



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

2026 AALP Dream Gala Raises Over \$110,000 for Ontario's Agriculture Leaders

GUELPH, August 11, 2026 – The Rural Ontario Institute (ROI) is pleased to report that the 2026 Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program (AALP) Dream Gala generated more than \$110,000 in fundraising support for Ontario's agri-food leaders.

AALP was established in 1984, through the work of four partners – the University of Guelph, Ontario Federation of Agriculture, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food and the Foundation for Rural Living. The program was created for those who want to broaden their horizons and help shape the future of the agri-food sector in Ontario. Since 2010, AALP has been delivered by the Rural Ontario Institute.

The AALP Dream Gala is a biennial fundraiser event hosted by recent program graduates in support of ROI and AALP, with a special focus on the current class. This year, AALP Classes 20 and 21 welcomed guests to *A Night at the Races* at The GrandWay Events Centre in Elora. The evening featured live and silent auctions showcasing a variety of unique items and distinctive experiences, as well as raffle draws and exciting horse racing entertainment.

"On behalf of the 2026 AALP Dream Gala Committee, I would like to thank our sponsors, donors and guests for their generous support of this year's Gala. Your contribution and presence helped make the gala a success, and we were delighted to receive such positive feedback from our attendees. The energy and excitement in the room as we came together to celebrate agricultural leadership was truly special," says Tyler Denham, Chair of the 2026 AALP Dream Gala and Grain Merchandising Manager at Great Lakes Grain. *"I'd also like to thank my fellow Class 20 members and the participants of Class 21, who contributed a tremendous amount of work over the past months to organize and deliver this year's event."*

The Gala helps to offset the costs of AALP, including an international study tour that gives leaders an opportunity to experience agriculture beyond Canadian borders and to network with agricultural leaders from other areas of the world. The evening was an outstanding success, raising over \$110,000 for ongoing program needs and Class 21's AALP leadership journey.

"AALP strengthens the skills and networks of leaders in the agriculture and food sector, helping them to lead positive change and make a difference in Ontario and beyond," says Emily Morrison, Chair of the ROI Board and AALP Class 16 alumna. *"It was inspiring to see the support and commitment of the AALP community, who came together to champion the industry we all love and the leaders who are making a difference."*

"My deep gratitude to our generous 2026 AALP Dream Gala sponsors and donors. The success of the gala wouldn't have been possible without their support," says Peggy Brekveld, Leadership Programs Director at ROI and AALP Class 21 alumna. *"The Dream Gala was an amazing night of networking, fun, games and fundraising. The funds received will benefit AALP programming in so many ways. I am amazed and awed by the generosity and continued support of AALP by alumni and supporters. Thank you all from the bottom of my heart."*

To learn more about the Rural Ontario Institute and AALP, please visit:

<https://www.ruralontarioinstitute.ca>.



ABOUT

The Rural Ontario Institute (ROI) is a charitable organization committed to developing leaders, informing decision makers and connecting communities. ROI delivers the renowned Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program (AALP) which is celebrating its 42nd year, and the Rural Change Maker program, a youth leadership program for emerging leaders to address local priorities. We provide data research and analysis on rural trends and demographics, equipping communities with tools through the Rural Community Wellbeing factsheets and dashboards, and Rural Housing Information System - addressing the housing and homelessness crisis faced by thousands of Canadians.

AALP is funded in part by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness (OMAFRA). Established in 1984, AALP has celebrated more than 540 graduates who are leading positive impacts across Ontario and beyond.

ASSOCIATED LINKS

- [RURAL ONTARIO INSTITUTE](http://www.ruralontarioinstitute.ca)
- [AALP DREAM AUCTION](http://www.aalp.ca)

CONTACTS

Peggy Brekveld
Leadership Programs Director
pbrekveld@ruralontarioinstitute.ca

MEDIA RELATIONS

Rural Ontario Institute
Guelph, Ontario
519-826-4204
info@ruralontarioinstitute.ca
www.ruralontarioinstitute.ca