

TBARS and Thunder Bay Farming Community Milestones II

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First part of this note (2004-2009) was published in Northwest Link, October 2009, Pages 10-12. Between 2010 and 2015, the renowned TBARS sustained itself with part funding from the NOHFC (for the project 'Efficient and Economic use of Fertilizer Nutrients') and during 2016-2017 with breathing funding from OMAFRA; supplemented with contributions from member farmers and local businesses and earnings through collaborative research projects with the industry, AAFC and the agricultural universities. During all these years, TBARS continued to be guided by its mission statement; reproduced as under:

“The Thunder Bay Agricultural Research Station, Thunder Bay, is committed to the establishment, operation, promotion and transfer of agricultural research for the further development and diversification of the agricultural industry.”

Development Oriented Research at TBARS was quickly applied on farms by an enterprising farming community of Thunder Bay (and also by farmers elsewhere within/and outside the Province of Ontario). A brief account of the changes that took place on farms (mostly Thunder Bay) during 2010-2017 is as follows:

2010:

- A single farmer grew 600 acres of spring wheat.
- Three growers in the vicinity of the research station added new bins for grain storage.
- One dozen growers cultivated CDC Coalition, a high yielding two row barley variety.
- Growers seeded winter wheat and spring barley together for better quality forage production.
- There was an increased diversity of locally grown and processed food in Thunder Bay.

2011:

- At least three producers (Fritz Jaspers, John Hanna, and John Veurink) seeded ~150 acres under NSC Warren a new high yielding soybean variety tested at and recommended by TBARS.
- Martin Schep seeded Encore a new high yielding barley variety tested at and recommended by TBARS.
- Quite a few growers (including Fritz Jaspers, Bernie Kamphof, and Rudy Buitenhuis) seeded Oceanik barley a new high yielding barley variety tested at and recommended by TBARS.
- Murray Janssen seeded 5525 Liberty canola in 20 acres.
- Mark Bolt seeded cascade oats.
- Jeff Burke continued to grow Millhouse-Food Barley
- More and more farmers applied sulphur to more and more crops. Fritz Jaspers applied sulphur to all crops including soybean. Alfalfa producers doubled the rate of boron application as recommendation by TBARS.
- Mark Bolt and Bernie Kamphof built Robot Milking Barn.

2012:

- Henry Janssens increased spring wheat area from 200 acres last year to 300 acres this year. He seeded Oceanik barley in 100 acres and soybean in 70 acres.
- Fritz Jaspers seeded 125 acres under Wilkin (first time) spring wheat and 330 acres under Sable (both varieties tested at TBARS). He seeded 125 acres each under soybean (RR Rosco tested at TBARS) and corn for silage (a DeKalb variety).
- Allan Mol added two new barley varieties (Celebration-6 row and CDC Austenson-2 row).
- Arie Grootenboer seeded berseem (an annual forage legume) as a sole crop in 4 acres and as an intercrop with barley (100 % barley, 100 % berseem) in 3.4 acres on May 11. Brandon Grant

seeded berseem in ~5 acres; first cut as hay and then left the regrowth for turning around. Grootenboer also seeded New Dale Barley in 20 acres.

- Martin Schep and Jim Burke seeded sorghum Sudan grass in 20 acres and 5 acres, respectively.
- Allan Mol planted 155 acres under barley; about 93 acres of Celebration, about 12 acres of Austenson and nearly 50 acres of Cowboy, and 40 acres of soybeans, DeKalb 2510 RY, a RR2 variety. Mol sprayed barley with a recommended tank mix including Refine SG, Puma Advanced and Stratego because it has a wider window for application (weed and disease control).
- *John Hanna and Martin Schep become the first growers in Thunder Bay to apply entire N as ESN to winter wheat. The two producers also resumed winter wheat cultivation.*

2013:

- Fritz Jaspers and Arie Grootenboer bought ESN for the first time for spring application. John Grootenboer was interested as well, but couldn't get ESN because of small quantities.
- Rudy Buitenhuis seeded spring wheat in 10 acres.
- Three growers (Mark Bolt, Richard Templeman and Jim Byers) together bought 14 tons of Synasolis barley. Bolt also seeded spring barley + winter wheat in 50 acres for the first time.
- Fred Breukelman seeded 200 acres under Oceanik barley in 200 acres (first time).
- John Veurink, Gerald Janssens and Dan Matyasovszky bought Encore barley seed for the first time.
- Arie Grootenboer and Bernie Kamphof seeded Newdale; a malting barley variety tested at TBARS during 2005-'07.
- Gert Brekveld seeded spring wheat in 50 acres for the first time. Some other farmers too added/or expanded area under spring wheat.
- Murry Janssens seeded ~100 acres under canola. John Hanna seeded 70 acres under canola. Jeff Burke (first time) seeded canola in 17 acres. Both John (1.5 MT/acre; combination of good weather, better fertilizer management and lime worked very well) and Jeff (1.2 MT/acre) got more than 1 MT seed yield/acre.
- Fritz Jaspers realized the rotational benefits with hardly any FHB when spring wheat was grown after soybean (he got 90 MT grains from 47 acres in the field close to TBARS) as compared to the one grown after silage corn. Fritz Jaspers was thinking to grow canola next year!
- Thunder Bay Oak Cheese Farm built their new state of the art cheese making facility at Boundary Drive, close to the Thunder Bay Co-Op Farm Supplies.

2014:

- Fritz Jaspers seeded Helios spring wheat variety in 200 acres. Mark Bolt seeded 45 acres under Kane and 85 acres under Sable (total 130 acres; up from 70 acres last year) wheat. Gerald Janssens seeded 60 acres under Helios wheat. John Hanna seeded Sable.
- Gert Brekveld seeded 50 acres under spring wheat (Sable, some acres under Oceanik and ~32 acres under New Dale barley. Jeff Burke grew spring wheat in 60 acres and his dad Jim Burke had some acres under spring wheat as well.
- Fritz Jaspers seeded 90 acres under canola (Liberty 130) for the first time in a field adjacent to TBARS and in another field on Boundary Drive x Monteith Road. This made the Slate River Valley even more beautiful! Jeff Burke increased area under canola from 17 to 65 acres. Jeff was planning to put a Canola Press to extract grade 2 edible oil from canola. John Hanna seeded 60 acres under canola and Gerald Janssens 30 acres under canola (for the first time).
- John Hanna decided to grow chickpea again in 10 acres, oats + berseem in 45 acres and berseem for seed production in 4 acres for the first time. John Hanna grew Liberty 5440 Canola for the first time. Hanna seeded 20 acres under yellow field peas; wheat (40 acres), barley (22 acres) and soybean (40 acres).

- Number of producers buying Synasolis barley seed increased from one in 2013 to 8 in 2014; Martin Schep 2 MT, Mark Bolt 5 MT, John Hanna 2 MT, Richard Templeman 5 MT, Bernie Kamphof 3 MT, John Veurink 2 MT, Jeff Shellacs 1 MT and Jim Byers 1 MT (total 21 MT = 420-525 acres).
- Richard Templeman and Fred Breukelman bought 1 MT Encore barley seed each. Breukelman seeded CDC Austenson barley in ~180 acres and 60-70 acres under Oceanik (under seeded with grass).
- Ed Breukelman seeded CDC Austenson barley in 130 acres and Oceanik in 70 acres and also Dekalb corn in some area.
- Allan and Henry Mol seeded CDC Celebration barley, a variety tested at TBARS, in more than 200 acres. Martin Schep became the biggest barley grower this year. He seeded 300 acres under barley; 100 acres no till and 200 acres under conventional tillage. Forty acres each under Encore and Synasolis and the rest (220 acres) under Cyane. Martin applied 100 lb N/acre to barley.
- Fred Breukelman, Bernie Kamphof and John Hanna used ESN for spring crops for the first time.
- Canola King Jon Wiley used multiple sources of N (urea, ESN, ammonium sulphate and manure; 117 kg N/ha from commercial fertilizers) and boron in line with such a recommendation from TBARS for crop production and had a record breaking canola seed yield of 4,912 lb/acre from Liberty 5440 (a canola variety tested and recommended by TBARS).
- Woodstar Farm Thunder Bay built the first Compost Bedding Pack Barn in northern Ontario!

2015:

- Dr. Sahota was presented with an Award of Honour by the Alumni Association of the Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana, Punjab, India on February 26, 2015.
- Dr. Sahota was invited by the Agromart Truro to make presentations on “Multiple Nitrogen Sources for Forages”, and another on “Nitrogen for corn and small grains” at their Biennial Crop Focus Even at Truro on March 24-25.
- A Tele Conference with Christopher Cronin, Edible Bean Marketing Assistant, Hensall District Co-operative, Inc., Tel. 519-262-3511 ext. 339 and his colleague Brad Chandler on chickpea revealed that they were planning to initiate a pilot project on chickpea (seeding done).
- Wes Skene Dairy Nutritionist Alberta (403-877-3545) called to know about MasterGraze corn.
- John Houley, a farmer from Quebec (418-596-2872) called and another near Toronto (Allan Cartwright; <margcartwright@hotmail.com>) emailed to know about Sainfoin and its seed source.
- Mark Bolt seeded canola in 90 acres for the first time in 2015. Fritz Jaspers increased area under canola from 90 acres to 295 acres, Gerald Janssen from 30 to 47 acres, John Hanna from 60 acres to 97 acres and Jeff Burke continued with 65 acres.
- Peter Aalbers seeded Galega (in 40-50 acres) and also Sainfoin for the first time.
- Gert Brekveld increased area under spring wheat to 120 acres.
- More and more farmers were using ESN (John Hanna, John Grootenboer, Gerrit Cramer and Gert Brekveld).
- Mark Bolt seeded winter rye in 168 acres for the first time.
- Research on MasterGraze corn at TBARS was applied by dairy farmers outside Calgary, AB.
- Brule Creek Farms added a canola press (3-4 MT/day capacity) to their operations to extract and market edible canola oil and canola cake; the latter as livestock feed.
- Slate River Dairy Farm diversified into milk processing and marketing of Whole, Skim and Cocoa Milk along with Whipping Cream, Farm Fresh Yogurt, Cheese and Kefir!

2016:

- New crop varieties such as *Cardale* and *Brandon* in spring wheat, *P140*-a non shattering canola variety for direct combining and *Pekko* and *P002T04R* in soybean were seeded first time in hundreds of acres in Thunder Bay District.
- Fritz Jaspers and Ed Breukelman seeded flax (CDC Glas) in 50-70 acres for the first time.
- Three producers (Fritz Jaspers, Ed Breukelman and Fred Breukelman) used plastic mulch in corn for the first time in ~350 acres.
- The number of winter rye growers increased from one last year to six (Mark Bolt, Joel Veurink, Gerrit Cramer, Martin Schep, Gert Brekveld and Erik Johansson) this fall (total nearly 400 acres seeded; out of which 120 acres were seeded as a cover crop by a single producer.
- Winter wheat made a comeback with one grower seeding AAC Gateway, a high yielding hard red winter wheat variety, in 60 acres.
- Two producers applied part N as ESN in the seed row to winter wheat and rye.
- Galega, a perennial legume, which proved to be a potentially good alternative to alfalfa at TBARS attracted a lot of interest not only from within the province, but also from the other provinces (Quebec, Saskatchewan and Alberta).
- Dairy farmers around Calgary expanded their acreage under MasterGraze corn three folds. TBARS pioneered in research on MasterGraze corn that produces 8 MT dry matter yield/ha in 80 days. Its feeding to dairy cows improved, milk yield by 3l/cow/day and butter fat yield from 3.93 % to 4.40 %.
- Students from the Lakehead University got educational tours at TBARS/and got guidance for their on-farm research and thesis writing.
- Land clearing and tile drainage on farms continued.
- Two dairy farmers expanded their barns.

2017:

- One of the most significant contributions of TBARS has been a Province Wide introduction of Galega, a new perennial forage legume from Scandinavian countries in 2017. Thunder Bay Feeds imported 4 MT of galega seed for some 20 farmers as follows:
Thunder Bay: 3 farmers
Dryden: 4 farmers
Rainy River: 3 farmers
Areas close to GTA: 3 farmers, and
Other areas including Ottawa Valley: 7
- Dr. Sahota answered numerous phone calls from within and outside the Province of Ontario on Galega cultivation. Peter Aalbers has planned to add 60 acres under Galega in 2018. Some other dairy producers have such plans as well.
- Five Thunder Bay producers ordered 25 MT of AAC Penhold (CSRW) seed; Ryan Jaspers 13 MT, Erin Brekveld 5 MT, John Veurink 3 MT and Martin Schep and Gert Brekveld 2 MT each.
- Rob Mol (10 MT), Mark Bolt (5 MT), and Erin Brekveld (3 MT) collectively ordered 18 MT of Boroe barley; total Boroe sale: 31 MT. TB Co-Op also sold 17.5 MT Celebration barley.
- Jeff Burke ordered 4 bags of 5535 CL canola (= 50 acres seeding). *Burke's Brule Creek Farms won the Premier's Award for Agri-Food Innovation Excellence 2017 for addition of an oil press to his operations that has allowed Burke to create his own line of cold-pressed, extra virgin canola oil for human consumption!*
- Fred Breukelman (150 acres) and Ed Breukelman (50-55 acres) seeded canola for the first time in 2017. Canola cultivar L252 is being grown for the first time this year. With canola fields scattered here and there, Thunder Bay looked like a mini Alberta this year!

- Fritz Jaspers and Fred Breukelman applied N to canola from three fertilizers; ammonium sulphate, urea and ESN. Jaspers applied ESN to spring wheat (200 acres) in seed row at seeding.
- Mark Bolt doubled his barn capacity with increase in milking Robots from 2 to 4 and Bernie Kamphof expanded his barn capacity by 1.5 times.
- Our member farmers had recorded high grain/seed yields (Fritz Jaspers 2.25 MT/acre AAC Penhold spring wheat and 1.75 MT/acre canola, Mark Bolt 2.30 MT/acre Boro barley and Gerald Janssen 2 MT/acre AAC Gateway winter wheat).
- Number of winter rye growers grew from 6 in 2016 to 10 in 2017; Aaron Breukelman, Bernie Kamphof, Bill Groenheide, Bruce Forrest, Gerald Janssens, Gert Brekveld, Jeff Burke, Kevin Belluz, Mark Bolt and Martin Schep. Thus winter rye became one of the main crops in the area!

2018:

- TBARS is poised to become LUARS (Lakehead University Agricultural Research Station) with effect from 1st April, 2018! Dr. Brian Stevenson, President and Vice Chancellor Lakehead University said that it was a win-win-win situation for all and we hope so!

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PS 2018:

- Four farmers (Bernie Kamphof, Gert Brekveld, Henry Janssen and Martin Schep) are growing canola for the first time. Total acreage under canola rose to ~700 acres. All but one grower seeded L140P a non shattering variety.
- Fred Breukelman would be growing Galega in ~50 acres for the first time.
- Most wheat growers have gone for CPRS AAC Penhold. Dennis Elhook became the first time wheat grower this year (16 acres).