

The Environmental Farm Plan - Putting Words into Action

Larry and Judy Chanda began making environmental improvements to their 125-head cow-calf farm near Delhi, Ontario 30 years ago, out of a need to protect the fragile sandy soil common to the Norfolk sand plain.

The Chandas were among the first graduates of the Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) program. "We were interested in the environment and considered ourselves to be stewards of the land", says Judy, "but the EFP helped us prioritize and finance some of the improvements we wanted to make. We looked at it as a tool to enhance our farm business."

Larry is the fifth generation to be raised on the family farm and believes that the land needs to be preserved for the long-term. "We had been planting windbreaks as a way to help combat the wind erosion. Since doing the EFP, we've also switched to no-till crop farming practices, wherever possible, on corn and soybean fields, and some of our lighter lands have been sown to grass crops to further discourage wind erosion while providing feed for the animals."

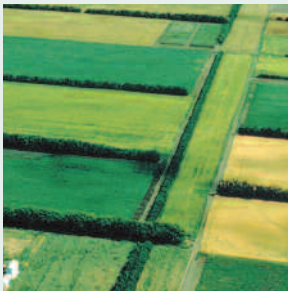
Other changes made following their participation in the EFP included putting eaves troughs on the barn, building a cement pad and a system to capture manure runoff, improving pesticide storage facilities and implementing a rotational grazing system.

In 1999, new fencing was erected around the former tobacco irrigation pond to keep cattle out of the pond. The Chandas have added a vegetated buffer strip around the pond and have lowered the water level to make it more conducive to ducks, geese and the largemouth bass that live in the pond.

Larry and Judy are strong proponents of the EFP. "There's probably a need on everyone's farm to make environmental improvements. Yet, so often even the smallest projects are expensive. That's why the EFP is such a good program. Everyone gains by participating in it. The success of the program speaks for its value. It has grown as a result of farmers having a good experiences and then talking to other farmers about it."

The Environmental Farm Plan program was created by farmers for farmers through the Ontario Farm Environmental Coalition (OFEC) in 1992. Since then, the program has evolved to the current Third Edition and is now offered, in various formats, throughout Canada as part of the Environment Chapter of the Agricultural Policy Framework. Cost-share funding for Beneficial Management Practices (BMPs) comes from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs. In order to be eligible for cost-share funding, a farmer must have their EFP peer-reviewed and deemed appropriate.

For more information, or to register for an Environmental Farm Plan workshop contact: the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association at 1-800-265-9751 or www.ontariosoilcrop.org.



Larry and
Judy Chanda

The Agricultural Policy Framework (APF) - A Federal - Provincial - Territorial Initiative
Le Cadre stratégique pour l'agriculture (CSA) - une initiative fédérale-provinciale-territoriale

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