



NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Agriculture
Ministry of Health

\$25 million for a stronger, more sustainable B.C.

VICTORIA – The Province is providing \$25 million to Genome BC in support of its ongoing research in the areas of agriculture, forestry, fisheries, human health, bioenergy, mining and the environment.

This funding from the Ministry of Health, will allow Genome BC to continue harnessing the power of genomics research and work toward providing solutions to current challenges faced by sectors important to B.C.

This funding is already making a difference in the area of agriculture. Researchers are developing and applying powerful new genomics tools that can be used to help beekeepers stop the colony losses they incur every year. These losses are mostly due to bee-specific infectious diseases and widespread resistance to chemical controls of these diseases is compounding the problem.

Honeybees play a major role in agriculture production – not only as producers of honey, but as pollinators of crops. This contribution is estimated to be worth approximately \$200 million to B.C.'s economy. Researchers are developing new tools to identify disease-resistant honeybees.

This is the first, industry-wide step to mitigate honeybee colony collapse. Consumers will also benefit from improved food security.

Research projects funded through Genome BC apply genomics science to a range of areas. In addition, a critical element of responsible genomics research is to provide a forum through which accompanying environmental, ethical, economic, legal and social issues can be explored so that the context for scientific research remains focused and relevant to society. Investments have led to the creation of full-time research positions, recruitment of top researchers to B.C. and the production of patents and licences in the province.

Genome BC is a non-profit research organization that works to improve the lives of British Columbians and Canadians in such sectors such as forestry, fisheries, agriculture, environment, bioenergy, mining and human health. It manages more than \$450 million in technology platforms and research projects.

Quotes:

Minister of Agriculture Don McRae –

“Without honeybees B.C. families would not be able to enjoy local blueberries, apples, cranberries and raspberries, or vegetables like cucumbers and pumpkins, as they all need pollination to develop. Today’s funding announcement will support many research projects, like finding solutions to the honeybee decline. It will also support research in human health, forestry, fisheries, bioenergy, mining and the environment.”

Minister of Health Michael de Jong –

“Innovation is one of the keys to ensuring an efficient health-care system. With this funding, important research will be able to continue that will help deliver quality services to improve the health of British Columbian families.”

Alan Winter, president and CEO of Genome BC –

“This funding will allow us to take the crucial foundational work that has been done and translate it into real-life applications for B.C. in the years ahead. Our unique approach to co-funding research projects also enables us to leverage the provincial investment fourfold.”

Quick Facts:

- Established in 2000, Genome BC is one of six regional genome centres across Canada.
- Based on a Vancouver Board of Trade study, it is estimated the provincial government’s investment of \$75 million between 2005 and 2010 in Genome BC allowed it to contribute \$450 million to British Columbia’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP), create 8,400 person-years of employment and contribute tax revenues of \$54 million to each of the provincial and federal governments.
- A genome is an organism’s complete DNA blueprint of genetic information.
- An estimated 30,000 honey bee colonies are contracted to pollinate food crops on B.C. farms every growing season.
- Pollination activities are worth approximately \$2.4 million annually to B.C. beekeepers and lead to agricultural products worth approximately \$500 million annually.

Learn More:

Genome BC: www.genomebc.ca

BC Research and Innovation Strategy: www.tted.gov.bc.ca/TRI/research/Documents/strategy.pdf

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