



News Release

For immediate release

Government of Canada Continues to Support Berry Growers

Langley, British Columbia, May 19, 2010 – Today the Government of Canada announced nearly \$1.2 million in funding for two research projects to benefit berry growers in British Columbia. Member of Parliament Ed Fast (Abbotsford) and Member of Parliament Mark Warawa (Langley) made the announcement today, on behalf of Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz.

“The Government of Canada is committed to the long term success of the Canadian berry industry through investments in science and innovation,” said Mr. Fast. “As one of the most productive raspberry and blueberry-growing regions in North America, the Fraser Valley will benefit significantly from research which will improve the already high quality of our berry products, allowing our farmers to remain competitive and profitable.”

“This funding shows how our Government puts farmers first here in the Fraser Valley and right across Canada,” said Mr. Warawa. “These projects will help create jobs and benefit our communities.”

The investment will go towards two projects:

- The Lower Mainland Horticulture Improvement Association (LMHIA) will receive more than \$1.1 million under the Developing Innovative Agri-Products initiative (DIAP), to help producers grow their businesses. Research will focus on developing new varieties, sustainable production and best practices for pest and disease management. While research will focus on the Pacific North West climate, the findings will help berry growers across the country improve production efficiency.
- The Abbotsford Growers Co-op will receive up to \$27,812 through the Canadian Agricultural Adaptation Program (CAAP), delivered by the Investment Agriculture Foundation of B.C., to determine market opportunities for aseptic processed berries. The aseptic processing technology gives processed berries a longer shelf life. CAAP is a five-year (2009-2014), \$163 million national initiative that aims to help the agricultural sector adapt and remain competitive. Funding for the project is subject to the signing of a contribution agreement.

“The Lower Mainland Horticulture Improvement Association has a long history of supporting meaningful research to improve the competitiveness of our growers,” said Alf Krause, LMHIA President. “Additional support from DIAP will enable us to expand our efforts to help build a strong, market-focused, sustainable berry industry.”



“Abbotsford Growers Cooperative is pleased to receive funding for the Market Development Assessment of Aseptic Processing of Raspberries within Canada,” said Moe Gill, Chair of the Abbotsford Growers Cooperative. “We are excited to offer a green alternative to the fruit processing industry of Canada. Aseptic purees reduce the need to keep raspberries block frozen, creating significant savings to fruit processors and the environment, while continuing to offer the consumer quality raspberries.”

Berries are one of the fastest growing categories of the fresh and frozen fruit sector, fuelled by new information about their health attributes. The B.C. berry industry has enjoyed remarkable growth over the past few years, reaching a farm gate value of around \$130 million for blueberries, cranberries, raspberries and strawberries.

Developing new berry varieties is a necessary long term process to ensure the future stability of the Canadian berry industry. Improved qualities, such as resilience against pests and disease, will increase berry yields and allow growers to expand markets both at home and globally.

Canada’s Economic Action Plan, coupled with other Government of Canada programs and initiatives such as DIAP and CAAP, continues to help farmers with its focus on strengthening the economy and creating jobs. Investments in viable market opportunities will help build an even stronger agriculture industry and Canadian economy.

For more information on Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada’s programs visit www.agr.gc.ca.

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