



BC's AGRI-FOOD

Update



Honourable Pat Bell
Minister of Agriculture and Lands

Featuring News From the Agriculture Sector of B.C.'s Ministry of Agriculture and Lands

MARCH 2006

FROM THE DESK OF PAT BELL

The agriculture industry is historically significant to B.C.'s economy. As noted several times in the speech from the throne on February 14, agriculture will continue to play a fundamental role in the future of this province.

We need to build on the existing foundation and provide focus and vision for the industry to grow and prosper. B.C.'s agriculture industry must be able to compete globally amongst other agriculture industries, but also amongst all industries to attract investment dollars.

The Province is committed to establishing a strategic Agriculture Plan. Premier Gordon Campbell appointed Delta South MLA Val Roddick as Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture Planning in June 2005 and she will lead the development of the agriculture plan.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Lands is developing a four-themed plan to facilitate

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Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture Planning and Delta South MLA Val Roddick announces six MLAs are forming a committee to conduct focused discussions with British Columbians to enhance the agriculture industry. Roddick made the announcement Feb. 17, 2006 at the Pacific Agriculture Show in Abbotsford.

Planning For Our Future By Growing British Columbia Agriculture

As B.C. agriculture looks to the future, many opportunities and challenges appear on the horizon. However, the industry is well positioned to capture the positive energy of transformative change and move forward in a sustainable manner. To ensure this will happen the Province of B.C., in cooperation with stakeholders and residents throughout the province, is committed to developing and implementing a comprehensive Agricultural Plan for B.C. Six MLAs, led by Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture Planning and Delta South MLA Val Roddick, will form a government caucus committee to conduct focused discussions with British Columbians to enhance the agriculture industry.

The mandate of the new Provincial Agricultural Plan includes:

- » Establishing a long-term vision for agriculture that will sustain and facilitate the growth and diversification of the agriculture sector.
- » Enhancing the contributions agriculture provides to British Columbia's vibrant economy, environment and quality of life.

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sector growth. We will improve access to crown land, increase access to capital, enhance knowledge flow, and manage the urban/rural agriculture divide. Additionally, we are encouraging First Nations participation in the agriculture sector.

I envision an economically viable agriculture industry in British Columbia. Our province is strategically well-positioned to move with the times to build a brighter future. I am excited that the new federal Agriculture Minister, Chuck Strahl, is from B.C. We have already begun to work together to build a sustainable agriculture industry that will be here hundreds of years from now feeding people in B.C. and beyond.

I look forward to continuing to work with the agriculture industry to transform our province into a global powerhouse of innovation, inspiration, and wealth creation.

Pat Bell

Minister of Agriculture and Lands

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Ministry of
Agriculture and Lands

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- » Increasing public awareness, understanding and support of the food production system in British Columbia.
- » Encouraging the active participation of First Nations in the agriculture sector.

As mentioned in the throne speech, the plan will encourage B.C. farmers to come forward with proposals to put more of their produce and products in B.C. schools. The provincial Agriculture Plan is expected to be finalized in the spring of 2007.

Ministry Loses Key Team Member

It is with great sadness that we announce that John Schildroth, Director of the Industry Competitiveness Branch of the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, passed away on February 27, 2006.

John came to the ministry in 1983 while working on his PhD at UBC. His task at the time was to do a review of the farm income insurance program for the tree fruit industry and he continued to work with the ministry until his untimely death due to complications of acute pneumonia at the age of 52.

John was very well respected by both industry and staff in the ministry. He was quick to pick up the pertinent points of a conversation and he could clearly define the options being presented. John was always full of enthusiasm and loved to meet new people. People sought John out for guidance and he always found time to talk and listen; he treated everyone, whether they were a new acquaintances or long-time friends, equally and with respect. His network of friends and colleagues was extraordinary. John's long-time colleagues have commented that his presence enhanced their enjoyment of their work in the ministry. John was a committed employee and he made a positive impact on the culture and the work of the ministry.

Prior to joining the ministry in 1983, John was on faculty at the Ontario Agriculture College at the University of Guelph and was a consultant on agri-food resource issues. He also previously served as the Executive Director of the B.C. Investment Agriculture Foundation and Director of the Trade Competition and Animal Industry Branches.

In his life away from work, he enjoyed cycling and jogging with friends and family and was an avid hiker, enjoying an annual trek with his partner, Carolyn, to the deserts of Arizona. John was a member of the Saanich Community Church.

Our thoughts and prayers are with his family. He will be greatly missed by his friends and colleagues in the ministry.

