

Nuffield Notes

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Canada 

Nuffielder Inductee into Saskatchewan Agricultural Hall of Fame



Jim Halford (Nuffield 1975) is to be honoured for his contributions to adoption of low till and zero till seeding.

Early in his career, Jim began examining alternative tillage systems and soon concluded that zero till held the most

promise. A major obstacle to making the system work was the lack of equipment that would effectively place seed and fertilizer into unworked soil.

Determined to make this system work, he began to design and test various types of devices through which seed and fertilizer are deposited into the soil.

After having applied zero-till technology on his own farm since 1979, Jim conceived, developed, tested and manufactured the Conserva Pak Seeding System beginning in 1983. He went on the market with it in Canada in 1989, and into Australia and USA in 1993. In 2007, Jim's company Vale Farms Ltd. sold the technology to the John Deere Company

Jim is a not a stranger to receiving awards. After the past years numerous awards and recognition, including Distinguished Graduate of the College of Agriculture, University of Saskatchewan, Distinguished Agrologist with the Saskatchewan Institute of Agrologists. the Manning Foundation Innovation Award for conceiving and developing the Conserva Pak seeder, induction into Canada's Conservation Hall of Fame and the L.B. Thomson Conservation Award (the P.F.R.A. Alumni Award) for outstanding achievements in the area of soil and water conservation practices. Jim continues to be an active Nuffielder, in his support for Nuffield Canada and his participation in events

AGM Held in Ottawa

Canada's capital was the site of the 2009 annual conference and meeting on December 2 and 3. One of the highlights of the meeting was the participation of Deputy Agriculture Minister John Knuble for part of the afternoon session. He spoke briefly of his background, but was there to learn more about the organization. Several short presentations were made on what Nuffield is and how it affected the various scholars. There was good interaction from the group. It should be noted that Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada has put \$ 5000.00 towards a reception at the Canadian Embassy in Washington for this years contemporary scholars conference.

A report was presented by the Strategic Planning Committee composed of John Lohr, President Barry Cudmore, Vice President Barb Stefanyshyn-Cote, Eastern representative - Jack Rigby and Western Director - Harold Perry. With a few minor amendments the report was accepted and sets an ambitious path for the organization. The goal is to annually support three Nuffield scholars at an elevated level of support. There will be an increased level of activity to enhance the public profile of Nuffield Canada and to increase funding.

After dinner participants had the opportunity to hear presentations from the 2007 scholars - Greg Braun and Steve Larocque.



Scholars visit anaerobic digester while in Ottawa area.

Meet Canada's Newest Scholars



Sarah Megens

Hailing from an 80-acre mixed farm near Stratford, Ontario, Sarah Megens has successfully combine her passion for politics and the environment and an educational background featuring international development and public relations, to lead to a career in local food systems development and agricultural land preservation.

Sarah served for over two years as project manager of Hamilton Eat Local, an experience which led her into a Master's degree in Rural Planning and Development at the University of Guelph. As a graduate student, Sarah's current research focuses on linking local food and agricultural policy to farmland preservation mechanisms, with a specific focus on Ontario's Greenbelt.

Sarah intends to extend her exploration of the connection between local food system and agricultural policy with farmland preservation models at the global level through her Nuffield Canada Farm Research award. She intends to visit the European Union and the United States in her quest to develop policy models that will strengthen local food economies and agricultural land preservation policies in Canada.



Shane Eby

Shane, a graduate of McMaster University, has been involved with community development through the non-profit, environmental and food security sectors around Hamilton and Toronto for a dozen years. For the last four years Shane has been a partner in "Underground Organics", a farm business in Hamilton, Ontario. Using rented land, they have a 50 acre Certified Organic farm growing vegetables, herbs, cut flowers and a mixed fruit orchard. They manage a CSA program (Community Shared Agriculture), and also sell through Farmers' Markets, restaurants, independent grocery and health food stores and to individuals for special events.

Shane's research topic will focus on the production and processing of hops with a specific look at how regional business networks link small scale hop producers with local brewers and consumers. He is considering visiting specific hop yards and local business networks within Canada, the United States, England, Germany, the Czech Republic, China and New Zealand.

New Look To the Website

- Check it out!!

After presenting the new look of the Nuffield Canada website at the annual meeting we are just around the corner to launching it to the rest of the world. We have built on the hard work of the past designers, updated a few pictures, rearranged a few sections and added some new components. Key features of the new website include the ability to download the application form, updated scholar profiles including the option of contacting scholars directly and an expanded sponsor page.

We are especially excited about a new section called "Nuffielders in the News", this is our opportunity to showcase the contributions that Nuffielders make to agriculture, provinces, communities and the nation on an ongoing basis to highlight the huge impact of a Nuffield scholarship. Another section we have included is called "Scholar Stories" this is a chance to relate some of the great stories about your Nuffield experience. We are also working on a Google Earth map to pinpoint current scholar locations, which will be beneficial for travelling scholars or just in case you are in the area and have time to visit.

The challenge is going to be keeping the information on the website current. We are still looking for profiles, reports, photos and stories. This is your website so we are asking all Nuffielders to please contribute. For the time being please send any ideas, photos, corrections or contributions to Barb Stefanyshyn-Cote. Contact info on the website - www.nuffield.ca

Executive Summary of Scholar Reports

Complete reports will soon be available on the website.

Holistic Livestock Health Care

by Greg Braun



Conventional or common practices of livestock healthcare are very focussed on disease causing organisms and how best to kill them. The holistic approach is about taking a broader view of disease and health. It looks

for the deeper more fundamental causes of disease, the very rational cause and effect relationships between an animal's entire body and the complete environment. The animal is seen as being part of the complete farm ecosystem. A treatment of disease in the holistic approach will often focus on the overall health and immune system function of an animal rather than one specific bacteria, virus, or disorder.

The foundation of the farm is the soil. Testing is essential to know where you are starting from and how to improve. Re-mineralization and biological activation are the key strategies used to improve and balance soil fertility. With better soils comes higher quality, nutrient dense feed, which provide livestock with more of the nutrients required for optimal health. Water is the forgotten basic building block of animal health. It needs to be easily accessed and clean. Removing pathogens and contaminants is easy with available products and technology.

Housing or shelter needs to be designed with animal comfort as the guiding principle. Less stress results in less disease, and is the beginning of a lower cost, higher production system. The choice of animal genetics must fit the production system and local environment, for optimal health and productivity. Crossbreeding and dual purpose animals need to be considered, with long term economic success being the criteria not show ring prizes.

Once these basics are in place livestock health can be maintained, improved, and repaired with a variety of products and treatments. By using high quality vitamins, minerals, and supplements much disease can be avoided. There are many herbal and homeopathic remedies effective for disease treatment. It does require a new set of knowledge for farmers and on farm experimentation. However, the results can be greater animal health, more economical production, and safer higher quality food.

Management Changes to Higher Incomes

by Steve Larocque



In an effort to achieve greater farm profitability in Canada, the evolution of 21st century agriculture can be described as "bigger is better". Today's philosophy is to reduce operating costs by gaining economies of scale while using current farming

practices across more acres of land. However, continuing to farm with the same management practices over a larger land base simply adds more risk and not necessarily profit. Bigger is not better, better is better. I believe precision seeding, controlled traffic farming, inter-row seeding and delayed senescence are four management changes that can generate higher returns to Canadian farmers.

Precision seed placement tools offer a quick return on investment through uniform crop emergence, increased maturity and higher yields. Controlled traffic farming has the potential to increase soil water storage, double moisture use efficiencies, improve nutrient uptake, reduce fuel consumption and lower machinery investment. Inter-row seeding offers higher yields through faster and more uniform crop emergence, reduced disease pressure, weed suppression and increased harvest efficiency. Delaying senescence can increase yields through higher kernel weights with the help of proper nutrition, fungicides, crop rotation, seeding rates and reduced compaction.

The cost of precision technology is dropping and the number of technical resources continues to grow, setting the stage for controlled traffic, inter-row seeding, precision planting and delayed senescence to move forward successfully in Canada. Benjamin Franklin once said the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result. We cannot continue the same farming practices on a larger scale and expect different results. Successful Canadian farms of the future will embrace these new management systems to take production and profitability to a new level.

From the President's Desk



Deputy Minister John Knubley (right) visits with President Barry Cudmore (left) and Rod Bradshaw.

We are at the midpoint of the Olympic games and have witnessed both the excitement of success and the agony of defeat. Vancouver and indeed the whole country is getting into the Olympic spirit. Could we somehow have the Nuffield Olympic games? Our interpretation of the Olympics must be the Tri-annual conference with the Contemporary Scholars Conference (CSC) being the equivalent of the annual World Cup. Regarding the CSC, we are very much looking forward to the event in Washington and Pennsylvania, March 6 to March 14. Most everything is in place for the Canadian Embassy to host the reception for the CSC on March 8. We are grateful for the financial support from Minister Gerry Ritz and from our own Brent Wright. Our most recent Nuffield recipients, Karen Daynard, Sarah Megens, and Shane Eby will be attending, along with Wally Doerksen, Brent Wright, and myself, representing the board of directors.

It was great to have the Deputy Minister John Knubley attend our AGM in Ottawa, a positive both for Nuffield and Mr. Knubley. Thanks Art and Grant for making this happen.

At our AGM we approved a strategic plan for moving forward. On its conference call of February 8 the board identified three items that require immediate action: the need to have three scholars for 2011; an effective advertisement campaign to seek out the best possible candidates; and the activation of regional chairs to make this successful. The board has asked Karen Daynard, who has expertise in this area, to spearhead an effective advertising and recruitment campaign. For this year, the board has agreed to extend the application deadline from March 31 to April 30. I would encourage all of you to play a role

in seeking out worthy individuals to apply for a Canadian Nuffield scholarship.

Regarding our application for funding to the Canadian Agricultural Adaptation Program (CAAP), the approval body has come back with several questions. Barb and I had one meeting with them and the application has been reworked to address those questions. Approval will give Nuffield Canada an opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of various leadership models and then develop the model that is best suited to our uniqueness. We will keep you up to date on this application process.

Barb Stefanshyn-Cote has been working hard in getting our website updated. Changes are being made and we will soon have a site that is current.

Our hosting committee for this year's AGM is from Saskatchewan and consists of Ian McPhadden and Barb Stefanshyn-Cote. The site will be Victoria, BC date is late November.

The travel to South America in January which included Nuffielders and friends was highly successful. Thanks to Jack for setting this up.

Barry Cudmore

Note to Past Scholars

No matter what year you did your travel and study, you are the best ambassador of the Nuffield opportunity. Who do you know in your commodity or community that would gain in the unique 'Nuffield experience' that can bring benefits to their business or career, as well as to their own personal development?

Take the opportunity in the next few weeks to make some calls to potential candidates.

Suggest that they contact a recent scholar or visit the website at www.nuffield.ca or send their questions by email to the head office at beck@yourlink.ca

Deadline for applications is April 30, 2010.

***Do your part to
Spread the Nuffield Opportunity !***