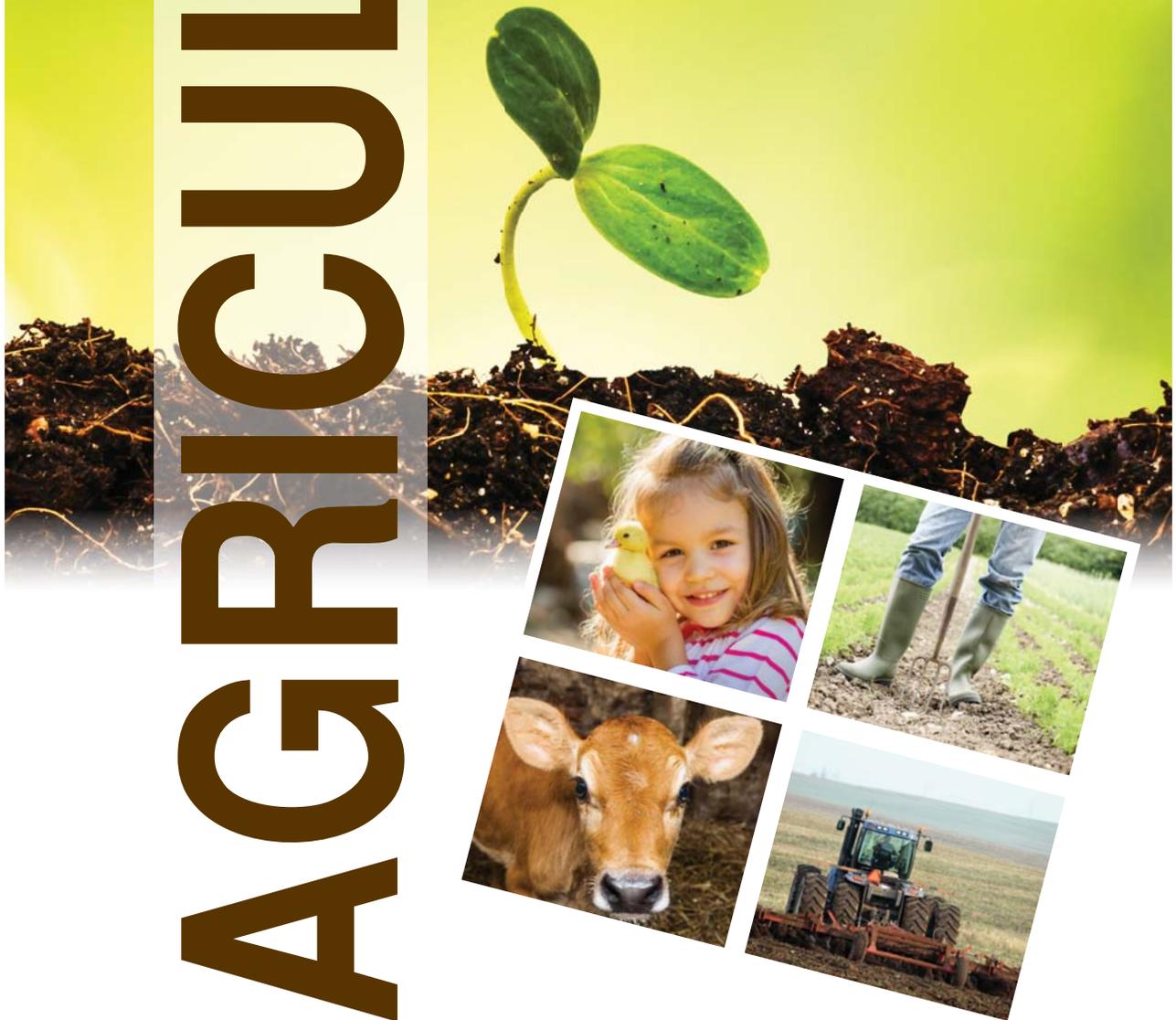


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# The hidden farm illness

By SHIRLEY BYERS

Ten years ago Gerry Friesen was a successful farmer, a key player in Manitoba Pork Marketing and a member of the Manitoba Farm Mediation Board. Outwardly, he was doing just fine. Inwardly, he was battling severe depression.

"I fooled a lot of people," he says. There has been a stigma around depression but that's changing. Gerry is doing his part to change it. He speaks at seminars and workshops about depression in farmers, he's open to talking to the media about his depression and he writes a blog on recovering from depression. He knows what depression feels like. He knows how difficult it was to seek help and he wants to make that first step a little easier for other farmers.

## STRESS CAN TRIGGER DEPRESSION

"We know job stress can be a huge contributor to depression and particularly in farmers and individuals that work in agricultural occupations," says Greg Gibson, registered clinical psychologist, Community Health Services for the Prairie Mountain Health Region based in Brandon. "In 2006 the World Health Organization cited farming as one of the most stressful occupations and they also highlighted that job stress is a precursor to mental health problems."

Farming is rife with risk factors, elements beyond the individual's control including uncertain weather, fluctuations in markets, disease outbreaks, input costs, machinery breakdowns and changes in government policy.

"All of these are things that farmers have little control over but they're kind of make or break factors," says Gibson. "And they can all have a financial effect and a psychological effect, and the financial effect can affect the psychology. A lot of these factors can impact, and certainly are a risk factor for, burnout and depression."

Gerry knows what stress feels like and the physical symptoms it can trigger. A few years ago, at a meeting he began to experience heart palpitations. "There was a lot of stress in my life at that time," he says, "issues with Manitoba Pork, my own farm issues—we had to restructure due to financial issues. It was in early 2004 that I finally did go to see a doctor."

The doctor put him on antidepressants and an anti-anxiety medication. "I came to understand the mental health issue better than I used to," he says.

## MORE WORK WASN'T THE ANSWER

"Looking back, I now recognize—it's ingrained in us that if we just work harder we will get rid of all these problems so instead of seeking the right kind of help we tend to try to work harder and work our way through the issues whether it's financial stress, whether it's depression, whether it's other stresses. That's just the way men are wired to handle things."

Gerry was able to hide his depression from the wider community, but the people who loved him most knew that something was wrong.



## DEPRESSION AFFECTS THE ENTIRE FAMILY

"I thought at the time I was doing a really good job of hiding it from them," he says. "In 2010, I facilitated a project called Men and Depression and at the time I actually interviewed my wife and kids to see if my depression had had an effect on them. To say it was traumatic is overstating it perhaps, but I was shocked at the response. I thought I had been hiding things from them and then realized that they had understood all too well there was something wrong with me and the different ways they tried to cope with that."

"My wife would say that in her life she has been married to four or five different men, three of them at least she just as soon would not have been married to and one of them was that depressed farmer who was trying to cope, was trying to do way more than he should have and wasn't dealing with the depression in the right way."

## HELP AND HOPE

For Gerry the right way to deal with his depression has been a combination of elements. Initially, he was on antidepressants and an anti-anxiety medication for about a year and a half.

After completing that regime and after a traumatic event in his life he tried talk therapy but didn't find the relief he needed. He went back on medication. It was at that time that the farm was sold. He now works in conflict resolution and stress management. Selling the farm gave him temporary relief from a lot of stress, he says.

Self-knowledge has helped as well. "Through the work I've been doing in the stress management area I've recognized who I am and what my trigger points are, and the fact that there are things that will drag me down."

"I get depressed when I'm asked to give and I have nothing left to give," he says. "When I'm very busy with my work, with my mediation stuff and stress management, I get to the point where I am tired and when I become tired, my defenses go down and I feel myself slipping over the edge. And then I have to be very proactive in dealing with that."

Cognitive behavioral aids such as David Burns' book, *Feeling Good* has also proved to be extremely helpful.

Burns refers to the thesis of Dr. Aaron T. Beck, one of the world's foremost authorities on mood disorders, and globally recognized as the father of cognitive therapy paraphrased below:

1. When you are depressed or anxious you are thinking in an illogical, negative manner and you inadvertently act in a self-defeating way.
2. With a little effort you can train yourself to change your thought patterns.
3. As your painful symptoms are eliminated, you will become productive and happy again.
4. These aims can usually be accomplished in a relatively brief period of time, using straightforward methods.

## BREAKING THE WALL OF SILENCE

After facilitating the seminar with the Manitoba Farm Stress Line Gerry was asked if he would talk about his own depression issues. "Never realizing the impact it would have, never realizing how difficult it would be, particularly at the beginning, but really the benefit out of all that is that people, some I've known for years and didn't realize they were hav-

ing mental health issues, came to me and said, 'You know this is what I'm experiencing,' and together we find new ways of coping and making life better for ourselves."

These days when he talks at seminars, workshops and other presentations he often says that the number one thing that helped him was actually starting to talk about his depression. He tells a story from the fall of 2005.

"There was a fairly traumatic incident in my life and I remember my neighbor dropping by and he asked, 'Are you doing okay?' Of course my normal response in the past would have been, 'Absolutely, I'm fine.' But I took advantage of that question that day and I talked for probably half an hour and I spilled my beans."

People don't want to talk about their mental health because there is a pride issue, he says. "I have no problem telling someone my knee is very sore because I sprained it but I hate telling people that I have a mental health issue. But when I did start talking about it and my neighbor said, 'Yeah, yeah I get that.' And he didn't look at me as if I had lost my marbles; it was just like, 'Yeah, I get that. I sometimes feel that way. Can I help with anything?' That kind of conversation was really freeing for me."

Professional health care workers are also extremely helpful, he says and warns people not to be discouraged if that first attempt to get help doesn't quite work.

"My message is, don't give up. Go see another counselor. I talk a lot about finding your support system. As much as I was hiding stuff from my wife I now realize if I had been open and up front with her that would have been way more helpful than I could ever have imagined. There are neighbors, professionals, community mental health workers. The list just goes on and on."

Gerry has been blogging since 2010 at <http://therecoveringfarmer.blogspot.ca/> and says that for him, it's a form of journaling and an awesome tool to deal with stress.

Continued on page C33



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### Lorne Crosson

Home: 306.733.4593  
Cell: 306.435.7148

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I would like to acknowledge the contributions made by farmers, ranchers and the agriculture industry in this country. Agriculture plays a big role in the economy of our country and I salute all farmers and farm families for their dedication to the agriculture industry.



**Ed Komarnicki**  
MP Souris-Moose Mountain

806 Broadway Avenue, Moosomin, SK  
Phone: 306-435-2831 Fax: 306-435-2837  
Email: [ed.komarnicki.c3@parl.gc.ca](mailto:ed.komarnicki.c3@parl.gc.ca)  
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## ASK US ABOUT SEED CLEANING







# Fire at hog barn near Kola kills over 1,500 pigs

BY JULIA DIMA

At around 10 p.m. on Tuesday, March 24, the Wallace District Fire department, with assistance from the Maryfield Fire Department and Virden and Melita RCMP later, responded to a massive fire that had engulfed a hog barn belonging to HyLife, just northwest of Kola, Manitoba.

There were no people in the barn at the time of the fire and no human injuries, but 1,500 sows and an unknown number of piglets died in the fire.

Wallace District Fire Chief Brad Yochim says that once the fire had spread, there was no chance of getting the animals out.

"Once we got to the barn, it was fully engulfed in fire—there was no saving anything unfortunately. It was a total loss of the hogs and the barn," Yochim says. "We just put as much water on it as we could get a hold of, and we had to go back the next day to put out hot spots."

The fire department was called to the fire because an employee received an alert from the farm's alarm system, and arrived to find fire and smoke at the west end of the barn. According to Yochim, the employee attempted to put out the fire with a fire extinguisher, but it was too advanced, so he vacated the building and called 911.

"It was a 600 by 100 foot building—it's an absolutely massive building—fully engulfed in fire from one end to the other... and some squealing hogs, which wasn't pleasant—it's a little unnerving," Yochim adds.

The next day, the Office of the Fire Commissioner started the investigation into the fire. Aside from knowing that the fire originated in the west end of the barn, Yochim says with a total destruction, it is hard to find the exact cause. Electrical components in the barn could have been a factor.

"There are all kinds of fans and lights and heat lamps in the entire barn, so there is a lot of electrical," Yochim says.

The fire was exacerbated by a massive winter storm that took place on Tuesday night. White-out conditions delayed the arrival of the fire department, and winds spread the fire.



Photo courtesy of RCMP Manitoba

The blaze at the hog barn took fire crews two days to put entirely out.

"The wind was a factor—once the fire breaches the building, then the wind just feeds it. Being at the west end of the barn, and having a west wind, the wind just pushed the fire right through the entire barn extremely fast," Yochim says. Nobody was injured in battling the blaze.

HyLife produces 1.4 million hogs each year in North America, and the barn that burned down was one of 90 hog barns in Manitoba.

HyLife Vice President Claude Vielfaure says that the loss of the barn and the pigs will have an impact for the company, but the dollar amount isn't known at this point.

"We will be working with our insurance company to understand (the loss)," Vielfaure says. "We haven't built a barn in quite a long time, so we need to understand all the costs associated."

There are a number of other barns in

in barns, there are many reasons why it would not work properly," he says.

He adds that in recent years, HyLife has been working to develop safety protocols in their barns, and though the cause of the fire is not known, there will be discussions within the company on what can potentially be done to prevent something like this from happening again.

"It's a very sad day whenever you have a barn fire and animals perish in the barns, it is something we don't like, and we need to understand what happened, and make sure we continue doing what we've done for years, which is ensuring our barns are as safe as possible," he says. "There will be a total investigation internally in our company on how we can improve that. We've done lots of that in the last few years making our barns as safe as possible, so we are going to review what we've been doing, and if we do find out what started this fire, we will need to see if we can improve our protocols because of it."

As far as staff, there were five employees that worked at this particular barn, and Vielfaure says that HyLife is currently in discussions with the employees about what the next step is for them. Because there are other barns in the region, he says it is likely all the employees will be placed in another barn in the area. Some employees are already working in different barns, and some were given a few days off to determine what happens next.

"They were devastated. They work with the animals every day, and they are obviously important to them, so they are sad about that. And obviously, it becomes, 'Well what is going to happen to me now?' So we have been proactively talking to them and trying to find a way of making sure they are taken care of," Vielfaure says. "Our plan is to retain the employees and move them to different sites, but all that has to be worked on. We will take care of our employees as far as that goes."

As of press time, the Office of the Fire Commissioner had not yet determined the cause of the blaze.

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**By SHIRLEY BYERS**  
Dale Montgomery has won an awful lot of awards in stock dog trials here and in the United States. His dog Gyp holds the Agribition record stock dog time at 47 seconds. His dog Huck is legendary. But it is Montgomery's contributions to the efficient but low stress handling of livestock that recently won him a designation to the Saskatchewan Agriculture Hall of Fame.

The story begins in 1986. Montgomery was coming to terms with a big change in his life—the end of a long and successful career in rodeo. He'd started out when he was around 17, riding broncos, then got into bulldogging, calf roping and team roping with his brother. He'd won a few championships, had a lot of fun, but the end was in sight. "Every cowboy's days are kind of numbered," he says. "I'd rodeoed for years and I was getting ready to retire or at least slow down." And he was okay with that, but giving up rodeo would leave a big gap and he wondered how he'd fill it.

But sometimes when one door closes another one opens. At about that time a friend living on an acreage near Saskatoon was looking for a home for an energetic young border collie. The dog was getting himself in trouble herding horses on neighboring acreages. "He was going to get run over or somebody was going to shoot him, so I got him," he says. "As soon as I got him home I saw he was a different kind of a dog. I didn't know what it was. I just knew he could handle stock like nothing I'd ever seen."

That was Huck, the dog that he credits with transforming his way of thinking about stock dogs. There's a softening in his voice when he talks about "that Huck Dog" and explains just how he was "different."

"Years ago, most cowboys—and I was a cowboy—basically wanted a dog that would chase cows. But Border Collies are a gathering dog. You can send them out a half a mile or a mile away and they will gather cows home. You learn to work with that natural instinct so that at command they will circle a herd, then, at whatever point you want, they will bring them up. Once they're trained you can use



Browarry Photographics Ltd.

Dale Montgomery with Huck, his first and arguably his finest herding dog, was inducted into the Saskatchewan Agriculture Hall of Fame in 2014.

## How a man and a dog improved stock handling in Saskatchewan

them for herding or driving.

"That's the way that Huck dog was. He was that way naturally right from the start. That dog taught me a much better way of handling livestock. You don't want a dog that's in there biting and chasing and causing a lot of ruckus. You want a dog walking in there calmly and coolly and just a nip here and a nip there if they need to but not unless they need to."

All that winter, Montgomery worked with Huck. He'd trained cattle dogs before but he worried that he didn't have quite the right knowledge to train this dog whose livestock handling style was so different from anything he'd ever seen. There wasn't much information available in Canada at that time on herding dogs but his local librarian in Maple Creek found him a book, *The Farmer's Dog*, by John Holmes which he still recommends. He learned a

lot from that book and in the spring of 1987 he took Huck to a clinic in Fort Assiniboine, Alta., taught by Brit Ray Ollerehsaw, then president of the International Sheep Dog Society. This was a man who had seen his share of talented herders, but he couldn't stop raving about Huck.

When Huck came to his life, Montgomery was training horses. For a while he worked with dogs and horses but before long he was working solely with dogs. In 1989, Canadian Western Agribition hired him to do a stock dog demonstration during the rodeo. It was an instant hit with the crowd and the stock dog competition has been one of the show's most popular events ever since.

As well as breeding border collies, he began to do custom training. There are usually 15 to 20 dogs on his farm in the Maple Creek area, and that's not counting the puppies. He's

raised two or three litters a year for the last 25 years and trained hundreds and hundreds in just about 30 years. And, oh yes, most of the dogs birthed on the Montgomery farm are descendants of that Huck dog.

People often ask him, how do you know if a dog is a good one? The herding instinct and other qualities a good stock

dog needs all come in varying degrees, he says. Intelligence, strength and a trainable disposition are all important.

"With most dogs, you have to wait for that herding instinct to hit them, although there is the odd exception, the little puppy who will be herding his or her littermates.

Generally, that instinct

can be ignited anywhere from a few months to a year and a half, he says. "With some dogs it happens very gradually. With others it can happen overnight. One day they have absolutely no interest in working. The next day they want to work like crazy. It's like that instinct is there and something triggers it and away they go."

In the meantime, when you're waiting for that instinct to hit, there's plenty you can do, he says. An eight- to ten-week-old puppy is too young to work but can learn obedience. He has to add that he doesn't want a lot of obedience. "I just want the dog to hang out with me, follow me around, come to me when called, maybe lie down or stay on command."

In over 20 years of competitions, Montgomery's wins include seven World Stock Dog Competitions at the Calgary Stampede, eight Agribition titles, two or three Farm Fair Edmonton wins as well as top times in Rapid City and Bismarck, North Dakota and other American competitions.

At the end of October he, and dogs Ben and Sue, head up to Lloydminster for the Stockade Roundup stock dog trials, then on to Edmonton and then back to Saskatchewan in November for Agribition. After that, he's not sure. "I turned 65 last winter," he says. "A year and a half ago I broke my back. That really slowed me down."

Over the years people have asked him to write a book about training stock dogs and he's thinking it could be the time to do that. He's working on a series of articles on that subject for *Canadian Cowboy Country* magazine and those just might evolve into a book, he says.

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# Saturated ground could be a concern for farmers this spring

BY JULIA DIMA

Farmers in the region are concerned that despite a mild winter with little snowfall, heavily saturated soil could delay seeding and lead to ponding and localized flooding concerns.

After massive floods covered the Southeast corner of Saskatchewan at the end of June last summer, farmers were left to contend with wet soil in almost every region of the province.

Kevin Woods, with Westwood Land and Cattle near Moosomin says that combines and tractors were still getting stuck in the fields at the end of October. The entire area went into winter freeze-up with saturated fields. Though the Prairies were beginning to look dry going into mid-March, a storm last week put a fresh layer of snow across the region.

"We went through a pretty decent winter, but that doesn't mean much because all it will take is one or two more of these snowfalls, and all we gained through the winter, we will lose in a short period of time. We really don't need a whole lot of moisture in the next 60 to 90 days," Woods says.

Just southwest of Moosomin, Ron Dietrich, who grows feed crops for his cattle, says that it took into late October and freeze-up to get bales off the ground.

"Although some sub-moisture seeped away in the winter, it was replenished with the spring melt . . . So, excess moisture is a fairly major concern at this point," he says. "We have time to recover from this new snowfall, certainly. But, the next six weeks will be critical. If it drags out like it did last year, we'll be delayed seeding, and that causes a lot more concerns down the line."

Moisture concerns are exacerbated further south in the Wawota, Redvers, and Maryfield area.

Neil Weatherald farms on the edge of Moose Mountain Park, and he's sure the water table cannot handle anymore moisture at this point.

"Another big snow would mean unseeded acres—we are full, the water table is right up there . . . the springs ran all winter, so that tells us the lakes and the ground are full. Everything we get now is runoff," Weatherald says. "(Last year) we still had three feet of snow at this time, so we are looking better than last year as of right now . . . hopefully things dry up. We have another month before we should get concerned."

During the summer floods, the Redvers region saw some of the most intense flooding. Dustin Toms farms near Redvers, and like Woods, says that though a dry winter was a blessing, the saturated ground means it makes little difference.

"We are pretty saturated, and that's the problem—even though there wasn't a whole lot of snowfall throughout the winter, it doesn't take much. There is just no place for it to go," Toms says. "I am guessing we will have an average to late seeding this year because of the moisture."

Though he also went into freeze-up with saturated fields near Maryfield, John Van Eaton says he is always an optimist and is not yet worrying about flooding or delayed seeding.

"I was not looking forward to a blizzard . . . but we don't have a huge snow pack, and I think even this is not going to be real detrimental, but we did go into freeze up with high soil moisture content, and there is enough frost in the ground that most should run off and not soak in. Once the soil is saturated, it can't absorb much more, so has to run off or pond, which was the problem," Van Eaton says. "That's in the back of our minds—I'm not losing sleep yet, but it's a concern. We still have four or five weeks before seeding, so a lot can change."

Van Eaton feels that another large snowfall or a large rain in the coming weeks could be the tipping point. Nonetheless, he is cautiously optimistic.

"I think our market hinges so much on things we can't control that as professional agro-business people, we just have to be prepared to take advantage of market signals when they are there. We have to be prepared to roll with the punches, take advantage of opportunities as they arise," he says.

Dwayne Wolfe of Wapella says that he is less worried than last year, when there was still a heavy snowpack in the spring. He says that because excessive moisture has become a trend in farming in the last four or five years, he is prepared for the problems associated with wet years.

"We've geared up on equipment, so we are able to have a fair bit of confidence going in that we can handle the situation—now it is what we are used to. We were expecting (the snowfall), and a few more before we go to seeding," he says.

Northwest of Rocanville, Darryl Williamson says he was lucky compared to others with the saturated soil.

"I am hoping it's going to be a normal spring, but it could get a little tense if we get any more snow in late March or early April," Williamson says. "The spring runoff is not too bad, but after it starts to warm up and we get rain on the remaining snow, that is my concern. When the ground starts to thaw, if we get the rain, it's bad. But, I am not worried, it's just part of farming."

The moisture concerns have been ringing true at the elevators in the region too. At Richardson Pioneer Limited in Whitewood, Director of Operations Trent Brister says that things are holding steady enough for a normal spring and on schedule seeding throughout the region right now, but another heavy snowfall or a spring rain could change that very quick.

"The big runoff has come and gone in the Whitewood area, so we are not sitting too bad. Just southeast, moisture is problem. We wouldn't want to see a two inch rain by any means, that would slow things down. Right now, if we don't get any more moisture by the third week in April, we could be seeding," he says. "If we don't get

excess moisture, we'll be okay. Most of the acres will get seeded—but if the weather changes, and it gets wet, that could change in a hurry."

Brister says that the moisture could cause fusarium in the seed germination, as it did last year after the floods, bringing the average grade of the crops down into the two and three range.

At Parrish and Heimbeck in Moosomin, Jeff Vanrobaeys says they are cautiously optimistic.

"I think that being said, there are certainly some concerns. Probably the biggest one is moisture—it varies a little bit, but there are parts of area that are going to go into spring wet already. Parallel to that, there is a lot of concern with the quality aspects the weather brought us last year, so some disease and yield—a lot of the grain we got last year had quality problems . . . grade one was rare, most growers were getting two, and some were getting 3 or worse as well," Vanrobaeys says. Like Brister, Vanrobaeys says it's likely fusarium will have an impact on germination this year.

The wet trend has changed the crops that many farmers in the area are choosing to plant, however. Cereals are less popular, and crops that handle moisture better are increasing.

"One of the big things is probably soybeans—we will put in a soybean treater here in Moosomin because we've seen increased demand 10 times over for soybeans . . . last year," he says. "They handle moisture better and don't have the same fertilizer requirement other commodities have."

Wolfe is one of those farmers that saw success with his soybeans last year, and has decided to plant the crop again in anticipation of a wet year.

As Louis-Dreyfus in Virden, Darryl Baker says that soybeans are increasing in that area as well. Because of disease concerns and lower prices, cereals are less popular this year.

Jeff Skulmoski with Jeff Skulmoski Seeds says that soybean is a good direction to head now, since it is more hardy than it once was, and requires less fertilization. But canola is still the top crop.

"Everyone around here is 50 per cent canola—seems like that's all that makes money anymore. There's the spring wheat, a few acres of malt barley, and way more interest in soybeans now—the varieties are getting earlier, they are more adapted for this region now than in the past . . . and they use less fertilizer. There is some interest in getting another crop growing here besides canola and wheat," Skulmoski says.

Prices are comparable to last year's, and lower than local farmers would like to see. However, the focus for now is making it to seeding day on time.

"The biggest worry is getting the crop in the ground," says Weatherald. "After that, we'll take issues as they come."

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# Research into creating gluten-free wheat

BY ROXANA HEGEMAN  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Kansas farmers are paying for genetic research to figure out exactly why some people struggle to digest wheat.

The hard science is aimed at developing new varieties of wheat at a time when the gluten-free industry is worth nearly a billion dollars a year in the U.S. alone.

The Kansas Wheat Commission is spending \$200,000 for the first two years of the project, which is meant to identify everything in wheat's DNA sequences that can trigger a reaction in people suffering from celiac disease, an autoimmune disorder in which eating even tiny amounts of gluten—comprised of numerous, complex proteins that gives dough its elasticity and some flavour to baked goods—can damage the small intestine.

The only known treatment for celiac disease is a gluten-free diet free of any foods that contain wheat, rye, and barley.

"If you know you are producing a crop that is not tolerated well by people, then it's the right thing to do," said the project's lead researcher, Chris Miller, senior director of research for Engrain, a Kansas company that makes products to enhance the nutrition and appearance of products made by the milling and cereal industry.

Though celiac disease is four to five

times more common now than 50 years ago, only about one per cent of the world's population is believed to suffer from it, and just a fraction have been diagnosed. But the gluten-free food business has skyrocketed in the last five years, driven in part by non-celiac sufferers who believe they are intolerant to gluten and look for such products as a healthier alternative.

Sales of gluten-free snacks, crackers, pasta, bread and other products reached \$973 million in the U.S. in 2014, up from \$810 million the previous year, according to a January report by the consumer research firm Packaged Facts, which analyzed the sales of hundreds of explicitly labeled and marketed gluten-free products and brands at supermarkets, drugstores, and mass merchandisers.

Understanding the causes of celiac disease and gluten intolerance is the goal of a lot of research around the world; Some focuses on human diagnosis and treatment, and others have identified about 20 of the protein fragments in wheat that causes celiac reactions.

But no one has identified all of them, or bred a variety of wheat that is safe for celiac sufferers to eat.

"We are hoping to be one of the first to establish this comprehensive screening of reactive proteins in wheat," Miller said.

The research began in July at the Wheat Innovation Center in Manhattan, Kansas, and remains in its early stages, with researchers extracting proteins from seeds of various varieties of wheat. A later step will be combining the proteins with antibodies produced by the human immune system to test for reactions.

He also plans to examine the wild relatives of wheat as well as modern varieties, and will tap into a Kansas wheat variety repository that dates back to the 1900s in hopes of finding a variety—perhaps one that fell out of favour among commercial farmers—that might already be low in reactivity for celiac sufferers.

Researchers hope to use that variety to develop a gluten-free wheat using traditional breeding methods.

An expert on celiac disease who reviewed Miller's plan online worries that it may prove "too simplistic," and fail to identify all the toxic sequences that can trigger a celiac reaction.

Armin Alaedini, assistant professor of medical sciences at Columbia University and a researcher at the New York-based school's Celiac Disease Centre, said the project may end up with a less toxic wheat product that isn't completely safe for all celiac disease patients.

"After all this effort, this product that is

coming out ... is unlikely to be superior in terms of nutritional value or baking properties and taste to the gluten-free products that are already on the market," Alaedini said.

The medical advisory board for the Celiac Disease Foundation, a non-profit based in Woodland Hills, California, could not reach a consensus on the viability of Miller's research.

But the organization's CEO, Marilyn Geller, is encouraged.

Her son had been sick his entire life before being diagnosed with celiac disease at age 15, Geller said, and his father also was later diagnosed. Since the disease is genetic, her grandchildren will be at risk of getting it.

If these research efforts can keep celiac disease in the public eye, more doctors will be aware of it and more federal research dollars may flow, she said.

Many people with the disease would like to "eat actual wheat, with the properties of wheat that make the bread nice and fluffy," she said.

"The idea of having a variety of wheat that they could eat that has those wonderful wheat-like properties would certainly be very interesting for them."

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# When is a family farm a business?

BY SHIRLEY BYERS

An on-farm abattoir and meat plant in Endeavour, Saskatchewan made the national news last August when a complaint was made to Occupational Health and Safety, a division of the Department of Labour in that province, and an investigation was launched.

Someone had lodged a complaint regarding Sam and Janine Covlin's eight- and 10-year-old children working in the family owned meat plant. During the investigation it was also discovered that three local kids, aged 11, 13 and 15 were also working in the plant as paid employees.

Within days, the story went viral on social media,

saturated local media outlets and zoomed to the CBC National. It was reported that the children helped out in all aspects of the family farm and meat plant. The Covlins raise and process cattle, pigs and poultry on their farm known as Cool Springs Ranch. The children were involved in every step of the operation from pasture to fork, Janine Covlin said in a CBC report. The girls' work in the meat plant included cutting up raw meat and weighing and vacuum bagging meat.

Reaction was mixed, with most comments on the CBC site at least, coming down strongly on the right of the children's parents to allow their children to work on the family farm. Terms like "nanny state" were thrown

around while other posters wondered if the investigation had been triggered by disgruntled union members.

With few exceptions most of the commenters seemed to miss the point. There was never any objection to the children gathering eggs, feeding chickens and carrying out other "farm" tasks. Nobody, at least not OHS, was trying to stop them from doing that. The objection was to their working in a meat processing plant which is against the law, as they are under 16.

That was the issue and it was quickly resolved when Labour Minister Don Morgan announced less than a week from the day the story broke that the unrelated under-age kids would have to go, but the Covlin children would be allowed to continue to work in the family meat plant.

"We treated this one as an extension of a family farm," the minister said in a phone interview. "If the parents are there giving supervision it's a learning process and they learn as they do anything else. And we expect parents to give appropriate supervision in the area of safety."

He also pointed out that the Covlin on-farm business has a "superb safety record."



Antimicrobial resistance is a real problem in cattle herds

## What beef producers need to know about antimicrobial use and resistance

BY THE BEEF CATTLE RESEARCH COUNCIL

There's no avoiding the topics of antimicrobial use (AMU) and antimicrobial resistance (AMR) these days.

We often see headlines like "Agricultural folly spawns superbugs," "Antibiotic Resistance Declared A 'Serious Health Threat' By CDC As Use In Meat Industry Skyrockets," and "Doctors call for ban of antibiotic use in farm animals as drug-resistant human infections hit 'dangerous level'" in the mainstream media. Headlines like that are alarming for most of us—consumers, government officials, and people who make a living raising livestock.

Flip through your favorite industry

publication and you're bound to find stories on the latest release of AMR reports by influential organizations, regulatory moves by the federal government to restrict the use of various antimicrobial drugs, announcements by grocery and restaurant chains to source meat produced with particular practices, or articles that encourage producers and industry groups to be transparent about why and how antimicrobials are used on farms.

At the heart of it all, we know three things:

- AMR is a real threat. If antimicrobials become less effective, then human health and animal welfare will suffer.

- AMR is a natural and very complex phenomenon, but improper use of antibiotics favors the development of AMR.

- AMU is necessary in beef production, and prudent AMU will slow the development of AMR.

To learn science-based facts about Canadian beef producers' impacts and responsibilities related to AMR and to find an excellent short new video, visit [www.beefresearch.ca/](http://www.beefresearch.ca/) AMR and talk to a veterinarian. The webpage includes a list of tips on how to avoid illness in cattle to reduce the need to use antimicrobials, and how to responsibly treat cattle when antimicrobial use is necessary.



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### Heavy Duty Trucks Spring Clean Event!

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<p><b>2011 Chevrolet Silverado 2500HD LTZ</b> STOCK# 15089A GX Package, 6.6L Duramax, Heated Buckets, Bose, Sunroof, Remote Start, 73,500 kms, Running Boards, Tonneau Cover, Linex Box Liner, XM, 20" wheels, was \$42,990</p> <p>SASK PST PAID ..... Clean Deal <b>\$40,888<sup>00</sup></b></p>	<p><b>2010 GMC Sierra 2500HD LTZ</b> STOCK# 15031A Local Trade, 6.6L Duramax, 4x4, Heated Leather, Running Boards, Remote Start, Extra Capacity Fuel Tank, Sunroof, XM, Alloy Wheels, 159,500 kms, was \$35,990</p> <p>SASK PST PAID ..... Clean Deal <b>\$33,888<sup>00</sup></b></p>
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<p><b>2010 Chevrolet Equinox LTZ AWD</b> STOCK# 15040A 3.0L DDHC DI V6 Engine VVT, Sunroof, Leather Appointed Seating with Heated Front Seats, Remote Start, Chrome Appearance Package, 82,000 kms, was \$19,990</p> <p>SASK PST PAID ..... Clean Deal <b>\$17,888<sup>00</sup></b></p>	<p><b>2007 Ford Edge SEL AWD</b> STOCK# 15057A 3.5L V6 Cyder, Auto, Leather, Sunroof, Five Passenger, 208,000 kms, was \$9,990</p> <p>SASK PST PAID ..... Clean Deal <b>\$7,888<sup>00</sup></b></p>

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# Increased funding for Sask. 4H Council

The Saskatchewan 4-H Council will benefit from a new three-year agreement totalling \$1.05 million under Growing Forward 2. This support means the council will receive \$350,000 per year, an increase of \$50,000 annually over the previous agreement, to support leadership development initiatives.

"Our government is proud to support 4-H as they continue to inspire youth to achieve their potential and to become tomorrow's community and business leaders," said Federal Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz. "With their new ideas, fresh perspectives and optimism, youth leaders and young farmers keep Canada competitive by making agriculture an economic engine of the country, now and in the years to come."

"The Saskatchewan 4-H Council plays a key role in engaging youth in the agriculture industry," Agriculture Minister Lyle Stewart said. "These funds help ensure youth have an opportunity to expand their knowledge, foster leadership skills and build a connection to the community."

As one of the largest and longest running youth organizations, the Saskatchewan 4-H Council has more than 200 local clubs and 800 volunteer leaders. The formal agreement, which concludes on March 31, 2018, will go to-



A scene from the 2014 Fairmede 4-H Achievement day

ward various programs and services that support its motto of "Learn to do by doing." "As 4-H Saskatchewan's 100th anniversary draws closer, we are not only reflecting on the history of our organization but our future

too," 4-H Saskatchewan Board of Directors President Joanne Hamilton said. "Government support allows the Saskatchewan 4-H Council to continue to build a legacy of community service and youth development

through our dedicated members and volunteers."

The Ministry of Agriculture has been a partner of the Saskatchewan 4-H Council for more than 20 years. The program that grew from livestock clubs founded as

early as 1917, offers opportunities to youth ages six to 25 to enhance life skills and their connection to the community.

This investment is funded through Growing Forward

2, a cost-shared partnership between federal, provincial and territorial governments designed to support an innovative, competitive and profitable Canadian agriculture and agri-food sector.

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# Turning off-grade canola into high grade diesel

BY SHIRLEY BYERS

A lifelong inclination away from the conventional, 25 cent canola, and long stretches of time in a tractor cab—just a few of the elements that positioned Zenneth Faye on the path that would lead to the establishment of Milligan Biofuels Inc., Canada's first canola-based biodiesel fuel plant, in Foam Lake, Saskatchewan.

Involved with the Saskatchewan Canola Growers Association since the mid-80s, Faye was part of a group that successfully petitioned for a canola development commission that would collect a check-off. In 1991 SaskCanola (Saskatchewan Canola Development Commission) was established and supported by some 26,000 levy-paying canola producers. Faye was on the first board of directors and served as Market Development Chairman.

"Through those levy dollars we started looking at crop development and variety development," he says. "We funded research with agronomics; we funded extension activities. One of things that has always been part of my nature was not to do traditional things, to look for other uses for canola."

In 1990 while he was seeding he heard a radio report about the bio diesel efforts in Europe where biodiesel had been mandated to be sold as fuel. The broadcast piqued his interest. Meanwhile, the Canola Commission was looking at how to make use of off-grade canola. In a year when much of the crop froze Faye was getting calls from all over Western Canada reporting prices as low as 25 cents per bushel. "Most of the crushers at that time would buy it at that price and then blend it in (with high grade canola) at very low volumes to get it out of the farmer's bin."

The Canola Commission began some research projects with Agriculture Canada. "There was a bright young grad student at that time, Martin Reaney, and we got connected with him," says Faye. "I'm an engineer as well and one of my old professors, Barry Hertz, was still there (at the U of S). The three of us were talking about opportunities one time over coffee. And we talked about how we could add some value to this very low grade product."

With research dollars available through the Canola Commission they put together a small project to look at making biodiesel.

### WORKING ON QUALITY AND QUANTITY

To make biodiesel as they do in Europe is not easy, but it's a fairly simple process, says Faye. It's much more difficult when you're using off-grade canola; the quality of the oil is never the same.

"But, at that time we were very naive as well," he says. "We thought we could just use some of the traditional recipes/technologies that were out there but we quickly found that that was not the case."

Also, making biodiesel in the lab is not the same as making it in a larger quantity. Through the '90s there was a lot of bad product made and dumped but a few good batches were also produced.

"When we had the good ones we then tried to streamline the research, keep focusing on how to continually and consistently make this high quality product."

This was the heyday of marketing clubs in every town and in Foam Lake the marketing club suggested they should get the word out, let people know what biodiesel is and how it works.

The problem was finding a place where enough biodiesel could be made. "We couldn't get anyone in Saskatchewan to make us some," says Faye. "We wanted about 100 gallons and we were making test tubes full."

They finally found a very similar product in Florida made from soybeans. They purchased some and over that summer the Foam Lake Marketing Club did trade shows around the area to show how biodiesel could be used in a vehicle. Faye had his own vehicle running on biodiesel for the summer, fall and part of the winter until the supply ran out.

By this time production in the lab had been scaled up to five gallon pail quantities and Professor Barry Hertz had taken it upon himself to buy a Volkswagen diesel engine and do some testing in his lab at the University.

### ADAPTING TO THE MARKETPLACE

At the same time as all this was happening, the federal government was mandating the fuel companies to decrease the amount of sulphur, a known carcinogenic, in the fuel. But when they reduced it, the lubricity of the fuel was also reduced. And, as Professor Hertz showed in his lab, there would also be higher engine wear.

And the city of Saskatoon was looking for ways to promote a more environmentally friendly city. Saskatoon would be hosting an international oil seed conference, says Faye. "They wanted to have something to showcase and we said, 'Hey, why don't we put some biodiesel in your buses and escort these dignitaries around?' We did that and sort of got people understanding that biodiesel works."

"And yeah, it works. It sort of smells like cooking and when a bus goes by and you see that black cloud of smoke it would be like you're cooking French fries."

The buses were run with between five and 10 per cent biodiesel. "We were also doing some testing work on them," he says. "We put posters on the sides of the buses. And we got very good publicity."

### PITCHING FOR A PLACE

At the same time, Faye was touring the province talking to Economic Development Committees in various communities, trying to convince them to look at building a biodiesel facility.

In his own words, he wasn't getting very many bites. "There were a lot of economic development committees in the '90s, he says. "Things weren't great in Saskatchewan. Economic Development Committees would hear about us and ask me to come and speak. We didn't have a lot to offer except the concept. It was almost like going into the Dragons' Den without a good business plan and getting shot down."

"So finally one day, I said, 'You know if I can't convince the community I live in to do this, it might as well just get packed up and put away.'" With that in mind, he made a pitch to a small group of farmers and business people in Foam Lake.

And the answer was . . . yes. The Town of Foam Lake, the RM of Foam Lake and a group of farmers threw in some cash and were then partners on a number of projects to continue the development. "There was no technology at that time," says Faye. "We had lots of stuff done in test tubes but nothing done to any kind of scale."

### A MAJOR BREAKTHROUGH AND A LUCKY BREAK

With monies from the Foam Lake group and Research and Development funds available from government; further research was done and there was a major breakthrough. Barry Hertz's work showed that their canola-based biodiesel worked well as a lubricity additive.

In 1996, Milligan Biotech was formed. The company went into production making a biodiesel additive that could be put into traditional diesel to increase lubricity and add to engine life. They began marketing the product in 2001.

The canola based biodiesel and the co-products were developed by the team effort of the Bio Processing Centre in Saskatoon, University of Saskatchewan scientists and Agriculture Canada. The technology is owned by Ag Canada, the Canola Development Commission and Milligan.

Another new product was later added and that one came about by accident. Through a glitch in production of their biodiesel additive, they ended up with a penetrating oil that was found to be much better than a certain well known penetrating oil. "When you plan for something and it goes the other way and you still come out with something that can make a dollar—that's how the second product came about," says Faye.

Because there wasn't a small enough crusher in Saskatchewan and because their needs were not the same as the needs of a client working with Number 1 canola they ended up creating their own crushing technology, tweaking traditional equipment to their particular needs.

Other co-products have been added. These include a rust inhibitor made from high quality canola derivatives, non-toxic and biodegradable; a road dust suppressant which can be used on clay and gravel roads, yard sites and helipads; an environmentally friendly asphalt release agent and a high quality, high oil meal for feeding animals.

On June 29, 2011, Environment Minister Peter Kent announced that the government was moving ahead with a 2 per cent renewable content requirement in diesel fuel and heating oil.

### IN RETROSPECT

When it all began did Zenneth Faye believe that the use of biodiesel would someday be made mandatory in Canada?

"I hoped, but I didn't think I'd live long enough to see it," he says. "The petroleum industry found that there was a good fit but it's not something they can make. They would have to re-tool to be able to make biodiesel. They didn't want to do that. They offered a lot of resistance. Petroleum companies are pretty strong, but eventually it came to be."

One of the challenges in those early days, he says was that they didn't have any production. How then can you have a mandate if there is no product? That's why in the early years Milligan needed to have a co-product. That's why the fuel additive and the other co-products were so important.

The end goal never was to replace diesel with biodiesel. That wouldn't even be possible, says Faye. "All the vegetable oil in the world would only replace three per cent of the fuel. So it's never going to happen."

The goal was to establish a market for off-grade canola. Today, Milligan buys over 60,000 tonnes of green, frozen or otherwise unwanted canola seed per year, produces over 20 million litres of biodiesel per year from their facility in Foam Lake and employs 46 people.

Milligan Bio-Tech Inc. is now Milligan Biofuels Inc. and its first executive manager, Zenneth Faye no longer works at the plant but he's still with the company in an advisory capacity. And, he's still fascinated with the idea of finding more uses for damaged canola seed.

One of them is glycerine. There are a number of products, depending on its purity, in which it can be used. Pharmaceutical glycerine is the top end. At the present time glycerine from Milligan is being sold for processing elsewhere, but . . .

"It's like when you make donuts you have the centre of the donut left. You make Timbits and get more than you would for the donut. The leftovers have value too. They just need a little processing and development work."

"That's the part I like . . . that's the part that intrigues me. I love dealing with the unknown. That's probably why I'm still farming."



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Crop rotation should be revisited, says a Regional Crops Specialist with Saskatchewan Agriculture

# Crop rotation is still a viable concept

BY CORY JACOB

The concept of crop rotations has fallen out of favor lately, whether it's due to economics, lovely Mother Nature, or logistics in the busy season. I think that it is time to revisit this concept and to understand why it has been promoted in the past.

Crop rotations are designed for improving crop and soil health over the long term and some would argue economics too, all to ensure sustainability. I really want to emphasize sustainability, as many producers seem to not be considering this. If you have a son that will be taking over the farm or are a young producer, think about the issues and consequences of less crop diversification and tight crop rotations 10, 20, 30, and 40 years down the road. Crop rotations are a great way to lessen these risks and consequences as they keep pests off balance, while maintaining soil nutrient levels and using water and nutrients efficiently.

Herbicide resistant weeds and weed

management are issues associated with tight crop rotations where the same crop is grown and a similar herbicide is used year after year. Plants are smarter than we give them credit for and they adapt to our farming practice. Eventually the weed population shifts to weed species that are resistant to that herbicide or mode of action. Herbicide resistance develops from a genetic mutation or natural tolerance in a weed population and if the same herbicide or mode of action is continually used, that weed does not die and goes to seed and spreads. You then have more and more herbicide resistant weeds to deal with. Once they are present, they are a long-term tenant on farmland.

Minimizing disease levels is also an important aspect of crop rotations; which reduce the growth, reproduction and survival of soil stubble borne pathogens, which cannot survive without a susceptible host or plant tissue. Crop rotations will not eliminate these pathogens, but

will reduce their population size so that there is less crop damage and control options will become more effective. Rotation of fungicide groups and modes of action will ensure fungicide efficacy. Using one single mode of action fungicide year after year will select for organisms that have resistance to the fungicide or mode of action and soon the fungicide will not be effective against the disease. Selecting a variety with disease resistance will also help, but do not only depend on that as resistance will break down and new strains, with no known resistance are discovered.

Crops have different rooting depths to capture nutrients and water. Peas, lentils, and flax have shallow root systems, while cereals crops have a deep rooted fibrous root system, followed by canola and mustard with a deep rooted taproot, and alfalfa with a very deep rooted taproot. The deep rooted taproot allows the plants to obtain nutrients such as nitrogen and sulfur that leach down in the soil profile, especially

in these wet years. Shallow roots and the fibrous roots system of cereal crops allows to capture phosphorus and potassium, which from seeding are higher up in the soil profile and move only a few millimeters in the soil every year.

As well, including pulse crops in crop rotations is a way to get free nitrogen from the crop when it is inoculated. Pulse crops fix 50 to 90 per cent of their nitrogen. Faba bean fixes 90 per cent, 80 per cent for pea and lentil, 70 per cent for chick pea and 50 per cent for soybean and dry bean and these crops leave residual nitrogen for the following crop as pulse stubble is broken down relatively quickly.

At the end of the day, I understand that economics and Mother Nature play a big role in choosing crop rotations. I wanted to provide some food for thought.

Cory Jacob is a Regional Crops Specialist with the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture in Watrous.

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# Top 10 organic and natural food trends of 2014

BY SHIRLEY BYERS

Sterling-Rice Group, a Colorado based research, consulting and advertising firm, has come up with a list of the top 10 Organic and Natural food trends of 2014.

Now, before we get to the list, it is perhaps wise to keep in mind that Sterling-Rice Group is in the advertising/influence biz. Are they revealing the trends? Or, are they trying to set the trends?

1. Plentiful lentils

With the demand for plant-based sources of protein and fibre increasing, more and more consumers are turning to the versatile lentil, which is an excellent source of both.

Another plus for lentils: they aren't soy, and they contain no gluten—two ingredients for which there is an increasing public concern.

2. Super sauces and toppings

Once an afterthought, the nutritional content of sauces, dressings and toppings is becoming something consumers care more and more about. So look for healthier and more nutritious salad dressings and pasta sauces. Even sweets are getting the treatment. Mm mm! High-protein cake icing and sundae toppings with extra calcium!

3. What's your gut feeling?

Evidence supporting the idea that a healthy gut equals a healthy body is continually mounting. As such, consumers are no longer looking solely to yogurt for their healthy stomach bacteria needs. Look for probiotic, co-biotic and prebiotic infused foods of all kinds to become more prevalent.

4. Let them eat grass

Increasing consumer awareness of the well-being (or lack thereof) of food producing animals means more demand for products sourced from happier, better fed animals. What this means is an increasing demand for grass-fed meat and dairy, and pen/cage-free pig and chicken products.

5. Beets

Beets have a unique blend of antioxidants, and because of this, food producers are looking for more ways to incorporate beets into their products. From individual snack packs of flavored baby beets, to yogurt and juices, beets are showing up everywhere.

6. African superfoods

Ever heard of baobab fruit (pronounced bey-oh-bab)? How about bissap tea or moringa leaves? No? You'll probably be hearing a lot more about these and more foods from Africa in the months and years to come.

Why? The African continent is home to a great many nutrient dense foods that up until now have not had much exposure in the rest of the world.

And, perhaps most relevant to the business side of things, Sterling-Rice's culinary strategist Christie Wood had this to say in a recent article in *Food Business News*: "Africa is viewed as an all-natural untouched hotbed of pure ingredients and pure sourcing . . . If you can say it's an African superfood, then inherent in that is a health halo of being very pure and natural and likely very nutrient-dense."

7. Drink your cereal

The message that whole grains are superior to pro-

cessed grains has been beaten into consumers heads for years now. But there's a problem: whole grains aren't always as easy to prepare as their processed counterparts. The solution: drinkable whole grains!

With consumers now more comfortable with the idea of drinking their nutrition (think protein shakes and vitamin-packed smoothies), convenient, whole grain beverages made from quinoa and oats are starting to go mainstream.

8. Bee-less honey

Honey substitutes made from fruit? Yup, people are working on it.

Why, you ask?

Our industrious pollinating pals are facing a host of problems these days, not the least of which being the still not fully understood Colony Collapse Disorder.

As a result of these problems and others, more and more of the honey sold in North America is coming from China, which is raising concerns for wary consumers.

Another problem: by most definitions, traditional beehive honey does not qualify as being vegan. But every-

one likes honey, even vegans! Fruit derived honey-like substitutes might be the answer.

9. Non GMO

All USDA and CFIA certified organic food products are GMO free. But not all products with a GMO free label are organic.

The verification process required of producers to display a GMO-Free label (nongmoproject.org) on their products, is much simpler and easier to obtain (though just as strict), and producers are doing it in droves to meet an increasing demand.

10. Scary dairy?

Fitting in with the upward trend of sea vegetables in general (kelp, seaweed etc.), milk substitute products made from algae might become the next big thing.

Algae milk contains substantial amounts of omega-3 fats, fibre and protein, but has no gluten, soy or lactose, which makes it a win-win for those seeking alternatives to both real dairy, and dairy alternatives already on the market.



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# Raitt won't tell railways where to ship grain for now

The Canadian government will not, for now, start telling railways where to ship farmers' grain but it will decide within days whether to extend its requirements on how much grain they must haul, Transport Minister Lisa Raitt said Wednesday.

In an interview in her parliamentary office, Raitt said farmers and shippers have questioned whether the government's grain-shipment minimums are still required and whether Ottawa should tell the country's two dominant railways, Canadian National Railway and Canadian Pacific Railway, on which corridors grain should be shipped.

Grain handlers and farmers say the railways have focused on the quickest turn-around corridors, notably Vancouver on the West Coast and the Great Lakes port of Thunder Bay, while ignoring shipments to the U.S.

"I am not looking at the question of corridors at the moment," Raitt said.

The mandatory minimum shipments, put in place to ensure crops from the record 2013 harvest got to market, expire Saturday. Raitt said she takes farmers' concerns seriously, but also noted Canada's grain backlog was "coming back to equilibrium."

The government is also looking at whether to remove a cap on how much revenue the railways can earn from shipping grain. The railways say that limiting their income from shipping grain reduces



their incentive to haul it.

Raitt said she is sure former International Trade Minister David Emerson will deal with this issue in his government-mandated review of the Canada Transportation Act. Emerson's report is due in December.

She said she did not lean one way or the other on the revenue cap, but added: "Look, I'm a market girl. There's no question that I fully believe in market forces."

She called "ridiculous" CP's refusal to pay government fines for not meeting the minimum grain shipments. CP CEO Hunter Harrison said this month the railway would contest the \$50,000 in fines in court on principle.

"Well, my principle is we said we would make sure that a certain minimum amount of grain is moving, and we expect it to be moved," Raitt said. "Eventually they should pay the fine."



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2002 New Holland BB940 Square Baler	\$33,000
1990-1994 JD 535 Round Balers (4)	\$6,900 - \$8,900
1998-2000 JD 566 Round Balers (2)	\$11,000 - \$12,900
2001-2005 JD 567 Round Balers (4)	\$13,900 - \$18,600
2007-2010 JD 568 Round Balers (4)	\$24,900 - \$35,400
2005 JD 557 Round Baler	\$13,900
2008 JD 558 Round Baler	\$21,500
New Holland 1033 HayLiner Stacker	\$6,000
2003 New Holland BR780 Round Baler	\$12,500
2002 New Holland 688 Round Baler	\$12,900
1996 New Holland 664 Round Baler	\$6,600
1996 New Holland 1475 Mower Conditioner	\$8,500
1996 Vermeer 605K Round Baler	\$8,600

**SP WINDROWERS**

2013 JD W150 35' Header, 330 hrs.	\$137,900
2012 JD A400 36' Header, 225 hrs.	\$138,000
2010 JD D450 40' Header, 780 hrs.	\$161,000
2004 JD 4895 no Header, 2000 hrs.	\$44,500
2008 JD 4895 36' HoneyBee, 1311 hrs.	\$95,500
2009 MF 9450 30' Header, 1620 hrs.	\$81,500
2012 Macdon M155 40' Header, 280 hrs.	\$157,000
2012 Macdon M155 35' Header, 384 hrs.	\$157,900
2002 Macdon 2952 30' Header, 3500 hrs.	\$61,700
2007 Macdon 9250 30' Header, 700 hrs.	\$72,300
2002 Macdon 9352 30' Header, 2713 hrs.	\$61,000
2008 Case WD1203 36' Header, 756 hrs.	\$86,900

**SEEDING EQUIPMENT**

2011 61' JD 1830/1910 430 Bus, D/S, Conveyor, Duals, 10" Rubber, Heavy Land Unit, Very Good Machine	\$175,000
2010 50' JD 1830/1910 SS, 430 bus	\$87,000
2003 60' JD 1820/1910, 10" Spacing, SS, Arm, Rubber Press, 430 Bus TBH Cart	\$145,000
2002 60' JD 1820/1910, Double Shoot, 430 Bus	\$69,000
2006 60' JD 1820, 10" Spacing, D/S, Arm, Silt Pkrs, No Tank	\$62,000
2003 52' JD 1820/1910, 10" Spacing, Steel Pkrs, SS, 350 Bus TBH Tank	\$64,900
1998 45' JD 1820/1900, 10", 340 Bus Cart	\$51,000
2003 40' JD 1895/1910	\$136,000
40' JD 737, 230 Bus, 787 Tank	\$35,000
2001 Bourgault 5440 Air Seeder Tank	\$61,500
2010 76' Bourgault 3310	\$159,000
2001 53' Bourgault 5710 w/5350 Cart	\$76,200
2003 53' Bourgault 5710 w/5200 Tow Between Tank	\$61,500
2005 60' Bourgault 5710, 5400 Cart, MRB	\$99,900
40' Bourgault FH36-42 3195 Tank	\$22,000
40' Bourgault 8800 3225 Tank	\$25,900
2003 50' Bourgault 8810 w/5350 Cart	\$69,000
1994 40' Flexcoil 5000 2320 Tank	\$40,000
1994 40' Flexcoil 5000 2320 Tank	\$36,600
1997 33' Flexcoil 5000 1330 Tank, NH3 Kit	\$40,000
1997 53' Flexcoil 5000 3450 Tank	\$46,000
1998 40' Flexcoil 5000 2320 Tank	\$34,000
1998 45' Flexcoil 5000 2320 Tank	\$49,000
2008 66' Seedhawk 6612, 400 Bus, 2600 Liquid Tank	\$224,000

**MISC EQUIPMENT**

2010 Frontier AB136 Bale Spear	\$1,200
New Holland 1033 Bale Wagon	\$6,000
1981 JD 270 3 pt Snowblower	\$1,200
1993 Inland DA92 92" 3pt Snowblower	\$1,900
2005 Schulte 9600 96" 3 pt Snowblower	\$4,900
Schulte SDX117 Snowblower	\$8,400
2012 Schulte SDX117 Snowblower	\$12,500
HayBuster 2600 Bale Feeder	\$62,500
2002 Highline 7,000 Bale Processor	\$8,500
Highline 8,000 Bale Processor	\$8,900
2008 Highline 8100 Bale Processor	\$16,200
2008 Highline 8100 Bale Processor	\$13,900
2008 Riteway 4560 Land Roller	\$47,000
2010 Schulte FX180 15" Rotary Mower	\$13,900
2008 Wilson 5370TDF 53" Double Drop, Hyd Tail, Tri-Axle Machinery Trailer	\$45,000

**4 WD TRACTORS**

1994 JD 8570, 12 Spd, Duals, 5550 hrs.	\$59,900
2000 JD 9420, Duals, 24 spd, 4310 hrs.	\$156,900
2010 JD 9430, Duals, 2070 hrs.	\$249,000
2013 JD 9510R, 756 hrs.	\$369,000
2006 JD 9620 3413 hrs.	\$208,900
2010 JD 9630, 2,000 hrs.	\$299,000
2011 JD 9630, Duals, 1461 hrs.	\$297,000
2013 NH T9.560HD PTO, 450 hrs.	\$339,000

**TRACK TRACTORS**

2011 JD 9630T, 1881 hrs.	\$325,900
2009 JD 9630T, 2167 hrs.	\$298,000

**2 WD - MFWD TRACTORS**

2014 JD 6150M Loader, 550 hrs.	\$155,500
2011 JD 7200R IVT, 2675 hrs.	\$155,000
2005 JD 7520 Loader, 10,800 hrs.	\$73,900
2007 JD 7520 Loader, 8500 hrs.	\$87,900
2010 JD 7730, 3300 hrs.	\$124,000
2001 JD 7810 Loader, 10,474 hrs.	\$72,900
1998 JD 8100, MFWD, 9311 hrs.	\$70,900
2010 Challenger MTE645, MFWD, IVT Trans, 1000 hrs.	\$155,900
2002 NH TV140, Cab, MFWD, Loader, 5133 hrs.	\$56,900
2002 Case MX135 Loader, 6800 hrs.	\$58,900

**COMBINES**  
(PLEASE REFER TO OUR WEB SITE FOR MORE DETAILS)

2012 JD S670	9 COMING IN!
2009 JD T670, 350 hrs.	\$244,000
2012 JD S680	COMING SOON!
2010 JD S680	COMING SOON!
2012 JD S690	3 COMING IN!

**GRAIN HANDLING EQUIPMENT**

2006 Brandt 8x37 Grain Auger	\$4,250
2008 Brandt 8x52 Grain Auger	\$9,900
2009 Brandt 13x70HP Grain Auger	\$15,900
2013 Brandt 13x40 PTO, Load Out Auger, Mover	NEW \$17,600
2004 Brandt 13x70XL Grain Auger	\$15,600
2010 Brandt 13x90HP Grain Auger	\$20,000
2005-2011 Brandt 1545LP Conveyors	5 to choose from
2009 Brandt 1585 Conveyor	\$18,800
Farm King 13x85 Grain Auger	\$19,000
2008 Westfield MKP130-111 Grain Auger	\$16,500

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**Devloo Roto Mud Scrapers** are designed to improve efficiency and yield. Our product is laser cut from #80 steel with a 6203 NTN motor grade bearing, and powder coated for a durable finish.

- Earlier seeding that leads to an earlier harvest
- More consistent seed-depth
- Better fuel economy
- Less friction and wear



*My name is Jason Juzwishin, and I farm in northern Alberta with my dad.*

*When we bought our 72' Seed Hawk, we discovered we were getting to much slip and lacking power. We had a 535 Case and were considering buying a bigger quad trac.*

*In the spring of 2014 we installed the Devloo Roto Mud Scrapers. Our engine load went down 10%, and so did our percentage of wheel slip. Our factory scrapers would just fill up solid and sometimes stop the wheel from turning. Our wheels now stay clean and I also believe our seedbed benefits because our compaction from the tractor is less. Installing Devloo Roto Mud Scrapers was a good choice.*

**Jason Juzwishin - Spirit River, AB**



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# FARM EQUIPMENT AUCTION

**GERALD & KIM BECKER**  
 306-436-7770 or 306-436-7734  
**FRIDAY, APRIL 10, 2015** 

**10:00 A.M. — YELLOW GRASS, SK**  
 DIRECTIONS: FROM YELLOW GRASS GO 4 ¼ MILES NORTH ON GRID 621,  
 1 ¼ MILES WEST, 2 MILES NORTH, ½ MILE WEST  
 WATCH FOR SIGNS **\*\*LIVE INTERNET BIDDING!\*\***

NH TJ 325 4WD tractor with 1967 hours, JD 4955 FWA tractor, JD 4430 2WD tractor with 3PTH, Farm All A antique tractor, Case IH 2388 SP combine with 2014 separator hours, 30' Case IH 1043 straight cut draper header, Degelman Shuttlekart 800 Grain Cart, 30' Hesston 8100 SP swather with 2110 hours, 36' Premier 1900 PT swather, Farm King steel drum swath roller, 33' Concord air drill single	shoot with 2320 air cart, Flexcoil system 95 harrow packers, 37' IH 5500 cultivator with tine harrows, Morris 48' rod weeder, MF 360 discers, 90' Flexcoil 67 suspended boom sprayer, EZ Guide 500 EZ Steer 50 auto steer, 1980 GMC 6000 3 ton grain truck with 33,100 km, 1974 Chev 3 ton grain truck, Sakundiak 10-72 swing auger, Sakundiak 7-45 auger with Honda engine and Wheatheart mover, Lode	King cart 2 compartment tank with hydraulic augers, Allied 795 FEL, Crown 600 3 yard PT scraper, shopbuilt 8' box yard scraper, shopbuilt flax straw buncher, 5 wheel hay rake, tandem axle trailer with water tank, shopbuilt tandem axle flat deck trailer, truck box utility trailer, irrigation pipe, shopbuilt swather transport, floating slough pump and hose, 1250 gallon poly water tank, plus much more!
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# FARM EQUIPMENT AUCTION

**ANDY & ELAINE HENNING**  
 306-869-3287 or 306-869-7932  
**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8, 2015** 

**10:00 A.M. — RADVILLE, SK**  
 DIRECTIONS: FROM RADVILLE GO 4 MILES NORTH ON HWY 28,  
 4 MILES WEST ON CORRECTION LINE ROAD & 1 ¼ MILES NORTH  
 WATCH FOR SIGNS **\*\*LIVE INTERNET BIDDING!\*\***

2009 JD 9630T track tractor with 2254 hours and Green Star ready, JD 4240 2WD tractor with 7815 hours and duals, JD 4430 2WD tractor with JD 148 FEL, 2008 JD 9770 STS SP combine with 1672 separator hours and Green Star ready, 2011 JD 615P pickup header with Houston crop deflector, 2009 Macdon 45' D60-D straight cut draper header, 2005 Prairie Star 4952i SP swather and 36' Macdon 972 draper header with 838 cutting hours, 2009 Demco 1050 grain cart with 18' auger, JD pea concaves, 2010 66' Seedmaster TXB6612 air drill double shoot plus anhydrous with 2010 tow between JD 1910 air cart also comes with 2010 M&R Welding anhydrous cart with 2-2000 gallon tanks, 70' Degelman 7000 Strawmaster	heavy harrow with 3255 Valmar and tote bag lift, 41' JD 680 vertical till chisel plow with Flexcoil harrows, Kello Built 5000 3 shank sub soiler, JD 4920 SP 120' sprayer with auto steer and Raven 4 auto boom, 4-Michelin 620/70R46 tires and rims, 4 Tridekon crop dividers, 1996 Deepker 48' hi-boy trailer with 2200/900/2000 gallon water tanks and Chem Handler III, JD Starfire ITC SF2 activation receiver, JD 2600 monitor, 2001 Kenworth W900L Hwy tractor with 500 ISX Cummins engine and 72' bunk, 2011 40' Wilson Pacesetter tandem axle grain trailer 2 compartment with aluminum tires, 40' 1996 Lode King tandem axle grain trailer, 1989 Bobco 24' goose-neck flatdeck trailer, 1989 GMC 2500 4WD pickup, 2010 Brandt 1390 XL swing	auger with hydraulic swing and mover, 2013 Sakundiak TL 10-39 auger with Vanguard 35HP engine and mover, Westfield 10-60 swing auger, Westfield m8-51 PTO auger, Sakundiak 8-33 auger with Kohler 25 HP engine, Johnson 8-10 hydraulic transfer auger, 12' auger seed treater, Graham G3 seed treater, Michael's hydraulic augers, DMC 54 rotary grain cleaner, Super Delux 990 Turb OK grain vac, Degelman hydraulic drive rock picker, Degelman hydraulic drive rock picker, Champion snow wing for 760 grader, shopbuilt 8' & 10' dozer blades, AG Industries header trailer, 90 barrel truck mount water tank, 1000 gallon fuel stand, 48' sea container, plus much more!
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Above left: Three generations of the Bourhis family were on hand at Agribition to receive the award as the 2014 Commercial Producer of the Year from the Saskatchewan Angus Association. Above right (left to right): Brynn, Keith, Karen and Connor Bourhis.

## Bourhis Ranch top Angus producer in the province

Like all cattle producers, the Bourhis Ranch is excited about the turnaround in the cattle business that we are currently enjoying. With the ups and downs over the last three decades in the cattle business, sacrifice and perseverance have paid off for the Bourhis Ranch, a cow calf and backgrounder operation at Kennedy in Southeast Saskatchewan, and the 2014 Saskatchewan Angus Association Commercial Producer of the Year.

With the purchase of a half section of land, Albert and Karen Bourhis started the operation in 1978. Albert continued operating heavy equipment and looking after the land and a small herd of cattle. Within a few years he was able to acquire another half section of land and slowly increase his cattle numbers. These were tough times for the young couple dealing with drought, frost, very high interest rates and a young family to provide for. Keith was the oldest, born in 1972 followed by two sisters Vivian and Shirley. Albert continued to operate heavy equipment part time until he retired in 2013 and Karen worked part time in the local Credit Union for several years.

After graduating from high school in 1990, Keith joined his parents in the small mixed farming operation and a gradual but steady expansion started.

Keith was eager to expand the cattle operation which consisted at the time of half Angus cross cows and half exotic cross cows, using primarily exotic bulls. In 1992 Keith took an artificial insemination course and implemented an AI program. They had been purchasing some replacement females to increase the herd but found that their homegrown females were working out well, so focused on keeping their own females with help from their AI program. Keith is passionate about breeding cattle and loves studying the numbers but

says, "I still have a lot to learn." Using AI allowed them to experiment with different breeds, as well as many different bloodlines within a breed. In the end they were always most impressed with the Angus influence. They usually AI'd the top end cows in May and had the AI cows and heifers calving in February. Keith said, "We had limited barn space and we needed vigorous calves and darn good mothers to make things work with limited facilities and the Angus cows seemed to rise above the rest."

In 2002 the father/son

team decided to move to a later calving date to save spending more money on new facilities. "We are fortunate to be blessed with some nice, natural parkland shelter," says Albert. "Once again the Angus cows seemed to thrive in a range calving situation and the later calving date has been a positive change. Because of the later calving date and larger numbers we have moved away from the AI program. We now focus on bull selection, making sure that our long list of criteria are met, in which maternal strengths are a high priority."

Today the Bourhis' own and operate a 400 cow/calf operation. They breed 450 head of commercial Black Angus cattle and own 2,000 acres of land and rent an-

other 4,500 acres. Approximately 1,400 of those acres are used for crops, and the remaining 5,100 acres are used for pasture and hay. *Continued on page C28*

"Now if our margins were increasing as fast as our yields..."

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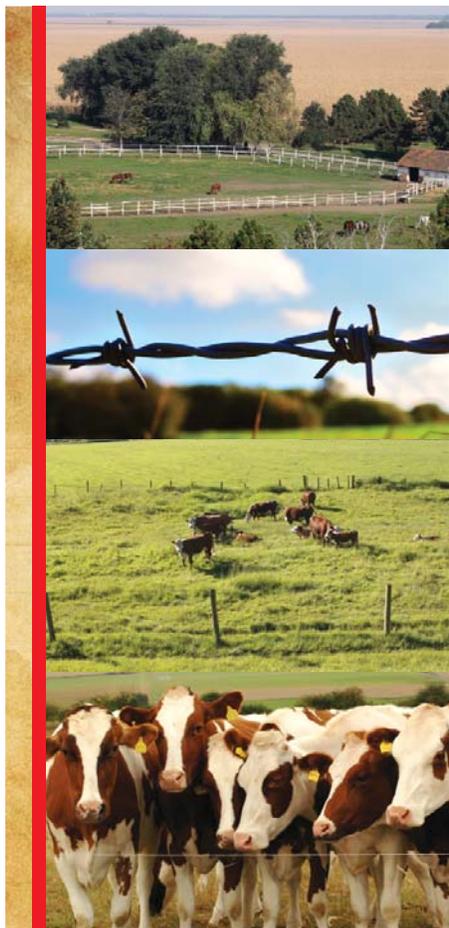


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# INTERESTING ALTERNATIVES

8<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL ON FARM BULL & FEMALE SALE

## Monday, April 6

### 1:30 p.m.

10 miles west of Wawota on #48 Highway

**SELLING**

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**VK 88B**  
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**VK 153B**  
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**VK 122B**  
Sired by: Main Event 40W



**VK 139B**  
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Do cows really like Simon and Garfunkel?

## More Mozart, more milk?

BY SHIRLEY BYERS  
Human beings are affected by music. It can relax us, make us want to move around, make us happy and even make us sad. But what about animals? Is it possible that the effects of music are not limited entirely to our own species?

In 2012, studies done at Colorado State University showed that dogs in kennels displayed less anxiety when they were played classical music than if they were subjected to raucous heavy metal. While in 2009, researchers at the Neurosciences Institute in San Diego discovered that parrots are able to "... bob their heads, tap their feet, and sway their bodies along to a musical beat." In other words, parrots can dance!

Parrots, and especially dogs, are one thing you may say. Dogs make good pets in part because they do things that other animals don't—human-like things. They appear to be happy to see us when we come home and sheepish when they've done something they know we disapprove of. They seem to have personalities. So to find out that they get "something"

out of music is perhaps not that big of a surprise.

But what about cows? Could music affect cows? Does Bessie dig Beethoven?

Well... maybe!

There is a lot of anecdotal evidence, and many dairy farmers who will swear by the idea. But what does the research say?

There isn't much of it, but in 2001 at the University of Leicester in England, scientists concluded that when cows were played music with a slow or minimal beat, such as Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony, or Bridge Over Troubled Water by Simon and Garfunkel, their milk production increased by three per cent.

Without being able to get inside the mind of cow (or a dog or a parrot for that matter,) it's impossible to know for certain why this might be. The obvious answer of course, is that the music had a calming effect on the cows. For a cow, a dairy barn is probably a fairly stressful place to be at times. So it stands to reason that if that stress is lessened (or at least, drowned out) the cows will be happier, more relaxed, and more apt to surrender more milk.

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# ROSS TAYLOR AUCTION SERVICE

## Farm Equipment Auction Gordon and Marilyn Shaw WINDTHORST, SK

Saturday, April 11th, 2015 at 11 am CST

To be held at their farm located 5 km east of Windthorst on # 48 highway and 2 km south on Oakshela RD. or 7 km west of Kipling on # 48 highway and 2 km south on Oakshela RD.

1984 John Deere 8650 w/ 6501 hours; 1980 John Deere 8440 w/ 8685 hours; Kabota 8950 DT MFD with 5085 hours; 2008 Case IH 8010 SP combine (Absolutely mint and loaded); 2000 Case IH 8825 SP swather; 25' Heston 1200 pto swather; 1999 Bourgault 8810 40' air drill; 1999 Bourgault 3195 air tank; Flexi-coil 65XL 110' field sprayer; 2002 Farm King 10' x 60' side swing auger; 2010 Wheathart 9" poly transfer auger; 2014 Agri Master 600 bus, gravity tank on heavy trailer; 2010 Precision 40' double hopper grain trailer; IHC 2500 diesel flat deck truck with 1000 gal. poly tank; 2000 GMC ¾ ton 4 x 4; Farm King 960 8' 3pth snowblower; 2010 King Canada 7500 watt generator

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For information call Gordon at 306-736-3214 or  
Ross Taylor Auction Service Toll free 877-6172537 or 204-522-5356



## Farm Equipment Auction Barry and Fran Balls MARYFIELD, SK

Monday, April 20th, 2015  
at 10 am CST

To be held in Maryfield Agricultural Grounds

1991 Case IH 9250; 1997 NH 8670 FWA; 1999 Dodge Ram 1500; 1986 IHC S2300; 1971 IHC 1600 Loadstar; 1991 Case IH 1680 SP combine; Case IH 725 hyd. fold PTO 25' swather; Kongskilde 500 grain vac; Case IH 8380 16' hydro swing

For information call Barry at 306-646-4323

## Farm Equipment Auction 5 Bar Farms LTD. - Neil, Joan & Joe Barber CARNDUFF, SK

Tuesday, April 21st, 2015 at 10 am CST

To be held at farm located 2 miles east of Carnduff on # 18 highway,  
6 miles north, 1 mile east and 2 ½ miles north

1983 Versatile 875; 1978 John Deere 4440; 1976 Versatile 750; 2013 John Deere 2665 zero turn lawn tractor; 1978 IHC 1900 full tandem; 1991 Case IH 1680 SP combine; Walinga Super Chrome Vac grain vac; 2002 Bourgault 8810 - 35' air seeder; 2 Westeel 4800 bus.hopper bins w/ air rockets and skids; 2 Westeel Roscoe 2200 bus. low profile hopper bins w/ air rockets and skids; 9 Westeel Roscoe 2200 bus. hopper bins w/ air rockets and skids; 1 Westeel Roscoe 4400 bus hopper bin w/ air rockets and skids; 2 Westeel Roscoe 1800 bus. hopper bin w/skids (no air); 1 epoxy lined hopper 1800 bus. w/ skids (no air)

For information call Neil at 306-482-3647

## Farm Equipment Auction Dwight and Debbie Worley KIPLING, SK

Thursday, April 23rd, 2015 at 11 am CST

To be held at their farm located 6 miles south of Kipling on # 605 to Beckavar Road,  
1 mile east, 2 miles south and ½ mile east.

1984 Case 2094; 1982 Case 2390; 1964 John Deere 4020; 1982 GMC 2500 diesel; Bob Co 20' gooseneck stock trailer w/ new floor; 2003 Jiffy 900 bale processor; High Hog calf tipping table w/ head gate; 1997 MacDon 5000 16' hydro swing; 1996 Heston 565A round baler; 1996 Morris 1400 hay hiker (14 bale)

For information call Dwight at 306-739-0330

## Farm Equipment Auction R.C. Cop Farms LTD. Raymond & Colleen Cop BELLEGARDE, SK

Friday, April 24th, 2015 at 10 am CST

To be held at their farm located junction of # 13 highway and Bellegarde access to  
village of Bellegarde 1 ½ miles west and ¼ mile north.

John Deere 4020; 1988 Versatile 846 4 wheel drive; Case IH 2388 combine; 2002 MacDon 960 36' straight header; 2000 Premier 2950 30' SP swather; 2007 Freightliner Columbia; 2004 Ford F150 4 x 4 extended cab; Morris 8900 35' cultivator , Bourgault 2195 tank; 1993 PATRIOT 70' high clearance sprayer

For information call Raymond at 306 452 3973



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# Budget has \$362 million for agriculture

Saskatchewan's 2015-16 budget includes \$362.4 million for agriculture.

"A successful agriculture industry is essential to Saskatchewan's diversified economy," Agriculture Minister Lyle Stewart said.

"Over the past number of years we have seen the agriculture sector grow, and our government is committed to ensuring that growth continues.

"A strong agriculture industry means a strong Saskatchewan."

The 2015-16 agriculture

budget contains \$71.2 million for strategic initiatives, including \$26.7 million for agricultural research and innovation.

The government will once again provide \$4.2 million in industry assistance, for support of organizations like the 4-H Council of Saskatchewan, Canadian Western Agribition and Agriculture in the Classroom.

The 2015-16 Agriculture Budget also contains \$240 million to fully fund business risk management

programs such as Crop Insurance, AgriStability and AgriInvest to support farming operations as they look to grow and expand.

The 2015 Crop Insurance Program includes ongoing enhancements giving producers more choice and flexibility.

As well, Crop Insurance premiums are decreasing for producers while coverage levels, on average, are increasing to \$183 per acre, up from \$162 per acre in 2014.

"This Budget will help keep agriculture and Saskatchewan's economy strong as we focus on building a productive and sustainable agriculture industry," Stewart said.

"Our government will continue to offer the programs and services that farmers, ranchers and agribusinesses need to be successful."

The ministry's 2015-16 Budget of \$362.4 million is a 2.5 per cent decrease from last year.

The previous budget included an above average amount of strategic initiative spending carried over from the first year of the Growing Forward (GF2) Agreement.

This carryover spending is not required for the 2015-16 Budget. The total GF2 commitment, \$388 million over the five years of the program, remains the same.

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# Growing Projects raise millions for Canadian Foodgrains Bank

BY JULIA DIMA

When the Canadian Foodgrains Bank formed to help end hunger in developing countries, it was a way to give rural agricultural people the chance to help.

"If you were a doctor, you could go to Africa and work in a hospital. A teacher could teach, an engineer could build, but the question was, what could a farmer do? And the answer was a farmer grows food," says John Longhurst with the Canadian Foodgrains Bank. "The Foodgrains Bank and growing projects grows out of the lifestyle of the farmers—it is what they do, and it's tied intimately to who they are as farmers and rural people. So, there is a strong, you could say spiritual, connection between growing projects and the people who run them."

Across Canada, there are 250 locally organized growing projects, where volunteers seed and harvest a crop, and donate the funds from the harvest to the Foodgrains Bank, where the money raised is matched 4:1 or 3:1 by the federal government and goes to help in either humanitarian crises overseas or in food security projects that help other farmers in developing countries maintain sustainable agriculture for themselves.

Some growing projects are small, harvesting a few acres of land, and some are massive, like a 500 acre project in Manitoba. All the projects are organized at the grassroots level by volunteers in the community.

"They are community run and owned. They spring out of the interest of local volunteers who enlist local businesses, churches, elevators . . . there are a lot of people engaged, and that's the secret to it. It grows organically out of a community, and when people support it, they are supporting Foodgrains, but also their best friend, neighbor . . . There is a sense that they are doing it for each other," Longhurst says. "Farmers often give up combining on their own land to do (this). Some project supporters make commitments to do the Foodgrains field first before their own. We are constantly grateful and appreciative of effort volunteers make to run these things."

In Manitoba, there are 45 growing projects, and last year, the province raised \$1.9 million, about two thirds of which came directly from the growing projects. In Saskatchewan, there are 30 projects which raised \$927,000, almost half of the \$2 million raised in the province.

The funds raised go to where there is the most need. Last year, continuous displacement of refugees in Syria meant that the Foodgrains Bank was working to provide immediate humanitarian aid to displaced people. This year, Longhurst says, the need for food is still particularly strong in the case of Syrian refugees, as well as in South Sudan. Those are the largest areas of need, but Longhurst says the Foodgrains Bank had 129 projects happening globally last year, and donations from growing projects can go into any of those projects.

Locally, there are growing projects in Moosomin—the Harvest for Hope—and Kola—the Cross Borders Community Growing Project.

In Kola, the growing project has been

happening for years. Don and Jan Neufeld of Kola are the driving force behind the continued success of the Kola harvest, which brings volunteers and sponsors from both sides of the border to help with the harvest. The land which is used for the harvest was donated by Helen Koop, who lives in Virden, but is originally from the area. Local farmers and agro dealerships donate combines for the harvest, and local businesses sponsor a large outdoor barbecue and picnic for harvest day, which brings anywhere up to 150 people to the growing project field near Kola on harvest day.

Neufeld has always believed in putting the Foodgrains Harvest first, and the harvest happens before he gets to his own farmland.

Though Neufeld's generation has been spearheading the harvest, the younger generation in Kola plans to keep the harvest tradition.

Tyson Martens combines on Harvest Day alongside the Neufelds, and his father, Gerald. Martens has been involved all his life, and now farming on his own, he still dedicates harvest day to the Foodgrains Bank.

"It's fun being a part of this, it's very successful, it's a great way to raise money and food for the Foodgrains Bank—it's the way that we can help out. Because we farm, we have the opportunity to do that."

Harold Penner, the Manitoba Regional Co-ordinator for the Foodgrains Bank, comes to every Kola harvest, and says that each year, there is something special about that harvest.

"The thing that stands out is at harvest time, they have this tremendous community support. Just to have the local . . . bank putting a big barbecue on, 150 plus people coming out—the beautiful community support for this kind of work is significant for this project—not that it doesn't happen elsewhere, but it is very strong in Kola," Penner says.

Penner says that the Kola project has been a consistently important part of Manitoba's Foodgrains work, and though the community is small, the support is monumental.

"It's so easy in this world to forget that there are hungry people out there somewhere, and to have this kind of a drawing together is just such a good reminder to people that we all have a part to play in ending hunger," he says. "Overall, the Foodgrains Bank collected \$15 million from Canadians last year, and about \$3 million of that is from Manitoba—two thirds of it coming from growing projects like Kola. It's part of the whole picture that we can work together to end hunger in the world."

In Moosomin, a group of young farmers decided to reinvestigate the local growing project, and created the Harvest for Hope three years ago.

The harvest brings together farmers from Moosomin and Rocanville to a field on Highway 8 between the two communities, and this spring, will go into its third seeding, this year planting hard red spring wheat.

Derek Smart, one of the farmers involved, says that as the group gets used to what it takes to organize the annual harvest, they are gaining more support.

"Last year, we were organized and more planned than the first year, and there were a lot of people out for harvest day—it was a logistics issue trying to pick a time between rains for harvest, so we couldn't give people a huge heads-up," Smart says. "But the important thing is we keep getting more support and there seem to be more businesses and people supporting us now."

Smart says he wants to raise more awareness about how much money can be raised from even a small harvest when the money raised is matched by the government. Though the Harvest for Hope rents the land, most of the inputs are donated, with John Deere seeding the field for free, and local farmers donating their combines and time at harvest time, and local businesses throwing a barbecue in the field.

For Smart, the feeling of getting to help in a way that makes sense as a farmer is rewarding.

"It's exciting, it's something we do for a living, and it's using our skill set to hopefully help other people out. Living

in a small town, you can get a bit small-minded, and it helps keeps things in perspective when you think more globally," he says. "And it is neat to see the whole community willing to help."

This year, both the Moosomin and Kola projects will be happening. In 2013, a special Olde Tyme Harvest for Hunger was held at Langenburg, where farmers had 40 threshing machines threshing winter wheat for the Foodgrains Bank. They donated the funds, and broke a world record for the highest number of antique threshing machines operating at once.

Next year, the Manitoba Agricultural Museum plans to start a friendly rivalry with the Saskatchewan farmers and break that world record, donating the proceeds to the Foodgrains Bank.

Longhurst says a big benefit is seeing local farmers have fun with the harvest and make it their own in ways like that.

"The projects also are significant for community itself when they come together on that harvest day," he says. "There's a sense of pride that we can do something big."



Emily Weedmark and Megan Davidson photos  
Scenes from last fall's Foodgrains harvest near Kola, Manitoba.



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# Crop rotation is key

Crop rotation is the key to manage residue and soil-borne diseases, and many insect species says Randy Kutcher, cereal and flax pathologist, University of Saskatchewan.

Blackleg is a residue-borne disease, he explains. "Residues can be found on the lower stem and upper root pieces of previous canola crops," he says. "And these can take a number of years to break down under prairie conditions."

To control blackleg, it's necessary to reduce the amount of pathogen inoculum in the field. Rotating crops, says Kutcher, not only helps to reduce inoculum, but also exposure of any single pathogen to the same fungicide. "Without good crop rotation there is greater selection pressure on the pathogen and therefore increased risk resistant varieties become susceptible and effective fungicides become ineffective," he says.

Why are some growers ignoring rotation recommendations? Kutcher's guess is that economics might play a role. "Use of all possible pest control measure requires planning well in advance and for many pests, usually involves growing a number of crops," he says. "My guess is that to be efficient in terms of time management, and perhaps bargaining power for inputs, growers have advantages when they specialize in fewer crops."

Growing several crops does require more knowledge and experience, and sometimes equipment, which can be challenging for some producers. Regardless, Kutcher says rotation is key. "A general rule of thumb is a minimum of three unrelated crop species: a cereal, an oilseed and a pulse, so wheat-canola-pea," he says. "Personally, I still think a four-year, four-crop rotation is desirable. When I have been involved in rotation studies of six different crops, there are usually very few plant disease issues."

In terms of blackleg, Kutcher doesn't think the problem is so much the pathogen itself, but more the number of acres

of canola currently grown in the prairies. Short rotations coupled with limited space between fields makes for an ideal environment where the pathogen can both spread and survive.

Sexual recombination occurs in the pathogen (*Leptosphaeria maculans*) life-cycle, explains Kutcher, so that means increased genetic variability and increased risk of new races that can overcome resistant varieties of canola. Furthermore, it also means there's increased potential for insensitivity to fungicides.

"The spores formed from the sexual stage are air-borne, so they can spread easily from field to field and probably many kilometres," says Kutcher. "And the pathogen can survive a number of years on the infected canola residue; two to seven years, depending on the environment."

Neil Harker, weed management researcher at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, says that crop rotation is the basis for introducing cropping system diversity.

"Different crops allow different herbicide mode of action groups to be applied, and that is important to reduce selection intensity for herbicide resistance," he says. "More importantly, different crops introduce other types of diversity that can disadvantage weeds and reduce herbicide resistance selection pressure."

For example, he says, winter-annual crops, like winter wheat, fall rye and winter triticale that are seeded in the fall, rapidly cover the ground in the spring. "Those crops preclude light, nutrient and water resources from summer-annual weeds that germinate the following spring," he says. "Therefore, many winter wheat growers do not need to apply a wild oat herbicide; reducing selection pressure for wild oat resistance to herbicides."

On the other hand, he points out, in areas where repeated winter crops have selected for dominant winter annual weeds — think downy brome or stinkweed — the obvious solution is to grow summer-annual crops to disadvantage those weeds.



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# Ag Briefs

## Potential seen for Manitoba farmers

The owner of Canadian Prairie Garden Purees believes Manitoba can play a big role in feeding the world's growing population.

Kelly Beaulieu says other food producing regions, such as California, are struggling with issues such as drought, lack of energy and contamination.

She says Manitoba is not dealing with any of those issues, and has good cropping ability, irrigated land and the right growing conditions.

She says innovations in technology, such as the aseptic puree process currently used by her company, can help alleviate the problem of food wastage.

## Problems with stored seed

Farmers have been busy evaluating their seed tests and in some cases sourcing other seed to plant this spring. Shanna Stolhandski-Dale with Seed Solutions says

there are a lot of issues showing up this year with high disease, low vigor from frost and storability issues.

She says pulses are a bit of a challenge especially if they sat out in the rain, while durum seems to be the hardest hit cereal with frost, high moisture issues and fusarium.

Stolhandski-Dale adds she is seeing a drop of 10 per cent or more in durum and barley in some of that older stored seed.

## Ont. slaughter cattle numbers down

The number of cattle slaughtered in Ontario in the first two months of this year is down about 16 thousand from last year.

Beef Farmers of Ontario says this years preliminary slaughter number was 91 thousand 3 hundred.

Last year, almost 108 thousand head had been slaughtered in provincial and federally-inspected plants in the province by the end of February.

BFO reports last week's fed cattle volume was up just slightly from the previous week and from a year ago.

## Plan to keep plastics out of Manitoba landfills

CleanFARMS is conducting a pilot project with the goal of keeping agricultural plastics out of Manitoba landfills.

Seven locations across the province accepted film, twine, and grain bags in March, with another collection period scheduled for this fall.

Project Manager Shane Hedderson says during a study in 2011, they found about 6,000 tonnes of agriculture waste plastic ended up in landfills every year.

He says the majority of that was grain bags, bale and silage wrap and plastic twine.



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# Oat market sees little demand

The oats market in Western Canada has gone cold, with little heat expected until closer to spring seeding.

"The basis is the thermometer, and right now oats are getting cold," said Ryan McKnight of Linear Grain at Carman, Man., noting basis levels were generally fading.

"We're just not seeing much demand for oats anywhere at the moment, for nearby or deferred periods," he said, adding "buyers don't chase grain when they're sitting full of inventory."

North Dakota also had a better-quality crop this year, which meant some historic markets were not as active looking for Canadian supplies as there were cheaper oats closer to home, he said.

Oats bids are now at about \$3.25 per bushel in Manitoba and \$2.75 in Saskatchewan, said McKnight. While farmers would

like to see prices at least 25 cents higher, he said there was obviously still enough grain moving at current levels to keep the end-use market satisfied.

"I have to bid based on what I can resell it at," he said.

While oats look sluggish, with both buyers and sellers waiting to see who blinks first, seeding conditions could be one catalyst pushing values one way or the other.

McKnight said most industry participants still anticipate oat area to grow in 2015, as the crop compares favourably with other options.

Oats are cheap to grow and perform well, said Mike Jubinville of ProFarmer Canada. The economics say oats acres should be down, he said, but the agronomics will see growers keep them in the rotations, with area likely in the three million-acre range.

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1997 Morris Max (40') 10" w/2100 Morris 8300	\$55,900
1997 Morris Max (34') w/ 6180 tank	\$17,900
1997 Morris Maxim (49') 10" spacing	\$15,500
1993 Morris Maxim I 41' 75" w/6180 Engine	\$26,500
John Deere 1810 (52") w/packers/liquid	\$39,000
Flexcoil 5000 (40')	\$16,900

### AIR TANKS

2003 Morris 7180 w/ auger	\$11,000
2002 Flexcoil 4350 w/ auger, VRT	\$29,500
Case 2300 Air Tank	\$11,900

### SWATHERS & HEADERS

2012 JD A400 w/36" HoneyBee, 250hrs	\$119,500
2012 Case 1203 w/36" HoneyBee, 150 hrs	\$111,000
2009 JD 4995 w/36" HoneyBee, 700 hrs	\$92,500
2009 MacDon D60 w/JD Adapter (40')	\$52,500
2004 MacDon 922 Auger Header (16')	\$15,900
2000 Premium 2950 w/30' 972, 2000 hrs	\$62,500
1998 Westward 9300 w/30' 962, 2200 hrs	\$37,500
1996 Premier 2920 2500 hrs w/25' 972 (2000)	\$35,000
1994 Westward 9000 w/(30') 972, 2600 hrs	\$42,500
1990 John Deere 2360 (25') 2100 hrs, PUR	\$14,900
1987 Westward 7000 (30')	\$5,900
1980 IHC 4000 24 1/2 ft. cab pu reel	\$6,500

### TRACTORS

2010 Kubota M135XDTC w/loader, 3000 hrs	\$62,500
2010 Kubota M135XDTC w/loader, 3100 hrs	\$59,900
2005 Kubota M105SDSC w/loader, MFD, 2700 hrs	\$42,500

### MOWER CONDITIONERS

2007 MacDon A305 16'	\$19,900
2004 MacDon 5020 16'	\$12,500
2000 Kuhn FC 4000 13' Discbine 3pt.	\$11,900
Hesston 1275 (16')	\$12,000

### MISCELLANEOUS

1995 Morris 1400 Bale Picker	\$13,900
51' Used Contour II Openers complete	\$6,500
Bale King 2000 w/grain tank	\$5,900
2009 Schulte XH1500 (15')	\$13,900
Highline 7000 Bale Processor	\$6,900
2008 Leon 575 Vertical Spreader	\$23,900

### AUGERS

2014 10x41' Wheatheart loaded	\$13,500
2009 Farm King 13x70' mower, bin alarm	\$13,900
2007 Farm King 13x85' winch	\$8,900
Farm King 13x85' winover	\$6,900

### TILLAGE

2014 Lemken Heliodor (33') 2000 acres	\$86,000
2007 Summers Disc (40') w/harrows	\$55,000
1997 John Deere 1810 (52') 10" spacing w/packers	\$39,000

### LAWN & GARDEN

2012 Kubota ZD323-60 330 hrs	\$10,500
2010 Kubota ZG 227 - 54", 260 hrs	\$6,200
2010 John Deere Z425	\$2,900
2007 Kubota GF1800 w/60"	\$3,500

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# World wheat crop expected to be smaller

The world's wheat crop will shed three per cent this year to 703.4 million tonnes from last year's record, but it will still remain above the five-year average, the CWB estimated on Wednesday.

The global 2015 corn crop should fall 1.6 per cent from a record last year to 973.5 million tonnes in 2015, Neil Townsend, CWB's director of market research, said at the Cereals Conference in Geneva.

He put the global 2015 soybean harvest at 299 million tonnes against a record 315.1 million in 2014.

U.S. consultancy AgResource head Dan Basse was more optimistic, pegging the world's 2015 wheat output at 720.8 million tonnes and the corn crop at 984.9 million tonnes.

Both analysts used comparative data for the 2014 world crops of 724.8 million tonnes for wheat and 989.7 million for corn.

Townsend forecast the European Union would ship a record 32.35 million tonnes of wheat on the world market next season,

up from 31.5 million in the current one.

U.S. exports in the 2015-16 season would rebound partly to 27.6 million tonnes, up from a sharply lower 24.5 million esti-

ated for 2014-15, but below the 32 million exported in 2013-14, Townsend estimated. U.S. exports have been hurt by a surge in the dollar this season.

The EU and U.S. rises would

be to the detriment of Canada's wheat exports, which would fall after at least four years of increases, to 20.75 million from 23 million estimated for the current season, Townsend said.

Black Sea countries that harvested hefty crops in 2014 could see their exports wane next season as production returns closer to 2013 levels with the Russian wheat crop pegged at 53.2 million tonnes, down 10 per cent on year, Ukraine's at 21.9 million tonnes, down 11.5 per cent on 2014.

Russian exports, set to rise to 20 million tonnes in the current season from 18.5 million in 2013-14, would fall 12 per cent in 2015-16 to 17.6 million tonnes, also hit by the country's export restrictions, Townsend said.

Ukraine's exports are set to fall 12 per cent to 9.7 million tonnes in 2015-16 after a 13 per cent rise this season to 11 million tonnes.

Ukrainian consultancy UkrAgroConsult on Tuesday pegged the country's wheat harvest to decrease to 20.6 million tonnes from 22.5 million tonnes in 2014.

Townsend said combined exports for the Black Sea region including Kazakhstan would fall to 34.1 million tonnes from 37 million in the current season.



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# Information key to fine-tuning on-farm breeding program

**THE CANADIAN BEEF RESEARCH COUNCIL**  
 Les Johnston has long subscribed to the beef management theory, "the more you know about your cattle the more it pays." Whether the south Saskatchewan beef producer is raising purebred Simmental bulls for a breeding market, or commercial cross-bred steers for the packing plant, he wants to know how those animals perform.

Being able to receive a steady flow of carcass data on cull livestock or finished commercial steers through the Beef InfoXchange System (BIXS) is a valuable confirmation of whether his breeding program is on the right track.

Johnston, who owns Nisku Land and Cattle Inc. near Fillmore, Sask. has farmed between both the purebred and commercial cattle industries for the past 40 years. He focused on purebred Simmental cattle for many years, when the BSE crisis developed in early 2000s then switched to producing and finishing mostly commercial cattle, and although he has been downsizing in the past year, still runs a smaller purebred as well as commercial beef herd.

But whether it is the commercial or purebred side he has always been interested in learning as much about cattle performance as he could.

"Basically it comes down to you can't fix what you don't know," says Johnston. "We have always been interested in seeing carcass data even before BIXS came along, but now it becomes a much easier process."

On the purebred side he began using ultrasound technology to measure marbling on replacement cattle in 1990s. "We were really impressed where the Simmental breed was headed, but because the registry hadn't been developed yet, we couldn't identify the genetics we needed. We actually had to turn to Red and Black Angus to find the genetics to produce the carcass quality we wanted."

In the early 2000s he began DNA testing bulls, and continues with that today. The DNA testing confirms genetic lines in the purebred herd and also is a check against ultrasound readings of carcass quality factors. An ultrasound reading provides a measure of the ribeye area, marbling and back fat thickness on a particular animal. Depending on the amount of information the producer wants, a DNA

test, made from a hair sample, can also reveal its potential for ribeye, marbling and backfat as well as carcass grade, yield grade, and tenderness. The combination of ultrasound and a DNA test provides relatively solid assurance of the traits that breeding animal will pass along to its offspring. And, if the producer wants more information about the animal's potential, the DNA test can also provide a score for average daily gain, docility (behavior), fertility, calving ease, feeding efficiency and longevity.

With BSE derailing the Canadian beef market in 2003, Johnston began producing more commercial cattle and finishing them himself, running about 240 head.

"We actually began doing more on the commercial side before the BSE crisis," says Johnston. "But once BSE hit we stepped up our commercial program and began to retain ownership of the steers. I believe you can always make money on good cattle and I had enough data on this herd that told me if I finished these cattle properly I could still make a few pennies on each one, or at least not lose my shirt," says Johnston. "And that approach came true—we were still able to make a few dollars on these cattle." Relying on the genetic potential of his cattle, Johnston was consistently able to finish and market steers with a good mix of AAA and AA carcass grading for a price premium.

Whether it was on younger purebred cattle that were culled, or on his own finished steers, he always sought out carcass data from the packing plant to guide his breeding program.

"The carcass data from the packing plant was able to tell us generally how the herd was performing, but it wasn't able to narrow it down to the individual genetics of an animal," he says. "That is where BIXS is an improved information tool. We are able to get carcass data specific to each tagged animal. We have 11 breeding pastures on this farm, so with that I.D. number I can know with almost certainty the dam and the sire of that animal, and then evaluate how those genetics are performing." Johnston says by being able to connect the carcass quality information of an individual animal with its sire and dam he can decide which bulls are producing the most desirable carcass traits in steers and select accord-



ingly. "With our breeding management and record keeping system, once I get that carcass data back from the packing plant and it is associated with an RFID number, I can easily check the records and know exactly the sire and dam of that animal. And if, for some reason, that sire and dam combination isn't producing a calf that produces a desirable carcass it doesn't mean I have to cull them. I can just look at the genetic information I have for the herd and perhaps just put that cow with a different bull next year to improve the traits in the

next calf." While Johnston, in the past couple years, is no longer retaining ownership of steers, he can still receive carcass data reports on his cattle. Calves marketed last fall, for example, are being backgrounded at a feedyard in Saskatchewan and then will be finished at a feedlot in Ontario. If finished cattle are processed at the Cargill plant in Ontario "those carcass data reports will eventually arrive back at the computer in my office," he says. When he was marketing his own steers Johnston was selling them on the

grid. That required that at least 60 per cent of the steers were grade AAA, with the rest hopefully producing AA carcasses. "And really it is the AAs where we made the most money," he says.

Johnston says when marketing on the grid he found the difference in price between a good AA animal and AAA could be very minor. "Unless you can negotiate a very good premium for cattle sold on the grid, a AA carcass with high lean meat yield can often provide as good a return as anything. The goal is produce a AAA, but at the same time maintain a lean meat yield of 59 per cent or higher."

The grid maximum at the time sought a hot carcass weight no heavier than 925 pounds, so he targeted his program to produce steers achieving an 840 to 900 pound carcass weight. And his breeding program selection over the years, has been on target—selecting bulls that produce the proper sized animal with desirable carcass traits. "In all the time we have been doing this before and now with BIXS we have only had one single A animal," he says.

Johnston says the potential information flow that BIXS offers across the production chain is valuable

information to any producer who is serious about fine tuning their breeding program to produce quality cattle for the market place.

"And it reduces the risk," he says. "You can finish and market your own cattle to get carcass data, but then you are carrying all the risk of feeding those cattle. With BIXS, any producer can produce a nice bunch of calves, sell them to a feedyard and then in a few months get the carcass data delivered to them. It takes a bit of learning to know how to read and understand a carcass report, but it can be an important tool in guiding your breeding program."

Johnston admits that genetic selection is only part of the equation in producing a market animal with top carcass quality—the feedlot feeding program also plays an important role too. "But genetics is most important part of the equation," he says. "As one of the leading beef industry experts, Charlie Gracely, says 'you can't make a poor carcass better, if the genetics aren't there. But, with poor management you can certainly wreck a good carcass.' As producers, I believe it is important to know who is feeding your cattle and how they are feeding them," he says.

*Continued on page 30*

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Scenes from the family owned and operated Bourhis Ranch near Kennedy, Sask.

## Bourhis Ranch top Angus producer in the province

Continued from page C17

Keith and Albert start calving in the beginning of April with the heifers first and the cows starting about 10 days later. They have a roughly 65 day calving period as they try to be very diligent about pulling the bulls after three cycles. "We are cattlemen first and are not afraid to stop the combine for a day and gather bulls." Usually by the beginning of June the calves are all processed and branded and moved to pasture. The calves are all tagged with Angus tags as "There are only positive effects to using Angus tags, it validates our product."

Typically the Bourhis' background most of their calves but do sell a few in the fall. Weaning usually takes place in mid to late November and the steers are usually backgrounded until February. In 2010 the Bourhis' teamed up with their friends and neighbors, Taylor Enterprises, and sold 82 of their top end steers directly to an Alberta feedlot. The results were very rewarding and they have been successfully marketing their steers that way ever since. It took a lot of work to get a solid group of uniform steers that can be marketed in pot load lots. The data they receive back has been excellent. "The carcass quality, feed

conversion, and ADG exceeded our expectations." One thing they have learned is that a pot load of quality Angus steers is an easy thing to sell! "A large percentage of our steers qualified as certified Angus beef which adds value to our cattle." They have also sold females privately and consigned bred females at local sales. Each year the Bourhis' still sell some bred females.

As the cattle herd has grown, the Bourhis' have looked at ways of becoming more efficient and have been bale grazing and corn grazing for several years now. The backgrounded steers are grown out on a silage ration.

The entire bull battery at the Bourhis Ranch is Black Angus. They try to purchase as many bulls as they can locally so they can follow the herd and select bulls from good working cows. Keith likes to have a good look at a bull's mother before making a purchase. Their bull selection criteria is somewhat different than most. "We prefer to avoid high birth weights and high birth weight EPDs. Calving ease is important." They also prefer moderate framed cattle that maintain their flesh easily. "I can be a bit of teat and udder perfectionist too," Keith says with a laugh.

"A lot of people question the fact that we are breeding Angus on Angus cattle. I understand that crossbreeding is scientifically proven. However we don't feel like our weights have suffered. We all sell our cattle by the pound and we like money too! We focus on fresh bloodlines within the breed and really think we are benefiting from the uniformity of one breed. If we were crossbreeding we wouldn't have enough cattle to make uniform potloads, unless we sourced our females."

Low stress cattle management is a big part of the day to day operation on the ranch. Keith took a keen interest in Bud Williams in the early 1990s, and over the years Keith and his good friend and neighbor Bob Brickley spent 19 days with Bud at classes and one on one time.

They are caught up in the hectic but wholesome ranching lifestyle and make it clear they wouldn't want it any other way! Keith's family is the next genera-

tion that is involved in the family farm. Keith's wife Karen works as a lab and x-ray technician in nearby Wawota and enjoys helping out on the ranch as much as she can. Their two children Connor (17) and Brynn (15) are also involved and help out whenever they can since they both have their own small herds. Connor is in grade 12 and is an avid outdoorsman loving hunting and guns, and enjoys playing hockey. Brynn is in grade 9 and enjoys volleyball and figure skating. She also enjoys coaching CanSkate in the Kennedy Skating Club. When they have any spare time both kids have colts they are training. Keith and Karen are involved in the local rink and school as both have been on the local school community council and have been president of the rink and skating club. Karen enjoys playing volleyball in the local ladies league. Keith always enjoyed playing hockey and is now enjoying coaching his son.

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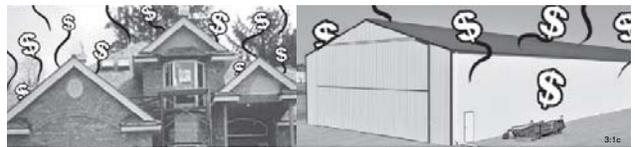
Sale Location: Oak Lake Community Hall located at 474 North Railway Street West. Complimentary Beef on a Bun at Hall.

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# New organization to enforce animal protection act

Last Thursday Agriculture Minister Lyle Stewart announced the establishment of a new humane society to provide enforcement of The Animal Protection Act in Saskatchewan.

The Ministry of Agriculture has reached a two year funding agreement with Animal Protection

Services of Saskatchewan, a non-profit corporation, to provide animal protection services beginning April 1, 2015. The agreement provides the organization \$610,000 a year for investigative services.

"Animal welfare is a top priority for our government," Stewart said. "We

welcome the opportunity to work with our new partner, Animal Protection Services of Saskatchewan, to continue enforcement of the Act and ensure a sound animal welfare system throughout the province."

The Saskatchewan Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

(Saskatchewan SPCA) announced earlier this year that it would not renew its contract with the ministry for animal protection services after March 31, 2015, due to its decision to focus on programs and services related to education and the prevention of animal cruelty.

Animal protection officers who previously worked for the Saskatchewan SPCA, including Animal Protection Services Manager Kaley Pugh, are part of the new Animal Protection Services of Saskatchewan. The organization will be based out of Saskatoon and its board will include members from

provincial veterinary and livestock organizations.

Starting April 1, there will be a new toll-free phone number, 1-844-382-0002, for reporting cases of animal abuse. The website is [www.animalprotection-services.ca](http://www.animalprotection-services.ca), and the general email address is [info@animalprotectionservices.ca](mailto:info@animalprotectionservices.ca).

"We look forward to continuing our work in protecting the health and well-being of animals," Animal Protection Services of Saskatchewan Executive Director Kaley Pugh said. "We are working closely with Saskatchewan SPCA to ensure a smooth transition of enforcement services."

"We are pleased to have an organization such as Animal Protection Services of Saskatchewan to help ensure responsible animal care across our province," Saskatchewan Horse Federation Executive Director Krissy Fiddler said.

"We welcome the new organization and the role it will play in supporting good animal husbandry practices, which are of utmost importance to our industry," Saskatchewan Cattlemen's Association Chair Bill Jameson said.

"The ministry will continue to engage stakeholders to ensure animal protective services are effectively enforced across the province."

## B.C. lawyer raising funds for statue of bull in Havana

BY SHIRLEY BYERS

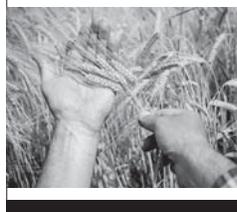
Carey Linde, a B.C. lawyer, wants to get Rosafe Signet, a Canadian Holstein bull, the recognition he feels he deserves. He's financing a commemorative statue that will be erected in a place of honour in Havana in February and he's producing a documentary too. A trailer for the documentary can be viewed at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uqkkl1ElwK>

Though few Canadians have ever heard of him, Rosafe Signet is regarded as the father of the dairy industry in Cuba. Ubre Blanca, one of his progeny held a Guinness record for milk production. When she died her body was preserved and is on display at Cuba's National Cattle Health Centre, while in Cuban classrooms, hands still shoot up when kids are asked if they know of Rosafe Signet. They do.

Twice winner of the grand champion-

ship at the Royal Agricultural Winter fair, Rosafe Signet was sold to Cuba in 1961 for more than \$100,000. Canadian farmers sold thousands of cattle and hogs into Cuba around this time. Canada and Mexico were the only two countries in the hemisphere not to break relations with Cuba in the years that followed the Cuban revolution in 1959.

Linde tried to raise money for his projects through Kickstarter and a PayPal account but because of U.S. trade embargos, he was shut out of these companies even though he was raising funds in Canada for a non-profit project. He's now raising the money on his own but has written to Justice Minister and Attorney-General Peter MacKay asking that he investigate the potential violation of FEMA, (Foreign Extraterritorial Measures Act legislation) that was amended in 1996 to protect Canadian firms and Canadian subsidiaries of U.S. companies



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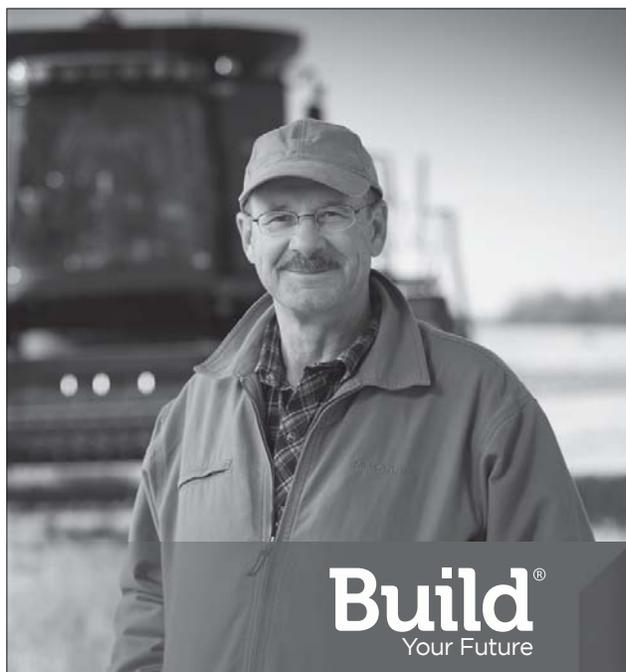
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# Information is key to fine-tuning on-farm breeding program

Continued from page C27

"I do my best to find out where my calves go and follow up with the feeder if I can. But at the same time, most of these feedyards are doing their best to optimize their rates of gain and produce a quality animal. It is in their best interest to market good quality cattle. And if the genetics are there to begin with, those cattle will finish properly."

"One important caution is not to let your herd get too far to one extreme or the other because then it becomes too hard to bring it back. If the reports start to show that animals are getting too big, for example, bring different genetics in to your breeding program. You may have to swallow your ego and buy a different breed altogether, but it will keep those cattle in the range that the market wants."

### APP FOR BIXS

Recognizing the importance of having more information to make better decisions is one reason an Alberta veterinary clinic has developed a mobile app to help clients connect with BIXS as a value added service.

The app, developed to work with all Android phones, is intended to make it easier for producers to enter calv-

ing and other relevant information onto the BIXS system, says Dr. Mike Jelinski with Veterinary Agri-Health Services Ltd. in Airdrie, just north of Calgary. It is available to clients for a nominal fee.

"We knew that certainly some of our clients were interested in having access to carcass data, and we felt by developing this app it would make it easier for them to access BIXS and be a value added service," says Jelinski.

Launched in 2014, the veterinary service had about 30 clients sign up for the app last year and more are expected in 2015. Producers have the app on their cell phone or tablet and can enter as much information as they want into BIXS. The key pieces of information along with CCIA tag number are date of birth (birth date method—either actual or calving start date) and sex of calf. But, the app can be used to enter a wide range of information including notes on calving difficulty and any treatment protocols.

"Along with the basics they can enter as much information as they want," says Jelinski. "And they can do it right

there in field or later if it is more convenient. And then with a couple of simple steps that information can be sent directly to BIXS."

Recognizing that BIXS is really just getting established as a conduit for information back and forth through the beef production chain, Jelinski says they offered the app as a way to get producers familiar with providing information to BIXS.

As the flow of information matures, he says there will hopefully be value in helping producers better manage or fine-tune their breeding programs, and search out market opportunities. "It may be of value to go to an auction mart or feedlot with records that include a vaccination certificate on all your calves," he says. "And with a record of animal health protocols there may be more opportunity to access markets looking for natural beef, or hormone free, or antibiotic free cattle. So the app is a value added service to help clients get on board early and become familiar with BIXS, and the process of collecting this information."

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# Cheer up, western Canada prosperity will return

As everyone from the Manitoba-Ontario border to To-fino knows, the local and provincial economies, which depend on resource extraction, have slowed.

So this is a critical time to get some perspective on the past. If governments panic and enact poor policy (higher taxes, the wrong type of taxes, forced "diversification" efforts, rescuing companies about to go under, or other ill-advised schemes) provincial governments in the West risk hollowing out the advantages, which, if left alone, will help Western Canada bounce back economically.

Consider the last two decades and one telling indicator—private-sector business investment (excluding housing). This type of investment drives job-creation which, among other benefits, can help governments balance their books (fewer people needing social programs, more people working and paying taxes).

Between 1994 and 2013, as the three westernmost provinces began to seriously reform spending and tax policies (Alberta in the 1990s, Saskatchewan partly in the 1990s and into the new century, B.C. beginning in 2001) Alberta attracted an average of \$37,285 of private-sector investment per worker. That was followed by Saskatchewan (\$29,024), British Columbia (\$12,116), and Manitoba (\$12,080), Ontario (\$9,132) and Quebec (\$8,836) lagged far behind.

As a result, Alberta and B.C. recorded comparatively low unemployment rates despite substantial migration to both provinces from other parts of the country.

For example, between mid-1993 and mid-2013, among the 15 to 64 age group, Alberta's net interprovincial migration number (340,111 people) was tops in Canada, followed by B.C. (93,392). Every other province lost people in the interprovincial migration game. That included Ontario (-56,391), Quebec (-121,428), all of Atlantic Canada (-128,273), Manitoba (-68,153), and Saskatchewan (-52,900).

Of note, however, after Saskatchewan began to reform



Mark Milke

(lowering business taxes, for example) and strengthened its economy, interprovincial migration numbers reflected that shift. Since 2007, when the migration numbers turned positive, Saskatchewan gained 8,974 people 15 to 64 years old from other provinces.

That 15 to 64 age group can serve as an approximate proxy for Canadians in search of a job (let's assume that teenagers and young adults in post-secondary education are a small slice of that group). Their movement can thus potentially impact subsequent unemployment numbers. Ergo, it's fair to assume most people moved to Alberta, B.C. and, more recently, Saskatchewan, for jobs.

Need proof? Check out the unemployment lines. Between 1994 and 2013, Alberta and Saskatchewan's annual unemployment rates (for those aged 15 to 64) averaged 5.4 per cent and 5.5 per cent respectively. B.C. (7.4 per cent) beat Ontario (7.5 per cent) and Quebec (9.1 per cent).

The West's relatively low unemployment occurred despite an influx of workers from other provinces to Alberta and B.C. Manitoba's unemployment rate (5.6 per cent) was also low, but the province was bleeding people.

So why is all of this happening? Luck? High resource prices?

Healthy prices for goods or services (oil and gas, for example) obviously help regional economies. However, they alone don't explain why Alberta and B.C. (and Saskatchewan, more recently) outperform central Canada in

good times and bad, despite high levels of migration from other parts of Canada.

Government policy matters. Otherwise, resource-rich Venezuela would be wealthy and resource-poor Hong Kong would be destitute—which is the exact opposite of reality.

Here in Canada, as my colleagues have discovered, Alberta, Saskatchewan and B.C. have done relatively well on policies that matters to healthy economies: taxes, regulation, labor laws, property rights, et al. Such relative smarts are why these three provinces remain among the most economically free jurisdictions in North America.

So, however western provincial governments respond to low resource prices, if they care about jobs, they should ensure the attractiveness of their jurisdiction is not artificially hampered by eroding western advantages.

Those advantages have helped the West weather serious downturns before. That also benefited the rest of Canada by attracting investment, creating jobs and tax revenues. If the advantages are left intact, history will repeat itself.

Mark Milke is a Senior Fellow with the Fraser Institute.

## Durum prices fall as new crops around corner

Durum prices in Western Canada are under pressure as other countries' new durum crops are just around the corner and end-users are well covered.

"We have new-crop French and Spanish durum coming on here in a couple months, and the Mexican crop as well," said Jerry Klassen, manager for Swiss-based GAP SA Grains and Products in Winnipeg.

Prairie old-crop values range from about \$8.25-\$9 a bushel across Western

Canada, down about \$1 from month-ago prices, Prairie Ag Hotwire data shows.

New-crop prices are hovering around \$7/bu., which should be attracting some forward selling by farmers — but isn't, Klassen said.

"I don't think any farmers are selling, because last year they pre-sold and it was a bit early. This year, they probably should be selling more, but they're not," he added.

Offshore export demand is "dead," and buyers are

content to wait until the new crop comes off in other parts of the world, he added.

It won't be long until the North American crop is seeded. "We're going to see the North Dakota durum seeded here probably in a couple weeks," Klassen said.

In Canada, seeding is still likely a bit further away, but acreage is expected to increase anywhere from 12 to 25 per cent compared to 2014, which is also bearish for prices.

Last year, durum area totaled 4.75 million acres, according to Statistics Canada, which will release its first 2015-16 planting projections on April 23.

Though the North American durum crop still has a whole growing season to go through, it looks as though it will be seeded in a favourable time frame because of the weather conditions seen so far this spring.

"It doesn't look like there's any reason for the market to rally here," Klassen said.

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# The hidden farm illness

**Continued from page C3**  
**WHAT DOES DEPRESSION LOOK LIKE?**  
 Depression is not simply feeling down for a short time. It is a medical condition. Symptoms of depression can include:

- Sleeping too much or too little.
- Fatigue, lack of energy.
- Sadness all day, nearly every day.
- Withdrawal from family and friends.
- Loss of interest, lack of enjoyment in things that used to be enjoyable.
- Trouble concentrating.
- Trouble making decisions.
- Headaches, stomach pain, joint or other pains.
- Change in appetite or weight, gaining or losing weight without intent.
- Feelings of irritability.
- Feelings of restlessness or feelings of being slowed down.
- Feelings of worthlessness.
- Excessive or inappropriate feelings of guilt.
- Thoughts of death or suicide.

To be diagnosed as depression, these symptoms must be present for most of the day, nearly every day for at least two weeks.

Some of these symptoms can also show up with other conditions, psychological and physical. Diabetes can cause tiredness, low mood and sleep difficulties. People who have a low thyroid may have some of these symptoms while people with an anxiety disorder may have trouble concentrating, thinking about things and making decisions.

**ONLINE TREATMENT FOR ANXIETY/DEPRESSION IN SASKATCHEWAN**

Although online therapy is very popular in other countries, so far Saskatchewan is the only province offering that service in Canada. Online counselling for depression and anxiety is available free of charge to Saskatchewan residents eighteen and over who have access to and are comfortable using computers, says Heather Hadjistavropoulos, professor of psychology at the University of Regina.

"We're currently offering a wellbeing course basically designed for people who have anxiety or depression," she says.

"The course consists of five lessons and with each lesson the person goes onto the computer and learns different information on how to improve wellbeing and cope with anxiety and depression."

There are five lessons in all and it usually takes one or two weeks to complete a lesson. Each lesson has reading material online and suggestions, activities and homework.

Lessons include basic information about depression and anxiety, how common these symptoms are, identifying and challenging thoughts that might be contributing to the condition, coping with the physical symptoms that go along with depression and anxiety, identifying and working on behaviors that may be contributing to challenges, putting it all together and continuing to work on long term wellbeing.

As well as working on their own course, takers have a therapist they can email during the week. Once a week that therapist goes online and reads the client's emails and responds to questions and concerns and offers encouragement.

"It's great for people who live in rural and remote areas or have mobility issues or just have other barriers such as family or farming responsibilities," says Hadjistavropoulos. People can work on this on their own time. Sometimes people feel reluctant or embarrassed about seeking help. Sometimes we find after people work on this they feel more comfortable if they need to go in to see a counsellor in person."

Learn more about this program at: <https://www.onlinetherapyuser.ca/well-being/welcome/>

**SOME OF THE RESOURCES IN YOUR COMMUNITY**  
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Edmonton: 780-408-5465 (LINK)  
 Calgary: 403-943-5465 (LINK)  
 HealthLink BC: 8-1-1

Farm Stress lines or equivalent:  
 Alberta: 877-303-2642  
 Saskatchewan Farm Stress Line: 1-800-667-4442

Manitoba Farm and Rural Support Services: 1-866-367-3276

Ontario: Distress Centres Ontario: 416-486-2242

Online Therapy (only in Saskatchewan) <https://www.onlinetherapyuser.ca/well-being/welcome/>

Long-time farmer, Gerry Friesen's blog: <http://therecoveringfarmer.blogspot.ca/>

**WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE HAVING THOUGHTS OF SELF-HARM OR IF SOMEONE YOU KNOW IS HAVING THOSE THOUGHTS**

If someone has thoughts of harming themselves, the most important thing he or she can do is to seek out support, says Greg Gibson, registered clinical psychologist, Community Health Services for the Prairie Mountain Health Region based in Brandon. This can be extremely difficult, particularly for someone struggling with depressive symptoms, as he or she may be plagued with negative thoughts, including "what's the use? Nothing will work anyway," or "I don't want to bother anyone. I'm not worth it." Having people you can talk to and a good support network is vital protection against both self-harm and suicidal thinking. Talking about the inner feelings that fuel your self-harm is potentially useful whoever you talk to, but counsellors are professionally trained to work with self-harm and will be best placed to support you in finding constructive alternatives. In Brandon and the surrounding area, the 24 mobile crisis line and Manitoba Farm and rural support lines are two 24-hour telephone support services that are available to folks in Manitoba.

When someone says he or she is thinking about suicide, ask questions. Be sensitive, but ask direct questions, such as: How are you coping with what's been happening in your life? Do you ever feel like just giving up? Are you thinking about hurting

yourself? Are you thinking about suicide? Have you thought about how you would do it? Do you know when you would do it? Do you have the means to do it? Asking about suicidal thoughts or feelings won't push someone into doing something self-destructive and may reduce the risk of the person acting on suicidal feelings.

Look for warning signs, such as the person talking about death or suicide ("I'm going to kill myself," "I wish I were dead" or "I wish I hadn't been born") and being preoccupied with death, dying or violence; getting the means to commit suicide, such as buying a gun or stockpiling pills; withdrawing from social contact and wanting to be left alone; having mood swings—being emotionally high one day and deeply discouraged the next; feeling trapped or hopeless about a situation; increasing use of alcohol, drugs, or other risky behaviors; giving away belongings or getting affairs in order; saying goodbye to people as if they won't be seen again; and behavioral changes, such as increased anxiety, or agitation.

And lastly, get help. If a friend or family member talks or behaves in a way that makes you believe he or she might commit suicide, don't try to handle the situation without help—get help from a trained professional as quickly as possible. The person may need to be hospitalized until the suicidal crisis has passed. If possible, tell a family member or friend what's going on right away. Or, if you think you can do so safely, take the person to the nearest hospital emergency room yourself. If you believe that risk is imminent, it is important to not leave the person alone.

Gibson says it is also important for the friend or family member to practice self-care and get support themselves. Loved ones and friends who are managing and supporting someone with depression and suicidal urges can fall into burn-out and depression themselves. It is important that these supports also find support and assistance themselves.

*This story was originally published in the Country Guide.*



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# Carcass data important for seedstock development research

BY THE BEEF CATTLE RESEARCH COUNCIL

Access to carcass data as well as other production information through the Beef InfoXchange System (BIXS) will be an invaluable tool for cattle breeders, geneticists and beef researchers in their efforts to build a better beef animal.

Information is the key, and carcass data along with other information from the production chain will not only guide cow-calf producers, but seedstock breeding programs as well, says Jennifer Stewart-Smith, president of Beefbooster. Michael Latimer with Canadian Beef Breeds Council says the information will be useful if it can be connected to a specific breeding program on the farm. And as a geneticist Dr. John Crowley of the University of Alberta says the carcass data will be a useful tool in understanding how the complex world of genetics influences traits in individual animals.

Carcass data is the real report card on the efforts to develop breeding stock by the seedstock operator, the time and commitment of cow-calf operators to produce a healthy weaned calf, and the management of feedlot operators in taking an efficient animal to market weight.

"BIXS is all about information and the value of that information will help in the development of EPDs (Expected Progeny Differences)," says Stewart-Smith. "But first we have to have the information. If

of cattle and average daily gain is an indicator of efficiency. Also, using birth date, feedlot in-date and kill date we can calculate days to harvest—birth date to kill date—or days on feed."

Back at the breeding level, Stewart-Smith can use this data to improve and expand the EPDs associated with any bull. Beefbooster has developed EPDs for key production traits. "And using a selection index we weight those traits according to their economic relevance," she says. "With carcass data and other production information we can develop EPDs for all carcass traits and rate those for their economic importance."

Stewart-Smith says while carcass data is important, information on efficiency from the cow-calf and feedlot sectors may be more useful in developing EPDs. "Carcass information will be the icing on the cake, not the cake," she says. "Too many carcass traits are antagonistic to cow-calf efficiency."

She notes it becomes a balancing act. As they fine-tune breeding programs to select for one trait, they don't want it to be at the expense of another desirable trait. "We don't want to select for one carcass trait and have it affect fertility, or some other feature. That's where we consult with researchers at Livestock Gentec to help us in the process."

Michael Latimer, executive director of the Canadian Beef Breeds Council agrees BIXS has potential to provide very useful information across the beef industry production chain, but that information has to be properly applied.

"It will be valuable information for the cow-calf producer and ultimately purebred operations to receive carcass data, but it has to be made relevant to a breeding program," says Latimer. "A producer can receive a carcass that tells them which calves had certain grades and other car-

Crowley repeats a quote by Dr. Mike Coffey, a genetics researcher at SRUC, Scotland's rural college. "In the age of the genotype, the phenotype is king."

"And that means even though we are beginning to understand the genotype—the genetic makeup of an animal—it is the phenotype or the traits of animal that can be measured that are really important," says Crowley.

Having access to carcass data, from large number of animals across different

breeds will confirm to researchers whether they are on the right genetic trail. "But the information will also tell us where research has to head," says Crowley. "A much larger database will enable new genomic research. The key is having data on carcass type to get a better understanding of genetics."

"BIXS is an excellent framework for connecting the whole industry and providing data flow to help us achieve breeding objectives."



all goes as planned with the flow of information it will be invaluable. We need to get that information back to the producer, and ultimately back to the seedstock operator as a guide for breed development.

"We can use a number of tools now to develop animals with expected breeding values—desirable traits—but it is getting the carcass data on a large number of animals that really tells us which bulls have the proper traits to produce what the market wants." EPDs are numbers that predict the genetic quality of future offspring or progeny of a particular bull, cow or heifer.

Stewart-Smith has been a long-time supporter of BIXS, seeing the potential it has to benefit seedstock development, improve production and feeding efficiency, and foster consumer confidence in a humane and safe-food beef production system.

"BIXS has the potential but it needs the whole industry to get involved," says Stewart-Smith. "There needs to be a meaningful flow of information back and forth through the production chain involving seedstock breeders, cow-calf producers, cattle feeders and packing plants."

As a beef seedstock developer, Stewart-Smith says carcass data is valuable to the Beefbooster breeding program, but she also needs other information from the production chain to properly analyze and manage genetics.

Along with individual cattle I.D. numbers, information most useful to her includes birth-date specifics—was it the actual birth date or the start of the calving season; gender of animal; feedlot intake date; feedlot in-weight; slaughter date; and carcass quality information such as carcass quality grade, rib eye area, backfat depth, marbling, hot carcass weight, yield grade and lean meat percentage.

"From these pieces of information we can calculate numbers that are important," says Stewart-Smith. "For example, using feedlot in-date, feedlot in-weight, kill date and hot carcass weight we can estimate the average daily gain of a group

of carcass quality characteristics, but they have to be able to connect that to a specific bull in the breeding program. If they have five or 10 bulls out on pasture during breeding season, for example, they have to be able to identify which ones are producing the most desirable carcass traits."

Latimer says for the information to be truly useful for the commercial cow-calf producer he believes it may require DNA testing of animals to match sires and dams with individual calves, or more segregated breeding season management and record keeping which identifies one or two bulls with a group of females.

And further, to be of value to the purebred operator, the cow-calf producer has to be willing to share that breeding information with the seed stock producer.

"So BIXS has potential to provide very useful information in managing the on-farm breeding program, but it may require some important management changes by cow-calf producers to make it truly useful," he says.

Dr. John Crowley says carcass data will be an important tool for all sectors of the beef industry and help direct research.

"This information is useful to the producer to guide them in their breeding program on the farm, but also has value to the seed stock producer," he says. "There are so many links in the production chain from the producer, then sometimes to a backgrounding operation, then to the feeder and ultimately to the packing plant and it turns out we are not always producing the end result product that everyone wants." Crowley is a research associate with the University of Alberta's Livestock Gentec centre and is involved in genomics research as part of the Alberta Bovine Genomics Program. He is also director of scientific and industry advancement with the Canadian Beef Breeds Council.

While researchers are understanding and mapping the genetic makeup of beef cattle the real value is in learning how that relates to the various traits within the animal.



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# Canadian beef cattle herd continues to shrink

The Canadian beef cattle herd continues to shrink as a growing number of animals are shipped to the United States.

Statistics Canada estimates there were 9.9 million head on beef operations as of Jan. 1, 2015. That's a 2.9 per cent decline compared to the 10.3 million cattle on farm at the beginning of 2014.

There was an even steeper decline in Saskatchewan, where total cattle in beef operations was estimated at 2.2 million head on Jan. 1, down five per cent from the previous year.

Many producers are taking advantage of record prices to recoup lost equity from the past decade. Other older farmers are using the opportunity to retire.

Feeder cattle sales south of the border were strong last year due to a rising U.S. dollar and an abundant supply of relatively inexpensive corn.

"The reality is that they have cheaper corn versus barley prices in Canada and cattle move to the feed," says Brian Perillat, manager and senior market analyst with Canfax.

About 66,000 head of Canadian feeder cattle were sold to buyers in the United States during the first two months of 2015, well ahead of the 55,000 during the same period a year ago.

Canadian-based processors are seeing the impact. Sandy Russell, an analyst with Spring Creek Land & Cattle Consulting at Outlook, Sask., recently found year-to-date slaughter levels are three per cent lower than 2014, considered in the industry to be not a stellar year. Canadian slaughter levels have gradually declined as weekly Canadian federally inspected kills have not exceeded 60,000 head since May 2012.

"It is one of those quiet factors that we have been monitoring that doesn't get a lot of attention as the industry deals with other issues," Russell says. "As we erode feeder numbers and start to see the amount of cattle on feed decline in Canada, you start to get concerned about your feeding and packing capacity. Once you lose players within the game, it is hard to get them back."

There was a bit of a silver lining in the Statistics Canada beef cattle estimates: the number of heifers for breeding only fell by 1.5 per cent.

"We have to retain a lot more heifers if we are going to start getting into any kind of an expansion phase," Perillat says. "We are still a little ways away from that happening yet."

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# Pressure mounting for end to COOL

BY ALEXANDER PANETTA  
THE CANADIAN PRESS

Business interests are pleading with the U.S. Congress to avert a trade war with Canada that could squeeze Florida orange-growers, put a cork in California wine exports and sour the sales of American chocolate.

Several groups Wednesday asked lawmakers to undo legislation that's caused trade tensions with U.S. neighbours, prompting Canada and Mexico to threaten widespread retaliation.

They urged a House of Representatives committee to change the country-of-origin meat-labelling rules before they cause blow-back for all sorts of American industries.

"This is a dark cloud that is forming over U.S. exporters," said Christopher Wenk of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

"This is a very urgent topic."

Canada has already listed a series of products that could be slapped with tariffs, should it and Mexico follow up their recent successes at the World Trade Organization with a win in the final round.

But proponents of U.S. country-of-origin rules say consumers deserve to know where their meat comes from. Those mandatory U.S. labels explain where livestock was born, raised and slaughtered.

Opponents say those labels do nothing to affect safety standards, cause headaches for businesses during processing, and amount to a protectionist measure that has slashed Canadian meat exports to the U.S. by half.

The Canadian government has expressed optimism that there might be

more sympathy for its position in the new, Republican-dominated Congress—even though the issue doesn't fall neatly along partisan lines.

The body certainly sounded Canada and Mexico-friendly on Wednesday. The politicians who spoke at the House agriculture committee hearing, as well as the people invited to testify, almost all supported repealing the law.

"Clearly there's no upside to this (rule)," said Republican Vicky Hartzler of Missouri.

"It's not good for America, it's not good for the producers, the processors, and it's not good for the mom that goes to the grocery

store that has to pay more for products. So we really do need repealing."

Linda Dempsey of the National Manufacturers Association warned: "Time is running out. It is imperative that Congress act quickly."

The vice-president of California's Wine Institute, Tom LaFaille, said producers lost 50 per cent of their exports to Mexico a decade ago because of retaliatory measures and it took them years to rebuild. LaFaille said he doesn't want a repeat. Wine is on the Canadian hit list for possible tariffs.

Congressman Ted Yoho of Florida expressed fear for his state: "Canada is

Florida's largest trading partner also—it would be tough for us. We ship a lot of citrus up there."

American candy-makers aren't too sweet on a trade war, either. Alison Bodor, the vice-president of their lobby group, the National Confectioners Association, noted that Canada's published list of potential tariffs includes different types of chocolate and sugar-free sweeteners.

"Many American-made chocolates will disappear from Canadian shelves," she said. "That loss of business will impact U.S. confectionery companies, their workers, and importantly also their communities."

A rare voice in support of national meat-labelling Wednesday was the National Farmers Union. While several big livestock associations oppose the existing law, the NFU isn't one of them.

The group's president, Roger Johnson, urged lawmakers to be patient. He said they should wait to see the final WTO ruling, expected soon, before taking any drastic measures.

He said about 70 other countries have meat-labelling requirements. Also, in the latest rounds at the WTO, he said the body's decisions against the U.S. have become increasingly narrow in scope.

He said the trade body

has never ruled against the principle of country-of-origin labelling—only the way the law has been applied—and he suggested the U.S. still had a chance of winning the final round.

A decision from the WTO is expected by May 18.

In a statement from Ottawa, Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz said Wednesday that he's pleased U.S. lawmakers are finally realizing what industry warned years ago: that the labelling rules damage an integrated North American supply chain.

Canada will be ready to retaliate if need be, he said, should it win the final round of appeals at the WTO.



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# Potatoes that won't bruise and apples that won't brown

BY MARY CLARE JALONICK AND KEITH RIDLER

Potatoes that won't bruise and apples that won't brown are a step closer to grocery store aisles.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration on Friday approved the genetically engineered foods, saying they are "as safe and nutritious as their conventional counterparts."

The approval covers six varieties of potatoes by Boise, Idaho-based J. R. Simplot Co. and two varieties of apples from the Canadian company Okanagan Specialty Fruits Inc.

Okanagan, based in British Columbia, is trying to make apples a more convenient snack with its non-browning version. The company says bagged apples wouldn't have to be washed in antioxidants like they are now, a process that can affect taste. Neal Carter, the company's founder, says they want to see bagged apples become as prolific as bagged baby carrots.

"We know that in a convenience-driven world, a whole apple is too big of a commitment," Carter said.

The apples are dubbed Arctic Apples, and Carter said he wants them to be labeled as such, since they bring an advantage to the marketplace. The first two varieties to get the non-browning treatment will be Granny Smith and Golden Delicious, and Carter says there won't be significant plantings until 2017.

Simplot calls its potatoes Innate and the varieties selected include Ranger Russet, Russet Burbank and Atlantic.

"We're trying to improve potatoes so everyone gets a better experience, just like it's right out of the field," said Haven Baker, vice-president of plant sciences for Simplot.

It could be years before the average customer is able to buy one of the potatoes. The company has about 400 acres of Innate potatoes in storage from the 2014 harvest that it plans to deliver to growers, packers and shippers



to be sent to a tightly-controlled network for use in small-scale test markets.

The company said those markets haven't been determined, and it's not clear yet how the potatoes will be labeled. The company said it's not selling Innate seed potatoes on the open market.

The potatoes have 40 per cent less bruising from impacts and pressure during harvest and storage than conventional potatoes, which the company said could reduce the more than 3 billion pounds of potatoes discarded each year by consumers.

"I think everybody wants to get what they pay for," said Doug Cole, Simplot's director of marketing and communications.

The potatoes will have 70 per cent less acrylamide, a chemical that can be created when potatoes are cooked at high temperatures, the company says.

The company is touting that as a potential health ben-

efit, as some studies have shown acrylamide to be a potential carcinogen, though the National Cancer Institute at the National Institutes of Health says scientists "do not yet know with any certainty" whether the substance can be harmful in food.

The FDA in its approval Friday noted that acrylamide has been found to be a carcinogenic in rodents.

The FDA's review process is voluntary. Both companies asked for a review to ensure their products met safety standards. As part of the process, FDA compares safety and data of the genetically engineered food in comparison to a conventional variety.

Aware of potential resistance from consumers, Simplot officials say Innate potato traits come exclusively from genes from domestic potato varieties.

However, one of the company's oldest business partners—McDonald's—has previously said it has no plans to use genetically modified potatoes. The company didn't respond to inquiries from The Associated Press on Friday.

Gregory Jaffe, biotechnology director for the Center for Science in the Public Interest, in a statement Friday objected to the voluntary system for approving genetically engineered foods.

"There's no reason why these 'Arctic' apples and 'Innate' potatoes would pose any food safety or environmental risk," he wrote. "That said, the process for allowing such new crops is badly flawed. Congress should pass legislation that requires new biotech crops to undergo a rigorous and mandatory approval process before foods made from those crops reach the marketplace."

Simplot is working on a second generation Innate potato that will have additional traits, including resistance to late blight, which the company said will result in a 25 to 50 per cent reduction in the need for pesticides. Late blight helped cause the Irish potato famine of the mid-19th century.



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Bonnie Spragg photos

Greg and Bonnie Spragg market their pastured hogs from their store in Rosemary, Alta. and at farmers' markets in Calgary, Brooks and Millarville.

## Alberta couple processes their own pasture-raised hogs

BY SHIRLEY BYERS

Back in 2002, when Greg and Bonnie Spragg were going into pastured pig production they were pioneers in an unknown territory. Raise pigs outside, year round on the Canadian Prairies? Who does that?

The Spraggs credit Bert Denning, then swine specialist with Alberta Agriculture, for pointing them in the right direction. They wanted to raise pigs and they were well positioned in some ways. Greg was working in a hog barn and Bonnie had grown up on a pig farm. Between the two of them they had a lot of pig know-how. But they didn't have the money to put up a barn.

Denning was talking about pastured pigs, low cost start-ups and direct marketing. Although they didn't immediately take hold of direct marketing they did buy some pigs and put them out to pasture. For the pigs, accustomed to nipple waterers and unaccustomed to sunshine and mud wallows, free range was a bit of a learning curve but not a steep one. It wasn't long before they were drinking from a trough, finding shelter from the sun when necessary and enjoying the mud. In short, they were doing great. "And they were certainly happier," says Bonnie. "All of a sudden they all had unique personalities."

When they'd decided to direct market their pigs, a commercial cross of Yorkshire, Landrace and Duroc, they looked at other selling points to make their product stand out. They considered several options such as certified organic and made the decision to raise their animals antibiotic free and to feed no animal by-products. Conventionally raised pigs are generally fed antibiotics for the first six weeks of their lives until they are weaned and sometimes even longer. And usually if one pig in the barn gets sick all animals are medicated because otherwise disease will go from pig to pig, Bonnie says. "We've had some

pigs die but never had (disease) spread to a second pig."

Rather than commercial pig feed which may contain animal by-products, their pigs are supplied with a mixture of locally grown barley and faba beans run through a mix mill. The pasture is a mix of alfalfa and native grasses. "We know they're eating it," says Bonnie, "because of how much feed we have to grind. During the summer our feed consumption is almost halved."

The pigs thrive outdoors. "Even at minus 25 or 30 they'll get out for a couple of hours," she says. "They'll eat and go back in the straw and do just fine."

### CHANGES AND TWEAKS

Although they did farrow their own pigs when they first started, the Spraggs now buy weaners from another farmer who follows their protocols. Originally, they also had a no tail docking policy but they've had to go back on that. Their supplier is trying to figure out a way he can keep those tails intact but with the closer proximity of indoor barns, it's a challenge.

Setting up their own butcher shop in nearby Rosemary was a turning point, says Bonnie. "We opened it in 2005. It was right in the middle of the BSE crisis and we couldn't get enough capacity to get our pigs processed. Everybody was doing so much beef."

Farmers couldn't sell their cattle. Many were scrambling to get one or two cows slaughtered so they could sell the meat on their own. This was clogging the smaller provincial plants that the Spraggs were trying to sell into. "We were driving around to three different butcher shops," she says. "Every shop would cut the pork chops differently and make different sausage and we couldn't promise our customers when we would have product because they would bump us at the last minute. We thought, if we're going to do this we have to have our

own processor."

Getting into the year-round Calgary Farmers' Market was another turning point. Having that market available 12 months of the year gave them a stable cash flow. They now have six employees at the Calgary market alone. Altogether, they employ 23 people, selling and processing Spragg pork. They still manage the farm on their own. "We hired people in the meat shop side, and we do less and less of the cutting and processing all the time," she says. "That was where it was easy to add people."

These days they're processing about 2,500 pigs per year. They sell from the main retail store and another retail outlet in Calgary as well as farmers markets at two locations in Calgary plus Brooks and Millarville. Their pork is available in some restaurants and they recently launched a product line of sandwich meats.

It's a very different business from what they envisioned just a few years ago. "We never thought it would grow to this point," Bonnie says. "We dreamed of it but we didn't really believe it. But every year it seems the next step seems attainable so we're like let's keep going. We're having fun and it seems doable."

### LOOKING AHEAD

Over the years Greg and Bonnie have had inquiries from other farmers asking if they could raise pigs and sell them to the Spraggs. "We always said, 'No,'" says Bonnie and explains, "We were building our brand. We figured we had to make our mark before bringing in others."

Now she thinks it might be the time to say, "Yes." It might be the logical next step for these pastured pigs pioneers.

*This story was first published in the Western Producer in January, 2015.*

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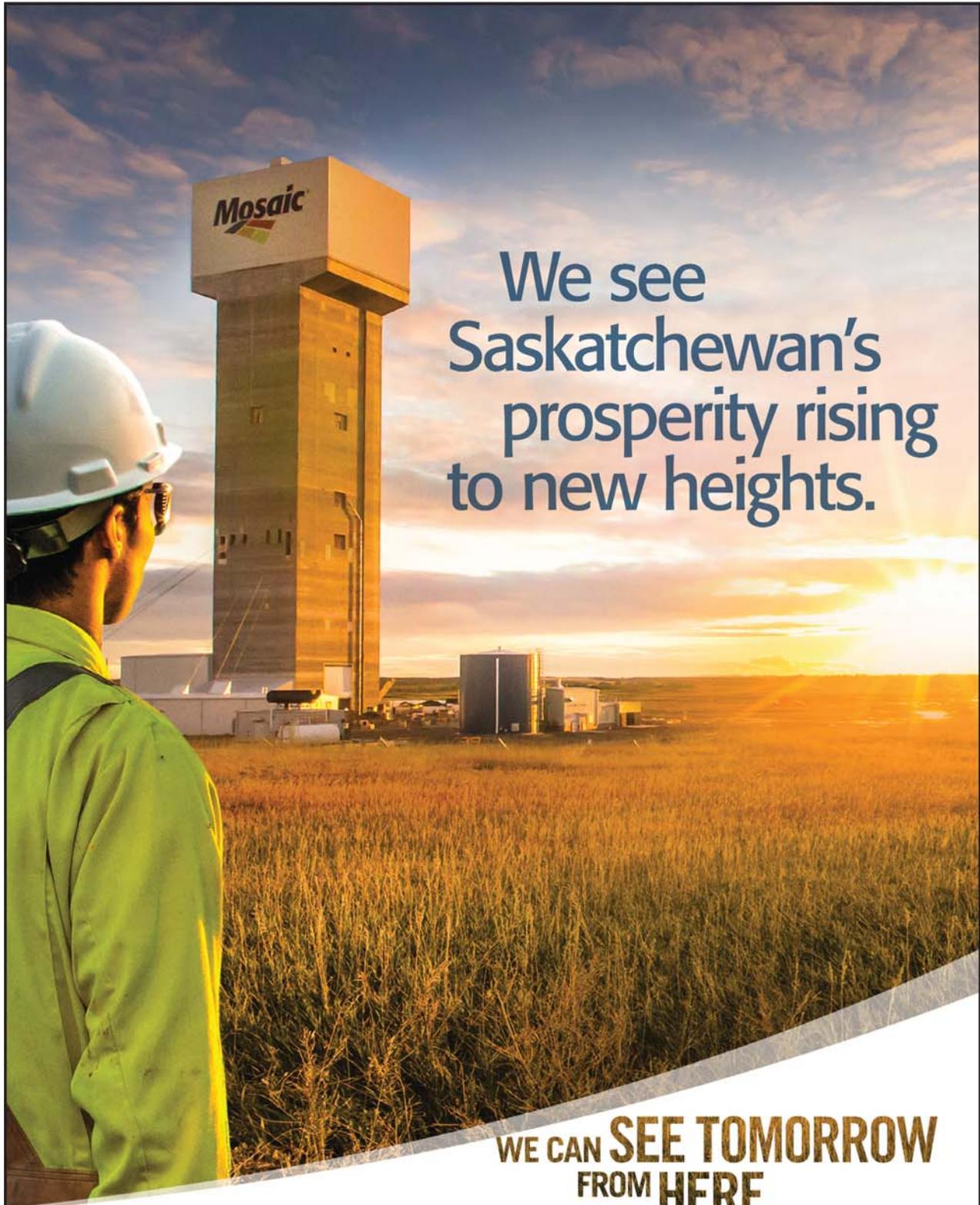
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