

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FARMLAND ADVANTAGE EXPANDS TO NEW REGIONS FOR 2022

August 29, 2022 – Victoria, BC: The Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC (IAF) is pleased to announce three new funding partners from the Government of BC for the Farmland Advantage program: the Ministry of Land, Water and Resource Stewardship (LWRS), the Ministry of Forests through BC Wildfire Service (BCWS), and the Ministry of Agriculture and Food (AF).

“We are thrilled to welcome LWRS, BCWS, and AF to the Farmland Advantage family,” says IAF Board of Director Chair Jack DeWit. “Farmland Advantage is doing important work on BC farms and ranches, and we are thankful to be able to work collaboratively with these BC Government Ministries to expand the regions and sites we can support through the program.”

LWRS has provided IAF a grant of \$1,500,000 to support the Farmland Advantage program over the course of two years, from 2022-2024. Funding will be focused on activities that advance watershed security through the restoration and protection of riparian areas which are the land next to streams and rivers. Some activities taking place include installing fencing, planting native species, and stabilizing banks, which improves the availability of good quality water for healthy ecosystems and communities.

BCWS has committed \$500,000 for Farmland Advantage over the next two years. IAF is partnering with BCWS to implement activities that reduce the fuel load for wildfires on private lands, farms, and ranches in the BC Interior as a pilot under the Farmland Advantage program. Wildfire risk reduction treatments generally consist of planning, prescription development, tree stand thinning, pruning, and surface fuel management. The overall expected result of this pilot is to increase the amount of wildfire resilient landscapes within the treatment areas.

In addition, AF has provided IAF with \$300,000 to support the adoption of regenerative agriculture practices over the next year. These practices include targeted grazing to improve soil fertility, establishing hedgerows to protect soil health, and riparian buffers to control erosion. The goals are to regenerate soil and water quality, complementing the activities that are funded by LWRS. The provincial funding from AF and LWRS are part of BC’s contributions this year to the Canadian Agricultural Partnership, a five-year, \$3 billion investment by federal-provincial and territorial governments to strengthen the agriculture, agri-food and agri-based products sector.

Background

Farmland Advantage is a payment for ecosystem services program that works with farmers to protect and conserve critical, natural lands, streams, and wildlife habitats in British Columbia. The program helps

farmers identify sites that can be protected and enhanced and develops recommendations and plans to preserve them. These plans can include actions such as water or stream setbacks, strategic fencing, reforestation, or rangeland enhancement. Farmers then carry out the recommendations and receive modest financial compensation from Farmland Advantage for doing so.

For more information about the Farmland Advantage Program: www.farmlandadvantage.ca

Funding Model

Farmland Advantage is a departure from IAF's traditional business model of delivering government programs. Funding agencies and partners interested in contributing to the program can specify certain areas of the province or habitat-types where they would like their contribution to go. Once the priorities are established, the program engages local experts and industry partners to identify high priority ecosystems and the farms and agricultural operations located in these areas. These farmers are then invited to participate in the program.

Farmland Advantage is funded by the BC Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy through the Healthy Watersheds Initiative; the Government of Canada through Environment and Climate Change Canada; the British Columbia Ministry of Forests through BC Wildfire Service (BCWS); and the BC Ministry of Agriculture and Food through the Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP). Farmland Advantage is an Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC program.

Additional Quotes

Katrine Conroy, BC Minister of Forests:

"Prevention, mitigation, and building a province where our communities are more resilient to the impacts of wildfire is a top priority for our government. We all play a role in wildfire prevention. By supporting the work of the Investment Agriculture Foundation, we are strengthening the agricultural community to undertake Wildfire Risk Reduction initiatives to help increase wildfire resiliency across the province and protect our critical agricultural lands."

Josie Osborne, BC Minister of Land, Water and Resource Stewardship:

"Healthy watersheds are a critical foundation of healthy ecosystems and communities. By investing in watershed restoration, we're also making an investment in the long-term well-being of people. When water and watersheds are respected and valued, they provide environmental benefits for years to come. I applaud the Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC on their important work to strengthen watershed security on B.C. farms and ranches."

Lana Popham, BC Minister of Agriculture and Food:

"Regenerative agriculture practices restore the soil, water and biodiversity of the land, which helps farmland become more resilient to climate change. We will continue to support B.C. farmers as they increase these regenerative practices and become more environmentally sustainable which will, in turn, strengthen our local food security and economies."

IAF is a non-profit organization that delivers programs to support a thriving agriculture and agri-food sector in British Columbia.

With 25+ years of experience, IAF is recognized as the leading provider of high-quality and cost-effective program delivery services for the agriculture and agri-food sector in BC; having delivered more than \$250 million to industry on behalf of the federal and provincial governments.

www.iafbc.ca

For more information, media may contact:

Kelsi Stiles

IAF Communications

communications@iafbc.ca