

NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release



BCFPA Delighted With Announcement from Ministry of Jobs

Abbotsford, B.C., October 21, 2011. “We are delighted with the [announcement](#) of the BC Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Innovation on the steps they are taking to further encourage business immigrants to invest in B.C. through the BC Provincial Nominee Program,” Nico Human, BCFPA CEO says. “We are particularly pleased to see that the BC PNP’s Entry Level and Semi-Skilled pilot will now become a permanent program. This is something we fought hard to get into place, and to hear that it will now stay in place is truly heartwarming.

“I still remember when members Rosstown Farms came to us with the challenges facing them on the labour front. They had recruited these great foreign workers that had improved productivity with something like 30% in their abattoir operations. The challenge they faced was that the workers could only stay for two years before they had to return to the Philippines even though many had shown great skills, and some management skills.

“We, as BCFPA, led a delegation to the then Minister of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development, Murray Coell. The Minister immediately saw the opportunity and opened the way for us to make the process work with his Ministry. A market analysis was asked for, and the Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC could help with a report that was current and exactly what was needed. Soon a pilot project was born for the food processing industry [<http://bcfpa.ca/story/2008/10/30/bc-expands-program-help-food-processing-industries>]. This meant that the foreign workers could apply to the BCPNP, with the chance of ultimately becoming Canadian citizens!

Rick Gagner, BCFPA Board Member, recalls, “Minister Coel’s understanding of the industry’s need, and his immediate and affirmative response was truly unexpected and impressive. Government was responsive, industry was served, and lives were given a new hope for the future. Amazing, indeed!”

“The day we announced it at Rosstown to the Filipino workers was truly amazing,” Human continues. “There were many teary eyes and happy, smiling faces.



October 30, 2008 - **After the Announcement:** The Hon. John van Dongen (*back row middle*) surrounded by delighted Rosssdown managers and staff with then BCFPA President, Robin Smith (*back row right*), and BCFPA CEO Nico Human (*kneeling second from left*). Pat Wiebe of Rosssdown is shown second left in back row, and Rick Gagner (with beard) just behind van Dongen

“The workers were ecstatic. The BC government was happy, Rosssdown was happy and so was the BCFPA. It was a win-win all around.

“The work, however, was not done. The pilot project had to be nurtured and supported over many months, and I would like to recognise BCFPA Board member Rick Gagner (of Sunrise Poultry). He stayed with the file, gave input to the Ministry as needed and kept the Board informed. Without him we would not be here today.

“Don’t you love it when a plan comes together,” Human concludes.

Pat Weibe, of Rosssdown Farms, adds, “This program has allowed us to succeed and be a viable locally owned and operated agri-business as well as fortunate to be a part of providing new immigrants with a chance to a solid foundation and more hopeful life in Canada.”

The **BCFPA** is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to represent all segments of the food, beverage and nutraceutical processing industry, and to coordinate common industry activities and resources under one umbrella. The Association represents micro, small, medium, and large processing companies.

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