

Shellbrook Chronicle & Spiritwood Herald

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Spring AGRICULTURE EDITION

Tim Oleksyn joins Jubilee Medal honorees

By JORDAN TWISS
Shellbrook Chronicle
Reporter

It's not every day you receive a phone call from the premier's office.

But when the call came for Tim and Cindy Oleksyn, it was with nothing but good news. Tim was to be one of just over 70 individuals from the Rosthern-Shellbrook constituency to be honoured with a Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Medal.

The Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Medal is the first provincial honour of its kind, and was created as a celebration of the 70th anniversary of the late Queen Elizabeth's ascension to the throne, and a recognition of her dedicated service to Canada. Following a nomination process, a total of 7,000 Saskatchewan citizens were selected to receive a medal based on their significant contributions and achievements.

In Tim's instance, his significant contributions to his community, his province, and his country came in the agriculture sector, both in his role as a producer and his service within organizations like the Beef Cattle Research Council, the Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association, and the Prairie Agricultural Machinery Institute.

"Like so many people that receive accolades or are identified for what they do, you're always humbled and you're always thinking that the people who helped support you are the ones who got left in the wake," he said of receiving the Platinum Jubilee Medal.

"I work with so many good people."

Tim's roots in agriculture reach all the way back to his parents and grandparents, and their small, family-run farms.

Growing up on the farm, he quickly learned the importance of getting involved with the agriculture community beyond the farmgate, and he took this lesson with him when he and his brothers, Doug (who also received a Platinum Jubilee Medal) and



Tim Oleksyn (middle) accepts his Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Medal from Lt.-Gov. Russ Mirasty and Saskatchewan Premier Scott Moe.

Terry, partnered up to form Oleksyn Bros Farm in 1979.

"Working for somebody just wasn't in our blood or our thought process. We wanted to be our own leaders," Tim said of his decision to stick with agriculture when some were choosing to leave the family farm and pursue their own careers.

"It's tough to turn away from that first spring soil, when you turn it over and smell that scent, or a new calf, or grass growing, or enjoying the harvest when you're putting your sweat equity into it."

Located between Shellbrook and Prince Albert, the Oleksyn Bros Farm operation is a traditional mixed farm, raising beef and growing everything from grains and cereals to canola and pulses.

Tim says the operation and

partnership with Doug and Terry has worked well since day one, and family is still central to everything they do both on and off the farm.

"When we're done work, we'll get together for birthday parties, to play cards, and enjoy each other's company with our wives," he said.

While keeping it in the family has been central to the success of Oleksyn Bros Farm, Tim says it's been equally important for them to continue to share their own knowledge and also benefit from the knowledge of other producers.

Whether it's within agriculture organizations, or at universities, Tim says producers have a responsibility to help build the industry up together.

This means forming close working relationships, dis-

cussing practice, policy, and problems within the industry, and one of Tim's personal favourite aspects to focus on: research.

"Without developing research, whether it be in crops, soils, or ranching, you can't develop policy," he said, noting that it's also crucial for research to be "adoptable and adaptable" for producers.

Looking back over a life spent in service to the agriculture sector — which also saw him inducted into Saskatchewan's Agriculture Hall of Fame in 2017 — Tim says the people he's exchanged ideas with have been the best part.

In particular, a point of pride for him has been mentoring the next generation of producers (especially young women in a male-dominated industry), giving them a plat-

form to let their voices and ideas be heard, and watching them excel in the industry with confidence.

Indeed, more than any accolades, honours, or recognitions, what matters most to Tim is the future of agriculture, and the responsibility of his generation to make it accessible to younger people who want to break in to a challenging, ever-changing industry.

"We leave a long shadow, but we still have a tremendous responsibility," he said.

"There's so many different aspects of [agriculture]. With technology, it's not just production. And even the communication of what we do is such a large pillar of where we are," he added, citing outside concerns over sustainability and climate change.



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Hamilton mulling options for CN Station

By **JORDAN TWISS**

Shellbrook Chronicle Reporter

The man who bought Shellbrook's CN Station at an auction of the Shellbrook & District Heritage Museum's collection in March is still considering options for the building's future.

Initially, Ken Hamilton had planned to move it out to his family's old property, restore it, and have it continue its life as a museum for people to come and visit. Since buying it, however, he says he's heard from more than a few people who would like it to remain where it is.

"I have to listen to these other groups and see what kind of ideas they have," he said, noting his first choice would be to leave it in place so it can generate revenue for the town.

"I haven't met with the town to see if it's still open to keeping the building there and having it made into something that would generate tax revenue for the town, or whether they have other plans for the property and just want it to be moved," he added, noting that he'll plan to move the building some time in June, if the town wants it gone.

Hamilton says he'd been following news about the CN Station since questions about its future in the community were first raised, and knew immediately he wanted to buy it if the opportunity arose.

For him, the interest in the building was personal and deeply rooted in his family's connection to Shellbrook and the history of the railroad.

Around the turn of the 20th century, Hamilton's grandfather came west from Ontario to build railroad grade, eventually receiving the contract to build all the Big River line coming from Shellbrook. He ended up buying land just a couple miles outside of Shellbrook to winter the horses he used for railroad construction. And after marrying, he decided to stay in Shellbrook and take up farming.

That farm has since been passed down to Hamilton and his generation, keeping the family connected to the area.

"Over the last 100 years, my family has either come back to Shellbrook through that rail station, or left town through that station. There's 100 years of history there with our family," he said.

In addition to his family connections to the CN Station, Hamilton says he was also fortunate to have the means and the tools to buy the building, thanks to his long career in the mining and construction industries. This means he won't need to pay the cost of hiring third-party contractors to move the building



The future of Shellbrook's CN Station is still a mystery, as new owner Ken Hamilton is considering his options.

(if the final decision is to move it) or restore it.

Indeed, his only regret is that the station didn't sell before the museum artifacts, to allow him to buy more items from the collection without taking the risk of not landing the winning bid on the building.

The History

Construction of the Shellbrook CN Station was completed in December 1909, making the building one of the town's earliest structures. In 1988, the property was a designated Municipal Heritage Property and transformed into the Shellbrook & District Heritage Museum.

Citing the potential costs to taxpayers to maintain and upgrade the building, Shellbrook's Town Council originally floated the idea of demolishing the station, and even drafted a bylaw to remove its heritage status, at a meeting held in May 2020. But after outcry from the public, it voted to give the station a 90-day reprieve to allow interested parties enough time to put together a proposal to save the building.

During this window, a proposal to turn the CN Station into an artisan's co-operative was brought forward by a local group that was interested in saving the building. However, these efforts were hampered by the COVID-19 pandemic and a lack of interest, and they failed to bear any fruit in the time

period allotted by council.

This allowed council to proceed with removing the station's heritage status at its Oct. 18, 2021 meeting and sealed the fate of the building (and the museum). Throughout 2022, items from the museum's collection were deaccessioned and returned to the families that had originally donated them, paving the way for the remaining items and the buildings to be auctioned off in March of this year.

The CN Station itself sold for a final bid of \$300, while the train station shed hauled in \$2,000. Meanwhile, the Rayside School required a second auction after failing to attract a buyer the first time around, and eventually sold for \$5.

All sales came with the caveat that the buildings be moved by Sept. 30 to free up the land for the Town of Shellbrook.

RM OF SPIRITWOOD NO. 496 NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF ASSESSMENT ROLL

Notice is hereby given that the Assessment Roll for the Rural Municipality of Spiritwood No. 496 for the year 2023 has been prepared and is open for inspection at the Office of the Assessor from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon and 1:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday, April 24th, 2023 to Friday, May 24th, 2023 excluding statutory holidays.

A bylaw pursuant to Section 214 of the *Municipalities Act* has been passed and the assessment notices have been sent as required.

Any person who wishes to discuss the notice of assessment or potential appeal may contact the Assessor at 306-883-2034 (RM of Spiritwood) or 1-800-667-5203 (SAMA).

Any person who wishes to appeal against his or her assessment is required to file his or her Notice of Appeal with the Secretary of the Board of Revision, Western Municipal Consulting at Box 149, Meota, SK, S0M 1X0.

An appeal fee of \$75.00 per property and payable to the RM of Spiritwood must accompany the appeal. The appeal fee will be returned if the appeal is successful.

Dated at Spiritwood, Saskatchewan, this 24th day of April, 2023.

Colette Bussiere,
Assessor



UPCOMING SALES:

SAT., MAY 6th – Donald & Jean Burdick – Farm Sale

Cookson, SK @ 10:00 a.m. – Land Location: NW 1-3-53-W3rd
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SAT., JULY 8th – Rene & Pauline Nicolas – Acreage Sale – Shell Lake

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Pre-Kindergarten & Kindergarten Registration

Light of Christ Catholic School Division and Living Sky School Division are accepting students into the Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten Programs for the 2023-24 school year. Students must meet the following criteria:

Kindergarten: Children who are five years old as of December 31, 2023.

Pre-Kindergarten: Children must be 3 or 4 years of age at the time of application. Please see the LOCCSD website (www.loccsd.ca) or the LSKYSD website (www.lskysd.ca) for further Pre-K criteria.

Please contact your local school for registration details.

Light of Christ Catholic Schools

Rivier – Spiritwood (Pre-K – Joint LOCCSD/LSKYSD Program & K)

306-883-2382

Living Sky Schools

Hartley Clark – Spiritwood (K) 306-883-2183

Leoville Central (Pre-K & K) 306-984-2241

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Leask celebrates school's past, future

By **JORDAN TWISS**

Shellbrook Chronicle Reporter

The community of Leask and representatives from the Prairie Spirit School Division recently gathered to celebrate the beginning of Leask Community School's \$6.5 million revitalization project.

Approximately 175 people attended a special ceremony held in the school's gymnasium to mark the occasion, with principal Lindsey Burym and vice principal Lisa Kuchler hosting a brief program.

As much as the day was about looking forward, it was also about honouring the history of Leask Community School, which began with the original one-room schoolhouse in 1923. In its first year, Leask Community School has just 12 students and one teacher. Today, the school serves 170 students with a staff team of more than 25.

The current Leask Community School building was constructed in 1954, with some additions in the years that followed. With its 70th birthday fast approaching, Burym told guests the facility was certainly starting to show its age.

"Many of us are looking forward

to having heat in our classrooms during the winter and not needing to have an umbrella on hand to cover us from the constant roof leaks in the spring," she said.

"Students are looking forward to the changes in the gym and how it will be even better. Some are looking forward to the media/music room and curiosity lab. Others are just happy to have a new classroom where everything will be like new."

The Prairie Spirit School Division says it plans repairs and renovations for all of its school facilities as needed. Major renovation projects like this one require considerable planning and the necessary funding.

With costs for the \$6.5 million project being shared by the division and the provincial government, the renovation includes the demolition of two older wings of the building, upgrading HVAC infrastructure, completing structural upgrades, modernizing the building, enhancing land-based learning opportunities, developing play spaces and supporting programming opportunities.

"There are some things we will miss. Like getting in our steps because we have so many hallways leading to classrooms," Kuchler said



Representatives from Prairie Spirit School Division, PCL Construction, Kindrachuk Agrey Architecture and Leask Community School took part in the ceremony.

of the coming changes to the school.

"We are also going to miss the extra space. As you may or may not know, teachers tend to hoard, so with a new school means purging all of our treasures to downsize our spaces."

In addition to an opportunity to look back at Leask Community School's history — and forward to its future — the ceremony allowed guests to enjoy cake and coffee and partake in tours of the building.

Work on the revitalization project was slated to begin this month, and wrap up in spring 2024.

The Prairie Spirit School Division says it gathered community feedback about local priorities for the renovated school as part of the planning for the project, and that local culture will be reflected in the design and use of the building.



Leask Community School principal Lindsey Burym (left) and vice principal Lisa Kuchler speak during a ceremony to celebrate the school's upcoming renovation project.



An architect's rendering of the new Leask Community School.



Leask Community School's original building from 1923.

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Abysmal domestic violence record demands real action

To some it might be just an unfortunate coincidence.

To others, it's evidence of an emerging pattern of troubling decisions made by members of the provincial government.

Either way, the Sask. Party found itself in hot water last week, after it was revealed that Agriculture Minister David Marit had nominated a man who had been charged with assaulting his wife for a Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Medal.

The charges were laid on June 2, 2022, nearly five months before Mr. Marit submitted the nomination. However, the man in question, Jim Wickett, only pleaded guilty to the charge in February of this year, just two months after he accepted the medal.

In a twist of irony, Mr. Marit submitted the nomination on Mr. Wickett's behalf on Oct. 26 – the same day former MLA Lyle Stewart came under fire for personally inviting convicted murderer, former MLA, and “long-time friend” Colin Thatcher to the legislature for the fall Speech from the Throne.

Though the revelations about Mr. Wickett's domestic assault charges were brought to his attention a week prior to them garnering media attention, Mr. Marit did at least strike the right tone when he finally chose to comment on the matter.

Mr. Marit said he was unaware of the charges against Mr. Wickett at the time of the nomination. This is easy enough to believe, as a professional relationship is not the same as a personal one.

In addition to apologizing to survivors and victims and reiterating his government's commitment to eliminating domestic abuse, Mr. Marit also said he had reached out to the provincial Protocol Office, which handles the distribution of honours like the Platinum Jubilee Medal.

Subsequently, the Protocol Office asked Mr. Wickett to return his medal, and he agreed to do so.

This is a far cry from the government's handling of the Thatcher incident.

When initially challenged on his decision, Mr. Stewart said, “If anybody has a right to be here, it's Colin Thatcher.” He also called Mr. Thatcher, who has maintained his innocence in the murder of his wife, a “fine individual” who has had a tough life “because of his time in prison.”



JORDAN
TWISS
~
News Editor

Mr. Stewart's sentiments were echoed by Justice Minister Bronwyn Eyre, who agreed Mr. Thatcher had the right to be in the legislature as a free citizen.

Both, apparently, failed to grasp the difference between someone being permitted to do something, and someone being granted the honour of an invite from a member of the sitting government.

Eventually, Mr. Stewart came to understand his “error in judgement”, if only

because it served to distract from the “tough on crime” messaging in the fall Throne Speech. And, after a weekend of reflection and listening, Mr. Moe also issued an apology.

That Mr. Marit's first response was to apologize, demonstrates that he has listened and learned as well.

It's a lesson learned none too soon in Saskatchewan, given the province's abysmal statistics on violence and domestic violence.

In 2021, the rate of violence against women and girls was 2,326 incidents per 100,000 people. That's the highest rate of any province, and more than twice the national average of 1,190.

The tale is similar for incidents of violence against men and boys, including domestic violence. Here, Saskatchewan is topped only by Manitoba, which saw 1,805 incidents per 100,000 people compared to Saskatchewan's 1,666. The national average is 1,015.

These, it must be noted, are only the police-reported incidents. There's no real way of knowing how many victims are suffering in silence.

There's clearly much work to be done in the province when it comes to domestic violence, and the Sask. Party government's 2023-2024 budget reflects this reality, with more than \$27.5 million in funding for interpersonal violence supports and services.

This includes a new investment of \$876,000 over three years to support survivors of domestic violence with the expansion of counseling services for clients living in second-stage shelters.

This is a good first step to providing survivors the resources they need to escape abusive situations, heal, and rebuild their independence.

But more will need to be done, of course. And the Sask. Party can't afford to distract from this important work by venerating abusers.



YOUR TWO CENTS

Union workers need your support

Dear editor,

Participating in a strike as a non-essential worker of the PSAC Union shows that we stand together in solidarity through the good times and the bad. A strike may not have been in every union member's best interest, but it is our last resort.

The cost of living has skyrocketed exponentially over the last few years and residing in a northern Saskatchewan community is far from cheap. Whether it be the price of groceries, housing, non-subsidized daycare, the ridiculous amount of taxes that we are expected to pay just for residing in Canada, etc... it is not do-able on a single middle class income.

Personally, an entire paycheque is devoted to daycare for two children, because there is such a need for licensed public daycare in our communities. Wait lists are piled high so unfortunately we do not get to reap the benefits of “\$10 a day daycare”.

Now, we are also expected to pay a carbon tax, high delivery fees for natural gas to our homes, as well as extreme base amounts for power and

water on top of our usage costs.

A cart full of groceries is no longer \$150. I'm lucky if I get a week's worth of food for a family of four for under \$300 in the North. A once-a-year grocery benefit from the government added onto GST, which my family does not receive, does not make up for the inflation that every single resident is seeing today.

As the cost of living keeps rising with no end in sight, we cannot be expected to continue living off of the same wage as 15+ years ago. Something needs to change. Something needs to be done. Inflation and the cost of living affects every single person in the country, union or not, and everyone deserves a fair, reasonable wage to support themselves and their families.

Please show your support for union workers in this difficult time.

Meagan Senft,
La Ronge, Sask.

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Report from the Legislature

The Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association (SUMA) held its annual convention from April 16 to 19. Premier Scott Moe, Government of Saskatchewan Cabinet Ministers, along with several Government Members of the Legislative Assembly, attended the convention to discuss the 2023-24 Provincial Budget and connect with municipal leaders. Our government greatly values the partnership with SUMA and the province's urban communities.

Saskatchewan is growing at a rate we haven't seen in over 100 years.



**HON. SCOTT MOE,
PREMIER**

~
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In 2022, the population increased by more than 29,000 people. This growth is supported by our strong economy, which created over

20,000 new jobs in 2022.

Our strong economy is fuelled by strong commodity prices and increased private-sector investment. This allows our government to invest in programs and services that make Saskatchewan the best place to live, work, and raise a family.

This year's budget provides \$503 million in direct support for Saskatchewan's growing municipalities, an increase of 12.1 per cent from last year. This includes Municipal Revenue Sharing, which will reach a record \$297.9 million this year, up 13.4 per cent from last year's

budget. Municipal Revenue Sharing provides predictable, no-strings-attached funding to use as local leaders see fit as they grow and build strong communities.

A total of \$152.7 million will be invested in municipal infrastructure in this year's budget. This includes the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP), which provides grants for community-based projects. It also consists of the New Building Canada Fund. These grants allow communities to invest in projects that will strengthen and grow Saskatchewan communities for years to come.

Communities across the province will benefit from 21 new infrastructure projects through a joint provincial and federal investment of \$42.1 million. The City of Lloydminster will benefit from a new arena and the Town of Balgonie will see a new aquatic centre, which will provide new opportunities for recreation and gathering places. In addition, several rural municipalities will see bridge replacements which will support the



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transportation systems of these communities. For more information on other investments, visit Saskatchewan.ca.

First Nations and Métis communities across the province will receive targeted funding totaling \$249.1 million. A record \$92.4 million investment will support Indigenous-led social and economic initiatives. The First Nations and Métis Consultation Participation Fund, which supports communities to engage in consultations related to the duty to consult, will receive continued investment. An additional continued investment of \$800,000 will support communi-

ty-led Indigenous initiatives to address issues raised in Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

Additional investments will target Indigenous career training, post-secondary institutions, and initiatives to ensure students have the learning opportunities they need for bright futures. Enhanced support for on-reserve policing will help keep First Nations and Métis communities safe, and funding for the Métis Addictions Council of Saskatchewan Inc. and the Community Justice Alternative Measures Program will also provide valuable community-based supports. Investments in our strong and growing First Nations and Métis communities are investments in a strong Saskatchewan.

Investing in strong and growing communities in our province is growth that works for everyone. To learn more about the 2023-24 Provincial Budget, visit Saskatchewan.ca.

These strings won't easily unravel

Imagine if you will, a Saskatchewan where every provincial decision must first comply with rules crafted by the Government of Canada.

We saw this very scenario recently when the Minister of Health stated he was 'blind-sided' by the federal government's claw back of \$750,000, just days after negotiating a healthcare deal. The Trudeau government used the excuse that Saskatchewan's MRI program does not comply with the fed's model of healthcare.

It's never been a secret that the federal government does not like our solution to shortening the waitlist for MRIs. We have known this since the day it started. Armed with that knowledge, why didn't this government negotiate a clause in the health agreement that we would not be penalized for our made-in-Saskatchewan MRI program?

In another recent example, the province giddily proclaimed as its own, the \$10 a day Childcare Program, which is heavily funded by the federal government. Almost immediately it backfired. Childcare facility owners found themselves having to cut spaces for certain clients in order to take on new clients that would be in compliance with the program.

When I asked the government in the house why almost every announcement they make is in partnership with the federal government, the finance minister admitted that there are numerous programs with federal "strings attached", including in healthcare, agriculture, infrastructure, housing, mental health and more.

It might have been advantageous to make deals with the feds not so long ago. But with this federal government, alarm bells should be ringing. The latest telegraphing moment by Attorney General David Lametti committing to 'look into' rescinding provincial responsibility over resources is yet another symp-



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tom.

So, while the province is chasing carrots of freshly printed federal dollars, it must relinquish authority of how that money is spent, essentially creating 'central governance by proxy'.

Surely by now, the provincial ministers know that this federal government has an agenda that has no qualms about running roughshod over the people of Canada, and in particular, the people of Western Canada.

In recent weeks, farmers attending town hall meetings are questioning the expansion now underway of the Premises Identification (PID) program. This is a federal program implemented by the province with a goal to track every livestock animal (including rabbits), no matter what the size or scale of the property. Even tiny hobby farms are caught in this net. In fact, it is the government that decides how many animals you are allowed to keep. The rationale centers around disease tracking or if an emergency is declared.

After the events of the last few years, trust in government by the people is at an all time low. The bar has been set extremely low as to what the threshold for an emergency is. No one really knows, as it is not well defined. Under this federal government, an emergency could be any pretense that hurts the economy. People just don't trust government not to abuse the authority entrusted to them.

In Saskatchewan, part of that mistrust was formed when we witnessed Premier Moe completely reverse his stated position after meeting with the Prime Minister. It's almost as though when it comes to Saskatchewan sovereignty, Premier Moe is playing checkers while the feds are playing 3D chess.

The people of Saskatchewan need this provincial government to connect the dots, figure out the end game, and protect our lifestyle and heritage.

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Totum Research Inc. January 2023 Study on How Geography Impacts Shopping Patterns, Habits and E-Commerce Across Canada

Spiritwood hosts 30th annual Music Festival

By NATASHA CABASE
Spiritwood Herald Reporter

The Spiritwood & District Music Festival returned after missing 2020, 2021, and 2022 due to COVID, hosting its 30th annual show on April 3 and 4 with Naomi Piggott-Suchan adjudicating.

Piggott-Suchan has been working for the past eight years as a professional pianist for McGill University's voice department, where she coached graduate and undergraduate vocalists in opera and Lieder repertoire, singing diction, musical style, languages (French, English, German and Italian), and ensemble.

The festival's gala performance was held the night of April 4 at 7:30 p.m., showcasing the best the performers had to offer. Bevra Fee was the master of ceremonies for the evening, while artworks from Glaslyn School adorned the walls, and other decorations were loaned out by the Grand Ole Opry.

At the discretion of the adjudicator, the evening's scholarships and awards were presented to the performers.

Starting with the Outstanding Performer of the Festival, presented by the Spiritwood & District Lions, the winner was Amara Menke. Amara also won a \$100 scholarship provided by Hujber's Market on Main.

For choral speech, a \$50 scholarship and plaque sponsored by Jim and Joyce Bone was awarded to Medstead's Grade 3/4 class.

Piano Solo awards, sponsored by Spiritwood Pharmacy, went to Reegan Pain (age 8 and under), Chloe Corriveau (age 9 & 10), Grace Siemens (age 11 & 12), Richard Ilioukevitch (age 13 & 14), and Amara Menke (age 15 and over). Each winner received a \$50 scholarship.

In Best Overall Canadian, sponsored by the Spiritwood Herald, Amara Menke was the winner. Meanwhile, Julianna Millar won Best Overall Baroque or Bach, sponsored by Innovation Credit Union. Best Sonata or Sonatina, sponsored by Marjorie Klassen, went to Emili Loiselle, Best Overall Chopin, sponsored by the Spiritwood Herald, went to Julianna Millard, and Langston Davies won in Best Overall Saskatchewan Music, sponsored by Spiritwood Scotiabank. Again, each winner in this group received a \$50 scholarship.

Up next, Ariel Smolinski won the Footsteps to the Future award (age 12 and under), sponsored by The Battlefords Registered Music Teachers Association, and Grace Driedger won the Footsteps to the Future award (age 13 and over). Mitchell Ilioukevitch was the winner of the Best Beginner at any age, sponsored by Carolyn Voss Mitchell. These awards also came with \$50 scholarships.

For voice solos, Raleigh Davies won in the age 12 and under group, and Martin Siemens won the Best Overall Sacred Solo, sponsored by Kathleen Gatzke.

Raleigh Davies also won the Best Overall in Musi-



The Medstead Grade 3/4 class won the award and scholarship for choral speech.

cal Theatre, sponsored by Lake Country Co-op, and Langston Davies was the winner of Best Overall in Folk Music, sponsored by Innovation Credit Union.

As for promising vocal performers, Langston Davies won in the 12 and under age group, with the award and scholarship sponsored by Barb Szasz, and June Macnab won the first year voice award and scholarship, sponsored by Spiritwood Confectionery.

Langston Davies was also the winner of the individual verse award and scholarship, sponsored by Thompson Agencies.

For duets, there were awards handed out in both the piano and vocal categories. For piano, Addison Pain and Hazel Driedger won the award sponsored by Prairie Centre Credit Union. Meanwhile, Raleigh and Langston Davies won the vocal award and scholarship.

Finally, the Spiritwood Lions Club Open Scholarships were presented to Jacob LaClare, Mackenzy Johnson, Anton Steinhardt, Ruth Siemens, Olivia Pineault, Paul Loiselle, and Hazel Driedger, who shared a \$200 prize.

More photos on page 7



Voice award winners, from left to right: Raleigh Davies, Langston Davies, and June Macnab.



Piano Solo winners, from left to right: Reegan Pain, Grace Siemens, and Richard Ilioukevitch. Missing: Chloe Corriveau.



Piano class award winners, from left to right: Julianna Millard, Emili Loiselle, and Langston Davies.

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Nadine Wilson MLA

Saskatchewan Rivers 888-763-0615
www.nadinewilson.ca saskrivers@sasktel.net

R.M. OF MEDSTEAD NO. 497

SEASONAL MAINTENANCE/EQUIPMENT OPERATOR POSITION

The R.M. of Medstead No. 497 invites applications for an experienced full time Seasonal Maintenance/Equipment Operator. The Seasonal Maintenance/Equipment Operator will be responsible for mowing this municipality's ditches, rock picking, mulching in conjunction with the grader operators, installing and repairing signs and other jobs as directed by the Reeve. Opportunity may be present in the future to move into a grader operator position. Pay rates depending on experience.

The R.M. of Medstead No. 497 is located in central Saskatchewan located approximately forty five minutes north of North Battleford.

Applicants must possess a valid Class 5 driver's license and have skill and experience in maintenance and operation of equipment including tractor, mower, rock picker and mulcher.

Submit written resumes stating experience, expected wage, two references and a current driver's abstract. Deadline closes once the position is filled. All resumes shall be marked "Seasonal Maintenance/Equipment Operator Position" and dropped off at the RM Office, mailed to the address below or emailed to rm497@sasktel.net.

R.M. of Medstead No. 497
Box 12
Medstead, SK S0M 1W0

Council thanks all applicants for their interest in this position but only persons selected for interviews will be contacted.

The R.M. of Medstead No. 497 reserves the right to reject and refuse any or all expressions of interest.

The R.M. of Shellbrook No. 493

Is now accepting applications for the position of
Seasonal Equipment Operator/Labourer

Class 1A would be a definite asset.
The applicant must work well with others
and work unsupervised.

This position will remain open until filled.
Only successful applicants will be contacted

Please submit applications to:
R.M. of Shellbrook No. 493
71 Main St. Shellbrook

Or email: admin.493@sasktel.net
Phone 306-747-2178 for further information.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

RM OF SHELLBROOK NO. 493

RM MAINTENANCE SHOP JANITORIAL

The Rural Municipality of Shellbrook No. 493 is currently looking for a Janitorial Contractor to clean the RM Shop located at 702 2nd Avenue East in Shellbrook, Sk. Cleaning will be done once a week and include washroom, lunchroom, boardroom and cleaning products are supplied.

Tenders will be accepted until April 30th, 2023. To view please contact Administrator Duane Storey @ 306-747-2158. Tenders can be dropped off at the Municipal Office, 71 Main Street, Shellbrook or e-mailed to admin.493@sasktel.net.

Hope, uncertainty in canola's future

Anyone doubting there is confidence in the future of the canola industry need look no further than announcements made in Yorkton over the last few years.

Richardson International Limited announced a significant investment in their canola crush plant in Yorkton in 2021 to double its processing capacity to 2.2 million metric tonnes annually.

And now Louis Dreyfus Company (LDC) has announced it will expand its canola crushing facility here.

The facility's new ca-

capacity will be over 2 million metric tons, which is more than double its current capacity.

Simply put, that means a massive amount of canola will need to be consistently grown in the years ahead with hauling distance of the two Yorkton-based facilities.

Now that doesn't ensure a reasonable return on the cost-of-production for farmers moving forward, but it does at least mean competition for canola, with the plants situated roughly within a long stone's throw of each other.



CALVIN DANIELS

When it comes to the future of canola, like many things, the crystal ball is rather cloudy.

For example, a couple of weeks back I wrote about plans stateside by Corteva Agriscience, Bunge and Chevron U.S.A. Inc. to produce

winter canola in the southern United States. There is a belief that there is potential to grow up to 10 million acres in that region within seven to nine years.

Those new acres could be a game-changer in terms of canola supplies.

There is the biofuels sector which could absorb added production, but governments are rattling sabres in ways that could thwart growth in that area. German environment minister Stef

fi Lemke says she will soon send proposals to cabinet for the country to withdraw from the

use of crop-based biofuel to achieve reductions in greenhouse gases.

And in the U.S., a recent government announcement indicated that country will subsidize its biofuel producers with a blenders' credit, but only for biofuels crushed or distilled in the United States. That is certainly a door closing for biofuel production in Canada with an export target of the USA.

As usual, government protectionism can quickly muddy production markets. And let's not forget the Canadian

government looking at whether fertilizer use mandates are needed.

While policy geared toward greenhouse gas emission reductions should generally be seen as positive, reducing fertilizer usage that would impact human food production and biofuel sources as well, should be far down any list in terms of new policy initiatives.

Ultimately, Yorkton is a beacon in terms of future canola interest, but it will not necessarily be a smooth road on the way to the commodity's future.

Spiritwood hosts 30th Music Festival



Duet winners, from left to right: Raleigh Davies, Langston Davies, Addison Pain, and Hazel Driedger.



Spiritwood Lions Open Scholarship Winners from left to right: Jacob LaClare, Mackenzy Johnson, Anton Steinhardt, Ruth Siemens, Paul Loiselle, and Hazel Driedger. Missing: Olivia Pineault.



Outstanding Performer winner Amara Menke, with adjudicator Naomi Pigott-Suchan.

Doucette wins April dessert



The winner of the Spiritwood Public Library's Dessert of the Month for April was Dana Doucette. The dessert was made by Kay Willson.

R.M. OF LEASK NO. 464 PUBLIC NOTICE

Public notice is hereby given that the Council of the Rural Municipality of Leask No. 464 intends to adopt a bylaw under *The Planning and Development Act, 2007* to amend Bylaw No. 2/20, known as the Zoning Bylaw.

INTENT

The proposed bylaw will rezone the land from Resort Commercial (RC) to Lakeshore District (LD).

AFFECTED LAND

The affected lands are lot 4B Lot 3 Plan 84B13418 as shown within the bold dashed line on the following map.

REASON

The reason for the amendment is to allow for the zoning change from Resort Commercial (RC) to Lakeshore District (LD).

PUBLIC INSPECTION

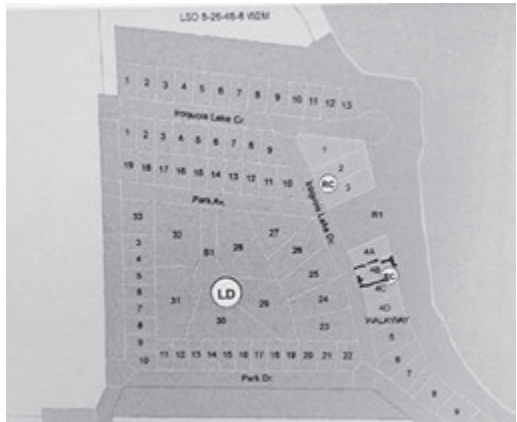
Any person may inspect the bylaw at the municipal office between 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. on Monday through Friday excluding statutory holidays. Copies are available at cost.

PUBLIC HEARING

Council will hold a public hearing on May 10, 2023, at 10:00 a.m. at the Leask Municipal Office to hear any person or group that wants to comment on the proposed bylaw. Council will also consider written comments received at the hearing (or delivered to the undersigned at the municipal office before the hearing).

Issued at Rural Municipality of Leask No. 464 this 17th day of April, 2023.

Donna Goertzen
Administrator



Shewchuk bound for North American Indigenous Games

By **JORDAN TWISS**
Shellbrook Chronicle Reporter

No stranger to the rink and the ball diamonds in Shellbrook, where he competes with the Parkland AA U18 Elks and the Shellbrook Rangers, local athlete Kamden Shewchuk is taking his talents on the road this spring and summer.

Also a member of the Lac La Ronge Indian Band, Shewchuk took to the ice for Team Woodland at the 2023 Tony Cote Winter Games from April 7-13, after participating in a successful try-out in January. Shewchuk played forward for the team, which won its first two games but subsequently lost the next two, ending its tournament run early.

Meanwhile, this past weekend, he competed in the 2023 Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations Youth Championship Hockey Tournament,

representing Lac La Ronge once again. As spring turns to summer, and ball season gets into full swing, Shewchuk will be traveling further afield and representing Saskatchewan.

From July 15 to 23, he'll be competing at the 2023 North American Indigenous Games on Team Saskatchewan's male U16 softball team.

He first tried out for the team in Prince Albert in February, and the coaches liked enough of what they saw to bring him back for an invitation-al tryout in March. Due to inclement weather, another invitational try-out was set for April, and Shewchuk was one of 24 boys to make the cut, earning a place as the team's starting shortstop.

"Kamden was contacted by the coach, Brock Perry, on April 11, letting him know that he had made the team as the starting short stop and that he was extremely impressed with his tal-

ent," Kamden's mom, Chezanne Shewchuk, recalled.

This isn't the first time Shewchuk has been tapped to compete at the national level. Last summer, after winning Provincial B gold with the Shellbrook Rangers, he was picked up by the Prince Albert Astros to play short-stop at the 2022 U15 Boy's Canadian Fast Pitch Championship in Wilmot, Ont.

Over four days of action at Nationals, Shewchuk earned a .500 batting average and a 1.425 OPS. For his play at the plate and in the infield, he was named to the All-Star Team as the top shortstop in Canada.

Shewchuk won't be the only Shellbrook athlete competing at the national level this summer. Madison Nelson will be joining him at the North American Indigenous Games, competing with Team Saskatchewan's U16 female softball team.



Shellbrook's Kamden Shewchuk is bound for the North American Indigenous Games in Halifax this summer, where he'll be competing in U16 softball.

Man close to withdrawing sex assault plea

By **JORDAN TWISS**
Shellbrook Chronicle Reporter

Following a messy exchange between his lawyers, a Saskatchewan man is one step closer to withdrawing his guilty plea on 12 sexual as-

saults. Cecil Wolfe, 61, was formally charged with the offences in 2022. According to police, Wolfe was working under the pretext of being a traditional healer or medicine man, when he committed the offences against women from Loon Lake, Blaine Lake,

Muskeg Lake Cree Nation, Saskatoon and surrounding areas between 2013 and 2021.

Wolfe initially pleaded guilty to the acts last April, and began sentencing in late October. The sentencing was put on pause in November, however, when Wolfe

fired his original lawyer, Loretta Pete Lambert, and asked to instead be represented by Harvey Neufeld.

Wolfe is now applying to expunge, or erase, his guilty pleas, and an expungement hearing is scheduled for June 30. In order for the application to be successful, Neufeld will have to prove that Wolfe was not properly informed, didn't understand, or was under duress when he initially pleaded guilty.

If Wolfe's application is successful and his plea is changed to not guilty, his case will go to trial.

Appearing with Wolfe in Saskatoon Provincial Court last Tuesday to set a date for the expungement hearing, Neufeld first raised concerns about a lack of communication from Wolfe's former lawyer.

Neufeld said he didn't have Wolfe's complete file, because Pete Lam-

bert failed to disclose all documents and hadn't replied to his emails.

As Pete Lambert was in the gallery, the presiding judge adjourned the proceedings for an hour to allow Neufeld and Pete Lambert to discuss. When the lawyers returned, Pete Lambert had agreed to photocopy her notes.

Crown prosecutor Lana Morelli said "it's unfortunate" court time was used for lawyers to communicate.

For the 12 charges against Wolfe, Morelli is seeking a sentence of nine-and-a-half years. Wolfe remains out of custody throughout the proceedings, and has repeatedly denied touching the women for a sexual purpose.

The identities of Wolfe's victims are protected by a mandatory court-ordered publication ban issued on the identities of sexual assault victims.

Investigators say they still believe there may be additional victims from over the past twenty years in the communities of Loon Lake, Blaine Lake, Muskeg Lake Cree

Nation, Saskatoon, and surrounding areas. The investigation remains active and victims are encouraged to contact their nearest RCMP Detachment or Police Service if they have information to share.

Information for sexual assault survivors, including what will happen when you report the assault to police, is available at: <https://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/en/relationship-violence/information-sexual-assault-survivors>

The Saskatoon Sexual Assault and Information Centre's Crisis Line can be reached at 306-244-2224.



Cecil Wolfe.

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Hon. Jeremy Harrison
MLA for Meadow Lake
jharrisonmla@sasktel.net

Hon. Scott Moe, Premier
MLA for Rosthern-Shellbrook
scottmoe.mla@sasktel.net

Minutes of an RM of Canwood meeting

(Where necessary, the following minutes may have been edited for clarity or brevity)

A regular meeting of the Council of the Rural Municipality of Canwood No. 494 was held in the Municipal Council Chambers, at 641 Main Street, Canwood, SK, on Feb. 15, 2023, commencing at 9:05 a.m.

Present – Reeve Lyndon Pease, Administrator Lorna Benson and the following Councillors for their respective divisions: #1 Ralph Korody, #2 Gerald Muller, #3 Gordon Andrews, #4 Mario Boisvert, #5 Kevin Olson, and #6 Cody Lockhart.

Delegations:
9:30 a.m. Dwight Diehl, Public Works Supervisor, Municipal Operations Update

11 a.m. Shannon McLean, Heritage Site
11:45 a.m. Councillor Indemnity

Boisvert: That the minutes of the Jan. 17, 2023, Regular Council Meeting be approved. Carried

Andrews: That the Statement of Financial Activities for the month of January 2023 for the R.M. General Account be approved as presented. Carried

Korody: That we approve the payments as listed on the attached account listing for a total of \$314,017.13 Council Direct Deposits for February and Payroll Direct

Deposits for 202 Pay Periods 2 & 3. Carried

Muller: That we move to in-camera at 9:25 a.m. Carried

Pease: That we reconvene the regular council meeting at 9:45 a.m. with all members of council and administration present. Carried

Public Works Supervisor Dwight Diehl attended the meeting at 9:50 a.m.

Public Works Supervisor Dwight Diehl left the meeting at 10:30 a.m.

Lockhart: That we acknowledge receiving the Financial Statement from the Canwood and District Bus Association for the period of Nov. 1, 2021, to Oct. 31, 2022. Further to this, we agree to a donation of \$2,000. Carried

Olson: That we agree to make a donation to the Canwood Regional Park Annual Fundraiser to be held March 11, 2023, of two loads of crushed gravel to be delivered within the boundaries of the municipality at no charge to the successful bidder. Carried

Lockhart: That we agree to provide a letter of support to the Canwood Regional Park Authority for the proposed spray park facility located within the park and instruct the Chief Administrative Officer to prepare and present the letter. Carried

Muller: That in the matter of the Min-

ister’s Order for the alteration of boundaries between the Resort Village of Pebble Baye and the Rural Municipality of Canwood No. 494, dated July 25, 2022, under the authority of Section 274 of The Municipalities Act, and in consideration of Council’s duty of fairness, we agree to abate the pro-rated portion of the municipal and school taxes and refund each ratepayer. Carried

Lockhart: That we acknowledge being in receipt of the Financial Statement of the Canwood Public Library for the year ended Dec. 31, 2022. Further to this, we have reviewed the 2023 Proposed Budget and agree to pay the grant request of \$3,600. Carried

Muller: That we direct the Chief Administrative Officer, in preparation of the List of Lands in Arrears pursuant to Section 3 of the Tax Enforcement Act, not to include land in respect of which the amount of taxes in arrears does not exceed one half of the immediately preceding year’s tax levy with respect to that land. Carried

Korody: That we approve the Council’s Indemnity as presented. Carried

Muller: That we advise the Community Planning Branch of the Ministry of Government Relations that we recommend approval of the Application to Subdivide Land of Robert Gerow, for the purpose of subdividing Parcel A from the NW 04-53- 07 W3, as the site has physical and legal access and exceeds the minimum site area requirements of Section 5 of the Municipal Zoning Bylaw 2003-7. Carried

Olson: That we approve the Permit Extension Application of Stacy and Shawn Schwindt to complete the interior of a new cabin by Jan. 31, 2024.

Olson: That we approve the Permit Extension Application of Bettina Corrins to

complete the deck and railings and interior finishes of a new cabin by Jan. 31, 2024. Carried

Muller: That we approve the Development Permit Application of Collin MacInnis for the construction of a house, with approval pursuant to Section 5.1.1(1) (c) of the Municipal Zoning Bylaw 2003-7. Carried

Muller: That we agree to the request of Emile and Pauline Tetreault to consolidate the following parcels:

- NW 09-53-07 W3, LSD 11-09-53-07 W3 Ext 44, Plan 77B10642
- NW 09-53-07 W3, LSD 11-09-53-07 W3 Ext 49, Plan BF100608209
- NW 09-53-07 W3, LSD 12-09-53-07 W3 Ext 42, Plan 77B10642
- NW 09-53-07 W3, LSD 13-09-53-07 W3 Ext 43, Plan 77B10642
- NW 09-53-07 W3, LSD 14-09-53-07 W3 Ext 47, Plan BF100608209. Carried

Muller: That we approve the Development Permit Application of Percy and Brenda Waterhouse for shoreline stabilization on the municipal reserve, subject to the conditions that the work must follow the parameters set out in the approvals obtained from Water Security Agency, or any other governing body issuing permits pertaining to this matter. Carried

Muller: That we approve the Development and Building Permit Applications of Brian Turcotte for the construction of a garage, with approval pursuant to Section 9.1.2 of the LD – Lakeshore Development District, Municipal Zoning Bylaw 2003-7. Carried

Pease: That we now file the correspondence. Carried

Olson: That we now adjourn at 12:20 p.m.

Sask budget failed to make life more affordable

By **GAGE HAUBRICH**
CTF Prairie Director

The Saskatchewan government could have helped taxpayers.

It could have made a plan to pay off the debt.

It didn’t do any of that.

Despite near record revenues, the Saskatchewan budget fails to provide any tax relief for Saskatchewanians and the debt will keep increasing after 2024.

The government saw a \$1.6 billion turnaround in 2023, leaving the government with a billion-dollar surplus. In 2024, government revenue is up \$2.5 billion, a 15 per cent increase over last year. Spending is up \$1 billion. Spending is up on almost every budget line. The surplus is also projected at \$1 billion.

To its credit, the government does plan on paying back up to \$1 billion in debt this year after paying back a similar amount in 2023. That seems like great news. Until you look a little deeper.

Paying down your credit card bill is a great achievement. It sets you up for the future and means you don’t have to waste as much money on interest charges. It becomes less of an achievement if you instantly go out and start driving up the same bill you just paid back.

And that is exactly what

the Saskatchewan government is planning to do. The debt is currently \$18.5 billion and will be \$18.1 billion by the end of 2024. But by 2027, the government projects the debt will increase 23 per cent to \$22.3 billion. All on the backs of taxpayers.

It’s disappointing that the government couldn’t find savings anywhere to stop the debt from rising. Especially when they didn’t have to look very far. The government didn’t need to spend \$8,000 chartering a flight to North Battleford or subsidize Delta Airlines to the tune of \$2.2 million. Now, because the government refused to cut back, Saskatchewanians are going to be stuck with the bill for interest payments well into the future.

Interest payments on the taxpayer-supported debt will be \$708 million this year. That’s costing every single Saskatchewanian an average of \$587 every year. That money is going to be completely wasted and can’t be used for tax cuts or programs. And every year the government lets the debt climb, this number is going to increase.

Despite the surplus, the government is also failing to provide any sort of tax relief. Unless you count a new PST exemption on rice farming boats. Other provinces have been cutting taxes and saving residents real money, but Saskatch-

ewan is failing to provide relief that families need.

Alberta, Ontario and Newfoundland and Labrador all recently cut gas taxes. Drivers in Alberta will be saving up to \$440 this year, In Ontario, a family will see \$195 in savings. And in Newfoundland and Labrador the average two car family can \$475 expect in savings.

Manitoba, Quebec, and New Brunswick also recently cut income taxes. In Manitoba, the cut will save an individual up to \$524 in 2023. Taxpayers in Quebec will save up to \$814, and those in New Brunswick will see a \$310 lighter tax bill.

All while Saskatchewanians get nothing.

The opposition Saskatchewan NDP are calling for the government to cut the PST off construction labour to make homes more affordable.

“Adding the PST to construction labour was a mistake from day one and it’s the epitome of a job-killing tax,” said NDP MLA Trent Wotherspoon.

The government should have listened and made housing cheaper.

Saskatchewan had a golden opportunity to cut taxes and commit to paying down the debt in this budget. Instead, the government is planning to increase the debt and leave Saskatchewan families with no tax relief.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

SPIRITWOOD: Wapiti Regional Library - Tuesday 9 am - 5 pm; Wednesday 9 am - 5 pm; Friday 9 am - 5 pm

LEOVILLE: Wapiti Regional Library - Wednesday 10 am - 4 pm; Thursday 10 am - 3 pm

SHELL LAKE: Wapiti Regional Library - Tuesday 12:30 pm - 4 pm; Wednesday 12:30 pm - 4 pm

BLAINE LAKE: Wapiti Library - Wednesday 11 am - 6 pm; Friday 11 am - 5 pm; Saturday 10 am - 4 pm. Contact us for more info 306-497-3130, www.wapitilibrary.ca.

BIG RIVER: Wapiti Library - Wednesday 11:30 am - 4:30 pm; Thursday 11:30 am - 4:30 pm. Phone # 306-469-2152

CANWOOD: Canwood Branch of Wapiti Regional Library. Tuesday 10 am - 3:30 pm; Thursday 3:30 pm - 8 pm; Friday 1:30 pm - 4:30 pm. Kids Club is Fridays 3:30 pm - 4:30 pm, Crafter’s Choice is the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month.

DEBDEN: Wapiti Library hours: Tuesday 10 am - 3 pm; Wednesday 3 pm - 7 pm. Librarian: Aline Hannon

LEASK: Wapiti Library & Legacy Gallery Hours - Tuesday 9 am - 2 pm; Wednesday 3 pm - 6 pm; Friday 1 pm - 5 pm

MARCELIN: Wapiti Library - Thursday 2 pm - 7 pm; Saturday 9 am - 2 pm. For information on all your library needs, please contact 306-226-2110.

SHELLBROOK: Shellbrook Branch of the Wapiti Library located at 105 Railway Ave., West (Provincial building). Library Hours: Monday 2 pm - 6 pm; Tuesday 12 pm - 8 pm; Wednesday 2 pm - 6 pm; Thursday 12 pm - 6 pm; Friday 10 am - 5 pm (Story Time 11 am - 12 pm); Saturday 10 am - 4 pm.

CANWOOD: Elk’s Fish Fry Supper, Canwood Elk’s Community Hall. Sunday, April 30th, Supper – 4 pm to 7 pm. Includes: fried fish, potato salad, coleslaw, P & Beans, buns & dessert. Adults – \$20; 10 & Under – \$10; Preschool – Free. ALL proceeds go to the operation of the Canwood Elk’s Community Hall

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Apples for the prairies

By **PATRICIA HANBIDGE**

Did you know that right here on the prairies we can grow apples that are as good as those that are grown anywhere in the world? Believe it or not but we can compare our quality of apples to those grown in the Okanagan, the Annapolis Valley and other places around the world. In 2019, Asia produced 56 million tons, followed by Europe with 17 million tons. Next was the Americas with 9 million tons, Africa with 3 million tons and Oceania with 818,000 tons.

In order to appreciate what it takes to grow delicious apples it is import-

ant to realize that all of the cultivars of apples that we see in the grocery store are not grown from seed but instead are propagated asexually or also commonly called produced by clones. The reason this is necessary is that in order for an apple tree to produce apples it needs to be cross-pollinated with another apple tree. What this means from a genetics perspective is that there is huge diversity of genetic data contained within that apple seed and each seed will grow into something that is unique from every other seed within that apple. It may produce fruit that is completely unique or it may not produce any fruit at all.

Another interesting fact is that the apple industry worldwide has been undergoing change. As stated earlier each apple tree is produced asexually so a graft from the desired type of apple is grafted onto a compatible rootstock. This rootstock began as a complete tree with a root system and a single stem. In the apple industry most often this rootstock is a dwarf rootstock which will have an effect on the apple tree itself to keep it smaller in stature and will also have an effect on when fruit is produced. The apple industry has been utilizing dwarf rootstock for many years as the trees themselves are smaller, require less maintenance, pruning is easier as they are shorter trees and the production has proven to result in larger fruit and in fact more fruit can be produced on the same size of land base.

As mentioned above, the rootstock will affect the age when the tree begins to bear fruit. Generally speaking, dwarf apples will produce two to three years after planting while semi-dwarf apples will usually begin to bear fruit at four to five years after planting. Standard apples may take seven to ten years to reach maturity and begin to bear fruit. Please note that dwarf trees will need staking or a trellis to support themselves and stay upright when fruiting.

The top part of the tree which has the newest growth is referred to as scion wood. This scion wood is collected during the winter while the tree is dormant and should be one quarter to three eighth of an inch in diameter. Store the scion wood in a cool, moist location with temperatures close to 34°F. Do not freeze but keep the humidity high and very close to freezing.

Grafting during late summer should occur when there is sufficient movement within the tree that the bark slips or in other words when the bark of the stock easily separates from the wood and buds are fully developed. Budding and specifically T-budding is the chosen grafting method where a single bud is taken from the scion wood onto the root stock. This method is faster than other grafting tech-

niques and the success rate is generally quite high as a stronger union is formed between the scion wood and the root stock. Even for a novice grafter, this method has proven to be one of the best options. The bud will remain dormant until spring and once the graft site has healed the wood above the graft will be removed.

Please note that in order to do this grafting, a sharp, good quality knife is essential. The graft should be wrapped with grafting tape which is a specialized tape used for grafting. Over the years many other tapes and methods have been used. When I first learned to graft, we wrapped the graft site with rubber bands and paraffin. It took a fine hand to ensure the wrapping was tight but not too tight to keep the graft site from desiccating but not so tight that the graft site would be strangled and not allow the sap to flow.

Watch for more upcoming articles on fruits we can successfully grow on the prairies – giving us a bountiful and diverse choice when stocking our larder for the long winter months.

Hanbidge is the Lead Horticulturist with Orchid Horticulture. Find us at www.orchidhort.com; by email at info@orchidhort.com; on facebook @orchidhort and on instagram at #orchidhort.



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Regular services, Sunday school and special services will be listed.

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PENTECOSTAL CHURCH Parkside 10:30 a.m. Worship Pastor Lorne Valuck 306-747-3572 Shellbrook Adult Study 9:30 a.m. Sun., 10:30 a.m. - Worship Pastor David Bodvarson 306-747-7235 Canwood Summer: 10 a.m. - Worship Pastor Bob Wrench 306-468-2138 Leask Gospel Tabernacle Sunday 11 a.m. 306-466-2296	ANGELICAN CHURCH Leask - All Saint's Sunday Service - 9 a.m. St. Andrew's - Shellbrook Sunday, 11 a.m. Service Canwood - Christ Church Sunday, 2 p.m. - Service Rev. Canon David Butorac 306-961-1634 Minister's Warden: 306-922-5159 H.C. Service with Rev. Butorac - 1 st Sunday of the month	CATHOLIC CHURCH Debden Sun. Mass - 9:30 a.m. Fr. Mariusz Zajac Big River - Sacred Heart Sun., 11:30 a.m. - Mass Whitefish Sun., 2:30 p.m. - Mass. Victoire Sat., 7:30 p.m. - Mass. Fr. Mariusz Zajac St. Agatha's - Shellbrook Mass - Sunday 11 a.m. St. Henry's - Leask Mass - Sunday 9 a.m. Mistawasis 1 st & 3 rd Sundays 1:30 p.m. Fr. Tuan Doan
PRESBYTERIAN Mistawasis Sunday worship 11:00 a.m. Rev. Katherine Bretzlaff	MENNONITE BRETHREN CHURCH Blaine Lake Gospel Chapel 109 Railway Ave. W. Blaine Lake 306-497-3316 Sunday, 10:30 a.m. Worship	SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST 407-2nd Ave E, Shellbrook Sat., 9:45 a.m. - Sabbath School Sat., 11:00 am -Worship Broadcast on VOAR 92.1 FM Pastor Liviu Tilihoi 306-747-3398
	EVANGELICAL FREE Big River 11:00 a.m. - Worship Bible Classes 9:45 a.m. Summer: 10:30 a.m. - 12 306-469-2258 Youth Nite: Fridays Mont Nebo Sun. Worship - 11:00 a.m. (10:30 a.m. June – August) 306-468-2525	

PRAISE & WORSHIP

Regular services, Sunday school and special services will be listed.

PARTNERS IN FAITH Lutheran/United/ Christchurch Anglican, 137-2nd St. W. Spiritwood Worship 1:30 p.m. Rev. Sarah Urano	LAKELAND COMMUNITY CHURCH (Corner of 1 st Ave. and 4 th St., Spiritwood) Sun., 11 am - Worship Service & Sunday School Pastor Michael Kluthe 306-883-2380	Gideons International of Canada Battlefords Camp Phone Art Martynes (306) 389-4633
UNITED /ANGELICAN Worship Services Glaslyn Time is on the sign Rev. Kun Kim Rev. Don Skinner	FIELDS OF HOPE (HOFFNUNGSFELDER) MENNONITE CHURCH Glenbush Worship - 11:00 am	SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST 407 - 2nd Ave .E, Shellbrook Sat., 9:45 am - Sabbath School Sat., 11:00 am - Worship Broadcast on VOAR 92.1 FM Pastor Liviu Tilihoi 306-747-3398
CATHOLIC SUNDAY Spiritwood - 11:15 a.m. Leoville - 9:30 a.m. Shell Lake - 2:00 p.m. SATURDAY Medstead - 6 p.m. Everyone Welcome Fr. Ramel Macapala	BETHEL Medstead 1st Sunday, 10 am - Worship Pastor David Jensen 3rd Sunday - 10 am Worship Pastor David Jensen	BELBUTTE FULL GOSPEL 11 am Worship Service
COWBOY CHURCH Spiritwood Every Wednesday Night 7 pm Spiritwood Legion Hall Pastor Rick Martin	MENNONITE BRETHREN Glenbush 10:00 am - Sunday School Worship 10:50 am	PARTNERS IN WORSHIP Shell Lake Worship Services Sunday 9:00 a.m. Pastor Sarah Urano 306-841-7333

Silverware haul coming McDavid's way

Connor McDavid is going to need an extra hand, or perhaps a teammate willing to do some heavy lifting, when it comes time for the National Hockey League awards ceremony to be held in Nashville in late June.

Nothing is guaranteed, of course, but McDavid already has three trophies locked up, with an opportunity for at least one more (the Conn Smythe award for most valuable player in the Stanley Cup playoffs).

Trophies in McDavid's clutches already include the Rocket Richard trophy for most goals during the regular season (64), the Art Ross trophy for the league scoring leader (153 points), which he pretty well wrapped up around Valentine's Day, and almost certainly the Hart Trophy as the league's most valuable player. Not a single pundit has dared suggest any other player has even a remote chance of wresting the Hart away from the 26-year-old eight-year veteran. Mc-

David's point total was the highest since Mario Lemieux piled up 161 points in 1995-96. This is McDavid's fifth scoring title, trailing only Wayne Gretzky (10), Gordie Howe (6) and Lemieux (6). Unless another Connor (Bedard) puts a stop to it, McDavid is likely to close the gap, or even surpass, the 10 scoring titles won by Gretzky by the time he retires.

So where will the other major trophies go?

The James Norris Memorial Trophy goes to the league's best defenceman and because it's obvious San Jose's Erik Karlsson is the most talented offensive player who plays defence, voters are likely to be strongly swayed by his 100-plus point season and award him the trophy. Former winners Cale Makar of Colorado and Adam Fox of the Rangers will get some voter attention, as will young Rasmus Dahlin of Buffalo, but Karlsson's status as only the seventh NHL defenceman ever to surpass 100 points will likely earn



BRUCE
PENTON

him the trophy.

The Calder Trophy for top rookie appears to be a two-player race, between Seattle's Matty Beniers and Dallas's Wyatt Johnston. Both had outstanding freshman seasons, scoring 24 goals each, but Beniers outpointed him 57-41. Goalie Stu Skinner of the Oilers and Arizona's Mattias Macelli will also attract some votes.

Boston's extraordinary regular season (a record 135 points) will almost certainly give them the Jack Adams trophy for top coach (Jim Montgomery) and the Vezina Trophy for best goaltender (Linus Ullmark).

The biggest prize of all though, besides the Stanley Cup, will be the team winning the lottery to pick first in the amateur draft. It's the Connor Bedard sweepstakes and it will dramatically alter the course of the lucky team. No silverware involved... yet. That will come a few years down the road.

• RJ Currie of sports-deke.com: "Ohio residents recently voted not to legalize marijuana. Not to worry Cleveland Browns fans: you've still got liquor."

• Headline at theonline.com: "Aaron Rodgers Mentions He's Only Heard Great Conspiracy Theories About New York"

• Headline at fark.com: "Mets to wear patches of their new sponsor, NY Presbyterian Hospital. Deal includes one free Tommy John surgery per pitcher."

• Late Show host Stephen Colbert, on the new pitch clock leading Major League Baseball games to be completed faster than any year

since 1984: "Of course, in 1984, players sped up the game with an innovation known as piles of cocaine in the dugout."

• Mike Bianchi of the Orlando Sentinel: "Pelicans star Zion Williamson has been out three months with a non-surgical hamstring injury and says he has been physically cleared to play, but is opting out until 'I feel like Zion.' If only we all got paid millions of dollars to not go to work when we don't feel like it!"

• Comedy writer Alex Kaseberg: "Regarded as the worst owner in sports, Dan Snider is selling the NFL's Washington Commanders for \$6 billion (after buying the team for \$750 million). That will show him."

• Kaseberg again: "Brooks Koepka said he and the LIV players did well at the Masters even though he lost a four-stroke lead, dropping eight strokes. That's like saying the Titanic did well on the first half of its maiden voyage."

• Comedy guy Torben Rolfsen of Vancouver: "NHL president Gary Bettman said the Ottawa Senators have six bidders in contention. In the U.S., senators have been open for bidding for decades."

• Rolfsen again: "The best thing about the pitch clock is that the Detroit Tigers lose faster."

• Another one from RJ Currie: "One of Google's computer-driven cars was pulled over in California for going too slow. The police christened it Danica Patrick."

• Headline at fark.com: "Caardinals aactivate Nootbaar aafter oopen-ing-daay injury"

• Steve Simmons of SunMedia: "Toronto sports. Raptors lose a playoff game leading by 19. Jays lose a playoff game, leading by eight. Leafs lose annually in positions to win around here. No wonder the Argos don't fit the city. They win too many Grey Cups."

Care to comment? Email brucepenton2003@yahoo.ca

Local spotlight: Wandering Shovel Farm

By NATASHA CABASE
Spiritwood Herald Reporter

As organic farming becomes more popular on the prairies, one farm found 15 miles away from Spiritwood is the Wandering Shovel Farm. The farm is operated by Trent and Lois Loewen, together with their seven active and growing children.

Though Trent and Lois had always kept their own home garden, and Trent loved the idea of sharing what they grew with the community, this first-generation farm officially started in 2015. Trent and Lois often talked about how their tools "wandered" around the farm, with the children taking and using them anywhere, hence the name "Wandering Shovel Farm".

This local farm features fresh, organic fruit and vegetables, including tomatoes, cucumbers, lettuce, radishes, beets, carrots, potatoes, onions, cabbages, and a whole lot more — all of it produced without any use of synthetic chemicals, to be more sustainable and beneficial to the land.

Their year-long process starts with crop planning in January. They determine what and how much to grow and get the seeds and supplies ready and ordered. By the month of February and March, they start with their first seeds like tomatoes and peppers, which are grown inside the house under growing lights.

As April begins, they start growing plants in their greenhouse, which will

then be followed by getting the field garden ready by early May and focusing on seeding and some transplants. Sometimes, as early as the end of May or early June, they are ready to take part in some farmer's markets.

By summertime, all the crops should be ready and continuously produce. But everyone in the family still helps out with seeding and planting. Operations begin to wind down in October, with November and December being the months for clean up.

Trent said that what they do is always a challenge and a learning process. Some of the plants they're currently growing, and will grow in the future, took them quite a while to figure out.

He added that one important aspect in farming is to pay attention to what's going on in your environment, which includes your soil, plants, the insects, and the weather.

"We're getting quite better from where we were to start with," Trent said.

The Loewens are usually found selling goods in several farmers markets in Leoville, Spiritwood, Meeting Lake Park, and Chitek lake. Aside from going into local farmers markets, they've also tapped into a more modern trend by offering weekly subscription boxes filled with vegetables, which can be customized to match individual preferences.

"It is important to us to have delicious, wholesome food for our family, and we want to share that with our community," Trent and Lois said.



Lois and Trent Loewen, owners of the Wandering Shovel Farm.

OBITUARIES

~

Brian William McGown

MCGOWN – Brian

Brian was born in Spiritwood, Saskatchewan on June 1st, 1949 to William and Mary McGown. Brian was a logger and

raised pigs and enjoyed fishing. He was married to Yvette for almost 23 years. They were married on August 18, 2000. He had a passion for music, playing piano and guitar and singing. Brian learned how to play the piano at a young age, playing and volunteering his time at community events for many years. He was known at the North Battleford Museum as Jack McGown.

He bought the Belbutte hall and with the help of Dale Budd, they had jam sessions every two weeks. For the last three

years, he suffered many health problems. While sick in the hospital, his wife, family and friends continued the jam sessions. He will be missed by his wife, Yvette and many friends. His celebration of life was held on March 25, 2023 in the Medstead Hall with family and friends attending. He passed away on February 25, 2023 with his wife Yvette and friend Kathy by his side.

Donations in his memory can be made to the Cowboy Church. Diabets or a charity of your choice.

Jim Van Eaton

VAN EATON – JIM

Born to Flavel and Guy Van Eaton, on October 15, 1929, in Shellbrook, SK, Jim (James Hiram) Van Eaton was the youngest of 8 siblings. He passed away after a brief illness April 18, 2023, at the Parkland Integrated Health Centre, where he became an integral part of the facility, continuing to enrich the lives of his fellow residents, caregivers, and his community. His motto was “I just want to be useful!” and he most definitely was.

After schooling in Rayside, Jim’s parents sent him to Yakima, Washington State to attend high school, where he learned mechanics. In 1949, upon his return home, he worked as a mechanic at Fellow’s Garage and in 1950, when his Dad died, he took over the family farm.

Jim married the love of his life Inez December 19, 1953, and together they were known as the local power-couple, working hard together, but also playing just as hard to balance things out. While Inez taught school, Jim volunteered his time or worked at various jobs. From putting the first AC systems into tractors, running Jim’s photography studio and his own satellite business, doing trenching to houses to bring in running water or electricity – Jim did it all. A jack of all trades, he had brains, ingenuity, and great strength to get all his jobs done well. He had a love for technology and always owned the latest gadget and newest thing, such as the first automatic washing machine he bought for his mother or the latest iPhone 14 or Apple watch – he had to have it. Jim was one of a kind, well-known in Shellbrook for his sailor cap, his modes of transportation - cars, trucks, planes, a hybrid vehicle (which he loved to show off) and scoot-

ers he drove way too fast.

Volunteerism was his strength. A humanitarian at heart, he was one of the initiating members of the Shellbrook Credit Union, where he held account number two – number one he gave to his Mother. He sat on the Board of Credit Union Central for 40 years, until Inez asked him to quit so they could travel. Off they went in their Cessna Cardinal plane and made trips all over the US and Canada.

Jim also served as a volunteer firefighter and a volunteer for the Shellbrook and Districts Fundraising Committee. He and his friend Richard Porter, along with many other volunteers, had a dream for the beautiful Parkland Integrated Health Centre, that we now enjoy and where he made his home for the last five years.

His most remarkable achievement was the creation of the STARS helicopter landing pad at the PIHC through his friendship with STARS Saskatoon Base Commander Barrie Tolmie. He also made friends with many politicians to create meaningful change for Shellbrook, such as pushing for an ambulance station in town. In his last years he wrote a book about his life and was selected to join the SHA Provincial Patient and Family Partner Long-term Care Steering Committee as a valued advisor for issues affecting residents of Long Term Care. Jim served on multiple boards and Committees and received numerous service awards, including the Canada 150 medal and the Queens Platinum Jubilee medal.

At age 89, Jim went on his first overseas’ trip to Europe after recovering from a severe illness that put him in congestive heart failure - filled with excitement about new adventures. He loved his first cruise down the Rhine and Danube in 2018 so much, he went back for two more river cruises in 2019. With 15% heart function, he toured Europe and had the time of his life, making new friends and seeing new sights. He fulfilled a lifelong dream by attending an Opera in Vienna and was overwhelmed by

the beauty of Europe’s castles, cathedrals, and countryside.

His most endearing quality was his beautiful and tender heart and his willingness to assist anyone who needed help. His temper often ran away with him, but also gave him energy and strength to be useful to his beloved community of Shellbrook, which to him was the absolute best place to live.

Jim is predeceased by his parents, his loving wife Inez (née Peterson) and all his siblings: Tony Roline Nutley, Bruce Van Eaton, Shirley Denton, Jo Bishop, Howard Van Eaton, Wallace Van Eaton, and Jack Van Eaton.

Celebrating the fullness and richness of his life are numerous nieces and nephews, his close friends Vi Spencer and sons, Ella Reidt and Elke Hutton, the Lafond family and his many, many other dear friends.

A very special thanks to Dr. Christine Ryan and Calder, who visited and cared for him exceptionally. To his caregiving team at the PIHC (Michelle, Brenda and Trina and many others) who doted on him as well as his two co-residents and fellow musketeers Rita and Wilma, who became close friends and they all looked after each other during the pandemic.

Jim, you left a big footprint on Shellbrook and an even bigger one on our hearts. You will be so missed.

The Celebration of Life for Jim took place on Thursday, April 27, 2023, at 2:00 p.m. from the St. John Lutheran Church in Shellbrook with Rev. Emmanuel Aristide as officiant. In lieu of tributes, memorial donations may be made in memory of Jim to the Shellbrook & Districts Health Services Foundation – Recreation Dept. (Box 33 Shellbrook, SK S0J 2E0). Arrangements have been entrusted to the care of Beau “Lac” Funeral Home & Crematorium, Tammy Smart, Funeral Director, Shellbrook, SK 306-747-2828.

GOOD NEWS

~

TURBULENCE

By LORNE VALUCK

Parkside Pentecostal Church

“This is your pilot. We may be experiencing turbulence.”

I’d like to share a thread of text messages from a conversation some time ago with our daughter, after her flight from Saskatoon to Wollaston Lake where she worked as a nurse.

Beth: Arrived safely. We had quite a bit of turbulence from Saskatoon to PA. The worst [thunder storm] I’ve experienced. Settled in and having supper.

Me: Glad you’re there safe. People calm during the turbulence?

Beth: Everyone very much afraid. Felt better once we talked to the pilot when we landed and found out he wasn’t worried at all. Everything was always under control.

And, in wrapping the conversation, Beth wrote: Also knew that if we were going down, I knew where I was going.

Know who’s in charge, and know where you’re going.

The Book of Daniel in Chapter 3 tells us about three Hebrew young men that were taken into captivity by one of Israel’s enemies.

The King of that country, Nebuchadnezzar, came up with an idea. An image would be fashioned, and at a ceremony of dedication when an orchestra played, everyone had to bow down and worship this idol. Anyone who didn’t comply would be thrown into a fiery furnace.

Now these Hebrew (or Jewish) guys, Shadrach, Meshack and Aben-dego served the one true living God, and knew they couldn’t, and in fact

wouldn’t want to bow down and worship an image or idol made by men.

So, on that day when the orchestra sounded the call to worship the image, the three Godly young men stood, and didn’t bow. Nebuchadnezzar was very, very upset.

Nebuchadnezzar stated his command again to the three, thinking surely they’d change their mind and bow, but they didn’t even have to think about it. They told the king that there was nothing to consider here. They would not bow, and they stated with confidence that the God they served would deliver them from the furnace and the king himself. And further, even if God chose not to deliver them from this death sentence, they still would trust their God, and not this idol or other false gods.

Talk about taking away all of Nebuchadnezzar’s trump cards!

They knew who was really in charge and where they were going.

The Bible goes on to tell us that God did deliver these three faithful men when they were thrown into the furnace, and influenced the King to acknowledge and honour their God.

Confidence, peace, and rest in God – in life and/or death. Our faith and joy aren’t dependent, or contingent on an earthly outcome, but on a Heavenly outlook.

This is your Pilot, Jesus speaking: “I will be with you always, even unto the end” (Matthew 28:20), offering “peace that transcends understanding” (Philippians 4:7).

Trust Him in your journey, and your destiny. Get to know the Pilot.

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Sask canola prospects keep growing

By **JORDAN TWISS**
Shellbrook Chronicle Reporter

As kids these days say, Saskatchewan's agriculture sector is crushing it.

Canola, that is, and in massive quantities.

With market analysts forecasting the global canola oil market to surge to \$43.34 billion (USD) by 2027, it's clear that vast fields of yellow will remain a common feature of the landscape in rural Saskatchewan in the years to come.

Producing close to 20 million metric tonnes of canola each year, Canada's canola industry contributes almost \$30 billion to the Canadian economy per year and employs 207,000 people across the country. Saskatchewan is the backbone of this world-leading industry, accounting for just over half of Canada's total canola crop.

However, with the industry having set a lofty goal to increase canola production to 26 million metric tonnes by 2025, the question becomes how it will manage to reach these levels in the next two years. There, too, Saskatchewan might hold the answer, if a recent announcement by the Louis Dreyfus Company is any indication of the canola market's trends in the province.

In early April, the company

announced it would more than double its current capacity at its canola crushing facility in Yorkton, which opened in 2009 and currently employs about 120 people. This will bring the facility's capacity to 2 million metric tonnes.

Construction of the facility's additional canola crushing line is expected to begin later this year.

"This major investment by LDC is good news for Saskatchewan canola growers and good news for workers and the economy in Yorkton and right across the province," Trade and Export Development Minister Jeremy Harrison said in a statement. "This expansion brings Saskatchewan even closer to several of the 2030 Growth Plan goals, including the ambitious goal of crushing 75 per cent of the canola produced in the province, strengthens the province's position as a global leader in agriculture value-added processing, and will further increase Saskatchewan's international exports."

In addition to helping with the canola crushing goal, the expansion puts the province closer to meeting several other key goals outlined in Saskatchewan's Growth Plan, including growing Saskatchewan's agri-food exports to \$20 billion, and increasing agriculture



value-added revenue to \$10 billion.

The Louis Dreyfus Company's expansion in Yorkton also continues a strong push for canola in the province that began with four key announcements in 2021.

First, also in Yorkton, Richardson International announced plans to expand its canola crushing site. The upgrades, scheduled for completion at some point in 2024, will double the facility's crushing capacity, creating jobs and helping the province reach its Growth Plan goal of crushing 75 per cent of Saskatchewan-grown canola right here

in the province.

Second, Cargill announced plans to build a \$350 million canola crushing facility of its own near Regina. If all goes according to plan the facility will be up and running in 2024, employing 50 people full-time and processing 1 million metric tonnes of seed each year.

Third, just days after Cargill made its announcement, Viterra revealed plans to build a canola crushing facility in Regina as well. The plant is expected to process up to 2.5 million metric tonnes of seed each year. Construction on the facility was slated for 2022,

with production beginning in 2024.

Finally, near Estevan, the initial groundwork is being laid for a proposed renewable diesel refinery, which would use canola as its primary feedstock. No timeline has been set for this project.

Canola oil and canola seed were among Saskatchewan's top three agri-food exports in 2022, with a value of \$3.5 billion and \$2.7 billion, respectively. Meanwhile, in 2021, farms in Saskatchewan reported the largest canola area in Canada with 12 million acres (up 8.2 per cent from 2016).



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Four steps to starting a hobby farm

Whether from a desire for community connection, building sustainable agriculture or just plain curiosity, hobby farming is growing in popularity. A hobby farm is small enough to be run solo or by just a few people, and it's usually not set up to make a profit.

Are you curious about starting one yourself? Here are four things to consider as you get going:

1. Get the finances straight. It's not an exciting step, but it's very important. Farms take more startup and upkeep than many new hobbyists expect. The biggest expense is the land itself – even just a few acres can cost thousands of dollars. Then there's seed costs, pest control, shelters for animals, feed and storage. It's absolutely doable, but make sure you're in a position

to make a major investment.

2. Find the right land. Just because a plot has a good price doesn't make it a good fit. One major consideration is drainage. If your land sits at the bottom of waterflow, your fields are going to turn to mud when it rains and take ages to dry out in the spring. Set up somewhere with too little rainfall, and you'll need to factor expensive irrigation or watering equipment into your budget.

3. Think of what you want to produce. This is often better done after finding a good plot of land. That way, you can build your plans around your situation instead of the other way around. Are you going to focus on crops? Raising animals? A combination of the two can take some of the expense out of animal

feed, and manure from animals will really help your crop yields.

4. Practice good biosecurity. Preventing disease outbreaks is essential, es-

pecially African swine fever (ASF), which is contagious and fatal to pigs. Always wear clean boots and clothing and disinfect equipment when you enter the farm. Set up proper

fencing to keep pigs away from wild boar, and avoid feeding your pigs any food scraps, since even a small amount of ASF could infect them.
www.newscanada.com

Feeding for fertility

By ALICIA SOPATYK, PAg,
*Livestock and Feed Extension
Specialist, Tisdale*

The post-partum interval, the time between calving and the first estrus (heat) after calving, is largely determined by the nutritional status of the animal and her body condition. During this time, nutritional requirements peak. Cows are expending energy lactating, repairing their reproductive tracts for re-breeding and meeting their own maintenance and growth requirements. To be productive and profitable these cows need to maintain a 365-day calving interval. Meeting her nutritional requirements at all stages of production, but especially during this critical time is essential for success.

Nutritional requirements for the animal are prioritized based on physiological factors: maintenance, growth, milk production, fertility and body reserves. If cows are deficient in energy or protein after calving, they produce less milk, often resulting in lower weaning weights. Cows in this situation will often also have subsequent difficulty with fertility. The two and three-year old cows that are still growing may also be subject to growth stunting in an energy and protein deficient scenario. The good news is that their appetite increases in lactation by 30 per cent. Providing a nutrient-dense diet will aid in returning

to estrus in a timely manner.

Forages alone rarely meet the nutritional needs of a lactating cow. Depending on where your forages are lacking, energy and/or protein supplementation will be necessary to meet all requirements. Some examples include barley grain, pellets and canola meal. In addition, failure to provide adequate vitamins and minerals can result in milk fever and/or winter tetany and could have longer-term implications for the animal's fertility. If herd fertility has been an issue in the past, consider switching to a different form of mineral that is formulated with fertility in mind. There are many breeder type products commercially available that focus on ensuring trace mineral uptake or custom mineral blends can be created specific to your situation. Remember to consider water quality when adjusting the ration and mineral program to optimize re-breeding.

Although reproduction is low on a cow's nutritional priority list, it is at the top for producers. Ensuring the cow's nutritional requirements are met during the post-partum interval is critical to the females re-breeding success. Monitor the condition of your herd throughout the calving and lactation period.

Contact your nutritionist or your local livestock and feed extension specialist for assistance with feed and water analysis and ration services that ensure your females are fed for fertility.



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APAS: Farmers feel carbon tax's sting

**By AGRICULTURAL
PRODUCERS ASSOCIATION OF
SASKATCHEWAN**

On April 1, the federal carbon tax increased to \$65 per tonne, the first year of an accelerated price on carbon that continues rising \$15 per tonne carbon dioxide equivalent until it reaches \$170 by 2030.

The Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan (APAS) is highlighting the disproportionate impact the carbon tax pricing system is having on Saskatchewan's agricultural sector.

“These additional costs come off our bottom-line because we’re price takers who sell into international markets” APAS President Ian Boxall said. “The impact of these costs on our farm operations needs to be recognized to ensure we can remain competitive in

international markets. Saskatchewan farms are going to pay over \$40 million in carbon tax just to get their products to port. This is money that comes right out of rural Saskatchewan.”

Boxall noted that Saskatchewan farmers and ranchers are furthest from market access and bear significant costs from carbon surcharges on fuel to transport goods to market. On average, Saskatchewan grain travels 1,150 miles to port. Published railway tariffs suggest a carbon surcharge of \$0.1129 per rail car mile will be applied to rail shipments this year, which equates to over \$36 million in carbon surcharges on 26 million tonnes of grain shipped to market.

Boxall noted that the same disadvantage applies to livestock where the majority of cattle are shipped out of province due to the lack of federally

inspected meat processing facilities in Saskatchewan. For example, 800,000 calves traveling 600 kilometers from central Saskatchewan to feedlot alley in Alberta equates to over 9,000 semi-loads of animals, incurring fuel carbon surcharges on travel both ways.

“Farmers feel the impact of these costs in the prices they receive at the farmgate”, Boxall said. “The Canadian senate will also soon be reviewing Bill C-234 to exempt carbon charges on propane and natural gas for barn heating and grain drying. The importance of having this Bill expedited through the Senate for royal assent and into law cannot be understated. This is a cost that producers see on their bills every month, and there are no available fuel alternatives with current technology.”

“Farmers will easily pay more in barn heating or grain drying each month

than they will ever see in rebates”, Boxall added. “We see these costs in our monthly bills and are feeling them trickle down to us through higher input costs and reduced commodity prices throughout the supply-chain. We need policy measures to provide exemptions and relief programs that recognize the competitive impact these costs are having on our bottom lines.”

On March 20, Boxall spoke to the House of Commons' Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food about the impacts of farm input inflation and the rising cost of food. He highlighted the importance of transparency throughout food supply chains. Current policy needs to be recognized and account for the impact of the carbon tax on the affordability of food in grocery stores and reduced farm margins.

How women are growing the agricultural sector

The agricultural industry in Canada has a rich history of innovating to create better and more reliable food supplies for people across our country and around the world.

But just like crops need the sun, rain and soil to thrive, the best ideas need varied perspectives to continue to innovate.

In agriculture, women are bringing valuable knowledge, skills and ideas to join what was once a male dominated field. In fact, an increase in women scientists in the sector is helping to drive innovation in all areas.

For example, a leading Canadian scientist Dr. Christine Noronha, designed a device called the Noronha Elaterid Light Trap, or NELT, that protects potato crops from a common, highly predatory insect called wireworm.

Among many areas of exper-

tise, women working in agriculture are also:

- Engineers improving agricultural infrastructure such as irrigation systems.
- Geneticists who study plant health over generations, so new varieties can better survive.
- Entomologists like Dr. Noronha who study insects and how to protect crops from pests.
- Bacteriologists and virologists who study disease in animals and crops.

For anyone considering a career in science or agriculture, there are plenty of areas where the opportunities to contribute are ripe. Find more information on inclusive and collaborative government science opportunities at agriculture.canada.ca/departement/careers.

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Shining a spotlight on millet

By AGRICULTURE AND
AGRI-FOOD CANADA

Hearty, nutritious, and versatile, millet is one of Canada's lesser-known cereal crops. While it is often thought of as animal feed or bird seed in this country, it has many applications and is an important staple food source in many areas of the world.

An ancient cereal, millet is considered a super grain – naturally gluten-free, nutritionally dense and a rich source of protein, fibre and essential minerals like iron and zinc. It's also a climate resilient and sustainable crop, able to withstand short growing seasons, poor soils and environmental stress, with low fertilizer and irrigation needs. This versatility also makes millet an excellent forage or cover crop, and it even shows promise as an effective bio-fuel.

With stats like these, it's no wonder the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations has declared 2023 the International Year of Millets.

To help celebrate, we're featuring some of the important research Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) scientists from across the country are leading on this mighty little super food and adaptable crop.

The mighty little millet

Little millet (*Panicum sumatrense*), a member of the millet family grown mainly in southeast Asia and Africa, is an annual grass with tiny seeds that could make a global impact on nutrition security. About 25 per cent of the world's population suffers from "hidden hunger" caused by eating food that is low in nutrients and vitamins. Little millet is a nutritionist's dream: rich with fiber, protein, antioxidants, and minerals like zinc and iron. And with a short life cycle (about 80 days) and high environmental stress tolerance, this nutritional powerhouse can be successfully grown in many areas of the world – including Canada.

Unfortunately, despite the crop's potential, little millet is among the least studied crops. Dr. Raju Soolanayakanahally, an AAFC scientist in Saskatoon, is working with research partners in India at the University of Agricultural Sciences, Bangalore to change that. Together, they have created a roadmap for future study of little millet using vast genetic resources. The result is a genetic atlas of the different stages in the little millet plant's life cycle to identify the super-food properties of this cereal plant.

The atlas is an important step toward uncovering the genetic networks that give this cereal plant its

unique nutritional and stress tolerant features. This data could be used to breed new improved varieties with enhanced uptake of iron and zinc, ultimately helping to curb hidden hunger around the world.

The benefits of millet as a cover crop

On Prince Edward Island, where spuds are the cream of the crop, Dr. Judith Nyiraneza is researching ideal "high residue" cover crop mixes that can improve soil health and potato yields as part of AAFC's Living Lab – Atlantic initiative. When crops are harvested they can leave materials in the soil called crop residue. This residue, if incorporated into the soil, can increase the yield of next season's crop, and can store more carbon in soils, which helps lower greenhouse gas emissions.

One of the cover crops that caught the eye of Dr. Nyiraneza was pearl millet, an annual grass crop, that usually grows one-to-three metres high. A relatively new crop for PEI farmers, Dr. Nyiraneza was keen to see how pearl millet stood up to other effective cover crops like sorghum sudan grass. She discovered that pearl millet was returning more carbon to the soil than any other cover crop she researched, while also reducing harmful nitrates from entering soils and increasing potato yield. Pearl millet can even reduce root-lesion nematode populations, microscopic worm-like organisms that target roots causing yield loss. Dr. Nyiraneza's research further solidifies pearl millet as a valuable and versatile crop for potato

farmers and the environment.

Seeing double: the dual benefits of sweet pearl millet and sweet sorghum

In Eastern Canada, researchers are busy exploring ways to maximize the potential of sweet pearl millet and sweet sorghum as dual purpose crops – providing both raw materials for bioethanol, a renewable energy source, and good-quality silage.

Dr. Annick Bertrand and Dr. Gaëtan F. Tremblay, AAFC research scientists at the Quebec Research and Development Centre, have set out to prove the dual benefits of these crops as both fuel and food. Harvested plants can be pressed in-field; the juice extracted from pressing can be used for bioethanol production, while the remaining residue, called the bagasse, provides silage. However, it's a balancing act to ensure enough carbohydrates are extracted from the juice for fuel and enough nutrients are retained in the bagasse for silage.

Dr. Bertrand and Dr. Tremblay were able to optimize a process for in-field pressing. Their work shows that the plant biomass can be pressed twice, with a favourable water to bagasse ratio. The resulting juice is effective for bioethanol production, while the bagasse still retains sufficient carbohydrate and nutrient composition to provide good-quality silage.

With work like this going on in Canada alone, it's easy to see why the FAO has chosen to declare 2023 the International Year of Millets.

Protect your pigs from African swine fever

African swine fever (ASF) is one of the biggest threats to farmers and the pork industry in Canada. Fortunately, the deadly disease isn't here yet – but that doesn't mean you should let down your guard.

No matter the size of your farm or how many pigs you have, ASF could affect you. Here are some steps you can take to protect you and your animals:

Learn how it spreads. ASF is not transmitted to humans, but even a small amount of the highly contagious virus could infect your pigs. It can spread between pigs through contact with other infected pigs or pork products, as well as contaminated farm equipment, feed and clothing.

Carefully source animal

feed. Make sure you know where your pigs' food comes from. Buy feed from a trusted supplier with proper biosecurity controls who is able to provide information on the ingredients and their origin. Be cautious when feeding any food or kitchen waste to your pigs and never feed them any meat products.

Avoid contact with wild pigs. All types of pigs, whether wild or kept as pets, companions or farm animals, are susceptible to ASF. So, make sure there is no direct or indirect contact between your pigs and wild pigs. Keep your farm surrounded by a fence with a gate that can be securely closed and locked.

Stay vigilant with people and tools. Be alert when peo-

ple visit or work on your farm. Clothes and shoes could be contaminated with ASF, especially if people have returned from countries with ASF within the past 14 days. Regularly clean your barns, vehicles and equipment – especially items that are shared or borrowed.

Be diligent when buying pigs. Only get animals from reputable sources and limit how often you introduce new pigs to the herd. ASF can be spread through diseased swine or healthy swine incubating the virus. Always isolate new pigs before introducing them to the farm population.

Find more information at inspection.canada.ca/asf-biosecurity.

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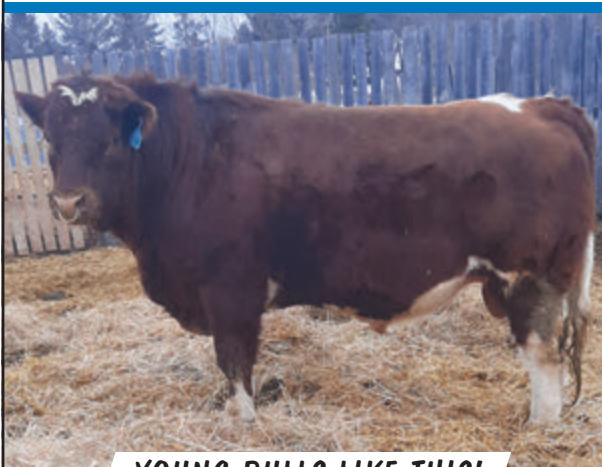
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Canada could soon face ag sector labour shortage

By **JORDAN TWISS**
Shellbrook Chronicle Reporter

In just a decade's time, Canada's agriculture sector could find itself in the midst of "one of the biggest labour and leadership transitions in the country's history," according to a new report.

Published by the Royal Bank of Canada, the Boston Consulting Group Centre for Canada's Future, and the Arrell Food Institute at the University of Guelph, the report says the industry could be headed for a shortfall of both farm operators and workers, as their numbers shrink and they get older.

In 2001, for instance, Canada had 346,000 farmers with an average age of 50, and the sector covered 166 million acres. By 2021, the number of farmers dropped to 262,000, while their average age rose to 56. The total acreage of farm operations also declined, dipping to 153 million acres.

With an average age of 56 years, the report says as many as 40 per cent of Canada's farm operators will reach retirement age in 2033. Meanwhile, 66 per cent of producers don't have a succession plan in place, leaving the future of their operations in doubt, and the next 10 years are projected to bring a shortfall of up to 24,000 general farm, nursery, and greenhouse workers.

"These gaps loom at a time when Canada's agricultural workforce needs to evolve to include skills like data analytics and climate-smart practices that enable us to grow more food with fewer emissions," the report states.

The findings of the report certainly

ly offer a reflection of the agriculture sector in Saskatchewan. In its 2021 Agriculture Census, Statistics Canada found the average age of farmers in the province was 55.8 years, up from 50.1 in 2001.

The Census also painted a picture of an industry that is slowly, but inevitably, declining in terms of total farms and farm operators.

Between the 2016 and 2021 Censuses, Saskatchewan's total of farms declined to 34,128 from 34,523, a drop of 395 farms. In 2001, however, the province had 50,598 farms.

Simultaneous to the decline of the number of farms in the province, the StatsCan Agriculture Census also shows a trend of consolidation into larger operations. In 2016, there were 4,495 farm operations of 3,520 acres or greater (the largest size category on the Census). By 2021, that number had increased by almost 150 to 4,644. In 2001, there were just 2,819 farms in this classification.

Similarly, the number of farm operators in Saskatchewan fell to 44,140 from 45,350 between 2016 and 2021, a loss of 1,210 operators. Comparatively, there were 66,275 farm operators in the province in 2001.

To confront these trends in Saskatchewan and across Canada, RBC's collaborative report lays out short, medium, and long-term plans to secure the agriculture industry's growth into the future.

In the short term, the report says the country will need to open its borders to 30,000 permanent immigrants to establish their own farm or green-



house operations or take over existing ones.

Over the medium term, agriculture education needs to undergo a shift to meet modern demands and maintain strong enrolment in post-secondary programs.

"For instance, no full-time MBA program among Canada's top 10 business schools currently offers elective courses in agribusiness," the report states.

"Similarly, agricultural schools don't do enough to promote a cross-disciplinary approach that integrates students in fields ranging from engineering to social science. These innovations will be critical to increasing enrolment and developing a stronger, better-resourced agriculture ecosystem."

As first adopters of many new technologies, producers also need more accessible advisory services to educate them on the best solutions, the most effective production practices, and the best ways to reduce costs and promote sustainability on their farms.

Finally, over the long term, the report calls for more mechanized and autonomous solutions on the farm, both as a means to improve efficiency and reduce the number of workers required, and to cut costs. Coupled with this, however, there also needs to be a significant increase in funding for research and development, to bring Canada up to the level of other similar countries.

"A lot of this innovative technology is already being developed in Canada. But more ambitious research and development is critical to cutting staffing needs and improving production rates and sustainability," the report stated.



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Bison business still offers lessons after 28 years

By **ALISON SULLIVAN**

"If you plan to work bison on Dec. 1, you don't start work on Nov. 30, you start on Nov. 1."

This is the key lesson that Hubert Esquirol has learned over his 28 years of owning bison that has helped him to develop the smooth handling system that sits quietly east of Meota, Sask.

Hubert Esquirol was raised east of Edam and relocated to Meota shortly after getting married. Early in his career, he spent 15 years working in the grain lobby before moving into livestock production.

He became interested in diversified livestock during his term as president of the Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association and was directed to Dr. Marshall Patterson, who was the Livestock Specialist with Canadian Agriculture and Agrifood dealing with elk, wild bear, and bison.

After hearing about the benefits of bison, Hubert picked up some reading material and decided in 1995 to purchase a couple of bison that he ran alongside his brother's new beef cattle herd. He started constructing his handling system in 1996 and completed it in 1997.

His operation started as a cow-calf and he sold animals at the auction in North Battleford. Later, he developed a relationship with some finishers in Quebec before transport prices got too high. Eventually, he developed

his system through to finishing and currently markets his animals as yearlings through video auction.

Bison have a gestation length of 275 days, with cows typically having their first calves around three years old. Hubert said there have been some cases more recently with improved growth rates where a young cow will have her first calf at just two years of age.

Animals are usually between 20 and 24 months old when they are marketed, usually reaching live weights of 1,000 to 1,200 lbs, depending on sex. This results in carcass weights of around 500 to 600 lbs.

About 60 per cent of Canadian production is sold to plants in North Dakota and Colorado, while the product that stays in Canada is sent to Lacombe, Alta. and Carmen, Man.

When asked, Hubert had two main advantages for working bison over cattle.

The first being the work season. The work is primarily done from November to May, leaving his summers free to go up North. Cows calve in April and May and the calves cannot be touched at least until November. At this point, Hubert says the calf weighs about 500 lbs and the mother is ready to separate from it.

The second advantage Hubert mentioned was global competition. Bison are native to North America and are not produced in other parts of the world, putting Canada

and the United States in a unique position as they don't have other global suppliers trying to get a share of the market.

Hubert's self constructed handling facility was born out of "some natural synergies that melded together to give an economic advantage." Being close to the oilfields and potash mining, he had access to old tubing and sucker rod as well as potash belts. Around 95 per cent of the materials he used in construction were recycled.

He learned from workshops, field days, and meeting with other producers about the animals and what worked and what didn't. He learned a lot about bison behaviour and placed a heavy emphasis on that when designing his system.

One common oversight he noted was that people tend to design handling systems in the summer and forget that they are for use in the winter. Being able to clear away snow and prevent buildup of ice is really important to make sure your system is working when you need it to.

Designing gates to roll instead of swing, reducing visibility by putting up belts, and working animals into gradually smaller groups are all things that help keep them calm and quiet, making for easier handling.

Hubert has five key points to consider when designing a handling system and using it.

The first was to make sure that you can catch your animals with minimum stress. The location should be something familiar to them. Allowing animals to move through the system without processing them, lets them feel comfortable so that when you want to process,

they remain calm instead of feeling trapped.

The second point was to make use of long and narrow pens. It helps keep the animals moving through the system and allows for push-type tools to help keep them moving forward. Hubert has an attachment for the front of the tractor that keeps the animals moving along. He says that while they are quite afraid of people, they don't really seem to mind being around a tractor.

The third was that time is your best friend. It is important to plan ahead and to have patience when dealing with animals that are stressed. If an animal gets worked up, the best plan of action is to take a

break and walk away to give them time to relax and be comfortable again.

The fourth point was that the herd mentality can work for or against you. Hubert has found that making animals visible to others in a pen can help get them to move on their own. They will instinctively want to join the others and they will be more relaxed in the process.

"Using the buddy system to move animals through the handling facility works great," he says.

They are more likely to move if they can go through with a friend. Putting older animals in with younger animals who are experiencing it

for the first time can help to calm the group down.

And finally, have safety meetings with your staff and take notes. This can help to improve the system and make sure that everyone stays safe.

Throughout the last 28 years, Hubert has made adjustments to his system and has learned a lot. When asked if there was anything he would change if he could do it all over again, the only thing he said was that he would have designed some of his holding pens to be longer and narrower. But overall, he is happy with the system.

"It feels so good when you design a system that works almost flawlessly," he said.



Hubert Esquirol's bison handling facility, located just east of Meota, is made of 95 per cent recycled material.

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Mapping the future of agriculture

The demand for food is directly related to population growth. By 2050, food needs are expected to double, according to a study published in the journal Agricultural Economics. That puts increasing pressure on the agricultural sector to meet growing demand. However, many experts think the industry will fall short.

In addition to increased food demand, consumer habits, technology,

and policies continue to force the agricultural industry to evolve. Indeed, the agricultural sector may look very different in the future.

Bigger digital footprint

Social media has transformed many industries, and it can do the same for agriculture. Farming supply chains can communicate with one another by getting feedback from customers in real time through social media. However,

agricultural operations will have to devote teams to manage social media presence, especially since misinformation is so widespread on social media.

Apart from social media, local farmers may increase their efforts to utilize mobile apps and direct-to-consumer purchasing options. The global pandemic helped businesses reimagine takeout and curbside shopping. Local farms may want to market to the

home-shopping community, providing ways to deliver produce, fresh meat and poultry and other items direct to customers' homes.

Regenerative agriculture

The future may feature a significant shift in the way farms source their ingredients. Regeneration International says that regenerative agriculture can be the future. This describes farming and grazing practices that may help reverse climate change by rebuilding soil organic matter and restoring degraded soil biodiversity. Some insist that farmers who utilize regenerative agriculture produce food that is more sustainable and healthy. This is something eco- and health-conscious consumers can stand behind.

Technological advancement

There's a good chance that technology will continue to play important and growing roles in farming operations. New agricultural technologies can collect data on soil and plant health and produce results in real time. Precision farming technology can be developed to deliver integrated solutions no matter the size of the operation.

Shift in what's grown

Farmers may give more thought to sustainable products. Crops like hemp and cannabis are being utilized in new and innovative ways, and they're only the start as consumers have expanded their views on plant-based foods and products.

While there's no way to see into the future, individuals can anticipate changes that could be in store for the agricultural sector in the decades ahead.



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How rising food demand is affecting farming

The population is growing and so is its demand for food to fuel those extra bodies. Harvard Business Review reports the global population has quadrupled over the last century. It's predicted that, by 2050, the population will exceed nine billion people.

The world is not able to feed all of its inhabitants, according to Penn State. There are more than one billion people who are estimated to lack sufficient food, and two billion who do not receive adequate nutrition. Researchers from the Institute on the Environment at the University of Minnesota concluded that, to feed the world by 2030, yields on maize, rice, wheat, and soybeans will have to rise by 60 to 110 percent. At the start of 2023, projections show them only increasing by 45 to 60 percent. There are a few reasons why food supply may not meet up with demand.

- **Climate change:** Climate change is predicted to cause issues to crop yields, especially in portions of the world where the population is growing the fastest. For example, a recent NASA study published in the journal *Nature* predicts that high greenhouse gas emissions may cause corn output to decline as early as 2030, but wheat output would increase. Farmers may need to roll with the punches and shift operations to cope with the environmental changes.

- **Decreased commercial farming interest:** Fewer people are working in farming. Land prices for expansion, new government mandates and regulations, and the impact of immigration and trade policies have made farming less attractive than it once was. Fewer commercial operations result in a diminished food commodity output.

- **Consumer waste:** Food loss and waste (FLW) is a widespread issue, posing a challenge to food security. The World Bank estimates 30 percent of all food across the globe is wasted, amounting to 1.3 billion tons of food per year. The average global household wastes 74 kg of food each year, according to the United Nations Environment Programme's 2021 Food Waste Index. Food waste is an issue that needs a solution as the world looks for ways to feed an expanding population in the decades to come.

In order to improve output, farmers have to make

some changes. These can include investment in tools and technologies that enable farmers to apply nutrients more precisely and at lower cost, advises the Environmental Defense Fund. Seeds that need less water and fewer nutrients, as well as new fertilizers that are less likely to be lost to air and water, are some additional ideas. Farmers also may want to employ

green practices, such as hydroponics and drip irrigation, if they haven't already, to improve efficiency and cut costs. The public also may need to petition their lawmakers to make it easier for farm workers arriving on working visas to man the fields.

Food demand continues to rise, and it has become challenging for agricultural operations to keep up.

Spring seeding guide

By **MACKENZIE HLADUN, MSc, AAg,**
Crops Extension Specialist, Moose Jaw

Seeds turn into plants, plants make grain, and grain in the bin turns into money. The rate you seed your crop establishes your overall plant population in the field. Plant population in the field establishes the tone for your yield in the subsequent harvest. Combined with your seed's thousand kernel weight (TKW) and expected seedling survival rate, your seeding rate can be determined through a simple equation.

Thousand kernel weight is simply how much 1,000 seeds weigh. You can determine this by counting and weighing 1,000 seeds of any crop you are seeding.

Estimates of your variety TKW are also provided in the table below for your crop type. The expected seedling survival rates can be determined using guidelines for average growing conditions. For cereals, expected seedling survival is 80 to 90 per cent. The expected seedling survival rate for canola is 40 to 60 per cent. Pulses have an expected seedling survival rate of 80 to 95 per cent. These rates may need to be adjusted depending on expected soil moisture, weather, seed quality, amount of seed placed fertilizer, weed pressure and seeding date. To have exact measurements of both your TKW and expected seedling survival rates, get your seed tested by an accredited lab. Not only will you get these

two measurements, but you'll also be able to get numerous other measurements that are helpful when seeding your crop.

To calculate your seeding rate, multiply your target plant population (per square meter) by your TKW. Divide this by your expected seedling survival rate. This will give your seeding rate in kg/ha. To convert to lbs/acre, multiply by 0.89.

To gauge when to start seeding, take readings of your soil temperature at the appropriate seeding depth in the morning and the afternoon at various spots in the field. Use locations in the field that represent your field overall. The average of these readings is your field soil temperature. The recommended minimum average soil temperature (at seeding depth) is required for the seeds to germinate. However, after germination your crop is exposed to the environment so be sure to consider risk of frost.

A well-established crop is the first milestone to having a successful cropping season. Calculating your seeding rate and seeding at the right soil temperature is the first step to a well-established crop. If considering applying a seed treatment to your crop before seeding, be sure to check out the Guide to Crop Protection.

Contact your local crops extension specialist for any additional information on seeding rates, seeding depth, or soil temperature.

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Green farming is growing

Farmers have been pressured to increase production to meet the demand of a growing population. This may require employing more efficient measures to ensure maximum output. Unfortunately, efficiency doesn't always mesh with sustainability, so commercial operations have had to make some modifications to find a balance between serving the public and protecting the planet.

Green farming utilizes different technology and practices in order to decrease detrimental impact on the environment. According to the farming resource NuFarming, agricultural operations have a significant impact on climate change. Simply adopting some new practices can lessen that impact.

Solar power

Growing plants are not the only thing on a farm that can benefit from the sun. Farmers can convert a portion or all of their power needs to solar. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, there are benefits when solar companies and farmers work together. Solar developers reduce installation costs and upfront risk by placing solar modules on previously tilled agricultural land. Vegetation under modules also can contribute to lower soil temperatures and increased solar performance. Agricultural land managers can reduce energy costs and diversify their revenue streams with solar. Plus, they can market products to sustainability-minded customers.

Solar is not the only renewable energy option. Farmers

can incorporate wind and hydroelectric power as well.

Crop rotation

This farming technique has been used for thousands of years and involves growing different crops in different seasons over a period of time. Farmers reduce the chances for pests and diseases becoming problems in the soil because frequent crop changes prevent invaders from gaining a foothold. Farmers use fewer fertilizers and pesticides as a result.

Hydroponic and aquaponic strategies

Farmers can improve productivity while also reducing environmental impact with these two growing methods. NuEnergy states that hydroponic systems grow plants in mineral solutions or in materi-

als like perlite or gravel. Aquaponics involves raising aquatic animals in addition to growing crops. The waste from the fish and other marine life is used to offer nutrients to the plants by growing them in this nutrient-rich water. Both methods remove the need for soil.

Drip irrigation

Drip irrigation methods deliver water to the roots of plants through a series of pipes or tubes. Because water is not being sprayed into the air through sprinklers and other methods, less is lost to evaporation, and less water overall may be needed to provide for crops.

Plasticulture

Plastic seems like it may not have a purpose on the farm, but recycled plastic, which is used in plastic mulch, can

help produce plentiful crops with less water. Plastic mulches raise soil temperatures and insulate against evaporation so plants can grow faster and mature sooner. Invasive weeds also may be less likely to take root in plastic mulch or when crops are grown on black plastic.

Natural pesticides

Farmers can introduce plants that pests tend not to like to reduce reliance on chemical pesticides. For example, interspersing crops with natural bug repellants, such as basil, lavender and lemongrass, may keep insects at bay. Alliums, chrysanthemums, marigolds, and other flowers planted nearby also may deter bugs.

Green farming is something more agricultural operations may want to adopt.

Steps farmers can take to combat climate change

Climate change is a challenge the world must confront together. Though people from all walks of life and in all corners of the world will be affected by rising global temperatures and the ripple effects of such increases, the impact of climate change on the agricultural sector figures to be especially significant.

Farmers have been on the front lines in the fight against climate change

for decades. When storms strike and climate patterns shift, farmers must find ways to adapt or potentially lose their livelihoods. Experts warn that the planet is warming at a pace that could prove devastating. For example, one assessment conducted under the World Climate Research Programme and published in 2020 in the Reviews of Geophysics concluded that the warming range of the planet will be

between 2.6°C and 3.9°C.

Everyone must do their part in an effort to avoid the more drastic outcomes associated with climate change. Farmers can explore these ways to combat climate change as they look to protect their personal and financial futures.

- Curtail methane emissions. The European Environment Agency notes that capturing methane from manure is one way for farmers to reduce agriculture-related greenhouse gas emissions. Meanwhile, the non-profit organization Foodwise reports that holistic, pasture-based livestock management utilizing practices like rotational grazing can help mitigate methane emissions from livestock.
- Emphasize efficient use of fertilizers. The EEA recommends efficient use of fertilizers as another means to reduce agricultural greenhouse gas emissions. The National Institute of Food and Agriculture at the U.S. Department of Agriculture notes that the greatest efficiency typically comes from the first increment of added

fertilizer/nutrients, with each additional increment thereafter resulting in lower efficiency. Making every effort to make the most of initial applications can save farmers money and reduce the impact on the environment.

- Participate in and help promote local farmers markets. Foodwise notes that food in the United States travels an average of 1,500 miles before it ends up on consumers' plates. In Canada, meanwhile, the average meal includes food that has travelled up to 3,000 kilometres. Transporting foods that far contributes to more greenhouse gas emissions. Farmers who can sell to local farmers markets can help reduce such emissions. Promoting those efforts via social media pages or other public platforms can increase consumer awareness of the availability of fresh, locally grown foods.

The challenges posed by climate change are not going away. Farmers can take various steps to overcome those challenges.




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Species selection for cover cropping mixes

By **AUSTIN BARON PAG**,
Agri-Environmental Specialist,
Swift Current

Cover crops, or poly crops, have been very popular in agricultural news lately. There are many claims regarding the improvement of soil health and nutrient cycling coming from seeding diverse mixtures. While these mixtures have potential environmental benefits, such as reducing fertilizer, it can be difficult to know what plants should be included in a blend. Though there is some research supporting these practices, one of the many questions remaining is around the optimal number of species. Pre-blended mixes can include anywhere from two species to an upwards of 18, but we really do not know where the point of diminishing returns lies. After how many species do the additional species stop adding notable value?

When designing your cover crop blend, there are a few questions you can ask yourself that may assist you in getting the right mix for your operation.

The goal of the crop

If the main intent is to grow feed, you may consider including more cereal species that have high biomass rather than novel flowering species designed to attract pollinators. If you are trying to manage compacted soil, you may include more brassica and legume species that have deep tap roots that can break-up compacted soil rather than species with fibrous root systems that may struggle. Brassica species also have been known to have biofumigant properties, meaning these plants have the some fungicidal and nematodal properties—though not all brassica species are suited to this task. Having differing root systems also will influence infiltration and nutrients in the soil profile.

The moisture of your region

Plants are broken into three categories, based on their method of photosynthesis: C3, C4 and CAM

Roughly 95 per cent of all plants are C3 plants and are considered cool and damp loving. When completing photosynthesis, these plants open their

stomata (pores) cells which can allow water to leave their cells. Many of the crops we grow on the prairies, such as wheat, barley and canola, fall into this category. On the other hand, C4 plants complete photosynthesis with their stomata closed, saving the release of excess moisture but sacrificing extra energy and resources of the plant. The C4 plants we typically see are corn, sorghum-sudangrass and millet, as well as some of our competitive weeds on the prairies such as pigweed and leafy spurge. CAM plants are adapted to dry environments (such as cacti and pineapples) and we typically would not seed them into a cover crop mix.

Consider the functional groups of the species included

There are several ways to delineate these groups, but for now we will break it down into warm or cold season and grass or broadleaf groups.

Warm season grasses, such as teff grass and corn, will thrive in high heat. Cool season grasses, such as rye grass and barley, will do better in cooler conditions but have a higher protein con-

tent. Warm season broadleaf plants, such as cowpeas, have lower protein but grow best between 32 and 35 C. Cool season broadleaf plants, such as radishes, turnips and alfalfa, have higher protein but also can have the beneficial properties of brassicas and deep rooting legumes that were discussed earlier.

Ultimately, when deciding on what species to include in your cover crop, it comes down to specific needs of your operation. You do not need to include a species from every functional group, nor do you have to stick to only one functional group. By increasing the number of species, you may buffer risk by having species that grow at varying environmental conditions, although be mindful that this may also increase cost. The perfect cover crop mix will balance economics while still meeting nutritional requirements and all environmental restrictions and likely look very different on your operation than it will on your neighbours.

For more information contact your local agri-environmental specialist.

How can you help your wetlands this spring?

By **KEANA BOERE, AAg**,
Agri-Environmental
Specialist, Outlook

Spring thaw, with the start of a new growing season and moisture from winter snowfall, can be an exciting time for Saskatchewan producers. Wetland ecosystems and riparian areas play a key role in managing spring runoff water. However, these ecosystems are vulnerable during the spring months. Maintaining the health of the environment and livestock is important as many livestock producers use wetlands as a water source and riparian areas as a forage resource during the growing season.

Riparian areas are the tran-

sition or green zones between the open water of a wetland and the upland vegetation. While they vary in size and looks, they are all influenced by water at some point in the year. Water-loving plants like sedges, cattails and willows can be present and soils will show signs of water saturation.

Wetlands and their riparian areas serve many ecological functions that maintain good water quality. Deep roots of wetland vegetation hold the soil together, reducing erosion. Riparian area vegetation slows the speed of flowing water, which reduces erosion, but also traps sediments, contaminants and excess nutrients. These all help protect

water quality.

In the spring, higher volumes of runoff water reaching and flowing into wetlands increase risk for erosion and contamination. Maintaining vegetation buffers around wetlands helps slow the speed of flowing water entering the waterbody. The vegetation also acts as a filter and can remove some of the suspended particles as the water slows.

Riparian area soils and vegetation are more vulnerable in the spring. Soils that are saturated with water are at a greater risk of compaction; animal hooves can easily cause damage like pugging and hummocking. Pugs describe the depressions that animal hooves leave in soft

soil and hummocks are the raised bump of soil pushed up from the pug. In the spring, riparian area plants are just beginning to grow after overwintering.

Deferring grazing in riparian areas until later summer will benefit the soil and plants. Drier soils are less susceptible to compaction and damage from livestock hooves. Allowing riparian vegetation an opportunity to grow in the spring will provide valuable forage later in the season when other upland forage resources begin to fade.

Funding is available for projects in riparian areas through the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership. Riparian Grazing Management

Beneficial Management Practices protect water quality by funding infrastructure to exclude or properly manage the timing, intensity and duration of livestock grazing along riparian areas.

If you have questions about managing your wetlands or riparian areas in the spring, or about funding available, contact your local agri-environmental specialist.

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What consumers can do to support local farmers

Farming has never been a vocation for individuals looking for easy work. Farmers typically work long hours, braving the elements regardless of how unpleasant the weather may be.

All that hard work ensures individuals who live in rural, urban and suburban communities have constant, readily available access to healthy foods. Such devotion merits support, and thankfully there are many things consumers can do to show their appreciation for local farmers.

- Buy fresh foods at your local farmers market. Farmers markets are many foodies' favorite places, but they aren't exclusive to individuals with a passion for food. Everyone needs to eat, so why not eat foods grown locally, which are generally more fresh and appetizing than imported fruits and vegetables sold at chain grocery stores? Even individuals who don't typically eat fresh fruit and vegetables can find something delectable at a

local farmers market, where anything from homemade tomato sauces to locally raised fresh beef and pork might be on sale.

- Order directly from local farms. Some farmers have embraced the e-commerce revolution and begun selling the foods they grow to consumers via their own websites. Research local farms and determine if it's possible to buy directly from them. Farms may offer delivery or pick-up, and consumers can enjoy fresh foods even more knowing that they helped farmers earn higher profits by buying directly from them.
- Check labels before buying in local grocery stores. Packaging labels will indicate where fruits and vegetables came from. When possible, choose items produced by local farmers. This may include fruits, vegetables, meat, pork, or even desserts like pies. Locally produced foods often taste more fresh than items sent from overseas or distant



farms, and consumers will feel better knowing they helped to support local farmers.

- Spread the word. Get the word out after a satisfying experience with local farms and farmers. Whether it's buying food from farms or taking advantage of family days that let kids enjoy a day on the farm, sharing positive experiences via social media or word-of-mouth can be a great way to inspire your neighbors to support local farmers as well.

Consumers can do much to support hardworking local farmers. In addition to feeling good about supporting their rural neighbors, consumers also might feel good when they sit down and enjoy a meal featuring locally grown, fresh foods.

Choose a lick tub that fits your operation

By **RIKKI WILSON, AAg,**
Livestock and Feed Extension Specialist, Humboldt

With seemingly endless options on the market, it can be difficult to determine whether you are picking the right lick tub to fit your livestock's requirements. While there are several viable ways to supplement minerals to livestock, including loose mineral provided free choice or into a total mixed ration, injectable options or mineral fortified pellets, this article will focus on lick tubs specifically.

When evaluating lick tubs available on the market, you should first consider what your herd's needs are. Are they grazing a lush alfalfa pasture or primarily grass? Are they close to calving or growing heifers? Do you want to supplement more protein into their diet or is your focus only on providing minerals?

With questions like these in mind, you can begin to determine what sort of tub would be best for your operation. For ex-

ample, a cow in late-gestation eating only grass hay may not be meeting her protein requirement depending on the grass species in that hay. Providing a lick tub containing additional protein of around 20 to 30 per cent may help cattle in this situation reach their protein needs. If providing additional protein and calcium to cattle grazing stand corn is your goal, a high-protein and high-calcium tub would be best for you.

There are a few types of mineral tubs available to producers on the market such as pressed, poured, and low-moisture tubs. Daily consumption of the tub is estimated based on its hardness.

Pressed blocks or tubs are typically the softest of the three which allows for greater intake of the tub, though they are more prone to weather damage. Pressed tubs are typically formulated using feed mill by-products such as distiller's grains with expected intakes of between 0.5 to 1.0 kg per day.

Poured tubs are a molasses-based for-

mula containing a mineral and vitamin premix, with added protein and fat and are hardened through chemical reactions. These tend to be more weatherproof but will dry out over time if not consumed. The expected intake of poured tubs is similar to pressed tubs at around 0.5 to 1.0 kg per day.

Low-moisture tubs are molasses and oil-based. As the mixture is heated, moisture is vacuumed off. Minerals, vitamins, and protein are added in, poured into the tub and then the tub is cooled. When set, this product will pull moisture from the air, creating a soft surface that livestock can consume. Because only the surface of the tub is consumable, this reduces the animal's intake of the tub to between 0.23 to 0.3 kg per day. This type of tub is also resistant to weather damage.

With these tub characteristics in mind, you can better evaluate which tub will work best for your operation. For example, if you are comparing the nutrient values of a pressed tub to a low-moisture tub,

you may want a higher amount of minerals and vitamins in the low-moisture tub as it will have a lower expected intake.

It is important to remember that while lick tubs are an effective way to supplement livestock on low-protein forages or provide some level of mineral and vitamins to livestock, there is still the risk of deficiency.

During late gestation or lactation, low quality grass hay and lick tubs will likely not be sufficient to meet protein requirements of the typical beef cow. It is also necessary to consider that not all cows will intake the recommended amount. Some may over-consume, some may under-consume, and some may not touch the tub at all. Intake of the supplement should be monitored to track whether actual intakes are meeting targeted or expected intakes.

Contact your regional livestock and feed extension specialist with any questions related to mineral supplementation to ensure your herd's needs are being met.

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When it comes to *Fusarium* spp. in cereals, traditional wisdom has been that on the *Fusarium* Head Blight (FHB) scale of tolerance, oats were the least susceptible cereal.

A recently published survey from the University of Manitoba analyzed 168 commercial oat fields in Manitoba and has a surprising conclusion: It found that *Fusarium* is common in oat in Manitoba with *F. poae* and *F. graminearum* being the most isolated species (Islam, 2022). Is this just an isolated survey result or have oats been flying under the radar when it comes to *Fusarium* infections?

Ongoing research on *Fusarium* in oats conducted by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) plant pathologist Xiben Wang at Morden, found that the FHB species affecting

oats are much more diverse than FHB in wheat. *F. avenaceum*, *F. langsethiae*. *F. culmorum* have also been isolated from oat in western Canada. According to Wang, it is quite common to find more than one *Fusarium* species infecting a single oat plant.

Research published by Tekauz and associates in 2008 concluded that surveyed oats in Manitoba and Saskatchewan tested higher for the mycotoxin deoxynivalenol (DON), a byproduct of *Fusarium* *graminearum* infection, than the levels found in wheat. This same researcher in 2001 found that levels of DON in wheat, barley and oats were similar when grown under the same field conditions in Western Canada.

Even though oats are infected during anthesis just like other cereals, infected oat panicles do not exhibit the typical *Fusarium* symptoms as you will find on wheat.

Fusarium in oats

A recent compilation of test results performed at Prairie Diagnostics Seed Labs, Discovery Seed Labs and 20/20 Seed Labs provides a snapshot of *Fusarium* spp. infection throughout Saskatchewan for the 2022 growing season.

While the 2022 sample size is small, it is an indicator that *Fusarium* spp. levels were on the rise for the 2022 crop year. With the additional moisture that was received this past growing season, this should be no surprise to producers.

Lowering your risk as a producer involves a few components. Oat seed should be tested if you are saving seed from a growing season with high disease pressure. If *Fusarium* is detected, you may need to increase seeding rates or apply a seed treatment designed for *Fusarium* or lower germination could occur.

If you are in an area where *Fusarium* is an issue, choose oat varieties that have been bred with high levels of resistance. The current varietal guides do not list *Fusarium* ratings so producers will have to ask their seed dealers.

Practicing longer crop rotations away from cereals will allow time for *Fusarium*-infected residue to decompose and residue inoculum levels to drop way down or disappear altogether. For producers who are growing oats for green feed, they should request a mycotoxin panel when they submit their feed sample for testing.

If you have further questions regarding *Fusarium* in oats, contact your regional crops extension specialist.



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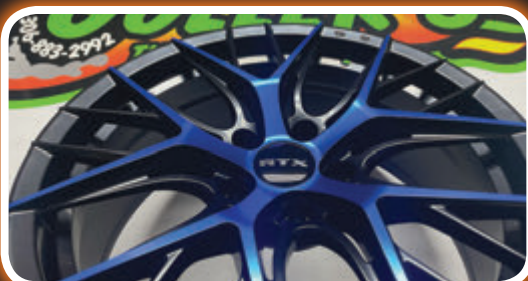
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