

Ontario Soil Management Committee

Terms of Reference

June 2024

Mandate

- The OSMC shall review and approve all soil management recommendations brought before the committee to ensure they encourage practices most likely to deliver improvements in the agronomic, environmental, and economic performance of agriculture, and provide the recommendations to be included in OMAFRA crop production guides and other resource material.
- In the course of the above, the OSMC will identify research needs in those areas and share this information with key research funding agencies including but not limited to OMAFRA, VRIC, GFO, etc.
- The OSMC will support the communication of recommendations.

In particular, the OSMC will concentrate on the following broad themes over the next five years:

1. Strengthening 4R practices and knowledge
2. Integrating and increasing knowledge regarding production economics and environmental impact
3. Soil conservation practices
4. Integrating all inputs into recommendation, such as manure/organic amendments

Meetings

Meeting Frequency: The Parent Committee will meet in-person (if possible), once per year, in mid-June, for one full day. Any additional meetings will be ad hoc (virtual or in-person) as needed.

Quorum: Minimum 60% of the voting members of the Parent Committee constitutes a quorum, including both in-person and online participants.

Decision Making: Following Robert's Rules, a member can make a motion to propose an action or decision. A motion must be seconded to be considered. Once seconded, the committee votes on the motion. The motion passes if a quorum of 60% is reached. If quorum cannot be reached, the motion will be distributed via email to the voting members of the parent committee and votes will be collected through email.

Membership

The OSMC will be composed of members drawn from government, the research community, and representatives from industry and farm organizations (with equal representation). Individuals should have some level of expertise in soil management, soil fertility and/or nutrient management. The OSMC parent committee will have a target membership base of 15-20 voting members. The membership list is not comprehensive – new members can be added and membership status can be changed as needed. Membership list will be updated frequently and distributed separately.

Member Responsibilities

Chair – two year term

- Set the meeting date, location, and deadlines for submission
- Chair parent committee meetings
- Recruit new members to the committee when needed
- Voting privileges for tie-breaking purposes only

Vice-Chair – two year term

- Assume the role of Chair if required
- Prepare to become Chair when two year term is complete
- Has full voting privileges

Secretary – two year (renewable) term

- Notify membership (and guests, if applicable) of meeting dates and deadlines
- Take minutes of the meetings
- Work with the Chair and Vice-Chair in finalizing the minutes and reports; distribute minutes and reports to membership
- Retain copies of the summary data presented to support recommendation changes, with links to the original source data
- Forward recommendations to the appropriate working groups and/or organizations
- Forward research priorities to the appropriate organizations
- Once term is completed, act as “former secretary” for 1 year to transition and onboard the new secretary
- Does not have voting privileges

Voting Members

- Represent their organization or working group, and report back to their organization or group if required
- Review reports prior to the meeting

- Attend and actively participate in discussions and decisions at the parent meeting, exercising voting rights as required
- Make recommendation for replacement if no longer able to serve as a member to ensure continuity within the group

Ad-hoc Members:

- Represent specific expertise or interests relevant to the OSMC's objectives
- Participate in discussion and provide insights based on area of expertise
- Attend parent and working group meetings on an as-needed basis for specific projects or topics; attendance at annual meetings is not mandatory

Guests

- May be invited or request to join in with proceedings of the OSMC, or be invited to stand as members of working groups, but will not have voting rights for approval of new/revised recommendations unless determined otherwise by committee/working group chair

Working Groups

Working Groups will always have one OMAFRA chairperson who is also a member of the Parent Committee. The Working Group chair is responsible for coordinating the membership and review process/timeline but does not have voting privileges. Working Groups will aim to have between 5-8 people, with even membership representation from government, research, and industry. Working Groups will provide a report to the Parent Committee at the annual meeting. With the exception of the Soil Laboratory and Communications Working Groups, all Working Groups will be created ad hoc, according to the scope of the research to be reviewed.

Working groups:

- Soil Laboratory – permanent
- Communication – permanent
- Field Crop – ad hoc
- Horticulture/Specialty Crop – ad hoc
- Waste Utilization – ad hoc
- Soil Health – ad hoc