

News Release

NEW FEDERAL FUNDING PROGRAM WILL ADVANCE AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD INDUSTRY

WOLFVILLE, April 7, 2004 – A five-year, \$255-million program aimed at positioning Canada’s agriculture and agri-food industry to capture new opportunities was unveiled today by Agriculture and Agri-Food Minister Bob Speller.

The Advancing Canadian Agriculture and Agri-Food (ACAAF) Program was developed based on ongoing feedback from the sector, including extensive industry consultations on the need for a long-term, funded program.

“This new federal funding program will have \$51 million annually to expand the sector’s capacity to respond to current and emerging issues and better plan for the future,” said Mr. Speller. “Increased collaboration and the forming of new strategic alliances within the sector will be key to its success.”

As the successor to the Canadian Adaptation and Rural Development (CARD) Fund, the ACAAf program will continue CARD’s innovative and cooperative approach to funding projects at the national, multi-regional and regional level identified and carried out by the sector.

The framework of the ACAAf is based on a three-pillar approach: Pillar I, Industry-led Solutions to Emerging Issues; Pillar II, Capturing Market Opportunities by Advancing Research Results; and Pillar III, Sharing Information to Advance the Sector.

In recognition that the challenges and opportunities facing the sector will change and evolve over time:

- 1. Pillar I will support projects that test or pilot approaches and solutions, and can serve as an incubator for initiatives holding future promise.**
- 2. Pillar II will support projects that transfer research results into market opportunities.**
- 3. Pillar III will support projects aimed at gathering, analyzing and sharing information to contribute to future agriculture and agri-food policy directions.**

“ACAAF will advance the industry by complementing the elements of the Agricultural Policy Framework, and will further encourage the sector to map out future agriculture and agri-food policy directions,” said Mr. Speller. “I expect sector-led projects, tested and piloted under ACAAf, will lead to future government or industry initiatives.”



News Release

-2-

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At the provincial and territorial level, projects will continue to be delivered by 14 industry-led councils. The total funding available to regional councils is being increased from the previous level of \$25 million per year under CARD, to \$27.3 million per year.

In addition, ACAAf proposes the establishment of “collective outcomes” as a key objective of the new program. Collective outcome projects are aimed at areas on which greater industry collaboration amongst national, multi-regional and regional stakeholders will be encouraged, to maximize benefits to the sector. By undertaking collective outcome projects, regional councils will have the opportunity to further increase the available funding to \$31.7 million annually.

National projects will be delivered by national industry organizations and other eligible applicants. Applications are now being accepted for national project proposals and must be submitted by May 31. A second call will follow in fall 2004. All project proposals must comply with the ACAAf principles and eligibility criteria.

Further details on how to apply for national projects can be found on ACAAf’s Web site at www.agr.gc.ca/acaaf.

-30-

For more information, media may contact:

Carla Ventin
Press Secretary
Minister Speller’s Office
(613) 759-1346

Media Relations
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
Ottawa
(613) 759-7972



BACKGROUND

ADVANCING CANADIAN AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD (ACAAF) PROGRAM

The Advancing Canadian Agriculture and Agri-Food (ACAAF) Program, a \$51 million per year/five-year funding initiative, is the successor to the Canadian Agriculture and Rural Development (CARD) Fund. The new federal funding program will support the goals of the Agricultural Policy Framework (APF), while empowering Canada's agriculture and agri-food sector to seize new opportunities in the highly-competitive global marketplace.

The ACAA Program was developed based on compelling feedback from the sector, including extensive cross-country consultations in the Fall of 2003 about the need for new programming and issues raised during APF consultations. A full evaluation of CARD II programming also helped to shape the new program.

ACAAF will mirror the highly successful industry-led approach employed under CARD, with involvement and initiatives delivered at the national, multi-regional and regional levels. Flexibility to allocate funds where the need is greatest and the accountability of the sector in managing various projects will continue to be the cornerstone of ACAA.

ACAAF Program Delivery

National initiatives will be delivered by national industry organizations and other eligible applicants. At the provincial/ territorial level, 14 industry-led councils representative of the agriculture and agri-food value chain in their respective region, will approve funding of regional and multi-regional projects.

ACAAF Program Objectives

Objectives include expanding the sector's capacity to respond to current and emerging issues; positioning the sector to capture future market opportunities; pro-actively engaging the sector to contribute to future agriculture and agri-food policy directions on an ongoing basis; and, integrating sector-led projects, tested and piloted under ACAA, into future government or industry initiatives.

ACAAF plans to accomplish its mandate through increased sector and other stakeholder collaboration, while forging new strategic alliances to identify current and emerging issues and

acting to address them – not only to help the sector grow but also to pave the way for future agriculture and agri-food policy directions.

How ACAAF is structured

ACAAF is based on a three-pillar approach:

- 4. Pillar I, Industry-led Solutions to emerging Issues;**
- 5. Pillar II, Capturing Market Opportunities by advancing Research Results; and**
- 6. Pillar III, Sharing Information to advance the Sector.**

As part of the ACAAF program, “collective outcomes” will be established. These “collective outcome” projects will be key in facilitating greater industry collaboration amongst national and regional stakeholders to maximize benefits to the sector.

The creation of a National Forum is currently being explored. Its composition will be drawn from across the sector and other key stakeholders. The proposed Forum would meet to identify potential areas of common interest that could become collective outcomes for the ACAAF program.

For more details, please visit our ACAAF Web page: www.agr.gc.ca/acaaf .