



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 2007

FROM THE DESK OF PAT BELL

Spring is almost here and the B.C. Legislature is back in for its spring session – which kicked off with a Speech from the Throne aimed directly at dealing with climate change. The Ministry is well positioned to play a key role in government's quest for a greener, cleaner British Columbia.

On Feb. 20, Budget 2007 was unveiled featuring an additional \$51M over three years for the Canadian Agricultural Income Stabilization program and funding for 20 new regional ministry staff to help bridge the urban/agricultural divide.

I appreciated all the feedback last month and look forward to receiving more at AL.MINISTER@GOV.BC.CA.

Until next month,

Pat Bell

Minister of Agriculture and Lands



Jessica McDonald, Deputy Minister to the Premier visits the B.C. Ministry of Agriculture and Lands Plant Diagnostic Lab in Abbotsford. Here Vippen Joshi, Diagnostic Plant Pathologist, explains the necessity of having a problem diagnosed correctly while Maria Jeffries, Plant Health Coordinator (right) and Leslie MacDonald, Plant Health Manager (far right) look on.

BC Blueberry Council Promotes Good Neighbour Relations

The Grower Liaison Officer (GLO) program, developed by the BC Blueberry Council, will soon be expanded thanks to a grant of \$100,000 from the Ministry. The program was developed in response to a growing number of noise conflicts between blueberry growers and their neighbours.

Currently bird-scare methods used by farmers include regulated audible devices like propane cannons, though other, more community friendly methods are being utilized.

Since 2002 conflicts between farming and urban communities have been reduced significantly, which is a tribute to the GLO program as it responds to a booming industry and rapidly reducing space between the growers and their neighbours.

B.C. is the biggest producer in Canada of high bush blueberries and the second largest producer in North America.

Building First Nations Agriculture Sector

Three First Nations Agriculture program areas will benefit from \$65,000 allocated earlier this year to the First Nations Agriculture Lending Association (FNALA) from the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands.

Though it remains small in relation to the agriculture industry as a whole, First Nations farming has been an active enterprise for centuries in B.C. The aim of the funding is to foster and develop its growth as part of the Ministry's goal to increase the number of First Nations actively involved in the sector.

FNALA, formed back in 1988, will use the funds provided by the province to examine the feasibility of creating an Aboriginal Agriculture Training Centre; development of a First Nations Food Certification Program and; an agri-food market study to identify opportunities for First Nations agriculture products for 2010.

Minister Bell is speaking to the Indigenous Farm Conference and Trade Show in Victoria on May 3, 2007.

John Schildroth Memorial Scholarship



John Schildroth, who worked for the Ministry for more than twenty years before his death in 2006, is being honoured with a scholarship.

The Ministry has initiated the John Schildroth Memorial Scholarship within the Faculty of Land and Food Systems at the University of British Columbia.

The scholarship will be awarded annually to graduate or undergraduate students in good academic standing who have demonstrated excellence in a range of non-academic fields, such as

community service, student leadership, volunteerism, and athletic or artistic performance. Preference will be given to a candidate studying Food and Resource Economics, Public Policy or a related field.

For more information please contact: Maryn Ellis, UBC Development Coordinator, at MARYN.ELLIS@UBC.CA.



2007 B.C. Outstanding Young Farmers Award: Minister of State for Intergovernmental Relations John van Dongen presented the award to Abbotsford turf growers Bert and Debbie Bos at the 5th annual Agricultural Industry Gala, Feb. 16 in Aldergrove.

MONTHLY TRIVIA QUESTION

In March, Canadians recognize National Nutrition Month. As health-conscious British Columbians, do you know which B.C. grown fruit has a history that dates back to the Stone Age?

Tip: This fruit has over 16 varieties and more info can be found in the tree fruit section of the MAL website.

The 10th person to email AL.MINISTER@GOV.BC.CA with the correct answer will receive a Best Place on Earth coffee mug.

February's TRIVIA WINNER is:
Robin Graffunder of Vavney, BC!
Congratulations Robin on correctly guessing 9,785,000 as the number of roses B.C.'s horticulture industry produced in 2005.

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