



AIC's mission is to support and promote Canada's professional and scientific capacity for contemporary agriculture. Our focus in 2008: *to be the Canadian interdisciplinary forum for contemporary agriculturalists providing solutions to pressing global challenges.*

To that end, in mid-February we will be sending you a survey. We want to learn more about the demographic profile of our members, and we want to utilize your skills and expertise as we move forward. Your input will help advance our collective agenda. Avanti!

Myles Frosst, CEO

Welcome to AIC NSAC Grads!

Thirty-six imminent graduates of Nova Scotia Agricultural College are now enthusiastic members of AIC following the CEO's presentation at the "Meet the Grad Night" at the university in Truro in January. Myles Frosst was in Truro to deepen the partnership with the Atlantic provincial institutes of agrology and was pleased to be invited to speak with highly motivated and accomplished NSAC students completing their graduate or undergraduate degrees.

The students attending noted the varied careers for which their academic background in agriculture will open doors. These university students, and now members of AIC, are global in outlook, multidisciplinary in approach and passionate about the opportunities for contemporary agriculture to provide solutions to challenges in Canada and around the world.

Whether they apply their knowledge to farming, international marketing of processed food, waste management, energy production, environmental sciences or the delivery of health (to name but a few of the students' interests) we congratulate them and welcome them as AIC members into the exciting and challenging world of contemporary agriculture.

AIC Accreditation Program Goes International

The Agricultural Institute of Canada's accreditation program has gained international status. AIC recently signed an agreement with the United Arab Emirates University to undertake a review of their

agricultural degree programs to determine if they are substantially equivalent to programs at Canadian academic institutions to which AIC, in partnership with provincial agrologist organizations and Canadian universities and colleges, has granted full accreditation.

Give me agriculture and I shall give you civilization.

His Highness Shaikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan
First President of the UAE

The UAE University is located in Al Ain, in the eastern region of the Abu Dhabi emirate. A progressive nation, the UAE has a long tradition of agriculture in its oases where crops have been grown for 5000 years. Underground water was channeled to palm groves and small fields, a technique still used today. Since the formation of the UAE in 1971, this small scale traditional farming has been complemented by investment that has seen thousands of hectares being cultivated, reflecting the importance placed on agricultural development by the government. When told the UAE could not develop a sustainable agriculture base, the President, His Highness Shaikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, said "make the impossible, possible."

In the past 25 years, the country's population has increased ten-fold and agricultural production has kept pace. The country is self-sufficient in salad



crops and poultry for much of the year and exports crops to markets in Europe. According to figures from the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries,

agricultural production stands at over Dh 2 billion per year. Studies have shown that much of the country's soil can be cultivated provided there is water and as a result, there has been an extensive program to drill water wells. The government will prepare land for local farmers, giving it to them for free along with seeds, machinery and advice on pest control.

The government also funds research on different crops to determine their adaptability to the local climate. One area that has seen dramatic growth is raising poultry for meat and eggs. Herds of cattle have been imported and have adapted to the climate

and are now producing milk, cheese and yogurt for the local market.

Agriculture and food exports to the UAE from Canada over the past four years have averaged over \$90 million, with a sharp increase in 2006 to reach \$200 million in that year. The UAE imports large volumes of Canadian wheat, canola seed, pulses, and ice cream.

The UAE University is committed to preparing its students to work in contemporary agriculture at home and abroad. It offers degree programs in horticulture, marine fisheries, animal science, food science, and agribusiness. The university's



academic programs undergo continuous external quality reviews, and several have achieved international accreditation status. The university hopes that AIC's review will result in accreditation of its agricultural degree programs.

AIC is presently assisting the university to prepare for the site visit. As well, AIC is solidifying the cooperation between AIC and the UAE's commitment to scientific and professional development through its relations with the UAE Embassy. The review itself is expected to take place in September 2008.

Other foreign universities have expressed strong interest in having similar reviews conducted. They know that the Canadian accreditation program brings significant benefits to the scientists and professionals engaged in contemporary agriculture in Canada. That the UAE University and others outside Canada value this program augers well for the international reputation of Canadian AIC members.

Sources: UAE Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, AAFC; Photos: UAE Interact

AIC Welcomes New Board Member

AIC is pleased to announce that **Jean-Paul Laforest, PhD, agr**, has joined the Board of Directors effective January 2008. Dr. Laforest is Dean of the Faculté des sciences de l'agriculture et de l'alimentation (Faculty of Agriculture and Food) at Laval University.

Dr. Laforest earned his PhD in Animal Physiology at the University of Guelph in 1990. His research interests include improving productivity in pork production systems and the effects of nutrition on animal breeding. He has received numerous awards including, in 2002, the Award of Excellence in

Teaching from the National Association of Colleges and Teachers of Agriculture.

He has been a member of Ordre des agronomes du Québec since 1981 and been a member of many OAC committees.

Dr. Laforest represents Laval University on the Canadian Faculties of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine (CFAVM), and represents CFAVM on the Canadian Agri-Food Policy Institute (CAPI).

He replaces **Isabelle Breune, agr**, on the AIC Board, who resigned in December 2007 due to work commitments. Thank you Isabelle for your contributions to the AIC Board during the past two years.

Help AIC Recognize Excellence

Don Rennie Douglas McRorie Ed Lister
Bryan Harvey Ed Tyrchniewicz Clay Switzer

These individuals are just a few of the distinguished Canadians who have made outstanding contributions to the profession of agrology and have received our highest honour - appointment as a Fellow of the Agricultural Institute of Canada.

AIC requests your help in our quest to recognize and celebrate excellence in our profession. In addition to the AIC Fellowship, we welcome nominees for our other six awards, including the International Recognition Award (for an individual who has gone above and beyond in their support of the AIC), and the Institute Partners Award (for international partners who make outstanding contributions to agriculture in the developing world).

Please consider nominating a colleague. Except in the case of the International Partners Award, nominees must be members of AIC. For most awards, nominations must be made either by an AIC Association Member, or by five individual AIC members. Please see the award guidelines, and nomination forms, on our website for complete details (www.aic.ca/about/awards.cfm).

Nomination deadline is April 30th, 2008.

ITPP Partners Visit Canada

Every two years, representatives from all of AIC's International Twinning Partnership Program projects get together to share experiences and acquire skills from one another. The 2007 International Partners' Meeting (IPM) was held in Edmonton in advance of AIC's Conference. International and Canadian project partners attended from ITPP projects in Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Ghana and Ethiopia.

Before the IPM, a number of international delegates spent time with their Canadian counterpart organizations. Two such delegates were Patrick Kumah and Gustav Mahunu from the Ghana Institute of Horticulturalists. Canadian project team members from the Canadian Society of Horticultural Science pulled together an ambitious itinerary for a diverse tour of agricultural sites to showcase Canadian horticultural field, greenhouse and post-harvest practices to these first time North American visitors.

Patrick and Gustav began their tour with Dr. Mary Ruth McDonald in Southern Ontario where they saw the Muck Crops Research Station, carrot production, harvesting and storage on the Holland Marsh, and greenhouse operations. They delivered a presentation to the University of Guelph's Department of Plant Agriculture and saw the University's mushroom research facility, as well as Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Vineland research station and orchards.

Then it was on to the Maritimes to spend four days with Josée Owen, touring sites in south-eastern New Brunswick and Nova Scotia's Annapolis Valley. Though field crops are scarce at this time of year, Gustav and Patrick were shown a cranberry bog and handling facility, an organic greenhouse greens operation, strawberry and raspberry transplant production, and were guided through numerous post-harvest, wholesale and retail facilities, such as the apple and onion storages of Nova-Agri Inc., and the Co-op Atlantic Hub in Moncton. Patrick and Gustav gave presentations at the AAFC Research Farm in Bouctouche, New Brunswick, and the Atlantic Food and Horticulture Research Centre in Kentville, Nova Scotia.



A highlight for Patrick and Gustav was enjoying the farm stands all decorated for Hallowe'en, particularly our orange pumpkins. Though pumpkins are grown in Ghana, they are always green. Photo shows Patrick with pumpkin people band in Kentville, Nova Scotia.

The two travelers often remarked on differences they saw between Canadian and Ghanaian horticulture. While certain crops such as cocoa and pineapple are grown on a large-scale in Ghana, and some large farms exist, most often areas under cultivation are extremely small (compared with farm

sizes in Canada), particularly in the poor, hot, dry Upper West region of Ghana. In villages where the dry season may last seven months with the only water coming from dam sites and wells, and where there is virtually no infrastructure such as paved roads or electricity, crop production is limited to the small areas that can be irrigated by hand. Even when produce exceeds the household needs, it frequently spoils in the hot weather before it can be taken to market. The ITPP project has seen successes in this region. Introduction of some technologies, such as bucket irrigation kits, make more efficient use of water, and micro-credit efforts have begun to enable wells to be concreted for a more reliable source of water. Following the tours around Ontario and the Maritimes, Patrick and Gustav traveled to Edmonton, where they joined with other ITPP partners at the IPM.

More information on the ITPP and partnership projects can be found on the AIC website. (www.aic.ca/international/itpp.cfm). The ITPP is funded through the Canadian International Development Agency.

Brenda Millar
AIC International Development Program Officer

Acknowledgement: Prepared with excerpts from an article by Josée Owen for the Canadian Society of Horticultural Science Newsletter.

Donald Rennie, PhD, PAg, 1922-2007

Dr. Don Rennie, a Fellow of the Agricultural Institute of Canada, passed away on December 23, 2007. Dean Emeritus of the Faculty of Agriculture and a former Professor of Soil Science at the University of Saskatchewan, Dr. Rennie leaves behind a legacy of agricultural research whose impact transformed the way farmers conserve their soil in western Canada. In many ways he was the founder of soil fertility in western Canada and his many graduate students now occupy senior posts on all three prairie universities and in government.

He was recognized nationally as a Fellow of the Canadian Soil Science Society, and received many Canadian and international awards. He was inducted into the Saskatchewan Institute of Agrologist's Wall of Honour and the Saskatchewan Agriculture Hall of Fame, and was made a Fellow of the American Society of Agronomy.

Dr. Rennie was made a Member of the Order of Canada in 1992 and received the Canada 125 Medal in the same year. He was the father of Dr. Rob Rennie, who presented the Agricultural Institute of Canada Foundation Leonard S. Klinck Lecture at the AIC 2007 conference. AIC expresses its sympathies to the Rennie family.