



Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association

1 Stone Road West, 1st Floor, Guelph, Ontario N1G 3A7

Toll: 1-800-265-9751 Tel: 1-519-826-4214

www.ontariosoilcrop.org

Windbreak minimizes soil erosion, improves weed control

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 1, 2016

By Lilian Schaer

Millbank – Dean Bauman was in search of a low maintenance windbreak that would reduce wind erosion of the soil and control weed seeds on his Perth County dairy farm near Millbank.

It was during an Environmental Farm Plan workshop that he first learned of the Farmland Health Incentive Program (FHIP), the cost-share funding program which supported the tree planting project he completed with two of his neighbours.

Collectively and with the help of the Grand River Conservation Authority (GRCA), they planted 1,250 white spruce trees, recommended to Bauman by the GRCA as a hardy, thick-growing species.

Each tree was planted into a ground cover with plastic around its base to control weeds, and a dripline irrigation system was installed. Using a 1,200 gallon water tank, a transfer pump and dripline with emitters at each tree, Bauman can water approximately 700 trees at a time.

“The goal is to have a nice uniform tree in the windbreak. The dripline system helps get the seedlings off to a good start and lets us ensure each tree gets the same amount of water for even growth,” explains Bauman.

With one of his neighbours farming organically, environmentally friendly weed control is important, so Bauman planted a thick-growing grass mix in the centre of the tree rows to choke out weeds. By adding 10 per cent clover to the mix, the grassy area will also provide food and habitat for pollinators when the clover is in bloom.

Bauman milks 42 cows on the farm where he grew up and that his grandfather first bought in 1970. Trees are few and far between on the property and a Farmland Health Check-Up, completed for his farm operation with the help of a Certified Crop Advisor, identified wind erosion as a contributor to soil degradation on the farm.

“A little over half of our land is in green cover for the winter already, but this windbreak will definitely address wind erosion issues and help with weed seed control, especially with the prevailing north-west wind,” Bauman says, adding that looking after soil health is an important part of his farm management.

“I compare soil to my cows in the barn. They need fresh water, good environment and bedding, and high quality feed to produce well and the same principle applies to the land,” he says.

FHIP, a component of the Great Lakes Agricultural Stewardship Initiative (GLASI), provides cost-share funding for approved on-farm activities in the Lake Erie, Lake St. Clair and Lake Huron southeast shores

watersheds, supporting specific Best Management Practices that are related to improved soil health and water quality. Ultimately, this will contribute to improving the health of the Great Lakes.

Applications are currently being accepted for the 2017 Farmland Health Incentive Program. A three-week application submission period will close December 13, 2016 (12:00 noon). Complete and eligible project applications will be considered for funding in the order in which they are received by OSCIA, with the priority basin (western and central Lake Erie) projects receiving first consideration for funding. Projects will be approved as funding permits.

GLASI is delivered by the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association (OSCIA) and is funded by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs through *Growing Forward 2*, a federal-provincial-territorial initiative.

-30-

Media Contact:
Christine Schmalz
Environmental Programs Manager
(519) 826-6062
cschmalz@ontariosoilcrop.org