



## 2006 CANADIAN AGRI-FOOD AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE WINNERS ANNOUNCED

**TORONTO, Ontario, November 6, 2006** - A visitors' gallery in a piggery. A new beer for Japan. An innovative organic produce greenhouse. A chicken farmer who juggles eggs while teaching about life on the farm. And a way to provide incentives to farmers to take care of their lands.

All of these projects were honoured today at the sixth annual Canadian Agri-Food Awards of Excellence, presented by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair. The awards were launched in 2001 and recognize achievements in five categories: environmental stewardship, agricultural awareness and education, innovation, voluntarism and agri-food export.

"I'm proud to see the scope of the creativity, innovation and inventiveness represented by these worthy award winners," said the Honourable Chuck Strahl, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board. "It just goes to prove, once again, that the Canadian agriculture and agri-food industry is one of the best."

"It's truly a pleasure to celebrate these stars of Canadian agri-food excellence at The Royal. It's fitting that we're able not only to celebrate, but also to profile these winners and their achievements to attendees of The Royal," said Royal president Rob McLaughlin.

The awards were presented at a special luncheon in Toronto before an audience of members of producer organizations and food associations, business and community leaders, as well as representatives of provincial and federal governments. Following the luncheon, an exhibit honouring the winners was unveiled at the Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada display at The Royal.

The 2006 award recipients are:

- Voluntarism - John Opsteen, Campbellville, Ontario
- Agri-Food Export - The Sapporo Value Chain Partners, Alix, Alberta
- **Environmental Stewardship - Ian Wishart, Portage la Prairie, Manitoba**
- Innovation - Origin Organic Farms Inc., Delta, British Columbia
- Agricultural Awareness and Education - Lee Whittington, The Pork Interpretive Gallery, Elstow, Saskatchewan

## Canadian Agri-Food Award of Excellence (CAFAE) for Environmental Stewardship



Ian Wishart of Portage la Prairie, Manitoba, received the CAFAE for environmental stewardship from Leonard Edwards, Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada(left) and Royal Agricultural Winter Fair Chief Executive Officer Bill Duron, right, at an awards luncheon held November 6 in Toronto. Mr. Wishart established a program called Alternative Land Use Services that provides incentives to farmers to maintain wetlands, prevent soil erosion, protect waterways and other beneficial land practices.

### **Canadian Agri-Food Award of Excellence for Environmental Stewardship - Ian Wishart, Portage la Prairie, Manitoba**

When Ian Wishart puts his mind to something, things get done. A grain, cattle and potato farmer from Portage la Prairie, Manitoba, Mr. Wishart is best known as the driving force behind an environmental land stewardship program called Alternative Land Use Services, or ALUS. ALUS is an ambitious project that provides incentives for farmers to maintain wetlands, prevent soil erosion, protect waterways and perform other environmentally beneficial land practices. The initiative is designed to be farmer-led, farm-focused and involves partnerships between farmers, conservation groups and governments. It took seven years and Mr. Wishart's "never-say-die" attitude, but his dream became reality earlier this year when the \$1.9 million three-year pilot project now called ALUS: An Ecological Goods and Services Research Project was launched.