



News Release

For immediate release

GOVERNMENT OF CANADA INVESTS IN ONTARIO'S FIRST AGRICULTURAL LABOUR FORCE CO-OPERATIVE

ALFRED, ONTARIO, JUNE 18, 2010 — The Government of Canada is investing in Ontario co-operatives to further local economic development. MP Pierre Lemieux, on behalf of the Honourable Jean-Pierre Blackburn, Minister of Veterans Affairs and Minister of State (Agriculture) today announced that the federal government will provide the *Union des cultivateurs franco-ontariens* with contributions of up to \$34,000 in funding to create the province's first Agricultural Labour Force Co-operative. The aim of this innovative project, which falls under the Co-operative Development Initiative (CDI), is to improve the region's skilled labour pool.

"For over a hundred years, Canadian co-operatives have helped thousands of people and communities find effective solutions to meet their needs," said Lemieux. "Creating this co-operative will not only enable farmers from the Clarence Creek region to have top-notch services, but it will also provide farm workers with full-time work year-round."

The Eastern Ontario Agricultural Labour Force will meet a major need identified by farmers from the Clarence Creek region: securing qualified labour. The aim of the co-operative is to give member farmers competent human resources which they would not be able to secure on their own. Farmers need temporary labour, a position that few farm workers are willing to assume. The co-operative will be the sole employer of farm workers, providing them with full-time employment year-round. The co-operative will model itself on Quebec's proven *Coopérative d'utilisation de la main d'oeuvre agricole* (CUMO), adapted to the realities of Ontario.

"Co-operatives have long contributed to local economic development, particularly in rural and remote regions where they create jobs and provide essential goods and services," added Lemieux. "Canada's co-operative sector has proven to be successful in strengthening our economy."

The Eastern Ontario Agricultural Labour Force is one of many projects funded by the Co-operative Development Initiative (CDI), a four-year, \$19.1-million program that helps Canadians develop new co-operatives and experiment with innovative ways of using the co-operative model. This initiative has been successful in making the co-operative option readily available to Canadians by improving access to advisory services, helping co-operatives raise the funds they need to succeed, and advancing research and knowledge development. The CDI is managed by the Canadian Co-operative Association and the *Conseil canadien de la coopération et de la mutualité* in partnership with the Government of Canada.

To learn more about the Co-operative Development Initiative, visit www.coop.gc.ca.

For more information, please contact:

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BACKGROUND

CO-OPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

The Co-operative Development Initiative (CDI) is a Government of Canada program delivered in partnership with the two national organizations of the co-operative sector, which are the Canadian Co-operative Association and the Conseil canadien de la coopération et de la mutualité. CDI is designed to help people develop co-operatives and to test innovative ways of using the co-operative model. CDI makes the co-operative option more readily available to Canadians, to respond to their present-day challenges.

Description of CDI

The program has three interrelated components:

The **Advisory Services** component is delivered by the co-operative sector through a network of co-operative development experts established across the country. The objective is to provide access to professional and technical services needed for the successful launch or strengthening of a co-operative. The Advisory Services component is managed jointly by the Canadian Co-operative Association and the Conseil canadien de la coopération et de la mutualité.

The **Research and Knowledge Development** component is designed to undertake, support and share strategic applied research that will advance co-operative development and growth. This component is completely managed by the Government of Canada.

The **Innovative Co-operative Projects** component provides funding to innovative projects that respond to public policy priority areas and generate best practices and learning. The policy priorities to be addressed through the Innovative Co-operative Projects are:

- agriculture, including farmer-driven value-added agriculture and biofuels;
- rural/northern community development;
- innovative goods and services, including innovative technologies; and
- capacity building and sustainability of the co-operative sector in Canada.

The upper limit of funding for Innovative Co-operative Projects is \$75,000 per year per project. The minimum proponent contribution for Innovative Co-operative Projects is 25% per individual project. The Innovative Co-operative Projects component is delivered jointly by the Canadian Co-operative Association and the Conseil canadien de la coopération et de la mutualité.