

Saskatchewan government answer to ABIC keynote speaker's call to action

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A funding announcement made by Saskatchewan premier Brad Wall Sept. 13th at the Agricultural Biotechnology International Conference in Saskatoon was well timed, directly following a call to action by keynote speaker Julian Cribb for more resources for ag-biotechnology research around the world.

The announcement of an additional \$5 million dollars for Saskatchewan's biotechnology sector will enable the innovative work being done in the area to continue and flourish.

The research investment will be provided through the provincial government's Agriculture Development Fund (ADF) over the next four years. The ADF provides funding to help institutions, companies, and industry organizations carry out R&D and activities to add value to agriculture, benefiting Saskatchewan farmers and ranchers.

Wall says Saskatchewan needs to continue to be "a global leader in the field of biotechnology to meet the demand for abundant, high-quality food."

The \$5 million announcement follows the 2010-11 budget commitment of almost \$17 million for agricultural research, as well as a \$5 million commitment to Innovation Saskatchewan. Premier Wall says the provincial government is "a friend and an ally," to the global industry and will work with the world to bring more ag-biotech businesses to the region.

Both Premier Wall and author Julian Cribb noted that the demand for food is expected to grow, with fewer resources, such as land and water. Premier Wall noted that the demand would likely grow by 70 per cent by the year 2040.

Cribb's recently published book entitled "The Coming Famine: The Global Food Crisis and What We Can Do to Avoid It.," cites the challenges the world will face in the coming decades, due to a growing world population and climate change. Among the key elements for finding solutions to the looming crisis, Cribb says, is putting more resources into agricultural biotechnology research.