

THE POTATO MINUTE

October 1, 2023

PGA
POTATO GROWERS OF ALBERTA
Est. 1966



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT - Terence Hochstein



Everyone has their favorite season, for some it is spring, some summer, or fall and some winter. Most of us that make a living from the soil, be it crops or livestock, fall would be considered our favorite season. It is a time of thankfulness and appreciation, but it is also a time of reflection and thoughtfulness as to what the next year will bring and what it will take to prepare for it. In agriculture, the seasons sometimes run into each other, but one thing is for sure, no farmer ever takes a day for granted because they never know what tomorrow will bring.

“Fall has always been my favorite season. The time when everything bursts with its last beauty, as if nature has been saving up all year for the grand finale.” -Unknown

Here we are again with Thanksgiving only a couple weeks away, wrapping up harvest, and growers are having to make the decision as to what to do with their last few acres of potatoes. What a difference a year makes. This time last year, most growers were wondering if they would have enough acres to fill their sheds and commitments, this year most all have been blessed with a bountiful harvest with excellent quality. For the south part of the province, which received minimal rainfall since the spring, having to totally rely on a diminished supply of irrigation water, the crop has turned out well above most folks' expectations. Most of our seed



Boston Farms Ltd. filling storage with this years potatoes

growing areas were blessed with timely rains throughout the growing season, and as such, the growers are having to work diligently finding space for their crop as well. As many experienced growers would say, now starts the second season of growing potatoes, keeping them healthy and alive in their storages until they are needed by the customer.

As the reports start to trickle in from across the country, it

appears that most areas are experiencing an average or above average crop. It is still too early to determine what our eastern growers harvested crop will store like, as that part of the continent has had more than enough rainfall throughout the growing and harvest season. It will be a good month until those numbers are available.

October not only brings a time of preparation for next year's crop for the growers, but it is a gentle reminder for those of us on the other side of the industry, that harvest reports, government reports, fall meetings, an annual report, a seed directory and the Potato Conference and Tradeshow are just around the corner. Throw in there that Christmas is only 90 days away and, well you have it, chaos is in full force here in the office. Rest assured that when it is all said and done, everyone will show up with smiles on their face at the conference and it will be another one for the record books. Everyone here on the PGA Team is a professional “one legged duck in a swimming pool”, even if some of us have a dislike for water.

For the calendar, the South Area breakfast meeting is October 24th at 8:00 am at the Heritage Inn in Taber, the following night, October 25th the North Area supper meeting is at 6:00 pm at the Holiday inn and Suites in Nisku. Both growers and industry are invited to join us at both locations. For more information, please contact the office. A couple of weeks later, November 20th - 22nd, the 57th Annual Alberta Potato Conference and Tradeshow will be held in Calgary at the Grey Eagle Resort and Casino. Over 70 tradeshow booths, multiple speakers and something new this year, a professional cooking demonstration, will be the highlights of what I am sure will be a fantastic opportunity for growers, their families, industry and everyone else to enjoy. For more information, please check out our website www.albertapotatoes.ca or call the office in Taber.

Until next month,

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SEED COORDINATOR - Stacey Bajema



Another successful seed potato harvest is in the books. After a couple years of challenging drought conditions, we weren't sure how this one was going to play out. We started out with some moisture in the ground, but a total lack of June rain across the province had everyone nervous, and it's safe to say we hit that sink or swim moment. Thankfully, 2023 became a year where we were able to swim. The seed areas in our province that didn't get any rain were supplemented by irrigation and most of our dryland northern seed regions received regular timely rains for the remainder of the summer. Seed storages in Alberta are full, particularly in some of our high generation areas which puts us on a path to meet the future needs of our expanding markets. The quality of our seed potatoes coming out of the ground was excellent and with nice soil conditions and mild harvest weather we expect this crop to store well throughout the winter season.

This week, as I was visiting farms on their final stretch of harvest, I had one grower say to me ***"We first express gratitude for a safe season and then we can be grateful for everything else"***. The potato industry in Alberta relies on members of our communities coming out and helping us bring

in the harvest. Potato graders, truck drivers and machinery operators are essential to our industry, and we are so grateful for the work that they do on our farms, and we hope to see them back again year after year.

In the coming weeks, some growers will shift into planning for the Post Harvest season, preparing for the shipping season that will begin in the next couple weeks and some possibly looking to make additional sales. Much of the seed potatoes grown in Alberta are under agreement already with long term customers looking for reliable access to clean seed. That being said, our 2023 Seed Potato Directory should be out in early November for those still looking for seed for the 2024 planting season.

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Top photos: Matt Visser of Norbest Farms Ltd. filling last harvest load of potatoes. Bottom Left & Middle: Great North Seed Potatoes Ltd. harvest and sorting. Bottom right: Hoogland Farms harvest crew also sorting and removing unwanted potatoes, rocks and debris before spuds enter storage facility.



AG RELATIONS DIRECTOR - Rebecca Wieler



This fall has been wonderful overall. It is great to see how rapidly the crop has been harvested with minimal delays in most parts of Alberta, as well as Western Canada. The last month has been quite busy with planning for the upcoming north and south area meetings, where Michele Konschuh will be giving a presentation on the Blackleg Project that is wrapping up in 2024.

A couple weeks ago, I spent a few days up in Edmonton with Stacey Bajema and Cody Van Driesten from Edmonton Potato Growers (EPG) learning how to operate the Smart Spud. The Smart Spud is a potato shaped sensor that allows you to see where damage or bruising may be occurring on the line or in the harvester. It is intended to reduce crop damage, minimizing bruising, shatter damage and blackspots. The Smart Spud measures the damage caused by the impact your potatoes are receiving during processing to pinpoint and fix the root causes. We ran the Smart Spud down various

potato lines on different farms, as well as through a few harvesters.

In the coming months, we have Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) Update workshops planned. The EFP is a voluntary, whole farm, self-assessment tool that helps producers identify their environmental risks and develop plans to mitigate identified risks. This program began in 2003 and the current update is required for most government programs regarding on-farm funding, ie: SCAP and will continue to be more prominent in the future. In the past, the PGA has hosted these programs for the growers to ensure eligibility.

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L-R: On Sandhills Seeds Inc. field, Rebecca adding potato sensor to harvester with crew, Stacey and Tony Kirkland watching potatoes go through the equipment.

BUILDING ON A SOLID FOUNDATION

ENVIRONMENTAL FARM PLAN

**UPCOMING ALBERTA
EFP WORKSHOPS**

South Area - October 17, 18 & 19

North Area - November 8 & 9

For more info click here

PROVINCIAL NEWS



PGA **GREY EAGLE**
RESORT & CASINO
ON THE BEAUTIFUL TRULY ALBERTA NATION
Calgary, Alberta

November 20-22, 2023

2023 ALBERTA POTATO CONFERENCE & TRADESHOW

ATB
Corporate Sponsor

REGISTER/SPONSOR
FOR MAIN CONFERENCE

Registration
deadline
November 1st

BOOK A SPACE
FOR TRADESHOW
+ MEALS

HOTEL INFORMATION:

To book hotel rooms, call 1.844.719.8777 or 403.719.8777 and provide Group #596701 and mention the Potato Growers of Alberta. Booking deadline is October 29th. Alternative partner hotel is the Blackfoot Hotel room block 403.252.2253 and also mention Potato Growers of Alberta conference.

NEW THIS YEAR...

During the Welcome Reception, we will be having a Tater Toss Tournament (cornhole) Teams of two can sign up. Winners will take home the boards. Start thinking about your potato-related team name. Call the office for more information and to register!



ALBERTA POTATO CONFERENCE & TRADESHOW



SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

	PLATINUM \$5000	GOLD \$2500	SILVER \$1500	BRONZE \$750	SUPPORTER <\$750
Recognition on social media FB, Twitter, Instagram	3 SOLO shoutouts	3 Shared shoutouts	2 Shared shoutouts	1 Shared shoutouts	
Logo on banquet slideshow	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Verbal recognition during sponsored event	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Display pop-up banner at sponsored event	2	1			
Recognized in December newsletter	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Logo on digital TV display	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Complimentary registration	2	1			

Recognition on social media
FB, Twitter, Instagram

Logo on banquet slideshow

Verbal recognition during
sponsored event

Display pop-up banner
at sponsored event

Recognized in December
newsletter

Logo on digital TV display

Complimentary registration

THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS SPONSORS!

- OPPORTUNITIES...**
- Monday PM Break
 - Monday Welcome Reception
 - Tuesday Breakfast
 - Tuesday AM Break
 - Tuesday Lunch
 - Tuesday PM Break
 - Tuesday Banquet
 - Wednesday Breakfast
 - Wednesday AM Break
 - Wednesday Lunch
- Partner's Program
 - Tater Toss Game Sponsors (bean bag)
 - Banquet Centerpiece Sponsor
 - Banquet Menu Card Sponsor
- *First come first serve. Please call office for more details.



**Deadline is
October 31st**

UPCOMING FALL AREA MEETINGS



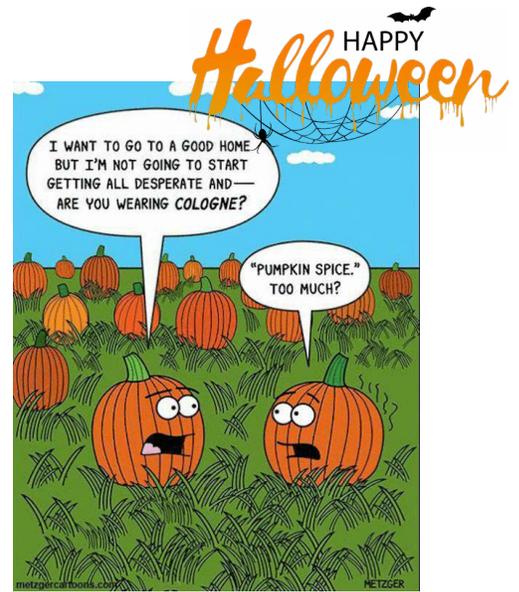
SOUTH AREA MEETING

OCTOBER 24
HERITAGE INN - TABER
8:00 AM BREAKFAST

NORTH AREA MEETING

OCTOBER 25
HOLIDAY INN & SUITES - NISKU
6:00 PM SUPPER

AGENDA WILL FOLLOW



NEW PGA SWAG FOR SALE...

- Light-weight Hoodies
- Heavy-weight Hoodies
- Ball tees (3/4 length sleeve)
- PGA Caps

Come check them out at the office!



Top Photos: Boston Farms Ltd. potato harvest in Coaldale. Bottom: Rocky Trail Farms Ltd. harvest in Purple Springs. All looking forward to the end.



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