



Rural Water Quality Program: Producer Profile

WindyBrae Farms

Municipality
Melancthon

Farm Type
Cash Crop

Acres
930

Years in Farming
23

As a CCA (Certified Crop Advisor), continuous learning and growth are integral to staying aligned with the evolving agricultural industry. Our farm's focus is to produce crops in the most profitable and environmentally sound manner possible. Working alongside industry leaders—such as other crop producers, specialists, innovators, and educators—provides valuable insights and opportunities for exploration and trials.

Our farm has a strong appreciation for the soil. It stands as our most significant asset, and efforts are consistently directed toward improving soil quality, enhancing growing mediums, and preserving the necessary terrain for crop production. An in-depth understanding of soil fertility is a distinct advantage, guiding cautious tillage practices and awareness of compaction issues. Soil structure and nutrient management are critical to sustainable cropping practices on our farms.

Cover crops have long been a key component of management practices, valued for their role in preventing erosion, returning organic matter to the soil, and aiding in nutrient retention. Their benefits make them a must do aspect of maintaining soil health and productivity.

~ Scott Caughill, WindyBrae Farms

Rural Water Quality Program Experience



Cover Crops

I have used primarily oats and rye; however, I have experimented with crimson clover, red clover and tillage radish. After wheat harvest, we broadcast cover crops and soil amendments (fertilizer). This seeding is followed by a vertical tillage pass. The cover crop is allowed to grow. It is sprayed off in the late fall, and left to decay on the field, providing protection from wind and water erosion, and to offer sustenance to the worms and soil micro-organisms. I am always amazed at how a significant mat of fall residue diminished to nearly nothing in time for spring plating. As a result:

- Yields have continued to increase
- Nutrient utilization (by the crop) has improved
- Soil health (structure, fiber, fertility, balance) has improved
- Stress-proofing our soil provides a layer of protection from heavy weather events such as excessive rain, drought conditions



Wind Break

In the highlands of Melancthon, we are very exposed to significant wind and weather. Our farm is very open. Working with Grand River Conservation Authority, we introduced windbreaks for protection of our farm buildings, and along our field perimeters to offer some protection to crop land. As a result we have seen significantly more birds around the farm buildings and reduction of soil movement by wind on our north and west fence row.



Well Decommissioning

When we purchased our home farm, there was an old dug well not far from our drilled well. We decommissioned it due to its proximity to our drilled well and the potential for contamination of our drinking water. This measure was undertaken in preventative protection of our water supply.



Nutrient Management Plan

We used a nutrient management plan grant to grid sample (soil sampling) some of our farms. With my background in soil fertility, I am focused on balancing soil fertility, identifying management zones geared toward better crop production and effective use of resources. The impact on the farm was higher yields, better quality crops, and more effective utilization of nutrients applied.