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### **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

In late February, I had the opportunity to attend the strategic planning session of the Saskatchewan Institute of Agrologists in Saskatoon. Because of my long time involvement with the SIA during my career in the province, they invited me back to participate in the discussions. Much of what was talked about there seemed to me that it also has relevance for us in OIA. Let me share with you some of the themes that came out of the two days.

SIA is taking a new look at its governance model. The first day was devoted to this and there was quite a bit a debate regarding the role of the Council (SIA does not have a Board of Directors but is governed by a Provincial Council), roles and responsibilities of the Executive Director/Registrar and SIA Office staff and how all of this connects to the operations of the Institute's six Branches. The words 'executive limitations' and 'policies' were used quite a lot throughout the afternoon. It was interesting to watch the discussion unfold I couldn't help but relate this to our own struggles that OIA had to address a couple of years ago regarding a governance model for the Board. By the end of the day, the consensus was that what SIA had been doing in the past regarding its operations was acceptable. It just needed to be identified and put into a policy and not just assumed.

Other themes that arose from the session on the second day were how to create public awareness and enhance the public image of agrology and agrologists; how to promote that agrologists adhere to high standards of performance particularly by following a code of ethics that governs their practise; how to enforce the Agrologists Act (SIA has right to practise legislation) and make sure there is compliance; and that SIA needs to demonstrate leadership related to the agricultural industry. Leadership will not only happen at the provincial level but with the collaboration and cooperation of the other Institutes of Agrologists including OIA, this leadership will happen on a national level. For me, these are very same issues that we face here in Ontario. And because of our existing legislation, our challenges are even greater.

On another matter, for those of you who have yet to register for the upcoming Conference and AGM, there is still time to do so. I have been pleased with the response to date and our Committee is also very pleased with the number of

sponsors. OIA has received over \$4,000 in financial and in-kind support from quite a number of companies and organizations.

Finally, on behalf of our Board, I want to congratulate Mr. Adrian Huisman of St. Catharines and Mr. Alex Leith of Dromore. Both men will be receiving Honorary Professional Agrologist Awards at the OIA Awards Dinner on April 16. See more information about these two worthy gentlemen elsewhere in the Post. Looking forward to seeing many of you in Niagara in April.

Sincerest Regards,



Bruce Hobin, M.Sc., P.Ag.  
President

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## **2010 OIA AWARD WINNERS**

This year, at the OIA Awards Dinner on April 16 in Niagara-on-the-Lake, the OIA will be presenting a Honorary Professional Agrologist Award to two deserving gentlemen. The P.Ag. (Hon.) Award is given to those individuals who are not Agrologist members of OIA but have demonstrated exemplary service to the agri-food industry in Ontario during their career.

### **Adrian Huisman – Honorary Professional Agrologist**

Nominated by the Niagara Branch, Adrian Huisman from St. Catharines has spent nearly a half a century as a strong advocate in the production and marketing of tender fruits, apples and grapes in Ontario. Originally from the Netherlands, Adrian began his career in the horticulture industry right after high school. He began working for the Ontario Tender Fruit Producers and the Ontario Fresh Grape Growers' Marketing Boards. From 1970 to the present he has held numerous management positions with the Grape Growers' Marketing Board and Tender Fruit Producers' Marketing Board. From 2000-2008 he also acted as the Manager of the Ontario Apple Commission. He is still is an advisor for the Ontario Apple Growers.

Adrian has developed and implemented numerous solutions for problems that plagued the fruit industry over the years. He has and continues to represent the industry on numerous local, provincial and federal boards associated with the Canadian fruit industry.

The fragile and complex tender fruit and fresh market grape industries require a steady rudder to steer the industry through troubled waters. Mr. Adrian Huisman has been the steady rudder for these industries for more than 45 years.

## Alexander Leith – Honourary Professional Agrologist

Nominated by the Huronia Branch, Alexander (Alex) Leith has made a longtime commitment to assisting and counseling many farmers facing difficult times in the Grey County area. Alex Leith was born in Durham, Ontario and raised on a family farm near Dromore in Grey County. He went to the Ontario Agricultural College and received his Diploma in Agriculture. After graduation, Alex returned to farm and was active in the Junior Farmers program. Early in his career, Alex worked for Grey County as a Fieldman and then with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture in a variety of Extension-related positions.

In 2000, after the closure of the Extension Office in Grey County, Alex was presented with the opportunity to become a Fieldman with the Queens Bush Rural Ministry. Founded in 1985 by the Unite Church of Canada, the Ministry's purpose is to provide a helping hand to farmers in crisis. Alex's job was to provide confidential counseling to help farmers address their specific financial situations and to refer them to the most appropriate help. By 2000, the Ministry had grown to include the Anglican, Lutheran, Presbyterian, and Roman Catholic Churches and has received numerous recognition awards for its work with struggling farmers. Alex is now the Coordinator of this program whose Mission Statement is "Helping Farmers Survive Crisis with Dignity".

Alex Leith still continues to operate a beef cow-calf operation near Dromore and is a very active member in his community.

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## 2010 OIA CONFERENCE AND AGM

Dr. Theo Blom, P.Ag., President of the Niagara Branch, and the members of the Niagara Branch have put together an exciting OIA Conference Program. Members asked for an annual conference to be part of the OIA Annual General Meeting. The Niagara Branch took up the challenge. One look at the Program shows not only a terrific line up of speakers and an awards banquet, but the pre-conference tour presents a "must go" professional development opportunity.

The theme of the Conference, *Nourishing Our Neighbours while Feeding Billions*, is not only timely given the current debate about local food and its role in sustainable food systems, but will provide members from across the province with the opportunity to network, discuss food as a global commodity, and provide a meaningful professional development experience.

All OIA members will agree that the speakers cross all scopes of practice.

- Ms Janet Horner, Coordinator, Greater Toronto Area Agriculture Action Committee and Whitfield Farms, Shelburne: Speaking on Marketing Ontario Food in the Golden Horseshoe.
- Ms. Jane Langdon, Wine Country Cooking School, Inc., Niagara-on-the-Lake: Speaking on the Challenges in Putting Ontario Food on Ontario Plates.

- Dr. John Kelly, P.Ag., Vice-President, Erie Innovation and Commercialization, Simcoe: Speaking on Agriculture Innovation, Implementation and Commercialization.
- Dr. Isabelle Lesschaeve, Research Director, Consumer Insights and Product Innovation, Vineland Research and Innovation Centre, Vineland Station: Speaking on Ontario Consumers' Motivations for Buying Local and Organic Produce.
- Mr. Paul Murphy, Executive Director, Global Analyses and Institutions, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Ottawa: Speaking on Production for World Export.
- Mr. Leonard Troup, Tender Fruit Producer; Chairman, Tender Fruit Producer's Marketing Board, Jordan Station: Speaking on Opportunities and Concerns of Producers.
- Mr. Barry Fraser, P.Ag., CAC, CAFA, Fraser Consulting and Associates, Chatham: Speaking on the Challenges and Opportunities from the Conference for Agrologists.
- Mr. Jim Weir, P.Ag., Registrar, Manitoba Institute of Agrologists, Winnipeg.

The full conference program, including a full description of the pre-conference tour is available on the OIA website:

[http://www.oia.on.ca/Uploads/2010%20AGM%20Registration%20Form\(1\).pdf](http://www.oia.on.ca/Uploads/2010%20AGM%20Registration%20Form(1).pdf)

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## **2010 AGM PACKAGE POSTED**

Members will find the AGM Package for the OIA's 51<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting posted on the OIA website:

<http://www.oia.on.ca/Events/Detail.aspx?id=646>

The OIA Annual General Meeting registration will begin at 1:30 p.m. at the Hilton Garden Inn, 500 York Road, Niagara-on-the-Lake on Saturday April 17, 2010. The AGM will commence at 2:00 p.m.

On the website you will see posted the Agenda; the minutes of the April 2009 AGM; both the OIA President's and Registrar's Reports; the 2009 Financial Statement and 2010 Budget; the proposed By-law Amendments and Motions; the Board Nominee Profiles; and the Proxy form for those who wish to participate but can not attend.

We look forward to seeing you in beautiful Niagara-on-the-Lake!

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