

THE BUZZ



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

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RESEARCH

New device signals change in diagnosing cattle. Disease detection in livestock may soon be encapsulated in what's called a telemetric bolus, which gives farmers a computerized non-invasive look at what's going on inside their animals. The bolus is a 120-gram cylindrical plastic monitoring device that records temperature readings inside an animal, then uses a tiny radio transmitter with its own unique frequency to transmit the readings to a field receptor. The receptor picks up the signals and transfers the data to a main receiver and then onto a farmer's personal computer. Watch SPARK*AIR reporter Natalie Osborne's story on this research on Farms.com. SPARK*AIR videos can also be seen [here](#).

How plants talk... and why we should listen. Crop plants "talk" to scientists by exhibiting certain growth traits that underline their likes and dislikes. And it's clear they don't like crowds. Knowing this has prompted a fundamental shift in farmers' approach to using herbicides, to make sure the environment is as weed-free as possible when plants start to grow. Pre-emergent herbicides are applied to the soil, and kill weeds before they get a chance to become competitors. University of Guelph weed control specialist Prof. Clarence Swanton gave U of G journalist Owen Roberts a sneak preview of his June 25th News@Noon talk about listening to plants. You can read about it [here](#).

RESEARCH STATIONS

Capital funding approved. ARIO and OMAFRA have approved \$4 million in capital expenditure for the 2010-11 fiscal year. This funding enables 120 new and ongoing projects at the 14 ARIO-owned research stations and three regional campuses. Projects range from basic infrastructure requirements to enhancing research and education program capacity, updating to newer technology and investment in renewable energy. Stewart Cressman, Chair of ARIO, says this funding is crucial to the Agri-Food sector. "ARIO's investment in research infrastructure, coupled with the intellectual capacity supported by the Partnership, provide the platform necessary to move the sector forward," he says.

Growing perennial grass more economically to fuel biomass energy production.

The University of Guelph Simcoe Research Station is embarking on a study to identify a more economical process to grow perennial grass for biomass energy production. Four perennial grass species will be studied over a two-year period to determine the best practices for growing them. This will provide Sand Plains region producers with an alternative crop option and lower production costs. Read more about this project [here](#).

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

OMAFRA-funded project to help plants, local business, grow. New premium organic soil-enrichment products based on worm castings will soon be available to gardeners and vegetable growers thanks to a new agreement between the University of Guelph and Forterra Environmental Corp. The new soil blends, to be marketed under the name '*Royal GRO Organic Mix*', were developed by a university research team led by Dr. Youbin Zheng of the School of Environmental Sciences. "The development of these high-end soil blends is great news, particularly for greenhouse organic vegetable growers as well as for home gardeners who can use these blends to improve their growing success for vegetables and other plants," says Zheng.

AGRI-FOOD AND RURAL LINK

Facilitating connections. Agri-Food and Rural Link, the new hub for knowledge translation and transfer (KTT) for the OMAFRA-U of G Partnership, is already delivering on its mandate to make connections between researchers and research audiences by assisting with a very successful Rural Community Economic Development Meet and Greet session and an Environmental Sustainability Research Forum. The Rural Meet and Greet session was held May 6, 2010 at the Arboretum Centre and attracted researchers from several different academic departments, schools and programs across the University of Guelph as well as staff from OMAFRA. Participants appreciated the ability to network. Read more about Agri-Food and Rural Link [here](#).

NEWS

New trust to invest in rural vet medicine. The Bovine Education Trust, a charitable endowment fund established by the Ontario Association of Bovine Practitioners and the Ontario Veterinary College (OVC), was launched in April with start-up funding provided by the OMAFRA-U of G Partnership through the Veterinary Clinical Education Program. The trust will help veterinary students interested in practicing in rural communities by providing them with the real-life learning opportunities and on-the-job experience they need to develop successful careers serving the dairy and beef industries. "With the generous support of our partners, we're investing in the future of rural communities by developing the next generation of bovine practitioners," said Dr. Kerry Lissemore, the OVC's associate dean academic.

STAFF AND STUDENT NEWS

OMAFRA funds public health position. A U of G graduate returns to join the faculty of OVC this summer as the college continues to strengthen the master of public health program. Karen Morrison, M.Sc. '95 and PhD '06, has been appointed to a four-year position supported by funding from the Veterinary Clinical Education Program. She was most recently a professor in Trent University's environmental and resource studies program. At OVC, she will play a key role in developing a course on ecosystem approaches to health. "Guelph is already a hub for eco-health research, and this is a great opportunity to stimulate more of this kind of work in Ontario and Canada," says Morrison.

COMING EVENTS

SouthWest Crop Diagnostic Day. In order to accommodate a higher attendance, this year's diagnostic day at Ridgetown Campus is being held on two days, July 7 and 8, 2010, with a limit of 200 people per day. The agenda will be the same each day and will provide agribusiness personnel with hands-on learning experiences to assist in the correct identification and treatment of crop problems common to southern Ontario. For more information, including registration details, go [here](#).

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:
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