

BIOMASS BULLETIN

— WINTER 2025 —

JOIN US FOR THE OBPC ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING IN MARCH

Come out for a great day of presentations, OBPC updates, and networking with biomass producers and researchers. Some of the presentation topics include:

- Biomass buffers and silt socks research update
- Organic matter building with biomass crops project update
- Switchgrass varieties and seed development updates
- Perennial grasses: from the agricultural field to the green industry.

Find the draft agenda at www.ontariobiomass.com.

Members of OBPC should consider running for the Board of Directors at the meeting. Be part of shaping the future of the biomass industry in Ontario!

When: Tuesday, March 18 from 10am to 3:30pm

Where: The GrandWay, 7445 Wellington Rd 21, Centre Wellington (Elora) and online

Register: <https://www.eventzilla.net/e/ontario-biomass-producers-agm-2025-2138667363>

Thank you to the Grand River Agricultural Society and Dr. Emily Chiang of the University of Guelph for supporting the AGM.



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VISIT US AT THE LONDON FARM SHOW

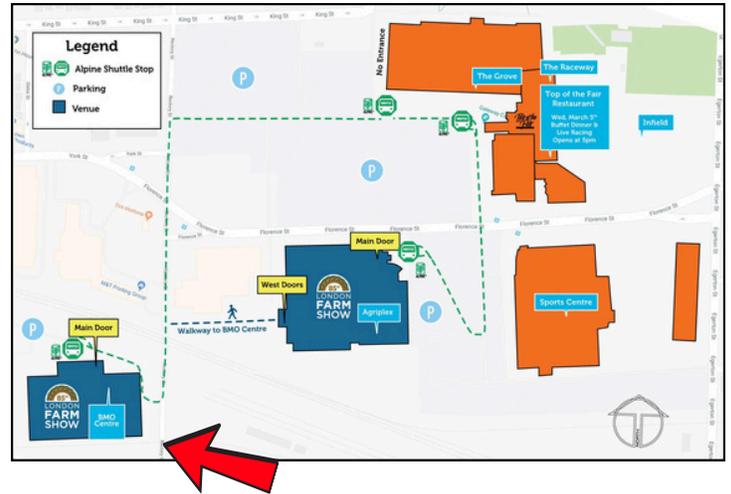
The London Farm Show is coming up in March and OBPC will be there, along with OBPC member Glenn Young's Empire Switchgrass.

Stop by our booth to talk about all things biomass. Bring your questions. Learn about growing crops like switchgrass and miscanthus. Find out why you should become an OBPC member.

When: March 5 - 7, 2025. Doors open at 9am. The show closes at 5pm on the 5th & 6th, 4pm on the 7th.

Where: The Agriplex, 845 Florence St, London & BMO Centre, 295 Rectory St, London

Learn More: londonfarmshow.com



OBPC is at booth 105 in BMO Centre

OBPC UPDATES

LOOKING TO BUY OR SELL SWITCHGRASS?

Whether you're looking to buy or sell switchgrass, reach out to OBPC Sales Rep, Bev Schenk at sales@ontariobiomass.com, or 519-741-4399.

FIND OBPC ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Give OBPC a follow on your social media platform of choice. We can be found on **Facebook**, **Instagram**, **X/Twitter**, and **LinkedIn**. Don't forget to tag us in your biomass-related posts!

While you're on Facebook, be sure to join the following groups:

- *Switchgrass for Habitat* - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1274817483284551>
- *Switchgrass for Farming* - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/6972269146227093>

WEBSITE RESOURCES

Have you visited the OBPC website lately? It's full of hundreds of great resources to help biomass producers.

www.ontariobiomass.com



Here you'll find resources covering agronomy, the biomass industry, and so much more. Check out the video library and photo gallery as well.



RESEARCH UPDATES

The Ontario Biomass Producers Co-op is a strong supporter of research. There are currently three active research projects being supported by OBPC.

Evaluating the technical and economic feasibility of harvestable biomass crops as regenerative buffer strips and silt sock packing for nutrient runoff control

Dr. Emily Chiang, University of Guelph

Buffers are strips of vegetation grown alongside natural areas, for example watercourses. They can be used as a best management practice on agricultural land to protect surface water from runoff. Buffers are typically implemented on marginal land, where they do not impact farming operations, or in environmentally sensitive areas. However, the limited adoption of buffers, especially in croplands not directly bordering a watercourse, calls for more innovative strategies to encourage its use, for run-off control, but also as a potential source of revenue, and one more tool to restore biodiversity in long-standing cropland regions. Understanding the economic benefits of harvestable biomass buffers requires a detailed evaluation on ideal placement and width of the buffer strips based on field location, logistics for harvesting, costs and returns. There are also opportunities in using the harvested biomass as filter media in silt socks, and in their use in combination with, or to complement, buffer strips. This project also intends to maximize the translation and transfer of the developed practices.

The biology and distribution of the switchgrass gall midge, an emerging pest in Ontario

Dr. Rebecca Hallett, University of Guelph

The switchgrass gall midge (SGM) was first detected in Ontario in 2020 by OMAFRA staff. Larvae of SGM develop within switchgrass tillers, causing 100% seed loss and 35% biomass yield reduction in infested tillers. Literature on SGM is insufficient and limited to South Dakota. There is a need to document the phenology and distribution of SGM in Ontario. This project will develop diagnostic tools and initial integrated pest management recommendations for switchgrass producers.

Determining the amount and long-term stability of atmospheric carbon sequestered by miscanthus and switchgrass biomass crops

Dr. Adam Gillespie, University of Guelph

Growing biomass crops, either on marginal land not suitable for food crops or in rotations with cash crops, can provide environmental benefits by sequestering carbon and improving soil health by increasing soil organic matter. This project will support climate change resilience research by providing robust estimates of soil carbon increases that can be attributed directly to biomass crops. Furthermore, the project will assess the resistance of soil carbon to decomposition (i.e., stability) to assess its long-term sequestration potential.



SPOTLIGHT - EMPIRE SWITCHGRASS



Empire Switchgrass, based in Milton, is a producer and wholesale supplier of premium de-dusted switchgrass bedding and agricultural products.

The product line includes:

- Finely chopped & de-dusted switchgrass
- Longer de-dusted switchgrass.

Providing versatility to meet each customer's needs.

Why use switchgrass? It's naturally antimicrobial, virtually dust-free when properly processed, highly absorbent, and it's a renewable resource that can be grown on marginal lands, making it a sustainable option.

Empire Switchgrass products have many uses, including:

- Horse bedding
- Livestock & pet bedding
- Garden mulch
- Soil amendment

To learn more and see videos of the manufacturing process, visit empireswitchgrass.com.

You can reach Empire Switchgrass by phone at (905) 875-7006, by email at info@empireswitchgrass.com, or through the contact form on their website.



Empire Switchgrass owner Glenn Young, OBPC member



A foal enjoying Empire Switchgrass bedding



Empire Switchgrass bedding is perfect for chicken coops

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www.ontariobiomass.com or support@ontariobiomass.com

