



Speaking Notes for

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For a presentation to the

Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food

**“Innovation & Partnership in the
Bioeconomy”**

Ottawa
May 8, 2007



Thank you for the opportunity to speak at your meeting. As I understand it, today's hearings are about a new agriculture policy for Canada – the Next Generation of agriculture. In looking at how we could participate in this review, CropLife Canada members and our GrowCanada® partners discovered that we share optimism about the future of agriculture and the opportunities for innovation. Joining me today is Richard Phillips, Executive Director for the Grain Growers of Canada. Also attending are representatives from the Canadian Seed Trade Association, and the Canola Council of Canada. And of course, the Canadian Federation of Agriculture here before you. We are all part of the GrowCanada® partnership.

While production agriculture has endured major challenges in the past few years, the GrowCanada® partners are united in our belief that plant science innovation can be – at least in part – a solution to the challenges facing agriculture. We see this as an opportunity to articulate a vision that offers a value chain perspective with innovation at its core.

The end result is this publication:

“Innovation and Partnership in the Bio-Economy – A Discussion paper on the future of Agriculture”.

In addition to CropLife Canada there are 8 allied stakeholder organizations that have lent their name in support of the document and the vision it has for the

future of agriculture. They are the: Grain Growers of Canada, Canadian Federation of Agriculture, Canadian Canola Growers Association, Canola Council of Canada, Pulse Canada, Canadian Horticultural Council, Canadian Seed Trade Association, and Canadian Renewable Fuels Association.

Organizations like the Canadian Federation of Agriculture have worked hard on their vision as well – CropLife Canada certainly supports the CFA's strategic growth pillar of its recommendations for the next generation of agriculture policy. GrowCanada® is focused on innovation, and we think this is an important and sometimes overlooked component.

So what is this collective vision for the future of agriculture?

We envision by the year 2015
*a prosperous, sustainable, and competitive
agriculture sector
in a flourishing bio-economy
built on leadership in scientific research,
innovation and the adoption of new technologies
and on working together in “win:win:win: value
chain strategic alliances,
to be a world leader in providing new products
and new solutions
for agriculture, nutritional, health, energy, and
environmental challenges facing consumers here
in Canada, and in markets around the world,*

so that all Canadians will enjoy the economic, environmental and social benefits of the bio-economy.

What does this vision – this opportunity – look like in real terms?

Well, we believe that by the middle to latter half of the next decade, there is the potential for a 500 billion dollar global bio-economy driven by discovery and innovation in plant sciences. Contrast that estimate to the size of the global plant science industry today, estimated at approximately 40 billion dollars.

This means translating our substantial investment in R&D – some 7.5% of sales – into new directions for

agriculture. This Committee is very familiar with the opportunity for agriculture from bio-fuels. Let me add:

- Crops producing vaccines and pharmaceuticals.
- Crops delivering nutraceuticals and functional foods.
- Crops generating biodegradable plastics and other biomaterials.
- Crops that can better withstand heat and drought, disease, cold and frost, and that grow in saline soils.

Today's measure of success for agriculture is increases in yield. In the future, we can imagine the evolution of quite different benchmarks. For example:

- Doses of medicine per acre,

- Litres of bio-diesel produced or the number of kilometers per acre.

And all this innovation has positive impacts on downstream processing such as the expansion of canola crushing capacity in the Prairies or ethanol plants across the country.

Plant Science: Solutions for Society's Challenges

What all of these innovations represent are solutions. Solutions for some of the most daunting challenges facing our society in agriculture, nutrition, health care, energy, and the environment, in both developed and developing economies.

They also represent solutions for farmers' most daunting production challenges, as well as economic opportunity for farmers and for the entire agriculture value chain.

Partnerships: Moving Technology Forward

But while scientific innovation is a pivotal and key driver for the bio-economy of the future, it's not enough on its own: forging strategic alliances and partnerships throughout the value chain is pivotal to ensuring the sector's commercial success. It is also about government looking at regulation in new and different ways.

Implementing the “New” Agriculture – Turning

Vision into Reality

How do we turn the vision into reality?

While I have outlined the role that industry can play, an important partner to make this happen is government. The recommendations to government in the paper are really the centerpiece of the entire document.

They fall into four broad categories:

1. Implement policy frameworks and regulation to *enable* innovation not disable – not talking about compromising health & environmental safety.

- Talking about using a “smart” regulations approach.
- Accelerating the development of science based policies and regulation – as innovative companies we need a predictable set of rules

- Communicating to the public to build confidence in the regulatory system

2. Help farmers adopt and adapt to innovation opportunities

- Assisting with on-farm infrastructure changes – the implementation of Quality Assurance programs, ISO certification
- Safety programs: HACCP, Environmental Farm Plan, behind-the-farm gate stewardship
- Providing training for handling new technologies through best management practices and environmental stewardship
- Closing the pesticide technology gap with the U.S.

3. Promote market acceptance

- Communicating technology's contribution to agriculture and assisting with regulatory capacity building both at home and abroad.

Finally, one more recommendation.

To help impress upon the public, the value chain stakeholders, and our global customers, that it is not business as usual in agriculture and to change the mindset from the “old” agriculture to the “new” agriculture, we recommend a name change to the department of agriculture.

4. Change the name from “Agriculture and Agri-food” to the department of “Agriculture, Food, and Bio-Resources”. This change – while symbolic - would

help make clear the fact that we are entering an era of transformed agriculture.

Conclusion

What's in this new vision for Canada?

For Canada and Canadians it is about environmental sustainability and economic opportunity.

It is about job growth, about increasing our productivity as a nation, about rural and regional economic diversification, about our international competitiveness, about a safe and secure food supply; and about prosperity for all.

It's about "growing Canada"!!