



# News Release

For immediate release

## GOVERNMENT OF CANADA INVESTS IN LOCAL WILD MUSHROOM INDUSTRY

**QUEEN CHARLOTTE ISLANDS, British Columbia, January 29, 2009** – The Government of Canada is investing in new technology that will not only help create additional opportunities for local employment but will increase the market potential for wild food resources. The federal funding of \$22,605 will support the Haida Gwaii Local Foods Processing Cooperative's efforts to refine the technology to produce dried wild chanterelles.

"The Government of Canada is proud to support this innovative project," announced John Duncan, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Member of Parliament (Vancouver Island North), on behalf of Federal Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz. "Adapting existing technology to create a new, high-quality local product creates employment opportunities and contributes to the long-term viability of this community."

The Haida Gwaii Local Foods Processing Cooperative works to create local employment on the Queen Charlotte Islands (Haida Gwaii) and ensure that wild food resources are harvested sustainably for local benefit. Changes to the existing technology will result in a more consistent end-product, and ensure that it can produce sufficient volume and quality of product to support a commercial enterprise.

"These funds will contribute to growing a sustainable business," said Lynda Dixon, General Manager and Director of the Cooperative, adding that the announcement will provide employment opportunities. "Our Co-op was created in order to bring economic benefits from Haida Gwaii's natural resources in a way that respects the cycles of nature."

Funding for this project is provided through Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Advancing Canadian Agriculture and Agri-Food (ACAAF) program, and delivered by the Investment Agriculture Foundation (IAF) of B.C. Through initiatives like ACAAf, the Government encourages agriculture and agri-food industries to explore new opportunities while contributing to a healthy environment and an improved economy.

For more information on ACAAf, please visit [www.agr.gc.ca/acaaf](http://www.agr.gc.ca/acaaf). To learn more about the Investment Agriculture Foundation and the funding programs it administers, please visit [www.iafbc.com](http://www.iafbc.com).



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## BACKGROUND

The Haida Gwaii Local Foods Processing Cooperative incorporated in October 2005. The aim of the Cooperative is to create local employment on the Queen Charlotte Islands (Haida Gwaii) and ensure that wild food resources are harvested sustainably with local benefits.

The Cooperative has 38 members who are all residents of Haida Gwaii. In addition to members who harvest and sell chanterelle mushrooms to the Cooperative, as many as 200 people come to Haida Gwaii each year to participate in the chanterelle mushroom harvest. The drying facility will employ four to six people once it is in production.

In the course of testing existing Vacuum Microwave Dehydration (VMD) technology (used for blueberries) it became evident that adaptation would be required to produce sufficient volume and quality of dried mushrooms.

The Cooperative has demonstrated market potential for wild chanterelles, especially in the European market. Once the VMD is producing sufficient quantities the Cooperative will develop a market plan and look to apply the technology to new products. Once operational, the Cooperative would be able to share their experience of adaptation of existing technology with other small scale, non-commodity specific and rural operations.