

## Upcoming Events

**Hazardous Waste Collection Day:** OWWA is planning an agriculture waste collection day on March 25, 2017. Be sure to set aside any agricultural hazardous waste as you're cleaning up this month. More details are available on our website.

**2017 Saskatchewan Association of Watersheds Conference and AGM:** April 5-7 2017 at the Boreen Centre, Esterhazy, SK. More information available at <http://saskwatersheds.ca/conference/>.



**FOR SALE \$10**

If you haven't gotten your copy of our 2017 calendar yet we still have some left! We are selling them at the reduced price of \$10. The calendar features beautiful photographs of our watershed taken by local residents. Get your copy today by contacting Cierra Wallington at 1-306-650-7172 or email [tech@oldwiveswatershed.com](mailto:tech@oldwiveswatershed.com).



*Evening Storm by Randi DeBruyne*

**Be sure to check out our article series happening right now in the Gravelbourg Tribune! You'll find more information about the programs offered through the Old Wives Watershed Association as well as some interesting articles about different management practices that you can incorporate into your operation.**



For more information on OWWA or watershed programs please contact:

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# Watershed Watch AEGP Update

March 2017

Newsletter

## OWWA Hosts the 2016 Provincial Drainage-Water Management Conference

On December 9, 2016 OWWA was proud to co-host one of two annual Provincial Drainage Conference in Gravelbourg, SK with the Saskatchewan Association of Watersheds. The theme of this year's event was "A Realistic Approach to Water Management for Agriculture Producers". The event was held at the Gravelbourg's Lions Den with approximately 40 people attending this daylong event. The proceedings opened with remarks from the Honourable David Marit, Minister of Highways and Transportation on behalf of

Speakers included representatives from the Water Security Agency as well as local Agrologists and even our very own Executive Officer. Topics included information about the Agriculture Water Management Strategy, how to approve drainage works, drainage effects on water quality and the landscape, elevation mapping and information about programs available to local producers. A delicious lunch was provided by Café Paris. OWWA would like to thank everyone who helped with this successful event. Support was received from the Saskatchewan Association of Watersheds, Water Security Agency and Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities.



*Etienne Soulodre, Senior Agrologist with the Water Security Agency spoke about the Steps to Approving Producer Drainage Works*



*The Honourable David Marit opening the conference*



*Attendees at the conference*

### **Online Agriculture Training System (OATS)**

The Online Agriculture Training System or OATS, is a high quality, interactive agricultural safety awareness training course developed by the Saskatchewan Safety Council and its FREE! This training system is a general orientation for young or new farm workers and an excellent source of information for more experienced workers or other agricultural interested people. The course provides a general introduction and overview of health and safety hazards and risks on most farms.

The online format provides the use of interactive scenarios, visuals, audio and text-based learning in a self-paced environment. Users can save their progress and log in from multiple locations allowing them flexibility in completing the program. This removes barriers of time and location. Downloadable resources will also be accessible throughout the course. The entire course takes approximately 3 hours to complete and users receive a printable certificate upon successful completion.

More information on this training program can be found here:

<http://www.sasksafety.org/training/online/Online-Agriculture-Training-System>

### **Seven Practices That Move Farm Managers to the Top**

By: Brenda Stefanson, PAg, Regional Farm Business Management Specialist, Watrous

Do you ever wonder how you, as a farm manager can ensure that your farm is financially successful over the long term? A recent study shows how adopting seven practices can move your farm from low financial performance into the top 25 per cent. In 2015, Farm Management Canada, Agri-Food Management Institute and Ipsos Ag and Animal Health conducted a study to determine whether adoption of beneficial farm management practices pays off for farmers. "The purpose of the project was to measure the degree to which farm business practices are direct drivers of farm financial success" (Dollar\$ and Sense, AMI, 2015).



This study identified seven farm business management practices that can improve the farm's financial position. In other words, farm managers employing these practices are found in the top 25 per cent in terms of their farm's financial performance. The project compared Canadian farms in the top 25 per cent in financial performance to the bottom 25 per cent. The differences are significant and reveal that the top managers are realizing big financial benefits. The seven farm business management practices that are employed by the top 25 per cent are:

- Propensity to continually learn
- Business decisions made with accurate financial data
- Use of professional business advisors
- Use of a formal business plan
- Cost of production monitoring and use
- Risk assessment and management
- Use of a financial plan with budget objectives

If you are interested in learning more about this study the full report, Dollar\$ and Sense: Measuring the Tangible Impacts of Beneficial Business Practices on Canadian Farms, July 2015, can be found at [www.fmc-gac.com/publications](http://www.fmc-gac.com/publications).

\*This article was adapted and the original can be found at [www.saskatchewan.ca](http://www.saskatchewan.ca) under Farm Business Management\*

### **Protecting our water sources**

by Bridget Andrews, Saskatchewan Association of Watersheds

The oil that was spilled into the North Saskatchewan River this past summer reminds us of how important the sources of our drinking water are. As communities along the North Saskatchewan River learned, when the water source is polluted by accident or inattention then urgent, desperate measures are required.

We are all upstream of someone and downstream of someone else, so it is important to work with neighbors to protect the source waters we all depend on.

Water Stewardship Groups like OWWA have been working with agricultural producers since 2006 to implement best management practices (BMP's) on their land to improve and protect ground and surface water quality.

While the great majority of land in a watershed lies within rural municipalities, the great majority of people who use the water live in urban communities. It is just as important for an urban center to implement BMP's to protect the quality of water within its boundaries.

For example, many urban storm sewers in Saskatchewan discharge directly into nearby lakes, creeks or rivers without being treated. New urban developments are implementing storm water management BMP's to mitigate quantity and quality of urban runoff by limiting the amount of impervious surfaces across the development. Other BMP's are designed to minimize storm water volume and non-point source contamination by utilizing biological resources such as green spaces, landscaped areas and engineered wetlands.

Individual urban residents can play an integral part in reducing their impact on water quality and quantity. Urban municipalities may want to consider a few key points listed below to include in their urban BMP messaging:

- Keep sidewalks, curbs and gutters in front of your property clean.
- Consider stenciling storm drains to say "No Dumping, Drains to a River". This helps residents make the connection between storm drains and local waterways that are used for drinking water, wildlife and aquatic habitat and recreation.
- Try to use water-based paints and never clean/rinse paint containers with thinner on the street.
- Fix oil leaks on your vehicle and clean up drips and spills with absorbent material.
- Read and follow the label on all fertilizers and pesticides. Excessive nitrogen and phosphorus entering the local waterway contributes to increased algae blooms in our lakes and rivers.
- Gather grass, leaves, and yard trimmings for proper disposal or composting.
- Remove and dispose of pet waste before you leave an area.
- The best option for washing your car is to use a car wash. Commercial car wash water is recycled and sent to a wastewater plant for treatment. When washing your car at home, wash it on the grass, gravel or a pervious surface so the water can infiltrate and not run directly into the storm sewer. Use phosphorus-free soap.



Ongoing education and awareness about BMP's is key to minimizing the risk to Saskatchewan's water resources.

### **Farm Business Services Survey**

The Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture would like your feedback on how they deliver farm business management programs and services. They're seeking input from all producers, whether you've accessed their farm business services or not. All survey participants will be entered into a draw for one of 10 free registrations for a Ministry extension or training event to a maximum registration amount of \$100. You can find their survey here: <http://gos.fluidsurveys.com/surveys/saskatchewan-agriculture/farm-business-services-survey/>