



NOVEMBER 2024



Students learning shipping and receiving protocols in the Parts Department.

## Nelson Motors in Redvers hosts second annual Think Ag event

BY ANGELA ULRICH

Nelson Motors and Equipment in collaboration with the South East Cornerstone School Division hosted their second annual Think Ag event, a hands-on experience that provided students insight into the operations of their Redvers John Deere dealership location.

Students participating in the event had the opportunity to work in the four main departments of the dealership. They gained practical experience in the parts department, where they handled receiving parts for internal and customer orders, manufactured hoses, and engaged in a race with one of the owners to locate and store parts correctly. The service department exposed the students to working with a pulled combine engine and allowed them to complete tasks such as setting valves.

Jaret Nelson, General Manager of Nelson Motors and Equipment, emphasized the importance of a hands-on approach.

"We wanted the event to be hands-on for these students. It's what our business is about, hands-on and helping customers be the best growers they can be," he said.

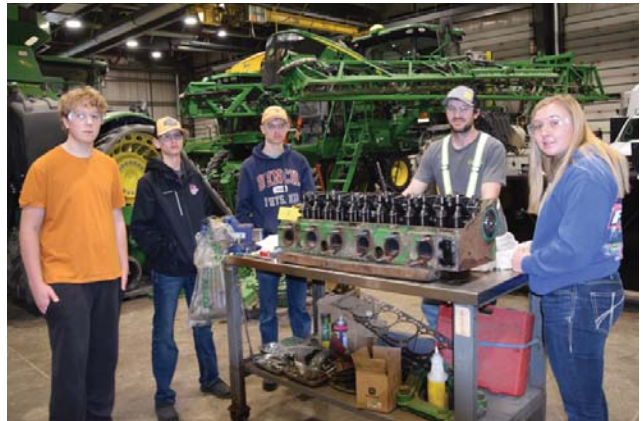
In addition to the departments mentioned, the students also interacted with the Precision Ag and Sales Departments. They were tasked with assisting a "customer" in finding suitable equipment and attachments for their land, and then working with the Precision Ag team using computers to send instructions to the equipment.

Shannon Mack, Human Resources and hiring manager, expressed her enthusiasm for the Think Ag event.

"It was truly rewarding to see the students engage meaningfully with our team," said Mack. "We discussed education options including apprenticeships, job opportunities, wages and overall work environment, giving participants a comprehensive view of potential career paths in the industry."

Mack also mentioned that two students would be participating in work placements with the company in the near future.

Events such as these are an incredible opportunity to showcase the diversity and limitless opportunities in the agricultural industry.



Students working hands-on with the Service Department setting valves on a pulled combine engine.

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Continued from front

### Nelson Motors in Redvers hosts second annual Think Ag event


**Right:** A student learning how to set valves on combine engine.

**Below left:** Hands-on learning in the Parts Department filling an order assignment.


**Below right:** Students learning about Precision Agriculture and how the computer systems translate to the operation of a tractor.

Angela Ulrich photos





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# Harvesting triple wins

BY GLOBE AND MAIL WESTERN SCHOOLS REPORT

In addition to being very dynamic and subject to changing conditions, food systems are deeply inter-linked with the environmental, economic and social spheres in which they are embedded.

In recognition that each change made in agricultural production brings unique challenges and opportunities that affect outcomes in all areas of impact, Dr. Christy Morrissey (PhD), professor in the Department of Biology in the College of Arts and Science at the University of Saskatchewan (USask), seeks to advance our understanding of the value of ecosystem services while providing farmers with guidance and tools for making land-use decisions.

The work of the Prairie Precision Sustainability Network has “the goal to find that sweet spot, where you’re doing something that is not only good for the environment but also brings social and economic benefits,” she says. “That’s one of the reasons this project has been taking off, because it ticks all three sustainability boxes.”

Morrissey and her team work directly with farmers to apply insights from data and machine-learning models to measures for optimizing land use. “With a conventional approach, farmers may think that more land under production equals more yield, yet we know that there are vast differences in profitability,” she explains. “Marginal areas, by definition, are consistently unprofitable, for example, due to saline, wet or dry soils or other challenges and don’t produce enough to offset the costs of seed and chemical.”

This means these areas are often sinks for fertilizer and pesticide applications, which come with both economic and environmental impacts, Morrissey says. “There are better uses for areas where growing crops is not cost effective, for example, converting them to forages or more naturalized habitat.”

## Land-use decisions bolstering farm resilience

The project—which uses satellite imagery trained on combine yield data to locate marginal croplands across the Prairie region—started two years ago and now has over 70 farmers participating in the study.

“We’ve been asking farmers for access to their precision yield data, ideally covering a number of years,” says Morrissey, adding that this information allows the team to train machine-learning models to correctly interpret visual information gained from satellites.

Once trained on enough data, the models’ predictive capabilities “can fill in the holes on areas where we don’t have yield data,” she notes. “For dominant crops like wheat and canola, we already have fairly good predictions, and we’re gathering more data to be able to predict marginal land for some of the other Prairie crops.”

Capturing data for a number of years—especially since 2017, when the resolution of satellite imagery started to allow insights on a 10-metre-by-10-metre scale—is especially meaningful since the Prairies are subject to drought-deluge cycles.

“The more data we have under these different cyclical regimes, the better we get at predicting what will happen in various parts of a field under different conditions,” says Dr. Morrissey. “The plan is to be able to forecast what areas will look like under dry or wet scenarios, which will allow farmers to make forward-thinking decisions about improving the resilience of their lands rather than reacting to what is happening at the time.”

## An interdisciplinary approach to advancing ‘one health’

Big-picture research like the Prairie Precision Sustainability Network requires insights from a number of perspectives. While Morrissey’s lab focuses on how converting marginal areas can contribute to pesticide use reduction and bring benefits to birds and insects, her colleagues from USask’s College of Agriculture and Bioresources and the Universities of Calgary, Manitoba and Waterloo offer expertise in agricultural socioeconomic, pollinators, landscape ecology, soil health, native and tame forage production—and AI for big data.

For USask President Peter Stoicheff, this is a prime example of the university’s “unusual and unique combination of strengths due to having 17 colleges—or faculties—represented.”

“The high number of disciplines has allowed us to become very interdisciplinary, and that’s a hallmark of the research we do at the University of Saskatchewan,” says Stoicheff. “Large global challenges like food security, climate change and population health are not going to be solved by one discipline or college or even a single university.”

For investigations affecting food systems, USask has built significant research infrastructure and expertise, he says. “We now talk about this in the context of one health, which is at the confluence of human, animal and environmental health. Given the complexity of these issues, it is no surprise that solving them requires large collaborations.”

Where the Global Institute for Food Security with the Crop Development Centre and the College of Agriculture and Bioresources provide an agriculture lens, the Department of Computer Science adds technology and data analytics capabilities. The School of Environment and Sustainability brings a sustainability perspective while the College of Arts and Science and the School of Public Policy can contribute important viewpoints about how to apply research insights to societal challenges in meaning-



Above and below are photos of Dr. Christy Morrissey (PhD), professor in the Department of Biology in the College of Arts and Science at USask seeks to advance our understanding of the value of ecosystem services while providing farmers with guidance and tools for making land-use decisions.



ful ways.

“We’re able to bring all of that—and more—together in one university, where we understand that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts,” says Stoicheff, adding that cutting-edge research is also taking place at VIDO and the Global Institute for Water Security.

“These impressive research and innovation strengths allow us to advance our one health vision,” he notes, “they have also attracted a wide range of partners, not only from other universities but also from industry, government and communities.”

The project has attracted 12 diverse partners from First Nations, non-profit organizations, financial institutions, government agencies, the agriculture industry and farming equipment manufacturers, says Morrissey. “We have a diverse group of collaborators who are committed to the idea of doing something good for the environment while providing more tools for farmers.”

## Precision agriculture and sustainability tools

Since agricultural production is highly dependent on weather and climate, being able to predict greater extremes in wet or dry conditions as well as temperature increases—and relate this information to land productivity—can help inform a farm’s economic strategy.

The Prairie Precision Sustainability Network is working to provide agronomic tools for “evaluating the profitability of different areas of land,” Morrissey says. “Farmers can enter their anticipated revenues as well as their expenses—accounting for the costs of inputs that have recently seen significant price increases—on a micro level to decide where they could maximize gains by taking marginal lands out of production.”

Yet beyond saving money on inputs and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, there are other benefits that can be reflected in the bottom line, she suggests. “There are small but measurable increases in crop yield when we provide more habitat for beneficial insects like pollinators and pest predators.”

Continued on page C4 ☞

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Cash crop	2022/23 (actual)	2023/24 (actual)	2024/25 (forecast)	5-Year Average
Corn (ON)	320	240	250	265
Soybeans (ON)	715	610	550	595
Canola (SK)	845	695	665	690
Peas (SK)	450	455	415	405
Lentils (SK)	815	900	765	765
Spring wheat - (SK)	415	335	320	330
Feed barley (AB)	375	280	290	285
Durum (SK)	475	460	400	435

Marketing Year for corn and soybeans: September 1 - August 31  
Marketing Year for wheat, canola, barley, peas and lentils: August 1 - July 31

Table 1: Crop prices (\$/tonne) for 2024/25 expected to be lower than five-year averages.

Type of crop	2023	2024	2024 relative to 2023	2024 relative to 5 Yr Avg
Barley	8.9	7.6	-15%	-19%
Canola	19.2	19.0	-1%	4%
Corn	15.4	15.2	-2%	6%
Lentils	1.8	2.6	44%	18%
Peas	2.6	3.2	21%	-8%
Soybeans	7.0	7.2	3%	12%
Durum	4.1	6.0	48%	23%
Wheat, excluding durum	28.9	28.3	-2%	6%

Sources: Statistics Canada, AAFC

Table 2: Canadian crop production is expected to be average to slightly above.

# What does 2024's challenging weather mean for 2025 grain and oilseed prices?

BY JUSTIN SHEPHERD  
SENIOR ECONOMIST, FCC

This year's growing season in Canada, and particularly the prairies, was a real roller coaster. Farmers had to come to grips with the lower prices the 2023/24 marketing year brought along while facing challenging weather. Our July outlook highlighted the issues the Western crop was facing as it turned dry during pollination while Eastern Canada was having a better summer with higher yield potential. With most crops in the bin, we look at the year ahead and what could impact expected prices.

## New marketing year prices are largely under the average of the past five years

In the 2023/24 marketing year, producers had to reduce their sales price expectations. For several years, prices have generally been higher than, and boosting, the 5-year average. However, new crop prices have now mostly fallen below their 5-year averages (Table 1) but remain well above pre-pandemic levels. In the upcoming marketing year, only feed barley and peas are expected to surpass

their 5-year averages. Overall, in the three months since our July outlook, price forecasts have remained relatively stable.

Grain prices for corn, wheat, and barley are projected to remain steady next year, whereas oilseeds may face lower prices. Peas and lentils could experience price volatility due to trade risks.

## Canadian crop production ends up near average after volatile summer

Although some Eastern Canadian producers are still harvesting, Statistics Canada's September 16th estimates predict another strong production year. Final survey-based production estimates for 2024 will be released on December 5, 2024, by Statistics Canada so there will still be changes to crop size. Corn and soybean crops should be similar in size to 2023 but above the 5-year averages (Table 2). Since crop planning began early this year, weak Ontario margins haven't changed much, as lower-than-expected prices were offset by higher yields.

Western Canada had a more volatile growing season.

Prior to seeding we highlighted the extensive drought that correlated with lower yields, but fortunately crop saving rains came in May and June. By the start of July, satellite views of the crop were rated at its highest potential ever, but again the weather changed, and the taps turned off during the crucial pollination period. So, while 2024 turned out to be solid overall, it could have been a true bumper crop had rain showed up in July.

The biggest jumps in production in the Prairies come from a return to average yield for crops like lentils, peas, and durum. All of them are up sharply from last year and highlight how tough 2023 was. Barley production is down this year due to lower seeded acreage as yields were average. Production of canola and wheat are forecast to be down slightly from last year, but above the 5-year average. Crop margins in 2024 for a typical Saskatchewan canola and wheat rotation are unchanged from originally forecast in January, with the second year of losses in a row when including cash rent.

Continued on page C5

# Manitoba immigration pilot to address rural labour needs

The Manitoba government is announcing a three-year West-Central Immigration Initiative pilot that would see the government partner with seven rural municipalities and Gambler First Nation to support west-central Manitoba employers in addressing labour market and succession planning needs, enabling economic and community growth. Labour and Immigration Minister Malaya Marcelino announced today.

"Manitoba is a leader when it comes to enabling growth and vitality of communities through immigration," said Marcelino. "Our government is proud to partner with rural municipalities through the West-Central Immigration Initiative to help local economies and communities across Manitoba grow and thrive. By working together, we're responding to the local needs for skilled workers in rural Manitoba and ensuring Manitoba continues to be a welcoming province."

The West-Central Immigration Initiative partners are:

- Municipality of Russell-Binscarth;
- Rural Municipality of Yellowhead;
- Municipality of Roblin;
- Rural Municipality of Ellice-Archib;
- Rural Municipality of Riding Mountain West;

- Rosburn Municipality;
- Prairie View Municipality; and
- Gambler First Nation.

A survey of 85 employers in the region estimated that 240 to 300 people will be required to meet labour needs within three years due to new jobs created, replacements, retirement and general growth, the minister noted.

"The Municipality of Russell-Binscarth is proud to partner with Gambler First Nation and our neighbouring municipalities to form the West Central Manitoba Immigration initiative," said Mayor Judy Snitynsky, Russell-Binscarth. "Through this collaborative partnership, we look forward to expanding our immigration networks and showcasing the unlimited potential that we offer for newcomers to this area of Manitoba."

The provincial immigration division currently has three active and successful regional immigration initiatives in Winkler-Stanley, Morden and the Parkland region, and continues to work with other regional and rural municipalities to develop similar immigration initiatives, noted the minister.

Overall trend analysis shows an increasing number of

provincial nominees are choosing to settle in rural communities - 25 per cent in 2023 compared to 16.2 per cent in 2012.



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# Harvesting triple wins

Continued from page C3

What's more, as the value of biodiversity and carbon storage is coming to the forefront, "this brings the potential of making the maintenance of areas in forage or perennial cover more profitable through with carbon and biodiversity markets that provide payments for the ecosystem services they provide," Morrissey says. "A big part of our project is about quantifying what we gain from converting marginal areas."

Using empirical data can help to frame the value of services provided by natural habitat - from biodiversity to carbon sequestration - in monetary terms, this could inform how to incentivize adoption through payments, tax credits or lower insurance premiums for converting marginal areas.

Converting and maintaining marginal land as natural habitat can help farmers save money and grow better crops on less land. It can provide social good for communities in the form of a more naturalized landscape. And

it is a positive step that "could help Canada achieve its net-zero goals by reducing the environmental impact of agriculture and harnessing the power of nature to sequester more carbon," adds Morrissey.

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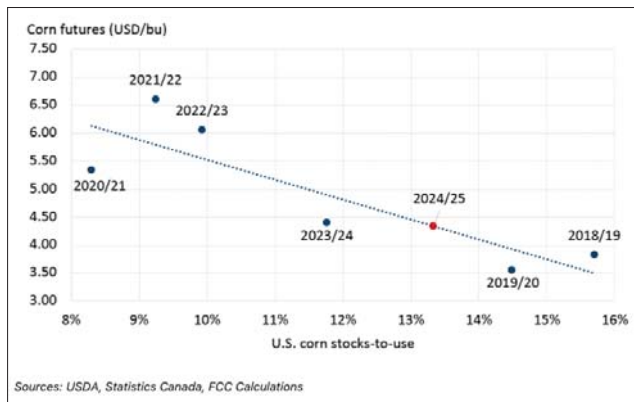


Figure 1. U.S. corn stocks-to-use.

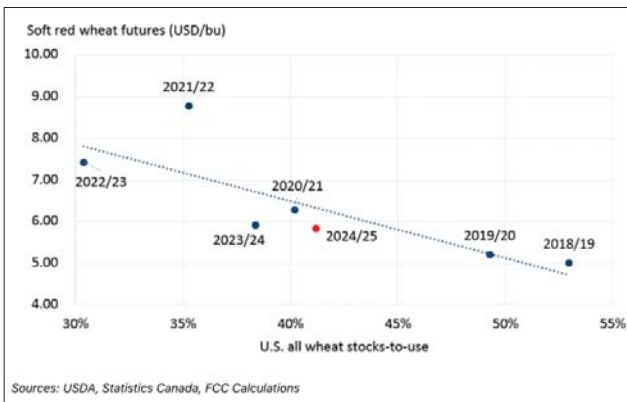


Figure 2. U.S. wheat stocks-to-use.

# What does 2024's challenging weather mean for 2025 grain and oilseed prices?

Continued from page C4

## Stocks-to-use provides a guide on potential price moves

A simple way to see potential crop price direction – which will impact Canadian prices – is to look at where the stocks-to-use ratio (a measure of the supply-demand balance) is relative to futures prices. Most futures contracts are priced in USD and the physical location for delivery is in the U.S.

### Corn

Despite some tough summer weather, the U.S. corn crop is expected to be large, keeping prices for corn and soybeans down. It's unlikely that U.S. stocks-to-use will drop below 10%, a level where grain traders become more bullish on prices (Figure 1). Even with a slightly smaller crop or increased demand, moving stocks-to-use significantly won't be easy. The next focus for U.S. corn demand is the South American crop, which is currently being planted and will be harvested in the new year.

### Wheat

The U.S. is a major wheat exporter but doesn't control global prices, as larger exporters like Russia or the EU have more influence. It acts more like a global reserve, drawing down stocks when prices are favorable. Wheat price and stocks-to-use trends align with corn in the U.S., but wheat stocks-to-use are much larger (Figure 2). With winter wheat planting nearly done in the northern hemisphere, attention shifts to crop conditions and winter weather in regions like the Black Sea, the U.S. Plains, and the EU. Although U.S. stocks-to-use is projected to rise this year, globally they are anticipated to decrease and reach their lowest point since 2014/15 due to consumption exceeding production.

### Soybeans

Soybean prices are currently in a grey zone relative to its expected stocks-to-use. U.S. stocks are not projected to be as tight as they were in the past four marketing years. However, U.S. soybean crush capacity is growing in addition to higher

expected exports year over year which is preventing stocks from growing back to pre pandemic levels (Figure 3). A significant amount of the new soybean crush capacity is intended for biofuel production, so any weakness in biofuel input requirements could decrease soybean demand. Getting stocks-to-use to fall back to 2020-2023 levels to support prices at a higher level is unlikely to happen unless global supplies falter e.g., a particularly bad South American harvest.

### Canola

Canola futures are priced in Canadian dollars with prairie located delivery points, so we can compare against Canadian canola stocks-to-use and see it is currently well priced. What could be the demand drivers for the year ahead? We know Canadian crush capacity continues to grow and will likely set another new annual record. Export demand has

been good to start the marketing year, including from China, who recently announced an anti-dumping investigation into Canadian canola. For canola stocks-to-use to significantly tighten and push up prices, the Canadian crop will have to end up significantly smaller in addition to substitute oilseed prices like soybeans moving in the same direction.

### Bottom line

A record harvest would have been possible for 2024 had weather cooperated, but Canada still ended up with an average crop. There are some benefits coming in the year ahead for producers; lower interest rates and a weak loonie are enhancing Canadian crop exports. However, overall margins remain slim for the recently harvested crop, prompting producers to focus on cost management and cautiously evaluate opportunities.

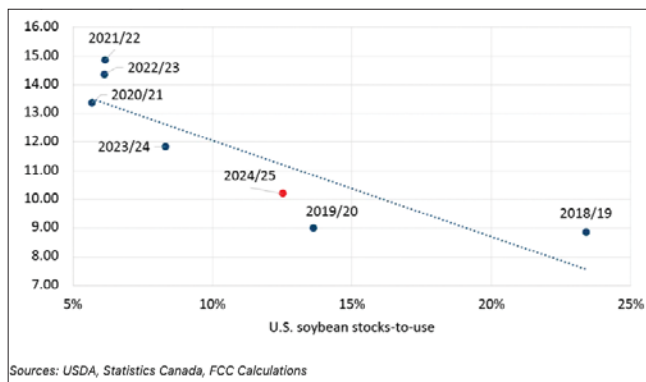


Figure 3: U.S. Soybean stocks-to-use.

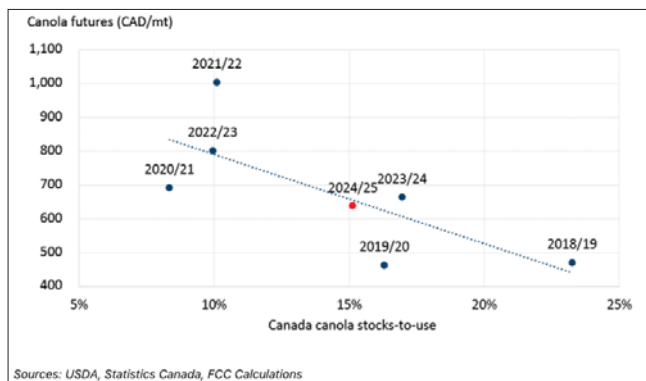



Figure 4: Canadian canola stocks-to-use



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# Agribition this week in Regina

BY RYAN KIEDROWSKI  
LOCAL JOURNALISM  
INITIATIVE REPORTER

There's a couple things about the month of November producers can usually look forward to—snow and the Canadian Western Agribition. This year marks 53 years since the largest livestock show in Canada began, and by all indications, there's no sign of it slowing down any time soon.

A recent statistic noted that last year's Agribition added \$116.5 million to Saskatchewan's economy, a 20.7 per cent increase over the year previous.

"I knew that our event was big, but when you see numbers like that, it is humbling but, it's not something we take for granted," said Agribition CEO Shaun Kindopp. "We're proud of the role that we play in the agriculture space. And you know, when we can contribute something like that to the province and the City of Regina, I think everyone wins. It's something that we're definitely very proud of."

He also pointed out that the 2023 event saw an increase from 2019 numbers, effectively bringing the show back from the pandemic basement after cancellation in 2020, as with most social functions during that time.

"We try to bring in some new, innovative ideas, we try to switch some of our marketing up, but I think people were locked in the house for a long time," explained Kindopp of the attendance climb. "I think they're looking for fun things to do, and we're proud that they're choos-

ing our event to come spend their time at."

There were 142,800 people through the gates in 2023, record attendance for the show that also bolstered tourist spending to \$83.2 million. Sales at the trade show booths alone accounted for \$998,300 last year, with trade show vendor sales totalling \$1.9 million. Then there's the livestock sales during the event, which amounted to \$2.2 million last year.

"We never really try and get complacent," Kindopp said when asked what he thinks keeps people coming back every year. "One thing that really drives us

is our livestock exhibitors. It's their big business for them. This is their livelihood, and we don't take that for granted. It's not cheap for them to come to town."

Making the Canadian Western Agribition a place worth driving to do business at is important.

"Whether it's at the trade show, whether it's in the livestock barns, or just the networking that happens, we're really happy that the people are coming here to do their business," he said.

### New this year

When asked what's new for this year's edition of the big show, Kindopp said

with a laugh, "come on down and find out!"

"We did a lot of 'new' last year," he said, listing features like the Miss Rodeo Agribusiness Contest, Animal Tech Awards, the Taylor Swift contest, and the trip to Australia. "This year, we're really focusing on trying to fine tune how do we take what we implemented last year, and make it better."

One example is the free-style bullfighting event, which will only be happening on Tuesday this year.

"If you want to see that incredible event, it's a one-night only, and it will not be happening every night

at the rodeo," Kindopp confirmed. "So if you want to see it Tuesday night, make sure to get your tickets—it's going to be awesome!"

With the first real dose of winter hitting hard just days before Agribition, Kindopp hopes everyone finds a safe route to Regina and enjoys six days of all things ag while in the Queen City.

"We do wish all of our exhibitors do travel safe to the event," he said. "If there's resilient people, it's people in Saskatchewan.

Winter happens every year, but we just want to make sure that people are safe. And once you are here, the entire event is indoors—with the exception of tie outs in the evening—but if someone's coming for the first time, everything that you're going to be seeing is going to be indoors. So as long as you can get here, there's definitely a lot of fun to be had inside."

Canadian Western Agribition runs from Nov. 25-30 in Regina, held at the REAL District.



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# Assiniboine College receives \$125,000 from Scotiabank to further agriculture research



BY KYLA COTTOM

Assiniboine College has received a donation of \$125,000 from Scotiabank to support advancing agriculture research. The funding will support active research that focuses on evaluating multi-species cash/cover crops and regenerative agriculture principles to advance net-positive grain farming.

The Russ Edwards School of Agriculture & Environment conducts research to address sector challenges and meet industry needs. As part of the college's Applied Research Strategy, the school significantly contributes to advances in agricultural practices, sustainable horticulture, and environmental stewardship.

"At Scotiabank, we are committed to playing a role in advancing a sustainable agriculture industry," said Janice Holzschner, Managing Director & Head of Agricultural Banking at Scotiabank. "We are proud to support Assiniboine College and its innovative applied research projects and to make a positive contribution to the environment and the agriculture industry, fostering a future where profitability and sustainability go hand in hand."

"Developing adaptive and regenerative practices in agriculture is crucial to reaching our shared climate and economic objectives," said Kim Brand, Vice President and Global Head, Sustainability at Scotiabank. "Through the tangible insights of this research, farmers will improve their capabilities to decarbonize their operations, build resiliency, and strengthen the sustainable food systems we all depend on."

Scotiabank's investment will support research led by adjunct faculty researcher, David Rourke, who is also the founder of Ag-Quest, an Agriculture and Environmental Field Research firm based in Minto, Manitoba. Rourke's research is focused on exploring the development of farming practices that are profitable, sequester large amounts of carbon, increase crop yields and lead to the elimination of the use of fossil fuels.

"We are pleased to have been recognized by Scotiabank for the impactful research being conducted through the college," said Dr. Nicole Gaudette, Dean of the Russ Edwards School of Agriculture & Environment at Assiniboine. "With Scotiabank's support, our research will continue to focus on developing innovative farming techniques and pave the way for more sustainable agricultural practices."

This generous contribution is part of Assiniboine College's ongoing efforts to develop the Prairie Innovation Centre for Sustainable Agriculture. The Centre will develop critical infrastructure, introduce new programs, and promote growth in the agriculture industry.

The Prairie Innovation Centre for Sustainable Agriculture is a one-of-a-kind Canadian college project that will bring together collaborative learning space, applied research labs and multipurpose spaces that will serve both the college community and agriculture industry. The Centre will support new program for labour market development, applied research and industry engagement.

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# USask announces new micro-credentials in sustainable irrigation

BY BRETT MAKULOWICH, USASK

Two new micro-credentials at the University of Saskatchewan (USask) provide professionals the opportunity to gain knowledge in water management and irrigation agronomy.

The new non-credit, community-level Sustainable Irrigation program is offered by the College of Agriculture and Bioreources (AgBio) at USask. Learners have the option to use their completed courses in this program towards two different micro-credentials; Sustainable Irrigation - Irrigation Agronomy, and Sustainable Irrigation - Water Management.

The program is designed for agronomists, agrologists, producers, engineers, and anyone who is interested in sound decision-making in irrigated agriculture. Learners are introduced to the conditions required for sustainable irrigation, including topics related to protection of the environment, regulations, technical design, water management, and farm management.

"Sustainable irrigation contributes to a more resilient agricultural sector in Canada by increasing agricultural productivity and mitigating environmental impacts,"

said Dr. Tom Yates (PhD), associate dean academic of AgBio. "These new micro-credentials are a great example of how the College of Agriculture and Bioreources strives to respond to community need by creating new and innovative programming."

To accommodate the professional work lives of learners, course materials are available online and may be completed asynchronously leading up to a three day in-person assessment for the micro-credentials. Learners can earn specializations in Water Management and/or Irrigation Agronomy based off which courses they choose to take.

"Developing an irrigation plan for a parcel of land is just of one of many hands-on learning assessments that takes place during the in-person portion of the micro-credentials," said Dr. Joel Ens (PhD), instructor and developer of the program. "Saskatchewan's prairie landscape provides learners an excellent opportunity to put what they've learnt into practice."

The program is currently open for registration. Questions about the program can be directed to [irrigation@usask.ca](mailto:irrigation@usask.ca).



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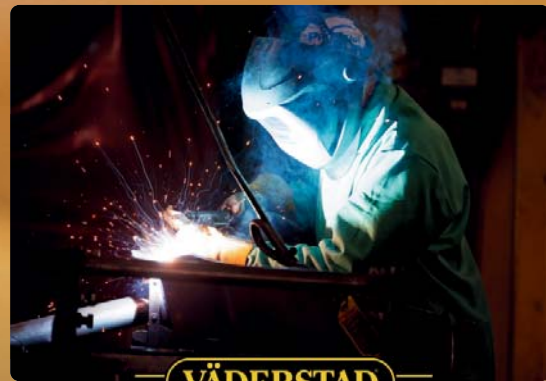
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# Working together—for better or worse

"Grandma, there's only seven kittens left and oneeeyee tail," cried my granddaughter with big sobs and gasps as she tried to say 'one.' My assurance that everything would be alright didn't help at all. "But Grandma, what will happen to Cuddles?"

Cuddles was a calico kitten, one of eight born in Hunter's uncle's barn. Hunter and her mom often drove out to the farm to see this batch of kittens but one night, something got into the barn and sadly, all that was left of kitten #8 was a tail.

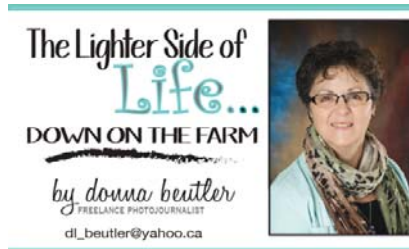
Hunter was very attached to this particular kitten. Her tears that day as hubby and I were eating our lunch on our back deck were unstoppable. We were relatively new to living in town and had brought our house cat from the farm with the plan that we would never get another house cat.

And, so it was that day that I drove out to the farm to pick this little five-week-old calico up and bring her to town. That night as the kitten curled up between hubby and I in bed he asked, "Why is Hunter getting another cat? They have two already. That's just crazy that her mom and dad are letting her get another cat. One cat in town is one too many." And on he went. Finally, I said, "Hunter isn't getting another cat." That was all I said. And that is all he said. He had married a cat-loving gal who had passed that love of cats onto her kids and grandkids and despite 'the plan' of eventually moving towards a cat-free household, he knew in that moment he was hooped—we had officially gained another feline friend.

I think of this often, though it's been eight or nine years since that day because every morning when I open my eyes, there is my calico cat, three inches from my face, her paw across my arm or my cheek—a constant reminder that I had brought her to a warm, safe place but also a reminder that I can't keep them all.

In the years since, and after the loss of my farm cat turned town cat at the age of 17, I have only caved one time since. The way I look at it is hubby's ideal is zero cats, mine is four and we have compromised and settled on two. That's working together at its best don't you think?

And working together has really been what it's all about down on the farm for the past 47 years. While we have primarily grain farmed, we've had pigs, chickens and cows from time to time, always settling back into mainly grain. Things didn't always go smoothly over the years. We worked hard, battled bugs and hoppers and too much rain and not enough rain and early



snows and hail and low prices and high input costs and you-name-it-we've-done-it kind of thing. But we kept working—together. For better or worse. I always tried to help as best I could though I definitely wasn't the best truck driver nor did I score high marks with the straight-cut header. Nevertheless, I baled and cultivated (doesn't that ever date me) and combined and herded cattle and fed orphaned calves and whatever I could to help. Was it always easy? Nope. Was it a lot of fun? Sometimes, but not always. Did we ever get tired? All the time. Did we keep on going? Yup. Every. Single. Time.

I sometimes wonder what the take-away was for our children during their growing-up years. I hope they have forgotten the times I said, "Oh, I forgot to buy ketchup," when the real answer was that we couldn't afford it. Now in their 40's, do they remember some of the tough times we went through together? Did the tough times make them stronger, more resilient, more cautious with their finances, perhaps? I can't speak for them but I know this much—the tough times give hubby and I great perspective. Great doses of reality in fact, not to mention a sincere compassion for those who are going through tough times, financially or otherwise.

As I watch what shapes the lives and hearts of my grands and in particular, my 'on-the-farm' grands because I know they are walking in a similar path to the one I grew up with and one that I have continued on for my entire adult life, I wonder what work ethics will guide them as young adults, what will bring them joy in their day-to-day lives and what kind of attitudes will carry them through the good times and the bad times whether on or off the farm.

Nowadays, when I pull into the farmyard, I see the twins (13) crossing the farmyard with a plan in place—I can see it on their faces. The plan. The determination. The joy of being in the great outdoors. In their hands there might be logs they have split, wood for the next great tree stand, a battery-operated screwdriver and a bag of screws to build something, the leaf blower or weed whacker to tidy up the yard. They are often on a mission these young farmers and outdoorsmen.


Today I asked one of the twins what he wanted for Christmas. "Chainsaw," was the single word reply and two minutes later a text with a link to the exact chainsaw he has his eye on. He has a plan, one that hopefully relies heavily on safe chainsaw cutting techniques of course, but also one in which he sees something that is useful and practical in, shall we say, his "line of work." And if it keeps my behind-the-camper log pile stacked high, it might be the best gift ever!

This fall, the routine for our grands and some of their friends has been to come to Grandma's house for lunch – some bring their own, while some wait for Gramps and I to dish something up. This group of four grands and two or three friends brings us lots of laughs, a fair bit of noise and a whole lot of dirty dishes. And we wouldn't change it for the world especially knowing it won't last forever. I will never get tired of making crepes for these kids who delight us because they take so much joy in the little things, something we would be hard-pressed at times to do in our busy, daily lives.

As I finish this column off, we are in the midst of our first winter storm. The snow is falling, the wind is howling and the highways are downright nasty. At least they were on the five-mile trip out to the farm and back this evening. I am a bit envious of the people who have made good use of the past week or so to get their Christmas decorations up and I have to say, when I pulled back into town, those lights were so inviting and so warm feeling. And so, it's time! Time to recall all the Christmases you have enjoyed and why you have enjoyed them. Time to spend with family and thank the good Lord for each one of them. Time to reach out to others who need a hand. Time to prepare for gatherings with family and friends.


And with that, it's also time to sign off. To our all our farmers and friends who love the land and the people of this province and strive to make it the best it can be for their families and their community and for future generations to come, take care out there. See you next time!

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# On the radar: Trends in U.S. ag and food that could impact Canada in 2025

BY JUSTIN SHEPHERD, SENIOR ECONOMIST, FCC  
GRAEME CROSSIE, SENIOR ECONOMIST, FCC

There's an old adage that says, "when the U.S. sneezes, Canada catches a cold." This is undoubtedly true in the ag and food sectors. And while there has been plenty of speculation about what the outcome of November's U.S. elections could mean for ag and food policy, there are topics to monitor that will be of importance regardless of the results. In this week's blog, we focus on three top trends to monitor in U.S. ag and food and what it could mean for Canada.

### To what degree will consumers demand 'made in the USA' products?

In the spring, the USDA announced a final ruling on voluntary country of origin labelling (vCOOL) for beef and pork products. In essence, the ruling says that, starting January 1, 2026, meat processors who display a "Product of USA" label on their beef and pork must only use animals that are born and raised in the U.S. Current-

ly, meat processors in the U.S. are allowed to import Canadian animals, raise and/or slaughter them, and use a "Product of USA" label. It's the latest in a two-decades long saga on country of origin labelling for beef and pork products. vCOOL's predecessor - mandatory country of origin labelling (mCOOL) - was repealed in 2015.

At first blush vCOOL seems less worrisome than mCOOL given the voluntary nature of the requirements. However, Canada will face difficulties exporting livestock to the U.S. For example, Canada sends about four million piglets (less than seven kilograms in weight and 21 days old) to the U.S. annually; so, while these hogs would spend most of their life in the U.S., they wouldn't qualify for a "Product of USA" label under vCOOL.

Industry sources are indicating that some processors could begin enforcing the rules by mid-2025. While we don't expect this to be the end of livestock exports (Figure 1), the impacts could be significant. Basis levels (the difference between the cash price received and futures prices) for live cattle and hog exports are likely to widen

and exports of processed meat products could face headwinds. Hog producers could face greater pressures given the decline in domestic processing capacity and increased reliance on U.S. access for slaughter. Quantifying the potential costs of vCOOL is challenging at this point but the WTO ruled the impact of mCOOL (in terms of foregone revenue) was over \$1 billion USD annually when it was in effect.

### The U.S. Farm Bill will require a refresh

U.S. Farm Bills cover multiple years and a wide range of agricultural and food programs. For agricultural producers, it includes commodity insurance programs, price supports and other programs like conservation.

Farm bills are typically set for a period of five years. However, when the most recent Farm Bill expired in 2023 it was given a one-year extension. This extension expired on September 30, 2024, and negotiations on the next long-term deal will start in the new year.

*Continued on page C14*

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# On the radar: Trends in U.S. ag and food that could impact Canada in 2025

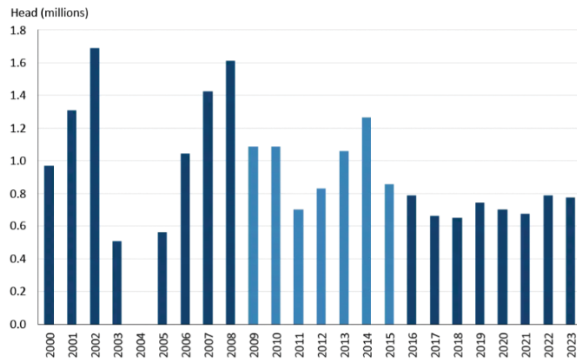
Continued from page C13

Canadian producers need to monitor the Farm Bill for possible impacts. Changes in support prices or insurance programs

could alter crop decisions of U.S. producers. For instance, better insurance for corn might lead to more corn planting in the U.S., pushing prices down. Ultimately,

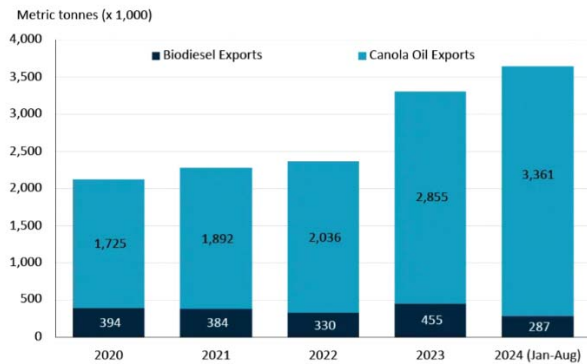
choices made on U.S. farms significantly affect futures markets and, consequently, Canadian prices for both grain and livestock.

wins the election, these policies will be approached very differently. These include the potential use of tariffs that will affect trade flows and prices, and the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA) review coming in 2026. Canadian ag and food business owners should remain attentive to developments in the U.S. but must prioritise managing their own risks and controlling the variables within their operations.



Light blue bars indicate years when mCOOL was enacted.

Source: Canadian International Merchandise Trade Database



Sources: Statistics Canada, Canadian International Merchandise Trade Web Application


### Bottom line


These are only three of the trends to be mindful of stateside as the new year approaches. There are others that will potentially have impacts. Depending on who

Top left: Figure 1: Historical cattle exports to the U.S.


Bottom left: Figure 2: Canadian exports to the U.S. of canola oil (crude and refined) and biodiesel.

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# UPCOMING TIMED ONLINE LAND AUCTIONS

## YOUR SASKATCHEWAN LAND AUCTIONEERS



**RM OF ABERNETHY #186 DALE & CINDY GOUDY  
TIMED ONLINE LAND AUCTION**  
 SUNDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2024 at 8:00am to  
 THURSDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2024 at 10:00am  
 (CST)  
 720.70 ACRES (3 PARCELS)  
 FOR A VIEWING CONTACT: 306-487-7815  
**ABERNETHY, SASKATCHEWAN**



**RM OF GARRY #245  
BRIAN & DAWN PROCYSHEN  
TIMED ONLINE LAND AUCTION**  
 SUNDAY, JANUARY 5, 2025 at 8:00am to  
 THURSDAY, JANUARY 9, 2025 at 10:00am  
 (CST)  
 6 FERTILE QUARTER SECTIONS  
 FOR A VIEWING CONTACT: 306-621-5883  
**YORKTON, SASKATCHEWAN**



**RM OF BAILDON #131  
HAROLD MARSHALL  
TIMED ONLINE LAND AUCTION**  
 THURSDAY, JANUARY 9, 2025 at 8:00am to  
 MONDAY, JANUARY 13, 2025 at 10:00am  
 (CST)  
 2 QUARTER SECTIONS AS 1 PACKAGE  
**MOOSE JAW, SASKATCHEWAN**



**RM OF CYMRI #36 & RM OF  
TECUMSEH #65  
LABORDE ENTPRISES INC.**  
**TIMED ONLINE LAND AUCTION**  
 FRIDAY, JANUARY 24, 2025 at 8:00am to  
 TUESDAY, JANUARY 28, 2025 at 10:00am  
 (CST)  
 FOR A VIEWING CONTACT  
 JOHN BOETTCHER 306-483-8128  
**ESTEVAN, SASKATCHEWAN**

**RM OF BROWNING #34 & RM OF  
BROCK #64  
MICHAEL & KIM WEINRAUCH**  
**TIMED ONLINE LAND AUCTION**  
 SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2025 at 8:00am to  
 WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2025 at 10:00am  
 (CST)



BEAUTIFUL HOME QUARTER & 5  
 QUARTERS OF PRIME FARM LAND.  
 FOR A VIEWING CONTACT  
 NORM KLATT 306-487-7815



**RM OF ELCAPU #154 & WILLOWDALE #153  
LES & JANET BLACKSTOCK  
TIMED ONLINE LAND AUCTION**  
 SATURDAY, MARCH 1, 2025 at 8:00am to  
 WEDNESDAY, MARCH 5, 2025 at 10:00am  
 (CST)  
 4 FERTILE QUARTER SECTIONS (SOIL CLASSES G&H)  
 FOR A VIEWING CONTACT 306-735-7203  
**WHITEWOOD, SASKATCHEWAN**



**RM OF ARGYLE #1  
PENELOPE MACPHERSON &  
ESTATE OF DAVID MACPHERSON  
TIMED ONLINE LAND AUCTION**  
 THURSDAY, MARCH 6, 2025 at 8:00am to  
 MONDAY, MARCH 10, 2025 at 10:00am  
 (CST)  
 13.5 QTR SECTIONS OF FARM LAND ONCE IN A LIFETIME  
 OPPORTUNITY FOR A VIEWING CONTACT  
 NORM KLATT: 306-487-7815



**RM OF BROCK #64  
HOOKENSON CATTLE CO. REG & VAL  
TIMED ONLINE LAND AUCTION**  
 SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2025 at 8:00am to  
 WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2025 at 10:00am  
 (CST)



**RM OF ENNISKILLEN #3  
HAROLD & PHILA MUNN  
TIMED ONLINE LAND AUCTION**  
 SATURDAY, MARCH 8, 2025 at 8:00am to  
 WEDNESDAY, MARCH 12, 2025 at 10:00am  
 (CST)  
 240 ACRES OF PASTURE LAND SOUTH OF OXBOW  
 FOR A VIEWING CONTACT HAROLD & PHILA MUNN  
 306-483-5023  
**OXBOW, SASKATCHEWAN**



**RM OF COALFIELDS #4  
HAROLD & PHILA MUNN  
TIMED ONLINE LAND AUCTION**  
 TUESDAY, MARCH 3, 2025 at 8:00am to  
 MONDAY, MARCH 17, 2025 at 10:00am  
 (CST)  
 8 QUARTERS OF FARM LAND IN THE RM OF COALFIELDS #4 WITH  
 \$27,000.00 OF OIL SURFACE LEASE REVENUE SELL!  
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# Farm insurance packages

We designed our farm policies to meet the unique needs of each farm – making sure farmers, their families, and their operations can stay safe and protected. All our farm policies also include coverage for the home, property, and personal liability.

## What's covered?

### FarmLite™ Policy

This policy is designed to protect customers who have minimal farming activity, or where farming is a secondary or hobby aspect to their rural lifestyle.

### FarmGen™ Policy

This policy is designed to protect smaller, family-farm style operations of less than 1,500 acres and where at least half of the farmer's income is generated from farming.



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