



GEORGE MORRIS CENTRE

New Value Chain Management Training Tool

Guelph, ON (August 30, 2007) The George Morris Centre, in conjunction with ACC Farmers' Financial and Farm Credit Canada, has released a unique new value chain management training tool to help farmers and agri-food companies significantly improve their competitiveness and profitability.

The first of its kind worldwide, the project was enabled by \$165,000 funding from the Agricultural Management Institute and additional support from others, including the Canadian Farmer Business Management Council, HUB International, and the Ontario Agricultural College. The training tool provides clear evidence of the financial benefits that forming and managing a value chain can bring to everyone along the chain, from farmers and agri-food businesses through to consumers.

According to Martin Gooch, a senior research associate with the George Morris Centre who has helped develop successful value chains in Canada and overseas, the lack of value chain development in Canada suggested that greater emphasis needed to be placed on providing farmers and agri-businesses with tools and insights necessary for exploring new business approaches, particularly value chain management.

“Value chains are one of the most frequently discussed, least understood trends in agriculture and agri-food today” says Gooch. “Even worse, value chains are all too often viewed as an idyllic concept that doesn’t work in practice. This project proves that value chains are real, are occurring on a world-wide basis, and are benefiting farmers, processors, retailers, and food service providers”.

Through his extensive network of contacts, Gooch was able to interview international value chain experts and practitioners from around the globe who have worked with producers, processors and retailers to develop successful value chain initiatives. The value chains presented as video case studies include Warburton’s, the UK’s largest independent baker, which sources wheat from the Canadian prairies and from a group of UK producers; KG Fruits, one of the world’s most successful new generation cooperatives; Thompson’s, a soybean, wheat, and corn breeder and marketer based in Ontario; and the Little Potato Company, based in Edmonton Alberta. Hailing from the fruit, vegetable, berry, pork, lamb, beef, soybean and wheat sectors, other

successful value chains highlighted in the video operate in the UK, the Netherlands, Australia, New Zealand and the U.S.,

The video footage includes participants involved in the chains explaining the management of their operations, and the benefits of involvement. It also includes interviews with several value chain experts from around the world, who describe further lessons that can be applied to other initiatives for commercial success.

Available on DVD or CD ROM, the video and written materials have been combined into a format that can be used in workshop or individual settings, and by groups looking to work together to strengthen their operations. It presents a unique opportunity to learn about the issues that others have faced, avoid common mistakes, and capitalize on the experiences of others.

As a companion to the DVD, a new website, www.vcmtools.ca, is being created that will allow producers and processors to locate a value chain management workshop already scheduled in their area, or to schedule a new one. Also included is general information on value chain management and its benefits.

The George Morris Centre is Canada's independent agri-food think tank, dedicated to provoking informed dialogue on policies and issues and fostering excellence in the Agri-food sector.

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