



# Growing for Tomorrow

Corporate Plan 2011 – 2014



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# Purpose of the Corporate Plan

The Foundation's Corporate Plan charts a course for the investments to be made during the next three years by providing our clients and funding partners with priorities and objectives along with evidence of the results achieved. While the Corporate Plan has been developed to broadly capture a three-year cycle, the Foundation's Directors and staff recognize that it is a living document and may require changes from time-to-time in order to address the reality of the issues at hand.

This document is a summary of the key elements of the Plan.

The Corporate Plan:

- Focuses the Foundation's activities on meeting the needs and priorities of the agriculture and agri-food industry in British Columbia;
- Ensures the Foundation's activities continue to reflect government and funding partner policy priorities;
- Creates opportunities for building strong and vibrant relationships and partnerships along the entire value chain;
- Promotes the highest standard of client service; and
- Ensures that the Foundation uses its resources to achieve maximum effectiveness.

The audience for our Corporate Plan includes:

- the **MEMBERS**, who are appointed to review and approve the Corporate Plan;
- our **CLIENTS** and prospective clients including agriculture and agri-food organizations and associations, cooperatives, marketing boards, aboriginal groups, for-profit agri-food companies, research institutions, local governments and individuals.;
- **FUNDING PARTNERS** and potential funding partners including Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the British Columbia Ministry of Agriculture.;
- **INDUSTRY STAKEHOLDERS** including the BC Agriculture Council, BC Food Processors and Small Scale Food Processors Associations, as well as sector organizations across the agricultural landscape; and,
- **DIRECTORS and STAFF** of the Foundation who share responsibility for implementing the Corporate Plan and evaluating our success.

# Our Role

As an industry-led, not-for-profit organization, we represent a significant component of the agriculture and agri-food community from farm supply to primary production to post-farm gate and food processing. Our staff excels at helping clients, both new and returning, through the project life-cycle process from capturing the idea to reporting on results. Our funding partners rely on the Foundation to do so in a diligent, effective and efficient way.

***Our vision is to be a catalyst for building a prosperous and sustainable agri-food community within British Columbia.***

The Foundation's Corporate Plan continues to support the national priorities of the Government of Canada, providing for new investments in the economic growth of the sector and supporting farm families and communities. We also continue to support British Columbia's Agriculture Plan priorities of an economically viable and resilient agriculture and food sector which contributes significantly to the health of British Columbians, climate change mitigation, environmental sustainability and a growing B.C. economy. The Foundation recognizes that the development and adoption of a national food strategy may be important to the long-term prosperity of the agriculture industry in British Columbia and we look forward to supporting the participation of BC's agriculture and agri-food sectors in this initiative wherever possible.

These priorities can be achieved by leveraging Foundation resources with those of the sector and allied industry's, developing new and innovative partnerships and by building capacity in industry.

Our focus is to work with our clients, industry and funding partners and invest in projects that have the potential to transform ideas into solutions. We do this by:

1. Proactively reaching out to clients and responding to industry needs and priorities.
2. Assisting clients and potential clients to ensure that their project idea has the greatest chance of success.
3. Providing leadership in areas where there is little immediate "pay-back" to industry and where the issue or opportunity is broader than any one organization has the capacity or mandate to manage.

4. Being a resource to industry, in areas such as strategic planning, value chain development, local area agriculture planning and new and emerging sector development.

## The Way We Work

Creating a strong culture of partnership between the Foundation and industry is necessary if we are to achieve the results required for the agriculture and agri-food sector. We must also ensure that the activities of the Foundation are well coordinated and linked to the priorities of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the British Columbia Ministry of Agriculture.

To achieve these objectives, the Foundation will:

- find new ways of bringing the best ideas and best minds together to focus on industry's needs;
- work in teams with other organizations including our major industry stakeholders to focus on meeting their priorities;
- work collaboratively to find the best solution to emerging issues and opportunities; and,
- support activities that are integrated and take full advantage along the value chain.

We need to pursue coordinated and collaborative opportunities with greater integration along value chains. As the issues facing the agriculture and agri-food industry grow in complexity, collaboration has become the best working model that maximizes resources, taps into specialized knowledge and increases industry's capacity to innovate in British Columbia. The Foundation has a strong tradition of partnership building and we will continue to foster our relationship with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, the BC Ministry of Agriculture, industry stakeholders and the farmers and agri-food businesses that we all serve.

# The Three Priorities

To meet our mandate and mission, the Foundation has identified three strategic priorities that are aimed at increasing BC's agriculture and agri-food industry's capacity to adapt, diversity and grow and identifies the key outcomes associated with each priority.

The priorities are:

1. Supporting ideas and projects that capture new and emerging market opportunities, improve industry's ability to respond to new and emerging issues, enable industry to develop new processes and that add value to the commodity market.
2. Delivering programs that advance industry as a whole or that are designed to be sector specific.
3. Partner with industry leaders to develop and deliver strategic initiatives on issues that are cross-sectoral or Pan-agriculture in nature.

# Priority One

Supporting ideas and projects that capture new and emerging market opportunities, improve the sectors ability to respond to new and emerging issues, enable the development of new processes that create efficiencies or lead to new market opportunities and add value to the commodity market.

To achieve this:

- The Foundation encourages ideas and supports projects that enable the agriculture and agri-food industry to develop new products, processes and technologies by providing funding and expertise in order that food production and processing sectors are better prepared to respond to consumer demands and to better assure the continuity and protection of British Columbia's food supply.
- The Foundation encourages ideas and supports projects that improve industry's ability to proactively respond to new and emerging issues and opportunities by providing funding and expertise so that industry can meet these new conditions strategically and advance collectively.

## ***Improving Biological Controls in Greenhouses***

The two-spotted spider mite is a common greenhouse pest that can cause substantial economic losses. It is conventionally managed using commercially-produced predatory mites (*Phytoseiulus persimilis*), but their quality is unknown at the time of release.

With \$85,500 from IAF, researchers at the University of British Columbia undertook applied research to address this issue and identify proteins that distinguish high or low reproductive capacity. They developed a molecular test to assess the quality of the mites. "We have come along way towards the goal of enhancing biological control in greenhouses," says Dr. Brian Ellis, principal researcher at UBC. Although a commercial diagnostic tool requires further research, Dr. Ellis also notes that this project broke new scientific ground with the first substantial genomics research on an arachnid.

- The Foundation encourages ideas and supports projects that improve industry’s ability to proactively respond to new and emerging issues and opportunities by providing funding and expertise so that industry can meet these new conditions strategically and advance collectively.

***The Tree Fruit Sector: Supporting innovation***

The BC tree fruit sector developed an industry-wide strategic plan in January 2007. The Tree Fruit Innovation Fund, funded to the tune of \$1.5 million, represents the implementation stage of this plan. An accord signed by eight tree fruit industry organizations commits the industry to work towards evolving industry structure, strengthening industry market position, improving quality of processes and products and developing new varieties.

“Since the 2007 introduction of the five-pillar Tree Fruit Industry Strategy, there has been tremendous progress on implementing various components of our industry plan. With support from the Investment Agriculture Foundation leading to the establishment of the Tree Fruit Innovation Fund, the industry has made significant progress on restructuring our packinghouses, improving fruit quality and market access. The fund has also enabled the industry to accelerate market adaptation initiatives such as food safety and traceability at both the facility and farm levels.”

- The Foundation supports projects that enable communities to develop a vision for a robust agriculture and agri-food economy and that provide industry with a voice in community planning by providing funding so that farming and value-added processing is an integral part of a balanced community plan.

In 2008, the community of Rural Oliver completed its first agricultural area plan. With \$20,000 from the Foundation, the Agricultural Advisory Committee of the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen developed a comprehensive plan to strengthen the long-term viability of Oliver’s agricultural industry

Agriculture plays a significant role in the well-being of the community. According to Allan Patton, chair of the advisory committee, “Agriculture commands the highest priority as an economic driver. It is the principle job creator and economic activity for the community. Agriculture is also the main attraction for tourists, with wine tourism and agri-tourism facilities including farm inns and restaurants.”

While a primary source of the community's livelihood, agriculture is not without its challenges in Oliver. Competition for land is a concern, especially the challenges that arise when non-farming residents live on agricultural land. The plan identifies gaps in the Official Community Plan and zoning bylaws that could be harmful to agricultural activity and offers recommendations to address them. The environment is also an important consideration, given the high concentration of endangered species in the area.

Implementation of the plan is now underway but the work to turn the plan into a concrete set of bylaws is likely to take a couple of years, says Patton.

What this means for the agriculture and agri-food industry:

- Investments in innovative projects which advance the industry through new information, products or processes. This will be measured in terms of dollars invested, projects completed, estimated economic impact or capture of the increase in knowledge of a project, successes established including new business opportunities or enhanced efficiencies resulting in reduced costs and lessons learned.
- Investments in projects that encourage collaborations and working strategically together to address challenges and/or opportunities. This will be measured by the investment in strategic planning, collaborative activities and initiatives.
- Investments in assisting the agriculture and agri-food sector to participate in local and regional government planning processes. These outcomes will be measured by the establishment of Agriculture Advisory Committees and their role as developers and managers of the agriculture area strategies and plans in their regions.

## Priority Two

Delivering programs that advance industry as a whole or that are designed to be sector specific.

To achieve this:

- The Foundation will continue to build productive relationships and deliver high quality service to industry and our funding partners by delivering end-to-end support ensuring access to programs, high standards for client service and financial stewardship.
- The Foundation will be accountable in its reporting to funding partners and industry on the impact of its investments so that all stakeholders will understand the benefits of the investments made in programming.
- The Foundation will work with young farmers through the BC Young Farmer Program, the Outstanding Young Farmer Program and the BC Agriculture Council to identify opportunities for young farmers to become involved with and engaged in mentorship programs.

In 2009, the Foundation brought together a wide range of clients and asked a series of questions designed to assist it in developing standards for service quality. The comments and recommendations have led the Foundation to implement a series of service standards ranging from application received to decision date and the number of days that it takes the Foundation to make payments on approved project reports. Standards are:

Service Standard 1: 35 business days from date Application is completed to date decision made.

Service Standard 2: 10 business days from date all conditions are met to date contribution agreement is mailed.

Service Standard 3: 30 business days from date Project Report is completed to date reviewed/approved, 15 business days from date approved to cheque mailed.

Service Standard 4 (Small Projects): 10 business days from the date Application completed to decision made.

What this means for the agriculture and agri-food industry:

- Executive level meetings will continue to be held with key industry stakeholders and funding partners on a regular basis. These meetings will endeavor to ensure that the needs of the agriculture and agri-food sector are reflected in the Foundation's plans and priorities.
- Develop working relationship with partner ministries at the Federal and Provincial level. This will result in a greater collaboration between agricultural adaptation programming and health and environment programming.
- Strengthening the relevant impact information at the project, initiative and program level for all Foundation funded projects. This will be accomplished by working with clients to assist in identifying the project outcomes as well as the economic, social and impact(s) of their projects.
- Young farmers will have an opportunity to observe, interact and learn from mentor peers so that they gain an understanding and appreciation for the work and contributions of agriculture-related organizations to the overall agriculture industry.

## Priority Three

Partner with industry leaders to develop and deliver strategic initiatives on issues that are cross-sectoral or Pan-agriculture in nature.

To achieve this:

- In consultation and collaboration with industry stakeholders, the Foundation will partner and/or lead, as appropriate, on issues of high priority where industry has low capacity or where issues are pan-agricultural in nature, by providing resources and expertise so that key issues as identified by industry stakeholders can be addressed.

***In 2010 IAF launched the BC Value Chain Initiative to assist groups interested in value chain development. A group of Cariboo ranchers and meat processors were first to try out this new service.***

They were shopping for funding for a consultant to help get the ball rolling on a grass-fed beef value chain. Instead, IAF value chain coordinator, Bill Henderson, met with them on two separate occasions. The first meeting involved a value chain workshop tailored to the group.

“It was great. Thanks to IAF, we made a lot of progress in one day and took a huge step to creating our value chain business,” says rancher and group chair, David Zirnhelt.

During the session, it became apparent they needed an action plan, and so a second session was added. Although still in the early stages of formation with more work ahead, the group’s vision is now clear.

“We need a premium to make it work,” adds Zirnhelt, who’s pleased the savings on consulting fees can be used for other activities down the road, like market research. “We’re just starting out, so our resources are pretty scarce.”

What this means for the agriculture and agri-food industry:

- The priority areas of value chain development and strategic planning will be further developed and the impact of these initiatives will be measured and shared with industry.
- The Climate Change Action Plan activities will be continue to be supported and, in collaboration with industry, results of adaptation and mitigation projects will be evaluated for impact.
- Specific priorities identified and supported by industry (that are within the Foundation's mandate and funding principles) will be addressed as priority activities for the Foundation as well.

# Mapping Our Progress

Success requires collective action and the key to the success of the Foundation's Corporate Plan is effective implementation and monitoring for results. The Foundation has a plan in place which will provide our clients, staff and funding partners with effective support in a number of key areas:

**Our clients.** From concept or idea to reporting on project results, the Foundation is available to assist clients with the necessary support and tools that maximize resources and streamlines processes. In 2011, the Foundation will introduce an online guide to assist new and returning clients through the application process. The Foundation has developed and implemented customer service standards that are focused on providing quality and accountability.

**Our staff.** Foundation staff have developed client service standards and work towards enhanced service delivery through a friendly, professional and timely response to our clients while still maintaining their ability to report and evaluate on the key indicators that our funding partners rely.

**Our funding partners.** Processes exist to ensure that all projects that the Foundation invest in are designed to elicit performance indicators and project results. As well, timely and thorough reports on the use of funds, compliance to legal agreements and as mentioned above, performance and impact of projects are submitted on a regular basis.

**Success stories** The Foundation has developed strategies and tools to engage clients and staff in order to develop project success stories and to effectively communicate the results of projects that we invest in. Tools such as newsletters, e-zines, annual reports, fact sheets and our website are being utilized to share project results with stakeholders and to highlight the successes and importance of the funding invested to British Columbian's and Canadians.

**Program evaluation.** From time-to-time, the Foundation will select one of the programs that it delivers and, in collaboration with external experts, assess the effectiveness of the program and the results delivered. These program evaluations are intended to be formative, that is, the results of the evaluation will lead the Foundation to improving or modifying the program elements in order that it better meets any deficiencies identified.

**Economic impact.** In 2011/12, the Foundation will be working with its sister Adaptation Councils and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada to assess the economic impact that adaption funding has had on the industry during the delivery of the ACAA and CAAP programs. This study will help the Foundation, its funding partners and our stakeholders, to better understand the impact and effectiveness of the funding activities and also to help establish a benchmark that can be used to evaluate these types of funding programs on an ongoing basis



# The Agriculture and Agri-Food Landscape in British Columbia

Agriculture is a significant industry in British Columbia with more than 315,000 people employed on farms, ranches and orchards, and in greenhouses, nurseries, veterinary offices, hatcheries, grooming and other agricultural-related services. Combining primary agriculture gross sales in BC of \$2.8 billion and food processing sales of \$6.9 billion along with food wholesaling and retail, the agriculture sector contributes over \$40 billion to the provincial economy and provides direct employment for approximately 34,000 people. The total jobs in the agriculture supply chain tops 315,000, making agriculture a major driver in the BC economy.

Climatic conditions in the province make it possible for British Columbia farmers to grow a wide variety of crops. The agriculture and processing sectors are very diverse with more than 240 commodities being produced in agriculture. The diversity provides a strong base for providing opportunities for adding value and new markets. However, diversity is a significant constraint for bridging differences and addressing common needs.

In 2009, the Foundation in partnership with BC Agriculture Council and the BC Food Processors' Association, commissioned Ipsos-Reid to conduct a survey to gauge public awareness and opinions about issues facing the agriculture, food and agri-food production industries in BC.

Major highlights of the survey that help to inform industry of new and emerging opportunities included:

- Increase in importance of food self-sufficiency.
- A majority of British Columbians say they would pay more for food that was deemed fresher, that was produced with less use of pesticides or chemicals", "was produced in BC" or "was produced in their region of the province", or purchased directly from the farmer.
- Most British Columbians think the agriculture industry in BC is in either "good" or "fair" shape, however fewer than four-in-ten British Columbians agree that "BC farmers receive a fair share of the money made on the foods they produce" or that "farmers are doing pretty well financially".

- British Columbians are confident that food products processed in BC are safe.
- They believe that food processors operate in an environmentally responsible manner and they say they find it easy to find a wide variety of food products processed in BC.
- There is continuing strong support for the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) and the policy of preserving farm land. However, this support is based on a low level of public knowledge about the ALR.

Like the agriculture and agri-food sector it serves, the Foundation's Corporate Plan must continue to respond to the changing needs of its clients and stakeholders. New technologies, emerging opportunities, preparing to effectively manage challenges that could not have been foreseen, and the priorities of our funding partners as well as other dynamics will continually reshape the Plan as we move forward.

To ensure that the Plan is relevant, the Foundation undertook consultations with industry and sector stakeholders and we thank each of them for their input, feedback and the care that they took to assist in its development.

Our commitment to each and every one of our stakeholders and clients is to be a responsive and responsible partner. That does not mean that every idea or every application will be approved for Foundation funding. It does mean that every idea and every application will receive our attention and, where possible, we will work hand-in-hand with our industry stakeholders, funding partners and clients, to ensure that each of these ideas and applications are provided with the best opportunity for success.

We look forward to your assessment of how we perform at keeping this commitment.