

Arrell Food Institute Scholars

Recipients of the 2017 Arrell Food Institute Graduate Scholarships



Nasrin Husseini intends to play an important role in advancing animal health and global food production in the digital age. Nasrin has already found significant success in her field, becoming the first woman to earn a doctorate of veterinary medicine after the Taliban rule in Afghanistan, before she came to Canada. She has worked at the Toronto Humane Society, the Donland Animal Hospital, and the Kato Animal Hospital in Toronto. Nasrin took the opportunity to work as a research assistant at the University of Guelph, and will now be earning her master's with Professor Bonnie Mallard, evaluating and adapting the use of the University of Guelph's High Immune Response (HIR™) technology to improve beef cattle health and productivity in the face of climate volatility.

Kathleen Johnson plans to use research to shape food systems, reducing system inequalities and increasing sustainability. Kathleen recently completed an undergraduate degree in civil engineering and society at McMaster University and will be completing a master's in water resources engineering through the School of Engineering with Dr. Beth Parker, Director of the G360 Institute for Groundwater Research. Kathleen's research will focus on understanding the flow and fate of agriculture and industrial contaminants in the fractured bedrock aquifer beneath the City of Guelph. Kathleen intends her work to allow for better preparation and management of agricultural operations, limit contaminant occurrence and lead to improved water quality for growing safe and sustainable food.

Katya Kudashinka's vision is to participate in a new future for agriculture that employs advanced data science to enhance crop yields and increase food production productivity for humankind. Katya studied engineering in Saint-Petersburg, Russia before completing a degree in computer science and a MBA at the University of Toronto. Katya is now focused on advancing her skills in the application of machine learning in agriculture and will do this by working on a project to develop a cost-effective, representative, and scalable method to remotely measure soil organic carbon levels using deep learning techniques. Katya will work with Drs. Graham Taylor, Ralph Martin, Aaron Berg, Paul Voroney and Alan Ker.

Amberley Ruetz's passion for sustainable food systems, food security and social justice stems from her Master's from the Institute on Globalization and the Human Condition when she researched in a Saharawi refugee camp in Algeria. Amberley later worked as a consultant for the Ontario Student Nutrition Program supporting the scale-up of an innovative local food delivery model for student nutrition programs. Her doctoral research with Dr. John Smithers will explore the impact of this new model on local economies and how they might evolve to expand the scope and sustainability of local food production and procurement in Canada.

Karthika Sriskantharajah believes that food research is essential to unlocking the potential of agriculture and thus enhancing the livelihoods of marginal communities in developing as well as developed countries. Karthika began her undergraduate studies at the University of Peradeniya, followed by her first master's degree in biotechnology at the Plant Genetic Resource Centre, Sri Lanka. Later, she worked at Hiroshima University for a second masters' program, identifying rice cultivars that have the natural mechanisms of salt tolerance to withstand salinity stress. Her PhD, with Dr. Jayasankar Subramanian, will focus on enhancing the product quality of tender fruits to reduce postharvest losses using hexanal.

pictured in order of biography