

November/December 2017
Volume 18, Issue 6

Prince Edward Island POTATO NEWS

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POTATO NEWS

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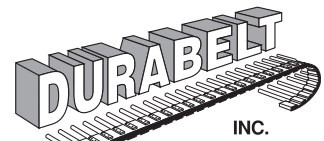
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Cover: Washed Island Ruby potatoes going over the grading line. This new Island variety, grown by McCardle Brothers in Middleton, was a selection from the Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada breeding program that is finding a place in the small red potato market. Photo: M.K. Sonier.



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Chairman's Comments

by Rodney Dingwell, PEI Potato Board Chairman



Another year has flown by and another Annual Meeting and Banquet just completed as I write this last report of the year. It was a difficult growing season with very little moisture for most, but a relatively easy harvest. Overall yields are down with great variability in yields and varieties, depending on those precious rainfalls, but hopefully storage will not be a problem.

It was great to see such a strong turnout to both the Annual Meeting and the Banquet. This year was our first time using Red Shores as our venue for the day's events, and from comments received we believe most enjoyed that location. We welcome your feedback as always regarding location, interesting speakers and issues you would like to see discussed.

I also wish to congratulate the worthy recipients of the 2017 Potato Industry Recognition Awards that were presented. During our annual meeting, we recognized Brian Beaton, our former provincial Potato Industry Coordinator, for his efforts on our behalf. Brian will be missed within the Department, but he continues to work in our industry and indicated he looks forward to working with us on issues of importance in his new private sector position. During the evening banquet, awards were presented to Ken Lingley, Eugene MacLure, and the late Wilfred Kelly: all very worthy men who have all contributed to making our industry greater each and every year.

Another shout out has to go to the men and women who helped put together the video "What Does It Take to Grow a Quality Potato?". That video helps share with Islanders and others the connection between our farms, the land and the potatoes we produce, and it, along with other footage

and imagery captured during this campaign, will be used for future communications as well.

We also thank the many other folks involved with organizing the annual meeting and other events the board hosted or co-hosted this past year. We thank very much the sponsors who supported us in the hosting of our annual meeting and banquet.

Statistics Canada released its estimate of Prince Edward Island and Canadian production on November 28th. They are indicating that PEI's total production was down just over 2 million cwt or 8 percent from last year. Canadian production is estimated to be about the same as last year overall, but some provinces feel Stats Canada has been overly optimistic with its yield estimates. Time will tell, but with the strong demand for all three of our sectors: seed, tablestock and processing, it should be a strong marketing season. Fresh prices to date are running at or above the levels of a year ago, and indications are that good pricing should continue. Seed quality also appears to be good, as the post harvest test results reports to date have shown low virus levels.

A big thank you goes out to Cavendish Farms and Mr. Robert Irving for a generous bonus he recently gave to all contract growers for their efforts in 2017. I am sure it is greatly appreciated by all.

As announced at our Annual Meeting, the newly formed committee looking at the structure of our Board, including the districts and the eligibility requirements for a registered producer, has commenced work. Our intent is to hopefully come up with some suggestions for improvements to take back to you, the producer body, in the coming year.

Thank you all for your support and encouragement during the past year and my wish for everyone is for a Merry Christmas and a safe and happy New Year.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rodney Dingwell".



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POTATO BOARD NEWS

PEI Board Directors

The AGM marks a change in the faces and positions at the Potato Board. John Hogg, Processing Director for the Summerside District, Jason Hayden, Tablestock Director for the Charlottetown District and Glen Rayner, Seed Director for the West Prince District all put their names forward to serve a second three year term. Owen Ching, Tablestock Director for the Souris-Montague district was completing his second three year term on the Board. He will be replaced by Chad Robertson of South Lake. The Board would like to thank Owen for the time and dedication he has shown to Board activities over the years.

At the December meeting, Darryl Wallace, Processing Director from West Prince, was elected Chair for 2017-2018. Vice-Chair will be Jason Hayden, Tablestock Director from Charlottetown and Secretary-Treasurer will be Summerside Processing Director John Hogg.

Board Meets with the Leader of Opposition

Mr. James Aylward, recently elected leader of the Island PC party and official Leader of the Opposition met with the Potato Board Directors at their November meeting. General Manager Greg Donald made a brief presentation on the strategic issues that are priorities for the Board including improving market access for PEI potatoes, access to crop protectant products in concert with the US, environmental regulation and enforcement in PEI, the Water Act/Carbon Pricing/Climate Change and the CFIA cost recovery initiative and activities underway to address those priorities.

General discussion followed with Mr. Aylward asking for feedback on the issue of farmland being taken out of production particularly in the eastern part of the province and asked if there were concerns with how the Land Ownership restrictions were being enforced. There was also discussion on NAFTA, the Water Act and the recently released guidelines for building irrigation ponds.

To conclude the meeting, Mr.

Aylward thanked the Board for the invitation to meet and said that going into the next provincial election, which could happen as early as Spring 2018, his party would be supportive of the potato industry.

NAFTA Update

The meeting schedule has been changed from a meeting every two weeks to one every month. The November meeting took place in Mexico, the December meeting will be held in the U.S. and the January meeting in Canada.

Progress has been made in several areas, but "unconventional" proposals being made by the U.S. have presented challenges to negotiators for all three countries. U.S. demands include a five year sunset clause which Canada and Mexico do not support due to the uncertainty it would cause for businesses and governments every five years. The U.S. has also indicated that it wants provisions for anti-dumping duties on fruits and vegetables, and higher U.S. and NAFTA content rules for the auto sector. Canada's supply management approach, and in particular, our dairy sector, is also being targeted by U.S. negotiators.

Potato Board staff have been in touch with federal and provincial trade officials for updates, and for information on how our industry may be impacted by the negotiations. We have also sought information on potential impacts on the potato sector if the U.S. President decides to withdraw his country from NAFTA, and to understand the rules under which trade would be conducted if NAFTA ended. The Canadian and U.S. potato industries have similar interests in seeing continued free trade of fresh and processed potato products between our two countries and has both advised their respective governments of those positions.

Canada/US Annual Potato Committee Meeting

On November 28th, representatives of Canadian and U.S. potato grower organizations, as along with CFIA, AAFC and the USDA, met in Toronto for the annual Canada/U.S. Potato Committee discussions. There

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was a strong turnout, with U.S. participation boosted by the attendance of state seed potato certification organization officials. For the first time, the Seed Certification Section of the Potato Association of America held its annual meeting in conjunction with the Canada/US Potato Committee meetings, allowing efficient use of travel expenses and time. Agenda items included Dickeya, Potato Cyst Nematode, Zebra Chip, crop protectants, potato research, the North American Plant Protection Organization, PACA, and trade agreements.

While Canadian growers are faced with high levels of uncertainty due to re-evaluation of many important crop protectants, US industry representatives indicated recent changes in the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) have made that organization much more industry friendly. No concerns were expressed on the U.S. side. Canadian industry representatives pointed out that if PMRA does cancel the use of a crop protectant, U.S. potato shipments to Canada may be impacted if the existing Maximum Residue Level (MRL) is currently higher than Canada's default MRL of 0.1 PPM. The U.S. will host the next Canada/U.S. Potato Committee meeting in Washington, DC in November, 2018.

Potato Cyst Nematode Guidelines

Several years ago, an agreement between the CFIA and the USDA/APHIS established the terms under which seed potatoes can move between Canada and the United States. The guidelines also established the rules pertaining to the detection and control of potato cyst nematodes (PCN) in each country. Changes were negotiated to the guidelines in 2014 to reduce the amount of testing required to enable the shipment of seed potatoes between our two countries, but those requirements are still expensive and trade limiting.

In 2016, the Canadian Potato Council and CFIA each

advised the U.S. National Potato Council and USDA/APHIS that additional changes to the guidelines were needed for cross border seed shipments. Hundreds of thousands of PCN soil tests have been done in Canada over the past decade, and the high level of testing clearly demonstrates that PCN is not present in Canada outside of the regulated areas in Quebec, BC and Newfoundland. Canadian representatives developed a specific proposal for reduced testing that was provided to the NPC and USDA in early 2017 for review and response.

At the Canada/U.S. Potato Committee meeting on November 28th, it was agreed that a working group consisting of CFIA/USDA and industry representatives from both countries will develop a new approach - a surveillance program - for PCN based on all the export testing conducted to date. Conference calls will be held in December to start this work. The existing PCN testing requirements will remain in place until the new surveillance program can be developed.

DECCO 070 EC Receives Emergency Use Registration

Provincial IPM Specialist Sebastian Ibarra, with the support of the local industry, was instrumental in obtaining this Emergency Use Registration. DECCO 070 EC is a clove oil product that is used as an organic sprout inhibitor on potatoes going to the US market and provides a valuable option for our organic producers.

PEI representatives will be working with other interested provinces, the registrant and PMRA to obtain full registration of this product so that our organic growers have an ongoing option to maintain market access for organic potatoes destined for the US market.



Board Chairman Rodney Dingwell presents donations of \$2,300 to Rayanne Frizzell of the PEI 4-H Council (left) and Danya O'Malley, Executive Director of PEI Family Violence Prevention Services (right). The donations were the result of funds raised through French Fry and baked potato sales at Farm Day in the City 2017.

PEI Potatoes Donated to Hurricane Maria victims

(CHARLOTTETOWN, PE - October 16, 2017) The Government of Prince Edward Island and the PEI Potato industry are once again teaming up to provide a tractor trailer load of fresh potatoes to those affected by a hurricane in the United States. A truck carrying over 42,000 pounds of fresh potatoes left PEI yesterday en route to help feed those in need in Puerto Rico as a result of the devastation caused by Hurricane Maria.

The load will be received at the hunger-relief organization Second Harvest of South Georgia, which is an official storage and redistribution site for FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency). From there, the PEI Potatoes will be included among other relief items and sent to Puerto Rico. Second Harvest also received a full load of PEI potatoes and produce in September for food aid in Florida following Hurricane Irma's arrival.

"Islanders continue to show their generosity to the world. We are pleased to partner with producers to share our potatoes with those affected in hurricane-damaged Puerto Rico., said Premier Wade MacLauchlan.

"Puerto Rico is particularly special to PEI, as we have a close and long term trading relationship with that territory. PEI Potatoes have been on the shelves in Puerto Rico for decades, and we want to do whatever we can to help our friends that have been through that devastating hurricane. We would like to say thank to you all involved, including the



Greg Donald (left) GM of the Potato Board loads potatoes on the truck for food aid for Puerto Rico under the watchful eyes of Alan McIsaac, PEI Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries and Wade MacLauchlan, Premier of PEI.

Province, fellow producers, packers and Annear's Transport who helped make this happen," said Rodney Dingwell, Chairman of PEI Potato Board.

The trailer will include 17 pallets of potato donations – from five-pound to 50-pound bags - from growers and packers throughout Prince Edward Island. The Government of Prince Edward Island and Morley Annear Transport will once again generously cover the freight costs. It is anticipated that the trailer will take approximately two-and-a-half days to arrive in Georgia. The potatoes are expected to reach Puerto Rico within the week.

List of partners: Government of Prince Edward Island; McKenna Bros, 48 Road; Blue Bay Farms, Rustico; Frank & Scott Power, Elliotvale; WP Griffin, Elmsdale; Rollo Bay Holdings, Rollo Bay; McCain Produce, Summerside; Gerrit Visser & Sons, Orwell; Eastern Produce, Pownal; Red Isle Produce, Charlottetown; Morley Annear Transport, Montague.

A composite image featuring a photograph of five people (four men and one woman) standing in a potato field. To the right is a circular logo for Griffin Farming Tradition, which includes the text "since 1947" and "A FARMING TRADITION". Below the logo, it says "AVAILABLE AT: Sobey's FOODLAND & CO-OPS participating". At the bottom of the image, the text "Over 70 years of tradition in every spud!" is written in a stylized font.

Farm Day in the City

Another beautiful day marked the tenth anniversary of Farm Day in the City in Charlottetown. The centre of Charlottetown, Queen Street from Grafton down to Water Street with some side streets included, was transformed into the Island's largest open air market featuring music, children's entertainment, agricultural displays and fresh product sale booths, a beer garden, a petting zoo and some good ol' fashioned friendly competition in the Pie Eating Competition.

The Prince Edward Island Potato Board was the title sponsor for the second year in a row. "This event provides a great opportunity for Island potato farmers to meet and talk potatoes with their urban neighbours," said Potato Board Chair Rodney Dingwell, a potato farmer from the Morell area. The Board had displays of different potato varieties, rotation crops, recipes and brochures, all which help to generate conversation with visitors to the event. Having actual farmers on hand to answer questions makes it a really authentic experience for people with little knowledge about growing potatoes.

Volunteers also helped to run events for the kids including making a real Mr. Potato Head and riding tractor tricycles. The new Cavendish Farms fry wagon, staffed by grower volunteers, was on hand and baked potatoes were sold as well. All proceeds from these sales (\$4,600) were donated to PEI 4-H and the PEI Family Violence

Prevention Services.

Below clockwise from top: Different potato varieties generate lots of questions; the Cavendish Farms fry truck is always popular; producer Gary Linkletter gets the thumbs up as he helps people leave a message for PEI potato farmers; volunteers Kendra Mills from the PEI Potato Board and growers Daryl Wallace, Alex Docherty and John Visser keep the fries coming; parents and kids alike enjoyed making real Mr. Potato Heads. Photos: M.K. Sonier & R. Barrett.



What Does it Take to Grow a Quality Potato?



by Kendra Mills, Marketing Director

Putting together a video shoot is no easy task, but this project was very much a joy to work on. I will fully admit that a project of this size always felt out of reach, due to the scope and cost of both production and media, but by breaking it down and taking it in phases, we were able to put together the funding. I feel that the result is something that we can all be proud of.

The project started with a conversation between Greg Donald and myself early in the spring. We talked about the possibilities and benefits and moved quickly to put a project outline together. We received quotes and project summaries from three different agencies. Furrow Creative, an Island based company led by Craig Harris, quickly rose to the top. Getting approval from the very supportive Tablestock Committee and Board of Directors was encouraging. Putting together the funding took some time, but with the support of the Board, Innovation PEI and the PEI Department of

Agriculture and Fisheries we were finally ready to begin in the early summer of 2017.

This main goal of the project was to provide us with a fully edited 30 second spot, but we were also looking to get some great video “B Roll” that we could put to a multitude of other uses. Usually projects like these take eight weeks or so just to get the idea and storyboard completely fleshed out. We were under major time constraints to start as we wanted to film as much of the cropping process this season as we could (we will go back next year to get planting and hilling). We were able to condense the planning into a few short weeks and get the cameras rolling right away!

When putting a spot together like this, there are several very important elements – the script, the music, the voiceover and the visuals. How they all marry together to tell a story and make an impact is the challenge. And of course, as with anything, there is always a piece that is a struggle to get right. Either the music isn’t quite suitable or



Not your usual equipment in a potato field. The crew spent many early mornings and early evenings shooting to take advantage of the best natural light and used shots taken from a drone, the back of a truck, on top of equipment, etc. to get natural and scenic shots that capture the essence of the Island and the people producing potatoes.



Young Vance Lawless of Kinkora takes direction from Stephen Harris of Furrow Creative before his shot.

the voiceover actor isn't getting the emotion, or something happens in the shooting process. It seems that there is always something, but not with this spot. All of the elements were bang on the first time and everything we saw in presentations and heard just fit! Some of that is easy – on the visual side, the beauty of the Island is pretty hard to mess up. But the other elements also just seemed to come together so beautifully. The script you hear is basically the first write. That almost never happens! I read the full script on a white board at the Furrow office, and mentally went "wow". The voice you hear is Craig himself! We heard a few different options, and nothing sounded as good as Craig reading it, so we went with it. Same with the music. We heard a few options but went with the first thing we heard because nothing was better. It all felt extremely natural.

The other very important part is the core elements of Island potato farms that you see – the farmers, their families and their fields. Everyone is incredibly busy with a lot on your shoulders, and on your minds. I know that first hand. But nevertheless, every time I asked someone for their help, for permission to film in a field, or to take half a day of their time to be in the spot, I was met with the following response: "I will do whatever I can for the industry." It gave me such a sense of pride to do my small part to help the industry as well. I can't thank everyone enough.

To start, ads are running on TV locally and online in Ontario and Atlantic Canada (Facebook, Youtube pre-roll and website ads) from October 30 to December 10. Once the initial run is over, we will be planning future media activities to utilize this great resource.

We have so much to be proud of and to be thankful for in our potato industry here on PEI. It's like no other. It's a backbone to our economy, it's a major part of our culture and PEI wouldn't be the same without it. It's a part of who we all are.

Marketing is nothing more than the stories we tell. We are so rich in history, authenticity, beauty and character, and I hope that comes through in the story we are telling here. What does it take to grow a quality potato? It really does take an Island.



Rodney Dingwell, Chairman of the PEI Potato Board; Kendra Mills, Marketing Director; Peter Nieuwhof, one of the growers who took part in the video, and Marla Morrison and Stephen Harris of Furrow Creative were all on hand for the unveiling of the Board's new ad "What Does it Take to Grow a Quality Potato?"

Export Development Canada's PEI Office

Patrick Murphy, Senior Account Manager
Export Development Canada, Charlottetown, PEI

In June of this year Export Development Canada (EDC) opened a new office in Charlottetown to provide more direct, hands-on service to the deep pool of dynamic and trade-minded companies in P.E.I. The potato industry in particular will be a sector of focus for EDC's new office, given its critical importance to the province's export makeup.

EDC support in PEI has grown in recent years as the province's export volume has grown, from \$1.12 billion to \$1.32 billion in 2016. There are now an estimated 425 companies either exporting or thinking about it in PEI, and EDC's goal is to support these companies in their international expansion as well as encourage more companies to join their ranks.

PEI is already exporting up to 120,000 tonnes of potatoes per year into the US, including Puerto Rico, where a taste for the province's best (and we'd argue the world's best) has become firmly established. For any company or individual involved in the potato sector, whether that happens to be in processing, supply, brokering or any other variety of work, this is an excellent place to start their export journey, with export costs low and numerous programs available to help launch their sales.

One of the most difficult challenges that small Canadian companies face is financing their international sales contracts. For example, EDC's Accounts Receivable Insurance (ARI) can help cover up to 90 per cent of losses if a customer doesn't pay or refuses goods, and much more. Policies like this can provide peace of mind when looking to break into a new market.

Individuals or companies looking to increase their working capital can receive up to \$10 million in guarantees with EDC's Export Guarantee Program (EGP). So, whether you're looking to expand into a new market or take on larger contracts for your growing company, this program can help you and your bank feel confident in your new endeavours.

Another form of trade support EDC offers is connections to international opportunities. EDC leverages its global network – established over 70-plus years of transacting in international markets – to facilitate high-quality introductions between Canadian suppliers and international buyers. These connections are generally established at matchmaking events that EDC either organizes or participates in, alongside Canadian trade partners such as the Trade Commissioner Service (TCS). The ultimate goal is to bring together groups of Canadian companies whose capabilities and expertise match specific foreign buyer needs, both in Canada and abroad.

EDC is continually seeking to create relationships with new foreign buyers that may be interested in Canadian

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products or services. These relationships create massive opportunities for Canadian businesses by bringing potential large-scale buyers to their front door.

Last year for example, EDC brought in a major buyer from the Mexican food industry which was looking to expand its supply chain. Over the course of two and a half days EDC set up interviews with 79 Canadian companies that fit the Mexican company’s needs. Those introductions could potentially lead to large-scale business for those small- to medium-sized companies that otherwise would have had trouble getting a seat at the table with such a large international buyer.

In a province that is abundant in natural goods and materials produced such as planes, seafood, and of course potatoes, PEI is on the rise for export growth. Last year alone PEI exported a total of 120 million dollars’ worth of raw potatoes, processed potatoes, and potato seeds. When mentioning PEI it’s hard not to think of the influence and significance that the potato has had for the province – besides, Canadians all know that the best potatoes in the world come from PEI, so why not let the rest of the world know too?

The new office is located at Suite 240 BDC Place, 119 Kent Street, Charlottetown, PE CIA 1N3 and Patrick Murphy can be reached at (902) 626-3037 or by email at PMurphy@edc.ca.

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PEI Shellfish Festival Chowder Competition

The 22nd Annual International Shellfish Festival took place this year from September 14-17 at the event grounds in Charlottetown, hosted by celebrity Chef Lynn Crawford. Once again, the PEI Potato Board was the sponsor of the PEI Shellfish Festival Chowder Competition. There were 2 heats over 2 days (Saturday and Sunday) with entrants from chefs all over PEI, looking to claim this year’s title of Best Chowder. Our own Alex Docherty was a judge, along with three others, including media and chefs. The winner of this year’s PEI Potato Chowder Competition was Chef Mitchell Jackson of the Claddagh Oyster House. Congratulations Chef Mitchell!

Our sponsorship also included a stage demo on Saturday presented by Chef Jane Crawford of Hopyard, doing a spicy PEI Potato and Lobster salad that the crowd got to sample. As well, we organized a farm tour with the international chefs and media group here for the competitions. We travelled to Lori Robinson’s and she gave an excellent overview of the PEI Potato industry to these influential folks (and even helped fix the bus door – thanks Lori!)

The final numbers haven’t been released, but indications are that numbers were up over last year. Another very successful weekend for the Shellfish Festival!



2017 PEI Shellfish Festival Chowder Competition winners left to right: 3rd place – Erin Henry, Piatto; 1st place – Mitchell Jackson, Claddagh Oyster House; 2nd place – Jane Crawford, The Hopyard. Congratulations all!

2017 Canadian Production Estimate

Source: Statistics Canada, November 28, 2017
(thousand cwt)

Province	2014	2015	2016	2017	% Diff
NFLD.	66	60	74	63	-14.9%
P.E.I.	25,240	24,850	25,723	23,664	-8.0%
N.S.	487	330	432	432	0.0%
N.B.	14,307	15,100	14,335	15,159	+5.7%
Que.	11,349	12,359	12,233	12,787	+4.5%
Ont.	8,225	7,970	6,602	7,830	+18.6%
Man.	19,240	21,630	22,400	22,200	-0.9%
Sask.	1,487	1,500	1,475	1,475	0.0%
Alta.	18,690	19,270	20,012	20,507	+2.5%
B.C.	1,563	1,555	2,205	1,770	-19.7%
Canada	100,654	104,624	105,491	105,887	+0.4%



by Kevin MacIsaac, General Manager
United Potato Growers of Canada

Statistics Canada released their Canadian Production Estimate on November 28th. Canada's overall production is very similar to last year, up +0.4%. Yield has increased from 308.1 cwt/acre to 309.4 cwt/acre. Canadian growers planted 1,000 acres less than in 2016.

Prince Edward Island, the largest producer was very challenged with dry conditions in the western part of the province this year. PEI Potato Board staff were estimating yields at 275cwt/acre. Stats Canada estimates have come in lower at 272cwt/acre. This will create a deficit of about 2 million hundredweight.

Manitoba, a large processing province, did not have a processing contract agreement in place until after all their potatoes were planted. They planted 4,000 acres less to adjust supply, however Mother Nature provided a growing season (and yield of 357 cwt/acre) that gave them almost the exact same amount of potatoes.

Stats Canada has increased Alberta's yield from 388 cwt/acre in 2016 to 391 cwt/acre in 2017. However with the crop stresses of a very hot growing season, some Alberta producers are doubtful they reached this plateau.

BC's crop, mostly fresh, is reduced significantly from a very large crop one year ago, but more of a return to normal.

Ontario has the largest production increase but it should be remembered that last year they suffered through a major drought, so this is also a return to normal. Although there were about 1,500 acres drowned out in the spring, the crop was excellent in Ontario this year. Some growers harvested close to 400 cwt/acre, much higher than the 225 cwt/acre reported by the Ontario Potato Board.

Finally, Quebec is always a consistent producer in terms of production. The Quebec Federation estimates their yield at 290 cwt/acre, in comparison to the 300cwt/acre reported by Statistics Canada, providing a volume similar to 2016.

In summary, given the shortfalls in production in some provinces coupled with needs of processing expansion in New Brunswick and Quebec, Canadian producers hope to see a profitable season develop and mature as we move forward.

2017 US Production Estimate

Fall Production - Top Nine States and Total US (thousand cwt)

State	2015	2016	2017	Percent
Idaho	130,400	139,320	131,325	-6.2%
Washington	100,300	105,625	99,000	-6.3%
Wisconsin	27,813	27,840	28,475	+2.3%
North Dakota	27,600	21,600	25,160	+16.5%
Colorado	22,575	22,236	21,527	-3.1%
Oregon	21,784	22,951	20,790	-9.4%
Minnesota	16,200	16,800	18,883	+12.4%
Michigan	17,550	17,020	18,600	+9.3%
Maine	16,160	15,113	15,200	+0.6%
Total Fall Crop	404,701	406,638	398,930	-1.9%

USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service, November 9, 2017



by Kevin MacIsaac, General Manager
United Potato Growers of Canada

The eight million hundredweight decrease in the largest producing state of Idaho is a significant factor in this year's reduction. In the spring, Idaho growers planted 15,000 less acres to adjust supply. Yields estimated by NASS are down from 430 cwt./acre in 2016 to 425cwt/acre. Surveys by United of Idaho actually show that number to be even lower, due to a poorer growing season. Producers were also challenged by difficult harvest conditions: too hot, too wet, and finally too cold when a hard frost on October 14 brought temperatures to 22 degrees Fahrenheit.

Washington's reduction of 6.6 million hundredweight is less substantial for fresh but very significant for processing activities in the Pacific North West as fryers gear up for expansion.

Although NASS has reported an increase for Wisconsin,

many producers in that state, actually feel their crop is lower than last year.

Colorado, an entirely fresh state, reported lower yields and was also affected by a very cold frost before harvest was complete.

Both Minnesota and North Dakota show large increases over last year, but in 2016 the Red River Valley experienced large crop losses due to heavy rains, so this is more of a return to normal.

At press time United of America is estimating fresh (net) shipments at 91.8 million hundredweight. This is a record

low (since data collection began) and certainly well beneath the 97 million cwt. shipped last year. This, in addition to the increased raw requirement by processors, is the key behind current strong pricing and forward looking profitability for this crop.



2017 PEI Potato Board AGM

The PEI Potato Board AGM was held at Red Shores on Friday, November 17, 2017. This was a new venue for the daytime event and was well received by those attending due to the large parking space, easy access, theatre style seating and excellent buffet lunch.

The day started off with the business meeting. Chairman Rodney Dingwell gave his report on the highlights of Board activities and issues addressed during the 2016/2017 year including: pesticide re-evaluations by PMRA, the provincial Water Act, environmental regulations and enforcement in PEI, the CFIA cost recovery initiative consultations, carbon pricing/climate change and adaptation and improved international market access for PEI potatoes.

The Chairman's Report was followed by the auditor's report on the Board's financial statements for the year. Craig Dykerman from BDO Chartered Accountants told the group that in the auditor's opinion, the statements provided fairly represented the Board's financial position for the year. He explained that while there were some variations from budget, due primarily to reduced income and spending for the foreign material detection equipment project, overall the Board completed the year with a very strong financial position.

General Manager Greg Donald then touched on strategy issues for the Board and initiatives underway to address these issues.

An open discussion followed the reports. Grower Alvin Keenan commented that for a provincial organization like the Board and a national organization like the Canadian Horticultural Council it is important to utilize the best options for grower communication. It is easy for messages to be lost in the multitude of communication that growers receive each day through various channels. Grower Morley Wood encouraged growers to become informed on Canada's rating as a carbon neutral nation and to let their elected officials know the impact that a carbon tax will have on their business operations. There were no further questions or comments and the business meeting was adjourned.

Following the break, attendees were treated to an informative and entertaining presentation by Ryan Smolkin, founder and CEO of the Smoke's Poutinerie chain. After successful years spent in property management and corporate branding, Smolkin founded Smoke's Poutinerie in 2008 beginning with one location at Toronto. Since that time he has grown the chain to over 100 franchise locations in both Canada and the United States and has opened sites in major sports arenas and airports. His key message to the

audience was that he was selling not just a potato product, but a brand and an entertainment experience. He engages with customers in a variety of ways - food trucks, contests, and entertainment events. Smolkin has close ties to the Island with all of his Canadian raw potato product coming from East Point Potatoes. While he promotes his Canadian image of plaid and the maple leaf, he considers Smoke's to be a global company based in Canada. His key messages included:

- Have a passion for your business.
- Know your target market.
- Develop long term partnerships.
- It all starts with one - one product, one sale, one location, one sports arena, etc.

Board Secretary-Treasurer Jason Hayden chaired the early afternoon session. After greetings from Alan McIsaac, provincial Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, Jason introduced Romain Cools, Secretary General of Belgapom, the organization of the Belgian potato processing industry, who gave an overview of the European potato situation. He explained that the European potato supply is dominated by five countries: France, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium and the United Kingdom. These five countries produce a volume of raw potatoes similar to what is produced in North America and are the location of the major processing facilities in Europe. 2017 production is up vs 2016 and with lower raw product prices they hope to regain some of the global competitiveness that they lost last year when supplies were tight. He summarized the challenges faced by European potato producers which are similar to those faced by growers in North America:

- Worldwide demand and consumption of potatoes
- Trade barriers
- Demand for a healthy and sustainably produced product
- Transportation costs
- Raw material availability

Kevin MacIsaac, General Manager of the United Potato Growers of Canada then provided an overview of the North American potato supply situation. In a nutshell, production is down slightly, processing supplies are tight and there will be some competition for supplies between the processing and fresh sectors. Fresh and seed growers are looking for a positive price year and the processing sector will be looking forward to an early start to the 2018 season.

Board Vice-Chair Darryl Wallace took over the chair duties after the break and introduced Dr. Nora Olsen, a



Clockwise from top left: Ryan Smolkin, founder and CEO of Smoke's Poutinerie gave an energetic presentation at the morning session; Romain Cools, Secretary General of Belgapom, updated PEI growers on the European 2017 potato crop and market outlook; Rodney Dingwell, Board Chair, presents a Certificate of Appreciation to Brian Beaton, former PEI Potato Industry Coordinator; Darryl Wallace (left) presents a Certificate of Appreciation to Rodney Dingwell (right), 2016-2017 Board Chairman; Board Chair Rodney Dingwell presents a Certificate of Appreciation to Owen Ching (left), outgoing Tablestock Director for the Souris-Montague District; Malpeque MP Wayne Easter brings greetings from the federal government.





Clockwise from top left: Grower participants in the video shoot (left to right) Patrick, Ray and Alvin Keenan, Chad Robertson, Keisha Rose and Brad Robertson receive photographs in appreciation of their efforts; Ken Lingley of On-Target Sprayer Services (right) is presented an Industry Appreciation Award by Board Director Alex Docherty (left); Eugene MacLure (right), recently retired from AgraWest, is presented an Industry Appreciation Award by Board Director Darryl Wallace (left); Sharon Kelly (right) received an Industry Appreciation Award from Greg Donald, General Manager of the PEI Potato Board (left) and grower Myles Rose on behalf of her late husband Wilfred Kelly; Grower participants in the video shoot Andrew Lawless, John Visser, and Derek and Terry Curley are presented photograph mementos in appreciation of their efforts by Marketing Director Kendra Mills (right).



professor from Idaho State University. Her specialty is potato storage and post-harvest physiology. She spoke to the group about Innovative Decision Making Tools for Growers. There have been great advancements in simple tools for rapid diagnosis and Olsen provided examples of some of the tools now available to growers:

- Low cost diagnostic kits for pathogens, such as potato viruses, that can be used right in the field to confirm the presence of a pathogen on the spot.
- APPS for smart phones - there is such a wide variety of agricultural apps available now, you just need to try different ones and decide by trial and error which ones are most useful for you - it is a very personal choice so just keep experimenting.
- An infrared gun (cost now down to approximately \$100) is now a cost effective way to assess pulp temperature of potatoes going into storage and is more objective than a pulp thermometer.
- Bruise balls that can be run through a harvester or packing line can identify problem areas so that adjustments can be made to reduce tuber damage.
- Technology that has been developed to test blood sugar for diabetics has been adapted to test potato glucose levels. Test strips now cost ten dollars apiece when a

fifteen to twenty thousand dollar piece of equipment was needed in the past.

- An infrared camera filter can be put on your smart phone allowing you to see differences between lots of potatoes put in storage at different times or under different conditions and to identify areas of the building where air leakage is taking place.

As she completed her presentation Olsen cautioned growers to make sure tools that they were using had been validated; to make sure that the tool fit the intended situation; and that they used the tool in combination with their field and scientific knowledge and gut feeling.

The afternoon ended with a presentation by Ghislain Pelletier, an agronomist with international experience. He spoke of changes in both North American and global potato production that have taken place in recent decades. The use of technology in agricultural production is expanding, sustainability assurances are increasingly being required by the market and the public, potato production in the developing world has now increased beyond that in the developed world and potato processing capacity is increasing in South America, China and India. He encouraged local growers to prepare for future changes by staying informed of industry developments both locally and globally, building on your strengths of generational knowledge of potato production, the health aspects of the potato and your documentation of practices that show your environmental and social responsibility and to continue to look for ways to increase your productivity sustainability.

Over 250 industry members attended the Potato Board banquet held at the Delta Hotel in Charlottetown. Industry Recognition Awards were presented to Ken Lingley of On-Target Sprayer Services; Eugene MacLure, recently retired from Agrawest following a long career in the PEI potato industry; and posthumously to Wilfred Kelly, a local consultant and agronomist who passed away in 2016. Wilfred's award was accepted by his wife Sharon.

After the awards presentations, Greg Donald, General Manager of the Potato Board and Marketing Director Kendra Mills described the development and execution of the recent PEI Potato video project, resulting in video footage to be used for marketing purposes and preparation of 30 and 45 second ads. After showing the 45 second spot "What does it take to produce a quality potato?", photos were presented to the growers who participated in the video shoot.

The evening ended with the now traditional review in pictures of all the events and activities that the Board and Island potato growers had been involved in over the past year.

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Soil Health - Continuous Learning

by Ryan Barrett
Research Coordinator and Agronomy Lead

In recent years, there has been much more attention paid to examining and quantifying the health of our soils. With new technology and new testing, we are learning more about what makes a soil “healthy” and how farmers can improve the health of their fields. However, there is not one agreed upon soil health index, and the factors that indicate the relative health of soil are many. In this article, we will explore some of the ways that we can assess the health of our soils and what we can do to improve struggling fields.

Soil Health can be defined as the continued capacity of soil to function as a vital living system to sustain biological productivity, maintain environmental quality, and promote plant, animal and human health. Emphasis is placed on the importance of all the multiple functions of soil, including biomass production, nutrient cycling, filtering and buffering, water storage/availability, biological habitat, biodiversity. Building and maintaining soil health is essential to agricultural sustainability and ecosystem functions.

Soil Testing: Conventional Testing and New Soil Health Tests

One of the cornerstones to assessing the health and fertility of soil is the traditional soil chemical analysis that most growers routinely conduct. These relatively inexpensive soil tests can help assess if any particular nutrients are notably lacking, as these deficiencies can have a big impact on crop yield and quality. In addition, indexes like Cation Exchange Capacity (CEC) and Phosphorus Saturation Index (P/AI) are also used to assess the ability of your soil to make certain nutrients available to growing plants.

Most routine soil testing analyses also include soil organic matter percentage, a factor fundamental to assessing the relative health of soil. Soil organic matter is fundamental to healthy soils. Not only does it provide nutrients and habitat for soil microorganisms, it also plays an important role in building aggregates in soil. Soils with improved structure have more capacity to hold water, particularly important in dryland crop production as is practiced in the majority of Prince Edward Island.

A recent report by the PEI Department of Agriculture and Fisheries has determined that over the past two decades, soil organic matter percentages in all types of rotations have been trending downward in Prince Edward Island. With the challenges presented by climate change

and changing weather patterns, it seems certain that Island potato growers will need soils that are more resilient and better able to hold water during dry periods. Therefore, reversing this downward trend in soil organic matter is essential.

All of this notwithstanding, simply knowing the soil organic matter percentage of a field does not tell the whole story of soil health. There has been substantial research in recent years on other soil testing tools for chemical, physical and biological characteristics that can be used to assess the relative health of soil and provide benchmarks to chart improvement of target fields. Examples of physical characteristics that can be tested include bulk density, porosity, penetration resistance (compaction), aggregate size, aggregate stability, and water holding capacity. Examples of biological tests that can be performed include mineralizable soil nitrogen, active carbon, microbial respiration rate, and populations of beneficial and parasitic soil microorganisms.

In the past couple of years, Kyra Stiles with the PEI Department of Agriculture and Fisheries has been testing PEI soils using the Cornell Soil Health test, which tests for a wide range of soil characteristics beyond those covered in our currently used routine soil test. The goal is to eventually provide these soil health tests locally and adapted to Prince Edward Island conditions. Kyra has presented some of her work on soil health evaluation at recent workshops and continues to conduct soil tests each year with her department colleagues and additional research partners. If interested in learning more about soil health testing, please feel free to reach out to Kyra for more information.

The Importance of Soil Microbial Communities

An essential component of soil health is fostering an active, diverse soil microbiological ecosystem. These soil microbes are necessary for decomposition of plant residues, nutrient cycling and availability, building soil structure, breakdown of toxins, and suppression of disease causing pathogens. Soil-borne diseases are usually most severe when soil conditions are poor, such as inadequate drainage, low soil organic matter, poor soil fertility, high soil compaction, and low microbial diversity. Key to maintaining a diverse microbial ecosystem is soil organic matter, as it is the primary food source for these microorganisms. Maintaining sufficient soil organic matter levels as well as a diversity of plant species has been shown to promote microbial diversity, which in turn can help keep disease-

causing pathogens (bacteria, fungi, nematodes, etc) in check.

This being said, it is important to keep an eye on harmful soil microbes and pests to assess whether you have a problem that requires immediate corrective action, or whether you may need to change what crop you plant in a field with an overabundance of pathogenic or parasitic soil organisms. Two pathogens that are causing substantial issues in Prince Edward Island potato fields are species of *Verticillium* fungi (particularly *V. dahliae*) and root lesion nematodes (*Pratylenchus penetrans*), which work together to cause what is commonly referred to as Early Dying Complex. Together, these nematodes and fungi compromise the ability of potato plant roots to absorb water and nutrients, leading to premature plant senescence and reduced yields. Previous research in the province has found very high populations of both *Verticillium* and root lesion nematodes in soil, and the Potato Quality Institute now offers testing services to quantify populations of both.

Soil Compaction

A physical property of soil getting increased attention recently is soil compaction. In many crop production systems, farmers have been moving to no-till or reduced tillage systems for a myriad of beneficial reasons, chief among them reduced soil compaction. However, potato production systems are by their nature more dependent on soil disruption, and movement of heavy equipment over fields at all times of the year is routine. Compacted soil has less room between soil particles for air and water, making it more difficult for roots to penetrate the soil in search of water and nutrients, while at the same time retaining less water and nutrients for growing plants. Previous yield variability research conducted with Steve Watts of Genesis Crop Systems has shown that compaction levels are generally high, with average penetrometer readings indicating tight soils that impede root growth under normal Island potato production systems.

In August 2017, the AIM Soil Working Group welcomed the Soil Caravan team from the Quebec Ministry of Agriculture to visit the Island to talk about soil health and soil compaction. Videos of their presentations and a helpful booklet are available on the PEI Potato Agronomy website (peipotatoagronomy.com). They had several take-home messages related to soil compaction, including:

- Where possible, control traffic on fields. Seventy percent of compaction occurs on the first pass over the field by equipment that is too heavy, so concentrating travel into tramlines/lanes minimizes damage over the whole field, and then mitigation work can be done in the most affected zones.

- Reduce the weight of equipment where possible, as well as reducing the total number of trips over the field. Where possible, limit the load per axle to six tonnes or less, and avoid field operations in wet conditions.
- Use of radial tires, lower tire pressures, and wide/dual wheels where possible.
- Dig a hole in your field to assess the profile of your soils for yourself. This will allow you to assess where there are compaction layers or evidence of shallow rooting.
- Subsoiling (ripping) should be done with flat points, working at least 4 inches (10 cm) below the hard pan layer. Subsoiling should be done when soil is dry to avoid smearing, and ideally should be done on a field that can be left to grow with a cover crop and no additional traffic for the rest of the season.

Improving Soil Health through Crop Rotation

All of the factors that have been discussed so far (organic matter, soil structure, compaction, microbial communities, etc) can be positively influenced by crop rotation. It is a reality that in some communities, land is hard to access and is expensive to buy or rent. At the same time, prices for other rotation crops have often not been able to compete with potato profits, so rotations are subsequently short. Nonetheless, multiple studies in multiple areas have consistently shown that longer and more diverse crop rotations are associated with higher yields and healthier soils.

In February 2017, the AIM Soil Working Group brought Dr. Bob Larkin from USDA in Maine to PEI to talk about long-term crop rotation work that he has done with potatoes and assessing different types of rotations for their effect on both marketable yield as well as economic return. Some take home messages from Dr. Larkin's presentation included:



A look at the crop rotation study underway at AAFC Charlottetown in 2017. Photo: R. Barrett.

- Having a rotation of at least three years in length, using conservation/reduced tillage where possible, has positive economic returns.
- Use of a disease suppression crop like mustard or sudangrass in the year before potatoes can be beneficial if incorporated as a green manure, followed by a cover crop.
- Addition of manure/compost when possible can have dramatic impact on improving soil organic matter.

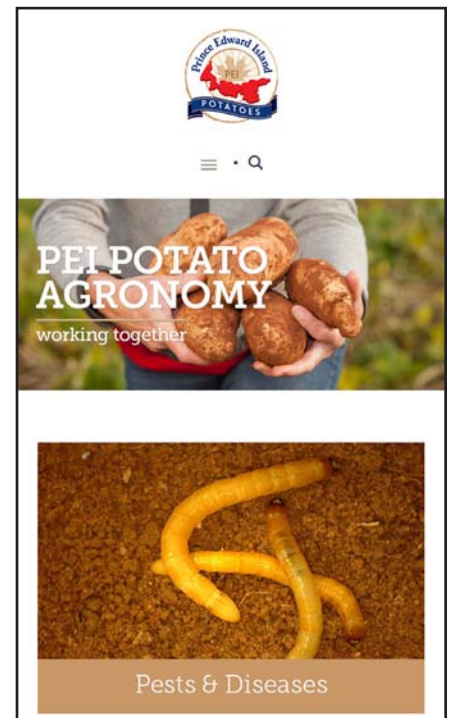
Multiple presentations and reports that I've read in recent months repeatedly stress that keeping something

growing in your soil as much as possible has very positive impact on soil organic matter and soil structure. Recently, we've seen more growers planting cover crops like rye or barley following potato harvest. Not only does this help with soil erosion, but it keeps that soil active and cycling. Some growers are opting to do residue tillage in the year before potatoes are planted in late summer or early fall and then plant a fall cover crop, again keeping something actively growing as much as possible. We do know that residue tillage is associated with less organic matter destruction than moldboard ploughing, and more green cover on fields will also foster the creation of more organic matter. Also of interest is crop diversity. Different crops will foster different soil microbes, so multi-species cover crops may serve to better stimulate soil microbial communities than a single species stand.

As previously noted, soil health is a growing subject of research, and we still have many questions that need answers. Soil health, fertility, and nutrient management are priorities for Potato Board research as well as for the Soil Improvement Working Group of AIM. We look forward to more research projects and agronomy workshops in the near future to continue to find ways to improve how we manage our soils, resulting in improved yields and more sustainable agricultural practices.

For more information:

A new agronomy website has been established as part of the Agronomy Initiative for Marketable yield (AIM). Visit www.peipotatoagronomy.com to find links to factsheets, research reports, videos, and webinars on a variety of agronomy topics. For topics related to Soil Health and Fertility, click on Topics at the top of the page, and then Soil & Fertility. Here you will find drop-down menus by topics area (Soil Health, Soil Compaction, etc) with resources listed under each one.



Home screen for the PEI Agronomy Site on a cell phone.

Upcoming Events

Please call the Board at (902) 892-6551 for further information on any of these events.

January 2018

- Jan 10 **UPGA/UPGC Potato Business Summit**, Rosen Shingle Creek Resort. Orlando, FL, USA.
- Jan 10-12 **National Potato Council Potato Expo**, Rosen Shingle Creek Resort. Orlando, FL, USA.
- Jan 17-18 **Maine Potato Conference**. Caribou, Maine.
- Jan 26 **PEI Federation of Agriculture AGM**. Charlottetown.

February 2018

- Feb 1 **New Brunswick Potato Conference**. Grand Falls, NB
- Feb 23 & 24 **International Potato Technology Expo**. Charlottetown, PEI.

March 2018

- March 6 **Ontario Potato Day**. Delta Hotel, Guelph, ON.
- March 7-8 **PEI Soil & Crops Conference**. Charlottetown, PEI.
- March 12 **Canadian Potato Council Meeting**. Ottawa, ON.
- March 13-15 **Canadian Horticultural Council AGM**. Ottawa, ON.

International Dickeya Symposium in Bangor, Maine

by Mary Kay Sonier, Seed Coordinator

Dickeya dianthicola is a species of blackleg-causing organism that has been identified in recent years in North America. It has been causing issues, particularly along the eastern seaboard of the United States where some growers have suffered considerable losses due to emergence and breakdown issues.

Organisms causing blackleg and soft rot symptoms in potatoes, *Pectobacterium spp.* and *Dickeya spp.*, are found in water and soil, and are transferred from one area to another primarily on seed potatoes or other hosts such as flower bulbs. *Pectobacterium* has been the organism that has primarily caused the blackleg symptoms that we are familiar with in North American potato fields. Losses due to this pathogen are usually minimal.

Dickeya species, on the other hand, can be more aggressive and may not show symptoms in cooler growing regions such as the northern tier of seed growing states and provinces. Symptoms can be severe in areas only slightly warmer such as New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania and most often include non-emergence or the typical blackleg symptoms that usually kill the plant. Symptoms can be seen throughout the growing season.

Dickeya has been faced in European potato growing regions for some time. Many of the incidences in commercial potato fields in the eastern seaboard region have been traced back to Maine seed potatoes. The Maine Cooperative Extension Service hosted a *Dickeya* Symposium in early November to update growers and industry personnel with information on the pathogen and management techniques that can be used to limit development and spread. One hundred and seventy researchers, industry representatives, extension reps, agronomists and growers from four countries and 22 states and provinces were on hand to learn about this emerging pest.

Dr. Jan van der Wolf from Wageningen University in the Netherlands provided an overview of *Dickeya* in Europe. They have been dealing with *Dickeya* species in Europe for many years. It does not persist in the soil and is not a quarantine pest. The presence of different species varies from year to year depending on environmental conditions and the competitiveness of the organism in the environment. In Europe, blackleg is dealt with through crop management and post harvest testing. The use of pathogen-free seed and hygiene practices during harvest, storage, seed handling and in the field are the most important management tools.

Steve Johnson, Crops Specialist and Extension Professor with University of Maine Cooperative Extension, provided an overview of *Dickeya* in the United States. He noted that blackleg outbreaks have been recorded over time in the United States in 1907, 1909, 1934-35 and 1950. Most recently, in 2013 and 2014, issues with non-emergence and tuber breakdown after planting Maine seed were communicated back to Maine from out of state buyers. In 2015, outbreaks of non-emergence caused by blackleg were noted on the eastern seaboard and *Dickeya dianthicola* was identified in Maine. In 2016 and 2017, *Dickeya dianthicola* was identified on the eastern seaboard, in Maine, in other areas of the US and in New Brunswick and Ontario. With latent infections, the seed can look fine but there can be significant field losses the following year in warmer growing regions. Symptoms appear to be different in eastern and western US growing areas and this could be due to different isolates or strains of the pathogen. Certain varieties appear to be more susceptible to infection. *Dickeya dianthicola* has been found in surface water, making irrigation and spraying with surface water a concern for potential spread.

Advances in detection and diagnosis for this organism were the next topic on the agenda. Testing expertise was sought in the last few years from Europe and a project was completed last year so that labs in the US and Canada, including PQI in Charlottetown, are now using the same protocol and testing technique. The most recent change to the protocol is to test a combination of the core and the peel for the most accurate detection result. Testing in European and North American regions is being used as a risk management tool - it is not a mandatory test. There is also considerable variation in field inspection requirements. There is a tolerance level in European, Canadian and some US state certification schemes for visual blackleg symptoms but in other areas the incidence of blackleg is not a part of seed certification. Testing is also taking place to determine which varieties are susceptible or resistant to *Dickeya spp.*

Afternoon presentations covered overviews of *Pectobacterium spp.* in Europe and the US, and a discussion on epidemiology and managing spread and risk of blackleg causing organisms.

Future needs include: reliable testing methods, a better understanding of the source of the problem, reliable options to cleanup the blackleg and reduce incidence and spread and improved response to new seed-borne pathogens.

Take Home Messages

- **Avoid mechanical injury during harvest and allow for good wound healing conditions.**
- **Rotate with crops that are not susceptible to, or hosts for, blackleg.**
- **Know where your seed is coming from and ask for field inspection results to see if any emergence issues or blackleg symptoms were noted.**
- **Have seed lots you will be planting tested for Dickeya if there are any concerns.**
- **Follow good seed handling and hygiene practices.**
- **Avoid irrigation or filling sprayer tanks with surface water.**

2016 & 2017 PEI Dickeya Survey

In the fall of 2016, seed lots were voluntarily submitted to the Potato Quality Institute to be included in a survey to determine the presence of blackleg pathogens on PEI. There were no detections of either Dickeya spp. or Pectobacterium spp. through the survey of Island produced seed, although one seed lot imported from off-Island tested positive.

During the growing season, a limited number of field samples were submitted by CFIA inspectors and growers to the government labs. These were determined to be blackleg caused by Pectobacterium, or what we would consider the historically common blackleg causing pathogen.

A survey will be conducted again in 2017. Growers are invited to submit up to two samples per farm of Island grown or imported seed. Testing will be completed after the Post Harvest Virus Test is complete. Full information on the survey and sampling details are available from the Potato Quality Institute at 902-368-8378.



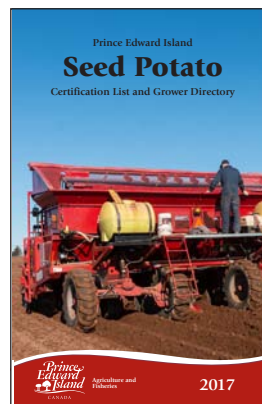
The Seed Section of the United Potato Growers of America has developed the following definition of different types of seed sales and encourages their growers to work towards having the majority of their sales in the 'A' and 'B' categories.

Defining Seed Sales

'A' Sale: A sale that is confirmed with a signed contract, including a stated volume and price. An advance or down payment is defined. There is a high level of confidence that the contract will be honoured and completed.

'B' Sale: A verbal contract with a stated volume and price with a known customer. There is probably no down payment. There is a reasonable expectation that the deal will be completed.

'C' Sale: A committed hundredweight on the sellers' part ("penciled in"). The price may or may not be determined. The deal may depend on factors beyond the control of the seller. There is still some reasonable expectation that the sale will be completed.



PEI Seed Directory Now Available

The Prince Edward Island Seed Directory is now available on line and as a hard copy. The Board will be distributing copies at our booth at the National Potato Council Potato Expo that will take place in Orlando, Florida, USA in January 2018.

The directory can be accessed online at:

www.peipotato.org/pei-potato-industry/seed

The directory is published annually by the PEI Department of Agriculture and Fisheries with information provided by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency.

Post Harvest Test Results will be available from late November to late December and are available by contacting the seed grower directly. As well, a listing of lots growers still have available for sale can be found on the Potato Board website at: www.peipotato.org/pei-potato-industry/seed/seed-availability-listing.

High Quality Novelty Seed Potatoes from Fox Island Elite Seed Potato Farm

Heritage Varieties

Pink Fir Apple

Heritage potato, long and knobby with good flavour.



King Edward

Old traditional English favourite. Early, white with pink blushes.



Irish Cobbler

An Island favourite at the roadside stands - often sold by name.



Warba

An early heirloom variety released in the 1920s. A favourite in B.C.



Reds & Blues

Adirondack Red

Red skin and red flesh. A novelty potato from Cornell University.



Lady Rosetta

Early with high dry matter. Good for chips.



Adirondack Blue



A blue skin, blue flesh novelty potato from Cornell University in New York.

Yellows

Yukon Nugget

Yukon Nugget has higher resistance to scab than Yukon Gold. More tubers per plant and smaller average tuber size than Yukon Gold.



Yukon Gem

A newer variety with yellow flesh that is more resistant to scab than Yukon Gold.



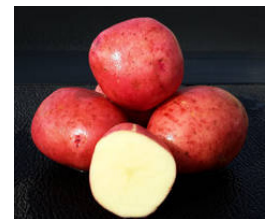
Peter Wilcox

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PEI Plant Disease Diagnostic Laboratory

2017 Season Summary

**Marleen Clark, P. Ag. Plant Disease Diagnostician,
PEI Department Agriculture & Fisheries**

The 2017 potato growing season started with overall good emergence and vigorous plant stands. However, as the spring progressed, some uneven emergence became noticeable. The varieties involved included Gemstar, Russet Burbank, Piccolo, Prospect and Goldrush. A total of seven samples were forwarded to Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada for fungicide resistance/sensitivity testing. The prevalent *Fusarium* strains involved with the seed piece decay samples this season were *Fusarium oxysporum* and *Fusarium coeruleum*. Both *Fusaria* species were found to be resistant to fludioxonil (Maxim) and in most cases sensitive to Thiabendazole (Mertect). The seed care products containing difenoconazole (Cruiser Maxx Potato Extreme, Maxim D) or prothioconazole (Titan Emesto) were effective against these *Fusarium* strains and would be considered good alternatives for seed treatment. This *Fusarium* resistance work was completed by Dr. Rick Peters and his staff at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC/ACC). Seed inoculated with fungicide-resistant *Fusarium* will produce a patchy potato field with poor vigour. Infected potato seed can spread the inoculum in the soil and this can reinfect the next crop to keep the cycle continuing. As well, some samples of seed piece decay this season had *Pythium* leak involved in the rot process. The *Pythium* fungus can cause both a seed piece decay problem and a 'wet' rot storage disease called Leak.

There were no confirmed cases of late blight this season. Environmental conditions for development and spread of the late blight fungus were not conducive compared to previous years. The inoculum source was diminished as growers planted clean, disease free seed and there were only four confirmed cases of late blight the previous year. Growers were vigilant and carried out husbandry management practices and intuitively followed an appropriate fungicide spray schedule. A Pilot Project on spore trapping was carried out this season in collaboration with our Dept. of Agriculture, Agri- Environmental Officer, Sebastian Ibarra. There were no late blight spores detected in the trap.

Aphid Alert reported that there were no green peach aphids detected this season. As well, the level of European corn borer reported through the Potato Pest Update was lower compared to other seasons.

Conditions were extremely dry the first of August

and some wilt started to show up in the lower leaves of the early potato varieties. This season the symptoms on the lower portion of the potato stems were expressed as a dry, shredded stocks with collapsed, hollow stems. This infection occurred very quickly and high humidity and temperatures enhanced disease development. Isolations from the tissue confirmed the early dying fungi involved included *Rhizoctonia spp.*, *Colletotrichum coccodes*, *Verticillium spp.* and a high level of *Fusarium*. Identification of the *Fusarium* strain involved in this complex disease was confirmed as *Fusarium oxysporum* (NFIS). This season the wilt symptoms expressed in the potato fields were related to high levels of *Fusarium* either from seed borne and/or soil borne inoculum. The new progeny tuber infections generally show a discolouration of the vascular strands and usually no stem end rot. However, infection can also start in wounds or possibly lenticels and causes circular lesions and a dry rot in storage.

Foliar leaf spot symptoms started to invade these wilted potato fields. Some potato varieties that expressed this disease symptom included FL1879, Atlantic, Innovator, Ranger Russet and Russet Burbank. The causal agent isolated from the tissue was *Alternaria alternata* or the Brown Spot fungus. As well, some *Alternaria solani* or the Early Bight fungus was also isolated.

In soybeans, the *Alternaria alternata* fungus can also cause a leaf spotting and this season the fungus was isolated from soybean foliage. The *Alternaria alternata* strain is also very saprophytic to dead or dying plant tissue. In the 2016 season, blackish leaf spots started



A Russet Burbank plant with severe wilt. Note the plant itself was still green but the stems collapsed. *Fusarium* and *Rhizoctonia* were isolated from the tissue.

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to develop in a Clearwater Russet potato field. The fungus isolated from the diseased tissue was confirmed as a *Phoma* sp. Other organisms that are saprophytic to dead or dying leaf tissue and that can cause a leaf spotting include *Stemphylium* sp. and *Colletotrichum* sp.

Three samples of potato stem tissue were submitted to the laboratory for analysis. The potato stems were exhibiting an inky, blackish rot at the lower portion and moving upwards. Only one tested positive for a blackleg pathogen and that was *Pectobacterium atrosepticum* which is the common, less aggressive bacteria involved in a bacterial blackleg infection.

Other crops that the laboratory regularly carries out plant disease diagnostic work for include Barley, Wheat, Cole crops, Carrots, Onions, Soybeans, and Fruit crops. New crops create an opportunity for farmers but there are always a few unknown diseases that may develop depending on the season. This year a new disease that started to develop in highbush berries was Phomopsis blight. Symptoms on the plants were blackish stems with the pith area of the stems exhibiting a gray to blackish discoloration. In the leaf tissue, some pin-like lesions were noticed. The apple acreage on Prince Edward Island is increasing and this season Fire blight symptoms appeared in mid-July in two varieties (confirmation pending). Other more common diseases that were also identified in apple samples included Phomopsis canker, Rust and Nectria Canker.



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An Update From the:

PEI Department of Agriculture & Fisheries

by Lorraine MacKinnon, Potato Industry Coordinator



Harvest is over, and now the winter months begin with lots of information sessions.

The International Potato Technology Expo is back in Charlottetown February 23-24 at the Eastlink Centre. Along with leading equipment and product manufacturing exhibitors on the tradeshow floor, the Expo also offers a conference for the potato industry. In collaboration with the PEI Potato Board, the PEI Department of Agriculture & Fisheries is pleased to present an enhanced conference program in 2018. This year the conference will take place each morning from 9 AM to 12 PM upstairs at Red Shores in the Grandstand Room next to Top of the Park. Three presentations each morning will be focused on current issues and innovation, and will aim to provide the audience with relevant, applicable and actionable information. Topics range from CIPC residue on seed potatoes, precision agriculture innovation, weed management in potatoes, and more. Speakers from around North America have been selected, as well as our own local experts. The \$20

conference registration fee includes tradeshow access and lunch. Visit www.potatoexpo.ca for more information and to register. This biannual event is not to be missed!

The PEI Department of Agriculture & Fisheries is also coordinating Pesticide Recertification Training again this winter. Class A license holders have three options to renew their certificate: 1) attend one Day A and one Day B training sessions over 5 years; 2) attend a one-day training course and write the exam; or 3) make an appointment to write the exam without training. Agendas and speakers have been refreshed for the Day A and Day B sessions. Check out the Department of Agriculture's website for training dates, locations, training materials, and other information. If you have any questions, call Muriel Power at 902-368-4154, or email mmpower@gov.pe.ca.

Everyone in the industry was shocked and distressed to learn about Steve Watt's accident in October. Steve operates Genesis Cropping Systems and works tirelessly to help PEI potato growers improve their crop yields and profitability. He's also involved in numerous other trials and organizations on PEI and is in constant contact with potato industry players from around the world. On behalf of the PEI Department of Agriculture & Fisheries, I'd like to wish Steve a full and speedy recovery. We look forward to your continued potato industry contributions.



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Young Beckham, son of Cody and Brianna (Marketing Coordinator at Mid-Isle Farms) Flood, is a proud supporter of PEI Potatoes. This image was captured by Katrina Kuzminer Photography.

INDUSTRY UPDATES

‘New Leaf’ for Chip Plant Means New Products, Markets

October 13, 2017 - Creating jobs for Islanders - A former potato chip plant is creating new market opportunities and lucrative new crops for the farmers of Prince Edward Island.

Earlier this year, New Leaf Essentials East took over facilities in Slemon Park previously used by Small Fry and Humpty Dumpty to produce potato chips. Now the plant specializes in processing “pulses” – high-protein legume plants like dried peas, beans, lentils, and chickpeas.

They are used in pulse products including starches, proteins, fiber and flour for human and pet food markets, including aquaculture feed. The company also serves export markets worldwide.

The Slemon Park expansion has a good Island pedigree. Chris Chivilo – New Leaf Essentials East co-owner with his wife, Tracey Chivilo - is a Charlottetown Rural High School graduate and owner of W.A. Grain and Pulse Solutions in Innisfail, Alberta.

New Leaf Essential East has a sister company, New Leaf Essentials West, based in Bowden, Alberta, that provides similar product line offerings. New Leaf Essentials East services the eastern half of North America, while New Leaf Essentials West services the western half of North America. Together they serve export markets worldwide.

Wayne MacLean, general manager of New Leaf Essentials East, said they are creating jobs for Islanders while providing a valuable new marketplace for Island growers.

“We work with local growers to provide alternative crops that will improve their financial returns; as part of this we continually look at new pulse crops that will grow well in Island growing conditions,” MacLean said. “We partner with local growers, local and national research organizations, and local grower support organizations, to identify an optimal crop rotation that provides both a positive impact to the soil, and sound financial returns for the farmer”.

For 2017 New Leaf Essentials had contracted for 6,000 acres of product grown, with a target for 2018 of 12,000 acres. The company estimated that it would contract with 50 farmers this year and create as many as 12 jobs at its Slemon Park plant alone.

In opening the plant, Chivilo said he was pleased to be able to connect with his home province and to let PEI shine as a food producer and processor.

“This province has a deep agricultural history, thousands of experienced growers, a dedicated workforce, and an

ideal season for growing the crops we process,” Chivilo said. “It’s also my home province and we see tremendous potential for growth here, which is why we’re so pleased to be opening New Leaf Essentials East in Slemon Park.”

Islanders Honoured for Protecting our Environment

The 30th annual Prince Edward Island Environmental Awards today (October 25) recognized a devoted group of Islanders for working to protect the natural environment we all share.

The Environmental Advisory Council chooses each year’s award winners from among nominations reviewed by its selection committee. Winners were announced in two categories: Organization and School.

“There is a lot of excellent environmental work being done across Prince Edward Island,” Communities, Land and Environment Minister Robert Mitchell said. “Our province’s size is our strength, because we have a well-connected, community-minded population that cares for one another and about keeping our Island a healthy, vibrant place to live and visit.”

The winners in this year’s Organization category awards are Kensington North Watersheds Association (KNWA) and Great Enlightenment Buddhist Institute Society (GEBIS). This winning school is Three Oaks Senior High School in Summerside.

“It is a highlight for me each year to participate in the selection and presentation of the Environmental Awards,” said Dean Stewart, Environmental Advisory Council chair. “These awards recognize the people, organizations and schools who work diligently to protect and enhance our environment. Ensuring we have a healthy and sustainable environment is a responsibility we all share.”

For more on the Prince Edward Island Environmental Awards, please visit www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/information/communities-land-and-environment/environmental-award-winners.

Cavendish Farms Officially Opens Two Mammoth Potato Warehouses in New Annan.

October 24, 2017 - The new storage facility at Cavendish Farms is 88,000 square feet, split between two 44,000-square-foot warehouses. Together they have a refrigerated potato storage capacity of 48 million pounds. Construction has been ongoing at the site since May.

“We are proud of our roots in this province and look

forward to future growth with our employees and growers,” said Cavendish Farms president, Robert K. Irving, during the official opening. “It is because of their efforts that we provide great tasting french fries to customers around the world from right here on Prince Edward Island.”

The new facility uses a Tolsma System to maintain consistent quality potatoes year-round for use at the company’s two processing plants on the Island.

P.E.I. Premier Wade MacLauchlan and federal Agriculture Minister Lawrence MacAulay were also on hand for the opening, which took place recently at the new facility.

“As Canada’s Food Island, our province is proud to offer high quality potatoes and frozen potato products that are enjoyed around the world. Cavendish Farms’ major investment in state-of-the-art storage facilities will enhance our competitive position and add to our collective prosperity,” said MacLauchlan.

Cavendish Farms produces frozen potato and appetizer products for the North American and international food industry in both the retail and restaurant sectors.

It operates four potato processing plants: two on Prince Edward Island, one in Lethbridge, Alta., and one in Jamestown, North Dakota. It also operates a fifth plant specializing in appetizer products in Wheatley, Ont.

Cavendish Farms is part of the J.D. Irving Group of Companies.

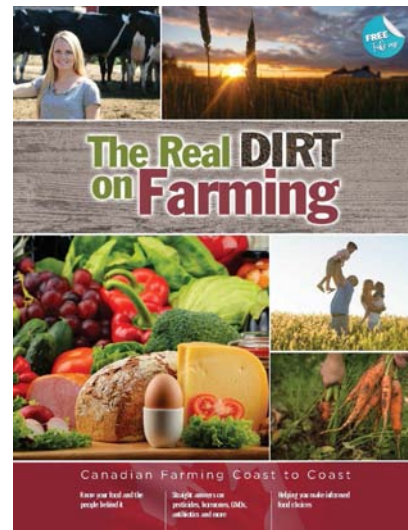
Farm & Food Care Ontario Unveils Updated Flagship Publication The Real Dirt on Farming 2017 is Now Available

November 3, 2017 – (Guelph) Farm & Food Care Ontario officially unveiled the fourth version of The Real Dirt on Farming, its flagship public-outreach publication, at the tenth annual Ontario Harvest Gala on November 2.

The Real Dirt on Farming is a nation-wide initiative designed to help Canadians connect with their food and the farmers that produce it – who they are, what they do, and why they do it. Using both stories and credible science, the publication addresses common questions and misconceptions about Canadian food and farming, as well as other subjects that the general public has indicated are important to them. It also highlights innovations that support our diverse food system, and shares unique personal experiences to proactively build relationships with a non-farming groups.

“Every Canadian deserves access to credible information about the food they eat,” says Brian Gilroy, chair of Farm & Food Care Ontario. “This publication provides the facts, and does so in a compelling manner. It is an excellent resource that helps all of us maintain and improve the relationship Canadians have with food and the farmers that produce it.”

To keep pace with Canada’s changing food and farming landscape, new data from Statistics Canada’s 2016 Census of Agriculture, and new topics have been included. Other subjects have also been expanded to incorporate advances in science, farmer experiences and consumer questions. Substantial effort has also been made to ensure all information sources are credible and accessible to readers.



This latest publication is the fourth edition since the project’s inception in 2006. To date, three million copies have been distributed to libraries, doctors’ offices, Registered Dietitians, political leaders, educators, and through inserts in national publications. The initiative is supported by a wide range of sponsors, and developed with the help of an expansive team of experts. Special thanks is given to Wallenstein Feed & Supply Ltd., as well as CropLife Canada for each supporting the project with \$100,000 contributions.

“We’re thrilled to support Farm & Food Care and the hard working people they represent. This latest edition of The Real Dirt on Farming does an excellent job of capturing the essence of Canada’s modern farmers and why they do the things they do,” says Rick Martin, general manager of Wallenstein Feed & Supply Ltd.

“It reaches the consumer in a visually striking, captivatingly honest way, delivering the facts to those who want to know the true story behind their food. This is highly recommended reading for anyone looking for the truth about sustainable food and farming for the future.”

A full 60 page publication is currently available online at www.RealDirtonFarming.ca. Hard copies may also be ordered from the website. A shorter digest version is also being developed to help expand the reach of this initiative. Both the digest and a French translation of the publication will be available in hard copy and online in January 2018.

Farm & Food Care Ontario is a coalition of farmers, agriculture and food partners working together to ensure public trust and confidence in food and farming. For more information visit www.FarmFoodCareON.org.

For more information: Kelly Daynard, Executive Director, Farm & Food Care Ontario, Phone: 519-837-1326 x224 email: kelly@farmfoodcare.org.

Survey Finds Canadians View Agriculture Positively

In March 2017, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) conducted its first survey on agricultural awareness among Canadians. The survey asked 1,521 Canadians about their knowledge and perceptions of the agricultural sector and revealed some of their concerns and priorities. AAFC will use the data to inform policy development and marketing activities, but results may also provide you with valuable insight that could influence some of your own business decisions.

Among other things, the survey found that:

97% of Canadians view the sector as important to the Canadian economy and 81% hold positive impressions of it. These impressions are grounded in the pride Canadians feel towards the industry and in the belief that our farms produce high-quality food. Still, the majority of Canadians (65%) see themselves as having little or no knowledge about the sector.

Nearly three-quarters (73%) of Canadians think that research and development plays a role in Canada's agriculture and agri-food sector.

Canadians tend to have mixed views about the impact of the sector on the environment. More than half of respondents (56%) believe Canadian farmers are good stewards of the environment, and almost half (45%) think Canadian farming is environmentally friendly.

The most popular sources of information about agriculture were the internet (57%) and television (28%).

When asked who they would trust the most to provide information about farming, the top responses were family (45%), farmers or ranchers (43%), scientists (38%) and AAFC (29%).

Want to know more? The Agricultural Awareness Baseline Survey final report is available at Library and Archives Canada.

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada Hosts International Conference on Minor Use Pesticides

Specialty crop producers from around the globe are faced with regulatory challenges including the regulation and registration of pesticides. By securing a more collaborative approach to regulation and management of minor uses of pesticides internationally, Canadian producers will have better access to international markets.

To address these concerns, more than 200 experts from 35 countries, including representatives from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC), gathered in Montreal in October to kick off the Third Global Minor Use Summit. The Summit focused on discussing regulatory challenges and ways to

collaborate to help farmers.

A minor use of a pesticide refers to uses of herbicides, fungicides, or insecticides on low-acreage, high-value crops, or where pest control is only needed on a small portion of a farm's overall land.

"Pesticides used to treat specialty crops are typically used in such small quantities that manufacturers find the sale potential insufficient to seek registration in Canada, leaving farmers with a limited number of tools to protect their crops," says Jennifer Allen, an entomologist with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Minor Use Pesticide Program. This situation is true in many other countries as well.

"Our goal at AAFC is to support farmers by creating more efficiencies in the generation of data needed to support the regulatory process. One of the ways we can do that is by collaborating with other countries," says Allen.

Pesticide regulations vary from country to country, both in terms of data required for their registration and the acceptable amount of residue that can be left on marketed produce (when pesticide is applied correctly). As a result of the latter, some countries will reject products at the border even if they contain trace pesticide residues which scientific studies show do not to pose an unacceptable risk.

The Summit provided a venue for experts to discuss these issues and identify ways to harmonize pesticide regulations. The goal is to reduce, whenever possible, the amount of duplication and cost involved in developing and reviewing regulatory submissions. This year's conference saw some strong progress. The group agreed to work on the following themes over the next five years:

- Increase cooperation by creating minor use champions from different regions of the world
- Actively promote the adoption of procedures to establish global maximum residue limits (the amount of pesticide that can be safely left on crops)
- Work towards a globally acceptable definition of minor crops
- Find consensus on crop grouping and representative crops (crops that are similar enough that they can be treated the same, i.e. onions and leeks)
- Develop a white paper on capacity building to meet regulatory data requirements.





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