

# School/College/Work Initiative

**PROJECT REPORT:** AgriFocus Regional Forum  
May 21, 2003

**Partners:** Ridgetown District High School,  
Lambton-Kent District School Board  
and  
Ridgetown College, University of Guelph

## Project Overview:

### **Background:**

Over the past several years, numerous community partners worked with the Lambton-Kent District School Board on a project entitled "AGRIfocus: Careers in Agriculture". This project, which received funding through Ontario's Rural Youth Job Strategy and various community partners, provided students the opportunity to start considering career options in the agriculture sector specifically related to food, science and business. The funding for this project has since run out.

Many worthwhile projects were developed during the course of this project, including classroom experiences, high school curriculum development, articulation programs with the University of Guelph, and a very successful mentoring program.

The SCWI project allowed the opportunity to rekindle some of these community initiatives.

### **Program Format:**

Regional Information Forum (Noon - 4:30pm), included presentations, lunch, strategy sessions to develop action plans and information sharing.

### **Objectives:**

The SCWI agenda addressed the following objectives:

- increased awareness among participants of career possibilities offered in agriculture and related fields, including excellent job-market opportunities
- raised awareness among participants of the articulation opportunities available to high students at Ridgetown College, University of Guelph
- created a utilization program with subject-based secondary school teachers to take advantage of the more than 100 agriculturally-based business mentors that are available for in-school programs

### **Participants:**

35 people attended the Regional Forum. While the organizers were somewhat disappointed with the turn out, it was quite good considering the regions High School Teachers were in contract negotiations and many not attending "extra" assignments.

**Educators:** 25 educators attended including: Director of Education, Program Consultants, Principals and Student Services Staff. A good cross section of the geographic area: Chatham-Kent and Lambton.

**Parents:** One School Council representative attended (Perhaps due to the afternoon meeting time and work commitments)

**Students:** 2 Student representatives attended and presented on their positive experiences with

AgriFocus: articulation and cooperative placements.

Presenters: 5 Ridgetown College, University of Guelph staff presented  
1 Rotary member on Rotary Career Edge program opportunities

Coordination: 1 admin assistant

**Action Plans:**

1. Careers: Information & Resources on:
  - a. Starting salaries
  - b. Employment prospects
  - c. Guidance dept. & Coop offices: ppt resource
  
2. Mentorship program: Revitalize: Explore funding possibilities to market & engage a part-time coordinator for Mentor Program for 2003-2004 school year