

Lots to see at 1990 REAP Field Days

Enthusiasts of sustainable agriculture came from across Ontario to attend one or both of REAP Canada's field days held at the farms of Doug Smith and Harry Wilhelm. On August 28th, in Thamesville, Kent County, farmers, extensionists and researchers embarked on field tours of Smith's strip intercropping system using ridge tillage, and REAP Canada's cover crop plots.

All were suitably impressed with the appearance of Smith's corn and soybean crops. Seeded in the strips where the winter wheat was, farmers saw what an early August seeding of hairy vetch looked like. The presentation of Smith's equipment was enhanced by the exhibition of equipment ranging from ridge cultivators with guidance systems to finger weeders. Unfortunately, a heavy rain the night before prevented dealers from demonstrating any equipment.

On August 30th, REAP held its second Field Day at Harry and Lila Wilhelm's near Tavistock, Oxford County. Field tours included low input white bean and soybean production, the no-till mow-kill soybean production method, cover crop field testing and species demonstration, low input corn production and corn interseedings.

Interesting discussions about nutrient cycling in corn, soybean and winter wheat production were led by Roger Samson and Allison Arkininstall of REAP Canada. Equipment demonstrations were held in the afternoon when farmers could see equipment such as the Great Plains no-till drill, the AerWay soil implement and Soil Savers work out on wheat stubble.

Taped slide shows on Smith's strip intercropping system on ridges and Harry Wilhelm's weed control and cover crop systems, and the premiere viewing of REAP Canada's first video production on covercrops plus many interesting displays from both industry and government were part of both Field day agendas.

Of course the field days were not complete unless you treated yourself to a barbecued hamburger and tart at Colleen Smith's food booth or a piece of one of Lila Wilhelm's famous pies.

We would all like to thank Doug and Colleen Smith and Harry and Lila Wilhelm for hosting the annual field days in Ontario and we look forward to doing it all over again next year.

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