

Prince Edward Island

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Volume 19, Issue 4

# POTATO NEWS



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# POTATO NEWS

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Cover: Montague Intermediate students Maggie Murphy and Kyra Norton present a plaque to Alvin Keenan and Basil Attwood of Rollo Bay Holdings thanking them for their participation and sponsorship of the Connect Ag program at the school. (Photo - PEI Ag Sector Council).

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# Chairman's Comments

by Darryl Wallace, PEI Potato Board Chairman



It is hard to believe that we are into the middle of the summer already. There is a wide variation in crop development due to the cold spring, but overall potatoes seem to be growing well. Rainfall has been spotty and variable again this season. Up in my area in western PEI, we experienced a short but severe hail and thunderstorm on July 10<sup>th</sup>. Fields in the Cascumpec area - including the Elite Seed Farm - experienced crop damage but fortunately it was early and potatoes seem to be bouncing back. Other isolated areas received some precipitation last week, but the remainder of the Island is anxious for a good rainfall.

Although it is hard to leave the Island during our short summer, I was out to Edmonton last week to attend the summer meeting of the Canadian Potato Council. Efforts continue to reduce the PCN testing burden on growers who ship seed across the Canada/US border in recognition of the body of negative test results accumulated over the past ten years. Negotiations are ongoing. Other topics for which the Council received updates included: the national potato

research cluster application, PMRA final decisions on fungicide products, the Safe Food For Canadians Act, the Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada potato breeding program, Potatoes Canada, the Potato Sustainability Initiative, and the Alliance for Potato Research and Education (APRE). As always it was interesting to see the amount of work that goes on behind the scenes at this venue to keep trade relations smooth, and regulations minimal and as realistic as possible so that growers can concentrate on the business of farming.

Our summer promotions are in full swing and it is nice to see the PEI Potato Board logo and our mascot Tate at so many festivals and events around the Island. Another good tourism season means that many more visitors learn about PEI potatoes with these promotions, and we are always proud to support events of local importance to Island residents too.

Congratulations to all the Award winners at the PEI Potato Blossom Festival Banquet in July. It is great to see this recognition from the community. The PEI Potato Board presented a certificate of recognition to Faye MacWilliams, Festival Chair, and her committee. It reads: "In recognition of your successful promotion and continual celebration of the Prince Edward Island potato industry over the past 50 years."



Award winners at the PEI Potato Blossom Festival for 2018 included (left to right) Gary Dunn, Kent Phillips Memorial Future Farmer of the Year Award; Sarah Woodside, 2018 PEI Pototo Ambassador; Billy MacKendrick on behalf of the Hockeyville Fab Five, the well-deserving recipients of the Irma Dumville Volunteer of the Year Award; George Kinch, an employee of Kent and Lloydia Smallman for 32 years and, prior to that, an employee of Kent's father, the 2018 Hired Hand of the Year award; and Winston and Harris Callaghan of Callaghan Farms Inc., Potato Producer of the Year Award. (Photo submitted.)

I hope we are all able to take some time over the next month to spend with family and friends, both from the Island or visiting from away, and enjoy the great vacation place that is our Island. Best wishes as well to all who will be celebrating special family occasions during the summer season - I will be walking down the aisle with two daughters who are being married this summer! Then time to get ready for harvest.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Darryl Wallace".

# POTATO BOARD NEWS

## Changes to Potato Board AGM and Potato Day Planned for 2018-2019

After recent discussions with Board and PEI Department of Agriculture staff, Board directors and other growers, a decision was made to amalgamate some meetings over the 2018-2019 winter season.

For many years now the PEI Potato Board has combined its annual business meeting with a full day of information sessions on the past season and market outlook for the harvested crop. For 2018, the business meeting will still be held in November (as per Board regulations) but the information sessions and industry banquet will be combined with the PEIDAF sponsored Potato Day held in February. Potato Day will be expanded to a two day event with the banquet held following the first day of sessions.

This format will be trialed in 2018-2019. The goal is to use meeting time more efficiently for producers, avoiding any topic repetition. The Board hopes that they will enjoy continued sponsorship of industry businesses with this new format and that it will be beneficial for the industry. A review will be conducted after the new conference in 2019.

## 2018 Potato Acreage Estimate and Outlook

Statistics Canada released its preliminary estimate of 2018 Canadian potato acreage on July 19th. PEI's acres were estimated at 84,000 acres, down from 84,200 acres in 2017. Total Canadian acreage increased 0.5% or 1,599 acres from last year, with most of that expansion focused on processing needs and to a lesser extent, seed to supply the increased processing capacity that will be coming online in Canada and the U.S. in 2019 and beyond. Tablestock acres may be down somewhat both in Canada and in the U.S.

Weather is posing challenges for producers in both countries, and in Europe. Hot dry weather is causing concern in many parts of Canada, including here at home, and even in areas that irrigate heavily, crops are being impacted. In Europe, even though acres were up in the major producing countries, yields are projected to be down significantly due to heat and drought. The U.S. seems to be facing the least amount of issues at this time, but there's still lots of time between now and harvest to change situations in all producing areas. United Potato Growers and the Potato Board will be monitoring this closely and will provide updates as we get closer to main crop harvest.



*Members of provincial caucus held a meeting at the grower-owned Fox Island Elite Seed Potato Farm in West Prince on July 5, 2018. The visit included a tour of the facilities and an opportunity for Board representatives to meet briefly with the group to discuss industry priorities. Caucus also met in-camera while there. Left to right: Alan McIsaac, MLA Vernon River-Stratford; Darryl Wallace, Board Chairman; Premier Wade MacLauchlan; Chris Palmer, MLA Summerside-Wilmot; Paula Biggar, MLA Tyne Valley-Linkletter, Heath MacDonald, MLA Cornwall-Meadowbank; Pat Murphy, MLA Alberton-Roseville; Greg Donald, Board General Manager; Robert Henderson, MLA O'Leary-Inverness; Robert Mitchell, MLA Charlottetown-Sherwood; and Richard Brown, MLA Charlottetown-Victoria Park.*

## PEI Potato Farm Hosts US Agriculture Secretary

On June 15th, Ray and Alvin Keenan and their families had the privilege of hosting US Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue and AAFC Minister Lawrence MacAulay at their farm in Rollo Bay. Secretary Perdue had been invited to PEI by Minister MacAulay for important bilateral discussions on trade and other issues of mutual interest between the two countries.

Potato Board staff also participated in the visit. It was evident that Minister MacAulay and Secretary Perdue held each other in high regard, and that this relationship enabled frank and productive discussions on issues. While at Rollo Bay Holdings, the Secretary was clearly interested in the new technology being used to grade the potato crop, and Ray shared with both gentlemen the highly integrated nature of the North American potato industry, and the importance of the free and fair flow of trade in potatoes between both our countries.

Minister MacAulay hosted a barbeque at his home later that evening for many representatives of the Island agricultural sector. Board Chairman Darryl Wallace attended the social event, which prominently featured PEI potatoes and other local foods.

### Canadian Potato Council Summer Meeting

The 2018 summer meeting was held in Edmonton, Alberta on July 16-17. The Little Potato Company, which



Canadian Minister of Agriculture Lawrence MacAulay (left) and US Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue (center) talk potatoes with farmer Ray Keenan of Rollo Bay Holdings during a July visit. Photo: W. Riley, AAFC.

is headquartered in Edmonton, offered CPC members a tour of its facility prior to the start of the meetings. PEI representatives joined those from Manitoba and BC for the informative tour.

In terms of issues covered during the CPC meetings, the Potato Task Force's draft report on the impacts of CFIA's cost recovery initiative on the competitiveness of the Canadian potato sector was finalized and adopted. CFIA currently collects an estimated \$55 million in fees from the Canadian agricultural sector, with close to \$3 million of this being collected from the potato industry. That's a disproportionately high percentage coming from the potato industry, given the value of the potato industry versus the entire Canadian agricultural sector. In early 2017, the Agency announced it was reviewing its fees and services with a goal of substantially increasing the level of cost recovery. It was clear from the analysis conducted by the Potato Task Force that our industry cannot bear even higher costs from CFIA, and indeed, the recommendation arising from the analysis was that the current level of fees being charged by CFIA to the potato industry should decrease by 50%.



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The report will be shared with AAFC Minister Lawrence MacAulay and Health Canada Minister Ginette Petitpas Taylor, along with a request to meet and jointly review the report and its recommendations. Phase 2 of CFIA's cost recovery initiative is supposed to be launched shortly, and the report will also be submitted to the Agency as part of the response to Phase 2 consultations.

Other issues discussed during the CPC summer meeting included work that's underway to lessen the amount of PCN testing required to sell seed between the U.S. and Canada, and vice versa. In Canada, over 350,000 PCN samples tested over the past eleven years demonstrate Canada's strong health status with respect to PCN. CFIA and the USDA have been working on alternative approaches going forward, with good industry engagement by members of the CPC. Work continues on this important issue.

Market access, trade negotiations, several CFIA updates on variety registrations, garden varieties, Safe Foods for Canadians Act regulations, and other regulatory-type items were discussed. Dr. Eric van Bochove, Director of Research Development and Knowledge Transfer with AAFC also updated the CPC delegates on changes to the national potato breeding program. Canadian potato industry reps, including processing company representatives, have been working with AAFC to improve the connectivity between the industry and the breeding program over the past few years. AAFC has made some changes as a result of those discussions, and we will continue to try to find ways to obtain maximum value from this important asset.

Several other issues were discussed, including crop protection (see the PEI Department of Agriculture's update in this issue for more information), the Potato Sustainability Initiative, the World Potato Congress, Plant Breeders' Rights, and so on. Positive changes have been made to the Alliance for Potato Research and Education (APRE), and good results are being obtained from the dollars being invested by producer organizations and processors on both sides of the border. More information on this will be provided in a future issue of the magazine. Please call the Board office for additional information on any other issues, or to suggest areas that require work on a provincial, regional or national basis.

## Looking for Volunteers

Farmers Helping Farmers (FHF) is interested in having potato producers volunteer with us in Kenya when we go for 3 weeks in late January until early February, 2019 to provide some technical advice to Kenyan potato producers. This will include visiting small Kenyan farms where potatoes are grown. Couples are welcome. FHF will make arrangements and provide orientation for all selected volunteers. The cost of travelling to Kenya and living there for 3 weeks will be over C\$4,000. A weekend safari to a game park will be included in the program. Anyone interested in volunteering should contact Teresa Mellish at 902-838-4032 or at [ktm.mellish@pei.sympatico.ca](mailto:ktm.mellish@pei.sympatico.ca). She plans to travel to Kenya with the team along with her husband, Ken.

Farmers Helping Farmers is small Island non-government organization which has worked in Kenya for 38 years. More information can be found at [www.farmershelpingfarmers.ca](http://www.farmershelpingfarmers.ca) or on the Farmers Helping Farmers Facebook page.



*A delegation of Kenyan officials from Meru County who wish to develop the potato industry in their county were hosted by the Farmers Helping Farmers organization in late June. Farmers Helping Farmers organized industry visits over several days for the group which included a stop at the Potato Board to speak with staff Greg Donald and Brenda Simmons and Robert Godfrey, Executive Director of the PEI Federation of Agriculture, about grower representation and organization. Pictured above left to right: Greg Donald; Robert Godfrey; His Excellency Kiraitu Murungi, Governor, Meru County; Guy Cudmore, Farmers Helping Farmers; Her Excellency Priscilla Murungi, First Lady Meru County; Mr. Maingi Mugambi, Meru County Executive Committee Member for Cooperatives; Professor Karwitha Kuigu, Meru County Executive Committee for Agriculture; Barry Cudmore, Farmers Helping Farmers; Pauline Laibon, Director External Linkages, Office of Governor.*

# Connecting with Youth

by Mary Kay Sonier

YOUTH - they are full of potential as future farmers, industry employees, consumers, leaders and lawmakers that will affect our world. The PEI Potato Board and growers work with many different local partners to engage youth in our province and help to educate them about the potato industry. This is especially important now as so many people, even those living in rural areas, are not related to a farm.

We are fortunate that agriculture is an engaging topic and there are a lot of ways to incorporate agricultural examples into curriculum subjects (such as science, geography and math,) that are interesting and fun.

One of the most direct ways to reach students is through the Agriculture Science classes and Academy Diploma Program (ADP) offered in some Island high schools. Jessica Reeves, a teacher at Kinkora Regional High School, is one of the enthusiastic teachers who help the students to learn about animal and plant agriculture

through lesson plans, field trips and hands-on activities at school. *“Currently almost 1/3 of our high school students are enrolled in the Academy Diploma Program in Agriculture & Bioscience at KRHS. Our students benefit from studying the importance of the agriculture industry in PEI and learning how their food is produced in a sustainable manner. We are very blessed to have so many industry partners who help us to educate and inspire a new generation of Aggies.”* Students who are registered in the ADP are also required to complete a Co-op term at a local farm or agricultural business.

Even before students reach high school age, there are a number of projects designed to educate children about the many aspects of the potato industry including potato nutrition, environmental sustainability initiatives, and how potatoes grow. Farmer participation and input helps make these initiatives successful. Many thanks to all who volunteer their time and sponsorship to make the programs outlined in the following pages successful.



*Michael (right) and his brothers Joseph (left) and Alan (centre) after a day of farm work pause to check out Michael's plot of early potatoes.*

## **Name: Michael Larsen**

**Grade:** Graduated from Grade 12 in June 2018

**School:** Kinkora Regional High School

**Why I enrolled in the Academy Diploma Program:** I enrolled in the Academy Diploma Program specializing in Agriculture and Bioscience at the end of Grade Nine so that I could learn more about things I am really interested in.

**My experience with the potato industry:** I consider myself a 4<sup>th</sup> generation Larsen farmer. I have been working in the warehouse and potato fields since I could walk. I started growing early potatoes several years ago in a garden and last year I supplied a local seafood store all summer. I have been driving equipment and trucks in the fields for several years and love to be involved in the potato harvest.

**My plans after high school:** I have been accepted to Dalhousie University Agriculture Faculty for the fall of 2018. We have a beef herd as well, so I am taking the Dairy Program to learn more about cattle.

**How I can contribute to the PEI potato industry going forward:**

I plan to return to the family farm when I finish at Dal-AC. I think more emphasis should be placed on the family farm and helping the younger generation get involved in farming.

## Name: Bevin MacLellan

**Grade:** Graduated from Grade 12 in June 2018

**School:** Kensington Intermediate Senior High School

**Why I enrolled in the Academy Diploma Program:** My real interest is being on the farm and growing crops. I enrolled in the ADP so I could learn about a subject I am really interested in and receive credit for it.

**My experience with the potato industry:** I grew up on the family farm and have been helping out as long as I can remember. I have also been getting some work experience in the industry off of the farm by working last summer and this summer at Kensington Agricultural Services.



*Bevin (right) has many mentors on the farm including (left to right) grandfather Kenny, Great-Uncle Clair, father Billy and older brother Rylan.*

**My plans after high school:** I will be starting at the Dalhousie Agriculture College in Truro, Nova Scotia this fall and I plan to major in Plant Science.

**How I can contribute to the PEI potato industry going forward:** I plan to return to the farm after I graduate and can contribute to improvement of the industry by being an innovative farmer and being involved in the industry.

## Name: Mya Wood

**Grade:** Graduated from Grade 12 in June 2018

**School:** Kinkora Regional High School

**Why I enrolled in the Academy Diploma Program:** I took the ag science class and the ADP program in order to gain further knowledge about the agriculture industry on PEI.

**My experience with the potato industry:** I grew up on a potato farm, Morley C. Wood and Sons Inc., so I have been exposed to the farming lifestyle ever since I was little. I also help out on the farm whenever help is needed.



*Mya's grandfather Morley Wood (left) and father Jeff Wood (right) have helped to foster her love of farm life and interest in science and agriculture.*

**My plans after high school:** I plan on attending UPEI and studying sciences.

**How I can contribute to the PEI potato industry going forward:** In the future, I could contribute to the industry by continuing to be involved with the family farm. I could also use the knowledge that I gained from the ADP program to educate others about how important the potato industry is to PEI.

## Name: Isaac McKenna

**Grade:** Entering Grade 12 in September 2018

**School:** Kinkora Regional High School

### Why I enrolled in the Academy Diploma Program:

I think this a great program for farm and non-farm kids to learn more about Agriculture and Bioscience in PEI. I also really liked that as part of the course we could get certifications like First Aid, tractor safety, animal care and WHMIS that are useful for summer and full-time jobs.

**My experience with the potato industry:** My mom Krista grew up helping on the family farm and still works with my Grandpa and uncle in the spring and fall. I was always around the farm too and it was just kind of natural that I should start helping out as soon as I was big enough.

**My plans after high school:** I am working for MacDougall Steel this summer and after high school I plan to work towards my Red Seal in the trades - right now I am thinking about welding or plumbing.

**How I can contribute to the PEI potato industry going forward:** It is too soon to say what I will end up doing for a career, but whatever it is I will definitely continue to work part-time on the farm.



*Isaac (center) was able to complete his co-op placement working on the potato farm with his grandfather Greg McKenna (left) and uncle Gordie McKenna (right).*

## Name: Abby Webster

**Grade:** Entering Grade 12 in September 2018

**School:** Kinkora Regional High School

**Why I enrolled in the Academy Diploma Program:** I took the program because I wanted to gain some practical experience in the agriculture and bioscience field.

**My experience with the potato industry:** My family has been a part of the PEI potato industry for many generations as farmers and business people. I was able to arrange a co-op placement with Mid-Isle Farms, a potato packing operation, which gave me my first exposure to the marketing side of the potato business.

**My plans after high school:** After high school I hope to go on to study Agriculture Business.

**How I can contribute to the PEI potato industry going forward:** I feel I can contribute in the future by working in the industry, whether it be in marketing or business development for an industry company or working with the business aspects of the farm. I have a strong interest in agriculture and look forward to pursuing a career in this field.



*Abby's father Troy has helped her learn about growing potatoes, which she knows will provide good background for a career in Agribusiness.*

## Name: Ben McCarville

**Grade:** Graduated from Grade 12 in June 2018

**School:** Kinkora Regional High School

**Why I enrolled in the Academy Diploma Program:** My older sister recommended it to me as she had taken it and thought I would like the hands-on work and field trips.

**My experience with the potato industry:** I spent two summers working on a potato farm in Kinkora for Louis and Andrew Smith. When looking for a place to do my co-op, I approached Brent because a friend of mine worked for him and his farm was close to my home.

**My plans after high school:** I am going to take a year off and work while I decide if I want to continue to work or return to school or train for a skilled trade.

**How I can contribute to the PEI potato industry going forward:** Right now I can contribute by continuing to learn about potato farming and helping to grow and pack good quality PEI Potatoes. In the future I may continue in farm work or in a supporting industry.



*Ben McCarville (right) is working on the potato farm this summer for Brent Craig (left), a neighbour who hosted him for his co-op term this past semester - a requirement of the ADP program.*

## Tasty Taters Competition 2018

The Spuds in Tubs Program was revised in 2018 and relaunched as the Tasty Taters Competition. Two schools were selected for the pilot: Montague Consolidated and Elm Street School in Summerside. Multiple classes from each school participated in the pilot in an attempt to increase engagement and excitement for the project and promote the competition between classes. Each school was provided with a growing tub, soil, seed potatoes and growing information as well as support from Tamara Sealy; Nutrients for Life; potato farmers Darryl Wallace, Greg Stavert, the Hogg family, and Brian Annear; and the Potato Board and PEI Ag Sector Council/Ag In The Classroom PEI. The schools received visits several times over the course of the growing period to help make adjustment and provide advice on growing potatoes.



*Grade 3 students at Montague Consolidated School get ready to dig the potatoes they grew as part of the 2018 Tasty Taters competition. Photo: Ag Sector Council.*

This pilot taught the classes teamwork as they had to make decisions every day about caring for their plants, putting their plants outside and carrying them in and out. Some got hit with frost and a couple had no potatoes due to lack of watering. All enjoyed a great experience that helped them to understand the challenges and rewards of growing food.

Harvest was completed on June 18 -19 with the Board mascot Tate there to oversee the activities. The winning class from each school received a potato bag filled with potato cinnamon rolls, biscuits, bread, and fudge and a \$50 cheque for the class for supplies. Thank you to all the participants and sponsors. Plans are already being made for 2019!

# Connect Ag Program at Montague Intermediate



Connect Ag is a pilot project of the Agriculture in the Classroom Program delivered by the PEI Ag Sector Council. The project took place over a several month period. The school teamed up with Rollo Bay Holdings, a potato farm in eastern PEI, and during the project students studied the workings of the farm in class, learned about the importance of the potato crop to the PEI economy, and also covered topics such as potato nutrition and sustainable farming practices employed by modern PEI potato farms. As part of the project, students also toured the packing facilities at Rollo Bay.

The students, teachers and staff at Rollo Bay were all enthusiastic about the benefits of the program from the learning opportunities to the local connections they were able to build. The final element of the project was a special Potato Day at the school. A group of students undertook to bake 200 potatoes and sell them to fellow classmates as a fundraiser for the Farmers Helping Farmers organization. This was accompanied by potato signs and posters containing potato information hung throughout the school. The lunch was followed by a series of potato games including the always popular potato sack race.

Rollo Bay donated the potatoes and Alvin Keenan (owner of Rollo Bay Holdings with his brother Ray) and staff member Basil Attwood were on hand to share in the lunch and activities. “The enthusiasm of the teachers and students at the school for this project was great,” said Alvin. “It was a good opportunity to share our pride in agriculture with them and to show them what goes into producing the food that they eat every day.” This pilot project was funded by Agriculture In the Classroom Canada and Farm Credit Corporation. The PEI Ag Sector Council hopes to continue with this project next year and involve schools in different areas and various types of farms.



*From top: Montague Intermediate teachers Jimmy Morris (left) and Katie Moore (right) with the CALM (Canadian Agriculture Literacy Month) Coordinator Shelley Ployer. They helped organize all the school activities that were part of the Connect Ag 2018 Project: signs throughout the school promoted Potato Day and information about potato production on Prince Edward Island; potato sack races were a big hit after the baked potato lunch. (Photos courtesy: PEI Ag Sector Council).*



# Tree Planting at O'Leary Elementary

The PEI Potato Board continued with the tree planting initiative with Island schools started with our first Green Intern in 2017. In 2018, the project moved to Western PEI. Our current Green Intern (funded through the AAFC Agricultural Youth Green Jobs Initiative), Zachery Phillips, worked with the PEI Department of Agriculture and Forestry Greening Spaces Program, students from the Trout River Watershed Crew and staff at O'Leary Elementary to plant trees and shrubs for two outdoor learning areas on the school property. After a short presentation by Board General Manager Greg Donald on the potato industry and some of the environmental initiatives that potato growers are involved in, the Grade 5 class moved outside for a quick lesson on planting and caring for shrubs and trees and then took part in the planting exercise.

Thank you to school staff, David Carmichael and Brent McLean from the Greening Spaces Program, the watershed crew and the students for a fun and successful day.

*Photos: (top) Brent MacLean from the PEI Department of Agriculture and Forestry provides a lesson to students in how to plant and care for the trees and shrubs. (bottom) PEI Potato Board Green Intern Zachery Phillips in the new outdoor learning area that will be created as a result of this project.*



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# Breakfast Pilot Program at O'Leary Elementary

Mark Phillips, Greg Donald, Darryl Wallace, and Mélanie Chassé (Cavendish Farms - Customer Technical Sales Manager) assisted with the O'Leary Elementary school breakfast program on June 7th. Volunteers from the community serve a breakfast covering at least three food groups every Thursday. Traditionally their breakfast would include scrambled eggs, toast etc. Our Chairman, Darryl Wallace, thought it would be a good opportunity to promote including potatoes as a part of a healthy breakfast. Mélanie and the team at Cavendish Farms developed a breakfast bowl (hash brown bottom, scrambled egg middle, and shredded cheese on top). The breakfast program would typically serve scrambled eggs on the first Thursday of every month. We were able to execute our breakfast bowls on the first Thursday in June.

The eggs were cooked by the volunteers in large electric skillets. With the help of Canada's Smartest Kitchen, we borrowed some cook tops for this trial to cook the hash browns. The on-site oven was used to keep the hash browns warm prior to serving.



After the students enjoyed their breakfast, Melanie and Darryl spoke to the students in each classroom about where the hashbrowns in their breakfast came from. Each class was given classroom materials, including a poster to explain the process of taking a potato from the field and turning it into a hashbrown.

*Photos: (left) The Pilot Breakfast Program potato cups developed at Cavendish Farms Test Kitchen contain hash brown potatoes, scrambled eggs and cheese in a cardboard cup. (Right) PEI Potato Board Marketing rep Mark Phillips cooks up some hash browns for the breakfast cups in the O'Leary Elementary kitchen.*

In total, approximately 120 students were served and everyone was very enthusiastic about the trial.

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# Market Summary 2017/2018

by Mark Phillips, Market Information Officer

Overall the 2017-18 marketing season was a positive one for prices. Due to the drought experienced in parts of the Island in 2017, many growers had a lower than average crop and movement was slightly behind last year, but similar to our three-year average. When comparing, it is good to remember that our production was down 8% in 2017 and the 2016-17 movement was very strong. With good demand and lower production, the crop moved in a timely manner. Much like last year, our movement was mostly driven by strong shipments to Canadian and US markets. Our export movement was down, but our domestic movement made up for it. Pricing in general was approximately 11% above the previous year. The Fresh Weighted Average (FWA) shows pricing trends weighted according to the percentage volume of various pack sizes shipped. A graphical representation of our FWA is shown below.

Overall, production in Canada was relatively flat in 2017. PEI had the largest decrease due to drought conditions experienced in many areas of the province in 2017. The US exchange, truck shortages in the US and resulting demand for Canadian product, helped to keep US shipments similar to last year's already strong numbers. Domestic sales were strong as well.

Approximately 5,710,093 cwt of tablestock potatoes

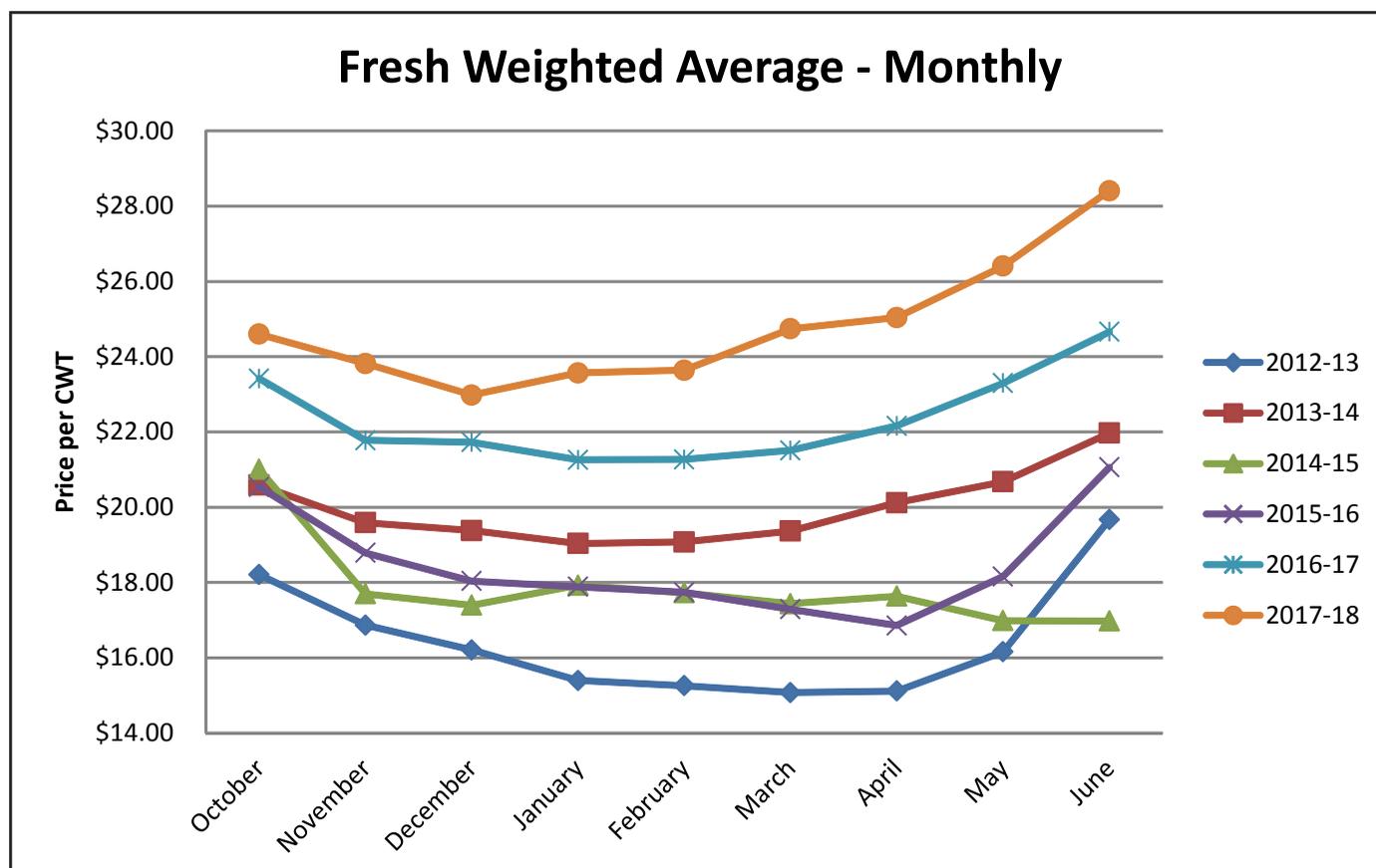
were sold from July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018. This represented a decrease of 5.6% over last year. When combining both tablestock and seed sales, movement decreased 6.0% compared to the previous year, and a 1.1% decrease below the three year average.

Movement to Canadian markets was down 6.0% from 2016-2017 as Ontario rebounded from its 2016 drought, but was 0.7% above the three year average.

Total US movement was down 2.6% over last year, and was up 7.7% over our three year average. The favourable exchange rate and manageable supplies made for a very strong year for US movement. Twenty-nine states (plus Puerto Rico) purchased PEI potatoes in 2017-2018.

We shipped 18.9% fewer potatoes to other export markets than last year, 32.0% less than our three year average. Seed sales were affected primarily by the loss of the Venezuela market. A total of 17 export countries purchased PEI potatoes in 2017-2018. Caribbean markets accounted for the highest volume of tablestock export shipments.

In total, to date for 2017/2018, approximately 45% of tablestock and seed sales were sold to Canadian destinations, while 45% were sold to the USA (including Puerto Rico) and 10% were sold to export markets.



# Marketing Notes

## New Brochures & Materials

In another collaboration with Fresh Media, this spring we have developed new and improved replacements for our 'Potato Perfect' pamphlet. We've taken the traditional, tri-fold pamphlet and we've expanded it to 24 page, full colour, 8.5" x 11" booklets which cover our history, sustainability, varieties, nutritional information, FAQs, handling and storage, food preparation, recipes and more. The booklets also promote our social media and website information (when appropriate). There are three different booklets: one highlighting seed potatoes, one focusing on the food service industry, and one directed to retail customers. Each booklet focuses on specific information relevant for each target market and provides the links and information to drive potential customers to our website and our dealer and exporter directories.

The booklets will be great handouts for retail events and tradeshow, and also serve as an informative and attractive industry overview to those looking for information on PEI Potatoes. They are a great way to capture what makes our

industry special. The first booklet completed was for the fresh market and so far they've been very well received. For more information contact Kendra Mills at 902-892-6551.



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# World Potato Congress 2018

# Cusco, Peru



In May of 2018, a group of Islanders were able to travel to Peru, the home of the potato, to attend the tenth World Potato Congress. It was held high in the Andean Mountains at Cusco, the historical capital of the Inca empire and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Presentations were coupled with field tours allowing attendees to gather information on the latest global potato research efforts and also spend time interacting with delegates from potato growing regions all over the world.

An excellent report on the Congress was written by Cedric Porter editor of World Potato Markets newsletter and the following excerpts are reprinted with his permission:

## **Potato Takes Centre Stage in Peru**

The role that potatoes can play in improving the lives and health of the world's population was a major theme of the tenth World Potato Congress held at the origin of the crop in Cusco, Peru. The event was held alongside the Latin American Potato Association congress and opened by Peru's President Martin Vizcarra.

The congress was a very technical one, with nearly all presentations given by academics.

The dozens of presentations at the congress proved that the potato is one of the world's most diverse crops, with perhaps as much or more undiscovered as known potential. Governments and businesses across the globe view the crop as a way of feeding people nutritionally and affordably. From using resources more efficiently to resisting pest, drought and disease to breeding enhanced health benefits and even the appeal of peel, here's a roundup of

the research presented at the congress, using the headings used at the event.

## **Climate Change & the Potato**

A project involving the USDA, International Potato Centre (CIP), Peruvian agricultural centre INIA, and Asociacion ANDES has used the application of inexpensive calcium supplements to increase yield in 30% of the 1 200 native cultivars it tested, with gains from 10% to 100%. Elsewhere, genetic exploration of native species means that new frost-tolerant varieties are being released to local growers.

A joint South African and Dutch project found that higher levels of atmospheric carbon dioxide as a result of climate change can enhance photosynthesis and reduce water use. However, higher temperatures associated with climate change put more stress on potatoes, so growers will need to avoid production during particularly hot periods. Meanwhile, a CIP project in sub-Saharan Africa has seen the release of three varieties in Kenya that do not experience a drop in yield in environments that experience 20-30% less rain and have temperatures that are 2C to 3C higher than in more benign potato growing conditions. Joint CIP and German institute work has shown that Andean potato growers will be increasingly threatened by potato tuber moth as the climate changes.

## **Potato Variety Development & Biotechnology**

Colombian researchers have mapped the genetics of the two most important agronomic problems for potatoes in the country – late blight and Guatemalan potato tuber moth. The knowledge is allowing them to develop resistant



Above left: Dr. Barbara Wells from the International Potato Centre (CIP) speaks on “The Role of the Potato in Feeding the Future.” Above right: PEI business owner and member of the WPC Board of Directors John Griffin chaired the Plenary Session on “Climate Change/Varietal Development and Biotechnology.” (Photos: Greg Donald)



varieties. A joint Spanish and Ecuadorian project has genetically sequenced 200 potato accessions highlighting their ability to resist stresses such as drought and heat.

Disease robs up to 40% of potential potato yield, according to a presentation of a CIP/UK/Poland research project. Recent genetic improvements have seen the control of late blight improved by using wild potato relatives in commercial varieties, virus resistance to Potato Virus Y (PVY) now achieved along with resistance to bacterial wilt. A major gene resistant to Potato Leaf Roll Virus (PLRV) will be isolated soon, with resistance to nematodes now being assessed too. The researchers said that a research and development environment that funds genetic improvement and policies that support the use of genetic technology could result in a 30% increase in potato productivity that would increase grower profitability and improve environmental protection across the world.

CIP is leading a project to improve iron and zinc levels in potatoes by introducing genes from less genetically complex diploid varieties into more complex tetraploid commercial types. More than 13 000 genotypes have been whittled down to 360, with iron levels of between 24mg/kg to 45mg/kg and zinc at 15-35mg/kg. From that list of 360, 50 have been prioritized for variety selection in Latin America, Africa and Asia. To put the figures in context, white potatoes normally have iron levels of between 5-8mg/kg and zinc 3.5mg/kg.

New breeding techniques such as genetic marking, genotyping and phenotyping are speeding up and reducing the cost of the process of variety development, according to Irish researchers. Genetic marking allows traits to be stacked together and breeding cycles to be shortened. The focus of government-supported work in the country has been on fry

colour and improved storage traits. Future work will look at environmental adaptation of potatoes.



A booth at the trade show advertising National Potato Day featured samples of native potato varieties.



No visit to Peru would be complete without travelling to Machu Picchu (above left). Nuclear production facilities (above right) at the Andenes Experimental Station have features similar to greenhouse facilities back home. (Photos: Greg Donald)

Japanese research has genetically removed toxic steroidal glycoalkaloids (SGAs) from potatoes, which develop in sprouts and green tubers and can cause food poisoning. The research not only removed the SGAs, but led to the accumulation of steroidal saponins, which enable the synthesis of pharmaceutical drugs such as anti-inflammatory, androgenic, estrogenic and contraceptive drugs.

Using true potato seeds, rather than tubers, the Dutch company Solynta is developing diploid potatoes with similar yields to commercial tetraploid controls. That is speeding up the development of new varieties.

### Potato Pest & Diseases

US company Maronne Bio Innovations has isolated beneficial bacteria to combat a range of diseases including blight, rhizoctonia and root knot and pests such as lesion nematodes and wireworms. Similar work in Belgium has seen the significant control of late blight, with researchers confident that antagonistic indigenous soil bacteria will be an important alternative to the use of fungicides and pesticides, some of which are losing their efficacy. Dutch work shows that popular blight spray Fluazinam, introduced in 1992, is less effective than it was in the past. Meanwhile, Canadian work shows that the use of spore traps allowed growers to detect the threat of blight up to 15 days earlier than normal, allowing them to protect crops with fungicides earlier.

The stacking of genes (particularly Rpi and Ry) should mean that there will eventually be a potato variety that can combine blight, PVY, bacterial wilt, and nematode resistance, according to British scientists. Meanwhile Canadian and Chinese researchers said there is still room for chemical control of blight and presented work on the use of Phosphite fungicides showing a 2 hour uptake into leaves and significantly increased uptake of chemical after 24 hours, protecting the crop more strongly and for longer

than alternatives. Phosphite can also be used as a post-harvest treatment to prolong storage periods.

Peru might be the home of the potato, but that means it is also probably the home of the potato virus too. An investigation by CIP researchers found much greater numbers and intensity of viruses than expected in the native potato growing regions. They are now using that knowledge to develop systems to better understand and combat those viruses in Peru and further afield.

Just like humans, aphids have their favourite potato varieties too, research in Argentina has discovered. Using this knowledge, breeders can identify genes in varieties aphids reject to use in commercial types and keep the pests at bay.

### Potato Crop Management

Better understanding of evapotranspiration replacement (water losses from irrigation) is helping preserve or increase yields with reduced water use, scientists from Colorado State University in the US told the congress. In one case, tuber bulking was faster and yields maintained despite a 17% reduction in irrigation water. Another finding was a 20% reduction in nitrogen fertilizer that was required when pinto beans were added to the rotation. Work in Florida, US, found that a combination of sub-surface drip irrigation, sub-irrigation drainage tiles and a sprinkler system reduced water use and increased nitrogen fertilizer efficiency.

Research in Sicily by Italian research institute IVALS found that coinciding irrigation with growth phases of the potato crop can save water without reducing yield. Only watering from tuber initiation to 50% of tuber growth rather than throughout the whole crop cycle resulted in high tuber yields and good tuber quality with a 870m<sup>3</sup>/ha reduction in water use.

The Belgian potato industry has worked with government institute VITO to develop a satellite system that

monitors temperature and rainfall to develop a predictive risk monitoring system for the potato crop. Launched last year, 300 growers, responsible for 10% of the national crop, registered for the free-to-use WatchITgrow system. The data is also available to Belgian traders and processing companies, allowing them to better plan their season.

Argentine researchers have used intercepted radiation (solar energy captured on the plant), total biomass and tuber yield to assess yield development in four french fry processing varieties. The length of the crop cycle (measured by intercepted radiation) was the most important factor determining total biomass and yield. This was then followed by radiation use efficiency (how well plants use radiated energy) and then harvest index (the measurement of crop yield).

A Brazilian project used five soil treatments to improve microbial activity, including the addition of grasses and maize into rotations. The most successful intervention was the use of deep tillage and the introduction of the grass *Panicum maximum* into the rotation.

### Post-harvest & Processing Technology

Work by the World Bank and US and Belgian researchers found that food loss in seven value chains (including potatoes) between producers and processors in six developing countries was between 6% and 25% of total production. Of those losses, up to 80% were with the primary producer, around 7% with traders or middlemen and 19% with processors. Other studies have found that in developed countries losses can be as much as a third, with those losses concentrated at the consumer part of the chain.

CIP and US researchers shared work on the genetic cataloguing of the CIP gene bank. They found 12,000 single nucleotide polymorphism (SNP) genetic markers in the 140 species of potatoes they hold – there are 157 known species. Genotypes for 9,292 of these 12,000 SNPs were found containing 1,417 tetraploid cultivars. The work in identifying the world's largest potato genetic resource should help the development of enhanced yield and nutritional varieties. A joint CIP and Canadian project is seeking to improve the genomic knowledge of as many types of potatoes as possible, giving researchers from across the world access to its data.

The world's potato processors might be removing the best bit of the

potato when they remove 70 000 tonnes of peel a year, said researchers from the processing heartland of the USA, Idaho. They said that micro molecules of copper, and nickel along with pectin, polyphenols and calystegine in the peel regulate digestive glycaemic enzyme response improving blood glucose levels and moderating the body's desire for more food. Fortunately for the State's processors old-time favourite variety Russet Burbank's peel had the highest level of inhibitors of 12 types tested.

### Andean Research Centre Unlocks its Treasures

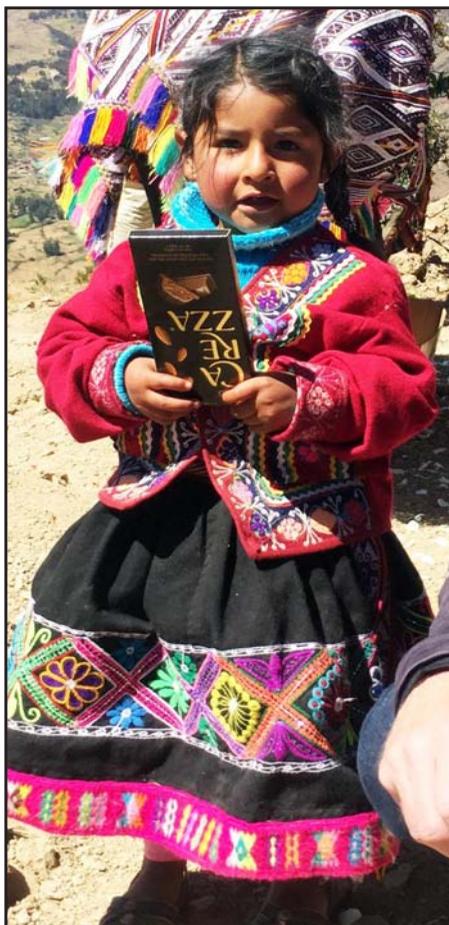
A highlight of the congress was a trip to the Andenes Experimental Station nearly 4,000 metres above sea level, an hour's drive from Cusco. It is run by Peru's National Institute for Agricultural Innovation (INEA) and uses terraces that have been growing potatoes for more than 1,000 years. The cultural importance of the potato was clear on the visit, with the crop bound-up with traditional pre-Inca and Inca beliefs as well as providing a staple food for generations.

But the research centre is looking to the future, while respecting the past by developing and understanding its gene bank of nearly 6,000 varieties and investigating affordable technologies to allow Andean growers to produce higher quality and yielding varieties.

Visitors to the station were able to see what is believed to be the earliest potato species *Moreliformia Haw*, the basis of potato production almost 10 000 years ago and one of 140 species held at the location. There was also a demonstration of the tools used to plant and harvest potatoes for many of those 10,000 years. The exhaustion of the soil at the site has led to a collaboration between researchers and global organic soil improvement company Bioflora.

### Next Stop Ireland

The World Potato Congress takes place every three years and the next host is Ireland, a country where the potato is fundamental to its history and culture both positively and negatively. It will be held in Dublin in May 2021. Organizers have promised a mix of potato science, policy and business that will appeal to all parts of the potato chain and include plenty of opportunities to see production in action and celebrate the potato with Ireland's famous hospitality.



An Andean child in traditional dress at the Potato Park.

# Potato Sustainability Initiative



**“Farmers and Industry working together to promote sustainability”**

**by John MacQuarrie, Director of Environmental Sustainability, Cavendish Farms and Mary Kay Sonier, PEI Potato Board**

More than ever, consumers are choosing products based on how corporations are demonstrating their commitment to social, economic and environmental sustainability. They are speaking with their wallets at the store and are also applying pressure as shareholders in publicly traded corporations. It is important for corporations not only to “tread softly upon the earth” but equally important to have the data to walk the talk and show their customers the progress being made. In the complex world of producing, processing and distributing food it is challenging to develop an integrated approach to support claims of sustainability. This involves all the partners along the supply chain – from the processing plant to transportation and packaging partners to farmers growing the key ingredients.

When global quick service restaurant giant McDonald’s

concluded they needed a tool to measure, influence and validate sustainability in the potato processing value chain, they decided it was time to create a new and unique approach to involve the frozen food processors and their contract growers.

The Potato Sustainability Initiative (PSI) grew out of the project started in 2010 to develop an integrated pest management (IPM) practice survey for potato growers supplying McDonald’s. The goal was to promote, track, and report adoption of IPM and other best practices that help reduce pesticide use and risks. A group including growers, three potato processors— Lamb Weston, McCain Foods Limited, Simplot; McDonald’s; the National Potato Council; the Canadian Potato Council (which includes the PEI Potato Board) of the Canadian Horticultural Council, and the IPM Institute assembled in Chicago to develop an action plan and timetable. The group contracted with FoodLogiQ, a technology company based in North Carolina, to put the grower survey online.

Survey questions cover topics such as compliance with local environmental legislation to adoption of advanced agronomic techniques designed to promote soil health and water quality. Results, once tabulated, place the grower into categories along a continuum ranging from Basic, Steward, Expert and Master. Individual growers can see the category in which they placed for each topic area and on an overall basis.



*The Potato Sustainability Initiative Steering Committee includes, growers, industry representatives and potato science resource personnel. The group meets several times through the year to review and make any modifications to the survey.*



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Building on the initial survey, in 2013, the group expanded to include Cavendish Farms, Basic American Foods, the Kraft Heinz Company, and Sysco. As the survey grew, so did the membership and the PSI now represents the input of more than 500 potato farmers across North America. As noted earlier, Prince Edward Island potato farmers were a part of this initiative right from the start, and over 80 growers, which represent a majority of PEI potato acres, continue to participate in the annual survey.

The Potato Sustainability Initiative has grown in scope and representation and is now a partnership of growers, grower organizations, processors, scientists, potato product buyers, the National Potato Council, the Canadian Potato Council and the IPM Institute of North America. The annual survey that growers complete addresses air and water quality, energy and water conservation, recycling and waste reduction, soil health, worker safety, community outreach and economic stability. A governance council advisory committee representing 6 processors, commercial stakeholders (McDonald's and Sysco), Canadian and US grower organizations, and an advisory committee of scientists meet on a regular basis.

Processors have a unique opportunity to collect key metric data including nutrient, irrigation and pesticide data for all fields from which potatoes are sourced. When the information is aggregated, growers can compare their individual farms to the overall results.

To establish and maintain credibility for the survey, audit criteria were developed in 2016 and 20% of the growers across North America are now audited on an annual basis. The PSI group developed an arrangement with professional food safety auditors to provide the service. When practical, food safety and PSI audits are combined on the same visit to minimize cost.

The on-line data generated by the detailed survey creates opportunities for individual growers to compare their results to aggregated regional results and processors can review the results of their grower / suppliers.

It is important that growers remain key stakeholders and participants in the continued development of the Potato Sustainability Initiative. Growers contribute the time and resources required to complete the online survey, ensure that they are following and adopting practices that allow them to continue to improve in environmental sustainability and to prepare for and participate in audits. "Grower involvement is key in ensuring that the online survey remains realistic and meaningful for growers to complete and that demands are not put-upon growers purely for perception purposes that have no scientific justification," comments Vernon Campbell, the PEI grower who, along with a grower from Alberta, represents Canadian potato farmers on the Governance Committee.

"Farmers in general have been frustrated by misperceptions in the marketplace and see a benefit of communicating what's actually going on," says Tom Green, President, IPM Institute of North America. "They've invested time and energy into identifying best practices and implementing those, now there's also a way to credibly measure outcomes of those practices — how they make a difference in terms of keeping nutrients and crop protection products on croplands and out of waterways where they are not intended."

Prior to this initiative, many areas were participating in local food safety and environmental initiatives. Here in PEI, farmers were, and continue to, obtain certification to apply crop protectants, maintain crop protection application records, participate in the Environmental Farm Plan program and many participate in CanadaGAP, a food safety program developed through the Canadian Horticultural Council.

Participation in the PSI provides recognition of environmental efforts on a wider level.

What began as an initiative driven by a major restaurant chain to chart sustainability in potato production, the PSI is becoming the multi-tool of the potato farming and processing industry. As the database grows, industry trends will become identified enabling more informed discussions around industry priorities. Growers can measure their progress, benchmark their results and demonstrate sustainability on their individual farms. Processors can demonstrate their commitment individually and as an industry to promoting and encouraging sustainable farming practices. Ultimately, the suppliers of the finished products can reassure consumers that by purchasing products grown and processed by PSI participants, they are supporting sustainable agriculture.

## Herbicide Resistance

Ask yourself these questions when determining if there may be herbicide resistant weeds in your field:

1. Do you frequently use the same herbicide?
2. Do you use the same methods of application?
3. Has this herbicide and rate worked in the past?
4. Are resistant weeds suspected in your area?
5. Have you observed a gradual decline in control?
6. Are there live and dead weeds of the same species in the same growth stage in your field?
7. Are other weed species being controlled by this same herbicide and rate?

If you answered yes to one or more of the questions above, resistance can be suspected.

What can you do?

1. Collect seeds from 20 surviving weeds.
2. Collect seeds from known susceptible weeds from adjacent fields if possible.
3. Place ~1,000 seeds in a paper bag.
4. Record field info (location, herbicide used and date of application, crop, date collected).
5. Submit samples for resistance testing to:

**Dr. Andrew McKenzie-Gopsill**

**AAFC - Charlottetown**

**[andrew.mckenzie-gopsill@canada.ca](mailto:andrew.mckenzie-gopsill@canada.ca)**

**(902) 370-1368**

The weeds of concern right now in PEI are lamb's quarters, redroot pigweed, ragweed and foxtails and we are keeping an eye out for glyphosate resistant Canada fleabane (horseweed) as it is now found across Ontario and Quebec and its seeds travel huge distances by wind.

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# PMANA Summer Meeting

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by Scott Howatt, Processing Coordinator

The Oregon-Malheur Potato Bargaining Association hosted the 2018 PMANA summer meeting in Anchorage, Alaska at Captain Cook's on July 8-9th. The purpose of the summer meeting is to bring attendees up to date with crop conditions in the potato growing areas of North America, to summarize the 2018 contract settlements and to discuss relevant frozen potato industry issues. The meeting had reduced attendance, with 24 grower representatives along with Brian Henninger of Ag-World Support Systems, a long time sponsor of PMANA. The Potato Processing Committee (PPC) sent John Ramsay and Scott Howatt to represent PEI processing growers.

This summary comes from the area reports supplied by each of the organizations that attended the summer meeting; the following review does not contain numbers or information from Idaho (SIPCO has withdrawn from PMANA) nor from North Dakota, Minnesota or Wisconsin, as they did not send representatives or reports. From the other nine processing potato areas that did attend, planted acres for processing in 2018 are up, and up over 10,000 acres. Grower reps reported these additional acres are a result of increased demand from their Fryer customers who have contracted greater volumes of processing quality potatoes. The increase in overall planted acres across North America reverses the trend of the past two years to hold flat or reduce planted acres.

The area reports describe good to excellent crops coming along, up to the first week of July. PEI's report detailed our cold start to the spring and noted the first weeks of summer have been exceptionally hot with some rains that are helping our crop to "catch-up". Most all other areas described current growing conditions as being above average. There was a verbal report from Wisconsin about some difficult conditions from heavy rains and a "damaging heat wave" over the past few weeks, but this was the worst of the reports on growing conditions.

In the Columbia Basin, early digs of Shepody are close to record breaking in both quality and quantity and the Fryers are processing both old crop and new crop. In all other areas, Fry plants continue to process old crop, reps stated there would be timely and strong transitions from old crop to new crop in all other areas later this summer. Growers from Washington and Oregon stated if the current weather holds, potato yields will exceed last year's turnoff.

Alberta and Manitoba report their potato crops are on track to turnoff average or better yields. Manitoba growers

are irrigating to address their dry, spring weather and growers in both provinces are pleased with the crop's development to date. In Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick, the reports were similar in that their potato crops are progressing very well despite periods of cold and backward weather this spring. Maine and PEI reported more variability in their potato stands however, both spoke to their crops coming along nicely with recent rains and heat.

Growers' projected costs of production for 2018 range between 1.2% increase in New Brunswick to a 4.3% increase in Alberta. The cost of production numbers for processing potatoes in the USA range between 2.0%-3.5%. In Canada, the range was much wider with lower numbers in the East and high numbers in the West. CoP increases are driven by wage increases trying to stay in step with minimum wage hikes; increasing land rental rates; increasing borrowing costs and for the Canadians only, fuel costs driven by newly introduced carbon taxes and the cost of parts and technology driven by the exchange rate differential between Canada and the USA.

All French fry processing plants across North America are operating at full capacity. Further plant expansion announcements in the Pacific Northwest will continue to be in the news and the major plant expansion in Manitoba by J.R. Simplot is a true indication of the strong demand for frozen potato products in the American marketplace. North American potato processors continue to grow and benefit from strong market demand in both the domestic and offshore markets.

The outlook and attitude from the growers in attendance was more positive than it has been over the last few years, buoyed by the contract price increases and the multi-year contracts achieved by some grower organizations this past spring. The discussions at the meeting noted that these price increases are directly related to the need of the processors to secure their supply of quality, processing potatoes. Senior grower reps reminded and cautioned all those in attendance that these crucial price increases can erode if the supply of acres to grow processing potatoes exceeds the processing capacity of the Fryers.

In summary, in early July, overall the processing crop looks very good to excellent in the growing areas that reported to the PMANA meeting. There is good potential for a significant increase of processing-quality potatoes being stored at the end of this growing season, which could exceed what we need to match the growing capacities of our processing customers.

*An Update From the:*

# PEI Department of Agriculture & Fisheries

by Lorraine MacKinnon, Potato Industry Coordinator



Despite a somewhat delayed planting season, a cold and wet June, a small amount of frost and hail injury, the crop is now looking pretty healthy! Here's hoping it remains that way. I hope everyone is able to spend some time enjoying the short but precious Island summer with friends and family.

## PMRA Decisions on Fungicides\*

In Canada, the Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) regularly re-evaluates all registered pesticides, and sometimes these re-evaluations result in proposed label changes. PMRA then seeks input from industry to determine whether or not the proposed changes will come into effect. Recently, the process of these proposed changes and industry consultations have culminated in decisions on some fungicides commonly used in potato production – chlorothalonil (Bravo, Echo), mancozeb (Manzate, Dithane, Penncozeb, Elixir) and metiram (Cabrio Plus, Polyram).

All of the above fungicides will remain registered in potatoes, with the exception of mancozeb-based seed treatments like Maxim MZ and Solan MZ. However, the PMRA decisions outline changes in use patterns. The impact is that when the changes come into effect, growers will have many more factors to consider when selecting a season-long fungicide program.

It's important to note: PMRA has given registrants (pesticide manufacturers) 24 months to change their product labels to reflect the decisions, so there will be no change in labels and use patterns for 2018; and perhaps not for 2019 either. Once the label changes, pesticide applicators are required by law to abide by the changes.

Some noteworthy changes are:

- Chlorothalonil (Bravo, Echo):
  - o Maximum three applications per season
  - o Re-entry intervals for chlorothalonil will be 3 days for scouting, and 19 days for roguing
- Mancozeb (Dithane, Manzate, Penncozeb, Elixir):
  - o Maximum ten applications per season
  - o Spray intervals are 7 days
  - o Maximum application rate 1.69 kg active ingredient per hectare

- Metiram (Polyram, Cabrio Plus):
  - o Maximum three applications per season
  - o Maximum rate per application – Polyram: 708 g/ acre (low rate), Cabrio Plus: 1.03kg/acre
- Mancozeb and Metiram applications in the same year must be limited. Total applications of the two must be ten or less (i.e. you cannot apply mancozeb ten times, and then spray metiram).

*\*The above changes, as interpreted here, should be confirmed with your crop protection representative or by reading the PMRA decision documents.*

## What does this mean for potato producers?

When the changes come into effect, more planning and consideration will be required in developing a season-long fungicide plan. The good news is that potato producers have a relatively large number of options for registered fungicides. The unfortunate news is that, given today's pesticide prices, it will most likely cost growers more money to abide by the changes that are coming. Broad-spectrum contact fungicide applications will be reduced, and more selective specialty fungicides might be required to complete a season of disease protection. Many of those specialty fungicides are more expensive, have low maximum number of applications per season, and require rotation to other modes of action in order to prevent the onset of resistance.

Remember also that we are not just talking about late blight; many growers routinely apply fungicides for early blight, brown spot, white mold, and other fungal pathogens. In a season with high disease pressure, this could become a puzzle and the pieces will have to be carefully arranged.

## Samples for Research

A number of researchers are asking for help from the potato industry to gather samples of the following pests for research purposes. If you observe any of these pests, please reach the contacts below:

- Flea Beetles –Christine Noronha , AAFC
- Early Blight – Ryan Barrett, PEI Potato Board
- Colorado Potato Beetles – Lorraine MacKinnon PEIDAF



## Crop Transition Findings and Strategy

June 20 2018

by Kevin MacIsaac, General Manager

The United Potato Growers' Crop Transition Conference was held in Minneapolis on June 20th and was open to both United and non-United members. The conference examined the 12 week period from July 14th to September 29, 2018 and tried to determine the shipments that would occur in the US market each week from the US and Canada. Shipments in the early weeks would compromise old crop, weeks in the middle would be both old and new, and weeks in the end would be entirely new crop. The various weeks were then broken out into russets, reds, yellows, and round whites. Based on input from each major potato producing region here are some of the observations:

### Yellows

The supply of yellows in the transition period will likely take care of itself. This is aided by good demand and a late spring in areas like Wisconsin, which will allow other areas like Kern County good movement before more volume comes in. In Canada, we wouldn't anticipate much volume before the week of August 4th.

### Reds

The situation is more complicated given the large supply of old crop coming out of the Red River Valley. United's shipping data from previous years show red shipments should not exceed 175,000 cwt/week in order to maintain positive pricing. In the first 3 weeks of the period, the market will be shipping 250,000 cwt/week just as the first area of new crop comes on in Big Lake, Minnesota. The ideal strategy would be to presell 250 loads a week to remain profitable. Shippers will need to communicate the best way to do this. In Canada, we would expect production coming in during the week of August 18th.

### Russets

The first 6 shipping weeks in the transition period are projected to be lower than the 3-year average. This is again due to a late start by Wisconsin, but also due to significant reductions in carryover in Idaho.

Last year Idaho carried 2.2 million cwt into August. This year's projection is less than 800,000 cwt. It takes about three weeks to fill the pipeline again, so warning flags would be raised in the week of August 25th. Product will have to be sent to storage or presold in the weeks of September 8, 15, and 22nd to prevent that initial downward spiral. Those

weeks also tend to coincide with a period of low demand, so the Idaho Potato Commission has stepped up with a big ad campaign during harvest. In Canada, we would expect first russets coming in during the week of September 29th, so we will be handed a market based on what has happened in those weeks before.

### Round Whites

The meeting did not spend a lot of time on round whites but in Canada we would anticipate new crop during the week of July 21st, but not significant volume until the weeks starting with August 11th.

### Conclusion

One conclusion was clear at the end of the day: Communication is essential between shipping areas so everyone is aware of the volume being supplied to the market in those critical weeks that set the stage for the main shipping season.

## Huge Vote in Senate Moves Farm Bill Forward

*National Potato Council, July 3, 2018* - Last Thursday the Senate overwhelmingly passed its version of a new Farm Bill by a vote of 86-11. This strong show of bipartisan support for the bill sets the stage for a potential conference and completed bill before the current Farm Bill expires at the end of September.

"Given the challenging political environment, the bill that the Senate passed is remarkable. It is a testament to the outstanding work of Chairman Roberts, Ranking Member Stabenow and both of their committee staffs in drafting this bill over the past year. The potato industry looks forward to working with them and their House counterparts in delivering a strong bill to the President's desk before September 30th," said John Keeling, NPC CEO.

Some highlights of the Senate's version of the Farm Bill include:

- Restores resources for the Technical Assistance for Specialty Crops program that is vital for potato trade issues.
- Makes \$80 million available annually for the Specialty Crop Research Initiative. This is an increase of \$25 million annually over the current available amount.
- Maintains vital resources for agricultural export promotion programs through the creation of a new Foreign Market Development Program at USDA.
- Supports continued operation of the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program and vital pest and disease prevention and eradication programs.

# INDUSTRY UPDATES

## **U.S. and Indonesia Sign Market Access Agreement for U.S. Fresh Potatoes**

JUNE 12, 2018 - On June 5, the United States and Indonesia reached a market access agreement that will allow U.S. fresh potatoes to be exported to Indonesia under a defined set of phytosanitary requirements.

The agreement comes after four years of discussions and will include both U.S. chipping potatoes for further processing and table-stock potatoes for direct consumption. Potatoes produced in all U.S. states are included in the agreement.

U.S. potato growers and exporters will need to follow the requirements in the protocol to ensure Indonesia's quarantine security, according to a June 12 press release issued by Potatoes USA. This includes growing from certified seed potatoes, taking actions to address any potential pests of concern, and sprout inhibiting the potatoes prior to export. Importers in Indonesia will be required to obtain an import permit prior to export.

The agreement also identifies which ports of entry will be equipped to receive U.S. potatoes. Full details on the protocol will be circulated to fresh growers and shippers.

Indonesia is a market of 261 million people and is the largest market in Southeast Asia to which U.S. fresh potatoes had not previously secured formal market access. U.S. exports of potatoes and products to Indonesia were valued at \$27 million in 2017.

"The Idaho potato industry congratulates the National Potato Council and Potatoes USA for opening up this huge market to U.S. fresh potatoes," said Seth Pemsler, vice president of retail and international for the Idaho Potato Commission. "Southeast Asia has proven to be strong markets for U.S. and Idaho potatoes, and the opening of the largest market in Southeast Asia should expand that success."

## **Registration of a New Paraquat End-Use Product with a Closed Delivery System in response to the 2015 Special Review (REV2015-14)**

Pest Management Regulatory Agency - 3 July 2018 - As part of the special review of paraquat, several additional mitigation measures to further protect human health and the environment were required, as outlined in Re-evaluation Note REV2015-14, Special Review Decision: Paraquat. One of the required mitigation measures was to

reduce the concentration of paraquat in the only end-use product currently registered in Canada, Gramoxone Liquid Herbicide with Wetting Agent (Registration Number 8661). Consequently, the registration of this product, with the current concentration and packaging, was cancelled and its last date of use (expiry) will be on 31 December 2018.

Following the special review decision, the registrant made an application to register a new end-use product, Gramoxone 200 SL, containing the active ingredient paraquat with a different product delivery system. The end-use product is to be contained only within a closed-system package, used only with a closed-transfer system for mixing/loading activities, and applied only by groundboom. These modifications were submitted as an alternative mitigation to the requirement for a reduced paraquat concentration in the registered end-use product outlined in REV2015-14. This application was assessed by Health Canada to determine if it addresses the human health concerns identified in the special review (potential risk of health effects as a result of accidental exposure in occupational settings).

## **Health Assessment of the New Closed-Transfer Packaging System**

For Gramoxone 200 SL containing paraquat, a risk assessment was conducted, comparing the potential occupational exposure from the new closed-transfer packaging system for groundboom applications with the exposure from the existing open-pour mixing/loading system currently registered. This risk assessment demonstrated that the closed system reduces mixer/loader exposure and addresses the concern regarding potential risk of health effects as a result of accidental exposure in occupational settings which triggered the requirement for reducing the concentration of paraquat in the end-use product. No health risks of concern are expected when workers follow label directions and wear personal protective equipment as stated on the label of Gramoxone 200 SL.

## **Conclusion**

Health Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency has completed an assessment of the information provided, and has found the information sufficient to support the registration of Gramoxone 200 SL (Registration Number 33125). This end-use product is to be contained within a closed-system package only, and to be used with a closed-transfer system for groundboom applications only. As this new product addresses the human health concern regarding potential risk of health effects as a result of accidental

exposure in occupational settings, a reduced concentration of paraquat in the end-use product is no longer required.

## Loblaw to Spend \$150 Million More Each Year Supporting Canadian Farmers

BRAMPTON, ON, June 27, 2018 /CNW/ - Loblaw Companies Limited (TSX: L) has announced that by 2025 it will spend \$150 million more each year with Canadian farmers buying local, fresh produce that otherwise would have been imported from around the world.

Given the short Canadian growing season and unique climate conditions, customers are used to eating produce sourced from international growers, often picked before their prime and then trucked thousands of kilometres. As part of today's pledge, Loblaw will work directly with local farmers to implement innovative growing methods or plant non-traditional crops, extending the growing season and bringing the "Grown in Canada" label to what were typically imported fruits and vegetables.

"For decades, we have worked with local farmers to feed our national appetite for Canadian-grown food," said Galen G. Weston, Chairman and CEO, Loblaw Companies Limited. "We are applying new resources to accelerate that

work, helping Canadian farmers find new opportunities to provide global products and year-round freshness, grown right here at home."

Loblaw sources more Canadian produce than any other grocer, working with about 300 domestic growers. In season, nearly half of all produce in Loblaw's various stores – including Loblaws, Zehrs, Real Canadian Superstore, No Frills and others – is Canadian-grown. However, the Canadian growing season is traditionally only a few months, and farmers have focused primarily on a well-established range of crops.

Over the past few years, Loblaw has worked with Canadian farmers to grow a greater variety of products, including multicultural goods not traditionally grown in Canada. As a result, customers can now find bok choy, long eggplant, methi leaf, napa cabbage and okra bearing Grown in Ontario and Grown in Quebec labels. These crops are traditionally grown in Mexico, Dominican Republic and Central America.

Loblaw is also working with Canadian indoor farmers and greenhouses to ensure a steady supply of fresh produce that would otherwise be out-of-season or imported from warmer climates for much of the year. Through its President's

Choice brand, the company has developed relationships with various greenhouse operations to source Canadian-grown berries from January through December. Additionally, in Newfoundland, where fresh produce often travels long distances to store shelves, the company has introduced a pilot program with a vertical farm operation, bringing unprecedented fresh greens to the region.

"This effort is a large and logical extension of commitments we've been making for decades," said Frank Pagliaro, who leads the produce procurement for Loblaw. "We're investing in Canadian innovation, supporting local farmers, extending shelf life to offer fresher goods, serving new tastes, and helping the environment by reducing food waste and the carbon footprint generated by international shipments. And, our customer love every one of these details."

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## CASA Celebrates 16 Years of Keeping Rural Youth Safe with the Progressive Agriculture Foundation

Winnipeg, MB, June 21, 2018: The Canadian Agricultural Safety Association (CASA) is pleased to celebrate its 16th year of partnership with the Progressive Agriculture Foundation (PAF) supporting rural youth health and safety through Progressive Agriculture Safety Days®.

The Progressive Agriculture Safety Day program is a community-organized safety event that teaches participants how to remain safe on the farm, ranch and at home. Safety Days (usually one-day events) are designed to be appropriate for all ages, hands-on, and informative. In 2018, 79 communities across Canada have held or are planning on holding a Progressive Agriculture Safety Day.

Safety Day topics are decided by the community for the community. Some of the most popular topics include tractor and animal safety and there are lessons available on issues ranging from meth awareness to ice safety. However, the one thing each Safety Day has in common is the dedication of the volunteers and communities.

“The Progressive Agriculture Safety Day program is, at its heart, about keeping rural youth safe,” says Marcel Hacault, CASA’s Executive Director. “But it’s also about

celebrating communities. The volunteers, participants, and local sponsors all come together to work towards one goal – a successful, interactive and fun safety day.”

Each year, CASA encourages communities throughout Canada to apply for and host a Safety Day event. “The great thing about Safety Days is that they are versatile,” says Hacault. “Each community has different needs and the Safety Day program is able to address each of these needs.”

“Since 2002, CASA has been instrumental in supporting the mission and vision of the Progressive Agriculture Foundation and the growth of Progressive Agriculture Safety Days® throughout Canada,” says Brian J. Kuhl, PAF Interim Chief Executive Officer. “With a presence in eight Canadian provinces, vital safety and health messages have been delivered to more than 127,000 children and participants at Progressive Agriculture Safety Days®. The partnership between CASA and PAF is special, as together we know we can make a stronger impact in saving lives and preventing injuries.”

Communities that would like to host a Progressive Agriculture Safety Day in 2019 can apply online at [www.casa-acsa.ca](http://www.casa-acsa.ca) and click on Programs. Safety Day coordinator training is available in both official languages. For a full list of 2018 Safety Day events in Canada visit [www.casa-acsa.ca](http://www.casa-acsa.ca).



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ca/programs/safety-days-for-children/ or call CASA at 877 452 2272.

The Canadian Agricultural Safety Association is a national, non-profit organization dedicated to improving the health and safety of farmers, their families and agricultural workers. CASA receives support from the agricultural and corporate sectors.

For more information, visit [www.casa-acsa.ca](http://www.casa-acsa.ca), find us on Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram, or follow us on Twitter @planfarmsafety or please contact: Robin Anderson, Communications Coordinator, 204-275-8870, [randerson@casa-acsa.ca](mailto:randerson@casa-acsa.ca)

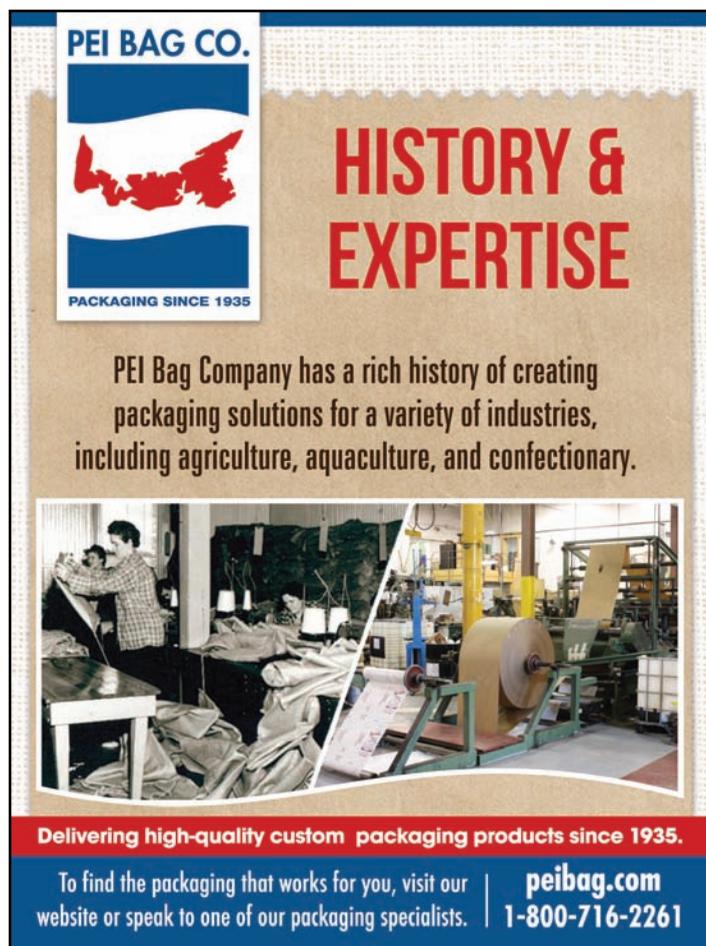
### **Irene Jewell of the Island Farming Community is One of Three 2018 Recipients of the Order of PEI**

Irene Jewell is the epitome of the Prince Edward Island farmer, entrepreneur and community citizen. Through passion and personal conviction, Irene’s ‘up-to-your-elbows’ approach as an Island farm woman is exemplary.

Irene’s pride was Jewell’s Country Gardens. Opening in 1964, it was a must-see for countless tourists. Irene was a master gardener and her private pleasure was cutting flowers and arranging them into bouquets for her table, for sick and shut-ins in the community and for other special occasions. In

1976, the Gardens, greenhouses and the Jewell home were sold. Irene and Parker turned their attention to supporting their three boys and their mixed farming operations based in York and Covehead.

Through her family, she has received multiple International Grand Champion awards for farm-grown produce since 1980. Irene has made her mark on Prince Edward Island. She has been an active member and leader in the Women’s Institute and was recognized in 1980, as the PEI Women’s Institute Women of the Year and was recognized individually, and in partnership with her husband Parker. The world and our Island need farmers, especially family farmers to ensure health and prosperity. Irene Jewell is a family farming inspiration and a pioneer in farm and gardening tourism, always maintaining the highest standards, applying top-notch customer service and a commitment to the highest quality products and community life. Irene Jewell is an Islander who is most worthy of investiture into the 2018 Order of Prince Edward.



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## **Upcoming Events**

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

### **August 2018**

- August 7 Potato Fieldworkers’ Meeting, PEI Potato Board Office. 7:30 AM.
- August 21 Potato Fieldworkers’ Meeting, Kensington AIC Office. 7:30 AM.

### **September 2018**

- Sept 4 Potato Fieldworkers’ Meeting, PEI Potato Board Office. 7:30 AM.
- Sept 12 Variety Trial/AIM Research Tour, AAFC Harrington Research Station. Harrington, PEI .
- Sept 25 Cavendish Farms Research Day.

### **November 2018**

- Nov 2-11 Royal Agricultural Winter Fair, Toronto, Ontario.
- Nov 16 PEI Potato Board Annual General Meeting, Toronto, Ontario.

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\*When applied at label rates. In line with Integrated Pest Management and Good Agricultural Practices, insecticide applications should be made when pollinators are not foraging to avoid unnecessary exposure.

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