

MAY 2025



This photo was submitted by Linda Turner from Kelliher as part of the World-Spectator's Spring Seeding Photo Contest.

Seeding progressing well, despite rain

BY RYAN KIEDROWSKI

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

A total of 72 per cent of crops are now seeded across Saskatchewan, which is higher than the five-year average of 60 per cent, and the 10-year average of 64 per cent. Folks in the southwest corner are almost wrapped up, sitting at 89 per cent seeded. Following close behind are producers in the northwest and west-central regions at 81 per cent complete, and those in the northeast at 74 per cent.

Thanks to rains that followed an April 22 snow event, the southeast and east-central parts of the province are below the provincial average, sitting at 63 and 58 per cent respectively.

Jeff Warkentin, COO of Hebert Grain Ventures, noted their seeding operations

around Moosomin are almost wrapped.

"It was going really good, we'd be about 75 per cent done," he said. "We had our pulses and cereals complete, and just started into canola, then we haven't turned the wheel in a week here."

Rain delays ground seeding to a standstill, but Warkentin is hopeful that the weatherman might be right for once.

"The forecast looks good, so if we get a couple days of sun, we should be off to the races again," he said. "If we got another six, seven days in, we'd put it to bed. It would be nice to finish in May here, so we're hoping in the next two days we get going. Canola goes a little bit quicker than the cereals and whatnot, so we should make pretty good time once we get going."

Having that canola sit in the cold, damp soil is not ideal, but Warkentin is not overly concerned.

"I think it will be all right, it's not too cold at night," he said. "If we get some extreme heat and bake the top, then we could have some emergence issues, but it wasn't going to freeze where it was in the ground."

A big snow event on April 22 stopped everyone's plans, and while snow in April is not unheard of, Warkentin estimates that storm set their crew a week back from when they'd like to begin seeding.

"We were making really good time too once we did get going, so I'd say it's very close to average," he said. "I guess it could be worse. There's a lot of people in the province looking for rain. So, I mean, you

gotta pick your poison, which one you'd rather be, right?"

By Rocanville, Rylar Hutchinson is in the same predicament—waiting for the heat to return so seeding can continue.

"Seeding was rolling fairly steady with few hiccups at the start," he said. "Seeding is at a standstill with the rains we've been having. I'd say we're half way done and we need the warm weather again to finish up."

As for his views on planting canola, a little later in May is a safe preference.

"I'm not a fan of that re-seed program, so I usually wait until after the long weekend to put my canola in," Hutchinson said, which this year, looks like a strategy that will pay off.

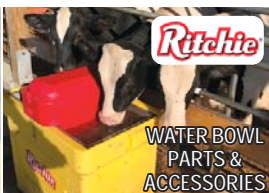
Continued on page C14

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Seeding 72 per cent complete last week

Seeding in Saskatchewan is nearly three-quarters complete with 72 per cent of crops now planted, which is an increase of 23 per cent from last week. This is a smaller increase than the week prior, which is largely due to rain delays in parts of the south and east regions of the province. Seeding progress remains notably higher than the five-year average of 60 per cent and 10-year average of 64 per cent.

Producers in the southwest are in the home stretch of seeding with 89 per cent of crops currently seeded in this region. Progress in the northwest and west-central follow closely with 81 per cent of crops now seeded in these regions. Producers in the northeast made good progress this week as seeding progress in this region sits at 74 per cent. Seeding progress in the southeast and east-central are below the provincial average. Seeding in the southeast is 63 per cent complete, while the east-central region has the smallest percentage of current seeded acres with progress currently sitting at 58 per cent.

Most of the pulse crops in the province have been seeded. Field peas lead seeding progress by crop type at 92 per cent, followed closely by lentils and chickpeas at 90 per cent and 83 per cent, respectively. Large portions of many spring cereal crops have also been seeded. Triticale and durum lead cereal seeding progress at 87 per cent, followed by spring wheat at 80 per cent and barley at 71 per cent. Canary seed and oat crops lag further behind other cereal crops with 56 per cent and 55 per cent of crops seeded, respectively. Seeding progress for all oilseed crops has now reached the halfway point. Mustard con-

Weekly Crop Report

Seeding Progress

72% complete for the week of
May 13 - 19



tinues to lead seeding progress for oilseed crops at 84 per cent, followed by canola at 58 per cent and flax at 50 per cent. Seed-

ing of soybean and perennial forage crops has made the least progress so far as 31 per cent of these crops have been seeded.

There was more rainfall in the province this past week compared to the week before, with the southeast corner of the province receiving the most precipitation. The highest recorded rainfall was in the Lampman area, which received 139 millimeters (mm). The Oxbow and Frobisher areas followed with 104 mm and 100 mm, respectively. The Carnduff area also received notable rainfall with 93 mm. Despite the abundant rainfall in certain areas, other parts of the province remain dry and producers there are hoping for rainfall soon.

The rainfall helped replenish topsoil moisture in certain areas, while dry conditions in other areas continue to deplete topsoil moisture reserves. Provincially, cropland topsoil moisture is rated as six per cent surplus, 69 per cent adequate, 22 per cent short and three per cent very short. Hayland topsoil moisture is rated as three per cent surplus, 64 per cent adequate, 27 per cent short and six per cent very short. Topsoil moisture levels in pastures are slightly drier as conditions are rated as two per cent surplus, 60 per cent adequate, 31 per cent short and seven per cent very short.

Seeding remains the primary focus for most producers in the province, but many are busy spraying, land rolling and picking rocks. Livestock producers are also working to move their animals to the pasture for the season. While producers remain busy with fieldwork, they are reminded to be aware of powerlines and other hazards when transporting large equipment. Drivers are reminded to take extra precautions when encountering farm machinery on roadways.

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Provinces renew commitment to veterinary training in Western Canada

Saskatchewan, British Columbia and Manitoba have renewed their financial commitment to the University of Saskatchewan's Western College of Veterinary Medicine (WCV), continuing a long-standing interprovincial agreement that has been in place for six decades.

The renewed agreement provides more than \$194 million to the WCV over the next five years, helping ensure the college can deliver critical veterinary medicine programming, research and clinical services that address the needs of each province.

"We are proud of the Western College of Veterinary Medicine and the exceptional education opportunities it provides to veterinary students from across Western Canada," Saskatchewan Advanced Education Minister Ken Cheveldayoff said. "We are grateful to have this internationally recognized college right here in Saskatchewan and are fully confident in U.Sask's ability to produce highly skilled veterinarians to care for both our livestock and companion animals."

"Our partnership is a great example of how provinces can work collaboratively to achieve our shared priorities and economic goals," Manitoba Advanced Education and Training Minister Renée Cable said. "We are pleased that this partnership creates opportunities for our students to access high-quality education right here in Western Canada. Communities across Manitoba benefit from the caliber of veterinarians that graduate from the program."

"We are proud to continue this long-standing interprovincial partnership to provide world-class veterinary medicine education," British Columbia Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills Minister Anne Kang said. "This agreement ensures that our communities have access to skilled professionals who play a significant role in animal health, food



The Western College of Veterinary Medicine.

security and public wellbeing."

The WCV is a leading centre of veterinary education, research and expertise in Western Canada, serving the needs of the livestock, fowl and fisheries industries, pet owners, and public health and food safety networks. The college is internationally accredited and includes a veterinary medical centre, a provincial

diagnostic laboratory, and large-scale research facilities that serve as resources for both students and professionals across the region.

"Ongoing financial support from the Governments of Saskatchewan, Manitoba and British Columbia has played a vital role in maintaining the WCV's reputation as a centre for excellence in

education, research and clinical services," WCV Dean Dr. Gillian Muir said. "We look forward to working together with the college's funding partners on strategies that address Western Canada's increasing need for veterinarians and animals health care services."

The new interprovincial agreement is in place until 2030.

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Spring seeding and the joy of fresh tilled dirt

There is nothing more "farm" than the smell of freshly tilled dirt or as my twin grands would say, "Dirt and freshly mowed grass." Personally, for me, it's the dirt. Slightly damp, little ridges from the tiller or the air drill and oh so black!

It's spring in Saskatchewan and the little rows of wheat are making their appearance across the fields. If the dirt is the best 'farm smell,' the long rows are the best 'farm picture' at this time of year. No, they might not be a photographer's dream or a newspaper's front page photo, but when I see the rows, I love the anticipation that sight brings in the spring.

Speaking of spring, wasn't that warm weather a beautiful thing? The rain a welcome treat? The cold May-long temps? LOL, not so much! Since I decided I better get some walking back into my routine (three days before the May long), it has either been raining or freezing and my old winter coat is back out of the closet hanging close by on a coat hook. My winter mittens have also been resurrected from the winter-wear tub.

Cold doesn't seem to bother the twins much at all. The adaptable young fellows, now 14, are continually thinking and doing. From our 'rv home' on the farm, I can hear these fellows hard at work. The little tractor and tiller are going. The riding mower is rolling along. The chain saw is cutting fallen trees. The SxS is passing by the camper, its back loaded with old tree branches. The fishing rods are up over their shoulders as they trod over to the fishing hole, dogs by their sides.

One night after 9 pm as one of the twins and his sister sat in the camper awaiting Grandpa's return from the field, we were enjoying strawberries and melted Tolerone after our evening campfire tradition. Through the back window I could see the other twin, shoveling dirt into the SxS. It was already dark—that exactly was he doing?

"What's Reid doing?" I asked Wyatt. "A make-work project or what?"

"Yup, most likely," was his response with a slight shake of his head. "Always making up work to do."

And since that night, he's planted the garden and some feed corn as well. You can always tell when he's been up to something because there's fresh tilled dirt somewhere! And logs! That chainsaw he wanted for Christmas has certainly been put to good use and those young fellows are keeping the wood pile on the back side of the camper fully stocked or stacked as the case may be.

When we started seeding, I was pretty excited to get those first days' meals going to the field. Of course, by day 3, I was less enthusiastic, however it's been coming together and wonder of wonders, after 48 years married to this guy of mine, the little 'seeding/harvest time



menu/cookbook' I sometimes attempt to create has materialized. Okay, so I only have two weeks of menus actually typed up, but the grocery list and prep lists and recipes that go along with my weekly plans have also been put together in a binder. Procrastination may prevent me from completing the next few weeks but when (if) I get it done, it's going to be a valuable tool and one that I can use both spring and fall. With my luck, hubby may decide this is retirement year.

Along with my nifty meal book, I have also spent some time creating summary-type workbooks for federal election workers, as well as what I call a 'rural poll key,' also for election workers. This all stemmed from my time spent over the last couple of months with Elections Canada. Rural maps are a bit of a challenge for Elections Canada (in my mind), and so my commitment is (if I ever work this job again) to have better guidebooks and legal land description information for the poll workers who work for me at the federal polls. I am jokingly known by my in-office staff as 'the map lady' and I would love for my poll workers to have better tools next time around.

When I left the elections office almost exactly 60 days from the day I started, I went straight to the kitchen (surprise, surprise) and you know what an adjustment that was for the don't-like-to-cook person that I am. One of the things I really missed during March and April was having the kids come over from school at noon. Grandpa was pretty good at the pizza or chicken finger meals for the kids but I am pretty sure they missed my crepes. I commented at noon on my first day back with the kids that "Wow, I've been gone for" And before I could finish my sentence, one of the twins piped up, "Since January 27." Ahhh, yes, that was the day we went south. And so, according to my grandson, I had not been home to feed him, his siblings and cousins and their friends for nearly 3.5 months.

Now that that election time is all a thing of the past, I must concentrate on the things of the present: seeding to be exact. Yes, we started off with a good run (well, technically not but more about that later), only to be shut down by the rain, which in itself is good, but so is sun and warmth at this time of year. The men were rolling along, happily seeding wheat; I was in the groove to make meals (sort of) and I was back at my happy place at the farm, living the dream in our 'tiny home.' If it sounds glamorous, it's really not. But it's good, and that's what's important.

Hubby's frustrations began the day he started seeding oats. A problem with the old air drill left some fellows (not the young ones) scratching their heads. And then a start to the canola and still, the problem was not rectified because the air leak would not be found, until, finally, and after a stretch of time that lasted forever (three days can seem like a long time when you have machinery problems), the problem was discovered! That was a couple hours before the rain started so fingers crossed going forward that all will run better than before. My guy was getting pretty antsy and even I was googling air drill air leaks as if I even have a clue how an air drill works. I also might have reminded said hubby of "our" long-term plan to retire seven or eight years ago. Just saying.

Meanwhile, when we can (as in wind-less or rain-less) evenings, the campfire gets going behind the RV and we catch up on our day, check out the 'big dipper,' and enjoy the great outdoors. And the ticks. Well, we don't enjoy them, but we are dutiful and persistent wood tick pickers. Puppy (now one year old) is long-haired so you can imagine what that's like. It appears it is time to use a medicine-based solution for tick control. Our granddaughter is even picking them off the 4-H calves, so plentiful are those awful parasites.

The spring farming season sees everyone running in a different direction, doing their thing, whether hauling fertilizer or seeding or spraying or repairing while the young farmers in my world are working with 4-H animals, seeding their own 'crops,' be it corn, gardens or extended grassy areas. We're happy to have another driver in the family as we travel from field to field and move machinery. Life on the farm keeps us hopping and the muscles aching by nightfall, at least from what I hear when hubby rolls over to go to sleep at night. Not sure if it's that nasty shoulder of his or the bonk on the head from a hit as he comes up from under the air drill. Ahhh yes, sweet bliss to be able to lay our heads down at night and sleep right through untilwell, 5:30 at best. Ugh!

Here's to all our farmer friends and readers everywhere—enjoy the spring season and with any luck at all, by the time you read this, the winter coats will be retired! Have a safe seeding season y'all!!

USask research team's discovery breaks new ground in swine disease management

A University of Saskatchewan (USask) research team has discovered a bacteria-killing molecule that enhances a pig's immune system response and could transform how swine producers treat and prevent contagious diseases in their animals.

USask researchers recently published a paper in Scientific Reports that identified a promising alternative for controlling infectious diseases such as swine dysentery, Porcine β -defensin 5, or pBD-5, is a host defence peptide (HDP) that may help to reduce the industry's reliance on antibiotics.

Also known as antimicrobial peptides, HDPs are naturally occurring, innate immune molecules found in all complex living organisms. The antimicrobial properties of HDPs allow them to play a vital role in combating pathogens such as bacteria and viruses.

"As researchers, we have an important role and responsibility in advancing animal welfare. I'm very excited to work on this novel project knowing that the disease responses of pigs can be enhanced through exploring the properties of this new molecule," said Dr. Arthur Nery Finatto (DVM), a PhD student based at the Western College of Veterinary Medicine (WVCVM) and the research paper's lead author. His supervisor is Dr. Matheus Costa (DVM, PhD), a WVCVM associate professor and a board-certified veterinary practitioner in swine health management.

Caused by the bacterium *Brachyspira hyodysenteriae*, swine dysentery is a production-limiting disease that leads to significant economic losses for swine producers. There's no effective vaccine for the infectious disease, and the only treatment option is antibiotic drugs.

Finatto said pBD-5 holds promise as an alternative to traditional antibiotic treatments—an important factor in global efforts to address the growing threats of antimicrobial resistance and food security for the world's increasing population.

"We currently need antibiotics for animal welfare reasons—we cannot let the animals suffer from treatable diseases," said Finatto. "But the development of this novel molecule is important because it is naturally produced

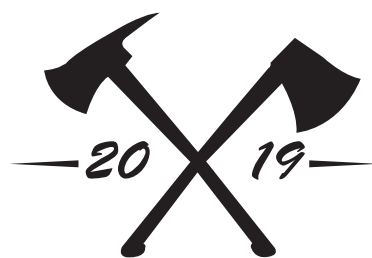
by the pig. We can selectively breed animals that produce more of this protein—essentially creating pigs with stronger innate immunity."

The team's discovery was inspired by their observations of how some pigs developed severe clinical signs of swine dysentery while others in the same herd remained relatively unaffected by the disease.

Through detailed genomic analysis, the researchers identified a region of the swine genome associated with this resilience, which encoded a peptide resembling β -defensins, a family of host defence molecules known for their antimicrobial properties.

Building on this discovery, Finatto and the team synthesized the peptide in the lab. USask researchers completed this challenging task in collaboration with chemistry scientists at the Université du Québec à Montréal. When the researchers exposed pBD-5 to various bacterial strains, the synthesized peptide demonstrated broad-spectrum antimicrobial activity—effectively inhibiting bacterial growth.

Continued on page C7



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AG NEWS

A detailed map of Saskatchewan, Canada, showing its major cities, towns, and roads. The map is oriented with North at the top. The province's border with Manitoba is to the east, and the border with the United States is to the south. Major cities like Regina, Saskatoon, and Moose Jaw are marked with larger circles. Smaller towns and villages are marked with smaller circles. Major roads are shown in red, and smaller roads in yellow. The map also shows the location of the province's capital, Regina, and the location of the province's largest city, Saskatoon. The map is a useful reference for anyone traveling in Saskatchewan.

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USask research team's discovery breaks new ground in swine disease management

A University of Saskatchewan (USask) research team has discovered a bacteria-killing molecule that enhances a pig's immune system response and could transform how swine producers treat and prevent contagious diseases in their animals.



Dr. Arthur Nery Finatto (DVM) and his research team have discovered porcine-defensin 5, a novel molecule that may help to reduce the industry's reliance on antibiotics

Continued from page C5

"What was really exciting was that when we exposed pig immune cells to pBD-5, we saw changes in gene expression," added Finatto. "The pig's own immune system began to express different immune-related genes, which suggests that pBD-5 not only has antimicrobial properties but also acts as an immunomodulator."

As well, the researchers observed that pBD-5 caused downregulation (a reduction of response) of certain genes in macrophages—immune cells that play a central role in the inflammatory response. By modulating the immune response, pBD-5 could help reduce the damage caused by swine dysentery and other production-limiting diseases.

In addition, pBD-5 appeared to enhance the activity of mitochondria in immune cells, particularly in cells responsible for antibody production. This finding suggests that adding pBD-5 to vaccine formulations could improve their ability to produce antibodies and to provide strong, long-term immunity to pigs.

Finatto hopes the research will help strengthen Canada's swine industry.

"At the end of the day, our goal is to make pigs healthier and provide the population with high-quality pork, and I'm proud to contribute to this important responsibility."

The Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC), le Centre de Recherche en Infectiologie Porcine et Avicole, and the Government of Saskatchewan funded this research.



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Relatively young fleet may allow farmers to delay equipment purchases amid tariffs

LEIGH ANDERSON, SENIOR ECONOMIST
Global trade disruptions have caused significant challenges for Canadian agriculture. Businesses prefer stability, but constant tariff changes create confusion, making it difficult to plan. Additionally, there's widespread uncertainty about the full impact of tariffs. The CUSMA exemption from the 10% blanket tariffs, and the 90-day delay in U.S. reciprocal tariffs, have given some relief to the agriculture industry.

However, farm equipment manufacturers still face a lot of uncertainty. Outside the automotive sector, it's less known that steel and aluminum tariffs are already in effect. Also, following CUSMA rules can be complicated for parts and components used in manufacturing.

Canada has a strong, primarily niche agriculture equipment manufacturing sector, but most equipment is sourced from the U.S. The U.S.-China trade war has significantly increased the cost of components from China, creating uncertainty in the farm equipment industry. This raises concerns about the availability and cost of equipment needed this year and beyond.

Steel and Aluminum tariffs

The primary reason for implementing the U.S. steel and aluminum tariffs was to boost domestic U.S. steel production, aiming to increase capacity utilization to over 80% (Figure 1). These tariffs have significant consequences for the farm equipment industry. When tariffs raise costs on raw materials like steel and aluminum, the price of new equipment also rises. This impacts demand for farm equipment and has broader implications for farmers and manufacturers.

See Figure 1 on page 9

The good news is that the impact on equipment prices might not be immediate for most of the equipment required this crop year, as manufacturers have raw materials already sourced and typically buy



steel under fixed-price contracts. However, they will eventually need to negotiate new steel price contracts. Currently, equipment manufacturers are adopting a wait-and-see approach, causing some production slowdowns in hopes of a trade deal. They are reducing production to avoid excess equipment inventory and managing production costs. The steel and aluminum tariffs are likely to impact the various equipment categories differently, depending on where various steel and components are sourced from.

Navigating CUSMA compliance amidst global component complexity

Manufacturers must provide a certification of origin to claim preferential tariff treatment. This involves detailed documentation proving the equipment meets CUSMA's rules of origin. For the majority of parts, it's not possible to be CUSMA compliant.

Newly manufactured farm equipment

often includes components such as semi-conductors or other electrical components imported from other countries including China. The U.S.-China trade war has significantly increased the cost of these components. Many parts, like hydraulic systems, belts, and bearings, are sourced internationally.

Tariffs, whether related to steel, non-CUSMA compliance, or the U.S.-China trade war, will raise the costs for manufacturers even for equipment being finalized for delivery and used this year. The Canadian farm equipment industry was already facing declining demand due to high equipment prices and reduced farm profitability. The current environment of tariffs and trade disruptions will further impede the farm equipment market and pressure pre-orders for 2026.

Decline in new orders and a shift towards used equipment

Farmers were already focused on per acre equipment costs before trade disruptions added to their concerns. U.S. farm equipment manufacturing sales declined by -18.4% in the first two months of this year, while Canadian sales fell by -5.7%. Uncertainty is deterring Canadian farmers from buying new equipment, leading to reduced pre-orders. Instead, farmers are maintaining existing equipment and investing in used machinery. New equipment purchases are likely to be delayed until tariff issues are resolved, driving demand and prices for used farm machinery.

Age of Canadian farm equipment fleet

Rising farm equipment prices due to trade disruptions will alter farmers' replacement decisions. Reduced demand for farm equipment will impact the age of the Canadian fleet. However, the fleet can likely withstand reduced sales in the short term as the estimated age of the fleet is now at a multi-year low for most equipment types (Figure 2). In the longer term, investment upgrades to the Canadian equipment fleet will be necessary.

See Figure 2 on page 9

Trends to monitor

1. Outlook for tariffs and potential trade deals

Monitoring the duration of tariffs, especially after the 90-day pause, is crucial. A trade agreement by July 9, 2025, is not guaranteed, particularly for steel and aluminum. The 2018 U.S. tariffs on steel and aluminum lasted 11 months before being scrapped.

Continued on page C9

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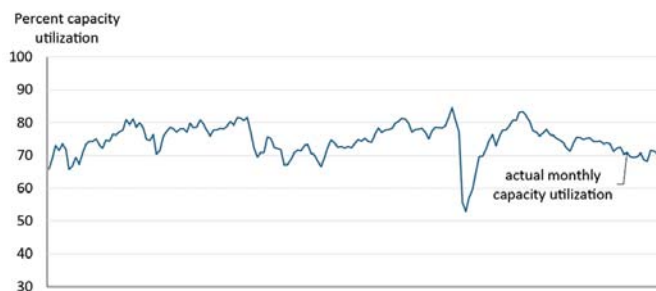


Figure 1: U.S. iron and steel capacity utilization remains below target



Figure 2: Proxy age of new farm equipment replacement cycle

Relatively young fleet may allow farmers to delay equipment purchases amid tariffs

Continued from page C8

2. Farm revenue

Crop prices and revenue so far this year have been difficult to predict. Profitability is getting tighter due to ongoing trade disruptions, impacting both commodity prices and costs. Even without tariffs, profitability projections for the year are already looking tight. Price volatility will continue as long as trade disruptions last. This year, prices are influenced more by geopolitical policies than by supply and demand, and these policies can change

quickly. The good news is with this volatility there will be opportunities for farmers to secure higher prices.

3. Strategic replacement decisions – a made in Canada focus

Annual equipment upgrades in some operations could face long-term issues if disrupted. Canadian dealers and manufacturers might benefit by promoting Canadian-made equipment, which could be less affected by tariffs if more domestic steel and components are utilized. Farmers need to strategically assess their unique equipment

needs to minimize disruptions to their replacement cycle. Dealers can help identify equipment with the least manufacturing cost increases for replacement this year.

Bottom line

Equipment currently being manufactured and used this crop year may have higher costs due to tariffs on components impacting overall manufacturing expenses. However, the 2026 equipment models face the most uncertainty right now. The entire industry is eagerly waiting for a resolution to the uncertainty and trade disruptions.

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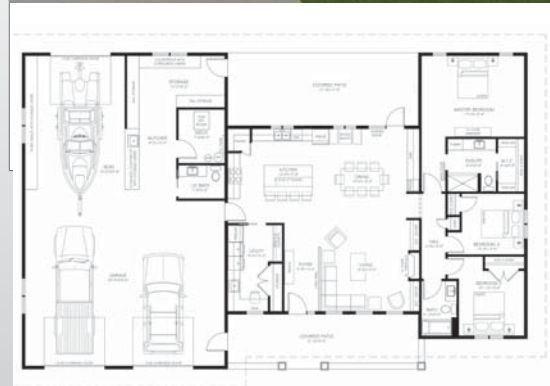


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Farming with purpose: Embracing the CEO mindset



Evan Shout, CPA and CFO of Hebert Grain Ventures

The CEO mindset isn't just about decision-making; it's about balancing priorities in personal and business life. This is essential for making farms more self-sufficient, says Evan Shout, CPA and CFO of Hebert Grain Ventures (HGV), a 40,000-acre grain and oilseed operation in Moosomin, Sask.

With expertise rooted in both innovation and sustainability, Shout brings valuable insights to the agriculture industry. He also serves as a consultant, business coach and speaker through Maverick Ag, the consulting and financial management division of Hebert Group. This group is the "family group" and parent company that holds the investments and non-operation-based assets.

Growing up in rural Saskatchewan, Shout was immersed in a farming community where agriculture was both a lifestyle and a central economic force. He developed a deep understanding of farm life and a clear vision for areas of growth. "We're a very proud industry. We're built on families, we're built on legacy, we're built on the lifestyle of agriculture," Shout says. "But the part that's changing, or that we've realized, is that the lifestyle didn't create the business—the business creates the lifestyle. Many farms have the lifestyle, but it's making it much more difficult to be a producer these days with the amount of costs and the number of zeros behind every decision."

To Shout, the CEO mindset is about running the farm like a business. He emphasizes the importance of having procedures, people and processes—ultimately transforming the farm into a self-managing enterprise.

Building a collaborative culture

Delegation and trust are central to Shout's leadership philosophy. "I got hired more or less just to take a few tasks off Kristjan's plate," Shout says, refer-

ring to Kristjan Hebert, president of the Hebert Group and managing partner of HGV. Many farmers, he notes, struggle with guilt if they aren't directly involved in every aspect of their operations, often putting in exhausting hours.

Trust in the team is critical to overcoming that guilt, Shout explains. "In today's society, we always reward performance, but we never reward trust. In agriculture, to get over the guilt factor and not be out there 24 hours a day, you need to have trust."

Shout emphasizes empowering others by building processes that enable independence. "The biggest thing for us is that we've got teams and management in charge of each team, and they've got processes and procedures in place that allow them to solve 98% of what comes across their plate."

"We trust that if they can't handle it, we'll get that phone call," Shout says.

The role of emotional detachment in decision-making

Shout stresses the need to remove emotion from major business decisions. "When you're in the boardrooms, it's a business discussion," he says. On family farms, however, emotions often creep into decision-making.

His advice is to maintain clear, logical communication that prioritizes the farm's long-term success. Shout recommends using systems like the Identify, Discuss and Solve (IDS) model, a core tool of the Entrepreneurial Operating System (EOS). It's designed to help businesses align their vision, strategy and operations by enabling teams to identify the root cause of issues, engage in focused discussions, and implement effective solutions to drive progress. This helps to avoid emotional biases common in family-run farms, such as being emotionally attached to farmland or machinery that's been in the family for years.

Engaging the next generation

Shout emphasizes that clear roles and responsibilities are essential for smooth farm transitions. "We all know that succession and transition on farms are massive issues, and part of it is just that nobody has a role or responsibility. Everybody is just in charge of everything," Shout says. To ease transitions, he encourages assigning clear roles so each family member has defined responsibilities, reducing conflicts over tasks.

As agriculture evolves, younger farmers are adapting to these shifts in new ways. "Technology has made that a lot easier be-

cause the next generation is more technologically savvy than the generation before them probably was," Shout says.

"It's giving them different roles and different responsibilities. So, when they do come back to the farm, they're not all stepping on each other's toes because the parents know that their children are better in agronomy or tech or better at marketing, and the children know that their parents have the experience, have grown 30 crops, and know how to put things in the ground."

Continued on Page C15

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Collaborating with Bunge to advance agriculture



FARMSMART podcast host, noted, "The fastest way to get people to adopt new changes is to get their neighbors to adopt the new changes. As folks are out there participating in this program, seeing the benefits from it, seeing the revenue from it."

As the partnership continues to grow, Bunge and Nutrien are targeting more acres this year and have expanded the program to include three more facilities in the Eastern Corn Belt and additional crops, such as corn and wheat.

"The exciting thing about working at Nutrien Ag Solutions is that we get to work for our growers everyday with innovative ways to increase return on their agronomic investments. Our partnership with Bunge provides us an opportunity to reward them for the conservation practices they currently run on their op-

erations as well as incentivize them for adopting new practices. It is rewarding when we can build a crop plan that directly led to a solution with value added revenue streams to their operations. At the location level, we have been able to build stronger business relationships with our customers by providing these solutions that tie back into the agronomic needs of our grower customers," says Nick Sommers, Nutrien Precision Ag Specialist, Central Indiana Division.

This initiative is another example of Nutrien's support for their farmer customers who are at the center of everything they do. They continue to leverage their partnerships and influence in the industry to help develop farm management solutions that aim to increase productivity, profitability and environmental stewardship.

Established in 2023, the partnership between Bunge and Nutrien has made progress in promoting farm management solutions among U.S. farmers. This strategic alliance aims to expand sustainable agriculture practices across shared supply chains in North America.

As part of this alliance, Nutrien provides farmers with crop consulting services, custom applications of fertility and chemistry, analytical testing of soil, water, and tissue, as well as traceability and data collection through the proprietary digital platform, Agribility. Bunge, a world leader in oilseed processing and a major producer of specialty plant-based

management, and crop rotation diversification.

Justin McAllister, Regenerative Agriculture Lead with Bunge, reflected on the progress made since the initiative's inception on Nutrien's FARMSMART Podcast. "We've released this program at two of our locations and had a great mix of growers engaged," he said.

Dr. Sally Flis, Director, Nutrien Sustainable Ag Programs, emphasized the importance of measuring the impact of conservation practices. "If we can't show what a grower has done and what the practice changes that they're making is, we can't measure that impact," she



oils and fats, then contracts with those farmers to manage harvest and post-harvest commercialization. The initial focus of the program was on soybeans grown near Bunge's crushing facilities in Council Bluffs, Iowa, and Decatur, Indiana. Farm management solutions include conservation practices such as cover cropping, reduced tillage, nutrient

stated. The good news for farmers is that there are various pathways Nutrien Ag Solutions offers to help growers with data collection, ensuring they have data available to help make informed decisions.

The program's success continues, with a growing number of farmers showing interest in participating. Dusty Weis,

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Seeding progressing well, despite rain

Continued from page C1

In the Gerald area, Kevin Hruska was contemplating taking a snowmobile to his land when the World-Spectator last checked in with him. Since that big snowstorm—which arguably saw the largest amounts in the area—the rain also contributed to moisture levels.

"We got two feet of snow, and then we had an inch-and-a-half of rain," Hruska said. "And now we're getting rain again. So we've seeded six days so far."

He estimated being a couple days away from hitting the half-way point last week with roughly 22,000 acres seeded so far this year.

"I would say we're typical of everybody, a third done, maybe a little better, third to half done," he said, adding he prefers seeding canola by May 25 as a target. "You definitely like to be done the first few days of June, because then the heat's coming."

Hruska noted a strip from Langenburg through to Russel is a belt of very wet land that just does not seem to soak away easily.

As for the finish line, he's estimating 10 non-stop days ought to cap seeding.

West of Hruska, Blake Duchek has been waking up to frost on his land near Atwater.

"It still got down to -2°C here last night," he said last week. "I came out about 4:30 this morning, and yeah, my truck showed -2°C, and the windows were thick with frost."

Even with those temperatures dipping below freezing and putting the pause on crop development, Duchek's wheat is poking out of the ground already.

"But this last week here, though, nothing really grew," he said. "It was cool, and only 5 or 6°C some of those days there and cloudy all the time. So the wheat was all up, but it's just sitting



Submitted by Stacey Johnson as part of the World-Spectators Spring Seeding Photo Contest.

there not growing. I imagine with this moisture and heat, it will really take off."

Duchek estimates being about 65 per cent finished seeding, which was thanks in part to an early start.

"We started to seed, and it was really wet," he said. "We started before everybody else to get going, and the first couple days were a little bit more of a struggle. Then we got those hot, windy days—well, you were wishing for moisture then already."

That request was answered in

the form of around two inches of rain, which came at a nice slow pace. However, the finish line is in sight as canola seeding begins.

"We're into the canola for just over two days, we've got about another week of canola, eight days, and then we just need two, three days seeding some green feed for the cattle, and then we should be done," Duchek said. "So, we will have the canola done by the end of the month here, or just before the end of the month, and a couple days doing the cattle feed stuff and be done

first part of June, the first couple days."

Had the rains not occurred, Duchek might be wrapping up already.

"But the ground is so cold," he pointed out. "When the ground is that cold, a guy shouldn't be seeding canola anyway until the 20th of May because the canola doesn't get out of the ground and by that time, your seed treatment is used up. Then the flea beetles decimate the canola as fast as it can come up out of the ground, because the seed treatment's

wore out, and then you end up spraying the canola two or three times after."

According to last week's weekly provincial Crop Report, topsoil moisture is quite a bit higher in the southeast corner of the province—rated at a 27 per cent surplus, 70 per cent adequate, and three per cent short. Hayland and pasture moisture content is about the same with most producers in the area saying they are satisfied with moisture conditions, and obviously eager to get back in the field to continue seeding.

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Canadians reject strict plant-based diets for more balanced food choices

Rather than committing to one extreme, many Canadians are choosing a flexible diet that blends both plant-based and traditional protein sources

Recent data from the Agri-Food Analytics Lab at Dalhousie University, based on the Canadian Food Sentiment Index, offers a nuanced look at the evolution of Canadian dietary habits. While some may view the decline in omnivorous eating as a sign of a plant-based shift in Canada, the data challenges this, showing a more fragmented and pragmatic shift in consumer behaviour, influenced by multiple factors.

Between fall 2024 and spring 2025, the share of Canadians identifying as omnivores—those with no dietary restrictions—dropped from 67.6 per cent to 60.8 per cent. At first glance, this appears to signal a major dietary shift. However, the decline is not being absorbed by vegetarians or vegans. In fact, the proportion of self-identified vegetarians fell from 7.7 per cent to 5.9 per cent. Vegans increased only marginally, from 2.6 per cent to 3.0 per cent.

While the drop in omnivores may seem significant, the real shift lies in the rise of more flexible eating habits, particularly among those identifying as flexitarians—those who prioritise plant-based foods but still consume meat and fish—and the “Other” category, which now represents 11.4 per cent of consumers (up from 9.1 per cent). These categories reflect a growing number of Canadians customizing their diets in ways that defy traditional labels, driven by personal preferences, cost, availability, and health considerations.

This points to a key insight: the future of protein in Canada is not about ideological purity or wholesale dietary conversions. It's about diversification and flexibility. Consumers are shifting based on factors such as cost and cultural context, experimenting with their diets rather than committing to one fixed approach.

The disconnect between consumer preferences and market trends is clearly demonstrated by Beyond



Dr. Sylvain Charlebois

Meat, a company that entered the market with the goal of replacing meat altogether. Five years ago, its stock was trading near US\$200. Today, it trades below US\$3, following multiple rounds of restructuring. The company's focus on ideological purity misaligned with consumer realities.

The messaging that meatless meat would be a complete replacement for traditional meat products was not what most consumers wanted. Beyond Meat symbolized the early push toward plant-based eating, but the reality is that many Canadians are not ready to replace meat altogether. Rather, they want alternatives that fit into their broader, more flexible eating habits.

Similarly, government-backed initiatives, such as Aspire Food Group's cricket-processing facility, have struggled to align with consumer preferences. Despite the environmental benefits of insect protein, these initiatives have failed to gain traction with Canadian consumers. Once promoted as the world's largest insect protein facility, Aspire Food Group's project is now in receivership, facing a \$42-million bankruptcy.

Insects may be traditional protein sources in parts of the world, but food choices are deeply cultural, and transitions take time. Imposing unfamiliar protein formats often backfires, especially when framed as moral imperatives rather than consumer-driven options.

This shift in Canadian eating habits is part of a

broader trend toward more conscious food choices. Rising food prices, environmental concerns, and a growing awareness of the impact of meat consumption on the planet are all contributing factors. However, despite these trends, the Canadian market has yet to fully embrace alternatives like insect protein, which remains too unfamiliar for most consumers. These are not changes that happen overnight, and as such, the market for alternative proteins must adjust to these realities.

So, where does alternative protein innovation go from here? Toward the middle. The winning formula lies in hybrid, blended products that reduce animal protein content without alienating mainstream eaters. The real gatekeepers remain price and taste. Sustainability may generate interest, but repeat purchases depend on value and flavour. Products that find this balance are more likely to succeed than those pushing for radical changes in dietary habits.

The alternative protein sector still holds potential in Canada, but only for those who align with consumer sentiment. The key to success lies in hybrid products that balance price, taste, and sustainability. Today's dietary decisions aren't about revolution; they're quiet negotiations, shaped by factors like taste, cost, and convenience—one plate at a time. Canadians are experimenting and adapting to their changing food environment, gradually finding the right balance.

Dr. Sylvain Charlebois is a Canadian professor and researcher in food distribution and policy. He is senior director of the Agri-Food Analytics Lab at Dalhousie University and co-host of The Food Professor Podcast. He is frequently cited in the media for his insights on food prices, agricultural trends, and the global food supply chain.

Farming with purpose: Embracing the CEO mindset

Continued from Page C12

According to Shout, this clarity in roles fosters the “big CEO mindset” where “everybody is in charge of their own thing.”

Redefining success in agriculture

Shout sees a shift in how success is defined in agriculture. In the past, success was often measured by hours worked. “If you put in 3,000 hours, you were successful,” Shout says. “That mindset has changed.”

Today, success is a more holistic concept that values personal time and quality of life. Farm operators can foster a sustainable lifestyle that supports both their work and family by prioritizing mental and physical health alongside agricultural responsibilities.

Embracing change for future success

“In agriculture, we’ve always had that line: ‘It’s always been done this way.’ It’s one of the most dangerous lines,” Shout says. “I agree that we need to respect what’s been done in the past, but we’re also in a different generation now.”

Looking to the future, Shout sees tremendous potential for innovation and diversification. “I can remember when I was a kid—and probably even a decade ago—things changed, but not a lot. In the last

decade, I’ve seen farms become things that I never thought were possible, whether it’s technology, data or just the mindsets of farms today. We’re starting to see some-

thing special in agriculture, and we’re beginning to adapt to the speed of change.”

By fostering a culture of collaboration, adaptability and community engagement,

agriculture can thrive in today’s rapidly evolving landscape. “Success is independent in each farm,” Shout says. “No farm has the same goals.”

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Nutrien supports the University of Saskatchewan's campaign goals with \$15 million transformational donation

Nutrien's purpose is to Feed the Future. The University of Saskatchewan (USask) aspires to Be What the World Needs. As long-standing partners, Nutrien has joined forces and committed to creating a lasting positive impact for generations to come by advancing innovative and sustainable agriculture around the globe and preparing students to become the next generation of leaders.

In alignment with these goals, Nutrien announced a \$15 million commitment—the largest single gift—to the University of Saskatchewan's Be What the World Needs Campaign driving a new era of innovation, collaboration and success.

"We at Nutrien are proud to continue our decades-long partnership with the University of Saskatchewan through a transformative \$15 million donation," said Ken Seitz, President and CEO. "This investment supports research, education, and innovation that aims to tackle some of the world's most pressing challenges. Together, we strive to strengthen global food security and contribute to building resilient agricultural communities both locally and globally."



A large portion of the gift will establish the Nutrien Centre for Sustainable and Digital Agriculture, housed in the College of Agriculture and Bioresources. The Nutrien Centre will focus on research, training and innovative technologies that accelerate farming into the digital age and create more sustainable and resilient food systems around the world.

"USask is a natural partner for us as we think about taking on cutting edge research to help our customers push yields, push profitability, but doing so sustainably because no one cares more about sustainability than farmers," said Jesse Hamonic, Region Manager, Canada.

Nutrien's donation will also establish the Nutrien Future Fund for the college, provide scholarships for Agbio students, and fund Indigenous and community engagement initiatives, like the kihci-okāwimāw askiy (Great Mother Earth) Knowledge Centre. The gift will also support scholarships for engineering students and the creation of a state-of-the-art lecture theatre in the College of Engineering.

"Nutrien is the world's largest potash producer, with six low-cost mines right here in Saskatchewan," said Trevor Berg, SVP Potash Operations. "By partnering with the university and specifically the College of Engineering, it helps ensure that Nutrien has a pipeline of great can-

didates to fulfill our purpose of Feeding the Future."

As we strive to meet the needs of a growing population, we will require a new generation of skilled workers. This gift is set to provide students with enriched learning experiences, equipping them with advanced solutions to empower farmers in enhancing productivity and profitability and environmental

sustainability. The University of Saskatchewan has played a key role in developing Nutrien's workforce and remains key to the company's future growth.

"We are deeply grateful for this incredible donation which builds on our long-standing relationship with Nutrien over the past five decades," said USask President, Peter Stoitcheff. "Nutrien is our valued partner and the largest corporate donor in USask's history, having generously invested more than \$50 million dollars over the years to support the university's research mission and to help prepare our students to become the next generation of leaders."

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Agristability enrolment deadline extended to July 31, 2025

Saskatchewan Agriculture Minister Daryl Harrison, along with federal, provincial, and territorial governments, announced the AgriStability enrolment deadline for the existing 2025 program year is extended (without penalty) from April 30, 2025, to July 31, 2025. The extension of the deadline is for the status quo program. The proposed changes announced by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada are still being considered and have not been implemented.

"Managing risk is crucial for the success of agriculture in our province," Harrison said. "The uncertainty of current market disruptions and tariffs reinforces the importance of our business risk management programs. Saskatchewan supports extending the enrolment deadline for the existing AgriStability Program. It provides producers with additional time to evaluate their risk management options. I advocated for this

change, along with my provincial and territorial counterparts; and I remain committed to furthering this dialogue regarding any potential proposed changes."

The nature of the existing AgriStability Program makes it well suited to support producers. As a margin-based program, AgriStability responds when a producer's whole farm profitability is impacted, including by rising costs and declining market prices. Tariffs have the potential to impact the prices producers receive for sold commodities. Coverage is personalized for each farm operation by using historical information, based on income tax and supplementary information. Farmers experiencing losses are encouraged to apply for interim payments under AgriStability for more rapid support. In the last six program years, Saskatchewan producers received over \$565 million in benefit payments.

Enrolling is easy. Producers can provide all the necessary information over the phone. The Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation (SCIC) is available to assist producers. To request a new participant package, call the SCIC AgriStability Call Centre at 1-866-270-8450 or email agristability@scic.ca.

AgriStability protects Canadian producers against large declines in farming income for reasons such as production loss, increased costs and market conditions. It is one of the Business Risk Management programs (BRM) under the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership (Sustainable CAP). Farmers are encouraged to make use of BRM programs, like AgriStability, to protect their farming operation and help make Saskatchewan agriculture strong.

Manitoba government stepping up to complete prairie innovation centre

Prairie Innovation Centre will create jobs, meet growing labour demands: Kinew

The Manitoba government is providing \$60 million in capital funding and a further \$60 million in bridge financing to support Assiniboine College's new Prairie Innovation Centre for Sustainable Agriculture, which will expand workforce training opportunities and support the future of agriculture in Manitoba, Premier Wab Kinew announced today.

"Manitoba's agriculture sector is critical to our province's economy and to staying resilient against Trump's tariffs," said Kinew. "The Prairie Innovation Centre will house new and expanded training, so Manitobans can learn the skills they need to get good, in-demand Ag jobs here in Westman and across the province."

With Manitoba's agriculture industry expected to grow substantially, the Prairie Innovation Centre will add hundreds of additional training seats in Westman to meet this demand, noted the premier.

The Manitoba government is providing:

- \$60 million in capital funding, with \$40 million going to the Prairie Innovation Centre and \$20 million for a new 216 seat child-care project within the centre.

- \$60 million in approved bridge financing to allow construction to begin immediately.

Assiniboine College has been working to establish the Prairie Innovation Centre as a state-of-the-art learning facility on its North Hill Campus. The centre will foster collaboration with industry, promote cutting-edge research and expand agricultural training capac-

ity to help meet local labour market needs, noted the premier.

"We are pleased the province is providing the financing for the Prairie Innovation Centre, said Mark Frison, president, Assiniboine College. "It is an important project that will help to improve value-added processing and export development capacity in the agriculture sector. Today's commitment allows us to go tender immediately. We look forward to working with the prov-

ince to finalize participation of the government of Canada in the project."

The Manitoba government has identified that this project is an important investment to the government of Canada and is advocating for federal support, said the premier.

In addition to training Manitobans for the agriculture jobs of the future, project construction is expected to create almost 1,000 jobs, added Kinew.

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Is interest-only financing right for your operation?

BY RICHARD KAMCHEN

Interest-only financing isn't for everyone, but it certainly shouldn't be dismissed out of hand. The interest-only term loan option, where borrowers pay only the interest without reducing the principal, has proven to be an effective financial strategy. This approach has been advantageous due to the consistent rise in farmland values and historically low interest rates over the past. It doesn't apply to traditional lines of credit or operating loans.

"Interest-only financing has been a popular and effective tool for farmland buyers over the past couple of decades, but it's not without risks," says Tim Hammond, president and CEO of Hammond Realty.

Those considering interest-only financing need to be aware of the risks and benefits:

Risks

Hammond says interest-only loans have worked well in a rising land market, but they come with notable risks:

- **Rising interest rates:** "With rates higher than they've been in years, the cost of carrying these loans can increase significantly, putting strain on cash flow," Hammond says.

- **Flat or declining land**



values: If values stabilize or drop, farmers relying on appreciation could be left with little equity and a higher risk profile.

farm management consultant with Filipchuck Management.

Benefits

Despite the risks, interest-only loans do have a place for some farmers and in certain situations.

Filipchuck says interest-only loans can be helpful during farm transitions when young farmers start out on their own or during a large expansion of an existing and well-established operation. "Have a strong business plan in place with ongoing financial and strategic planning and monitoring," she says.

Hammond highlights flexibility as the main advantage of these loans,

helping farm operators manage cash flow while

pursuing growth and funding daily operations or upgrades.

Interest-only financing lowers the upfront financial barriers to making purchases, he notes. It can also help a farm operator act fast when the right piece of land comes up, Hammond explains.

Such loans provide short-term strategic benefits as well. "Many farmers use these loans as a bridge, intending to refinance or pay down principal later," Hammond says.

Tax benefits exist, and interest payments are tax-deductible, he says.

Interest-only financing can be a valuable tool under the right circumstances, but success depends on careful planning, financial monitoring, and a clear understanding of its risks and benefits.

Thank you to all of our hardworking farmers, ranchers and agri-businesses!

Daryl Harrison
MLA for Cannington

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