

For Immediate Release  
2009AL0004-000152  
July 25, 2009

Ministry of Agriculture and Lands

## CANADA AND B.C. STRENGTHEN FOOD SAFETY SYSTEMS

NANAIMO – A four-year agreement has been signed to ensure food products in British Columbia are amongst the safest and highest quality in the world, today announced MP James Lunney on behalf of Federal Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz and Parksville-Qualicum MLA Ron Cantelon on behalf of Agriculture and Lands Minister Steve Thomson.

“Farmers here in Nanaimo-Alberni and across British Columbia work hard to produce safe, healthy food for our kitchen tables,” said Dr. James Lunney, Member of Parliament for Nanaimo-Alberni. “Our government is proud to partner with producers and the provincial government by putting farmers first and making important investments in food safety.”

“As a government, and as consumers, we want to be confident in the safety of the food we eat. Protecting the health of British Columbians is a top priority,” said Thomson. “The funding announced today enables a proactive approach in working with the food processing industry to ensure the highest level of food safety in our province by preventing and controlling hazards before they happen.”

The Food Safety Systems Implementation (FSSI) program will receive up to \$3 million over four years under the Growing Forward Agreement, a partnership between the provincial and the federal governments. The Government of Canada and the Province of B.C. have been working with farmers and processors every step of the way to develop the Growing Forward framework to develop programs that are tailored with the flexibility to meet B.C.’s diverse regional requirements. The Small Scale Food Processors Association of B.C. will deliver the FSSI processor program across the province.

“Food processors preserve the quality and safety of our local foods so we can enjoy our favourites even once their growing season has passed,” said MLA Cantelon. “Processors add value to B.C.’s award-winning products and I’m proud to see that our local farmers have built a reputation for high standards that will continue to improve under the Food Safety Systems Implementation program.”

Growing Forward is a national agriculture framework to coordinate federal and provincial agriculture policy. Federal, provincial, and territorial governments are delivering \$1.3 billion to Canadian farm families from 2008 to 2013. British Columbia’s share under these agreements will be a total of \$78 million over the next five years.

For a complete list of Growing Forward programs in B.C., visit [www.gov.bc.ca/al/](http://www.gov.bc.ca/al/) or [www.agr.gc.ca/GrowingForward](http://www.agr.gc.ca/GrowingForward).

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