



For immediate release

Steve van der Leest  
2011 Recipient of the Life Member Designation

**TORONTO: August 29, 2011.** . . Cori Bonina, Chair of Canadian Federation of Independent Grocers (CFIG) Board of Directors and John F.T. Scott, President and CEO of CFIG, announced Steve van der Leest, President of The Overwaitea Food Group as a 2011 recipient of CFIG's prestigious Life Member Designation.

With roots in Victoria, BC, and a career that has spanned communities big and small across British Columbia and Alberta, Steve van der Leest is a symbol of innovation for the Western Canadian food business.

Steve's passion for action has been evident right from the beginning. In the late 1960's, he got his start in the industry as a part-time grocery bagger at the Woodward's Food Floors, where he quickly joined the ranks of the corporate store management team. In the late 1970's, Steve owned and operated a very successful independent supermarket in High River, Alberta, which led to his active membership with Associated Grocers voluntary co-op and the Canadian Federation of Independent Grocers.

Next, Steve joined the team at Associated Grocers through which he held various roles in wholesale and food service management. At the age of 34, Steve was appointed President of the division. With Steve at the helm, Associated Grocers was revitalized and attracted the interest of Jim Pattison. Together, in 1990, they privatized Associated Grocers and brought it under the umbrella of the Overwaitea Food Group (OFG). At OFG, Steve assumed responsibility for supply chain, taking on the role of Executive Vice President. In 1997, Steve was appointed President of the Overwaitea Food Group.

Steve's held an active role in numerous food associations throughout his career, including Canadian Distributors Grocers Institute (CDGI), Canadian Federation of Independent Grocers (CFIG), Food Marketing Institute (FMI), and he's been a board member and Chairman of both the Canadian Council of Grocery Distributors (CCGD) and United Grocers Inc. (UGI).

Today, Steve leads an innovative and growing company with an innovative spirit that is known for industry leadership. The Overwaitea Food Group is one of the few privately held regional independent food retailers in Canada, and a leader when it comes to supporting the health and wellness of communities in Western Canada. Proudly local for more than a century, the company operates six banners: Save-On-Foods, Overwaitea Foods, Cooper's Foods, PriceSmart Foods, Urban Fare and Bulkley Valley Wholesale.

Steve van der Leest will be officially recognized on Monday October 24th at Grocery Innovations Canada 2011, Canada's premier grocery exposition and conference, at CFG's Luncheon of Honour, in the Leonard Cohen Ballroom, at the Toronto Congress Centre.

**The Canadian Federation of Independent Grocers (CFG)** is a non-profit trade association founded in 1962, which continues to be a collaborative community, equipping and enabling independent, franchised and specialty grocers for sustainable success. Representing over 4000 grocery retailers from every part of Canada, CFG is a strong and united voice for independent grocers, providing programs for operational excellence, facilitating educational and training programs and fostering enabling-relationships among retailers and suppliers. CFG is a respected organization that speaks confidently for its retail members to industry, government, and the consumer.

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**For more information, contact:**

Dan Leggieri, Communications Manager  
Canadian Federation of Independent Grocers  
416-492-2311 ext. 231  
dleggieri@cfg.ca

