



For immediate release — Wednesday, March 31, 2021

## **McCain Foundation investment paves the way for U of L studentships in sustainable agriculture**

**A virtual media availability with Dr. Erasmus Okine (U of L) and Jeremy Carter (McCain) is scheduled for 10:30 a.m. Any media wanting to attend can send an email to [caroline.zentner@uleth.ca](mailto:caroline.zentner@uleth.ca) and request the Zoom link.**

Thanks to a \$280,000 investment by the McCain Foundation, University of Lethbridge graduate students will further contribute to innovation in sustainable agriculture.



The McCain Foundation Studentships for Sustainable Agriculture are aimed at supporting and promoting master of science students in biology whose research focuses on science and leadership in sustainable agriculture. The pilot project will fund a minimum of six graduate students for two years at \$20,000 per year. The studentship offers training in experimental science with world-class researchers at the U of L, as well as novel courses and new networking opportunities. Students in the specialized cohort will

conduct a thesis-based research project focusing on one of three major themes, including genetics, physiology and natural product chemistry, and environmental sciences.

“The McCain Foundation has long supported initiatives in the rural communities where McCain operates and potatoes are grown by local farmers,” says Linda McCain, chair of the McCain Foundation. “We are pleased to support the McCain Studentship in Sustainable Agriculture, in line with our commitment to education and the environment, so these communities and their farms can continue to grow for generations to come.”

“We are excited to partner with the McCain Foundation and help build local expertise and knowledge in sustainable agriculture,” says Dr. Erasmus Okine, U of L provost and vice-president academic. “McCain and the University of Lethbridge are ideally positioned in Canada’s Premier Food Corridor to become leaders in sustainability to ensure local agriculture thrives well into the future.”

As the world's population is expected to reach 10 billion in the next 30 years, the need to produce more food using less resources is critical. The partnership between the University and McCain and the training opportunities it provides for students will help advance sustainable and regenerative agricultural practices in southern Alberta, across Canada and around the world.

"Feeding an ever-growing population with agriculture practices that protect and preserve the planet is a massive challenge," says Jeremy Carter, professional agrologist and McCain director of agriculture Western Canada. "Producing delicious food sustainably is our priority, and we are committed to ongoing research into regenerative agriculture, and sharing this knowledge with farm families we partner with across Canada."

Students chosen for the studentships will take specialized coursework that includes a lecture or seminar class focused on advances in sustainable agriculture. A master class in agricultural enterprise management will also be offered through the Dhillon School of Business. At the end of the two years, students will participate in research showcase event to publicize their work.

"This is an ideal training opportunity because the students will be exposed to a broad training platform to enhance their research skills and knowledge base in the field of sustainable agriculture," says Dr. Matt Bogard, a Canada Research Chair in Aquatic Environments and assistant professor in the Department of Biological Sciences. "This program will enhance the employability of graduates, making them attractive candidates for careers in applied research or management in the sustainable agriculture industry."

The investment is part of the U of L's SHINE campaign and this partnership highlights the importance of the U of L's connection to the community, specifically how expertise available at the University helps solve problems at the local level and beyond and leads to opportunities for economic growth and a more sustainable future.

McCain, founded 60 years ago, is a Canadian success story rooted in agriculture. It partners with more than 130 potato growers in Canada, 30 of them in southern Alberta. Its Coaldale processing facility recently celebrated its 20th anniversary. With an eye to the future, McCain is committed to regenerative and sustainable agriculture, working hard to develop farms with smaller carbon footprints and fewer environmental impacts.

This news release, along with a [video](#), can be found online at [McCain Foundation studentships](#).

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