

CAPI awards "Advancing a National Dialogue" scholarships

OTTAWA, February 12, 2013 — The Canadian Agri-Food Policy Institute (CAPI), with the support of Farm Credit Canada (FCC), is pleased to announce the three winners of the 2011-2012 graduate students awards program, "Advancing a National Dialogue."

The winners of the program are Melanie Sommerville (first place), Lauraine Wagter-Lesperance (second place), and Drew Davidson (third place). The winners are awarded scholarships in the amount of \$10,000 for first place, \$5,000 for second place, and \$5,000 for third place.

The students were tasked with addressing the question: "How can Canadian agri-food players produce more with less?" Students were urged to consider how players in the agri-food sector could work together and with other key stakeholders to better manage the use of natural resources (e.g., water) and minimize impacts on the environment. They were also asked to consider how these players can anticipate and meet evolving global food demands — and consumer expectations — while ensuring profitability. Students were also invited to offer practical operational ideas, including how governments could support these transitions. The student papers are posted on CAPI's website.

"We're delighted that these graduate students have offered their views about creating value in the agri-food sector," said David McInnes, President and CEO of CAPI. "We need to produce more with less. We need to generate a national dialogue on how best to do so, thanks in part to these passionate, engaged students."

Melanie Sommerville is a doctoral student in Human Geography at the University of British Columbia. Her research interests include the globalization of agro-food systems and the politics of global food security. Sommerville's dissertation research explores the geopolitical dimensions of large-scale investments in farmland through case studies on the Canadian Prairies and overseas.

"My question about these new investment vehicles is whether the increased productivity they may generate could be offset by public interest losses with respect to other public services," said Sommerville while commenting on her paper.

The second place winner, Lauraine Wagter-Lesperance, is a doctoral student in Immunogenetics in the Department of Pathobiology at the University of Guelph. "My response to the question asked of participants", said Wagter-Lesperance, "was that agri-food players could definitely produce more with less. They can do this by anticipating and meeting evolving global food demands and consumer expectations, while maintaining a profitable agri-food sector." Wagter-



▶ **1st place:**

[Melanie Sommerville](#)

▶ **2nd place:**

[Lauraine Wagter-Lesperance](#)

▶ **3rd place:**

[Drew Davidson](#)

Lesperance' recent research has included evaluation technology to improve the health and food quality of dairy cattle through the reduction of antibiotics and improved resistance to diseases like mastitis.

Drew Davidson, the third place scholarship recipient, is doctoral student in Chemical Engineering (Nanotechnology) at the University of Waterloo. His research interests include new materials for controlled release of agrochemicals. When asked what motivated him to prepare his paper, Davidson said, "The sum of the effects of inefficient agrochemical use is a major problem that severely impacts both the cost and sustainability of agriculture. I strongly believe," added Davidson, "that reducing loss of agrochemicals has the potential for immense cost savings and sustainability increases for large scale agriculture."

Concluded in 2012, the Advancing a National Dialogue awards program was made available to nine graduate students over a three-year period and was supported by Farm Credit Canada.

About CAPI

The Canadian Agri-Food Policy Institute (CAPI) is an independent, unbiased policy forum that is dedicated to the success of Canada's agriculture and agri-food sector. CAPI is a catalyst. It identifies emerging issues, promotes dialogue and advances alternative solutions to issues with stakeholders across the diverse agriculture and agri-food value chain, and among academia, research institutes, governments and other sectors in Canada. Based in Ottawa, CAPI was established as a not-for-profit corporation in 2004 by the federal government and is guided by a diverse Board of Directors and an Advisory Committee [www.capi-icpa.ca].

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About FCC

As Canada's leading agriculture lender, FCC is advancing the business of agriculture. With a healthy portfolio of more than \$24 billion and 20 consecutive years of portfolio growth, FCC is strong and stable – committed to serving the industry through all cycles. FCC provides financing, insurance, software, learning programs and other business services to producers, agribusinesses and agri-food operations. FCC employees are passionate about agriculture and committed to the success of customers and the industry. For more information, visit www.fcc.ca. Follow FCC on twitter [@FCCagriculture](https://twitter.com/FCCagriculture).

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