



PRESS RELEASE

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Canadian Hemp Industry Sets Its Course

Buoyed by record high seeded acreage, rapid expansion in food and fibre processing and a new industry association Board of Directors, the Canadian Hemp industry is writing its own Cinderella story. At the 2013 annual convention of the Canadian Hemp Trade Alliance (CHTA) held in Saskatoon in November, participants set a new record for attendance and were treated to a rich roster of industry experts presenting topics ranging from animal feeds to nanotechnology. Presentations addressed opportunities and innovation in food technology, nutrition, medicines, composite products and agronomy.

“The hemp story bears a very strong resemblance to rapeseed in the late sixties” according to Keith Watson, a retiring Manitoba Agriculture agronomist. Watson was honoured at the convention with a lifetime membership to the CHTA and a new briefcase made from hemp.” But hemp has a better story than canola” Watson added. “The Omega fatty acids in its oil are more in balance with human nutritional needs and the protein from the meal has a superior protein profile than canola. And the fibre has significant value too. It is a very profitable crop alternative for Canadian farmers”.

In response to the opportunity, Canadian farmers registered 66,671 acres to seed to hemp in 2013 according to Health Canada records. This is a 50% increase over actual seeded acres in 2012 (based on that year’s estimated flood reduced total). Domestic processors are planning new plants in the fibre and composite sectors and expansion of several oil crushing operations is currently under way. “We are receiving over 100 calls per month asking about hemp products and business opportunities” says Kim Shukla, CHTA Executive Director. “New entrants and interested parties are keeping us very busy”.

At the convention members elected a new Board of Directors which includes hemp growers from Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Quebec as well as representatives from food processors, fibre composite research, retailers, government and food nutrition. “This is the strongest and most diverse Board we have ever had” says Russ Crawford, the newly elected president of the CHTA and a 40 year veteran of Canadian agriculture. “We are very fortunate with the caliber of directors we have attracted to our Board this year and their expertise will provide solid leadership to steer the ship as the industry moves toward its Long Term International Strategy goal of 250,000 acres of hemp by 2018”.

For more information on growing hemp or buying products made from hemp visit the CHTA website at www.hemptrade.ca or call (204) 326-9542 – Kim Shukla, Executive Director.