FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The W. Garfield Weston Foundation contributes $2-million to Canadian seed biodiversity

Ottawa, May 31, 2017 – USC Canada is pleased to announce a generous $2-million donation from The W. Garfield Weston Foundation in support of the most comprehensive nation-wide seed biodiversity program: The Bauta Family Initiative on Canadian Seed Security.

This gift is championed by Mrs. Gretchen Bauta, Director, The W. Garfield Weston Foundation. The Foundation is a strong supporter of biodiversity conservation; combined giving to The Bauta Family Initiative on Canadian Seed Security’s program totals more than $7-million.

“We are delighted to support this incredibly innovative program that is science-based, farmer-led, and already yielding tangible results for Canadian growers,” said Mrs. Bauta.

Conserving, adapting, and creating new biodiversity in Canada

In an age of ever-changing growing conditions, food security requires locally grown, diverse seed. The Bauta Family Initiative on Canadian Seed Security works with hundreds of farmers across the country to conserve diversity, breed new crop varieties, and adapt diverse vegetables and grains to Canadian climates and sustainable farming methods.

“The vast majority of our food begins with a seed, and diversity in our seed supply is our greatest asset in the fight against climate change. What sets our work apart is placing the knowledge and experience of farmers front and centre,” said Jane Rabinowicz, Executive Director, USC Canada.

Through this initiative, producers collaborate with researchers at the University of Manitoba to breed new varieties of wheat, oats, corn, and potatoes. Early trials of the wheat, bred organically and carefully selected by farmers in their fields, have shown nine per cent higher yields, better disease resistance, and higher micronutrient content than standard commercial varieties.

“We are thrilled with the renewed commitment of the Foundation. Their leadership will advance participatory plant breeding and seed conservation, and establish this work as essential to the agricultural landscape in Canada,” said Aabir Dey, National Program Manager, The Bauta Family Initiative on Canadian Seed Security.

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About The Bauta Family Initiative on Canadian Seed Security

Delivered by USC Canada, in partnership with Seeds of Diversity Canada, The Bauta Family Initiative on Canadian Seed Security is Canada’s most comprehensive effort to build resilience in Canada’s seed system. The program, launched in 2013, works with producers, researchers, governments, businesses, and civil society partners to conserve biodiversity, maintain public access to seed, and deliver research and training programs on ecological seed production.
About The W. Garfield Weston Foundation

The W. Garfield Weston Foundation is a Canadian charitable trust, established by Garfield and Reta Weston and their nine children in 1958. It was the belief of the founders that since it was the hard work of Canadian employees that made the Foundation possible, that its charitable funding should be directed to the benefit of Canadians. The mandate of The W. Garfield Weston Foundation includes neuroscience, land conservation, education and research in Canada’s North.

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LINKS
USC Canada | usc-canada.org
The Bauta Family Initiative on Canadian Seed Security | seedsecurity.ca
The W. Garfield Weston Foundation | westonfoundation.org