



# News Release

---

For immediate release

## **\$100 MILLION IN FEDERAL FUNDING WILL TRANSFORM THE WAY LAND-USE DECISIONS ARE MADE IN CANADA**

**OTTAWA, September 20, 2005** - Agriculture and Agri-Food Minister Andy Mitchell today announced the federal government is investing \$100 million in the development of an Internet-based service that will provide a recognized source of information, analysis and interpretation of land, soil, water, climatic and biodiversity data to assist land-use managers in their agri-environmental planning.

Led by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada in partnership with other federal departments, provincial, territorial and municipal governments, non-government organizations (NGOs) and industry groups, the National Land and Water Information Service will provide online access to current, local and regional agri-environmental information such as the kind of production a particular section of land will support.

“The Service is an investment in agri-environmental sustainability and will serve the agricultural sector and all Canadians by encouraging responsible land-use choices,” said Minister Mitchell. “It will transform the way these decisions are made in Canada.”

Currently, the information needed to make responsible agri-environmental decisions is either not available or is not easily accessible. The National Land and Water Information Service will make data accessible through a recognized point of entry using on-line technology and tools and will also provide access to experts to help facilitate informed decisions.

Using the Service, agricultural producers will be able to determine, for instance, if their land will support an expanded operation or whether the water supply might be affected by the kind and size of the proposed production.

“Through this Service, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada will provide information and decision support that encourages responsible environmental choices,” said Minister Mitchell. “Land management decisions at national, regional and local levels require this range of support to ensure due consideration of social, economic and environmental objectives.”

The National Land and Water Information Service is an integral part of the deliverables under the Agricultural Policy Framework (APF) to achieve environmental goals. The APF is the comprehensive policy involving the Government of Canada, provincial and territorial governments, and the agriculture and agri-food industry. The goal of the APF is to help the agricultural sector address emerging challenges, such as increasing domestic and foreign consumer demand, increased global competition, and advances in science.



-2-

The National Land and Water Information Service will be developed using proven Geographic Information System (GIS) technology. GIS is a system of computer software, hardware, data and personnel, which manipulates, analyzes and presents information that is tied to a spatial location.

The Service is scheduled to be introduced through a phased approach over four years.

-30-

For further information, please visit [http://www.agr.gc.ca/nlwis/main\\_e.htm](http://www.agr.gc.ca/nlwis/main_e.htm), or contact:

**Media Relations**

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

**1-866-345-7972**

**(613) 759-7972**

**Matt Tolley**

Press Secretary

Minister Mitchell's Office

**(613) 759-1059**

(\$100 million in federal funding will transform the way land-use decisions are made in Canada)

.../3

-3-

---



# Backgrounder

## National Land and Water Information Service

Canada's agriculture and agri-food industry is undergoing rapid change. Global competition, trade challenges and public expectations are accelerating the need to better use Canada's resources. The public and private sectors have had to respond to changing demographics, greater public concern about the health and safety of food and water, a growing demand for new products, and concerns about environmentally sustainable food production.

Trends toward more intensive agricultural practices and competing land uses have resulted in higher demands on land, soil and water and air resources, and have impacted climate and biodiversity as well. Proper planning of agricultural development has become essential so that Canadian land-use managers can maximize economic benefits while safeguarding the environment.

The National Land and Water Information Service will be a coordinated, national service providing easy and timely access to detailed geospatial information and interpretive models to support local and regional land-use decision making. It will leverage existing capability, scientific knowledge, information expertise, and technological capacity, strategically linking the land, soil, water, climatic and biodiversity information of federal, provincial, territorial and municipal governments, non-government organizations and the private sector. This partnership among the owners of the information is the foundation upon which the Service will be built.

Through the National Land and Water Service, land managers, community groups, the agricultural sector, all levels of government and the general public will be able to access meaningful geospatial information across Canada.

It will assist the agriculture sector in developing a knowledge economy by providing access to innovative applications, the best available information and the capacity to use them. By encouraging efficient and effective use and management of agricultural resources, Canada's national competitiveness in the agricultural business will be strengthened.

The Service will provide:

- Expertise that includes knowledge management, the capacity to interpret the information and to collect and maintain it;
- Partnerships with other governments, industries and farm groups that have a need for agri-environmental information;
- Information Management/Information Technology infrastructure made up of independent computers and databases housed not only at AAFC but also at its many partner agencies;
- Applications that meet user needs to support decisions; and

.../4

(\$100 million in federal funding will transform the way land-use decisions are made in Canada)



- Data that is current, accurate and at an appropriate scale.

The objectives of the project are:

- To provide access to high quality, digital geographic information that allows public and private land-use decision makers to manage their business risk, increase the public awareness of these decisions, and improve environmental sustainability;
- To develop and maintain relevant scientific and technical expertise needed to extend the use of agri-environmental information;
- To lever and manage geospatial data sponsored by federal, provincial and territorial governments, and to better utilize planning capabilities;
- To improve data collection and policy development methods of all levels of government; and
- To support and extend the capacity of environmental programs under the Agriculture Policy Framework (APF), and interact with the other elements of the APF.

### **The potential of the Service**

Several projects demonstrate the potential of information products that can be provided through the National Land and Water Information Service. These include:

- Plant Hardiness Zone Maps for Canada, an Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada initiative, outlines the different zones in Canada where various types of trees, shrubs and flowers will most likely survive. <http://sis.agr.gc.ca/cansis/nsdb/climate/hardiness/intro.html>.
- AAFC, in partnership with the Manitoba Riparian Health Council which includes representatives of the federal government, the Manitoba provincial government, non-government organizations and producer groups, developed a map viewing website with calculators and tools to help landowners make decisions on how best to manage and protect riparian areas and adjacent lands. [www.Riparianhealth.ca](http://www.Riparianhealth.ca)
- The Crop Condition Assessment Program (CCAP), developed and maintained by Statistics Canada in partnership with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, is an interactive product that uses low-resolution, digital satellite data during the growing season to monitor changing vegetation conditions in Western Canada and the United States. <http://www25.statcan.ca:8081/ccap/ccaphome.jsp>

Implementation will be divided into four separate, distinct and manageable phases, each of which provides increasing levels of service and benefits for users. The project will be completed in 2009.

For further information, please contact the Project Manager, Denis Douville at [DouvilleD@agr.gc.ca](mailto:DouvilleD@agr.gc.ca) or (613) 694-2344 or Communications Manager, Bev Kerr at [kerrb@agr.gc.ca](mailto:kerrb@agr.gc.ca) or (613) 694-2671.

[WWW.agr.gc.ca/NLWIS](http://WWW.agr.gc.ca/NLWIS)

(100 million in federal funding will transform the way land-use decisions are made in Canada)

---