forage Council BEEF FARMERS

FORAGE RESEARCH IN ONTARIO



This trial evaluates the impact of fertility management on the yield and quality of 19 different forage mixtures available on the Ontario market.

These treatments ranged from pure grasses to pure legumes and included common hay and pasture grass-legume mixes available on the market. The three fertility treatments to be tested include: 1) zero fertility control, 2) a one-time application/yr of 100 lbs/acre of 19-19 -19 (N-P-K) fertilizer, or 3) fertilize as needed according to OMAFRA guidelines based on soil testing. The 100 lbs/acre of 19-19-19 (NPK) was a light application of nutrients and less than the OMFRA recommended rates.

An economic analysis also provides information on profitable mixtures or species for producers in Ontario. The project spanned three years (field seasons were 2020, 2021, and 2022) and was conducted at the Ontario Crops Research Centre in Elora.

Read more at <https://bit.ly/48Vhq9e>

This project is in its final year of a 3-year trial that was based at the Ontario Crops Research Station in Elora. This project is evaluating different fall cover crop treatments planted after winter wheat harvest and followed by a corn crop.

The treatments include monocultures of oat, winter pea, berseem clover, balansa clover, red clover (frost seeded) and mixtures of oat/winter pea/radish, oat/berseem clover/radish, and oat/balansa clover/radish. The experiment compared the different cover crop monocultures and mixtures and the effect of harvesting a fall forage from the cover crop.

An economic analysis was conducted on potential N credit savings related to cover crop species and additional forage income to determine the best short-term economic practices.

Read more at <https://bit.ly/48MkG6C>

Ontario Forage Council would like to thank Dr. Kim Schneider for her work on forage research and for providing these articles.



Follow us on Instagram!
[facebook.com/onforagecouncil](https://www.facebook.com/onforagecouncil)

NEWS BRIEFS

THE FORAGE UPDATE

In 2024 OFC started a new monthly email newsletter, The Forage Update, aimed at bringing you OFC updates and forage industry news and events on a more regular basis. Subscribe at onforagenetwork.ca/subscribe. Past issues can be found at bit.ly/3V3yUKX. To advertise in the newsletter, please contact Rebecca at admin@ontarioforagecouncil.com.

HAVE YOUR SAY

We're always working to better understand our audience and what you want. What topics do you want to learn more about? What locations work best for you? Take a moment to complete a brief survey to let us know about you and what you'd like to see from OFC. Head to <https://forms.gle/LG7ZTomymuZ6KM7KA>.

Here and there in 2024



Throwing it back to Forage Expo 2015



**GREY
AGRICULTURAL
SERVICES**

www.greyagservices.ca
info@greyagservices.ca
519-986-3756

A non-profit resource centre serving farmers of Grey County and beyond.

- Workshops
- Administrative & event planning services
- Ag resources
- Free meeting space for ag organizations



for a cleaner tomorrow

www.ontariobiomass.com

Working to create profitable biomass markets for Ontario farmers.

THANK YOU TO OUR MEMBERS

OFC GOLD MEMBERS



OFC SILVER MEMBERS

Can Grow Crop Solutions Inc.
DLF PICKSEED
GROWMARK
International Stock Food
Mapleseed

Marcrest Manufacturing
Nuhn Forage Inc.
OSCIA
ProRich Seeds
Quality Seeds Ltd.

Semican
SGS Agrifood Laboratories
Silo-King Forage Treatment
Speare Seeds
University of Guelph

and THANK YOU to our individual members!

“

The Ontario Forage Council brings like-minded corporations, industry groups and individuals together with a common goal of promoting the benefits and advantages of forage crops in your rotation. Forages are a very important field crop that is often underrepresented and the OFC gives us a united and stronger voice in the industry.

Terry Nuhn, Nuhn Forage Inc.

”

BECOME A MEMBER

Ontario Forage Council's vision is to promote a strong and economically sustainable forage industry in Ontario

Join the Ontario Forage Council and help steer the future of the forage industry in Ontario!

Head to <https://bit.ly/3AIXolx> for more information, or reach out through one of the methods below.

CONTACT US



877-892-8663 or 519-986-1484



support@ontarioforagecouncil.com



206 Toronto St. S., Unit 3
PO Box 463
Markdale, ON, N0C 1H0

GET SOCIAL



facebook.com/ONForageCouncil



instagram.com/onforagecouncil



x.com/ForageCouncil



youtube.com/@ontarioforagecouncil