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### Stinkweed has biodiesel potential

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By [Sean Pratt](#), [Saskatoon newsroom](#)  
December 8, 2010

Alberta researchers are working on a new oilseed crop that could be grown on marginal lands in the northern portion of the province.

High Prairie, Alta., farmer Stan Peacock has identified pennycress, which is also known as stinkweed, as a potential feedstock for the biodiesel industry.

The eureka moment occurred when he crushed canola containing pennycress seed and noticed the resulting oil had better biodiesel properties than canola.

Peacock approached regional economic development groups to fund agronomic and processing research on the crop.



Stan Peacock crushed canola containing pennycress seed and noticed the resulting oil had better biodiesel properties than canola. | Photo courtesy South Peace News

The Lesser Slave Lake Economic Alliance and Peace Region Economic

The Lesser Slave Lake Economic Alliance and Peace Region Economic Development Alliance agreed to fund a three-year, \$174,000 project exploring the potential of converting the former weed into a profitable oilseed crop for area farmers.

Results look promising two years into the project.

"I think it has tremendous potential," said Greg Radstaak, general manager of the Lesser Slave Lake Economic Alliance.

Farmers in the region are mostly cow-calf producers or forage growers.

"We have a lot of marginal land, so it's either low quality soils or it's prone to frost."

It is hoped that pennycress will give producers an oilseed that could provide them with a similar net per acre return as canola.

Researchers have overcome some of the biggest obstacles in growing the crop, such as cracking the protective seed coat to achieve proper germination.

The third year of research will focus on converting the meal into a usable feed product in addition to a bioherbicide and biopesticide.

Peacock is in the process of raising funds to build a \$30 million, 66 million litre biodiesel plant that would use locally grown pennycress and off-grade canola seed.



Pennycress, which is also known as stinkweed, is a potential feedstock for the biodiesel industry. | Photo courtesy the Lesser Slave Lake Economic Alliance

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