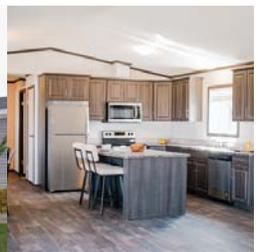




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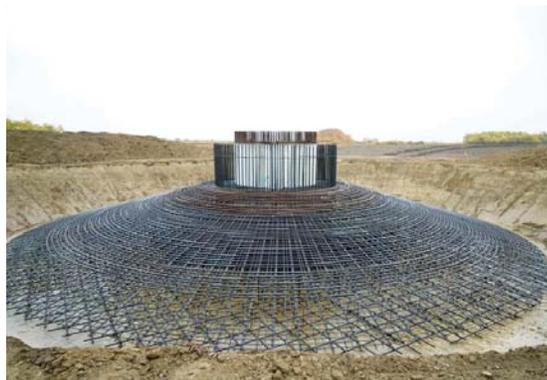
October 2023 • Volume 16 Number 10

Covering Southeast Saskatchewan and Southwest Manitoba



Bekevar Wind Energy Project taking shape

Wind turbines are taking shape at the Bekevar Wind Farm in the Kennedy-Kipling area. The 200 megawatt wind energy project will power 100,000 Saskatchewan homes. At left, a group from Cowessess First Nation tours the construction site. The Bekevar project is owned by Renewable Energy Systems (RES) Canada and Awasis Nehiyawewini Energy Development, a wholly owned Cowessess First Nation entity.



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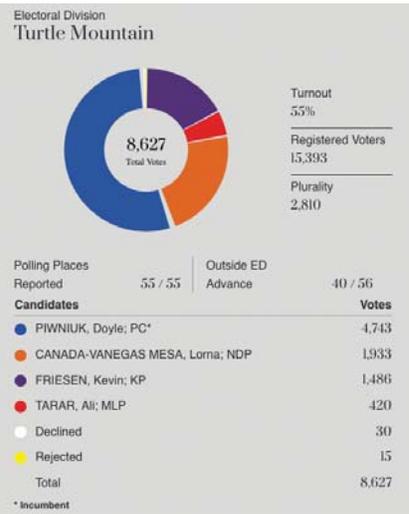
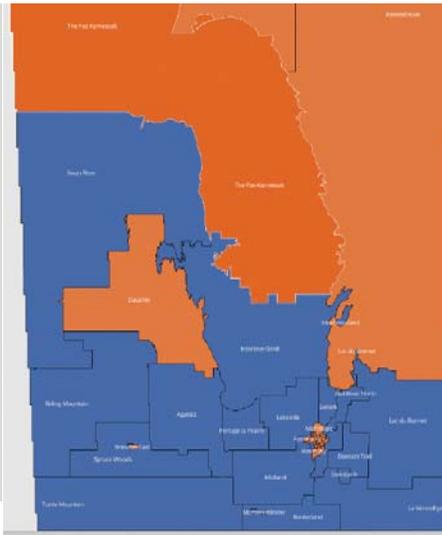
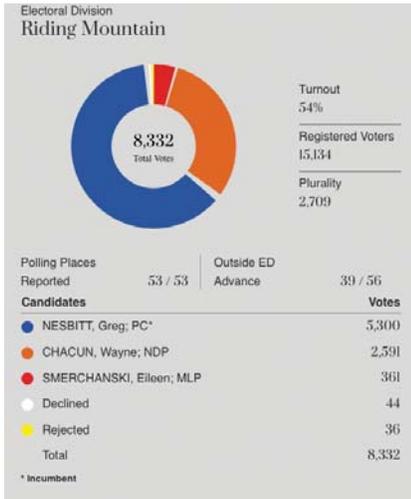
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Manitoba Election Results

The NDP won the Manitoba election Tuesday, winning the vast majority of Winnipeg ridings and sweeping northern Manitoba, while the Progressive Conservatives retained the rural seats in southern and western Manitoba.

NDP win Manitoba election, PCs win local seats

The first First Nations premier of a province in Canada has been elected in Manitoba, with the New Democrats under Leader Wab Kinew taking seats in the key battleground of Winnipeg, but rural ridings in Western Manitoba remained Progressive Conservative.

The sprawling Riding Mountain constituency stretches from Wasagaming and Minnedosa to St. Lazare and Virden, and south to Reston and Pipestone.

Newspaper publisher Greg Nesbitt won the seat for the Progressive Conservatives, with 5,300 votes, compared to 2,591 for the NDP and 361 for the Liberals.

Farther south in the Turtle Mountain riding, Doyle Piwniuk held the seat for

the Progressive Conservatives, with 4,743 votes, compared to 1,933 for the NDP, 1,486 for the Keystone Party, and 420 for the Liberals.

Winnipeg holds 32 of the 57 legislature seats and the NDP flipped seats that had been held by Progressive Conservative cabinet members.

Former NDP cabinet minister Gord Mackintosh, who retired in 2016, said the New Democrats ran a disciplined campaign.

"The NDP campaign has been very sure-footed and really sympathetic to, I think, the key issues Manitobans are grappling with," he said from NDP election headquarters.

Heather Stefanson took over the top spot of the Progressive Conservatives mid-term in a party leadership race after former premier Brian Pallister retired in 2021.

Stefanson said she would step down as party leader.

"Wab, I hope that your win tonight inspires a future generation of Indigenous youth to get involved in our democratic process, not just here in Manitoba, but right across the country," she said in a speech.

Progressive Conservative campaign manager Marni Larkin said it's been a long, hard campaign.

"I've never experienced an election

that's been so aggressive at the door, on the ground... this is an all-out war."

The Tories also took out ads to portray the NDP as a risk to the economy and the province's finances. They pointed to final budget figures released last week, which said the province recorded a surplus in the 2022-23 fiscal year for only the second time since 2009.

"We are the only party with a plan to pay for the necessary services that Manitobans rely on," Stefanson said Monday.

Liberal Leader Dougald Lamont was hoping to add to the three seats the Liberals last held in the legislature but were reduced to one.

Continued on page 4

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NDP win Manitoba election, PCs win local seats

Continued from page 3

Lamont was defeated in St. Boniface and resigned as party leader.

"I will say, I always knew this was a possibility, but we had to hope beyond hope and keep working and do everything we could to run the best possible campaign we could, and we did, and I'm incredibly proud of that," he said.

The Tories, who won 36 seats in the last election, promised during the campaign to hire more health-care workers and build hospital infrastructure.

They also pledged major tax cuts to

help people with inflation and to boost the economy. They promised to reduce personal income taxes and phase out a tax that employers pay on their total annual payroll.

The NDP, which won 18 seats in the last election, made health care the central issue of its campaign. Kinew promised to reopen three hospital emergency departments that were downgraded by the Tory government. He was on offence throughout the campaign, holding press conferences in Tory-held areas and highlighting the local candidate.

Kitchen plans to run in next federal election

BY KEVIN WEEDMARK

Souris-Moose Mountain MP Dr. Robert Kitchen says he plans to run again in the next federal election.

Kitchen was first elected in 2015, and was re-elected in 2019 and 2021. In 2021 he was elected with 76 per cent of the vote, the largest plurality in Canada.

"I haven't done any big announcement, but the bottom line is that I'm running again," says Kitchen. "So we're moving forward and we're ready should an election be called tomorrow. We're ready to go and that's the plan at this point in time. As to when the election will happen, who knows. One reason I want to run again is I want to be in government."

"I've always been thinking that way, so it's been the plan and there obviously are other issues that happened and you look at those and family issues and things like that. But at this point in time everything looks like that's the plan, so hopefully we can be in government and we can go from there."

Why did he enter politics in the first place?

"Well I got into it because it was another



Souris-Moose Mountain MP Dr. Robert Kitchen says he plans to run again in the next federal election, saying he is looking forward to serving on the government side of the house.

avenue for me to help my family, for lack of a better word, which is what I consider my constituency," he says. "At the time they were my patients when I was in practice and my family has expanded out to the whole constituency, and as MP I do what I can do to try and help those where I can. I've still got that goal and ultimately I still believe that the seat I sit in doesn't belong to me—it belongs to you and the constituents and that's what I will continue to believe."

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Grade 1 students were learning about grain quality, while also tasting the wheat, at Stockholm's Crop for Community's educational event.



Students from Macdonald School in Stockholm were learning about a tractor and grain cart in the field, on Sept. 26.

Crop for Community learning event held at Stockholm

BY SIERRA D'SOUZA BUTTS
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

As part of the Crop for Community initiative, students from Macdonald School Stockholm engaged in an educational event about agriculture, on Sept. 26.

Approximately 24 students, including a class from P.J. Gillen School in Esterhazy, spent the day rotating between stations on the Serhan farm, where they learned about agriculture, and how important it is in Saskatchewan.

"We're taking the kids through the stations of harvest," said organizer Heather Bergstrom.

"They're starting with Nutrients for Life, which is an organization for education about agriculture. The students will learn about 4R which is the nutrient stewardship."

"Another station is about combining, we've got a demo here from Canada West Harvest Centre about a class combine machine made in Germany, and was assembled in the U.S."

"They'll learn about the grain cart and a little bit about the production process on the field, and how the wheat gets taken from the land to the elevators."

"We also have two stations where G3 from Melville is providing information about grain quality, logistics and transportation, and just about the sheer volume of wheat that Saskatchewan provides to the world."

Since the community initiative started in 2014, the group has raised \$255,000 which has helped build and upgrade existing facilities within the community, such as the school playground, the Stockholm Community Daycare, the multiplex and more.

"This is the 10th year we've been doing Crop for Community," Bergstrom said. "It started out very small and morphed over

the years, but this is the third year where we're doing a real student event."

Meaning behind the community fundraiser

Initially, Crops for Community started off as a fundraising initiative, but has recently grown into a learning opportunity for students as well.

"It's really turned into a real agricultural event. Students are completely immersed in agriculture," said Melissa Johanson, principal at Macdonald School in Stockholm.

"I'm starting to hear it a lot more over the years, they understand it."

"It's gone from just a fundraising activity to a full on educational activity, and that's really important because we live in Saskatchewan."

Johanson said teaching students about the role agriculture plays in the province and in the world is essential.

"Agriculture is all around us, and a lot of the students' families work at Mosaic and with potash," she said.

"We know that potash helps fertilize everything and helps feed the world, it's a big deal here."

"I hope the students have an appreciation for agriculture through this. I hope they understand where food comes from, that it doesn't just come from the store, and that the farmers are the ones who put all of their time and effort in, and that they are the reasons for where their food comes from."

"I hope that they are inspired, I hope that they appreciate farming and agriculture from this."

Over the years, local businesses and volunteers in the community have helped contribute towards the project.

"There's the generosity of Mosaic who

provide a potash donation, and Sharpe's Soil Services converts that potash to money so that we can buy seed, fertilizer, and also maybe pay for custom farming of 110 acres of land," said Bergstrom.

"In tandem with that during harvest, and sometimes during seeding, there's an educational opportunity for the children to learn more about agriculture and the importance of it in Saskatchewan."

"There's a lot of work and energy put in, we appreciate everyone in the community who does a little bit that makes it all come together."

With all of the proceeds from Crops for Community going back into the community of Stockholm, Johanson spoke about why the fundraiser is so important to her, and members from the community.

"We want to give back to the community, we operate 10 months of the year and this helps us get around," she said.

"We're really grateful for the support from our community, the support from our families, from our students. I just think it provides so much opportunity for our students here."

"This is good for people because they may hear about Crop for Community, but maybe they don't know what it really entails."

"It's a fundraising initiative, but most importantly it's teaching kids about agriculture and how vast it is."

"Heather gave the perfect speech to start it off today saying there's so many career opportunities in agriculture, the sky really is the limit."



At one of the stations during Stockholm's Crop for Community's educational event, students were tasting cookies and other treats made from wheat.



Left: The Grade 6 class of Macdonald School Stockholm learned about combining from Canada West Harvest Centre, during Crop for Community's educational event on Sept. 26. Right: A student eating grain from one of the wheat crops.



Jessica Campbell from Rocanville, the first woman full-time AHL coach, behind the Seattle Kraken bench for a preseason game.

Jessica Campbell behind the bench for Kraken game

Jessica Campbell, who grew up in Rocanville, joined a growing group of women to coach an NHL game when she was behind the bench for the Seattle Kraken's preseason game against the Calgary Flames at Climate Pledge Arena on Monday.

The 31-year-old followed Kori Cheverie in reaching the milestone. Cheverie, head coach of the new Professional Women's Hockey League franchise in Montreal, was a guest coach for the Pittsburgh Penguins on Sunday.

"It's obviously a tremendous opportunity, and I'm honored to be where I am," Campbell said. "It's really a humbling feeling to be part of the Kraken organization. I truly mean that."

Hired as a full-time assistant coach for Coachella Valley of the American Hockey League on July 4, 2022, Campbell

helped the Kraken's affiliate reach the Calder Cup Final in their first season in 2022-23. She has been coaching on-ice sessions at Kraken training camp the past week and was behind the bench with Dan Byslma for 3-2 shootout loss Monday while Seattle coach Dave Hakstol worked its split-squad game at Calgary.

Campbell's influence can be felt throughout the Kraken organization, especially among those who played for Coachella Valley last season.

"She deserves being in the spotlight," said forward Andrew Poturalski, who was in the lineup for Seattle on Monday. "She brings such a different side of things, and she's really creative and just [brings] a totally different perspective than what I've been used to."

"She's helped all of us forwards down there in Coach-

ella, and especially on the power play. So it's really cool to be a part of that and have her behind the bench."

It wasn't Campbell's first trailblazing experience in her coaching career. When she was hired by Coachella Valley, she became the first woman to be an assistant coach in the AHL. She previously served as an assistant coach for Germany at the 2022 IIHF Men's World Championship, also becoming the first woman to coach at that tournament.

Campbell began her hockey career as a child playing with and against boys in her hometown of Rocanville, where girls hockey wasn't an option for her at the time.

"I grew up as a young player dreaming of playing in the NHL because that's all I knew," Campbell said. "I never imagined being able to coach at this level."



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The Moosomin Shrine Club's support for Levi Jamieson, above, will be highlighted at a fundraiser November 10.

Saskatchewan roots country singer JJ Voss, left, will be headlining the event.

Rocanville singer-songwriter Lachlan Neville, above right, and the Kelly Brothers, right, will also perform at the event.



Moosomin Shriners plan concert for November

Support for Levi Jamieson will be highlighted

BY KEVIN WEEDMARK

The Moosomin Shrine Club will host a fundraiser in November featuring Saskatchewan roots country singer JJ Voss, Rocanville singer-songwriter Lachlan Neville, and well known country group the Kelly Brothers.

The fall fundraiser is an annual tradition for the Moosomin Shrine Club, and helps raise funds to support local people and projects.

One person the Shriners have been able to help is Moosomin's Levi Jamieson, and Levi and his family will be there for the fundraiser this year.

"Before the main act we've set aside some time for Levi or the family to say some words about their experience at the Shriners' Hospital in Montreal and how their experience was through the Shrine system because a lot of people don't know about everything the Shriners do," said Leo Ilustrisimo of the Moosomin Shriners.

"We're hoping that it helps spread the word on what the Shriners are doing and what services are offered in Shrine hospitals."

Shriners happy to help

Ilustrisimo said the Shriners were happy to help Levi Jamieson and his family after Levi lost the use of his legs in an ATV accident.

"After his accident, when he got back home, we contacted the Jamiesons to see what the provincial hospital had planned for his therapy and whatnot," says Ilustrisimo.

"As far as seeing a specialist, there was a long waiting list for Levi to get access to a specialist. So when we got the application in, we were able to get him to Philadelphia to see a spinal injury specialist right away.

"I think he's done three trips to Montreal already where they're doing some therapy on his legs and fitting him with new wheelchairs that are properly molded to his body and just giving him the therapy that he needs."

Feels good to help

Ilustrisimo says it feels good to be able to help. "It's been wonderful for us, especially to be able to help our own local patients get the help they need and see them improve."

"How I always think about it is that if things are going okay there's no need for the Shrine hospital but if you really need it, it's because sometimes the province of Saskatchewan is not able to provide a certain service, or it's harder to get into that system to see a specialist and there's that service that's offered here by the Shriners."

Concert an annual tradition

Ilustrisimo says the Shrine concert has been going on for several years. "I think it's the seventh year that we've been do-

ing it. We had Jess Moskaluke last year, we had the Derina Harvey Band a couple of times, we had Eli Barsi two times, we had Ray St. Germain and we had the Bromantics.

"Half of our funds stay in Moosomin to help local people and 50 per cent go the Wa Wa Shrine, our provincial organization, and it goes to the Patient Transfer Fund which helps Shrine patients in Saskatchewan get access to the hospitals in Montreal and the United States.

"Whenever a Shrine patient goes in for an appointment, all of the travel expenses are paid for by the provincial organization and all of the medical treatment that they get is taken care of by the Shrine hospitals which the provincial clubs donate to as well.

"The 50 per cent that we keep and that stays in the community, we get to spend towards local initiatives that we think are important and a priority for kids in the community. So even though the patients already get the free treatment and travel expenses, we can still do a top up of that and it's donated locally by the Shrine Club. It's not only for Shrine patients, we're also donating to projects that we think need some support and we've given towards projects like the Terry Lynd Basketball Court and we donated a bench for the Age Friendly group. This year we also donated a wagon to the school to help them with access for kids with mobility issues and certain projects like that in town."

He said the fundraiser is one of the main sources of funds for the local Shrine club.

"We have three fundraisers that we do," he said. "The first is the Rose Day in the spring/summer, then we have the concert later in the year and then we also have calendars.

"Our biggest event that has been growing over the years is the concert. We've been doing better every year. We started with fewer tables—we started smaller and now it's kind of growing to be a big fundraiser for us."

Full evening of entertainment

This year the Shriners have a full evening of entertainment planned.

Dawn Nagy, CAIB

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Above: People from the community were enjoying the barbecue at the grand opening event.

Right: Nurse and Home Administrator of Cobblestone House Amber Hintz cut the ribbon with resident Francis McCarthy, along with (middle) Mayor Larry Tomlinson, and Ina Van der Merwe, the facility's first resident.



From left are, Amber Hintz of Cobblestone House, resident Frances McCarthy, Mayor Larry Tomlinson, Travis Penner of Bridgeroad Developments, resident Ina Van der Merwe, Jim Yeaman of Care By Design, Blair Arn and Mitch Linklater from Kohr Capital.



Big turnout at Cobblestone grand opening

BY SIERRA D'SOUZA BUTTS
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Around 200 people came out on Sept. 27 to celebrate the Cobblestone House's grand opening in Moosomin.

At the event, there was live entertainment, a free barbecue and cake, along with tours of the facility.

The Cobblestone House will serve as a long-term care and assisted living facility with 42 units.

It is located next to Pipestone Villas on Wright Road in Moosomin.

On the day of the event, Mayor Larry Tomlinson said a few words.

"I would like to thank the investors and everyone who was behind getting this going," said Tomlinson.

"It's a very beautiful building, it is something that was really needed in town. It's going to do nothing but expand everything for the town and, where we would like to go with the town in the future.

"It's been a lot of work, I can't say enough about the investors and all of the work that went into getting this built.

"It's a beautiful building and I'm sure it's going to be used well into the future.

"It's nice that it joins with what we already have here with Pipestone Villas. This will be a real good fit for the town.

"As far as the town is concerned, we thank you very much for everyone coming out and to all of the investors. It will be a great asset to the town, thank you very much."

Construction for the new assisted living facility began in April 2022, and residents started moving in at the beginning of August this year.

Amber Hintz, nurse and home administrator of the Cobblestone House, thanked everyone who helped make the project come to light.

"I would like to start with Jim Yeaman, he's with Care by Design. They are the ones who run the care side of things here, along with his partner Heather," she said.

"We also have Travis Penner from Bridge Road Developments, and Blair Arn and Mitch Linklater from Kohr Capital Investments.

"I also want to thank Chris for providing the live entertainment. We want to say thanks to Flaman's as well, they donated their barbecue to us. Also they are having their grand reopening on Sept. 28.

"Also thanks to my staff, they've worked really hard getting this place up and running, and cleaned up for today. Lots of them are here on their own time, we're very appreciative of that."



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Virden Theatre Productions performing 'The Music Man' November 1-5

This fall, Virden Theatre Productions is tackling a well-known classic, *The Music Man*, and the company is thoroughly enjoying the masterpiece it is, having produced three modern musicals in the past few years—*Mamma Mia*, *Elf*, and *Matilda the Musical*.

The extraordinary cast ranges in age from 10 to 72 and hails from Virden, Minnedosa, Brandon, Souris, Oak Lake, Russell, Pierson, Oak Lake, Elkhorn, Lenore, Kola, and Maryfield, Saskatchewan. The size of the cast is the second largest in the company's history—second only to *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* in 2015.

This cast's talent is deep top to bottom. Homegrown song and dance man Brady Chyzyk, steps into the lead role as the charismatic Harold Hill. In a first for VTP, Brady's real-life songbird wife Taylor plays opposite him as the town's music teacher, Marian Paroo.

Brandon's Josh Hildebrandt, another homegrown talent, is perfect as Harold's sidekick Marcellus.



Joey Simms, who previously dazzled as Buddy the Elf and Rudolph the dance instructor, plays Harold's nemesis, Charlie Cowell. Veteran actor, Elkhorn's Bernice Kliever, plays Mrs. Paroo perfectly, and we are excited to introduce two promising young talents in the role of Winthrop, Lenore's Corbyn Waller and Brandon's Xavier McGorman-Winthrop.

Other principal cast includes Oak Lake's Mike

Thiessen and Wendy Bancescu as bumbling Mayor Shinn and his flamboyant wife Eulalie. Nyah Perkin from Souris and Elkhorn's Stella Canart are their charming daughters Zaneeta and Gracie. Tommy Djilas is played by talented Virden teen Evan Terin, and young, local pianist Emery Strachan is Amaryllis.

Producer/director Michelle Chyzyk excitedly shares that the famous bar-

bershop quartet in this musical will be a highlight for audiences.

"You can't go wrong with four extraordinary actors and choral musicians in these roles—tenor Darrell Corbel, a long-time, passionate barbershopper, tenor Marlin Peters, baritone Todd Plaisier, and well-known Minnedosa bass, Jim Comrie," she says. "The entertaining quartet in this show was definitely one of the reasons we chose *The Music Man*."

Director Dean Munchinsky has spent countless hours designing the innovative set—a challenge in this massive project. He has also been sharing his expertise and brilliance as a trained, working actor, helping performers find tremendous depth in their characters—something not always seen in community

theatre.

Tackling this classic show means that the actors, and also the audiences, will have many memories of past experiences with this magical title. In fact, director Michelle Chyzyk's first foray into musical theatre was playing the role of Amaryllis back when she was in Grade 7 at Carman Collegiate, and leading man Brady was once young Winthrop in Mecca Productions' *Music Man* back in 2006. Many performers from Virden Collegiate's *Music Man* in 1988 also are part of this large cast. It is exciting to think of all the new audiences that will fall in love with "76 Trombones" and the oh, so memorable Pick-a-Little Ladies!

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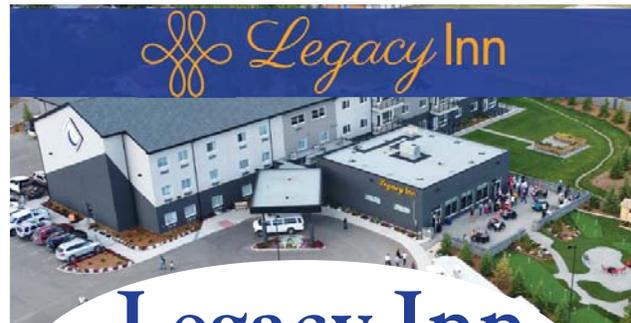
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Wilson Old-Time Harvest

Above and below are photos from the 8th Annual Wilson Old Time Harvest that brought out close to 200 participants and spectators at the Wilson farm near Wawota on the September long weekend. The crew running the harvest used three antique threshing machines, a 1930's JD auger, A 1950 IHC pull-type combine, as well as three self-propelled combines from the 1960s and 1970s. Ten acres of spring wheat were threshed without any issues.



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SIPPA program brings in 16 doctors to rural areas

BY SIERRA D'SOUZA BUTTS
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

After completing the Saskatchewan International Physician Practice Assessment (SIPPA) program in June, 16 new physicians began practicing in rural Saskatchewan this summer.

Out of the 16 physicians, three are working in southeast Saskatchewan; Dr. Pasha Azad in Esterhazy, Dr. Eesan Sasisthar in Moosomin, and Dr. Azadeh Bordbar in Redvers.

"The program has been a great success for the province of Saskatchewan. We welcomed the 16 doctors and their families to our growing province," said Tim McLeod Minister of Mental Health and Addictions, Seniors and Rural and Remote Health.

Since the program launched in 2011, Saskatchewan has been able to attract and retain 283 family doctors across the province.

"They get to choose where they want to go, but we certainly try to make our rural centres attractive for them and it's been a great success so far," McLeod said.

"Over the course of the program, we have trained a little over 500, but 283 remain.

"That's a pretty high rate of success I would say."

With the SIPPA program being unique to the province, McLeod explained the process for how the program works.

"The SIPPA program assesses internationally trained doctors on their medical education and clinical ability, as part of the licensure process to practice medicine in our province," said McLeod.

"These are doctors who trained and were practicing in other jurisdictions around the world.

"Including these 16 new doctors, we now have 283 family physicians currently working in our province as a result of this program.



Above: Tim McLeod, Saskatchewan's Minister of Mental Health and Addictions, Seniors and Rural and Remote Health.

"We certainly think it's a very successful program, and of note, 77 per cent of those 283 family doctors are working in rural communities and not in our major urban centres."

Feedback received on SIPPA program

McLeod was asked if there are any challenges in attracting international doctors through Saskatchewan's SIPPA program.

"I think that's a broader question about the attractiveness about the province in general," he said.

"I certainly think the growing province, and the strong economy is an attractive feature for these doctors and their families.

"Anyone who lives here knows that Saskatchewan is a great place to live in, to work, and to raise a family.

"We certainly do our best to make it known to these doctors that this is a great place to come, and 283 of

them have agreed with us."

McLeod spoke about the feedback he has heard from the communities of where the SIPPA doctors are working now.

"It's been positive feedback. We have a variety of incentive programs to try and draw physicians and nurses of all designations to our rural communities," said McLeod.

"This is one of those, and I think the feedback we are getting from the communities is that they appreciate our efforts to retain and incentivise these positions, so that they can be fully staffed with the physician positions they require."

The SIPPA program falls under the province's Health Human Resources (HHR) Action Plan which focuses on bringing and retaining more healthcare workers in Saskatchewan.

"We have the four-point plan to recruit, to train, to incentivise, and to retain, and that plan is working," said McLeod.

"We're seeing success on all fronts. We've recruited doctors and nurses from other jurisdictions. We're training more, we have more seats available at our post-secondary institutions.

"We've got incentive packages to try and incentivise hard-to-fill positions, particularly in our rural and remote jurisdictions.

"We've retained a lot of medical professionals by converting some part-time

positions into full-time positions, and making those more attractive for them."

McLeod was asked how many more internationally trained doctors are expected to be practicing in Saskatchewan by the end of the year.

"The SIPPA program assess physicians three times per year, and they have a capacity to assess approximately 45 every year," he said.

"We're hopeful that the next hunch would certainly bring in a similar number. I don't have those numbers available to me yet.

"We're very proud of this program. This is an amazing Saskatchewan program that I'm not aware of other jurisdictions doing the same thing.

"There may be, but this program in particular is home-grown, and we're very proud of it."



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Left: Ashley Clark and Andrea Smyth in Wawota's Haunted Hotel Medieval Torture in 2018. **Right:** Zander Porter from Wawota's Haunted Hotel in 2020. Photo by: Veracity Creative

Wawota's 'What Lurks in the Dark' Haunted Hotel

BY SIERRA D'SOUZA BUTTS
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

For the sixth year, Wawota will be hosting their annual Haunted Hotel weekend events for this year's Halloween season. The theme for this year's haunted hotel is What Lurks in the Dark.

There will be three night events on October 20, 21, and 28 from 7 p.m. to midnight for people to buy tickets for, and a Visual Tour of the haunted hotel scheduled for October 29 from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

"This is one of the biggest fundraisers for our community. We're able to bring in outside funding which is huge for a small community and we're able to support three groups in town," said Kayla Porter.

"We try to spread out who the recipients of the proceeds are each year, this year it's going to the daycare, the rink, and the curling rink."

Last year, the committee was able to raise just under \$10,000 from their two Haunted Hotel nights.

"We really feel like our haunted house is different than a lot of the other ones around," said Porter.

"Ours is an interactive experience. The one big thing we think is different than other haunted hotels is we are extremely lucky to have it at the Wawota Hotel. It's actually at the bar in town.

"People come and get to have the party atmosphere while they wait, they don't

have to just wait in line and stand around, they actually get to enjoy whatever entertainment is on that night or the music. It's a really fun crowd, everyone's dressed up and having fun.

"That is a big difference for us, the other thing we think really sets us apart is each year we pick a specific theme, and that theme is carried on through the whole Haunted Hotel. It's almost like a play at the same time, we feel like we're telling a story as people go through it. We stop and talk to them sometimes too."

Although there is not a limit to how many tickets can be sold, Porter said they recommend people buy their tickets in advance, and come early on the night of

the event, as the lines up are usually quite long.

Volunteers help make the event a success

There are about 35 volunteers who help contribute to Wawota's haunted hotel nights.

The three main organizers of the event, Porter, Michelle Klein, and Lynette Coffey, said the big fundraiser could not be possible without all of the support they receive from the community.

Continued on page 18

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From left are, Sara Nichols Assistant Deputy Minister of SaskBuilds, Deputy Minister of SaskBuilds Kyle Toffan, Will Woodward of Scott Builders, Elder Alvin and George Kequahtoway of Sakimay First Nation, Rural and Remote Health Minister Tim McLeod, MLA for Moosomin constituency Steven Bonk, MLA for Melville-Saltcoats Warren Kaeding, Dr. Johann Roodt of SHA, and Mayor Rod Wolfe of Grenfell.

Sod-turning held for Grenfell's new long-term care centre

BY SIERRA D'SOUZA BUTTS
 LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER
 Members from the community came out on Oct. 2 to celebrate the sod-turning of the new Grenfell Long-Term Care facility, which will consist of 33 beds for senior residents in the area.

Prior to the former LTC centre—Grenfell Pioneer Home—closing in 2018 due to the poor conditions of the facility, residents in the community have been raising money for decades to construct a new building.

"The province of Saskatchewan's contribution to this project is \$15 million, and \$10 million of that was already announced in the 2023-24 budget," said Rural and Remote Health Minister Tim McLeod.

"The remainder will be coming in future budget years, and the community and the foundation is fundraising a large portion to go on top of that."

The new home will include two spa tub rooms, a commercial kitchen, common living and dining spaces, administrative areas, a maintenance garage and parking stalls.

"I understand the residents of Grenfell have been waiting patiently for this new facility, and that time has finally come," said McLeod.

Continued on page 19

Steven Bonk, MLA
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Wawota's 'What Lurks in the Dark' Haunted Hotel

Continued from page 16

"One thing we're particularly proud of is how much the youth in Wawota has gotten behind it," said Porter.

"A lot of our kids are actually a part of the haunted house and they're getting to the age where they can actually participate in the scaring now too.

"We love seeing that the younger generation finds it really important too. The kids version (Monster Mash) has now become the opportunity where the young actors and performers in the community get a chance to shine.

"We really like that it's a way for our youth to have an opportunity to show their acting skills and their makeup skills. We've really been trying to nurture that as well.

"I think it shows, the youth in our community is super excited about it. This Thursday we're having a program with the library, we're teaching a special effects and makeup class. That's one thing we really love, how much the youth like it and how much they're getting into it. It's almost like



Jaycee Patterson in Wawota's Haunted Hotel Medieval Torture in 2018.

give back to the community. We really wouldn't be as successful as we are if it wasn't for our community, and surrounding communities, too.

"We have people here who will purchase things from someone in Moosomin, we pick up supplies from Carlyle and Kenossee too. It's really great, yes Wawota is our main supporter, but this whole corner has definitely embraced us and showed us some love, and we love it."

Different nights planned for Haunted Hotel events

Tickets for Wawota's Haunted Hotel can be purchased through the group's Instagram, Facebook, or Tik Tok account: wawotahauntedhotel

In addition to the haunted hotel nights scheduled for October 20, 21, and 28 from 7 p.m. to midnight, a Monster Mash and Visual Tour for kids will be held from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. on October 29. The event will be a less scary performance than the other haunted hotel nights.

"For our adult nights, we do suggest anyone under 14 to be accompanied by an adult," said Porter.

"It is quite scary, and we've been told it's quite scary. We do have a kids version on the Sunday, Oct. 29.

"We've been told by the community, a lot, that the haunted house has so many aspects of it, that when you're going through it once it's so hard to see everything. We put a lot of effort into our props, pretty much everything we have there is homemade.

"A lot of community members have said to us they want to be able to see everything we do up there, so Sunday will be our kids version/visual tour. We have a lot of adults coming through as well, checking out everything we've done.

"The 20, 21, and 28 are the quite scary adult versions. This year, because we have been told for so many years that it is quite scary and we do have a lot of people who sometimes don't finish it, we added the option to wear a glow stick around your neck which will tell the actors to tone it down.

"We want people to know that even though other years it has been too scary, we have the option to tone it down this year and make it enjoyable for everyone.

"If you are wearing a glow stick we just won't interact with you. We'll still scare your friends, but just not you," Porter said laughing.



Above: This year, the community of Wawota is putting on multiple haunted hotel nights on October 20, 21, and 28, in addition to their Monster Mash and Visual Tour of the hotel on Sunday, October 29.

a new generation.

"Also, they seem to really understand the importance of fundraising behind it too, and the community aspect of it, which I think is important, for especially a small town to learn."

Aside from the youth in Wawota being of great help, Porter said people from surrounding areas also make a huge difference.

"Our community is really supportive. They see how big a fundraiser this is and the fact that all of the money goes back into the community," she said.

"We have people who offer to make us suppers for the nights we're getting ready, we have community members that donate us stuff, we had community members going out and handing out posters for us this year.

"Chimo Building Supplies in town and in Carlyle is a huge supporter. They not only give us a discount, but they save us materials that they think we could use, without them I don't think our project would be what it is."

"The community is just fully behind us, the school is supportive of us. This year we got to give some grants to the school, we have a graduation grant we give, and we also gave two Grade 7 to Grade 12 awards this year as well.

"We're just trying to find as many ways as we can to

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Sod-turning for Grenfell's new long-term care centre

Continued from page 17

"I want to offer my sincere thanks to the Grenfell Health Foundation for their generous donations that would further complement the government's commitment to the project. Without your support and contributions, projects like this simply would not be possible."

Years of dedication towards planning for new LTC

At the sod-turning, the Mayor of Grenfell Rod Wolfe informed everyone about the community's efforts for working towards building a new LTC centre.

"It's been a long journey to say the least," Wolfe said. "I remember my late father working tirelessly on the original foundation to build this facility nearly 30 years ago. It's thanks to the past, to the current, and as well as future members and volunteers, that we can make this project a reality today."

"Lots of time and effort has also been focused on this project by past and current councils, but let's not forget the volunteers who spent hours of their time and effort on fundraising and organizing so we can stand here today."

"It is these unselfish efforts that will continue to build small town atmosphere with state of the art services, and facilities, right here in our beloved town of Grenfell."

"Seeing projects like this one being built shows that all levels of government working together to achieve a goal can make it happen."

Wolfe mentioned that the LTC centre will not only benefit the elderly, but will also be appreciated by families and children who live in Grenfell.

"This facility will ensure that our grandparents and parents will have a home



Tim McLeod, Saskatchewan's Rural and Remote Health Minister said a few words at the sod-turning event for Grenfell's new Long-Term Care centre. Next to him is MLA for Moosomin constituency Steven Bonk.

that they can be comfortable and happy in right here in Grenfell, their own home town," said Wolfe.

"As well the positive spin offs this can entail for the town truly cannot be measured, neither economic, financial or mental."

"For example, our children can once again leave school and walk to see their grandparents, no planned trips an hour away just to stay close with your loved ones."

"It's these small benefits that is invaluable to residents of our own town, as well as others near to our area."

"Inclosing on behalf of the Town of Grenfell and District Health Foundation,

we look forward to working very closely with SaskBuilds, SHA, and the ministry to see this project through to completion and operation."

Steven Bonk, MLA for the Moosomin constituency, said the demand for a LTC facility in the community has been there for a while.

"I know the community of Grenfell has been working on this for 30 or 40 years now to replace the old home," said Bonk.

"I believe it was in 2018 the home was closed and since then it's been top priority, not only for the community of Grenfell, but also

for the Ministry of Rural and Remote Health.

"We've done everything we could to push this through the government as quickly as we could. I know there's a lot of things that have to happen with large sums of money like this, as far as due diligence and making sure the site is properly chosen, I just want to thank the health authority for the good work they've done there."

"Also to SaskBuilds, for making sure this was a priority and for pushing through with it quickly. As far as being a priority, this was a top priority for the Government of Saskatchewan and the community of Grenfell."

MLA for Melville-Saltcoats Warren Kaeding said the new facility will help keep people in the community of Grenfell for the long run.

"What you traditionally see, especially in some communities, as health care concerns increase people tend to move and leave their rural communities to get closer to health care," Kaeding said.

"Having a facility like this is going to keep people in the community that much longer, it will keep their support network in the community that much longer, it really stabilizes communities."

Scott Builders began the prep work for the site a few weeks ago, and will begin construction shortly.

Construction work is expected to continue until winter freeze up begins, with major construction activities resuming by Spring 2024.



Left: People from the town and surrounding are came out in support of the sod-turning event.



Right: Mayor of Grenfell Rod Wolfe said people in the community of Grenfell have been working towards a new Long-Term Care facility for decades.



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People from across Saskatchewan came out for a tour of polycropping at the Knutson Ranch, located in Wapella, on Friday, Sept. 29.

Polycropping information session held in Wapella

BY SIERRA D'SOUZA BUTTS

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

On Sept. 29, people came out to attend a tour and information session on polycropping's role in carbon sequestration at the Knutson Ranch in Wapella.

The event was organized by the South of the Divide Conservation Action Program (SODCAP) and Living Lab - Central Prairies.

The day included a farm tour at the Adam Knutson Ranch, followed by a presentation by Dr. Bart Lardner from the University of Saskatchewan, and an overview of producers' experiences using polycropping, at the Moosomin Legion for the remainder of the day.

"It's always good to have educational events like this just to showcase what other people are doing in other parts of the province," said Bridget Andrews, executive director for Saskatchewan Association of Watersheds.

"With regards to cover cropping and

how to improve soil health, as well as increase carbon sequestration, reduce carbon greenhouse gas emissions, and being more efficient on the land.

"As well, just seeing how you can duplicate what other people are doing to make it better on your own farm."

The reason the educational event was held in Wapella was because Adam Knutson and his family are partners in the Living Lab project with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, along with SODCAP.

"Adam's farm is a partner in the program. This will be a five-year project and over the next five years they'll be looking at soil health, nutrients, all of those things," said Andrews.

"It's linking academics and science to producers on the ground who are taking that information and making their farms better."

One of the speakers at the event, Dr. Bart Lardner from the University of Saskatchewan, spoke about what his past and cur-

rent research of polycropping entails.

"It's probably been 30 years now since I've been involved in the cow-calf and forage research," said Lardner.

"In my mind it's all about intercropping and involving the cropping sector and the livestock sector.

"We've been doing a lot of work looking at utilizing extensive and different ways for swath grazing and bale grazing.

"We're also looking at production efficiencies, and different systems for what's best for the producer.

"In the last eight years, my program shifted to the environmental aspect. We're looking at the different interactions between the soil, the plant, the animal, and

now the environment.

"We're measuring with our colleagues, the soil scientists, what's happening below ground. We're looking at it with some microbiologists, in terms of soil.

"We're also looking at the pros of having an animal grazing on an acre of land. The nutrient cycling aspect of what's coming out the back, in terms of new nutrients, as well as what are the gasses that are coming out the front door."

At the event, Trevor and Cindy Green of Moosomin also shared their experiences of the different challenges and opportunities they found when partaking in polycropping.

Daryl Harrison

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Left: Brenda and Dean Redman came from Moose Jaw to operate the steam engine for the threshing machine at the Annual Rocanville Museum Threshing Day held on September 16.



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20	Friday	Presort Sale - Charolais	9:30 a.m.
23	Monday	Cow & Bull Sale	8 a.m.
27	Friday	Presort Sale - Angus	9:30 a.m.

- NOVEMBER 2023 -

3	Friday	Presort Sale	9:30 a.m.
6	Monday	Cow & Bull Sale	8 a.m.
10	Friday	Presort Sale	9:30 a.m.
17	Friday	Presort Sale	9:30 a.m.
20	Monday	Cow & Bull Sale	8 a.m.
24	Friday	Presort Sale	9:30 a.m.

- DECEMBER 2023 -

1	Friday	Presort Sale	9:30 a.m.
4	Monday	Bred Cow/HFR Sale	12 p.m.
5	Tuesday	Regular Sale	9 a.m.
15	Friday	Last Chance Presort Sale	9:30 a.m.
18	Monday	Bred Cow/HFR Sale	12 p.m.
18	Monday	Butcher Cows & Bulls	to follow

VIRDEN

- OCTOBER 2023 -

16	Monday	Cow & Bull Sale	8 a.m.
18	Wednesday	Presort Sale - Charolais	9:30 a.m.
25	Wednesday	Presort Sale - Angus	9:30 a.m.
30	Monday	Cow & Bull Sale	8 a.m.

- NOVEMBER 2023 -

1	Wednesday	Presort Sale - Speckle Park, Shorthorn	9:30 a.m.
8	Wednesday	Presort Sale	9:30 a.m.
13	Monday	Cow & Bull Sale	8 a.m.
15	Wednesday	Presort Sale	9:30 a.m.
22	Wednesday	Regular Sale	9 a.m.
25	Saturday	Season Opener Bred Cow Sale	12 p.m.
27	Monday	Cow & Bull Sale	8 a.m.
29	Wednesday	Presort Sale	9:30 a.m.

- DECEMBER 2023 -

2	Saturday	Bred Cow Extravaganza Sale	12 p.m.
6	Wednesday	Regular Sale	9 a.m.
9	Saturday	Bred Cow Classic	12 p.m.
13	Wednesday	Last Chance Presort Sale	9:30 a.m.
19	Tuesday	Bred Cow/HFR Sale	12 p.m.
20	Wednesday	Butcher Cows & Bulls	9 a.m.



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Plain & Valley

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Covering Southeast Saskatchewan and Southwest Manitoba



Kyle Penner of Harvest of Hope (left) and Rick Block, Saskatchewan Regional Representative of Canadian Foodgrains Bank during last year's harvest.

Local projects help Canadian Foodgrains mission to end world hunger

BY SIERRA D'SOUZA BUTTS
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE
REPORTER

Growing projects in Saskatchewan play a major role in supporting the Canadian Foodgrains Bank mission of alleviating world hunger.

Rick Block, Regional Representative for Saskatchewan of Canadian Foodgrains Bank, said the province alone contributed \$2.7 million last year to the non-profit organization.

"In terms of this past fiscal year, the Foodgrains Bank brought in a total of just over \$21 million in donations," said Block.

"That's by individuals, that's by businesses, and also numerous growing projects and community events in Canada.

"There would be approximately 200 growing projects and community events across Canada.

"In Saskatchewan we have more of the community events, as well, we have somewhere just over 40 of these growing projects."

Funds raised from growing projects and community events are donated to the Canadian Foodgrains Bank. The organiza-

tion then provides food assistance for people in need around the world.

The federal government matches donations to the Foodgrains Bank, allowing the help to go further.

"Of that \$21 million of donations, Saskatchewan raised \$2.7 million of that total, and of that \$2.7 million, about \$1.2 million came from growing projects and a few community events," Block said.

"We're definitely just about that 45 per cent mark, and we reflected that in Saskatchewan.

"It might go down to 40 per cent if you look nation wide, but really that is a significant bulk of our donation income that really comes from the concept of people working together saying, 'hey, we're better off working together to help alleviate hunger.'

"That's really been a blueprint of the Foodgrains Bank since day one, you even see it in the structure throughout the organization. All of these organizations that say 'if we work together, we're able to accomplish a lot more than if we were

each individual agency doing its own thing.' That's then reflected down to the community grassroots level. Harvest of Hope is a great example of that."

Harvest of Hope, largest project in Saskatchewan

One of the growing projects in the province that contribute to Canadians Foodgrains Bank locally, is Harvest of Hope in Moosomin.

Last year, Harvest of Hope brought in revenue of \$130,000 and after input costs, an estimated \$70,000 was donated to the Canadian Foodgrains Bank.

For this year, there are close to 35 growing projects in Saskatchewan.

"There's 33 registered projects, two of them are in limbo, but one of the projects, which is called Grow Hope Saskatchewan has six locations," said Block.

"It's a bit of a network of farm families that offer acres. There are 37 field sites that are part of Foodgrains projects.

"Harvest of Hope in Moosomin really represents all the

pieces of a traditional growing project."

With Harvest of Hope being one of the largest growing projects in the province, Block was asked how it compares to other projects.

"It's typical in the way it's structured, in the way it's organized," he said.

"You see a great cross-section of people that are involved, businesses will step up. For example whenever we are going out there, the Credit Union will say let's provide lunch, Borderland Co-op will provide fuel, companies are saying we'll bring machines, along with individuals who are offering the use of their machines and their time.

"One of the things that's very unique with Harvest of Hope is its size. It is the largest growing project in Saskatchewan.

"There are a few larger across Canada, but only a few, my guess is it would be in the top five. Harvest of Hope is at 288 acres, farming two quarter sections.

"We talked a little bit about the risk in farming, there's even risk in starting up a fundrais-

ing project. Particularly in those one or two first years when land was not being donated, and this group had to raise funds in order to essentially pay the rent on that first year. Obviously with the hopes there would be enough income in that first year to be able to afford rent for next year, and any necessary inputs that maybe weren't being covered.

"At 288 acres, that's a lot of input. Often we see projects that are 80 acres or 100 acres, they can get a lot of their inputs often covered, but at 288 acres, that's going to require a good amount of partnership building and also some financial management.

"I really credit the Moosomin Harvest of Hope for the way they've done that. They have done that very successfully."

Block said growing projects in Saskatchewan are all spread out across the province.

"If I did a formal count, perhaps we would see a little bit of a concentration in the southwest, maybe an hour or so centred around Swift Current," he said.

Continued on page 28

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Kelsey Selby Photo

A threshing demonstration taking place in front of the Rocanville museum. Volunteers pitched sheaves of wheat for a large crowd into the threshing machine at the Annual Rocanville Museum Threshing Day held on September 16..



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Local projects help Canadian Foodgrains mission to end world hunger

Continued from page 25

"Alongside growing projects, there are individual farms and farmers that continue on an annual basis, it might not officially be registered as a growing project, but they're providing grain donations on an annual basis, it almost acts like a growing project."

"There is a real concentration of growing projects around Yorkton, but there is also quite a few individuals who are an hour radius around Yorkton where there's lots of folks who support the Foodgrains Bank."

"The third area I would point out is north of Saskatoon, through the traditional Mennonites towns there is one large project that isn't a growing project, but it's a community event. There's lots of individuals who contribute as well to the Foodgrains Bank, but there's foodgrains supporters all over the province."

"We're in our 40th anniversary year, and there's always new people coming to the table to support our work, and there's people who have been doing it for 40 years."



"Obviously, that pulls a lot of heart-strings and people want to be involved in that."

"A little bit closer and more into the heart of the Foodgrains Bank identify and mission is that we're known as a Christian response to hunger. There is a faith motivation for a large cross-section of farmers as well."

"At its core, part of the Christian faith framework is that everyone's created in God's image and that everyone has the dignity of receiving food for today, a sense of food security for the coming days, and so part of it is a desire to be able to respond both compassionately and generously, when and where, as possible to help those who don't have enough."

"I think connected to that, farmers and people in communities really enjoy that the Canadian Foodgrains Bank is a Christian organization and I think people at the community level enjoy being able to say we're doing this."

"People from a variety of churches and people who are part of any church are simply working together under this mission to help the Foodgrains Bank do its work internationally. There's some motivation in that as well."

Local projects help alleviate world hunger

With each initiative helping to contribute to Foodgrains Bank goal for alleviating world hunger, Block explained how many people the foundation has helped world-wide.

"The total grant money that came from Global Affairs (the Government of Canada) was approximately \$43 million," he said.

"They have a number of grants that match what donations are doing. When you combine the donations of Canadians, government grants, and there's even additional grants that are brought in, it means that on an annual basis last year we programmed about \$82 million of emergency food assistance and long term food security work internationally."

"That \$82 million reached just over a million of people in total this past year."

Block spoke about what he thinks motivates farmers across Canada to volunteer for projects like these.

"This is now my eighth harvest with the Foodgrains Bank. I've gone through a decent number of years and talked with lots of farmers," he said.

"Obviously my sample would be Saskatchewan, but I think it's representative of farmers across the country."

"There's a number of different motivations, some farmers are definitely responding because they see what some of their neighbors and friends are leading in their community. They understand the real importance of getting together and helping those that are less fortunate."

"That would be the motivation of some of the farmers. As it gets closer into the central mission of the Foodgrains Bank, there are many farmers who understand the risks of growing food, they understand the risks of their livelihood being tied to a larger market, so many forces beyond their control, let alone the weather."

"Intuitively, and in their own experience, they get the sense of what happens when these things don't co-operate and the possibilities of not being able to provide for your family."

"In Canada we have lots of risk mitigation tools, like crop insurance and whatnot, usually most farmers say at the end of the day, even if the whole year's a bust we're going to make it, and we'll get through until the next year, but they identify that's not the case for many small holder farmers around the world."



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2023 farmland values: Where are we at mid-year?

BY CORBIN CHAU, DATA ANALYST,
VALUATIONS, FCC

There hasn't been a noticeable shift in the underlying trend of farmland values in the first half of 2023. Even if higher interest rates are slowly eroding buyers' purchasing power, limited availability of farmland for sale is generally still pushing prices higher. The national average growth rate in dryland farmland values for the first six months of 2023 stands at 7.7% (Table 1). The most recent 12-month annual increase is slightly lower than the preceding 12-month growth.

However, there is a high degree of variability across the country. Saskatchewan and Quebec farmland values recorded the highest average 6-month increases in the country, with 11.4% and 10.6%, respectively (Table 1). Ontario and Manitoba's average increases were nearly identical at 6.9% and 6.4%. Alberta recorded a 3.0% average growth, and British Columbia rounds out the available estimates with an even 0.0%. We can't provide average estimates for the Atlantic provinces since fewer sales were available at mid-year; we expect to provide reliable estimates at year-end.



ing costs and pressures on the Canadian and global economies have made farm operations cautious regarding capital expenditures and investment. On the other hand, a limited supply of farmland available for sale and robust

evated land prices coupled with higher interest rates are leading to a slowdown in sales. The South Coast, British Columbia's most expensive region, has been experiencing a small pullback in land values, whereas other regions have recorded steady or slightly increasing land values.

Farmland values in Alberta have increased at an average moderate rate in the first 6 months (3%), resulting in a year-over-year increase of 6.0%. It's important to note that this increase applies to dryland, and the most recent 12-month increase is lower than the previous 12-month increase from January 2022 to December 2022. The availability of farmland for sale remains low in this province.

Saskatchewan leads the country in the average farmland value increases for this first half of the year at 11.4%. Most regions saw increases in the 7-11% range, indicating relatively steady demand province-wide. The North East region stood out with the strongest demand, leading to above-average growth relative to the rest of the province. Low precipitation has led lately to an increased demand in heavy clay soils, where moisture retention has been rewarded with higher prices.

In Manitoba, we are seeing a shift in growth away from the higher-priced land. The Eastman and Central Plains - Pembina Valley regions have the highest average prices and the lowest growth recorded in the last 6 months and the last 12 months.

For Ontario, our internal database of farmland transactions indicates a considerable decline in the number of sales in the Southern region. This area has recorded some of the strongest growth over the last 6 months and the last 12 months. Crop yields were above average this past year, leading to robust gross revenues and strong demand for farmland. The situation thus far in 2023 for both western and southern Ontario is different, with high volumes of rain, which raises questions about the expected yield for this year and the outlook for farmland demand in the second half of the year. There remains a wide range of pricing across the province, with South West, Central West and South East regions leading in price per acre.

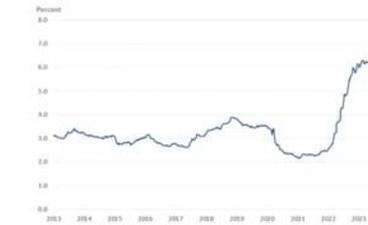
Continued on page 31

Table 1: Average farmland values changes in the first half of 2023 by province

PROVINCE	AVERAGE % CHANGE JAN 2022 - JUNE 2023 (6 MONTHS)	AVERAGE % CHANGE JULY 2022 - JUNE 2023 (10 MONTHS)	AVERAGE % CHANGE JAN 2021 - DEC 2022 (12 MONTHS)
B.C.	0.0	1.6	6.0
Alta.	3.0	6.0	10.0
Sask.	11.4	11.0	14.2
Man.	6.4	12.8	11.2
Ont.	6.9	10.9	19.4
Que.	10.6	11.3	11.0
N.B.	N/A	N/A	11.1
N.S.	N/A	N/A	11.6
P.E.I.	N/A	N/A	10.7
N.L.	N/A	N/A	N/A
Canada	7.7	12.2	12.8

Source: FCC calculations

Figure 1: Effective average business interest rate climbed by 4 percentage points since beginning of 2022



Source: Bank of Canada

farm income have contributed to higher land values in the first 6 months of 2023.

Farm cash receipts growth slows down while borrowing costs have trended higher

A series of policy rate increases by the Bank of Canada lifted borrowing costs much higher than businesses have faced on average in the last ten years (Figure 1). Yet farm cash receipts were resilient amid downward pressure on agriculture commodity prices. FCC Economics' most recent projections call for farm cash receipts to increase 6.6% in 2023 (Figure 2). On the one hand, higher borrow-

Provincial trends

In British Columbia, on average, the province recorded no change in farmland values, with some growth in one region offset by small declines in another. There's evidence that el-

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- Each tender must be accompanied by a \$5,000.00 deposit cheque payable to Meighen Haddad LLP. Deposits accompanying unacceptable bids will be refunded.
- Tenders may be submitted for one or both parcels.
- Highest or any tender not necessarily accepted.

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Black Gold Classic champions

The second annual Black Gold Classic all breeds cattle jackpot was held in Virden on Saturday, September 30. There were over 30 exhibitors and 120 head of cattle in attendance ranging from heifer and bull calves to bred heifers. Following are the champions.



Champion Bred Heifer - RPY Kassidy 144K ET exhibited by Madisyn Robertson and Eden Meadows Farm.



Champion Bull Calf - Red Kenray Ninja 11L exhibited by Kenray Ranch.



Above left: Champion Futurity Heifer - KCH Sugar n' Spice 228K exhibited by KCH Cattle Co.



Above Middle: Champion Heifer Calf - HFL Rose 3050L exhibited by Horner Cattle Company.



Above right: Reserve Champion Bred Heifer - HFL Brett's 2039K exhibited by Horner Cattle Company



Left: Reserve Champion Bull Calf - Big Sky Chevy 4L exhibited by Big Sky Simmentals



Reserve Champion Futurity Heifer - S7R LHCC Onyx 700K exhibited by Section 7 Ranch.



Reserve Champion Heifer Calf - EMF Lucy ET 14L exhibited by Eden Meadows Farm.

Black Gold Classic would like to **THANK** all our sponsors, exhibitors, judges, Lenore 4-H Beef Club and the Virden Agriculture Society for making this show happen! We look forward to seeing everyone next year: Mark your calendars for Saturday September 28th, 2024

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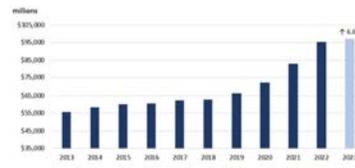
Black Gold Committee: Cody Renz, Naomi Best, Amanda Scott, Everett More, Greg Tough, Ashlee Mitchell and Trevor Nolan

2023 farmland values: Where are we at mid-year?

Continued from page 29

Quebec's farmland sales seem to be undeterred by higher interest rates. The province recorded the second highest growth rate in Canada over the last 6 months, combined with a slightly accelerating pace of increase over the last 12 months compared to the preceding 12-month period. A high degree of variability was observed across regions, with little to no increase in some regions and higher-than-average increases in others. For example, we recorded high growth rates in the regions of Lac St-Jean and Chaudière-Appalaches and smaller increases in the Montérégie and Laurentide-Lanaudière regions (even if the latter two areas remain leaders in terms of price per acre). A limited number of sales in the Atlantic region limits our ability to report an average rate. However, we expect to be able to leverage sales

Figure 2: Farm cash receipts projected to increase 6.6% in 2023



Source: Statistics Canada for obtained amounts and FCC Economics for the forecasted figures

data for New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island in our annual report. The sparse data we have for the first six months of the year nonetheless suggests moderate increases across all three Atlantic provinces aforementioned.

The path forward

High interest rates, elevated farm input costs, and uncertainty regarding future commodity prices characterize the current environment. It's no surprise to have farm operations exercise caution. Yet the balance of demand for farmland relative to the supply available is pushing land prices higher. It would be prudent to expect farmland value appreciation to slow until the uncertainty over the economic environment vanishes.

Labour market challenges to persist amid recent progress

BY ISAAC KWARTENG, SENIOR ECONOMIST, FCC

Labour availability remains a significant economic issue across all regions and industries in Canada. Shortages can slow productivity gains, limit growth opportunities and sustain inflationary pressures. And the imbalances between labour demand and supply are particularly acute in the agri-food supply chain. Here's a look at the recent trends in the labour market and a revisit of our long-term assessment of future labour supply and demand in the agrifood industry published in 2022.

Short-term outlook for labour shortages is improving

The Canadian population growth rate in 2022 was the highest in 65 years (+1,050,110; +2.7%), mostly driven by international immigration. This influx of people has contributed to alleviating labour shortages. A few indicators suggest the Canadian labour market remained on solid footing in the first half of 2023. Job vacancies are the number of vacant or unfilled positions an employer is looking to hire, usually reported at the end of the month. Job vacancies declined to the lowest level observed since the second quarter of 2021, the fourth consecutive drop. Year-over-year and adjusted for seasonality, both job vacancies (-210,690; -21.3%) and job vacancy rate (-1.2 p.p.; -21.3%) declined, while the number of payroll jobs increased (+509,355; +3.1%).

Continued on page 32

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Labour market challenges to persist amid recent progress

Continued from page 31

The recent decline in job openings and the rising jobless rate suggest labour market tightness is diminishing.

Job vacancies and vacancy rates declined year-over-year in the agriculture and food processing sectors. Payroll jobs recorded a decrease (-6,225; -2.7%) in the agriculture industry, while the food processing sector registered an increase of 2.2% (+5,655 jobs).

Projected gap between labour supply and demand continues to narrow

The long-term labour market outlook rests on labour supply and demand projections. Labour supply projections come from a 2019 Statistics Canada study and haven't been updated relative to our 2022 analysis published. Yet, we know that population growth is accelerating, and chose to focus on the high labour supply growth scenario reported by Statistics Canada (Figure 1), which aligns with the recent annual increase in the Canadian labour force.

Labour demand projections were computed as a function of the annual growth in Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The updated long-term projections illustrate a shrinking gap between potential labour supply and demand. It suggests that any labour market tightness will continue yet may not be as significant as projected last year under a strong population growth scenario.

The inverse relationship between the ratio of potential labour supply to potential labour demand and the vacancy rate can be leveraged to evaluate the extent of future labour shortages. As the ratio decreases, labour supply becomes less available relative to labour demand and thus leads to higher job vacancies and vacancy rates. Conversely, an increase in the ratio would suggest an expansion in labour supply relative to demand, leading to fewer vacancies.

Figure 1: Changes in potential labour supply and demand in Canada



The projections suggest that the ratio of potential supply and demand will decline from 2022 to 2031, largely due to the influence of economic growth on labour demand surpassing the influence of the scenario of strong growth in labour supply. Labour challenges are expected to persist as Canadian employers compete for a limited number of

skilled workers.

Table 1: Vacancy rates related to potential labour demand and supply under high population growth scenario

Year	Ratio of potential labour supply and demand ratio	All Sector	Food processing	Agriculture*
2018	1.34	2.4%	3.2%	3.9%
2021	1.34	4.7%	5.4%	4.7%
2026 projections made in September 2023 (September 2022)	1.10 (1.10)	4.8% (3.9%)	5.0% (4.4%)	4.8% (4.8%)
2031 projections made in September 2023 (September 2022)	1.12 (1.12)	5.8% (4.9%)	5.5% (4.9%)	5.0% (4.3%)

* Seasonally adjusted in the fourth quarter due to high seasonality

Sources: Statistics Canada and FCC calculations

Agri-food industry staring at a tight labour market

There's been a steady decline in agricultural labour since the early sixties because of technology. However, a rising global population and rising incomes drive food production growth. Thus, labour demand in the agriculture and food processing sectors is expected to reflect the growing global food production needs.

We project that the average vacancy rate for the entire economy will climb from 4.7% in 2021 to 5.8% in 2031

(Table 1). The trend in the food processing and agriculture sectors is identical but doesn't jump up nearly as much because average vacancy rates were already elevated. The average vacancy rate goes from 5.4% in 2021 to 5.5% in 2031 for food processing and from 4.7% to 5.0% for agriculture.

Our most recent projections point to a tighter labour market in food processing relative to projections made a year ago (numbers between parentheses in Table 1). Conversely, the labour market in agriculture is projected to be less tight as the average vacancy rate in 2026 and 2031 is now forecast at a lower level (4.8% relative to 5.6% for 2026 and 5.0% relative to 6.3% in 2031).

Bottom line

Labour challenges are going to persist. And any improvement suggested by these projections is conditional on high population growth and a sustained pace of automation in the industry.

The labour shortage in Canada requires a multipronged strategy and innovative solutions for a sustainable and prosperous future of the agri-food industry. Sustained and skilled immigration and automation on the farm and within food processing plants are two solutions to boost productivity gains and ease pressures in the labour market. Investing in education and training programs and enhancing working conditions to attract and retain skilled workers are worthwhile avenues to explore.



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Harvest 2023

A farmer south of Fairlight cuts through a field as Harvest 2023 continues. Many farmers say the crop came in better than expected after a challenging year.

Farmers wrap up harvest for the year

BY SIERRA D'SOUZA BUTTS
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

With fall here, most farmers across Southeast Saskatchewan have finished harvest for the year.

"Harvest is going pretty good. The days are quite a bit shorter now, it's usually a bit wet and dew in the morning" said Murray Bruce who farms near Moosomin near the end of September.

"Of course we've lost a bit of our daylight hours. There's not quite long of days as we used to have, it's taken a little bit longer.

"We have canola yield, as long as we can keep all of the iron running things are going pretty good."

Bruce said he planned to finish harvest in the next few weeks, and is pleased with how his canola and wheat

have done.

"We're likely two-thirds done, it all depends on mother nature," Bruce said laughing.

"The crops are looking surprisingly well with the little rain we had in July. We had a good reserve of moisture last fall so the crops must have rooted deep and did surprisingly well.

Continued on page 36

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A first look at the 2024 crop input market

BY LEIGH ANDERSON
FCC SENIOR ECONOMIST

As the 2023 crop harvest is nearing the halfway point across Canada, attention has already turned to next year. This is FCC's preliminary estimate for the 2024 crop input market.

Fertilizer market outlook

Fertilizer prices reached record highs in 2022 as the world faced supply issues following Russia's war against Ukraine. This resulted in Europe curtailing production due to high natural gas prices. However, the global marketplace was resilient in increasing fertilizer supplies, and high prices resulted in demand contraction in many of the world's poorest agriculture regions. As a result, fertilizer prices have continued to soften over the past year (Figure 1).

European natural gas prices will con-

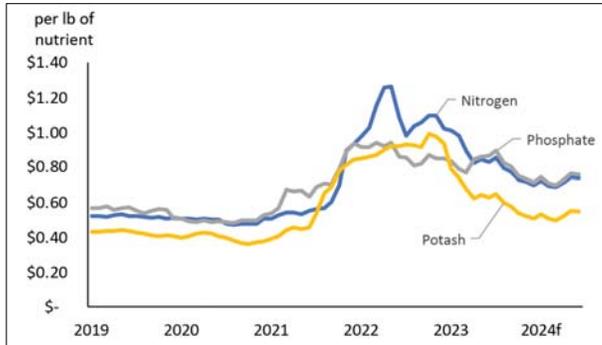


Figure 1: Canadian fertilizer price trend and forecast

tinue to be on the radar for 2024, but there seems to be less uncertainty regarding global fertilizer nitrogen capacity. For one, China has re-entered the urea export market, and global potash prices remain soft.

Our preliminary assessment indicates that fertilizer prices are expected to remain under pressure into early 2024 but recover as seeding in North America approaches. Given current drought conditions in Western Canada and the U.S. mid-west, volume in the fall application period is expected to be weak.

The drought in western Canada and the excessive moisture levels in eastern Canada will impact fertilizer demand in 2024. Farm input retailers have an opportunity to continue growing their soil sampling business (e.g. 4R's) as they work with their customers to determine the optimal fertilizer application levels and any fertilizer residuals left in the soil from the drought.

Fuel

Slowing global economic growth is expected to result in diesel prices trending lower in 2024. Our preliminary estimate indicates that farm diesel prices will be 2.8% lower in 2024. However, continued global uncertainty, including Russia's war against Ukraine, OPEC+ supply cuts, and relatively low levels of U.S. distillate (e.g. diesel), could keep prices elevated.

Continued on page 36

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Farmers wrap up harvest for the year

Continued from page 33

"We're going to need some recharge this fall, or early next spring, some rain to get the reserve moisture back up again. The ground is pretty tapped out right now, it will need a little recharging between now and seeding time next year."

Bruce said the biggest challenge he faced during this year's season were the unexpected rainfalls.

"As soon as we pulled the combines out of the shed we started getting those little showers of rain so that stops us, usually, for a couple of days," he said.

"Every time it rains, it does downgrade the wheat a little bit, and takes a bit of weight away from the seed. That would likely be the biggest challenge."

"Farming is very much mother nature oriented, so if she's good to us we usually have a good year. Our business is very weather dependent."

Farmer in Esterhazy said harvest went well

Harvest was expected to be finished by early October, said Kevin Hruska, who farms in the Esterhazy, Gerald, Lagenburg, and Bredenburg areas.

"We're over the half way mark, we're well into our canola. There's been several rain delays, but we got our wheat done in pretty good time," said Hruska at the end of September.

"The canola, we're rushing it. Canola is delayed a bit this year with the later rains and little showers, it's not too detrimental. We needed to by sometime anyways."

"We need seven working days of harvest and then

we'll be done."

With the rainfalls at harvest, Hruska said the rain does not have the same impact on canola than it does on wheat.

"Moisture and drizzle on canola doesn't get damaged as much as grain does," he said.

"Canola is an oilseed, it doesn't deteriorate in drizzle or rainy events as much as cereal grain does. The pressure is sort of off because a few rains doesn't deteriorate your quality."

Given the dry weather conditions over the summer, Hruska said the crops are looking better than expected.

"I would say the yields are closer to average than a good, poor crop. I would say I'm speaking for everyone that the yields are slightly higher than expected with the amount of rain we got," he said.

"They're a little better than I thought, you need an excellent crop to make good money or a bumper crop. An average crop hardly makes you much money now with the expenses, but that's farming. That's been all my life like that."

"So far it's been a relatively smooth harvest, weather is the biggest challenge for harvest, I think, for most farmers, and this year, so far, the weather hasn't been too hard for us."

Crops in good shape in the RM of Martin

A farmer in the RM of Martin, Steven Donald, said he was surprised with the condition his crops were in, based on the lack of rain in southeast Saskatchewan this sum-

mer. "As far as combining, we're pleasantly surprised

for the lack of moisture for what we have now," he said. "For me, the biggest challenge all boiled down to the weather, but at the same time this year was stressful in a way, but it wasn't as stressful as last year, simply because we weren't getting the storms."

"The storm season is stressful and when we missed all of those, so it takes the stress off, in my opinion."

"Even worrying about if we should be spraying fungicide or not, it was one of those things that it was so dry, whether you did or didn't, I don't know if it made a difference."

"It's always weather related on our end of things that would be the most challenging."

Compared to last year's harvest season, Donald said his farmland received too much moisture last summer, whereas this year, it was the complete opposite.

"Last year we were unfortunate on our end of things because we just got hammered with storms," said Donald.

"This year we didn't get any of that, and we were lucky enough to get just a few rains at the right time. There was no real bad weather instances we had to worry about, no hail or the stuff we can't control, but it is nice to have some rain."

"Harvest this year has been pretty uneventful. The weather did keep us from going when we wanted to go, but as far as getting the crop off in condition in deep condition we're very happy this year."

"We'll be getting some spraying done now, we're ready to get on with our fall jobs. All that fun stuff before the bails role and the cows come home from the pasture."

A first look at the 2024 crop input market

Continued from page 35

Chemical and seed

Continued recovery in global production of agrochemicals and softer demand has led to increased global supplies. Overall, global prices have moderated for both glyphosate and glufosinate. The Canadian market will largely depend on domestic supplies and demand.

The commercial seed market uncertainty remains concerning the impact of the 2023 drought on seed for the 2024 growing season, including production costs. Particularly for canola seed, it will largely depend on the ability for growing seed supplies in South America during the off-season this winter.

We anticipate that the Canadian crop input market will grow modestly in 2024, and several factors might impact pricing and sales in 2024.

Issues to monitor

1. El Nino and drought monitor: El Nino is expected to continue into early 2024 and bring warmer temperatures.

In anticipation of another year of dry and hot weather, Canadian producers may look to early maturing varieties if moisture issues persist for the 2024 growing season. Crop-input retailers promoting early maturing varieties may see an increased benefit from customers.

2. Farm revenue trends: Canadian crop receipts for the first half of 2023 were up 19.8%, driven by strong sales of canola and wheat. The drought is expected to reduce Canadian grain, oilseed and pulse production by 13%, which could weigh on year-end crop receipts for 2023 and into the first half of 2024, particularly in regions that experienced exceptional drought. Strong farm cash flow remains key to crop input sales. Pre-purchase trends for the remainder of 2023 may provide an early indication of what the sector can expect for 2024.

3. Economic slowdown and interest rates: Interest rates may have peaked already, as noted by the Bank of Canada's decision last week to hold their policy rate constant. We expect interest rates to decrease by the second half of 2024 as the global and Canadian economies weaken. Interest rate spreads between Canada and the U.S. will be

important to monitor as it impacts the value of the Canadian dollar. See the Economic and Financial Market Update for continued monitoring of macro-economic issues.

Bottom line

Preliminary estimates indicate that the 2023 drought in North America will negatively impact the crop input market in 2024. The biggest wild card for farm input providers is the demand for fall fertilizer application and pre-purchase business for the upcoming growing season. Expectations that El Nino will last longer into 2024 will continue to drive business decisions on the farm, including soil testing, spray decisions and what varieties to plant.



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Upcycling canola to increase cattle health

BY BROOKE KLEIBOER
Saskatchewan summer views wouldn't be complete without sunny yellow fields, but naturally, some canola produced can't be used for human consumption.

Instead of having discarded canola go to waste, University of Saskatchewan (USask) graduate student Erika Cornand is leading an investigation into if these leftovers can be used as a diet supplement for pregnant cows to improve their health and the health of their calves.

When packaged into a pellet form, canola seeds can be used as a fat supplement easily provided to cows in their diets. Cornand is determining if providing this canola seed-based pellet can improve the body condition and reproduction rates of cattle, and at what amounts this supplement is effective.

Cornand, a master's student in Animal and Poultry Science in the College of Agriculture and Bioreources, and her researcher supervisor Dr. Bart Lardner (PhD) are using the innovative research facilities located at the USask Livestock and Forage Excellence Centre (LFCE) in Clavet, Sask. The pastures and feeding facilities available at the LFCE have allowed the research team to monitor 72 cows during the past two years during their pregnancies.

Three groups of cattle were randomly chosen to receive differing amounts of the canola supplement at the same stage in their pregnancies. One group received no extra fat supplement,

while the other two groups received 150 and 300 grams of fat per day, respectively. Body weight of the cows and the quality and volume of milk produced after calving was recorded throughout the study to track the effects of the additional fat supplement.

"Cattle can typically be fed three to eight per cent fat in their total diet before any negative effects are commonly reported," said Cornand. "We're looking to determine if positive effects on cow and calf performance seen in previous research can be replicated here, and to determine if there is a specific level where the benefits [of a supplement] are maximized."

The cattle received the trial canola-based supplement for 150 days before being transitioned back to a regular diet.

"Our preliminary results suggest that providing the canola seed-based pellet during the second and third trimesters of pregnancy improved their body condition scores and the pregnancy rate of the cows," said Cornand.

USask graduate student Erika Cornand is helping to develop healthier cattle in Saskatchewan by studying the effects of a canola-based supplement on the health of cows and their calves.

She notes that the preliminary results of the study are good news for both beef producers with cattle to raise and grain farmers who may have canola to discard.

"Rather than off-grade



USask graduate student Erika Cornand is helping to develop healthier cattle in Saskatchewan by studying the effects of a canola-based supplement on the health of cows and their calves.



canola being sold at discounted rates, there is the possibility for grain producers to sell their product to cattle producers," said Cornand. "There are potential benefits for the cow and her offspring which may carry over into economic profitability."

The study is also planning to examine how the additional fat in the mother's diet may cause genetic differences in her offspring.

"We are wrapping up the second year of data collection for the cow portion of this study," said Cornand, noting that the project will now move into a phase where calves are weaned from their mothers and raised in feedlots at the

LFCE according to industry guidelines. "We've collected additional data from all calves born [during the study period] that will be analyzed for genetic differences due to prenatal fat supplementation."

Cornand is on track to finish her master's degree by December 2023, but the study will continue on with the calf portion of the trial and a genetic analysis to follow in the next few years. So far, Cornand has been invited to present her preliminary research results at the American Society of Animal Science Conference and the Canadian Beef Industry Conference, with final results to be complete in 2026.

With previous experi-

ence working as a dairy technician and during her undergraduate studies at the University of Alberta, Cornand hopes her work helps beef producers leverage the findings of research that is ongoing to make their herds healthier.

"I want to be able to make a difference to the producer—whether in the cow-calf, dairy, or feedlot sector—so they can realize the benefits of various nutritional investigations being carried out here at the University of Saskatchewan," said Cornand. "Part

of my training in this program is preparing me to deal with challenges that producers face and working together to investigate the causes and address them by coming up with practical solutions."

The study has received funding support from the Saskatchewan Canola Development Commission, the Beef Cattle Research Council, Alberta Beef Producers, the Saskatchewan Cattlemen's Association, and the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada.

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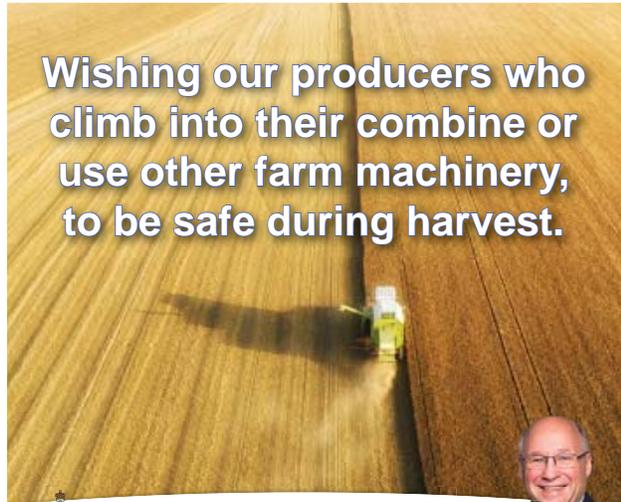
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Sask Pulse Growers invests in genomics research focused on root rot resistance and stress tolerance

On September 7, Saskatchewan Pulse Growers (SPG) announced funding for two pulse-related genomic research projects, co-funded through Genome Canada's Climate-Smart Agriculture and Food Systems initiative (CSAFS). SPG's over \$1.4 million investment will be leveraged for a total pulse research and development investment of over \$12.8 million. These research projects are each four years in duration and aim to develop information and tools for breeding better combinations of wheat and lentil varieties in cropping systems and to enhance root rot resistance and drought tolerance in peas.

They include:

- **ACTIVATING** genomics to accelerate climate-smart crop delivery, Dr. Kirstin Bett and Dr. Curtis Pozniak, University of Saskatchewan – \$6 million
- **PEACE** (Pea Climate-Efficient): Developing climate-resilient, low carbon footprint field pea as a preferred rotation crop through the inter-disciplinary integration of genomic technologies, Dr. Marcus Samuel, University of Calgary, and Dr. Sateesh Kagale, National Research Council, Saskatoon – \$6 million

"This research works towards developing tools for lentil breeding as part of Saskatchewan-based rotations and enhancing the development of root rot resistance and stress tolerance in peas utilizing genomics technology. SPG is happy to support these research initiatives, as they closely align with our research and development strategy," says Trent Richards, Saskatchewan Pulse Growers Board Chair.

These projects will reduce the carbon footprint of Canada's food production systems by building their resiliency, environmental sustainability, and economic growth potential.

Other funders and supporters of these projects include Genome Canada, Genome Alberta, Genome

Prairie, Alberta Pulse Growers, Manitoba Pulse & Soybean Growers, Saskatchewan's Agriculture Development Fund, Saskatchewan Wheat Development Commission, Western Grains Research Foundation, and Results Driven Agriculture Research (Alberta).

The Agriculture Development Fund is supported through the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partner-

ship, a five-year, \$3.5 billion investment by Canada's federal, provincial, and territorial governments that supports Canada's agri-food and agri-products sectors. This includes \$1 billion in federal programs and activities and a \$2.5 billion commitment that is cost-shared 60% federally and 40% provincially/territorially for programs that are designed and delivered by provinces and territories.



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