



For Immediate Release

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Wheat Growers Applaud Investment in Food Research

The Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association (WCWGA) is pleased to see the federal government make a \$17 million investment into research aimed at identifying and developing food ingredients that contribute to better human health.

“The Wheat Growers believe this is an area that has significant profit potential for farmers,” says Cherilyn Jolly-Nagel, President of the Wheat Growers. “This research will help Canadian farmers to be the leaders in growing crops specifically geared to providing consumers with health benefits.”

Jolly-Nagel was commenting on the federal government’s announcement on Friday to contribute \$17 million toward the National Centre for Agri-Food Research in Medicine, based in Winnipeg.

This research initiative is designed to complement the Richardson Centre for Functional Foods and Nutraceuticals which is under construction at the University of Manitoba.

The Wheat Growers believe that the future of prairie farming lies in growing higher value crops, such as those that can be used to produce functional foods or nutraceuticals. “Let’s face it,” says Jolly-Nagel. “Canadian farmers are going to have a tough time competing against low-cost grain producers in Brazil, Argentina, Ukraine and Kazakhstan. Instead, our success will lie in producing higher value, higher margin food ingredients.”

The Wheat Grower hope the announcement will lead to a cluster of related food research and development, similar to the biotechnology cluster in Saskatoon. “Such investments attract world-class researchers and are often the catalyst for private sector investment,” says Jolly-Nagel. “Our hope is that the prairies will soon be seen as the place to be for companies to invest in food and plant research.”

The Wheat Growers note however that investing in food and crop research is but one piece of a complex puzzle. “We also need to ensure Canada’s regulatory environment will facilitate the development of these crops,” states Jolly-Nagel. “Improvements are needed in our marketing, variety registration and regulatory system to ensure we have the ability to bring these food ingredients to market.”

Jolly-Nagel also notes changes are needed in Canada’s food labelling laws. In an article in the latest issue of *Wheat, Oats and Barley*, she writes about how Canada’s food labelling laws are among the most restrictive in the world, in terms of allowing food manufacturers to make specific health claims.

“Changing Canada’s food labelling laws will create greater consumer demand for foods that have specific health benefits,” explains Jolly-Nagel. “As farmers we want to capture that demand, and grow those crops that add value to our bottom lines.”

The WCWGA, an independent producer organization, has spent 35 years bringing forth innovative farmer-driven solutions and will continue to lobby on behalf of forward thinking, progressive producers in an effort to make farming sustainable and profitable.

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For more information, please contact:
Cherilyn Jolly-Nagel
President
(306) 354-2517

Innovative, farmer-driven solutions.