Vertical Announces Wollastonite Research and Development Results

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Vancouver, British Columbia (FSCwire) - Vertical Exploration Inc. (V: VERT.H) (“Vertical” or “the Company”) is pleased to announce the successful completion of Phase Two trials involving cannabis growth with wollastonite ($CaSiO_3$) as a growth medium additive at BC Bud Depot’s ACMPR-licenced Research and Development facilities in Vancouver, BC. Samples of marijuana grown with 15% wollastonite from Vertical’s St. Onge project were entered in an international growers’ competition, winning first place overall for Best Flower at the August 2018 Kootenay Cannabis Cup in Cranbrook, BC.

Phase 2 of the BCBD wollastonite study began Apr. 4th, 2018 with 270 plants being tested after Phase 1 showed crushed powder, at either 5% or 10% per plant/base potting mix ratio, had a dramatic effect that reduced the test group resistance to stresses such as nutrient imbalances, water, pests and diseases. BCBD decided to use crushed powder and crushed small granular in Phase 2 studies after Phase 1 results.

First part of Phase 2-A was broken into 6 groups, using only crushed powder, 30 plants in each group with increasing amounts of wollastonite used in each group. Ratios of 2%, 5%, 10%, 15% and 20% were used in the base potting mix and a control group.

BCBD base potting mix and control groups had an average PH level of 6.0, at 2% no PH changes were noticed, at 5% PH level raised to 6.1, at 10% PH level raised to 6.3, at 15% PH level raised to 6.5, at 20% PH level raised to 6.8.

There was a noticeable difference in root mass, root health, and resistance to stresses in the 5%, 10%, and 15% groups. There was also a noticeable difference in foliage density when compared to the control group.

Phase 2-B was started July 20th, 2018 using crushed small granular, using the same base formula that was established in Phase 2-A, results for this Phase are still undetermined.

270 plants were involved in the trials, split into 30-plant groups with wollastonite added at 0%, 2%, 5%, 10%, 15% and 20% of the total growth medium.

“We documented soil PH and insect pest levels on a weekly basis through the course of our study,” reported Matthew Harvey, Vertical’s Director of Research and Development. “We observed a steadily declining pest density as levels of wollastonite increased. In terms of crop protection, wollastonite addition had the greatest net benefit of any environmental measure we took, sharply reducing or even eliminating the need to use other means to manage pest activity. Reduced insect stress allowed higher plant health and vigour, leading to greater yields of end marijuana product, especially in the 10%, 15% and 20% wollastonite groups. Our in-house experts deemed that peak marijuana quality occurred in plants grown with 15% wollastonite. The judges at the Kootenays Cannabis Cup event did not disagree.”

The growth trials also documented improved root and foliage density with the addition of wollastonite. Result tables from the time of harvest indicate a sharp contrast between sparser, tinted roots of control groups (consisting of peat moss, worm castings, kelp meal and glacial rock dust) and the dense, white root matrix of plants grown with 10%, 15% and 20% wollastonite. Wollastonite used in the study was -40 mesh fine-grade powder, sourced from the Company’s St. Onge Wollastonite project located in Quebec, Canada.

BC Bud Depot Operations Manager Rick Kendall reported that from an accounting perspective, the costs of growing with wollastonite were offset by the cost savings associated with reduced pest management requirements. “From an industry perspective, wollastonite is a very appealing additive because it couples crop protection with product improvement,” Kendall stated. “For consumers, it leads to a more natural and organic product. For Micro Producers it means enhanced quality and a simplified growing process. For the large-scale producers, risk mitigation and crop protection will be the greatest driver for wollastonite adoption in the cannabis industry.”

The Cannabis strains used in the wollastonite trials were BC Sweet God and Cali Cure, a high-CBD strain. The First Place Overall award for BC Sweet God was the 45th major award earned by BC Bud Depot over fifteen years of international competition, but the first one credited largely to a soil additive.

“Competition at these events is extremely tight,” stated Harvey. “It takes more than excellent genetic varieties win awards at this kind of competition. It takes advanced growing techniques and high-quality soils. Our soil recipe featuring high levels of wollastonite allowed plants to maximize their genetic potential to produce cannabinoids and terpenes. We’re extremely pleased by the competition results and what it does for us as a company, showing our top genetics, high-end skills and techniques. Growers tend to be secretive about their soil recipes, but we’re happy to share that wollastonite is a key ingredient leading to the success of our grows.”

Peter P. Swistak, President/CEO of Vertical Inc., states, “Among the various research and validation programs initiated so far by Vertical in the agricultural sector, positive feedback from BCBD shows no doubt that Vertical’s decision to market the St.-Onge Wollastonite outside of traditional markets will diversify and increase marketable solutions for the benefit of our shareholders. More research results are anticipated shortly.”

ABOUT VERTICAL EXPLORATION

Vertical Exploration’s mission is to identify, acquire, and advance high potential mining prospects located in North America for the benefit of its stakeholders. The Company’s flagship St-Onge Wollastonite property is located in the Lac-Saint-Jean area in the Province of Quebec.

ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD

Peter P. Swistak, President

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