



News Release

Beyond the Easter Report: Framing a Comprehensive Canadian Agri-food Policy

Guelph, ON (February 8, 2006) “Given the right conditions, the Canadian agri-food sector has a very bright future” says Dr. Larry Martin, CEO of the George Morris Centre. Ensuring that those conditions are identified and achieved is one of the main reasons the Centre is committed to the development of a new Canadian Commercial Agri-food Policy.

A special report released today outlines this policy development plan, which has already begun with a study on opportunities for the sector, including analysis of a report by the Hon. Wayne Easter entitled *Empowering Canadian Farmers in the Market Place*. While Mr. Easter’s report contained some valid points, Martin explains that the issues are much broader than presented. “We need to get to a greater depth of understanding in order to deal with issues and opportunities in a strategic manner.”

To ensure that the necessary level of understanding is reached, the Centre’s plan includes an opportunity for stakeholders from across the sector to have real input into the process. Martin Gooch, one of the co-authors of the George Morris Centre report, agrees that involving a broad cross-section of stakeholders is essential to ensuring the sector’s future prosperity. “Encouraging the development of constructive relationships between businesses operating across the entire sector will have greater influence upon the future prosperity of Canada’s agriculture and agri-food industry than any other single factor. Collaboration and prosperity go hand in hand; and ill-conceived legislation is the antithesis of enabling companies to prosper in the face of mounting international pressure.”

The strategic intent of the George Morris Centre plan is to facilitate the design and implementation of a policy that supports growth in the commercial component of the agri-food sector, thus allowing Canada to prosper in the emerging international marketplace.

The complete report is available on the George Morris Centre website:
www.georgemorris.org

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For more information please contact
Joanne Falk
Manager, External Relations
George Morris Centre
519-822-3929, ext. 218
joanne@georgemorris.org

The George Morris Centre is a national, not-for-profit think tank specializing in the Canadian Agri-food sector. The Centre provides perspective, critical information, strategic analysis, and planning, as well as education on issues affecting the sector.