



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Recruitment is now open for Class 21 of the Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program

There's no better time to lead your field! Grow your potential and expand your network with the Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program.

GUELPH, ON, October 3, 2024 – The Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program (AALP) is now accepting applications for Class 21 that begins in September 2025. During the executive leadership program, up to 30 individuals will embark on a personal journey to realize their potential, while exploring agriculture, food and rural economic development from the local to the international level through a leadership lens. Each Class is created with attention to the diversity of participants so that peer-to-peer mentorship, hands on experience and a broad network are developed.

“AALP build’s top leaders, better prepared to identify and overcome challenges and to capitalize on emerging opportunities across Ontario’s agriculture, food and rural sectors,” said Gabrielle Ferguson, Leadership Programs Director at the Rural Ontario Institute. *“The program focuses on core leadership skill development, builds self-confidence, sharpens communication abilities and delivers experiences that make participants future ready.”*

“Embarking on the AALP journey will certainly provide Class 21 participants with opportunities to enhance their skill sets, expand their perspectives and knowledge base, as well as build their networks,” said Lisa Thompson, Minister of Rural Affairs. *“This unique, hands-on program will ultimately impact their work and community involvement in a positive manner.”*

“AALP has a longstanding history of developing agricultural leaders who inspire others and cultivate positive change in the industry, which will continue to be crucial over the long term,” said Rob Flack, Ontario Minister of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness. *“Ontario is an agri-food powerhouse because of the talented people in this industry that drive its success. Recruitment for the next class of agricultural leaders is tremendous news for the entire agri-food industry. I wish our future leaders all the best and extremely fulfilling careers, and I look forward to hearing about their future accomplishments.”*

Successful applicants will come together for approximately 45 days of in-session training including: in-person seminars, online webinars, small group issues analysis projects and two study tours, north American and international. While meeting with industry, government and organization influencers, Class participants will learn about government and political systems, national and international trade, communication, negotiation, emotional intelligence, team dynamics, problem-solving, debating, agriculture issues and innovation.

“The future of our agriculture sector depends on visionary leaders who are prepared to tackle the challenges, build productive working relationships, and seize the opportunities ahead,” said Drew Spoelstra, President of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, and graduate of Class 13. *“The Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program has a long history of shaping such leaders. I encourage passionate individuals who are committed to making a difference in our industry to apply for the next Class. This is your opportunity to grow, learn, and lead in a sector that is vital to our economy and communities.”*

“AALP is not merely a program - it’s a journey of growth, discovery, and empowerment,” said John Cranfield, Interim Dean of the Ontario Agricultural College at the University of Guelph. *“Through immersive experiences, diverse perspectives, and unwavering mentorship, participants emerge as visionary leaders who drive positive change in agriculture and beyond. Graduates of the program know the importance of building resilience and fostering innovation, and they turn that understanding into action at the community level and beyond. AALP isn’t just about leadership - it’s about cultivating transformational change that echoes through generations.”*

Interested applicants are encouraged to attend AALP’s information sessions held throughout October to chat with alumni about their experiences and have their questions answered.

For more information about the program and on how to apply, please visit <https://www.ruralontarioinstitute.ca/aalp/>. The deadline for applications is October 30th, 2024.

ABOUT

The Rural Ontario Institute (ROI) is a non-profit organization committed to developing leaders, informing decision makers and connecting communities. ROI delivers the renowned Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program (AALP) entering its 40th year of operation. AALP is an 18-month experiential executive leadership program for those who want to shape the future of the agriculture and food industry and make a positive difference in rural communities across Ontario. AALP has over 520 graduates who have risen to leadership positions in private industry, producer associations, public service and community organizations. AALP is funded in part by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture Food and Agribusiness and the Ontario Ministry of Rural Affairs

CONTACTS

Gabrielle Ferguson,
Leadership Programs Director
Rural Ontario Institute
gferguson@ruralontarioinstitute.ca

MEDIA RELATIONS

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