

The ROCKWOOD Miller



SOYBEAN SAVVY: Peter Hannam, a pioneering soybean producer and promoter, was inducted into the Canadian Agricultural Hall of Fame this fall. He is shown here with soybeans ready for shipment. He grows and processes them on his farm, Woodrill. *Rebecca Ring Photo*

Eramosa soybean pioneer inducted into Hall of Fame

By Rebecca Ring

Peter Hannam, co-owner of Woodrill Farm Enterprises and Woodrill Ltd., was inducted into the Canadian Agricultural Hall of Fame this fall, at the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair. His farm, crop supply and elevator business is located on Hwy. 7, between Rockwood and Guelph. Last year, Woodrill Ltd. established a second location in Marsville. He owns them with his son, Greg, and Jim Timmings.

Hannam's claim to fame is spreading soybean production throughout Ontario and dedicating funds and time to its promotion. He and 12 other farmers started First Line Seeds in 1982, which grew, processed and sold varieties of soybean seeds adapted to shorter growing seasons. When they began, there was no soybean production in Ontario north or east of London. Now, it is one of the largest crops grown in the province, with about 2.15 million acres compared to 685,000 acres in 1980. Last year, 75,818 metric tonnes of soybeans were produced in Wellington County alone.

In 2004, the farmers sold First Line Seeds to Monsanto Corporation, a US giant in agricultural chemicals and genetically engineered seeds. With funds from this sale, Hannam set up the Hannam Soybean Utilization Fund (SUF) at the University of Guelph. It funds research into new uses of soybeans.

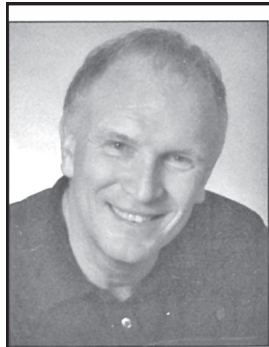
He also established Project SOY (Soybean Opportunities for Youth). It awards prizes of \$2500 to undergraduates for designing new uses for soybeans. Projects ranged from surfboards to Canadian Irish Cream.

The SUF takes these projects to a higher level, awarding research grants to graduate students or faculty. Research includes using soybeans as an alternative home heating or vehicle fuel (bio-fuel), and in auto-parts such as foam insulation, seats and bumpers. Hannam says "Anything made from petroleum products, like polypropylene or nylon, can be made from plant products."

During the sale, Monsanto gave an award to First Line Seeds for its innovation in bulk handling. Previously, soybean seeds were packaged in 25 kg paper bags. Most

farmers needed 1500 to 1800 bags, which was inconvenient and produced a lot of packaging waste. First Line Seeds instituted a program where farmers could pick up or have seed delivered in bulk. In the first year, 40% of their seeds were sold in bulk. Now, all seed companies offer bulk handling. Hannam says "Because we were spread out across the province, we could

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Sales Representative

Area farmers already preparing for parade

Several Rockwood and area farmers are already preparing farm machinery for the annual Farmers' Parade of Lights, which will be held on December 14 of this year. The event draws over 10,000 spectators from all over Ontario every year.

"Our participants are off to a great start again this year. Spectators can expect to see some very exciting floats on the 14th," says Kevin Murison, one of the event organizers.

This will be the fourteenth year that farmers from the surrounding area converge on the village at seven o'clock in the evening with various pieces of decorated and festively lit farm equipment. The floats vary in size, (some up to 20 feet wide) and shape depending on what piece of farm equipment is selected by the 20-25 participants.

"The parade is strictly for fun," says Murison. "There is absolutely no advertising, fundraising or fees associated with it."

"The parade has come a long way since our first year when a number of local farmers got together and drove through town with no set route or legal considerations," says Murison. "We now have an organizing committee that ensures that the parade occurs in a safe and well organized fashion, complete with Police escorts and proper permits."

Murison says the floats themselves have also come a long way, with some of

the farmers starting a month ahead to assemble their many

WELLINGTON OPP REPORT

Collision on 124

A 33-year old man from Guelph/Eramosa Twp. has been charged with impaired driving after an OPP officer, responding to a report of a collision on County Rd. 124 found the driver of a 1995 GMC Safari had been drinking.

Police said the Safari had struck the rear of another van that was turning into a driveway on the road, formerly Highway 24 on Saturday, Nov. 25 about 6:40pm. Injuries in the collision were minor.

Sexual assault

A 36-year-old Guelph man has been charged with sexual assault and sexual interference following an incident which happened in Erin Township on Tuesday, September 26.

OPP Officers went to the home in Erin Twp. on that date when a 12-year-old girl reported she had been sexually assaulted while she and a girlfriend hitch-hiked and were picked up by an older man.

Wellington OPP's crime unit investigated and charges were laid.

The Guelph man is scheduled to appear in Guelph court on January 8 to answer to the charge.

strands (20-40 per float) of Christmas lights and decorations.

Along with the show of lights, spectators will have the opportunity to view a range of farming equipment from yesteryear and today with antique and modern equipment involved. Santa and Mrs. Claus will ride in style as usual for the finale of the parade atop a massive combine.

Murison points out that a sample of the beautifully lit parade floats can be enjoyed at the group's website www.rockwoodfarmersparade.org. The website also contains exact directions to Rockwood and the exact parade route.



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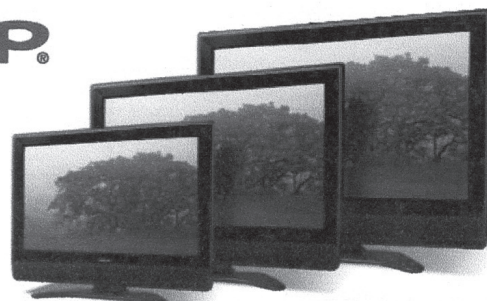
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