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Prairie oat industry invests nearly \$1 million in proactive research project

Thursday, January 16, 2014 – (SASKATOON, SK) "As the world's largest oat exporter, maintaining the high quality of Canadian oats is of paramount importance to us," said Willie Zuchkan, Chairman of the Saskatchewan Oat Development Commission (SODC) during the inaugural CropSphere conference in Saskatoon this week.

That's the reason The Prairie Oat Growers Association (comprised of the Saskatchewan Oat Development Commission, the Manitoba Oat Growers Association and the Alberta Oat Growers Commission) along with the Canadian Grain Commission and the Agricultural Development Fund (ADF) will invest almost \$1 million over the next four years into a research project that studies how mycotoxins affect oats. 'Mycotoxins' are the secondary metabolites of fungi, more commonly known as molds that can be found in grains and grain products

"Increasingly stringent testing, especially in Europe, make it more important than ever to be proactive," Zuchkan added, noting that the proposed trade agreement between Canada-European Union is just one example of a market that is likely to require testing for mycotoxins in oats and other products.

The Prairie Oat Growers Association will administer the research project, co-funded through the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture's Agriculture Development Fund (ADF), provided under the federal-provincial Growing Forward 2 framework, in collaboration with the Canadian Grain Commission, which will be conducting the research.

"We are pleased to contribute our expertise in mycotoxin research and to help producers meet customers' requirements for safe grain," said Elwin Hermanson, Chief Commissioner of the Canadian Grain Commission.

"We want to understand more about mycotoxins in oats," Shawna Mathieson, Executive Director explained. "This project will help determine whether mycotoxins occur more frequently in certain areas; how storage may be a factor; and ways to help oat producers prevent against mycotoxins in their crops."

The research project is expected to be completed by 2018.

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