

AIMS Implements Same-Day Funding Decisions

In an effort to simplify access by agri-food associations to government support, the Agri-food Industry Market Strategies (AIMS) process now provides "one-stop" funding approval.

When an industry association makes its case (by the presentation of long-term business plans) for government to support export development initiatives, a decision will probably be made on the same day as the association presents its plans to the AIMS Steering Committee.

Elwood Hodgins, AIMS Coordinator, said that when industry associations create business plans or update their current plans, they can then approach the Steering Committee for funding initiatives outlined in the plan under the new Agri-Food element of the Program for Export Market Development (PEMD). Following the presentation, the Steering Committee will make its decision, usually on the same day. In the past, funding approvals had to be obtained from various other sources within government.

"So you have, to a large degree, what industry has been seeking, that is a fast one-stop approval process," said Hodgins.

The AIMS process encourages agri-food associations to develop and implement market responsive business plans. Such business plans also provide a framework for industry and government collaboration in access to markets. This combines industry and government resources with the activities and priorities determined by industry.

The AIMS Steering Committee is now responsible for approval of PEMD Agri-Food resources. PEMD

Agri-Food was announced in November 1992 under the Agri-Food Trade Opportunities Strategy as a major vehicle for delivery of increased federal support for export development. The AIMS Steering Committee is made up of representatives from Agriculture Canada; External Affairs and International Trade Canada; Industry, Science and Technology

Canada; and Western Economic Diversification Canada. In addition to approving requests under PEMD Agri-food, the Steering Committee also coordinates funding from member departments.

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levelled against many North American growing areas. But when a satisfied Mexican inspector left B.C. last year, the talking finally payed off.

McCain Foods Ltd. and Agriculture Canada have had unprecedented success with the Canadian-developed Shepody potato. Developed at Agriculture Canada's Fredericton Research Station, the potato has gone from a single seedling in 1968 to a world class competitor now grown in many parts of Europe, the U.S., Australia and New Zealand. Since its official registration by Agriculture Canada in 1980, it now ranks fifth in acreage in North America and third in Canada, with 11.9% of total potato acreage. McCain has the rights to the potato in many countries outside of Canada and has carefully managed its proliferation. The Shepody has quickly become a prized potato for use as french fries and is being introduced for processing by McDonald's Restaurants in many markets. In 1991 it received the Outstanding Cultivar Award from the Canadian Society for Horticultural Science.

Canadian wineries have gained an international reputation for quality ice wines which are challenging the leading German ice wines. The wineries have achieved this success by emphasizing quality and niche marketing, introducing new products, and improving old ones. The wineries have also worked hard to get their wines onto the menus of top restaurants or carried by airlines. **Hildebrand Winery Estates** exports five per cent of production to Japan, Britain and New York. The **Great Canadian Wine Trading Co. Ltd.** has lined up several Canadian wineries for an export push — highlighting Canadian ice wine — into the Far East. These companies include **Inniskillin, Cave Springs Cellars Ltd. and Reif Winery Inc.**

Dare Foods Ltd., Kitchener, Ontario, entered the Mexican market only in March of 1990 and already boasts 13 product lines. These include eight cookies and five crackers and sales are considered strong. Dare is trying to further increase its presence in Mexico by introducing other products in the future.

