



Sunnette Kamffer captured this photo of seeding in the Welwyn, Saskatchewan area recently.

Farmers wrap up seeding for the year

BY SIERRA D'SOUZA BUTTS

With moisture conditions being adequate to above adequate in the Moosomin area, and slightly more wet in the southern part of the region during seeding, local farmers say this year's crop has great potential.

Foy says adequate moisture to start growing season

Kyran Foy, a grain farmer near Red Jacket, said the soil conditions within his area have been more moist than preferred while seeding.

"We farm all the way from north of Red Jacket to almost Fairlight, and it's definitely wetter down south of the lake," said Foy.

"The rain last weekend definitely made it wetter down there than it is north. We're a little delayed in the south, we don't need anymore rain for a while down there. The north has pretty good weather conditions. A little late start to seeding, but things are going good now."

Foy is growing wheat and canola. He said the rain slightly impacted his seeding.

"We didn't seed for four or five days. None of our fields were really dry to begin with so it definitely made

it a lot wetter.

"We got anywhere from an inch of a quarter to over two inches, where it's over two inches it's definitely wet, but it's dried up a lot this past week."

He was asked what the worse case scenario would be for this year's crop.

"I'm not quite old enough, I do remember the 80s, I was a kid in the 80s and there were grasshoppers, it was dry, but I didn't know how bad the drought was back then," he said.

"Since I've been farming which is over 20 years, too wet has been our problem far more than too dry. If we get too much rain in the next couple of weeks it will be more devastating to our crop.

"We have lots of moisture to get a good start to the growing season, we just need some rain in late June and July when we're done seeding, done spraying, then it can rain. Right now we have lots of moisture that's why I'm saying we don't need rain at this time."

"That would be the best case scenario, no rain until the end of June and a bit more in July, then a nice hot dry harvest. Also no hail and no frost."

Foy said he plans to finish seeding by the end of May. "We hope to be done in roughly a week, by next week-

end," he said. "I know some neighbours who wrapped up last week."

As long as there are no more rainfalls during seeding, Foy said this year's crop should come out great.

"Spring time when we start seeding it's always the most optimistic time of the year, you think everything's going to be great, but it's a long ways to harvest so a lot can happen," he said.

"Between now and September it all has to do with the weather. If Mother Nature co-operates right now, it looks pretty good. In a normal year, normal rainfall and all the other stuff would be good too, we just don't really get too many normal years anymore."

Hebert says crop off to a great start

Krisjtan Hebert from Herbert Grain Ventures said his team finished seeding last week, and that this year's crop is off to a great start.

"Seeding is going really good, conditions were a little wet in the middle, but they're pretty good," he said.

Continued on page C16

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2023 Cattle and hog outlook update:

Strong red meat demand likely not enough to rescue eastern hog producers

BY MARTHA ROBERTS

Cattle prices for 2023 are forecasted to be higher year-over-year (YoY) and above the five-year average, thanks to the smaller North American herd creating beef production challenges. Our forecasts for the outlook period have all risen since our February outlook (Table 1*).

Cow-calf profit projections are also positive, with expected revenues climbing and average costs falling YoY. Margins in 2023 are expected to be above the five-year

average, and that positive outlook extends well beyond the next three months. This will be the year when feedlot margins will likely rise to be closer to break-even, with some backgrounders into the black, after years of profitability pressures. Lowered feed costs in the West will also help boost margins there.

On the heels of the big news from Olymel in Quebec, the outlook for hog prices has weakened since February. Ontario market hogs have dropped from their 2022 highs and are now more in line with their five-year average. Eastern and Western feeder hog prices have dropped YoY and remain below their five-year average. In the West, Manitoba market-ready hogs have also dropped YoY but remain elevated above the average. We expect isowean prices to fall YoY and average out at less than their five-year average. All in all, volatility's ahead for the sector.

Isowean profitability is expected to trend higher in 2023, close to break-even or positive. Margins of western farrow-to-finish operations will continue to be positive, whereas eastern margins will drop YoY for the second year due to softening prices and feed costs that are relatively higher than in the West.

Trends to monitor in 2023

The shrinking North American cattle herd, elevated feed costs and red meat demand are the three major factors to monitor that we identified in February. However, Olymel's news of its Vallee Jonction plant closing tops the list for Canada's eastern hog markets. Hog producers in the East won't have the same slaughter capacity to fill, with reductions in the Quebec hog herds expected to total 1 million. A new hog marketing agreement in QC will lower producer prices and introduce future profit-sharing options between processors and producers.

Feed costs continue to trend lower

With Russia threatening to refuse to re-sign the Black Sea deal that would facilitate grain exports during the ongoing war in Ukraine, the break in feed costs expected for 2023 may be challenged.

Continued on page B12 ^{ESP}

LIVESTOCK PRICES	JULY FORECAST	JULY AVERAGE	5-YEAR AVERAGE
Alberta fed steer \$/cwt	195	176	165
Alberta 550 lb steer \$/cwt	210	200	210
Alberta 850 lb steer \$/cwt	260	270	260
Ontario fed steer \$/cwt	210	185	150
Ontario 550 lb steer \$/cwt	265	275	265
Ontario 850 lb steer \$/cwt	295	270	265
Ontario market hog \$/kg	2.15	2.42	2.25
Ontario feeder hog \$/kg	1.95	2.35	2.45
Manitoba market hog \$/kg	2.15	2.45	2.60
Manitoba feeder hog \$/kg	2.15	2.35	2.60
Isowean \$/head	50	60	55

Sources: Statistics Canada, AAFC, USDA, Calfax, CME Futures, and FCC calculations
 * Due to a change in methodology, the table used in our February outlook can't be directly compared to this table.

As farmers gear up for the busy spring season, be diligent and stay safe.

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Stop kochia from setting seed

By SHAWN SENKO

Kochia that survived pre-seed burnoff needs to be taken out before it drops seed later in the season. The big weeds can produce at least 15,000 seeds per plant – often many more – so letting them set seed and then spreading that seed with the combine can move a herbicide-resistant population across a field very quickly.

Kochia with resistance to both Group 2 and Group 9 herbicides is found all across the Prairies in big numbers. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada weed scientists have also confirmed kochia populations with resistance to Group 4 and Group 14 herbicides.

The best practice is to control small kochia plants in the pre-seed window with a tank mix of effective herbicides. If kochia is still alive after crop emergence, growers have fewer options in canola fields.

The only in-crop herbicide option that works on Group-2 and Group-9 resistant kochia is an early application of Liberty on Liberty Link canola cultivars. Group-10 glufosinate in Liberty will control all resistant kochia populations as long as plants are not too large to kill at the time of spraying.

Roundup Ready, TruFlex and Clearfield systems based on Group-9 and Group-2 weed control are no longer effective on most kochia across the Prairies.

In all cases, scout after spraying. If kochia plants survived pre-seed burnoff and the first in-crop spray, use these other measures to stop them.

Physically remove kochia plants. Options include mowing areas where kochia is the dominant species and crop yield expectations are low. Hand weeding could be worthwhile in areas where individual resistant (or likely



The big Kochia weeds, pictured above, can produce at least 15,000 seeds per plant.

resistant) plants are present.

Use combine seed destroyers. Combine weed seed destroyers, the mechanical hammer mills that pulverize all seeds in the chaff, can effectively destroy at least 90 per cent of kochia seeds – as long as harvest is not delayed to the point where major seed drop has begun.

Apply Edge in the fall. This won't stop seed set this year, but could be part of the solution in fields with a lot of resistant kochia. Group-3

ethalfuralin (Edge) applied in the fall on fields planned for canola the following year can help manage kochia resistant to glyphosate and other herbicides.

Canola growers with herbicide-resistant kochia may want to look at other long-term management strategies. They could seed kochia-infested areas to salt-tolerant perennial forage rather than continue to throw inputs at acres with no hope of profitability. They could diversify the crop rotation with early- and late-seeded crops, including winter cereals and forages that provide early season competition. If poor drainage is at the root of salinity problems, localized tile drainage may remediate low productivity areas where kochia tends to thrive. Farms that prefer Roundup Ready or TruFlex canola may want to consider cultivars with stacked systems – TruFlex and Liberty Link – to give them flexibility to manage herbicide-resistant kochia.

For more on this topic, please read "How to contain herbicide-resistant kochia" and "Integrated weed management: Best practices" in the Weeds section at canolacouncil.org/fundamentals.

Shawn Senko is an agronomy specialist with the Canola Council of Canada. Email senkos@canolacouncil.org.

Photos by Canola Council of Canada



Canola growers with herbicide-resistant kochia may want to look at other long-term management strategies.




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Governments announce renewed funding to build resiliency and public trust in agriculture

On May 18, the Governments of Canada and Saskatchewan announced more than \$4.1 million to support Farm & Food Care Saskatchewan, Agriculture in the Classroom Saskatchewan and 4-H Saskatchewan over the next five years under the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership (Sustainable CAP). This investment supports the organizations that tell the story of agriculture in Saskatchewan and build public trust while developing the next generation of agriculture leaders.

"By helping consumers understand how farmers produce food, organizations like the 4-H, Farm and Food Care and Agriculture in the Classroom strengthen the public's trust in our food system," said Federal Agriculture and Agri-Food Minister Marie-Claude Bibeau. "They also connect future leaders to the agriculture and agri-food sector, which sparks young people's interest in this essential area."

"These groups are vital advocates of the agriculture industry," Saskatchewan Agriculture Minister David Marit said. "By supporting their work, these groups provide farmers, ranchers and agri-businesses with a stronger collective voice so their stories can reach consumers, classrooms and communities across the province."

Farm & Food Care Saskatchewan connects consumers to food and farming through events, training and educational resources and plays a critical role in building public trust, promoting agriculture and supporting farmers.

"With less than three per cent of the Canadian population having a direct tie to the farm or ranch, the need to engage with consumers is stronger than ever," Farm & Food Care Saskatchewan Executive Director Clinton Monchuk said. "Partnerships like these ensure that more



Saskatchewan Minister of Agriculture David Marit speaking at Balgownie Elementary School

Canadians understand how farmers and ranchers are growing the food we all eat."

Agriculture in the Classroom Saskatchewan is essential to promoting agricultural education, building connections between young people and the agricultural industry, and inspiring the next generation of agricultural leaders through hands-on activities, engaging programs, and inquiry-based educational resources.

"The future workforce is in classrooms," Agriculture in the Classroom Saskatchewan Executive Director Sara Shymko said. "We need the brightest

minds to help find solutions for agriculture's most complex issues. AITC experiences ignite curiosity about food systems and inspire students to become involved in building a stronger agriculture future."

4-H Saskatchewan is a youth development organization that aims to provide young people with opportunities to develop leadership, citizenship and life skills through agricultural and other related projects. 4-H Saskatchewan is one of Canada's largest youth organizations and provides members and leaders with learning experiences tailored to indi-

vidual needs and interests through the motto "Learn To Do By Doing."

4-H Saskatchewan is very grateful for the continued support we receive from the provincial and federal governments," 4-H Saskatchewan Executive Director Aubrey Eaton said. "Our organization is proud of our agricultural roots and we will continue to take an active role in building public trust by developing leaders that will help grow the agriculture sector."

Resiliency and Public Trust are priority areas for the Governments of Canada and Saskatchewan under Sustainable CAP. Recognizing the agriculture sector is a key economic driver, the governments are committed to investing in organizations that help consumers understand the industry, build trust and showcase its commitment to food safety, animal health, and the environment. Supporting Farm & Food Care Saskatchewan, Agriculture in the Classroom Saskatchewan and 4-H Saskatchewan helps industry and consumers stay informed, connected and empowered, which is critical for the success and sustainability of the industry.

Sustainable CAP will provide \$175,000 to Farm & Food Care Saskatchewan, \$325,000 to 4-H Saskatchewan and \$325,000 to Agriculture in the Classroom Saskatchewan in each of the next five years to meet these objectives.

Sustainable CAP is a five-year, \$3.5-billion investment by Canada's federal, provincial and territorial governments that supports Canada's agri-food and agri-products sectors. This includes \$1 billion in federal programs and activities and a \$2.5 billion commitment that is cost-shared 60 per cent federally and 40 per cent provincially/territorially for programs that are designed and delivered by provinces and territories.

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Understanding Canadian farmland rental rates: FCC analysis

Farm Credit Canada (FCC) has released an analysis of the rent-to-price ratio for cultivated farmland in Canada. The rent-to-price ratio is obtained by crossing cash rental rates and the Farmland Values Report data. A ratio trending lower suggests that cash rental rates are appreciating at a slower pace than land values. Conversely, an increase in the ratio indicates that rental rates are increasing faster than land values. This information can help producers make decisions around buying versus renting land.

The national rent-to-price ratio in 2022 was 2.55 per cent, compared to 2.5 per cent in 2021. In Saskatchewan and Alberta, there were slight year-over-year increases. The RP ratio increased to 3.1 per cent and 2.6 per cent respectively, while all other provinces saw decreases.

"There are several economic conditions that impact the cost of renting land in Canada. Land values, the availability of land and its quality can all drive the price to rent," explains J.P. Gervais, FCC's chief economist.

There is provincial fluctuation in cash rental rates and land values which creates a significant range in the minimum and maximum ratios for each province. The high-end rent-to-price ratio is typically for land with the lowest value per acre in the province.

	2022	2021
*British Columbia	n/a	n/a
Alberta	2.60%	2.20%
Saskatchewan	3.10%	3.00%
Manitoba	2.40%	2.50%
Ontario	1.40%	1.45%
Quebec	1.50%	1.60%
New Brunswick	2.40%	2.50%
Nova Scotia	1.25%	1.60%
Prince Edward Island	4.35%	5.20%
Canada	2.55%	2.50%

*British Columbia did not have enough lease data to produce a confident ratio

Average provincial rent-to-price ratio 2022 and 2021

Around 40 per cent of Canadian farmland is rented. Typically, renting is less expensive than purchasing and the lower the ratio, the better the renting option becomes. For young farmers and new entrants, renting is seen as a viable option to free up capital that would otherwise be tied up in purchasing and instead can be put towards financing options for other needs like machinery or inputs.

Another important consideration when deciding whether to buy or rent is understanding the relationship between rental rates and cropland revenues. Rental rates as a proportion of crop gross revenues have declined since 2020, but crop input costs have increased significantly, putting pressures on profitability.

"Deciding whether to buy or rent is a strategic decision unique to each producer," said Gervais. "There is a lot to consider, including interest rates, yields, commodity prices and input costs. Open communication and collaboration between landowners and renters creates a quality, long-term relationship. Matched with a risk management plan and business strategy, producers have the building blocks for success."

Understanding the rent-to-price ratio can be a useful tool in helping producers plan, consider the economic conditions in their area and ultimately make calculated decisions for their operations.

Ag manufacturers driving record implement exports with increased global demand for Sask products

Amid recent records for international exports, the province's agricultural manufacturers are generating sustained and significant growth as they create a rising global demand for Saskatchewan-made equipment and technology solutions.

While 2022 provincial exports to the U.S. reached an all-time high of \$29.3 billion and total agri-food exports were a record \$18.5 billion, shipments by the agricultural implement sector over the past five years have increased in value by 135 per cent from 2018 (\$359 million) to 2023 (\$843 million). From 2021 to 2022 alone, their value increased by 58 per cent. Saskatchewan's total exports for 2022 were valued at \$52.6 billion.

"Our province is known internationally as a source of safe, reliable and sustainably produced food, but we're also being recognized for the quality equipment we use to grow it," Saskatchewan Agriculture Minister David Marit said. "The made-in-Saskatchewan equipment our businesses design and create has a market that extends around the world, and these products are clearly in demand. We're very proud of our innovative manufacturers and the success they're creating in communities across the province."

Saskatchewan's agricultural manufacturing sector—which specializes in short-line manufacturing of equipment for precision dryland farming—is well-dispersed between urban and rural centres, with many smaller operations based in communities with populations under 10,000. Many of these manufacturers are participants

in major industry events like Canada's Farm Show in Regina in June and Ag In Motion in Langham in July, where the latest agriculture technology is showcased to thousands of producers and international buyers.

"Canada's agricultural manufacturing sector is ingenious and resilient, and our Saskatchewan manufacturers have proven themselves as export powerhouses with significant contributions to pro-

ducing the highest quality and most sought-out agricultural equipment in the world," Agricultural Manufacturers of Canada (AMC) President Donna Boyd said. "AMC members remain focused on moving ahead to promote productivity, ensuring global competitiveness, increasing export opportunities and continuing to invest in the growth of Saskatchewan."

Destinations for Saskatchewan agriculture

implements are highly varied, with the U.S. and Australia the largest markets followed by countries such as Lithuania, France,

Uruguay, Kazakhstan, Mongolia and Bulgaria. Products include equipment designed for a wide range of purposes such as

zero-till seeding, spraying and fertilizing, livestock and forage, rock removal, and grain handling, storage and transportation.



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Spring is here and so are the seeding adventures

Oh the smell of freshly tilled dirt! This is what I love most about seeding—the smell of the dirt once the air drill has made its pass through the field. For all of us 'old' former 'summerfallowers,' there was no smell quite like the fresh turned-over dirt, right? What I remember most from my teenage years working summerfallow fields was that smell as I rolled along on the old 1850 cab-less Cockshutt tractor with my 14' wide cultivator behind me. Well maybe it was 20' wide, I'm not really sure anymore. Of course, the smell of dirt was one thing, but the layer of it over your entire body was less than wonderful.

A mere four weeks ago, give or take, we were ATV-ing across the fields wondering when the snow along the fence lines would disappear and a handful of days later, May 7 to be exact, we were up and rolling! Our little excursion that day took us along the creek that we often quad through and which runs along our land. As we curved around and through the creek, I asked my better half if the bears would be awake yet from their wintery sleep. I swear he had no sooner said, "Of course they're awake now" when right in front of us were two one-year-old cubs. We didn't get much of a look at them before they bounded off through the trees and deeper down into the creek, more scared of us than we of them.

As the men keep things rolling in the seeding department, my contribution is almost imperceptible. Meals. In. The. Field. By the woman who hates to cook. So far the scalloped potatoes didn't pass muster because the slow cooker did exactly as its name implies—cooked slowly and not entirely completely. As for the air-fried pork chops, they also need a bit of work. There seems no amount of recipe-searching or diligent attempts that help me out when it comes to kitchen duty. I am doomed. Fortunately for me, a rainfall or two allowed me to take a break from my four-straight-day run of meals in the field.

And that break took me on a mini-trip to the city to see the youngest of our grands (9 and 6) one weekend, I had a little chat with my grandson that first night to remind him that in the morning, since he gets up at 5:30/6 a.m. even on weekends, he could just be really quiet for an hour or two until the rest of the household started waking up.... Or he could just roll over and go back to sleep until like 8 o'clock perhaps.

The next morning (at 6:49 a.m. no less) I was literally pulled from my warm, fuzzy dream when I heard him call, "Grandma!" My eyes popped open to his little face leaning over me. "What?!" I said, fully expecting something of a serious nature to be revealed to my fog-thickened brain. He smiled the sweetest of smiles and in the sweetest of voices said, "Good morning, Grandma!" and



off he went. Now how can you beat that awakening? And so I am reminded (yet again) that the most special things in my life are not things at all.

It was May 10 when some serious-looking clouds were building in the west and north as I was making lunch. Nevertheless, I headed north with my lunch bucket only to be stopped our miles out of town by ice-covered highways created from marbles of hail. The fields all around me were white with hail—how often does it hail in May, I wondered. By the time I reached the farm a mile or two further north, I could see that there had been a bit of a downpour which meant only one thing—my guy would no longer be seeding. Where the heck was he? Why hasn't he phoned me? When I found him, he was checking his half-ton closely for hail dents. Luckily it was dent-free but mud-free it was not and now, nor was my previously relatively clean truck—back it had to go to Donna's front yard truck wash...again!

Just as the men are seeding this year's crop, the twins (now 12) are also seeding. It's priceless to watch. They worked up a little patch (4'x6') of ground right next to the dog house last year and seeded wheat. This year they got the little tiller roaring away and have worked two small patches. Their seeding plan includes wheat and oats and to make their soil better, they ATV'd over to the field next door to where there is an old barn bottom to haul some piles of that wonderfully soft dirt over to their 'field' and work it in. To ensure their crop is kept safe from dogs and deer and people, they have fenced it all in and now they'll be crop checking all year long just like their Grandpa does.

As the farm grands and their mother sat around the campfire out at the farm the other night, they were chat-

ting about their upcoming days—their 4-H steers, baseball, homework and all the things going on in their world. Every now and then, from across the yard, the twins would get a call (as in a yell as opposed to a phone call) from their dad: "Boys!" and both boys would respond with the same identical response at exactly the same time: "What do you want?" "Need a ride to the semi," (or whatever instruction he had for them) Dad would yell back and off the boys would go with the side-by-side to 'uber' dad over somewhere before setting back in around the fire until the next call came. I see cell phones in the twins' future very soon.

Our 'farm' granddaughter (14), who loves to side-by-side from one field to another was telling her mom one day as they were coming from the north towards their farm that she could see the old barn on their place. When mom told her that technically that farm with the old barn is Grandma and Grandpa's farm, Sierra was a little surprised. "What?!" she said, "You mean I have been trespassing all this time?" And that started the campfire chuckles in all their simplicity and hilarity. Right up until homework time that is and that apparently always comes much too quickly on a beautiful warm evening on the farm—for both the kids and the grandma.

On one of my crazy run-here, run-there days between town and the farm, I was in a mad dash to make lunch for my granddaughter who comes over from school at noon, pack lunches for the guys in the field, get the cinnamon buns out of the oven, get the laundry dried and folded so I could get it out to the camper for hubby and I inadvertently managed (from my handy-dandy fanny pack in which I carry my phone) to Facetime none other than Kevin and Kara. With my head practically in the dryer, I am pretty sure they were as surprised to see my face (or perhaps the inside of my dryer) as I was to see them. As it was, the clothes got folded, the kids got fed, the cinnamon buns turned out quite lovely and the men got fed, albeit a bit late.

When a friend asked me to proofread something he wrote the other day, following the passing of his wife four months ago after her two-year battle with cancer, it was another reminder to me to take the time to really enjoy each day and each special person in my life and I hope that despite this very busy time of year for farmers and ag industry workers, that there is nothing more important than the people who help make our days go 'round. Make every day the best it can be for the people you hold close to you because without them, your life would be oh so empty.

Take care y'all. Until next time...

2023 Grains, oilseeds and pulses outlook update:

Profitability strong despite drop in crop prices

BY MARTHA ROBERTS

Just past halfway in the 22-23 marketing year (MY) for Canada's cash crops, global and future prices have weakened, softening most of the projected prices since our January outlook. Durum bids have also fallen.

Table 1: Prices (\$/tonne) have softened since January, as expected

CASH CROP	2021-22 MY (ACTUAL)	2022-23 MY (YEAR TO DATE)	2022-23 MY (FORECAST)	2023-24 MY (FORECAST)	5-YEAR AVERAGE
Canola (CNS)	302	325	325	310	290
Soybeans (CNS)	600	700	738	700	610
Canola (SK)	800	800	800	765	680
Peas (yellow - SK)	605	445	430	395	340
Lentils (red - SK)	910	725	720	680	595
Spring wheat - (SK)	415	425	405	400	290
Feed barley (AB)	335	370	380	375	220
Durum (SK)	630	470	475	460	340

Sources: Statistics Canada, AAFC, USDA, PDO, CanFax, CME, MOEX and ICE Futures, and FCC calculations
Marketing Year for corn and soybeans: September 1 – August 31
Marketing Year for wheat, canola, barley, peas and lentils: August 1 – July 31

However, due to a change in our methodology, our previously published outlook estimates and forecasts aren't directly comparable to these April figures (Table 1). By comparing the two, it appears that prices have risen since January, which is generally not the case. Our former price projections were for specific locations (e.g., Lethbridge barley), while the new methodology projects an average provincial price. This new reporting will also differ from AAFC projections.

With prices softening, FCC Economics projects Eastern crops (winter wheat, corn and soybeans) to remain profitable throughout the outlook period. However, margins per acre will fall considerably YoY and will likely be less than the five-year average. That average was boosted by two excellent years of profitability in 2021 and 2022, when commodity prices were at historic highs and input costs had not yet peaked.

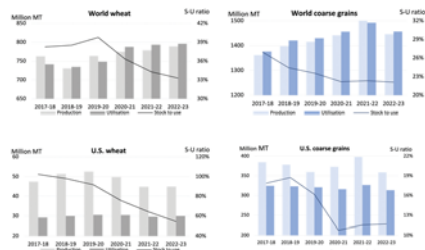
In the West, expected fall revenues will boost strong profitability for canola, durum wheat and red lentils, with yellow peas, barley, and spring wheat margins still positive but closer to break-even. Year-over-year margins will fall in 2023, but only from the last three years of historic highs, and they'll remain well above the five-year average.

In January, we identified low global supplies and high input costs as two influential factors to monitor in 2023.

Stocks-to-use ratios remain strained

Global wheat production has grown since 2018-19 but has been outpaced by growth in demand which has pressured its stocks-to-use ratio up to April (Figure 1). And while global coarse grain production grew more year-over-year (YoY) than utilization in 2021-22, the war in Ukraine and drought conditions elsewhere limited production in 2022-23, dropping it more than utilization fell YoY. The upshot? World stocks-to-use ratios for the two commodities remain the lowest in the last six years and have not yet reversed the downward trend as we suggested they might – but their falls appear to have slowed. Any further strengthening of the ratio will indicate pressured commodity prices.

Figure 1: Strong global demand for crops drops ratios; U.S. ratios burdened by production losses in 21-22 rd 22-23



Source: WASDE

A sharp YoY decline in the 2021-22 MY U.S. wheat production helped speed the decline in its stock-to-use ratio, given that utilization didn't fall as much. This crop year's ratio to date hasn't slowed. The ratio for U.S. coarse grains fell to its lowest point in the 2020-21 MY. It's trended higher since, based on excellent YoY production growth in 2021-22 and falling utilization in 2022-23.

The biggest unknown is whether Russia will extend the UN-brokered Black Sea deal to facilitate the movement of grains and other commodities from Ukraine as we head into spring. Recent discussions with Moscow have clouded optimism that the deal, set to expire May 18, will be re-signed. What is known in world markets is the impact of Argentina's historic drought. Mid-April estimates pegged the country's soy production at 23 million tonnes,

53% lower than initial projections, and corn production at 32 million tonnes, or 40% of the original forecasts. Global soy markets remain very tight.

Continued on page C19



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Elize Steyn captured these photos of seeding in the RM of Silverwood at Eastview Farms with the northern lights and with a rainbow as part of the World-Spectator's Spring Seeding Photo Contest.

Sustainability Incentive Program reopens with industry partners

Farm Credit Canada's (FCC) Sustainability Incentive Program is once again open to applicants in partnership with the Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Beef (CRSB) and McCain Foods.

FCC encourages eligible cattle producers and potato growers to explore the benefits of receiving incentive payments by increasing the adoption of sustainable practices through the CRSB certification initiative and the McCain Foods potato growers' framework. Anyone who applied to the program in 2022 and new eligible applicants are now able to apply for this year's incentive payments.

"FCC is happy to be reopening applications for our sustainability programs. We are in a unique position to work with individual sectors in the agriculture and food industry on their sustainability goals," explains Curtis Grainger, FCC's director of sustainability programs. "The progress we're seeing looks different depending on the sector and on an individual's operation. That's why the established, verified initiatives at CRSB and McCain Foods are important partnerships that allow us to support producers with their individual needs."

The goal of the Sustainability Incentive Program is to recognize and encourage customers as they adopt sustainable agricultural practices. Incentive payments are calculated on a portion of a customer's lending with FCC. Producers are required to continue to meet the requirements and certification of their respective program to be eligible for the annual incentive payment. Complete details are available at fcc.ca.

The CRSB works with third-party certification bodies (Verified Beef Production Plus, Where Food Comes From and Ontario Corn Fed Beef Quality Assurance Program) to provide audited certification to its Sustainable Beef Production Standard at the cow-calf, background and feedlot level.

"FCC has shown up in a big way for CRSB certified producers, recognizing the time and investment it takes to maintain certification and continuously improve production practices," says Ryan Beierbach, CRSB Chair and Saskatchewan producer. "The partnership between CRSB and FCC has been pivotal to the growth of the Certified Sustainable Beef Framework over the past year. We've seen increased interest and retention in CRSB certifications and as a producer myself, I am proud of FCC acknowledging beef producers' commitment to sustainable production."

Beierbach notes that increased consumer demand for certified sustainable beef in the marketplace puts CRSB certified producers in an excellent position moving forward.

McCain Foods is an excellent partner in the FCC Sustainability Incentive Program by providing matching incentive payments to eligible producers. Their framework guides producers on their sustainability journeys. McCain Foods has a goal to implement sustainable agricultural practices across 100 per cent of its potato acreage worldwide by 2030.

"As a global leader in the food industry, McCain Foods is committed to promote sustainable agriculture practices," says Daniel Metheringham, McCain Food's vice-president of agriculture. "We are proud to work in partnership with FCC to incentivize and support farmers in their transition to regenerative agriculture. This collaboration exemplifies our shared commitment to creating programs that foster environmental stewardship, improve farm resilience, and build a more sustainable future for our communities and our planet."

Canadian producers have always focused on what is best for their land and livestock, while meeting the challenges of the market and the needs of consumers. The future will require continued innovation and the adoption of new practices and technologies as an ongoing part of business planning and risk management.

FCC continues to look for opportunities to incentivize producers who participate in industry-led sustainability

initiatives that have established systems for verification and measurement of best management practices.

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Pethick seeds corn for this year's corn maze

BY SIERRA D'SOUZA BUTTS

For the third year in a row, the McAuley Corn Maze in southwest Manitoba will be open to the community starting July.

Farmer Alistair Pethick said they finished seeding this year's corn maze about two weeks ago.

"We finished planting at the end of last week," said Pethick.

"We wanted to do it again this year just for fun. Everyone seemed to like it and it seemed like a neat thing to have."

"It's something for the community, for people to go out to do," added Marie Morris of Pethick farm.

"It goes over really well and people enjoy it so we like to keep it going."

The height of the corn in the maze is about eight to 12 feet tall, and takes people about 45 minutes to go through the entire maze.

Since it was first created in the summer of 2021, Pethick said it has been a great addition to the community.

"It started during Covid, this is our third year for the corn maze," he said.

"It really started out as an outdoor activity that people can do where you weren't in contact with anyone. That's how it started, and we kept doing it ever since."

"Our local Pioneer Seed salesman, they donate the corn for the maze every



This is the third year the McAuley Corn Maze will be open to the community. The height of the maze is about eight to 12 feet tall, and takes people about 45 minutes to go through the entire maze. **Above** is an aerial photo of the maze from August, 2022.

year. It doesn't really cost us a lot, we just have a donation box for people who want to donate and that's re-invested back into the corn potty and all of the different stuff we need at the maze.

"This is just a fun activity we can do that is also something different."

People come from different communities in Saskatchewan and Manitoba to visit the maze, Pethick

said. "I think everyone really likes it," he said.

"We've had people from three hours from us who come. It's well received, it definitely has gone over really well."

Pethick said they seeded the corn differently this year in hopes of getting better quality of the corn.

"The last couple of years it has been really wet so the soil wasn't perfect, but the first year we seeded it

with the air seeder and it didn't grow that well. The corn wasn't that good."

"The last two years we were using a planter and I think we'll have way better corn."

When will the maze be ready?

After the corn has fully grown and is tall enough to be a maze, Pethick said it should be open to the public by the end of July.

"The seed is just starting to come out of the ground, but obviously it being a crop it has to be tall enough to be a maze," he said.

"We start mowing it in the middle of June last year, and by the end of July and beginning of August it's tall enough to be a maze."

"Then it stays a maze until we harvest it late October."

Last year, the organizers

of the maze added a guest book, a picnic table and a cartoon dinosaur activity for kids to participate in while at the maze.

"The first year we had corny jokes at the end of each dead end. Last year we had dinosaurs, people had to find all 13 dinosaurs, and this year we're going to do something different. We're not sure yet what we're doing."

Morris said her favourite part about the maze is seeing families have a great time.

"It's fun to drive by and see all of the people parked along the road and using the maze," she said.

"I'm excited for the Halloween haunted maze we do in the fall too. Hopefully we can put it on again this year, it's all volunteer based. As long as we have volunteers we should be able to."

The maze is free of charge, however Morris said they welcome volunteers and donations to help maintain the maze.

"We always welcome people," she said.

"I put a note out last year to try and find more people, and we ended up with enough people to do it so that was good."

"I'm hoping that we can put it on again this year. If anyone is interested in participating they can reach out to us on the Facebook page."

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Elize Steyn captured these photos of seeding in the RM of Silverwood at Eastview Farms as part of the World-Spectator's Spring Seeding Photo Contest.

SARM encouraged by wildlife damage compensation enhancements

The Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities (SARM), along with member RMs, welcomes the recent announcements made around wildlife management including improved access to fencing packages and supplemental freight adjustments for impacted agriculture producers. These are encouraging initial steps in what is hopefully the beginning of a long-term strategy to balance the need for healthy, sustainable wildlife populations, and producers' ability to protect valuable feedstocks and infrastructure.

"Our members have expressed concerns about vari-

ous wildlife populations and the multiple types of damage being dealt with across the province," says Ray Orb, SARM President. "SARM has made this one of our top priorities when speaking to the province and is hopeful for continued enhancements."

These enhancements will help ease the stress caused by wildlife destroying needed winter feedstocks. Many Saskatchewan producers have experienced an increase of wildlife damage which has caused them to have seek out and purchase additional feed from further distances to replace the damaged feed in order to maintain their

livestock herds. This has also caused higher-than-normal replacement feed costs in parts of the province.

The increases in those areas of the province for big game hunting opportunities which was announced earlier, along with these current enhancements of the Wildlife Damage Prevention Program, and the supplemental freight adjustments, are steps in the right direction.

"This is the time to make proactive changes on this issue and SARM is optimistic changes like these will help get agriculture producers to a place where they can better manage their wildlife issues next year," states Orb.

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Mariah Roy took this photo of spring seeding at Fairlight, Sask on May 3 as part of the World-Spectator's Spring Seeding Photo Contest.


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2023 Cattle and hog outlook update: Strong red meat demand likely not enough to rescue eastern hog producers

Continued from page C2
However, prices to date and those forecast for the year have given Canadian livestock producers a reprieve.

Table 2: Year-over-year price declines to help ease margin pressures

FEED COSTS	2022 FORECAST \$/TONNE	2022 \$/TONNE	3-YEAR AVERAGE
Feed barley (A&B)	255	305	310
Corn (GR)	205	220	255

Sources: Statistics Canada, AAFC, USDA, CanFax, CME Futures, and FCC calculations

The reprieve will directly impact cattle producer profitability (Figure 1). The availability of the better feed grain crop in 2022 was a factor in the improved margins of that year. As feed costs continue to weaken throughout the first half of 2023, profitability is expected to improve.

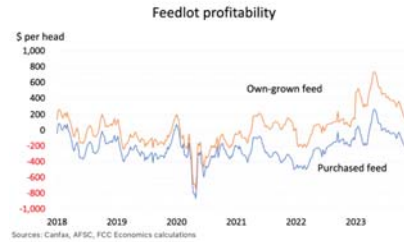
The effect on profitability is even more pronounced in a high feed cost environment when producers grow their own feed. Own-grown feed costs have made a significant, consistent difference to margins since 2021.

The current strength of beef demand continues to drive cattle market fundamentals

The contraction in the North American cattle herd is likely slowing as conditions improve in fields and markets. Nonetheless, the USDA raised their forecast for 2023 domestic beef production in April (to 26.8 billion pounds) based on higher anticipated slaughter numbers in Q2 and Q3. The March 1 Cattle on Feed report showed a correspondingly lowered feedlot inventory, down more than 4% YoY. In Canada, federally inspected packers have slaughtered 2.2% fewer heads YoY as of April 22. The CanFax cattle on feed report for April 1 showed inventories 9% lower YoY, with consistent YoY declines each month since August 2022. Fed cattle prices, one of the outcomes of consistently high beef demand, reflect this movement

through the system.

Figure 1: Feed prices directly impact cattle profitability



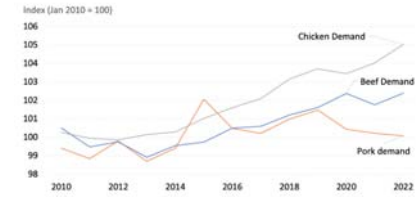
Sources: CanFax, AAFC, FCC Economics calculations

The U.S. is heading into its busiest season for beef demand with the Memorial Day weekend festivities, which are helping to drive current slaughter numbers there. However, bearish factors such as slowing economic growth and higher interest rates are likely to weigh on upcoming demand in both the U.S. and Canada as discretionary spending takes a back seat to debt repayment. Chinese beef demand is expected to be strong as the country continues to break away from pandemic-related economic restrictions and will support global beef prices. According to McKinsey, there's a movement in China away from pork consumption to beef, which is seen as better value, better quality and healthier – although pork remains the country's meat of choice.

The Chinese red meat market highlights the divergence we see in the demand for beef and pork (Figure 2). FCC Economics' meat demand index shows the different tra-

jectories of Canadian demand for the two red meats.

Figure 2: The different influences of a pandemic on beef vs. pork demand



Source: Statistics Canada

Canadians still prefer beef despite high prices, with beef demand climbing steadily since 2013. With an added boost in 2015, pork matched the growing demand until 2019, when it started falling. Throughout the pandemic (2020–2022), disposable income and pent-up demand benefitted the cattle supply chain while reducing demand for pork. However, pork prices are down relative to beef and chicken, which should move consumption towards pork, everything else being equal.

Bottom line

The demand for red meat is expected to be strong for the first half of the outlook period and well into the second half when Canadian bar-b-que season begins. Overseas demand is also robust, although Canada isn't a large meat exporter to China, as are South American, U.S. and Oceanic exporters. But even a good bar-b-que season won't be enough to offset the major changes to eastern hog production.



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Susie Atkinson took this photo on the evening of May 9 south of Spy Hill as part of the World-Spectator's Spring Seeding Photo Contest.



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FCC supports Canadian producers challenged by economic environment

Farm Credit Canada (FCC) is offering support to new and existing customers who are experiencing financial difficulties, including cash flow challenges, due to higher-than-average input costs and elevated interest rates.

The cost pressures in the current economic environment are difficult to pass on, resulting in tough financial circumstances for some operations. To help producers, agribusinesses and agri-food operations with their immediate cash flow needs, FCC is offering an unsecured credit line up to \$500,000 with loan processing fees waived.

"As a lender solely dedicated to the agriculture and food industry, we understand how this period of elevated costs has put pressure on some customers," said Sophie Perreault, FCC chief operating officer, in announcing the credit line.

"FCC is here to support new and existing customers over the long term, and that means finding ways to meet challenges as they arise."

"While the current experiences of individual operations within the different agriculture and food sectors are varied, we hope those who identify with these challenges will use this credit line as an opportunity to work through their current position and build back stronger than before," said Perreault.

Viable operations that have been significantly affected by the current economic environment are encouraged to reach out to FCC for support. FCC will work to come up with solutions for their operations to reduce financial pressures.

FCC offers flexibility to all customers through challenging business cycles and unpredictable circumstances on a case-by-case basis. That includes flexible payment options, including the ability to restructure lending when appropriate, as well as payment deferrals and credit lines.

New and existing customers are encouraged to contact their FCC relationship manager or the FCC Customer Service Centre at 1-888-332-3301 to discuss their individual situation and options.

vice Centre at 1-888-332-3301 to discuss their individual situation and options.



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Additional province-wide support for producers impacted by wildlife damage

On May 19, Saskatchewan Agriculture Minister David Marit announced further support for Saskatchewan producers through enhancement of the Wildlife Damage Prevention Program.

"We continue to respond to the needs of our producers," Marit said. "Prevention measures play an important role to limit further damage. We are implementing changes to our existing prevention program to mitigate impact of wildlife on stacked forage winterfeed supplies."

The Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation (SCIC) administers the Wildlife Damage Prevention Fund. Producers can receive funding for steps taken to prevent wildlife damage to feed supplies. Funding for fencing is available. Producers who have received compensation greater than \$2,000 per feed storage site may be eligible to receive a fence package to protect their future feed supplies. SCIC will inform eligible producers of prevention options and work with them to determine the appropriate package. Once a fence is constructed, a site is no longer eligible for wildlife damage compensation.

Saskatchewan producers are eligible for compensation on damaged crops and livestock caused by wildlife through the Wildlife Damage Compensation Program. Producers should reach out to their local SCIC office by calling 1-888-935-0000 as soon as damage is detected.

For more information about the Wildlife Damage Compensation Program visit <https://www.scic.ca/wildlife-damage>.



Some farmers have seen as many as 100 to 500 deer on their farmland during the spring.

Legislation to protect firearms owners now in effect

Important provisions in The Saskatchewan Firearms Act came into force on May 19. The Act protects the rights of lawful firearms owners across the province and enhances public safety.

"The Government of Saskatchewan is pleased to see this legislation come into effect today," Corrections, Policing and Public Safety Minister Christine Tell said. "This legislation reflects our commitment to keeping Saskatchewan people and communities safe, while also addressing violent gun crime and promoting responsible firearms ownership in our province."

The new provisions coming into force:

- establish licensing requirements for seizure agents involved in firearms expropriation under new

- federal laws;
- establish provincial firearms offences that will promote the safe and responsible use of firearms;

- allow the Minister to appoint a Firearms Compensation Committee to determine the fair market value of any firearms, ammunition and related accessories being expropriated by the federal government; and

- allow for designation and approval of firearms testing facilities.

Two additional provisions under the Act are expected to come into force in the coming months - the requirement for payment of fair compensation for any firearms being expropriated by the federal government, and forensic and ballistic testing requirements of those expropriated fire-

arms. These remaining sections will be brought into force after the necessary planning, implementation and regulatory changes are completed to ensure proper oversight.

"This legislation, along with our expanded duties and responsibilities, will allow for the implementation of services to law enforcement agencies to greatly increase public

safety, while we continue to support the proud heritage of responsible and law-abiding firearms ownership by Saskatchewan residents," Chief Firearms Officer and Saskatchewan Firearms Commissioner Robert Freberg said.

This legislation will be primarily administered by the Saskatchewan Firearms Office.

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Farmers wrapping up seeding for the year

Continued from front

"Compared to last year, obviously last year was less dry for seeding than we've probably had in 10 years, but two years ago it was the driest one we've ever had. It's a bit touch-and-go on how to compare them," said Hebert.

"I would say the big thing this year is getting going earlier. Last year no one really got to get going until the third week of May, and this year guys were able to get going in the first 10 days in May. It was great to get going earlier."

Hebert was asked if there were any challenges with seeding this year.

"We had a couple inches of rain right in the middle of the season, and it started off wet enough so managing moisture and turning circles around wet spots, that always adds a little bit of time," he said. With the weather conditions being suitable during seeding, Hebert said this year's crop has good potential.

"Right now everything has lots of moisture and is coming out of the ground good, so if we were to get a little bit of rain here in the next 10 days, and then if it warmed up, I would say there's lots of good potential," he said.

"I think best case scenario is always an above average crop with above average prices.

"Worst case scenario is we don't get any rain from now until harvest, which doesn't happen too often in our area, but right now it looks like it has lots of potential to be a good average year to slightly above average year, but it's really early so anything could happen."

Soil conditions great

Within the Moosomin area, soil conditions have been great for seeding, said Wendy Schatz Leeds, lead agronomist with Sharpe's Crop Services.

"The weather conditions have been really good. We had the little rain break, but these windy days are drying up the top soil so it's nice to have that moisture at a few meters going so we're thankful



Elize Steyn submitted this photo of seeding getting underway at East-view Farms in the RM of Silverwood.

for that," she said.

"We probably didn't need the rain that happened recently, but you never know when mother nature is going to give you moisture so we'll take it whenever we can get it.

"I wouldn't say it backlogged us, definitely south of us I think it's the weather there so they're a bit slower than Moosomin north.

"I would say we're 75 per cent to 80 per cent done. Moosomin north is finished, south might be closer to 60 per cent done, but again, you want to take rain whenever you get it, just not too much."

Schatz Leeds said farmers were able to start seeding earlier this year compared to last year because of the drier weather conditions.

cellent during seeding this year in the Esterhazy, Gerald, Lagenburg, and Bredenbury areas, says farmer Kevin Hruska.

"The seeding conditions have been good," he said.

"We had one small rain delay, it was a little wet at the start, but as the season went on we haven't got a ton of rain, the conditions have become really favorable. At the moment, we're seeding in excellent conditions."

Hruska said he plans to finish seeding by the end of May. Compared to last year's seeding, he said this year has been smoother.

"Last year was a little tougher, we had some the pours in the middle of seeding which made it a little more difficult," he said.

"You can see that when you're seeding the crop this year. When we're going right through half of our farm was a little on the wet side, and half of it was a little on the dry side just the way of our land.

"Specifically it's nicer seeding into dryer soil than you hope for rain afterwards."

He was asked what he thinks the outcome will be for this year's crop.

"That's really hard to predict that far ahead, but we're off to a good start. I think crops went in at a good timing and in good conditions," he said.

"That was the first hurdle to get over and I think we got that. Now the temperatures should get the crop off and up on the ground going. The potential's there for a decent crop."

Hruska said some of the challenges he's faced this year with seeding are the expenses.

"Costs are always a farmer's biggest challenge, there's no question about it. Then for grain prices you hope that grain prices support the costs, that's always the story."

"I just wish all of the farmers good luck and hope they finish up in good time."

"We're doing really good because we started seeding really late last year. We might have only been seeding a week in at this time last year," she said.

"I would have to look at the starting date, but I would say we're pretty normal for seeding timing.

"We have really good moisture conditions so far. There's already wheat up and ready to be tackled with herbicide. It looks really healthy and nice, our fingers are crossed that the weather isn't too hard on our canola and we should have a fantastic crop."

Great seeding conditions says Kevin Hruska

The weather conditions have been ex-

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Nathan Barnard took this photo as part of the World-Spectator's Spring Seeding Photo Contest.

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Table 2: Farm input prices to ease in 2023 as supply-demand balance regains stability

	PURPLE GASOLINE	DIESEL	UREA	AMMONIUM PHOSPHATE	ANHYDROUS AMMONIA	POTASH
2020-21	5.9%	1.4%	3.8%	10.6%	-0.6%	-21.2%
2021-22	43.0%	45.3%	90.9%	53.8%	79.4%	80.8%
2022-23	0.6%	5.0%	1.4%	2.5%	26.1%	51.1%

Sources: Alberta Farm Inputs, World Bank, FCC calculations (* rolling average)

Profitability strong despite drop in crop prices

Continued from page C6

Fertilizer prices set to offer relief after abnormal highs

U.S. fertilizer prices have declined rapidly in the last few months. European natural gas prices (the key feedstock in nitrogen fertilizer) are again aligned to historical trends after supply boosts last autumn and a well-timed warm winter. European fertilizer production capacity idled during the pricing crisis and has returned online, boosted by lower natural gas prices.

At a time when overall commodity prices have also declined, we examined the relative differences in the price changes of crops and fertilizers (a crop-to-fertilizer price ratio) to get a rough sense of fertilizer affordability per crop. A higher ratio indicates better fertilizer affordability. Large spikes in 2021 show the impact of that year's drought that propped up crop prices. The subsequent sharp decline in the ratio reflects the impacts of rapidly rising fertilizer prices.

FCC Economics is projecting continual declines in fertilizer and commodity prices throughout 2023 (Table 2). However, because commodity prices won't fall to the same extent as fertilizer prices, we see the crop-to-fertilizer price ratio improving throughout 2023. Nitrogen prices may fall even further in June/July if two million acres of corn, the USDA's March 31 seeded acreage report's swing acres, aren't planted this spring. Conversely, producers who bought this year's fertilizer in the fall of 2022 (at high prices) but didn't sell their crops when commodity prices were high may deepen the ratio further.

Bottom line

With commodity prices expected to ease in 2023, margins will fall. The good news is that they'll fall from the last two or three years' highs and remain positive throughout the outlook period. Two significant factors will help offset the fall in crop prices: continuing tight global supply/demand balances and dramatic slowdowns in the growth of farm inputs.



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