

# **ANNUAL REPORT**

**2002**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**



- 1. Report of the President
- 2. Report of the Executive Vice-President

## Report of the President

---



To Members of the  
Canadian Horticultural Council:

The Canadian Horticultural Council has had a very hectic year addressing issues on your behalf. There is no longer one main issue or just one crisis - there are many and they are complex and relentless. As your executive and staff we have been successful on many fronts and yet there is much work left to do - there just are not enough people or hours.

I intend only to touch on some of the key issues we have been working on. There are many comprehensive reports on specific issues in your binder and I encourage you to read them, comment and ask questions. Your ideas and opinions are always welcome, and necessary so your executive can serve you better.

John Jaques and I have represented you on safety nets for the last number of years, the frustration in this file this past year is beyond everything I've ever seen in ten years on this issue. The new programs demanded by the federal government do not address the needs of agriculture, input has been ignored but the fight continues. CHC and the rest of agriculture will never give up our position, which is farm income, and stabilization programs that address the needs of the Canadian agriculture and horticulture producers.

The crop protection file has made some advances this past year, in particular the announcement in June of the intention to establish a minor use program similar to the US IR-4 Program. Work continues on this one and our crop protection advisory committee and national office staff must continue to pressure government to set this up so it benefit our industry in the best possible manner.

The on the farm food safety issue will continue to be a major issue into the future. Our focus is to give you, the grower the necessary tools you need to respond to this issue in the marketplace. This issue has already experienced many trials over the last number of years many because the farm community, the government or the trade did not really know which way was the best way to go. At last year's annual meeting members voiced opinions on some of the directions we were going and the CHC responded by setting up a nation wide committee with you directly involved in the process. The evolution of a food safety protocol will continue for many more years and it will be vital that the CHC is involved as a player in this issue.

The new office project is now to the point where we moved in just before Christmas. Contributions are still coming in, we have not yet raised the target amount however I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those that helped to build our own building and it's not to late for you to be part of this project.

Over the last number of years the CHC has developed a good working relationship with CFA, in particular on the safety net file and this alliance has been vital to us. Last year we had an associate membership with them, now we plan to work toward full membership. The CHC staff and I have found the CFA, and in particular Bob Friesen to be very professional and valuable to work with and it would be in the best interests of our Council to build on this relationship.

I would like to now touch on an important issue to me; this will be hard to write, maybe even harder to listen to but here goes. For the past 20 years or so I have been involved with farm organizations, so have most of you. Thankfully, some of you are older than me, but I have seen a real shift in the way farm organizations are viewed. I realize too, that most of you who will hear this are the converted, the folks who really believe in the process of bringing the concerns of the growers to government for their consideration in the creation of policy. We also believe that when you take these concerns to the government you should be going with a possible solution, which by the way the CHC and others have done for years. There are clearly two things that really affect this situation; the first is that governments - in our case the federal government - do not seem to be listening or want to listen to us anymore. Why is that? Part of the problem is the government itself, have become aloof from the regular citizen, smarter than all of us all and so wrapped up within government structure that there seems to be another world there. The main problem, though, is that they continue to hear mixed messages. Farm leaders may tell them one thing while individuals tell them another; response to special interest groups is at an all time high and the folks in government do not know which way to turn.

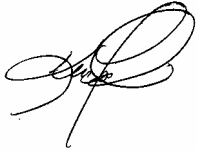
This brings me to the second problem in how farm groups are viewed and again, I am speaking to mostly the converted, the believers. Farm groups are developing a poor reputation from government and from our own farmers. Why is that? This is more complex. First of all a lot of the agriculture community, not all but a significant number are not doing that well financially, some their fault and others not, free trade for some, weather, markets, the list goes on. In Canada the government today does not intend to help to the extent the United States or Europe does. The general public is not on our side. I think, and not because of the position I'm in, that farm organizations do a good job for their members, sometimes the outcome is the best that can be achieved but may not suit the general farm members. But the reality is it could have been worse, but they don't know that. Then there are a few, and sometimes they hold rather high status in the agriculture community that the fame they have is in the demolition of things, being critical not constructive. Farm organizations are basically volunteer-based, and under staffed for the workload that exists today. We all welcome constructive criticism, if the main motive is building. Too often farm groups have self destructed or nearly self destructed by just a small number of folks who have sway with the meeting or are louder than anyone, while persons that are satisfied are silent. This type of event demoralizes staff and the volunteers, and this will make staff and volunteers somewhat ineffective because their time is spent addressing these folks rather than the issue at hand.

The solution is to focus on the issues, laying no blame, but to strive for the best possible outcome for our farmers. If something has to be changed, let's change it, anything that will make all of us more effective is to our benefit.

I would now like to thank the executive, finance committee, and the CHC staff for all the work done this past year. We have had many good things happen - let's continue to strive for those outcomes. To you the horticulture producers of Canada thank you for allowing me

to represent you. I know your president for next year - Doug Connery - will do an excellent job.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ken Forth', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ken Forth  
2002-2003 President  
Canadian Horticultural Council  
March 6, 2003

# Report of the Executive Vice-President

---



## Annual Report to Members

The Canadian Horticultural Council has completed another fast-paced and effective year on behalf of our members and the sector. The issues confronting horticulture, and indeed all of agriculture, continue to increase in both number and complexity. The CHC national office continues to serve an integral role in coordinating national activities for horticulture, we continue to work toward our mission, which is to advance the growth and economic viability of horticulture by encouraging understanding and cooperation across the country so as to build consensus on key issues. Taking a national approach to the challenges we all share has never been more important, since the context in which we do business is increasingly a global one, It is absolutely critical that all regions participate actively not only to represent their interests but also to contribute to the “bigger picture”.

The CHC’s mandate includes:

- Promoting safety nets programs which are effective and available to all
- ensuring access to effective crop protection tools and technologies
- Establishing and maintaining guidelines for a national on-farm food safety program
- Monitoring and commenting on human resource issues and regulations
- Participating in decisions relating to foreign trade agreements and the WTO
- Working with regional commodity organizations to identify and support specific needs
- Assisting industry in adapting to a rapidly changing regulatory environment
- Providing input to government and private enterprise on research priorities
- Building partnerships with allied industry, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders
- Coordinating crisis management activities at a national level
- Communicating with members on a broad range of issues

The following notes provide highlights on key activities of the past year and are by no means intended to be all-inclusive.

### ➤ **Safety Nets**

Ken Forth and John Jaques continue to represent the CHC and horticulture at the National Safety Nets Advisory Committee (NSNAC), the minister’s advisory committee. We are also fortunate to have direct links to the National NISA Committee.

The Agricultural Policy Framework (APF) is driving changes to safety nets, or business risk management as it is now commonly referred to. We continue to believe the overall intent of the APF to be positive and it is very difficult to take exception with the pillars of this framework. We are appreciative that the Minister was able to secure the longest financial commitment ever (to agriculture) from Cabinet. That being said, though, these “hard to come by” dollars must be invested wisely and bring about improvements to our programs and not simply “change for the sake of change”.

It has been our understanding the major objective of the thorough review of the safety nets programs is to:

- bring about changes to crop insurance which will result in certainty of support, including the type and amount
- provide disaster coverage; again, with certainty of support (including the type and amount) so as to eliminate/reduce the reliance on ad hoc support
- provide the provinces with the ability to plan and not rely on ad hoc programming

We further understand the following constraints apply to federal funds:

- three (3) year transition to a two program set to include an improved crop insurance program and a NISA that will address disaster; therefore terminate CAP and incorporate a disaster component within NISA
- pay on the way out (NISA)
- include some means to provide producers an opportunity to use NISA (if they so choose) to improve profitability (i.e.: investment)
- transition dollars must treat all Canadian farmers in the same manner
- no block funding (this is policy for all federal departments, not just agriculture)
- AAFC must make some changes prior to April 1, 2003

We continue to have many concerns over the changes being proposed to safety nets and have articulated these concerns on many occasions, including directly to Minister Vanclief as well as the Rural Caucus. In summary:

- NISA is working reasonably well as it exists today; it is well used and liked by the horticulture sector and accepted by the financial community. It is the only one of the current programs that is generally available to horticulture producers; crop insurance and others are not. It has taken many years for this stabilization program to evolve to its present framework. The proposed changes will completely alter the original intent of NISA and not longer provide stabilization
- The new NISA program (as it is being presented) does not resemble old NISA. We have been unsuccessful in efforts to analyze the impact of the new NISA vs. the old programs as the National Safety Nets Advisory Committee has not been provided with the appropriate information do so and therefore make sound business decisions and recommendations. The timelines to do so have been too short to meet the deadline for implementation of a new program.
- investment trigger aspect: NISA is a stabilization program, not an investment fund
  - food safety and environment cannot be funded through a safety net' stabilization program; these are social issues and ones which must be borne by all tax payers and dealt with under another program/s
  - the investment component must be taken off the table
- changes must not result in Canadian producers being more vulnerable to trade action by other countries
- trade action: we are fearful that the inclusion of investment trigger(s) will be a target for future trade action by the United States Department of Commerce, therefore placing the Program at even greater peril.
- it is imperative to strive to ensure programs remain green and not move them into the amber category; in fact the AAFC should reconsider its WTO submission Vis-à-vis amber and proposed reductions
- new programs must not encourage separation of operations as this will highlight specificity and invite trade action

- the timeline for change is unacceptable to industry— there are too many unknowns and a lack of sufficient, credible information on which to base decisions
- the demands being put on the new programs as presented to date are more than they can bear
- companion programs (programs administered by the province) would be phased out. There must be some flexibility to have some of the programming administered by the provinces so as to reflect the unique needs of a specific province

The CHC will continue to lobby for the much needed additional time and information that are required before a new program is adopted. Current programs must be extended until at least March 31, 2004 or an appropriate timeframe for a new program can be developed and analyzed properly.

### ➤ ***Crop Protection***

There has been significant progress on this file since the CHC held a press conference on our challenges the ensuing announcements of federal initiatives at which time the Ministers of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) and Health Canada outlined a joint initiative to help Canadian farmers and consumers benefit from the increased availability of reduced-risk pesticides. The initiatives allocated \$10.3 million to be used for risk reduction activities and the introduction of safer products in support of the new Pest Control Products Act enacted on December 12, 2002. In June 2002, AAFC announced \$54.5 million in funding over six years to allow AAFC and PMRA to give Canadian producers better access to minor use and reduced risk pesticides. AAFC is developing a minor use pesticides program similar to the US IR-4 Program. A minor use pesticide centre will be established to manage and coordinate AAFC actions, carry-out field trials, liaise with stakeholders, integrate data generation with IR-q, prepare submissions to PMRA, provide faster registration of a broad range of minor use pesticides, improve availability of reduced-risk products and develop transparent tracking and results reporting. PMRA will utilize funds to ensure an adequate capacity to review registration submissions.

#### • **Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada**

AAFC's focus has been on two main priorities: ensuring the program is ready for field trials in 2003 and identifying and equipping the research centres to be used for the trials - including hiring and training staff.

The first step has been to determine the location of the research centres and field sites. Visits were made to various sites by AAFC officials to assess; site capacity; staffing and equipment requirements; and crop, growing capabilities. From this, six centres in five provinces were chosen and the following 10 field sites are being established: Bouctouche, New Brunswick; Kentville, Nova Scotia; St-Jean-sur-Richelieu, Québec; Vineland, Ontario; Delhi, Ontario; Harrow, Ontario (2 sites - greenhouses and field crops); Scott, Saskatchewan; Summerland, British Columbia and Agassiz, British Columbia.

Identification and selection of staff at most of the sites is almost complete and Good Laboratory Practices (GLP) training has started. Plans are to have staff at all the sites GLP trained by April 1, 2003, with compliance to be obtained sometime during the 2003 growing season. Currently, within AAFC, the two Harrow sites, plus the Agassiz site are GLP trained and compliant- Work has also begun on assessing lab analysis capabilities and establishing and maintaining quality assurance solutions for 2003 and beyond.

AAFC has participated in discussions with Provincial Minor Use Coordinators (PMUC5) and national farm groups to assess priority projects for 2003 field trials. An amalgamated list of current and historical project proposals has been assembled and distributed to PMUCs and national farm groups. The list includes between 100 and 200 projects which AAFC may be able to undertake for the upcoming growing season, including historical and priority projects identified in 2002. Grower organizations can use this project listing in discussions with PMUCs over the next few months when examining future pest management needs.

AAFC has already received, from PMRA, the data requirements for numerous projects. They are under review and study plans are being developed. Pre-submission documents are being prepared to determine data requirements for the other projects. Contact has been made and discussions are underway with private sector contractors for potential opportunities to partner on field trials for 2003 to meet projected goals.

AAFC has also been successful in establishing links with IR-4 officials to gain their cooperation in many areas, including a number of joint projects for the 2003 growing season. AAFC has committed to 24 joint projects, triple the number of projects conducted in previous years - on average 6 to 8 projects per year. Also, an additional 3 projects, to develop efficacy data related to AAFC and IR-4 priorities, will be conducted in the coming year to raise the priority of these projects for subsequent residual trials in 2004. Contractors have been hired and are preparing the required pre-submission consultation documents to submit to PMRA to maximize the number of joint projects for 2003.

Although their primary focus has been on being operational to conduct field trials for 2003, progress is being made in the area of risk reduction as well. Risk reduction activities will include: prioritizing commodities, developing crop profiles, analyzing gaps in pest management needs, developing strategies and solutions to reduce risks, implementing strategies and assessing the results. Through cooperation between AAFC and PMRA, collaborative work is already underway with PMRA, provincial governments, producers and other stakeholders on several commodities including canola, apples, potatoes and pulse crops. In order to move forward in this area, developing crop profiles of the pest management practices being used by growers is needed. These will form the baseline information to develop strategies to reduce pesticide risks and establish research priorities. Reducing the risks from pesticides contributes to the environmental objectives under the APF and is an element of other APE programs such as environmental farm plans. Discussions are underway with the Canadian Federation of Agriculture (CEA) and the Canadian Horticultural Council (CHC) to identify how remaining CARD funds may be used to accelerate the creation of crop profiles.

The CHC will remain very involved in discussions and information sharing with AAFC and other stakeholders as the program continues to develop in anticipation of a fully operational Minor Use Program for Canada. We had been hoped this would be in place on April 1, 2003 but this will not be the case.

- **Pest Management Regulatory Agency**

One of the commitments from PMRA was to appoint a minor use advisor/ombudsman. This has been a long-standing recommendation from the CHC. Dr. Imme Gerke has been appointed to this position and began her activities in July 2002. The functions of this position are similar to the US EPA's minor crop advisor, that is, liaison with growers, with AAFC, with

the EPA, and with 1R4 to encourage harmonization with the U.S. regarding products for minor use.

PMRA has already increased the amount of resources available for minor use review as well as for the expedited review of reduced risk products. This means that, when AAFC, or any other data sponsor, generates data and makes a submission for minor use registration; sufficient PMRA staff will be available to ensure that review timelines are met. To assist potential applicants, PMRA held a half-day training session on the preparation of URMULE submissions in conjunction with the Canadian Pesticide Regulation Course in October 2002.

Many of the minor use registrations are currently being handled by PMRA through the User Requested Minor Use Label Expansion, or URMULE, program. The new kinds have already had positive effects on this program. PMRA is also working closely with the US EPA and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Interregional Research Project Number 4 (1R4). Recognizing that the expansion of reduced risk pesticides into minor uses is important to many Canadian growers, the PMRA and EPA have established a Joint Review Program for minor uses. The registration of the first minor use product through the joint review process was completed this year.

PMRA already has joint review programs with the U.S. EPA for reduced risk pesticides and for pheromones and microbials, and more than 50 percent of submissions received for new active ingredients are now reviewed jointly or as a workshare with the U.S. As of October 30, 2002, there have been 32 registrations from this program, and there are currently more than 24 submissions in process. Each year the number increases as more registrants develop their products for joint entry into Canada and the U.S. and avail themselves of the program. This ensures that products, including those used on minor crops, become available to Canadian growers at the same time as U.S. growers - in the past, there have been a significant delays before registrants filed submissions in Canada.

PMRA is also working with registrants to encourage them to make submissions for crop groupings rather than individual crops, so that products can be used on a larger number of crops. PMRA recognizes that there are uses of newer, reduced risk products available in the U.S. that are not available to Canadian growers. As a result, PMIRA announced a Canadian initiative for reduced risk pesticides at the end of May. This is in addition to the existing PMRA-EPA joint review program for reduced risk products. To encourage registrants to file submissions in Canada, PMRA has committed to use the EPA reduced risk criteria and to reduce the review time for submissions that meet the criteria. There has already been one submission for a new active ingredient to this new program.

There is a lot of work to be done as we work toward realizing our vision of an office of minor use for Canada. We are well on the way now, and have been especially fortunate to have an extremely knowledgeable and dedicated team working on our behalf. Including Dean Thomson, Shirley Archambault and Craig Hunter. Progress continues, but this initiative must move along more quickly.

### ➤ ***On-Farm Food Safety***

The vision of the Canadian Horticultural Council in the area of food safety is to ensure members receive the necessary information and tools to allow the sector to be proactive and well positioned to meet the ever changing and evolving demands from the marketplace and government bodies.

The CHC's role is to maintain the On-Farm Food Safety Program (OFFSP) developed for members and to continue to work with you and other partners in the supply chain, including wholesalers, retailers and governments to ensure understanding of the on-farm realities relative to food safety. The goals are to establish a mind set and recognition among members of the need to adapt and adopt on-farm food safety programs in order to maintain markets and provide assurances sought by the market. Documenting many of the good practices already being used is key.

The Canadian Horticultural Council's Food Safety Committee was struck by motion of the membership at the Annual General Meeting in March 2002 with a mandate to explore and report to the Board of Directors on cost effective implementation and delivery mechanisms for a national on-farm food safety program.

The committee consists of the Chair, Dr. Douglas Powell, two members from each province, and one staff member from the CHC national office; additional resources may be invited as deemed necessary. The Committee is charged with developing a credible, transparent and cost effective framework for the CHC OFFSP, and ensuring that the framework meets the needs and adaptation capacity of Canada's horticulture sector. The principles supporting the program and delivery strategy are that the OFFSP must be:

- technically and financially feasible
- consistent between regions and commodities
- recognized by buyers

The committee has met several times and submitted made a series of recommendations that form the basis of a national, on-farm food safety program while retaining the flexibility required by Canada's diverse horticultural sector. The recommendations include:

1. that the CHC retains OFFS technical expertise for ongoing advice in support of the CHC OFFS program

2. that the CHC adopt the following credible, transparent process to retain food safety support/advise on an ongoing basis:

- Develop, publish and widely disseminate a Request for Proposal with activities to include;
  - Periodic updates of the CHC OFFS guidelines as required
  - Ongoing monitoring and environmental updates
  - Assistance as required to develop commodity-specific programs, implementation and assessment

and consideration given to:

- Breadth of technical expertise
- Flexibility
- Practicality
- Ability to network on a regional, national and international basis
- Access to comprehensive resources
- Demonstrated ability to interlace with client groups

It is further recommended that this process have membership support.

3. that the current (revised) version of the CHC guidelines be submitted to CFIA for technical review

4. that CHC encourage its members of like commodities or groups of commodities, to work collectively to develop national, commodity-specific on-farm food safety programs consistent with the CHC OFFS guidelines
5. that commodity specific OFFS programs be verified either internally or externally by qualified, trained personnel
6. that the CHC establishes a permanent food safety committee that includes food safety coordinators/verifiers from commodity or regional programs to ensure consistent application of commodity specific OFFS programs
7. that the CHC prepares and submits a funding proposal to the Canadian On-Farm Food Safety Program. Key elements of the proposal shall include:
  - engaging technical assistance to develop and assess a generic checklist and record keeping forms derived from/for the CHC guidelines;
  - advice on guidelines revisions; and
  - advice on the development of national, commodity specific programs

The RFP was distributed early in 2003 and a review committee will be established to review submissions. It is expected that a final selection will be made in the spring.

During the past year the guidelines as well as the prerequisites and hazard analysis were reviewed and updated. These documents were subsequently submitted to the CFIA for technical review. Several other national organizations are in the queue ahead of us and we expect the review process to begin in late spring and continue through the summer. The committee has attempted to respond to farmers, retailers and others in the farm-to-fork food safety system who want a credible, flexible way to further enhance the safety of Canadian produce. Our actions continue to be proactive and consistent with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Agricultural Policy Framework and meet buyer expectations.

#### ➤ ***Plant Health / Canadian Plant Protection Advisory Committee***

The CHC has taken on an increased role over the last year in supporting the activities of the Canadian Plant Protection Advisory Committee, the national body representing Canadian plant industries at the North American Plant Protection Organization. CPPAC serves an important role in flowing information both ways between NAPPO and Canadian plant-based agricultural sectors, including horticulture, forestry, seeds, specialty crops, grains and oilseeds, hay and forage crops. Many plant health issues are cross-commodity, and, with increasing global trade, require more attention, expertise and resources than ever before. CPPAC aims to provide a forum to discuss the "big picture", to develop a national voice on cross-commodity issues, and to prevent duplication of efforts by many separate sectors dealing with the same issues. The horticultural sector has for many years taken a lead role in ensuring that industry interests are heard at the NAPPO table.

A strategic visioning session was held at the 2002 CPPAC Annual General Meeting to determine the future focus for the committee. Past involvement by CFIA was being reviewed, in light of the new direction that CFIA's Plant Health and Production Division has taken in establishing Provincial Plant Protection Advisory Committees. CPPAC members agreed that CPPAC still had an important place in coordinating and representing interests at a national level. A member recruitment strategy was elaborated, and efforts continue to bring new members on board.

After many years of representing CPPAC at NAPPO, Henry Heuver passed the torch in 2002 to Bruce McTavish, member of the SC Nursery Landscape Association. Bruce represented the Committee at the Annual NAPPO Meeting in Mexico in October 2002. Apart from a contingent from the Canadian potato industry, Bruce was the only industry representative from Canada. He was not able to attend the many Panel meetings including Fruit Tree, Grapevine, Vegetable, Forestry and others. In contrast, the United States was represented by sixty industry members and Mexico by over One hundred. With so few industry representatives, Canada is at a disadvantage in comparison to the US and Mexico, when it comes to securing a Canadian position at NAPPO. Standards are being developed at the NAPPO Panels that will move into regulation in all three countries, and it is much more difficult to make changes to NAPPO standards after they have been approved. It is hoped that more industry members will be able to attend the 2003 NAPPO meeting in New Orleans.

The CHC's contribution to CPPAC activities has included administrative support for meetings, conference calls, newsletters, and financial management. A conference call was organized for November 20, 2002 to provide an update from the NAPPO meetings and deal with some pressing plant health concerns, including:

- Canada-US border trade issues and changes to APHIS as a result of the creation of the US Homeland Security department
- Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety
- Invasive Species, Aquatic Plants, and Weeds Import Policy
- Potato Mop-Top Virus
- Food Irradiation

The CHC coordinated the Annual General Meeting of CPPAC held in Ottawa in February 2003. Heather Gale at the CHC National Office is the contact person for CPPAC information.

### ➤ ***Apple Industry National Lobby Effort***

The CHC Apple Working Group, which represents growers from all five apple-producing regions of Canada, has been working hard over the last year to find ways to address the common problems facing apple producers from coast to coast. The need for a national strategy is pressing. Canadian apple growers are facing barely break-even situations and losses in unprecedented numbers, threatening the viability of Canadian apple production. Our research indicates that apple growers across the country lost, on average, 9 cents for every pound of apples produced in crop year 2000.

The national group joined forces to prepare a document entitled *The Canadian Apple Industry: Recommendations for Renewal*. This document was presented on November 26, 2002 to Minister Vanclief and twelve other MPs representing apple-growing regions across the country. Grower representatives from BC, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia gathered in Ottawa for their annual post-harvest meeting, followed by a full day of meetings on Parliament Hill. The briefing book is being sent to MPs who were not available to meet with the group directly, as well as to provincial Ministers and Deputy Ministers of Agriculture.

The document highlights the challenges facing Canadian apple growers and recommends programs that government can implement in conjunction with the proposed Agricultural

Policy framework to help growers remain competitive and achieve the goals of environmentally-responsible production of safe, high quality food for domestic and export markets. Key recommendations include a national replant program, on-farm food safety implementation program, Integrated Fruit Production implementation program and pest monitoring services, research in primary production and new cultivar development, NISA enhancements, and changes to crop insurance.

The AWG intends for the briefing document to be updated regularly and used in future lobbying efforts. The recommendations will be prioritized to form the basis of a strategic plan, which will guide follow-up actions and ensure progress. Provincial growers associations are also using the document to support lobbying activities at the provincial level.

- **The National Apple IFP Guidelines**

In 2001 the Apple Working Group of the Canadian Horticultural Council (CHC) embarked on a project to develop Integrated Fruit Production (IFP) guidelines for the Canadian apple industry. The goals of the project are to (1) enhance the economic viability of the sector by meeting international standards, producing high quality fruit economically, and assisting the industry in providing an alternative marketing tool for Canadian apples; (2) minimizing negative impacts on the environment (air, water, soil and wildlife) by reducing reliance on pesticides and implementing IPM programs; and (3) enhancing grower awareness, acceptance and adoption of sustainable apple production practices through education, opportunity and incentive. The purpose of the National Apple IFP Guidelines will be to provide a uniform minimum standard for apple production, which will be built on by individual provinces developing their own, more region specific IFP protocols and marketing ventures.

Integrated Fruit Production is a systems approach to orcharding, which promotes sustainable agriculture practices to produce optimal yields of high-quality fruit while protecting the environment. IFP seeks to balance farm inputs with outputs, maintain environmental integrity and biodiversity in the rural landscape, and encompasses the entire farm as a unit for economically viable crop production. IFP emphasizes reduced use of pesticides through integrated pest management practices, attention to tree health through a balanced nutrition program and production of high quality fruit. In many European countries, in New Zealand and elsewhere, IFP is now the norm for producing apples and various ecolabeling programs have been used to educate consumers on its merits.

The project consultant, EarthTramper Consulting, developed a working draft in early 2002 which included principles and practices of soil management, orchard floor management, irrigation, nutrition, training and pruning, IPM practices, pesticide use, harvest practices, machinery maintenance, worker/workplace safety, waste management and environmental stewardship. The draft was vigorously reviewed by apple growers, and by government extensionists and researchers. Buy-in and acceptability of the guidelines by apple growers across the country was deemed of paramount importance for the project to be successful. In April 2002, an updated draft was sent to 42 apple growers across the country with an enclosed grower self-assessment evaluation form, designed to provide further feedback and evaluation after a full growing season.

An excellent participation rate in the pilot project during crop year 2002 yielded a useful set of data from growers across the country. These results were compiled and analysed by EarthTramper Consulting and a revised draft of the guidelines circulated in December 2002

to industry representatives for final comment. The final draft incorporates a new Section dealing with On-Farm Food Safety, which follows the major categories in CHC's On-Farm Food Safety Guidelines for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables. This section of the guidelines has already undergone a comprehensive review by members of the industry and technical experts.

The final National Apple IFP Guidelines document will be approved for implementation in 2003 and distributed in time for the growing season to all apple producers in Canada. An extremely successful two-day IFP Conference attended by over 100 participants was held in Montreal on February 3-4, 2003 to introduce a broader range of producers, packers and retailers to the program, and to discuss labelling and marketing options for IFP-grown apples.

➤ ***Build a Home Project***

On December 18, 2002 the Canadian Horticultural Council moved to new office facilities. This concluded the CHC's 16-month fundraising effort to cover its share of the joint project with the Canadian Produce Marketing Association. We take this opportunity to extend our sincere thanks and appreciation to the many contributors to this project for their commitment to the future of the CHC. I encourage you to visit us when you are in Ottawa.

➤ ***Other Areas***

As noted previously, this is not an all-inclusive description of the CHC's initiatives. The Potato Committee Executive and the Seed Potato Sub Committee have both been extremely active throughout the year. Trade issues, plant health concerns and test markets have been at the forefront of their discussions. In the coming months the national office will be actively involved in commenting on the WTO negotiations and contributing to Canada's final position. Anne Fowlie has been invited to represent horticulture on the Minister's WTO advisory committee. Issues with the United States, in particular the Country of Origin legislation and the Public Health Security and Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Act of 2002 (Bioterrorism Act) are serious cause concern for all of us and are being closely monitored.

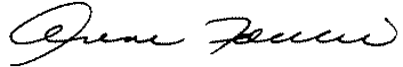
We expect the Bioterrorism Act will have a significant impact on how we conduct business with the United States, our major trading partner our major trading partner.

A membership survey was undertaken to determine member' priorities so as to ensure that we are allocating our limited resources to the areas that matter most to you. Results, along with comparisons to the 1997 survey will be tabled at the AGM in Niagara Falls.

➤ ***Summary***

The national office relies on a highly dedicated and professional staff to carry out the day-to-day activities of the organization. We could not do this without the input and direction of the Executive and Finance Committees, the respective committee chairpersons and most importantly — you, the members. We appreciate your assistance. I also take this opportunity to recognize and thank the team in the national office: Shirley Archambault, Heather Gale, Tracy Todd, Lyse McClelland, Stéphane Landreville, Marie Boudreau, Dave Pearen and Amy Argentino for their many invaluable contributions.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Anne Fowlie". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "A" and a long, sweeping underline.

Anne Fowlie  
Executive Vice President  
March 6, 2003