

THE BUZZ



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

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BREAKING NEWS

OMAFRA-U of G calls for letters of intent. The Office of Research has issued a call for letters of intent to address identified priorities in each of the [seven research themes](#) within the research program. The letters of intent are due by noon, Friday, December 18, 2009. For research theme descriptions, and more information about the calls, consult the individual research themes posted on the OMAFRA-U of G Research Programs [website](#). "This is our second call in 2009, and it will address a refined set of research priorities from the province," says Rich Moccia, Associate Vice-President (Research) Agri-Food and Partnerships. "Our researchers really stepped up in response to the earlier competition, and we expect continued, high quality proposals again this round to add momentum to our successful agri-food research programs."

IN THE NEWS

What consumers really think about organic food. Research to measure how consumers react to claims of food that is "local", "sustainable" and "organic" is being done for the first time at Vineland Research and Innovation Centre. Dr. Isabelle Lesschaeve, the centre's Research Director of Consumer Insights and Product Development, is leading the study. It will determine how price, sensory experience, production practices and region of origin claims affect Ontario consumer decisions to buy horticultural products and wines. Knowing which factors affect what their customers buy will enable agri-food businesses to use labeling and marketing strategies that will impact purchase behavior. Lesschaeve says no systematic research has been done to assess how consumers truly respond to claims that organic food is healthier and more environmentally responsible -- and at the same time, the organic sector is growing. Read more about this research [here](#).

Ice cream that's good for you. Low-fat, sugar-free, high-fibre and delicious-tasting ice cream: that's Prof. Doug Goff's goal, along with his graduate students in the Department of Food Science. They've already had a hand in developing numerous formulations, new ingredients and new processes for ice cream -- including the use of

alternative sweeteners, new sources of milk proteins, enhancing shelf-life, slow-churning and extending the shelf-life of soft-serve mix. To fix high fat content he's discovered it can be reduced while maintaining the creamy, full-fat texture by spreading the fat globules more thinly. One of Goff's latest projects is to make ice cream more nutritious by adding soluble fibre. The health benefits of dietary fibre to promote digestion are well-known, but North Americans only consume about half of their daily requirement. Goff says dairy products such as thickened beverages, puddings and ice cream can make good carriers for soluble fibre. Read more about this research [here](#).

RESEARCH STATIONS

Hardier, tastier strawberries picked fresh...in November. Prof. John Zandstra and his team of researchers at the University of Guelph's Ridgetown campus are hoping to extend the strawberry growing season by at least another month, to **November**, by producing "day-neutral" strawberries indoors using a high tunnel -- a lightweight, solar-heated greenhouse commonly used to extend the growing season of horticultural crops. This type of strawberry, becoming increasingly popular with consumers, relies less on daylight to bud than the typical **June**-bearing strawberry, and produces fruit as long as the weather conditions are good. Research coming out of the Cedar Springs, Simcoe and New Liskeard research stations, combined with Zandstra's studies for the past five years, is aiming to fulfill the steadily increasing consumer demand for strawberries. Read more [here](#).

Design for Mission 2050 facility underway. A project management firm has been hired to take Mission 2050 through the next phase of development -- design. PMX Inc. will lead the design process from concept to schematic design and then detailed, construction-ready plans and specifications. The proposed world-class livestock and environmental research facility will combine agricultural, life science and engineering research with technology development to provide economic and environmental solutions for agricultural livestock enterprises. It will generate new knowledge in many related fields of research, including green technologies, farm-based renewable energy systems and innovative fossil fuel replacement products. The steering committee, led by the Office of Research, includes major commodity organizations, has been meeting regularly to build support for the project and provide guidance for the design process. An expert "think tank" conference to consider major design strategies for the facility took place in September and was attended by researchers and experts from several universities and organizations.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

New patent application filed for green technology. The University of Guelph has filed a US provisional patent application on a green technology for potential automotive application. This technology currently under development at the Bioproducts Discovery and Development Centre (BDDC) is expected to enable the manufacture of auto parts from 99 per cent bio-based green composites. Such a green composite is made from agricultural natural fibres, lignin and bioplastics. The technical feasibility of using this green composite is demonstrated by the manufacture of an auto part prototype (car window panel). Prof. Amar Mohanty, Director at BDDC and Premier's Research Chair in Biomaterials and Transportation, is leading this research which is jointly supported through OMAFRA and the Ministry of Research and Innovation. Mohanty says "truly green composites from plant-derived fibres and crop-derived bioplastics are the wave of the future in greening the manufacturing sectors from automotive parts to sustainable packaging."

NEWS

Resistant canola germplasm developed. A number of lines of canola bred to resist the cabbage seedpod weevil are expected to be commercially available for growers' use by next year. University of Guelph plant research scientist Laima Kott has developed a canola line using natural weevil resistance from a "close cousin" plant, white mustard. Cabbage seedpod weevils, which consume seeds from within canola pods, can severely reduce seed yield for Ontario producers. The breeding for resistance is based on introgression of the trait, together with doubled haploid breeding work which Kott has been doing since 2000. Kott says this will help with production. "It will allow farmers to reduce use of pesticides on canola crops, and could reduce crop losses by a very significant amount," says Kott.

Latest Animal Health Laboratory newsletter hot off the press. The latest issue of the quarterly *AHL Newsletter* is now out and includes information on *avian bornavirus* and proventricular dilation disease, new testing methods and updates on other animal diseases. The newsletter is produced to inform AHL clients and partners about its current activities and laboratory-based animal disease events and trends. Read the current issue [[here](#)]. You can also read past issues [[here](#)].

STAFF AND STUDENT NEWS

SPARK gets cover in *Canadian Greenhouse*. Partnership research is front and centre, as the latest cover story and photo -- both by SPARK participant Andra Zommer -- in *Canadian Greenhouse* magazine. A Guelph research team led by Prof. Youbin Zheng, Environmental Biology, appear in a story called "Improved organics from the ground up: Guelph researchers developing a systems approach to help growers catch up with consumer demand." It notes demand for organic products has doubled every four years over the past two decades, but 80 per cent of the market is filled by imports because we don't have the production capacity here to grow it. Zheng and his team are out to change that.

OVC students win international awards. Two Ontario Veterinary College Students have received American Association of Bovine Practitioners (AABP) Bovine Veterinary Student Recognition Awards. Christie Morrow won the Intervet/Schering-Plough Animal Health Student Recognition Award. Jennifer Hubbard won an Amstutz scholarship and also won first place in the research presentation at the AABP conference. Morrow and Hubbard were two of 13 OVC students who attended the conference in Omaha, Nebraska in [September, 2009](#).

TVO children's program features AVP and Alma Station. An upcoming "food for the brain" segment on TVO children's show, [Taste Buds](#), features Associate Vice-President (Research) Agri-Food and Partnerships Rich Moccia at the Alma Aquaculture Research Station. In the segment, Moccia talks to Taste Buds about the research taking place at Alma, and the health benefits of eating fish. The episode is set to air November 23 at 6 p.m. and repeats November 28 at 11 a.m.

COMING EVENTS

News@Noon. The next News@Noon lunchtime seminar takes place December 4, 2009 in the conference centre at 1 Stone Road W., Guelph. Prof. Rickey Yada, Canada Research Chair in Food Protein Structure and Scientific Director of the Advanced Foods and Materials Network (AFMNet), will give an overview of the steps involved in developing and producing the perfect potato chip and the research that is presently going on at the University of Guelph in this area. For more information, contact Liz Snyder (519-826-3376, lsnyder@uoguelph.ca) or Robyn Meerveld (519-826-4191, robyn.meerveld@ontario.ca).

About The Buzz

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

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Find out more about the OMAFRA-UofG Partnership at:

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

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

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