



## SERIES 6

**Building on previous research on local food procurement, this series is celebrating local food champions and their commitment to supporting Ontario's agri-food sector.**

# LOCAL FOOD CHAMPIONS: FACES BEHIND OUR FOOD



Paul Kelly,  
Research and  
Apiary Manager

**PROFILING:  
LUCKEVICH PINCHIN  
HONEY BEE RESEARCH  
CENTRE**

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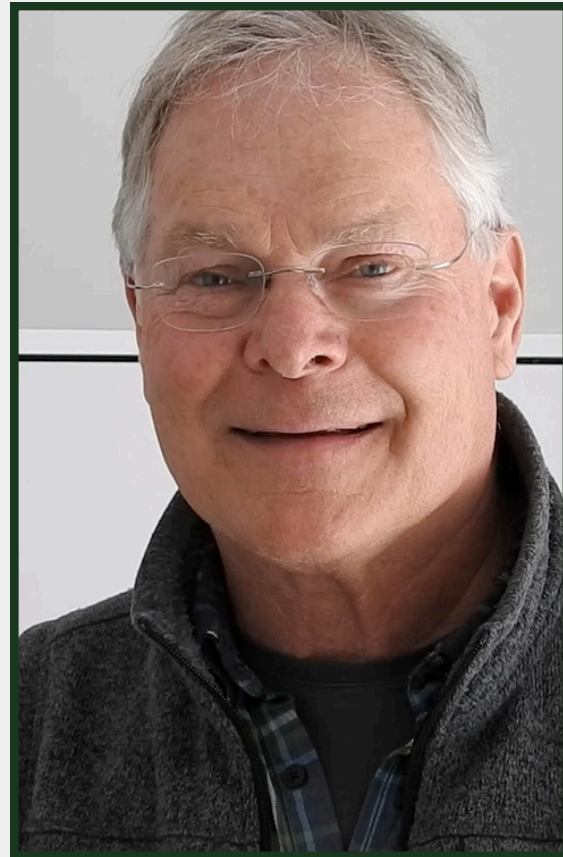
## LOCAL FOOD CHAMPION

# LUCKEVICH PINCHIN HONEY BEE RESEARCH CENTRE

### UNDERSTANDING THE BUZZ

Honey bees are among the most important contributors to our food system, providing essential pollination services for many of the fruits, vegetables, and seed crops that Canadians enjoy every day. Without healthy honey bee populations, crop yields and food production would be significantly reduced. At the University of Guelph's Luckevich Pinchin Honey Bee Research Centre, protecting and strengthening these vital pollinators is at the heart of everything they do. The Centre combines education, research, beekeeping, and community outreach in a way that few institutions can match.

Education is one of the Centre's most impactful contributions. Through university courses, hands-on learning opportunities, and student engagement programs, the Centre inspires the next generation of agricultural leaders and pollinator advocates. More than 800 students each year are introduced to honey bees through University of Guelph programming, making it one of the largest bee education programs in the world. Students gain practical experience through volunteer and employment opportunities, working directly with bees, honey production, and research activities. "It's really nice to see students come along, learn a lot, and then watch them go off into their careers," says Kelly. "A lot of it starts with attracting people in to learn about bees, beekeeping, and bee research."



"We do more things than most places do, we do education, we support research, we operate as a commercial beekeeping operation, and we engage the public. It's all connected."

Paul Kelly, Research and Apiary Manager

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Community engagement and education are foundational to the Centre's work

Beyond the campus, the Centre is deeply committed to community education and engagement. Each year, the Centre offers introductory beekeeping courses that attract aspiring beekeepers and bee enthusiasts from across Ontario. These popular weekend programs cover everything from bee biology and hive management to honey harvesting and pest control. Community volunteers also work alongside Centre staff, gaining practical skills while contributing to the operation. "We're teaching people who want to start beekeeping or learn more about it," Kelly explains. "They help us out, but they also learn more skills and learn what goes on here." Through public workshops, volunteer opportunities, educational events, and the sale of locally produced honey and hive products, the Centre helps connect people to agriculture and the critical role pollinators play in food production.



Photo by Honey Bee Research Centre

Research remains a cornerstone of the Centre's mission. The team focuses on improving honey bee health, addressing challenges such as parasites, diseases, environmental stressors, nutrition, and climate-related impacts. Their work has helped develop innovative approaches to managing Varroa mites, one of the greatest threats facing honey bees worldwide, while also exploring breeding strategies to improve natural resistance within bee populations.

The Centre's long-standing student apiculture club further enriches the learning experience by providing opportunities to create bee-related value-added products (candles, propolis tinctures, lip balms, honeycomb, beeswax food wraps and more), host educational events, and support beekeeping initiatives both locally and internationally.



Photo by Honey Bee Research Centre



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“We’re trying to help beekeepers keep bees healthy, strong, and productive.”

The Centre collaborates extensively with researchers, students, interns, and industry partners across Canada and around the globe. “We take interns from around the world, and we have connections right across Canada,” says Kelly. “They come here to learn, gain experience, and then many of them go home and apply what they’ve learned in their own countries.” These collaborations allow knowledge generated in Guelph to support healthier bee populations and stronger food systems internationally.

The Luckevich Pinchin Honey Bee Research Centre exemplifies what it means to be a local food champion. By advancing scientific research, educating students and beekeepers, engaging the community, and promoting healthy pollinator populations, the Centre helps safeguard the foundation of our food system. Its work ensures that farmers have access to the pollination services needed to produce food while fostering greater public understanding of the relationship between pollinators and agriculture. As Kelly notes, “We’re trying to help beekeepers keep bees healthy, strong, and productive so that we do have these pollinators for our crops and our food.” Through its leadership, innovation, and commitment to education, the Centre continues to make a lasting contribution to local food production and agricultural sustainability. You can purchase raw honey or value-added hive products available at the Luckevich Pinchin Honey Bee Research Centre located at 460 Stone Road East in Guelph or through their on-line shop. All proceeds go back to supporting their programs.



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