



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**ENVIRONMENTAL FARM PLAN (EFP) PROGRAM’S BENEFITS BIGGER AND BETTER**

ABBOTSFORD, B.C. - The B.C. Agriculture Research and Development Corporation (ARDCorp), B.C. Ministry of Agriculture, and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada are pulling out the stops to encourage as many B.C. farmers and ranchers as possible to take advantage of the Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) Program. March 2012 starts the final year of funding from Growing Forward, a federal-provincial-territorial initiative.

The EFP Program is the critical gateway for B.C. producers to access funds for the Beneficial Management Practices (BMP) Program. BMP-funded projects address waste management, air quality, emissions control, soil and riparian integrity, water quality, and on-farm materials storage. Both programs are delivered through ARDCorp. To start off the new year, the EFP and BMP Programs will roll out key upgrades that will significantly benefit B.C. producers and their farming or ranching operations.

The main upgrades are three-fold. B.C. farmers and ranchers can now:

- 1) apply for funding months sooner than in previous years;
- 2) gain access to more funds per project than ever before; and
- 3) can pool efforts with neighbouring producers with similar projects while preserving the ability to individually access the full cost shared funding.

ARDCorp will start accepting EFP applications as early as January 1, 2012, for projects to be completed by December 31, 2012.

Funding maximums are boosted in most of the beneficial management practices (BMPs) categories, ranging from a \$5,000 increase for composting of agricultural waste to \$50,000 increase for recycling waste water. Higher funding maximums will allow B.C. producers to reap the most of methods and new technologies that improve the long-term environmental efficiency and sustainability of their operations.

Neighbouring farmers can now apply for funding a shared BMP project, if they are eligible for the same BMP category, without having to divvy up the funding maximum among them. This alone can encourage producers to collaborate on a single larger project.

“We are very pleased with the new EFP-BMP Program upgrades,” said Allen James, ARDCorp Chair. “With these improvements, producers are in a better position to enhance their current stewardship practices.”

For more information about the EFP Program, visit: [www.bcefp.ca](http://www.bcefp.ca).

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