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[Celebrating 75 Years of Farming](#) [1]

Last night, Farms at Work hosted a celebration of life, community and farming at the home of Mel Morton, an eighty-eight year old grain farmer from Fraserville, ON. Mel was thrilled to be able to share his extensive knowledge of agriculture with farmers young and old, and welcomed twenty-five eager participants to his farm for an informal field walk and discussion.

After showing us around his pristine fields of certified organic spelt and soy, we made our way into the barn to enjoy some cake, strawberry lemonade, and a rousing discussion of the changes in farming that Mel has experienced over his 75 year career. The discussion was informal and self-guided, with topics ranging from Mel's entry into farming at 16, the introduction of GMO crops in Canada, and Mel's transition into organic certification in the late 80's.

While everyone was thoroughly intrigued by the elder farmer's stories and advice, it became quite clear that Mel was hoping to learn just as much from the group of new and transitioning farmers as they were from him. Periodically he would pick folks from the group and insist they tell everyone a bit about their own farming practices. Though it was slow to start, eventually everyone was exchanging tips, tricks and techniques with the group by the end of the night.

When asked if he had plans to retire any time soon, Mel quickly responded that he intends to "farm until 100 and then retire for 30". "After that", he said, "who knows". Here's to you, Mel!

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[Energy Efficiency Award Contest Announced by OSCIA](#) [2]

Are you farming on the greenbelt? Do you have a clever invention on your farm that saves energy? How about an idea that saves time and creates efficiency?

The Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association ([OSCIA](#) [3]), in partnership with the [Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation](#) [4], want to hear about your farming ingenuity.

Head on over to their [contest page](#) [5] to watch a clever Youtube video, and for all the contest details. To nominate your creative energy saving solution for a chance to win one of three cash prizes of \$1,500, [click here](#) [6] for the contest application.

If you aren't sure whether your farm is on the Greenbelt, [click here](#) [7] to see a map of the boundaries. Note: if your farm is on the Oak Ridges Moraine, you are on the Greenbelt.

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[Reasonably Priced Farm in East Central Ontario](#) [8]

Are you a new farmer looking for a reasonably priced farm to start your business? The Multiple Listing Service has several farm properties to consider throughout east central Ontario, one of which can be found [here](#) [9].

Keep your eyes peeled for our new website (coming soon), which will have Finding Farmland functionality later this year!

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[Upcoming Workshop: Natural Pest Control & Organic Pesticides](#) [10]

Using Weeds & Native Plants to Make Natural Pesticides

On Sunday August 11th, Farms at Work will be hosting an advanced-level workshop in natural pest control for farmers and market gardeners in east central Ontario. Taught by Dr. Fulvio Gioanetto, an expert in agroecological extension programs, closed-loop input systems, and a summer guest of Plan B Organic Farms (near Cambridge, ON), this hands-on workshop will offer alternative solutions to pest control problems faced by market gardeners and farmers across the province.

Built around the research of Dr. Gioanetto, topics of the workshop will focus on the use of wild plants as bioindicators of soil health; the production and demonstration of agroecological, insecticidal and fungicidal sprays made from common weeds and minerals; organic management of garlic nematodes; and general discussions on compost and fertility. The day will include components of classroom-style lecture and discussion, as well as hands-on creation and use of various sprays in field settings.

The workshop will be held at [Wheelbarrow Farm](#) [11] in Sunderland, ON (<http://goo.gl/maps/qGjzs> [12]) from 10am to 4pm. Tickets are \$80 each and may be purchased at: www.wildplantpesticides.eventbrite.ca [13]. Organic Wheelbarrow Farm lunches are available for purchase from host Tony Neale for an additional \$12. Please let us know if you wish to buy lunch by emailing [Jay Adam](#) [14] of Farms at Work. Otherwise, please plan on bringing your own lunch.

This valuable workshop is being held three times over the season in southwestern Ontario, and this will be your only opportunity to learn from Dr. Gioanetto in east central Ontario before he returns to Mexico in September. At least 15 participants will be required in order for us to cover the cost of the workshop, so you must pre-register by 4pm on Friday August 2nd. Register soon though, as space is limited to 20 participants and interest in the workshop has generated quickly!

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[Farms at Work in the News Again](#) [15]



Susan Chan (Project Manager for Farms at Work) has received some excellent coverage recently for her work raising awareness of the need to conserve native pollinator habitat on farmland across the province. On Saturday June 8, Susan was invited to [Lunar Rhythm Gardens](#) [16] to lead an informative field walk and presentation on the regional efforts being made around east central Ontario to conserve native pollinator habitats on farmland. Farmer Jessica Foote invited Susan to speak to community members and farmers about the important role played by native pollinators in both our food system and our rural economies.

The event garnered such interest that the press showed up and put together an excellent piece on the work being accomplished by folks like Susan, Jessica and Farms at Work. Check out the article and video spot at [DurhamRegion.com](#) [17]

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Source URL:<http://farmsatwork.org/news/201307>

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