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## **Abbotsford Dairy Farmer and Entrepreneur Wins Award of Excellence for Innovation**

**January 27, 2011, Abbotsford, B.C.** – The Investment Agriculture Foundation of B.C. (IAF) announced today that Bill Vanderkooi, president of Abbotsford’s Bakerview Eco-Dairy Association and CEO of Nutriva Group, is the recipient of the 2011 Award of Excellence for Innovation in Agriculture and Agri-Food.

“This award celebrates the innovators who help B.C.’s agriculture and agri-food industry stay on the cutting edge, for the benefit of all British Columbians,” said IAF chair Stuart Wilson. “We are very pleased to honour Mr. Vanderkooi for his commitment to innovative, environmentally responsible and sustainable dairy farming practices.”

Bakerview EcoDairy is the first demonstration farm of its kind in Canada. Through the EcoDairy’s interactive tours, the public can access a fully operational dairy farm that showcases a number of innovations, including an on-site anaerobic digester, robotic milker, cow brush, comfort stall systems, lighting and ventilation.

“We appreciate the recognition for the Bakerview EcoDairy’s contribution to innovation and education,” says Vanderkooi. “The EcoDairy promotes technology that integrates cow comfort and sustainability and is uniquely positioned to deliver a valuable experience for the B.C. school curriculum that will help increase exposure to where our food comes from.”

In addition to his work on the Bakerview EcoDairy, Vanderkooi is CEO of Nutriva Group, a multi-faceted group of agri-businesses that focuses on developing and managing whole food value chains. Vanderkooi lives with his wife Helinda and five children in Abbotsford.

This year’s honourable mention is Abbotsford’s Catalyst One On-Farm Anaerobic Digester, a facility currently under development to process manure and other organic waste streams to produce biogas and high quality fertilizer. This project will be the first in British Columbia to produce raw biogas that is upgraded to biomethane (a carbon-neutral fuel) and injected into the existing natural gas system.

“This facility shows that technology and innovation can offer solutions to problems, such as how to deal with organic waste materials,” says Chris Bush, president of Catalyst Power Inc. “It is our hope that B.C. will build on the foundation we provide by progressively developing new solutions.”

The IAF Award of Excellence for Innovation in Agriculture and Agri-Food celebrates innovative ideas, products, projects and programs generated by the agriculture and agri-food industry that deliver economic, environmental or social benefits to British Columbia. The award is open to individual B.C. residents and Canadian-based organizations and businesses operating in B.C. This year’s honourees were announced on January 26 at the B.C. Agriculture Council’s annual Agri-Food Industry Gala in Abbotsford.

The Investment Agriculture Foundation is a not-for-profit organization that strategically invests funds on behalf of the federal and provincial governments in support of innovative projects that benefit the agriculture and agri-food industries in British Columbia.

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