THE WORLD-Spectator AG NEWS

APRIL 2026

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

Sask reviewing farm land ownership

The Government of Saskatchewan announced on April 14 that it will undertake a comprehensive review of The Saskatchewan Farm Security Act, including additional public and stakeholder consultations after an initial review conducted by the Farm Land Ownership Advisory Committee.

"This review will ensure any potential changes to The Saskatchewan Farm Security Act are done right and continue to meet the needs of Saskatchewan producers," Agriculture Minister David Marit said.

The Advisory Committee met with leaders in the agricultural, real estate, legal and financial services sectors as well as conducted their own research into farm land ownership. Their work confirmed there is no evidence of foreign ownership of Saskatchewan farm land under the current legislative framework. This aligns with the Provincial Auditor's report, which found no instances of unauthorized foreign ownership.

The comprehensive review will explore opportunities to improve ownership verification, strengthen penalty and enforcement tools, modernize definitions, and strengthen reporting obligations and oversight of permanent residents. The review will also consider other components of the Act not reviewed by the Advisory Committee, including farm security and home quarter protection, to ensure ongoing relevance and effectiveness.

"The outcome of our outreach was very informative with no evidence of foreign ownership reported," Farm Land Ownership Advisory Committee Chairperson Ken McDonald said. "We feel this legislative review will help ensure the province's farm land stays in the hands of Canadian farmers and that there will be a positive path forward for the next generation."

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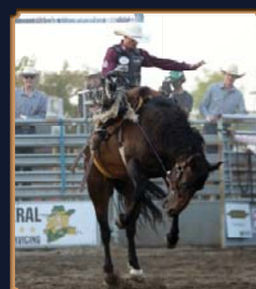
MOOSE MOUNTAIN
PRO RODEO
KENNEDY, SK

KENNEDY MOOSE MOUNTAIN 93RD PRO RODEO

Saturday, July 18 - Sunday, July 19



SATURDAY

- 3pm Parade
- 4pm to 5 pm Happy Hour in Rodeo Beer Gardens
- 6pm Rodeo with Bull riding under the lights
- Sheep Scramble during intermission
- Wild ponies following rodeo performance
- 9pm Saturday night - DJ Platinum Music in the Beer Gardens
- Intermission Performances Noemy Goeurjoly, Roman Riding Act

SUNDAY

- 9am Pancake Breakfast at Kennedy Friendship Centre
- 11am Cowboy Church Service at the Rodeo Grounds
- 2pm Rodeo
- Sheep Scramble during intermission
- Wild ponies following rodeo performance
- Intermission Performances Noemy Goeurjoly, Roman Riding Act

Come meet our Rodeo Queen. She will be at the grounds all weekend

Food Booth & Beer Gardens open for the weekend

ADMISSION : Adult Day Pass- $25.00
Student Day Pass - $10.00 | 5 & under FREE
Family Weekend Pass $90.00 (2 Adults + 2 Students)

PRO RODEO CANADA C.P.R.A.

- Free camping in designated areas
- Food Trucks on site
- ATM on site

For more information call Jill Lowe at 306-736-8967

Saskatchewan Animal Enforcement Agency now delivering animal welfare enforcement services

Animal welfare enforcement services in Saskatchewan are now being delivered by the Saskatchewan Animal Enforcement Agency (SAEA), following the transition of services previously provided by Animal Protection Services of Saskatchewan on March 31, 2026. Members of the public can call the same contact number at 306-382-0002 or visit their website at www.saskanimalenforcementagency.com to report suspected animal cruelty or abuse.

The transition supports the Government of Saskatchewan's continued commitment to protecting the safety and welfare of animals across the province. SAEA is responsible for enforcing The Animal Protection Act, 2018 throughout Saskatchewan, excluding the City of Regina, where animal welfare services continue to be provided by the Regina Humane Society.

"Our government's partnership with the Saskatchewan Animal Enforcement Agency ensures that animal welfare enforcement continues without interruption," Agriculture Minister David Marit said. "This new agency brings a strong, long-term approach that supports effective and compassionate enforcement that protects communities and animals across Saskatchewan."

“The Saskatchewan Animal Enforcement Agency is here to serve the people and animals of Saskatchewan through professional, transparent, and accountable enforcement of The Animal Protection Act, 2018," SAEA CEO Lavan Thirukketheesawaranathan said. "In the communities we serve, including urban companion animal settings, rural livestock operations, and First Nations communities, we prioritize education and voluntary compliance while taking decisive action when animals are in distress. We are committed to building strong relationships with our communities and partners, and to collaborating with other agencies and animal welfare organizations so we can work together toward the Ministry of Agriculture’s goals of fair, consistent, and financially responsible enforcement. In partnership with the ministry, we are strengthening animal welfare, supporting Saskatchewan’s agricultural community, and upholding the public’s trust.”

For concerns regarding animal cruelty and neglect, contact SAEA or the local police force for the jurisdiction. For animal welfare concerns within the City of Regina, contact the Regina Humane Society. For concerns regarding animal control, dangerous animals and stray animals, contact your local municipal or rural municipal office.

SAEA was selected through a public, competitive procurement process. The group brings strong internal governance framework with civilian board oversight to ensure accountability and enforcement. The board of directors have experience in law enforcement, finances and business management and includes two elders from First Nation communities to advise on First Nation related issues.

Canadian seeded acreage: Will fertilizer prices reshape 2026 planting decisions?

By Leigh Anderson, FCC Senior Economist

Seeding is only weeks away, but final planting decisions are clouded by a higher degree of uncertainty than usual. Many Canadian crops are expected to face tight margins in 2026, and rising fertilizer prices are adding pressure just as plans are finalized. In our 2026 crop outlook, we noted that crop export pace and cost management would be key to profitability. Since then fertilizer costs have become an even bigger factor amid the turmoil in the Middle East.

While many acres are already committed through crop rotations or contracts, some swing acres remain flexible. Crop rotation usually guides planting decisions, and most years farmers make only small changes. This year, however, may be different. Higher fertilizer prices could shift acres toward lower input crops, reduce fertilizer use, or even take some marginal land out of production. This blog explores where those acreage shifts may occur.

Digging into current seeding projections

Early seeding projections offer a useful snapshot of how farmers are positioning themselves heading into the growing season. Statistics Canada's 2026 Field Crop Survey suggests Canadian farmers plan to seed more canola, corn, barley, flax, and soybeans, while acres of wheat, oats, lentils, and peas are expected to decline (Table 1).

Table 1: Statistics Canada 2026 preliminary seeding intentions

Crop	2025	2026	yr/yr
Barley	6,135,800	6,440,800	5.0%
Canola	21,623,100	21,839,200	1.0%
Corn for grain	3,782,200	3,846,200	1.7%
Corn for silage	1,043,600	957,500	-8.3%
Flax	620,200	753,200	21.4%
Lentils	4,379,600	4,137,600	-5.5%
Oats	2,996,100	2,903,400	-3.1%
Peas	3,509,700	3,078,300	-12.3%
Soybeans	5,781,800	5,889,500	1.9%
Durum wheat	6,531,500	6,377,600	-2.4%
Spring wheat	18,808,900	18,781,100	-0.1%
Winter wheat	1,691,600	1,578,800	-6.7%
Principal field crops	**75,212,500**	**75,004,400**	

Note: winter wheat acres are seeded in the fall of 2025.

Sources: Statistics Canada, FCC Economics

It is important to note that this survey was conducted before the outbreak of the U.S. war in Iran. Since then, fertilizer prices have risen, which could influence final planting decisions. To assess the potential impact, we analyzed historical variability in seeded acreage over the past decade. Year-over-year changes for each crop were used as a proxy for the potential range of "swing acres" relative to current Statistics Canada projections (Table 2).

Table 2: Acreage variability and potential swing acres

Crop	StatCan estimate 2026	10-year average variability (+/-)	Swing acres (+/-)
Spring wheat	18,781,100	7.4%	1,390,000
Canola	21,839,200	3.4%	740,000
Barley	6,440,800	10.5%	670,000
Soybeans	5,889,500	10.6%	620,000
Durum wheat	6,377,600	8.2%	520,000
Lentils	4,137,600	11.9%	490,000
Oats	2,903,400	13.4%	380,000
Peas	3,078,300	11.9%	360,000
Flax	753,200	21.5%	160,000
Corn for grain	3,846,200	2.3%	86,000
Corn for silage	957,500	7.7%	73,000
Principal field crops	**75,004,400**	**7.3%**	**5,489,000**

A statistical analysis was conducted for each crop to assess variability in acreage changes. The analysis examines changes in seeded acres over a 10-year period and serves as a proxy for the potential range of swing acres relative to current Statistics Canada projections.

Sources: Statistics Canada, FCC Economics

Historically, acreage shifts among major field crops have been limited. We estimate that up to 5.5 million acres— or 7.3% of total principal field crop acres—could still shift from preliminary intentions. Under current market conditions, some of these acres may move toward lower input or more favorable margin crops, including shifts away from high nitrogen crops such as corn toward alternatives like soybeans. Below, we delve into some of the crops to assess the likely direction for those swing acres.

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To contact Ag News
call 306-435-2445 or email
world_spectator@sasktel.net

Sask reviewing farm land ownership

☞ *Continued from Page B1*

"We appreciate the government's efforts to continue to bring transparency around farm land ownership in Saskatchewan," Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association President Jeff Yorga said. "Producers want a level playing field, and the upcoming consultations are a great first step to ensuring that. We look forward to working with all stakeholders to make sure producer voices are heard."

"Protecting ownership of Saskatchewan's pasture and hayland is of critical importance to our beef cattle producers and there are no better caretakers of Saskatchewan's grassland and farmland than ranchers and farmers," Saskatchewan Cattle Association Chair Chad Ross said. "The Saskatchewan Cattle Association supports the work of the Farmland Advisory Committee and the provincial government's plans to undertake a comprehensive review of The Saskatchewan Farm Security Act and looks forward to actively participating in consultations going forward."

"The Saskatchewan Farm Security Act is an important provincial statute designed to protect, support, and provide security for Saskatchewan family farms," Wheat Growers Association Chair Darryl Fransoo said. "Today's announcement shows the continued support our government continues to provide, ensuring a prosperous future for farmers facing more challenges than ever before."

"Our farmland is one of Saskatchewan's greatest assets, and it's important that the rules around who can own and use it keep pace with the realities of farming today," Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities President Bill Huber said. "This review is a good chance to make sure the Act continues to protect family farms and support the future of our rural communities."

Saskatchewan farm land is one of the province's most valuable assets. The government says it wants to ensure the legislative framework regarding farm land ownership meets the needs of the people of Saskatchewan as the nature of farming and business continues to evolve.

APAS leads independent review of Sask farmland

The Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan (APAS) has been working on an independent review of Saskatchewan's farmland ownership rules since August 2025 and is pleased that the government of Saskatchewan has finally committed to reviewing The Saskatchewan Farm Security Act. APAS says they look forward to contributing evidence-based recommendations to ensure farmland remains accessible for future generations.

In partnership with Praxis Consulting, the project—Enhancing Public Trust in Saskatchewan Land Ownership Policy & Regulation—aims to address ongoing producer concerns about foreign investment, rising land costs, transparency, and the long-term sustainability of family farms.

"Accessible and affordable farmland is essential to preserving Saskatchewan's farming future," said APAS President Bill Prybylski. "Producers are worried about foreign capital, obscure corporate structures, and the lack of clarity surrounding ownership—not just for today, but for future generations."

A key concern is the growing impact of farmland ownership trends on intergenerational land transfers. Rising land costs, speculative investments, and increasing foreign interest in Saskatchewan farmland are making it harder for family farm operations to pass farmland between generations. These trends threaten both the financial stability of family farms and the broader sustainability of Saskatchewan's rural communities.

"Saskatchewan farmland must remain accessible and affordable for the next generation of producers," added Prybylski. "We are committed to finding practical solutions that safeguard producers and the future of agriculture. This review will equip us with the facts and tools needed to advocate for stronger policies that support farm families and rural communities."

Praxis Consulting's independent assessment will ensure that APAS's recommendations are grounded in evidence and reflect the diverse needs of Saskatchewan's producers. The findings will be presented to the Government of Saskatchewan as part of its legislative review process, with the goal of strengthening land ownership policy and public trust.

Is spring just teasing us?

"Sure, farming can be stressful at times, but at least the pay is pretty bad and the hours suck." I don't know who wrote that statement or I would credit it appropriately but I so relate to it. I also relate to the video of the farmer hitting the rapids in a canoe, bouncing sky high as he tries to avoid the 'rocks' of "high fertilizer prices," "high fuel prices," and "low crop prices." It can be a bumpy ride, one that I have been on for 49 years and counting, hubby even longer.

At one time, when I was oh so young and optimistic, I wanted nothing more than to be on a tractor, in a field, working the land. Summerfallowing, picking rocks, harrowing, haying or combining. Even calving cows (on a very small scale) appealed to me if it didn't involve needles, C-sections or dying animals. It's very true, I was not cut out to be a cattle farmer. Probably not a grain farmer either when it comes right down to it but it is what I have come to know and it's been my life now much longer than it hasn't.

Spring has sprung sort of, at least at the time of me writing this. Or perhaps it's just teasing us. Nice day here, one there, miserable the next and snow to boot. On one beautiful day in the middle of April, hubby and I tackled installing a new exterior door on our rental garage. We allowed two hours but ran into a snag or two and it ended up taking six. It was an unfortunate thing the old siding on that old garage didn't quite allow the door to fit in and the trimming of that siding was a bit more time-consuming than we anticipated. Fortunately, the lockset went in without a hitch! We were quite pumped ¬– spring had finally arrived. So spring-like was it that I pulled the riding mower out and gave the rental yard and our yard both a nice trimming up. The green of the grass was noticeable and despite the dust I stirred up, I was so happy to be outdoors.

I probably don't have to tell you Saskatchewan folks what we woke up to the following morning. There was not a speck of grass to be seen under the several inches of snow that had fallen. Highways were crazy bad, the cold temperatures meant retiring the shorts I had just started wearing the day before, and the gazebo, so freshly cleaned out and ready for the season was now filled with snow. I guess I un-tarped it one day too soon!

And so, April rolls along, sometimes snowy and sometimes warm and sunny. On April 9, 1977, we had the driest, sunniest, hottest day ever, so much so that we were sweltering in our dresses and tuxedos. In the 49 years since, we have never had quite the same type of day, weather-wise, as our wedding day, although once over that time period, there was one fairly nice day. It was so fortunate hubby was really sick with the flu on our honeymoon, fevered and chilled and miserable, that he didn't even complain about not being able to be in the field until about three-quarters the way home from our week-long trip to the west coast and back.

On our first anniversary, with lots of snow still on the ground, we decided we would head for Santa Fe, New Mexico for a few days. Oh to be young and drive that far in such a short period of time. One night on our way home, we decided to save some money on a motel room and sleep for a few hours at a roadside rest stop along the interstate north of Denver, Colorado. The plan was to carry on to the Black Hills of South Dakota the following day. Unfortunately, our car (a lovely two-door Olds Cutlass) wouldn't start when we were ready to get on the road. The date was April 19 and it was warm enough to sleep in the car without it running, so imagine our panic when it would't start. The car didn't come with factory cruise control so we had had it installed prior to our trip and though we didn't know it at the time, putting the steering wheel up had caused the problem because once we lowered the wheel, all was fine!

I happened to be behind the wheel as we turned off the interstate to head east towards Lusk, Wyoming and out of nowhere a horrible blizzard blew in along with a good foot of snow. The secondary highway didn't have shoulders and I couldn't see where I was going. Stopping to let hubby drive was not an option and all we could do was roll the passenger window down for hubby to try spot the reflectors that stood along the highway. It took forever to reach Lusk and by the time we rolled into town, a bit before noon, we could tell that the few hotels that were there at that time were filled right up. After waiting for a couple of hours, we were able to get a room and basically sleep the day (and night) away. I am pretty sure trying to save a few dollars really saved us nothing in the end.

The twins (nearly 15 now), outdoorsmen through and through, have returned from an ice fishing trip up north to the fishing lodge and while they await their next trip up to camp, they are keeping busy outdoors. I can't be sure, but I think their washing machine must run steady just to keep up with the mud on their ski pants and their blue jeans. It's a busy life when there are creeks to conquer and cows to feed and muddy terrain to traverse on ATV's. I am reminded that I was once in the same shoes – trying to keep ahead of the mud and the laundry during spring all because of the outdoorsman the twins' dad was when he was their age.

Today, as I write this (April 21), with temperatures in the mid-20's and awaiting another unwelcome blast of rain and snow, the farm grands are busy outdoors, working with their 4-H cattle, giving the golf clubs a bit of a warm-up, side-by-siding here, there and everywhere. They won't head indoors until well after the sun sets because adventure happens outdoors in their world. I on the other hand, when I was at the farm earlier today, was tempted to open up the RV in preparation for our temporary move to the farm. And then I remembered the forecast and thought there was absolutely no point just yet.

A few days ago, I sent individual texts to the twins, one who always responds and one who never does. The question was, 'What do you want for your birthday?' And instantly, the one who never responds, answered: "Vacuum sealer." And there you have it. A good vacuum sealer apparently is a necessity.

The Lunch Bunch continues to come by at noon hours and the talk around the table today turned to summer jobs they might have someday – what they might like to do in a year or two down the road and what kind of jobs might be available. I told them it would likely be cool to have a job up north at a fishing camp some summer but that they maybe wouldn't like to be there for an entire summer. I was wrong! It sounds like the young men around the table thought an entire summer up north would be the perfect job!

And while these youngsters, all 13 to 15 years of age, talk of summer jobs, here's hoping life on your farm this season is a good one. There's no feeling quite like it to be out pulling those air drills through the ground and smelling the fresh earth. Happy seeding to all our farmer friends out there and to everyone else, enjoy the sunshine and great outdoors once the spring weather smartens up.

New Farm Stress Line partnership delivers enhanced mental health services for the agriculture sector

As of April 1, SaskAgMatters Mental Health Network Inc. will manage the Farm Stress Line as part of a coordinated mental health support system for Saskatchewan producers, their family members and their employees. The new partnership offers 24/7 confidential access to crisis line counsellors trained in agriculture, as well as follow-up counselling sessions with Saskatchewan-based registered mental health professionals with backgrounds in agriculture.

The Government of Saskatchewan and Government of Canada are providing $200,000 per year for the next two years for the Farm Stress Line and counselling services through the Sustainable Canadian Agriculture Partnership (Sustainable CAP).

“Farmers withstand unique demands and challenges that affect not only their physical health, but also mental wellbeing,” Federal Agriculture and Agri-Food Minister Heath MacDonald said. “This partnership ensures that when members of our agricultural community reach out, they are connected with a mental health professional who truly understands their reality.”

"People working in agriculture face stressful work conditions affecting their livelihood and wellbeing," Agriculture Minister David Marit said. "They need support from mental health professionals who understand the industry and who will ensure confidentiality for those who reach out. The Farm Stress Line has a proud history of supporting the agricultural community, and these improved services will help protect the health of people working in the sector."

The Farm Stress Line toll-free number - 1-800-667-4442 - will stay the same. Producers can call about anything affecting their wellbeing, including financial stress, family pressures, anxiety, depression, burnout or concern for someone else.

Rancher on a horse overlooking a golden field. Top text reads "Protecting Producers Mental Health." Main text on the graphic reads "The Farm Stress Line is available 24/7 at 1-800-667-4442." On the bottom of the graphic the logos read "Farm Stress Line Saskatchewan, Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership, Canada and Saskatchewan."

SaskAgMatters is a Saskatchewan-based organization of producers and mental health professionals. The organization is enhancing its local counselling services through a partnership with the Canadian Centre for Agricultural Wellbeing to provide crisis support services from counsellors with agricultural training through the National Farmer Crisis Line.

"SaskAgMatters was founded to break down the barriers that Saskatchewan farm families face when trying to get help," SaskAgMatters board chair and co-founder Cynthia Beck said. "We have removed the time and stress involved in finding a mental health professional and cover the financial cost of these services. Our counsellors offer flexible appointment times and will meet by telephone or virtually."

"Through our research, we listened to Saskatchewan farmers and ranchers," Associate Professor, College of Nursing, University of Saskatchewan, and co-founder of SaskAgMatters Dr. Michelle Pavloff said. "Their experiences guided this new approach to mental health support, including a refreshed Farm Stress Line and access to therapy provided by those who understand agriculture, either through lived experience or training. This work was built with producers, and we are proud to be advancing farmer mental health in Saskatchewan."

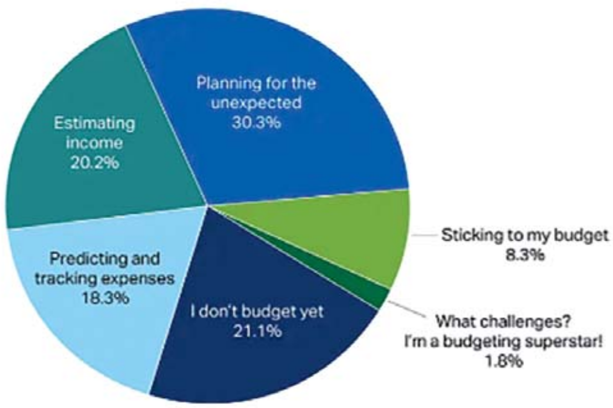
Sustainable CAP is a five-year, $3.5 billion investment by federal, provincial and territorial governments to strengthen competitiveness, innovation, and resiliency of Canada's agriculture, agri-food, and agri-based products sector. This includes $1 billion in federal programs and activities, and a $2.5 billion commitment that is cost-shared 60 per cent federally and 40 per cent provincially for programs that are designed and delivered by provinces and territories.

Do you have the two budgets your farm needs?

BY ALLISON FINNAMORE

A budget is a plan for the future, yet the unpredictability of farming makes it tough to produce an accurate forecast. There's an endless list of expenses that can arise: What will crop prices be? Will my herd get sick? Will I need equipment repairs or purchases?

It's questions like these that make budgeting for farms complex. Many producers say planning for the unexpected is their biggest challenge when it comes to budgeting.



Source: Poll results from Mastering Your Farm Budget webinar

Why do you need a budget for the farm?

While the unpredictability of farming makes it tough to plan, that uncertainty is one of the biggest reasons to build and monitor your budget. When you have a comprehensive understanding of the numbers of your farm business paired with a regularly reviewed budget, you're in a better position to respond to the unexpected and make informed decisions with confidence.

Two budgets to use for cash flow management success

Establishing budgets, even simple ones, is a critical first step in cash flow management – the lifeblood of any farm business.

Audrée Morin, a Business Advisor at FCC, says a strong operating budget should become your goal post for the upcoming year, while the monthly cash flow budget provides the clarity you need to achieve the year-end goal.

"The operating budget and monthly cash flow will be the catalyst to help you decide where you want to dig deeper into your operation and have a pulse on your year-end success," Morin says.

The two most important tools in cash flow management are the operating budget and the cash flow budget. Together, they provide a comprehensive view of your financial situation, allowing you to monitor your cash flow, identify potential issues, and take proactive measures to ensure you have sufficient cash on hand to meet your obligations and pursue growth opportunities.

Operating budget

An operating budget focuses on the day-to-day operations of the farm and answers the question, "Will I be profitable?" It projects your revenue and expenses over a certain period, typically a year, using accrual accounting principles. That means the operating budget reflects the expected revenues and expenses as they are anticipated to be earned or incurred during the budget period, regardless of cash flow timing. It allows you to set financial goals, allocate resources, and make informed decisions about your operations.

How to set up an operating budget

For a full step-by-step guide to building your operating budget, explore Sowing success: Effective cash flow management from the Manage Your Farm Finances course series.

Cash flow budget

Operating budgets ensure you have enough money to cover operational costs and pay your debts. However, they don't paint the full picture of your cash position. This is where a cash flow budget comes in.

Cash flow budgets track the timing of cash inflows and outflows and answer the question, "Will I have enough cash when I need it?" Knowing the timing of your cash flow allows you to anticipate and plan for potential cash shortages or surpluses.

For a full step-by-step guide to building your cash flow budget, plus strategies for managing your cash flow, explore Sowing success: Effective cash flow management from the Manage Your Farm Finances course series.

Tips for success

Record

Whether it's spreadsheets or farm accounting software like AgExpert, document your operating and cash flow budgets so you can better track and communicate the position of your farm business.

Build

You can get more detailed with the budgets as you get the hang of it. Break your operation out by enterprise, barn, or whatever division works best for you. Be careful not to get carried away. If you are too detailed, keeping a cash flow budget becomes too big and overwhelming – you may have a tough time sticking with it.

Monitor

Regularly tracking cash and analyzing your budgets means you'll not only be able to identify surpluses and shortages, but you'll also build valuable insights to strengthen your resilience in future years.

Ready to get started?

Explore Sowing success: Effective cash flow management. In three simple online lessons, learn how to build operating and cash-flow budgets and move from monitoring to effective oversight.

See Ag News online at **www.world-spectator.com/ag-news**

Saskatchewan welcomes Pest Management Regulatory Agency approval of emergency strychnine use

The Governments of Saskatchewan and Alberta received approval for a revised joint Emergency Use Request for the use of two per cent liquid strychnine to support integrated pest management of Richardson's ground squirrels (RGS).

The revised request was submitted to Health Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) following close collaboration between both provinces and the federal government. The revised request included additional stewardship measures and environmental safeguards to support responsible use.

"Saskatchewan producers have been clear about the challenges they face in managing gophers with the limited tools currently available," Agriculture Minister David Marit said. "We are pleased to see the emergency use request granted as a practical opportunity for producers to demonstrate how strychnine can help protect their crops and pastures from continued damage. We hope to see strychnine reinstated permanently in the future as a tool producers can use to manage gophers."

Under the Emergency Use Registration authorized through the Pest Control Products Act, areas in approximately seven crop districts in southwest, southeast, south central and northwest Saskatchewan will be eligible to access strychnine. These areas were identified using Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation claims data and information related to species at risk presence.

The revised Emergency Use Registration includes measures to protect species at risk, including a refined geographic scope, increased monitoring and carcass collection and disposal requirements and enhanced mandatory training.

The federal authorization allows strychnine to be registered for use in Saskatchewan and Alberta until November 2027, subject to all PMRA conditions. Saskatchewan will continue to support producers, including those outside of areas eligible for strychnine, through extension efforts, the Gopher Control Program and Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation programs.

"The Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities (SARM) has been calling for a practical solution on strychnine for a long time, so today's announcement is a significant win for our members," SARM President Bill Huber said. "SARM will continue to work with governments and producers to ensure this tool is used responsibly and effectively."

"We applaud the government for hearing producers' concerns and pushing forward with a common sense, made-in Saskatchewan solution to the ongoing gopher infestation," Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association President Jeff Yorga said.

"We want to thank the Government of Saskatchewan for continuing to press this issue with the Pest Management Regulatory Agency," Sask Wheat board chair and producer from Broadview Jocelyn Velestuk said. "Having controlled, emergency registration of strychnine provides producers with a critical tool to help mitigate damage and losses to cereal crops incurred by pests. While we are still awaiting full details, the positive direction we are seeing is an important step for Saskatchewan farmers."

"Saskatchewan Pulse Growers is pleased to see the approval of the emergency use registration of strychnine for RGS control," Saskatchewan Pulse Growers Board Chair Stuart Lawrence said. "With limited options, we recognize the Government of Saskatchewan's efforts to ensure continued access to this important and effective product."

"The Saskatchewan Cattle Association (SCA) applauds the federal government's announcement authorizing time-limited and controlled emergency registration of strychnine for the management of RGS," SCA Chair Chad Ross said. "The considerable negative economic impact of RGS is a reality for many livestock producers, and their ability to manage this pest is essential. SCA greatly appreciates the Saskatchewan government's efforts to ensure that producers have access to this important pest control tool as part of their RGS management strategy."

"This emergency registration provides Saskatchewan farmers and ranchers with an essential pest management tool to protect against more losses caused by RGS," SaskOats Chair and producer near Pangman, Saskatchewan Elwood White said. "RGS have been increasing sharply in some areas since the cancellation of this product in 2023 and this essential change will allow producers adequate tools to address this problem."

"Farmers have been clear that losing strychnine has caused extreme losses on our farms," SaskBarley Chair Cody Glenn said. "This revised EUR shows we can use strychnine safely while still protecting wildlife. It means farmers can once again use a tool that makes a real difference in managing RGS."

"Richardson's ground squirrels are causing real damage for Saskatchewan farmers, and producers need effective, responsible tools to manage them," SaskOilseeds Research Manager Doug Heath said. "This time-limited, tightly controlled emergency registration gives farmers access to an important option, while ensuring strong safeguards are in place for the environment and species at risk."

Home Design OF THE MONTH

Type: Bungalow
Sq. Ft.: 1,798
Walk-Out Basement
Garage: 2 Car

Bedrooms: 3
Bathrooms: 2
House Width: 79'
House Depth: 53'

SOUTH PRAIRIE DESIGN

House Plan provided by
South Prairie Design
www.southprairiedesign.com

Quadruplet lambs

Carrie Rutten's daughter has been busy lambing this spring.

Their farm south of Carlyle had a big surprise when one of her ewes had quadruplets. This is the first time on their farm that they have had quadruplet lambs.

Canadian seeded acreage: Will fertilizer prices reshape 2026 planting decisions?

☞ *Continued from page B4*

Soybeans versus corn

Statistics Canada is projecting soybean and corn acreage to both increase by nearly 2% from last year; however, these estimates were made before the war began. As a result, corn acreage could ultimately be lower, as producers shift land away from higher-cost crops. Soybeans require less nitrogen fertilizer, making them more competitive in today's high input-cost environment.

There is room for soybean acreage to move higher, as historical variability exceeds 10%. This appears plausible given current fertilizer prices, particularly in eastern Canada, where producers are more exposed to fertilizer price shocks at planting due to less pre-buying earlier in the season. The soybean-to-corn futures price ratio continues to favour soybeans, reinforcing incentives for additional acreage gains this year, especially in Manitoba and eastern Canada (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Soybean-corn futures price ratio favours planting soybeans

Sources: Barchart and FCC Economics

Corn acreage in Canada has historically shown limited flexibility, with swing potential of only about 2.3% because much of the corn crop is tied directly to inelastic local livestock demand. As a result, any expansion in soybean acres is more likely to come at the expense of spring wheat, particularly in Manitoba, where producers have greater flexibility to shift soybean acres from corn and wheat.

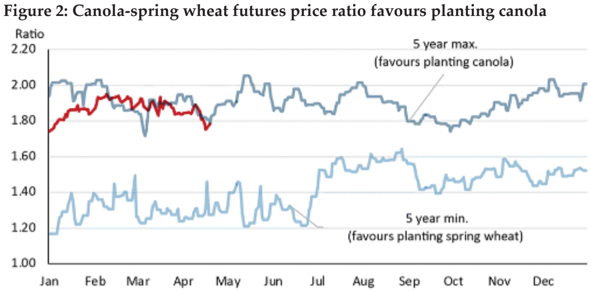
Canola versus wheat

Statistics Canada estimates 2026 canola acreage at 21.8 million acres, about 1% higher than 2025. Historically, year-over-year changes in canola acreage have been modest, averaging 3.4%, though even a typical shift can amount to more than 700,000 acres.

Despite expectations for large ending stocks, several factors continue to support canola plantings. China's lowering of canola tariffs has improved market access and boosted producer confidence, while expanding domestic crush capacity should help absorb additional supply. Prices have risen, and current price relationships versus spring wheat favour canola (Figure 2).

As seeding decisions are finalized, canola acreage could move above 22 million acres, with a reasonable range of 22 to 22.5 million. Growers also tend to prioritize fertilizer spending on canola over wheat, further supporting acres. While Statistics Canada survey results suggest spring wheat acreage will be largely unchanged in 2026, spring wheat faces the greatest downside risk from acreage shifts into other crops. Canola has additional upside potential, as conflict in Iran is pressuring oil prices higher, improving biofuel economics and potentially incentivizing increased canola acreage.

Figure 2: Canola-spring wheat futures price ratio favours planting canola



Sources: Barchart and FCC Economics

Shifts in other crop acres

Shifts in other crops are also possible. While none are major crops on their own, together they represent more than 2.5 million acres of potential swing acres that could still influence overall supply.

Lentil and durum acres are under pressure due to ample supplies and weaker prices. Lentils also face market access risks, including the possibility of higher import tariffs from India. However, both crops require less fertilizer than many alternatives, which may limit acreage declines and keep plantings closer to recent levels. In some regions, durum and lentils are central to crop rotations, making large acreage shifts difficult.

Pea acres are more uncertain. Large ending stocks of peas are a headwind, but they remain worth watching given the removal of tariffs for the Chinese market, high nitrogen prices, and burdensome lentil and durum supplies. Peas are often included in rotations not just for current returns, but for the benefits they provide to profitability in the following year.

Oats and barley remain key wildcards. Oat acres have declined since peaking in 2022 at 3.9 million acres, but history suggests they can still surprise. Over the past decade, oat acreage has varied by about ±440,000 acres, or 13%, year to year. Oats are relatively cheap to grow, which could support acres, but current low prices are a challenge. Barley acres have also trended down longer term, but lower fertilizer needs and a growing cattle herd could support more barley acres in 2026, particularly on marginal land or for silage.

While swing acres among principal field crops often dominate the discussion, other acreage categories—including hay land and unseeded acres—are becoming more relevant as market incentives and profitability pressures shift.

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Good management can help keep good employees

Jackpot! You created a quality job description, took time to interview, asked the right questions, checked references and have hired a motivated, skilled and pleasant new employee. In a tight labour market, it's OK to celebrate. But not for too long. There are still onboarding tasks to complete that will benefit all, including your farm.

BY MYRNA STARK LEADER

A great onboarding experience pays real business dividends, cuts productivity loss, reduces the need for additional recruitment and improves overall team morale.

"The foundation of effective onboarding is the relationship between the hiring manager and the new employee," says Cheryl Skiba, Vice-President of Human Resources at FCC. "If that relationship doesn't start strong, the employee will struggle to succeed. Investing in that connection is essential, not only for the employee's success, but for the manager as they build a strong, high-performing team. The specific job training and technical pieces matter, of course, but they only work if the relationship is there first."

As the new person, the hire faces change and so does the farm CEO or manager. It's the employer's job to set the stage. A great start, with solid communication, increases the hire's desire to do good work, in turn helping them and the farm to succeed.

Set clear expectations and vision

Clearly explaining specific job tasks is important and so is talking about the farm business' purpose, strategy and how the employee's work will contribute. Is the farm business helping feed people, providing an input to a high-quality product or something else? Share short- and long-term business goals and the business stage—growing, maintaining or in transition.

Show that you recognize when an employee takes on a challenge and be mindful of how you react to mistakes.

If experimentation, innovation and suggestions are welcomed, how and when? Talk about the operation's work culture —command and control or collaboration and consensus-building. Explain team dynamics, expectations of the new employee and your leadership style.

Skiba says everything from team dynamics to expectations begins at the top. That means understanding that the new hire isn't just a number doing a job, but a real person.

"Leaders have to be open to the fact that every individual brings something unique to the table," Skiba says. "When leaders recognize that and stay open and curious, it becomes much easier to build real rapport. That happens through simple things, regular conversation, check-ins and taking the time to understand who they are and what motivates them."

Compensation comes in many forms

Today, compensation, or "what's in it for them," goes beyond salary, sick leave and vacation time. Ag workers increasingly want a total experience, not just a paycheque, and farm CEOs are recognizing that, says Skiba.

Beyond traditional benefits, organizations can offer meaningful development opportunities, including professional courses, certifications, mentoring and conference participation. Many focus on lifestyle perks such as wellness programs, mental health resources or team-building experiences that help farm employees feel connected and supported.

Certain farm CEOs take it a step further by tailoring benefits to their workforce, prioritizing work-life balance, personal milestones or recognition programs that help people feel seen and valued.

When farm employees feel their CEO or manager is genuinely investing in them, not just through compensation, but through support and connection, it shows up in engagement, performance and overall job satisfaction and therefore productivity, Skiba says.

Be open

"As leaders, we have to show the way," she explains. "That starts with being vulnerable, being open to new ideas, new perspectives and new ways of doing things. When leaders listen with intention and curiosity, it creates space for people to bring their best thinking forward."

Let employees find their fit

New employees don't automatically understand a CEO's expectations, working style or decision-making processes. Without clarity, this can lead to job dissatisfaction or uncertainty about their role. At the same time, a new hire who brings fresh ideas or different experiences can unintentionally create discomfort among existing team members. Leaders need to anticipate both dynamics and address them openly.

"Everyone comes in with different experiences, some limited, some extensive," Skiba says. "The question is: how does that fit into your organization, and how do you embrace those opportunities to do things differently?"

To feel confident and capable, new employees need clear information about job conventions—from work hours and responsibilities to communication norms and how decisions get made. They may also require tools such as system access, smartphones or specific applications to perform their work effectively. If new hires don't have the tools or training they need, leaders shouldn't be surprised if they struggle.

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Good management can help keep good employees

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Recognition fosters good morale

Skiba encourages farm CEOs to recognize the meaningful work employees make toward team goals. She also cautions against assuming that everyone wants to be recognized in the same way. However, don't be so quick to unexpectedly announce at a tailgate meeting the person's contribution.

For some, public recognition would be their worst nightmare, while others would embrace it. Make the effort to know what will resonate best with a given employee.

"Understanding what motivates each employee is key," Skiba explains. "How it's delivered, though, makes all the difference."

Be patient

If someone is trying something for the first time, be aware they may make one or more mistakes. Have a conversation about it, mistakes are part of the learning curve. Talk about what happened, but don't dwell on it. Focus on what they learned and what went well. This will give the new hire a sense of psychological safety.

"It helps develop them in their career path," says Skiba. "When you create a safe environment, employees respond positively."

Review and revise employee management policies

Hiring may also be a great time to refresh your farm business' employee management toolkit. Onboarding can highlight gaps which can be closed accordingly depending on the needs, size and nature of the business. It might mean documenting holiday or unpaid time-off policy to ensure consistency or writing a process to lodge a complaint. Or it might involve dealing with noncompliance or creation of a more formal performance management plan so all employees know how and when they will be evaluated.

Newcomers to employee management can find best practices online, through agriculture organizations or even other businesses. Consider hiring a human resources consultant, who can provide insight specific to your unique farm business, helping to customize and optimize your employee management policies.

"HR teams can be quite lean in some organizations, so staying on top of trends and staying connected to trusted resources like an external consultant can be invaluable," she says.

Skiba suggests farm CEOs and managers regularly review all of their HR policies as situations arise, but at a minimum they should be reviewed every two to three years.

Never underestimate the importance of good employee management practices, especially on a farm or ranch, where attention to this area might not always be top of mind, particularly during the peak times. It's during these busy periods where good practices are likely to have great payoff, especially for a new hire.

"Feeling valued and coached by their leader in the first 30, 60, 90 days is incredibly motivating to a new hire," Skiba says. "When that happens, they're more engaged, more energized and their performance naturally follows."

Canadian seeded acreage: Will fertilizer prices reshape 2026 planting decisions?

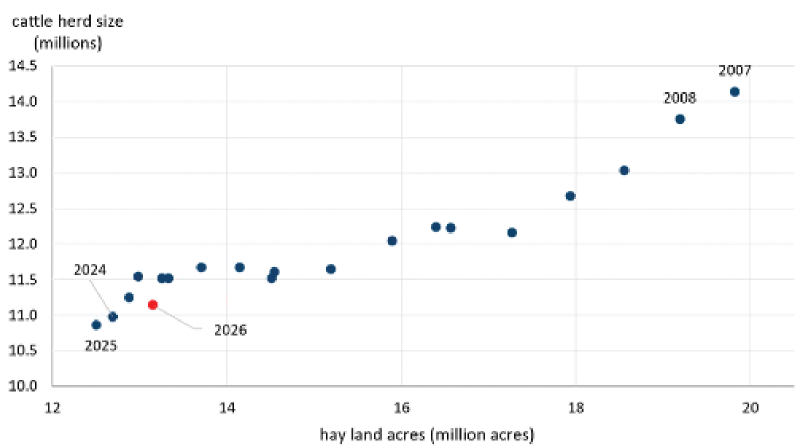
☞ *Continued from page B13*

Cattle herd rebuilding: will acres shift back into hay land?

Canada's cattle herd is finally starting to grow again. As of January 1, 2026, beef replacement heifers were up 4.8% from last year, signaling that producers are making longer-term investments to rebuild their herds. This supports expectations for continued herd growth, and hay land acres could follow that same trend.

Cattle herd expansion points to potential increases in hay land acres. Much of the hay land converted to cropland over the past several decades tended to be marginal land. With cattle prices strong and producers increasingly focused on rebuilding their herds, some of that land could shift back into hay production. If the rebuilding trend continues, past relationships between herd size and hay acres suggest up to 650,000 acres could move into hay, although greater use of corn and barley silage may limit the scale of that shift (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Cattle herd expansion indicates possible acreage shift to hay land



Source: Statistics Canada, FCC Economics

Will unseeded acreage rise this year?

Decisions to leave land unseeded typically depend on factors such as soil moisture, crop prices, and spring weather conditions. With higher fertilizer costs and tighter projected farm margins, unseeded acreage is a key area to watch this year. Historically, unseeded acreage has shown significant variability, sometimes changing by as much as 25%, most often due to crops unable to be planted caused by excessive moisture. Based on that historical range, unseeded acreage could increase by as much as 280,000 acres this year to 1.4 million acres, particularly if producers choose to take marginal land out of production.

Bottom line

Input costs are a major concern amid low crop prices and surging fertilizer prices following the U.S. war in Iran. Overall, we do not expect large swings in seeded acreage, but there is enough flexibility to help farms adjust in a higher fertilizer price environment. If more acres swing into canola and soybeans, wheat is likely to see the largest acreage losses, though smaller adjustments could also come from other crops. Hay land and unseeded acres may also deliver surprises. It will be important to watch how markets move between now and planting, how crop price relationships change over the next month, and how this influences decisions on the remaining acres.

Tax rules and their impact on intergenerational farm business transfers

BY MÉLANIE LAGACÉ

There are tax advantages that make transferring a farm, fishing or small business corporation to a family member the same tax as selling to a third party.

Marc St-Roch, FCPA, MTax. and tax specialist at SCF Conseils, a Quebec-based professional services network, says the tax rules also specify eligibility criteria, particularly with respect to capital gains.

Greater recognition of family transitions

If you sell your business's shares to a company controlled by a family member, such as a child, spouse (including their children), grandchild, niece, nephew, great-niece or great-nephew, you may qualify for a substantial tax exemption on the capital gain realized.

St-Roch says that prior to 2021, amounts paid by a child-owned corporation were considered taxable dividends, which significantly increased the buyer's tax liability and cash flow pressure. In some cases, it meant the buyer had to have up to 70% more cash than the amount paid to the seller.

Now, with the creation of a purchasing corporation by a descendant, it's possible to transfer funds tax-free from the operating company to the new entity, substantially lightening the financial burden. These funds then go to the seller, who can use their Lifetime Capital Gains Exemption (LCGE).

Legislative developments

The tax rules recognize sales to corporations controlled by children or other eligible relatives as capital gains. This allows the older generation (seller) to use their LCGE, meaning the gain is not taxed as dividends. The tax rules apply only to genuine intergenerational transfers.

Two transfer options

Immediate transfer: The successor takes control of the company within three years (36 months).

Gradual transfer: The transition takes place over a period of five to ten years (60 – 120 months).

Conditions at the time of sale

Each share class transferred must be verified for eligibility at the time of transfer.

Control of the acquiring corporation must be exercised by one or more adult family members, including children, grandchildren, stepchildren, sons- and daughters-in-law, nieces, nephews, great-nieces and great-nephews.

Conditions to be met after the sale

You must own less than 50% of any class of shares of the transferring or acquiring corporation, and you cannot own any shares after 36 months, except for non-voting preferred shares.

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Tax rules and their impact on intergenerational farm business transfers

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You must transfer management and supervision of the business to your children or eligible successors within 36 or 60 months, in the case of a gradual transfer.

For a gradual transfer of a family farm or fishing operation, you have 10 years to reduce your interest (debt or preferred shares) to 50% or less of its original value.

You must ensure that your children or eligible successors retain control of the purchasing corporation and that at least one of them is actively involved in the business for 36 to 60 months after the sale, depending on the type of transfer.

Capital gains deduction amount

The Lifetime Capital Gains Exemption limit of $1,250,000 adjusts for inflation starting in 2026. This is a lifetime limit, meaning any amount from previous years will reduce the remaining balance available to the taxpayer.

The importance of planning your transfer

It's possible to transfer your business to your children or other eligible family members and retain the same tax benefits and financing opportunities as you would selling to a third party.

"Careful planning under the guidance of taxation, accounting and business law specialists is key to a successful transfer and ensuring the long-term future of your business," St-Roch says.

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Current farmland values are anything but 'dirt cheap'

BY JUSTIN SHEPHERD
FCC SENIOR ECONOMIST

The term "dirt cheap" was first recorded in 1819 according to the Merriam-Webster dictionary and is defined as being extremely inexpensive. While this idiom may have accurately described soil, dirt, or land prices centuries ago, farmland today plays a significant role by supplying food, feed, fuel, and fiber globally. Moreover, for most grain and oilseed producers—including those in Canada—farmland represents their primary asset reflected on their balance sheets.

The average value of Canadian farmland continued its steady ascent in 2025, with an increase of 9.3%, the exact same appreciation as last year. However, while the national number is the same, the provinces and regions which make that up shifted. Alberta, Manitoba, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island all increased at higher rates than the prior year and the largest decline was seen in British Columbia. In general, growth in values continue to be supported by limited supply of farmland for sale, slightly lower interest rates, and strong margins from 2021-2023.

This post marks the third consecutive year of our in-depth analysis into the underlying factors driving farmland value growth. We investigate the relationship between Canadian grain and oilseed margins and subsequent increases in farmland values. For this year, we have introduced a comparative study of cropland values between Canada and the United States.

Canadian cultivated farmland values are correlated with margins

It is not a leap to think that higher grain and oilseed margins for producers are connected to the ability to potentially pay more for farmland during the following year. Better margins and cashflow lead producers to be more interested and in a better financial place to expand the following year, supporting demand for cultivated farmland. For example, average Canadian farmland values grew 13% in 2022 which was supported by strong grain and oilseed margins of 31% in 2021 (Figure 1).

Margins dropped but stayed historically high in both 2022 and 2023 and farmland values grew again in the following two years. However, when we get into 2025, we need a deeper dive as we see Canada's 9.3% growth in farmland values, but margins in 2024 were considerably tighter than the prior 3 years. For some producers, coming off multiple good years likely left them in a strong financial position. In addition, the supply of land was tight which helped support prices.

Figure 1: Canadian cultivated farmland values are connected to prior season margins
Sources: Statistics Canada, FCC Economics

Can we draw any forward-looking conclusions from this? We know margins tightened further in 2025 for most grain and oilseed producers and we must look even further back in time to find those higher margin years. On the supply side, how much land comes on the market will continue to play a major part as well. Overall, it looks like cultivated farmland growth should slow this year.

Comparing Canadian cultivated farmland value growth to the U.S.

To begin, it is important to acknowledge the complexities inherent in comparing two neighbouring countries with distinct characteristics. Although some provinces and states share similar agricultural practices and climatic conditions, the United States possesses farmland located sufficiently south to offer year-round warm environments, whereas Canada has northern regions where farmland remains snow-covered for much of the year. The types of crops cultivated, and the respective ownership restriction policies introduce further variables that may influence outcomes.

Additionally, there are variations in how Canadian farmland values are calculated. To address this, we have determined a Canadian cultivated farmland value weighted by crop acres only and compared it to an equivalent U.S. value. Conversion of U.S. values into Canadian dollars allows for a more accurate comparison. Therefore, this analysis will focus exclusively on national figures for each country and maintain a straightforward approach.

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Current farmland values are anything but 'dirt cheap'

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The average price for Canadian cultivated farmland in 2025 was $6,900 per acre, slightly lower than the $8,150 per acre price of average U.S. farmland (Figure 2). However, when we look back since 2000, both countries cultivated farmland values have moved upwards and the dollar per acre gap between the two countries remains roughly the same today. Noticeable differences are where the U.S. land market from 2010 to 2015 had periods of very sharp growth, followed by a period of flat growth (2015-2020) before sharply increasing again. Canadian cultivated farmland values meanwhile have showed more consistent growth rates, averaging 8.7% over the last decade (whereas the U.S. only grew at 5.6% in that time).

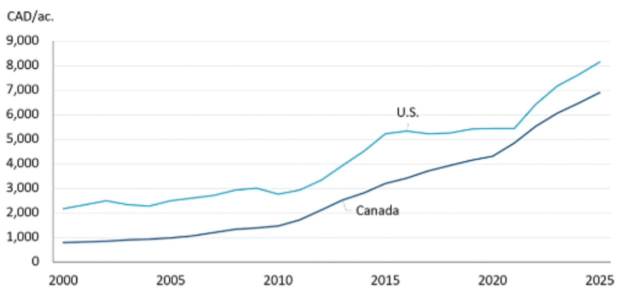


Figure 2: U.S. cultivated farmland values trades at a premium relative to Canada
Sources: USDA, Statistics Canada, FCC Economics

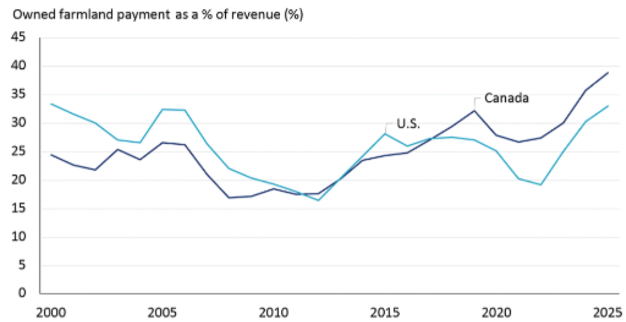
Producers' ability to generate revenues from owned cultivated farmland

To assess the affordability of cultivated farmland prices in both Canada and the U.S. for owned land, we rely on the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture's formula for land investment cost. Both countries' agricultural balance sheets reveal that farmers typically have about 85% equity in their operations. Since farm real estate makes up the largest share, we assume that cultivated farmland equity matches that percentage, meaning mortgage payments are only required on roughly 15% of farm real estate value.

We apply a 1.5% opportunity cost to each country's existing 85% land equity. Opportunity cost refers to the value of an alternative investment, such as earning interest from treasury bills, instead of holding farmland. The remaining 15% is allocated to mortgage principal and interest over 25 years. In 2025, newly purchased cultivated farmland in Canada averaged $367 per acre, while using this method, owned land costs $143 per acre. Using U.S. interest rates, newly purchased American ground costs producers $381 per acre, while owned land is $127 per acre. We use the owned land value multiplied by total seeded acres as a percentage of grain and oilseed revenues to create a ratio as shown in figure 3. This allows for a comparison that removes the impact of exchange rates.

Owned cultivated farmland payments, as a share of revenue, reached their highest level since 2000 in both Canada and the U.S. Last year in Canada, cultivated farmland payments accounted for 39% of grain and oilseed farm cash receipts—meaning for every dollar earned, $0.39 went toward land payments. The U.S. average was $0.33 per dollar of revenue, offering a slight advantage to American farmers. Although this calculation doesn't include income from livestock or other sectors, it demonstrates that land costs as a percentage of grain revenues are comparable between Canadian and U.S. farmers.

Figure 3: Owned cultivated farmland payment as a percentage of revenue in Canada is now well above the U.S.



Sources: Statistics Canada, USDA, FCC Economics

Since 2020, farmland values in Canada have risen faster than those in the U.S., which has reversed the previous Canadian advantage of lower land ownership costs per acre. Still, even though farmland payments now make up a larger share of producers' revenue, most have maintained enough cash flow to meet their yearly payment requirements.

What will drive farmland affordability in 2026

It turns out the phrase 'dirt cheap' has lost its literal meaning in today's context, as farmland has become a vital asset for producers, underpinning both their balance sheets and the broader agricultural economy. While American cropland trades at a premium relative to Canada, affordability challenges are underscored by the rising share of farm revenue dedicated to owned land payments—39% in Canada, surpassing the U.S. at 33%. This shift has reversed Canada's historical advantage and reflects the impact of strong cropland value growth. Despite increased payment burdens, most producers have maintained sufficient cash flow to meet their obligations, thanks in part to prior years of strong margins and equity in operations. With how tight margins are in grain and oilseed production right now, slower farmland value growth could help long term.