



# Stewardship Report Summer 2016

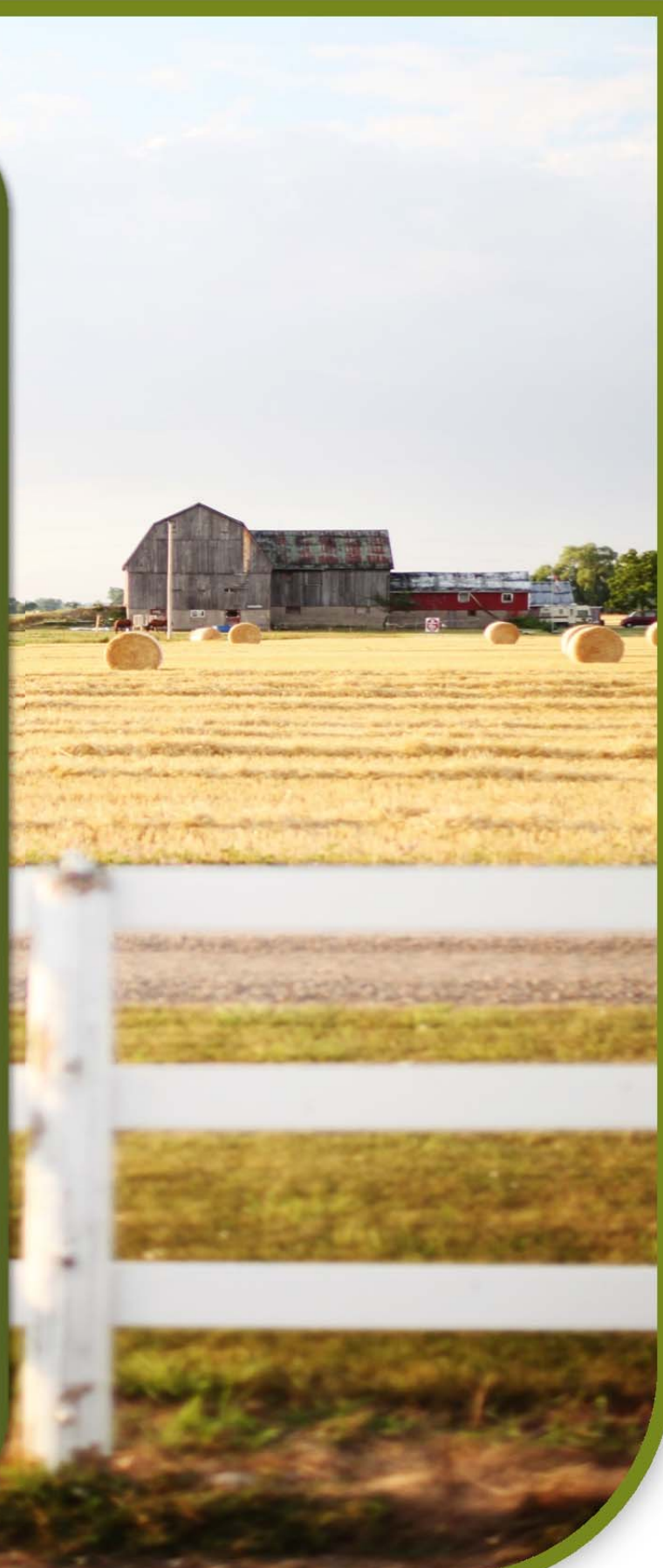


**The Rural Ontario Institute (ROI):**

- **Develops leaders**
- **Initiates dialogue**
- **Supports collaborations**
- **Identifies and amplifies key issues and opportunities**
- **Builds organizational capacity in rural and northern Ontario**

**ROI delivers one of the longest-running leadership development programs in the world – the Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program (AALP).**

**This Stewardship Report highlights how support from sponsors helps to build stronger leaders, more resilient organizations and vibrant communities.**



## THE ADVANCED AGRICULTURAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

Since 1984, AALP has had a solid track record of developing strong leaders.

Over 450 men and women – current and emerging leaders in Ontario’s agriculture and agri-food sectors and in communities across rural and northern Ontario – have benefited from this 19-month executive leadership development program. AALP provides these leaders with the skills, knowledge, broad perspective and positive attitude required to be effective leaders now and into the future. Graduates are strong, capable individuals who take on leadership roles within their communities, businesses, associations and in the broader agriculture, agri-food and rural sectors. The most significant indicator of program performance is showcased in the achievements of our alumni, and the valuable contributions they make after the program.

Through a series of seminars, study tours, self directed learning and distance education, AALP prepares leaders to help shape the future of their businesses, organizations and communities. AALP combines hands-on experience, introduces broad industry knowledge and exposes participants to contacts and networks that would otherwise take decades to accumulate.

The objectives of the program remain to **develop** leaders who are better prepared to **identify and overcome challenges** and to **capitalize** on emerging opportunities across the agriculture, agri-food and rural sectors.

Support from industry leaders is vital to the strength of our program. In fact, without the support of sponsors and funders, AALP would not be possible. Financial commitments from the industry are matched by a commitment from the Board and staff of ROI to achieve the program objectives and maintain exceptional quality of leadership development programming.



## ACHIEVING OBJECTIVES AND MAINTAINING EXCELLENCE

We continue to deliver on program objectives by ensuring that seminar and study travel agendas focus on: core leadership skill development; exposure to the agri-food system and the economic, political, social, cultural and physical environment in which it operates; exploration of local, national and global issues; and personal and professional development.

### AALP MILESTONES - CLASS 16

Over the past year, and continuing into 2017, 26 men and women are participating in AALP and have or will achieve the following curriculum highlights and milestones:

1. Completion of Seminars 1-8: Guelph, Peterborough, Chatham, Ottawa, Elk Lake, Toronto, Niagara Falls, London.
2. Completion of the North American Study Tour: Quebec, New York, Washington DC, Maryland and Pennsylvania (July 2016).
3. Class 16 International Study Tour: Vietnam and Thailand (February 2017).
4. Graduation of AALP Class 16 (April 2017).



**AALP Class 16 in Washington, DC, for their North American Study Tour**



## ACHIEVING OBJECTIVES AND MAINTAINING EXCELLENCE

During the eight seminars, Class 16 participants have or will cover these topics:

- Leadership theory and application
- Personality, self-understanding and development
- Human behaviour and working effectively with others
- Decision making and responsibility
- Dynamics of change
- Social, economic and political issues facing northern Ontario
- Visioning and strategic planning
- Federal government; globalization and trade
- Canadian and US government political processes, economic and trade policies, lobbying
- Political, economic and cultural comparisons
- Public speaking and presentation skills
- Facilitation, meeting management and leading groups
- Communications
- Media training and working effectively with the media
- Conflict resolution
- Getting your message across effectively
- Productivity improvement and time management
- Innovation and risk taking



**AALP Class 16 in Elk Lake, Ontario**

*“Because of AALP, I have been able to more effectively lead projects and committees with the organizations in which I work and volunteer.”*

-AALP Alumnus

## ACHIEVING OBJECTIVES AND MAINTAINING EXCELLENCE

Participants also add to their “toolbox of skills” by completing an Issues Analysis Project (IAP). The IAP is an action based leadership project within the agriculture, agri-food and rural sectors in Ontario. Class 16 is working with the following organizations, in a consultative role, to examine an issue important to the client organization and within the industry:

- Agricorp
- Farm & Food Care Ontario
- 4-H Ontario
- Golden Horseshoe Food & Farming Alliance
- Rural Ontario Institute
- University of Guelph Ridgetown College

**The Issues Analysis Project teams have been able to impact businesses in tangible ways. Due to the work of a past IAP team, Ontario Agri-Food Education Inc (OAFE) was able to launch a new program noting that:**

***“The IAP report gave us a foundation for launching another program. Within a year we were able to launch the program. The report had enough data that we could implement it.”***

## EVALUATING, EVOLVING AND RE-AFFIRMING

The ROI Board of Directors and the AALP Advisory Committee proactively ensures that curriculum keeps pace with leadership, agriculture, agri-food and rural issues of the day, the advances in educational trends and the potential impact and challenges of the national and global marketplace.

### AALP EVALUATION

In 2012, ROI retained the services of Dr. Harry Cummings and researchers from the School of Environmental Design and Rural Development at the University of Guelph to conduct an evaluation of AALP. They set out to understand, improve and renew the overall effectiveness of the program. Research was conducted between September 2012 and January 2013, which looked at the rural sectors in Ontario and provided recommendations to improve the program.

Study results showed overwhelming agreement that AALP continues to provide relevant content – based on feedback from participants and industry stakeholders. The study also provided some opportunities for changes and many of the suggestions made have now been implemented.



AALP Evaluation: Alumni perspectives of program value

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE AALP EVALUATION STUDY

### RELEVANCE

Participants considered the program to be relevant to their current positions - **91% felt that the content met or exceeded expectations**. Communication and organizational skills; marketing, economics, and business; and decision-making were identified as the most relevant to current positions. Societal issues covered by the program concerning rural and agricultural sectors in general also remain relevant aspects of the program today.

### EFFECTIVENESS

In the Alumni Survey the following were ranked highest (6 or 7) in terms of skills and knowledge acquired during the AALP leadership journey on a 7-point scale, with 7 being a substantial increase:

1. Networking.
2. Trends in the agricultural industry and rural society.
3. Government and the political system.
4. Public speaking.

### IMPACT

AALP alumni were asked to indicate their most significant professional accomplishment. The most frequently mentioned benefit being gains within their current job, followed by increased participation in farm organizations, better leadership skills and increased roles in municipal and community organizations.

With respect to personal gains, confidence was mentioned most. Networking was the next most-identified personal gain from the program, followed by respect for differences and effective leadership.





## SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RETURN ON INVESTMENT STUDY

Another study, completed in 2013 by the George Morris Centre, evaluated the Social Return on Investment from AALP. The study reaffirmed the tremendous value of AALP to Ontario society and the economy. Social return on investment is a method to track and capture the impact a program has on the lives of its participants.



**The social return on investment from AALP is 25%. That means for every \$1 invested in AALP, the social return on investment is \$1.25.**

Both studies are available at: <http://www.ruralontarioinstitute.ca/aalpreports>

## LOOKING FORWARD...

As a result of these studies, ROI remains confident that AALP is valuable to participants and to the agriculture and agri-food sectors and rural and northern communities across Ontario.

Because of the overwhelming affirmation received, the core of the program remains the same going forward: eight face-to-face seminars, team projects, a North American Study Tour and an International Study Tour. Changes to the program have included the addition of a webinar component when possible and optional days for some of the seminars. These revisions reflect the input of participants and stakeholders and the financial realities of providing the program. Tuition for Class 16 was \$11,000 which represents approximately 1/3 of the costs required to deliver the program.



# AALP IS POSSIBLE BECAUSE OF OUR GENEROUS SPONSORS

## Patrons



## Pacesetters



## Champions



## Allies



## Leaders



## Builders



## Boosters



*“Prior to AALP, I defined leadership as being the person with all the vision – directing everyone in their respective tasks and solving all problems.*

*Since AALP, I have discovered that leadership involves seeing the best in people, creating synergy, looking for fantastic outcomes and making sure your team is credited for a job well done.*

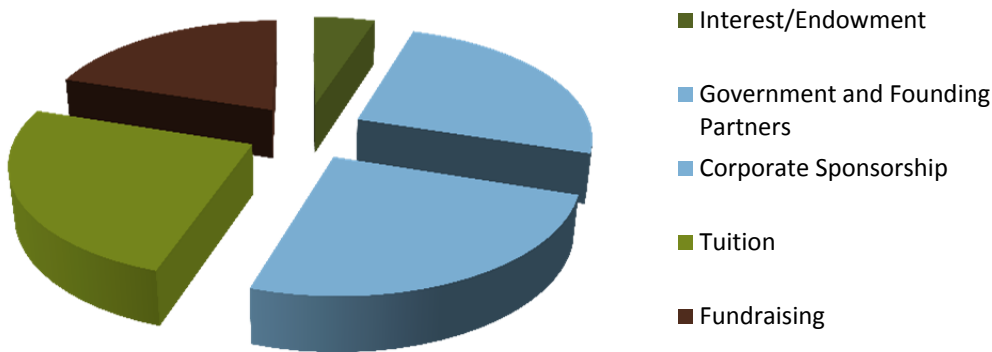
*It is about planning, encouragement, openness to ideas and people and BEING the change we want to see in our world.”*

**-AALP Alumnus**

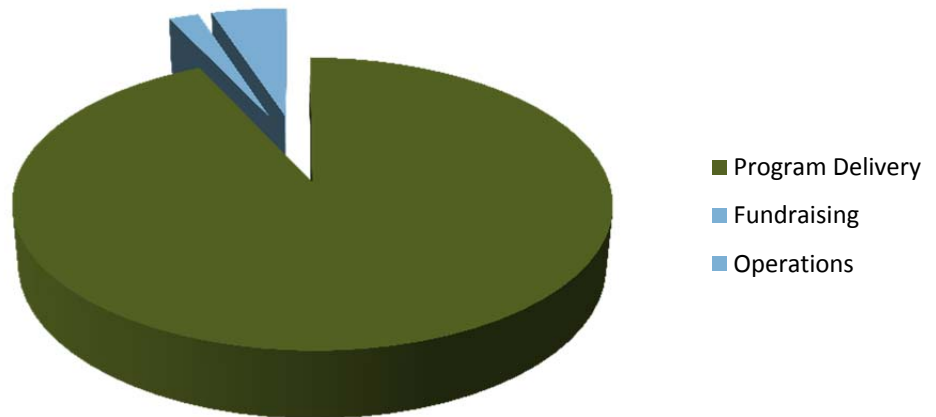
## HOW SUPPORT IS USED

Sponsorship support goes directly toward funding AALP’s intensive 19-month educational program. Throughout the long history of AALP, costs have increased and so has our commitment to deliver a program of exceptional quality. This requires a large investment from many stakeholders within the industry. Participants are aware that they are only paying about 1/3 of the cost of AALP and that 2/3 is provided through the generosity of sponsors and funders and fundraising endeavours.

### Typical AALP Funding Sources



### Typical Class Expenditures



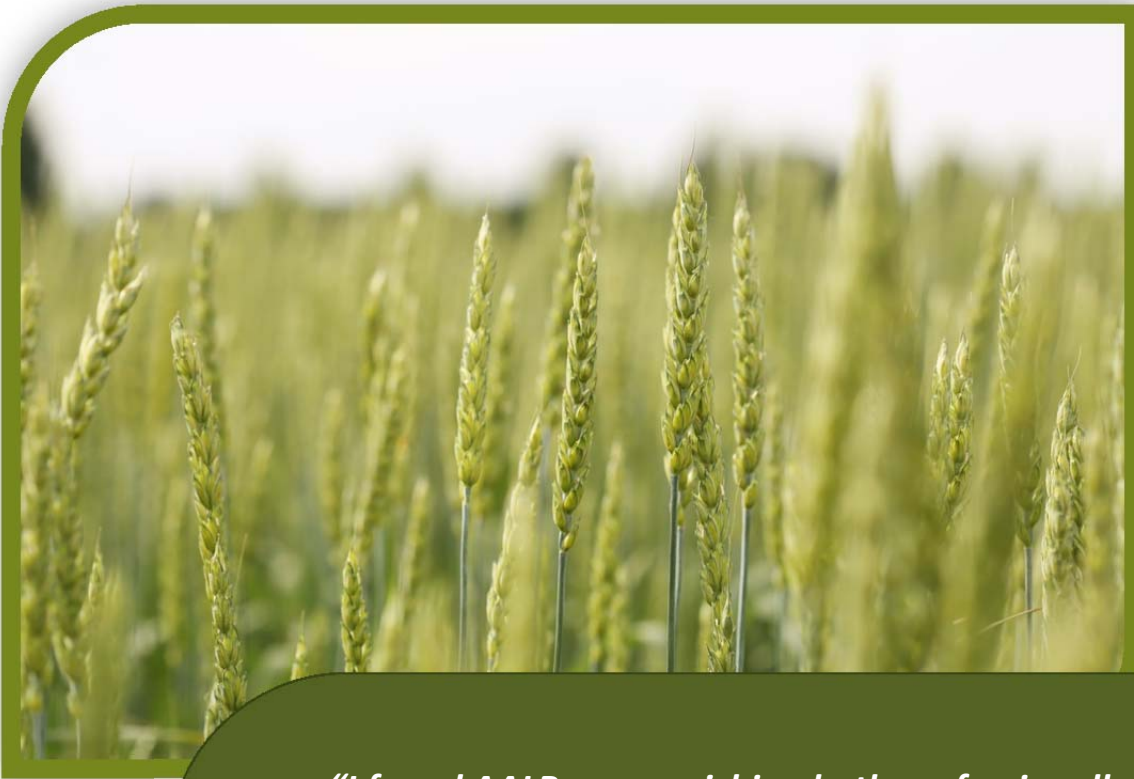
## RECOGNIZING COMMITMENT TO LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Program sponsors play a significant leadership role in our industry and provide tremendous support to AALP. We continue to recognize this leadership and showcase sponsor support at every opportunity.

In each class, we acknowledge our sponsors in a number of formal and informal ways including:

- AALP class participants work in teams to research and present ***Sponsor Spotlight*** presentations that are shared at seminars throughout the program. Each presentation focuses on a specific sponsor, exploring their business and activities and highlighting their sponsorship of AALP.
- Sponsor logos are included in printed and online communications - newsletters, media releases, on our [website](#) and in the [Rural Ontario Institute Annual Report](#).
- Signage and printed materials at seminars.
- Sponsors receive special thanks (verbally, in printed materials and on signage) at our key events:
  - Class Opening Event/Banquet
  - AALP Dream Auction
  - Wm. A. Stewart Public Lecture and Reception
  - Class Graduation Banquet





*“I found AALP very enriching both professionally and personally. The curriculum and interaction with peers from a wide variety of ag sectors broadened my knowledge of and appreciation for agriculture in Ontario, but also internationally.*

*AALP enhanced my critical thinking abilities – a key component in decision making. The skills I learned about engaging others have changed how I interact at work and in my volunteer activities. It’s given me greater confidence and skill and has made me a better leader, team player and employee.*

*It’s an intense program that is extremely rewarding, and the benefits will be shared with both my professional and personal communities.”*

**-AALP Alumnus**



## WHY SPONSOR AALP?

- Agriculture, food and rural issues are high priorities for the province. Now more than ever, we have an opportunity to influence the future of our sectors and rural and northern communities across Ontario.
- Good leaders are needed to move our industry forward – in businesses, in associations and organizations, in communities and on farms.
- Investment in AALP pays off at a rate of 25% - that's better than the rate of return on most investments!
- AALP graduates go on to hold many different influential positions within the industry and in their communities. Many credit their AALP experience as one of the cornerstones that helped them get there.
- Sponsor representatives have many opportunities to interact with each class – providing opportunities for sponsors to keep a pulse on what is happening in the industry.



**ADVANCED AGRICULTURAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAM (AALP)**

**RURAL ONTARIO INSTITUTE**

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