



IAF Champions Local Planning for B.C. Food Production

Victoria, B.C., September 18, 2008 – Local planning is a key factor in protecting and enhancing British Columbia’s ability to produce food. Over the past four years the Investment Agriculture Foundation of B.C. has directed nearly \$400,000 towards the development of 18 agricultural area plans and strategies to protect farmland and ensure strong food production in the province. According to IAF Chair Stuart Wilson, this investment is very timely given current world food shortages and rapid increases in global food prices.

“Farming communities in B.C. have faced several challenges over the past few years. As the price of land has been rising, farmers are faced with developmental pressures in addition to the higher cost of fuel, feed and fertilizer,” said Wilson. “This is why the agricultural area plans are so vital to implement – to provide a forum to deal with urban rural issues and to ensure the long-term sustainability of agricultural communities.”

The agricultural plans focus on developing practical solutions to issues along with identifying opportunities to strengthen farming and ultimately contribute to the stability of the agricultural industry in communities across B.C. As arable or potentially arable land only makes up about three per cent of the land in B.C., it needs to be used to its full potential to ensure food security and support local food production.

Among the most notable projects funded through the IAF is the agricultural plan for the Township of Spallumcheen. With more than 400 farms covering an area of almost 17,000 hectares, the township provides B.C. residents with a significant amount of dairy and poultry products as well as other agricultural goods. The township was looking to strengthen farming, decrease community conflicts and retain good agricultural land. With the help of the IAF, an area agricultural plan was created that successfully integrated these goals into local decision-making.

“Given that 80 per cent of Spallumcheen is in the Agricultural Land Reserve, it was important to ensure that we were taking the right steps towards fully utilizing these areas,” said Councilor Dave Brew, of the Township of Spallumcheen’s agricultural advisory committee. “The plan has served as a tool for existing and long-term land-use planning to ensure that agriculture remains as a backbone in our township.”

About the Investment Agriculture Foundation

The Investment Agriculture Foundation is a not-for-profit organization that manages and distributes federal and provincial funds in support of innovative projects to benefit the agriculture and agri-food industries in British Columbia.

For more information about agricultural area plans and how to apply for funding, please visit: http://www.iafbc.ca/funding_available/programs/local-govt-ag_planning/ag_planning.htm.

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