



Ontario Agri-Food Education Inc.  
L'Éducation agro-alimentaire de l'Ontario, inc.

May 15, 2012

**Ontario Agri-Food Education Inc. (OAFE) receives funding to connect students with emerging agriculture careers and innovations**

**MILTON, ON** - Ontario Agri-Food Education Inc. (OAFE) is pleased to announce the Agricultural Adaptation Council (AAC) through the Canadian Agricultural Adaptation Program (CAAP) is providing \$210,000 of funding in support of a two year project designed to expose students to emerging agriculture careers and innovations. This project uses a collaborative approach that will outreach to both the agri-business sector to uncover their needs and predicted skill set shortages, and to high school students, exposing them to a variety of agricultural career opportunities.

A recent Conference Board of Canada study reported that the food sector is now Canada's largest manufacturing industry (by sales) and provides approximately 13 per cent of employment in this country. To support the full economic impact of this growing sector, the Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council (CAHRC) also predicts that Canada will need to fill a job skill set shortage of about 50,000 in the next few years.

While the agriculture sector has a career skill set shortage, education in Ontario has a skilled worker overage, with an estimated 80 per cent of those currently graduating from Faculties of Education unable to obtain full time employment for five years.

A key focus of this project will be the development of a collaborative approach that connects the agri-business sector to the educational sector in an attempt to develop a cutting edge program that brings career information to students. Working together they will deliver programs and resources to students that showcase agricultural innovation and technologies as they relate to emerging agri-business career opportunities.

New and creative educational resources and tools, including videos and other web-based materials, will be created to expose students to the vast array of new and innovative career opportunities in the agriculture and food sector.

A pilot program this fall will use existing agriculture events and facilities as "classrooms" to showcase the variety of emerging career opportunities to students, having them learn first-hand through face to face interactions with local agri-business representatives.

"The funding for this new initiative supports the very definition of research and innovation as OAFE dialogues with emerging agri-businesses to showcase their predicted skill set shortages, and then produces innovative career resources to entice tomorrow's graduates to fill these job gaps," commented Colleen Smith, OAFE Executive Director.

Long-term, this project will provide a network of knowledgeable individuals able to deliver a number of leading edge activities through schools to students, while at the same time, increasing the number of students/youth exposed to and connected with local agri-businesses.

Ontario Agri-Food Education Inc. is a not for profit, registered charity dedicated to enhancing the learning experiences of students by providing high quality, objective, and relevant agriculture and food related learning materials and services for Ontario educators.

Investment in this project has been provided by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada through the Canadian Agricultural Adaptation Program (CAAP). In Ontario, this program is delivered by the Agricultural Adaptation Council.



Agriculture and  
Agri-Food Canada

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