

August 6, 2021

**PRESS RELEASE for immediate distribution.**

**SouthGrow and MNP issue call for applicants for annual Agri-food Futures Scholarships.  
Southern Alberta**

As part of an ongoing effort to invest in the future of the agri-food economy of Southern Alberta, the SouthGrow Regional Economic Development Alliance issued a call today for applicants to their annual Agri-food Futures Scholarships.

**“This is the third year we’ve issued these scholarships to support young people who are exploring careers in this sector,” said Mayor Jim Willett from the Village of Coutts and Chairperson of SouthGrow. “With these scholarships we’re sending the message that there are excellent careers in southern Alberta working in and around the food industry, from farm to table, and that you can secure an education and a good paying job right here.”**

The numbers certainly back up what SouthGrow is saying. A 2018 report from Brookings posited that over half of the world’s population is now middle class or wealthier – and the trend lines continue to improve. Additionally, the UN estimates that the global population is headed to nearly 11 billion by 2100. That’s a lot of mouths to feed, and increasingly wealthy populations around the world have more money to spend on high quality food from regions like Southern Alberta.

“When you add in the impacts of climate change, the forecasts get even better for the food industry in Canada. Many of the global regions that are experiencing sharp increases in food demand also face challenges with increasing their food supply as climate change negatively impacts the efficiency of their production. We’ve got it comparatively good in Canada and will have an easier time with adaptation. That all adds up to opportunity,” says Peter Casurella, Executive Director of SouthGrow.

This year SouthGrow has been joined by MNP, a leading national accounting, tax, and business consulting firm in Canada, in their sponsorship of the scholarships. Bruce Warkentin of MNP provided a \$1500.00 donation to be split between the two scholarships.

**“MNP strongly believes in the future of agri-business in southern Alberta and the investments we make today in our youth will result in significant returns for all stakeholders.” – Bruce Warkentin, MNP.**

MNP has deep partnerships throughout Southern Alberta in the agri-food space and their contribution makes the SouthGrow scholarships even more impactful. The Agri-food Future Scholarship program consists of two annual awards that go to one student attending the University of Lethbridge, and one attending Lethbridge College. This year the value of each scholarship is \$2250.00 and the call for applicants is open until August 23<sup>rd</sup>.

You can access the application guidelines at [www.southgrow.com](http://www.southgrow.com) or by emailing [peter.casurella@southgrow.com](mailto:peter.casurella@southgrow.com)

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