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### **SASKATCHEWAN OAT GROWERS INVEST IN CDC RESEARCH**

Saskatchewan oat growers have committed to invest \$500,000 in University of Saskatchewan research on high-yielding and disease-resistant oat varieties.

The Saskatchewan Oat Development Commission (SODC) will provide \$100,000 per year over five years to the U of S Crop Development Centre (CDC) and plant sciences department to hire research technicians, train summer students, and fund graduate students in oat agronomy, pathology, plant breeding, and genomics.

"Research is critically needed in oats," says CDC Chairman Dwayne Anderson, "but now targeting funds to address specific farmer needs should help us move closer to the goal of making oats a more profitable crop. We hope to see improvements to varieties for both human and livestock food. Potentially, that could include better forage varieties."

"Saskatchewan oat producers are now truly one of our research partners and are more closely involved in maximizing R&D's benefit to the oat industry," adds CDC oat and barley breeder Brian Rossnagel. "We are extremely proud that the SODC has chosen to invest in our U of S program to help continue to improve the bottom line for Saskatchewan oat producers."

The new research funded by SODC builds on the U of S's history of outstanding oat research into varieties with exceptionally high milling quality for the oat food market.

"It's extremely important that we work together with all those involved in the western Canadian oat industry, from the farmers to the millers," says plant sciences agronomist Steve Shirliffe. "The feedback and support we receive from our research partners and supporters such as SODC are critical to future planning and the success of our oat R&D programs."

Established within the U of S plant sciences department in 1971, the CDC is a nationally renowned centre of excellence in crop research. The CDC seeks to increase diversification of crops and their products for the farmers and agriculture industry of Saskatchewan by improving existing crops, creating new uses for traditional crops, and developing new crops.

Formed in 2006, the SODC represents farmers who allocate 50 cents per metric tonne from Saskatchewan-grown oats sales to support research and development into new market opportunities, higher quality crops, and improved yields. In 2008 the SODC board directed a relatively small (\$25,000 – one time contribution) amount to assist CDC work on "high groat fat" oat varieties, potentially with livestock applications.

"We view this new five-year investment plan as a template-strategy which will pay dividends to growers down the road," says Dwayne Anderson.

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