
UPDATE

For Immediate Release
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May 25, 2019

Ministry of Agriculture
Agriculture and Agri-food Canada

Agritech making fruit more accessible for British Columbians

VICTORIA – British Columbia's agritech companies are partnering with the federal and provincial governments to find the perfect pairing between food and technology.

A number of innovative projects are receiving investments under the Canadian Agricultural Partnership.

B.C. pears are a delicacy, though their ripening time makes it difficult for British Columbians to enjoy this fruit consistently. Consolidated Fruit Packers Ltd. (CFP) of Kelowna is eager to change that by bringing innovative methods to the Canadian pear market.

Pears are a unique fruit because they are one of only a few fruit species that do not ripen on the tree. They require time for the sugars to develop off the branch, which can pose a challenge for consumers eager to enjoy a local pear. CFP is studying the process required to create a pre-conditioned pear that consumers will be able to take home and enjoy immediately or soon after purchase.

Defining the conditions that create the perfect pear will allow CFP to offer a local pear with a more consistent texture and flavour. Approaching this challenge from another angle, CFP is developing the optimal method of packaging to further enhance the sweet, juicy flavour that B.C. pears are known for, to provide consumers with the best eating experience.

This project is one of many examples of businesses partnering with the federal and provincial governments to help British Columbians access more local fruit and support growers and producers.

A project by Vancouver-based Vintality, a subsidiary of Geotronics Consulting Inc., is working with B.C. vineyards and fertilizer companies to boost yields and grape quality while lowering the amount of fertilizer needed to grow grapes.

Geotronics Consulting has designed a fertilizer trailer with GPS technology that will automatically dispense precise amounts of liquid fertilizer to targeted areas on the property thanks to its built-in program. This will reduce the amount of fertilizer and water used in the vineyard while ensuring plants get the nutrients they need. The project is designed to increase the competitiveness of B.C.'s grape and wine industries by enhancing the tools growers, producers and processors can access to produce their products.

The CFP and Vintality projects are a small sample of the innovative ideas that B.C.-based organizations are working on to build a more sustainable future. Projects under the Canada-British Columbia Agri-Innovation Program have received nearly \$2.6 million in funding from the Canadian Agricultural Partnership. The partnership is a five-year federal-provincial-territorial

agreement that includes \$2 billion in cost-shared strategic initiatives delivered by the provinces and territories, and \$1 billion for federal programs and services through March 2023.

Quotes:

Marie-Claude Bibeau, federal Minister of Agriculture and Agri-food –

“Canadian-made foods are recognized worldwide for the highest standards of quality and food safety. Through this investment, our government is supporting agricultural innovation so B.C. fruit producers and processors have access to new technologies and tools to be even more competitive and meet growing consumer demands for their excellent products.”

Lana Popham, B.C.’s Minister of Agriculture –

“It’s no secret that B.C. fruit tastes amazing. Finding innovative ways to improve access to pears and grapes for British Columbians while creating neat tools to support our growers, producers and processors is fantastic. It’s wonderful to see new technology supporting communities and industries throughout the province.”

Gord Morrison, category director, Consolidated Fruit Packers –

“Consolidated Fruit Packers is committed to being the most innovative team in produce with an unwavering commitment to value and taste. The funding through the governments Agri-Innovation Program has provided us the opportunity to push the boundaries in agritech as we create a better eating experience for consumers with ready to eat, delicious local pears.”

Chris Mark, operations, Vintality –

"The Canada-B.C. Agri-Innovation Program has given us the support to make our project a reality. Real change and innovation takes a lot of partners and the Agri-Innovation Program has been critical for us in creating this change. We believe B.C. should keep making the best wine that respects the *terroir*, and this is a big step in making that more and more a reality."

Quick Facts:

- B.C.’s climate makes it possible for farmers to grow, harvest and produce over 200 commodities.
- Agrifood and seafood sales in the province generated over \$14 billion in 2017.
- The B.C. food and beverage processing sector generated over \$9 billion in revenue in 2017.

Learn More:

To read the January 22, 2019, news release discussing other projects that have received funding, visit:

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2019AGRI0004-000053>

To read the May 22, 2018, news release announcing the program, visit:

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2018AGRI0032-000974>

For more information on the Canada-BC Agri-Innovation Program, visit:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/agriculture-seafood/programs/canada-bc->

[agriinnovation](#)

For more information on how to apply to the Canada-BC Agri-Innovation Program, visit:
www.iafbc.ca/funding-opportunities/innovation/

For more information on the Canadian Agricultural Partnership, visit:
www.agr.gc.ca/eng/about-us/key-departmental-initiatives/canadian-agricultural-partnership/?id=1461767369849

For more information about Vintality, visit: <https://vintality.ca/>

For more information about Consolidated Fruit Packers, visit: <http://cfp-ltd.ca/>

A backgrounder follows.

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BACKGROUND

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Support for B.C. companies

These 12 projects received \$1,024,319 in support from the Canadian Agricultural Partnership under the Canada-BC Agri-Innovation Program, bringing the total funding to nearly \$2.6 million since the program began in April 2018.

Brightside Poultry: \$25,000 to purchase a specifically designed vending machine to sell eggs at the farmgate.

Certified Organic Association of BC: \$118,000 to engage organic producers to adopt a new online certification tool to streamline the certification process and encourage more producers to follow up with organic certification.

Consolidated Fruit Packers: \$188,810 to purchase and implement a blueberry grading machine that can consistently grade size, colour classification and quality with high accuracy.

Consolidated Fruit Packers: \$131,450 to develop a perfect eating-stage preconditioned pear.

Farming Karma Fruit Company: \$55,000 to develop an industrial-scale machine to remove apple cores with seeds and stems prior to juice pressing.

Howling Bluff Estate Winery: \$47,871 to study the capability of a flex cube, an alternative storage container that could replace traditional oak barrels to reduce the cost of producing wine.

Joppa Wills Inc.: \$40,688 to develop a commercial-scale fruit dehydrator to divert about 45,360 kilograms (100,000 pounds) of raw-grade food waste back into the food supply.

Kwantlen Polytechnic University: \$10,000 to develop and confirm scientific protocols for effectively assessing the microbial health of soil.

Mirochembiotech Ltd.: \$70,000 to pilot test amino-acid chelated minerals to make them more readily available in Canada.

University of British Columbia: \$90,000 to research and demonstrate a suitable methodology for the detection of norovirus in fresh produce in B.C.

University of British Columbia: \$54,000 to develop a sustainable, cost-effective approach to manage dairy manure and recover value-added nutrients.

Van Eekelen Enterprises Ltd.: \$136,500 to develop and test a system for growing Witloof (leafy vegetable) to improve cleanliness, reduce repetitive labour and increase efficiency.

Vintality: \$57,000 to develop a GPS fertilization trailer to precisely apply fertilizer according to plants' needs.

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