



# Grand River Agricultural Society

Community Report  
2021/2022





# President's Message

2021-2022 was once again a year we will not forget, as we were forced to respond to the pandemic and variants which had a significant impact on our business, not to mention devastating effects on the entire world.

I want to congratulate our staff and management team who were able to, not only adjust, but move our organization forward to make a difference in both our local community and the agricultural/environmental industry overall.

We saw a lot of change in our structure over the past year, as Jamie Martin stepped down from his role as Director of Operations and is now managing the racing operation under our newest company we created, the Grand Rive Raceway Corporation (GRRC), to focus our racing business.

This, in turn, led us to create two new roles which have been filled as follows:

- Katie Giddy, Vice President of Operations
- Isaac Scott, Vice President of Finance

Once the pandemic restrictions were lifted, we were finally able to make use of our newest building named The GrandWay Event Centre which, as we speak, has become the go-to place for not only the community but the agricultural industry as well. We are now able to host and cater to a much larger and more diverse clientele.

In August, we partnered with the Fergus Fall Fair to host a drive-thru community breakfast in celebration of Food Day Canada, which served another purpose as well; this was a tribute to a local food champion known not only nationally, but internationally, as a champion of food—Anita Stewart.

In October, with the aid of a facilitator, the Board was empowered to determine new vision and mission statements and redefine our core values to hone our business and philanthropic activity over the next three years. We want to be a catalyst to help make an impact in the agricultural tech and environmental sectors.

Members of the Philanthropic Committee partnered with staff to plan and implemented a new memorial forest and pollinator garden at Groves Memorial Community Hospital and formed a partnership for ongoing maintenance with the local horticultural society.

I want to say thanks and congratulate our various committees who, with staff, are the real workforce in keeping our Society moving forward, enabling our growth and the ability to make a difference.

**Your passion, drive, and insight are unmatched!**

Any organization is only as strong as the staff component, and we are extremely fortunate to have a strong, dedicated staff committed to excellence, which makes our role as a Board so much easier.

Respectfully,

Garth Green  
GRAS President



# Grand River Agricultural Society

## Our Vision

Nourishing people, animals, and the planet.

## Our Mission

Supporting innovation, education, economic growth, and community enabling agriculture and the environment to thrive.

## Values

- Partnering with others
- Making a difference
- Caring about people
- Doing the right thing
- Reimagining the possible
- Celebrating diversity



The Grand River Agricultural Society (GRAS) is a not-for-profit organization that is part of The Grand Family which also includes the Grand River Raceway and The GrandWay Events Centre. Known for its philanthropic contributions to the community through scholarships, community mini grants, and major donations, GRAS is striving to bring agriculture, education and community together.



# Economic Impact

**\$2.8**  
**MILLION**

*Since 2004, the Grand River Agricultural Society has provided funding, Gift-In-Kind support, and impact investing for initiatives totaling \$2,795,235 and growing.*

## **2021-2022 GRAS Philanthropic Commitments:**

### **Agriculture/ Environment**

- 4-H Ontario Council (2<sup>nd</sup> installment) \$5,000
- Circular Innovation Council \$10,000
- Guelph Humane Society \$6,200
- Jersey Ontario \$13,000
- Mounted Games Across Canada \$2,000
- Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association \$20,000

### **Community**

- Centre Wellington Chamber of Commerce – Awards of Excellence \$750
- Centre Wellington Food Bank \$5,000
- Community Mini Grant Program \$4,500
- Elementary School Breakfast Programs \$37,000
- Groves Memorial Community Hospital – Healing Garden, Pollinator Garden, Memorial Forest \$82,000
- OAAS \$1,000

### **Education**

- Aberfoyle Agricultural Society \$2,000
- Focus on Nature Program \$3,000
- GRAS Dougald Campbell Award \$250
- GRAS Margaret Bolender Award \$250
- GRAS Scholarship Program \$25,000
- Iris Meck Communications Inc. \$3,500
- University of Guelph – OAC Student Recruitment and Liaison Program (3<sup>rd</sup> installment) \$54,293

### **Events**

- Awards of Excellence – CWCC on location
- Local Biz Night – provided room rental to CWCC
- Mounted Games Across Canada – provided facilities
- Waterloo & Grand River 4-H Dairy Shows – provided facilities & prizes
- West-Central Junior Dairy Show – provided facilities
- Breakfast From the Farm
- Earth Day Competition
- Personal-Sized (Virtual) Pizza Perfect

\*Many of our traditional gift-in-kind of facility space and support did not take place in 2021/2022 due to cancellation of events as a result of COVID-19 health restrictions. Sponsored events such as the Grand River Pull & Truck Show were also cancelled due to COVID-19 health measures. We look forward to hosting and supporting more events again in 2022/2023.



## GREAT PLACE TO WORK CERTIFIED

Grand River Raceway is proud to announce they have been named on the 2022 list of Best Workplaces in Retail & Hospitality!

First awarded in 2019 as a Great Place to Work, and then later recognized on the 2020 list of Best Workplaces™ in Retail and Hospitality, the organization is thrilled that they continued to receive incredibly positive feedback about employment at Grand River Raceway and The GrandWay Events Centre which is owned and operated by GRAS. This award comes after all the changes that COVID brought with staffing changes. The raceway has been back open at full capacity since June 3, 2022.

Grand River Raceway received this honour after a thorough and independent analysis conducted by Great Place to Work®. The list is based on direct feedback from employees of the hundreds of organizations that were surveyed by Great Place to Work®. The data has a 90% confidence and a plus or minus 5% margin of error.

To be eligible for this list, organizations must be Great Place to Work- Certified™ in the past year, and work primarily in the Retail or Hospitality Industry.

This year...

\$2.9  
MILLION

Spent on goods and services

\$665  
THOUSAND

Capital improvements

\$1.3  
MILLION

Total staff wages and benefits

\$456  
THOUSAND

Agricultural events and community support



# Commitment to Community



## Earth Day Contest

GRAS hosted an Earth Day Contest where students from grades 1 to 8 could submit a story, project, poster, or full class project on the topics of waste-free lunches, preventing pollution, alternative energy (such as wind, solar or a new invention!), clean water, clean air, the three R's (reuse, reduce, and recycle), and/or compost food waste.

## Virtual Personal-Sized Pizza Perfect

GRAS's Virtual 'Personal Sized' Pizza Perfect was an agriculture-awareness program designed specifically for grade 3 students in the Wellington and Waterloo school boards. The program includes videos of hands-on activities and live demonstrations including milking a cow, cheese making, transplanting seedlings, and more!



Celebrating local women on

## International Women's Day

March 8th @  THE GRANDWAY

 Grand River  
Agricultural Society



## International Women's Day Lunch

For the first time ever, since opening our brand new GrandWay Events Centre, we hosted 90 local ladies in our large ballroom to celebrate International Women's Day on March 8, 2022. This event was presented in collaboration with the GRAS and The GrandWay. While the ladies enjoyed a delicious buffet lunch, a variety of women from Centre Wellington shared their personal stories, reflecting on the challenges, opportunities, and strengths in their own personal journeys.



# Breakfast from the Farm



The Grand River Agricultural Society (GRAS) and Fergus Agricultural Society (FAS) have teamed up to bring a breakfast from the farm experience similar to events held by FAS in the past.

When FAS announced they would have to cancel the usual Breakfast at the Farm for a second year in a row around the same time, GRAS decided to partner in the spirit of the late Anita Stewart – a local community member considered to be the visionary behind Food Day Canada.

“One thing that Anita dreamed of was about having all areas of the ag sector and food sector work together, We thought ‘what better way than coming together for Breakfast From the Farm.’” - Katie Giddy, VP, Operations.

The partnership works out well, because FAS has a large volunteer base while GRAS provided the space at the Grand River Raceway parking lot and kitchen at the new GrandWay Events Centre.

Breakfast consisted of a breakfast sandwich, milk, and fruit for \$2.00, with all products sourced from companies and farms in the local community.



# Impact Investing

## GRAS and RH Accelerator make an Impact Investment in IntelliCulture

Grand River Agriculture Society (GRAS) and RH Accelerator (RHA) announced that they have made their first collaborative Impact Investment in IntelliCulture, an innovative early stage company making precision agriculture accessible to all.

“We at GRAS are thrilled to share we have made our first, of hopefully many, investments under our recently announced Impact Investing model. The goal for GRAS is to support local early stage innovative companies in the agriculture, food, and cleantech industries,” shares Deborah Whale, Vice President of GRAS and Chair of the Philanthropic and Impact Investment Committee.

**Simply put, IntelliCulture digitizes and automates farm management.** “We believe precision agriculture should be accessible to all,” says Cole Powers Co-Founder of Intelliculture. “In the future, whether we like it or not, farming is going to look different than what we are used to. That’s why our mission is to provide affordable technology that drives ROI in farm operations. Our farm management software is designed to address three of the industry’s largest challenges; labour availability, pest prevention, and machine safety.”

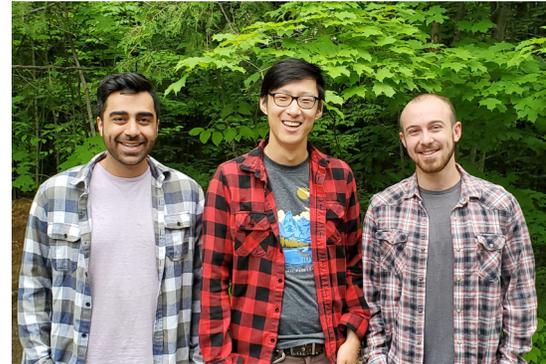
The collaborative agreement between RHA and GRAS provides a nurturing environment for early stage business such as IntelliCulture, by combining patient capital with coaching, mentorship and business expertise.

“The team at RHA are excited to be co-investors with GRAS in IntelliCulture,” says Joe Dales, Co- Founder at RHA. “Through our founder and company development program we will be able to help the management team be more successful and grow, creating jobs, and business activity in the region. IntelliCulture is just one of a rapidly growing sector of innovative companies in our region and there is tremendous future potential.”

“Using the funding provided by GRAS and the access to network and expertise from RHA, we are excited to grow the company and continue serving growers. We’ve already brought on some all-star technical talent and we are so grateful to be inspiring more graduates to pursue careers in the ag sector” shares Cole. “Investing in great people to grow our team, we

have a heavy lens on marketing and sales for this next chapter.”

IntelliCulture provides management software for farms to provide insights into spray coverage, operational health, and labour management. Driven to ensure technology remains accessible to all growers, the company digitizes and automates the management process for farms in a simple, elegant fashion.



## GRAS is set to provide a Rapid Response to Business Development

Grand River Agricultural Society (GRAS) announced the launch of the Rapid Response for Business Development (RRBD) Initiative to support their ongoing commitment to impact investing by creating long-term sustainability and fueling innovation in the agriculture and environmental sectors.



**The GRAS RRBD Initiative will provide up to \$10,000 to support Ontario-based agriculture, agri-food, agri-products, and clean-tech businesses as they work with established business connections to advance market opportunities and secure sales for their innovative products, processes, or technologies.**

The latest in GRAS's Philanthropic and Impact Investment Initiatives, the program is designed to enable businesses, with preference to those located in Wellington, Waterloo, and Perth counties, to respond quickly to global market opportunities.

The RRBD initiative will provide support for eligible travel and associated costs that are required to work with clients where there is a high potential to "close the deal" with real and established business connections. Working with CanLead Solutions, RRBD will be open to application on April 5th, 2022. GRAS has committed \$50,000 in first-year funding in a multi-year commitment to the program.

The GRAS RRBD was modelled on a similar successful government program that was previously available through the Ontario Agri Food Technologies Association (OAFTA).

## THE SPARK SYMPOSIUM

The SPARK Symposium focused on igniting collaboration where agri-food innovation meets investment.

The symposium featured a welcome by Senator Rob Black and several guest speakers on the topics of "Why is ag innovation an important strategic investment?", the current state of the Canada's ag-tech ecosystem, and why investment matters from the point of view of successful ag start-ups like Farm Health Guardian, Dairy Distillery, and Intelliculture. Presentations from Sean O'Connor, Emmertech, and Denise Dewar, BioEnterprise were also a highlight of the day.



# Scholarships



The Grand River Agricultural Society (GRAS) established this bursary/scholarship program to provide financial assistance for students who are permanent residents within our membership area of Wellington County, Perth County, and the Region of Waterloo, and are entering or enrolled in college diploma, university undergraduate or Masters agricultural and/or environmental programs.

## Scholarship Recipients (\$2,500/each):

**Lexi Johnston – Listowel, ON**  
B.Sc – Agriculture  
University of Guelph

**Derrick Knill – Bornholm, ON**  
Doctor of Veterinary Medicine  
Ontario Veterinary College, University of Guelph

**Nora De Vos – Guelph, ON**  
Environmental Science Program  
University of Guelph

**Brie Lirette – Guelph, ON**  
Doctor of Veterinary Medicine  
Ontario Veterinary College, University of Guelph

**Julianna Tindall – Guelph, ON**  
B. Sc – Agriculture  
University of Guelph

**Olivia Chiu – Guelph, ON**  
Masters of Science  
Ontario Veterinary College, University of Guelph

**Nicole Hiddema – Moorefield, ON**  
Diploma of Agriculture Program  
University of Guelph - Ridgetown

**Daniel Marquez – Cambridge, ON**  
Environment and Business Co-Op Program  
University of Waterloo

**Jaydyn Martin – Ariss, ON**  
Diploma of Agriculture Program  
University of Guelph - Ridgetown

**Jordan Scholten - Harriston, ON**  
Masters of Rural Planning & Development  
(Environmental Planning concentration)  
University of Guelph

## Here's what our scholarship recipients say ...



I'm in Bachelor of Sciences, Environmental Science at the University of Guelph. Winning the scholarship means so much to me, as it will help me to further my studies in science which will then help me to decide what I would like to do in the future. I'd really like to, in some way, help fix the climate crisis we are facing as it is a big issue that many people overlook.

- Nora



I am a 2nd year Masters of Science in Rural Planning and Development at the University of Guelph. I am very grateful to be a recipient of the 2021 GRAS scholarship. This award will help me get through the final year of my education, and help me achieve my goals of working as an Environmental Planner in rural Ontario.

- Jordan



Thank you so much for this opportunity. It means that I can support myself and my career as an aspiring veterinarian. I am currently completing my studies at the University of Guelph as a Masters student in clinical studies.

- Olivia

## Community Mini Grant Recipients

### Fergus & District Horticultural Society - \$1,000

Enhancement of the gardens at Terry Fox Park

### Wellington 4-H Poultry Club - \$1,000

Purchase of incubators

### Suicide Awareness Council of Wellington-Dufferin

"In the Know" mental health literacy training

### Zone 7 Egg Producers - \$1,000

Eggs in the Classroom program

### St. Mary Catholic School, Elora - \$1,000

Phase 2 of the playground development

# GRAS Impact



## LRIC Early Career Research Award Launched

# \$70,000

Three researchers from the University of Guelph are sharing the first-ever Early Career Research Award, announced by Livestock Research Innovation Corporation (LRIC) at its annual meeting on June 13. Dr. Jennifer Ellis from the Department of Animal Bioscience at the Ontario Agricultural College (OAC), and Dr. Nicole Ricker and Dr. Sam Workenhe, both in the Department of Pathobiology at the Ontario Veterinary College (OVC), are each receiving \$25,000 towards innovative research they are working on.

LRIC, Grand River Agricultural Society (GRAS), Western Fair Association (WFA), OAC and OVC all provided financial support to create this new award. Originally valued at \$70,000, LRIC and GRAS each contributed an extra \$2,500 this year to support the naming of three winners.



Left to right: Joe Dales, RHA, Brian Mill, LRIC, Jamie Martin, GRAS, Dr. Nicole Ricker and Dr. Sam Workenhe, both in the Department of Pathobiology at the Ontario Veterinary College (OVC), Dr. Jennifer Ellis from the Department of Animal Bioscience at the Ontario Agricultural College (OAC), and Dr. Rene Van Acker, Dean of OAC.



## Equine Guelph

# \$150,000

GRAS is thrilled to give a gift of \$150,000, over three years, to Equine Guelph. Proudly initiating a partnership of a multi-year initiative to continue building and developing valuable programs dedicated to the development of the horse industry.

This donation will directly support Equine Guelph's programs for job training and educational pathways to careers in the horse industry, further developing and expanding their Equine JobTrack, the Large Animal Emergency Rescue program (LAER), and the EquiMania! youth program.

# Community Matters

## School Breakfast Program

# \$37,000

GRAS is fortunate to help provide funding for breakfast/healthy snacks for children in our community. Our vision states that we remain focused on nourishing people, animals, and the planet. GRAS is focusing their food security funding for 2022 to rural elementary school breakfast programs within Wellington County.

GRAS mailed out cheques with a value of \$1,000 to 37 elementary schools in Centre Wellington rural areas. As an organization we felt this was a simple opportunity to give children a step up and strong start to their day. A nourished mind and body will have more energy for learning and growing! Food is fuel and providing these types of programs in schools is essential to our children's education.



## Groves Memorial Forest

# \$70,000

Behind Groves Memorial Community Hospital (GMCH) and along the path that leads to The Cataract Trail, we are helping to continue the legacy of loved ones lost. GRAS prepared the soil for planting and donated the costs of landscaping and planting of the trees for the Groves Memorial Forest. This initiative will provide direct funding for vital equipment purchases at GMCH.

This spring, the planting of the new forest took place with a limited number of trees including dedicated plaques. With a \$3,500 new donation, you're not only helping fund vital equipment purchases at GMCH, but you will be given the opportunity to name a tree with a plaque to last the lifespan of the tree/plaque.



Photo the grand opening of the Groves Memorial Forest. Left to right: Dorothy Key, Diane Squires, Doug McCraig, Deborah Whale, and Angela Stanley, President and CEO, Groves Hospital.

# Horse Racing at Grand River Raceway



Total wagering on GRR live racing for the 2021 season was \$10,165,586 for a daily average of \$216,289. During the same period in 2020, 47 race dates were conducted, \$12,953,560 was wagered, with a daily average of \$269,866. The total wager was down 21.5% over last season. A total of 485 races were conducted this year, 3 less than the same period last year. Ontrack wagering on GRR was \$391,298, or \$10,033 per card once customers were permitted onsite. The drop in wagering was primarily from the US. In 2020, COVID restrictions limited US racetrack operating dates, which created a gap in the market that GRR was able to benefit from. This past season, US racetracks were at full operations.

The Grand River Raceway Corporation became active on April 1, 2021, with confirmation of licensing approval by the AGCO and membership approval by Ontario Racing.

**\$10,165,586**

Wagered from all sources on horse racing at GRR

**\$4,615,060**

Total purses paid

**47**  
RACE  
DATES

June to  
September  
2021

**\$319,298**

Wagered on-track on all horse racing

**\$98,193**

Average purses paid per card

**\$20,960**

Average wagered from all sources per race



Photo by: Dave Landry

Colin Kelly won the title as the leading driver at GRR. The Guelph resident, who relocated to Ontario from his native Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, in the Fall of 2016 won 65 races in 287 starts. Kelly is no stranger to the winner's circle as he also was the leading driver at the Elora oval in 2018. He has over 1,250 career wins and more than \$7million in earnings. Kelly won races for many trainers during the meet, but his main client was Kyle Bossence, who captured the leading trainer title.

Trainer Kyle Bossence recorded 27 wins in 91 starts to win the dash title in 2021. Based in Arthur, ON, the title was his first at GRR. Top performers in the barn were pacers Casimir Swamp Girl and Partyintheshadows, and classy trotter Willyorwonthe.



Photo by: Dave Landry

### **BETTERHAVEMYMONEY**

The \$251,050 Battle of Waterloo was won by Betterhavemymoney, driver James MacDonald, and trainer Nick Gallucci. The Betterthancheddar colt is owned by breeder Millar Farms of Stouffville. The mile time of 1:52 4/5 was a track record for the gelding.



Photo by: Dave Landry

### **LOVE THAT SMILE**

The \$145,060 Battle of the Belles was won by Love That Smile, driver Louis-Philippe Roy, and trainer/owner Rene Bourassa. The Sportswriter filly is also owned by M&S Racing of Rockwood, Gilles Caouette of Sudbury and Marc Gelinas of Shawinigan, Quebec.



# THE GRANDWAY

In 2021, we were able to reopen the doors to The GrandWay, welcoming a wide variety of celebrations and events. We're thrilled to see the weekdays as busy as the weekends! Over the last 12 months, we have seen an increasing number of weddings as couples once again can plan their big day with certainty. As part of the GRAS mandate, The GrandWay welcomes not-for-profit organizations providing them with a space for fundraising, as well as business meetings and training. We have been overwhelmed by the number of charities and not-for-profit groups who have used the space to raise significant funds for community organizations.

The GrandWay was also designed to be a hub for entertainment, and we have enjoyed performances from Elora Community Theatre, Yuk Yuks, and Doll Haus Entertainment.



**KIARA & ILONA**

FROM CANADA'S DRAG RACE SEASON 1

SATURDAY, APRIL 2

GRANDWAY EVENTS CENTRE

DOORS 6PM SHOW 7PM

CHARLIZE ANGEL  
CRYSTAL QUARTZ

ANNE TIQUE DOLL  
ULTRAVIOLET

KARMA KAMELEON  
MADISON AVENUE

ON TOUR  
Mark Brinkley's  
**YUK YUK'S**  
STAND-UP COMEDY

Comedy Night  
at  THE GRANDWAY





At The GrandWay, we have a philosophy that every event we hold is an experience and our team works hard to bring our guests' vision to life. We believe that event planning should be as enjoyable as the event itself, which is why we take a down-to-earth approach and welcome guests to tap into our network and expertise. We take pride in hosting every event, and always execute with a smile!



# Meet The Board



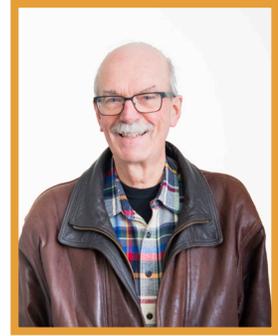
Garth Green  
President



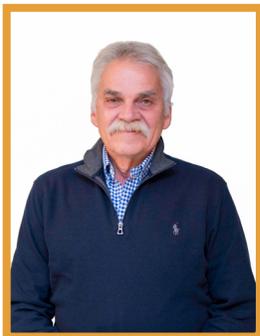
Deborah Whale  
1<sup>st</sup> Vice President



Jean Szkotnicki  
2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President



Robert Davies  
Legal Secretary



Don Jewitt  
Past President



Cynthia Philippe  
Director



Jason Castellan  
Director



Skip Maher  
Director



Tony Morris  
Director



Diane Squires  
Director



Gord Surgeoner  
Director



Dorothy Key  
Executive Assistant/Board  
& Member Liaison

GRAS is run by a volunteer board of directors, all with diverse backgrounds in agriculture, finance, law, corporate, etc. This team works towards fostering innovation and relations in the agriculture and environmental sectors. They proudly set the strategic direction for the entire organization.

# GRAS Partnerships

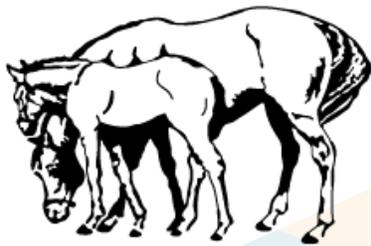
Our partners are making great waves in our community.  
We are proud to work with each of them and see their projects flourishing.



ONTARIO  
AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE



FOUNDATION



EQUINE GUELPH  
helping horses for life™



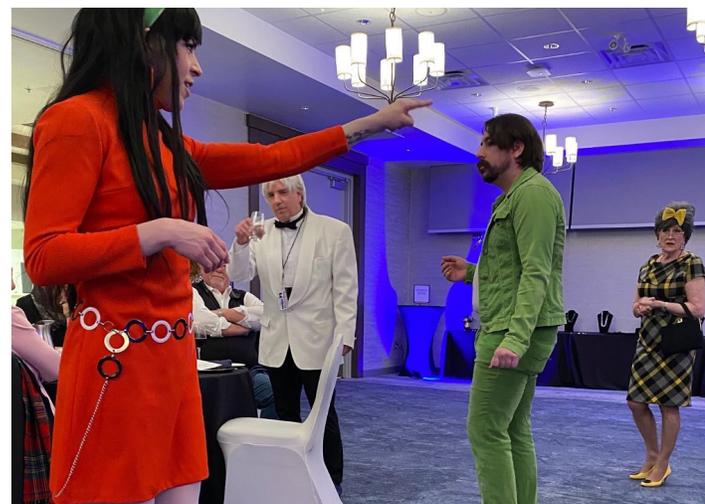
Indspire

Indigenous education, | L'éducation des autochtones.  
Canada's future. | L'avenir du Canada.



CANADA  
4-H Ontario









# Grand River Agricultural Society

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