

Plain & Valley

Covering Southeast Saskatchewan and Southwest Manitoba

April 2021 • Volume 14 Number 4

Great horned owl returned to her territory

BY SPENCER KEMP
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

A great horned owl was released on April 1 in her home territory between Rocanville and Moosomin.

The owl, affectionately called Beauty by the people who oversaw her rehabilitation, was brought into care on December 10, 2020 after being struck by a car.

Tricia Mogstad with Silverwood Wildlife Rehabilitation says they received a call after Zaria Espinosa Alfaro and Joel Merkosky saw the injured owl on a grid road.

"It came into care after a couple were driving home near Rocanville on a grid road. They saw an owl on the side of the road and they could tell that it was injured," said Mogstad. "I told my rescuer to go and pick up the owl. She went out, did some searching, and had to chase it around a little bit before she found her hiding in a tree.

"Even when an owl is injured it can move pretty quickly on its feet. So she was crawling up a tree and tried to meld into it. My rescuer managed to get ahold of the owl and bring it back here. We began the treatment and were able to get it over to the vet's the next morning," said Mogstad.

She says that the owl suffered bruising and head trauma, but no broken bones.

A large wound was also found in the owl's neck.

"We did x-rays and found no broken bones, but she was strained and her wing was hurt."

"She had muscle bruising, tendon tears, and without a CT scan, you can't really tell that. There was a bit of head trauma as well, bleeding in the brain. You can tell that just by how they hold themselves and their behavior. During the exam we also found there was a hole in her neck, her neck was ripped. We didn't realize just how much it was ripped until we were at the vet's. She was ripped from back to front and she had a hole going through her neck.

"It was one of these situations where we just said let's give her medication, let's give her time and hopefully she heals. The weeks went by and I had to give her meds and food, force-feeding her twice a day for almost three or four weeks. Then she was self-



Above: Beauty, the Great Horned Owl, was released back to her territory on Thursday after she was found injured, rescued and healed by Silverwood Wildlife Rehabilitation. Shown here is Tricia Mogstad releasing Beauty in a field near her territory.

feeding on her own from that point."

Mogstad explained that they had to wait even longer for the feathers to grow back from Beauty's injuries before being able to release her.

"With Beauty, because she was ripped open, all those feathers were gone. Not only did we have to wait for every part of that wound to be healed, but we also had to wait for all those feathers to come back."

Mogstad noted that Beauty was an older owl and already had established territory. Owls, being territorial birds, can sometimes run into trouble with other owls that already claimed an area.

Because of this, Beauty was released where she was found in order to ensure she was properly

returned to her territory.

"She's an old girl. She's not a young owl, she's full-sized. She came in plump for the middle of winter and healthy. She was an older owl but she was just at the wrong place at the wrong time.

"That's why it's important to get her back to her territory. That is her home. It has been for a very long time. And when our rescuer was getting the owl she had people stop by who said they knew that owl and said they had seen her in the area for years."

Mogstad says that it is not uncommon for Silverwood Wildlife Rehabilitation to take owls into their care.

"I get a good number of owls, I think we got about 10 owls this year alone," she says.

She also notes that Silverwood

Wildlife Rehab takes in a wide variety of animals from foxes to ducks, to various types of birds, to deer.

"We seem to be doubling (our intake) every year. Last year we had 98 individuals come through," she says.

"We treat a lot of everything. Many many things. The owls are fairly common because they tend to get hit by cars. They fly at night and land on the road at night, and people are traveling very quickly, especially on the grids. So they'll suddenly come up and there's an owl there that gets hit. Then other times we get things like hawks.

"They can be anything from being hit by a vehicle to getting into fights with one another, they're very territorial. Especially owls, owls are very territorial. In

the spring when the young owls leave the families after they're done sticking around their moms and dads, in leaving and trying to find new territory for themselves, they will get into trouble with another owl and then someone will find the injured owl in a field and bring them to us."

During the winter months, Mogstad says she operates alone with the help of her rescuer when needed, but in the summer Silverwood Wildlife Rehabilitation receive a grant to hire students to assist them.

All animal care is funded by donations.

"They cost a lot," she says. "This owl alone cost between \$1,400 and \$1,500 to rehabilitate her from beginning to end."

Continued on page 3

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Above: Tricia Mogstad of Silverwood Wildlife Rehabilitation, holding Beauty, along with Zaria Espinosa Alfaro and Joel Merkosky, the couple who found the owl at the side of the road when she was injured and called Silverwood Wildlife Rehabilitation to rescue her.

Right: Beauty is removed from her carrier before her release.



Great Horned Owl returned to her territory

Continued from front

Having so many different animals on site also means having lots of different kinds of enclosures. For big birds like Beauty, once they are able to fly, the largest enclosure is 44 feet long, 20 feet wide and 25 feet high.

"When they can hit the 25-foot-high cross posts and go down and up and

down and up and go around, then I know that they are ready," says Mogstad.

She says they also have structures to hold deer, elk and moose, and individual structures just for animals like the raccoons, skunks, coyotes, and foxes. The enclosures are well spaced out so that the prey animals cannot smell the predator animals, and vice versa.



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Community market planned for Moosomin

Market will be held every Saturday from May long weekend to September long weekend

BY KEVIN WEEDMARK
A community market will be set up Saturdays during the summer in Moosomin.

Organizer Jarrod Slugoski was at a recent Moosomin town council meeting to discuss the plan.

"I'm very interested in building a Moosomin Community Market," he said.

"I lived in Lake Louise for 15 years and I went every week to Banff on Wednesdays and Canmore on Thursdays at the community markets. It's the idea of a farmers' market but it's more about bringing the community together, with music, shopping, visiting, just providing a good place for people to be for the afternoon.

"I've been thinking about this for about a year now, and I think it has massive potential to show what Moosomin is and

how amazing it can be.

"I would like the opportunity to work with the town on building this up over the next year."

Slugoski says he has already had several people express interest in the community market, which would operate every Saturday from the May long weekend to the September long weekend.

"I've had multiple requests for more information," Slugoski told council members, "but I've had comments that in the past with farmers markets, business licences were required for each and every person that set up a booth—I want to know if this is what is expected."

Slugoski said Bill Thorn has offered free use of space next to Celebration Ford for the market.



A scene from a past farmers' market at Bradley Park in Moosomin. This summer, the hope is to hold a community market on Saturdays next to the Trans-Canada Highway.

Daryl Harrison

Member of the Legislative Assembly
Cannington Constituency



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He said the site has highway visibility, and part of the idea is to create a weekly event that will have people from the community coming out, and then draw customers off the highway. Further, the idea is to promote Moosomin to those people coming off the highway, encouraging them to explore everything else the town has to offer.

CAO Paul Listrom said business licenses wouldn't be required for individual businesses if the market is operated on commercial property, as there are already commercial taxes collected on the property.

Council decided to waive any business licenses for vendors for the first year. Regardless of where the market is located.

Slugoski says he wants to have a wide variety of vendors. "The idea is to run it like the Red Market Barn at Kenosee, a community market, not just a farmers' market," he says.

"I've spoken to a food truck vendor who sets up food truck wars, I spoke to a business in Brandon that rents out inflatables, there's a lady who has a petting zoo who is interested in coming out, I'm looking at a bandstand with music, I'm looking at trying to get a fruit truck to come. We want to have a lot going on.

"The idea is to capture the highway traffic. The idea is to bring people from outside of Moosomin into Moosomin. We're looking at renting bikes, having hay rides, to help introduce people to Moosomin."

Slugoski pointed out that Virden and Esterhazy have farmers' markets on Fridays and the Red Market barn runs events through the summer on Sundays, and with the new Moosomin market operating Saturdays, he's hoping vendors will stay in the area and hit three markets on a circuit.

Continued on page 6

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Community market planned for Moosomin

Market will be held every Saturday from May long weekend to September long weekend

Continued from page 5

He said he is trying to make it as simple as possible for the vendors, including table rental and promotion as part of the cost of participating in the market.

"Part of the reason I wanted to know about the business licenses is I want to have a simple cost for the vendors so they know exactly what to expect. If we could come up with a simple fee for the table plus promotion, then we can make it simple. I've talking to Kara and Kevin about an ad in the vacation guide and Plain and Valley that could promote the vendors."

Slugoski told council members he is excited about getting the market off the ground.

"I came back to Moosomin for a reason," he said. "I like the sense of community here and I want to do what I can

to add to it. And the way things went with the Burger Week promotion, I know that people are ready to do fun things again."

Councillor Chris Davidson suggested that Slugoski look at alternate locations.

"We could block off two blocks of Broadway west of Main Street and two blocks east," he said. "That way you would be out of the wind and you would bring people downtown."

Slugoski pointed out that there is no charge for the land next to Celebration Ford, and he feels the location may attract people from the highway, who could then be directed into town.

"If we can get people in

town to support it, and we get a good crowd, then we will get people coming off the highway, too, because they will see there's something going on, there's a crowd, there's something to check out. If we offer things to buy, and multiple avenues for being social—eating, listening to music—this is a great way to promote the community."

Councillor Murray Gray said he believes the market can be successful.

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Local pharmacists ready for arrival of vaccines

BY SPENCER KEMP
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Saskatchewan Health Authority has recruited pharmacists across Saskatchewan to help administer the COVID-19 vaccines as part of Phase 2 of the vaccine roll-out strategy.

Pharmacy Manager at Rx Drug Mart Moosomin, Kari Meyers, says they were happy to help when the SHA asked.

"We have been on board with giving injections for the past couple of years and we've been doing more and more with seasonal flu shots every year, offering those to our local customers. With the COVID-19 vaccine becoming available a lot of pharmacies in the areas, us included, said we were on board. If they want to utilize the phar-

macy services to administer the COVID-19 vaccine, we're happy to help. The Saskatchewan Health Authority and the College of Pharmacy Professionals had been in talks with seeing where our role is. It was partially based around how much vaccine is available and if Public Health can handle it themselves or if it could be done quicker by utilizing pharmacists.

"They have big shipments coming in, so they're able to utilize pharmacy services because they know we're successful. We're some of the most successful health professionals in Saskatchewan. It's very easy for somebody to come into a pharmacy and get a vaccine."

Meyers says they will expect their first shipment of vaccines within the first week of April.

"We are still waiting because we're not part of Phase 1 of immunization which is supposed to be coming to an end shortly. Pharmacies will be giving the COVID vaccines in April, we're told it could be as early as April 1st, but we expect it'll just be sometime within the first week," said Meyers.

She explains they will have to store the vaccines themselves on-site but are unsure which vaccine they will be receiving.

"We'll have to store the vaccine. What they'll be doing is they'll be providing us with the vaccine the same way we order other medications. We aren't sure which vaccine we're getting, but if it's the Moderna vaccine, it's stored in a freezer. But when it's exposed to fridge temperatures it's good for 30 days. We don't know for

sure yet. Pharmacies have medication-specific fridges to store medication in, and that's where we'd store the vaccine."

Pharmacists will administer the vaccines either at the pharmacy or a nearby site dedicated to immunization.

Meyers says that as the Rx Drug Mart building includes a separate space that was formerly a walk-in clinic, the pharmacists will be able to administer the vaccine at the pharmacy itself.

"We would be administering it here at the pharmacy. Public Health is going to be operating clinics and they'll be part of the central booking system, but pharmacies will not be through that same booking system, you'd have to book a vaccine through the pharmacy directly.

The actual administration of the vaccine, if it's from a pharmacist, will be at that pharmacy.

"We have a space in the front of our store that used to be a doctor's office. Now it's an empty space with what would be treatment rooms in there. We're going to do our COVID vaccines there, just as we did with our flu shots. It provides the person getting the vaccine privacy as well as low traffic. With the pandemic itself, we're trying for the six feet of distancing and keeping low numbers in the store. It provides us with that separate space so we don't have the person getting the vaccine directly in the waiting area."

Meyers says that Rx Drug Mart in Moosomin has two qualified employees who can administer the vaccines, and thanks to operating a flu clinic through the pandemic, pharmacists are prepared for Phase 2.



Kari Meyers at the entrance to the former Walk-in Clinic at Moosomin Rx Drug Mart, which was used as a flu shot clinic in the fall, and will be used to provide Covid-19 vaccinations.

Pharmasave, says they are also prepared to help Public Health where needed.

"We are part of Phase 2, so right now they're still working on Phase 1 and

vacinating the eligible seniors ages 70 plus and eligible health care workers. Public Health is doing all that, but once we make it to Phase 2 and make the vaccine available to people under 70, then we will have access to the vaccine so that we can be vaccinating along with Public Health, so they can have their clinics and we can pick up as many people as we can to help them out."

Hanna explains that the pharmacists will be administering the vaccine in the same location they held their flu-clinic.

Continued on Page 10

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Whitewood's Mel Topinka sets new world record

BY TRAVIS LONGMAN

When it comes to feats of strength there isn't much Mel Topinka hasn't accomplished. The Whitewood, Saskatchewan native has been lifting weights since he was 12 years old in 1974. The 59-year-old construction worker continues to impress and practice his craft daily. He also continues to set records.

Most recently back in November 2020 he set a world record in the class five (50 and over) 87 kilogram class (190 lbs) bench press competition. Topinka bench pressed 440 lbs. in addition to this world record Topinka still holds a record for doing 92 push-ups in one minute.

Topinka has a daily routine that he does four to five times a week. He gets up at 5 am then does push-ups. After that he has a protein or two, then a workout. This helps keep Topinka in shape. He encourages everyone to live a healthy lifestyle and to quote Hulk Hogan "take your vitamins, say your prayers."

When Topinka began weightlifting in 1974, Vasily Alekseyev from the



Mel Topinka

Soviet Union had won Olympic gold in 1972 and Arnold Schwarzenegger was dominating the Mr. Olympia competition. Another person who inspires him is Canadian Lewis Cyr, the Canadian strongman from the 1800s who is known as the strongest man who ever lived.

These three men inspired Topinka and made him want to do his best.

Topinka lives in Regina but he frequently returns to Whitewood to visit his parents. Topinka is proof that no matter where you come from, you can accomplish anything you set your mind to.

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Long-term care/assisted living project moving forward

BY KEVIN WEEDMARK

A long-term care/assisted living project proposed for Moosomin has more than enough verbal commitments of funds to complete the first closing later this month, and proponents say the project can proceed.

Zoom meetings were held in March with potential investors, and at this point there is more than enough support to move forward with the project.

"We had good engagement, good response, good conversation, and we already have the first closing amount verbally committed to and wrapped up, so the project is proceeding," Larry Scammell of Kohr Capital said.

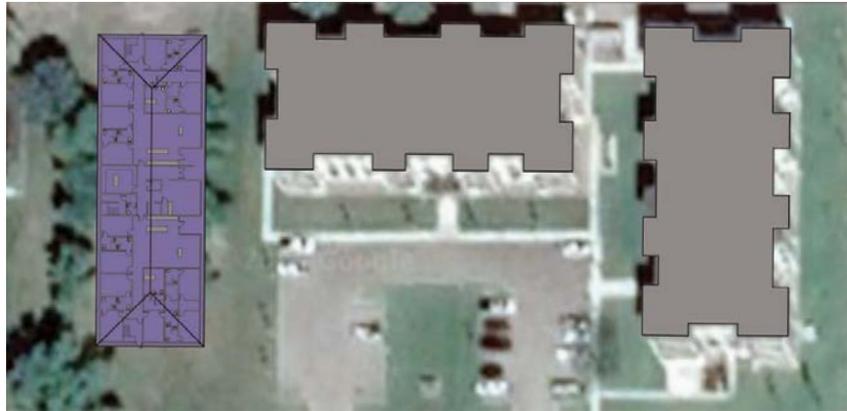
"We targeted half a million dollars for the first closing and we actually verbally over subscribed that amount—and it turns out we may not even need that amount. It may be closer to \$350,000 or \$300,000 that we need."

"We had closer to \$600,000 to \$650,000 committed, so we'll just have to scale back the commitments," said Shayne Shepherd of Kohr Capital. "For interested investors, we'll have to scale back their interest and they can invest in the second closing."

"Raising more than the \$500,000 is just a testament to everyone in the community understanding there is a need for this type of facility and putting their support behind it," added Scammell. "It's good to see."

"That money was raised 100 per cent within the community," he added. "The main purpose of the meetings yesterday is to continue the commitments for the second closing which is going to happen in August or September. That's really what we're focusing on right now, continuing to be top of mind, to get in front of people that are interested. Yesterday we had verbal commitments from five people that were on the call, saying they are interested in getting involved in the project in August or September when we go do that second closing. That's what we're really driving people towards at this point, now that the first closing is wrapped up. We still want people that are interested to come forward, let us know that they're interested and we'll get them on the list for follow up."

Scammell said the project investments have come together as expected.



At far left: The footprint of the planned long-term care/assisted living facility that will be located on Wright Road in Moosomin.

"It's taken time to get everything lined up, but as far as capturing the investor interest, it's going exactly how we expected," he said.

"Once the first closing is formally complete, which will be another three or four weeks, that will kickstart the design. You wouldn't expect to see a whole lot of activity on that site until later in the summer and that's where people get really excited. Typically after the design commences it would be anywhere from five to six months afterwards that you would expect to see construction activity, to see shovels in the ground."

"Right now, we're just continuing to add to the list of interested investors that want to get involved in the project which will happen August or September this year. All in, we're looking at raising \$3 million."

Shepherd said the response from Moosomin investors has been incredible.

"I think the response has been fantastic, I would dare say overwhelming," he said.

"They see the need for this. Everyone keeps referencing the hospital that was built and the fact that now the long-term care there is full and people can't utilize it and they don't want to move their family or loved ones outside of Moosomin or even close. They don't want to move them to places like Regina, they want to keep them at home. So they really see the need for this type of project and people vote with their wallets sometimes and that's what we're seeing here. There's definitely lots of people that see the viability of the

project."

Shepherd said the number of jobs created was one of the top questions Thursday. "Employment was one of the top questions, in terms of how many jobs, and of course it's going to be 15 full-time jobs but that may encompass 18 to 21 different positions. Some might be part time. From the investment standpoint there was a lot of conversation around how the mutual fund trusts works opposed to if I just want to get involved in one project. It's really more how the mechanics of how things work

and how people can get involved.

"The ability to use registered funds to access these type of investments is unheard of, in most cases. Especially to be able to invest in a project like this in your own community with registered funds, so they see the viability of that, and with the mutual fund trust people like the fact that not only can they be invested in their community but they'll be in other communities that are like Moosomin."

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RCMP agree to participate in Clare's Law

Law allows people to find out if intimate partners have been involved in violent or abusive behavior.
RCMP previously refused to participate, citing federal privacy legislation

BY SPENCER KEMP

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER
The Saskatchewan RCMP announced that after some delay, they would be taking part in Clare's Law.

Clare's Law, also known as the Interpersonal Violence Disclosure Protection Act was adopted in Saskatchewan in 2018. The act allows police to warn people if their partner has a history of violence or abusive behavior. Police services are permitted to share the history of the partner, which can include criminal convictions or police responses to domestic violence complaints.

But the RCMP was unable to take part in the act. Due to Section 8 of the Privacy Act, the RCMP was not permitted to disclose personal information of individuals without their consent.

Relationship Violence Coordinator Constable Joelle Nieman with the Saskatchewan RCMP explains that this is due to the RCMP having to adhere to federal regulations.

"So in the RCMP, we're a federal institute so we're bound by federal legislation such as the privacy act. So in this case, the privacy act does not allow for an institution to go ahead and release an individual's information without their consent. So we had to look at this privacy section and really see what part of the legislation that



The RCMP depot in Moosomin.

we can identify was affecting our participation. Through consultation with the Office of the Privacy Commissioner and federal and provincial governments we were able to make a regulatory amendment to the RCMP regulations that now allows us to participate in Clare's Law," said Nieman.

"It was a regulatory change and not a legislation change. It is only for the Saskatchewan RCMP."

She explains that while the Saskatchewan RCMP worked on a solution to take part in Clare's Law, they provided additional services to ensure the safety of potential victims of domestic violence.

"As the Saskatchewan RCMP, we felt that it was extremely important that we were able to put policy and procedure in place in the interim prior to us getting this regulation change so that we could address and deal with any sort of Clare's Law requests coming in.

"We weren't able to participate fully in the process but we did have our own processes in place to safeguard potential victims.

"We had safeguards in place to ensure that these people could receive information from other agencies as well as be better informed about how to make appropriate decisions about their safety."

Nieman says that with Clare's Law, members of the public can request information about their partner at any police station now that the RCMP is able to disclose personal information for Clare's Law.

"The process is called 'The Right to Ask' and that is triggered when a potential victim of interpersonal violence attends to the RCMP detachment and requests risk-related information. This 'Right to Ask' application can also be triggered by a third party so this would be a person that has personal knowledge of the person at risk relationship and is seeking the information to safeguard that person.

"It's as easy as going to any RCMP detachment or any municipal police agency."

"Once it's in place, there's a protocol so that if someone was interested in getting information on a partner, potential partner, or former partner there is a process they can go through to get an application to get that information.

"There's a risk assessment that is done by the committee then ultimately the information is provided to the individual. It wasn't difficult bringing it forward, as I mentioned before we have one of the highest rates of interpersonal violence in the country, so anything we can do as a province in conjunction with our partners and stakeholders is very important so this was one of those steps."

Local pharmacists ready for arrival of vaccines

Continued from Page 7

"We are going to be off-site, same as we did for the influenza season in the old Sears building. That's where we'll be running our COVID-19 clinics."

She says all the equipment is ready to go to handle Phase 2.

"It has not changed since we did our influenza clinics, it's still set up. We have a couple of semi-private booths there. So we'll have the reception there to greet and direct them, then when the pharmacist is ready to give them their injection, they will be called into one of the booths.

There's also a waiting area there as they'll be required to wait for 15 minutes following the injection."

Hanna says that they are also in a waiting game to see which vaccine they will receive and when they will receive it.

"We're in a waiting game right now. We don't know which vaccine we'll be getting, we don't know how much we'll be getting, we don't know when we'll be getting it. They say the earliest we'll see it is April 1st, but that doesn't mean we'll have it on April 1st," explained Hanna.

She adds that pharmacists have access to online training

material to help prepare them for the different steps necessary to administer the various COVID-19 vaccines.

"I think we're prepared. There are online training courses for each particular vaccine because they all have their own specific details as far as administering them. I have watched some of them, but I'm just waiting for them to let us know which one we're getting so we can do the specific training that is available."

The SHA is hoping to administer the first doses of the COVID-19 vaccine to all Saskatchewan residents who want them by the end of June.



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Community Oncology program expanding

Moosomin program currently serves 70 chemotherapy clients

Equipment purchase through MDHCF will allow more chemotherapy to be offered

BY SPENCER KEMP

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Community Oncology program in Moosomin currently serves about 70 patients, but now is able to accommodate a wider range of chemotherapy options and serve a wider range of patients.

Thanks to donations made to the Moosomin and District Health Care Foundation, the Community Oncology Program of Saskatchewan (COPS) in Moosomin now has the equipment to expand its services.

The COPS program was designed to help patients who need chemotherapy get it closer to home by providing it in smaller communities.

Moosomin is the smallest community in Saskatchewan but part of the Community Oncology Program, originally conceived to expand chemotherapy from the main centres into rural Saskatchewan to bring the treatment closer to the patients.

Manager of Pharmacy Services at the Southeast Integrated Care Centre in Moosomin, Karen McDermaid, says the Foundation purchased the fridge and freezer because the COPS program needed additional space to store chemotherapy treatments.

The fridge was purchased to meet storage standards as other drugs cannot be stored alongside chemotherapy agents.

The freezer was purchased as well to help provide a specific treatment that requires medication to be frozen once mixed.

The fridge and freezer were purchased for an approximate price of \$7,500.

"They purchased a fridge about a year ago and then purchased the freezer. Ultimately that was in association with the Chemotherapy Outreach Program because we can't store things like insulin and other injectable fridge drugs with chemotherapy. And we were getting to the point where we didn't have space because of the number of chemotherapy patients we have. As well, one of the medications we have needs to be in a freezer that is purposed as a hospital freezer. We initially had a household freezer, but we were told we couldn't use that anymore," McDermaid said.

Because pharmacy standards do not permit the use of household freezers or fridges, they had to purchase a new one that has its temperature monitored 24 hours a day with an alarm to alert staff in the event the freezers temperature goes outside its required range.

She says that the new freezer has allowed them to provide a new type of treatment that could only be administered in Regina before the purchase.

"The treatment that is tied with this one is a seven-day a week, every day treatment and the injection takes about ten minutes. We had patients who were driving to Regina every day for seven days just because we didn't have the freezer. So it's an addition to our little space."

She explains that one thing the COPS program does is helps minimize the amount of driving patients need to do to receive treatment.

"What the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency looks at is the number of kilometers you save if you had to drive to Regina and back. Even if you're driving from Redvers to Moosomin, it's a huge difference. Even for the patients as well, depending on the chemotherapy you're getting you may not feel that great after, and knowing you have a two-hour drive ahead of you to get



From left: SEICC Manager of Pharmacy Services Karen McDermaid, pharmacy staff Janelle Schenn, Kate Chegwin, Tracy Buckland Fawcett, and Todd Miskiman, and Moosomin Mayor Larry Tomlinson with the Moosomin & District Health Care Foundation pose with a new fridge and freezer that will allow the South East Integrated Care Centre to provide additional services.

home as opposed to ten minutes. "There are also better support systems here as well with family and friends. So it's just more manageable."

From April to December 2020 alone, patients were saved 84,490 km of driving. To put that into perspective, that would be like driving the full length of the Trans Canada Highway 11 times.

Thanks to the purchase of the freezer, they are now able to carry one more drug that saves local patients trips to Regina.

"The Outreach program is set up so that certain medications that outreach centres can offer and there are different criteria that go into that decision but the one drug that needed the freezer was an approved drug and we could now add that offer it to patients locally."

McDermaid says that it's not just Moosomin residents who utilize the program, but also individuals from nearby communities.

"We have people from Broadview, Redvers, Kipling, Moosomin, Esterhazy, and Rocanville. And we even have people from Manitoba because they see physicians in Moosomin. The next closest centre that does the COPS program is Melville and Estevan and Weyburn."

She says that since the program began in June of 1999 they have been able to provide full services to patients in the area.

"Our involvement is having the pharmacists review the orders when they come in from the cancer clinic and our technicians do the chemotherapy preparations and then we have nurses that are trained for the administration and documentation involved."

She says that the program has around 70 patients from southeast Saskatchewan and southwest Manitoba, but the number fluctuates.

"The numbers go up and down. We are one of the quieter programs in the province, busier than some but when compared to places like Yorkton we're pretty quiet. Our volume fluctuates based on the need within the area. There are times where we could do more, there are times when we do less. We could always expand and do more but it's based on what the need is in the local area."

The COPS program in Moosomin has a team of physicians, nurses, pharmacists, pharmacy technicians with a consultation

to social workers, dietitians, home care, and additional supports where needed as

well as a treatment room with two chairs and a room with a stretcher.

The COPS program is available in Estevan, Humbolt, Kindersley, Lloydminster, Meadow Lake, Melfort, Melville, Moose Jaw, Moosomin, Nipawin, North Battleford, Prince Albert, Swift Current, Tisdale, Weyburn, and Yorkton.



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What's at the Wolseley Archive? Hawker Hurricane fighter aircraft flown by Bev Smiley



Bev Smiley was born and raised in Wolseley. He joined the RAF just before WW2, and became a Prisoner of War, participating in the preparations for The Great Escape.

By STEPHEN SCRIVER

At the Town of Wolseley Archive, we are featuring some pieces of a Hawker Hurricane fighter aircraft that was excavated in France in 2003. When the serial number on the engine was researched, it was found to be the wreck of a fighter flown by P/O Bev Smiley of Wolseley, Saskatchewan. Bev had been shot down on May 23, 1940, flying cover for the British troops who were on their way to evacuate at Dunkirk.

And how did a Canadian get overseas that early in the war? Bev had left Wolseley in the mid-1930s, looking for an adventure. He felt that flying a fighter aircraft for the Royal Air Force might be just the thing. Bev took some training in mining engineering, then found a job in a hard rock mine in Northern Ontario, saving his wages so he could buy passage on a ship to Britain. He would be accepted into the RAF and earn his "wings" in early 1939, being posted to 242 Squadron just in time to see Britain enter World War Two.

On his first sortie over France, Bev was attacked by a dozen ME 109s and put up a good fight before being badly wounded and parachuting into the arms of a German Wehrmacht unit. He remembered being kicked by a few of the soldiers, but was eventually sent to a French hospital, where he got excellent treatment, and when he had fully recovered, began his next adventure as a Prisoner of War.

Bev ended up at Stalag Luft III, where he became heavily involved in organizing sports to keep his fellow POWs busy. He was the organizer of the camp baseball league, which had 52 teams. But the real business of the prisoners was always to escape, and here again, Bev brought his skills to bear. He spent many hours in the construction of the three tunnels, one of many Canadians who took part.

The prisoners who wanted to escape had to draw lots, and only 200 were given the opportunity to make the attempt. Bev wasn't lucky enough to choose a number, but might have been fortunate. Fewer than 80 men made it outside the camp before the tunnel exit was discovered, and only three ever made it to freedom. Of those captured, 50 were shot on the orders of Hitler.

Bev made it back to Canada after the war, and my former neighbour, Elaine (Chatterson) Melvin, said, "Bev was the hero of the town," when he returned to Wolseley

after his demobilization in 1945. He went into the pulp and paper industry post-war and eventually was superintendent of a plant



These pieces of Bev Smiley's downed Hurricane fighter were excavated in France. On the left are the guts and face plate of the altimeter. Top right is a piece of the Perspex or wind-screen, and at bottom right is the face plate of the Turn and Slip Indicator.

near Nanaimo, B.C. He kept up his interest in sports, once playing third for a team that won the Canadian Seniors Curling Championship. He passed away in B.C. in 1986.

Bev and my father were defense partners, and were still teenagers when they played for the Wolseley senior hockey team in the early 1930s. At the end of an away game, as the teams were leaving the ice, Bev approached one of the referees and asked, "Where's your dog, sir?" When the ref answered that he didn't own a dog, Bev quipped, "In this modern age, all blind men have dogs."

When Bev's Hurricane was excavated, a number of the pieces were given to his family. Bev's brother, Dr. Kennedy Smiley of Ottawa, made sure that some of them made their way back to Wolseley. We are grateful to have them as part of the collections in the Town of Wolseley Archive.

1902 bank book

By STEPHEN SCRIVER

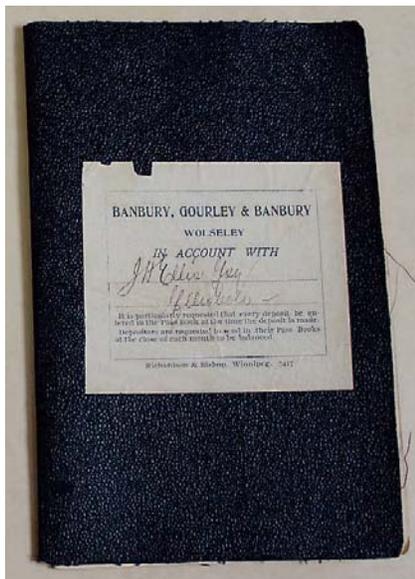
At the Town of Wolseley Archive we have this bank book announcing: "Banbury, Gourley & Banbury Wolseley In Account With" and the name of the depositor is as historic as the previous ones. It's J.H. Ellis, the man who landed in (and later named) Ellisboro, along with Levi Thomson, in 1882.

With a little digging I found that when the Banbury Brothers bought out Gibson Lumber in 1902 (eventually becoming Beaver Lumber), they also came into possession of a bank. It seems that The Bank Act of that day allowed anyone with a good name and some financial backing to establish a bank. Back then the Banbury name was good enough for Mr. Ellis to trust them with his money.

Mr. Gourley was an associate of the Banbury brothers (Edwin and Robert), and it seems he was a valuable colleague, as they gave him equal billing in their bank. He was apparently an astute accountant. But Mr. Gourley left the partnership soon after when he made the mistake of falling in love with a Miss Bray of Wolseley. You see, she was the daughter of the owner of Bray Lumber, the competing lumber yard in Wolseley. Gourley was given an ultimatum by the Banburys, but the heart won over the wallet, and Mr. Gourley left his partnership to take Miss Bray's hand in marriage in 1905.

It didn't take long for Edwin and Robert Banbury to realize they had lost a valuable man, and Gourley was taken back into the fold within a decade. He was an important member of the Board of Directors of Beaver Lumber until his retirement.

The banking industry is now mostly controlled in a few skyscrapers in Eastern Canada, as Wolseley sadly found out only recently. It makes one year for those days when the president of your bank lived just down the street.



This 1902 bankbook at the Town of Wolseley Archive tells of a simpler time when Canadian banking wasn't as strictly regulated as it is now.

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Traditional land use study will record Métis history in southeast Saskatchewan

BY SPENCER KEMP
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

A traditional land use study is underway across southeastern Saskatchewan through the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan. This study aims to help preserve traditional knowledge passed on by Métis Elders in the region.

The Métis Nation Eastern Region III is conducting the study to help preserve the history and culture of the Métis in Saskatchewan.

Co-Chair of the Traditional Land-Use study, Dexter Mondor, says they want to see how deep Métis roots run in Saskatchewan.

He explains that the current generation of Elders are growing older and he believes that it is important to capture their knowledge on the region while there is still time to do so.

"We are doing this so we can discover the broadness of the Métis footprint in the Eastern Region III which is the eastern corner of our province. We're also partnered with Parks Canada through the Motherwell Homestead in the Qu'Appelle Valley. We have received a grant from them and also funding through the Métis Nation Saskatchewan to do this traditional land-use study," Mondor said.

Mondor notes that the rapid expansion of resource development is disturbing and could be

impacting traditional land use by the Métis people.

He explained that the first phase of the study involves interviewing Elders in the area and allowing them to share their stories and history.

"We're interviewing elders, knowledge keepers, and older people in the community. There are lots of them in the Qu'Appelle Valley which is home to lots of Métis people and we're just learning the history and more defining the history, things like where settlements used to be, where people used to live, who they used to work for. Back in the '30s '40s and '50s Métis people were largely farmers. We're learning all that and we're collecting that data and compiling it in one form so we can have access to it."

Mondor says X-Terra has been hired to help them compile the information.

X-Terra is an indigenous-owned company located in Saskatchewan that specializes in environmental im-

pact assessments.

"We hired a company called X-Terra and they do story mapping. Once we've collected all our data and we're happy with our presentation, that story mapping part will become the data that we can share with the public.

"We have working group meetings every week and we've identified locations within our group as to where we want X-Terra to go out and do research.

"They work with lots of industries and all types of groups to map land and do research studies and things like that. What we're doing is our in-house person is interviewing people that are recommended or singled out.

"She's doing all these interviews which are tough during COVID-19. So there are phone interviews, questionnaires going out and a form going out."

The interview mail-out package supplies information about the study. There will also be a short

questionnaire and a list of interview questions the individual can pick from.

Maps will also be provided to help the individuals label and identify Métis settlements, homesteads, and so forth. Consent forms will be attached that are required to be signed for participation.

Mondor explains that when the study is complete, the information will be compiled into an interactive map that will help share the history of the Métis in the area.

He says they are doing this to help share their heritage and history before it is lost.

"You can click on a dot on the map and it will come up with a bunch of information but then

there might also be a person who might have used to live there or had family there and they will share their story through our interview.

"The Métis have always been in Saskatchewan when they moved out from the Red River settlement out of Winnipeg and into three or four key areas in Saskatchewan. But in the '30s and '40s, they were dispersed because the government forced them to leave and changed things. Now we're wanting to reconnect with that history and we realize that some of these knowledge keepers or elders who are passing on and haven't shared their stories, that stuff is lost forever."

Mondor says passing

along the information of the Elders is important to the Métis community.

In the Métis community, Elder is a word that is used for those who are knowledgeable. Elders often hold respect in the Métis community and serve the community by educating others about practices, family traditions, and oral histories as well as contemporary methods.

But the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan is wanting to take this history preserved by the Elders and make it available to everyone who wants to learn of their history and heritage.

Those who have not been contacted but wish to take part in the study or have history to share can email tlus_eriii@sasktel.net

Steven Bonk, MLA for Moosomin Constituency

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Traditional Land Use Study

Métis Nation-Saskatchewan Eastern Region III is conducting a Traditional Land Use Study and we need your help!

The purpose of this study is to collect information from community members of how the land was an important part of family and community life growing up in the Qu'Appelle Valley and surrounding area. The current generation of Elders are growing older and it is very important to capture their traditional knowledge of the Region while there is still time to do so.

The study focuses on MN-S Eastern Region III, which starts near the Qu'Appelle Valley and runs as far south as the US border. ERIII is home to 8 Locals in Fort Qu'Appelle, Lestock, Estevan, Lebret, Weyburn, Sintaluta, Rocanville and Moose Mountain.

For the study to be successful, we need your participation. You control the narrative; you choose the questions. We created a process centered around you and your comfort level.

If interested, please contact us. We will send you an Interview Mail-out Package containing:

- Information about the Study, our Region, etc.
- Interview questions for you to choose from
- A short questionnaire
- Map(s) that you can help label and identify Métis Settlement, Homesteads, etc.
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Moosomin Shriners help family with medical costs

Young Calloway McMullan faces a long road ahead with treatment for cleft palate

BY KEVIN WEEDMARK

The Moosomin Shrine Club has presented \$1,000 to the McMullan family of Moosomin.

The funds are to help Calloway McMullan with medical treatment for a cleft palate.

The Shriners originally sent Calloway to a Shrine Hospital for treatment, and now he is seeing a specialist in Toronto, outside the Shrine system, so the local Shrine Club decided to donate to help with travel expenses.

"Originally we went to Chicago, and it was totally covered by the Shriners, from leaving Moosomin to Chicago," says Shane McMullan, Calloway's father.

"We were actually set to go again, in March of 2020," adds Nicolette, his mother. "We were all ready to go, we had our bags packed and everything and it was that Monday we got a call from the doctor saying don't come because of Covid. His surgery was to be on Wednesday and by Thursday the state had shut down."

"Illinois was on total lockdown that week," adds Shane. "We wouldn't have got out. It was awesome when we were in Chicago. The Shriners had us set up in the Ronald McDonald house in Chicago and they had actually organized our transportation from the Ronald McDonald house to the hospital. To use our cell phones down there it costs so much more. So the Shriners I think even covered that, to get American coverage. It was amazing to have that kind of support."

"We no idea of the Shriners hospital system even," says Shane. "The only thing I knew



\$1,000 donation to McMullan family

The Moosomin Shrine Club presented \$1,000 to the McMullan family to help cover medical expenses for toddler Calloway. From left are Moosomin Shrine Club Vice-President Leo Illustrisimo, Shane, Calloway, and Nicolette McMullan, and Moosomin Shrine Club President Greg Gillespie.

about the Shriners was the circus from when I was a kid."

"They were incredible at the Shriner hospital in Chicago," adds Nicolette.

"He was crawling at that point

and you're in the hospital for the day. So he would crawl out into the hallway and everyone would come and say hi. It's a completely different experience. You don't feel like you're in a hospi-

tal as opposed to when you're at a place like the Regina General."

"It feels like you're staying with family," adds Shane. "But just knowing that we had the support, that the Shriners were

behind us, made a big difference."

The family says young Calloway has a long road ahead of him, with multiple surgeries.

"It's very complex," says Shane. "You need yearly visits to make sure that the bone will be good enough to take. The next step will be once he gets his molars in, they'll put an appliance in his mouth and then that will actually help align everything. He's missing parts of his palate on either side. So they'll put the appliance in and just round it out, and that will be in until he's around six or nine. Then they'll take a piece of bone from his hip, or two pieces, and then they'll put it in both of those voids."

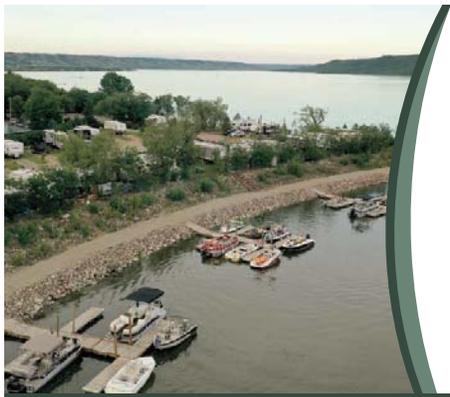
Calloway's father Shane also was born with a cleft palate.

"I have a single unilateral cleft lip and palate," says Shane. "He has bi-lateral. I had a lot of surgeries—my last surgery was at 25 years old. My issue was just one side, uni-lateral, and bi-lateral is both sides, so his is twice as involved as mine."

How did the local Shrine club get involved?

"The fall before last, Calloway hadn't had any surgeries yet I don't think, but I was at a flu clinic at the arena and Bill Thorn just approached me and said the Shriners might be able to help with Calloway."

The family say the financial help from the Shriners is useful, but it means more to simply know they have the group behind them. "It will cover the flights to go to Toronto," said Shane. "It's great to have that support, but it means a lot just to know they're there for us."



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Rod rig training

A rod rig was set up in front of Mantl in Moosomin in March where a four-person crew was being trained to use the rig, which will be working in Southeast Saskatchewan this summer. Troy Smith with Mantl Moosomin says Mantl is hoping to have two of the rigs working in the southeast this summer as activity in the oil industry begins to pick up again. "There will be a lot of reactivation of wells that were shut in a year ago," he says. Mantl owns 33 rod rigs, also known as a flashby. The rigs are different from a traditional service rig which lifts rods and tubing out of the hole. Rod rigs just lift sucker rods, are more cost efficient, rig up time is faster, and they are good for quick jobs.

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The challenges of graduation ceremonies during a pandemic

Much like the high school graduation ceremonies planned last school year during the government mandated shut down of schools, this year too, has its own set of challenges. These challenges lie within the regulations and restrictions outlined by the government of Saskatchewan and school divisions, but also within the community itself.

The limitations in place by the government are intended to keep the people of the province safe during the pandemic. However, these guidelines are ambiguous and largely left up to interpretation—interpretations which can vary and create so many more questions than answers. These questions circle around logistics and capabilities and reality. How can a plan be safely executed in such a way that celebrates the graduates and appeals to the majority? Can we have a ceremony in a parking lot? Does the class have to be arbitrarily divided into two or even three groups to have multiple ceremonies? What space can accommodate this? And most importantly how can we regulate crowds, bystanders and participants to follow government mandates?

No matter what interpretations are brought forward, decisions require a rubber stamp of approval from the school division before planning can proceed.

In addition, planning can only go so far. The guidelines are ever changing depending on transmission rates and regional cases. To add yet another denominator to the equation, there are now variants of concern. These are significant factors which will impact the next set of regulations and guidelines to come out. It is unclear what regulations mid-April will look like and planning is paused until these are made public. This will directly impact the ability of communities and households to gather and celebrate the Class of 2021. Much like



Shayna Zubko

last school year, so much is uncertain. All of this uncertainty has an emotional side, affecting the planners, families and the graduates themselves. Decision making is challenging since there are so many emotions involved. Frustration levels can be high on both sides of planning.

The school's hands are tied because of the limitations which have been outlined. No one wants to be responsible for an outbreak or being the small-town graduation ceremony that makes it on the evening news for all the wrong reasons. Most schools have had a well-oiled machine in their previous years of graduation ceremonies, therefore it is frustrating to have to throw out the old program and create something new and yet it is understandable why it is necessary. Of course, schools and staff would prefer to celebrate the successes of students who they have watched grow, learn, and succeed. It is frustrating to not be able to accommodate the wants of the parents and students because of regulations.

Either way, graduation is the time when students will cross the finish line in the metaphorical race of high school and teachers have been there to pass them water, Gatorade and snacks along the way. They have been torch bearers and baton carriers too. Schools want to do what is best, with what has been thrown at them. But, like so much during this pandemic, restrictions and limitations have prevented the normal of the past.

Shayna Zubko is a teacher at Esterhazy High School.



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Kevin Weedmark took this aerial photo of crops near Moosomin.



Farmland prices strong, stable, FCC reports

Canada's farmland market remained strong and stable during a year marked by economic turbulence caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, according to the latest Farm Credit Canada (FCC) Farmland Values Report.

The average value of Canadian farmland increased by 5.4 per cent in 2020, slightly more than the 5.2 per cent increase reported in 2019.

In Saskatchewan, average farmland values increased by 5.4 per cent in 2020, following gains of 6.2 per cent in 2019 and 7.4 per cent in 2018.

Manitoba farmland values increased by an average of 3.6 per cent in 2020, following a 4 per cent increase in 2019.

The report, which describes changes in Canada's farmland values from Jan. 1 to Dec. 31, 2020, covers almost an entire year of disruptions caused by the pandemic. For Canadian agriculture, disruptions included temporary food processing plant closures, some displaced exports, sector-specific labor shortages and significantly altered consumer buying habits.

"Since land is the most valuable asset on any farm operation, the agriculture land market is a good barometer for measuring the strength of Canadian agriculture," said J.P. Gervais, FCC's chief economist. "Despite having gone through a uniquely volatile year, farm income generally improved and the overall demand for farmland remained strong throughout 2020."

Despite important supply chain disruptions caused by the pandemic, commodity prices climbed in the last half of 2020 for many crops and interest rates kept close to historic lows. Domestic demand for food remained strong and global supply chains continued to have an appetite for Canadian food and commodity exports, Gervais noted.

"Producer investments in farmland are a reflection of their confidence and optimism," he said. "Agriculture presents opportunities as producers seek to expand, diversify or transfer their operations to the next generation."

The highest average provincial increase for farmland in 2020 was in British Columbia and Quebec, with averages of eight and 7.3 per cent, respectively. Alberta followed with a six-per-cent increase and Saskatchewan mirrored the national average increase of 5.4 per cent.

Ontario and Manitoba both reported increases that were lower than the national average at 4.7 and 3.6 per cent, respectively.

Farmland values across the prairies were mainly influenced by tenants purchasing land from landlords, neighbour-to-neighbour sales, producers buying or selling land to gain operational efficiencies and family farm purchases to support succession plans.

Atlantic provinces saw the smallest average farmland value increases in 2020. Prince Edward Island reported an increase of 2.3 per cent, Nova Scotia's increase was 1.6 per cent and New Brunswick had a 1.3-per-cent increase. This follows more significant increases in 2019.

Weather played a significant factor in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, as well as other parts of the Atlantic provinces in 2020. The region experienced the worst drought in decades during the critical growing season, which significantly diminished the value of cash crops, as well as created hay and forage shortages.

There was an insufficient number of publicly reported sales in Newfoundland and Labrador to fully assess farmland values in that province.

Increases in farmland values reported across the country are as wide and varied as the factors that may have influenced them. Average farmland values have increased every year since 1993; however, increases were more pronounced from 2011 to 2015 in many different regions. Since then, Canada has seen more moderate single-digit increases in average farmland values.

Gervais said producers should have and maintain a risk management plan that takes into account possible economic changes, ensuring their budgets have room to flex if commodity prices, yields or interest rates shift. They also need to exercise caution, especially in regions where the growth rate of farmland values exceeded that of farm income in recent years.

"The pandemic has underscored the value of having a comprehensive risk management plan that covers all risks areas: production, marketing, financial, legal and human resources," he said. "Farm operators need to have the financial ability to protect their operations from the potential impact of risks that may not be on their ra-

dar. Fluctuations in commodity prices and interest rates and/or unforeseen variations in production can diminish the ability to safeguard and build equity in the operation and successfully meet cash flow requirements."

Given the uncertain economic environment, Gervais recommends farmers, ranchers and food processors continue to thoroughly evaluate their investments.

Saskatchewan

Saskatchewan's average farmland value increased 5.4 per cent in 2020, the same as the national average. This follows an in-

crease of 6.2 per cent in 2019, which came close to mirroring the national average increase of 5.2 per cent for that year.

Much of Saskatchewan received excessive moisture at the beginning of June, which caused some localized flooding, although the moisture received in early July was desperately needed. There were no delays in harvest, and yields were generally average throughout the province with some areas reporting higher-than-average yields, which contributed to improved farm incomes and stronger demand for farmland.

Continued on page 35



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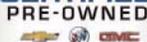


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125,000-acre initiative aims to conserve Canadian prairies through collaboration with ranchers

Ducks Unlimited Canada, McDonald's Canada and Cargill support expansion of Canadian grazing land and forages to help combat impacts of climate change and protect wildlife



Beef farmers and ranchers play an important role in providing quality food, but few people know they also play an essential role in protecting Canada's land, water and wildlife. With the urgency of unprecedented environmental challenges, like climate change, Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) has teamed up with McDonald's Canada and Cargill to support rancher-led work through a \$5-million CAD Forage Program. The program will work to return 125,000 acres (50,585 hectares) of cropland to grass and pasture by 2025.

In response to growing climate concerns, returning less productive annual cropland to perennial grass helps remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Collectively, the impact of this program is comparable to removing 75,000 metric tonnes of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere—the same as the emissions from driving 299 million kilometres in an average passenger vehicle. Perennial grass cover also provides habitat for prairie wildlife.

"In North America's prairie ecosystems, cattle help ensure the sustainability of grasslands," said Karla Guyn, chief executive officer for DUC. "Cattle fertilize the soil and help maintain plant biodiversity through grazing, controlling invasive grasses and allowing other species to thrive."

"For decades, we've worked with Canadian cattle farmers and ranchers to conserve natural habitat on their land," said Guyn. "This initiative builds on their long-standing environmental stewardship while providing opportunities to help

support their operations. We're grateful to have strong partners in Cargill and McDonald's that recognize the importance of natural habitats as part of sustainable agriculture."

Grasslands are some of the world's most productive and diverse ecosystems, but these habitats and the species they support continue to be lost at alarming rates. Canada's prairies contain wetlands, lakes, rivers and valleys that provide habitat to more than 60 wildlife species at risk. This project will help expand habitat and provide enhanced water quality, as grasslands naturally filter harmful nutrients from water.

The support from McDonald's and Cargill allows DUC to provide farmers and ranchers incentives via discounted seed and technical support to help establish the forage on their land. In return, program participants agree to maintain the forage for 10 years.

"The result is a healthy, productive landscape where ranchers can graze their herd or harvest hay and a diversity of wildlife thrive," said Guyn.

McDonald's and Cargill are market leaders in Canadian beef. Both have made sustainability a cornerstone of how they do business, recognizing the role they play in advancing responsible food production. These companies are investing \$1.25 million CAD in the Forage Program over the next five years, with DUC adding \$3.75 million CAD through matching programs.

"This initiative is an example of how McDonald's is driving toward our global cli-

mate change commitment by supporting beef farmers and ranchers in their efforts to implement practices that reduce greenhouse emissions," says Nicole Zeni, senior manager, supply chain management, McDonald's Canada. "Here in Canada, we'll continue to collaborate with our partners, working together to create change and positive outcomes for farmers, ranchers, communities and the planet."

This collaboration also supports Cargill's BeefUp Sustainability initiative, which seeks to reduce greenhouse gas emissions throughout the company's North American beef supply chain by 30 per cent by 2030. Cargill has launched sev-

eral initiatives and three other programs to support this goal.

"At Cargill, we are in a unique position to drive sustainable beef production across North America. Through this project, we are partnering with Canadian ranchers to show how cattle are a force for good in conserving this critical ecosystem of soil, grassland and wildlife habitats," says Heather Tansey, sustainability lead for Cargill's global protein and animal nutrition and health businesses. "By working hand in hand, we can scale realistic solutions that address sustainability challenges and feed the world."

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Canadian food autonomy takes a big step forward

We learned recently that McCain Foods has upped the ante in TruLeaf Sustainable Agriculture and its wholly-owned subsidiary GoodLeaf Farms, Canada's largest commercial vertical farming operation.

McCain has invested \$65 million in GoodLeaf, making it the single largest shareholder in the venture. The idea is to create a national network of sustainable vertical farms that will bring fresh produce to several urban markets in the country.

These are exactly the type of projects we need in Canada. GoodLeaf has come a long way from its humble beginnings in an abandoned school in Bible Hill, Nova Scotia. It now operates a fully-automated 45,000-square-foot facility in Guelph, Ontario, and is looking to expand its operations nationally, with McCain's support.

These are highly capital-intensive projects and getting a private sector leader in partnership is nothing short of a coup. The company has the technological experience and expertise to do well.

McCain brings to the table far more than just cash. The company is probably one of Canada's best agri-food vertical integrators. It understands supply chain economics very well. The potato industry in Canada is amazingly well-coordinated, mostly due to McCain's leadership. From farm to fork, farmers, distributors and even food service, including players like McDonald's, all work together to improve efficiency and quality.

Last year, McCain had to deal with a 300-million-pound glut of potatoes due to the closure of thousands of restaurants. More than 75 per cent of fries are consumed through food service. Most of the glut was rerouted or repurposed within months, and 12 months later, the industry is back on



Sylvain Charlebois

its feet.

While milk was being dumped everywhere, the potato industry regrouped and got it done. It was an impressive feat.

McCain's ability to work the food chain will help GoodLeaf. Since these projects are about generating business in a high-volume, low-margin environment, risks can be high. Dealing with grocers is never easy but understanding the stock-keeping unit (SKU) game and what happens in grocery stores will be critical. These partnerships are key for Canada's ongoing pursuit of more food autonomy.

Food autonomy is about moving the needle on domestic production. It's not about food sovereignty, which fosters the desire to produce and regulate everything within our borders. An autonomous food system is about building production capacity in an open economy.

Investing in controlled-environment agriculture (CEA) is about optimizing growing conditions for any crops, throughout the year, regardless of weather patterns. CEA technologies have come a long way to include hydroponics, aeroponics, aquaculture and aquaponics.

There are several ways to grow crops effectively and safely. GoodLeaf uses hydroponic techniques to produce sustainable, safe, pesticide-free, nutrient-dense leafy greens, very

much what a growing number of consumers are looking for. Vertical farming also knows no limitations when designing a supply chain. To reduce logistical requirements and increase product quality and freshness, vertical farms can be built in cities, in suburbs, anywhere. Growing microgreens or produce generates no smell, unlike livestock.

The potential is substantial, especially for a country like Canada where produce price volatility has historically given consumers sticker shock. According to NielsenIQ numbers, vegetable prices over the last 12 months have increased by almost 11 per cent. Some products, like tomatoes and cauliflower, have seen higher increases.

When healthy food is perceived as financially out of reach, some consumers will walk away and their nutrition will suffer.

With climate change, CEA and vertical farming can become humanity's best friend, no matter where you live in the world.

Conventional outdoor agriculture has also come a long way but it remains highly vulnerable to a variety of uncontrollable factors. So the McCain-GoodLeaf partnership is a step in the right direction. We have access to clean water, clean energy and affordable land in Canada, compared to other places. All the main elements are there for this growth.

But \$65 million is still a very modest sum compared to what we're seeing elsewhere in the industrialized world.

AppHarvest, an agri-tech company operating one of the world's largest CEA facilities in Morehead, Ky., became a publicly-traded company in the fall. The transition provides AppHarvest with more than \$600 million of unrestricted cash, which will primarily be used to fund operations and the building of many other facilities around the United States.

With climate change affecting crops in Florida, Arizona and California, coupled with the emergence of better soil and plant science, agri-tech clearly has the attention of many investors. The pandemic just made the issue even more obvious. America has now over 50 major vertical farming operations, with more to come.

We have much to do in Canada to catch up. But this new McCain-GoodLeaf venture should be a good case study.

Dr. Sylvain Charlebois is senior director of the agri-food analytics lab and a professor in food distribution and policy at Dalhousie University.

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You can't pour from an empty cup

Mental health resiliency in turbulent times

BY KYLE ANDERSON, M.A.,
BRIDGES HEALTH

It is said that the only constant in life is change, and there is no better example of this than the current Covid-19 pandemic, which has caused momentous changes in the ways we live our lives.

With so many individuals experiencing fear, uncertainty, and stress, mental health concerns are on the rise.

Agricultural producers face unique stressors, including financial uncertainty, community isolation, and work pressures, all of which contribute to higher levels of depression, anxiety, and stress. It is more important than ever to make sure that mental health is a priority for ourselves, our families, and communities.

Resiliency is a skill that can be actively learned and applied to improve mental wellbeing. When considering how to improve resilience, here are a few elements that are important to consider:



Maintain connections

Having supportive social relationships ensures we do not feel alone during challenging times. While some individuals have a natural reaction to withdraw and isolate, it is important to accept support from those who care about you. Displaying vulnerability and asking for help is a sign of strength, not weakness.

Focus on what you can control

Highly stressful events are inevitable, but you can change how you interpret and respond to them. If we put too much focus on things that are out of our control, feelings of stress and anxiety will only multiply. Instead, put your time and energy into matters you can control, such as your attitude, your effort, and problem-solving solutions.

Nurture a positive self-view

Often we are our own harshest critic. Be aware of your internal dialogue and challenge any negative self-talk. Display self-compassion by speaking to yourself the way you would talk to a loved one, use positive self-affirmations, and give yourself permission to make mistakes.

Maintain boundaries

It is important to set and maintain healthy boundaries around physical space, time, and emotional energy. Not having healthy boundaries can cause us to become overwhelmed and burnt out, so do not be afraid to strengthen your

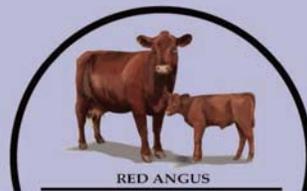
"NO" muscle!

Engage in self-care

"You can't pour from an empty cup." Prioritize time to look after yourself so that when setbacks inevitably occur you are in a better position to respond effectively. Exercise, healthy eating, meditation, and hobbies are a few general areas of self-care. Do what works for you!

When we strengthen these skills on a regular basis, we are better equipped to handle challenges when they arise. Try checking in with yourself each day by asking, "how do I feel right now?" This increases self-awareness and helps you identify when problems are occurring, allowing you to adjust before the situation worsens.

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USask scientists help find the key to decoding rye genome

An international team led by the IPK Leibniz Institute in Germany and including University of Saskatchewan (USask) researchers has succeeded in completely decoding the genome of rye, despite its large size and complexity.

Rye is a distinctly climate-resistant cereal plant that is of considerable importance for Germany and northeastern Europe. In Canada, most rye is grown in Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

At USask, the research team includes professor Curtis Pozniak, director of USask's Crop Development Centre and Ministry of Agriculture Strategic Research Program Chair in Durum and High-Yield Wheat Breeding and Genetics, plant molecular geneticist Andrew Sharpe, director of Genomics and Bioinformatics at USask's Global Institute for Food Security (GIFS), Sean Walkowiak (Pozniak's former research officer, now research scientist for Canadian Grain Commission), bioinformatics analyst Brook Byrns, and plant sciences emeritus professor Brian Fowler.

"Rye is one of the most cold-tolerant cereal crops and can survive the harshest winters typical of the Canadian Prairies," said Pozniak. "The genome sequence of rye points to important genes that could be used to enhance the cold tolerance of other important winter crops, including wheat."

The results published today in the journal *Nature Genetics* are promising for both science and breeding. Rye offers access to a diverse gene pool, not only for rye breeding but also for wheat breeding.

"The delivery of the rye genome represents the work of a large and dedicated group of partners across the world," said Sharpe. "These results are significant, as they provide a complete genome that is closely related to other grass crop species such as wheat and barley, thus allowing a deeper insight into the evolutionary relationships between them."



Rye only became a pure cultivated species 5,000 to 6,000 years ago. Its complex genome has just been fully decoded for the first time.

All the research data is available to the general public, meaning the extensive genetic diversity of rye can be systematically discovered and used by breeders in a more targeted approach.

"The comparatively low economic importance on a global scale, combined with the great complexity of the genome, interfered with rye getting into the focus of the international research community and thus its genome sequence has been revealed only recently," explained professor Nils Stein, lead of the research group Genomics of Genetic Resources at IPK and holder of a joint professorship at the University of Göttingen.

Rye shares a close and long evolution-

ary history with barley and wheat. However, its role as an important crop is much shorter. While barley and wheat were domesticated about 10,000 years ago in the so-called Fertile Crescent of the Near East, rye initially spread to Northern Europe as a weed growing in barley and wheat fields. Gradually, rye adopted the characteristics of its two "big brothers" before becoming a purely cultivated species 5,000-6,000 years ago.

There are important biological differences between rye and its two relatives: rye is fertilized through cross-pollination, thus individual genetic traits cannot be "fixed" as easily as in a self-fertile plant species, and the rye genome is highly

complex, which is mainly due to the large number of highly repeated DNA segments.

Knowing the reference sequence makes it easier to transfer positive properties of rye, such as resistances, to wheat without negatively affecting baking properties, for example.

"For example, resistance genes from rye can be transferred to wheat through classical cross-breeding, which has already been used repeatedly in the past," said Stein. "So the significance of our research extends far beyond rye."

"The technical prerequisites for sequencing such a complex genome are available today," Stein emphasized.

The research used homozygous seeds from the plant breeding company KWS SAAT SE & Co. KGaA.

"The new genome sequence of our inbred line Lo7 is a great technological achievement and an important step forward towards a more comprehensive genetic characterisation of this crop," said Andres Gordillo, lead of rye breeding at KWS.

"It will considerably enhance breeding progress and, therefore, the attractiveness of rye. More specific, it will substantially improve our ability to link resistance traits observed in the field with their underlying genes and their location on the rye genome."

Parallel to the work of the international research team led by Stein, Chinese researchers created a reference sequence of a Chinese landrace.

"We worked very well with our Chinese colleagues, which ultimately brought great added value for rye breeding and research. We were able to use two different methods to study two very different rye varieties, of which the complete reference sequences are now available," said Stein. "With these two studies, rye has caught up with barley and wheat and is in the middle of the genome research era."

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Calls up to Farm Stress Line



BY SPENCER KEMP
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Many producers have turned to the Farm Stress Line to help deal with some of the stress and feelings of isolation brought on by the job.

Acting Executive Director of Saskatchewan Mobile Crisis Services which oversees the Farm Stress Line, Jan Thorson, says that in the past quarter of 2020 the agency an increase in calls followed by a seasonal decrease.

"I can certainly say for the last quarter with what we have statistically available to us, yes we did see an up-take over the summer and into the fall. We don't have our early winter statistics back yet, but I would suggest that there's been a slight drop-off just because of the time of year and the stresses of farming aren't as great in the winter in many cases. We suspect that will turn around again in the spring and we will see more calls to the line," Thorson said.

The Farm Stress Line provides a service to producers in Saskatchewan who feel the pressure of their job and provides an opportunity to normalize their concerns.

"The Farm Stress Line is a gateway service. It's a place to bring your immediate concerns, talk with a professionally trained counselor who can help you normalize some of the things you're going through, and help you decide if you need more help. We have a resource bank of referrals that we can make for people if they feel they need more help. I think the main thing we do is provide normalization, assure people that this is a normal response to a very difficult situation across the globe. We encourage them to call us at any time as often as they need to if that will be helpful for them," said Thorson.

Concerns raised by producers were largely around the stress of being isolated during the pandemic, with the public health orders making it difficult to meet in person. Thorson noted that the increase in isolation due to the pandemic has led to increased depression amongst the producers who have contacted them.

"The main issues brought up to us are around mental health concerns, concerns about depression, isolation, those kinds of things. Family disputes and addictions too."

Thorson explained that they have been implementing a new system to help track COVID-19 related concerns from producers as they currently do not have a system in place.

This new system as it's implemented will provide Mobile Crisis Services with additional information and will better allow them to keep track of statistics.

"It's not something that we track specifically with our statistics, but we made some changes so we will be

able to do that, but it won't be until down the road until we get that data back. But I think what's been hard for farmers has been the isolation that the current health orders have produced. And I'd say that across the board for all our clients, that's been very difficult for people, particularly people who live alone or do not have access to a friend or family group, don't have great wi-fi or internet access."

With the stress of COVID-19 at the forefront of many producer's minds, Thorson reminds farmers of a few ways to deal with some of the stress.

"I would say, particularly during COVID, it's very important to maintain contact with your friends or family, whether that be through telephone calls or zoom meetings. I would really encourage them to reach out to someone they're close to at least once a day."

Thorson also reminds producers to participate in some self-care, which can help reduce stress.

"Go easy on yourself, everybody is suffering right

now and it's okay to not be managing this as well as you may think you should be. Whatever you feel you need to do to make yourself feel better is fine unless it's destructive. Eat properly, get some rest, exercise, all those things contribute to your overall well-being all the time and they're particularly important during a pandemic."

If a producer is feeling that they need additional help, Thorson says that they provide recommendation services to callers who feel they may need them. This service gets callers in contact with professionals who can better help them.

Thorson explained that they see seasonal increases and decreases in calls to the Farm Stress Line, but have been seeing more since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Farm Stress Line is available 24/7 and can be reached at 1-800-667-4442

The Mobile Crisis Services also provides services for gambling addictions and a suicide hotline as well as a general crisis hotline for those who need it.

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Boost for USask research to bolster beef production with better biology approaches

A multi-agency research team led by University of Saskatchewan (USask) veterinary reproductive biologist Dr. Gregg Adams (DVM, PhD) aims to make rapid strides in improving the productivity, efficiency, and sustainability of Canada's \$18-billion beef sector by integrating advances from the field of omics into livestock production.

"USask has an amazing facility and program centred around the Livestock and Forage Centre of Excellence (LFCE), and expertise in all areas of livestock production, but one thing that has been missing is a genomic component," said Adams.

Genomics and other omics tools in biological science—such as phenomics, microbiomics, proteomics—involve the study of the appearance, structure and behaviour of animals, their microbiomes and cell proteins. Researchers have made tremendous progress in these areas over the past decade, and they can now use these advanced tools for extensive livestock production, he said.

The beef cattle industry is tremendously important in the West, with Saskatchewan and Alberta probably accounting for 70 per cent of Canada's beef production, Adams said. Consequently, even incremental changes in performance translate into big gains in economic value and job growth.

Adams' Integrated omics for sustainable animal agriculture and environmental stewardship (IntegrOmics) project has been awarded \$6.75 million over five years by the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI), with another \$10.1 million expected from



Cattle at the USask Livestock and Forage Centre for Excellence (LFCE) in January, 2020.

Christina Weese photo

institutional partners, private industry and vendor in-kind support.

By bringing together experts in microbiology, epidemiology, reproductive biology and forage nutrition, the project aims to integrate the advances in omics tools to address challenges in the beef industry such as disease management, fertility improvement and environmental impact mitigation—something already in place in the dairy, hog and poultry industries.

The first step is to gather reams of previously unavailable behavioural and other physical data on beef cattle by placing multispectral cameras in pastures and close confinement areas and linking the information with gene markers for desired traits, said Adams.

"Once we identify these markers—the genomic characteristics that relate to performance, we can actually begin to collect the genetic material—the germplasm, embryos and semen from those individuals that have desirable

characteristics," he said.

The goal of IntegrOmics is to make it easier for cattle producers to identify and breed animals with desired traits such as better meat quality, stronger disease immunity, healthy uterine and semen microbiomes, shorter gestation periods, and good maternal behaviour and heavier calf weights at weaning.

To accommodate the collection, processing, sorting and cryopreserving of bulls' semen and cows' eggs, and creating and preserving

embryos, IntegrOmics is establishing a biobank at the LFCE that fits hand-in-glove with the genomic tools researchers will use. The biobank will serve the needs of the beef livestock industry as well as bison conservation efforts—the other facet of Adams' research included in the CFI award.

As well, IntegrOmics researchers are using genomics to develop rapid diagnostic tools for diseases and antimicrobial resistance that have been troublesome for the beef industry.

"If we can put these tools in the hands of diagnosticians or farmers themselves, they can report the results immediately—within hours or a day rather than having to wait days or even weeks—then we can cut the head off an epidemic, or certainly focus on appropriate antibiotics," said Adams.

"This project has been two years in the making, and it's created a lot of enthusiasm and momentum," he said. "Once the infrastructure and equipment are in place and we become proficient in its use, the impact will be felt for a generation or more."

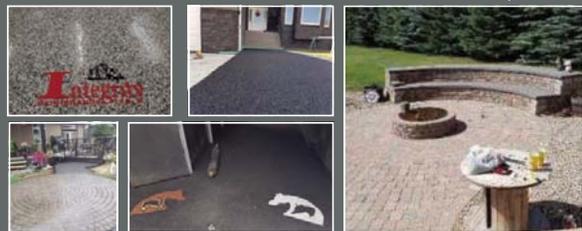
USask researchers on the IntegrOmics project include: Cheryl Waldner, Janet Hill, Dinesh Dadarwal and Jaswant Singh, all from the Western College of Veterinary Medicine, and Matthew Links from the College of Agriculture and Bioresources. Other team members are Gabriela Mastrodonato (Toronto Zoo); Jocelyn Poissant (University of Calgary); Graham Plastow (University of Alberta); and Muhammad Anzar (Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada).



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Keep business and personal finances separate

BY RICHARD KAMCHEN

Separate your farm business and other finances to better understand your operation's performance and remove unnecessary headaches from the tax season.

"It's good business practice, and it's good personal finance practice," says Vanessa Stockbrugger, founder of Womencents.

Mingling finances only complicates things and misses getting a clear picture of how your farm and household are running, she says.

Prevent blending

One of the best ways to keep your business and personal finances separate is to have separate bank accounts and credit cards, says Erich Weber, business finance specialist with Ontario Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

He also recommends separating assets, ensuring farm assets are under the farm name, while personal assets are kept in your personal name.

Other income

Financial mingling can also be an issue for those generating outside income.

When working off-farm, tax deductions are taken off every cheque, with the net amount ideally going into your personal account, Stockbrugger says. But if it winds up in the farm account, you can't know where you're drawing money from, she adds.

Issues also could arise during tax season when you'll need clarity on how revenue will be taxed, adds Manitoba Agriculture farm management specialist Sharon Ardron.

Risks

It's important to have separate bank accounts, especially if the farm is incorporated, as there's a corporate tax for the business and a separate personal income tax, Stockbrugger says.

Weber says including a personal expense or asset on your farm income tax return can lead to your income tax returns being filed incorrectly, resulting in higher tax owing and possible penalties, with perhaps added accounting costs.

Another danger of not separating finances is causing a shortfall in farm working capital that might have been needed to cover business obligations, Ardron says.

Digitize

One way to navigate these waters is to use farm accounting software that allows users to separate their

books. Separate accounts can help in determining if the farm is truly self-sustaining, notes Laurier Poirier, FCC AgExpert product specialist.

Covid-19 financial support for farmers has heightened the importance of accurate bookkeeping as governments seek specific figures.

"The better your bookkeeping, the easier it is to apply or qualify for different programs," Poirier says.

The pandemic has also factored into the growing popularity of AgExpert's web-based subscription, he notes.

With the challenges of in-person meetings, it makes accounts more accessible and easier to share.

Remember these tips:

- Keep your farm finances and assets separate
- Separate books benefit farm and household analysis
- Don't overpay taxes by mingling revenues and expenses
- AgExpert simplifies bookkeeping while enhancing accessibility and sharing

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Richardson International doubling capacity of Yorkton canola crushing plant

By BRIAN ZINCHUK
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Canola is riding a wave these days, and on March 22, Winnipeg-based Richardson International Limited is announcing a significant investment in their canola crush plant in Yorkton. In addition to doubling its processing capacity to 2.2 million metric tonnes, the project will optimize operational efficiencies and modernize the facility to meet an ever-growing global demand for canola oil and canola meal products.

The facility is one of two canola crushing plants that were built on the northwest corner of Yorkton a little over a decade ago, with the neighbouring plant operated by Louis Dreyfus Company. Together, they have made Yorkton an important hub for canola processing, and this new announcement will expand upon that.

In a release, Richardson said that when completed, the Yorkton facility will include a high-speed shipping system with three 9,500-foot loop tracks, complementing infrastructure currently in place. It will be situated roughly to the northeast of the existing facility.

Loop tracks have become commonplace throughout the United States as the most efficient manner to load unit trains, and they are becoming the norm in Canada, as well. Richardson Pioneer, itself, announced on March 15 that it would be building a loop track for a new 36,600 metric tonne elevator at Swan River, Man. Its new high-throughput elevator near Grande Prairie, Alta., will also have a loop track, as well as one built at another new elevator High Level, Alta., in recent years.

The Yorkton facility will be served by both major railways, Canadian Pacific and CN, and will be dedicated to moving canola crush products "at some of the most efficient levels seen in North America."

Additional facility upgrades and improvements will effectively double processing capacity in excess of 2.2 million metric tonnes of seed. The site will also have three high-speed receiving lanes, providing producers and trucking partners a fast and effective means for seed delivery.

The development includes the purchase of 240-acres of city-owned industrial land adjacent to the existing site. The existing plant falls within the Rural Municipality of Orkney.

"We opened the original Yorkton plant in 2010 and at that time, it was by far the largest capital investment Richardson had ever undertaken," Richardson International president and CEO Curt Vossen said. "Saskatchewan and Manitoba producers have responded effectively, providing growth in canola production over the years - this has given us the confidence to move forward

with expansion once again. We have appreciated the encouragement and cooperation of the rural municipality of Orkney, the city of Yorkton, and the province of Saskatchewan."

As a significant supplier to the global canola market, Richardson said it has been focused on improved operational efficiencies, modernization, and automation. With \$120 million recently invested in their Lethbridge, Alberta crush plant, this latest investment in Yorkton will provide additional opportunities to producers to market their oilseed crop, it said.

When asked how much of an investment the Yor-

ton expansion would be, Richardson spokesperson Kelcey Vossen said they were not able to share that at the moment.

"The global outlook for Canadian canola oil is promising, and this latest investment emphasizes our ongoing commitment to best-in-class facilities," said Darrell Sobkow, Richardson senior vice-president, Processing, Food, and Ingredients. "Yorkton lies right in the heart of canola country and we are focused on providing our producer customers with increasingly efficient means for meeting the needs of a growing global consumptive market."

Scratching dirt

Richardson said construction will begin immediately with no disruption to current operations and is expected to be completed in early 2024. During the construction phase, there will be significant opportunities for employment within the area and upon completion, the company expects to add full-time positions to the plant. "This state-of-the-art facility represents a good news story for all industry participants - for our producer customers and end-use buyers across North America and abroad," said Keith Belitski, director of operations, Yorkton. "A construction

project of this magnitude will be significant, economically, to the province of Saskatchewan, the city of Yorkton, and surrounding areas."

Kelcey Vossen said that the construction crew would be "in the dozens," as would future additional employment, once completed. That number would likely be disclosed later, she said.

"This is a significant investment in our province that will create local jobs, support economic recovery and help our province continue to grow," Trade and Export Development Minister Jeremy Harrison said in a government news

release. "As the world recovers from the economic impacts of the pandemic, there remains a growing need for the food products Saskatchewan produces, such as canola oil and canola meal, and we appreciate this investment and expansion at Richardson's Yorkton canola crush plant, which will help meet that demand. Our government is committed to maintaining a competitive business environment to attract these types of investments, which will benefit all Saskatchewan residents, and we look forward to working with Richardson on this important project."

Continued on page 33



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How to build strong relationships with kids who return to the farm

BY MATT MCINTOSH

Children returning to the family farm from higher education, or another career often bring new ideas and perspectives with them. They also have hopes and expectations, just like the older generation.

For some farm families, realistic planning and open communication are critical to achieving those expectations. Only then can they converge on what most benefits the farm business and those involved.

For Lauren Maurer and her husband Ryan, farmers from Grenfell, Sask., bringing the next generation into the farm begins with a spreadsheet. They use it to document everyone's goals and what they see themselves doing on the farm for the next few years.

This basic visual allows them to discuss how the goals could be achieved – and if they're realistic.

"It's a way of communicating and allowing her to take a step," says Maurer about their daughter (one of their three children), who now manages most of the farm's financial records.

Maurer uses a red light, yellow light, green light system in conjunction with the spreadsheet. Ideas deemed workable get the greenlight and those requiring more work receive yellow.

In cases where the younger generation's goals are not perceived to make sense or not supported by the older generation, instead of an immediate red light, they hold roundtable discussions to see if they can



find middle ground.

Children bringing new ideas to the business are more likely to succeed if Maurer sees them accompanied by numbers and depth. In other words, do the math, and develop a multi-year plan.

Fundamentally, she believes all parties must agree on why the farm

exists – particularly since tangible goals can and often do change. If that's not possible, open communication can also help ensure a problem-free exit.

"Having more people multiplies your world. We need to align everyone's vision," she says. "If we want to go in two directions, then

we probably need to part. But if we can find synergy, why not?"

Encouraging the next generation to continually learn and keep a team of trusted advisors is one of several strategies used by Garnet Martin, a farmer from Watrous, Sask.

As a guest on a transition-focused episode of FCC Knowledge

Podcast: Talking Farm and Food, Martin described reiterating to returning family how they should not expect to know and do everything. The right people can help you weather tough times and make better business decisions.

"Surround yourself with knowledgeable people, successful people, and understand that you've got a lot to learn. And I'm not saying that to be mean to a young person. But sometimes you come in, and you know, 'Oh, I know how to do this. This is going to be easy.' No, it's not," he says.

"You've got to start learning... build a really strong team in all the different areas you want to learn."

Like Maurer, Martin believes being open about what everyone expected was critical in his own succession story.

"We looked at everybody's goals and everything, and we couldn't lock everything in stone and give a direct map of how this would play out. But we had a very good sense of everybody, and everybody was aboard."

Welcoming the younger generation back to the farm can sometimes be tricky. Embracing new ideas and learnings while moderating enthusiasm can be a fine line. Creating a spreadsheet with family members' goals and vision of their place on the farm in the years ahead may help bring some reality to the new ideas. It also helps when fresh concepts are researched, well thought-out and planned.

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The RM of Antler Council is accepting tenders for lots available in Antler, SK. These lots will be sold as is and most are not serviced. The lots are subject to a Base Tax of \$235.00 for each lot grouping listed below. The lots that are available for tender are as follows and available as grouped:

- Lots 1-2 Block 1
- Lot 22 Block 2
- Lots 19-20 Block 4
- Lots 3-6 Block 1
- Lot 26 Block 2
- Lots 1-7 Block 5
- Lots 11-13 Block 1
- Lots 1-3 Block 3
- Lot 13 Block 5
- Lots 14-15 Block 1
- Lots 14-15 Block 3
- Lots 14-16 Block 6
- Lots 12-14 Block 2
- Lot 16 Block 3
- Lots 20-22 Block 7
- Lots 15-17 Block 2
- Lots 17-20 Block 3
- Lot 23 Block 7
- Lots 18 & 25 Block 2
- Lot 1 Block 4
- Parcel N 101210689
- Lot 19 Block 2
- Lot 2 Block 4
- Parcel L 101210690
- Lot 20 Block 2
- Lots 17-18 Block 4
- Parcel Q 101210656
- Lot 21 Block 2



Please see the map for locations of lots in Antler, SK. When tendering, please state lot grouping, tender price, and plans for development. Tender Deadline is May 10th, 2021 at 4:00 p.m. Please submit tenders by mail, fax, email or in person to:

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Brent Kobes—Policy Researcher, APAS



Sameeha Jhetam—Master’s Student, University of Saskatchewan College of Agriculture and Bioresources (Poultry Management and Welfare Lab)



Andrea De Roo—Farmer and Professional Agronomist (with specialization in precision agriculture)

Investing in our youth

How three young agricultural leaders are making a difference

BY DELANEY SEIFERLING

The Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan (APAS) has long recognized the importance of nurturing the next generation of industry leaders.

This is why it launched the Youth Leadership and Mentorship Program in 2014, which aims to help young producers gain the skills and contacts necessary to lead the industry into the future.

APAS is not alone in recognizing the importance of having a succession plan for the industry. In the past decade several initiatives have been launched with the same goals, including at a national level.

Last September, federal Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Marie-Claude Bibeau announced the formation of the Canadian Agricultural Youth Council (CAYC), a group of young Canadian industry members that will provide input into future plans for the development and success of the agriculture industry.

The council is made up of 25 members (chosen from 800 applicants), of which three are from Saskatchewan. Meet

them below:

Brent Kobes

Why did you apply to be part of the CYAC?

The council is open to young people from all parts of the agricultural industry, and with my workplace and background I figured I would be a good fit. I was honestly surprised when I was selected, and am frankly humbled by the talent that the CYAC has recruited.

What are your specific areas of interest in the Canadian agriculture/agri-food industry?

I am particularly interested in markets and transportation. My grandfather worked for the Canadian National Railway and growing up on the prairies every small town had an elevator. Understanding the interconnections and flow of goods from the farmgate to port is a truly herculean task. It interconnects my family farm to the global market and relates me to consumers across the globe.

What impact do you hope to have in your CYAC role?

My hope is that the CYAC can provide the Minister with valuable insights into the workings of agriculture on the ground, particularly in Western Canada, while also developing another generation of young leaders within the sector that can support each other in their future endeavours.

In your opinion, what are the major challenges/opportunities for Saskatchewan’s agriculture industry going forward and how can we address/exploit these?

Over the last few years Saskatchewan producers have seen a dramatic decline in their margins, which creates instability in families, communities, and the entire sector. Ensuring that producers have access to markets with competitive prices and inputs that don’t break the bank is essential to ensuring stability and growth in the sector.

Continued on page 39

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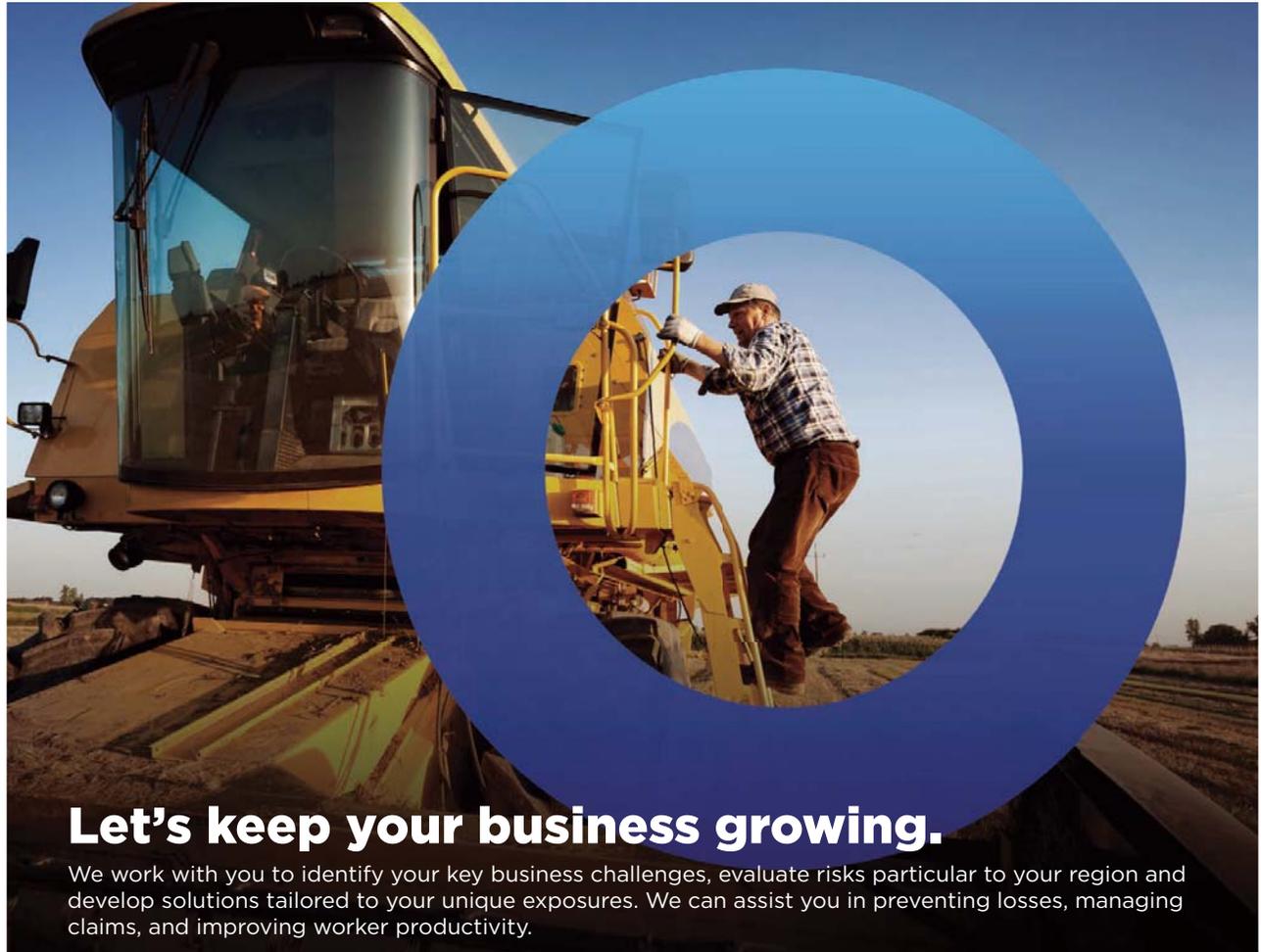


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Labour shortages cause concern for Saskatchewan agricultural employers

BY SPENCER KEMP
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Through the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, Canadian farmers lost around \$2.9 billion due to labour shortages.

With the research done by the Canadian Agriculture Human Resource Council (CAHRC), it was found that Canadian farmers suffered a loss equivalent to 4.2 per cent of the sector's total sales due to labour shortages brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Debra Hauer, AgriLMI Manager with CAHRC, says they conducted a survey that received just over 450 responses from Canadian farmers.

"We conducted a survey of farm-business owners in Canada from the middle of November until early January and we received 453 responses from farm employers. These are the farmers who have employees, both foreign and Canadian. We asked them a number of questions about the impacts of COVID on their labour force, then we supplemented that information with a series of interviews with key opinion leaders across the country in different types of agriculture to get a little bit more information," Hauer said.

"We had grain producers, beef producers, and even beekeepers respond to the survey.

"The vacancy rates for Canadians in Saskatchewan were higher than the average in Canada at about a nine per cent vacancy rate for Canadian farmers on farms. We asked about the impacts of labour shortages and 100 per cent of Saskatchewan farmers said they were exhibiting stress from the labour shortages. We asked about lost sales and revenue and that was actually lower in Saskatchewan than across Canada as a whole, however, Saskatchewan farmers were much more likely to say they delayed or cancelled expansion plans. What happened during this pandemic will impact the future."

Hauer explained that the shortages came from increased border and travel restrictions.

"What caused the loss as a whole is that they were unable to find enough people to work on their farms. So those people who had temporary foreign workers were not able to get the workers they needed coming from outside of the country. When we think of temporary foreign workers we think of people who come from Mexico or the Caribbean countries to work in horticulture farms in Ontario, Quebec, and B.C. But also in Saskatchewan, for example, there are people who come from the southern hemisphere like Australia, New Zealand, South Africa as well as Eastern Europe to work on farms. But because of travel restrictions, people were not able to come, and even those who were able

to come could not come on time.

"At the same time, farmers that couldn't get people from other countries to work on farms, they looked more so towards Canadians to work on farms. However, of farmers who said they had labour shortages, 70 per cent said there were fewer Canadians applying. Part of that was because that this time last year people were told to stay home. They weren't supposed to go anywhere or travel. People were concerned about outbreaks or had to do childcare. There were a variety of reasons that there were fewer Canadians who could work on farms."

Hauer notes that while the agricultural sector saw success with exports through 2020, it should not take away from the impacts that labour shortages have on Canadian farmers.

"Agriculture outperformed the Canadian economy last year. So GDP increased by more than seven per cent compared to a decline across all sectors by more than five per cent, and that was led by prep production. Animal production was fairly flat but prep production increased. Cannabis production also increased by around 30 per cent.

"The grain and oilseed production in Saskatchewan had a banner year last year. The value of agricultural exports went way up, driven by about a 30 per cent increase in grain and oilseed exports to China.



AgriLMI Manager with CAHRC, Debra Hauer says that Canadian farmers lost \$2.9 billion due to labour shortages brought on by COVID-19

So things went a little haywire in the trades last year. People in certain parts of agriculture did very well, and I think Saskatchewan is benefitting from a great year in agriculture. Other parts of agriculture did not do so well, things like animal production fared much worse. That had to do with holdups in meat processing plants that had to close down because of the pandemic which caused a strain on the entire supply chain for meat and products. There were big negative effects in horticulture as another ex-

ample, so the effects of the pandemic varied from one sector to the next."

While Saskatchewan utilizes the least amount of Temporary Foreign Workers (TFW), the beekeeping industry was hit hardest by the travel restrictions preventing the hiring of additional workers.

Canadian farm owners that employ both Canadian and TFWs were asked where the labour shortages impacted them the most through the pandemic.

One-hundred per cent of farm owners in Saskatchewan say they are dealing with excessive stress brought on by the labour shortages compared to the average of 90 per cent across Canada.

Production delays were also noted as an impact by 60 per cent of Saskatchewan farmers, compared to the 62 per cent average.

Only 40 per cent of Saskatchewan farm owners noted a loss of sales and revenue due to the labour shortages when compared to the Canadian average of 60 per cent.

Sixty per cent of farm owners in Saskatchewan have seen a delay or cancellation of investment or expansion due to the labour shortages when compared to the Canadian average of 41 per cent.

Saskatchewan farm owners also noted additional overtime costs with 40 per cent of farm owners reporting an increase. The Canadian average was 30 per cent.

Animal welfare issues were also noted by Saskatchewan farm owners with 40 per cent of owners noting impacts brought on by labour shortages. This exceeds the Canadian average of 10 per cent.

Saskatchewan agricultural employers were asked about their concerns through the next year of the COVID-19 pandemic,

Seventy-four per cent of Saskatchewan employers

expressed concern about dealing with a COVID-19 outbreak at their business, in line with the Canadian average of 73 per cent.

Sixty-eight per cent of Saskatchewan employers noted concern about changing costs of inputs, in line with the Canadian average of 66 per cent.

Inadequate staffing levels were a bigger concern for Saskatchewan employers with 63 per cent noting concern, well above the Canadian average of 48 per cent.

Fifty-eight per cent of Saskatchewan employers were uncertain about government support programs and resources compared to the Canadian average of 54 per cent.

Fifty-three per cent of Saskatchewan employers were concerned about temporary vacancies due to illness, family or childcare responsibilities, self-isolation after exposure, and quarantine after travel, slightly above the Canadian average of 41 per cent.

Fifty-three per cent of Saskatchewan employers expressed concern about transportation disruptions, up from the national average of 43 per cent.

Fifty-three per cent of Saskatchewan employers were uncertain about new rules and restrictions in Canada and TFW source countries, down slightly from the Canadian average of 54 per cent.

Continued on Page 34

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Firefighting students and lead instructor Curtis Brooks go over theory in the new classroom building at the Emergency Services Training Site, just east of Melville.



New classroom in use at Parkland College Emergency Services Training Site

On Easter weekend 2019, a fire damaged an under-construction classroom building at Parkland College's Emergency Services Training Site, east of Melville. The charred structure had to be demolished and a new facility was built

in its place. Then Covid-19 hit, postponing last year's scheduled NFPA 1001 Firefighter program. But now, the new classroom is being put to good use as the postponed program gets start-

ed. There are 18 students from 10 different communities in Platoon #17. They'll learn the theory and get hands-on training at the Emergency Services Training Site until the end of June. Platoon #18 begins training in late July.

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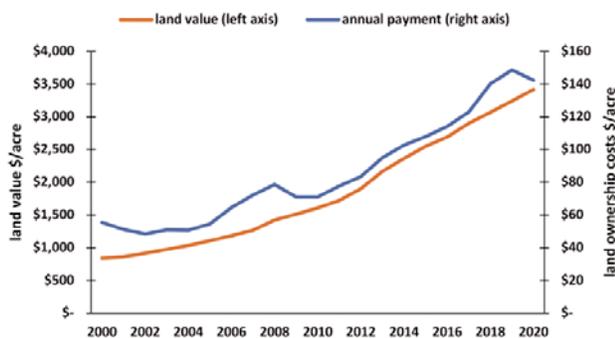
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Affordability of farmland remains low despite higher revenues and lower interest rates

Figure 1. Canadian average farmland values vs. the cost to purchase



Source: FCC calculations.

BY LEIGH ANDERSON
BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE ANALYST

Demand for Canadian farmland remained strong in 2020 due to record-low interest rates and improved crop production revenues. According to the FCC Farmland Values Report, farmland values increased 5.4% in 2020.

Average farmland values have increased every year since 1993 and were more pronounced from 2011 to 2015. Since then, Canada has seen more moderate single-digit increases. But despite low interest rates and high farm revenues in 2020, affordability was at its second-lowest level in the last 20 years.

In this article, we look at the farmland values report findings through the lens of ownership costs.

Calculating farmland annual payment

Most farmland is purchased with a combination of equity and debt. And the affordability of farmland is a matter of land prices, financing costs and farm revenues.

Let's assume we have a new land purchase with a down payment of 25% and a loan amortized over 25 years. The annual payment will be based on the loan interest rate.

To determine the farmland annual payment, we'll use the effective average business interest rate (a weighted-average borrowing rate of bank and market interest rates), which averaged 2.7% in 2020. The formula for determining the farmland annual payment is:

Farmland values and annual payment tend to evolve at the same pace (Figure 1) but differ as interest rates rise or fall. Despite rising land values in 2020, lower interest rates reduced payments. Average

Canadian annual payments per acre declined 4.3% to \$142/acre in 2020 despite land values increasing 5.4%.

Measuring affordability

A measure of affordability is obtained by comparing land payments relative to gross revenues derived from crop production (Figure 2). We used average provincial yields and prices to measure revenues—a soybean-corn rotation in Eastern Canada, a canola-wheat rotation in Western Canada and a potato-wheat rotation in Atlantic Canada.

Land payments as a percentage of crop revenue declined from 33% in 2019 to 32% in 2020 due to strong crop receipts and lower interest rates. This remains slightly higher than the 2014 to 2020 average of 29%. The 2008-2014 average share of crop revenues devoted to ownership costs was the lowest.

That period also had some of the highest increases in farmland values, highlighting the strong annual returns in the grain and oilseed sector during this period. As crop revenues following 2014 showed stability, land values increased, resulting in affordability declining.

The trends are similar across all provinces, but the proportion of crop revenues to cover payments varies considerably. In Saskatchewan, the share of crop revenues (canola-wheat rotation) relative to average land payments was estimated at approximately 18% in 2020, down from 19% in 2019.

In Ontario, the share of crop revenues (soybean-corn rotation) is much higher at 66% in 2020. Ontario agriculture is diversified across many enterprise types, including horticulture and livestock sectors that compete for farmland. Also, farmland

values vary considerably within Ontario, ranging from as low as \$2,000/acre in Northern Ontario to as high as \$32,900 in the Central West region. High valued land would require gross revenues of \$4,200/acre to reach the national average of 32% of revenues covering payments.

Elevated payment/revenues ratios suggest that observing farmland purchases with a negative net cash flow is possible in the current environment. In this case, the ability to "subsidize" the purchase from other sources of revenues or other land will factor in the buyer's decision.

Expected farmland value trends in 2021

The low interest rate environment and strong grain and oilseed prices will continue to drive strong demand in 2021. And tight availability will likely mean higher farmland values.

Monitor interest rates trends as the economy recovers. There are some early signs of rising yields for longer-term bonds. Understanding the influence of various rate and farm income scenarios on farmland payments is an essential component of a solid financial risk management plan.



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SSCA calling for farmer feedback

BY SPENCER KEMP
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Farm organizations including the Soil Conservation Council of Canada and the Saskatchewan Soil Conservation Association (SSCA) are calling for farmers to review the Government of Canada's proposed Greenhouse Gas Offset Credit System regulations.

The proposed regulations are currently open for comments and will remain open until May 5, 2021, for a total of 60 days.

Jocelyn Velestuk, a Sask Wheat and SSCA director who is also a member of the SSCA's Carbon Advisory Committee explains that the SSCA has some things they would like to push for with the regulations.

"Some of the things that the SSCA has been pushing for, and we've been quite solid on our position, is that we need to separate biological sinks from industrial point source emissions in order to have carbon off-set markets. But that encompasses agricultural soils.

"The other thing we would need to include is no-till continuous cropping. There are also issues with words like 'additionality' and like 'businesses as usual', there's a 40% penetration rate for practices before they're considered 'business as usual' and basically taken off the system completely.

"The third point we would be pushing for is that we need transparency in the carbon offset market, which means that we need to know where the money's flowing and we need the person who is creating the offset or the farmer to own the carbon credit and be able to even bank that credit if need be."

She says that the Government of Canada had invited the SSCA to help develop the regulations, which Velestuk notes was an opportunity for them to voice concerns.

In a release, the SSCA notes that their Carbon Advisory Committee is committed to working with the federal and provincial governments to develop a science-based offset protocol for the sequestration of carbon in agricultural soils.

Additionally the groups represented included Sask Wheat, SaskCanola, SaskPulse, SaskBarley, SaskFlax, SaskOats, Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities, Agriculture Producers Association of Saskatchewan, the Soil Conservation Council of Canada and the SSCA.

"For the past year we were involved in representing a lot of the farm groups, so we represented a lot of commission groups. APAS and SARM represented as well and were invited to participate in a technical working group for industrial carbon sequestration and carbon offsets in ag soils. There was also the Ministry of Ag and Ministry of Environment folks that were on that technical working

"If we totally ignore the fact that with our current practices that we're sequestering carbon, then we're missing out on huge opportunities. If you want to measure real change and real carbon offset, we can't just throw away an entire practice."

—Jocelyn Velestuk

group," said Velestuk.

"We worked for a year on that technical working group and we were very solid in our position because this is the way we see forward, as a way for farmers to really be involved in the carbon offset system.

"We have research backing us up with this too and SSCA is a long-standing organization that's always been industry-driven and so when no-till was first getting adopted 30 years ago is when SSCA came to be. In 1995 SSCA initiated the Prairie Soil Carbon Balance project. We've been sampling soils on a large scale in Saskatchewan to determine carbon change over time with our practices. So that project was initially introduced with no-till in 1995 and soils were measured four times in the last sampling that happened in 2018.

"So we have data saying that yes, farmers are sequestering more carbon than they're taking out, so we know that we have a net positive carbon change in our soil with our current practices, which includes our no-tilling continuous cropping.

"We know this is happening, we know you're probably not going to go back to when we started this practice, but if we totally ignore the fact that with our current practices that we're sequestering carbon, then we're missing out on huge opportunities. If you want to measure real change and real carbon offset, we can't just throw away an entire practice. So we've really been standing by that in our discussions with the government."

One of the concerns was the term 'business as usual' being used. Velestuk notes that the term has no scientific backing and is only used as a policy.

In a media release, the SSCA said they will continue to advocate for separate regulations for agricultural carbon sink protocols that would not be subject to non-scientific factors such as "business as usual." Any offset program must also include farmer ownership of soil carbon cred-

its, a registry that allows farmers to "bank" their credits, an effective price discovery mechanism, and full transparency of basic costs.

"It's not a science-based word. It is completely a policy word that's put in there, so we're saying let's base it on science, let's measure an actual offset. How do you measure an actual offset but then take away what's being sequestered by a current practice It just doesn't make any sense at all.

"So we're saying yeah if there are more practices, great. But let's measure if there's actual carbon change and let's get a protocol that does that well."

Velestuk says that their biggest goal is to have no-till acknowledged as a practice by the Government of Canada for their proposed Greenhouse Gas Offset Credit System, noting that a vast majority of Saskatchewan farmers take part in the practice.

"Each year, through no-till practices, Saskatchewan farmers sequester about 9-million new tonnes of carbon dioxide. We are committed to achieving a regulatory environment that recognizes this significant positive impact," added Velestuk.

Velestuk notes that farmers in Saskatchewan are open to change and will adopt new practices if needed.

"We just want to let the provincial government know that Saskatchewan farmers will not be happy if no-till is not included as a practice. What we're currently doing, we're sequestering carbon and we know it's being measured in the federal inventory.

"So we're saying we need to measure that offset and we need to give value to the farmgate. If farmers see value in carbon, they're going to adopt practices to put more carbon in the ground. So it could only be a good thing.

"If carbon is a commodity, then farmers will be able to manage that quite well in an offset system."

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Richardson International doubling capacity of Yorkton canola crushing plant

Continued from page 25
String of canola announcements

The prospect of additional value-added processing fits within government growth plans. "Saskatchewan is a leader in agricultural production and we welcome this investment to increase canola crush capacity in the province," Agriculture Minister David Marit said. "We know the world wants the high-quality products Saskatchewan produces, with canola oil and canola meal our top value-added exports in 2020. This expansion of processing capacity will help Saskatchewan meet the goals outlined in our Growth Plan, which includes a target to crush 75 per cent of the canola our province produces here in Saskatchewan."

The announcement is the third in recent weeks of companies intending on building substantial canola processing facilities in Saskatchewan. However, unlike True North Renewable Fuels' announcement that is beginning fundraising for a "renewable diesel and canola crushing" project at Regina, or Covenant Energy's planned "renewable diesel facility" at Estevan, construction on Richard's Yorkton expansion is expected to begin immediately.

The Regina and Estevan facilities are expected to take advan-



This Google Earth image shows the Richardson International canola crush facility at Yorkton on the left side of the map. To the right is the area where the triple loop track will be installed. The rail line going northwest/southeast is the Canadian Pacific mainline. The line going straight east connects to the CN rail network. The facility on the lower right is the Louis Dreyfus Company canola crush plant.

tage of the federal government's planned Clean Fuel Standard, which will require liquid fuels, like diesel to reduce their hy-

drocarbon components. When asked if the Yorkton expansion had fuel production as its intent, Kelcey Vossen said increased

canola production by Western Canadian produces and increased global demand for food product was driving this. She

said. "The Clean Fuel Standard came up a fair bit, however, we are in the food business and this expansion project is to meet an increase in global food demand, not biodiesel. Our grower customers have been effective in providing growth in canola production over the years which has given us confidence to undergo another expansion. Richardson had a past expansion, back in 2012, where we increased capacity by 25 per cent."

Richardson International is part of James Richardson & Sons, Limited, a prominent Winnipeg-based conglomerate whose companies include Richardson, Richardson Pioneer, Richardson Oilseed and Richardson Milling in the agricultural sector. Their oil company, Tundra Oil & Gas Limited, is the dominant oil producer in Manitoba, and their pipeline company, Kingston Midstream, is the principal pipeline gathering system for southeast Saskatchewan and southwest Manitoba. Its financial services include RF Capital Group, Richardson Wealth and Wynward Insurance Group. In real estate, their head office is the Richard Centre Limited, at the corner of Portage and Main in centre of Winnipeg. Finally, in transportation, the company operates Bison Transport.

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Labour shortages cause concern for Sask agricultural employers

Continued on Page 29

Fifty-three per cent of Saskatchewan employers are concerned about not having TFWs arrive on time, slightly above the Canadian average of 49 per cent.

And 53 per cent of both Canadian and Saskatchewan employers expressed concern about not being able to hire the necessary amount of workers.

Farm owners and employers were also asked which areas they need support with to help deal with the impact of COVID-19 over the next year.

Fifty per cent of Saskatchewan employers say they require help applying for and employing TFWs, compared to the Canadian average of 36 per cent.

Thirty-three per cent of Saskatchewan employers say they require help with access to financial support programs, this is above the Canadian average of 27 per cent.

Only six per cent of Saskatchewan employers asked for help finding and retaining Canadian workers, below the Canadian average of 15 per cent.

And six per cent of Saskatchewan employers are asking for help with COVID-19 protocol support, below the Canadian average of eight per cent.

Hauer says that labour shortages are something that has been around in Canada for a while and will continue to impact producers across the nation.

"Labour shortages have been around for a very long time and our research has indi-

cated that those labour shortages are doubling every 10 years. Another issue is finding people who have the right skills. An example of that would be people on grain and oilseed farms that might be looking for someone who can drive a truck or combine during harvest, but not everybody has the skills to be able to do that. Machinery skills are also important, not everybody has that. As we become more technologically advanced in agriculture, people will have to know how to maintain and install software programs. So skill requirements are increasing in agriculture and that is a concern."

She explains that while CAHRC is a research organization, they work with other organizations to communicate their research and any potential solutions to the issues.

"We do the research and we put it out there and other organizations can pick it up and come up with the solutions. However, we are involved with a sort of consortium of industry groups that are called the Labour Task Force that has about 40 representatives of 40 organizations around the country. They have been advocating for a while for the development of a national labour strategy for agriculture and also through food processing.

"The national labour strategy that they are pushing for would involve ensuring that there are enough people to work in food processing and agriculture."

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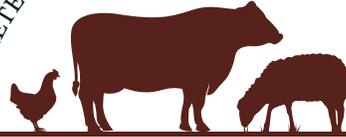
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FCC: Canada's farmland market remains strong, stable

Continued from page 17

Saskatchewan farmland values were mainly influenced by tenants purchasing land from landlords, neighbour-to-neighbour sales, producers buying or selling land to gain efficiencies and family farm purchases to support succession plans. All of these were typically purchased through tender, realtor or privately negotiated.

The North Western region saw an average increase of 6.3 per cent, although there were stable farmland values in some parts. The increase was influenced by smaller parcel purchases of cultivated land and most of the increase was a result of activity that occurred in the last six months of 2020.

The most significant increases in average farmland values occurred in the West Central and North Eastern regions at 9.1 per cent and 9 per cent respectively. Strong demand for good quality land in pockets of these regions drove the increase, while interest in lower-quality land remained stable.

South Eastern and East Central regions reported an average farmland value increase of 4.8 per cent and 4.3 per cent respectively. Good quality land again accounted for most of the increases, supported by purchases of lower-quality land in some areas.

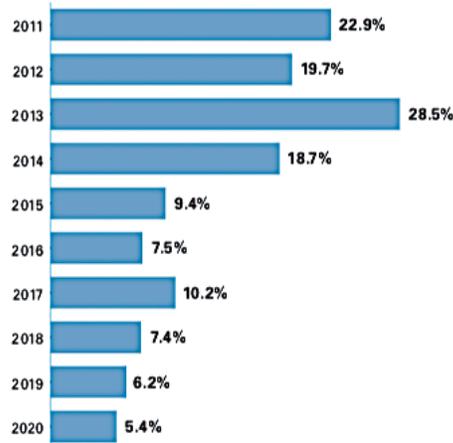
The South Western region had the lowest increase for the province at 2.5 per cent. Farmland values in this region are very diverse, with increases mostly noticeable in the south, where farmland values are the lowest. The majority of this region has remained stable.

Manitoba

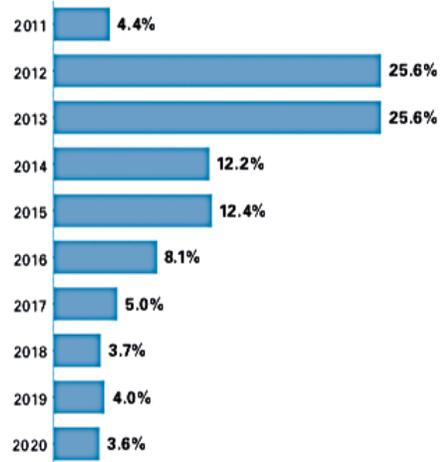
Manitoba farmland values increased by an average of 3.6 per cent in 2020, following a 4 per cent increase in 2019.

The 2020 growing conditions varied throughout the province, with overall yields near average, depending on the crop and location. Forage production was

Saskatchewan Annual % change in farmland values



Manitoba Annual % change in farmland values



impacted by a lack of sufficient moisture and potato yields were average throughout the province. Buyers in the province continued to be mainly existing producers expanding their operations, next-generation producers entering the market and landlords selling to tenants.

While some areas received reduced rainfall, other areas experienced significant moisture; however, the overall moisture levels were below average. Insect infestations were an issue in 2020, with flea beetles in canola fields, cutworms and grasshoppers in other crops. But overall, grain and oilseed receipts have been very strong.

The Interlake region had the highest average farmland value increase in the province at 11.6 per cent. This followed a

dry and windy growing season in northern areas, while southern areas received more consistent moisture. The harvest conditions remained good with minimal weather delays, and the area experienced an early frost, which impacted longer-season crops.

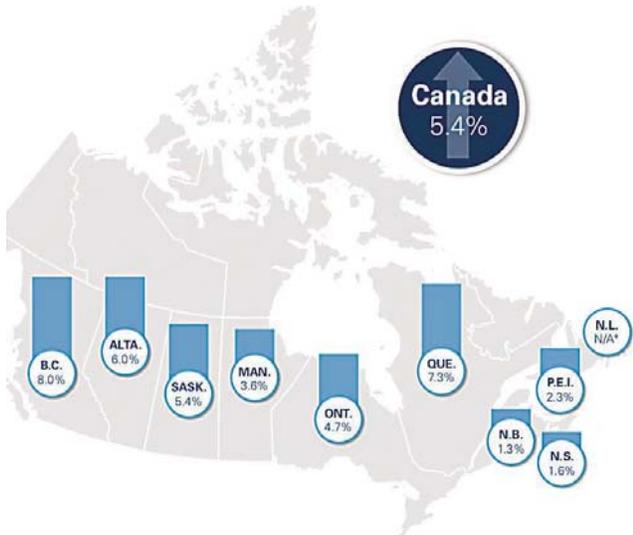
The Eastman region has an average increase of 5.3 per cent in farmland values, following an 8.2 per cent increase in 2019. The area also had a growing season that was variable with significant moisture in the south and dry, windy conditions in the central to the northern region.

In the Central Plains-Pembina Valley region, farmland values increased an average of 4.8 per cent, with the most significant increase observed in the traditionally lower land value area of the region.

Central Plains-Pembina Valley region's irrigated land—including parts of the Westman region—had an average value increase of 4.6 per cent in 2020.

The Westman region had an average increase that was lower than the provincial average with 2.9 per cent, largely due to varied growing conditions experienced throughout the province. Buyers in the region were mainly existing producers continuing their expansion with next-generation producers entering the industry.

The Parkland region reported a decrease in value of 2.9 per cent, with the most significant decrease observed in the northern part of the region. Other areas of the region experienced mostly slight increases in values or no increases.



The annual percentage change in farmland values across Canada from January 1 to December 31, 2020. (There was an insufficient number of publicly reported transactions in 2020 to accurately assess farmland value in Newfoundland and Labrador.)

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Provincial budget includes \$23.1 million increase for ag

The 2021-22 provincial budget included a \$23.1 million increase to the Ministry of Agriculture budget. The \$386.9 million Agriculture budget represents a six per cent increase from the 2020-21 budget.

"The importance of a secure, reliable and safe food supply chain is essential for our citizens and for our economy," Agriculture Minister David Marit said. "The 2021-22 Agriculture budget will once again fully fund business risk management programs, provide a record level of per-acre coverage under the Crop Insurance Program, continue last year's record investment in agriculture research, and make important investments in irrigation expansion."

The Agriculture budget includes a \$20.6 million increase to business risk management funding, compared to 2020-21. This will provide \$265 million to fund a suite of business risk management programs, which are delivered as part of the federal-provincial Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP).

The \$150.1 million 2021 Crop Insurance Program includes coverage of \$273 an acre. This is a new record for per-acre coverage under the Program and represents an \$11.1 million increase from 2020-21. The 2021 Crop Insurance Program featured additional options for producers seeking to insure their tame hay acres, an increase in Native Forage Establishment Benefit coverage, updates to the base grade for large-seeded Kabuli chickpeas, the introduction of the Commercial Vegetable Pilot Program, and increases to the establishment benefit values for canola, lentils, chickpeas and corn.

This year's budget also contains an additional \$2.0 million for the Wildlife Damage Compensation Program, which compensates Saskatchewan pro-



ducers for crop damage and predation caused by wildlife, to address stronger commodity prices. This program is available to all Saskatchewan producers; you do not need to be an existing Crop Insurance customer to qualify for coverage.

The Ministry of Agriculture remains committed to funding innovation and growth in the industry. The 2021-22 Agriculture budget will also once again include \$32.9 million in funding for agriculture research, which matches last year's record level of funding for research.

Additional investments will also be made to expand irrigation in Saskatchewan, with an increased \$2.5 million for irrigation development projects. This funding will help to advance projects in areas outside of the Lake Diefenbaker Irrigation Expansion Project, through existing irrigation development programming. Expanding irrigation is part

of Saskatchewan's 2030 Growth Plan. The Growth Plan also aims to increase crop production to 45 million tonnes, increase live-stock cash receipts to \$3.0 billion, double agriculture value-added revenue to \$10 billion and expand agri-food exports to \$20 billion.

Once again, the Agriculture budget includes \$71.2 million for strategic programs under the CAP agreement. CAP programs provide funding for agricultural research, markets and trade, value-added agriculture, environmental sustainability and public trust.

2020 once again demonstrated the resilience of the Saskatchewan agriculture sector. Producers harvested the second-largest crop on record at more than 39 million tonnes. Saskatchewan agri-food exports also reached a new high last year of \$16.9 billion, accounting for more than 55 per cent of total provincial exports in 2020.

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You can't predict the future—but you can plan for the unexpected

In the final seconds of 2019, as you started your New Year's Eve countdown, what expectations did you have for the year ahead? Whatever they were, they likely didn't include a global pandemic and worldwide business disruption—and yet, here we are. Which just goes to show: you really can't predict the future.

That's not to say you can't plan for it, however. While 2020 was undoubtedly an unprecedented year in many ways, there were a few things that could have made it a little easier—like having a rock-solid succession plan in place.

While most of us envision a succession plan as something you implement leading up to retirement, it can actually be an excellent tool to help you prepare for any situation in which the owner or lead decision-maker in your farm becomes incapacitated. That makes it a great thing to have in your back pocket as we head into 2021. What value does a succession plan bring to the table? Let's break it down:

It forces you to plan for worst-case scenarios

There are countless reasons why you may have to leave your farm unexpectedly—and most of them aren't pleasant ones. As a result, most farm owners put off planning for unexpected illness, death or injury.

If you're one of them, it can be helpful to remember that when you plan for these types of events, you're not necessarily doing it for yourself—you're doing it for your loved ones. If you had to leave the farm suddenly, they would be dealing with stress, anxiety and, potentially, grief. A succession plan can help you make sure that 'farm business confusion' isn't added to the list.

It clarifies everyone's role

Part of succession planning involves identifying each family member's role within the company and establishing a plan to fill farm-critical positions down the road. This clear organizational succession framework also allows the farm to maintain a sense of continuity in an emergency.

If you're forced to step away, other members down the chain of command should be able to seamlessly step in—as everyone knows what needs to get done and what responsibilities need to be fulfilled.

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How many people in your family know where all your bank accounts, investments and contacts are held? Could they access your personal insurance information, or your will, if they needed to? Are they aware of your liabilities?

If you're unsure about any of the answers to these questions, a succession plan can help. It offers an opportunity to take all the important information swimming around in your head and put it in a central, easily-accessible area so your loved ones can find it.

So long, 2020

While 2020 wasn't exactly the year any of us expected, it did teach us some valuable lessons—most notably, we have no idea what the future may hold.

In 2021, it's quite possible something unexpected might happen again (although, likely not at the same scale as a global pandemic). This year, however, you can give yourself and your family some peace of mind by starting the succession planning process. It's a decision you definitely won't regret.

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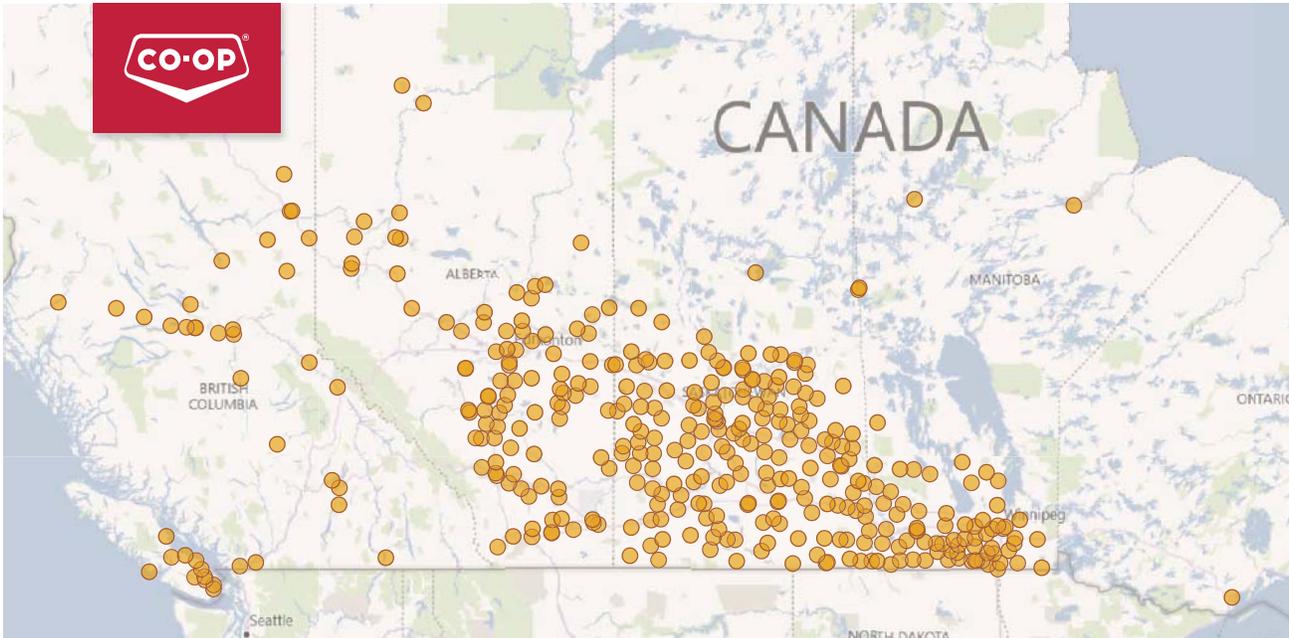
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Investing in our youth

How three young agricultural leaders are making a difference

Continued from page 27

Sameeha Jhetam

Why did you apply to be part of the CAYC?

I thought it would be a great opportunity for the federal government to hear about challenges faced by youth in the industry, as we are well educated, experienced, and have many innovative ideas. I also thought I would bring a unique perspective to the CAYC as a woman of color and immigrant with a passion for agriculture, livestock farming, and science.

What are your specific areas of interest in the Canadian agriculture/agri-food industry?

My specific areas of interest include all aspects of poultry production, animal welfare, and using science and research as a way of improving and advancing the agriculture and agri-food industry.

Why are you interested in these areas?

Poultry is the meat most consumed in Canada, and thus research into production practices and bird welfare is extremely important. As the world's population increases, we need to feed the world while continuously improving animal welfare, farming sustainably, and advancing our technologies within the industry. By using science and research, the agriculture and agri-food sector can continuously evolve and improve by adopting new practices and technologies. This can lead to more investment and commitment to the industry.

What impact do you hope to have in your CAYC role?

First, I hope to focus on the core ideas that we, as a council, determine are most important and work toward implementing changes in these areas. I personally hope we can improve public trust in the sector and increase the presence and credibility of the CAYC, while allowing other youth in the industry to feel their voices are being heard.

Andrea De Ro

Why did you apply to be part of the CAYC?

As I finished my studies, started working in the indus-

try, and invested in our family farm, I could start to feel the disconnect my grandparents and parents felt between agriculture and government. When the CAYC was announced, I saw it as an opportunity to be a part of the discussion around policies that affect the industry and my future in agriculture. I also saw it as an opportunity to connect and network with a diverse group of youth across our country, and to listen and learn about their concerns and challenges.

What are your specific areas of interest in the Canadian agriculture/agri-food industry? Why are you interested in these areas?

My interests in Canadian agriculture are really grounded at the farm level. Farming systems, agronomy, and research are where I focus most of my energy, but animal husbandry, public perception of agriculture, and mental health are also very important to me. Growing up on the farm, of course, has greatly influenced my interests in the industry. But I also believe producers are the foundation that the rest of the industry is built around and my interests are driven by the desire to help them succeed.

What impact do you hope to have in your CAYC role?

Ultimately, I hope I can bring a practical perspective from the farm to the discussion and development of agriculture policy, and see the feedback from the council be implemented in a meaningful way. I would also like to see the disconnect between industry and government, urban and rural, and the various ag sectors start to narrow. Outside of our work on the council, I hope I can inspire youth to consider all the amazing opportunities that are available in agriculture and to get involved. I think it's important to include the ideas and thoughts of youth, through the council and other means, in the discussions of decisions that are going to direct their future in agriculture.

In your opinion, what are the major challenges/opportunities for Saskatchewan's agriculture industry going forward and how can we address/exploit these?

The biggest challenges I see for Saskatchewan agriculture are the barriers to young producers succeeding or starting a farm, rural connectivity, and the disconnect

between primary agriculture, government, and consumers. The opportunities I see in Saskatchewan are climate change mitigation, value-added processing, and a growing movement to support local. Most of these challenges and opportunities are not unique to Saskatchewan and their impacts can be felt across the country. That in itself is an important part of how we will address and exploit the challenges and opportunities in front of us and help the industry move forward.

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