

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Dr. Rob Gordon, OAC Dean to Address Ridgetown's 57<sup>th</sup> Graduating Class**

#### **May 21, Ridgetown:**

The 57<sup>th</sup> annual Spring Convocation at the University of Guelph's Ridgetown Campus will be held on Friday, May 29. Many friends and family members will be guests as 153 students graduating from diploma and certificate programs in Agriculture, Horticulture, Environmental Management, Veterinary Technology and Veterinary Medical Office Administration.

"I am always excited to help celebrate the achievements of our students with family, friends, staff and donors," says Campus Director, Dr. Art Schaafsma. "We want our graduates to recognize this special day as simply the next step towards life-long learning."

The guest speaker for graduation will be Dr. Rob Gordon, Dean of the Ontario Agriculture College (OAC). Dr. Gordon became the new Dean of OAC one year ago, and was recently recognized for his individual leadership abilities by his former colleagues at Nova Scotia Agriculture College. He is a visionary leader and he welcomes the distinctive task of addressing OAC's Ridgetown graduating class.

The ceremony will begin at 2:00 p.m. in the Rudy H. Brown Rural Development Centre. The Class of 2009 has selected Nikki Leyser, an Agriculture Diploma student from Stratford, as the valedictorian. Nikki comes from a large family who operate a dairy farm and at this time her career interests are focused on the activities of the home dairy farm.

In addition to receiving a diploma or certificate, many deserving students will receive special awards for academic proficiency and outstanding leadership. "We are extremely thankful for the broad community of committed friends and businesses that will support our awards program financially this year, particularly in these challenging economic times," says Schaafsma. This year, over \$20,000 in cash and gifts will be awarded.

The OAC academic programs offered at Ridgetown Campus provide students with the opportunity to learn from knowledgeable professors and lecturers, and develop important skills needed to begin their careers in agriculture, food, horticulture, environmental and veterinary sciences.

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**Below: Ms. Nikki Leyser, Agriculture Diploma Program, and 2009 Class Valedictorian**

