

## **IRDA INAUGURATES THE BIGGEST ORGANIC AGRICULTURE RESEARCH SITE IN QUÉBEC**

**Saint-Bruno-de-Montarville, May 3, 2013** – The Research and Development Institute for the Agri-Environment (IRDA) is inaugurating the Organic Agriculture Innovation Platform (OAIP) today. Located on a 90-ha piece of land, it is the biggest organic agriculture research site in Québec and Canada.

The Deputy Premier, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and Minister responsible for the Abitibi-Témiscamingue region, Mr. François Gendron and the Minister of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology, Mr. Pierre Duchesne will speak at the event.

The OAIP brings together 34 partners who will have access to the site's high-tech infrastructure for carrying out research and development, transfer, training and public awareness activities related to organic crop production.

As Pierre Lemieux, President of IRDA's Board of Directors, explains, the OAIP was developed in response to repeated calls from Québec's agricultural community: "Québec imports 70% of the organic products it consumes. If we want to reverse this trend, we will have to come up with strategic tools to improve crop production practices. The results of the research conducted by the Organic Agriculture Innovation Platform will serve as a springboard for increasing production of local organic products."

At a time of climate change, new challenges lie ahead for organic farmers, such as the emergence of insects previously unable to survive winter. Thanks to the OAIP, Québec researchers now have access to specialized equipment and services for conducting crucial research on these new realities.

"IRDA is proud to have established this centre of expertise for an ever-growing sector. In addition to supporting this boom, the activities of the Organic Agriculture Innovation Platform will benefit all agricultural producers who care about reducing the environmental impact of their operation," said Jocelyne Dagenais, IRDA's President and Chief Executive Officer.

The OAIP has received \$13.1 million in funding, with \$7.5 million for infrastructure and \$860 000 in seed money coming from the Ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur, de la Science, de la Recherche et de la Technologie, \$2.17 million from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, \$1.2 million from the Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation, \$25 000 from the Fondation de la Faune du Québec, and \$1.4 million from IRDA.

*IRDA is a non-profit research corporation whose mission is to engage in agri-environmental research, development and transfer activities that foster agricultural innovation from a sustainable development perspective. Every year, IRDA conducts some 100 research projects in collaboration with numerous agricultural community and research partners.*

*The mission of the OAIP is to offer a site that meets organic standards for the purpose of conducting research, development, transfer, training and public awareness activities in the area of organic crop production.*

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