

Growing Tomorrow

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BC farmers to gain from multi-million dollar agreement

On June 13th, Agriculture and Agri-Food Minister Lyle Vanclief and BC Minister of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries John van Dongen met in Delta to sign the Canada-British Columbia Implementation Agreement. The agreement puts into action the national Agricultural Policy Framework (APF), ushering in new programming and a five-year commitment in federal and provincial funding to improve and strengthen BC farming.

“The agreement spells out many of the concrete measures that both governments will undertake to deliver on their common goals,” said Mr. Vanclief. “It will ensure that Canadian

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William Cheuk, Vancouver, BC

Great leadership and fresh thinking continues

As four new directors join our Board

The Investment Agriculture Foundation of British Columbia is pleased to welcome four new board directors.

William Cheuk, of Vancouver, BC representing Horticulture - Greenhouse, Nursery & Floriculture. William is the Managing Director and Vice President of South Alder Green Houses and oversees the production and management of a 23-acre hi-tech vegetable greenhouse. William's background is chemical engineering, horticulture and business

administration. William is also a Director of Global Greenhouse Produce Inc., Board Member of BC Greenhouse Vegetable Research Council, and Vice President of the BC Greenhouses Growers' Association.

Tony DiMaria, of Lake Country, BC representing Horticulture - Tree Fruits and Grapes. Tony has a machining/mechanics background. He has been farming for 21 years and manages a 35-acre operation consisting of 'new

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BC Farmers to gain *continued*

agriculture continues to be a key sector for the prosperity and quality of life of all Canadians.” The APF will help Canadian agriculture make the most of new international opportunities by safeguarding and enhancing food safety and quality, advancing environmentally-sound agricultural practices and fostering innovation.

“The agreement ensures B C farmers are on a level playing field with producers in other provinces,” said Minister van Dongen.

New APF programming in the areas of environment, food safety and quality, renewal and science and innovation in British Columbia is valued at more than \$60 million. Funding for the business risk management programs will be driven by demand. Canada and British Columbia are committing more than \$32 million over three years to support the transition from existing safety net programs. ■



Ministers John van Dongen and Lyle Vanclief

Highly-qualified individuals *continued*



Tony DiMaria, Lake Country, BC

varieties’ apples, pears, and table grapes. He is presently Chairman of the BCFGA Northern District Council, a member of the BCFGA

Crop Protection Committee, and a Director of the North Okanagan Growers Cooperative.

Gerry McClintock, of Courtenay, BC representing Community and Rural Agriculture. Gerry operates a 100-acre farm on Vancouver Island. Cow/calf and hay are the main farm products, along with direct farm marketing of blueberries and raspberries, and some meat chickens. Gerry also owns and operates a 110-acre managed wood lot just south of

Courtenay. Gerry is President of the Comox Valley Farmers’ Institute and sits on the Agricultural Advisory committee of the Comox Strathcona Regional District.

Gary Sandberg of Chilliwack, BC representing Other Livestock Sector. Gary has a diverse background in food processing, and in food sciences as the Program Head of Food Technology at BCIT. He is also the owner of Three Stirrups Stables Corporation where he breeds Trakehner horses. Gary holds a PhD in food science and is an active member of the BC Horse Council. He also owns and operates a small vineyard. ■



Gary Sandberg, Chilliwack, BC



Gerry McClintock, Courtenay, BC

A Parting Word

The completion of my mandate as Chair marks a time for reflection on the accomplishments of the Investment Agriculture Foundation since its inception.

Experienced industry leaders, each representing specific sectors, came together in late 1996 as the Directors charged with developing goals and objectives and a vision for nurturing this embryonic, pan-agriculture organization, all within the guidelines of our member industry groups and government funding agencies.

Essential to nurturing the vision for the fledgling Foundation, was the development of independent Directors into a highly cohesive Board – one with

a passion for the success of the agri-food industry as a whole. That important accomplishment was central to the Foundation’s leadership role in motivating industry partners to take a strategic approach in creating a stronger industry and in supporting initiatives focused on adaptation, innovation, and most importantly, partnership.

The Foundation’s strong commitment to working with both industry and government partners to develop strategic initiatives has brought new and enhanced program funding to the BC industry. Partnership with industry and all levels of government will continue to be essential to the success of the Foundation.

L. Gary Kenwood

BC Grain Producers aim to beat the weather

At the best of times, the climate of the BC Peace River region poses challenges for agriculture. The frost-free season in the Peace is chillingly brief and grain producers cannot always rely on varieties proven successful in other regions. However, the long days and short nights of summer in this northern region present other possibilities.

As such, the BC Grain Producers Association's research committee has developed five research priorities and trial projects spanning four years, from 2002 - 2006. The IAF is contributing \$540,000 (45%) to the trials, within a total research project cost of \$1.2 million.

Five areas of research are being undertaken.

- Short Season Variety Selection** to determine the top 20% yielding varieties and varieties with reduced average maturities.
- Growing Degree Days Project** to develop a model or system allowing a heat unit value to be assigned to current and future varieties to assess maturities, improve performance predictions, yield higher quality crops.
- Day – Length Insensitive Soybean** a new crop potential to determine the potential of soybean production to expand cropping options.



Clair Langlois (Research Manager) harvesting wheat from Fort St. John test plots

Short Season Flax Breeding to produce three lines of early maturing linseed flax.

Higher Value Barley to promote management or selection processes to arrive at two or more varieties that produce quality traits for malt and brewing standards.

With the grim weather in 2002, the harsh conditions helped researchers draw definitive conclusions. Clair Langlois, research manager with the BCGPA said, "Normal weather could have let some borderline varieties hang in for several years. Ruling out varieties is a positive thing and now we can free up resources for other crops."

At the helm: our new Executive Team

The Foundation is pleased to announce the election of Walter Goerzen, *PAG*, Chair; Bob McCoubrey, Vice-Chair; Deborah Henderson, Secretary and H.A. (Bert) Miles *CMA*, Treasurer. The new Executive Members represent Post Farm Gate, Emerging Sectors, Farm Supply and Post Farm Gate, respectively. This new executive team will continue to focus on innovation and build upon the important legacy of former Executive Committee members.

Four of the Foundation's founding directors are now retiring from the Board. Gary Kenwood (past Chair, Vancouver), Ben Doerksen (Abbotsford), Fred Gartrell (Summerland) and Roma Tingle (Prince George) have all contributed their expertise and broad industry knowledge to ensure that Foundation decisions create a stronger industry future. The Foundation is very pleased to recognize Gary, Ben, Fred and Roma for their dedication and lasting contribution to BC Agriculture. ■

Research probes Food and Beverage Issues

BC food and beverage processors comprise more than 130 agricultural commodity groups. They do not have an organization to lead strategy development for the industry - and this was one of the subjects of a recent research project, commissioned by a Food & Beverage Processors' Steering Committee.

The research was part of a larger project funded through the IAF to help develop a long term strategy for BC food and beverage processors and to provide industry access to the \$1.5 million Agri-Food Future Funds. The Steering Committee was formed in 2002 after a series of IAF-led workshops involving processor representatives across the province.

The research helped to clarify priorities of the industry. Responsive and Equal Regulations, Labour Costs and Access to Capital were considered the most important issues. Market Access also stood out.

Interest in forming an umbrella organization is linked to the perceived value membership can bring. Finding a common goal is the challenge ahead. "Diversity is one of the industry's strengths, but it also detracts from the single focus that drives a clear, dynamic strategy," explains Pieter Vanderpol, the Committee's Chair.

When asked what services an industry-led and financed organization might provide, respondents indicated that they would be most interested in:

- Information about government programs and how to access grants and funds (53%).
- Lobbying government on food and beverage issues (50%).
- Education seminars on various topics and issues of relevance (45%).
- A web site providing information about issues of relevance to the industry (43%).

The report is on the web site at www.iafbc.ca.

With this research input, the Steering Committee is working on a BC industry strategy to develop and exploit its competitive advantage. ■

Keeping pace with organics



Ironwood Farm Organic Produce, Comox Valley Farmers Market

Consumers can't get enough of BC organic products and the need for information among organic producers is growing exponentially. A recent seminar put on by the Certified Organic Association of British Columbia (COABC) proved extremely valuable in helping farmers come together to share information on topics ranging from production to marketing.

Under the Agri-Food Future Fund, the IAF supports organics as an emerging sector. As such, to date, the IAF has committed \$1 million in funding to the COABC Strategic Plan for 2002-2005 - of which the recent seminar was one of the overall plan's initiatives.

Held over three days in February at Camp Alexandra in White Rock, the seminar addressed many topics including US market trends, soil health, biotechnology, and on-farm food safety. Speakers from a variety of institutions - from UBC to Capers Markets - led panel discussions and workshops for the 125 delegates.

Keynote speaker was Bob Williams, Chair of Van City Capital Corporation. "Bob inspired a lot of creative ideas, particularly in the way in which businesses of different sizes can learn to collaborate for mutual benefit" said Cathleen Kneen, COABC board member and editor of the BC Organic Grower Magazine.

The organic sector in BC is growing at approximately 20% per year. While consumer demand for organics is strong, region-specific loyalty or shopping habits are not. Therefore, to remain competitive, the BC organic sector needed a clear strategic plan to increase production capacity, promote products and develop the marketplace, and foster environmental sustainability.

Beyond these overall goals, the new COABC Strategic Plan will address a host of challenges and opportunities facing the industry, from knowledge gaps to labeling confusion, to setting consistent industry-wide policy. ■

2003 Application Deadlines

The following dates have been established to provide an effective administrative process for proposals going to the Foundation's Board for consideration. **Sept 1 • Oct 2 • Nov 7, 2003 • Jan 5 • Feb 10 • April 2 • April 30 • May 28, 2004**

Overview of Projects Funded

Projects approved in the period May 1, 2003 to June 30, 2003

Project proposals approved	10
The Foundation contribution	\$499,238
Total value of projects	\$1,049,980

Summary of total projects approved by the Foundation to June 30, 2003

Letters of Intent received	178
Applications received	418
Number of projects approved	286

For a detailed listing of approved projects please check out the foundation web site www.iafbc.ca.

Total Funding Commitment	\$14,444,135
Total Value of Projects Approved	\$49,579,624

Funding for the Investment Agriculture Foundation of British Columbia is provided by:

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Chair, Chilliwack

Garnet Berge
Dawson Creek

Tony DiMaria
Lake Country

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