

JANUARY 2025



USask research fields near campus in Saskatoon.

More funding for crop reasearch

Twenty-three crop and cropland-focused research projects at the University of Saskatchewan (USask) have received \$4.18 million in support from the provincial government through the Agriculture Development Fund (ADF).

The ADF is supported through the Sustainable Canadian Agriculture Partnership (CAP), an investment of \$3.5 billion over five years from federal, provincial and territorial governments with the goal of supporting the agri-food and agri-product sectors across Canada. The Sustainable CAP includes \$1 billion in federal programs and activities and a \$2.5 billion commitment for programs designed by provinces and territories that is cost-shared 60 per cent by the federal government and 40 per cent by provincial/territorial governments.

"Agricultural research at USask has long been a pillar of our success and our standing in Saskatchewan and around the world," said Dr. Baljit Singh (PhD), USask vice-president, research. "This support from the government and our industry partners in furthering this type of research and innovation is a vote of confidence for USask being what Saskatchewan and the world needs in the agricultural sector."

A total of 53 crop projects received funding from the 2025 ADF. USask's 23 projects, with \$4.18 million in total funding, are the most of any organization to receive support from the ADF. Projects funded range from soil science research to health benefits of plant proteins to exploring different varieties of wheat and pea crops.

"ADF is an essential partner for the College of Agriculture and Bioresources, in terms of our ability to carry out high-impact research that supports the producers of Saskatchewan," said Dr. Angela Bedard-Haughn (PhD), dean of USask's College of Agriculture and Bioresources, and a professor in the Department of Soil Sciences. "Whether we're looking at soil, plants, animals, all the way through the value chain, ADF is key."

ADF projects can also receive funding through industry partners. Select USask projects received additional support from valuable industry partners in the agricultural and agri-food industries including Alberta Grains, Manitoba Crop Alliance, Saskatchewan Pulse Growers, Western Grains Research Foundation, Saskatchewan Oilseeds Development Commission and the Saskatchewan Wheat Development Commission.

Crop ADF 2025 recipients at USask

The following University of Saskatchewan (USask) crop research projects received funding from the 2025 Agriculture Development Fund:

- Haixia Zhang (PhD), College of Agriculture and Bioresources – Improving haskap quality and marketability by examining factors related to fruit shelf life, bioactivity and harvest span – \$260,000
- Jeff Schoenau (PhD), College of Agriculture and Bioresources – Revealing Nutrient Uptake and Biomass Development Patterns in Chickpea Cultivars – \$32,275 – Co-funded by Saskatchewan Pulse Growers
- Lingling Jin (PhD), College of Arts and Science – GreenSkEye: a software system for automated and direct monitoring and analyzing continuous changes of greenhouse crops – \$263,500
- Sabine Banniza (PhD), College of Agriculture and Bioresources – Digging deeper into chickpea root rot issues – \$134,989 – Co-funded by Saskatchewan Pulse Growers and Western Grains Research Foundation

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Farm transition workshop coming to Canada's Farm Show in March

Succession expert presents Bridging the Gap

BY RYAN KIEDROWSKI
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Nick Oakley, Business Development Lead with Farm Management Canada, will be hosting a farm transition workshop at Canada's Farm Show in Regina on March 17.

Agricultural producers today often live and work on the same land for four generations before they settled. It's a family business often carrying one name for many decades, yet according to statistics, only 12 per cent of Canadian farmers have a transition plan. Even more staggering is that only a further 13 per cent are working on that plan.

"I wish there was one simple answer or a template—fill this in and here's your transition plan, and off you go," says Oakley. "The tricky thing is that every farm situation is unique and different based on different components, and that could be based on ownership structure, based on management and roles and responsibilities, based on family and who's involved in the farm, and how many potential siblings there are, and if they're on the farm or off the farm—there's so many different factors that are at play."

Oakley will be coming to Regina on March 17 as Farm Management Canada brings an interactive farm succession workshop called Bridging the Gap to the Queensbury Convention Centre. The day-long workshop will feature experts in accounting, finance, and communication that promotes farm families to work together on a plan for 'what happens next.'

"If you're not properly preparing the next generation to transition into these roles, you're doing them a disservice, and you're doing a disservice to the generations that came before you," Oakley said. "It's such an important topic, we're so glad that we can come to Regina to do that."

Bridging the Gap is made possible through partnerships with MNP, AFSC, FCC, Ritchie Bros., and RBC.

"Just to see groups come together for the good of the industry, for the education of the producer is such a wonderful space to be in," Oakley said. "They see the incredible value in a workshop like this, and to come to the table just to support farmers without looking for a signature on a new loan, or to become a client or whatnot. We believe that if we all contribute to the industry, then farmers are going to be more well informed. Farm family situations and farm transitions are going to be done a lot smoother and a lot easier, and it's going to make for a more suc-



Nick Oakley, Business Development Lead with Farm Management Canada, will be hosting a farm transition workshop at Canada's Farm Show in Regina on March 17.

cessful industry where everybody then will benefit from that."

Don't wait

The important piece the Oakley stressed about having a transition plan is that it be a living, breathing document that can be addressed, looked at, and updated as life situations change.

"It's something that changes based on additions or subtractions to families or farm businesses and something that I think the biggest thing that we're trying to push across to people is that you can't get started planning your farm transition too early, but you definitely can start

planning it too late," he said. "One of the most important things about farm transitions that's definitely different from most other business transitions is that the farm is so closely linked to the family, and to ensure and preserve harmony in the farm family, it's really important to be out front of these farm transitions, to be as transparent as you can."

Communication of what those desires look like in a transition scenario is crucial, ensuring that everyone at least understands what is happening.

"Maybe there are some people who aren't especially happy with how this is going or how this other thing is happening," Oakley said. "But if they're understanding what's in the plan, I think that's the best way to at least ensure that down the road, that you can still get together for Thanksgiving dinners, that Christmases aren't awkward because there's a big elephant in the room, that people know what's happening, and can plan their lives around what that might look like."

Oakley pointed to one example of a family where one member didn't properly file their will, with the important document only existing on a computer.

"That computer ended up getting run over in the driveway because the one son didn't like what was on it," Oakley recalled. "He wasn't included and he just destroyed it."

The best case scenario in his experience is to have the family gather and go over a transition plan and have those sometimes difficult conversations.

"It can go wrong in many different ways, but it's also quite possible, really likely, that it can go really well and really right by taking the appropriate steps, by getting extra help and expertise from professionals when needed, and doing it properly," Oakley said.

The workshop concludes with a 45-minute question and answer session featuring every presenter from the workshop, allowing the opportunity for different views on the same topic.

"You pose a question to them, and you get three or four of them collaborating on answers, so you get a perspective of a couple different lenders," Oakley said. "You get a perspective of a farm transition advisor, you get a perspective from a tax advisor, and it's such an incredibly valuable time to hear from all of them together on your questions."

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USask explores innovative soil carbon mapping research

When it comes to crop production, soil is vital for plant health, nutrient supply and water retention. Today, two soil science projects dedicated to the future of mapping carbon levels in Saskatchewan soil have received support from a major government fund, allowing researchers to create a better roadmap of soil health for the province's producers.

BY MATT OLSON

Led by Dr. Angela Bedard-Haughn (PhD), the dean of the University of Saskatchewan (USask) College of Agriculture and Bioresources, these projects—supported by the Government of Saskatchewan-administered 2025 Agriculture Development Fund (ADF)—will help Saskatchewan producers better understand and predict the carbon distribution in soil.

"Soil carbon is a really essential component of what we measure in soil, because it's an important indicator of soil health and the soil organic matter itself serves as both a source of nutrients as well as a sponge that allows soil to hold on to both water and nutrients," Bedard-Haughn said.

Bedard-Haughn notes that it is important to have detailed information on current and potential future soil carbon levels so producers can make deliberate decisions on soil health, crop production and management practices in their fields.

"It's important for us to understand where we are right now so we know how our land management practices affect soil organic matter over time," she said. "We need a baseline measurement. It's similar to checking your blood pressure—we have to track it over time. Taking a one-off measurement isn't going to be enough."

The first of the projects, titled "Mapping Soil Carbon Sequestration in Saskatchewan Cropland," will use a combi-



Photo: Kira Glascock

Dr. Angela Bedard-Haughn (PhD), the dean of the University of Saskatchewan (USask) College of Agriculture and Bioresources.

nation of in-the-field, remote sensing and predictive mapping techniques to evaluate carbon levels in the soil. The goals of the project are threefold: to measure and map the levels of carbon currently in the soil; gauge the effects of both land use and climate on the carbon levels in soil; and create predictive models for how carbon levels in soil might change in the

future.

To create as fulsome a carbon map as possible, Bedard-Haughn said she and her research team would be using samples collected from Saskatchewan fields in conjunction with machine learning algorithms to build models with as much data as possible. The project received \$290,400 from the ADF and industry sup-

port from the Saskatchewan Oilseeds Development Commission and the Saskatchewan Wheat Development Commission.

Information from the first project will contribute to a second project titled "A Sustainable Future for the Saskatchewan Soil Information System (SKSIS)." This project will add more data to a digital platform with information about soil health and composition in fields around the province, known as the SKSIS (sksis.ca).

Originally built as a digital repository for soil records collected in the latter part of the 20th century, Bedard-Haughn said the SKSIS has had substantial pickup by producers and agronomists. By adding more pertinent data to the publicly available system, USask researchers can lead the development of another tool for Saskatchewan's ever-growing and globally influential agricultural industry.

Bedard-Haughn lauded the support of the ADF and noted that this carbon mapping project builds off previous soil carbon work funded by the ADF, helping to create a comprehensive carbon map and predictive model for all agricultural land in Saskatchewan.

"This funding is an important recognition of the importance of soil health for the future of agriculture in this province," she said.



It was definitely the horses that inspired me to want to take over and be more involved with the farm and the breeding program that my dad, grandfather, and great-grandfather worked on."



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Crop reporters wanted for upcoming growing season

BY RYAN KIEDROWSKI
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

In this province, conversations about the weather aren't just an excuse for small talk, it's a downright crucial topic for many people's livelihoods across Saskatchewan. That's why the provincial Ministry of Agriculture is looking for more volunteer crop reporters this season—it's a small way to make a large impact.

"We send out a survey each week during the growing season, between April and October," explained Lyce Masich, a Crop Extension Specialist with the Ministry of Agriculture. "The survey only takes about five minutes to do, and reporters only have to answer the questions that they have an answer for. So we ask both crop and livestock related questions. The only requirement we have is to give us the rainfall data that you collected from the week."

Currently, there are 220 crop reporters across the province, but 131 rural municipalities (44 per cent) are without someone to represent their area.

"We really promoted the crop report at Agronomy Research Update, which is a conference we hosted in December, and then at Crop Production Show," Masich said. "Since then, I've had a few more people email me, interested in being a crop reporter."

According to a Nov. 28, 2024 map of current crop reporters, many RMs in the southeast are in need of volunteers, including Moosomin, Hazelwood, Wawken, Walpole, Maryfield, Moose Mountain, Brock, Willowdale, Spy Hill, Montmartre, Wellington, Grayson, and McLeod.

"Any time is a good time to sign up to be a crop reporter," Masich said. "But now is a great time because it's slower in the ag industry right now. Farmers, agronomists, anyone interested in being a reporter, they can sign up. We can get them a rain gauge and survey booklet in good time."

Information gathered from volunteer crop reporters is utilized every week during the growing season through the provincial crop report, detailing rainfall, topsoil moisture conditions, seeding and harvest progress, crop development and damage, livestock feed supplies, and pasture conditions.

"We would like reporters more in the south, especially in the RMs along the U.S. border," Masich said. "We don't have a ton of reporters down there, and then in central areas, there's a couple pockets that don't have reporters."

Given how conditions can change quickly within a small area, Masich encourages people interested in volunteering that might already have a reporter in their RM to apply regardless.

"We still highly encourage you to sign up, because crop



Crops in Southeast Saskatchewan.

conditions can vary within an RM and rainfall as well," he said. "So it's good to have two sources of information for each RM. We welcome everyone, and we value everyone's data equally."

Some reporters have been around since the provincial crop report was in its infancy, a milestone that does receive recognition.

"The crop report has been out for close to 50 years, and this year is the first year we have a reporter hitting 45 years," said Masich. "Each year, we put on an appreciation event for long-term reporters that hit milestones, so 25 years, 30 years, etc. and this year was the first year we have somebody hitting 45 years. So that's quite the milestone, quite the achievement, and we sure appreciate the dedication from our reporters."

Over the years, thanks to all the data collected by dedicated reporters, the crop report has come to be relied on and looked forward to each week.

"It's got a very significant impact," Masich pointed out. "It's one of the most—if not the most—popular publica-

tion we put out, just because it's viewed by so many each week."

Masich says with a laugh that on some Thursdays during the growing season, if the report is late by even five minutes, public panic tends to set in.

"I have a flood of emails from people wondering where it is because they're just anticipating it and wanting to know what's going on," he said, adding that the report's audience reaches beyond Saskatchewan borders as well. "Not even just within the province, but worldwide as well. Producers and agrologists read it to assess risk, moisture conditions and predict crop yields in their areas. Also policy makers, marketers, investors, trading partners all around the world read the report because they want to know how our grain and commodities are being produced and conditions in production."

For more information, and to sign up as a volunteer crop reporter, email the Crop Report Team at cropreport@gov.sk.ca

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Manitoba opening new MASC offices in Virden and Shoal Lake

The Manitoba government is responding to requests from Manitoba's agricultural sector and opening two new Manitoba Agricultural Services Corporation (MASC) Service Centres in Virden and Shoal Lake to better meet the needs of Manitoba farmers, Agriculture Minister Ron Kostyshyn announced last week.

"Where the previous government ended services, we're bringing them back," said Kostyshyn. "We heard from producers loud and clear that they wanted the in-person service they used to enjoy. These new service centres will also help MASC staff to further build relationships with producers, allowing them to better anticipate and respond to their individual needs."

A number of agricultural organizations have been asking the province to open

new MASC Service Centres after 21 Manitoba Agriculture and MASC offices were closed across the province, noted the minister.

The additional service centres are anticipated to open by the end of summer, added Kostyshyn. Precise opening dates and accompanying details will be communicated to clients in the coming months.

Approximately 1,600 MASC clients will benefit from the addition of two new service centres and roughly 94 per cent of MASC clients will be within a 60-minute drive to a MASC Service Centre, an increase from 83 per cent, the minister noted.

The two new service centres in Shoal Lake and Virden will provide farmers with better access to Agrinsurance, hail insurance, wildlife damage compensation,

agricultural loans, pathfinding services for programs offered by Manitoba Agriculture and other programs administered by MASC. Each new location will be staffed with four full-time employees and one casual employee, said the minister.

"Manitoba farmers have been clear in their desire to have access to more in-person services through MASC," said Jill Verwey, president, Keystone Agricultural Producers. "We are pleased to see the government has listened to farmers with this commitment to open two additional service centres in Shoal Lake and Virden."

"Cattle producers certainly see value in the work being done by MASC and many like to have the option to sit down across the table from their staff to have in-depth discussions about programs and services

that can help their farms and ranches," said Matthew Atkinson, president, Manitoba Beef Producers (MBP). "MBP had been advocating for there to be more service centres so that our members can access MASC services closer to home and we thank the provincial government for fulfilling its commitment to open two new offices."

In order to determine where new service centres would have the greatest impact, MASC undertook a service delivery review that analyzed client satisfaction survey results and distance to access in-person services as well as existing service centre client volumes and staff-to-client ratios.

For more information on MASC visit www.masc.mb.ca.

Farm transition workshop coming to Canada's Farm Show in March

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He added that even after the Q&A portion has concluded, experts will stick around for one-on-one questions producers may have.

Canada's Farm Show a perfect opportunity

The Bridging the Gap workshop happens one day prior to Canada's Farm Show in Regina on March 17. With this being the first year the show occurs before seeding, timing couldn't be better to bring a couple hundred producers down to the Queensbury Convention Centre. In fact, the upcoming workshop will be one of the largest presentations of the workshop Farm Management Canada has done.

"I am really just excited to be officially at the Farm Show," Oakley said. "One of the really cool things that they've done to encourage people to come both to the show and to the event, is to offer a free ticket to the show if you come to the workshop. So everybody coming to the workshop is getting a free ticket into the show the next day, which is an incredible gesture on their part."

For Canada's Farm Show, hosting the workshop in conjunction with their event made sense.

"Through a lot of the research that we have been doing with farmers in Saskatchewan, this is a very important topic with many farm families," said Carla Vipond, Show Director of Canada's Farm Show. "Certainly, Farm Management Canada is a national leader in bringing these important farm transition planning sessions throughout Canada, and so we thought this was a really great opportunity to do this here in Saskatchewan and, more importantly, in Regina."

Oakley described how

FMC had the Farm Show in mind as an opportunity to present the workshop, and were pleased when CFS reached out to them with an invitation.

"They called us and said, 'just join us here, come to the Farm Show,'" Oakley said. "We can host right on site here, and they've been an incredible partner. So thanks to them, we are officially coming to the show."

This will be the first time in Canada Farm Show's 40-year history that the event takes place in March, which Vipond credits in most part to changing farming practices keeping producers busy through June.

"March is the perfect time for us to be hosting a

farm show because that's just before they're getting ready for a very busy growing season," she said. "This is the opportunity for them to come in to Regina, take in an awesome trade show, take in a lot of entertainment, which is what we have planned this year."

Listing some of the event draws around CFS, Vipond noted, the Jelly Roll concert on March 16 at the Brandt Centre, plus the Regina Pats vs Swift Current Broncos game on March 18 at the same venue.

"It's been an extraordinary learning experience from a show standpoint," Vipond said of the decision to bump the show up

to March, which for 2025, meant a few months less time to prepare. "The response from industry has been extraordinary. Before Christmas, our trade show was actually 90 per cent sold out."

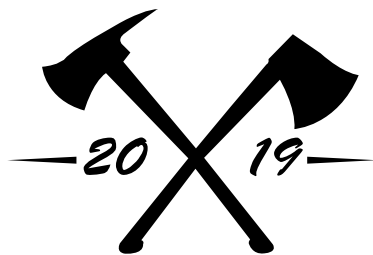
Partnerships like those with FMS and the addition of new companies taking in their first Farm Show

or returning after a hiatus further cements that the March dates were a good decision.

"While our planning cycle was short, the response was fantastic, which made it all worthwhile," Vipond explained. "There's actually a lot going on at REAL—we've got everything from hockey playoffs to concerts

to a farm show. But actually, that's what's making it exciting, there's just a lot to do in addition to taking in a great Farm Show."

To register for Bridging the Gap, visit fmc-gac.com/btg for more information. Canada's Farm Show runs from March 18 to 20 this year with the theme "Grow Starts Here."



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APAS calls for pause to capital gains tax changes

BY RYAN KIEDROWSKI

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan (APAS) is expressing concern over the proposed changes to capital gains tax regulations, and is calling for a pause on the proposed capital gains tax changes.

With the recent prorogation of Parliament, many people are left wondering how the proposed changes to capital gains tax rules are allowed to continue. While the changes are left in limbo, the Canada Revenue Agency will continue to collect new charges in the coming tax season.

In last year's federal budget, an increase to the capital gains inclusion rate was proposed on any gains realized on or after June 25, 2024. Instead of the previous 50 per cent, the inclusion rate rose to 66.67 per cent—except for individuals and certain trusts (graduated real estates and qualified disability trusts), who still fall under the old rate on the first \$250,000. Corporations and the majority of family trusts are affected by the new rate, and for individuals the increase in the top tax rate on capital gains above \$250,000 is approximately nine percentage points.

Meanwhile, agricultural producers are also left wondering exactly how the proposed changes will affect their operations, especially those with succession planning at top of mind.

"The majority of producers who do retire use the revenue from the sale of their land as their retirement fund," explained APAS president Bill Prybylski. "The uncertainty of not knowing what are the tax rules right now? What are the capital gains rules? Is CRA going to enforce the rules, even though that they haven't actually been passed through Parliament? So the biggest thing is the is the uncertainty."



APAS President Bill Prybylski

Since much of farm value is linked to land assets, the changes can have a huge impact on the family farm.

"It's not a small amount of dollars we're talking about anymore," Prybylski said. "So it is very significant, the tax implications. How do producers plan but they don't know what rules they have to follow?"

APAS is looking for a clearer picture on what the tax changes mean for farmers, requesting a meeting with the federal minister of national revenue, Marie-Claude Bibeau, but no answer has been forthcoming.

"We've sent her a letter requesting a meeting with her," Prybylski said. "I will be in Ottawa for some other other things, so I was hoping for a chance to meet with her while I'm in Ottawa, but we have, as of yet not heard back from her office."

In addition to detailed information, APAS wants to see a pause in the changes until more in-depth talks can take place.

"We're not optimistic a whole lot will happen, but we would like to see the changes paused until there can be some consultation and some some clarity from the government as to what the actual rules are going to be," Prybylski says. "Even going forward from there, we're not sure what the government is going to look like, if there's going to be an election call shortly after. There will be a non-confidence vote to call an election, there's just so much uncertainty, and we would like to see things just put on hold until we can clarify."

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce agrees with APAS, noting that the CRA "lacks clear legislative authority to implement this tax," lauding an early campaign promise from the Conservatives to nix the change.

"Reversing this tax increase will help to bolster investment and entrepreneurship, and signal to the world that Canada is open for business," said Jessica Brandon-Jepp, Senior Director, Fiscal and Financial Services Policy with the Canadian Chamber of Commerce. "We encourage the federal government and other political parties to also commit to not implementing this tax."

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Insights on what makes cows efficient, allowing better decision-making on farms

An impressive array of tools – from data analytics and precision agriculture to livestock vaccines, crop development, genomic selection and more – is ushering in the future of farming.

Located at the heart of one of Canada's agricultural powerhouses, the University of Saskatchewan (USask) has developed an impressive portfolio of achievements related to creating stronger and more resilient food systems.

Mika Asai-Coakwell, professor in the Animal and Poultry Science department with the College of Agriculture and Bioresources at USask, focuses her efforts on "finding an efficient cow" through a project called, "Genomic association analysis of forage efficiency in beef cows."

"When you have animals that are more efficient over the long term, one benefit is that producers can rely on these cows longer – and don't need as many replacement heifers to become breeding cows," she explains. "Higher calving rates would lead to a more productive farm overall."

And when producers can raise more cattle with less resources, says Dr. Asai-Coakwell, this reduces the impact on the environment, decreasing the carbon footprint associated with



Mika Asai-Coakwell, professor in the Animal and Poultry Science Department at the University of Saskatchewan look to identify the genomic markers that are associated with efficiency in beef cattle.

this aspect of beef production.

As a first step, the team set key indicators for efficiency in cows. "From a traditional standpoint, an animal that eats less and gains more mass has been seen as more efficient," she says. "But more recently, we've been considering a

new definition. It reflects the fact that mature cows are no longer growing – and this makes the feed-to-mass conversion less indicative."

What instead makes a cow efficient for beef cattle is "the ability to conceive, produce a healthy calf, wean that calf and then get pregnant again the following

years," says Dr. Asai-Coakwell. "An efficient cow is able to keep her health and body fat throughout these cycles with minimal feed supplementation."

However, the equation is far from simple, and the researchers are charged with isolating markers in the genome from among the many

factors that can affect efficiency, including herd management, farm location and weather conditions. "This complexity makes teasing out the genetics component more challenging," says Dr. Asai-Coakwell. "We have to determine which traits can be inherited versus which are due to environmental influences."

Valuable tools for researchers and farmers

Underpinning these efforts is a ranking system, developed by collaborators for one cohort of cows, which the team now looks to apply to a much larger population, says Nyah Hopkins, a graduate student who works with Dr. Asai-Coakwell on the project.

USask graduate student Nyah Hopkins works alongside Asai-Coakwell on

her research projects. (Photo: Submitted)

The ranking system itself already represents a very useful tool, since previous methods for feed conversion required measuring the complete feed intake of an animal, Ms. Hopkins says. "This is not only expensive and time-consuming, but for cows raised on pasture, it is almost impossible."

The new system uses measures that are routinely obtained on farms, such as calving dates, the cow's weight and body condition at calving – and the weight of the calf at birth and at weaning, she notes. "The resulting efficiency score indicates how well a cow is able to continuously produce healthy calves while maintaining her body weight on forage-based diets."

Continued on Page C14 ☞

Manitoba

2025 AgrilInsurance program announced

Agriculture and Agri-Food Minister Lawrence MacAulay and Manitoba Agriculture Minister Ron Kostyshyn announced details of the 2025 AgrilInsurance program administered by Manitoba Agricultural Services Corporation (MASC) on Jan. 22.

"Farmers in Manitoba are known for delivering top-quality products to Canadians and the world," said MacAulay. "It's vitally important that they have access to flexible risk management programs to help them protect their

operations so they can keep meeting the demand for the products they produce."

After a lower-than-average claim year in 2024, Manitoba farmers will benefit from lower premium rates for most insurable crops in 2025. For annual crops, the average premium for producers will be \$13.01 per acre in 2025 compared to \$15.43 per acre in 2024. MASC calculates premium rates using methodologies that are reviewed and approved by Agriculture and Agri-Food

Canada (AAFC).

Volatility in global commodity markets continues to impact AgrilInsurance dollar values for the 2025 season. Some crops such as flax and field peas will have higher dollar values. For the majority of crops, however, dollar values are lower than in 2024 based on market forecasts. Total coverage for 2025 is expected to be \$4.2 billion, noted MacAulay.

"As a farmer for many years, I understand the importance of knowing your coverage and costs as you

plan for the next growing season," said Kostyshyn. "We're happy to offer coverage at affordable rates for Manitoba farmers through the AgrilInsurance program so they can confidently plan for the upcoming crop year."

Continued on Page C13 ☞

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More funding for crop reasearch

Continued from front

• Sabine Banniza (PhD), College of Agriculture and Bioresources – Evaluating shade covers to improve reliability of blossom blight disease screening – \$71,300

• Ana Vargas (PhD), College of Agriculture and Bioresources – Developing high-value faba bean cultivars – \$167,248 – Co-funded by Western Grains Research Foundation

• Michael Nickerson (PhD), College of Agriculture and Bioresources – Improving the gelation properties of faba bean and pea protein concentrates for application in structured plant-based products – \$250,500

• Michael Nickerson (PhD), College of Agriculture and Bioresources – Development of a wet fractionation process for extracting pea and faba bean albumins by pilot-scale vibrational shear filtration – \$149,800

• Oon-Doo Baik (PhD), College of Engineering – Cost-effective and high-performance atmospheric cold plasma technology for wheat, canola and lentil – \$137,000 – Co-funded by Saskatchewan Pulse Growers

• Angela Bedard-Haughn (PhD), College of Agriculture and Bioresources – A sustainable future for the Saskatchewan Soil Information System (SKSIS) – \$90,668 – Co-funded by Saskatchewan Oilseeds Development Commission, Saskatchewan Pulse Growers and Saskatchewan Wheat Development Commission

• Angela Bedard-Haughn (PhD), College of Agriculture and Bioresources – Mapping soil carbon sequestration in Saskatchewan cropland – \$290,400 –

Co-funded by Saskatchewan Oilseeds Development Commission and Saskatchewan Wheat Development Commission

• Tom Warkentin (PhD), College of Agriculture and Bioresources – Rapid introgression of aphid resistance into pea elite cultivars – \$149,645 – Co-funded by Saskatchewan Pulse Growers and Western Grains Research Foundation

• Christian Willenborg, College of Agriculture and Bioresources – Herbicide screening in spice crops II: continuing the search and generating minor use data – \$179,400

• Martin Reaney (PhD), College of Agriculture and Bioresources – Graphene and epoxidized oil strengthen canola protein-based plastics – \$180,000

• Yongfeng Ai (PhD), College of Agriculture and Bioresources – Enzymatic modification and ultrasonication to improve functionality, nutritional quality, and flavor of starch-rich pulse flours – \$149,000 – Co-funded by Saskatchewan Pulse Growers

• Yongfeng Ai (PhD), College of Agriculture and Bioresources – Novel hydrothermal method to develop functional low-glycemic food ingredients and encapsulant from pea starch – \$144,500 – Co-funded by Saskatchewan Pulse Growers

• Phil Chilibeck (PhD), College of Kinesiology – A pea-based beverage for improving bone health – \$150,000 – Co-funded by Saskatchewan Pulse Growers

• Adam Carter (PhD), College of Agriculture and Bioresources – Accelerating CWRs wheat improvement with multi-trait rapid-cycle recurrent genomic

selection – \$242,444 – Co-funded by Alberta Grains, Manitoba Crop Alliance, Saskatchewan Wheat Development Commission and Western Grains Research Foundation

• Bishnu Acharya (PhD), College of Engineering – Developing Innovative applications for spent bleaching clay and soapstocks from canola processing – \$146,000

• Curtis Pozniak (PhD), College of Agriculture and Bioresources – Alternative mechanisms for resistance to the wheat stem sawfly in wheat – \$206,019 – Co-funded by Alberta Grains, Saskatch-

ewan Wheat Development Commission and Western Grains Research Foundation

• Curtis Pozniak (PhD), College of Agriculture and Bioresources – Introducing high-protein content and early flowering alleles from wild wheat relatives while minimizing linkage drag – \$160,037 – Co-funded by Saskatchewan Wheat Development Commission

• Dr. Warren Helgason (PhD), College of Engineering – Flexible allocation of irrigation water – maximizing productivity and water efficiency – \$287,180



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Top economic charts to monitor in 2025

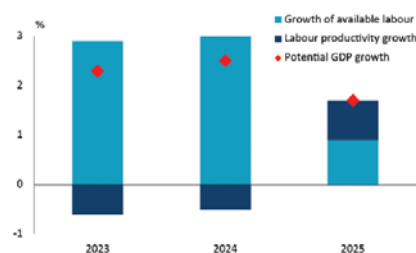
As we start the new year amid new challenges, including slowing population growth and potential trade barriers, here are FCC's top charts to help make sense of the economic environment for the agriculture and agri-food sector, from producers to consumers.

Slower population growth will dent economic growth

After a rough couple of years, when real GDP growth averaged a meagre 1.5%, Canada's economy is unlikely to get much better this year. Reduced immigration levels are expected to slow population growth, significantly reducing potential GDP growth - the economy's speed limit, which is estimated as the sum of available labour (i.e., population) growth and productivity growth.

The Bank of Canada currently estimates potential growth to be just 1.7% in 2025, but even that seems optimistic given the central bank's expectation of productivity bouncing back significantly this year (Figure 1). It's unclear what will rekindle productivity, more so considering business investment has been treading water. With such a low speed limit, don't count on Canada's real GDP growth to bounce back significantly in 2025.

Figure 1: Economy's speed limit has been lowered for 2025



Source: Bank of Canada

Tariffs, Trade, and the Canadian dollar

As if slowing population growth wasn't enough, Canada also has to contend with a more uncertain trade environment. With Donald Trump's return as U.S. President, Canada is facing the prospect of punitive tariffs and a resulting slump in exports. Look for U.S. tariffs, if any, to be imposed for a few months on selected products as a negotiating tactic, as was the case in 2018, before being lifted. If 2018 is any guide, cool heads will prevail in the end because negotiators know all too well how interconnected the two economies are. We expect both parties to eventually agree on a deal, which will provide a framework for CUSMA 2.0. But any tariff drama will be enough to restrain exports temporarily and depress investment, further restraining real GDP growth this year.

With such a cloudy economic outlook, it's difficult to be optimistic about the Canadian dollar. While the underperforming loonie helps to boost Canada's export dependent economy, imports or any trips to the U.S. will cost a lot more. The loonie's correlation with oil has broken down over the last three years (Figure 2). But only part of that breakdown is due to Canada-U.S. interest rate differentials. In fact, the differential is similar to what it was in early 2007, and the WCS oil price is much higher than 18 years ago. And yet the C\$ is now trading at just 70 U.S. cents or so, versus 90 cents back in 2007. Clearly there's more to the ailing loonie than just oil and the interest rate spreads. That casts doubts about the likelihood of a significant rebound for the loonie this year.

Figure 2: Loonie's correlation with oil has diminished over the past three years



Sources: Bank of Canada, Government of Alberta

Weathering the upcoming Canola trade barriers

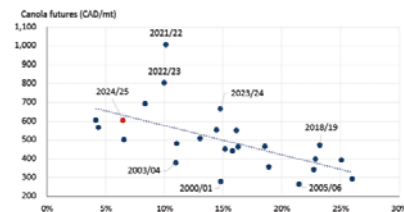
Uncertainty hangs over the 2025 canola market due to China's anti-dumping investigation but also a smaller than anticipated Canadian canola crop. It will take time for China to conclude their investigation - China's 2018 case against Australian barley took 18 months - but in the meantime since the beginning of the crop year on August 1st, Canadian canola exports have been strong. Thanks to

China accounting for over 75% of all shipments, the export pace is running 10 weeks ahead of schedule. Even if China slows down as expected, Canada will only need to export another 3 million tonnes of canola to reach Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's (AAFC's) export target of 7.5 million tonnes in 2024/25. China's anti-dumping probe is more likely to impact 2025/26 exports.

Canada's 2024 canola crop of just under 18 million tonnes has been in demand by domestic processors in addition to the strong export pace. The canola crush sector is on track to process over 11.5 million tonnes this crop year. If exports slow more than anticipated, crushers could process closer to 12 million tonnes, but it would depend on farmer deliveries. The other factor to consider is demand for canola oil, which is currently price competitive compared to other vegetable oils including soybean oil. Canola oil has found a home in U.S. biofuel programs to date but uncertainty surrounding the specifics of U.S. biofuel and government policies for 2025 leaves this market in limbo right now.

Overall, the impact on the remainder of 2024/25 canola marketings will depend on how U.S. biofuel policies change and any U.S. import tariffs, but these are balanced by the smaller crop size. Current stocks-to-use estimates are anticipated to be tight but are priced appropriately relative to the long-term trend (Figure 3). The upcoming 2025/26 crop will likely be influenced more by China's anti-dumping probe and 2025 weather. Reduced exports to China in 2025/26 could result in increased ending stocks if alternative export destinations don't materialize. Prices would decline based upon the corresponding stocks-to-use trend.

Figure 3: Exports and domestic crush will influence canola stocks-to-use and prices



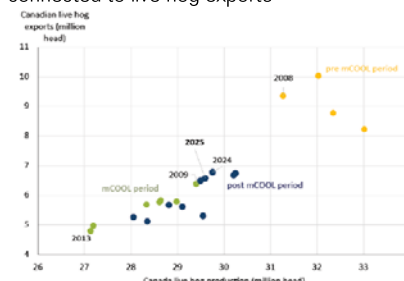
Sources: Barchart, USDA, FCC calculations

Concern building for hog producers regarding voluntary country of origin labeling (vCOOL)

Starting in 2026, for meat to qualify for a "Product of USA" label, the animal must be born, raised, and processed within the United States. While the rule doesn't come into force until next year, U.S. processors could begin implementing it later this year. This rule is voluntary, allowing companies to opt-out of labeling their products if they prefer. This change is intended to circumvent the previous mandatory country-of-origin labeling (mCOOL) regulations, which were repealed following Canada and Mexico's victory at the World Trade Organization. We discussed this development last fall.

Canadian hog production growth is closely linked to exports of live animals, including 21-day old piglets to market-ready hogs, with most of these exports going to the U.S. Before mCOOL was implemented in 2009, Canada produced approximately 32 million hogs annually and exported 8-10 million hogs (Figure 4). However, by the midpoint of mCOOL in 2013, production had decreased by 5 million hogs and exports declined accordingly. Production has never recovered to pre mCOOL levels, and with Canada's domestic slaughter capacity facing various challenges in recent years, any disruption in export demand could result in a smaller Canadian hog herd in the upcoming years as hog prices would be pressured to clear the excess supply.

Figure 4: Canadian hog production is tightly connected to live hog exports



Source: USDA PSD

High cow and heifer slaughter rates not conducive to herd rebuilding

The Canadian beef herd hit its lowest point in 30 years

last year and when data is released for January 1, 2025, it is expected to be smaller once more, despite another year of excellent to record cattle prices. In 2024, nearly half of the slaughtered cattle in Canada and the U.S. were heifers and cows, a 3-year low but still historically high, which will result in the herd declining to start 2025 (Figure 5). To see the herd start to grow in a year, the industry needs cows and heifers to make up less than 47% of slaughter. Until that happens cattle prices will remain near record levels, which will undoubtedly support retail beef prices. Don't expect barbecue season to be a cheap one given Canadian's preference for beef means demand is expected to remain strong.

Cow-calf producers have benefited from high prices, some using the extra income to pay off debt from drought years, while others chose to leave the industry rather than expand their herds. Cow-calf profitability is expected to remain strong in 2025 and while herd rebuilding might start later this year, significant expansion won't be seen for a few years. Rebuilding the herd will take several years of good weather and high prices. Fortunately, feed supplies improved last year.

While supply and demand fundamentals suggest a positive outlook for cattle prices, potential trade issues are a major concern. Tariff threats from the new U.S. administration could impact the Canadian-U.S. livestock sector due to the integrated North American market. The uncertainty around tariffs and vCOOL may also hinder Canada's ability to retain heifers for herd growth.

Figure 5: Declining slaughter rates still not supportive of Canada and U.S. herd rebuilding as of January 1



Sources: Statistics Canada, USDA, FCC calculations

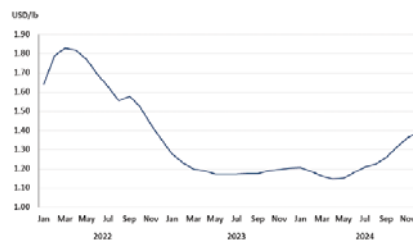
The cow-calf sector is not the only one reaping the benefits of high cattle prices. The Canadian dairy sector has also benefited. The milk per cow productivity gains has allowed the dairy sector to cull additional cows and send more calves to slaughter increasing dairy revenue.

Does the blended milk price have the potential to move in 2025?

In November 2024, the Canadian Dairy Commission (CDC) announced there will be a very slight decline (-0.02%) in the farmgate milk price in 2025. However, not all of the average blended price is set within the supply management system. Approximately 11% of butterfat (by weight) goes into Class 5 products, a class of milk where all components are determined by U.S. prices (solids non-fat prices in some Class 4 products are also determined by U.S. prices). The price of non-fat dry milk began to rise in the latter half of 2024 (Figure 6), providing a small boost to Canadian average blended prices in the process.

The USDA is projecting non-fat dry milk prices in the U.S. to average \$1.30/lb in 2025, which if it held, would be a 5.4% increase from 2024. This price, however, is subject to market forces and could move up or down as the year unfolds. Our analysis shows that a 10% swing in Class III milk prices changes the average blended milk price by 0.5%, all else being equal. So, if producers are hoping for a price boost in 2025, it'll have to come from a rise in U.S. milk prices.

Figure 6: U.S. non-fat dry milk prices rose towards the end of 2024



Sources: Barchart, FCC calculations

Food processing: Who's the most vulnerable to trade barriers?

After a year of roughly flat sales, food and beverage processors are facing the prospect of another difficult year in 2025.

Continued on page C15

Taking care of business

What a perfect day to sit down at the computer and do some writing! I may not have a true sense of the blizzard raging outdoors from my home here in town but my guess is it isn't a great day to travel anywhere so writing it will be.

The Christmas season has come and gone but I just have to say how much I enjoyed every single part of the celebrations – lots of laughs and too much food – what excitement, what fun! We especially enjoyed hosting a large Christmas gathering of no less than 32! Okay, it may have been a bit scrunchy but hey, it's one day and what a great day it was. We got in some "team" games with trivia, guess-the-tune, and of course some 'gag' gifts and steals. The package of fleece cleaning cloths/ rags was one of the top delights. We loved the expression one of our nieces (a city gal from Calgary now living in Saskatchewan and engaged to a farmer) who couldn't quite figure the allure of a package of fleece cloths in our farmer-dominated group.

I know some may have bemoaned the fact that they had to return to work after Christmas, but for some of us (moi for sure) who only needs to work part time during the farm's busy times, I had it made! Enjoyable late-night movies (you know the kind ... staying up until 10 p.m., munching on popcorn), sleeping in until all of 7:00, maybe even 8:00 the odd day. Ahhh, sweet bliss!

Some mornings since Christmas were brutal though. And not for reasons you might think. When the land line rings at strange hours, my first thought is something has happened to someone in my family. Take the middle-of-the-night (1:30 a.m.) call from what I call 'fake Amazon.' Yup, that was a rude awakening to say the least. Three mornings later, 6:00 a.m. and it's 'fake Bell Canada.' Really? All were recordings of course so you can't even express your frustration with being so rudely awakened. This morning, was another 6:19 a.m. one that hubby grabbed as we heard his mom's name being announced from the phone. 'Oh, this is serious,' I thought as I listened to the one-sided conversation. "No, Mom, you called me, I didn't call you," was what I was hearing hubby saying, realizing it wasn't an emergency call after all. And when I double checked her phone calls from her house later that day, guess what? At that time of the morning, there was an incoming call from some strange number (not ours) at 6:19 a.m., so another sort of scam-type thing where a fake number shows coming in to her phone but on our phone, it shows her number calling us. What next?

The storm that Friday meant a delayed trip of our first-thing-in-the-morning (think 8:30) trek to the farm to feed Mr. Rescue Kitty (yes, the one hubby won't let me bring to town). Later in the afternoon however, we headed out to feed our little farm friend, happy to see that the twins, on hiatus from school due to the storm, had been there with food already.

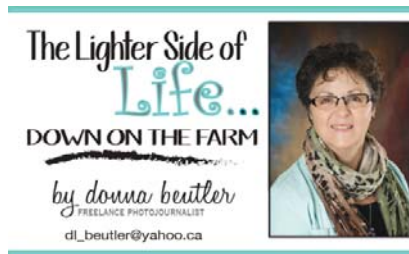
One of the twins (13) was busy sweeping the man-cave steps in the shop that afternoon. "Bored?" I asked. "Sort of," he said, sweeping the dirt onto a coffee can lid. No-bus days would be great if the outdoor weather wasn't so nasty but of course, if it was nice, the buses would have been running. "What would you like to be doing?" I asked. "Ski-doing," he responds. Love those single word answers, complete with a grin from ear to ear.

A recent multi-day trip to Regina to help shuttle the grands to hockey and ringette meant some extra time with the grands we don't see as often as our 'Whitewood' grands. Our first stop was, of course, the rink where we bought our grandson (10) some fries and went to sit down on the bleachers where his sister was already on the ice. He put one fry in his mouth and as nonchalantly as could be, asked, "So, Grandma, what do you think about Canada being the 51st state?" Really, I thought to myself, why is a 10-year-old even remotely aware of what is happening in U.S. politics? Of course, this is the lad who at age five and six years of age loved to talk about the roles of mayors and premiers and how cool it would be to have a job like that.

Our Regina grandson is not an aggressive type person in any way, shape or form, in life or in hockey so when he got a penalty the other day (first time ever), we all wondered what on earth he did. Well the very short story was this (from his dad): "Just finished. Big win. Hayden levelled a kid and got a penalty." Well, well, well ... who would have guessed?!

Hayden, the kid who was born without a shy bone in his body, talked to anyone and everyone right from the get go, asked the most unusual and interesting questions and could talk, talk, talk, no matter what also told me about this group of friends of his who each have a role in this "group." One is the PR man who smooths the troubled waters when there's some friction; one researches answers to questions they want answers to; one does this and another does that and the last one, besides himself, plays another role. "What do you do, Hayden?" I ask, wondering if there will be any surprises here. "I do the talking when something needs to be said to the group," is his answer. Yup, no surprises whatsoever.

Back home in Whitewood the other day, as we were feeding our 'lunch bunch,' the group of grands and friends who join us most every noon hour, Grandpa asked the twins if there were any new calves yet. "Don't know, haven't been home for three hours," was the response. So them. And then they were on to other things – who is dating who, who got in trouble at school and so on. I told them some of this was maybe bordering on gossip which we really should not be doing. Five sets of eyes kind of looked at me as if to say, "Gossip? Huh?" Ironically, the next thing out of one the twins' mouth was, "We should start a rumour!" This from my grandson of few words as he relayed the rumour he thought he ought to start, not



that he actually would.

One of my projects yesterday was to get my credit card set up online so I can quickly check my transactions and balances. This meant installing an app on my phone. Easy enough, I thought. Once I inserted my email address, it told me to enter the "token" that was sent to me on my land line. Token? I wondered, but presumed it was a code, however there was no way to get the code from my land line so I phoned in to the toll-free number only to realize I was 67th in queue.

Eventually I was able to speak to a human who said she would delete my land line number from the account and put my cell number in so I would get a text. Which, as you might have guessed, did nothing because no matter what, the app kept saying it had sent a token (what's with that word anyhow?) to my home number. Her solution? Wait 15 minutes because it takes a while for the new phone number to register, then it would work. So of course, we hung up.

Half an hour later, I tried again, but no matter what I did, that home number kept appearing. Oh my word. Did I mention I started this process at 1:05 that afternoon? Eventually, I came to the conclusion that I simply needed to delete the app and start over which I did. And ta-da, the 'token' would come to my cell phone. But after five,

10, then 15 minutes, it still had not come through so my second call to them saw me in 94th spot in queue and literally, no word of a lie, when the human answered some 30 minutes later, the code popped up on my phone and I said, "Sorry for calling, I got what I needed," and we hung up.

By this time, it was after 3:00 but at least I was into the app and I hit "transactions" only to see, 'there are no transactions at this time.' Long story short, my third call to the credit card company and only 78th in queue this time around, netted me, eventually, this from the lovely human on the other end (she truly was super nice): "You won't see any transactions. If you want to see transactions since your last statement, I could e-mail them to you." YES! Now why didn't the first lady just say that in the one o'clock conversation? "Yes, please do that," I said. "Sure, it will take two to three days, however," she continued, explaining that only my transactions on the account would be emailed. "Oh, no, no, no," I said, "my husband and I have one account, one statement and it's his transactions (in other words, the farm's transactions) that I want to see." Of course you know where this is going because, even though the account is joint, they would not send that information to me without his consent. Fortunately I found him in the garage and put him on the phone.

By this time, I was exhausted! And it was 3:55! That process took exactly 10 minutes short of three hours. And as I finish up this column one day later, I still don't have the information I want and I only wanted to double check some recent transactions because I am doing, believe it or not for so early in the new year, my year-end farm financials, all while wondering if any of this is worth the effort. Oh the joy of 'taking care of business.' LOL

Here's hoping your frustrations wash off your shoulders without any lasting effect on your mental health. As we prepare to start the augers back up today (warmer weather coming we hear) and haul grain out of the bin, we trust you all will take care out there on the farm or from wherever you may be. Spring is kinda, sorta a, just around the corner so until next time, thanks for tuning in!

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2025 AgrilInsurance program announced

Continued from Page C8

MASC is further enhancing the AgrilInsurance program by adding birdsfoot trefoil as an eligible crop for Forage Establishment Insurance and expanding the boundaries for grain corn area 1 and incorporating the grain corn insurance test area as grain corn area 5. The Wildlife Damage Compensation program is also being enhanced by increasing the maximum value used to calculate livestock predation claims to \$7,000 from \$3,000 per animal.

The AgrilInsurance program is a risk management tool for Manitoba farmers to protect against production shortfalls and quality losses caused by natural perils. In the case of extreme weather events that impact production such as drought or excess moisture, the AgrilInsurance

program provides predictable coverage producers can depend on when planning for the upcoming growing season, noted MacAulay. Manitoba has a high level of AgrilInsurance participation with over 90 per cent of annual crop acres and more than 7,400 farms enrolled in the program.

AgrilInsurance is a federal-provincial-producer cost-

shared program that helps producers manage production and quality losses. Support for the program is provided by the governments of Canada and Manitoba under the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership (Sustainable CAP).

For more information, contact MASC or find a service centre at www.masc.mb.ca/masc.nsf/contact.html.




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USask graduate student Nyah Hopkins works alongside Asai-Coakwell on her research projects.

Continued from Page C8

The next step is to identify genotypes that point to higher efficiencies through genetic analysis of material from “both highly efficient and not very efficient cows,” says Ms. Hopkins. “When we know which genomic regions are associated with efficiency, we could design tools for testing for these genetics.”

This genomic testing, Ms. Hopkins proposes, would allow “a faster and better selection process. The ultimate goal is to provide farmers with a molecular tool for choosing the animals they want for their herd.”

Partnerships testament to USask's contribution to agriculture

Dr. Asai-Coakwell's project has garnered strong support from the Saskatchewan government's Agriculture Development Fund, the Saskatchewan Cattlemen's Association and individual producers.

She sees this interest as a sign that her work addresses a need in the beef cattle industry for selective genotyping methods, which are already used to identify favourable traits in the dairy industry, for example. “There is a lot of opportunity to implement genotyping tools in the beef cattle industry,” Dr. Asai-Coakwell says. “This work is essential for our producers.”

Beyond the specific interest in the genomic analysis project, Baljit Singh, vice-president, research at USask, sees collaborations and funding support as evidence that the university is considered a trusted partner not only in agriculture research but all areas of impact.

“We encourage our scholars and graduate students in each of our facilities to think of how the knowledge or technologies they create can help our partners, whether that's from government, industry or community organizations,” he says.

What makes work related to food systems especially meaningful is to see research findings being translated into better outcomes for food producers – as well as Saskatchewan's success as “an agricultural powerhouse,” says Dr. Singh, adding that countless examples attest to the university having played a key role in enabling strong outcomes.

“Just consider that one of the most successful animal vaccines ever developed have come out of the University of Saskatchewan,” he says. “This has helped save millions of food animals around the globe to enhance food security and save millions of dollars for farmers.”

The Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization (VIDO) at USask has conducted infectious disease re-

search and vaccine development for almost half a century. Eight of its vaccines have been sold commercially, six have been described as world firsts. From 2013 to 2022, VIDO's operations and construction projects contributed more than \$511-million to the economy and created or supported an estimated 2,375 full-time equivalent jobs.

On the crop development side, USask has an equally impressive track record, notes Dr. Singh. “Our researchers with the Crop Development Centre [CDC] are providing cutting-edge advantages to growers in Saskatchewan and around the world.”

Since 1971, more than 500 varieties across over 40 kinds of crops have been developed and released from the CDC. Added up, this translates into a contribution of \$17.8-billion in gross farm outputs from 1991 to 2022.

Strengthening the research and innovation ecosystem

While these impact numbers are impressive, nurturing a fruitful research and innovation ecosystem requires ongoing efforts, Dr. Singh emphasizes. “We have to be responsive not only to our partners but also to our scholars and students so they can collaborate and have access to research infrastructure that allows for ground-breaking discoveries.”

Dr. Asai-Coakwell values the support. “This university provides us with a lot of tools as well with excellent students who contribute to this type of research,” she says.

“It is very exciting.”

Genomic analysis – looking for clues as to which genes are involved in making herds healthier and more productive to inform selection and breeding decisions – relies on “a strong animal science department with many researchers who examine different facets of animal science,” says Dr. Asai-Coakwell.

Another asset is the Livestock and Forage Centre of Excellence, which brings together “all aspects of raising beef cattle, with a cow-calf operation, a feedlot and a specialized metabolism barn,” she notes. “This is really advantageous not just us but for all researchers in this field, both on the plant and forage side and the animal side.”

Dr. Asai-Coakwell and Ms. Hopkins see providing tools for the farming community as a key imperative. They know that farmers need allies in their quest to feed a growing population while paying attention to the environmental footprint associated with their operation.

“When we can identify what makes a cow efficient – and give farmers tools to select for more efficient herds,” says Dr. Asai-Coakwell, “this brings benefits at all levels of the farming process.”

Dr. Singh adds, “We work to ensure that not only our doors are always open but we also go to our partners who have a challenge or an opportunity we can help to address, because we understand that we are here to serve the people of Saskatchewan, Canada and the world through generating and mobilizing knowledge.”

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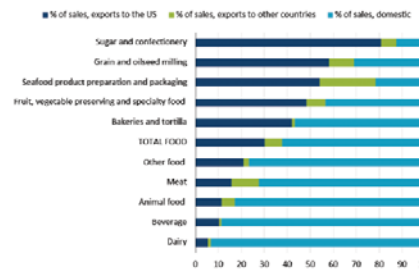
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Several sectors are highly reliant on exports and are therefore vulnerable to increased trade protectionism.

The United States is the largest single market for exported food from Canada, accounting for 30% of food processing and 10% of beverage processing sales. Its economic size, proximity, and cultural similarities make it hard to overlook as an ideal destination for Canadian businesses. However, low diversification puts the sector at risk. Tariffs proposed by incoming President Trump, would increase the prices of Canadian products compared to U.S. and put financial pressure on sectors highly reliant on exports to the U.S. The sugar and confectionery sector is particularly vulnerable given that more than 80% of its sales are generated from exports to the U.S. (Figure 7).

For those businesses selling primarily to the domestic market, there is still reason to be aware of potential trade wars impacting imported ingredients and the depreciating Canadian dollar.

Figure 7: Reliance on United States export market varies across sub-sector



Note: 2024 YTD January - October
Sources: Statistics Canada and FCC calculations

Rising costs will cap farm equipment sales

Over the last two years new equipment costs per acre have risen faster than farm revenue per acre, so much so that equipment costs as a share of farm revenues have

soared to a decade high (Figure 8). So, it's not surprising that sales of farm equipment have been weak.

Figure 8: Farm equipment still expensive relative to revenue



Source: FCC Economics

New farm equipment unit sales are projected to remain soft through 2025 as farmers feel the pressure of lower commodity prices, high equipment prices, and tighter profitability. However, the decline in sales is expected to be less severe than in 2024, and sales of 4WD tractors should stay above the five-year average. This trend is not just in Canada; U.S. farmers are facing the same issue. Because of weak demand, U.S. farm equipment manufacturers have cut production.

This weak demand has also affected the used equipment market, leading to higher inventories. Last year, some dealers sold excess inventory at auctions for lower prices. We expect this trend to continue in 2025, with more used equipment being sold at auctions. However, new equipment prices might not come down all that much because they are mostly set in U.S. dollars and with the forecast of weak loonie through the year this would pressure prices higher. Furthermore, if tariffs are added, prices of new equipment would increase further.

Overall, we expect overall equipment costs to better align with farm revenue than over the past two years.

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