



# 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

SUMMER 2007

## Media Room

[WWW.GOV.BC.CA/AL/MEDIAROOM](http://WWW.GOV.BC.CA/AL/MEDIAROOM)

### FROM THE DESK OF PAT BELL

From farmer's markets to fairs and exhibitions to flooding, it has been a busy summer for the agriculture industry. Farming is not without challenges, such as pest management, drought or natural disasters. We worked hard to mitigate damage and loss from flooding in the Fraser Valley and around the province. Through teamwork and a great collaborative effort, the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands successfully planned, prepared and relocated animals out of high risk flood zones.

Another priority is to support our farmers, and on August 6, B.C. Day, I ask all British Columbians to make the conscious decision to buy B.C. products. Support our agriculture industry by purchasing B.C. grown products.

We heard your feedback about the newsletter, and we're changing the format to reflect your comments. Look for a more user-friendly, web-based newsletter in the coming months.

Until next month,

#### Pat Bell

Minister of Agriculture and Lands

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



On July 11, Minister Bell (right) visited the Nicomen Island dairy farm of Sid Stoker, one of seven Lower Mainland dairy farmers that moved animals as a precautionary measure due to the risk of spring flooding.

## Tree Fruit and Grape Industry Receives \$8 Million Investment

On July 13, Minister Pat Bell was in Kelowna to announce an \$8 million (\$5 million federal, \$3 million provincial) investment in B.C.'s fruit industry. The provincial funding is for the B.C. Fruit Growers to remain competitive in a global economy as laid out in their strategic plan. The federal funding will provide for the removal and renewal of plant stock.

The tree fruit industry has faced a number of recent challenges, such as mounting pressures from declining prices and demand, and increasing import supply.

The B.C. Fruit Growers Association (BCFGA) was pleased with the thoughtful process and collaboration of their members, partners and government staff.

At the event, Minister Bell presented BCFGAs President Joe Sardinha with a Minister's Award of Excellence for the Most Improved Industry in 2006.

## Ministers Put Forth New Vision at FPT Meeting in Whistler

Agriculture ministers from across Canada met in June to develop *Growing Forward*, a new funding framework agreement-in-principle for the agriculture industry. *Growing Forward* will form the basis of a federal/provincial cost-share program that is easy for farmers to use and easy for the province to adapt to – this is of tremendous importance to B.C., which boasts Canada's most diverse agriculture

industry. Innovation and accountability are keys to the next generation of agriculture – both will be addressed as part of *Growing Forward*. Lessons learned from the first Agricultural Policy Framework will be incorporated into the *Growing Forward* plan.



Agriculture ministers from across the country gathered in Whistler June 28-29 for their annual Federal-Provincial-Territorial meeting. Here Minister Bell addresses media as Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture Planning Val Roddick looks on.

The soon to be released provincial Agriculture Plan combined with the Federal/Provincial/Territorial *Growing Forward* agreement will guide the future of agriculture in British Columbia. Ministers will be meeting again in September to further discuss *Growing Forward*.

For more information:



## Dr. Lewis Wins Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA) Award



Ron Lewis was surprised when he learned he was selected by the CVMA Council as the recipient of the national Hill's Public Relations Award. Ron's colleagues nominated him for the award for his ability to handle the media in such a professional manner and provide credible information during many high profile disease events over the years.

The \$1000 award recognizes an individual who has worked towards

enhancing the public image of the veterinary profession. Ron began working for the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands as a veterinary pathologist in 1980. He was appointed Chief Veterinary Officer and Director of the Animal Health Branch in 1999.

The award was presented in July at the CVMA's annual convention in Ottawa. Congratulations Ron for all of your achievements!

### DID YOU KNOW?

You can have access to your own piece of farmland by purchasing a share in the Keating Community Farm Co-operative. The co-operative method of farming is a way for people who want to be involved in agriculture to have access to land without the expense of buying farmland. For more information:

[www.conservancy.bc.ca/content.asp?sectionack=keatingfarm](http://www.conservancy.bc.ca/content.asp?sectionack=keatingfarm)

B.C. produces about 95% of the Canadian production of cultivated blueberries. This is more than 23 million kilograms per year. About 50% of these are processed and 50% sold fresh, for export and local consumption through stores and farmgate outlets.

The Similkameen Valley community of Cawston has become the largest organic tree fruit producer in Canada.

The third annual Organic Islands Festival was held July 7-8 in Saanich. Over 2500 people attended on July 7. The festival featured organic farmers, horticulturalists, green retailers and organic restaurateurs.

Don't miss it next year:

[www.organicislands.ca](http://www.organicislands.ca)

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

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



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