



## MEDIA RELEASE

### **Motivating the Development of an Innovative Agri-Food Industry**

Guelph, ON (May 9, 2012) – Developing a profitable innovative industry begins by motivating and enabling the development of innovative businesses. The Value Chain Management Centre has released a report detailing factors that determine the ability and motivation of producers and other agri-food businesses to innovate from a value chain perspective. Innovating as a closely-aligned value chain provides businesses the opportunity to develop sustainable competitive advantages.

Despite innovation being at the forefront of policy discussions for over 20 years, Canadian firms continue to underperform in innovation when benchmarked against their international rivals. The report details factors leading to gaps in the performance of Canada's agri-food industry versus competing jurisdictions such as Australia, New Zealand and the UK. They include the fact that although Canada continues to invest heavily in scientific and technological R&D, relatively little investment is made in motivating and enabling organizational innovation. This is despite increasing evidence that proves that success is ultimately determined by organizational and institutional innovation.

The report describes how the present situation partly stems from the influence that government and industry policies have upon the attitudes and behaviour of individuals, businesses and institutions which, together, form the agri-food industry. The present situation also stems from the agricultural and agri-food industry not possessing a learning culture. These factors are closely related. The motivation and aptitude to learn is a fundamental requirement for individuals and businesses to develop the ability to communicate effectively and the problem solving skills required to create innovative business models and practices. Without the existence of policies, regulations and programs that motivate purposeful changes in individuals' perspectives, attitudes and behaviour, the wider agri-food industry will continue to be typified by adversarial relationships and the existence of individuals and organizations which look to the past for ways to compete in the future. This will severely limit the opportunities that exist to develop an innovative and profitable Canadian agri-food industry.

The report describes government policies, programs and regulations that have been implemented elsewhere, which have resulted in more innovative agri-food businesses and industries.

The report, *"Motivating and Enabling Value Chain Innovation in Canada's Agri-Food Industry"* is available at [www.valuechains.ca/thinkpieces](http://www.valuechains.ca/thinkpieces). It can also be found at [www.georgemorris.org](http://www.georgemorris.org).

For more information contact Martin Gooch [martin@georgemorris.org](mailto:martin@georgemorris.org) (519-822-3929 x 216)

The Value Chain Management Centre is the only Canadian organization dedicated to researching value chain issues and opportunities, and assisting businesses to implement value chain initiatives. It is a subsidiary of the George Morris Centre, Canada's independent agri-products think tank, which is dedicated to fostering excellence in the agri-products sector.