



**Investment
Agriculture
Foundation**
of British Columbia

MEDIA RELEASE

Investment Agriculture Foundation Holds Annual General Meeting

April 20, 2011 , Victoria, B.C. – The Investment Agriculture Foundation of B.C. (IAF) held its annual general meeting in Abbotsford today and presented reports on its contributions in 2010 to the British Columbia agriculture and agri-food industry.

“Acting on input from industry and in keeping with our strategic priorities, in 2010 we committed nearly \$3.5 million to a wide variety of new projects and initiatives,” said IAF chair, Stuart Wilson. “But the real story is the impacts these contributions have had on producers, processors and local agricultural communities.”

Four short videos highlighted some of these impacts told from the perspective of the recipients of IAF funding.

Wilson also presented an overview of the recently-completed evaluation of IAF’s Local Government Agricultural Area Planning Program, which supports the development of agricultural area plans within municipalities and regional districts.

In the financial report, treasurer Peter Levelton reported that IAF paid out nearly \$6 million toward new and continuing projects and initiatives.

Recognizing that IAF’s primary role is to provide funding that will assist industry to remain competitive and adapt to new conditions, executive director Peter Donkers presented IAF’s 2011-2014 Corporate Plan, including three main priorities:

- supporting ideas and projects that capture new and emerging market opportunities, improve the sector’s ability to respond to new and emerging issues, enable the development of new processes that create efficiencies or lead to new market opportunities and add value to the commodity market;
- delivering programs that advance the industry as a whole or are sector-specific; and
- partnering with industry leaders to develop and deliver strategic initiatives on cross-sectoral and pan-agricultural issues.

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

More information about the Investment Agriculture Foundation and the programs it administers, the video testimonials, the 2010 Annual Report, the 2011-2014 Corporate Plan and the Local Government Agricultural Planning Program evaluation can be found online at: www.iafbc.ca

Backgrounder attached.

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Backgrounder: Local Government Agricultural Planning Program Evaluation

The Investment Agriculture Foundation's (IAF) Local Government Agricultural Planning Program supports projects that lead to the development of regional Agricultural Area Plans.

"This program brings together local governments and the agricultural community to develop a local, shared vision for the future of agriculture and improve the viability of farming in municipalities and regional districts around B.C.," said IAF chair Stuart Wilson.

- Since 1999, 28 agricultural plans have been approved for funding totalling nearly \$800,000. 17 of those plans are now completed.
- In the last two years, plans have been completed for Coldstream, Kent, the Pemberton Valley, Maple Ridge, North Saanich and the Cowichan Valley. Plans are currently in development for Boundary, North Saanich, Central Saanich, Chilliwack, Delta, Kamloops, Alberni Valley, Central Kootenay, Campbell River, West Kelowna and Osoyoos.

To determine the effectiveness of the program, in 2010 IAF commissioned an independent evaluation of the program that examined the method of delivery, the quality of implementation and the outcomes of the plans. University of Northern British Columbia associate professor, David Connell, led the evaluation, reviewing 16 completed plans and interviewing 34 program participants.

- The planning process was identified as positively influencing the level of awareness and opinions of agriculture.
- Several other benefits were noted, such as improving consistency between provincial policy and legislation and local government policies, reducing urban/rural conflict, and positively influencing agricultural land use policy decisions.
- Seven of the completed plans have resulted in changes in land use policies and six were formally adopted as a sub-area Agricultural Area Plan.

According to Connell, "Without a doubt, IAF's Local Government Agricultural Planning Program has positively influenced agriculture in B.C. by bringing groups together, encouraging open dialogue and improving the understanding of agricultural issues among non-farmers."

Opportunities for improving the program were also noted and will be built into the program over the coming months.

Funding was provided for the evaluation and is provided for new Agricultural Area Plan projects through the former federal-provincial Safety Nets framework.
