



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Innovation Award Winner Redefining Crop Health Technology**

**April 30, 2015, Victoria, B.C.** – The Investment Agriculture Foundation of B.C. (IAF) has awarded the 2015 Award of Excellence for Innovation to Dr. Saber Miresmailli, founder and CEO of Ecoation Innovative Solutions (EIS), for the development of a wireless crop health monitoring system that will prevent crop losses and decrease pest and disease management costs for growers.

“The Award of Excellence for Innovation celebrates the leaders behind those projects that have the potential to transform a sector, or turn a problem into an opportunity for B.C.’s agriculture and agri-foods industry,” says Ken Bates, IAF chair. “Dr. Miresmailli’s creativity and leadership in addressing the industry-wide issue of crop protection will provide growers with a new tool that allows them to identify and address problems before they spread, reducing crop loss, labour, and pesticide applications.”

EIS *crop-sense*™ automates the plant monitoring and inspection process, and identifies where and when treatment is needed at the plant level. Instead of looking for signs of pests and diseases, *crop-sense*™ conveys information about plant health based on plant-generated signals before symptoms arise. The system will allow growers to identify pest outbreaks sooner, and take action to manage the pest before there is damage to the crop.

EIS recently established a research greenhouse at UBC to test its technology on eleven major cultivars of tomato and is also conducting massive data collection inside commercial greenhouses to complete its signal database and refine its predictive models and prototype. Once fully implemented, EIS technology can significantly reduce grower operation costs related to pest and disease management and minimize crop losses due to pests and diseases. Commercial trials are underway to prove the efficacy and functionality.

“Our vision at EIS is to change the way we produce and protect our food with the help of innovative technology and big data. I am extremely proud that today, we can apply this vision to various agricultural settings, from sophisticated greenhouses in British Columbia to smallholder cowpea farms in Benin, West Africa,” says Dr. Miresmailli.

“As an immigrant, thinking outside the box has always been my forte. Over the years, I've enjoyed tremendous support from people, organizations and government agencies that have invested their trust in me and made my journey possible. I am extremely thankful for the recognition. I consider this

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award as yet another driving force and motivation for me and my amazing colleagues at EIS with whom I share this honor.”

The IAF Award of Excellence for Innovation in Agriculture and Agri-Food celebrates B.C.’s agriculture and agri-food leaders who have implemented specific projects or initiatives leading to economic, environmental or social benefits to British Columbia and the industry in general, or to a specific sector. This year the award was presented at the IAF Award Luncheon and Project Showcase in Abbotsford.

In addition to the winner, the selection committee recognized two Honorable Mentions – Brad Marchant from Enterra Feed Corporation, for developing a new value-added process for dealing with bio-waste; and Michael Gilbert from SemiosBio Technologies for introducing new precision technology that is helping growers in Canada, Europe and the U.S. combat orchard pests.

“We are proud to have supported these nominees through federal and provincial innovation funding, and are now thrilled to recognize and celebrate their incredible achievements. These projects represent long-term gains that extend beyond agriculture to impact consumer, environmental and economic health,” says Ken Bates.

Through the Canada-BC Agri-Innovation program, the Investment Agriculture Foundation has committed over \$6-million in federal and provincial funding to projects in research and development and pilots and demonstrations. Looking ahead, the Agri-Innovation program will focus funding on facilitating commercialization and adoption of innovative products, technologies and practices.

The Investment Agriculture Foundation is an industry-led, not-for-profit organization that works with the agri-food industry to strategically invest federal and provincial funds toward projects that have the potential to transform ideas into solutions.

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