

Southwest Agricultural Conference 2009



The 16th Southwest Agricultural Conference was held January 6-7, 2009 at the University of Guelph, Ridgetown Campus. The conference experienced record attendance again this year with approximately 1100 attending each of the two days.

The theme of this year's conference was "Solid Decisions in Volatile Times" and presented topics from Recipe for High Yielding Soybeans to New Manure Application Technology. Other theme related sessions included More

\$ From Fertilizer, Stacking the Traits, Shaving Input Costs and Energy Buy Save or Create. Back by popular demand were topics on ethanol, wind energy, commodity marketing and weed control.

Les Kletke, the feature speaker on Tuesday, gave a good overview of the agricultural opportunities and threats from Brazil, Russia, India and China. The feature speaker on the second day was Brian Thwaites of Brainspeaker Inc. He talked about the ten things we forget and made us realize we are not the only ones who forget what we were going to do. He told us about the party in our brain and how it is difficult for us to focus as our brain processes information a lot faster than we are able to take in information.



New this year as a pilot the sessions in the two lecture theatres were broadcast over the internet to 25 participants in two rooms at the University of Guelph, Kemptville Campus. The sessions were well received and with some fine tuning it is hoped to provide sessions from the conference to more people at Kemptville and possible to locations in the north and in central Ontario next year. It is a great way to deliver this high quality program to those who may not wish to travel to Ridgetown or who may not have the same access to speaker.

The format of the program is seven 50 minute concurrent sessions plus the feature speaker so it is a full day of

learning! The presenters are a mix of farmers, researchers, government extension staff and agriculture industry personnel. The goal of the conference is to bring in the best speaker possible for a topic, by whatever means.

Here is a sample of the more than 40 sessions that were offered concurrently over two days at the conference:

- Cover Crops for Field Crops
- Biomass Trials and Tribulations
- Fungicides: Are 697,542 Farmers Wrong?
- Keeping Manure in the Root Zone
- Drift Now – Pay Later
- Turning Lemons into Lemonade
- Ontario's Buy Local Movement
- Soil Organic Matter: The Key to Production
- Glyphosate – Factors Affecting Performance
- Equipment: Buy or Lease?
- Fine Tuning Nitrogen in Vegetables

Crop Advances: Field Crop Reports

Once again, the conference hosted a reception at the end of the first day. The Taste of Ontario reception featured meat, vegetables, fruit, honey, mead, wine, beer and spirits from southwestern Ontario.

The conference is a cooperative effort between the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, the Southwest Soil and Crop Improvement Association, many agribusiness supporters and Ridgetown Campus, University of Guelph.



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Visit our website www.southwestagconference.ca for conference information. A number of the presentations were recorded this year and are posted on the website under proceedings.