



INSIDE B20- B40 Mining, Energy & Manufacturing



THE WORLD-Spectator AG NEWS

MAY 2022



A farmer seeding between Moosomin and Rocanville last week. Despite snow and rain just a few days earlier, farmers were out in their fields.

Farmers ‘mucking it in’ with late seeding

BY SIERRA D’SOUZA BUTTS
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER
Local farmers in Southeast Saskatchewan share their experience of what it is like seeding in wet conditions during late spring.

“It’s slow going, a little frustrating. I’ve been stuck multiple times, we have to keep an extra four-wheel tractor out with us all the time just to pull the tractor out, rather than unhooking all the hydraulic lines,” said Mark McCorriston, a grain farmer who farms west of Moosomin.

“We’re probably losing 10 to 15 per cent of the cultivated acres on average because those acres are too wet, they either have water lying in them or they’re just muddy

and wet. Other than that, we’re trying to keep moving forward but it’s slow going, lots of overlap, lots of turning and small necks, islands and stuff like that this year.”

McCorriston said he and his team have been working long hours every day in order to finish their seeding by early June.

“In a typical day, we try to meet at the farm for 5 a.m., and usually between 9 p.m. and 10 p.m., we quit and head back,” he said.

“It’s long days and it’s hard on everyone because you get tired, you’re usually frustrated and may get a little grumpy, but everyone just tries to work their best and move forward.”

In addition to the snowstorms in April, a major rainfall hit the southeast area on May 13. McCorriston was asked what the best case scenario would be for this year’s crop.

“Unfortunately we’re the definition of what my dad would call, ‘mucking it in.’ I’m still hoping for maybe below or average yield, but it’s unfortunate that what grew our best crop last year, some of those low areas are just lying in water now,” he said.

“It’s hard when you know that you’re missing your most prime wetter land that grows good crops, and unfortunately we’re running out of time. It’s past the May long weekend, and we’ve decided to just try keep moving ahead.”

Continued on page B10 ☞

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Left: The sun setting behind the Parrish and Heimbecker terminal west of Moosomin last week.

Kevin Weedmark photo



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A farmer cultivating a field between Moosomin and Rocanville last week.

Saskatchewan Crop Report

Seeding progressing slowly in SE Sask

Seeding is progressing slowly in Southeast Saskatchewan with the most progress being seen in the western half of the region. Forty-four per cent of the crop is now in the ground, up from 17 per cent last week but behind the five-year average (2017-2021) of 81 per cent for this time of year. Seeding has been continually delayed due to rain, snow and cool weather since the beginning of the 2022 growing season.

Compared to previous weeks, there was less precipitation received across the region, however, some areas still received enough rain to delay seeding for a couple days. The Moosomin area received 40 mm, the Grenfell area 36 mm, the Indian Head area 32 mm and the Broadview and Odessa areas 24 mm. Heat is now needed to accelerate growth of both crop and pasture land since adequate moisture has been received so far.

The topsoil moisture levels across the region continue to improve. Cropland topsoil moisture is rated as 34 per cent surplus, 60 per cent adequate, three per cent short and three per cent very short. Hay and pasture land topsoil moisture is rated as seven per cent surplus, 81 per cent adequate, nine per cent short, and three per cent very short. Pasture conditions are rated as 20 per cent excellent, 51 per cent good, 24 per cent fair, four per cent poor and one per cent very poor.

Due to cool rainy weather over the past several weeks, crop emergence was slow and now development of most crops in the region are rated as being behind normal. Most of the crop damage that did occur this week was due to frost and flooding.

Seeding progress climbed throughout many regions of the entire province in the past week, despite a storm that brought snow and rain to parts of the province. Fifty-two per cent of the 2022 crop is now seeded, up from 33 per cent last week. This is still behind the five-year average (2017-2021) of 78 per cent for this time of year. The rainfall received over the past week in drier areas will help improve soil moisture conditions and establishment of early seeded crops.

The west central region is the farthest along with 81 per cent of the crop seeded. Seventy-six per cent of the crop is seeded in the northwest, 73 per cent seeded in the southwest, 44 per cent seeded in the southeast, 22 per cent seeded in the northeast and 21 per cent seeded in the east-central region of the province.

The east received significant amounts of precipitation. The Hudson Bay area reported 88 mm, the Jedburgh area 85 mm, the Rama area 83 mm, the Indian Head area 32 mm and the Biggar and Cando areas 11 mm. While rain is welcome in the eastern half of the province, many producers are eager to continue their seeding operations.

Soil moisture continues to improve across the province, mainly in the eastern regions where most of the spring precipitation was received. Cropland topsoil moisture is rated as 15 per cent surplus, 58 per cent adequate, 18 per

cent short and nine per cent very short. Hay and pasture land topsoil moisture is rated as six per cent surplus, 63 per cent adequate, 20 per cent short and eleven per cent very short.

Pasture conditions are rated as 10 per cent excellent, 27 per cent good, 36 per cent fair, 16 per cent poor and 11 per cent very poor. Pastures in the western half of province are struggling to establish this spring due to very limited precipitation causing many livestock producers in the area to continue to feed cattle on farm.

Earlier seeded crops have started to emerge where moisture is sufficient, but cool weather over the past week has slowed development of many crops. In general, most crops are rated as normal for their development except for canola, which was rated as 67 per cent behind. This is likely due to the extremely dry conditions in the southwest and west central regions, delaying growth and the recent cool weather across the whole province. Most of the crop damage this week was due to minor flooding, light frosts, drought conditions and flea beetles.

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FCC supports beef sustainability program

Farm Credit Canada (FCC) has created a new offering to attract and recognize Canadian beef producers certified to sustainability standards set by the Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Beef (CRSB).

The FCC Sustainability Incentive Program will provide a payment to FCC customers who are CRSB Certified through CRSB's certification bodies including Verified Beef Production Plus, Where Food Comes From Canada, and the Ontario Corn Fed Beef Quality Assurance Program.

"Canadian producers are already expert stewards of the land and livestock, and the beef sector has been a leader in demonstrating their sustainable practices through the CRSB," said Todd Klink, FCC's vice-president of marketing. "We are pleased to work with the CRSB to recognize FCC customers who have already achieved their certification and to encourage additional producers to become certified."

The payment to customers, made by FCC, will be calculated as a portion of their lending with FCC to a maximum of \$2,000 per year. Certified producers are welcome to re-apply for the incentive payment each year for the life of the FCC Sustainability Incentive Program.

For customers who are already CRSB Certified, applying for the program is a simple process at fcc.ca/sustainabilityprograms. That is also where producers interested in becoming certified and taking advantage of the incentive payment can find more information.

"The Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Beef applauds FCC for seeing the benefits of CRSB Certified beef production practices," said Anne Wascko, CRSB chair and co-owner of Bar 4 Bar Land and Cattle Inc.

"The Canadian beef industry is continually evolving for the benefit of people, animals, and our planet. Thanks to the sustainable practices demonstrated by CRSB Certified beef producers, we have seen tremendous environmental stewardship and a high standard of animal care, which leads to a thriving beef industry today and for future generations. Sustainable practices will help achieve the ambitious long-term goals set by the industry," she said.

In a group of certified beef producers who participated in an earlier pilot of the Sustainability Incentive Program there was high praise.

"This will be a great program for producers like us and for the cattle industry," shared one FCC customer who entered the program. "We invest a lot in our operation, and it is important to be recognized with something in return."

The CRSB certification program involves an on-going audit process with its partners to ensure operations are meeting its sustainability standards based upon five principles, including natural resources, people and community, animal health and welfare, food, and efficiency



and innovation.

"There is an increasing demand from consumers for certified assurances of sustainably-raised beef," Wascko noted. "Canadian farmers and ranchers care about the environment, and we will continue to do what's right to conserve our land and our animals, and to meet the needs of the present without compromising those of the future."

"FCC already has lending solutions to support our customers' sustainable practices. Launching this program with the CRSB is another way to support the industry on its sustainability journey," said Klink. "While collaborating with the CRSB on this program is the first partnership of this kind, FCC has the intention of building incentive programs for other sectors in the future."

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mation and knowledge specifically designed for the agriculture and food industry. As a self-sustaining Crown corporation, we provide an appropriate return to our shareholder, and reinvest our profits back into the industry and communities we serve. For more information, visit fcc.ca.

The Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Beef (CRSB) advances Canadian beef industry sustainability through multi-stakeholder engagement, collaboration, communication, and science. The CRSB drives recognition and continuous progress in Canadian beef through sustainability performance measurement, and projects and initiatives aligned with strategic improvement goals. The CRSB's Certified Sustainable Beef Framework, known as CRSB Certified, is a voluntary third party-audited sustainability certification program that recognizes sustainable practices in beef production and processing and enables sustainable sourcing, delivering credible, science-based assurances for consumers about sustainable beef production in Canada. Learn more at crsb.ca



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The world is running out of oil—vegetable oil

It's funny how sometimes we take the simple things in life for granted. Cooking oil, or vegetable oil, is certainly one of them.

Our appreciation for vegetable oil will likely reach new levels in months to come. Oil prices have increased by 25 per cent in just the last six months. While palm oil went up 50 per cent, canola oil is up 55 per cent on average.

The world is slowly running out of vegetable oils.

Vegetable oils aren't just about frying things. This ingredient is in many things we eat. All household kitchens and restaurants use vegetable oils. Major companies will buy vegetable oils to manufacture the food we buy daily. Pasta, cookies, chocolate, mayonnaise – many dry and baked goods contain vegetable oil. It's one of the most universal and versatile ingredients we have at our disposal.

Palm oil is the big one, given how affordable it is. Recently, Indonesia, the largest producer of palm oil in the world, announced it would no longer export its oil. The embargo started on April 28. Indonesia accounts for 55 per cent of palm oil exports. That's huge. Since the price of palm oil had increased by 40 per cent in Indonesia, the government believed it had no choice.

Malaysia, the second-largest exporter, is experiencing unprecedented labour shortages affecting palm oil production. The country accounts for 31.2 per cent of palm oil exports, according to the Observatory of Economic Complexity.

Although many condemn the use of this oil for environmental reasons, the fact remains that several companies buy this product. Nestlé, Mondelez, Ferrero Rocher – most big food companies need it and we eat it every day.

For sunflower oil, the situation is even worse. Ukraine, the victim of a brutal invasion, is the largest exporter of sunflower oil in the world. The country exports around 5.4 million tonnes of the oil, half of the quantities found across the globe. Russia, responsible for 25 per cent of sunflower oil exports, will have difficulty finding customers due to sanctions imposed against it.

For canola oil, Canada, the largest export-



Sylvain Charlebois

er, must contend with last year's abysmal growing season. The drought was so severe that our country had to import canola to meet our demand for vegetable oil. So there are hardly any reserves to start 2022.

And finally, there's soybean oil. Argentina, Paraguay and Brazil are among the largest exporters of soybean oil. These countries have also been hit by major droughts and anemic production in recent years, creating supply problems everywhere.

Even if other major exporting countries like the Netherlands and Germany have good harvests in 2022, it won't be enough to cover the anticipated deficit this year and possibly next year.

The importance of an ingredient that we have all taken for granted in our kitchens will then become much more evident.

What could help is to lessen the amount of vegetable oil used for energy. About 15 per cent of all vegetable oils are used to support the production of biofuels. We could see some countries divert some of that production for more food-related vegetable oil use, but that's not a given – far from it.

As we navigate this global food crisis, we expect more countries to instinctively ban exports and even hoard commodities to secure supplies. Each decision will add more pressure to the market, raising prices across the board.

Over the next several months, things will most certainly get ugly to the point where many people will experience famine or acute hunger. In fact, more than 100 million people could suffer, and that would be devastating.

Despite all of this, Canadians are the lucky ones. Our grocer may ration vegetable oils, but we should feel lucky just to have access to them.

Dr. Sylvain Charlebois is senior director of the agri-food analytics lab and a professor in food distribution and policy at Dalhousie University.

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"The scholarship is a great way to express your ideas and gives you an opportunity to make a difference in the agriculture industry."
- Emily Sebastian, 2022 Recipient

saskatchewan.ca/ag-scholarship Saskatchewan Canada

Saskatchewan Agriculture student scholarship recipients announced

On May 10, federal Agriculture and Agri-Food Minister Marie-Claude Bibeau and Saskatchewan Agriculture Minister David Marit presented four agriculture scholarships to students from across the province.

"There is a wide variety of trades and careers associated with the agriculture sector, from the farm to the lab to technology companies," said Bibeau. "Encouraging young people to pursue careers in agriculture will provide a strong foundation for the future of the industry. This scholarship program will help our young leaders pursue their studies and embark on rewarding careers in agriculture."

"We received many outstanding applications this year in the form of both essays and video," Marit said. "It's great to see Saskatchewan youth talk so passionately about agriculture and transparency, and we're very proud to support them and their career plans. The future of our industry is in good hands."

Emily Sebastian of Montmartre was awarded \$4,000 toward her post-secondary studies as the grand-prize winner of the 2022 Agriculture Student Scholarship. Emily's video submission discussed the various ways that farmers and ranchers can effectively communicate with consumers in a transparent and honest manner. Emily will be furthering her education at the University of Saskatchewan at the College of Agriculture and Biore-sources.

"The scholarship is a great way to express your ideas and gives you an opportunity to make a difference in the agriculture industry," Emily said. "More than that, though, it makes you think about what you can do to become more transparent about your, or your family's operation."

Kristie Pedersen from Lockwood, Grace Waldenberger from Marquis and Kate Ax-

ten from Minton were all awarded \$2,000 as runners up for the scholarship.

Kristie's essay explored how communication and education is key to bridging the gap between the farm and the plate. She focused her transparency essay on the whole supply chain and the need for everyone to share their story. Kristie will be furthering her education in Moose Jaw where she will be studying in the Agriculture and Food Production Program at Saskatchewan Polytechnic.

Grace's essay highlighted the important role that agriculture plays in people's lives, whether they are directly connected to the industry or not. She spoke about the impact that social media influencers can have on people and the importance of educating youth. Grace will be taking her post-secondary education at either the University of Saskatchewan or the University of Lethbridge.

Kate Axten's video submission focused on what transparency is and how farmers can be more transparent. Her video showcased the work that her family farm has done to improve transparency with their consumers. Kate will be attending Dalhousie University in the fall where she will be studying International Food Business in the Faculty of Agriculture.

The Agriculture Student Scholarship Program is funded through the Canadian Agricultural Partnership, a five-year, \$3 billion commitment by Canada's federal, provincial and territorial governments that supports Canada's agriculture, agri-food and agri-products sectors. This includes a \$2 billion commitment that is cost-shared 60 per cent federally and 40 per cent provincially/territorially for programs that are designed and delivered by provinces and territories.

For more information on the scholarship winners and their submissions, visit www.saskatchewan.ca/ag-public-trust

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Renting out farmland?

How to protect yourself and property value

BY RICHARD KAMCHEN

As a landowner, there are deliberate steps that you can take to maintain the value of your property. They can protect everyone's interest and lead to better prices when you rent or eventually sell.

It's a worthwhile time investment, experts say. "The last few years, with the demand for land as high as it's been, it's really the quality of the land that is the determining factor of the price," says FCC agriculture transition specialist Dean Lewko.

Be a good record keeper

There are a significant amount of records landowners need if they're going to prove that quality.

Darren Bond, a management specialist with Manitoba Agriculture, says the true value is in the details. Landowners should track and record pretty much everything that happens on their land.

Keeping digital records using management software is advised. Most software can be linked to a cell phone, but even a notebook with dates and applications will do in a pinch.

At the top of the list should be crop rotations, including varieties, to track herbicide-resistant traits used, Bond says.

It's also important to keep track of:

- Soil fertility
- Fertilizer rates
- Types and pesticides used, especially herbicides that carry residuals and may have re-cropping restrictions
- Insect and disease pressure
- Exceptional weather events, like drought or flooding, and any drainage work

Bond advises landlords to also ask their renters to track fertilizer rates.

"With the increase in fertilizer prices, many landlords are requesting that soil fertility levels be reasonably close to levels at the start of the land rental agreement once a lease expires," he says.

Get it in writing

When renting farmland, handshake promises aren't uncommon, but they can leave either side vulnerable, says Lewko.

Instead, consult the professionals and, at minimum, use a land rental agreement. The agreement template lets both parties consider everything that should be discussed when entering into an agreement.

Bond encourages landowners and renters to consult with their legal representatives to fully understand their responsibilities within their agreement, thus avoiding future disappointment and dissatisfaction.

Dodging pitfalls

There are several commonly overlooked details to watch for in written land rental agreements.

First refusal

The most overlooked detail by renters is the right of first refusal.

"It really protects the investment they've put into the land, like if they've done a lot of drainage work or increased the fertility of land," Lewko says.

Total rental price

List the total annual rent for all land in the agreement instead of a per acre rate.

"This will alleviate disagreements when areas of the field go unseeded or when there are differing amounts of seeded acres per year," Bond says.



When renting farmland, handshake promises aren't uncommon, but they can leave either side vulnerable.

End agreement

Include a termination clause with procedures to end a land rental agreement mid-lease that's fair and equitable to both parties—just in case the relationship breaks down before the contract ends.

"The better the relationship you have with your landlord, the better it's going to work for you in the long run,"

adds Lewko.

Bottom line

Keeping up-to-date records and taking extra steps with rental agreements can be a valuable investment in your land. Avoid handshake agreements, get the deal in writing and steer clear of commonly overlooked details like listing the total rental price rather than the price per acre.

"And who, planting time and harvest season, will finish his forty-hour week by Tuesday noon, then, pain'n from 'tractor back,' put in another seventy-two hours. So God made a farmer."

~ Paul Harvey





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Oh, the smell of freshly tilled dirt!

Oh the smell of freshly tilled dirt!
There is nothing quite like it and I have loved it forever. Today, as the air drill makes it way around the field, not only is it the smell of freshly tilled dirt, but of very damp freshly tilled dirt, so damp in fact that I am praying the guys don't get stuck.

What a difference from last year—I didn't have to guess then where the men were working for the dust that rose up behind them; this year not so much. And while the timing may be later than our usual end-of-April start, we can say we are rolling!

With the heavy snows and rain we have experienced, we definitely needed something to take our minds off of not getting onto the land in good time. Hubby was incredibly antsy and was a tad, shall we say, worried about whether "start day" would ever come.

And then out of the blue came a reprieve from worrying about late seeding. I received an early and unexpected call for surgery saying, "Can you be here in a week?" And without a second's hesitation I was all in because getting that second new hip was without question something I was not going to say no to. And hubby was just going to have to put aside thoughts of seeding to be, as it was, my right-hand man.

I was barely nervous this time around but once they put the IV into the back of my hand, I had other thoughts—as in 'how am I gonna escape this place?' It was at precisely that moment that my surgeon walked in (I had not seen him for two plus years due to Covid) and there I was, flat on my back, throwing off the covers, saying, "I'm getting very hot, I'm gonna faint, I'm gonna be sick." Well so much for my planned "how are you Doctor?" reunion sort of meeting.

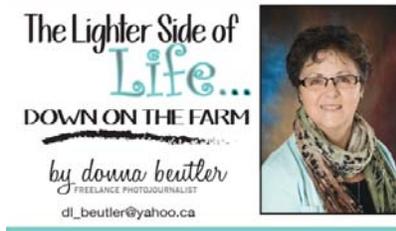
Without any hesitation, my surgeon lifted my legs toward the ceiling and lowered the head of the bed. It's a picture that will never leave my mind. As the blood returned to my head, I immediately felt better physically but was certainly feeling pretty embarrassed about it all. Oh well, there was no time to get all worked up about it because by then they were wheeling me into the OR.

Despite that awkward little moment, I am so eternally grateful for all that my medical team did for me that day, although I do believe they missed the memo about sedation. I may have been frozen waist down, but I was definitely wide awake through it all. There were a couple of moments when I nearly raised my hand to ask if they had missed sedating me, but in the end, I simply laid there and listened to the reciprocating saw (it's smaller than my reciprocating saw) doing its thing and the hammer doing its thing. I felt like I was in my little workshop, the only thing being that I was the piece of wood they were cutting apart and hammering back together.

Some of my grands came for a visit and it was wonderful to see their smiling faces. I personally think they came for the swim at Grandpa's hotel room next to the hospital but when they walked in, it made my day. The youngest (5) not only loves crafting but all things numbers and she handed me a get well card she had made. "Get Well Soon Grandma" they read on the front. On the inside of one, there was a large "63" and while my first reaction was what's the 63 all about, I quickly realized she had written down my age—in 6-inch print no less.

Well, we have just gotten through the May long weekend and many die-hard campers were out camping despite the snow and cool conditions to start. We personally weren't at some RV resort or campground but we did set up camp at our favourite spot—right next to the shop on the farm with our bird's eye view of the chicken coop and the dog house.

The twins (11) greeted my arrival at our camper with a wheelbarrow full of logs, ready to get that first campfire started. "Did you remember the Toblerone and strawberries?" their sister asked. Alas, I did not and



we settled for roasted marshmallows versus their favourite campfire treat, melted chocolate and fruit.

With my guys happily seeding on the holiday Monday, the twins and I took a little side trip across the field that I said was the first one we seeded last year. No, they told me, this was the second field seeded last year. "Remember Grandma, the field beside it was seeded first last year because that was pea stubble." Really? Well, whatever, and off we went, through the creek where we saw a moose, a fox and several ducks out swimming. Fortunately, we did not see any bear, always a plus I figure. And lastly, as the boys picked up a set of antlers, they shouted, "There's wood-ticks on here—female ones and male ones." Okay, so I have pulled a lot of woodticks off a lot of kids, cats and dogs, but I have never held one up close enough or long enough to take that close of a look. Who knew?

With seeding now in full swing (well, until it rains again), the twins have planted their own crop of wheat. It's a patch about four feet by six feet, not far from the dog house. They carefully fenced it off with some sticks and chicken wire, though not quite enough chicken wire apparently. "Grandma, do you have any chicken wire at your house in town?" they came running to ask. "Sorry, guys, I am presently all out of chicken wire," I told them and then suggested they finish off with baler twine. And off they went in the side-by-side to who knows where, returning moments later with a handful of twine that very quickly was wrapped from post to post at several different heights to create a barrier to dogs who might dig up their 'crop'.

And so, as I watched these two young farmers at work and at play, I couldn't help but think how their whole world revolves around the farm. They had popped into my RV at 8:00 one morning, ready for a snack since breakfast had been an hour or two before that and they had been out 'working' since then. Their day was filled with pedaling, side-by-siding, gathering cut wood for the fire, feeding 4-H steers, cutting lawn (oh that old-style environmentally friendly push mower they got for their birthday was a big hit), playing ball, picking wood-ticks off the dogs, picking twine and a multitude of who knows what. If those

boys didn't have to go inside to eat, they would have spent the entire day outdoors just as their dad did on this same farm back in his day.

At the end of the day it was obvious to me that the twins had found the day too short to get everything in that they had hoped to because there was this dual groan from them when their mom called them in Monday night at 8:00. "It's not even dark yet," one said. "Wish there was no school tomorrow," said the other, both nodding at that sentiment as they trekked slow-mo from the campfire towards the house.

As I contemplate the enthusiasm these young farmers show on the farm, I can't help but think of the amount of information they absorb as they go about their day and about the huge differences the farming industry has undergone since I was their age. Remember seeding with the old press drill? The days spent summerfallowing? Oh and how about the days picking square bales by hand and then getting them up the bale elevator into the loft? I am pretty sure my legs still carry the scars of the old alfalfa bales we would pick every haying season.

Yes, everything has changed and it's not all bad, I figure. After all if we had had a choice to work smarter and not harder in our day, maybe we would have! Advances in technology will keep on growing exponentially and will be the norm long after we are no longer farming. I am pretty sure we will leave agriculture to very smart, tech-savvy, work smarter/not harder farmers who will one day look back and chuckle on how "it used to be done in the olden days."

As we work our way through spring seeding 2022, here's hoping our farmer friends stay high and dry and that all those in the ag industry, whether in sales or parts or buying grain or manufacturing or input supplies or whatever it is will keep on seeing agriculture as an industry well worth being part of.

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Farmers 'mucking it in' with late seeding

Continued from front

"If it was a couple weeks earlier I would like to just sit back and let it dry up a bit so we could do a better job, but with the crop insurance deadline lingering, we just have no choice but to keep moving forward," said McCorriston.

He also added that the Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation (SCIC) which provides insurance for crops experiencing a loss in yield, does not help him drastically.

"The unseeded acreage from crop insurance, I feel is inadequate. In order to qualify for unseeded acreage on crop insurance, you have to have a minimum of five acres that you leave behind because you can't seed it, I find that frustrating because depending on what neck of the woods you're farming in, it can really change," McCorriston said.

"We have land over by Fleming and it has small potholes that you just go around, well no matter how many times you go around them you can't leave an area large enough that fits five acres, but then let's say you move north of Moosomin, north of the airport, there's giant areas that are saturated.

"I feel like the program has its points, but it's not tailored to fit each individual and the area you farm in. I find that as you go in different areas, the five acres minimum does work in some areas, and in other areas the plan doesn't work at all because you just go around these little spots, but they'll never add up to five acres individually, they would need to be lumped together."

McCorriston said he will be applying for Crop Insurance for the areas that are eligible on his farm.

"I'll be applying. On average, for example, I've got one field that was 1,066 seeded acres last year, this year we have 907 acres," he said.

"It's an unreal amount of land that is not going to be seeded this year and I'll be putting in a claim for unseeded acres on the land, it's just not all of it will qualify unfortunately, but I feel it should.

"It was all viable farmland for the last three or five years that has been planted every year, now this year we have to leave it behind. I'm hoping more farmers speak up and maybe they can tailor the program to actually fit the farmers' needs."

McCorriston said he started seeding a couple weeks ago, but had to stop and continue, in between cold weather conditions.

"You have to pick and choose your fields, you kind of have to dance around. Plus the costs for diesel fuel, it's near two dollars a litre and it's just extra expense in an expensive year," said McCorriston.

He was asked if the moisture conditions have benefited producers this year compared to the drought they faced last year.

"We needed some moisture most definitely, but from a grain farming perspective we got too much," said McCorriston.

"It would've been a lot better, as my grandpa would say, "to seed in the dust and let your bins bust," we wanted and needed the rain, I just wish it didn't happen quite so fast. I thought we would have more of a transition period where we would have a dry year, then it would slowly get a little bit wetter. I didn't think we'd go from dealing with too dry to too wet, but Saskatchewan is the land of extremes and I did anticipate it would be this wet again, I just didn't think it would be, a year right after the drought.

"For a livestock farmer, my wife and I have 250 cows as well and the grass is green. Before, the pastures were really suffering over the last couple of years, it's nice from a cattle farming aspect, because the pastures were really taking a beating and I'm hoping this year, with the extra rains and an early start to green grass, maybe the pastures will make a rebound."

McCorriston said he is concerned about the weather conditions being adequate throughout the summer.

"One of my biggest fears—and I've seen it happen before—is we get all this rain in the wrong season then Mother Nature forgets about us in the summer time when we can appreciate or use some rain," he said.

"In June or July or August, I'm always scared we won't get rain, but it's one of those aspects of dealing with agriculture, Mother Nature dictates those terms and you have to deal with them and do your best."

Wet conditions have benefitted cattle farmers

Scott Mannle, who farms on the border between Silverwood and Willowdale, said the wet conditions from the weather has benefitted his cattle.

"The pastures are definitely green and started growing, the biggest benefit is our water sources, the dug outs and the sloughs the cattle use to drink from in the summer time, are all full," Mannle said.

"That's put us in really good shape because we haven't had any runoff for the last two springs, and people had to haul water, there were water issues with cattle in the

summer because the levels of the dugouts and sloughs were so low.

"Everything is full right to the brim, we just need some heat and then we're well on our way for the grass situation, which is a welcome relief after a long winter of expensive feed, and limited amounts of it, too."

Mannle shared his thoughts about what he thinks the year will be like for cattle producers.

"For the summer I think we'll need some rain in June and July when it gets hot, and we need that for the crop and everything else, but as far as things go right now we're in pretty good shape," he said.

"We shouldn't have any water issues this summer because the dugouts started full, whereas last spring they started half full to begin with, and by the end of the summer without any rain, we were empty.

"I think even if we have a summer with limited moisture we would still have enough water, it wouldn't be one of our main concerns."

Looking back to last year's cattle season and the drought that the prairies faced, Mannle was asked if this year's moisture conditions will be an advantage for the season.

"For us as cattle farmers, we're still looking at high feed grain prices come fall time, based on what contracts are available right now, that is still a concern for us," Mannle said.

"We're hoping for a big crop, to have a little more access to grain, which will help feed grain prices and ultimately help feed cattle prices.

"Things are somewhat optimistic in the agriculture industry as a whole, I wish that all western provinces were getting the rain we've gotten, and the moisture everywhere because I know there's still some places that are extremely dry, but we need a two-week stretch of weather to get this crop in and get it going. The later we get it in, the less optimism there is for bumper crop going forward."

Hruska says it's not too late for a good yield

Kevin Hruska, who farms in the north of Esterhazy, Bredenburg and Langenburg areas, shared his thoughts on seeding starting in late spring of this year.

"We started late because of the moisture and when you do get going it's slow, you just don't have the coverage you normally do because you're struggling with wet conditions and you're still trying to do a good job, it's sort of double jeopardy I guess," Hruska said.

"I think everyone has started seeding now. We are well on our way, we're approaching half way, we're quite not there yet but we'll be there fairly soon. I would say we're a little ahead of the norm for our area, what we did is when it seemed like it was going to be wet, we started fighting the rain off the start, we didn't wait for it to dry up."

Hruska said he and his team started seeding almost two weeks ago, but had to shut down because of the rain and continue after.

"We're working 16 hour days, we don't work around the clock because we don't want someone getting stuck in the middle of the night," he said.

"We're putting in big days, but we always did. At the same time, these conditions aren't totally unusual, once in a while these things come around. This isn't like a one-in-a-hundred years type of thing, unfortunately it happens too often."

Hruska plans on finish seeding in about 10 days. He said the best case scenario for this year's crops is for it to stop raining.

"For the rest of the year we need it to stop raining now, and put our seeding in. You've seen crops be seeded two weeks late and it's only one week late at the end," he said.

"It catches up a little bit, you might lose a little yield or something, it's not the end of the world yet, it all depends how the summer goes. If we get good rain, the frost might be a risk, but if it stops raining in the summer and the sun is burning, then we won't be concerned about frost in the fall."

Compared to last year's drought, Hruska said there was an upside to seeing moisture this year.

"Rain makes grain, I think when it rains it indicates that we're not in a big drought trend, I think it's an indicator that it can rain," he said.

"When there's a little bit of moisture around, moisture brings more moisture. We didn't get as much precipitation as our friends who are south and east of us, which we're grateful for that and wish them luck."

Hruska said the weather temperatures is what will dictate this year's yield being good.

"I think the biggest thing is not the precipitation we got, but the lack of warmth. The lack of warmth and the late disappearance of the snow is the harmful part," he said.

"I seeded through a snow bank today. That's the thing that's different about this year, not the inches of rain, but the fact that we had no heat when the snow came.

"I wish all my farmer friends good luck for this year, please tell them that."

Excess moisture has helped some grain farmers this year

Trevor Green, APAS representative, said some farmers have reached out to him about seeding in recent wet conditions.

"I haven't heard too many guys getting stuck, but there's always issues getting trucks on wet fields and equipment getting stuck and stuff, but I haven't heard too many people," Green said.

"As long as we miss the rains that are supposed to come in the next couple of weeks, it's going to be good. There's nice seeding conditions in a lot of areas right now, but there's still potholes filled with water too, there's going to be a lot of potholes that are not going to get seeded this year because of that."

With the excess moisture from the wet weather conditions, he said there is an advantage for farmers.

"The crops are going to have a better start I think this year than last year, last year it was really dry this time of year," he said.

However Green pointed out that producers who do not have sectional control for their seeding equipment will lose on input costs.

"It's definitely a year where sectional control is going to pay off because of all the overlap, for anyone who has a big drill and doesn't have any sectional control there's definitely going to be some increased costs for fertilizer overlap and seed overlap," Green said.

"It will be a year that will definitely show where the benefits of sectional control on larger seeding is. Let's say you have an 80 foot drill and there will be eight sections on that drill, it will shut off in 10 foot sections, if that drill runs over a spot that is already seeded, the machine using the GPS will shut those sections off so you're not double seeding and double fertilizing.

"If you have an 80 foot drill and it doesn't have that sectional control, if you go and seed a 20 foot strip, you're seeding another 60 foot area over again. It increases the costs pretty quick, especially with the price of fertilizer now, it's almost become a necessity on large drills."

He said the anticipated time for producers to finish seeding should be in mid-June.

"With the weather now, the odd guy might finish in 10 days or so, but there are also farmers who are just starting now, they'll be done in about two or three weeks."

Green was asked what the best case scenario would be for this year's crops.

"You never have a crystal ball, but it looks like it's going to get a good start, we're still going to need some timely rains to come at the end of June, and end of July," he said.

"Timely rains will be the difference between an excellent crop and an average crop, you have good soil moisture to get it going, but it needs timely rains to make an above average crop. As long as we get those, it could be a good average year."

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The world is on the brink of a food shortage

It's likely that more than 100 million additional people will experience either famine or acute hunger, something we've never seen before

Food supply chain hangers due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the impact of Russia's invasion of Ukraine have resulted in questions about the global nature of our food systems.

Some suggest we need to deglobalize and refocus our energy on making most economies around the world food sovereign, including Canada's.

Given what the world is about to face this year, with major famine as millions experience acute hunger, it's hard to argue against such a claim. But global trade over the years, especially for Canada, has been nothing short of a godsend and brushing any of it to the side would be to our detriment.

We should be clear on one fundamental reality: The world is still all about the United States and China. Everyone else adjusts along the way, including Canada. Thirty-five per cent of China's exports go to the United States, and China is also America's leading customer.

So Canada matters very little in the grand scheme of things, at least right now. Still, the world is in deep trouble.

About 15 per cent of all calories on Earth come from wheat, with corn covering a lot of calorific ground as well. With Ukraine out of the supply mix, coupled with sanctions against Russia, the global wheat deficit this year will be a significant challenge given that 25 per cent of grain exports come from that region. We're going to be short on wheat, corn, barley and many other commodities.

By the time we're done with 2022, it's likely that more than 100 million additional people will experience either famine or acute hunger, something the world has never seen before.

The planet operates under a 90-day production cycle of agricultural commodities. Canada's contribution, along with the U.S. and parts of Europe, occurs in the fall.

With U.S. President Joe Biden's recent ethanol mandate, almost 40 per cent of the U.S. corn crop is used for ethanol, not food. In Canada, it's about 10 per cent. The food-for-fuel obsession is back, despite the looming crisis.

Canada will be fine when it comes to food access, but food will become more expensive. Poor nations always lose access to their food supply first, while richer nations



Sylvain Charlebois

like Canada will secure food supplies by paying more. Poor countries have no capacity to store calories at all.

Germany, typically a big buyer of Ukrainian commodities, stated that retail food prices could increase by as much as 50 per cent this year. Commodity traders are already buying and even hoarding what they can get to secure supplies needed for the next several months.

China is basically the only nation that could bridge the calorie gap. China's significance in all of this can't be underscored enough.

Of some of the challenges we face, fertilizer access is certainly key. These critical inputs for farmers cost on average about US\$1,500 a tonne, five times the cost 12 months ago. Farmers need fertilizers to produce crops, but the market is controlled by a handful of multinational companies—some of them are in Canada—that supply-manage their products to artificially boost prices. This needs to stop.

We're also paying for years of bashing generic engineering in the media by groups that have used fear to put forward an organic-centric diet for affluent city dwellers.

Additionally, groups have recklessly lobbied city councils and provincial governments to ban the use of chemicals that make agriculture more cost-effective. The approval process for new traits for new crops can take years in many developed countries, including Canada.

Agriculture is and will always be about technologies. Those foolish fanatics who are anti-genetically modified organisms (GMOs) will have to accept that.

And now, many people are talking about deglobalizing our food economy. Deglobalization occurs when the economic interdependence between nations declines.

For Canada, this would be a problem. Canada is one of the largest countries in the world in terms of land, with fewer than 39 million people. Deglobalization essentially means Canadians will face a reduction in their standard of living. Almost 60 per cent of our wealth comes from trade. Trade also makes our food more diverse and affordable. But this doesn't mean our approach to trade doesn't need fixing—it certainly does.

High-functioning food systems aren't immune to destructive forces like climate change or a global pandemic. We know that. Tyrants like Russian President Vladimir Putin can only make matters worse.

A new globalization agenda would require that nations adhere to acceptable humanitarian conduct to participate in a global economy.

Nations would also need to ensure farmers aren't held hostage by the powerful companies controlling the fertilizer industry. That needs to change, and Canada can do something about it.

Canada will also need to make our agriculture more efficient and more productive through a solid food autonomy strategy. The only province that has a food autonomy strategy is Quebec.

Canada needs a pathway to produce more food in an open economy, offering us better access and affordable prices while growing our agriculture through trade in a sustainable matter.

A comprehensive strategy would include sustainable water practices and the use of renewable energy to support production. If we do things right in Canada, in a few decades we could end up supplying water-scarce California with food rather than the other way around.

Bold thinking requires an audacious strategy. Canada can do better since we have so much to offer.

Global trade has worked for the betterment of the world. But attaining more resiliency is still a work in progress, whether we like it or not.

Dr. Sylvain Charlebois is senior director of the agri-food analytics lab and a professor in food distribution and policy at Dalhousie University.

Changes to PST will benefit farmers and ag industry

Amendments to the Provincial Sales Tax (PST) regulations will provide greater clarity to farmers and help ensure that PST is applied fairly and consistently to farming and agricultural goods and services.

"After speaking with agricultural organizations in our province, we heard concerns that PST was inconsistently applied to farming and agricultural activity," Deputy Premier and Finance Minister Donna Harpauer said. "The changes to the PST regulations will be more equitable, consistent and protect farmers against perceived 'PST creep' in farming activity."

Effective April 1, 2022, new PST exemptions were made through regulation changes. These exemptions include:

- prefabricated wind breaker panels for use in the protection and handling of livestock
- insulators for electrified livestock fences
- certain farm equipment attached to a registered vehicle
- on-farm dugout excavation and for trenching (in specific circumstances related to farming)

Additionally, it was clarified that the following products are also exempt from

PST and are retroactive to April 1, 2016:

- water storage tanks used in spraying or irrigating crops
- storage tanks for weed control chemicals, insecticides, fungicides, herbicides, liquid fertilizer
- adjuvants that improve their efficacy or application
- portable seed cleaners used on-farm by farmers in preparing their crop for storage or market (farmers in the business of seed cleaning must pay PST on their seed cleaning equipment)
- farm tractors

"While inflation and operating costs have been rising the last couple of years, cattle producers, and all farmers, simply cannot pass along higher costs including taxes," Saskatchewan Cattlemen's Association Chair Arnold Balicki said. "The recognition of this by the Government of Saskatchewan when it comes to PST on several important farm related goods and activities is appreciated by Saskatchewan's cattle producers. Keeping this tax out of the industry helps keep it on a level and fair playing field, making us more competitive in the long run."

The estimated, annual cost of these changes is about \$1 million. The Ministry

of Finance is also beginning discussions about modernizing the agriculture and

farming section of PST legislation, to potentially be considered in future budgets.



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Is greed driving the beef industry to a legal showdown?

When it comes to price-fixing, the U.S. acts. Canada, not so much

A Quebec-based group is leading a class-action lawsuit aimed at major federally-licensed beef packers. Cargill, JBS Foods, Tyson Foods and National Beef Packing are all accused of colluding and inflating beef prices since 2015.

So if you're a consumer in Quebec who's been buying beef since 2015, you can be part of the claim. The authorization application was filed in the Superior Court of Quebec and the group will hear from the courts later this year.

This claim doesn't appear to surprise anyone. Food prices have been skyrocketing for a while, especially beef. According to Statistics Canada, while ground beef is up only four per cent since January 2015, most beef cuts have gone up from 30 to 51 per cent. Only baby food and potatoes have seen sharper increases since 2015, so beef prices stand out.

Farmers have long complained about how little they get versus how retail prices behave at the grocery store. The correlation between the price farmers receive and retail prices has always been weak for most products. But consumers are noticing, and some groups are acting on concerns that something may not be quite right.

What's perplexing about the claim is how it only aims at a handful of packers. If collusion did occur at the meat counter, many other companies would have arguably benefited from artificially inflated prices, including smaller abattoirs and, of course, retailers. Margins are significant on meat sales in food retailing, so grocers would have also increased profits as a result of higher wholesale prices.

The claim is likely inspired by what has happened in the United States in recent months. In December, the White House released a scathing report about how profits in the meat-packing sector have spectacularly increased, by over 300 per cent since the start of the pandemic.

JBS USA approved a US\$52.5 million settlement in an American lawsuit in which the company was accused of conspiring to boost beef prices. They never admitted guilt in the deal, though. Cargill, National Beef Packing and Tyson Foods were also named in the case, the same com-



Sylvain Charlebois

panies mentioned in the Quebec claim. Of the four, only Tyson is publicly traded.

When it comes to price-fixing, the United States doesn't fool around. When Congress and the White House have concerns, they act on them. In Canada, not so much.

The bread price-fixing scandal that came to light back in 2017, when Loblaw admitted having participated in an alleged industry-wide operation, opened the door to some public criticism. In 2017, Loblaw CEO Galen Weston Jr. strategically threw everyone in the industry under the bus when admitting Loblaw's involvement in a 14-year-long bread price-fixing scheme.

By admitting guilt and supporting the investigation, Loblaw received immunity from the Competition Bureau. The investigation didn't provide evidence to prosecute anyone else, even though bread prices went up dramatically while the scheme was ongoing.

But a group in Ontario has just been authorized to go ahead with a class-action lawsuit against the bread industry. So the beef claim is the second lawsuit we've seen in Canada in just a few months.

Some will say these class-action lawsuits are often launched by ambulance-chasing law firms looking for easy money or cheap publicity. Perhaps, but with higher food prices and Canada's inability to forcefully monitor retail food prices, these allegations are likely going to make a valuable point.

Canada is really data poor compared to the United States. Statistics Canada doesn't really report small details about what's going on with all food categories, at least not as much as the U.S. Many even believe that food inflation is underestimated in Canada since Statistics Canada only relies on a few grocers to measure food inflation.

With strong data, American institutions can and will use the stick. In Canada, we pursue companies in hopes they blink. What doesn't help is how under-resourced the Competition Bureau is. This needs to change.

At the heart of it all is how we measure greed, or at least how we should measure it. How much is too much, given the relatively small margins in the agri-food industry?

When a consumer walks away from a store with a \$40 steak and willfully paid for it while many other options are offered, you can argue the grocer gave choices. But with higher food prices, our inability to measure or detect greed in the system will become more obvious. And consumer trust is at stake.

We need to act before skepticism in Canada grows even further.

Dr. Sylvain Charlebois is senior director of the agri-food analytics lab and a professor in food distribution and policy at Dalhousie University.

Farmers still find reasons to share equipment

BY TREVOR BACQUE

Farming is as much an individual career as it is communal. From the tight-knit communities formed through agriculture and rural living to family-like relations often shared between neighbours, farming is just different. On the other hand, one typically individualized component of 21st century farming is equipment and many Canadian farmers own their equipment by themselves. However, with sky-high iron prices, many opt to share.

At Courtright, Ont., Julie Maw and her husband Kyle share grain buggies with friends and neighbours going back more than a decade. With an old livestock barn on their property sitting empty, they thought there was a way to repurpose it. At that same time, a neighbour needed a place to store a pair of grain buggies over winter. A quick solution was born: the Maws store the grain buggies and, as payment, use them at harvest time at no charge.

"One of us can start sooner than the other," she says. "This works for us and it benefits both parties."

Julie and Kyle maintain the buggies. As she explains, it's a small price to pay for not having to make outright purchases on expensive machinery.

"Equipment has a hefty price tag and that's not changing anytime soon," she says. "We might not have the cash flow to put out at that time. If a buggy can patch us through for a couple years... it's an advantage for a young farmer starting out."

Julie encourages farmers to make communication the number one goal when deciding to share equipment and make certain everyone's expectations are in sync.

"Make sure everyone has a clear understanding up front of what's expected, when one plans to use it and how the ownership will work."

Thinking about sharing?

Consider a formal agreement

While communication is important, having a formal agreement in place can help ensure expectations are clear, understood and agreed upon. A formal document can mitigate any disagreements or misunderstandings. After all, equipment sharing is a business transaction like any other.

One way to set up an agreement is to base equipment shares on land shares and design a living document that provides legal direction should land-based percentages change. The share of equipment may differ from person to person and may also differ over time. Equipment maintenance also comes into play, so no one person is footing the bill or making maintenance decisions exclusively.

This type of arrangement provides solid direction going forward.

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FCC ready to work with customers impacted by avian flu

Farm Credit Canada (FCC) is prepared to work with customers concerned about financial hardship due to the impact of avian influenza, a devastating disease for poultry operations.

"We are monitoring the situation closely and talking with our customers to let them know we are prepared to help them overcome any short-term financial issues that might arise as a result of this highly contagious and deadly bird flu," said Michael Hoffort, FCC president and CEO. "That's why we're offering flexibility for customers experiencing financial pressure as a result of avian flu."

To date, the virus (H5N1) has been detected in several poultry farms across Canada. This affects live birds, bird products and by-products impacting chicken, turkey, ducks and egg sectors, as well as poultry input suppliers and processors. FCC is prepared to help customer poultry operations directly affected by the disease or by bans placed on farms in the proximity of infected farms, which could potentially lead to cash flow problems.

FCC will consider additional short-term credit options, deferral of principal payments and/or other loan payment schedule amendments to reduce the financial pressures on producers impacted by avian flu. FCC will also offer flexibility and even a combination of options based on the individual needs of its customers, since each farm financial situation is unique.

"We are ready to help our customers through these circumstances that are beyond their control," Hoffort said. "By working together, we can all play a part in helping poultry producers overcome this challenge. It's the right thing to do."



Customers impacted by avian flu are encouraged to contact their FCC relationship manager or the FCC Customer Service Centre at 1-888-332-3301 as soon as possible to discuss their individual situation and options.

Manitoba

AgrilInsurance seeding deadline for soybeans extended

Manitoba Agriculture and the Manitoba Agricultural Services Corporation (MASC) are announcing the extension of the AgrilInsurance seeding deadlines for soybeans starting in 2022.

The full coverage seeding deadlines for soybeans are now June 8 in Soybean Area 1 and June 4 in Soybean Areas 2 and 3. In addition, soybean growers in these areas will now be eligible for insurance if planting occurs in the five days following the full-coverage seeding deadline. However, coverage will be reduced by 20 per cent. The full-coverage seeding deadline for Soybean Area 4 con-

tinues to be May 30 with no extended seeding deadline coverage. These changes are permanent and will be part of the AgrilInsurance contract going forward.

These changes were made in consultation with the Manitoba Pulse and Soybean Growers Association after a review of available data and agronomic considerations such as growing season length and the use of varieties that are more adapted to Manitoba conditions since the seeding deadlines were last considered. These changes are not expected to materially change the risk to the AgrilInsurance program and therefore there is no change to

premiums as a result.

MASC is not considering seeding deadline extensions for other crops at this time. The final spring seeding deadline for many major crops is June 20. AgrilInsurance contract holders who are unable to seed by June 20 due to wet conditions are eligible for Excess Moisture Insurance.

MASC clients are encouraged to connect with their MASC Service Centre if they have questions about AgrilInsurance or are looking for resources to assist in dealing with wet conditions. For a full list of MASC seeding deadlines, visit www.masc.mb.ca/seeding-deadlines.

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How the rise of online auctions is changing used farm equipment sales

BY RICHARD KAMCHEN

The popularity of online equipment auctions has taken off in the last few years but, there's one item for sale buyers would like to see more of—used equipment.

Sales of used equipment are usually robust when new equipment manufacturers face challenges, such as those with the supply chain.

One way buyers can purchase used equipment is through auctions. While there has been less in-person auctions, online auction numbers have surged, especially timed auctions.

Ritchie Bros. Auctioneers started hosting online auctions in 2002, but most of its business remained in conjunction with live auctions. The popularity of timed auctions took off at the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic in early 2020, says Luke Fritshaw, Ritchie Bros. Auctioneers regional sales manager in Saskatoon.

Timed auctions ins and outs

Bidding no longer opens when an auctioneer gets to a lot, but three to five days before auction. This allows customers to put in their maximum bids early and avoid sitting to watch the auction and wait for their item.

Since timed auctions are held online, bidders can take more time to place their bid from the comfort of their homes. Though that may mean higher prices, since bidders have longer to consider the purchase.

At some auction houses, the time left on the bid is reset if a bid is placed in the last two minutes of the sale. That provides customers with additional time to decide how high they're willing to go with their bidding.

"It's just a lot more accessible. More customers can manage their time and business, and still be able to bid on equipment a few days before. Or, they don't have to sit down until minutes before the actual closing time," Fritshaw says.

Do your research

Buyers need to do their research, and that's possible even in most consignment



Buyers want lots of pictures and information on auction websites.

sales. The equipment comes from reputable consumers or dealerships who can provide its history. Dealer financing isn't available at auction sales, but other financing can easily be arranged.

Buyers want lots of pictures and information on auction websites so they can make purchase decisions without ever seeing the equipment in person.

It's interesting to note that sometimes even local people bid online to save themselves time. And they can also bid anonymously.

Sellers, consult your accountant

One of the first steps for farmers thinking about having a farm sale should be talking to their accountant for financial

and tax advice. Farmers will want to minimize tax implications, considering the large cash flow increase that an auction will produce.

An important aspect is choosing a good time for a farm sale. March/April, June/July and October/December are usually considered optimal months for a farm auction. Some auction houses like Ritchie Bros. try to avoid auctions in the busy farming months as farmers are focused on either putting the crop in or taking it off.

Another factor to consider is that most buyers want to talk to the seller about their equipment. Many potential buyers feel they can get a lot of good information from the farmer who has owned, operated and serviced the equipment to be sold. The

auction company doesn't know the history of the equipment like the owner does. In some cases, a potential buyer will request that an independent mechanic examine a piece of equipment in advance of a sale.

If buyers plan to finance any purchases, it should be arranged before the auction. Most farmers factor in after-sale costs such as trucking, but it's wise to research this beforehand to avoid surprises.

Early bids

Timed auctions won't completely replace live bidding, but they will remain an option. Buyers still have a desire to get together with others at live auctions, but "buyers and sellers see a benefit in using the timed auction system."

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Elize Steyn submitted these photos of seeding in the RM of Silverwood as part of the World-Spectator's Spring Seeding Contest. Spring seeding photos can be sent to photos@world-spectator.com for a chance to win \$100 and have your photos displayed in the paper.



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FCC ready to work with customers affected by widespread flooding in Manitoba

Farm Credit Canada (FCC) is prepared to work with Manitoba customers concerned about financial hardship due to the flooding caused by torrential rainfall, snowmelt and waterway ice jams.

"Widespread flooding along the Red River, combined with heavy rain that recently blanketed parts of western Manitoba, has not only forced the evacuation of some communities, but has also disrupted some farm operations during this critical planting season," said Shannon Weatherall, senior vice-president of FCC's Prairie operations. "We want to assure customers who find themselves financially vulnerable as a result of these circumstances that FCC will work with them to explore all options for addressing any short-term cash flow problems."

It has been an extremely challenging time for many producers across southern Manitoba, since many of the same areas also faced adverse growing conditions last year due to drought or a lack of moisture in some regions that reduced yields and created higher input and feed costs for livestock producers.

FCC may consider additional short-term credit options, deferral of principal payments and/or other loan payment schedule amendments to reduce the financial pressures on producers affected by the flooding. FCC will also offer flexibility and a combination of options based on the individual needs of its customers, since each farm financial situation is unique.



"The risk of extreme weather is always top of mind for producers, but there are times when compounding circumstances can overwhelm even the strongest risk management plan," Weatherall said.

"FCC is here to provide the flexibility customers need to make it through these situations and get their businesses back on track."

Customers affected by flooding are en-

couraged to contact their FCC relationship manager or the FCC Customer Service Centre at 1-888-332-3301 as soon as possible to discuss their individual situation and options.



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Ontario fed steer	175	155	145
Ontario 550 lb. steer	230	220	215
Ontario 850 lb. steer	200	185	155
Ontario market hog	105	80	85
Ontario feeder hog	140	105	100
Manitoba market hog	105	75	80
Manitoba feeder hog	165	95	125
Isowean Shead	60	60	50

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

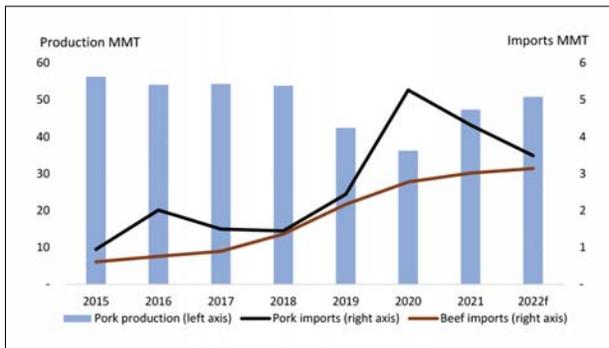


Figure 1: Chinese '22 pork production growth larger than anticipated – reducing pork imports

2022 Cattle and hog outlook update:

Mixed profitability for Canada's red meat sectors

BY JUSTIN SHEPHERD
ECONOMIST WITH FCC

The Russian invasion of Ukraine has changed the feed cost outlook for 2022, and stronger price volatility will continue for the remainder of the year, challenging profitability.

Cattle prices in 2022 are forecasted to remain at or above 2021, but margins will remain under pressure due to high feed costs (Table 1). Feedlot margins are projected to be negative on average, while cow-calf margins are expected to be near break-even. Improved pasture and forage conditions in Western Canada will be critical for profitability in the cow-calf sector.

Ontario hog prices are projected to be significantly higher than the last few years, but margins are projected to be below the five-year average due to higher feed costs. Quebec hog prices are subject to a temporary price adjustment based on an agreement between producers and processors. April Quebec hog prices were 13.5 per cent lower compared to Ontario, according to AAFC data.

Quebec processors also agreed to reduce Ontario hog slaughters by 5,000 head per week during this time. High feed costs may also put pressure on feeder hog prices that are not fully captured in the Table 1 forecasts. Manitoba hog prices are forecast to be up significantly in 2022. Margins will be tight overall in the hog sector.

In February, FCC identified China's efforts to rebuild its hog herd, Canadian feed availability and prices, and domestic red meat demand, as three dominant forces impacting profitability of the Canadian cattle and hog sectors. They are still exert-

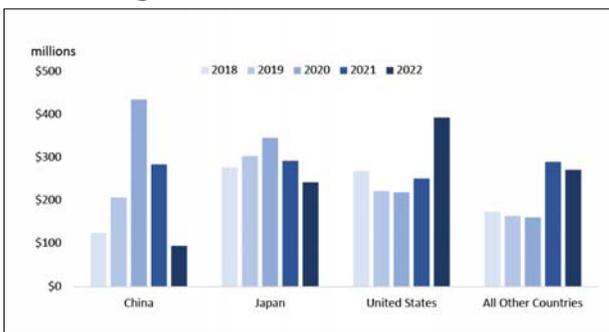


Figure 2: United States largest destination for Canadian pork exports in Q1

imports are expected to fall 19 per cent in 2022 and are somewhat behind the recent decline in U.S. pork cutout values. Conversely, Chinese beef imports are expected to increase for the third straight year, with the USDA forecasting an increase of 4 per cent in 2022.

Chinese imports of Canadian pork dropped 67 per cent in Q1 of 2022 compared to the same period in 2021. Canadian exports to the U.S. increased 56 per cent (Figure 2). Total Q1 Canadian pork exports were \$1 billion, down 10 per cent YoY. While the value of quarterly exports was the lowest in three years, they remain very strong compared to pre-ASF. Very strong cow slaughter in the U.S. and a decline in the U.S. hog breeding herd in Q1 suggest strong demand for Canadian pork and beef exports.

Continued on Page B19

ing dominance in addition to the war in Ukraine and weather-related impacts on the 2022 global feed supply.

China's impressive efforts to rebuild hog herd and shifting export destinations

China's pork production is forecast to grow around 7 per cent YoY, up from the 5% per cent projected at the start of the year (Figure 1). The quicker-than-anticipated recovery of the Chinese hog herd is reducing Canadian pork export opportunities. While production is not back to pre ASF levels, pork supply and demand in China are more balanced. Chinese pork



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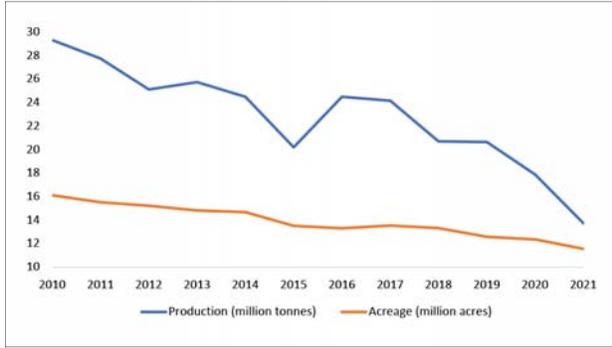


Figure 3: Canadian tame hay acres and production in a downward trend

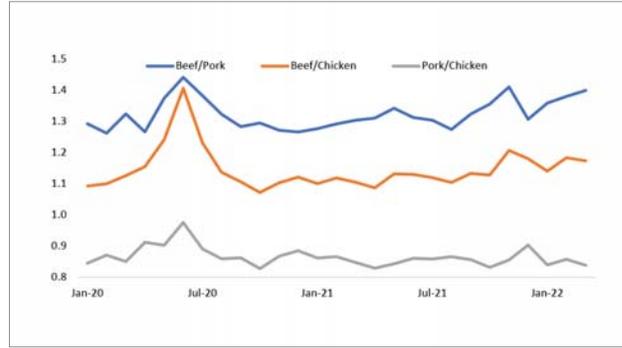


Figure 4: Monthly average Canadian retail protein price ratios

2022 Cattle and hog outlook update:

Mixed profitability for Canada's red meat sectors

Continued from Page B18

Lack of feed availability and strong prices in Canada

Since the initial outlook, feed availability has further deteriorated with tight global stocks and increased market uncertainty due to the war in Ukraine. Feed costs for 2022 are now projected to be up significantly compared to 2021 for both feed barley and corn (Table 2). Canadian crop year purchases of corn from the U.S. are a record 3.7 million tonnes due to reduced grain production in western Canada.

One of the key feeds to watch this spring is tame hay. Last year's Prairie drought wreaked havoc on production, causing a 7.8 MMT shortfall relative to the five-year average (Figure 3) and the lowest overall production since 1949. Acres harvested for hay have been trending downward since the 2003 peak, and 2022 spring did not help get cattle back out on the grass. Heavy April snowfall in eastern Saskatchewan/Manitoba and drought conditions in Alberta and southwest Saskatchewan meant producers had to continue feeding hay. Hay prices were up 71 per cent in February YoY and should stay high until

stocks can be rebuilt this summer. Spring and summer rains will be needed to help western cattle producers. Conversely, hay production in eastern Canada was extremely strong and supportive of producer margins.

Domestic red meat demand and inflation

Retail inflation in March at 14.1 per cent for beef led to the protein retail price increase, while pork's 6.4 per cent YoY increase was the lowest relative to other proteins such as chicken (7.4 per cent) and dairy (9.0 per cent). As consumers head into grilling season, beef has become more expensive relative to pork (Figure 4). Pork has become cheaper relative to both chicken and beef. Poultry, especially turkey and eggs, will likely continue to appreciate in price due to widespread avian influenza hitting North America hard.

Prices for red meats are likely to stabilize at high levels given higher costs across the entire supply chain and the strong domestic and global demand for proteins. Yet, sustained profitability for cattle and hog operations remains elusive in the current environment. A strong 2022 crop would certainly bring relief to feed costs.



FEED COSTS	2022 FORECAST \$/TONNE	2021 \$/TONNE	5-YEAR AVERAGE
Feed barley (AB)	440	375	265
Corn (ON)	355	305	220

Table 2: Feed prices remain elevated

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