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‘Buy local’ trips up honey producers

BY ROBERT ARNASON
BRANDON BUREAU

In 2014, the price of Canadian honey was basically the same as U.S. honey.

A U.S. Department of Agriculture national honey report from February 2014 said Canadian beekeepers received US$2.12 per pound for their honey and North Dakota beekeepers received $2.11 per lb.

That parity is over. There is now a massive price gap between Canadian and American honey of about 70 cents per lb.

In the USDA national honey report from September of this year, North Dakota producers received $1.70 to $2.08 for their honey, while American honey packers were paying Canadian beekeepers $1.25 to $1.35 per lb.

“Our prices don’t even come close to matching what the American producers are getting,” said Mike Dejong, president of the Alberta Beekeepers Commission and an apiarist from Hay Lakes, Alta.

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A TOUGH HARVEST
Potatoes in Alberta: Potato Growers of Alberta takes a look at 50 years of production in the province. See page 28. | BARB GLEN PHOTO

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**Sask. still debating wildfire assistance**

Donations pour in after livestock, property and feed lost in fires

**BY KAREN BRIERE**

The Saskatchewan government is still weighing whether it will provide assistance to producers who lost animals and property in October’s wildfires.

Agriculture Minister Lyle Stewart said the province has already agreed to help pay for the burial of what is now estimated at 770 cattle killed or euthanized as a result of the fires in southwestern Saskatchewan.

“Generally speaking, when it comes to paying for livestock, we haven’t used AgriStability to cover insurable losses, so we’re kind of caught in that precedent and it’s a bit of an uncomfortable place to be,” he said Oct. 25.

Some affected producers have said conditions should step forward to help in the unusual circumstances of the fire and wind storm that occurred Oct. 17. In addition to the hundreds of cattle, miles of fences and other infrastructure and acres and tonnes of feed were lost.

However, Stewart said he is unsure about setting a new precedent, and added that feed assistance programs haven’t always worked.

“In the past we’ve implemented programs to cover some of the cost of transporting feed and we found that those programs were just built into the cost of the feed,” he said.

“We don’t want to go in that direction again, but if there are some things we could do, we’d be interested in that.”

A wildfire relief fund established by the Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association had raised more than $100,000 worth of donations in about 24 hours.

President Shane Jahnke said all types and sizes of donations were rolling in, from a large ranch that pledged $30,000 to animal health and feed companies and agri-retailers.

“A lot of it right now is feed,” he said. “What we’re probably looking for is (donated) trucking assistance because people can donate from all over the place, but it’s hard to get the trucks there.”

The Mennonite Disaster Service has volunteered time to rebuild fences.

“It’s just been absolutely remarkable,” Jahnke said.

He said that a final tally of damage should be completed before the government announces any further help, if it intends to do so.

“How do you put a value on native grass?” he said.

“If we don’t get rain and it doesn’t grow back, it’s invaluable. If we get rain, it will bounce back quick.”

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**Farm worker safety rules tabled**

The government wants recommendations from Albertans before making final regulations

**BY JEREMY SIMES**

Alberta farmers have received a glimpse into what kinds of farm safety regulations may be introduced in the province.

The groups tasked with making recommendations on new occupational health and safety standards for non-family farm workers in Alberta released their report Oct. 27.

The report was in response to the government recommendation in the Enhanced Protection for Farm and Ranch Workers Act.

The groups reviewed current health and safety codes and provided recommendations on how they should be tweaked to best accommodate both farm owners and employees.

As well, they provided a set of recommendations that inform general best practices for agriculture safety.

Provincial officials say they will consult farmers before making permanent changes, but the recommendations provide a glimpse into what might be potentially coming down the pipe.

For starters, the groups recommend that Alberta create a new farm safety association, which could comprise elected board members.

The association would help create guidelines and assist producers and their employees with applying codes and standards.

As well, they recommend creating a separate manual for farms and ranches and ensuring that guidelines are plain and easy to read.

Agriculture Minister Oneil Carlier acknowledged the province hasn’t always been the best at communicating with farmers, citing issues when the government first introduced Bill 6. (Bill 6) saw our government learn some tough lessons,” he said during a news conference.

“These groups have been an important step in building relationships and ensuring all areas of the ag sector have a voice at the table.”

He said he hopes the recommendations ease concerns.

“(Bill 6) saw our government learn some tough lessons,” he said during a news conference.

As well, the group said flat-bottomed grain bins shouldn’t be considered as a “confined space” because they have an entry door and generally have good airflow.

However, they had a difficult time coming to a conclusion regarding other grain bins. They said the bins can pose both high and low risks so farmers and employees should assess each bin on a case by case basis before they enter.

**Additional topics**

Other key recommendations involve building codes and how farm employers and employees should deal with chemical, fire and explosion hazards.

Group members concluded that older farm equipment that won’t meet new code standards should be exempt from requiring upgrades. For example, grain bins with ladders that aren’t shielded wouldn’t need to be retrofitted.

As well, they recommend that any new equipment bought when the code is in effect will be given a grace period of one year before they’re required to be up to standard.

While these safety standards won’t apply to family farms, group members suggested the government invite family operations to participate and have access to safety resources.

Carlier said he would support participation from family farm operators, if they choose to do so.

“Farmers and ranchers want to have their operations safe. This gives them more tools to be able to do so,” he said.

The full report can be viewed at www.alberta.ca/farm-and-ranch, and Albertans can submit their feedback at that website or by email at farmandsafety@gov.ab.ca.

The deadline to submit is Jan. 15, 2018, and the government will draft regulations following that.

Producers with pay employees who are not family members are now expected to follow general safety standards, and they can be inspected by OH&S inspectors.

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That $2.5 million is 37 percent of the total collected. The amount of refunds requested each year has changed little since refundable checkoffs were available. Most of the rebates go to feedlot owners. The $1 national checkoff is set to increase to $2.50 in April 2018.

The proposal is to give 65 percent of the money to Canada Beef Inc., 35 percent to the Beef Cattle Research Council and five percent of the money to Canada Beef Inc., Proceeds from the checkoff are used for research and development of the beef industry. The industry funds are split among the BCCA, BC Association of Cattle Feeders, Feeders and Breeders Association and the dairy sector.

Rancher Maggie Dulaney of InnisfailOct. 25. She believes the organization may have lost its vision from when it was formed in the 1970s and she wants proof that every dollar collected was spent wisely.

“Nobody is suggesting that there hasn’t been good work done by the delegates and the management of the ABP, but over the years of increases in millions of dollars of guaranteed funding, we saw a huge waste of money, fewer grassroots resolutions passed at board level, no accountability when asked for it and no transparency of in-house expenses and a major pervasive- ness of entitlement,” she said.

“We have done more with the ABP with a refundable checkoff. We have done more with less,” she said.

It’s regrettable that members feel there is no accountability, said ABP delegate Kelly Smith-Fraser of Red Deer County.

“There is zero accountability in the $2.5 million that leaves this industry (in check-off funds). There is zero accountability to those dollars that are going back into people’s pockets and not into the industry and to improve the industry,” she said.

Ryan Kasko of Kasko Cattle Company and vice-chair of AFCSA board said the demand for a refundable checkoff was to help facilitate accountability.

“Some of us may have been surprised by how much money actually got taken out of ABP and not put into another organization, so I think with the proposal that we have, we recognize that we need to have stable funding for ABP and Alberta Cattle Feeders Association, as well as other organizations,” he said in Fort Macleod.

“This is kind of the first step in maybe a grander scheme to come together as an industry and work on areas of common interest.” Every province handles levies differently.

British Columbia raised its checkoff to $2.50 this year. A cattle industry neglect group Canada Beef administrates the money and the funds are split among the BCCA, BC Association of Cattle Feeders, Feeders and Breeders Association and the dairy sector.

The B.C. government set up a $10 million beef industry development fund about 20 years ago and the interest is used for research and other projects. Funds have to be matched with check-off dollars.

“It brings the industry together much better. It allows ways because everybody understands what is going on and it is not a fight over those dollars,” said Kevin Bonin, manager of the B.C. Cattlemen’s Association.
Looming antimicrobial rules will be tough on beekeepers

Few Canadian veterinarians are able to write antibiotic prescriptions for bees, which could affect hive health.

BY ROBERT ARNASON

A list of antimicrobials given to livestock will be available next year only with a prescription.

Many of those beekeepers did their hives with antibiotics to prevent American foulbrood, a bacterial disease.

That’s because most veterinarians in Canada don’t have the knowledge or training to write prescriptions for bees, said Rod Scarlett, executive director of the Canadian Honey Council.

Beekeepers use two antibiotics, tetracycline and tylosin, to treat American foulbrood.

The promotion in the U.S. would create an impact north of the border. “How do we control and allow access to these products (antimicrobials) with the dog and cat at the end of the street?”

The honey council considered asking for an exemption for beekeepers but ruled that out because antimicrobial resistance is a Health Canada priority.

“Where this whole antimicrobial concern is valid,” Scarlett said.

“So what we asked is at least for some discussion on a period where we can get veterinarians familiar with beekeeping problems.”

He said it’s unrealistic to train and educate vets about bee colonies and diseases that affect bees by doing it “in a vacuum.”

Beekeepers use two antibiotics, tetracycline and tylosin, to treat American foulbrood.

A petition last year garnered more than a dozen signatures asking for an exemption for beekeepers.

Robert.Arnason@producer.com

As the trend took hold and other honey packers adopted the same policy, U.S. buyers began paying more per pound to American beekeepers and less to Canadian honey producers.

“We (Canadian producers) are still selling lots of honey to the States, but it’s significantly marked down,” Friesen said.

The discount hurts prairie beekeepers because there are many differences between raising cattle and raising bees.

One of the differences is the use of veterinary medicine. Almost all cattle producers in Canada have a relationship with a vet.

Beekeepers work closely with a vet. “Most of the import product and lump it in with livestock can cause antibiotic resistance,” Scarlett said.

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India ponders pulse import limits

India is contemplating import duties on peas and lentils, says a commodity markets specialist.

In an article he wrote for the Hindustan Times, G. Chandrashekhar said the Indian government is at its wits end trying to figure out how to prop up low pulse prices.

India, which amounts to about $15 million per tonne, says Canadian exporters do not need to fret as long as the trade action is limited to duties.

"If all they’re talking about is import duties on peas, that’s fine. That’s not a big issue," he said.

That’s because yellow peas are the cheapest pulse in the world and while a duty could make the product more expensive, it would still be an affordable substitute for chickpeas.

However, if India decided to implement an import quota as it has with pigeon peas and gram, that would be a disaster.

Gord Bacon, chief executive officer of Pulse Canada, said duties would be better than the phytosanitary-based trade barrier Canada currently faces.

As of Oct. 1, Canadian exporters either have to have their shipments fumigated with methyl bromide in Singapore or pay five times the normal inspection fee upon arrival in India, which amounts to about $18 per tonne.

Other exporters such as the United States and France have an exemption from the policy that lasts through Dec. 31.

Bacon said the import duty threat arises every four or five months.

India would be within its rights under World Trade Organization rules to apply the duty.

“We recognize the Indian government has an obligation to provide some level of support to Indian farmers who are some of the poorest people in the world," he said.

However, any policy change India makes must be applied fairly and with enough advance notice that markets can adjust, said Bacon.

He hopes the fumigation issue can be resolved before or during a November trade mission to India involving three Canadian cabinet ministers.

Dismal exports

Canadian pulse exports are already off to a slow start because of lackluster demand from India.

The country is coming off a year where it produced 23 million tonnes of pulses, which is 26 percent higher than the previous record. It also imported a staggering 6.6 million tonnes.

India is in the midst of harvesting the second biggest kharif crop on record and is concurrently planting what is expected to be another big rabi crop.

Chandrashekhar believes the combined 2017-18 crop could be 21 million tonnes, which would be the second biggest on record.

And that’s on top of the estimated 2.5 million tonnes of stocks in government and private trade inventories.

That’s why Chandrashekhar said imports are “sure to take a beating” this year.

Canada’s bulk pea exports are down 484,000 tonnes through week 12 of the 2017-18 campaign compared to the previous year, while bulk lentil exports have fallen 220,000 tonnes.

“We’ve taken a big kick already without any of these other added issues,” said Clancy.

“I honestly do not believe farmers understand just how much of a change there’s been in export movement. I think that they think it’s a trick.”

Farmers have been slow to deliver their pulses into the system. Once they start to sell, there will be more downward pressure on prices, which would make any Indian import duty even less relevant.

Clancy said buyers such as China and Cuba will pick up some of the slack, but it won’t be enough to offset the decline in Indian demand this year.

His advice to farmers is to take advantage of any mini-price rallies that arise.

Pulse demand

India, which annually consumes about 300,000 tonnes of pulses, is currently facing a short-sighted move that would be better than the phytosanitary barriers it’s been trying to avoid.

Bacon said the import duty threat is a part of the reason why Indian consumers are eating less of the pulses that the country is growing.

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The duties range from 54 to 70 percent on soy biodiesel from Argentina and 51 percent on palm biodiesel from Indonesia. That is in addition to countervailing duties of 58 to 64 percent on biodiesel from Argentina and 41 to 56 percent on biodiesel from Indonesia that were established in August.

The duties are collected as cash deposits and held in trust until final rulings are in place. The final ruling on the countervailing duties is scheduled for Nov. 8 and the final ruling on the antidumping duties is scheduled for Jan. 3, 2018.

Scott Irwin, agricultural economist with the University of Illinois, said everybody he talks to in the biodiesel industry expects no changes in the final rulings. He said it is impossible to statistically determine what impact the duties have had on imported biodiesel because the most recent import data is a few months old. However, there is plenty of anecdotal evidence.

"Of all the people I’ve talked to in the industry, it’s a full-on stop of biodiesel imports to the U.S. from Argentina and Indonesia," he said. The U.S. imported 3.5 billion litres of biodiesel in 2016, including 1.7 billion litres from Argentina and 1.8 billion litres from Indonesia.

That is 2.1 billion litres of supply that is going to have to come somewhere else now that the duties are in place.

"The simple answer is that the U.S. then uses all of its own biodiesel production capacity," said Irwin.

There are 15.9 billion litres of biodiesel production capacity in the U.S. but only about 7.6 billion litres of actual annual production.

"We’ve got a lot of excess capacity that could easily make that up domestically," he said.

The question is, is there enough soybean oil in the feed plants? "I suspect that the U.S. just might see its soybean oil exports dry up completely and we’ll just use it all domestically," said Irwin.

The U.S. exports 2.1 billion pounds of soybean oil annually, which is enough to produce 1.1 billion litres of biodiesel. That still leaves a shortfall of one billion litres.

"It’s hard to see how we’re not going to have to import some soybean oil, canola oil or something," he said. Argentina could export soybean oil instead of biodiesel to the U.S., but it faces a hefty 27 percent export tax. That gives Canadian canola oil a big advantage.

Irwin believes some of the 13.8 billion lb. of soybean oil used for food, feed and cosmetics in the U.S. could be diverted to the biodiesel sector. That diverted soybean oil could be replaced by Canadian canola oil imports.

Whether canola oil is used directly by the biodiesel plants or as a replacement for displaced soybean oil in the food sector, it would be a new source of demand for the product that could boost prices.

Irwin said it is important to keep in mind that the biodiesel duties are not going to increase overall vegetable oil demand in the U.S., but it will reshuffle the deck in terms of what oil is used where.

"Undoubtedly, I believe in the transition there will have to be some price pressures to bring about these readjustments," he said.

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There had been hopes that a robust free and visible market would evolve for the CWB’s commodities once the monopoly was turned off the lights for the last time and we'll just use it all domestically," said Irwin.

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I'll address several issues in this week's column, from Saskatchewan agriculture to the Canadian dollar to China's changing support for domestic wheat producers.

MARKET WATCH

MARKET FACTORS

SASKATCHEWAN YIELDS

Last week’s Saskatchewan crop report provided the department’s estimate of crop yields. Its assessments for durum, spring wheat and barley were quite a bit higher than Statistics Canada’s official numbers. There was little market reaction, likely because traders would prefer to wait for the official update from Statistics Canada, which is due Dec. 6.

The biggest variance was in durum, where Saskatchewan Agriculture pegged the yield in the province at 36 bushels per acre compared to Statistics Canada’s 29.6 bushels.

Durum is grown in southern areas where drought was a major problem this summer, and so a lower yield was expected.

While better than Statistics Canada’s estimate, the Saskatchewan Agriculture forecast is still short of the previous four-year average of 42.5 bushels per acre.

If Saskatchewan Agriculture is correct, it would add 790,000 tonnes to the total production, pushing it up to about five million tonnes.

Another factor to note in China’s wheat market is the challenge to Beijing’s wheat support that the U.S. has launched under the World Trade Organization. It will likely take several years for the trade and domestic policy reforms to fully play out, but somewhere down the road there might be processing for increased wheat and corn exports to China.

Beijing last month announced a huge increase in ethanol production to use up these stocks. It is also encouraging livestock production to move from urban areas to the northeast, which is the centre of corn and soybean production.

The wheat support level was reduced by only 2.5 percent so likely won’t have much impact, even when farmers make decisions for the winter crop seeded in the fall of 2018.

The story is different in corn. With no support level, the price has fallen a lot and acreage is down.

The corn price in March was 20 percent below the floor price in 2016, according to the blog site Dim-Sums. In 2017 area fell 3.4 percent from the previous year.

There is no talk yet of the government eliminating the support price for wheat as it has done for corn.

The government is closely watching the impact of lower corn prices on farm income and rural political stability. It provides direct farm income support and individual state support crop payments.

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Follow D’Arce McMillan on Twitter @darmcmillinia or email darcemcmillan@producer.com.
Drought in southern regions produced flowers with less nectar

Northern Prairies beat south for honey production

The story was similar for Mark Friesen, who lives in Morden, Man. Hot weather and lack of rain hindered honey production. “I think it was pretty much the worst year I’ve ever had, in terms of productivity,” he said. “It didn’t rain when it was supposed to.”

However, Friesen has spoken to beekeepers in other parts of Manitoba, particularly the north-west, who had a fantastic year. One of those producers had yields higher than 300lb. per hive. There is significant variability in yields, but honey production will likely be average in Manitoba, Friesen added. Canadian beekeepers produced 760,020 million lb. of honey annually from 2012-16, but production was more than 90 million lb. in three out of the five years.

The December live futures price had been at a strong premium to October, giving feeders the courage to hold out for stronger cash prices. However, Friesen has spoken to producers in other parts of Manitoba, particularly the north-west, who had a fantastic year. One of those producers had yields higher than 300lb. per hive. There is significant variability in yields, but honey production will likely be average in Manitoba, Friesen added. Canadian beekeepers produced 760,020 million lb. of honey annually from 2012-16, but production was more than 90 million lb. in three out of the five years.

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New food policy should include input from agricultural experts

T o make good decisions, you need good information. Decisions or policies made with limited information or diversity of input could be flawed. The Liberal government’s recent attempt at tax reform is a prime example. A superficially attractive desire to make the tax system fairer when it became clear that it would cause great damage to many small businesspeople, including farmers. Clearly, that terrible policy was created in a single silo without adequate information. Another policy under development is the revamp of the Canada Food Guide.

The food guide might seem trivial — an elementary school lesson soon forgotten or a colourful poster in a medical office. However, the guide is important. It is a foundation, a set of guiding principles that influence menus, medical and health advice and government policy. We’ve all heard the adage “you are what you eat.” And for many, we don’t like what we have become. Too many Canadians are overweight or obese. Diet-related illnesses such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease are killing us.

To charge ourselves, we need to change what we eat, and that is a prime motivator for the new food guide. The next version of the food guide came out in 1942 and was last updated 10 years ago. Our understanding of how our bodies react to the food we eat is constantly evolving. Health Canada, the department responsible for the guide, wants it to reflect the latest research.

Recognizing the fundamental role of food in who we are, Canada’s chief public health officer says. “Some evidence suggests that more and better food — the right kind — has targeted urban centres. That last point is particularly critical, given six percent of Cana-
dians say they don’t have a single close friend — a figure that jumps to 15 percent among individuals 75 or older. Community health outcomes weren’t the only focus of Tam’s report. As Ottawa continues to develop its food policy for Canada and revamp the Canada Food Guide, Canada’s chief health officer also took a closer look at Cana-
dian access to healthy and affordable food.

Food insecurity remains a serious concern for Canada’s three territories, with almost 47 percent of households in Nunavut reporting some level of food insecurity. It was estimated in 2014 that 12 percent of Canadian households experienced food insecurity at some point in the previous year — a concern that has been linked to poor physical and mental health. Not every province collects data on food insecurity, the report noted, making it difficult to get a big picture look at the issue. Still, the report found that a lack of access to nutritious food cannot be automatically linked to dis-
cance.

“Food security does not appear to be strongly related to living close to stores that sell food or to commu-
nity food programs,” the report said, noting that city zoning rules could or help increase a commu-
nity’s access to fruits and vegeta-
bles. Farmers markets and com-
munity gardens have also helped.

“Experts believe that current food environments are set up so that it’s easy for people to eat unhealthy food,” the report said.

Most of the research that’s been done around how communities are structured — and their access to food — has targeted urban cen-
tres, Tam said. In her report, she noted more research on food access in rural and remote communities is needed. Then there’s the ever-present knowledge question.

“Information about food and nutrition is constantly evolving, often presenting conflicting mes-
sages about what to eat and what to avoid,” the report said.

It’s a confusing environment that becomes even more complicated because of individual responses to food and various nutritional needs.

“What constitutes a healthy diet and identifying how it contributes to better health can vary across individuals,” the report said.

“People differ in how they digest and metabolize food, meaning not everyone reacts to food in the same way.”

Kelsey Johnson is a reporter with iPolitics, www.iPolitics.ca.
Fighting malnutrition with education

BY AMANDA THORSTEINSSON

It’s not only Canadian volunteers whose hard work and determination help to combat hunger through the Canadian Foodgrains Bank.

Modina Begum, who lives in the remote village of Dhakhinail, Bangladesh, is one such volunteer.

Modina is helping her community people, Modina married her husband, Abdul, when she was 17. They have three children between the ages of four months and 11 years. Abdul is a farmer, but isn’t able to produce enough to provide for all his family’s needs, so he also uses a motorbike for additional income.

Modina spends most of her time caring for her family. She also does tailoring to help support the family. It’s a busy life and sometimes one would blame Modina if she chose to put all her energy toward simply working to get by.

But that’s not Modina’s way. As a mother herself, the lack of knowledge about proper nutrition concerned her.

When Modina learned about an opportunity to be trained as a community health volunteer through PARI, the local Bangladeshi partner of foodgrains bank member World Renew, she signed up.

"I had no idea about feeding nutritious foods to pregnant mothers and children under two. I never thought that I could be of any help to my community," she says.

"Now I learned these things and am helping my community people.

In her role as a community health volunteer, Modina teaches pregnant and nursing women and mothers of young children about the importance of nutritious foods.

She encourages them to go for pregnancy checkups and take iron and calcium tablets and informs them of dangerous symptoms to watch for.

She encourages mothers to exclusively breastfeed their babies for six months, and she makes sure babies are growing at a healthy pace. When they’re not, she encourages mothers to take their babies to a health centre.

"Volunteers like Modina play an incredibly important role in spreading nutritional information in hard-to-reach communities," says Barbara Macdonald, who directs international programs at the foodgrains bank.

"She understands intimately the traditional beliefs and customs surrounding childbirth and child rearing in her community and is able to explain to her fellow mothers which beliefs are untrue and may be harmful," she adds.

According to World Renew Bangladesh team members, it’s common for mothers to feed their babies sugar water along with breast milk.

Many believe it gives the baby a sweeter personality. As well, many pregnant mothers try not to eat too much because they believe it will make the baby grow too big and lead to a difficult delivery.

And analysts worry that the weak ban on pesticides and expensiv

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OPEN FORUM

LETTERS POLICY:
Letters should be less than 300 words. Name, address and phone number must be included for verification purposes and only letters accepted for publication will be confirmed with the author. Open letters should be avoided; priority will be given to letters written exclusively for The Western Producer. Editors reserve the right to reject or edit any letter for clarity, brevity, legality and good taste. Publication of a letter does not imply endorsement by The Producer.

MISSED THE MARK
To the Editor:
In The Western Producer article Hog Production Protest Misses the Mark (Oct. 12), I think it is more a question of the journalist in question seriously missing the point.

The reality is that there is a wide diversity of groups and individuals with serious concerns about the prospect of the ramping up of industrial style hog production as it is practised in Manitoba, with many good reasons.

The whole package of “red tape reductions” proposed by the Pallister government extends beyond Bill 24 and the changes to the Environment Act to also include a rewrite of the Livestock Mortalities and Manure Management Regulation and the building code relating to hog barn construction.

The journalist chose to ignore the substantive issues that these changes bring forward, in favour of parroting the oft repeated, meaningless and unsubstantiated claims by the industry of “the most stringent manure management regulations in North America” and “if all the hog barns in Manitoba were gone tomorrow about one to two percent less phosphorus would flow into Lake Winnipeg.” (Editor’s note: The opinion piece that appeared on our website noted that the estimate comes from Don Flaten, University of Manitoba soil scientist and nutrient management expert.)

I will pick three issues of concern.

Firstly, there is the appalling record this industry has with respect to barn fires and the concerns around animal welfare and ethical production practices.

Since 2002, over 80,000 pigs have been incinerated in barn fires in Manitoba. Worse yet, the numbers rose substantially at the time when the industry was losing money.

Only three cases were proven arson, but then I can imagine the difficulty of making that determination after the fact. All the while the hog industry was bowing for government bailouts, which they got.

Now as part of the red tape changes, the building code has been rolled back, requiring no dedicated firefighting pond, fewer firewall separations, and fewer fire retardant coverings, consigning thousands more pigs to a brutal and fiery death going forward.

Secondly, yes let’s talk about phosphorus and Lake Winnipeg. Many Manitobans are deeply concerned about the ever deteriorating state of our big lake.

Lake Winnipeg has the dubious distinction as the most eutrophic of the world’s 10 largest fresh-water lakes.

The reality is that we simply don’t know how big the hog industry is in Manitoba and how much manure is produced.

In 2007 the Clean Environment Commission report, entitled Environmental Sustainability and Hog Production in Manitoba, made a call for immediate research into the serious issues that these new barns bring forward, in favour of anything that makes agronomic sense.

Other jurisdictions have clearly shown that the soil’s ability to retain phosphorus diminishes rapidly at these levels. Let’s do the research here and get some sound science on the subject.

My third example is the air-quality issue. This has both an environmental (climate change) component as well as the obvious social one.

Hog barn operators strongly resist the use of covers on lagoons. The reason is simple — without covers they can vent off the ammonia, methane, nitrous oxide and carbon dioxide and reduce the spread acres required by as much as 30 percent. It’s cheaper.

In the U.S., intensive livestock operations are recognized as the primary source of ammonia emissions to the atmosphere.

Again, the 10-year old Clean Environment Commission report proposed negative, agronomic, synthetic covers be required on all lagoons. It is no longer socially acceptable to make such an uninformed stink, even in our rural areas.

At the council decision meeting with respect to a recent barn proposal, one councillor made the profound statement: “There are just too many families that will be affected by this.” Enough said.

Needless to say the proposal was summarily declined.

Why would I care about all this? Well, I have had the opportunity to live and farm one mile downwind of one of these operations for the last 15 years. It has been a learning experience — one we do not need to repeat.

As for (Robert) Arnason’s column, I would suggest go back to journalism school. Learn to leave his personal biases at the door. Do the necessary investigative groundwork to fully comprehend the issues at stake. Present a balanced perspective on the issues at hand. We used to expect better from The Western Producer.

Jon Crowson, Oak River, Man.

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**Flax oil developers believe art market is game changer**

Improvements to flax-based paint could allow company to tap the Canadian and U.S. art market worth more than $100 million

**BY SEAN PRATT**

Manitoba hog barn moratorium inches toward elimination

Manitoba's hog barn moratorium is moving quickly toward cancella-
tion after committee hearings failed to convince the Progressive Conser-
vative majority that the barn ban should continue.

"It was garbage legislation that was meant to create or exacerbate the urban-rural divide," Morris MLA Shannon Martin, a PC who represents an area in the heart of Manitoba's hog belt, said about the previous NDP government's legis-
lative and regulatory attack on hog farming.

"No other similar industry had similar requirements placed upon it." **Shannon Martin**

**BY ED WHITE**

It was garbage legislation that was meant to create or exacerbate the urban-rural divide. No other similar industry had similar requirements placed upon it.

Supporters of the bill included a number of immigrants who came to Manitoba and Canada to work in the hog processing industry. Hog processing is a big employer in Brandon and has contributed through Hues Art Supply.

"When you come forward with something that is all the way around better — doesn’t yellow, dries faster and has less odour — that’s a real game changer for that market," said Trotter.

Prairie Tide and Hues Art Supply have formed a company called Mar-
tin & Paul that will produce the oil and paints that will be sold and dis-
tributed through Hues Art Supply.

It wasn’t until he visited an artist friend that he had his eureka moment for what to do with it.
The Alberta municipality looks to province, power company for compensation and reviews communication system

BY BARB GLEN
LETHBRIDGE BUREAU

The Municipal District of Acadia, which saw more than 12,000 acres of farmland burned and about 190 head of cattle killed in an Oct. 16 wildfire, plans to ask the province of Alberta and Atco Electric to compensate affected residents for their losses.

The municipality declared a local state of emergency during the fire, which was one of many that saw more than 12,000 acres of farmland burned and about 190 head of cattle killed in an Oct. 16 wildfire, plans to ask the province of Alberta and Atco Electric to compensate affected residents for their losses.

“Access to area residents’ landline and cellphone numbers would improve evacuation efforts,” said Williams.

When the wildfire occurred last month, “we had to manually call everyone in the path of the fire,” said Williams, but that proved impossible with outdated numbers and the fact that the municipal office itself had to be evacuated.

As well, one councillor’s home was on fire during the emergency and the others were also fighting the blaze and trying to communicate with residents.

The MD also plans to update its emergency response manual, Williams said.

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FIRE AFTERMATH

Municipal district wants to learn from devastating fire

The Alberta municipality looks to province, power company for compensation and reviews communication system

BY BARB GLEN
LETHBRIDGE BUREAU

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“We will approach the government to open up that program … to let eligible private individuals to apply through the municipality to get reimbursed for some uninsurable expenses,” said Williams.

Fire is an insurable loss, but the question is whether that insurance is affordable and available. The fire was caused by a downed Atco electrical pole, according to the post-fire investigation.

“We don’t have any plans to pursue legal action of course, but we’re just hoping we can sit down with them and try to come to some arrangement between them and landowners, not only just to get reimbursed for costs but we want to make sure this doesn’t happen again, because those poles are almost 40 years old. Another wind could easily cause this again.”

Williams said the MD is taking steps to learn from the fire. Plans include improvements to the radio communication system used by fire departments and responders, establishing a mutual aid agreement with the Rural Municipality of Chesterfield in Saskatchewan and installing software to record, update and manage the landline numbers and cellphone numbers of area residents so they can be called during emergencies.

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GLYPHOSATE

European Union moves closer to pesticide ban

BY ROBERT ARNASON
BRANDON BUREAU

The last week of October added a dramatic chapter to the never-ending glyphosate saga in Europe.

The future of the herbicide, the active ingredient in Roundup, is still uncertain in the European Union but it’s becoming clear to observers in Canada that the glyphosate brawl is much bigger than one weed killer. It’s about European activists who want to change farming practices around the globe.

“I think it’s finally hitting home that this is not just (about) a chemical here or there. This is an ideological shift,” said Pierre Petelle, president of CropLife Canada, a group that represents manufacturers of pest control and plant breeding products.

“Every day I look at the news that comes out of Europe and I pity my colleagues that work there.”

The European Parliament recently voted to phase out the use of glyphosate by 2022.

However, the European Commission, which is the bloc’s executive branch, then proposed extending the herbicide’s license for five years. A vote on the proposal is scheduled for Nov. 9.

Petelle said it’s hard to guess how that vote will go because when it comes to agricultural chemicals, it seems like science is almost irrelevant in Europe.

“It’s becoming more and more the case, as sad as that is,” he said.

“Without some sort of foundation in science, there’s no predictability.”

Canadian farmers should be worried because “Europe is edging toward no tolerance for glyphosate and many other pesticides. This means maximum residue limits on imported grain and food could drop to nothing.”

“The rest of the world that’s growing food for Europe ... is now held hostage to Europe’s political winds on chemistry,” Petelle said.

“It’s going to have an impact on the ability of us (Canadian farmers) and other exporters to use the components we need to use.”

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5% higher yield than AC® Carberry
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REGINA — Saskatchewan’s family doctor of the year says practising in a small-town is about getting to know people. “You respect their privacy but you learn a lot about their personality and character,” said Dr. Jennifer Kuzmicz, a 45-year-old physician and mother of two.

She earned the award from the Saskatchewan College of Family Physicians for her medical accomplishments and approach in her 70-year practice.

Kuzmicz credits her rural upbringing with shaping the kind of doctor she is today.

She said the development of her people-centred approach to medicine took root early in her life and stemmed from growing up on a farm near the hamlet of Candiac, Sask., and attending Montmartre School. “I try to make the person in front of me the most important thing and not to feel rushed or distracted because people can tell when you’re not listening,” said Kuzmicz.

Longtime patient Sandy Potter, 92, has benefited from a number of house calls from her over the years and has witnessed her physician go the extra mile in providing medical care. “When I come in, I bring my little list and she goes over everything with me one by one,” she said.

Colleague Dr. Sarah Liskowich nominated Kuzmicz for the award, citing her contributions to educating future family physicians from first year medical students to residents. “[Kuzmicz] is a family physician who consistently puts patients first, acts as a role model to colleagues, learners and the interdisciplinary team, advocates for her patients and above all provides high quality continuity of care,” said Liskowich in an email.

Kuzmicz received her fellowship in family medicine in 2014 and has been the Regina family medicine residency training co-ordinator since 2013. As faculty member in the University of Saskatchewan’s academic family medicine department, Kuzmicz works with physicians who are starting their careers.

As part of the training, she stresses the need for continuing education and the honing of diagnostic skills and places importance on viewing the patient as a whole. “What I tell residents is to remember these are people, they’re not just patients, and that they don’t necessarily have a lot of experience or knowledge about the health system and they’re depending on you.”

Donna Carlson keeps busy both on and off her cattle farm at Cherhill, Alta., volunteering in 4-H and her community.

Carlson, a 45-year-old physician and mother of two, is certain neighbours know her Cherhill, Alta., farm. She is also well known in her community for her longtime service in 4-H. Locally and in the district, having served as the president of the regional 4-H council for two terms. “The guys will tell you I’m never home,” said Carlson.

She and her husband, Mark, have a 400 head commercial cow-calf operation and grow feed on their 11 quarter farm, which once also included 2,000 hogs. Mark’s father, Art Carlson, was one of the founding leaders in the original Cherhill 4-H Beef Club.

Carlson got into 4-H by helping her Cherhill, Alta., farm. "I try to make the person in front of me the most important thing and not to feel rushed or distracted because people can tell when you’re not listening," said Kuzmicz.

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Jacklin Andrews is a family counsellor and that’s not so bad.

**Q** Ever since my husband started taking those little blue pills a few weeks ago, our sex life has improved immensely. It is still not as robust as it was when we were first married many years ago, but it is a huge step up from the frustrations we have experienced more recently. I do not want to sound unappreciative but even though life is more satisfying for me now, I am struggling a bit with it. It just feels funny to think that my husband’s love for me is encapsulated in a little pill we pick up from the pharmacy. It doesn’t feel authentic.

**A** You might find it useful for you and your husband to see your family doctor together. You seem to have some bad information about the medication that your husband is taking. Your physician can help both of you better understand what your husband’s medication is doing. The pill has nothing to do with his feelings for you. All that his medication does is give him the capability to be intimate.

The feelings are already there. They just needed some help. The pill does not work if no love is there to begin. Most relationships have periods when people do not get along. Financial problems, worries about children, unpredictable weather, intrusive in-laws and daily tensions can create a rift between a couple.

A little pill is not going to bring their relationship back forthem. To reconnect, they have to resort to the old-fashioned, one on one moment together, talking through anxieties and reaffirming their commitments and respect for each other. Once they have recommitted themselves to the relationship, the pill can help them enhance intimacy.

We can never replicate in our laboratories what nature created in the first place. The medication your husband is taking may help your sex life but chances are that it will not be the magnificent moment it once was. That is all that you can expect and that is all that is likely to happen, and that’s not so bad.

Jacklin Andrews is a family counsellor from Saskatchewan. Contact: janandrews@producer.com.

Financial problems, worries about children, unpredictable weather, intrusive in-laws and daily tensions can create a rift between a couple.

**Luxury touches**

Sometimes you want to live a little and depart from utilitarian. Think of these ideas as jewelry that can accessorize but are easily changed without disrupting the kitchen if the fashion changes.

- To add sparkle to kitchen, chandeliers are trending.
- Long days in the kitchen make the feet and legs tired. There are numerous options for high-end cushioned floor mats.
- A sink faucet can be a focal point. There are many flashy, yet functional faucets available.

**Tackling a kitchen makeover**

It pays to sweat the small stuff when it comes to kitchen renovations.

**Team Resources**

**Sarah Galvin, BSHeC**

The success of a kitchen renovation is in the details. It is well worth the effort to make comprehensive notes of every little detail. Not only will you save time in the long run but it will also save money by having fewer recalls of the trades.

The first question to answer is whether to use a general contractor or be your own general contractor. The contractor lines up all the trades and knows how to estimate the time required for each phase and keeps the renovation moving smoothly. Be realistic about your skills. It is usually best to stick with the professionals. They can access the materials you need much faster and save delays. Getting the job done right the first time saves endless hours of future frustration.

Take cabinets as an example. If they are not properly installed, it impacts the installation of countertops and backsplashes. One recommendation I have from personal experience is that you should consider doing kitchen and bathroom renovations at the same time. The space is smaller but it requires the same trades. Assume that the renovation will likely take longer than you expect.

The appliances

Don’t keep old appliances when doing a major renovation. The kitchen is built around appliances so select them before starting the floor plan. The trending colour in appliances is a glossy high tech white reminiscent of a smartphone.

Handles are stainless steel. Black is also popular and gray tones are available. Retro colours of the 1950s such as beach blue, pink lemonade, buttercup yellow and cherry red are making a comeback. Check Consumer Reports for ratings on appliances. A quiet dishwasher that does a good job is an asset. Refrigerators now have a variety of drawers rather than just the bottom or top freezer. Stoves go beyond gas or electric. Steam heat is available for moist cooking and baking. Cooktops feature induction heat, gas or smooth top electric. For the high tech chef, Bluetooth is available so the oven, microwave and hood fan can be synchronized.

An outside vented hood fan is best for eliminating smoke, steam and heat from the kitchen. Kitchen sink garbage disposers are less popular as composting becomes more common. A garbage disposer takes a lot of space in the cabinet below the sink.

**Floor plan**

Measure and create a floor plan on graph paper to scale. Start with the four walls, windows and doorways, then add appliances and cabinetry. Now is the time to consider if any of the doorways can be moved to create a better kitchen floor plan.

With one of the kitchens I renovated, I placed masking tape on the floor to show the new plan and lived with it for a while to decide if the change would be comfortable. Consider creating work centres such as a baking station or a beverage station. Don’t plan to store heat sensitive items such as wine or spices and herbs in warm places like beside the stove or over the fridge.

The work triangle is the distance between the refrigerator, stove and sink. Too many steps are tiring, but adequate work...
space around each is essential. Separating the stove and sink is a good idea because both are heavy use areas.

The kitchen in my 1960s bungalow was completely inefficient with space wasted by peninsulas, a hole in the upper cabinet over it and a built-in kitchen table with bench. Storage and counter space were lacking. By removing the kitchen table and benches I was able to relocate the refrigerator and move the hall entryway. This created a larger counter space adjacent to the stove.

This is the most difficult and expensive to move, especially if the basement is developed. This is the time to think about sinks. One reader suggested taking your largest pot and biggest baking sheet to the store when you select it. Consider the practicality of sink materials. The farm style ceramic sinks do chip and stain so dishes dropped in them will most certainly break. Stainless steel is still the number one choice. If you have an island, consider placing an extra small sink there. It will keep people away from the dish-cleaning centre if they need to get water.

Garbage, composting and recycling are easily overlooked. There are a variety of options, including under-sink garbage cans that swing open when the cabinet door is opened. Trash compactors can be useful. You may decide to have this station outside the kitchen.

Cabinets

Experts suggest devoting about 40 percent of the budget to the cabinetry. The most popular finish is a wood stained in a warm colour, and brushed nickel is the most popular choice for hardware. The most popular finish is a wood stained in a warm colour, and brushed nickel is the most popular finish for hardware.

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If you are using a single knob on a drawer, it should be placed slightly off-centre to the ceiling. Side mounts on drawers can handle 75 pounds (34 kg) or more weight. Centre mounts are intended for small, lightweight storage to a maximum of 35 pounds (15 kg). Look for drawers that have a soft close feature. This stops them from slamming shut. Pullout shelves in the base cabinets allow for better access to this storage space.

If you do a lot of baking, consider having a lower pullout shelf in the pantry that could accommodate large containers for flour and sugar. As you plan the cabinetry, consider if you have any special appliances that require more space. My stand mixer is about one inch (2.5 cm) too tall to fit under the standard cabinet so an adjustment had to be made at the time of installation. I use it a lot so I like to have it on the counter top.

Lighting and electrical

The codes are constantly changing so chances are electrical upgrades will be required. For example, ground fault circuit interrupter plugs are required around the kitchen sinks. As well, you may need to add more breakers in the main electrical box.

Don’t forget to add electricity to the island or peninsula.

Plan lighting so the electrician can do all the wiring at the same time. There are three types of lighting: task, mood and general. The overhead light is for general lighting. Pot lights are common for task lighting over the sink or stove. Under-cabinet lighting serves as task lighting but also mood lighting when all the other lights are turned off.

Have them all on different switches. You may want to choose a special light, over the island for example, to create a focal point and dress up the space but be careful with the budget. It is easy to overspend on lighting.

Materials

After all the planning has been completed, you can do the fun stuff in choosing the finishes. If you are doing a major renovation, don’t fall for trendy stuff. You are going to live with this kitchen for a long time, and classic styles don’t look dated in a year or two.

Suitable floorings range from hardwood to ceramic or stone tiles to sheet goods. Tile is unforgiving and dropped dishes will break. As well, it is hard on the feet if you work long hours in the kitchen.

Marble is popular in countertops and back splashes but expensive and not always available. There are good quality laminates in natural stone colours that can serve just as well. Stone, slate and marble also chip, scratch and stain. Tile is still the most popular backsplash. Tempered glass is another option. Either paint the wall or use wallpaper for colour and install tempered glass over it for the backsplash. The focal points in the kitchen are above the stove and above the sink. They would be the places to use decorative features in the backsplash. Window coverings should be simple and easily pulled out of the way. Pleated shades or venetian blinds are still the favourite option.

Choose a single finish for the faucets and drawer pulls. Most popular is brushed nickel. The faucet for the main sink is another opportunity to create a focal point. The gooseneck style is practical for putting large pots and canners in the sink.

Sarah Galvin is a home economist, teacher and farmers’ market vendor at Swift Current, Sask., and a member of Team Resources. She writes a blog at allourfingersinthepie.blogspot.ca. Contact: team@producer.com.
Maritime farmer all smiles when she’s milking
Young dairy producer eager to implement new technology and ideas into the family operation

BY KAREN BRIERE
REGINA BUREAU

GOULDS, N.L. — There was never a doubt that Rebecca Williams would be the fourth generation to operate Forest Pond Farms Ltd. The dairy barn is her happy place. “I love it,” she said. “That’s simply it. I’ve never wanted to do anything else.”

At 20 years old, she has a two-year dairy business management diploma from Nova Scotia Agriculture College under her belt and was contemplating a return for two more years to obtain an agri-business degree. She decided her heart was at home in Newfoundland and Labrador with the herd. “I’m ready to be home,” she said. “For good.”

Her dad, Ray, is currently in charge, and they have no formal succession plan in place, but Rebecca says she is ready to take over. Darlene, her mother, says when Rebecca came home from Nova Scotia on school breaks, she ran the show. “I’m OK with working every day,” Rebecca said. “I enjoy getting up and working all day long.”

The family milks 170 cows at 5:30 a.m. and 4 p.m. each day, and has about 200 head. The cows are housed in a free stall barn with a parallel milking parlour. They operate in conjunction with Pond View Farm next door to share some equipment and facilities.

Milk is picked up every second day by Central Dairies, an Agro-Pur company, and shipped to the mainland for further processing. Only fluid milk, some cheese and butter are processed on the island.

Transportation is a challenge for the island’s 27 dairies. There is no auction or feedlot, so cull cows are shipped by truck and ferried off the island. “We keep a lot of bulls for our own use for beef,” Rebecca said. “We sell some to hobby farmers.”

The Williams family makes silage bales and mixed ration of feed daily but much of the feed is imported from the mainland because of the short growing season and lack of land available to grow it.

“It takes 12 hours to come across the island from Port-aux-Basques,” said Darlene, referring to where the ferry unloads on the other side of the island. Rebecca said other cost-of-production challenges are the weather and labour. “People don’t want to do a heavy labour job,” she said. “Getting someone new is hard.”

Rebecca has shown cattle at events around the province since she was four years old. She believes that connection developed with cattle in the show ring played a big role in shaping her career choice. “There’s just the rush of being in the ring,” she said.

But there’s also extra responsibility and work ethic you get from doing that.”

Rebecca is involved in the Newfoundland and Labrador Young Farmers’ Forum and said it’s important for the next generation of farmers to educate themselves, implement new methods and technologies and tell their stories.

As part of that, she began doing tours on the farm that attracted 500 children over the last three years.

She and her sister work with the School Milk Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador and Agriculture in the Classroom to conduct the tours, which she describes as eye opening for both students and teachers.

On three different tours, the attendees even got to see a calf being born, and Rebecca said she was surprised that parents and teachers on the tour didn’t all know a cow had to have a calf to produce milk.

Continued on next page
her family isn’t different from other farm families in that respect. According to Statistics Canada, only 5.7 percent of the province’s farms have written succession plans. Rebecca is also concerned that the number of dairy farms is dropping. In 2002, there were 41. “I worry that small farmers that have such passion aren’t going to make it as the industry grows.”

Karen Briere, producer.com

I worry that small farmers that have such passion aren’t going to make it as the industry grows.

REBECCA WILLIAMS
FORSYTH POND FARMS LTD.

A robot pushes feed to the family’s 200 dairy cows.

LEGALIZATION ISSUES

Dangers of marijuana

CLARE ROWSON, MD

Q: What is your personal opinion about the upcoming marijuana legalization in Canada?

A: I am concerned and hope that the overall effect will be to reduce the amount of crime associated with the illegal drug trade. I wish that the treatment taxes it too much, people will still go to their usual dealers. I was well-known that cannabis is not good for children and can cause a lack of motivation and even precipitate psychotic breakdowns in vulnerable individuals. If adults have easy access to it, then it might be difficult to keep it out of the hands of their children. Also, illegal drug dealers are already targeting schoolchildren, so I am sure they will continue to do so, even with the new laws.

I am also concerned that today’s marijuana is much stronger than it used to be so some people may overdose or have side-effects such as confusion and hallucinations. There are also concerns with driving under the influence.

BENEFITS OF BACTERIA

Q: The science news is now fairly liberally strewed with news of research into the influence of our microbiome on overall health. I wish that this understanding had developed many years ago. It would have made my life easier. I have read with interest your column on chronic diarrhea. I am 87 years old and have suffered virtually all my life with chronic diarrhea. Its onset may well have been due to my early childhood in Iraq where I likely had experienced entertis. I never could find any treatment offering more than short-term relief.

After a particularly severe bout that was leaving me dehydrated, I decided to try probiotics. I had taken an occasional drink of probiotic yogurt and it seemed somewhat beneficial. From a pure liquid stream, my stool became firmer than I had ever experienced. Since then, I have found that a regular intake of probiotics helps maintain a relatively healthy gut. This spring, I had developed many years ago.

It would have made my life easier.

I worry that small farmers that have such passion aren’t going to make it as the industry grows.

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It would have made my life easier.
A story of two happy snowbirds

The road to the south was built over years

BY SHIRLEY BYERS
FREELANCE WRITER

Clayton and Marjorie Markussen have been flying south for 17 years.

They spend about four months in Texas and the remainder at their home on Fishing Lake, about 19 kilometres from Foam Lake, Sask. The first time they travelled to the United States for the winter, they went with another couple. They later bought a 16 x 60 foot mobile home, which is now located in a trailer park in McAllen, a city in the Rio Grande Valley.

They say they prefer the Texas climate to Phoenix, Arizona, another popular snowbird destination, for one important reason: “Not as many allergy and air problems for me,” says Marjorie.

A population of about 100,000, McAllen is considerably smaller than Phoenix, although it has grown since they first went there and swallowed up the little towns around it, says Clayton.

“We’re very close to grocery stores, pharmacy, everything we need,” says Marjorie. “We don’t have to venture far but we do go to other parks to visit.”

There’s plenty to do in the trailer park too. Classes and activities offered on-site include everything from Bible study to dancing, from bingo to cardio, from bowling to genealogy to stained glass. Clayton golfs once a week, Marjorie enjoys doing Swedish embroidery, a craft she learned at the trailer park, and they both like to play cards. Early on they found a church home in the community and a farmer friend that they make sausage with.

“It’s become like a second home.”

“People say welcome home when we get there,” says Marjorie. “It’s pretty nice.”

Before retirement they went south for only a few weeks each winter and tasks such as grain hauling and harvesting seed brought them home earlier. Now they can stay a little longer, though they never leave Saskatchewan before Christmas and generally spend about four months at their winter get-away.

It was probably just as well those early holidays were shorter. Marjorie says she “got awful homesick” that first winter. One of the cons of the snowbird life, she says, is “not being here when grand children are born, not being here, missing birthdays, missing weddings….”

“Missing funerals,” Clayton adds.

“It was probably just as well those early holidays were shorter. Marjorie says she “got awful homesick” that first winter. One of the cons of the snowbird life, she says, is “not being here when grand children are born, not being here, missing birthdays, missing weddings….”

“Missing funerals,” Clayton adds.

They always celebrate Christmas at the lake with their family of three daughters, one son, 15 grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren before they head south. Their beach front home has plenty of bedrooms and bathrooms and includes a second story with a theatre room, a family room with a pool table and a sunroom looking out over the lake. It’s perfect for family gatherings, like the celebration of Clayton’s recent birthday which began Thursday and ended Sunday morning. “We built our home for the kids to come and live in,” Marjorie says with a smile.

When they retire they talked to their three daughters and one son about various options such as selling the land or renting it. They were hoping their son would farm but he chose another career, as a trucker. One of the daughters loved the farm but realized she could never farm.

The only descendent who might have wanted to farm is a grandson. Now 25, he was too young when they retired to think of taking it on. “But he does live in the farmhouse,” says Clayton. “I guess if we could have seen ahead that Jay would have liked to (take over the farm) we could have kept on,” says Clayton. “We could have easily kept on. We would have had to hire help.”

“It was time to trade off some of the machinery. I thought it was a good time to do it. I still think that but…”

They sold their machinery at an auction, and eased into retirement by renting some of the land and arranging for another farmer to custom farm some of it. They eventually sold four quarters and arranged to cash rent the remaining 11 quarter sections to Clayton’s nephews, an arrangement that still continues.

Was it hard walking away from the farm?

“No really,” says Clayton. Marjorie thinks it may have been harder for Clayton than for her.

Clayton says no but concedes that “I get more restless when they’re combining now, wanting to be out there, than I did when I was farming,” added Marjorie.

“He cares about how it’s going…. It would really concern him if things weren’t going well for them.”

It makes a difference though that it’s his nephews farming the land. “Yes, that means a lot,” he says.

Marjorie nods. “They’re good boys,” she says.

FOR A RELATED STORY, SEE PAGE 65
Joe and Suzanne Lefebvre of Ontario bought a travel health policy in October 2010 specifically for an Alaskan cruise they would take the following May.

On the fourth day of the cruise, Joe, who was 80 at the time, had to be hospitalized in Fairbanks with pneumonia. Complications set in and he spent 15 days in the hospital, after which their insurer arranged to fly the couple to a hospital in London, Ont., quite near their home.

That was all the insurer would do for them. The company refused his claim because Joe had a heart condition, atrial fibrillation, which he hadn’t disclosed on the insurance application.

In its defence, the insurer said the application had read, “If you are unsure if you have ever had a heart condition, please consult your doctor.”

Joe did have atrial fibrillation, stemming from a blood clot in 2008. The questionnaire in the form he filled out had stated that insurance would be denied for pre-existing conditions that weren’t testable before a trip.

Because his pre-existing condition had been stable for three years at the time of his hospitalization, the Lefebvres had assumed they weren’t required to include it on the application.

Their request for a review led to another refusal. Joe and Suzanne were left to deal with a $107,000 medical bill.

In the world of travel insurance plans, the phrase “pre-existing conditions is a very important.

According to an article on SnowbirdAdvisor.ca, every medical condition you have ever had, no matter how trivial, qualifies as a pre-existing medical condition. Any and every physical condition, symptom, illness or disease that you have sought treatment for could turn out to be a pre-existing condition that can absolve an insurer from paying out.

As well, if test results uncovered a new medical issue while applying for insurance, that issue would be considered a pre-existing medical condition and excluded under your policy.

However, there is a good part to this. Even if you have pre-existing medical conditions, you can still be covered if those conditions are stable and have been controlled for a mini-

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE
mum period of time when you apply for your policy. These periods are usually 90, 180 or 365 days, depending on the policy, your conditions and your age at the time you apply. The assumption is that any changes to a pre-existing medical condition during that minimum period indicates that the condition is no longer stable.

As well, changes also include any new medication or even dosage changes to an existing medication used to treat a pre-existing medical condition. Finally, how “stable” and “pre-existing condition” are defined and what exactly they mean can differ greatly from policy to policy. The moral of the story? Know your medical history. Don’t be hasty in filling out the forms. Talk to your doctor about any pre-existing conditions. Get a list of prescriptions and procedures with dates. It’s easy enough to forget something that could be crucial in the event you have to collect on your policy. Other elements of travel insurance policies that snowbirds need to know include:

Coverage

Travel medical insurance exists to cover those procedures that are of an emergency nature. It does not cover elective or non-medically necessary procedures, though it might cover your travel expenses if you need to cancel your trip or come home early.

Eligibility

To be eligible for travel medical insurance you will generally need to:

- be covered by your provincial government health care plan for your entire trip
- apply for your insurance from within Canada before you leave for your trip
- purchase insurance for your entire trip
- not make any misrepresentations on your insurance application

Travel medical insurance providers aim to recover some of your medical expenses from your provincial government, so if you aren’t covered by your provincial health care plan, your snowbird medical insurance may be invalid or limited.

Effective date

Your insurance coverage usually begins on the effective date, which simply means the date on which you actually depart on your journey to your winter nest. At the other end of your trip is the expiry date. For single trip policies (you’re going there and will pretty much remain there until you return to Canada), your coverage will expire on the return date as you indicated on your application. For multi-trip policies (you’ll be back and forth a bit), your coverage expires on the last day of the policy term, usually 365 days after the effective date.

If you can’t return to Canada on your stated return date because of flight cancellations, weather or other specified reasons such as a medical emergency, your policy should extend the expiry date of your coverage from 24 to 72 hours. But again, read the fine print.

Extending your trip

It’s the end of your trip and you want to stay just a little bit longer? Your policy should allow you to extend your coverage for an additional fee, subject to there being no change in your health or medication.

Cancellation refunds

If at some point after you purchase your travel medical insurance and before your departure date you have to cancel your winter travel plans, your policy should have a provision that allows you to cancel it and receive a full refund, possibly minus an administration fee.

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Prairie land conservancy provides alternative

BY SHIRLEY BYERS

Retiring farmers have many reasons for wanting to sell their land, and there are alternatives, says Duane Guina, executive director of Farmland Legacies, a registered, non-profit charity, which holds agricultural land in trust and promotes sustainable values.

"Some don’t like the direction that agriculture is going in," Guina says. "He says issues some retiring farmers have with selling their land are family histories tied to the property, certain practices the farm has operated under such as wildlife friendly or organic that they would like to see continued. As an alternative to selling, some farmers might consider donating some or all of their farm to Farmland Legacies.

The organization had its beginnings in the late 1980s and officially came into being in 1996. "It was a time of farm crisis," says Guina. "There were debt moratoriums, people were losing land to financial institutions because it was overleveraged."

"We don’t hear the alarming stories so much now but farm debt across Canada is still very real. It has grown from over $5 billion in the 1970s to over $65 billion by 2011."

The Farmland Legacies founding group was ecumenical with representatives from the Anglican, Catholic, Lutheran and Mennonite faiths. Concern over farm debt and over leveraged. "It informed a lot at the time, he says. "It informs a lot what is still important in my life today."

As a young adult, he would come to the land, "It was not about making money," he says. "We went on the land, walked it as much as we could so that everyone understood what was going to happen."

"It was not about making money on this land. It was about being a good steward."

WHEN YOUR FARM NEEDS STRONG GENETICS VIGOROUS GROWTH DEPENDABLE RESULTS

SUSTAINABILITY


text continues
After the Farm

BY SHIRLEY BYERS
FREELANCE WRITER

Al Boyko and Helene Tremblay-Boyko got an early start on their unique retirement plan because they knew they were in uncharted territory. There were no models, at least in Saskatchewan, for the way they wanted to pass on their farm. The couple have three daughters. None of them want to farm and they live in Vancouver; Galveston, Texas; and just outside Edmonton. Owning a farm in east-central Saskatchewan just wouldn’t be practical.

Boyko and Tremblay-Boyko plan to live in their house on their farm for as long as they can. When they can no longer manage the farm, the land will be donated to Farmland Legacies, a Saskatchewan-based land conservancy, which will assume that task.

Who their land goes to is important; how it’s stewarded is crucial. The farm, comprising 1,440 acres, north of Canora, Sask., is a bit hilly. It’s peppered with sloughs and bluffs of poplar and willow, and other native species provide shelter to lots of wildlife as well as a herd of 100 grass-fed, organically raised cattle. They also grow organic grain, grass and legumes.

“We’re looking at some way to involve a new and younger farmer so we don’t have to just sell off our farm because it would be bought up by a conventional farmer in the area and they would drain it and clear it and level it,” Boyko said.

“At the same time, we need to use our land for our retirement income. We’re trying to find a way to get someone to farm the land without selling the farm.”

Boyko and Tremblay-Boyko intend to go on living in their house on their home quarter and would be available to mentor and farm-sit when the new farmers need a break.

The journey

They began their quest in 2009 with ads in farm publications. That got results, but the candidates the ad found weren’t interested in renting the land — they wanted to buy it — and that would continue to be a sticking point for future candidates.

Land ownership is generally pretty important to Canadians even as prices spiral to a point where it is more and more difficult, they say.

When a young South American woman wrote to Tremblay-Boyko that she and her husband wanted to immigrate to Canada and in fact wanted to live on a farm, the Boykos thought their search had ended. They already knew the young woman’s family and knew their values were similar. The young couple, Anita and Albano, leased cattle from a not-for-profit organization and soon had built up a herd of 65.

The immigration targets just kept changing all the time,” Tremblay-Boyko said. “I don’t know if it would be different now.”
That experience left the couple discouraged, but after a break of about two years they were ready to try again, this time with the help of a website, Farmlink.net.

A farmland dating site?

FarmLink.net describes itself as “a cross between Realtor.ca and eHarmony: farm-seekers can find detailed property facts as well as the terms of lease or succession arrangements, while retiring farmers and farmland owners can learn about the aspirations and values of the farmers they might work with and to connect with each other through a confidential message system.”

Boyko and Tremblay-Boyko were the first farm owners in Saskatchewan to post their farm on the Farmlink site. Most of the site’s farm seekers were from British Columbia and Ontario. It was difficult for some of them to wrap their heads around the idea of a farm of more than 1,400 acres.

“We learned a new term. They called us broad acre farmers,” Boyko said.

Added Tremblay-Boyko: “What I discovered pretty early on was that the candidates we might mesh with the best were people in livestock, so I started looking at who wants to raise cattle/sheep/goats,… I was proactive. I must have sent out 200 emails.”

Around this time the couple acquired an additional 16 acres near their farm. Once a farmyard, it has electrical power to the site, several mature trees and a log barn that is sound. The new property is available to be purchased by whoever they might enter into a farming partnership with.

Journey’s end?

Their goal may be in sight. They’re getting to know an Alberta family, Dale and Stacey Maier and their two children, and so far, so good. They’ve met with the Maiers and the potential young farmers have made several visits to the farm. They raise goats.

The Maiers will require only a small portion of the land for their enterprise, so the search will continue for another livestock operation to rent the rest of the land.

“We’re requiring sustainable practice but haven’t hammered out a deal,” Tremblay-Boyko said.

There will be separate agreements for the acreage for purchase and for machinery use.

The Maiers are also optimistic.

“I think it will be good for us because it allows us to get into farming without having to put a lot of money up front, which we don’t have right now,” Stacey Maier said.

“It helps us get into it, pay for things as we have money. My husband is still going to be working. He’s self-employed as a heavy-duty mechanic. I’ll stay at home with the kids and run the farm part. This would allow us to farm without coming up with this huge amount of money to purchase everything up front. It allows us to start small and build as we can and hopefully end up with less debt and more profit. And it also helps because Al and Helene have been farming for a while and it’s nice to have mentors. We weren’t much interested in the traditional, ‘borrow lots of money; have lots of debt.’ We had been looking for an alternative way to get into agriculture. And Al and Helene are amazing and I can hardly wait to start working with them, to be honest.”
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Future of branch lines depends on volume

Canadian Pacific Railway identifies lines slated for closure

BY BRIAN CROSS
Saskatoon News Now

Canadian Pacific Railway says it will continue to review its Canadian rail network in an effort to improve safety and find operational efficiencies.

However, CP officials declined to comment specifically on the future of Western Canadian branch lines that are slated for discontinuance in the company’s three-year rail network plan.

“As per the Canadian Transportation Act, railways must prepare and keep up to date a plan indicating...whether it intends to continue to operate the line or whether, within the next three years, it intends to take steps to discontinue and operate the line,” CP said in a recent email.

“We are following the process prescribed by the (Canadian Transportation) Agency, including giving any interested party ample time to provide feedback.”

In its three-year rail network plan published late last year, CP identified 14 sections of rail line that are slated for discontinuance.

The list includes five sections of track in Saskatchewan spanning a total of 230 kilometres and two sections of track in Alberta covering 33 kilomtres.

Saskatchewan lines listed for discontinuance include:

- A section of the Hatton subdivision in the province’s southwest covering 80.5 kilometres between Hatton and Golden Prairie
- Nearly 83 kilometres of track on the Kerrobert–Rosetown subdivision between Conquest and Herschel
- Approximately 112 kilometres of track on the CP Radville subdivision between Weyburn and Bengough
- Approximately 22.7 kilometres of track between Kelvington and Fosston in the province’s east-central region

In Alberta, the lines slated for discontinuance include:

- Approximately 12.4 kilometres of track between Stirling and Raymond
- Roughly 21.5 kilometres of track on the Breton subdivision between Buford and Sunnybrook.

The plan also lists seven spur lines or rail leads, including one in Manitoba, one in British Columbia and five in Ontario.

CP spokesperson Jeremy Berry said CP’s board of directors has the final say on discontinuance plans because they do not want to affect their relationship with rail service providers.

In mid-September, CP closed several producer car loading sites in Saskatchewan citing reduced shipping volumes.

Affected locations in Saskatchewan included Tompkins, Middle, Cupar, Markinch, Grand Coulee, Wilcox, Moosomin, Tisdale and Qu’Appelle.

CP now services 27 producer car loading sites in Saskatchewan, down from 79 in 2005.

brian.cross@producer.com

Farmers prove that 6074 RR yields like InVigor®

With yields that lead the Genuity® Roundup Ready® segment, 6074 RR proved it could go head-to-head with the perceived yield leader, InVigor® hybrids. In 2016, the BrettYoung vs. InVigor Challenge Trials were launched—these are farmer-run, head-to-head trials across Western Canada that featured 6074 RR against the best InVigor hybrids. In those trials, 6074 RR yielded 102% of InVigor with an average 53.6 bushels per acre. And 2017 results are once again proving that 6074 RR can challenge InVigor yields.

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Agronomic and Regulatory Services Manager with BrettYoung.

BrettYoung introduced the DefendR™ trait platform as part of an active disease management strategy. 6074 RR carries the DefendR Sclerotinia tolerance trait and has improved Sclerotinia tolerance over susceptible checks.

“6074 RR has Sclerotinia tolerance at levels that will reduce impacts of infection and reduce yield loss wherever disease pressure is present,” says Rene Mabon, Agronomic and Regulatory Services Manager with BrettYoung.

Mabon says the DefendR trait allows for greater flexibility in fungicide application timing if flowering is uneven and staggered. Additionally, the improved Sclerotinia tolerance can help reduce the impact of Sclerotinia in long-flower crops where the window of fungicide protection has lapsed.

“If environmental conditions favor the disease, we recommend selecting varieties with the DefendR Sclerotinia tolerance trait as well as using a fungicide for a complete defense,” says Mabon.

For up-to-date results from the Challenge Trials, go to brettyoung.ca/6074

DefendR Sclerotinia tolerance trait BrettYoung introduced the DefendR™ trait platform as part of an active disease management strategy. 6074 RR carries the DefendR Sclerotinia tolerance trait and has improved Sclerotinia tolerance over susceptible checks. 6074 RR has Sclerotinia tolerance at levels that will reduce impacts of infection and reduce yield loss wherever disease pressure is present,” says Rene Mabon, Agronomic and Regulatory Services Manager with BrettYoung.

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BY BARB GLEN
LETHBRIDGE BUREAU

TABER, Alta. — In this part of the world, PGA stands for Potato Growers of Alberta. In the wider world, especially that of sports, PGA stands for something vastly different.

That’s why Alberta potato growers found themselves in negotiation with the Professional Golfers Association in 1996.

"Who knew what a domain name was back then," said PGA (the potato organization) executive director Terence Hochstein.

But the potato group was alert to the possibilities, so it secured the www.pga.com web address before the golfers did.

An obsolete golf club called a mashie — and French fries served in golf clubhouses all over North America — were probably the closest connections that the PGA (the golfers) had with the PGA (the potato growers.)

Writing from the Avenue of the Champions in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, in May 1996, PGA program manager Jon K. Colclasure wrote to PGA controller Glenn Hurst to make a deal.

“We would like to use the domain name noted above and believe the Potato Growers of Alberta would benefit from using a domain name that is not confused with the PGA of America,” wrote Colclasure.

But Hurst and growers didn’t make a quick assent. Two months later, the growers agreed to relinquish pga.com for $34,000 — $20,000 for the name and the rest for expenses in the switch to www.potatonet.com.

Ever practical, the growers quickly earmarked the money for research into potato starch.

In hindsight, the price seems low, said Hochstein, but the value of a web address wasn’t well understood at the time.

That story is one of hundreds in the Potato Growers of Alberta history book published in October, which spans the organization’s “50 years of working and growing together.”

Historical data, photos and stories from potato growers themselves are included.

PGA financial administrator Wendy McDonald and communication co-ordinator Deb Brewin are the drivers behind the 408-page hardcover book.

“It started as a cookbook. Through the years, the association had done a number of cookbooks, and it had been 18 years, so we thought we would do another cookbook to celebrate the 50th,” said McDonald.

The board had other ideas. Yes, they would support a cookbook, but a history book should come first, they said.

There were “mounds and mounds” of stories and photos.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE >>

POTATO GROWERS OF ALBERTA

PGA history: when spuds and golf got into a mash

A new history book covers 50 years of growing potatoes in Alberta
of boxed material amassed over the years, including meeting minutes, financial reports, newspaper clippings, old newsletters, slides and photos.

“There was no organization, really, in the boxes,” said Brewin. “It was a huge undertaking just to go through the boxes and see what was in there and see what needed to be purged and see what needed to be kept for our own archives.”

In addition to that material, the two asked past and present potato growers for their histories, aiming to include at least 100 of them in the book. About 88 complied, and their stories and photos make for interesting reading about early hardships, immigration and, for some, internment during the Second World War.

The book documents the early days of growing potatoes in Alberta, when they were considered a market garden crop. Today, some 45,000 acres of potatoes are grown in the province, which is home to major processing plants.

“We were gearing towards 200 pages and when we were getting going, I thought we might not make it,” Brewin said.

“But the more we dug into the boxes and the pictures, the more we found. Articles, information that needed to be included. So deadlines got extended.”

She and McDonald said perusal of all the historical data was time consuming but entertaining.

“It’s so interesting. And that’s the purpose of a history book. You don’t read it from front to back. You just flip it open,” said McDonald.

Added Brewin: “Some of the growers’ stories, you’d sit back and just giggle. They’re very transparent. I was really humbled to read about the hardships that a lot of these growers went through back in the 1940s. They didn’t have machinery. A lot of it was horse-drawn and hand-built implements.

“Those humble beginnings were probably what I remember most.

“This isn’t your average history book. There’s so much more than just stories. There’s authentic, original documents that come from the people that were on the commission at the time.”

The book spans the period from 1966 to 2016, with a smattering of information from earlier days. The growers have had several name and structural changes over the years, going from the Alberta Potato Growers Association to the Alberta Potato Commission to its current Potato Growers of Alberta moniker.

The name of its newsletter has also evolved, from the Spud Note to the Tater Times to the Common-Tater, and finally to today’s Potato Minute.

The PGA took delivery of 1,000 copies of the book. Few growers had picked up their copies as of mid-October — half were pre-sold — so feedback on the project has been minimal so far.

“Not every industry has an opportunity to go back into the past 50 years and still have people around to talk about it. It’s a tremendous read.”

TERENCE HOCHSTEIN
POTATO GROWERS OF ALBERTA

As for the recipe book, McDonald and Brewin said a 253-page volume is already at the printers.

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Farmers told to grow low quality wheat to satisfy market needs

FROM THE ARCHIVES

BRUCE DYCK

The Western Producer takes a weekly look at some of the stories that made headlines in issues of the paper from 75, 50, 25 and 10 years ago.

75 YEARS AGO: OCT. 29, 1942

Crop quality was the lowest since 1928, based on protein levels. Grading was also down from previous years.

Not enough lumber was available to meet farm needs, said H. Stein-thorson, president of the Western Retail Lumbermen’s Association. He said it had been estimated in July that 200 million feet of lumber would be needed just for grain stor-age.

"Less than 10 percent of this quantity has been received and at the moment there are thousands of bushels of threshed grain lying out in the fields unprotected," he said.

50 YEARS AGO: NOV. 2, 1967

A major player in the grain industry said Canadian farmers needed to be able to grow lower quality wheat as well as the top quality varieties for which they were known.

"While high grade Northern would continue to be the mainstay of prairie production, there should be a lower price wheat to offer the market," said F.E. Hamilton, chief commissioner of the Board of Grain Commissioners.

Canadian Wheat Board officials planned to visit China in November to try to negotiate another big wheat sale to that country. The Chinese had bought 33.6 million bushels earlier in the year and another 1.1 million following that, but nothing since then.

25 YEARS AGO: OCT. 29, 1992

Canada and the United States were working on a deal that would make it easier for American producers to ship hogs into Canada. U.S. slaughter hogs coming north had to be quarantined for 30 days to keep pseudorabies out of Canada, but the two countries were talking about lifting that requirement for some animals.

Keystone Agricultural Producers agreed to support Manitoba government restrictions on burning straw.

"I think the whole farm community has received a black eye, and it’s the whole farm community’s responsibility," said KAP delegate Bill Tows of Lowe Farm. "If we ignore it, we’ll be told what to do."

10 YEARS AGO: NOV. 1, 2007

The wheat board proposed significant increases in initial payments to reflect soaring grain prices. It wanted the milling wheat price to increase to $65 a tonne from $44, the milling quality durum price to rise to $131 from $116 and feed wheat to jump $100 to $230.50.

Lower cattle prices were forcing cattle groups to reduce their budgets. For example, Alberta Beef Producers slashed $750,000 from its 2007-08 budget in the middle of the year but was still facing a $762,500 deficit.

Floyd Bigsby, a professor in the University of Saskatchewan’s agricultural engineering department, demonstrates a tractor monitor in March 1977. | FILE PHOTO

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Don’t let tax confusion delay other farm planning: adviser

BY ED WHITE
WINNIPEG BUREAU

Don’t become paralyzed by all the uncertainty around farm taxes and fail to get your transition and succession plan done. There are worse uncertainties created by unexpected life and farm changes that many farmers haven’t prepared for than there are with tax changes, said farm family life coach Elaine Froese.

“Do you have a will? A power-of-attorney?” said Froese, a Boissevain farmer and farm adviser who specializes in intergenerational farm transitions. “Your financial plan and your tax plan for transition is only one small piece. What’s your communications plan? What’s your conflict resolution strategy? What’s your plan for lifestyle?”

“Don’t let what the government is doing with tax grind your planning to a halt.”

Uncertainty and anxiety have struck many farm families since the federal government announced changes to farm taxes that many have feared could badly damage farm succession plans and discourage parents from passing their farms on to their children.

The government recently dropped the most contentious part of the reform package after a tsunami of outrage from farmers and other small businesspeople smashed into the Liberal attempt to eliminate tax loopholes. However, some of the proposed changes are going forward.

Tax experts have said whatever the government finally passes, the actual impact for farm families won’t be known for years because it will take Canada Revenue Agency audits and court cases to establish how the rules and regulations apply to farms in the real world.

Froese said that uncertainty is unlikely to frazzle many farmers, but male farmers are likely to be the most frazzled.

“The tax piece, for men especially, is highly disproportionate to the impact of what’s really important.” Meanwhile, a generation of farmers is growing older and needs to sort out how the farm is going to be dealt with in the case of retirement, death or illness.

Delaying planning because of the confusion will set up a farm for worse confusion if something caused succession issues to be dealt with unexpectedly, she said. ed.white@producer.com

FINANCIAL PLANNING

A horse and bull make unusual pasture buddies on the Bar Pipe Ranch near Okotoks, Alta.

| WENDY DUDLEY PHOTO |

HANGING OUT

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Input Capital expands interests in prairie canola; expects strong growth

BY BRIAN CROSS
SASKATOON NEWSROOM

Regina-based commodities broker Input Capital Corp. is continuing to expand its foothold in the prairie canola industry.

Financial documents released by Input Capital last month show the publicly traded company had canola reserves of 405,000 tonnes as of Sept. 30, 2017, up from 259,000 tonnes a year earlier.

The company now has canola supply or “streaming” contracts with 301 canola farmers across Western Canada, including 221 growers in Saskatchewan, 71 in Alberta and nine in Manitoba.

Input Capital offers farmers an up-front payment for canola that has yet to be harvested and sells “streamed” canola when market conditions are favourable.

In its 2017 fiscal year, the company signed 297 streaming contracts, issued payments of $36.8 million, added 199 new growers to its client list and sourced more than 300,000 tonnes of canola.

“Over the last year, we have seen a lot of growth,” said Doug Emsley, company president and chief executive officer. “Today, we have over 300 active streams (growers), up from just 112 last year at this time, and we anticipate another strong year of growth in fiscal year 2018.”

For the 12 months that ended Sept. 30, Input’s revenues from canola sales exceeded $34 million. Input’s canola streaming contracts are aimed at farmers who require capital to expand their land base or crop production.

Some observers have criticized its operating model, suggesting it appeals primarily to growers who no longer qualify for debt financing through traditional lenders.

Over the past five years, Input generated total revenues of $86.1 million from canola sales and paid farmers about $160 million.

With total canola reserves estimated at 405,000 tonnes as of Sept. 30, 2017, the company controlled the equivalent of two percent of annual prairie canola production.

brian.cross@producer.com
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PotashCorp profit disappoints as merger looms

Share prices are dropping but the merger is expected to eventually bring them up.

(Reuters) — PotashCorp, which is set to merge with Agrium Inc. to withstand a fertilizer slump, has reported a smaller-than-expected quarterly profit and narrowed its full-year forecast, pressuring its stock.

PotashCorp has levelled off this year after hitting eight-year lows late last year because of low crop prices and excessive production capacity.

The slump, which has extended to nitrogen and phosphate fertilizers, has led PotashCorp to seek consolidation and idle capacity.

It said the all-stock merger with Agrium, valued at $2.5 billion when it was announced last year, was on track for completion by the end of the year, forming a new company called Nutrien.

New York-listed shares of Potash dipped 1.7 percent last week to $17.26.

Pressure on PotashCorp stock is likely to be short-lived as investors quickly turn their attention to the merger, combining the company’s fertilizer capacity with Agrium’s network of stores to sell fertilizer and seed to farmers, said Brian Madden, portfolio manager at Goodreid Investment Counsel, which owns PotashCorp shares.

“The bigger prize is the combination of the two businesses,” Madden said.

“Nutrien” is going to be bigger and less volatile.”

India last month approved the merger, contingent on PotashCorp selling stakes in fertilizer companies ICL Israel Chemicals, SQM and Arab Potash Co Plc.

PotashCorp should resist using the proceeds for further acquisitions in an oversupplied market, Madden said.

PotashCorp’s sales volumes exceeded expectations, but the opening of new mines owned by K+S AG in Saskatchewan and EuroChem in Russia will add competition early next year, said BMO analyst Joel Jackson.

The company’s third-quarter revenue rose 8.6 percent to $1.23 billion, helped by higher sales volumes and average realized prices of potash.

However, the cost of goods sold rose five percent in the quarter, resulting in a smaller profit.

Net income fell to $33 million, or six cents per share, from $81 million, or 10 cents per share, a year earlier.

PotashCorp tightened its full-year adjusted earnings to 88 cents to 94 cents per share from 45 cents to 65 cents.

Excluding items, profit was nine cents a share, lower than the 12 cents analysts expected, according to Thomson Reuters.

AN ORANGE LOAD

Pumpkins were on display recently at the Davison Orchards and Country Village near Vernon B.C. | DUANE McCARTNEY PHOTO

GRAIN PRICES

U.S. farmers tighten belts as prices drop

World bumper crops are driving down grain prices and no relief is expected next year.

CHICAGO, Ill. (Reuters) — When Kansas farmer Tom Giessel drove over a deer carcass and punctured a tire on his combine during harvest this fall, he did not have the time or cash to fix it. He borrowed his neighbour’s tractor to finish.

U.S. farmers are cutting costs any way they can to compete with cheaper producers in Argentina and Brazil.

Four years of global oversupply have pushed down grain prices, reduced agricultural revenues and put more expensive producers under financial pressure.

In response, U.S. farmers have bought cheaper seeds, spent less on fertilizers and delayed equipment purchases as they seek to ride out the downturn. However, more bumper harvest forecasts and rising energy prices herald another tough year for farmers next year.

“The logical thing to do is stop farming,” said Giessel, 64, who farms about 5,000 acres and has worked on the land all of his adult life.

Giessel has cut spending on what he can control — seeds, chemicals, fertilizer, rented land and chevied through his farm’s savings. He stands to lose $93 an acre, or nearly $15,000, on one corn field alone this year.

“My burn rate is a raging fire, and I am no different than anyone else on earth,” he said.

Some farmers have had to sell assets to keep afloat. Others have gone into bankruptcy.

U.S. farmers have taken another hit this year because of rising prices of labour, fuel and electricity.

These costs together account for about 45.4 percent of total expenses and are largely paid by farmers’ interest expenses have risen on banks tighten credit to the agricultural sector.

These items were expected to push overall costs up 1.1 percent in 2017, which would mark the first year since 2014 that farmers have failed to reduce total costs.

Farmers cut $40.20 billion to bring total costs down to $330.49 billion between 2014 and 2016, according to the U.S. Agriculture Department’s Economic Research Service.

The downturn in spending has hurt productivity, say farmers.

“You find yourself Catch-22,” said Jeff Fisher, who grows corn and soybeans on 1,600 acres in Illinois.

“You just hope the yield won’t be hit too bad next year.”

David Miller, who grows corn and soybeans on 500 acres in southern Iowa, saved about $8 per acre for beans and some $20 per acre for corn by using cheaper seed.

The risk is that they will produce a smaller harvest. Adding to that concern is that after a dry summer, he expects his poorest soybean field to yield around 20 bushels per acre, 65 percent off the state average.

Even with the cuts, U.S. farmers are still spending more per acre than their competitors in Latin America.

In Argentina, corn was expected to cost slightly less than $200 per acre in 2017-18, according to Ezequiel de Freijoo, an analyst at farm association Sociedad Rural’s Institute of Economic Studies, well below the $310 per acre in the United States in 2016.

Soy farmers in the Latin American country are spending around $115 an acre, compared to around $163 in the U.S. last year.

The lower costs have helped Latin American producers take market share from their competitors in the U.S. Brazil and Argentina combined are expected to capture nearly 42 percent of the global corn export market in 2017-18, up from less than 38 percent in 2014-15.

During the same period, the U.S. saw its share of global corn exports drop to around 11 percent of the market from 33.5 percent.

Latin American farmers, like their counterparts in the north, are also searching for ways to cut costs to boost their margins and take more of the global market from competitors.

“We are cutting use of fertilizers, for example,” said José Fernandes, who farms nearly 1,000 acres of soy in Brazil’s key Mato Grosso production region.

“We have been ‘burning fat’ for a long time here on costs.”

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MERGER
Walk on the wild side

Appreciating nature | The Prairies are always beautiful, but particularly so in the fall, when the leaves turn colour and birds and other wild animals prepare for winter. Here are some snapshots from recent weeks.

A flock of Canada geese take to the sky after basking on a lake in Alberta’s Peace River region Oct. 3. | Randy Vanderveen photo

ABOVE: A pair of ring-necked pheasant roosters move through roadside grasses near Frank Lake, east of High River, Alta., Oct. 21. | Mike Sturk photo

FAR LEFT: A magpie finds a free ride on the back of Raven, a standard donkey kept on Burro Alley Ranch near Millarville, Alta., Oct. 11. | Wendy Dudley photo

LEFT: A male hairy woodpecker tucks into the beams on a log home near Priddis, Alta., Oct. 2, finding tiny bugs hidden in the seams. | Wendy Dudley photo
Study shows farmers are reducing antimicrobial use

BY JOHN GREIG
FREELANCE WRITER

Ontario hog farms that participated in a voluntary antimicrobial benchmarking project reduced their use of antimicrobials by 18 percent over two years.

The results of the Ontario Pork Industry Council study show what can be done when farmers actually know their antimicrobial use and the practices of their peers, says Dr. Greg Wideman, a veterinarian with South West Ontario Veterinary Services.

He presented the results of the 2016 study at the Ontario Swine Health Advisory Board’s annual Big Bug Day. A similar study was conducted in 2014.

“We have demonstrated that a voluntary, antimicrobial use benchmarking project, based on producer interest, goodwill and engagement, is feasible, acceptable, it’s producing high quality results that we can take back to the farm and turn into action,” Wideman said.

The study involved 700,000 Ontario finisher pigs from more than 30 farms in each year. It was started in 2014 to try to figure out how much antimicrobials were needed to raise a pig in Ontario.

The range of antimicrobial use was significant in the 2014 study, ranging from almost non-existent to extremely high in farms that happened to have had disease outbreaks that year, such as secondary infections after a porcine respiratory and reproductive syndrome (PRRS) outbreak.

There’s significant pressure for farmers to reduce or control the use of antimicrobials on farms to control bacteria, and the use of antimicrobials as growth enhancers is being reduced, Dr. Bob Bell, chief executive officer of Bio Agri Mix, told the same meeting, and such use will soon be off labels for antimicrobials.

Wideman said the decision was made to conduct a second study last year to have a comparison, especially with increasing interest in antimicrobial use on farms by consumers and regulators.

Three farms dropped out in 2016 because of various circumstances, but the number of sows increased as farms grew and one operation in particular added more of their sows to the study.

The study looked at the weight of antimicrobials used on the farms. In the 2016 study, the amount of pig live weight increased and the amount of antimicrobial use went down, which meant the milligrams of antimicrobial use per 100 kilograms of pig decreased by 18 percent.

After the 2014 study, a wrap-up meeting was held with producers and co-operators, which resulted in good conversations about antimicrobial management, said Wideman.

“I’m going to say because of active engagement in benchmarking and conversations that occurred during and after that process, there was a significant change in antimicrobials,” he said.

Seventy percent of the farms decreased their antibiotic use, “just from starting the conversation.” Some had disease challenges and did increase their use of antimicrobials.

When the working group looked at the farms where antimicrobial use increased, eight of 10 of them had a disease issue, including PRRS, mycoplasma and ileitis.

“The reality is that health status changes in Ontario, and when health status changes, one of the responses, sometimes the main response, is to use antibiotics to keep pigs alive,” Wideman said.

The study also looked at the types of antimicrobials that were used. Class I antimicrobials are those that are most important for human use. They are increasingly restricted for use in animals. The study showed that the total of Class I antibiotics used on the more than 30 farms was low.

“It’s not tens or hundreds of thousands of kilos of Class I antimicrobials, not by a long shot. It’s almost a rounding error away from zero, when we look at the whole antimicrobial use in this study,” he said.

That’s a good news story.

He said he also believes farmers understand the value of Class I antimicrobials and made decisions based on appropriate use.

The study was conducted using a confidential, web-based assessment tool developed by Boehringer Ingelheim. Wideman said the tool, called Compass, is scalable for many different uses in benchmarking antimicrobial use.
The big demand is for fine wool production, but Canadian farmers tend to produce a coarser product. Canadian wool is not carpet wool. It’s still a clothing type wool for blankets, sweaters, hand knitting yarns or coating fabrics, so it’s well suited to those types of applications. He said there are good dual-purpose breeds in Canada, and wool growers try to encourage use of those that produce good fleece as well as meat, “but it’s up to the producer at the end of the day.”

Sheep numbers have been falling in Western Canada in recent years, but Bjergso said that hasn’t greatly affected the wool growers co-op. He speculated the West could see a drop in production this year because of a dry summer and resulting higher feed expenses. “Last year we had some slippage but we think it was mainly due to drought conditions in Eastern Canada, expensive feed, high cattle prices, which meant that producers could cull quite rigidly. It appears that’s what happened,” CCWG president David Mastine was asked about the effect of a split among Canadian sheep producers last year, which saw formation of the National Sheep Network when Alberta, Ontario and Quebec groups split from the Canadian Sheep Federation. Mastine said the wool growers are not taking sides in the matter, but “we want to see a national voice.”

“Unfortunately, our fine wool is finer that what our fine wool is. It will be 21 micron and finer, and our fine wool is mostly between 22 and 25 micron,” Bjergso explained. “The broader crossbred wool market has struggled the past 18 months, “he said after the co-op’s general meeting Oct. 21. “Most of the fine wool they’re using is finer that what our fine wool is. It will be 21 micron and finer, and our fine wool is mostly between 22 and 25 micron.”

Bjergso made his ninth trip to China in September to attend the annual Nanjing Wool Market Conference and sold several containers of graded Canadian wool. “It’s been a little tough to sell into that market the last 18 months,” he said.

“I didn’t have high expectations just because of the way the market was for the coarse wool, but we did better than I thought. So that was, I hope, a good sign that the coarser wool market is on the rise.”

In his report to members, Bjergso said there is a major difference in price between coarse and fine wool. Record prices have been achieved in the past year for the latter type of 22 micron and finer.

He said international branding of Merino wool, along with new products that blend wool with synthetics, are likely reasons. “The broader crossbred wool market has struggled the past 18 months, and to this point in time has not been able to ride the coattails of the rising fine wool market,” Bjergso explained.

In China, which accounts for 63 percent of exports from the five top wool exporting countries, is the price setter, and it has a surplus of coarse wool products. Canadian sheep producers tend to focus on breeds with dual purpose: meat as well as wool. Many of those breeds produce coarser wool, Bjergso said.

“The bulk of the Canadian clip would be between 29 and 35 micron because the breeds that we have here, everybody is primarily focused on commercial lamb production … so those breeds that we have tend to be a coarser, lighter fleece. “It’s not carpet wool. It’s still a clothing type wool for blankets, sweaters, hand knitting yarns or coating fabrics, so it’s well suited to those types of applications.”

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“We feel it’s very important for the industry to have a unified voice that represents Canadian producers from coast to coast. That’s the mandate that we have.”

“I’m not sure how we’re going to achieve that, but certainly that has to be the end result because government is only going to look for one unified voice.” CCWG members at the annual meeting also attended the grand opening of a new 14,000 sq. foot facility east of Lethbridge. The Lethbridge facility used to be in the city’s downtown, but the age of the building and limited parking were challenging in recent years. The former building has been sold to the Long and McQuade music store.

barb.glen@producer.com
Winter cereal outlook better than anticipated

Producers urged to seed winter wheat even if it’s dry because enough moisture should fall to help the crop

BY ASHLEY ROBINSON

WINNIPEG — Winter cereal acres are down following concerns in September about seeding in dry conditions, but crops seeded in Western Canada are in good shape heading into winter.

“Very little moisture is required in the fall to get the seed to germinate and start growing, especially if it’s been seeded shallow,” said Amanada Swanson, a southern Saskatchewan winter wheat agronomist with Ducks Unlimited.

The final crop report from Manitoba Agriculture, released Oct. 16, said germination and establishment of winter cereal crops was good, but seeded acres were down across the province.

Mid-September reports from southern Saskatchewan and Alberta said limited acres of winter cereals had been seeded because of dry conditions. A brief reprieve happened in the second half of September as rain fell.

“Even if the rains don’t come and it doesn’t germinate in the fall, it will germinate, come up in the springtime,” Swanson said. “If moisture doesn’t come until spring, it doesn’t mean the crop won’t come up, Swanson said, adding it will just act more like a spring wheat than a winter wheat. Farmers in Western Canada seeded 355,000 acres of winter wheat last fall, eventually harvesting 398,000 acres, according to Statistics Canada. Prairie production came in at 546,400 tonnes, which was well below the 1.02 million tonnes grown in the previous year.

Swanson has been speaking to producers across southern Saskatchewan, and those who seeded winter cereals have said germination is at the two-leaf stage — the three-leaf stage is ideal. “The) seeding date (really didn’t really make a huge difference this year just with the conditions being so dry,” she said.

“The crop stages for the majority of what the producers in Delta, B.C. took part in the study. “The project really came about through the work that the climate action initiative spearheaded,” said Sean Smukler, an assistant professor at UBC.

According to Smukler, regional assessments of potential climate change impact were done across the province. “When they did their regional assessments, Delta’s drainage issues were flagged. Then they actually hired us to do an initial assessment of what the producers in Delta currently understand of their own drainage management issues.”

“The main objective of the research project was to look at different methods of dealing with drainage. Many producers in the region have their spacing at 30 feet or greater and the researchers put the spacing at 15 feet. “We had an improved performance at that smaller spacing,” said Smukler.

“So, if farmers are to anticipate a future where precipitation patterns are going to be more intense and more erratic, they’re definitely going to need to invest in improving their drainage infrastructure or else their ability to work in those critical shoulder seasons is going to be reduced dramatically.”

Researchers found improved results in grassland fields that were pulled out of production for a year or more until the drainage system was fully established.

B.C. study finds ineffective farm drainage in Lower Mainland

BY SHELLEY TOMLINSON

A study of drainage issues was recently completed in Delta, B.C. Researchers from the University of B.C. took part in the study. “The project really came about through the work that the climate action initiative spearheaded,” said Sean Smukler, an assistant professor at UBC.

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Researchers found improved results in grassland fields that were pulled out of production for a year or more until the drainage system was fully established. 
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Eliminates iron, iron staining, rotten egg odor, bad taste, coliform bacteria, e. coli, manganese, black water. System includes 90 gal retention tank, well pro dry pellet chlorinator, 12 horse power repress pump, 7 gallon draw down pressure tank, 10-54 multi-media filter is additional. Shipping is FOB The Water Clinic, Saskatoon, SK.

**Meridian 1620 Multi Purpose Fertilizer Bin**

4110 Buchel, 156 MT tone; Multi-purpose gran, oat, feed and fertilizer N, 46-44-14+Cyclic. Size: 10 ft. High, This bin has 8 – 46X514ags, 40 degree bottom cone. Comes with a durable 5x7 stainless steel base, Bell poke hole, 3 view glasses and a bottom manual Powder coated inside and out. Delivery included in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. (Additional freight may apply to the Peace Region in Alberta.)

**Never Spill Spout Auger Hopper Mover with 2 Remotes**

Four wheel drive electric auger mover for 10 inch & 13 inch augers. Electric motors with gears. Connects to hopperveyor four wheel drive. Wiring direct to tractor battery. Disconnect to unplug harness. Comes with two remote controls. Shipping is included.

**Watermark Beach Resort Vacation & Golf Package**

3 nights accommodation in a two bedroom lake front suite for four people at the beautiful Watermark Beach Resort in Osoyoos, BC and eight rounds of Golf including power cart at Osoyoos Golf and Country Club. Osoyoos Golf Club has two beautiful 18 hole Courses. In addition, a $150.00 credit for the Watermark Restaurant & Patio. Please indicate certificate use when booking. Original certificate must be presented at check-in.

**TM - Agricultural 2500-Acre Package**

TM - Agricultural is proprietary formulation that is applied to the plant and soils existing microorganisms. It helps to stimulate the growth of beneficial microbes that have been dormant, helping to increase and activate bacteria in the soil. For more information contact us at 780-469-9066 Best Farming Systems.
New Berg’s 20 ft Grain Box (Box only) with tarp, lighting, switching, installation cables and mud flags supplied. Choose your color (Red extra) installation available. FOB Winkler, MB.

Building Spec: 4 ply laminated 2 inch x 8 inch posts & 8 inch engineered beams 3:12 pitch. 6’x6’ door, 1-1/2” x T150 overhang with chain driven Galvanized roof. Coloured walls. 29 gauge metal. Delivery & install not included.

5000 US Gallon Upright Tank

Standard Options: Lifting / tie down lugs, Liquid densities put a 20% per gallon 16 inch kit with a 6 inch breather two 3 inch self aligned discharge manifold (PN: discharge-recirculating), Siphon Tube, Ribbed bolt on bulkhead (Fill-discharge-vent). 4 inch breather; two 3 inch o 20 lb. per gallon; 16 inch lid recirculating); Siphon Tube; Ribbed bolt on bulkhead (Fill-discharge-vent). Hopper Block; Two 3 inch breather; 16 inch lid; 3 inch o 20 lb. per gallon; 16 inch lid. Full analysis provided. FOB Arborfield, SK.

Apollo Grain Probe Unit

Apollo Grain Probe, 8 foot long. Sample 8 feet off the bin with one probe; sufficient capacity for a testable sample. One probe gives test sample. The handle is bent to hook on to a ladder. Light and easy to handle with all metal construction. New Product - tried and tested. Similar models $600. FOB Saskatoon, SK.

Apollo Machine

4600L Meridian Double Wall Ag Tank

4600L Meridian Double Wall Ag Tank. As an industry leader in tank design, this Meridian Double Wall Ag Duty tank features: CAN-ULC S601-07 Approved, heavy gauge steel construction, lifting lugs, two fully welded tank saddles, emergency vents, open fittings, Meridian’s premium powder coated exterior,100% secondary containment. Call John for delivery options 780-352-9121.

Can Pro Farms 2017 Alfalfa Pellets (Dehy)

We produce Dehy alfalfa pellets that are very efficient feed for livestock as they minimize waste, reduce feed costs, and handle like grain. Our pellets are 10% max moisture, 17% min protein, 30% max crude fibre; 28% ADF, 42% NDF, 65% CP. Full analysis provided. FOB Arborfield, SK.

Apollo Machine

545 George Avenue
Edmonton, AB
780-484-2224
www.allenleigh.ca

55004 Range Road 251
Sturgeon County, AB
780-939-3328
www.caibuildings.ca

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Can Pro Farms 2017 Alfalfa Pellets (Dehy)

We produce Dehy alfalfa pellets that are very efficient feed for livestock as they minimize waste, reduce feed costs, and handle like grain. Our pellets are 10% max moisture, 17% min protein, 30% max crude fibre; 28% ADF, 42% NDF, 65% CP. Full analysis provided. FOB Arborfield, SK.
**Meridian Platinum Fuel Express Trailer**

Meridian’s Platinum Fuel Express trailer with its large capacity of 3,750L, along with its high volume 12-gallon/minute fuel pump & 50’ of hoses, makes refueling easy in the field and reduces down time. New features include a 300lbs DEF System (diesel exhaust fluid) which includes the tank, 12 volt pump & 25’ of hose. New touch screen on a white face from neat as well. Registered with Transport Canada as a UN Standard Mobile IBC. Delivery included to Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. Item may not be exactly as illustrated.

**Meridian Manufacturing Inc**

1-800-830-3447

www.meridianmgf.com

**Dimensions:**

**Price:** $4,450

**Opening Bid:** $2,100

**Item #** 205

**Located in:** Winnipeg, MB.

**Description:**

The industry standard for grain moisture testing in Canada for more than 50 years. This complete moisture meter kit includes the new storage/transport case with the Model 919 Moisture tester and 2-16-5 Foliar Liquid Fertilizer

**Power Rich Corporation**

Unit B 1865 Borrows Ave

Winnipeg, MB

1-800-491-8984

www.powerrich.com

**Dimensions:**

**Price:** $2,100

**Opening Bid:** $1,299

**Item #** 357

**Located in:** Swift Current, SK.
Honey Bee SP36 Hart Carter Reel Kit Includes 6 Batts

Honey Bee SP36 Hart Carter reel kit includes 6 batts. Storage fee applies for any items left two weeks after purchase. FOB Allan, SK.

Item #749-750

JD 900 Draper Knife Drive

10,000 draper knife drive (jn-09786). Storage fee applies for any items left two weeks after purchase. FOB Allan, SK.

Item #522

SprayTest Wireless Remote Boom Control

The $1,400 is eligible for any Model of SprayTest wireless remote boom control to fit the winning bidder's sprayer. It comes complete with a plug and play harness and free shipping. Must be redeemed by March 30, 2018.

Item #339

Magnetic Camera Package

The simple solution to direct your own grain auger or conveyor into the bin. Special magnets hold the camera onto the auger tube. The infrared camera allows up to 32 feet of visibility in the dark. FOB Unity, SK.

Item #305

MAGNUM 60 Gallon Single Wall T Fuel Tank

Magnum 60 Gallon Single Wall T fuel tank fits between the wheel wells and the cab of your truck, as you can still pull your fifth wheel or gooseneck trailer. It will give you that extra fuel needed on a long road trip. Standard colors are White and Special and custom colors are available. FOB Maple Creek, SK.

Item #300

Test your items... Magnetic Camera Package

The simple solution to direct your own grain auger or conveyor into the bin. Special magnets hold the camera onto the auger tube. The infrared camera allows up to 32 feet of visibility in the dark. FOB Unity, SK.

Item #305
### Opening

**Item #**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Description</th>
<th>Price</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TM-Agricultural 1500 Acre Package</td>
<td>$15,750</td>
<td>$1,575</td>
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<tr>
<td>JD 936 Draper- Hart Carter Reel Kit Includes 6 Battas</td>
<td>$2,795</td>
<td>$280</td>
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<tr>
<td>Harvest Services Feeder Chain FC1445</td>
<td>$1,749</td>
<td>$175</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Technotill 2.0 Precision Packer</td>
<td>$8,375</td>
<td>$838</td>
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<tr>
<td>ST600I Stockade Cordless 9 ga Fence Stapler Package</td>
<td>$2,217</td>
<td>$222</td>
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<tr>
<td>Watermark Beach Resort Snowbird Getaway Package</td>
<td>$1,650</td>
<td>$165</td>
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<tr>
<td>LEGEND Single Loop Air Drill Rate and Blockage Monitor</td>
<td>$2,759</td>
<td>$276</td>
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### Selling Price

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<th>Item Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Allen Leigh Wireless 26X PTZ CowCam Kit</td>
<td>$2,970</td>
<td>$297</td>
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<tr>
<td>Harvest Services Feeder Chain FC1445 Fits NH CR 910, 9110, 9120, 9900, 9920</td>
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<td>ST600I Stockade Cordless 9 ga Fence Stapler Package</td>
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<tr>
<td>SoilStar Auger-Steer</td>
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<tr>
<td>22.5' High Rate Unloading Tube</td>
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### Other Items

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<tr>
<td>CIH 2010-20 and NH 72c-74c Hart Carter Reel Kit</td>
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<td>$255</td>
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<td>$2,759</td>
<td>$276</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Details

- **Item #**: Item number for identification.
- **Price**: Selling price of the item.
- **OPENING BID**: Opening bid amount for the sale.

### Additional Information

- **Watermark Beach Resort Snowbird Getaway Package**: Included in the Nov/Oct Snowbird Getaway Package $1,650 per month before taxes and gratuities, Nov. 1 - Dec. & Dec. 1 - 31. Two bedroom lakewide unit with tub kitchen, living room, dining room, laundry, outdoor hot tub, 24-hr concierge, restaurant and patio, located in the heart of the South Okanagan on Okanagan Lake. **Certificate is valid only when booked. Original certificate must be presented at check-in.**

- **Triple Star Auger-Steer**: The Auger-Steer drastically improves the maneuverability of pull-type augers and conveyors. Kits include everything to fully install, including hydraulic hoist, cylinder, safety valve & couplings to match your tractor. FOB MacGregor, MB.

- **22.5' High Rate Unloading Tube**: 22.5’ High rate unloading tube for 60/75 756 & 5670-600 series combines (all30120). Storage fee applies for any items left two weeks after purchase. FOB Allan, SK.
## High Clearance Sprayer Jack

- **Description**: Adjustable from 50 to 74 inches (other heights available).
- **Price**: $995
- **Contact**: Allan, SK

## Liquid Fertilizer 7-4-6

- **Description**: Fills Lexion 500-600-700 series wide body Claas Lexion 500/600/700 (5179340cl). Fits series wide body Claas Lexion 500-600-700 combines.
- **Price**: $14,000
- **Contact**: Allan, SK

## Eze-Feeder-12 Volt

- **Description**: This UTV-based model of Eze Feeder measures 40 in 12.5 and fits in the back box of many styles and models of UTV machines and has a capacity of 5 gal (gallons). It has an Easy cleaned interior which makes it ideal for feeding grain, minerals or pellets. It comes standard with a 12 volt auger drive, power and wash rods. Other options such as a tow ring trailer or Digital scale can be purchased separately and added UTV/PTZ Model Only. Freight extra. FOB Brandon, MB.
- **Price**: $2,239
- **Contact**: Brandon, MB
6. All items in Producer Auction may be viewed at the respective seller's place of business as indicated on the auction website. The Producer Auction grants no fee or rights to sellers in Producer Auction, not to buyers who purchase items from sellers who participate in Producer Auction.

9. All content on this website is the property of The Producer Auction or the sellers. The Producer Auction grants a limited license to each user of the website to make personal use only of the website itself. Any other use, including reproduction, modification, distribution, transmission, or display of the content on the website is strictly prohibited. The Producer Auction and the sellers reserve the right to terminate or modify Producer Auction at any time and without notice. The content on the website is subject to change. Include the Bidder Trust Committee reserves the right to discontinue the auction or list the item.

23. The Bidder Trust Committee may waive the reserve price on an item with the Bidder Trust Committee's approval. It is possible to make you the high bidder for the item. For example, if yours is the first bid on an item, the Bidder Trust Committee reserves the right to continue the process of disqualification and notification of subsequent bidders, or to remove the item from sale.

26. Payments and Winning Bid Certificate package can be made at The Producer Auction's office located at 2131 Million Avenue, Saskatoon, SK, S7V 2K9. Offices are 8:30am - 4:30pm Monday - Friday. Other Winning Bid Certificate fulfillment will be determined by the Bidder Trust Committee reserves the right to discontinue the auction or list the item.

27. The total purchase price of an item for each winning buyer is defined as the leading bid for the item at the close of the auction. If such offer is accepted you will be obligated to make full payment of the total purchase price to be negotiated separately between the buyer and seller. Personal Cheques MAY be accepted depending on the value of the auction item purchased. You MAY be asked to provide Government Issued Photo Identification when making your payment.

28. The seller may pay the total purchase price to The Western Producer, except in the case of Automobiles, Real Estate and high valued items which must be paid in full at the conclusion of the auction. If such offer is accepted you will be obligated to make full payment of the total purchase price to be negotiated separately between the buyer and seller. Personal Cheques MAY be accepted depending on the value of the auction item purchased. You MAY be asked to provide Government Issued Photo Identification when making your payment.

29. If the buyer fails to comply with these rules—including the obligation to make full payment of the total purchase price within the time limits and terms set out in this section, in addition to other remedies provided to the Seller and the—The Producer Auction or the seller may cancel the sale and offer the item for sale to another party. Bidders will remain liable for any damages or losses caused by their default.

30. The Producer Auction will charge all required taxes when applicable to winning bidders and remit these collections to their respective government agencies, except in the cases of items such as Motorized Vehicles, Automobiles or Real Estate where the-seller will collect applicable taxes. If you are the buyer on a vacation, you are responsible for all expenses not specifically included such as airport taxes, ground transportation etc. and must have all documentation necessary for travel. Please note that in some states or municipalities, homes or vehicles carry special tax legislation that requires that tax be paid at Fair Market Value.

31. As stated in these rules, all sales are final. However, in the event that an item you won and paid for was not fairly represented on the Producer Auction website, a refund may be considered. To be considered for a refund, the buyer must return the Winning Bid Certificate for the item, and must submit a request within forty-eight (48) hours of completing payment and receiving their certificate. Please see the Contact Us page for contact information. We will notify the buyer via email of the status of the refund application once we have received, reviewed and processed the request. If the refund application is successful the buyer can expect a refund in the same form of payment as originally used to make payment, within 7 - 14 days from date of our notification and approving the request. Please note that refunds are not guaranteed, they will only be granted in cases of unfair presentation of an item as determined by the Bidder Trust Committee.

PRIVACY RULES

34. You must register to place bids. Registration requires your full name, address, phone number(s) and e-mail address. This information will be used to contact you in the event you are a winning bidder. You may receive a bid update or invitation on items that you have placed a bid on from the business sponsoring that item. You will be assigned a unique User Name that allows you to place bids and follow their progress in Producer Auction. NOTE: This User Name may not be used in any way to identify you should you participate in Producer Auction.

35. When paying for a Winning Bid (and its related items), additional information such as a credit card number may be collected from the buyer. This information is collected solely for the purpose of allowing the buyers to pay for the product or service on which they are winning bidders. The credit card information is NOT stored in the Producer Auction systems after the transaction is processed.

36. All information collected is for the sole use of the Producer Auction. The Sellers and Auction Media. This information will not be communicated to any other third parties without your consent.

The Western Producer Auction - FALL 2017

REGISTER ONLINE AT www.producerauction.com

BID PRICE BY PHONE 1-800-310-9315

PLEASE NOTE:

- You do not have to win an item to register and intend to purchase that item. WHETHER YOU BID AND REGISTER FOR THE AN \ NOT BID AND REGISTER FOR THE AN, YOU MUST BE A REGISTERED USER TO VIEW AND PLACE BIDS ON ANY ITEM

- All users are bound by the rules of the auction and are responsible for the actions of their agent or employee.

- All information collected becomes the property of The Producer Auction, the sellers and the Bidder Trust Committee.

- All your bids are made in good faith and are non-refundable. Should you win an item, you must complete payment within the time limits and terms set out in these rules.

- All information provided is for the sole use of the Producer Auction, The Sellers and Auction Media.

- The Producer Auction is not responsible for the availability or content of any other website to which the auction website is linked.
It’s the same but different for Canadian snowbirds in U.S.

Americans and Canadians share a lot of similarities, but the differences can often be glaring, from guns to Cheezies.

People may sometimes see similarities, but the differences can often be striking. For example, in winter in Texas and have become good friends with their neighbours. As well, we've been here for about the same length of time. Clayton and Marjorie Markusson winter in Texas and have become good friends with their neighbours. There, they're particularly enjoying making sausages with a family friend with whom they have become acquainted.

A visiting relative remarked that she'd figured out why Clayton and Marjorie enjoyed their Texas winters so much. "They're just like us," she said. However, there are also differences, and health care is one of them. In Canada, it's pretty much covered by taxes. We have universal health care, which covers most medical needs.

In the United States, people buy insurance, some are covered by their employer and some go without.

"People without health-care insurance may not seek care when they need it and thus develop a serious disorder that could have been prevented. Medical bills that are not covered by health care insurance can lead to bankruptcy," says the Merck Manual - Consumer Version.

Judy Hamilton, a former snowbird, said that during her winters in Arizona, she bought a health insurance plan. "I can't afford to be sick," she said.

"None of the differences are easy to resolve. We like paying taxes, but I remember one conversation in which I was asked how about our medicare and I tried to be diplomatic..." I ended with the comment that no one goes bankrupt over health care in Canada and our reply was, "our country is going to be bankrupt.""

"Americans tend to be insular," she said. The Canada, the right to bear arms is not enshrined in the constitution. This is similar in the United States. Also, Canadian gun laws are written and administered federally. In the U.S., you can earn from state to state and those favoured by snowbirds do tend to have, according to your view, the best or the worst guns laws — in other words, the least like ours.

Gun ownership in Canada tends to be mainly confined to hunters, farmers and bad guys, while in the U.S. it's not uncommon for people who fit into none of those categories to be carrying a weapon.

The U.S.'s heavy Christian leanings influence much of its cultural and political landscape. That influence is present in Canada but in less force than in the U.S. Americans buy gas by the gallon, milk by the quart and apples by the pound. They travel miles and they measure those balmy winter temperatures in degrees Fahrenheit. None of this will be a problem for snowbirds who still remember the imperial system and will slip easily into gallons and miles and the comfort of a 79°F day.

They pronounce the last letter of the alphabet as “zee” rather than “see.” They wear hoodies and knitted caps or beanies instead of bunny hats and tuques with tennis shoes, gym shoes or sneakers, but never runners, on their feet. They might wear a robe or a bathrobe rather than a housecoat as they relax on the sofa or couch, but if it's leather, some might call that sitting in a chesterfield, as Canadians do.

"And the Republican attitude became evident in that they are insular. "Americans tend to be insular", "some" schools. Whether or not it's concealed — in other words, the least like ours.

When you see signs in restaur- ants, ‘we are a gun free zone,’ or, ‘do not bring guns into this restaur- ant,’ that's scary,” she said.

U.S. President Donald Trump's campaign promise to do away with gun-free zones might not make her feel any better. So far he hasn't acted on that promise, which he later re-worded to apply to only military bases and schools and later still to “some” schools.

Similarly, Canadians are less religious than Americans. In the U.S., 51 percent of the population identifies as Protestant Christian, forming the so-called "silent majority." In Canada, 42 percent identify as Roman Catholic and 23 percent as Protestant.

Whether or not it's concealed would depend on the regulations in that particular state. Institutions such as some schools and business- ies have designated themselves as "gun free." Hamilton said she finds the need for such mea- sures disturbing.

"When you see signs in restaur- ants, we are a gun free zone,” or, ‘do not bring guns into this restaur- ant,’ that’s scary,” she said. U.S. President Donald Trump’s campaign promise to do away with gun-free zones might not make her feel any better. So far he hasn’t acted on that promise, which he later re-worded to apply to only military bases and schools and later still to “some” schools.

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The wildfires that burned across British Columbia this year affected producers in varying degrees.

“It impacted the fields, I saw photos from throughout the Cariboo that lost everything. The trees are still standing but all the grass is still gone but they lost a lot of the crop for the year,” said Serena Black, general manager of the B.C. Forage Council.

“Then the producers in the area that weren’t impacted were contacted pretty immediately by the government looking for extra feed that could be supplied to the regions that were hit.”

For fruit growers, there were no direct effects. “We didn’t have any orchards damaged by fire,” said Glen Lucas, general manager of the B.C. Fruit Growers’ Association, which is based in Kelowna.

According to information provided by the provincial agriculture ministry, producers in the province were unable to access their fields in a timely manner because of the evacuation orders that were in place. “What caused the forest fires was very hot, dry weather and so that did have an impact on our growing season,” Lucas said.

“When the temperature exceeds, certainly if it exceeds 35 C, those trees, it shuts down the growth.”

The heat also affected harvest timing for fruit growers. “The other thing, especially heat combined with sunlight, is that we can get sunburns on the fruit,” he said.

The smoke from the fires made the direct sunlight less intense. Lucas said the fruit is also one size smaller than in an optimal year. “The fruit is still a good size. We still have a range of size, so we will be able to serve the markets.”

The B.C. Grain Producers Association didn’t see an impact. “We didn’t have any fires up here in the north and in B.C., 95 percent of grain production is in the northeast corner,” said president Rick Kautz.

An AgriRecovery Fund is available for B.C. farmers and ranchers affected by the forest fires. Crop adjusters from the ministry have begun the process of evaluating production insurance forage losses, and forage claims have been made in the areas affected by the wildfires.

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WASHINGTON, D.C. (Reuters) — The U.S. commerce department set preliminary antidumping duties on imports of biodiesel from Argentina, Indonesia and the Ukraine following an initial finding that the product was being sold at prices below market value in the United States.

The antidumping duties range from 54.36 to 70.05 percent on soy-based biodiesel from Argentina and 50.71 percent on palm oil biodiesel from Indonesia, the department said in a statement. Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross said the Argentine government has asked for negotiations, and the U.S. department is working toward an agreement to suspend both the antidumping and countervailing duties has no practical effect in terms of real market access, Argentina’s foreign ministry said in a statement.

The Argentine government was working toward an agreement to suspend both the antidumping and countervailing duties, the ministry said. Indonesia will contest the antidumping duty, said Oke Nurwan, a senior trade ministry official in Jakarta. At the beginning of the investigation by the U.S. commerce department, Indonesian exporters were threatened with a 28.1 percent duty, said Nurwan, adding Jakarta will sum its own calculation to the U.S. agency. “We will fight to counter the U.S. dumping allegation,” he said.

U.S. President Donald Trump’s administration has made enforcement of trade laws a top priority. It plans to build another five ethanol plants and SDIC aims to institute a 10 percent ethanol mandate, a state-owned firm has already begun construction of a new ethanol plant and plans five more.

China’s State Development & Investment Corp. (SDIC) aims to produce four to five million tonnes of ethanol a year in the next three to five years. It wants to profit from a new policy promoting ethanol use. China said last month it will require 10 percent ethanol content in gasoline by 2020 to boost industrial demand for excess corn stocks and clean up the nation’s polluted air. It plans to build an additional 10 plants, including in Jilin and Heilongjiang provinces, and buy additional facilities, Guo Zhongjie, SDIC’s director of strategy and development, said.

The five new plants are still awaiting government approval. State-owned grain trading house COFCO is China’s top ethanol producer but SDIC plans to be the market leader within five years, Wang said. SDIC has also hired Yue Guojun, former chief engineer and board chair at COFCO’s ethanol division.

In a row, collecting a record 7,285,279 meals. Our deepest thanks to all.

Thanks a million (well, 7.28 million, actually)

Our generous partners, community volunteers and supporters helped FCC Drive Away Hunger make a difference to Canadians for the 14th year in a row, collecting a record 7,285,279 meals. Our deepest thanks to all.

BIOFUEL

Chinese firm gears up to meet new ethanol demand

BEIJING, China (Reuters) — Following on the heels of China’s plan to institute a 10 percent ethanol mandate, a state-owned firm has announced construction of a new ethanol plant and plans five more.

China’s State Development & Investment Corp. (SDIC) aims to produce four to five million tonnes of ethanol a year in the next three to five years. It wants to profit from a new policy promoting ethanol use. China said last month it will require 10 percent ethanol content in gasoline by 2020 to boost industrial demand for excess corn stocks and clean up the nation’s polluted air. It plans to build an additional 10 plants, including in Jilin and Heilongjiang provinces, and buy additional facilities, Guo Zhongjie, SDIC’s director of strategy and development, said.

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Dumped food could help cities tackle hunger, waste

TEPIC, Mexico (Thomson Reuters Foundation) — Apples, bread, pasta and coffee are high on the list of foods worth $218 billion that Americans dump in the bin or pour down the drain each year, much of which could help feed the country’s poorest families, an environmental group has said.

Under growing pressure to deal with the up to 40 percent of food that households, restaurants, grocers and others throw away, U.S. cities must find new ways to stop waste going into landfills and get edible food to those who need it, the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) said in two reports.

“This is food that is surplus... It’s not food that’s coming off people’s plates,” said Darby Hoover, a senior resource specialist at the NRDC, a U.S.-based environmental non-profit.

“It’s food that’s packaged and prepared and did not end up getting served.”

More than two-thirds of food thrown away by households is potentially edible and could be redirected toward the one in eight Americans who lack a steady supply of food, the studies said.

Uneaten food costs an average American family of four $1,500 a year, they noted.

Denver, Nashville and New York, the three cities at the centre of the research, could dish up as many as 68 million extra meals a year if their waste food was used instead of binned, while retailers could be a big source of food donations, said Hoover.

“If we could distribute just 30 percent of the food we currently discard, it would equate to enough food to provide the total diet for 49 million Americans,” said one of the reports.

Cities need to find better ways to match food donations, especially from businesses, to poor communities, and reduce the food waste that takes up almost a quarter of landfill space and emits nearly three percent of U.S. greenhouse gases, the research said.

Improved planning and more education could help cut the amount of food people throw away, often because it has gone mouldy or they do not want to eat leftovers, said Hoover.

“Making the most of our food supply has wide-reaching benefits, helping to feed people and save money, water and energy in one fell swoop,” NRDC senior scientist Dana Gunders said in a statement.

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GETTING LOADED

Smithfield sells pork online

BEIJING, China (Reuters) — WH Group Ltd., the world's largest pork company, says its U.S. subsidiary, Smithfield Foods, will for the first time sell its U.S.-produced pork online in China, via online retailer JD.com Inc.

The move follows other international food companies that are looking to boost sales in the world's top pork consumer through its vast e-commerce market, with a growing middle-class developing a taste for branded and imported meat products.

The fresh food division of JD.com, JD Fresh, will be the online sales platform for Smithfield’s pork products in China, according to an agreement signed by Smithfield, Henan Shuanghui Investment and Development Co., which is also owned by WH Group, and JD.com.

Smithfield said Shuanghui, Asia's largest animal protein company, would be its domestic agent for the venture.

WH Group bought Smithfield in 2013 in a $4.7 billion deal aimed at tapping the massive supplies of U.S. meat for export to China.

JD Fresh is the largest direct sales fresh food platform in China, as well as the biggest online pork retail market in the country. In the first half of 2017, gross merchandise volume from direct sales of meats on JD increased more than 780 percent year-on-year.

JD.com's meat sales have rocketed in recent years, reaching the tens of millions of dollars in 2016, with imported meat accounting for more than a third of its total sale of meat, a spokesman for the company said previously.

The products sold on JD will include bone-in cuts and variety meats with a focus on small packaged frozen products, which are some of the highest demand in China, the statement said.

The parties will also co-operate on areas such as data and cold chain logistics.
Biodiversity

‘Save the dung beetle’, pleads global science chief

Threatened species get all the attention but worms and insects are vital to the ecosystem, says project chair

OSLO, Norway (Reuters) — Governments should extend the protection of nature far beyond iconic creatures such as tigers and elephants to species including worms and beetles that are vital to human prosperity, says chair of a global scientific project.

“We are trying to ... put biodiversity on the same level — as an environmental, economic, social, security issue — as climate change,” Robert Watson said. “Biodiversity is absolutely central to human well-being” as the source of everything from food to medicines, said Watson, chair of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES).

More than 550 IPBES experts from more than 100 nations, in the most comprehensive review to date, will issue regional reports about the state of nature in the Americas, Asia and the Pacific, Africa, and Europe and Central Asia in March. They will also issue a report on land degradation and restoration next year and a global summary of biodiversity in 2019, he said.

Man-made threats to nature include pollution, the clearance of forests to make way for farms and cities, invasive species in new habitats and rising temperatures caused by man-made greenhouse gas emissions.

Watson said people often think of charismatic species such as lions, polar bears or orangutans when they consider threats to the natural world. He said the reports would put a far wider spotlight on how ecosystems work.

As well, he said less well-known creatures, such as worms or insects, are vital by helping to cycle nutrients in the soil.

“Some of the most important species aren’t very charismatic — like the dung beetle in the African plains,” Watson said.

“If you tell people, ’we need to save the dung beetle,’ I think one’s going to get a pretty jaundiced look,” he said.

IPBES issued its first report last year, showing that bees and other pollinators are at risk from pesticides and disease.

It estimated that $235 to $577 billion worth of annual world food production from coffee in Brazil to apples in China depends on pollinators.

The IPBES reports would gauge the risks to natural systems, ranging from coral reefs to cloud forests.

Some past United Nations reports say that human pressures mean the world is heading for a “sixth extinction” comparable to the cataclysm that wiped out the dinosaurs 65 million years ago.

Diversion Project

China diverts water north in massive irrigation plan

BEIJING, China (Reuters) — China has transferred 10 billion cubic metres of fresh water from the country’s south to its drought-prone north in the few years since a massive water diversion project came on stream, authorities said.

In recent decades, water supplies in the north have been challenged by protracted droughts, a surging population, agriculture and unprecedented manufacturing growth.

China aims to ultimately supply 44.8 billion cubic metres annually to the north via the ambitious water diversion project. That would be about seven percent of the volume of water consumed by the entire country in 2015.

The expensive engineering project, which involves transferring water from the south via three major routes, was first raised as an possibility as early as the 1950s.

Along the middle route, the water pumped from the Yangtze River has gone to Beijing, Tianjin and neighboring provinces of Henan and Hebei, according to the South-to-North Water Diversion Office under the State Council, or cabinet.

The middle route carries water through canals, waterways and pipelines from Danjiangkou reservoir in central Hubei Province. It came into operation in late 2014.

The project has supplied 2.7 billion cubic metres of water to Beijing, serving 11 million people.

Currently, about 70 percent of Beijing’s water supply comes from the project. Previously the city’s water supply came mainly from underground water.

Tianjin received 2.2 billion cubic metres of water while Henan and Hebei got 3.5 billion cubic metres and 1.1 billion cubic metres, respectively.

China aims to keep national annual water consumption below 670 billion cubic metres through to 2020, as part of efforts to ease chronic regional shortages by cutting waste and boosting efficiency.
China reverses ban on ‘mouldy’ cheese imports

Complaints from consumers unable to buy their favourite cheese forced Chinese officials to lift restrictions

BY CHRIS MCCULLOUGH
FREELANCE WRITER

Soft cheese consumers in China will once again be able to buy their favourite type after the country’s government decided to reverse a ban that it implemented two months ago.

These so-called “mouldy” cheeses were banned because of the techniques used in their production. Even though these techniques have been used for centuries, the Chinese were concerned they posed a risk to public health.

The ban applied to specific types of European cheese such as Roquefort, Danish Blue, Gorgonzola or Stilton, which have been safely imported and consumed in China for decades.

Refuting the argument, the European Union said its position has always been clear in that the techniques and cultures questioned by the Chinese have been used by EU cheesemakers for centuries, and European cheeses “clearly do not pose a risk to consumer health.”

According to World Trade Organization rules, all members have to accept international production standards unless there is a justified risk. However, it appears Chinese consumers were not happy about the ban and started to complain.

Although dairy produce was typically once not a major part of the Chinese consumer’s diet, cheese consumption in the country is on the increase, thanks to a growing fondness for fast food, particularly pizza. In fact, China imported more than $400 million worth of cheese last year.

These complaints forced a number of meetings between the European Commission’s experts in trade and health and food safety and their Chinese counterparts.

As a result, the Chinese authorities have agreed to lift the trade obstacles and update their rules on cheese.

The commission’s delegation and the French embassy in China have also proposed to organise a technical seminar between European and Chinese experts on relevant cheese standards in a bid to limit the risk of further trade obstacles.

“We are very happy about the decision,” said Vincent Martin, the cheesemonger in China.

“I think it’s a way for China to show they’re really open-minded to selling foreign products and especially cheese.”

India drags feet on GM mustard approval

NEW DELHI, India (Reuters) — India has frozen requests to commercially release a locally developed genetically modified mustard, even though an expert panel had recommended it for “consideration for environmental release and cultivation.”

An environment ministry spokesperson directed Reuters to GEAC for comment, although an interview with the GEAC chairman was not possible. The GEAC, headed by Amita Prasad, whose office is marked “confidential and restricted circulation,” has deferred approval despite a panel ministry’s website marked “confidential and restricted circulation.”

Cotton is the only GM crop allowed to be sold in the world’s second most populous country, where arable land is shrinking. Monsanto dominates the cotton seed market in India and often faces resistance from local companies over its position.

The environment ministry told parliament July 31 that GM mustard had been recommended by GEAC to it for “consideration for environmental release and cultivation.”

An environment ministry spokesperson directed Reuters to GEAC’s website, which is marked “confidential and restricted circulation.”

The decision on the mustard represents a setback for Deepak Pental and his colleagues at Delhi University, who worked on developing and testing the variety for years.

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Cargill to buy feed maker to tap profitable natural foods trend

CHICAGO, Ill. (Reuters) — Cargill is buying a natural animal feed maker, another in a string of deals to capitalize on rising demand for higher-margin natural foods and antibiotic-free meat and dairy products.

The company’s recent push, including the deal for Iowa-based Diamond V, has centered on its animal nutrition and protein unit with expansions in feed production and aquaculture and divestitures of its U.S. pork business and cattle feedlots.

Cargill and its rivals have moved to diversify amid a global grain glut that has weighed on margins and dragged profits.

The deal, expected to close in January, is Cargill’s latest investment in its animal nutrition and protein segment, which has posted higher profits in five straight quarters and is a major focus of the company’s long-term growth strategy.

“We anticipate that we will continue to invest in this space,” said Chuck Warta, president of Cargill’s premix and nutrition business.

The company invested in feed additive company Delacon in July, bought the animal feed business of U.S. farm co-operative Southern States in August and expanded feed milling in Thailand in September.

“This space of micronutrition and feed additives around the world, that’s about a $20 billion market. Delacon and Diamond V are our initial investments into this,” Warta said.

Cargill did not disclose terms of the Diamond V deal but said it was among the five largest acquisitions in the company’s 152-year history.

Among those deals were a $1.5 billion acquisition of Norwegian fish feed company EWOS and a $1.2 billion deal in 2008 for starch manufacturer Cerestar.

Diamond V is privately held and does not disclose its revenue. The deal includes Diamond V’s human health business Embria Health Sciences, which produces ingredients for dietary supplements.
Farmers spray and harrow a field near a working pumpjack east of Herronton, Alta., Oct. 20. | Mike Sturk photo

**CATTLE PRODUCERS MAKE FOOD BANK DONATION**

The Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association is well on its way to meeting its goal of donating 10,000 pounds of packaged ground beef.

The SSGA donated 3,000 lb. to food banks on World Food Day, Oct. 16, which increased its total to 4,000 lb.

Saskatchewan ranchers donated 8,500 lb. of beef worth $84,000 last year during their inaugural campaign.

Producers donate beef cattle or cash toward processing, and three packers process the meat: Treen Packers, West Bridgford Meats and Western Prime Meat Processors.

The Beef Drive received a US$10,000 boost from Delanco Animal Health’s 100 Communities initiative, whose goal is to eliminate hunger in 100 communities worldwide.

Nutritious protein such as ground beef is difficult for Saskatchewan food banks to provide, and the campaign helps keep emergency hampers stocked.

For more information, call the SSGA office at 306-757-8523.

**FROST-DAMAGED FABABEANS WANTED**

Alberta Agriculture is looking for frost-damaged fababeans for a digestibility research project on feeding chickens.

Researchers will also look at dehulling as an option to get rid of the frost-damaged parts of the crop. Snowbird and Snowdrop are the varieties most used as animal feed, but all varieties are welcome in weights of about 50 to 75 kilograms.

**TRADE MISSION TO AFRICA**

Alberta companies are invited to join Alberta Agriculture’s Innovation and Smart Agriculture Mission to Cote d’Ivoire and Ghana Nov. 18-26.

The mission will include meetings with the World Bank Group, the African Development Bank and regional stakeholders and a walking program at the Salon International De L’Agriculture et Des Ressources Animales D’Abidjan.

Companies will gain an understanding of project requirements and constraints as well as their level of competitiveness in accessing World Bank and African Development Bank financed projects and programs in the region.

Eligible companies should be consultants, contractors, manufacturers, suppliers, training institutions or universities that provide services to international agricultural projects.

Participating companies may be reimbursed for their participation for one half of the actual designated participation costs, up to a maximum of $2,000.

Companies will receive details upon application and acceptance.
Scottish farming about managing marginal land

Researchers are encouraging producers to use livestock grazing to rebuild soil and grasslands.

BY BARBARA DUCKWORTH
CALGARY BUREAU

EDINBURGH, U.K.— Farming in Scotland’s rugged terrain has been going on for thousands of years and the challenges never diminish.

Eighty percent of the land in Scotland’s agriculture land has some sort of disadvantage from an agriculture production point of view,” said agriculture ecologist Dave McCracken, who manages the Kirkton and Auchtertyre Hill and Mountain Research Centre.

The 2,200 acre property north of Edinburgh is owned by Scotland’s Rural College, a private agriculture institution that handles applied research, education and consulting.

Seventy percent of the agriculture land is referred to as uplands. This has nothing to do with altitude. Instead, it’s because the land is hilly and rocky with a thin soil cover and poor vegetation.

Due to the latitude, the Scottish growing season is similar to that of Canada. Twilight comes early in the winter months while the summers have long days and short nights. There is abundant rainfall and woodlands have shrunk back.

Large predators were wiped out during the Second World War. Many of the habitats and many of the species that now place a high nature conservation value on in Scotland and across Europe are reliant on some form of grazing pressure to maintain them,” he said.

“They do not see managing their farm better from an environmental production perspective could actually have, in many cases, a benefit for the farm itself. They say, ‘that is just managing for society so they better pay for it,”’ he said.

“Over time in the Highlands and the islands we have seen a marked reduction in the production of sheep,” he said.

Those who dispersed their sheep moved into something else such as agri-tourism or guided hunting. McCracken researches alpine grazing systems throughout Europe where similar conflicts exists. Part of his work strives to convince the public and the government that the uplands are worth retaining from an historic, cultural and environmental point of view.

In addition, climate change is affecting these regions with more extreme weather events. Nature is getting out of balance as the hill-sides are taken over by heather, forbs and bracken, a large fern that is impalable livestock.

More pests such as ticks and liver flukes and new diseases driven by climate change are being reported.

“We are getting wetter, milder winters and summers so pests like liver fluke is becoming a big issue,” he said.

Besides changing climate and forage loss, farmers are facing other challenges with low productivity among ewes and black loss, an unexplained disappearance of animals when they are turned out to graze.

Along with these challenges are predators such as badgers, foxes, eagles and buzzards going after young animals.

Large predators were wiped out hundreds of years ago, but in the last 20 years large birds predator such as sea eagles have been reintroduced in parts of the Highlands and islands where they prey on lambs. The raptors are protect species but they are becoming problem predators.

Besides the loss of good grazing, woodlands have shrunk back. Much of the forested land was logged out during the Second World War, and tree planting programs are ongoing. Fast growing trees can provide shelter and flood control, improve water quality and provide a second income from logging.

Such initiatives would bring them in line with new government plans to base agriculture subsidies on eco-system services such as controlling greenhouse gas emissions and promoting biodiversity, carbon sequestration and better water quality.

“The process has been much talked about but hasn’t got to a stage with a transparent scheme you can actually show,” he said.

He sees environmental production versus agriculture production as symbiotic.

The advantage is that it is not just about how the land is used.

“With the sheep off, then you can actually show, “ he said.

Farmers in the UK, MB, ON, NB, PEI, NL, YK, NWT, rcmp to consult your Provincial/Territorial Agricultural Ministries for possible help in funding the registration costs to attend.

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When voters in the United Kingdom decided to sever a 40-year-old relationship with the European Union last year, few of them likely considered the potential consequences of punishing tariffs and the loss of free access to the European market of 500 million consumers. After the split is final in 2019, some studies predict a 50 percent drop in farm income if the entire U.K. agricultural sector does not pursue new opportunities, find new markets and become more efficient.

BY BARBARA DUCKWORTH

TONELEIGH PARK, U.K. — Voters in the United Kingdom may have decided they no longer want to pay $16 billion a year into European Union coffers, but they still want to be a member of the free trade club. Dependent on trade, the British agriculture sector wonders where the split with the EU might lead and have started pushing farmer organizations for answers.

"As a member organization, they want us to be really bold, and many of our farmers would like us to be absolute protectionist and stop stuff coming in, but we want to trade with the world. That is not going to happen, is it?" said John Boyle, head of livestock for the National Farmers Union representing England and Wales.

There is a massive amount of trade between Ireland, Great Britain and Europe, which could be stymied by tariffs and border inspections that have not existed for 40 years. The U.K. exported 500 million pounds of beef, pork and lamb to the EU and outside markets in the first months of this year, which is 18 percent more than the same time last year. "We have seen food and drink exports double over the last decade," said Phil Bicknell of the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board, which promotes British agri-food products around the world. The NFU said the red meat sector could be hit especially hard because of tariffs. The beef market is holding at very high prices, "said Phil Bicknell of the development board. "We have 65 million people who are relatively affluent. If you look at cattle prices on a global scale, it is very high, so it is very attractive."

AFTER BREXIT:
HOW THE UNITED KINGDOM IS COPING WITH A NEW TRADE LANDSCAPE

The U.K. possesses references to the EU regulatory framework, so they are all going to have to be redrafted to reflect the fact that we will have our own regulations post-Brexit," said Bicknell. The U.K. is self-sufficient in lamb and one-third of what is produced is exported. However, a third of consumption is imported, mostly from New Zealand.

"There is growing concern because the U.K could impose tariffs of 10 and 80 percent after Brexit, depending on the meat cut. Seventy percent of British pork goes to other EU members, but China accepts 15 percent and demand is growing. Pork goes to China on the basis of a bilateral export agreement through the EU. "Every single export certificate the U.K. possesses references the EU regulatory framework, so they are all going to have to be redrafted to reflect the fact that we will have our own regulations post-Brexit," said Bicknell. The U.K. is self-sufficient in lamb and one-third of what is produced is exported. However, a third of consumption is imported, mostly from New Zealand.

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Irish farmers worry about loss of U.K. market

The country now sells 290,000 tonnes of beef a year to the U.K.

EU. It is hoped the U.K. accepts an 80,000 tonne TRQ following the split while the EU takes the rest, New Zealand may push for more. The U.K. is 80 percent self-sufficient in dairy and imports cheese and butter, mostly from Ireland. Fluid milk is produced locally.

"With dairy we probably have the biggest potential post-Brexit as long as we can get the supply chain working and find where the markets are. We have been very domestically focused," said Bicknell.

"It leads to a culture change. How do we take on the Irish mentality of finding where the markets are and finding where the customers are?"

More infrastructure investment is needed to step up the processing side.

"There will be commercial impacts driven by uncertainty and driven by exchange rates." The weakening of the pound sterling, against the euro has caused disruptions in price stability, but the country is determined to forge ahead with its own trade agenda.

"We saw an immediate impact with the Brexit decision from the exchange rate," said Angus Woods, who chairs the Irish Farmers Association’s livestock committee and produces lamb, beef and cereals on his County Wicklow farm.

He supports diversification of agriculture and markets outside the U.K., but he is also a realist. A high pound could be the beef trade if disruptions occur. About 270,000 tonnes of Irish beef now goes to the U.K. annually.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

SEEKING NEW DEALS

How many years might it take to negotiate(1) a free-trade agreement with:

CETA(2) 7
MEXICO 4
SOUTH AFRICA(3) 3
CHILE 6
SOUTH KOREA 4
MERCOSUR(4) 7

(1) not including time for ratification and full implementation (2) Canada- European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (3) deal will be superseded by Southern African Development Community agreement (4) trade agreement between Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay

Source: U.K. Agriculture & Horticulture Development Board

BREXIT SCENARIOS: AN IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The United Kingdom’s decision to leave the European Union, with its single market and the Common Agricultural Policy, has created considerable uncertainty for the agricultural sector. The country’s Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board has identified four main areas of concern:

1. Terms of international trade, both with the remaining EU-27 and with other countries
2. Domestic agricultural policy in terms of support payments, rural development and market management
3. Migrant labour and its availability
4. The U.K. regulatory environment

The board released a Brexit study Oct. 11 that evaluated all the farm sectors and potential outcomes in a new trade environment. Key findings included:

- In sectors where direct support accounts for a significant proportion of farm business income, this impact assessment shows a dramatic immediate impact of reduced support levels on business profitability.
- Trade issues also have a significant bearing on farm business income. The U.K. is a net importer of products for most food sectors, and the EU is a key trading partner. In areas such as dairy and pork, three different scenarios show that farmers may benefit from rising prices, reflecting the rising costs of trade.
- In sectors where exports are significant, such as cereals and sheep meat, rising costs of trade for U.K. products into EU markets will mean downward pressure on domestic farmgate prices. In turn, this is reflected in farm business income levels.
- In some scenarios, higher labour costs resulting from restrictions on migrant workers will reduce farm business incomes. The significance of this will be highest in horticulture, where labour costs are the highest proportion of costs. Whichever scenario is chosen, higher-performing farms remain profitable in every sector. These farms are best placed to weather the negative impacts of any of the Brexit scenarios. They are capable of generating positive incomes with the lower-performing farms are making losses.

This suggests that taking steps to improve productivity and performance would enable farmers to mitigate potentially negative impacts of Brexit, even before details on agricultural trade or policy emerge.

Source: Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board

Last year, Ireland exported more than $16 billion of agricultural products to 175 markets. Some farm groups worry what the trade impact will be on the country with its withdrawal from the European Union.

By Barbara Duckworth
CALGARY BUREAU

DUBLIN, Ireland — Ireland and the United Kingdom may have had their differences over the years, but the two share a strong interdependent business alliance. Bound by cultural ties, proximity and a common language, the two are each other’s best and largest trading partners. As the U.K. prepares to withdraw from the European Union, that decision to leave the common market has spurred uncertainty.

"From where I sit as secretary general of the department, I break it into two pieces: one is the political negotiations and the other is the commercial impact," said Aidan O’Driscoll, secretary general of the Irish agriculture department.

Trade will continue, but a lot is at stake.

With an annual turnover of $38 billion, agri-food is Ireland’s most important indigenous industry. Last year it exported more than $16 billion worth of products to 175 markets. The U.K. accounts for more than 40 percent of Ireland’s total exports of beef, pork, dairy, poultry and beverages. Twenty-four percent of the U.K.’s agri-food exports worth $4.9 billion went to Ireland.

The deadline for the U.K. to leave is March 29, 2019, but many questions on what is achievable. In the meantime, no one wants to slow down commerce.

"The commercial impacts of a Brexit will not wait on the negotiation timeline," O’Driscoll said at a recent agriculture conference in Naas, Ireland.

"There will be commercial impacts driven by uncertainty and driven by exchange rates."
Padraig Brennan is director of international markets for the Irish Food Board, known as Bord Bia. © BORD BIA PHOTO

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“Axe we going to find a market to take 270,000 tonnes in the next year and a half or two years at the kind of money we're paying for it? No, is the short answer,” he said.

Talking about alternative markets is one thing, but the reality could be much different.

He is referring to an ambitious export plan called Food Wise 2025, a 10-year strategy to increase the value of Irish food and beverage exports by 2025 to $27.5 billion.

That strategy means looking beyond the British Isles, said Padraig Brennan, director of international markets for Bord Bia, also known as the Irish Food Board.

“Brexit or no Brexit, companies should be looking at diversification,” he said.

“We are so export oriented, and what happens in the global marketplace affects us more than most.”

Bord Bia is a state agency that promotes Irish agri-food products domestically and abroad. It provides a link between producers and customers and has a network of international offices to help open doors for the Irish food sector.

The Bord Bia Brexit Barometer keeps businesses informed about negotiations and potential changes.

“There was a point when the Irish industry was driven by EU policy and the common agriculture policy around support systems and interventions,” Brennan said.

“That left an industry that didn’t have to care as much about exports. It was a challenging time and it was a simpler system, but that is no longer the case. Part of the business plan includes promoting Ireland as an environmentally friendly food producer through Origin Green, the national food sustainability program. The verification program promotes sustainable agriculture practices from the farm to the retailer and is backed up with regular audits.

“We must show continuous improvement because all countries show continuous improvement. This is a starting point and we have to demonstrate how we are improving,” said Andrew Mullins, sustainability development manager.

Another strategy is giving customers what they want.

“The industry has invested a lot of time getting to know customer requirements and getting to know the European market much better than before and looking at adding value,” Brennan said.

“The sector has grown much better at identifying the niche markets and understanding from an individual customer point of view, what is their desire.”

Canada and the EU signed the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement Sept. 21, and Ireland has looked at Canada as a potential country to have a stronger presence for meat exports. Lamb may be easier to sell because Canada has a deficit, and the Irish product could be offered as a specialty import.

“We need to understand the market better. We don’t have a tradition of exporting there,” said Brennan.

The most recent figures showed $27.5 million in exports went to Canada, so there is some growth potential.

“CEGA gives us an opportunity to grow that further, and I am sure there will be more products coming in this direction as well,” he said.

The bigger prize is the Asia Pacific region.

“The EU has approval to ship beef to places such as the Philippines, and last year the country accepted 15,000 tonnes of Irish beef. A pending deal is expected with China and is likely to be similar to Canada’s agreement because both countries have similar BSE status. Ireland’s strengths are in beef, pork, dairy, seafood and beverages.

Beef

Ireland produces far more beef than it needs on a landscape that is 80 percent grasslands.

“We produce eight times the amount of beef we need for our population, and we are the largest exporter of beef in the northern hemisphere and fifth largest internationally and we are the largest exporter to EU retailers,” Mullins said.

There are 110,000 cattle farms in Ireland. Processing and selling beef focuses across the country, and raising cattle on grassland is part of the cultural mosaic.

The main challenge for beef farming in Ireland is low income pegged at $19,000 to $23,000 a year. We know 48 percent of beef farms have off-farm income,” said Rowena Dwyer, an Irish Farmers Association economist.

Farm incomes are dependent on Common Agriculture Policy payments, but the next round offers less money with conditions attached to environmental sustainability.

Processors seek the highest value markets, which is the U.K.

“We sell to the best market at the best price. For the beef sector, that is what the U.K. is and we shouldn’t, in any of this discussion, lose that focus and lose the focus on influencing and currently asking our government to get agriculture to the top of the EU negotiators’ agenda,” said Mullins.

In addition, Ireland has built a strong trade selling beef on the agri-food front to the United Kingdom, Ireland and the European continent, where more than 145,000 live animals have been exported.

Pork

While grass-fed beef is widely promoted, Irish pork is also finding opportunities.

China bought 65,000 tonnes of Irish pork this year, and more growth is expected this year.

“At this stage China will be our second biggest market,” Brennan said.

Most of the exports to China were originally offal, but the last three years have seen a swing towards higher quality cuts with decent returns.

The dairy herd has grown from 1.2 million cows in 2010 to similar BSE status. Ireland’s strengths are in beef, pork, dairy, seafood and beverages.

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BY BARBARA DUCKWORTH

STONELEIGH PARK, U.K. — When voters in the United Kindom went to the polls in June to decide whether they wanted to stay in the European Union, many thought people would opt for the comfort of the status quo.

“The expectation from everybody was that it would be close but that it would be remain,” said Minette Batters, deputy president of the National Farmers Union, which represents 55,000 farmers in Wales and England.

“There was no expectation that it would be to leave, so I went to bed absolutely expecting to wake up in the morning and see that we had voted to remain.”

It was a close vote at 51.9 percent in favour of leaving. Now the consequences of exiting the 40-year-old relationship are under consideration.

“The vast majority of farmers have not known life as an independent nation,” Batters said.

They want to know how they can survive without the safety net of the EU. “There is a lot of concern among farmers that we will be the sacrificial lamb if we don’t have a deal with Europe and we go to WTO default,” she said.

Default could mean reverting to the World Trade Organization’s established tariffs, which are particularly punishing for the livestock sector.

Batters raises 300 head of pedigree and commercial beef cattle as well as lamb.

Her lambs and calves could be ready for market just as the separation is final. A potential 51 percent tariff could be slapped on U.K. lamb exports to the EU, and she fears the industry would be priced out of the market, especially if products from lower cost producers enter the country.

“It all depends on the deal with Europe, and then we will be able to sign trade deals with countries that can produce food much cheaper than we can, and that is where the danger comes from,” she said.

Batters said subsidies have helped farmers prop up their farms, which has discouraged efficiency.

“If you look at the beef and sheep sector, where we have a lot of small family farms that are halfway up the hills, if you take away the subsidies they will cease to exist,” said Anna Farrell, of the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board.

The Conservative government has committed to continue farm support until 2020, but no one knows what to expect after that. Organizations such as the NFU and the development board are creating farm business education programs to help farmers stand on their own two feet in a world with no subsidies and tighter market access.

The NFU is membership driven while the development board is funded with producer levies and has an annual budget of about $96 million. Some of that money is going back into education and strategies.

Education strategy priorities:

• inspiring farmers to be more competitive and better able to withstand market shocks
• innovation, knowledge and research
• markets and exports
• knowing what consumers want

Farmers are also asked:

• Do you know your costs?
• How well do your business costs compare with your peers?
• What profit do you need?
• Do you have a plan to cope if the direct payment was reduced?
• Do you have a risk management plan?

The development board was developing programs before the pivotal vote to show farmers the need to adopt new technology that results in profitability, said Susannah Bolton, the board’s knowledge exchange director.

One of the programs is the three-year-old Monitor Farm initiative to track the cost of production.

Thirty farmers volunteered as monitor farms to share their business information. The starting point is to benchmark finances under a single whole farm tool regardless of the commodity. The farmer selects a steering group that could include neighbours, a bank manager and agronomist to help benchmark the business and discuss improvements.

“There are some interesting and very consistent messages,” she said.

“At first everybody focused on their variable costs, but where the real big differences can be made is around what we called fixed costs.”

Each farm has a web page, and three regional meetings are held so other farmers can hear what is being done.

Some of the findings were uncomfortable.

“There was some recognition for awhile that the place where farmers were really falling down was that they weren’t really recognizing themselves as businesses,” she said.

Too many considered farming a lifestyle and an obligation to keep a legacy going.

“Brexit sharpened the focus and gives us another reason for people to realize they are missing out, but actually this is something we recognized in our industry for quite some time,” said Bolton.

Taxpayer support to cover income deficiencies could be on the way out as government struggles to fund other social demands such as health care and education.

“Farms that have received subsidy over decades has meant the sense of responsibility for maintaining the business has been somewhat ignored because somebody else can pay to make sure that I can feed myself and my family,” she said.

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payments are healthy, so it is hard for people to focus on making business management plans, said Peter Hardwick of the development board. “The ones that are keen to improve are the ones that are already quite good and understand that they can get better,” he said.

The subsidy is similar to a deficiency payment, and as a result UK agriculture is not as competitive as it should be. “Some people think that Brexit might be positive,” he said. Older farmers may decide to exit the business and turn it over to the next generation. “Maybe land would be freed up for younger farmers who would be prepared to take on the full economic risk of that activity,” said Hardwick.

Uncertainty reigns in Scotland as Brexit looms

BY BARBARA DUCKWORTH
CALGARY BUREAU

DINBURGH, U.K. — British farmers need to start preparing for all contingencies once the United Kingdom gives up membership in the European Union.

If farmers stopped thinking about the politics of Brexit and started getting some business planning in place so that when the implications of Brexit actually do come to rest, their mindset is in a proactive mode rather than a reactive mode,” said Gavin Dick.

“At the farm level, they should be managing for change.”

Dick, whose family farms near Edinburgh, Scotland, is manager of the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board’s cereals and oilseeds division. The board is an umbrella organization for British commodities and is supported by producer levies to promote agriculture and provide farmer education. Agriculture has been far down the list as negotiators work through the complicated divorce involving 19,000 laws and regulations covering a long-term trade and cultural relationship.

The only certainty is uncertainty. When the final deal is signed, farmers do not know how much power Scotland or Wales may have over their own agriculture policy, but Dick hoped new legislation written in London recognizes the differences among the three jurisdictions.

Business plans

A major focus for farm groups is developing more extension and education for producers to adapt to inevitable changes linked to Brexit. “This is going to give the growers a nice boot in the backside to actually do what they should have been doing already,” said Dick.

Scotland has fewer diversification opportunities because of topography and climate. However, it does offer some unique goods and exported about $24 billion worth of agri-food and beverages last year with plans to step that up to $48 billion by 2030.

Whiskey and Brexit

Scotch whisky is a global commodity and adds about $8 billion to the British economy. “At the moment whisky is tariff free so they are not foreseeing huge issues directly,” said Dick. “Their biggest threat is uncertainty, and uncertainty stops people buying and trading.

The industry has said it wants business certainty and protection of the product in international markets. It also wants a domestic tax and regulatory agenda that allows it to grow.

Under World Trade Organization rules, whisky benefits from a zero tariff on exports to the EU, the United States, Canada and Japan. The industry does not want this status sacrificed.

Scotch whisky must use Scottish water and be made and aged in Scotland. Distillers have a policy of using Scottish grain first, and if they get the quality they want, they support the domestic product. Pure single malt is supposed to be 100 percent Scottish, and some distillers contract direct with local farmers.

For example, Glenfiddich uses grain from a local producer group, but it is providing only 10 percent of what the company needs, so malt barley may be imported. One of the big byproducts of the whiskey trade is wet distillers grain for the livestock sector, but distillers can now be paid to convert the spent grain into a dry product that is burned for energy.

That product was a mainstay for some livestock producers, and they have lost it.

Cereals and oilseeds

Malting barley is the largest component of the grain industry because of the size of the whisky business.

About half is grown on contract and half is sold on the spot market, said Dick. “It is all for whisky. We can’t actually grow enough barley in Scotland for whisky and it is very much a growing market,” he said.

The development board participates in variety trials to test grains for malting and high-quality distilling. Scottish barley for whisky is below 1.9 percent nitrogen content.

Fall rye is grown for biofuel and may need up to 150,000 acres in the future. It could replace oilseed rape because the hybrid rye is good for rotations.

“Uldest rye was very profitable until the grower got into the wrong scheme where you were paid by your crops. Everybody jumped onto winter rape,” said Dick.

Clubroot became a problem, and now only resistant varieties are allowed in a seven-year rotation, and these are lower yielding.

Beef, lamb and pork

Quality Meat Scotland is a producer-funded organization to promote beef, lamb and pork at home and abroad.

The organization is funded with a mandatory levy collected at time of slaughter on all cattle, sheep and pigs. The checkoff is $4.84 for cattle, $1.49 for sheep and $1.30 for pigs.

“It gives us a levy budget of about four million quid ($6.4 million),” said Stuart Ashworth of Quality Meat Scotland, which also operates a farm assurance scheme that carries a special EU sanctioned logo to identify the geographical location of production.
“It is food trustability and the regulators love that,” said Laurent Vernet, head of marketing for the organization based in Edinburgh. The EU introduced the logo in 1996, and it has spread to other countries. It is accepted among trading partners and covers a range of food products.

England is not part of this program, but Wales recently joined. Without that logo QMS would not be able to promote the brands Scotch Beef and Scotch Lamb under EU regulations.

Pork products are labelled, but hog production is low in Scotland with about 38,000 sows. The Scottish cow herd is stable at 430,000 head, and most are pure beef breeds that are not crossed with dairy cattle.

Scottish beef’s best customers are Sweden, France, the Netherlands and Belgium. They are demanding customers but are willing to pay more.

“We are focusing our marketing on people who can afford to pay more for our product,” Vernet said. “We are interested in the consumers who are eating less meat but are increasing the quality.”

Scottish representatives have travelled to Canada to see what opportunities might exist but see it as a niche opportunity.

“It will be minimal. Some of the retailers may be happy to have it as a point of differentiation,” Vernet said.

Nothing much is happening as exporters work through regulations and specifications under the Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement signed by Canada and the EU. Paperwork and customs clearance are cumbersome.

“They say it is a free market but it is not that free,” Vernet said. “After CETA we were told, yes, technically we should be able to trade. We are going to send just a few boxes to see how it is going to work.”

The Philippines and other Asian markets recently opened to the EU. Ireland, France and Denmark are already exporting to that country, and Scotland is playing catch up. There are concerns about tariffs and quotas following Brexit.

“In relation to lamb, 30 percent of what we produce is exported to Europe free of tariff. We back fill with product from New Zealand on a seasonal basis,” Ashworth said.

New Zealand has a TRQ of 228,000 tonnes to the EU, and Britain takes up to 80,000 tonnes of that product. No one knows how that quota might be split under a new trading agreement.

“If we don’t have some free trade with Europe, then potentially lamb prices will be halved,” Ashworth said.

The Scottish lamb industry was already in decline when EU payment schemes changed. The flock was around 110,000 ewes but is down to about 98,000. The tradition is to raise lamb on the hillsides and marginal land and then send the live animals for finishing in England and Wales.

Horticulture

Soft fruits such as strawberries, raspberries, black currants and blueberries are grown in a small corner of Scotland.

Most went for processing, but in the last decade strawberries became popular for the premium fresh market.

“When it was processed, every farmer had a few acres of soft fruit,” said Dick. “But we did give 6074 RR our DefendR™ Sclerotinia-tolerance trait. The only canola with yields to challenge InVigor®.”

Now it has come back with a small number of very professional specialists, growers who are supplying table berries for the whole of the U.K.,” said Dick.

Labour is the main issue for that sector. Many were Eastern European labourers who pick fruit and then shift over to the potato harvest.

No work permits were required under the EU, but no one knows if workers will be able to move as freely as before.

“There’s lots of questions but no answers coming,” said Dick.

Potatoes are a major crop for Scotland, which grows about 500,000 tonnes of certified seed a year, of which 100,000 are exported to the rest of the EU. Egypt takes about 50,000 tonnes of Scottish seed a year.

Many Scottish producers remain optimistic they will find good export markets for their products. | BARBARA DUCKWORTH PHOTO

We can’t put toilet paper in your sprayer.

brettyoung.ca/6074

But we did give 6074 RR our DefendR™ Sclerotinia-tolerance trait.

The only canola with yields to challenge InVigor®.
Western Canadian farmers are embracing technology that can increase yields and boost profitability. | MICHAEL RAINE PHOTO

BY BRIAN CROSS
SASKATCHEWAN NEWSROOM

If you’re a Canadian grain grower in the 21st century and you’re not using precision agriculture tools to reach your full productive potential, then it might be time to reassess the way you’re doing things on the farm.

That was the key message delivered by speakers and representatives from various agriculture technology companies who attended the Farms.com Precision Agriculture Conference in Saskatoon Oct. 25.

The event attracted dozens of technology companies that displayed the latest in precision ag products.

“Precision ag today is different than what it was even 10 years ago,” said Wade Barnes, president and chief executive officer of Farmers Edge.

“Ten years ago … it was focused around GPS technology, driving the tractor straight, gathering data. But I think today, precision agriculture has really morphed into what I would call decision agriculture or digital ag.”

“Ultimately, it will be the users — farmers, agronomists and grassroots decision makers — who determine which companies prosper. “The climate has changed very quickly with Monsanto acquiring Climate Corp. (which came) with this huge, billion-dollar number so what you saw after that was this real drive toward innovation … with a lot of other companies jumping into agriculture,” Barnes said.

“I don’t think farmers are overwhelmed by (digital ag),” he continued.

“To be honest, I think they’ve been waiting for it. … They’re saying ‘look, I’m in the business of farming. I want this tool to tell me what to do and when to do it and I want to be able to trust that it’s accurate.’”

Data integration will be critically important as the market matures, he added.

“You might have five companies offering five different services and each one of them might be very important on its own. But the farmer has to be the one that sorts marshals it all together and he may not have time for that (type of) management.”

“I think … the companies that can be fully integrated … are the ones that are going to be successful,” he continued.

“There’s not as many like that in the industry right now and … it will take deep pockets so I think what you might see is that movement toward consolidation … where the bigger companies with deeper pockets are the ones that are going to be able to build those fully integrated platforms.”

Joe Dales, founder and senior vice-president of Farms.com, said Western Canada’s farmers are no strangers to digital technologies.

“However, adoption is still in the early stages. “There’s a lot of new technology hitting the market today so I think it’s just a really dynamic time for technology in the agricultural marketplace,” said Dales, whose company organized the Oct. 25 event.

“It can be a bit intimidating and confusing for farmers so we just wanted to get everybody together so we could talk about what’s out there ….”

Dales said the adoption of digital technologies on the farm has advanced significantly since Farms.com hosted its first Precision Agriculture Conference five years ago.

“Today, we have access to data and tools and technologies that we’ve never had before, so I think there’s some tremendous potential, especially in Western Canada,” Dales said.

“We’ve got great scale, we’ve got wonderful farmers, we’ve got productive soil and I think we all know we can get more productivity out of our operations. It’s just a question of how.”

“The analogy that I like to use is that it feels like we’re in the fourth inning of a nine inning ball game. We’ve started to recognize the potential of this … but there’s still a long way to go.”

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Visit us online at www.producer.com to see a video about this story.

The company that revolutionized prairie agriculture with the introduction of FieldView, a line of digital technology that has introduced another game-changing technology that it claims has the potential to change the way crops are grown in Western Canada.

Climate Corp., a subsidiary of Monsanto, announced last week an official western Canadian launch of Climate FieldView, a new digital platform that collects and analyzes farm data and helps growers with management decisions.

The Climate FieldView platform, said ClimateCorp., will help farmers manage their fields and their crops more accurately and efficiently for greater productivity and increased profitability.

ClimateCorp. launched the platform in Eastern Canada last September and a similar system has been available to growers in the United States since 2015.

With its western Canadian launch, growers in Manitoba, Alberta and Saskatchewan will now have access to the new platform.

“The Climate FieldView platform is a one-stop shop for simple field data management, helping Canadian farmers get the most out of every acre,” said Denisse Hockaday, Canada business lead for ClimateCorp.

“The delivery of the platform’s powerful data analytics and customized field insights, farmers across Canada have the power to tailor their agronomic practices more precisely than ever before, fine tuning their action plans for the best outcome at the end of the season.”

The Climate FieldView platform is Monsanto’s entry into what many consider the next major frontier in global agricultural production.

The FieldView system collects data from any number of connected farm devices and uploads the data to computers, iPads or smartphones, where it can be viewed, analyzed and customized.

Ultimately, the system will allow growers to identify and manage variability in their fields and make
The adoption of digital technolo-
gies on the farm represents the new
Green Revolution in agricultural produc-
tion.
That’s according to business
leaders who attended the 2017
Farms.com Precision Agriculture
Conference in Saskatoon Oct. 25.
“While we can think the next
green revolution in agriculture is
going to be centred on data and
digital information, we have only
begun to realize the potential of
precision agriculture,” said
Denise Hockaday, Canadian business lead
for Climate Corp.
“We can even get great products into the
field and protect them with great crop
protection products, but there’s still a
level of variability that needs to be
managed,” Hockaday said.
“We need to learn more about that
variability and we need to have
greater insights into it so we can
make appropriate management
decisions. That’s where data and
data science is going to come into
play.”
According to Hockaday, agri-
cultural producers have only begun to
scratch the surface when it comes to
realizing the full potential of
digital data collection on the farm.
To different degrees, western
Canadian farmers have been col-
lecting data for decades. But in
the last decade or so, the
emergence of digital data has
begun to transform modern agri-
culture.
Today, new technologies and
products based on digital data are
evolving. Modern farmers have more information at
their fingertips than ever before.
The ability to share, analyze and
use that data to boost on-farm pro-
duc tivity is the latest challenge
facing technology companies. Hockaday said farmers’ ability to
employ digital data hinges on the
industry’s ability to develop prod-
ucts that allow users to collect and
analyze data quickly and easily.
“Farmers are busy. They don’t
have a lot of time and that’s been
one of the frustrations so far,” she
said.
Software solutions that allow
farmers to manage their data must
to be user-friendly, inexpensive and
hassle-free.
They should also be multi-func-
tional and capable of collecting
digital information from a wide
variety of sources and across vari-
ous brands.
Customer support will also be
critically important, she said.
Wade Barnes, a Manitoba
farmer who founded Farmer’s
Edge, agreed that digital data
collection and analytics has the
potential to transform modern
agriculture.
But much of that potential will be
realized if the industry fails to develop
products that offer “integrated
solutions.”
Growers do not have time to
to become familiar with several dif-
ferent software programs that offer
advice on different aspects of their
farming operation.
They want a system that allows
them to manage everything
through one platform, from seed-
ing and fertility rates to timing of
herbicide and fungicide applica-
tions to optimal combine speeds
and grain storage solutions.
The companies that develop the
most flexible and reliable integrat-
ed software products will emerge
as dominant players in the indus-
try.
“I think the sad part about it is that
when the dust settles, there proba-
ibly won’t be that many players left
and that’s unfortunate, because if
anything, farmers want choice,”
Barnes said.
“There’s a lot of big companies
out there right now that are going
to be looking to build platforms to
compete (in digital agriculture) and
I think, unfortunately, you’ll see
some great tech companies get
swallowed up by bigger compa-
nies.”
That said, it’s an exciting time
to be involved in agriculture, he add-
ed.
“I think we’re (in a) really lucky
time to be involved in agriculture
right now because we’re actually
going to see another really big trans-
formative change in the industry.”
There was the green revolution,
which I wasn’t around for, but I
was lucky enough to be around
when Roundup Ready crops came
and no-till. My view is that this is
another chance to see something
significantly huge happen in agri-
culture.”
Interest in the use of drones, manned aerial systems or satellite systems to gather imagery has grown rapidly with producers in Western Canada. Each has its own advantages and growers can choose based on resolution requirements, availability and cost.

### IMAGERY PLATFORMS

**Data collection from above; getting the right stuff from flight**

TERRY A. BRASE

After flying drones for a few years, I was asked to speak at various conferences. Most of these are professional and proper affairs in which people sit quietly to listen, applaud the speaker politely, and ask thoughtful questions afterward. However, at one memorable conference at which there were people representing drones, manned aerial systems and satellite systems, it wasn’t so polite or professional.

I was on a panel made up of people representing each imagery platform. Each panelist gave a presentation on the advantages and use of their chosen imagery platform. I spoke specifically about the use of drones in agriculture. During my presentation, there were comments from several people in the audience that could be best called heckling.

As an experienced teacher, good-natured heckling from students is common and easy to deal with. But this was the first and only time I had ever been heckled as a speaker at a conference. I continued and ignored the comments, mainly out of surprise. The next speaker, who also talked about drones, was not so surprised nor as quiet.

Escalation of comments between the hecklers and the speaker led to full-blown arguments; not something I had ever seen at a conference or even since.

People are passionate about their imagery. I understand that all of these people’s livelihoods depend on their chosen technology and therefore they are defending it. I still meet people on a regular basis that believe their technology is the best and are not afraid to defend it.

One gentleman that I work with believes that satellites are the best way to capture imagery for ag producers. He is literally a rocket scientist, spending much of his working-life at NASA.

He has worked with imagery satellites for years and has developed a software for analyzing satellite imagery that will estimate nutrient needs and irrigation problems. He believes that the large area that satellites cover and the number of satellites that are available are making satellite imagery cheaper than anything else available.

A new satellite constellation is being placed into orbit that will provide daily images in a wide range of visible and invisible wavelengths. According to him, satellite imagery is what all growers should use.

A third gentleman has a company that sells and flies rotor drones. He has been providing imagery services, and also uses drones for application of crop protection products.

He believes that drones give his customers the flexibility and immediacy needed by some growers. If they want an image now or need to spray a crop product now, the drone can be up in the air within a few minutes.

The high resolution of one inch ground sampling distance is valuable for plant populations, specific locations of stressed plants or assessment of irrigation lines. Imagery from drones is what growers should use.

Since I speak and teach about drones, it seems to people that I am a proponent of drones. Yes, that is correct, but I am also a proponent of satellite imagery and manned flights as well.

Actually, I am a proponent of imagery. The imagery, whether it is infrared, NIR, LIDAR or thermal, is the important part of any system regardless of the platform. The platform should be considered when a grower has specific needs for resolution, availability and cost.

Each system has its specific advantages and the grower should consider all three as tools when making a choice. The thing to remember is that the imagery is the important part and not to be tethered to any one system. You have a choice to make precision happen.

Terry A. Brase is an agriculture consultant, precision agriculture educator and author. BrASE LLC. Contact him at precision.happens@producer.com

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Jamie Holdstock, MSc, PAg  
Agronomist  
Pioneer Crops  
Swift Current, SK

Jamie works closely with producers providing them with agronomic advice that benefits their business and operation. Her services include field planning, agr retail, weed identification, crop scouting, and recommendations.

The professional agrologist (PAg) designation provides recognition to the public that I am accountable and beholden to professional standards and ethics.

Jamie was raised on a mixed farm at Arborfield, SK. She received an animal science technology diploma from Lakeland College, and a BSc in Agriculture and an MSc in animal science from the University of Alberta. Jamie previously worked with Lakeland College, SK Crop Insurance Corporation, and the Food Processing Development Centre.

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Dave Knouse, PAg  
Regional Manager  
SK Crop Insurance  
Northwest SK

Dave oversees operations for seven offices in Central and Northwest SK including Davidson, Saskatoon, Prince Albert, Rosetown, Kindersley, Turtlesford and North Battleford. He administers and manages five insurance programs within the offices such as the Wildlife Compensation Program and the Western Livestock Price Insurance Program.

The professional agrologist (PAg) designation reflects recognition of an individual with a science-based education, who is committed to a profession bound by ethical practice standards.

Dave grew up on a grain farm near Milestone, SK. He received a BSc in Agriculture from the University of Saskatchewan. Dave previously worked in crop inputs, ag retail, and ag manufacturing.

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FARGO, N.D. — Remember when snowmobiles were cheap and the technology simple? Well, those days might be returning with the back-to-basics SnowDog built in Russia.

Some of the earliest snow machine contrivances in North America consisted of a power unit driving the track and pulling a single sled or train of sleds holding the driver and cargo. And that's exactly what the SnowDog is, according to Lynn Stuhaug of Buffalo River Sales in Glyndon, Minnesota.

"Make no mistake about it, the SnowDog is not meant to replace your Arctic Cat. It's not so much of a snowmobile as a power unit for moving things around," said Stuhaug, adding that top speed is just 20 m.p.h.

"They've only been coming over from Russia for two years now, but every shipment gets sold out right away. That's probably because of the price. The small one with the Briggs & Stratton 7.5 horse sells for $3,100. The bigger one with the 13 horse sells for $3,500. The engines are built here in the U.S.

"It's mostly farmers buying these things because they get around so well. The track is 20 inches wide and even the big one only weighs 300 pounds, so it pulls you through a lot of rough territory. Farmers use them for fencing in wet areas or hauling feed out to remote areas. You can drive them along the edge of a slough or through shallow water. You can pull a cart or a couple of sleds pretty easily."

LYNN STUHAUG, BUFFALO RIVER SALES

"It’s mostly farmers buying these things because they get around so well. The track is 20 inches wide and even the big one only weighs 300 pounds, so it pulls you through a lot of rough territory. Farmers use them for fencing in wet areas or hauling feed out to remote areas. You can drive them along the edge of a slough or through shallow water. You can pull a cart or a couple of sleds pretty easily. The big one has no problem pulling 600 or 700 pounds."

There are about a dozen dealers on the Prairies.

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LIVESTOCK

Bale net wrap proves deadly for livestock

The wrap is popular with producers but can’t be recycled and some landfills won’t accept it

BY BARB GLEN

FORT MACKLEOD, Alta. — Bale net wrap is handy stuff when it comes to hay quality preservation, bale uniformity, ease of handling and protection from the elements. However, it’s not quite so handy when net wrap ends up in a cow’s stomach, impedes digestion and eventually leads to the animal’s death.

Doug Leeds saw a first-hand example of the problem. The Claresholm, Alta., area rancher found a cow’s skeleton in his property earlier this year and the only thing well preserved was a large wad of net wrap in what was once the cow’s rumen.

“She had eaten the stuff and packed it away. It’s actually as hard as a rock,” Leeds told those at the Alberta Beef Producers zone meeting in Fort Macleod Oct. 23. He brought the wad of material to illustrate his point.

Though there are recycling options for some types of agricultural plastic, such as twine and grain bags, the same is not true for net wrap. Most landfills don’t accept it, and it is illegal to burn it in Alberta, although that often happens in the absence of any other disposal method, said ABP delegate Assar Grinde of Bluffton.

Grinde compiled a paper for ABP members in which he asks whether the organization should support development of an agricultural plastics recycling program.

In most cases where the question was asked, the answer was yes.

In Fort Macleod, for example, members agreed that ABP should promote environmental re-use of agricultural plastic and increase awareness about the danger it poses to livestock.

At another ABP zone meeting in Innisfail, producers also moved to support a recycling program for grain bags, silage tags and twines, in co-operation with other interested parties.

“The minute you use plastics, it is contaminated and the recyclers do not want contaminated plastic,” Curt Maki of Eckville, Alta., said at the Innisfail meeting.

“That is not feasible for us. The people who recycle plastic need to find new uses for it. They do not want it. They want more money to recycle it. They want us to pay,” Grinde has done some research on agricultural plastics, including how they are dealt with in other provinces and countries. He suggested in a working paper that failure to address the problem could result in government intervention.

“Changes could be made (to government legislation), given environmental protection group pressures, if this were to become a flare point dealing with industry’s discussions about good stewardship,” Grinde wrote.

The trouble is, neither he nor the head of Alberta’s recycling council know the composition of net wrap.

CRYSTAL COOK

Private companies reward beef producers for sustainability efforts

BY BARBARA DUCKWORTH

INNISFAIL, Alta. — Beef producers who want financial compensation when they adopt sustainable practices could be rewarded by a new private sector initiative.

The Canadian beef sustainability acceleration pilot announced earlier this year includes companies like Cargill Meats, Cara Foods, McDonalds and Loblaw, which are depositing money into a special fund to reward all players involved in the beef production chain.

“People believe that they need to do this and the fact is that retailers are actually putting dollars on the table,” said Deborah Wilson of the traceability company BIXs at the Alberta Beef Producers zone meeting in Innisfail Oct. 25.

Companies are investing in the industry based on the amount of sustainable beef that appears in the chain, but there are no details on the size of premiums.

Payments to eligible participants could start next year and would be provided quarterly.

Starting Oct. 1, BIXs started to trace cattle produced sustainably from the farm to the processor. The initiative follows indicators established by the Canadian Roundtable on sustainable beef covering food safety, environmental and animal care, as well as the role of people in beef production.

To participate, producers need to sign on to BIXs so cattle are monitored from farm to Cargill Meats. They must also become audited by the pilot, visit cbsapilot.ca/.

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Putting cattle out to graze standing corn is becoming more common on the Prairies. New hybrid corn varieties that require less heat have offered more alternatives for winter grazing. It is a high energy, nutritious feed with respectable yield potential that maintains quality through the winter.

Research has shown 1,790 pounds per acre of forage can sustain a 1,500 lb. cow through the winter. Whole standing corn far surpasses that.

At 50 percent starch, corn cobs provide enough energy to keep cows warm and in some cases, gain weight as they work through a field.

“When we go into a winter feeding situation with the cows, we are trying to manage body condition in those winter months,” said researcher Bart Lardner of the Western Beef Development Centre. Research at the centre found grazing cows cost 70 cents to $1.42 per day compared to dry lot feeding costs of about $2.50 per day.

Corn meets their energy needs during the cold winter months but cattle still need to be monitored. “Energy requirements of that beef cow (during winter) ramps up considerably. The wind chill factor combined with the cold temperatures is the biggest thing,” Lardner said in an Oct. 12 webinar sponsored by the Beef Cattle Research Council.

Corn can work as a wind shelter but additional protection and extra bedding may be needed for the colder, windy periods. Cows may take a day or two to adjust to standing corn when they are first turned into a field.

Cows will eat the cobs first, then the stalks and husks. Figuring on an average cow weight of 1,400 lb., each animal will eat 30 to 40 lb. of dry matter or about 2.5 percent of its body weight.

Lardner recommends splitting a field into smaller paddocks with electric fences and offering the cows four or five rows of corn at a time so they are forced to consume cobs, tassels and stalks before moving onto other sections of the field. Producers should add a round bale of grass hay or straw for added fibre because too much starch from the cobs can lead to rumen acidosis or founder.

Samples containing the entire plant should be tested to make sure all nutritional needs including protein are met. Disease in corn can be a problem in wet years, so samples should be checked for fusarium and other toxins. If protein levels get low close to calving, consider adding a supplement. It is also important to add a well-balanced mineral program that includes micronutrients like copper, manganese and zinc.

Weaned beef calves can also eat corn but they may need supplements. One research trial showed calves in the field gained about 1.3 lb. per day but this did not affect their feedlot performance. They may be a bit lighter when they enter the feedlot but they made up for it with weight gains later.

Corn is a high cost crop. Individual farms may report some differences but the beef development centre calculated growing corn costs $206 to $223 per acre. “It is a high input, high risk crop. You are putting a lot of dollars per acre for grazing beef cows, so do it right,” Lardner said.

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Webinar explains cost of corn grazing and provides agronomy advice

BY BARBARA DUCKWORTH
CALGARY BUREAU

Cattle at the Longson ranch feed on corn in a field southwest of High River, Alta. MIKE STURK PHOTO

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LIVESTOCK MEDICATIONS

Antibiotic availability worries producers

BY KAREN BRIERE
REGINA BUREAU

STRASBOURG, Sask. — Some cattle producers are worried about changes that might affect how they access veterinary antibiotics. Regular federal regulations now being phased in mean some drugs that producers currently access at local retail stores will be available only through veterinarians.

Concern about antibiotic resistance led to the new regulations for medically important antibiotics. The first change was designed to eliminate growth-promoting antibiotic claims on labels. Another change will require a veterinarian-client-patient relationship before a veterinarian will be able to issue a prescription.

Brent Johnson told the Saskatchewan Cattlemen’s Association District 6 meeting that he is concerned about humane treatment of animals if producers don’t have easy access to what they need.

“If you’re out on a weekend and you’ve got a cow with pinkeye or a cow with foot rot and you’re out of Neomycin, are you going to pay an after-hours charge for a bottle that you used to just be able to run to the co-op and get?” he said. Johnson said producers are following the beef code of practice, participate in verified Beef Pro programs and follow best-management practices to show how they humanely care for their animals. Quick access to antibiotics should be part of those practices, he said.

Johnson is also worried about the cost. His motion, which will be carried forward to the SCA annual general meeting in January, called on the organization to lobby the province and the Saskatchewan Veterinary Medical Association to ensure that antimicrobial drugs are not added to a minimum price schedule.

The motion also asks government to investigate how a pharmacy-style retail system for livestock drugs could be set up to foster competition.

More producers buying into livestock price insurance

BY KAREN BRIERE
REGINA BUREAU

STRASBOURG, Sask. — More Saskatchewan cattle producers bought livestock price insurance this year, likely because of last year’s high prices. After record strong prices in 2015, when price insurance might not have seemed a necessity, 2016 brought a hard reality check.

Jodie Griffin said that more price insurance look more attractive. “The calf market this week last year was running in the high 70s, like $1.70/cwt,” said the Western Livestock Price Insurance Program co-ordinator for Saskatchewan. “That same weight break today is $2.27. It’s insane.”

And she said producers who were paying attention when they were buying calf policies noted they could insure for $2.32 even though it cost them $8 per hundredweight. “Inexpensive, but worth it,” she said. “And it’s paying out.”

Overall, participation rose to 2,947 producers this year, up 500 from the year before. They insured 22 percent of the estimated marketable calf crop compared to just 12 percent in 2016 and 15 percent in the first two years of the pilot program. The program will continue in the next policy framework after Growing Forward 2 ends in March 2018. Griffin told the Saskatchewan Cattlemen’s Association’s District 6 meeting that 25 percent of the purchased policies have now expired.

The cattlemen are paying an average of $40 per head in addition to the strong market price. Feeder policies paid out $50 per head.

More producers buying into livestock price insurance
Circadian rhythm research applies to livestock health

The livestock emergency response unit housed in Nobleford, Alta., was on display, and firefighter Andrew Watson talked about its equipment and use. “The call comes in and we will respond. We usually send anywhere from four to seven guys out. If possible seven, but four for sure,” said Watson. “We basically set up a complete corral system. Containment is a very big issue because...if we don’t have these trailers, we’re doing就像 this and animals running (around). Our biggest concern is to get the animals out of the trailer, contained, into another trailer and getting them on the road.” Watson said the trailer is equipped with 20 fence panels, four gates, mesh fencing and various tools that allow firefighters to cut open trailers if necessary to remove animals.

Though cattle are the most commonly transported livestock in southern Alberta, the rescue trailer and personnel can also handle pigs, horses, sheep and poultry. “In the last week and a half, we’ve had this trailer out twice,” said Watson. “So it is being used.”

The need for greater awareness most recently became apparent this summer when a truckload of pigs overturned near Standford, Alta., but the livestock rescue unit wasn’t called because responders weren’t aware of its existence. Pigs that survived the crash died of heat stress because there was no place to contain them had they been removed from the wreck. Now 911 dispatchers can be asked to send the livestock rescue trailer to an accident scene. AFAC’s emergency line, 800-506-2273, can also be called at any time to assist in dispatch.
No fall-back deal in effect if NAFTA axed

Canada and the U.S. would not revert to the 1989 trade agreement, says official

BY ROBERT ARNASON
BRANDON BUREAU

With North American Free Trade Agreement negotiations faltering, it’s possible that the U.S. could walk away from the talks and kill the deal.

Should that happen, a few observers have said the original U.S.-Canada Free Trade Agreement would take effect. That would lead in negotiations between Canada and the United States to update that deal.

John Masswohl, director of government and international relations with the Canadian Cattleman’s Association, isn’t buying that argument.

“I think that’s overly simplistic,” he said.

“If NAFTA is ripped up, the Cana-
dan-U.S. FTA from 1989 would also be ripped up. I think you have to assume if we’re going to do a demo-
lion so we can do a re-construc-
tion, then we’re demolishing right down to the studs.”

The three countries formally began talking about NAFTA in August because U.S. President Donald Trump promised to rip up or renegotiate the deal during his 2016 campaign.

Representatives of Canada, Mexico and the U.S. took part in the fourth round of negotiations last month to update the 24-year-old NAFTA deal.

A number of analysts are concerned the U.S. is on track to terminate NAFTA because Trump continues to make unhelpful comments.

“If we cannot make a deal, it will be terminated and that will be fine,” he said in October.

As well, U.S. negotiators have put forward proposals that are untenable for Canada and Mexico, such as changing rules of origin around automobile manufacturing so half of all content comes from the U.S.

“I don’t know how many of these proposals there are, but there’s a stack of them,” Masswohl said.

“They all come from the perspec-
tive … to relabelling trade, so they (the U.S.) no longer have a (trade) deficit.”

Since many of the proposals are unacceptable to Canada and Mexico, some analysts have suggested that Canada should pursue a bilateral trade deal with the U.S.

Masswohl said it’s much too early to give up on the NAFTA negotiations, but the idea of renegotiating the Canada-U.S. FTA doesn’t make sense because NAFTA was an improvement to the older deal and changes have been made to NAFTA since 1994.

“To revert back to the original agreement from 1989, that needs a heck of a lot of modernizing,” Masswohl said.

Whether Canada is re-negotiat-
ing NAFTA or the old FTA, accepting a bad deal isn’t an option, said Don Buckingham, Canadian Agri-
Food Policy Institute chief execu-
tive officer.

“If Canada doesn’t at least main-
tain its position, why would it sign a NAFTA 2.0, or an FTA?” he said.

He said Canada would be better off reverting to World Trade Orga-
nization rules for trade, where there would be small tariffs on commodities and goods exported to the U.S.

Masswohl agreed.

“If somebody presents you with a win-lose scenario and you can’t accept being on a lose end,” he said.

“You’ve got to go to lose-lose.”

Some trade experts may believe that NAFTA talks are headed for a “lose-lose” outcome but Masswohl isn’t in that camp.

It’s still early and there’s time to reach a NAFTA deal that is positive for all three countries and beef producers in Canada, he said.

“We (the CCA) are still pursuing improvements to the older agreement, and this thing hasn’t reached critical mass yet. When it does get to a genuine cri-
 sis, Masswohl believes the U.S. board’s position will cause the U.S. to walk away and not agree to a deal.

“We’ve done a little bit (of lob-
ying), but they are more or less keeping their powder dry,” Masswohl said.

robert.arason@producer.com

Ag Stocks Oct. 23-26

The TSX posted a record high, supported by strong profit gains at Amazon and Google pushed U.S. markets higher. For the week, the TSX composite rose 0.6 percent, the Nasdaq gained 0.2 percent and the Nasdaq climbed 1.2 percent.

Gainers in SDC. U.S. exchanges in $U.S.

AG Finance

88 NOVEMBER 2, 2017 | WWW.PRODUCER.COM | THE WESTERN PRODUCER
Before getting too far into “next year” thinking, it’s important to look at how you did financially in 2017. There are many reasons why people farm. One of them, though, must be to earn profit.

Four key questions should be addressed:

What profit did the farm earn in 2017?
Profit must be calculated on an accrual basis, factor in changes from year to year in inventory, accounts receivable and accounts payable. It includes an allowance for amortization (depreciation) on buildings and equipment. Net cash profit is simply not adequate when determining how much money a farm made, or lost.

How does this compare to past years?
Looking at the profit earned in the most current year provides good information but has to be compared to previous years. What is the trend line? In the past five years, how many have been good? How many poor? The trend line provides a better base of information on your ability to generate profit that you can use when making management and investment decisions for the coming years.

Where did/will your profit go?
Cash is king, especially for farm businesses. Cash can come from different sources, but the only sustainable one is profit. Once you’ve determined how much money you’ve made, examine where the profit is going: capital investment, principal repayment, personal withdrawals and extraordinary items. With that information, align your cash inflow (which is a function of profit) and cash outflow.

Will these levels of profit get you and your family to where you want or need to be in the future?
I ask this question, but usually don’t get a very clear answer. Farm families rarely have thought much about it. But I think there are good reasons why the discussion should become more common.

Higher capital investment, inter-generational transition, narrow margins, changing practices and greater risk are why it makes sense to establish financial goals for profitability.

Many ratios and indicators are available to analyze financial performance. A basket of ratios looks at farm financial performance from various perspectives. They all tell you something about your business financially.

I’ve found the following six ratios to be effective in providing an overview on financial performance. They look at various aspects of the business and paint a picture of your financial situation. Some of the benchmarks will vary depending on the sector you farm in.

- Gross margin (Gross Margin Ratio)
- Working capital (Working Capital Ratio)
- Leverage (Leverage Ratio)
- Debt servicing (Debt Servicing Ratio)
- Net operating profit margin (Net Operating Profit Margin Ratio)
- Operating efficiency (Operating Efficiency Ratio)

### Use ratios and benchmarks to analyze performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ratio</th>
<th>Formula</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
<th>Strong</th>
<th>Ave</th>
<th>Weak</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gross Margin Ratio</td>
<td>Gross Margin / Gross Revenue</td>
<td>Is the farm generating acceptable margin as a percentage of gross revenue?</td>
<td>&gt;65%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>&lt;50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working Capital and Working Capital Ratio</td>
<td>Current Assets - Current Liabilities / Cash Operating Expenses</td>
<td></td>
<td>&gt;50%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>&lt;10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leverage Ratio</td>
<td>Total Liabilities / Total Equity</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.4:1</td>
<td>0.65:1</td>
<td>&gt;1:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debt Servicing Ratio</td>
<td>Debt Servicing Capacity / Principal and Interest</td>
<td>Can the farm generate enough earnings to pay its annual principal and interest payments?</td>
<td>&gt;2.0:1</td>
<td>1.50:1</td>
<td>&lt;1.1:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Operating Profit Margin Ratio</td>
<td>Net Operating Profit Margin / Gross Revenue</td>
<td></td>
<td>&gt;20%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>&lt;5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating Efficiency Ratio</td>
<td>EBITDA / Gross Revenue</td>
<td>How efficient is the farm at generating a margin before interest, taxes (income) and amortization?</td>
<td>&gt;35%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>&lt;15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Indicators based on market value assets**

**EBITDA = Earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation & amortization**

---

**TERRY BETKER**

**FINANCIAL ASSESSMENT**

Terry Betker is a farm management consultant based in Winnipeg. He can be reached at 204-782-8200 or terry.betker@backswath.com.
### CATTLE & SHEEP

#### Saskatchewan

**Cattle**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Live</th>
<th>Oct 20-26</th>
<th>Previous</th>
<th>Oct 13-19</th>
<th>Year Ago</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Steers</td>
<td>17.07</td>
<td>134.82</td>
<td>125.47</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heifers</td>
<td>14.22</td>
<td>133.94</td>
<td>122.84</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Slaughter Cattle**

- **Carcass Weight**
  - Slaughter Carcass Weight
    - Canfax
  - Feeder Cattle
    - Kansas
    - Nebraska
    - South Dakota
    - Iowa
    - Dodge City
- **Feeder Cattle**
  - (Class 1) 55-69 lb
  - (Class 2) 700-800 lb
- **Elevated Bone Weight**
  - (Class 1) 110-120 lb
  - (Class 2) 160-180 lb

#### Manitoba

- **Steers**
  - 180-160 lb
  - 200-220 lb
  - 220-240 lb
  - 240-260 lb
- **Hogs**
  - 320-340 lb
  - 400-420 lb

#### Alberta

- **Slaughter Cattle** ($/cwt)
  - (Average $/cwt)
  - (Class 1) 180-190 lb
  - (Class 2) 200-220 lb
  - (Class 3) 240-260 lb

- **Cash Prices**
  - Oct 27: 277.23
  - Dec 23: 277.00
  - Mar 11: 277.00

### GRAINS

#### Canada

- **Chicago Nearby**
  - Wheat
  - Oats
  - Canola
  - Soybeans (Nov)

#### U.S.

- **Wheat**
  - Chicago Nearby
  - Wpg ICE
  - Canola
  - Soybeans

#### World

- **Wheat**
  - World Futures
  - World Export
  - World Import

### ELEVATOR SHIPMENTS

#### CANADA

- **Corn**
  - **CNW**
  - **PAC**
  - **SKE**
  - **INT**
  - **SID**

#### U.S.

- **CORN**
  - **USDA**

---

**NOTES:**

- **HOGS**
  - Due to wide reporting and collection methods, it is misleading to compare hog prices between provinces.

- **CATTLE & SHEEP**
  - **Slaughter Cattle** ($/cwt)
  - **Cash Prices**
  - **Feeder Cattle** ($/cwt)

- **GRAINS**
  - **Chicago Nearby**
  - **World Wheat**
  - **World Canola**
  - **World Soybean**

---

**EQUIPMENT:**

- **Sons of Groot**
  - **CAN**
  - **US**

---

**MARKETS**

- **CATTLE & SHEEP**
  - **Slaughter Cattle** ($/cwt)
  - **Feeder Cattle** ($/cwt)

- **GRAINS**
  - **Chicago Nearby**
  - **World Wheat**
  - **World Canola**

---

**FUTURES ($US/100 bu.)**

- **Chicago Nearby**
  - Wheat
  - Oats
  - Canola
  - Soybeans

- **World Wheat**
  - World Futures
  - World Export
  - World Import
**WEATHER**

**PIT STOP**

A flock of snow geese flew onto a harvested wheat field near Craik, Sask., to forage. Many prairie regions saw snow in the week before Halloween. | MICKEY WATKINS PHOTO

**LAST WEEK’S WEATHER SUMMARY ENDING OCT. 29**

### SASKATCHEWAN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Temperature last week</th>
<th>Precipitation since April 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assiniboia</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>-6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadview</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>-13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastend Cypress</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>-7.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Estevan</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>-13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindersley</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>-6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maple Creek</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>-1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meadow Lake</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>-6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melfort</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>-5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meadow Lake</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>-6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prince George</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>-0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regina</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>-10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rockglen</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>-10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saskatoon</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>-6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swift Current</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>-5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Val Marie</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>-8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weyburn</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>-7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yorkton</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>-7.1</td>
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</table>

### ALBERTA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Temperature last week</th>
<th>Precipitation since April 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brooks</td>
<td>26.6</td>
<td>-6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calgary</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>-6.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cold Lake</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>-4.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coronation</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>-4.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Edmonton</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>-6.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grande Prairie</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>-4.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>High Level</td>
<td>11.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lethbridge</td>
<td>23.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Llloydminster</td>
<td>17.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medicine Hat</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>-6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk River</td>
<td>25.2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace River</td>
<td>13.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pincher Creek</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>-4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Deer</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>-9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stavely</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>-6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegreville</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>-6.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### MANITOBA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Temperature last week</th>
<th>Precipitation since April 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brandon</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>-11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dauphin</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>-11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gimli</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>-8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melita</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>-10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morden</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>-7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portage La Prairie</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>-6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swan River</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>-9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winnipeg</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>-6.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**BRITISH COLUMBIA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Temperature last week</th>
<th>Precipitation since April 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cranbrook</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>-5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort St John</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>-6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kamloops</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>-0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelowna</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>-3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prince George</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>-5.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**IDEAS, INNOVATION, AND KNOWLEDGE**

CropSphere 2018 – January 9 and 10

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