

# The Potato Minute

September 1, 2020

**PGA** Est. 1966  
**POTATO GROWERS OF ALBERTA**

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT - Terence Hochstein

I am not sure where the last 8 months have gone, but here we are on the 1st of September, and harvest is in full swing in Southern Alberta. Our seed growers in the Lacombe and Edmonton areas have vine killed most of their early generation seed and will begin to harvest in the next 7-10 days. Early indication from the south harvest is that most growers are disappointed in the yields. The wet spring and 2 weeks of 35°C temperatures have taken the shine off many acres of potatoes. The long-term fields should still be green and bulking up, but many of the fields have shut down and have begun to die off as well. Only time will tell what the overall picture will look like.

Reports from other growing areas across North America are also one of disappointment, with how the early field-run yields have been. The east coast had very little rainfall during the growing season, so their yields will be well below their long-term average. Growers from Manitoba are reporting that their early crop is off from years past. The PNW has reported that their field-run yields were respectable but there is concern that the extreme heat in late July and August will affect their storage crop. It will be interesting to see what the overall picture will look like come November, as far as available potatoes to meet the needs of the processors.

After a lot of discussion with the Board and in keeping with AHS guidelines, the decision has been made to cancel the Annual Potato Conference and Tradeshow in November. The growers will have their AGM Business Meeting on Wednesday, November 18th using a virtual platform. The fall Area Meetings will be held in mid-October, using a hybrid format following AHS guidelines. It is everyone's hope that come 2021, there will be an opportunity to resume our annual 3-day conference and tradeshow.

With harvest well underway, growers have indicated that it has been challenging to find suitable protocols to keep everyone safe and protected from possible exposure to COVID-19. One thing is for certain, growers are resilient and innovative and they will do whatever it takes to keep themselves, their families and their employees safe. Harvest is probably the most important time of the year for their operations. After all, a successful harvest is what pays the bills and allows for everyone to plan for next year.

I hope everyone has a safe and successful harvest.

*Until next month, stay safe!*

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## SEED COORDINATOR UPDATE- Stacey Bajema

Seed Growers across Alberta are busy gearing up for the upcoming harvest season. With our later planting season, and mixed weather conditions, this season we expect a slightly later start to the seed harvest this year. Here, at CDCN, Tina Lewis expects to be harvesting the potato plots starting mid-September.

### Post Harvest Test

Due to COVID-19, there will be significant changes to the Post Harvest Test Program for this upcoming season. As we are just working on the final details, we ask that all seed growers be aware that we will be releasing important information regarding this program soon.

### B.C. Variety Trial 2020



*Staff at BCTrials Field Day*

The B.C. variety trial held their annual field day on August 19 this year. While the event was limited due to Covid-19, industry officials could still register to see the results of the trial. The viewing day hosted about 50 guests at scheduled times, with maximum of 20 people in the plot at once with directional cues to promote physical distancing.



*New variety showcased by Alberta grower.*

There were 70 varieties on display this year, with 27 of them being Agriculture Canada varieties and 43 varieties as part of their replication trial. The potatoes were all dryland and harvested at 98 days.

Heather Meberg, of ES Crop Consult Ltd., reported that the plot looked great and they had a great yield this year. We are very grateful to Heather and her team for organizing this event and showcasing some of our great varieties from Alberta!



### Temporary Foreign Workers

On July 31, 2020, the Federal government announced 58.6 million dollars in increased funding to strengthen the Temporary Foreign Worker Program and to support the health and safety of these workers during the pandemic. Of this funding, 7.4 million was committed to direct TFW outreach support programs, \$16.2 million to strengthening the employer inspections regime and \$35 million towards a cost-share program with producers for infrastructure improvements to accommodations and other health and safety measures on farm which will help prevent and respond to COVID-19.

In addition, the Federal government will be reviewing accommodation requirements for the Temporary Foreign Worker Program. A consultation process will be launched across Canada to include the provinces, workers, employers and the partner foreign countries to establish improved guidelines to the program.

"While provinces and territories are responsible for setting health care, employment standards and housing requirements in the agriculture sector post-quarantine in their respective jurisdictions, the Government of Canada is committed to further federal action to help reduce the incidence and impact of on-farm outbreaks, and protecting those who are part of the Temporary Foreign Worker Program." - Canada.ca

We wish all our growers and their families a safe, healthy, and prosperous harvest season!

Please feel free to contact me if you need anything.



*Jake Hoogland of Hoogland Farms checking tubers.*

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## PROVINCIAL NEWS



### 2020 Winners Announced

On behalf of the Alberta Young Speakers for Agriculture competition, we want to thank you sincerely for contributing your video to our competition. We had

some tremendous speeches submitted, which clearly shows your passion for agriculture and the many issues you spoke about. In the words of our judges:

Public speaking is the #1 fear in the world and you have conquered it. This increases your employment capability and leadership contributions to wherever you go in life. This skill is one of the most important you will ever develop and you will benefit from it more than you can possibly realize. Keep at it, keep getting your point across and keep having your awesome voice heard! With that in mind, we are proud to announce the winners of our AYSA 2020 competition:

#### Senior:

1. Tia Schram, Bruderheim, Alberta - Lessons learned over the last 25 years of agriculture – and how we can apply it to the next 25.

2. Claire Meier, Calgary, Alberta - Should the agriculture industry fund and support opportunities for youth development?

#### Junior:

1. Leslie Siewert, Cayley, Alberta - Lessons learned over the last 25 years of agriculture – and how we can apply it to the next 25

2. Austin Noirot, Caroline, Alberta - Should the agriculture industry fund and support opportunities for youth development?

3. Aksha Burande, Calgary, Alberta - Aquaculture: The challenges and solutions of developing, funding and marketing an emerging food source.

Source: [albertayoungspeakers.com](http://albertayoungspeakers.com)

## ALBERTA OPEN FARM DAYS

CP FARMS  
AUGUST 15TH

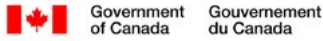


Over 250 visitors!



# Government announces greater flexibility and extension of Canada Emergency Business Account

August 31, 2020 - Ottawa, Ontario - Department of Finance Canada



Small businesses are the backbone of our economy but they continue to face economic challenges and uncertainty during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, the Honourable Chrystia Freeland, is today announcing that the application deadline for the Canada Emergency Business Account (CEBA) is extended from August 31 to **October 31, 2020**.

The government is working closely with financial institutions to make the CEBA program available to those with qualifying payroll or non-deferrable expenses that have so far been unable to apply due to not operating from a business banking account.

Further details on these changes will be released in coming days, including a new business account opening process through which qualifying businesses will be able to apply.

The Deputy Prime Minister is also announcing that the Business Credit Availability Program (BCAP) is extended to June 2021. Through BCAP, the government is supporting the flow of additional credit that businesses need to maintain operations and keep employees on the payroll. Export Development Canada (EDC) and the Business Development Bank of Canada (BDC) will continue to work with lenders to support access to capital for Canadian businesses of all sizes in all sectors and regions.

CEBA and BCAP are both part of the Government of Canada's COVID-19 Economic Response Plan, which is helping Canadians and businesses deal with the economic impact of the ongoing pandemic. The measures under this plan are helping businesses protect the jobs that Canadians depend on, keep their doors open, and bounce back as the economy gradually recovers.

*"Small businesses can count on the federal government to stand with them during this pandemic. By making CEBA loans available for an additional two months, we will help more small businesses get into a better position to weather the storm and get back on their feet. Extending BCAP will improve access to the capital needed by businesses to pay workers' salaries and cover expenses — and it will also serve as a bridge until we return to more normal borrowing conditions. The federal government is actively considering what further measures are needed as we continue with a safe reopening of the economy."*

- The Honourable Chrystia Freeland  
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance

*"For Canada to truly lead in a post-COVID world, supporting small businesses is critical. This is why our government continues to take bold and comprehensive action to do just that. By extending the Canada Emergency Business Account through to the end of October, we are taking the necessary steps to ensure that small businesses will be able to access the liquidity they need to keep operating while times are still tough, so they will be able to rebuild on the road to economic recovery."*

- The Honourable Mary Ng  
Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade

### Quick facts:

Launched on April 9, 2020, CEBA provides interest-free loans of up to \$40,000 to small businesses and not-for-profits, to help cover their operating costs—such as rent, utilities and insurance—during a period where their revenues have been temporarily reduced. These loans are partially forgivable as repaying the balance of the loan on or before December 31, 2022 will result in loan forgiveness of 25 percent (up to \$10,000).

To qualify for CEBA, applicants must continue to meet either the payroll eligibility criteria or they must demonstrate a minimum of \$40,000 in eligible non-deferrable expenses. In addition to requiring a business account, applicants with payroll lower than \$20,000 will still need to show that they meet the following CEBA eligibility requirements: a Canada Revenue Agency business number; a 2018 or 2019 tax return; and eligible non-deferrable expenses of between \$40,000 and \$1.5 million, after taking into consideration other federal COVID-related supports.

As of August 27, 2020, more than 730,000 CEBA loans have been approved, representing more than \$29 billion in credit disbursed.

To apply for CEBA or to learn more about the program, businesses can contact their primary financial institution. Information can also be found on the program's website [here](#).





## The Grassroots Greenhouse 2020

GRASSROOTS NEWS, May 4, 2020

An annual snapshot of public opinion about Canadian agriculture and food.

As enthusiastic advocates for the Canadian Agri-Food sector, Grassroots Public Affairs is pleased to release our second annual agriculture and food research public opinion poll.

Our approach for 2020 includes COVID-19 pandemic-related food questions, as well as repeated questions from 2019 so we can measure any change in public opinion. Key findings for this year's research include:

- 64% of Canadians believe that hunger and food insecurity will worsen in future as a result of COVID-19.
- 97% of Canadians trust the quality of food grown or produced domestically – an increase from 2019.
- 92% of Canadians endorse government support for the agriculture and agri-food sector.
- 62% of Canadians believe that temporary foreign workers should continue to come into Canada.
- 87% of Canadians believe that agriculture and agri-food is a leading economic driver in Canada, identifying the sector as the most economically important industry surveyed.
- 86% of Canadians believe that agriculture and agri-food plays a key role in Canada's national security and critical infrastructure, with the sector coming second only to healthcare in terms of importance.

Other key findings include:

- Across the country more than one-in-six saying they have worked on a farm, in agriculture or in food processing.
- Canadians are more likely to grocery shop themselves as opposed to ordering-in, grabbing takeaway or using a grocery delivery service due to COVID-19.
- Canadians continue to hold overwhelmingly negative views towards food additives such as hormones, pesticides, antibiotics and GMOs.
- The future of Canadian agriculture looks positive with a strong plurality believing that the industry is likely to grow as opposed to shrink or stay the same as it is today.
- Canadians continue to believe that the federal government should prioritize financial support for grains over livestock but support for proteins has increased in the past year.

Special thanks to Food Banks Canada for their participation.

You can read coverage of our poll findings by Bernard Tobin of Real Agriculture [here](#).

Peter Seemann, President  
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Source: [foodintegrity.ca](http://foodintegrity.ca)



THE CANADIAN CENTRE FOR  
FOOD INTEGRITY





## Crop Update August 20, 2020

At press time parts of Eastern Canada are facing moderate to severe drought conditions. Rainfall is critical for this crop. In Western Canada, the crop is running behind schedule as processors push to get new crop harvest underway. Prairie yields currently look average at best.

The view from across the country:

### Prince Edward Island:

The optimistic outlook which PEI had in early July, has unfortunately disappeared with high temperatures, record low rainfall, and windy conditions over the past two weeks. In the Bedeque area (the central potato growing area in the province), for example, the average rainfall for June, July, August, is 259.1 mm or 10 inches. In 2001, "the year of the drought" on PEI, the cumulative average for those three months was 138.6 mm or 5.4 inches. This summer the June, July, and August to date rainfall in Bedeque has been 38.6 mm or 1.5 inches. Although this is PEI's worst case area, it does show the extreme situation that some of the growers in the province are trying to cope with. There are growing districts on PEI which have had a much better summer with timely rainfall events, but they have been very localized making predictions on crop yield almost impossible. At this time the PEI Potato Board would estimate that overall production could be down 15%-20% at a minimum.

Field-fry chip harvest began last week with yields coming in below budget, however the quality and size profile is very good. Cavendish Farms continues to process old crop potatoes, involving a handful of growers while the majority of the remaining 2019 volume is in company storages. Cavendish has indicated they will be starting new crop on September 10th, which is approximately a week later than normal.

There has been some limited early harvest of table potatoes mostly for local markets, Atlantic Canada, and Puerto Rico. Test digs on PEI, indicate the crop is falling behind the previous four years data on both yield and size. Growers are concerned about the overall quality of the crop with regard to sugar ends, scab, and off-type. It has been a devastating summer for over half of PEI's family farms and communities.

### New Brunswick:

Growing conditions have been hot and dry as well in New Brunswick although the St. Andre area seems to have received a couple more inches of rain throughout the

season. Early potato varieties are suffering however the Russet Burbank crop is still holding up.

There is hardly any old crop left on the fresh side, and processing potatoes are on schedule to clean up soon as per contract delivery. New crop harvest has started on chipstock with yields that are only fair, but fields need to be harvested for chip plant schedules. Some early Superiors have also been dug green with lighter yields in the 225 cwt/acre range.

### Quebec:

The province was very dry, however it caught the tail end of Hurricane Isaias a week ago which provided some much needed relief. The eastern part of Quebec in particular, could still use more rain.

Old crop is pretty much gone now, although it took longer than expected to move. The large supply of old crop left over, delayed start up harvest on new potatoes as growers waited for the system to clear itself rather than crowd the market during the transition period. Demand has been traditionally quiet with hot summer days and a provincial holiday period for construction workers.

Harvest to date on new crop, shows yields down about 10% with smaller tuber profiles, but otherwise good quality on the early maturing varieties impacted by the heat and dryness. Growers are hopeful that the later varieties will size and provide an average (to slightly below average) yield.

### Ontario:

The growing season has been a hot one with dry conditions making it stressful on potato canopies, and heat runners being developed.

Parts of the Alliston area, where most of the storage crop is located, received several inches of rain over the period of a weekend creating some drown outs in low spots. Growers were having difficulty getting sprayers through some fields. The southern part of the province remains dry where fresh harvest is underway. Chip harvest is on schedule with chip companies accepting loads on schedule after old crop cleaned up early and new crop development had been running about a week behind normal.

### Manitoba Fresh:

The crop is desperate for rain in the southern part of the province. The dryland area where a large portion of the table potatoes are grown, has received only two rains this season. The crop is 7-10 days later due to a cool, wet spring. Fresh harvest is just getting started and tuber set is not outstanding on early fields.

### Manitoba Processing:

The processing area of the province has been dry, with extreme heat issues creating runners and stolons. The crop outlook is mixed with some fields looking tired from the heat

stress and others looking better. The crop was running a week behind average in maturity, however one processor started a week ago on Ranger Russets with good gravity and adequate size. Overall the Ranger crop is expected to make average yields, however Shepodies are not as good, having lost some of their set. The Russet Burbank crop is expected to be down in yield. Both processors in the province are running now.

#### **Saskatchewan:**

Growers are expecting a better crop than the previous two seasons. Conditions have been fairly dry but not as hot and dry as last year.

Most of the potato land is irrigated and pivots have been running for most of the summer. Yield digs show a slightly higher yield than last year with a similar set and better size. Fresh crop harvest will start in the coming days and top killing of seed began this week.

#### **Alberta:**

The growing season has been up and down in Alberta, with good planting conditions, followed by a lot of rain that created drown outs throughout the province. The northern region has seen the highest rainfall amounts accompanied by cooler, cloudier growing conditions. There have also been

a couple of damaging hailstorms this season. Overall the early estimate of yield potential would seem to be average at best.

Chip harvest has been underway for three weeks and early yields were disappointing. Quality was good, with a smaller sized profile. One fryer has started processing field run Rangers. The other processor is a week away from out of field deliveries.

#### **British Columbia:**

The growing season in BC has been a good one after a solid start and occasional rains, in comparison to some recent years where there has been no rain. Many fields are loading down to finish up. Yields are expected to be above average, but it depends on showers over the next few weeks. Growers have seized the opportunity of good markets to move significant amounts of their crop already, easing the strain on storage potatoes. While their clay soils are high yielding, BC growers also know they can be unforgiving in a wet fall, and hope for dry conditions into the last step of their potato growing season.

For more information contact:

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General Manager Kevin@unitedpotatocanada.com





A tough, but necessary decision has been made to cancel our upcoming Alberta Potato Conference and Tradeshow that was to be held in Red Deer on November 17th-19th. Given the current situation with COVID-19, the PGA would not have been able to host our annual event and still adhere to the required guidelines put forth by AHS. In following with our Regulation requirements, we will be hosting a virtual-only (Zoom) AGM Business Meeting on Wednesday, November 18th, time TBD. Like many of the Boards and Commissions in Alberta, we have made this decision in the best interest of not only our growers, their families and our industry but for everyone that is involved in the undertaking of this great annual event. Our plan is to come back in 2021 with an even better event for all of us.

Russ Van Boom,  
Board Chairman

**Don't forget to cancel your hotel reservations or change them for next year's event, November 22-24 at the same location. 1-800-662-7197**

### SEPTEMBER DATES TO REMEMBER

September 1: Random Acts of Kindness Day  
September 4: Bring Your Manners to Work Day  
September 5: Be Late for Something Day  
September 9: Wonderful Weirdos Day  
September 10: Swap Ideas Day  
September 13: Blame Someone Else Day  
September 14: Boss/Employee Exchange Day  
September 15: IT Professionals Day  
September 16: Stay Away From Seattle Day  
September 19: International Talk Like a Pirate Day  
September 22: Remote Employees Appreciation Day  
September 28: Good Neighbor Day  
September 30: Ask a Stupid Question Day

### AGM SPONSORSHIP

Thank you to our many kind and generous sponsors, who have supported our industry and events in the past! Unfortunately, due to the cancellation of the 2020 Alberta Potato Conference & Tradeshow, due to Covid-19, there will not be any opportunities for sponsorship this November. We appreciate your continued interest and support and look forward to working together again soon!!!

Stay healthy & well!!

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