



News Release

For immediate release

GOVERNMENT OF CANADA INVESTS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA'S ORGANIC FARMING SECTOR

ABBOTSFORD, British Columbia, January 30, 2010 – The Government of Canada is investing in British Columbia's organics industry so that farmers can take advantage of new research and growing market opportunities. Member of Parliament Ed Fast (Abbotsford) announced an investment of up to \$900,000 to help the Certified Organic Associations of BC (COABC) implement a new and comprehensive market development strategy for the organics industry.

"Our Government knows that farmers are key to Canada's economy, especially as it begins to show signs of recovery," said Mr. Fast, on behalf of Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz. "Organic agriculture gives farmers new market opportunities that will boost their bottom line. This investment will help build a road map to keep organic farmers on the cutting edge of innovation, improve industry best practices, and make sure farmers can respond to increasing consumer demands for top quality organically grown food."

The Organic Sector Development Program Strategic Initiative will support five goals: increasing sector capacity, building confidence in certified organic systems and products, promoting environmental stewardship, advancing organic research and innovation, and strengthening organics infrastructure. This will involve, for example, creating a resource directory for growers, developing research proposals, designing an environmental assessment instrument to be used in the certification process, and educational materials and workshops to encourage farmers to transition to organics.

"This funding will allow us to continue to develop and support organic agriculture in BC," said Brad Reid, President of COABC. "From field to plate these funds will aid with organic research and innovation, increase the capacity of the organic sector, and ensure continued confidence in BC certified organic products. We are grateful to Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the Investment Agriculture Foundation of British Columbia (IAF) for this opportunity."

Created in 1993, the Certified Organic Associations of BC (COABC) is an umbrella association which provides certification accreditation and leadership in the development of organic food production throughout BC and Canada. It administers the BC Certified Organic Program and ensures its credibility, facilitates domestic and international trade, and promotes the overall growth of the organic food community in BC through education, advocacy and research.

"Here in BC, there is growing consumer demand for organic products and our organics sector is working hard to meet the challenges that such growth brings," said Stuart Wilson, IAF chair, who also noted that an Ipsos Reid poll commissioned by IAF in 2008 found two-thirds of British Columbians willing to pay at least a little more for certified organic food. "With this funding, organic producers will be better positioned to take advantage of these opportunities."



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In addition to delivering Canada's Economic Action Plan, which focuses on strengthening the economy and securing Canada's economic future, the Government of Canada has put into place many other programs that help farmers and stimulate the economy such as the Canadian Agricultural Adaptation Program (CAAP).

Funding for this project was provided by the federal CAAP initiative. It is a five-year (2009-2014), \$163 million federal initiative that aims to help the agricultural sector adapt and remain competitive. Eligible projects could be in the areas of traceability, environment, climate change, capacity development, pests and diseases, and more.

For more information on CAAP, please visit www.agr.gc.ca/caap. In British Columbia, CAAP is delivered by the Investment Agriculture Foundation of British Columbia. To learn more about the IAF, please visit www.iafbc.com.

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