



News Release

For immediate release

GOVERNMENT OF CANADA INVESTS OVER \$258K IN ORGANIC FARMING

OTTAWA, Ontario, August 20, 2008 – The Government of Canada is providing organic farmers with the support they need to tap into new and locally-based markets. This Government continues to support the organic industry while they grow to meet increasing consumer demand for organic products. A \$258,100 investment was announced today by Federal Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz which will benefit farmers, consumers and the environment.

“Increasingly, families at home and around the globe are choosing to buy organic food,” said Minister Ritz. “The Government is committed to supporting our farmers as they seize these new market opportunities.”

Funding for the project, called *Growing Up Organic*, is being provided to the Canadian Organic Growers Inc. (COG) through Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada’s national Advancing Canadian Agriculture and Agri-Food Program (ACAAF).

“Through this initiative, government, farmers and industry are ensuring the continued growth of the agricultural sector, and a vibrant future for organic farming in Canada,” said Laura Telford, Executive Director of COG.

Organic farming promotes the sustainable health and productivity of the ecosystem – soil, plants, animals and people. Organic foods are farmed using environmentally sustainable production methods, focusing on practices such as soil regeneration and water conservation.

The project will help organic farmers tap into locally-based markets such as child care facilities, hospitals and schools, and encourage the transition of conventional farmers and introduce new farmers to organic practices.

The project will also help develop regional organic value chains, including producer cooperatives and the infrastructure needed to support local distribution and storage. This will help farmers by providing a high value, secure market and will provide consumers with increased access to regionally grown organic food. Having local distribution of foods also means a reduction in transportation and greenhouse gas emissions, which benefits the environment.

Through the ACAA program, which began in 2004, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada has provided more than \$7.2 million to 74 organic projects.



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For more information, media may contact:

Media Relations

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
Ottawa, Ontario
1-866-345-7972
613-759-7972

Margaux Stastny

Press Secretary
Office of the Honourable Gerry Ritz
613-759-1059

Laura Telford

Executive Director
Canadian Organic Growers Inc.
613-216-0741