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### **Innovation Award Winner Creates New Opportunities for Canadian Dairy**

**April 18, 2018 – Victoria, B.C.** The Investment Agriculture Foundation of B.C. (IAF) has awarded the 2018 Award of Excellence for Innovation to Philip Vanderpol, president and CEO of Vitalus Nutrition, for the development of technology to produce VITAGOS™, a prebiotic fiber from a milk by-product.

“The Award of Excellence for Innovation celebrates the leaders behind projects that can offer economic, environmental or social benefits to British Columbia and the industry in general, or to a specific sector,” says IAF director Alistair Johnston. “We are thrilled to recognize Philip’s leadership in helping the Canadian dairy industry become internationally competitive.”

Vitalus is a leading supplier of customized dairy ingredients to the food, beverage and nutraceutical industries. After a series of IAF-supported projects for the development, pilot and pre-commercialization stages, Vitalus was able to develop the technology to transform a by-product of milk protein processing into a promising value-added ingredient.

With the recent launch of their VITAGOS™ line, Vitalus has become the first North American manufacturer of a high-value fraction from dairy permeate. This prebiotic can now be used in infant formulations and other foods to enhance their nutritional characteristics, including dairy products and beverages, fruit drinks, fruit preparations and animal feed.

“The development and commercialization of this new ingredient will help the dairy industry transform a currently unused by-product into a value-added functional food product that can create new economic opportunities in the food processing sector, while enhancing consumer health,” explains Philip. “I am grateful for the recognition of this award, as well as early project support for the process and product development stages of VITAGOS™.”

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 on April 12<sup>th</sup>.

In addition to the winner, the award selection committee was pleased to recognize two Honorable Mentions – Dr. Victor Lo from the University of British Columbia, for his pioneering efforts to enhance the environmental stewardship of B.C. dairy farms through the development of a more sustainable manure and nutrient

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management process; and Silvio Lettrari, owner of Kaslo Sourdough, for introducing the world's first sourdough pasta to help address the needs of a growing number of consumers with gluten sensitivities and other dietary concerns.

"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," says Alistair. "These projects represent long-term gains that extend beyond agriculture to impact consumer, environmental and economic health."

The Investment Agriculture Foundation 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 Canada-B.C. Agri-Innovation Program was provided by the Governments of Canada and British Columbia under *Growing Forward 2*, a federal-provincial-territorial initiative.

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