

Tom Beach
Fellow of the Agricultural Institute of Canada



Tom Beach has put his heart and soul into helping build AIC into a dynamic organization that leads the way on articulating Canadian agricultural issues, increasing the credibility of agrology as a profession, and making food security a reality for the people of developing nations. He reaches beyond the mere doing to develop a deeper understanding and bring out solutions that bring people together. It is obvious that Tom has a passion for making the things he's involved with serve the agricultural community, the agrology profession and the public. His quiet confidence and analytical skills allow him to bring to light solutions that take organizations, projects, and people to a higher level.

Tom has served twice as the Executive Director of AIC, from 1999 to 2001 and from 2002 to 2007. During these times AIC was making fundamental, and difficult changes. Tom played an important role in helping to steer the organization through a difficult membership restructuring, transition to a new form of governance and resurrection of an important AIC tradition.

As Executive Director, Tom led the resurrection of the AIC discussion paper in 2005. The first paper produced as a result of this renewal, *Big Farms, Small Farms*, generated much national public discussion on the sustainability of Canadian agriculture as witnessed by more than 100 newspaper articles and 20 radio programs on the subject. Through these actions Tom played a significant role in changing and preparing AIC for its future role of positively impacting national agri-food policy and informing the public on agri-food issues.

Tom's achievements extend well beyond the Executive Director role, though. Two other areas where Tom has had a significant impact are as the International Program Coordinator (1996 – present) and Accreditation Program Coordinator (1997 – 2008).

Building on his previous experience with CUSO, Tom was instrumental in moving the AIC international program from an ad hoc collection of projects to a unified program with a vision for providing real development assistance. Tom also ensured that all AIC projects set clear cut goals with measurable indicators that led to successful outcomes.

He led the effort in 2000 to renew CIDA funding for another 5 year period, achieving an increase in funding and keeping the program relevant and viable despite funding cutbacks within CIDA. Proving his resourcefulness, Tom identified a new area from which to access additional funding which put AIC in the position of being able to negotiate future contracts worth more and for longer periods. During this time AIC's international program was cited by CIDA as one of the most effective voluntary sector programs

promoting food security. Funding was again renewed in 2006, extending the program to 2011.

Undoubtedly Tom's analytical skill and patience, both at home and in the field, in cultivating and maintaining relationships with government departments and agencies, the NGO community (Canadian and international), and community groups is what has secured AIC's reputation in the field of international agricultural development. His contributions to rural and agricultural development have been recognized internationally through the awarding of an Honorary Fellowship in the Ghana Society of Animal Production and Honorary membership in the Soil Science Society of Sri Lanka. The impact of Tom's achievements on the agricultural sector of the developing countries with AIC projects is significant and long lasting.

As administrator (and a Professional Agrologist), Tom provided important leadership in building the AIC program for accrediting agriculture programs at the eight Canadian academic institutions offering undergraduate agriculture degrees. Tom's role as Accreditation Coordinator began when the program was launched in 1997, and it grew in strength and stature under his very capable administration. The inaugural round of accreditations set the standard for subsequent reviews and Tom worked diligently with the volunteer site reviewers and university staff to ensure a smooth and successful outcome.

During this time he pushed beyond simply administering the program to engage in the process of accreditation and was AIC's representative on the Association of Accrediting Agencies of Canada. He served as Vice Chair in 2006 and then Chair of the organization in 2007. Tom worked with the executive to promote AAAC and increase membership. By making this extra effort he was able to identify and gain access to online training for AIC site reviewers, thus improving the quality of the program. Upon completion of the first round of accreditation reviews Tom facilitated an in-depth review of the program, and once again went beyond simply administering to make valuable suggestions resulting in important modifications. Reaching beyond his prescribed role once more, this past year Tom developed and fostered connections with academic institutions in the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia to apply AIC's evaluation to their programs to provide an assessment of equivalency with Canadian degree offerings.

A man of quiet confidence, his admirers many and his achievements large, Tom Beach really has made a difference to Canadian and world agriculture.

Nominated by AIC members:

Sandy Todd, Bob Eilers, Bryan Harvey, Kwame Oppong Anane, Gary Patterson and Merv Pritchard

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