



**Honourable George Groeneveld
Minister
Agriculture and Rural Development**

Ag Expo & North American Seed Fair

March 06, 2009, 11:45 a.m.

**Lethbridge Exhibition Park
Lethbridge**

Check against delivery

- Thank you for that introduction ... It is my great pleasure to be here with you, celebrating Ag Expo and the North American Seed Fair.
- First, I would like to bring you greetings from the Province of Alberta ... from Premier Ed Stelmach ... and from all of my Legislature colleagues.
- I would also like to acknowledge other distinguished guests joining you today ...including MLAs Bridget Pastoor, Lethbridge East ... Greg Weadick, Lethbridge West ... and Barry McFarland, LittleBow.
- As a farmer, I know how valuable it is to get together like this ...
- Talking about our common interests, our problems ... and taking in this magnificent trade show ...
- It really gets a farmer itching to get started on the new crop and livestock season.

- Plus, the North American Seed Fair ... a feature since 1897 ... offers a magnificent display of junior, open and pedigreed seed in more than 53 classes.
- With nearly 300 samples submitted, the 13 volunteer judges ... and 17 volunteer seed fair committee members had their work cut out for them.
- To the winners of this prestigious event, please accept my hearty congratulations for your dedication, determination and perseverance.
- It takes a special kind of patience to plant a seed ... and wait for it to sprout.
- It takes nurturing and optimism that what you have planted will thrive and grow.
- Just getting that far is an accomplishment.
- The care it takes to then create an award winner is a testament to your special skills, knowledge and expertise.

- I applaud you and hope your success takes root in all your endeavours to enrich and diversify Alberta's seed, plant and crop base.
- Your work ties in with Alberta's Science for Solutions approach to blend good science and sound research.
- Your work builds upon the agricultural sector, using innovation and home-grown expertise.
- I salute all of the researchers, exhibitors and suppliers who have made this a premier event across Western Canada ...
- I regret that ... due to commitments and flight schedules ... I will miss the awards presentations ... but before leaving, I intend to tour the South Pavilion and see the seed samples ...
- I also know, both as a farmer and as your minister of agriculture and rural development ... that you are concerned by current events.

- There is worry and uncertainty, given the depth of the global economic downturn.
- Then there are everyday concerns about drought and crop pests.
- It leaves us all with a sense of unease.
- However, I want to assure you that your Government of Alberta is behind you as a partner ... in these demanding times.
- Together, we will continue to meet challenges ... to increase your yields and productivity ... to open new markets ... and seek new opportunities to grow and diversify.
- If there is one message that you take away today, I hope it is this ... **we need to work together.**
- Government and industry ... province to province ... federal government with provincial government ... Ag society and community ...

- ... Because this is our road to success ... And the possibilities give me great optimism and pride.
- Thank you for inviting me to join you today.
- Let me close by saying that I look forward to meeting you and hearing about your concerns. And, may Ag Expo conclude today as another resounding success.