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For information

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### **Weed Education and Awareness in BC**

Kelowna, BC – What does the Agriculture Environment Partnership Initiative (AEPI) have in common with the following groups: Southern Interior Weed Management Committee, South Okanagan Invasive Plant Society, Boundary Weed Management Committee, and the Central Kootenay Invasive Plant Committee?

The above groups have all partnered with the AEPI in working toward the education of agricultural producers and the public about noxious weeds and invasive plants. The goal is to decrease weed infestations through identification, inform people about appropriate removal techniques and ultimately, provide strategies to prevent introduction of invasive plants. Keeping weeds out of grasslands and farmers' fields benefits the environment by improving and/or retaining natural habitats and minimizing the need for costly weed management programs.

The Southern Interior Weed Management Committee includes the areas surrounding Kamloops; South Okanagan Invasive Plant Society works in the Okanagan Valley; Boundary Weed Management Committee hails from the Rock Creek area; Central Kootenay Invasive Plant Committee works out of the Nelson region; and the Northwest Agriculture Environment Committee involves folks from the Smithers area. The volunteer committees involve many stakeholders, including producer groups, from throughout the communities – these folks have local knowledge of weed infestations and provide valuable input toward the development of the Education and Awareness programs.

Fall fairs, on-farm field days, and community events are just some of the places you'll see Committee members teaching people about weeds and their habits. Some committees provide regular features in local newspapers and industry publications highlighting the invasive plants of concern in their area. Providing strong support on behalf of producers and the agriculture sector, the AEPI has contributed \$65,000 over the past 4 years to these groups out the total of \$140,000 expended. Other partners in the education and awareness projects include the BC Invasive Plant Council, regional governments, utilities and transportation agencies, forest companies, environmental groups and provincial forests, parks and environment ministries.

The AEPI 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.

For more information about the invasive plant and weed education and awareness projects, please call the BC Agriculture Council at 250 763 9790 or visit [www.bcac.bc.ca](http://www.bcac.bc.ca).

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