

*Opening Remarks for  
Pre-Hearing Conference  
Red Raspberry Research, Market Development and Promotion Agency  
March 15, 2013 1:30 p.m.*

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Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. My name is Tim O'Connor and I am the Panel Chair of this public hearing. The Panel has been appointed by the Farm Products Council of Canada to examine the merits of establishing a *Red Raspberry Research, Market Development and Promotion Agency*. I am a Council member, and my fellow Panel member who is here with me today is Phil Klassen who is also a Council member from Saskatchewan.

I would like to introduce Duane Schippers, our legal counsel and Nathalie Vanasse, Hearing Secretary who should be able to answer your questions regarding rules and process for the hearing.

Before we begin, please note that a transcript of this meeting will be produced and posted on FPCC's Website.

As I mentioned, the Council appointed this Panel to conduct hearings into the merits of establishing a *Red Raspberry Research, Market Development and Promotion Agency*. As part of its duties, the Council must inquire into the merits of establishing an agency for any farm product where producer groups

file such a request, and then proceed to make recommendations to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food in accordance to the *Farm Products Agencies Act*.

In connection with such inquiries, section 8 of the Act directs Council to hold public hearings. While doing so, it has all of the powers of a commissioner appointed under Part I of the *Inquiries Act*.

During this inquiry, the merits of a proposal developed by the British Columbia Raspberry Industry Development Council will be examined. This proposal pertains to the establishment of a *Red Raspberry Research, Market Development and Promotion Agency* under Part III of the FPAA.

The notice was published in the *Canada Gazette* on January 19, 2013 as required under section 9 of the Act. The notice gave the purpose and scope of the hearing. Council's inquiry was also advertised in weekly newspapers and farm journals across Canada.

The Council called for submissions on the proposal for the Raspberry agency by February 21, 2013. We have received a total of 7 submissions and 4 requests to appear. As a Panel, we want to encourage participation and hope to hear from stakeholders from all sectors of the raspberry industry.

In terms of the outcome of this process, the Panel will prepare a report for Council which will contain recommendations. In these, the Panel could support the proposal, in whole or in part, recommend that certain powers under section 42 of the Act be included or excluded and, alternatively, the Panel could recommend some of the changes that may be suggested during the hearing process.

This is perhaps the most important part of this process. Public hearings are conducted to get input from people from all sectors of the industry and to use this in preparing our recommendations.

Once the hearings are concluded, the Panel will make its recommendations to the Farm Products Council of Canada. Council will then prepare a report with recommendations to the Minister of Agriculture. It is then up to the Minister to decide whether or not to proceed with the Proclamation of the Agency.

I want to emphasize that the Panel does not make the decision in terms of whether or not there is to be an agency. Our mandate is to make recommendations to the Council.

It is important to note that the Act stipulates that in making its recommendations to the Minister, Council will not recommend the establishment of an agency unless it is satisfied that a majority of producers and importers are in favour of such an action.

In the proposal submitted by the Raspberry Industry Development Council as well as some of the submissions received, information was provided on producer and importer support. However, the Panel feels that extending the time allotted for submissions by parties would provide for more stakeholder participation and ensure that the Panel's report and recommendations are thorough and compelling.

The Panel also hopes that by eliciting further participation by stakeholders, more fruitful and fulsome discussions and exchanges can take place during the hearings themselves.

As such, a new deadline for submissions will be posted on Council's website shortly. Following this additional period and once the Panel is ready to move on to hearings, a new Pre-Hearing Conference will be scheduled.

To return to the Pre-hearing Conference agenda, the purpose of this meeting is to explain the next steps in the Panel's inquiry and to answer questions you may have.

I would like to remind you that the public examination file that contains all of the submissions and letters of opinion received is also available on our website for public view as it will be at all hearing sessions. Another set is kept at Council's office. Evidence tabled during the additional period for

submissions and during subsequent hearings will be added to the public file as we go.

Ladies and Gentlemen, this concludes my remarks and we will now open the floor for questions. Thank you.

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Potential Question

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Q: Why has the panel decided to extend the deadline for submissions instead of going ahead with public hearings?

A: The purpose of the public hearing process is to obtain views from a variety of stakeholders. The Panel feels that by extending the period for submissions, additional points of view can be gathered and that this will also help foster healthy discussions and debates during the public hearings.