

# THE BUZZ



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

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## IN THE NEWS

**Manure, methane and megawatts.** The Stanton family farm in Ilderton, Ontario is turning manure into energy with the help of university researchers. The Ontario government invested \$2.5 million to complete a biogas demonstration facility at the farm, developed in collaboration with the University of Western Ontario, the University of Guelph and the University of Waterloo. All of the manure produced by more than 2,000 cows and on-farm wastewater is processed through the biogas system to generate methane gas. The gas is burned, producing more than enough energy to fuel the farm's operation. During the past year, Ridgetown campus staff have been consulted about use of the anaerobic digester system which produces the methane gas. As well, this farm has hosted tours for students enrolled in relevant courses at the University of Guelph's Ridgetown and Guelph campuses. Read more about this story [here](#).

## BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

**Industry Liaison Officer expands BDO services.** The Business Development Office has appointed Richard Puntis to the position of Industry Liaison Officer. This new position, supported in part by the NRC's Industrial Research Assistance Program, will provide an additional link between the research needs of industry and the research expertise of the University. Puntis will be working to strengthen those links and to support increased collaborative research between the University and local companies. "Richard's broad scientific and marketing expertise enables us to improve our interaction with Ontario companies, and will be of great help in facilitating partnerships with our dynamic researchers," says Associate Director Steve De Brabandere. Puntis has worked for 20 years developing and growing businesses locally, nationally and internationally across the engineering, biotechnology and environmental sectors. He is an environmental geologist by training.

## NEWS

**Work nears completion on new lab.** The new Pathobiology/Animal Health Laboratory on Gordon Street includes state-of-the-art diagnostic and research lab facilities, a 120-seat lecture theatre, seminar rooms, teaching labs, and office space. Work on the project is scheduled for completion in August 2010. Dr. Grant Maxie, director of the Animal Health Lab, says this project will provide added capabilities and efficiencies in dealing with animal disease outbreaks and animal health surveillance. "Biosecurity will be much enhanced over the current facility, foreign animal disease testing will be moved within the new building from the current portables, and the new laboratory has been designed to accommodate changes in technology and to prepare for surges in testing needs," he says.

**SPARK\*air is gearing up for season two.** SPARK\*air has received support from OMAFRA to proceed into 2010 with its second season of video broadcasting. SPARK\*air highlights food, agriculture, rural and health research stories from the University of Guelph which are funded by OMAFRA. "SPARK\*air represents a unique medium for the OMAFRA-U of G partnership to disseminate innovative research to our numerous stakeholders," says Rich Moccia, Associate Vice- President (Research) Agri-Food and Partnerships. Students Promoting Awareness of Research Knowledge (SPARK) is a student research-writing program in the University of Guelph's Office of Research. SPARK\*air is the branch of the program that produces electronic research communications materials through radio broadcasts and research videos.

**HQP program application process underway.** Graduate students can now apply to be a part of the new Highly Qualified Personnel (HQP) program. This program offers training and development opportunities for an outcome of "market-ready" graduate students. Background information and details of the application process can be found [here](#). The deadline for applications is March 15, 2010 and scholarship announcements will be made May 3, 2010.

## **STAFF AND STUDENT NEWS**

**U of G researcher wins award for KTT.** U of G researcher Peter Sikkema was presented with the [T.R. Hilliard distinguished agricultural extension award](#) for 2009 last month at the [Southwest Agricultural Conference](#). The Ridgetown Campus weed researcher received the award in recognition of his outstanding contribution to research and extension in weed management. One of Sikkema's most innovative approaches to extension has been the development and implementation of a [website](#) providing current and relevant information on herbicides and weed identification and control. Since October 2004, the website has been visited more than 80,000 times. Sikkema is currently collaborating on an OMAFRA-U of G research project, led by Prof. Clarence Swanton, investigating responses to new challenges in pest management systems for sustainable field crop productions. "Peter sets the standard for quality in extension and research at Ridgetown Campus," says Rob Gordon, dean of Ontario Agricultural College.

**Traceability system to Ontario agriculture.** Traceability systems ensure food safety from farm to fork. Improved traceability provides increased customer satisfaction, and can help producers with inventory control and production co-ordination. Recent initiatives from OMAFRA are attempting to track food throughout the entire supply chain -- from production through to the retailer. Two University of Guelph SPARK students, Alycia Moore and Joey Sabljic, teamed up with OMAFRA representatives, researchers and small-business owners to see how they're involved in developing and implementing improved

traceability programs in Ontario. Three of their articles have been featured in three separate January editions of the *Ontario Farmer* newspaper.

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## COMING EVENTS

**Precision dairy management conference.** This meeting, taking place March 2 - 5, 2010 will bring together the best technology in precision dairy management in the world, provide a sharing environment for researchers, technologists, developers and producers to expand their knowledge of precision management technology and stretch the boundaries of application of technology in improved management and welfare of dairy cattle. Find out more [here](#).

**Two sessions, one time and place.** The 4<sup>th</sup> annual Growing the Margins and 2nd annual Biogas Conference and Exhibition take place March 8–12, 2010 at the London Convention Centre, London, Ontario. Growing the Margins will explore green energy and economy for the farm and food sectors. The biogas sessions will present and provide many opportunities to discuss projects and activities in this field. To find out more go to [www.gtmconference.ca](http://www.gtmconference.ca) or [www.gtmconference.ca/splashbiogas](http://www.gtmconference.ca/splashbiogas).

**U of G College Royal 2010.** College Royal is an annual tradition since 1925, and now represents the largest university open house of its kind in North America. This year it takes place March 20–21 across the U of G campus. For more information about exhibits and hours, visit the website [here](#).

**Workshop on bioplastic developments.** Bioplastics and Green Composites 2010 is a workshop taking place at the Delta Hotel in Guelph, Ontario, Canada, March 31 - April 1, 2010. This workshop, led by U of G Prof. Amar Mohanty, will examine some of the most recent discoveries in bio-based materials, chemicals and fuels, and present case studies from industry leaders including Mazda, Ford, DSM, DuPont, C G Tower and The Woodbridge Group. Academic and industry experts will present their latest findings and developments in this evolving industry. Find more details [here](#).

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## 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-U of G Partnership at:

[www.uoguelph.ca/research/omafra/index.shtml](http://www.uoguelph.ca/research/omafra/index.shtml)

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