

**Sent:** Tuesday, January 13, 2015 3:43 PM

**To:** gerry.ritz@parl.gc.ca; correspondancem@agr.gc.ca

**Cc:** bairdj@parl.gc.ca; andrea.lyon@agr.gc.ca; jbkitts@toh.on.ca; Mark.kristmanson@ncc-ccn.ca; Chris Wiebe

**Subject:** Loss of Central Experimental Farm Research Sites

Dear Minister Ritz:

My colleagues in the Canadian Society of Soil Science have recently informed me of the possible transfer of research land from the Central Experimental Farm in Ottawa to the Civic Hospital. This is very disappointing news to myself and the soil science community in Canada more generally.

The Central Experimental Farm has for many years been one of the premier research facilities in soil science in Canada and hence developments there are followed with great interest across our nation. Although it has been recognized as a National Historic Site, its history alone would not, however, warrant our concern over the possible land transfer; rather it is the continuing role of this CEF land in top-flight soil science research that is the greater concern for the soil science community.

Increasingly the scientific community realizes that long-term experiments are essential to understanding soil functions in a changing world. There are two very important long-term experiments on the imperilled land. One was established in 1992 and compares tilled soils to no-till soils. The second is a major and very innovative study headed by AAFC scientists. This study assess the decomposition of organic matter in 10 sites with different climate/soil combinations in Canada and three international locations (Scotland, New Zealand, and California). There is considerable international interest in this experiment, and the loss of the "home" site is very unfortunate.

I hope that every other alternative, including use of other, less critical sites on the CEF was examined before this decision was made. This year has been declared by the UN as the International Year of Soils, and an announcement that a way had been found to preserve these critical research sites would be welcome news indeed for the soil science community.

Sincerely,

Dr. Dan Pennock

Fellow, Canadian Society of Soil Science

Canadian representative on the Intergovernmental Technical Panel on Soils and

Professor of Soil Science, University of Saskatchewan

51 Campus Drive

Saskatoon SK S7N 5A8

Phone: 1-306-966-4064