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Government of Canada Investing in Alberta Barley Farmers

Edmonton, Alberta, July 29, 2010 - The Government of Canada continues to help Canadian barley farmers capture new markets and increase profitability. Today, Member of Parliament Laurie Hawn (Edmonton Centre), on behalf of Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz, announced an investment of more than \$1 million to find ways to include Canada's top quality barley in new markets around the world.

"Canadian barley farmers produce a world class product that is in high " said MP Hawn. "Through this investment, our Government is helping Canadian farmers expand and capture new niche market opportunities around the world that will boost their bottom line."

The Alberta Barley Commission will use this investment to identify and develop new niche markets which will benefit western Canadian barley growers for the shochu barley market. Shochu is a popular Japanese drink derived from barley. While shochu is expected to be the primary market for the selected varieties, they will also perform well as malt or livestock feed, providing western Canadian barley farmers with multiple marketing options for their products.

"The Alberta Barley Commission is confident that barley grown in Canada meets the needs of the Japanese processors for food quality and safety," said Matt Sawyer, Chairman of the Alberta Barley Commission. "It is our goal in Canada to continue to make important gains in this search for higher quality and safety to continue to meet the needs of our customers."

"The shochu barley initiative will build on previous commercialization research led by the Alberta Barley Commission," said Heather Broughton, Chair, Agriculture and Food Council, "This innovative project will help the Alberta barley industry diversify by identifying barley varieties suitable for the shochu, as well as other global barley markets."

This investment is funded through the Government of Canada's Canadian Agricultural Adaptation Program (CAAP), which in Alberta is delivered by the Agriculture and Food Council.

Canada's Economic Action Plan, coupled with other Government of Canada programs and initiatives such as CAAP, continues to help farmers with its focus on strengthening the economy and creating jobs. Investments in viable market opportunities will help to build an even stronger agriculture industry and Canadian economy.

For information on CAAP please see www.agr.gc.ca/caap.

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