



So where is Ithaca, anyway? (AAFC/USDA/ORF meetings, Nov. 2017)

A joint AAFC/USDA strategy meeting and the 2017/2018 Oat Rust Forum (ORF) were held at Cornell University in Ithaca, NY, from 13-16 November, 2017. (For more science-related information, see [here \(AAFC/USDA\)](#) and [here \(ORF\)](#).) It was a bit tricky for some folks, but we all made it to the beautiful Finger Lakes region of upstate New York.



Both meetings were open, and many people were able to attend all four days. The groups represented people with various interests in oat, and were the perfect size for good, meaningful discussions. The plethora of walking trails and decent restaurants in Ithaca also encouraged many side gatherings and deep conversations!

The first two days were devoted to the AAFC/USDA discussions.



Jean-Luc Jannink, from USDA/ARS at Cornell University, addresses the group.



Discussion after Shiaoman Chao's genotyping presentation.



Catherine Howarth from IBERS, UK, presented the European perspective.

AAFC/USDA meeting participants:



Back row: Wubi Bekele^{1*}, Paul Doran², Clare Saied³, Clay Birkett³, Mandy Waters⁴, Dave Matthews³, José Costa³, Tom Fetch¹, Shea Miller¹, Robert Park⁵, Ann Blechl³, Jim Menzies¹, Bao-Luo Ma¹, Gongshe Hu³, Nick Tinker¹, Jae Ohm³, Weikai Yan¹. **Front row:** Charlene Wight¹, Mark Sorrells⁶, Catherine Howarth⁷, Shiaoman Chao³, Jean-Luc Jannink^{3,6}, Kathy Klos³, Jennifer Mitchell Fetch¹, Aida Kebede¹, Ali Nakhforoosh¹. (*affiliations are listed at the end)

Some of us also took the opportunity to visit [Grainful](#), an Ithaca company specializing in producing frozen, savory meals made with steel-cut oats.

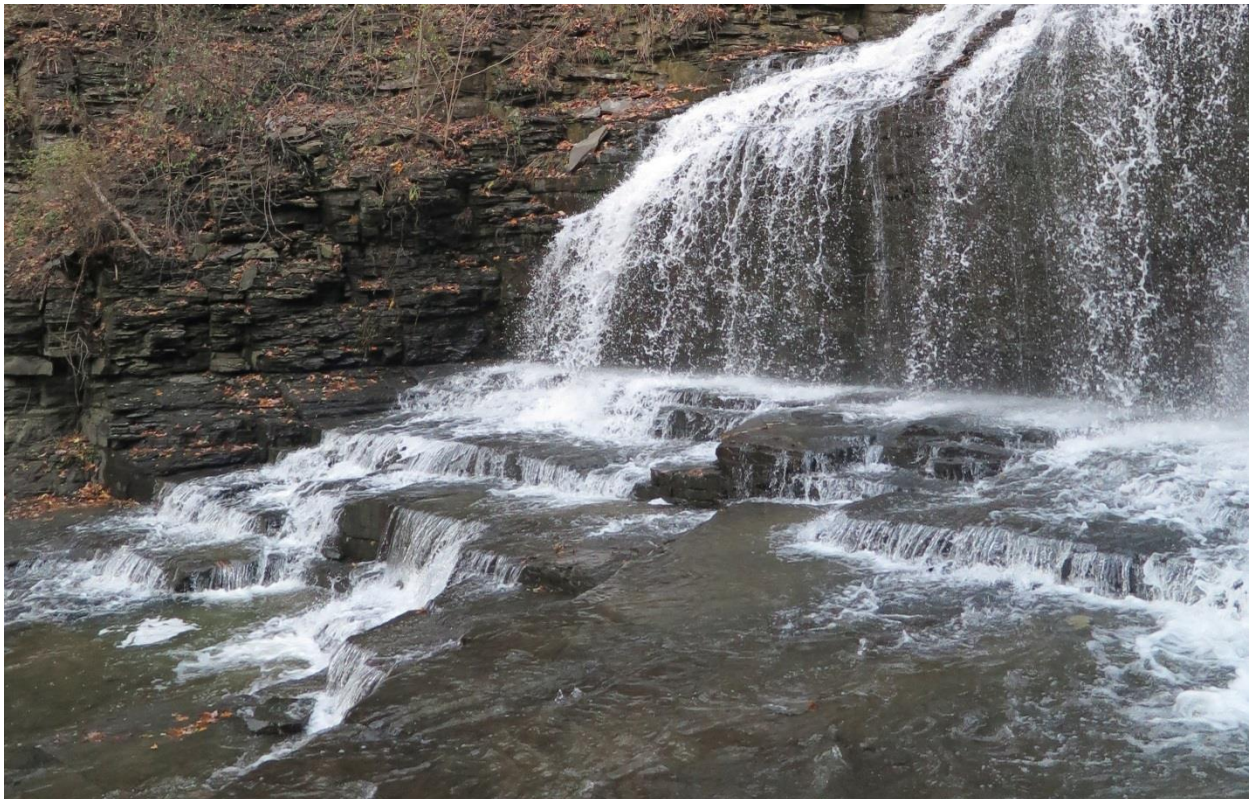


Jan Pajerski of Grainful (left) showing us the test kitchen.

We did a lot of walking through the Cornell campus and around town. The number of waterfalls in Ithaca is astonishing!



Say "cheese"!

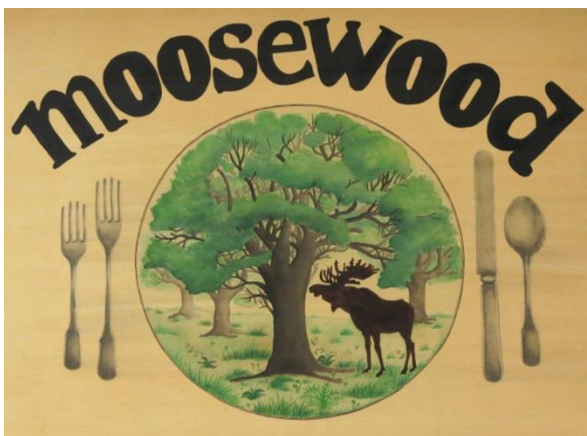


The Oat Rust Forum was held the second two days. It was especially nice to have Robert Park, from the University of Sydney in Australia, present his work and discuss collaborations.



Everyone hard at work....

The banquet for the Oat Rust Forum was held at [Moosewood](#), a world-famous vegetarian restaurant known for its cookbooks!



ORF 2017/2018 participants:



Back row (staggered): Kathy Klos³, Kevin Smith⁸, Shiaoman Chao³, Ann Blechl³, Haiyan Jia⁴, Clare Saied³, Catherine Howarth⁷, Wubi Bekele¹ (hiding), Aida Kebede¹, Weikai Yan¹, Robert Park⁵, Tom Fetch¹, Bruce Roskens⁹ (also hiding), Ali Nakhforoosh¹, Charlene Wight¹, Jim Menzies¹, Jennifer Mitchell Fetch¹, Ali Shaukat¹⁰, Madeleine Smith⁸, Austin Case⁸, Lucia Gutierrez¹¹, Nick Tinker¹. **Front row:** Mark Sorrells⁶, Jim Bradeen⁸, Eric DeBlieck⁹, Tom Rabaey¹², Paul Richter¹², Emmanuel Byamukama¹⁰, José Costa³, Melanie Caffé-Trembl¹⁰, Britta Hansen⁸.

Finally, it came to light during the first meeting that Shiaoman Chao would be retiring. A spontaneous tribute was initiated by Jean-Luc Jannink, and it just happened to be [captured on video](#).... Thank you so much for all of your contributions to the community, Shiaoman!

Many thanks are also due to the organizers and funders of the Cornell meetings: Nick Tinker, Jean-Luc Jannink, Clare Saied, Brita Hansen, Jim Bradeen, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, the Stakman Borlaug Center, and the Oat Rust Initiative (ORI) Executive Committee. Thanks also to Robert Park and Catherine Howarth for traveling such a long way to participate!

-Charlene Wight.

Participants' affiliations:

¹Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC), ²NRGene, Ltd., ³USDA/ARS, ⁴PepsiCo, Inc., ⁵Univ. Sydney, Australia, ⁶Cornell University, ⁷IBERS, Aberystwyth, UK, ⁸Univ. Minnesota, ⁹Grain Millers, Inc., ¹⁰South Dakota State Univ., ¹¹Univ. Wisconsin-Madison, ¹²General Mills, Inc..



Catherine, Madeleine, Nick, and Wubi having a somewhat less-deep conversation (!) in Stewart Park, at the end of Cayuga Lake.