June 4, 2009

New products transforming Alberta's agriculture and forest industries

Edmonton... The new Alberta Biomaterials Development Centre will help Alberta’s agriculture and forestry industries develop new ways to make products from plant fibre and other bio-based feedstock.

Alberta is inviting researchers and companies from around the world to test methods and technologies for producing new or enhanced materials, chemicals and energy from fibre feedstock. Alberta’s vast feedstock resources and expertise in this emerging sector provide global companies with fertile ground for developing, testing and producing new products.

“Alberta’s strength in research and our great agriculture and forestry resources means we’re in the right place to transform these traditional industries. Our government’s strategies for diversifying our economy show that innovation is the key to gaining new value in industries like agriculture and forestry that are already established in our province,” said Doug Horner, Minister of Advanced Education and Technology.

“Alberta’s forest resources can extend beyond current uses,” said Ted Morton, Minister of Sustainable Resource Development. “New technologies are showing that wood fibre can enhance or replace materials derived from non-renewable resources. This means getting more uses from every tree harvested, to make products with more renewable content.”

“With these technologies, everything a farmer produces becomes potential bio-based building blocks for a new range of chemicals and materials,” said George Groeneveld, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development. “It can lead to new global markets for Alberta products and new sources of skilled employment in rural Alberta and the agricultural sector.”

The Alberta Biomaterials Development Centre is a $15-million investment by partners Advanced Education and Technology through the Alberta Life Sciences Institute, Agriculture and Rural Development, Sustainable Resource Development and the Alberta Research Council.

The centre was created as a response to competitive pressures impacting forestry and agriculture and was developed from recommendations in the 2007 report, Alberta’s Fibre Roadmap: Getting Value from Every Fibre-Making the Most of Alberta's Lignocellulose Resource. Located at the Alberta Research Council’s Vegreville facility and the University of Alberta’s Agriculture Discovery Place in Edmonton, the Alberta Biomaterials Development Centre links research, technology and business to bring new products derived from agriculture and forestry-based fibres to the market faster. It will offer access to expertise, test facilities, scale-up equipment, validation prototyping, and customer-demonstration support.

Attachment: Backgrounder, project partners and funding

Media inquiries may be directed to:
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To call toll free within Alberta dial 310-0000.
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Alberta Biomaterials Development Centre

Project partners

Advanced Education and Technology (AET): AET focuses on the application of science and research and the innovative use of technology to shape the future of the province.

Agriculture and Rural Development (ARD): ARD is responsible for the management of programs designed to facilitate the development of all components of the agriculture and food industry, to sustain the natural resource base of the industry and to encourage the development of rural communities.

Sustainable Resource Development (SRD): SRD works with Albertans to ensure a balance between the economic, environmental and social values of our province; oversees the development of Alberta’s forests; and manages the use of public lands.

Alberta Research Council (ARC): ARC is an applied research and development (R&D) corporation that develops and commercializes technology to grow innovative enterprises.

University of Alberta Agri-Food Discovery Place: An innovative research, training and technology transfer facility that focuses on food safety and value-added processing of food and industrial products

Additional information

Alberta’s Fibre Roadmap: Getting Value from Every Fibre - Making the Most of Alberta’s Lignocellulose Resource: The study addresses the provincial government priority to build a stronger Alberta by identifying ways to diversify our economy, respond to competitive pressures in our renewable resource sectors, and add value to our renewable resources within our borders. View the report at: http://www.advancededandtech.alberta.ca/media/180652/fibre_roadmap.pdf

Project Funding and Support

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<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Type of Investment</th>
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