



**PRESS RELEASE**  
**For immediate release**

**Researchers receive funding to fight salmonellosis and improve soybean production**  
*Genomics working for Québec's agrifood industry*

**Montréal, July 21, 2015** – Génome Québec is pleased to announce that two major international research projects have been selected for funding under Genome Canada's new funding competition, Genomics and Feeding the Future.

The goal of the funded projects is to harness the transformative power of genomics and its related disciplines in order to generate significant economic benefits and improve the well-being of the population. "We are working to ensure the sustainable development of Québec's bioeconomy. The results of the program allows Québec to drive genomic research toward strategic applications for the agrifood industry: it's a major leap forward for the sector, since the projects funded in Québec focuses on food safety, security and optimized food production. The benefits of research result as applied to agrifood will have a positive impact on both the local and world population," said Catalina López Correa, Vice President, Scientific Affairs at Génome Québec.

Under the program, Québec will receive \$23 million – 27% of the total sum invested in Canada. Given that Québec represents approximately 23% of the Canadian population, this performance is excellent news for the province's agrifood industry, which is beginning to derive more and more benefits from the application of genomic research.

**Ensuring food safety and reducing the economic burden of salmonellosis**

**Lawrence Goodridge** of McGill University and **Roger C. Levesque** from Institute for Integrative Systems Biology of Université Laval are leading a team that is using whole genome sequencing to identify the specific *Salmonella* strains that cause human disease. With this knowledge, the team will develop natural biosolutions to control the presence of *Salmonella* in fruit and vegetables as they are growing in the field. The team will also develop new tests to rapidly and efficiently detect the presence of *Salmonella* on fresh produce before it is sold to consumers, as well as tools to allow public health officials to determine the source of *Salmonella* outbreaks when they occur, so that contaminated food can be quickly removed from grocery stores and restaurants. Their work will reduce the number of people infected with *Salmonella* each year, as well as the economic costs of the infection.

**Improving yield and disease resistance in short-season soybean**

**François Belzile** and **Richard Bélanger** of Université Laval are leading a team that will probe deeply into the genetic code of soybeans to identify DNA markers that control key aspects of plant growth such as time to maturity and resistance to diseases and pests. Breeders will be able to use these markers to develop improved soybean varieties best suited to Canadian weather conditions. The team will also breed soybean varieties resistant to certain prevailing pests and diseases. As well, they will conduct research focused on maximizing the growth potential of the soybean industry in Canada to accelerate producer adoption of soybeans in western Canada. Economic spinoffs of this research have the potential to reach \$278 million annually, based on increasing the yield potential of soybean crops, increasing their resistance against diseases and pests and reducing the use of pesticides.



Two additional Québec researchers received funding under the Genomics and Feeding the Future competition as collaborators on projects spearheaded by British Columbia. These projects focus on the health of honey bees and salmon production.

### **About Génome Québec**

Since May 2000, Génome Québec has been the driving force behind the development of genomics in Québec. By supporting over 80 projects and 900 researchers and managing the operations of the McGill University and Génome Québec Innovation Centre, Génome Québec is helping to accelerate the discovery of new applications for genomics in strategic areas, such as personalized health care, forestry, the environment and agrifood.

The funds invested by Génome Québec are provided by the ministère de l'Économie, de l'Innovation et des Exportations du Québec, the Government of Canada, through Genome Canada, and private partners.

For more information, visit [www.genomequebec.com](http://www.genomequebec.com).

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