

THE BUZZ



News about the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs – University of Guelph Partnership

May 19, 2009

Vol. II, No. 9

IN THE NEWS

Partnership expertise helps with H1N1 flu problem. The Animal Health Lab and several U of G faculty have been called upon to help during the H1N1 flu outbreak. As a centre of expertise in animal influenza viruses, the Animal Health Lab provided reference virus stocks to various government health laboratories in Canada, to help identify the virus. The AHL rapidly obtained sequencing primers for differentiating the novel H1N1 virus from the endemic H1N1 virus, in the event that the new virus strain appears in Ontario swine.

U of G professors and partnership researchers Cate Dewey and Ken McEwen have been featured extensively in the news, commenting on the safety of eating pork and the possible economic impacts of the outbreak respectively. Read more about them [here](#).

Partners in horticulture research. The partnership agreement recently signed between U of G and the Vineland Research and Innovation Centre (VRIC) will provide new ideas and products for Canada's grape growers and winemakers, fruit producers and landscapers. Horticulture researchers from the two institutions will explore and use the latest technologies to improve products, quality and choice and to increase economic wealth. Areas of exploration will include consumer and marketing tests conducted in a new sensory analysis laboratory; applied genomics for variety development to increase yield, resist diseases and meet consumer demand; and the development of horticultural technologies and production methods. Under the new agreement, VRIC will receive about \$1.75 million per year through the existing OMAFRA-U of G partnership.

RESEARCH STUDIES

A pretty, functional flower. OMAFRA and U of G researchers are growing daffodils – lots and lots of them – to help Niagara Region pharmaceutical company Biolyse fight Alzheimer's disease. Daffodil bulbs contain minute traces of galanthamine, a compound which Biolyse uses in drugs it produces to help treat the disease. Currently the company imports daffodil bulbs from Holland, but U of G Profs. Al Sullivan, Theo Blom and Gopi Paliyath, along with Jim Todd from OMAFRA, are hoping to create a local source. Sponsored

by Biolyse and Ontario Tobacco, the research team has planted 1,400 kg of 12 different varieties of bulbs – by hand - in three test plots, one of which is at the Simcoe Research Station. They're hoping to extend the growing season of the daffodils and therefore increase bulb yield, size and maybe even the amount of galanthamine produced. Other benefits to this research are the possibility of using the plant waste for biofuels, and offering another option for tobacco farmers who are looking to re-crop.

RESEARCH STATIONS

Helping horticulture. The Simcoe Research Station, which opened nearly 50 years ago, is often referred to as a hidden gem. Its mission is to strengthen horticulture industries along the north shore of Lake Erie. Supporting this goal are 86 hectares for research activities such as Prof. Al Sullivan's daffodil research mentioned above, as well as research on asparagus, berry crops and nuts, ethnic vegetables and apples. The Simcoe Research Station is also an important part of finding alternative crops for the sandy tobacco soils of the area.

See the stations. Getting out and having a look at the research stations the partnership supports is a great way to see first-hand the innovative and practical work that goes on at them. For information on how to arrange a tour, contact the station managers directly, or contact the Office of Research (Agri-food and Partnerships) at 519-826-3800. Station manager contact info can be found by clicking on either animal research or crop research [here](#).

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

Guelph researchers awarded Proof of Principal Funds from C4. Eight University of Guelph research projects have received \$250,000 from the C4 proof of principal fund (C4 is a technology transfer community of Southwest Ontario universities). The grants were submitted through and supported by the Business Development Office, for projects that add value to promising inventions with the goal of developing new products for Ontario's benefit. Of the eight successful projects, three were developed in part through the OMAFRA partnership agreement, and two have received matching funds from the OMAFRA sponsored proof-of-principal fund. These include Prof. Jim Squires' project to eliminate boar taint in pigs through genetics, and Prof. Laima Kott's project related to a mint variety to treat inflammation. Prof. Keith Warriner's project to develop a sensor to detect mycotoxin contamination has also received funding through the C4 program.

NEWS

OVC receives full accreditation. The Ontario Veterinary College has been granted full accreditation for up to seven years by the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) Council on Education. Canadian veterinary colleges are accredited jointly by the AVMA and the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association, to determine whether they meet 11 standards for items such as teaching, research and service. The accreditation report highlighted OVC's strengths in a number of areas, particularly its innovative curriculum, continual improvement of the admissions process, highly collegial atmosphere and the faculty's commitment to student learning. "What a wonderful tribute to OVC, especially its faculty, students, alumni and staff," says OVC Dean Elizabeth Stone. "To earn full

accreditation during a fiscally challenging time is a testament to the commitment of the entire college.”

Newest Research magazine features water studies. The newest University of Guelph *Research* magazine is now available. Themed around water management, it features articles on several research projects about water that have come out of the OMAFRA–U of G partnership. The publication is written in its entirety by the University’s Students Promoting Awareness of Research Knowledge (SPARK) program, which is supported in part by the enhanced partnership. See the full issue [here](#).

COMING EVENTS

Learn about the science and business of functional foods. Health professionals, producers, researchers and agribusiness professionals will be speaking at the Food meets Function conference June 17–18, 2009 in London, Ontario. This conference will deliver the latest information on human nutritional science and the healthfulness of functional foods that will be of particular interest for registered dietitians and health professionals. As well, there will be sessions intended for those wanting to learn more about the production, retail and processing aspects of the functional food value chain. For more information or to register, go to www.foodmeetsfunction.ca.

2009 Canada’s Outdoor Farm Show. This year’s farm show takes place September 15-17, 2009 on the grounds of the Woodstock Research Station. It features demonstrations of innovative production systems, and energy and healthy living expos. For more information go to www.outdoorfarmshow.com.

About The Buzz

The Buzz is the electronic community news vehicle for the OMAFRA-University of Guelph partnership.

Editor: Liz Snyder, OMAFRA-UofG programs, 519-826-3376, lsnyder@uoguelph.ca. To contribute, contact Liz or contributing editors Robyn Meerveld, (519-826-4191, robyn.meerveld@ontario.ca) or Owen Roberts (519-826-5207, owen@uoguelph.ca).

Contributors to this issue: Wally Andres, Catherine Bianco, Theo Blom, Natalie Carter, Brenda Cassidy, Steve DeBrabandere, Grant Maxie, Robyn Meerveld, Rich Moccia, Remo Pallottini, Owen Roberts, Liz Snyder, Al Sullivan, Mary Visser Kerr.

Find out more about the OMAFRA-UofG Partnership at:

www.uoguelph.ca/research/omafra/index.shtml

www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/about/uofg/

Please forward this newsletter to anyone who may be interested.