

THE POTATO MINUTE

APRIL 2024

Growing Healthy Potatoes Together



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT - Terence Hochstein



It's the 1st of April and southern Alberta has finally received a blanketing cover of snow. Over the last two weeks, most of the south received up to a foot of snow. This was a welcomed sight, but will do little to rectify the inevitable. The province has been under a drought for the last 5-6 years and we need a major change in the weather patterns. In talking to growers from other growing areas in western North America, most are extremely dry. One of our growers was visiting family in Iowa a week ago and on their drive home, never encountered any snow until they reached central North Dakota, and even then, it was only a dusting. We need another month of wet snow and then a rainy May and June to restore some of our empty reservoirs and replenish the soil moisture. With the rest of the province not having the luxury of irrigation, the concern with everyone is that the entire province is extremely dry going into spring. The current realization is that every river in the province is well below its normal water flow for this time of year. The next 4-6 weeks will be extremely critical to the production of food for the coming year. Here's hoping for a wet May and June.

With the month of April, most of our seed industry is ramping up for the inevitable rush to get seed moving. Some farms have been shipping consistently for the last 3 - 4 weeks into the US market. The growers in the southern basin of Washington are already about three weeks in on their CY 24 planting. The north basin started planting last week. In contrast, by the end of April, the Alberta industry will be well into planting as well.

The week of March 4th -7th, Tony Kirkland, Gord Visser, Russ Van Boom, Stacey, Rebecca and myself were privileged to be able to attend the 102nd Annual Fruit and Vegetable Growers of Canada AGM in Ottawa.



"Fresh Approach: Navigating Modern Challenges" FVGC Grower Panel title at the FVGC AGM in March.

Prior to the AGM, the Canadian Potato Council had their spring meeting and strategic planning session on March 4th, as well as the United Potato Growers of Canada spring meeting. The four days was intense, but well worth it. I think the growers that attended will agree that with Alberta being so far from Ottawa, our representation in these national organizations still give our provincial industry a much needed voice in the federal arena. We are fortunate to be a part of these great organizations.

Our March 12th and 19th, spring area grower meetings were once again, well attended by both growers and industry associates. We work very hard to bring as many people as possible together across all aspects of our industry twice a year for grower meetings, including our golf tournament, the potato conference and tradeshow and the APIA Burgers and Beans BBQ. The Alberta potato industry is very fortunate to have the relationships that we do between our grower base, our processors, buyers and the industry partners that make up the forward thinking industry.

On the contract front, the Alberta contracts are now behind us and most growers already have the volume for CY 24. Although some of our sectors are down in acres this year, there is some positive growth in other areas. By the first of June, we will have a good idea of what was planted in Alberta for this upcoming year. Washington and Alberta remain the only areas that are complete on their contracts.

Here's hoping that the snow continues, followed by a wet spring with abundant rain.

Until next month,

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GOV'T RELATIONS-POLICY-SEED DIRECTOR - Stacey Bajema



March is one of the busiest months on a seed potato farm. Alberta has hundreds of trucks leaving our farms and headed to many destinations across Canada and south of the border. Many of our commercial growers, here in Alberta, are also starting to send trucks to the northern seed districts to pick up their shipments for the upcoming season. It is an exciting time in our industry, as it marks the beginning of a new growing season.

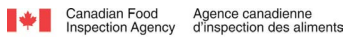
For the PGA, this past month, it was spent connecting with growers and partnering organizations to collaborate and discuss policy for the year ahead. Grower area meetings continue to be very well attended by growers and are a primary way for the industry to communicate changes and opportunities coming to the industry. The engagement of potato growers and our industry partners continues to be one of our industry's greatest strengths.



Team Alberta Crops is an organization made up of Alberta Pulse, Alberta Grains, Alberta Canola, Alberta Sugar Beet Growers AB/BC Seed Growers, Alberta Beekeepers and the Potato Growers of Alberta. The group advocates together on common issues affecting Alberta field crop growers and beekeepers in Alberta. Recently, the group met in Edmonton to meet with various government ministries and officials to discuss topics such as water management, value-add processing and land use management. The event also included an evening reception for producers, commissions and members of government to interact on issues affecting Alberta farms. We are grateful for all the hard work that went into putting this event together and look forward to doing it all again next year.



The Fruit and Vegetable Growers of Canada met in Ottawa this month for their annual general meeting. This is a crucial time for the organization as groups provide direction for FVGC on advocating for issues of trade, industry standards and crop protection, among other things. The PGA is especially grateful for work done by the organization recently to advocate for higher borrowing limits for the [APP loan program](#) and the passing of Bill C-234 in its original form to exempt farmers from paying carbon taxes on various farm fuels.



ANNUAL ADJUSTMENT OF CFIA SERVICE FEES

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) adjusts its [service fees](#) annually based on the Consumer Price Index in accordance with the Service Fees Act. This requirement ensures that the CFIA's service fees keep pace with the costs of providing services.

The next annual adjustment will result in an increase of the service fees by 6.8% as of March 31, 2024.

This fee increase reflects the percentage change over 12 months in the [April All-items CPI for Canada](#), published by Statistics Canada, for the previous fiscal year.

More information on [Adjusting service fees for inflation](#) is available on the CFIA's website.



Team AB Crops Lobby Days - Edmonton (AB Legislative Bldg Tour)

Top L-R: Stacey Bajema, Alison Davie-PGA Bd Chair, Gary Tokariuk-ABSG President, Honourable R.J Sigurdson-AB Ag & Irrigation Minister, Scott Jespersen-AB Grains, Amber Ozero-AB Bees, Jason Hale-AB Deputy Ag Minister, Shannon Sereda-AB Grains, Bottom: Wayne Schneider - AB Canola Bd Member, Amber Ozero-AB Bees Bd Member, Stacey Bajema, Alison Davie - PGA Bd Chair



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AGRICULTURAL RELATIONS DIRECTOR - Rebecca Wieler



As a new crop year approaches, the PGA Research Committee is excited to support four new potato research projects beginning in the fields soon. Researchers from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Lethbridge College, and the University of Lethbridge have submitted proposals to the PGA Research Committee and a select few were approved to support the Alberta Potato Growers.



University of
Lethbridge



Faculty of Arts & Science

Dr. Michele Konschuh, with the University of Lethbridge will be leading a project investigating *powdery scab*. Powdery scab is a long-lived parasite that affects potatoes by forming root galls and tuber lesions. There are no fungicides registered in Canada to control or suppress this disease. This research project aims to determine the impact of rotational crops and weeds on powdery scab, as well as the presence of potato mop top virus (PMTV). This project will involve collecting soil samples, evaluating crop plants and weeds for powdery scab, and using molecular techniques to detect the presence of *S. subterranea* and PMTV. The project will provide information on the current levels of powdery scab in participating potato fields, the impact of rotational crops on powdery scab, the presence of PMTV in powdery scab, and the role of weeds in powdery scab persistence. This project aims to provide recommendations to producers regarding crop rotations, weed control and variety selection to reduce the soil inoculum level of powdery scab and mitigate its impact on potato production in Alberta.

Dr. Michele Konschuh is also working on a project titled '*Coordinating Soil Health Research in Alberta*'. This project aims to develop a soil health research framework for Alberta to guide future projects. She will conduct a literature review of soil health practices relevant to Alberta, engage with researchers, producers, agronomists, and industry to discuss recent efforts to improve soil health practices, and to draft several research proposals to address research gaps regarding soil health. This literary review is necessary to build off of existing research and to develop Alberta specific proposals to address *Alberta specific needs*.

College with collaboration from the Canadian Light Source (CLS) in Saskatoon and the University of Manitoba. The research team will be investigating the impact of different sprout suppressants, including Chlorpropham (CIPC) on the structural and compositional changes in stored potatoes. The research outcome will provide new insights into the micro/cellular level changes in potatoes during storage, benefiting breeding programs, producer storage managers and processors. The project will also develop a non-destructive screening technique using near infrared (NIR) hyperspectral imaging to evaluate seed potato quality.



Agriculture and
Agri-Food Canada

Dr. Jonathan Neilson with AAFC will be working on a project that aims to address the issues of *heat stress in potato production in Alberta*, which is a recurring problem that is likely to worsen over time. The project will evaluate different land and crop management practices to reduce heat stress, including the use of cover crops and nurse crops to lower soil and canopy temperatures. This project will also examine the use of commercial products to alter plant physiology and increase heat stress resistance, such as glycine betaine and algae extract. Another focus of this project is to examine the role of plant fertility in promoting heat stress recovery, particularly the application of water-soluble calcium to reduce heat stress symptoms in potatoes. This project will provide recommendations and guidelines to potato growers on how to lessen the impact of heat stress through crop and land management, as well as how to set up and run evaluation trials for products and management practices on their farms.

The PGA Research Committee is looking forward to continued collaboration with our Alberta Potato Researchers to maintain an innovative and progressive industry in the province.



CENTRE FOR
APPLIED RESEARCH,
INNOVATION AND
ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The research project submitted by Dr. Chandra Singh aims to study the structural and compositional changes in stored potatoes during pre and post dormancy break using synchrotron sourced imaging. It will be conducted at the Lethbridge

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PROVINCIAL NEWS



Call for
Groundbreakers
& Game Changers



ALBERTA AGRICULTURE HALL OF FAME AWARD

Deadline For Nominations May 3, 2024

The Alberta Agriculture Hall of Fame was created in 1951 to recognize individuals on a biennial cycle who have made significant contributions to the agriculture and food industry and to the development and sustainability of rural life in Alberta.

Alberta Agriculture and Irrigation ceremonially inducts up to 3 individuals every 2 years. The Selection Panel is appointed by the Deputy Minister and is comprised of a cross-section of panelists representing Alberta's agriculture industry.

Eligibility

Individuals, who have demonstrated leadership in farm, rural or commodity organizations, or in the food industry, are eligible for the Alberta Agriculture Hall of Fame. Leadership must have been demonstrated over many years at the provincial level, and the candidate must have made a significant province-wide impact on the industry as a whole.

Nominations

A candidate must be nominated by 3 individuals other than members of the candidate's immediate family. Nominators may submit a nomination on behalf of an organization or independently as individuals.



[Click here for more info](#)

Speak up for Agriculture and Win BIG!

The Calgary Stampede and the Alberta Young Speakers for Agriculture are combining forces to create an exciting NEW opportunity to showcase youth who are passionate about public speaking and agriculture with \$15,000 in prizes and awards, and the opportunity to win a trip to Nationals in Toronto.

Youth in the Junior Division (11-15) and Senior Division (16-24) will choose one of the two preliminary competitions to compete:

Olds, Alberta

Olds College
Monday, July 8, 2024

Calgary, Alberta

Stampede Park
Friday, July 12, 2024

Top 5 qualifiers from each preliminary competition and division will earn the opportunity to compete at the Youth Agriculture Speaking Championships at Stampede Park on Saturday, July 13, 2024.

Registration Closes June 30, 2024



The Calgary Stampede and the Alberta Young Speakers for Agriculture are excited to announce the Youth Agriculture Speaking Championships this July. Youth who are passionate about public speaking and agriculture will have the opportunity to compete in this new competition format with \$15,000 in prizes & awards.

Winners will also receive a trip to Toronto to compete in Canadian Young Speakers for Agriculture Finals in November.

Please note, youth participating are not required to have a background in agriculture, but rather just a desire to learn and speak about it!



Visit ag.calgarystampede.com/events/youth-speaking for topics, contest details, registration and more!



For more event information, visit:
www.ag.calgarystampede.com/events/youth-speaking



POTATO GROWERS OF CANADA

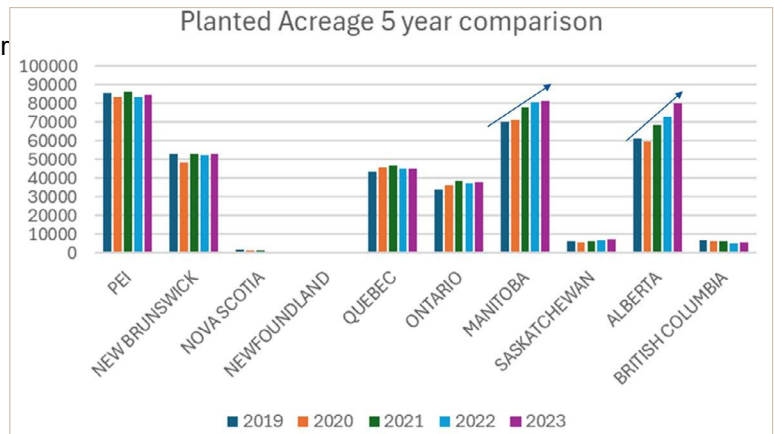
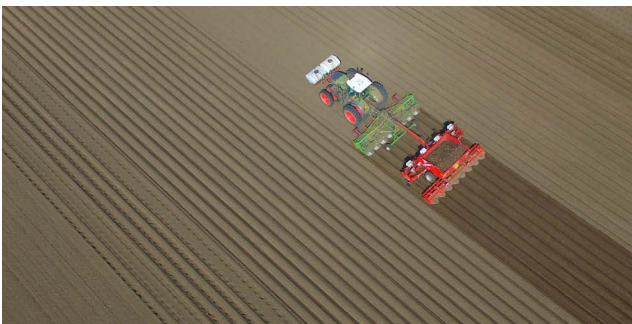
LES PRODUCTEURS UNIS DE POMMES DE TERRE DU CANADA

So how did we start the year? Well, we can certainly see the impact of the high levels of precipitation in the east and very good yields in the west in our overall production numbers and highlighted comparisons to last year. Overall, Canada did hit record production at 128 million cwt, but most of that growth was in the processing sector and particularly in Alberta and Manitoba.

PROVINCE	Statistics Canada Report December 5, 2023				PRODUCTION COMPARISON		
	Planted Acreage	Harvested Acreage	Yield	Production ('000 cwt)	2023 VS. 2022	2022	2021
PEI	84,500	83,000	311	25,813	-7.1%	27,789	27,209
NEW BRUNSWICK	52,815	50,515	295	14,879	-12.5%	17,000	18,200
NOVA SCOTIA	800	780	285	222	-7.5%	240	357
NEWFOUNDLAND	425	370	134	50	-3.8%	52	55
TOTAL MARITIMES	138,540	134,665		40,964	-9.1%	45,081	45,821
QUEBEC	44,919	43,873	292	12,805	-10.3%	14,278	14,100
ONTARIO	37,700	37,400	230	8,602	5.4%	8,160	8,953
MANITOBA	81,000	80,000	372	29,760	13.9%	26,139	24,024
SASKATCHEWAN	7,300	7,200	247	1,780	22.8%	1,450	1,519
ALBERTA	80,100	76,440	420	32,063	19.6%	26,813	24,614
TOTAL PRAIRIES	168,400	163,640		63,603	16.9%	54,402	50,157
BRITISH COLUMBIA	5,830	5,790	370	2,140	33.8%	1,600	2,080
TOTAL CANADA	395,389	385,368	332	128,114	3.7%	123,520	121,111

This growth in production is, of course, also reflected in the overall planted acreage for the country which continues to increase, although not as big a jump as in 2021 or 2022. But if we look at each province for the last 5 years we can see the larger increases in the west specifically in the processing sector. We expect this figure to rise again over the next couple of years with the planned expansion of the McCain facility in Coaldale, Alberta and other developments throughout North America. However this may stabilize after a couple of years unless we see more processing plant expansions or additions.

There is a potential for seed acres to increase, however fresh planted acres will likely remain stable.



CURRENT HOLDINGS

Province	March 2024	March 2023	% Change	5 year average
PEI	13,946	16,478	-15.4%	16,554
NB	6,064	7,660	-20.8%	8,261
Quebec	5,978	6,212	-3.8%	7,216
Ontario	3,850	3,422	12.5%	4,088
Manitoba	14,493	10,950	32.4%	13,209
Alberta	19,186	13,189	45.5%	15,298
BC	508	292	74.0%	559
TOTAL	64,025	58,203	10.0%	65,185

Although storages are at record levels, if we continue the current pace of movement in the table sector we could have stocks cleaned up in just shy of 5 months time. There is still concern about the high levels of processing potatoes, which may get reflected in planting intentions for 2024 as processors will be hesitant to take early harvest if stock levels remain high.

It is important to note that experience shows quality in storage will continue to deteriorate in general which will, of course, impact the total pile left to move.

Submitted by - Victoria Stamper, UPGC General Manager
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FROM THE OFFICE

HOME GARDEN & LEISURE SHOW - LETHBRIDGE



Trina getting potatoes looking show quality, Deb & Juanita ready for visitors.



L-R: PGA Chair, Alison and Michael Davie ready for their shift to speak to consumers, Mark Miyanaga, Dustin Monson and ED - Terence Hochstein having good conversations with people interested in Alberta potatoes, happy recipients of their "I Love Alberta Potatoes" stickers **THANK YOU TO ALL OUR WONDERFUL VOLUNTEERS AND POTATO DONORS FOR THE DISPLAY!**

SPRING AREA MEETINGS



Top L-R: North Area Meeting group, Mike Harding - AAFC, Russ Stewart - Promax Agronomy.
Bottom L-R: Greg Nakamura - PGA Negotiations Chair, Deanna Klassen - AFSC, South Area Meeting group



FROM THE OFFICE



All About Potatoes!

There are **6 Processing Plants** in Alberta – for Frozen French Fries and Potato Chips!



Alberta Farmers Grow **Over 230 Varieties** of Potatoes for the Seed, Table and Processing Sectors



Alberta's Potato Industry Provides over **9400 Full-time Jobs** in Canada, of which **7380** are located in Alberta

Processing + Packing

Consumers + Exports

Alberta's Potato Industry Contributes over **\$2.87B** to Canada's Economy, **\$2.31B** stays here in Alberta

160

Alberta Potato Producers Grew About **80,100 Acres** of Potatoes in 2023!

Alberta Potato Growers

Tissue Culture

Hotel reservations @ Grey Eagle 1.844.719.8777, 403.719.8777 reservations@greyeagle.ca
Mention Group ID#66202 or Code PGADEL24 (only for this hotel).

****Hotel Option 2: Blackfoot Inn-Calgary**
403.252.2253

****Mention Potato Growers of Alberta (only for this hotel).**
Book by October 1, 2024

2024
ALBERTA POTATO CONFERENCE & TRADESHOW



November
19-21

Grey Eagle Resort & Casino - Calgary, Alberta

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When you think potatoes, think Alberta





The following individuals are recognized for their long-standing contribution to the APIA and have been awarded a Lifetime Membership to our association.

Corah, Chuck	Jensen, Wayne	Nelis, Jacques
Gash, Brian	Kaiser, Dave	Oikawa, Tricky,
Gouw, Arie	Mitchell, Peter	Sandberg, Phil
Hacker, Bill	Mrak, Tony	

The following individuals are members in good standing of the APIA for the 2024 calendar year:

Andrews, Nathan	Duell, Gary	Iwan, Josh	Mackinnon, Kevin	Quiring, Cassidy	Trempler, Darren
Bareman, Kelsi	Duell, Michael	Janssens, Blayne	Marshall, Robin	Rattray, Desiree	Trottier, Donna
Barnes, Autumn	Duesing, Scott	Jennings, Mike	McBroom, Henry	Richard, Marc	Van Eedan Petersman, Lloyd
Bauman, Gerald	Durrin Gentry, Jenny	Jensen, Brad	Meier, Whitney	Ritchie, Mike	VanBerkel, Wim
Bell, Jared	Durnall, Simon	Jensen, Ryan	Menkveld, Andrew	Russell, Jessie	VandenDool, Ed
Bexte, Taylor	Dykstra, Ray	Kaiser, Dave	Michalezki, Brynn	Sawatzky, Kirby	Vermette, Brian
Bonertz, Terry	Engleson, Kristi	Keys, Scott	Michielsen, Frank	Scholing, Karlo	Visser, Darryl
Bos, Johan	Finch, Melanie	Kinniburgh, Shaun/Stacey	Miller, Alex	Schuppler, Steve	Vossepoel, Adam
Bos, Tim	Fletcher, Blake	Kirkham, George	Molenaar, Reegan	Schutter, Ehren	Walter, Greg
Boychuk, Sarah	Fletcher, Braden	Klassen, Greg	Morris, Patrick	Slingerland, Tim	Warkentin, Bruce
Brehaut, Randy	Fletcher, Bruce	Kleisinger, Chad	Mrak, Tony	Slomp, Harry	Waugh, Jeremy
Brewin, Lindsay	Fletcher, Derrick	Knitel, Georgina	Nagata, Cameron	Slomp, Jordan	West, TJ
Burton, Luke	Forbush, Todd	Konyonenbelt, Marlin	Nelis, Brian	Smienk, Susan	Wilson, Barb
Claassen, Chantal	Gallant, Dave	Kowalchuk, Nolan	Nelubowich, Adam	Smith, Kevin	Wind, Jeremy
Claassen, Lauren	Garos, Dirk	Krautkramer, Josh	Nicholson, Joe	Sorensen, Martin	Workman, Brodie
Coleman, Doug	Gash, Brian	Kruk, Adam	Nikles, Brendan	St. Laurent, Ed	Wynker, Sara
Collins, Collin	Gavin, Tim	Kuepfer, Edwin	Nyborg, Bruce	Stevenson, Kelly	Zarazun, Owen
Cousins, Trent	Gillespie, Scott	Kuizenga, Al	Olson, Darcy	Stewart, Craig	Zuber, Wojciech
Dahlen, Joe	Glas, Cobie	Kwiatkowski, Ryan	Orr, Bill	Stewart, Russ	
Day, Carol	Goertzen, Nathan	Lawson, Andrew	Pickles, Taunya	Stinnissen, Pat	
DeHaan, Jeff	Gouw, John	Lazar, Ioana	Pieters, Kristof	Stinson, Bryce	
Delisle, Mike	Gratton, Lawrence	Lewis, Kyla	Pluta, Denine	Stober, Brent	
Dilworth, Marty	Haacke, Aaron	Lyczewski, Laurie	Powers, Dan	Swanson, Charlotte	
Dok, Martin	Hanlon, Brendon	Lyon Blair	Quinn, Dean	Tavchandjian, Nico	
Draper, Derrick	Humble, Anthony	Mackenzie-Grieve, Rob	Quinton, Justin	Tetz, Andrew	

MEMBERSHIP

The Alberta Potato Industry Association (APIA) is composed of 'individuals' from many different areas of businesses. All of these people work with, and alongside, the potato growers in Alberta. Formed in 1990, the APIA participates and leads in various activities, such as APIA Burgers N' Beans, Alberta Potato Conference Trade Show, and hole sponsorships for the Annual PGA Golf Tournament. In addition to these events, the APIA is also a proud supporter and sponsor of Spuds and Tubs Alberta, PGA Area Meetings and Nuffield Scholarships relevant to the Potato Industry in Alberta.

Membership into the APIA is \$55/year to 'individuals' of a business.

Membership benefits include: name exposure to growers and industry via the PGA's "Potato Minute", early access to events such as the Alberta Potato Conference Trade Show, an invitation to Burgers N Beans, and the opportunity to help out and meet growers and industry people involved in the Alberta Potato Industry.

Our industry, along with the APIA, has experienced much growth, in part, by combined efforts of many individuals who have taken the time to get involved. If you are interested in membership, please reach out to geraldine@grattonmechanical.ca with your contact information. She will work with you to get a membership set up.