



CERTIFIED  
CROP ADVISER

# Recognizing Excellence

By Susan Fitzgerald, *Executive Director-ON*

In Canada, we are able to produce safe and abundant food even as the bar continues to rise regarding quality, variety and price. Innovation in production techniques and product development are needed to keep Ontario producers at the forefront of the agricultural industry. Fifty years ago, in an age of corner stores, butcher shops and green grocers, it was hard to envision our current reality of huge retail supermarkets, frozen ready-prepared dinners, and a plethora of drive through, fast food restaurants. Bioengineering and genetically modified foods were beyond imagination and few farmers marketed their products as organic or "green" even if it was.

## Technology, regulations, environment, and consumer demand are changing the face of agriculture and creating tremendous challenges and opportunities for growers

As consumers become more concerned about the nutritional value, quality and safety of our food, the agricultural practices of modern growers are increasingly in the public eye. Consumers demand the highest standards in food production as well as compliant environmental stewardship.

The demands on the agricultural industry today require producers to make careful decisions in a number of areas such as: environmental protection, soil and water management, crop and rotational selections, and nutrient management. Having access to a knowledgeable, professional, and experienced crop adviser can be critical for success.

Throughout North America, 13,874 men and women serve farm clients as Certified Crop Advisers (CCAs), providing information and expertise on crop production, crop protection and natural resource management. This group of commercial, public and independent advisers plays an important role in modern agriculture. Crop advisers provide advice and counsel producers in their decision making process. This responsibility requires a good understanding of science, food safety, technology, economics and environment. Crop advisers combine knowledge in these disciplines with their local experience to render sound recommendations.

## The CCA Program is part of the American Society of Agronomy (ASA)

ASA has over 90 years of history and plays an important role in the certification and tracking of continuing education for the CCA Program. When partnering with a CCA you have an adviser who has met the rigid standards set by the ASA. Candidates must document work experience, pass exams and maintain on-going continuing education. Achieving the CCA designation is not an easy process. On average, just 60% of those seeking CCA status and sitting for the exams actually achieve certification. Not only are CCAs qualified to help you, they are bound by a Code of Ethics to put their customers' needs first. Farmers are increasingly finding that CCAs are valuable partners who help them to compete in a global marketplace.

Just as the marketplace demands and rewards excellence, beginning in 2003, the Ontario CCA Board began awarding an annual CCA Award of Excellence

to recognize one of the 500 Ontario CCAs who delivers exceptional customer service. The award was designed to recognize a crop adviser who delivers exceptional customer service, is highly innovative, has shown that they are a leader in their field, and has contributed substantially to the exchange of ideas and the transfer of agronomic knowledge within the agriculture industry.

## The 2006 recipient was Shawn Brenneman

Shawn has been an outstanding employee of Sylvite Agri-Services for five years. In that time, he has built up the trust and respect of his customers by providing them with the information and recommendations they need to be profitable. They know Shawn has their best interest at heart and is continually looking for solutions to make their operations more successful.

The 2006 CCA Award of Excellence was presented to Shawn Brenneman on January 10, 2007 at the CCA Conference and Annual Meeting in Niagara Falls before 180 of his peers. The other 2006 nominees were Gord Hyndman, Thompsons Limited, Steve Johns, Syngenta Crop Protection, and Robert Moloney, Inland Co-op/FS Partners.

## Previous winners of the CCA Award of Excellence are:

Terry Phillips, *Co-operative Regionale de Nipissing-Sudbury (2005)*;  
Kirk Patterson, *Scotland Agromart (2004)*; and  
Deb Campbell, *Cargill (2003)*.

The Award is jointly sponsored by *Syngenta Crop Protection and CropLife Canada – Ontario Council*.



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*There are over 500 Certified Crop Advisers (CCA) in Ontario. Each CCA has demonstrated their knowledge about Ontario crop production by passing the required exams. In addition, they have the crop advisory experience, the education, the commitment to continuing education and have signed a comprehensive code of ethics, which places the grower's interests first.*

*This industry driven program helps ensure that Ontario crop producers are well served by those providing their crop production advice.*