

# The View...

From Huron County Farmers, Drainage and Conservation Experts

January 2024

## Register Now for Cover Crop Workshop

Please join Ausable Bayfield Conservation and Huron Soil and Crop Improvement Association on Friday, January 26th from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. for a cover crop workshop. The workshop will be held at the OMAFRA Building in Clinton with a hot lunch to follow.

Participants will hear from local producers sharing their cover crop experiences, as well as Nicole Menheere (Fertilizer Canada) who will speak about her research on soil health, and Mervyn Erb (Agri-



*Producers gathered at the 2023 workshop.*

Solve Inc.), who will be speaking about a rye after corn cover crop trial. Grant program information will also be shared.

There is no fee for attending the workshop, but registration is

required. To register, please contact Hope Brock (Ausable Bayfield Conservation) at [hbrock@abca.ca](mailto:hbrock@abca.ca) or 519-235-2610 by January 22, 2024. There are limited spaces, so register now to avoid disappointment.

## Think Spring...Order Trees

Thinking about a buffer, windbreak, or retiring some marginal land? Trees offer multiple benefits to both the landowner and the larger watershed. Contact Ian Jean at

519-235-2610 or [iJean@abca.ca](mailto:iJean@abca.ca) to inquire about where trees could be planted on your land, and the grant programs that exist. Mail in orders due by January 31, 2024

and orders accompanied by payment taken until February 28, 2024.

**SCAN ME!**



# Drainage Trade Offs Studied Regionally and Locally

Part of the monitoring taking place at the Huronview Demonstration Farm (at right) is to examine water quality and quantity associated with various tile drainage patterns (i.e., contour, contour controlled, conventional) and spacing (15', 30' and 40'). We know that drainage provides both agronomic and economic benefits to our agricultural system, however, there are environmental trade-offs that need to be acknowledged as well. Eileen Kladviko, Professor of Agronomy at Purdue University, said it well when addressing these trade-offs in that “intensified drainage needs intensified management”. Kladviko, who has spent decades researching agricultural drainage, investigated how land management techniques like tillage and cover crops impacted water quality and quantity across varying tile spacing patterns (16', 33', 66' and 132'). She observed that



*Aerial view of tile drainage after installation at Huronview.*

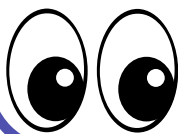
practices like no-till, varied crop rotations and cover crops reduced flow-weighted nitrogen concentrations (loads) leaving the field under all the tile spacing scenarios. She also noted that narrower drain spacings resulted in more water and nitrate lost through tile flow. Even with low nitrate concentrations, higher rainfall levels combined with increased drainage will result in large loads. This scenario can ultimately lead to downstream flooding, erosion and water quality issues. Yes, drainage is

important, but it can come at a cost. Monitoring at Huronview will help further our knowledge of how best to address the trade-offs with tile drainage. One thing is for sure in that if we want more drainage we need to implement more ways to hold back and slow water from leaving the system. This means we need to ensure we are using a suite of practices such as reduced tillage, varied crop rotation, cover crops, wetlands and controlled drainage.

**Watch Professor Kladviko's presentation here!**



Huron County Soil & Crop together with Ausable Bayfield Conservation are actively seeking a farm landowner to share in demonstrating the benefits of no-till, strip till and cover crops to soil health. Competitive rent or share-crop arrangements available.



**For more information, please contact Wim Feddes at [wikafeddes@hotmail.com](mailto:wikafeddes@hotmail.com) or Hope Brock at [hbrock@abca.ca](mailto:hbrock@abca.ca)**

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