

Prince Edward Island

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POTATO NEWS

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POTATO NEWS

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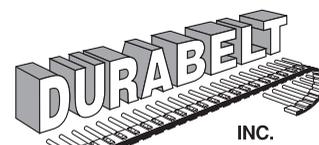
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Cover: Potato fields in PEI have been out in flower since mid July with the excellent rainfall and growing conditions so far in 2021. A nice sight to welcome visitors back to the province. Photo: M.K. Sonier.



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Chairman's Comments

by Wayne Townshend, PEI Potato Board Chairman



Where does the time go? It is hard to believe that we are already into August.

In general, it looks like the potato crop got off to one of the best starts in recent years. Most areas of the Island have received timely rains, fields have closed the rows, plants are flowering and setting tubers and early varieties are starting to bulk. However we still have a long ways to go before the crop is harvested and in the bin.

It was very welcome news from Minister Myers (Department of Environment, Energy and Climate Action) that the government decided to remove any reference to a moratorium on high capacity wells for supplemental agricultural irrigation from the Water Act Regulations and to treat agriculture like all other industries and individuals in PEI with regard to new well permits. This adds another "tool in the toolbox" for farmers, but all producers realize it is just one tool. We need to continue to work on improvements to soil health, develop more drought resistant varieties and make other adaptations to adjust to climate change factors

that affect our crop. However, after twenty years, it is nice to finally have a government address this issue based on science and common sense. We thank Premier King, Minister Thompson and other members of cabinet for their support of this change.

Industry members were also glad to receive the news on July 9th that the PEI Supreme Court upheld the decision of the lower court in the Skye View Farms case dealing with incidents around a fish kill that occurred in 2016 after an extreme weather event. We hope that the federal government lawyers do not continue with a further appeal and that government funds be spent in ways that can help the family farms of PEI adapt to the extreme weather events that we seem to be experiencing more often as a result of climate change.

A new provincial program was announced last March to do just that - the PEI Agriculture Climate Solutions Program. Details on this program and the recently announced Agricultural Clean Technology Program can be found on the

PEI Department of Agriculture and Land website.

We have all worked very hard during the past 18 months to keep ourselves, our families and our employees healthy during the COVID crisis. It is encouraging to see PEI doing so well and restrictions easing on gatherings and travelling. It has been a costly process for our governments and businesses and it is nice to see some light at the end of the tunnel. We hope to see the economy pick back up to help pay all the COVID bills. I hope you are able to take some time this summer to welcome family and visitors to the Island or to visit loved ones who are living away.

In closing, I would just like to wish everyone a positive outcome for the rest of our 2021 growing season.

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PEI Potato Board News

Moratorium Lifted - Development of an Irrigation Strategy in Progress

It was very welcome news to learn that the moratorium on permits for high capacity wells to be used for agricultural irrigation was lifted and will not be included in the new Water Act Regulations that came into place on June 16, 2021. Farmers will now be treated the same as every other individual and business sector on PEI. It was good to see the recognition that the regulations in place to evaluate applications for wells for other sectors will also be used in the same manner to evaluate permits for agricultural irrigation. As part of the process, Minister Myers announced that an irrigation strategy will need to be in place, as well as drought contingency plans. The provincial government will lead the process of developing the irrigation strategy and the Potato Board, the Federation of Agriculture, the Organic Co-operative and other groups look forward to providing input where possible.

The Potato Board has invited members of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability to participate in a supplemental irrigation tour in late July.

LAND MATTERS Final Report Released

On July 15, 2021, the final report of the Land Matters Advisory Committee, entitled "Now is the Time", was released. The report contains thirteen recommendations, mostly pertaining to land ownership and the Lands Protection Act, and land use and the Planning Act. Those recommendations were in response to the presentations and submissions received by the committee over the past nine months. As stated in the report: "At increasing speed, we see the loss of valuable agricultural land and viewscapes to coastal and ribbon development, conflicting land uses, urban sprawl, and land speculation. Islanders also have concerns with corporate ownership and control of land, non-residential land ownership, environmental degradation, coastal erosion and climate change."

Strengthening the language of the Lands Protection Act and Planning Act to make them more enforceable and to increase transparency of land ownership are key elements of the recommendations.

As well, the Committee considered submissions on aggregate land holdings limits, and recommended that "the provincial government maintain aggregate land holding limits at their current level under the Lands Protection Act,

and that land holding limits be reviewed every five (5) years through an open, evidence-based process involving the public, stakeholders, and subject matter experts – with the next review beginning in 2026."

The PEI Potato Board's submission to the Committee, among other items, recommended the aggregate land holdings limits be increased to 1,250 acres per individual or 3,750 acres for a corporation, with the proviso that the loopholes in the Acts be closed. The PEI Federation of Agriculture recommended status quo re land limits, as did several other stakeholder groups. In its report, the Committee noted concerns raised regarding the scale and competitiveness of farms, the Committee felt it "did not hear sufficient evidence to support increasing land holding limits. Several factors influence the competitiveness of farms, including (but not limited to) their scale."

The need for a province-wide land use planning framework, prioritizing resource land and coastal land was highlighted. Many reports and commissions over the past fifty years have recommended this, and the Committee fully supported this and emphasized the urgency of moving on it immediately.

Several stakeholder groups, including the Board, raised the issue of soil health. "Stakeholder groups expressed that enhanced programs and services are needed to further incentivize the adoption of beneficial management practices (BMPs), and the diversification of agricultural production." To address this, the final recommendation in the report was "that the provincial government review and enhance soil health programs and initiatives such as the Alternate Land Use Service Program and the recently announced provincial Soil First Farming Initiative."

Agriculture Minister Bloyce Thompson has acknowledged receipt of the report, and the intensive and



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thoughtful work done by the thirteen member committee. In his response, he stated “Our team is already taking steps to review the report and finalize a plan that includes timelines for implementing the recommendations.”

We encourage all members of the potato industry to review the full report, which is available at <https://www.landmatterspei.ca/whatweheard>.



Maritime Electric Proposal to Remove Residential Second Block Rate

The Maritime Electric residential declining second block rate structure has been under discussion for more than a decade. Changes to the rate structure have been proposed so that all users of electricity are charged fairly. Any changes will be revenue neutral for Maritime Electric. A study was commissioned and delivered to IRAC in the past year suggesting that over four years the second block rate be discontinued. This could result in a 25% increase in power bills for many farms.

IRAC will be having public hearings in the fall and agriculture organizations such as the Potato Board and the Federation of Agriculture can present their opinion on proposed rate changes and have an opportunity to suggest other options. Competitiveness needs to be part of the discussion as well as options such as a farm rate.

Judge Dismisses Federal Appeal of Skye View Farms Case

On July 9, 2021, Supreme Court of Prince Edward Island Justice James Gormley dismissed an appeal by Crown prosecutors who were seeking to overturn an earlier not guilty verdict in the Skye View Farms and Docherty family charges that arose following a torrential rain on July 25, 2016.

In his decision, Justice Gormley upheld Justice Nancy Orr’s original decision that the Docherty’s Charter rights were violated based on a warrantless search of their land by federal officers. Federal lawyers filed an appeal shortly after Justice Orr’s decision, and a hearing on the appeal was held on January 15, 2021.

Federal lawyers could once again appeal this latest ruling. The Board has stated for several years that there are major efforts underway on Island farms to reduce the probability of runoff, even given more and more severe rainfall events. Better approaches outside of the courts to addressing issues arising from extreme weather had been sought, to no avail to date on the part of federal officials.

Skye View Farms is the most recent farm to face the massive undertaking of fighting federal charges and steep fines/penalties, and they are up against the federal government that seems to have endless resources to charge, prosecute and appeal court decisions that are in the farmer’s favour.

The investigation and subsequent court proceedings have consumed almost five years and carry a high financial cost for the farm. Skye View Farms and the Docherty family have already been penalized financially by fighting the charges and they have had their names in the media over the past several years. Extreme weather is becoming more and more frequent, resulting in massive damage to infrastructure, homes and natural areas around the world. No one is seeking a “pass” for cases of neglect or stupidity, but the intensity of events should be factored into decisions to lay charges. In the Skye View case, its defense included plans to show just how intense, unusual and destructive that rain was on July 25, 2016, but that part of the case did not get tried in court as the issue of the lack of search warrant led to the not guilty verdict.

PEI Potato Board Helps to Provide Soil Science Explore Boxes to Local Schools

To celebrate National Soil Conservation Week in 2021, Nutrients for Life donated Soil Science Explore boxes to selected middle and high school classes across Canada. Each Soil Science Explore Box contains multiple hands-on educational soil science activities that focus on the



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Potato Farm Sign Draw

The photos on the center pages were snapped while travelling the Island in the past few years. Farm signs are as unique as the families on PEI who grow our number one crop and signs are one way Island potato growers show their pride in their farm and what they do. Many of these farm names are well known in their local communities as important employers and often as a contributor to the local rink, food bank or sponsor or participant in community events.

Share a photo of your farm sign and your name will be entered in a draw to win one of four \$250 Canada's Food Island gift cards

Photos can be of the farm sign alone or family members around the sign. Farm sign photo entries will be shared in *PEI Potato News* over the next year.

To submit an entry:

1. Send digital photos to:
potato@peipotato.org
(photos should be 1 MB or larger)
2. Please include the following information:
 - Full farm name and location
 - Names of any family members and/or pets in the photo
 - Name of the photographer

**The Deadline for entries is:
September 15, 2021.**





importance of healthy soil, plant nutrients and 4R Nutrient Stewardship. Educators received classroom sets of Nutrients for Life resources, a soil probe, lab materials to test soils for N, P, and K, and a soil porosity and permeability kit. The boxes also contained various soil samples from across the country to compare and test.

“We were very excited with the response received for this new initiative in our region,” says Tamara Sealy, Executive Director/Regional Manager of Nutrients for Life Foundation Canada. “Twenty-five classrooms in the Atlantic region were sponsored by local agri-businesses like the PEI Potato Board.” A total of 59 boxes were shipped to classrooms in May as part of this first-ever national campaign.

Katherine Johnson an agriscience teacher at Charlottetown Rural High School received one of the boxes. She commented, “The students enjoyed the opportunity to explore and use the contents of the box. The kit was useful to translate knowledge learned in the classroom to hands-on practice in the lab. Analyzing the nutrient content of various soil samples throughout Canada was engaging and well suited for the high school level.

Nutrients for Life Foundation Canada is a registered charitable organization committed to bringing educational materials to the classroom, focusing on soil science and agricultural sustainability. Visit their website at www.nutrientsforlife.ca

Canadian Potato Council Summer Meeting

The Canadian Potato Council (CPC) Summer Meeting was held virtually for the second year in a row on July 21, 2021.

Several topics on the agenda concerned current activities that involve the industry relationship with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency; including the Seed Potato Regulation Modernization Initiative and disease management.

The CPC hopes to get back to face to face meetings with an in person meeting in early December 2021.

UPGC Crop Update July 22, 2021

by Kevin MacIsaac

Growing conditions across the country seem to have reversed regionally from a year ago. This year the four main growing provinces in eastern and central Canada have received good moisture levels to date, while the four western provinces have been extremely hot and dry. Here is a summary of crop growth across the country:

Prince Edward Island: The Island crop looks excellent with canopies looking as good as many can remember. Rows are reaching full closure with most fields at tuber initiation and some fields even sizing.

New Brunswick: The crop is coming along about two weeks ahead of schedule with harvest underway for the early fresh market in the southern zone of the province.

Quebec: Early planting has allowed full row closure on most fields. The table harvest began on July 5th with good yields and quality reported.

Ontario: The potato crop in Ontario looks great at this time with lots of moisture put down for the crop. New crop harvest is just getting started and the last week of July should provide some good volume into the table market.

Manitoba: Fresh potato growing areas of the province are experiencing the most severe drought in the province, with very hot and dry conditions. Processing potatoes in the main growing area are looking better, but overall, the province has been dry and hot.

Saskatchewan: It has been hot and dry for this year’s potato crop. The excessive heat has dropped the set under plant canopies and could potentially reduce yields to three quarters of a crop.

Alberta: The seed growing area in the northern part of the province started out with excellent moisture reserves from last fall. However, many farms have not seen rain since June, and plants are beginning to wilt and show signs of stress. The central region of the province is in better shape, benefitting from more rainfall. The southern area of the province where most of the processing potatoes are grown has been extremely hot and dry. Reservoirs in the area have not been this low since 2002. The province will need all the additional 7,000 acres planted this spring to meet its needs.

British Columbia: The potato crop got off to a great start in BC, However, the first half of June was cool and wet and as a result many fields didn’t get the jump they got last year. It has been very hot and dry since June 15th. Temperatures in the seed growing area have been extremely high with Pemberton reaching more than 40 degrees Celsius on a couple of days. Early harvest in the Chilliwack area began on May 20th.

The Modern Family Potato Farm on PEI

by Mary Kay Sonier

Part I

It is a common complaint heard in agriculture circles, that consumers or non-agriculture folk have a nostalgic view of the family farm - the nice farmhouse, a red barn, a few cows in the front pasture, a tire swing etc. - and do not appreciate the changes that have taken place over the years. This is further complicated by food marketers who use this nostalgic image on logos and to sell their food.

Potato farms on PEI today exist in all types of sizes and forms. They range from small market gardens a few acres in size who sell produce at the roadside or at a Farmers Market, to multi-family operations who have utilized economies of scale and the latest technology to produce a crop they sell to local food processing companies or pack and sell to large consumer market in major urban centres like Toronto and Montreal. Changes on the farm mirror those seen in general society (Fig. 1), often for similar reasons - constantly striving for improved physical and economic health, efforts to improve efficiency in our businesses, trying to achieve work/life balance and greater awareness of the human impact on the environment.

In the past, many people may have stayed on the farm because they were expected to or because they did not have many other options open to them. In 2021 however, most people who are farming are there by choice. They have chosen the farming lifestyle and the risks that come with it. Part I of this series looks at a couple of farms who contract potatoes for processing use production. Parts II and III in upcoming issues will feature farms involved in the fresh and seed sectors.

Harris Brothers

David and Bobby Harris grew up on the family farm in Knutsford, PEI (Just down the road from O’Leary) where their parents raised a family of five and produced beef and grains as well as seed, fresh and processing potatoes. Russet Burbank used to be the mainstay and there is a Winburn Harris clone of Russet Burbank in the tissue culture bank at Fox Island Elite Seed Farm. When Winburn retired, Winburn Harris and Sons became Harris Brothers.

Both David and Bobby started working on the farm full-time when they were finished school and they cannot imagine doing anything else. Over time they got out of seed production to concentrate on processing potatoes and now all of their crop is contracted with Cavendish Farms.

As the farm has evolved, so have the varieties they grow and the production practices they



David (Left) and Bobby Harris with Bobby’s son Camden at the warehouse in Knutsford. Photo: M.K. Sonier.

Figure 1 - Changes on Farm Similar to Those in General Society

Society in General	On the Farm
Improvement in health care facilities, pharmaceuticals and medical techniques to treat various illnesses.	Improvements in pest control products and application equipment – lower active ingredient rates, more targeted to specific pests, biological pesticides, etc.
Increase in the number of women working outside the home.	Increase in the number of women working off-farm.
Development of cars with rear view cameras, sensors for changing lanes, more fuel efficiency, electric vehicles, etc.	Farm machinery with GPS technology, autosteer, variable rate seeding, fertilizer and spray application technology, low drift nozzles, etc.
Adoption of curbside collection of recycling, waste and compost.	Recycling programs for pesticide containers and silage plastic.
Increased government requirements for Environmental Impact Studies before development takes place, regulations for water treatment, etc.	Certification for pesticide applicators, regulations surrounding fuel and pesticide storage, adoption of production techniques to increase the environmental sustainability of the farm.



Winburn (left) looks on while Bobby and son Maddeo plant plantlets of the Winburn Harris Russet Burbank clone in the garden. Photo: The Harris family.

use. Variety selection is an important tool they are using to improve production in a variety of areas: improved disease resistance to pests such as scab and improved efficiency with higher yielding varieties and varieties that require less fertilizer and are better suited to the various soil types they farm. Whereas the Russet Burbank variety accounted for over 65% of their acreage as recently as 10 years ago, now they grow four different varieties and Russet Burbank, while still an important part of the mix, has dropped to approximately 40%.

It seems more than ever that average Canadians are being affected by extreme weather events and Harris Brothers have good familiarity with how weather can affect the best made plans – from the extreme drought in 2001 when yields were reduced by almost 40% across PEI to the 2018 harvest when 7,000 acres were left in the ground in PEI due to extreme rainfall during harvest. Their farm was negatively affected by both these events, as well as less drastic but still significant dry periods experienced in recent years. A lot of research is going on in the industry to identify rotation crops and change in practices that will help contribute to the resiliency of farms to cope with climate extremes and to improve the environmental sustainability of Island potato farms. David says, “While we are not the first to experiment on our farm, we keep a close eye on research and evaluation trials taking place in research plots and in farm scale evaluation trials and we adopt changes we believe will work for our farm situation.” Recent changes

they have made include moving away from clover to soil building rotation crops such as sorghum sudan grass and alfalfa/timothy hay and the use of the basket hiller system to reduce the number of equipment passes across the field and improve water penetration into the hilled soil. They also use GPS on their tractors to ensure efficient use of fertilizer and crop protectants. Harris Brothers have completed an Environmental Farm Plan, complete the Potato Sustainability Initiative questionnaire every year, and participate in the Alternative Land Use Services program.

As with many people their age, David and Bobby grew up in a household where their mother Isabel’s work was centred in the home. However, like modern day urban families, their own families include two working parents. David’s wife Lorna works in the health care field and his two daughters now work as nurses in Charlottetown. Bobby’s wife Jennifer works as a potato broker on the fresh side of the potato business and they have two young boys. Both brothers also take time to contribute to industry and community organizations. David is currently an industry representative on the Potato Processing Committee of the PEI Potato Board, a group which worked to negotiate contracts between potato growers and processing companies each year. Hockey was always a big part of their lives growing up and they both retain ties to the sport in O’Leary. David is on the rink board that is fundraising and planning major improvements to the local ice complex and Bobby is a coach in the minor hockey league.

Farms such as Harris Brothers continue to evolve to adapt to changes in technology and society as the do the population and economy of PEI as a whole. These farms are important businesses that have a positive impact on their local community and contribute to the Island way of life.

Murray Farms

Kevin Murray knew what he wanted to do from the time he was six years old – be a part of the family farm. After high school he went to Holland College to take a Farm Machinery Mechanic course (the last year it was offered) and then returned to the farm in Bedeque where he works with his father Eldon and mother Jane. Murray Farms is a full family affair: Kevin and Eldon look after the field work, grading and shipping. Jane does all the books and also helps out wherever needed depending on the season. Kevin’s sister Debbie and brother-in-law Brad, who do not farm but live next door, and Kevin’s wife Danette, who works off-farm in the accounting field, help out during busy times. They also hire a local high school student on a part-time basis and are fostering his interest in farm related work.

Kevin’s grandfather Sidney passed away suddenly



Kevin enjoys teaching his children Max (10) and Lauryn (3) about potatoes and sharing his love of farming. Photo: Buffy Boily Photography.

when Eldon was only 21 years old. Eldon chose to focus on the potato crop to keep the farm going. Murray Farms shipped processing potatoes to C.M. MacLean potato and vegetable processing company in New Annan and when the company was bought by the Irving family in 1980 and renamed Cavendish Farms, Murray Farms was one of their first suppliers. Now 100% of their crop goes to the French fry plant. Change on a farm is constant and ongoing as technology advances and research identifies practices that

will make a farm more efficient and more sustainable. Over the years, additional hedgerows were planted on Murray Farms to reduce negative impacts of winds they experience being so close to the shore, berms and grassed waterways have been installed in various fields to reduce the potential for soil erosion and



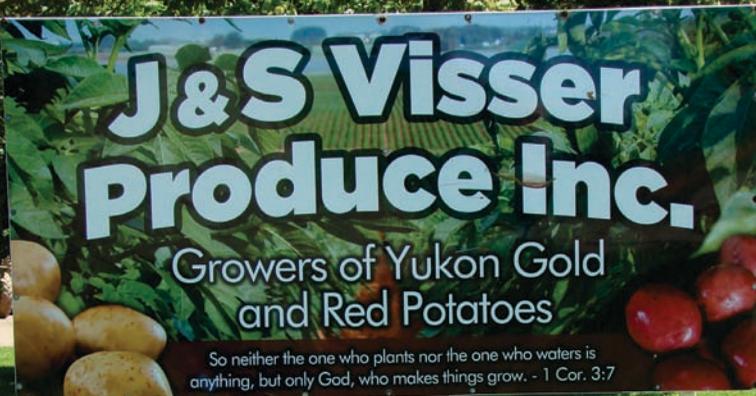
More trees were planted on berms on Murray Farms this spring to expand on hedgerows currently in place to combat wind erosion. Photo: Kevin Murray.

they routinely spread barley on harvested potato fields to provide a green cover on the fields over the winter months. The farm is fortunate to have a natural pond on their property and they were an early adopter of irrigation technology, buying their first reel in 1998. As Kevin says, “Some years we do not use it at all, some years only for a week or two and some years we may use it as many as 5 or 6 weeks. We obtain a permit each year, monitor water levels and abide by regulations for water withdrawal. It is a good tool to have in the toolbox to help provide some predictability to yields we will achieve and to use our inputs efficiently.”

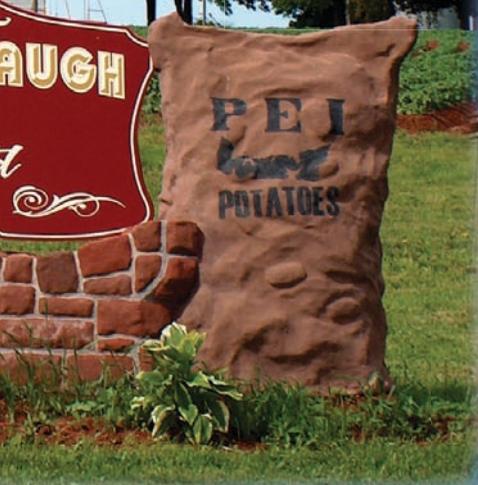
Murray Farms is one of the members of the East Prince Agri-Environmental Association and this has increased their involvement with on-farm demonstration trials and hands-on research. Through the group they regularly monitor the soil moisture levels in their fields and Murray Farms and two other members have installed nitrate cells at tile drain outlets to reduce nitrates that may otherwise be released into nearby watercourses. Strips of willow trees adjacent to riparian zones have also been evaluated by their group, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada scientists and the PEI Department of Agriculture and Land and have shown promise for use for a source of woody biomass production and as vegetation filters decreasing leaching and runoff of nutrients from agricultural fields to riparian zones. Kevin hopes to plant a strip on their farm next year. They are also trying different rotation crops such as sorghum sudan grass and pearl millet to improve soil health and combat pests such as nematodes and verticillium.

Like many others, Murray Farms is also looking to variety selection as one tool to improve efficiency and reduce inputs. Historically they grew Russet Burbank and Shepody for their French fry contracts. This year they are growing seven different varieties to evaluate which three will eventually work best on their farm. Russet Burbank acreage has dropped from their traditional level of 150 acres to 40 acres this year.

Kevin and Danette have two children ages ten and three years old. Kevin enjoys sharing the farm life with his children and teaching them about the crops he grows and answering all of their “Why do you do that?” questions. They also like finding ways of incorporating farm activities into the children’s pursuits – they have a small roadside stand to sell early potatoes and last year Kevin and his son Max grew a small field of sunflowers and opened it as a flower u-pick one weekend with funds raised going to Bedeque Minor Hockey. The Murray family enjoys finding opportunities to educate the public about modern farming and building community connections.



Proud of What We Do!



Grower Travels

Barry Cudmore has been growing seed potatoes out in the Brackley Beach area on the north shore of PEI all his life. In recent years, as well as keeping a hand in commercial seed production, he has helped to fill the growing market for quality seed for market and home gardens. As his acreage has scaled back and children have grown, he has had more free time in the winter months. As a result, he and his wife Ellen have been fortunate to (Pre-COVID) indulge their passion for continuous learning and international travel. Together they have travelled to Slovenia and Poland.

Barry has also taken on some more ambitious travel projects on his own - including a 2019 trip to the Everest Base Camp. This involved travelling to Kathmandu, Nepal, and then trekking through several villages to Mt. Everest Base Camp at 17,600 feet

The fact that potatoes are grown worldwide means that it is not uncommon to run across potato growers wherever you go, and fellow growers have a natural interest to learn from each other. On one of the group's stops on the trek to the Base Camp, Barry noticed some people in the local village planting potatoes. At first they did not want to talk to a tourist, but when he explained through an interpreter that he was a fellow potato farmer, they invited him into their plot and to take part in the planting operation.

Barry is already planning his next adventure once international travel is possible again.





Photos previous page: (left) mother and daughter get potatoes out of a storage pit; (top right) Barry reaches Everest Base Camp (17,600 feet); (bottom right) fenced plots for planting crops in one of the villages on the way to the base camp. Photo Above: Local woman (left) tells Barry (right) that he has done a good job in planting potatoes their way. Photos: B. Cudmore.

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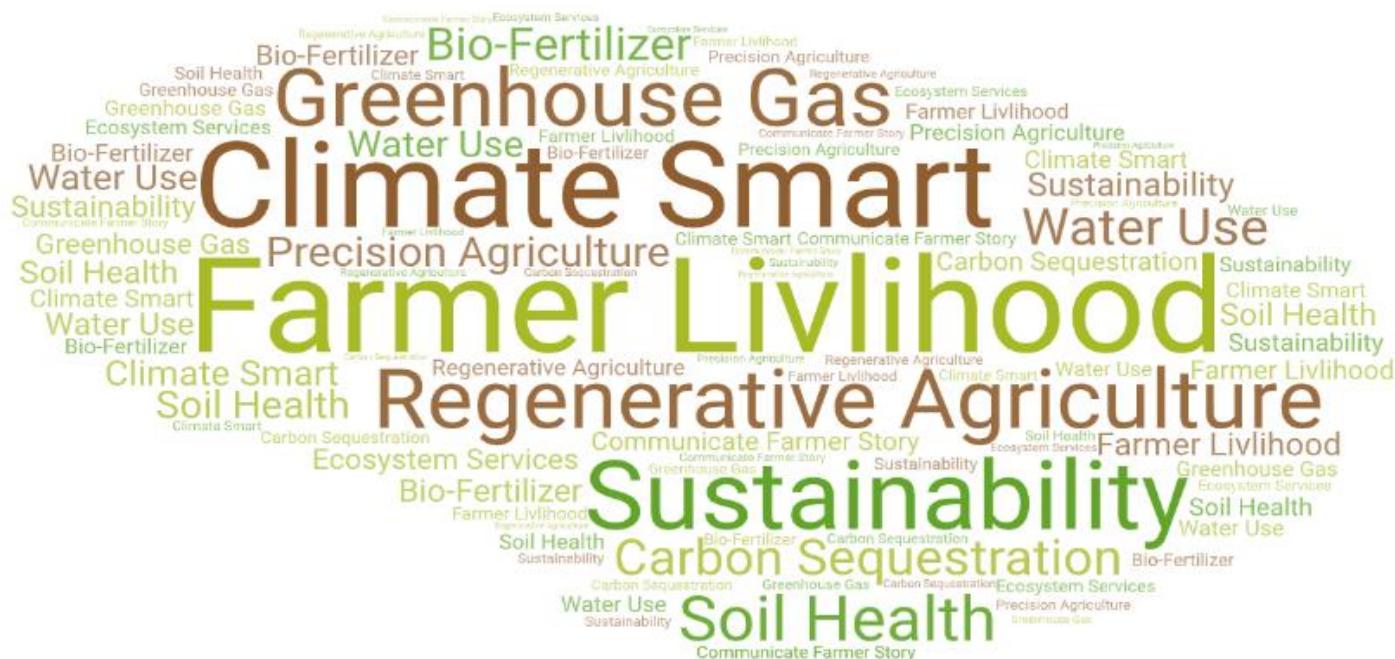


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The Potato Sustainability Alliance



by John MacQuarrie, Director of Sustainability, Cavendish Farms and Mary Kay Sonier, Editor, PEI Potato News

The consumer is king! In the food world that has meant meeting consumer demand for staples and building demand for new products - be it actual new food products or established products offering improvements in nutrition content, flavour, appearance, or convenience. In today's world of heightened awareness of environmental impacts of human activity, the new demand is not only for a specific or improved product, but a product that is made in an environmentally sustainable manner. This has led to all kinds of food assurance programs such as:

- Sustainable beef
- Fair trade coffee
- Dolphin friendly tuna
- Certified Organic

Consumers want to do their part in supporting what they feel are answers to environmental problems and often feel that their purchasing habits are the most effective means of driving positive change.

Multinational, regional and local companies publicize the fact that they are looking to satisfy this consumer demand with in-house sustainability strategies that focus on key areas such as reductions in packaging, and energy use throughout their supply chain.

These trends in measuring sustainability are worldwide as countries and companies strive to meet climate change

targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Wording associated with these efforts abounds: Circular Economy, Regenerative Agriculture, Carbon Neutral, Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions, Carbon Sink, etc.

Sustainability programs are not new in the potato business. Ten years ago, a group of potato processors, farmers, distributors and a major restaurant chain collaborated to create the Potato Sustainability Initiative (PSI) to address potato sustainability challenges. Over time, this program has evolved into the Potato Sustainability Alliance (PSA), a roundtable format focused on defining, measuring and advancing potato sustainability using robust metrics to drive improvements in productivity and profitability while protecting the environment. Members of the Alliance, together with over 550 U.S. and Canadian farmers, are committed to advancing a common vision of potato sustainability and delivering economic, environmental and social outcomes at scale.



The current Potato Sustainability Alliance has six main priority areas:

- Greenhouse gas
- Water quality
- Water use intensity
- Farmer livelihood
- Integrated Pest Management (IPM)
- Soil Health

The sustainability landscape is getting even more complex as major buyers are paying more attention to Environmental, Social and Governance issues (ESG) and are setting new standards for supply chains. The PSA board sees an opportunity to support farmers by raising the profile of sustainable potato production through improved communications.

On a go-forward basis, the PSA will focus on meeting the needs of customers who in turn want to assure consumers they are sourcing sustainably produced goods. A farmer survey that has been in place now for about 10 years will be improved and updated to ensure PSA partners are able to collect meaningful information in an efficient manner. If the job is done right, the PSA board expects the organization can help to minimize the burden being placed on farmers

to provide information. In terms of next steps, the first priority is to benchmark the PSA survey against a recognized platform, the Sustainable Agriculture Initiative (SAI) - see box on page 18 - and this is specifically required by some large customers. Secondly, the PSA is going to launch a project to recommend an approach to measure on farm greenhouse gas emissions and potentially carbon capture. The PSA board is optimistic they can accomplish this in a way that does not require every farmer to report on a host of new issues. In the short term, that being 2021, the PSA expect farmers will receive a survey that is pretty much identical to that they completed last year. Over the next few months, the PSA will have a project team work with consultants to help the initiative grow from being a survey to providing a sustainability program. In the meantime, the PSA is excited about the response to its ad to hire a new executive director and hopefully they will have someone in place soon.

Amidst all the general talk, growers are looking for specifics on they types of practices that could be measured individually or on an industry wide basis and have been, or could be, included in questionnaires or surveys and industry assessments. Some examples would include:

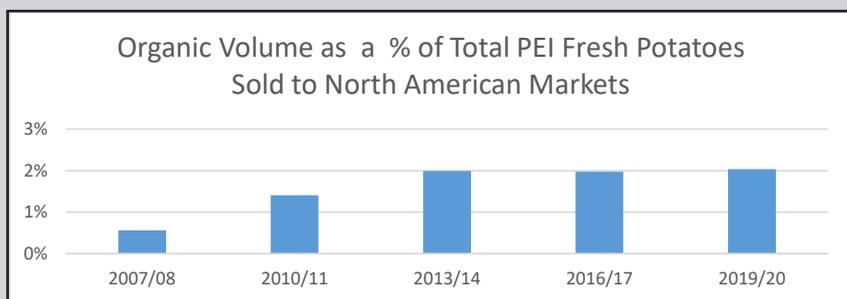
Sustainable Agriculture Practices Used on All Kinds of Farms

When it comes to looking for food from farms practicing sustainable agriculture, consumers may first gravitate towards organic – a term with some familiarity. However, as farmers get better at telling their story, it is becoming more widely understood that both organic and conventional farms utilize many of the same sustainable agriculture techniques. These may include applying manure to add nutrients and organic matter to the soil, practicing soil conservation methods, utilizing Integrated Pest Management programs, growing green manure and cover crops, employing precision agriculture technology to use inputs efficiently, etc.

Other common organic production practices such as manual or mechanical control of weeds and use of a restricted list of pest control and fertilizer products have a high cost and organic producers must obtain a higher price in the marketplace to remain viable. While organic potatoes have carved out a market niche, the market growth for PEI organic potatoes, for the time being, appears to have slowed. The volume

of organic potatoes shipped from PEI increased in the early to mid 2000's but has remained stable at about 2% since 2014.

All types of farms must continue to embrace sustainability for the industry as a whole to have a positive impact and help achieve climate change targets.



- reductions in tillage;
- adoption of 4R nutrient principles to reduce fertilizer use;
- use of precision agriculture technology to apply variable rates of fertilizer and pesticides across a field;
- more efficient use of nutrients with irrigation use;
- use of new varieties that are more pest and disease resistant or require less fertilizer;
- use of energy conservation initiatives;
- growing cover crops, etc.

Sustainability as a concept will continue to be refined and change to be balanced with other factors as all industries move into the future with climate change a major consideration. Farmer livelihoods are mentioned as one priority in the written materials surrounding these agricultural sustainability initiatives. There is also recognition that responsibility for bearing the cost of a sustainable supply chain needs to be shared by buyers of agricultural materials and suppliers of products and services to farmers and not just left to farmers themselves.

About the Sustainable Agriculture Initiative Platform*

Founded in 2002, the Sustainable Agriculture Initiative Platform (SAI Platform) is a global not-for-profit organization transforming the food and drink industry to source and produce more sustainably. We enable our members to share expertise, create solutions to common challenges and promote sustainable agriculture in a pre-competitive environment. By developing tools and principles we are creating secure and resilient agricultural supply chains. Our current focus is on beef, crops and dairy. Our innovative and industry focused tools, the

European Roundtable for Sustainable Beef (ERBS), the Farm Sustainability Assessment (FSA), Spotlight and the Sustainable Dairy Partnership (SDP), lead the way to effective sustainable practices while delivering value to our members, farmers, their communities and consumers.

We connect, collaborate, and build industry-wide solutions globally to catalyse and support sustainable change in agriculture. With over 120 members, from companies and organizations in the food and drink industry, we are at the forefront in pioneering sustainable agriculture around the world.

* SAI Annual Report 2020. Website: www.saiplatform.org

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An Update From the:

PEI Department of Agriculture and Land

by Lorraine MacKinnon, Potato Industry Coordinator



Here we are in mid July, and I think it's a safe assumption that folks in the potato industry have a much rosier outlook than we did a year ago. The effects of the pandemic continue to wane, and the crop looks to be in excellent condition for the most part.

In general, emergence in potato fields was very good in 2021. However, the Plant Diagnostic Lab did receive several samples of seed potatoes this spring from fields with emergence issues. The samples were from numerous varieties and included both whole and cut seed. Marleen Clark (PEIDAL Plant Diagnostician) reports that the main organisms found in these samples were Pythium and Fusarium.

As of mid July, no spores of late blight have been trapped in PEI, Maine or New Brunswick. With heavy rain and high humidity, conditions have been extremely conducive for blight to develop, if the inoculum was present. The spore trapping networks that have been developed by the Potato

Board and growers alike in recent years are a fantastic tool to keep us abreast of our late blight risk situation. It should be noted that late blight DNA has been detected in spore traps in multiple locations in Ontario, though no field infections are reported to date.

On the insect pest front, the situation varies widely by insect and location. The Aphid Alert program has trapped very few aphids on the first two collections, however some growers are reporting that they're being challenged by European Corn borer (ECB) populations. The PEIDAL will be focusing efforts on monitoring the ECB populations as the season progresses



European Corn Borer adult.
Photo: Sebastian Ibarra.

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in both corn and potato fields, as we look to validate the assumption that there will be two generations of ECB in the 2021 season.

I've collected samples of Colorado Potato Beetles for AAFC pesticide resistance monitoring and will continue to do so until the end of July. Although the results of these samples will not be known until 2022, the ongoing sampling and monitoring is important to keep tabs on the effectiveness of our key insecticides and remind us to rotate different insecticide classes and avoid an over-reliance on neonicotinoids.

PEIDAL Staff Update

The Sustainable Agriculture team has some new faces that potato producers will soon get to know.

Holly Barrett, Soil & Water Conservation Engineer – Holly has a Bachelor of Engineering Degree from the University of New Brunswick. Holly enjoys playing sports, hiking and travelling with her family of 4. Holly will be located on the 5th Floor of the Jones Building, reporting to Carla Millar, Manager.

Eileen Beaton, Agri-Environmental Specialist – Eileen has a Master of Science with a Major in Agriculture from Dalhousie University. Eileen has been working on PEI in the agriculture industry for the last 4 years. She enjoys going home to Pictou, N.S. to spend time with family and friends,

she also enjoys her lifelong hobby of bagpiping. Eileen replaces Sebastian Ibarra, who has relocated to Kelowna, BC with his young family.

Agricultural Clean Technology Program – seeking funding proposals from farmers!

Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada recently announced a new federal funding program for producers looking to adopt green technologies and practices. Applications are now being accepted, and I am certain Island potato farmers have some projects that would fit the eligibility requirements. The main focus of the program is reducing greenhouse gas emissions, through new technologies adopted on-farm (such as fuel switching).

The program is the Agricultural Clean Technology Program. The Adoption stream of this program offers producers up to 50% funding of commercially available green technologies to reduce greenhouse emissions and provide other environmental benefits. Precision agriculture, green energy, energy efficiency and bio-economy solutions are all considered under the program.

The minimum project size is \$50,000.

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Industry Updates

Global Sustainability Report Sets McCain on Path to a Greener Future

TORONTO, June 7, 2021 /CNW/ - By the end of the decade, every potato that becomes McCain Superfries, Bistro fries, potato patties, Smiles, Tasti Taters or homefries will be from a farm using regenerative agricultural practices.

As part of today's release of McCain's 2020 Global Sustainability report Together, Towards Planet-Friendly Food, the company is pledging that it will be implementing regenerative agricultural practices across 100 per cent of its potato acreage — representing 370,000 acres worldwide — by 2030. This transition will restore and protect soil health and quality and look to natural processes to control pests, prevent plant disease and strengthen crops against severe weather events.

"The pandemic has put a spotlight squarely on the precarious nature of our global food system," says Max Koeune, Chief Executive Officer of McCain. "But the largest challenges we face are related to climate change. It's estimated that a quarter of man-made carbon emissions come from the production of food, and if we have to grow more food to feed more people, that will only intensify. If we don't transform the way we grow food, the whole system is at risk of suffering irreparable damage."

Regenerative agriculture calls back to a time when farming was based more on biology than chemistry, with a focus on soil health and quality. A sustainable farming practice, Regenerative agriculture promotes biodiversity, more plant cover on fields throughout the year, minimizing soil disturbances and maximizing crop diversity as a way to increase water efficiency, protect against erosion, pump more nutrients into the earth, create greater resilience to droughts and floods, capture more carbon and increase the yield and quality per acre.

McCain's annual Global Sustainability Report tracks the progress of commitments made in its initial sustainability report issued last year, and makes a series of new commitments to help it move towards its climate objectives.

"Our Global Sustainability Report is an annual progress report for McCain to keep track of the commitments and goals we have set," says Charlie Angelakos, Vice-President of Global External Affairs and Sustainability for McCain. "With additional commitments between now and 2030, we are proud to play a role in combatting climate change and discovering a more sustainable way to farm."

Among the commitments in this year's update beyond its Regenerative agriculture pledge are:

- Opening three Farms of the Future in different growing regions around the world by 2025.
- Reducing carbon emissions from potato farming, storage and freight by 25 per cent by 2030.
- Reducing carbon emissions from all operations by 50 per cent by 2030.
- Moving to 100 per cent renewable electricity by 2030.
- Using 100 per cent of every potato harvested.
- Sending zero waste to landfills by 2025.
- Removing palm oil from all McCain branded products by 2025.
- Making 100 per cent of packaging recyclable, reusable or compostable by 2025.
- Donating 200 million meals to global foodbanks and NGOs by 2025.
- McCain has also tracked its progress against commitments it made in its inaugural Global Sustainability Report last year, including:
 - A six per cent reduction in absolute carbon emissions across the company's global operations.
 - A two per cent decrease in water use in water-stressed regions.
 - A five per cent increase in use of renewable electricity.
 - Donating 53 million meals — an estimated 16,000 tonnes of food — to foodbanks and NGOs worldwide throughout 2020.

McCain will implement regenerative agricultural practices on its three Farms of the Future, the first of which is now operational in Florenceville, NB. The purpose is to demonstrate that these agricultural practices, supported by technology and innovation, can be implemented at scale and be economically viable for farmers.

"Our belief in Regenerative agriculture goes back to our roots as a farm business," says Mr. Koeune. "As a global leader in food production, McCain has a responsibility to re-imagine the way we grow a potato in a way that is beneficial for both the planet, and the communities where we operate. We have to act today to make things better tomorrow."

Learn more about McCain's sustainability commitments as well as its journey towards regenerative agriculture in Together, Towards Planet-Friendly Food, 2020 Global

Sustainability Report Summary at <https://www.mccain.com/Sustainability-Report-Summary-2020/>.

About McCain Foods (Canada)

McCain Foods (Canada) is the Canadian division of McCain Foods Limited, an international leader in the frozen food industry. McCain Foods is the world's largest manufacturer of frozen potato specialties, and also produces other quality products such as appetizers, vegetables and desserts that can be found in restaurants and retail stores in more than 160 countries around the world. In Canada, the company has eight production facilities with approximately 2,400 employees and, in addition to its famous French fries and potato specialties, makes frozen desserts, snacks and appetizers.

Canada's Agriculture Day 2022

GUELPH, ON. May 27, 2021 – The Canadian Centre for Food Integrity (CCFI) announced February 22, 2022 as the date for Canada's Agriculture Day.

Canada's Agriculture Day is a day designated for our country to come together to recognize and celebrate the men and women who produce the food that Canadians, and people around the globe, love to eat.

"Canada's Agriculture Day is a great opportunity for all of us to show our appreciation for the individuals who are the backbone of the food system. I encourage all Canadians to join in this national celebration and find creative ways to show your support for Canadian agriculture," said John Jamieson, CCFI President and CEO.

Canada's Agriculture Day, led by Agriculture More Than Ever, has developed a very strong social media presence since its inception in 2017. Canadians from coast-to-coast will show the love through media channels with the official hashtag #CdnAgDay. Whether you are online, in person or at home, there will be various ways for all of us to honour Canadian agriculture and food on Feb. 22, 2022.

Some suggested ways to participate are:

- Post a photo or video celebrating Canadian agriculture.
- Cook an all-Canadian meal.
- Post a "Forks up" selfie.

For more information, visit AgDay.ca (JourAgCan.ca in French).

The Canadian Centre for Food Integrity (CCFI) is a national charity with a clearly defined mandate to help Canada's food system earn public trust by providing research, resources, and communications. In May 2021 CCFI assumed the leadership of Agriculture More Than Ever.

Upcoming Events

Please call the Board at (902) 892-6551 for further information on any of these events. In person events require pre-registration to ensure public health guidelines for gathering limits are met.

August 2021

- August 3 **Bi-weekly Field Workers Meeting.** 7:30 AM. Location TBA. Virtual option available to join as well.
- August 17 **Bi-weekly Field Workers Meeting.** 7:30 AM. Location TBA. Virtual option available to join as well.
- August 18 **Monthly Potato Board Meeting.**

September 2021

- Sept 19 **Open Farm Day.** Island Wide.
- Sept 24 **Toe Taps and Taters, Fall Flavours Festival,** Canoe Cove.

October 2021

- Oct 28-30 **Produce Marketing Association Fresh Summit,** New Orleans.

November 2021

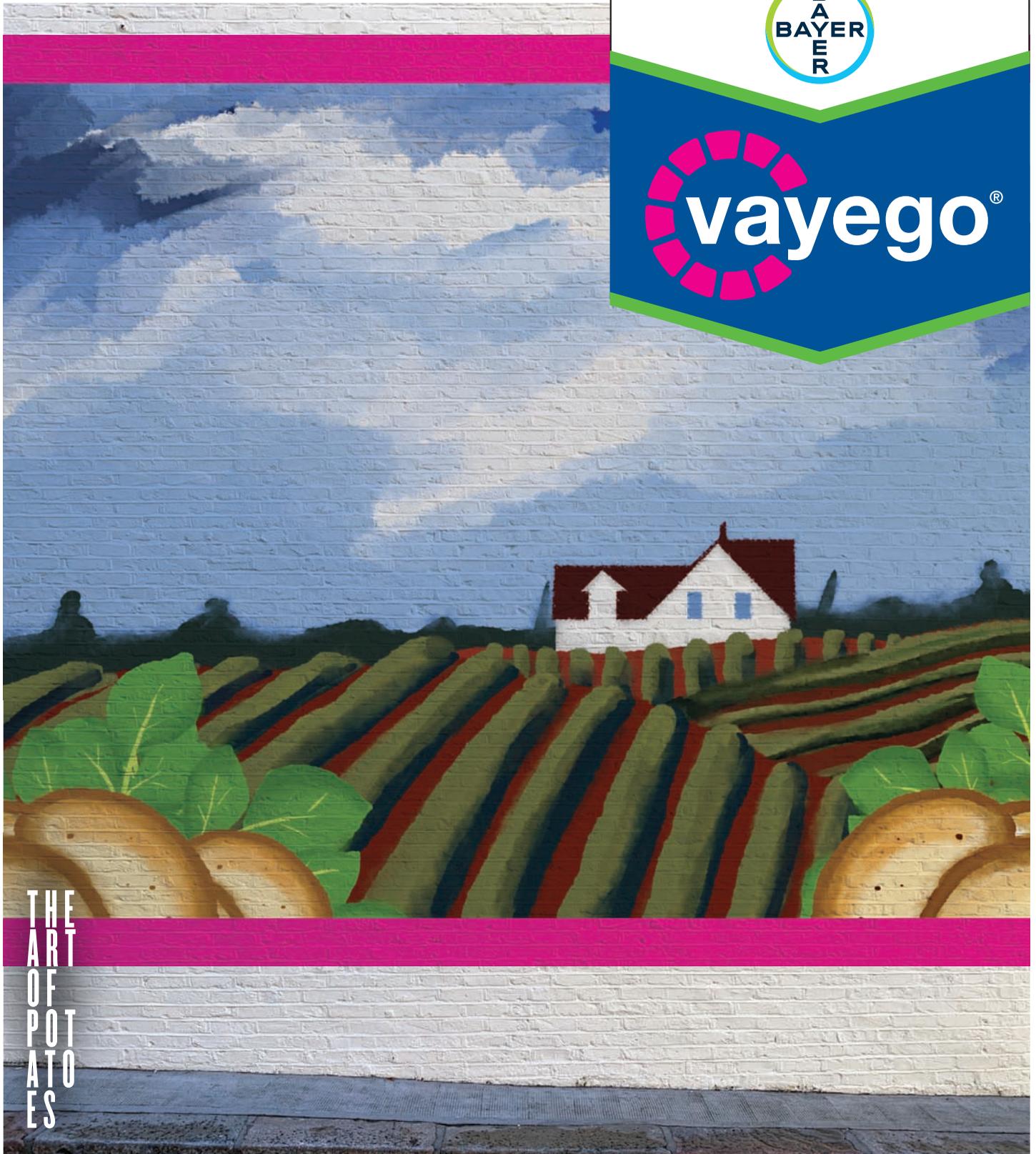
- TBA **PEI Potato Board Annual Meeting.** PEI Potato Board Office.

December 2021

- Dec 2-3 **Canadian Potato Council Fall Meeting.** Ottawa, ON.

January 2022

- Jan 5-6 **National Potato Council Potato Expo.** Anaheim Convention Center, Anaheim, CA.



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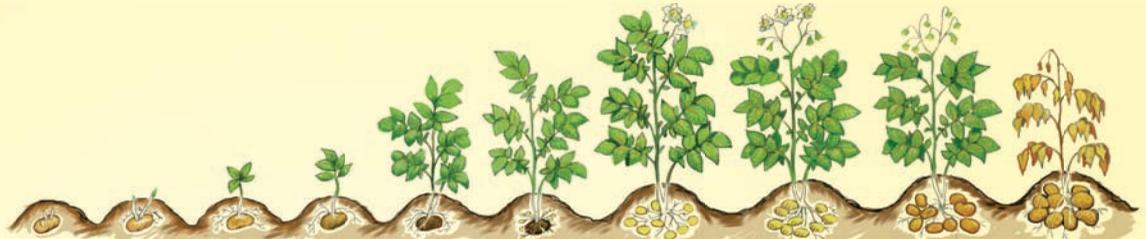
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			Consistent, systemic control of leafhoppers. Short 7-day PHI.		
			Systemic, residual control of sucking and chewing pests, including Colorado potato beetle, European corn borer, armyworms, flea beetles and aphids. Short 7-day PHI.		