



Innovation and Resiliency

This document highlights some of our speakers, panelists, and moderators.

**Ashlee Cooper**

Program Advisor, City of Guelph

Ashlee worked for many years in the non-profit sector where she developed and delivered a broad spectrum of programs to address complex local food issues. Ashlee is a participatory design and community engagement specialist bringing over 10 years of commitment to the betterment of the food system.

**Ashley Brockelbank**

Tourism Officer, Perth County

Ashley has been working in economic development and tourism since 2018. She is passionate about creative marketing and loves devising new and unique ways to promote her rural region.

**Brandon Hebor**

Co-founder, Boreal Greens Co.

Brandon Hebor is an internationally recognized ag-tech entrepreneur and innovator having designed, developed and deployed Toronto's first Vertical Aquaponic Farm. Brandon is the co-founder of Boreal Greens Co., a vertical farm in Markham.

**Brent Downey**

Founder, Urban Stalk

Brent has grown Urban Stalk to be a recognized Pan-Canadian Research Partner to increase food security while ensuring a net positive environmental impact. Brent's vision for Urban Stalk is to become the leading ag-tech business providing high nutritional impact foods equitably for all communities across Canada and the U.S.

**Brett Wills**

CEO, Green Enterprise Inc.

Brett Wills spends a majority of his time helping organizations across Canada drive organizational performance while simultaneously improving environmental and social performance. Brett's work in the agri-processing industry includes working with over 100 food processors from small start-ups to large multi-nationals.

**Chris Dudley**

Director of Entrepreneurship, Seneca College

Chris has over 35+ years of combined corporate business, entrepreneurship and academic experience. In 2014, Chris took on the role of founding Director of Seneca HELIX - Seneca's on-campus incubator.

**Collin Dobell**

Executive Director, Ontario Water Center

Colin Dobell has been Executive Director of the Ontario Water Centre (OWC) for seven years. OWC is a charity with a mission to engage young people in water-wise connection to the land, through arts, science, and technology.

**Craig Youdale**

Dean, Canadian Food and Wine Institute Niagara College

As Dean, Craig has overseen the launching of programs in Baking Pastry, Culinary Innovation and Food Technology, Brew Master and Brewery Operations Management, and most recently the new Artisan Distilling program.

**David Thompson**

Manager, Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Center

David Thompson is the Manager of the Rural Agri-Innovation Network, aiming to build a more resilient agri-food sector in Algoma through innovative research and agri-food development projects.

**Drew Crinklaw**

Policy Advisor, OMAFRA

Drew's work focuses on various land use planning initiatives that influence the agri-food sector. He studied at the University of Guelph where he obtained an undergraduate degree in Geography and a Masters in Rural Planning and Development.

**Glen Smyth**

CEO, Apple Flats Foods

Glen aims to develop crabapple as a staple Canadian flavor. As of today, Apple Flats Foods is the only crabapple-focused company in North America. His mission aims to preserve a particular species of crabapple from extinction.

**Helma Geerts**

Policy Advisor, OMAFRA

Helma's focus is on provincial policy and guidance to protect farmland and encourage farm viability. Her work includes guidance and advice on implementation of the Agricultural System and diversified uses in prime agricultural areas.

**Janet Horner**

Executive Director, Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance

Janet's extensive network and lived experience as partner of a field crop farm in Dufferin County makes her an excellent advocate for agriculture and food production. Janet also sits as a Commissioner on the Niagara Escarpment Commission.

**Janice Bartley**

Founder, Foodpreneur

Janice works with community-based organizations that support women, food entrepreneurs and newcomers. She is a recent recipient of the Black Entrepreneurship Fund that provides advisory led paths to start and scale black food entrepreneurs.

**Jocelyn Beatty**

Rural Planner, OMAFRA

Jocelyn provides support in interpreting and implementing provincial policies relating to prime agricultural areas, covering both the Northwest and Central East regions of Ontario. She developed research projects on food insecurity in small communities as well as Indigenous participation in collaborative land use planning.

**Judy Chang**

Co-Founder, York Region Food Accelerator

Judy Chang is the co-founder of the York Region Food and Beverage Accelerator at York University, the first regional Food Accelerator in Ontario. They support startups in the food industry to access valuable knowledge, connect with mentorship and key players in the industry.

**Justine Dainard**

Project Manager, County of Wellington Smart Cities Office

Justine is the lead for the County of Wellington's Regenerative Agriculture pilot. She is also an advocate for improved rural broadband connectivity. An Archaeologist and Librarian by training, Justine continues to be excited by the stories soil has to tell.

**Karina Shnaiderman**

Committee Member, YFRN

Karina is passionate about combining academic innovation with on-the-ground field work to create long-term and sustainable changes within the agricultural sector. Karina's past research projects include looking at mitigating barriers to entry for new agrarians.

**Kelly Maloney**

Economic Development Officer, City of Kawartha Lakes

Kelly Maloney works with the community towards achieving a vibrant and growing agri-food economy. Her work touches a variety of subjects including agriculture and food policy development, business and export development, and food processing attraction and expansion.

**Ken Lamb**

Member, Trillium Lamb Inc.

Ken runs a large commercial multi-generational sheep farm. Part of that business led to being a founding member of Trillium Lamb Inc. an organization of progressive, commercially minded Ontario lamb producers.

**Kevin Jakiela**

Co-Founder, Just Vertical

Just Vertical is a way for urban consumers without outdoor space to bring the healthy, fresh, and unique tastes of a backyard garden into their home with our vertical growing system that doubles as living art. Kevin helped grow Just Vertical from an idea stage to a multimillion-dollar valuation.

**Mark Josephs**

President, Kisko

Mark's parents started the company that successfully launched the iconic Jamaican brand Kisko Pops throughout Canada. Today Kisko is the largest freeze pop manufacturer in Canada.

**Michelle Sundborg**

Founder, The Little Red Bake Shop

Michelle is the owner and baker at The Little Red Bake Shop, a cookie subscription and cookie gift box business. Her mission is to help her customers celebrate everyday with a delicious treat.

**Narek Nersisyan**

Sales & Marketing Head, Holland Marsh Wineries

From day one, the Nersisyan family philosophy has been to manage the vineyard with the utmost respect for the surrounding ecosystem. After numerous years of working within multinational companies in the wine and spirits industry, it was time for him to come home to his true calling at Holland Marsh Wineries.

**Pam Duesling**

General Manager, County of Brant

Pam understands the challenges and opportunities of both rural economic perseverance and agricultural land use planning through her work. Pam is currently working with Dr. Wayne Caldwell on agricultural land preservation and on-farm diversification projects.

**Sean Columbus**

Economic Development Officer, Town of Georgina

Sean works on a number of initiatives that grow the existing agricultural sector, attract investment, and also provide expertise on a number of Agri-Tourism projects. Sean is always looking for new ways to advance Economic Development & Tourism within his role to create a more vibrant and sustainable economy.

**Tamara Fernandez**

Director, OMAFRA

Tamara is the Director of the Agri-Food Labor Management Branch in the COVID Agri-Food Secretariat at the OMAFRA. She has worked for over 20 years in the agri-food sector in industry, academia, and provincial and federal levels of government.

**Trissia Mellor**

Manager, Northumberland County

Trissia Mellor develops partnerships to support numerous initiatives showcasing agriculture's local economic contribution. Trissia was the driver for the Province's first Regional Local Food BR+E which catalyzed the building of a \$2.5M municipally-owned-and-operated food processing facility.