A New Honey Bee Research Centre

Honeybees play a key role in agricultural productivity and ecosystem sustainability by providing pollination services to crops and wild plants. Recent colony losses have received much media attention, though no single cause exists; research demonstrates a number of stressors, including parasitic mites, climate change, agricultural practices and land use changes.

Ongoing research and education is needed to support these critical members of the ecosystem. The Ontario Agricultural College is building for the future and relocating the Honey Bee Research Centre to expand its capacity for research and outreach. Currently a campaign is under way to raise $10M to support this critical initiative.

Impact Statement:

U of G is a leader in beneficial insect health and sustainable pest management, as evidenced by three named research chairs: The Pinchin Family Chair in Honey Bee Health, the Rebanks Family Chair in Pollinator Conservation and the Bayer CropScience Chair in Sustainable Pest Management. We are also home to the oldest insect collection in Canada, which continues to play an international role in studies of changing insect populations, and the identification and management of invasive species.

For the future of honey bee health and the health of our society, we are creating a new, iconic facility focused on bee health education, research, advocacy and outreach. It will be a destination; a place of excellence in design, function and research. Together we can create a true movement to support bee health through a reimagined centre.

Goals:

Teams at the University of Guelph Honey Bee Research Centre have far outgrown the function of the current facility. A reimagined center will increase capacity to continue critical research focused on the effects of parasites and pesticides on honey bees behavior and immune response. The new HBRC will allow for increased tour capacities, educational outreach, and international collaboration while inspiring the community and the public on the vital mission to protect pollinator populations.

By investing in this research and teaching facility, we will ensure that Ontario is addressing beneficial insect health with the best possible science.

The new location will add space for undergraduate teaching and graduate student research and be accessible to expand tours and services for the community. It will include:

- 100 hive apiary
- Public indoor and outdoor areas with interactive education spaces
- Classroom and event space
- A café and shop
- Office space
- Gardens and parking

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