



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Funds Available to Strengthen Agricultural Communities

Victoria, B.C., September 30, 2009 – The Investment Agriculture Foundation of B.C. (IAF) has increased the level of funding accessible through its Agricultural Area Planning Program, from \$30,000 to \$45,000. According to IAF chair Stuart Wilson this timely change is intended to encourage the development of more plans and reflect the increased cost of planning since the program began in 1999.

“One of IAF’s corporate priorities is to facilitate dialogue on rural-urban issues. Agricultural area plans are a vital component of this, ensuring that local governments and the agriculture community work together to develop a shared vision for the future of agriculture.” said Wilson. “By increasing available funds, more communities will be able to develop practical and viable solutions to rural-urban issues and identify opportunities that benefit both agriculture and the community.”

Matching funds are available for communities wishing to develop an agricultural area plan or update an outdated plan. Eligible applicants include municipalities, regional districts or an alliance between a local/regional government and an agriculture organization.

Allan Patton – author of rural Oliver’s 2008 agricultural area plan and a member of the Okanagan-Similkameen regional district’s agricultural advisory committee – notes the program has been well-received by community leaders.

“IAF’s money is very well spent,” said Patton. “Communities in other areas of our regional district have expressed interest in developing and implementing their own plans. Increased funding will certainly make this even easier.”

For more information about the Agricultural Area Planning Program, visit www.iafbc.ca/ag-plans

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

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Backgrounder attached.

For more information, media may contact:
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Backgrounder

IAF created the Agricultural Area Planning program in 1999 to support projects that will lead to the development of agricultural area plans within municipalities and regional districts. The average cost of an agricultural area plan is \$65,701, with the average plan receiving \$28,250 from IAF.

To date, IAF has invested a total of \$565,000 in the creation of 20 plans in regions throughout the province. Out of the total number of plans approved for funding, eight are currently underway and 12 have been completed.

The following communities have been approved for funding and are working toward developing a plan:

- Boundary
- Cowichan Valley
- Coldstream
- Kent
- Maple Ridge
- North Saanich
- Pemberton Valley

The following communities recently completed an agricultural area plan:

- Spallumcheen
- Lake Country
- Salt Spring Island
- Summerland
- Rural Oliver

Funding may also be available to carry out agriculture viability studies, develop agricultural strategies, conduct arability studies and carry out foodshed analyses, as well as the implementation of specific activities at a community or regional level. These types of projects (what IAF calls pre-plans and implementation projects) are considered on a case-by-case basis.

Funding provided by:

