

## Slime Busters

If you've ever crossed a stream, picking your way through the rocks, you may have noticed a slimy coating covering them. This slime is actually a result of a physiological process microorganisms use to protect themselves against stress. By attaching to a hard surface, summoning other microorganisms, and creating a slimy coating – or biofilm – microorganisms have become very adept at self-protection.

Innovotech Inc., recently amalgamated with **MBEC BioProducts**, a product development firm based in Edmonton, has found that biofilms are also at the root of some of agriculture's most worrisome diseases such as fusarium, a fungus that has recently devastated wheat crops in Manitoba to the tune of \$100 million. Biofilms are also behind potato ring rot, which if found in seed potatoes can result in a company losing its seed sales license for five years – often resulting in company foreclosure.

MBEC's research, funded by AVAC, ACIDF and AARI, has led to the development of a promising seed treatment for potatoes and other crops that is expected to give farmers another tool in fighting these economically devastating agricultural pests – helping to better weather future agricultural storms.



Ken Boutlier and Dr. Lyriam Marques with Innovotech



## Early Diabetes Diagnosis

Type 2 diabetes is a serious health concern that can lead to heart disease, blindness, and amputation. **Ceapro Inc.**, a company based in Edmonton, has developed a simple and cost effective screening test to detect the beginning of Type 2 Diabetes and allow people at risk to take measures to help prevent the onset of the condition.

The product, CeaProve, is a specially formulated, standardized wafer that causes a temporary rise in blood sugar levels that can be detected by doing a quick analysis of the blood. Dr. Sarah Lord, Manager of Clinical Services at Ceapro, says CeaProve is being marketed to workplaces in Canada as part of wellness programs designed to keep employees healthy. The test is voluntary, but once people know they are at risk for diabetes it can lead to improved health and the prevention of complications from the disease. Lord stresses that CeaProve is a screening tool, and once a person knows the results of the test they should consult with their physician for treatment. It's estimated that one in three people with diabetes don't know they have it. CeaProve can fill a real need in terms of a quick and easy early screening test. This product development was funded in part by AVAC.