

Experimentation of Environmental, Agricultural and Forestry Applications for New Agronomic Products Based on Wollastonite

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ALMA, June 1, 2022 - Collège d'Alma and its College Center for Technology Transfer (CCTT), Agrinova, are pleased to announce the beginning of large-scale experimental work for the development of agronomic products with wollastonite. The three-year research program has a total budget of \$342,000, of which \$225,000 comes from financial assistance obtained through the Science Research Council's College and Community Innovation Program (CCI) from Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC). The partners, who will provide \$117,000 in cash, labor, and materials, are Magnor Exploration Inc., in charge of mining the Canton Saint-Onge wollastonite deposit in Saint-Ludger-de-Milot for [Vertical Exploration Inc.](#), and Arianne Phosphate, whose collaboration on the project will test the potential synergy with its high-purity apatite concentrated product.

The project aims to experiment with the environmental, agricultural and forestry applications of new agronomic products with wollastonite and apatite. In 2018, Agrinova's preliminary work already suggest a strong potential for soil amendments from the product of wollastonite alone, a mineral species of the silicate group. The current trials will include apatite, a natural phosphorus fertilizer. This combination shows promise for fixing phosphorus and acting as a slow released fertilizer. Other anticipated results also include neutralization of acidic soils, protection against some pests (e.g. spruce budworm), improvement of plant resistance to environmental stresses, and decontamination of tributaries. Qualifying as organic soil amendment, the potential markets for these two regional products include, among others, maple syrup production, production of grass (sod), field crops (cereals, corn, and soy) and boreal forestry.

Between the exploitation of deposits and the supply of products adapted to agriculture and forestry, the demonstration of the effectiveness and harmlessness of the new products is to be done by the partners who look for short-term marketing. The project's main objective is therefore to develop new certifiable agronomic products based on wollastonite and apatite and to assess their environmental and economic performance.

Mr. Régis Pilote, biol., agr., M. Sc. and team leader of agronomic services in an industrial environment for Agrinova and principal researcher of the project mentions: "This new product will be complementary to existing products for the fertilization of crops and soil amendment. It provides silica, which is assimilated by plants when chemically available and reinforces their hydrocarbon skeleton, making them stronger to deal with crop enemies and climatic stresses".

Mr. Peter Swistak, President of [Vertical Exploration Inc.](#), says: "This research program comes at a right time when many potential customers are asking for access to our product to test its effectiveness." Mr. Bernard Lapointe, Ph.D. and technical advisor for [Vertical Exploration Inc.](#), comments as follows: "Recent geopolitical events on a global scale have a major influence on the price of various inputs in agriculture. These price increases' as well as the risks of shortage of some products encourage countries to secure their food supply by developing local natural fertilizers, which moreover produce significantly less greenhouse gases during their manufacture".

Mr. Raphaël Gaudreault, engineer and chief of operations for Arianne Phosphate, indicates: "Our company is already involved in various research on the development of natural biological fertilizers, and it is with pleasure that we are associated with this new study".

About Vertical Exploration Inc.

The mission of [Vertical Exploration Inc.](#) (www.vertxinc.com) is to identify, acquire and develop high potential mining sites located in North America for the benefit of its stakeholders. The company's flagship property, the

Canton Saint-Onge wollastonite deposit located in Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean in the province of Quebec, is operated by Magnor Exploration Inc.

About Arianne Phosphate

Arianne Phosphate ("Arianne Phosphate inc." - www.arianne-inc.com) develops the phosphate deposits of the Lac à Paul project, approximately 200 km in the north of the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean region in Quebec (Canada). These deposits will produce a high-quality igneous apatite concentrate grading 39% P₂O₅ (feasibility study published in 2013) and containing little or no contaminants. The company has 189,969,848 shares outstanding.

About Agrinova

Created in 1996, Agrinova (www.agrinova.qc.ca) is a college center for technology transfer in agriculture (CCTT) affiliated with Alma College. With more than 1,600 projects carried out since its creation, Agrinova has demonstrated its ability to respond effectively to the innovation needs of Quebec businesses, particularly in various fields of action, such as animal production, in field crops, northern agroforestry, land use management, berry production, greenhouse cultivation, revegetation of degraded sites and reduction of greenhouse gases (GHG).

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