



Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association

1-367 Woodlawn Road West, Guelph, Ontario N1H 7K9

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

www.ontariosoilcrop.org

NEWS RELEASE

OSCIA to deliver cost-share support to farmers in the Lake Erie and Lake St. Clair Watersheds

New LEADS program application intake opens Fall 2021

Guelph, ON (October 26, 2021) – The Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association (OSCIA) will soon be accepting applications for a new round of project funding to help farmers improve environmental sustainability, soil health and water quality in the Lake Erie and Lake St. Clair watersheds. The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) [announced the new intake](#) on October 18.

Beginning November 2 at 9:00 A.M. (ET), applications will be accepted under the Lake Erie Agriculture Demonstrating Sustainability (LEADS) initiative, a geographically targeted cost-share program funded under the Canadian Agricultural Partnership (the Partnership). Approved LEADS projects will focus on improved soil health and reduced risk of nutrient losses in the Lake Erie and Lake St. Clair watersheds. [An interactive map](#) showing the eligible area is available on the OSCIA website.

Updated program information is available on www.ontarioprogramguides.net. Applications are only accepted during intakes, but farmers who may be interested in participating can visit the website to help prepare their application for the intake opening on November 2. The intake will close at 5:00 P.M. (ET) on November 8, 2021, and eligible applications will be continuously assessed while funding is available.

The Canadian Agricultural Partnership is a five-year government initiative to strengthen the agriculture, agri-food, and agri-based products sector and increase its competitiveness, prosperity, and sustainability. The Partnership cost-share funding is administered to Ontario producers by OSCIA. Since April 2018, OSCIA has delivered more than \$9.2M in LEADS cost-share funding allocated to over 930 projects for eligible Ontario farmers.

“The Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association is pleased to be delivering the next LEADS intake this Fall,” said Chad Anderson, President of OSCIA. “OSCIA is excited to continue supporting LEADS-area farmers in their adoption of best management practices that improve soil health and support Ontario’s commitment to nutrient loss reductions in these priority watersheds.”

Along with a fourth edition [Environmental Farm Plan](#), farmers will need to have completed a [Farmland Health Check-Up before applying](#). The Check-Up provides farmers in the LEADS-eligible area with the opportunity to work one-on-one, at no cost to the farmer, with a participating Ontario Certified Crop Advisor (CCA) or Professional Agrologist (P.Ag) to assess risks to soil health and water quality. Best Management Practices (BMPs) are chosen to address those risks, and an implementation plan is established. Select BMPs may be supported financially through the LEADS cost-share program. Examples

of projects eligible for support under LEADS include planting cover crops, installing erosion control structures, nutrient management planning and modifications to tillage and nutrient application equipment.

Cost-share levels are determined by the risks identified through the applicant's completed Check-Up and the ability of the BMP to address an identified challenge. The intake offers up to 65 per cent cost-share funding for eligible projects and applicants may receive up to \$100,000 over the course of the LEADS program (2018-2023). Cost-share levels and assessment criteria specific to each project category are identified in the Online Program Guide (www.ontarioprogramguides.net).

Information about LEADS, including eligibility criteria, the application process and program deadlines, is available at ontarioprogramguides.net or farmers can reach out to their local [OSCIA Field Staff](#). Farmers can find a list of CCAs and P.Ags eligible to conduct the Farmland Health Check-Up at farmlandhealthcheckup.net/.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association LEADS@ontariosoilcrop.org or FHCU@ontariosoilcrop.org; (519) 826-4214 or 1-800-265-9751.