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AGILITY Innovation Summit to feature agriculture industry leaders, Feb. 9-10

Agriculture industry leaders will gather at the University of Lethbridge, Feb. 9-10, for the annual AGILITY Innovation Summit: Future of Food.

This student-focused event features industry experts who will address key topics such as the explosive growth in agriculture, food production and technology-related



sectors. Through a series of panel discussions and networking sessions, students will learn about innovation in agriculture, the impact of big data, food processing and the value chain, sustainable farming and current trends in investment and financing related to food and agriculture.

“One of the things I always valued while going to school was actually hearing from real people in the industry about what’s going on. They live and breathe it every day and bring a real-world component of what’s happening now in the industry,” says Remi Schmaltz (BMgt ’06), CEO & Director at Decisive Farming.

Schmaltz will be joined by fellow industry leaders such as Mark Thompson, Vice-President Strategy at Agrium, Tom Burke, Senior Investment Advisor at Canaccord Genuity Wealth Management, Preet Marwaha, Executive Vice-President of Hempco Canada Superfoods, Colin Rush, COO, Agriculture Division at Cleanseed Capital Group, among others.

“I think it’s a great event in terms of connecting industry with students and bridging that gap,” adds Schmaltz. “We’re always looking for good people at Decisive, so that’s an element that interests us, and I always learn things at these events from the other panelists. If you’re not out talking with other people, you’re not learning.”

Schmaltz grew up in Beiseker, Alta. and found his way to the U of L seeking both a smaller community and school atmosphere. His student experience, which featured occasional trips to Castle Mountain, fit him perfectly and he's always eager to return to campus to help the next generation of students. He currently lives in Banff while Decisive Farming's head office is located in Irricana, Alta.

A two-day conference, the AGILITY Innovation Summit also offers students a chance to tour local agriculture businesses to get a better sense of the innovative initiatives that are happening close to home.

"It's important to recognize that agriculture is a key part of our regional identity and a driver of economic growth," says the U of L's Tyler Heaton (BFA '15), manager of AGILITY. "This conference will expose students to the challenges and opportunities that exist in the agribusiness space, while inspiring them through direct access to the leaders who are driving this growth."

Schmaltz says that is an important message to send to political leaders and the rest of the province.

"There's a lot of talk about innovation and diversification in our economy these days and this event brings awareness to the innovation that exists right now," he says. "Hopefully the government recognizes that there is a thriving agribusiness sector here, one that is distinct from oil and gas, that should be fostered to grow."

A complete schedule for the AGILITY Innovation Summit, along with featured speakers and bios, can be found here: <http://www.agility-ulethbridge.ca/>.

To view online: <http://www.uleth.ca/unews/article/agility-innovation-summit-feature-agriculture-industry-leaders>

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