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## Laurier local food researcher named national award finalist

WATERLOO – Laurier associate professor Alison Blay-Palmer has been named finalist for the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada's (SSHRC) 2013 Impact Partnership Award, demonstrating Waterloo Region's commitment to highlighting the importance of local foods and local farming. The winner will be announced October 15 at the World Social Science Forum in Montreal.

For more than a decade, Blay-Palmer has been involved in research related to sustainable food systems. Blay-Palmer's SSHRC-funded research partnership, "Building and Reinforcing Resilient Food Networks in Canada and Beyond" involves Carleton University, University of Guelph, Lakehead University, Ryerson University, local food networks in Ontario, across Canada, and extends into the international community. The partnership has produced a widely respected report, "Ontario Communities of Food: Models and Best Practices" and a community food toolkit. The tool kit is being used by communities around the world and has been a catalyst for extending Blay-Palmer's partnerships globally.

"The continued growth of Dr. Blay-Palmer's partnerships, both locally and internationally, is a testament to how deeply this work addresses the critical food security issues facing Canadians," said Abby Goodrum, Laurier's vice-president: research. "'Building and Reinforcing Resilient Regional Food Networks in Canada and Beyond' is a superb example of what can be accomplished through academic and community partnerships. The partnership has broadened the conversation around food security, engaged Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne, and reached out to include provincial and international partnerships."

Blay-Palmer's research is based on community-linked research meetings, participatory research projects, workshops, reports, peer-reviewed journal papers and conference presentations. Her sustainable food partnership has been credited with having a significant impact on Canada's food security. Blay-Palmer's dedication to local food was recognized in the Ontario Legislature during the second reading debate of the proposed Local Food Act, introduced by Premier Wynne, who also serves as the Minister of Agriculture.

Blay-Palmer is director of the recently established Laurier Centre for Sustainable Food Systems.

"We are very excited about the work of the research centre," said Blay-Palmer. "Local and sustainable community food initiatives reflect a growing public awareness that food can act as a vehicle for positive change. The SSHRC award nomination recognizes our continuing work to be at the forefront of research on these initiatives."

The Partnership Award acknowledges a SSHRC-funded formal partnership for its outstanding achievement in advancing research, research training or outreach. It is awarded to a partnership that, through mutual co-operation and shared intellectual leadership and resources, has demonstrated impact and influence within and beyond the research community.

Laurier Centre for Sustainable Food Systems: [wlu.ca/research/food](http://wlu.ca/research/food)

Nourishing Communities: Sustainable Local Food Systems Research Group: [nourishingontario.ca](http://nourishingontario.ca)

Community Food Toolkit: <http://nourishingontario.ca/community-food-toolkit/>

"Models and Best Practices for Building Sustainable Food Systems in Ontario and Beyond":

<http://nourishingontario.ca/models-and-best-practices/>

"Impact Awards: SSHRC reveals shortlist:" [http://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/news\\_room-](http://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/news_room-)

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