

## Great Lakes Grain – Ninth Annual Crop Assessment Tour

### Final yield and crop quality report for 2018 crop assessment tour

CHATHAM, ON September 11, 2018 - The official tour began on September 4 and concluded on September 7, 2018. With more than 500 corn and 450 soybean fields observed by teams consisting of 85 staff from Great Lakes Grain, AGRIS Co-operative and FS PARTNERS. It has given us a great insight into crop conditions and assessment of final yields.

We are ready to call the corn yield at 183 bushels per acre and are predicting a new provincial soybean yield record of 54 bushels per acre. The weather concerns of the spring, slowly gave way to favorable growing conditions in the latter stages of July and August. We certainly had our doubts early in the spring of just what kind of growing season and final results we would experience.

In the end cob length is longer than last year, row number stayed the same and plant populations were higher than previous years. All this has come together with favorable weather during grain fill to add to the final yield. While we may be missing a lot of high top end yield numbers, we are not seeing a lot of low end yields either. You can get to good average yield with a narrow range in yield.

In contrast to last year, 95 per cent of the fields were in dent stage and last year only 44 per cent of the observed fields were dent stage. Last year we were looking for another 750 CHU to finish the crop in September. This year we have achieved our normal accumulation with most areas in the southwest exceeding 3200 CHU to date.

Corn is not without its issues. The observations reported by staff in the field centered on nitrogen deficiency symptoms in 28% of the fields and gaps in the plant stand. Between missing plants and loss of nitrogen we may have left some yield on the table. This is a great follow up with your crop sales specialist to put in place a scouting program next year just after emergence to sort out planter issues. Is the gap a missed seed or one that did not germinate? We need to sort out planter performance separate from seed issues.

Managing **nitrogen as a system** is another opportunity to protect the nitrogen investment and keep it around longer to meet yield demands. Split N programs, timing, rates, technology and stabilizers all need a good discussion with your trusted advisor.

Plant health was generally good from foliar leaf disease stand point. Some late North Corn Leaf Blight was present. Low incidence of Western Bean Cutworm, except fields that had it present it was doing significant amount of damage. Apart from yield loss we can almost be assured of Gibberella Ear rots and the resulting DON toxin it can produce.

We also observed some normal silk channel infections on 18 per cent of the fields, especially on hybrids with a upright cob orientation and tight husks. This will require careful harvest plans. Fields that are already showing infections before black layer will need to be harvested first and shipped if you want to minimize discounts for quality. This is not the corn you want for long term storage. The longer this corn stays in the field the worse the infection becomes, it will not improve with age.

Soybeans will be the crop we talk about in 2018. Planting dates range from April 30 to end of June. Interestingly enough planting dates are not explaining estimated yields as much as row spacing. Seven inch spacing is out yielding wider spacing by as much as five bushels per acre in our estimations.

Thinking back to spring we experienced stand establishment issues. Most fields have substantially lower plant populations. Narrow rows would have canopied earlier this year taking full advantage of the sunshine sooner. Sunlight hitting bare ground does not make beans. Soybeans do compensate for thinner stands with additional branching and more pods.

The pod counts this year were the highest we have seen in nine years of the tour. We count the pods on one ten thousandths of an acre. (1/10,000). We normally use 2.5 beans per pod as a conversion factor. This year we saw many four bean pods and as result were thinking that the beans/pod should be higher.

We had our interns in the co-operative system collect 300 plants in random fields and do the counts. Much to our surprise the same 2.5 beans per pod average. It would appear while we fixate on four bean pods, we miss the ones with one or two beans in the them.

Yield is a function of number of pods, number of beans and weight of the beans. The nodes on the stems is where flowers and pods originate and we saw numerous nodes with as many as six pods and others with only two or none at all. The top nodes had pods in most fields and this is always a good sign. We did observe more nodes on the main stem than usual. This may well be in response to hot weather as there is some experimental evidence to suggest the soybean plant may initiate more nodes as a result.

As favorable weather occurs in the last half of the growing season we have more ideal conditions to fill beans and we did see a larger bean size which will contribute more weight and higher yields. We have always said beans need to be stressed to yield. There is never any one factor that explains the final outcome it is a systems approach to management.

Weed control in particular on resistant weeds remains a high priority for many farmers. Most weeds have come after the critical weed free period and have not impacted on yield however the challenge will be at harvest. Some preharvest burndown will be required to reduce dirt tag on identity preserved soybeans. Escapes driven by late season rains has brought on Canada Fleabane and Giant Ragweed. Fall weed control will be highly recommended ahead of wheat planting.

We do see an early harvest with corn and soybeans and likely both ready at the same time. A harvest plan for grain quality is advised especially for corn with ear molds. It may be a year where we harvest corn before soybeans. Unless of course wheat needs to be planted on designated soybean fields.

Below are our estimated yields by county.

County	Corn yield	Soybean Yield
Brant	180.6	41.2
Bruce	183.4	47.8
Dufferin	175.2	52.0
Elgin	179.5	54.5
Embrun/Eastern Ontario	177.8	52.0
Essex	161.5	47.7
Grey	165.6	48.9
Hamilton-Wentworth	170.7	41.0
Huron	198.8	49.0
Kent	193.4	58.6
Lambton	178.8	51.9
Middlesex	194.2	54.5
Norfolk-Halldimand	170.5	56.8
Oxford	188.3	52.3
Perth	177.0	47.3
Simcoe	183.4	46.0
Waterloo	175.6	53.7
Wellington	186.0	51.5
York	170.8	43.3
<b>Weighted Average</b>	<b>182.9</b>	<b>53.7</b>

The opportunity we have in front of us is the marketing of this crop. Growers were aggressively marketing early this year as corn and soybeans values were very profitable. We had advised growers to be more than 50 per cent contracted of 2018 crop before the July 1.

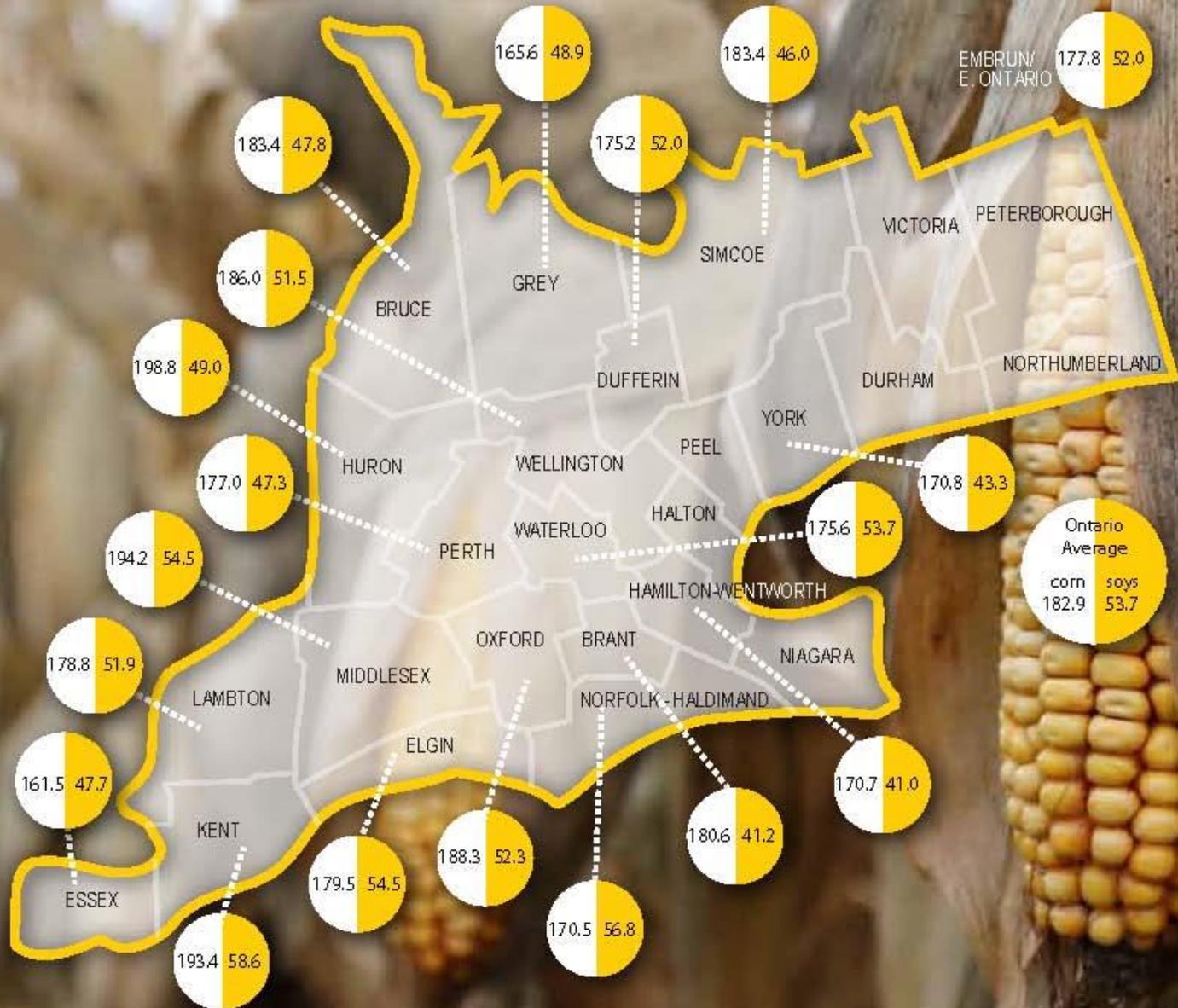
Seasonally the market gives us opportunity before July 1 and this year was no exception. Now with a large corn and bean crop ahead of us we need to ramp up our marketing before the harvest low gets set. An additional sale today with your existing sales will still be a good average.

We don't just do the **crop assessment tour** to understand the provincial average. We do it to help our merchandisers understand how big the crop actually is and what plans we need to have in place prior to harvest. We also do it to help our **farmer-owners** do a better job of marketing and planning for next year. What changes do you need to make in your plans for next year?

# GREAT LAKES GRAIN



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