



# 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

APRIL 2007

## FROM THE DESK OF PAT BELL

B.C.'s farm workers, many from our Indo-Canadian community, are the backbone of our agriculture industry. In March, a horrific accident claimed the lives of Sarbjit Sidhu, Amarjit Kaur Bal and Sukhvinder Kaur Pooni while travelling by van to work on a local farm. Later in March we proclaimed Canadian Agricultural Safety Week, with the families of those involved very much on our mind. When it comes to agriculture, it is our workers that are our most valuable resource, and we must do everything we can to protect them.

I appreciate your recent feedback and look forward to receiving more at [AL.MINISTER@GOV.BC.CA](mailto:AL.MINISTER@GOV.BC.CA).

Until next month,

**Pat Bell**  
Minister of Agriculture and Lands

### What's New

click on the new button on our website for the most current news



Val Roddick, Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture Planning and Selkirk College culinary student, Lindsey Durling, show off their gold-medal winning creations at the BC Food Service Expo on Sunday, March 4, 2007. The timed cook-off pitted Val's team against Gordon Hogg, Minister of State for ActNow BC. The cook-off event launched the IAF-sponsored, BC Chefs' Association's Hot Chefs, Fresh Plates cookbook.

## International Eggs

The Ministry of Agriculture and Lands has provided financial support to the International Egg Commission Conference being held in Vancouver in 2009. This funding includes a \$20,000 contribution to the B.C. Egg Marketing Board toward the cost of hosting the event. This is a terrific opportunity to showcase our province prior to the 2010 Winter Olympics and to exhibit to our international partners the sophistication of our homegrown egg industry.

B.C.'s egg industry continues its steady climb to pre-Avian Influenza sales and production levels after the challenges of 2004 and the delayed recovery due to home dating placement. The Specialty Bird research advisory committee, utilizing monies from the Ministry's \$1.5 million grant, is studying alternative housing systems for poultry, egg enhancements using selenium and the growth of niche market and ethnic egg products. The egg industry is seeing real growth in the specialty sectors providing premium price -- free run, free range and organic -- egg products to meet the needs of the consumer. The industry is continually being asked to respond to the growing demands of an educated and ethnic marketplace.

## Agriculture Day

April 24th, 2007

On April 24, 2007, British Columbians will recognize Agriculture Day, a time to make the conscious decision to purchase B.C. grown products. Then take a moment to visit the ActNow BC website [www.actnowbc.gov.bc.ca](http://www.actnowbc.gov.bc.ca) for a list of seasonally available fruits and vegetables and coordinate your meals and shopping so you can plan ahead to eat local products. Your community, province and environment will reap the rewards as we all help to build a sustainable local food system for ourselves and future generations.



### MONTHLY TRIVIA QUESTION

The Pacific oyster, European oyster, Manila and littleneck clam, Japanese scallop, blue and Gallo mussel, and, most recently, the geoduck comprise the inventory of shellfish species found on farms in British Columbia. The commercial culture of the Pacific oyster can be traced back to what year, when it was first introduced from the Far East?

The 4th person to email [AL.MINISTER@GOV.BC.CA](mailto:AL.MINISTER@GOV.BC.CA) with the correct answer will receive a B.C. baseball cap.

**Congratulations March's TRIVIA WINNER is:** Kelly Harris, Transportation Coordinator, British Columbia Milk Marketing Board on correctly guessing apples as the B.C. grown fruit that has a history that dates back to the Stone Age.

To respond to this newsletter, or for more information, please e-mail:

[AL.MINISTER@GOV.BC.CA](mailto:AL.MINISTER@GOV.BC.CA)



Ministry of  
Agriculture and Lands



## Animal Health Centre in Abbotsford

The Ministry's Animal Health Centre (AHC) is a full-service veterinary diagnostic laboratory, located in the Abbotsford Agriculture Centre in Abbotsford.

The AHC is responsible for rapid and accurate diagnosis of animal diseases and other factors leading to ill health as well as support of animal health programs. Staff investigate and identify major livestock diseases that could have potentially devastating effects on the food supply. Submissions are provided by veterinarians, livestock producers, general public and government agencies and the results are used to monitor animal health in British Columbia. The professional staff also acts as consultants on animal health issues.

With respect to the consulting role, key members of the staff sit on the steering committee for the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands B.C. Foreign Animal Disease Emergency Support (FADES) project. On March 13, 2007 FADES was recognized by the Community of Federal Regulators for innovation and collaborative inter-agency work for their nationally recognized project plan.

Recently AHC received a nomination for the Premier's Excellence Awards as only one of two labs in Canada to be accredited by the American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians.