



Creating Opportunities for Ontario's Agri-food Sector, with the Aging Population in Mind

The Schlegel-UW Research Institute for Aging's new Agri-food for Healthy Aging program has partnered with the Guelph Food Technology Centre's FANbase™ Ontario to highlight opportunities for Ontario's food innovation sector to respond to the increasing aging population and the nutritional needs of older adults.

Guelph, ON (August 2009) – [Agri-food for Healthy Aging](#) (A-HA) has joined forces with [FANbase™ Ontario](#) (Ontario Functional Food, Agriculture and Natural Health Product Database) to shed some light on nutrition research in older adults, and opportunities the results present for Ontario's Functional Food and Natural Health Product (FFNHP) sector.

The result of this collaboration will be a dynamic, half-day seminar as part of the Guelph Food Technology Centre's (GFTC) Innovation Breakfast Series on October 28, 2009 at the Cutten Club in Guelph, Ontario. The event entitled, **Agri-food for Healthy Aging: Opportunities for Ontario's FFNHP Sector**, will include speakers from Canada Bread, the University of Guelph, the University of Waterloo, RBJ Schlegel Holdings Inc. and the GFTC.

Food and nutrition researchers, product developers and food service experts will present needs and opportunities related to eating, functional ingredients and more, as they are of importance to older adult consumers. Attendees will also learn how a growing population of older adults affects ingredient choice, processing, packaging and marketing of food.

Mike Sharratt, Executive Director of the Schlegel-UW Research Institute for Aging (RIA) says: "This [event] is an excellent opportunity for us to provide insight into current A-HA research and the practical application of the results, for both older adults and for Ontario's agri-food industry." while seniors may face various physical or cognitive challenges, Sharratt adds, "Everyone has to eat, which is why it is important to conduct research and have industry interested in this market."

The Agri-food for Healthy Aging (A-HA) initiative is a collaborative research group created through the efforts of the RIA, MaRS Landing, University of Waterloo, and University of Guelph. A-HA's core researchers hold expertise in the areas of relevance to an aging population including applied nutrition & dietetics, nutritional sciences, food science and human health. By exploring linkages between agriculture, food, nutrition and mealtime environment, A-HA aims to present innovative opportunities to improve health and well-being of older adults.

Barb Dillingham, Senior Project Manager of *FANbase™ Ontario* and Functional Food & Natural Health Product (FFNHP) Sector Specialist of the GFTC, comments: "Specific health conditions, anti-aging, convenience, taste and mealtime environments are all important to our aging family members and consumers alike, and this event is an opportunity for nutrition researchers and the food industry to meet together to address the needs of older adults in these areas."

FANbase Ontario is an initiative at the GFTC that is connecting the functional food and natural health product sector in the province. It is leveraged to increase visibility of the provinces FFNHP sector and to increase opportunities for its stakeholders throughout the value chain. FANbase activities include facilitation of networking and information sharing as well as development of FFNHP-targeted GFTC services to meet the needs and foster growth of the FFNHP sector.

"Agri-food is an important economic sector for the entire province. Fostering strong relationships between research and business will give the Toronto Region a strategic advantage as we continue to develop and grow the agri-food cluster," said Dr. Karen Sievwright, Director of Research, Toronto Region Research Alliance (TRRA) - one of the Breakfast's sponsors.

TRRA is a public-private partnership that focuses on research-intensive investment attraction and leveraging the economic advantages of the region's extraordinary research strengths. TRRA serves the broader Toronto Region, embracing Durham, Guelph, Halton, Hamilton, Peel, Toronto, Waterloo, Wellington and York regions.

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