

Growing Tomorrow

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Inroads in Europe for Canadian Wine and Spirits

An agreement between Canada and the European Union (EU) on wines and spirits is expected to maintain stability in Canada's domestic marketing and distribution practices and significantly open the European market to Canadian products.

The agreement was signed by Agriculture and Agri-Food Minister Lyle Vanclief, International Trade Minister Pierre Pettigrew and European representatives on September 16.

"This agreement strengthens Canada-EU relations by eliminating previous irritants in the wine and spirits sectors," said Minister Pettigrew. "In addition

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Dr. Punja and Mahfuzur Rahman of SFU examine the severity of root rot on ginseng collected from an experimental plot at Harper Ranch Ginseng Garden near Kamloops.

"Functional Foods" an expanding opportunity

An alliance between four Health Product and Functional Food industry associations is accepting proposals to drive industry expansion and growth.

In 2002, the British Columbia Herb Growers Association, the Associated Ginseng Growers of British Columbia, the Sea Buckthorn Growers Association and the British Columbia Functional Food and Nutraceutical Network (BCFN) forged an Industry Alliance and prepared a Strategic Plan for initiating industry wide growth.

Now, their Steering Committee is accepting project proposals, and so far, has received 18 submissions with 3 projects currently moving forward.

The Strategic Plan focuses on identifying markets, value-chains and distribution channels, and on creating alliances between health, medical and educational communities, as well the need to clarify product standards.

All of this work has been in response to the ever more health-conscious and

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Tarra Mason Ward joins our Performance & Evaluation Team



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to resolving grievances, the agreement solidifies Canadian access to the EU marketplace.”

“This is a win for Canada, it’s a win for Europe, and most of all, it’s a win for wine and spirits producers and consumers in both of our regions who can now look forward to more trade opportunities and a greater variety of choice than in the past,” said Minister Vanclief.

The agreement also offers a simplified certification process for the export of Canadian wine and protection for Canadian wine and spirit geographical indications, such as Okanagan Valley, Niagara Peninsula and Canadian rye whisky.

Provincial governments and industry played a major part in the negotiation of the agreement and will continue to play a significant role in its implementation, which will likely come into force in early 2004.

For Canada, the major benefit is the maintenance of favourable measures that allow wineries in BC and Ontario to operate private wine store outlets that sell only wine produced in Canada. The agreement will also facilitate access to the EU market for Canadian exports and, in particular, for Canada’s flagship products of Canadian whisky and icewine. ■

“Functional Foods” *continued*

prevention-minded consumer looking for value-added properties in their foods and supplements. From ginseng to garlic extract – herbs, natural products and functional foods are in high demand. The Canadian market for Health Products and Functional Foods has been estimated at between \$1.6 billion and \$2.4 billion.

Acting on a Strategic Plan objective to enhance market access for BC products, one newly funded project is a conference titled “Japan, A global leader in the development and marketing of functional foods.” Japan has one of the largest and well-regulated functional

food markets in the world, presenting exciting opportunities for BC’s export industry.

Through the Agri-Food Futures Fund, the Investment Agriculture Foundation is contributing \$400,000 to the implementation of a five-year Strategic Plan. “All organizations within the Industry Alliance have common goals,” says Jerzy Zawistowski, Director of BCFN, “We are more consolidated and stronger when we work together under one umbrella.”

To find out more, check out their website: http://www.scbc.org/programs/health_product_and_food_program.htm ■

Planning The Future of Agroforestry

Agroforestry integrates agriculture and forestry practices and can provide producers with new opportunities to diversify. To realize the full potential of alternative cropping methods, an Agroforestry Steering Committee has created a five-year Strategic Plan.

Through the Agri-Food Futures Fund, the Foundation has committed \$500,000 for the implementation of the Strategic Plan over the next five years. “The Strategic Plan’s purpose is to promote and increase agroforestry crop production systems in BC,” says Harold Reedy, Chair of the Steering Committee.

Agroforestry practices include silvopasture, timberbelts, integrated riparian management, forest farming and alley cropping. Resulting crops and products can be both traditional and non-traditional including everything from medicinals and wood products to syrups, Christmas trees and florals.

The Strategic Plan was developed after an extensive survey of BC producers was conducted. “We found that sustainability and environmental stewardship were major reasons for wanting to implement agroforestry practices,” says Reedy. Agroforestry can also



Jennifer Curtis (New Crop Specialist, BCMAFF) and Detmar Schwichenberg harvest cedar boughs from a windbreak buffer protecting forage fields on the Schwichenberg Dairy Farm. The boughs will be sold for extra income.



Harold Macy (right) and Adam Campbell harvest sap at Headwaters Creek Woodlot in the Oyster River Watershed, Vancouver Island. Big Leaf Maple sap is used to produce delicious syrup and unique wine.

Planning The Future *continued*

provide environmental protection when used in riparian or windbreak areas, as pollution and odor filters, as living fences to enrich soil and to prevent erosion and loss of topsoil.

“To increase agroforestry activities in BC we must raise awareness about the benefits of practicing agroforestry systems,” Reedy continued. “Our Committee will be seeking interested industry partners to assist us in

implementing our Strategic Plan. We also are wanting to identify existing successful agroforestry operations to showcase.”

In November, Agroforestry workshops will be held in Oyster River, Abbotsford, Vernon, Cranbrook and Prince George. Contact Harold Reedy at hreedy@bulkey.net or Richard Hallman at 604-556-3148. ■

Beautiful Gardens ... a Super Natural BC

The BC Landscape and Nursery Association (BCLNA) is developing new tourism-inspired ideas for expanding the domestic ornamental horticulture market.

Garden-inspired tourism focuses on enhancing BC's international reputation as a tourist destination with beautiful gardens to enjoy including parks, theme gardens and the landscaping of our communities.

This BCLNA market development initiative encourages municipalities and businesses to focus on creating attractive landscapes as a means to enhance tourist appeal – and thus expanding the market for BC nursery plants and landscape services.

“If municipalities across BC can see the measurable economic returns from investing in ornamental horticulture, there is a significant opportunity to expand the market for BC's nursery growers, retailers and landscape trades,” said Gordon Mathies, President of the BCLNA. “Our focus of building strong working alliances outside of the industry is paying dividends.”

The current initiative has received \$21,250 in funding from the Foundation – accounting for 50% of total funding. Some of the projects underway include:



David Boag and Heather Edward, Co-Chairs for BC's Communities in Bloom program, at the first BCLNA meeting to build partnerships between Communities in Bloom, the ornamental horticulture industry and BC municipalities.

- Partnering with the Communities in Bloom Program to strengthen its administrative foundation.
- Improving the garden image database of Tourism BC and the Canadian Tourism Commission.
- Increasing BC's presence at international trade shows by pooling resources between small businesses.
- Further developing the existing website (www.gardeninspiredtourism.ca) for public use with new and more detailed images of gardens, and for tourist companies worldwide, with a searchable database to find unique gardens to add to their trip packages. ■

Our New Executive Director

The Foundation is pleased to announce the arrival of Robert Simon as Executive Director. Robert started a two year term with us on August 1, 2003



Executive Director Robert Simon

through a secondment agreement with the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries.

“As the Foundation mandate and programs have grown, so has the need for the Foundation to move from a part-time to a full-time Executive Director,” says Walter Goerzen, Chair. “Enhanced program funding from the federal and provincial governments has expanded the activities of the Foundation. This appointment gives the Foundation necessary management resources to operate as an effective and independent organization focused on the needs of industry.”

Rob brings excellent qualifications to his new position. He has demonstrated leadership skills in several challenging situations over the past nine years while working with the Ministry of Finance and Corporate Relations as a Team Leader, with the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs as a Negotiations Analyst and with the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries as a Policy Analyst. Rob has a BA from Wilfred Laurier University, Waterloo, a Certificate of Business Administration from the University of Victoria, and a MA in Conflict Analysis and Management from Royal Roads University. ■

