

# The Potato Minute

July 1, 2021



## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT - Terence Hochstein

We haven't quite reached July 1st yet, but the country is starting to look like the "dog days of summer" are here to stay. For those of you not familiar with this timeframe, "the dog days" refer to late July and August in the Northern Hemisphere. The hottest 40 days named for the rising of the "dog" star known as Sirius in Greek and Roman times. They related to "heat, drought, sudden thunderstorms, fever, mad dogs, and bad luck." Whose counting, but at the rate we are going, it may be a 70-day period this year.

What started out as a promising season, is rapidly deteriorating before everyone's eyes. In traveling around Southern Alberta, outside of the irrigation areas, you will find many cereal crops that are only eight inches tall and have already headed out. Many acres of dryland peas have already completed flowering and only have a few pods on them. In some areas, the dryland canola looks very stressed and the hay crops and pasture are thin at best. Unless we receive some timely rains in the next couple of weeks, the crops in Southern Alberta, outside of the irrigation areas, will be in trouble. Even these areas will be tight on water if we must continue to irrigate at this pace to keep everything going.



Potato plants flowering in southern Alberta

Southern Alberta, like the rest of Western Canada, and much of the western half of the US are in various stages of dry to drought. Further north, our seed growing areas are looking great right now, but are only as good as the next rainfall. It will be very interesting to see what the July 1st USDA Crop report looks like, as far as yield potentials going into the fall.

As we near the end of the current CAP funding programs in April 2023, our government is working towards fully

utilizing the existing programs to maximize the benefits for the agricultural sector in Alberta. On June 23rd, Minister Dreeshen announced a new program that will allow growers to upgrade specific technology, including security and internet coverage on their farms.

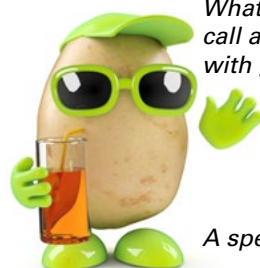
The ag sector is current in preliminary discussions with our Minister's office as to what is, and will be important to the Industry in the Next Policy Framework, over the next 5 years (2023-28). For more information on these initiatives, check out page 5.

By the time you read this article, there will already be new crop processing potatoes harvested in the Basin. Growers down in the southern part of the Basin are working with the variety Hamlin Russet. This variety is being tested in many of the growing areas of North America. This will be the earliest ever that a frozen fry variety will be run with yields expected to be in the 20T/acre range. Not bad for the end of June.

Moving forward, into the month of July, we all look forward to being able to socialize with family and friends once again. The APIA Burger and Beans is scheduled for Wednesday, July 7th, and the following day, the PGA golf tournament will be held in Lethbridge at Paradise Canyon. For more information, please refer to page seven in the Potato Minute. As well, the PGA is planning to host their Alberta Potato Conference and Tradeshow in November 2021. Stay tuned as we move forward with plans for this exciting event.

Until next month,

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What do you  
call a potato  
with glasses?

A spec-tator

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## SEED COORDINATOR UPDATE - Stacey Bajema



Seed potato production in Alberta is off to a great start, with most production regions reporting a good crop so far. Southern Alberta has been quite dry this spring, but they are supplementing with irrigation. Northern Alberta's mostly dryland acres benefited from almost ideal planting conditions, with good moisture beneath the surface. However, as June winds down and July begins, we expect high temperatures and little moisture and many of our growers will be hoping for rain to maintain this promising crop.

We are grateful to see the easing of restrictions in Alberta, as many of our seed growers use this time to visit or host their customers and see how the crop is progressing. Good communication is the key to building strengthened relationships with our customers.

July is always a busy month for the seed coordinator. I look forward to spending some time in Southern Alberta this month, for meetings and some much-anticipated social time at the APIA's Burgers and Beans and the PGA annual golf tournament.

The PGA seed committee met this past month and continues to be quite engaged. We also look forward to summer meetings for the Canadian Potato Council and the Potato Association of America this month.

### Seed Potato Regulation Modernization

The Seed Potato Regulation Modernization consultation process is starting to intensify, as the first Task Team on traceability has been meeting regularly throughout this past month. The results of the grower survey has also been reviewed and I am very appreciative to our larger group of Alberta growers who participated in the survey. Your comments will be used as a valuable part of the consultation process. The PGA Seed committee and our group of volunteers have been actively involved in this brainstorming process on how our CFIA regulations will assist us in building a successful future in seed potato production.

### Western Canada Post-Harvest Test Program



Planning for the 2021 Western Canada Post-Harvest Test program is well underway and we are happy to report we will most likely be back in Hawaii this season. Twin Bridges Farms will, once again, host our program and E.S. Crop Consult will be remaining onsite to supervise the crop. While we were able to provide an adapted program in 2020 due to COVID, the entire team is ready to put the days of endless sprouts behind us and get back to providing our Western Canadian growers the high-quality comprehensive program they have come to expect.



Participation in the post harvest grow-out is the best way to get a read on what is happening in your seed lot. While lab testing does give you a reading on your specified disease levels like virus and BRR, it only provides information on what you have asked to be tested. A grow-out allows you to see even the things you haven't asked for. Things like germination, chemical damage or other unexpected diseases can only be seen during a post-season visual inspection. These things are always better to know before it is received by your customer.

Every farm in Alberta has its unique challenges. If you are unsure about the best whole farm post-harvest testing regime for your operation, we encourage you to reach out to Peter Ellis directly to discuss.

### Blackleg in Seed Potatoes

The University of Lethbridge and AAFC is currently working on a project to study blackleg in seed potatoes. They would very much appreciate anyone who can provide them with samples. If you are in the field and have the opportunity to collect a sample, it would be very much appreciated. Samples should be wrapped in a paper bag or napkins and kept cool to prevent further breakdown of the material. If you have any questions or need instructions on shipping samples, please feel free to contact me or reach out to Michele Konschuh at ([m.konschuh@uleth.ca](mailto:m.konschuh@uleth.ca)) directly.

As always, if you have any questions, contact me anytime.

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# AGRICULTURAL DIRECTOR - Thomas McDade



## Potato Agronomy Management Reports (PAM-Cast)

Hello all. It is that time of year again, as I am sure you have noticed you are getting weather and PAM-Cast reports from the PGA. These reports are based on the weather conditions monitored from a weather station in your growing area. The PAM-Cast report is intended as a management tool that provides potato growers with an indication if weather conditions are conducive for the development of early or late blight. These reports are not associated with the late blight spore trapping surveillance program that also includes a weekly report to all potato growers in Alberta. Together, these two reports provide a very important management tool, from which the decision to (or not to) spray fungicides can be made with confidence.

Each year, I get many calls from growers, with questions regarding the PAM-Cast and what it means. I would like to provide an explanation in this article, as this is an important on-farm management tool for all potato growers. Let's take a quick look at what the important parts of this report mean: The PAM-Cast report provides key growing information collected from a weather station in your area. This includes temperature, relative humidity, precipitation, growing degree days, physiological days (P-Days), disease severity index and the evaporation transpiration (ET) calculation.

Your PAM Cast report calculates the cumulative growing degree days for your area, which does apply to all crops.

Because potatoes possess very specific heat requirements, the minimum temperature for growth and development is 7 ° C (45° F) and the most rapid growth and development occurs at 21 ° C (70 ° F). The growth rate decreases with increasing temperature above 21 ° C (70 ° F) and finally stops at 30 ° C (86 ° F). From this information P-days can be calculated. Therefore, the P-Day calculations on your report are always lower than the growing degree day numbers.

The PAM-Cast report provides an indication of when to spray fungicides, based on the P-Day calculations. The recommendation for the first spray application to control early blight is after the P-Day season total has exceeded 300, after 50% emergence. For your weather station and the potato crops in your area, I have tracked and entered the planting and 50% emergence dates into the PAM-Cast reporting system. Please take this recommendation as a rule of thumb and continue to monitor your fields visually. As far as technology has progressed, nothing has surpassed the value of boots on the ground.

The report also generates a disease severity index (DSV) for late blight. The DSV uses the cumulative P-Days and how fast this number is accumulating. The DSV factors in the hourly temperature and the relative humidity. As a rule of thumb, when the DSV reaches 18 or when the DSV number increases by more than 8 points in a 7-day period, it is a strong indication that a fungicide application may be necessary.

The PAM-Cast and the weekly Surveillance Spore Trapping Reports are very valuable tools in helping to determine when spray applications are warranted. Please let me know if you have any questions regarding these programs.

Thank you and as always, work safely.

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<div>PAM-Cast</div> <div>Potato Agronomy Management - Forecast</div> <div>June 24, 2021 - Lethbridge</div>					<div>PGA</div> <div>POTATO AGRONOMY OF ALBERTA</div>		<div>Alberta</div> <div>Agriculture and Rural Development</div>		<div>Alberta</div> <div>Weather Service</div>	
Seven Day Summary										
Date	Temp Min (C)	Temp Max (C)	RH Min (%)	RH Max (%)	Precip	GDD	PDay	DSV	ET Russett (mm)	
18-Jun-2021	5.8	25.2	21.9	87.8	0.0	10.5	6.3	0	3.0	
19-Jun-2021	12.8	19.3	51.0	97.0	1.0	11.0	8.4	0	1.9	
20-Jun-2021	11.0	22.6	28.2	95.8	1.1	11.8	8.2	2	3.1	
21-Jun-2021	6.8	27.7	22.3	95.5	0.0	12.2	6.3	0	3.7	
22-Jun-2021	11.4	31.4	17.9	85.3	0.0	16.4	7.1	0	5.0	
23-Jun-2021	15.9	25.3	33.2	92.6	0.7	15.6	9.3	0	3.2	
24-Jun-2021	12.9	19.8	57.0	98.3	5.5	11.4	8.5	3	1.7	
Season Totals					62.4	241.0	139.5	10	99.4	
Surplus (+) / Deficit (-)					-37.0					
Predicted Water Use Next 7 Days (mm)					20.4					
Seeding Date Used For ET Calculations					4/28/21					
Early Blight										
To control Early Blight, it is recommended that the first spray occur 300 Potato Days after the emergence of 50% of the plant. After the initial spray, the following spray schedule is recommended: June - every 14 days July - every 14 days August - every 10 days September - every 7 days				50% Emergence Date: June 04, 2021 Date PDays > 300: NA PDay Accumulation as of Jun 24, 2021: 139.5				Recommended Spray Schedule: First Spray Date: NA Second Spray Date: NA Third Spray Date: NA Fourth Spray Date: NA Fifth Spray Date: NA		
Late Blight										
To control Late Blight, it is recommended that the first spray occur when the Disease Severity Index (DSV) reaches 18 points. Subsequent sprays are recommended when the DSV index increases 8 points within a 7 day period.					Current DSV		7 Day Change		5	
Notes					Disclaimer					
Precipitation totalled from April 1st. GDD and PDays totalled from potato 50% emergence date of 04-Jun-2021.					The above information is developed from site-specific climate data using an agronomic model. The summary is intended to demonstrate disease pressure within the region. No claims are made as to the accuracy of this information for varying sites, conditions or cropping systems. The responsibility rests solely with the individuals who interpret and implement information from this report. The modeled results are intended to aid in decision making and by no means replaces the need for proper in-field monitoring.					

June 25, 2021 7:13 am

For more information, visit the IMCIN website at [www.imcin.net](http://www.imcin.net)



### SAFETY CORNER



This month's letter is R:

## Remote Work



**Risk zones:** Anytime/anywhere someone is working alone and without readily available assistance in case of an injury, illness or emergency, in fields or vehicles traveling alone, in isolated structures away from others

### Hazardous Acts & Conditions:

- Vehicle, ATV or equipment incidents
- Medical events
- Animal attacks
- Vehicle fires
- Violent people
- Events requiring immediate assistance from other individuals or emergency services (Police/Fire/EMS)

### What Can Result:

#### Do:

- Have a means of reliable communication readily available
- Establish a communication plan and check in regularly
- Communicate any changes to work plans or locations
- Ensure there is a plan in place and someone is designated to assist in case of an emergency or missed check-in
- Wait for assistance if the task is high risk

#### Ask yourself:

- Am I performing high-risk work?
- Can I wait until someone is able to accompany me/help me perform the task?
- What is my plan if something goes wrong?
- How long will it take for help to arrive?
- Do I have a first aid kit available if I need it?

### CONTROLLING THE RISK OF WORKING ALONE

*HIGH RISK: Working alone without a means of emergency communication or working alone emergency procedure*

*MEDIUM RISK: Working alone, but having a means of emergency communication and a working alone emergency procedure*

*LOW RISK: Working alone, but staying the same general areas as others and maintaining constant communication*

*GOLDEN HOUR: The first hour after a traumatic injury occurs. This is considered the most critical time period following an injury where if emergency treatment is received, it is more likely to lead to a successful outcome.*

Source: [agsafeab.ca](http://agsafeab.ca)



### UPGRADING TECHNOLOGY FOR ALBERTA'S FARMERS

#### Introducing a new Canadian Agricultural Partnership Program

Twenty-first century farms are high-tech operations – from livestock and dairy to cereals and greenhouses, Alberta producers are leading the way for modern agriculture. With that in mind, we have introduced the Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP) Farm Technology program to make farmers and ranchers even more competitive

To be eligible for funding, the program targets technology that is proven, but not yet widely adopted within an applicant's farm type. The program supports the adoption of innovative technology that minimizes agricultural waste and optimizes farm efficiency, like:

- digital sensors that contribute to greater precision and more accurate matching of inputs with requirements
- wands and panel readers for electronic livestock ID tags that enable livestock producers to log weights digitally
- devices that boost internet coverage on the farm

But this grant will also help to protect farmers and their operations. Rural crime and farm security are growing concerns in Alberta. In 2017, rural Alberta had a higher overall crime rate than urban areas. In rural Alberta, the crime rate was 10,964 incidents per 100,000 population; in urban areas, it was 7,920 incidents per 100,000 people.

Recognizing that, the Farm Technology program includes a farm security component.

This program will help farmers and ranchers protect their operations by supporting investments in farm security best management practices, like:

- GPS equipment trackers that can monitor equipment locations
- remote monitoring cameras for rural security

[Alberta's modernized, simplified CAP programs](#) have made it easier and quicker for farmers, ranchers and food processors to get the funds they need to update their operations. To make it even easier, the programs have been condensed from 16 to 9. Funding is limited so I encourage interested people to apply early.

Find one that fits your operation and apply at.

<https://cap.alberta.ca/CAP/index.html>

Source: [alberta.ca](https://cap.alberta.ca)

### Getting the best deal for Alberta agriculture

Engaging with Albertans on the future of agriculture in the province

Alberta Ag & Forestry Minister, Devin Dreeshen is asking for feedback to determine Alberta's priorities for the Next Policy Framework (NPF) that will replace the joint federal-provincial Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP). In addition, he is looking for feedback on long-term business risk management (BRM) reform.

CAP, which expires in 2023, is a \$3 billion 5-year investment by federal, provincial and territorial governments to strengthen and grow Canada's agriculture and agri-food sector. The NPF will continue our investment in Alberta's agriculture industry through to 2028.

Alberta's agri-food sector is doing well despite the challenges in recent years, but we know that challenges will likely continue to persist. Through CAP and the NPF,

we will support Alberta's Recovery Plan through increased investment attraction and improved market access.

BRM programs aim to provide producers with tools to protect the viability of their farming operations and to manage financial risk. Reliable programming is essential for the continued growth of the agriculture sector and we're looking to gather solutions to the current problems that we know exist within these programs.

#### Have your say

The minister will be bringing your feedback forward when they negotiate the next policy statement at the 2021 Federal, Provincial and Territorial Ministers of Agriculture conference this fall. Albertans can have their say by filling out the [online survey](#) by **July 2, 2021**. Your input will support future phases of this project as we move closer towards a new agreement that works for Alberta's world-class agriculture sector.

[Read more...](#)

Source: [alberta.ca](https://cap.alberta.ca)

## Crop Update June 23, 2021

The potato crop in Canada is in varying stages - from emergence to touching between rows. Potato growers everywhere are optimistic for the good growing conditions needed to move this crop in its early life stages. Here is a summary of how the crop looks across the country:

**Prince Edward Island:** A lot of the Island crop is at emergence with nice even stands being reported. Growing conditions are excellent and the crop is in better shape than this time one year ago. In-province surveys indicate planted acreage could be up slightly, in the 1% range (1,000 acres). Industry is pleased that the provincial government has removed the moratorium on deep water wells for agricultural use. The restriction will not be relaxed in time for this year's crop but will have benefit for the one in 2022. Old crop is in short supply making it difficult to control movement with such a small inventory

**New Brunswick:** The crop went in early with some growers reporting their finishing date in 2021, to be ahead of their starting date last year. Emergence has been good and although conditions have been dry, they are not yet affecting the growth of the crop, as canopies begin to fill in exposed soil area. Planted acreage will be up, with the Formed Product Line in the McCain expansion requiring a minimum of 3,000- 4,000 additional acres. Entities in neighboring states have also looked to increase their volume requirements. Some chip growers have shifted volume towards fryer contracts. Old crop is in very limited quantity in few hands. Fresh quality depends on the lot as it nears the end of storage season. Fresh prices have been steady with strong upward movement on 8oz and up, driven by increased count carton prices in the US. Processing inventory will likely be prioritized for the specialty production line allowing it to become fully operational in July.

**Quebec:** Spring came early to Quebec with ideal conditions for planting and emergence. Yield wise, the crop looks great overall, although it has been a bit drier in the region south of Montreal. Planted acreage will be up for processing and will also see a slight increase on the fresh side. Old crop has tightened up in the last two weeks due to increased demand and should allow for perfect timing, as old crop transitions to the new one. New potatoes have been listed in retail grocer flyers for start-up harvest on July 5th and full volume of 10lb's available by July 8th. With orderly marketing well established, Quebec producers expect to start new crop at \$4.00/10lb

**Ontario:** Spring came early with warm temperatures allowing for ideal planting conditions. Some of the very early potatoes planted in April were nipped by frost but have since recovered. The crop overall looks very good, but the province is very dry and in need of rain. Growers with irrigation have rarely seen such an early start to the job of adding water, with many in their third or fourth pass already. Old crop will run right up to new crop deliveries. The new crop harvest is expected to begin July 10-15. Acreage is expected to be flat this year.

**Manitoba:** Fresh potatoes have been experiencing very dry conditions in Manitoba for 3-4 years now. This year it has been dry, with no rain for two weeks now, and none in the forecast for 10 days. Some reservoirs are 35%-40% full while others are empty. As a result, crop potential is likely average at best. Total fresh acreage is similar although down a couple hundred of reds. Old crop red potatoes had been long, but demand picked up substantially in the last two weeks and will clean up easily in July. This increased demand and movement also moved pricing up \$2.00/cwt. on U.S. destinations. Processing potatoes are also thirsty in Manitoba with crops struggling for moisture. Growers in some areas are using up their available water to hasten row closure and minimize evaporation losses from the soil surface. Moisture limitation will challenge yield potential. Industry planting surveys to date show an increase of 5,500 acres within the province, however this will not be quite enough to meet processing plant requirements. Old crop will continue to be imported into the province until the end of July, and processors will be starting new crop in mid-August.

**Saskatchewan:** Growers experienced an early spring and good planting conditions. The province is quite dry and although they do have more irrigation, water supplies are some of the lowest in memory. Planted acreage is expected to be up slightly, around 200 acres.

**Alberta:** Planting was completed in nice time this year and subsequent emergence has been even with strong plants. However, it has been extremely dry in the province, with some areas receiving only an inch of rain over the past weeks. Alberta is not as reliant as other provinces on reservoirs to source water for irrigation, so should have adequate water supply for the processing region, although growers have been busy staying ahead of the crop needs. The seed crop traditionally planted a bit later in the northern area of the province is coming along well. Crops in the Lacombe, Red Deer area were subjected to severe hail damage last week which shredded emerged plants in those fields. Old crop should be finished shipping to processors by July 20th. Some processors are short, while others are long, which may facilitate some swapping of raw product until new crop is ready.

**British Columbia:** BC had an early spring with good planting conditions. Growing conditions have been very good and many fields have bud formation and rows almost closed. The first early Warba's were on sale in the market on May 20th. Old crop is limited although there were a few lots of excess seed that had to be repurposed for other uses. Demand for table potatoes has been good with retail prices in BC stores fetching \$6.00/10lb. - \$7.00/10lb. depending on the category.

The information contained in the UPGC Crop Report, was obtained from the UPGC Board of Directors Meeting on June 22, 2021.

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





## Annual Golf Tournament 2021

**DON'T DELAY...**  
**REGISTER TODAY**



Please join us for this year's golf tournament at beautiful Paradise Canyon Golf Resort in Lethbridge...

## July 8th

We are so excited to finally get together with everyone again and partner with the Alberta Potato Industry Associates for this much anticipated event! Register alone or with your team of four.

\* Please note: While we try our best to accomodate your team requests, we cannot make any guarantees.

Registrations and Sponsorships are available through Eventbrite.

Golf registration closes July 6th



Don't miss your chance to win the APIA "Hole-in-One" prize of \$50,000.

8:00 am Registration &  
Bagged Breakfast

9:00 am Shotgun start

Awards after everyone is finished

**\*\*\*THERE WILL BE NO BANQUET THIS YEAR**

## FROM THE OFFICE

### ASK A FARMER

PLANTING

[Click here](#)

Our first Ask A Farmer video series has been launched. This has been a project in the making for several months and is ongoing. In partnership with Chinook Community Futures in Taber, the goal is to work together to showcase the diversity of the crops in southern Alberta, plus educate the public on how potatoes are grown throughout an entire season and how they end up on your plate. Research shows that consumers want to hear the "farmers' story". The questions have been gathered from the public throughout years of attending tradeshow and schools, along with general questions that come our way to promote public trust. Thanks to all our potato growers who have volunteered to help with this project. Stay tuned for more!



### Burgers' n Beans

July 7th, 5pm  
Taber Legion Park

Open to APIA and PGA members and their families (including kids of all ages).

Gates open at 4:30pm

See you there!!



July 26-29 Virtual Meeting  
[Click here for more details](#)

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