



## COMMENTARY

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### “The Voice of Manitoba Farmers”

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## ecoABC Puts Farmers in the Driver’s Seat

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Farmers are one step closer to being in at the ground floor of Canada’s emerging biofuel economy. Recently, the federal government announced the details of a program called ecoABC which provides incentives for ethanol and biodiesel production, based on the level of farmer investment in the projects. As the percentage of farmer ownership goes up, so does the federal level of support, ranging from 5 cents per litre up to 20 cents per litre.

This is the kind of funding support that will encourage growth in rural areas, and also develop new markets and new investments for farmers. Another condition of the ecoAgricultural Biofuels Capital (ecoABC) Initiative is that these facilities must use agricultural feedstocks like canola or wheat as the raw materials in the facility. This will help create a new market for farmers’ grains, and encourage research into new crop varieties that are suitable for the fuel market.

Biofuels will help to re-start rural Canada’s economic engine, and it makes sense for farmers to be in the driver’s seat. The benefits of alternate fuels should be felt in the rural communities that produce them, not just in the urban centres that purchase them. By providing these incentives, government is sending the right signal to innovative companies and investors to locate and source their projects in rural areas.

Farmers have a unique opportunity to capitalize on biofuels to build their operations, diversify their investments, and drive more rural economic growth. At the same time, farmers can be part of the environmental solution, and that’s always a good move.