

Money given for feed research dollars

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Alberta livestock producers should benefit from money being put into researching livestock feed.

In May 2009, the Alberta Beef Producers (ABP), the **Alberta Barley Commission (ABC)** and the Alberta Crop Industry Development Fund (ACIDF) invested \$6.25 million over five years to develop barley and triticale varieties better suited to the silage and feed grain needs of Alberta's cattle feeding industry.

Of that amount, \$1.5 million came from ABP and \$1.25 million from **ABC** (both using producer check-off dollars), with the remainder from ACIDF.

Recently, the Alberta Livestock and Meat Agency kicked in another \$8 million for the project.

ABP chair Chuck MacLean said the initiative is multi-year because seeing the results of research always takes

time, especially since three or four crops are needed. But the current state of the industry made it imperative to act.

"It's better to do something than to do nothing," said MacLean.

The idea, he said, is to improve not only the yield but also the quality of the grain, to allow producers to be more self-sufficient.

"Nobody likes to live off the back of anybody."

Area ABP representative and Valleyview resident Roland Cailliau said the research is vital because of the cost of feed.

"Feed can make up to 80 per cent of a feedlot's expense, not counting the original cost of the animal," said Cailliau, adding a cow/calf operator has less feed expense.

"Greater volume and value (quality and quantity of energy and protein) in the feed should increase profitability and efficiencies of both (grain and livestock) producers."

Cailliau said through the project, grain producers will hopefully be able to produce more feed grain and yet be profitable by doing so with new varieties, and livestock producers hope higher grain volumes and qualities will make them more efficient and profitable.

MacLean said hopefully the research will be good for the industry in the long term.

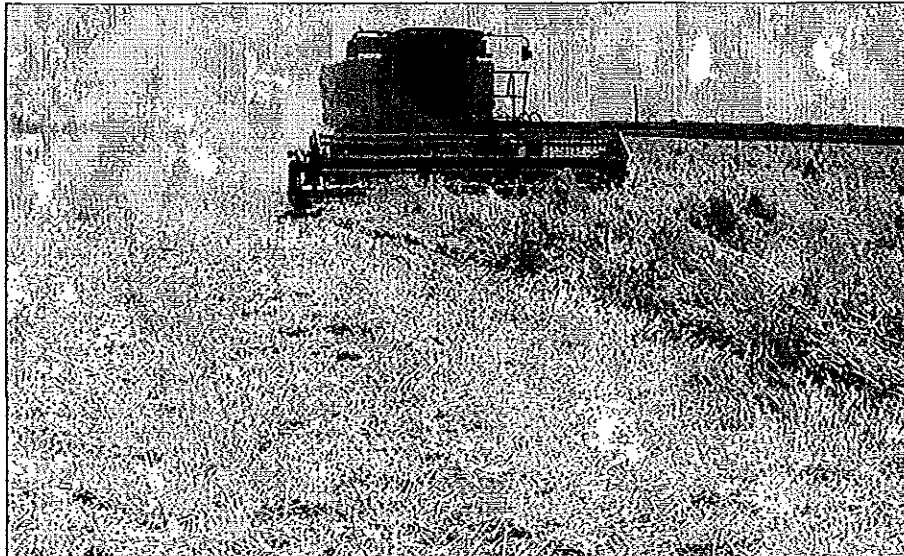
"We were happy to see that ALMA would step up to the plate."

Cailliau agreed, saying provincial and federal governments have provided little or no money into grain research while in the U.S. – with whom Canada's producers are competing – major inroads have been made.

"As livestock producers, we are always glad when funds are made available for research that will ultimately help our industry," he said.

"ABP has identified this as a major problem of our industry."





Alberta producer organizations are researching the development of quality silage and feed varieties.