



# News Release

For immediate release

## **The Government of Canada invests in innovation to support oilseed development in Eastern Canada**

December 7, 2018, Belle River, Prince Edward Island – Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

Oilseed crops are one of the fastest-growing markets in Eastern Canada. For example, soybean production in Prince Edward Island has roughly tripled since 2008 to 2016. Our farmers are working hard to grow their businesses by tapping into exciting new opportunities both at home and in the emerging markets abroad.

Today, Lawrence MacAulay, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food was at the Atlantic Soy processing plant in Belle River, Prince Edward Island, to announce a federal investment of \$3.7 million to the Eastern Canada Oilseeds Development Alliance (ECODA). This investment will help farm businesses, like Atlantic Soy, to obtain the latest varieties in oilseeds that are best suited to grow in Atlantic Canadian soils and meet the demands of consumers in international markets.

Over the next five years, ECODA research activities will focus on:

- Developing better varieties and new oilseed crops for eastern Canada, including soybeans, camelina, brown mustard, pulses, canola, and hemp;
- Product innovation to boost market opportunities for oilseeds and value-added products;
- Improving land use and increasing profitable crop rotation options; and
- Improving pest resistance and soil preservation.

There are 21 projects over all and of these activities 10 projects worth \$733,000 will be conducted in Prince Edward Island.

The research and commercialization program includes some 15 Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, university, and private sector research organizations, and 12 grower and industry partners from eastern Canada, including collaborators from Europe, Japan, and the United States.

### **Quotes**

“Our Government is always looking for ways to grow opportunities for farmers in Prince Edward Island, and across our country. This investment into the development of new oilseed varieties made to grow in Eastern Canadian soils and sell in international markets, along with trade opportunities our Government is creating, will help our farmers put more money in their pockets and grow their businesses.”

- *Lawrence MacAulay, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food*

“Our ECODA partners are very pleased to have this opportunity to work together to bring agricultural science, innovation, and commercialization expertise together for the benefit of all Canadians. AAFC’s support is an important incentive for industry-driven R&D that enables the development of breakthrough technologies and commercial successes.”

- *Rory Francis, President of ECODA’s Board of Directors.*



“Research is key: the future is breeding better varieties. You have to test many different varieties before you get a winner and this investment will help breed varieties that will suit the soils of PEI. Better varieties will result in greater opportunities for the farmers of PEI, and ultimately more high quality product for Atlantic Soy to expand its non-GMO export market.”

- *Murray MacDonald, Manager, Atlantic Soy*

## Quick Facts

- Soybean sales from Eastern Canada to Japan and other Asian Markets total over \$2.3 billion.
- Approximately 16% of the soybean acreage in 2016 in Prince Edward Island was exported to Japan to be processed into tofu and miso.
- The Atlantic Soy facility began operating in March 2008, through a partnership between David Hendrick of Hendrick’s Agri-food and the MacDonald family.
- With the implementation of the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership, Canadian oilseed growers now have tariff-free access to many Pacific markets, including Japan.
- The Government of Canada has identified the agriculture and agri-food sector as a core driver of jobs, growth and prosperity, setting a target to grow Canada's agri-food exports to \$75 billion annually by 2025.
- Funding was provided through the AgriScience Program under the Canadian Agricultural Partnership.
- The Canadian Agricultural Partnership is a five-year, \$3 billion investment by federal, provincial and territorial governments to strengthen the agriculture and agri-food sector. The Partnership builds on Growing Forward 2, the previous five-year agreement that ended on March 31, 2018.
- The Partnership includes programs and activities to enhance the competitiveness of the sector through research, science and innovation. Through the AgriScience Program, a five-year, \$338 million initiative, the government is supporting leading edge discovery and applied science, and innovation driven by industry research priorities.

## Associated Links

- [Canadian Agricultural Partnership](#)
- [Eastern Canada Oilseeds Development Alliance](#)

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## **Backgrounder – Eastern Canada Oilseed Development Alliance**

The Eastern Canada Oilseed Development Alliance (ECODA) received \$3,702,171 in funding under Canadian Agricultural Partnership's AgriScience Program. The program aims to accelerate the pace of innovation by providing funding and support for pre-commercial science activities and cutting-edge research that benefits the agriculture and agri-food sector. Industry will contribute \$2,663,829 towards the research activities for a total of \$6,366,000.

ECODA benefits oilseed growers, processors and exporters in Eastern Canada by establishing oilseed crop options that match regional factors as well as local and export market needs. Its mandate is to facilitate innovation in the oilseed supply chain, and partnerships that capture economic value for Eastern Canada's agri-food sector.

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- Improving land use and increasing profitable crop rotation options; and
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### **Priority for the Sector and Region:**

One of the fastest growing opportunities for agriculture in the Eastern Region is in oilseeds, in particular soybean and canola production. Eastern Canada's soybean production has seen an increase of 7 per cent, with farm cash receipts of \$2.3 billion in 2016 (an increase of 9.8 per cent since 2012), mostly due to exports to Japan and other parts of Asia. Canola has the highest cash value per acre of all crops produced in Canada, however production in Eastern Canada has been a little slow due to the lack of agronomic knowledge and practices. This project will address this knowledge gap with research that will help establish oilseeds as a viable export crop for Eastern Canada.

### **Prince Edward Island**

On Prince Edward Island, the value of the soybean crop in 2017 was worth more than \$18 million. Pulse production continues to expand on Prince Edward Island, with an estimated \$3 million in sales in 2018.

Of the 21 research projects being funded under the AgriScience Program, 10 of them will be taking place on Prince Edward Island, including at AAFC research farm in Harrington. These 10 projects will be backed by a total federal investment of over \$733,000.

These projects include:

- Developing canola varieties that are resistant to clubroot;
- Developing better soybean varieties adapted to PEI soil conditions and climate;
- Exploring canola in potato rotations;
- Evaluating hemp varieties;
- Using brown mustard in potato rotations;
- Improving soil health with pulses;
- Exploring camelina as a rotational crop; and
- Using non-GMO oilseeds as salmon feed.



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**Benefits to Canadian agriculture:**

Although the research activities on the latest techniques and technologies for growing oilseeds is primarily focused on the Eastern region, the results will be transferrable to the rest of the country. Expanding the communication plans of all aspects of oilseeds production and marketing will benefit other provinces involved in oilseeds production.