

POTATO MINUTE



POTATO GROWERS OF ALBERTA

June 4, 2019

Executive Director - Terence Hochstein



A month ago I wrote that the east coast, in fact eastern Canada, was inundated with rain and flooding. Well here we are a month later and our peers from the east still do not have all of their crop planted. PEI and New Brunswick have half their crop planted at best. There are still acres to be seeded in Ontario and Quebec. Some of the north eastern states still have unseeded acres as well. When you add all of this up

there is a very good chance that some growers will run out of fall before they get their crop harvested. This is never a good situation when you know you are behind the 'eight ball' before you even get your crop in the ground. A recent quote I came across genuinely reflects the occupation we openly chose: - "And into the field I go to lose my mind and find my soul".

For those readers that think farming is still a 'lifestyle' you may want to consider having a cup of coffee with one of these above mentioned growers to get a full understanding of the physical, emotional and mental stress that they and their families go through when these types of years present themselves. Farming is not for the faint of heart as Mother Nature holds all of the cards.

Back in Alberta, our crop is coming along nicely. Most of the crop in the south will be out of the ground by the end of the week. The central and north areas are about two weeks behind the south, although that is not uncommon. Some of our early seeded crop in the south sat in the ground for seven weeks before emergence. The seed growing areas can

make up a lot of that time by having warm soil as they plant their crops. To date, the moisture in the central and north areas is adequate but that can change in a very short period of time. Without irrigation, our growers rely on weekly showers or rain events to get the crop through to maturity. Even some of our southern growers this year will have to manage their crops very carefully, as some irrigation districts are on allocation already. This usually means that some of the lessor valued crops are limited to their water in order to supply adequate amounts to the higher valued crops. Each operation has a finite amount of water and they must decide which crop gets what. Three years and counting, of below normal snowpack and rainfall is leaving everyone looking towards the skies for a reprieve. Southern Alberta has lived through this in the early 2000's and survived, we will make it through this again.

"And into the field I go to lose my mind and find my soul".

On the political front, there is an opportunity for the agricultural community to revisit the outcome of Bill 6, 17 and 30, enacted by the previous provincial government. The UCP government is in the process of reaching out to the producers in the province to see what is working and what requires change. One of the positive outcomes of these previous bills was the birth of AgSafe AB. This independent organization made up entirely of agricultural producers has made great inroads into creating a *Safety culture* in the Ag community. I don't believe there is a single Ag producer in the province that does not care about the safety of their family, their employees and anyone else who visits their farms. Many of these operations previously provided insurance coverage through private carriers and would like the opportunity to once again have that option of choosing between WCB and the private industry. More to come on this initiative in the months to come.

Until next month

Terence

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Reminder to submit your paperwork to your regional CFIA office to request field inspections for the upcoming season.

Also you need to inform CFIA of any lots that require PCN testing for export during the 2019/20 shipping season. If you aren't sure if a lot is destined for export, it's better to have it tested rather than lose an opportunity because it wasn't.

Also, as stated in an email sent to all licenced seed growers, PCN testing is no longer required to send post-harvest test samples for the grow out. If this has prevented you from sending samples in the past, this will not be a requirement for the 2019 and future crops and we look forward to including any samples you wish to send. More information regarding the 2019 PHT grow out will be sent to all licenced seed growers in August.

WASHINGTON STATE COMMERCIAL TRIALS

Washington State University will be holding their field day and commercial trials on Thursday, June 27th. The location is the Research Unit, 1471 W. Cox Road, Othello (6 miles east of Hwy 26/17 Junction on Booker Road, ¼ mile south of Hwy 26). If you sent seed to a commercial grower in Washington State, there is a very good chance a sample will be submitted for the trials. This is a good opportunity to see how your samples look, compare them to other samples (they have been inspected) and also meet with customers.

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June Theme Days:

- June 1: Say Something Nice Day
- June 3: Leave the Office Early Day
- June 4: Hug Your Cat Day
- June 7: Donut Day
- June 8: Companies That Care Day/Bike Naked Day
- June 12: Peanut Butter Cookies Day
- June 15: World Juggling Day
- June 17: Ride Your Motorcycle to Work Day
- June 19: World Sauntering Day
- June 20: Recess at Work Day
- June 23: Eat at a Food Truck Day
- June 24: PLEASE Take My Children to Work Day
- June 27: Micro, Small and Medium Sized Enterprises Day



June 17, 2019
Food Safety Conference & AGM - Calgary
\$175/person

Engage; *Exhibit*; Network; Inspire; Influence; learn!

8:00 am Exhibitors Setup
(Table Top Display Opportunities only \$385 includes 2 people to attend)

8:30 am REGISTRATION, Coffee - Nutrition - Networking

- Practical Root Cause Analysis for Allergen Management - NSF
- Food safety & traceability software by Provision Analytics
- The Gatekeepers of Food Safety

Where?

Best Western Premier Plaza Hotel
 1316 - 33 Street NE Calgary
 403.248.8888 or 1.800.661.1464 or res@calgaryplaza.com
 Reservation Group Rate Number: 43457

Reserve your spot!

[DOWNLOAD REGISTRATION FORM AND FULL CONFERENCE DETAILS](#)

Sign up more than one staff member or more than one course and save an additional 10% per person off these already discounted conference course rates

- June 18 Food Defense - \$600
- June 19 HACCP FS Leadership for Managers - \$600
- June 20 Food Safety Culture - \$600
- June 21 (AM) Food Fraud Vulnerability Assessment - \$300



FARMERS ON THE FRONTLINE

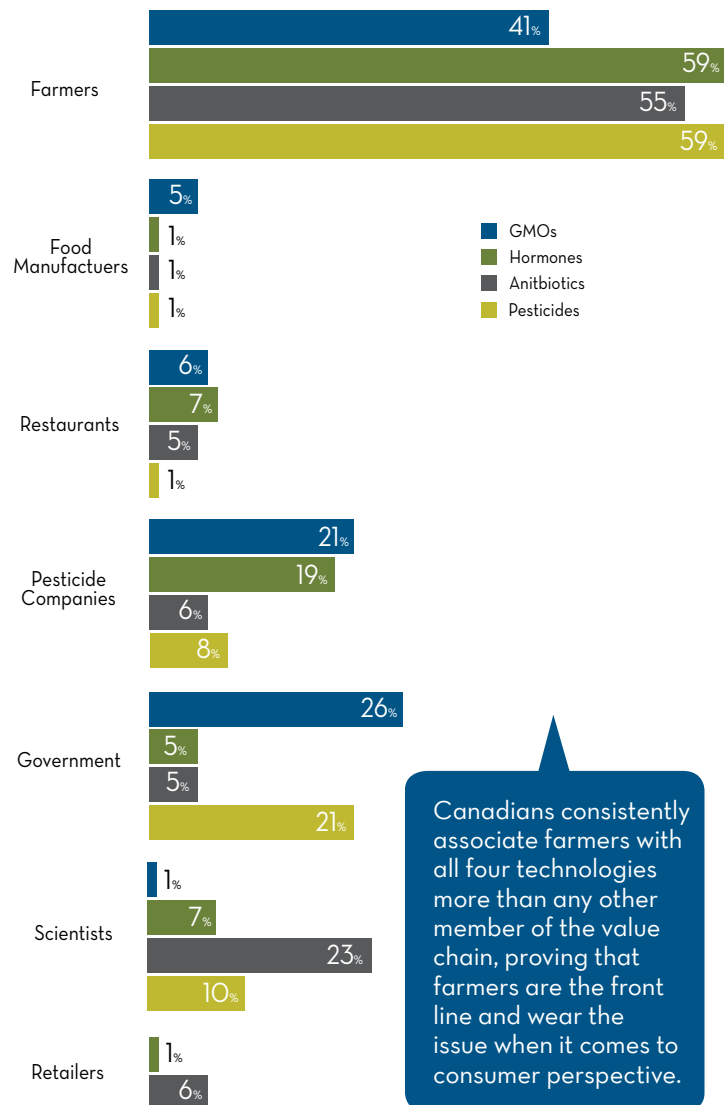
2019 Research on Food & Farming

While Canadians have varying opinions on the four individual technologies examined within the research (GMOs, Pesticides, Hormones and Antibiotics), there is one common theme all Canadians firmly associate with each of these technologies: farmers. Farmers are associated with these technologies more than any other member of the value chain proving that farmers are the front line and wear the issue when it comes to public opinion.

- 60% of the analyzed discussions associated pesticides with farmers, while only 21% associated pesticides with government, and only 10% with scientists.
- The results are similar for hormones, antibiotics, and GMOs.
- While GMOs were the least associated with farmers at 41%, this is still substantially more than the number of discussions that associate GMOs with the next closest stakeholder (government at 26%).

The implications on future messaging is significant; Canadians are not predisposed towards listening to assurances about government regulatory safety measures because government is not the primary stakeholder that is associated with the technology. In contrast, farmers have compelling stories and can act as key figures for educating the general public on agriculture issues. And when it comes to retailers, Canadians do not see a role for them in telling the story about why farmers need access to technologies.

STAKEHOLDERS ASSOCIATED WITH EACH ISSUE



Canadians consistently associate farmers with all four technologies more than any other member of the value chain, proving that farmers are the front line and wear the issue when it comes to consumer perspective.

Maintaining public trust will be an on-going issue for the agrifood sector

By Alex Binkley — National Newswatch — Apr 24 2019



Farm and food organizations have their own issues but maintaining public trust is one they must collaborate on.

Ottawa—When it comes to building and maintaining public trust in the food system, agriculture and processing organizations have to exit their silos and work together cooperatively, says Jean-Michel Couture of Groupe AGECO.

“We need a collective national approach to the issue and that includes ensuring we have the right ways to measure it,” he said in an interview about his presentation to a Public Trust Steering Committee (PTSC) workshop.

Developing public trust is “a long-haul project for the agrifood sector” he said. With the current level of interest in how food is produced, “it’s a challenge that’s here to stay. You have to make sure the message is being heard.”

Good is viewed as a public good and each part of the food system is being watched by the public, he said. “Agrifood is operating in a very unique system.

“We need a clear understanding of what’s already being done and how agrifood organizations are dealing with public views about the food system,” he said. “It’s not a matter where one size fits all but we have to discuss how we tell our story.”

It’s also important to have a reliable way of measuring public trust in food production practices that shows if progress is being made and why, he said.

As it currently stands, “there is no clear and consistent way to determine if, and to what extent, the activities undertaken by the overall industry and individual groups to build trust are effective.”

It’s necessary for agrifood to be able to prove its claims of food safety and sustainability and how the situation is steadily improving, he said. Then it must develop a strategy for communicating this information.

He also suggested that in addition to hard look at what’s working and what’s not in the agrifood industry, the sector should examine the steps the forestry and mining sectors are taking to develop public trust in their production practices and products. AGECO is a Quebec-based agrifood consulting firm that studies economic and social life cycle analysis and advises on corporate responsibility services.

Later this year, the PTSC will officially launch its program, which Couture said should set out an overall strategic plan along with one for every organization within the agrifood system and the way public trust will be measured. Organizations “will do their own business within the context of the Public Trust Framework. If everything is aligned, harmony is achievable.”

However the silos that dominate the agriculture sector need to be broken down, he said. “This is how public trust will work.”

The Framework will be able to use what works for one sector as an example for others to consider as part of their actions, he said.

PTSC was set up by the Canadian Centre for Public Integrity and Canadian Federation of Agriculture. Still to come is where the Public Trust Framework will be housed and who will run it.

-Alex Binkley is a freelance journalist and writes for domestic and international publications about agriculture, food and transportation issues. He’s also the author of two science fiction novels with more in the works.

Join us for the 2019 Annual PGA Golf Tournament

JULY 11
Paradise Canyon Golf Resort

Register online



Deadline is July 4th

What you need to know about this year's Golf Tournament ...

- All golfers **MUST** register! We only have space for 144 golfers, so anyone who intends to play, must register through the link provided to take one of these spots. We cannot take any "walk up's" per Paradise Canyon's request.
- All registration can be completed online this year, through the PGA website, or by clicking the link [here](#)
- If you would prefer to be invoiced (or pay by cheque), you will have to contact Roberta or Patti at the PGA office to register or sponsor the event on your behalf.
- If you have registered but cannot attend, please find a replacement to golf in your place & advise Patti who will be coming. If your cannot find a replacement, please contact her, so someone from the "Wait List" can have the opportunity.
- If you are a Platinum Sponsor, thank you!!! We are offering you one complimentary golf registration this year. However, you **MUST** register this person online as well (or contact Patti) so that this golfer is issued one of the 144 tournament spots!! There is a separate ticket for this registration.
- *All Sponsors .. we appreciate your support...thank you!! Will you please provide us with a copy of your latest, high-resolution logo for all signage & recognition??*



Hotline For Incident Assistance
1.833.9AGSAFE
1.833.924.7233

General Inquiries
info@agsafeab.ca
403.219.7901

Burgers ' N Beans
July 10
4:30-8:00pm
Taber Legion Park

"Growing Healthy Potatoes Together"

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