As this is our last Potato Minute for the year, this is the time where we all need to look back and reflect on all of the blessings that our Industry has received over the last year. The potato industry in Alberta had one of their best years on record with many of our Growers experiencing excellent yields and quality. Everyone’s storages are full and everyone is looking forward to 2016.

Two weeks ago we wrapped up another very successful conference and trade show. Every year we strive to provide our Growers, their families and Industry with three days of information, networking and also an opportunity to celebrate the accomplishments of the past year. By all accounts it was a great success and the bar has once again been raised for next year. Given the current economic times and political landscape that our province and the country is experiencing, the message that came from our keynote speaker, Mr. Bruce Vincent was spot on.

Our industry and agriculture in general is very quiet, unassuming and private by nature. Farmers go about their business, with their families by their side, on a daily basis doing what they love. Their pride is to feed the world in an economically viable, sustainable and safe environment, so that future generations will always have a safe supply of food. As Bruce Vincent explained, “if we do not stand up and get involved in telling our own story, by painting a positive picture, the rest of the world will paint us right off the canvas”. Our story is a proud one, based on safety, unity, sustainability, stewardship and family values, we just need to let the rest of the world know this.

Another highlight of this year’s conference and trade show was the celebration of the APIA’s (Alberta Potato Industry Association) 25th anniversary. Who would have ever imagined that the dreams and vision of those original members would be celebrated in such a manner? There are very few, if any, individual member organizations in existence that work so closely with a Grower organization. The PGA family is truly thankful for this relationship and looks forward to the next 25 years.

A heartfelt thank you goes out to all of our Industry sponsors that, year after year, so generously help sponsor such a great event. We could not begin to put on such a first class event without your help. This year we had guests from many different provinces and states and they were all very impressed with the quality and unique comradery that we have here in Alberta. THANK YOU TO ALL.

The PGA team is hosting our annual Christmas open house on Friday Dec 18th from 1-4 pm., everyone is invited to stop by and help celebrate the festive season. As Christmas will soon be with us, I would like to take a moment to personally extend, on behalf of my wife, family and myself a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all of our Members, their families and the entire Potato Industry.

Best wishes.

Until next month,
Terence
Thank you to our Attendees & Sponsors of the 2015 Alberta Potato Conference & Trade Show in Red Deer on November 17th - 19th

The theme of this year’s conference can be summed up with one word…unity. From the focus of the write ups in the annual report, to the business meeting discussions, to the messages from the speakers, the importance of staying united as a group is a necessary ingredient to keeping the Alberta Potato Industry sustainable and growing.

The APIA Trade Show had 50 exhibitors, but besides the business talks, the event also proved to be fun-filled, with great food and friendships being renewed. This was also a milestone event for the APIA who showcased their 25th anniversary as an organization with a video tribute at the banquet, where founding member were honored and a dance to celebrate followed.

Already the PGA Staff is busy preparing for our milestone next year, as we celebrate our 50th Anniversary in Banff.

The Potato Growers of Alberta would like to thank our many generous sponsors for their support of the 2015 Potato Conference and Trade Show

Outgoing PGA Chairman Laus Stiekema opens the conference with welcoming remarks. The number of Licensed PGA Growers attending this year was up compared to last year’s event.

Dave McLean of APIA, serves up a mashed-tini at the Welcome Reception.

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Platinum Sponsors

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Black Label Zn

Silver Sponsor

Bronze Sponsor
Congratulation to Ed Vandenberg who was elected for a three year term as the Director-at-Large at the Annual General Meeting held on November 19th. Ed was also elected as the Chairman of the Board in a separate PGA Board of Directors meeting held that same day. Also, welcome to Russell Van Boom, North Area Director elected at the North Area Meeting in October.

2015-16 PGA Board of Directors
Ed Vandenberg - Sun Vista Farms Ltd., Enchant (Chairman)
Jake Schutter - 3D Farms J.V., Bow Island (Vice-Chairman)
Chris Perry - Perry Produce Ltd., Coaldale
Louis Ypma - SLM Spud Farms Ltd., Taber
Alberta Ypma - A & A Seed Farms Ltd., Lacombe
Michel Camps - CP Farms Ltd., Barnwell
Russell Van Boom - Northbank Potato Farms Ltd., Sturgeon County

A BIG Thank You to HOOGLAND FARMS for providing the stage back drop again at this year's Alberta Potato Conference & Trade Show.
“Celebrating the work of our Hands”

Submitted by: Cindy Fletcher

Right on the heels of our Potato Conference was the fourth annual Chops and Crops reception. It was held on November 23rd at the Matrix hotel in Edmonton and is strategically planned, after harvest, while the house is in session, and just blocks away from the provincial legislature. The goal is to connect government, and industry in an informal setting with one-on-one conversations, while sampling appetizers featuring high quality ingredients produced by the commodity groups involved.

We recognize that that many of the issues and concerns of individual commodity groups are shared throughout Alberta’s entire agriculture industry and the collaboration of groups to form this reception gives one clear voice to the government on our challenges. The event gives us an opportunity to showcases the importance of agriculture in Alberta’s Economy. For instance, in 2014, over 60,600 Albertans were employed through primary agriculture and more than $3.9 billion in GDP was contributed to the provincial economy.

This year we decided to hold an “all party reception” where in the past we had just invited members of the political party in power. This was done for several reasons, one, to give future Chops and Crops receptions familiarity and priority by governing officials, and two; to allow producers to connect with their MLA regardless of the party they represent. Invitees included board members, and producers from eight different boards and commissions, and members of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta (MLA’s) as well as select public servants and industry partners who are significant to our groups. Representatives from the PGA included; our new Board Chairman Ed Vandenberg, Board Members Louis Ypina and Russ Van Boom, Seed Committee members Jan Vermue and Jake Hoogland, the Prairie Representative for the Canadian Horticultural Society Ernie Van Boom, our Executive Director Terence Hochstein, and myself.

Welcoming remarks were made by Lee Markert, Chairman of the Alberta Canola Producers, while Darcy Fitzgerald introduced the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry. Oneil Carlier was unable to attend as he was on a trade mission to Japan at the time. Lori Sigurdson, the Minister of Innovation and Advanced Education, Jobs, Skills, Training and Labor brought greetings from the government of Alberta. In total 19 MLA’s and 3 Ministers attended that evening. The unfortunate death of Conservative MLA Manmeet Bhullar earlier that same day likely had an effect on attendance.
Greetings,

It is official, my first Alberta Potato Conference & Trade Show is in the rear-view mirror. Well, that’s not technically true, it wasn’t my first. My wife and I were welcomed warmly at last year’s AGM, but only as “attendees” for part of the event.

This year, I had a behind the scenes look at what goes into preparing for the conference. What a huge undertaking. Plans really do start a year in advance of the conference. And in the case of the 50th anniversary celebration, almost 2 years in advance! A lot of time and effort goes into organizing this event, but the PGA staff are up to the challenge!

So what did I learn from this year’s AGM in Red Deer? It’s hard to put into only a few sentences what was gained by attending this year. However, I will make the attempt. From what I saw, the potato industry in Alberta is thriving. In some cases there are still three generations on the farm, with varying levels of involvement. That speaks volumes about our growers’ commitment to this industry. I also observed that now, maybe more than ever before, there needs to be a united front as we face what is coming in years to come. Such things as rising costs, developing world markets, and concerns about food and farm safety are at the forefront of issues that need our attention.

In years to come, it will be important for the potato industry in Alberta to tell our story, which is a good story. Alberta’s potato industry has a rich history and one that is worth sharing.

And congratulations to the APIA on 25 years!

Jay Anderson ~ PGA Project Manager

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**SEED COORDINATOR’S REPORT**

**Annual General Meeting**
**Red Deer, November 17th**

The annual Business Meeting of the Seed Potato Growers was held on November 17th in Red Deer. The Seed Growers Committee members are: Jeff Ekkel, Chair, Lacombe, Tony Kirkland, Spruce Grove, Gord Visser, Edmonton, Bruce Chedzoy, Gibbons, Jake Hoogland, Millet, Jan Vermue, Stony Plain, Peter Kamper, Lethbridge and Ben Meyer, Rolling Hills. Updates were provided for the Canadian Horticultural Council, CFIA and provincial data.

Two presentations were made following the business meeting. Andre Gagnon, Progest, Quebec, talked to growers regarding the new Private Breeders Network in Canada and how industry and the Network can work together. Don Reiter, AAFC, Edmonton, discussed Export Markets and how to develop them.

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Jay introduces Dr. Michele Konschuh to speak at the Research meeting at this year's Alberta Potato Conference & Trade Show

Deb Hart ~ PGA Seed Coordinator

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**Potato Expo**

The PGA will have a booth at Potato Expo again this year, to promote our industry. If you are planning to attend the 2016 conference in early January, and could help out by spending an hour in the booth, please let me know. Thanks for your help with this and hope to hear from you!

**Thank You!**

A huge thanks to Stefan Haenni, Haenni Farms, Melle Kager, Hoogland Farms, Jan Vermue and Tom Janssen, West Edmonton Seed Potatoes and Tina Lewis, AAF, CDCN, for their help with processing the Western Canada samples for the grow out. It takes many hands to get the samples ready for shipment and with help from these growers and especially Tina for the work she does, it makes the job much easier!

Deb Hart ~ PGA Seed Coordinator
The History and Cookbook Committee met at the Potato Conference to discuss the “need to do” list to get this project on the roll, in order to have it ready for the 2016 Potato Conference in Banff. What we need first is your information, and we encourage our Growers to begin writing their story for the book. The template below was created by the committee, and it gives you the details of what we need from you by March, 2016. We will be reminding you by email, Friday Facts, and the Potato Minute...so there will be no excuses! We hope to have everyone’s participation so this will make for a unique memorabilia.

Farm Name Here with Established Date

With the anniversary of the PGA coming up, we are assembling a History/Cookbook. We would like to see something from all the farms, past and present!

This is the template we will be using. It allows for you to include three to four pictures. Using more pictures would take away from your story space, which currently allows for 375 words. If you need more words to tell your story, you can use up to 500, but this will mean including only two to three pictures. We will start with your farm name and the year you started growing potatoes in Alberta. Some ideas to consider when writing your farm story are;

1) Where did your farming operation originate from?
2) Who started the potato production on your farm and how did that come about?
3) How many generations have been involved in the operation of the farm, and who do they include?
4) What sector (fresh, seed, process) did you start in and did that evolve to other sectors?
5) How has your farming operation changed over the years, such as number of acres you plant and the technology you use?
6) What was your most favorite planting year or your most memorable crop?
7) Has anything ever happened on your farm that you will never forget?
8) What you wish you would have known back then?
9) What words you would use to describe being an Alberta Potato Farmer?
10) Do you have any special memories of the PGA or its Members?
11) What events (provincial, national, international) may have effected your potato operation?

This publication will be unlike any other commodity group has done, as the second part of the book will contain a collection of our Grower’s favourite POTATO recipes! We would provide a link to the recipe on the page with your history, and a link to your history on the page with your recipe.

This recipe should be your own, or could be out of another cook book, BUT with your alterations. If you are using a recipe from a book, please reference the name and author.

If you have two favourite recipes and can’t choose, send them both in! In case of duplication, we could use your second choice!

DEADLINE FOR YOUR INFORMATION IS MARCH 15, 2016!

Please email your info to wendy@albertapotatoes.ca along with your pictures or send it all by mail and we will return the pictures to you.
Potato Growers of Alberta, 6008 46th Avenue, Taber, AB T1G 2B1
Please call 403-223-2262 if you have any questions, ask for Wendy or Cindy.
Manitoba Looks to Overtake P.E.I.

Manitoba is digging into Prince Edward Island’s lead as Canada’s potato king. Canada is growing more potatoes, and Manitoba is largely responsible for the increase, according to new numbers from Statistics Canada.

The agency reported Friday that potato production in the country is up 4.1 percent in 2015, with Manitoba alone accounting for (the largest) increase. “I think the potential is there for us to match P.E.I.’s total output,” said Dan Sawatzky, manager of the Keystone Potato Producers Association. He “would not rule out” Manitoba surpassing P.E.I in the future, he said.

In 2015, P.E.I. represented 23.7 percent of Canada’s total potato production. Manitoba was close on its heels at 20.6 per cent. Prince Edward Island prides itself on being Canada’s king of potatoes. The island is Canada’s largest potato producer and the industry is worth more than $1 billion to the province, according to the Prince Edward Island Potato Board. P.E.I.’s love affair with the crop goes so deep, one Islander recently proposed to his girlfriend using potatoes.

The recent surge in Manitoba’s potato production has to do with how much the primary potato processors—McCain’s, Simplot, and Cavendish Farms—contract out to farms. All three demanded fewer potatoes for 2013 and 2014 from Manitoba farms, but in 2015 all three demanded more.

Looking at the long-term trend, however, Sawatzky said, it’s clear Manitoba is doing its best to catch up to P.E.I. The industry has grown substantially in Manitoba over the past 20 years, he said.

“There was a major expansion in 1997 here with the McCain plant in Portage. Simplot built a new plant in 2003 ... McCain’s also purchased the Carberry plant from Nestlé Foods,” said Sawatzky. The potato industry in the East isn’t keeping up with that pace, he said. “Growth isn’t continuing as much or as strong [in] the East ... McCain’s closed [its] P.E.I. plant last year,” he said.

Canadian potato production is up overall in part because of the low exchange rate of Canadian dollar compared to the U.S. dollar, he added.

SOURCE: POTATO GROWER Magazine  Published online: Nov 23, 2015
SOURCE: CBC NEWS

CANADIAN POTATO PRODUCTION 2015

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Source: Statistics Canada Cansim Table 001 - 0014 (000cwt)  Nov 20.15
Storage Reports!

Hello there! I hope this message finds you well and that you all had a great summer and a bountiful harvest!

December 1st we started collecting storage data for the 2015 crop year, and this will continue on the first of each month until June.

Please remember that we just need the total tonnage you have in storage—broken down into market designations (Seed, Process, or Table/Fresh).

There are four ways you may submit your data;
1. You may go on line to submit your report http://66.18.255.162/pgareportengine/
2. You can reply with your information to my email,
3. You can call 24/7 to 403-223-2262 and leave me a voicemail with your tonnage on it.
4. Or you may text me at 403-634-1406

Thanks in advance for your co-operation, and if you need any help with this at all, please just give me a call.

I look forward to hearing from you,

Cindy Fletcher
Account Clerk & Promotions Coordinator

Attention all Growers

Below is the link to the government website for the survey in regards to the “hours of work” piece of legislation.

I would encourage everyone to fill it out and provide your comments.

If there are multiple people involved in your operation please have everyone fill out the survey.

We need to have our voice heard.

As well, a number of you have called to say that there is no room left at the town hall meetings.

Some of your Board members had the opportunity to discuss this with Minister Sigurdson on Monday evening and she assured us that the government would be adding more seats and meeting locations.

Please watch the Alberta Government website.

Any further questions please give me a call.

Thank you

Terence Hochstein
https://extranet.gov.ab.ca/opinio6/s?s=28168

While at the Crops and Chops Reception, Seed Committee Chairman Jan Vermue was interviewed by Caitlin Reeser from “Call of the Land”. If you missed the interview, which aired on November 25th, you may listen to it by following this link;
http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/newslett.nsf/all/cotl24485

December Dates to Remember

Open Monday to Friday
8:00 am to 4:30 pm

Closed for the Christmas Season
Starting Thursday Dec. 24th at
12:00 Noon

December 24th at 12:00 Noon

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