

A Unifying Voice for Science and Agriculture



Ottawa, October 14, 2009

The Agricultural Institute of Canada (AIC) has convened an influential 10-member Advisory Council to help establish a unifying voice for science and agriculture in Canada.

“Agriculture and the related sciences and industries can provide solutions to many of the most pressing challenges of the 21st Century, but few Canadians understand this,” said Myles Frosst, AIC CEO. “And with more effective collaboration between agri-resource businesses and scientists, there could be a profound impact on the environment, the economy and our well-being.”

Lack of understanding of the substantial societal benefits that can be derived from agri-resources, combined with sometimes ineffectual government financial and policy support for innovative science in the agro-economy, is preventing the sector from contributing to its full potential.

The Advisory Council is comprised of representatives from the corporate sector, industry associations and the science community of universities, research councils and scientific societies. It will provide advice to help AIC build a strong and unifying voice for all sectors and disciplines involved in the agro-economy.

Members of the AIC Unifying Voice Advisory Council:

Ted Bilyea – former Executive Vice-President, Maple Leaf Foods Inc. (retired 2005), and now an agri-food consultant specializing in innovation with clients in both private and public sector. Mr. Bilyea serves as Deputy Chair of the Science Advisory Board of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and is a member of the Board of PrioNet Canada. He is also a member of the Board of Paterson Global Foods Inc. and Afexa Life Sciences Inc. (Cold FX).

David Chanasyk, PhD – Professor, Renewable Resources, University of Alberta. His research interests include hydrology, runoff and erosion, land reclamation and water quality. Dr. Chanasyk is a Past President of the Agricultural Institute of Canada (2003-2004).

Chantal Farmer, PhD - Research Scientist, Swine Lactation Biology, with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada in Lennoxville. Dr. Farmer is also Associate Professor, Animal Science Department, Laval University, Editor of the Canadian Journal of Animal Science and a member of the Executive of the Canadian Society of Animal Science.

Ralph W.F. Hardy, PhD - President and co-founder of the National Agricultural Biotechnology Council (NABC), a consortium of over 35 not-for-profit agricultural research and educational institutions in Canada and the United States that provides an open forum for discussion on the safe, efficacious, and equitable development of agricultural biotechnology. Previously, Dr. Hardy was President of BioTechnica International and President and CEO of the Boyce Thompson Institute for Plant Research, Inc.

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Bryan Harvey, PhD - Emeritus Professor, University of Saskatchewan Crop Development Centre. He is a former chair of the university's horticulture department, and served as Acting Vice-President Research and special advisor to the Vice-President Research. Dr. Harvey is the breeder or co-breeder of more than 40 barley varieties and serves on a number of national and international committees related to plant breeding and the seed industry. He is a Past President of the Agricultural Institute of Canada (1994-95).

Douglas Hedley, PhD - Private consultant and Executive Director, Canadian Faculties of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine, representing the five veterinary medicine and eight agricultural faculties in Canadian universities. Dr. Hedley retired in 2004 as Assistant Deputy Minister, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. He continues to work on farm income issues in Canada and the USA, has provided training on governance issues in China, and explores farm marketing and processing approaches within Canada and North America.

Rory McAlpine - Vice-President, Government & Industry Relations, Maple Leaf Foods Inc. He has overall responsibility for building strong and effective relationships with government and industry stakeholders to develop a coordinated and proactive government and industry relations program across Maple Leaf Foods. Mr. McAlpine was Deputy Minister of the B.C. Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries from 2002-2005, and prior to that held various executive positions in the federal government.

Al Mussell, PhD - Senior Research Associate, George Morris Centre, Guelph. His areas of research expertise are farm management, agricultural marketing, and farm income policies. He also teaches finance and marketing to participants in the Centre's executive development and agricultural management programs. Prior to joining the George Morris Centre, Dr. Mussell worked as an economist in the milk procurement division of Land O'Lakes, Inc. in Minnesota.

Don Smith, PhD – Chair, Plant Science Department and Head, Green Crop Network & McGill Network for Innovation in Biofuels and Bioproducts. Recent work in his laboratory has led to the discovery of two sets of compounds, produced by bacteria, that cause plants to grow faster and produce more biomass and seeds, material useful for food, feed or biofuel production. This research activity has resulted in over 245 publications, eight patents and a spin-off company.

Lyle Vanclief - Agriculture and agri-food consultant based in Ameliasburg, Ontario. Member of Parliament for 15 years (1988-2004) and former Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. Working with provincial and territorial ministers of agriculture, Mr. Vanclief established the Agricultural Policy Framework, a federal-provincial-territorial agreement that aims to make Canada the world leader in food safety and quality, environmentally responsible production, and innovation.

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The Agricultural Institute of Canada is a non-governmental organization whose mission is to build scientific and professional capacity for the wise use of the agri-resource base.