



Agri-News

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Alberta Innovates Builds on Reputation for Excellence

Climate change – pine beetles – bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) – water and soil conservation – health research challenges from Alzheimer’s to West Nile Virus... issues such as these are challenging governments across Canada and around the globe.

Alberta is home to some of the best researchers and innovators in the world, and on January 4, 2010, to make it easier for Alberta’s researchers and innovators to work together to use science to find solutions to these and other challenges, Alberta Advanced Education and Technology launched the **Alberta Innovates** website at www.albertainnovates.ca

This is one of the steps in realigning Alberta’s provincially funded research and innovation organizations. The new system, called **Alberta Innovates**, will enable outstanding people within these organizations to work more closely together to achieve even greater results than they could have under the old system. Working together, new opportunities, new solutions and new sectors that will drive the next generation economy in Alberta will be created.

The names of the new corporations under the **Alberta Innovates** umbrella reflect their individual roles in answering the priority questions that are provided by society and government. Each of the following corporations will focus on areas where Alberta has the opportunity to be a leader or enhance its current standing in the global economy:

- **Alberta Innovates - Bio Solutions** includes staff from the Alberta Agricultural Research Institute (AARI), Alberta Forestry Research Institute (AFRI), Alberta Life Sciences Institute (ALSI) and Alberta Prion Research Institute (which is currently part of Alberta Ingenuity). The chair of the board will be Art Froehlich, partner and strategic advisor, AdFarm.

- **Alberta Innovates - Energy and Environment Solutions** includes staff from the Alberta Energy Research Institute (AERI) and the Alberta Water Research Institute (which is currently part of Alberta Ingenuity). The chair of the board will be Eric Newell, chancellor emeritus, University of Alberta.

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- **Alberta Innovates - Health Solutions** includes staff from the Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research (AHFMR). The chair of the board will be Robert A. Seidel, Q.C., national managing partner, Davis LLP.
- **Alberta Innovates - Technology Futures** includes staff from Alberta Ingenuity, Alberta Research Council, iCORE and nanoAlberta, as well as the programs related to the Bringing Technology to Market action plan. The chair of the board will be Ron Triffo, chair, Stantec Inc.

Each of these corporations will work closely with related Government of Alberta ministries to help further the ministries' research agendas.

Working closely with these four corporations will be the Alberta Research and Innovation Authority (ARIA), which transforms the current Alberta Science and Research Authority. ARIA will provide strategic advice to the Minister of Advanced Education and Technology (AET). The chair of the board will be Dr. Marvin Fritzler, Arthritis Society Research Chair, Faculty of Medicine, University of Calgary.

Also working with the corporations will be the Alberta Research and Innovation Connector. This service provided by AET, in partnership with key service providers, will help connect entrepreneurs, researchers and investors with the information and support they seek from Alberta Innovates.

Alberta has a strong heritage of research and innovation, and **Alberta Innovates** articulates that long history of a can-do attitude, of research and innovation focused on solutions. This new, invigorated spirit of collaboration and coordination, synchronization and alignment will result in a shared focus on bridging research and ideas to products, services that will directly benefit Albertans and people all around the world. Alberta's researchers and innovators are armed with a freedom to create and a spirit to achieve that will make **Alberta Innovates** a leader in the global marketplace.

For further information, visit www.aet.alberta.ca/research/system/mandates/framework.aspx or the new **Alberta Innovates** website at www.albertainnovates.ca.

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Green Building Technologies Symposium

Over 200 people attended the **Green Building Technologies Symposium** in December 2009, to discover how going green makes business sense. The symposium was organized by Alberta Finance and Enterprise, Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development, Alberta International and Intergovernmental Relations, Canadian Home Builders Association, Calgary Regional Partnership, along with sponsors Polycore, Clark Builders, Shane Homes, CMHC, Enershield and Bullfrog Power.

"People were there to learn about the latest trends in green products and best practices in green building," says Patti Breland, project coordinator – bio-industrial development, with Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development. "Symposium participants chose from two speaker streams that allowed them to get the most pertinent information relevant to them over the two days. Information included insights from industry experts in sessions on incentives for Growing Green, achieving Net Zero housing, indoor environmental quality, certifications and financing options."

The symposium included a manufacturers showcase where the Alberta Biomaterial Development Centre distributed samples to attendees while showcasing natural fibre insulation bats made from hemp, hemp loft board, corn panel board, Zero Resin Agrifibre board, Oriented Split Straw Board (OSSB) various types of non-woven felts, biocomposite feed material as well as seven-foot tall hemp stalks and soft flax fibres.

"This symposium was a great place to gain greater knowledge of green building technologies, exchange ideas, find solutions and form new partnerships," says Breland.

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Tax Deferrals for Alberta Livestock Producers Affected By Drought

The Government of Canada announced today that more Alberta livestock producers affected by drought will be eligible for a federal tax deferral.

"The Government of Canada continues to deliver real results for farmers and ranchers by offering tax deferrals to the producers whose operations are suffering due to the hot, dry season," said Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz. "These tax deferrals are just another way in which we are working to make sure our livestock producers can remain competitive and profitable."

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The tax deferral allows eligible producers in designated areas to defer income tax on the sale of breeding livestock for one year to help replenish breeding stock in the following year. In the case of consecutive years of drought designation, producers may defer sales income to the first year in which the area is no longer designated.

“Earlier this year the government acted quickly to assist producers who are struggling due to drought conditions,” said the Honourable Jean-Pierre Blackburn, Minister of National Revenue and Minister of State (Agriculture). “The designation of these additional areas is a result of our continued monitoring of the impacts of the weather on our farmland as well as our hands-on approach to supporting Alberta farmers and ranchers.”

Producers who reduced their breeding herds by at least 15 per cent are eligible. Thirty per cent of income from net sales can be deferred if the herd has been reduced by at least 15 per cent, but less than 30 per cent. Where the herd has been reduced by 30 per cent or more, 90 per cent of income from net sales can be deferred.

“A number of regions in Alberta experienced very dry conditions this year,” said Agriculture and Rural Development Minister George Groeneveld. “Our provincial and federal governments remain committed to working with Alberta’s cattle producers. We continue to monitor soil moisture levels and are watching what is coming next year.”

Eligible producers will be able to request this deferral when filing their 2009 income tax returns. Livestock producers are advised to contact their local Canada Revenue Agency Tax Services Office for details on the income tax provisions.

Additional designations are a result of the continuous assessment of the drought situation throughout the fall.

For more information on the extent of the drought or programs to assist farmers, and an updated list of designated Alberta tax deferral areas, visit the AAFC drought watch site at www.agr.gc.ca/drought

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New Dean of Veterinary College Appointed at U of S

The University of Saskatchewan’s Board of Governors approved the appointment of Dr. Douglas Freeman as (WCVM) new dean. Freeman begins his five-year term on March 1, 2010, and will become the regional veterinary college’s sixth dean in its 45-year history. He replaces Dr. Charles Rhodes, the WCVM’s dean since 2002. Rhodes is retiring after 39 years of service with the college.

The Western College of Veterinary Medicine’s (WCVM) is a veterinary school servicing Albertans. Les Burwash, manager of equine programs with Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development sits on the Equine Health Research Fund at WCVM, a group which prioritizes equine research and allocates funding to the various projects.

“Dr. Freeman’s broad experience, his approachable personality and his collaborative manner will make an excellent fit with the Western College of Veterinary Medicine and the University of Saskatchewan,” said Brett Fairbairn, the university’s provost and vice-president. “These qualities will serve him well in his new role as one of Canada’s key leaders in veterinary education, animal health, public health and food safety.”

“I am thrilled to be the next dean of the Western College of Veterinary Medicine. It is an outstanding veterinary school with tremendous talent in a broad range of programs,” said Freeman. “I look forward to working with the faculty, staff, students and friends of the veterinary college in addressing current challenges and opportunities in veterinary medicine.”

During his 26-year career, Freeman has gained a valuable range of experience as a veterinary practitioner, an administrator of clinical and diagnostic services, a researcher and an academic department head. Since 2001, Freeman has been a professor and head of two departments — veterinary diagnostic services and veterinary and microbiological sciences — at North Dakota State University in Fargo, N.D.

Freeman completed a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree, a clinical residency and a Master of Science degree in theriogenology at the University of Minnesota. He received a PhD in reproductive physiology from the University of Idaho and is a diplomate in the American College of Theriogenologists.

Freeman has worked in the clinical science and basic science departments of academic institutions in the United States as well as overseas. His experience also includes private veterinary practice and veterinary professional services in the animal health industry. Freeman is a past president of the American College of Theriogenologists and is a current member of the Board of Directors for the Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges (AAVMC).

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During his term at North Dakota State University, Freeman served as director of the NDSU's Great Plains Institute of Food Safety for two years, and led multi-disciplinary research programs in disease surveillance, public health and food safety. He was selected as an American Council on Education Fellow in 2006, and spent one year at the University of Minnesota where he gained experience in academic leadership and administration of the university's Academic Health Center.

Located at the University of Saskatchewan, the Western College of Veterinary Medicine is Western Canada's premier centre of veterinary education, research and expertise, and an integral member of Canada's veterinary, public health and food safety network. More than 400 undergraduate and graduate students are enrolled at the internationally-recognized institution that includes a veterinary teaching hospital, provincial diagnostics laboratory and research facilities.

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Setting a Price On Value

For decades farmers have been price takers – whatever the commodity market dictated, they got. With the growing trend to buy local, more and more farmers are bucking tradition and becoming price makers. They do this by producing an obvious value or quality difference between their product and the competition's. While simple in theory, applying the value lesson isn't always so easy.

For example, Cherie Andrews, Terry Church and Judy Kolk, all members of the **Flavours of the Foothills** cluster in southern Alberta, joined forces to market their unique honey-black currant BBQ sauce for meat. The tasty sauce turned out to be a hot seller at farmers' markets. It took no time for the team to realize that their price was too low, so they reviewed their costs, added a reasonable profit margin and raised their price.

"They ended up selling more BBQ sauce at the higher price because of its perceived value in the market," says Elaine Stenbraaten, new venture coach with Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development, who heard the producers tell their story at a pricing workshop last year. "Pricing really is a marriage of profit and costs spiced with a dash of market sensitivity. Knowing the market you're in, and the value and benefits customers see in your product are critical factors for pricing success."

To help entrepreneurs solve their pricing puzzle, Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development is partnering with local agencies to offer **Setting a Profitable Price** workshops in several locations across Alberta.

This workshop will enhance participants' understanding of cost-based pricing. In a nutshell, an adequate cost-based price is determined by adding together all marketing and production costs and an adequate profit margin. An adequate profit margin considers both the perceived value of the product and leaves room for growth. The stumbling block that is often encountered when establishing a price occurs because operators don't know their actual costs. Without cost knowledge a fair price can't be set. In addition to pricing theory the workshop will help participants understand how to cost out every aspect of production and marketing as well as accurately assess the value of the product, its packaging, presentation and other inherent components for the chosen market. Knowing the potential customers also enables marketers to judge how much they'll pay for the product.

These interactive workshops are for Alberta farm direct producers, small processors and agripreneurs who wish to understand the basics of costing and pricing products to arrive at a price point for direct marketing channels.

"Last year's workshop participants appreciated the hands-on format of the workshop, the chance to share their business experiences with other entrepreneurs, and they valued the pricing templates that they could take home and use in their own business," says Jan Warren, new venture coach with Alberta Agriculture, and, along with Stenbraaten, one of the organizers of the workshop series.

As Jane Eckert, a marketing guru, says, "Experience tells me that farm direct marketers simply don't know how to price their products. They don't know if they are making money and how to set appropriate profit margin goals. I found this trend held true in Alberta."

"Jane's comment is spot on," says Stenbraaten. "The workshops have been well received because pricing is the issue that everyone struggles with. By the end of the day, participants understand pricing strategies and can use that knowledge to make sound business decisions. The valuable connections they make with others in the workshop are an added bonus."

Workshop dates and locations are:

- January 12, 2010 in **Fairview** (contact Linda at 780-538-6208)
- February 3, 2010 in **Leduc** (contact Alberta Farm Fresh Producers Association toll-free in Alberta at 1-800-661-2642 or 780-373-2503)
- March 10, 2010 in **Airdrie** (contact Jodie Eckert at 1-877-603-2329)

The **Setting a Profitable Price** series is sponsored by Growing Forward, a federal-provincial-territorial initiative.

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Agri-News Briefs

Banff Pork Seminar

The annual Banff Pork Seminar, *New Process, New Product, New Policy*, is being held at the Banff Centre on January 19 to 22, 2010. The seminar includes presentations on pandemic preparedness planning, estimating the market cost of H1N1, best of current research, effective advertising, swine genetics, and China's pork industry. The program of the 2010 Banff Pork Seminar has been approved by the Alberta Veterinary Medical Association for Continuing Education (CE) credits and by the Alberta Institute of Agrologists for Professional Development credits (CPD). Registration for the seminar is \$300 per person, \$350 for walk-in registration. Additional copies of the seminar Proceedings are available. For further information and online registration, visit the seminar website at www.banffpork.ca

Local Food 2020

Dine Alberta is hosting the *Local Food 2020: Creating a Vision for Alberta's Local Food System* event in Calgary on February 2, 2010. The event will focus on what Alberta's food system will be by the year 2020. Producers and chefs are welcomed to join in this brain-storming round table discussion with a goal of envisioning a map to a viable sustainable food system. Chefs and growers will dialogue together to determine what needs, issues, changes, ideas and details might make up the big picture over the next 10 years. This is a no charge event; however, seats are limited and must be booked by January 25, 2010. To register, contact Marlene Abrams at 780-963-4709 or e-mail marlene.abrams@gov.ab.ca

FarmTech 2010

FarmTech is Western Canada's premier crop production and farm management conference. Being held in Edmonton on January 27 to 29, 2010, the conference will be of particular interest to agribusiness participants, land managers, crop producers, and livestock producers. For further information, call 1-866-327-6832 or visit the *FarmTech* website at www.farmtechconference.com