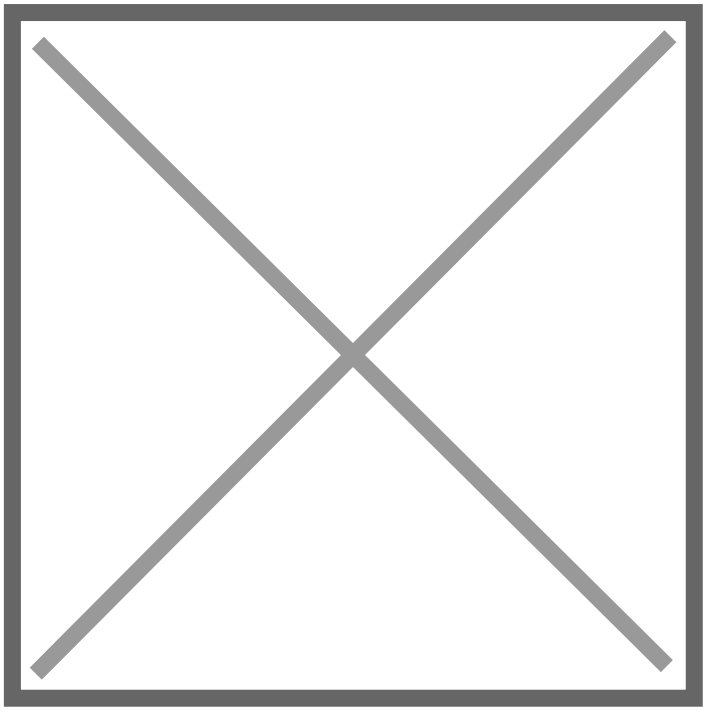


BioClusters

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CANADA

Punjab signs MoU with Province of Saskatchewan

The state of Punjab and the Province of Saskatchewan signed two Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) to work collaboratively to develop scientific, economic and technical linkages and initiatives for the benefit of both Saskatchewan's life science sector and the Punjab.

These collaborations could include transfer of technologies for improvement of pulse and cereal crops, support for the establishment of collaborative research projects aimed at crop improvement, support for advances in crop processing and utilization, as well as the establishment of company to company business relationships in agricultural science.

The MoU was signed during the state chief minister Capt Amarinder Singh's visit to Province of Saskatchewan. During the visit the team led by him met with the Saskatchewan Minister of Industry and Resources, Eric Cline, Saskatoon's Mayor Don Atkinson, and leaders from the Saskatchewan life science community. On behalf of the Province of Saskatchewan, Minister Cline signed a five-year MoU alongside Avtar Henry, the Food and Supplies Minister.

This relationship was initiated in October of 2004 when Dr Ashley O'Sullivan, president and CEO of Ag-West Bio, was part of a mission to Punjab. During this mission, Ag-West Bio and the Punjab Biotechnology Park Ltd. (PBPL) of Chandigarh signed a MoU to develop a framework of collaboration for economic, scientific, and technological developments in agricultural and environmental biotechnology, bioprocessing, and health care. As a result, several potential deals are currently being facilitated between Indian and Saskatchewan companies.

Source: www.biotech.ca

ASIA

Pakistan set to enter GM cotton era

"The developments made in cotton biotechnology by the country's scientists were quite impressive and that Pakistan was set to enter the era of genetically-modified cotton once the bio-safety guidelines, to be issued by the Ministry of Environment, were put in place," said Sikandar Hayat Bosan, Federal Minister for Food, Agriculture and Livestock.

Speaking at an international conference on " Biotechnology for Salinity and Drought Tolerance in Plant" at Islamabad, Bosan said, "Six million hectares in Pakistan were affected by salinity and water logging, owing to which 25 per cent productivity of crops had been affected. Biotechnology was the only solution to the problem."

Bosan further noted that Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz had instructed the Ministry of Environment to finalize the bio-safety guidelines.

Source: www.agbioworld.org

NEW ZEALAND

New Zealand to invest $41 million in business R&D

New Zealand's Biotech Industry Organisation (NZBio) has congratulated the government on a solid incremental improvement in funding for research, science and technology in this years' budget.

"The government has made a significant investment of $41 million in Technology New Zealand, an initiative that supports business R&D," Brian Ward, CEO, NZBio said.

"We also welcome the extra $16.2 million for industry-based research through research consortia, the additional $14.7 million to expand Technology for Industry Fellowships Programmes, and $58.4 million for regional and sectoral development.

"Supporting the biotechnology business community will ultimately strengthen New Zealand's economic basis, and the increase in research funding will be very beneficial for companies wishing to commercialize technologies, improve their ability to innovate and compete internationally.

"Other good news for the biotechnology sector includes changes in taxation law that will see the removal of barriers to R&D investment, and temporary tax exemption on the foreign income of new migrants and New Zealanders who have been non-resident for tax purposes for at least 10 years and come back here to work. New Zealand's biotechnology industry needs the best international talent available, and these measures will go a long way towards encouraging ex-pat Kiwis and new migrants to build their careers here," Brian Ward said.

Source: www.nzbio.org.nz

AMERICA

New Bioenergy Bill introduced

The Biotechnology Industry Organization (BIO) strongly endorses the National Security and Bioenergy Investment Act of 2005, introduced by Tom Harkin and Richard Lugar, members of the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee.

The bill updates the Biomass Research and Development Act with the goal of rapidly boosting the production of bio-based fuels at competitive prices, developing a broad range of bio-based products that replace petroleum-based products, and expanding opportunities in the growing bio-economy. The Bill also establishes incentives to increase the production of ethanol from cellulose-containing crops and crop wastes and expands the Federal Agency Biobased Procurement Program among other things.

Source: www.bio.org