



Health, energy, food security, and investment key themes at ABIC 2010 conference

Saskatoon, SK: Biotech innovators are gathering at TCU Place in Saskatoon from September 12 to 15 to explore new answers to some ancient questions: how can we feed ourselves, protect our planet, maintain our health, and still make a living?

ABIC 2010 - the Agricultural Biotechnology International Conference - brings together experts from around the world to explore the science of agricultural production, food safety, sustainable development, and investment.

At the pre-conference public forum on Sunday, one of Canada's most preeminent science journalists, Jay Ingram, will explore an information paradox. Why is it that even if you have excellent facts to prove your case - whether it be on climate change or GM foods - it doesn't necessarily mean people will agree with you?

On Monday, the conference officially begins with a keynote presentation by Dr. John Hamer from the international life sciences investment firm Burrill & Company. Hamer will speak on how agbiotech innovation has come from small and medium enterprises so far, and how the time is ripe for investors to take the industry to the next level.

Next at the podium will be Australian author, academic, and champion of science communication, Julian Cribb, who argues that global food security is by far the most pressing challenge facing humanity. He will outline some essential solutions, including opportunities for agbiotech.

On Tuesday, keynote speaker Dr. Prem Warrior, from the Agriculture Development Group of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, notes how the developed world has made significant gains through agricultural innovation. Warrior will discuss how biotechnology could be the answer to hunger and poverty by increasing productivity of the small farms that are the norm in three quarters of the world's economies.

Then, Dr. Karl Dawson of the Alltech Centre for Nutrigenomics and Applied Animal Nutrition will discuss how new biotechnologies are not only changing the way we produce our foods, but also how we use them. These technologies promise to re-shape the way we understand nutrition, and transform our systems for controlling food safety.

Wednesday's keynote will be delivered by Dr. Clive James of the International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications (ISAAA). James will speak of the role of biotechnology in helping us face the enormous challenges of achieving environmental, social, and economic sustainability in a world where nearly one billion people suffer from malnutrition.

All speakers, including the keynotes, will be available for media interviews in the green room at TCU Place for a half hour immediately following their session. ABIC staff and volunteers will be on hand to help arrange interviews outside these times.

ABIC 2010 is hosted by Ag-West Bio. Since it began in Saskatoon in 1996, the conference has traveled the world, from Australia and Ireland to Germany and Thailand. ABIC 2010, themed "Bridging Biotechnology and Business," offers three concurrent streams covering Energy, Health, and Sustainability. Media representatives are highly encouraged to register before the conference at www.abic.ca/abic2010.

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Please note that cellphones do not function well inside TCU Place.