

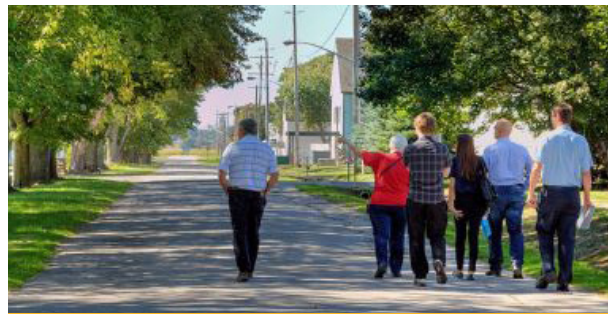
# Building social and economic development capacity in rural SW Ontario communities

## Summary

This project was designed to leverage student skills and funding to connect 12 municipalities with knowledge and expertise in support of local projects. Students applied knowledge from a graduate-level rural planning and community development course. The student consultants' planning and communications strategies generated engagement, investment and innovation in communities across southwestern Ontario.

## Knowledge Translated and Transferred (KTT)

The students focused on applying their knowledge from the graduate-level rural planning and community development course. Although the original project strategy was to focus on online engagement and communication, the student consultations and projects shifted to reflect diverse community development and planning needs. In

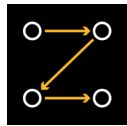


## Example project: Putting Vanastra on the Map

Located in Huron County, Vanastra (pop. 650) was one of the 12 project sites matched with student consultants. The graduate student consultant team worked with local business owners and other community members and developed a plan to communicate the benefits of living and working in Vanastra. The resulting report, **Putting Vanastra on the Map**, is credited with “galvanizing the community” and triggered a positive cascade of attention and investment, including more than \$2M of infrastructure funding.

“We had this group of young people coming into our community, fresh eyes. Hands-down, it was really the catalyst for the change that we’ve seen today, because the report was so comprehensive. It kept coming up that it was the report putting Vanastra on the map, and it did. It put Vanastra on the map.” Jan Hawley, Business Development Office, Huron East

particular, the collaborative efforts of the student consulting teams and the community project teams identified and documented local, district-specific ways to promote and meet the social and economic needs of rural communities.



## Path to Impact

### How KTT Can Change Communities

- **Issue request for proposals (RFP) to find projects.** The project issued three RFPs in municipalities across Ontario, asking whether community projects needed consultation around social media and communications.
- **Match project to student capacity.** Students chose the successful RFP from submissions based on their own learning goals and interests.
- **Supervise via experienced consultants.** Three faculty members with experience in rural community development and consulting and a PhD student in rural studies supported project selection and management.
- **Create useful reports.** Each project included in-person meetings, which led to a specific community engagement and rural planning (capacity enhancing) strategy “final report” for each municipal project.
- **Work together.** Community liaisons from the municipalities volunteered for each project. When the liaison

was able to engage in regular communication and provide ongoing input, projects were more successful.

- **Adjust with feedback and troubleshooting.** Student evaluations and reflections helped faculty supervisors guide and course-correct the projects and work through challenges and opportunities that emerged.



## Positive Impacts

### Social and Economic Impacts From Small-Scale Consultation Projects

The projects had a substantial impact on participating communities. The student consultants’ communication and strategy products, tailored to the needs of local municipalities, created social and economic impact. Project partners reported that fresh perspectives helped them solve real-world municipal challenges, and enabled projects that would not have otherwise been possible. The final reports were also useful KTT products that were leveraged for further funding and planning.

“[We] really didn’t know how to tackle the issues, the challenges, of Vanastra, because it was so unique... [now] we have a game plan and we have a focus, [an] objective. Your program allowed me to take those objectives and formulate an even more comprehensive plan.” **Jan Hawley, Business Development Office, Huron East**

## **Students Gained Real-World Experience and Skills**

Students gained real-world consultation and KTT practitioner skills in a supported and collaborative environment. They gained a sense of responsibility from being entrusted to complete the process planning and implementation.

## **Highlighting Best Practices in KTT for Agri-Food and Rural Research**

### **Best Practice 1**

**Realistic expectations for time and scheduling are key**

This set of projects worked because of attention to schedules of both people and projects. Aligning student and municipal volunteer schedules required careful planning. Additionally, student strategies needed to be vetted for realistic timelines (e.g., expected social media growth over a semester).

### **Best Practice 2**

**Adapt to stakeholder needs and preferences**

An original goal of the project was to share social media skills. During consultation with local municipalities, it became clear that more substantial communication products and strategies were needed more urgently than social media support. As a result, the class decided to refocus their efforts on projects that were more closely aligned with stakeholders' immediate needs and preferences (e.g., written reports and detailed communication strategies).

**Title:** The Application of Innovative Web-Based Engagement for Community Projects

**Principal investigator:** Prof. Wayne Caldwell (University of Guelph)

**Date:** 2012-2013

**Keywords:** rural development, capacity-building, engaged learning, highly qualified personnel

**Selected project team and partners:**  
45 graduate students from the School of Environmental Design and Rural Development and municipal representatives from Bruce County, Elgin County, Huron County, Perth County, Halton Region, Brussels, Huron East, North Huron, Grey Highlands, Township of Elizabethtown-Kitley and the City of Guelph.

**Program ID:** KTT Funding Program 299566

This research was supported by the KTT program, which received funding from Growing Forward 2, a federal, provincial and territorial initiative, and from the Ontario Agri-Food Innovation Alliance (previously the OMAFRA-U of G Partnership).



Image source: Grey County

## About this report

The Ontario Agri-Food Innovation Alliance is committed to “getting science off the shelf” to support a thriving agri-food sector and vibrant rural communities. This series of reports highlights the impact of research funded through the Alliance and illustrates best practices

for enhancing research impact through knowledge translation and transfer (KTT). Many thanks to Prof. Wayne Caldwell (University of Guelph) and Jan Hawley (Huron East Business Development Office) for participating in interviews about the impacts of this project.

# Creating resources to promote agri-foods for healthy aging

## Summary

Researchers, producers, health professionals and older adults collaborated on this project to create and share resources showcasing how agri-foods can support healthy aging. The team created a recipe resource designed to improve nutrition and healthy agri-food preparation for older adults and produced other usable products (infographics, webinars) to support nutrition for healthy aging. The team used public health nutrition networks to share the resources widely and to reach audiences across Canada.

## Knowledge Translated and Transferred (KTT)

The research team wanted to find ways to use agri-foods to improve the health and well-being of older adults. This project brought together expertise around agri-food, nutrition, public health, long-term care, older adults and caregivers.

“[The best part of the resource was] the research base...having a recipe



## Project resource: Recipe guide for older adults

The team produced a recipe guide that targeted older adults. Key to the development of the guide was consultation with older adults to understand their knowledge needs.

“...the specifics of what that recipe resource looked like, the information that it actually provided, that was informed by our stakeholder engagement sessions... they enlightened us [about] things that we might take for granted.” **Hilary Dunn, Agri-Food for Healthy Aging**

The consultation led to the development of a collection of recipes presented in a way that met the knowledge and nutritional needs of older adults. The resource was broadly shared through partnership with the Nutrition Resource Centre. As a result, there has been a steady and significant uptake of the guide. The guide is available to download or order at: <https://the-ria.ca/resources/recipe-resource-for-healthy-aging/>.

book that actually has research suggesting and supporting that eating more of these kinds of foods is protective [of one's health]. That really helps anyone doing education around healthy eating, because it's a solution" Karen Gough, Ontario Public Health Association, Nutrition Resource Centre



## Path to Impact

### How Collaborative KTT Can Close Knowledge Gaps

- **Identify the problem.** The project team realized that older adults needed practical and evidence-based diet and nutrition information.
- **Connect with stakeholders early.** The team connected with older adult stakeholders early in the process to determine the best ways to design and present recipes featuring nutritious Ontario agri-foods.
- **Work with content area experts.** The team also connected with grower groups and producers, dietitians, long-term care providers and others to design easy-to-use resources for good nutrition based on agri-foods.
- **Communicate through networks.** The team partnered with knowledge-brokering organizations with strong connections to health and nutrition who could leverage their networks for broad dissemination.

- **Use multiple outreach methods.** Webinars and newsletter outreach connected products with audiences from health care and public health, government, industry and non-profit sectors.

"[This project focused on highlighting] all of the amazing bounty we have in Ontario in terms of agri-foods and what they have to offer for nutrition and optimizing health and how that can directly connect to healthy aging." Prof. Alison Duncan, principal investigator



## Positive Impacts

### Bringing Together Diverse Stakeholders With a Common Interest

This project created an opportunity for diverse stakeholders with common interests—older adults, producers and a variety of health professionals—to connect and interact with the goal of improving health for older adults through better nutrition. This topic was of emerging interest to many of the stakeholders, but it had not received much attention until the project started the dialogue and brought the right people to the table.

## Evidence-Based Products That Meet Needs of Older Adults and Health Professionals

The project led to targeted and practical products, such as the recipe guide for older adults and a webinar for health professionals, that were both evidence-based and easy to use. 227 health

professionals, researchers and policy-makers attended the webinar. Project partners reported that they continue to get positive feedback from individuals downloading and using the recipe guide, which has been viewed and downloaded hundreds of times and has been distributed in hard copy.

## Highlighting Best Practices in KTT for Agri-Food and Rural Research

### Best Practice 1

**Consulting with stakeholders from the start leads to better uptake**

Collaborators on this project prioritized collecting stakeholder input through consultation early in the process. This approach led to final products that were well-matched to the needs of stakeholders and products that were well-received and -used.

### Best Practice 2

**Use knowledge brokers to reach stakeholder groups**

The project team leveraged the expertise of knowledge brokers to reach targeted stakeholders. Both Dietitians of Canada and the Nutrition Resource Centre at the Ontario Public Health Association were able and willing to share their networks to disseminate the final products.

“We had a partnership with Nutrition Resource Centre... they have a massive [communication] network that we could leverage to increase the reach of that resource. [Being] able to partner with organizations that have that [capacity] already in place just makes the [KTT] project have that much more impact.” **Hilary Dunn, Agri-Food for Healthy Aging**

**Title:** Bridging the Gaps in Ontario Agriculture, Food, Nutrition and Health to Create Healthy Aging Strategies

**Principal investigator:** Prof. Alison Duncan (University of Guelph)

**Date:** 2014-2017

**Keywords:** agri-food, collaboration, growers, health care, healthy aging, older adults, nutrition

**Selected project team and partners:** Hilary Dunn and others at Agri-food for Healthy Aging (A-HA), part of the Schlegel-UW Research Institute for Aging (RIA); older adults, growers and health-care professionals. The Nutrition Resource Centre at the Ontario Public Health Association and Dietitians of Canada were dissemination partners.

**Program ID:** KTT Funding Program KTT2014-10058

This research was supported by the KTT program, which received funding from Growing Forward 2, a federal, provincial and territorial initiative, and from the Ontario Agri-Food Innovation Alliance (previously the OMAFRA-U of G Partnership). Partner funding was provided by Schlegel-UW Research Institute for Aging and Dietitians of Canada.



## About this report

The Ontario Agri-Food Innovation Alliance is committed to “getting science off the shelf” to support a thriving agri-food sector and vibrant rural communities. This series of reports highlights the impact of research funded through the Alliance and illustrates best practices for enhancing research impact through

knowledge translation and transfer (KTT). Many thanks to Prof. Alison Duncan from the University of Guelph, Hilary Dunn from A-HA at the University of Waterloo and Karen Gough at the Nutrition Resource Centre for participating in interviews for this report.



# Getting the word out about new technology to improve dairy herd health and profitability

## Summary

This project was developed to increase dairy industry uptake and awareness of High Immune Response (HIR) technology for commercialization. HIR is a testing procedure and management tool with the potential to significantly improve dairy herd health and the quality and safety of dairy products. HIR technology improves herd immunity, enhances disease resistance and reduces antibiotic and disease treatment costs. The project team developed easy-to-use resources and connected with potential commercialization partners and audiences.

“Technology transfer is not an easy thing, knowledge transfer is not an easy thing, because folks need to communicate on both sides and understand each other. Bridging that gap is what’s needed to take what’s on the bench to the marketplace.”  
**Lauri Wagter-Lesperance, PhD in immunogenetics, project coordinator**



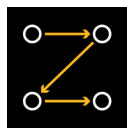
## Worldwide recognition of innovative research-based technology and uptake in 120+ countries

High Immune Response (HIR) technology won a World Dairy Expo innovation award in 2013. In 2017, Prof. Bonnie Mallard received the Governor General’s Award for Innovation and, in 2018, she received the YMCA Women of Distinction Lifetime Achievement Award. In addition, Prof. Mallard received the University of Guelph 2017 Innovation of the Year Award along with co-inventors Jack Dekkers, Lauri Wagter-Lesperance, professor emeritus Bruce Wilkie and Brian Kennedy. HIR technology, marketed as Immunity+, is now available internationally in 120+ countries through commercialization partner Semex Alliance®.

Image source: Ontario Veterinary College (OVC), University of Guelph

## Knowledge Translated and Transferred (KTT)

High Immune Response (HIR) is a patented technology developed at the University of Guelph that identifies cattle with superior immunity and enhanced disease resistance. Livestock producers can use HIR to make management decisions to naturally improve herd health, animal well-being and productivity. Through commercialization, HIR technology provides benefits to producers, consumers and animals by reducing use of antibiotics and therapeutic intervention. This KTT project was developed to increase dairy industry awareness and uptake of HIR and to make this product available in the marketplace for producers.



### Path to Impact

#### How KTT Can Bring a New Technology to Market

Collaborators on this project developed a plan to get the word out to the dairy sector about the patented HIR technology. Areas of focus were: enhancing communication, increasing awareness of the technology and finding a partner for commercialization.

- **Have technology ready for adoption.** The HIR technology had been tested and validated before this project, making it ready to launch to industry.

- **Connect with audiences.** This project involved giving potential audiences multiple opportunities and methods to learn about HIR.
- **Create targeted communication and marketing resources.** Working with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) and other interested stakeholders, the project team developed fact sheets and other resources for dairy producers and veterinarians. A presentation and video highlighting HIR technology were created and distributed via DVD and USB at producer and veterinary meetings.
- **Promote online and in person.** The team designed social media content to direct potential consumers to the University of Guelph and other websites featuring HIR. They also delivered in-person training through workshops with regional producers and veterinarians, and at information booths at targeted regional and national forums.



### Positive Impacts

#### Dairy Herd Health and Producer Profitability

The success of HIR technology enabled this commercialization success story. The technology helps producers create more sustainable and efficient dairy herds, improving herd health and profitability.

“The Immunity [plus] calves growing up, they don’t get needles. They’re healthier and you never see them sick. If they do get sick they bounce back much quicker than usual.” **Brad Hulshof**, dairy producer and HIR tester

### **KTT Activities Connect Research Technology With Industry Partner**

The KTT outreach activities yielded a connection with industry partner Semex Alliance®, Canada’s largest dairy genetics company. Semex now markets HIR technology as Immunity+™ across the globe.

“We knew we had to be strategic and

it started with talking to producers. We knew about the technology, but you can’t put a technology out there until you [understand the industry’s needs]: “Will this help you? What do you think of this?” **Lauri Wagter-Lesperance**, PhD in immunogenetics, project coordinator

The broad sector awareness raised by the KTT project helped Semex in selling Immunity+ to producers. More than 5 years later, Immunity+ is on the market and accessible to producers throughout Ontario and in 120 countries around the world. HIR technology is now being validated for beef cattle herd management.

## **Highlighting Best Practices in KTT for Agri-Food and Rural Research**

**Best Practice**  
**1**

**Stakeholders learn in different ways, so offer multiple options**

This project worked because the team created multiple approaches to getting their message out. In-person exhibits and training workshops were combined with fact sheets, videos, presentations and social media engagement. This layered approach allowed multiple opportunities for audiences to learn about the new technology.

**Best Practice**  
**2**

**Know and target stakeholders and influencers**

The project team connected with people who influence dairy producers (veterinarians, breeders and other on-farm service suppliers) to inform their clients on HIR best practices. Through targeted workshops and key scientific presentations, producers and veterinarians became more knowledgeable about HIR and were able to share knowledge with others in their network about its benefits. Finally, an industry partnership with Semex Alliance® allowed for broad distribution and marketing in Canada and internationally.

**Title:** High Immune Response Technology

**Principal investigator:** Prof. Bonnie Mallard (University of Guelph)

**Date:** 2010-2012

**Keywords:** commercialization, high immune response technology, knowledge broker

**Selected project team and partners:** Research team members Profs. David Kelton and Tom Funk, and Lauri Wagter-Lesperance, Shannon Cartwright and Laura Cain, all from the University of Guelph. Stakeholders included the Dairy Farmers of Ontario, Dairy Farmers of Canada, Canadian Dairy Network, Semex Alliance®, CanWestDHI and the Ontario Association of Bovine Practitioners, as well as cattle producers, veterinarians and breeders in Ontario, Canada and internationally.

**Program ID:** KTT Funding Program 299523

Project funding provided in part by the Ontario Agri-Food Innovation Alliance's KTT Funding Program.



Image source: OVC, University of Guelph

## About this report

The Ontario Agri-Food Innovation Alliance is committed to “getting science off the shelf” to support a thriving agri-food sector and vibrant rural communities. This series of reports highlights the impact of research funded through the Alliance and illustrates best practices

for enhancing research impact through knowledge translation and transfer (KTT). Many thanks to Dr. Lauri Wagter-Lesperance (University of Guelph) and Brad Hulshof (dairy producer) for participating in interviews for this report.

# Bridging the science-to-policy gap in agri-food public health

## Summary

Researchers developed a handbook to provide scientists with tools to more effectively translate research findings for policy-makers. The team then brought together 75 researchers and policy stakeholders in the agri-food public health sector for an interactive workshop. The workshop was designed to raise awareness of the new tool and increase capacity to translate scientific evidence into public policy.

## Knowledge Translated and Transferred (KTT)

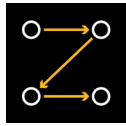
The project team found agri-food and public health researchers needed more sector-specific tools to translate their research for policy-makers. They determined that a handbook of KTT practices, specifically targeted to science-to-policy professionals, would help grow capacity for knowledge synthesis and transfer for more informed policy- and decision-making in agri-food public health.



## Tailored science-to-policy knowledge synthesis handbook

The main project innovation was *Knowledge Synthesis, Transfer and Exchange in Agri-Food Public Health: A Handbook for Science-to-Policy Professionals*, specifically developed for science-to-policy professionals in agri-food public health to better understand how to approach knowledge synthesis, transfer and exchange. This handbook is located at a permanent link on the University of Guelph's Atrium institutional repository: <https://atrium.lib.uoguelph.ca/xmlui/handle/10214/7293>.

The handbook offers an introduction to knowledge transfer and exchange (KTE), and includes methods for knowledge synthesis, transfer, dissemination, exchange, application and evaluation. It provides examples and practical exercises related to agri-food public health policy, making it particularly useful and accessible to the sector.



## Path to Impact

### How KTT Can Support Evidence-Based Agri-Food Public Health Policy Development

- **Identify knowledge gap.** The researchers found that the context for this work was right: policy-makers in government identified a need for more evidence-based decisions.
- **Summarize literature.** The project team reviewed the literature and summarized the key principles, methods and practices for successful KTT (“how to ensure that relevant and credible research is generated and utilized to inform policy- and decision-making”).
- **Collect feedback from stakeholders.** The researchers conducted focus groups and in-depth interviews with stakeholders in the agri-food public health sector to provide detailed information about needs, gaps and opportunities.
- **Design product to meet specific needs.** The literature review, focus groups and interviews with stakeholders informed the development of the handbook. The handbook contains easily accessible tools and guidance for policy-makers and researchers undertaking science-to-policy work.
- **Promote via outreach workshop.** The project team held an interactive workshop with key science-to-

policy stakeholders to promote uptake of the handbook and knowledge exchange among practitioners. A diverse group of 75 international, national and provincial science-to-policy professionals attended the workshop.



## Positive Impacts

### Increased Capacity for Evidence-Based Policy

The handbook and workshop provided researchers with tools to more effectively communicate their work to policy professionals. The project provided in-person training and reference materials for science-to-policy professionals, building capacity for evidence-based policy and decision-making.

“[Science-to-policy work] was already something that was gaining traction... so a lot of our government stakeholders were really keen on this and it coincided with more activity and push towards getting more value out of research, and being more evidence-based in decision-[making].” **Ian Young (post-doctoral researcher on the project)**

### A Valuable Contribution to the KTT Literature

The handbook and the accompanying academic papers make a valuable and timely contribution to the KTT literature. These publications provided other agri-food researchers who wanted to influence policy with guidance on how to develop

products and original research in a format that is useful to policy-makers.

## Highlighting Best Practices in KTT for Agri-Food and Rural Research

**Best Practice**

**1**

**Knowing and targeting influencers**

This project worked well because the researchers took time to understand influential members of their targeted group of science-to-policy professionals through interviews and focus groups. These perspectives directly shaped the crafting of the handbook for this audience. By targeting this stakeholder group, the researchers were able to create a product that supports the adoption of agri-food science in policy-making.

**Best Practice**

**2**

**Building a project team with a broad network**

The project team was built to include the Public Health Agency of Canada, a government organization that had access to the targeted stakeholders. The team was able to leverage these networks to market the handbook and to recruit science-to-policy professionals at various levels of government to the capacity development workshop.

**Title:** Bridging the Gap Between Science and Policy in the Agri-Food Sector through Knowledge Synthesis and Translation (KST) Support Tools

**Principal investigator:** Prof. Scott McEwen (University of Guelph)

**Date:** 2011-2013

**Keywords:** science-to-policy, KTT tools, KTT resources, agri-food public health

**Selected project team and partners:** Ian Young and Mai Pham (University of Guelph); Andrijana Rajić and team at the Public Health Agency of Canada.

**Program ID:** KTT Funding Program 299549

This research was supported by the KTT program, which received funding from Growing Forward 2, a federal, provincial and territorial initiative, and from the Ontario Agri-Food Innovation Alliance (previously the OMAFRA-U of G Partnership). Additional funding was provided by Public Health Ontario.

## About this report

The Ontario Agri-Food Innovation Alliance is committed to “getting science off the shelf” to support a thriving agri-food sector and vibrant rural communities. This series of reports highlights the impact of research funded through the Alliance and illustrates best practices for enhancing research impact through

knowledge translation and transfer (KTT). Many thanks to Prof. Scott McEwen (University of Guelph) and Ian Young (former post-doctoral researcher and currently professor at Ryerson University) for participating in interviews about the impacts of this project.



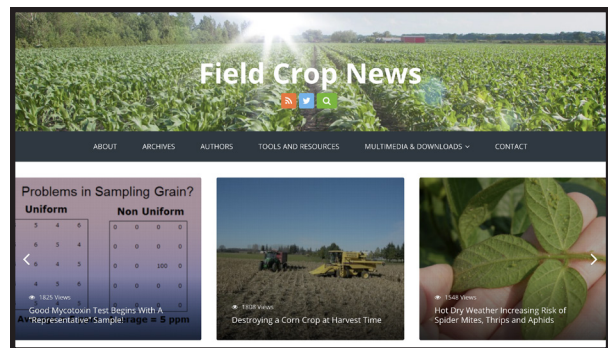
# Delivering expert advice and problem-solving resources to field crop producers

## Summary

Project partners developed the website and resource archive [www.fieldcropnews.com](http://www.fieldcropnews.com) to assist OMAFRA extension staff and the University of Guelph in delivering expert advice to field crop producers as needed and in season. In six years, the site has reached 100,000+ page views and continues to grow. This advice helps producers understand and respond to time-sensitive issues, including the effect of weather on crops, pests, and soil fertility. The website's archive of relevant research allows staff to respond to information requests quickly and effectively, and can also be accessed directly by producers and other stakeholders.

## Knowledge Translated and Transferred (KTT)

Through the development of the online archive, this project provided a way to access, update and deliver research and information for field crop stakeholders in a time-sensitive (“just-in time”) way.



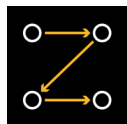
## Website providing up-to-date knowledge resources has reached 100,000+ views

This resource supports the more than 8.5 million acres of field crops in production in Ontario. Field crop producers often urgently need access to relevant information. Now in its seventh year, the site **[www.fieldcropnews.com](http://www.fieldcropnews.com)** provides an on-line archive and delivery system for timely field crop production information.

The site contains research resources, tools and experiential knowledge materials to assist producers and other stakeholders. This resource also functions as a forum where producers, researchers and industry personnel can share information and ideas. This site was designed to be accessible and open to revision by registered users in real time. 2,600 visitors were logged during the first month of operation, with 25,700 visitors by the end of the first year. During peak in-season periods, up to 10,000 visitors are logged monthly.

The website also functions as a forum for producers, researchers and industry personnel to share information and ideas.

“I think that diversity [of ways to access resources] is critical, and knowing we can address different levels on the spectrum [of audiences]. This site obviously helps farmers directly, but we are also thinking a lot of the actual advisers [and] also people who work for different companies or other employees of the ministry.” Prof. François Tardif, University of Guelph



## Path to Impact

### How KTT Can Enhance and Support Production Systems for Field Crop Farmers in Ontario

- **Target FAQs with available evidence and resources.** Collaborators on this project gathered available evidence and resources that would help OMAFRA to answer commonly asked questions from field crop producers.
- **Translate content for different audiences.** The project team used professional videographers to create video reports on 10 OMAFRA-University of Guelph research projects related to field crop production, and hired professional writers to create newsletters, articles for other publications and information and fact sheets for each

of the University of Guelph field crop production research projects. The project team worked with an IT vendor to create a database to store and deliver online multimedia content, with options for user-generated content submissions and social media connections.

- **Make a communications plan.** Team members developed a marketing and communications plan to maximize awareness and uptake of these KTT products, as well as new knowledge produced by OMAFRA-U of G field crop production research projects.
- **Plan for longevity.** Due to site popularity among government, non-profit and field crop industry users, sustainability and support has not been an issue. The OMAFRA crop technology team has covered day-to-day site responsibility and most content development, and the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association supported a website refresh.



## Positive Impacts

### Economic Benefit From an Online Resource Website

This site creates economic benefit by bringing high-quality research evidence to producers. Producers use the site as a primary source when issues arise that could impact their farm businesses. The

number of visitors is continuing to grow at a significant rate, demonstrating how useful this site is to the community.

## Highlighting Best Practices in KTT for Agri-Food and Rural Research

### Best Practice **1**

#### Plan for the entire project process (and beyond)

This project was a success because it was very well-planned. The overall project plan was supplemented by a specific marketing and communications plan designed to raise awareness about the site, connect with site users and learn about user experiences. By building in time for changes and welcoming feedback, the site team was able to optimize user experiences and meet the needs of producers, the OMAFRA crop technology team and U of G faculty.

“We had a vision—let’s build something—and we worked with a vendor, we put it out there and then said now we are open to constructive feedback. We could see early on how people were using the site, and for the first two years we just got feedback and changed it to make things easier and more user friendly.” **Mike Cowbrough, crop technology team, OMAFRA**

### Best Practice **2**

#### Maintain fresh and relevant content for a variety of audiences

Content development for resource websites requires time and investment in capacity. By starting with professional support for content creation, encouraging peer-to-peer collaboration in the site forums and working to develop capacity among new crop technology team members in OMAFRA, the site administrators have found ways to maintain fresh and relevant content.

**Title:** Enhancing the KTT of Field Crop Production Information to Ontario Growers.

**Principal investigator:** Prof. François Tardif (University of Guelph)

**Date:** 2010-2013

**Keywords:** agronomy, field crop, production, profit maximization, research archive, website

**Selected project team and partners:** Mike Cowbrough of the Agriculture Development Branch at OMAFRA. Stakeholders included the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association, the Innovative Farmers Association of Ontario, other government departments and private companies.

**Program ID:** KTT Funding Program 299512

This research was supported by the KTT program, which received funding from Growing Forward 2, a federal, provincial and territorial initiative, and from the Ontario Agri-Food Innovation Alliance (previously the OMAFRA-U of G Partnership).



## About this report

The Ontario Agri-Food Innovation Alliance is committed to “getting science off the shelf” to support a thriving agri-food sector and vibrant rural communities. This series of reports highlights the impact of research funded through the Alliance and illustrates

best practices for enhancing research impact through knowledge translation and transfer (KTT). Many thanks to Prof. François Tardif (University of Guelph) and Mike Cowbrough (OMAFRA) for participating in interviews about the impacts of this project.