

DECEMBER 2022



At the 2022 APAS General Meeting in Saskatoon on Dec. 8 and 9 multiple resolutions were passed, including a resolution to have livestock producers exempted from the federal policy of Electronic Logging Devices (ELDs) for truck drivers across Canada.

APAS passes resolution for livestock exemption from ELD mandate

BY SIERRA D'SOUZA BUTTS
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

At their annual general meeting, the Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan (APAS) passed multiple resolutions, one in particular being a livestock exemption for the federal policy of Electronic Logging Devices (ELDs), which is set to take effect on January 1, 2023.

The mandate requires truck drivers to switch from paper logbooks to ELDs that record the driving time in commercial motor vehicles.

The intent of the device is to help make sure drivers are compliant with the maximum allowable working

hours of service regulations resulting in reduced fatigue for drivers, improved administration efficiency and safer roads in Canada.

"We just passed the resolution that I put forward today with the Electronic Logging Devices mandate. Now we get to work to send some letters out and talk to some people to try and get an exemption like the U.S. got," said Trevor Green APAS Representative for the RM of Moosomin.

"We also passed a resolution on APAS presenting a livestock production insurance, similar to the crop insurance for wheat and canola, but for production of livestock.

"We passed lots of resolutions, but these are the three I

brought forward.

"The other one was to have a livestock summit in January that APAS is going to host. We'll have the full council, the chicken farmers, the beekeepers, the bison producers, the Ag producers. Everyone will be invited in a room to get direction for livestock in Saskatchewan and where we can go from there."

The resolutions brought forward by APAS present a new direction the association plans to take when addressing their concerns with the federal government.

"The direction APAS is taking now is to be more offensive than defensive in agriculture issues," said Green.

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2022 economic year in review

BY MARTHA ROBERTS
FCC ECONOMICS EDITOR

The ever-optimistic among us hoped we'd seen the worst Covid impacts. If that were true, a moderation in demand would help to lower inflationary pressures without invoking dramatic monetary intervention from the Bank of Canada (BoC). But with inflation at 5.1% to start the year and the omicron wave underway, it wasn't clear if that would amount to anything more than wishful thinking.

January

Covid had unleashed a storm of demand on global markets that had become increasingly costly to supply. As elsewhere, experts believed Canadian rate hikes would happen in 2022, moving the overnight interest rate (OIR) from the then-current 0.25% to end the year at 1.5%. With such hikes, expectations were that inflation would fall to around 3% by December. The economy was humming, doing better than expected, with strong forecasted growth.

There were, however, signs of the forces that would soon dominate headlines. Canadian agrifood producers were getting high commodity prices, realized from the ongoing strength of global demand and leading some to wonder if those prices aid at the root of global food inflation. China was cutting back its outsized influence that had dominated the 2020-21 global agri-food trade, and overall Canadian pork exports were down year-over-year (YoY) as a result. Hog slaughter capacity in eastern Canada had been reduced in response to packers' COVID-related slowdowns in 2020 and 2021, creating a historically high backlog of hogs in Quebec.

But all that took a back seat with growing reports of Russia amassing troops at Ukraine's borders.

February

Canada's job market was strong, with the unemployment rate dropping to 5.5%, slightly lower than its February 2020 pre-pandemic level. With the omicron restrictions, employment had fallen by



200,000 jobs in January but bounced back with 337,000 jobs in February. Production headwinds had nonetheless appeared in several of Canada's livestock sectors.

Hog slaughters in Quebec and Ontario were destined to be cut further, putting additional strain on the pace of slaughter needed to clear the backlog noted in January. And Avian Influenza was reported in the eastern region of the U.S. and Canada. Twelve thousand turkeys were culled in Nova Scotia.

Then, the world watched in horror on February 24 as Russia advanced into Ukraine. Forecasters warned that should the two countries' ag and oil production or exports fall due to the war, world prices would rise again. Futures for corn, soybeans, canola and wheat rose significantly that week, some even hitting their daily upper limit. It didn't bode well for those worried about inflation.

March

On March 11, the BoC raised the OIR from 0.25% to 0.50%, and the market speculated that it would end the year as high as 1.75%. Such optimism didn't last long. By month-end, markets expected the overnight rate to end the year near 2.25%.

The war in Ukraine was hitting the ag

prices and price volatility.

April

Although GDP data showed that the Canadian economy grew in the first quarter at a 3.1% annualized rate, things were slowing down. April's growth was expected to slow from the previous months. But that news took a back seat to more worrying reports.

Overall inflation was 6.8%, and food inflation had climbed 8.8% YoY. In ag markets, wheat was above US\$11/bushel. The price of corn reached the US\$8/bushel mark in Chicago for the first time since 2012. That didn't help markets' concern that high inflation expectations were becoming ingrained – and possibly the source of future inflation growth.

Avian influenza was spreading unchecked, with 700,000 birds euthanized to date and the end, not in sight. The outbreak hit Alberta hardest.

Another effect of the war? Investors were turning to the U.S. dollar as a haven in uncertain times and boosting its value relative to the CAD.

Continued on page C8

USask research finds zapped, infrared-heated lentils more nutritious and 'greener' to process

By combining heat from microwaves and infrared energy, University of Saskatchewan (USask) researchers have uncovered a new, more energy efficient way to process lentils, making them more nutritious and digestible. The findings may result in more value for consumers, food processors, ingredient manufacturers, and producers.

Processing red lentils with a specialized combination infrared microwave system—a countertop device that allows heating by microwave and radiant heat simultaneously—the USask research team was able to substantially improve how easily these lentils could be digested.

"The process makes these macromolecules—starch and protein—more accessible to enzymes in our bodies," said Mehdi Foroushani, USask doctoral student and first author on the study published in the journal Food Chemistry Advances.

By tweaking the amount of moisture in the lentils, and the amounts of microwave and infrared energy, the research team was able to make more than 96 per cent of the starch digestible, and more than 85 per cent of the protein digestible, measured by how quickly the product dissolves in vitro. In raw lentils, less than 69 per cent of starch is digestible and less than 80 percent of protein is digestible.

To better understand what happened at the molecular level and examine it in the finest detail possible, the research team analyzed the lentil samples using USask's Canadian Light Source synchrotron.

"Starch has a smooth surface," said USask doctoral student Tahereh Najib, co-author of the study. "We make it kind of rough, so it's more accessible by enzymes and the starch can be better broken down."

More than two million tonnes of lentils are produced on average each year in Canada, the world's biggest producer, with the majority produced in Saskatchewan. Lentils are harvested, cleaned, and graded before packaging or further processing. Most are cooked and consumed as a whole grain, but a growing volume of lentils is dried and turned into a powder to isolate proteins from starches and used as a food additive.

"Our process takes 200 per cent less drying time," said USask College of Engineering researcher Dr. Venkatesh Meda (PhD), principal investigator on the study. "The unique nature of this energy method is that there is no input of chemicals used for drying, there is no output in terms of release of greenhouse gases."

In microwaving, heat is generated from the center of the lentil and radiates outward—moisture and heat escape to the outside



From left, USask doctoral students Tahereh Najib, Mehdi Foroushani, and USask College of Engineering researcher Dr. Venkatesh Meda (PhD) at the Canadian Light Source synchrotron.

environment. By simultaneously roasting the surface of the lentils with infrared heat, the research team was able to increase the overall efficiency and better seal in the microwave heat.

"By having more plant-based alternative food ingredients in our diet, one can also reduce our environmental footprint by fulfilling our need for proteins from plant sources," said Meda.

The ideal setting of lentil moisture, microwave energy intensity, and infrared roasting depends largely on how the lentil flour will be used.

"Modified lentil flour can be a great source of plant-based ingredients for our dietary and nutritional needs, and our kitchen and food processing operations," said Meda. "Lentil

flour serves as an additive or substitution to our food system; not only make the food nutritious but also preserve its acceptable texture."

The USask-processed lentils have not yet been assessed or approved for official trials involving human or animal consumption, for which a commercial kitchen is required. While the texture may be acceptable, how does the zapped lentil flour taste?

"At home we have been using it, and the aroma has improved to 'acceptable,' and not deteriorated compared to any other commercial variety," said Meda. "We're happy to re-

port there is not much loss in any of the sensory qualities: colour, texture, aroma."

Currently, the lentil flour is processed in very small batches—only 50 grams. The next steps in the research involve improving the flavour, scaling up to process larger amounts of lentils, applying the process to other legumes and oilseeds, and examining whether the technique could also improve seed quality for germination.

The research was funded by the joint Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture-Government of Canada Agriculture Development Fund.

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Tales of Christmas on the farm

"You went there?" he said the very second he walked through our front door the other day. "You bought a picture from that place in Canmore?" It was obvious this young fellow (one of the twins) had not forgotten the Ken Hoehn pictures he had seen when he was visited the mountains last summer. "That guy had bear pictures and deer pictures too!"

I'm not sure what 11-year-old boy would particularly notice a scenic photo on the wall, let alone where it was purchased from, but this one did, primarily because he had spotted a wildlife picture there that he really, really, really wanted, though his parents didn't buy him one, much to his disappointment.

So, from the young men of few words, came a dialogue about all the great photos they had seen at that gallery in the mountains and the fact that the gallery owner was not only a really awesome photographer but Saskatchewan born and raised as well.

I couldn't help but think that day, when Reid's eyes went wide with awe over this particular picture or at least awe with the thought of a particular 'deer' picture he was remembering, if we look with such awe at the beautiful nature that surrounds us, the wildlife, the sunsets, the lakes and the wheat fields waving in the wind.

I also wonder if we look with such awe at the wonderful gift that came some 2000 years ago in the form of a baby born in a manger and the angel's proclamation to the shepherds: "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy!"

For me, this season is a wonderful time to reflect on that proclamation and to enjoy the lights and the decorations, the church services, programs and suppers, the gathering together of friends and family and though I know it can be a tough time for those who are facing loss, sickness and loneliness, it is also a time to remember that it's not the gifts beneath the tree that have the most meaning but rather who is around the tree.

This year, with all the warmth (in my heart) that comes along with this beautiful season came a renewed desire within me to tackle all things Christmas: decorations, lights, baking. Baking? Did someone say baking?

For those who know me well, the kitchen is my least favourite place to be, but this year it seemed the kitchen was calling me. Or perhaps I was (yet again) procrastinating at getting the farm books brought up to date.

Generally my Christmas preparations include buying boxed goodies and purchasing trays of baking from local fundraisers and that has always served me well but with anticipation and excitement, I made a list of what I could bake and I was determined there was a new hid-



den me just waiting to emerge—I could become a baker like no other.

And so began my '12 Days of Christmas' Baking Challenge. Day 1 – sugar cookies. How difficult could it be? Room-temperature butter did it say? How long does refrigerated butter take to become room-temperature anyway? And what's with the refrigerating the dough part? The dough was so hard when I took it out of the fridge, I ended up microwaving it before I could roll it out. I shook my head.

Day 2 – Making the icing for the sugar cookies was a relative breeze; decorating them not so much. I mean, really, how difficult can it be? The icing was a bit too firm at first, then too runny and the icing decorator thing-a-ma-doey was really awkward to use and I made a royal mess to say the least. Finally, I spread some icing on the cookies with a butter knife, added some sprinkles and fed them to the grands after school. And since that day, the grandskids have asked for more cookies at least four times and when I suggest raisin drop cookies, their response is always, "Nope, we want sugar cutout cookies!"

Day 3 was homemade ice cream and day 4 was butter tart making, neither of which resulted in a good ending. In fact, the word 'fiasco' comes to mind. I came to the conclusion there is a reason I was never meant to spend time in the kitchen, despite my high hopes. Tell me to build the walls for a new bedroom basement and I'm on it. Ask me to design a poster or write an article for the paper and I am your gal. Paint the interior of my house? Yup, on it! Drive a combine? No problem! Bake something? Yeah, not so much. I most definitely lived up to becoming a baker like no other; just in a whole different sense than what I envisioned.

Of course, during this time of year, there are no com-

bines to drive and no parts-runs to make but the farm is never far from our minds as we plan our fertilizer and chemical needs at this time of year and work on those never-ending farm books.

When it's cold and wintery and we are buried under a bunch of snow, even the thought of harvesting brings warm, fuzzy feelings and great memories of those tailgate meals and long nights out in the field under the stars. Somehow the stress of that particular season of our life is forgotten as we deal with the never-ending shoveling of snow and the pain-in-the-butt chore of dressing in layers every time we walk out the door.

When the grandkids were over a few days ago, one of the twins helped carry wrapped presents from my kitchen table to their resting place downstairs to put under the tree, wondering out loud what was in the packages with his name on. I told him one was a coupon from me for cooking lessons that I would teach after Christmas. "How would you like that?" I asked. His answer was priceless: "You????"

Twin #2 had a reprieve from helping me do some Christmas prep due to a hockey injury that saw him in emerg a time or two following the mishap on ice. The result meant a cast and crutches and some disappointment on his part of not being able to play the game he so enjoys. We wondered how this kid, always so active and who practically lives outdoors year-round, was going to adapt. After watching him bowl on his knees and ride his snowmobile on his knees, I figure I shouldn't have been so worried—he's adapting quite well!

Whenever I start decorating for Christmas, my mind inevitably goes back to my childhood years and especially all that my parents did to make Christmas time extra special. From the tree that we cut ourselves from the forest surrounding our Ontario home, to the homemade decorations our mom made from pieces of foam and foil to the yummy treats mom would bake. Christmas time was a special time despite the fact that we lived far from our Saskatchewan-based family.

And so, at this time of year, here's hoping you have been able to step back from the busy-ness of Christmas and look at all that it really means. And I hope you will or have been able to enjoy the family gatherings, getting together with your friends, reading the Christmas story together, those special foods your family enjoys (stuffed mushrooms and sorry-looking but tasty sugar cutout cookies here we come), playing board games or tobogganing with the kids.

Whatever it is that comes your way, may it be bright and merry all season long! Until next year...

VIEWPOINT LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Liberals must cancel their fertilizer reduction target

Dear Editor:

Few people work harder than Canadian farmers. Every day, agricultural producers across our county are busy growing premium food for all of us to enjoy and share with the world. Even as inflation drives costs higher than ever, our farmers are doing everything they can to keep costs low so Canadians can continue to enjoy nutritious, sustainable, home-grown products.

Our agriculture sectors have been making consistent strides in environmental sustainability long before Liberal public policy implementation and failures. We cannot let them force reduction plans on farmers in the future, harming our already exhausted industry. The greenhouse gas emissions in Canada due to agriculture are just 8% of Canada's total GHG emissions, which is less than 2% of total global GHG emissions. By contrast, the global average of emissions from agriculture is 26%, demonstrating the incredible success and dedication of Canadian farmers to environmental preservation.

Instead of giving these hardworking Canadians their thanks, the Liberal government is demonizing farmers and attacking one of their primary tools—fertilizer.

The Trudeau Liberals recently outlined their plan to reduce Canada's fertilizer emissions by 30% by 2030. Unfortunately, this costly, unscientific scheme couldn't come at a worse time for Canadian agriculture or consumers.

Farmers are still reeling from the impacts the war in Ukraine has had on fertilizer supply, and according to financial experts, the Liberals' target could lead to \$48 billion in losses. To top it off, farmers are still stuck with the carbon tax which has jacked up the cost of doing business and made operating a farm more difficult.

The reality is that Canadian farmers are already outperforming the entire world on sustainability.

Our producers have made incredible strides in delivering the food Canadians need, while protecting the environment. In fact, Canadian farmers are already up to 70% more efficient in fertilizer use than other countries.

Rather than praising Canadian farmers as the global standard, the Liberals are insulting producers with activist policies which not only harm economic sustainability, but also their world-leading environmental stewardship.

Arbitrary restrictions on fertilizer will lead to greater challenges for farmers, higher prices for Canadians, and less of our high-quality food being shared with the world. Food prices have increased more than 10% over last year, and these avoidable increases will hurt regular Canadians who are already struggling to make ends meet.

Food security is a global priority and Canada plays a substantial role in feeding the world as we export 80% of what we produce. The Liberal government's fertilizer and carbon tax policies will impact Canada's ability to export nutritious and affordable food to destinations in the world that desperately need our support.

I encourage everyone to sign e-Petition 4133, sponsored by John Barlow, Conservative Shadow Minister for Agriculture, Agri-food, and Food Security. It was brought forward by a PEI farmer calling on the Liberal government to abandon their aggressive emissions target and protect our industry from the threat of the implementation of a mandatory fertilizer reduction. I ask you to please sign this petition and encourage those around you to as well. This policy impacts every single one of us, particularly our hardworking farmers, our agri-food sector and families struggling with the cost of living. The Liberals must stop punishing farmers and immediately cancel their ridiculous fertilizer reduction target.

Cathy Wagantall
MP Yorkton-Melville



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Farm equipment market adjusting to economic environment

Strong demand for farm equipment is expected to continue in 2023, as the market weathers rising interest rates and a weakening Canadian dollar, according to Farm Credit Canada's (FCC) farm equipment market outlook.

"Producers will benefit from strategic planning as inventory levels for farm equipment remain below pre-pandemic levels, something we expect could continue through 2024," said J.P. Gervais, FCC's chief economist, noting tractor inventory levels are down 42 per cent and combines are down 47 per cent from the five-year average. "This equipment demand is supported by strong farm cash receipts, while inventory is hampered by the supply chain disruptions we saw over the past two years."

The used equipment market has seen increased demand because of the pandemic-related shutdowns. With limited availability of new equipment and parts, producers were adapting by having additional used equipment available for parts if needed.

Equipment manufacturers are expected to increase production of new equipment due to the changing economic environment providing the opportunity for inflationary pressures in the used equipment market to moderate.



As for new equipment, the Canadian dollar has a direct impact on equipment prices.

"Most new tractors and combines sold in Canada are manufactured south of the border, so an expected depreciation of the loonie through 2023 should lead to price increases on farm machinery," Gervais explained. "This is also the result of inflationary pressures in the supply chain that occurred in the last half of 2022."

While the depreciating loonie makes new tractors and combines more expensive, producers can take some solace in the fact that a depreciating loonie also has a positive effect on farm commodities destined for export.

Strong commodity prices will continue to support the demand for farm equipment, offsetting the impact of higher interest rates and a lower Canadian dollar. The used equipment market is expected to stay robust for most of 2023 and into 2024.

Farm equipment sales for 2023 are projected higher for high horse-powered (HP) tractors, combines, and implement sales driven by strong crop receipts:

- 100+ HP tractor sales to rise 8.7 per cent
- 4WD tractor sales to rise 13.9 per cent
- Combine sales to rise 19.3 per cent
- Canadian agricultural implement manufacturing to rise 32.2 per cent

However, small HP tractor sales, which are largely driven by the health of the Canadian economy, are expected to slow in 2023:

- Less than 40 HP tractor sales to decline 0.4 per cent
- 40 - 100 HP tractor sales to rise 0.4 per cent

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APAS passes resolution for livestock exemption from ELD mandate

Continued from front

"We've always been reactive, there's a problem, there's a flood, there's a drought, there's bugs or whatever, and we react to it.

"Now, we're going forward in a positive attitude. Instead of just asking all the time, we're saying, this is what we need to do to bring the industry forward. We're presenting the problem and the solution instead of just presenting a problem all of the time."

Exemption from ELD mandate

Green spoke about the resolution APAS approved for having livestock producers being exempted from the ELDs mandate.

"In the U.S., they made an exemption for livestock haulers because it's such a perishable item," he said.

"It's really detrimental to the eastern part of the province and the northern part of the province of Saskatchewan, or in western Manitoba because a lot of the feed-lot industry was built in southern Alberta."

"We can end up having cattle coming out of Virden, Manitoba going to a feed-lot alley and being an hour away from a destination, then having to stop for eight hours with the livestock on a trailer when they are only an hour away from their destination.

"It's not the fault of the truck drivers or the producers, it's just the way the industry was built. The biggest concern is the detriment to the livestock, you've added eight hours to that trip for that livestock, when there's really no need for it.

"We get hogs coming out of Alberta to go to Brandon to kill, and a lot of those trucks take cattle back to Alberta. Well now that two-day trip is going to turn into a four-day trip for that truck driver, so how much income has he lost by not being able to make two of those trips that week and now he's only going to be able to make one."

Currently under the Government of Canada rules, commercial vehicle drivers hours of service regulations limit drivers to 13 hours of consecutive driving time in a 16 hour work shift, and then a minimum of 8 consecutive

hours of off-duty status.

In Canada, a commercial truck driver must stop driving after:

- 3 hours of driving time from the end of the most recent period of 8 consecutive off-duty hours
- 14 hours of on-duty time from the end of the most recent 8 consecutive off-duty hours
- 70 hours over 7 consecutive days, or 120 hours over 14 consecutive days

With APAS passing the resolution for livestock producers to be exempted from ELDs, Green said the group will now work towards lobbying the federal government for the exemption.

"We're not asking for the truck drivers to drive 20 hours, a lot of the time drivers are still going to only be driving 13 hours, but there's certain cases where you having loading issues or something happens because not everything goes right all the time," said Green.

"It's not like it's going to be every single trip, there's just going to be certain cases where exemptions have to be made to make that trip without a detriment to livestock."

Resolution for livestock insurance

Another resolution that was passed at their annual meeting was APAS's resolution for proposing an insurance for livestock production to the federal government for producers.

"Right now in Canada, I can't insure my cow for production, but I can insure my calf price in the fall," said Green.

"The livestock producer pays 100 per cent of the premium. In crop insurance when I go to town and I insure an acre for wheat, I'm insuring the price and production for that acre of wheat.

"I can say I'm going to grow 60 bushels acre of wheat and get insured but, I can't do that with my cow and ensure that I'm going to have a calf in the fall.

"It puts the livestock producer at a disadvantage for insurance which creates more of a liability. Banks look at you as a higher risk than a grain farmer because you

don't have that backing of insurance.

"The other thing with livestock price insurance is that the cattle producer pays 100 per cent of the premium, but in grain they only pay for 40 per cent of the premium and then the provincial and federal government kick in that 60 per cent.

"It's a subsidized insurance program for grain producers, where as for livestock producers, we pay 100 per cent of the premium. It's a very expensive insurance."

With the resolution now approved, APAS representatives will begin to move forward to present it to the federal government.

"I'm on the livestock committee with APAS. What we'll look into is developing some type of program with industry partners and then presenting it to the government," said Green.

"That way it's producer-driven, more so than going to the government with our hand out and saying 'we want an insurance program' and then letting them develop it. Let's go with a solution to the government and say, look we've come up with this, have a look at it and see what you think. That, we feel this will work for producers, and ask do they feel they can support this program."

Upcoming meeting for all producers

The final resolution Green proposed was to have a meeting with all livestock producers across the province, to come together and get on the same page about issues they are facing.

He said he is hoping to have the meeting in the new year.

"We want to have a livestock summit to have everyone in the room to get a feel and understanding of the whole livestock industry in Saskatchewan."

Green said he is happy with the direction APAS is taking with having one voice speak on behalf of the majority.

"I really like the direction APAS is going and I think it's really good for producers to have one voice in the industry," he said.

"We can have a voice with the government that represents the whole industry of wheat growers, canola growers, bison growers, chicken farmers, honey producers. We can have everyone going to the government with our issues, but one voice for agriculture would be a lot stronger than 50 groups going to the government.

"If we can get everyone's support in APAS, I think we can have a stronger voice in agriculture."



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Province introduces The Saskatchewan Firearms Act to protect law-abiding firearms owners

On December 1, the government introduced The Saskatchewan Firearms Act to protect the rights of lawful firearms owners.

"This Act will help address concerns of responsible firearms owners and enhance public safety across Saskatchewan," Corrections, Policing and Public Safety Minister Christine Tell said. "We take public safety seriously and support initiatives that reduce the criminal use of firearms, while preventing gang violence and stopping illegal guns from entering our province."

The Act will:

- With respect to recent changes by the federal government that impact lawful firearms owners:
 - establish licensing requirements for businesses or individuals involved in firearms expropriation;
 - require and oversee fair compensation for any firearms being seized; and

- require forensic and ballistic testing of seized firearms.

- Establish a provincial firearms regulatory system that will promote the safe and responsible use of firearms.

This legislation will be primarily administered by the Saskatchewan Firearms Office (SFO). The Office will also take on an expanded role in prosecuting non-violent regulatory firearms offenses.

"Since inception, the Saskatchewan Firearms Office has successfully handled public safety files and continues to work closely with police to ensure that gun safety laws are properly enforced," Chief Firearms Officer Robert Freberg said. "The enhanced mandate this legislation provides will expand our office's ability to promote responsible firearms use and improve community safety."

The government has dedicated approximately \$3.2 million this fiscal year to begin development of several

firearms initiatives, including:

- establishing a Saskatchewan Firearms Ballistics Lab to support police services and provide timely access to Saskatchewan-based ballistics and firearms expertise;
- establishing a Firearms Compensation Committee to determine the fair market value of any firearms, ammunition and related accessories being expropriated by the federal government;
- enhancing training and education regarding safe storage and firearms licensing; and,
- launching a made-in-Saskatchewan marketing campaign to promote firearm safety and best practices.

Additional firearms officers are being employed with the SFO in a continued effort to support the law-abiding firearms community, while also investigating incidents associated with mental health, domestic violence and illegal activities involving firearms.



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2022 economic year in review

Continued from page C2

May

It was sinking in Canada-wide that our fears were gaining life. The month's inflation rate was 7.7%, the highest in nearly four decades.

But it didn't stop there: More global supply shocks raised food prices. The Russia-Ukraine war was pushing up prices. With forecasts of tighter stocks-to-use ratios for major commodities, Indonesia and India limited or banned exports of key agri-food commodities to secure their domestic supplies. Commodity prices soared. Markets made nervous by tight stocks meant such volatility would continue.

June

At home, the BoC was making decisions few had foreseen. Hiking the rate by 0.5% for the second consecutive month (to 1.5%), they noted more hikes would be needed at the upcoming July 13 meeting. The year-ending OIR was expected to be 3.00% or slightly higher.

Growth in production costs was at the heart of a move by the Canadian Dairy Commission, which announced an out-of-schedule 2.5% increase in the target for the farm-gate milk price. Even with the announcement, costs were forecasted to outpace farm-gate prices.

Amid that market volatility, another crop cycle was underway. Spring seeding was all but finished in the East, where fields were reported to be in good shape. Various parts of the Prairies suffered from too much moisture, where planting progress lagged the 5-year average considerably. There was some good news though: fertilizer prices were softening as urea futures were down 43% in mid-June compared to the end of March and were expected to decline further throughout the summer.

July

Russia and Ukraine struck a deal to allow shipments to leave Ukraine ports. It appeared that crop prices had peaked as uncertainty faded about the geopolitical conflict and more news of the 2022-23 marketing year (MY) crops was available. With Canadian seeding finished, StatsCan estimated fewer canola and soybean acres in favour of wheat, corn, and oats.

The long arm of COVID was receding in some livestock markets. Canada's poultry producers recorded increased production due to three factors: a recovery from the COVID-led demand slowdown; chicken was a favourable purchase point relative to other meats; and a slowdown in imports from the U.S.

Q2 GDP numbers showed that the Canadian economy grew at an annualized rate of 3.3%, higher than Q1 (3.1%). Nonetheless, Canadian retail sales were down 2.5% from June to July, mostly driven by lower gasoline sales. Despite this slowdown in retail sales, the BoC delivered a super-sized rate increase of 100 bps.

August

New OECD projections to 2031-32 supported suspicions that crop prices had peaked in the 2021-22 MY. They were expected to stabilize within the 2022-23 MY, although at higher levels than before the pandemic. While increased costs of production would keep them elevated, they were able to retreat from the highs of 2021-22, pressured lower by slightly improving stocks-to-use ratios and the resolution of some of the worst logistics bottlenecks that arose during COVID.

With the latest CPI data showing inflation at 7.6% YoY

in July, it had become clear that inflation was going to be that unwelcome guest who wouldn't leave. Prices were expected to continue increasing, although at a slower pace than in the last 12 months.

September

Hurricane Fiona landed on the east coast on September 24. The storm was the strongest hurricane and one of the wettest ever recorded in Canada. Massive damage was sustained across sectors, including dairy, potatoes, corn, greenhouses and fisheries.

Statistics Canada production estimates showed that the corn crop would be the largest in history. That boded well for Eastern Canadian producers, given that recent global production estimates and news involving Russia were bullish. France's drought-reduced 32-year low in corn production was worsened by newly downward-revised expectations for Ukraine's corn production. The USDA projected overall declines in the EU's production of wheat and corn as well. And Russian natural gas exports were so limited to Europe that by mid-month, 70% of European nitrogen fertilizer plants were completely closed. Headlines suggested Russia's agreement with Ukraine (to export grain through the Black Sea) was in jeopardy.

Avian influenza re-emerged in Eastern Canada with the first case in four months. It was worse in the West. The disease had impacted 1.1 million birds in Alberta alone by September 27. More than 2.5 million birds had been disposed of across Canada.

October

Transportation challenges were top-of-mind in Canada and south of the border as the possibility of a U.S. rail strike loomed and water levels fell in the Mississippi River - where 92% of U.S. ag exports pass. With transport costs soaring, Canadian producers were facing a dual-edged sword. The forecast of little rainfall for the river basin could mean a boost in Canadian crop exports, but input prices for Canadian farms and businesses could increase if the slowdowns weren't resolved.

The BoC hiked the overnight rate by 50 bps, but in anticipation of a 75 bps increase in the U.S. federal funds rate, the Canadian dollar continued to fall against the greenback. By October, it had lost 10% against the USD on the year, making U.S. imports increasingly more expensive.

November

The year was perhaps best characterized as one of extreme price volatility, and it was back in the news. On October 29, Russia suspended the grain movement deal with Ukraine, resulting in swift commodity price increases. However, within several days, Russia re-entered the deal, and futures dropped. On November 17, the deal was extended for four months.

The federal government unveiled the details of a \$1.7 billion package to compensate the supply-managed sectors resulting from the impacts of the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA), with payments starting in early 2024.

December

Price volatility in agricultural commodities has calmed as winter has approached. That means prices could be more stable through to spring. At home, there was good news for farm revenues. Crop receipts were up 7.3% in the first nine months of this year relative to 2021. And with a much better 2022 crop in the Prairies, receipts will climb much higher in Q4. Although livestock receipts increased 11.6% over the first nine months, the positive trend in gross income was muted by the large input cost increases recorded throughout the year. The BoC lifted its overnight rate to 4.25%, but we think borrowing costs overall are about to plateau for most of 2023 and that overall farm input inflation should moderate considerably.

This is a reminder that we'll be taking a break from bringing you insights until the week of January 10, when we'll outline the top charts you should monitor in 2023.

From all of us at FCC Economics, we wish you the best of the season and a Happy New Year!



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FCC contributes \$1.5 million to 85 community projects across Canada

Moosomin Armoury to receive \$20,000 for new boiler system

Farm Credit Canada (FCC) is giving \$1.5 million through its FCC AgriSpirit Fund to 85 community groups across Canada to support rural capital projects. Included in the donations is \$20,000 for a new energy efficient boiler system at the Moosomin Armoury.

"At FCC, we applaud all Canadian non-profit groups that invest time and energy to support their fellow citizens," said Shannon Weatherall, FCC senior vice-president of Prairie operations. "Through the AgriSpirit Fund, FCC supports causes that contribute to a sense of community and help improve the quality of life for rural residents. It's one of the ways FCC gives back to the communities where our customers and employees live and work."

This year, the FCC AgriSpirit Fund awarded between \$5,000 and \$25,000 for various community improvement initiatives that enrich the lives of residents in cities, towns or Indigenous communities with fewer than 150,000 people.

Organization	City	Amount	Project
Fort Pelly-Livingstone Museum	Pelly	\$10,000	Upgrade the museum furnaces.
Mistawasis Nehiyawak	Leask	\$25,000	Create a community garden and food forest to provide fresh produce to the community.
R.M. of Sasman No.336 - Margo Community Recreation Board	Margo	\$12,000	Upgrade the community centre's washroom facilities.
Rural Municipality of Britannia No. 502 - Britannia United Services Memorial Hall	Lloydminster	\$20,000	Upgrade the roof and insulation of the community hall.
Salvation Army Prairie Division	Regina	\$20,000	Purchase a new vehicle to support the needs of the Salvation Army Moose Jaw.
Society for the Preservation of the Moosomin Armoury Inc.	Moosomin	\$20,000	Install a new energy efficient boiler system in the community centre.
Town of Gull Lake	Gull Lake	\$15,000	Install a new furnace and windows in the community hall.
Town of Osler	Osler	\$10,000	Install LED lighting in the outdoor arena.
Town of Outlook - Outlook Community Garden Inc.	Outlook	\$20,000	Plant fruit trees and relocate the garden to a larger land space at the community garden.
Village of Abbey	Abbey	\$15,000	Purchase and install new windows in the community centre.
Village of Hodgenville - Hodgenville Community Centre	Hodgenville	\$5,000	Upgrade the community centre's lighting to LED lighting.

In Saskatchewan, the following projects are receiving funding

Over the past 19 years, the FCC AgriSpirit Fund has supported 1,529 projects, an investment of \$19.5 million.

The next application period opens April 1, 2023. Registered charities, municipalities, First Nations and non-profit organizations interested in funding can visit www.fccagrispiritfund.ca for eligibility requirements, to apply online and view past projects.

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APAS wraps up general meeting

The Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan (APAS) held its General Meeting in Saskatoon December 8-9. Some of the key messages for the meeting included governance renewal, reinvigorated partnerships especially with the universities and research centres, and the future of the livestock industry.

"Good governance is the foundation for every organization. APAS needs to look at and incorporate best practices in our governance in order to ensure sustainability, success, and effectiveness as we move forward," APAS President Ian Boxall said.

"It's critically important for our organization as we focus on expanding our membership to have more transparency, accountability, participation and engagement in everything we do."

Boxall also stresses APAS remains the only farm organization in Saskatchewan that is 100 per cent dedicated to farm and ranch family success.

"We are completely funded by farmers. This ensures that our focus is always on farm and ranch success."

Overall, APAS members passed 19 resolutions at the General Meeting. Some of the highlights coming out of the meeting include APAS examining what is driving rising fertilizer, fuel, and chemical inputs, APAS' examination and support the development of a cow/calf production insurance program, and an investigation into the proposed fertilizer emission reduction strategy from the federal government and investigate the methodological and scientific foundation of this initiative.

"Resolutions are the most important work APAS conducts throughout the year," Boxall said. "Throughout District Meetings, Committee Meetings, and several consultations and conver-

sations we have throughout the year, we develop these resolutions to take agricultural issues from the grassroots and put them in front of policy makers to make positive change in Saskatchewan and in Canada."

A key focus going into 2023 will be engaging universities and research centres to enhance APAS' capacity to address farm-gate problems with innovative Saskatchewan-based solutions.

"Reinvigorating our partnerships with our universities will enhance our ability to create policy solutions for current and future farm issues that our members are bringing forward," Boxall noted.

One of the current issues is the future of Saskatchewan's livestock in-

dustry. This was a notable reoccurring issue raised by members across the province during the meeting.

"The livestock industry is experiencing a heard decline over the past number of years. As this happens, a lot of perennial forage and grasslands are being converted to cropland. This will have a negative environmental impact as well as reduce the market for feed grains," emphasized Boxall.

"Our members are calling for a livestock summit that brings together various groups to discuss and identify solutions that will help ensure success for livestock producers," said

Boxall.

As part of the meeting, Board elections occurred, and the 2023 Board Executive were elected. Ian Boxall remains President of APAS for another term, while Bill Prybylski will remain a Vice-President. Bev Pario has been elected by the board as Vice-President.

"It's an honour to be elected to the Executive by my peers on the Board," Pario said. "I am excited to work on behalf of Saskatchewan farmers to help resolve farm issues."

Kevin Gilbert (RM of Arlington #79) and Devon Walker (RM of Wilton #472) became new members of the board.

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Mission to Vietnam explores new trade opportunities

Exports to Vietnam have increased 50 per cent in 2022

Trade and Export Development Minister Jeremy Harrison was in Vietnam recently to discuss trade and additional economic partnerships.

"Our goal is to strengthen our ties with Vietnam, and showcase the benefits of our agriculture commodities, natural resources, and innovation," Harrison said. "An example of Saskatchewan's commitment to strengthening those ties is our recently opened trade and investment office in Ho Chi Minh City. As we move forward we are always seeking to diversify our exports into markets outside of China."

The mission emphasized how Saskatchewan-sourced agricultural products and potash can enhance food security. The province is already Vietnam's largest supplier of dry peas, making up 47 per cent of all imports of the product to the nation.

The province opened a trade and investment office in Vietnam in February of 2022, which is already increasing provincial exports. Year-to-date exports from Saskatchewan to Vietnam are up by 50 per cent in 2022, to \$91.7 million. Much of that increase is being driven by increased exports of potash, wood pulp, canola oil, lentils and weighing machinery. There were discussions on potential labour market partnerships.

Canada and Vietnam are both part of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership, a free trade agreement between nine countries in the Asia-Pacific region. This free trade agreement eliminates tariffs and reduces trade barriers, meaning decreased costs of the things we make together, allowing participants to be more competitive on the world stage.

There is also interest in working together on green energy. Carbon capture, utilization and storage technologies, small modular reactor research and development, sustainable mining and rare earth elements have all been noted as areas where Saskatchewan and Vietnam can collaborate.

"Saskatchewan has the resources and technology that our growing world needs," Harrison said.

The mission also showcased Saskatchewan as a location for attracting talent and international students. Saskatchewan post-secondary institutions have 19 agreements with their counterparts in Vietnam, and the province was host to 248 international students from the country, approximately two per cent of all international students in the province.

Saskatchewan's delegation will depart for Vietnam on December 8 and returned on December 16.

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