

*Opening Remarks for
Second Pre-Hearing Conference
Red Raspberry Research, Market Development and Promotion Agency
June 11, 2013 – 3:00 p.m.*

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. My name is Tim O'Connor and I am the Panel Chair. I am joined today with newly appointed Council member Mike Pickard, from Saskatchewan. Mike has replaced Phil Klassen whose term with the FPCC ended in mid-March.

Joining us again is Duane Schippers, our legal counsel and Nathalie Vanasse, Hearing Secretary who are here to answer your questions regarding rules and process for the hearing.

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

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 extended submissions on the proposal for the Raspberry agency to April 30, 2013. We have received a total of 26 submissions and 3 requests to appear.

The Act stipulates that in making its recommendations to the Minister, Council will not propose 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 with the submissions received following the April 30 extension, the Panel is satisfied with the demonstrated support and therefore decided to proceed with next steps.

As a panel, we want to encourage participation at the hearings and, depending on our agenda at each hearing, we hope to hear from the floor.

Any person or party who has filed a request to appear will be given the right to cross-examine other interveners at the hearings.

Second priority will be given to anyone who has filed a submission with the Panel within the prescribed deadline. Although they will not be allowed to cross-examine other interveners, the Panel does recognize them as participants in the hearing. The last part of the agenda will be reserved, time permitting, to hear from anyone else who wishes to make their views known.

We intend to be an active Panel and ask a lot of questions. We are going to look at this proposal from all sides, both in support and against, and to examine any constructive suggestions for change to the proposal as it has been put forward by the British Columbia Raspberry Industry Development Council.

The Panel intends to be fair throughout the hearing process. We want to be fair to all individuals and groups appearing before us, and we intend to ensure that each group will be given an equal chance to speak and to ask questions. We hope to be as flexible as possible during the hearings

We also want to be sure that we have carried out our mandate as fairly as possible to allow us to submit a well-balanced report, having considered every element brought forward.

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 offer some of the changes that may be proposed during the hearing.

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 suggestions 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.

The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the dates and locations of the hearings themselves, and to settle the other procedural matters listed on the agenda.

All decisions on these matters will be published in a report which will be sent to all participants. The dates and locations of the hearings will be advertised on FPCC's Website as soon as possible.

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 the Council's office. Evidence tabled during the hearings will be added to the public file as we go, including the transcripts of the hearings.

Ladies and Gentlemen, this concludes my opening remarks and we will now proceed with the agenda for today. Thank you.