

**Innovation Place Newsletter
September 2002 Edition**

Canadian Food Inspection Agency consolidates activities at Innovation Place

This has been a year of consolidation for the Saskatoon district office of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA). In December of 2001, the government agency relocated its downtown and airport industrial area offices to new spacious facilities on the third floor of 421 Downey Road at Innovation Place.

The move consolidates the CFIA's Animal Health, Food Inspection and Western Seed Laboratory activities in the district, bringing together 49 staff members in one convenient location.

"We had two different offices spread across Saskatoon," says Dr. Al Klemmer, inspection manager for northern Saskatchewan, who heads the Operations area of the CFIA district office in Saskatoon. "The leases for both locations were expiring simultaneously, so it seemed like a good time to bring our people together in one office. Innovation Place is an ideal location for us, as it also offers close proximity to our laboratory at the University of Saskatchewan - the Centre for Parasitology and the Centre for Veterinary Drug Residues - at 116 Veterinary Road."

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency is headquartered in Ottawa. The organization has divided the country into four operational areas, working from 18 regional offices, 186 district offices and 408 offices in non-government establishments (such as processing facilities). The CFIA also operates 22 laboratories and research facilities that provide scientific advice, develop new technologies, provide testing services and conduct research.

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency delivers all of the federal government's food, animal and plant health inspection programs. The agency's programs are developed at the CFIA's national headquarters; these policies and directives are then passed on to the regional and district offices for implementation.

"Consumer protection is our number one mandate," says Klemmer. "Our role is to enforce the food safety and nutritional quality standards established by Health Canada, and for animal health and plant protection, to set standards and carry out enforcement and inspection."

CFIA activities range from the inspection of federally-registered meat processing facilities to border inspections for foreign pests and diseases, to the enforcement of practices related to fraudulent labeling. The organization also verifies the human transportation of animals, conducts food investigations and recalls, performs laboratory testing and environmental assessments of seeds, plants, feeds and fertilizers.

The Saskatoon district office employs a staff of 34. "We have several staff members who work under the Programs Branch of the agency. We have Animal Health and Plant Health Programs people who are involved with policy development and implementation. One of the Programs staff is a veterinary specialist working in meat hygiene; another veterinary specialist works in Animal Health. We also have a Plant Health biotechnology specialist on staff. In September, we will be adding a veterinary biologics person to our staff, who will be doing inspections of facilities that produce veterinary biologics such as vaccines, checking on their procedures and processes, to ensure that safety standards are being met. This is a new position for the Western Canada Area," says Klemmer.

"We also have people on the Operations side of the agency; we're the ones who implement the policies, procedures and directives that the Programs Branch issue. For example, I work on the Operations side as the inspections manager for Northern Saskatchewan."

He says that the majority of the province's Plant Health staff are based in the Saskatoon district office, because of its central location. Plant Health staff are involved in numerous activities, including import, export and domestic movement of plant products as well as labelling and quality assurance of fertilizer and animal feed. "We have inspectors who go out and inspect fields, looking for crop diseases and pests. If a producer is selling registered seed, they go out to ensure that the specified seed is being grown."

Several Animal Health inspectors also work from the Saskatoon district office, visiting farms and livestock facilities in the area. Inspectors verify the health of the livestock, testing and monitoring for a wide range of diseases. "Some of the diseases we test for include those that have been around for a long time, brucellosis and TB in cattle, for example. Because Canada is considered free of TB in most species, those tests aren't done as frequently as in the past. Any time we export, however, we have to satisfy the importing country that the animals are testing negative for those diseases," says Klemmer.

The Saskatoon district office is also on the watch for Chronic Wasting Disease, particularly in elk. "This has been a real problem in Saskatchewan over the last three years. Our Animal Health inspectors and veterinarians are dealing with this matter on almost a daily basis." Klemmer also supervises the meat inspectors who work at the federally-registered meat processing facilities throughout central and northern Saskatchewan.

"On the Food Inspection side, our office also has inspectors who are involved in food safety and quality inspection and enforcement, at both the manufacturing and retail level. If we have any identified food problems, one of our inspectors at this office is involved with food recalls. He inspects establishments that are not federally-registered, looking for health and safety problems. If a food product is recalled, hamburger for example, he works to ensure that the product has been removed from the retail shelf and that it's being returned as directed," says Klemmer.

"We have another inspector who works specifically with honey producers. We have fruit and vegetable inspectors, even shell egg inspectors. We also have one person in our office who actually doesn't work under the CFIA; he works with Health Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency, dealing with proper pesticide use."

"Our district office is also home to the Western Seed Laboratory, which serves CFIA operations all across Western Canada," says Klemmer. Fifteen out of the 49 CFIA staff at the Saskatoon office work directly for the CFIA's Western Seed Laboratory.

The Western Seed Laboratory provides testing services for seed purity, germination and varietal purity. It also tests for smut of barley and for seeds of quarantine significance to the CFIA's western area and the seed industry in Western Canada. The laboratory is also responsible for the national evaluation and certification of seed graders in registered seed establishments.

Janine Maruschak, acting head of the Western Seed Laboratory, says, "When CFIA Operations staff take a seed sample, they send it to us for testing. They tell us what kind of tests they want and for what purpose."

The Western Seed Laboratory works with all crop varieties grown in Western Canada. "There is only one other CFIA seed laboratory in Canada, and that's in Ottawa," says Maruschak.

"Many of our staff members are accredited seed analysts. We also have several laboratory technicians working on herbicide tolerance testing and GMO testing."

Maruschak says that demand is on the increase for testing of herbicide-tolerant and other genetically modified (GM) seed products. "Our work is driven by CFIA Programs and Operations staff, who are our clients. We are doing tests to monitor whether a herbicide-tolerant seed variety is as herbicide-tolerant as claimed and to ensure that it won't be a contaminant in other varieties that aren't supposed to be herbicide-tolerant."

Klemmer sees the potential for increased interaction with tenants of Innovation Place, particularly with companies involved in agricultural biotechnology. "The addition of a Plant Health biotechnology specialist and a veterinary biologics specialist to the Saskatoon office, as well as increased GMO testing at the Western Seed Laboratory, will definitely create new opportunities for interaction in the future," says Klemmer.

Sustainable Communities Institute seeks global recognition

It's no secret that rising populations and increasing urbanization are causing huge problems for cities throughout the world. Heavy demands are being placed on local governments, economies and the environment to manage limited resources and protect natural environmental assets.

But rather than seeing these sustainability issues as problems, academic, business, and scientific leaders in Saskatchewan see tremendous opportunities to develop a technology cluster in sustainable urban environmental management in the province with a research institute located at Regina Research Park.

For the past year, the University of Regina, the City of Regina, the National Research Council, Western Economic Diversification, Saskatchewan Industry and Resources, and the Regina Regional Economic Development Authority have been working together on this initiative.

A plan has been developed that will position Regina as a recognized environmental centre of excellence that will bring together the best science and research in the field along with urban managers to address sustainability issues.

The Sustainable Communities Institute is being established as a non-profit corporation jointly governed by the University of Regina, the City of Regina and the National Research Council. Stage one of the project - which comprises startup activities - is expected to begin in the fall of 2002 and be completed over the course of 18 months.

Gerald Fiske, Project Director for the Sustainable Communities Institute, said he is confident that the \$30 million investment over five years will eventually lead to a \$300 million-plus industry in Regina.

"Our investigations have clearly demonstrated both the need and the opportunity to create a research and innovation initiative in support of sustainable urban environmental management," says Fiske. "Our efforts have revealed strong interest from key research organizations and the rationale for creating a national centre for research in Regina."

The goal of the Sustainable Communities Institute is to be recognized on a global scale as a leading research and development initiative and establish formal links with innovative companies and leading research organizations around the world.

"I am confident that the strong knowledge and research base will draw commercial enterprises to Regina as well as providing opportunity for existing local firms to convert the research into economically viable business opportunities," says Fiske.

The Sustainable Communities Institute will draw together top environmental researchers and municipal managers to create models for making decisions on important urban environmental issues including safe water, clean air, efficient energy use and quality use of land.

A key element of this initiative is the Integrated Research Program, which will establish the City of Regina as a test bed and working model of the sustainable urban environment of the future.

The City of Regina has agreed to share information from its systems with researchers. The researchers will then be able to create systems to help monitor a variety of factors that affect air, water, land and energy use.

Feedback from the centre will provide an excellent framework for sustainable development in Regina. The city will become a template for local "green" projects in other cities.

Fiske says that companies located in Regina will have the ability to take advantage of the expansion of the environmental industry by being so close to the core of new knowledge.

"The potential financial benefits to Regina and Canada more than justify the cost of the Centre," he says. "Not only will Regina build a reputation for its extensive knowledge base, but the opportunities for private companies to grow and prosper are unlimited. High quality jobs will stimulate the economy and have a positive effect on the people of Regina, Saskatchewan and Canada."

PFRA & D. Black Communications win national award

D. Black Communications and PFRA (Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration, a unit within Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada) recently won a national award for "Excellence in Dealing with a Controversial Topic" at the Association for Media & Technology in Education in Canada (AMTEC) Media Festival.

The five-minute animation entitled "RoboCow: Operation H2O" helps explain to school children how water quality can be improved by using the best on-farm management practices.

"With the very sensitive and serious water quality issues of Walkerton and North Battleford so prominent in everyone's minds, our client wanted a simple approach to help people understand the fairly complex issues of factors affecting water quality," says company president Deborah Black.

"We had a great working relationship with PFRA and together we developed the concept for the animation combined with an objective approach to demonstrate how on-farm practices might be improved. It was a very careful balancing act, but from this award, I'd say that we met the challenges with tremendous success."

The animation can be viewed by logging on to the D.Black Communications Inc.'s home page at www.dblack.com and following the link.

Strategic funding and support for this work was provided by the Canada-Saskatchewan Agri-Food Innovation Fund.

Who's new to Saskatchewan's research parks?

New to Innovation Place:

- **Health Services Utilization and Research Commission**, 241 - 111 Research Drive.
(www.hsurc.sk.ca) Contact Barb Nisbet at (306) 655-1508. Email: nisbetb@hsurc.sk.ca .

On the move at Innovation Place:

- **Centurion Investment Advisors** (formerly Gold Leaf Securities) have relocated from the Network Center to 201 - 14 Innovation Boulevard.
- **Profit Systems** is relocating from 407 in the Galleria Building, to 105 East Wing of the Galleria.

Professional French instruction

St. Thomas More College and Language Training Canada offer Professional French classes. Originally designed for civil servants, this course will help you develop the skills needed to work in French in a professional setting. "The Programme de Base de Français au Travail" maintains federal standards for French in the workplace.

Learn to speak on the phone, organize meetings, write business letters and much more. Daytime/night-time classes are available, in house sessions can be arranged.

For more details contact Nelly Plantiveau - Co-ordinator at 966-8048 or prof.french@usask.ca

Good sports at Innovation Place

Hail the conquering sports heroes of Innovation Place! The scoreboard told the story, and the following good sports took top honours at this summer's annual Innovation Place events.

Innovation Place Golf Tournament Champions:

Men's: Rob Trimble

Women's: Fran Nutter

Winning Team: Austin Beggs, Bob Burnyeat, Terry Mazurkevich and Ken Barteski

Innovation Place Squash Tournament Champions:

Men's Elite Division: Kjeld Gattinger

Men's A Division: Doug Michasiw

Women's A Division: Dalyce Taggart

Innovation Place Slow-Pitch Tournament Champions:

Draw 1/Side A winner: SED Team X

Side B winner: BDM

Draw 2/Side A winner: Ag Canada

Side B winner: Monsanto

Tournament champion: The Draw 1 and Draw 2 winning teams faced off, with Ag Canada taking home the tournament trophy! Congratulations!

Overall League champions: Based on the standings from this season's Slow Pitch league play, Ag Canada and NRC tied, with 20 points each! Both teams will share the honor of League Champions.

Congratulations to the victors, and thanks to everyone who participated and contributed to all of the fun!

Innovation Place to host Symphony Garden Party

"Nothing could possibly be more satisfactory."

- *The Mikado*

Innovation Place invites you to enjoy an evening of outstanding musical entertainment, superb cuisine and fine wines, Saturday, September 14, by attending the Symphony Garden Party at Boffins Club and Gardens.

The gala event will help raise funds for the Saskatoon Symphony Orchestra, create interest in the upcoming SSO season and provides an opportunity to meet new SSO conductor Douglas Sanford. The renowned conductor is just beginning a five-year term with the Saskatoon Symphony Orchestra. He will divide his time between the SSO and the Okanagan Symphony. Sanford has performed with acclaimed international orchestras in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia and Poland, as well as the Vancouver, Winnipeg and National Arts Centre orchestras.

Karen Conway, general manager of the Saskatoon Symphony Orchestra, says the Symphony Garden Party will have a "far eastern, Asian theme, inspired by Boffins Gardens."

Ten SSO musicians will entertain that evening, says Conway. "We'll have two quintets who will be playing inside and outside Boffins, simultaneously, weather permitting."

The musical programme will include songs from Gilbert & Sullivan's *The Mikado*, performed by a well-known local soloist.

Cocktails begin at 5:30 p.m. A full buffet of Asian-inspired cuisine will follow, created by "Chef Steve" of Boffins Club.

"We'll also have a nice selection of wines, along with beer selections from Japan and China. Your ticket includes a free wine, beer or sake," says Conway.

Tickets are \$75.00 per person with a \$35.00 charitable receipt and can be obtained from the SSO box office by calling 665-6414.

Conway says that this is the first fund-raising event the symphony has held at Innovation Place. "Response so far has been very positive. People are quite excited about the event. We're very pleased with the new partnership we have created with the Innovation Place community. Bill Sitter, general manager of the research park, has been very, very accommodating and supportive of the symphony."

Bill Sitter says, "Providing access to such organizations as the Saskatoon Symphony Orchestra, along with other business groups and arts groups, is an important part of our commitment to the community.

"We're not just a business organization; we also feel it's important to support the more integral aspects of life in Saskatoon, including the arts and special events."