

Prince Edward Island

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POTATO NEWS



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In Our Seed Potatoes Issue:

- Seed Management 2023
- Investigating Resistance to Insecticides
- Capital Investment Project at Fox Island



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POTATO NEWS

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Chairman's Comments

by John Visser, PEI Potato Board Chairman



We have had a busy few months at the Potato Board as we enter what we like to call “meeting season.” Along with our regular seed, fresh, and processing committee meetings and our Board of Directors meetings, we have had some great information sessions for all growers’ including the AIM workshops and sessions at the International Potato Technology Expo. The AIM workshops are open to all growers, with meetings being hosted across the Island, and I strongly encourage you to take one in. A highlight for me was learning about farming practices across the Atlantic and new technologies used at Sophie Bambridge’s seed and processing operation in England.

We pride ourselves in being a strategically focused organization and we are working our way through creating a new five year strategic plan. I want to sincerely thank you for your input, as this will guide the Board and staff in their work and ensuring the industry continues to be well represented.

Our seed industry is alive and well and has made huge progress in mitigating disease. We have excellent numbers coming back from post harvest testing with an over 92% pass rate as of now. A big thank you to the growers who attended meetings last year and who have put in the extra work and shouldered the added costs to get us here. While we anticipate having enough seed for the crop this year, growers may need to be flexible in the varieties they are looking for.

The wart file continues to be moving along, albeit slowly. I look forward to meeting with the new CFIA President in the near future to ensure he is up to speed on the ongoing impacts to our industry.

Processing negotiations are going to look quite different than the past few years. The Processing Committee is

working hard to stay on top of the North American negotiations already underway and be prepared to accept a fair contract settlement on PEI. The table market is down slightly over last year, in price and volume, which is not surprising as it was a historic year and there were significant crop increases across western North America. Overall, we are trending above average in the fresh market and if we maintain current movement, we will have few issues moving the 2023 crop.

On a lighter note, let's not forget the importance of balance in our lives. As we gear up for the upcoming growing season, I urge all growers and their families to take the time to enjoy activities outside of farming to recharge and prepare for the upcoming growing season, which will be here before we realize it.



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PEI Potato Board News

At the December meeting of the Board of Directors, Chairman John Visser was able to distribute the PEI Potato Board donations from the french fry sales at Farm Day



Danya O'Malley from PEI Family Violence Prevention Services Inc. receives a donation from Chair John Visser

in the City that took place on October 1, 2023 to Danya O'Malley of PEI Family Violence Prevention Services Inc. and to Rayanne Frizzell from PEI 4-H.



Rayanne Frizzell from PEI 4-H receives a donation from Chair John Visser



The PEI Potato Board welcomed Krista Shaw in January as our Director of Stakeholder Relations

Krista Shaw has joined the PEI Potato Board team as the Director of Stakeholder Relations. Reporting to General Manager Greg Donald, Krista will be accountable for advocating for programs, policies and regulations that support the viable growth of our industry. She will support the development and maintenance of strategic relationships and communications with growers, industry and government stakeholders.

Krista is coming to us from her role as Assistant Deputy Minister with the PEI Department of Health. A former Director and Executive Director, she recently completed a Masters in Work, Organization and Leadership, and has over 22 years in leadership positions.

Krista comes from a farming family and she proudly married into Shaw Brothers Farm, a 250 year old, 8th generation seed operation in Stanhope. She lives there with her husband Steven and son Jack.

Krista is looking forward to meeting potato industry members, learning about current industry issues and becoming an industry advocate.

I am sure you will join me in welcoming Krista to the team. She can be reached at the office (902) 892-6551 or mobile (902) 314-9619 or by email Krista@peipotato.org

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AIM Research: Reduced Nitrogen for Seed

By Ryan Barrett, Research and Agronomy Specialist

The AIM Seed Working Group has been investigating ways over the last few years to optimize the size profile of seed potatoes to necessitate less cutting of seed. Reduced seed cutting with larger average seed piece size has generally been associated with improved emergence, less seed wastage, and improved yields. Research has been conducted on different best management practices associated with reducing average tuber size and increasing the number of tubers per plant. There has also been some work done around reducing the amount of nitrogen applied at planting as no reduction has been seen in yield with the reduction of nitrogen; in fact, we have seen increases in yield and tuber number at lower rates of nitrogen. Therefore, this work was continued in 2023.

Three fields were set up with reduced nitrogen trials in 2023. In West Prince, we set up two trials on seed fields. Varieties evaluated were Targhee Russet and Mountain Gem. For both varieties, the standard nitrogen rate was 100 lbs N per acre, applied in-furrow at planting. The treatment rate was 70 lbs N per acre, applied in-furrow, a 30% reduction in applied nitrogen. Planting date was May 20th for Targhee Russet and May 23rd for Mountain Gem. Top-kill date was September 1st for the Mountain Gem and September 7th for the Targhee Russet, and samples were harvested on September 26th, 2023. Both fields were split between low N and standard N rates, with the splits flagged and recorded.

In East Prince we set up a trial with Mountain Gem Russets on an irrigated seed field. The standard nitrogen rate was 150 lbs/ac N, applied in-furrow at planting. The treatment rate was 113 lbs/ac N applied in-furrow. The total fertilizer blend was reduced by 25%, so P, K and other nutrients were also reduced by 25%; however, it was felt that there would not be a deficiency of these other nutrients. Planting date was May 30th, 2023 and top-killing date was August 29th, 2023. Harvest samples were dug on September 27th, 2023. At harvest, six 10 foot samples were dug from each of the low N treatment and control in the same part of the field to reduce the effect of natural in-field variability. Hand-dug potato yield samples were graded and seed was divided into four size categories (< 4 oz, 4- 7 oz, 7-10 oz, and > 10 oz.). The total number of tubers per plot was also recorded. To calculate the cwt per acre from the lbs in 10 feet of row, we used the multiplication factor of 13.

At the two West Prince sites, there was no significant

difference in total yield or tuber number between the two nitrogen rates. The only significant difference (at 90% confidence interval) was that the weight of tubers under four ounces was lower in the 70 lbs/ac N treatment for both varieties. There was also no difference in the amount of residual nitrates in the soil after harvest. This leads us to believe that the optimum nitrogen rate for these fields is likely somewhere in the 70 to 100 lbs/acre range. Based on our results, we would not recommend that the producer make a significant change in their standard nitrogen fertility program, as 100 lbs/acre of nitrogen is already a lower rate than many seed growers employ in PEI.

In the East Prince field, there was a statistically higher total yield and number of tubers per sample in favour of the low nitrogen treatment (113 lbs/ac) compared to the grower standard rate of 150 lbs/acre. The reduced N treatment had a higher number of tubers per cwt, primarily in the 4-7 ounce size category. As a result, the percentage of the seed lot that will need to be cut more than once has been decreased while the total yield has increased, which was the objective of the trial. Further supporting the potential to decrease the applied nitrogen rate is the fact that there was statistically higher residual nitrate (50% more) after harvest in the 150 lbs/acre standard practice than in the 113 lbs/acre treatment. This indicates that the 150 lbs/acre supplied more nitrogen than was needed by the crop, and the 113 lbs/acre rate resulted in less residual N that will be susceptible to nitrate leaching or off-gassing

**Across 13 trials over four years,
there was no difference in total yield
of seed potatoes between grower standard
N rates and a 25-30% reduction treatment.**

**Full details are available on the
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at www.peipotatoagronomy.com.**



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Reflecting on Good Seed Management Practices in 2023

By Rebecca MacSwain, Seed Specialist

PEI seed growers proceeded cautiously into the 2023 growing season, as late-season aphid populations in 2022 were significantly higher than those of previous years. The high aphid populations in 2022 resulted in higher virus levels on harvested seed lots, and a lower provincial Post-Harvest pass rate than traditional averages. PEI was not the only region in this situation, as New Brunswick and Maine also reported abnormal pressure in the '22 growing season. As a result, New Brunswick and Maine increased the allowable virus cap for Potato virus Y (PVY) in seed planted in the spring of '23 to ensure sufficient availability for commercial production.

In an effort to maintain the integrity of high-quality and disease-free crops, PEI maintained the existing virus cap, a maximum of 3% PVY for the 2023 season.

Island growers were diligent in monitoring insect and disease pressures throughout the duration of the crop's development. The provincial "Aphid Alert" program was a valuable resource in gauging the risk factors associated with aphid populations and planning accordingly. 17 farms across the province participated in the program to track aphid populations throughout the summer and early fall.

Growers took a careful approach in managing crops in the 2023 season. Information seminars shared the importance of early season aphid protection in applying mineral oils frequently and generously. A minimum of 2L/acre per week of mineral oil applied to seed crops has been the recommendation for a number of years; however, many producers have increased mineral oil applications to 3-4 L/acre. Sufficient oil applications in combination with rotation of different chemistry groups of

insecticides has proved to be a very effective strategy in managing virus spread.

Aphid numbers were lower in June and July 2023 than in 2022. Nonetheless, green peach aphids began to appear in traps as early as late July, and total numbers of aphids recorded in early and mid September were still significantly higher than recent years prior to 2022. There is some evidence to believe that warmer weather is affecting the lifecycle of green peach aphids and accelerating their arrival to Prince Edward Island. Despite continued insect pressure, the precautionary and attentive management practices demonstrated during the 2023 growing season proved to pay off. The projected provincial pass rate for post harvest testing is above 90%, a significant improvement on the pass rate of the 2022 crop.

The statistics confirm that Island seed producers continue to demonstrate a steadfast commitment to producing high-quality, disease free crops.



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ELIGIBLE PRODUCTS



Potato Expo in Austin, Texas

By Greg Donald, General Manager of the PEI Potato Board

On Jan. 10-11, 2,320 potato growers and industry members from 18 countries turned out for Potato Expo 2024 at the Austin Convention Center in Austin, Texas, to do business and prepare their operations for the future. Celebrating its 16th year, Potato Expo 2024 broke all previous attendance records previously set at its Las Vegas show held in 2020. Along with the more than 2,300 attendees, 216 exhibitors convened at the potato industry's largest North America trade show. Included in the attendees and exhibitors were many Islanders including Potato Board staff, directors, farmers and industry members from PEI.

The annual event is hosted by the National Potato Council (NPC). According to current NPC President RJ Andrus of Idaho Falls, Idaho, "Kicking off every year, Potato Expo features industry experts and addresses issues top-of-mind for industry partners. This year's event doubled the number of educational and business-oriented sessions, which were



Ian Shaw, Donald Stavert and Craig Wallace, PEI Potato Board Directors at the Potato Expo in Austin, Texas



Chair of the PEI Potato Board, John Visser having a great conversation at the Potato Expo in Texas

held on three stages – the Expo Stage, the Cultivation Stage, and the Pavilion Stage in the all-new NPC Pavilion, which focused on the industry's public policy and advocacy efforts. We couldn't be happier with the turnout and the positive responses we received about the exhibitors, programming, and receptions. Thank you all for making Potato Expo 2024 the most successful event in its history!"

Potato Expo serves as a forum to foster collaboration between national and state potato associations, as well as the rest of the industry. Maintaining its reputation as a

place to help better position the industry for the future, Potato Expo 2024 addressed many current topics from disruptive weather patterns and the growing use of artificial intelligence (AI) in the potato industry to public policies affecting the growers.

(Source NPC release)



Rebecca MacSwain, Seed Specialist at the PEI Potato Board standing with Donald Stavert at the Potato Expo, with Ian Shaw on the right.

AIM Winter Workshop Series hosts Sophie Bambridge, B & C Farming, UK

By Ryan Barrett, Research and Agronomy Specialist

The AIM Seed and Tuber Quality Working Group invited Sophie Bambridge of B & C Farming, Norfolk, England to speak with producers and industry partners on February 7th and 8th in Fox Island and Emerald. A third meeting planned for Montague had to be cancelled due to the heavy snowfall from the previous weekend.



Sophie Bambridge, B&C Farming , UK

Sophie farms alongside her father Tony and the farm's technical manager Chris Day in Norfolk, an important agricultural region in England. B & C Farming manages approximately 6000 acres of farmland, with the majority of acres being land that they do not own but which they farm in partnership with landowners. They grow 375 acres of seed potatoes and 300 acres of processing potatoes along with more than a dozen other crops in rotation. Potatoes are grown in a long rotation (8 to 10 years) due to the challenge of potato cyst nematodes (PCN), as well as the significant tillage and destoning that has to happen in order to plant

potatoes.

In her presentation, Sophie shared how their farm approaches field operations, storage and grading of seed, managing seed quality and pest management, their relationships with key customers, and their farm's sustainability efforts. While there are many differences in growing potatoes between the UK and Prince Edward Island, it became clear that there are a number of challenges in common: lack of skilled labour, climate change, high costs of capital investment, and balancing sustainability efforts with profitability.

Sophie shared a video of their Tong seed grading line that they installed in 2018. It grades seed into six different size fractions with only four people required for the whole process. This enables them to grade with a smaller crew for a longer period of time while keeping seed tubers dormant. Sophie also relayed how they sell seed in the UK, where seed is supplied to a customer based on what they need to plant a certain number of hectares, rather than priced by the tonne. The seed spacing depends on the variety and the size fraction of seed that the commercial grower receives. B & C Farming is one of the few farms that cuts seed in the UK, as more than 95% of seed is planted whole; however, as they grow a few larger profile varieties (such as Shepody) for McCain growers, they do the cutting for the commercial grower.

In addition to her two presentations to growers, Board staff were able to take Sophie along with her partner William Skea and daughter Arabella out to a number of industry partners (Allan Equipment, Cavendish Farms Research) and grower farms to experience the PEI potato industry. Thanks to those that opened their doors for our visits and those that attended the workshops. A recording of the workshop in Emerald is available through the PEI Potato Agronomy website.



Great turn out at the Emerald AIM workshop to hear Sophie Bambridge speak.

Investigating Resistance to Insecticides in PEI Aphid Population

By Ryan Barrett, Research and Agronomy Specialist

The goal of this project was to conduct a genetic survey on preserved aphids collected weekly, through the Aphid Alert Program in 2022 from various locations across Prince Edward Island (PEI). The objectives included assessing the extent of pyrethroid insecticide resistance resulting from known resistance mutations, quantifying fluctuations in insecticide resistance rates throughout the season and across three primary agricultural regions of PEI, and pinpointing the specific aphid species contributing to resistance within the larger aphid community. This analysis is crucial for obtaining valuable insights into the evolving dynamics of aphid resistance to pyrethroids in PEI, ultimately aiding in the development of more effective and sustainable pest management strategies for potato growers in the region.

Previous research on this topic was done by the team at Agricultural Certification Services (ACS) in 2015-2016 on this topic, but no analysis had previously been done on PEI aphid samples. In addition, we have started to see larger populations of Green Peach aphids (GPA) in recent years. We know that Green Peach aphids are a preferred vector for transmitting potato viruses such as PVY and potato leafroll virus (PLRV), so better understanding the level of insecticide resistance in this species and other aphids is very important. Therefore, the AIM Seed and Tuber Quality Working Group contracted the services of ACS to carry out this research.

DNA extraction was carried out on a minimum of 200 preserved aphids collected in 2022 from PEI. The extracted DNA underwent PCR amplification using primers targeting either a smaller, generic gene region or a larger region specific to Green Peach aphids, or both. Extracting high-quality and sufficient quantity DNA from aphids preserved for over a year posed challenges, especially for the mutation analysis employed in this study.

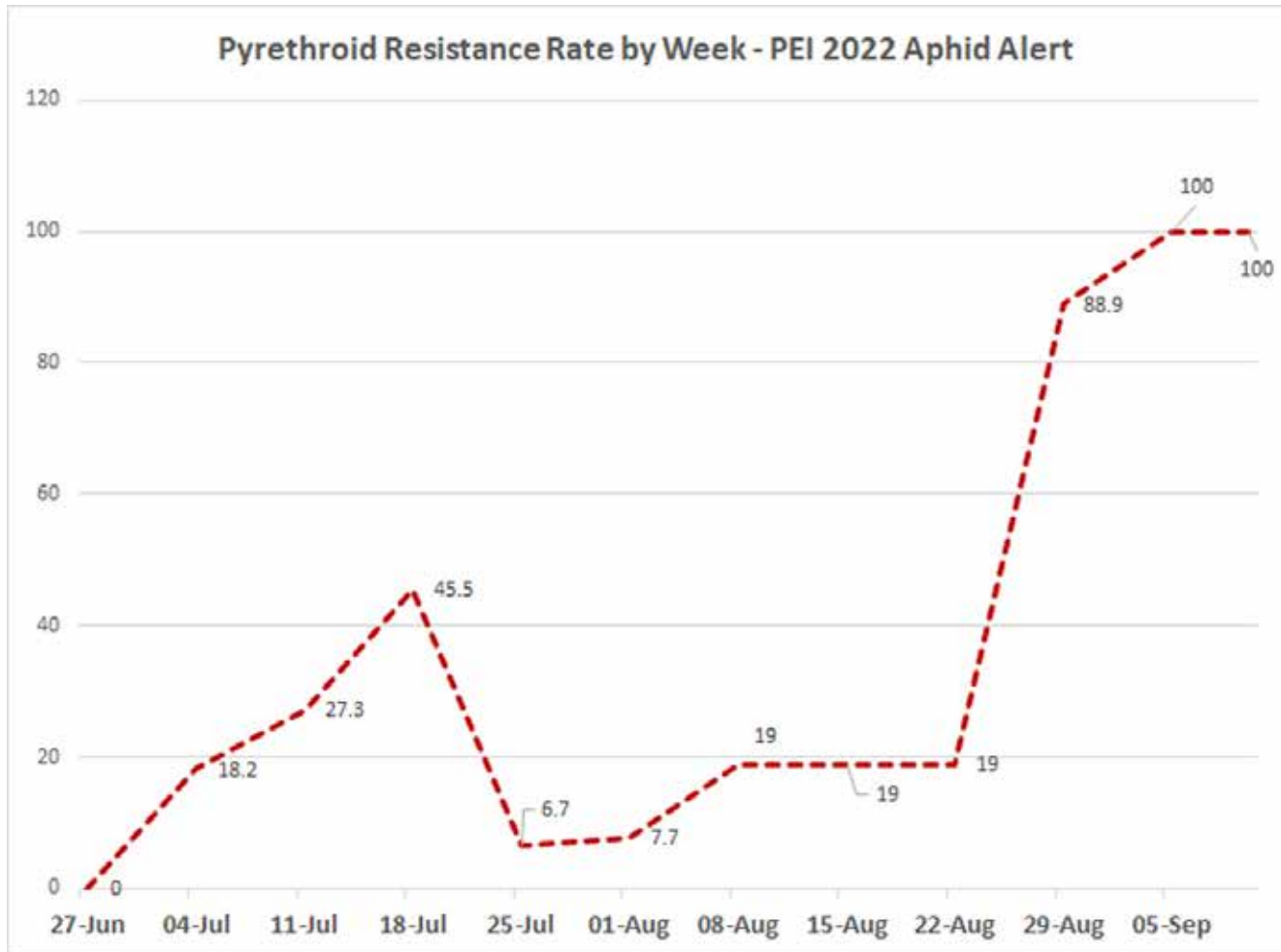
From this analysis, the research team found that 46% of the tested aphids exhibited at least one pyrethroid resistance mutation. Notably, resistance levels changed significantly over the season, with a distinct peak early (around mid to late July), a decline in early August, then rising to a later peak in early to mid-September, where 100% of tested aphids were resistant. Unlike the changes in resistance through time, we did not find convincing differences in rates from different regions of PEI.

The vast majority (94%) of the resistance mutations were linked to *M. persicae* (Green Peach aphid), with the remaining 6% associated with sequences most closely matching *R. padi* (Bird Cherry Oat aphid). Surprisingly, a substantial number of early-season aphids were genetically matched to *M. persicae*, contrary to visual assessments of the aphids when collected. This study shows that substantial pyrethroid insecticide resistance occurs in the aphids of PEI, even early in the season, but especially late in the season. The levels of resistance observed in this study exceed that found in the two year survey (2015-2016) in NB (MacKenzie et al. 2018), which in itself found an increase in resistance in the second year of the survey compared to the first. This suggests that resistance is similar across our region, and increasing over time.

This research was limited to resistance to the pyrethroid insecticide class, generally among the most commonly used foliar insecticides in the region, and for which the greatest concentration of study and characterization of resistance mutations is known. It is important to note, however, that similar resistance mechanisms have also been seen in other commonly used insecticide classes such as neonicotinoids, organophosphates and others, but they were not studied as a part of this survey. Commonly used pyrethroid insecticides used for aphid control include Silencer, Matador, Decis, Labamba, Pounce, and Ambush.

Moving forward, growers are encouraged to replace pyrethroid insecticides after mid-July with other aphicides. In 2022, we saw Green Peach aphids show up in late August, while in 2023, we saw them show in aphid traps as early as late July, with peak numbers occurring in mid to late August. It is also important to note that we did see some evidence of pyrethroid resistance in early season non-colonizing aphids as well. Maintaining a good rotation of aphicides of different classes along with mineral oil application of a minimum of 2 L per acre per week has been shown to significantly reduce the risk of PVY spread in-season and is associated with better post-harvest test results.

Our thanks to Tyler MacKenzie, Mathuresh Singh and the rest of the team at ACS for partnering with us in this research. Thanks also to the team with the PEI Department of Agriculture who run the Aphid Alert program for supplying the aphids for this research project.



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Capital Investment Project at Fox Island

By Marla Slater, Seed Project Coordinator at Fox Island

In March of 2022, Fox Island embarked on an ambitious two-year capital investment project that aimed to transform its agricultural practices and set new standards for efficiency, and biosecurity. This ground-breaking initiative was made possible through a collaboration between the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA), the provincial government of Prince Edward Island, and the PEI Potato Board.

A central focus of the project was the installation of a refrigeration system within the storage facility. This enhancement not only ensures optimal temperature control but also plays a crucial role in regulating conditions to keep the seed in prime condition. By prioritizing the integrity of the seed, Fox Island is better poised to deliver a quality seed.

Committed to eco-friendly practices, Fox Island incorporated solar panels into its energy infrastructure. The deployment of solar technology not only helps to reduce the farm's carbon footprint but also serves as a strategic move to offset electrical costs.



Walker Warehouse Ventilation

Recognizing the paramount importance of biosecurity, the project incorporated measures to enhance the safeguarding of the farm's property. This included expansion of the parking lot, to create a safer forklift loading area of the seed onto trucks for shipping outside of the biosecurity area. Additionally, an innovative solution was introduced with the inclusion of a portable loading ramp. This strategic addition

enables the loading of seed outside of the bio-secure zone, streamlining operations and minimizing potential risks. The expansion of the parking lot proved indispensable in accommodating these conditions, ensuring smooth and secure logistics during shipping periods. To further strengthen biosecurity, a hot water high-pressure washer was added to ensure that farm equipment and undergo thorough cleaning. This preventative measure guarantees a soil-free, clean equipment, effectively mitigating the risk of contamination.



Shop Solar Panels

In a stride towards optimizing efficiency & reducing manual labour, Fox Island purchased a new planter to help expedite spring planting. This strategic investment not only streamlines operations but also reflects a commitment to harnessing technology for enhanced productivity. In tandem with the new planter, the seed farm will also incorporate new strategies for in-furrow fertilizer applications, aiming to speed emergence and improve tuber set. By incorporating these advancements, the farm not only works to use today's agricultural innovations but also underscores its dedication to sustainable and efficient farming practices, setting new standards for precision and productivity in planting for Fox Island.

To capitalize on existing infrastructure, Fox Island initiated the purchase and installation of a ventilation system for its oldest storage facility. This transformation not only breathes new life into the structure but also marks a significant step towards increasing storage capacity. By repurposing this facility, Fox Island not only optimizes its storage capabilities but also positions itself to accommodate potential future expansions in acreage and crop yield.



Hot Water Pressure Water

This forward-thinking approach underscores the farm's commitment to operational efficiency and future scalability.

Acknowledging the unpredictable nature of weather conditions, Fox Island took a proactive stance to safeguard its tissue culture banks. The installation of a generator ensures a continuous and safe growing space, irrespective of weather/ electrical fluctuations. This measure is crucial in maintaining the integrity and viability of the tissue culture banks. Fox Island's investment in the generator underscores its commitment to the preservation of critical genetic resources.

Fox Island's commitment to efficiency and modernization extends beyond its agricultural practices to the central office and lab building. Addressing both comfort and sustainability, the farm invested in an updated central air system to replace broken air conditioning units. Utilizing the existing central ductwork throughout the entire building, this upgrade not only enhances the working environment for staff and researchers but also represents a conscious effort to reduce reliance on fossil fuels for heating.

Fox Island's capital investment project, spanning from March 2022 to March 2024, sets a new benchmark for agricultural innovation. Through collaboration and a forward-thinking approach, the farm has not only improved its operational efficiency but has also demonstrated a commitment to biosecurity. As Fox Island continues to evolve, this project serves as a testament to the transformative power of strategic investments in the agriculture sector.



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By Victoria Stamper, General Manager, UPGC

What's happening in potatoes? January 2024

The month, and the year, started off with a bang at the Potato Business Summit in Austin, Texas, hosted by United Potato Growers of America and sponsored by United Potato Growers of Canada among others. The summit, just prior to the NPC hosted Potato Expo, had a great lineup of speakers discussing topics from alternative crops, general economic outlook, a European update, fresh and frozen sector outlooks and a very interesting presentation about the potato consumer.

Some of the takeaways from Stephen Nicholson's discussion about the economy in the US included the fact that wages are up over inflation and the consumer is in a good position because with higher wages comes more disposable income and with mortgages still at relatively low rates things are good at the moment, but consumers are still worried about the future. Things are a little different in Canada as our mortgages are for much shorter terms than in the US so many people's mortgages came due for renewal right as interest rates were raised, causing Canadians to feel the impact of inflationary pricing much more on their disposable income levels. From a global perspective, US exports are declining as countries like Brazil and Russia continue to be more aggressive on world markets. We will continue to see the impact of the invasion of Ukraine for many years to come as the country has some of the best agricultural land in the world and it will take a long time to come back.

In Europe, the EU-4 has had fairly stable planted acreage and yields over the years including in 2023 and there was a very good potential for the crop: however, severe weather before and during harvest caused 650,000 tonnes of potatoes to be left in the ground. It is the smallest crop ever for the UK and Belgium, the Netherlands, France and even Germany to some extent continue to talk about shortages. There may be opportunities for NA to take back some market share as Turkey, India and China are filling the gap on supply but are still not competing at the same level with EU4 and NA which still control the majority.

The US market was characterised by a general over supply of potatoes in the Pacific Northwest, concentrated in the processing sector. After two years of shortages

processors over contracted acres, and after an excellent growing season resulted in higher yields in the region, including Alberta and Manitoba, russet supplies outmatched projected demand in the processing sector. The fresh crop does continue to move, and as of January was only off seasonal pace by about 4-6%, however, many growers want to know the planting intentions for 2024. The US is hopeful that weaker alternative crop pricing, combined with a weaker Idaho GRI; cost of production increases, water level concerns and even seed supply will all work together to keep planted acreage at levels that will avoid this type of oversupply moving forward. If the US does return to volumes shipped in prior years as has happened this year, then the market tends to value the crop at the same level it did in those years.

Turning to the "potato pile" in Canada, we saw a very interesting growing season last year for many regions due to weather, from drought like conditions in the west to seemingly never-ending rain in the east. However, even with these climate challenges, the crop was harvested well and at a record potato production for the country of over 128 million.

Total Canadian Potato Storage Holdings on January 1, 2024 are up 7.2% compared to January 2023 and are well above the five year average. Quebec, PEI and New Brunswick are all showing lower stocks compared to January of last year, which may be a combination of good movement in December but also higher cull rates in certain varieties. We can see the impact of a very good crop in the west, with the provinces of Ontario to BC showing much higher January stocks when compared to last year and their 5 year average. Slightly higher disappearance in Ontario and BC could not counter lower disappearance levels in the rest of the provinces. It is however important to remember that although disappearance may be lower in some areas, we are still setting records for total disappearance when we look back several years. With higher planted acres, particularly in the west, coupled with better yields, we see the impact of the increased production. Storages seem to be holding well to date despite concerns of the wet conditions in the east and higher than normal storage levels in the west.

Although storages are at record levels, if we continue the current pace of movement in the table sector we could have stocks cleaned up in just shy of 6 months time. There is still concern about the high levels of processing

potatoes, however, which may get reflected in planting intentions for 2024 as processors will be hesitant to take early harvest if stock levels remain high. It is important to note that experience shows quality in storages changes from now on with the onset of the frigid cold weather. With storages remaining closed for several days, CO2 levels can build up, so it is advisable for growers to keep a close eye on their piles!

Fresh Sector

In total, based on AAFC holding reports, Canada has 16.5 million cwt of potatoes for the table sector in storage as of January 1, which is 4.2% below the amount in storage at the same time a year previous, but still higher than the five year average. The majority of the fresh potatoes are grown in the eastern provinces where stocks fell by 811,000 cwt compared to last year. As we remarked last month, even if we add in the table stocks of Manitoba and BC, overall stocks are still down slightly year over year. Despite an oversupply of potatoes in the Pacific Northwest, we can still see movement was good in the fresh sector for December; in fact, disappearance for fresh potatoes was up 27.8% from a year ago. Table potatoes continue to be a good source of nutrition and value per dollar for consumers during continued food inflation.

Processing Sector

With excellent crops in the major processing sector markets of Alberta and Manitoba, coupled with oversupply south of the border, it is not a surprise that holding of potatoes destined for processing are up by 13.2%, a 6.8 million cwt increase over last year and a record for Canada in this sector. Although the potatoes for frozen stock may be

much higher, in areas like Ontario the pace of movement for chip stock has actually increased. We continue to keep an eye on opportunities for export of frozen product to Europe who, it is estimated, have left just over 650,000 tonnes of potatoes in the ground due to dismal weather during harvest. There may also be some movement of potatoes from the west as supply in the Atlantic Northeast is tight due to losses at harvest and potential storage issues moving forward. With potential contract reductions in the spring growers should have time to react and adjust planting intentions for this coming crop.

Seed Sector

Seed Inventory on January 1, 2024 is 10.1 million cwt which is 3.8% below 2022 and just slightly above the five year average, perhaps not surprising if we look at certified acres planted in 2023. We can see that more than half of the major seed producing areas reported decreases in planted acreage in 2023 compared to the year prior. In fact, certified acres in Canada are at their lowest level since 2018. With stocks down in all provinces except Ontario and PEI, there may be regional and/or varietal shortages in seed that were seen last year. In PEI, where seed is currently grown mostly for local use, it is interesting to note that since 2020 acreage for Mountain Gem has almost tripled and acreage for Burbanks has reduced by almost half. In the next largest seed area of Alberta, the top three varieties based on accepted acres are dominated by the russet varieties of Burbank, and Ranger, consistent with the overwhelming focus on processing potatoes in the province.

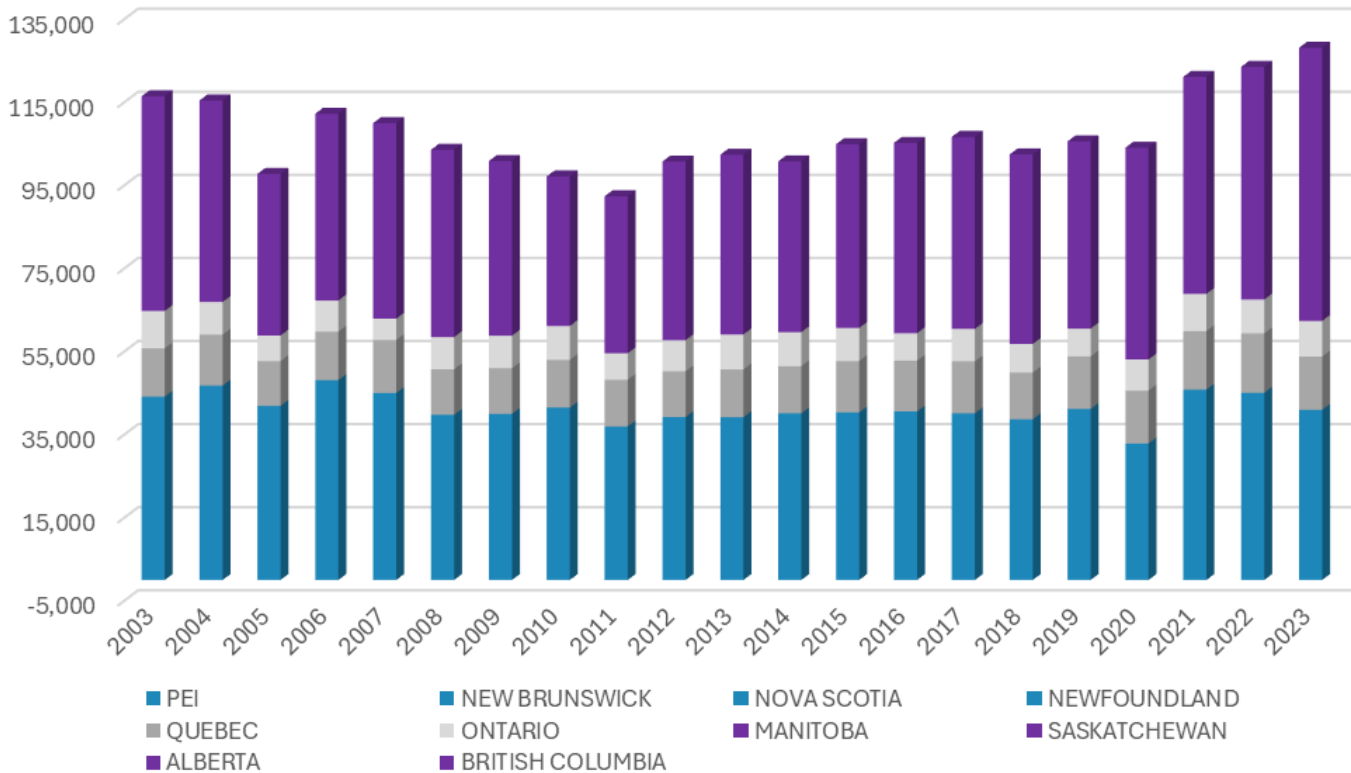
United Potato Growers of Canada will continue to monitor holdings and disappearance of the potato supply in North America, reporting monthly for your reference.

Province	Statistics Canada Report December 5, 2023				PRODUCTION COMPARISON		
	Planted Acreage	Harvested Acres	Yield	Production ('000 cwt)	2023 vs. 2022	2022	2021
PEI	84,500	83,000	311	25,813	-7.1%	27,789	27,209
New Brunswick	52,815	50,515	295	14,879	-12.5%	17,000	18,200
Nova Scotia	800	780	285	222	-7.5%	240	357
Newfoundland	425	370	134	50	-3.8%	52	55
Total Maritimes	138,540	134,665		40,964	-9.1%	45,081	45,821
Quebec	46,762	45,566	296	13,492	-5.5%	14,278	14,100
Ontario	37,700	37,400	230	8,602	5.4%	8,160	8,953
Manitoba	81,000	80,000	372	29,760	13.9%	26,139	24,024
Saskatchewan	7,300	7,200	247	1,780	22.8%	1,450	1,519
Alberta	80,100	76,440	420	32,063	19.6%	26,813	24,614
Total Praries	168,400	163,640		63,603	16.9%	54,402	50,157
British Columbia	5,830	5,790	370	2,140	33.8%	1,600	2,080
Total Canada	397,232	387,061	333	128,801	4.3%	123,521	121,111

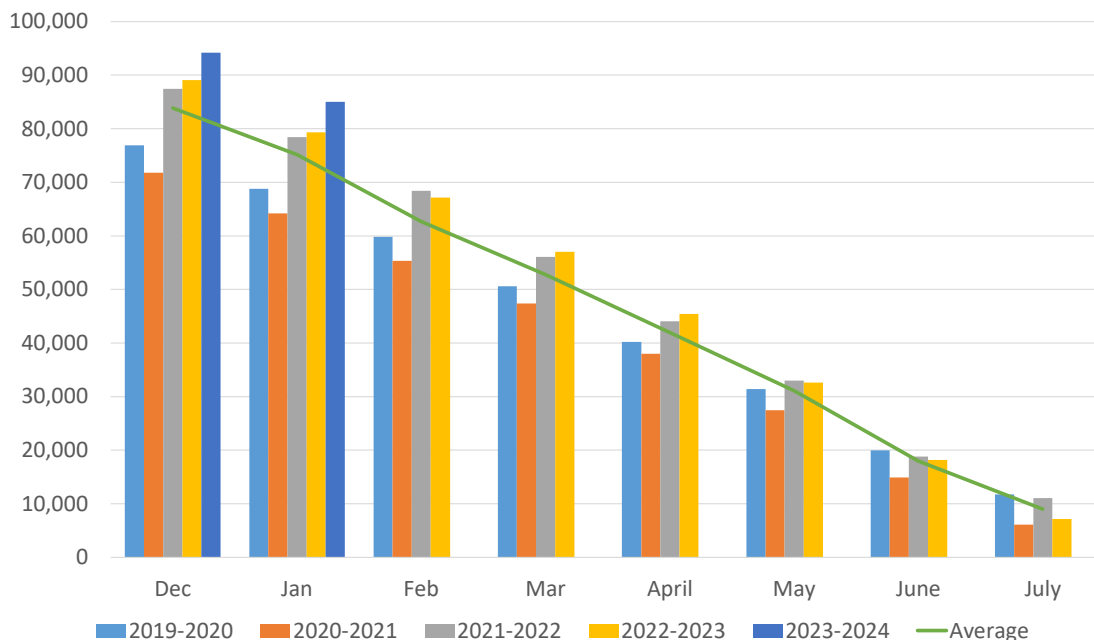
20 Years of Canadian Potato Production

('000 cwt)

East / West comparison



Canadian Holdings by Month



Post Harvest Testing in PEI

By Patrick Quilty of the Potato Quality Institute

diligent in their spray schedule.

POST HARVEST RESULTS

2023 - 91.1%

2022 - 68.9%

2021 - 96.2%

As every year rolls through it is always different from the previous year in one way or another. 2024 has been no different. Sample numbers submitted for Post Harvest testing were down, with approximately 40% utilizing Post Harvest PCR testing while the ELISA/Greenhouse testing accounted for approximately 60%. The Potato Quality Institute finished testing around the first week of January 2024.

We saw a lot of short samples after testing this year, which could have been because of the wet summer and less sunshine so the tubers were not as mature as they normally are at harvest. This created some early break down of tubers before we could complete the testing.

That being said the results were very good with an approximate 91.1% pass rate with 81.5% samples at 1% or less. This was one of the better years in a while, mainly because there were no aphids until very late in the season and most growers had their green plants killed and ready for harvest when the sightings began. Other factors include not raising the percentage cap and that growers were very



Tubers are replanted in a greenhouse after taken out of dormency to be able to test the green leafy growth for PVY.

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New Potato Industry Coordinator for the Department of Agriculture in PEI

By Rodrigo Santos, Potato Industry Coordinator



My name is Rodrigo Santos and since November 2023 I have been appointed as the new Potato Industry Coordinator for the Department of Agriculture in Prince Edward Island. I accepted this challenging position with excitement to support the Island's largest industry and I wish to continue developing the quality work delivered by my predecessors.

I'm originally from Brazil, where I built my career working on Research and Development for some key global corporations in the seed business. Early in 2022 I moved to PEI with my family and it was when I first had contact with the potato industry by working on research in the processing sector. The move to the Department of Agriculture has been a pleasant experience, as its people bring the welcoming spirit characteristic of the Islanders. To work close to the producers and to support their progress is something that motivates me, and I'm looking forward to getting acquainted with more stakeholders through the year.

One great opportunity to meet will be during the 2024 International Potato Technology Expo, on February 22nd and 23rd, at the Eastlink Centre, in Charlottetown. Along with the show, the traditional conference will be held in the mornings to provide informative talks on current themes for the industry. This year's topics will include market updates

for Canada and the U.S., economy, labor, disease and pest management, and digital and precision agriculture, delivered by renowned specialists in each area. There will be up to 5 CEU's approved for Certified Crop Advisors during the conference and the admission is included in your show registration. Registration at the door is \$20, but you can pre-register online and save 50% to guarantee full access for the two days of the tradeshow and conference, which includes free lunch on both days. For more information, including the full conference schedule, and to pre-register, visit www.potatoexpo.ca.

Also, returning to this year's edition of the Potato Expo, there will be a networking evening at The Pourhouse (upstairs at the Old Triangle, Great George St.) on Feb. 22nd. There, you can meet some of the speakers and socialize with other growers and industry professionals. Doors at the Pourhouse will open at 6:00 pm and there will be no cost to attend.

In conclusion, I would like to mention that the current edition of the PEI Seed Potato Certification List and Grower Directory is available, regarding the seed produced in 2023. The Seed Directory is put together by the Department of Agriculture with information provided by the CFIA and authorized for release by the seed producers. In 2023, 12,230 acres of seed potatoes were entered for inspection in PEI, which reflects about 90 seed growers and a selection of over 80 table and processing varieties. Printed copies of the booklet will be mailed to growers and industry and additional copies can also be found at the PEI Potato Board Office. During the Potato Expo, copies will be available at the booth of the PEI Department of Agriculture. The online version can be downloaded from the Department website or by capturing the QR code below with your smartphone camera. For additional copies or other topics that I may be able to assist with, feel free to contact me at 902-314-1607 or email rsdsantos@gov.pe.ca.

*Scan this QR code to
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Potato Directory to your
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TABLE 3
PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND 2023 CROP
SUMMARY OF HECTARES* PASSED BY CLASS AND VARIETY

The information includes only the production information authorized by growers for release in this publication.

VARIETY	PE	E1	E2	E3	E4	F	C	TOTAL
EVA	0.250	10.030	39.940	331.910	52.140	14.090	0.000	448.360
MOUNTAIN GEM RUSSET	0.370	1.760	27.820	219.840	133.936	49.710	4.650	438.086
DAKOTA RUSSET	0.000	0.000	26.000	122.510	29.620	112.460	0.000	290.590
RUSSET BURBANK	0.210	2.540	73.260	161.340	19.250	0.000	0.000	256.600
NORLAND	0.163	2.610	22.890	26.180	26.400	19.050	0.000	97.293
CARIBOU RUSSET	0.100	1.030	22.010	50.930	5.450	4.100	0.000	83.620
RANGER RUSSET	0.170	0.780	18.010	19.790	0.000	27.810	0.000	66.560
ALVERSTONE RUSSET	0.004	0.000	14.180	22.180	28.049	0.000	0.000	64.413
NONPAREIL RUSSET	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	59.740	0.000	0.000	59.740
ALTHEA	0.000	0.000	0.000	6.520	43.150	6.870	0.000	56.540
LAMOKA	0.003	0.000	9.100	34.200	1.820	10.000	0.000	55.123
INNOVATOR	0.044	0.000	0.000	0.000	54.260	0.000	0.000	54.304
TARGHEE RUSSET	0.040	0.000	0.000	43.547	0.000	2.020	0.000	45.607
WANETA	0.003	0.000	0.000	33.900	4.040	3.640	0.000	41.583
KENNEBEC	0.160	1.110	8.400	28.830	0.000	0.000	0.000	38.500
GOLDRUSH	0.430	10.710	7.490	11.160	3.090	1.820	0.000	34.700
YUKON GEM	0.060	0.410	0.000	17.530	0.000	15.670	0.000	33.670
RICKEY RUSSET	0.004	0.000	0.000	0.000	33.150	0.000	0.000	33.154
NADINE	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	29.960	0.000	29.960
SATINA	0.280	9.280	18.750	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	28.310
SUPERIOR	0.270	4.190	0.000	0.000	18.240	5.500	0.000	28.200
DAKOTA PEARL	0.000	0.000	18.950	0.000	0.000	5.830	0.000	24.780
CHIEFTAIN	0.200	1.010	11.340	0.000	0.000	11.130	0.000	23.680
CLEARWATER RUSSET	0.050	0.000	4.210	18.550	0.000	0.000	0.000	22.810
PAYETTE RUSSET	0.090	0.770	3.680	16.870	0.000	0.000	0.000	21.410
REVEILLE RUSSET	0.000	0.000	0.000	21.300	0.000	0.000	0.000	21.300
SORAYA	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	20.180	0.000	20.180
SHEPODY	0.000	0.000	0.000	11.500	8.100	0.000	0.000	19.600
ELECTRA	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	4.050	8.610	6.680	19.340
ALEGRIA	0.000	0.000	0.000	5.100	0.000	11.140	0.000	16.240
CARLINGFORD	0.000	0.000	4.000	10.360	0.000	0.000	0.000	14.360
ACTRICE	0.000	0.000	0.000	14.040	0.000	0.000	0.000	14.040
AC CHALEUR	0.030	0.100	0.810	5.340	7.700	0.000	0.000	13.980
QUEEN ANNE	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	12.800	0.000	0.000	12.800
BELMONDA	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	11.740	0.000	11.740
REBA	0.000	0.000	11.280	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	11.280
AAC CANADA GOLD-DORÉE	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	11.000	0.000	0.000	11.000
	2.931	46.330	342.120	1233.427	555.985	371.330	11.330	2563.453

* Includes only those varieties that are currently registered and have production exceeding or equal to 11 ha.

Reprinted from the 2023 Prince Edward Island Seed Potato Certification List and Grower Directory



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Industry Updates

New President of CFIA

The Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, today announced the following changes in the senior ranks of the public service: Dr. Harpreet S. Kochhar, currently President of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, becomes Deputy Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, effective January 27, 2024. Paul MacKinnon, currently Deputy Secretary to the Cabinet (Governance), Privy Council Office, becomes President of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, effective January 27, 2024.

Workers Compensation Board are looking for volunteers.

Are you, your family, or your workers at risk of hearing loss? Do you know what the noise levels are on your farm? Or when and where hearing protection is needed?

Noise-induced hearing loss happens over time and can often be linked to a noisy work environment. Noise hazards are present in many industries, including the potato industry. In fact, the prevalence of hearing loss in adult farmers is almost double that of non-farmers, according to the Canadian Centre for Rural and Agricultural Health (Saskatchewan). The good news is that this type of HEARING

LOSS IS PREVENTABLE!

With that in mind, the Workers Compensation Board's OHS Farm Safety Specialist is looking for volunteers to have noise levels measured on their potato farm. This is offered free of charge. Depending on the time of year the assessments will focus on when storing, grading, packing, polishing, etc., are taking place. The information collected will be used to create relevant and useful educational materials for PEI's potato industry. If you choose to participate, your individual results will only be shared with you and the WCB's Occupational Health and Safety Division. If you are interested in participating, please contact the OHS Farm Safety Specialist, Hillary Hayden, at hhayden@wcb.pe.ca

As a potato industry employer, managing the risk of hearing loss is an important step you can take to protect and promote a healthy farm workplace. Management includes assessing the noise hazards, lowering noise levels if possible, selecting adequate hearing protection, training workers, and audiometric testing. Hearing loss is a permanent disability, and these efforts can help protect your farm workers. Remember, there is no substitute for someone's natural ability to hear.

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Reduced rates (as low as 0.4L/Ha)
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Mary Robinson, PEI's Newest Senator

Mary Robinson was officially sworn in Tuesday as PEI's newest Senator. Robinson's appointment to the Senate was announced on January 22nd. Mary Robinson has been a recognized leader in the agriculture industry, having served as the Vice-President of the World Farmers' Organization, and managing partner of the Robinson Group of Companies, a 6th-generation farm and agribusiness on the Island.

Mary has worked for over 25 years with the Robinson Group of Companies, which includes Eric C. Robinson Incorporated, Island Lime, PEI Agromart, and ECR Holdings. She has also been actively involved in agricultural sector organizations at the provincial, national, and international levels. She was a board member and the President of the PEI Federation of Agriculture, the first female President of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, and the first female Chair of the Canadian Agricultural Human Resources Council. She also served on Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's National Food Policy Advisory Council and the PEI Regional Economic Advisory Council. She is currently a member of the Board of the Canadian Centre for Food Integrity, the University of Prince Edward Island Board of Governors, and the Board of Directors of Mid Isle Farms.

In the Senate, Robinson joins PEI's other Senators — Percy Downe, Brian Francis and Jane MacAdam. Congratulations Mary!



From left, Senator Marc Gold stands with senators Mary Robinson and Rob Black ahead of Senator Robinson's swearing-in ceremony on February 6, 2024.

Agriculture In The Classroom PEI Needs Volunteers

#CALM24 Volunteers Needed! Canadian Agriculture Literacy Month is coming up and you know what that means...

We're looking for volunteers to help share our CALM story to Grade 3 classrooms and our AG Adventure Days!

If you're looking to volunteer and have a blast with grade 3 students, please contact us, or sign up by clicking this link: <https://aitc-pei.ca/volunteer.php>
Contact Shelley for more information: calmpei2013@gmail.com / (902) 393-9049

Canada GAP Auditor Training

CanadaGAP's newest Certification Body, MSVS. For program participants who supply Costco, MSVS is pleased to confirm that they have been approved by Costco Canada to verify their suppliers against the Costco addendum in conjunction with CanadaGAP audits. Costco USA is also accepting MSVS audits against the Costco addendum this year. Additionally, MSVS will be offering the CanadaGAP Auditor Training course for the first time live online May 6-7 & 13-15, 2024. Register early to avoid disappointment! Email them at info@msvs.ca

Upcoming Events & Program Deadlines

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

March 2024

- March 5-7 **Fruit and Vegetable Growers Annual Meeting**, Ottawa, ON
- March 6-7 **Cereal and Oilseeds/ PEI Crop Conference**, Summerside
- March 13 **PEI Potato Board of Directors Monthly Meeting**, Charlottetown
- March 20-21 **Northeast Potato Tech Forum**, Rodd Royalty, Charlottetown

April 2024

- April 8-10 **Restaurants Canada Show** **Energize Center**, Toronto
- April 17 **PEI Potato Board of Directors Monthly Meeting**, Charlottetown

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