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IMPROVING ENERGY-EFFICIENCY ON GREENBELT FARMS *Pilot Program Reduces Costs for Farmers, Increases Environmental Benefits*

The Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association (OSCIA) and the Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation have partnered to promote innovative, economic farming practices that support the environment.

Building on the success of the Environmental Farm Plan program, this pilot – worth \$150,000 - will provide Greenbelt farmers with opportunities to adopt energy-efficiency technologies. Farmers can apply for funding to improve thermostats, HVAC controls, lighting, heating and cooling recovery equipment to get greater energy efficiency on-farm and reduce their environmental impacts. The one-year program is called *Farming Power – Green Energy Innovation in the Greenbelt*.

“I know that farmers across the Greenbelt are excellent stewards of the land,” said Burkhard Mausberg, CEO of the Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation. “By partnering with the OSCIA, we are providing the solution to keeping our environment healthy, while also supporting substantial, long-term economic benefits for farmers.”

An Environmental Benefits Index, which assigns a point score based on environmental outcomes, will be used to fund proposals with the greatest energy savings on a sliding scale of cost-share incentives. An award ceremony, recognizing the projects with the greatest energy efficiencies will be presented at OSCIA’s Annual General Meeting in 2014.

“OSCIA is excited about partnering with the Greenbelt Foundation again,” said Joan McKinlay, OSCIA President. “We are eager to see how farm businesses respond to the new and innovative program design. *Farming Power* will encourage management practices that lead to more sustainable and profitable farms.”

Applications to the pilot program will be available through the OSCIA beginning April, 2013.

About the Greenbelt:

For fresh air, clean water, healthy local food, and a thriving economy with good jobs – Ontario's Greenbelt is the solution. At more than 1.8 million acres, it's the world's largest permanently protected greenbelt, keeping our farmlands, forests, wetlands safe and sustainable. [The Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation](#) works to help keep farmers successful, strengthen local economies, and protect and grow natural features. Join us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#)

About the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association:

OSCIA is a unique non-profit farm organization with a dedicated membership of over 4,000 members representing virtually all commodity groups, and having a significant presence in all major agricultural areas of the province. OSCIA works to facilitate responsible, economic management of soil, water, air and crops through development and communication of innovative farming practices. Visit www.ontariosoilcrop.org

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