

GOVERNMENT INVESTMENT TO BEGIN VINELAND RENAISSANCE

**Will Help Revitalize Agri-Food Research and
Create a Centre of Innovation**



Vineland, Ontario - The federal and Ontario governments have made the first steps to create a vital hub for horticultural science and innovation in Vineland by making it a model for research facilities elsewhere in the province and the country.

The announcement was made at the Vineland Research Centre by the Member of Parliament for Niagara West-Glanbrook, Dean Allison, on behalf of the Honourable Chuck Strahl, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board who was joined by the Ontario Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, Leona Dombrowsky.

"Canada's new government is pleased to collaborate with the Province of Ontario towards the revitalization of horticultural research activities in Vineland that will benefit the horticultural industry not only in the Niagara Peninsula, but across the province and the country," stated Allison, M.P. for Niagara West-Glanbrook. "This collaboration will help strengthen our research capacity in the horticultural sector for a sustainable and profitable agriculture sector."

"Research and innovation are crucial to the future success of Ontario's agri-food sector," Dombrowsky said. "By making this investment, we are signalling a new day and innovative approaches to capturing new opportunities."

Ontario is providing \$12.5 million to the Vineland Research and Innovations Centre Incorporated. Canada is making a financial and in-kind commitment valued at \$15.5 million over the next five years towards research projects that support the mission of this new Centre at Vineland.

"This is a great day for Niagara," said St. Catharines MPP Jim Bradley. "We have some of the best soil and climate in the country -- now we will have some of the best minds in the country contributing to agricultural productivity in Niagara, the province and the country."

Several industry associations, including Flowers Canada (Ontario) and the Niagara Peninsula Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association, have already committed funding to the project. The government investments follow recommendations from the Vineland Renaissance Advisory Panel, which submitted its report to the Ontario government in January, 2007. One of the key recommendations was that public-private partnerships would leverage greater investment in the initiative. Both governments have committed to working with industry to bolster ongoing support for the centre.

The Vineland Research Station was first created in 1906, when a local citizen donated the property to the province to create a centre of excellence in horticultural research. Ontario's tender fruit and grape and wine industries have reaped the benefits of the work conducted there, which included plant breeding and the introduction of new varieties, production techniques and post-harvest technologies.

As a next step, both governments will explore additional means to support the activities of the new Centre where both governments can optimize their investments in land, facilities and ongoing support for horticultural research.

"This is a tremendous step forward for creating a modern centre of excellence and innovation that will bring benefits not only to the Niagara region but throughout Ontario and Canada," said Donald Ziraldo, co-founder of Inniskillin Wines, and chair of the advisory panel.