



For Immediate Release

Upcoming GTA Conference Attracts Global Leaders in Agriculture and Food Innovation

GUELPH, Ontario (March 14, 2012) – Agri-food business leaders, public policy makers, and academics from across Canada will meet April 3 and 4 in Mississauga to discuss a paradigm shift from conventional business practices to value-chain based strategies.

The Value Chain Innovation Forum, being hosted by the Vineland Research and Innovation Centre and the Value Chain Management Centre, will look at maximizing market competitiveness, increasing profitability through the formation of successful alliances and incorporating Lean Six Sigma business improvements. Participant dialogue at the Forum will help shape business environments for the agri-food sector well into the 21st century.

On April 3, forum speakers will share what they have achieved by adopting a value chain approach into their businesses, and why. Day two will take a hands-on, workshop approach to enable business leaders to achieve more profitability by making immediate changes. Expert panels in horticulture, livestock and field crops will use Canadian value chain success stories as examples to facilitate discussion and debate on the shift from traditional business models.

“It’s important to understand why current systems are not creating the innovation and productivity required for a competitive agri-food sector, and learn how businesses can evolve to a value chain model,” said Martin Gooch, Director, Value Chain Management Centre. “Forum speakers have been specifically selected to provoke new ways of thinking about competitiveness in the agri-food sector and strategies for change.”

Vineland Research and Innovation Centre and the Value Chain Management Centre bring their respective expertise in research, innovation and value chain development to the planning of this event. Key participants also include Martyn Jones from Morrison Supermarkets, the UK’s fourth largest grocery chain and second largest fresh food processor; Peter Hines, an international expert in LEAN processes from the Lean Enterprise Research Centre in the UK; Dr. David Tanner from Zespri International in New Zealand, a mega-company in the production and marketing of kiwis; Jack Barclay from innovative Australian meat processor CRF; and Frank Pagliaro, VP Produce Business Unit, Loblaw.

“The Forum has been designed to assist businesses in improving their bottom lines by adopting value chain best management practices,” said Jim Brandle, CEO, Vineland Research and Innovation Centre. “This event is also about sitting down with industry, government and academia to take a hard look at what’s needed in Canada to support greater innovation, entrepreneurship and productivity.”

To encourage dialogue and to set the tone for an interactive Forum, registrants will receive a working paper in advance. A reception sponsored by Farm Credit Canada will be opened by Hon. Ted McMeekin, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. For further information and to register, go to www.vcif2012.com.

This Innovation Forum is one of several Forums supported by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs through Growing Forward, a federal-provincial-territorial initiative. Innovation Forums are designed to bring together representatives of industry, academia and government to consider opportunities and challenges facing the agri-food sector in a given area and to consider ways in which the sector can respond through innovation.

About Vineland Research and Innovation Centre

Vineland Research and Innovation Centre is an independent, not-for-profit organization that was created to be a world-class centre for horticultural science and innovation. In its capacity to enable and foster relationships with industry, academia and government, Vineland works to deliver premium product and production innovations. Vineland brings a global perspective to the Canadian horticulture industry and offers a broad range of lasting benefits to stakeholders both locally and internationally. Aligned with industry needs, Vineland's research priorities and outcomes are focused on the growth of the entire horticulture industry. Vineland is funded in part by Growing Forward, a federal-provincial-territorial initiative.

Further information:

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About the Value Chain Management Centre

The VCMC is Canada's only initiative dedicated to improving the profitability and competitiveness of businesses operating in the agri-food sector, through promoting and enabling the development of closely-aligned value chains. A subsidiary of the George Morris Centre, it achieves this by collaborating with Canadian and international researchers, businesses, governments and practitioners to undertake action research, share lessons learnt and identify factors impacting the performance of agri-food and agri-product value chains. The VCMC translates insights acquired through academically rigorous research and analysis into education and training initiatives, designed to increase the management expertise of businesses operating in the agri-food sector.

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