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A new opportunity to develop livestock and human vaccine in Saskatchewan: SARM supports VIDO's effort to strengthen the response to infectious disease

The Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities (SARM) Board of Director's met with the University of Saskatchewan's Vaccine Infectious Disease Organization (VIDO) in January, to discuss the ways rural municipalities can support and strengthen the world's response to infectious diseases. This includes helping to establish VIDO as Canada's Centre for Pandemic Research.

"We are excited about our newly formed unity to stand as friends of VIDO, assisting VIDO with the promotion of the organization and their important work," says Ray Orb, SARM President. "We acknowledge and support the extensive work VIDO has done in the past four decades. We recognize many of our rural members' livelihoods depend on the health and well-being of their livestock and VIDO is leading the way in developing essential animal vaccines and antivirals."

SARM's 296 rural municipalities are home to large cattle, sheep, bison, and swine producers. VIDO's research and work directly impact our producers, feedlots, and ranches:

- VIDO created, Vicogen, a recognizable vaccine against calf scours launched in 1978
- VIDO created a new vaccine for lung disease in sheep,
- VIDO is developing a vaccine for Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD),
- VIDO created a vaccine for lung plaque in cattle, and
- VIDO continues the work of developing a vaccine for African Swine Fever.

"Not only does SARM support VIDO's critical work with livestock, but with their efforts surrounding Covid19. Recently, it's been proven that we need local organizations like VIDO, Canada's Centre for Pandemic Research, to take the lead in developing vaccines. VIDO has taken the initiative and advanced a Covid19 vaccine to clinical trials. They are an organization that is here to problem solve on multiple levels," says Orb.

SARM intends to continue its support for VIDO and its international partners studying human and animal pathogens and developing solutions for infectious diseases around the world.

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Background: *SARM is the independent association that represents its membership of rural municipal government in Saskatchewan and is the principal advocate in representing them before senior governments.*

VIDO The University of Saskatchewan's Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization (VIDO) is internationally recognized for its role in vaccine development and is one of Canada's national science facilities. VIDO has a 45-year history of vaccine development and commercialization—eight of its vaccines have been sold commercially, and six have been described as world-firsts. The >170-member organization operates using an ISO:9001 certified management system in state-of-the-art containment facilities. VIDO receives core operating support from the Canada Foundation for Innovation Major Science Initiatives fund and the Government of Saskatchewan through Innovation Saskatchewan and the Ministry of Agriculture. Visit www.vido.org.

SARM's 117th Annual Convention is March 15-17, 2022, at the Queensbury Centre in Regina. We invite provincial news agencies to join us as representatives from rural Saskatchewan municipalities converge to discuss and debate key, timely topics, among them, the critical issue of Saskatchewan's need to strengthen the response to infectious disease.

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