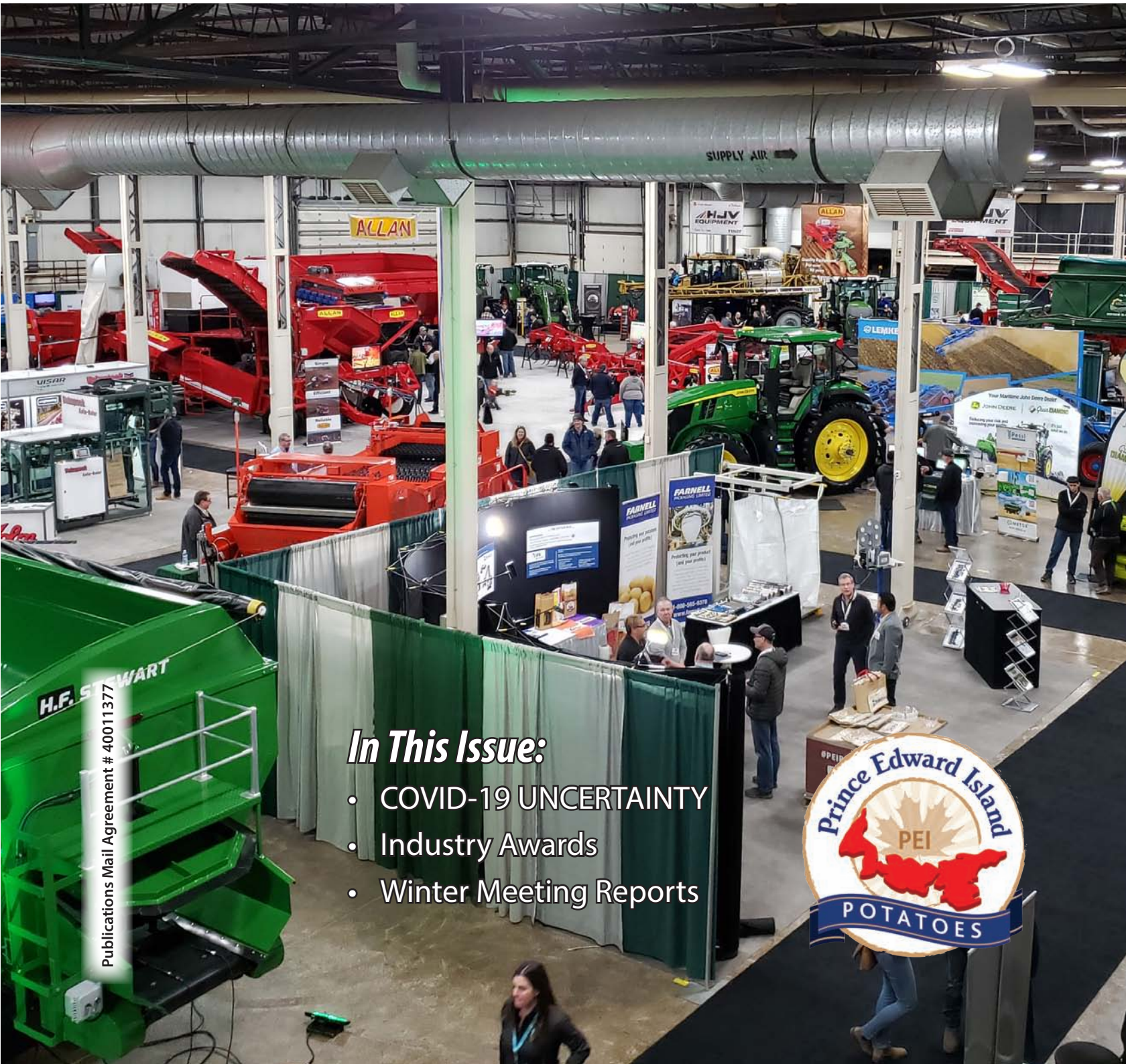


Prince Edward Island POTATO NEWS

March/April 2020
Volume 21 Issue 2



In This Issue:

- COVID-19 UNCERTAINTY
- Industry Awards
- Winter Meeting Reports



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POTATO NEWS

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Fox Island Elite Seed Farm

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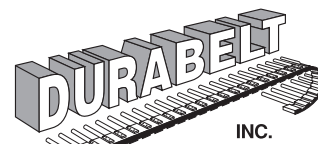
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Cover: The International Potato Technology Expo held a very successful event in Charlottetown in February 2020 with over 3,000 attendees over the 2 days of trade show and conference activities.



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Chairman's Comments

by Jason Hayden, PEI Potato Board Chairman



It is difficult to know what to write for this issue as circumstances are changing every day and we all try to cope with and limit the spread of the novel Coronavirus.

As agricultural producers, we are getting close to the start of our production season and our main concern is keeping ourselves and our employees healthy as we all work to ship the remainder of our 2019 production and get ready for planting the 2020 crop. The COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on everyday life puts a question mark around demand for different sectors of the market. The surge in demand at retail during March drives home the fact that people have to eat, whether the food is from a restaurant or meals cooked at home, and the Board will do its best to work with the segments of our industry and national and international partners to understand the opportunities and challenges going forward.

The Board is also working on your behalf with various partners on issues such as trucking, labour, inspection, etc. that have arisen over the past few weeks. We

have received excellent cooperation and support from Minister Thompson and his staff, and with our Members of Parliament to date, and will keep the lines of communication open going forward.

While those issues are going on, at the same time we are also trying to maintain some degree of normalcy and although some issues have been pushed to the back burner for now, we continue to work on items such as:

- seeking approval for an irrigation research project to begin in 2020.
- preparing our position for Lands Protection Act Consultations.
- Seeking grower input on Best Management Practices on Land within 200 m of a watercourse as developed by the Agri-Watershed working group.


There's a lot of uncertainty right now as we quickly approach planting, and it is very important to plant only enough potatoes to satisfy known markets. How many

acres each of us plants is within our control. What happens beyond that is less under our control in terms of weather conditions, market demand and so on. Growing potatoes is risky business at the best of times, and in the face of the extraordinary circumstances under which we will be planting the 2020 crop, support from our government partners in terms of reducing regulation to the level that growers in other provinces face, and better business risk management programming (perhaps even extraordinary risk management programs given the circumstances) would be timely.

I hope you, your families and your staff are healthy and safe, and we wish you well for the 2020 spring season.

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POTATO BOARD NEWS

COVID-19 UPDATES

How our world has changed in just a few short days and how it is continuing to change.

Food and food production is deemed an essential service which means that right now many people in our industry are busier than ever. Although fresh movement has subsided somewhat from the first 7 – 19 days of people stocking their shelves to prepare for staying at home, retail demand remains strong for both fresh and processed potato products while food service business has dropped. Whether they go to a restaurant or stay at home, people still need to eat and potatoes are a comfort food in these strange times. Potato chip sales have been strong as well - another impact of people hunkering down at home.

There is a strong focus at all government levels to support current movement of food as well as the food that will be produced on farms in PEI and across Canada in 2020. We have seen this in the swift action by governments to keep borders open for truck traffic, the designation of truck drivers and farm and food production workers as essential, and support for the movement of foreign agricultural workers. Information on these topics is changing all the time and we encourage all industry members to refer to the information link listed below to stay up to date.

We're also pleased that Minister Thompson went to bat for farmers and food producers in PEI and sought and obtained a waiver for our products from Quebec's spring weight restrictions. This harmonization of maximum allowable weights to match those of Ontario and the Atlantic provinces enables us to fully load trucks travelling to markets throughout Eastern Canada. This improves efficiency, lowers environmental impacts and means we can move product in and out of our region with less trucks. The waiver also includes inputs for food production, pharmaceuticals and medical and sanitation products.

When times get tough, our PEI Potato farm families come together to help our neighbours near and far who need it most. We'd like to send our gratitude and thanks to all of our farm workers, packers, dealers, shippers, industry colleagues, and truck drivers for their work during these times, ensuring families have safe and nutritious food on their tables.

PEI Potatoes Facebook Post, March 25, 2020

The industry has also had to deal with the need for family members and employees to self-isolate before returning to work if they have been away from PEI within the past fourteen days, and the overarching need to keep our families and our employees healthy so we can continue with the important occupation of food production - this includes farm workers, inspectors, packers, food processors, dealers, exporters

Find a list of links with the latest news and information about items involving COVID-19 that relate to your farm operation on our PEI Potato Agronomy Page:

<https://peipotatoagronomy.com/covid19/>

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and truckers as well as all of the input suppliers. We thank them all, as well as the other important people in our distribution channels such as those who work in grocery stores. Prime Minister Trudeau, federal Minister Bibeau and provincial Minister Thompson have all also pointed out the importance of farmers, farm workers and all those in the food chain, and the role they play in the vital business of providing food for Canadians.

Whether we like technology or not, we are all becoming more accustomed to attending web based conference calls, bookmarking links that will give us the latest information we need, doing online applications, etc. We are fortunate that we have these tools that enable us to maintain some sense of normalcy and business as usual in the face of this disruption to our

usual practices. It has also brought more attention to the need for better internet service in rural PEI as some parts of our province are quite underserved and struggle with slow speed/low bandwidth.

Planning for the future is difficult in times like these but we know that we need to plant a crop and produce a crop in anticipation of food needs for the coming year. It's hard to keep up with all the information and announcements, but both levels of government have put in tools to aid in business stability. Industry partners like the Canadian Horticultural Council, Canadian Produce Marketing Association and Canadian Federation of Agriculture have also assembled good information and up to date information can be found on our web page.

Board Representatives Meet with Canadian Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food

A group of Board staff and directors were pleased to meet with the federal Minister of Agriculture, the Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau, during her visit to Prince Edward Island on March 5-6, 2020. It was a welcome opportunity to brief the Minister on the importance of the potato industry to the PEI economy and the role our industry plays in a national context. There was also good discussion on the challenges and opportunities for our industry moving forward. Some of the topics covered during the time with the Minister included:

Market Access - the importance of Free Trade Agreements but the importance of resources to follow up on these agreements to secure favorable tariff rates and phytosanitary issues for potatoes.



PEI Potato Board Representatives met with federal Minister of Agriculture on March 6. Left to right: Greg Donald, General Manager of the PEI Potato Board; the Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau, Canadian Minister of Agriculture; Billy Cameron, Board Director; John Visser, Board Director; Mary Kay Sonier, Seed Coordinator with the PEI Potato Board; and Wayne Townshend, Vice Chairman of the PEI Potato Board. Photo: AAFC.

Environmental Issues - the need to support growers as they adapt to climate change and deal with the results of catastrophic weather events.

Transportation - the need for a secure and reliable transportation system.

CFIA Cost Recovery - the current situation and the impact future changes could have on our industry.

Agri-Stability - the Minister was thanked for the disaster funding received for the 2018 crop and Directors emphasized the need to return the AgriStability program to former levels as changes have reduced the effectiveness of this important part of the BRM suite of programs.

Research - the Minister was thanked for the investment in infrastructure and staff over the past few years at the Charlottetown Research Station and for support received for national research priorities via the Horticultural Research cluster funding that runs until March 2023.

Monthly Meetings with Minister of Agriculture

The Potato Board reached out to Minister Bloyce Thompson soon after his appointment as minister to ask if he would meet with Board representatives on a monthly basis to discuss issues and keep lines of communication open. Meetings were held at the Jones Building with the Minister and Deputy Minister Brian Matheson a few times before the Minister said he would much rather meet with farmers in their yards and buildings than in a boardroom.

The Board took him up on this and the first such meeting was held at the farm of Jason Hayden, Chairman of the Potato Board. An initial meeting was held between the Minister, his staff and the Potato Board executive and this was followed by a meeting with several growers from the surrounding area so that the Minister could get direct feedback on issues. The second meeting was held in West Prince at the farm of John Griffin, one of the Board directors from this area. The same format was followed. This type of meeting has been very beneficial in building relationships with the Minister and allowing farmers to directly express to him their concerns and know that he is willing to advocate for Island farmers.

Unfortunately, as so many things, these gatherings are now on hold during the pandemic but the lines of communication remain open and the meetings will resume once restrictions have been removed.

CHC Meeting Report

The last industry gatherings attended by Board staff and grower representatives before social distancing measures were put in place were the Canadian Potato Council meeting and the Canadian Horticultural Council (CHC) AGM in Ottawa from March 10-12, 2020.

The Canadian Potato Council meeting is one of three annual gatherings where representatives from the provincial potato associations meet face to face to discuss common issues and work together to address federal regulation and program changes as well as Canadian trade issues.

Some of the issues under discussion at this meeting included:

- updates from CFIA representatives on:
 - progress on PCN test requirement changes with the US;
 - market access for potatoes in various markets;
 - plans for modernization of the Seeds Act.
- a request from the PEI Potato Board that the current test market for a 2" round white grade be made permanent. A vote on this issue was postponed for a month to allow other provinces time to consult with

their members before taking a position.

- Requesting that the CFIA replace the test market mechanism for fresh fruit and vegetables that was removed when the Safe Foods For Canadians Act regulations came into force (see resolution below).
- An update on crop protectant re-evaluations ongoing with PMRA.

At the AGM itself resolutions are presented and voted on that will direct CHC staff operations for the next year. Two resolutions put forward by the PEI potato industry that were supported at the AGM were as follows:

#1 Resolution Title: Re-instatement of Test Market Authorizations for Fresh Fruit and Vegetables

Sponsor: Prince Edward Island Potato Board

WHEREAS the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Regulations(FFVR) of the former Canadian Agricultural Products Act contained provision 2.3 to allow for the granting of an exemption in order to test market products with respect to elements such as grades, packaging and labelling; and

WHEREAS those provisions were used regularly over the years by several commodities to determine the feasibility of new packaging, labelling and grade standards or to allow exemption from Regulations on a temporary basis (e.g. one-year); and

WHEREAS there were fifty (50) test markets in effect under the FFVR at the time of coming into force of the Safe Food for Canadians Regulations(SFFCR) and the repeal of the FFVR, many of which were then incorporated into the SFFCR based upon the test market having been deemed successful; and

WHEREAS when the SFFCR came into force, a new Test Market Authorization policy was put in place which the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) stated would apply to all foods; and

WHEREAS the potato industry sought to establish a test market in late summer, 2019 and then learned that the new



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test market authorization policy does not apply to fresh fruit and vegetables; and

WHEREAS test markets were an excellent means to determine whether a change to grades, packaging and labelling for fresh produce would work in the Canadian market, test market authorizations have now been eliminated without prior discussion with the fresh fruit and vegetable sector;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the CFIA work with the Canadian Horticultural Council to re-establish a test market authorization process in the next three months that will contribute to the competitiveness and economic well-being of the fresh fruit and vegetable sector in Canada.

#2 Resolution Title: Communication of CanadaGAP Audit Expectations

Sponsor: Prince Edward Island Potato Board

WHEREAS CanadaGAP is a Food Safety Program designed to help implement and maintain effective food safe procedures within fresh produce operations; and

WHEREAS CanadaGAP requirements are not always crystal clear to participants as they are open to interpretation; and

WHEREAS like many assurance programs, CanadaGAP is continually evolving as potential hazards are identified over time based on science and on situations that arise; and

WHEREAS CanadaGAP has a process by which audit expectations and program requirements are reviewed with audit certification bodies and, based on those discussions, direction and clarification is given as to how to audit and/or interpret particular situations and documentation requirements as they pertain to farmers and other participants in CanadaGAP; and

WHEREAS farmers and other participants currently do not have access to that information unless and until an auditor arrives on their farms/packing sheds and advises them that a particular element is being interpreted

differently going forward; and

WHEREAS being informed of this while an audit is underway can make an already stressful process more challenging for farmers and other participants, and does not strengthen confidence of the clients in the program;


THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that CanadaGAP promptly and clearly communicate to its clients (farmers and other participants) any such clarification or direction that it gives to the certification bodies so that all participants in CanadaGAP are working towards the same goal of achieving compliance with the program's requirements.

Intervenor status in Legal Proceedings


Following the notice of appeal by the federal prosecutor of Judge Nancy Orr's acquittal in the Skyview Farms case, the Potato Board made the decision to seek intervenor status for the appeal. In the original case, the defendant, Skyview Farms was acquitted when the judge rendered a decision that the federal environment enforcement officials had violated the Charter of Rights by entering the farm

property without a search warrant to gather samples that could be used to support future charges. If this decision is overturned on appeal it will affect all PEI potato farmers going forward so the Board decided it would be beneficial to have input into the appeal.


An application to act as an intervenor was made, and while Skyview Farms did not oppose the application, the federal prosecutor did. A hearing before Judge Gordon Campbell was held in February 2020. Board Assistant General Manager Brenda Simmons testified on behalf of the Board at the hearing and answered questions from the federal prosecutor as he challenged the Board's right to intervene. The Board was represented by Lynn Murray and Iain Campbell. At the present time we are awaiting the judge's decision on whether the Board's application will be approved or rejected.




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PEI Potato Expo



The 2020 edition of the International Potato Technology Expo welcomed professionals from across North America back to the Eastlink Centre in Charlottetown on Friday February 21 and Saturday, February 22. Presenting partners, Prince Edward Island Department of Agriculture and Land and the Prince Edward Island Potato Board, along with major sponsors, Farm Credit Canada and Syngenta were please to see over 3,000 attendees walking the show floor to check out diverse exhibits from local, regional, national, and international companies. Dozens of exhibitors at the show debuted cutting-edge and innovative products including new potato varieties, the latest models of equipment, innovative growing technology, and more.

Education sessions were held on Friday and Saturday morning and this year the cost of the sessions was included in the show registration. A wide range of topics were covered with both local and international speakers.

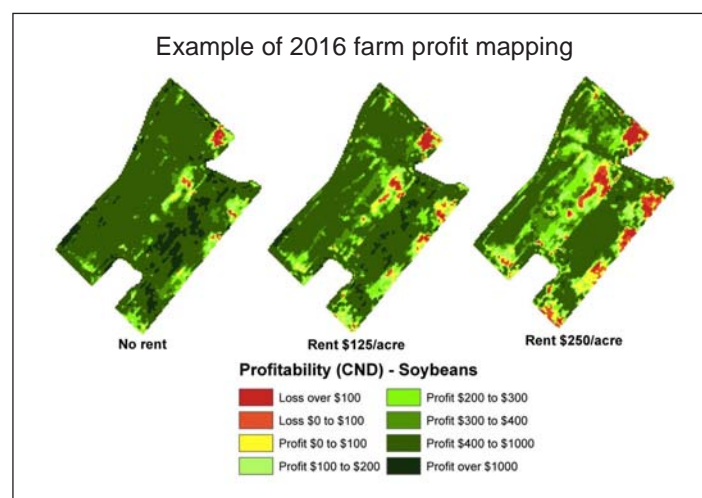
Profitability mapping with Precision Ag

Dr. Clarence Swanton, professor emeritus with the University of Guelph introduced the concept of profitability mapping using precision agriculture tools that many growers are already using. For example, many producers commonly use yield mapping technology. When low areas of production are identified the first response may be to look at opportunities to correct or manage low yielding

parts of the field such as:

- Water management
- Organic matter, soil type analysis
- Precision adjusted planting and nutrient applications to compensate for low yields

Yield maps can be combined with financial information to develop profitability maps.



If making changes to address low yield areas does not render them profitable, he asked “Can we divert these areas within a field to enhance diversity and conservation

while protecting farm profitability?”

Dr. Swanton continued that profitability mapping can serve as a management tool for farmers. He did however caution that there are barriers to adopting this type of strategy including the facts that conservation scenarios are highly field and farm specific; the land owner value system and rental agreements based on total field acres not profitable acres; and the need for farm organizations and governments to increase support for policies that encourage biodiversity. He concluded with the thought that if barriers can be overcome, then profitability mapping can be an important tool for the future to enhance: ecosystem stability through greater diversity; on farm profitability; and access to international markets.

Increasing Potato Yields with Precision Ag

The next speaker, Jacob Van Den Borne is a third generation farmer with fields on both sides of the Netherlands/Belgian border. He is known globally for his advanced use of Precision Agriculture on potatoes and other crops. His first comment was that his grandfather practiced precision farming by visiting his fields every day and keeping detailed notes of what he did each day and how it worked. That being said, although farming has changed, the advanced technology we have today is just a tool to help become a better farmer.

Jacob started using precision technology (for example using GPS equipment to prevent overlaps) in 2006 and in 2009 he advanced to precision farming, which he defines as the Right Time, the Right Place and the Right Application. He has spent the last decade adopting new technology and techniques and adapting these to his specific farming situation. He reviewed the type of data he collects over the course of the season and how the information is used to make his practices more efficient and profitable. These included a range of data collection methods that included yield maps, soil analysis, tracking tractor movement and fuel consumption, sensors on the sprayer, drones and thermal imaging. Some of the ways in which this information was used included variable rate compost, fertilizer, and spray application, variable rate planting; controlled traffic in the fields to reduce areas of compaction and irrigation scheduling. His presentation provided many ideas for ways in which PEI growers can advance the use of



Jacob Van Den Borne, of Van Den Borne Potatoes in the Netherlands runs through the Precision Agriculture applications he uses throughout the growing season. Photo: R. Barrett.

precision agriculture techniques on their farms.

Other presentations at the conference included a discussion of local variety trials and new varieties gaining in popularity by Mary Kay Sonier, Seed Coordinator at the PEI Potato Board, and Newton Yorinori, Director of Research at Cavendish Farms; “Attracting and Keeping Diverse Employees”, by Beth Connery, a farmer in the horticulture sector in Manitoba; and “Carbonomics”, a presentation comparing the interactions among carbon and soil health to the nature of a country’s economy made by Keith Berns, a farmer in Nebraska and founder of Green Cover Seeds in 2009, a company producing seed and seed mixes for cover crops.

The International Potato Technology Expo is North America’s leading potato event and takes place biennially in Charlottetown. The next edition will occur in 2022 and information will be posted online at www.PotatoExpo.ca as it becomes available.

Awards Banquet

The Industry Awards Banquet was held on Friday February 21 at the Top of the Park Restaurant at Red Shores. The Banquet is an opportunity for public recognition of those who contribute to the success of the Potato Board and the industry in general.

Several directors completed their terms on the Potato Board in 2019.



Beth Connery, a farmer from Manitoba, speaks about her experience in “Attracting and Keeping Diverse Employees.” Photo: Ryan Barrett.

Chairman Jason Hayden presented appreciation plaques to David Francis, retiring after serving two consecutive three year terms as Seed Director for the Summerside District and Rodney Dingwell, retiring after serving two consecutive three year terms as Processing Director for Montague-Souris District. Harris Callaghan, retiring Table Director for West Prince was also recognized but was unable to attend the event. Jason Hayden also received thanks and recognition for his time and efforts on behalf of PEI growers while serving as Chairman for the past year.

Industry Appreciation Awards were then presented to two well deserving individuals: Gary Linkletter, grower and former co-owner of Linkletter Farms who served as Board Chairman for several years and was a longtime PEI representative to the Canadian Horticultural Council; and Bert Carr who spent his career assisting growers through the crop input industry. Full citations are provided below. Congratulations and thank you to all these gentlemen who have contributed to the ongoing success of the PEI potato industry.



Above left to right: PEI Potato Board Chairman Jason Hayden welcomes guests to the 2020 Annual Industry Awards Banquet; Jason presents appreciation awards to retiring directors David Francis (centre) and Rodney Dingwell (right). Below left to right: Alvin Keenan and Jason Hayden present an Industry Appreciation Award to Gary Linkletter (center) which read "In appreciation and recognition for your contribution to our industry including outstanding leadership as director and chairman of the Prince Edward Island Potato Board and as a longstanding representative to the Canadian Horticultural Council"; Jason Hayden presents an Industry Appreciation Award to Bert Carr (centre) as Jason Webster (left) reads the citation: "In appreciation of your support and contribution to the Prince Edward Island potato industry through a career spent working with growers to help market their production and providing inputs and services to improve efficiency and profitability."





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Marketing Report

by Kaley MacDonald-Butler and Mark Phillips

The media plan for “It Takes An Island” is currently wrapping up its third in-market campaign. The campaign’s Fall session was October 10 to November 17, 2019 focusing on television broadcast, digital ads and social ads in Prince Edward Island. The campaign’s Winter session was January 20 to March 15, 2020 focusing on digital and social ads in Ontario, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland. The results for the Fall session are positive. Video viewership completion rate is up year over year which means increased brand exposure and consumption of the PEI Potato story. The Fall session had 1.6 million digital ad impressions, 30% increase of website usage over the previous session and strong engagement on social media channels like Facebook and Instagram. Complete results from Fall and Winter sessions to be provided in an upcoming volume of the magazine.

The public relations plan that coincides with the Winter session of the media plan has commenced in market. Lifestyle expert Janette Ewen is working with PEI Potatoes for a second year to promote the versatility and usage of potatoes in televised broadcast sessions across Canada. The Board is also working with social media influencers to promote potatoes and recipes to our target demographic. Results on the PR plan will also be provided in an upcoming volume of the magazine.

February was Potato Lovers Month, so with that the Board celebrated it by delivering a month long social media campaign. The campaign focused on a different topic each week: the ultimate sidekick, endless potato possibilities, all about lil’ spuds and thank our farmers. The results for the social campaign were positive with top engagement being in the Ontario market. Campaign reach was over 99,000 points of contact with users, there was over 35,000 video views and engagement was strong.

Due to COVID-19, we’ve had to postpone or delay some marketing efforts. The CPMA trade show to be hosted in Toronto May 12-14 has been cancelled for 2020. The

show will be held in Vancouver next year. Ag Adventures in Summerside and other Ag literacy month events have been cancelled for this year as schools close for COVID-19. Burger Love and our Frydays campaign has been pushed back until dining rooms reopen. We are holding off on our Brand Research project for the time being as we feel results would be skewed with current events. We are working hard to ensure we are prepared for when things return to normal.

We are trying to portray positive messaging to our social followers throughout these times. We’ve been focusing on recipes and food photos since people will have more time to prepare food. We’ve also shared kids recipes and activities, since most children are home from school and looking for things to do. We will continue to use our social channels to thank everyone involved in getting our potatoes to market.

In the early stages of COVID-19 demand for potatoes skyrocketed. Prior to this time, food service demand had been strong, while some consumer pack business had slowed. At the onset on social distancing, potatoes sales hit a record pace. Suddenly food service demand slowed, and consumer packs couldn’t move fast enough. From March 12- March 25, sales were almost 60% above the previous year. As consumers get stocked up there is expected to be a lull. We will likely see a volatile end to this shipping season as supply chains change to meet the new market situation.



Canadian Holdings as of March 1, 2020 ('000 cwt)

	<u>2016-17</u>	<u>2017-18</u>	<u>2018-19</u>	<u>2019-20</u>	19-20 vs. <u>18-19</u>
PEI	14,506	14,074	12,379	14,193	14.7%
New Brunswick	8,766	8,616	7,550	7,711	2.1%
Nova Scotia	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total Maritimes	23,272	22,690	19,929	21,904	9.9%
Quebec	5,602	5,702	5,281	5,698	7.9%
Ontario	2,200	2,941	2,570	2,724	6.0%
Total Eastern Canada (inc. Maritimes)	31,074	31,333	27,780	30,326	9.2%
Manitoba	11,458	10,977	8,640	8,974	3.9%
Saskatchewan	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Alberta	10,434	12,300	11,811	11,711	-0.8%
British Columbia	505	361	548	391	-28.6%
Total Western Canada	22,397	23,638	20,999	21,076	0.4%
CANADA TOTAL	53,471	54,971	48,779	51,402	5.4%

Prince Edward Island Disposition as of February 29, 2020 (cwt)

	<u>2016-17</u>	<u>2017-18</u>	<u>2018-19</u>	<u>2019-20</u>	19-20 vs. <u>18-19</u>
Production	25,723,000	24,463,000	22,600,000	25,200,000	11.5%
Canadian Shipments	1,369,042	1,320,086	1,347,678	1,401,231	4.0%
U.S. Shipments	1,745,776	1,679,408	1,327,112	1,368,780	3.1%
Export Shipments	561,238	409,152	556,518	509,496	-8.4%
Total Fresh	3,676,056	3,408,646	3,231,308	3,279,507	1.5%
Processing / Local Use	6,267,913	5,886,966	5,587,091	6,258,586	12.0%
Seed for Next Crop	0	0	0	0	
Cullage	1,273,400	1,093,488	1,402,164	1,468,445	4.7%
Total Disposition as of February 29	11,217,369	10,389,100	10,220,563	11,006,538	7.7%
Holdings at March 1	14,505,631	14,073,900	12,379,437	14,193,462	14.7%

Projected Utilization as of March 1, 2020 (cwt)

Fresh	3,423,312	3,276,370	2,512,287	3,311,201	31.8%
Processing	9,056,983	8,911,260	7,939,202	8,724,849	9.9%
Seed	2,025,338	1,886,270	1,927,948	2,157,412	11.9%

Processing Contract Talks in North America

by Scott Howatt. Processing Coordinator

Contract negotiations across North America in 2020 were set to become game-changing settlements for processing growers prior to February. Up until then, sales of finished frozen potato products in food service and retail had been gaining year-over-year, both domestically and off-shore. In the past three years, all four of the major fry processors had completed major plant expansions in the PNW, Alberta and Manitoba, investing hundreds of millions into innovation and increased production. The supply of high-quality processing potatoes across North America was tight (and still is) caused by major potato crop losses in North Dakota and Manitoba and other setbacks in marketable yields in Alberta's and Idaho's harvest. In addition, some growing districts in the Atlantic Northeast battled significant storage losses and harvested crops with below average quality parameters. All these factors of supply and demand encouraged growers across the continent to aim their negotiations towards much-needed, major increases to their pre-season contracts with the goals of offsetting their ever-escalating costs of production and addressing the high level of risk that exists in growing potatoes in the US and Canada.

As grower representatives brought their expectations of fairness to the tables in their respective Provinces and States, they found their processors reluctant to negotiate in most jurisdictions. Growing areas which would normally have contract settlements in place before February were still in talks with their fryers by mid-March. At the time of print, there are only four agreements in place across North America and two of those are the second year of a two-year deal in North Dakota. Since the majority of parties and areas are still in the midst of talks it would be inappropriate to publish any values at this time. In the next edition of The Potato News, when settlements are completed, we will give a report on the gains achieved.

Right now all sectors of the industry are dealing with changes taking place as a result of COVID-19. There are disruptions and uncertainty in the supply chains for all types of potatoes - french fries, chips and fresh potatoes - and food service and restaurants vs supermarket retail.

In these uncertain times, it is more important than ever for growers to plan prudently and only plant potato acres which go to a secure and profitable market; emphasis on the profitable.



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PEI Soil Conservationist of the Year Awards

Cash Crop Division -

Jonathan and Katie MacLennan, along with their son Gabriel, are MacLennan Properties Ltd of West Cape. This farm family's speciality is potatoes, producing 700 acres annually. Jonathan and Katie farm together as a couple; Jonathan has farmed for 27 years and he is the next generation farmer following after his father Laurids and mother Alma MacLennan.

In the MacLennan's crop rotation they have potato, barley, and alfalfa crops. If fields are in need of soil health improvements, or are small in size, then they will go with potato, under seeded sorghum sudan grass and alfalfa.

They have numerous features in permanent grass vegetation, controlling the runoff from fields and providing filtering of sediments as water moves across the landscape. They have also completed a hedgerow demonstration and evaluation project with the Eastern Canada Soil and Water Conservation Centre, reduced their tillage intensity, plus increased the amount of spring plowing they do, work with the 4R Fertility Program through Steve Watts to advance their nutrient management target and they have made use of a new blight model forecasting service that uses local weather data to predict blight conditions.

Jonathan and Katie are involved in many organizations in their community and in agriculture. "As a very successful family farm, MacLennan Properties Ltd. of West Cape, PEI is dedicated to growing economic opportunities in rural PEI, in a sustainable fashion", says John Hooper, President PEI Soil and Crop Improvement Association (PEISCIA).

Livestock Division -

Oceanbrae Farms Ltd is a milking shorthorn and beef operation of Fred and Margaret Barrett; and Matthew and Chandler Barrett. Milking 70 dairy cows requires well managed forage and field crop production to keep them all fed and happy. Crops produced on their 600 acre land base include 50 acres of small grain cereals, 60 acres of silage corn, 70 acres of pasture and 295 acres of forage, mainly alfalfa.

The Barrett family has considerable soil conservation and environmental enhancement measures in place on many of their farms to control water flow, protect sensitive areas and reduce soil erosion. Strip cropping is in place to reduce wind erosion for three fields that are exposed to northerly winds. Seventeen grass waterways (16,000 feet in length) handle concentrated flow of water on their fields. Nine expanded buffer zones, encompassing 16 acres of former farm land, are permanent features on the farm. Manure is applied in the early spring season before the planting of cereals and corn; and most times the manure is incorporated into the soil within two days. Most of the manure resources goes to the corn production year of the rotation but all fields receive manure from 240 head of cattle every 2 to 3 years.

"As a successful agri-business, Fred, Margaret, Matthew, and Chandler Barrett of Oceanbrae Farms Ltd. incorporates a strong work ethic with a strategic vision to the promising future of agriculture on Prince Edward Island", says John Hooper, President of PEISCIA.



John Hooper (left) and Mark Grimmet (right) present the Soil Conservationist of the Year Award for the Cash Crop Division to Kate MacLennan of MacLennan Properties. Photos: Tyler Wright.



John Hooper (left) and Premier of PEI Dennis King (right) present the Soil Conservationist of the Year Award for the Livestock Division to Matthew and Fred Barrett (center left to right) of Oceanbrae Farms.

2019 PEI Industry Variety Trial

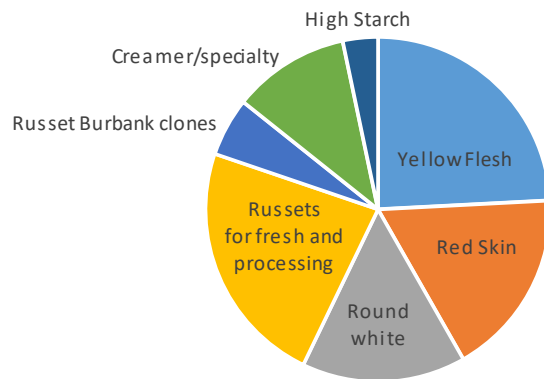
by Mary Kay Sonier, Seed Coordinator

The Canadian Agri-Science Cluster for Horticulture 3 is funded jointly by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and various players in the potato industry. An ongoing and important part of the research cluster is the variety evaluation project which includes Industry Potato Variety Trials in PEI and other participating provinces. In PEI, this trial is at the later stages of the process outlined in Figure 1 showing how a new line moves from the original cross through the evaluation process to commercial adoption. Many lines are weeded out along the way.

The PEI trial is organized by the PEI Potato Board and the trial is grown and managed at the AAFC Harrington Research Station by Biologist David Main and his team. Entries of advanced breeding lines and newly available varieties are solicited from the AAFC Potato Breeding Program and private variety agents.

The purpose of the industry trial is to look at new varieties (many that have been bred in regions with growing conditions different from PEI) and advanced breeding lines

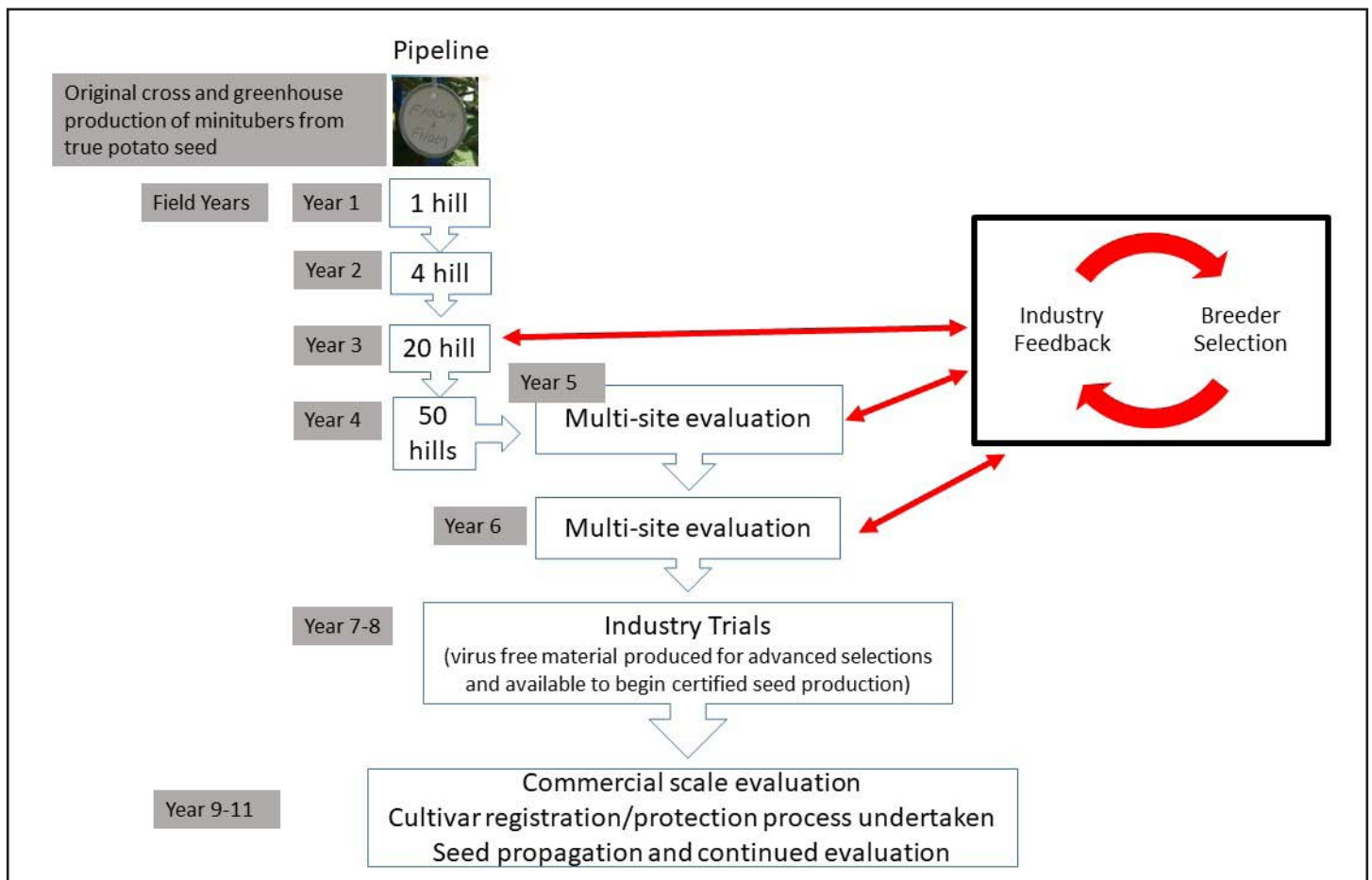
Figure 2. Lines Tested in PEI Industry Trial by Category since 2014



to see how they perform under local growing conditions.

While lines suitable for all sectors are accepted into the trial, the main focus is on varieties for the fresh market so that we minimize duplication of evaluation work being carried out by processing companies.

Figure 1. Schematic showing an example of the process (and time frame) new potato varieties may go through for evaluation and seed multiplication before they are widely available for commercial use. (Schematic template provided by AAFC).





Some promising entries from the 2019 PEI Industry Trial include (clockwise from top left): AR2018-11 - a selection from the AAFC breeding program - a red skin, pale yellow flesh creamer variety; SF Vario - a European variety from Real Potatoes - an early maturing, yellow flesh potato with reported resistance to PVY, PLRV and scab; Payette Russet from PVMI - a late maturing russet for processing with good resistance to virus and cold sweetening resistance; and Bridget - a good yielding medium-early processing variety from Parkland Seed Potatoes.

During the trial, lines are evaluated during the growing season for emergence, vigor, maturity, and any notable disease, pest or environmental condition (such as drought) tolerance or susceptibility. After harvest, lots are graded for size using an optical grader, specific gravity measures are taken and tubers are evaluated for overall appearance and internal defects.

A full report on the annual trial is prepared and distributed to those who have submitted entries, to local growers through presentations at winter meetings and articles such as this one and to the Canadian Industry through the Canadian Agri-Science Cluster for Horticulture 3 project reporting system as well as through the Canadian Horticultural Council website (www.hortcouncil.ca). Anyone wishing a full copy of the 2019 trial report can contact the PEI Potato Board office at (902) 892-6551 or potato@peipotato.org.



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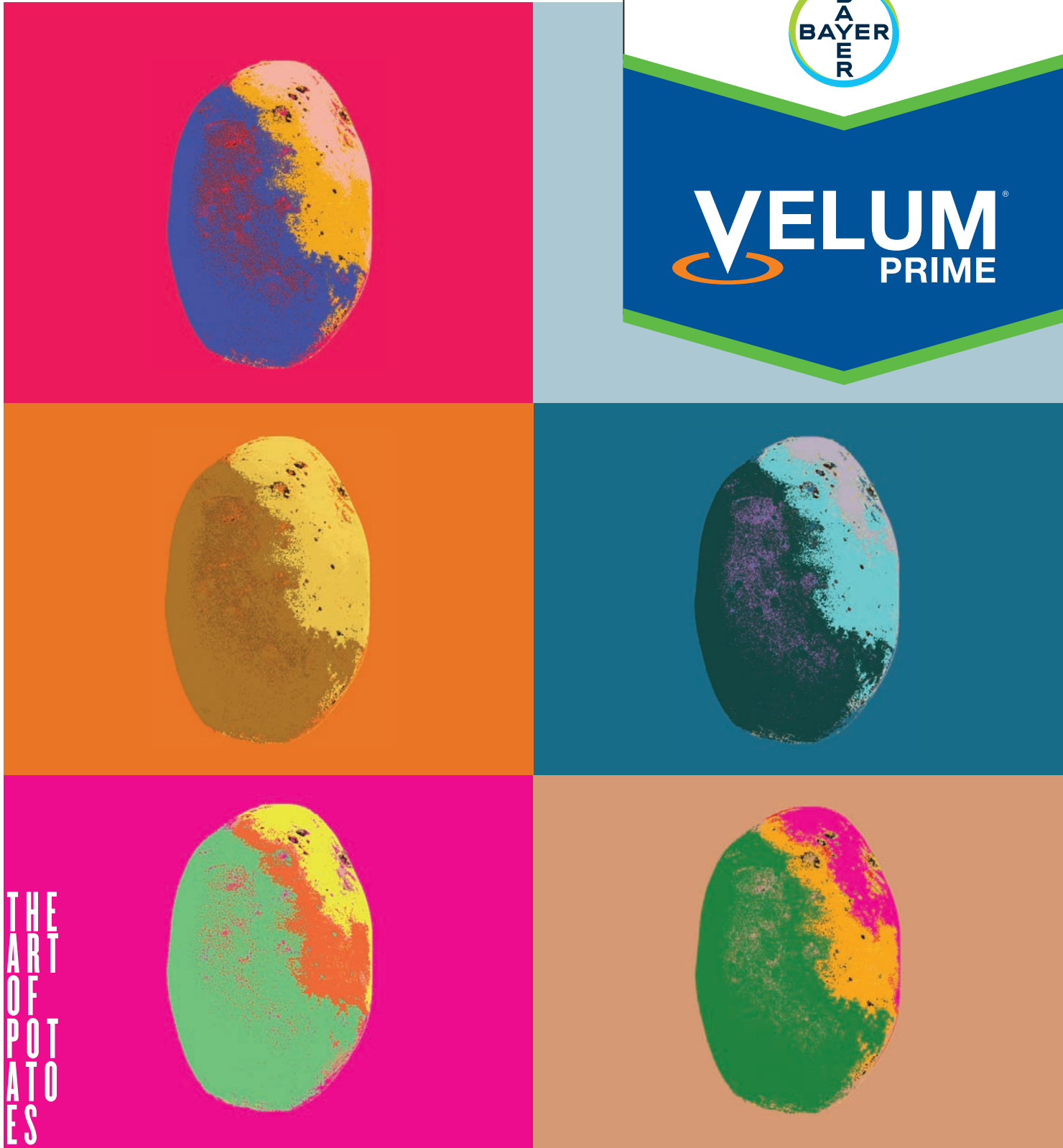
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AIM Workshops

By Ryan Barrett, Research & Agronomy Coordinator

It seems like a long time ago already, but back in the days when in-person meetings were still happening AIM held two more series of local workshops with growers and industry partners in Emerald, Mill River and Montague. These meetings were very well attended, as the guest speakers that we were able to procure spoke on topics of high interest to many farmers here in Prince Edward Island. After guest speakers at both meetings, Ryan Barrett was able to share the results of recent AIM trials.

On February 12th and 13th, Russell Jonk spoke on the subject of seed production, and in particular, seed sizing/grading technology. Russell is a partner in Swansfleet Alliance, a family-run seed and processing potato farm in south central Manitoba. They grow approximately 1,000 acres of seed and 1,000 acres of processing varieties. Russell provided an overview of their farm, potato farming in Manitoba, some of the challenges they face, and how they are adapting practices to meet those challenges.

Some of the key points that generated significant discussion with growers at all three meetings:

- A provincial seed price, based off of the processing contract value with a multiplier.
- Grading technology that allows for more seed sizing, custom cutting, and differential pricing for whole seed.
- Use of 1,4 DMN for sprout inhibition in seed and

using this product to raise storage temperatures slightly before cutting.

- Use of spray nozzles on seed cutters providing continuous disinfection of knives to prevent seed-borne disease spread (ie. blackleg).
- Use of self-propelled diggers and carts for their seed acres.
- The use of bed planting for seed acres to increase plant population.

On March 12th and 13th, Peter Johnson (pictured below) spoke with growers on the subject of soil compaction. "Wheat Pete" is now an independent agronomist in Southern Ontario, after retiring from OMAFRA as the cereals specialist, and he is also a regular contributor to Real Agriculture and RealAg Radio. Peter shared with growers how serious soil compaction can be and how it is caused. He was able to show examples of both short term and long term yield reductions from compaction and how we are often limited in how we can reverse compaction. It's important to find ways to prevent compaction where possible and then look at mitigation (deep tillage, rotation crops) afterward. A significant part of the presentation was on how heavy machinery weights and high tire pressures are contributing to compaction in different ways. High tire pressure is generally associated with surface compaction (in the primary root zone) while weight per axle is associated with deep compaction, which is harder to fix. There was lots of discussion about the optimum use of subsoiling (in dry conditions, in a growing crop), which crops can help

mitigate compaction (such as alfalfa), and the use of central tire inflation systems (CTIS) to adjust between highway and field appropriate tire pressures.

Slide decks from both workshops are available on the PEI Potato Agronomy website, and a video of the soil compaction presentation in March is available on YouTube (linked on the website).



Preparing for Lands Protection Act Consultations

by Mary Kay Sonier

Prince Edward Island is unique in Canada, not just because it is the smallest province, but because such a high percentage of its land base (88%) is privately owned. In other provinces, crown land percentage ranges from a low of 29% in neighbouring Nova Scotia to over 80% in several of the larger provinces such as Ontario, Quebec and British Columbia. PEI has had some form of legislation limiting land ownership since 1875. Currently, the Province regulates property rights on PEI, especially the amount of land that may be held by a person or a corporation, through the Lands Protection Act (LPA). The LPA pulled all land legislation together in 1982. The purpose of this Act is to provide for the regulation of property rights on PEI, including the amount of land that may be held by a person or corporation. The circumstances behind this include:

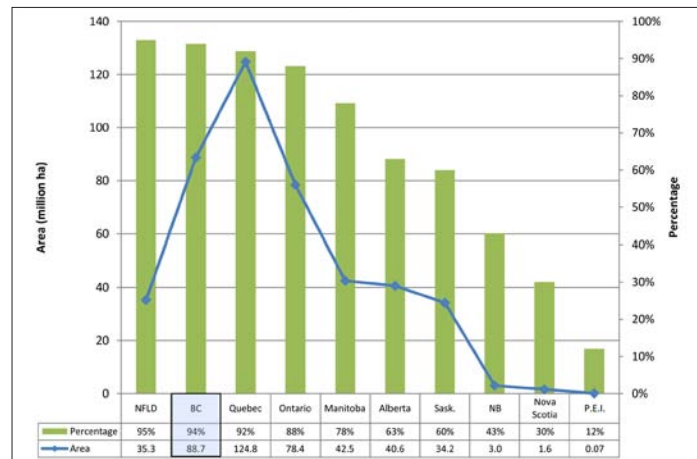
- Historical difficulties with absentee land owners;
- PEI's small land area and comparatively high population density; and
- The fragile nature of PEI's ecology, environment and lands and the need for stewardship of these resources.

When you also consider factors such as the long fight in the 1800's to give tenants the right to purchase the land they farmed, the fact that much of PEI's economy is reliant upon agriculture, which needs an adequate land base, and tourism, which exploits the natural and pastoral beauty of PEI, as well as the need for sustainable development going forward, it is no wonder that land ownership remains a contentious subject in PEI.

The Provincial Government has made it known that they will be overhauling the Lands Protection Act in 2020. Since the LPA was first enacted in 1982 there have been rounds of public hearings with minor changes made to the legislation, and much discussion and study on how to balance the rights of the individual and protection of land for public good. The recommendations from the PEI Report of the Commission on Land and Local Governance in 2009 and the Report of the Commission on the Lands Protection Act in 2013 are referenced often when future changes are discussed.

According to provincial statistics, the Island has a total

Figure 3 Provincial Crown Land in Each Canadian Province



Source: Data for all provinces (except BC) from Environment Canada, *The State of Canada's Environment*, 1996. Data for BC calculated with support from Integrated Registry Branch, Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations

Table from the *British Columbia Crown Land: Indicators and Statistics Report 2010*.

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of 1.4 million acres and farms represent about 42.5% of this total land area (594,324 acres). Farmers have an important role to play in the upcoming consultations. In February, the PEI Federation of Agriculture sent a survey to all of its members to ensure the position the organization takes is comprehensive and truly reflective of their views - the grass roots membership. Questions covered the topics of:


- Purpose and Intent of Land Legislation
- Land Limits
- Enforcement and Administration
- Crop Rotation
- Sale of Land
- New Farm Entrants
- Land Zoning and Development
- Stewardship and Sustainability

Consultation meetings were planned to discuss the survey and to assist the Federation to formulate a position for the upcoming consultations with the government. Unfortunately due to the COVID-19 health measures these meetings have been delayed.

Potato farmers are members of the Federation of Agriculture and have been a part of the Working Group that the Federation has formed to take the lead on this issue. The Potato Board has also struck a committee to help develop

input on behalf of our industry, and has been working closely with the Federation to ensure that potato grower interests are fully captured in the Federation position on this topic. The Potato Board, along with the Federation, will be taking part in the government consultation process once it resumes but individual farmers are also strongly encouraged to participate. If you have any suggestions on this important issue, please contact your Board director or the Board office.






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Fruit Logistica 2020

by Ellen Kouwenberg, Export Development Consultant

Potatoes Canada, a project which represents licensed exporters from the provinces of Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick and Alberta, provides a resource for our exporters who market potatoes in Canada, the United States, and around the world. We work with federal and provincial officials on initiatives that support the sustainability and success of our exporters and the industry as a whole.

Participation in Fruit Logistica, the world's largest trade show for the fresh fruit and vegetable sector, has been a major step in achieving our outreach objectives. The Potatoes Canada consultant linked up with exhibitors from across Canada, and worked together over the past few months to ensure a formal and visible Canadian presence at the show via a Canadian pavilion. A pavilion enables the inclusion of meeting room space for our exporters to set up onsite meetings with potential buyers.

It should be noted that there is no formal federal presence in this show, but we were able to work with the Canadian Consulate in Berlin and it had a representative on site for the duration of the show. The presence of Nora Gruetters, Canadian Trade Commissioner in Berlin, adds strength and value to the Canadian presence at this show and provides on-site supports for our exporters. Using Fruit Logistica as the anchor, the Potatoes Canada export representatives are given exposure to leading edge technological advancements in the potato grading and packaging sectors allowing them to remain competitive as they are better able to speak to the packaging trends in North America and the world.

Objectives:

- Promote and raise/renew awareness of the Canadian Potato Industry in the international marketplace.
- Identify new market opportunities for Canadian seed and fresh potatoes and processed potato product.
- Gather information, based upon respective government regulations, on the process to evaluate and trial Canadian potato varieties in market countries as well as gain information on official country specific variety registration databases.

- Identify market constraints and barriers related to the importation of Canadian potatoes into new market countries and developing markets.
- Explore new production, seed varieties, and technological advances which may be on the horizon as a demanded method by their customers ensuring understanding and adaptability.
- To meet with existing customers and international contacts to discuss changes happening within the global potato industry and how industries must adapt.

FRUIT LOGISTICA Berlin is the largest fruit and vegetable trade show in the world. It covers every single sector of the fresh produce business and provides a complete picture of the latest innovations, products and services at every link in the international supply chain. It thus offers superb networking and contact opportunities to the key decision-makers in every sector of the industry.



The Potatoes Canada booth was staffed by representatives from the three participating provinces (left to right): Paul Sawatzky, Parkland Seed Potatoes, AB; Brian Adams, Hillsdale Farms, NB; Ingham Jenkins, D.I Jenkins & Assoc., PEI; and Ellen Kouwenberg, Potatoes Canada Export Consultant.

Despite the unique challenge presented by this year's coronavirus outbreak in China, the event once again set the gold standard as a platform for networking and marketing, bringing together a record number of over 3,300 exhibitors as well as more than 72,000 trade visitors from all over the world.

As one might expect for an event with such an extensive global reach, there was intense media attention on FRUIT LOGISTICA 2020 as it got underway. Travel restrictions on visitors and exhibitors from China, combined with understandable concerns among others planning to attend, certainly slowed down the exhibition's recent growth. Clear communication in the days prior to the show and additional security measures on site did a lot to boost confidence. All visitors were asked to provide a declaration prior to entrance that they provided no risk of carrying the coronavirus and had no symptoms of being unwell.

With around 85% of exhibitors coming from outside Germany to take part, this year's exhibition helped more companies than ever before to establish new contacts and develop new supply partnerships.

For Potatoes Canada, Fruit Logistica, 2020 was an excellent venue to promote and showcase the Canadian industry, raise brand awareness and offer an opportunity for the Canadian potato industry exporters to explore the trends and innovation in production and packaging. It was a great opportunity for PC delegates to interact with customers across the globe and determine how best to approach their growth strategies.

Inquiries for fresh & seed potatoes were made from various countries including, Malaysia, Vietnam, Spain, Egypt, Portugal, Greece, Barbados, USA, Algeria as well as officials involved in variety development and registration.

PC delegates assisted the Export Development Coordinator in fielding these inquiries and a number of business-to-business meetings were held over the three day event. The PC consultants and embassy posts have been fielding inquiries with licensed in-country importers post-show.

Throughout the three day trade show, a number of inquiries regarding Canadian potato varieties were received. European breeders visited the booth, some of whom have existing relationships with PC exporters. Networking with these breeders is important to expanding our global reach.

PC reps were also pleased to meet up with business associates and customers at the fair, allowing representatives an opportunity to share ideas on what they are seeing at FL. This included such folks as representatives from Canadian Produce Marketing Association and Dispute Resolution Corporation reps, as well as transportation and logistics

companies and Potato Association members from various countries.

The Potatoes Canada booth and Canadian Pavilion at Fruit Logistica, 2020 provided an excellent venue to promote the Canadian industry to the international marketplace. The expertise and experience of the delegates in product, price and logistics provided a strong professional cohesive environment, with each of the delegates having a speciality and knowledge of specific pieces of the potato industry and the markets they service.

There was a wide range of companies exhibiting innovative packaging, and quality control products and systems, in particular, an effort to separate themselves from the plastics packaging industry. This show is where the world comes to showcase the most advanced technology. If businesses from Canada wish to be part of the same playing field as our world competitors, Fruit Logistica is the place to find out how to get to and stay at the top.

A "store tour" was arranged again for this year providing an opportunity for participants to see product displays and packaging. This walking tour was laid out with the start point being the delegate's hotel and included the top chains in Europe. It provided opportunity for Canadian delegates to visit local market chains to view product, display units and consumer trends in the German marketplace. By providing the tour map prior to travel, participants could do this on any free time available if they were not able to participate in the full week events.

Follow-up with the commercial contacts made at the trade show have been strong post-show. All contacts were sent a personal thank you for visiting the booth. Those who have responded have been provided with the list of exporters from PEI, NB and Alberta and advised to reach out to those exporters to meet their specific needs.

Funding partners of the Potatoes Canada project include the Government of Canada through the AgriMarketing Program, the Potato Growers of Alberta, Potatoes New Brunswick, the PEI Potato Board, the NB Department of Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries and the PEI Department of Agriculture and Land.



An Update From the:

PEI Department of Agriculture and Land

by Lorraine MacKinnon, Potato Industry Coordinator



Daily life on PEI and on your farms is drastically different today compared to my last article. The PEI Department of Agriculture & Land is working under altered conditions, but still committed to delivering the programs and services that growers expect. Thank you for your patience and understanding during this time. I know that all farmers are struggling with uncertainty, concern about employees, and general stress. Please keep in touch during this time, and remember that the Farmer Assistance Program 1-800-736-8006 is available for farmers, farm families and farm employees.

2020 Wireworm Workshop Webinar

In light of COVID-19 concerns, the 2020 Wireworm Workshop was delivered through an online live webinar. Well over 100 people tuned in, and the Wireworm Working Group is highly appreciative of your continued interest and flexibility under the current circumstances. Ryan Barrett has uploaded the presentations onto the PEI Potato Agronomy site, and the webinar can be viewed anytime on Youtube, at


https://youtu.be/jZpzJ_ZQ4U8

2019 Click Beetle Survey

For the past decade, a Click Beetle survey has been conducted every 3-4 years to monitor the population and species dynamics of the adult stage of the wireworm. In 2019, the PEI Department of Agriculture & Land conducted the survey; under the expertise and guidance of Christine Noronha at AAFC, and through funding made possible by the Canadian Horticulture Council's Cluster Funding program.

The results of the 2019 Click Beetle Survey were encouraging. The Island as a whole has seen a substantial drop in the number of click beetles trapped, however, while overall numbers are lower than in 2016, they are still higher than 2012. So we have certainly seen an encouraging population decline; but we must not become complacent. Continued wireworm IPM practices, research and solutions development is crucial.

Watch for full details from the survey in the next issue of *PEI Potato News*.



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PMRA Update

Health Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency regularly assesses the human health and environmental risks of pest management products, and PMRA also undertakes reviews when new information comes to light that indicates an elevated risk.

Several active ingredients used by PEI potato farmers have been under re-evaluation, or special review. Some changes will come into place for 2020, and the industry awaits decisions on several products as well. What follows is a summary of some major changes that are a result of past decisions, but it's important for applicators to read all labels; including NEW labels, to fully understand these changes.

Important Label Changes for 2020:

Chlorothalonil (Bravo, Echo, Ridomil Gold Bravo, Tattoo C, Elixir):

- Maximum of 3 applications per season in potatoes;
- Lengthened re-entry Intervals – scouting 3 days; roguing 21 days;
- Additional requirements for personal protective equipment (PPE).

Metiram (Polyram, Cabrio Plus):

- Maximum of 3 applications and 1.4kg/ha per season;
- Lengthened re-entry intervals;
- Additional requirements for PPE.
- NOTE: The manufacturer is discontinuing metiram. Final date of use is June 21, 2021.

Products currently under review or re-evaluation for which final decisions are expected later this year include:

- Mancozeb (Dithane, Manzate, Penncozeb, etc)
- Clothianidin (Titan, Poncho)
- Imidacloprid (Admire, Alias, Gaucho, Clutch)
- Thiamethoxam (Actara, Cruiser Max, Cruiser 5S)
- Lambda-cyhalothrin (Matador, Silencer)

- Linuron (Lorox)
- Thiophanate methyl (Senator)

For these products, the most restrictive potential decision is cancellation in potatoes. We do not know what the final decisions will be, but applicators should be prepared for the possibility of losing access to one or more of the products listed above. Keep in mind that when products are cancelled, they are phased out gradually; usually over a period of 24 months. The most up to date information I have today indicates growers can still use all products listed above for the 2020 growing season.

Growers often ask what they can do to keep pest management tools registered. Industry organizations such as the PEI Potato Board provide tremendous amount of information to PMRA when pesticide consultations are underway, and growers are invited to provide their individual feedback as well.

It is also important to ensure that label directions are followed completely, including label changes mentioned above for lengthened re-entry intervals, additional PPE and maximum applications per season. When doing re-evaluations, PMRA may conclude that the label recommendations are not commonly followed, in which case they would assume higher risk to either human or environmental health. This could result in future cancellation of pest control products.

The good news is that the potato industry will be able to adapt to the loss of certain pest control products through innovations in integrated pest management, such as disease forecasting, precision agriculture, and the continued development of pest resistant varieties.

Thanks to you and your farm employees for continuing to provide Canadians with food on our plates. Good luck in the upcoming planting season, and stay safe and healthy.

BACK TO PROMO BASICS

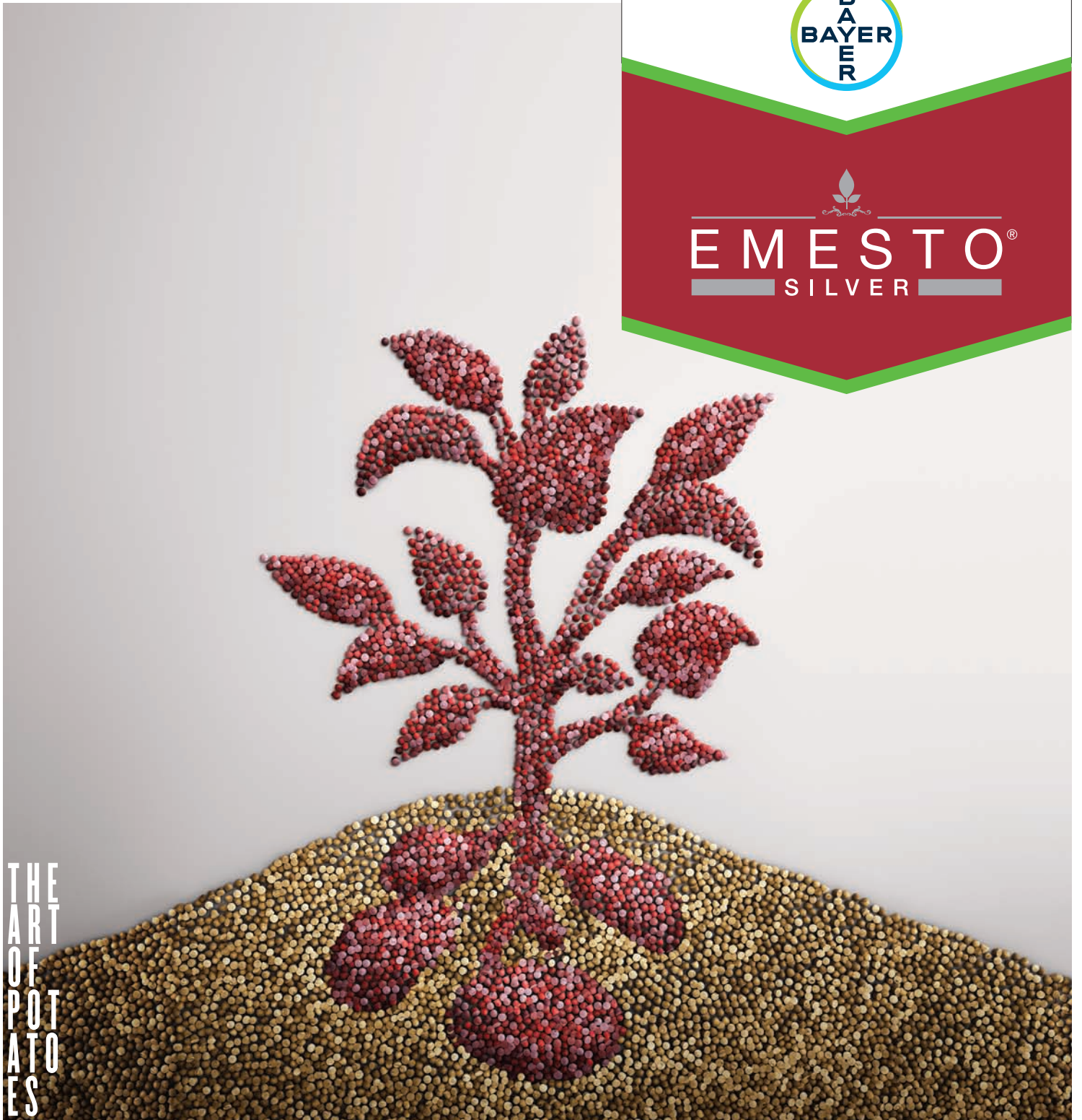
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INDUSTRY UPDATES

2020 Gordon and Sandra Sobey Agriculture Awareness Award

Charlottetown, PE, January 31, 2020 – Since 1993, Gordon and Sandra Sobey along with the PEI Federation of Agriculture have presented an Agriculture Awareness Award in recognition of outstanding efforts in projecting a positive image of agriculture on Prince Edward Island.

This year's recipient is Vanco Farms Ltd. Vanco Farms Ltd. specializes in growing specialty potatoes, organic potatoes, premium cut tulips, and tulip bulbs. The potato operation is family owned and operated by three brothers; Willem, Rit, and Phillip VanNieuwenhuyzen and the tulip operation is owned and operated by Bas Arendse. Together, along with family and many dedicated staff members, they encompass Vanco Farms Ltd.

The VanNieuwenhuyzen family have deep roots in the



Gordon Sobey, right, presents the Gordon and Sandra Sobey Agriculture Awareness Award to Rit VanNieuwenhuyzen of Vanco Farms.

agriculture industry in PEI and Holland, with their families growing various crops which included potatoes and tulips. In 1982, the VanNieuwenhuyzen family moved to Prince Edward Island and purchased a mixed farm. 2001 was the beginning of the current generation, as brothers Willem, Rit, and Phillip took over the family farm and changed the focus to growing organic, specialty potatoes, and tulips.

Over the years they have done countless amounts of farm and greenhouse tours and each spring they allow the public to visit and take photos of their tulip fields. Vanco Farms Ltd. is active on social media and knows how important it is to share photos and info of their farm to be honest and transparent to consumers. Vanco Farms Ltd. projects a positive image of agriculture on PEI by keeping followers informed online and opening up their farm for consumers to get a first-hand view of an island farm.

The VanNieuwenhuyzen's have strong family values and know how important it is to educate the next generation on how food gets from farm to table. They have hosted Farm & Food Care PEI's second annual Breakfast on the Farm on August 3rd, 2019 which brought in a crowd of 1,000 people. Vanco Farms Ltd. is also very community orientated and supports "Tulips for the QEH" annually which sells bouquets of tulips with all proceeds being donated to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Foundation to help raise money to update essential equipment.

The owners and staff of Vanco Farms Ltd understand important public outreach is and has completed outstanding efforts in projecting a positive image of agriculture on PEI. They are a very deserving recipient of the 2020 Gordon and Sandra Sobey Agriculture Awareness Award.

Media contact: Robert Godfrey, Executive Director, PEI Federation of Agriculture, 902-368-7289, rgodfrey@peifa.ca

New Resource Gives Island Farming Community More Mental Health Support

January 31, 2020 - Prince Edward Island's farmers and their families have a new resource to help them deal with the mental and emotional stress that can come with farming life.

The new website www.farmerstalk.ca encourages farmers, producers and family members to open up about the challenges they face, to support each other and to reach out for help with any mental health struggles they may be dealing with. The site reminds farmers that they are not

alone and includes personal messages about mental health, links to support services and advice on how farmers can take care of their mental health before it becomes a crisis.

Agriculture and Land Minister Bloyce Thompson launched the website today at the annual meeting of the PEI Federation of Agriculture.



Hon. Bloyce Thompson, PEI Minister of Agriculture and Land

"I can tell you from my experience and from the lives of those around me, farming can be a stressful way to make a living. Too many of our friends and colleagues wrestle alone with anxiety, depression and isolation. We want to open up conversations about mental health and farming. There are people who care and services available to help." - Hon. Bloyce Thompson

Farmers and those that support them are encouraged to visit the FarmersTalk.Ca site, download the talk bubble(link is external) to spark conversation and post social media messages of support using the hashtag #FarmersTalk.

FarmersTalk.Ca was developed by the Department of Agriculture and Land in cooperation with Island farm organizations, and provincial mental health services.

New Minister of Environment Announced

Natalie Jameson, member of the Legislative Assembly for Charlottetown-Hillsborough Park, was appointed as Minister of Environment, Water and Climate Change during a ceremony at Government House on February 21, 2020. The appointment is intended to put a further emphasis on efforts to conserve the environment and adapt to climate change while delivering on a commitment to building a stronger, healthier province for Islanders.

Natalie Jameson is an energetic, community-minded, proud mother of two young boys. Ms. Jameson attended local schools and later both Holland College and the University of Prince Edward Island, studying business and tourism.

After graduating from UPEI in 2009, Natalie moved west like many young Islanders and spent several years in Calgary working in professional roles primarily in the areas of community investment, human resources, and accounting.

She is a dedicated volunteer having left her mark on charities and not-for-profits across Canada, including women's shelters, the United Way, and the Ronald McDonald House.

In addition, Minister Jameson will also serve as Minister responsible for Status of Women and Minister responsible for Charlottetown, working closely with her Cabinet and caucus colleagues to fulfil government's priorities of people, communities, wellness and the environment.



Government of Canada Research Investment to Help Manage Costly Potato Disease

March 11, 2020 – Ottawa, ON – Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada - The Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food spoke to growers from across the country at the Canadian Horticultural Council AGM today in Ottawa and announced a federal investment of over \$2.3 million to support the Canadian Horticultural Council's research into managing the Potato Early Dying (PED) disease. The horticulture sector contributed an additional \$991,918 towards this research, for a total investment of over \$3.3 million. The purpose of the project is to provide potato growers with the knowledge, tools and technologies they need to manage Potato Early Dying, which results in premature aging, limiting potato yield by as much as 50 per cent. As part of the project, the Canadian Horticulture Council will survey potato fields to determine the levels of PED and evaluate the control of PED through growers' cropping systems, best management practices and control products. With this new funding, the federal government has invested a total of \$13.8 million in Canada's horticulture research cluster, which is giving farmers cutting-edge technologies and practices for better pest management, better handling of produce, and improved soil health. The research cluster is also developing new sustainable practices to reduce the environmental footprint as well as new crop varieties to keep our growers competitive. In her speech, Minister Bibeau expanded on her Government's plan to support growers and help them grow their businesses. Beyond the significant investments into research and science, this includes helping farmers get the qualified workers they need in a more timely way. It also includes working with the provinces and territories to improve our business risk management programs, and helping producers take full advantage of all the market opportunities that have resulted from the Government's strong agenda for trade.

AAFC Researcher is Inspiring the Future Crop of Women in Science

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) scientist, Dr. Judith Nyiraneza, recalls her desire to analyze and learn more about the things around her began at a young age. She credits her mentors during postgraduate studies for fueling her passion for science, which has helped propel her career to becoming co-leading scientist of the innovative Living Lab – Atlantic initiative.

Dr. Nyiraneza joined AAFC in 2005 as a doctoral student in Quebec City, followed by two and a half years as a postdoctoral fellow, and as research scientist in 2012 at Charlottetown Research and Development Centre. Since then, she has been determined in her pursuit to identify strategies to enhance soil health and to increase nitrogen and phosphorus use efficiencies, which promote healthy crop growth and reduce environmental impact.

It's this same passion and determination that Judith instills in the countless students she has mentored to help them realize their opportunities for success during postgraduate programs and research projects at AAFC. Judith encourages them to enjoy their research and connect with people every day.

"I'd rather that my students look back on their learning experience with pride once they are finished, rather than look back with relief that it's finally over," explains Dr. Nyiraneza.

Rim Ben Jannet, a recent doctoral graduate from Laval University, has been under Judith's guidance since 2013. They have worked together to publish Rim's research on strategies to enhance phosphorus use efficiency in acidic soils under potato production systems.

"I consider myself lucky to have Judith as a mentor, as she helped me to think critically and provided the tools to overcome complications," says Rim. "She is a very optimistic and positive person who inspires trust, support and kindness."

As one student's journey ends, Judith is excited to begin anew with Yvonne Uwituze, who is a doctoral student enrolled at Laval University and performing laboratory and field work at the Charlottetown Research and Development Centre.

"It's important that we encourage our younger generation, including girls and women, to pursue their dreams, whether it's science, technology, engineering or math," says Judith. "I'm proud to be passing the torch to the next generation of scientists."



Rim Ben Jannet (left) and Dr. Judith Nyiraneza (right) at Rim's Ph.D defense presentation in December 2019.

PEI Potato Board Strategic Plan

The PEI Potato Board completed the development and consultations on its new strategic plan in November 2019. The Plan was discussed and adopted by producers at the Annual General Meeting on November 19, 2019. This will now form the blueprint for Board operations from 2020 to 2024.

The project was completed with funding assistance of the PEI Department of Agriculture and Land. Their support helps the industry to define our strategic objectives and focus activities on priorities identified by the farmer members.

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