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**MEDIA RELEASE**

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## **BC Innovation Council Awards \$220,000 for the Commercialization of Agricultural Technologies**

BRITISH COLUMBIA – BC Innovation Council (BCIC) is pleased to announce the Expression of Interest voucher recipients of the BCIC Commercialization of Agricultural Technology (CAT) Competition, who are awarded \$10,000 each to put towards developing business plans for the next round of competition. Out of 60 applicants to this competition, 22 companies were successful in moving forward to the Proof of Concept stage.

The winning companies are involved in a diverse range of advanced science and technology innovations in the agriculture, food and bioproducts sectors. Top applicants will then be required to make a presentation to a panel of expert judges for a chance to win a portion of the \$600,000 proof of concept money.

“Congratulations to the winners of the BCIC CAT competition who are leading the way with new innovations for BC’s economic future,” said Small Business, Technology and Economic Development Minister Iain Black. “It is a key priority for our Ministry to continue supporting research and innovation in the province by encouraging the transformation of innovative ideas into commercial reality.”

The BCIC CAT Competition increases the awareness of BC’s thriving agriculture and food industry. Generating over \$2.5 billion at the farm gate and over \$8 billion in food processing sales, BC’s agri-food industry now exports over \$2.5 billion of agricultural products and employs over 305,000 individuals province-wide.

“Government is committed to strengthening BC’s agri-food businesses through innovation,” said Agriculture and Lands Minister Steve Thomson. “When the world comes to BC for the 2010 Winter Olympics, we will have the opportunity to showcase technology and innovation in agriculture.”

The announcement and introduction of the 22 Expression of Interest voucher recipients will be made at BCIC’s Roundtable event *Accelerating Innovation to Commercialization: Innovation in Agriculture, Food and Ag-bioproducts* on September 21, 2009 at the SFU Wosk Centre for Dialogue in Vancouver. The event includes presentations by successful BC agri-food entrepreneurs and features Gord Surgeoner, President of Ontario Agri-Food Technologies and his influential model support program. There will also be a roundtable discussion on ways to attract investment and accelerate commercialization in BC where support programs will be identified.

1 backgrounder attached. (Company profiles of the Expression of Interest voucher recipients)

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## **About the BC Innovation Council**

The British Columbia Innovation Council (BCIC) is the lead organization driving the commercialization of innovation in British Columbia. BCIC is focused on accelerating the growth of our science and technology communities and competitively positioning British Columbia in the global science and technology economy in order to provide significant employment opportunities and a high standard of living for British Columbians. BCIC is a Crown agency of the Province of British Columbia.

For more information about BCIC, visit [www.bcic.ca](http://www.bcic.ca).

## **About the BCIC CAT Competition**

The BCIC Commercialization of Agricultural Technology (CAT) Competition is focused on strengthening BC's agriculture, food and bioproducts sectors. It bridges the gap between research and industry by transforming innovations into real-world solutions. There are two stages to the competition: The Expression of Interest (EOI) stage and the Proof of Concept stage.

For more information about the BCIC CAT Competition, visit [www.bcic.ca/industry/life-sciences](http://www.bcic.ca/industry/life-sciences).