

*Prince Edward Island*

November/December 2022  
Volume 23 Issue 6

# POTATO NEWS

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## In This Issue:

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- PEI Potato Board AGM
- Production Estimates



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# POTATO NEWS

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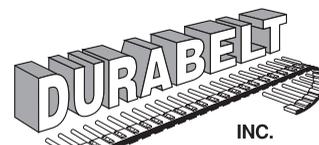
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Cover: PEI seed potato field at Fox Island Elite Seed Potato Farm early in the 2022 growing season. Photo: M.K. Sonier



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# Chairman's Comments

by John Visser, PEI Potato Board Chairman



It is very positive to see the 2022-2023 marketing season off to a strong start. It has been a challenging year in more than one respect with the fall out from potato wart detections along with issues such as labour shortages, rising input costs and the clean up after Fiona. Blessed with another good quality and high yielding crop, Island growers continue to work through all these challenges.

The Board had a successful Annual General Meeting and Industry Banquet in late November. It was a pleasant change to be able to gather to review Board activities during the past year and honour those who have in the past, and in many cases continue to, contribute so much to the ongoing success of the potato industry in PEI. A full report of the meeting and banquet can be found on page 10 of this issue.

While shipping for fresh and processing use is ongoing, growers and packers continue to bear the new costs imposed by the Ministerial Order that was put in place for all potatoes

on PEI, whether grown in fields associated with Potato wart detections or not. There are several pieces of information that will be under discussion this winter - investigation results, as all soil samples have now been collected and over 50 percent of samples have now been analyzed; the report of the International Advisory Panel - due very shortly; and an interim report of the working group reviewing the Long Term Management Plan to suggest improvements based on sound science, etc.

Our provincial government has been supportive and responsive and we thank them. We will meet with Minister Compton and Deputy Minister Matheson shortly to continue to share information and direction.

I want to wish you and your families a Merry Christmas and all the best for 2023!



Board staff received special recognition from the Potato Board Executive for all their work and dedication since the potato wart crisis began in the fall of 2021. Pictured left to right: Ryan Barrett (Agronomy Lead/Research Specialist), Mark Phillips (Market Information/Marketing Specialist), Rob Morrison (Comptroller), Debbie Hirst (IT Administrator), Mary Kay Sonier (Seed Coordinator/Editor PEI Potato News), Karen Martin (Receptionist), Board Chair John Visser, Greg Donald (General Manager), Kendra Mills (Marketing Director), Scott ) (Processing Specialist) and Brenda Simmons (Assistant General Manager).

# PEI Potato Board News

## Hurricane Fiona Clean-Up

Potato Board General Manager Greg Donald spent the first few days after Fiona struck on September 24<sup>th</sup> contacting growers and driving around the province to assess the damage for the potato industry. Some operations experienced damage to warehouses, but by far the most immediate problem for the majority heading into the busy harvest season was power. While many places were without electricity for less than a week, others were down for 10 to 20 days. The need was communicated to those agencies and government departments involved in the clean up and restoration. The Board was able to assist in some measure with matching up those in need with help that was available, including growers loaning generators to each other until power was restored across the Island.

The weather since Fiona was very favourable for potato harvest and it was fortunate that the Island received much less rain than was forecast. While the crop is now safely in the bin, there are many clean up issues still to be addressed. A major impact of the storm is the sheer volume of downed trees across the province. Power lines have been cleared but leaning trees still pose a risk for power lines and property when the next storm hits. Trees across field access roads and the edges of fields need to be cleared away so farmers can proceed with fall field activities and in preparation for planting next spring. There will be no shortage of tasks to keep Islanders busy for the winter.

The PEI Department of Agriculture and Land has made several programs available to farmers who were impacted by the storm. Details and links to further information are provided by Lorraine MacKinnon in the PEI Department of Agriculture and Land update on page 20.



*The high winds of Fiona were particularly hard on tarp barn and storage buildings, like the two in the background of the picture above which lost their covers totally. Damaged buildings must also be assessed for structural damage before repairs are made to address any future safety concerns. (Photo: M.K. Sonier)*



*Losing the roof from a warehouse or storage building and structural damage were a few of the negative impacts of Hurricane Fiona on potato industry infrastructure along with downed trees from field hedgerows. Loss of power from a few days to a few weeks was a major disruption for all harvest and packing operations. (submitted photos)*



## Canadian Potato Council provides perspective on stakeholder comments on the draft report “Assessing pathways of introduction for potato wart (*Synchytrium endobioticum*) from Canada into the United States”

David Jones, Manager, Canadian Potato Council

November 4, 2022

On October 14, 2022, the United States Department of Agriculture – Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA-APHIS) issued a bulletin (see link below) announcing that a DRAFT report *Assessing pathways of introduction for potato wart (Synchytrium endobioticum) from Canada into the United States* (henceforth referred to as *Draft Pathway Analysis*) has been published for public consultation for a 30-day period.

The *Draft Pathway Analysis* evaluates the likelihood of introduction of the potato wart pathogen (*Synchytrium endobioticum*) from Canada into the United States via a) commercially produced propagative material excluding true potato seed), b) commercially produced potatoes for consumption, and c) soil, with no consideration beyond minimal risk mitigation measures that may be applied – it is strictly a pathway analysis.

You may be aware of statements from some industry stakeholders regarding the *Draft Pathway Analysis* that have raised concerns regarding the movement of potatoes grown on Prince Edward Island (PEI). The purpose of this article is to clarify what the *Draft Pathway Analysis* reports, and what it does not report, so that you can better understand and evaluate for yourself if the information as presented is accurate or is disinformation.

First and foremost, it is critical to understand that the *Draft Pathway Analysis* looks at potential ways potato wart could move into the United States with minimal risk mitigation in place to prevent movement via those pathways. As stated on page 1 of *Draft Pathway Analysis*, “**We did not consider any mitigation measures beyond minimal brushing and washing prior to export and visual inspection at ports of entry.**” In a footnote, USDA-APHIS states “*Minimal washing and brushing means that the imported tubers for consumption will meet U.S. grading standards prior to entry; currently, the grading standards only require 90 percent of the tubers be completely free of soil (USDA AMS, 2011, 2022).*” Furthermore, as stated on the USDA-APHIS Stakeholder Risk Assessment Consultation website page, “**You will not find mitigations for pests shown in draft pest lists and risk assessments. Risk Management, including mitigations, is conducted after we receive stakeholder and country comments on each pest list or risk assessment.**” In other words, this analysis presents the possible routes of entry of the disease if no preventative actions are taken.

Clearly, the USDA-APHIS utilizes a process of first identifying possible pathways for pest entry (i.e. *Draft Pathway Analysis*), followed by a second step which is a consideration of risk management and possible

mitigation measures. It is unfortunate that some stakeholder statements have failed to acknowledge that the analysis is conducted under conditions of minimal risk mitigation, or mention the two-step process that USDA-APHIS follows in their stakeholder risk assessment consultations. It is highly disappointing that some industry stakeholders fail to be open and transparent in their communications. This can only be interpreted as intent to mislead.

Land, soil and potatoes in PEI are regulated by the CFIA under the *Potato Wart Domestic Long Term Management Plan*. The plan outlines the restrictions and surveillance activities for potato wart in order to reduce the risk of spread of potato wart and protect potatoes, potato production, trade and the economy. The plan addressed fields may have had a positive detection of potato wart, or be of varying level of concern due to association with a positive field through adjacency, seed source/direct movement of equipment, or indirect movement of equipment. Each field level of concern is associated with specific CFIA restrictions on crops grown and equipment movement/disinfection and requirements for soil testing, surveillance and monitoring. All of these measures directly mitigate the risk of movement of potato wart, and were not considered in the *Draft Pathway Analysis*. It is important to understand that potato exports from PEI only occur with strict risk mitigation measures in place to address the pathways of potential entry of potato wart.

Extensive soil testing and surveillance for potato wart has been conducted for over 20 years and is ongoing in PEI to monitor for the presence of this disease, and to confirm those areas in PEI that are free of the pest. Soil samples are also taken across Canada in all potato producing provinces to demonstrate the absence of potato wart in those areas.

The United States Federal Order of April 1, 2022 (DA-2022-14) in fact includes several risk mitigation practices/measures that have been implemented to address pathway risks discussed in the *Draft Pathway Analysis*. Some of those mitigation measures that have been implemented for potatoes for consumption include:

- imported potatoes must not originate from any fields restricted by CFIA for potato wart nor be grown from certified seed potatoes originating from fields the CFIA restricted for potato wart;
- potatoes must meet the requirements of the U.S. No. 1 grade standard;
- potatoes must be free of soil upon inspection at the port of entry and be washed with a forced stream of water to eliminate adhering soil, including caked dirt;
- potatoes must be treated with a sprout inhibitor and be accompanied by export documentation detailing the treatment;
- all potato shipments must have traceability from production site to packing and export to allow a full trace-back and recall;
- potatoes must be officially inspected for pest freedom prior to export;
- each consignment must be inspected and accompanied by a certificate issued by CFIA and approved by APHIS stating that potatoes for consumption are free of quarantine pests for the United States.

All of the above mitigation measures address the risks of potato wart movement described in the *Draft Pathway Analysis*. However, the same document did not consider risk mitigation measures beyond minimal brushing and washing. USDA-APHIS allowed the resumption of PEI shipments of potatoes to the U.S. in April, 2022 based on these measures.

It is hoped that the information given here has provided clarity that the USDA-APHIS DRAFT report *Assessing pathways of introduction for potato wart (Synchytrium endobioticum) from Canada into the United States* is the first step in risk assessment of the potential pathways of potato wart movement. This analysis did not consider any mitigation measures beyond minimal brushing and washing prior to export. Risk management, including mitigations, is conducted after stakeholder and country comments on the risk assessment are received by USDA-APHIS.

The Canadian Potato Council is disappointed that some industry stakeholders have not been transparent and open regarding their communication of statements extracted from the *Draft Pathway Analysis* without context and without disclosure that the analysis did not consider any mitigation measures beyond minimal brushing and washing prior to export. It is our position that potato growers and other sector stakeholders should be provided with accurate and fulsome information, without the exclusion of key information that is required to form meaningful conclusions.

The Canadian Potato Council looks forward to providing comment to the USDA-APHIS public consultation on the *Draft Pathway Analysis*, and particularly so, to the next step, the risk management and mitigation consultation that will follow.

USDA-APHIS Bulletin available:

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USDAAPHIS/bulletins/33251ed>

USDA-APHIS *Draft Pathway Analysis* available:

[https://www.aphis.usda.gov/import\\_export/plants/plant\\_imports/process/potato-wart-ra-pathway-analysis.pdf](https://www.aphis.usda.gov/import_export/plants/plant_imports/process/potato-wart-ra-pathway-analysis.pdf)



The graphic features a central logo with a stylized shield containing green, blue, and orange stripes, above the text "SOIL FIRST FARMING" in large, bold, red and green letters. Below the logo is a map of Prince Edward Island. To the right is a collage of agricultural images: a green field, a red soil field, and hands holding soil. At the bottom left, there is a list of bullet points and a website URL. At the bottom right, there are logos for "Prince Edward Island CANADA" and "Farm & Food Care Prince Edward Island".

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- Meet some of those working to support soil health on PEI
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## Board Welcomes New Directors

The PEI Potato Board is pleased to welcome two new directors following the Annual General Meeting on November 22, 2022.

Katie MacLennan will be representing the West Prince District as the Seed Director. Katie and her husband Jonathan operate MacLennan Properties Ltd. in West Cape, PEI. They grow both seed and processing potatoes but have been increasing their seed acreage in recent years. They are also very active participants in on-farm research trials to improve the efficiency of their farming practices and evaluate ways to improve the environmental aspect of their farm. They have one son, Gabe, who is in high school. Katie is also active in community activities and was chair of the organizing committee of the PEI Potato Blossom Festival in O'Leary in 2022.



Ian Shaw of Shaw and MacLeod Farms will be the new Processing Director representing the Eastern District. Ian

has grown processing and fresh potatoes for over 29 years on his farm in Uigg, PEI.

Retiring directors are Mary Gillis of MacLean Farms and Mark MacMillan of Wilfred MacMillan and Sons. They were recognized at the annual banquet for the time and effort they have contributed to board activities over the years.



## Board Elects New Executive for 2022-2023

The new Board met on Tuesday, November 22 to elect a new executive and appoint members to the various Board committees.

John Visser, Tablestock rep for the Central District will serve a second term as Chairman. It has been a very busy year in 2021-2022 and it will be very beneficial to have continuity in this role for the next year.

Billy Cameron, Seed Director at-large, will serve a second term as Vice-Chair and Chad Robertson, Table Director at-large will serve a second year as Secretary-Treasurer.



More than 400 people visited G. Visser & Sons Potato Farm in Orwell Cove on October 8, 2022 to "Fill their Boots" and pick potatoes directly from the field. Many thanks to the Visser families who planned and hosted the event to thank Islanders for their support over the past year. Pictured above: (l to r) Production Manager Gui Poggio, Randy Visser, Jennifer Visser and their daughter Emma Visser.

# PEI Potato Board Annual General Meeting and Industry Banquet

The Potato Board Annual General Meeting was held on Tuesday, November 22, 2022 at the Board office in Charlottetown. Participants were in attendance both in person and virtually.

The day began with comments from the Honourable Darlene Compton, Minister of Agriculture and Land. She commented on the difficult year just experienced by the PEI potato growers and the importance of working closely together as we move ahead.

John Visser then provided the Chairman's report. This was followed by comments from General Manager Greg Donald. Staff members Mary Kay Sonier, Seed Coordinator; Scott Howatt, Processing Specialist; Kendra Mills, Marketing Director and Ryan Barrett, Research and Agronomy Specialist each provided a summary of initiatives for the coming year in their respective areas.

Market Updates were then provided by Victoria Stamper of the United Potato Growers of Canada and Mark Phillips, the Board's Market Information Officer and Marketing Specialist. They emphasized that while in 2022, areas in eastern Canada and the North Eastern United States had strong yields, the projected production for North America as a whole is down. Growers should market accordingly and avoid putting too much pressure on the market and risking price reduction when this is not warranted. Movement and prices for PEI potatoes have been strong to date.

## Potato Industry Leaders Honoured at Prince Edward Island Potato Board Annual Banquet

The Prince Edward Island potato industry gathered for its annual awards dinner for the first time since 2020. COVID-19 had put the banquet on hold for the past two years. There were many challenges during those years, including COVID-19, Hurricane Fiona, and, most notably, the potato wart crisis of 2021-22.

The industry took time to thank Premier Dennis King, former Minister of Agriculture Bloyce Thompson, current Minister of Agriculture Darlene Compton and the rest of the provincial government for their support and hard work during the potato wart crisis. The Board also recognized retired MP Wayne Easter for his work during the crisis. Although he was no longer a member of parliament, he was still there for the potato industry last year, making trips to Washington and Ottawa, as well as providing persistent correspondence to key contacts to support our industry.

Speeches were presented by Agriculture Minister Hon. Darlene Compton, Health MacDonald, MP Malpeque, and Potato Board Chair John Visser. Laura Dickson of Farm Credit Canada, major sponsor of the banquet, also offered some comments.

The Potato Board presented Industry Recognition awards for lifelong contributions to the PEI Potato industry to Gerald "Jeddy" MacFadyen, John Robinson, and Kevin MacIsaac.

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Gerald “Jeddy” MacFadyen was only sixteen when his father passed away, and he and his brother were tasked with taking over the family farm. His dad, Edward, and his cousins were pioneers in the seed potato industry in PEI. In the early years of commercial potato production, he was one of the largest potato farmers in PEI, growing 100-175 acres. This was remarkable in the early labour-intensive days that preceded modern farming technology. Jeddy has participated in the growing of over eighty potato crops. He has left an incredible legacy for his sons and now grandsons, making MacFadyen Farms Ltd. a fourth-generation farm. Jeddy and his wife Joyce have been exemplary citizens and have contributed to all facets of community life, enriching the lives of all in his church and community. Ninety-six-year-old Jeddy was there in person to receive the award with his wife and family.

John Robinson, his father Eric, and his brother Alan operated Eric C. Robinson Inc. in Albany, PEI, for many years. Their business consisted of a farm, packing shed, and potato dealership, as well as selling grading equipment, handling equipment, cultivating equipment, seed cutters, fertilizer, and crop inputs. John’s chemical engineering background enabled him to give expert advice to his customers. Over the years, John gained a reputation as a fair and honest man. Their farm was cutting-edge and led the way in trying new crops and production techniques. They were the first in their communities to employ soil conservation techniques, strip cropping, terraces, berms, hedgerows, and more, practicing sustainable agriculture before it was a buzzword. Much success can be attributed to his wife Hazel, who was also very involved in the operations. Philanthropy and support of their community are also a big part of their identity. In 1988 John and Alan banded with six other family farms to construct and operate Mid-Isle Farms Inc., a state-of-the-art packing and washing dealership. John was involved with developing the Canadian Potato Marketing Agency to help align potato supply with demand. His communication skills are excellent, particularly his listening skills. Daughter Mary Robinson and grandson Adam

Wight were on hand to accept the award on behalf of John.

Kevin MacIsaac brought industry insight from many different angles. Kevin grew up on his family’s farm in Bear River, PEI. He spent some time as a crop specialist in NB after completing his Bachelor of Science with a focus on Agriculture from the University of Guelph before returning to his family’s farm, where he was involved with dairy, potato, grain, and forage production. He served in executive positions with the PEI Soil and Crop Improvement Association, the Prince Edward Island Potato Board and other organizations. He later took on the role as the General Manager of United Potato Growers of Canada (UPGC), working to promote information sharing between Canadian Provinces and our United States counterparts. Kevin provided great industry support for over ten years in this role. Kevin has been a great spokesman for the industry and worked very hard with his US counterparts during last year’s potato wart crisis. Kevin retired from UPGC this year. Kevin was with his wife, Nancy, to accept the award.

There was a moment taken to also acknowledge the 2021 industry recognition award recipients Peter McKenna, Charles and Wilhelmina Murphy, and Morley Wood since the Board could not have a banquet last year.

The industry acknowledged outgoing board representatives Mark MacMillan, Mary Gillis and Young Farmer Michael Ramsay for their time on the board. New Board members Ian Shaw and Katie MacLennan were welcomed. Current Potato Board chair John Visser received recognition for completing his first year as chairperson and for rising to the significant challenges as the Board’s leader during a difficult year.

In a reversal of roles, the Board Executive shifted the script and offered a plaque as recognition to the PEI Potato Board staff for their hard work during the Potato Wart Crisis.

It was a great evening celebrating after years of complex challenges. The potato industry is an integral part of PEI, and it was an excellent opportunity to give thanks to those who have been and are working to keep it that way.

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# PEI Potato Board AGM & Industry Banquet



(Left) The Honourable Darlene Compton, PEI Minister of Agriculture and Land addresses the group gathered at the PEI Potato Board Annual General Meeting. (Right) Marketing Director Kendra Mills provides an update on marketing activities to the AGM.



The MacFadyen clan gathered to celebrate the industry recognition award presented to their father and grandfather “Jeddy” MacFadyen. Left to right: Donnie, Daniel, Michael, Bill, Nancy, Tammy, Neil, Rodney, Joyce and Jeddy MacFadyen, Board Chairman John Visser and MacFadyen’s neighbour David Francis.



Awards presented at the annual banquet (clockwise from top left): the Honourable Bloyce Thompson, PEI Minister of Economic Growth, Tourism and Culture and the Honourable Darlene Compton, PEI Minister of Agriculture and Land accept a certificate of appreciation for the provincial government for efforts during the potato wart crisis from John Visser, Board Chairman and Greg Donald, General Manager; Mark MacMillan, retiring Director receives a certificate of appreciation from John Visser, Board Chair; 2021-2022 Board Chair John Visser receives a certificate of appreciation from Vice-Chair Billy Cameron; John Visser addresses banquet guests; members of the extended Robinson family accept the industry recognition award on behalf of John Robinson. (left to right): Susan Robinson, Deborah Robinson-Annear, Dr. Alan Robinson, Adam Wight, Mary Robinson and Lori Robinson; Kevin MacIsaac, retired General Manager of UPGC receives an industry recognition award from John Visser, Board Chair and Ray Keenan, Chair of UPGC.



## POTATO GROWERS OF CANADA

### LES PRODUCTEURS UNIS DE POMMES DE TERRE DU CANADA

Victoria Stamper, General Manager, UPGC

USDA NASS released its 2022 estimate of Potato Production in the United States on November 9. NASS expects production of the fall potato crop to be down 3.2% with a reduction of almost 1.3 million hundred weight. The large drop in potato production was not unexpected with the substantial decrease of 25,000 planted acres in Idaho, one the largest producing states. The drops in other areas are driven by several factors including very late planting due to cold and wet spring; water shortages; as well as high temperatures and wind in some regions.

Potato Production in Canada for the year 2022, is estimated by UPGC at 124,717,000 hundred weight. This is down 0.7 million hundred weight or 0.5% below 2021.

Although 2022 saw over 4,000 fewer acres planted in PEI, overall Canadian planted acreage was almost flat to 2021. The bigger reduction, however, came from very late planting in BC, Manitoba, Quebec and New Brunswick due to a very cold and wet spring, combined with hot dry weather conditions later in the summer and into the fall across the country and particularly in Ontario where many growers are unable to irrigate their crops. Canadian yields are estimated to remain flat overall, with great variability between provinces, however high quality and good harvest conditions have allowed for a smaller reduction in production than originally anticipated in the spring.

Canada Potato Production Estimates will be reported by Statistics Canada on December 7, 2022.

## United States Potato Production Estimate November 9, 2022 (million cwt.) NASS

State	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	% change vs 2021
California	15,457	17,028	12,861	11,049	9,160	-17.1
Colorado	21,722	19,666	22,596	21,484	21,080	-1.9
Florida	5,512	6,831	5,304	5,400	4,956	-8.2
Idaho	141,750	133,980	134,775	132,090	120,745	-8.6
Maine	15,035	16,480	13,462	18,389	18,113	-1.5
Michigan	18,240	19,475	17,550	19,350	16,720	-13.6
Minnesota	18,705	18,040	17,922	17,553	19,298	9.9
Nebraska	9,264	9,259	9,212	9,261	9,552	3.1
North Dakota	23,725	20,945	23,800	22,500	22,265	-1.0
Oregon	27,000	22,680	27,000	26,280	25,311	-3.7
Texas	7,438	7,612	7,115	5,520	7,188	30.2
Washington	100,800	101,475	99,653	91,928	94,903	3.2
Wisconsin	27,135	28,980	28,770	29,025	27,598	-4.9
<b>Total US Crop</b>	<b>450,020</b>	<b>422,451</b>	<b>420,020</b>	<b>409,829</b>	<b>396,889</b>	<b>-3.2</b>

USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service Nov 9, 2022

# UPGC Estimate\* of Canadian Potato Production

November 17, 2022

\*Official report will be released from Statistics Canada on December 7, 2022

PROVINCE	2019	2020	2021	2022 ESTIMATE	% change over 2021
PEI	24,302	21,000	28,510	<b>27,100</b>	<b>-4.9%</b>
NEW BRUNSWICK	16,400	11,500	18,200	<b>16,800</b>	<b>-7.7%</b>
NOVA SCOTIA	416	300	357	<b>214</b>	<b>-40.1%</b>
NEWFOUNDLAND	54	55	55	<b>53</b>	<b>-3.6%</b>
<b>TOTAL ATLANTIC</b>	<b>41,172</b>	<b>32,855</b>	<b>47,122</b>	<b>44,167</b>	<b>-6.0%</b>
QUEBEC	12,648	12,731	16,216	<b>15,500</b>	<b>-4.4%</b>
ONTARIO	6,705	7,518	8,953	<b>7,800</b>	<b>-12.9%</b>
MANITOBA	19,700	24,000	24,927	<b>26,300</b>	5.5%
SASKATCHEWAN	1,500	1,400	1,519	<b>1,450</b>	<b>-4.5%</b>
ALBERTA	21,718	23,407	24,614	<b>27,600</b>	12.1%
<b>TOTAL PRAIRIES</b>	<b>42,918</b>	<b>48,807</b>	<b>51,060</b>	<b>55,350</b>	<b>8.4%</b>
BRITISH COLUMBIA	2,145	2,155	2,080	<b>1,900</b>	<b>-8.7%</b>
<b>TOTAL CANADA</b>	<b>105,589</b>	<b>104,066</b>	<b>125,431</b>	<b>124,717</b>	<b>-0.5%</b>



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# Canadian Centre for Climate Change and Adaptation is Now Open!

Officially opened on May 19, 2022, the Canadian Centre for Climate Change and Adaptation (CCCCA) has become an epicenter of climate change research on PEI. The Centre is a new venture supported by the governments of Canada, Prince Edward Island, and the University of Prince Edward Island (UPEI), where collaboration between climate change researchers, students, industry, and local partners is supporting a suite of multi-disciplinary research topics examining climate change on PEI.

The Centre's 45,000 square foot research building overlooking St. Peter's Bay, PEI, includes cutting-edge research and facilities, including the internationally renowned UPEI Climate Research Lab and the UPEI School of Climate Change and Adaptation. The facility is surrounded by wetlands, woods, and coastal habitats directly affected by climate change, which provides a readily accessible "living laboratory" for students and researchers to survey and from which to gain inspiration.

After the official opening event, the first annual Open House for the general public was held at the Centre on Friday, October 21, 2022, focusing on "designing solutions to solve climate emergency through experiential learning." Some 200 attendees—including residents, industry



*Canadian Centre for Climate Change and Adaptation at St. Peter's Bay.*

leaders, Indigenous community members, and interested individuals—participated in this event.

The Open House began with remarks from Dr. Greg Naterer, Vice-President of Academics and Research. It was followed by a series of short talks by guest presenters from First Nations, industry, the provincial government, NGOs, and academia on climate change challenges and opportunities on Prince Edward Island. The presenters talked about the effects of climate change on PEI and how to mitigate and adapt to them.

In line with the Centre's innovative and futuristic design with power generated mainly from geothermal and solar sources, the various research groups, or "labs", that operate under the CCCC have wide-ranging interests and innovative research approaches. The Climate Smart Lab—headed by Dr. Xander Wang—is made up of students with diverse backgrounds (e.g., chemistry, geology, sociology, marine and terrestrial biology), resulting in a variety of ongoing climate-related research projects with topics that



Ross Dwyer, Manager of Research Partnerships, School of Climate Change and Adaptation introducing the drone fleet.



*Dr. Aitazaz Farooque, Interim Associate Dean of the UPEI School of Climate Change and Adaptation, speaking at the opening ceremony at CCCCA.*

range from coastal erosion to wildlife populations, including endangered and harvested species. Predictive flood modeling, groundwater interactions, and climate-related impacts on Indigenous communities are further examples of ongoing research of the Climate Smart Lab.

Food security and agricultural advancements for adapting to climate change also play a huge part in CCCCA's research scope. Collaborating with UPEI's Faculty of Sustainable Design and Engineering, ongoing agricultural projects aim to shed light on adaptation strategies and inform government policy to help Island farmers cope with climate change effectively.

Other amenities in CCCCA include a Centre of Excellence in Food Security and Sustainability and student housing. Dr. Farooque is leading the Centre of Excellence as a Director with very close collaboration with the Potato Industry on PEI and beyond. Students will be taught their first and second years of the bachelor's degree on the UPEI campus and take classes at the St. Peters Campus for their third and fourth years. Over 30 graduate students are working at the Centre. These students are developing precision agriculture and innovative climate technologies to combat the challenges in the face of climate change.



*Dr. Greg Naterer, the Vice-President, addressed the attendees at the Open House event.*

The CCCCA has Canada's largest drone fleet for various purposes, from monitoring farms to supporting precision agriculture to studying how climate change affects coastline erosion rates. The CCCCA will provide excellent education and research services to Islanders while raising awareness and providing excellence in climate research and adaptation.

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# PEI Diagnostic Lab Summary 2022

Marleen Clark, P.Ag.

Plant Disease Diagnostician, PEI Analytical Laboratories

The PDD Laboratory section of PEI Analytical Laboratories, part of the Prince Edward Island Department of Agriculture and Land, provides diagnosis and surveillance of disease caused by fungi, bacteria, and viruses for commercial crops produced on PEI.

Samples for disease investigation are submitted to the PDD laboratory by producers, agriculture extension staff, researchers, greenhouse growers, agri-business representatives, crop insurance agents, and the general public. Diagnoses are based on a combination of investigative work, visual examination of symptoms, microscopic observations and culturing onto synthetic media. When additional confirmatory testing is necessary, culture samples may be sent to other laboratories with producer's consent. Samples submitted to the PDD laboratory between May 26th and October 19th, 2022 consisted of the following crops: Potatoes (42.22%), Apple (17.78%), fruit crops (9.44%), Vegetable crops (10.56%), other crops (7.78%), Cereal crops (8.89%), and Cole crop (3.33%). Diagnoses were also completed this season on new crops such as lavender and turf grass.



*Rhizoctonia stem canker in Goldrush variety- Rhizoctonia black scurf isolated from the seed.*

The objective of the PDD program is to provide disease diagnosis, and work with Crop Specialists to provide producers with information to control and prevent re-occurrence of disease. All sample results are accompanied with a written disease diagnostic report, a fact sheet on the disease, and a Crop Specialist consultation if needed. The collection of data is recorded using the Plant Health Reporting

System (PHRS) which also stores historical trends and disease susceptibility of various crops. Timely information on pest levels can help farmers make informed decisions on the utilization of appropriate control measures and management practices.

The 2022 growing season began with adequate rainfall and optimal growing conditions, especially for potatoes. The weather conditions following Hurricane Fiona were ideal for harvest. In the spring, there were a few seed emergence issues caused by leak, *Pythium ultimum*. The *Pythium* fungus combined with *Fusarium* can be present in potato seed eyes, wounds or in the soil. *Pythium* leak is primarily a soilborne disease but in combination with seed rotting pathogens such as bacteria and *Fusarium*, seed pieces can become non-viable. During warm, moist harvesting conditions, in potatoes with some wounding, *Pythium* can enter tubers and cause a storage rot quickly. Tubers harvested from wet areas are more prone to leak. Crops such as carrots, wheat, corn and soybeans are hosts for this fungus and can overwinter in our soils. Some of the varieties having seed piece decay this season due to *Pythium* and *Fusarium* included Shepody, Prospect, Alverstone, Russet Burbank, Campagna, Dakota Russet and Goldrush.

Potato late blight infections were not reported or identified this season which can be attributed to low level of inoculum and improved management practices being carried out by growers, along with an increase in spore trapping surveillance. The spore trapping is an important component in disease monitoring and prevention. Weekly updates through the growing season on spore levels for several potato foliar organisms were timely and gave farmers important information when planning spray regimes. The last confirmed incidence of late blight was in 2016 with four confirmed cases of US23 genotype.

Several Agdia test kits were used this season for a preliminary test for pinkeye, bacterial soft rot, blackleg, late blight, and pink rot causal organisms. These kits are a quick, rapid method to reduce the turn-around-time for results. However, additional laboratory procedures are still required to properly identify the causal agent.

With optimum growing conditions, the incidence of *Verticillium* and other wilt diseases such as white mould, *Rhizoctonia* stem girdling and *Fusarium* wilt were reduced. Several varieties such as Prospect, Vales Sovereign, and Campagna were exhibiting blackish stems on the upper portion of the plants. This was an incidental infection due to the lower portion of the potato stems being infected with



*Fusarium coeruleum* and *Pythium* sp. infection in eye of *Campagna* seed.

organisms as *Colletotrichum*, *Verticillium*, *Fusarium* and *Rhizoctonia*. Warmer temperatures, high winds, coupled with sporadic rainfall, and in some cases, high amounts of precipitation in a short time span, were conducive for bacterial spread. The plant stems were weaker and some tributary bacteria, *Pseudomonas* sp. and *Xanthomonas* sp. started in the weakened stems.

There were no pink rot tuber samples received this season and only three common scab tubers. The *Phytophthora erythroseptica* (pink rot) metalaxyl-m (Ridomil Gold) fungicide resistance survey that Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada offered is now completed. With the farmers' permission, the Plant Disease Diagnostic Laboratory submitted 95 isolates to Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada for fungicide resistance testing from 2013 to 2022. In 2013, one metalaxyl moderately-resistant (MMR) strain was found in the Prospect variety. In 2014, 14 isolates were found to be metalaxyl highly-resistant (MHR) in varieties of NorValley, Prospect, Goldrush and Superior. In 2015 and 2016, there were no metalaxyl-resistant strains identified.

The level of pink rot infections has decreased in recent years. Varieties that have shown susceptibility to the pink rot fungus include Goldrush, Russet Burbank, Dakota Pearl, Prospect, Superior and Norvalley. The use of improved pest management systems and applications of foliar and post-harvest phosphite products help reduce the incidence of infection in storage. It is important to note that a high level of soil adhering to potato tubers may reduce the chemical efficacy of the phosphite products.<sup>1</sup>

*Fusarium* head blight fungus, *Fusarium graminearum*, was detected in oats this season. In corn seedlings, both *Fusarium* sp. and *Pythium* sp. caused damping-off. Other crops such as fruit crops and Cole crops had minimal disease issues. Due to the Fiona hurricane, apple orchard harvests were reduced by 80 to 100 percent, depending on the location.

During the winter months, it is important to monitor storage facilities closely. Keep potatoes as cool and dry as

possible and watch for changes in the temperature of the pile. An Infra-red gun may be used to detect any changes in pile temperatures.

Planting disease-free seed in the spring can help eliminate an inoculum source. Some non-regulated potato diseases that can cause misses in a potato field include bacterial soft rot, blackleg, black scurf, leak, *Fusarium* dry rot and late blight. It is recommended to have your seed tested prior to planting for any potential seed piece decay organisms.

<sup>1</sup>Crane, B. (2017). *Assessing and managing metalaxyl-m resistant strains of the potato pink rot pathogen Phytophthora erythroseptica in Canada*. Charlottetown, PE: University of Prince Edward Island.

## Upcoming Events & Program Deadlines

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

### December 2022

Dec 14 **PEI Potato Board monthly meeting.**

### January 2023

Jan 4 **UPGA Potato Business Summit.** Denver, Colorado.

Jan 4-5 **2023 NPC Potato Expo.** Denver, Colorado.

Jan 27 **PEI Federation of Agriculture AGM.** Charlottetown, PEI.

### February 2023

Feb 13 **PEI Potato Day.** Credit Union Place, Summerside.

### March 2023

Mar 14-16 **Canadian Horticultural Council Annual General Meeting.** Vancouver, BC.

An Update From the:

# PEI Department of Agriculture and Land

by Lorraine MacKinnon, Potato Industry Coordinator



## New Staff At PEIDAL

The PEI Department of Agriculture and Land is pleased to announce we've added to our team to further support producers.

Morgan McNeil has joined the Sustainable Agriculture



team as Soil Health Specialist, a newly-created position. Many producers know Morgan from her years as Junior Agronomist at the PEI Potato Board. Morgan has a Master of Science in Soil Health from Dalhousie Agricultural Campus (2019) and has extensive on-farm and in-field experience. One role she

will play is to support growers in the development of Soil Health Improvement Plans (SHIPs). More information on that below!

Kurtis Rooke joins the Sustainable Agriculture team as our new Soil & Water Conservation Engineer. Kurtis holds a Bachelor of Engineering from the University of Guelph and most recently worked in agricultural machinery manufacturing. A new resident of PEI, Kurtis grew up on a beef/cash crop farm in Mount Elgin, Ontario. He will support producers in developing soil conservations plans and storage/manure management solutions.



## Attention: Agricultural Irrigators

Soil Health Improvement Plans (SHIP) will be required for irrigated fields in 2023 before you will be eligible to have a Water Withdrawal Permit issued for any of the following:

- Surface water permits
- New high capacity wells (excluding research wells)
- New low capacity wells requiring a permit under the Water Act

Holders of existing Groundwater Extraction Permits under the Environmental Protection Act and producers with existing multiple low-capacity wells without a permit WILL NOT require a Soil Health Improvement Plan for 2023, as existing irrigators will be phased in over time as they obtain Water Withdrawal Permits under the Water Act.

For questions on permit requirements, please contact Bruce Raymond at the PEI Department of Environment, Energy and Climate Action at 902-368-5054.

### What is a Soil Health Improvement Plan (SHIP)?

- A Soil Health Improvement Plan (SHIP) is a new advisory service developed to help producers understand their current soil health status and implement actions to support it.
- Soil and Water Specialists will work with agricultural producers to develop a plan that outlines beneficial management practices on farm.
- Soil Health Testing results will be collected to get started on SHIP development.
- For more information on SHIP, contact PEI Department of Agriculture and Land's new Soil Health Specialist: Morgan McNeil at momcneil@gov.pe.ca (902-213-3476).

## Provincial Support Announced For Farms Impacted By Storm Fiona

Last month, the Government of PEI announced new funding to support farms impacted by Storm Fiona. The funding is intended to assist farms where extraordinary costs have been incurred associated with agricultural infrastructure, crops, and livestock due to Fiona that are not covered by existing Business Risk Management (BRM) programs and other federal or provincial programs.



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Items such as building loss or damage, fuel for generators to complete harvest, and tree clearing are eligible under the program. The deadline to declare damage and submit an initial application is December 15th, 2022.

For more information and to access guidelines and application forms, please visit the PEIDAL website, call 902-368-4145 or email [Agr-FionaResponse@gov.pe.ca](mailto:Agri-FionaResponse@gov.pe.ca).

Additionally, the On-Farm Electrical Interruption Assistance Program will assist farms in the purchase and installation of a backup electrical generator. The program will help farms overcome food safety, biosecurity, and animal welfare issues that occur during extended electrical power interruptions. For more information, please visit the PEIDAL website, call 902-368-4880 or email [assurance@gov.pe.ca](mailto:assurance@gov.pe.ca).

Additional resources have also been allocated to the Farmer Assistance Program and to FarmersTalk.ca to support mental health in the industry. Call 1-800-736-8006 if you need support with the many mental health challenges that accompany farming.

## February 13: 2023 PEI Potato Conference

Planning for the 2023 PEI Potato Conference is now underway between the PEIDAL and the PEI Potato Board. There are some exciting changes for this year's event – the location is moving back to the Credit Union Place in Summerside for February 13th, and we've jam-packed the agenda with more speakers than ever! Topics will include:

- Practical and profitable soil health practices
- 2022 insect population monitoring results
- New and local insights on nutrient management requirements
- Variable rate plant spacing
- ...and many others!

After general sessions in the morning, concurrent sessions will run in the afternoon giving producers choice of session they'd benefit most from. Our keynote luncheon speaker is Mark Black – double lung and heart transplant recipient, 4-time marathon runner and dad. Mark will talk about how he faced his challenges in life and formed a high-level resiliency to move forward. Check him out at [www.markblack.ca](http://www.markblack.ca)!

## Federal Initiative Building Resilience In The Potato Sector of Prince Edward Island

Potato Stabilization and Innovation Initiative is accelerating recovery through investments in modernization and product diversification

*October 14, 2022 · Souris, Prince Edward Island.*

The agriculture and agri-food sector plays a vital role in communities across Prince Edward Island and throughout Atlantic Canada. When potato wart was detected on P.E.I. in the fall of 2021, export restrictions threatened the livelihoods of more than 5,000 Islanders who work in the industry. The Government of Canada acted quickly to put measures in place to support those most severely impacted, including the Prince Edward Island Potato Stabilization and Innovation Initiative (PSII).

This two-year, \$16 million initiative helps small and medium-sized enterprises modernize their operations to enhance productivity and diversify product lines. Investments in areas such as digitalization and automation, development of value-added products, and diversification into new and emerging markets is helping the industry respond to changing market conditions.

Today, the Honourable Ginette Petitpas Taylor, Minister of Official Languages and Minister responsible for ACOA, announced a combined contribution of over \$4.2 million for nine businesses across P.E.I.

Today's announcement further demonstrates the Government of Canada's commitment to working with industry to chart a path forward for the P.E.I. potato sector to ensure that producers, and the businesses that support them, are positioned for sustainable growth.



*Left to right: Heath MacDonald, Member of Parliament for Malpeque; Sean Casey, Member of Parliament for Charlottetown; Honourable Lawrence MacAulay, Minister of Veterans Affairs, Associate Minister of National Defence and Member of Parliament for Cardigan; Honourable Ginette Petitpas Taylor, Minister of Official Languages and Minister responsible for ACOA; Ray Keenan, President, Rollo Bay Holdings Ltd.; Alvin Keenan, Director, Rollo Bay Holdings Ltd.*

# Industry Updates

## The World Potato Congress Inc. Welcomes Its New Executive Director

October 12, 2022 - The World Potato Congress President, John Griffin, would like to extend a congratulations and



warm welcome to our new incoming Executive Director, Ellen Kouwenberg, who will be replacing outgoing General Manager, Brian Douglas.

Born and raised in a family of 9 children, her family operated a potato/beef operation in PEI, Canada. She received her BBA through UPEI and studied International

Business at the University of Copenhagen, travelling extensively throughout Europe and Russia exploring various business models as part of those studies.

Upon her return, she worked with the PEI Department of Agriculture in various capacities including, Potato Services, Farm Business Management, and the International Programs Division. A secondment led her back to the private sector where she completed a feasibility study into and the establishment of the PEI Potato Quality Institute (PQI), a nationally accredited testing laboratory which she then managed and expanded.

After her departure from PQI, she has continued to work in the global potato network, collaborating on projects with USA University potato variety research programs, expanding international technical and regulatory trade, and farm biosecurity. She brings experience to the World Potato Congress through her global connections, facilitating incoming and outgoing agricultural missions and trade shows involving countries in North Africa, Central and South America, Philippines, USA, and the Middle East. Ellen resides with her husband and their three children on a 285-cow milking herd dairy farm. Ellen has over 25 years as 4-H youth leader, sitting on various boards and committees in this and other organizations within her community, and as such, has been recognized with a Women In Agriculture

award for her on-going contributions.

The World Potato Congress Board members look forward to working with Ellen in her new role.

## Canadian Centre for Food Integrity Announces Change in Board Leadership

Guelph, ON. November 2, 2022 – As part of its succession plan, the Canadian Centre for Food Integrity's (CCFI) Board of Directors announces that Mike Dugate has been elected chair of the board and will be replacing long-time chair Kim McConnell.

Kim McConnell has served as chair of the CCFI board since its inception in 2016. His leadership, ideas and experience have been instrumental in the establishment of CCFI as the central organization in building public trust in the Canadian food system.

Kim McConnell is a founder and the former CEO of AdFarm, one of the largest agricultural marketing communications firms in North America. Over the years, he has been the catalyst behind many major industry ventures including an initiative to build greater public trust in food.

At the 2022 Public Trust Summit recently held in Toronto, CCFI Board and staff extended their sincere appreciation to Kim McConnell for his support and contributions over the past few years.

Mike Dugate, former Executive Director of Chicken Farmers of Canada, will assume leadership of the CCFI board, where he has been serving as a director since 2019 and Vice-Chair since 2020. Mr. Dugate provides extensive board governance, business, human resources, and government relations expertise to the board. In the area of public trust, he was a key contributor to the creation of the Public Trust Steering Committee and the Poultry Sustainability Value Chain Roundtable.

"It is a privilege to be elected as the new chair of the CCFI, said Mike Dugate. I am very grateful for the leadership and expertise of Kim McConnell who has been integral in taking the CCFI from a start-up to a well-established organization with great industry support and respect."

Additionally, the CCFI board has recently elected Julie Dickson Olmstead as a new board director. As the Managing Director of Public Affairs and Corporate Responsibility for Pattison Food Group, Julie oversees public affairs, ESG and DEI strategy, government and industry relations and strategic planning for sustainability, zero waste and environmental leadership projects.

Ms. Dickson Olmstead joins the following individuals who are currently serving on the CCFI board:

- Stéphane Beaudoin, President, Gestbeau Inc. and Magon Inc.
- Adele Buettner, Founder and President, AgriBiz Communications Corp.
- Mike Dungate, former Executive Director, Chicken Farmers of Canada
- Timothy Kennedy, President and CEO, Canadian Aquaculture Industry Alliance
- Nicole McAuley, Head of Communications and Public Affairs, BASF Canada Agricultural Solutions
- Darlene McBain, Industry Relations Manager, Farm

Credit Canada

- Kim McConnell, a founder and former CEO of AdFarm
- Shanna Munro, General Manager, Diversey Canada
- Mary Robinson, farmer, agribusiness owner, and President of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture (CFA)
- Jean-Marc Ruest, Senior Vice-President, Corporate Affairs and General Counsel, Richardson International Limited

*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 coordinating research, resources, dialogue, and communications. For more information, visit [foodintegrity.ca](http://foodintegrity.ca).*



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Our deepest thanks and gratitude to the PEI Potato Board and all the growers and dealers that helped support Food Banks Canada throughout this program. We are so grateful to have been able to distribute these spuds to communities in need from coast-to-coast-to-coast.

Food Banks  
Canada



## How does a PEI potato become yummy poutine for people experiencing food insecurity in Rankin Inlet, Nunavut? With your amazing support, of course!

After exports of P.E.I. potatoes to the U.S. were suspended in November, Food Banks Canada worked with government officials and the P.E.I. Potato Board to keep loads of fresh, wholesome produce from going to waste. Together, we committed to distributing over 80 truckloads of perfectly palatable tubers—for a total of over 4 million pounds—to food banks across the country. As was reported in a CBC story featuring Food Banks Canada CEO Kirsten Beardsley, the network of food banks and provincial associations were 'overjoyed' to receive the recovered spuds. Look what happens when we all pull together!



"The large donation of 900,000 pounds of potatoes has been a tremendous help. We are extremely thankful for donations like this; potatoes are high in protein and fiber, keep individuals full for extended amounts of time, and taste great in just about anything! Thank you for helping feed the need in our community. We appreciate all you do."  
Mackenzie Adams, UHC – Hub of Opportunities



Much like in Windsor at the UHC – Hub of Opportunities, the folks at the Ikurraq Food Bank in Rankin Inlet, Nunavut worked wonders with the shipment of potatoes – securing additional funding for cheese and gravy to serve hundreds of community members with a hot, heaping of poutine. In addition to this decadent treat, they put potatoes to good use: "The potatoes added a great source for stews, which with additional resources such as caribou are a staple food in our community." David Fredlund, Ikurraq Food Bank Society

### About Food Banks Canada:

Food Banks Canada provides national leadership to relieve hunger today and prevent hunger tomorrow in collaboration with the food bank network of over 4,500 food banks and community agencies from coast-to-coast-to-coast. Over the past 10 years, as a system we've sourced and shared over 1.4 billion pounds of food and Food Banks Canada shared nearly \$168 million in funding to help maximize collective impact and strengthen local capacity – while advocating for reducing the need for food banks. Our vision is clear: create a Canada where no one goes hungry. Visit <http://www.foodbankscanada.ca/> to learn more.



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