

## **Nearly \$50M invested in the Canadian Agri-Food Automation and Intelligence Network**

New innovation competition will bring together eight partners to accelerate Canadian leadership in digitization and automation in agriculture.

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By Jennifer Paige



The Government of Canada continues to invest in the agriculture and agri-food industry to create good middle-class jobs and ensure the sector punches above its weight in a competitive global market.

The Honourable Amarjeet Sohi, Minister of Natural Resources, on behalf of the Honourable Navdeep Bains, Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, recently announced an investment of up to \$49.5 million in the Canadian Agri-Food Automation and Intelligence Network (CAAIN), a network

bringing together the private sector, academia and research institutions to accelerate automation and digitization in Canada's agricultural sector.

CAAIN's \$108.5 million project will build on Canada's strengths in artificial intelligence (AI), robotics and precision agriculture to develop exportable farming solutions that will reduce reliance on temporary labour, increase global competitiveness and improve profitability for Canadian farmers.

Thanks in part to this investment, Canadians will benefit from the creation of highly skilled jobs and new businesses, improved food safety and livestock traceability, and smarter agriculture that reduces greenhouse gas emissions and land, water and pesticide use.

"Demand is growing for Canada to help feed a hungry planet, and our new technologies, approaches and processes, in conjunction with meaningful partnerships, will strengthen our agricultural sector and help meet that demand. CAAIN will build on innovation within the agricultural sector by bringing technology to market, applying data and new problem-solving technologies like artificial intelligence, and identifying opportunities for collaboration across the value chain between sectors," said Laura Kilcrease, CEO, Alberta Innovates.

Spearheaded by Alberta Innovates and the Vineland Research and Innovation Centre, together with Alberta's Olds College and Lakeland College, CAAIN is expected to begin with eight partners from British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario and Quebec. The network will use the Olds College Smart Farm as a hub to develop and test new technologies.

This project supports investment in increased automation and digitization in the agriculture and agri-food sectors to boost competitiveness, as recommended by the Agri-Food Economic Strategy Table.

This investment is being made through Stream 4 of the Strategic Innovation Fund, a program designed to attract and support high-quality business investments in Canada's most dynamic and innovative sectors. CAAIN is one of two winning projects to receive Strategic Innovation Fund support following a rigorous competition that was first announced on December 14, 2018.

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