



Creating a New Pharmaceutical Industry in Canada

Issue

A thriving pharmaceutical industry is growing poppies for pharmaceutical medicines in the United Kingdom, Europe and Australia, but not in North America.

Background

A new variety of poppy with high levels of thebaine can be used to produce prescription drugs such as oxycodone and codeine, and does not contain the narcotic properties of traditional poppies.

There is a thriving pharmaceutical industry growing poppies for pharmaceutical medicines in the United Kingdom, Europe and Australia, but not in North America.

Canada is the only G8 country that does not grow or process the raw materials for poppy processing; however, Canadians purchased over \$600 million in prescription medications derived from poppies in 2011.

Several locations have the ideal growing conditions for a high content thebaine poppy crop in our country.

It is critical for the federal government to open the way now for the private sector to innovate and find new, higher value-added opportunities by using our soil, water, processing factories, and research scientists. This is especially important so that national objectives are achieved to replace public sector fiscal stimulus with private sector investment and to enhance farm incomes from the market.

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce supports the creation of a cluster of biological science industries that would marry farm commodities and biotechnical research. This approach has the potential to stabilize the foreign exchange fluctuations that negatively affect the international competitiveness of many agricultural and manufacturing sectors.

The Alberta Chambers of Commerce recommends that the Government of Alberta:

1. Facilitate the creation of a new pharmaceutical industry by communicating to the federal Minister of Health that when reviewing applications for approval, the Minister recognizes the potential of farming and processing of high-level thebaine poppy in Canada for the pharmaceutical industry; and

that these applications be expeditiously reviewed and approved by Health Canada and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency.

2. Support ongoing research at universities that are currently working on projects, including high-level thebaine poppies that foster a new national pharmaceutical industry.