



News Release

For immediate release

Harper Government Helps Oat Growers Expand Markets

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, December 6, 2012 – The Canadian oat industry will be able to grow new international markets with an investment from the Harper government. Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz today announced that the Prairie Oat Growers Association will receive an investment to help boost the industry's sales internationally.

"Our government's top priority remains the economy, and Canada's agriculture and agri-food industry plays an important role in creating jobs and keeping our economy strong," said Minister Ritz. "This investment will position Canada as an international leader in the oat industry, enhancing its global marketing capacity and competitiveness."

The \$100,000 investment through the AgriMarketing Program will help the Prairie Oat Growers Association increase export of oats and oat products to the U.S. equine market and educate horse owners and equine advisors on the benefits of Canadian oats for equines.

"The AgriMarketing funding is being used toward the Prairie Oat Growers Association's efforts to reclaim lost equine feed markets for oats in North America," said Bill Wilton, President of the Association. "Oat exports declined by 700,000 metric tonnes from 1994 to 2011, and it's critical to Canadian oat producers that we reclaim that market. The AgriMarketing funding is imperative for producer-funded commodity groups that have no advocate to expand markets in agriculture products like oats."

The Prairie provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba produce an average of about 90 per cent of Canada's oats, with the majority grown in Saskatchewan and Manitoba. In 2011, oats provided \$425 million in farm cash receipts to these western provinces.

Through the AgriMarketing Program under Growing Forward, the Harper government is investing \$88 million to help industry implement long-term international strategies, including international market development, industry-to-industry trade advocacy, and consumer awareness and branding activities.

The Harper government has identified market development as a priority under Growing Forward 2, and this announcement is another example of what is being done to enhance competitiveness and drive innovation and long-term growth in Canadian agriculture.

To find out more about the AgriMarketing Program, please visit www.agr.gc.ca/agrimarketing.

To find out more about the Prairie Oat Growers Association, please visit www.poga.ca.



Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada Agriculture et Agroalimentaire Canada

Canada

-2-

For more information, media may contact:

Media Relations

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
Ottawa, Ontario
613-773-7972
1-866-345-7972

Jeff English

Press Secretary
The Office of the Honourable Gerry Ritz
613-773-1059
jeffrey.english@agr.gc.ca