



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

2026 Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program Dream Gala Summer Event Unveiled

GUELPH, January 23, 2026 – The Rural Ontario Institute (ROI) is pleased to announce this year's Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program (AALP) Dream Gala and Auction will be held on June 19, 2026, at The GrandWay Events Centre in Elora.

The AALP Dream Gala is a biennial event that brings together close to 300 Ontario agriculture leaders in support of ROI and AALP with an emphasis on the current class. This year, AALP Class 20 and Class 21 invite guests to experience "A Night at the Races." The event will begin at 5:30 p.m. and will feature live and silent auctions, horse racing, and a variety of games. Auction items will be curated by past and present AALP Classes and will showcase a wide variety of distinctive experiences and unique items for bidding.

"The 2026 Dream Gala will be a night to celebrate and champion the future of Ontario agriculture," says Tyler Denham, Chair of the 2026 AALP Dream Gala and Merchandising Manager at Snobelen Farms Ltd. *"Guests will have the opportunity to enjoy the thrill of live racing, bid on auction items, and experience a night of FUN-draising all while supporting the emerging leaders of Class 21."*

"We're shaking things up for this year's Dream Gala," says Kayla Veldman, Vice-Chair of the 2026 AALP Dream Gala, Pullet Manager at Veldman Poultry Ltd and Owner/Operator at Veldman Grain Farm Limited. *"Instead of a formal sit-down dinner, guests will have the opportunity to mingle and enjoy local food delicacies from a variety of food stations with open seating."*

"The AALP Dream Gala brings together leaders from across the agri-food sector who see the value in leadership development to meet the challenges our farms, food systems and rural communities are facing today. This year, guests can look forward to plenty of opportunities to connect with AALP Alumni, sponsors, and friends who continue to support the program," says Peggy Brekveld, Leadership Programs Manager at the Rural Ontario Institute.

"AALP is an immersive leadership experience that equips participants with the knowledge, skills and network they need to help shape the future of agriculture, food and rural communities," says Gabrielle Ferguson, Leadership Programs Director at the Rural Ontario Institute. *"We are grateful for our program sponsors, including the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness, and industry and commodity organizations, who see the immense value in supporting the future of our industry by investing in its leaders. We are excited to gather with AALP alumni and supporters for a wonderful summer evening as we celebrate agricultural leadership."*

Guests are encouraged to dress up in fun summer attire, including bright colours, fascinators and bold brims. Tickets for this public event are available online at www.aalpdreamauction.com. Early bird pricing is available when you purchase your tickets before April 20th, 2026. To learn more about sponsorship opportunities for this year's Dream Gala, please visit www.aalpdreamauction.com/sponsors.



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 celebrated its 40th year of operation in 2024, and the Rural Change Maker program, a youth leadership initiative for young rural, emerging leaders to address local priorities. We provide data research and analysis on rural trends and demographics. Information is disseminated in our Rural Ontario Facts products - factsheets and accompanying dashboards. Currently, ROI is engaged in a rural housing initiative that will help communities to address the housing and homelessness crisis being faced by thousands of Canadians.

ASSOCIATED LINKS

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

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