

CELEBRATING **10 YEARS** OF INNOVATIVE IDEAS



**Investment
Agriculture
Foundation**
of British Columbia

Funding provided by:



Growing Up Together: IAF's Contributions to Agriculture

The Investment Agriculture Foundation manages and distributes federal and provincial funds in support of innovative projects benefiting British Columbia's agri-food industry. Since 1996, we have been entrusted with more than \$90 million in funding to help the industry seize

new opportunities and deal with emerging issues. Over these last 10 years, our work has evolved and expanded along with the array of programs we administer on behalf of the Government of Canada and the Province of BC. These

programs include the federal Canadian Adaptation and Rural Development and the Advancing Canadian Agriculture and Agri-Food programs; the joint federal/provincial Safety Nets funding and Agri-Food Futures Fund; and several industry specific, provincially-funded programs.

In recognition of our tenth anniversary, we're putting the spotlight on a small number of diverse and innovative projects we've supported over the years. By no means does this sampling tell the whole story, but it does provide an indication of what's gone before, what's currently being done, and what may be possible in the future.



Conservation project wins stewardship award

A BC Conservation Foundation project brought conservationists and ranchers together to save the Chilako Watershed in 2000. Ranchers were worried that river erosion would lead to flooding and conservationists were concerned about the destruction of salmon spawning beds. As a result, riverbanks were stabilized with cover grass, cottonwood trees and fencing, and hard river-crossing mats now protect spawning beds from farm equipment. IAF contributed \$31,400 to the project, which won the Countryside Canada Environmental Stewardship Award from the Canadian Federation of Agriculture in 2002.

Provinces share cost and benefits of vaccine study

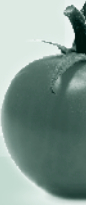
IAF works with similar organizations in other provinces and territories with benefits that reach beyond BC borders. Working collaboratively means sharing costs and risks, and it also encourages new industry alliances. The Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization, based at the University of Saskatchewan, received \$85,000 from IAF in 2000, and with funding from other councils and industry organizations, studied needle-free delivery systems for vaccines that protect dairy and beef animals against respiratory diseases.

Giving a lift to the greenhouse vegetable industry

IAF helped the BC greenhouse vegetable industry grow when it allocated a total of \$1 million in 2002 for the industry to update and implement its strategic plan. Rather than applying separately to IAF for every individual project, the greenhouse industry opted to seek an allocation to increase its farm gate value from \$200 million to \$303 million over a five-year period. This project demonstrates an example of industry thinking strategically to upgrade its production, marketing and communication capabilities, and increase its competitiveness.

UBC studies how BC wines age

In 2003, the Wine Research Centre at the University of British Columbia received \$176,800 from IAF to begin studying which grape varieties age best in various microclimates in the province. Selected wines will be evaluated for 24 years, using both taste panels and chemical evaluations. With trends expected to emerge by the 10-year mark, the unique database created in this project will provide the industry with feedback to help BC wines improve their aging potential and their competitiveness worldwide.



Enhancing resistance to scrapie

BC sheep are closer to becoming scrapie free, thanks to the two-year BC Purebred Sheep Genotyping Project. DNA samples of more than 2,000 participating sheep will help develop breeding strategies to enhance flocks' resistance to scrapie, a fatal disease similar to BSE in cattle, which has created barriers to trade. The market value of BC sheep has already begun to increase as a result of this recently-completed project, which received \$139,800 from IAF.

Less pests and better taste for Creston cherries

The Creston chapter of the Okanagan Kootenay Cherry Growers Association has completed the first phase of a project that will ultimately help educate cherry growers about pest control methods. In 2005, the project recorded the number of fungicide applications and researched the presence of diseases, the results of which helped growers in the Creston Valley reduce overall chemical use by 13%. IAF's \$52,500 contribution will help growers continue to lower fungicide use, ensure food safety for the public, and maintain high quality fruit.

Livestock handlers benefit from small project grant

For the last two years, IAF has strived to fund small-scale projects, especially those initiated by smaller industry organizations. One such project funded this year was a low stress livestock handling clinic. Organic producers Lorna and Charles Ruechel wanted to share an effective cattle handling technique with their community, so they hosted a workshop with Dylan Biggs – a renowned livestock handler – on their farm in Lumby. IAF contributed \$3,120 to the workshop costs.



Helping the Landscape and Nursery Sector Grow

The BC Landscape & Nursery Association (BCLNA) has worked on more than a dozen projects with support from IAF. Funding ranged from \$4,000 to \$140,000 to address a wide variety of industry priorities, including several projects aimed at disease and pest control, such as rose downy mildew and clematis stem rot. Most recently, IAF reached beyond BC borders to the Canadian Nursery Landscape Association's integrated pest management (IPM) project, which worked with the BCLNA and equivalent provincial organizations to develop and implement IPM technologies and strategies. For Jane Stock, BCLNA executive director, the ability to work with other stakeholders is a key to project success.



Three Cheers for Three Leaders

Online safety training for processing workers

The BC Institute of Technology, working with industry and other agencies, has developed a food safety course targeted to the specific needs of plant workers in the food industry with nearly \$9,000 in funding from IAF. The "Food Safety for the Plant Worker" course is available across BC in classroom and online format. By improving safety awareness and training accessibility, the course improves the quality of products processed in BC.



Grain testing addresses Peace region growing conditions

To ensure that the grain industry continues to adapt and grow, the BC Grain Producers Association is researching the crops and crop varieties best suited to the growing conditions of the Peace region. This multi-year project, which began in 2002, is conducting five separate plant research studies, including one that is evaluating and developing new, early maturing linseed flax varieties as a more reliable and value-added crop for Peace growers. IAF contributed nearly \$540,000 to the project.

Agriculture education a hit with BC schools

The Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation offers quality classroom resources for teachers from kindergarten to Grade 12 to increase students' awareness of the BC agriculture sector. IAF has funded several projects for the popular program over the last 10 years. While the group originally relied very heavily on IAF funding, IAF helped them grow increasingly self-sufficient by teaching them how to acquire new sources of funding. Most recently, IAF provided \$21,500 towards the development of a new strategic plan completed this year.

Three elected chairs have guided the Investment Agriculture Foundation through ten years of successful funding programs. It all started on October 15, 1996 when IAF's original member organizations appointed 11 directors to the first board. Bruce Bakker, chair of the member's group at the time, chaired the initial board meetings until Gary Kenwood assumed the role on January 9, 1997.

"The foundation was a brand new idea when I became a director," said Kenwood. Even though he didn't know what he was getting into, he agreed to serve as IAF's first chair because he had related experience and time to spare, having just sold his nursery business.

Because Kenwood was chair for the first years, he was involved in a broad range of activities, from forming the IAF mission statement to collaborating with adaptation councils in other provinces and territories. He said one of the most important challenges of his term was establishing a positive relationship with the BC agri-food industry.

IAF was formed to distribute funds for the Canadian Adaptation and Rural Development Fund, and some people didn't expect it to outlast the four-year program. However, Kenwood explained that the first board took measures to ensure a longer life for the organization, such as seeking incorporation as a foundation in October 1996.

"By the time I was on the board it was pretty clear to us that this was a long-term organization," said Walter Goerzen, who was an IAF director for two years before he became chair in May 2003.

He welcomed the director appointment because he was interested in IAF's funding programs and the positive, industry-developing nature of the foundation. IAF grew quickly during Goerzen's years as chair:

"The number of programs administered, the amount of funding available and the number of staff all increased substantially," said Goerzen. "The growth and change was exciting because there was increased opportunity to work with industry."

IAF continues to grow today, which is why the current chair is confident of its future.

"Based on money on hand and indications of potential future funding, a long-term future exists for the foundation," said Bert Miles, who became chair of IAF in May 2006 after serving as a director for four years. In addition to secure funding, he said there are many industry challenges to be addressed, which will keep IAF busy for a long time.

"We need to find innovative ways to support industry and help groups secure matching funding sources," said Miles. "The biggest challenge the foundation faces is having flexibility and recognizing that different sectors have different needs."

He added that IAF needs to be more proactive in finding and funding projects that result in increased farm gate income and long-term industry viability.

Although there are challenges that lie ahead, Miles acknowledges IAF's important contributions to the agri-food industry over the last 10 years.

"Celebrating the 10-year anniversary recognizes the strength of the foundation and the commitment of the provincial and federal governments to the foundation as an effective delivery vehicle," he said.

Kenwood agreed, adding that the foundation has much to celebrate, especially in its enhanced relationship with the BC agri-food industry.

Similarly, Goerzen added, "This is the perfect opportunity to reflect on what IAF has accomplished and highlight what it has to offer. A 10-year anniversary for an organization like the foundation is a significant achievement." □



"Partnering provides a broader point of view from the beginning and sometimes increases the availability of project resources," she said.

IAF has also aided market development strategies, such as a Garden Inspired Tourism project, which helped the industry capitalize on opportunities created by efforts to encourage garden-related tourism. Furthermore, IAF funding has helped the industry adapt to emerging challenges, such as new regulations to prevent the spread of sudden oak

death, a disease that has caused widespread damage to trees and shrubs in the Pacific Northwest.

"It is difficult to imagine how BCLNA and our industry would be able to manage the complex producer and social challenges of today's ornamental horticulture world without the financial assistance and learning resulting from Investment Agriculture's birth ten years ago," said Stock. IAF has truly helped this industry to adapt, diversify and grow. □

History Timeline

1996

May 27 Following discussions with the governments of Canada and British Columbia, BC adaptation council formed by: BC Cattlemen's Association; BC Federation Agriculture; BC Fruit Growers' Association; BC Horticulture Coalition; Council of Marketing Boards of BC; and F.A.R.M. Community Council of BC

Oct 15 - Member organizations appoint first board of 11 directors

Oct 31 - The Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC is incorporated under the BC Society Act as a not-for-profit society

1997

Jan 9 - First executive elected; Gary Kenwood appointed chair of the board

Mar 7 - IAF allocates funding to the Central Farm Working Group to establish the BC Agriculture Council as the central farm organization after the BC Federation of Agriculture disbanded

May 1 - IAF board approves first project applications to receive funding

May 2 - First annual general meeting held in Abbotsford

1999

Sep 16 - IAF bylaws amended to enable the members to add new members; board accepts the BC Milk Producers' Association as an official member of the Foundation



2001

Apr 6 - IAF welcomes three new member organizations: BC Grain Producers Association; BC Pork Producers Association; and the Horse Council of BC

Number of voting directors increased by two to allow for broader representation of the BC agri-food industry

Oct 1 - Website and new newsletter launched with new positioning statement: Helping Agriculture Adapt, Diversify and Grow

2002

Apr 24 - IAF welcomes two new member organizations: BC Greenhouse Growers Association and BC Landscape & Nursery Association

2003

May 30 - Walter Goerzen appointed chair of the board

Aug 1 - IAF appoints its first full-time Executive Director; Robert Simon, to handle expanding mandate

2004

Jan 22 - IAF signs on to help deliver the federal-provincial Agricultural Policy Framework's environmental farm planning component and its incentive programs through the BC Agriculture Council

2005

Apr 26 - Council of Marketing Boards of BC resigns as a member of the Foundation; IAF members accept the BC Poultry Association as a new member

Nov 7 - BC Agriculture Council awarded Canadian Agri-Food Award of Excellence for Environmental Stewardship due to successful IAF nomination

2006

May 30 - H.A. (Bert) Miles appointed chair of the board

Oct 31 - IAF marks its 10-year anniversary

Behind the Scenes at IAF

Every successful organization has a well-organized team of professionals that carry out the essential day-to-day activities. IAF is no different, and as the foundation has grown over the last 10 years, so has that team. When IAF was first established, work was carried out by a couple of staff seconded from the BC Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Foods (now the BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands). Today, with 13 staff hard at work, funding partners entrust a growing number of programs to IAF for delivery on their behalf.

The current IAF team is listed here, from the longest serving staff member to the latest arrival. Unless otherwise noted, all staff work out of the main office in Victoria.

Sherry Greening

Comptroller
Joined IAF in October 1996

Elaine Burgess

Administrative Officer
Joined IAF in September 1999

Al Helmersen

Executive Director
Joined IAF in September 2000

Debra Gibbard

Program Administrator; Orchard Renovation Program (Summerland)
Joined IAF in April 2003

Linda Rodd

Administration Officer; Orchard Renovation Program (Summerland)
Joined IAF in April 2003

Emily MacNair

Program Manager; Plant Industries
Joined IAF in March 2004

Coreen Moroziuk

Program Manager; Animal Industries (Burnaby)
Joined IAF in November 2004

Rick Van Kleeck, PEng

Coordinator; Livestock Waste Tissue Initiative (Abbotsford)
Joined IAF in May 2005

Jessica Ng

Agri-Food Futures Fund Administrator
Joined IAF in June 2005

Alana Wilson, PAg

Program Analyst
Joined IAF in October 2005

Sandra Tretick

Communications Coordinator
Joined IAF in October 2005

Lenore Barron

Administrative Assistant
Joined IAF in May 2006

Kate Lautens

Communications Assistant (Co-op)
Joined IAF in September 2006

Bill Henderson

Manager; Project Development & Implementation
Joined IAF in October 2006