

GOOD NEWS BITE

\$1.25 Million Research Investment to Improve Canadian White and Coloured Bean Seed Quality for Export Markets

December 17, 2009:

Canada's dry bean industry received a big boost for a new research initiative that will enhance quality and improve world-wide marketability of white and coloured beans. The federal government has announced they will be contributing almost \$800,000 to research being led by Ridgetown Campus scientist, Chris Gillard.

Getting beans to mature evenly is critical for top quality, and growers often use a desiccant as a harvest-aid to control weeds and ensure uniform, rapid dry-down of beans. Gillard says there is a lack of information on the desiccants in regards to application timing and rate effect on crop yield and quality. "The objective of this research is to provide new environmentally and economically sustainable harvest-aid programs for dry beans that will provide the best quality bean for our customers," he says.

Much of the research will occur in Huron, Perth and Middlesex counties where dry bean production is a large part of farm revenue. Canada is the fourth largest exporter of dry beans in the world, valued at \$136 million annually.

Mr. Bev. Shipley, MPP for Lambton-Kent Middlesex, made the funding announcement at Ridgetown Campus' Huron Research Station near Exeter. "We want to help farmers succeed by creating new opportunities for Canadian producers through investment and innovation," says Shipley. "I've been a dry bean producer, and I know what this investment means to this industry." This is the first investment announced under the Developing Innovative Agri-Products (DIAP) program, which supports industry-led science and technology projects.

Ben Lobb, Member of Parliament for Huron-Bruce was also in attendance at the recent announcement and noted the importance of investment in agriculture innovation.

In addition to DIAP funding, the project is receiving significant funds from CanAdvance, and further project funding from several producer and industry organizations including; Ontario Agri-Business Association, Ontario White Bean Producers, Ontario Coloured Bean Growers Association, Manitoba Pulse Growers, BASF, Valent, and Nufarm.

Also attending the announcement was Mike Donnelly-Vanderloo, Executive Director of the Ontario Coloured Bean Growers Association. "This is a tremendous partnership," he says. "The federal government's

contribution, along with the investment of \$500,000 from industry associations, agribusiness and producers, gives a total of \$1.25 million to help the dry bean industry.”

Along with Gillard, the Canadian research team will include Dr. Peter Sikkema, Ridgetown Campus weed scientist, Dr. Robert Gulden, University of Manitoba and Dr. Robert Blackshaw, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Lethbridge, Alberta.

Ridgetown Campus is a provincial campus of the Ontario Agriculture College (OAC), University of Guelph.

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Image from Funding Announcement:



Funding Announcement at Ridgetown’s Huron Research Station, Exeter, ON

Photo L-R: **Tom Harris**, Chair, Ontario Coloured Bean Growers Association, **Mike Donnelly-Vanderloo**, Executive Director, Ontario Coloured Bean Growers, **Chris Gillard**, Researcher, Ridgetown Campus, **Bev Shipley**, Member of Parliament, Lambton-Kent-Middlesex, **Bernadine Wolfe**, General Manager, Ontario Coloured Bean Growers, **Ben Lobb**, Member of Parliament Huron-Bruce, **Mark Goodwin**, Industry Consultant, Pulse Canada, and **Dr. Peter Sikkema**, Researcher, Ridgetown Campus.

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