

Farmers for Investment in Agriculture



Mrs. Susie Miller
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Mrs. Miller,

Acknowledging that there has been a 40 percent drop in funding for A-base agricultural research since 1994, and considering the global market for agriculture is becoming increasingly competitive, we recommend the federal government double their investment in core agronomic research over the next decade. With a small increase of \$28 million per year, the federal government could restore funding to 1994 levels by 2020.

Many of Canada's largest farming groups agree that this is the right approach, including:

- Alberta Barley Commission
- Alberta Pulse Growers
- Atlantic Grains Council
- British Columbia Grain Producers Association
- Canadian Canola Growers
- Fédération des producteurs de cultures commerciales du Québec
- Grain Growers of Canada
- Grain Farmers of Ontario
- Manitoba Corn Growers Association
- Prairie Oat Growers
- Western Canadian Wheat Growers
- Western Barley Growers Association

We recommend this increase in funding for A-base agricultural research for several reasons. First, the private sector gives almost no funding research on crops, other than canola, corn and soybean. These three crops only make up about 30 percent of acreage, but will account for 96 percent of private sector research by 2012. This means cereals, pulses and forages combined will only account for about 4 percent of total private sector investment in Canada.

Second, the research and development of wheat and other cereals is seriously underfunded. In 1999, a study reported Canada had one of the lowest levels of investment in wheat compared to the crop value, in comparison to other wheat producing countries. Since then, the federal government investment in research has continued to drop.

Third, the market for these crops is growing significantly. The Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations predicts the population will grow by 2.3 billion people by 2050. Global agriculture will have to grow by an incredible 70 percent. Canada needs to be well prepared to capitalize on this expanding market. To do so, we need our researchers to develop crops that are more efficient, higher-yield, with increased disease, pest and weather resistance.

Finally, investing in A-base agricultural research is profitable for the government of Canada and the whole Canadian society. Indeed, it is estimated that agronomic research yields 40-60 per cent economic returns for the whole society. **For these reasons, it is vitally important that this Crop Research Funding Working Group recommend the Grains Innovation Round Table support the restoration of Federal research funding.**

Sincerely,



William Van Tassel

Vice-Chair

Fédération des producteurs de cultures commerciales du Québec