

# Sustainable agriculture policy in the works for Guelph

The Dean's Council of the Ontario Agriculture College (OAC) of the University of Guelph has responded to the Report of the Committee on Sustainable Agricultural Systems. The Report was written to recommend a sustainable agriculture policy for the College.

The Dean's Council accepted the Committee's definition of sustainable agriculture as follows:

Sustainable agricultural systems, over the short and long term:

- a) maintain or enhance environmental quality, wisely use nonrenewable resources and promote the maintenance of renewable resources, including plant and animal species;
- b) provide safe and nutritious food to meet human needs; c) enhance the quality of life in rural and urban communities in terms of social, aesthetic, economic and other conditions;
- d) promote economic viability.

According to the Council the program in sustainable agriculture systems will help develop policies and practices, incorporating the above objectives, in the context of local, national, and global sustainable development. Hopefully it will assist in the planning and design of the rural community and the countryside, including the preservation and enhancement of the landscape in all its physical, social, aesthetic and economic dimensions.

Further, the Council affirmed the sentiment of the Committee that sustainable agriculture should not be viewed as a distinct activity within the College, but rather, characteristic of the College as a whole. Accordingly, the Council recommended that the sustainable agriculture program should place emphasis on a systems approach and on the evaluation of the potential impacts of emerging technology.

To that end, Dr. Wally Beversdorf, current Chair of the Department of Crop Science, was appointed Director of the Institute of Agriculture and Rural Resources for Sustainability. A council and an advisory committee will be selected at a later date. The College has provided the Institute an initial 1990 - 1991 budget of \$150,000 to set policy direction and to promote sustainable agricultural activities in teaching, interdisciplinary research, and extension.