



# THE YEAR IN REVIEW

Food, Agriculture, Community, Environment

> 2009 IN REVIEW

*A look back at what made 2009 great!*

## Embracing Change – OAC 2009

As Dean of the Ontario Agricultural College (OAC) at the University of Guelph, I am pleased to have this opportunity to share with you the first *Year in Review* edition of *FACE >forward*, a newsletter to celebrate OAC's achievements in research, education and service for agriculture, food, the environment and rural communities.

The newsletter is published three times each year in electronic format. For a free subscription, send your email address to [oacinfo@uoguelph.ca](mailto:oacinfo@uoguelph.ca).

For OAC, 2009 was a year of tremendous change as the college embarked on a process of strategic repositioning to maintain and develop our strengths in teaching, research and service in the face of some daunting fiscal challenges and realities. We have

initiated and reinvigorated our efforts to connect and reconnect with partners to find new ways to deliver relevant programs that will address not only today's needs, but tomorrow's as well.

In *2009 in Review*, you'll find highlights of some of the key developments at the college over the last twelve months. For the full versions of these stories and more, visit our website at [www.oac.uoguelph.ca](http://www.oac.uoguelph.ca).

With thanks for your ongoing support,

Robert Gordon  
Dean, Ontario Agricultural College  
Guelph • Alfred • Kemptville • Ridgetown

## Winter 2009

> **Towards Climate Positive was the theme of the 15<sup>th</sup> annual, student-run Environmental Sciences Symposium** held to raise awareness about climate change and the environmental issues threatening the world's ecosystems.

> **OAC Public Lectures** focused on such diverse topics as innovation in today's agriculture industries, sustaining biodiversity in your garden, and golf course preparation and maintenance.

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> **Andy Robinson**, associate professor and graduate coordinator in Animal &

Poultry Science (APS), **began a five-year term as chair of APS** as of March 1.

Robinson's research is focused on livestock genetic improvement, with a specialization in swine and more recently fish.

> A study conducted by **researchers in Animal & Poultry Science** and published in the *Journal of Animal Science* revealed that a cow's disposition can be determined by looking into its eyes.

The higher the proportion of visible white in the cow's eye, the more anxious the animal.

> **Biodegradable cups made from soy fibre and maple syrup enhanced with soy** took top prizes at the 13<sup>th</sup> annual Project SOY Competition. Established to create new uses and marketing strategies for soybeans, the competition showcased 17 student projects, ranging from cupcakes and barbecue sauce to dye and moisturizer.



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CHANGING LIVES  
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# Spring/Summer 2009

> **Alan Ker**, a professor from the University of Arizona, **began a five-year term as chair of the department of Food, Agricultural and Resource Economics** as of April 30. His research and teaching interests include applied and theoretical econometrics, risk management, trade and institutional economics.



> **A new partnership agreement between the college and the Bluewater District School Board** will smooth the path for students heading to OAC's degree or diploma programs in agriculture, exempting graduates of the specialist high skills major in agriculture from introductory agriculture courses during subsequent studies at U of G's main or regional campuses.



> **Art Hill**, associate professor in Food Science, **began a five-year term as department chair** effective April 1. Hill's primary research interests are milk composition and analysis, cheese technology, and nutritionally functional milk products.

> **Renée Bergeron** was **appointed interim director at Kemptville Campus** for a period of one year until May 2010. Throughout this time, she also continues as director at the Alfred Campus, where she assumed leadership responsibilities in May 2007.

- > **Tom** (OAC '65) and **Joanne Cowan** (UofG, '67) and **Clay Switzer** (OAC '51) **were inducted into the Order of OAC** at the college's annual OAC Recognition Banquet. The Order acknowledges significant contributions by individual donors toward the OAC mission to enrich the teaching and study of agriculture, food production, the environment, the community and rural development.
- > Research projects headed by OAC faculty members **Amar Mohanty** and **Gale Bozzo** (Plant Agriculture) **were awarded funding through the Canada Foundation for Innovation Leaders' Opportunities Fund**. Support received through the awards will be used to purchase new equipment for the Bioproducts Discovery and Development Centre, and to explore new processes for preserving the quality of horticultural produce to extend its marketability.
- > **Keith Warriner** and **Mansel Griffiths** (Food Science) **were granted almost \$340,000 in federal funding** over the next four years to improve food and water testing in the threat of bioterrorism and deadly outbreaks. They will develop techniques and tools for early and accurate detection of contaminants and toxins in food and water samples.

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## Spring/Summer 2009

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- > **Researchers in OAC's department of Plant Agriculture have found a giant ragweed biotype that is showing resistance to the popular herbicide glyphosate.** The appearance of a glyphosate-resistant population can complicate management for growers. Further greenhouse and field trials will be conducted on the weed biotype to confirm resistance as well as identify potential management options.



- > Students across Ontario will soon learn more about the great prospects that a post-secondary education in agriculture and agri-food provides thanks to a **new partnership between the college, Monsanto Canada and the OAC Class of '53**, which will support the development of new initiatives to promote the benefits of educational programs, create capacity for students to become actively engaged in the recruitment function, and coordinate opportunities with other organizations to create broader awareness.

- > **A team of researchers, including Amar Mohanty (Plant Agriculture) and Manjusri Misra (School of Engineering), received \$620,000 from the national Networks of Centres of Excellence program** to create car-part prototypes from a "green" plastic and natural and biobased fibres. The prototypes will be engineered in U of G's Bioproducts Discovery and Development Centre.
- > OAC alumni took **top honours at U of G's Alumni Weekend** in June. The university's Alumnus of Honour Award was presented to retired crop science professor, professor **Neal Stoskopf** (BSA '57, MSA '58). **Mary Lynn McPherson**, BSc(Agr) '80, received U of G's Alumni Volunteer Award. As part of the weekend's festivities, OAC dean Rob Gordon unveiled a plaque to honour the members of the Order of OAC. The plaque is now prominently displayed in the OAC Dean's Boardroom.



- > Faculty, staff and students from OAC joined with colleagues across U of G to host the **university's first-ever Science Olympics**. Teams of secondary school students competed in contests involving biology, physical sciences, nanoscience and agricultural sciences during the day-long event, intended to stimulate students' interest in science and attract secondary school students to U of G programs.

- > Thanks to funding provided by the federal and provincial governments, a new project is now underway to **renovate U of G's Axelrod building** to create a state-of-the-art environmental teaching and research centre. When completed, the revamped facility will showcase innovation and green technologies, and serve as home to the School of Environmental Sciences, the School of Environmental Design and Rural Development and components of the School of Engineering.

- > In August, **Jonathan Newman** assumed the role of **Director for the newly formed School of Environmental Sciences**, established through the merger of the former departments of Land Resource Science and Environmental Biology. An OAC faculty member since 2004, Newman will be instrumental in the development of an inclusive vision for the diverse interdisciplinary group which integrates physical and life sciences to address environmental issues in agricultural, forest and aquatic ecosystems.



# Fall 2009

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- > Animal welfare experts from OAC's department of Animal and Poultry Science and U of G's Campbell Centre for the Study of Animal Welfare will lead a **new virtual centre for Canadian scientists in poultry behaviour and welfare**. The centre, announced in September, is a joint initiative of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC), the Poultry Industry Council and the Canadian Poultry Research Council.
- > **OAC surpassed its 2009 United Way goal by collecting more than \$74,000** across its units and regional campuses in this year's U of G campaign that exceeded its half-million-dollar goal, **with a final total of \$520,000 university-wide**.
- > OAC dean Rob Gordon announced the appointment of **three new associate deans for the college's senior administrative team**. **Rene Van Acker**, former chair of the department of Plant Agriculture, was appointed to the newly established position of associate dean (external relations). **Jonathan Schmidt**, faculty member in the School of Environmental Sciences assumed the role of associate dean (academic). **Beverley Hale** from the School of Environmental Sciences was appointed to the position of associate dean (research & innovation). All the appointments are for five-year terms.
- > **Peter Sikkema** (Plant Agriculture) **was named as recipient of the T.R. Hilliard Distinguished Agricultural Extension Award for 2009**. The award was established by the OAC Alumni Foundation to recognize individuals who are making significant contributions in agricultural extension in the province of Ontario.
- > OAC added another **Canada Research Chair** to its roster effective September 1, with the appointment of **Christian Blodau**, a Tier 2 Canada Research Chair in Environmental Geology and Biogeochemistry. Based in the School of Environmental Sciences, Blodau is focused on the sustainability of Canada's northern wetlands, lakes and freshwater reservoirs.
- > OAC faculty members in the School of Environmental Sciences will lead **two national strategic research networks** announced in September and funded through grants from the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC). **Hung Lee will serve as co-scientific director of the Bioconversion Network**, which brings together academic researchers, industry and government partners to help Canada make the transition from a petroleum-based economy to a biobased one. **Peter Kevan will serve as principal investigator of CANPOLIN** (the Canadian Pollination Initiative) which connects researchers at 26 institutions in the fields of entomology, ecology, plant reproductive biology, genomics, prediction and economics to address the growing problem of pollinator decline in agricultural and natural ecosystems in Canada.
- > **Rich Moccia** (Animal and Poultry Science) **was appointed as U of G's new associate vice-president research** (agri-food and partnerships) for a five-year term effective September 1. Moccia, who served as interim AVP Research from May 2007, is credited with playing a leadership role in negotiating a new partnership between the university and the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) in 2008. The partnership returns more than \$1.15 billion each year to the Ontario economy.
- > In October, fourth-year landscape architecture students from OAC's School of Environmental Design & Rural development presented **conceptual redesigns for the hub of downtown Guelph** during a public open house at City Hall. The student designs, including visuals, three-dimensional models, digital modeling and hand graphics, provided a number of different visions for the city's St. George's Square, slated for redevelopment within the next few years.
- > **The first Urban Agriculture Symposium** hosted by the U of G and several local partners was held November 20 at the Arboretum, bringing together 150 industry, government and academic leaders in their efforts to promote the use of urban space for local sustainable food production.

