

The Potato Minute

December 11, 2020

PGA
POTATO GROWERS OF ALBERTA
Est. 1966

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT - Terence Hochstein

Normally at this time of year, we would be reflecting on this year's harvest, and all of the trials and tribulations of the past growing season. I would be providing a quick summary of the Annual Alberta Potato Conference and Tradeshow, and thanking all those that attended. Unfortunately, 2020 had a different plan for how the last 10 months played out.

Yes, we can all be thankful for the relatively productive growing season and a safe harvest, but it goes beyond that. As primary producers, or as we are now referred to as, an "essential service provider", agriculture has been one of the few bright spots in this entire COVID-19 pandemic. For the most part, we are all still employed and we get to continue to do what we all love to do; producing food to feed a hungry

world. For this, we can all be thankful, but unfortunately many in our country are no longer employed and are faced with a dire situation in front of them and their families.

As I write this article to close out 2020, my phone continues to ring with calls about how this whole pandemic is anywhere from "a bunch of bogus" to "this is real and it is affecting everything that we do". Some of you have lost loved ones or have family members and staff that have experienced various degrees of sickness from COVID. The level of acceptance differs with each individual, and regardless of your mindset, the choices we make moving forward, will affect everything we do on a daily basis.

Looking ahead, we are now starting to plan next year's Alberta Potato Conference and Tradeshow, November 22-24th, 2021, in Red Deer. It will be a whole new format and approach, so watch for details in the upcoming months.

As is customary after our AGM, albeit a virtual ZOOM call this year, I would like to formally introduce our new PGA Board for the upcoming year: Photo Top - Bottom, Russ Van Boom - Chairman, Tony Bos - Vice Chairman, Lyndon Nakamura, Jeff Ekkel, James Bareman, JP Claassen and Alison Davie.

I look forward to working with all of the Board members in the coming year. It takes a lot of time and effort to be an effective Board member. Everyone of these individuals has put aside their own personal interests to better serve their grower organization and its membership. Thank you for your dedication to the Potato Growers of Alberta.

As Christmas is just a couple weeks away, I would like to take this time to wish the PGA Team, the Growers and their families a Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year, on behalf of my wife Lynnette, my family and myself.

Until next month,

terence@albertapotatoes.ca
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SEED COORDINATOR UPDATE - Stacey Bajema



Finally, we are coming to the end of this tumultuous year for the seed industry. Although there is still some uncertainty, there is also some reasons for optimism as the end of this pandemic is in sight. We are happy to report that seed yields, overall in Alberta, were average, despite some regional differences. CFIA has reported that our accepted seed acres were up 4% from last year. When we compare ourselves to other regions of Canada and the US that experienced significant drought this year, Alberta is in a good position to meet the needs of our domestic and export seed markets. With the mild weather and healthy demand, some of our growers have been able to start moving product and we are cautiously hopeful as we move into 2021.

On November 17, 2020, the PGA held its annual Alberta Seed Business meeting virtually. There was a brief overview of the work we are doing with the CFIA on the Seed Regulations Modernization project, as well as changes made at CDCN and the new RDAR research program. Terence Hochstein gave a brief industry update and seed pricing was discussed by our Seed Chair. It was a brief meeting in anticipation for the virtual PGA AGM the following day. We are optimistic about resuming our regular format next year and having some great speakers for next years Seed Business meeting. The PGA seed committee also met twice this past month to review issues from this past year and make plans for the year ahead. These meetings were full of active discussion and I am grateful for the engaged representation we have on this committee!

The CPC Fall meeting and the Potato Association of America Certification meetings also took place virtually this month. Both of these meetings were very informative and allowed us to discuss regulatory and certification issues across Canada and the United States.

Finally, I just wanted to express my gratitude to Deb Hart. Deb will be finished at the end of this month as a fulltime PGA employee, however, she will still be consulting part-time on some projects and completing her National commitments. I am very grateful to have had this year of mentorship and collaboration. I know Deb is looking forward to having more time to spend with her family.

We are, once again working from home as CDCN has been reduced to essential operating staff only. However, please reach out to my cell if you need anything. Merry Christmas!

Pesticide Applicator Course in the North!

We have some interest in having a pesticide applicator course in the north. However, we need some more people to make it happen. If you have people on your north area farm that would be interested in this course when restrictions allow, please let Thomas or myself know ASAP.

Seed Directories

All Seed Directories have been mailed out, so all Seed Growers, and those already on our mailing list (out of province and country), should have received their hardcopies by now. We do not have any more available. If you or one of your customers are looking for information, the directory is posted on the PGA Website and will soon be posted to the Potato Association of America website as well.

Changes to the Canadian Emergency Business Accounts

December 4, 2020 - Ottawa, Ontario - Department of Finance Canada

Small businesses continue to face challenges and uncertainty during the COVID-19 pandemic and the government is providing support to ensure they can stay in business.

Since the spring, the Canada Emergency Business Account has helped almost 800,000 small businesses and not-for-profits in Canada. Today the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, the Honourable Chrystia Freeland, announced the expansion of the Canadian Emergency Business Account (CEBA).

Starting on Friday, December 4, 2020, eligible businesses facing financial hardship, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic are able to access a second CEBA loan of up to \$20,000 – on top of the initial \$40,000 that was available to small businesses.

Half of this additional financing, up to \$10,000, will be forgivable if the loan is repaid by December 31, 2022. This means the additional loan effectively increases CEBA loans from the existing \$40,000 to \$60,000 for eligible businesses, of which a total of \$20,000 will be forgiven if the balance of the loan is repaid on time.

As announced in the Fall Economic Statement, the application deadline for CEBA has also been extended to **March 31, 2021.**

To apply, eligible businesses and not-for-profits need to contact the financial institution that provided their initial CEBA loan and provide the appropriate information and documentation.

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AGRICULTURAL DIRECTOR - Thomas McDade

As we prepare for another holiday season, it is going to be anything but normal. You may find that you have some extra time on your hands, as there are many things that we cannot yet safely do. The only thing that seems to be a safe choice, is to stay home and stay safe. One suggestion for a safe activity over the holidays, is to catch up on your reading. A suggested source for interesting reading material can be found online in two places, on the PGA website and on:

www.potatoresearchcluster.ca

Canadian Potato Council Launches Potato Research Cluster Knowledge Transfer Website

The Research Working Group of the Canadian Potato Council (CPC) is excited to announce the launch of a new bilingual website to inform Canadian potato producers on the research that is underway in the Canadian Agri-Science Cluster for Horticulture 3, as well as sharing the latest updates on research progress from each of the project leads. On this website, each of the eight Cluster research activities is introduced. Each activity page includes early outcomes of cluster project research, key messages for growers, and links to periodic research updates, as well as additional extension materials relating to each activity. The eight research activities included in CHC's Cluster 3 include:

Generate and Evaluate Integrated Pest Management Tools for Wireworm Control in Potatoes in Canada

Canadian Potato Early Dying Network (CanPEDNet)

Potato Variety Evaluation

Late Blight: Tracking Pathogen Strains and their Characteristics

Development of Regional Management Strategies and Decision Making Tools for Control of Colorado Potato Beetle

Increasing Profitability of Canadian Potato Producers by Controlling Common Scab

Investigating the Occurrence and Distribution of Potato Tuber Necrosis-Inducing Viruses in Canada

Enhancement of Canadian Potato Industry through Smart Agriculture

"The website has been designed to be the 'go to' place for Cluster project results. Knowledge transfer is a critical part of the Cluster and it's hoped that the website will make this information accessible to all Canadian potato growers and other industry stakeholders" stated Dr. Tracy Shinnars-Carnelley, Chair of the CPC Research Working Group. The potato research reported on this website is generously funded by contributions through the Canadian Agri-Science Cluster for Horticulture 3, in cooperation with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's AgriScience Program, a Canadian Agricultural Partnership initiative, and by the Canadian Horticultural Council, CPC member organizations, industry stakeholders, universities and colleges and provincial governments. The activities of the Canadian Potato Council (CPC) are supported by eleven provincial potato grower organizations. The CPC collaboratively works at the national level to improve the economic well-being of the potato growers of Canada.

Additionally, the PGA's website will also feature updates on local research activities. These research reports are available on our website.

I would like to wish everyone a happy and safe holiday, and a return to the old normal in 2021.

Thomas McDade
403.892.7184





Chops & Crops Virtual Roundtable Event with the Honourable Devin Dreeshen - Minister of Agriculture & Forestry

November 23, 2020



This yearly reception began 8 years ago, with several Alberta commodity Boards and Commissions hosting the event. The main goal was to invite the Alberta Premier, Ag Minister's, MLA's to come and engage in meaningful one-on-one conversations with Board representatives about a number of industry topics.

Of course, this year was a little different being a virtual roundtable event, but each commodity rep was present and able to ask an important question regarding their industry. The Ag & Forestry Minister, Devin Dreeshen was our special guest to answer the questions that were brought forward.

Our theme, "Feeding Albertans", couldn't of been a better message this year, with what is going on in the world around us. Farmers and producers haven't skipped a beat when it comes to raising and growing food every day to feed people in Alberta and across the globe.

The following nine questions were directed to the Minister for a response.

1. **Non-tariff trade barriers** – Todd Hames, Chair of the Alberta Wheat Commission.
2. **Research** – Jeremy Olthof, President of the Alberta Beekeepers Commission.

3. **Surveillance and emergency response** – Brent Moen, Chair of Alberta Pork.

4. **BRM** – Brad Boettger, Chair of Alberta Oat Growers Commission.

5. **Federal carbon tax/offsets/CFS** – John Guelly, Chair of Alberta Canola.

6. **Water quality** - Gary Tokariuk, President of Alberta Sugar Beet Growers.

7. **Rural infrastructure and taxation** – Dave Bishop, Chair of Alberta Barley.

8. **Investment in value-added** – Don Shepert, Chair of Alberta Pulse Growers.

9. **Water Security** – Russ Van Boom, Chair of the Potato Growers of Alberta.

A special thank you to our Chairman, Russ Van Boom who also provided an enlightening closing message.

To listen to the virtual one-hour event, you can visit the link [here](#).

- Deb Brewin, PGA Communication & Promotions Director





This past year, like everywhere else, has not been business as usual. The Alberta Potato Industry Association (APIA) entered 2020 after just completing its largest trade show and we were pretty excited about the upcoming year.

As things progressed, and after much thought and deliberation through the year, we cancelled Burgers N Beans, our involvement in the PGA Golf Tournament and eventually the APIA Trade Show that is held in conjunction with the Alberta Potato Conference.

In December, we had our Annual Meeting virtually. At our meeting, we announced that a number of our directors were stepping down. I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank the following for their many years of volunteer service to the APIA:

Dave Kaiser – Lifetime Member, Univar
Jaques Nelis – Lifetime Member, Nelis Construction
Al Koyata – Growers Supply
Dennis Chinner – RBC

Elections were held with the following results:

Mike Duell, Secretary
Lawrence Gratton, Treasurer
Russ Stewart, President
Directors: Arie Gouw, Bill Hacker, Bruce Fletcher, Craig Stewart, Erin Anderson, Jared Bell, Jessica Joss, Justin Quinton, Kirby Sawatzky, Nathaniel Quinn

For anyone needing to acquire or renew an APIA membership, please reach out to Jessie Joss at jessica.joss@rbc.com

We plan on kicking off 2021 with a meeting to discuss responsibilities for the committees, tackle our new education scholarship program, and work hard to be ready for Burgers N Beans, the PGA Golf Tournament, and the APIA Trade Show in November. In closing, I would like to thank our members, past supporting exhibitors to our Trade Shows and all of the PGA for their understanding this past year. We sincerely look forward to seeing everyone in 2021.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Respectfully,

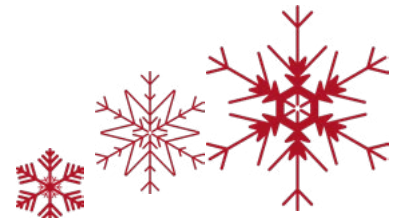
Russ Stewart, President

POTATO COCONUT CHOCOLATES - *Growers Favorite Potato Recipes (1994)*



3 C icing sugar
4 C flaked coconut
1 C mashed potatoes, chilled
1 tsp almond extract
1 (175g) pkg.
semi-sweet chocolate chips
4 oz semi-sweet chocolate
¼ bar paraffin

- *Combine icing sugar, coconut, potato and almond extract. Mix well.*
- *Drop by 1 teaspoon onto wax paper lined baking sheet.*
- *Chill for 1 hour.*
- *Roll each drop into a ball.*
- *Combine chocolate and paraffin in top of a double boiler.*
- *Melt over boiling water.*
- *Dip coconut balls into chocolate mixture, swirling to coat evenly.*
- *Remove with a fork and return to a wax paper lined baking sheet.*
- *Chill 1 hour or until coating hardens.*
- *Store in an airtight container.*
- *Makes 6 dozen.*





\$3.7 Million for Programs that Help Farmers Manage Risk

News release

December 8, 2020 – Ottawa, Ontario – Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

The Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, recently announced an investment of \$3.7 million for two projects in support of Farm Management Canada at the Agriculture Excellence Conference.

The first project, with an investment of over \$1.8 million through the AgriCompetitiveness Program, will help farmers build their business management skills and practices by facilitating the sharing and expansion of skills, knowledge and best practices throughout the sector.

Farm Management Canada is also receiving an investment of over \$1.8 million through the AgriRisk Initiative's Research and Development Stream. With this funding, Farm Management Canada will provide training and education to producers and industry professionals that promote comprehensive approach to managing risk in agriculture. This project will enhance producers education on risk management in the sector, enable them to better develop risk management plans and help farmers manage the wide range of risks they face every day.

The projects build on this year's conference theme, Prosperity with Purpose, which focuses on taking a proactive approach to farm business management to build the confidence and underlying capacity to weather storms, seize opportunities, and be well-positioned for continued success.

"The Agriculture Excellence Conference is a key annual event for producers and our industry, where we can have meaningful discussions and see the dedication

of everyone working to provide food to consumers in Canada and abroad. The funding announced today will give farmers and industry professionals the opportunities to share their knowledge and expertise with others, especially young farmers. It will also give them access to important training to help them better manage the many risks they face.

-The Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food

Quick facts

- The AgriCompetitiveness Program is a five-year program under the Canadian Agricultural Partnership that aims to help the agricultural sector to: leverage, coordinate and build on existing capacity; enhance safety; adapt to changing commercial and regulatory environments; seize new opportunities; share best practices, and provide mentorship opportunities.
- The AgriRisk Initiatives is a five-year program under the Canadian Agricultural Partnership that supports the development of new risk management tools.
- Farm Management Canada is a not-for-profit national organization dedicated exclusively to providing leading edge resources to enable Canadian farmers to make sound management decisions.
- The Agricultural Excellence Conference is the only event in Canada dedicated exclusively to bringing farm management enthusiasts together to build their business acumen.

Source: canada.ca

Launch of the International Year of Fruits and Vegetables

The launch of the International Year of Fruits and Vegetables #IYFV2021 will take place on Tuesday, 15 December 2020 from 13:00 to 15:30 CET through the virtual conferencing platform Zoom.

The International Year of Fruits and Vegetables (IYFV) 2021, as proclaimed at the 74th session the UN General Assembly, is a unique opportunity to raise awareness on the important role of fruits and vegetables in nutrition, food security and human and planetary health. It also aims to reduce food loss and waste and promote sustainability and safety of the fruits and vegetables value chain.

- Pre-register to watch the launch event by webinar [here](#).



THE CANADIAN CENTRE FOR
FOOD INTEGRITY

2020 CCFI PUBLIC TRUST RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

Trends in trust and the path forward...

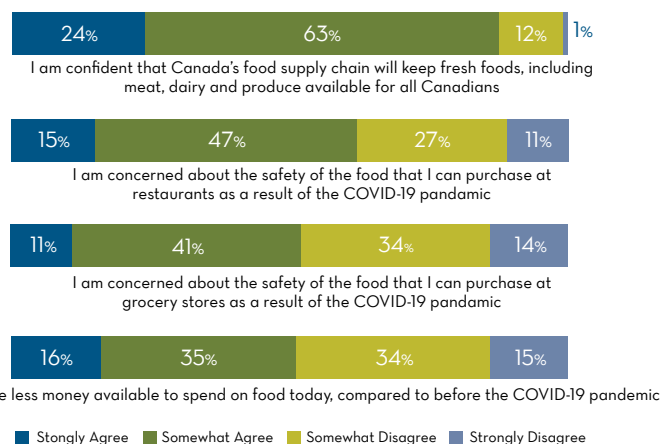
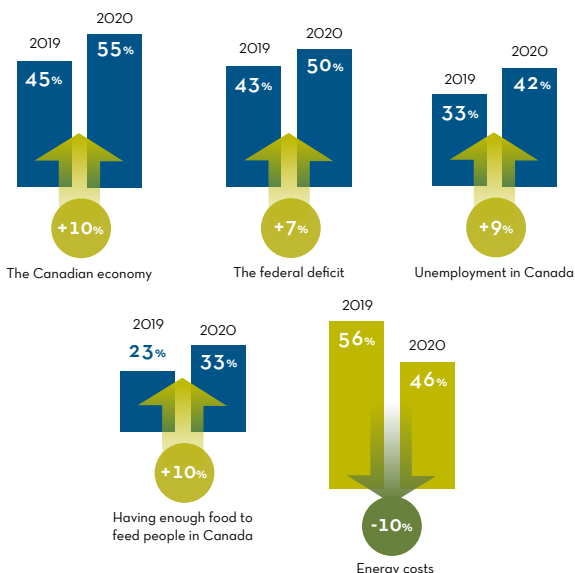
The 2020 survey was conducted on behalf of CCFI by Ipsos Public Affairs and collected results from a sample of 2,903 Canadians from July 28th to August 27th, 2020. A total of n=2,703 completed the survey online and n=200 Prince Edward Island residents completed the survey by telephone. The sample is representative of the general Canadian population aged 18 years or older. The precision of online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the results of this research are accurate within +/- 2.1 percentage points or 19 times out of 20 if all Canadian adults had been polled. S

We asked Canadians to rate their level of trust towards a variety of food system stakeholders on several topics. **Across all areas, Canadians have the most trust in farmers.**

	Overall	Providing Information About Food	Food Safety
Farmers	1	1	1
Scientific/Academic Researchers	2	1	N/A
Grocery Stores	3	2	3
Restaurants	4	3	6
Federal Government Agencies	4	3	2
Food Processors and Food Manufacturers	5	4	7
Politicians	6	6	N/A
Advocacy groups	N/A	5	N/A
Food industry associations	N/A	N/A	5
Organizations that certify if products are organic	N/A	N/A	4

Despite the huge impact of COVID-19 on Canadians' everyday lives, confidence in our country's food system is extremely high; a majority (87%) agree that the country's food supply chain will keep fresh food available for all Canadians, a proportion which includes a quarter (24%) who say they 'strongly agree'. However, Canadians are still vigilant about their food during the pandemic. Six in ten (61%) say they are worried about the safety of food in restaurants and half (52%) say they are concerned about the safety of the food in grocery stores. A reflection of the difficult financial times facing many, half (51%) say they have less money available to spend on food today than before the pandemic.

CONCERN HAS SIGNIFICANTLY CHANGED IN:



Confidence in Canada's food system is high, but cost concerns persist. COVID-19 has put enormous pressure on the food and agriculture industry, and Canadians feel that our food system has successfully weathered this storm. Despite this positivity, **the pandemic has highlighted the importance of food costs - an issue Canadians have consistently cited as a top concern.** Food system stakeholders must continue to work to demonstrate



Province	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020 Est.	% Diff.
NFLD.	74	63	56	54	55	+1.9%
P.E.I.	25,723	24,463	22,600	24,302	21,000	-13.6%
N.S.	432	432	365	416	300	-27.9%
N.B.	14,335	15,159	15,670	16,400	11,500	-29.9%
Que.	12,233	12,505	11,221	12,648	12,868	+1.7%
Ont.	6,603	7,830	6,919	6,705	7,518	+12.1%
Man.	22,400	22,200	20,300	19,700	24,000	+21.8%
Sask.	1,700	1,625	1,454	1,500	1,400	-6.7%
Alta.	19,519	20,572	21,762	21,718	23,407	+7.8%
B.C.	2,205	1,824	2,100	2,145	2,155	+0.5%
Canada	105,224	106,673	102,447	105,589	104,203	-1.3%

Potato Production in Canada for the year 2020, is estimated at 104,203,000 hundred weight. This is down 1.4 million hundred weight or 1.3% below 2019. Due to market uncertainty from COVID-19, Canada planted 5,000 fewer acres in the spring of 2020. The bigger reduction, however, came from hot dry weather conditions across the country and particularly in Eastern Canada where many growers are unable to irrigate their crops. Canadian yields dropped 13cwt./acre from 309cwt./acre in 2019 to 296cwt./acre in 2020. There is large regional disparity within this crop from East to West. See the following for regional details

Statistics Canada has estimated Canadian Potato Production in 2020 to be 104,203,000 hundred weight. This is down 1.3% or 1,386,000 hundred weight below the 2019 crop. Hot, dry conditions declined yields below 2019 by 13cwt./acre to 295.9cwt./acre. Due to better harvest conditions this fall, fewer acres had to be abandoned in comparison to the last two years. There are considerable regional differences in the crop this year as seen in the comments on individual provinces below:

Prince Edward Island:

The province was one of the region's most severely affected by the drought. Stats Canada estimates production is down province wide by an average of 13.6% compared to the 2019 crop. In addition, there are growers in the central part of the province who experienced reductions of 25-30%.

The reduction translates to 3,300,000 hundred weight and affects all categories of production. Yields per acre dropped from 289 last year to 251.5 cwt./acre in 2020.

Nova Scotia:

Production is estimated to be down 27.9% below 2019. Hot dry weather in this eastern province reduced yields to 250cwt./acre. In addition, planted acreage was down from 1,600 acres to 1,200 acres this spring also contributing to the large reduction.

New Brunswick:

New Brunswick had the largest decrease in potato production this year at an estimated 29.9% reduction from 2019. Hot, dry weather was the cause of this 4,900,000 hundred weight shortfall below 2019. It is estimated that yields declined to 237.4cwt./acre from 310.6cwt./acre last year. All sectors of seed, table, and processing have had their supply shortened.

Quebec:

Not all data from Quebec was available at reporting time so a yield model was used to produce Quebec's harvested area, production, and yield. Estimates will be revised at a later date when available from the Institut de la Statistique du Quebec. The model estimates Quebec's production to be

NATIONAL NEWS

up 1.7% above 2019 at 12,868,000 hundred weight. It is also estimated that yields have risen from 293cwt./acre in 2019 to 312cwt./acre in 2020. Quebec is the one area of the country that experienced a difficult harvest this fall and reports at least 2,000 acres that were not harvested. In addition, some acreage was harvested after very cold temperatures in mid-October and will likely create higher cullage rates in those lots.

Ontario:

Stats Canada estimates Ontario's production to be up 813,000 hundred weight or 12.1%. This would bring overall production in the province to 7,518,000 hundred weight. Stats Canada also estimates that 700 acres were not harvested in the province. Acreage in the spring had increased by 2,500 acres for both chip and fresh sectors. Manitoba:

After a disastrous harvest last year, Manitoba reports the biggest increase in Canadian production this year, up 4,300,000 hundred weight or 21.8% above 2019. Hot, dry weather took the top off yields, moving down to 337cwt./acre from 345.6cwt./acre a year ago. Growers, however, were pleased to be able to harvest all of their crop in record time compared to the fall of 2109 where vast acreages had to be abandoned due to wet, cold weather. Stats Canada estimates overall production in the province to come in around 24,000,000 hundred weight. Planted acreage increased in the spring by 1,500 acres bringing the total in the country's second largest acreage to 71,500 acres.

Saskatchewan:

Production is expected to be down 6.7% this year with a total production of 1,400,000 hundred weight. Stats Canada

estimates yields were reduced from 250 cwt./acre last year to 233cwt./acre in 2020, mostly due to a hot dry growing season. Saskatchewan acres dropped from 6,300 acres to 6,000 acres this spring.

Alberta:

Stats Canada estimates Alberta increased its production by 7.8% or 1,689,000 million hundred weight in 2020 making it the second largest provincial increase in Canada this year. Although the growing season was a bit of a challenge, yields increased to 404cwt./acre compared to 382cwt./acre in the 2019 crop. It also ended well with excellent harvest conditions allowing growers to pick up much more of their crop compared to a year ago. Stats Canada estimates that 1,740 acres were not harvested, likely explainable by drowned out areas in the spring. Total production in the province is expected to reach 23,407,000 hundred weight. Growers had decreased their acreage in the spring by 1,550 acres as they reacted accordingly to processor volume reductions as a result of COVID-19 slowdowns.

British Columbia:

Stats Canada estimates production in British Columbia very close to 2019 with an increase of 0.5%. Total production is expected to come in at 2,155,000 hundred weight. An excellent growing season produced recording breaking yields for the province at 331.5cwt./acre, up from last year's 325cwt./acre. Good fall weather allowed all of the crop to be harvested.

For more information contact: Kevin MacIsaac, General Manager UPGC Kevin@unitedpotatocanada.com

NEW \$3 MILLION GRANT PROGRAM RECENTLY ANNOUNCED FOR THE CLASS 1 MANDATORY ENTRY LEVEL TRAINING (MELT) PROGRAM



Mandatory Entry Level Training (MELT) was implemented on March 1, 2019 by the Government of Alberta to improve safety for everyone on the road by ensuring Class 1 (tractor-trailer) and Class 2 (bus) drivers receive adequate training before they are tested for a Class 1 or Class 2 driver's licence. Drivers who have held a Class 3 driver's licence with two (2) or more years of experience driving Class 3 commercial vehicles may be eligible to take the Experience and Equivalency Class 1 MELT Program.

commercial trucks that require at least a Class 3 driver's licence to operate, a shorter version of the Class 1 MELT program is available.

For more information on the MELT Class 1 Experience & Equivalency Program click [here](#)

Source: [alberta.ca](#)



To recognize the experience gained by drivers operating

On behalf of the PGA Board & Staff...



MERRY CHRISTMAS

AND HAPPY NEW YEAR



Mark Your Calendar

PGA CAMBRIDGE
HOTEL & CONFERENCE CENTRE
* red deer
November 22 - 24,
2021

2021 ALBERTA POTATO CONFERENCE & TRADESHOW

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