



News Release

For immediate release

GOVERNMENT OF CANADA INVESTS IN FARM ANIMAL CARE IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

ABBOTSFORD, British Columbia, October 3, 2009 – The Government of Canada is investing more than \$500,000 to help British Columbia livestock and poultry producers share information and raise industry awareness of farm animal care best practices.

“Farmers across British Columbia take pride in their animal handling practices,” said Member of Parliament Ed Fast (Abbotsford), on behalf of Federal Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz. “Our Government is partnering with farmers so that they have access to the latest and best farm animal care techniques.”

The B.C. Farm Animal Care Initiative will help establish a new industry standard for animal welfare in B.C. Working with industry, B.C. Farm Animal Care Council (BCFACC) is communicating with industry, the public, and other animal care councils; monitoring animal care issues, legislation and research results; and promoting animal care best practices through a series of courses on handling livestock emergencies and developing regional emergency response plans.

“Farmers and ranchers across B.C. are proud of their animal husbandry practices,” said Garnet Etsell, chair of the B.C. Agriculture Council. “Funding this initiative will build on this success and keep B.C. agriculture at the leading edge with respect to the humane treatment of animals.”

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

"It's a smart investment," said Stuart Wilson, Chair of the IAF. "Through this investment, animals benefit, farmers and ranchers benefit, and the industry benefits."

For information about new AAFC adaptation programming, please visit www.agr.gc.ca/caap. To learn more about the Investment Agriculture Foundation and the funding programs it administers, please visit www.iafbc.com.



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Agri-Food Canada

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For more information, media may contact:

Media Relations

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
Ottawa, Ontario
613-773-7972
1-866-345-7972

Meagan Murdoch

Press Secretary
Office of the Honourable Gerry Ritz
613-773-1059

Bohdan Zajcew

Investment Agriculture Foundation of B.C.
604-908-0920

Garnet Etsell

B.C. Agriculture Council
778-808-5691



BACKGROUND

According to Statistics Canada, in 2007 the B.C. livestock industry generated nearly \$1.2 billion in farm cash receipts. Altogether, the sector represents over 19 million animals of diverse types including beef and dairy cattle, pigs, poultry, sheep and llamas.

In 2008, the first phase of the B.C. Farm Animal Care Initiative received \$55,000 in ACAAFF funding to the B.C. Agriculture Council to develop a strategic plan. The project looked at the effectiveness of farm animal care councils in other provinces in addressing these issues and set a course of action for the B.C. industry to take, starting with the development of the B.C. Farm Animal Care Council (BCFACC).

The B.C. Farm Animal Care Council (BCFACC) will work to ensure that consumers and the general public are knowledgeable and confident that B.C. livestock products are produced using humane, science-based farm animal care practices, contributing to the sustainability and the value of the industry.

The BCFACC is a committee of the B.C. Agriculture and Research Development Corporation (ARDCorp), a wholly owned subsidiary of the B.C. Agriculture Council (BCAC). Founded in 1997, the BCAC provides leadership in representing, promoting, and advocating the collective interests of all agricultural producers in British Columbia.

The mandate and strategic direction of the BCFACC will be determined by a working group accountable to the BCFACC's members and ARDCorp. Members of the working group are from organizations representing livestock producers, BCAC, the B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, and the B.C. Veterinary Medical Association.

In addition to the BCFACC, Canadian farm animal care organizations are: the National Farm Animal Care Council, the Ontario Farm Animal Council, the Manitoba Farm Animal Council, the Farm Animal Council of Saskatchewan and Alberta Farm Animal Care.

For more information about the B.C. Farm Animal Care Initiative, visit: www.bcfacc.ca.

This project was funded by AAFC's Advancing Canadian Agriculture and Agri-Food (ACAAF) program which ended on March 31, 2009. In June 2009, AAFC launched a replacement program, the Canadian Agricultural Adaptation Program (CAAP). CAAP, designed to continue to help the agricultural industry plan for the future, builds on the successes of ACAAFF, and is aligned with Government of Canada, departmental and industry priorities. For more information visit the website at www.agr.gc.ca/caap.