



## Press Release

***For Immediate Release***

### **AgriRecovery Program Announced for BC Vegetable Growers**

(Surrey, July 12, 2011) Today in Delta Federal and Provincial Agriculture Ministers, the Honourable Gerry Ritz and the Honourable Don McRae, announced a cost shared AgriRecovery program for BC vegetable producers who experienced crop land damage in 2010 and crop revenue losses throughout the 2010-2011 marketing season. The damage and losses result from severe rain during the fall harvest season when as much as 50 percent of the Fraser Valley's crop yield was unharvestable.

The aid package is intended to help farmers bridge the financial gap caused by having less crop volume to sell during the 2010-2011 marketing season and farmers incurring above normal costs for getting 2011 crops planted. Included in the extraordinary expenditures are: readying gullied and eroded land for cropping; repairing compromised drainage systems; and undertaking additional measures for assuring quality crops during the 2011 season.

David Taylor, Chair of the BC Vegetable Marketing Commission (VMC), welcomed today's announcement commenting that "the long sought assistance will help bring affected vegetable farm businesses to better financial footing." Taylor further stated that "the efforts of the federal and provincial governments over the past few years have resulted in production and revenue risk management tools being available to farmers. Though capable in normal years, the standard risk management tools were overcome by the autumn 2010 circumstances. To assure viability and sustainability for the BC vegetable sector the additional financial assistance is badly needed."

VMC gathered information about the regulated storage and processing vegetable crops affected by last fall's excess moisture indicates significantly fewer acres of potatoes, beets, cabbage, carrots, rutabagas, turnips, bush beans, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, and cauliflower were harvested in 2010. Poor field or crop conditions resulting from unrelenting rain overwhelmed field drainage capacity to the extent that in excess of 3,400 acres of vegetables located in the Fraser and Pemberton valleys and parts of Vancouver Island were unharvested. The VMC reports that the combination of significant revenue loss resulting from a 43% reduction in normal crop volumes in 2010 and increased near term operating costs leading to heightened indebtedness levels jeopardizes sustainability and will take as much as 3 years for some vegetable farm businesses to return to financial equilibrium.

Peter Guichon, a Delta potato farmer, VMC Vice-Chair, and 'buy local' proponent commented that "the 2010 crop losses were devastating and unprecedented in living memory for the havoc it wrought to our fourth generation vegetable farm business and those of my colleagues." Guichon further commented that "along with our wholesale and retail partners, BC vegetable growers in large measure contribute to meeting rising BC consumer expectation for fresh, local produce. With normal harvest conditions this fall the demand for BC produce throughout the 2011-2012 marketing season is expected to be met with adequate volumes of a broad selection of BC vegetables."

The BC Vegetable Marketing Commission administers orderly marketing of regulated vegetable crops in British Columbia pursuant the Natural Products Marketing (BC) Act.

-- 30 --

Contact: Tom Demma, General Manager, BC Vegetable Marketing Commission – Tel: 604- 542-9734

Website: [www.bcveg.com](http://www.bcveg.com)