News Release

For immediate release

GOVERNMENT OF CANADA INVESTS IN FIRST NATIONS YOUTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS IN SASKATCHEWAN

OTTAWA, Ontario, June 20, 2008 – The Government of Canada is further demonstrating its commitment to deliver support for farmers by investing in three innovative projects that will benefit Saskatchewan's entire agriculture sector.

"This Government is committed to providing farmers with the support they need to remain competitive and successful," said Federal Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz. "Whether it is keeping gopher populations under control or building the next generation of leaders through 4-H funding, this Government is putting farmers first."

The Government of Canada is providing close to $420,000 to the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities to find a cost-effective and environmentally-friendly method of controlling the Richardson's ground squirrel population in order to reduce the damage to agricultural land in Saskatchewan and other Western provinces.

The Government is also providing $680,480 for two projects to expand the agricultural sector in Saskatchewan First Nations communities by helping First Nations youth develop leadership, public speaking, and entrepreneurial skills as well as explore career opportunities in agriculture and related fields.

Federal funding for these three projects is being provided through Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Advancing Canadian Agriculture and Agri-Food (ACAAF) program. In Saskatchewan, ACAAF is delivered by the Agriculture Council of Saskatchewan (ACS).

"These projects will have a tremendous impact on the agriculture and agri-food sector both in Saskatchewan and across Canada," said Murray Purcell, Chair, ACS. "From increasing opportunities for First Nations youth to providing innovations for producers and processors, ACAAF funded projects such as these will bring benefits that will strengthen our agriculture and agri-food sector."

For more information on ACAAF, please visit www.agr.gc.ca/acaaf. To learn more about the ACS and the funding programs it administers, please visit www.agcouncil.ca/acaafs.

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