

Wagyu beef on its way to Spiritwood

Continued from 1

Both of the brothers expected to see their Wagyu crosses finish a bit lighter than the commercial crosses that they typically make, as the breed isn't of large size itself. Additionally, fat is a more energy intensive tissue to produce than lean and fatter animals usually have slower growth rate.

Jason and Kendall were excited to see how the animals perform through the growing and finishing period but were most looking

forward to seeing the final product, the steaks.

Their Wagyu crossbreds will be finished at home with Kendall's purebred bulls. Along with hay and silage, Kendall feeds the bulls a high protein corn-soy-canola pellet. He says that while the pellets are designed to promote lean growth, animals they have finished on them in the past have had nicely marbled steaks.

Usually, the Gabourys would finish one animal for their own use each year. In recent

years, with their cattle numbers being up, they have been able to market a few animals to some locals and have them butchered at a local abattoir.

If their trial goes well and they enjoy the product themselves, they intend to market the animals locally. "If I don't like the finished product, I'm never going to do it again," said Jason. "If we pursue it more, it will be very gradual."

Both Kendall and Jason talked a bit about

the lack of a market for the product in Saskatchewan. It isn't something that is well known in the province. "You would have to develop relationships before going in for it," said Jason.

A few others in the province have dabbled with Wagyu, the most notable being the 'Snow Beef' produced in Saskatoon. It is a cross between a Holstein and a Wagyu. Despite that, no one is trying to make a serious go of it yet, according to Kendall.

With calves due in February and an estimated birth to finish period of 16 months, it will be 2023 before Kendall and Jason get a look at their final product. Until then, stay tuned.

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Finding the fertilizer 'sweet spot'

Farmers walk a fine line when it comes to adding phosphorus fertilizer to their fields. If they don't use enough, they risk lower yields. If they add too much, the excess can be lost to runoff and lead to potentially toxic algae blooms in nearby ponds and lakes. On top of that, the phosphate rock mined to make most phosphorus fertilizers is a limited resource. In addition,

fertilizing for other elements, such as nitrogen, can change soil chemistry, which in turn changes the way that phosphorus fertilizers work in soils.

Researchers recently moved science one step closer to finding the "sweet spot" for phosphorus fertilizer use. Using the Canadian Light Source at the University of Saskatchewan (USask), the team used light millions

of times brighter than the sun to gather highly detailed information about how fertilizing with nitrogen and phosphorus change the chemistry of soils and the availability of phosphorus for crops.

The group examined soil from long-term plots at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Swift Current Research and Development Centre near Swift Current, Saskatchewan. They studied soil from plots that were established in 1967, with a fall-wheat-wheat rotation, and which had received a fixed amount of phosphorus since 1967, with or without nitrogen fertilizer. They also looked at sub-plots where phosphorus fertilization was stopped in 1995 but with no change in nitrogen fertilization (with or without nitrogen fertilizer). Their study, published recently in *Geoderma*, was part of a PhD thesis project by researcher Shuo Chen from China Agricultural University in Beijing.

The team found that long-term fertilization practices—in particular, the use of nitrogen fertilizer—have changed the soil chemistry in these plots, which has in turn

changed the chemical forms of phosphorus and the ways phosphorus cycles within the soil. In particular, adding nitrogen fertilizer reduced the soil pH (making the soils more acidic). This binds the added phosphorus fertilizer more tightly, making it less available to crops.

"Soil pH and organic matter—which contribute to good soil health in general—had the largest influence on the forms of phosphorus in soil and the processes these phosphorus forms undergo within soil," said Dr. Barbara Cade-Menun, a researcher with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and collaborator on this study. "For producers, the key to optimal cycling of phosphorus is ensuring their soils have sufficient organic matter and a neutral pH."

To identify the chemical forms of phosphorus present in soil at a molecular level, the team used the Saskatchewan Structural Sciences Centre (SSSC) at USask and the SXRMB beamline at the CLS. Cade-Menun said the high-tech equipment was essential to the team's work.

"The SSSC let us look at



Soil samples are taken, as part of a research project into the impact of fertilizer on soil chemistry.

phosphorus that is bound to carbon," said Cade-Menun. "The CLS allowed us to look at the inorganic side and answer questions like 'Is the phosphorus bound to calcium, iron or aluminum?' and 'How are these forms shifting with different fertilizers?'"

"These advanced tools allow us to know precisely what is going on in the soil," she added.

The group's results point to the need to dig deeper to fully understand the specific role that pH and organic matter play in how phosphorus cycles in soil. This includes studying other crop rotations with different fertilizer rates, such as lentil-wheat rotations, as well as other

plots with long-term nitrogen and phosphorus fertilizer experiments in other provinces, including Manitoba and Quebec.

Everyone benefits when producers get maximum crop yields while using the least amount of fertilizer and keeping soils healthy. "I don't think anybody would argue with wanting to grow crops that are healthy and to optimize our production because the consumer benefits. But we want to do that in the most cost-efficient and environmentally sustainable way," said Cade-Menun. "And that means balancing what the crop needs with making sure it has just enough, but not too much, fertilizer."



Researcher Shuo Chen performs soil extraction.

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Hoback hopeful for change in Ottawa

In the midst of a mid-pandemic snap federal election, Randy Hoback, the Conservative incumbent for the Prince Albert riding, says he's noticed a dominant theme emerge from his talks with the constituents he's met with.

"We can't afford another four years of Justin Trudeau," he said. "Trudeau must go."

Constituents, Hoback says, are concerned about how Trudeau is "wrecking the country, dividing us, and playing one area against another." They're also asking questions about how the Liberal's promised spending will be paid for, and what its government largesse will mean for inflation rates.

Hoback says the evidence to support these claims is



in the changes that have occurred at the federal level since 2015. When Prime Minister Trudeau's government took office in 2015, the Bloq Québécois claimed just 10 seats and the idea of western separatism wasn't even on the table.

That, and so much more, has changed, says Hoback.

"In six years of Trudeau government, we've got the re-emergence of the Bloq Parti in Quebec, a separatist party in western Canada, large unemployment in the oil and gas sector, and foreign investment drying up," he said. "He's just driven away so much and done so much harm in a such a short period of time."

Having served as the MP for Prince Albert since 2008, Hoback says he's still taking nothing for granted in the last few days of this campaign.

He also says he still finds joy in the little things, whether it's helping an elderly constituent claim their old age security, or working on the trade file in Ottawa.

While the little things may be the most rewarding, Ho-

back feels he's tallied a list of large accomplishments that speak to his record as the MP for Prince Albert.

Having served on and chaired the trade committee, and acted as shadow critic for international trade, Hoback was part of a team that worked on the Canada-US trade deal negotiations, alongside the Liberals and the NDP, to negotiate the best deal for Canadian interests.

Hoback says he's also proud of the legislation that ended the Canadian Wheat Board monopoly and benefited western wheat farmers, and of the work he and colleagues did to help children from earthquake-stricken Haiti make it to Canada after their adoptions were put on hold.

"I see them at passport clinics now, and they're getting older," he said. "That's pretty rewarding."

With stress and worries running high in his constituency, Hoback feels a Conservative government under party leader Erin O'Toole offers the best alternative. In particular, Hoback cites the party's pledge to rein in spending, create 1 million jobs, introduce federal ethics laws that actually have teeth, and tackle the riding's mental health and addictions crises — problems, he says, that have only deepened as a result of the pandemic.

"Let's get our jobs back, let's get our economy going, let's get our pipelines and oil and gas going, because we have a lot of people in this

riding who work in that sector," Hoback said.

"As that sector starts to get back on its feet, you'll see the domino effect. All of a sudden, they're hiring more plumbers and you see more houses being built."

Pointing to the recent announcement of a new OSB mill in Prince Albert and the re-opening of the pulp mill, Hoback says this what he intends to fight for, if he's elected to return to Ottawa and represent the riding.

He also promises to continue pushing for more ethical governance.

"Getting good governance that is responsible and respected, and respects taxpayer dollars... that's always important and always something to keep fighting for."

Hjertaas promises people-first approach

In her second go at becoming the MP for Prince Albert, Liberal Party candidate Estelle Hjertaas says she's learned a lot since she placed third in the 2019 election.

Acknowledging that many constituents may have seen her as a stereotypical "latte drinking leftist," and that she didn't do enough to dispel these misconceptions in her first campaign, Hjertaas says she's placed more emphasis on who she is.

"I'm from Saskatchewan. I was born and raised here in Saskatchewan, and I've been in Prince Albert for seven-and-a-half years now," she said. "My father's family is a farming family, and I hunt and fish recreationally. I'm



not the stereotype some people have in mind."

Her background aside, Hjertaas has worked as a legal aid lawyer for the past eight years and has spent her spare time being heavily involved in the community, founding three community organizations, serving on the

boards of eight other organizations, and volunteering in other capacities.

With a career that involves fighting for people every day, and what she calls a duty to give back as much as she can, Hjertaas feels she'd do a great job representing the riding in Ottawa and helping constituents with their daily concerns.

"I think I've shown through the way I'm living my life, that my commitment to this community and various issues in the community is very significant. It's helped me understand the different challenges we face, and the resources and riches we have.

Having racked up the campaign miles already, Hjer-

taas says the top issue she's heard about is the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the rising tide of the fourth wave. She feels that the Liberal party's platform is best suited to address constituents' concerns because it takes a people first approach.

Though public health mandates remain the jurisdiction of the provinces, Hjertaas says a Liberal government will support provinces by footing the bill for proof of vaccination documents. It can also help keep people and businesses afloat with programs like the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) and the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS).

Though she concedes that not everything went perfectly, she feels the Liberals' approach was appropriate.

"We're still in the pandemic, so we need to continue to support people until we're through this. Obviously, that has a price tag, but the price tag of not doing that would be much higher," she said.

In addition to being the party with the best plan to confront COVID, Hjertaas also feels the party's plan offers the best recovery because it's focused on rebuilding Canada and doing things differently.

A key pillar of this is confronting issues that were highlighted during the pandemic, such as the vulnerabilities in long-term care, the gaps in childcare availability (a concern she shares as a mother to a six-month-old who has been on a waitlist

since before giving birth), and addressing climate change.

After a summer of wildfires and prolonged drought, Hjertaas says constituents are finally recognizing that climate change is happening here and affecting their lives.

Here, too, Hjertaas feels voters may have misconceptions about the Liberal Party's plan, and says the focus is on putting people and communities first.

"People here sometimes think we're going to shut-down all the industries and that's it. But that's not at all it," she said.

"It's not just climate change. It's making sure that people are supported to re-train or transition to different areas... keeping communities healthy and people employed, and moving into something that's ultimately better for everyone."

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4R fertilizer plan boosts bottom line

**By Jenifer Heyden, M.Sc., PAg,
Livestock & Feed Extension
Specialist, North Battleford**

Best management practices for nutrient/fertilizer application are based on 4R principles. These principles refer to using the right source, right rate, right time and right placement of fertilizer. Crop response to nitrogen fertilizer and the 4R principles have been widely researched for various crops. Like annual crops, perennial forages in hay production require fertilizer to replace nutrients including nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium and sulphur, which have been depleted over time during haying practices. With increasing land prices, forage producers need to maximize production on hay stands. 4R fertilizer best management practices are one option.

Fertilizing perennial forage stands has become more popular in recent years. However, producers may be reluctant to fertilize as nitrogen losses can be significant when using traditional fertilizer sources. In the cropping sector, the use of nitrogen loss inhibitors has become a common practice. Nitrogen loss inhibitors improve the efficiency of

nitrogen and minimize losses compared to the use of a bare urea blend. The uptake of these nitrogen loss inhibitor products has been limited in the perennial forage sector. There are several products on the market. For example, Agrotain is a urease inhibitor that is applied to urea to slow the volatilization of ammonia before stabilizing in the soil as ammonium. Products such as NEON Surface Superu and Anvol have the same modes of action but are a combination product with both a urease inhibitor as well as a denitrification inhibitor which slows the conversion of ammonium to nitrate, in addition to slowing the volatilization of ammonia. These products are a great fit in forage fertilizer blends since the fertilizer is typically applied by broadcast spreading. In addition, nitrogen loss inhibitors produce fewer greenhouse gases than traditional bare urea, making them more environmentally friendly.

An Agricultural Demonstration of Practices and Technologies (ADOPT) project was carried out in 2020 in three locations across Saskatchewan; Plunkett, Outlook, and Parkbeg. The goal was to demonstrate and compare the benefits of fertilizing with nitrogen loss inhibitors as part of a complete fertility program for older mixed hay stands. The project was established on sites that were predominantly grass, used for hay production. Soil testing was done in the spring to determine the proper blend and application rates to achieve



Preparing to spread fertilizer at the ADOPT 4R Fertilizing Forages co-operator site near Spiritwood, Sask., May 28, 2021.

Parkbeg site did not receive a substantial amount of rain at once. Although the cumulative rainfall was similar across sites, the Parkbeg site only received small drizzles rather than a soaking rain. Feed quality showed little to no change between the various treatments at all locations. The cost of fertilizer ranged from \$54.12/ac to \$84.56/ac depending on the site location and the treatment. The economics, though different for each site, showed the same trend; that applying the nitrogen stabilizing products had a great enough yield

bump to justify the cost of treating the urea.

At the end of the day, forage production must be sufficient to justify the value of the land and the goals of the operation. While the cost of fertilizer can vary greatly year to year and rain is required, the increased yield of perennial forage stands may make it worthwhile. Given the positive response of this demonstration, a second project is underway in new locations for 2021, including Aneroid, Moose Jaw and Spiritwood.

If it doesn't make economic sense to fertilize an existing perennial forage stand, it may be more beneficial to take that stand out of production and re-establish it instead. Take all factors into consideration when evaluating your land base. For more information about fertilizing perennial forages, contact your local regional office or call the Agriculture Knowledge Centre at 1-866-457-2377.

a yield goal of two tonnes of forage per acre. Fertilizer was broadcast using a spin spreader in strips to a plot size of approximately 10 acres. Each site had four treatment applications – untreated check (no fertilizer), bare urea blend fertilizer, urea blend fertilizer treated with a urease inhibitor product and urea blend fertilizer treated with a combination urease and denitrification inhibitor product.

Forage yield results in 2020 showed that regardless of treatment, the yield increased by applying fertilizer and increased even more when the nitrogen treatment products were used. The Plunkett and Outlook sites both showed a very high response to the fertilizer (61 to 136 per cent yield increase depending on treatment), whereas the Parkbeg site showed a very small response (nine to 27 per cent yield increase depending on treatment). This is likely because the

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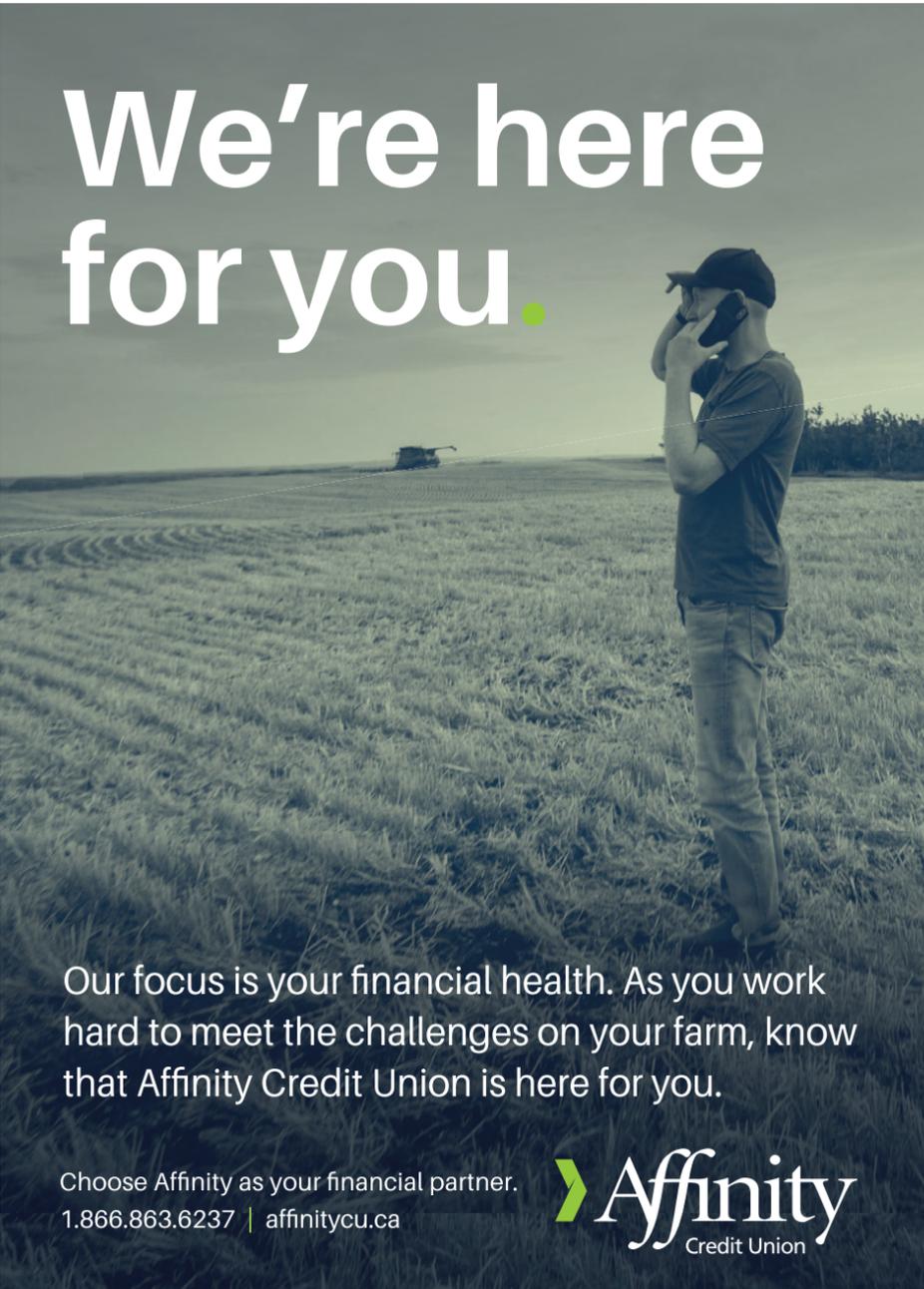
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Managing poisonous pasture plants

**By Luke Jorgensen, AAg,
Range Management
Extension Specialist,
Humboldt**

There are many species of poisonous plants that grow in Saskatchewan. Sometimes, these plants can be a risk to your livestock. Knowing the risks and managing accordingly is important to make sure your livestock stay healthy.

Poisonous plants should be considered when coming up with a grazing plan. You are much more likely to come across poisonous plants in native pastures, but they can still be an issue near wetlands and on saline soils in tame fields. Some of the more common poisonous plants you might find in Saskatchewan include

water hemlock, seaside arrowgrass, death camas, locoweed and milkvetch. Shrubs like Saskatoon and chokecherry can also poison livestock that are forced to graze them. It can be difficult to keep track of all the potentially poisonous plants in your pastures, but there is a list of the plants to look out for on page 57 of Managing Saskatchewan Rangelands. Identifying poisonous plants is an important skill that will help you manage the risk to your grazing livestock.

While toxic plants are quite common, livestock poisonings are rare. This is because livestock tend to avoid eating poisonous plants when they have other options available. The best way to reduce the risk to

your livestock is to make sure there is plenty of good forage available in your pastures. This is a smart practice for many other reasons, but it's especially important if you know there are toxic plants present.

Grazing time is another thing to consider when managing for toxic plants. Seaside arrowgrass, for example, grows faster in the spring compared to the species around it, so waiting to graze until later in the season can reduce the risk. Livestock are also more likely to eat poisonous plants when moved on to a fresh pasture, especially if they are hungry. Ensure your livestock are well-fed before moving them to a pasture with toxic plants to reduce the risk of poisoning.

One last consideration is your mineral program. Some toxic plants accumulate salts, which can make them more appealing to livestock who are missing something in their diet. Therefore, a good mineral program can help prevent your animals from eating things they shouldn't.

The symptoms of poisoning can present as anything from reduced animal performance to convulsions and mortality. You should consult your veterinarian if you lose any animals or suspect your livestock have been poisoned. Stock Poisoning Plants of Western Canada is an excellent resource to help identify toxic plants in your pasture, as well as the signs of poisoning and the grazing

conditions that make issues with toxic plants more likely.

Poisonous pasture plants are something to be aware of when making management decisions, but, if managed right, they usually don't cause any problems. For help identifying and managing for toxic plants in your pastures, call the Agriculture Knowledge Centre at 1-866-457-8377.



Water hemlock.

A picture is worth a thousand words

**By Travis Peardon, PAg,
Livestock and Feed Extension
Specialist, Outlook**

For producers using remote watering systems, monitoring is a constant chore, especially on hot days. When remote systems work, they are great for cattle, providing fresh, clean water. They also provide environmental benefits compared to animals that have direct access to dugouts. When remote systems fail, it can become a serious situation in a matter of hours if weather is hot and cattle have no access to water.

Rudy Rosedale Grazing Ltd. has recently installed cellular game cameras to alleviate the stress and constant worry about remote watering. The 20,000-acre community pasture located northeast of Outlook relies on wells and miles of pipelines to water the approximately 1,100 pair they graze in the summer. The pasture recently set up two cameras at the last water site on each of its two pipelines. This allows the manager, Jarret Nadeau, to monitor water several times a day without having to make the one-hour tour it required before

the cameras were installed.

"The best part is knowing the cattle have water. It saves us a lot of time but just knowing the cattle have water is so important to us," says Nadeau.

The game cameras were purchased from a local hunting store along with cellular boosters that help the cameras send the pictures in areas with poor coverage. The cost for the two cameras and cellular boosters was about \$900. No subscription is required for 100 pictures or less a month, so Nadeau has the cameras set to transmit three pictures a day. His first picture shows

up on his phone at 7 a.m. with two more coming at 1 p.m. and 7 p.m.

Ensuring cattle have access to water when delivered remotely can be time consuming and stressful in the busy summer months. Cellular game cameras are one innovative way to monitor water sites and ensure the health and safety of your animals. For more information on this topic, or any other livestock related questions, please contact your local livestock and feed extension specialist or call the Agriculture Knowledge Centre at 1 866 457 2377.

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Rural Sask. orgs outline election priorities

By Jordan Twiss

As Canadians head to the polls for a federal election in which the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic is a priority for many, the Agricultural Producers Association (APAS) and the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities (SARM) are hoping to see more of rural Saskatchewan reflected in the parties' platforms.

The organizations are

also calling on rural Saskatchewanians to ask pointed questions of their prospective candidates, on issues ranging from rural high-speed internet, to supports for producers, to rural infrastructure.

"This election is coming at a time when Saskatchewan producers are facing a mountain of challenges, and we need to ensure our federal government will be there for the agricultural

sector," APAS President Todd Lewis said.

Shortly after the federal election was launched, APAS released a detailed listing of the issues it would like the next federal government to address. Given that the organization just released the first report from its Rural Connectivity Task Force at the end of March, complete with 43 recommendations to improve rural internet and cellular service across Canada, it's no surprise to see the issue at the top of its list.

Lewis says many Saskatchewan farmers and ranchers have little to no cellular or internet service on their farms, limiting their ability to improve productivity and efficiency. On top of hindering their business, the lack of connectivity is also a safety issue for farm families.

"What's the point of having access to a technician who can diagnose the problem with your machine if you can't connect to this technician? That's the issue many producers are facing, not to mention the issue of safety when you can't use your cell-phone to call someone," Lewis said.

"You don't have to look

very far to hear stories about farmers being injured while working in the field and not being able to call for help."

With many of Saskatchewan's ageing farmers and ranchers transitioning their farming operations to their children, and a new generation of younger producers entering the industry, APAS is also calling on all federal leaders to support the agriculture sector.

In particular, APAS is hoping to see programs to assist with these farm transitions, increased funding to the 2023-2028 Agricultural Policy Framework Strategic Initiative Programs, and additional investments to reform Business Risk Management programs.

"We know agriculture is a major driver in Canada's economic recovery," Lewis said. "That's why we need to see action and support for farmers and ranchers right now, who are new to the industry or who are adapting to changing markets and technologies.

After years of market uncertainty, caused in large part by a diplomatic spat between Canada and China, APAS also wants to see the next federal government provide farmers

and ranchers with greater market transparency and improve access to trade opportunities.

Lewis says APAS wants to see this objective achieved by creating a Canadian export sales reporting program, improved railway transparency, and conducting a full railway costing review.

APAS also wants to work with the federal government to address climate change, while requesting federal leaders to understand that producers are price-takers in international markets. This means farmers and ranchers must absorb additional costs of the carbon tax that are then passed through the supply-chain.

Lewis says federal leaders also need to recognize that producers are leaders when it comes to the stewarding the environment, and also acknowledge the critical role Saskatchewan's croplands and grasslands have in combatting climate change through the capturing and storing of carbon.

"Farmers and ranchers don't receive any additional credit, even though the investments they've made have reduced their carbon footprint and cap-

tured more carbon in their land." Lewis said. "Agriculture has a major role to play in helping to fight climate change. We want to continue doing our part against climate change, but we need to be recognized for the good work we're already doing."

Echoing many of the priorities outlined by APAS, SARM is also calling for the next federal government to make key commitments to improve rural broadband infrastructure. SARM considers broadband an essential service, much like electricity and water, and says reliable service is "fundamental" to the economic and social wellbeing of rural Saskatchewan.

"It has proven critical in the delivery of health-care, education, and other key supports during COVID-19," SARM said in outlining its election priorities.

SARM also has concerns about carbon pricing, in particular the increased costs being borne by Saskatchewan producers. Calling the current carbon pricing model a "threat to the competitiveness" of producers to provide a reliable and affordable source of high-quality food, SARM says the next federal government must ensure that any carbon offset system rewards the past and ongoing efforts of producers to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions.

After a summer marked by prolonged drought and less than ideal growing conditions, SARM is also calling on the next federal government to renew investments in risk management programs and ensure farmers are included in developing the next Agricultural Policy Framework due in 2023.

Finally, noting that agriculture continues to be a major contributor to the provincial and federal economies, SARM is calling for investments in rural road and bridge infrastructure to ensure products can get to market.

"Rural roads and bridges are vital for the sustainability of rural communities and municipal governments do not have the resources to fund essential infrastructure projects on their own," SARM said. "RMs need access to funding that is truly dedicated to rural and small communities."

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Farmers score big win on climate protection

In its April Budget, the Federal Government announced several programs to help farmers transition to lower-emission, climate-adaptive production systems. Recently, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) provided details on three such programs.

AAFC has announced a “call for proposals” for a \$200-million On-Farm Climate Action Fund. The Fund will underpin programs to support farmers to adopt three beneficial management practices (BMPs): cover cropping, enhanced nitrogen management, and rotational grazing. AAFC estimates that the Fund, resulting programs, and on-farm adoption will reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by “up to 2 million tonnes [per year] by 2024, and by 1 million tonnes per year ongoing,” with BMPs projected to be applied on 2 million acres.

Rather than designing and delivering the three programs itself, AAFC “is seeking proposals from potential delivery partners to redistribute the funds to farmers undertaking eligible activities. Potential delivery partners could include producer groups and associations, commodity organizations, Indigenous groups, non-governmental organizations, and provincial or territorial Crown corporations, among others.” Those hoping to be selected as “delivery partners” would design and propose programs that could achieve the government’s projected outcomes.

AAFC gave examples of possible program designs:

- Cover cropping: for example, payment-per-acre to cover adoption or related costs such as seeds and equipment.

- Nitrogen management: for example, agronomic services to develop farm-specific nutrient management plans, equipment modifications..., and soil sampling and analysis.

- Rotational grazing: for example, agronomic services to develop grazing management plans, interior cross fencing, water system infrastructure, legume and forage seeds.

For many years, and most prominently in its Tackling report, the NFU has urged governments to partner with farmers to enhance grazing management, adopt cover crops, and, especially, to use nitrogen more efficiently and at lower rates. The announcement is a key step toward many of the programs and outcomes the NFU has led in advo-

cating.

Moreover, this year’s drought across BC, the Prairies, and parts of eastern Ontario has strongly underscored the need of on-farm practices that enhance soil organic matter and, thus, water-retention capacity. In coming decades, as droughts become more frequent and intense, these soil-building and climate-adaptive on-farm practices will become crucial.

In addition to building soils that can hold more water, these BMPs reduce emissions. Green and growing cover crops can “catch” nitrogen in the fall—nitrogen that could otherwise be lost as nitrous oxide, a powerful GHG. And enhanced nitrogen efficiency (better placement, better application timing, and superior formulations) can mean lower rates without yield losses, cutting

nitrous oxide emissions in two ways: as a result of lower tonnage applied, and as a result of lower emission per tonne.

These three programs represent key victories for the NFU and Farmers for Climate Solutions (FCS). NFU members Ian McCreary and Arzeena Hamir chaired the FCS Task Force that gave rise to these programs. Many NFU members, officials, and staff have been active in FCS work. And the NFU has taken a lead role in elevating the issues of climate change and emission reduction—with efforts extending back more than two decades. We should all take great pride in the fact that our NFU and FCS work is paying off in the form of effective, multi-million-dollar programs to help farmers transition to lower-emission, climate-resilient farming practices.

Use of grain bags requires care

By Sherri Roberts, PAg.
Crops Extension
Specialist, Weyburn

If you’re considering temporary storage options for your grain, grain bags may be the solution you have been looking for. However, you need to do your research as not all bags are created equal. The principal behind grain bags is once the bag is properly sealed, the levels of oxygen in the bag decrease while the levels of carbon dioxide increase. This carbon dioxide rich environment is meant to reduce the level of

insect and disease organisms. Does this really happen?

Research conducted in Indiana on corn concluded that the moisture content of the crop at the time of bagging is a deciding factor in whether or not insect and disease organisms are halted. It is also a factor in grain quality. High-moisture grain, with greater than 25 per cent moisture, will in fact become ensiled, if placed in a grain bag.

Work done at the University of Manitoba compared three different moisture con-

tent levels in canola that was stored in hermetically sealed bags for a 40-week storage period. They found that in dry moisture canola (8.9 per cent moisture content), germination was maintained above 90 per cent and free fatty acid value (FAV) stayed within safe storage limits. The germination of straight moisture (10.5 per cent moisture content); canola was maintained at initial values in most parts of the silo bags, except the top layer. However, the germination of damp moisture (14.4 per cent moisture con-

tent), canola dropped to below 80 per cent and FAV doubled its initial value within eight weeks of storage. High levels of carbon dioxide and localized hotspots, in damp moisture canola seeds, indicated greater biological activity. Canola seeds graded as Canada Grade 1 at the beginning of storage, were considered to be Grade 1, Grade 2 and Feed Grade for the dry, straight and damp moisture canola seeds, respectively at the end of the 40-week storage study.

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Use of grain bags requires care

Continued from 21

The orientation of your grain bag is a consideration when choosing a site. Bags should be placed from north to south so as to expose the grain bag to the sun evenly. This alignment minimizes temperature variations that can cause moisture migration and localized heating. If the bag is positioned east to west, the sun will beat down on the south side of the bag all day long and may lead to overstretching and possible bag failure. The bag should also be placed on an elevated, slightly

sloped and firm site location where there is no chance of flooding. Don't place your bag across a slope to prevent water buildup along the edge of the bag; this can cause stress on the bag and possibly cause it to overstretch or fail. Areas where tree branches could be an issue should be avoided as broken branches may cause damage or bag failure.

Grain bags are not all created equal. When purchasing, check the "mil" thickness and number of layers a bag has. Overfilling can also lead to prema-

ture bag failure. Bags are only meant to stretch up to ten per cent. Animal damage can also create weak points in the bag. Weekly checks along the whole bag should be done and repairs with bag-quality tape should be performed.

While grain bags are a short-term way to handle your bumper crop, they still require due diligence to keep the grain quality. If you have questions about grain bags, please contact your local crops extension specialist or the Agricultural Knowledge Centre at 1-866-457-2377.



Crop termination factors to consider

By Alison Fransoo, PAg, Crops Extension Specialist, North Battleford

There are several different factors to consider when planning to terminate a crop. Poor establishment, resistant weed infestations, a disease issue or removing an old forage stand are a few common reasons to terminate a crop before harvest. Methods used for crop termination are mowing, tillage, herbicides or a combination of these methods. There are a number of things to take into consideration when deciding which method to use.

If protecting the soil from erosion and trapping moisture through the winter is important, consider using herbicides to terminate the crop. When choosing a herbicide, keep in mind cropping restrictions. What are your crop plans on that field for the following year and will they be impacted by the choice of herbicide? By choosing a herbicide method, the stubble will remain on the field to prevent erosion and assist with trapping moisture through the winter for the next crop but may require an operation to manage crop residue prior to seeding. Depending on the time of year a crop is termi-

nated, more than one application of herbicide will likely be required.

Terminating a crop through mowing is most commonly used when a heavy resistant weed population establishes. You may be mowing patches or the whole field depending on how wide spread the resistant weed is. The purpose for mowing is to remove the weed population before it produces seed of the resistant type. This method would be used when there isn't an alternate herbicide group option available for the resistant weed in that specific crop.

If tillage is used for crop termination, consider that it will take several passes. Tillage can destroy soil aggregation, making the soil more susceptible to erosion and moisture can be lost through increased evaporation due to tillage operations. Tillage can also bring dormant weed seeds that are buried to the surface where they may germinate.

Terminating the crop by tillage can also cause loss of organic matter in the soil. If you're considering terminating a crop by tillage early on and the soil is dry, the

impact on nutrient availability should be considered. Low soil moisture decreases soil microbe activity which results in less mineralization and reduces the amount of nitrogen available for the next crop. However, leaching and denitrification losses are reduced in dry soils which may offset the effect of reduced mineralization. The combination of reduced microbial activity and dry soils may also reduce plants' ability to access and use phosphorus and potassium. Testing your soil prior to seeding a new crop will be important to determine nutrient content.

In summary, when terminating a crop by herbicide, consider the number of herbicide applications and cropping restrictions for the subsequent crop. When terminating a crop using tillage, there are more factors to consider. Using tillage may result in increased erosion and loss of moisture. By working the soil, organic matter and available nutrients may be reduced as well.

For more information on terminating your crop, contact your local crops extension specialist or call the Agriculture Knowledge Centre at 1-866-457-2377



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Sask. farmers look to the future after months of drought

By Nick Pearce,

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

When farmer Cortney Solonenko looks over his drought-stricken land near Yorkton, he sees a tank running on empty.

This year may be the worst one since he and his brother took over what's now a roughly 15,000-acre farm from their father in 2013.

They've grown roughly 41 bushels of winter wheat per acre so far, which is about half of normal.

Saskatchewan's agriculture has always relied on the land's moisture retention, "but when the tank's empty, the tank's empty," said Solonenko, who farms near Stornoway.

"We're getting nervous for next year."

Solonenko is one of the many Saskatchewan farmers who are facing the daunting prospect of planning for 2022 with soil moisture reserves depleted and a business threatened by a dire drought.

Small rain showers in recent weeks have done little to reverse the low moisture levels.

With moisture at a premium, University of Saskatchewan hydrologist Phillip Harder is advising producers to keep their crop stubble high this fall so their land retains more from any upcoming snowfall.

There would need to be roughly 200 millimetres of precipitation this fall for the soil to meet its needs, which is very unlikely. Leaving a summer field fallow or crop stubble higher may help, but it's not a silver bullet for 2022, he said.

"If it's anything remotely dry again, we're going to be having these same conversations, and it's still going to be really painful on the farming community."

Wes Anderson, vice-president of agronomy with Croptimistic Technology, says farmers are going to

have to enter 2022 with "a different mindset."

An exceptional year calls for exceptional management, he said.

Anderson advises against falling into old patterns like fall tillage, which may ultimately be little more than "recreational" in these conditions. That said, a few tried-and-true methods may be worth considering.

Leaving stubble high is one option.

While many have already done so, he's also suggesting adopting zero tillage. Other options include managing residual nutrients, testing soil and controlling fall weeds to keep every bit of stored water.

"It feels like there's nothing you can do, but at the end of the day you have to be able to capture any opportunity that does come," he said. "Maybe that's only a half-inch of rain, maybe it's three inches of snow."

Solonenko plans to make the most of the lack of moisture, planting crops like flax and lentils that need less water. The lentil crop he planted for the first time this year yielded roughly 40 bushels, which he finds encouraging.

He has also booked about 70 per cent of his fertilizer outputs for next year — which may cushion him somewhat from its rising prices — and has also stayed out of forward grain contracts that other farmers have struggled to fulfil during the drought.

He thinks the next few months will be critical as he waits to see what weather comes with winter and spring.

Higher commodity prices may help growers like him, according to Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan vice-president Ian Boxall.

Producers with less money available for farm inputs are also likely to roll back on fertilizer as prices rise, he said.

"We're going to see substantially reduced yield and commodity prices that are very, very aggressive," Boxall said, comparing the market favourably to the droughts of the early 2000s that were further hampered by lower prices.

Boxall says farmers are resilient and should be optimistic for the year ahead. But he wants grain companies that have negotiated forward contracts with struggling farmers to be more flexible.

Governments should also continue to support the industry — especially cattle producers — to avoid the drought dragging down local economies as farmers tighten their budgets, he said.

"Farmers have a smaller crop than they're used to, but because of the prices, that turns a really bad year into an 'Okay, we're not going to lose the farm' kind of year," said Adam Pukalo, commodities adviser at PI Financial Corp.

The conversations he's had with clients have been bullish on grain markets in the short to medium term, although watching those prices climb can be "a jab in the side" for some farmers without grain, he said.

In some cases, he's advising farmers on how to protect high prices to make the most of the situation headed into 2022.

"Clients always want the highest price, but then that probably means that they don't have a crop. And then, if they have a great crop, that probably means the price is lower," he said.

Paige Stewart, a farmer near Fillmore, has been more fortunate. Her farm has received some rain and she has a crop. However, some lessons learned from a challenging year in 2019 may matter for farmers planning for 2022.

Investing in private revenue insurance, in addition to government farm insurance programs like AgriStability, may offer some needed protection during hard years, she said.

It can be hard to swallow, and may "take the cream off the top" in good years, but it also takes the edge off of the harder ones.

Relationships also factor in. Stewart said having a network of other farmers — especially those who lived through the droughts of the 1980s — could be a huge untapped resource for some who are looking for outside support.

She found that personally when her operation was facing challenges in 2019, she said. At the time, she and her husband took up coaching basketball to focus on something other than farming. It was a welcome break.

Headed into next year, she agrees with Boxall that governments should be backing up producers and livestock owners who've been particularly hard hit.

In her eyes, fully reimbursable counselling services, combined with support from relationships, can help people through a tough time.

"Farmers aren't going to pick up the phone. They need someone to come and sit with them in the combine, and talk to them on their turf, when they need help," she said.

Solonenko also advises finding a silver lining. Rising prices are a small reassurance that farmers can overcome a challenging year as they head into a new one.

Those small upsides and pockets of resilience will be a valuable resource as farmers begin sewing their hopes for 2022 after the drought.

"When agriculture struggles, everyone struggles," Solonenko said. "It's tough for us and we'll get through it."

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Reducing food loss and waste on the farm

By Shiela Miller,
Intern Extension Agrologist,
Moose Jaw

The value of all food wasted or lost in Canada is \$49 billion per year. Each sector of the food supply chain contributes to this number. It is important to note that there is a difference between food loss and food waste. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations refers to food loss as a reduction in quality or quantity of food that occurs prior to reaching retailers and consumers. Food waste is food fit for human consumption that has spoiled or is disposed of by retailers, food service providers and consumers. Food loss and waste occurs during the production, storage and distribution of food products in retail stores and in our own homes. It begins on the farm and continues down the chain to the consumer. Each sector of the food supply chain needs to take

part in reducing food loss and waste, including farmers and ranchers. Agricultural producers play an important role in combating this issue as they play one of the most vital roles in the food supply chain; growing our food.

There are many obstacles that result in food loss during the production process, including an array of pests, severe weather conditions, livestock losses, poor product quality, demand for commodities and ever-changing market prices. All of this results in grain and livestock that never make it to market, which reduces farm incomes and increases consumer expenses. Reducing on-farm losses can have great impacts in improving food security and efficiency, reducing pressures on natural resources such as land and water. Reducing on-farm losses also helps to feed the world's rising population. There are several ways in which producers can

implement sustainable and beneficial management practices on their operations, not only to help reduce costs on farm but to be a part of the food loss and waste solution.

For grain producers, drought tolerant and disease resistant plant varieties help maintain yield while reducing reliance on pesticides. Pod shatter reduction traits in canola also help to retain the seeds in the pods, which reduces harvest loss. Along with advances in genetics, the use of technology such as satellite imagery, soil moisture probes and in-field weather stations provide an array of data that creates an opportunity to tackle potential damaging issues at the earliest possible chance.

For livestock producers, selecting for feed efficiency helps to reduce food loss as more meat is being produced with less inputs. In instances where conditions have led to failed or low quality

grain crops, ranchers are able to use this as an alternative for feed. Reducing livestock death in calves is also a way to help reduce food loss on the farm. Implementing preconditioning management practices, vaccination programs and managing stocking rates help to reduce these deaths.

Addressing food loss and waste requires commitment, collaboration and communication on various levels. Taking steps to combat this issue will help to reduce environmental harms associated with food loss and waste, reduce pressures on resources needed to produce our food and improve food security to help feed our growing population.

If producers are looking for ways to apply any of these practices on their operations or have questions around sustainable and best management practices, please contact the Agriculture Knowledge Centre at 1 866 457 2377.

Q&A: U of S researcher pushes limits on pulses

By Nick Pearce

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

A University of Saskatchewan scientist sees a future where grocery bags come from pulse seeds.

Dr. Yongfeng Ai has received \$2.5 million through the Canadian Agricultural Partnership to spur research aiming to draw more value from plants like peas, fava beans, lentils and chickpeas. Ai spoke to the StarPhoenix about how his research works on finding new uses for pulses, from making new food ingredients to replacing Styrofoam, grocery bags and

wound dressings.

This interview was edited for length and clarity.

Q: Why is this important?

A: Plant-based proteins are used for things like the Beyond Meat burger and other plant-based foods, which are gaining popularity. But at the same time, the crops used for those, like peas and lentils, also have about 40 to 50 per cent starch in their seeds. Basically, we separate the protein and the starch.

Finding a good way to use starch is critical for industry, because we cannot just look at protein. The challenge we're facing in Saskatchewan is we produce more and more plant-based protein — because that's popular — but how do we utilize the starch?

Q: How would you use those starches?

A: It can create novel food ingredients. An example is starch that resists digestion, so it can function as a dietary fibre. Another application may be clean-label food starch, which isn't chemically modified. The use of micro-organisms could also convert starch into fermentative proteins, which could provide another source of protein for consumers.

We can also use it for packaging like grocery bags. We're interested in transforming the starch into fi-

bres for fabrics, like for clothing and other uses. It could also be used to replace petroleum-based Styrofoam. We can use it for more degradable, compostable products that will provide more sustainable options for our consumers.

Starch can also be modified to replace more expensive medical materials. The new starch materials can be used to arrest bleeding, to bandage wounds, and to make wound dressing and skin grafts.

Q: What makes this so hard?

A: First, the performance needs to be promising and have practical value. The second is the price needs to be more competitive. The new knowledge and technologies we develop can be used by farmers, by our food processors, and by bioplastic or biomedical companies to find new ways to utilize pulses.

That's the most difficult part: how can the knowledge and technologies be really utilized by the industry? Can it outperform the existing materials, and lead to commercialization?

Q: What's the big picture for your work?

A: We want to maximize the value of crops we grow in Western Canada through processing. The way our knowledge and technology are going, it can be easily transferred to other crops like wheat and barley. In doing so, we do our best as researchers to build a more robust, value-added agriculture sector.

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Dr. Yongfeng Ai is leading research at the U of S to unlock the full potential of pulses

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SHELLBROOK CHRONICLE & SPIRITWOOD HERALD

26

SEPTEMBER 16, 2021 • FALL AGRICULTURE EDITION

Phone
306-747-2442

Fax
306-747-3000

Email
chads@sbchron.com

P.O. Box 10, Shellbrook, SK S0J 2E0
Advertising Deadline - Friday: 4:00 p.m.

Subscriptions
\$75.00 + \$3.75 (GST) = \$78.75/year

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306-747-2442

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All prices plus applicable taxes.

NOTICE

This newspaper accepts advertisements in good faith. We advise that it is in your interest to investigate offers personally. Publications by this paper should not be taken as an endorsement of the product or services offered.

FOR RENT

FOR RENT - Units for rent with private entry & bathroom in Spiritwood. All utilities included. For more info call 306-883-9234 or email nkfast@hotmail.com TF

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

SPIRITWOOD STOCKYARDS (1984) LTD.

is currently looking for someone to **operate our canteen.**

You must be able to provide meals for 10-25 people on Wednesdays.

If you are interested please contact **Brian** at 306-883-7375

SPIRITWOOD STOCKYARDS (1984) LTD.

is currently looking for **part-time outside staff** for penning and sorting during our sales.

If you are interested please contact **Brian** at 306-883-7375

HELP WANTED

SHELLBROOK MOTEL hiring for one laundry and one housekeeping position. Please call or drop off resume at motel. 306-747-2631 TF

PERSONALS

Seeking biological father, I was born June 7, 1977 to G. Danchuk. He doesn't know I exist, any info please contact me loopfruit96@msn.com

MEMORIALS

IN LOVING MEMORY OF
Allan "Bookie" Fitch
Who passed away
September 17, 2018



We think of you in silence, and often speak your name. All we have are memories and a picture in a frame. Our hearts still ache in sadness and silent tears still flow. For what it meant to lose you, no one will ever know. Sadly missed and lovingly remembered. Sally and family 1-37

CARD OF THANKS

I would like to give a big thank you to Alfred Svendsen and everyone who came out on Saturday, September 4th to help keep the Stump Lake Cemetery looking so great and anyone who gave a donation to the Cemetery Fund. Stella Campbell

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Spiritwood Herald

is looking for the right individual to work part-time with reporting of news happenings in Spiritwood and area.

Some other duties involved.

Send resume to **Jordan Twiss, Editor Spiritwood Herald** at **Box 10, Shellbrook, Sask. S0J 2E0** or by email to jordan@sbchron.com

Please mark reporter position.



Missing: Dylan Koshman

Date of Birth: Apr 11, 1987

FROM: Edmonton, AB

Weight: 190 Lbs.

Eyes: Hazel/Brown

MISSING SINCE: Oct 11, 2008

Height: 5' 9"

Hair: Brown

File: 3197 SR

CHARACTERISTICS: Dylan has a scar on his left cheek and left eyebrow.

PARTICULARS: Dylan was last seen wearing jeans, dark colored t-shirt and skate boarding shoes.

Anyone with information, please contact Local Police or Child Find at 1.800.513.3463 or 306.955.0070
All calls are confidential - you do not have to leave your name

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