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The logo for the ONFARM FORUM 2024. It features a circular icon on the left containing a green leaf and a brown soil mound with a white water droplet. To the right of the icon, the word "ONFARM" is written in a large, bold, sans-serif font, with "ON" in blue and "FARM" in brown. Below "ONFARM", the word "FORUM" is written in a large, bold, green sans-serif font, and "2024" is written in a large, bold, blue sans-serif font.

# ONFARM FORUM 2024

**Information Package for Attendees**



**WILTON**  
CONSULTING GROUP

# Agenda

## February 8, 2024 via Zoom Videoconference

The Ontario Soil & Crop Improvement Association looks forward to welcoming you to the 2024 On-Farm Applied Research and Monitoring (ONFARM) Forum! Since 2019, the ONFARM program has completed extensive soil health and water quality analysis on farms across Ontario to build a stronger understanding of best management practices (BMPs) and their effect on soil health and water quality. Originally a four-year program, ONFARM was recently renewed until 2028. During the Forum, we will reflect on what we have learned so far and look forward to the exciting research priorities that the next phase of the program has in store.

Time	Activity
	<b>Welcome &amp; setting the stage</b>
	Speakers:
9:00 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Dr. Bronwynne Wilton, Wilton Consulting Group (WCG)</li><li>• Dr. Angela Straathof, Ontario Soil &amp; Crop Improvement Association (OSCIA)</li><li>• Cale Selby, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, &amp; Rural Affairs (OMAFRA)</li></ul>
	<b>How BMPs improve aggregate stability &amp; Slakes App overview</b>
	Speaker:
9:25 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Dr. Elizabeth (Liz) Rieke, Soil Health Institute</li></ul>
	<b>Linking soil health and water runoff: Insights from monitoring agricultural BMPs</b>
	Speakers:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Donna Small, Lower Thames River Conservation Authority</li><li>• Mari Veliz, Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority</li><li>• Tatianna Lozier, Upper Thames River Conservation Authority</li></ul>
10:25 am	<b>Break</b>
	<b>Panel: Managing the limiting factor of water in crop production</b>
	Moderator:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Norm Lamothe, Woodleigh Farms &amp; ONFARM</li></ul>
10:40 am	Speakers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Dan Saurette, OMAFRA</li><li>• Kevin McKague, OMAFRA</li><li>• Marty Vermey, Grain Farmers of Ontario</li><li>• Ted Taylor, Soil Resource Group</li></ul>

Time	Activity
11:10 am	<p><b>Practical tools to share agricultural research data and results</b></p> <p>Dr. Correndo will explore some interactive and open-access tools to improve the accessibility of data and results in agriculture, including tools he developed while at Kansas State University. Dr. Correndo will also present some potential tools to be developed at the University of Guelph to enhance knowledge mobilization and open data sharing, which aligns with the core objectives of ONFARM.</p> <p>Dr. Adrian Correndo, University of Guelph</p>
11:50 am	<p><b>Closing Remarks</b></p> <p>Speaker:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Gord Speksnijder, OSCIA</li></ul>

## ONFARM Background

The On-Farm Applied Research and Monitoring (ONFARM) program is a nine-year initiative developed by OMAFRA, delivered by OSCIA, that is completing extensive soil health and water quality analysis on 30 farm sites across Southern Ontario. This network of sites and established partnerships will help build a stronger understanding of BMPs and their effects on soil health and water quality on Ontario farmland. The ONFARM program is collecting water and soil quality data to assess various BMPs such as cover cropping and the use of organic amendments. Soil quality data is being collected by the Soil Resource Group, while teams at three conservation authorities are conducting water quality research. ONFARM is also supported by a network of farmer cooperators, who are essential to the success of the program.

## Meet the speakers

### Welcome & setting the stage



**Dr. Angela Straathof** is the Director of Research and Knowledge Transfer at the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association (OSCIA). She oversees delivery of OSCIA's on-farm research initiatives, connecting farmers with researchers and resources to test best management practices (BMPs) and support knowledge mobilization of those findings. Angie has a PhD in Soil Biology and Chemistry from Wageningen University in the Netherlands, and conducted research at the University of Manchester's Soil and Ecosystem Ecology laboratory in England before joining OSCIA in 2018. She has supported delivery of the ONFARM program since its inception in 2019.



**Cale Selby** is the Director of the Environmental Management Branch in OMAFRA's Food Safety and Environment Division. Cale's career has spanned 20 years in government and has included working with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, OMAFRA, and internationally with the government in New Zealand. The common thread in his career has been the intersection of natural and agricultural systems and working on collaborative solutions for highly complex challenges. Cale is the Co-chair of the Soils Action Group and Chair of the Agriculture Sector Working Group.

## How BMPs improve aggregate stability & Slakes App overview



**Dr. Elizabeth (Liz) Rieke** is a Soil Microbiome Scientist at the Soil Health Institute. Dr. Rieke has a background in microbiology and engineering. She is developing DNA sequence-based indicators to describe changes in soil functionality not captured by current soil health indicators. Dr. Rieke's work also focuses on unearthing the microbial drivers of currently adopted soil health indicators. Dr. Rieke received her PhD in Agricultural & Biosystems Engineering from Iowa State University. She is a member of the Soil Science Society of America.

## Linking soil health and water runoff: Insights from monitoring agricultural BMPs



**Donna Small** is the Agricultural Program Coordinator for the Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority. Donna has experience working with producers to implement agricultural BMPs with the goal of improving soil health and reducing agriculturally sourced nutrient loading in the Lower Thames River watershed. Donna's areas of expertise include water quality research/monitoring, BMP incentive program delivery, and agricultural education/outreach. Donna graduated from the University of Guelph.



**Mari Veliz** is the Healthy Watersheds Manager at Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA). She has worked at ABCA since 2000. Mari has managed water quality, bio-monitoring, agricultural and urban best practice evaluation, and community outreach programs.



**Tatianna Lozier** is the Stewardship Services Coordinator at the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority, where she works closely with farmers to adopt agricultural BMPs. She has worked in rural water quality research to evaluate BMPs since 2012 and continues to be involved in innovative projects to address water and nutrient management concerns.

## Panel: Managing the limiting factor of water in crop production



For six generations, Woodleigh Farms has worked the rolling hills in Peterborough County. **Norm Lamothe** and his family manage a diverse 500-acre cash crop farm which includes a four-crop rotation of corn, soybeans, wheat and oats. The family has recently transitioned its 1,500-tap maple syrup operation to organic and everyone enjoys spending time in their year-round passive solar greenhouse which supports their three-acre market garden. Norm has a lifelong interest in supporting soil health and biodiversity through the use of soil amendments such as biosolids, green manures as well as compost processed on-farm using municipal leaf and yard waste. Combining extensive soil sampling data, imagery and variable rate technologies, Norm is keen on demonstrating the economic benefits of being ecologically sustainable in a modern cropping system.



**Daniel Saurette** is a Land Resource Specialist (soil scientist!) with OMAFRA, based in Guelph, ON, since 2016. Daniel specializes in soil classification, soil mapping, and landscape interpretation. His current focus is on soil sampling and developing baseline soil data for Ontario soils. Daniel is also developing predictive digital soil mapping techniques to expedite delivery of updated soil maps for agricultural areas of Ontario through the use of big data and machine learning.



**Edward (Ted) Taylor**, MSc., is a Pedologist with the Soil Resource Group. Ted has over 40 years of professional experience interpreting soil resources for agriculture and forestry, and developing BMP educational materials, predominantly with OMAFRA until his retirement in 2019. His technical knowledge of southern Ontario agriculture spans pedology, the nature and properties of most soil types, soil-plant relations, crop performance on a wide range of soil conditions, soil degradation and soil health.



**Marty Vermeij** is the Senior Agronomist at Grain Farmers of Ontario (GFO). He manages GFO's agronomy team, which helps to support Ontario grain production. Key projects include the Great Lakes Yield Enhancement Network and the Ontario Cover Crop Working Group. Marty has a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture, Crop Science from the University of Guelph and completed technical training at Ridgeway College. Marty lives on a farm in southwestern Ontario with his wife Marcia. They spent the last 25 years raising their sons, some cattle and chickens, and producing grain crops.



**Kevin McKague** is an Agricultural Engineer with a master's degree in water resources engineering. He has worked in the field of soil and water conservation for most of his career in both the private and public sectors. Currently, Kevin is the Water Quality Engineer with OMAFRA, where he participates in a variety of studies evaluating the influence of soil health practices on water quality leaving the field edge.

### Practical tools to share agricultural research data and results



**Dr. Adrian Correndo** is an Assistant Professor and the Research Chair for the Pick Family Chair in Sustainable Cropping Systems in the Department of Plant Agriculture at the University of Guelph. His mission is to develop and evaluate cropping systems that effectively deal with the challenge of producing more food, fuel, and fiber without degrading our natural resources. Dr. Correndo maintains and leverages the value and legacy of multiple long-term trials at the Elora Research Station, where studies explore such management practices as tillage, crop rotation, cover crops, and fertilization management.

### Closing remarks



**Gord Speksnijder** serves on the OSCIA Board, representing the Quinte region. He is Chair of the Research Committee and sits on the Ontario Soil Management Committee. Gord earned his MSc from the University of Guelph. He lives with his wife and two kids in Port Hope in Northumberland County, and farms with his brother.

## Connect with and learn more about ONFARM



[www.ontariosoilcrop.org/onfarm/](http://www.ontariosoilcrop.org/onfarm/)



[onfarm@ontariosoilcrop.org](mailto:onfarm@ontariosoilcrop.org)



[@OntarioSoilCrop](https://twitter.com/OntarioSoilCrop)

This event has been approved for 2.5 Continuing Education Units (CEUs) for Certified Crop Advisors (1.5 Soil & Water Management CEUs and 1 Crop Management CEU).

This event is an OSCIA-recognized Knowledge Sharing Event (KSE) for Ontario farmers with On-Farm Climate Action Fund (OFCAF) projects in the Cover Cropping category.

*This program is funded by the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership, a five-year (2023-2028), \$3.5-billion investment by federal-provincial and territorial governments to strengthen competitiveness, innovation, and resiliency of the agriculture, agri-food and agri-based products sector. This includes \$1 billion in federal programs and activities and a \$2.5 billion commitment that is cost-shared 60 per cent federally and 40 per cent provincially/territorially for programs that are designed and delivered by the provinces and territories.*

