

## **Dr. Michael Raymont's Biography**

Michael is the President, CEO and a director of AVAC Ltd., and Managing and Founding Partner of Verdex Capital; both organizations are Canada-based venture investors emphasizing all aspects of the Agriculture and Food sectors with the exception of land. AVAC also manages a portfolio of fund-of-fund investments and the Accelerate angel co-investment fund.

Dr. Raymont is also Chairman of Borderline Asia, and a Director of Arzaq Investments LLC, both of which provide investment funding and financial advisory work in Asia.

Formerly, Michael served as President (Deputy Minister) of Canada's National Research Council (NRC). Prior to this Dr. Raymont was CEO of three growth businesses in Canada and the US, before which Michael was CEO of the venture capital, US and international subsidiaries of Telus Corp.

Dr. Raymont has presented widely on innovation, technology commercialization, sustainability, food/agriculture and energy. He has extensive international experience, having lived for many years in the US, East Asia and Europe. He has been a director of public and private companies since 1974.

## **Innovation in Agriculture -- Optional or Imperative**

As the world's population inexorably increases to a projected 9.5+B by 2050 and the global supply of arable land remains flat or decreases, increasing pressures will be brought on the world's agriculture industry to grow more with less. Diet change in developing countries, adverse weather events, water shortages, pest resistance, plant diseases and soil contamination/overuse all exacerbate this challenge.

In the last 15 years, amazing progress has been made in the fields of genetics, life science tools, computational biology, ecosystem understanding, pest, disease and weed control, etc., but the issue is not just a question of more R&D. Incubation, acceleration, commercialization, and deployment must be fast-tracked if promising technologies are actually going to contribute to growing more from less.

Dr. Raymont will present some background on the imperatives for "agricultural technology innovation **now**", some of the outstanding opportunities, and illustrate how these circumstances present investors with unprecedented return opportunities rivaling the best in ITC, web and internet.

To slightly misquote Economist and Nobel Laureate Peter Drucker, "*Agriculture, not the Internet, represents the most promising investment opportunity of the 21st Century*".