

Report Prepared for Peace River Agriculture Development Fund

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Objectives:

The objective of this project is to have a strong representation at a national level to ensure participation of the development of new canola varieties, crop research, policy making and varying market opportunities.

Activities & Accomplishments:

BCGPA maintains membership with two national canola organizations; these are the Canadian Canola Growers Association and Canola Council of Canada. The BCGPA representative on these committees is Ross Ravelli, currently the president of the Canadian Canola Growers Association. The main activities of these groups are outlined below:

Canadian Canola Growers Association (CCGA) is the umbrella organization whose members are the six grower groups from BC to Ontario, with a combined membership of over 60,000 growers. The association's purpose is to influence national issues and policies and enhance the profitability of Canadian canola growers.

Cash Advance Program: The CCGA has administered cash advance programs since 1983 - which has grown to cover over 20 crop types and to advance over \$200 million annually to 6,000 prairie growers. These funds are split evenly between the two programs, the Spring Credit Advance Program (SCAP) and the Advance Payments Program.

We continue work to make this program more value to growers - to that end we are in discussions with the federal government to have the Spring Advance Program become a permanent feature which would allow for a streamlined set of programs and allow for a reduction of programming costs.

The Canola Cash Advance Program has dispersed \$400 million in cash advances for the first time. It is the growth of this program that helps fund the extensive policy initiatives of the CCGA.

During 2007 CCGA spent significant time and money in consultations with the federal government to ensure that Canada:

- 1) Developed sound bio-fuels policies
- 2) Developed fuel mandates and production incentives to match the levels in the US, and
- 3) Put in place policies that not only supported farmer participation in the development of this Canadian industry but that farmers had the incentives to be active participants.

Clearly the federal government has listened. While there are still hurdles to be addressed, I think it is safe to say that we will have a significant bio-fuels industry in Canada in the near future – it is hoped this will add stability and value adding opportunities to canola growers for years to come.

Transportation issues have always frustrated the grains and oilseeds industry, including lack of cars, poor car cycle times and poor service from our two major rail lines and sales have been lost. Bill C-8 has passed into law which will give more rights to grain shippers and formalize a process for service complaint remedies. In the past, shippers had limited avenues to challenge the railways for service complaints, and these were costly, time consuming and ineffective. CCGA initiated a nationwide awareness campaign to highlight the need for those important changes and

to solicit support of this Bill, additionally CCGA directors spent two days in Ottawa in December lobbying all parties for support. It was a rare thing to see all parties support the quick passage of this bill!

The CCGA is now pushing for the required "Level of service review to be completed as soon as possible - improved rail service is the key and will have the biggest impact on growers' incomes.

The CCGA has hired a consultant to conduct an in-depth study of Canada's Business Risk Management Programs. We hope to have this study completed by the end of summer 2008. The general goal is to assess what we have – what works, what doesn't and make specific recommendations for either a new program or changes to existing programming.

World Trade Organization (WTO) – the 'Doha Round' continues on its slow slide to either completion or collapse. For approximately 90% of Canadian farmers that rely on export of their products a successful conclusion to these talks is important.

Canada is asking for ambitious results in all three of the 'Trade Pillars' – Domestic Support, Export Competition and Market Access – but also want the ability to protect Canada's supply managed sectors by being able to retain (or increase) Import Tariffs and Quota restrictions on foreign products seeking access to the Canadian market. Canada is the 4th largest exporter of agricultural products and services in the world.

The CCGA by itself, and thru the Canadian Agri-Food Trade Alliance (CAFTA), are seeking a meaningful agreement. Increased trade and reduced subsidization will help both developed and undeveloped countries to increase the value of their products, the sustainability of the farmers and the agriculture industry.

Canola Council of Canada (CCC) is the group that encompasses all levels of the canola supply chain - from growers, seed developers, crushers, and exporters. Thru this group we are able to deal on issues that affect canola; labeling, trans fatty acids, GMO, market development and any number of other issues. The strength of this group is that it gives everyone an understanding of the views and issues of the other sectors within the value chain and allows us to make informed decisions that are best for the whole industry not just individual components.

Thru the Canola Council of Canada the industry continues to look at the issue of "pricing by oil". Moving to a system that pays by the percentage of oil content in your seed needs to be further investigated to see its effect throughout the entire canola value chain. Growers need to be involved in this discussion.

Benefits to Industry:

New markets and opportunities are continually emerging and need producer input. Mr. Ravelli's presence at these meetings has ensured that the BC Peace Region's canola growers have had their concerns and opinions represented, and in return have received access to current information regarding production, marketing, and policies.

Extension & Demonstration:

Great Web Site: www.bcgrain.com this site that has it all. This is a great start page for local farmers – it is also a great page for canola information – Canola Council of Canada and Grow Canola is a couple of great sites to check out.

Communication with the producer is achieved through the BCGPA quarterly newsletter, Canola Digest magazine, Canola Ink newsletter which is emailed, and Canola Grower's manual, which is available through Canola Council of Canada.

News releases and articles

Variances from original work plan, schedule or budget: As the president of the Canadian Canola Growers Association, a majority of Mr. Ravelli's travel to meetings were paid through that association.

Finances:	Budget	Actual
Income	\$13,750.00	\$8,591.66
Expenses	\$13,750.00	\$8,591.66

Attachments:

Finances - Contributions in kind summary, budget vs. actual income statement
Newspaper Article