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AEI MR1 3-Jul-07.doc

July 3, 2007

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For immediate release

UV Treatment Improves Irrigation Water

Delta, BC – The Agriculture Environment Partnership Initiative has given the BC Vegetable Marketing Commission a one-year, \$18,000 research grant.

The grant was used to demonstrate and evaluate the effectiveness of ultraviolet treatment systems for reducing microbial pathogen levels in irrigation water.

Two on-farm trials took place at a blueberry farm in Matsqui and a vegetable farm in Cloverdale. Water samples were taken pre-UV treatment and post-UV treatment approximately once a week between the end of May and mid-September. The trial results indicated that the ultraviolet system was effective in reducing the levels of *E. coli* and fecal coliforms in the ditch water to meet provincial irrigation water guidelines.

The availability and quality of irrigation water used for food crops is important to berry and vegetable farmers. A UV system for irrigation water must meet regulatory agency standards and be an affordable treatment solution.

Irrigation ditch water is known as surface water and it is subject to contamination from various sources. *E. coli* is often used as an indicator organism because it is easily detectable and water quality standards for various agricultural uses in British Columbia are established. Microorganisms, such as *E. coli*, are destroyed by UV light with the correct combination of UV intensity, duration of exposure to UV, and the penetration of UV through the water.

For more information about the UV Treatment of Irrigation Ditch Water project, please call the BC Agriculture Council at 250 763 9790 or visit www.bcac.bc.ca.

The Agriculture Environment Partnership Initiative is an Agri-Food Futures Fund program created to help the agri-food industry contribute positively towards resolving wildlife and environmental issues. Agriculture and Agri-food Canada and the British Columbia Ministry of Agriculture and Lands provide funding for this initiative through a trust agreement with the Investment Agriculture Foundation of British Columbia. The British Columbia Agriculture Council manages the program.

Written by Lynn Lashuk.

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Funding provided by:

