

EFAO Farmer-led Research Program Advisory Panel Procedures, Program Goals & Project Criteria

Advisory Panel

2016 Advisory Panel

EFAO farmers: Thorsten Arnold, Paul DeJong, Angie Koch, Ken Laing, Darrell Roes

Non-farmer partners: Aabir Dey, Ralph Martin

Selection process

Selection criteria and process

- Maximum 8 members with at least 2/3 representation by EFAO farmer members and
 - *At least* one new member each year, i.e. a member with no previous involvement in the FLRP
 - *At least* one farmer-researcher from previous year who has not served on the Advisory Panel
 - Representation of each sector (livestock, field crops, horticulture), region of Ontario and scale of farm, when possible
- Nominations are accepted throughout year and at FLRP annual meeting
- Selection: Current Advisory Panel selects new Panel from list of nominees

Role of Panel

- Select projects from member priorities and project criteria, as outlined below
- Promote FLRP within membership
- Help build partnerships with non-profits, government agencies, municipalities, conservation authorities, agribusiness and media outlets for funding and dissemination of results

Notes for media contacts: Country Guide, Ontario Farmer/Jeff Carter, Rural Voice (esp. if there are multiple farmers in same region)

Short-term goals of FLRP

1. Train and support farmers to collect rigorous and practical data that is meaningful for their farms, with the understanding that
 - a. Every farm is different and often requires individualized answers
 - b. Empowering individual farmers to innovate is a catalyst for broader change
2. Build EFAO's research network by conducting new farmer-led research, archiving previous research and engaging the membership in the Program
3. Conduct successful research projects that begin to support and encourage a culture of on-farm innovation in ecological agriculture
4. Demonstrate potential of farmer-led research as a tool for innovation in ecological agriculture and build EFAO's capacity to support on-farm research, in order to secure funding for 3+ years

Long-term goals of FLRP

1. Support and encourage a culture of on-farm innovation in ecological agriculture
2. Broadly disseminate data and information about farming that encourages ecological practices
3. Develop strategic partnerships that help support the needs of diversified, ecological farmers (e.g. with OMAFRA, OSCIA, conservation authorities/municipalities)

Other Activities of the FLRP

Research archive

This includes an online database that lists farmer-researchers and describes previous research and findings.

Names and data for database will be collected via:

- Survey to all members
- Space at Conference to record information in person

EFAO research updates and highlights of other research in Newsletter

Experimental design and analysis webinar, winter/spring

- Once farmer-researchers are committed, we will set the date for the webinar
- Open to the public, mandatory for farmer-researchers
- Can use Bauta's Adobe software and Aabir can help facilitate!

Farmer-led research Field days

- Dates will be chosen once farmer-researchers and projects are finalized
- FLRP field days will be **free** and open to public
- One field day will be the grant-mandated Ontario Trillium Foundation recognition event, including media release and MPP invite; tentatively planned for cover crop experiment
- Sarah will refer to media database to have media outlets cover field days

Research Meeting

Location: 2016 EFAO Conference, Kingston

Tuesday, 4-7pm with evening social; Wednesday AM

We have enough funds in the budget to cover 1 night hotel stay for Advisory Panel and farmer researchers, but not mileage reimbursement.

- Open to all EFAO farmer-members; farmer researchers and Advisory Panel
- First half: Farmer-researchers share results from 2016
- Second half: Set research priorities for 2017+ years; find farmer-researchers, start designing trials
- Potential for an experienced farmer-researcher from another network to give a Keynote
- **Other conference activities:** Booth / room, maybe beside Carrot Cache, for idea generation and research archive, research posters, general Q&A about farmer-led on-farm research

2016 Member priorities, as selected from Information Session:

Cover crops (specifically cc pairing with specific veggies)
Intercropping (horticulture)
Soil amendments (horticulture)
Soil testing (livestock/field crops)
Grazing (livestock/field crops)

Recommendation for 2016 Four Levels of Research Support

1. Experiments that require a lot of organization and funding from EFAO (e.g. multi-farm trials, expensive experiments)
 - Must match member research priorities
 - Cooperators fee (see note below) and research expenses covered
 - Full support with research protocol and report, etc.
 - Selection: chosen by Advisory Panel
2. Smaller scale experiments, observation/data collection or experiments happening irrespective of the FLRP but of broad interest to the membership
 - Must fit EFAO's vision and mission and, if possible, member research priorities
 - Cooperators fee covered (see note below) but not research expenses
 - Support with research protocol and report
 - Selection: EFAO farmers suggest projects, with deadline for idea submission of February 15, 2016; Sarah compiles suggested projects, which are approved by Advisory Panel via email

For project types 1 & 2:

- Each farmer will receive up to \$500 (one fee per farm, not project); farmer can opt not to be paid and either choose to donate \$500 back to EFAO and receive a Charitable Gift Receipt or waive fee all together.
 - Details of the support provided and expenses covered will be outlined in each Research Protocol
 - Research Protocols will be posted online and projects will be announced so other members can join/replicate
3. On-going projects that are of interest to EFAO membership
 - Support to formalize protocol and share with members
 - Support to share results (may or may not write formal research report)
 4. Individual farmer-support
 - Sarah helps with experimental design and interpretation, as needed