



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Investment Agriculture Foundation Holds Annual General Meeting & Project Showcase

April 18, 2018 – Victoria, B.C. The Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC (IAF) held its Annual General Meeting in Abbotsford last week to present its contributions for 2017 to the British Columbia agriculture and agri-food industry.

IAF chair Ken Bates highlighted the impacts achieved by industry through funding programs like the B.C. Government's Buy Local Program, the B.C. Agrifood and Seafood Export Program, and the Canada-B.C. Agri-Innovation Program. Bates also thanked Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the B.C. Ministry of Agriculture for their ongoing support.

"Many of our funding recipients reported that they would not have been able to even start their projects without program support," Bates emphasized. "Not only did project funding result in new product lines for some, but several credit the funding for contributing to broader social and environmental impacts."

Executive Director Michelle Koski provided an overview of project impacts across B.C.'s crop, livestock and pan-agricultural sectors, also crediting the Innovation, Export and Buy Local programs for increasing opportunities for industry and helping B.C. companies like Organic Ocean Seafood, Naturally Homegrown Foods and Jealous Fruits to become more competitive on both domestic and international levels.

"Thanks to the considerable investments from the federal and provincial governments, we have been able to advance innovation and accelerate growth for farm, food and processing businesses across the province," noted Koski, adding that close to \$12 million of innovation funding has been invested in over 150 projects since 2013, while more than \$3.8 million of export funding has supported over 450 projects.

On the financial side, treasurer Bert Miles' report revealed IAF approved approximately 200 projects during 2017, with contributions totalling more than \$7.4 million toward new and continuing projects and initiatives.

Following the AGM, new directors Angela Groothof and Kiren Sihota were welcomed onto the IAF board, while a fond farewell was bid to departing chair Ken Bates and director Dale Krahn.

Continuing IAF directors are vice chair Jack DeWit (Fraser Valley/other livestock), Len Bouwman (Fraser Valley/dairy), Walter Fritsche (Peace/grains, oilseeds and forage), Glenda Gesy (Thompson-Okanagan, pre-farm gate), Arzeena Hamir (Vancouver Island/emerging sectors), Alistair Johnston (Fraser Valley/post-farm gate), Dennis Lapierre (Okanagan-Shuswap/community agriculture), secretary Don Low (Kootenays/tree fruits and grapes), treasurer Bert Miles (North Okanagan/greenhouse, floriculture and nursery), Kalpna Solanki (Lower Mainland/post-farm gate), and David Zehnder (East Kootenay/cattle).



Read the 2017 Annual Report: <http://iafbc.ca/annual-reports/>

2018 Showcase of BC Projects

The *2018 Showcase of B.C. Projects* topped off the day, featuring an exhibit of almost 40 projects by IAF clients that are inspiring new ideas and approaches in B.C. agriculture, and offering a forum to explore partnership and funding opportunities.

“Showcasing BCLNA’s projects is important to the nursery industry as well as other sectors, as we learn from the diversity of projects and how they can enable industry to move forward to face challenges,” says Hedy Dyck, Chief Operating Officer for the BC Landscape and Nursery Association. “It is a pleasure to work with IAF to find the pathways to address emerging issues and build a strong and vibrant industry.”

Dairy farmer, agricultural advocate and creator of Fresh Air Media, Andrew Campbell served as keynote speaker, sharing his unique insights into consumer perceptions and how to use social media and new technology to build public trust and cultivate more productive communication between industry and consumers.

About Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC

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

Funding for the B.C. Agrifood and Seafood Export Program and the Canada-B.C. Agri-Innovation Program was provided by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the B.C. Ministry of Agriculture under *Growing Forward 2*, a federal-provincial-territorial initiative.

Funding for the B.C. Government’s Buy Local Program is provided by the B.C. Ministry of Agriculture.

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