

Growing Tomorrow

Fall 2005 | Volume 5 | Issue 2

BCAC Recognized for Environmental Programs

The British Columbia Agriculture Council has been awarded a prestigious national award for its environmental programs.

George Hamilton, BCAC's environmental chair, and Brian Baehr, program coordinator, accepted the Canadian Agri-Food Award of Excellence for Environmental Stewardship at a celebratory lunch at the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair on November 7 in Toronto.

BCAC has been leading the way in delivering environmental programs and its delivery model has been recognized as unique.

...continued page 2



Two Graham Bruce Elementary students collaborate on the math of farming.

Harvest Time: Not Only the Plants Have Grown

Two elementary schoolboys studied a clutch of plants sprouting at the University of British Columbia farm. They penciled notes on a sheet of paper attached to a clipboard. Nearby, another boy asked: "When can we harvest that lettuce?"

For ten months, these boys and their classmates participated in the Land-Based Youth Education Urban Farm Project, conceived and managed by two professors in UBC's Faculty of Education and designed to teach students first-hand about growing food. Volunteer community farmers

and avid gardeners – called "farm friends" – team up with students in grades five through seven, as well as UBC Education students.

Planning begins in the classroom in autumn. Then, from January through June, teams visit UBC to experience every facet of the growing process. The children take part in crop selection, greenhouse planting, crop plot planting, weed and soil maintenance, and harvest.

Built on a successful 2002 pilot, the program expanded in 2004-2005

...continued page 2

INSIDE

2 Accreditation will Help Agri-Tourism Grow

3 Focus on the Future

4 LWTI Helps Industry Prepare for New Regs

Project Funding Promotes Inter-provincial Alliances

5 Value Chains Feed Everyone's Needs

Inside IAFBC



**Investment
Agriculture
Foundation**
of British Columbia™

BCAC Recognized for Environmental Programs *continued*

BCAC's environmental program includes the Agriculture Environment Partnership Initiative (AEPI) and the Agriculture Environment Stewardship Initiative (AESI). Managed by Brian Baehr for BCAC, both are focused on resolving environmental and wildlife issues with agriculture with funding from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands. To date, more than \$10 million has been allocated to 88 projects.

With the federal-provincial Agriculture Policy Framework, in 2003 BCAC accepted responsibility for the delivery of the Environmental Farm Planning (EFP) Program and the National Farm Stewardship/Greencover initiatives in British Columbia. More than 2,100 producers have now participated in EFP programming and in excess of 350 statements of completion have been issued to producers. Neils Holbeck and Ron Bertrand, at the helm as provincial coordinators, depend on the involvement of 18 commodity group leaders to assist producers with their planning and implementation.

Under the National Farm Stewardship/Greencover Program, producers proceed to implement beneficial management practices identified in the planning process. This component is incentive based and so far 268 applications involving \$1.4 million have been approved for funding.

IAF – which facilitates the funding of these initiatives through its federal/provincial funding sources – nominated BCAC for this award. The Canadian Agri-Food Awards of Excellence are sponsored by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair. ■

Harvest Time *continued*

to increase the number of Vancouver-area students to more than 100 from 18. IAF contributed about \$37,000 to the total project cost of \$72,000.

“Students learn about the hard work, time and care farmers expend growing food for consumers,” said UBC professor Jolie Mayer-Smith, who co-directs the project with professor Linda Peterat. “They learn about the link between land, farming, food and community well-being.”

Mayer-Smith and Peterat are developing a model program for farm-based intergenerational education that can be adapted by other communities. With a team of graduate students, they interview all participants about their experiences and what the new learning approach has taught them.

“The long-term impact of this educational approach will become evident as participating students mature and make career and life decisions,” said Mayer-Smith. In the program's fifth year, students from year one will be asked about their experience and its impact.

For now, the children are most interested in digging up their hard work. In June, they gathered with parents, teachers, project team members and farm management personnel to enjoy the fruits of their labour.

“Hands-on experience planting, growing and harvesting their own food deepens students' understanding,” said Peterat. “The experience changes their perceptions about farms and their awareness of and interest in the work involved.” ■

Accreditation will Help Agri-Tourism Grow



Vista D'Oro Farms in Langley.

From roadside produce markets to farm-based bed and breakfasts, British Columbians are taking advantage of agri-tourism opportunities in growing numbers. The entrepreneurial spirit of farmers seeking new

revenue streams has driven the sector, but without quality assurance guidelines in place, agri-tourism growth has suffered.

Research conducted in 2001 found that product and service quality control is a challenge within the industry. Subsequently, the BC Agri-Tourism Alliance (BCATA) took control of the BC Agri-Tourism Initiative, an Agri-Food Futures Fund program aimed

at developing a sustainable industry. BCATA itemized – within the initiative's strategic plan – the necessary steps to develop a code of standards for products and services. The logical next move was implementing these standards, and the Quality Assurance Program was born.

Piloted in 2004 and officially launched in February 2005, the Quality Assurance Program allows agri-tourism operators to become accredited by BCATA. Operators initiate the process and complete an application online. BCATA inspector Jyl Singh visits each applicant's site to ensure standards are met and helps owners improve operations if they do not meet the guidelines.

Once accredited, the business gains access to insurance and marketing programs offered by BCATA, and the right to use the BCATA-accredited logo. So far, more than 40 operations have been accredited.

Accreditation will Help Agri-Tourism Grow *continued*

“I’m getting really good feedback,” said Singh. “You have a professional person coming onto your site with new eyes and trying to help you out. It’s a win-win situation.”

BC is the first jurisdiction in Canada to attempt implementation of industry-wide standards. “We’re ahead of everybody else, but they’re watching closely, especially Alberta,” said Singh.

BCATA wanted the program in place before the Olympics, to ensure agri-tourism operators greet people properly.

IAF’s Agri-Food Futures Fund contribution made up about 46 per cent of BCATA’s code of standards implementation budget, of which the Quality Assurance Program was a large part.



BCATA-accredited Vista D’Oro Farm in Langley showcases the Farmgate shop. Lee Murphy (shown) runs the operation with her partner Patrick.

Visit www.agritourismbc.org for more information or contact BCATA coordinator, Robert Thompson, at (250) 544-0941. ■

What Can the Quality Assurance Program Help Do?

- > Increase the quality of agri-tourism products and services
- > Improve consumer safety and health at agri-tourism businesses
- > Enhance BC’s reputation for agri-tourism experiences
- > Strengthen the local, regional and international agri-tourism markets
- > Increase farmer and consumer awareness of quality assurance
- > Showcase British Columbia as a leading agri-tourism destination

Focus on the Future

How can the Investment Agriculture Foundation better direct its funding to keep BC’s agri-food sector moving forward? That’s been the focal point of a year-long industry-driven initiative that is now nearing conclusion.

Focus on the Future is a broad, province-wide consultation process with two primary goals: identify and assess key issues important to the industry’s lasting success; and ascertain specific strategies and actions industry, government and IAF can pursue to help industry improve its competitive position and build a stronger future.

“We’ve asked our partners to help us identify the issues most important to the long-term profitability of BC’s agriculture industry and its related value chain,” said IAF director Bert Miles, who chairs the project steering committee. “We’ll use this information to determine our funding priorities and direct trust funds to address these needs.”

The four-stage process involves:

1. A comprehensive scan of existing information on BC’s agri-food industry to identify key issues faced;

2. A competitive analysis to determine strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats;
3. Industry consultations to establish the most appropriate options for action;
4. Integrating the results of the previous stages to define strategies and identify actions that industry and the foundation can begin to implement immediately.

Focus on the Future’s first two phases were completed in the summer and early fall. Industry consultations were held in seven communities throughout October and November, with the stage four final report expected early in 2006. “The final report will be a living document,” added Miles. “All parties have a commitment to move the issues forward in a timely fashion.”

Focus on the Future received \$175,000 in funding under the Advancing Canadian Agriculture and Agri-Food program. Overall direction and project management was provided by advisory and steering committees, with representation from BC Agriculture Council, Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, BC Food Processors Association, and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. ■

The first two phases of Focus on the Future identified 12 key issues broadly affecting the entire industry:

- > Support development of value-added and niche-market products
- > Develop export markets
- > Enhance marketing expertise, capabilities and efforts
- > Improve innovation performance
- > Increase access to skilled workers and managers
- > Increase access to financing
- > Build on our strong quality and safety systems
- > Take advantage of changes in the value chain
- > Increase industry cooperation and coordination
- > Reduce production costs
- > Enhance environmental sustainability
- > Increase access to the physical resources required for production

LWTI Helps Industry Prepare for New Regulations

High temperature incineration is getting a lot of attention in the wake of changes within the livestock industry. In October, meat processors and other waste tissue generators assembled at Big Lake's Rodear Meats to witness the Burn-Easy 428-RS in action, a technology that may help the meat processing industry satisfy anticipated new disposal regulations.

Following the BSE (mad cow) crisis in 2003, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) proposed that specified risk material (SRM) be removed from all animal feed. SRM is the ruminant tissue that can potentially contain the infectious agent that causes BSE. In order to guarantee SRM does not enter the feed chain, it must be completely destroyed. What is proving difficult is not only the time-consuming and costly removal and segregation of SRM at slaughterhouses and packing plants, but also the subsequent disposal of the tissue.

Canada is expected to have SRM disposal guidelines written into law this winter, and operations that fail to meet requirements will not gain required federal licensing. The Burn-Easy technology may be one of the types of equipment needed to deal with waste tissue in a way that fulfills the expected CFIA rules.

Thompson Rivers University tested the economic and environmental suitability of a carcass incinerator as a disposal method for solid slaughterhouse waste that contains SRM.

The new Livestock Waste Tissue Initiative (LWTI), administered by IAF and funded by the province, organized the Big Lake demonstration and financed the scientific study that took place the following day.

The \$5 million initiative was launched by IAF in July 2005. It offers farmers, slaughterhouse operators, renderers, meat processors and local governments a flexible source of funding for innovative, affordable and sustainable improvements to livestock waste tissue management.

"We certainly see this initiative going towards resolving the challenges presented by Canadian Food Inspection Agency regulations," said Mark Nairn, president of the BC Cattlemen's Association. "The important thing is it will help producers and processors deal with the disposal of Specified Risk Material."

In addition to the feasibility trials done on the incinerator, Thompson Rivers has performed similar tests on a gasification unit. LWTI funded \$24,800 of the gasification project's \$60,000 total costs. The incineration project had a comparable budget, of which \$24,900 came from LWTI.

For more information, visit www.iafbc.ca/livestock or contact Rick Van Kleeck, LWTI coordinator, at (604) 556-3145 or email: Rick.VanKleeck@gov.bc.ca ■



Thompson Rivers University held a demonstration of SRM incineration technology in October. Rick Van Kleeck (shown) is the LWTI Coordinator.

Project Funding Promotes Inter-Provincial Alliances

IAF is joining Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada to encourage project proposals that involve collaboration with provincial councils and industry groups outside British Columbia.

These projects, called Collective Outcomes, have been highlighted for funding through the federal government's two-year-old Advancing Canadian Agriculture and Agri-Food (ACAAF) program. In July, the IAF board passed a resolution to encourage more applications for Collective Outcome projects, increasing the foundation's standard funding for eligible projects to 60 per cent from 50 per cent.

IAF is accepting applications for projects that are: supported and funded by multiple provincial councils; supported by provincial industry groups; and approved by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada as a Collective Outcome.

For more information about ACAAF and eligibility, contact IAF's program managers:

Coreen Moroziuk
Responsible for animal industry projects
Ph: (778) 371-7443
Cell: (250) 839-6053
Email: iafcoreen@shaw.ca

Emily MacNair
Responsible for plant industry projects
Ph: (250) 356-0119
Cell: (250) 361-5410
Email: Emily.MacNair@gov.bc.ca ■

Value Chains Feed Everyone's Needs

A day-long Richmond forum in late October cast a BC spotlight on one of the most important new directions in the global food industry – the development of opportunities for food and beverage processors and producers to increase profits through collaboration across the value chain.

Value chains are defined as vertical alliances of independent businesses working collectively in response to specific needs, opportunities and growing consumer demand in the marketplace. Through collaboration, each link in the chain – producers, processors, distributors, marketers, retail outlets and even consumers – come together to get new and higher value food products into the marketplace faster, more efficiently and often less expensively than traditional approaches.

“BC actually lags other provinces in the implementation of formal value-chain initiatives,” said Gay Hahn, CEO of Vancouver’s Avalon Dairy and co-chair of the BC Food Processors Association. BCFPA organized the Richmond gathering, the province’s first ever value chain event.

“The purpose of the forum was to raise awareness and understanding of value-chain opportunities within the food industry by learning about what some BC companies are achieving through value chain relationships, and what others are doing to promote value chain opportunities elsewhere in Canada and around the world,” Hahn added.

Nearly 90 participants heard speakers stress that value chains start with the consumer. Value chain management is ultimately

driven by customer demand, and each link must do its part to meet the needs of the consumer.

The forum is part of a larger value chain management pilot project initiated by the BCFPA. The project will include the preparation of a plan to define future needs and opportunities in BC value chain management.

Garden Protein International, Natures Path Foods, MyEyes N.V., Andres Wines (Power States) and the BC Dairy Foundation helped sponsor the event, which also received \$32,500 toward the total pilot project cost of \$65,000 from the Food and Beverage Processing Initiative, a component of the Agri-Food Futures Fund. ■

Inside the Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC

Three new staff members have joined IAF to help us deliver an expanding range of programs, initiatives and administrative needs. Please join us in welcoming them!



Jessica Ng
Agri-Food Futures
Fund Administrator

Jessica administers four of the Agri-Food Futures Fund

initiatives: Aboriginal Agriculture, Food and Beverage Processing, Food Quality and Safety, and Women in Agriculture. Jessica works closely with industry groups on applications, contracts, project progress and workplans. Jessica is a recent graduate of the University of Victoria with a Bachelor of Commerce degree, where she majored in international business. Contact her at (250) 356-1839 or email: Jessica.Ng@gov.bc.ca



Alana Wilson
Program Analyst

As program analyst, Alana finds ways to make our project reporting more

efficient for clients while ensuring that we are meeting the administrative and accountability requirements of our funding partners. Alana comes to us with extensive knowledge of the Canadian Adaptation and Rural Development (CARD) and the Advancing Canadian Agriculture and Agri-Food (ACAAF) programs from her previous position as industry development officer for the Agriculture and Food Council of Alberta. Alana earned a Bachelor of Science Agroecology with Honours from the University of British Columbia, where she specialized in food and resource economics. Contact her at (250) 356-1665 or email: Alana.K.Wilson@gov.bc.ca



Sandra Tretick
Communications
Coordinator

Sandra takes charge of the brand new communications

coordinator role. The job is multi-faceted but Sandra’s overall responsibility is to increase the level of IAF’s existing communications activities and work with industry and government stakeholders to raise public awareness of IAF and BC agriculture in general. Sandra has a Bachelor of Business Administration in marketing from Simon Fraser University. Sandra joins IAF from the forest sector and was previously director of communications for the Association of BC Forest Professionals in Vancouver. Contact her at (250) 356-1672 or email: Sandra.L.Tretick@gov.bc.ca

New Ministry, New Minister: Upshot of BC Changes



Pat Bell, Minister of Agriculture and Lands, is a two-term MLA who was first elected in 2001.

Flush with a new provincial mandate, the BC Government announced a major reorganization in June 2005 that impacts the province's agricultural community.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries has a new name – the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands – and now includes the management and allocation of Crown land, overseen by the newly created Integrated Land Management Bureau.

Pat Bell, MLA for Prince George North and formerly Minister of State for Mining, is the new minister.

“My goal is to enhance the economic development and environmental sustainability of the agriculture and food

sectors while delivering safe, high quality food,” said Bell.

Delta South MLA Val Roddick, a former Investment Agriculture Foundation director, has been appointed Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture Planning.

In addition to Crown land management, ministry responsibilities include: industry development; animal health and crop protection; food safety and quality; aquaculture licensing and regulation; soil management, weed control and crop insurance.

To that end, the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands is working to prepare an agriculture plan for the province by December 2006, building on contributions from the Parliamentary Secretary and supported by an MLA committee. ■

Calendar of Events and Application Deadlines

February 16-18, 2006: Visit the IAF exhibit at the 8th Annual Pacific Agriculture Show in Abbotsford, BC.

April 24, 2006: IAF holds its Annual General Meeting.

Application Deadlines: January 9, February 6, March 20, May 8 and August 14, 2006.

Overview of Projects Funded

The Foundation is a non-profit organization that invests funds to help the agri-food industry adapt, diversify and grow.

Summary of total funding committed by the Foundation to September 30, 2005. Contact IAF's program managers to discuss funding availability and eligibility requirements.

Administered Directly by IAF

Canadian Adaptation and Rural Development (CARD).....	\$8.27 million
National Soil and Water Conservation Fund	\$1.20 million
Safety Net Companion Program	\$8.28 million
Advancing Canadian Agriculture and Agri-Food Program (ACAAF).....	\$0.66 million
Orchard Renovation Program	\$20.91 million
Livestock Waste Tissue Initiative	\$5.00 million

Administered through Delivery Partners ¹

Agri-Food Futures Fund ²	\$21.50 million
Sterile Insect Release Program	\$5.44 million
Agriculture Environmental Stewardship Initiative	\$0.99 million

Initiatives Under Development

Poultry Biosecurity Initiative	\$1.50 million
2010 Industry Opportunities Initiative	\$1.00 million

¹ IAF has committed these funds to third parties for administration and distribution.

² There are 14 AFFF initiatives, four of which are administered by IAF.

BOARD MEMBERS

Walter RJ Goerzen
Chair, Chilliwack

Garnet Berge
Dawson Creek

Tony DiMaria
Lake Country

Rhonda Driediger
Langley

William Cheuk
Delta / Surrey

Deborah Henderson
Vancouver

Cornelis Hertgers
Agassiz

Jens Larsen
Merritt

Gerry McClintock
Courtenay

Bob McCoubrey
Lake Country

H.A. (Bert) Miles
Coquitlam

Gary Sandberg
Chilliwack

Walter Siemens
Abbotsford

Ex Officio

John Berry
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

Harvey Sasaki
BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands

CONTACT INFO

Investment Agriculture Foundation of British Columbia

Tel (250) 356-1662
Fax (250) 953-5162
www.iafbc.ca

Funding provided by:

