



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

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Media Room

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FROM THE DESK OF PAT BELL

September was declared Eat Local month, and we celebrated in style with the launch of the Eat BC! campaign. Eat BC! is an innovative and fun way to get consumers to appreciate the value and health in consuming agri-food products that are grown, produced and processed close to home. The program also strengthens the vertical linkages between chefs, farmers, and suppliers, and creates new partnerships to increase the presence of B.C. foods at over 130 restaurants around the province.

This past month also marked the 104th Union of British Columbia Municipalities convention, where local governments and communities join together to discuss common issues with the Province.

Have a Happy Thanksgiving and be sure to celebrate the bounty of agri-food products available to you right at your doorstep. Why not challenge your family to create a holiday meal around B.C. products?

Until next month,

Pat Bell

Minister of Agriculture and Lands

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Minister Bell is joined by Val Roddick, Parliamentary Secretary for Agricultural Planning, one of the thirty participating chefs, Bert Miles, chair of the Investment Agriculture Foundation, Dr. Art Hister and Ian Tostenson, president and CEO of the BC Restaurant and Food Association for the Sept. 14 kick-off of Eat BC!

Eat BC! Campaign Launched at Pacific Culinary Institute

On September 14, Minister Pat Bell joined industry partners, sponsors, chefs, farmers and suppliers to launch the province-wide Eat BC! campaign. Eat BC! began as a Ministry of Agriculture and Lands pilot project in 2006 with a \$15,000 grant. The program was so successful, funding was increased to \$282,000 over two years in partnership with the Investment Agriculture Foundation.

Chefs showed off their signature dishes, and farmers and suppliers proudly showed their B.C.-grown products, in a food fashion show that was hosted by Bell and well-known television personality and health expert Dr. Art Hister. The show even had an unconventional runway model in the form of a giant tomato, the BC Hot House tomato mascot. Over 130 restaurants from around the province participated this year, up from 53 last year. Restaurants provided a free appetizer or dessert to BC Automobile Association members during the Eat BC! two week campaign from September 14-30.

More information about the campaign can be found here: www.eatbc.com

Transitional Licenses Approved to Ease New Meat Regulations

A three-year process to bring all of B.C.'s abattoirs and meat-processing facilities into compliance concluded with the new Meat Inspection Regulation (MIR) taking effect on September 30, 2007. To assist with the transition to the new regulations, the Province will be allowing limited, temporary "transitional licenses" to be issued to processors who are already in the process of upgrading their facilities in some areas of B.C.

The ministries of Health, Agriculture and Lands, and Environment, have combined their resources to strengthen the animal surveillance and meat inspection systems that prevent food borne illnesses or contaminants from entering the food chain.

Although safety requirements have been in place in some areas of BC since the 1960s, this new MIR extends a consistent level of food and animal safety protection to the entire province and is consistent with markets in other provinces. For more information, visit www.health.gov.bc.ca/protect/meat_inspection.html

Province joins with federal government to improve pest management

Last month, Gerry Ritz, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, and Pat Bell, Minister of Agriculture and Lands, announced a federal and provincial government investment of \$311,500 in support of two pest management projects aimed at helping to protect the environment in British Columbia.

Funding of \$288,500 to the B.C. Landscape and Nursery Association (BCLNA) will initiate a province-wide pest management accreditation and Integrated Pest Management (IPM) training program, to identify companies and individuals using a high standard of pest management practices that protect the environment. An additional \$23,000 will be provided for a series of biocontrol seminars conducted by the Institute for Sustainable Horticulture at Kwantlen University College to further support the use of biological approaches to pest management.

Other project partners include members of the Western Canada Turfgrass Association and the B.C. Recreation and Parks Association, a variety of community groups, and the Bullitt Foundation through the Institute for Sustainable Horticulture.

DID YOU KNOW?



All domesticated turkeys descend from wild turkeys indigenous to North and South America. If you consume turkey on Thanksgiving, it is most likely the Broad Breasted White or the Broad Breasted Bronze. These commercial turkeys were selected due to the bird's excellent conversion of feed to breast meat, but the result of this improvement is a loss of the bird's ability to successfully mate and produce fertile eggs without intervention. Both the Broad Breasted White and Bronze turkeys require artificial insemination to produce fertile eggs.

Pocket Markets have sprung up around Victoria. Local non-profit organization FoodRoots gathers local produce from our farmers and makes it available to the general public at regularly scheduled markets. FoodRoots also hosts Sustainable Feasts on the first Saturday of each month, which showcase locally grown and processed foods in a delicious five course meal. More info on these events: www.foodroots.ca

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