

City student wins biotech competition

CANWEST NEWS SERVICE APRIL 28, 2010

A 14-year-old Saskatoon girl won the nation's top biotechnology competition for students on Tuesday for her contributions to finding a way to determine if a dangerous fungus is present in lentil crops.

Rui Song, the youngest winner ever of the Sanofi-Aventis BioTalent Challenge, accepted the award at a gala in Ottawa where she beat out high-school-aged competition from across the country.

The Grade 9 student at Walter Murray Collegiate worked on a method to differentiate between two strains of the fungus *Colletotrichum truncate*.

While both strains viciously attack lentil crops, one causes far more damage -- up to 50 per cent loss in some areas.

The fungus has affected lentil crops in Canada, Bangladesh, Syria and Ethiopia. Saskatchewan grows about 98 per cent of all lentils in Canada, which is the second-largest producer of the crop in the world.

Song and a mentor from the University of Saskatchewan designed 2,000 potential genetic markers and tested 50 of them, trying to see if they could differentiate between the two strains.

In the end, Song was not able to, but she said earlier her efforts have opened up a promising avenue for future research.

"If we tested the other 1,950, there is a chance that we would be able to find a marker that is able to differentiate between them," she said.

Song -- who won \$5,000 to share with her school and a trip to Chicago for her efforts -- was humble in accepting her award.

"I really didn't come to this competition expecting to win a prize," she said.

"I was really surprised . . . I just wanted to present my project to the best of my ability and to represent Saskatoon to the best of my ability."

© Copyright (c) The StarPhoenix

STORY TOOLS

 [E-mail this Article](#)

 [Print this Article](#)

 [Share this Article](#)

Font: [A](#) [A](#) [A](#) [A](#)

RELATED STORIES FROM AROUND THE WEB

Saskatoon student becomes youngest winner of national biotech contest

Saskatoon StarPhoenix, Canada
Tuesday, April 27, 2010

E-i-e-i-o: Ontario farmers to seed more dry beans but wheat to fall: StatsCan

Daily News, Halifax
Monday, April 26, 2010

Stats Canada Tidbits

Progressive Farmer
Monday, April 26, 2010

Welcome Google User

Here are more The StarPhoenix topics related to your search for "*City student wins biotech competition*"

▫ [City student wins biotech competition](#)

We have the MOST jobs in Saskatoon.

Enter Keyword ex. Retail

search today!

Find Jobs

The StarPhoenix Powered by **working.com**

MOST POPULAR NEWS

MOST READ **E-MAILED** **COMMENTED**

▫ [Woman hospitalized after falling from back of pick-up truck](#)

▫ [Ice unwelcome guest at cottages](#)

▫ [Council balks at chickens](#)

▫ [Rash of robberies on city's eastside](#)

▫ [Craven man killed after semi carrying pigs strikes truck on Sask. highway](#)

▫ [Robberies spike on east side](#)

[more »](#)

THE STARPHOENIX BREAKING NEWS

Sign up to receive breaking news alerts from The StarPhoenix.

SUBMIT