

## Historic Spiritwood icon finds modern use



Spiritwood's grain elevator is still an iconic presence in the town and continues to see use to this day.

By **BEVRA FEE**

*Spiritwood Herald Reporter*

Of the many and varied things of which Saskatchewan can boast, having the most grain elevators in Canada ranks as one of the unsung glories. But where once the sight of the familiar prairie giants was commonplace, with elevators situated every six to eight miles along western Canada's rail lines, the sentimental beauties have now diminished into the 200 range and dropping.

The local "Prairie Sentinel," as the iconic figure has affectionately been dubbed for its unmistakable form, is alive and well, relentlessly serving its purpose of grain storage in the town of Spiritwood.

Built in 1960 and moved to Spiritwood from the community of Tallman, located between Blaine Lake and Krydor, the elevator served the Saskatch-

ewan Wheat Pool up until it closed around 2002.

Subsequently, a group of local farmers purchased it in 2003. The original group of 10 farmers consisted of Bryan Gaboury, Dale Willick, Allan Steinhilber, Mick Valette, Ralph Amendt, Don Voss, Neil Berg, Raymond Gatzke, Torben Nielsen and Lawrence Willness.

That number has now distilled down to four, two of whom are holdovers from the original group – Bryan Gaboury and Nancy Willick (whose late husband Dale was an original member), and two newcomers from the Gaboury family, Jason and Kendall, the second generation to join in the ownership of the Spiritwood landmark.

Farming approximately 9,000 acres, the Gabourys utilize three Super B trailers and one hired truck driver to keep the elevator full. Storage in town offers a central and handy means for loading when it comes time to market

the grain, explains Bryan.

"Having it stored in the elevator during winter when we need to ship loads to market means not having to start the tractor in frigid weather, not having to get to the bins or bags in the field and not having to wait until spring when there are road bans on."

Together, the elevator and the annex hold 136,000 bushels, which are continually being turned around. When grain is moved out, more is brought in from the grain dryers on the farm and stored for shipping according to market bookings.

"We typically truck grain out to Hamlin, North Battleford and Lloydminster, but we have hauled to Saskatoon, Clavet and Nipawin among other places in the province," informs Bryan.

Spiritwood's growth was spurred by the arrival of the railway in the late 1920s, and it would have been hard to fathom at the time that the rail would

ever leave. Indeed, the local history book committee expressed in its 1984 publication that, "Spiritwood serves a strong farming area for 40 miles, it is unlikely the CN line will be abandoned."

Fast forward to today, and there is no trace of steel and spikes, just an overgrown rail bed running along the north side of the elevator.

In the early days of farming in Saskatchewan where there was an elevator, there was trade. Villages centered around where the farmers delivered grain, as that was often also where they bought farming supplies.

Originally designed for a minimum grain capacity of 25,000 bushels, as stipulated by Canadian Pacific Railway (in order to obtain a license to construct an elevator along its track), prairie grain elevators varied in size but were originally dominated by the trade of flour-milling companies.

*Continued on page 2*



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# Historic Spiritwood icon finds modern use

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The iconic shape of the elevator was a result of the inner workings of the facility, which centres around a vertical leg that carries grain – dumped from a trailer into the pit – to the top of the elevator where it is sent via a distributor, through bin spouts and down into the various storage bins.

Modern-day feed mills are an exposed version of the same system, having their channels and spouts all visibly going to their accompanying bins. If one tries to picture such a facility enclosed only around the hoppers, and leg and bin spouts, it is easy to visualize the recognizable form that would result.

When it came to learning the complexities of dumping, elevating, and

sorting the grain into the various bins within the elevator and the annex, Bryan Gaboury credits retired elevator agents Brian Kuchler and Jerome Weiland for giving him guidance at the beginning.

Jason Gaboury chimes in, “I learned from dad and Kendall!”

Leading the tour of their facility indicates that he was taught well, as Jason deftly opens interior doors to check bins and talks about the repair and maintenance of the structure.

“Some of the maintenance we can do ourselves, but sometimes we have to get contractors in,” he explains. “We have fire extinguishers everywhere, and that is part of obtaining insurance. We have it inspected every year and

complete the work list, but it’s not as easy to get insurance for it anymore – we recently had to change companies.”

Talk of the danger of fire in such a dry, dusty cribbed wood building led Bryan to recall the Spiritwood elevator fire of 1977, in which three

of the town’s four elevators were lost in a battle during a windy night.

“Burning shingles were landing in farmyards two miles away,” Bryan recalled.

While the ownership, the business landscape, and the face of farming have changed substan-

tially over the last century, the basic purpose of the prairie grain elevator has remained that of receiving, storing, and then shipping grain. Where once there was an elevator within a day’s return trip by horse and wagon, there are now Super B trailers

hauling grain to central locations to be stored and shipped from large terminals that are located along intact rail lines.

But for as long as it lasts, Spiritwood can still take pride in being home to one of the prairies’ most recognizable silhouettes.



Bryan Gaboury (left) and Jason Gaboury show off the grain elevator’s “birth certificate.”



Bryan Gaboury demonstrates some of the mechanics involved in moving grain in the elevator.



Jason Gaboury looks into one of the many bins within the annex.

## Shellbrook Royal Purple donates to schools



Shellbrook Royal Purple members Cindy Wall (left) and Elaine Perkins present a \$500 cheque to Shellbrook Elementary School principal Kevin Koroluk. The funds will assist with the purchase of playground equipment.



Royal Purple members Elaine Perkins (left) and Cindy Wall present a \$500 cheque to WP Sandin High School vice principal Lou-Anne Stefankiw. The funds are for upgrades to the school’s track. By ELAINE PERKINS, Shellbrook Royal Purple

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### VILLAGE OF PARKSIDE NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF ASSESSMENT ROLL

Notice is hereby given that the assessment roll for the Village of Parkside for the year of 2024 has been prepared and is open to inspection in the office of the assessor from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on the following days: Tuesdays, April 16<sup>th</sup>, 2024 to May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

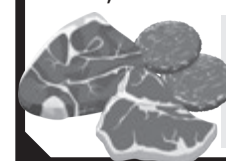
A bylaw pursuant to section 214 of the *Municipalities Act* has been passed and the assessment notices have been sent as required.

Any person who wishes to appeal against his or her assessment is required to file his or her notice of appeal with the Secretary of the Board of Revision, Western Municipal Consulting Ltd., Box 149, Meota, SK S0M 1X0 by May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

Dated this 11<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2024.  
Brenda Lockhart

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# Debden approves Main Street rezoning for cannabis store

By **JORDAN TWISS**  
*Shelbrook Chronicle Reporter*

Two months after a public hearing at which it heard strong opposition from ratepayers, council for the Village of Debden has approved Bylaw 1/2024, an amendment to the municipal zoning bylaw to allow for a cannabis retail outlet to open up shop on Main Street.

Council began exploring the amendment after being approached by Aaron and Meagan Palidwar of Into the Weeds Cannabis, which already operates in Spiritwood and Big River. While the village's existing bylaw allowed for cannabis retail outlets in the C2 Highway District, the father-daughter duo felt none of the available properties in this zoning classification met their needs, and instead identified a building located at 305 Main Street (the C1 district) as a more suitable location.

As cannabis retail outlets were prohibited in the C1 district, an amendment to the zoning bylaw to allow for cannabis retail as a discretionary use was required, and so too was a public hearing.

At this public hearing, held on Thursday, Feb. 22, council heard objections about the proximity of the building to École Debden Public School, concerns about the impact to community safety and children, the potential for an increase in crime and violence, and fears about the dangers of canna-

bis use.

Council reviewed and considered all these concerns at its March 14 council meeting. Given that a retail outlet selling alcohol is just as close to the school as the potential cannabis retail outlet would be, and that minors aren't allowed to enter either establishment, council felt this wouldn't be a concern.

Council also dismissed many of the community safety concerns raised, particularly those around the risks of cannabis use.

"Council also considered the feedback they received during discussions with other communities that currently have an operational Cannabis retail store," explained Tamara Couture, CAO for the Village of Debden.

"None of them felt that Cannabis retail had a negative impact on their community, nor did they feel there was an increase in crime or violence in the municipality."

Following much discussion and deliberation, Couture says the majority of council voted in favour of amending the zoning bylaw and gave it the final necessary readings at its regular meeting on Thursday, April 11.

As required by law, the amendment has now been forwarded to the Government of Saskatchewan Community Planning Branch for review.

While council's decision is sure to be unpopular with ratepayers who are opposed to having a retail cannabis outlet in the community,

Couture notes the decision aligns with the municipality's Official Community Plan, which "aims to direct development and growth while protecting economic vitality of the Village's commercial district, encouraging new commercial development in the core area, prioritizing Main Street as a primary location for retail activity, and reusing vacant and under-utilized buildings."

"The amendment was initiated by a company wishing to utilize a vacant building on Main Street, aligning with the village's goal of revitalizing the commercial area," Couture said. "To date, the Village has not received a development application for an alternative commercial business in this location."

"Overall, the decision reflects careful consideration of all community feedback, legal requirements, and long-term planning objectives outlined in the Official Community Plan," she added.

Council's approval of the zoning bylaw amendment was welcomed by Meagan Palidwar.

"We are now full speed ahead and are looking forward to expanding our business footprint in the Village of Debden," she said.

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# Knutsen wins April dessert



The Spiritwood Public Library drew the Dessert of the Month winner for April. The lucky winner was Wayne Knutsen. Picking up on behalf of Wayne was his sister, Sharon Goller (right). Board member Jayde Tymchak made the beautiful Carrot Cake.

Submitted by **HEATHER GATZKE**, Librarian

## R.M. OF CANWOOD NO. 494 NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF ASSESSMENT ROLL

Notice is hereby given that the Assessment Roll for the Rural Municipality of Canwood No. 494 for the year 2024 has been prepared and is open to inspection at the Office of the Assessor from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on the following days: Monday to Friday, April 24, 2024, to May 24, 2024.

A bylaw pursuant to Section 214 of *The Municipalities Act* has been passed, and the assessment notices have been sent as required.

Any person wishing to discuss the Notice of Assessment or potential appeal may contact the Assessor at 306-468-2014 (R.M.) or 1-800-667-5203 (SAMA).

Any person who wishes to appeal an assessment is required to file a "Notice of Appeal to the Board of Revision," by May 24, 2024, with Mike Ligtermoet, Secretary to the Board of Revision, 642 Agnew Street, Prince Albert, SK, S6V 2P1, along with the applicable fees, made payable to the R.M. of Canwood No. 494, which will be returned if the appeal is successful.

Dated at Canwood, Saskatchewan, this 23<sup>rd</sup> day of April, 2024.

Lorna Benson, Assessor

## TOWN OF BIG RIVER PUBLIC NOTICE

Public Notice is hereby given that the Council of the Town of Big River intends to adopt a bylaw pursuant to Section 207 of *The Planning and Development Act, 2007* to amend Bylaw No. 2015-02, known as the Zoning Bylaw.

### INTENT

The proposed bylaw will amend Bylaw 2015-02, the Zoning Bylaw:

- Section 9, R1 - Low Density Residential District, Section 9.2 Discretionary Uses to add: 18. Short Term Rental Accommodation; and
- Section 13, C1 - Core Mixed Use Commercial District, Section 13.2 Discretionary Uses to add: 10. Short Term Rental Accommodation

### AFFECTED LAND

The affected land is legally described as R1 - Low Density Residential District and C1 - Core Mixed Use Commercial District

### REASON

The reason for the amendment is to add Short Term Rental Accommodation as a Discretionary Use in the R1 - Low Density and the C1 - Core Mixed Use Commercial District.

### PUBLIC INSPECTION

Any person may inspect the bylaws at the Town Office in Big River on any judicial day from Monday to Friday between the hours of 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon and 1:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

### PUBLIC HEARING

Council will hold a public hearing on May 14, 2024, at 1:00 p.m. in the Board Room at Big River Community Centre, 606 1<sup>st</sup> Street North, in Big River, Saskatchewan to hear any person or group that wants to comment on the proposed bylaws. Council will also consider written comments received at the hearing (or delivered to the undersigned at the municipal office before the hearing).

Issued at Big River this 26<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2024  
Noreen Olsen, Administrator

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## Sask. climate inaction threatens ag sector

In the opening sentence of its Agricultural Drought Preparedness Plan, the Ministry of Agriculture (and by extension the Sask. Party government) makes an unexpected admission.

“Droughts are predicted to become more frequent with climate change,” the executive summary of the 20-page document begins.

In the following paragraph, it continues with: “In Saskatchewan, it is widely known that drought can have huge economic implications, particularly in the agriculture sector.”

Of course, anyone who’s been paying attention these past few years knows this to be true.

In 2021, extreme drought conditions resulted in the smallest crop the province had seen since 2003. Overall crop production was down 43 per cent, and the drop in productivity was costly not just for producers, but also for the government, which spent an estimated \$2.4 billion on crop insurance payouts to producers.

Though not as severe as 2021, drought in 2023 brought more of the same challenges. Due to a 20 per cent drop in overall crop production, the Sask. Party government made another \$1.85 billion in crop insurance payouts — helping turn its projected \$1 billion budget surplus into a \$273.2 million deficit.

This all points to the accuracy of the government’s opening statement in the Agricultural Drought Preparedness Plan.

So, what makes it unexpected?

Well, for starters, the document was drafted in January 2022. Yet, after consecutive years of dry conditions, Finance Minister Donna Harpauer called 2023’s drought and subsequent crop insurance payouts an “unforeseen” circumstance.

This seems odd, to put it lightly, given that the stated purpose of the Drought Preparedness Plan is to monitor past and current trends so that the effects of drought can be mitigated and adapted to.

Perhaps, because Agriculture isn’t her portfolio, Miss Harpauer’s seeming ignorance to drought-like conditions in the province can be excused. Though, given her position as finance minister, Miss Harpauer should be



JORDAN TWISS  
~  
News Editor

privity to anything that might negatively impact the province’s finances.

What’s more, Miss Harpauer shouldn’t need a preparedness plan to tell her the province is experiencing prolonged drought conditions. Not when she could just drive around the province and see firsthand all the dried out sloughs along highways.

The Sask. Party government’s acknowledgment of climate change as a driver of drought is surprising for another important reason.

Though he said as recently as his March 27 appearance at a parliamentary committee meeting on the federal carbon tax that he “believes in climate change,” Premier Scott Moe’s actions don’t line up with this supposed belief in the slightest.

Since replacing Brad Wall as Premier in 2018, Mr. Moe has made his Sask. Party government the second official opposition party to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s Liberal federal government, taking issue with nearly every single policy it announces.

However, he’s devoted the lion’s share of his energy and rhetoric to the federal government’s environmental policies, most notably the carbon tax, and even squandered a lot of taxpayer dollars and failed legal challenges to have the tax deemed unconstitutional.

Indeed, despite his professed belief in climate change, there isn’t a single federal environmental policy Mr. Moe has agreed with or welcomed without raising questions, concerns, or challenges. And his opposition to the carbon tax, in particular, has only become more vehement since Mr. Trudeau announced an (admittedly unfair) exemption for Canadians who rely on home heating oil to heat their homes.

Mr. Moe responded to this first by asking for exemptions to be granted on all forms of home heating. When this failed, his government decided it would simply stop remitting the carbon tax on home heating, even knowing taxpayers might end up the ultimate losers if the federal government decides to withhold carbon tax rebates.

Most recently, Mr. Moe has gone beyond calling for carbon tax fairness, and joined federal Conservative Party leader Pierre Poilievre in his calls to



“Axe the Tax,” and last week expressed disappointment and surprise when the Trudeau government’s 2024-2025 budget didn’t eliminate the tax (even though there was never any reason to believe it would).

In the meantime, Mr. Moe and his Sask. Party government haven’t advanced viable alternatives or solutions to address the climate change they purport to believe in.

First, its experiment with carbon capture and storage at Boundary Dam Unit #3 was a resounding failure, costing taxpayers millions of dollars in penalties for missed carbon sequestration targets, and prompting SaskPower to abandon plans to retrofit other Boundary Dam units with the technology.

Second, its climate change strategy, launched in 2017, has been called unambitious, and experts say it won’t meet international climate targets (though, to be fair, the same can be said for the federal government’s policies).

Third, its gamble on nuclear power generation in the form of Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) won’t see any payoff for a decade, as the first reactor isn’t expected to come online until the mid-2030s, and a positive outcome is not at all a guarantee.

And last, as the province struggles with prolonged drought-like conditions, it’s barrelling ahead with its planned Lake Diefenbaker irrigation project. This, despite the fact that the

Water Security Agency had to limit outflows from the lake after it received only 28 per cent of its historic inflow in 2023.

The Lake Diefenbaker project is expected to deliver water to 500,000 acres of agricultural land at a cost of more than \$4 billion (though, the first phase of the project has already climbed in cost to \$1.15 billion from \$500 million). But if drought-like conditions persist, or worsen, this could come at the expense of the nearly two thirds of the province who rely on the lake for drinking water.

At the end of the day, then, it’s irrelevant if Mr. Moe and his Saskatchewan Party government believe in climate change, and it’s irrelevant if the Agricultural Drought Preparedness Plan acknowledges climate change as a contributing factor to drought.

Time and time again, through its combative relationship with the federal government and its policy decisions, this Sask. Party government has made it crystal clear that it has no interest in actually doing anything to combat climate change.

It’s yet another example of this government refusing to listen to anything it doesn’t agree with.

Another example of it knowing better but doing worse.

If it’s not careful, if it continues to bury its head in the sand, it could one day come at the expense of the very agriculture industry it claims it’s protecting.

### Shellbrook Chronicle

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## Report from the Legislature

Saskatchewan's economy and population are growing rapidly and with that growth comes a need for new, expanded and renewed infrastructure. The 2024-25 provincial budget invests a record \$4.4 billion in capital projects to support classrooms, care and communities.

The budget invests \$216 million in education capital to enhance learning environments for students in Kindergarten to Grade 12 schools. This includes \$165.9 million to support 11 ongoing new or consolidated school projects and three major renovations in Balgonie, Carlyle, Saskatoon, Regina, Prince Albert, Moose Jaw, Lanigan, La Loche and Wilcox.

Another \$8.8 million supports the planning for nine new schools and two renovations announced in this year's budget, located in Pinehouse, Regina, Saskatoon, Corman Park and Swift Current. Our government has invested \$2.6 billion into school capital since 2008-09 for 65 new schools and 32 major renovations, demonstrating our commitment to Saskatchewan

wan students.

In health care, our government is making a record investment of \$516.8 million in infrastructure improvements to provide residents with the care they need and deserve. This is an increase of \$179.3 million from last year.

Major health care capital projects in this year's budget include the redevelopment of Prince Albert's Victoria Hospital; replacement of the Weyburn General Hospital; work on long-term care facilities in La Ronge, Regina, Grenfell, Estevan and Watson; and construction of the parkade at Regina General

Hospital.

Our government has invested more than \$2.9 billion to support the construction and maintenance of new health care facilities since 2008-09, helping to ensure that you can get the care you need when and where you need it.

The budget invests \$617.1 million into operating, maintaining, building and improving Saskatchewan roads and highways, an increase of 3.5 per cent. The entire amount collected in fuel tax – \$521.3 million – is enhanced with additional investments to maintain and operate Saskatchewan highways.

The budget provides \$417.3 million for transportation capital to improve more than 1,100 km of provincial highways. Construction continues on several major highway improvement projects, including twinning projects near Rowatt and Corinne on Highways 6 and 39 between Regina and Weyburn, corridor improvements on Highway 5 east of Saskatoon, and completion of the replacement of the two Highway 6 bridges

over Regina's Ring Road.

The budget also includes \$73.5 million to build, operate and maintain the transportation system in northern Saskatchewan. Since 2008-09, our government has invested more than \$13 billion in transportation infrastructure, improving more than 20,700 kilometres of highways.

Saskatchewan municipalities continue to benefit from this year's budget, with a record \$350.1 million in transfers through capital programs.

This year, \$78.9 million will be invested in water projects. This includes more than \$35.9 million to continue to develop and expand irrigation in the province, as well as funding to support the engineering, design and construction of the Lake Diefenbaker Irrigation Project.

To continue to enhance public and community safety, \$60.8 million will be invested in projects at provincial courts and correctional facilities. This work includes continued construction of the remand expansion at the Saskatoon



**HON. JEREMY HARRISON**  
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Our provincial Crown corporations are also a priority in the budget. Crown corporations are investing approximately \$2.6 billion this year – another record – to improve infrastructure in the province. Over the next four years, the Crown sector will invest more than \$9.5 billion, which is the largest capital investment in its history.

SaskPower is investing a record \$1.6 billion in the provincial electricity system to meet demand and maintain reliability and support the transition to a modern grid. This includes construction of the natural

gas plant in south-central Saskatchewan, improvements to the plant near Kerrobert and expanding the southwest transmission interconnection.

SaskEnergy is investing \$416.9 million into the province's natural gas transmission and distribution system to help meet growth in demand.

SaskTel is investing \$439.8 million to ensure the information and communications technology infrastructure is in place to help connect Saskatchewan residents. Investments this year include continuing to deploy fibre to rural Saskatchewan and rolling out the 5G wireless network.

The 2024-25 Capital Plan of \$4.4 billion is the largest in Saskatchewan history and over nine times the amount of the capital budget in 2006 under the NDP government, which was \$484 million in today's dollars.

As our government continues to make these infrastructure investments to build classrooms, care and communities, we look forward to hearing from you.

## Sask. gov't presents 'final offer' to teachers

By **JORDAN TWISS**  
Shellbrook Chronicle Reporter

Collective Bargaining Agreement negotiations between the Saskatchewan government and the province's educators resumed last week, ending a months-long stalemate over how to handle class size and complexity and violence in schools.

Following sessions filled with what STF president Samantha Becotte has called "difficult discussions," the Government-Trustee Bargaining Committee (GTBC) has tabled its "final offer" to teachers, leaving them to vote to ratify or reject a new agreement on May 8 and 9.

The government's three-year contract offer includes salary increases of three per cent in the first two years and two per cent in the final year of the agreement, with retroactive pay to Sept. 2023, and enhancements to benefits packages. This marks a return to the government's original salary offering, after Education Minister Jeremy Cockrill had previously proposed 3 per cent increases over the next four years to match the salary increases taken by MLAs.

The government's offer also includes its promised accountability framework, an agreement between the government, school divisions, and teachers meant to ensure new funding to address class size and complexity will be used for its intended purpose, as well as a new line saying the framework will be "honoured and followed."

Outside of the collective agreement, there was also a letter of undertaking signed by GTBC chair Don Hoium to address classroom size and complexity.

In a press release issued last Wednesday, April 17, Hoium suggested both parties had reached a "tentative agreement" on the government's offer.

"The GTBC feels this is a fair and reasonable agreement that will benefit Saskatchewan students, teachers and families," he said in a statement.

Speaking to reporters the following day, Becotte called this a mischaracterization of the talks. According to her, the GTBC made it clear the government was presenting its final offer and had no interest in negotiating further.

"There was no willingness to find further

solutions within the bargaining process," Becotte said, pointing to concerns about the letter of undertaking signed by Hoium.

"Anything within the letter of undertaking would be non-binding and there is no dispute-resolution process."

The province's teachers have been without a contract since last August, and since new contract negotiations with the province began in May 2023, they have asked for issues like classroom size and complexity to be included in their new collective bargaining agreement. The government has refused to budge on this issue, leading to a prolonged campaign of job actions by the province's teachers.

On March 8, after a months-long stalemate with the teachers over the issue, the government and the Saskatchewan School Boards Association (SSBA) announced a multi-year funding agreement, promising \$356 million over the next four years to address issues of class size and complexity.

The government then proposed a memorandum of understanding with teachers and school divisions on an accountability framework that would ensure proposed

education funding makes it into the classrooms and toward the supports it's intended for.

While the STF welcomed the funding commitment and the offer of accountability, it expressed concerns that the funds could still be clawed back or used for other purposes without any sort of binding contract in place.

With teachers now set to vote on the province's final offer, Becotte says it will be up to the government to decide what happens next if the offer is rejected.

Speaking to reporters Friday, Cockrill wouldn't say whether the government's offer is final, and expressed hope that teachers will vote to ratify the deal.

"I think there's some good things in this agreement that are good for teachers, good for the province and, at the end of the day, good for students, to ensure that we don't have sanctions going forward that affect, obviously, curricular time but all the extracurriculars and important things like graduation as well," he said, noting that bargaining is tough and there aren't a lot of winners in the process.

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# Pie in the Eye delivers \$50,000 for SARCS

By BEVRA FEE

*Spiritwood Herald Reporter*

Spiritwood's biennial event to raise funds for the Rec Centre mortgage payment tallied up another large net take on Saturday, April 20. With a lively crowd in attendance at the Mezzanine of the Rec Centre to watch a hitlist of locals receive pies in the face, the evening was one of fun, laughter, revenge, and generally reckless pie management.

Bidding started three weeks out in order to determine the list of the top 15 people who others were willing to pay to see get a pie in the face. Votes cost one dollar per, and the ranking was established early on with a meagre list of only six names in the first week. By week two it was noticed that Aaron Dauvin's name was not on the list, so that got rectified immediately and he never left top spot again.

During the final day of bidding, the list changed hourly, with some new names coming in out of nowhere and then moving up or down depending on who from the list wanted to move down out of the top 15. If one were on the list near the bottom, he or she could spend a few dollars on some of the names below them and bring those names up into the top 15 while moving down out of danger themselves.

At cutoff time, Aaron Dauvin held strong in first place, Tanner Gaboury was steady all the way through in second place, and the innocent individual planning the entire event — Kaeli Cross, at no point previously on the list — landed in the number three spot at the very last minute before voting was cut off.

Come the night of the event, Aaron Dauvin was among the handful of recipients who drew more than one pie in the eye. Auctioneer Boyd Stuart kept the flow going with wildcard pies — pies to

be sold at intervals through the evening to bidders, who then won the right to decide at whom the pie was thrown and also the thrower.

A total of 12 wildcard pies were purchased on the program, but Mr. Stuart may have added a few (and more dollars to the bottom line). The wildcard pies were the only way someone from the list of 15 could exact revenge on whoever they thought may have bought votes to get them into the final group of guaranteed recipients.

Moms pied sons, wives pied husbands, kids pied moms... anyone in attendance was fair game to receive a pie, as long as someone wanting to pie them brought their debit card. The crew of regulars from Friday's Happy Hour at the Rec Centre paid high dollar on the night for the right to pie one of their own — Maurice Bussiere. Bussiere received an "ugly pie," which was made up not of pudding

and whipped cream as the rest were, but of ketchup, mustard, and Tabasco sauce.

However, the top price paid for a pie was by Matt Shepard, who forked over \$2,300 for the joy of placing a pie on the mug of Les Walker.

Two VIP tables were auctioned off at the beginning of the evening. The VIP tables included seating for eight people in the front row, 40 drink tickets, a dessert of choice, and a pie to throw.

Another fundraiser for the evening was the auctioning of snacks and desserts. Donated by local individuals and businesses, the snacks and desserts were auctioned off throughout the evening. Rounding out the fundraising, a 50/50 was held on the night with the winner — Colette Bussiere — taking home \$620.

Pie in the Eye is one of SARCS's most popular fundraisers and it has been well-supported over the years. The last three Pie events combined have raised a total of approximately \$114,000.



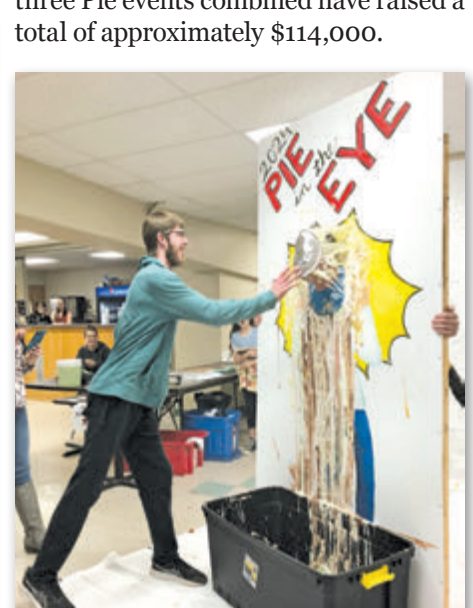
Norie Beauchesne pies dad, Alex Beauchesne, during SARCS's Pie in the Eye fundraiser.



Shelley Goller pies her son, Brett Goller.



Renley Penner pies her mom, Kaylee Wall, with the help of her dad, Travis Penner.



Devyn Thompson pies Les Walker.

## Sask. invests in ag mobile skills lab

The Government of Saskatchewan has announced a \$300,000 investment in Agricultural Manufacturers of Canada (AMC) to create a mobile, virtual-reality skills lab.

The mobile skills lab will visit school campuses and community events across Saskatchewan to promote career opportunities within the agricultural manufacturing industry. This investment will allow individuals to fully experience what an in-demand career in the industry looks like through the assistance of virtual reality.

"Agricultural manufacturers play an important role in driving our provincial economy and

employ people in communities across Saskatchewan," Immigration and Career Training Minister Jeremy Harrison said in a statement. "Saskatchewan is a leader in innovative agriculture and this investment ensures that agricultural equipment manufacturers will continue to attract the talent needed to support their growth."

Over the past five years, Saskatchewan's agriculture manufacturing exports have increased by 129 per cent, from \$364.2 million in 2019, to an all-time high of \$853 million in 2023.

"Our provincial agriculture manufacturers are some of the

most competitive and innovative businesses you will find anywhere," Agriculture Minister David Marit said in a statement. "When dollars are spent in markets around the world on dry land agriculture equipment, the Saskatchewan brand is in demand. This investment ensures people can connect with rewarding careers in the ag sector and keep our international reputation growing."

The mobile skills lab will travel across the province this summer and promote agricultural manufacturing industry careers to students, parents, teachers and communities. In addition to growing the workforce, the mo-

mobile skills lab will showcase professional development opportunities to those already working in the agricultural manufacturing industry.

"Our industry has seen exponential growth and the demand for talent is unprecedented," AMC President Donna Boyd said in a statement. "A career in agriculture offers the opportunity to be one of the most successful industries in Canada—one which protects the environment, ensures global food security and fuels the future of food through innovation. AMC is directly addressing the needs of our members and our industry through the Careers in Ag

initiative and we are proud that the Government of Saskatchewan supports the quest to attract and incentivize people into our sector through the investment in our Mobile Skills Lab.

The Government of Saskatchewan works with partners like AMC to help address labour shortages and promote careers in growing industries. Targeted investments support the recently released Saskatchewan Labour Market Strategy, which outlines how the province is developing the workforce to meet employer demand and ensuring Saskatchewan people benefit from the province's growing economy.

### Provincial Budget | 2024-2025

## \$22.4 million increase in Agriculture Budget this year

The Ministry of Agriculture will receive **\$570 million in this year's budget to support our agriculture industry through investments in programming for producers and agri-businesses, funding for agricultural research and enhancements to crop insurance.** Our province's agriculture sector is the backbone of our economy while helping to feed the world through sustainable crop and livestock production. Our investments will support the continued competitiveness and strength of the sector.

**Hon. Jeremy Harrison**  
MLA for Meadow Lake  
jharrisonmla@sasktel.net

For more information  
visit [Saskatchewan.ca/budget](https://Saskatchewan.ca/budget)

**Hon. Scott Moe, Premier**  
MLA for Rosthern-Shellbrook  
scottmoe.mla@sasktel.net



## Ag robotics has only scratched the surface

Certain topics in agriculture have tended to dominate farm media – this column included – over the years.

For example, the protracted debate which finally led to the elimination of the Canadian Wheat Board, the Port of Churchill, and the evolutionary move to zero till farm practices would be such topics.

Currently, the trend toward robotic agriculture is added to the list.

There is no doubt in this writer's mind that robotic farming is the

next big thing in terms of on-farm operations.

Just what the future will look like is of course an unknown. In many ways, the basic foundation of robotic technology is very much in its infancy, and what improvements will be made in the next decade will be beyond what most of us can even start to imagine.

How that technology is adapted to agricultural applications is another facet of development which is going to be significant, and not fully understood today.



CALVIN DANIELS

So it's hardly surprising to see a *www.producer.com* story about DLG (the German Agricultural Society), which organizes Agritechnica, the world's largest farm machinery show, adding

a new feature to its upcoming outdoor Feldtage (field days) event to do exactly that.

"FarmRobotix is to become a platform that will supply farmers with relevant information," said Malene Conlong, DLG's international press liaison in the article.

Robotics have been part of the annual field days event for several years, including a design competition for field robotics. The FarmRobotix focus will emphasize that element of emerging technology.

The addition to the show is simply a testament to the realization of the importance of robotics, and with that in mind how critical it is to keep the producer aware of what is emerging in the field.

When I think back, my father quit school so he could focus on working horses in the field, and he lived to see four-wheel drive tractors with air-conditioned cabs and radios.

Had he lived only a couple of decades longer, he would have seen the ear-

liest autonomous tractors and drone technology.

Imagine what a younger farmer today – who quit school at 14 – will see a half century from now. What will robots be doing in our world and on our farms in 2074?

It's a question even the likes of prolific science fiction author Isaac Asimov would find challenging to imagine, but it will most certainly be greatly different from the typical farming of today.

Change is a constant and that includes how farmers farm.

## Sask. rejects drought preparedness committee

By JORDAN TWISS

Shellbrook Chronicle Reporter

Recent years have seen Saskatchewan's agricultural producers become familiar with the impacts and cost of drought.

In 2021, extreme drought conditions resulted in the smallest crop the province had seen since 2003. Overall, crop production was down 43 per cent, including a 54 per cent reduction in the durum wheat crop, a 50 per cent reduction in the oat crop, and a 38 per cent reduction in the canola crop.

The drop in productivity was costly not just for producers, but also for the government, which spent an estimated \$2.4 billion on crop insurance payouts.

With climate change pushing seasonal temperatures higher year-over-year, dry conditions have persisted in the province. Another year of extreme drought in 2023 resulted in a 20 per cent drop in overall crop production, forcing the government to make another \$1.85 billion in crop insurance payouts – and helping to push the province's finances from a \$1 billion surplus to a \$250 million deficit.

With 2024's spring thaw almost complete, the Water Security Agency is predicting much of the province, including the Shellbrook and Spiritwood areas, will experience below normal or well below normal spring runoff.

This means another dry growing season is looking increasingly likely, and all producers can do is stay positive and hope Mother Nature will be co-operative and deliver significant spring rain falls.

"We've seen [drought] affect our livestock sector hugely, because we're down over the last number of years 100,000+ head of cattle in Saskatchewan because of lack of feed and lack of water," said Ian Boxall, president of the Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan (APAS).

"At the end of the day we want to go out and seed and grow a crop. We don't want crop insurance. We don't want programs. We want to grow a crop. We want to get enough feed for our livestock."

In hopes of making this goal more attainable, APAS lobbied the Sask. Party government in March, calling

on it to establish a provincial Drought Preparedness Committee made up of government agencies and representatives from the agriculture sector.

The committee, Boxall says, would help the province develop a more proactive approach to dealing with drought by examining existing resources, monitoring past, current, and future weather trends, and more.

Most important, though, would be the unique ideas, perspectives, and possible solutions it could bring to the table.

"We always feel that a proactive policy approach is better than reactive. We get better policy if we discuss prior and come up with some solutions," Boxall said.

"There are some great resources and people out there who could have a positive influence on this committee, and sometimes when we have extended drought, we need to think outside the box to ensure that we're doing the best with the resources we have."

While Boxall was hopeful the Sask. Party government would be on board with the idea of a Drought Preparedness Committee, he says the response he received earlier this month was effectively, "We've got it covered. You don't need to worry about it."

Though he applauds the government for having developed an Agricultural Drought Preparedness Plan, and appreciates the programs it has in place, Boxall says he was disappointed by the response.

"We wanted more engagement. We wanted to be included in the conversation, since agriculture will be the biggest sector hit by drought and yet it's still the biggest economic driver in our province," he said. "I'm disappointed that the government didn't see a need to include producer groups."

The Saskatchewan Agricultural Drought Preparedness Plan considers historical trends, evaluates current and future drought risks, and outlines an approach to mitigating and adapting to the effects of agricultural drought, all with an eye to minimizing financial and environmental losses.

A collaborative, multi-ministry initiative, the Plan is predicated upon four pillars: preparedness, monitoring, response, and recovery approaches.

While he hopes the plan will prove helpful for the province and producers, Boxall feels there have to be other, more proactive resources and ideas out there.

Boxall notes the Yorkton area recently had a huge hay crop, and wonders if a system couldn't be developed to allow cattle producers in the southwest of the province (which has experienced some of the worst of the drought conditions in recent years) to move their livestock to that area to pasture.

On a related note, Boxall says he'd

like to see incentives in place to keep excess hay from being shipped to the United States.

"A lot of our excess hay ships to the States because the Americans get a trucking subsidy. So, we have a shortage of hay in Saskatchewan, and yet the 'excess' is going to the States because those producers can pay more because they have a trucking subsidy," he said.

"It's just some of those things that we need looked at and could be discussed."

### COMMUNITY CALENDAR

**SPIRITWOOD:** Wapiti Regional Library - Tuesday 9am - 5pm; Wednesday 9am - 5pm; Friday 9am - 5pm

**LEOVILLE:** Wapiti Regional Library - Wednesday 10am - 4pm; Thursday 10am - 4pm

**SHELL LAKE:** Wapiti Regional Library - Tuesday 11am - 4pm; Wednesday 12pm - 5pm

**BLAINE LAKE:** Wapiti Library - Wednesday 1pm - 6pm; Thursday 1pm - 6pm; Friday 1pm - 6pm; Saturday 10am - 3pm. Contact us for more info 306-497-3130, [www.wapitilibrary.ca](http://www.wapitilibrary.ca).

**BIG RIVER:** Wapiti Library - Tuesday 11:30am - 4:30pm; Wednesday 11:30am - 4:30pm; Thursday 11:30am - 4:30pm. Phone # 306-469-2152

**CANWOOD:** Canwood Branch of Wapiti Regional Library. Tuesday 10am - 3:30pm; Thursday 2pm - 6pm; Friday 1:30pm - 5pm. Kids Club is Fridays 3:30pm - 4:30pm, Crafter's Choice is the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month.

**DEBDEN:** Wapiti Library hours: Tuesday 10am - 4pm; Wednesday 1pm - 7pm. Librarian: Aline Hannon

**LEASK:** Wapiti Library & Legacy Gallery Hours - Tuesday 9am - 2pm; Wednesday 3pm - 6pm; Friday 11am - 5pm

**MARCELIN:** Wapiti Library - Thursday 2pm - 7pm; Saturday 9am - 2pm. For information on all your library needs, please contact 306-226-2110.

**SHELLBROOK:** Shellbrook Branch of the Wapiti Library located at 105 Railway Ave., West (Provincial building). Library Hours: Monday 2pm - 6pm; Tuesday 2pm - 8pm; Wednesday 2pm - 8pm; Thursday 12pm - 6pm; Friday 10am - 5pm (Story Time 10:30am - 11:30am); Saturday 10am - 4pm.

**SHELLBROOK:** TOPS Club Inc - Interested in taking off pounds sensibly? Pop into our open house & see what we are all about! May 7th @ 5:30 pm, Shellbrook Pentecostal Assembly - 61 2nd Street W

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# WP Sandin High School hosts careers fair

By **JORDAN TWISS**  
Shellbrook Chronicle Reporter

On Tuesday, April 16, Grades 6 to 8 students at WP Sandin High School gained first-hand knowledge from local professionals about a wide array of potential career paths, when the school played host to an informal careers fair.

The invaluable learning opportunity is part of the Grade 6 to 8 Career Education curriculum, in which students are tasked with exploring different career opportunities and professions of interest, and investigating the personal qualities and skills learned in school that translate well into those professions.

"Instead of reading about these professions, I decided

to connect with the community and bring the experts in the profession to us," said teacher Marliese Kasner. "[I thought] it would provide unique learning experiences."

All told, 27 different professionals volunteered to share their expertise and experience with the students, and Kasner says she was thrilled with the tremendous support from the community.

Among those imparting their professional wisdom on the day were Premier Scott Moe, Michelle Harris, Brittany Ferguson, and Jordan Thiessen (medical laboratory technologists), Cheryl Ledding (business owner), Zach Boettcher (chiropractor), Sandi Horricks (pharmacy technician), Kelly Zbaraschuk (medical radiation technologist), Lisa Wallin (physical therapist), Carla Keyowski (hair stylist), Linwood Williams (mil-

itary), Lyle Banda (financial advisor), Sgt. Smith (police officer), Derek Robin (lineman), Sean Helm and Grant Thiel (farmers), Jen Thiel (pharmacist), Crystal Schmitz (bank manager), Kris Moe (entrepreneur), Briana Hart (autobody technician), Stacey Lajeunesse (corrections officer), Brandy Berg (massage therapist), Jonathan Nelson (livestock farmer), Jennifer Fonos (welder), Mike Kennedy (forestry technician), Cortney Olsen (nurse), and Terry Page (truck driver).

Kasner says her students were buzzing about the many different things they learned all afternoon.

"The students were engaged and excited to listen to many professions and have hands-on learning experiences," she said. "It is [an experience] they will not forget."



Medical laboratory technologist Jordan Thiessen shows a pig lung to Mason Harris.



Medical radiation technologist Kelly Zbaraschuk walks students through her job.



With guidance from hair stylist Carla Keyowski, Gwyn Phan gives Mr. Mandzak a close shave.

## Canwood Bowling Alley hosts wind-up

By **LORRAINE BENSON**

On Friday, April 12, the Canwood bowling alley was a busy place. All the bowlers from this past season came together for a potluck supper and celebrate another year of exceptional visiting and bowling.

After supper, the hardware was handed out by Theresa Burgmaier to the lucky recipients, and team trophies were handed out as well.

The winning league team members from Tuesday and

Thursday afternoons were: Terry Lofstrom, Marilyn Lofstrom, Theresa Burgmaier, and Sharon Ashby. The total pins for rollofs – 5,376.

The winning league team members for the Wednesday evening were: Ron Samson, Laurie Samson, Glenda Wilson, Terry Hamborg and Dale Benson. The total pins for rollofs – 6,454.

Ladies high average – Marilyn Lofstrom – 179.

Men's high average – Tom Wilson – 208.

Ladies high triple – Marilyn Lofstrom – 677.

Men's high triple – Tom

Wilson – 795.

Ladies high single Marilyn Lofstrom – 246.

Men's high single – Tom Wilson – 321.

Wednesday Seniors for Ladies high single – Lorna Parent – 232.

Men's high single – Al Dion – 250.

The evening culminated with the Turkey Rollofs. During the year, if you get

three strikes in a row, you get a Turkey. Actual (frozen) turkeys were given to the winners: Marilyn Lofstrom for the ladies and Tom Wilson for the men.

The rest of us got a chance to get a strike and win a turkey. Faith Mazurek was the winner in that category.

It was a great evening, and we hope to see everyone in the fall.



Men's High Single and High Triple: Tom Wilson



Ladies High Single and High Triple: Marilyn Lofstrom



Afternoon league winners, from left to right: Terry Lofstrom, Marilyn Lofstrom, and Theresa Burgmaier. Missing: Sharon Ashby.



Wednesday evening winners: left to right Dale Benson, Ron Samson, Laurie Samson, Glenda Wilson, Terry Hamborg.

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# Feds table 2024-2025 Budget

By **JORDAN TWISS**  
Shellbrook Chronicle Reporter

Federal Finance Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland tabled the Liberal government's 2024-2025 budget last Tuesday, April 16, calling it a means to deliver "fairness for every generation."

"Together, we will unlock the door to the middle class for more Canadians and renew the promise of our great country," Freeland said in the House of Commons.

The 430-page document pegs the federal deficit at \$39.8 billion for 2024-2025. However, the country's debt-to-GDP ratio, which compares what a country owes to what it produces, is expected to tick slightly downward to 41.2 per cent this fiscal year, and is projected to continue this trend for the next four years.

Once again, the federal budget offers no road map back to balance, boasting \$480.5 billion in overall spending and promising \$52.9 billion in new spending over the next five years. This means debt servicing is expected to rise, too, reaching an annual cost of \$54.1 billion.

"After eight years of Justin Trudeau, the budget is still not balancing itself. Everything Justin Trudeau spends money on gets worse and more costly. Trudeau has spent, Canadians are broke, and the country is broken," Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre said in a statement.

Housing remains a key pillar for the federal government for the third consecutive budget. It plans to spend \$8.5 billion with a goal of building 3.87 million homes by 2031, and to use the \$55 billion Apartment Construction Loan Program to partner with provinces to build more rental housing.

The partnership with the provinces comes with several benchmarks, including building on government, non-profit, community-owned, and vacant lands, considering access to childcare in the development process, and cutting development approval timelines to 12 to 18 months.

Looking to boost affordability for some of the most vulnerable Canadians, Bud-

get 2024-2025 promises \$6.1 billion over six years for a renewed Canada Disability Benefit. The maximum benefit is set at \$2,400 annually, and estimated to go to more than 600,000 low-income people with disabilities aged 18 to 64.

The goal is to have payments begin to reach people who need them by July 2025.

Five years after it was promised alongside the introduction of the federal carbon tax, the government is making good on its commitment to return the \$2.5 billion collected from small businesses back to them in the form of the Canada Carbon Rebate for Small Businesses. An estimated 600,000 businesses with 499 or fewer employees will be eligible.

Budget 2024-2025 also sees spending to the tune of \$1.5 billion on the beginning stages of the government's promised national pharmacare program, a commitment of \$1 billion over five years to introduce a national school lunch and breakfast program for an estimated 400,000 students, and \$1 billion to help with the creation of more daycare spaces.

In line with the government's environmental policy, and its goal of having all new vehicle sales be EVs by 2035, the budget pledges \$1 billion to expand EV charging infrastructure across the country. It also gives the Zero-emissions Vehicles Program, which offers up to a \$5,000 rebate for leasing or purchasing an EV, a \$607.9 million top-up.

Last but not least, after years of being accused of being soft on national security, Budget 2024-2025 includes nearly \$10 billion over five years for various national security and defence initiatives.

On the policy side, the feds will be targeting airlines and concert and sporting ticket vendors in an aim to increase transparency around ticket sales. Under the regime, both airlines and concert and sporting ticket vendors will be required to list all fees upfront.

For concert and sporting tickets, vendors are being asked to tackle ticket reselling via bots, which drives up prices. Meanwhile, airlines are being asked to waive the seat selection fee for children under 14 to make it easier for families to

sit together.

In the tech sphere, the government will be amending the Telecommunications Act to prohibit companies from charging customers for changing providers. It also plans to expand Canadians' right to repair by allowing them to use third parties to fix their devices without voiding warranties.

The government is calling on the provinces to introduce similar right to repair programs, and says it's also hoping to crackdown on planned obsolescence, a practice of designing products to break or become obsolete in a short timeframe to encourage sales of new products.

Of course, all these promises come with a hefty price tag.

To pay for some of it, the federal government is increasing the capital gains tax on the wealthiest 0.13 per cent of Canadians (about 40,000 people). The budget does

so by raising the portion of income from the sale of stocks and investment properties that is subject to income tax from 50 to 66.7 per cent, but only for the segment of investments that exceeds \$250,000 for individuals, and on all capital gains realized by corporations and trusts.

The government expects a revenue boost of \$19 billion from this tax hike, which it says will not apply to the sale of Canadians' principal residences.

The government is also hiking excise duties on cigarettes to reap an extra \$1.36 billion over five years, and increasing vaping excise duties by 12 per cent, raising \$310 million over five years.

Finally, some savings will be found through cuts to the public service. All told, the government expects to eliminate about 5,000 full-time positions from the bureaucracy, which has grown to 357,247 workers.

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# Minutes of an RM of Spiritwood meeting

(Where necessary, the following minutes may have been edited for clarity or brevity)

The Regular Meeting of the Council of the Rural Municipality of Spiritwood No. 496 was held on Tuesday, Feb. 13, 2024.

In attendance were, Reeve Shirley Dauvin, Division 1 Larry Vaagen, Division 2 Dale Wasden, Division 3 Terry Wingerter, Division 5 Heather Warkentin, Division 6 Bevrá Fee, Administrator Colette Bussiere, and Foreman Darcy Laventure.

Absent was, Division 4 Dennis Laventure.

A quorum being present the meeting was called to order at 8:57 a.m. by Reeve, Shirley Dauvin.

Vaagen: That the Foreman's report having been read now be filed. Carried

Wasden: That we purchase Hi-Vis reflective winter parkas & pants

for the full-time public works employees & Hi-Vis reflective coveralls for all public works employees. Carried

Wingerter: That the minutes of the Jan. 9, 2024, Regular Meeting of Council be approved as presented. Carried

Warkentin: That the Administrator's report having been read now be filed. Carried

Fee: That the bank reconciliation for the month ending Dec. 31, 2023 (Accruals) & Jan. 31, 2024, be accepted as presented. Carried

Warkentin: That the "List of Accounts" as listed on the attached Schedule "A" forming part of these minutes be passed for payment: Cheque No. 14563-14593 (\$88,810.37), Payroll File No. 449, 451, 452 & 453 (\$39,625.47), EFT No. 2024 0002-0009 (\$49,974.34). Carried

Wasden: That the Statement of Financial Activities for the month

ending Dec. 31, 2023 (accrual invoices) and Jan. 31, 2024, be approved as presented. Carried

Vaagen: That the gravel crushing tender for 2024 be awarded to Venture Construction Inc. Carried

Fee: That the gravel hauling tender for 2024 be awarded to Bedrock Sand & Gravel Inc. and Kustaski Enterprises Ltd. Carried

Wingerter: That we acknowledge & accept the Dec. 31, 2023, inventory value for pest control supplies, culverts & gravel stockpiles as presented. Carried

Warkentin: That cemetery plot fees for RM owned cemeteries be set at \$250 and interment fees be set at \$250. Carried

Wingerter: That we support the resolutions being put forth to SARM regarding Nurse Practitioners & the SIPPA Program and the request to change legislation for

Breach of Bylaws. Carried

Warkentin: That we continue to participate in the Thickwood Hills Watershed Association & pay the respective membership fee. Carried

Fee: That we follow up with the North Central Transportation Planning Committee regarding upgrading Hwy No. 3 to a primary weight corridor and meet with adjacent RMs to discuss. Carried

Vaagen: That the Council for the RM of Spiritwood No. 496 has no objections to SaskPower's new line install at E 1/2 03-51-11-W3 as per Service Order No. 20415996. Carried

Warkentin: That we acknowledge the Spiritwood Public Library reports and provide additional funding in the amount of \$2,365.00 for two (2) additional hours and \$1,000.00 for the operating grant for the 2024 calendar year. Carried

Warkentin: That we approve the quote from Bunker Fire Safety to purchase five (5) - 4-unit free standing lockers for the Spiritwood Fire Dept. in the amount of \$9,181.75 plus applicable taxes and shipping. Carried

Warkentin: That we participate in WCB optional coverage for elected officials at the minimum amount of \$39,170. Carried

Wasden: That the request to clear trees, brush & debris from the right of way described as Twp Rd 512, between Rge Rd 3122 & 3123 and Rge Rd 3122 between Twp Rd 511 & Twp Rd 512 which provides access to N 1/2 10 51-12-W3 be approved as per the road allowance brushing policy. No compensation will be paid as the brush clearing is only beneficial to the applicant & does not provide a benefit to the municipality. Carried

Fee: That Rick Doell be appointed to the Meeting Lake Regional Park Authority as an RM representative to fill the vacant seat for the remaining term expiring Dec. 31, 2024. Carried

Fee: That the council meeting be closed to the public at 11:29 a.m. under the authority of Part III of The Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, to go in camera to discuss Human Resources. Carried

CAO Colette Bussiere left council chambers at 11:29 a.m.

CAO Colette Bussiere returned to council chambers at 11:40 a.m.

The regular meeting of council was out of camera & resumed at 11:40 a.m.

Wingerter: That the correspondence, having been read, now be filed. Carried

Warkentin: That the meeting be adjourned.

## Tips for spring feed forages

By **KEANA BOERE**  
Ministry of Agriculture

Seeding a successful perennial forage stand takes planning and a little luck. Forage seed is an investment — planning and following best practices for establishment improve your chances of getting a good catch and a productive stand.

Spring is generally the recommended time to seed perennial forages as this is the best opportunity for good soil moisture conditions.

What other practices can you do to im-

prove your chance of success in seeding a productive forage stand?

1. Species selection is an important first step. You want to select species that will grow in your area and be productive for your specific end-use goals. Some species are better suited for use in a hay stand while others perform best under grazing.
2. Use high-quality seed to improve germination and reduce the risk of weed seed contamination. Certified #1 or Common #1 seed is recommended.

3. Most forage seeds are very small and should not be seeded deeper than 12 mm (1/2 inch).
4. A firm seedbed is best for forage seeds to have good seed to soil contact. Clean, unworked stubble makes a good seedbed.
5. Seeding rates will vary depending on your area. Ideal seeding rates are based on the targeted pure live seeds per square foot (metre) and the average available precipitation for your area.
6. Starting with a clean, weed-free field is important to give forage seedlings a strong start. Control weeds before seeding, especially stubborn perennial weeds.
7. Select the appropriate inoculant if seeding any legume species. Each

legume or group of legumes requires a unique species of rhizobium to form nodules and fix nitrogen for the plant.

8. Forages require nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, sulphur and micronutrients to remain productive. Soil testing is the best way to assess soil nutrient levels and results can be used to decide on fertilizer options. Be aware of the safe rates for seed-placed fertilizer with forage crops.
9. Patience. Forages are slow to establish compared to many annual crops, and often require over a year to be fully established.

If you are looking for more details on forage seeding and species selection, the Saskatchewan Forage Crop Production Guide is a great resource.

## PRAISE & WORSHIP

Regular services, Sunday school and special services will be listed.

### LUTHERAN CHURCH

Zion - Canwood  
Sunday School,  
Worship Sunday, 9 a.m.  
(in-person only)  
St. John's - Shellbrook  
Sunday School,  
Worship Sunday, 11 a.m.  
(in-person and online  
via Facebook live)  
Rev. Emmanuel Aristide

### PENTECOSTAL CHURCH

Parkside  
10:30 a.m. Worship  
Pastor Lorne Valuck  
306-747-3572  
Shellbrook  
Adult Study  
9:30 a.m.  
Sun., 10:30 a.m. - Worship  
Pastor David Bodvarson  
306-747-7235  
Canwood  
Summer: 10 a.m. - Worship  
Pastor Bob Wrench  
306-468-2138  
Leask Gospel Tabernacle  
Sunday 11 a.m.  
Pastor Josh  
1-780-690-2100

### UNITED CHURCH

Big River  
Sundays  
11 a.m. - Worship  
at Anglican Church  
Rev. Dave Whalley  
306-747-2804

### ANGLICAN CHURCH

Leask - All Saint's  
Sunday Service - 9 a.m.  
St. Andrew's - Shellbrook  
Sunday, 11 a.m. Service  
Canwood - Christ Church  
Sunday, 2 p.m. - Service  
Rev. Canon David Butorac  
306-961-1634  
Minister's Warden:  
306-922-5159  
H.C. Service with Rev.  
Butorac - 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of the  
month

### EVANGELICAL FREE

Big River  
11:00 a.m. - Worship  
Bible Classes 9:45 a.m.  
Summer: 10:30 a.m. - 12  
306-469-2258  
Youth Nite: Fridays  
Mont Nebo  
Sun. Worship - 11:00 a.m.  
(10:30 a.m. June - August)  
306-468-2525

### IMMANUEL LUTHERAN

Parkside  
11 a.m. - Worship

### PRESBYTERIAN

Mistawasis  
Sunday worship  
11:00 a.m.  
Rev. Stewart Folster

### CATHOLIC CHURCH

Debden  
Sun. Mass - 9:30 a.m.  
Fr. Mariusz Zajac  
Big River - Sacred Heart  
Sun., 11:30 a.m. - Mass  
Whitefish  
Sun., 2:30 p.m. - Mass.  
Victoire  
Sat., 7:30 p.m. - Mass.  
Fr. Mariusz Zajac  
St. Agatha's - Shellbrook  
Mass - Sunday 11 a.m.  
St. Henry's - Leask  
Mass - Sunday 9 a.m.  
Mistawasis  
1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays 1:30 p.m.  
Fr. Tuan Doan

### SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST

407-2<sup>nd</sup> Ave E, Shellbrook  
Sat., 9:45 a.m. - Sabbath  
School  
Sat., 11:00 am - Worship  
Pastor Myshan Irving  
306-747-3398

## PRAISE & WORSHIP

Regular services, Sunday school and special services will be listed.

### PARTNERS IN FAITH

Lutheran/United/  
Christchurch Anglican,  
137-2<sup>nd</sup> St. W.  
Spiritwood  
Worship 11:00 a.m.  
Rev. Sarah Urano

### UNITED / ANGLICAN

Worship Services  
Glaslyn  
Time is on the sign  
Rev. Kun Kim  
Rev. Don Skinner

### CATHOLIC SUNDAY

Leoville - 9:30 a.m.  
Spiritwood - 11:15 a.m.  
Shell Lake - 2:00 p.m.  
SATURDAY  
Medstead - 6:00 p.m.  
Everyone Welcome  
Fr. Ramel Macapala

### COWBOY CHURCH

Spiritwood  
Every Wednesday Night  
7 pm  
Spiritwood Legion Hall  
Pastor Rick Martin

### FIELDS OF HOPE (HOFFNUNGSFELDER) MENNONITE CHURCH

Glenbush  
Worship - 11:00 am

### BETHEL

Medstead  
2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday, 10 am -  
Worship  
Pastor David Jensen  
4<sup>th</sup> Sunday, 10 am -  
Worship  
Pastor David Jensen

### MENNONITE BRETHREN

Glenbush  
10:00 am - Sunday School  
Worship 10:50 am

### Gideons International of Canada

Battlefords Camp  
Phone Art Martynes  
(306) 389-4633

### BELBUTTE FULL GOSPEL

11 am Worship Service

### PARTNERS IN WORSHIP

Shell Lake  
Worship Services  
Sunday 9:00 a.m.  
Pastor Sarah Urano  
306-841-7333

### LAKELAND

COMMUNITY CHURCH  
(Corner of 1<sup>st</sup> Ave. and 4<sup>th</sup>  
St., Spiritwood)  
Sun., 11 am - Worship  
Service & Sunday School  
Pastor Michael Kluthe  
306-883-2380



## One word for Caitlin Clark: Dominating

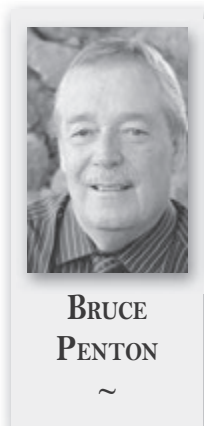
She was born on the 22nd day of January, 2002, wears No. 22 for the Iowa Hawkeyes and her team finished No. 2 in the NCAA women's basketball championship, but Caitlin Clark has No. 1 written all over her.

There was perhaps no more famous athlete in North America during the month of March than Clark, whose dominance on the basketball court turned her from a prodigy to a legend. She was the obvious No. 1 selection in last week's Women's National Basketball Association draft, going to the Indiana Fever, and most sports analysts in the U.S. predict that thanks to Clark, the women's pro game will get the same attention boost she gave the college game the past couple of seasons.

Not especially tall at 6-foot-0, Clark nonethe-

less dominated her sport for the past two years and her team's games became must-see TV across most of the basketball-crazed U.S.A.

With a deadly eye for the three-point shot, Clark averaged 31.6 points per game as Iowa posted a 34-5 record en route to the national final against South Carolina, which completed its undefeated season with a 87-75 win over Clark's Hawkeyes. The Clark legend grew and grew and grew all year, to the point where her team's championship game against South Carolina drew a TV audience of 18.7 million, more viewers than any basketball game in 2024 of any level — men's or women's college games, NBA, and WNBA included. ESPN has already announced that 36 of Indiana's 40 WNBA games next season will be nationally televised.



BRUCE PENTON

Coach Dawn Staley of South Carolina was quick to pay tribute to the Clark effect, saying after the championship game that she wanted to "personally thank Caitlin Clark for lifting up our sport. She carried a heavy load for our sport and it just is not gonna stop here on the collegiate tour. But when she is the No. 1 pick in the WNBA draft, she's gonna lift that league up as well. So Caitlin Clark if you're out there, you are one of

the GOATs of our game. We appreciate you."

Besides becoming a household name, Clark also became the collegiate game's all-time leading scorer, with 3,685 points in four seasons. The men's mark, which she surpassed, was held by LSU's Pistol Pete Maravich, who scored 3,667 points in three years.

Clark will undoubtedly sign a lucrative contract with Indiana and continue to be a Sports Centre darling, but money is the least of her worries. Thanks to the introduction a couple of years ago of Name, Image and Likeness payments to college athletes, Clark is already worth more than \$3 million, with dozens of endorsement contracts to her credit. Good thing, too, because the maximum salary for a WNBA rookie is \$76,300. Tip money, basically.

The phenomenon that is Caitlin Clark now enters its next chapter, and the WNBA will be the beneficiary. In stock-market parlance, the WNBA's arrow is pointing straight up.

• Mike Bianchi of the Orlando Sentinel: "Even though Dec. 25th is on Wednesday this year, the NFL announced that it will play two games on Christmas Day, thus commandeering a holiday that was once the NBA's showcase day. In the NBA's eyes, the NFL truly is 'The Grinch Who Stole Christmas.'"

• Eamon Lynch of golfweek.usatoday.com: "Bryson DeChambeau, one of the arsonists who set golf's house on fire, is now complaining that others aren't moving quickly enough to extinguish the blaze."

• Augusta National chairman Fred Ridley, saying the 12th hole will never be lengthened, as suggested by 2000 champ Vijay Singh: "That's almost like asking, you know, can we touch up the Mona Lisa a little bit."

• Headline at TheBeaverton.com: "O..J Simpson funeral to feature ceremonial televised white bronco chase."

• Another one from the Beaverton, which wrote a story headlined: "Ten names for Utah's new NHL team even less rep-

resentative of the state than Jazz. No. 5: Utah Gangster Rappers; No. 8. Utah Open Past 10 p.m.-ers"

• O.J. Simpson death headline in the The New York Post, exhibiting extreme New York Posty: "Real Killer is Dead."

• And the Beaverton, piling on: "O.J. Simpson dies surrounded by family members he didn't kill."

• Comedy guy Torben Rolfsen of Vancouver: "The Masters music makes Barry Manilow sound like The Clash."

• RJ Currie of sports-deke.com: "Tiger Woods says if everything comes together, he believes he can win another Masters. He got me so fired up I sent another set of marriage proposals to Anne Hathaway, Margot Robbie and Gal Godot."

• Another one from RJ Currie: "Pittsburgh police arrested a Nashville Predators fan for throwing a catfish onto the ice, then later dropped all charges. Poetic justice — he was caught and released."

• Headline at fark.com: "Shohei Ohtani was not involved with his interpreter's gambling scandal according to the Brinks truck of money MLB used to make it the truth."

Care to comment? Email [brucepenton2003@yahoo.ca](mailto:brucepenton2003@yahoo.ca)

## Three resources for new farmers

Canada has a long history of farming, and many farms have been in the same family for generations. Others are trying their hand at farming for the first time, whether they are newcomers or long-time residents interested in a hands-on career in tune with the environment. Whether you're a new farmer or come from a long line of farmers, here are three programs designed to help you manage the risks and finances of running a farm.

### Training and incentives

Whether you are new to farming or established in the field, it might be worth considering an alternative to private loans, such as the Canadian Agricultural Loans Act Program - known as the CALA Program. This program can help those looking to establish, improve or expand their farming business with lower interest rates and down payments, as well as flexible repayment options and incentives.

You may qualify for up to \$500,000, with the federal government guaranteeing 95 per cent of the loan, which means access to better interest rates and lower minimum equity.

### Cash advances

Any business owner knows that managing cash flow can be a challenge. It is particularly difficult when

the product you are selling can take weeks, months or even years to be ready for market. To help farmers get by while their crops or livestock are growing, the federal government developed the Advance Payments Program.

Under this program, farmers can access up to \$1 million in advanced funds based on the value of the eligible agricultural products they will produce or have in storage, with the Government of Canada paying the interest on the first \$100,000. Applications for 2024 will open on April 1, 2024. Depending on what is being produced,

farmers will have 18 to 24 months to fully repay their advance.

### Debt management

Sometimes things do not work out how we want them to. If you are struggling to manage your debt, you can apply to the voluntary, confidential Farm Debt Mediation Service to receive credit counselling and to have a meeting arranged with your creditor(s) to develop a recovery plan.

Learn more about these and other financial resources at [agriculture.canada.ca/manage-farm-risk-and-finance](http://agriculture.canada.ca/manage-farm-risk-and-finance).

[www.newscanada.com](http://www.newscanada.com)



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## OBITUARY

## Myrna Burgess



(Dorothy) Myrna Burgess was born on August 2, 1926, the third of six

children born to Frank and Edna Foster. Before marrying, Mother attended "normal" school in Saskatoon for the summer months, and in the fall, she began her teaching career in Mudie Lake, Saskatchewan. She married Lester Burgess in 1946, and after a short time of living in BC, they settled in the Mayview district, Saskatchewan, and it was there that they raised their 7 children. She took on short teaching contracts at Tan-

glewood School in the district of Mayview, but eventually was hired by Prince Albert National Park, where she worked seasonally for the next 29 years. Some of you may recall her smiling happy face when you entered the PANP at the South Gatehouse. Mother was an avid gardener and a wonderful cook. She enjoyed music, dancing, playing cards, curling, crosscountry skiing and most recently she was an armchair baseball play-

er, cheering on her beloved Blue Jays. She also became a Master of the iPad which enabled her to stay in touch with all who were precious to her, wherever they were. She was an avid world traveler, and she lit that candle in the hearts of many of her grandchildren. Even at the age of 97, she knew the details of every grandchild, great grandchild and great-great grandchild, including where they were and what they were doing on a daily basis.

Mother was predeceased by her parents Frank and Edna Foster, her husband Lester Burgess, her children Brenda and Brian Burgess, her

grandson Cole Hudson Mayert, her sisters Marjorie and Florence and her brother Ed, as well as many members of her extended Foster and Burgess families.

She is survived by: Her son Gerald (Jennifer) of Kamloops, BC; Her son Larry (Helen) of Tweedsmuir, SK; Her daughter Sandra (Dennis) of Swift Current, SK; Her daughter Diane (Guy) of Kamloops, BC; her daughter Lorraine (Jimmy) of Calgary, Alberta, and daughter-in-law Lori (Pat) of Carrington, North Dakota. At the time of her passing Myrna had 18 grandchildren, 44 great grandchildren

and 5 great-great grandchildren.

Myrna was laid to rest in the Prince Albert Memorial Gardens in Prince Albert, next to her husband Lester and daughter Brenda. A Celebration of Life was held at 1 o'clock on Saturday, April 20, 2024 at the Shellbrook Pentecostal Assembly with Pastor Dave Bodvarson officiating. Funeral Arrangements have been entrusted to Beau "Lac" Funeral Home in Shellbrook. In lieu of other tributes, memorial donations may be made to the Shellbrook & District Health Services Foundation (Box 33, SHELLBROOK, SK. S0J 2E0.

## GOOD NEWS

### HUMILITY IS A HARD THING TO GRASP

By **DAVE BODVARSON**  
Shellbrook Pentecostal Assembly

Humility is a hard thing to grasp. When you think you've got it, you likely don't.

I have had a series of little cars. I actually owned a Suzuki. On my birthday a number of years ago, someone got a decal with my first name on it that I put in my back windshield. It read "David's Suzuki."

I think I drove the Suzuki a couple of years. One day, my wife and I went for a drive. I noticed someone as I went by her, and I rolled down the window and engaged in a conversation.

That day I was wearing inexpensive green sunglasses our son gave me that had the University of Saskatchewan logo inscribed on them. I don't know why I said it; I guess I was just being friendly. But I asked her what she thought of my glasses.

She said, "David you sure think highly of yourself."

Well that struck me funny.

I must admit I find the Bible a book that needs to be balanced!

Jesus said, "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Mark 12:31)

A Psalmist said, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made." (Psalm 139:14)

And I love that verse in I Corinthians 15:10, which reads "I am what I am by the grace of God."

Not quite 40 years ago, I graced the walls of Lutheran Seminary in Saskatoon. At the time, Marlene and I were pastoring Native New Life Church in Saskatoon. I had graduated with a Bachelor of Theology Degree, but wanted to go for a Master of Divinity. I have a couple stories that relate to my time there.

I did take a course on family with Dr. Carol. But my salary was challenging, and the demands of raising a family didn't allow me to continue pursuing the degree.

The Pentecostals and the Lutherans had a relationship. We would send our students to their seminary to get higher education. The President of the seminary had a habit of meeting with the Pentecostal students that were studying there.

I recall the day I was called to his office. As we engaged in conversation I tried to build a bridge. I told him a few things he would have known.

One was that my last name is Icelandic. The second thing was I reminded him the state religion in Iceland my grandfather's home country is Lutheran.

I don't think I impressed him at all. His response was Icelanders are very stubborn people. They are Luther-

an, but never go to church. I'm sure that is an exaggeration; there has to be some Icelanders who are faithful in attending church.

My second story about the Lutheran seminary relates to Dr. Carol. As he was teaching one day, he related a story about his time pastoring. He said he got to a church where it seemed that one particularly influential man in the congregation didn't get along too well with the pastors sent their way. As a result, that church had a string of pastors who served.

Dr. Carol, who was the pastor, felt led to visit with him. In the visit, he asked the man if he would allow him to wash his feet. I suspect the man was taken aback. In the privacy of the man's home, with a basin of water and a towel Dr. Carol washed this old patriarch's feet.

The following Sunday the man got up in church and said now we have a pastor.

I am still challenged by Jesus' words in John 13:14: "If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet."

Wonderful humility. Serving others is what Jesus wants of us.

## Know your seed-borne disease risk

By **MACKENZIE HLADUN**  
Ministry of Agriculture

Seed-borne diseases can be pesky; they can lead to an accumulation of disease in your field and spread through subsequent crop years. Following a dry year like 2023, disease levels are often thought to be low. However, disease can still happen in dry years, and being aware of the amount of disease in your area is important for determining the next steps. Interim data submitted by seed labs around the province show the average per cent infection of seed-borne diseases in both cereals and pulse crops. This information can be a powerful tool in knowing how to protect your next crop. This information is even

stronger when combined with your own seed test. Testing your seed for disease, vigour and germination is important preparation for seeding.

There are many different pathogens that can infect the seed and impact the crop, causing seedling blight and damping off effect. Each disease level has a threshold, and the threshold can vary by pathogen and crop type. Detailed information on mitigating seed-borne diseases and preventing further infection for pulse crops and cereal crops is available.

If you're in an area with a high infection of a seed-borne disease, put your best crop forward by applying mitigation strategies to your seed. Seed cleaning, treating seed with a fungicide seed

treatment and getting your seed tested are three important strategies for dealing with contaminated seed. Cleaning your seed can help remove some of the diseased seed from the lot. Treating with a fungicide seed treatment can prevent further infection of the pathogen into the plant and protect from seedling blight and rots. As always, follow the label; you can find more information in the 2024 Guide to Crop Protection. As mentioned above, testing your seed can help you make informed decisions.

Ensure your seed is the best it can be for this year's crop. Contact your local crops extension specialists or call the Agriculture Knowledge Centre at 1-866-457-2377 to learn more.

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# Spiritwood Wagyu experiment a Grade A success

By **JORDAN TWISS**  
Shellbrook Chronicle Reporter

It started as a simple question raised during a conversation at a Christmas gathering a little more than three years ago.

Spiritwood area cattleman Kendall Gaboury and his sister-in-law, Angie, were talking about a farmer near Caronport, Sask., who had introduced “snow beef” to the prairies by artificially inseminating Holstein cows with Wagyu semen, when she asked if

he could try the same thing with his own herd.

At the time, Wagyu beef — which comes from a breed of cattle native to Japan — was just emerging as a “must-have” delicacy in the culinary world, coveted for its high levels of marbling (intramuscular fat deposits) and flavourful “melt-in-your-mouth” quality.

Seeing a chance to experiment with something new, Kendall thought, “Why not give it a try?”

“I already used AI breeding in my purebred herd, so I quickly texted my semen provider to see if he could source some Wagyu semen for us,” he said. “In about a minute, he texted me back to say that he could drop some in my nitrogen tank the next time that he was passing through Spiritwood.”

Before beginning their experiment, Kendall says he and his brother, Jason, talked to a few other cattle producers who had tried breeding Wagyu themselves or knew someone who had tried it.

At almost every turn, they received the same warning.

“They basically told us not to waste time or effort,” Kendall said. “Their main concerns were that the calves were too weak to thrive here, their calves were tiny at birth, and that it took up to three years to get the animals up to finished condition.”

As the Wagyu breed was entirely new to them, and they were uncertain of how the animals would fare in Saskatchewan’s climate, Kendall and Jason opted to dip their toes into the market and didn’t bother with a marketing plan.

Instead, using the information they’d been given, they hand-picked commercial cows from their herd, prioritizing cows that usually produced large calves at birth, cows with thick hair coats, and big cows with both frame and depth.

Starting in the spring of 2021, they bred only five cows to Wagyu: two of Jason’s Simmental-Charolais crosses, two of Kendall’s purebred Black Angus, and one of his Simmental-Charolais crosses.

Knowing they weren’t looking to go beyond half-Wagyu or keep any breeding stock, they were pleased when calving season came around and their cows delivered only bull calves. And they were also satisfied with the calves they got.

“The calves were over 80 lbs birth weight,” Kendall said. “They had an adequate amount of hair, [and they] continued to grow at a decent pace.”

Once they’d been weaned from their mother, Kendall and Jason strived to push their growth with a total mixed ration of hay, barley silage, super oats, mineral, and 14 per cent protein pellets. The feeding regimen worked well, allowing the steers to be butchered at 15 to 16 months of age with a dressed weight of more than 800 lbs.

More importantly, though, the quality of the meat was everything they had hoped for, making it easy to find takers in the area.

“Jason and I each kept some of the meat for ourselves as well, and were blown away by the end product,” Kendall said. “The marbling in the steaks and roasts was incredible. This made

them juicy and tender.”

Having had success in their first round of experimentation with Wagyu beef, Kendall and Jason have purchased 10 more straws of only male sexed Wagyu semen and plan to artificially inseminate cows in May.

“If everything goes as well as it did last time, we could possibly breed some cows every year to Wagyu,” Kendall said, noting that this would require more of a marketing plan.

“For now, we’ll keep our fingers crossed that we have more happy customers enjoying our product in June 2026.”

*With files from Alison Sullivan*



Kendall and Jason Gaboury’s first experiment with Wagyu produced good results at calving season.



Kendall says the steaks and roasts they got were “incredible,” leaving him and his customers satisfied with the results.

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# Three challenges facing the agricultural sector

Since the World Health Organization declared a global pandemic in early 2020, businesses big and small have faced significant challenges. Though the pandemic has ended, many sectors, including the agricultural industry, are facing familiar and unfamiliar challenges.

The agricultural sector is crucial to the survival and health of billions of people across the globe. Though it's obvious that modern agriculture is vital to feeding a global population that was greater than eight billion people at the dawn of 2024, the United Nations notes that agriculture also boosts prosperity and economies by providing jobs. That reality only underscores the notion that the challenges facing the agricultural sector are facing everyone, even those whose livelihoods are not directly linked to the industry. According to *Earth.org*, an organization that offers environmental news, data analysis, research, and policy solutions, the following are three sizable challenges facing modern agriculture.

**1. Climate change:** Perhaps no challenge is greater for



humanity in the twenty-first century than climate change, and the agricultural sector is no exception. Climate change has caused shifting weather patterns marked by unpredictability and potentially disastrous developments like prolonged drought. Estimates from NASA indicate corn yields may decrease by 24 percent by the end of this century, a potentially dangerous development linked

to a host of factors, including a shifting climate and elevated surface carbon dioxide concentrations that can be traced to human-caused greenhouse gas emissions.

**2. Population growth:** The booming global population is attributable to numerous factors, including longer life expectancies in developed nations due to medical advancements. How to keep the global

population fed at a time when the climate is adversely affecting crop yields is a significant challenge facing both humanity and the agricultural sector. As the population grows, so, too, does the demand for water, which also must be used to grow crops. Navigating this challenge will be significant, and how it's managed could affect the economic stability of the agricultural industry in the

decades to come.

**3. Investment:** Perhaps no industry is more vital to human survival than agriculture. *Earth.org* notes that countries with strong agricultural sectors often boast higher standards of living and health than nations with a less productive agricultural industry. Despite that, *Earth.org* notes that investment in the agricultural sector is not commensurate with the growing population. Supporting measures to invest more heavily in the agricultural sector could reduce food shortages in the decades to come and ensure the agricultural sector is better positioned to address the many challenges it is already confronting in the twenty-first century.

The challenges facing the agricultural sector affect those who work in the industry but also the global population as a whole. Recognition of that reality may compel more people to support measures designed to ensure the agricultural sector can thrive and help the world to overcome potentially devastating challenges in the decades ahead.

## Three things farmers can do to fight financial stress

Farming can be an extremely rewarding career, giving you a hands-on opportunity to provide food for your family and people across the country or even around the world. But it can also be a challenge financially with several factors, including unpredictable weather, making it hard to know precisely how much money you will make from year to year. If you are facing financial difficulties with your farming operation, here are three ways you can find help.

### Low-cost loans

As the old saying goes, sometimes you have to spend money to make

money. For example, you may want to invest in more land, purchase solar panels, or need to construct new buildings, repair existing ones or even purchase more equipment, such as a tractor.

While you can apply for a general business loan from your financial institution, as a farmer you can access up to \$500,000 in government-backed loans through the Canadian Agricultural Loans Act — known as the CALA Program. The program is open to full- and part-time farmers, and there are incentives for start-up farmers. You can apply for these loans through your

lender.

### Debt management

If you are struggling to pay off debt, there is another program that can help: the Farm Debt Mediation Service. Through this voluntary, confidential program, you can get free financial counselling and access to mediation services where you can meet with your creditor(s) to develop a recovery plan.

### Mental health

Mental health is part of overall health. And the stress of struggling to make ends meet can impact your life in many ways, from loss of sleep and irritability, to increasing your risk of

hypertension, heart attack and stroke.

Whether it is talking to a family member, a fellow farmer or a trained professional, speaking about your concerns is the first step in getting them under control. There are a several free resources you can access including an episode of the First Sixteen podcast, "Mental health on the farm" that provide more insight into common issues many farmers face.

Learn more about these programs and other supports for farmers at [agriculture.canada.ca/manage-farm-risk-and-finance](http://agriculture.canada.ca/manage-farm-risk-and-finance).

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# The growth of green farming

Farmers have been pressured to increase production to meet the demand of a growing population. This may require employing more efficient measures to ensure maximum output. Unfortunately, efficiency doesn't always mesh with sustainability, so commercial operations have had to make some modifications to find a balance between serving the public and protecting the planet.

Green farming utilizes different technology and practices in order to decrease detrimental impact on the environment. According to the farming resource NuFarming, agricultural operations have a significant impact on climate change. Simply adopting some new practices can lessen that impact.

### Solar power

Growing plants are not the only thing on a farm that can benefit from the sun. Farmers can convert a portion or all of their power needs to solar. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, there are bene-



fits when solar companies and farmers work together. Solar developers reduce installation costs and upfront risk by placing solar modules on previously tilled agricultural land. Vegetation under modules also can contribute to lower soil temperatures and increased solar performance. Agricultural land managers can reduce energy costs and diversify their revenue streams with solar. Plus, they can market products to sustainabil-

ity-minded customers.

Solar is not the only renewable energy option. Farmers can incorporate wind and hydroelectric power as well.

### Crop rotation

This farming technique has been used for thousands of years and involves growing different crops in different seasons over a period of time. Farmers reduce the chances for pests and diseases becoming problems in the soil because frequent

crop changes prevent invaders from gaining a foothold. Farmers use fewer fertilizers and pesticides as a result.

Hydroponic and aquaponic strategies

Farmers can improve productivity while also reducing environmental impact with these two growing methods. NuEnergy states that hydroponic systems grow plants in mineral solutions or in materials like perlite or gravel. Aquaponics involves raising aquatic animals

in addition to growing crops. The waste from the fish and other marine life is used to offer nutrients to the plants by growing them in this nutrient-rich water. Both methods remove the need for soil.

### Drip irrigation

Drip irrigation methods deliver water to the roots of plants through a series of pipes or tubes. Because water is not being sprayed into the air through sprinklers and other methods, less is lost to evap-

oration, and less water overall may be needed to provide for crops.

### Plasticulture

Plastic seems like it may not have a purpose on the farm, but recycled plastic, which is used in plastic mulch, can help produce plentiful crops with less water. Plastic mulches raise soil temperatures and insulate against evaporation so plants can grow faster and mature sooner. Invasive weeds also may be less likely to take root in plastic mulch or when crops are grown on black plastic.

### Natural pesticides

Farmers can introduce plants that pests tend not to like to reduce reliance on chemical pesticides. For example, interspersing crops with natural bug repellants, such as basil, lavender and lemon-grass, may keep insects at bay. Alliums, chrysanthemums, marigolds, and other flowers planted nearby also may deter bugs.

Green farming is something more agricultural operations may want to adopt.




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# Calving and postpartum nutrition for a successful breeding season

By **JORDAN JOHNSON**  
Ministry of Agriculture

As calving season progresses, many of us look forward to green spring pastures and summer turnout. However, our cows still have several challenges ahead like colostrum production, initiation of lactation and returning to estrus prior to the start of breeding season. Close nutritional management during these periods helps set your herd up for a successful breeding season.

Colostrum production begins as early as five weeks prior to calving and peaks just before birth. The amount and quality of colostrum produced is largely influenced by late gestation nutrition. Near calving it can be difficult to achieve adequate nutrient intake due to the physical constraints that the growing fetus imposes on the rumen, reducing capacity for feed intake. Increasing energy and protein density of the diet will support maintenance functions and fetal growth and colostrum production. Failure to meet nutrient requirements may be at the expense of the cows' body condition. Cows in good body condition (2.5 to 3.5 on a 5-point scale) that receive a balanced diet produce higher quality colostrum than those that are thin or are fed poor quality diets.

After calving, milk production peaks around 60 days of lactation when a cow's energy requirements are greatest. While protein is important, typically the most limiting nutrient during peak lactation is energy. Total digestible nutrient and protein requirements on a dry matter basis for a mature cow from mid-gestation to early lactation

are outlined in Table 1. Due to the increasing nutrient requirements during calving and lactation, it becomes very difficult and costly to improve body condition of thin cows during calving. Additionally, cows fed nutrient deficient diets will be forced to use body reserves to produce enough high-quality milk. This could result in reduced milk production and calf performance and a loss of body condition as the breeding season approaches.

To achieve the ideal scenario where a cow produces one calf every year, an average gestation length of 283 days allows a cow only 82 days after calving to return to estrus and rebreed. This period between calving and conception is referred to as the postpartum interval. As discussed previously, a cow's body condition at calving and lactation has a large impact on colostrum and milk production. Perhaps more important is the impact of body condition on the duration of the postpartum interval. Cows in lower body condition take longer to reach their first heat after calving, while cows in good body condition experience higher pregnancy rates and rebreed sooner. Most cows require four to six weeks to return to a normal estrus cycle, this may be prolonged for cows in poor body condition. While adequate nutrition pre-calving is critical to maintain body condition and support colostrum and fetal development, inadequate post-calving nutrition alone can reduce conception rates. Depending on the length of your calving and breeding seasons, the result may be more open cows.

Complicating each of these factors is the influence of cow age. While mature cow requirements may be more

easily met, first or second-calf heifers need additional nutrients to meet their own growth requirements. Failure to meet their growth and gestational requirements increases the risk that these younger cattle may not rebreed, leading to higher open rates and culling of younger animals in your herd. Separating first and second-calf heifers and thin cows in your herd may allow you to allocate feed resources to those most in need.

While it is tempting to turn your cattle out to pasture early, set your breeding season up for success by ensuring that your cows nutrient requirements are being met during calving, lactation and the postpartum interval. For assistance evaluating your feeding plan, contact your local livestock and feed extension specialist by calling the Agriculture Knowledge Centre at 1-866-457-2377.



## The basics of regenerative agriculture

Climate change poses a threat to various industries, not the least of which is the agricultural sector. Agricultural industry insiders recognize that the changing climate has been forcing farmers and agricultural organizations to adapt and adjust for decades, and that need to be flexible won't change in the years to come.

One of the changes many farmers may consider in coming years, if they haven't already, is a pivot to regenerative agriculture practices. Regenerative agriculture could have a profound impact on the world over the next half century, so now may be a great time to gain an understanding of the practice.

What is regenerative agriculture?

Regenerative agriculture is a production system that focuses on reducing water usage and other inputs as part of a larger attempt to prevent land degradation and deforestation. According to the organization Green America, regenerative agriculture is designed to harness the power of photosynthesis in plants to sequester carbon in the soil. The ability to do that can improve soil health, crop yields, water resilience, and nutrient density.

Why should people be interested in regenerative agriculture?

Green America notes that regenerative agriculture draws down atmospheric carbon dioxide. That's a significant benefit, as *Climate.gov*, which is a product of various

departments within the National Ocean and Atmospheric Administration, reports that adding more carbon dioxide to the environment is causing global temperatures to rise. In fact, observations from the NOAA Global Monitoring Lab in 2021 revealed that carbon dioxide alone was responsible for about two-thirds of the total heating influence of all human-produced greenhouse gases. Green America reports that, at scale, regenerative agriculture could help to reverse the climate crisis by drawing down atmospheric carbon dioxide.

Another reason to consider regenerative agriculture is its connection to topsoil. Green America reports that the world is on the cusp of running out of topsoil, which is

vital to growing food. Regenerative agriculture rebuilds topsoil, which can lead to greater food security across the globe.

What are some regenerative agriculture practices?

Regenerative agriculture practices include the usage of cover crops, a reduction in tilling, crop rotation, and spreading compost. Green America notes that regenerative agriculture practitioners also avoid the use of synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, and factory farming.

As the climate crisis continues to challenge the agricultural sector, regenerative agriculture could help farmers and the larger industry successfully confront those issues.




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# Wheat midge populations and management

By **EILEEN BEATON**  
Ministry of Agriculture

Throughout the larval stage, wheat midge (*Sitodiplosis mosellana*) can cause significant damage to wheat crops in Saskatchewan. The midge larvae feed on the developing wheat kernel, causing it to crack, shrivel and become deformed. Crop damage is not apparent as there is no change in colour, size or shape to the affected wheat head. However, developing seeds within the glumes will show damage symptoms.

Each year, the Ministry of Agriculture conducts provincewide surveys on wheat. In fall of 2023, 359 sites were surveyed to produce the 2023 survey map showing a regional representation of viable wheat midge populations. Soil cores were collected then sent to the Crop Protection Lab where they were assessed for viable larvae. The map can be used by producers and agronomists to view areas that may be problematic during the 2024 growing season.

Wheat midge populations in 2023 were reduced compared to the 2022 survey; however, significant hotspots were found north of Regina, and smaller instances of dense populations were found near Saskatoon, Kindersley and

Lloydminster. Do not discount the occurrence of wheat midge, even in regions that are anticipating low levels for the subsequent year. Favourable environmental conditions, particularly timely rains prior to the end of May, can still promote larval development and the emergence of adults in late June/early July. Refer to the Wheat Midge 2023 survey map to view survey results for your area.

## Control Methods

If spring wheat is planned as part

of a rotation, there are midge-tolerant wheat varieties available as varietal blends. For 2024, varietal blends are available in CWRS, CPSR, CWSP, CWSWS, CWHWS, CNHR, CWES and Durum wheat classes. Visit the Midge Tolerant Wheat Stewardship Team website for information on midge-tolerant wheat and VBs, along with the Saskatchewan Seed Guide.

You can also consider crop rotation to a non-host crop. Since spring wheat is the primary host for wheat midge,

planting a non-susceptible cereal crop (e.g. oats, barley) or a broadleaf crop (e.g. canola, pulse) is a good option as midge adults are not strong fliers.

Producers are encouraged to scout their conventional wheat fields during the susceptible period – when the wheat head becomes visible as the boot splits until mid-flowering, to determine midge populations and, if necessary, timing of an insecticide application.

Insecticide options have recently diminished for the control of wheat midge in wheat in Canada. Health Canada cancelled all registrations of insecticides containing the active ingredient chlorpyrifos (e.g. Lorsban 4E, Nufos, Pyrifos, Pyrinex and Citadel); therefore, these can no longer be used. Alternative insecticides registered include those containing the active ingredient dimethoate (e.g. Cygon, Lagon). Dimethoate application needs to be well timed with the occurrence of adult wheat midge. For more information, refer to the Crop Protection Guide.

If you have any questions about the survey or wheat midge, please contact your local crops extension specialists or call the Agriculture Knowledge Centre at 1-866-457-2377.



## Spring management of winter-feeding sites

By **CORISSA WILCOX**  
Ministry of Agriculture

Extensive winter-feeding beef cattle in a field setting reduces environmental impacts, while meeting production requirements. Managing soil organic matter, which provides nutrients and energy to plants, is important for maintaining productive soils and subsequent crop/forage production. The addition of animal manure and including perennial forage crops into a field's rotation can increase organic matter in the soil. Post-winter site management is necessary and may require considerations beforehand, prior to the growing season.

Here are some factors to consider:

### Manure and residual feed

Manure and residual feed may build up in certain areas in the field called hot spots, which may require harrowing equipment to spread leftover residual mate-

rial across the field. An even distribution of organic matter is important to ensure nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium are spread across all areas of the field for uniform plant growth and soil health. Hot spot areas may delay plant growth and produce lower crop/forage yields. High-density grazing in the summer may also be a cost-effective method to spread leftover manure and feed, but this method requires close management as soil compaction may occur.

### Soil nutrient status

Soil testing prior to the growing season in the spring and in the fall helps determine the amount of nutrients deposited into the soil from organic matter and whether the soil has limiting nutrients. A soil analysis can help indicate if fertilizer is required or not and which nutrients are deficient. Additionally, pH can be an indicator of soil nutrient status. Soil pH should ideally range

from 6-7 (neutral); below or above this range may negatively affect plant health and could limit production. When soil sampling, it is important to note that samples should be representative of the entire field to account for variability. Soil nutrient levels may also be determined by visually assessing subsequent crop/forage growth and recording yields and additional nutrients added to the field.

### Runoff

When selecting a wintering site, sloped land should have been avoided, although nutrient runoff may still occur. Warmer temperatures may cause runoff, which is due to poor infiltration of water and drainage into soil. Sloping land has increased potential for runoff and can benefit from tilling to expose stored frozen water, increasing water and soil contact. Increased residue reduces sun-to-soil contact, which slows water evaporation from the

field. Tillage increases water evaporation, so reducing equipment use allows water to be retained in the soil that can be used for plant growth.

Some other important considerations may include evaluating the extensive winter-feeding strategy that was used, planning the anticipated time of returning to the site (seeding and/or feeding) and monitoring the crop/forage

seeded. It is recommended that wintering sites be rotated each year, which may require planning in advance, so spring can be an ideal time to do so. If seeding a tame forage stand in the spring, it may be optimal to select creeping rooted grasses to tolerate equipment, livestock and erosion.

The Resilient Agricultural Landscapes Program (RALP) provides funding to assist

livestock producers to improve their management of extensive livestock wintering sites and use of land for perennial forage production through the Extensive Wintering Site Management best management practice (BMP) and Seeding Tame Forage BMP. To learn more about the program, visit our webpage or call the Agriculture Knowledge Centre at 1-866-457-2377.



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# Three tips to protect farms from cyber threats

From automated equipment like a programmed irrigation system, to a weather tracking app, to an on-line database for suppliers or distributors, there are any number of internet-connected parts of a farm that can leave it vulnerable to cyber threats without proper precautions.

Cyber disruptions such as a breach of confidential employee information, a ransomware takeover that locks you out of your systems and demands a fee, or a technological equipment failure can cause serious problems for farmers. It can eat into your profits, weaken consumer trust in your business and limit your ability to deliver on contracts.

When the farms that feed our communities are at risk, there's a lot at stake to protect.

Here are three ways to help protect a farm from cyber security disruptions.

## 1. Be aware online

Unlike many other essential sectors, such as health care, farming technologies are



regularly connected to farmers' home internet networks and personal cellphones. This means taking standard steps to be safe online is even more important than usual, since a breach on your home network could impact business systems in addition to personal finances. If possible, use a virtual private network (VPN) to access your on-farm

digital systems instead of using public Wi-Fi.

Scammers try to trick people into revealing personal or sensitive information they can use to hold people to ransom, take funds or steal identities. When using email or social media, always be mindful of whom you're interacting with and what you share. Don't open links in emails or texts from

sources you don't recognize.

## 2. Use safeguards

Beyond being careful online, a few simple things can go a long way. Up-to-date software, hardware and patches mean the latest manufacturer protections, so make sure to install them regularly.

Backup your information often – and to a hard drive, not just on-

line storage – so you can access your data if your network ever becomes compromised.

Use unique, strong passwords and turn on multi-factor authentication for online or digital accounts. That's when you must input a code sent to you through a text or email after entering your password online.

In addition to the steps

above, make a guide or plan of action. Map out your on-farm networks and digital systems, and the hardware that connects to them, including computers, mobile devices, sensors, servers, automated equipment, environmental controls and financial systems.

Then, identify steps to protect yourself and your business, such as good online safety habits like using a secure internet connection. Make a list of suppliers, IT service providers and sector associations. Also identify steps you will take if you face a cyber threat and what you will do to recover quickly.

## 3. Report cyber incidents

If you suspect that your farm may have fallen victim to a cyber incident, promptly report your concerns to the Canadian Centre for Cyber Security's Cyber Centre.

Find more information and resources to help you stay cyber safe at [agriculture.canada.ca/cyber-security-farming-business](https://agriculture.canada.ca/cyber-security-farming-business).

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# Drought impact on cattle open rates

By **CHELSEY SIEMENS**  
Ministry of Agriculture

For cow-calf operations, a major component of profitability is reproductive efficiency or the number of calves weaned per cow exposed. When open rates are higher than expected, it can be difficult to pinpoint the cause; there may be many factors that contributed. Dry conditions over the past several years have impacted many aspects of beef operations, including those that contribute to open rates.

The quantity and quality of forage available to many cow herds has been reduced due to dry conditions. Pasture may be unable to supply the energy needed for cows to maintain their body condition. Cows in lower body condition at calving will be slower to resume cycling following calving, conceive later in the breeding season and calve later the next year or remain open if unable to conceive before bulls are pulled.

To maintain herd size, more replacement heifers may be kept to compensate for an increase in open cows. If yearling heifers haven't reached 55 to 65 per cent of their mature body weight by breeding time, their fertility may also be reduced. Over two to three years, the result is higher than expected open rates at pregnancy checking, or fewer than expected calves on the ground at calving. Whether developing or purchasing, bringing new animals into the herd is an expensive endeavour. It takes several years for those animals to start paying for themselves.

Trace minerals, specifically copper, manganese and zinc are necessary for reproductive processes in both cows



and bulls. Trace mineral deficiency can occur due to low levels of minerals in forage or insufficient intake of mineral supplements. Components present in feed or water which bind trace minerals and decrease their availability to the animal will also lead to a trace mineral deficiency. Water quality in dugouts tends to decrease during dry conditions. When evaporation is high and recharge of surface water sources is low, dissolved solids like sulfates increase in concentration. Sulfates bind copper and other minerals in the animal's digestive system rendering them unavailable to the animal. Over time, this contributes to deficiencies in cows, which can result in lower conception rates.

Vitamin A is necessary for reproduction and synthesized in the rumen from carotenes found in fresh green forage. During the summer months, cows usu-

ally consume enough fresh forage to satisfy the requirement for vitamin A. During dry conditions, forages go dormant earlier in the grazing season than usual. The beta carotene content of dormant forages is much lower, making it necessary to supplement vitamin A in the ration. Even feeds that were harvested green will gradually decrease in beta carotene concentration during storage. Vitamin A deficiency can lead to decreased fertility of the cowherd.

Some feeds contain high levels of nitrates, which can lead to poor performance, abortion and even death in cows. The incidence of nitrate toxicity may increase during dry conditions. Drought stress is one of the factors that causes nitrate accumulation in plants like annual cereals, or poly crops, which may be used for greenfeed or swath grazing. There is also an increased likelihood of

feeding plants that tend to be high in nitrate, like kochia, when other forages are in low supply. Cows affected by nitrate toxicity may abort their calves, contributing to the open cow problem.

Taking steps to address the above issues starts many months before the breeding season begins and can be challenging as dry conditions continue. What can be done to minimize the impacts of environmental and nutritional stressors?

- Test your water and feed to identify potential issues and know where you're starting from. Ministry of Agriculture regional offices provide free testing for livestock water sources. Livestock and feed extension specialists can provide advice for feed analysis and interpretation of feed test results.
- Include a nitrate test for any feed with the potential for nitrate accumulation. More information on nitrate toxicity can be found on our website.
- Monitor body condition of cows throughout the year and strive to maintain a body condition score of 2.5 to 3. Check out this instructional video on body condition scoring.
- Evaluate your strategy for delivering trace minerals and vitamin A. If mineral deficiency is suspected, a blood test or liver biopsy may be worth pursuing to confirm that is the issue.

For more information on high open rates, watch this video or contact your nearest livestock and feed extension specialist by calling the Agriculture Knowledge Centre at 1-866-457-2377.

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## Know safe fertilizer rates this spring

By **REBECCA HORT & MACKENZIE HLADUN**  
*Ministry of Agriculture*

Properly fertilizing your crop is essential to reaching your yield targets. There are several ways to incorporate fertilizer into the soil. The most common ways include applying a band in the fall once the soil has cooled, in the spring prior to seeding or in the mid-row or seed row during seeding. It is beneficial to seed-place immobile nutrients, such as phosphorus and potassium; however, keep in mind the recommended safe rates for seed placed fertilizer. These recommendations are based on seedbed utilization (SBU), soil texture, crop type, soil moisture and the source of fertilizer. Seed bed utilization is the amount of the seedbed that the fertilizer has been spread. A higher SBU means more fertilizer can be seed-placed safely and a lower SBU means less fertilizer can be seed-placed.

The calculation for SBU is:  $SBU (\%) = (\text{opener spread/row spacing}) \times 100$

Nitrogen is important for plant growth, reaching yield potential and increasing the grain protein content. Nitrogen is mobile in the soil and can be

placed in a mid-row band while seeding. This is beneficial because too much nitrogen in the seed row can damage the seed and cause germination problems. Factor in nitrogen from all sources of seed placed fertilizer when calculating safe rates (i.e. applying ammonium sulphate with seed) to ensure your application stays within the safe rates.

Phosphorous and potassium are needed for cell development and signalling and are crucial to plant growth. Both are immobile and do not move in the soil. Putting phosphorous and potassium with the seed is the best way to ensure the crop will get what it needs. Safe seed rates for phosphorous should also be followed to ensure germination. If potassium is seed placed, the pounds of phosphorus plus the pounds of potassium should not exceed the maximum total seed-placed phosphorus.

Some regions of Saskatchewan entered the winter with little soil moisture in the seedbed and many are experiencing dry conditions. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada publishes drought maps that can help you in evaluating the amount of moisture in your seedbed. If there is low moisture available

to your crops during seeding, or if the weather is conducive to seedbed drying, reducing the amount of seed-placed fertilizer by a minimum of 50 per cent is recommended.

Soil testing is important this year, particularly if you had dry conditions in 2023. There could be additional residual nitrogen or other nutrients, left in your field from the previous crop. Soil testing will help account for excess residual nitrogen and reduce the total nitrogen that needs to be applied. If fertilizer needs still exceed the recommended maximum fertilizer rate in the seed row, consider applying the rest in the mid row or through alternative applications prior to seeding. When planning your crop's fertilizer applications, be sure to follow 4Rs; right rate, time, product and source. 4R designated agronomists can help you to ensure you are fertilizing your crop according to the 4R principles.

Learn more about the safe-rates of seed-placed fertilizer for different crops and SBU, visit Fertilizer Canada, contact your local crops extension specialists or call the Agriculture Knowledge Centre at 1-866-457-2377.

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# Recognize the threat of hail to your crop yields

By **TYCE MASICH**  
Ministry of Agriculture

Hail events are unpredictable and can occur anytime during the growing season with potentially devastating consequences on crop production. Severity of hail damage is dependent on crop type, variety, growth stage, hail intensity and area of the canopy affected by the hail. Hail damage causes yield losses to crops through stem breakage, defoliation, increased lodging, bacterial infections from open wounds and premature pod shattering.

Early season hailstorms tend to be less detrimental to crop yields. Crops such as wheat (prior to tillering), peas, lentils, faba beans and chickpeas have growth points below the soil surface in which damaged plants can regrow from; however, this will delay maturity. Canola seedlings are also resilient to hail as plants should survive if the growing point is intact. Crop

regrowth can take time; therefore, it is important to scout the crop three to four days after a hailstorm to determine the surviving plant stand, prior to making reseeding decisions. Since early season hail typically isn't devastating to yields and reseeding causes delayed maturity, reseeding usually isn't economical unless hail results in very low or non-uniform plant stands. As crops mature, they have a lower probability of naturally recovering from hail damage which makes crops more susceptible to yield loss during mid-to-late crop stages.

Canola is more prone to significant yield loss after the seedling stage. When four to six leaf stage canola is hit with hail, the plant has less time to naturally recover and the damaged tissue makes the plant more susceptible to blackleg. Fungicides for blackleg in canola should only be applied if blackleg is an issue in your field and you were considering using them prior to the hailstorm. Hail after flower-

ing will bruise the pods which results in seeds drying out and early shattering. If there is widespread bruising on the lower pods of canola plants, then consider early swathing (no earlier than 20 per cent colour change) to mitigate the risk of yield loss from pod shattering.

Hail damage between the milk and hard dough stage in wheat results in the greatest yield losses. In addition, simulated hail damage research shows that hail damage prior to the milk stage can greatly reduce yields depending on the storm's intensity and duration.

Many varieties of peas, lentils, soybeans and faba beans have an indeterminate growth habit that maintains vegetative growth throughout the growing season which increases the chances of recovering from hail damage. However, hail damage to pods in pulse crops makes it easier for pathogens to enter and can result in poor seed set.

Unfortunately, response options for hail damage are limited. Research shows that using post-hail remedies such as fungicides and nutrient blends after a hailstorm has an insignificant impact on crop recovery and yield which usually makes these options uneconomical. Foliage damage and losses in crop canopy can promote weed activity; therefore, herbicide application may prevent further yield loss from weed pressure. However, to ensure safe and economical herbicide use, it is important to consider herbicide timing restrictions prior to harvest, estimated yield after hail damage and weed populations after hail damage. Purchasing hail insurance is the best option for protecting your crop investment from significant yield losses. For more information or if you have any questions about hail damage, please contact your local crops extension specialist or call the Agriculture Knowledge Centre at 1 866 457 2377.

## Five tips to keep farm animals safe

During escalating challenges such as wildfires, flooding, extreme temperatures and the threat of viruses, the well-being of your animals is important. From comprehensive emergency planning to biosecurity measures and careful feeding practices, here are five tips to keep your animals safe and healthy.

### Have an emergency plan

Establish an emergency plan to keep your animals safe. Include details like transportation and evacuation routes when possible, along with copies of important documents like veterinary records and property maps. Ensure you have a two-week supply of feed, water and

medications for your animals. By planning ahead you'll be able to make quick and effective decisions during a crisis.

### Biosecurity is not a buzzword

Strong biosecurity measures are an important way to prevent the spread of diseases and contaminants to your flock or herd year-round. They typically involve steps such as isolating new animals from others for two weeks, establishing visitor protocols, and ensuring proper procedures for boot and handwashing, as well as equipment cleaning. When travelling abroad, ensure you follow protocols so diseases aren't accidentally introduced to

animals.

Given a global risk of diseases like African swine fever (ASF), biosecurity is the most important measure to stop the spread if it is ever detected in Canada. While this viral disease cannot be transmitted to humans and is not a food-safety risk, it is almost always deadly for pigs. They could catch it from an infected pig or through contact with contaminated clothing and farm equipment.

### Caution with food scraps as feed

Food recycle programs that gather surplus food from grocers, and repurposing kitchen scraps may seem like practical ways to reduce food waste, but it's important to exercise caution. Avoid feeding scraps to animals because the food could impact their nutrition or be contaminated. For pigs, ASF can be spread through small amounts of contaminated pork product which is why it is illegal in Canada to feed pigs meat.

### Wild animals are not friends

While your animals may spend time outside, it's important to protect them from potential disease carriers like birds, foxes and wild pigs. Despite not being traditional predators, birds can spread avian influenza, and wild pigs can transmit ASF if it spreads to Canada. Ensure your animals do not have contact with wild animals.

### Monitor your animals closely

Regularly observe your animals for any behavioural or physical changes. This will help you spot subtle signs of poor health before issues become more serious or illness spreads further.

Learn more about how to protect your animals from ASF on the Canadian Food Inspection Agency website at [inspection.gc.ca/asf-biosecurity](https://inspection.gc.ca/asf-biosecurity).

[www.newscanada.com](http://www.newscanada.com)



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