



Agriculture and  
Agri-Food Canada

Agriculture et  
Agroalimentaire Canada



# Evaluation of Renewal Funding to National Organizations

## Final Report

Office of Audit and Evaluation

March 2, 2010

**Approved by the Departmental Evaluation Committee on March 2, 2010.**

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## **Executive Summary**

### **Introduction**

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Office of Audit and Evaluation (OAE) evaluated the activities of the five National Organizations that were funded through the Renewal Initiative under the Agricultural Policy Framework to assess the continued relevance, clarity of rationale and performance of funding provided to National Organizations in support of the Renewal Initiative and its successor, the Business Development initiative.

### **Background**

Under the Agricultural Policy Framework (APF) (2003-04 to 2008-09), the Renewal Initiative was aimed at providing both new and established farmers with enhanced skills development, training, and improved access to assessment and business management services, with the objective of increasing profitability for businesses. In total, National Organizations received \$25.7 million over six years to fund activities in support of Renewal Initiative objectives undertaken by the following five National Organizations:

- Canadian 4-H Council (4-H);
- Canadian Agricultural Safety Association (CASA);
- Canadian Young Farmers' Forum (CYFF);
- Canada's Outstanding Young Farmers' Program (COYFP); and,
- Canadian Farm Business Management Council (CFBMC).

In 2009-2010, APF's Renewal Initiative was replaced by the Business Development program under a new policy framework known as Growing Forward. Starting in 2009-2010, 4-H, CASA, CYFF, COYFP, and CFBMC activities have been funded under new contribution agreements with AAFC under the Business Development program.

The National Organizations are funded to provide services, information and tools to help build awareness of the benefits of and encourage the use of sound business management practices.

### **Methodology**

The evaluation was undertaken over a period of twelve months and was based on a literature review, a review of National Organization documents and files, interviews with nine representatives of National Organizations and 16 representatives of other relevant organizations, a telephone questionnaire of representatives from 33 producer organizations, and a focus group with AAFC staff involved with the Renewal Initiative.

## **Findings**

- 1. Activities undertaken by National Organizations in support of Renewal objectives continue to be relevant: They address continuing needs and are aligned with Government of Canada priorities.**

The evidence supports the conclusion that funding for activities undertaken by National Organizations in support of Renewal / Business Development objectives contribute to government priorities related to skills development (2009 federal Budget and 2009 Speech from the Throne).

Activities undertaken by National Organizations in support of Renewal / Business Development are also consistent with the needs and interests of target beneficiaries (i.e., youth and new and existing farmers). Stakeholder organizations in the agricultural sector have expressed a need for on-going activities to support producers' access to skills, knowledge, and tools to improve farm business management, activities to promote best business practices, activities to promote on-farm health and safety practices, and activities to create awareness of farming opportunities for a new generation of farmers.

- 2. The program rationale for Business Development should be clarified to provide stronger linkages between activities delivered by National Organizations and program objectives, performance indicators, intermediate and end outcomes.**

Activities undertaken by National Organizations notionally align with AAFC's current Business Development objectives. However, a more complete and rigorous program rationale would clarify the causal linkages between youth activities, farm safety and Business Development objectives, support improved performance measurement and provide clearer guidance on the criteria for selecting National Organizations to deliver Business Development activities in the future.

- 3. The five funded National Organizations cost-efficiently provide, among them, a comprehensive suite of services and products aimed at the whole Renewal/Business Development target audience spectrum.**

The evidence supports the conclusion that the funded National Organizations cover the full range of producer target audiences, from youth and entry-level through active producers to exiting producers. The National Organizations address a full range of farm business issues without overlapping with each other or with other organizations. The National Organizations generate a high volume of outputs that are in keeping with the achievement of Renewal / Business Development objectives, particularly the promotion of knowledge and awareness of sound farm business management practices, which if

adopted should increase profitability. Because of their established infrastructure, relations with complementary organizations, and abilities to leverage funding and volunteers, the National Organizations deliver Renewal / Business Development activities in a cost-efficient manner.

**4. A key challenge in managing and monitoring the impacts of funding provided to National Organizations is the ability to attribute behavioural impacts to activities that promote increased awareness and skills development.**

Notwithstanding the challenge in attributing behavioural impacts to activities that promote increased awareness and skills development, AAFC's ability to assess achievement of higher level Renewal / Business Development outcomes is hampered by a performance measurement strategy that does not adequately capture outcomes associated with activities targeted at youth, and to a lesser extent farm safety. It is further limited by a lack of quantitative data that could possibly be generated through a producer survey specifically targeted at activities undertaken by National Organizations.

## **Recommendations**

The evaluation suggests two recommendations:

1. The program rationale for Business Development should be clarified to provide stronger linkages between activities delivered by National Organizations and program objectives, performance indicators, intermediate and end outcomes.
2. The Business Development Program should administer a periodic survey of producers to ensure that quantitative information is available on the higher-level program outcome related to "increased realization of business goals".

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background

Under the Agricultural Policy Framework (APF), the Renewal Initiative was aimed at providing enhanced skills development and training, improved access to assessment and business management services, and expanded opportunities. It was intended to assist both new and established farmers in assessing their business circumstances, reviewing options, and acquiring the skills and resources to succeed in 21<sup>st</sup> century agriculture. The underlying logic of the Renewal Initiative was that its programs and services would lead to increased knowledge and awareness, which would in turn lead to the adoption of beneficial management practices, ultimately resulting in the end outcomes of:

- “increased profitability;
- choices about sources of income;
- market and consumer demands respecting food safety and quality and environmentally-responsible production met; and
- opportunities from science and innovation captured.”<sup>1</sup>

The Renewal Initiative was comprised of several programs, including funding that was provided to National Organizations to deliver services, information and tools on farm business management to and new and existing farmers<sup>2</sup>. The following five National Organizations received funding over five years (2003-04 to 2007-08) under the Renewal Initiative:

- Canadian 4-H Council (4-H);
- Canadian Agricultural Safety Association (CASA);
- Canadian Young Farmers’ Forum (CYFF);
- Canada’s Outstanding Young Farmers’ Program (COYFP); and,
- Canadian Farm Business Management Council (CFBMC).

Funding for activities delivered by National Organizations was extended one year, through 2008-2009, as a transition year to the implementation of the Business Development program under Growing Forward. In total, \$25.7 million was allocated to the National Organizations under the Renewal Initiative.

Growing Forward was implemented in 2009-2010 to replace the APF. The Business Development program is the successor to the Renewal Initiative. The Business Development program is aimed at “building awareness of the benefits of and encouraging the use of sound business management practices while also enabling

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<sup>1</sup> AAFC (2003, December 24). *RMAF – Annex 3 – Non-Business Risk Management Part II – Renewal Priority Area*. p.2.

<sup>2</sup> Other Renewal programs included: Canadian Farm Business Advisory Services (CFBAS); Farm Business Assessment (FBA); Specialized Business Planning Services (SBPS); Canadian Agriculture Skills Services (CASS); and, Planning and Assessment for Value-added Enterprises (PAVE).

businesses in the sector to be profitable and invest where needed to manage the natural resource base sustainably.”<sup>3</sup> Beginning in 2009-2010, 4-H, CASA, CYFF, COYFP, and CFBMC activities have been funded under new contribution agreements with AAFC under the Business Development initiative of Growing Forward. While the program is open to all National Organizations that are involved with providing farm business management tools, services and information to Canadian farmers, youth and the wider farm population, only the five original organizations continue to receive funding.

## **1.2 Evaluation Purpose and Methodology**

AAFC’s Office of Audit and Evaluation (OAE) evaluated the activities of the National Organizations that were funded through the Renewal Initiative of APF, including the extension year. The evaluation period covers fiscal years 2003-04 through 2008-09. The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the continued relevance, clarity of rationale and performance of funding provided to National Organizations in support of the Renewal Initiative and its successor, the Business Development program.

The evaluation was based on the following five lines of evidence:

- literature review<sup>4</sup> (spanning 67 reports, documents and websites);
- review of National Organization documents and files;
- interviews with nine representatives of National Organizations and 16 representatives of other relevant organizations including the Canadian Federation of Agriculture (CFA), the Canadian Agricultural Human Resources Council (CAHRC), Farm Credit Canada (FCC), various sponsors, and provincial officials;
- telephone questionnaire of representatives of 33 producer organizations; and
- focus group with AAFC staff involved with the Renewal Initiative.

Data from all sources were collected and compiled by OAE officials. Analysis was carried out against the following six evaluation questions:

### Relevance

1. Is the program rationale clear? How well do the activities undertaken by the funded National Organizations of the Renewal Initiative / Business Development program align with current Government of Canada priorities and AAFC objectives?

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<sup>3</sup> Official AAFC Program Document. 2009.

<sup>4</sup> *A Literature Review for the Evaluation of AAFC's Renewal Program Activities: Final Report*, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. March 31, 2009.



2. Are the needs addressed by the Program clear? Do they continue?
3. Is there overlap or duplication among the funded National Organizations, or with other AAFC funded organizations?

#### Performance

4. What are AAFC outputs and early outcomes for this program?
5. To what extent have Renewal / Business Development funded activities undertaken by National Organizations contributed to achievement of AAFC objectives?
6. Is the approach cost-effective?

Preliminary findings were presented to Renewal and Business Development officials and senior managers for review and validation. Consolidated results and conclusions are presented in this report.

### **1.3 Evaluation Constraints**

The evaluation methodology does not include an analysis of quantitative data on the impacts of Renewal / Business Development activities undertaken by National Organizations on targeted beneficiaries. Consequently, it is difficult to attribute behavioural change to activities delivered by National Organizations in support of program objectives. Nevertheless, more qualitative lines of evidence are used to estimate behavioural and attitudinal changes among beneficiaries. Moreover, given that the findings are based on multiple sources of evidence, the evaluation makes conclusions on the impacts of funded activities where results from various lines of evidence are consistent.

Also, given that the evaluation did not identify quantifiable impacts of Renewal / Business Development activities undertaken by National Organizations, it was not possible to conduct a proper cost-effectiveness analysis. As a result, the evaluation focused on analyzing the cost-efficiency of the activities delivered and outputs produced by National Organizations.

## 2. Program Profile: Logic Model

The Business Development program, the successor to the Renewal Initiative, is a two part program to build awareness of the benefits and encourage the use of sound business management practices, while also enabling businesses in the sector to be profitable and invest where needed to manage the natural resource base sustainably and to market and produce safe food and other products.

The logic model for the Business Development program improves upon that of the Renewal Initiative in that it specifically targets activities undertaken by National Organizations (particularly CFBMC), and it includes target assumptions for farm safety and young or beginning farmers for intermediate and end outcomes.

Program objectives will be achieved by promoting sound agri-business practices through cost-sharing provincial programs and through the provision of federal-only support to National Agricultural Organizations, therefore contributing to the Department's Agri-Business Development Program.

**Business Development Logic Model<sup>5</sup>**

Activities	Output(s)	Immediate Outcome(s)	Intermediate Outcome(s)	End Outcome(s)	Strategic Outcome (SO 3)
Negotiate agreements with National Organizations	Signed agreements with National Organizations	Increased outreach of National Organizations	Increased adoption of beneficial management practices	Increased realization of business goals	An innovative agriculture, agri-food and agri-based products sector

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<sup>5</sup> Official AAFC Program Document. 2009.

### 3. Program Profile: National Organizations Objectives and Delivery

Historically AAFC has funded the five National Organizations, which undertake activities aligned with AAFC Renewal / Business Development objectives. Three organizations address youth, one addresses farm safety and the fifth addresses farm business management.

#### 3.1 Canadian 4-H Council (4-H)

Established in 1933, 4-H focuses on enhancing skills of youth with an emphasis on the development of agricultural and non-agricultural technical skills, and life skills, including responsible citizenship, leadership, farm skills and knowledge development, and financial management. 4 H aimed to contribute to Renewal objectives by developing a strong base of skills and knowledge for youth aged 8 to 21, many of whom will become the next generation of Canadian farmers. The Canadian 4-H Council also supports activities of provincial 4-H organizations.

In addition to the support of AAFC, 4-H receives funding through an annual grant from the Canadian 4-H Foundation (a not-for-profit organization that receives donations to support 4-H programs), Farm Credit Canada, and many corporate sponsors.

Under the Renewal Initiative, the 4-H Council received a total of \$3.0M over five years as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Contributions to 4-H by Fiscal Year		
Year	Planned Allotment	Actual Expenditures
2004/2005	\$600,000	\$506,761
2005/2006	\$600,000	\$687,331
2006/2007	\$600,000	\$600,000
2007/2008	\$600,000	\$600,000
2008/2009	\$600,000	\$600,000
Total	\$3,000,000	\$2,994,092

Source: Program documents

Renewal funding was used to support a number of activities, including organizing national conferences, funding skills and knowledge development projects, providing a clearinghouse for materials and resources for provincial 4-H members, supporting provincial 4-H learning and development activities, and planning and program management. Of this amount, a total of \$250K (8.5%) was allocated to cover program administration costs.

### 3.2 Canadian Young Farmers' Forum (CYFF)

Established in 1997, CYFF aims to facilitate networking and education opportunities for young and beginning farmers, aged 18 through 40. The objective of targeting Renewal activities to youth and beginning farmers was to address succession planning and to help youth of today to become effective farm operators through information and services on good farm business management practices.

Under the Renewal Initiative, CYFF received \$1.1M over five years as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Contributions to CYFF by Fiscal Year		
Year	Planned Allotment	Actual Expenditures
2004/2005	\$228,500*	\$125,000
2005/2006	\$82,700	\$178,383
2006/2007	\$275,200**	\$283,201
2007/2008	\$275,200**	\$267,200
2008/2009	\$267,200	\$240,480
Total	\$1,128,800	\$1,094,264

Source: Program documents

\* Overlapped 2004/05 and 2005/06 fiscal years.

\*\* Agreement provided up to \$550,400 for 2006/07 and 2007/08 fiscal years.

CYFF facilitates information sharing, training and networking for young and beginning farmers from across Canada aged 18 to 40. CYFF aims to provide young farmers with a voice in identifying challenges and developing solutions, and to raise awareness and support for the Agriculture Industry.

The majority of CYFF's operational funds come from AAFC. Additional sources of funding include FCC, the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB), Monsanto, and Meyers Norris Penny. Funded activities under the Renewal Initiative included: organizational structure, membership recruitment, networking, annual meeting and project management.

### 3.3 Canada's Outstanding Young Farmers' Program (COYFP)

Established in 1979, COYFP is involved in activities to recognize excellence in farmers between the ages of 18 and 39, and to exchange ideas and raise awareness of good farm business management practices. Again, funding was provided to this National Organization to support activities among young farmers to address issues of succession planning and promotion of good farm business management practices.

Under the Renewal Initiative, COYFP received a total of \$150K over six years, as outlined in Table 3.

<b>Table 3: Contributions to COYFP by Fiscal Year</b>		
<b>Year</b>	<b>Planned Allotment</b>	<b>Actual Expenditures</b>
2003/2004	\$25,000	\$25,000
2004/2005	\$25,000	\$25,000
2005/2006	\$25,000	\$25,000
2006/2007	\$25,000	\$25,000
2007/2008	\$25,000	\$25,000
2008/2009	\$25,000	\$25,000
Total	150,000	\$150,000

Source: Program documents

COYFP obtains funding from national sponsors including, Bayer CropScience, CIBC and John Deere. As well, COYFP is supported by AdFarm, a marketing and communications agency dedicated to agriculture.

Funding was used to support a number of activities, including an annual national recognition event and agricultural forum, a speaker's bureau, raising awareness of the program in agricultural and urban communities, and maintaining program alumni.

### **3.4 Canadian Agricultural Safety Association (CASA)**

Established in 1993, CASA is a national farm safety networking and coordinating agency addressing issues of illness and fatal and non-fatal injuries among farmers, agricultural workers, and their families. Agriculture is the fourth most hazardous industry in Canada, after mining, quarrying and oil wells; logging and forestry; and fishing and trapping. Every year, between 120 and 130 farmers are killed at work. The economic burden from agricultural injuries is estimated to be between \$200 and \$300 million annually in Canada.<sup>6</sup> CASA's activities aimed to contribute to the Renewal objective of increasing farmers' profitability, based on the hypothesis that improving occupational health and safety is a core component of good farm management that ultimately leads to increased profitability.

CASA promotes on-farm health and safety, is a national advocate for safer agriculture in Canada, takes a leadership role in public policy development, maintains public information, delivers the Canadian Agricultural Injury Surveillance Program, maintains the Agricultural Health and Safety Database, and is involved in community infrastructure development and knowledge development and transfer.

AAFC has been the main source of funding for CASA, providing over 95 percent of CASA's annual revenues. Under a Renewal Initiative contribution agreement, CASA received \$6.4M over five years, as outlined in Table 4. Of this amount, \$317K per year (25%) was allocated to cover program administration costs.

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<sup>6</sup> Locker et al., 2003 Rural Health Research

<b>Table 4: Contributions to CASA by Fiscal Year</b>		
<b>Year</b>	<b>Planned Allotment</b>	<b>Actual Expenditures</b>
2004/2005	\$1,284,000	\$1,180,164
2005/2006	\$1,284,000	\$1,304,966
2006/2007	\$1,284,000	\$1,283,960
2007/2008	\$1,284,000	\$1,334,000
2008/2009	\$1,284,000	\$1,284,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$6,420,000</b>	<b>\$6,387,090</b>

Source: program documents

### 3.5 Canadian Farm Business Management Council (CFBMC)

Established in 1991 on the recommendation of Federal/Provincial/Territorial Assistant Deputy Ministers, CFBMC is “devoted exclusively to developing and distributing farm management information.”<sup>7</sup> at the National level. CFBMC's mission statement is “to provide 'leading edge' resources to enable Canadian farmers to make sound management decisions.”<sup>8</sup> These resources are intended to help farmers increase monetary returns. Developing farmers' management skills is a key component of these activities.

The target audience for CFBMC's activities is farmers in Canada, including those who are beginning their careers.

Funding totalling \$15.1 million was allocated to CFBMC over the six year APF period, as shown in Table 5. CFBMC obtains additional revenues from such activities as sales of farm management information products, and through sponsorships, memberships, advertising, and conference fees.<sup>9</sup>

<b>Table 5: Contributions to CFBMC by Fiscal Year</b>		
<b>Year</b>	<b>Planned Allotment</b>	<b>Actual Expenditures</b>
2003/2004	\$2,500,000	\$1,768,741
2004/2005	\$2,500,000	\$2,189,258
2005/2006	\$2,500,000	\$2,847,334
2006/2007	\$2,500,000	\$2,847,000
2007/2008	\$2,500,000	\$2,847,667
2008/2009	\$2,500,000	\$2,600,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$15,000,000</b>	<b>\$15,100,000</b>

Source: program documents

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<sup>7</sup> CFBMC. Annual report 2005 – 2006. Retrieved January 11, 2008 from <http://www.farmcentre.com/Documents/AnnualReport-2005-2006.pdf>. p. 1

<sup>8</sup> CFBMC. (c.2007). *About Canadian Farm Business Management Council*. Retrieved on December 18, 2007 from: <http://www.farmcentre.com/AboutCFBMC.aspx>

<sup>9</sup> CFBMC. (n.d.) Annual report 2005 – 2006. Retrieved January 11, 2008 from <http://www.farmcentre.com/Documents/AnnualReport-2005-2006.pdf>. p. 1

## 4. Findings: Relevance

**1. Is the program rationale clear? How well does the National Organization Program of the Renewal Initiative /Business Development program align with current Government of Canada priorities and AAFC objectives?**

**Activities undertaken by National Organizations are notionally aligned with AAFC objectives.** In establishing the program rationale for the Business Development program, the intermediate and end outcomes focus solely on the Business Development objectives related to: strengthening the capacity of businesses in the sector to assess the financial implications of business improvements; strengthening the ability of businesses in the sector to manage transformation; and implementation of effective action and business management plans/practices for farm operations. The intermediate and end outcomes do not capture specific activities associated with enhanced participation by young or new entrants.

While improvements have been noted in Business Development program documents over its predecessor Renewal Initiative (e.g., Performance Measurement Strategy, and in particular the Terms and Conditions), gaps remain in the program rationale, as the causal links between National Organization activities relating to young or new entrants, and to a lesser extent farm safety, and their associated performance indicators, intermediate outcomes, end outcomes, and Renewal / Business Development objectives are not fully explicit. The linkages could be made clearer in future foundational documents (e.g., Memoranda to Cabinet and Treasury Board Submissions) and program documents (Terms and Conditions and Contribution Agreements). For example, the connection between skills development and youth and “increased adoption of beneficial management practices” and ultimately “increased realization of business goals” could be made clearer through a more thorough description of farm succession planning and its relationship to realization of business goals. As well, the connection between farm safety and “increased realization of business goals” could include a more thorough description of occupational health and safety and its contribution to improved outcomes.

**The activities undertaken by National Organizations are generally consistent with Government of Canada priorities.** Activities funded under Renewal / Business Development undertaken by National Organizations align well with Government of Canada priorities as outlined in the 2009 Budget and the 2009 Speech from the Throne. Budget 2009 calls for increased “... investment in skills development,” and commits the federal government to “invest in new funds over the next five years to help Canadian farmers to innovate, to increase competitiveness, and to achieve greater environmental sustainability.” The Throne Speech states, “our Government is acting to support Canadian industries in difficulty - including... agriculture - and to protect the families and communities who depend on those jobs.”

The Business Development outcome of "increased realization of business goals" supports this aim.

<p><b>2. Are the needs addressed by the Program clear? Do they continue?</b></p>
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**The needs addressed by the Program are clear, and continue.** The evidence from interviewees (especially those representing other farm organizations<sup>10</sup>), and AAFC Program officials suggest that there is a continued need for activities to support producers' access to skills, knowledge, and tools to improve farm business management, activities to promote best business practices, activities to promote on-farm health and safety practices, and activities to create awareness of farming opportunities for a new generation of farmers. For example, interviewees representing other producer and financial organizations stated:

- "...farm injuries have a large ripple effect";
- "[the business education and tools provided by] CFBMC is absolutely necessary";
- "We need our future clients [young farmers] to have financial education. That is why we support and continue to support CYFF";
- "[Training for youth provided by] 4-H is critical in Ontario. Keep it alive"; and
- "Without 4-H's huge impacts, it would be hard to get youth interested [in farming]".

High client uptake figures for activities delivered by National Organizations suggest that these intended target audience members are seeking to increase their knowledge and skills related to farm management. National Organization services are well accepted by program participants and clientele groups, and are considered to be effective. This finding was also supported by the literature review which compared the activities delivered by Canada's National Organizations with those in four other countries and found in the United States a National Organization to match each of Canada's five National Organizations. In the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand, National Organizations were found matching CFBMC, CASA, and CYFF. Although not all of the matching National Organizations in other countries are supported by their respective national governments<sup>11</sup>, there appears to be

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<sup>10</sup> Where appropriate, in the Findings sections, a distinction is made between the views of the 16 representatives of "other" farm organizations - including the Canadian Federation of Agriculture (CFA), the Canadian Agricultural Human Resources Council (CAHRC), Farm Credit Canada (FCC), various sponsors, and provincial officials - and the views of the nine interviewed representatives of the National Organizations. In order to maintain the confidentiality of interviewee responses, the identities of individual interviewees respecting particular commentary is not disclosed.

<sup>11</sup> Limited information on funding sources was found. It was determined that government support is provided to the CYFF equivalent organization in Australia. Government support is not provided to the farm safety organization in the United States, the farm safety organization in Australia, the CYFF equivalent organization in the United Kingdom, or the CFBMC equivalent organization in the United Kingdom. These organizations are supported through other means such as memberships and corporate sponsorship.



international recognition that there is a need to support activities targeted at the business management capacity of farmers and at young farmers and farm safety.

**3. Is there overlap or duplication among the funded National Organizations, or with other AAFC funded organizations?**

**The five currently funded National Organizations are seen as comprehensively and efficiently filling an important role in promoting farm management, awareness and safety at the National level.** Analysis of the producer organization questionnaire indicates that producers engage in substantial uptake of National Organization activities, products and services. This finding is confirmed by evidence provided in National Organization annual reports, and in National Organization Contribution Agreement progress reports. Analysis of National Organization representative interviews, interviews with representatives of other organizations, and the focus group with Program officials indicates that National Organization services are well accepted by Program participants and client groups, and are considered by these parties to be efficient.

**No overlap or duplication of activities was found among the five funded National Organizations.** The file review revealed that the five National Organizations have distinct mandates. 4-H works to develop a base of skills and knowledge among youth aged 8 to 21. CYFF facilitates the exchange of information among young and beginning farmers between the ages of 18 to 40 from across Canada. COYFP encourages young farmers between the ages of 18 to 39 to pursue excellence. CFBMC disseminates farm management information to increase knowledge and understanding of beneficial business management practices among farmers of all ages. CASA promotes improved on-farm health and safety. As a result, there is no overlap or duplication of activities undertaken by National Organizations.

**The activities delivered by National Organizations complement and enhance other AAFC Renewal Initiative / Business Development programs, and complement non-AAFC activities and programs.** The five National Organizations raise awareness and provide skills and development necessary for farmers to get involved in other Renewal / Business Development programs such as Canadian Farm Business Advisory Services and Canadian Agricultural Skills Services. Analysis of the document and file review, interviews with representatives of the National Organizations, interviews with representatives of other organizations, and the focus group with Program officials reveals that National Organizations coordinate networks of provincial and local affiliates funded by other orders of government and non-government organizations, thus promoting a National approach to their work while supporting regional flexibility. Complementarity, but no overlap, between the mandates of the National Organizations funded through Renewal / Business Development and these other organizations was found. For example, CFBMC maintains active relationships with its Provincial partners as well as the other four National Organizations and organizations such as the Canadian Agricultural Human

Resources Council (CAHRC). Interviewees representing other organizations agree that CFBMC actively works with its partners to avoid duplication. According to representatives of other organizations<sup>12</sup>, CASA maintains close ties with Provincial farm safety organizations, commodity groups, and the Canadian Centre for Health and Safety in Agriculture (CCHSA). In addition to its relations with CFBMC, 4-H maintains close relations with such Provincial organizations as the Junior Farmers of Ontario, Boys and Girls Clubs, Scouts and Guides, and youth groups within the Canadian Federation of Agriculture (CFA). CYFF interacts closely with CFA, Grain Growers of Canada, CAHRC, 4-H, and the National Farmers Union. CYFF uses CFBMC resource materials, and a CYFF representative sits on the 4-H and CASA boards of directors. COYFP maintains close ties with CYFF and 4-H.

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<sup>12</sup> These observations are based on the analysis of the interviews of the 16 representatives of "other" farm organizations including the Canadian Federation of Agriculture (CFA), the Canadian Agricultural Human Resources Council (CAHRC), Farm Credit Canada (FCC), various sponsors, and provincial officials. In order to maintain the confidentiality of interviewee responses, the identities of individual interviewees respecting particular commentary cannot be disclosed.

## 5. Findings: Performance

**4. What are AAFC outputs and early outcomes for this program?**

**5. To what extent have Renewal / Business Development funded activities undertaken by National Organizations contributed to the achievement of AAFC objectives?**

**National Organizations provide vehicles for the exchange of information on best management practices and on-farm health and safety, increase new and established farmers' access to business management information, increase awareness of good farm business practices, issues and challenges, and promote safer farm practices.** Analysis of Program documentation, the review of literature, and interviews with National Organization representatives and representatives of other organizations<sup>13</sup> revealed a high volume of Renewal activities and associated beneficiary uptake. Examples include the following:

- CASA is a leader in the development of policies, standards and programs, and the dissemination of information on farm safety (via newsletters and the CASA website). CASA sponsors information events (e.g., Safety Days). CASA also delivers the Canadian Agricultural Safety and Health granting program to its regional affiliates, and maintains the Agricultural Health and Safety Database, a comprehensive collection of information and resources around the world, including summaries of CASA-funded projects, university research data, safety promotional items and links to organizations that communicate agricultural safety messages. CASA also delivers the Canadian Agricultural Injury Surveillance Program (CAISP), Canada's leading national statistical database on farm safety, including information about fatal and hospitalized agricultural injuries. According to the producer organization questionnaire, 21 of 33 (63 %) producer associations indicate that their producer members access CASA services for information on farm safety. The Canadian Agricultural Injury Surveillance Program reports decreased farm fatalities between 1990 and 2005.
- 4-H Canada has 28,000 members in 2,300 clubs across the country. 4-H annually supports four national conferences on volunteer leadership and skills development, citizenship, and diversity. 4-H also delivers grants to, and provides administrative support for, provincial and local chapters. A majority of 4-H alumni surveyed by 4-H feel

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<sup>13</sup> "Other" farm organizations include the Canadian Federation of Agriculture (CFA), the Canadian Agricultural Human Resources Council (CAHRC), Farm Credit Canada (FCC), various sponsors, and provincial officials. In order to maintain the confidentiality of interviewee responses, the identities of individual interviewees respecting particular commentary cannot be disclosed.

positively about their participation in the organization. An internal membership study conducted by 4-H indicated that "over 90 percent of leaders and members agreed that [4-H] programs and services contribute to leadership, teamwork and personal development; and over 75 percent agreed the [4-H] programs contribute to life skills, recreation, leisure and fun, citizenship and rural renewal, and management communication and analytical skills."<sup>14</sup>

- CYFF provides \$80,000 annually in grants to Provincial affiliates (\$8,000 per province) to support membership recruitment and networking through such activities as advertising, planning, pamphlets, promotional material, speakers, travel costs, websites and press releases. CYFF also provides best practices training, conferences, resource materials and information to young farmers.
- CFBMC annually provides some 1.2 million hours of farm business management instruction via conferences, seminars, and marketing caravans to over 50 agricultural groups and 7,000 producers. CFBMC provides 15 to 20 webinars annually to up to 5,000 subscribers. CFBMC's Canadian Farm Manager magazine has 20,000 subscribers. CFBMC also develops farm business management standards and guidance tools, and provides speaker and mentoring programs. According to the producer organization questionnaire, 27 of 33 (81 % ), producers organizations reported that their producer members use CFBMC to get information on farm business practices. CFBMC's own research found that 76 percent of surveyed 2006 conference participants reported that they "implemented concrete actions" as a result of what they learned at the conference. Ninety-two percent of surveyed Marketing Caravan workshop participants said they would implement what they had learned, and ninety-eight percent said they would recommend the workshop to others. Forty percent of surveyed Managing People on Your Farm readers said they "made changes" based on the publication.
- COYFP organizes an annual national recognition event promoting excellence among farmers aged 18 to 39, and an Agricultural Forum to raise awareness of its work. COYFP also maintains a speaker's bureau showcasing former award winners.

**It is difficult to conclude on achievement of end level outcomes for activities delivered by National Organizations.** The performance measurement strategy for the Renewal Initiative / Business Development program does not adequately capture intermediate and end outcomes associated with activities undertaken by National Organizations that are targeted at young and new entrants, and to a lesser extent, farm safety. Furthermore, there is an absence of independent empirical evidence on

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<sup>14</sup> Canadian 4-H Council Strategic Plan 2003-2008.

the “adoption of best farm business management practices”, “realization of business goals” or “increased profitability”, given the challenge of attributing behavioural change due to activities involving information exchange and awareness building. A producer survey specifically targeted at activities undertaken by National Organizations, and outcomes achieved, would be one way of generating data related to achievement of end level outcomes.

AAFC officials and National Organization representatives acknowledged this challenge and expressed an interest in obtaining this kind of data in future. On a limited basis, the National Organizations may be able to collect some empirical impact data.

<b>6. <i>Is the approach cost efficient?</i></b>
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**The National Organization Program provides a cost-efficient vehicle for the delivery of awareness, and outreach services contributing to Renewal / Business Development objectives associated with building skills, knowledge and awareness and use of farm business management practices.** As it was not possible to identify quantifiable impacts of renewal activities undertaken by the National Organizations, it was not possible to conduct a proper cost-effectiveness analysis (i.e., an assessment of the costs of outcomes). As a result, the evaluation focused on analysing the cost-efficiency of the activities delivered and outputs produced by the National Organizations. Analysis of Program documentation, interviews with National Organization representatives and representatives of other organizations<sup>15</sup>, and the focus group with Program officials shows a number of measures consistently applied by National Organizations, and features of the National Organizations themselves, that increase the cost-efficiency of the delivery of Renewal activities. These measures and features include the following:

- National Organizations have established relations with farmers and have an inherent level of trust and credibility within the producer community;
- Most National Organizations have a large corps of volunteers;
- AAFC dollars are used to leverage funds and in-kind donations from sources other than the Federal Government. For example many of CASA's AAFC-funded Canadian Agricultural Safety and Health Grants are awarded to projects receiving matching funding from other levels of government or other sources. CYFF's office space is donated by Wild Rose Agricultural Producers in Alberta; and

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<sup>15</sup> "Other" farm organizations include the Canadian Federation of Agriculture (CFA), the Canadian Agricultural Human Resources Council (CAHRC), Farm Credit Canada (FCC), various sponsors, and provincial officials. In order to maintain the confidentiality of interviewee responses, the identities of individual interviewees respecting particular commentary cannot be disclosed.

- National Organizations work closely with Provincial affiliates and other agricultural organizations resulting in broader reach for delivery of information, products and services.

**The criteria for selecting National Organizations to deliver Renewal / Business Development activities are not clear.** Under both the Renewal Initiative and the Business Development Program, the criteria for funding the National Organizations remain unclear. As a result, it is not evident why AAFC funds three National Organizations that are focused on youth, one organization on farm safety and one on farm business management. There is a need to clarify the selection process and criteria for funding of National Organizations. According to AAFC program officials, there is a limited number of National Organizations devoted to awareness building and adoption of improved farm management practices. As a result, AAFC has not been able to successfully solicit competitive funding proposals from other organizations.

**AAFC represents core funding for three of the five funded National Organizations.** AAFC funding represents between ninety percent and one hundred percent of the annual budgets of CFBMC and CASA, and approximately three quarters of the annual budget of CYFF<sup>16</sup>. This funding goes to sustain these organizations' ongoing operations, covering ongoing costs such as staff salaries, basic administration costs, travel costs, costs of communications with members, costs to produce and distribute newsletters, costs to develop and maintain websites, and costs of sponsoring workshops, seminars and conferences. These organizations rely on AAFC funding for their continued operation for activities that relate to Renewal/Business Development objectives.

- 2007-08 AAFC funding as a percentage of the National Organizations budget:
  - CASA: \$1,334,000 awarded by AAFC, or 99% of total budget
  - CFBMC: \$2,847,667 awarded by AAFC, or 92% of total budget
  - CYFF: \$ 267,200 awarded by AAFC, or 77% of total budget
  - 4-H : \$ 600,000 awarded by AAFC, or 28% of total budget
  - COYFP: \$ 25,000 awarded by AAFC, or 23% of total budget

Most Renewal / Business Development funding is provided to the five National Organizations for activities of an ongoing or recurring nature (e.g., awards ceremonies, conferences, and newsletters). Funding to these organizations has been provided annually by AAFC for many years.

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<sup>16</sup> Under their contribution agreements with AAFC APF programming, funded National Organizations were not required to provide complete budget information (this information is now required under Growing Forward). The organizations were only required to provide an accurate record pertaining to the use of AAFC funds. National Organization budgets were made available to the evaluation, however different organizations used different assumptions and computations in developing their figures. Thus, calculations used in the present analysis must be considered imprecise.

## **6. Conclusions**

**Activities undertaken by National Organizations in support of Renewal / Business Development objectives are relevant: They address continuing needs and are aligned with Government of Canada priorities.** The evidence supports the conclusion that funding for activities undertaken by National Organizations in support of Renewal / Business Development constitutes a means of achieving government priorities (as defined, for example, in the 2009 Federal Budget and in the 2009 Speech from the Throne). Activities undertaken by National Organizations in support of Renewal / Business Development are consistent with the needs and interests of target beneficiaries (i.e., youth and new and existing farmers). Stakeholder organizations in the Agricultural sector have expressed a need for on-going activities to support producers' access to skills, knowledge, and tools to improve farm business management, activities to promote best business practices, activities to promote on-farm health and safety practices, and activities to create awareness of farming opportunities for a new generation of farmers.

**The program rationale for Business Development should be clarified to provide stronger linkages between activities delivered by National Organizations, program objectives, performance indicators, intermediate and end outcomes.**

Activities undertaken by National Organizations notionally align with AAFC's current Business Development objectives. However gaps remain in the program rationale between activities of National Organizations related to beginning farmers, young and new entrants, and to a lesser extent farm safety, and Renewal / Business Development expected outcomes. Program objectives, performance indicators and outcomes are not fully explicit and causal links between activities related to farm safety or to attract new entrants/youth and outcomes to "increased adoption of beneficial management practices" and increased "realization of business goals" are not clear.

A more complete and rigorous program rationale would clarify the linkages between youth activities, farm safety and Business Development objectives, and provide clearer guidance on the criteria for selecting National Organizations to deliver Business Development activities in the future.

**The five funded National Organizations cost-efficiently provide, among them, a comprehensive suite of services and products aimed at the whole Renewal / Business Development target audience spectrum.** The evidence supports the conclusion that the funded National Organizations cover the full range of producer target audiences, from youth and entry-level through active producers to exiting producers. The National Organizations address a full range of farm business issues without overlapping with each other or with other organizations. The National Organizations generate a high volume of outputs that are in keeping with the

achievement of Renewal / Business Development objectives, particularly the promotion of knowledge and awareness of sound farm business management practices, which if adopted should increase profitability. Due to their established infrastructure, relations with complementary organizations, and abilities to leverage funding and volunteers, the National Organizations deliver Renewal / Business Development activities in a cost-efficient manner.

**A key challenge in managing and monitoring the impacts of funding provided to National Organizations is the ability to attribute behavioural impacts to activities that promote increased awareness and skills development.**

Recognizing the challenge in attributing behavioural impacts to activities that promote increased awareness and skills development, performance measurement strategies should be developed to ensure that activities and outcomes can be realistically measured and are meaningful. In the case of the Renewal / Business Development Program, the lack of a fully articulated program rationale that captures activities related to young and new entrants, and to a lesser extent farm safety, makes it difficult for Program Managers to collect data and to monitor and report on performance against intermediate and end outcomes. AAFC's ability to assess performance is further limited by a lack of quantitative data that could possibly be generated through a producer survey, with targeted questions on activities undertaken by National Organizations.



## 7. Recommendations

1. **The program rationale for Business Development should be clarified to provide stronger linkages between activities delivered by National Organizations and program objectives, performance indicators, intermediate and end outcomes.**

A more complete and rigorous program rationale would:

- clarify the linkages between farm safety, youth activities and Business Development objectives;
- support the selection of National Organizations in the future to deliver Business Development activities; and
- facilitate performance measurement.

### **Management Response and Action Plan:**

The Performance Measurement Strategy (PMS) for the Business Development Program's support to National Organizations will be updated to establish clear linkages between activities delivered by National Organizations and the program objectives, the performance indicators and the intermediate and end outcomes, in particular between farm safety, youth activities and Business Development objectives.

*Target Date: March 31, 2010*

Future official program documentation such as Memorandum to Cabinet, Treasury Board submission, Performance Measurement Strategy, Terms and Conditions will establish clear linkages between activities delivered by National Organizations and the program objectives, the performance indicators and the intermediate and end outcomes, in particular between farm safety and youth activities and Business Development objectives.

*Target Date: FY 2012-13*

2. **The Business Development Program should administer a periodic survey of producers to ensure that quantitative information is available on the higher-level program outcome related to "increased realization of business goals".**

The absence of independent empirical evidence respecting the adoption by producers of best farm business management practices or increased profitability/increased realization of their business goals precludes any definitive statements about the achievement of higher-level Renewal / Business Development outcomes. This lack of quantitative data limits program management's ability to make sound conclusions on achievement of higher-level Renewal / Business Development outcomes. A producer survey specifically targeted at activities

undertaken, and outcomes achieved, by National Organizations is a suggested means of generating this information. Also, on a limited basis, the National Organizations themselves could be asked to collect selected empirical impact data.

### **Management Response and Action Plan:**

The Contribution Agreements with National Organizations require them to report back annually on outcomes achieved and outputs produced. For that purpose, National Organizations will conduct immediate and medium term feedback surveys. These results will be used to measure how the National Organizations are helping AAFC meet its Business Development performance measurement requirements such as indicators, targets and outcomes. *Target Date: Fall 2010*

Performance measures have been developed for Business Development Growing Forward programming, both for cost-shared and federal-only elements (National Organizations), and are set in the federal Performance Measurement Strategy and FPT Bilateral Agreements. FPT agriculture departments are to report on objectives and outcome achievement by the end of GF period. In collaboration with provinces and territories, AAFC is developing a performance measurement work plan to meet their performance measurement requirements for Business Development programming under Growing Forward. The work plan will examine how best to pursue this measurement work considering such factors as program budgets, producers' survey fatigue, challenge of attribution of outcomes to program activities, and other surveys undertaken by the department for other data and information needs. *Target Date: March 31, 2013*