

# agrivision

*Promoting security, jobs and growth in agriculture and agri-food*

## **New Action Plan Framework signals positive change for the Canadian agriculture sector**

Federal, provincial and territorial agriculture ministers took a major step towards securing the long-term success of the agriculture and agri-food sector at their annual meeting in the Yukon, on June 28, by agreeing in principle on a national action plan to make Canada a world leader in food safety, innovation and environmental protection.

During the meeting, Ministers agreed that the agriculture sector must meet growing demands from Canadian citizens and global consumers seeking assurances about the safety of the food they eat and the environmental impact of how it is produced. They also acknowledged that while advances in science are creating new opportunities for the sector, they are also bringing about new challenges, and that the sector is facing rapid change and is becoming an increasingly knowledge-intensive industry.

Ministers agreed that the ability of governments and stakeholders to manage these issues will determine the sector's future success and, in particular, the ability of Canadian producers and agri-food companies to maintain and enhance access to existing and emerging markets.


They also recognized that there will always be circumstances where farmers are faced with unanticipated income declines as a result of weather, disease and other factors beyond their control. The Ministers stated their commitment to the current review of farm safety nets, with the aim of completion by 2002, and agreed that work on the long-term direction, in close consultation with industry, will build on safety net funding.

"Our vision is for a sector that is

branded number one in the world. A sector fuelled by innovation and the latest research, including such things as life sciences, and squarely based on the highest standards of food safety and environmental protection." said Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Lyle Vanclief during the meeting. "Other countries – our competitors – are starting to move ahead in these areas. We cannot and will not be left behind in our bid for consumer confidence," added Minister Vanclief.

The action plan aims to build on Canada's reputation as a producer of safe, high-quality food, by strength-

ening on-farm food safety systems and securing their international recognition, and through the development of identity-preserving tracking and tracing systems throughout the food chain. The plan also aims to enhance the sector's environmental performance through accelerated adoption of sound environmental practices on the farm, and to use science to help the sector create economic opportunities with innovative new products.

For more information on Canada's action plan for an agricultural policy framework, visit [www.agr.ca/cb/news/2001/n10629be.html](http://www.agr.ca/cb/news/2001/n10629be.html) 

## **Minister urges new round of WTO negotiations, real reform**

Cairns Group Ministers were described as united and determined to push for agricultural reform, and committed to establishing a fair, market-oriented agricultural trading system by Agriculture and Agri-Food Minister Lyle Vanclief on September 5, 2001.

Mr. Vanclief made the comments at the 22nd Cairns Group Ministerial meeting in Punta del Este, Uruguay.

During the meeting, ministers reviewed the progress to date in the World Trade Organization (WTO) agriculture negotiations and stressed the importance of ensuring that the momentum continues in the lead up to and following the WTO ministerial meeting in Doha, Qatar in November.

"In the WTO agriculture negotia-

tions, Canada's objective is to achieve a substantial reduction or elimination of trade distorting domestic support, the elimination of export subsidies and significant improvements in market access," said Mr. Vanclief. He stated that these objectives were set out in Canada's initial negotiating position, and that Canada's negotiators will continue to pursue them aggressively.

Minister Vanclief also noted that production and marketing decisions on Canadian products will continue to be made in Canada, and that the federal government will continue to consult closely with the Canadian agriculture and agri-food sector and the provinces throughout these negotiations.


## Canadian Agri-Food Awards of Excellence launched

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair (RAWF) have launched five national awards to celebrate outstanding achievements in Canadian agriculture and agri-food. The Canadian Agri-Food Awards of Excellence will be given for innovation, environmental stewardship, export performance, agricultural awareness and education, and voluntarism, and will honour the achievements of individuals, groups, organizations, and businesses and their contributions to the vitality of Canada's agri-food sector.

"The agri-food sector is crucial to this country's economy and these awards honour those who keep us in

the forefront," said Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Lyle Vanclief. "Canada's reputation as a world leader in supplying high-quality food products is well known and the industry deserves a pat on the back."

"The awards will also recognize the tremendous role of the agri-food sector in the economic growth, environmental health and rural fabric of our country," added Minister Vanclief.

The awards will be presented on November 5, 2001 at the President's Luncheon at the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair in Toronto. Further information on the awards is available at [www.agr.gc.ca/ag\\_awards\\_e.phtml](http://www.agr.gc.ca/ag_awards_e.phtml) 

## Team Canada Atlantic trade mission finds success in U.S. south

A Team Canada Atlantic Trade Mission to Atlanta in May has produced \$750,000 in initial sales for nine participating food companies from across the region.


Several companies are now selling products in the U.S. southeast. Products range from Newfoundland fruit wines to processed fish, vegetable products and cheese. Others are finalizing distribution deals or contracts for future sales in the fastest growing market in the United States.

"The success that has been achieved by this group of entrepreneurs is further proof that Canadian agriculture and agri-food producers can compete and win in the international marketplace," said Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Lyle Vanclief. "I congratulate all of the businesses that attained great success during this trade mission in opening doors and identifying new opportunities," Minister Vanclief added.

During the mission nine companies

showcased their products at a "Taste of Atlantic Canada" food-tasting event prepared by Halifax-based chef Donald Walker. Atlanta food business representatives dined on potato wraps and grilled sausages, Malpeque oysters, fruit wines, Canadian cheddar cheese, crab cakes, Coquille St. Jacques and smoked salmon.

The Team Canada Trade Mission to Atlanta was organized by the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA), Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Market and Industry Services Branch, the four Atlantic Provinces, the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Industry Canada, and the Alliance of Manufacturers and Exporters of Canada.

The nine food companies were among 37 Atlantic Canadian companies taking part in the mission. Over the next two years, the mission is expected to generate total sales of \$34.5 million. 


## New state-of-the-art facility to benefit Saskatchewan farmers

Construction of a new \$2-million, state-of-the-art greenhouse and laboratory at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's (AAFC) Shelterbelt Centre in Indian Head, Saskatchewan, will enable the centre to upgrade its applied research activities in the areas of agroforestry, shelterbelt establishment, tree species improvement, tree care and diversification.

Minister Ralph Goodale recently toured the new facility, expected to be completed in October, which will allow for leading-edge research to uncover innovative environmental and rural renewal opportunities, from tree breeding for healthier and hardier varieties, to the reduction of greenhouse gases, and the exploration of a wide range of diversification alternatives.

This year also marks the centre's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. In 1901, its first year of operation, the centre distributed 35,000 trees. Today the centre distributes on average six million trees per year, and works with a number of partners to improve the quality of life of producers and to protect Canada's natural resources.

Operated by AAFC's Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration (PFRA), the Shelterbelt Centre has developed several superior tree and shrub species designed to thrive in the harsh Prairie climate. The centre is also testing a range of trees and shrubs as possible commercial options for farmers in the areas of fruit and maple syrup production, lumber production, and fibre potential for the wood processing industry.

Properly planned shelterbelts provide a range of benefits. In the field they protect soils and crops and reduce evaporation by lowering wind speed. Around farmyards they reduce wind, control blowing snow, protect livestock and buildings, and trap snow to help replenish dugouts. Shelterbelts also provide diversification opportunities and wildlife habitat, while mitigating the effects of climate change by sequestering atmospheric carbon. 

## Funding for food and water safety projects announced

While in Saskatoon, Agriculture and Agri-Food Minister Lyle Vanclief announced funding for two projects that will enhance food safety and water quality.

One of the two projects is a national program to provide information to veterinarians, as well as a program focusing on improving water quality in Saskatchewan. The support for the projects comes from the Government of Canada's \$60-million-a-year Canadian Adaptation and Rural Development (CARD) fund.

The Western College of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Saskatchewan has received \$112,000 to establish a global Food Animal Residue Avoidance Database (gFARAD) Centre in Canada.

The database will give Canadian veterinarians access to an international


pool of information on the use of livestock and poultry medicine. The Canadian gFARAD Centre will work in cooperation with the University of Montreal to provide timely, bilingual access to the database. This will allow veterinarians to make decisions based on the most up-to-date international and domestic information and further preserve the safety and quality of Canadian livestock and poultry.

For the second project, the Saskatchewan Wetland Conservation Corporation received \$78,319 toward its Prairie Water Care Program.

The program will establish and support local watershed stewardship groups throughout the province. Demonstration projects that improve water quality through conserving or restoring wetlands, riparian areas and native habitats will also be implement-

ed. Volunteers will help monitor water quality and pilot projects will demonstrate the value of conservation activities such as tree planting, seeding grass, fencing and setting up remote watering systems to control livestock access to wetlands.

"These projects are important because they focus on protecting our land and water, as well as our livestock and food quality," said Minister Vanclief. "These initiatives reinforce Canada's international reputation as a supplier of safe foods and demonstrate our ongoing commitment to the protection of our environmental resources."

Started in 1995, the CARD fund is the Government of Canada's initiative to help the sector capture market opportunities. CARD supports projects at both the national and regional levels. 

## Funding to enhance environmental action on Manitoba farms

Two new projects in Manitoba will help farmers step up efforts to improve the health of land and water and increase wildlife habitat, thanks to \$600,000 in federal funding, announced in Winnipeg by Agriculture and Agri-Food Minister Lyle Vanclief.

"This funding will flow to projects that reflect the priorities of stakeholders in Manitoba," said Minister Vanclief. "Farmers have a huge stake in the future health of land and water and as such have identified clear environmental goals. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada is committed to helping them reach these goals and also to helping confirm Canada's reputation around the world as an environmentally-conscientious producer of food."

The Manitoba Habitat Heritage Corporation will receive \$150,000 to set up fora for stakeholders that encourage cooperative efforts at restoring natural habitat. It will also receive \$450,000 to support individual


efforts across the province to establish off-site watering facilities, forage buffer strips, and fish and wild-life habitat.

Funding for the two projects comes from the Government of Canada's \$10-million national Agricultural Environmental Stewardship Initiative (AESI), announced last June by Minister Vanclief.

Manitoba's \$990,000 share of the national program is administered by the Manitoba Rural Adaptation Council, an industry-led group that also distributes funds from the Government of Canada's \$60-million-a-year Canadian Adaptation and Rural Development (CARD) Fund.

The two projects were selected by the council following extensive consultations with industry on its environmental goals and priorities.

The AESI provides funds for projects which address the regional impacts of agricultural practices on

water quality, soil health, and wildlife habitat and biodiversity. It is financed by the CARD fund and is one element of CARD's comprehensive approach to environmental sustainability. 

### agrivision

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## Organic research centre to be built in Nova Scotia


A national centre for education and research in organic agriculture will help quench a growing thirst for knowledge in this fast-emerging sector and give Canada's producers an advantage over international competition.

Agriculture and Agri-Food Minister Lyle Vanclief was in Baddeck, Nova Scotia to announce \$854,700 in federal funding for the facility. Known as the Organic Agriculture Centre of Canada, it will be based at the Nova Scotia Agricultural College (NSAC) in Truro and will carry out initiatives in collaboration with colleges and universities across the country.

Canada's organic sector is enjoying

\$1 billion-a-year in retail sales and a 20 per cent annual growth rate. There are also significant opportunities to further this growth in major markets such as the United States, Europe and Japan.

The centre will ensure organic farmers and those interested in making the transition into organic production have the expertise they need. The centre will also provide leading-edge technologies.

"Support for the organic sector is part of the Government of Canada's ongoing commitment to helping the sector diversify and pursue new growth opportunities," said Minister Vanclief. 

## Canada to Appeal WTO Dairy Ruling

Agriculture and Agri-Food Minister Lyle Vanclief and International Trade Minister Pierre Pettigrew announced that Canada will appeal the ruling of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Compliance Panel on Dairy.


"We firmly believe that Canada has fulfilled its international obligations concerning dairy exports and that the approach we have taken fully complies with the WTO rules," Minister Vanclief said. "We will therefore be working with industry stakeholders and the provinces to mount the strongest appeal possible."

Canada's dairy supply management system uses farm-level production quotas to match milk production to domestic requirements for milk and dairy products. The system helps provide efficient dairy producers with a fair return on their labour and investment while ensuring Canadians have an on-going supply of high-

quality milk and dairy products at reasonable prices.

The Panel's ruling, if left to stand, would have the effect of setting new rules for what practices are to be considered as providing an export subsidy. This could have implications not only for Canada's approach to dairy exports, but also for some practices of several of its trading partners, including the United States and the European Union.

In 1999, following a challenge by the United States and New Zealand, a WTO Panel ruled that Canada's export pricing system for dairy products such as butter, cheese, skim-milk powder and other products constituted an export subsidy.

According to the ruling, the manner in which dairy exports take place in all provinces is not consistent with Canada's WTO international obligations. 

## P.E.I. potatoes gain improved access to U.S. markets

Prince Edward Island potatoes will gain improved access to U.S. markets thanks to an agreement reached with the United States Department of Agriculture for the 2001 crop of P.E.I. potatoes.

Under the agreement announced by Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Lyle Vanclief on August 1, many restrictions that were imposed on the 2000 crop as a result of an isolated case of Potato Wart have been removed. These include requirements to both wash and sprout inhibit potatoes destined for the U.S. market.

"The replacement of restrictive import conditions by science-based measures such as crop inspection, surveillance, and reporting has been the Government of Canada's objective from the outset," said Minister Vanclief in response to the latest negotiations with USDA officials.

The Government of Canada's efforts to work in cooperation with the U.S. and its stringent adherence to risk mitigation procedures have led to a strong base of scientific evidence to support the latest relaxation of export requirements to the United States.

"Together with industry and the PEI government, the Government of Canada has worked extremely hard to resolve this issue and improve access to U.S. markets," said Minister Vanclief.

Minister Vanclief also emphasized that the Government of Canada will continue to work with the U.S. to resolve all remaining issues relating to the export of PEI potatoes. 