



March 31, 2003

Dear Grower:

On January 24, 2003, at the Annual General Meeting of the BC Fruit Growers Association, the Honourable John van Dongen announced that the Orchard Replant Program of the Okanagan Valley Tree Fruit Authority (OVTFA) will be continued to March 31, 2006.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries has elected to wind up the OVTFA by March 31, 2003, and consequently has entered into a trust agreement with the Investment Agriculture Foundation of British Columbia, as of April 1, 2003, to continue seamless delivery of the Orchard Replant Program.

The Province will meet its full commitments for orchard replant, as the trust fund will be comprised of the residual funds remaining with the OVTFA, plus the remaining funds committed by government for the program. The program to be operated through the trust fund will be called the "*Orchard Renovation Program*".

Under the terms of the trust, the Investment Agriculture Foundation will assume the replant commitments made by the OVTFA to fruit growers. Projects received by the OVTFA to March 31, 2003 will be carried forward by the Foundation. New applications will be considered within the parameters that governed the program under the OVTFA and which have been carried over into the trust agreement. In keeping with the mandate of the original program, funding will be available only for the replanting of land from which qualifying fruit trees have been removed.

The Investment Agriculture Foundation will continue delivery of the program from the offices at the federal Pacific Agri-Food Research Centre in Summerland, with the current administrative staff. Application forms and general information about the *Orchard Renovation Program* are available from the Summerland office (1-800-665-5254) as well as the ministry website at http://www.agf.gov.bc.ca/ovtfa/replant_index.htm. Forms and information will also soon be available at the Foundation's website – www.iafbc.ca.

I believe this step to be very positive for industry as it enables the Province to follow through on its full commitment to the *Orchard Renovation Program* while facilitating a smooth transfer of the program authority to a producer body with a mandate to help the agri-food industry to adapt, diversify and grow.

Sincerely,

Jacque Kendall, CEO
OVTFA