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December 2024



Alliance Innovations

Growing Ontario agri-food together: A collaboration between the Government of Ontario 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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HAPPY Holidays

Wishing you, and those
near and dear to you,
happy holidays and
best wishes for 2025.



*From the team at the
U of G Office of Research - Agri-Food Partnership.*

The University of Guelph will be closed from Monday, December 23, 2024, to Wednesday, January 2, 2025, and will re-open on Thursday, January 3, 2025.

U of G names new leadership in the Office of Research

[Dr. Rebecca Hallett](#) has been appointed interim associate vice-president (research, agri-food partnership) and will take over the portfolio to lead the Ontario Agri-Food Innovation Alliance, a collaboration between the Government of Ontario and the University of Guelph, and provide strategic management and support to the largest single research agreement at the University.

Hallett will also oversee the University's Laboratory Services Division and maintain key relationships with numerous public and private sector partners.



"I am honoured to step into this role and excited at the opportunity to help support and champion the Ontario Agri-Food Innovation Alliance.

The Alliance has been critical to my own research program throughout my whole career, and I know the tremendous value it brings to the University and to Ontario."

Dr. Rebecca Hallett

[Dr. Shayan Sharif](#), who had been serving in the role of interim associate vice-president (research, agri-food partnership) at U of G, has been appointed interim vice-president, research & innovation.

This news follows that of Dr. Charlotte Yates' retirement announced earlier in November. During the transition period while the University conducts a formal search for its next president, Dr. Rene Van Acker will assume the role of interim president and vice-chancellor at U of G.

Sharif, Hallett and Van Acker will remain in their new roles until the presidential search is complete.

Read the full announcement

PhD student puts agri-food research in focus with contest win

Agri-Food Category Winner

"PERCH PARTY"

Submitted by Madeleine McAuley



Madeleine McAuley's "Perch Party" photo has won the Agri-Food in Focus prize supported by the Ontario Agri-Food Innovation Alliance in the 2024 University of Guelph Research in Focus photo contest.

[McAuley](#), an Animal Biosciences PhD student in U of G's Ontario Agricultural College, snapped the photo while assisting lab-mate and MSc student Steeley Ellis to collect data for her experiment about the development of perching behaviour.

The photo shows three-week-old pullets (young hens) that are part of the trial at the [Ontario Poultry Research Centre](#); an active research facility owned by Agricultural Research and Innovation Ontario and managed by U of G through the Alliance. This behaviour and welfare research, led by faculty researcher Dr. Tina Widowski, aims to determine best practices for perch provision for growing pullets and laying hens to inform updates and revisions to the Code of Practice.

View all the winners and honourable mentions

Alliance funding supports dairy and poultry sectors

Research projects funded by the Ontario Agri-Food Innovation Alliance and Food from Thought are supporting Ontario farmers. From reducing antibiotic use to meeting the egg needs of corporate buyers, Alliance research provides innovative solutions for a sustainable, productive sector.

Alliance-funded U of G research drives smarter antibiotic use in dairy herds

CASE STUDY | U of G Research Drives Smarter Antibiotic Use in Dairy Herds

Ontario Poultry Research Centre studies balance hen welfare, growth and egg volume

STUDY | Antibiotic Use in Dairy Herds



Research led by Dr. Stephen LeBlanc
Ontario Veterinary College

Read the case study

CASE STUDY SERIES

U of G Poultry Management Research Guides the Movement to Cage-Free Eggs
Dr. Grégory Bédécarrats, Department of Animal Biosciences at Ontario Agricultural College



Read the case study

Celebrating World Soil Day

December 5 was World Soil Day, intended to raise awareness of the importance of soil health and sustainable soil management. The U of G knowledge mobilization initiative Soils at Guelph asks Ontario farmers how investing in soil health practices is economically beneficial for the farm. Watch all five episodes!

Minimize Disturbance	Year Round Roots

Episode 1: Minimize Disturbance

Episode 2: Year Round Roots

Episode 3: Build Organic Matter

Keep it Covered_Ep 4_Soil Health



Episode 4: Keep it Covered

Episode 5: Diversify Your Rotations

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.

Upcoming events

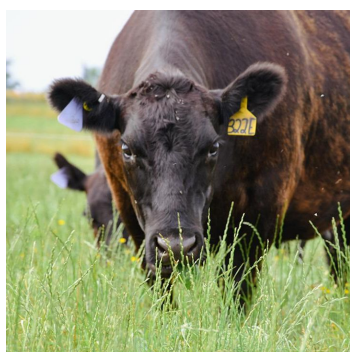


Digital Development, Inclusive Innovation and Information Disorder Webinar - Part 3

December 16, 2024, 10 - 11 a.m., Online

Join U of G's School of Environmental Design and Rural Development to explore the legal aspects of AI and robots in climate-smart agricultural practices.

[Event Registration](#)



Annual Virtual Beef Symposium

January 30 and February 6, 2025, 7 - 9 p.m.

Mark your calendar for two evenings of engaging presentations and conversations on a variety of topics for both cow-calf and feedlot producers. Presented by [Beef@Guelph](#).

Media

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

Better, faster, stronger soil data can feed the planet (Dec. 3, U of G News)

For World Soil Day, Alliance-funded researcher Dr. Asim Biswas says data is the answer and his research into affordable technology can transform the way we feed the world.

Ontario soybean yields proof of crop resilience (Nov. 29, Farmtario)

Some of the plot results from the Ontario Crops Research Centre in Winchester yielded over 100 bushels an acre.

Reducing your farm's cybersecurity risks (Nov. 19, Farms.com)

With funding from the Alliance, Dr. Ali Dehghantanha, Canada Research Chair and professor in cyber security at University of Guelph, has developed a security monitoring system available to farms and farm businesses.

Build bigger value for cull dairy cows (Nov. 18, Farmtario)

Alliance-funded research shows feeding dairy cows going to the meat market can make sense financially and for animal welfare.

Poultry research in Canada – heavy hitters launch new projects (Nov. 15, Poultry World)

Several Alliance-funded researchers are launching new projects supported by federal government funding delivered through the Canadian Poultry Research Council.

U of G receives funding for three new Canada Research Chairs (Nov. 14, U of G News)

Dr. Asim Biswas, an Alliance-funded researcher who aims to develop smart farming solutions, will hold a new Tier 1 Chair in Digital Agriculture.

Insights from Kim Schneider (UGuelph) on grazing cover crops (Nov. 5, Farms.com)

Dr. Kim Schneider shares cover crop grazing results with producers at Atlantic Forage Field Day 2024. Watch the full presentation on Farms.com.

Canada needs an innovative One Health strategy to prepare for the next pandemic (November, Canadian Science Policy Centre)

U of G's acting vice-president (research and innovation) Dr. Shayan Sharif writes that in order to get ahead of emerging zoonotic threats like avian influenza, Canada needs to embrace a One Health approach that breaks down the silos separating human, animal and environmental health.

Make an Alliance connection



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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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