

The Potato Minute

March 1, 2020



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT - Terence Hochstein

Although it is still winter here in Alberta, our seed growers have already begun their busy seed shipping season. For the past couple of weeks, truckloads of Alberta seed have been steadily moving south into the US markets. Most of the seed growers have indicated that their entire sheds are committed to, and they all wish they had a few more tons of available seed to move. The demand for good quality Alberta seed is very strong this year, with exceptional international, interprovincial and local demand.

The southern Basin in Washington is expecting to start planting the last week of February, if the weather holds. Once this begins, it is only a matter of time before the other growing areas begin their spring planting process.

With spring soon around the corner, most all processing areas across North America are engaged in contract talks with their respective processors. While the demand for frozen potato products continues to rise across the globe, so does the need for good quality raw product. As the discussions unfold, both parties are striving to obtain a contract that will allow each side to remain both sustainable and profitable...

more on this topic at a later date.

On the home front, the PGA is excited to welcome two new staff members to our Team. Juanita Stange will be re-joining the PGA on a part-time basis as our Administrative Assistant. She is replacing Roberta Sebok, who retired in December to reside with her family in the Crowsnest Pass. Juanita worked for the PGA about 15 years ago as the Administrative Assistant.

Stacey Bajema will be joining the PGA the 1st week of March. She will be replacing Deb Hart in Edmonton, as our new Seed Coordinator. Deb officially retired on

December 31st, but will remain under contract to train Stacey and fulfill some of her national appointments. Deb is leaving the PGA after 15 years of dedicated service to the potato industry to spend more time with her husband and grandchildren.



April 1-5th is Aggie Days in Calgary. This is an opportunity to get in front of over 30,000 school children and the general public to talk about our industry and what we do to feed the world. If you have some spare time and would be willing to volunteer, please contact Deb Brewin for more information.

March 9-12th, the Horticultural Industry will be meeting in Ottawa for the 98th Annual Canadian Horticultural Council AGM. If you want to get a first hand look at what we do as an industry at the national level, plan to join us. More information can be found on the CHC website: www.hortcouncil.ca.



Until next month.

Terence
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SEED COORDINATOR UPDATE- Deb Hart

Documents For Shipping Seed

A reminder to contact CFIA as soon as possible for shipping point inspections to the US, and to have all documents available for your customers during the busy shipping season:



- BRR Results** (PCR testing only accepted for shipments to Idaho).

Even if you grow only one or two seed lots for your own use, the BRR test is a CFIA requirement and must be performed. All seed lots leaving the farm must be BRR tested, regardless if shipments are within Alberta, Canada or outside of Canada.

- PCN test results** for shipments to the US.

- North American Plant Health Certificate for shipments to the US.

- All paperwork for domestic and bulk shipments

Post-harvest test results, visual and/or lab test and Field Inspection Results

Most customers request copies of these documents and it is a contract requirement for commercial growers; these documents must be available if requested by the Processor. This requirement is for **ALL SEED GROWERS**, including process growers growing their own seed for commercial production.

North & South Area Meetings

Plan to attend the North and South Area Meetings to receive reports from the Canadian Horticulture Council AGM, as well as updates to national and provincial programs pertaining to the Seed Industry. The North Area Meeting will take place Tuesday, March 17th, at the Holiday Inn & Suites, 1100 – 4th Street, Nisku (east of the airport & Hwy #2 on the north side of the street). The meeting will begin at 6:00 p.m., with dinner. The South Area Meeting will take place at the Heritage Inn, Taber, beginning at 8:00 a.m. with breakfast on Thursday, March 19th. Hope to see you there.



New Contact Information

Stacey Bajema has been hired to take over the position of Seed Coordinator, starting March 2nd , and you can reach her by calling 780-415-2305. I will continue to be an employee of the PGA, mentoring Stacey for a period of time, however, if you wish to reach me, you can do so by calling my cell or sending an email.

*deb@albertapotatoes.ca
780.722.9395*

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FARM DAYS**

**A HUGE THANK YOU TO THE VOLUNTEERS, POTATO
DONORS AND OLD DUTCH FOODS AND PEPSICO FRITO-LAY
FOR THE POTATO CHIPS FOR AG EXPO THIS WEEK!**



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ROCK BOTTOM POTATOES INC.

AGRICULTURAL DIRECTOR - Thomas McDade

Hello all. It has been another busy fall and winter so far. For the most part, it has been a much gentler winter than in the last couple of years and it's almost March. Spring should just be around the corner. I hope that everyone has a chance to enjoy some time off, before we are back in the fields again.

Once again, the PGA research portfolio has been busy, with existing and some new projects. It seems like it was only yesterday we were in Red Deer at the AGM, but there has been a lot of miles since then. Since the AGM, I have been in Ottawa, attending Canada / US Potato Council meetings, in Las Vegas at the Potato Expo as well as Charlottetown, attending the Potato Technology Expo. Of course the conference featured a lot of content on potato diseases and bugs, however, I did note that there is more and more content on new variety development, precision Ag and soil health. In particular, topics relating to soil health are becoming more prevalent. Soil health related topics have also been well represented by many booths at the tradeshows.

The national research initiatives, that the PGA supports, grew this last year as funding was finally secured for The Canadian Potato Early Die Network (CanPEDNet). The researcher that has led this program is Dr. Mario Tenuta, from the University of Manitoba, as part of Growing Forward II. For the current research program, Dr. Tenuta will be collaborating with the University of Lethbridge Potato Research Chair, Dr. Dmytro Yevtushenko.

As part of the CanPEDNet, Dmytro and a number of students were out this last fall, collecting soil samples from a representative sample of fields that are earmarked for potatoes next year. In total, there were 32 fields from which soil samples were obtained from across the potato growing region in Southern Alberta.

There were two things that the soil samples were tested for. First the levels of *Verticillium dahliae* was assessed by the Agricultural Certification Services Lab, in Fredericton, NB. Of the 32 soil samples submitted, virtually all were found to have very low levels of *Verticillium microsclerotia* present. Most of these soil samples were found to have 12 microsclerotia propagules per gram of soil, and in most cases much lower. Overall, this is an excellent result as the economic threshold for *Verticillium Dahliae*, per gram of soil, is in the 8 to 12 range.

The soil samples were also analyzed for Nematodes by the PEI Potato Quality Institute in Charlottetown. Dmytro is currently analyzing these results.

Let's hope that as February draws to an end, March will continue to greet us with more mild temperatures. Hopefully the old expression of "out like a lamb, in like a lion" won't come true.

Thank you, and as always, don't forget to take a moment and work safe!

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403.892.7184*



Efficient Grain Dryer Program - CAP Funding



The **Efficient Grain Dryer Program** is an energy efficiency program intended to assist producers with reducing the overall energy use on their operations. The program will only fund equipment that shows a significant energy efficiency improvement over standard practice.

Eligible activities include:

Grain dryer and grain drying system components that significantly improve energy efficiency above standard configuration are eligible under the program. These components can be factory options on new equipment or retrofits installed on existing equipment. For more information, visit https://cap.alberta.ca/CAP/content/EFFICIENT_GRAIN_DRYER

PROVINCIAL NEWS



BRINGING THE FRESH TO ALBERTA'S FOOD BANKS.

Together with Alberta's growers and producers, food banks can provide more nutritious foods to Albertan's struggling with food insecurity.

Alberta Hunger Stats:

Key Alberta provincial statistics from HungerCount 2019:

- o 89,821 visits to a food bank in March 2019.
- o 45% of food banks in Alberta reported an increase in visits.
- o 38% of visits were children under the age of 18, compared to 34% nationally.
- o 42.7% of visits were single households, an increase of 7% from 2018.
- o Of the households accessing food banks, 19.5% cited their primary income came from employment and 33.8% are on social assistance (a decrease of 3.3% from 2018).
- o 39% site social assistance or low benefits as being the main reason for accessing a food bank, 20% site low wages and 11% site unemployment or job loss.

Key points on hunger trends in Alberta:

- o Provincially, visits to a food bank have dropped over the last three years, however, almost half of food banks reporting in Alberta experienced an increase in visits.
- o The percentage of visits by children continues to be high and exceeds the national average of visits.
- o The number of employed Albertans accessing the food bank continues to be higher than other provinces.
- o Single people make up the highest percentage of those

accessing the food bank, compared to those with 2 or more individuals in their family type. Single adults' access has increased with the rise of basic living costs, and limited government supports available.

Read Food Banks Canada entire HungerCount 2019 here: <https://hungercount.foodbankscanada.ca/>

Edmonton Food Bank and Little Potato Company Articles:

<https://www.edmontonsfoodbank.com/uploads/potato-harvest-fort-edmonton-park/>

Potato Distribution by the #'s:

Potatoes are a staple item in Alberta, including in food bank client hampers for almost all 95 members of Food Banks Alberta. No one understands the nutritional benefit a potato provides better than you, our provinces valued growers. Your donations continue to support Alberta's food banks in their mission to provide hampers that are packed with wholesome fresh foods.

Calgary Food Bank distributes between 30,000 lbs. to 50,000 lbs. of potatoes per month, to food bank clients and agencies serving vulnerable populations in the city.

Edmonton's Food Bank distributed approximately 14,000 lbs. of potatoes per month to food bank clients and agencies serving vulnerable populations in the city.



Source: Jaimee Larson, Food Bank Fresh Alberta

PROVINCIAL NEWS



Evaluate the Types of Emergencies

For your farm, what are the emergency situations that could happen? Build a list of all emergencies that could possibly occur. For example; Structural Fire, Medical Emergency, Work Alone Rescue, Grain Engulfment, Wild Fire, Tornado, Blizzard, Flooding, Fall from Height Rescue, Confined Space Rescue, Power Line Contact, Vehicle Incident, etc. For each emergency, develop the response plan and decide who is responsible to get help.

Identify Emergency Response

When one of the identified emergencies happens, what do you do? What does your family do? What do your farm workers do? Go through the process of deciding what your emergency response will be for each type of emergency.

Locate Emergency Equipment

Based on the types of emergencies, develop a plan where you will have emergency response equipment for your farm. Consider the following ideas:

- Will each piece of motorized equipment have a first aid kit?
 - Where are your fire extinguishers? What type of fire extinguishers do you need on equipment?
 - Will you have an AED on your farm?
 - How will farm workers rinse their eyes if needed?
 - How will you maintain your emergency response equipment? Once you have the list, install the equipment and train everyone about where the equipment is stored and how to use it.
- Also discuss with your family and farm workers how to keep equipment in ready condition.

Key Contact Information

When an emergency happens, we have a hard time remembering what numbers to call.

Writing down the key contact numbers and posting these where family and farm workers can find them is an important step to any emergency response program. Consider posting contact numbers by the phone, on safety boards, and within each piece of motorized equipment on the farm.

Emergency preparation is best done sooner than later. Once you have your plan established, check it periodically to ensure that it is current and train your family and your farm workers about the program to help them prepare. When something happens, you will be glad you had a plan in place.

Source: agsafeab.ca

ACROSS THE COUNTRY

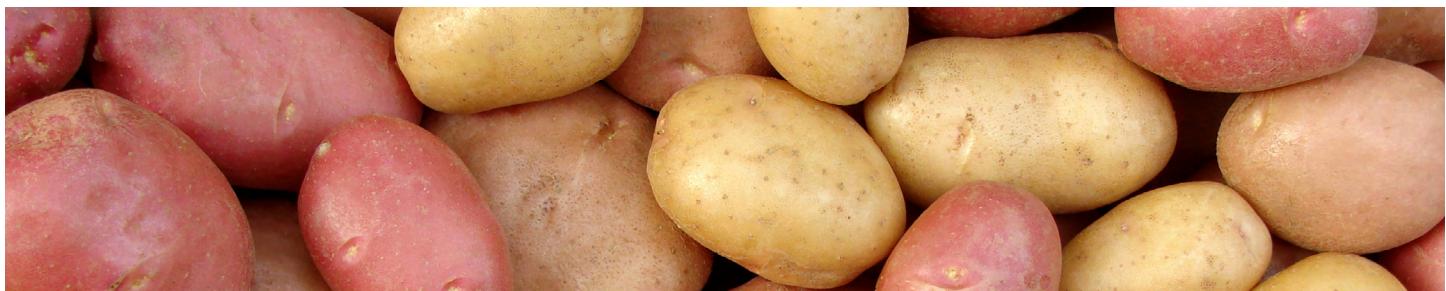


Canadian Potato Storage Holdings (**All Sectors**) by Province

Feb 1, 2020 Infohort: AAFC (000 cwt)

Province	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	3-yr. Average	2019-20	2020 vs. 3-yr. avg
Prince Edward I	16,439	16,019	14,470	15,643	16,292	+4.1%
New Brunswick	9,945	9,795	8,753	9,498	9,001	-5.2%
Quebec	6,611	6,706	6,154	6,490	6,838	+5.4%
Ontario	2,675	3,652	3,221	3,183	3,365	+5.7%
Eastern Canada	35,670	36,172	32,598	34,814	35,496	+2.0%
Manitoba	13,075	11,885	10,105	11,688	10,504	-10.1%
Alberta	11,811	14,003	13,547	13,120	14,051	+7.1%
British Columbia	651	481	654	595	526	-11.7%
Western Canada	25,537	26,369	24,306	25,403	25,081	-1.3%
Total Canada	61,207	62,541	56,903	60,217	60,577	+0.6%

Total Canadian Potato Storage Holdings on February 1 are slightly above the 3-yr. average at 60.6 million hundred weight. British Columbia, Manitoba, and New Brunswick report decreases of stocks on hand below their 3-yr. average. Provinces with more potatoes in storage than their 3-yr. average include, Alberta, Ontario, Quebec, and Prince Edward Island. Strong movement has decreased holdings in New Brunswick and British Columbia.



FROM THE OFFICE

SPRING AREA MEETINGS

NORTH AREA MEETING

**March 17, 2020
Holiday Inn & Suites
1100 - 4th St.
Nisku, AB**

Beginning with supper @ 6pm

Agenda to follow

SOUTH AREA MEETING

**March 19, 2020
Heritage Inn
Highway 3
Taber, AB**

Beginning with breakfast at 8am

Agenda to follow

Everyone welcome. Please plan on attending a meeting, as they include important industry updates.

**March 17: St Patick's Day
March 20: 1st Day of Spring**

PGA Office:
6008-46 Ave. Taber, AB T1G 2B1

Follow us on Facebook and Twitter @AlbertaPotatoes



**March 8, 2020
Daylight Savings**



Spring Forward

GROWER LICENSING FOR THE 2020 SEASON WILL BE SENT OUT TO EACH GROWER THIS MONTH. TO AVOID THE SPRING RUSH AND JULY DEADLINE, PLEASE SEND IN YOUR COMPLETED FORMS, INCLUDING LICENSE FEE, AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.



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Staff Editor: Deb Brewin

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PCA

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