



Anne Fowlie  
Executive Vice-President

# A MESSAGE

from the Executive Vice-President of the Canadian Horticultural Council

“ Our greatest strength lies in our membership, our collective alliances and our partnerships. ”

Welcome to the inaugural edition of Fresh Thinking, the official publication of the Canadian Horticultural Council. Fresh Thinking was selected as the title to build upon the Council's successful 2007 initiative Fresh Thinking: Growing the Five Billion Dollar Canadian Horticultural Production Sector. It captures the essence of the entrepreneurial and innovative spirit which has, over time, built the rich and diverse sector we treasure. Furthermore, it is a key component of a concentrated overall communication and awareness strategy which coincides with the recent rebranding of our national food safety program for fresh fruit and vegetables, CanadaGAP, and the launch of our newly re-designed website ([www.hortcouncil.ca](http://www.hortcouncil.ca)).

We continue to seek ways to profile the size and significance of the horticultural sector, document its contributions to the Canadian economy, and highlight the realities of farm income and the numerous unique characteristics which differentiate horticulture from all other sectors of agriculture. Although the challenges are many, there are also real opportunities to advance practical solutions which will benefit us all.

Healthier Canadians will place less demand on publicly funded health care programs. We have a unique opportunity and Canada's horticultural sector can offer significant contributions to the health and wellness of Canadians. Over the coming months we will work closely with partners in a number of forums to advance the Horticulture for Health message. We will continue to seek a champion to help carry this message forward. We are, after all, in the food production business and the health business. We are also the only group who can say “Eat More”.

With fresh thinking I have no doubt we will be successful in achieving resolution to a number of our challenges. Our greatest strength lies in our membership, our collective alliances and our partnerships. Striving to influence public policy and achieving any measure of success in this regards is not easy — in good times and particularly not in the uncertain times we are now living.

The past year has been one of learning for us. The creation of the Science Advisory Committee provided a forum for a very targeted collaboration on science and innovation. This positioned us to submit a proposal to the Growing Canadian Agri-Innovations Program (Canadian Agri-Science Clusters). This was a significant achievement which was made possible by the work of many. We look forward to delivering meaningful results over the coming years.

Collaborative initiatives to develop and drive industry-led solutions are more critical than ever. A strategic vision and an ability to identify and articulate challenges, needs and industry-supported proposals around alternative service delivery and business modules are needed. Moves by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency to modernize the plant program are of particular interest to us.

Responsiveness to the trade and commerce-related requirements of horticulture is a high priority. A key component to the Government of Canada's biosecurity and risk mitigation initiatives will lie in how prevention, timely response, crisis management and communications are managed. A National Plant Health and Emergency Pest Response Plan for horticulture, with compensation as a core component, has been needed for some time and we hope these new initiatives will help us achieve our goal. Perhaps this is the window of opportunity we have needed.

Moving ahead in these areas will impact in a very real way our ability to compete and ensure a much sought after favourable regulatory environment and a fair and ethical trading environment. The regulatory and standards playing field is not level and is, in many respects, fraught with disincentives.

As future editions reach you, we look forward to informing you, challenging you and providing feature articles which are timely and thought provoking. Risk mitigation, traditional and non-traditional, labour, innovation and technology, association governance and consumer trends are just a few of the pieces we are already working on.

Thank you to all who work with us and support us in so many ways, whether through committee initiatives, various projects or attending CHC-related events.

Agriculture has and will continue to change. Clearly, programs as they exist today and the way they are delivered will need to further change and in a manner which is more responsive and timely to the needs of horticulture. The all important value chain is working, and while we enjoy valuable partnerships, the food system is working for some players more efficiently and profitably than for others.

I hope you enjoy this edition and join with me in looking forward to those to come. Until next time...Think Fresh! 