



Farmers and Food Processors Secure Vote of Confidence from B.C. Consumers

Victoria, B.C. – March 17, 2009 B.C. farmers and food processors continue to win the confidence of B.C. consumers. That's the underlying message of a newly released study of public attitudes towards agriculture, food and agri-food production in B.C.

The study was conducted by Ipsos Reid Public Affairs of Vancouver. It was commissioned by the Investment Agriculture Foundation of B.C. (IAF), with input from the B.C. Agriculture Council and the B.C. Food Processors' Association. The results were made public today at the annual general meeting of the B.C. Agriculture Council.

Among the study's specific findings:

- More than nine in ten British Columbians (93%) believe agriculture is an important contributor to the provincial economy.
- 96% of British Columbians trust farmers to act in the best interests of consumers.
- Nine in ten British Columbians (91%) believe it is important that BC produce enough food so that we don't have to depend on imports from other places.
- Almost nine in ten British Columbians (88%) like to go out to farms and farmers' markets where they can buy their food directly from the farmer.

According to IAF board chair Stuart Wilson, the public's vote of confidence in the agriculture and agri-food sectors is well deserved. "Almost 300,000 British Columbians work on farms, ranches, and orchards, and in greenhouses, nurseries and other agricultural-related services," said Wilson. "The positive results in this poll serve as an important acknowledgement of their contributions to the health and economic well-being of British Columbians."

On a related note, the IAF survey suggests most British Columbians (almost 80%) believe farmers make good neighbours. Additionally:

- Most British Columbians (86%) believe BC farmers take good care of their animals.
- Three-quarters of British Columbians (76%) agree that farmers take good care of the environment.
- Almost four in five British Columbians (78%) believe that a benefit of agriculture is protecting green space near cities.

Among the study's more sobering findings: three-quarters of British Columbians rate themselves as knowing "not very much" or "little" about farming in B.C.

The lack of public awareness, said IAF board chair Wilson, represents a huge opportunity. “B.C.’s agriculture and agri-food industries are key parts of the province’s economic infrastructure,” said Wilson. “The more British Columbians know about agricultural producers and processors and their related organizations, the more informed choices they can make about the food they put on their tables.”

The Investment Agriculture Foundation of B.C. 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 B.C. To learn more about the IAF and the funding programs it administers, please visit www.iafbc.ca.

For more information, or for a copy of the Ipsos Reid Poll of Public Opinions Toward Agriculture, Food and Agri-Food Production in B.C., please contact:

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