



Regional Infrastructure Development Program

For Tile Drainage and Land Clearing Projects 2014-2016

Program Background

Identifying needs for the development of infrastructure such as agricultural drainage, the Rural Agri-Innovation Network and the Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Centre recruited Conestoga Rovers & Associates, and C.G. Trivers Ltd. to conduct an Agricultural Engineering Analysis and Development Strategy for drainage in the Algoma District.

As part of the drainage study, surveys were distributed to farmers throughout the district, of which 25 percent responded indicating the need for drainage infrastructure improvements.

RAIN utilized this information to build an application to the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund, Strategic Economic Infrastructure Program in collaboration with a consortium of 30 farms. This program supports projects in Northern Ontario that help create jobs, build capacity, efficiency and modern infrastructure in our communities. The program aims to advance economic development opportunities and support investment through strategic infrastructure in the region.

On April 22nd, NOHFC and the Province of Ontario announced \$989,000 for the Rural Agri-Innovation Network (RAIN) to help fund a regional tile drainage project for Algoma District agricultural producers in 2014-2015.

The NOHFC program will subsidize 50% (to maximum of \$500 per acre) of the costs per acre associated with drainage installation.

What is Tile Drainage or Subsurface Drainage?

The purpose of tile drainage or subsurface drainage is to lower the water table of poorly drained fields by placing perforated drain tubes 2-12ft beneath the soil. In the past, "tile drainage" referred to the use of short clay pipes and was much more expensive and difficult to install than it is today. Modern "tile drains" are corrugated, flexible and perforated (PE or PVC) pipelines wrapped with filter material to improve permeability and prevent the entry of soil particles.

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Tile drains can be installed by a landowner on their own properties, or otherwise must be done so by a licensed professional. Most licensed professionals use self-tiling machines to maintain precision, quality and to reduce soil disturbance. When hiring a professional, tile installation costs in Northern Ontario may vary from \$700-\$1100 per acre.

Benefits of Tile Drainage

- Soil surface of tilled land will warm and dry out more quickly, allowing access to the field earlier and longer, thus extending the growing season
- Crops can develop a deeper root system, which will allow the plants sufficient access to water and essential nutrients, even in extreme wet or dry conditions, making the plant less weather dependent.
- Studies have shown that crop yields and quality will improve by 20-30% when compared to those on untilled land.
- Improves aeration in the soil and reduces soil compaction.
- Reduces plant loss and stress and the damage rate of seeds and seedlings
- The ability to control water depths on farmland reduces the risk of flood, therefore can reduce the cost of crop and land insurance
- Installing tiles can improve the value of a property significantly

Eligibility

Landowners interested in participating in the Tile Drainage/Land Clearing Program must meet the following criteria:

- The applicant must live in a rural or farming community.
- The applicant should be in possession of a registered farm business registration number or business registration number.
- The applicant must secure financing, or provide proof that sufficient funds are available.
- The individual producers must make cash contributions of at least 10 per cent of the contractor costs (materials and labour) specific to their individual acreage.
- Regional land clearing and/or tile drainage contractor costs (materials and labour) and the project management/administration fees of the service provider are eligible for support.
- The land can be already in production or be new acreage.

For land clearing projects:

- In-kind labour by farm owner / operator and current employees is ineligible.
- In-kind contribution for use of farm machinery to complete work is ineligible.

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- All eligible expenses must be invoiced to a third party (contractor, leasing / renting of equipment).

For tile drainage projects:

- Work must be completed by a contractor licensed for tile drainage installation.
- Materials are eligible only if installed by a contractor licensed for tile drainage installation.
- Copy of map and identification of property showing tile installation must be provided with requests for payment to NOHFC

Application Guidelines & Procedures

- Contact the RAIN Infrastructure coordinator to obtain an application. Complete application and return it to the coordinator
- Provide a map of the land parcel that will be tiled along with approximate acres, submit with the initial application. RAIN can assist in preparing a map for your property.
- Give feedback to RAIN as to what contractor is preferred. A total of three quotes must be collected from various contractors; alternatively RAIN can undertake a request for tender process for the project(s).
- Call your municipality office to see if the drain outlet is compatible and ready to be used for tile drainage. Obtain a permit if necessary, or advise the Coordinator if a further assessment is required.
- A licensed drainage contractor will contact you to conduct a field survey, assess outlet(s) and will provide a cost estimate, and installation date.
- Tiles and other material will be ordered and delivered to your property.
- Following the installation, the invoice must be paid to the contractor in full. After which you must provide a copy of the invoice and proof of payment to the Program Coordinator.
- You will then be provided with a contract agreeing to the perimeters of the program, and to receive the subsidy amount specified. The same parcel of land cannot be funded twice.
- Your claim will be submitted to NOHFC for processing. 10 percent of your grant subsidy will be held until the drainage contractor provides the necessary documentation. Funds will be issued by cheque and sent by mail.
- You may be asked to participate in a post-evaluation survey at a later time.
- Your site may be chosen for a random installation inspection to ensure that the tiles were installed properly.
- Your property may be chosen to display a sign recognizing the program supporters.

Attention farm owners:

RAIN is organizing a Manitoulin and an Algoma Application Stream for a 2015-2016 Tile Drainage/Land Clearing Infrastructure Program. For more information on the Regional Infrastructure Development project, please the program coordinator below.