Students currently enrolled in a Masters’ program at the University of Guelph are invited to undertake empirical research on topics related to young people’s pathways into farming. The global phenomenon of an ageing farming population, poor returns on farming in the current economic paradigm and an apparent lack of interest among youth in agrarian and rural futures have attracted considerable attention among policy makers and researchers. At the same time, what is overlooked is that not all young people leave farming and the countryside, and some urban youth establish themselves as first-generation urban or rural farmers. By studying young people’s pathways into farming futures we aim to fill an important void in current work on rural youth and agrarian studies and in policies related to rural poverty reduction and employment generation. First, the research studies will go beyond documenting the various barriers that keep young people from establishing agrarian futures to examining how at least some young people manage to overcome these. Second, they will assess the working of intergenerational dynamics underpinning trajectories into farming, ranging from inheritance to the intergenerational transfer of knowledge. Third, they will shed light on generational innovation in farming practices across the globe. Gender will be treated as a key relation of social differentiation shaping all three areas of inquiry.

Two MA/MSc students will receive $5000-$10,000 each to undertake field research in Canada, China, India or Indonesia. Fluency in the local language is a must. Students will have the opportunity to interact with other researchers, to present in seminars/ workshops, and to publish in a peer-reviewed journal. Funding will be distributed on a competitive basis and selection will be based on submitted research proposals. The individual funds will be released in three installments. The first, following the submission of a detailed fieldwork plan and ethics approval; the second, following the submission of a report summarizing the research findings upon completion of fieldwork; and the final, following the submission of a substantial output (thesis, research paper). The funds will be allocated in accordance with the graduate program calendar.

Interested students please contact Dr. Sharada Srinivasan, University of Guelph. To apply, please send a CV and a 1000-word research proposal (consisting of research objective, questions, data collection methods, budget and time table) to sharada@uoguelph.ca by 01 November 2016.