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## ONTARIO SOIL AND CROP IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

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### The Soil Health Improvement Program opens September 28th, 2016

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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The Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association (OSCIA) is pleased to announce the new Soil Health Improvement Program (SHIP) for agricultural producers in the Lake Simcoe, Nottawasaga, and South-eastern Georgian Bay watersheds. With funding by Environment and Climate Change Canada through the Lake Simcoe/South-eastern Georgian Bay Clean-Up Fund, SHIP offers financial support for implementing Best Management Practices (BMPs) that improve soil health and reduce edge of field phosphorus loss.

With a similar structure to the Farmland Health Incentive Program, SHIP requires producers to complete an on-farm soil health assessment by working with a participating Certified Crop Advisor (CCA). Free of charge to producers, the Soil Health Check-Up and the Muck Soil Health Check-Up offer producers a unique opportunity to develop Best Management Practices that are tailored to the specific needs of their operation.

“This isn’t a one-size-fits-all program. Through working one-on-one with a CCA, producers gain an in-depth understanding of their operation’s Soil Health Challenges and work to develop BMPs that will benefit their farm and the health of the greater watershed,” explains Christine Schmalz, Environmental Program Manager at OSCIA.

The Soil Health Improvement Program offers up to 50% cost-share to a maximum of \$20,000 in funding to producers in the Lake Simcoe, Nottawasaga, and South-eastern Georgian Bay watersheds who implement Best Management Practices after completing a Soil Health or Muck Soil Health Check-Up. Eight BMPs are eligible for cost-share under SHIP: cover crops, crop nutrient plans, buffer strips, windbreaks and windstrips, equipment customization, erosion control structures, fragile land retirement, and water runoff management.

This program will begin accepting applications on September 28, 2016 at 12:00 noon, and funding will be allocated to eligible projects in the order in which applications are received. Producers interested in the program are encouraged to complete their Soil Health Check-Up in preparation. Program materials are now available online as well as a list of participating CCAs who are keen to complete Check-Ups in the eligible area.

For more information on eligibility criteria, the application process, and program deadlines visit the OSCIA website at [ontariosoilcrop.org](http://ontariosoilcrop.org) or contact OSCIA directly at 226-706-8671 or [SHIP@ontariosoilcrop.org](mailto:SHIP@ontariosoilcrop.org).

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