

MEDIA RELEASE

200+ Ridgetown Campus Graduates to Walk Across Stage and Straight into Jobs

May 30, 2013: RIDGETOWN - The 61st Spring Convocation at the University of Guelph's Ridgetown Campus, as part of the Ontario Agricultural College, will be held on Friday, May 31, 2013 with local alumnus, Gary Paling, Class of 1974 as the graduation speaker.

The 231 graduates from diploma or certificate programs in Agriculture, Horticulture, Environmental Management, Veterinary Technology, Performance Horse Handler, and Veterinary Office Administration will be gathering in the Rudy H. Brown Rural Development Centre to celebrate with family, classmates and friends.

Graduates finishing the Agriculture Diploma program have several opportunities for employment and many will go to work either in agribusiness or at their family farm business. Students in several other academic programs finish their last academic semester with an industry work placement that very often leads to their first industry job. The campus typically has more job postings than students to fill them; Ridgetown graduates are fortunate.

"I'm thrilled for the opportunity to personally congratulate Ridgetown Campus' graduating students and am even more excited about the contributions they will make to the communities in which they will live and work," said Rob Gordon, Dean of the Ontario Agricultural College. "Their contributions are sure to make for a strong and vital future for the agriculture and agri-food sector here in Ontario and around the world."

"I see graduation day as a milestone celebration as these individuals move from students to alumni, and begin to make their mark wherever they may be headed," stated Ken McEwan, Campus Director.

The Class of 2013 has much to celebrate, and Eric Dietrich of Lucan, Ontario has been selected by his classmates to deliver the valedictorian address. Dietrich is an Agriculture Diploma graduate now working for the summer on his family's 3,000 acre cash-crop farm operation. This fall, Dietrich plans to further his agribusiness studies in western Canada and then return home to full-time farming at the family operation.

Gary Paling, a Farm Credit Canada District Director for Chatham-Kent, Essex and Lambton counties, and class of 1974 alumnus will be addressing the graduates. Paling is eager to address the potential in today's youth as leaders in agriculture and agri-food. Paling is also a keen supporter of the campus as the Vice-Chair and Alumni Relations Lead for the Ridgetown Campus Agri-Food Foundation.

Prior to the 1:45 p.m. student procession and convocation ceremonies, a special Donor Appreciation Luncheon will be hosted to celebrate the on-going support of graduation award donors. Awards for academic proficiency and student leadership will be presented to a number of graduates. "We are very fortunate to have the financial support from our alumni, community friends and businesses, many that have supported the campus for five or six decades," says McEwan. "This year, over \$24,775.00 in cash and gifts will be awarded to deserving students."

Established in 1874, OAC is Canada's largest and most comprehensive institution for teaching, research and extension service in food, agriculture, communities and the environment. The OAC academic programs offered at Ridgetown

Campus provide students with valuable experiential learning opportunities and the chance to learn from world class researchers, professors and lecturers, developing important career and life skills.

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