

# [***Soil health pioneer challenges Senate committee; Don Lobb tells senators their soil health report will be the most important responsibility of their career***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BKF-0YT1-DYWW-806R-00000-00&context=1516831)

Ontario Farmer

March 19, 2024 Tuesday

Final Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. A10

**Length:** 503 words

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**Body**

Ontario Farmer Ottawa -The Senate agriculture committee has been challenged to deliver the message Canadians need to hear about protecting and improving the country's food producing ***soil***.

Don Lobb, who tested ***soil health*** improvement actions back in the 1970s on his farm near Clinton in Huron County, addressed the committee's final public meeting on ***soil health*** before it began work on a report expected later this year.

"Your report on the status of ***soil health*** in Canada will be the most important responsibility of your careers," he said. "How you position findings will determine both their utility and your legacy."

The committee's report will be important "because ***soil*** is where everything begins. ***Soil health*** is essential to food availability.

That determines the standard of living, which then underpins social, economic and political stability. ***Soil*** is a finite strategic resource of consequence far beyond agriculture."

Lobb also reminded the Senators that after the ***Soil*** at Risk report was released in 1984, "we had a flurry of activity and many programs that lasted three or four years. A generation later, much of the impact from that effort has been lost and we are starting over again. So we need long-term support and a financial incentive that really moves people forward."

The presentations to the committee during the last 18 months "effectively brought into focus every element of ***soil health*** as it contributes to human ***health***, environmental ***health***, urban ***soil*** management, forest productivity, water and air quality and our capacity to produce food. The interaction among these elements has been shown to be real and to be important."

The testimony showed the need to protect Canada's best crop-producing ***soil*** from nonfood production use as well as support the restoration of eroded or degraded ***soil***, Lobb said. "We need to care for that ***soil*** in a way that ensures maximum carbon storage and precipitation use, and we need to protect rangeland and fragile lands to ensure their sustainable use."

That will require influencing ***soil*** management decisions through incentives for those who use proven ***soil*** care practices. "It will take four generations of support to ensure lasting change."

For the first time in history, the knowledge and tools needed to protect and improve ***soil health*** both profitably and sustainably exist and municipal, provincial and federal governments must be encouraged to work collaboratively for the protection and care of food land in real and measurable ways.

"We must also attract support and participation from the agrisupply industry, the communications community, the food industry and the consuming public."

The challenge to the committee is whether their report will "convincingly advocate for a new and different influence paradigm? Will those articles plot a path of fresh opportunities that leads to ***soil health*** protection and improvement? This is necessary to ensure enduring ***soil*** productivity. Can we define a ***soil*** care ethic that will be the rally point for all Canadians?

**Load-Date:** March 19, 2024

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