

Farm ideal for research on salt effects

Re: Experimental farm land across from Civic contaminated by salt, Dec. 1; Blood on floor, Dec. 2.

Recently, Citizen writer Andrew Duffy discovered that 12 acres of Field #1 of the Central Experimental Farm, adjacent to Carling and Fisher avenues, are contaminated with salt blown in by prevailing westerly winds from winter salting of the Carling thoroughway. This disclosure led columnist Kelly Egan to conclude that this portion of the Farm was “useless for research.”

On the contrary, a salty section of the Farm provides an opportunity to conduct plant research on the growing problem of soil salinity for agricultural crops. There is similar reduced yield of conventional crops along the borders of countless fields along country roads throughout regions where salt is used to melt snow and ice. Saline soils also arise from regular irrigation whereby water, not crop utilized, rises to the surface where it evaporates, depositing dissolved salts.

It is well-recognized now that Earth’s soil is getting too salty for many crops to grow, and much work has been expended establishing the salt tolerance of various plants. At the very least, this 12-acre bordering section could be given over to the perennial cultivation of asparagus (very tolerable to salt) for both study, modification and harvesting as a local Central Experimental Farm commodity for sale by Friends of the Farm.

George Neville, Ottawa

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