

Prince Edward Island

January/February 2020

Volume 21 Issue 1

POTATO NEWS

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- PEI Potato Expo Coming Up
- Holdings & Disposition



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POTATO NEWS

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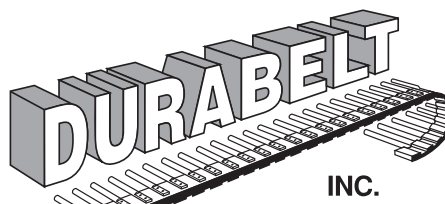
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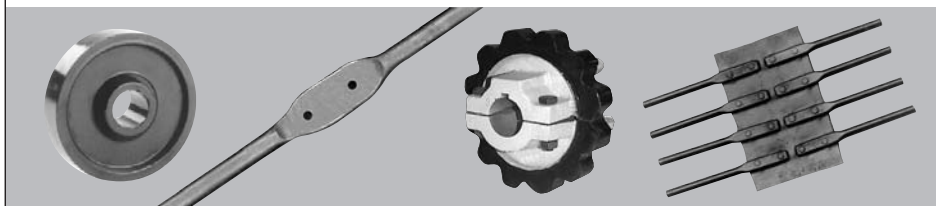
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Cover: A field on Graham's Road that is part of a Living Labs Trial. Various soil-building crops were grown in 2019 including a multi-species mix on the left, oats in the middle strip and sorghum sudangrass underseeded with alfalfa on the right. The photo was taken on August 12, 2019 by Morgan McNeil.



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Chairman's Comments

by Jason Hayden, PEI Potato Board Chairman



We have entered a new decade with new and old challenges and new opportunities ahead of us.

To start the year, the Board has recently adopted an updated strategic plan to guide our activities for the next five years. We welcomed all the input provided by growers at our district meetings and the effort of Board directors and staff to review and refine all the drafts. This will provide the touchstone to ensure that all of our activities are focused on our outlined goals to move our industry ahead.

The weather last fall resulted in storage issues on many farms. Growers have worked hard at salvaging problem lots since October, and it was encouraging that Cavendish Farms was able to utilize many of those lots before they were lost. The amount of potatoes still in danger has lessened, but the efforts to save the potatoes are costly in terms of electricity and shrink, and some farms have had to empty refrigerated storages far earlier than planned. On the fresh side, we are shipping good quality to the market, movement is steady and prices are up from last year reflecting the tight

North American supply. Recent reports at the United Business Summit and the NPC Potato Expo that many PEI representatives attended in mid- January provided supply and outlook by sector and growing area. A full report on these meetings can be found later in this issue. Seed is in tight supply at home and across North America, so growers are strongly encouraged to ensure they have their supply lined up now.

Contract negotiations will be a key focus this winter, and a processing grower meeting was held on January 23rd to gather input on priority issues for improvements.

The Safe Foods for Canadians Act moved from voluntary to mandatory requirements for traceability and preventative control plans for some operations in January 2020. CFIA also wants people to register with My CFIA (www.inspection.gc.ca/mycfia) if they require phytos. Check with your inspector or online for more information.

The winter months offer many educational opportunities. Pesticide applicator training sessions and AIM workshops have been on-going since December. The International Potato Technology Expo will be held in Charlottetown on February 21-22 at the Eastlink Centre. The sold-out trade show is not to be missed and will be accompanied by information sessions on both days. As well, the Industry Banquet, formerly held in conjunction with the PEI Potato Board AGM in November, will take place on the evening of Friday, February 21st at Red Shores, Charlottetown. All growers and industry members are welcome to attend. Tickets are available by calling the Board office at 902-892-6551.

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POTATO BOARD NEWS

PEI Potato Board's New Strategic Plan 2020-2024

In January 2019, the PEI Potato Board began a process to update its strategic plan for the next five years that included several engagement workshops involving the Board of Directors, senior staff, growers and selected government officials. Working sessions took place in March, August and September 2019, with the final plan presented at the Annual General Meeting in November 2019 and formally adopted by the Board in December 2019.

The overall structure of the PEI Potato Board strategic plan is similar to its predecessor in that there is a vision, mission and the three strategic sectors articulated around tablestock, seed and process potatoes. While the vision, mission and strategic objectives for all three sectors remain largely intact, the Board brought several adjustments to the desired outcomes and performance measures. The core

business of the PEI Potato Board is to serve the interests of seed, tablestock and process growers, whose strategic objectives are listed below. The enablers, while not at the core of the organization's purpose, enable Board members, staff and growers to achieve the aims of the organization. Again, these strategic enablers are consistent with those outlined in the 2014-2019 edition, however, there are a few notable changes. First, the addition of a new strategic enabler of environmental sustainability to reflect the increase in pressure faced by growers to improve and to be seen to improve environmental stewardship. A second important change lies with the adjustment and revision of several statements of desired outcomes, strategic objective and performance measures.

Our thanks to Alain Rabeau from the Intersol Group in Ottawa, Ontario for his extensive work in facilitating this review and update of the PEI Potato Board's strategic plan for the next five years.

PEI Potato Board Strategy Map – 2020-2024

VISION

PEI Potato growers united and at the forefront of national and global potato markets

MISSION

The PEI Potato Board represents PEI potato growers, working together to ensure long-term profitability and sustainability through marketing, advocacy, negotiations and activities to support quality potato production.

Strategic Sectors

SEED

Strategic Objective

- Viable and expanded seed industry on PEI

TABLESTOCK

Strategic Objectives

- Increase the consumption of fresh PEI potatoes
- Position PEI Potatoes as a recognized and sought-after brand

PROCESSING

Strategic Objectives

- Improve economic sustainability of processing acres
- Diversify contracted volume

Strategic Enablers

ORGANIZATION SUSTAINABILITY

Strategic Objective

- Ensure efficiency & effectiveness of Potato Board staff, Board of Directors and holdings

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

Strategic Objective

- Advocate for programs, policies and regulations that support viable growth of the industry

COMMUNICATIONS

Strategic Objectives

- Maintain ongoing communications to growers and industry stakeholders
- Take a lead role on behalf of the industry in responding to public trust issues

MARKETS & MARKET INFORMATION

Strategic Objectives

- Provide high-quality market information to growers & industry
- Maintain existing & develop new markets

RESEARCH & EXTENSION

Strategic Objectives

- Improve marketable yield & margins earned by growers
- Improve environmental sustainability of the industry

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Strategic Objectives

- Support environmental stewardship practices
- Ensure grower's views have impact on environmental regulations
- Support grower compliance efforts regarding regulations

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Canada/US Potato Committee Meeting

Representatives of national, provincial and state potato organizations met in Ottawa on December 2-3, 2020 to discuss issues of mutual interest to potato farmers on both sides of the Canada-US border. Topics covered during the meeting included crop updates from each region, Canada-US bilateral potato trade (phytosanitary and inspection updates from CFIA and USDA-APHIS, PCN testing and proposed changes to the requirements), crop protectants, transportation, labour, food safety programs, the Canada/US/Mexico Free Trade Agreement, the Potato Sustainability Alliance (formerly the PSI), and the Alliance for Potato Research and Education (APRE). State seed certification agencies also attended the meeting, holding a separate seed only meeting the following day.

There were several new faces around the table, particularly from the U.S. side. John Keeling retired as the senior staff person for the US's National Potato Council, and he has been replaced by Kam Quarles, CEO and Mike Wenkel, COO. As well, Dan Moss retired as the U.S. Co-chair, and has been replaced by Jared Balcom from Washington State.

PCN Testing Guidelines to be Changed

The Canadian Potato Council and CFIA had proposed changes to the PCN Guidelines that would reduce the amount of testing required by seed farms in order to ship seed across the border. In the end, the US industry and APHIS agreed to proceed in only one area. The current requirements specify that if a field has been tested twice since 2009 and found not positive for PCN, it qualifies for a testing exemption for the three following potato crops. That testing exemption will now be extended to four potato crops. After that period of time has elapsed, a field must be tested once and it then requalifies for the testing exemption.

CFIA and APHIS are working on making the changes to the guidelines document to put the four crop year exemption into effect.

Harmonization of Weight Restrictions across Canada

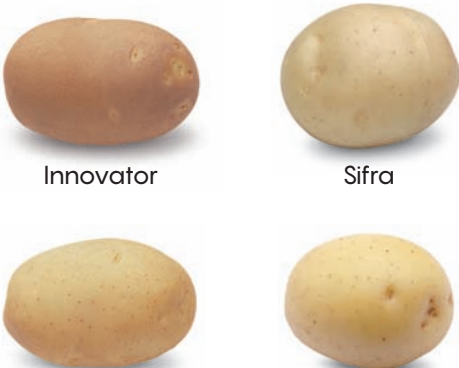
This initiative started with a call from Alvin Keenan at Rollo Bay Holdings Ltd. to express concern about our industry needing more trucks to get our product to the market. A limiting factor is the need to load trucks to less than capacity at certain times of the year due to different highway weight restrictions across Canada. This led to resolutions from PEI being passed at the Canadian Horticultural Council and the Canadian Federation of Agriculture. Our Board raised it with our provincial government trade officials, and during consultations on the new Canada Free Trade Agreement, and we were excited when we learned that other provincial governments joined our PEI government in identifying this issue as priority one for resolution in 2018.

Two years have gone by, and although the Board continues to raise the issue at various forums (Conference Board of Canada, meetings with politicians and senior staff), there has been no progress in finding a solution. Quebec's weight tolerance is lower than the rest of eastern Canada, and it appears they are refusing to address the issue (even though there is funding available).

As well, we have heard that the Quebec government appears to be exempting its own agricultural industry from those limits, effectively impeding the ability of other provinces to travel those major highways with the same amount of weight on a truck as they allow their own industry members to do. It is a barrier to trade, it hurts competitiveness, it is a negative in environmental terms - it ticks all the boxes as being a major issue.

At time of writing this piece, it is Red Tape Awareness Week – an initiative of the Canadian Federation of Independent Businesses. These weight restrictions are red tape and a barrier to trade. It appears the Canada Free Trade Agreement, which came into force on July 1, 2017 with great intent to address trade barriers within Canada that impact competitiveness, is failing to address a major irritant. Let's hope that another push on this will result in positive change in the coming year.


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PMRA Update on Neonicotinoid Pesticides*

January 16, 2020



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Introduction

This document provides a progress report on Health Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency's (PMRA) ongoing assessments of the neonicotinoid insecticides ([see previous update on the Neonicotinoid Pesticides in 2017](#)). The assessment of this group of insecticides is extremely complex and multi-faceted; a status update for each aspect of the assessments follows.

Pollinator Assessments: Thiamethoxam, Clothianidin, and Imidacloprid

A. Completed work to date:

In 2012, in response to new research and the establishment of a new North American pollinator risk assessment framework, in cooperation with the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and the California Department of Pesticide Regulation, Health Canada initiated pollinator focused re-evaluations of the three neonicotinoids ([thiamethoxam](#), [clothianidin](#), and [imidacloprid](#)). Health Canada completed the three pollinator re-evaluations and published its decisions on 11 April 2019.

In order to protect pollinators, Health Canada is cancelling many uses of neonicotinoids on crops that bees find attractive, such as orchard trees, and is not allowing spraying of some crops, such as berries and fruiting vegetables, before or during bloom. Seed treatment uses were found to be acceptable; however, Health Canada requires the addition of label statements for all cereal and legume crops to minimize exposure of pollinators to dust during planting of treated seeds. The implementation of these decisions is currently underway and the required mitigation measures must be implemented on all product labels sold by registrants no later than 11 April 2021.

B. Work to be completed:

Health Canada is conducting special reviews of clothianidin, imidacloprid and thiamethoxam products that are registered for use on cucurbits such as pumpkin, squash and watermelon on the basis of potential risks of concern to a specific species of ground-dwelling bee, the squash bee (*Peponapis pruinosa*). These special reviews are pending the submission of relevant data specific to the biology of squash bees. These studies are currently being undertaken by academia. The pollinator re-evaluation decisions considered the risks to honey bees as well as native pollinators such as the squash bees that are under special review.

C. Timeline for completion:

Once the new squash bee data have been submitted, Health Canada will evaluate this information to confirm whether the risk mitigation already put in place as part of the pollinator assessments remains adequate to protect squash bees, or if additional mitigation measures are required.

Cyclical Re-evaluation: Imidacloprid

Aquatic Special Reviews: Clothianidin and Thiamethoxam

A. Completed work to date:

On 23 November 2016, Health Canada published for consultation a proposed re-evaluation decision for imidacloprid. On 15 August 2018, Health Canada published two proposed special review decisions, for clothianidin and thiamethoxam, examining the risks to aquatic invertebrates. All three proposals indicated that these substances have been measured at levels that are expected to be harmful to aquatic insects. Therefore, Health Canada proposed to phase out all the agricultural and a majority of other outdoor uses of imidacloprid, as well as all outdoor uses of clothianidin and thiamethoxam to protect the environment.

B. Current status:

Health Canada is reviewing a substantial amount of new information that has since been received. This included comments from the public, pesticide registrants, provinces, and an unprecedented amount of new water monitoring data from various stakeholders such as Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's water monitoring working group and from the provinces. These new data are of high quality and provide a much clearer picture of the levels of neonicotinoid pesticides being detected across Canada. The information and data provided by the various working groups of the Multi-Stakeholder Forum on Neonicotinoids has proven to be crucial in Health Canada's assessments. In addition, Health Canada is also considering new information that is being published in scientific papers on neonicotinoids. This new information will be incorporated in the risk assessment to ensure that the upcoming decisions reflect the current scientific knowledge.

C. Revised timeline for completion:

The analysis of the information received is ongoing. While Health Canada had initially committed to reporting its findings on the potential risks to aquatic insects by the end of 2019, due to the vast amount of new information received, this decision has been delayed so that Health Canada can review the new scientific papers, data, and comments received. Therefore, final decisions related to the cyclical re-evaluation of imidacloprid and the aquatic special reviews of clothianidin and thiamethoxam are expected to be published in the Fall of 2020.

Cyclical Re-evaluations: Clothianidin and Thiamethoxam

A. Current status:

Finally, full cyclical re-evaluations of clothianidin and thiamethoxam were initiated in 2016 to assess their value, as well as human health and environmental risks other than impacts on pollinators and aquatic invertebrates. As mentioned above, the assessment of the impacts on pollinators was recently completed in 2019 and the assessment of the impacts on aquatic invertebrates is being considered in the special reviews.

B. Timeline for completion:

These cyclical reviews are currently under way, and proposed decisions will follow the final decisions for the special reviews of thiamethoxam and clothianidin on the risks to aquatic insects.

** The above information is taken from a document circulated by PMRA on January 16, 2020. For a copy of the full four page document that includes background information on these assessments please call the Board office at (902) 892-6551.*



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by Ryan Barrett, Research & Agronomy Coordinator

Representatives of the Prince Edward Island Potato Board travelled to Las Vegas, Nevada in mid-January to attend the NPC Potato Expo and associated industry meetings. This was the largest attended Potato Expo in history and had a large number of Canadians making their way to Vegas (over 25% of registered attendees). Meetings for PEI Potato Board representatives began on Monday, January 13th with a board meeting of the United Potato Growers of Canada. Chair Ray Keenan and General Manager Kevin MacIsaac provided an overview of UPGC's activities in 2019 and financial position, and representatives of the different growing regions provided updates on the status of the crop in each province. Most regions of the country had

significant challenges with the weather in 2019, resulting in both significant abandoned acreage in Manitoba and Alberta as well as storage issues in multiple provinces. On the plus side, fresh market prices remain strong across the country. Following the UPGC meeting, a number of representatives attended the United Potato Growers of America Supply and Demand Committee Meeting, where updates were provided from each major potato growing region in North America on movement, pricing, and holdings for the current marketing year. The committee reduced the shipping forecast for fresh potatoes in the U.S. to 86.1 million hundred weight. This is down 7.7 million hundred weight from 2018-19 and is a historical low compared to anything in recent history. One would have to go back to 1964 to find supplies of fresh potatoes that low. Idaho leads

the reduction due to the last 15% of their harvest being affected by frost and cold temperatures. The second largest reduction is in the Red River Valley where disastrous harvest conditions have provided record low supply since data collection began. Red stocks in the valley are at 52.5% of their 5-yr. average and yellow holdings are at 62% of their 5-yr. average.

On Tuesday morning, Board representatives attended the United Potato Business Summit in advance of the opening of the Potato Expo. The first presentation was by Stephen



Nicholson of Rabobank, providing an economic outlook for agriculture. Nicholson touched on the current trade wars and changing trade agreements and how they have had a significant impact on agricultural trade in the United States. Global commodity trade has plateaued in the past few years, and commodity stocks are generally at all time highs. 2020 is forecast to be a year of negative margins for corn and soybeans and potentially a more positive year for wheat, given issues in both Argentina and Australia. Soybean acres are forecast to climb back up in the USA in 2020 but normalization of trade will be required to bring prices back to profitability.

Cedric Porter of the World Potato Markets newsletter then provided an overview of the European potato situation. 2019 was also a challenging yield for most European potato growers, with the EU producing its second smallest crop on record. Up to 20,000 acres are yet to be harvested in the UK due to wet harvest conditions, while summer drought limited yields in most of Europe. Surprisingly, this low production has not translated into much higher prices like we have seen in North America. EU fry exports to the USA continue to grow each year, now up to 100,000 tonnes per year. Another challenge facing European growers in 2020 will be the banning of CIPC for sprout inhibition and diquat for top-killing. There are some replacements for these products but they are generally less effective or require additional testing.

John Toaspern of Potatoes USA provided a potato market overview for the United States, noting that both the value and total size of the national potato crop is increasing at the same time that demand for product is also growing. Approximately 20% of US potatoes are now exported (primarily as frozen product). Consumers are now spending more money on food away from home than at home, and potato sales to food service is forecast to grow 4% in the next year. Potatoes are on 83% of food service menus, and a total of 59% of all potatoes produced in the USA are now destined for food service! On the fresh market, there has been a growth in demand for yellow and round-white varieties at the expense of russet and red varieties. One interesting statistic that Mr. Toaspern shared was that EU exports have grown four times faster than American exports in the last ten years, and that USA frozen French fries are \$100/tonne more expensive than Canadian fries and \$300/tonne more expensive than fries from the EU (primarily from Belgium). Two

reasons: Cheaper fry pricing in Europe, particularly Belgium. Secondly, North America has lagged behind in production capacity and is only now building factories to meet the increased demand. Fry companies seemed hesitant at first to believe that increased consumption would turn into a long term trend. In comparison there currently is excess capacity in European factories.

These market outlook presentations were then followed by presentations looking at the future of agriculture. Don Dufner of John Deere talked about innovation and advancement in farm equipment and precision agriculture, including the development of new electric-powered tractors that can also off-board power to a towed implement. He was then followed by Brett Sciotto of Aimpoint Research on work that his organization has done to identify how ready American agriculture is for the future. His research divides farmers into five different segments: independent elites, enterprising entrepreneurs, classic practitioners, self-reliant traditionalists, and lifestyle farmers. These different segments respond differently to capital investment, growth in farm size, use of farm credit and government funding program, and succession planning. By doing focus groups and “war game” simulations with agricultural industry representatives, they forecast consolidation to continue (and speed up), that gene-editing will become mainstream, that traceability and sustainability programs will become routine and integral in agriculture, and that agriculture will lose political power as the population becomes increasingly urban.

The United Business Summit was then closed by UPGA General Manager Mark Klompfen, who shared some updates on potato marketing this year. Shipments for most



John MacQuarrie (left), Director of Sustainability with Cavendish Farms moderates a panel discussion on sustainability that included Sanford Gleddie of the Little Potato Company; Tammy McElroy of Sysco Corporation; and Vernon Campbell of Mull Na Bienne Farms in PEI.

fresh market categories are down compared to last year, reflecting a drop in total production from the 2019 crop. Total supply is forecast to be down 10% this year, resulting in a forecast of an increased return of 63%. This compares with a 3% drop in supply translating into a modest 8% greater return in the 2018-2019 marketing year. UPGA also anticipated potato acres to grow in 2020 due to low prices for alternative crops.

The NPC Potato Expo then opened on Tuesday afternoon and continued through the day Wednesday. The Board staffed a booth during the show, receiving a number of inquiries for seed and fresh potatoes from both North Americans as well as international representatives. We were able to give away a good number of seed guides and

other industry promotional information, and as well as showed our recently developed video series on a loop.

Presentations during the Expo tended to be somewhat “advertorial” in nature, with many speakers from companies promoting their own products or services. A couple of topics that came up repeatedly were enhanced efficiency fertilizer products, advances in irrigation technology, and data management platforms for both field management as well as regulatory compliance. Two companies with particularly interesting presentations were Agrometrics (integrating production with both marketing and regulatory compliance data management) and Agrian (combining field-level management along with profitability/budgeting functions for each field, as well as food safety data export).

There were also concurrent sessions on topics as diverse as advances in packaging, managing labour issues, food safety compliance, and the future of the potato industry.

The final presentation of the Potato Expo was a panel discussion on sustainability featuring four partners in the Potato Sustainability Alliance (formally PSI). The session was chaired by John MacQuarrie, Director of Sustainability with Cavendish Farms, and also included Vernon Campbell of Mull Na Bienne Farms as a grower voice on sustainability. Both did a great job highlighting how the potato industry is being pro-active on sustainability. Vernon had the quote of the day when he remarked that “farmers aren’t environmental activists, but we are active environmentalists.” It is great to see the Prince Edward Island potato industry in a leadership position on sustainability.

The 2021 Potato Expo will be held in early January in Grapevine, Texas before heading to Anaheim, California for 2022.



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Marketing Report

by Kaley MacDonald Butler and Mark Phillips

Kwik Lok Closure Labels

While we invest plenty of marketing dollars in branding, brand awareness, and social media, if customers can't find our products then it is hard to market effectively. We know we have a desired brand, and high brand recognition, but it's becoming more and more difficult for consumers to locate our products in store. As evidenced by recent store checks in Canadian markets, there is more "noise" than ever in the produce aisle. It's tough to find what you're looking for if you don't know where to look. The idea of labelled Kwik Lok fasteners used on poly bags is an easy, cost effective way of ensuring consumers can find our potatoes in store. (see image)

We've spent a lot of energy in the last number of years trying to encourage retailers to include our logo on packaging. While the benefits in terms of branding are clear, it can be a logistical headache, lead to extra plate costs, and discourage retailers who would have to carry more packaging varieties. A closure label can be an inexpensive and productive advertising alternative. A closure label is seen by the consumer at the very moment buying decisions are made and at the point of sale where the consumer can buy the product. An attractive, well designed closure label stands out and grabs attention. By helping consumers identify PEI potatoes, we can ensure our marketing efforts are successful.

We currently have one dealer implementing these labels with one of their customers. Our simple design features our *I love PEI Potato* logo on one side, with our bilingual logo on the other side, and a call to action to the recipe page of our website. We encourage packers to add these closure labels to their future poly business. For a small fee, packers could customize the closure and make a call to action of their own.

We realize, in adding something new to a packaging, there is always an extra cost. We've partnered with the

Department of Agriculture to help cover the costs of installing the necessary equipment to add the branded kwik loks closures to a packer's



current setup up. There is also funding available for the initial purchase of closure labels. For more information on this call Mark Phillips or Kaley Butler at 902 892-6551.

New Vignettes Available Online

We are rolling out a series of short videos designed to give people a peek into where Island potatoes come from. The seven vignettes are a spin-off of our "It Takes an Island" advertising campaign the Board launched in 2017. The vignettes are aimed at consumers, as consumers, in general, are less connected to the farm than they once were. While people are less connected to the farm, they are becoming more interested in their food sources and want to become more informed about where their food comes from.

There are seven new vignettes in total: Introduction, Planting, Growing, Harvesting, Shipping, Family Tradition, and Uniqueness. It's our first cohesive story on how potatoes start from a seed and get to your plate. While the videos contain a lot of information, we've kept the length short (just over a minute) to match consumer trends. People often won't dedicate 10 minutes to watch a video, but they may spend that same time watching several short videos. The vignettes, as with the original TV commercial, feature Island growers, which makes the viewing experience authentic.

We've tried to release the videos strategically, with the planting and harvesting videos launching during their respective seasons. We're going to release family tradition and uniqueness vignettes during Potato Lovers' month in February. We've shown the full videos at Island events such as Breakfast at the Farm, Farm Day in the City, Open Farm Day, and most recently the Potato Expo in Las Vegas.

To see the videos visit <https://www.youtube.com/user/PEIPotatoes>.



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CANADIAN HOLDINGS as of January 1 ('000 cwt)

	<u>2016-17</u>	<u>2017-18</u>	<u>2018-19</u>	<u>2019-20</u>	19-20 vs. 18-19
PEI	18,744	18,095	16,650	18,340	10.1%
New Brunswick	11,134	11,106	10,309	10,294	-0.1%
Nova Scotia	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total Maritimes	29,878	29,201	26,959	28,634	6.2%
Quebec	7,611	7,898	7,440	7,986	7.3%
Ontario	3,153	4,431	3,777	4,016	6.3%
Total Eastern Canada (inc. Maritimes)	40,642	41,530	38,176	40,636	6.4%
Manitoba	14,730	13,589	12,160	12,240	0.7%
Saskatchewan	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Alberta	13,364	15,916	15,335	16,022	4.5%
British Columbia	773	618	813	675	-17.0%
Total Western Canada	28,867	30,123	28,308	28,937	2.2%
CANADA TOTAL	69,509	71,653	66,484	69,573	4.6%

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND DISPOSITION as of December 31 (cwt)

	<u>2016-17</u>	<u>2017-18</u>	<u>2018-19</u>	<u>2019-20</u>	19-20 vs. 18-19
Production	25,723,000	24,463,000	22,600,000	25,200,000	11.5%
Canadian Shipments	795,347	741,639	727,298	802,174	10.3%
U.S. Shipments	1,058,632	1,002,224	800,733	767,577	-4.1%
Export Shipments	402,907	332,627	468,477	412,598	-11.9%
Total Fresh	2,256,886	2,076,490	1,996,508	1,982,349	-0.7%
Processing / Local Use	3,921,565	3,645,953	3,344,394	4,049,081	21.1%
Seed for Next Crop	0	0	0	0	
Cullage	800,582	645,376	608,830	829,063	36.2%
Total Disposition as of December 31	6,979,033	6,367,818	5,949,732	6,860,493	15.3%
Holdings at January 1	18,743,967	18,095,182	16,650,268	18,339,507	10.1%

Projected Utilization as of January 1 (cwt)

Fresh	5,021,283	4,777,260	3,983,608	4,815,508	20.9%
Processing	11,657,369	11,394,608	10,636,982	11,299,187	6.2%
Seed	2,065,314	1,923,313	2,029,677	2,224,811	9.6%

PEI Agri-Watershed Partnership

by Ian Petrie

PEI farmers have always faced many challenges, but uncertain weather, the weeks of drought mid-summer followed by heavy downpours and days of rain, has sharply raised the financial and environmental risks. Yield and quality remain the big worries, but more recently the possibility of fishkills following unusual and significant localized rainfalls has added to the pressures. The public demands strong regulations to prevent them, and the courts have been inconsistent in whether the farmers charged have met the test of “due diligence”; in other words, did a producer do everything that’s reasonably expected to prevent a fishkill. A new effort combining the experience of farm organizations like the Federation of Agriculture and the PEI Potato Board and the knowledge of provincial watershed groups is working to ensure the public and environmental regulators gain confidence that producers are meeting that due diligence standard.

The PEI Agri Watershed Partnership was created last fall when leaders from farm groups and watershed organizations realized they both want the same thing, to keep soil on fields, and protect local wildlife and waterways. The stakes have been raised for farmers as the public insists governments display more commitment to protecting the environment, and important buyers like the fast food companies want to show off their environmental credentials by demanding written proof that farmers are becoming more sustainable.

For their part, watershed groups have strong local knowledge of waterways and riparian zones around fields and can help farmers see problems before they

occur. Members are usually volunteers and have a good understanding of the importance of farming to rural communities.

The Partnership has been working with agrologists, researchers, and consulting with farmers, to come up with “Best Management Practices” that are practical and cost effective. These include fall cover cropping, primary residue tillage, band spraying, and so on, all designed to prevent erosion, rebuild soil organic matter levels, and keep soil and pesticides where they’re needed, on fields.

There’s a growing understanding that identifying high risk areas around waterways should be a priority. Where there’s agreement to retire land, or resources needed to slow down or eliminate erosion and run-off, the Partnership will lobby Government for sufficient funding to get the work done.

Watershed groups and farmers have not always seen eye to eye, and this new working relationship will require some effort to build trust. There’s a feeling within the Partnership that both can learn from each other. There will always be some risk from farming, but habitat destruction can never be seen as a cost of doing business.

This new effort is not looking at adding another layer of regulations. Instead, the Partnership is determined to identify farm practices that are effective and give farmers the best choices to both maintain productivity and gain some legal cover in the event of a fishkill. All of the work will be brought to key stakeholders for input over the next couple of months.



PEI Living Labs Initiative

2019 Overview

by Ryan Barrett, Research & Agronomy Coordinator and
Morgan McNeil, Junior Agronomist

Living Labs is a national partnership between government, industry and farmers that will run from 2019-2023 across Canada. As has been reported previously, the purpose of this program is to set-up practical field research trials to collect relevant data for interpretation. The overall goal is to improve the adoption of agricultural practices to reduce negative environmental implications for long-term sustainability while improving yield and profitability at the same time. Living Labs sites are currently under development in PEI and Manitoba and are planned for additional provinces soon.

Prince Edward Island is the first part of Canada to get the Living Labs project started. It is a collaboration of Internal Partners such as Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC), the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) and Environment & Climate Change Canada (ECCC), as well as External Partners such as the PEI Department of Agriculture and Land, the PEI Potato Board, East Prince Agri-Environmental Association, Souris and Area Wildlife Branch and the Kensington North Watershed Association, among others.

There are eight External Projects and a handful of Supporting Activities underway in PEI, on topics such as cover cropping/crop rotation practices, nurse crops, irrigation, and vegetative structures. The first three projects to develop Best Management Practices (BMPs) are led by Ryan Barrett and Morgan McNeil with the PEI Potato Board. They are titled as follows:

BMP1- Fall Seeded Cover Crops After Primary Tillage in 2019 Before Potatoes in 2020

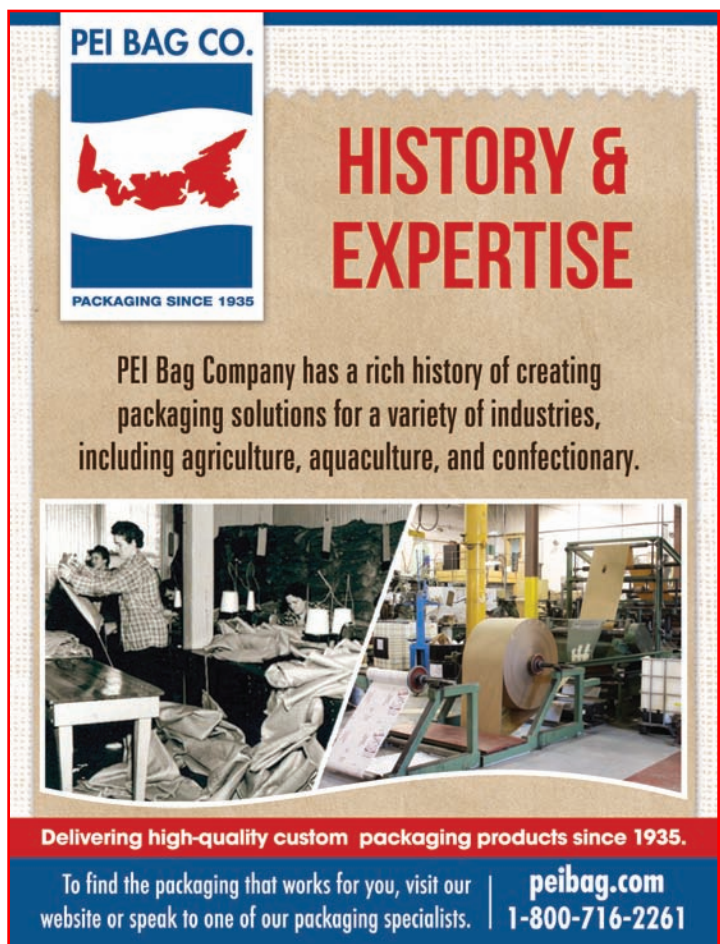
BMP2- Fall Seeded Cover Crops After Potatoes in 2019

BMP3- Full- Season Soil Building Crops in 2019

The first work was started in the spring of 2019 with BMP3 to grow what are thought to be soil-building crops next to more standard check crops (oats, ryegrass, or timothy/clover) as a control. As is the case in many areas of North America, many fields in PEI have lower soil organic matter (SOM) than desirable. The goals of BMP3 are to build SOM and reduce disease potential such as Potato Early Dying. We set-up nine fields in this BMP with soil-building crops including brown mustard, buckwheat, hemp, sorghum sudangrass, pearl millet, and multi-species mixes

with 8-12 different plants. The particular crops grown at each location depended in part on the interests of the farmers. We collected soil samples in the spring for chemical nutrient and soil health package analysis, nematodes and *Verticillium dahliae* counts. We also took soil compaction readings with a digital Penetrometer field tool. Above ground, crop biomass samples were collected over the growing season, and additional soil samples were collected in the fall for subsequent nutrient analysis. The results we have obtained to date are still very preliminary, as we have follow-up sampling to do in the spring (soil) and fall (soil and potato yield) of 2020. A full report will be available after the 2020 growing season and this will be repeated for two more cycles. The SOM range across fields in 2019 was 2.1 - 2.9, and the pH ranged from 5.6 - 6.1.

BMPs 1 and 2 address the fact that later in the growing season, erosion and nitrate leaching tend to be environmental concerns. Reducing tillage and keeping bare ground covered in some kind of plant biomass are beneficial practices that can lessen these concerns. In late August/early September 2019, we set up eight fields in for the BMP1 project in which farmers planted cover crops after



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fall tillage beside a no-cover check strip for comparison. Treatment crops included mustard, Icarus radish, barley or oats. Improving potato yields in the following year would be another goal of this BMP. In 2019 the growing season weather conditions were not particularly cooperative, with very dry conditions in August preventing farmers from tilling their land, followed by heavy rainfall in September, including Hurricane Dorian. This resulted in much later cover crop planting dates than hoped for, impacting the results in year 1.

An additional seven fields were set-up in late September-early October 2019 after potato harvest for BMP2. The goals in this BMP were to assess and reduce wind/water erosion and nitrate leaching, particularly since the soil is more susceptible to losses after the physical disturbance imposed from the recent potato harvest. For BMP2 the treatment crops included barley, oats or fall rye. The cover crop options for this practice are reduced compared to BMP1, given that it is a later window of establishment before winter. The earlier the cover crop was seeded (and especially before Oct. 15th), the more likely it was to establish well before getting late into cooler fall temperatures.

For BMP1 and BMP2, soil chemical analysis, soil erosion, nitrates and percent ground cover were tested at each site. Either metal rebar pins (rods) or splash pans were set-up in a sub-set of the fields, with 2-3 in each of a cover crop and check strip crop. We are still sorting through this data, but it appears that the splash pans gave more reliable data than the pins. In certain fields, we observed much lower

amounts of soil in the pans where there was a cover crop than in the check strips. We will be looking to optimize this research in future years.

The percent ground cover was determined at each site by taking photos in both the cover crop and the check strip at 2-3 time points in the fall at roughly similar height off the ground. The photos were analyzed using the iPhone Canopeo app to generate averages in each treatment for comparison. In many of the fields for 2019, the establishment of green cover was quite low, around 15%; largely due to late planting dates. Overall, it appeared better to seed something than to leave the ground bare for the winter.

Additionally, soil nitrate testing was done to three depths. We are still interpreting all of the results, but several fields did show lower nitrates with the presence of a cover crop than without. Results will be most valuable with more than one year of data compiled.

Other PEI Living Labs projects conducted by External Partners that got a start in 2019 include the following:

BMP4 – Nurse Cropping

This project was led by Kyra Stiles with the PEI Department of Agriculture and Land. The plan is to evaluate the use of nurse crops in potato and corn fields to protect against soil erosion as well as improve soil moisture levels. Nurse crops in potatoes are established at planting and then desiccated before potato emergence. In corn, nurse crops are established when the corn is about 4-6 inches high, forming a carpet under the corn crop. This trial



On the left is a close up taken on November 6, 2019 of a mustard/oats cover crop mix was seeded on Aug. 28, 2019. The black and white image shows the same section as that on the left run through iPhone Canopeo app to show the % green area. The check portion of the same field with no cover crop planted had only 0.16% green area. Photos: Morgan McNeil.

was severely impacted by Hurricane Dorian, reducing the amount of available data, but it is hoped to have more fields participating and more cooperative weather in future years.

BMP5 – Potato Productivity and Nitrogen Use Efficiency with Improved Irrigation Scheduling

This project was led by Tobin Stetson with the PEI Department of Agriculture and Land and included four irrigated fields that compared the farmer's standard irrigation schedule against irrigation scheduling informed by soil moisture and predicted precipitation as well as no irrigation. There is also a plan to compare irrigation with a slightly reduced nitrogen treatment, but there was not time to establish that treatment this spring. The project involved frequent measurement of soil moisture readings to inform the irrigation schedule. This was done manually in 2019 but will be performed using automatic sensors in future years. While there was a difference observed between irrigated and non-irrigated parts of the field, there was not a significant difference observed between grower irrigation practices and the modified scheduling. This may have been impacted by the fact that four different varieties were grown in the four participating fields, as well as the adverse weather conditions in late August and early September. This work will continue and be improved for future years.

BMP6 – Variety Performance Under Irrigation

Steve Watts of Genesis Crop Systems led this project, which involved evaluating six varieties under irrigated and non-irrigated conditions. Three "standard" varieties (Russet Burbank, Prospect, Ranger Russet) were evaluated alongside three newer varieties of interest (Clearwater Russet, Mountain Gem Russet, Dakota Russet). Across all varieties, irrigation improved total yield by approximately 85 cwt/acre and improved total crop value by more than \$1100 per acre. However, there was a noticeable

difference observed between varieties, with Prospect and Russet Burbank displaying the lowest yield gain and Mountain Gem and Clearwater having the greatest gain, with Dakota and Ranger intermediary between the other four varieties. From the first year of trials, it does appear that some varieties may benefit more from irrigation than others under Prince Edward Island conditions. This work will be continued in 2020.

BMP7 – Evaluating the use of Enhanced Efficiency Nitrogen Products

In this project, Steve Watts worked with producers to evaluate the use of Super U, an enhanced efficiency nitrogen source, on a field scale. For all treatments, the same amount of nitrogen was applied at planting (approximately 65% of total). In each field, use of Super U at hilling at two rates was compared with a conventional application of urea. Yield and residual nitrates were then evaluated for each treatment.

There were some issues with trial establishment in some of the trial fields this year due in part to challenging conditions at planting. There was not a significant difference between treatments in 2019, but results were extremely variable (both positive and negative) depending on individual field conditions. Steps will be taken to minimize variability in 2020 to provide a more accurate representation of the impact of enhanced efficiency nitrogen products on both yield and residual nitrogen levels.

Research on these trials, as well as a series of trials by internal project partners, is planned to continue for the next three years. Throughout the process, growers in the participating regions will be consulted for input on this research, both to improve the research as well as knowledge transfer. This is a collaborative initiative that aims to respond to both the needs of the growers as well as environmental/societal needs. We look forward to sharing more results with you in due course.

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AIM Workshops

by Ryan Barrett, Research & Agronomy Coordinator

On January 20th and 21st, the second in a series of four local workshops this winter were held on the subject of “Choosing the Right Rotation Crops to Meet the Needs of Your Fields.” These meetings were held in Montague, Emerald and Mill River and featured a comprehensive presentation by AIM Project Lead Ryan Barrett, followed by presentations by Treasa Pauley of Eastern Canadian Oilseeds Development Alliance (ECODA) and Wayne MacLean of WA Grains.

Ryan’s presentation first shared results of many of the crop rotation trials that have been done with participating growers over the past couple of years, as well as some trial data from local research partners. A number of Island growers have been partnering with AIM to conduct field trials of different rotation crops, including sorghum sudangrass, pearl millet, and brown mustard among others, in an effort to manage potato early dying (PED), wireworm, and/or to build soil health. Some trial results were more predictable, including one trial in the Kensington area showing potatoes following forage pearl millet to have about a 40 cwt yield improvement over potatoes following red clover. Other trials showed mixed results; for many fields, the levels of *Verticillium dahliae* and root lesion nematodes were much lower than anticipated than when the fields were selected for trials. This served to demonstrate to growers the importance of testing to ascertain what challenges a field may have in order to match the crop rotation choices properly to the needs of the field.

Further plot trial data on rotation crops from Dr. Judith Nyiraneza from AAFC in Charlottetown has shown that potatoes following warm season grasses like sorghum

sudangrass, forage pearl millet or forage sorghum have shown between a 10 to 20% yield improvement compared to red clover. Work will be continuing through the Atlantic Living Labs Project to explore this both on a plot scale as well as on a field scale with participating growers.

Ryan then went through a number of different crops (both soil-building crops and cash crops) to share advantages of each crop as well as possible shortcomings of these crops in order to determine what sort of rotations they fit best into. Whether a grower is trying to fight early dying, fight wireworm, build soil organic matter, or mitigate soil compaction will dictate the best crop rotation choices. He also discussed possible strategies for the best performing fields that includes maximizing the amount of cash cropping, provided that growers also utilize cover crops to maintain and build soil health.

Following Ryan’s presentation, Treasa Pauley shared some of the research work that ECODA (supported by the Potato Board) is doing to look at different oilseed crops in rotation with potatoes. This includes both plot-scale work at AAFC as well as field-scale trials with growers. One trial where ECODA is looking for more participating growers is investigating the effect on potato yield following brown mustard harvested for seed versus brown mustard incorporated as a biofumigant. ECODA is also doing some research into the use of camelina, a high-biomass brassica crop, as a biofumigant crop in Atlantic Canada.

Next, Wayne MacLean gave an overview of some of the different cash crops that WA Grains has been contracting with PEI farmers, including green and yellow peas, black beans, brown mustard, buckwheat and hybrid fall rye. Wayne wanted to share that for some farms, there may

be a cash crop alternative that fit their rotations while still providing the opportunity to improve soil health and use cover crops. WA Grains are partners in the research being performed by ECODA as well as conducting other trials with Dr. Aaron Mills at AAFC.

Copies of these presentations are available on the PEI Potato Agronomy website under “Seminar/Workshop Presentations.” More local workshop are planned for February (Seed Management) and March (Soil Compaction and Tillage).

Potato Early Dying (PED)

Legume Strip Trial – Field B

Spring 2019: pH = 6.3 soil OM = 2.1 K20 = 306 (VH)

	RL Nematodes (#/kg soil)	% change	<i>V. dahliae</i> (cells/g soil)	% change
Spring 2019	1,742		7,489	
Fall 2019				
Red Clover	19,931	+ 1044%	9,405	+ 26%
Alfalfa/Timothy	2,319	+ 33%	9,444	+ 26%
White Clover/Festolium	5,653	+ 225%	6,185	- 17%
Ryegrass/Festolium	14,568	+ 736%	6,582	-12%

An Update From the:

PEI Department of Agriculture and Land

by Lorraine MacKinnon, Potato Industry Coordinator



Winter has certainly become “meeting season”, and I look forward to seeing many of you at sessions throughout the winter. In this issue, I will share some information on the upcoming Potato Expo in Charlottetown, but first I wanted to let industry know about some specialized training that several people from the PEI Department of Agriculture & Land have recently received.

MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID

In January, several staff undertook a two-day training session in order to be certified in mental health first aid. Think about this like regular first aid; where certified individuals can assess and stabilize medical concerns until, if needed, professional medical help arrives. PEIDAL staff interact with PEI producers daily and we sometimes see things, such as elevated anxiety levels or changes in normal behavior, that cause us to become concerned. We are now trained to recognize potential issues, provide information and guidance if appropriate, and importantly, to listen.

2020 INTERNATIONAL POTATO TECHNOLOGY EXPO – FEBRUARY 21-22, 2020

In just a few weeks, the potato industry will convene in Charlottetown for the biennial International Potato Technology Expo. The Eastlink Centre will be packed full with equipment dealers, input suppliers, financial partners, innovative entrepreneurs, industry and government representatives, and of course potato farmers! Once again, the PEI Department of Agriculture & Land is partnering with the PEI Potato Board to organize a conference at Red Shores during the Expo. New for this year, your registration to the trade show includes registration to the conference – no additional fee and no lineup to attend the conference.

You can now register online for the trade show and conference, and the conference agenda is available there as well.

Go to www.potatoexpo.ca for all the details.

The conference planning committee is excited to bring a diverse range of topics of interest to potato producers, from agronomics and technology to HR and economics on the farm. Our speakers hail from across the country and around the globe, but sessions that focus on local research and issues are also planned.

Profitability Mapping with Precision Ag

What areas of your field make you money? Where are you losing money? Dr. Clarence Swanton, professor emeritus with the University of Guelph, will introduce the concept of profitability mapping using precision agriculture tools many growers already employ, and then he will present ideas to address those varied profitability zones. Yield maps can help producers identify variations in the field, but sometimes reducing that variability costs more than what is returned to the grower.

Increasing Potato Yields using Precision Ag

Potato farmer Jacob Van Den Borne has employed precision agriculture on his farm in the Netherlands for over a decade. He has been called the world’s most leading edge farmer with respect to precision agriculture. Jacob will share his philosophy, his tactics, his data management



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approach, and his results.

New Variety Standouts

Newton Yorinori (Cavendish Farms Research Division) and Mary Kay Sonier (PEI Potato Board) will discuss the management profiles of the top standouts from recent variety trials - processing, and table varieties will both be covered. We've seen some promising varieties come to PEI, and now Newton and Mary Kay can share their knowledge on optimizing their yield and quality under PEI conditions.

Attracting & Keeping Diverse Employees

As a farmer, Beth Connery understands the labour crunch that agriculture is facing. She will present strategies to attract, manage and retain farm employees from diverse backgrounds. Finding employees is hard, and a large portion of the work force is approaching retirement – but the pool of tomorrow's potential candidates is much more diverse than in decades gone by.

Carbonomics

Is carbon the currency of a soil ecosystem? Keith Berms from Greencover Seed in Nebraska compares the interactions among carbon and soil health to the nature of a country's economy. Keith's presentation will alter the way you think about your soil and the way you grow crops in it.

2020 WIREWORM WORKSHOP

The last wireworm day was held in 2017, and since then valuable research has been conducted. Additionally in 2019, the Click Beetle survey was also completed. Planning is now underway to share this new information with producers. Mark your calendars for March 24th, 2020 at Red Shores (storm date March 25th), and stay tuned for more information.

Cavendish Farms 2019 Top Growers



Back row (left to right): Avard Smallman, Smallman Farms (seventh place); John Sweet, Sweet Farms (eighth place); Michael Ramsay, Oyster Cove Farms (tenth place); Andy Toombs, Bedeque Farms (sixth place); Peter Waugh, Albert E. Waugh & Sons Ltd. (fifth place). Front Row (left to right): Jubs Bristow, VP Agriculture, Cavendish Farms; Chris MacAulay, MacAulay Farms Inc. (ninth place); Troy Rennie, Dock Corner Farms Ltd. (fourth place); John Visser, Victoria Potato Farms Inc. (first place); John Ramsay, Oyster Cove Farms Ltd. (tenth place); Karl Smallman, Triple S Farms Ltd. (third place); John Phillips, Westcountry Farms (second place); Robert Irving, President, Cavendish Farms.

In Memoriam

Alton Edward Williams

August 7, 1934- October 31, 2019

Alton grew up in Elmsdale, PEI. He was raised on his parent's farm along with his 3 brothers and 4 sisters. It was during these early childhood years that he developed his lifelong passion for farming.

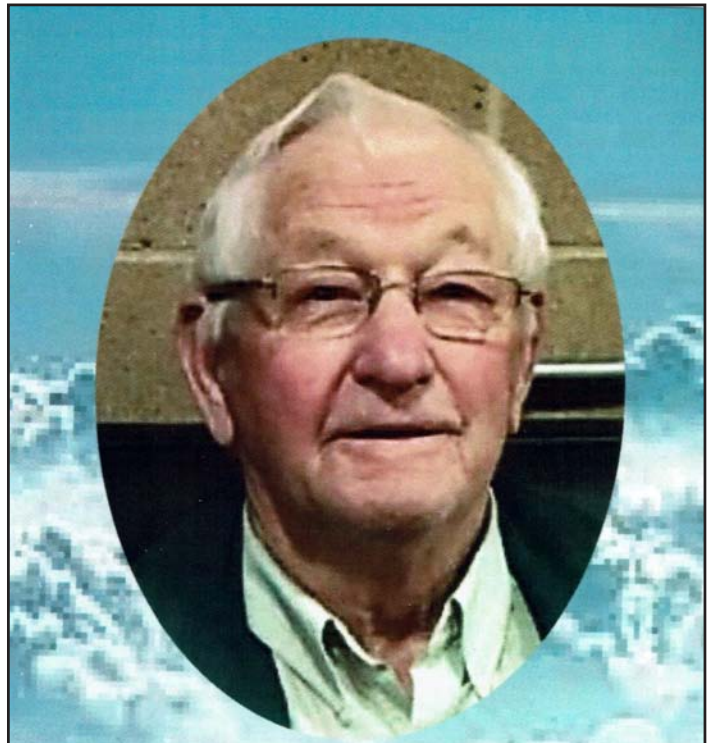
After working in Ontario for several years, Alton returned home to PEI with his wife, Ethel and daughters, Donna and Kimberley. He bought the family farm from his parents, David and Alecia. Soon after another daughter, Carolyn and a son, Duane, rounded out the family. He began to farm in earnest with a small mixed farm.

As the years passed, he was able to expand his farm. He started off growing a small amount of potatoes. He stored his first few crops in the basement of the family home. Eventually, he was able to grow more potatoes and he built a potato warehouse to store his crop. Soon a second warehouse was added.

He was one the first people on PEI to raise Saler cattle. He loved to talk about all types of farming and had almost daily chats with his cousin, George Stewart. He greatly enjoyed his time as the President of the Potato Producers Association. He was able to meet a large number of people and tour farms all across North America.

In 1993, his son Duane began farming with him. In 1995, Alton suffered a major injury when he fell off the barn roof and broke his back. Due to his strong will, he was able to walk again but never regained full mobility. In 1999, Alton planted his last crop. He decided it was time to retire and sold the family farm to Duane.

The farm continued to grow and expand which pleased Alton. He was now able to use his free time to tour fields, both his son's and the neighbours. He loved nothing better than checking potato tops. All the farm employees got quite adept at reattaching Alton's car bumper after he got stuck on the potato drills. He was always anxious to be the first



one on the land in the spring. It was not an uncommon occurrence to have to send a tractor to tow him out of the fields.

In his last few years, his health prevented him from being as active as he wanted to be. He focused on watching the grandchildren play hockey, watching sports on TV and keeping up with current events both locally and internationally.

During his last few days in the palliative care unit at the Prince County Hospital, his love of farming was displayed. Right up to the very end, he wanted to know "how many acres were dug", "how many acres are left to dig", "is there rain in the forecast" and "tell Dylan to keep the harvester going, don't stop digging". The last potato was harvested on October 30th and Alton passed away shortly after, early in the morning of October 31st. His last harvest was done.



INDUSTRY UPDATES

Cavendish Farms Growing Green Award 2019

Country View Farms of Kinkora received the Growing Green Award for sustainable farming at the annual Cavendish Farms Banquet.

Since 2018, the awards have been presented to growers in each of Cavendish Farms' growing regions who demonstrate dedication and leadership in crop sustainability throughout the supply chain process.

Farms are evaluated on the results of their most recent Potato Sustainability Initiative Survey scores and an annual Cavendish Farms' survey that evaluates growers on various sustainability metrics. Other factors taken into consideration are their practices related to air and water quality, soil health, habitat conservation and wildlife protection.

The McKennas have demonstrated progress in reducing soil erosion, improving soil health and conserving natural areas. They are also active members of the East Prince Agri-Environmental Association. They will receive \$5,000 to support on-farm environmental projects.

Farm & Food Care PEI Workshop

Our annual Farm & Food Care PEI Workshop will be held on March 13, 2020 from 9am - 2pm at the Murchison Centre in Charlottetown. Public Trust 2019 research from the Canadian Centre for Food Integrity will be presented along with other great speakers. The 2020 Food & Farming Champion will also be announced! More details to come!

Free tickets can be found here: <https://farmfoodcareworkshop.eventbrite.ca>

Food & Farming Champion Award

Farm & Food Care PEI recognizes local "Champions" who work to tell the story of food production on the Island. The "Food & Farming Champion" Award is presented to individuals, organizations or businesses who have taken the initiative to help engage with consumers in a conversation about food and farming on PEI. Nominees are individuals who are passionate about food and agriculture and are proud of our industry - they use their skills to share their stories and provide consumers with accurate information about agriculture and food production.

The 2020 Food & Farming Champion Award Nomination

Form can be found on our website at www.farmfoodcarepei.org. The 2020 Food & Farming Champion Award will be awarded at the Farm & Food Care PEI Annual Workshop on March 13th, 2020 at the Murchison Centre.



Greg (left) and Gordie (centre) McKenna of Country View Farms accept the 2019 Growing Green award from Robert Irving (right), President of Cavendish Farms.





POTATO GROWERS OF CANADA

LES PRODUCTEURS UNIS DE POMMES DE TERRE DU CANADA

United Partners PEI Seminar

by Kevin MacIsaac, General Manager, UPGC

The United Potato Growers of Canada held its annual "Partner Seminar" in Charlottetown on January 29th. An excellent attendance of growers and industry people gathered to hear presentations on a wide range of topics including:

The Canadian Supply and Market Outlook from Kevin MacIsaac, UPGC; P.E.I. Potato Market and pricing update from Mark Phillips, Market Information Officer with the PEI Potato Board; The Benefits of Tile drainage from Sid Vander Veen, Ontario Land Improvement Contractors Association; Land Use and Ownership in PEI from Brian Matheson, Deputy Minister, PEI Dept of Agriculture and Land; Facing Climate Uncertainty from Dr. Adam Fenech, Associate Dean, School of Climate Change, UPEI; and the U.S. Potato Supply and Market Outlook, from Mark Klompfen, President and CEO of the United Potato Growers of America.

In an excellent presentation, Mark broke down the Supply/Price data for Yellows, Reds, and Russets.

For the purposes of this article, we will zero in on Russets.

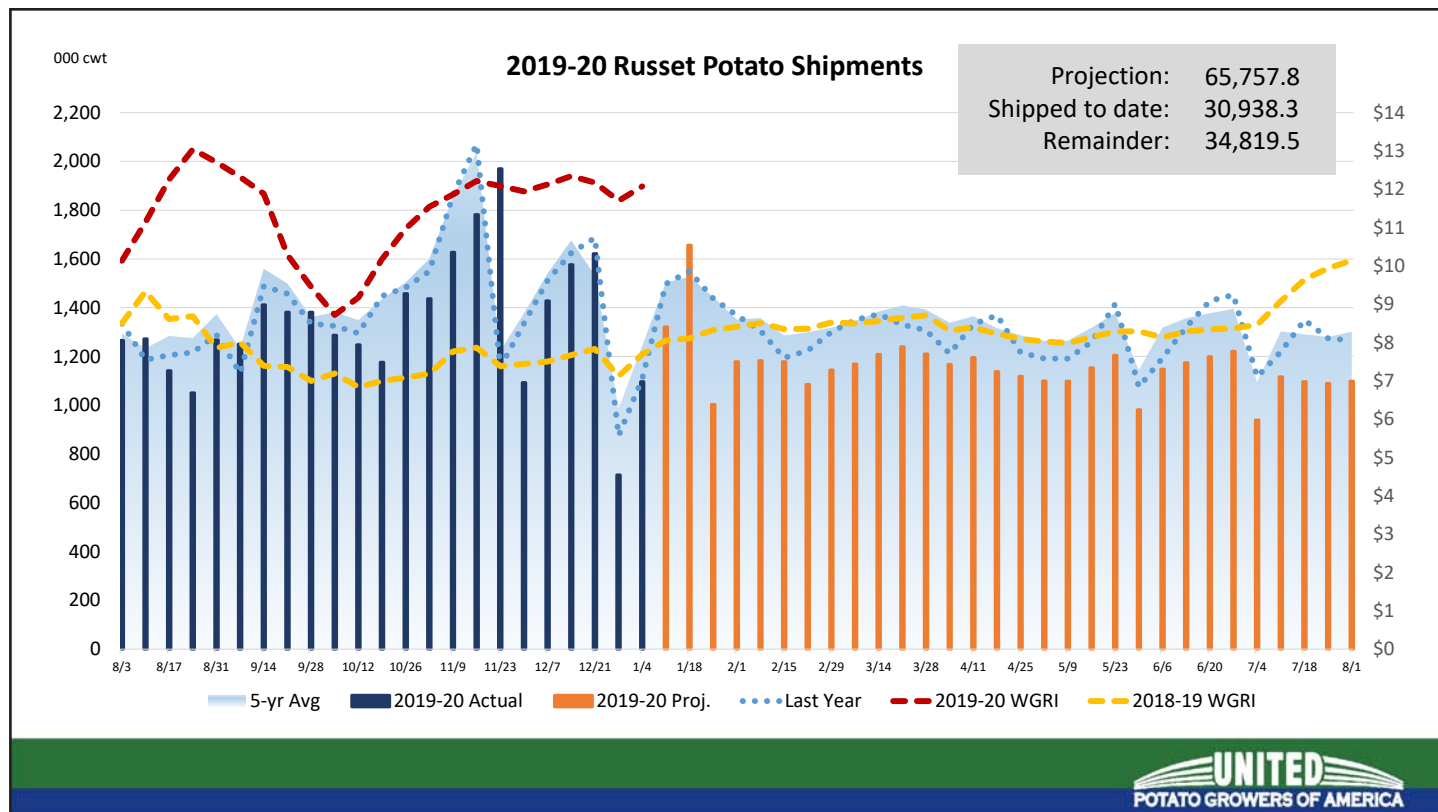
Specifically, for russets, the 2019-20 reduction in supply from Idaho, and the corresponding decrease in projected shipments, has significantly increased the Grower Return Index (GRI) for growers in that state. For example, actual shipments from the 2018-19 crop were 34,968,400 hundred weight resulting in a GRI (value of a pile of potatoes being moved into a packing shed less the packing costs in the shed) of \$6.68/cwt. By comparison, shipments from the 2019-20 crop are projected at 30,623,800 hundred weight (4.3 million cwt. less) which has an average GRI to date of \$10.49. The graph on the next page shows the 5-year average Total U.S. Russet Potato Shipments, to be around 72,876,800 cwt/yr which brought a weighted GRI of \$6.99/cwt. over that period. With 2019-20 estimated fresh production to be 65,757,800 cwt., that should bring an average all-region weighted GRI of \$11.41/cwt.

So, what is the Russet-potato supply/price correlation?

A 10% lower supply gives 63% greater return. UPGA calculates this correlation for each crop and last year for



At the December 2019 Potato Board meeting, money raised through French fry and baked potato sales during Farm Day in the City in October was donated to several worthwhile causes. Chairman Jason Hayden presented donations of \$2,000 to (far left) Elizabeth Landrigan representing the PEI 4H Council and (center photo) to Lindsay Merrill representing the PEI Family Violence Prevention Services. (Far right photo) General Manager Greg Donald (right) presented a donation of \$1,650 to Robert Godfrey who accepted the donation on behalf of Farmers Helping Farmers. Many thanks to all the volunteers who helped out at Farm Day in the City and made these donations possible.



example, 3% lower supply gave 8% greater return. As one follows the red line on the graph representing the 2019-20 Weighted GRI, we can see the traditional decline in price as harvest ramps up and fills the gaps in the marketplace. Our eyes shift to the price increases beginning on what date? It corresponds with October 8th - the date of the cold freeze and early onset of winter in Idaho, causing cellar doors to close for the season. Mother nature has provided

us with a profitable pricing plan for the 2019-20 crop – wouldn't it have been great to have planned that from a management perspective! The other major takeaway from Mark's presentation was that there is a high probability of expanded potato acres in the US in 2020, as the prices of alternative crops are lower. Such an increase would result in much lower potato prices so caution is needed when planning acres for 2020.

Upcoming Events

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

February 2020

- Feb 6 **New Brunswick Potato Conference & Trade Show.** Ayr Motor Centre, Woodstock, New Brunswick.
- Feb 12 & 13 **AIM Seed Management Workshop.** Emerald, Monague and Mill River.
- Feb 21-22 **PEI Potato Conference and International Potato Technology Expo.** Charlottetown, PEI

Feb 21

PEI Potato Industry Awards Banquet. Charlottetown, PEI.

March 2020

- March 5 **PEI Soil & Crop Improvement Association Conference.** Credit Union Place, Summerside.
- March 10 **Canadian Potato Council Meeting,** Ottawa, ON.
- March 10-12 **Canadian Horticultural Council Annual General Meeting.** Ottawa, ON.
- Mar 12 & 13 **AIM Soil Compaction/Tillage Workshop.** Emerald, Monague and Mill River.
- March 24 **Wireworm Workshop.** Red Shores, Charlottetown, PEI.



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