



The Easton family will be receiving their 75 Year Award from the Canadian Angus Association on April 4, at the Eastondale Angus farm near Wawota, during their annual spring sale. The family have been raising Angus cattle for 79 years, and Erica Easton, right, is the fourth generation of the family to be involved in the farm, along with her parents Shelley Easton (left) and Dale Easton.

Easton family farm in the family for generations

BY SIERRA D'SOUZA BUTTS
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Easton family has been operating a family farm near Wawota for generations. They have raised Angus cattle for much of that time and this year, they will be receiving the 75 Year Award from the Canadian Angus Association.

The association recognizes individuals and families that have demonstrated a long-time commitment to the Angus breed in Canada, through maintaining a continuous membership in the association for at least 50 years.

Dale Easton of Eastondale Angus, said the family farm

started when his grandfather came to Saskatchewan for more opportunities.

"It was my grandfather who started here, he came out with his father from Ontario and homesteaded out here. He started his own place here in Wawota," he said.

"My grandfather chose to raise angus cattle, and we've stuck with what he picked and we've really enjoyed the ride along the way."

Erika Easton, is the fourth generation of the Easton family to be involved with the farm.

"I just like the lifestyle and I really enjoy doing other things in farming that takes you to a lot of places, whether it's the shows or the sales to see different people, I meet

people across all of Canada and even around the world," Erika said.

"I've had great opportunities from the business to do lots of travelling and I couldn't really imagine myself doing anything else."

"I love the farm, I love everything we do here, from working with the cattle to going to the shows and sales. I really enjoy working with the cattle and being out there when I can," she said.

Erika began her experience of working on the family farm around the age of six.

Continued on page C30

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2022 Grains, oilseeds and pulses sector outlook

The major trends to monitor for grain, oilseed and pulse operations include:

- Inflationary pressures on crop inputs
- Geopolitical tensions and global trade

It was another extraordinary year in 2021. We witnessed record-breaking drought in parts of Canada and the U.S., unrivalled shipping rate increases and increasingly costly global demand for most crops amid ever-shrinking supplies. In Canada, grains, oilseeds and pulse producers did well, with an estimated 11.9% year-over-year (YoY) growth in farm cash receipts. They took a hit on expenses, as general inflation on goods rose 4.4% YoY, and farm inputs increased, on average, by 12.0% for the first three quarters of 2021.

Commodity prices will continue to boost revenues throughout the 2021-22 and 2022-23 marketing years (MY) (Table 1). We forecast prices for all principal field crops to remain elevated above their five-year averages, even though for all but yellow peas, red lentils and spring wheat, they're projected 5.1% (canola) to 9.1% (durum) lower YoY in 2022-23.

Global supplies of principal crops improved in 2021, but many are still tight. That, along with record-low Canadian supplies and persistent global demand, is expected to maintain strong Canadian prices throughout 2022.

Profitability to be challenged by input costs in 2022-23

While revenues should be good for the 2022-23 MY, the biggest concern will still be profitability. Input costs continue to rise from elevated levels, although the speed at which they do so is expected to taper off. We expect producers of all major field crops to be profitable throughout the MY, although margins will be tight on barley and spring wheat.

Wheat

The USDA projects 2021-22 Argentinian wheat production at a record 20.5 MMt, a 16.2% YoY increase and the European Union at 138.9 MMt, a 9.4% YoY increase. Russia and Ukraine are projected to have produced a combined 108.5 MMt. Global wheat supply, expected to be stable YoY in the 2021-22 MY, will still be tight, with global ending stocks forecast to be the smallest since 2016/17. Canadian total supply is even tighter at 32.1% lower YoY. The good news is that, aside from the lowered yields, the quality of

the Canadian crop was good. That will help with revenues as higher quality wheat offers a premium in global export markets, a boon in a year when Canadian exports are expected to be 38.3% lower YoY to 16.3 MMt according to AAFC.

While all seeding estimates are likely to change in the coming months when more information can be included in the analysis, FCC's preliminary seeding forecasts for durum and non-durum wheat show slightly higher acres YoY in 2022.

Corn

With Western feed stocks in short supply for the 2021-22 MY, AAFC has projected a YoY increase of almost 50% in corn imports, primarily to the West. Along with record-high Eastern Canadian corn yields and production, they boosted total supplies for the 2021-22 MY to 19.2 MMt, also a record. Carryout stocks are expected to decline slightly YoY, with domestic feed use and exports rising. Chatham prices are currently expected to be extremely high throughout the MY.

While corn prices are expected to be above average for 22-23, acreage in 2022 is expected to fall, due to high fertilizer prices and competitive pressures from higher-priced crops.

Soybeans

The Canadian soybean supply for the 2021-22 MY is the lowest in three years, as 2021 carry-in stocks, production and imports all declined YoY. And although carryout stocks will be 53.1% higher YoY, they're still expected to be 27.5% lower than the 2019-20 carryout. Globally, YoY stronger production won't be enough to keep ending stocks from dropping again, as continued strength in global demand will support prices that remain above the five-year average.

Planting estimates show Canadian soybean acreage is likely to gain in 2022. Several factors are behind the increase. First, fertilizer costs are expected to lower corn acres (where relatively more nitrogen fertilizer is required). Second, newly minted U.S. renewable fuel mandates are calling for a large increase in the use of soy oil while human oil consumption continues to rise.

Canola

Very tight Canadian supplies are the cornerstone of this

marketing year's story for canola and, at 14.5 MMt, are expected to reach a 13-year low. Stocks were low to begin the year, and a 40% dint in overall Canadian yields (46% in Saskatchewan) reduced total production to 12.6 MMt, a 35.4% YoY decline. But, as with wheat, the quality of the smaller crop is high.

Given the low stocks, domestic crush and exports are forecast lower YoY, exports by 48.7%. That's despite strong global demand for oilseeds expected throughout the MY. The pace of exports is strong at the beginning of this MY (Figure 1), which may dampen demand from domestic crushers throughout the rest of the year.

With low supplies hampering world trade, canola pricing could be subject to considerable volatility in 2022. Nonetheless, they should remain well above their five-year average. Prices for the 2022-23 MY are forecast lower YoY, but still 72.5% more than the five-year average.

Canola acres are projected to gain the most in 2022, with global and Canadian stocks so low, prices so high and a crop that will be highly profitable.

Continued on page C25

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Saskatchewan's Spring Runoff Report

Normal to below normal runoff in south due to dry conditions in 2021

The Water Security Agency (WSA) has shared the spring runoff forecast for 2022. This forecast is based on conditions as of March 1.

WSA actively monitors snowpack and precipitation during the winter months to forecast the province's available water supply through the summer and fall and to prepare for any potential issues. WSA completed snow surveys in mid-February to assess the water available for runoff. For the most part, water supplies from the province's major reservoirs are expected to continue to meet the province's needs in 2022.

As previously reported, the hot and dry conditions throughout 2021 caused most areas of the province to go into winter with drier than normal moisture conditions. Therefore, despite significant amounts of snow, some areas with dry conditions at freeze-up are still predicted to have normal to below normal runoff.

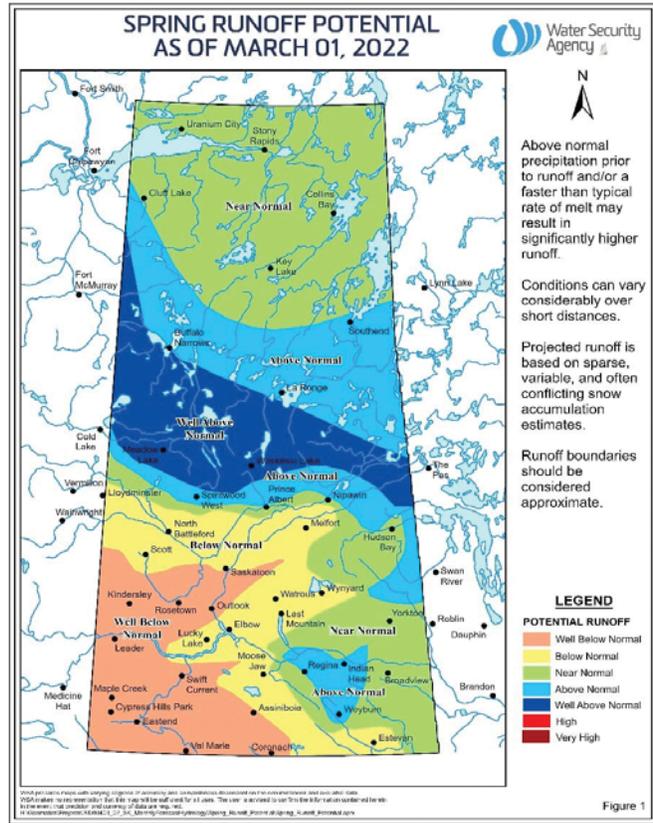
WSA is currently expecting a below to well below normal snowmelt runoff response over much of southern Saskatchewan. Only areas east of Moose Jaw are forecast to receive near or above normal runoff. Below normal runoff in the southwest may result in some water supply issues, including shortages and potentially water quality related issues later in the year. With a significant snowpack, above to well

above normal snowmelt runoff yields are expected across central areas of the province. However, flooding is not expected at this time.

With significant snowpack within the North Saskatchewan River Basin, there is an elevated risk of a dynamic ice breakup event occurring on the North Saskatchewan River. This may result in ice jamming and flooding similar to what was observed on the river in 2020. The public should remain vigilant when near melting waterways as ice jamming and breakup can be unpredictable.

With an alpine snowpack that is generally well above normal, the agency is optimistic that flows on the Saskatchewan River System and levels at Lake Diefenbaker will be better than what was observed in 2021. The Water Security Agency will continue to protect and manage our water supply to support industry and habitat.

When developing this snowmelt runoff outlook, WSA assumes normal weather conditions going forward to the conclusion of the melt. Any increased runoff potential would be reflected in the April forecast provided runoff is not already underway. The current report can be found on the wsask.ca website under Provincial Forecast.



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Saskatchewan introduces enhanced measures to control feral pigs

The Government of Saskatchewan is taking steps today to proactively enhance and broaden the regulation, monitoring and control of wild boar and feral pigs in the province.

The Ministry of Agriculture is developing regulations for licensing existing commercial wild boar farms and imposing a moratorium on any new farms. Regulations for wild boar/feral pigs will also be developed under The Pest Control Act, which would specify the various monitoring and control efforts as well as public obligations to report.

Additionally, annual funding for the Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation (SCIC) Feral Wild Boar Control Program for surveillance and eradication efforts in the province is being doubled to \$200,000.

"Increasing feral pig surveillance and eradication efforts, along with declaring them a regulated pest, are proactive measures to help ensure the health of both the agriculture industry and the natural environment in Saskatchewan," Agriculture Minister David Marit said. "These are substantial steps that improve risk management and protect the resilience and security of our agriculture industry, which is a critical component of our provincial

economy."

Feral pigs are invasive and established within localized regions of the province, including agricultural production areas, and represent a significant problem due to damage caused to hay and crop land and to natural areas, as well as their potential to spread invasive plant species. They also harass livestock and wildlife, and are potential reservoirs for livestock diseases such as African swine fever, a federally reportable disease that is not yet present in North America but is a serious threat to the Canadian pork industry.

The SCIC and the Ministry of Agriculture work closely with the public, producer associations like Sask Pork, and rural municipalities to monitor and deal with feral pigs in the province. This issue is among various areas of mutual interest and cooperation between the province and the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities (SARM) which recently requested a collaborative, long-term solution to the wild boar/feral pigs issue in Saskatchewan.

All wild boar/feral pig sightings should be reported immediately by contacting a local SCIC office or calling 1-888-935-0000 (toll-free).



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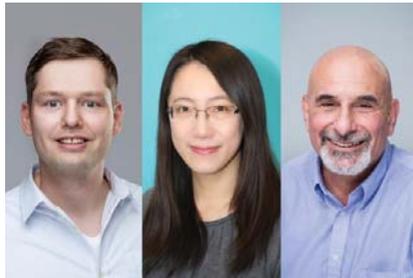
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New federal funding to enrich USask digital agriculture research



Above: Dr. Ian Stavness (PhD), Dr. Lingling Jin (PhD) and Dr. Leon Kochian (PhD).

a University of Saskatchewan (USask) Computer Science and Global Institute for Food Security (GIFS) team has been awarded \$125,000 in funding from the Canada Foundation for Innovation's (CFI) John R. Evans Leaders Fund (JELF) to support the development of innovative greenhouse imaging and computing infrastructure.

Data-driven processes and decisions are increasingly important in the agriculture sector. Although large amounts of farm and plant data are being collected by growers and scientists, the ability to create actionable information from these large datasets remains a key challenge.

To fill this gap in the rapidly expanding digital agriculture sector, the USask team, led by Dr. Lingling Jin (PhD), assistant professor of computer science in the College of Arts and Science, and GIFS research leaders, Dr. Ian Stavness (PhD), Research Chair in Computational Agriculture, and Dr. Leon Kochian (PhD), Canada Excellence Research Chair in Global Food Security, will use the new funds to build the Green SkEye platform. This innovative infrastructure combines state-of-the-art computing and plant imaging hardware to analyze plant populations in greenhouses at an unprecedented level of detail.

"At USask our researchers are working hard with the future in mind, and that means developing technologies that can contribute to greater food security around the globe," said Vice-President Research at USask, Baljit Singh. "We appreciate this investment, which allows us to help us attract and retain world-class expertise."

The platform will build on the foundation and strengths of the GIFS-led Plant Phenotyping and Imaging Research Centre (P2IRC), including data science and bioinformatics. GIFS' Plant Growth Facility will also provide greenhouse space and resources, as well as serve as a testing ground for the Green SkEye platform. GIFS will also provide additional funds for the development of this platform, with

other funds and support flowing through the Canada Excellence Research Chair in Food Security, led by GIFS.

"The Green SkEye platform represents an innovative solution to a challenging problem in agriculture and that solution would not be possible without our strong agtech ecosystem," said Dr. Steven Webb (PhD), GIFS chief executive officer. "We are excited to provide both matching funding and infrastructure for this collaborative project that contributes to our vision of a world where everyone has access to safe and nutritious food."

Current plant imaging systems widely used for research and commercial purposes are large and expensive. The

food security.

"This new facility builds upon data science and bioinformatics foundations established in the CFREF-funded Plant Phenotyping and Imaging Research Center, led by GIFS," said Stavness. "It will result in collaborations between GIFS, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, the Crop Development Centre, and a number of industry partners."

Funding provided through JELF helps institutions attract and retain outstanding researchers by providing up to 40 per cent of the cost of academic research infrastructure, with remaining funds solicited from other public and private sources.

Green SkEye platform is a made-in-Saskatchewan plant imaging system that will be globally unique, capturing real-time colour and near-infrared images at a fraction of the cost of commercial solutions for imaging plants in specialized chambers or on robotic gantries.

"The unique data generated by the Green SkEye system, in combination with existing field and genotyping data platforms, will provide a competitive advantage, helping attract and retain outstanding new researchers working on deep learning, data analytics, bioinformatics, genomics, and phenomics research," said Jin.

The transdisciplinary collaboration enabled by the project will advance our understanding of the interactions among the different elements of the agricultural system, ensuring Canada stays on the cutting edge when it comes to agricultural productivity and



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Jim Pattison receives Saskatchewan Distinguished Service Award

The Government of Saskatchewan has recognized Jim Pattison with the Saskatchewan Distinguished Service Award for his commitment to Saskatchewan's economy and his dedication to philanthropy.

Mr. Pattison was privately presented with the award in February 2022.

"Jim Pattison is the pride of Luseland, Saskatchewan," Premier Scott Moe said.

"His success is attributed to his hard work, dedication and consideration for the greater good. Saskatchewan is proud to present Mr. Pattison with the award, as his contributions to the province have benefited so many."

Pattison started his career as a car salesman and is now the CEO, chair and sole owner of the Jim Pattison Group, Canada's largest privately held company. The group owns Pattison Agriculture in Moosomin.

Pattison is also the owner of Ripley's Believe It or Not!, Guinness World Records, Save-On-Foods, Quality Foods, Real Estate Development and many media outlets across the western provinces.

He is also a philanthropist. Pattison donated \$50 million toward the construction of the children's hospital in Saskatoon, which is now named in his honour. Because of his generosity, many families in Saskatchewan are able to



seek medical help and treatment closer to home.

"Mr. Pattison has not only enriched Saskatchewan's economy, he has also improved the lives of the citizens in our province," Moe said. "I want to personally thank Mr. Pattison for his work and continued contributions."

Pattison has always found ways to give back to the province. In July 2017, he arranged for Hollywood icon Marilyn Monroe's crystal and rhinestone encrusted dress, made famous when she wore it to sing "Happy Birthday" to then United States President John F. Kennedy, to be displayed in his hometown of Luseland, drawing observers from far and wide. The dress made further stops at his Save-On-Food locations in Saskatoon and Regina, as well as other store locations in western Canada.

The Saskatchewan Distinguished Service Award recognizes non-residents of the province who have made outstanding contributions to Saskatchewan and the development of the province's economy, culture and society.

Nominations for the Saskatchewan Distinguished Service Award may be proposed by any ministry, agency or Crown corporation of the Government of Saskatchewan, or authority in which the government is a direct partner.

Including Pattison, 25 people have received the award since its inception in 1997.

2022 crop insurance enrolment deadline extended to April 14, 2022

Federal Agriculture and Agri-Food Minister Marie-Claude Bibeau and Saskatchewan Agriculture Minister David Marit have announced the 2022 Crop Insurance enrolment deadline is extended to April 14, 2022. Due to logistical challenges because of the ongoing supply-chain issues posed by the pandemic, there was a delay in the delivery of the 2022 Crop Insurance packages to producers' addresses. These challenges occurred after the packages left the Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation (SCIC) on February 25, 2022.

"Prairie producers continue to inspire

us with their resiliency and ability to rise to the challenges of the past year," said Marie-Claude Bibeau, federal Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food. "Risk management programs like crop insurance are essential to help producers prepare for the future, and we want to ensure they have the time they need to make decisions that are right for their business."

"We want to ensure producers have additional time to review their operation's risk management plans for the upcoming growing season," said Marit. "SCIC offers a full suite of programs to support produc-

ers, including Crop Insurance. We understand the challenges the Saskatchewan agriculture industry is currently facing, and I encourage producers to take the time now to review all Crop Insurance options and select features best suited for their operation."

As of March 10, 2022, the 2022 Crop Insurance packages were circulated and distributed to producers' addresses. Producers can anticipate receiving their packages in their mailboxes within the next few days.

SCIC staff are available to assist producers with their Crop Insurance endorsement and coverage details. Producers can also access and modify their Crop Insurance details directly through SCIC's online Crop

Insurance portal, CropConnect. Producers must select insured crops and coverage levels or make additional changes by April 14, 2022, or coverage will remain the same as the previous year. For more information, contact a local SCIC office, email customer.service@scic.ca, or call 1-888-935-0000.

Crop Insurance is a federal-provincial-territorial Business Risk Management program under the Canadian Agricultural Partnership. Under Crop Insurance, premiums for most programs are shared 40 per cent by participating producers, 36 per cent by the Government of Canada and 24 per cent by the Government of Saskatchewan. Administrative expenses are fully funded by governments, 60 per cent by Canada and 40 per cent by Saskatchewan.



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Saskatchewan leads Canada in wholesale trade growth

Saskatchewan is leading the nation in year-over-year growth in wholesale trade.

Saskatchewan's wholesale trade increased 34.7 per cent (seasonally adjusted) between January 2021 and January 2022, which was first among the provinces.

"This major increase in wholesale trade is yet another key indicator that Saskatchewan's economy is in an enviable position coming out of the pandemic and poised for real growth," Trade and Export Development Minister Jeremy Harrison said. "In 2021, Saskatchewan hit all-time records in agricultural exports, forestry product sales, and merchandise exports, while our unemployment rate has dropped to a seven-year low. This is good news for jobs, businesses, and our communities across the province as we continue to see significant investment pour into our strong, sus-

tainable Saskatchewan."

In 2021, Saskatchewan's agricultural exports were worth \$17.5 billion, the forestry sector hit an all-time high of more than \$1.8 billion in sales, and merchandise exports reached a new record high of \$37.2 billion. The unemployment rate in Saskatchewan dropped to 4.7 per cent as 30,100 new jobs gained in February 2022 compared to February 2021.

The top performing sectors that drove year-over-year growth in wholesale trade in January were farm products (up 31.6 per cent) motor vehicle and parts and accessories (up 17.3 per cent), food and beverage (up 7.6 per cent), and machinery and equipment (up 7.6 per cent).

In January 2022, the total value of wholesale trade in Saskatchewan was more than \$3.3 billion.

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Surviving cold, calving and Covid!

You can't live in this province without understanding why some people like to escape the cold of a Saskatchewan winter. This year we may have been blessed with much needed snow for our depleted soil moisture levels but let's face it, we could have done without that nasty cold and those bone-chilling winds. The memories of my childhood home in the forests of northwestern Ontario may fade as the years go by, but guaranteed there is one thing that sticks in my mind—there was no wind where I grew up!

Along with a desire to get "off the farm" and do a mini-getaway in February was the excitement of getting together with my daughters and their kids for a night at the spa. We have all tried to be cognizant of the covid rules during the past two years and it seemed that February break would give us an opportunity to spend a couple of days together and a chance to celebrate getting (sort of) back to normal.

Of course, as luck would have it, normal would be a few weeks coming. Within three days of our time in Moose Jaw, seven out of the seven of us that shared a suite together all had Covid and by the end of a week, 19 out of 21 of us from about five households all ended up with the sniffles, loss of taste, coughing and breathlessness that came along with it. I may have been a NyQuil junkie during isolation, but at least I can say Covid is behind me, at least until next time! (As for isolating, which I so carefully did, or so I thought, it wasn't enough to stop my better half from getting it anyhow.)

As the primary source of supplying sustenance for our two-month-old twin calf, hubby (when he got sick) had to turn over the reins of bottle-feeding to our twin grandsons (11) and their dad. The poor little fellow wasn't too sure at first who was on the other side of the bottle but when faced with starvation or a strange person holding the bottle, he had no choice but to adapt, at least temporarily.

The Lighter Side of
Life...
DOWN ON THE FARM

by *donna beutler*
FREELANCE PHOTOJOURNALIST
dl_beutler@yahoo.ca



When I stopped at the farm a few weeks ago, the twins had their eyes glued to the tv screen in their dining room. One might have assumed they were having some 'screen time' but no, they were glued to the action out in the barn's warm room and the corrals beyond via camera. It's easy to see how in tune they are with who's calving when and whether the momma cow of the moment is doing okay or not, all from the comfort of a warm kitchen.

Naturally that took me back to our way of doing things (you know—in the old days) and without cameras or even warm rooms then, my husband and I took turns checking every hour when we knew we were getting close to welcoming a new calf. If I could show my farm grandchildren a picture of our calving system of the 90's (for the 20 cows we had), I know without a shadow of a doubt, they would stare at us in disbelief and ask, "Is that really what you did in the olden days?"

Despite the simplicity of our little corral system and calving pen, it worked remarkably well, and we never

lost a calf or any ears, thanks in part to the nifty little heated garden shed (where there was only room for two calves and one adult or two adults and one calf) that we could dry every calf off on those bitterly cold January nights.

For many cattle farmers in this area, calving may just be starting, but for us it's already a distant memory and we can fully switch our attention to the next task at hand—seeding. I was reminded this week, after hearing Member of Parliament Robert Kitchen for Souris Moose Mountain paying tribute in the House of Commons to former Saskatchewan MP and Senator Len Gustafson who recently passed away, of the true heart of a farmer.

Mr. Kitchen referred to a particular line that Paul Harvey wrote in "God Made a Farmer," this being: "... who, planting time and harvest season, will finish his forty-hour week by Tuesday noon, and then pain'n from tractor back, put in another seventy-two hours." And while he referenced this as aptly describing Mr. Gustafson who was a businessman, a contractor, an MP, a Senator and a farmer, I couldn't help but think how it so aptly describes Saskatchewan farmers in general.

Many of us as farmers here in Saskatchewan may not have the political aspirations of Mr. Gustafson, but so many of us share the work ethics he had, the love of the land he had, the desire to do what we do with honesty and integrity.

And so farmers, be you cattle or grain farmers or both, let's continue being an integral part of the agricultural industry with the values so ingrained in us.

And on top of that, may we continue to inspire younger generations with our love of livestock and land.

And as my twin grandsons told me when I asked about their passion, may we too be as excited as they are about what they see as the first and foremost thing to be passionate about—farmin'!

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Calls for solution following CP Rail labor disruption

Brief labor disruption added to supply chain issues and had an impact on export products

BY SIERRA D'SOUZA BUTTS
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

A brief labor disruption that shut down CP Rail last week has led to calls for a solution that will prevent labor disruptions from stopping rail transportation in Canada in the future.

Moe calls for solution

In a letter to the Prime Minister, Saskatchewan Premier Scott Moe called for a solution to the labor disruptions in future.

"Export and import supply chains have been disrupted by the pandemic, floods in British Columbia, cold weather, rail service issues, illegal blockades, port congestion, and now Russia's brutal war of aggression on Ukraine," Saskatchewan Premier Scott Moe wrote to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

"We would also like to meet to discuss longer-term measures (such as railways being deemed an essential service, like longshoremen after strikes in the 1990s) to avoid future disruptions on Canadian railways, which can have a crippling impact not only on agricultural production, but also on Canada's and the world's food supply."

Marit concerned

"It's very detrimental, we're obviously as a government very concerned and I think last week we showed that in a number of actions that we proceeded with," Saskatchewan Agriculture Minister David Marit told the World-Spectator in an interview.

"When we heard talks were in trouble, there were four cabinet ministers here from the province who signed a joint letter to our respective federal ministers, encouraging them to look at either back to work legislation or binding arbitration, just so that the railway could keep functioning and yet the details of working out a contract could still go on, in a respectful manner that respects both parties."

"It's obviously very con-

cerning, it could have a huge impact on our trading relationship with a lot of countries, who have said to me personally in meetings that I've had with them, that one of the biggest challenges and concerns they have with doing business with Western Canada is logistics around delivery of product," he said.

"We've always tried to address those concerns, over the past number of years."

Marit shared his thoughts on the damage the stoppage of CP workers could have on Canada's supply chain.

"There's products moving all the time, a lot of it is just-in-time delivery. We've just gone through two years of a pandemic that's obviously brought challenges in the supply chain, in all aspects of it, not just in agriculture products, but all products, forestry, potash, oil and gas products come out by rail from here as well," he said.

"It has a huge impact on the economy for the province of Saskatchewan, but also globally. Customers around the world are relying on us to deliver product so when we see disruptions like this, it has a huge impact on us."

"Our concern as a government right now is damaging our reputation globally, to be able to deliver products in a timely manner. I know from experience, I have talked to companies around the world that have raised this as a major concern as well. Obviously if it's a concern



to them, it's something that we as governments have to look at a solution to resolve it.

"We're an exporting nation and we have to have the service there, to provide to put the product at the ports, so that it can be delivered in a timely manner to people around the world, who are relying on the supply chain."

"In the last two years we've seen the importance of the food supply chain and what it means to countries around the world, so we have to make sure that if we're going to be a top reputable country for growing product in a safe environmental manner, that we do, we also have to be top rated for delivering that product as well."

He said how Saskatchewan's potash production could be impacted, if the lockout and strike for CP employees continued longer than it did.

"It could impact our province significantly, and in respect of what's happening in Europe right now, with Russia invad-

ing the Ukraine, and we're very concerned about that, but it has an impact on potash around the world globally, supply chain and the grain supply as well out of Ukraine," Marit said.

"It brings a number of challenges where countries around the world that rely on imported food and products, it's very concerning for them as well as just to make sure that the system can be made functioning in a respectful manner to address their needs, and we heard it from countries and companies around the world where a lot of them do what we call 'just in time delivery', where the product gets there, they off load it, they process it right away and it's out of the door. It's kind of trying to be a fluid system so when you get a delay, it's going to take a significant amount of time to get ramped up to 100 per cent again, meanwhile you have ships that are waiting off shore to be loaded, now what happens if that product isn't at shore to the terminals that needs to be delivered,

then that shipment could be pushed back and waited even longer because it will bring another vessel to be loaded for something else."

"It's very concerning to us on this aspect and now we're getting into the spring time where a lot of European countries are thinking about putting a crop in the ground here in the next few weeks to a month."

"When there's a lock out, it's two sides that have to get together and come to an agreement, it's not ones right and ones wrong, there's issues on both sides for this that have to be worked out."

Disruption could impact ag sector, says APAS

Bill Prybylski, vice-president and director of Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan (APAS) says he is concerned regarding the supply chain, due to the recent labor disruption at CP.

"It could be extremely devastating on the supply chain, particularly agriculture goods, going in and out," Prybylski said.

"Particularly this time of year, with the fertilizer and chemicals that are going to be needed on the farm within the next four to six weeks, any disruptions in

the supply chain will have a detrimental affect on the farming economy for sure."

With Canada dealing with previous supply chain issues from the Covid-19 pandemic, Prybylski said the stoppage of work from CP employees could have worsened the issue.

"Certainly the supply chain issues have come to the forefront in the last several months with Covid and this is only going to make things worse, there's been areas of supply chain that show there are weaknesses and room for improvement and this will just exasperate the problems,

If a similar labor disruption happened again the agriculture sector of the country would be severely impacted, he said.

"From the agricultural perspective obviously a big one would be fertilizer, if there's a lengthy shut down at the rails there's going to be that much less fertilizer coming into places that it's needed," he said.

"As well as chemicals, if the chemicals aren't in place when needed then we have a very narrow window of application, and if the chemicals aren't available when we need them, then it would be a missed opportunity and farms would be taking a financial hit on that."

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Provincial Budget

SARM, APAS pleased with support for rural Sask

The Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities (SARM) and Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan (APAS) both say they are pleased with the provincial budget released on Wednesday.

"SARM appreciates this budget's increased dollars for initiatives and programs that benefit rural Saskatchewan and believes this government is on track despite the deficits incurred in recent years due to pandemic, weather events, and more," stated SARM in a press release Wednesday.

"Understanding that the bridge infrastructure deficit is growing, and additional investment is critical for Saskatchewan, SARM appreciates the investment to the Rural Integrated Roads for Growth (RIRG) Program of \$22.5 million, including \$7.5 million in stimulus funding."

"Road and bridge infrastructure is integral to rural life," SARM President, Ray Orb says. "This will help RMs maintain and improve economically strategic municipal roads and bridges that support agriculture, energy, forestry, and other rural-based sectors."

"The success of Saskatchewan's agriculture sector is imperative for the province's economic growth," continues SARM in its release. "Agriculture producers in Saskatchewan can take comfort knowing the province is funding the Business Risk Management Program at \$338.5 million and enhancing programs like Crop Insurance (and others) to ensure support will be there when it's needed. SARM also appreciates the continued investment in irrigation expansion."

"As municipal revenue sharing remains a reliable (and preferred) model for funding, one that RMs count on to serve their communities, SARM is disappointed that the funding was decreased for the second budget in a row, reduced to \$276 million. While increased funding to the municipal revenue sharing is needed, SARM greatly appreciates the continuation of the Targeted Sector Support Funding at \$1.5 million, money earmarked for capacity building and intermunicipal co-operation."

After the backlog and strain resulting from Covid-19, SARM is very appreciative of the budget focusing on funding and initiatives to improve our overall healthcare system. SARM is pleased with the inclusion of key rural focused initiatives such as physician recruitment, long term care, and funding for more healthcare programming and services in rural area."

"Continued investment to reduce rural crime is also welcome news," says Orb.

"SARM appreciates the noteworthy investments of \$50.7 million to create a Provincial Protective Services branch and a \$2.5 million increase for the Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency."

"With broadband being a service that is essential to the livelihood and economic growth in rural Saskatchewan, SARM hopes the \$337 million investment in information and communications technology infrastructure will reach rural Saskatchewan to further contribute to a network of reliable, and affordable broadband across this province."

The Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan (APAS) is supportive of the provincial government's 2022-23 budget for the Ministry of Agriculture.

"While the province continues to manage the debt after Covid-19, APAS remains appreciative of the government programs geared towards helping agriculture thrive in Saskatchewan," APAS President Ian Boxall said. "Given the higher crop values and crop production costs, we are especially appreciative to see the increase in Crop Insurance coverage for 2022-23."

APAS is appreciative of the \$338.5 million investment to fund business risk management programs. Among the programs included in the budget are Crop Insurance, AgriStability, AgriInvest, and Western Livestock Price Insurance.

"Producers are coming off of a historic drought and heading into one of the most unpredictable years on record," Boxall said. "It's important for the provincial government to support producers in case another drought is on the way this summer."

APAS is also appreciative of new investments in research, irrigation, and PST measures to support agriculture.

Moving forward, APAS would like to see the provincial government continue to invest in programs such as AgriInvest, AgriStability and AgriRecovery to help producers through challenging times, be it economically or due to drought.



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Crop, forestry residues fuel USask, industry green project

With Saskatchewan's north home to a boreal forest that's larger than Germany, and its south making up nearly half of Canada's cropland, the province's agriculture and lumber industries alone annually produce about 24 million tonnes of biomass residue.

Now, University of Saskatchewan (USask) researcher Dr. Ajay Dalai (PhD) is working with a Calgary-based industry, Tidewater Renewables, to develop a novel integrated process to produce renewable natural gas (RNG, also called biomethane) from the biomass.

The goal is to help decarbonize the heating and power production sectors by replacing non-renewable natural gas with biomethane and help Canada's transition to a low-carbon economy, said Dalai, a distinguished professor in USask's College of Engineering and Canada Research Chair of Bioenergy and Environmentally Friend-

ly Chemical Processing.

The process Dalai is developing aims to make cost-efficient biomethane from the vast volume of agricultural biomass available on the Prairies. While some of the material is used as animal feed and bedding, a lot is left in fields or hauled to landfills, where it rots and releases methane—a greenhouse gas whose impact on climate change is nearly 25 times worse than carbon dioxide.

Monetizing the carbon in biomass to produce renewable biomethane locally instead of allowing methane from decomposition to contribute to climate change is sensible, especially as it also reduces the reliance on non-renewable natural gas, Dalai said.

"The idea is to digest the residues from agriculture biomass to make methane," he said. "We collect the methane, take the solid and gasify to get more methane. Then

we take the byproduct gases from the gas we make and convert that into additional methane as well," Dalai said.

The biomethane produced this way is identical to the methane in natural gas and can be directly injected into existing natural gas networks. Diverting the biomethane, rather than see it simply released into the atmosphere, mitigates its global warming impact.

Dalai is developing a novel integrated process that uses both biochemical (anaerobic digestion) and thermochemical (gasification) methods to produce RNG.

Tidewater is providing \$150,000 annually for three years for the project. Dalai is also applying for an Alliance grant from the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, which would provide \$300,000 annually for the project if he is awarded funding. At least six highly qualified personnel will be trained as part

of the project.

His team aims to conduct a comparative study of the different biomethane production processes and the most cost-effective and environmentally benign method will enable Tidewater experts to scale up the best option to an industrial scale.

Natural gas, petroleum and coal are inequitably distributed across the globe, while biomass is more evenly spread among countries, Dalai noted. The technology he's developing will not only benefit Tidewater to build and commission an economically viable biomethane plant, but it also could be exported for use elsewhere in the world, he said.

Sharing the findings with other renewable energy companies in Canada to set up cost-effective biomethane plants will help them reduce carbon emissions while creating opportunities for farmers, engineers, and researchers, Dalai said.

A new opportunity to develop livestock and human vaccine in Saskatchewan:

SARM supports VIDO's effort to strengthen the response to infectious disease

The Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities (SARM) Board of Director's met with the University of Saskatchewan's Vaccine Infectious Disease Organization (VIDO) in January, to discuss the ways rural municipalities can support and strengthen the world's response to infectious diseases. This includes helping to establish VIDO as Canada's Centre for Pandemic Research.

"We are excited about our newly formed unity to stand as friends of VIDO, assisting VIDO with the promotion of the organization and their important work," says Ray Orb, SARM President. "We acknowledge and support the extensive work VIDO has done in the past four decades. We recognize many of our rural members' livelihoods depend on the health and well-being of their livestock and VIDO is leading the way in developing essential animal vaccines and antivirals."

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- VIDO is developing a vaccine for Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD),
- VIDO created a vaccine for lung plaque in cattle, and
- VIDO continues the work of developing a vaccine for African Swine Fever.

"Not only does SARM support VIDO's critical work with livestock, but with their efforts surrounding Covid19. Recently, it's been proven that we need local organizations like VIDO, Canada's Centre for Pandemic Research, to take the lead in developing vaccines.

VIDO has taken the initiative and advanced a Covid19 vaccine to clinical trials. They are an organization that is here to problem solve on multiple levels," says Orb.



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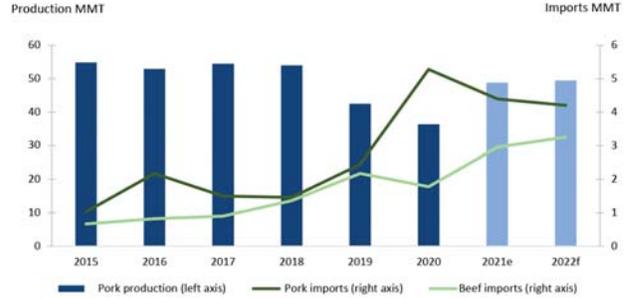
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Ontario 550 lb. steer	230	220	215
Ontario 850 lb. steer	195	185	155
Ontario market hog	100	80	85
Ontario feeder hog	145	105	100
Manitoba market hog	95	75	80
Manitoba feeder hog	155	95	125
Isovean \$/head	60	60	50



Above: Table 1: Livestock prices (\$/cwt) are expected to improve year over year and to exceed the 5-year average.

Above: Figure 1: Chinese '22 pork production growth likely to limit pork imports; beef imports continue to grow.

2022 cattle and hog sector outlook

The three major trends to monitor for cattle and hog operations in 2022 include:

- China's red meat imports and its efforts to rebuild its pig herd
- Feed costs
- Stabilizing red meat demand

It will be another year of split margins in the cattle sector—positive for cow-calf and pressured for feedlots.

Prices will rise year-over-year (YoY) and be better than their respective five-year averages (Table 1). But, continued growth in feed costs has taken—and will continue to take—a big bite out of profitability.

Average hog prices should be higher in 2022, both YoY and relative to their five-year averages, and that will help produce positive margins for isowean operations. But it will also be a year that farrow-to-finish operations in the East will benefit more from a relative feed cost advantage than those in the West, where some profitability challenges may be present.

At the end of last year, higher cattle placement led to a strong supply of fed cattle in early 2022. But high feed costs mean fed cattle will be marketed at lower weights, leading us to forecast Canadian cattle production at 6.4 billion lbs. in 2022, a 2.5% YoY loss. That, along with lower beginning stocks, has dampened the forecast for exports in 2022.

Hog production, forecast at 6 billion lbs. in 2022, is flat compared to 2021 production.

Continued on page C15



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USask researchers aim to boost uranium, wheat sectors with novel technology

Two University of Saskatchewan (USask) projects have been awarded Natural Sciences and Engineering Council (NSERC) Alliance Grants totaling \$885,000 for research aimed at developing novel technologies to improve productivity and profitability in the key agriculture and uranium sectors.

Dr. Yuanming Pan (PhD), professor in geological sciences at USask's College of Arts and Science, was awarded \$60,000 over two years to further develop and refine a novel technique he invented for uranium exploration involving studying radiation-induced defects in quartz and calcite.

He is working with an industry partner, Baselo Energy Corp, which is contributing \$30,000 cash and \$67,800 of in-kind support that includes training two highly qualified USask personnel who will do summer field work as junior geologists on the project.

Baselo Energy last year announced a rich uranium find, ACKIO, at its Hook project in northern Saskatchewan's Athabasca Basin—an area that hosts some of the world's highest grade uranium deposits. Baselo wants to add Pan's novel technique to its exploration program in and near the basin.

"When we think uranium, we think radiation," said Pan. "But exploration for uranium rarely uses radiation directly because typical radiation like alpha particles can be stopped by rocks and soils easily and aren't detectable."

In three previous projects, Pan showed that the quartz defects form when the mineral is bombarded by alpha particles emitted by the radioactive decay of uranium.

Pan said this damage occurs over a geological timescale of thousands of years when hot aqueous fluids carrying dissolved uranium pass through rocks, leaving behind the tell-tale trail of their passage. The defects are minuscule, so researchers use a highly sensitive technique called electron paramagnetic resonance (EPR) spectroscopy to analyze them.

"What we are doing essentially is mea-

suring these radiation-induced defects in order to map out where the fluids came from, where they went—the pathway or conduit of these ancient fluids," he said. "The pathways are very useful for exploring new uranium deposits."

Pan said although many northern mines contain calcite, the mineral hasn't been tested for radiation damage to the extent done for quartz—something he plans to do in this project.

"My students and I are interested in finding new defects in both quartz and calcite, so this research really is a mixture of pure science and applied science in helping the company grow their understanding of the ACKIO deposit."

Breeding fusarium-resistant wheat through advanced genetics

A large multidisciplinary team led by Dr. Randy Kutcher (PhD), professor in the College of Agriculture and Bioresources and a plant pathologist at USask's Crop Development Centre (CDC), and Dr. Lipu Wang (PhD), research officer at CDC, was awarded \$825,000 over three years to develop wheat plants with stronger genetic resistance to Fusarium head blight (FHB).

Industry partners Western Grains Research Foundation (WGRF), and the Saskatchewan Wheat Development Commission (SWDC) are providing total cash and in-kind contributions of \$412,500, bringing the total project value to \$1.24 million.

A fungal disease, FHB shrivels kernels in the grain, causing severe losses in yield and quality.

"Cultivating resistant wheat varieties is an efficient, eco-friendly and often most economical way to control FHB when it's part of an integrated pest management program that includes crop rotation, appropriate seeding rates, and use of fungicides when the situation warrants," said Kutcher.

He said the project will provide a "selection of tools" to achieve several objectives



Dr. Randy Kutcher (PhD), professor in the College of Agriculture and Bioresources and a plant pathologist at USask's Crop Development Centre.

and can accelerate plant breeding cycles and benefit the wheat industry.

The current problem with FHB is linked to growers' preference for short plants—they want less plant and more seed. Yet researchers have found that the genes for short plants are also associated closely with genes for susceptibility to Fusarium.

"So, one part of the project is to try to find new dwarfing genes, or somehow figure out how to break that linkage and separate the genes," said Kutcher.

The second objective is to see what's actually happening inside the plants, so when plants become infected, researchers can understand changes in the plant metabolism. Researchers want to learn if FHB-resistant plants produce different compounds than susceptible plants.

To select plants that are less prone to disease, a PhD student is using technology at the Canadian Light Source (CLS) at USask to study and image infected plants. The

goal is to use the images to eventually develop bench-top equipment that can identify which kernels or wheat spikes are diseased—currently a laborious, subjective, and error-prone task that plant breeders and pathologists perform by visually rating thousands of plants and harvest samples for FHB damage.

"By incorporating technology such as artificial intelligence and deep machine learning to identify Fusarium, we can develop a more consistent assessment process that we can initially offer to breeders and eventually the industry," said Kutcher.

One post-doctoral fellow, as well as two PhD and four MSc students, will be trained as part of the project. USask co-applicants and collaborators on the project from the Colleges of Arts and Science, Engineering, and Medicine, and from CLS. External collaborators are from Huazhong Agricultural University in China, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, SWDC and WGRF.

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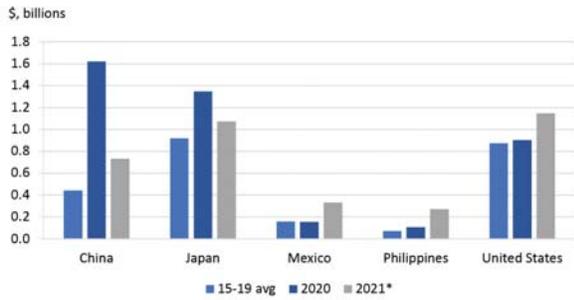
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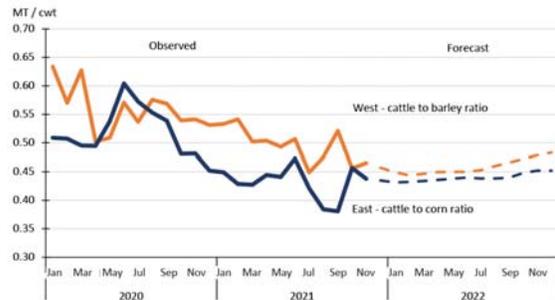


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Above: Figure 2: Growth in 2021 Canadian pork exports to U.S. and others help offset lower exports to China.



Above: Figure 3: Cattle prices have declined relative to feed prices.

2022 cattle and hog sector outlook

Continued from page C12

Three trends to watch in 2022

1. The legacy of ASF and China's efforts to rebuild its hog herd

In 2022, China's hog production is forecast to grow YoY, and pork production will grow 5%, the second year in a row it's risen (Figure 1) after low prices and disease outbreaks led to higher YoY slaughter in 2021. Pork imports will decline as domestic pork production is expected to help total meat supplies reach pre-ASF levels but remain elevated beyond historical levels. In 2021, they fell 16.7% from the sharp high seen in 2020, and they're expected to fall a further 4.5% in 2022. Year-over-year growth in beef imports is expected to continue for the second year in a row, with the USDA forecasting 10.2% growth in 2022 after 65.5% growth in 2021.

According to some commentators, China has struggled to produce its planned meat output for several years now. Some Chinese estimates suggest that by following their current five-year livestock plan, Chinese producers will regain the output of 2014 only by 2025, primarily by recapturing the pork production lost to ASF. The national plan calls for increased self-sufficiency in livestock and meat production, a questionable goal given the country's available land and clean water supplies.

China's pork production may be stalled for the short term as disease continues to take a toll and the sow herd continues to rebuild, implying opportunities for Canadian exporters. Chinese imports of Canadian pork exploded in 2020 (Figure 2). They then fell 54.9% YoY in 2021 while remaining 65.7% above the previous five-year average. It's the same story for Japan, where lower YoY exports were still 16.9% above their five-year average.

Exports to our other principal import markets gained in 2020 and continued to grow in 2021. That suggests global pork demand remains elevated and can be expected to support price growth soon.

2. Feed availability and prices in Canada

While feed costs remain well above their five-year averages in Eastern and Western Canada in 2022, they should drop YoY.

As prices for livestock rise and feed costs decline, the livestock-to-feed ratios in Canada's east and west are expected to improve moderately. For cattle, the improvement in prices expected in 2022 won't be enough to offset the steep increase in feed costs seen in 2020 and 2021, despite a levelling of feed price increases in 2022. The price-to-feed ratio is projected to be flat and at lower levels than the last two years (Figure 3).

3. Domestic red meat demand expected to gain ground in 2022

Between 2015 and 2019, the annual average Canadian consumption growth for the two red meats averaged -1.0% for pork and 1.0% for beef. In 2020, YoY pork domestic availability fell while beef remained steady.

Preliminary estimates suggested declining Canadian beef consumption in 2021, but that may prove to be a unique aberration that will reverse in 2022. Domestic consumption had been slowly climbing for five previous years and stabilized in 2020. Pork consumption declined 10% YoY in 2016, pulling down the five-year average, then it quickly gained ground between 2017 and 2020. But the first year of the pandemic was extraordinary in terms of the sudden fall in pork consumption - and whatever decline in 2021's red meat consumption is realized may paint an even bleaker picture.

It may not be as bleak as it seems, however. The falling consumption can be explained by dips in household income while meat prices rose, foodservice shutdowns and two years of huge boosts to Canadian red meat exports.

Retail inflation in December stood at 11.9% and 8.4% YoY for beef and pork, a higher figure than other animal proteins such as chicken (6.2%), eggs (3.8%) and dairy (3.0%). We should see less inflation over the next few months as various supply chain issues are sorted out. But prices for red meats are likely to stabilize at high levels given higher costs across the entire supply chain and strong domestic and global demand.



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Possible impacts of the Russia/Ukraine conflict

Country	Barley	Corn	Canola	Wheat	Sunflower oil
United States	179 (9)	58,219 (1)	160 (6)	25,113 (3)	44 (12)
Ukraine	4,604 (4)	26,930 (4)	2,541 (3)	19,132 (5)	6,003 (1)
Argentina	2,779 (5)	35,034 (2)	14 (10)	12,647 (7)	721 (4)
Russia	5,155 (3)	4,173 (6)	488 (4)	37,179 (1)	3,168 (2)
European Union	6,700 (1)	4,205 (5)	288 (5)	31,322 (2)	755 (3)
Brazil	0 (NA)	32,484 (3)	0 (NA)	736 (17)	0 (NA)
Canada	2,339 (6)	1,393 (12)	9,182 (1)	22,435 (4)	1 (25)
Australia	5,903 (2)	65 (29)	2,754 (2)	16,267 (6)	2 (24)

Above: Table 1. Average exports in thousand metric tonnes between 2017 and 2021 (rank in parentheses).

The invasion of Ukraine by Russia touches us all. The unfolding tragedy hits close to home given the large Ukrainian community in Canada. Acknowledging the immense human and economic tolls of the war, we will focus here on the econom-

ic impacts on the Canadian ag and food sectors of the conflict and the associated sanctions.

Trade with Ukraine and Russia

An expected outcome of the war is that trade with Ukraine will slow down and that sanctions imposed on Russia will make trade with that country more difficult. Both Ukraine and Russia are not large trade partners to Canadian ag and food businesses. In the last five years, Canada has exported on average \$65 million in ag and food products to Ukraine and imported for about \$33 million of these products. Over the same period, on average, Canada has exported \$80 million and imported for \$93 million in ag and food products to Russia. These markets are small compared to Canada's main trading partners, nonetheless they can be important to some Canadian businesses.

Grains and oilseeds

We expect the war to have an important impact on the grains and oilseeds market, adding more volatility to already unpredictable markets. Ukraine and Russia are major exporters of barley, corn, canola, wheat and sunflower oil (Table 1). If the conflict and accompanying sanctions negatively impact the production or the movement of those

commodities, shortage on the world market or shifts in trade flows would cause prices to rise.

Ag commodity markets have already been shaken by the war. Last Thursday, futures for corn, soybean, canola and wheat were significantly up, some even hitting their daily upper limit. However, those gains were erased soon afterward as it appears that products related to the energy sector might be exempt of US sanctions. On Monday, following the announcement over the weekend of new and tougher sanctions on Russia, markets were again on edge with wheat up more than 5%.

Fertilizers

Fertilizer prices are already inflated because of various disruptions from the pandemic. The conflict could add to these disruptions if sanctions affect Russia's fertilizer exports.

Continued on page C29



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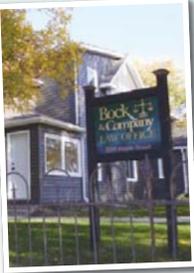
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Western Manitoba farmland values up 17.6, 12.2%

BY SIERRA D'SOUZA BUTTS

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According to Farm Credit Canada (FCC)'s 2021 Farmland Values Report there has been an 8.3 per cent increase in average farmland values for Canada, up from a 5.4 per cent increase in 2020.

The annual report provides a look at the regional land value trends across Canada in price per acre.

In FCC's report, Saskatchewan reported an average increase of 7.4 per cent in farmland values. This came after a 5.4 per cent increase in 2020 and a 6.2 per cent increase in 2019.

Manitoba farmland values increased by 9.9 per cent during 2021, following a 3.6 per cent increase in 2020 and a 4 per cent increase in 2019.

The FCC Farmland Values Report highlighted some significant increases in average land values in several areas, with the highest recorded in Ontario of 22.2 per cent and British Columbia of 18.1 per cent. Two of the Atlantic provinces followed with increases of 15.2% in Prince Edward Island and 12.3% in Nova Scotia.



Kevin Weedmark photo

A field of sunflowers between Reston and Virden. Western Manitoba saw the highest increases in farm values in the province, with a 17.6 per cent rise in Parkland and 12.2 per cent in Westman.

Manitoba's southwest grows farmland values

FCC's appraiser for Manitoba, Peter Alder, said the value of farmland increased in Manitoba because of the low interest rates and the high commodity prices, but he also said it's a combination of other factors as well.

"Overall we see increases across the province here in Manitoba, and over the years we've had a steady increase, a steady demand for farmland. Maybe in the Westman area and Parkland area we had to catch up a little bit," he said.

"It's a matter of supply and demand, let's say you have some healthy farm operations that want to expand their land base and if that piece of land comes of for sale and it's good quality land, they will be willing to pay that extra amount for the land."

Alder "It comes down to the quality of

that piece of land, if that piece of land is able to produce a good yield, based on the high commodity prices, it will be much more desirable for the farmer. It is one of the drivers, I wouldn't say it's the main one, I think it's a combination of many drivers."

Manitoba's farmland regions in Parkland and Westman increased the most in the province, according to FCC's 2021 report.

Parkland increased its average farmland values by 17.6 per cent averaging \$2,600 per acre and Westman increased by 12.2 per cent averaging \$3,100 per acre.

Although the southwest regions in Manitoba reported a higher increase compared to its eastern regions, Alder pointed out those regions were somewhat catching up to the province's eastern areas.

"That 12.2 per cent increase in the west

man area, it may be a little bit above the average but we were a little bit lower in the past years, and that factor of catching up as well, I think that played a role too," he said.

Regions such as eastman increased by 5.4 per cent yet averaged in farmland values at \$4,800 per acre, which still remains higher than Manitoba's southwest regions.

"At the end of the day it comes down to healthy farmers, good productive land, high commodity prices and land prices. As well, we had some online auctions or tender sales, that's what you'll find most of the time for land sales."

"We see fewer sales that go through a real estate agent, if I have a close tender sale or close auction, first of all I have control of who the land will go to as a seller, and secondly as a buyer, I might be willing to bid a little bit more or to pay more to get

that piece of land. There's not that interaction between the buyer and seller anymore and I'm not saying that's a main driver but certainly those are the transactions where we see \$200 being paid more, per acre."

Alder spoke about the link between the commodity prices and crop insurance coverage playing a role in increasing the province's farmland values.

"At the end of the day if I have a piece of land and I do my math regarding how much yield I would get or how much I wouldn't, then I'd factor how much I would get from my insurance coverage," he said.

"I guess we had a rough ride because of the drought and the heat stress on the vegetation (last year), but even if I still get some money from my crop insurance it still gives me some cash flow to be invested again. With the high commodity prices due to the supply issues we had, that certainly makes the math for the farmer look better to invest into land that is more expensive."

Alder was asked what he thinks the future of farmland values in Manitoba would look like.

"Based on the path that Manitoba has been on for several years and based on the history from its numbers, I would suspect that the values will steadily increase. In some areas it will be more pronounced, in some areas a little bit less, but overall based on historical values, we'll see an increase of our land values over the next couple of years."

"Here in Manitoba supply and demand is a main factor, strong healthy farms that's on the supply managed side, or on the grain side as well. The quality of the land starts to play a role as well, if we have that plateau land for example versus grain land and vegetation land, that might be a factor as well. We will see in the next couple of years how it will evolve if we have drought, these are all factors that might influence the land value but the overall drive for us in Manitoba is supply and demand."



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The dollars and 'sense' behind wetland conservation: USask research

A team of University of Saskatchewan (USask) researchers has built a tool designed to estimate a value for wetland services to help farmers, land planners and policy makers understand the benefits of wetland conservation in agriculture.

As viable farmland becomes more important for sustainable food production, there are many pressures faced by farmers to convert wetlands into usable farmland, thus decreasing the overall wetland area. It has been estimated that inland freshwater wetlands have decreased by 70 per cent since the beginning of the 20th century.

Although at first glance wetlands seem to be wasted space across an agricultural landscape, wetlands provide 'services' to people and the surrounding landscape, including acting as environmental filters, storing nutrients and water, and providing habitats for other species to live in.

"Calculating wetland ecosystem services or measures of importance is almost as difficult as quantifying the importance

of fresh air," said Dr. Chrystal Mantyka-Pringle (PhD), a conservation planning biologist and adjunct professor at the USask School of Environment and Sustainability. "You don't realize how important they are until they are gone."

In a new publication in the journal Wetlands Ecology and Management, the USask research team analyzed a myriad of global factors to help them determine what contributes or influences the value of a wetlands, and translated these findings into monetary values to help represent the relative "worth" of each area to society and agricultural operations.

The team collaborated with Environment and Climate Change Canada and the Wildlife Conservation Society Canada on the project.

The study found more densely populated areas increased the value of the wetland as there are a greater number of people benefiting from the ecosystem services contributed by wetlands. Other factors that influenced wetland value included income levels and the level of agricultural productivity in the area.

"Taking all these factors into account, the article and tool led by Dr. Eric Asare (PhD) from the USask College of Agriculture and Bioresources generates approximate dollar values and ranges of values representing wetland areas that reflect the level of regulating services (for example, water and nutrient filtration, climate control and flood control) and provisioning services (pollination, ability to



Above: Dr. Eric Asare (lead of paper and tool development), Dr. Chrystal Mantyka-Pringle (PhD), Dr. Ken Belcher (PhD) and Dr. Bob Clark (PhD).



Above: "Vanishing wetlands" by Cam Forester. (Painted for the Virtual Water Gallery/Global Water Futures.)

produce food, building and crafting materials) wetlands provide.

"Specific data that reflect wetland values are hard to obtain and measure if you don't have the resources or expertise to collect it yourself and hence a tool such as this one can be useful to farmers, managers and policy makers," the researchers stated in the publication.

In populated prairie areas closer to cities with lower density of wetlands, wetlands can have values averaging \$6,500 per hectare (ha) per year for their combined services, whereas wetlands in areas of lower population density, but with higher wetland area, are valued at about half this amount. These estimated values for ecosystem services can be substantially greater than the net returns of cultivating canola or spring wheat, which range from \$85/ha up to \$500/ha depending on the

location.

With climate change and tumultuous weather conditions affecting agricultural production, conserving wetlands and understanding their benefits are vitally important for those who make land use decisions.

"If nature hurts, we hurt as humans, and we need to build back resiliency in agricultural and other systems by restoring wetlands and nature."

Other USask researchers involved in the project include USask College of Agriculture and Bioresources professor Dr. Ken Belcher (PhD) and USask Global Institute for Water Security (GIWS) research scientist Dr. Bob Clark (PhD).

The research was supported by the GIWS, Environment and Climate Change Canada, and the Prairie Water grant program.

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Flea Beetle Damage on Canola

Scout for flea beetle damage in several places throughout the field, including field edges, hedgerows, and bluffs, ideally at five points, in a "W" pattern, checking 10 plants at each point (to get a representative sample).

10% **20%** **25%** **35%** **50%**

25% is the action threshold and 50% is the economic threshold

Once the action threshold is reached, consider applying foliar insecticide if prior to the four-leaf stage and if flea beetles are still present and actively feeding (by checking for evidence of fresh feeding wounds and/or damage to newly-emerged leaves) to prevent reaching economic injury levels.

Stem Feeding
Include the inspection of cotyledon stems when flea beetle scouting. No specific threshold exists to evaluate the impact of stem feeding, but due to the function of the stem (supplying water to the leaves) and its fragility when young, stem feeding can be more damaging than leaf defoliation and even cause plant fatality (especially under hot and dry conditions).

Feeding damage is less of a concern with moderate temperatures, good soil moisture and an adequate plant stand, but it becomes a greater concern with lower plant stands, lower moisture and higher temperatures.

2 cm
3/4"



Flea beetles become active with the first extended period of warm weather in April and May. Striped flea beetles (shown) emerge from winter rest one to four weeks before the all-black crucifer flea beetles.

Canola seeding steps to reduce flea beetle risk

By KEITH GABERT

Canola growers can take steps before or at seeding to improve crop competition against flea beetles. These include:

Residue management

Standing stubble protects soil from erosion and collects more snow. Stubble also improves flea beetle management by providing shelter from wind. With direct seeding, the remaining stubble can keep flea beetles feeding on leaves—and not down on the stems. A few bites on a leaf are far less damaging than a few bites on the stem.

Seed decisions

If growers have some wiggle room on last minute seed treatment decisions, they may upgrade their seed treatment. Enhanced insecticide seed treatments will improve flea beetle protection, especially when used in combination with the following management practices. Arrange a check strip comparison if you have two seed treatments on the same variety.

Aim for five to eight plants per square foot

This target is good for yield, and more plants mean fewer flea beetles per plant and more seed treatment per acre.

Take steps for fast emergence and more vigour

Rapid emergence and vigorous early-season growth can extend seed treatment protection until the four-leaf stage, which is generally considered to be the end of the flea beetle risk period. To achieve these objectives, seed shallow, at a reduced speed, into a warm, moist seedbed. Use only safe rates of seed-placed fertilizer. Our best recommendation is to use only phosphorus in the seed row and no more than 20 lb./ac. of actual phosphate. Higher rates of seed-placed fertilizer can add more stress, slow the pace of growth and reduce the plant stand.

Once the crop has emerged

Even with all of these steps, flea beetle damage can still reach the economic threshold of 25 per cent leaf area loss across the field. If feeding is a concern, scout frequently, especially in warm, dry conditions that are ideal for flea beetles.

Flea beetles become active with the first extended period of warm weather in April and May. Striped flea beetles emerge from winter rest one to four weeks before the crucifer flea beetles, and it may take three weeks for all overwintering adults to emerge.

Canola Watch has good tips on the spray decision and tips to improve results. Please go to canolawatch.org/fundamentals, click on the Insects section and read "The flea beetle spray decision: 8 steps" and "How to assess leaf area loss from flea beetles".

Keith Gabert is a Canola Council of Canada agronomy specialist and a contributor to Canola Watch. Subscribe for the timely agronomy emails at canolawatch.org/signup.



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Partnership expanding work on National Index on AgriFood Performance

Today, Protein Industries Canada announced a co-investment into the second phase of Canada's National Index on Agri-Food Performance, alongside lead partners Pulse Canada and the Global Institute for Food Security (GIFS) at the University of Saskatchewan, with the support of David McInnes, Coordinator of the National Index on Agri-Food Performance.

The National Index on Agri-Food Performance is focused on developing a set of sustainability indicators and metrics related to Canada's agriculture and agri-food industries, which will help increase Canada's competitiveness in the global market. The Index will shine a spotlight on the sustainable practices being utilized in the industry, while also helping address where improvements can be made.

"As Canadians and consumers seek food that has been produced and processed sustainably to put on their tables, Canada has everything needed to become a significant global leader," explained the Honourable François-Philippe Champagne, Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry. "And through the creation of a National Index on Agri-Food Performance, we will ensure even more domestic and international opportunities for our sustainable, Canadian crops."

"Innovation is key to the agricultural sector's competitive advantage and long-term economic prosperity in Canada. With the ability to measure our sustainability efforts through the National Index on Agri-Food Performance, we will strengthen Canada's reputation and competitiveness as a supplier of high quality food products into the future," said the Honourable Ma-

rie-Claude Bibeau, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food.

In addition to Protein Industries Canada, Pulse Canada and GIFS, more than 75 organizations spanning the food system are collaborating to advance this work. This includes diverse representation not only from the agriculture and agri-food industry, but also from adjacent sectors such as financial services, innovation organizations, environmental NGOs, and federal and provincial governments. The partners are focused on showing how agri-food production and supply in Canada is economically, environmentally and socially sustainable. Additionally, they are striving to ensure that sustainability is communicated to both consumers and trade partners, helping build trust and improve Canada's national agri-food brand.

"Canada has a reputation for sustainable production and processing practices. Having a set of metrics and indicators that measures these practices on a consolidated basis across the agriculture and agri-food sector will allow us to further back up our sustainability claims, strengthening Canada's reputation and global brand and increasing trust in our products," Protein Industries Canada CEO Bill Greuel said. "The ability to measure our sustainability efforts will help increase our competitiveness in the global market—particularly as we work to become a global leader in the production of plant-based ingredients and foods. Sustainability is an important distinguisher in this market, and this project will help further establish Canada as a leader in the area."

Continued on Page C28



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Farmland values up 14.7% in SE Sask

BY SIERRA D'SOUZA BUTTS
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER
According to FCC's 2021 Farmland Values Report there was an 8.3 per cent increase in average farmland values for Canada last year, an increase from the 5.4 per cent increase in values in 2020.

Saskatchewan reported an average increase of 7.4 per cent in farmland values. This came after a 5.4 per cent increase in 2020 and a 6.2 per cent increase in 2019.

Manitoba farmland values increased by 9.9 per cent during 2021, following a 3.6 per cent increase in 2020 and a 4 per cent increase in 2019.

The FCC Farmland Values Report highlighted some significant increases in average land values in several areas, with the highest recorded in Ontario of 22.2 per cent and British Columbia of 18.1 per cent. Two of the Atlantic provinces followed with increases of 15.2% in Prince Edward Island and 12.3% in Nova Scotia.

Farmland values grow in eastern Saskatchewan

While much of the Prairies were impacted by drought in 2021, Chris Préjet, appraiser for Saskatchewan at FCC, stated that farmland in eastern regions of the province increased in value because they were impacted less by the drought.

"In line with the national trend, we saw factors in with interest rates, the favorable commodity prices, they were able to somewhat offset as the farming income was not as impacted from the drought," Préjet said. "The east side actually saw lesser impact from that drought so the operations in that half, generally speaking, were able to take advantage of higher commodity prices with their slightly better yields. That increased farming income which increased demand, and supply wasn't able to keep up with that demand."

Although drought played an important role in reducing yields in some areas of the country, Préjet said eastern Saskatchewan



Green fields of crops between Moosomin and Fairlight last summer. Kevin Weedmark photo

was less impacted.

"It's that impact from the drought, they are able to get a bigger yield than the west half might have got," he said.

"Because of that, they (eastern regions) were able to capitalize on the higher prices which then generates more income, that then gives more purchasing power or more strength for demand, with more demand comes more competition and it leads to the higher market values that we saw this past year."

Out of the six regions in Saskatchewan, FCC reported the east central and southeast regions as the highest increase for its average of farmland values.

The east central region increased by 11.3 per cent, averaging \$1,900 per acre and the southeast region increased by 14.7 per cent, averaging \$2,200 per acre, in FCC's 2021 report.

"The southeast and east central region

had better growing conditions, more timely rains that kind of thing, an overall less impact from that drought so that paired with the lower interest rates and crop insurance pay outs, they were able to generate more income and that increased that demand. Those were the main things that we saw in those two regions there," said Préjet.

A common trend that FCC found for farmlands increasing in value in most areas in Canada, was because of high commodity prices, he said.

"Let's say your yields are registered to what it normally would be, but then the commodity prices are higher, you're then generating more farm income where you have more working capital, you can then use that towards your operation," Préjet said.

"Some farmers were using that towards buying land, and with that purchasing power from that increased income, they were able to compete more for properties. That purchasing power led to more competition, with the supply staying the same but the demand increasing, that generally leads to increases in market values."

He said the purpose of FCC's annual Farmland Values Report is to get feedback and to help producers plan ahead.

"It's another tool that operations can use to plan, to prepare themselves and to get a feeling about what's going on in the markets and their areas," said Préjet.

"They're there locally, they do see and hear from farms in the area, they know their own markets so they use this report and on top of what they know already, to gauge where the market is going."

Préjet was asked what he thinks the future of farmland values in Saskatchewan will be.

"I can say that our economics team does see the commodity prices being strong for the rest of the year. There is the uncertainty of how the crop season is going to go, obviously we can't predict that, but there is some optimism going forward this year. We'll see how things play out."

"I think farmland values increasing throughout Canada just shows the strength of the industry really, and that's just reflected again in Saskatchewan. There's a strong demand which means farms are doing well overall, obviously some are facing more challenges than others but overall it just speaks to the strength of the industry."

He said the reason why Canada increased its overall farmland values was because of higher commodity prices.

"It leads back to the higher commodity prices, low interest rates and just that environment that we were in last year, those were probably the main factors that drove the market."

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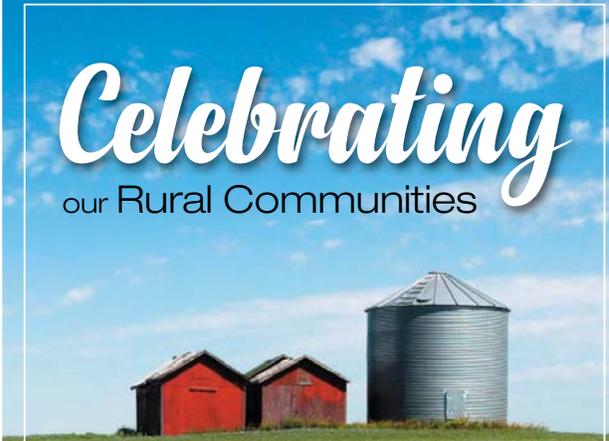
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The Cloverbud District 5 speech winners. From left are Jace Beutler (first) from Wawota Beef Club, Austynn Brehaut (second) from Wawota Beef Club, and Jenna Leeds (third) from Riders and Wranglers.



The Junior District 5 speech winners. From left are Olin Johnson (first) from Whitewood Beef Club, Alexia Brehaut (second) from Wawota Beef Club, and Cohen Neville (third) from Fairmede Beef Club.



The Intermediate District 5 speech winners. From left are Walker Murphy (first) from Moosomin Multi Club, Avrielle Brehaut (second) from Wawota Beef Club, and Cailey Haus (third) from Candiac Beef Club.



The Senior District 5 speech winners. From left are Megan Kelly (first) from Moosomin Multi Club, Emily Sebastian (second) from Candiac Beef Club, and Brynn Easton (third) from Riders and Wranglers.

District 5 4-H speeches held in Moosomin

BY MOOSOMIN MULTI 4-H CLUB REPORTER
CAMDYN SPARVIER

On Sunday March 13, 41 speakers met at the Bethel United Church in Moosomin to deliver District 4-H Speeches.

There were a variety of entertaining topics, and the judges had a difficult time selecting winners.

We would like to thank our sponsors Sharpe's Crop Services and Borderland

Co-op as well as our judges: Zelda Myburgh, James Calloway, Judi Johnson, Devona Putland, Dennis Lonsdale, Nayme Ferguson, Andi DeRoo, Kara Kinna, Cheryl Weatherald, Kevin Weedmark and Jaime Light.

Regional 4-H Speeches were held in Milestone on Saturday March 26. We wish the best of luck to our District 5 representatives.

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2022 Grains, oilseeds and pulses sector outlook

Continued from page 2

Any further strength in the oilseeds markets will only bolster canola prices before planting.

Lentils and peas

Tight stocks provide most of the story for Canadian pulse crops too. Dry pea supplies have fallen to 2.8 Mt for the 2021-22 MY, a 43% YoY drop. Domestic use is expected to fall, exports will likely tumble more than 40%, and carryout stocks are expected to plummet 90% to 50 Mt for the year. With a large decline in 2021 production due to low yields, Canadian lentil supplies have also fallen to 2.1 thousand kt, representing a drop of slightly more than one-third.

FCC forecasts the total seeded area in 2022 to rise for dry peas and decline for lentils.

Trends to monitor in 2022

1. Inflationary pressures on inputs, energy, equipment and land

For many producers, the largest hurdles of 2021 came from the steep growth trends across many different expenses. According to a database of Alberta farm input prices, year-over-year prices spiked across categories of fertilizers, machinery, energy, labour and seeds, with costs of fertilizers and fuel rising between 20 and 27% (Figure 2). The meteoric price gains for inputs in 2021 were partly due to price contractions in 2020 that were reversed in 2021.

However, while the YoY gains for fertilizer and energy were more pronounced than their respective three-year averages, four-wheel-drive tractors, canola seed and general farm labour were more expensive in 2021 than they averaged between 2018 and 2020. Wheat seeds were slightly cheaper last year than in 2020, and the average of 2018-2020.

What's more worrying than the base-year effect (of comparing 2021 prices to an unusual year of pandemic-led price declines) are the supply chain issues that have exacerbated the inflationary pressures.

In the U.S., fertilizer production had fallen in 2020 in response to anticipated curtailed demand arising from COVID, and it was

further limited by natural gas shortages due to both the Texan freeze and Hurricane Ida. Those constraints occurred at the same time of unexpected and large boosts in demand for fertilizer in response to higher commodity prices from both U.S. and global buyers. And global supply was hampered when China, the world's largest producer of phosphate, introduced export taxes.

This year, fertilizer production and exports are likely again to be subject to supply chain disruptions, possibly pushing prices higher (Table 2) - although the worst increases appear to be behind us. Energy costs are expected to also rise, with farm diesel, oil and purple gasoline averaging 14.3% price hikes in 2022.

Land values are also expected to have risen as producers respond to high commodity prices and low interest rates by vying for more acres. Watch for the FCC Farmland Values Report on March 15 for more detail.

2. Geopolitical tensions and global demand

The U.S. is at the heart of two current geopolitical conflicts, each with implications for Canadian agriculture. The Biden administration must respond to China's noncompliance in meeting its import commitments, but the 2020 Phase One trade deal has proven to be as precarious as it seemed when struck. China has purchased no more than 55% of the total volume of imports it had promised to buy by January 2022. Their imports of ag commodities are better, with close to 80% of the agreed-upon volumes. As a huge grain importer, especially with the ongoing hog herd reconstruction, China's imports can lead to sustained periods of high grain prices.

The threat of war between Russia and Ukraine is growing. Russia's warnings of U.S. interference in its domestic security are stoking European and U.S. talk of "massive" sanctions should Ukraine be invaded. Economic sanctions could be applied to the trade of agricultural commodities and create more supply chain issues with implications for price volatility. As the world's largest exporter of wheat in 2020, Russia will limit exports with an 8.0-million-ton wheat export quota in 2022 spring and early summer. The conflict could also further deplete very tight global supplies of fertilizers.



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Ukraine invasion will strain grain supplies

The Russian invasion of Ukraine will strain world grain supplies for months to come, driving up prices and inflation rates, said a panel of economists on Tuesday. "God forbid we have a weather problem this year," said Dan Basse, head of AgResource Co., who described war in the Black Sea region as the greatest supply shock since World War I. "This is the biggest supply shock that we can find, looking backwards at our data to 1914 ... on a caloric basis," he said, amounting to about 11% of the world's annual consumption.

"A war that extends to June would be catastrophic for the spring crops" of corn, wheat, and sunflowers, added Basse during an online forum organized by the Farm Foundation. "The question is, can they (Ukrainian farmers) get it in the ground?"

Private consultant William Liefert said Ukrainian grain production "will suffer from major harm" to the infrastructure for moving grain and obtaining seeds and other crop inputs. If Russia gains control of Black Sea ports, it could prevent Ukraine from exporting grain from this year's harvest or grain held over from the 2021 crops. Economic

sanctions were expected to push Russia into a recession. Russia is the No. 1 wheat exporter in the world and Ukraine is No. 4 in corn. Wheat prices surged to record highs following the invasion. Corn and soybean prices also are up due to tightening supplies.

The uncertainties over the outcome of the invasion will keep grain prices high and exert inflationary pressure, said Basse. The U.S. inflation rate, already the highest in four decades at 7.9%, could peak at 8% or 9% in late summer, he said.

"I think all bets are off now" regarding inflation, said Joe Glauber, of the IFPRI think tank, because of questions over the volume of future grain production in Ukraine and Russia and how much of it would reach the world market.

"I know this isn't necessarily the most popular suggestion, but I think the (United States) should consider suspending these mandates" for biodiesel production and use, said Glauber. "To me, food sort of trumps that."

The Renewable Fuel Standard guarantees biodiesel a share of the U.S. fuel market and a \$1-a-gallon tax credit is offered to producers. Some 40% of U.S. soybean oil is used

in making biofuels. Soy oil is also used as an ingredient in foods ranging from baked goods to salad dressing. A bushel of soybeans yields 11 pounds of oil during processing.

"Our forecast for the year ahead is that combined maybe these two countries will do 20 million to 22 million tonnes of wheat (exports)," said Basse. "Our estimate is that (Ukraine) is going to be down around 50%, or almost that, at 22 million tonnes" of corn production in 2022, with exports also down sharply.

India and Australia have huge wheat inventories, which partially will fill the gap created by war in Ukraine. But drought dragged down crop production in South America in recent months and the U.S. and Canadian wheat belts have been dry for months, so grain supplies could remain tight, said Basse and Glauber.

One side effect potentially would be farm income at the highest level ever due to continued high commodity prices, said Basse. At the same time, demand for U.S. grains could press the transportation network to its limits. "The pipe to export facilities may not be big enough."



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Agriculture Word Search

By Devona Putland

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Sask budget demonstrates strong commitment to agriculture

This year's Agriculture Budget is \$462.4 million, a 19.5 per cent increase from the previous year that is driven by a strong 2022-23 Crop Insurance Program and record agriculture research funding.

The budget includes \$338.5 million to fund a suite of business risk management programming, including Crop Insurance, AgriStability, AgriInvest and Livestock Price Insurance. More than \$250 million is budgeted for Crop Insurance. Average coverage will reach a record level of \$405 per acre this year, due to higher commodity prices and increased yield coverage.

"This is a dynamic industry that helps to feed the world, as demonstrated by record agri-food exports of \$17.5 billion in 2021, with enormous potential on the value-added front as we develop irrigated acres and welcome investment in canola crush facilities here in Saskatchewan," Agriculture Minister David Marit said. "This year's budget will help supply the industry the tools needed to move through current challenges, such as continued dry conditions, while positioning producers for long-term growth and success."

Effective April 1, 2022, a number of clarifications are being made to Provincial Sales Tax (PST) related to farming and agriculture activities, including establishing the exemption for the on-farm digging of dugouts, among other activities.

Agricultural research funding in 2022-23 is a record \$33.8 million. This includes \$2.0 million in new funding for the Global Institute for Food Security to define, accelerate and communicate the agriculture sector's contributions to improved environmental outcomes.

The government also continues to invest \$31.8 million in agricultural research as part of the \$71.2 million annual commitment to strategic programs under the five-year federal-provincial Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP) agreement.

CAP also funds priority areas such as value-added agriculture, market expansion, public trust and environmental stewardship and rural water development. This includes the Farm Ranch Water Infrastructure program, under which the maximum rebate for livestock producers is temporarily increased. Livestock producers who want to access the enhanced funding for an agricultural water project have until March 31, 2022, to submit a preliminary application, with projects to be completed by September 30, 2022.

Again this year, \$2.5 million of additional provincial



support is being provided for irrigation development to help producers develop irrigation infrastructure projects.

The 2022-23 budget provides \$1.6 million to Animal Protection Services of Saskatchewan (APSS) for sustainable animal welfare enforcement in the province. This is an increase of \$800,000 from the previous year's budgeted amount and it will enable the organization to expand its effective services to include the City of Saskatoon.

APSS, City of Saskatoon and Saskatoon Police Service are collaborating to provide enforcement in Saskatoon as of April 1, as APSS ramps up to take over full enforcement by the fall.

"We appreciate the work of Saskatoon SPCA and Animal Protection Services of Saskatchewan in support of the humane treatment and well-being of animals and will continue to work with all parties in this transition of animal welfare enforcement duties," Marit said.

Agriculture is at the center of several 2030 Growth Plan goals, including growing crop production to 45 million tonnes, increasing livestock receipts to \$3 billion, increasing value-added revenue to \$10 billion and growing agri-food exports to \$20 billion.

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Partnership expanding work on National Index on AgriFood Performance

Continued from Page C22

Creating Canada's first agrifood sustainability index involves tailoring a suite of globally recognized indicators that meet the needs of Canada's agrifood context. The project also includes developing a series of papers to inform the index and policy implications. These actions will help present Canada's sustainability credentials for the sector as a whole, including the plant-based foods and ingredients sector, improving Canada's ability to meet the growing global demand for healthy, sustainable plant-based foods and ingredients.

A total of \$659,000 has been committed to this phase of the project, with Protein Industries Canada committing \$626,000. Project partners are committing the remainder and providing in-kind support.

"The world needs more of Canada's vision for modern, sustainable agriculture," Pulse Canada President Greg Cherewyk said. "This project gives Canadian farmers and the entire value chain the tools they need to quantify their sustainability performance through real data, ensuring the market is appropriately compensating our industry for the positive impact it has on the environment."

"We know that Canada is one of the largest and most sustainable producers of food; however, we don't have all the metrics to prove it or to even improve upon it," GIFS Chief Executive Officer Steven Webb said. "This project that is a result of the National Index on Agri-Food Performance partnership will give us the data and the transparent process to measure how well we are doing on the sustainable production and pro-

cessing of food, and give consumers at home and abroad the added and justifiable confidence in our agrifood sector."

"Developing Canada's first agrifood sustainability index should become the country's signature response for a society and marketplace that increasingly values transparency and accountability for how food is produced, processed and sold," said David McInnes, coordinator of the index project. "The partners want Canada to be known here and abroad as the trusted source of food."

This is Protein Industries Canada's 34th project announcement, and the ninth under their capacity building stream. Together with industry, Protein Industries Canada has committed more than \$451 million to Canada's plant-based food, feed and ingredients ecosystem.



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Next gen agriculture mentorship program welcomes new mentees and mentors

Today, the Canadian Western Agribition's (CWA) Next Gen Agriculture Mentorship Program welcomes the newest group of agriculture leaders.

"Young Canadians are the ones who will shape the future of agriculture, and we all benefit from having them learn from seasoned mentors," said Marie-Claude Bibeau, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food. "With the Next Gen Program, our government is supporting knowledge transfer to get the next generation of farmers on the right track toward successful careers."

"The Next Gen Agriculture Mentorship Program plays an important role in the sustainability of the agriculture sector," said Agriculture Minister David Marit. "Through this mentorship, bright, young leaders can develop the essential skills and tools to advance their careers and, ultimately, advance the industry. Congratulations to the mentees and thank you to the mentors for your guidance."

The successful mentees and mentors chosen to participate in this intake are: Kaitlyn Kitzan, paired with Dale Leftwich; David MacTaggart, paired with William

Greuel; Erika Stewart, paired with Mike Sidoryk; Kristin Thompson, paired with Tara Davidson; Brooke Dudley, paired with Alison Weaver; Chelsey Mitchell, paired with Megz Reynolds; Morgan Heidecker, paired with Sheldon Kyle; Rena Leier, paired with Clinton Monchuk.

The program matches eight young leaders in the agriculture industry with experienced professionals for an 18-month mentorship where they gain skills and experiences to advance their careers. Mentees gain industry knowledge, board and governance training, business education and networking opportunities that align with their existing skills, interests and desired outcomes.

Established in 2019, the program is entering its fourth cycle. The Governments of Canada and Saskatchewan committed \$100,000 to support this intake of mentees. "CWA remains a proud partner in building the future of agriculture with this program," CWA President Chris Lees said. "The quality of the applicants and the dedication of mentors show how truly important and how bright the future of our industry really is."

Next Gen Agriculture Mentorship Program

Meet this year's mentees

- Kaitlyn Kitzan
- David MacTaggart
- Erika Stewart
- Kristin Thompson
- Brooke Dudley
- Chelsey Mitchell
- Morgan Heidecker
- Rena Leier

- Dale Leftwich
- William Greuel
- Mike Sidoryk
- Tara Davidson
- Alison Weaver
- Megz Reynolds
- Sheldon Kyle
- Clinton Monchuk

CANADIAN AGRICULTURAL PARTNERSHIP Saskatchewan Canada

The Next Gen Agriculture Mentorship Program is funded through the Canadian Agricultural Partnership, a five-year, \$3 billion commitment by Canada's federal, provincial and territorial governments that supports Canada's agriculture, agri-food and agri-products sectors. This in-

cludes a \$2 billion commitment that is cost-shared 60 per cent federally and 40 per cent provincially/territorially for programs that are designed and delivered by provinces and territories.

More information about the program is available online at saskatchewan.ca/CAP.

Possible impacts of the Russia/Ukraine conflict



Continued from page C16

This is in addition to Russia's self-imposed export quota on fertilizer to control inflation within its borders.

In 2020, Russia was the world's largest fertilizer exporter with exports reaching US\$7 billion (World Bank WITS database). China, which is also limiting its exports, was second at US\$6.6 billion and Canada was third at US\$5.2 billion because of its potash exports.



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Energy

Russia was the world's third largest oil producer in 2020 (or second depending on the source). If sanctions limit Russia's exports, this would further contribute to rising oil prices. Oil prices have been rising already because of the uncertainty caused by the conflict.

Russia is a major natural gas exporter to Europe. Amongst the sanctions already imposed, Germany has suspended the certification of the Nord Stream 2 natural gas pipeline. This will not impact natural gas prices in Europe in the short term. However, if sanctions affect the ongoing flow of natural gas, it will cause prices to spike in Europe. This will further boost fertilizer prices as natural gas is a key input in nitrogen-based fertilizer production.

Macroeconomic conditions

An indirect effect of the ongoing conflict

is that investors are turning to the USD as a safe-haven currency. Oil prices should currently favour a stronger Canadian dollar but the uncertainty regarding the conflict in Ukraine is supporting a strong USD.

Going forward, what will happen will depend on how the conflict develops. If the loonie stays weak, it will boost exports, help growth but also make imports pricier and cause additional inflationary pressures at a time when inflation is hitting levels not seen in a generation. This might force the Bank of Canada to take a more aggressive approach to curb inflation by raising interest more rapidly than otherwise. Another possible outcome is that the war and sanctions will cause global economic growth to slow down, weaken inflationary pressures and delay expected interest rate hikes from western central banks. It is too soon to predict which scenario will prevail.

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The second generation of the Easton family farm, (left) Joyce and George Easton received the 50 Year Award from Canadian Angus Association in 1998. This year, Dale Easton and his family will be receiving the 75 Year Award from the association.



At the 2009 World Angus Forum, the Eastondale Break Away 32'07 bull was named Reserve Champion Bull, in Spruce Meadows, Alberta. The bull was bred and raised by Eastondale Angus then later sold to another breeder.

Eastondale Angus in the family for generations

Continued from front

"I always said I wanted to do it, even when I was younger I couldn't really imagine doing anything else," Erika said.

"I was the only child so I was outside and helping around on the farm a lot which was great. I still help now when I'm not working, but I definitely had chores when I was younger and if I had animals of my own, I had to go make sure they were cared for, too."

Dale was asked if he thought the family farm would pass on to his children at the time he took over the business.

"You don't really think of those things at the time, you just hope you can make it to the next year. Farming is not an easy deal, the cow business has been good. It hasn't been real lucrative, but it's provided us a good way of living," he said.

"It would be neat for it stay in the family, but it's her decision whether she wants to. She's got to do what's best for her in the future, how long she does it we don't know."

Challenges and rewards of running a cattle farm

Dale described what producing and running a cattle business is like.

"Every day is caring for the livestock, you're either making feed for winter or feeding them, or making sure they're in the pastures they're supposed to be in, getting bred and being ready for the next calf crop, preparing for a bull sale or marketing some females to other producers, commercial or purebred," he said.

"You go with the seasons, summer you're preparing for winter feeds and winter you're feeding them, now spring we're preparing for a bull sale."

One of the biggest challenges of farming cattle is calving season, Dale said.

"Probably calving is the most because it's keeps going for a long time, it's hard work, you're dealing with calving 24 hours a day, and you can be dealing with weather issues," he said.

"But we enjoy it, I enjoy breeding cattle and trying to make them better all the time. It's definitely a lifestyle, in the purebred industry you meet a lot of people. We know people right across Canada that are not only in the Angus industry, but across the livestock industry."

"We have good friends in other breeds of cattle that we talk to too, where we've bounced off ideas and learn from each other as well."

"It's a lifestyle in the way your life really revolves around it, it becomes a big part of your life, and you get to enjoy the outdoors and continue to learn."

Shelley Easton said she likes to be around the cows because they all have personalities.

"We like to go out and see their calves, watch them grow and come to the sales." She said the most rewarding part about farming is the calf crop.

"The calf crop is great, when they wean, seeing what their mothers produced, seeing the calves you produced in the year, if you improved them, that's probably the most rewarding part."



Erika and Dale Easton at their family farm—Eastondale Angus—near Wawota, Saskatchewan. Erika will be the fourth generation of the Easton family to be part of the family farm.

Dale said they aim to calve about 220 calves a year.

"When I was a kid at 15 years old, is when I got to understand the industry more. We've increased our land base a bit since then, but to think a farm would keep 200 cows in 1975, there was no thought of that, probably you would keep 50 cows back then, but compared to those years you've probably quadrupled your production," said Dale.

The family said in the purebred industry, farming is a 365 day a year commitment.

"You can't go away for two weeks and leave them, they're not immune to getting sick or things just happen and you need to be there for them when they do," said Shelley.

"Dale and Erika go to the pastures every day to make sure they are accounted for and their water's checked, making sure that they have enough grass to be fed or if they need to be moved somewhere else."

History behind Eastondale Angus farm

It's been 24 years since Dale's father passed on the family farm to him.

"In 1998 is when my dad retired to town. I've been here my whole life and grew up with my grandfather at this farm."

"I lived with my parents in this house and my grandfather used to live in the house Erika currently lives in," said Dale.

"He bought his first Angus female in 1943 and took a membership in the Canadian Angus Association the year after. The history of the farm has been good to us, there's been tough times but good times. He started the farm back then and Erika's now the fourth generation."

Erika spoke about how being the fourth generation of the Easton family, has given her an advantage.

"I've had the opportunity to work alongside dad, we have a good founda-

tion as far as our cows and not only that, but our customer base that we sell to every year," she said.

"I'm very fortunate to not necessarily have to start from scratch, that's a huge advantage compared to someone who is just starting up."

"We have an idea of where we want to go with the cattle, we've taken this long to build up our cow herd to where we are today and that shows to other producers the quality that we have."

The Easton family was awarded the Canadian Angus Association 50 Year Award in 1998 and will be receiving the 75 Year Award this year.

Shelley said Dale's dad would have been proud of the family for receiving the 75 Year Award.

"On April 4 we have our annual sale and there's someone from the Canadian Angus Association coming out to make the presentation to us," she said.

"Dale has never left here, I joined and Erika's never left, it all happened on this farm. This is the place where everything started so receiving the award at the farm only feels right."

Dale was asked why he decided to stay in the cattle industry for 50 years.

"We do this for a living, that's how we make our bread and butter. Shelley and I both had off-farm jobs when we were younger, but it's our own living now," he said.

"We worked off the farm when my parents were here and when my grandfather was, and when my parents retired, we took over."

"I was raised with five brothers and sisters on our family farm, we all had our chores."

"I probably had the most interest in pure bred cattle to take over the business, the others probably didn't have that desire, they had other things they were focused on—or maybe because I was the eldest I got to choose first."

Easton family's most memorable experiences

The Eastons were asked what their favorite memory of being in the cattle industry is. "Being a part of four generations of being on the farm, I think that's incredible," said Shelley.

"Being here when grandpa and grandma were here, when all the families were here and they all had a living off the farm, I think that was quite the memory."

"There's kind of a toss up between that and when the calves are born which is pretty exciting too, but I think seeing great grandma and great grandpa here was pretty neat. Even when Dale's brothers and sisters were here because they were all still at home, so for me that was the best memory, everyone being there at one time."

Dale said his favorite memory was working with his grandfather and father.

"With my dad and grandpa, the three of us working together was neat to experience. There's a few people who get to experience it, but it's limited to how many actually get to work on a daily basis with their grandpa and dad," he said.

"Another great memory, this was after dad retired, but every four years they have this World Angus Forum and in 2009, Canada hosted it. It was in Spruce Meadows just outside of Calgary, we took cattle to that and it was magnificent."

"It was mind blowing how big and how good it was, people from all over the world were there. We bred and raised a bull that was reserve champion at that show and that probably was the highlight for me, when we won, it was pretty neat. We bred the bull and sold it to another breeder, but we still had an interest in it and when he was reserve champion at that show, it was pretty neat, our years of production came to a head."

"That would be my greatest memory, it would be tough to top but you know every year we have a really good sale."

Being a director to moving up to president for Saskatchewan Junior Angus Association, Erika said that has to be one of her greatest experiences.

"For me besides the world forum show, every year the junior association has a summer show and we actually drove down to one in Ontario. That was fun because it was a bit like a family trip, then we got to go to the show too so that was a memory that always comes to the top of my head," she said.

"Then as I've gotten older I've gotten my own cows too, it's always cool when I can show my own cow, it's something that I've raised or responsible for that cow family."

"Last year I showed a heifer that was my own at Agribition and in a show in Brandon, it's neat to have my own name on it too, not just a farm name, that's probably my favorite memory. I was also able to go to New Zealand, Canada sent over three teams of youth over and I was able to captain one of the teams and we were the reserve world champions to one of the other Canadian teams."

Fairmede 4H Club Public Speaking

BY ERICA ADAMSON
Fairmede 4H Club held their Public Speaking on Thursday March 10, 2022. Here are the results:

Peewee's (not placed):

- Brooklyn Van Meer
- Colt Hall
- Hayden Jamieson
- McKenna Jamieson

Cloverbud:

- 1-Jenna Leeds
- 2- Luke Greenbank
- 3- Tie. Bo Schneider and Sawyer Van Meer

Junior:

- 1- Nate Greenbank

- 2- Cohen Neville
- 3- Erica Adamson

Intermediate:

- 1- Rory Greenbank
- 2- Levi Jamieson
- 3- Tie. Drew Leeds and Brooklyn Van Meer

Senior:

- 1- Cheyenne Jamieson

Winners in each category received a portfolio and had their name engraved on a floating trophy in memory of Angus Turpie and the Peewee division received a participation toque, all donated by Diane and Darcy Jamieson and family and Keith

Turpie.

Due to weather, speeches were done by video text and we would like to thank our judges Coralyn Anderson, Sydni Wilson and Alex Woodrow for a fantastic job!

A few of our members went on to represent Fairmede at Districts which were held on Sunday March 13, 2022 in Moosomin at Bethel United Church. A big thank you to our members for representing Fairmede at Districts: Cloverbuds Jenna Leeds and Sawyer Van Meer, Juniors Erica Adamson and Cohen Neville and Intermediate Drew Leeds. Cohen Neville placed third in the Junior division at districts and Jenna Leeds placed third in the Cloverbud division as well.



Peewee: Brooklyn Van Meer, Hayden Jamieson and Colt Hall. Missing: McKenna Jamieson.



Intermediate: Rory Greenbank, Drew Leeds and Levi Jamieson. Missing: Brooklyn Smith.



Cloverbud: Luke Greenbank, Bo Schneider and Sawyer Van Meer. Missing: Jenna Leeds.



Junior: Nate Greenbank, Cohen Neville and Erica Adamson.

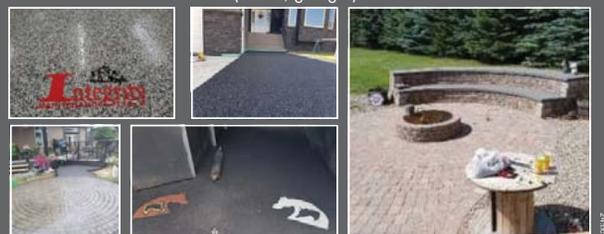
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Ways to better optimize fertilizer efficiencies

Everyone is cringing at the price for fertilizers right now, considering it has nearly doubled since last season. Farmers can't help but wonder "why do I even need to use fertilizer?" and is it worth the effort? In short, yes, but there are ways to better optimize fertilizer efficiencies.

Phosphate fertilizers are important because they are a significant source of the phosphorus (P) that the plant needs to grow. Phosphorus is required by plants for many vital functions, including photosynthesis and respiration. Phosphate is crucial for cell division and the development of new tissue, making it even more critical in early plant development. Studies have shown that early season deficiencies have a greater impact on yield than deficiencies later in the season.

So why has the fertilizer price been going up so much lately? The short answer is input prices are rising. The costs of the inputs in fertilizers have gone up significantly, particularly diammonium phosphate (DAP) which has nearly doubled in price, which increases the cost to produce phosphate fertilizers. Additionally, the cost of natural gas has gone up a lot over the past year, contributing to the rise of the fertilizer cost of production. And of course, one can't help but notice the sky-rocketing prices of gasoline right now, as we are over 50 per cent more expensive than this time last year. This is

escalating the cost of transportation of products.

Furthermore, changes in supply and demand have also had a large impact on the price of fertilizer. There have been price increases for many crops, like corn, soybeans, and wheat in the past year. This has increased the number of farmers looking to grow these crops, and as these crops, particularly corn, often need more fertilizer, this has increased the demand for fertilizer. Many farmers often apply more fertilizer than necessary for these crops in fear of profit



or yield loss. And finally, the supply of fertilizers has been greatly impacted by many things, such as we

are still experiencing some of the effects of the supply chain disruptions that have occurred due to Covid-19.

As well as some complications with imports due to sanctions being put on exports and some countries limiting what their producers are allowed to export.

So, given all of that, is there a way to increase fertilizer efficiency and potentially lower the amount of fertilizer to be added to the soil this spring? There are several factors that affect the availability of P in the soil. A major factor, especially in the Canadian prairies, is soil temperature. Low soil temperatures reduce P solubility. This and

other environmental factors can be counteracted somewhat, by banding phosphate fertilizer, so that it is close to the seed, aiding in early root development. Additionally, biologicals which contain P solubilizing bacteria like XiteBio® Yield+ help to increase P availability either from fixed soil P or from fertilizers, which in turn improves crop productivity throughout the growing season resulting in greater yield.

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APAS launches survey to gather feedback on the next generation of farm programs

The Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan (APAS) has launched an online survey to collect feedback from Saskatchewan producers about changes to agricultural programs that are up for renewal in 2023.

The federal and provincial governments are currently holding consultations for the next federal/provincial policy agreement that covers many aspects of agricultural programming, including business risk management, trade, research and environmental programs.

APAS launched a Task Force last fall to review existing programs and prepare recommendations for these consulta-

tions. The Task Force has completed the first phase of its work and is looking for producer feedback on potential changes to business risk management programs, such as AgrInvest, AgriStability, and AgriInsurance, as well as federal trade and research programs. The Task Force is seeking feedback on 19 draft recommendations, covering six program areas.

"These programs affect our operations as producers," said Bill Prybylski, APAS Vice President and Chair of the NPF Task Force. "They also play an important role in the economy by ensuring there is financial backstop in place to protect our producers from economic and production

risks like last year's devastating drought. We want to hear directly from our members and other organizations to ensure these recommendations meet the needs of

producers from all sectors and areas of the province." The Online Survey will remain open until the end of March and is accessible through the APAS website.



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New study shows strong return on farmers' investments in wheat breeding

According to a new study, western Canadian farmers have received nearly \$33 in return through varietal improvements for every dollar they invested in wheat breeding.

In 2021, the Canadian Wheat Research Coalition (CWRC), which includes the Saskatchewan Wheat Development Commission, Alberta Wheat Commission, and Manitoba Crop Alliance, along with the Western Grains Research Foundation (WGRF), and the Saskatchewan Winter Cereals Development Commission (SWCDC), began working together on a study to quantify the benefits of wheat breeding investments by western Canadian producers over the past 27 years.

The three farmer-led crop commissions comprising CWRC receive funding through mandatory but refundable producer levies on grain sold. The commissions contribute a large portion of their budgets towards innovative research on farmers' behalf. Genetic and agronomic advancements to achieve maximum yields, and achieving a consistent end-use quality are properties on which the Prairie commissions base their research programming.

"This study clearly indicates that farmer investment in public breeding programs is working and is providing substantive returns to farmers," says Fred Greig, Chair of the CWRC and Manitoba Crop Alliance representative. "Current information will allow CWRC and wheat commissions the ability to affirm our investment strategy and/or adjust it to better utilize farmers' hard-earned dollars."

The CWRC, WGRF, and SWCDC worked with Dr. Richard Gray and Dr. Katarzyna Bolek-Callbeck to update the previous studies that examined wheat farmers' return on investment (ROI) for wheat varietal development.

Only yield improvements were considered when calculating the benefits to farmers to keep the estimate as conservative as possible. Including other traits such as improved insect and disease resistance would have further increased ROI but are dependent on specific environmental conditions and are difficult to assess. Improvements in agronomic practices over the same period were also not included in the final ROI estimates.

"Our measure is conservative because we don't include many other potential benefits. It does provide a very defensible estimate because we can measure it accurately," says Gray. "Wheat yields are something that everybody sees. They understand that the new

varieties are better than the older varieties, yielding better, and improved yields are the key trait that delivers value back to the producer."

The report also outlines that varietal development investments have a trickle-down benefit to all of society, with taxpayers reaping the returns, as well. Enhancing breeding capacity and maintaining funding relationships and budgets will be key to ensuring the continued success of farmer investments in varietal development moving forward.

The full comprehensive report is available at wheatresearch.ca.




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