

# THE BUZZ



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

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**Happy New Year!**

## IN THE NEWS

**Mellowing red wheat's bitter notes.** People who consume whole-grain foods made from red wheat have traditionally sacrificed some flavour for the sake of health benefits, says University of Guelph Prof. Lisa Duizer, Department of Food Science. The culprit is the astringent and bitter notes that are inherent in red wheat. But understanding how people react to these traits may lead to a balance between health and taste in future whole-grain products. An article about this research, by [SPARK](#) writer Joey Sabljic was [published](#) in the first issue of the [Grain Farmers of Ontario](#) magazine in October. SPARK provides monthly articles to the Grain Farmers of Ontario, a newly formed collaboration between the Ontario Corn Producers, the Ontario Soybean Growers and the Ontario Wheat Producers' Marketing Board.

**U of G researchers discover more effective avian influenza vaccine.** University of Guelph scientists have made a discovery that may lead to more effective vaccines to protect poultry and humans from the H5N1 avian influenza virus. The team, led by Prof. Shayan Sharif from the Department of Pathobiology, has found one of the molecular determinants of the H5N1 avian influenza virus that can induce immune responses in chickens. "We may be able to use this in future vaccines to not only protect domestic flocks but also to prevent or control the spread of the virus from birds to humans," says Sharif. Read more about this research [here](#).

## RESEARCH STATIONS

**New staff join Arkell and Elora Dairy.** Three new research facility forepersons have been hired -- Joe Parkinson at Elora Dairy, Tim Thalen at Arkell Swine and Feedmill and Dave Vandenberg at Arkell Poultry and Equine. At Elora, Parkinson is responsible for supervising staff, managing operations regarding herd production and health and overseeing day-to-day upkeep and maintenance of the facility. At Arkell, Thalen and

Vandenberg are additionally responsible for preparing and following up on research projects and animal use protocols, providing technical assistance to researchers and monitoring and managing inventory and use of livestock in research and teaching. All three have extensive experience to help them in their new roles. Thalen was raised on a large commercial sow operation and now runs his own hog finishing operation. Vandenberg grew up with poultry and dairy and previously worked setting up new poultry barns. Parkinson started at the University 13 years ago while getting his degree in animal science and has been with the Elora and Ponsonby dairy stations ever since, most recently as lead hand.

## **BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT**

**New Interim Director at BDO.** The Business Development Office welcomes Dr. Martin Bosch as its new interim director, effective **January 1, 2010**. Bosch takes over as interim director while the search for a full-time director continues. Bosch is a well-known entrepreneur in the community, holds undergraduate and graduate degrees in chemistry from the University of Guelph and has spent many years as an educator and administrator in the post-secondary system. Martin's role will be to help the BDO continue to build and to increase emphasis on partnerships and entrepreneurship.

## **NEWS**

**Selenium may help maintain milk yield in dairy cattle.** Dairy cows normally experience a dramatic decrease in milk production starting 11 weeks after calving when mammary epithelial cells responsible for synthesizing milk start to die off. But Silvio Miranda, a PhD candidate supervised by Dr. John Cant in the Department of Animal and Poultry Science at the University of Guelph, has discovered that supplementing the mammary epithelial cells *in vitro* with selenium could prevent the cell loss that leads to low milk volume. "Our results suggest that selenium supplements in an animal's feed may be the key to preventing a loss in milk yield, and that adding this longevity to a cow's production would provide economic gains for producers," says Miranda.

**Strong response to OMAFRA-U of G Research Programs call for letters of intent.** University of Guelph researchers submitted 203 letters of intent (LOIs) to the Office of Research - Agri-food and Partnerships in December 2009, in response to the most recent call for LOIs under the OMAFRA-U of G Research Program. Over half of the LOIs were submitted under more than one of the seven research themes. For this call, approximately \$10.9 million is available for allocation to those projects that are approved. Review committees are meeting in January with the goal of inviting successful candidates by the end of the month, to submit full proposals in early March.

## **STAFF AND STUDENT NEWS**

**UofG student wins agriculture speaking award.** This year's winner of the Canadian Young Speakers for Agriculture competition is Cindy Schickedanz, an animal science student from the University of Guelph. The competition, now in its 25th year, attracts competitors from across the country. A video of Schickedanz's enthusiastic delivery of her topic, *The Unsung Heroes of Agriculture*, is [posted](#) (along with the other 14

competitors in the senior division) on [farms.com](http://farms.com), the organization that also hosts our budding SPARK\*AIR knowledge translation and transfer videos. In her speech, Schickedanz notes parallels between farm men, women and children, and some of agriculture and food's famous names, including John Deere, Louis Pasteur and Norman Borlaug. Schickedanz is a student in Owen Roberts's agricultural communications class, which hosted the University of Guelph speak-offs.

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## COMING EVENTS

**Annual and final reports due.** Annual and final reports for research projects in all research themes under the OMAFRA-U of G agreement are due Friday January 29, 2010 by noon. All information you need to complete these reports can be found [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 the opportunity to discuss the many 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).

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## **About The Buzz**

**The Buzz** is the electronic community news vehicle for the OMAFRA-University of Guelph partnership.

Editor: Liz Snyder, OMAFRA-UofG programs, 519-826-3376, [lsnyder@uoquelfh.ca](mailto:lsnyder@uoquelfh.ca). To contribute, contact Liz or contributing editors Robyn Meerveld, (519-826-4191, [robyn.meerveld@ontario.ca](mailto:robyn.meerveld@ontario.ca)) or Owen Roberts (519-826-5207, [owen@uoquelfh.ca](mailto:owen@uoquelfh.ca)).

Contributors to this issue: Natalie Carter, Steve DeBrabandere, Elin Gwyn, Bev Livingston, Robyn Meerveld, Haley Millard, Silvio Miranda, Rich Moccia, Natalie Osborne, Remo Pallottini, Joe Parkinson, Owen Roberts, Brad Rogers, Joey Sabljic, Shayan Sharif, Liz Snyder, Tim Thalen, Dave Vandenberg, Mary Visser Kerr.

Find out more about the OMAFRA-UofG Partnership at:  
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