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Oct. 2020



A collaboration between OMAFRA and the University of Guelph

Alliance Innovations

Stories of the Alliance people, places and programs generating impact in the agri-food sector in Ontario and around the world.

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In this issue:

- Resources to support the Tier I Research Program Call for Proposals
- A story about one U of G researcher who is protecting plant health and reducing inequities by leveraging a compound called hexanal to extend the shelf-life of fruit
- A focus on the research, partnerships and impact of the Ontario Crops Research Centre in Simcoe
- Knowledge exchange and skills events running this fall
- News, media links and publications

What's New?





Province invests \$6.52 million in U of G research

Ontario is investing in agri-food research that will make farmers more competitive and build resiliency in the agri-food sector. More than 40 research projects received funding through the previous (2019-20) cycle of Alliance funding calls.

[Read more >](#)



Province funds new field crop services building at U of G's Ridgetown Campus

A \$6.5-million investment from OMAFRA, funded through the Agricultural Research Institute of Ontario, will support construction of a 12,000-square-foot facility to modernize crop research on campus and provide students with a cutting-edge space.

[Read more >](#)



Tier 1 Call for Proposals Open

The Alliance Research Program invests in research that aligns with OMAFRA priorities. The call is open from Oct. 5 to Dec. 2. See more information below to support your project proposal or visit the Tier I web page on the Alliance website.

[Read more >](#)



KTT and GLAAIR funding calls open

The calls opened Oct. 14 and proposals are due Dec. 15. Learn more about the [Knowledge Translation and Transfer \(KTT\)](#) Funding Program and [Gryphon's LAAIR](#) (Leading to the Accelerated Adoption of Innovative Research) Program, and plan to attend a town hall session on Nov. 3 or 4.

Research and Program Highlights

Tier I Research Program Call for Proposals



**Resources to support
your Tier I proposal**



The Alliance Research Program funds research projects that support strong rural communities, help keep our food safe and develop a prosperous, environmentally sustainable agri-food sector in Ontario.

The single-stage call for proposals for project operating funding is open from Oct. 5 to Dec. 2, 2020, with an intent process deadline of Nov. 16.

Project proposals must align with OMAFRA research priorities and address a specific research question. Read the [OMAFRA Research Priorities for 2020-21](#) for details on research priorities and questions.

Eligible U of G researchers interested in applying for research project operating funding may do so through the [Tier I Research Program Call for Proposals](#). If you have questions, email rescoord@uoguelph.ca.

- [Tier I Program Guide](#)
- [OMAFRA research priorities for 2020-21](#)
- [Previously funded projects](#)
- Town hall information session [slide deck](#)
- [Knowledge Translation and Transfer \(KTT\) manual and sample KTT plans](#)
- Alliance website [Apply for Project Operating Funding \(Tier I\) web page](#) (includes offline proposal and budget templates)



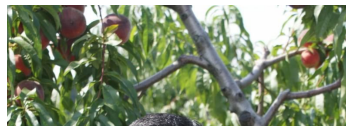
United Nations names 2020 the International Year of Plant Health

This year is an “opportunity to raise awareness about how protecting plant health can help end hunger, reduce poverty, protect the environment and boost economic development,” according to the UN [Food and Agriculture Organization \(FAO\)](#).

Here is one story about a University of Guelph researcher whose work, partially funded by the Alliance, involves a compound that is poised to improve plant health, reduce waste and support food security locally and globally.

Nano-formulation of waste-reducing compound developed at U of G may offer local and global benefits

Plant agriculture professor Jayasankar Subramanian and his team are developing new technologies to decrease fruit spoilage, part of Ontario’s annual food waste that costs a



total of [\\$12 billion per year](#).

Subramanian runs a research program to develop new fruit trees in the Niagara region and teaches at the University of Guelph. For the past 10 years, he has also been building on a long-standing research program at U of G (started by Prof. Gopinadhan Paliyath) to explore new ways to use hexanal, a naturally occurring compound that slows fruit aging.



Now a recent project, funded through the Ontario Agri-Food Innovation Alliance, may improve local production as well. It involves packaging hexanal in nano-formulations to extend the shelf life of tender fruits like peaches and grapes by one to three weeks. The extra time would allow the fruits to be shipped farther and enjoyed by more consumers, helping to reduce waste.

[Read more >](#)

Focus ON: Ontario's Agricultural Research Stations

A world-class network of research stations across the province, owned by the Agricultural Research Institute of Ontario (ARIO) and operated and managed by the University of Guelph, enable multidisciplinary research that powers innovation in Ontario.

Ontario Crops Research Centre - Simcoe



The list of fruits, vegetables and alternative crops grown at the [Ontario Crops Research Centre in Simcoe](#) (Simcoe Research Station) reads like a grocery list for a shopper choosing ingredients for a nutritious and locally grown meal: asparagus, cucumbers,

potatoes, cherries, peaches, fresh-market and cider apples, hazelnuts, quinoa and even hops for brewing beer.

This crop diversity highlights the possibilities for the centre's location in the Norfolk sand plain, a biodiversity hotspot whose sandy loam soils make it optimal for growing crops.

The centre has been open since 1961 and has a mission to help strengthen the fruit and vegetable industries in the potentially highly productive zone along the north shore of Lake Erie.

Simcoe centre optimizes efficiency and productivity



The 86.8-hectare research centre includes four to six hectares of modern intensive orchards, planted to maximize efficiency, productivity and fruit quality. It is also home to four heated glasshouses, a greenhouse-headroom or propagating area, and chambers for controlled environment studies. A lab and sample storage upgrade was also recently completed.

This location supports industry partnerships with groups such as the Ontario Apple Growers, Ontario Ginseng Growers Association, Asparagus Farmers of Ontario, Fox Seeds, Ontario Processing Vegetable Growers, Ferrero Rocher, Norfolk Fruit Growers and many companies that are part of the tree fruit and vegetable seed industries.

OMAFRA specialists in fruit and vegetables also work from this location, facilitating collaboration on Alliance projects.



Explore [ongoing research projects at the Ontario Crops Research Centre - Simcoe](#), available on the Alliance website.

Some of the current studies under way include:

- Producing a year-round supply of high-quality potatoes for Ontario
- Cyclamen mite and strawberries: molecular detection and host plant resistance
- Using novel grapevine rootstocks for stabilizing yield in winter injury-prone wine districts in south-central Ontario
- Subsurface drip irrigation for enhanced asparagus production



Questions about the studies listed or about ongoing



**research projects at
the research
stations?**

Contact:
researchstation.info@
uoguelph.ca.

Research supports the agri-food sector

Projects carried out here have resulted in:

- New varieties for the asparagus industry (including Guelph Millennium, the predominant variety grown in Ontario)
- Testing of new cucumber varieties for the processing cucumber industry
- Evaluation of pest control products for various fruit and vegetable crops that support minor use registrations, which are important for the fresh and processing vegetable industries
- Rootstocks and cultivar development for the pome and tender fruit industry
- Irrigation scheduling for tree fruits
- Development of precision thinning strategies of apple, pears and peaches
- Evaluation of cider apple cultivars for the Ontario cider industry



The Ontario Crops Research Centre in Simcoe was featured in the first of a [series of webinars](#), hosted by the Alliance, that highlight the impact of the agricultural research centres across the province.

See the presentation slides from Barbara Yates (Ferrero Rocher) and Prof. Praveen Saxena: [Micropropagation and conservation of hazelnut](#), and [sign up for future sessions](#) about the Ontario Crops Research Centre in Elora, the Ontario Beef Research Centre and the Ontario Aquaculture Research Station.





Publications

A selection of Alliance people, places and programs cited in popular and trade media

1. [The economics of cover crops: Ridgetown research highlights profitability gains and losses in grain and vegetable systems](#) (*Farmtario.com*, Oct. 7)
2. [Ont. government invests in U of G](#) (*Farms.com*, Oct. 19)
3. [New crop research facility coming to Ridgetown](#) (*Farmtario*, Oct. 19)
4. [Province invests in Ridgetown](#) (*Chatham Voice*, Oct. 20)
5. [University's new \\$6.5M building at Ridgetown will support field crop research](#) (*Londoner*, Oct. 20)
6. [Globally significant technologies receive U of G Innovation of the Year Award](#) (*University of Guelph news*, Oct. 21): Food science professor Keith Warriner and post-doctoral researcher Mahdiyeh Hasani repurposed their food disinfection technology—work partly funded by the Alliance—to clean N95 masks used in hospitals and care homes.
7. [Researchers probe soil in northern Ontario's Great Clay Belt, with a little help from some hunters](#) (*CBC News*, Oct. 21)

Events



Visit the U of G booth at the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair

This year's virtual Royal Agricultural Winter Fair will be held Nov. 10-14. Visit the University's showcase, *A Place to Grow*, to explore research highlights from the research stations and across U of G.

[Learn more >](#)



Skills for Research Impact: KTT Strategies and Dissemination

How do you share your research with non-academic audiences? On Nov. 10, take a deep dive into ways to disseminate your findings with Elizabeth Shantz from U of G's Research Innovation Office.

[Learn more >](#)



Knowledge Exchange Event: Advancing the Science of KTT in Agri-Food

The Alliance hosted a free digital knowledge exchange event on Oct. 28 about evidence-based agriculture and the importance of KTT research in the agri-food sector. The recording will be available online.

[Learn more >](#)

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