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Summer 2024



Alliance Innovations

A collaboration between OMAFA and the University of Guelph

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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Ontario invests more than \$7 million in U of G research



Alliance-funded research aims to improve fish health and production for Ontario's growing \$98-million aquaculture industry.

Dr. David Huyben and M.Sc. student Junyu Zhang at the Ontario Aquaculture Research Centre.

Engineering a robot to harvest tomatoes, making microplastic-free green composites and using responsible artificial intelligence are among over 40 University of Guelph agri-food research projects to receive more than \$7 million in new funding from the Ontario government.

For 2024, [44 research projects](#) that drive economic development, protect animal health and welfare, and support sustainable, home-grown food will be funded through the Ontario Agri-Food Innovation Alliance, a collaboration between the province, the University of Guelph and Agricultural Research and Innovation Ontario.

The Alliance leverages U of G's leadership in agriculture and veterinary sciences to deliver practical innovations for farmers, agribusinesses and communities. Every year, more than 240 faculty experts are directly involved in research projects supported by the Alliance.

[Read the full announcement](#)

[Explore 2024/25 funded projects](#)

U of G pitch competition highlights agri-tech talent, technology



Pitch competition participants (L to R): Sidhanth Pereira of [EarthOne](#), Domenique Mastronardi and Beckie Prime of Beck's Broth, Dr. Cody Kupferschmidt of Erode AI, Jonnie Lawson of Interius Farms, and Dr. Shari Van De Pol of [CATTLEytics](#).

Congratulations to the five participants in this year's Ontario Agri-Tech Pitch Competition!

The competition aimed to unite farmers, academics, agri-tech entrepreneurs and investors to raise awareness about problems worth solving and to showcase investment-worthy companies.

The company with the greatest potential to advance the Ontario agri-food sector and beyond won a grand prize of \$10,000 and the winner of the People's Choice award took home \$2,500.

Discover the winners

The event was organized by the University of Guelph's Research Innovation Office in collaboration with the Government of Ontario through the Ontario Agri-Food Innovation Alliance.

Alliance advances cybersecurity in the dairy sector



Dr. Ali Dehghantanha, Canada Research Chair in Cybersecurity and Threat Intelligence at the University of Guelph and founder of the [Cyber Science Lab](#), spoke with producers at the Canadian Dairy XPO.

U of G's cybersecurity expertise was on display in April at multiple cybersecurity-focused events. Dr. Dehghantanha and a team of U of G experts catalyzed connections and sparked new ideas among dairy producers, suppliers and government.



As farms increasingly rely on new technology like smart systems that control everything from barn temperature to feeding infrastructure and milking robots, cybercriminals see producers as easy prey. Whether for ransom or activism,



cyberattacks can derail businesses and threaten animal health.

“It doesn’t matter if you’re a small producer or a multimillion-dollar health care, financial or agricultural operation — if your system is vulnerable, eventually you will be a target,” said Dehghantanha.

Read the full article

These events were organized by U of G’s Research Innovation Office and supported by the Food from Thought Research program and the Ontario Agri-Food Innovation Alliance.

Alliance-funded project promotes soil health

How are healthy soils good for business? The team at [Soils at Guelph](#) asks Ontario farmers how investing in soil health practices is economically beneficial for the farm.

Explore five engaging episodes highlighting soil health reminders about minimizing disturbance, year-round roots, building organic matter, keeping it covered, and diversifying your rotations.

Watch episode 1: Minimize Disturbance

Minimize Disturbance_Ep1_Soil Health_Good for Business

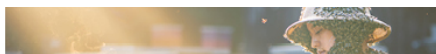


Watch All 5 Episodes

This video series was created with support from the Alliance's KTT Mobilization funding program.

Are you a U of G researcher looking to create engaging content to disseminate research findings? Explore the Alliance's [KTT funding programs](#) for support options.

U of G Office of Research photo contest returns



2024 research in focus PHOTO CONTEST



The U of G Research in Focus photo contest is an opportunity for U of G faculty, staff, students and postdocs to showcase pictures of their research for a chance to win one of five cash prizes.

The contest is aimed at providing a way to share compelling research stories.

Special "Agri-Food" category sponsored by the Alliance!

The best photo with an agricultural theme will win \$750.

Submissions are open until November 8, 2024.

Research in Focus photo contest details

Upcoming events



Northwest International Ag Expo

July 25-27, 2024, Emo, Ontario

Experience the agricultural event of the year at the Northwest International Ag Expo, hosted by the Northwest Soil & Crop Improvement Association. Participants have the opportunity to tour the Ontario Crops Research Centre - Emo on select event days.

[Event details](#)



Food Day Canada

August 3, 2024

Food Day Canada engages and inspires everyone to shop, cook and dine Canadian. It's a chance for all Canadians to join hands in one massive celebration in praise of our farmers and fishers, our chefs and researchers and, above all, our home cooks.

[Join in and celebrate with Food Day Canada August 3, 2024.](#)

Media

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

Innovative agri-food research gets \$7.2 million boost (July 15, Farmtario)

A \$7.2 million investment in Ontario-led research and innovation will increase agriculture and food sector competitiveness.

Two winners of Early Career Research Award named (July 10, Farmtario)

University of Guelph researchers aim to improve GRIP and disease readiness.

Soil school: How nutrients move and the impact on fertilizer management (July 3, Real Agriculture)

Alliance-funded researcher Dr. John Lauzon joins an episode of RealAgriculture's Soil School to discuss fertilizer management.

U of G propelling a tech-driven agri-food future (June 27, U of G OAC)

Research and development of agri-food technologies is underway at the Ontario Agricultural College (OAC), as University of Guelph researchers look for smarter ways to produce more food with less.

Is your herd safe? Cybersecurity essentials for dairy farms (June 18, Progressive Dairy)

Dr. Ali Dehghantanha, Alliance-funded researcher and founding director of U of G's Cyber Science Lab discusses cybersecurity on dairy farms.

U of G researchers receive more than \$ 7.8M in federal support (June 14, U of G News)

NSERC Discovery grants awarded to Alliance-funded researchers as part of \$7.8 in federal support.

Ontario innovator wins Food Waste Challenge (June 13, The Western Producer)

St. Catharines-based Clean Works was named one of two winners in the novel technologies stream of Canada's Food Waste Reduction Challenge. Clean Works technology was developed at U of G with Alliance funding.

Understanding transmission of the avian influenza virus (June 11, Farmtario)

Dr. Claire Jardine explains One Health approach to avian influenza at a poultry industry event.

Field strawberry season kicks off early (June 6, The Grower)

Berry Growers of Ontario discuss how day-neutral strawberries have revolutionized the industry. U of G researchers tested U.S.-bred day-neutral strawberry varieties to select berries that would thrive in Ontario's soils and climate and be "fruitful" for the province's growers.

Efficient low-cost GIS solution beats out AI to count corn plants (June 5, U of G's Food from Thought)

A Canadian seed company will implement the technology, which was developed at U of G with support from the Alliance. The new geographic information system (GIS) technique for counting plants in corn test plots uses drone images and could replace traditional manual counting and more expensive options.

Duo behind Beck's Broth saluted with health food award (June 4, Global News)

Former HQP Scholar Dominique Mastronardi and company CEO Beckie Prime were recently the recipients of the One to Watch award with their bone broth-based drink Beck's Broth.

The state of cannabis production in Ontario (June 4, two today)

Dr. Sara Epp, an Alliance-funded researcher and a rural planning and development professor

at U of G, discussed the state of cannabis production as a form of agriculture.

Pain control aids calves at castration (June 3, The Western Producer)

A recent Alliance-funded study found that young calves show more pain responses when not treated with pain control at castration. However, the study also showed that there was no impact on average daily gain by mitigating the pain at castration.

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This newsletter is produced by the University's Office of Research. The views expressed are the views of the University and do not necessarily reflect those of OMAFA. Questions regarding the Ontario Agri-Food Innovation Alliance can be addressed to omafago@uoguelph.ca.



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