

New cranberry research centre will be Canadian first

BY DAVE WILLIS, POSTMEDIA NEWS
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John Savage, left, chair of BC Cranberry Marketing Commission, Kerry-Lynne Findlay, MP for Delta-Richmond East and Todd May, Richmond farmer and president of the BC Cranberry Research Society, survey the cranberries after a special announcement for funding for a cranberry research facility.

Photograph by: submitted, for Richmond News

Delta-Richmond East MP Kerry-Lynne Findlay announced over \$200,000 in funding from the federal government for a new cranberry research centre Tuesday.

She made the announcement at Cranwest Farms in Delta on behalf of MP Lynne Yelich, Minister of State for Western Economic Diversification.

“This funding will aid in the construction of a cranberry research centre — the first of its kind in Canada and only the fourth in North America,” said Findlay.

She noted the new research centre will serve as a cranberry test facility where current and new varieties can be evaluated using various growing mediums and alternate production techniques.

Richmond cranberry grower and president of the BC Cranberry Research Society Todd May was at the announcement as well.

“This is extremely important to the cranberry industry and its ability to move along at a rapid pace in development of our research farm,” he said, adding that the industry has faced some challenges lately.

The challenges generally revolve around declining production in some established plants and some of the new plantings as well, he said.

May said he'd like to see the initial development and construction to be finished by the end of 2012 or beginning of 2013. The facility is expected to include 15 or more acres of actual planted production area. Findlay said the cranberry industry is a significant contributor to the local economy and that B.C. cranberry growers produce approximately 80 million pounds of cranberries on an annual basis, with over 90 per cent destined for international markets.