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**APRIL 2025**



Kevin Weedmark took this aerial photo of crops east of Moosomin last year.

# Soil moisture levels average in southeast as farmers prepare for seeding

## Spring snow storm will delay seeding

BY RYAN KIEDROWSKI

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

With spring temperatures finally arriving, it won't be long before producers are able to hit the land. According to Water Security Agency Spokesperson Patrick Boyle, the spring run-off in the region peaked a couple weeks ago. The result—even with a last blast of winter in the form of a spring snow storm on April 22—is an average moisture level, setting the stage for another good growing year.

"This snowfall is not going to come in behind those

peak flows, so it's just going to prolong them as they move through, but not going to create any issues," he said. "It's not a huge deal from our perspective, because everything had already moved off."

What this time of year might look like was a concern last fall as most of the province had below normal precipitation at freeze-up.

With a last blast of winter having gone through the area, plans of an early start to seeding have been put on hold. Moosomin-area producer Trevor Green has his sights on

the middle of May as a target for when fields might be dry enough to work.

"I think we'll be well beyond the first of May now," he said. "Other years we started on the 20th of April and this year we'll get started on the 15th of May. The only difference when you get started on the 20th of April is you seed for 12 hours a day, and when you get started on the 20th of May, you seat for 21 hours a day!"

*Continued on Page B7* 13/25

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# Legislation introduced to support municipalities with pilot framework for safe disposal of derelict structures

On April 9, Minister Eric Schmalz introduced amendments to The Construction Codes Act to support the Government of Saskatchewan's pilot framework to assist municipalities in dealing with derelict structures.

"Municipalities are in the best position to ensure the long-term safety and prosperity of their communities," Government Relations Minister Eric Schmalz said. "By updating this legislation to support our derelict buildings pilot framework, the Government of Saskatchewan is helping local leadership practically and effectively address the challenges posed by municipally-owned derelict properties."

Derelict buildings can present economic, financial and social challenges for municipalities and can be costly to maintain or remove. At the Saskatchewan Association for Rural Municipalities' annual convention in March, the provincial government announced the development of a pilot framework intended to help eligible municipalities dispose of these structures as well as provide a training opportunity for local volunteer fire departments.

"We have heard from SARM, SUMA and other municipal leaders that



have asked for this opportunity to provide training scenarios for our world class volunteer firefighters

that are the cornerstone of our rural communities," Environment Minister Travis Keisig said. "We look

forward to seeing the continued collaboration that will benefit many across our province."

The pilot framework's parameters are being developed in partnership with multiple ministries

and agencies and details will be available to municipalities in summer 2025.



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# Farmers, farm groups say the next government needs to do more for agriculture

BY RYAN KIEDROWSKI

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

After the election on April 28, local farmers say they hope the next federal government takes interests and concerns of the agriculture industry more seriously. "I think the biggest thing with any politician—whether it's federal or provincial—is we have to stop using food as a political football," said Moosomin-area producer Trevor Green. He pointed to the example of China imposing 100 per cent tariffs on Canadian canola oil and meal in response to the equal Canadian tariff on electric vehicles from China.

"Canada puts EV tariffs on China. What does China do? They flip-flop back, and they put tariffs on canola oil, which they don't buy a lot of anyway," Green said, adding that the 25 per cent retaliatory tariff the Chinese have imposed on Canadian pork has been quite impactful.

"It's really hurting our pork industry," he said. "There's all this talk of who's going to protect supply management in Canada. Every time Quebec wants to protect supply management, the U.S. hammers our beef. It's food sustainability, and we have to quit using food as a political football."

The tariff situation in general has ripple effects across the board, establishing an environment of confusion.

"When the tariffs were announced, we took a pretty significant hit on our canola prices," said Bill Prybylski, President of the Agriculture Producers Association of Saskatchewan. "They've since rebounded somewhat. We would like to see some resolution to that as soon as possible, with some type of a negotiated settlement."

Another push from APAS has been for export sales data so producers know what kind of playing field they're working with. "We can know what type of sales are on the books and where's all this commodity



APAS president Bill Prybylski

stuff that we're growing, where's it all going," Prybylski said.

The uncertainty is what producers would like to see removed.

"It all creates instability in the market, and it creates fear," explained Green in reference to beef prices. "Any time there's instability, it always affects the price a bit, but we're a long ways away from selling calves. We hope that it's all straightened out by then, and everything's on a steady course by fall. Same with the crops, there's a little bit of crop in the bins, but not a lot."

In the case of the Chinese canola tariff, the real impact is on canola meal, which has a more finite shelf life than other forms of the product.

"They're our second largest market," Prybylski said of China. "And certainly, we'd like to diversify our market to a certain extent. Seed is one thing, but the canola meal is another; that market is an on-demand market. It's pretty hard to store

canola meal. Canola seed can store for a fairly lengthy time, but the canola meal is a perishable item that has a very limited shelf life, so it needs to get to its final destination quickly."

Canola is an extremely important crop in Saskatchewan, and not just for those growing it.

"You look at the whole canola industry just in Saskatchewan, the jobs that are created, all the crush plants, right from construction, there's lots of jobs there in constructing these, the upgrades that they're doing now and building on," said Blake Duchek, who farms in the Atwater/Stockholm area. "And then, once they're up and running, they employ a lot of people. There's lots of spinoffs from the canola industry, and that doesn't seem to matter to them."

He also pointed to the rebounding price of crop, which took a slight hit when the Chinese tariffs were first reported.

"The States, they actually buy more of our canola than China does," Duchek said. "And surprisingly, when that Chinese tariff was announced, canola went down to \$12.50 a bushel."

Recent numbers now indicate \$15.50 per bushel.

"It went down for a week, and all these buyers make their money off hedging and everything, and now the price is higher than it has been in the last year," Duchek said.

The whole canola tariff situation has some producers wondering if perhaps alternative markets aren't such a bad idea.

"It might be short-term pain for long-term gain if we develop new markets," said Moosomin-area producer Jeff Warkentin. "It gives us more options going forward."

Ultimately, Warkentin isn't shaken by the events, and still plans to put canola in the ground this year.

"It hasn't changed any of our plans," he

said. "If you don't sow canola, what else do you sow? Nothing else is showing record profits. Grow a little bit of everything. There's volatility in the markets right now, but volatility breeds opportunity, too."

## Calling for change

Some producers say they feel agriculture is simply forgotten about by federal leaders. This is coupled with indifference and apathy in how speaking up for agriculture seems to fall on deaf ears.

"It would be a common sentiment in the West that everybody's looking for change," said Warkentin. "No matter who gets in, we just want somebody that's pro-agriculture, pro-energy, and will pay attention to us out here in the West."

Duchek agrees, and is not anticipating much change in local ridings.

"I don't think it matters much to the local ones, because they know they're going to get elected here," he said. "In a rural setting, the Conservatives know they're going to get in."

Regardless of what political stripe people align with, the overall confusion of the past few months have had their toll.

"All that uncertainty, it's hard on our business," said Gerald-area producer Kevin Hruska. "Everybody just kind of shut their wallets and are riding the storm out, the chaos. Still, the worst tariff we've ever experienced is the carbon tax. We need a Conservative government, and that's all there is to it!"

## Government response

How governments have responded to tariff threats has created differing results. On the federal side, Green says knee-jerk reactions while in the midst of a Liberal leadership race and an election have not been beneficial.

Continued on B9

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# Agricultural water management funding now available



The Water Security Agency (WSA) has announced the Agricultural Water Management Fund is open for applications in 2025. The fund supports agricultural producers and local governments to develop water management projects.

Since 2022, the fund has provided over \$2 million to help 93 projects across the province to obtain drainage approvals that support environmental stewardship and agricultural growth in Saskatchewan.

"The Agricultural Water Management Fund supports responsible and sustainable water management in Saskatchewan," Minister Responsible for the Water Security Agency Daryl Harrison said. "Saskatchewan producers are great stewards of the land, and we know supporting our agricultural sector with programs like this leads to a growing and vibrant province."

Applicants can receive up to \$95,000 per project based on a cost-sharing approach. It can be used for qualified persons support, technical and engineering costs, and mitigation and rehabilitation works for agricultural water management projects.

This program is part of WSA's ongoing commitment to supporting the agricultural community in developing and maintaining responsible agricultural water management projects in Saskatchewan.

Eligible recipients include:

Individuals or corporations registered in Saskatchewan who own, lease, or rent property for agricultural production purposes;

- First Nations in Saskatchewan;
- Saskatchewan rural municipalities;
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For more information about the Agricultural Water Management Fund, or to apply, visit: [wsask.ca](http://wsask.ca).

## Upcoming Auctions:

**Online-timed Acreage Equip., Farm Supply & Tool Auction for Marcel & Audrey VanSteelandt—Deloraine, MB**

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**Bidding ends: Sun. June 8 @ 6pm—soft close**

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**Bidding starts: Mon. June 16 @ 9am**

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**Hon. Daryl Harrison**  
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(306) 443-4400



**Kevin Weedmark**  
MLA for Moosomin-Montmartre  
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**Hon. Warren Kaeding**  
MLA for Melville-Saltcoats  
warrenkaedingmla@sasktel.net  
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Dale Woods submitted this photo last spring of seeding getting rolling in 2024.

# Soil moisture levels average in southeast as farmers prepare for seeding

## Spring snow storm will delay seeding

**Continued from front**  
While crops like peas and barley can tolerate cooler temperatures and the unpredictable swings of late April, the safe bet is certainly to wait if possible. "And then, May Long, guys can switch into canola or whatever," Green said. "But right around here, I would say we're going to be probably in excess of moisture now with this stuff."

Certainly, this most recent snow event has differed from what producers have seen through the winter months. Moisture in the April 22 snowfall will likely push any sort of fieldwork plans two weeks further into the calendar.

"The wind was sucking up quite a bit of moisture before this, and we would have probably been right in ideal moisture conditions before this, but now we got a pretty good wet dump period right now," Green said. "Most of the creeks and ravines maybe only ran for a day, or a day and a half, where we usually get at least three days to a week of runoff."

Jeff Warkentin of The Hebert Group estimates the recent snowfall will push back seeding at their operation by about a week to 10 days.

"We were hoping to go and vote on April 28 and then start seeding when we got home," he said, adding that approximately one foot of snow fell on their land. "It's hard to tell exactly, but it has certainly warmed up this afternoon, and we're starting to see some bare ground again. So we'll see how much the ground will soak up."

Warkentin credits a good thaw this spring that had a lot of low spots in the fields drying up nicely before the

April 22 snow. "We got to just take the extra time to make sure we're organized so we can be as efficient as we can once the show does start," he said, seeing the silver lining in the down time. "When you think about it, there's always those little things that you forgot to get ready. That's what we're doing is going through things with a fine-tooth comb and making sure we're ready."

By Rocanville, producer Rylar Hutchinson agreed with the mixed blessing of the snow event—a nice boost to moisture levels, but likely to delay getting into the field any time soon.

"Things were going good and it was looking like a normal start to seeding," he said. "But this late snowfall will push things back."

"There is good moisture in it, so I can't complain, I suppose," he continued. "It's hard to say when we could hit the field, but it'll be a later start than normal."

In the Atwater/Stockholm area, Blake Duchek estimates his land received around 14 inches of wet snow.

"It was more like pure slush," he said. "I bet there's probably three to

four inches of water out of this snow we will probably have."

Initially, Duchek had May 1 targeted to begin seeding, but the precipitation will set him back almost one week.

"It was actually just getting nice, we were out pumping some water out in a couple different fields, and you could drive with a half-ton in the fields," he said. "It was just getting to that point that it wasn't greasy on top. We went backwards a little bit with the storm."

With the slushy snow making things a muddy mess on gravel roads, even the RM of Fertile Belt graders couldn't be deployed.

"The roads that didn't get plowed yesterday morning or this morning, driving down on those, the ruts are over a foot deep, and they're just froze solid," he said.

In the Gerald area, Kevin Hruska reported the heaviest snowfall with two feet landing on his land.

"We're going to be late seeding here in this area this year," he said. "And we were wet in the first place. No problem snow-mobiling right across any field here right at the moment!" he said last week.

As with the other producers the World-Spectator

spoke with, Hruska is looking into almost the middle of May now as a possible entry to seeding, should the weather stay decent.

"I would say May 12,

maybe something like that," he said. "That's where we're probably hoping to start."

The long-term forecast is showing a warming trend

after April 28, with overnight lows above freezing for the most part. In 2024, about 13 per cent of producers had finished seeding by May 6.

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Here are some of the entries in the World-Spectator's Cutest Calf Contest!



Submitted by Stacey Mead



Submitted by Anna Fletcher

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# Farmers, farm groups say the next government needs to do more for agriculture

Continued from B3

"We haven't had a functioning government since December 17," Green said. "Our trade partners see that. Our neighbours see that. If you're in the business of buying products from people and the company that you've been buying products from is showing a lot of instability, CEO's getting fired and CEO's not showing up for work, it kind of makes you question whether you're going to buy products from those people."

Conversely, the provincial government took a more moderate approach.

"I think [Premier] Scott Moe has handled it very well," Green said. "He has not shot off from the cuff, he's kept his rhetoric very low. Sometimes, not doing a lot when you're dealing with a guy like Trump is maybe the best course of action."

Members of the Saskatchewan government including the Premier, Ag Minister and the Minister of Trade and Export have all hit the road for various meetings and trade missions.

"There's always trades going on," Prybylski said. "We haven't seen any significant amounts going to other countries, but I think the seeds have been sown that their government has made those contacts. We certainly appreciate the effort that they've put in to making those contacts in those other countries. Any time those types of relationships can be built, that certainly will provide fruit down the road. I'm optimistic that there will be opportunity for sales into other countries, but I'm not aware of anything as of yet."

### Some positives

There are places where some producers say the government has managed to get things right—for example when the federal Agriculture Minister, Kody Blois, was the lone Liberal MP who voted against Bill C-234 that sought to include the carbon tax on grain dryer usage.

"I've known Kody for quite a few years, and while we

**"It would be a common sentiment in the West that everybody's looking for change."**

—Jeff Warkintin

probably differ on our political views, I certainly appreciate the work that he's been doing for agriculture," Prybylski said. "I think he did more in the only week that he was in as ag minister than what had happened from that department in the last couple of years."

"He was, he was definitely in favour of removing the carbon tax," Prybylski continued. "He's done a few things just in that week with changes to the agri-stability program. At least there's some recognition that there's a potential for some harm in the ag sector in Western Canada."

However Prybylski said there's always room for improvement, pointing to tweaking the terms in the federal government's agriculture programming as an example.

"Things like the Advanced Payment Program, I would like to see that limit increased to \$350,000 and become a permanent every spring," he said.

Other examples include placing the Canadian Food Inspection Agency back in the Agriculture portfolio instead of its current placement in Health Canada.

"That never made a whole lot of sense to me in the first place," Prybylski says.

Making good on the National Supply Chain Task Force's May 2023 recommendation for the federal government to expand railway inter-switching zones is another idea with roots.

"Extended inter-switching on the railroads was something that the federal government introduced as a pilot project, but we would like to see that become a permanent fixture," said Prybylski. "And some extended inter-switching miles, rather than limiting it to a smaller distance."

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## How to **reduce flea beetle risk** with strong stand establishment

- 1 Seed shallow into warm, moist soil
- 2 Target 5 to 8 plants per square foot
- 3 Use safe rates of seed-placed fertilizer

Find more tips at **CanolaWatch.org**



# Quick crop establishment lowers flea beetle risk

by Keith Gabert  
Flea beetles remain the top ranked canola pest, according to the latest grower survey. The Canola Council of Canada 2024 grower survey asked respondents to name the diseases, weeds and insects of greatest economic risk to canola. Flea beetles were the most common answer in 2024, as they were in the 2022 and 2020 surveys.

While flea beetles seem to be unavoidable, growers can reduce the risk. John Gavloski, entomologist with Manitoba Agriculture, says canola crops that reach the four-leaf stage within three to four weeks of seeding are less likely to need protection from a foliar pesticide spray. Canola crops that require in-season foliar sprays are often slow-establishing and non-competitive.

Weather can be a major factor in rapid stand establishment. Canola sown in warm, moist soil will emerge quickly and uniformly. Warm conditions without moisture will often favour flea beetles over the crop. Whatever the weather, the following agronomy steps put the crop in the best possible scenario against flea beetles.

### Target 5-8 plants per square foot

Canola crops that establish quickly and have five to eight plants per square foot usually face minimal risk from flea beetle feeding. More plants mean fewer beetles per plant – a situation more likely to keep leaf area loss below the threshold of 25 per cent. The graphic below is a visual representation of this point.

### Seed shallow into warm, moist soil

A later seeding date may reduce the flea beetle risk if it means warmer soils and faster growth. Note that later-established canola crops could be flowering on hotter days and may have increased fall frost risk.

### Consider advanced seed treatment

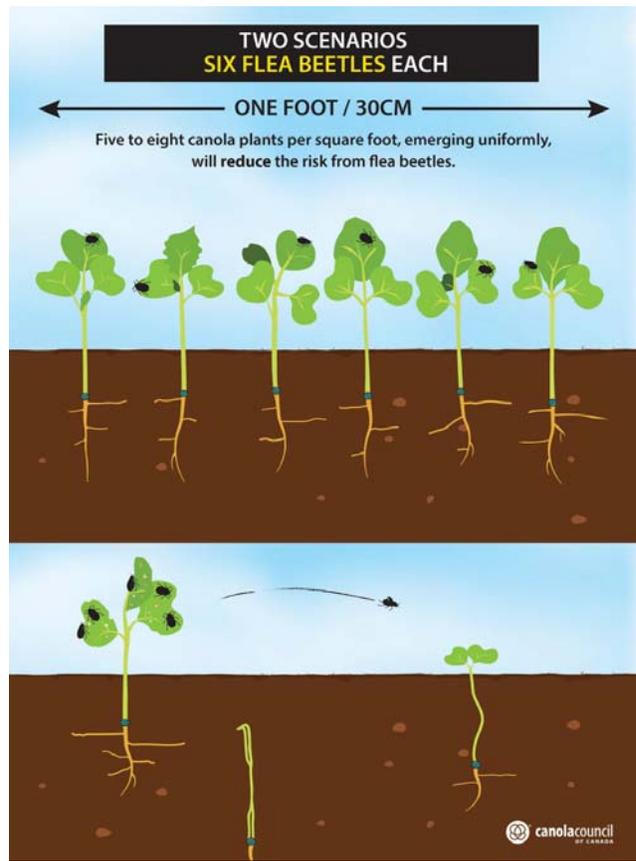
Advanced seed treatments will improve flea beetle protection in high-risk areas. However, seed treatments don't work as well or are not actively taken up when the plant is not growing or when moisture is inadequate for the transfer of active ingredient from seed coat to seedling. Flea beetles need to take a bite of the canola seedling to take in the seed treatment insecticide.

### Use safe rates of seed-placed fertilizer

The 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 add more stress, slow the pace of growth and reduce the stand.

### Till versus no-till

While canola planted into warmer blackened soil may emerge faster, that same warm ground cleared of obstacles also tends to attract more flea beetles. Also consider that crop residue retains soil moisture, which can contribute to more rapid emergence when moisture is limited.



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Chance Joannette teaching ATV safety.



SaskPower's display on electrical safety and hazards.

## Redvers Ag Safety hosts successful farm safety day April 9

BY ANGELA ULRICH

The Redvers Agricultural Safety Committee hosted a successful Safety Day on Wednesday, April 9 at the Redvers Recreation Centre, bringing together students from the surrounding area to raise awareness about the importance of safety in agriculture. The event featured interactive presentations, hands-on demonstrations and informative sessions aimed at educating youth on how to stay safe on the farm and around agricultural equipment.

Redvers Fire Chief Brad Hutton and committee board member explains, "Going back a couple of years ago, I had an idea that we should do a safety day focussing on the school age children of our community. There was a Progressive Ag Safety Day hosted in 2019 that was well attended with great reviews from teachers, children, and parents. After putting some thought into it, I decided to get a board together and make this happen for Redvers. Heather Adair with Redvers EMS agreed to be assistant co-ordinator and then we got it rolling.

"We contacted The Progressive Agriculture Foundation to get started on the online training that is a requirement for all co-ordinators to complete for the event. Then we had the Saskatchewan Association of Agricultural Societies and Exhibitions (SAASE) invite our board members to their annual convention in Yorkton to complete further training. Our volunteer board consisted of myself (Brad Hutton), Heather Adair, Breanne Barber, Chance Joannette, Shelby Joannette and Katy Soroka. We invited Kindergarten to Grade 6 students from Maryfield, Bellegarde and Redvers schools totalling 230 children. We gathered volunteers to run 18 different safety booths and group leaders for 18 groups of children to tour through. The day was set up to operate like a trade show style with individual booths to keep the children's focus on that safety topic."

A variety of safety topics were taught to the students. They included grain bin safety, auger safety, quad/ATV safety, household chemical look-a-likes, large animal awareness, fire safety, and home emergencies. There were live demonstrations with a tractor and auger to show the dangers of a PTO entanglement and what could happen if a person is caught in an auger. They also demonstrated the danger of a loader bucket coming down on a person if they happen to be playing under one. The final demonstration of the day was how to properly extinguish a grease fire on the stove with a fire blanket and what happens if you were to use water.

Overall, the day was a huge hit with all students and teachers that attended.

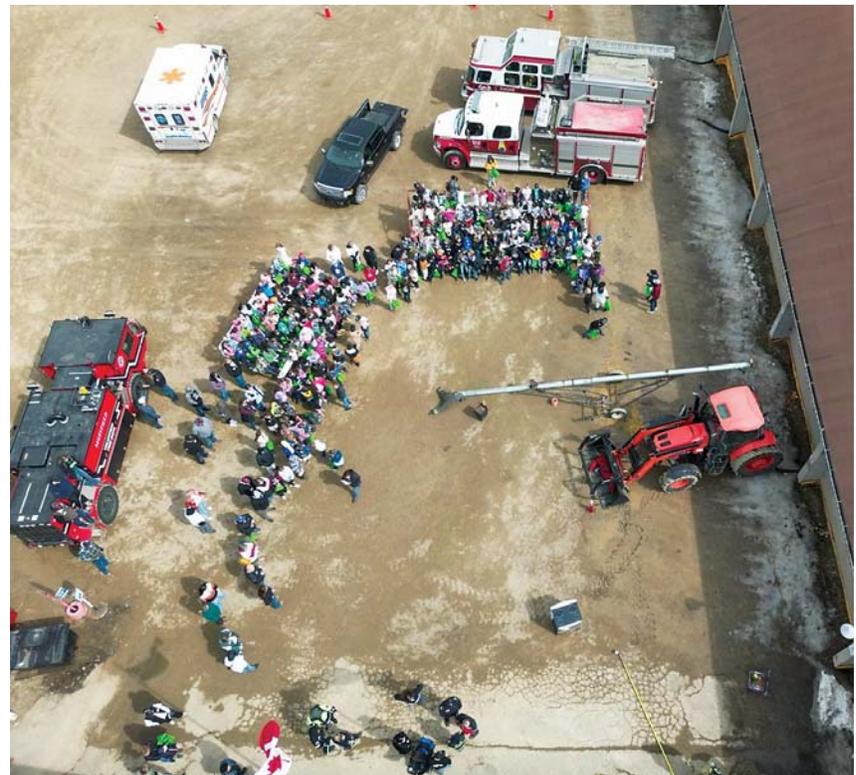
"We are so grateful for everyone involved including the organizing board, group leaders, session presenters, Maryfield Fire for the smoke trailer and the fire members operating it, the Redvers Activity Center for preparing and serving lunch to the volunteers and the Rising Phoenix Café for providing the afternoon snack," said Hutton. "This day could not be possible without all the volunteers that put in the extra time to make this day a success. The sponsorship that we received and commitment to agriculture safety from the board will allow this event to continue for many years to come."

The SAASE Provincial Safety Day program began in 2012. Since then, SAASE's Agricultural Societies are hosting over 15 safety days a year, with over 5,500 students attending from schools across Saskatchewan. In 2015 over 500 volunteers—donating over 4,000 hours of their time worked on safety days to teach children about safety.

Since the program was set up, SAASE has been able to develop partnerships which include Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture, Community Initiatives Fund (CIF), the Progressive Agriculture Foundation, the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association (CASA), SaskPower, Farm Credit Canada, the Saskatchewan Safety Council, and the Prairie South School Division.



Above and below: The safety day presentation with a tractor and auger showing the dangers of a PTO entanglement



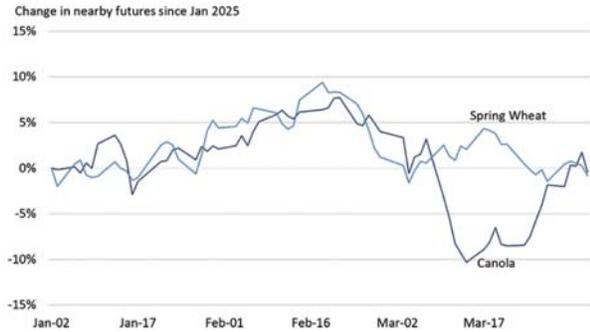


Figure 1: Canola futures prices were down 10% but have since recovered slightly

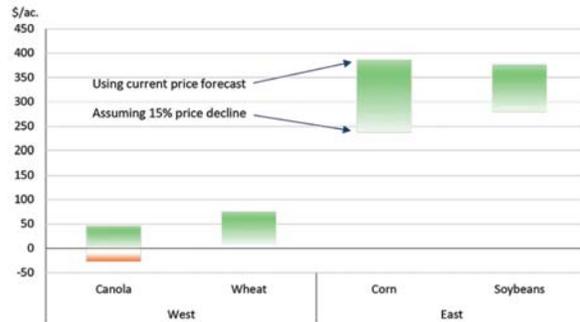


Figure 2: Projected average returns over all costs (less land), 2025-26 crop year

# Margin uncertainty impacting seeding decisions

BY JUSTIN SHEPHERD & GRAEME CROSBIE

Seeding is rapidly approaching in Canada, and the question of what producers will plant this year is more uncertain than usual due to current and potential future trade disruptions. Since our 2025 crop outlook in January, tariffs and trade issues have expanded, however the focus on cereals experiencing a price resurgence relative to oilseeds has been confirmed. This outlook provides information to make informed marketing decisions based on producer seeding decisions amid uncertainties.

and wheat acres (both spring and durum) tend to deviate very little year-to-year (Table 2) relative to their respective averages. This was true even between 2019 and 2022 when China had import restrictions on canola seed from Canada. It is true that seeded canola acres were down in 2019 and 2020 but relative to record highs 2017 and 2018; indeed, seeded canola acres in 2020 were in line with 2015 and 2016 levels. Outside of agronomic considerations,

this was likely a result of seed exports finding alternative markets and finding alternative routes to China. Exports to the EU were very strong in 2020 and 2021 (a result of very poor European rapeseed production in 2019 and 2020), partially offsetting the limited export opportunities to China. Statistics Canada estimates 21.5 million acres of canola to be seeded in 2025.

Continued on B20 <sup>RSR</sup>

## Crop prices volatile to start 2025

Despite all the U.S. tariff noise, canola and wheat prices fared pretty well to start 2025 relative to the beginning of the year. At one point in mid-February, canola and wheat futures were up 8% and 9%, respectively. They then fell, particularly canola prices after the Chinese tariff announcement in early March (Figure 1). However, canola futures have rebounded in the last three weeks, highlighting the ongoing volatility.

Soybean and corn prices experienced a similar phenomenon in the first three months of the year, rising in late January into February before falling back in March. During this period, a clearer picture of the size of the large South American soybean crop emerged, pressuring soybean prices.

## Tight margins will get tighter with continued trade disruptions

Absent tariffs, profitability was already looking tight for the 2025-26 crop year; considering the impact of tariffs (or potential tariffs) makes that outlook even more challenging.

Our latest profitability estimates for wheat/canola in Western Canada showed average returns of \$50-75/acre (excluding the cost of land). In the east, estimates were ~\$375/acre for both corn and soybeans, again excluding the cost of land. These numbers assume average yields at a regional level, so localized production shortfalls would trim these estimates. We also acknowledge the difficulty in forecasting prices in this environment and that there is considerable downside risk in these estimates. Given that, we illustrate what a 15% price decline would mean to these numbers. Such a decline would result in negative canola returns (-\$25/acre) and breakeven wheat returns in the west. In the east, returns would fall to \$240/acre for corn and \$280/acre for soybeans (Figure 2).

## Little change expected in major crop seeding intentions this spring

Producers in Eastern Canada have historically stuck tight to their soybean, corn, and winter wheat rotations. Over the last decade, corn and soybeans are the two crops least likely to see swings in seeded acres whereas the smaller crops (in terms of total acres seeded) see larger annual swings, relative to their averages (Table 1). In Ontario and Quebec, Statistics Canada estimates 3.9 and 3.1 million acres of soybeans and corn to be planted, respectively, in 2025. The U.S. is expected to plant nearly 5 million more corn acres this spring compared to last year as global stocks-to-use are tighter relative to soybeans.

The story is similar in the west. Canola



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Province	2024 Rental Rates			2023 Rental Rates		2022 Rental Rates		2021 Rental Rates		2020 Rental Rates	
	Rent to Price Ratio	Range		Rent to Price Ratio							
		MIN	MAX								
BC	n/a			n/a							
AB	2.35%	1.25%	3.65%	2.40%	2.60%	2.20%	2.20%	2.20%	2.20%	2.20%	
SK	3.10%	1.80%	4.60%	3.10%	3.10%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.30%	
MB	2.40%	1.15%	3.60%	2.40%	2.40%	2.50%	2.60%	2.50%	2.60%	2.60%	
ON	1.20%	0.45%	2.25%	1.25%	1.40%	1.45%	1.70%	1.45%	1.70%	1.70%	
QC	1.60%	0.60%	2.90%	1.50%	1.50%	1.60%	1.80%	1.60%	1.80%	1.80%	
NB	2.00%	1.10%	3.35%	2.00%	2.40%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	
NS	2.00%	1.25%	2.90%	1.80%	1.25%	1.60%	1.50%	1.60%	1.50%	1.50%	
PEI	4.10%	3.25%	5.15%	4.35%	4.35%	5.20%	5.50%	5.20%	5.50%	5.50%	
Canada	2.50%			2.52%	2.55%	2.50%	2.70%	2.50%	2.70%	2.70%	

Table 1: 2024 Rent to price ratio by province, with minimum and maximum range by province, including RP ratio since 2020.

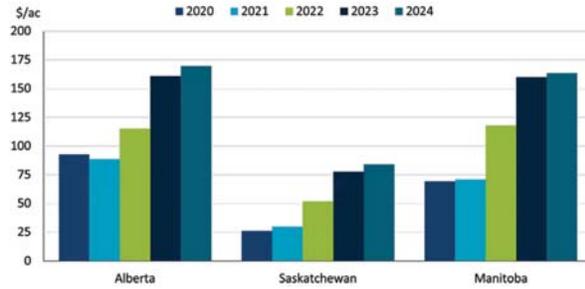


Figure 1: Per acre difference in profitability for renting vs newly purchased land in the Prairies

# 2024 Farmland rental rates: Renting or purchasing depends on many factors

BY LYNE MICHAUD, É.A.

For the past five years, FCC has been closely monitoring Canadian farmland rental rates and examining the impact of farmland value growth on these rates. According to the FCC Farmland values report, there was a significant increase of 9.3% in average farmland values in 2024.

While this growth rate is slower compared to recent years, it remains notably high. In contrast, the trends in cash rental rates have been more moderate. Over the last five years, the Canadian rent to price ratio has fluctuated from 2.70% in 2020 to 2.50% in 2024.

Renting land is an important business decision to manage financial risk. The duration, conditions and options negotiated when renting land has a large impact on the rental market trends. This can lead to rental agreements lagging farmland value changes in the short term.

## Rent to price ratio analysis

While there are different kinds of rental agreements used in the agriculture sector, like crop sharing; this analysis focuses on cash rental agreements, which is measured as follows:

$$\text{Rent to Price (RP) ratio (measured in \%)} = \frac{\text{Cash rental rate per acre}}{\text{Value of cultivated farmland per acre}}$$

The national average RP ratio in 2024 was 2.50%, very similar to the previous year's rate of 2.52% (Table 1). No rates are published for British Columbia as data in multiple regions of that province were deemed insufficient to provide an accurate average RP ratio.

Saskatchewan and New Brunswick saw no change in the RP ratio for 2024, despite strong increases in farmland value in the same period. Rental markets in these provinces quickly adjusted to reflect changes in farmland values. Other provinces showed slower responses, with little or no change in dollars per acre rental rates resulting in a lower RP ratio.

## Renting has improved annual cash flow over purchasing farmland

Renting can be an integral component of a business's strategic plan when aiming to expand its land base and grow operations. To compare any cash flow advantages of cash rental agreements versus purchasing land, we subtract the costs of land rental from new land purchase costs, assuming a 25% downpayment and a 25-year amortization (Figures 1, 2, and 3). Based on the province-wide RP ratio, the cash flow benefits of renting versus buying can vary significantly across different regions.

As the 2024 RP ratio in the Prairies remained stable, the cash flow advantage of renting land increased slightly compared to purchasing. The increase ranged from \$5 to \$10 per acre, influenced by lower interest rates that helped offset some of the rise in farmland values related to newly purchased land payments (Figure 1). Since



2020, Alberta's rent advantage increased by \$77 per acre, Saskatchewan's by \$58 per acre, and Manitoba's by \$95 per acre.

Ontario and Quebec producers have also experienced better cash flow with rental agreements than purchasing land. From 2020 to 2024, Ontario's rent advantage increased by \$620 per acre, and Quebec's by \$368 per acre (Figure 2).

New Brunswick and Nova Scotia have seen improved cash flow from rental agreements compared to land purchases (Figure 3). From 2020 to 2024, New Brunswick's rent advantage rose by \$103 per acre, while Nova Scotia's increased by \$44 per acre, the lowest growth in Canada. In 2020, Prince Edward Island (PEI) producers experienced better cash flow from purchasing land over renting, the only region in the country. The RP ratio in PEI has dropped the most in Canada over the last 5 years due to rental market adjustments, which improved the cash flow advantage for renting by \$147 per acre.

Despite the advantages of improved cash flow by renting in 2024, it is always prudent to carefully evaluate production costs before entering into new land rental agreements to fulfill operational requirements.

Purchased land appreciation since 2020 highlights benefits to owning.

The previous charts have demonstrated the annual cash flow advantages of renting farmland in recent years compared to purchasing. However, this analysis does not account for one of the major benefits of purchasing, namely land value appreciation. With the RP ratio data history available, we can compare purchasing versus renting in 2020 and the impacts on cash flow against land appreciation over five years. For simplicity, we will assume that the rental rate was fixed for five years

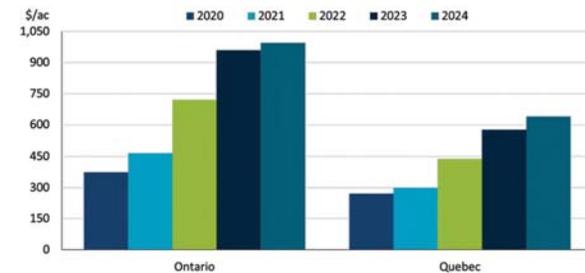


Figure 2: Per acre difference in profitability for renting vs newly purchased land in Ontario and Quebec

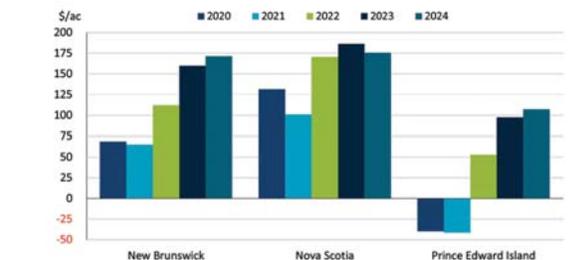


Figure 3: Per acre difference in profitability for renting vs newly purchased land in Atlantic Canada

at the 2020 rate, the purchased land was locked in for the same period, and additional cash flow generated was capitalized at the 10-year Canadian bond rate.

# 2024 Farmland rental rates: Renting or purchasing depends on many factors

Continued from B16

Renting land has been more advantageous for cash flow relative to purchasing in all provinces except Prince Edward Island (Figure 4). Saskatchewan producers gained \$140 of additional cash flow per acre over five years, Alberta \$490 per acre, Manitoba \$365 per acre, Quebec \$1,430 per acre, and Ontario \$1,975 per acre by renting vs purchasing in 2020. Nova Scotia and New Brunswick also saw rental advantages. In PEI, purchasing land in 2020 actually led to a higher annual cash flow due to the highest rental rates in the country at that time. Consequently, opting to rent in 2020 would have resulted in a cumulative cash flow of -\$210 per acre compared to purchasing.

Figure 4: Looking back at choosing to buy or rent farmland in 2020 related to cash flow and farmland value appreciation

On the other hand, if an operation had bought land in 2020, it would have experienced increases in land values. For example, in the Prairies, farmland increased \$1,200 to \$1,500 an acre (Figure 4). In Central Canada, land values have gone up more dramatically since 2020 with Quebec

farmland values growing nearly \$6,000 and Ontario increasing nearly \$9,200 on average. In the Maritimes, that growth ranges from \$500 in Nova Scotia to \$2,200 in Prince Edward Island.

### Bottom line

The choice between renting and buying farmland depends on various factors, such as comparing the cash flow benefits typically associated with renting to the asset appreciation demonstrated by the notable rise in farmland values nationwide. As producers evaluate their options, they must consider their unique financial situations and future expectations for rental rates and farmland values, ultimately balancing short-term profitability with long-term asset growth.

Right: Figure 4: Looking back at choosing to buy or rent farmland in 2020 related to cash flow and farmland value appreciation



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# Manitoba government providing \$150 million for agricultural producers

Province announces \$10 million in additional matching funds for Federal AgriStability Program

The Manitoba government will provide farmers and producers with more than \$150 million in supports, including \$10 million to match federal AgriStability funding, Premier Wab Kinew announced today.

"We're standing up for Westman and Western Canada, and protecting your jobs," said Kinew. "With \$150 million in supports for agriculture, we're making sure that farmers and producers can weather the economic uncertainty we're facing and protecting jobs in the agriculture industry."

The Manitoba government will provide \$10 million in additional matching funds for the AgriStability program, as well as \$140.8 million for business risk management programming including AgriInsurance, Wildlife Damage Compensation and AgriInvest.

The premier noted the province is also working with farmers, producers and businesses to protect jobs, strengthen Manitoba's economy and respond to tariffs from China and the United States, in addition to working with Keystone Agricultural Producers toward a number of shared goals to support Manitoba agriculture including:

- identifying opportunities to remove regulatory barriers to grow value-added food processing businesses;
- advancing trade work in Manitoba's interest including collaboration with other provinces and engagement with key U.S. states critical to Manitoba's trading relationship that will be hurt by potential tariffs; and
- advocating to the federal government and working to deliver policies and investments in value-added pro-

cessing, improvements to business risk management programs and access to the capital producers need.

"As Manitoba's general farm organization, advocating for the interests of all Manitoba farmers is our top priority," said Colin Hornby, general manager, Keystone Agricultural Producers. "We are committed to working collaboratively with the Manitoba government to have the perspectives of all Manitoba farmers reflected in any government efforts to address today's trade challenges and we thank them for giving us a seat at the table."

Budget 2025's tariff budget sets aside contingencies to support Manitobans in the face of U.S. tariffs, including \$100 million in support for farmers and producers, bringing Manitoba's total support for agriculture producers to as much as \$250 million, the premier noted.

# Manitoba government makes \$13-million investment in downtown agriculture exchange

Gate will diversify trade, expand Manitoba agriculture on the global market: Premier

The Manitoba government is investing \$13 million for Cereals Canada to develop the Global Agriculture Technology Exchange (Gate), a world-class centre in downtown Winnipeg that will support grain producers and processors in their ongoing efforts to establish new international trading partners, Premier Wab Kinew, Business, Mining, Trade and Job Creation Minister Jamie Moses and Agriculture Minister Ron Kostyshyn announced today.

"Agriculture is the backbone of Manitoba's economy and this investment will protect jobs as farmers and producers are facing a trade war on two fronts," said

Kinew. "This new exchange will help showcase Manitoba's grains to the world and help drive up global demand for high-quality Canadian grain products."

"We're working with Cereals Canada to drive innovation and provide their technical expertise to help bring more investments to Manitoba," said Moses. This partnership will protect Manitoba jobs and deliver opportunities for long-term growth in Manitoba.

Funds will be used to support the building and equipment costs to develop a new building in Winnipeg's Exchange District, with research and innovation space for specialty milling, a pilot bakery, pasta

extrusion, as well as training and office space.

"Canada produces some of the highest quality grains in the world and that gives us a unique advantage," said Kostyshyn. "Retaining Cereals Canada in Winnipeg will solidify Manitoba as the centre of the Canadian grains industry and a hub for global trade."

"This is a substantial investment from the Manitoba government for the future of Canadian cereals," said Dean Dias, CEO, Cereals Canada. "Gate is an essential investment in diversifying our markets and mitigating trade risk, providing global buyers with trusted technical knowledge

and expertise, and maintaining Canada's leadership as a trusted and consistent supplier of high-quality cereal grains."

This new investment is part of the Manitoba government's commitment to the revitalization of downtown Winnipeg, improving safety and bringing businesses back to the downtown core, noted the premier, adding the investment in Gate will complement provincial funding for the Your Way Home homelessness strategy, the redesign and creation of the Portage Place Health Centre of Excellence, investments in the downtown YMCA and bringing people together for Winnipeg Jets whiteout celebrations.

# Sask showcased at Food, Fuel, Fertilizer Global Summit

Third annual summit brings together business leaders from across Canada

On April 8, Premier Scott Moe delivered the keynote address to more than 300 business leaders and policymakers at the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce's 2025 Food, Fuel, Fertilizer Global Summit in Regina.

"It has never been more clear how vital Saskatchewan is to ensuring food and energy security around the world," Moe said. "The Food, Fuel, Fertilizer Global Summit emphasizes the province's critical role in global trade and sustainable development, which is of utmost importance during this time of uncertainty. More and more countries are understanding the value that we bring to the table, realizing that choosing Saskatchewan is not just a good choice, but the right choice."

The summit explored the global role the province plays, particularly in the sectors of agriculture, mining and energy. Through his keynote, Premier Moe discussed food, and energy security, cutting the carbon tax, the province's tariff response plan and the importance of diversifying export markets.

"Saskatchewan's approach to trade and investment has helped position our province as a reliable global partner in food, fuel and fertilizer," Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce CEO, Prabha Ramaswamy said. "With international engagement offices in 9 countries across the world, Saskatchewan is poised to diversify markets, expand market access for businesses, and supply these vital resources to the world. Events like the Food, Fuel, Fertilizer Global Summit showcase the leadership and resilience that make Saskatchewan a steady and trusted partner in uncertain times."

In 2024, Saskatchewan's exports reached over 160 countries, with eight markets that totaled over \$1 billion. Last year the province saw international merchandise exports reach \$45.4 billion, a top three record for Saskatchewan.

Private capital investment in Saskatchewan increased last year by 17.3 per cent to \$14.7 billion, ranking first among provinces for growth. Private capital investment is projected to reach \$16.2 billion in 2025, an increase of 10.1 per cent over 2024. This is the sec-

ond highest anticipated percentage increase among the provinces.

Statistics Canada's latest GDP numbers indicate that Saskatchewan's 2023 real GDP reached an all-time high of \$77.9 billion, increasing by \$1.8 billion, or 2.3 per cent. This ties Saskatchewan for second in the nation for real GDP growth and above the national average of 1.6 per cent.

All of this allows the Government of Saskatchewan to prioritize affordability, health care, education, and safer communities and deliver the services Saskatchewan people need and deserve.



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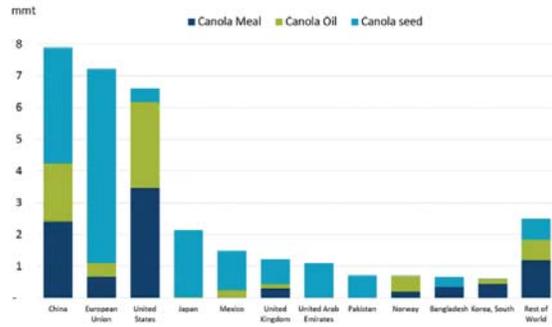
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Crops	Variability ranking (high to low)*	StatCan estimate 2025
Chickpeas	1	453,000
Soybeans	2	1,626,100
Flax	3	446,500
Mustard	4	286,800
Rye (all)	5	472,700
Corn (silage)	6	378,100
Corn (grain)	7	553,400
Oats	8	2,695,500
Lentils	9	4,167,600
Peas	10	3,474,600
Barley	11	6,005,300
Canary seed	12	230,700
Spring wheat	13	19,115,200
Durum wheat	14	6,341,600
Canola	15	21,461,100

\* A statistic for each crop was calculated and ranked accordingly from highest to lowest. The statistic considers changes in seeded acres year-over-year relative to the 10-year average. This allows for comparison between crops, irrespective of the total amount of seeded acres.

Table 2: Wheat and canola the least likely crops to see major changes in seeded acres historically



Five-year average

Source: USDA PSD

Figure 3: Largest global importers of canola seed and products

# Margin uncertainty impacting seeding decisions

Continued from B15

The situation this time around is different. The recently announced Chinese tariffs target oil and meal, not seed; and, with the expansion of domestic crush capacity, the industry looks different today than it did five years ago. There is a greater degree of market diversification for seed, less so for oil and meal. The U.S. and China dominate global meal and oil import markets, with over 65% of each product heading to one of those destinations (Figure 3).

European rapeseed production was down -14% in 2024 (and was the smallest crop since 2020) due to adverse weather. Correspondingly, between October 2024 and February 2025, over 700,000 mt of Canadian canola seed found its way to the EU, the highest export pace since 2020-21. This could be one reason why old crop

prices have found support recently despite the Chinese tariffs and could provide support for the remainder of the current crop year. The level of EU production in 2025 could have a significant impact on 2025-26 canola prices and will be a watch item this summer.

We could see some 'swing acres' go into flax and lentils this year. Our profitability estimates for 2024-25 and 2025-26 show these two crops as having decent returns, and historically we've seen more variation in seeded acres with these crops, particularly flax which ranks third in our variability ranking (Table 2). We could also see more soybean acres in Manitoba given its historical year-to-year variation and the fact that potato acres could fall this year as buyers in that province have reportedly parred back purchases of potatoes this year.

## Bottom line

Weather has been much less of discussion this winter, both because of the volatility of crop markets, but also because the improved drought maps show the best conditions coming out of winter since 2020. There's still a long way to go before the crop is in the bin, though. Now more than ever, understanding individual farm production costs is important. The one thing we know about prices in 2025-26 is there will be volatility and, at times, opportunities to lock in returns. This is maybe truer in 2025-26 than in other years given prices are reflecting more geopolitical policy and less supply / demand fundamentals, and these policies can be implemented (or reversed) with the stroke of a pen.

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# Understand the ins and outs of grain payment deferral

BY TREVOR BACQUE

For decades, farmers have opted to defer some or all their grain payment cheques when they deliver to their local elevator.

This strategy is often used as a tax planning tool: farmers will sell their grain but wait until sometime in the future, usually the new calendar year, to accept payment. It's a way to manage taxable income. Grain payments can be future-dated up to 364 days from the date of being issued a cheque.

### A common practice

In the 1990s, the practice was largely unused, likely because of low farming profits. Yet, as farm size and income steadily grew and farms incorporated throughout the 2000s, the practice of deferred grain payments became more common. The income cut-off number is now \$500,000 -

once a farm's net income exceeds that, tax rates increase.

Chartered accountant and Saskatchewan farmer Lance Stockbrugger says there is a valid reason why farmers carry on the deferment tradition: deferring grain payments means farmers can bring in more income within a year and still benefit from a lower tax bracket. Similarly, for farm operations registered as sole proprietorships, any income not deposited into a bank account is simply moved to the next year. Less cash inflow means lower taxes.

"When farms incorporate, they can earn significantly more net income and pay it at a lower corporate tax rate," he adds.

However, Stockbrugger says there's cause for caution when considering whether deferred payments are right for your farm operation.

*Continued on B22*



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# Understand the ins and outs of grain payment deferral

Continued from B21

### Potential red flags

Farmers should consider the financial position of the grain company they deal with, Stockbrugger says.

Can the company handle all the deferred payments being cashed at once? Stockbrugger points out how, in 2003, the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool nearly went bankrupt when thousands of farmers cashed their deferred payments in early January. The Wheat Pool barely survived and had to restructure its business immediately following its brush with financial death.

"What a lot of people don't understand, is the risk of that business going bankrupt or not coming clean financially and their ability to pay that deferred grain cheque," he says. "People will defer millions of dollars with a grain company to save tax and

they have no idea what their financial position is like."

Stockbrugger estimates about two-thirds of all grain farmers use some form of deferrals as a tax management tool. And while it can be a useful strategy, it's still taxable income.

### Timing is everything

Jeanine Courteau, head of audits at the Canadian Grain Commission, believes farmers need to understand the risk of deferred payments where the grain company may go bankrupt, and makes it clear it's better for farmers to err on the side of caution.

"We want to see the producer get paid," Courteau says. "We want to see that producer take that cheque right away, cash it and if it clears the bank, great. Then it's no longer a liability for the licensee and the

producer has money in their hands."

When the producer goes to cash their cheque, timing is critical to ensure the grain company has the funds to cover the cost of deferred payments. Under the Safeguards for Grain Farmers Program, producers are eligible for compensation within 90 days of the date of their grain delivery, or within 30 days of the date a cash purchase ticket or cheque was issued and delivered to them. The lesser of the two applies. The faster farmers get and cash their cheques, the lower the risk to their bottom line.

"But if the company suddenly fails to meet its obligations three or four months later, you're at a loss because you deferred your payment into the new year and are

now outside your eligibility period," Courteau says, adding that the Canadian Grains Commission is mandated to protect producers and staying within the deferred payment parameters is important to making that happen.

"It's going to boil down to the personal risk appetite on whether or not producers are willing to accept the risk and the implications," Courteau says.

Overall, while deferral of a grain payment can be a valuable tax management tool, it's critical to know the financial position of a company. Otherwise, you could find yourself in a problematic situation, especially if you are outside the Canadian Grain Commission's compensation window.



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# Saskatchewan farmers celebrate end to Railway Carbon Tax Surcharge

The Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan (APAS) celebrated the positive steps taken by CN and CPKC to eliminate their rail carbon tax surcharges, effective April 1, 2025, for Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, and New Brunswick. This development follows the federal government's elimination of the consumer carbon tax (fuel levy), a move enthusiastically supported by APAS.

"This is massive for farmers," APAS President, Bill Prybylski, declared. "Axing the surcharges puts more cash where it belongs—in our pockets and back into our rural communities. It's a huge lift, especially now, with trade uncertainty. Between 2019 and 2024, Saskatchewan farmers have been saddled with about \$200 million in carbon surcharges by the railways. We've fought tirelessly for relief, and seeing it finally come to an end is incredibly rewarding. Eliminating these surcharges not only ensures farmers feel the benefit of scrapping the federal consumer carbon tax but also keeps us competitive on the global stage."

APAS highlights the critical nature of this success,



pointing out that railway fuel surcharges were set to cost Saskatchewan farmers an estimated \$80 million this year alone, underlining the significance of this decision.

APAS welcomes the changes but remains vigilant about the still-active Low Carbon Fuel Standard (LCFS) in British Columbia, which might increase shipping costs for grain

from Saskatchewan to BC Ports by raising railway fuel costs. Additionally, following the removal of the federal consumer fuel levy, APAS advocates for transparency and detailed analysis of how the federal Output-Based Pricing Sys-

tem (OBPS) impacts farm input costs.

"Moving forward, it is crucial that we have clarity on the implications and application of the continued provincial carbon pricing in British Columbia on rail freight costs for our produc-

ers," added Prybylski. "We also need the federal government to ensure complete transparency around the OBPS and its impact on our sector as climate policies evolve, reinforcing the need for close collaboration with agriculture to avoid plac-

ing undue burdens on food producers.

"The successful removal of the carbon tax is a testament to the depth of APAS's policy work, focused advocacy and its relentless efforts to support the interests of farm and ranch families."





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