

THE ONTARIO AGROLOGIST

A conversation with William (Bill) Ungar, P.Ag., CCA-ON, and President of Ungar International based in London, Ontario. The company sources, imports, markets and sells agricultural-grade fertilizers, as well as automotive- and industrial-grade chemicals, with contacts and associates around the world.

Q: Why did you feel it was appropriate to pursue a P.Ag. designation?

Bill: I wanted to be part of an association that's recognized and well regarded within its sphere of influence. An Institute of Agrologists brings a professional membership together who must follow guidelines set out through accepted and mandated standards of practice. Those standards may be upgraded from time to time for purposes on competence within an evolving field, but there is also a code of ethics in place that is practiced by members to ensure that a level of objectivity is maintained.

Q: Do your customers and this industry expect a higher level of professionalism today?

Bill: Yes, when you work with the public today in such a complex and evolving business environment, which is certainly the case in the agriculture and agrifood industry, being part of a regulated body such as an Institute of Agrology is largely expected by many of the people I deal with at various levels, and in some circumstances it is required by someone in my position.

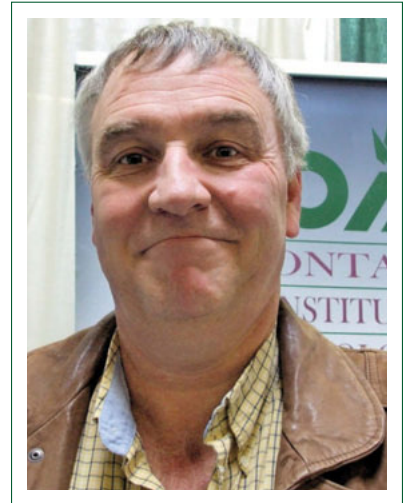
Q: What circumstances do you encounter where a P.Ag. designation is required?

Bill: My company does a lot of business in Western Canada. I have to say

that Professional Agrologists are not nearly as well recognized in Eastern Canada as in Western Canada, simply because in those provinces a practicing, consulting agrologist cannot make certain recommendations without holding something like a P.Ag. designation. Now that's not the case here in Ontario, but my P.Ag. designation is required in the West for much of the work I do with customers and with the Ag industry. Quite frankly, I believe my P.Ag. designation, as it currently stands in Ontario, should be mandated as a licensed requirement just as it is in Western Canada.

Q: Why do you feel an upgraded mandate is necessary?

Bill: I go back to the complexities within the industry, and also with the more critical public that we're dealing with today. The modern system we deal with today, that's local, national and global, is just too much to deal with for someone without the ongoing training, experience, and the proper credentials that go with it. Agrologists work in every facet of agriculture — and as individuals, an Agrologist goes well beyond what many would view as part of the traditional agriculture and agrifood system. But it is all part of a larger whole — when you see how agriculture relates to a very long and



continuous system. As an Agrologist you are a steward for the agricultural system, which is part of the broader food system which, in turn, is part of a much broader environmental system. This is an integrated system that just can't be seen as piece-meal, or perceived as separate parts anymore. It is not seen that way by the production or processing industry today, and it's certainly not seen that way by the larger general public.

The Ontario Institute of Agrologists represents nearly 500 Professional (P.Ag.), Technical (T.Ag.), and Articling (A.Ag.) Agrologist members across Ontario's diverse agricultural industry. The OIA is based in Guelph. For a current listing of OIA Members, events and information go to the website shown below.