



Investment  
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GROWING TOMORROW

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# Agricultural Planning Program Helps Communities

**“The planning process stimulated new thinking that led to better communication and cooperation involving agricultural issues.”**

That’s one of a number of positive reviews provided by those participating in a recent independent evaluation of IAF’s Local Government Agricultural Planning program.

Recognizing the important role local governments play in agriculture, IAF established the program in 1999 to fund the development of agricultural plans in BC.

In completing the evaluation, David Connell, associate professor with the University of Northern British Columbia and research assistant, Daniel Sturgeon, reviewed 16 completed agricultural plans and interviewed 34 of those involved.

The plans were evaluated in a number of areas for completeness and functionality. Governance was one such area. Agricultural Advisory Committees were identified as important contributors to governance because they play an ongoing role in the development and approval of the plan.

Connell’s evaluation found that almost every committee remained active after the planning process was completed, fulfilling important duties such as reviewing local government applications to the Agricultural Land Commission and acting as “sounding boards” in local matters pertaining to agriculture.

The number of agriculture planning projects in BC is growing every year, from about nine when the program started to 51 today (including 14 in progress.) To date, IAF has funded 30 plans.

According to Bert van Dalssen, manager of the Ministry of Agriculture’s Strengthening Farming Program, “IAF’s financial support for agricultural plans has definitely contributed to the increase in numbers.”

Connell also evaluated the influence the plans had on local agricultural land use policies, and here the program got another high rating. Interviewees responded that the plans provide the knowledge and background for local politicians to take a firmer stand on boundaries.

Dr. Connell made a number of recommendations for the program and some of them are already being implemented by IAF. For example, Connell suggests that consistent use of terms used for agricultural policies across jurisdictions would contribute to clarity. In turn, this could increase the awareness of agricultural planning, and agricultural land use planning in particular, across the province. The term “Agricultural Plan” can be used to describe a general undertaking, covering all aspects of agriculture, including land uses, on-farm activities, economic development, healthy communities and food security. Whereas, an “Agricultural Area Plan (AAP)” should be reserved to describe a local government policy tool for land use planning intended to be adopted by council.

“It is important for AAPs to be formally adopted as part of Official Community Plans (OCP). Doing so gives the plan more legitimacy and a greater likelihood that its contents will be implemented by local governments,” says Tony Pellett, a regional planner with the Agricultural Land Commission. “Plans that are not adopted by council tend to sit on a shelf.”

Connell found a strong relationship between stated goals and project outcomes. “When the

stated goal of the project was to revise agricultural land use policies, in five of six cases the goal was achieved. However, when there is no mention of such goal, then the plan is most likely only ‘received’ by local governments.”

Two communities in the Fraser Valley are recent recipients of funding from IAF. The District of Kent completed their project in 2010. “Our AAP is an appendix document to our OCP. When considering agricultural related projects or development applications, district staff will refer to relevant AAP policy statements in reports to our AAC and council,” says Darcey Kohuch, Kent’s director of development services.

The City of Chilliwack is in the middle of their planning process. “When we began, we didn’t consider the ultimate goal of being adopted by city council. But after reading this report, it has become one of our highest priorities,” states Dr. Chris Byra, a member of Chilliwack’s Agriculture Planning Steering Committee and an IAF director. “Dr. Connell’s recommendations will help us create a much more effective AAP.”

According to Connell, “Without a doubt, this IAF program has positively influenced agriculture in BC by bringing groups together, encouraging open dialogue and improving the understanding of agricultural issues among non-farmers.”

The full evaluation report is available on the IAF website: [www.iafbc.ca](http://www.iafbc.ca)

**Funding: \$19,545 provided through the former federal-provincial Safety Nets framework. (B0027)**

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# Eyeing Health Properties of Wild Berries

The natural health products sector is expanding rapidly and there is high demand for pulp and seed oils of wild berries for use in cosmetic and functional food products.

The success of these products is often dependent on being able to offer standardized quality and purity, so before developing and marketing these products, some vital information is necessary. Accurate data on the chemical components of the berries and fruits helps health product companies develop quality control parameters and optimal post-harvesting technologies, ensuring consistently high-quality products. Targeted market intelligence helps assess existing demand for value-added products, identify potential new markets, and ascertain quality requirements.

Natures Formulae Health Products is a Kelowna-based manufacturer and developer of natural health products. With IAF support, the company undertook a study to determine the nutraceutical properties of BC wild berries and small fruits, producing a wealth of data on 23 berry and fruit samples. The results of the study helped them to develop and commercialize a variety of new products, including a skin care line featuring rosehips and two beverages. It also outlined several challenges and possible solutions to the commercialization of wild berries in BC.

"This project was a lot of work, but really opened many doors for us in the community, with local growers and co-ops," says Barbara Johnston, founder of Natures Formulae. "This project has been of great benefit to us because we better understand how berries work and what they can contribute to the products."

Funding: \$40,000 through the Agri-Food Futures Fund, Food and Beverage Processing Initiative. (AF014 A207)

## 2 New Initiatives Launched

Last summer, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the BC Ministry of Agriculture jointly announced support for BC's beef and tree fruit industries through the AgriFlexibility Fund. Both initiatives are now up and running and accepting proposals. Applications will be received until fall 2013, although projects must be completed prior to March 31, 2014.

### The Tree Fruit Market and Infrastructure Innovation Initiative

The BC Fruit Growers Association is now accepting proposals that will create long-term benefits for the industry. Eligible activities include:

- innovative packing and storage infrastructure
- development of strategies to better compete in the marketplace
- introduction of value-added products
- improvement of area-wide integrated pest management programs
- new environmentally friendly technologies

For more information, please visit [www.bcfga.com](http://www.bcfga.com) or call 1-800-619-9022.

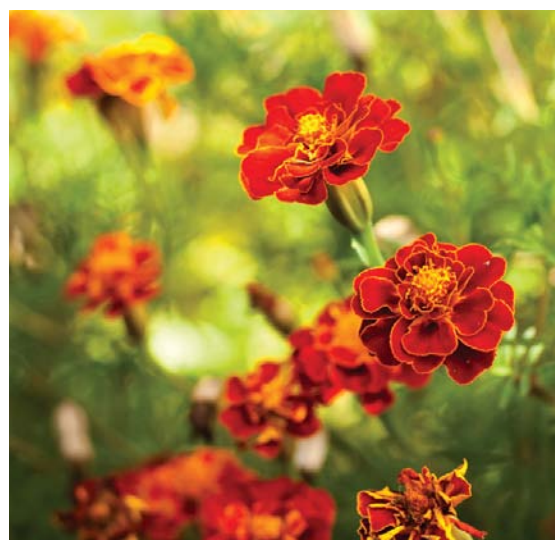
### The Canada-BC Ranching Task Force Funding Initiative

The BC Ministry of Agriculture is now accepting proposals that will create long-term industry benefits. Eligible activities include:

- market research and development of attribute branding
- development of certification/standards to support attribute marketing
- value-chain innovation and development
- new product incubation/development and investment
- consumer education and business missions to support new exporters in emerging markets
- technological innovations that reduce costs or increase value

For more information, please visit: [www.ranchingtaskforce.gov.bc.ca](http://www.ranchingtaskforce.gov.bc.ca)

## Cover Cropping to Reduce Pests



Nematodes are a big problem for root crop growers on Abbotsford's Sumas Prairie.

Chemical control isn't always effective and growers wanted to find a long-term solution to manage this pest and increase the marketability of their carrots and parsnips.

Certain cover crops – such as French marigold and millet – have been shown to suppress nematode populations over time

when grown in other climates. These are most effective when grown during the summer. Could they also work here in our coastal conditions if planted in the fall?

That's what the Lower Mainland Horticultural Improvement Association aimed to find out. They evaluated the impact of four nematode-controlling cover crops at two test sites with a history of root knot nematode damage. Two of the crops failed to establish. The other two resulted in 50 per cent cover, but no significant effects on nematode populations or carrot marketability were noted.

While fall planting of these nematode-controlling cover crops alone doesn't appear to be an effective technique for nematode management, the study successfully raised awareness of the value of cover cropping and growers have begun to incorporate this into their existing practices. Some are now planting portions of fields into cover crops during the summer and experimenting with others in the fall. And some growers are noticing less nematode damage on carrots harvested from areas previously planted with these nematode-controlling cover crops.

Research results were presented to growers at a field day to raise awareness about soil borne diseases and as part of an overall summary of vegetable research projects at the 2010 LMHIA Growers Short Course.

Funding: \$3,500 through the former federal-provincial Safety Nets framework. (SP120)

# Greenhouse Research Shows Promise

Lysozyme, an extract from chicken eggs, is proving to be an effective material for controlling fungal diseases in greenhouse vegetables.

That is the conclusion of a project recently completed by Neova Technologies of Abbotsford with funding from IAF and adaptation councils in Alberta and Quebec.

Neova develops biologically active products that contribute to health and wellbeing. One of its products, lysozyme, is an enzyme extracted from chicken egg whites. Lysozyme is marketed globally to a number of industries, including food and beverage processing and pharmaceuticals. In wine making, lysozyme is used to inhibit the growth of a bacteria that causes spoilage. In cheese making, it prevents acid fermentation that causes gas bubbles in hard and semi-hard cheese.

Neova research scientist, Yun Cai Gao, recently led a project to investigate whether lysozyme would work in the horticulture sector.



In the first phase of this three-year project, she collected plant fungal pathogens commonly found in BC greenhouses. At the Neova lab, lysozyme, when combined with other natural antimicrobials, reduced fungi growth by a whopping 92 per cent. With in vitro results showing promise, in vivo testing began.

At the Alberta Science Council's greenhouses in Vegreville, a total of five trials were completed. "We observed reductions in the disease rating when using the same lysozyme combination in the greenhouse," claims Gao. There were significant decreases in the disease ratings of root and stem rot (*Pythium sp.*) in cucumbers, grey mold (*Botrytis cinerea*) in lettuce and fruit rot (*Fusarium solani*) in peppers.

The study concluded that lysozyme, in combination with other natural antimicrobials like chitosan (a byproduct of the crab and shrimp processing industry) and a strain of yeast are good candidates as biocontrol agents in greenhouse crops and could even be approved for certified organic production.

"Our growers use integrated pest management in their production systems," says Iris Bitterlich, manager of IPM and industry development programs with the BC Greenhouse Growers' Association. "Lysozyme is another potential tool to help manage some common diseases of greenhouse vegetable crops."

Funding: \$191,849 through former federal adaptation programming.\* (W0083)

# Cherries to China

Imagine fresh Canadian cherries in markets across China. That's what members of the Okanagan Kootenay Cherry Growers Association envision.

They see big potential to increase sales and returns. With more than 1.3 billion people, China represents a huge market if you can correctly navigate each of the stages necessary to gain access.

A field inspection is a major component of China's approval process and a key step in moving closer to opening up this market to Canadian cherries.

Two entomologists from China arrived in late July 2010 on a fact finding mission to examine Canadian pest control practices and develop a pest risk assessment. The delegation, guided by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), inspected several orchards and packing houses in the Okanagan just as the season's cherries were ripe for harvest.

Following an evaluation of the trip report and pest risk assessment, Chinese and Canadian authorities will need to agree on an inspection and certification protocol.

"We're hoping to start shipping cherries to China on a trial basis starting this summer," says Greg Norton, a grower in the Oliver area. "Even though we're a really small group, the funding from IAF allowed us to get in the game."

Funding: \$7,640 through the former federal-provincial Safety Nets framework. (SP158)

## IAF WEBSITE SURVEY



Does the IAF website meet your needs? We have prepared a brief survey and would appreciate hearing your views on it. It takes just five or ten minutes and you can be entered in a draw to win one of ten \$25 Tim Hortons gift cards. To find the survey, please visit [www.iafbc.ca](http://www.iafbc.ca) before July 15, 2011.



## Victoria Hosts Outstanding Young Farmers

The Canadian Outstanding Young Farmer program recognizes producers between

the ages of 18 and 39 that exemplify excellence in farming in a number of aspects, including conservation practices, financial management, contributions to the community and more.

Every year, one couple from each of seven regional events is selected to represent their region at the national event. The 2010 conference was held in Victoria last November.

The national conference also provides an opportunity for delegates to network, share best practices and learn about opportunities to enhance their farming practices. Funding from IAF helped support the conference's educational activities, including a forum on value chains and a tour of local agri-food operations.

The forum took place on November 26, where an audience of more than 150 heard presentations from industry leaders about how to integrate value-added elements into their farm operations.

"The financial support from IAF allowed us to really make the conference first-class," says conference co-chair Rick Thiessen. "The tour was a great opportunity to showcase agriculture on the west coast and the forum speakers provided unique perspectives on a hot topic."

The presentations by Nico Human, Brent Warner, Mary Forstbauer, Tyler Schramm and Bill Vanderkooi are available online: [www.nicohuman.com/oyf.htm](http://www.nicohuman.com/oyf.htm)

Funding: \$21,305 provided through the former federal-provincial Safety Nets framework (A0622)



## UPCOMING APPLICATION DEADLINES

VISIT OUR WEBSITE  
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## New Market Opportunities for BC Raspberries

**New market opportunities might soon be available to BC raspberry growers, according to a market development assessment conducted by Abbotsford Growers Co-operative and supported by IAF.**

BC is the largest producer of raspberries in Canada, with 4,200 acres growing 26.5 million pounds of berries. However, only three percent of raspberries are sold fresh, with the vast majority being processed into a



variety of products, as well as retail and wholesale packs.

Abbotsford Growers Co-operative is owned by 127 grower members and processes raspberries from more than 2,500 acres of farmland. The co-op owns the only aseptic processing facility in western Canada. Aseptic processing is a high-temperature sterile process similar to that used to package wine into 'bags in a box' and milk into ultra-high temperature packages. For health-conscious consumers, aseptic processing provides a preservative-free product with a fresh taste.

However, there is currently little awareness among buyers about this form of processing, as it is relatively new technology in Canada. A desire to increase market awareness motivated the co-op to undertake a market assessment and develop a set of recommendations to make aseptic processed raspberries more marketable to potential buyers.

After surveying 183 retail buyers, commercial end-users and other industry members, the co-op identified several opportunities in domestic fruit smoothie and energy bar markets. However, the biggest potential likely lies in export markets. While the majority of Canadian infrastructure is geared towards cold storage, US and Asian buyers are interested in this shelf-stable product.

"We are enthusiastic about some of the new opportunities identified in Canada that could grow in the long run, but the study also found that export opportunities will be very important for future growth, so we will be pursuing that as well," said Stephen Evans, general manager of Abbotsford Growers.

Although the results indicate that tapping domestic markets might be challenging, Evans remarked that the study provided valuable information on potential barriers and helped the co-op focus their future marketing efforts.

**Funding: \$18,075 provided by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Canadian Agricultural Adaptation Program.\* (A0605)**

### Agriculture in Maple Ridge

Maple Ridge council recently endorsed an Agricultural Area Plan for the district. The plan, created by the district's agricultural advisory committee, spells out a vision for agriculture. Improving market access for local farmers, bringing more land into production and increasing knowledge about agriculture top the list of priorities. Specific implementation items are now being reviewed by the committee for inclusion in the district's Official Community Plan. These include recommendations for development guidelines to protect agriculture and other measures aimed at assisting small lot producers with their business needs and increasing farming activity.

"The plan was developed in consultation with the community," stated Candace Gordon who chaired the committee. "It was huge step forward in highlighting the importance of agriculture to the local economy and culture of this growing community."

**Funding: up to \$28,300 through former federal adaptation programming.\* (B0016.15)**

### Inaugural Conference a Success

The Horse Council of BC's recently completed Equine Industry Report indicated a desire amongst industry members for quality education. The council's first Equine Education Conference – held in Kelowna in January – brought together 277 horse professionals and enthusiasts for educational and networking opportunities. The seminars covered topics ranging from horse care, breeding best practices and recreational land use to business management, legal and insurance issues.



"Many of the participants remarked on the high quality of the seminars. Even those who had been in the industry for many years said they gained new insight," says Kelly Coughlin, industry manager for the Horse Council. "IAF funding was extremely important to the success of the conference, as it helped us bring in quality professionals to deliver the seminars." To see video from the conference, visit: [www.hcbc.ca](http://www.hcbc.ca)

**Funding: up to \$10,000 through the former federal-provincial Safety Nets framework. (SP166)**

### Keeping Chicken Flocks Healthy

Chickens are susceptible to viruses like Infectious Laryngotracheitis or ILT, a provincially reportable disease. Although this acute respiratory disease poses no risk to humans, it can spread rapidly through a poultry flock. Following ILT outbreaks in the Fraser Valley during 2009 and 2010, the BC Poultry Association responded by hosting a one-day workshop in Abbotsford last fall. More than 100 producers heard a panel of experts share the latest information on the subject. Topics included an update on the current situation in BC, effects on the processing industry, control measures, management and controls used in other regions and what vaccines are available.



Producers also discussed why it's important for everyone to be conscious of how their own farm practices can affect neighbouring farms. Although it is not completely clear how the disease is being transmitted to other farms in the Fraser Valley, increased biosecurity measures and the right vaccination program created in consultation with a veterinarian can help reduce the possible spread of ILT and the associated risks to birds and producers.

**Funding: \$782.50 through the former federal-provincial Safety Nets framework. (SP160)**

\* An Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada Program. Pour la version française veuillez consulter: [www.iafbc.ca/francais.htm](http://www.iafbc.ca/francais.htm)

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