

# SOILS AT GUELPH

ANNUAL REPORT 2021

# SOILS AT GUELPH

SOILS AT GUELPH is committed to addressing the problem of declining soil health in Ontario by mobilizing research knowledge among stakeholders on the importance of soil health for food security, environmental quality, and climate change.

The vision of SOILS AT GUELPH is to see widespread adoption of science-backed sustainable soil management practices in Ontario.

Our mission is to advance sustainable soil management in Ontario by making research accessible and facilitating knowledge exchange between researchers, farmers, industry, government, and the general public.

## 2021 OVERVIEW

**\$81,000**

Additional Funding Secured

**21.5**

CEU Credits Offered

**50**

Resources Created

**>1,100**

Event Attendees

**1,200**

Co-op Student Hours

**18**

Partner Engagements

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# A MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN OF THE ONTARIO AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE

We are so proud of the work the SOILS AT GUELPH team has been able to accomplish throughout this unprecedented year. It has shown the commitment from the team to see the SOILS AT GUELPH initiative excel.

OAC continues to discuss and act on our Soils Strategy. We continue to explore possible partnerships and discuss philanthropic interests with our donors to propel our knowledge mobilization from our soil health researchers. In the short term, we are pursuing additional funds towards enhancing our capacity over the next year. Additionally, we are in conversations about soil science graduate scholarships to entice the best and brightest students to the program.

OAC continues to explore the idea of a soils summit that will help establish the University of Guelph as a leader in this area. We see this opportunity as a way to shine a light on important issues, rallying people to action, and connecting new stakeholders beyond our existing networks.

Additionally, we are exploring conversations regarding a Chair in Soil Health and Conservation. We would like to see the theme of this chair reflected in the OAC's 150th anniversary in 2024. A commitment to this Chair position could spark our pursuit of a national centre in soil health at the University of Guelph.

We are so grateful for the initial investment in our SOILS AT GUELPH program to help elevate the voices and findings of critical soil health research. I look forward to continuing the momentum that you initiated through your investment in SOILS AT GUELPH.

Sincerely,

**Dr. Rene Van Acker**  
Dean, Ontario Agricultural College  
University of Guelph

# A MESSAGE FROM THE SOILS AT GUELPH EXECUTIVE TEAM

Wow, what a year; unprecedented, pivoted, and locked-down. Fortunately, for many, this past year allowed for reflection of where their food comes from and the soil that provides it. We quickly shifted to videos and virtual meetings, with great success. For example, Cam skillfully led the Midwest Cover Crops Council Conference in mid-February with a theme of Making Connections: Cover Crops, Soil Health and People. We partnered with the OAC '59 Future Leaders Fund to feature Economist Roger L. Martin in a conversation on how his book *WHEN MORE IS NOT BETTER* applies to agriculture and soil care. As you will see in this report, outreach contributions from SOILS AT GUELPH have been significant.

We were pleased to support and offer expert witness to Senator Rob Black's call for a standing committee on Soil Health in Canada. Evaluating the role of soil health in Canadian production systems will require a network that converges scholars and industry from multiple fields, including soil science, plant science, animal science, social science, economics, and climate science. Any solution will require that we leverage the best and brightest minds. SOILS AT GUELPH is well positioned to provide leadership for the proposed Study of Soil Health.

We are very proud to let you know that over this past year our contributions to soil science have been recognized. Prof. Kari Dunfield was appointed Chair of Pillar 1 for UN-FAO [Global Soil Partnership](#) (North America) to strengthen work on soils and to develop synergies with other relevant initiatives. The OSCIA Soil Champion Award celebrated Prof. Laura Van Eerd's excellence in soil research and advocacy for sustainable soil management. Prof. Claudia Wagner-Riddle has been named [Research Leadership Chair \(RLC\)](#), which promotes and sustains the ground-breaking research happening at the University of Guelph. These are great honours that advance soil knowledge in Ontario and globally.

We are grateful for the opportunities that SOILS AT GUELPH has provided. Thank you for your commitment to soil care. We are looking forward to touring fields and talking soil this year.

## **Dr. Laura L. Van Eerd**

Co-Executive Director, SOILS AT GUELPH  
Professor, Sustainable Soil Management  
Research Program Director, Ontario Agri-Food Innovation Alliance

# OUR TEAM



## DR. LAURA VAN EERD

Co-Executive Director

Dr. Van Eerd is a Professor in the School of Environmental Sciences at the University of Guelph Ridgetown Campus. Her research program has made significant contributions in understanding agroecosystem functions of soil health, nitrogen cycling and crop diversity.



## DR. CLAUDIA WAGNER-RIDDLE

Co-Executive Director

Dr. Wagner-Riddle is a Professor in the School of Environmental Sciences at the University of Guelph. She is a world-renowned environmental science researcher focusing on the mitigation of greenhouse gases emitted by agricultural production systems.



## DR. KARI DUNFIELD

Co-Executive Director

Dr. Dunfield is a Professor in the School of Environmental Sciences at the University of Guelph and holds the Canada Research Chair in Environmental Microbiology of Agro-ecosystems. The long-term objective of my research program is to study the relationship between genetic diversity of soil microbial communities and soil ecosystem functioning.



## CAMERON OGILVIE, MSc

Outreach and Communications Coordinator

Cameron received his MSc from the University of Guelph in Cropping Systems and Agronomy where he explored the potential for service crop monocultures and mixtures to improve water supply to a following corn crop. Cameron leads the outreach initiatives with SOILS AT GUELPH.



## JORDAN GRIGG

Co-op Student

Jordan is a graduate student in the School of Environmental Sciences. Her passion for making science accessible to all audiences makes her a wonderful addition to the SOILS AT GUELPH team. She leads elementary and secondary school outreach initiatives.

## ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS OF OBJECTIVE 1

# DEVELOP ACCESSIBLE SOIL RESEARCH CONTENT

The SOILS AT GUELPH team continues to enhance our digital platforms and resources for stakeholders to engage with University of Guelph soil science research.

## DIGITAL PLATFORMS

### WEBSITE AND ANALYTICS



**4,400**  
Users

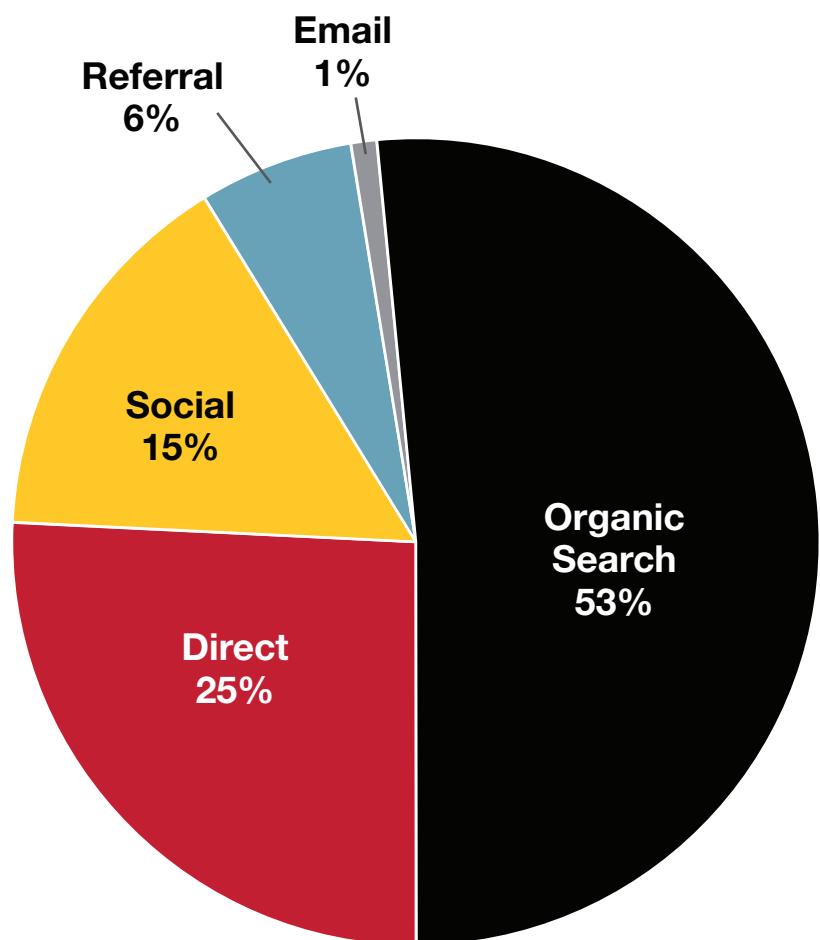


**5,800**  
Sessions



**12,400**  
Page Views

From April 1, 2020-March 31, 2020, activity on the SOILS AT GUELPH (SOILS) website, [soilsatguelph.ca](http://soilsatguelph.ca), has grown 10 times compared to what was reported last year. Over 4,000 people visited our website, with 53% finding us through a search engine such as Google or Bing (Figure 1). This past year has provided us with useful analytics data that will help us improve our website in the future.



**Organic Search** – a user arriving at the website after doing a keyword search in a search engine (ex. Google, Bing)

**Direct** – a user arriving at the website from a hyperlink entered in the search bar

**Social** – a user arriving at the website from a social media platform (ex. Twitter)

**Referral** – a user arriving at the website from a hyperlink on another website (ex. uoguelph.ca)

*Figure 1. Key visitor pathways arriving at our website. Around 53% of our website visitors found us through a keyword search in a search engine.*

## TOP 5 SITE PAGES

Our top website pages show that there is significant increase in traffic to our website over the previous year. This is very positive. We are analyzing the bounce rates (Figure 2) to understand whether visitors are finding the information they are looking for or that website modifications are needed. We are committed to continual improvement of our website by using more direct calls to action on these pages, providing links to more information of interest, and tracking conversions.

SOILS AT GUELPH VIEWS PER WEBPAGE		
Webpage	2020-2021 Number of Views	2019-2020 Number of Views
Homepage	2731	167
About	544	44
News and Events	448	38
Projects	369	36
Publications	214	NA

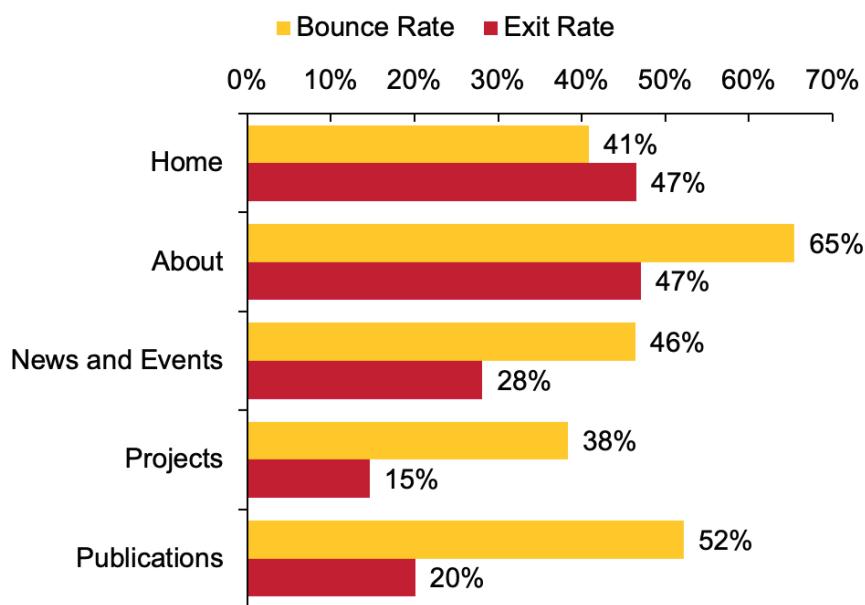


Figure 2. Bounce and Exit Rate for Top Pages. While being some of the highest visited pages, our Home and About pages also had the highest number of Exits where people stopped browsing.

## TOP 5 STUDY SUMMARIES

Title of Study Summary	Page Views
<a href="#">Is it profitable to store carbon with cover crops?</a>	416
<a href="#">Trapping carbon in agricultural soils with Wollastonite</a>	189
<a href="#">The soil-plant-microbe dance</a>	181
<a href="#">What's the matter with red clover?</a>	150
<a href="#">Updating our understanding of the soil organic matter-crop yield connection</a>	148

## OTHER STUDY SUMMARIES

[Focus on continuous living cover, not adding more crops to rotation to see soil carbon gains](#)

[Tillage, crop rotation, and their effects on soil health](#)

[What's the matter with red clover? VIDEO SUMMARY](#)



## TWITTER



**480,000** Impressions  
**14,800** Engagements  
**122%** Follower Increase

We have more than doubled our follower count on Twitter over the past year, increasing from 672 in April 2020 to nearly 1,500 by the end of March 2021 (Figure 3). Twitter remains an excellent network for sharing research results and promoting events like the Midwest Cover Crops Council Conference we helped to organize (Figure 4; see Objective 2).

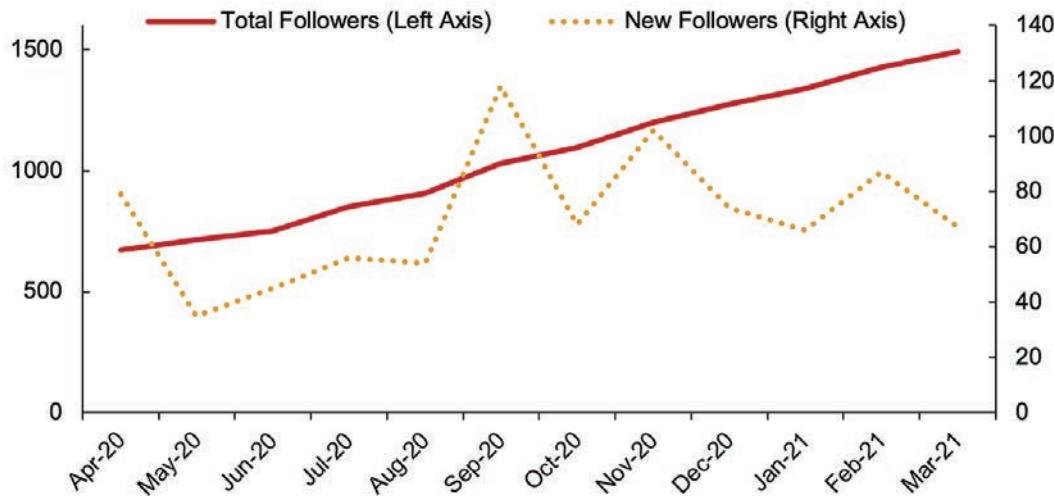
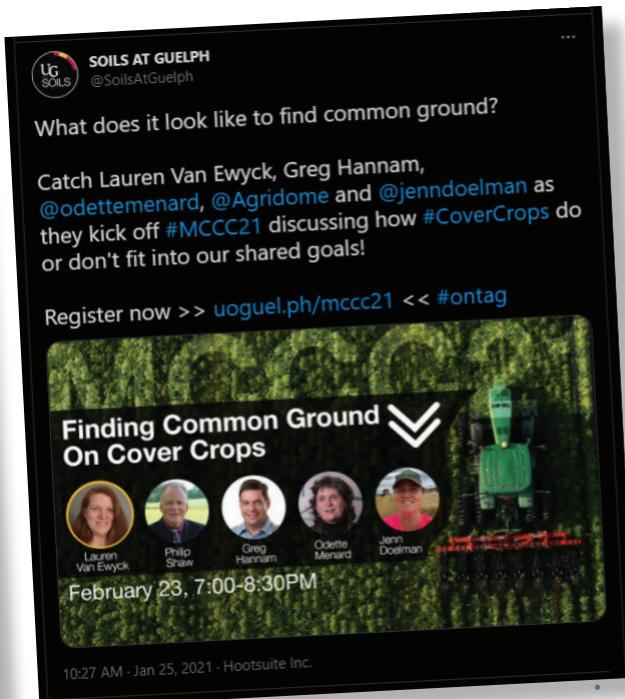
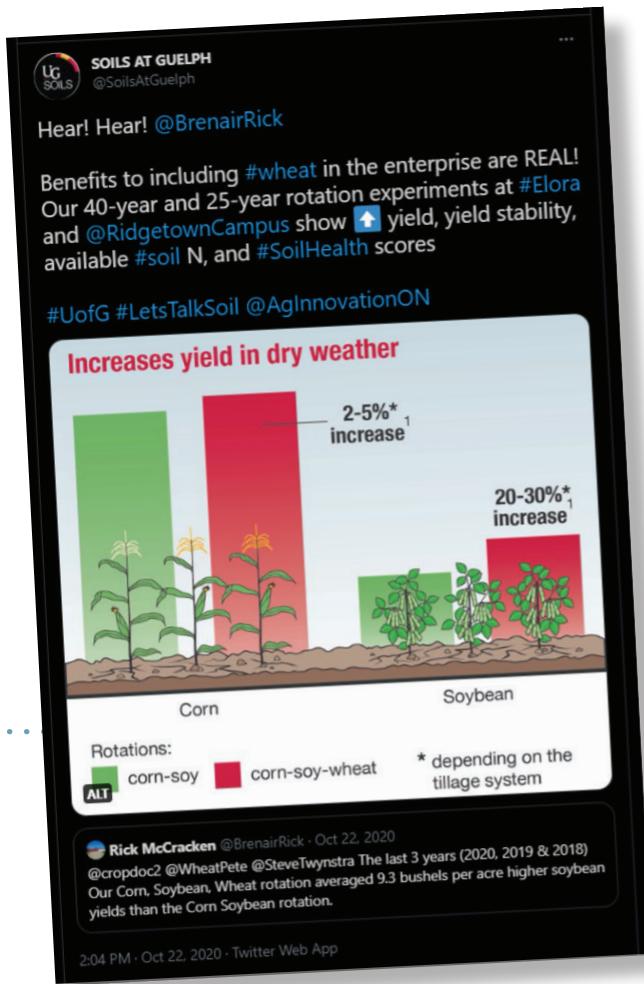


Figure 3. @SoilsAtGuelph Twitter Followers from April 2020-March 2021.



Impressions	5,432
Total engagements	332
Media engagements	213
Detail expands	60
Likes	29
Profile clicks	16
Retweets	11
Link clicks	1

Impressions	12,431
Total engagements	266
Media engagements	148
Detail expands	33
Likes	16
Profile clicks	10
Retweets	13
Link clicks	40

Figure 4. Two top performing tweets from @SoilsAtGuelph and their associated analytics.

## YOUTUBE



**1,200** Views  
**47** Watch Hours  
**5,300** Impressions

Pivoting to virtual in March 2020 has allowed us to build up our YouTube channel. Cameron Ogilvie filmed several videos over the summer and fall months for webinars and farm events. We successfully secured additional funding in July 2020 from Food from Thought to contract a company to film a series of research videos for us and partnered with the Ontario Soil Network to feature some of their farmers in the videos. Two of these videos are now available on our website, receiving over 600 views to date.

The University of Guelph has also started a marketing campaign called Improve Soil where they are showcasing our capacity as a global leader in soil science research.

Visit [uoguel.ph/improvesoil](http://uoguel.ph/improvesoil) to learn more.



## TOP VIDEOS

Title of Video	Views
<a href="#">Learning from Soil with Lysimeters</a> – Food from Thought Video Series	324
<a href="#">Sustaining the Living Soil</a> – Food from Thought Video Series	320
<a href="#">Developing an Ontario Soil Information System</a> – Researcher interview with Dr. Asim Biswas	172

## OTHER VIDEOS

### [#UofG is a Leader in Soils Research](#)

– Improve Soil UofG Marketing Campaign

### [Innovations in Organic Swine Production](#)

– CREATE Climate Smart Soils Videos

### [Adapting to a Changing Climate](#)

– CREATE Climate Smart Soils Videos

### [Organic No-Till Soybean Production in Ontario](#)

– Canada's Digital Farm Show feature in partnership with OMAFRA

### [SOILS AT GUELPH: Advancing Sustainable Soil Management in Ontario](#)

– Canada's Digital Farm Show feature

### [Impact of long-term cover crops on soil health enhanced tomato productivity, plant health and fruit](#)

– Soil Health Institute virtual poster presentation by Jessica Awrey (Advisor: Dr. Laura Van Eerd)

### [Cover crops, soil health + profits](#)

– Soil Health Institute virtual poster presentation by Dr. Laura Van Eerd

### [Long-term effects of crop diversification on soil fungal communities](#)

– Soil Health Institute virtual poster presentation by Willian Milson (Advisor: Dr. Kari Dunfield)

## WEBINARS

### CROP ROTATION COUNTS

To mark the 40th anniversary of the long-term crop rotation and tillage experiment at the Ontario Crops Research Station in Elora, and the 25th anniversary in Ridgetown, SOILS partnered with the Grain Farmers of Ontario to host two webinars for UofG researchers to discuss these experiments, their findings, and implications for agronomy with crop advisors. One and a half Continuing Education Unit (CEU) credits were provided.

Title of Webinar	Speakers	Views	Date
<a href="#">Penalty of Poor Rotation</a>	Dave Hooker, Deb Campbell	67	July 30, 2020
<a href="#">Rotation Impacts on Soil Health and Microbes</a>	Laura Van Eerd, Kari Dunfield, Dan Petker	110	August 6, 2020

### ONTARIO VIRTUAL DIAGNOSTIC DAYS

On Day 4 of the Ontario Diagnostic Days series, SOILS, lysimeter research, and the Soil Health Interpretive Centre in Elora were featured as part of a collection of soil snippets. [Click here](#) to view the video filmed by Cameron Ogilvie and available on Real Agriculture's website. The video received over 2,000 views and 1.0 Soil and Water CEU credits were provided.

### ROYAL AGRICULTURAL WINTER FAIR

SOILS contributed to the University of Guelph virtual booth on soil health research alongside the Ontario Agricultural College (OAC) [Student Liaison recruitment program](#) in November 2020. We featured research from the Soil Health Interpretive Centre, as well as a video series featuring Ontario Soil Network farmer Brett Israel. Brett shared about the changes his family is making to the farm to become more resilient and climate-smart. In March 2021, Brett joined Dr. Claudia Wagner-Riddle and Cameron Ogilvie for a webinar discussion, [Healthy Soil for a Healthy Climate](#), that explored how soil management can help mitigate climate change.

## OTHER WEBINARS

- Improving Knowledge Exchange Between Farmers and Researchers – Presentation to the Certified Crop Advisor (CCA) Soil & Water Day, November 2020
- Introducing SOILS AT GUELPH – Presentation to the Ontario Turfgrass Symposium, January 2021
- Carbon Capture and Sequestration in Agriculture – Presentation to 4th-year OAC aggie class, March 2021



# INFOGRAPHICS

## LEARNING FROM SOIL USING LYSIMETERS

With funding support from the Alliance, we created three spot infographics and one trade show-sized poster to explain the lysimeter infrastructure and research at the Soil Health Interpretive Centre (Figure 5). [Click here](#) to find the rest of the series.

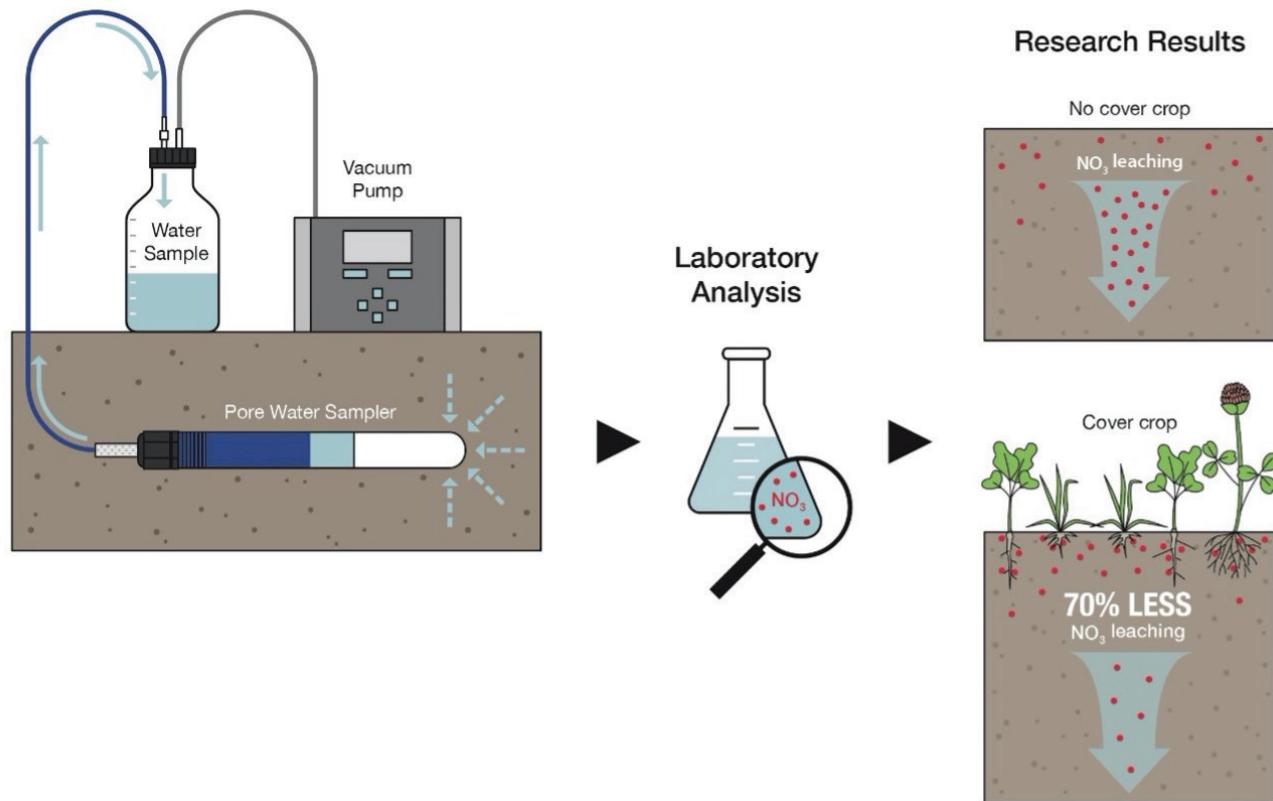


Figure 5. Pore Water Samplers use a vacuum to extract water from the soil through porous cups so the water can be analyzed in a laboratory for nutrients. Previous research using these instruments has shown that including cover crops can reduce nitrate leaching out of the root zone by 70%. Including cover crops not only keeps valuable nutrients in the soil but also protects our drinking water.

## CROP ROTATION COUNTS

To mark the 40th anniversary of the long-term crop rotation and tillage experiment at the Ontario Crops Research Station in Elora, and the 25th anniversary in Ridgetown, SOILS partnered with the Ontario Agri-Food Innovation Alliance (the Alliance) to develop a series of four infographics showcasing the insights gained from these trials (Figure 6). The four infographics summarize areas of research insight:

- Higher yield
- More resilient during drought years
- Improves soil nitrogen use efficiency
- Improves soil health

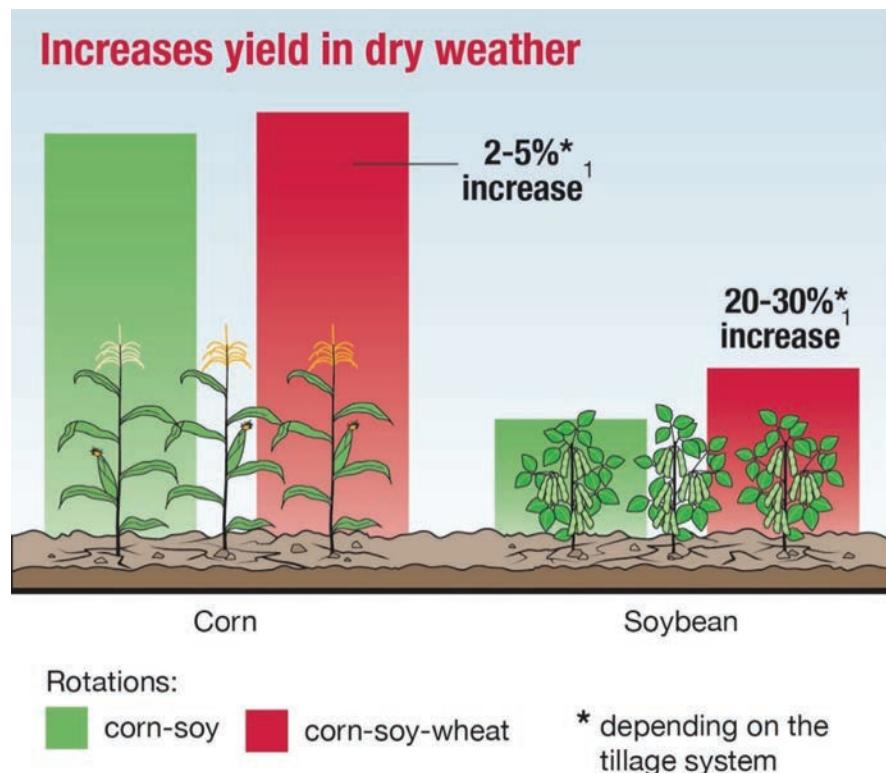


Figure 6. Prepare for drought years by adding a small grain cereal, such as winter wheat, to your farm's corn-soybean rotation. Research shows that during dry years, corn and soybean yields are higher and more stable when they are part of a rotation with cereals or forage crops (More resilient to weather extremes: hot + dry and wet + cool years).

[Click here](#) to browse the infographics on the Alliance website.



## FACT SHEETS

Over the past year, we partnered with OMAFRA and the Midwest Cover Crops Council to produce a series of Cover Crop Recipes for Ontario – two-page guides created for those new to implementing cover crops. One has been published and is available on the MCCC website; two more are currently under review by other researchers, extension staff, and industry representatives:

- [Ontario Cover Crop Recipe – Post Corn Silage, Going to Soybean: Introduce a Fall Rye Cover Crop](#)
- Ontario Cover Crop Recipe – Post Wheat, Going to Corn or Soybean: Use Oat-Radish (Under Review)
- Ontario Cover Crop Recipe – Post Wheat, Going to Corn: Undersown Red Clover (Under Review)

## LESSON PLANS

Our co-op student Jordan Grigg has been working with the OAC Student Liaison program to provide virtual soils education for student groups. Additionally, Jordan helped to create a lesson plan on soil health, now available on the OAC website, that educators can use with their students:

- [Soil: An Essential Resource](#)

## POPULAR PRESS ARTICLES

- [Looking for Carbon Sequestration Answers](#)
- [Influential Women in Canadian Agriculture: Laura Van Eerd](#)
- [Lasting Impact: The penalty of poor crop rotation\\*](#)
- [Lasting Impact: The secret is in the soil\\*](#)
- [Lasting Impact: Technology helps living soils knowledge\\*](#)
- [Scaling up soil health research\\*](#)
- [The Economics of Cover Crops](#)
- [Cover crops reduce nitrate leaching](#)
- [Finding the right Fungus](#)
- [New Discoveries from Old Soil](#)
- [Van Eerd, Denotter honoured with OSCIA Soil Champion Award](#)

## NEWSLETTERS

Every three months, SOILS send an e-newsletter to our subscribers with activity highlights over the past few months, recent publications, study summaries, and other events. From April 2020 to March 2021 our newsletter list doubled, now having over 200 subscribers. Roughly 60% of the newsletters are opened, and subscribers click on at least one link in nearly 20% of the newsletters. Below are the newsletters we published this past year.

- [April 2020 – Issue 20-001](#)
- [September 2020 – Issue 20-002](#)
- [December 2020 – Issue 20-003](#)
- [Midwest Cover Crops Council Conference](#)
- [March 2021 – Issue 21-001](#)

\*Authored by Cameron Ogilvie

## ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS OF OBJECTIVE 2

# CONVENE EVENTS THAT PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE SOIL MANAGEMENT KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

Organize workshops, webinars, conferences, and tours for farmers, farm advisors, and students.

## CANADA'S DIGITAL FARM SHOW

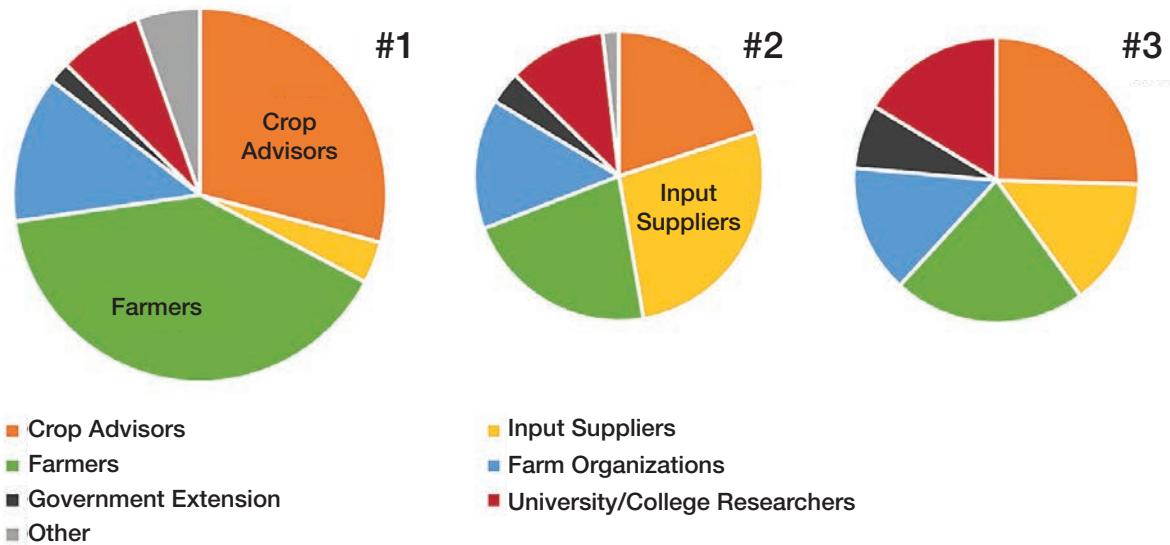
For this year's Farm Show, we partnered with Jake Munroe (OMAFRA) to host another demonstration site for his OSCIA Tier II Organic No-till Soybean Production Trial. In June we joined Jake and others to film the crimping of the rye plots and planting of soybeans; we were able to share this video on the Digital Farm Show platform alongside other plot demonstrations. [Click here](#) to view the video on our YouTube channel.



Figure 7.  
Knowledge  
Mobilization  
Coordinator,  
Cameron Ogilvie,  
promoting the  
SOILS AT GUELPH  
initiative in a video  
for Canada's Digital  
Farm Show in  
September 2020.

We also repurposed some other footage and created a general video promoting the SOILS initiative. Over the four days of the Farm Show, we had nearly 60 watch this video, and another 30 watch the roller crimper demonstration; these represented the average engagement that the Farm Show staff measured for other sessions. Additionally, we used our virtual booth to share our Crop Rotation Counts infographics (see Objective 1 > Infographics), study summaries, and gathered survey feedback.

We received over 60 responses to our survey – more than we had anticipated – and sent a few winners a SOILS AT GUELPH snapback. One of the survey results indicated that this audience perceived farmers and CCAs to be the primary sources of trusted information for farmers, confirming for us that these are the correct audiences for us to connect with (Figure 8).



*Figure 8. Top three trusted information sources for farmers. These survey results were collected from those who attended Canada's Digital Farm Show and visited the SOILS virtual booth. There were 58 responses, indicating that the #1 source of information for farmers is other Farmers and Crop Advisors.*

## SOIL HEALTH RESEARCH FORUM

To celebrate World Soils Day, SOILS partnered with OMAFRA in hosting a virtual forum for soil health research, on December 7, 2020. University of Guelph researchers Kari Dunfield, Laura Van Eerd, Claudia Wagner-Riddle, David Hooker, Erin Nelson, and Richard Vyn shared their research. Many of the SOILS resources mentioned above were also promoted on the event website; [click here](#) to view these resources.

Over 300 people registered for the event and a maximum of 227 people were online at one time. We were able to provide a total of 2.5 CEU Credits through the forum (1.0 for Soil and Water, 0.5 for Crop Management, and 1.0 for Professional Development)

The audience was over 50% university researchers and government staff, with the remaining representing agribusiness, conservation authorities, primary production, and farm organizations. The post-event evaluation indicated that nearly 70% would continue to investigate these or related studies, and 30-50% said they would connect their work with the presenter's work or tell another colleague about it. General feedback about the event was positive with more than 80% of attendees being satisfied to very satisfied with the event.

## MIDWEST COVER CROPS COUNCIL CONFERENCE

SOILS joined OMAFRA and the Ridgetown Business Development Centre to organize the 2021 Midwest Cover Crops Council Conference from February 23-25. Our team partnered with several Ontario farm organizations (OSCIA, EFAO, OSN, IFAO) and conservation authorities (CA) (Grand River CA, St. Clair Region CA Upper Thames River CA) to ensure the agenda would resonate with these networks and to help with promotion and session hosting. We also partnered with the OAC Dean's Office and the OAC '59 Future Thinkers committee for our keynote conversation with top business mind Roger L. Martin.

Despite the limitations of being virtual, the conference was a resounding success:

- >240 registrants for the general conference and an additional 400 registrants for the OAC '59 Future Thinkers Keynote Conversation with Roger Martin
- Raised \$31,000 in sponsorship
- Hosted 10 sessions over 3 days with 11 farmer speakers, 9 industry speakers, and 14 researcher speakers; one respondent in the post-event survey celebrated this “Excellent mix of producers and academic”
- Provided 15.5 CEU credits for CCA's:

Category	Credit
Nutrient Management	1.0
Soil and Water	6.0
Pest Management	1.0
Crop Management	3.0
Professional Development	4.5

- Post-event survey revealed a positive shift in knowledge of cover cropping practices, with four growers mentioning they would try a new cover cropping practice for the first time
- Received very positive feedback on the MCCC Conference as well as the keynote conversation with Roger Martin,



The Roger Martin event was spectacular! Although I knew from the title that there were great possibilities, the result exceeded my expectations considerably...I again commend your team on selecting a superior lecturer and thinker for the inaugural Future Thinkers event.

– Clarke Topp, MCCC Conference Attendee

# POWER OF SOIL WORKSHOP

On January 22 we co-hosted the Power of Soil workshop with Equiterre, the Greenbelt Foundation and Wilton Consulting Group. Forty-five people attended representing farmers, industry, government, and research. [Click here](#) to view the Recommendations Report and Technical Report with Research and Analysis.



# SOIL HEALTH INTERPRETIVE CENTRE VIRTUAL TOURS

Beginning in May 2020, we knew that this was going to be a different year. We created a virtual [SOILS AT GUELPH Tour](#) to promote Soil Health Interpretive Centre for farm and student groups. Thanks to our co-op student Jordan Grigg, we have continued to connect with many student groups through our partnership with the OAC Student Liaison Team. We have also used the videos we created with Food from Thought funding in these events (see Objective 1 > Digital Platforms > YouTube). Overall, we are very pleased with how we were able to continue promoting soil health knowledge given the circumstances.

Date	Guest	Attendees
11-Aug-20	Grey Soil & Crop Improvement Association (1.0 Soil and Water CEU Credit)	27
17-Aug-20	Farm and Food Care Ontario, Facebook Live	13
20-Oct-20	Halton District School Board, Halton	65
27-Oct-20	St. Faustina Elementary School, Mississauga	22
26-Nov-20	Norwell District Secondary School, Palmerston	23
4-DEC-20	Norwell District Secondary School, Palmerston	15
18-FEB-21	The Woodlands School, Mississauga	30
25-MAR-21	The Royal Agricultural Winter Fair, Spring Seminars	20
	TOTAL	218

## ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS OF OBJECTIVE 3

# STRENGTHEN THE NETWORK OF SOIL CHAMPIONS IN ONTARIO

Celebrate and support partner organizations in their efforts to advance research-based sustainable soil management.

SOILS has been intentional about providing a platform for Ontario farmers to share their expertise alongside UofG soil scientists. Through videos, events, and other resources we have created over the past year, we have been able to showcase this essential partnership between farmers, consultants, and researchers, thereby strengthening the network of soil champions in our province. Additionally, we have participated on several committees that share this same goal of increasing collaboration on soil health innovation and knowledge sharing. Information on the objectives and activities of these committees can be found below.

## ONTARIO SOIL ACTION GROUP

Over the past year, Claudia Wagner-Riddle, Laura Van Eerd, Kari Dunfield, and Cameron Ogilvie have been contributing to the Ontario Soil Action Group (SAG), which is the implementation group of the [Ontario Soil Health Strategy](#) (the Strategy). The Strategy is divided into four Themes: Soil Management, Soil Data and Mapping, Soil Evaluation and Monitoring, and Soil Knowledge and Innovation. Recently, SAG has been prioritizing actions items from these themes and further developing goals and objectives to be implemented over the next three years. Dr. Dunfield has chaired task teams developing goals and objectives for Themes 2-3, and Dr. Wagner-Riddle has chaired the task team for Theme 4. A draft implementation plan is scheduled to be completed by fall 2021.

## ONFARM STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT WORKING GROUP

Representing SOILS, Cameron Ogilvie was invited to the Stakeholder Engagement Working Group (SEWG) for the newly launched ONFARM network. Cameron contributed to the SEWG Outreach and Engagement Strategy, attended an early field day in fall 2020, took photos for the OSCIA team to use in communications (Figure 9), promoted the ONFARM network in industry presentations, and has contributed to the initial development of an infographic series on starting on-farm research projects using examples from the network. [Click here](#) to learn more about the ONFARM network. [Click here](#) for a summary of the 2021 ONFARM Forum which took place February 10, where Dr. Van Eerd participated on an expert panel of on-farm research.



Figure 9. Two attendees at the ONFARM Embro launch event held fall 2020 (Cameron Ogilvie)

## ONTARIO SOIL HEALTH MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS WORKING GROUP

Spearheaded by the Ridgetown Campus Business Development Centre, the Ontario Soil Health Marketing & Communications Working Group has been developing a unified marketing strategy for groups that promote adoption of Best Management Practices for soil. Recently, the Working Group has engaged with a marketing firm to create a brand and messaging that is shared amongst the represented organizations and our audiences. Cameron Ogilvie represents the SOILS team on this working group. [Click here](#) to learn more about the Ontario Soil Health initiative.

## ONTARIO SOIL HEALTH EDUCATION

With more than 20 years of experience developing and delivering agricultural training, Ridgetown Campus Business Development Centre is building soils knowledge. They are currently creating numerous soil health education opportunities for farmers and their advisors. More than four soil courses from introductory- to advanced-levels are in various stages of development. Content is delivered using various approaches such as online modules, expert webinars, peer-to-peer learning, and in-the-field. Dr. Van Eerd is representing the SOILS team on this working group. [Click here](#) to learn more about Education component of the Ontario Soil Health initiative.

## MIDWEST COVER CROPS COUNCIL COVER CROP DECISION TOOL

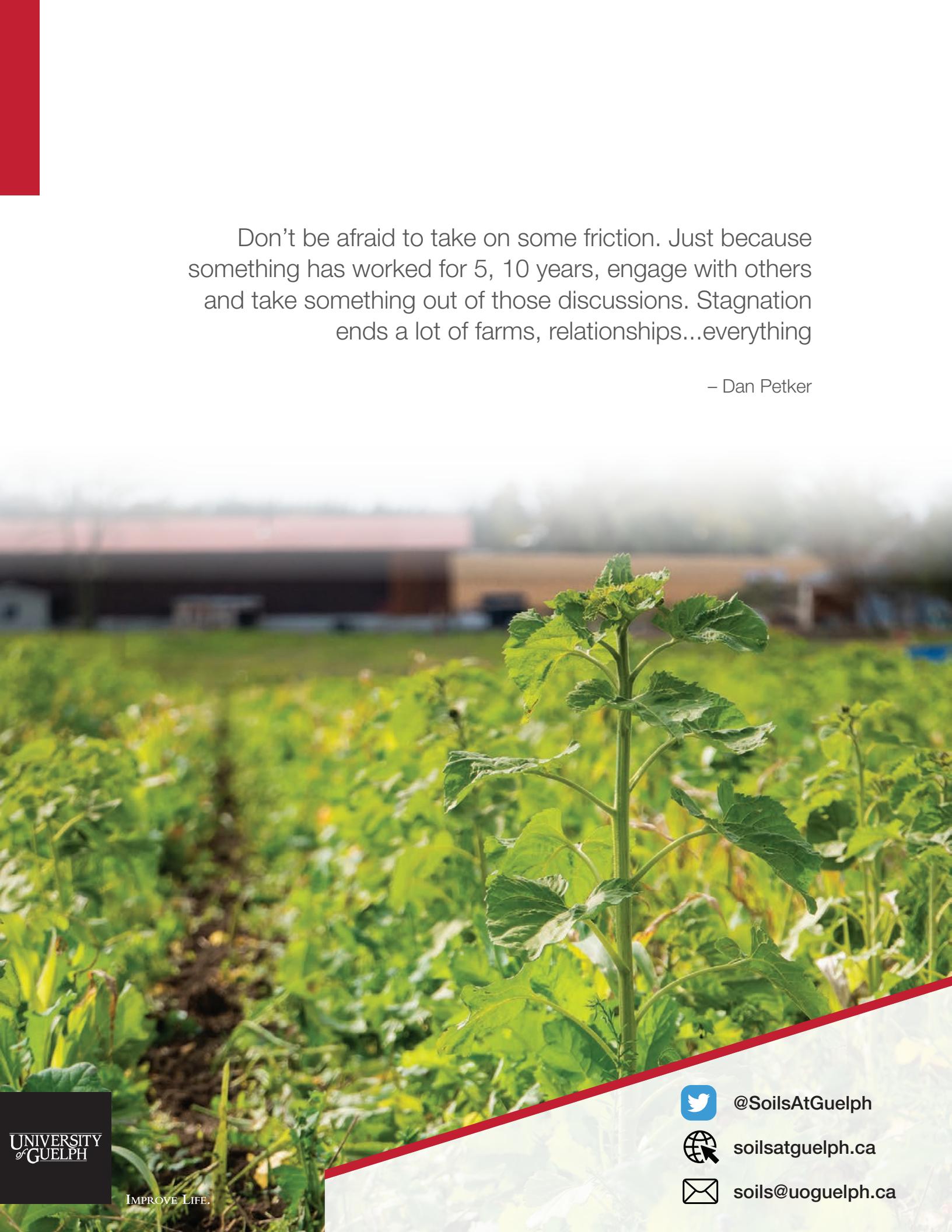
As part of Laura Van Eerd's KTT project Cover Crops: Moving the Strategy Forward for Ontario, the Midwest Cover Crops Council's decision tool was updated. An Ontario expert committee of farmers, seed suppliers, researchers and OMAFRA staff revised the enhanced decision tool to integrate current knowledge and research. This [web-based tool](#) aids growers and their advisors in making informed decisions on the most appropriate cover crop species or mixes based on goals for their operation.



## ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION

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Over the past year, SOILS received \$15,000 from Food from Thought for our project proposal, Mobilizing soil health research through virtual events at the Soil Health Interpretive Centre, along with \$40,000 from the Alliance KTT funding program over 2021-2023 for, Research Case Studies as Learning Enrichment Tools for Better Soil Management. We also received over \$6,000 in co-op student funding support from ECO Canada and with it were able to keep Jordan Grigg employed part-time from September 2020 through April 2021.



Don't be afraid to take on some friction. Just because something has worked for 5, 10 years, engage with others and take something out of those discussions. Stagnation ends a lot of farms, relationships...everything

– Dan Petker

