

SEPTEMBER 2025



Kristine Sauter took this photo of harvesting near Kelso, Sask.

Farmers hurry to finish harvest after rain

BY NICOLE TAYLOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

After a week and a half of rain, farmers in Southeast Saskatchewan and Southwest Manitoba are rushing to finish harvest, seeing good yields, but in some cases, a down-grade in quality due to a lengthy period of warm, rainy weather.

"The weather that we had was too long, too wet, and too warm. Most grain wants to sprout in those conditions. Certain varieties of wheat, for example, have better resistance to sprouting than others, but with that long of that kind of weather that we had, I would be surprised if there wasn't some sprouts in every variety of wheat that is still in the ground," says Wendy Leeds, and agronomist with Sharpe's Crop Services in Moosomin.

She noted that this has a large impact on the quality and value of grain.

"It ends up being really unfortunate for producers be-

cause that sprouting downgrades it. We could have cases where number one grade wheat, the kind used for quality bread and flour, becomes downgraded to a feed grade, and given to animals. Because of that, wheat prices are quite poor right now, so producers won't get nearly as much value as they could from the crop they have left standing."

Thankfully, a lot of farmers got a hefty amount of their wheat crop off before the rain started.

"It will be super frustrating for producers. Thankfully we had a really good run of crop prior to this, so maybe there will be some options for blending," says Leeds. "Really, it will just depend on how bad the sprouting is and it will be a field-by-field basis for producers. It's going to depend on what variety they grew and how much sprout there is. I know there has also been some canola sprouting, but again there are different levels of grading, so we'll just have to see how it looks as more crop comes off the fields."

"Nobody wants to lose value and quality on what was

such a beautiful crop, but that's just the kind of season Mother Nature gave us, along with the strange warm and rainy weather."

Before the rain and storms that hit the region, this year's crop was one of the nicest in years.

"It still is a very good crop in terms of yield," said Leeds. "Yields will still be very good even with all of the rain, it's just the quality that will take a hit. Canola isn't as bad, I know that the high moisture can reduce weight of canola, but I'm still optimistic yields will be good. The value of canola is going down a bit because crops are coming out of the ground and people are seeing that yields will be high. Hopefully it keeps relatively good value because canola has always been our cash-crop."

Other factors in Saskatchewan and the rest of the world are also affecting the prices of crops.

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Moe says province, federal government working together to defend canola industry

BY NICOLE TAYLOR

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER
Premier Scott Moe was in Moosomin on Thursday, and was asked what some of the next steps are in tackling the issue of canola prices in Saskatchewan.

"Parliamentary Secretary Kody Blois has said there would be three ministers on the ground in China that continue to engage, and that's a good next step," said Moe.

"I think we saw one of the next steps yesterday when the Prime Minister of Canada had a meeting with the President of China yet again in New York, and it looks like there will be a meeting between President Xi Jinping and our Prime Minister some time in the future. That's where it's going to get settled, and I've always said it isn't going to be Premier Moe or any other premier sitting down with the president of China, it needs to be a nation-to-nation agreement.

"I think there is a path and an avenue for us to find some resolution with China. However, the bigger, broader, and our largest trading partner continues to be the United States of America, and all of these conversations, although not directly connected, have connections, and we need to continue to work hard in Washington D.C. We're doing what we can to support the Minister Dominic LeBlanc, who has taken up residence in D.C. to carry on discussions with Secretary Howard Lutnick, so there is a lot going on.

"We very much have to stay focused on what matters to Canada, Canadians, and our Canadian economy. For us in Saskatchewan it's all about market access. Low-tariff, zero-tariff market access. Our largest trading partners are the U.S. and China. We've been fortunate in diversifying to a number of other markets that are now billion dollar markets for us such as Mexico, Japan, and South Korea is an increasing market, the European Union is an increasing market, India is an increas-



ing market. We're maybe in a little bit stronger position than other provinces, but we need that tariff-free market access, in particular to the U.S. and China, so those are priorities for us right now.

"And you are seeing something new from this premier and this government where we are working alongside supporting the federal government and getting us to that point.

"Over the last 10 years there has been a feeling by myself and many industries and people working in places like Moosomin, Saskatchewan that there has been a number of things that have been done to us, to the industries that are employing people and creating wealth in our communities, by our federal government and prime minister.

"Today that has changed to some degree where we have a number of things that are being done to our nation of Canada in the way of market access to the United States, market access to China and elsewhere by other foreign players, so this is a time for us to come together as Canadians at various levels of Canadian governance to defend Canadian interests, all of them, including those in Saskatchewan, including the canola industry."

Left: Premier Scott Moe speaking in Moosomin on Thursday.

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Farmers hurry to finish harvest after rain

Continued from front

"Canola, wheat and most other crops are being affected by tariffs, as well as the conversation that yields are good as the harvest comes off the fields. There are also factors overseas, I believe places like Australia had a very good crop this year. Like always, the world affects our little dot in Moosomin, Saskatchewan. The better the yield around the world, crop prices will be a little less because of supply and demand and everything else," she said.

"Obviously the tariffs aren't helping at all, but I think that most farmers know that there will be some movement in that over the winter. The issue will be that our input prices are really high right now. The fertilizer pricing for producers has come back, and usually there's a summer reset, but that was much higher than it normally was. The world is really short on nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium right now, and so that is going to really affect what farmers have to pay for input. They're kind of getting a double-whammy for outlook right now."

Leeds says that farmers are used to these ups and downs, and may want to store their grain to see if prices improve.

"Farmers are used to this, and lots of things can change as the months go on, but for anybody that needs cash right now, it's kind of a tough market right now. If you can hold on to your grain for a little bit longer, and wait to see if input prices go down a little, I would. Sometimes demand goes up as supply goes down, and that can drive value up a bit."

She says that warm, dry weather that hit the region last week is perfect for finishing up harvest, but there's a ways to go yet.

"If we can keep the weather we are having currently, that would be great for producers, and it looks like we are going to have the same pattern for a few weeks. Most farmers



Mariah Roy took this photo of Hebert Grain Ventures harvesting.

need a good two to three weeks to finish, we were only about 40 per cent of the way done when the rain came, so we still have a bit of chewing ahead of us."

"We just kind of got started again after our 10 day break so we don't have a real feel for what it's going to look like but certainly the weather has taken some of the shine off," says John Van Eaton who farms in the Maryfield area.

Van Eaton says crops were extremely nice before the extended period of rain took hold.

"I don't know if I would say once in a lifetime, but they were pretty nice," he says. "Right up there with some of the best crops I've ever seen, that's for sure. We haven't done any canola quite yet but it did look good, we will see what happens now. We've got a little bit of wheat to finish and then canola and flax."

"We broke down a little bit. We were straight cut-

ting so the straw breaks down and it deteriorates the seed and some of it is quickly sprouting. We've bred plants and crops to germinate quickly and get out of the ground quickly, so when we have a number of days with warm, humid weather they think that's what they are supposed to do.

"I'm hoping that it's still a three and not feed, but I don't think it will be any better than a three and of course before the rain it was number one and had pretty good protein and nice yield."

"A couple of neighbors have just started into canola and said there's a little sprouting there as well. Then you lose weight because the rain will cause the weight of the kernels to go down, so if canola was weighing 55 pounds before the rain and 50 now, you lose 10 per cent of your yield right there."

For weather, Van Eaton says they need "probably two weeks weather in the

of mid 20s with a little bit of breeze and not much humidity. Two weeks will just about do it I think."

Aside from the weather, farmers are also dealing with some factors that are affecting price.

"Certainly canola prices are affected by Chinese tariffs, feed grain prices are more affected by the U.S. corn crop. Certainly tariffs play a part in that and it would be nice to have no tariffs, and we definitely need that especially with canola. There's a big crop in other parts of the world and there is just a whole bunch of things in the mix that affect prices more than just local supply and demand. That doesn't have very much to do with it anymore."

"I think anyone in this business accepts that there is a fair amount of risk, but you just try to mitigate those risks and do the best you can."

Hebert Grain Ventures has crops planted from Ryerson to Whitewood,

including peas, rye, wheat, barley, and canola. Jeff Warkentine says they were about 65 per cent through their harvest last week.

"We need two good weeks yet," he said. "Our yields have been good. The quality was excellent before the rain and it's a little less after the rain obviously, but there was a lot of quantity there."

"We had the smoke this summer, some timely rains, we didn't get the excessive heat in July that we've gotten the last few years. From what we've seen so far that's made a big difference."

"Other than the rain delays, harvest has been pretty good. We could have done without the rain and weather the last seven to eight days, but you can't control mother nature."

Cory Woywada with Parrish and Heimbecker in Moosomin and Virden says he's seeing the same thing at the elevator—crops that went down in quality due to extended rain.

"We are seeing wheat that is standing or swathed that is now lower quality," he says. "If it's below 200 it just makes it feed because there is no market for it. We're seeing some in the 220 to 260 range, and we're seeing a lot under 150. So there was a lot of damage."

"Same with canola, we are seeing some sprouts in canola, which you usually don't see, but I don't know if anyone has really gotten into anything that was swathed."

"But I think with the cereals we were probably 80 per cent done anyway before the rain, so we just have a little bit left out there."

"Before the rain, it was all number 1, and it varied from 11 to 16—really nice, heavy weight. We are seeing big yields on everything, probably the best we have ever seen. I think it cooled off at the right time and we got the August rain there and everything filled up."

Salute to Saskatchewan Farmers!

As the fall harvest season is underway, your Saskatchewan Party MLAs recognize the hard work of farmers and proudly stand with agricultural communities across our province. The industry is the backbone of our strong economy, creating jobs and opportunities and feeding the world. Together, we will continue to support agriculture through investment, innovation and advocacy.



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USask announces new Introductory Agriculture certificate

Students in the new Certificate in Introductory Agriculture program can study online or in-person at their own pace to learn about agriculture in the Canadian Prairie Region.



(Photo: Christina Weese)

The new Introductory Agriculture certificate provides a base knowledge of agriculture in the Canadian Prairie region.

"The new Introductory Agriculture certificate is designed for a variety of learners from different education and professional backgrounds," said Dr. Angela Bedard-Haughn (PhD), dean of the College of Agriculture and Bioresources (AgBio) at the University of Saskatchewan (USask). "The College of Agriculture and Bioresources developed this certificate to provide students flexible learning and choice in their pathway to admission. Applicants can

range from mature students who want to broaden their scope of professional practise into agriculture, to undergraduate students across different academic disciplines."

The target audience for the new certificate also includes educators who want to deliver science-based agriculture programs in primary and secondary schools, individuals seeking entry-level, non-professional agriculture employment, and

new and current USask undergraduate students. USask students can earn this certificate concurrently with their degree or diploma program or take it as a standalone program. It provides students from different academic disciplines, such as business or engineering, a competitive edge by expanding their scope for future careers.

The Introductory Agriculture certificate provides a base knowledge of agriculture in the Canadian Prairie region. Students will learn key competencies in the field of agriculture, diverse ways of knowing, agrology and professional practice in agriculture, the scientific principles that govern agriculture and the environment, and the socio-economic impacts of agriculture.

"The College of Agriculture and Bioresources has a proud history of responding

to the educational needs of Saskatchewan, the nation, and the world by developing innovative programming," said Dr. Tom Yates (PhD), associate dean academic of AgBio. "The Introductory Agriculture certificate is the fifth new educational program we've launched since 2022. We're committed to empowering students to learn in ways that fit their lives and therefore benefit their communities."

Courses in the Introductory Agriculture certificate can be transferred into other AgBio undergraduate degree and diploma programs. Students also have the choice to study online or in-person at their own pace. New applicants can start the 15-credit unit certificate as early as January 2026. Questions about the program can be directed to AgBio Student Services.

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

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FCC lays out strategies to diversify Canadian food exports

Canada has an opportunity to diversify \$12 billion of food and beverage exports to non-U.S. markets to protect against trade disruption, enhance global competitiveness and build a more resilient agriculture and food system. That's according to a report by Farm Credit Canada (FCC) titled 'The \$12-billion trade shift: Canada's opportunity to diversify food exports beyond the U.S.'

Canada's food and beverage sector is heavily reliant on the U.S. as over three-quarters of its exports were destined to the southern neighbour, compared with 31 per cent of primary agricultural products in 2023. In terms of imports, 65 per cent of food and beverage products came from the U.S., compared to 78 per cent for primary agriculture. This reliance leaves Canadian ag and food producers vulnerable to unpredictable trade dynamics. The U.S. economy will always remain a key market for Canadian exports, but the evolving trade landscape underscores the need to diversify to non-U.S. markets.

"Canadian agriculture and food producers rely on international trade to thrive, but ongoing trade disruptions have created uncertainty and barriers to growth. Diversifying food and beverage exports beyond the U.S. will not only strengthen producers' resilience but also benefit Canadian consumers and the broader economy," said Justine Hendricks, FCC president and CEO. "This report is FCC's effort to focus Canadian dialogue on how diversification is im-



portant, viable and an opportunity we can't miss out on."

FCC's recommended \$12-billion diversification strategy focuses on three key areas:

Strengthening inter-provincial trade, redirecting \$2.6 billion in exports from the U.S. to meet domestic demand. This approach reduces import reliance, supports Canadian producers and helps stabilize the food system nationally;

Maximizing benefits from Canada's 15 existing free trade agreements, which collectively cover 51 countries and 66 per cent of global GDP, to expand Canadian food and beverage exports globally; and

Forging new international partnerships to capture emerging opportunities in high-value markets in Europe, Asia and Latin America, targeting \$9.4 billion in growth beyond the U.S.

The report identifies trade diversifi-

cation opportunities across commodity groups, including prepared foods, vegetable oils and animal feed. Prepared foods represent the largest category, making up 19 per cent of Canadian food and beverage exports, which totaled \$8.6 billion in 2023, with 90 per cent currently destined for the U.S. Boosting inter-provincial trade can replace approximately 10 per cent of these exports domestically, while the remaining 90 per cent must be redirected to high-value markets in Europe and rapidly expanding markets in Asia.

"Investing in infrastructure, innovation and expanding product offerings will be critical to supporting this transition. Shifting \$12 billion in exports will reduce risk and secure stability for the Canadian agriculture and food sector," said J.P. Gervais, FCC's chief economist. "A balanced trade portfolio will make the ag and food industry more competitive, adaptable and prepared to succeed in a changing global economy."

Additional strategies highlighted in the report include promoting the "Buy Canadian" movement to stimulate domestic demand and enhancing Canada's global brand to signal quality, safety, and versatility of Canadian food products. Expanding domestic value-added processing will allow Canada to capture a larger share of the food dollar; while exploring a variety of protein sources and sustainably processed items will open new opportunities both at home and abroad.



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Tailgate meals make the best harvest memories

I was thumbing through a magazine the other day when I came across an advertisement for a "Tailgating" recipe magazine and my first thought was, "Why didn't I think to write one of these? I have a LOT of tailgate meal experience," followed by, "Oh right, cooking's not my thing." I actually wondered if it might be worth buying the magazine until I noticed in smaller print down in the right-hand corner: "Game Day Favourites." Alas, their idea of 'tailgate' was not remotely the same as mine. While I might not have the same fond memories of tailgate meals when the grands are grown, I am positive they will have nothing but great memories of the crew gathered 'round, grabbing plates of food and chatting for a few minutes before climbing back aboard their respective machines/trucks.

And yes, it is that time of year – tailgate meals galore. My handy-dandy meal planner (self-made) sits perched on my counter, open at Week 1, Day 1. I love that I created this masterpiece (well If nothing else, it's a piece of work of some sort) but I have to be honest. I haven't actually utilized it at all, so it's still sitting open at Week 1, Day 1. A down day or a rainy day or a run for parts day messes up my week so I need to re-work it into a one-day-at-a-time sort of plan and forego the extensive planning ahead part.

The last part of August was mighty hot and I actually thought I was going to enjoy the cooler days they were predicting at the time. I should know myself better. Once the cool days and frosty nights arrived, I was cranking up the furnace, both in the RV at the farm and the house in town, depending on where I was staying at the moment. The crop isn't anywhere close to being off and I am already wondering how I am going to survive the cold winter days and how I am going to keep myself busy and moving.

Beautiful harvest weather returned after a week or so of damp weather and so the twins (14) and I began counting down the number of "fields" that were left. It didn't result in us figuring out exactly how many acres (the boys felt saying '12 quarters minus some bush' was best) there were left between Gramps' fields or their dad's fields, but we came up with a number of days that we thought it might take us to finish and it wasn't too far from what the guys figured (although, to be honest, I added four extra days on for good measure.) Hubby's reaction was an emphatic, "How did you come up with that number!?" with a shake of his head. I have my reasons – shorter days/late starts, bad breaks, fires. Fires? What's with the fires?

A baler fire one day and a combine fire another added a bit of excitement to our otherwise every-day-the-same kind of days. Between neighbours, fire fighters and fam-



ily, there was some fast action which resulted in the fire not spreading to the field of wheat across the fence line. The combine fire was fortunately extinguished relatively quickly but meant a down day or two while we awaited parts. Those hot days had me worried the tailgate meal truck might catch on fire during lunch times especially as I had to keep it running in the field for the dog. She hates the heat and sits front and center with her nose pretty much pressed right against the front a/c vent. On the hot days, she will take air conditioning over sandwich crusts any day.

There's been the odd other 'oops' moments, some bigger, some smaller. When your granddaughter joins you on the lunch run and notices the grain that Uncle is unloading into the semi trailer is simply running through onto the ground, you know there has been another 'oops' moment somewhere along the line.

We lost a couple of good combine/swather operators when the twins went back to school after a good run of harvest days during the last part of August. I am not sure who was sorer they had to go back to school – us or them. One day when their dad and I drove up to one of the grain trucks, we noticed a layer of wheat covering the hood of the truck (someone had an 'oops' moment) and I know we both thought the same thing at the same time – let's move that truck real quick before Grandpa comes along in his combine and notices that (like it's never happened to him!)

The days tend to run one into the other at this time of year and when I tell someone there was a phone call for them two or three days ago and then check my phone and see it was only yesterday, that's when I realize the long days are catching up with me. I like to start my day washing combine windows (is the dust on these canola fields not worse than ever before?) before I head back to the yard to make breakfast. Or to eat what hubby has

made as the case may be if he beats me back after fueling and servicing the machines. Once I get back into town I start making bun dough and prep for lunch. I am pretty certain there is a direct correlation between my tendency to bake and how far behind I am on doing the farm books. Yup, procrastination keeps the cinnamon buns rolling off the assembly line!

On this particular day (the 24th of September), I was late getting windows done (where are the combine keys this time/the header needs lowering or raising, etc.) and I expressed my frustration to hubby saying there was no way I would get my bun dough on in time let alone have buns baked for the hamburgers I was planning to make for lunch. "But there is an easy solution to that," he says, "go to the grocery store and buy some buns!" And so ... with already four trips to the grocery store in the past two days, I made my fifth trip. Maybe that weekly plan with its handy dandy grocery list wasn't such a bad idea after all!

Last night, after a visit with the twins around the campfire, I plopped down onto the couch in the RV with the 'special' (spoiled) farm cat next to me (she likes real people food as opposed to cat food), I opened my computer to finish this column. I was filled with a deep appreciation for all those in my life who keep things rolling at such a crazy time of year. I know, I know, I complain about the darn meal-making/hauling but it's a tiny but important part of the operation and when the busy-ness ends, I will be wishing for something more to do. So for now, I will stick my wing-it meal plans, enjoy the grands and friends who grace my kitchen table every day at noon and I will be thankful for our farm life and all that it offers (even the challenges). There is no life like it and to explain it is nearly impossible.

Keep plugging away, grain farmers. By the time you read this, you (and maybe us too) may be finished, but if not, let's get 'er done! Until next time, safe harvesting!!



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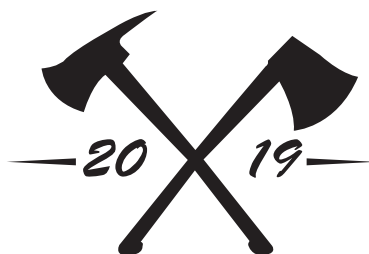


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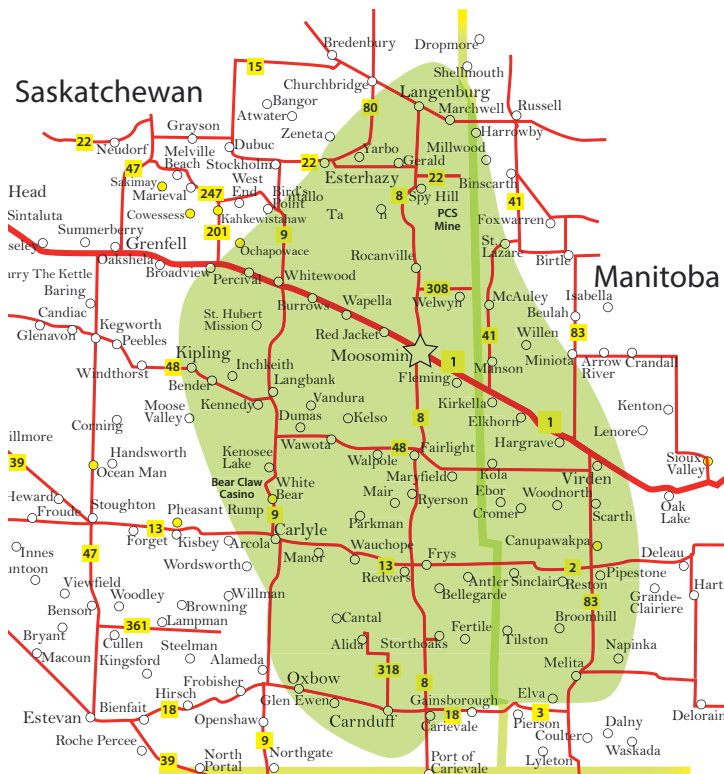
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Esterhazy, Langenburg,
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AG NEWS

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Carney's nation-building plan forgets food

Canada's agri-food sector powers \$90 billion in exports and one in nine jobs, yet it's missing from the fed's flagship infrastructure agenda

Prime Minister Mark Carney's "nation-building" strategy may boast big wins for energy and infrastructure, but it sidelines one of Canada's greatest economic assets: food.

His first five flagship projects—the LNG terminal in Kitimat, a small modular nuclear reactor in Darlington, the \$1-billion Contrecoeur container terminal east of Montreal and mineral developments in B.C. and Saskatchewan—send a message that Ottawa is ready to build. But for all their ambition, they overlook the sector that feeds the country, powers \$90 billion in exports and supports one in nine jobs.

Canada is one of the world's great breadbaskets—reliable, safe and absurdly productive. The agri-food sector isn't just farms and tractors; it's one of the most advanced, innovative ecosystems we've got. And yet, among Carney's first round of "nation-building" moonshots, food didn't even get a seat at the table.

Sure, the expanded port in Montreal will help grain and processed food shipments. And yes, stable nuclear power might one day shave energy bills for processors and greenhouse growers. But these are trickle-down perks—not the kind of direct investment the sector actually needs. Food deserves its own spotlight.

This oversight isn't just symbolic—it exposes real pressure points that threaten the entire system. Take Western Canada's beef-packing bottleneck, for example: a few mega-facilities dominate the sector, so when one gets gummed up by a strike or shutdown, it sends shockwaves through the entire supply chain. Farmers are left holding the bag—and consumers feel the hit. Expanding and decentralizing capacity would help, but that's just scratching the surface.

If Carney wants to prove Canada can be a food power as much as an energy one, we need projects with the same heft and urgency as those just an-



Sylvain Charlebois

nounced. To match the ambition of Carney's energy and infrastructure plans, here are five food-sector nation-builders that would move the dial:

The Prairie Gateway Grain and Pulse Terminal—a rail-linked export hub in Saskatchewan or Manitoba—would get lentils, peas, canola and wheat to global markets fast. Think Contrecoeur, but for the Prairies.

Protein Supercluster 2.0 would string together state-of-the-art processing facilities to transform raw commodities into premium plant proteins, canola oil and biofuels. A second-generation government-backed innovation corridor, it would help Canada move from raw exports to value-added, export-ready, job-creating production.

A National Plant and Animal Science Campus, inspired by Wageningen University in the Netherlands—a world leader in agricultural research—would centralize the kind of next-gen crop science, livestock genomics and climate-resilient breeding Canada will need to compete in the decades ahead.

Call it moonshot science; we've been staring at the ground too long.

Northern Food Sovereignty Corridors, featuring investments in greenhouses, vertical farms and logistics, would reduce reliance on overpriced imports and bring fresh food, and economic independence, to northern and Indigenous communities. It would also move reconciliation from speech to action.

A Digital Food Traceability Network would use blockchain and AI to track food from seed to supper, slashing waste, boosting consumer confidence and giving our exports a transparency edge in an increasingly picky global market.

Carney's five projects are a solid start. They prove Canada can think big. But a real strategy needs to feed people as well as power them. Agriculture can't remain the forgotten cousin in economic planning.

The point isn't to downplay the importance of energy or mining. Mines and reactors may fuel prosperity but it's food—and the infrastructure, science and innovation behind it—that will secure it. Canada's real strength lies not just under the ground but in the fields, labs and refrigerated supply chains that keep our plates full and our trading partners coming back for seconds.

Dr. Sylvain Charlebois is Director of the Agri-Food Analytics Lab at Dalhousie University, co-host of The Food Professor Podcast and Visiting Scholar at McGill University.

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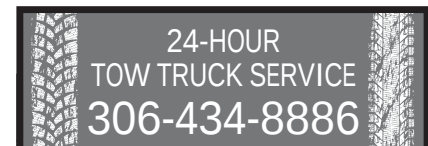
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New hands, new horizons: Transitioning to non-family successors

BY CRAIG LESTER

They're not family or staff, but you believe they're the best option for continuing your farm's legacy.

Transitioning the farm to someone uninvolved or unconnected with the operation is rare. If there are no children or the next generation isn't interested, the for-sale sign is usually put up at the end of the driveway, and the bidding begins.

But not in all cases. Joel Bokenfohr, a business advisor with FCC, has handled some of these rare situations. "It's not as common in agriculture, but very common in other industries," he says.

As the farming community faces the dual challenges of limited succession partners and the financial barriers for younger generations entering agriculture, it's clear that other paths need to be explored.

Bokenfohr has seen two scenarios where this occurs:

- Passing the farm to passionate non-family or non-staff members
- External management to bridge generations

Outside-the-box succession

Passing the farm to passionate non-family or non-staff members can be rewarding. However, the journey to achieving this goal can be challenging.

Bokenfohr says in the cases he's seen, the legacy of the farm is important. "They are often looking for somebody external with passion to step in and continue that legacy, continue what they've spent their life building."

Perhaps the biggest challenge to achieving this is finding the right person. Avenues to explore include local agricultural organizations or provincial farm succession and land matching programs. It may



also be fruitful to reach out to farm transition advisors, or network through farming events and social media.

One key from Bokenfohr is to be clear on your goals from the beginning, which a professional can help with. An external manager can be brought onto farms that have seen considerable growth and bring fresh perspective and clarity. "You start seeing a little bit of external help that has managed these businesses coming in to provide a bit of a gap between parents and children," Bokenfohr says.

Not only does this make sure that the farm is taken care of between generations, but it also creates a second option in situations where the next generation decides it doesn't want to take over the operation.

In this case, the manager will have gained considerable experience and understanding of the management and

stewardship practices of the farm, which makes them the perfect candidate to enter into a transition plan with the owner.

Planning the transfer

When planning a non-family transition, the first step is to have an equity transfer plan.

This could involve a gradual transfer of ownership through financing or discounts, allowing the new manager to gain ownership over time while ensuring the family's financial needs are met.

Bokenfohr adds that using equity (land, buildings or quotas) can help the successor sustain and grow the farm. In some instances, farms offer stock options or management roles to entice prospective individuals into the farm's leadership without immediately transferring full ownership.

Regardless of the route, owners must have a clear financial plan for their retirement needs, ensuring their cost of living is met while facilitating the farm's transition.

Bringing it all together

Succession can be tricky, and transferring to a non-family or staff member adds another layer to an already complex issue. So why not just sell the farm and be done with it?

The reward of seeing your operation passed to a person you trust to manage it, knowing that your legacy will live on, might be your priority. It all depends on your goals. If protecting your farm's legacy is a goal, the transition can be easier if you make sure the plan includes you sticking around for the first couple of years so that the incoming owner has the benefit of the extra experience and possibly an extra set of hands around the farm if needed.

If you do move forward with this, remember:

- Have a plan even before you start looking for a successor
- Use a professional to help make this process easier
- Give it time. Make sure you have the right fit
- Use equity to smooth the transition and help the successor sustain and grow the business
- Ensure you are taken care of after the transition is done

By making these arrangements, you can balance your financial needs as the retiring owner with those of the successor and ensure the farm's continuity and your legacy.

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Amber Hintz submitted this photo of Kolten Hintz taking a break during a long, hot harvest day.

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USask's VIDO celebrates 50 years of protecting health, food security, and vaccine sovereignty

The University of Saskatchewan's (USask) Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization (VIDO) is marking its 50th anniversary

Events last week celebrated half a century of world-leading discoveries that protect the health of people and animals, safeguard Canada's food supply, and strengthen the country's ability to prepare for future pandemics.

Founded in 1975 as a Prairie-based livestock lab, VIDO has since grown into one of the world's leading infectious disease research centres. Occupying nearly 10 acres on USask campus, VIDO is recognized as Canada's Centre for Pandemic Research and a leading national science facility. The organization plays a pivotal role in the global race to stop emerging infectious diseases and strengthens Canada's vaccine sovereignty.

"VIDO's impressive success story reflects USask's commitment to solving global challenges," said USask President Peter Stoitcheff. "This anniversary is both a celebration of past and present impact and a clear signal of VIDO's critical role in ensuring Canada's health security for decades to come."

VIDO is home to more than 200 scientists, trainees, technicians and staff. The organization is a key Canadian partner in the global "100 Days Mission", an initiative spearheaded by the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) and endorsed by the G7 and G20 nations. The mission aims to create new vaccines within 100 days of identifying a pandemic threat. Building on its leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic when VIDO isolated SARS-CoV-2 from the first Canadian case and was the first Canadian academic institution to move a vaccine candidate into clinical trials, the organization is now developing a broadly protective and adaptable coronavirus "platform vaccine" with millions in funding from CEPI.

In addition to its pandemic work, VIDO has delivered eight commercial livestock vaccines, including six global firsts, that have helped farmers protect their herds and flocks, kept food affordable and available for families, and strengthened Canada's food security and trade. This ability to protect both people and animals underscores VIDO's unique role at the intersection of human health, animal health, and global food systems.

Looking ahead, more than \$150 million in federal,



provincial, municipal and private funding has been invested in new infrastructure, alongside ongoing operational support from the Canada Foundation for Innovation and the Government of Saskatchewan. New high-containment laboratories and animal housing facilities are under construction, and the Vaccine Development Centre is now producing prototype vaccines for both humans and animals. Together, these investments position VIDO as one of the most complete end-to-end vaccine development environments in the world, advancing Canada's vaccine sovereignty and strengthening global preparedness.

"VIDO's 50 years reflect more than scientific achievement—they embody Canada's ability to protect people, animals, and our future," said Dr. Volker Gerdts, VIDO director and CEO. "With our unique, integrated facilities that span discovery to manufacturing, we are building the capacity to respond swiftly, save lives, and prevent the next global health crisis—not just for Canadians, but for the world."

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Preliminary outlook: Possible cost pressures in 2026 reinforce drive to find efficiencies



While harvest is far from being done across the country, it's not too early to start thinking about profitability for next year. Prices and expenses are always top of mind for farmers. Although input costs have decreased from their peak in 2022, they have remained elevated and are once again trending higher. Unlike 2022, when rising crop input costs were offset by strong commodity prices, 2026 is shaping up very differently. Crop prices are forecast to trend in the opposite direction, squeezing margins and impacting productivity. This pressure is compounded by global trade disruptions, including the tariffs on Canadian canola and peas by China.

With margins under pressure, managing costs is more important than ever. While trade and geopolitical issues are largely out of your control, focusing on what is within your control can make a difference. Decision aids, agronomic advice and other value-added support from input suppliers can help farmers make better decisions, improve efficiency, and boost revenue.

Continued on page B19

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Harvest progress remains steady

Overall harvest progress has remained steady, however, the rain and high humidity stalled progress in the eastern portion of the province and caused a delayed start in the west. As a result of the rain and high humidity, areas with cereal crops still in the field are seeing poor quality and sprouting. High temperatures over the weekend and into this coming week will help farmers progress or finish up.

The provincial harvest progress total is 68 per cent, sitting behind our five-year average of 83 per cent and 10-year average of 72 per cent. The southwest continues to lead in harvest progress at 80 per cent complete. The southeast region currently sits at 70 per cent complete. The east-central and west-central areas sit at 59 per cent complete and 65 per cent complete, respectively. The northeast sits at 61 per cent complete while the northwest sits at 69 per cent complete.

Harvest is complete for winter wheat and fall rye with field peas sitting at 99 per cent combined and lentils at 96 per cent. Spring wheat is 73 per cent combined, durum 78 per cent, oats 70 per cent and barley 86 per cent. Many farmers moved to combining canola this week and 42 per cent of that crop is now combined. Other oilseeds, flax, soybeans and mustard - sit at 18 per cent, 23 per cent and 62 per cent, respectively.

Minimal rain was seen this week across the province. The most rain fell east of Yorkton recording 44 mm in the Rhein area and 18 mm in the Calder area. The only other significant rainfall events were in the Carnduff and Blaine Lake areas which both received 20 mm.

Combine harvesting a crop in a field. Text indicates harvest progress in Saskatchewan

Topsoil moisture conditions declined across the province this week with many areas not receiving any rain. Cropland topsoil moisture sits at two per cent surplus, 59 per cent adequate, 32 per cent short and seven per cent very short. Hayland topsoil conditions are three per cent surplus, 51 per cent adequate, 29 per cent short and 17 per cent very short. Pasture topsoil conditions are two per cent surplus, 40 per cent adequate, 36 per cent short and 22 per cent very short.

Since August, pasture conditions have decreased slightly. Provincially, one per cent of pastures are in excellent condition, 31 per cent in good condition, 39 per cent in fair condition, 20 per cent in poor condition and nine per cent in very poor condition.

This week most of the crop damage reported was caused by wind and dry conditions. There were also some reports of low-lying areas being lost to water accumulation. Waterfowl damage was more present this week as

geese, cranes and other waterfowl move across the province.

Harvest is a very busy and stressful time. We would like to remind producers that the Farm Stress Line is available to provide support toll free at 1-800-667-4442.

With an increased number of machinery fires being

seen, we would like to remind producers to have fire mitigation resources ready, blow off their combines regularly and take precautions when working around powerlines. The public is also reminded to exercise caution when encountering machinery and equipment travelling on roadways.

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A harvest photo submitted by Brian Fleury, taken east of Lampman.



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Dale Woods submitted this photo of combining wheat north of Moosomin.



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Manitoba expands ag services with new MASC offices in Virden, Shoal Lake

The Manitoba government is strengthening support for farmers and rural communities with two new Manitoba Agricultural Services Corporation (MASC) offices in Virden and Shoal Lake, Agriculture Minister Ron Kostyshyn announced here today.

"Our government is committed to ensuring Westman farmers have the tools and support they need to succeed after the previous government closed these offices," said Kostyshyn. "By opening new MASC offices in

Virden and Shoal Lake, we are making it easier for producers to access programs and services closer to home, where they are needed most."

The new offices will improve access to MASC programs and services, providing more convenient, in-person support for crop insurance, lending and other key resources, the minister said.

MASC plays a vital role in supporting the province's agriculture sector through risk management, financing,

and advisory services, noted the minister, adding that the new locations are part of the Manitoba government's ongoing efforts to strengthen rural communities.

"The Town of Virden is so pleased to welcome the MASC offices back," said Mayor Tina Williams, Town of Virden. "The value of having a local office for our surrounding farm communities cannot be overstated."

The Virden and Shoal Lake offices are now open to serve 650 to 700 farm-

ers and agri-businesses in the surrounding regions. Each new service centre is staffed by four full-time employees and a team of insurance adjusters.

MASC now has 12 service centres across the province providing access to agricultural insurance, lending and other agricultural programs and services.

For more information on MASC programs and services, visit www.masc.mb.ca.

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Preliminary outlook: Possible cost pressures in 2026 reinforce drive to find efficiencies

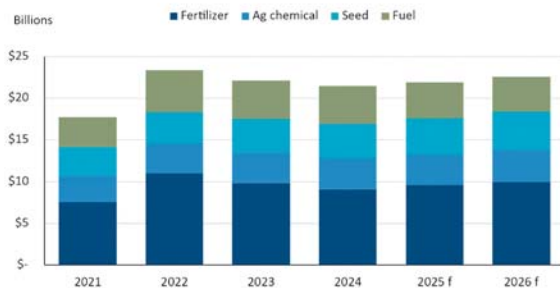
Continued from page B14

Below is our first look at the factors impacting the crop input market for 2026, which is intended to help farmers plan for the year ahead.

Crop input costs expected to rise again in 2026

Canadian farmers are expected to spend \$22.5 billion on crop inputs in 2026 (Figure 1). This could make 2026 one of the most expensive crop years, potentially rivaling the record set in 2022. Expenditures on chemicals and seeds are rising due to inflationary pressures. Fuel is the only cost expenditure projected to decline. However, fertilizer, the largest expense category, is forecasted to reach nearly \$10 billion driven by elevated prices and is the focus of our analysis.

Figure 1: Canadian crop input expenditures expected to remain elevated in 2026



Sources: Statistics Canada and FCC Economics

Fertilizer prices remained elevated

Fertilizer prices have been rising over the summer, even though this is usually a quiet time when prices tend to drop. Nitrogen fertilizer has stayed high across North America because U.S. farmers planted a lot more corn, estimated at 97.3 million acres, up 7.4% from last year. This increase has driven up demand for nitrogen, especially for summer top-dressing.

On the global market, strong demand has also pulled nitrogen into other markets including Europe. Phosphate prices remain high as global supply is tight. India has been driving much of the summer demand for urea and phosphate.

In contrast, in Canada, high fertilizer prices have kept summer demand low. Many farms delayed purchases for next year, instead taking a wait-and-see approach amid market uncertainty. Retailer summer fill programs were quiet due to limited price incen-

tives. As global demand stays strong and supply tight, fertilizer costs may remain high, just as crop prices are expected to fall, putting more pressure on farm margins.

Increased production could pressure crop prices

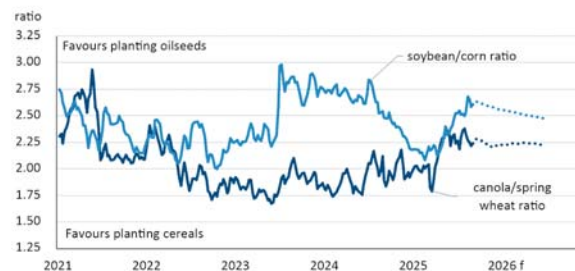
U.S. farmers are on track to harvest a record-breaking corn crop this year, thanks to record yields and expanded acreage. Despite improved grain and oilseeds prices earlier in the summer, the increased production, along with the loss of Canadian canola and pea export opportunities to China, and the impact of U.S.-China tariffs, are expected to put downward pressure on commodity prices. As prices fall, farmers may become more cautious with planning for next year's acres and inputs, with reduced cash flow and profitability in mind.

Crop price ratios

Crop prices ratios such as soybean-to-corn and canola-to-wheat reflect the current state of supply and demand. Essentially, it's a market signal to help farmers make planting decisions. Higher ratios favour planting oilseed (canola or soybeans) acres while a lower ratio favour planting cereals (corn or wheat).

Currently, the crop price ratios are favouring planting oilseed over cereals. Even though the ratio currently favors oilseeds due to strong biofuel demand, future demand and acreage will depend on the trade disputes with China, both Canada and the U.S. Canola prices are expected to be pressured unless Canada's trade issues with China are resolved before spring. On top of that, China hasn't bought any new crop soybeans from the U.S. because of ongoing tariffs. If this continues, both soybean and canola prices could drop further, and crop price ratios may shift back in favor of planting more corn and wheat by spring (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Crop price ratios could favour planting cereals by spring



Sources: Barchart and FCC Economics

Continued on page B20

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Preliminary outlook: Possible cost pressures in 2026 reinforce drive to find efficiencies

Continued from page 19

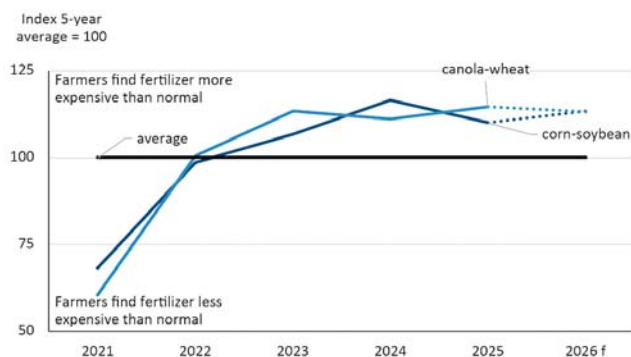
Since corn requires higher amounts of nitrogen fertilizers, any shift to increased corn planting tends to drive up demand for nitrogen fertilizers, pushing up fertilizer prices. Thus, as planting approaches monitoring the crop price ratio as a proxy for U.S. nitrogen fertilizer demand. U.S. corn acreage for 2026 will once again factor into nitrogen fertilizer prices.

Fertilizer to crop price ratios

The fertilizer-to-crop price ratio measures the cost of fertilizer relative to the revenue farmers expect from their crops. A high ratio means fertilizer is expensive compared to crop prices. And conversely, a low ratio suggests fertilizer is more affordable. This ratio influences farmers' input decisions on which crops to grow and how much fertilizer to use to maximize profitability.

Our projected fertilizer-to-crop price ratio is currently showing slight affordability declines for 2026 (Figure 3). Furthermore, there's potential for crop prices to move lower, while fertilizer prices could continue to rise. This combination of downside risk for crops and upside risk for fertilizer means the fertilizer-to-crop price ratio could increase even further.

Figure 3: Fertilizer to crop price ratios remain elevated and could trend higher



Sources: Alberta farm input prices, Statistics Canada and FCC Economics

Global trade and geopolitics continue to influence the supply side of the fertilizer market. Russia's war in Ukraine remains a key factor, especially for fertilizer. A peace deal could ease energy and fertilizer prices, helping restart European nitrogen plants. However, continued conflict would keep prices high. U.S. tariffs on Russia may raise nitrogen costs, especially in eastern Canada, which relies on UAN (Urea Ammonium Nitrate) fertilizer imports from the U.S., where Russia is a major supplier.

China has resumed limited exports of urea and phosphate fertilizers after years of restrictions. Even small volumes could ease global shortages, but it's unclear if exports will increase further.

Enhanced uncertainties do not mean farmers should remain passive to external developments. They should focus on what they can control. Building strong relationships with input suppliers and agronomists is key. Many producers are now using economic decision tools to improve efficiency and productivity to protect profitability.

Practices like 4R Nutrient Stewardship involve applying the right fertilizer source, rate, time, and place are now used on over 25 million acres, or nearly 27 per cent of total cropland in Canada, helping reduce costs.

Economic thresholds help determine when inputs like pest or fungicide treatments are worth the cost, focusing on profitability rather than field appearance. Tools like fertilizer efficiency calculators (e.g., Manitoba Agriculture) guide optimal use and yield targets, while fungicide thresholds help weigh yield gains against input costs—avoiding unnecessary spending.

Aerial spraying is gaining ground due to its speed and reduced crop damage. While it is slightly more expensive per acre, it becomes cost-effective when accounting for trampling losses from ground equipment.

Together, these approaches reflect focusing on what you can control, where working collaboratively across the supply chain is key to maximizing returns. It helps with planning crop rotations, booking fertilizer and seed needs for next year, even when risks are high.

Bottom line

Canadian farmers are facing a challenging outlook for 2026, with the combination of elevated crop input costs and softening commodity prices squeezing margins. Global trade tensions, particularly with China, and geopolitical instability further cloud the outlook. In this highly uncertain environment, finding cost efficiencies and focusing on productivity gains are more critical than ever. Leveraging agronomic expertise, economic decision tools, and collaborative relationships with suppliers can help producers realize efficiencies and sustain profitability.

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AG NEWS

Next Issue October 27th

Maximizing every acre: How 4R Nutrient Stewardship transforms soil efficiency

BY TREVOR BACQUE

Farmers who want their crops to be as sustainable and productive as possible should continue to adapt 4R practices, as well as explore new and emerging technologies. That's the message from the Enterprise Machine Intelligence Learning Initiative (EMILI) staff. EMILI is an industry-led non-profit that works collaboratively with producers, industry, investors and innovators to grow a sustainable and economically resilient digital agriculture industry. It's part of the FCC Innovation Farm Network, which supports entrepreneurs in commercializing their innovations by testing and refining them under actual farm conditions before the product reaches the broader market. 4R practices are:

Right source: Use the correct type of fertilizer or nutrient source that matches crop needs and soil conditions.

Right rate: Apply the appropriate amount of nutrients to meet crop requirements without excess.

Right time: Apply nutrients when crops can best use them, reducing losses due to runoff, leaching or volatilization.

Right place: Position nutrients where crops can access them efficiently, such as near the root zone.

EMILI hosted the Manitoba 4R Day at Innovation Farms on Grosse Isle, Manitoba. Innovation Farms Manager Leanne Koroscil says those at the event were surprised to see how the 4Rs can be applied and improve their bottom lines.

"Practices actually improved on-farm economics, crop productivity and fertilizer efficiency while also benefiting the environment," she says.

The day also featured in-depth discussions on enhanced efficiency fertilizers, soil sensors, and tile drainage, all in relation to 4R nutrient stewardship.

"Implementing 4R practices helps folks improve agricultural productivity, and it also minimizes the impact on the environment," Koroscil says. "As a whole, it's really helping farmers grow food in a sustainable way."

The farm is situated on a real, working 5,500-acre broadacre crop operation. This provides farmers with a clear understanding of how the practices can work at their farm. "It really gives people a realistic view of what is happening



on the real scale," she says.

Soil sense

Another exciting feature at Innovation Farms is the network of soil sensors. They are tethered to weather stations and monitored through an app on a farmer's smartphone. The tech from one of the sensor systems, Crop Intelligence, monitors and records soil moisture and other environmental metrics to identify yield potential throughout a field during the growing season. It can help a farmer know when to apply more fertilizer, nutrients, or spray crop protection products, which could ultimately save farmers money and preserve the efficacy of crop protection products.

"You can't manage what you don't measure," Koroscil says. "Having sensors on the farm is just one way that we're able to make more informed decisions."

Sensors aren't just for soil, either. Other commercially available sensors at the farm include imaging sensors and those capable of detecting the movement of grain in fields or storage bins.

4R nutrient stewardship really helps contribute to the preservation of land.

Above all, Koroscil encourages farmers to continually learn about the 4R principles.

"Because every farm is different, there's not necessarily one practice that works for every farm - it's going to work differently for everybody," she says. "Being able to educate yourself on what is being researched in your area, applicable to your region and soil types on your farm, will be very ben-

eficial. Take time to attend something like a 4R event, webinars or engage other resources."

Beyond that, Koroscil encourages farmers to track and record field data as much as possible. His-

EMILI: a natural partner

For FCC, the decision to support EMILI was an easy

one. Chelsea Gray, FCC's Smart Farm Partnership Manager, says the work at EMILI aligns perfectly with what FCC is all about: sustainability across all metrics at a farm and ranch level.

"They're super sophisticated in their programming and how they execute on-farm events to showcase technologies and share insights and innovation in the agriculture industry," Gray says. "They check every box in terms of what I look for in a strategic industry partner."

With the unique projects carried out at EMILI Innovation Farms, all powered by AgExpert, this real-world collaboration has helped FCC firsthand enhance the product and continues to make it as functional as possible for farmers.

"This really allows AgExpert to not only support the industry, but it also ensures that our product is evolving to support the changing needs of over 100,000 customers," Gray says. "What we care about is empowering our customers to make informed business decisions to support their success. 4R practices are a way to create a net positive impact at a farm level."

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(Photo: Chris Hendrickson)

The Canadian Barley Research Coalition (CBRC) has provided \$1.8 million for the continued support of the USask Crop Development Centre's barley breeding program.

CBRC commits \$1.8 million to CDC barley breeding activities

The Canadian Barley Research Coalition (CBRC) announced today it will provide \$1.8 million in funding over three years to the University of Saskatchewan's (USask) Crop Development Centre (CDC), to extend the core breeding agreement and support the development of varieties with improved agronomics, disease resistance and end-use quality.

By CANADIAN BARLEY RESEARCH COALITION

The CBRC is a collaboration between the Saskatchewan Barley Development Commission (SaskBarley), Alberta Grains and Manitoba Crop Alliance.

"The keys to past success within the CDC barley breeding program have been the skilled staff, our in-house malt and molecular marker labs and the ability to evaluate large numbers of breeding lines. This CBRC funding will support these pillars moving forward," said Dr. Curtis Poznaniak (PhD), director of the Crop Development Centre.

"This renewed investment ensures Western Canadian farmers can expect new barley varieties from a world-class program, keeping barley competitive with improved yield and agronomic benefits," said CBRC Chair Cody Glenn (who also chairs SaskBarley). "The CDC is uniquely positioned to deliver effective results for Western Canadian agriculture. This fund-

ing extension will allow the program to continue delivering improved varieties and capitalize on new opportunities."

Leaders from CBRC's member organizations echoed this sentiment, highlighting the practical benefits for farmers.

Scott Jespersen, chair of Alberta Grains, emphasized the real-world impact of the funding: "The CBRC's investment in the CDC reflects the importance of providing farmers with access to high performing, resilient barley varieties. This funding will deliver on-farm benefits that help barley farmers improve yields, manage disease pressure and stay competitive in global markets."

Jonathan Hodson, chair of Manitoba Crop Alliance, pointed to the CDC's impressive history: "The CDC has an excellent track record of developing high-performance barley varieties for a variety of end-use markets. The CBRC's continued support for this innovative breeding pro-

gram will ensure barley remains a productive and profitable crop for farmers across Western Canada."

Continuing the funding agreement with the CDC was a priority for CBRC and is

in line with the organization's goal of facilitating long-term investments aimed at improving profitability and competitiveness for Western Canadian barley farmers.



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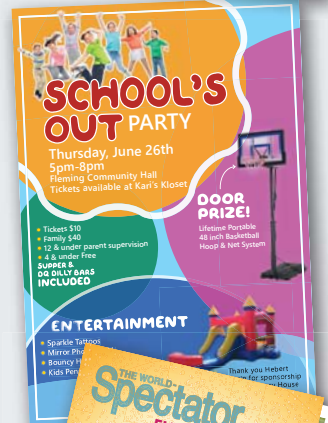
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Building a positive work culture on the farm

BY BECKY ZIMMER

Creating a positive work culture is essential in modern farm management. It benefits both family-run farms and operations with outside employees.

During peak seasons like seeding and harvest, the demanding hours can be challenging for everyone involved. However, by fostering a supportive and respectful environment, farm operators can make these busy times more manageable and rewarding for themselves and their employees.

Good leadership bolsters employee retention, recruitment

In light of the growing mental health conversation in agriculture, workplace culture is changing, says Bonnie Taylor, a registered social worker and psychotherapist based in Wellesley, Ont. People are finding ways to ensure their employees feel valued, which can help businesses retain employees, especially with labour shortages affecting many farming operations.

Demonstrating respect, patience and a positive attitude sets an example for others. "Leaders who ask themselves, 'How am I controlling my temper? How am I demonstrating to others that I show respect?'... they're the ultimate role models for their employees," she says.

Reflecting on your own behaviour can help to set an example of the supportive culture you want to cultivate.

"Being known for having a great work environment can also be a form of recruitment," Taylor says. If employees like where they work and feel respected and valued, they'll be more likely to pass the word on to friends and relatives who may also be looking for a positive workplace.

Role of communication and vulnerability

"Saying, 'Hey, I'm scared or exhausted or frustrated,' can be liberating," Taylor says. But it can also be difficult for someone to be vulnerable and open about their feelings.

Respecting and validating this openness is important.

For example, telling someone how they should feel instead of acknowledging their feelings can quickly cut the line of communication, leaving an employee feeling alone, Taylor explains. Employers and employees need to feel comfortable talking. This is part of trust-building.

The benefits of a supportive farm workplace

When an employee feels they have purpose and motivation, and that they're working with someone instead of for them, everyone benefits. "That could mean higher profits, stronger goals for growth, and everyone pulling in the same direction as a team that cares for one another," Taylor says.

She adds that while not everyone is in a position to make decisions about the direction of the farm, it's important that everyone understands the shared goals they're working towards. Being recognized for how one's efforts contribute to those goals can help build morale.



Recognize and value employee contributions

Farm work often involves risks, especially when using heavy machinery and managing livestock. If the team looks out for one another, that could also mean lower injury rates. "At a time when we're more connected than ever, it's easy to give someone a call to ask if they need a break or some food after running the combine all day," Taylor says.

Also, know that recognition can look very different from one employee to another.

Not every good effort or great idea needs to be publicly celebrated if that will make someone feel uncomfortable, Taylor adds. In some cases, a private conversation would go further.

Group recognition, like an after-harvest supper or get-together, is also a great way to unwind, debrief and celebrate a demanding harvest. It doesn't have to be extravagant, especially if the operation had

some setbacks that were out of their control.

"Setbacks are disappointing to everybody, but the farm manager can show support for their employees and build a positive workplace by saying 'OK, we're still going to have our end-of-year celebration. You all did an amazing job despite some things being out of our control. There was nothing else we could have done, so let's still recognize what we were able to.'"

While farming will always be a demanding profession, respect, communication and recognition can make the workplace a great place for everyone.

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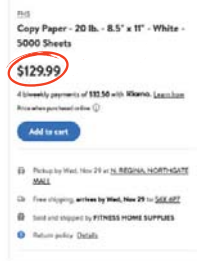
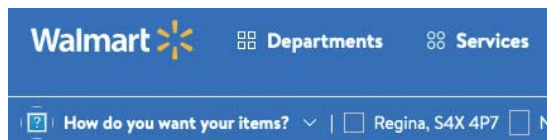
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Protect profitability: Key tools for farm financial fitness

Canada's farm economy slowed down in 2024, so what's ahead for farm income statements?

Canadian farm cash receipts totalled C\$97.9 billion in 2024. That's a year-over-year decrease of 1.6% after reaching a new record the previous year. The decline was driven by crop prices falling 13.8% but was moderated by a 7.6% increase in livestock and animal product prices. Overall farm operating expenses grew in 2024: the farm input price index for crops fell 0.2% while the animal products index increased 1.5%. Farm net cash income (revenues minus operating expenses) decreased in 2024, to \$19.6 billion.

Looking ahead, farm cash receipts are projected to increase 8.5% in 2025, but given all the uncertainty stemming from global trade disruptions this forecast could come in lower. Both crop and livestock receipts are expected to grow in 2025, led by strong cattle prices due to a small North American herd size and strong exports of wheat and canola. Globally, agricultural commodity prices have been under pressure as markets face uncertainty in trade.

Knowing this can help you anticipate the changes you may see in your income statement and identify efficiency gains to protect profitability in 2025.

The upward trend in Canadian land values continued in 2024 with an 9.3% annual increase. Strong demand for farmland, with fewer available listings, strengthened farmland values through 2024. We project a 4.9% average increase in farmland values in Canada in 2025.

After four years of Canadian agriculture's asset value growth being stronger than liabilities, assets grew 6.3% in 2024, with liabilities up 14.4%. Total asset growth is primarily due to higher farm real estate values which now represent over 79% of total farm assets. Even with slower growth in assets, the agriculture sectors net worth (own-

ers' equity, or assets minus liabilities) continued to grow reaching C\$832 billion in 2024 (+4.8% over 2023).

Farm debt outstanding is expected to grow 6.3% in 2025. Canadian farms are recording higher borrowing costs, even with easing interest rates. Despite reduced investments on equipment and buildings, demand for farmland remains strong for well capitalized producers who are seeing opportunities to enhance the efficiency of

their operations.

While the sector sees tremendous uncertainty stemming from global trade disruptions this year, overall, the industry is in a good financial position to endure a year of lean profitability.

Are you comfortable using financial statements to better manage your operation? A good place to start is by visiting your accountant.

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Left: The line of 10 combines ready to bring in the harvest.

Below: People enjoying the lunch in the field before the harvest.



Crossborders growing projects brings in harvest for Foodgrains Bank

On September 10, the harvest for the Crossborders community growing project at Kola, Manitoba took place. This annual harvest for the Foodgrains Bank involved 10 combines this year, four grain carts, and seven semis. A 260 acre field of canola was harvested bringing in 42.6 bushels and acre.

The harvest kicked off with a barbecue lunch in the field.



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How to protect your farm from misinformation

We face an avalanche of information, making it hard to identify what's credible. Misinformation pervades all industries, threatening efforts and hindering critical decision-making. As a farm operator, it's essential to identify what's valuable and question what isn't.

But how do you do that?

Pause and assess social media

Social media platforms like Facebook, X and TikTok are especially prone to misinformation. Dr. Timothy Caulfield, Faculty of Law professor in the School of Public Health at the University of Alberta, says that misinformation is designed to engage users emotionally.

Caulfield suggests asking questions when you interact with social media content. "Is this messaging playing to my emotions or values? Is it trying to make me angry? These questions can help identify red flags, revealing cognitive biases at play," he says.

Caulfield also suggests a simple trick: be patient. Avoid rushing decisions based on something you saw while scrolling. "Pause for a moment," Caulfield says. "Take a moment and ask yourself if the headline or content is accurate. Good, credible research shows that pausing and reflecting before you internalize the messaging makes you more resilient to misinformation."

Ask your experts

Eugenie Officer, sales enablement manager at FCC, echoes that sentiment. She suggests taking time to digest the information and stresses the importance of seeking the insight and opinions of the ag experts you deal with.

"Consulting different experts helps ensure you're always supported in the decision-making process," she says. "Whether it be an agronomist, your lender, your lawyer or your accountant, they specialize in dealing with complex issues and might have more relevant information than you'll find on social media or a Google search."

Most specialists have professional standards to maintain. Officer says it's less likely you'll find yourself dealing with potential negative consequences if you seek professional help instead of doing your own research. "Any decision that might have legal or financial ramifications for your operation where you're missing context or not 100% informed might result in some big impacts for you," Officer says. After all, being an expert in all areas is unrealistic and making decisions that may impact your business can be stressful. This is where trusted advisors can be particularly helpful in bringing specific expertise to your operation.

Be mindful of AI

AI, or artificial intelligence, has exploded online and permeated many aspects of our digital lives. When it comes to AI, there's good news and bad news, according to Dr. Caulfield. The bad news is that AI is going to make the situation worse. "AI can be used to make fake but very realistic-looking social media content quickly," he says. "It

can make fake news articles and fake research to support that content. That will make it so much more difficult to fact-check because you might be met with more AI-generated misinformation."

However, there is good news. "There's emerging research that we might be able to use AI tools to identify misinformation and create AI-generated chatbots that can help people navigate the conspiracy theories,"

Caulfield says. "So, you can engage with these chatbots, and studies have shown that these really can help."

It seems counterintuitive, using AI to weed out AI. "AI is not going away," Caulfield says. "We've got to figure out how to work with these technologies to make things better." Be mindful when engaging with AI so it works for you and not against you.

Develop critical thinking skills

Cultivating critical thinking skills is essential to deciding what's legitimate and what's not, particularly when it comes to your operation. "I think farmers are so well-placed to use critical thinking because they're like interdisciplinary researchers already," Caulfield says. "They know a lot about agriculture, business and the economy. I think the farming

community already has built-in critical thinking skills."

Key elements of a critical-thinking mindset to navigate misinformation:

Verify sources: Gather information from a variety of reputable sources rather than relying on a single study or article.

Understand context: Put whatever information you find into context by asking how it compares to industry norms or past practices.

Self-awareness: Recognize when information triggers strong emotions. Ask, "Is this trying to provoke me?"

Create a network of trusted advisors: Reach out to experts and rely on their expertise when making complex decisions about your business.

Stay vigilant online: Shield your livelihood from misinformation, helping to strengthen your farm's long-term success.



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