



# News Release

For immediate release

## GOVERNMENT OF CANADA INVESTS IN DAIRY INNOVATION

**OTTAWA, Ontario, February 4, 2010** – The Government of Canada is driving innovation to help Canadian dairy producers make their herds more productive, products more nutritious, and their on-farm food safety systems stronger. Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz announced today that the Dairy Farmers of Canada (DFC) will receive up to \$10 million from the Government of Canada to fund these important initiatives.

“Canadian dairy farmers create thousands of jobs in our communities and that’s why our Government is making key investments to drive innovation and keep our producers on the cutting-edge,” said Minister Ritz. “These investments will help Canadian dairy farmers get more out of their milking parlours, strengthen food safety systems, and put even more nutritious products on kitchen tables across Canada.”

The Government of Canada will deliver more than \$8.7 million and partner with industry and universities to create a cluster of scientific and technical expertise to study the health benefits of dairy products and ways to improve animal productivity through health and breeding. This funding includes up to \$7.2 million under the Agri-Science Clusters initiative, with a \$1.5 million contribution from the Canadian Dairy Commission and \$121,000 from the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada. This investment will support the Dairy Farmers of Canada’s contribution of \$3 million for the cluster.

The Government of Canada is also investing up to \$995,000 in the Dairy Farmers of Canada’s Canadian Quality Milk (CQM) food safety system, which helps producers proactively strengthen on-farm food systems. This funding will help the DFC develop a national database (National Electronic Administration System – NEAS) to track on-farm audits and manage the validation and registration processes for this system.

“Canadian dairy producers are pleased to partner with the federal government and universities across the country in the development of this dairy research cluster. This is a solid investment in the future of our industry,” said Jacques Laforge, President of the Dairy Farmers of Canada. “We welcome the Government’s commitment to research and innovation to ensure our Canadian dairy products remain a viable source of pride for Canadians over the long term. These research activities will reinforce and solidify our strong commitment to provide healthy, safe and sustainably produced dairy products to Canadians.”

The dairy industry is important to the Canadian economy, generating \$5.3 billion in farm gate revenue and 160,000 jobs for Canadians in 2008.

As a core economic driver in this country, agriculture is a key priority of Canada’s Economic Action Plan (EAP) and the dairy industry is an important part of that. Investing in viable market opportunities helps to build an even stronger dairy sector. As the EAP moves into Phase II, the focus remains on strengthening the economy, while working towards returning to balanced budgets and securing Canada’s economic future.



The Government of Canada funding is subject to the projects meeting all eligibility requirements and the signing of contribution agreements.

For more information on Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's programs visit [www.agr.gc.ca](http://www.agr.gc.ca).

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**BACKGROUNDER**

**Agri-Science Cluster - Dairy Cluster**

The Agri-Science Cluster initiative is a way to maximize the impact of the Government's investments in science and innovation by focusing on Canada's agricultural strengths and attracting industry investment. The dairy cluster will bring together the best scientific and technological expertise to do more research into the nutritional qualities of dairy products and to find ways to improve animal productivity through better breeding techniques, in a sustainable and environmentally-friendly way. Research will focus on strategic issues that the dairy sector has identified as priorities, to ensure the industry is well positioned to meet future challenges and continues to grow.

This Agri-Science Cluster is funded under the Agri-Innovations program, a \$158 million five-year program announced last May to support industry-led science and technology projects. Investments in innovative agricultural practices and processes will help farmers throughout Canada tap new market opportunities, making them stronger, more productive and more competitive.

**Food Safety Systems Development**

The Canadian Quality Milk (CQM) safety system, developed by the DFC, helps producers prevent and reduce on-farm food safety hazards and risks. The program is based on Hazard Analysis of Critical Control Points (HACCP) principles, and provides producers with best management practices and procedures to ensure that potential food safety problems are caught before their product is out the door. To be certified under the CQM program, producers must meet specific requirements that include daily testing, record-keeping and monitoring of products.

Many farms across Canada are already certified, and the DFC hopes to have all producers implement the program and be registered by 2012. The funding announced today will help the DFC develop a national database (National Electronic Administration System – NEAS) to track on-farm audits and manage the validation and registration processes for this system.

This Growing Forward initiative is being funded through the Canadian Integrated Food Safety Initiative (CIFSI) delivered by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. Under the Food Safety Systems Development (FSSD) component of CIFSI, the Government of Canada supports organizations in developing national, government-recognized on-farm and/or post-farm Hazard Analysis of Critical Control Points (HACCP) or HACCP-based food safety systems.