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New Diverse Field Crops Cluster goal to increase cropping options for farmers

Saskatoon, SK: The Diverse Field Crops Cluster (DFCC) will benefit farmers, and ultimately, all of Canada, by increasing the variety of crops that Canadian farmers grow. DFCC is a new agri-science cluster whose purpose is to support the research and development of high-potential emerging crops. DFCC research will be focused on flax, camelina, canaryseed, sunflower, hemp, quinoa and mustard.

The Honourable Lawrence MacAulay, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) announced over \$13 million in funding from AAFC through the Canadian Agricultural Partnership's AgriScience Program. This investment, combined with industry contributions of nearly \$11 million, brings the value of the cluster to over \$24 million.

"Ag-West Bio is proud to lead the new Diverse Field Crops Cluster," says Wilf Keller, president and CEO of Ag-West Bio. "We are very grateful to Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada for recognizing the importance of developing a wide range of crops. Through research these crops can reach their full potential and bring benefits to the Canadian economy and to the environment."

Diversifying the cropping mix will help to extend rotations, break disease and pest cycles, and insulate producers from the volatility of commodity price cycles. DFCC will align industry and research stakeholders to seize market opportunities and accelerate the acreage and market returns of these crops.

"Crop diversity is essential for keeping Canada's agricultural ecosystem healthy and productive," says Mike Cey, Ag-West Bio Director of Corporate Initiatives, who led the funding application process by forming a consortium of the groups that are working to advance each of the crops represented.

The crops under the DFCC umbrella are represented by Saskatchewan Flax Development Commission, Canaryseed Development Commission of Saskatchewan, National Sunflower Association of Canada, Canadian Hemp Trade Alliance, Mustard 21, NorQuin (quinoa), and Linnaeus Plant Sciences Inc. (camelina).

For more information about the Diverse Field Crops Cluster, please visit www.dfcc.ca

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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 by the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture through the Canadian Agricultural Partnership program, with additional support from Western Economic Diversification Canada and the National Research Council-Industrial Research Assistance Program.