

Discovery and Dialogue Meeting: Animal Health and Welfare

October 11, 2019

Okay, so we're online and we're live with the mic. Um, so I'll try to speak loudly so that it gets captured appropriately.

So, for those of you that don't know me... So I recognize a number of faces in this room but a number of you, I don't. So, I look forward to getting to know a number of you better over the next year. I've been with OMAFRA now just over two and a half years. I'm the manager of research program coordination and the research and innovation branch. Um, my responsibilities are to, um, oversee the coordination on the OMAFRA side for the research, uh, schedule of the Agreement which includes this research call. Um, also, we lead the open research programming for OMAFRA out of my group and that includes the food safety call that you may be familiar with as well as the previously known, New Directions program.

Um, we have my team here today as well as the IKM unit here today, Os Zachariah sends his regrets, he's on vacation. He manages the information knowledge management group which is the KTT strategy and elements for the OMAFRA Ministry.

So, the purpose of, um, this portion of the meeting today is really the engagement, it's just the opportunity to make introductions with new researchers at the University of Guelph and a number of significant staff changes at OMAFRA to get together and talk research priorities, research proposals. What do we need from the research community to solve the Ministry's problems as well as meeting some of our needs in the Ministry.

So, briefly, I'm just going to give you a quick overview of the research agenda, um, and then we'll dive right into the priorities and questions and break out into our introductions and discussions.

So, so, we hope today that you're going to gain further insight into our new, uh, Ministry-wide research agenda which does apply to our research programming under the University of Guelph Alliance Agreement as well as our open research programming, um, so Tier II's. It also aligns for our Canadian agricultural partnership programming as well.

So, our goal here today is to give you, provide you an overview on that but also to really just get into the research priority questions for today's theme. And so today is basically animal production, animal health and welfare, as well as some food safety that has been incorporated into this call.

So, our research agenda at a glance, so this slide is familiar, Stacy had it up on her Townhall presentation and it's just showing you that research is an integral support to the agri-food sector at the Ministry, it's also an integral support to our rural communities and our core business areas, that's why this new research agenda has been aligned underneath the Ministry's three core businesses, um, protection and assurance, stewardship, and economic development.

Each year OMAFRA invests in the agri-food research and innovation and it's since supported development of new products, agricultural advancements, and of course, economic growth. As part of our continuous improvement, uh, motto, if you will, um, improvement of our research programming has

been a key focus since the establishment of the new research agreement with the University. So, for the last two years, we've been reviewing our policies, programs, processes, our research management system and have made significant changes to all of those in the last two years and we're not done yet. We still have a number of initiatives that we need to move through continuous improvement.

So, in our, in this continuous improvement theme, we undertook a review and consultation of the actual research needs of our stakeholders, industry and the Ministry. Um, that, so we did include a lot of partners in the upfront engagement over 800 stakeholders were involved in our review of our tech, uh, tech transfer review which included, in part, this Agreement and this program. So, we're now implementing and, uh, have enhanced a more flexible research priority setting process and this is to maximize our research investments that really do support the sector development as well as economic growth.

This new Ministry wide integrated approach aligns our research priorities underneath the core businesses and we've identified, moved away from the seven historical themes into, uh, ten themes to further focus, um, the research problem or the need that we're trying to achieve and to make very clear, the research question, uh, or the statement underneath that focused area of what we're looking for, where we hope that your proposal will put forward a really great solution, uh, on how to meet that goal.

Um, so, many of the research themes, previously, are still relevant but they were established quite a long time ago so this is just a modernization and a re-focusing of the Ministry's current needs as well as industry and government, in general.

Um, okay, so, our, again, Stacy had indicated the Tier I call has been launched. We have arranged in 10 priorities, I have already spoken to, I think, all of this. Just again, the Ministry has provided, um, provided these documents and they are all available on the Ministry's, uh, sorry, the University of Guelph's research page. So, the research priority document and so on, is there. I won't go over that cause you have the link and, um, and Stacy covered that in detail.

So, this is the look of the new document. So, um, I just want to show, uh, first of all, get a sense of how many people have had the opportunity to go in the document and actually read through it from beginning to end here. Okay, so good, that gives me a good sense then on how much detail to talk about as well. Um, again, the, the, we've aligned everything under the three core businesses so when you open up the document, it's broken into the three core businesses: protection and assurance, stewardship, and economic development and then the new ten focus priority areas are then under their respective core business. So, this session today is focusing on animal health and welfare and food safety and so on. Animal health and welfare would find themselves under the protection and assurance section, um, but there are also questions throughout the document as Stacy indicated that are also relevant to animal health and welfare. Competitive production systems that may cross with animal health and welfare and so on, so it is really critically important that you read the questions in the appendix, to Stacy's point earlier, so that you can see the questions that are relevant to you as your researcher for your area of expertise and interest and then figure out, um, what proposal you're putting forward and what, then, um, focus priority area and core business it's going to align under. And the reason you need to know that is because, as Stacy showed you with the RMS application, you need to know what focus area you're putting your application under so it gets put to the right panel review table.

So, for this session, we've customized the slide deck, um, into those goals and focus areas that are relevant for your, your research areas here. So we've got it divided into, uh, competitive production systems, under economic development here and you'll see on the slide there, we've just really taken the, the wording verbatim out of the research priority document so I won't read it off to you but it is important to note that in previous calls where research priority focus, um, focusing on, so, creative, cost-effective products or increasing effectiveness in livestock production would have fit under animal production systems. These kind of research needs are now reflected in the competitive production systems which has cross-sector needs, so some of them being around livestock. So, this is now, we're getting into that cross theme, uh, concept.

Protection and assurance, animal health and welfare. So, for research priorities, you'd likely, have likely, originally found under emergency management that are related to livestock, you're likely now to find those kind of research needs under animal health and welfare. So, there's no longer an emergency management, uh, separate table any longer, it's now integrating that into, into this new category and that's where you'll find those.

Um, so, the next one is the food safety and a reminder that other food safety questions, the Ministry has identified underneath the Ministry's research agenda do exist; however, the ones that were appropriate for the University of Guelph call are in this section and their covered here. We are currently reviewing the other food safety research questions and we are looking at reviewing our open research program so stay tuned, uh, the best way to keep abreast of the open research program and potential calls is obviously through the constant contact registration through the research management system so that you'll be receiving an email when the call is launched. So, for open research call, the Ministry's reviewing that presently and we'll get back to you soon on that one.

Okay, um, as Stacy indicated, there's a lot of people here to help you. It's a new year with a new program so we want to make sure you have a lot of people that you can reach out to and their, and their email addresses as well as their phone numbers. They can be found on our contact list, um, they're all here for you. How we've arranged it this year, is if you have a question about the research priorities, funnel them into the Research and Innovation Branch first, which is the appropriate contact here and then they will have a conversation with you about the question. If you're looking to speak with a specialist, there's been, again, a number of staff changes in the Ministry so we want to help engage you with the right specialist, um, so that's why that list is there. So, we're going to act as the first, first touch point or the conduit for your inquiries with respect to the priorities, the fit, that sort of question and then my team and Oswald's team will then help you reach out to the right Ministry folks. Um, we have not included the Director champions on our contact list as of yet. Um, you may be aware that there's been some changes to our senior executive leadership in the Ministry. Um, we're unfortunately losing a number of our wonderful Directors, uh, to retirement, um, and a few are moving on to other opportunities. So, we will update that list in the next week and get that up to you on the website as well. Um, but, I would like to take this opportunity to highlight for you that Anette Anderson, our longstanding director champion for animal production systems as well as a number of other, uh, portfolios has announced her retirement with the Ministry so we're enjoying as much as we can of Anette right now and taking all her knowledge and experience before she goes off to a new chapter and other things. So, we want to thank you, Anette, for all your support and leadership, it's been a real pleasure.

So, what I want to do now, is, um, before we move into the four groups that we think, we feel are appropriate based on the enrolment for today's session, I want to just highlight again for you, the need to read the question. Going from the question in the priorities document, looking to see where we've categorized that underneath the focus area and the research priority, take note of that so that when you go into the RMS, you're able to, um, put it into the correct, uh, correct bin, if you will, for panel review.

Stacy Favrin: Cass, I forgot to mention about there being focused areas that have no questions... can you maybe mention that just so it doesn't cause confusion?

Cass: Oh okay, so, in the priorities document, obviously we've got a new research agenda, some of the focus areas do not have any questions but that's just for this year. So, there weren't any identified through the research priority setting process, um, for a need at this time or a need in the next, um, to go out in a project this year that we need results in a three-year time. It doesn't mean that there's not a question there, it just means that there's not a question for this call, this round. It's just, uh, maybe they'll be one the next opportunity next year. Okay.

So if you have other questions, we're happy to capture them and we are capturing your questions and answers so that we can figure out a way to share them out to the broader research community because we recognize not everybody's able to attend our sessions when we have them scheduled, um, so we do, and we are very interested in your questions and we will take them back and we will review them and we'll adjust what we need to in terms of documentation and so on to improve and enhance the communications.

Okay? So, again, uh, productivity, animal health and welfare, best management practices over on this side. Food safety up here. Uh, if you need to have more space, feel free to use the hallway, I guess, I don't know if I'm speaking out of term for the University of Guelph's rules...but... and again, thank you for your time and attention.