

THE BUZZ



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

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IN THE NEWS

Top marks for University of Guelph. The University of Guelph continues to be one of Canada's leading research universities, according to [Maclean's](#) magazine and [Research Infosource](#). In the annual *Maclean's* rankings, Guelph placed second in reputation and fourth overall among comprehensive universities. It's also tops to students, who gave Guelph high marks in the [University Report Card](#) published by the *Globe and Mail*. Research Infosource ranked Guelph 14th overall, and the highest in attracting research income of any comprehensive, medium-sized university without a medical school. In an accompanying [Research Universities of the Year](#) survey, the university was ranked first of any comprehensive, medium-sized university without a medical school, in financial output indicators -- attracting research income and faculty research intensity -- and second overall in Canada when also comparing other research output indicators. Read more about these stories [here](#) and [here](#).

'Green' car parts to debut in 2010. The world's first car to have interior parts made from wheat straw-reinforced plastic -- created via technology that has roots at the University of Guelph -- is set to roll off the assembly lines in the New Year. The Ford Motor Company announced in November that its 2010 Ford Flex will include storage bins made from this bio-based material. The wheat straw-reinforced plastic was created by the Ontario BioCar Initiative. This multi-university project involves scientists at U of G and the universities of Toronto, Waterloo and Windsor. "It's an amazing achievement," said plant agriculture Prof. Larry Erickson, one of BioCar's lead researchers. The wheat straw-reinforced plastic that will be used in the Ford Flex originated from an earlier Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs project involving Erickson. "That work set in motion the experiments we did that led to where we are today," he said. Read more about this research [here](#).

RESEARCH STATIONS

Muck Crops and KTT growing strong in the Holland Marsh. The [Muck Crops Research Station](#) (MCRS) provides a wide array of knowledge translation and transfer (KTT) services to local vegetable growers throughout the year. Each year the station hosts a muck conference, where growers hear about the latest in muck crops research, and a grower field day, where producers have the opportunity to see muck crop vegetable trials and compare common standard varieties with new and upcoming varieties. During the peak season, growers can call the [Agriphone](#) (905-775-7201) for weekly recorded updates on growing conditions and recommendations for disease and pest management. They can also bring in samples, and phone the station year round to have diseases and other production problems diagnosed. Statistics show these services are being increasingly utilized: attendance at this year's grower field day, for example, was 20 per cent above average. "So far this year 325 samples and over 100 phone calls have been assessed and addressed," says Michael Tesfaendrias, research associate and coordinator of the MCRS Integrated Pest Management Program.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

University of Guelph at the Royal Winter Fair. The University of Guelph had a strong presence at the [Royal Agricultural Winter Fair](#) this year, highlighting the importance of UofG research to the public, to the government...and even to Prince Charles, who toured past the Guelph booth with his wife Camilla. Sharing the research-related portion of the University of Guelph display was the OMAFRA-U of G Partnership, the Business Development Office, the Office of Research, the Biodiversity Institute of Ontario, the Bioproducts Discovery and Development Centre and the Campbell Centre for the Study of Animal Welfare. Steven Liss, Associate Vice-President Research (Research Services) at the University of Guelph says the strong presence of the university at this event highlights the university's leadership role in agricultural, veterinary and food science research in Ontario. "We are privileged to be part of the tradition of the Royal and to be able to share our passion and to showcase our accomplishments with everyone from school age children and their parents to Royalty," he says.

NEWS

Finding better ways to green Ontario highways. The Ontario Ministry of Transportation, Vineland Research and Innovation Centre and Landscape Ontario are partnering in a multi-dimensional demonstration and research project to determine the best species, planting processes and maintenance practices required to ensure plants survive and thrive in harsh highway conditions. As well, they're developing a market for Ontario starter plants, in retractable roof greenhouses. Tony Giovanni, Executive Director of Landscape Ontario, says this project provides not only potential environmental benefits but also economic benefits to Ontarians. "From an economic perspective the plantings will contribute to the economic sustainability of the agricultural community of which landscapers and ornamental growers are key members." Planting at the highway 401 and 427 site will take place in the Spring of 2010. Read more [here](#).

Helping reverse economic decline in rural Ontario. Prof. Wayne Caldwell, School of Environmental Design and Rural Development, University of Guelph, is heading a

new research program to help struggling rural municipalities cope with economic decline. With support from Industry Canada's Community Adjustment Fund (Ontario) and a research team of recent PhD graduates Jennifer Ball and Bronwynne Wilton, along with master's students Katie Temple and Arthur Churchyard, he plans to develop a "how to" manual to identify and explain best practices for ailing municipalities. He also wants to highlight success stories of other rural areas and provide approaches to improve local conditions. Rural communities recognized as leaders in economic development will be selected as case studies for the project. Before publishing the manual, Caldwell and the research team will review and refine the practices and approaches to determine the applicability for other rural communities. "Ideally, we'd like to see a more engaged and successful municipal sector across the province" says Caldwell. Read more [here](#).

STAFF AND STUDENT NEWS

Helping hone communications through the OMAFRA – U of G partnership.

The University of Guelph's director of research communications, Owen Roberts, led two writing sessions in November with content geared to the unique needs of OMAFRA's Agriculture Development Branch (ADB). The branch focuses primarily on applying production agriculture research in livestock, horticulture, field and greenhouse crops, as well as the transfer of that knowledge to farmers and other industry partners. The branch also provides business tools and training to support farm businesses. ADB staff prepare a considerable amount of technical writing in the form of factsheets, books, manuals, presentations and various teaching aids. Roberts' "Ten-ish Ways to Improve Writing and Presentations" encouraged attendees to think like a journalist. He suggests starting by asking yourself "so what?" and "who cares?" to develop the message. Roberts also covered editorial flow and style, basic grammar rules and the importance of checking your facts.

U of G students shine at animal welfare assessment competition.

Students from Ontario Veterinary College and the Department of Animal and Poultry Science made an impressive showing at the Animal Welfare Judging and Assessment contest held in November at Michigan State University. The students won the team title for the vet student division, second place overall, the graduate student award and several individual awards. At the competition, students evaluated two scenarios on how to manage and care for a particular species, to determine which one best ensured quality of life for the animal. They then prepared and presented their rationale. To get ready for the competition, the students met with coaches twice weekly, for a month, to discuss judging and assessing animal welfare and to review relevant scientific literature. Prof. Derek Haley, Department of Population Medicine, was one of the coaches. "All the training paid off!" he says. For more information contact Catherine Bianco at cbianco@uoguelph.ca.

COMING EVENTS

HAPPY HOLIDAYS EVERYONE!!!! The University of Guelph is closed December 25th – January 1st, 2010.

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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