

## **FarmSmart Agricultural Conference 2020**

The FarmSmart Agricultural Conference celebrated its 21<sup>st</sup> year on Saturday, January 18th, 2020. The conference, which began at Redeemer College, Ancaster in 1999 and moved to the University of Guelph in 2003, continues to offer participants, speakers and sponsors more opportunities to learn and network on all things ag related. FarmSmart wishes to thank the many participants, organizers, speakers and sponsors who have supported this conference over the past years.

Friday's program, CerealSmart, brought over 300 producers and agricultural business people together at RIM Park in Waterloo. CerealSmart was headlined by Phil Needham of Needham Ag in Calhoun, KY. He was joined by Dennis Pennington of Michigan State University Extension. The day brought cereal production optimization forward and raised the bar for producers in the pursuit of making wheat a larger part of their cropping portfolio.

Attendance on Saturday was around 700 people, which was less than 2019 because of a significant snow storm. In an effort to expand the value of the FarmSmart franchise, the organizers continue to offer a full day livestream Beef Symposium event.

Those in attendance found the event excellent as reported from the participant evaluations.

The conference mandate is to provide an opportunity for farmers, extension agents, academics and industry to interact and learn from a series of approximately 50 sessions and workshops held in up to 8 concurrent formats throughout the day. Topics included crop and livestock production sessions along with nutrient management, alternative energy, business management, general interest and others.

Participants chose their own program from the diverse slate of topics allowing each participant to tailor the day to their interests and requirements. This diversity of program is what makes FarmSmart unique among the wide range of conferences held each year and based on the success of the format will continue to be the focus of the program committee in the future.

The Youth Program was again a great success with close to 60 participating. We continue to emphasize this aspect of the conference. Children aged 8-16 come out and have a fun and interesting day exploring the University of Guelph and all it has to offer. For the first time this year we were able to arrange a tour of the OVC Vet College which was well received by the youth participants and we returned to the School of Environmental Sciences Space Lab, which is always a hit.

FarmSmart 2020 was an outstanding success and all the partners are looking forward to bringing you FarmSmart 2021 on January 22-23<sup>rd</sup>, 2021. Mark your calendars today, so

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as not to miss the exciting and informative chance to join fellow producers, industry, extension and academics at next year's event.

### **Acknowledgements**

The FarmSmart Agricultural Conference is produced in partnership between OMAFRA, Golden Horseshoe and Heartland Regional Soil and Crop Improvement Associations, the University of Guelph and is supported broadly by Ontario's agricultural industry.

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