



Sask. Beekeepers face swarm of uncertainty



Hannigan Honey employees open and inspect a hive.

Photo courtesy of Hannigan Honey

By **JORDAN TWISS**
Shellbrook Chronicle Reporter

One of the keys to surviving in the agriculture industry is learning to embrace and accept the things that are beyond one's control. For Saskatchewan's beekeepers, that's been just about everything so far this growing season.

Bees, like any crop, require specific conditions to thrive. This spring delivered precisely the opposite, with late snowfalls bleeding into an equally wet summer, and frequently cool and windy conditions added into the less-than-ideal mix.

For Shellbrook's Hannigan Honey, a good year means the business' 6,000 hives produce about 1,600 drums full of honey to be shipped across Canada and to the U.S., Ja-

pan, and other markets.

"The way the season's shaped out this far, both with the strength of our colonies in the spring and the way the weather played out, we've just been on our heels the whole time," said Murray Hannigan, owner of Hannigan Honey.

"Now, we're getting to the end, and we're coming in with two thirds of our normal crop. It's going to be the shortest production per colony that we'll have seen in many years."

Saskatchewan's odd summer weather has impacted more than just hive health.

Hannigan Honey's 6,000 hives are spread across about 140 locations, from Blaine Lake up to Debden, and from Mont Nebo over to Briarlea. This broad geographic area makes it nearly impossible to monitor and

protect the hives at all times, making things like bear-proof fencing a necessity.

With all the snow and rain this spring and summer, the solar units powering Hannigan Honey's bear-proof fencing weren't getting enough sun to keep bears out, resulting in higher bear losses than the business has seen in many years.

These hardships are all in addition to the ever-present and growing threat posed by the varroa mite, a parasite that feeds on honey bees.

Hannigan says that the varroa mite was virtually unheard of in Saskatchewan 25 years ago. But now, dealing with infestations has become a major financial burden for the province's beekeepers.

And the battle to contain the parasite isn't getting any easier. For

years, beekeepers have depended upon Apivar, a miticide developed in France, to deal with varroa mites. Recently, though, its efficacy has waned.

"Much like grain farmers... if you keep spraying the same product over again, the [pest] is going to adapt," Hannigan said.

"We're really having to put a lot of dollars into controlling this. It keeps us on our toes, but we know that if we're going to stay in business, we've got to have healthy bees."

In any one growing season, poor weather and issues with bears and mite infestations would be enough misfortunate for any beekeeper to deal with.

Bad things, after all, are said to come in threes.

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SPIRITWOOD
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First & Main*

Big River Street Fair brings end to summer

By **JORDAN TWISS**
Shellbrook Chronicle
Reporter

Nicole Phillips Klassen has fond memories of going to the rodeo in Big River when she was a kid. But for as much as those childhood events entertained her, they also taught her an important lesson about community.

"Somebody had to spearhead that, get the volunteers, and get things going. As kids, we loved it," she said. "But if you don't have a group of people who are willing to do stuff like that, you don't have anything going on."

Through the childhood events she grew up with, Phillips Klassen developed a love of organizing community events.

A few years ago, she led the organization of a vendor sale that was well received. And as this summer came to a close, she and co-organizer Jodie Cowan had the idea to bring it back and do something more with it, eventually settling on the town's first-ever Big River Street Fair.

"We just wanted to have a fun end to summer," Phillips Klassen said. "When you have vendors down there, the adults like that part. But then, we thought what can we do for the kids? If you get the kids down there, you've got the adults down there."

While a vendor sale almost organizes itself — because vendors are always happy for an opportunity to sell their wares — planning a whole street fair was something new for Phillips Klassen and Cowan.

Fortunately, as they spent a month planning the day out, other community members stepped up and volunteered to run different parts of the event.

With their help, the first Big River Street Fair was held on Saturday, Aug. 29, offering a day of perusing the goods of 26 vendors, taking part in classic kids' activities like a fishing pond, ring toss, and cake walk, a corn-



Kids enjoyed classic carnival games, like the fish pond.

hole tournament, live musical entertainment, and lots of food.

In another fortunate turn, the weather co-operated for the day, leading to a great turnout. Though no formal tally was taken, Phillips Klassen says nearly 200 burgers were sold throughout the day.

"I would have been happy if 10 people showed up. But it turned out better than we expected, and people didn't just come down and then leave right away. They came

and spent the afternoon," she said.

"With this first one, we set the bar pretty high."

Going into the Big River Street Fair, Phillips Klassen had hoped it would be successful enough to become an annual event. Based on the positive reception, plans will soon be in the works for next year, and Phillips Klassen says there will be a dunk tank added to the list of activities and hopefully even more vendors.

But looking further

into the future, she hopes the Big River Street Fair will inspire future generations to organize events for the community.

"It's good for the community. It keeps your community close-knit," she said.

Events like the Big River Street Fair also do good in the community. This year, proceeds from vendor table fees helped the Big River Legion cover the costs associated with painting a veterans' crosswalk in town.



Wagon rides offered visitors a tour of the town.



Sweet Life Farms was among the 26 vendors in attendance for the day.



Buskers provided musical entertainment throughout the afternoon.

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Otterson reflects on 20 years of governance

By JORDAN TWISS

Shellbrook Chronicle Reporter

As a former teacher and admitted lifelong learner, it was curiosity that led Shellbrook Mayor Amund Otterson to join town council in the early 2000s.

“As a former town councillor and businessman said to me: everybody should do it once, so you know how things operate and see it from the inside,” he said.

“I just wanted to know how the town functioned in terms of what you don’t see. I could see that there were issues with infrastructure.”

When he first joined council, the town’s wastewater treatment infrastructure was inadequate, both in terms of its ability to treat wastewater and from an environmental perspective. This was particularly evident around the creek on the west side of town, where Otterson would frequently take his students for outdoor learning opportunities.

The eventual financing of brand-new wastewater treatment infrastructure was among the first of many major projects undertaken by the town in the 20-plus years Otterson has been at the council table.

Others that hold a place in Otterson’s mind include the community hall expansion, the development of the first four blocks of 2nd Avenue East, the \$2 million renovation of the Richardson Pioneer Recreation Cen-



Shellbrook Mayor Amund Otterson is stepping down after more than 20 years on council.

tre, multiple renovations of the Hidden Hills of Shellbrook Golf Course, and the construction of Parkland Integrated Health Centre.

All these, he says, point to Shellbrook’s strength and continued growth as a community.

“When you travel around the province, like I do on bicycle tours, you see — especially in southern Saskatchewan — towns that are not

growing. Towns that are declining,” he said.

“We’re very fortunate here,” he added, pointing to Shellbrook’s social infrastructure for recreation, arts and culture, which are vital to the community, even if they aren’t money makers.

Of course, for small municipalities with limited budgets, the work is never truly done. But after more than two decades of governing Shellbrook through significant change, Otterson says it’s time for him to step away from the council table and move on to the next chapter of his life.

“A person shouldn’t be allowed to serve for 20 years, really, but you do it because you have a passion for it. You do it as a service, especially in municipal politics,” he said.

When asked about his fondest memories of his time on council and as mayor, Otterson’s first thought is of Parkland Integrated Health Centre, and also his involvement with the human resources aspect of healthcare in the community.

There were many moving parts to the project beyond just building the hospital, such as running water, sewer, and storm sewer services out to the property and developing the road. But through the hard work of the local steering committee and the contributions of surrounding communities, the hospital opened debt-free.

“There are some communities that are still trying to figure out how to pay the debt on those things,” Otter-

son noted.

As he prepares to bid farewell to council, Otterson says much credit is owed to past and present administrators and town employees, who always had the community at heart — even when working in the challenging environment that is a small community like Shellbrook.

And on a more personal note, Otterson adds that he owes much to his predecessors as mayor, George Tomporowski and John Young, who served as mentors to him over the years.

Proof that change is the only constant, there are some potentially big changes on Shellbrook’s horizon: ongoing community efforts to build a new pool, the water treatment plant upgrade project, and the promise of a new K-12 school.

But one thing Otterson would like to see more focus on in the future is transitional housing or assisted living options for seniors.

As he passes on the torch, Otterson encourages anyone who cares for the community to throw their name into the hat for mayor.

“A lot of people look at it as trouble and a pain. But it’s also service to the community,” he said. “You should be there for the good of the community as a whole.”

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Sask. Beekeepers face swarm of uncertainty

Continued from 1

But now that trade negotiations between Canada and the United States have fallen apart, resulting in U.S. President Donald Trump imposing 50 per cent tariffs on Canadian honey and \$28 billion of Canadian goods, Canadian beekeepers have effectively been priced out of a market that was worth \$28.5 million in 2025.

Twenty years ago, Hannigan Honey shipped the majority of its honey to the U.S. Fortunately, says Hannigan, the business has diversified, growing its exports to Japan, and now ships just under 40 per cent of its product to American buyers.

This, along with Hannigan Honey’s 84-year history of operations, positions the business well to weather the storm until a trade deal can be reached and the tariffs are removed.

But other operations may not be so lucky.

“I feel terrible for

younger beekeepers who are just getting in, trying to get established. I’ve been there. I’ve experienced that. I remember it very well,” Hannigan said.

“The hope is that we’re using up all the bad stuff in one year.”

For Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan (APAS) president Bill Prybylski, the key to solving the tariff challenges that beekeepers and other Saskatchewan producers are facing is for both the Canadian and American governments to stop the finger pointing, get back to the bargaining table, and work out an agreement.

While APAS hasn’t yet crunched numbers for how agriculture will be impacted by the American tariffs, Prybylski says the agriculture sector hasn’t been hit as hard as other sectors because agricultural goods are still mostly protected under the CUSMA trade pact.

Still, he expects there will be some challenges ahead.

“We’re going to see an increase in costs when it comes to buying new equipment, or buying parts or repairs for existing equipment,” he said. “The effect that will have remains to be seen, but it will be significant for some producers.”

Though the Canadian government has promised to provide relief for businesses impacted by U.S. tariffs and Canada’s own retaliatory tariffs, Prybylski says the only true resolution is a deal.

“In the meantime, we’ll be looking for some assurance from our government that our agricultural products and inputs will be exempted from any tariffs going north or south,” he said. “It would be very unfortunate if food and the things that are needed to produce it are being used as a weapon in a political dispute. That’s just wrong.”

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Food security key to Canada's sovereignty

Every year, the Oxford Dictionary chooses a word of the year by drawing inspiration from cultural and linguistic trends.

Given how social media has come to dominate nearly every aspect of our daily lives, it's no surprise that the last few words of the year have come from platforms like TikTok – the most recent winner being “rage bait,” a term used to describe online content that is deliberately designed to stoke anger or cause offense.

But if global trends continue for the rest of 2026 (and there's little reason to doubt they will), the Oxford Dictionary might be able to break with the recent years' tradition of following the cultural zeitgeist, and instead select a word that is almost as old as the world's first nations.

The word is sovereignty, meaning the supreme and independent authority to control a country or territory.

To be fair, the word's resurgence into the modern lexicon didn't begin this year. But thanks to the words and deeds of a certain U.S. president, the idea of sovereignty is being discussed more than ever.

As one of said president's targets over the past 18 months, Canada and Prime Minister Mark Carney have often led the global conversation about sovereignty.

And as Canada-U.S. trade tensions continue to simmer, Canada's sovereignty to decide its own future remains very much at the forefront of the conversation.

Early in the year, while speaking at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, Mr. Carney made it clear that food and a country's sovereignty go hand-in-hand.

“A country that cannot feed itself, fuel itself, or defend itself has few options,” he said.

He was right. In even the most stable and predictable global climate, food security should be a top priority



JORDAN
TWISS

~
News Editor

ty for Canada (and for any country, really).

But then, in a perplexing about-face, his government announced the closures of three Agriculture Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) research and development centres and four satellite research farms were to be closed, including those in Scott, Sask., and Indian Head, Sask.

Also on the chopping block was Canada's only Organic and Regenerative Program, headquartered in Swift Current.

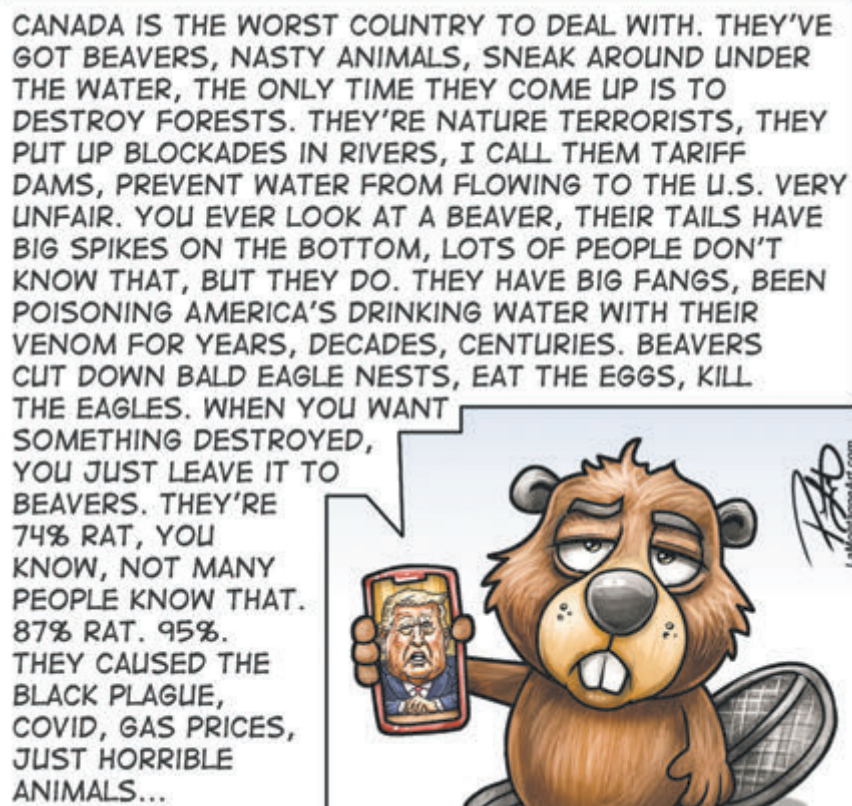
The backlash was immediate and well-deserved, and a months-long investigation by the House of Commons Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food made it clear that those responsible hadn't done their homework.

If Mr. Carney's government had taken even a moment to do its homework, it would have known that the Indian Head research farm's seed increase unit was responsible for stewarding more than 300 seed varieties to ensure their purity and quality, and provided seed for 20 million acres of crops grown across western Canada.

It also would have known that the Organic and Regenerative Program in Swift Current was the only program of its kind in Canada, conducting research to lessen producers' dependence on fertilizer and other chemical inputs.

And it also would have known that the Scott research farm was home to projects aimed at helping producers deal with herbicide residues left on their crops. The soil at the farm was especially important for Saskatchewan producers, because it breaks down herbicides more slowly and doesn't exist anywhere outside of the province.

While Mr. Carney's government has yet to fully reverse its decision, it did see reason and form an MOU with Premier Scott Moe's government to keep the Indian Head and Scott re-



search farms open for the foreseeable future.

A few weeks prior to this, Mr. Carney's government unveiled a \$3.2 billion National Food Security Strategy, which includes funding to create more choice and competition at grocery stores, increase domestic food production, and cut red tape across the agricultural supply chain.

And on trade with the U.S., Mr. Carney's government has also made Canada's supply management system a line it will not cross.

The move is about safeguarding domestic production of dairy, poultry, and eggs (though, some Canadians would like to see this system abolished, on the grounds that an influx of imports – largely from the U.S. – would lower prices for consumers).

While more can always be done to boost domestic food production and Canada's food security, Canadians would be foolish to look to the United States and its current president for guidance.

After returning to office for his second term in 2025, said president empowered his Department of Government Efficiency to take an ax to multiple government agencies, resulting in staffing cuts of about 20 per cent to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Those cuts included active surveil-

lance networks like FoodNet, reducing tracking capabilities for major foodborne pathogens.

The consequences of this move played out in explosive fashion over the summer, as the U.S. saw more than 17,000 confirmed cases of diarrhoea caused by cyclospora-contaminated lettuce.

There have also been outbreaks of E. coli and salmonella from alfalfa sprouts, eggs, jalapeños, frozen blueberries, and a number of other products.

With persistent drought and lower herd counts keeping beef prices high, the same president who cut food safety monitoring has made plans to import 300,000 metric tonnes of beef tariff-free over a three-month period.

Where's the beef coming from? The president won't say, and even U.S. Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins doesn't know.

The move is supposed to lower prices for consumers and give ranchers time to rebuild their herds. But realistically, importing a bunch of mystery meat and undercutting ranchers is the surest way to make people sick and put those same ranchers out of business.

Food sovereignty is inseparable from national sovereignty. As the U.S. continues to self-sabotage, Canadians must hold the line.

Shellbrook Chronicle

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Spiritwood Museum hosts mystery night

By **SPIRITWOOD MUSEUM BOARD**
Submitted

On Aug. 23, the Spiritwood & District Museum tried out a new event, a mystery night to be held at the museum.

Summer student Hayley Harris approached the museum board with the idea. The board, extremely thrilled with her initiative, wholeheartedly encouraged her.

She undertook all the planning of the mystery, as well as ticket sales and caterer coordination. Over 50 people attended the mystery night, titled "The Mystery of the Missing Journal."

Upon first arriving, participants were allowed to tour around the museum, many of them having never toured it before and being surprised by how much of the local history was familiar and interesting to them.

After a bit of touring, supper was served. It was a beautiful evening, so diners were seated outside at picnic tables.

The meal was not only catered, but also fully donated, by Ronnie and Roxy Sawatzky, somehow transforming something as simple as chili and a bun with side salads into a gourmet meal.

After supper, the mystery began. The concept was that a newly discovered 1910 settler's journal had been set to be unveiled — a priceless piece of local history that tells the story of one family's life in the early Spiritwood area.

But before the big reveal, the journal disappeared. It was now up to the guests to solve who took the journal, where they hid it, and why they took it. Participants were able to play as individuals, or in groups.

Throughout the museum were cryptically-worded clues, as well as five suspects who could be questioned for more clues. It was up to the player-detectives to decipher the information and solve the mystery.

Despite Dave Hyndman seeming very suspicious as a suspect,



Guests question some of the mystery's suspects.

it turned out — we should've known — to be Marene Iverson's character, Margaret, who committed the theft of the journal, hiding it in the front flower bed.

Margaret's reason for taking the journal was food for thought: "I took the journal because I was afraid it would become just another artifact. It would

be placed behind glass, given a little plaque, and people would walk past it without ever stopping to wonder about the person who wrote it or the life they lived. I thought if the journal disappeared, people would start asking questions. They'd have to look deeper and explore the museum to find the pieces of the story. I know I went too far, and I shouldn't have taken it. But I wanted people to remember that these aren't just old objects sitting behind

glass. They're pieces of history. If we don't take the time to discover the stories behind them, eventually they really will become just another artifact."

Only two groups solved the mystery in full, but most groups/individuals solved one or two of the three questions. But winning wasn't too important, because everyone agreed that the fun and enjoyment they had that night surpassed all expectations.

On top of supper and a mystery, there was also a 50/50, sponsored by Prosperity Credit Union and won by Lynna Buswell, as well as a goodie basket raffle, sponsored by Innovation Credit Union and Simplot Grower Solutions-Spiritwood, won by Dave Corneliuson.

Extra supplies for the event were covered by R&L Feeds.



The event included raffle prizes and a 50/50 pot that climbed to \$1,230.



Guests enjoyed an outdoor meal, provided by Ronnie and Roxy Sawatzky before working to solve the mystery.

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Canada must remain focused on global trade

In the face of the collapse of Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA) talks, one thing has once again become crystal clear: Canada has to look to the future, working to forge trade deals sans the U.S. whenever possible.

The prospect of a new CUSMA deal was always remote with president Donald Trump at the helm in the U.S. He is that unicorn of presidents, being in part protectionist in the extreme, with a healthy dose of easily bruised ego, resulting in his

decisions changing on erratic whims no one — himself included — can explain coherently.

The issue for Canada in terms of trade, and really for any country wanting to deal with the U.S., is that Trump creates a volatility that is difficult to quantify.

We may hold out hope that mid-term election results in November soften things. But a cloud hangs over that vote in terms of how legitimate its results might be, and there is at least some who wonder if Trump will ever willingly leave the White



CALVIN DANIELS

House.

And, if gone, the damage he has caused in terms of relations with just about everyone — shockingly North Korean leader Kim Jong Un being an exception — that will likely take years to rebuild.

So, it is important for Canada, and in particular for the agriculture sector, to see reports like the recent one where Pakistan is back buying large volumes of Canadian canola.

After Canada had almost no sales to Pakistan from 2023-2025, the country is apparently purchasing 506,656 tonnes of Canadian canola during the first six months of 2026.

The deal isn't so large as to dramatically change trade numbers overall, but it is the sort of thing Canada needs

to be redoubling its efforts toward getting done.

Certainly, many will have seen suggestions that Canada consider joining the European Union — a move that would likely not be as good for the ag sector as one might think, given how fiercely protective of domestic agriculture many EU countries are.

But such talk is at least worth the process of considering.

Long have we lived next door to our major trade partner. And while there have been disputes, we felt con-

fident at the end of the day the U.S. was a friend and ally.

An invasion of Venezuela, a war started in Iran, and covetous remarks about annexing Greenland and Canada becoming an American state, are rather compelling evidence that Trump has tromped upon multiple friendships in pursuit of his ego.

So, the rules of the game have changed, and Canada needs to look globally more than ever to forge new trade efforts in the vacuum that Trump has created.

Crop Report: Aug. 25 to 31

By **MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE**
Submitted

Last week began with predominantly dry conditions across much of Saskatchewan, allowing producers to make harvest progress. Many regions received rainfall and localized hail later in the week and field activities continued where conditions permitted. Harvest is now 18 per cent complete in Saskatchewan, up seven per cent from the previous week. Progress remains significantly below the 5-year average of 39 per cent and the 10-year average of 34 per cent. Producers remain optimistic that favourable weather conditions will support further harvest progress.

Significant precipitation was reported in many areas later in the week. The Prairie Rose area recorded

the highest rainfall at 136 millimetres (mm), followed by the Fertile Belt area at 125 mm. The Langenburg and Sisman areas also received 113 mm and 96 mm, respectively. The widespread precipitation significantly improved topsoil moisture conditions across much of Saskatchewan.

Harvest operations, primarily in winter cereals, pulses and other early-seeded crops, continued as weather conditions supported field activities.

The significant variation in growing conditions across Saskatchewan resulted in a wide range of yield estimates for all crops. Producers throughout the province continue to report considerable yield variability due to the dynamic nature of the growing season.

Current provincial average yield estimates are 52 bushels per acre for hard red spring wheat, 44 bushels per

acre for durum, 94 bushels per acre for oats, 74 bushels per acre for barley, 41 bushels per acre for triticale, 38 bushels per acre for canola, 26 bushels per acre for flax and 39 bushels per acre for field peas. Lentil yields are currently estimated at 1,361 pounds per acre, while mustard, canary seed and chickpea are 1,129 pounds, 1,266 pounds and 1,501 pounds, respectively. In many parts of the province, weather conditions during the growing season had a significant impact on crop yields.

Crop damage over the past week was mainly due to wind and rain, which caused some localized flooding. Sclerotinia stem rot damage in canola was also reported, particularly in regions with high precipitation during the growing season.

Producers are actively working on combining, swathing and desiccat-

ing crops seeded later in the season. They are also busy baling and hauling straw, as well as transporting grain. Additionally, some producers have started making projections and plans for fall fieldwork to prepare the land for next season.

With harvest well underway, producers are reminded to follow safe operating practices and remain vigilant while working in the field. Having fire suppression resources readily available and taking precautions around power lines can help reduce risks during harvest. The public is encouraged to exercise caution and provide ample space when approaching or passing farm machinery on roads.

The Farm Stress Line is available to provide confidential support to producers, toll-free at 1-800-667-4442.

A complete, printable version of the Crop Report is available online.

Boosting soybean protein

By **TANNARA YELLAND**
Canadian Light Source

Soybean is a critical element of the global food supply: Between its use for animal feed and human consumption, it accounts for roughly two-thirds of plant-based protein meal output worldwide. Canada is a global leader in sustainable soybean production, with 70% of its crop, one of the country's top three by value, exported annually.

According to Brazilian scientist Gabriel Montanha, soy production has “exploded” in recent decades to meet demand — but there hasn't been a corresponding increase in soybean's protein content. “To ensure soy remains a sustainable crop, we need to increase the protein content of soy seeds,” says Montanha, who is doing a postdoctoral fellowship at the European Synchrotron Radiation Facility (ESRF) in Grenoble, France. “It's critical we find ways want to generate more protein without increasing the amount of land we're currently cultivating.”

Montanha and colleagues used the Canadian

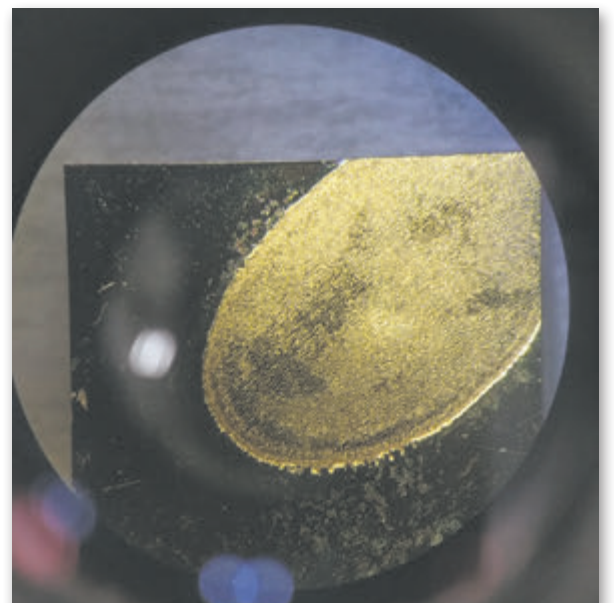
Light Source (CLS) at the University of Saskatchewan (USask), and Brazil's National Synchrotron Light Laboratory (LNLS) to determine if the mineral content of soybean seeds could influence their nutritional content. With the help of synchrotron imaging, the researchers investigated the location of proteins and minerals inside four types of soybean seeds; they found that certain minerals appear to play a crucial role in protein formation.

“We could see that the genotypes that had higher protein content also had higher zinc and sulfur,” says Montanha, who completed this research as part of his PhD, alongside collaborators at Brazil's University of São Paulo and Sapienza University of Rome (Italy). The team's findings are published in the journal *ACS Agricultural Science & Technology*.

Montanha says the imaging they did at the CLS and LNLS was key to the research. “The use of these different tools for structural and chemical imaging of biological materials really pushed us forward to understand the role of the nutrients in the plant's physiology.”

He and colleagues are already working on fer-

tilization techniques that could ensure soy seeds have access to sulfur and zinc at key points in their development to boost protein content.



Cross section image of a soybean seed.

Shellbrook's class of '86 celebrates 40 years

By ANN REMY
Submitted

Shellbrook's class of 1986 reunited and reminisced during a celebration of its 40th high school reunion on July 17 and 18.

Some members of the class had remained connected over the years, while others hadn't seen one another since our 10-year reunion. And some of us hadn't been together since Grade 10, Grade 11 or graduation itself.

But as it turned out, the time apart didn't matter much at all.

We began Friday evening with an informal gathering at Gilles' and my motorhome in Kinsmen Park.

There were snacks, drinks, my traditional Jell-O shots, and plenty of stories. But more than anything, there was that wonderful process of re-discovery.

There were hugs. There was laughter. There were moments of looking at someone and thinking,

"I know you..." followed by the delight of suddenly realizing exactly who was standing in front of you.

Before long, the years between 1986 and 2026 seemed to collapse.

We talked about where life had taken us: careers, marriages, children, grandchildren,

moves, adventures, successes and challenges. We learned about things our classmates had accomplished that many of us had never known.

And, of course, we remembered.

Saturday afternoon we gathered at Duane Storey's home for the main reunion.

Duane generously opened his home and yard to all of us and took on the important role of Master Barbecuer, preparing the meat with a great deal of care and doing an absolutely delicious job of it.

Everyone contributed to the evening. Appetizers and salads appeared

on the tables. Lawn chairs filled the yard. Drinks were poured. Conversations moved from one little group to another.

One of the funniest parts of the afternoon was revisiting the information everyone had submitted before the reunion as an informal

trivia game.

We also pulled out our Class Prophecies from 1986, those wonderfully confident predictions we made when we were teenagers and apparently believed we had everyone, and perhaps life itself, completely figured out.

But there was also a quieter and much more important part of our reunion.

Not everyone from those school years had the opportunity to grow older with us.

So, our reunion was a time to remember friends from our school years who are no longer with us: Curtis Shutter, Rick Chapman, Kerry Lynn Perkins Ajas, Janice Trueman Kolenowski, Veronica Adeline McAdam Zdrill, Jacqueline Anne Sommerfeld, Von Bittner, and Warren "Tex" Folden.

The reunion concluded with a trip to the local bar, where we spent the rest of the evening talking, laughing, and remembering.



Shellbrook's Class of 1986. Back row, left to right: David Puddicombe, Tom Sinclair, Dwayne Fucksick, Gary Stene, Brad Stene, Duane Storey, and Myron Wall. Front: Deanna Pease (Mathers), Darlene MacDonald, Cathy Bartley (Clarke), Lori Nelson (Steinhilber), Lynn Williamson (Beaulieu), Cindy Wall (Souch), Annette (Dumuth), Vicky Walker (Lemecha), Anissa Friesen (Tiegen), and Ann Beaulieu Remy.

Sask. RCMP issues school zone safety reminder

By SASK RCMP
Submitted

Saskatchewan RCMP Traffic Services want to help drivers and parents brush up on the dos and don'ts of driving in school zones.

Inspector Lee Knelsen, Operations Officer of the Saskatchewan RCMP Traffic Services, says: "Everyone plays a role in keeping children safe in school zones. That's why knowing what to do is so important. Saskatchewan RCMP officers will be present in school zones across Saskatchewan, reminding drivers to slow down, stay alert and help protect young pedestrians."

To help keep children safe, Inspector Knelsen encourages all drivers to adopt the following behaviours in school zones:

Reduce your speed.

Before entering a school zone, you must reduce your speed to the posted limit. The speed limit is in effect every day of the week, all year. Resume your previous speed only after having exited the school zone.

Stop for school buses.

When a school bus has its red lights flashing and stop arm extended, you must stop at least five metres away from the school bus. Wait for the red lights to stop flashing and the stop arm to be pulled in before moving again.

Locate pedestrians, children and cyclists around you.

When driving in a school zone, take the time to locate pedestrians, cyclists, and scooter riders around you.

Children can be unpredictable while playing or walking to and from school and may enter the roadway unexpectedly. Stay alert, expect the unexpected, and give cyclists plenty of space. Before opening your vehicle door, always shoulder check for approaching cyclists and other road users.

Avoid U-turns and three-point turns.

When driving in a school zone, never make a U-turn or a three-point turn. These manoeuvres are illegal because they can be difficult for children to anticipate, increasing the risk of a collision. If you need to change direction, turn onto a different street at the next intersection instead.

Parents who drive their children to school have additional responsibilities in keeping children safe in school zones. Inspector Knelsen encourages

parents to adopt the following behaviours in school zones:

Stop in designated areas.

When dropping off children at school, do not stop in designated school bus loading areas, which are typically marked with cones. These zones help students safely board and exit buses at the curb. Always use designated parent drop-off zones instead.

If parent drop-off zones are full, do not stop or double-park in driving lanes, even temporarily. Doing so is illegal and blocks other drivers' view of pedestrians, increasing the risk of a collision.

Have children exit the vehicle on the side away from moving traffic.

When parent drop-off zones are full, stop where your children can

safely exit your vehicle away from traffic, ideally from the passenger side on the same side of the street as the school. This reduces their exposure to passing vehicle.

Walk a block.

If you can, choose to park a little farther from the school and walk the rest of the way with your children. It helps reduce traffic congestion near the school and ensures children know how to safely walk to school.

Stop your engine in the winter.

When stopping near a school in winter, turn off your engine, even if you're only parked briefly. Exhaust fumes create a visual obstruction, making it more difficult for drivers to see children near your vehicle and for children to see approaching traffic.

Teach your children a few safety rules.

Refresh your children's knowledge of school traffic safety rules each year. Remind them to use sidewalks and crosswalks, look both ways before crossing, stay alert and avoid distractions, texting or listening to music. Walking the route to school together before the first day can help identify safe crossings and potential hazards.

Inspector Knelsen added: "There are many things we can do to help keep children safe on their way to and from school. But if I could ask drivers to do just one thing, it would be to slow down in school zones. Reduced speeds give you more time to react to the unexpected and can make all the difference when it comes to preventing a collision."



APAS eyes potential of Clean Fuel Regulations

By **JORDAN TWISS**
Shellbrook Chronicle
Reporter

The Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan (APAS) is expressing cautious optimism about the economic potential that could be unlocked by embracing the federal government's Clean Fuel Regulations.

Introduced by then-Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's government in 2020, the Clean Fuel Regulations came into effect in 2023 and require gasoline and diesel suppliers to gradually reduce the carbon intensity of the fuels they produce and sell in Canada.

By 2030, the federal government says, the regulations will lower the carbon intensity of gasoline and diesel to 15 per cent below 2016 levels, reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 26 million tonnes.

The regulations also include a \$1.5 billion Clean fuels Fund, aimed at supporting domestic production and adoption of low-carbon fuels, such as hydrogen and biofuels.

The Clean Fuel Regulations

are an integral part of the federal government's 2030 Emissions Reduction Plan: Clean Air, Strong Economy. In addition to helping Canada reach its goal of achieving net-zero emissions by 2050, they're intended to establish Canada as a reliable producer and consumer of biofuels.

Like other environmentally-driven policies introduced by the federal government over the past decade, the Clean Fuel Regulations have often been dismissed as an unfair burden on the prairie provinces, and in particular the oil and gas and agriculture sectors.

Hoping to get beyond the noise, APAS president Bill Prybylski says the organization took the initiative to research the regulations at the behest of its membership. Based on its review of the potential additional costs and the possibilities for economic gains, Prybylski says APAS could support the regulations "under certain conditions."

"The biggest thing is to ensure domestically produced feedstock, whether that's canola or minor acreage crops that are showing potential to be a good source

for feedstock for renewable diesel," he said. "That's the kicker, to ensure that Canadian producers gain the benefits from any additional regulations."

While Saskatchewan canola producers are the most obvious potential beneficiaries of the Clean Fuel Regulations, given the oilseed's proven potential as biofuel feedstock, additional regulations always mean financial pain for producers.

APAS' research suggests that the regulations could increase fuel costs by anywhere from 3.4 cents to 16 cents per litre, costing Saskatchewan \$115 million annually.

For producers, Prybylski says, there needs to be transparency about the additional costs — where they're coming from, why they're there, and who's paying for them.

"We have to make sure that, if there are additional costs to non-canola growing producers, then there's some sort of compensation for those additional costs without the additional benefits," he said.

Should the Clean Fuel Regulations be implemented properly, APAS believes the

benefits will outweigh the additional costs, resulting in a boost to Saskatchewan's economy of \$592 million per year.

Canola producers would be the primary beneficiaries, with canola oil and canola seed demand growing by 1.5 million tonnes and 3.4 million tonnes, respectively.

And with more canola being grown in Saskatchewan for domestic use, canola growers would no longer be beholden to sometimes difficult trading partners, such as China and the U.S.

"If these Clean Fuel Regulations were to be fully implemented, Saskatchewan would have to nearly double its crush capacity, which is going to create a whole bunch of jobs in construction and operation and maintenance," he said. "It's a whole bunch of economic activity for rural communities."

Though canola growers have the most to gain off the bat, Prybylski says these benefits have knock-on effects for the rest of the economy, such as freeing up elevator space for other crops.

"Creating a stable domestic demand for our locally

grown product has the potential to return great value to the producers of the province and the Saskatchewan economy as a whole."

The build-up of domestic biofuel production is a sticking point for Canada's Farms and Fuels Alliance (FFA) as well. As written right now, the FFA says, the Clean Fuel Regulations are allowing U.S. imports to crush the domestic industry.

According to the FFA, American producers receive tax credits worth up to 36 cents per litre under U.S. President Donald Trump's One Big Beautiful Bill Act. These U.S. imports are then further subsidized by the Canadian government, creating an unlevel playing field for Canadian producers.

As a result, American ethanol now accounts for 70 per cent of Canada's blended gasoline supply, up from less than 50 per cent five years ago.

Rather than a taxpayer-funded bailout, the FFA wants the Clean Fuel Regulations amended to grant domestic ethanol producers the same level of tax credit as their American competitors.



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Shell Lake Seniors activity highlights

By **DAVID JENSEN**
Shell Lake 50+ Club

On Aug. 31, 16 members of the Shell Lake 50+ club gathered to celebrate birthdays and anniversaries for July and August.

Entertainers for the evening were the Stump Lake Slough Thumpin' Brothers, a group of three brothers, ages 13 to 17 years. They play and sing real old style bluegrass music on typi-

cal bluegrass instruments: the guitar, mandolin, fiddle, and cello. Each of the boys play multiple instruments.

Their repertoire includes both familiar and less familiar music. While playing their music, their fingers are flying. It is fast-pasted and well synced, indicating extensive practice and true joy. The boys were accompanied by their enthusiastic and promotional parents, Richard and Sue.

After the birthday song was sung,

the celebrating people gathered at the head table. As usual, Anita Weiers did her magic best preparing the birthday desserts for the evening.

She provided two very different cakes, the first being a light and airy

angel food cake with a choice of Blueberry or Strawberry topping, and the second being a black forest chocolate cake.

More than one person had one piece of each.

Gov't commits to second SGI rate increase

By **JORDAN TWISS**
Shellbrook Chronicle Reporter

SGI says it will proceed with a planned 3.75 per cent Auto Fund rate increase on June 1, 2027, despite recommendations from the Saskatchewan Rate Review Panel to pause them.

The decision was announced by Minister Responsible for SGI Jeremy Harrison at a news conference in Saskatoon on Friday, and will increase costs for Saskatchewan vehicle owners by about \$39 per year or \$3.25 per month.

SGI imposed a similar 3.75 per cent increase on June 1 of this year.

In its report, issued in July, the Rate Review Panel did recommend approval of this year's rate increase.

The panel acknowledged that the 2026 increase was "necessary, justifiable and [a] step in the right direction," because Saskatchewan Auto Fund costs have signifi-

cantly increased due to higher damage claims, inflation, more complex vehicle repairs and higher expenses, and revenues have failed to keep pace.

Prior to June's rate increase, SGI had not increased its rates since 2014. The auto fund operated at a loss for the past four years.

Despite this, the panel did not recommend approval of the 3.75 per cent hike for June 1, 2027.

Instead, it wanted SGI to submit a new application that should be supported by "complete public evidence, including a financial forecast, capital adequacy analysis, consultation outcomes, non-rate actions, and a capital restoration plan."

Other recommendations made by the panel included the Saskatchewan Auto Fund adopting a capital margin of at least 6.5 per cent, presenting a multi-year capital restoration plan to restore the Rate Stabilization Reserve to the 125 per cent, and reviewing the safe driver recognition program to determine it remains fair, among others.

In announcing its decision to proceed with the second rate increase next June, the government said the approach balances affordability concerns

with the Auto Fund's financial needs.

"The panel's recommendations recognize that claim costs and inflation are putting significant financial pressure on the Rate Stabilization Reserve and overall Auto Fund sustainability," Harrison said. "Our government's response balances those financial realities with our commitment to affordability for Saskatchewan drivers."

The government's decision to proceed with the SGI rate hike was criticized by the Official Opposition, which accused the government of failing to act on Saskatchewanians' cost-of-living concerns.

It also said the decision is proof of the government's mismanagement of SGI and other Crowns.

"For generations, Saskatchewan residents and drivers have paid into and built-up SGI, and after just eight years Scott Moe has nearly undone it all," said Shadow Minister of Highways and SGI Darcy Warrington in a statement.

"And this isn't a one off. SaskPower is facing a serious financial crisis, and now ratepayers are facing massive power bill increases."



Birthday celebrants for the months of July and August. From left to right: Ray Leier, Corrie Rush-Battersby, Chris Lindsay, Colleen Reed, and Donna Prafke.



The Stump Lake Slough Thumpin' Brothers provided musical entertainment. From left to right: Raef, Winston, and Burke Debruijn.

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New homes for some NFL quarterbacks

When the 2026 National Football League season kicks off this week with a New England at Seattle Wednesday night classic, the same quarterbacks who battled Feb. 8 in the Super Bowl won 29-13 by Seattle, Sam Darnold for the Seahawks and Drake Maye for the Patriots, will both be under centre. The status quo at QB will be in effect at most other stadiums around the league, too, but there are a number of QBs wearing new NFL uniforms.

A handful of journeymen quarterbacks played a game of musical chairs in the National Football League's off-season and many fans are asking 'who's starting where'? Let's examine the movement.

Perhaps the most significant change involves Tua Tagovailoa, for six years the starting quarterback of the Miami Dolphins. Tua, whose actual first name is Tuanigamanuolepola, was a Pro Bowl QB in 2022 and led the NFL in passing yardage in 2023. But his star dimmed during the last couple of years and in 2025, he led the league in interceptions. In March, he was flat-out released by the Dolphins, and the Atlanta

Falcons snapped him up, signing Tagovailoa to a one-year contract worth \$1.215 million, close to the league minimum. Tua is likely to be the Falcons' starter, but will compete with Michael Penix, drafted two years ago, for the top job.

Suiting up in Miami to try to fill Tagovailoa's shoes is Malik Willis, who was a backup in Green Bay last year. He signed a three-year deal with the Dolphins worth \$67.5 million.

Kyler Murray, who was picked No. 1 overall in the 2019 draft by Arizona Cardinals, didn't lead them to the promised land, as had been hoped, and was released in March. Minnesota Vikings, who are hoping that their most recent top draft pick, J.J. McCarthy, will eventually develop into a star, snapped up Murray, signed him to a minimum salary on a one-year contract and abruptly named him the starting QB.

Geno Smith is expected to be the starter with New York Jets, marking a return to the team which drafted him in the second round in 2013. Smith has bounced around without much success, playing for the Giants, Chargers, Seahawks and the Raiders, before being dealt back to the Jets. The Raiders deemed him expendable when they chose No. 1 in the draft and selected hotshot college star Fernando Mendoza, who led Indiana to an unbeaten season and the 2026 NCAA championship.

Finally, another quarterback situation of interest will unfold in Cleveland, where Deshaun Watson is expected to be the No. 1 man ahead of last year's rookie hopeful, Shedeur Sanders. The son of Deion Sanders played in eight games for the Browns in 2025, throwing seven TD passes and 10 interceptions. Watson, in the final year of a five-year \$230 million contract but plagued in recent years by injury and serious legal problems, has all-star potential and a terrible reputation.

Some will succeed.



BRUCE
PENTON

~

Some will fail. And the quarterback carousel is almost certain to continue again next year.

• Mike Bianchi of the Orlando Sentinel: "The Cleveland Browns choosing Deshaun Watson as the starting quarterback over Shedeur Sanders is the NFL equivalent of looking in the refrigerator, seeing nothing but expired milk and deciding, 'Eh, what the hell, it's only five days past due.'"

• Retired basketball star Shaquille O'Neal: "Excellence is not a singular act but a habit. You are what you do repeatedly."

• Headline from The Beaverton.com: "Guys who get punched in the head for a living worried about Trump's cognitive state"

• Super 70s Sports: "I hereby retroactively de-

clare the Montreal Expos 1994 world champions. I'll be having a parade tomorrow in my living room."

• Janice Hough of leftcoastsportsbabe.com: "Fans in San Jose voted for 'the Blades' for their then new NHL hockey team. And the owners decided it had ties to gang violence. So they changed to the 'Sharks.' Apparently never saw West Side Story."

• Mike Bianchi of the Orlando Sentinel: "The NFL has finally decided to eliminate the Pro Bowl and the Pro Bowl Games – a merciful end for an event that had been in hospice care for about 20 years. Sadly, doctors could find no sign of competitive life."

• Another one from fark.com: "NFL ends the Pro Bowl. Both re-

maining viewers are devastated."

• "Another one from Bianchi: "LIV Golf just cancelled its final tournament of the season and now is laying off all of its employees. Translation: LIV is now DED."

• Another theonion.com headline: "Do You Have Any Idea Who I Am?" Jalen Brunson Shouts At Librarian Refusing To Move Him Up 'Lonesome Dove' Waitlist."

• Steve Simmons of the Toronto Sun: "I'm confused by the giant salaries paid to NFL broadcasters. Like, why do it? I'm going to watch because it's football. Tom Brady or Tony Romo, or anyone else for that matter, aren't the reason I tune in."

Care to comment? Email brucepenton2003@yahoo.ca

Canwood Library summer events a big success

By BEV WYATT
Branch Librarian

The Canwood Library had a wonderful summer of fun, creativity, and community connection.

In collaboration with the Summer Youth Program, the library welcomed approximately 140 children throughout the summer for a variety of creative and engaging activities, including the Notice Nature Program.

The summer wrapped up with a special event at the local park, where the Library Board hosted a picnic lunch for the children. Everyone then took on the challenge of a fun scavenger hunt, putting their teamwork and problem-solving skills to the test.

This summer would not have been such a success without librarian Bev Wyatt, the Summer Youth Program workers, members of the Library Board, volunteers and, most importantly, the children who came out.



Kids created butterflies as part of Canwood's Summer Youth Program wind-up.

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Shellbrook Chronicle
& Spiritwood Herald

The veggie garden: Part 2

By **PATRICIA HANBIDGE**
Orchid Horticulture

Last week, we talked about what is growing in my veggie/fruit garden and how we generally prefer to store the crop for winter or alternatively our favourite way to consume the produce! We managed to cover some of the early and mid-season crops and touched on some of the vegetables that require a lot of space to grow.

Let's move onto the star of the vegetable garden – the tomato. The one veggie (or fruit) that is truly something we all can't wait to harvest as soon as possible. For this reason alone, I will seed some tomatoes early so I can start eating and enjoying them as early as June! I grow lots of climbing cherry tomatoes that are both hybrid and heirloom. The same goes for the larger tomatoes as I have found that if I grow a blend of these types, I am always guaranteed a good crop. If we happen to have a cooler, cloudier summer, it is

the heirloom tomatoes that can provide the bounty. If it is hot, then I get to enjoy both heirlooms and hybrids and the feast if bountiful.

As far as cherry tomatoes go, I love Sweet Million hybrids as they are productive and do not crack. Some of my other heirloom favourites are Rapunzel, Chocolate Cherry and Black Cherry. As far as the larger tomatoes that are heirloom include Manitoba, Cherokee Purple and the best ever tasting tomato Brandywine. Other good hybrids include 'Bush Beefsteak', 'Early Girl' and 'Celebrity'.

The ways to enjoy tomatoes are endless! I always pick everything when our daytime temperatures do not get consistently into the double digits as they really do not grow and can get damaged and thus will store more poorly. Everything that is green mature will ripen and I often have many fresh tomatoes into late November and sometimes into December. I store them in flats in a cool area and ensure I remove any that begin to spoil right



away. As far as processing, I make a lot of salsa! It goes into any hot dish that needs tomatoes and brings in the peppers, onions and garlic at the same time. I generally process these so I can store them in jars, but sometimes I will fill Ziploc bags, sealed well and frozen flat to conserve space.

Root crops are always the last to harvest and I tend to leave them in the garden well after the killing frost. However, if the tops of carrots or

any other crops are crowning, I add some soil to ensure they do not freeze. Carrots, parsnips, potatoes and beets just get sweeter after a frost or two, so as long as they have not frozen, they are lovely. In warmer climates, I will harvest these in spring if fall ends up getting too busy.

Any of the brassicas (cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower etc.) are harvested throughout the season and picked when they are ripe. I always

grow these crops under remay cloth or floating row covers as inevitably, the worm will appear on the plate of an honoured guest. I gave up trying to find them all years ago and prefer not to use any of the common rotenone-like dusts on what I consume.

Short season crops like spinach, lettuce and spring onions are now in their third successive planting. We have been enjoying fabulous salads with all sorts of ingredients from the garden. My children, and now grandchildren love to go and fill a basket from the garden to make a salad as there are edible greens, flowers and more that will make not only a beautiful salad but one that is filled with a vast array of nutrients.

I hope that you have been enjoying harvesting what you have grown!

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

GOOD NEWS

THE ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE

By **DEB ANDERSON**
Submitted

Years ago, a Bible College class assigned the task of writing down 100 things I was thankful for.

"That will take a long time," I mused.

The list was written in about thirty minutes and is so valuable it rests by the head of the bed to this day. One thought led to another. Our world surrounds us with beauty and the marvel of our own

bodies gives us much to thank God for.

Scripture encourages us to give thanks when we petition the Lord, not simply listing needs to Him.

"Enter His gates with thanksgiving in your heart" (Psalm 100:4).

"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God" (Philippians 4:6).

These (and many others) encourage giving thanks as a daily activity and attitude of heart, not merely an annual event followed by a turkey dinner.

Consider the account of Jesus' life where He was summoned by the ten lepers.

The account relates: "[the lepers] stood afar off. And they lifted up their voices and said, 'Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!' So when He saw them, He said to them, 'Go show yourselves to the priests.' And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned...and [gave] Him thanks...He said to him, 'Arise and go your way. Your faith has made you whole.'"

Through the years, translations have watered this "whole" down to "made well", but the original word is "sozo," which carries greater blessing. Wholeness goes for body, soul, and spirit — saved, healed, and delivered. Wonderful additional blessings were granted to the thankful man, that go down in history to show us God's thoughts on giving thanks.

One preacher I heard gave even greater implications to this being made whole. Beyond rescue

from disease, the dark kingdom and promise of eternal life, the preacher suggested that wholeness was shown in that those damaged, disfigured areas could well have been restored, made new (no more missing fingers or nose).

We know our God to be gracious. Did He restore all of the man's body, with no signs of his past remaining?

There is no way to know for sure.

You decide.



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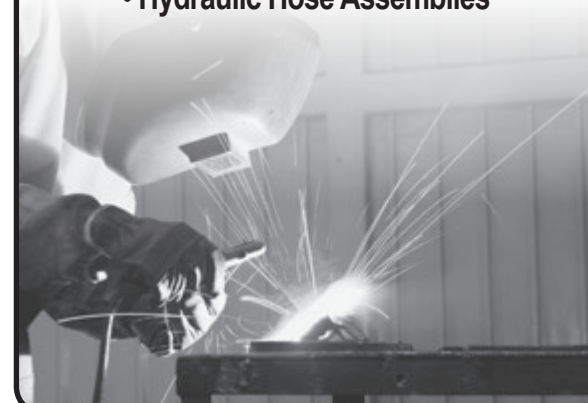


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Minutes of an RM of Canwood meeting

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

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, Sask., on July 21, 2026, commencing at 9 a.m.

Present were Reeve Levi Schutte, Chief Administrative Officer Lorna Benson, and the following Councillors for their respective divisions: #2 Gerald Muller, #3, Rick Jensen, #4 Mario Boisvert, #5 Kevin Olson, and #6 Cody Lockhart.

Absent: #1 Vacant

Delegations:

9:30 a.m. Kari Carr, Coalition of R.M. of Canwood Lake Lot Owners

10 a.m. Dwight Diehl, Public Works Supervisor, Municipal Operations Update

Muller: That the minutes of the June 16 Regular Council Meeting be approved as presented. Carried

Jensen: That the minutes of the June 22 Budget Meeting be approved as presented. Carried

Muller: That the State-

ment of Financial Activities for the month of June 2026 for the R.M. General Account be approved as presented. Carried

Muller: That we approve the payments as listed on the attached account listing for a total of \$339,169.75 Council Direct Deposits for July and Payroll Direct Deposits for 2026 Pay Period 13 & 14. Carried

9:30 a.m. Delegation Kari Carr spoke to Council.

9:47 a.m. Delegation Kari Carr left the Council meeting.

Jensen: That we purchase a 2026 John Deere Grader 772P Motor Grader from Brandt with a trade in of the 2017 CAT 140M AWD Motor Grader for a cost of \$335,126.57. Carried

Muller: Further to the above resolution, and Resolution No. 6 of March 18, 2026, we instruct the Chief Administrative Officer to make application to the Affinity Credit Union for financing for 5-year terms and monthly payments for the equipment purchases as follows: 2026 John Deere Grader 772P Motor Grader \$560,909.10, 2026 John Deere Grader 772 Motor

Grader \$200,000. Carried

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

Public Works Supervisor Dwight Diehl left the meeting at 11:00 a.m.

Olson: That we hire Chaos Fire Service and Repair, Allan, Sask., to complete the valve repair on the Canwood Fire Truck at a cost of \$2,200. Carried

Lockhart: That we contribute \$2,500 from the funds in the Dedicated Lands Account to the Debden Recreation Board for the roof of the arena that is located within the boundaries of the Village of Debden, subject to any approvals required by the Ministry of Government Relations in accordance with The Planning and Development Act, 2007, and The Dedicated Lands Regulations, 2009.

Further to this, the contribution is subject to the implementation of a condition on the contractor of a 25% holdback subject to final inspection. Carried

Lockhart: That we renew our Affiliate Level Membership with Farm & Food Care Saskatchewan at a cost of \$1,050. Carried

Muller: That we appoint Marcel Baynton, Duck Lake, Sask., as the Municipality's Weed Inspector for the year 2026. Further to this, the rate will be \$30 per hour and \$1.26 per kilometer. Carried

Lockhart: That we adopt the revisions to Policy No. 7.07 Dust Suppression. Carried

Muller: That we now recess this meeting at 1:05 p.m. for a presentation by Jensen Stromberg Chartered Professional Accountants on the 2025 Financial Statements of the R.M. of Canwood No. 494. and the 2025 Financial Statements of Highway 55 Waste Management Corporation. Carried

Boisvert: That we now reconvene this meeting at 2:20 p.m. Carried

Lockhart: That we approve the request of Denise Dumais to consolidate the two 80-acre parcels on the SW 17-53-06 W3. Carried

Schutte: That we acknowledge the Building Permit Application of Roy Bedient for a detached garage, pursuant to Section 9.1.2 of the Municipal Zoning Bylaw 2003-7. Carried

Jensen: That we approve the Development Permit Application of Corrine and Richard Schwehr for two storage sheds in the Agricultural District of the Municipal Zoning Bylaw 2003-7. Carried

Muller: That we acknowledge the Building Permit Application of Myrna Eliason to move in an RTM and seacan, pursuant to Section 9.1.2 and 9.1.1(1)(b) of the Municipal Zoning Bylaw 2003-7. Carried

Schutte: That we acknowledge the Permit Extension Application of James Symynuk to complete the detached garage by May 31, 2027. Carried

Jensen: That we now file the correspondence. Carried

Lockhart: That we strongly urge Municipal Hail Insurance to review and increase the commission compensation levels provided to R.M.s to better reflect the current administrative efforts and operational costs involved in delivering these services. Carried

Jensen: That we approve the Council's Indemnity as presented. Carried

Lockhart: That we now adjourn at 2:25 p.m.

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The rise of the local farm stand

By **BEVRA FEE**
Spiritwood Herald
Reporter

The term “Farm Fresh” rolls off every marketing campaign of a savvy farmer, adorns kitchen decor, and is even a paint colour for one of the popular paint brands in your hardware store.

Evoking the feeling of food being picked and delivered without intervention, the slogan draws up memories of visiting grandma’s farm for a wholesome meal where everything was grown or gathered by someone you trust without question.

Consumer preferences for farm-fresh goods and locally grown produce, along with modern technological advances and distancing practices that evolved as a result of a global pandemic, have given rise to the increase in farm-direct sales.

Data from the 2021 Census of Agriculture show that both the number and the proportion of farms reporting direct sales have increased over the 2016 date. But the predominant methods used by farms to sell products directly to consumers have also changed.

Responding to the growing consumer demand for farm-fresh goods over grocery store produce, Canada’s farms have also evolved. Every province and territory except Nunavut reported farm-direct sales as of the last reported census.

On-site stands proved to be the most frequently reported direct sales method, with 8.2 per cent of all farms in Canada reporting having a stand.

Locally, farm stands fulfill the consumer demand throughout the countryside. Dotting the landscape near Leoville, Meeting Lake, Spiritwood and Shell Lake, the farm stands compliment the weekly Farmers Markets and market gardens already in the area.

Windmill Stock Farm Stand placed their stand at the crest of a hill to one side of a rural junction along the busy road to Echo Bay and Misty Bay on Big Shell Lake. With a retro farm cart serving as their stand, the side-bar to a weekend getaway proves to be worth the pause.

“Our most popular items have been the sourdough bread and the ‘Char’s Pickle Dip’. However, when fall arrives, we will sell 80 to 100 pumpkins in one afternoon!” notes Jill Cronin, owner of Windmill.

What started in 2022 has matured into a larger undertaking, with a corn maze added to the property — but with a charitable fundraising component.

While visitors to the corn maze can enjoy the fun of winding their way through the crop (which is later feed for the cattle) on weekends preceding the witching season, the Northern Spirit 4-H Club haunts the maze near Halloween to raise money for their club.

According to their poster, “Although the corn is for cows, giving the Club a purposeful fundraising opportunity is the main goal.”

In its second year, the corn maze has grown from two acres last year

to four acres this year. “The average time for an adult to go through for the first time is roughly 23 minutes, unless they get stuck in the spiral.” (I will leave that to someone else to unpack.)

Many of the local farm stands offer a guest book and all are operated on the honour system. With a cash box and instructions for e-transfer placed at the site, consumer convenience means more sales volume.

With curb-side pickup being a common practice in 2026, many shoppers appreciate the ability to place an order through social media and send payment electronically.

Before hitting the road — or on the way — consumers typically check their favourite Farm Stand’s Facebook page to see what the weekly offerings are and to interact with the seller to find out if they have items in stock, i.e.: “I won’t be going by the stand until later this afternoon — can I still get eggs if they are sold out?”

Indeed, the global pandemic of 2020 changed the way consumers expect to access products as well as the way producers



The Windmill Stock Farm Stand cart sits on rural junction along the busy road to Echo Bay and Misty Bay on Big Shell Lake.

are able to market them.

In its first year of operation, the Prairie Grid Farm Stand — located off Highway 24 a few miles north of Spiritwood — is situated right on the farm yard of owner Tracy Jantz.

Offering the traditional eggs and baking, Prairie Grid also ventures into home decor, pottery, candles and floral arrangements.

The value-added products are made with the farm’s home-grown ingredients, including cold-

pressed canola oil. Leaning heavily on the floral component, Prairie Grid offers pricing by the stem as well as professionally crafted wedding bouquets.

Social interaction is incorporated into the season at Prairie Grid with an end of season gathering — the “Farm Stand at Dusk” soiree was held in late August to celebrate a successful season under the lights.

Offering iced coffee and cupcakes for purchase, the event was the result

of a social media survey on the Stand’s Facebook page. With their ideal location — nearly halfway between Spiritwood and Leoville, Prairie Grid offers delivery to both small towns at certain times when it coincides with their trips to town.

Grown & Gathered is also ideally located to accommodate the lake traffic in summer.

Situated at Meeting Lake just before entering several of the lake’s subdivisions, Grown & Gathered is in its second year of selling largely produce and value-added items such as pickles, jams and jellies.

With an apparent specialty in the sourdough vein, this farm stand has quickly built up a repeat clientele.

“I like trying all the new treats they offer, but I am currently obsessed with the sourdough cinnamon peach donuts!” offered one farm stand devotee.

Encapsulating all of Statistics Canada’s findings into a common-sense rationale, the devotee adds: “I choose local farm stands because they make it easy to find fresh, delicious, locally-sourced goods close to home or the lake. Knowing I am supporting a neighbour do something they enjoy is also rewarding. Nothing beats homemade!”



Kiara Duhaime stands amongst the tall corn in Windmill Stock Farm Stand’s corn maze.

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Keeping your crops market-ready

By **REBECCA HORT**
Ministry of Agriculture

Harvest is ongoing and there are many things to keep in mind to ensure your grain can be sold into any market. Before applying pre-harvest pesticides always check the label and be aware of any restrictions that may impact the marketability of your grain.

When spraying harvest aids close to the end of the growing season, be mindful of pre-harvest intervals (PHIs). The PHI is the minimum amount of time that must be left from when the herbicide is applied to when the crop is cut by swathing or straight-cut combining. If the proper time has not passed between application and cutting, residues may be left on the seed and the grain may not be accepted by grain buyers. PHIs are variable between specific products, ranging from several days to over 60 days. This timeframe allows for the active pesticide ingredients to break down, with the more time that has passed, resulting in less residue remaining. Check out the Pre-Harvest Interval Calculator Tool on the Keep it Clean website to find out how many days you need to wait between application and harvest.

Marketability of the crop can be at risk when not following the PHI of a product. Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs) are determined for pesticides based on using the registered rate at the correct crop stage. By applying a pesticide product at the incorrect maturity stage, the grain may acquire pesticide residues above



the MRL set by regulatory agencies. Application should occur when the crop is physiologically mature. If a pre-harvest aid is applied to a crop that is too green, the seed can then take up the product, resulting in high pesticide residues in the grain and limited marketing options. Pre-harvest products need to be applied at less than 30 per cent seed moisture content throughout the whole field.

When applying glyphosate pre-harvest, remember that it is not a desiccant and should only be used for weed control. If saving the grain for seed, glyphosate should not be applied pre-harvest as it may decrease the germination rate. When tank mixing products, such as glyphosate for pre-harvest weed control and Saflufenacil (Heat), the PHI must follow the most restrictive product label.

Review the Product Advisory for market risks based on crop protection products to ensure your crop is acceptable for domestic and export markets. The five tips for keeping your crops ready for the market are:

1. Use acceptable pesticides only – Only applying pesticides registered for crop use in Canada and acceptable for domestic and export markets, will help minimize trade concerns when marketing your grain.
2. Always read and follow the label – Follow the correct application rate, timing of application and PHI of the specific product you are using.
3. Manage disease pressures – Following an integrated disease management plan will help you protect your crop from disease and ensure your grain will meet the requirements of export markets.
4. Store crops properly – If not stored properly, the crop quality can decrease or the grain can contain harmful contaminants, both affecting market risk.
5. Deliver what you declare – When delivering grain to a licensed grain company, a declaration must be filled out confirming the variety of grain being sold. Certain grain buyers may also ask you to sign that specific crop protection products were not used.

For more information on PHIs, marketability and tools and resources, visit the Keep it Clean website. To connect with a local crops extension specialist, contact the Agriculture Knowledge Centre at 1-866-457-2377.

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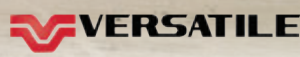
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Follow farm safety guidelines

Agriculture is routinely ranked among the most dangerous professions around the world. Both the National Safety Council and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health say agriculture is one of the most hazardous industries in the United States. In Canada, farmers are five times more likely to die from work-related injuries than workers in all other industries. According to the Canadian Agricultural Injury Reporting program, agriculture-related incidents kill an average of 70 to 110 people each year.

Farming operations continue to push forward with more mechanized and high-tech equipment that requires routine reviews of safety protocols. Ensuring safe working conditions is vital within the agricultural sector. These guidelines can set the course for safer farming work.

- Rollover Protective

Structure (ROPS): The most effective lifesaver on a farm is ROPS. When combined with seatbelt use, ROPS is 99 percent effective in preventing death during a tractor overturn. ROPS are roll bars or roll cages fitted for wheel- and track-type tractors, says Penn State Extension. Modern guidelines indicate that all machinery should be fitted with updated guarding to prevent entanglement accidents, which are often caused by Power Take-Off shafts.

- Respiratory protection: Grain bins and silos can pose significant risks on a farm. This includes toxic air exposure as well as the risk for engulfment. High-profile incidents in 2023 illustrated the threat that oxygen-limiting silos can pose after deadly carbon dioxide concentrations form. Risk of suffocation also is great in a grain bin if a person is engulfed by grain. Workers should never work in a bin

alone and should utilize a lockout/tagout system to ensure that all augers are off before entry.

- Chemicals and biological hazards: High-potency pesticides and fertilizers create their own hazards on the farm. Personal protective equipment (PPE) is a must when working with chemicals. Most modern standards require proper ventilation, chemical-resistant gloves and dedicated eye protection to prevent acute poisoning and long-term health issues.

- Hearing protection: Exposure to the sounds of farm machinery and other equipment can



result in tinnitus (ringing in the ears) and eventual hearing loss unless hearing protection is worn regularly.

- Fatigue and mental health: Mental and physical fatigue of farm workers can result in injury as well. A critical trend uncovered in recent agricultural safety research ultimately led researchers to conclude

factor for farmers. Environmental factors such as drought, floods, wildfires, pests, and diseases, as well as long hours and financial concerns, can result in feelings of isolation and frustration. Stress is a known precursor to physical accidents on the farm.

These are just some of the risk factors on farms that can lead to accident or injury. Falls from ladders, injuries from livestock, exposure to UV rays, and exposure to high levels of dust, mold and bacteria also can affect modern farmers. Agricultural safety needs to evolve as quickly as the changing operations on farms.

that “fatigue management” needs to be prioritized, according to the United States Department of Agriculture. Tired operators can be vulnerable to lapse-of-attention errors, so farmers are encouraged to implement scheduled breaks.

The Rural Health Information Hub says that stress also is a big

Police issue warning about stolen RCMP equipment

By JORDAN TWISS

Shellbrook Chronicle Reporter

The Saskatchewan RCMP is advising the public to be aware of individuals who may be impersonating police officers, following the theft of an RCMP officer's equipment from a hotel in Prince Albert in the early morning hours of Sept. 2.

According to the RCMP, the officer had been staying at the hotel as part of their policing duties.

Investigation has determined that four people — three males and one female — broke into the room at the hotel, which is on 38th Street West. The room was not occupied at the time, the theft was recognized as soon as the officer returned to

it, and the office promptly notified the Prince Albert Police Service.

Police say an RCMP service pistol, three pistol magazines, two carbine magazines, a baton, pepper spray, a grey RCMP shirt with RCMP patches on the shoulders, as well as some of the officer's personal effects were among the items stolen.

A conducted energy device, and a police duty jacket, vest, body-worn camera, and radio were also stolen, but recovered later after a ground search around the area of the hotel.

One adult male was arrested later in the morning in Prince Albert. Another male suspect was arrested at a Prince Albert residence the following day, and much of the stolen equipment was recovered.

The Prince Albert Police Service and Saskatchewan RCMP continue to investigate. Both the Prince Albert Police Service and Saskatchewan RCMP say they will continue working to locate the service pistol and some of the magazines.

Initial review of the incident indicates the officer stored their equipment securely. The suspects broke into a secure location illegally and stole the equipment. The pistol, conducted energy weapon, cartridges, baton, and spray were in a locked box.

“We understand the concern when unauthorized individuals possess police clothing and equipment. If you ever are in a situation where you are unsure if someone is actually a police officer, you may request to see their badge and ID card,” the Saskatchewan RCMP advises.

“Both the badge and card will show the same regimental number and the ID card will have a photo of the officer. If you have further concerns, when it is safe to do so, call 310-RCMP or 9-1-1 to verify the identify of the officer or individual involved.”

It is illegal to impersonate a police officer.

If you notice anything else concerning, or if anything seems “off” during an encounter with police, call your local police service or Crime Stoppers.

If you have any information about this theft or know of anyone in possession of police equipment they shouldn't have, call the Prince Albert Police Service at 306-953-4222. Information can also be submitted anonymously by contacting Saskatchewan Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS (8477) or www.saskcrimestoppers.com.

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The importance of soil health measurements

By **JACQUELINE DRIESCHNER**

Ministry of Agriculture

Soil health, also known as soil quality, describes how well soil can perform its many functions, including supporting plant growth, providing clean air and water, sustaining wildlife and contributing to productive agricultural landscapes. This definition recognizes that soil is more than a material that holds plants in place, it is a complex ecosystem containing minerals, organic matter, water, air and billions of microorganisms. These microorganisms cycle nutrients by breaking down organic matter and forming beneficial relationships with plants that support growth.

For Saskatchewan agricultural producers, soil health has practical and economic value. Healthy soils provide several benefits that support long-term productivity, including:

- Improving water filtration and storage, helping crops withstand excess or deficient moisture conditions;
- Reducing the risk of erosion by wind or water;
- Cycling nutrients more efficiently; and
- Improving resiliency to variable weather conditions, helping stabilize yields.

While the concept of soil health is widely accepted, measuring it re-



mains a challenge. Producers often ask a simple question: what does soil health mean for my farm? They want information that is connected to productivity, profitability and management decisions.

Most producers are familiar with traditional soil tests that measure nutrient levels and physical properties, such as pH and texture. These tests often lead directly to management recommendations. For example, if a soil nutrient test shows low phosphorus levels, fertilizer can be applied to help achieve yield goals. In contrast, new biological soil tests measure microbial abundance and activity, but the results can be more difficult to interpret and apply to an on-farm management decision.

This is why it is recommended to use these biological soil tests to benchmark a field or site's soil health score before and after the implementation of a management practice. Benchmarking could help evaluate how management practices such as reduced tillage, residue retention, diverse crop rotations, cover cropping, livestock integration and targeted fertility management influence soil health over time. This information could help producers better understand how management decisions affect soil performance and productivity.

One challenge with soil health test results is that they can vary depending on environmental conditions, sampling methods, laboratory pro-

cedures and the testing laboratory itself. For this reason, producers, researchers and industry specialists are calling for greater standardization of soil health testing and reporting. Until standardized soil health testing between labs is available, it is recommended to use the same soil testing lab for consistent measurements, allowing producers to benchmark their soils and track changes over time.

It is also important to evaluate soil health within the context of a soil's inherent characteristics, including soil order, soil texture, climate and landscape position. For example, loamy grassland soil in southern Saskatchewan should not be expected to have the same soil health characteristics of sandy forested soil in northern Saskatchewan. Soil health assessments must account for these natural differences.

Ultimately, soil health is about maintaining the long-term capacity of soil to support productive, profitable and sustainable agriculture. By measuring and managing soil health more consistently, producers can make informed management decisions while protecting one of their most valuable resources for future generations.

Contact the Agriculture Knowledge Centre at 1-866-457-2377 to speak to your local extension specialist about beneficial management practices that can improve soil health and quality.





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How AI is transforming agriculture

Technology has revolutionized global agriculture. Automation has changed the agricultural sector, and those changes might have arrived in the nick of time.

The global population is projected to reach nearly 10 billion by 2050, and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations estimates that food production has to increase by at least 70 percent to keep up with demand. In order to address the deficit without exhausting the Earth's finite resources, many farmers are seeking help from artificial intelligence (AI). AI offers farmers additional perks as well.

Precision agriculture

Precision is a notable benefit of utilizing AI within the agricultural sector. By using AI-powered sensors and satellite imagery, farmers can monitor crop health by looking at each and every plant instead of inspecting by the acre. According to a report by MarketsandMarkets, a revenue



impact and marketing consulting firm, the market for AI in agriculture is expected to grow from \$1.7 billion (the figure in 2023) to \$4.7 billion by 2028.

Precision helps to keep plants strong and weed-free. AI-driven “see-and-spray” technology utilizes computers to identify weeds among crops and apply herbicides only to those weeds. This re-

duces blanket-spraying an entire field, which is a waste of resources. Research published in the Journal of Agriculture and Food Chemistry indicates that this AI-guided tool can reduce herbicide use by up to 90 percent. This reduces costs to farmers and benefits local ecosystems.

Risk management

Weather across the planet has featured an uptick in volatile, un-

anticipated conditions. This can make planting even more challenging for farmers. AI models can process decades of historical weather data, soil conditions and atmospheric changes to offer predictive analytics that help the agriculture industry.

By using predictive AI tools, farmers can determine optimal planting windows to maximize yield, according to the Inter-

national Food Policy Research Institute. In addition, AI algorithms can predict outbreaks of pests and diseases before farmers notice them on their own. Multispectral imagery from drones can detect crop stress caused by nutritional deficiencies or fungus days before a human might recognize such indicators.

By catching things early, farmers can reduce risk of a poor crop

and financial losses.

Automation

Agricultural labor shortages are forcing farming operations to seek alternatives to get the job done. The American Farm Bureau Federation notes that farm labor has become more expensive and it's harder to find workers who want to do the arduous tasks often required of them.

In Canada, the Canadian Agricultural Human Resources Council reported 28,200 unfilled agriculture jobs in 2022. The organization says this resulted in \$3.5 billion in lost sales.

AI-driven robotics and autonomous tractors guided by GPS can help fill the void. These devices can work through the night, preparing soil, harvesting crops and performing other vital tasks.

AI continues to be integrated into the agricultural sector. In order to maintain food security and mitigate labor shortages, farming operations are using technological tools to bridge gaps and improve efficiency.

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Sask. looks to boost early literacy

By **MINISTRY OF
EDUCATION**
Submitted

Helping students build strong foundational reading skills begins with understanding their early learning needs. This September, the Government of Saskatchewan will

be providing provincial reading screeners for Kindergarten to Grade 3 students. The screeners are part of its Actions to Improve Early Literacy initiative and will help teachers identify students who may need additional help with foundational reading skills.

“Strong reading skills open doors for students throughout their education and beyond,” Education Minister Everett Hindley said. “By providing provincial reading screeners and expanding supports for teachers, we are ensuring Saskatchewan's youngest learners receive the high-quality literacy instruction they need to become confident readers.”

Provincial reading screeners are brief, evidence-based assessments aligned with Saskatchewan curricula and developed by internationally recognized literacy experts. Students from Kindergarten to Grade 3 will participate in reading screening, ensuring educators are able to identify students who might need additional supports and respond quickly to provide targeted supports when they can have the greatest impact.

The Actions to Im-

prove Early Literacy initiative includes curriculum renewal, professional learning opportunities for teachers, reading screeners and intervention supports. These coordinated efforts will enhance classroom literacy practices and ensure students receive timely, targeted interventions. To support implementation, the Ministry of Education is providing resources such as instructional videos for educators for each provincial screener and intervention materials in English and French for students who require additional support.

The Government of Saskatchewan remains committed to ensuring every child has the opportunity to become a skilled and confident reader through evidence-based literacy instruction and early intervention. More information is available at saskatchewan.ca/earlyliteracy.

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Beware blister beetles in your hay stands

By **RIKKI WILSON**
Ministry of Agriculture

As haying season has become delayed in many parts of the province due to weather constraints, ministry extension specialists are hearing reports of blister beetle populations in the Swift Current, Moose Jaw and Humboldt regions. These regional sightings of blister beetles have prompted a reminder for producers across the province to increase field monitoring for blister beetle activity during hay harvest.

What are blister beetles?

There are upwards of 20 species of blister beetle common to Saskatchewan, many of which can be toxic to livestock if consumed in sufficient quantity. Blister beetles are 1 to 2.5 cm in length and contain a toxin called cantharidin; a chemical irritant that can blister internal and external body tissues. Certain species carrying greater toxin concentration than others.

Blister beetles are most commonly found on alfalfa plants, particularly on blossoms, and typically appear when hay stands are greater than 20 per cent bloom. Because haying season has been delayed by weather in many areas, the amount of blooms has increased, attracting blister beetles.

While ruminant livestock are less affected by cantharidin, in high enough concentrations, this toxin can be fatal in rare instances. Extra care should be taken to avoid feeding any level of blister beetle contaminated hay to horses, as they are highly sensitive to cantharidin. The amount of toxin required to kill a horse is 0.5 to 1 mg per kg of body weight; as few as



Nuttall's blister beetle.

4 to 6 grams of dried beetles may be fatal to a horse.

The amount required to result in fatality for ruminant livestock has not been well-established, as cases of poisoning are less common. Symptoms of cantharidin toxicosis include abdominal pain, frequent urination attempts, straining, loss of appetite, keeping the muzzle submerged in water, shock, circulatory collapse and, in some cases, death.

Where are we seeing populations?

Blister beetles are found most often in alfalfa during the flowering stage (greater than 20 per cent bloom), consuming both flower and leaf material. Populations tend to concentrate in the southern half of the province and move as far north as Saskatoon and Humboldt. While blister beetles are not typically found further north than these areas, it is possible to see

them further north in lesser concentrations, particularly as populations adapt to new climates.

Epicauta spp. blister beetles may be more likely to be present in areas where large grasshopper populations were observed during the previous year, as their young larvae feed on grasshopper eggs. Nuttall's blister beetle larvae feed on solitary bee larvae.

During the 2026 growing season, ministry extension specialists have heard reports of blister beetle populations in southern Saskatchewan and the Humboldt region. However, care should be taken in all areas to monitor for blister beetle activity, given their ability to thrive under many climates and conditions.

Tips for harvest and reducing risk

While chemical control options do exist, they are

largely cost-prohibitive and can have other unintended consequences. One such consequence may be increased grasshopper populations, as blister beetle larvae feed on grasshopper eggs. Another unintended consequence, if spraying later in the season, is killing of blister beetles in the hay stand, where they then die and are incorporated directly into bales. Blister beetles do not secrete cantharidin toxin unless killed and crushed, and toxin does not dissipate over short time periods.

Management strategies typically involve taking action to reduce toxin risk at the time of haying and include the following:

Delay the cutting of hay

- Blister beetles will migrate as they run out of food (blossoms and leaves).
- In instances where populations are high, it may

be worth sacrificing hay quality in favour of reduced toxin load.

Cut hay earlier

- If hay quality is preferred over quantity, cutting before alfalfa reaches 20 per cent bloom may be effective as forage has been removed before high beetle populations move in.

Avoid the use of crimpers, rollers or conditioners when cutting hay

- This allows most beetles to pass through the swather without being crushed, and given the opportunity to exit, the swath three to six hours following cutting without releasing toxin.
- A self-propelled swather without conditioners may be required to avoid the crushing of blister beetles.
- Cut hay with a sickle bar or rotary mower.
- The use of pull-type swathers or discbines are inadvisable, as swaths or standing hay may be ran-over, resulting in the crushing of blister beetles.
- Note that unconditioned hay will take longer to dry in the swath. The use of a tedder or swath turner may be advisable to move the swath once beetles have moved on to speed the drying process.

If machinery options are limited, take precautions to limit or reduce the number of blister beetles that will be crushed during cutting

- Open crimpers, rollers and conditioners to the widest setting.
- Avoid driving on swaths as much as possible.

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Sask., Feds unveil AgriStability changes

By **MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE**
Submitted

Federal Agriculture and Agri-Food Minister Heath MacDonald and Saskatchewan Agriculture Minister David Marit have announced changes to the 2026 AgriStability Program to support producers impacted by excess moisture and localized flooding.

“Farmers work hard to prepare for growing seasons, but extreme weather can quickly change realities on the ground,” MacDonald said. “That is why we are committed to supporting producers through our Business Risk Management programs to help with the adaptable support they need to navigate unpredictability and protect their farms.”

“Excess moisture and flooding created challenging conditions for many Saskatchewan producers early in the growing season,” Marit said. “Saskatchewan producers are resilient and our Business Risk Management programs are designed to help them manage uncertainty. These changes provide additional flexibility to help producers make decisions that best support their operations.”

Late participation for the 2026 AgriStability Program year is now available for Saskatchewan producers. Producers who did not enrol by the April 30 deadline can still participate in the pro-

gram with a reduced benefit. Producers who wish to participate through late participation must join by Oct. 1, 2026.

Additionally, the interim payment rate for Saskatchewan producers is increasing from 50 per cent to 75 per cent of the estimated final benefit. The AgriStability interim payment can help producers’ cash flow by providing them with an advance on their final AgriStability benefit to help support production losses and/or increased costs.

“Saskatchewan producers are managing circumstances beyond their control, and timely, responsive business-risk-management programs are essential,” SARM President Bill Huber said. “These measures are a positive step that recognizes the real impacts of wet conditions on farm operations. SARM looks forward to continued work with federal and provincial governments to build greater flexibility and meaningful improvements into AgriStability and other risk-management programs so they can respond sooner and more effectively to the diverse and evolving risks facing producers.”

AgriStability support can help offset the impacts of excess moisture and localized flooding. The AgriStability Program uses margins to determine if producers are eligible for benefit payments. AgriStability takes into account the change in in-

ventory from one year to the next.

- Any grain or feed inventory loss is factored into the margin calculation, reducing the program year margin, which improves the potential for a program benefit.
- For livestock, any animals lost due to flooding will impact the inventory on the farm as well as the revenues for the operation. These reductions will be reflected in the AgriStability margin calculation. In addition, if producers have to purchase alternative feed due to flooding on pastures, those expenses are allowable under the AgriStability Program.
- Land too wet to seed or land that was seeded and then flooded will also be captured by the AgriStability Program. In both situations, AgriStability will account for the lost production on the farm and will capture those losses in the margin calculation.

For more information, producers can contact the Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation (SCIC) at 1-866-270-8450 or visit scic.ca.

AgriStability protects Canadian producers against large declines in farming income for reasons such as production loss, increased costs and market conditions. It is one of the Business Risk Management programs under the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership.

Recycled fertilizers could be key to sustainable ag

By **VICTORIA SCHRAMM**
Canadian
Light Source

Researchers have uncovered new insights into how phosphorus from recycled materials moves through soil—offering guidance to support more sustainable fertilizer use.

Phosphorus is an essential nutrient for plant growth, yet many soils lack enough of it

to support strong crop yields. Farmers often rely on fertilizers made from mined phosphorus, a limited, non-renewable resource.

As global agriculture shifts toward more sustainable practices, researchers are exploring alternative fertilizer recipes made from waste materials. These “recycled” ingredients include sewage sludge (leftover solids from water treatment), sew-

age sludge ash (from when those leftovers are burned), and meat and bone meal (bones and tissues that are not consumed).

In a recently published study, researchers from Denmark, Brazil, Germany, Lithuania, and Switzerland used the Canadian Light Source (CLS) at the University of Saskatchewan to examine how phosphorus from these recycled fertilizers behaves in different soils over time. The goal was to better understand when and where this phosphorus becomes available to plants—critical information for improving its effectiveness in agricultural settings.

The researchers used the CLS to identify the chemical forms and precise amounts of phosphorus present in both the fertilizers and soils.

“Phosphorus is one of the most difficult elements in the soil to analyze in a conven-

tional lab,” says Aimée Schryer, lead author of the study and postdoctoral researcher at the University of Copenhagen. “It’s hard to make reliable conclusions or recommendations that you can use in the field based on those results; it’s more of a guess.”

“That’s why using the synchrotron was so helpful. It allowed us to discover exactly what’s within our soils and within these recycled fertilizers so that we’re much more confident with our conclusions.”

The team found recycled phosphorus behaves differently than conventional mineral fertilizers. While mineral phosphorus typically becomes less available over time, some recycled sources—particularly those derived from sewage sludge—became more available with time and moved further through the soil as time passed.

Having the recycled fertilizer move further through the soil is a

significant advantage over mined fertilizer, which normally stays put, explains Schryer. More movement can make the fertilizer easier for the plants to access.

The study also found that soil type plays a significant role. Certain combinations of soil and recycled fertilizer improved phosphorus movement and availability, while others limited it, even under favorable conditions.

Overall, the results show that a “one-size-fits-all” approach does not work when it comes to recycled fertilizers. Instead, farmers and researchers must consider both the type of soil and the timing of application to maximize effectiveness.

Using advanced tools at the CLS allowed the team to better understand the different forms of phosphorus present—information that is essential for making accurate predictions about how these fertilizers will perform.

This research represents an important step toward reducing reliance on mined fertilizers and advancing a more circular agricultural system, where waste materials are reused productively. Schryer says that, while field studies are an important next step, her team’s findings will help inform future research and the development of practical recommendations for farmers.

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Op-ed: Competition matters for prairie farmers

By **BILL PRYBYLSKI**
APAS President

The recent announcement that Cargill intends to acquire grain handling assets recently purchased by Parrish & Heimbecker has once again brought the issue of grain sector consolidation to the forefront. The transaction follows a series of major changes in Canada's grain industry, includ-

ing the Bunge-Viterra merger and P&H's acquisition of GrainsConnect. Together, these developments raise an important question: what does continued consolidation mean for Canadian farmers? For producers, competition is not an abstract economic concept. Competition determines where we deliver grain, how many bids are available, the services offered in our

communities, and ultimately, the prices we receive for our crops. APAS supports a competitive and efficient grain handling system. We recognize that investment in infrastructure, export capacity, and logistics is critical to maintaining Canada's position as a reliable supplier of agricultural products. Companies must be able to grow, invest, and compete globally. How-

ever, growth through consolidation warrants scrutiny when it has the potential to reduce producer choice. The Competition Bureau's recent review of grain industry transactions demonstrates why strong oversight matters. To ensure a fair, competitive, and transparent marketplace, we must strengthen competition oversight. There must be rigorous, independent oversight

by regulators to review grain industry transactions and ensure producers retain meaningful marketing options and bargaining power. This latest transaction also reinforces the importance of the federal government's ongoing examination of competition throughout Canada's food supply chain. The government should continue its examination of market power and value distribution across the entire food supply chain to address the concerning disconnect between commodity prices farmers receive and the prices consumers ultimately pay.

Competition also depends on transparency. Canadian grain farmers continue to operate at an information disadvantage compared to many of their international counterparts. While countries such as the United States publish timely export sales data, Canadian producers lack access to the information needed to fully understand global demand and market conditions. Canada needs to implement timely export sales reporting to increase transparency. This improvement would enhance price discovery, improve supply-chain planning, and provide farmers with valuable insights into market demand, helping them overcome their current information disadvantage.

Producers deserve a competitive domestic grain handling system that provides meaningful choice and fair market opportunities. Consolidation is not automatically good or bad. But every transaction deserves careful examination through the lens of its impact on farmers. A strong agricultural sector depends on ensuring producers remain active and protected participants in the marketplace dominated by international companies.

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