

News Release

GOVERNMENT OF CANADA CREATES NEW MARKET OPPORTUNITIES FOR CANADIAN HONEY PRODUCERS

CHARLOTTETOWN, Prince Edward Island, June 18, 2010 – The Government of Canada is investing in a new Canadian technology that will benefit honey producers. Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz announced today that Island Abbey Foods Ltd. will receive up to \$473,000 in repayable funding to expand operations and manufacture fully dehydrated honey-based products.

“Our Government recognizes that investments in innovative projects create opportunities for our farmers and benefit the community by creating jobs,” said Minister Ritz. “This project will increase demand for Canadian honey while offering up a healthier food alternative for consumers.”

Through its innovative process, Island Abbey Foods developed Honibe Honey Drops, the world’s first 100 per cent pure dried honey made without any additives or preservatives. Packaged individually, the honey drops were originally launched as an alternative to sweeteners for hot beverages. The honey product has garnered a lot of attention and won the Sweet Grocery category and was named Best of Canada for 2010 at SIAL (Salon International de l’Alimentation), the world’s largest international trade show.

The product was also selected as one of the top innovative and successful new-product introductions of 2009 by a jury of international trade journalists and is a finalist for the SIAL d’Or grand prize competition.

The company has since added a honey and lemon combination and recently announced plans to expand flavour combinations for a confectionery line as well as develop a botanically-enhanced line of natural lozenges.

“This expansion is a significant and exciting milestone in our company’s history,” said John Rowe, president of Island Abbey Foods. “It will quintuple our production and double our workforce over the next couple of years.”

The funding will go towards expanding operations, training and introducing the products into international markets. The project is expected to create 15 jobs and increase demand for Canadian honey, encouraging development of the Canadian Apiculture sector.

Daniel Ficza, past vice-president of the PEI Beekeepers Association and a leading P.E.I. bee keeper, said having a successful honey processor in the province like Island Abbey Foods Ltd. is good for the honey industry.

“They have unique honey products and they are selling them into big markets,” said Ficza. “This is expanding our markets for local honey.”

Funding for this project comes from the Agri-Opportunities Program, a five-year program that focuses on new innovative agri-products, processes or services that are currently not commercially produced or available in Canada and that are ready to be introduced into the marketplace. In addition, Canada's Economic Action Plan supports agriculture as a core economic driver in this country, and is committed to creating jobs for the future. Investments in viable market opportunities will help build an even stronger agriculture sector and Canadian economy.

For more information on the Agri-Opportunities program please visit www.agr.gc.ca/agri-opportunities.

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