



# News Release

For immediate release

## Harper Government Strengthens Oat Industry

January 22, 2014 - Brandon, Manitoba - Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz announced today an investment of more than \$3.7 million to the Prairie Oat Growers Association (POGA) to help oat producers sell more of their crop in the global marketplace.

POGA will receive more than \$3 million from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's (AAFC) AgriInnovation Program for three research projects:

- Up to \$2,905,829 for scientists to pursue collaborative research to develop new oat varieties targeted specifically for cultivation in the Canadian Prairies. These new varieties will be high-yielding, with enhanced resistance to disease.
- Up to \$151,500 to create a new method of identifying genes for use in oat improvement. With the ability to identify desirable traits in oats, breeders will be able to create higher-value varieties, leading to increased commercial opportunities.
- Up to \$109,500 to evaluate how oat beta-glucan improves the responsiveness of the immune system in horses. The beta-glucan fiber found in oats has been proven to deliver numerous health benefits to humans and is expected to do the same for horses, which may lead to increased exports of Canadian oats to markets abroad.

POGA will also receive an investment of up to \$600,000 from AAFC's AgriMarketing Program to help oat producers gain a foothold in the American equine market through the development of targeted marketing activities to promote Canadian oats as high-quality feed for horses. Activities include a multimedia advertising campaign to increase awareness of Canadian oats as healthy equine feed and attendance at trade shows and conferences where POGA can hold face-to-face meetings with equine experts, such as veterinarians and nutritional researchers.

### Quick Facts

- The AgriInnovation Program is a five-year, up to \$698-million initiative under the *Growing Forward 2* policy framework that supports pre-commercialization research, development, and knowledge transfer leading in agriculture. The AgriMarketing Program is a five-year, \$341-million initiative under *Growing Forward 2* that seeks to build and promote Canada's ability to expand domestic and export markets through promotional activities to help position and differentiate Canadian products.
- Canada is a major oat producer, with about 90 per cent of Canadian oats grown in the west, and is the largest exporter of oats in the world. In 2012, the Canadian oat industry brought \$430 million to the farm gate and exported \$620 million worth of high-quality oats to a number of key markets, including the U.S. Canada continues to be a global leader in oat production, trade, milling and research.
- Canada and the European Union (EU) trade agreement will significantly boost trade and investment ties. Upon entry into force, almost 94 per cent of EU agricultural tariff lines will be duty-free.



## Quotes

*“Our Government remains committed to growing the economy, and oat growers play a vital role in creating jobs and keeping our economy strong here in Manitoba and across Canada. By providing farmers with the tools they need to succeed, this investment will help grow consumer demand for oats and expand market opportunities.”*

- Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz

*"The Prairie Oat Growers Association (POGA) appreciates Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's continued support of research and market development for Canadian oats. With POGA advocating for western Canadian oat growers, and Government and industry supporting grower initiatives, we have a strong partnership to advance the quality of our product and increase oat sales in our target markets. We are confident that the projects made possible by this funding will be a huge benefit to oat producers.*

- Bill Wilton, President of the Canadian Food Exporters Association

## Associated Links

[Growing Forward 2](#) (Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada)  
[AgriInnovation Program](#) (Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada)  
[AgriMarketing Program](#) (Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada)  
[Comprehensive Economic Trade and Agreement](#) (Canada's Economic Action Plan)

## Media contacts

### Jeff English

Director of Communications  
Office of the Honourable Gerry Ritz  
**613-773-1059**

### Media Relations

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada  
**613-773-7972**  
**1-866-345-7972**  
Follow us on Twitter: @AAFC\_Canada