



Ag-West Bio approves \$300k funding to Smart Earth Seeds

May 11, 2017

SASKATOON SK: Ag-West Bio, Saskatchewan's bioscience industry association, has approved a \$300,000 investment in Smart Earth Seeds, a vertically-integrated plant breeding company developing high-omega meal and oil products derived from its proprietary camelina genetics platform.

Camelina offers special promise as a sustainable source of the essential fatty acid ALA (an omega 3 fatty acid) as well as an ideally balanced Omega3: Omega6 ratio. Also rich in vitamin E and natural antioxidants, camelina conveys excellent health benefits for humans and for animals, particularly fish, cats, dogs and horses.

The Ag-West Bio approval was made after a thorough investment review of Smart Earth's track record and technology, and market traction in aquaculture and other feed markets. It is contingent on leveraging investment from other investors up to a \$2 million threshold. Ag-West is now actively entertaining investment interest from other ag-tech investors while Smart Earth executes its 2017 production and marketing plan.

Ag-West Bio has been aware of Smart Earth's development trajectory for several years. Wilf Keller, president and CEO, says "We know them well. Their successive technology and market milestones over the past two years sparked our investment interest. Their sustainable aquafeed ingredient has garnered the most attention, but we like their diversity into several different revenue streams, based on a foundation of advanced germplasm and solid economics, all along their value chain."

Smart Earth Seeds has generated over \$1 million from sales of its camelina products, including significant sales into the aquafeed industry. Smart Earth has sought and received approvals from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency for use of rich-Omega3 camelina meal as feed for broiler chickens and egg-laying hens. CFIA has recently approved camelina oil for use as a feed ingredient for salmon and trout. Exciting breakthrough markets for camelina products also include the equine and pet food industry, as well as for cattle and dairy production.

Smart Earth's plant-breeding activities will provide traits that ensure maximum yield and profitability to benefit farmers. Soon-to-be released varieties will offer non-gmo herbicide resistance, a significantly larger seed size and a variety optimized to deliver an improved Omega3: Omega6 ratio.

"We have established several large markets for our healthy, sustainable, high-omega products," said Smart Earth CEO Jack Grushcow. "With our new varieties we will be more than competitive with other oilseed crops and will have a significant advantage on marginal lands. This seed investment gives us the opportunity to get to the next level of marketability and commercial traction."

Ag-West Bio's technology commercialization fund approves two investments annually on average, ranging from \$50,000 to \$300,000. Approvals are based on a comprehensive review of the significance of the technology, market opportunity and company growth potential. Since inception in 1989, Ag-West Bio has made or managed investments in over 60 different bioscience companies, valued at more than \$13.2 million.

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About Smart Earth Seeds

Dedicated to developing the best camelina varieties available, Smart Earth Seeds maintains a continuous plant-breeding program unmatched in scale and scope. The company is focused on the development of high value meal and oil products based on its proprietary genetics. The company currently provides ingredients used in poultry broiler and layer feeds, aquaculture including salmon and trout, and companion pets. Several cosmetics companies have developed high margin products using Smart Earth camelina oil.

About Ag-West Bio

Ag-West Bio is Saskatchewan's bioscience industry association. The company works as a catalyst for developing partnerships and industry growth in the bio-economy through investments, aiding strategic alliances, and providing business planning support, regulatory advice and communications. Funding for Ag-West Bio is provided the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture and Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada's Growing Forward II program, with support from Western Economic Diversification Canada and the National Research Council-Industrial Research Assistance Program. www.agwest.sk.ca