

■ **EDUCATION:** \$1M research effort at Trent University

Math profs helping Qatar tackle drought

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Two math professors at Trent University are helping Qatar navigate the unpredictabilities associated with climate change and food insecurities.

Professors Kenzu Abdella and Marco Pollanen are creating mathematical models to help Qatar farmers predict events such as crop production or likely severity of droughts.

Qatar is a nation facing evolving conditions due to climate change and desertification, Abdella said, and needs help forming long-term solutions.

The goal is to provide farmers with a better sense of what's to come, Pollanen explained, which will help the nation come up with the appropriate safeguards.

"If you know what the cost of a drought is, you can insure against it," he said.

The two are joining four other professionals who focus on food security, providing Qatar's farmers with unique solutions rooted in mathematical models. Their partners are researchers in Qatar

and at the University of Western Sydney in Australia.

The Qatar Foundation is providing \$1.03 million to fund the project.

Their work will also help Qatar choose best conversation practices, Abdella said, by knowing the different variables at work.

The three-year project begins in the fall.

Abdella said the pair will stay at Trent University, but will likely spend a lot of time travelling to Qatar, along with hosting their other team members.

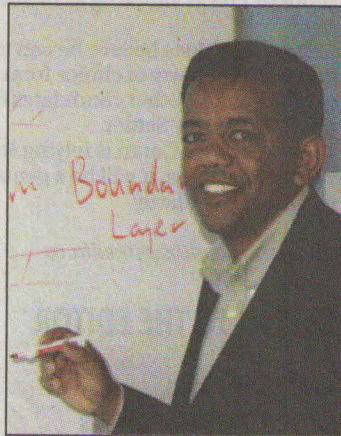
Abdella said projects and partnerships like theirs are becoming more common. What's unique about this one, he said, is that it was initiated by Qatar and Qatar University.

Qatar is a small state with a population of 250,000 and limited agriculture, but its oil and gas reserves rank it as one of the world's richest nations. It sits on a small peninsula, surrounded by the Persian Gulf on three sides and bordering Saudi Arabia to the south.

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Prof. Marco Pollanen



Prof. Kenzu Abdella

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