

Prince Edward Island

Spring 2024
Volume 25 Issue 2

POTATO NEWS



Publications Mail Agreement # 40011377

In What's New in 2024 Issue:

- Living Labs Upcoming and Continuing Projects
- PEI's Top 10 Varieties
- Planting 2024 Begins on PEI



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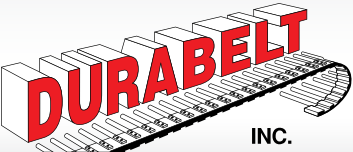
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Chairman's Comments

by John Visser, PEI Potato Board Chairman



After a busy winter, spring is here, and we are in the midst of the 2024 planting season. Farmers are always eager to get the machinery rolling and are full of anticipation at what this year's crop will bring. Spring 2024 was one of the earliest I can remember seeing tractors scratching ground from one end of the Island to the other.

We had excellent post-harvest seed tests at the end of the 2023 season, with an overall pass rating of over 92%. That speaks to the extra diligence seed farmers put into monitoring for pests and weather-related disease last growing season and mitigating it as soon as it was noticed. Despite seed being short in some varieties this year, most farms received what they needed, and we are on target to meet or slightly exceed last year's number of total planted acres. Demand for Island grown seed was high and price was again very strong, with many varieties seeing increases over last year. Seed growers are essential to our industry and the support shown to them this year has been great.

After the realization of significant oversupply in the West (mostly Idaho) from the 2023 crop, fresh markets were slower and there were decreased price implications for most varieties compared to last year. Despite this, PEI moved a significant amount of potatoes and our remaining storages are at a three year low.

Our processing committee and the growers it represents worked hard to come to a new contract agreement with our main buyer prior to planters being filled this year. Our Island soil and typical weather patterns provide good conditions for a strong crop of varieties such as Mountain Gem and Targhee.

We know we are leaders when it comes to growing the best, high quality potatoes and in practicing effective farm practices in preventing disease spread. As a reminder, it is

important to always remember and implement appropriate bio-security practices including cleaning and disinfecting. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Board office and they will be happy to assist.

In closing, I wish you all a safe and healthy planting season. Please remain diligent in following safe farm practices and openly communicate these to all staff and anyone who may be around your farm this time of year. Road safety is key and I'm proud of the work the Board has done with external partners in drawing attention to safe driving practices for the travelling public when farm equipment is on the move.

Lastly, I want to acknowledge all the people who assist our farmers this time of year in getting their crops in. A very special thank you to the spouses and other family members who work with us, keep us well fed, get us from field to field, and keep everything else running at home while we are in the fields. Your support is greatly appreciated.

I hope everyone enjoys their summer and that just the right amount of rain will fall!





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The PEI Potato Board extends best wishes to all PEI potato growers and industry members for a safe 2024 planting season.



PEI Potato Board News

“Fill Your Boots”

Islanders turned out to collect thousands of pounds of free potatoes at this year’s “Fill Your Boots” event. G Visser and Sons, Monaghan Farms, and Spud Isle Farms collaborated with the PEI Potato Board for the initiative, the fourth event in the past three years. In a heartwarming display of community spirit, nearly 900 attendees seized the opportunity to fill their boots with free potatoes provided by these farms.

This event served as a fun and interactive way for these farms to give back to the local community. Participants showed their appreciation by contributing donations of over over \$3200 along with non-perishable grocery items for the food bank.

Acknowledging the importance of sharing with those in need, guests were encouraged to take extra bags of potatoes for any community members who couldn’t attend the event.

PEI Potato Board chairman John Visser said of the event, “It is a great way to engage with surrounding communities and show them what we do; the ability to do that while providing free potatoes and collecting donations for the food bank makes the event even more impactful. We thank the farms who participated this year.”

The day was not only about free potatoes but also about fostering a deeper connection between farms and the community. Attendees were treated to a variety of engaging activities, including farm tours, demonstrations of cutting-edge equipment, immersive experiences with VR headsets, and photo opportunities with the beloved PEI Potatoes mascot, Tate. As an added thrill, visitors got to see a demonstration of a potato cannon in action.

G Visser and Sons of Orwell Cove developed the idea for the first “Fill Your Boots” event in the winter of 2022 and have hosted four events on their farm since. COO Adam Jay commented, “We see the opportunity to be able to be generous in this way as a huge blessing, and it helps us to connect with our community while sharing some of our crop.”

The event, made even more memorable by the favourable weather, underscored the significance of local farms in strengthening community ties and supporting charitable causes.



Potatoes a Plenty and even Tate came to take advantage of “Fill Your Boots”



Miss Stavert Filled her “Boot” to over flowing with her favorite PEI potatoes



PEI Potato Board News

Agriculture in The Classroom

Mark Phillips, marketing specialist with the PEI Potato Board, was fortunate to participate in AG Adventure Days earlier this spring at the Eastlink Center in Charlottetown. Over 1,100 Grade 3 students representing 50 classes took part in the event which spanned two days. Mark had a quick 8 minutes with each class to teach them about potato production here in PEI. Mark was also able to present at the Summerside event held at Credit Union Place as well. Thanks to Mark for engaging young minds about our industry and to the folks at Agriculture in the Classroom PEI for organizing those great events.



*Mark Phillips enhancing the minds of students about the greatness that is PEI Potatoes!
Photo Credit:Government of PEI*

PEI Potato Board Undergoes Renovations

It has been 22 years since the PEI Potato Board opened its doors at 90 Hillstrom Avenue in Charlottetown and it was well past time for a freshening up! Thanks to the support of the Board, dated tile flooring, beige walls and large blue countertops are being replaced. We will now be home to light colored walls, sharp black trim and doors, and wood styled flooring. While our look may be changing, what hasn't changed are the team of staff who continue to work hard with and for our Island growers. Please stop in and check out upgrades!



Out with the Old and in with the New



Planting Begins on PEI



Photo Credit: Adam Jay



Photo Credit: Adam Jay

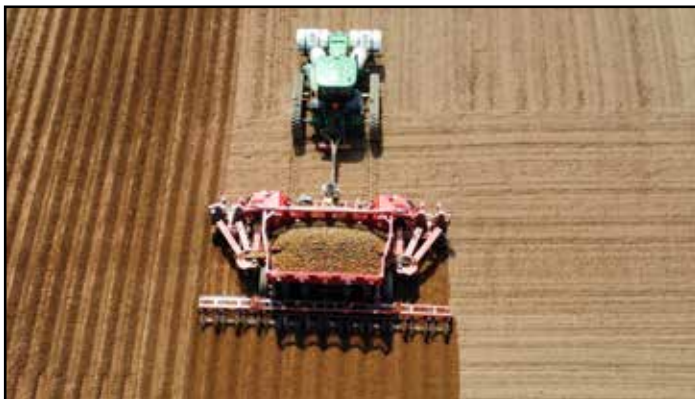


Photo Credit: Josh Hayden



Photo Credit: Josh Hayden



Photo Credit: Klaas Nieuwhof



Photo Credit: Dave Essery

HAPPY PLANTING 2024

Upcoming Events & Program Deadlines

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

June 2024

June 12 **PEI Potato Board of Directors
Monthly Meeting, Charlottetown**

July 2024

July 10 **PEI Potato Board of Directors
Monthly Meeting, Charlottetown**

July 31 **Deadline for Board Elections,
Charlottetown**

August 2024

August 7-9 **United Potato Growers of Canada,
AGM & Canadian Potato Council
Summer Mtg. , Winnepeg, MB**

August 14 **PEI Potato Board of Directors
Monthly Meeting, Fox Island Seed
Farm**

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND POTATO PRODUCERS NOTICE OF ELECTIONS

Elections are being held under Section 11 of the Potato Marketing Plan Regulations to fill four vacancies on the PEI Potato Board. The four vacancies are created by the expiration of terms in office of John Visser, table-stock director for the Central District; Billy Cameron, seed director at-large; Craig Wallace, processing director for the Western District; and Guy Cudmore, seed director for the Eastern District. Guy Cudmore is eligible for election this year for a second term. John Visser, Billy Cameron, and Craig Wallace have all served two consecutive terms, and are not eligible for re-election this year.

To be eligible for election, a producer willing to serve on the Board must:

1. Be registered with the Potato Board on June 30, 2024;
2. Meet the classification requirements;
3. If interested in a district position, be nominated by ten producers located in the district the person seeks to represent who are registered with the Board on June 30, 2024;
4. If interested in an at-large position, be nominated by ten producers from any part of the province who are registered with the Board on June 30, 2024;
5. Have delivered to the Returning Officer, or have mailed and postmarked no later than the last day of July 2024, a properly completed nomination form; and
6. Indicate a willingness to serve by signing the nomination form.

Nomination forms are available from the Prince Edward Island Potato Board, 90 Hillstrom Ave., West Royalty Business Park, Charlottetown; Tel: 902-892-6551 or from the PEI Marketing Council Office: Suite 216 Farm Centre, 420 University Avenue, Charlottetown, PE C1A 7Z5; Tel: 902-569-7575.

Nomination forms containing original signatures must be delivered by, or postmarked no later than, July 31, 2024 to:

Returning Officer
Potato Board Elections
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Charlottetown, PE C1A 7Z5

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The Importance of Cleaning & Disinfection

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR ON FARM BIOSECURITY

1. Routine Cleaning and Disinfection

Cleaning and disinfection reduces the spread of many potato pests and diseases such as Nematodes, Potato Wart, Bacterial Ring Rot (BRR), Bacterial Soft Rot/Blackleg, Fusarium Dry Rot, Late Blight, Potato Virus X and others.

- Practice routine cleaning and disinfection of potato equipment and storage facilities at all stages of potato crop management.
- Potato handling and seed cutting equipment can be a primary source of contamination. A seed cutter is a common source for BRR, Bacterial Soft Rot, Fusarium Dry Rot, Late Blight and PVX. Regularly clean and sanitize seed cutter blades to minimize your farm's risk.

2. Implement Biosecurity Practices

Implementing biosecurity measures on-farm acts as a proactive strategy to control and manage potential threats effectively.

- Limiting access to unauthorized vehicles limits the introduction of pests and diseases. Clean and disinfect vehicles and equipment that have left and returned to the property.
- Provide training and education to staff to increase awareness of and compliance with good farm management practices.
- Maintaining accurate records is essential to ensure procedures are followed correctly to facilitate traceability, when needed. Record activities in a log book.

3. Reducing Risk on Your Farm

Prevention is key in maintaining your farm's integrity, free of pests and diseases. A collaborative approach offers multiple forms of protection.

- Always plant certified seed with known test results (BRR, PVY, PLRV)
- Manage volunteers and cull piles responsibly.
- Utilize a IPM approach in managing the spread of pests and diseases throughout the season.

Adapted from *Cleaning and Disinfecting Potato Equipment and Storage Facilities* by Nora Olsen and Phil Nolte – University of Idaho

Processing Contract Settlements in North America

By Scott Howatt, Processing Specialist

The spring of 2024 will be remembered by North American processing growers for a number of reasons; unfortunately, one of the main reasons will be the downturn in the pre-season processing contract values and contracted volumes. Presently, there are contracts in place in most growing areas across the continent (except two) and these contracts are reported to be down within the range of 1.4% to 3.9% from their 2023 values.

Negotiation for 2024 began in the Pacific Northwest (PNW) with some preliminary discussions before Christmas; however, more focused talks with some growing areas began at the Potato Expo in January. After some back and forth with their customers, the Potato Growers of Washington (PGW) reported they achieved agreements in early January and then later, at the PMANA Spring Meeting in February, it was revealed that these parties valued their various settlements as 2.5% down overall. With this lowered value coming out of the largest volume processing area in North America (NA) it became a benchmark for fryers and grower organizations across the continent.

The gross oversupply of potatoes in the PNW (and to a lesser extent the Midwest and Manitoba) was a leading factor in every discussion around pre-season contracts in NA. The staggering combination of western fryers over-contracting in the spring, in an attempt to rebound from two years of short supplies; together with farms in Idaho shifting ground from other crops to “open potatoes” to hopefully reap the benefits of record high potato prices; along with some growing districts in Alberta, Idaho & Washington harvesting one of their best yielding crops in a generation, all accumulated into creating millions of hundredweight of potatoes without any home or purpose.

The next major impact from the oversupply: volume cuts in the 2024 contracts. Spring planting is in different stages across the continent and the reported cuts are varied. PGW have advised that individual grower volume cuts range from 10% to 70% depending on the variety and the delivery period; overall, the cut in the Columbia Basin is estimated to be approximately 15%. It is difficult to pinpoint the situation in Idaho, but early projections suggest a 10% cut in contracted volume. Idaho’s 2024 contracts are reduced by 3.9%, making Idaho the deepest price reduction in NA.

The Potato Growers of Alberta (PGA) settled their contracts in early February and reported their agreements

as 1.4% reductions in value combined with volume cuts ranging from flat to 20% depending on the fry company. It is worth noting that Alberta is an area where significant expansion continues to happen with McCain Foods in the midst of a major plant expansion at their Coaldale facility (scheduled to open in summer 2025) and with Cavendish Farms signalling to their growers that they are looking to expand the Lethbridge facility in the near future.

The next wave of contract talks did not produce negotiated agreements. Rather, after a number of discussions with grower reps, both McCain Foods in Wisconsin and JR Simplot in North Dakota stepped away from the bargaining process and visited their growers with purchase agreements valued at 2.9% down in Wisconsin and 3.5% down in North Dakota. There are no solid numbers on volume cuts in the Midwest, but we understand the cuts will range from 5% to 10% respectively in the two states. In the meantime, the growers of Malheur County, Oregon reported a settlement with JR Simplot in Caldwell, Idaho valued at 3.65% down.

As March went along, discussions continued between grower reps and their potato processing customers in Maine, Manitoba, New Brunswick (NB), PEI and Quebec. In NB, Maine and Quebec, growers were highly interested in talking about the shortcomings of their 2023 crop, created by difficult summer weather and the wet harvest. Hundreds of trailer loads of contracted processing potatoes have been hauled into Maine and NB from western Canada to supplement the short supply of potatoes in Aroostook County and the St. John River Valley. On April 11th after two days of contract mediation, the growers of PEI who supply Cavendish Farms voted to accept an offer from the company valued at 2.49% down, all on Base prices. During contract signing, Cavendish growers received the same volumes as 2023. Shortly after the PEI settlement, Keystone Potato Producers Assn. in Manitoba voted to accept an offer from McCain Foods valued at 2.5% down overall, however this agreement is a combination of language improvements and Base price decreases. On April 18th, the Directors of the Agricultural Bargaining Council in Maine voted to approve an offer from McCain Foods valued as 1.6% down across the entire pile, field run. This settlement is also a combination of language improvements for the growers and larger Base price decreases, similar to the agreement in Manitoba. At time of print, the growers of New Brunswick and McCain Foods have yet to come to an agreement and there is no

news of contract settlement from Quebec.

From 2021 to 2023, North American processing contracts increased between 40-45% accumulatively. These increases in gross farm income were greatly offset by major increases in growers' variable costs, most notably: seed, fertilizer, crop protectants, fuel, repairs and labour. In addition, there were significant increases in borrowing costs as well as land costs. Over these three years significant gains were made by some farms here in the Atlantic Northeast where, due to favourable growing conditions, they achieved above-budget crop yields with above average quality. These "extra" potatoes in 2021 and 2022 mostly sold for premium prices that were equal to or better than contract pricing. In my Potato News article from May of last year, the last three sentences said, "If an over-supply of potatoes were to occur in 2023-24, our fry customers will be asking for a price decrease in their pre-season contracts. The Law of Supply & Demand dictates (and history has proven time and time again) that a contract price reduction will result if there is an oversupply of potatoes being offered to our fryers... no matter what happens with crop input costs or the costs for tractors, gear, warehouses or ground... Fact! Growers in all areas can best help themselves, their industry, and their future if they only grow potatoes that they know are sold!"

My message this May remains the same; all North

American growers need to dial their planted acres and subsequent production closer to their customers needs. The supply of potatoes is the only factor that is within growers' control. As the above report proves, an over-supply of potatoes will be the driving force behind any further deterioration in contract pricing.

IT'S POTATO PLANTING SEASON!
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Living Lab-PEI: An Innovative Approach to Farmer-Led Research



**EAST PRINCE
AGRI-ENVIRONMENT
ASSOCIATION**

By Emily Belliveau

The East Prince Agri-Environment Association (EPAA) is a group of 14 innovative farm families committed to building a more sustainable agriculture industry through evidence-based management practices. Since its formation in 2014, the EPAA has been at the forefront of promoting evidence-based management practices to build a more resilient and environmentally conscious agriculture industry.

One of the EPAA's core beliefs is that collaboration breeds innovation. By forging partnerships with local watersheds, agricultural organizations, and academic institutions, the association has cultivated a network of expertise aimed at driving positive change across PEI's agriculture sector. Through this collaborative effort, the EPAA's goal is to inspire farmers to continue adopting beneficial management practices (BMPs) on their own lands.

As the EPAA enters its second year of the Living Lab – PEI project (LL-PEI), it aims to further its impact and reach across the Island. The official announcement of LL-PEI, made on August 24th, 2023 at the UPEI Canadian Centre for Climate Change and Adaptation in St. Peters Bay, marked a significant milestone in the journey towards sustainable agriculture on PEI. The LL-PEI team is also closely working with its Atlantic counterparts, as well as other teams in the nationwide network of 14 living labs.

Funded by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's (AAFC) Agricultural Climate Solutions (ACS) – Living Labs program, and supported by AAFC researchers, LL-PEI is a five-year initiative aimed at driving further innovation and implementation of BMPs on real working farms. Taking a holistic approach to agricultural innovation, LL-PEI focuses on sequestering carbon and reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions while addressing other areas crucial to environmental stewardship and agricultural sustainability, such as improving soil health, enhancing water quality, and conserving biodiversity.

At the heart of LL-PEI lies a collaborative framework where farmers actively participate in the co-development, testing, and evaluation of practices on their own farms. Supported by a diverse team of researchers, including

scientists and socio-economic analysts, this approach ensures that proposed solutions are not only scientifically sound but also economically viable and socially relevant. Under the guidance of the EPAA, LL-PEI focuses on six key areas:

BMP 1: Livestock Feeding Strategies

This activity evaluates the inclusion of PEI seaweed in the diets of beef and dairy cattle to reduce enteric methane emissions while assessing animal production, health, and reproductive performance. This research is underway at the AAFC Nappan Research Farm in collaboration with Dalhousie University and the PEI Department of Agriculture. Living Lab – PEI is supporting knowledge transfer activities.

BMP 2: Rotational Grazing

This activity comprises two key components: improving the management of long-term forages, and introducing intensive grazing practices in Island potato rotations. This research involves the establishment of a community of practice, providing support to producers in developing grazing management plans, and implementing practices to improve pasture yield, soil health, and water holding capacity.

BMP 3: Natural Carbon Sinks

This activity involves two sub-activities: designing multifunctional hedgerows in collaboration with producers to support agronomic and ecological goals, and investigating the carbon sequestration potential of edge-of-field constructed wetlands.

BMP 4: Alternative Soil Amendments

This activity involves two sub-activities: evaluating combinations of biological soil amendments (biochar, compost) to increase soil organic carbon and crop yield, and investigating the use of residual soil amendments (gypsum, wood ash, compost) as alternatives to inorganic fertilizers and lime.

BMP 5: Cover Crop Management Strategies

This activity involves two sub-activities: assessing the combined effects of a minimum-tillage and maximum green cover crop rotation, and interseeding cover crops within late-season crops like corn and soybeans, with the aim of enhancing soil organic matter, carbon sequestration, and

reducing nitrate leaching and soil erosion.

BMP 6: Refining Nitrogen Management

This activity involves three sub-activities: determining how legumes and cover crops impact soil nitrogen supply for subsequent potato and corn crops, investigating new and emerging technologies for nitrogen management in potato production systems, and comparing liquid manure application methods (broadcast versus injected, with and without nitrification inhibitors) on crop yield, nitrogen and phosphorus-use efficiency, and greenhouse gas emissions.

The PEI Potato Board are leading a series of field trials under the BMPs 2,5 and 6.

Supporting Activities

In close collaboration with project partners, each BMP activity has three key supports: awareness, engagement, and knowledge transfer activities (social media campaigns, factsheets, field tours, producer workshops), digital agriculture tools (precision agriculture technologies, digital soil mapping, modelling), and socio-economic analysis to understand the impacts of adopting these practices on farm profitability, off-farm social benefits, and barriers and incentives to adoption.

As the EPAA and its partners forge ahead in their collaborative efforts, the LL-PEI project holds the potential not only to revolutionize individual farms but also to ignite widespread transformation within PEI's agriculture sector. By leveraging the power of collaboration, innovation, and evidence-based practices, the association is leading the charge towards a more sustainable future for agriculture

on the Island and beyond.

If you have an idea for a project, please contact eastprinceassociation@gmail.com. Learn more about Agricultural Climate Solutions (ACS) – Living Labs



Alternative Soil Amendments





Natural Carbon Sinks



Rotational Grazing Demonstration



Cover Crop Barley Field



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Impact of Projected Climate Change on Selected Potato Varieties in PEI

By Ryan Barrett, Research and Agronomy Specialist

Summary

The purpose of this study was to investigate the potential influence of projected climate change on potato yield, potato plant physiology disorders and product quality with potato varieties identified as of interest by PEI Potato Board. The objective of this project was to evaluate the performance of 11 selected potato varieties used in PEI under drought and heat stress conditions by assessing physiological and biochemical factors to give farmers a reference for the production management in the future.

These potato varieties were selected for evaluation in greenhouses and growth chambers at Dalhousie University's Faculty of Agriculture. Among the selected varieties, Goldrush, Russet Burbank and Red Norland were considered drought susceptible. Alverstone, AAC Red Fox, Caribou Russet, Colomba, Dakota Russet, Highland Russet, Mountain Gem, and Satina were regarded as potentially drought-resistant varieties based on grower feedback. For each trial, three to four selected potato varieties were grown in two greenhouse compartments simultaneously. Both compartments were set as 20°C at daytime and 14°C at night with 16/8 hr day/night light cycle. Digital temperature recorders were used to monitor the temperatures. The greenhouse experiments were aimed at evaluating the impact of drought stress on potatoes. The growth experiments were aimed at evaluating the impact of both drought stress and heat stress on potato plants because it is hard to control the temperature differences in the greenhouses. Growing conditions in growth chambers were set to simulate a 120-day growing season in PEI from late May to early September. Two walk-in growth chambers were used. Chamber 1 was used for heat and drought treatments; chamber 2 was used as control. The temperatures for the treatment group in the growth chamber 1 experiment will always be 5°C higher than the conditions for the

control group plants in chamber 2.

A variety of plant growth data parameters were measured, including germination date, leaf area, stem count, aboveground biomass dry weight, tuber number, tuber yield, tuber greening, occurrence of tuber malformation, photosynthesis and transpiration rate and specific. Leaf area was measured twice during the growing season. Quality variable such as soluble sugars and total protein were also collected.

Results

According to the physiological data from the greenhouse experiment, drought stress had effects on chlorophyll index, leaf area, photosynthesis rate, transpiration rate, and stomatal conductance of potato plants. The impact of drought stress on factors not only differs by varieties but also by the growth stage of potato plants. For the chlorophyll index and leaf area, none of the 11 varieties was significantly affected by the drought stress during the tuber initiation. But



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after the second drought treatment, there were differences in chlorophyll index for Alverstone Russet, Dakota Russet, and Red Norland. The photosynthesis rate of Dakota Russet was significantly impacted by the drought stress both after the first treatment and the second treatment. The drought stress had a significant impact on the photosynthesis rate of Alverstone Russet, Russet Burbank, Mountain Gem Russet, and Highland Russet only after the second drought treatment.

The transpiration rate of Russet Burbank, Red Norland, Caribou Russet, and Goldrush significantly decreased in the treated group after the first treatment. But after the second treatment, only Dakota Russet showed significantly reduced transpiration rate in the treated group. Russet Burbank showed a significant decrease in stomatal conductance in the treated group both after the first and second treatments, and Dakota Russet also showed significantly lower stomatal conductance in the treated group after the second treatment.

The drought level used in this experiment did not have a significant impact on the specific gravity of any variety. However, it affected the yield, greening percentage, and malformation percentage of tubers. The effect differs by variety. All the 11 varieties have a lower yield in their treated groups compared to their control groups, but the differences between them are quite different among varieties. The greening percentage in the treated group of Dakota Russet was significantly lower than the control group, while it was much higher in the treated group of Red Norland compared to its control group. Alverstone Russet and Highland Russet both showed a significant increase in the malformation percentage in their treated group compared to their control groups. Some other varieties showed a much higher malformation percentage in the treated groups compared to Alverstone Russet and Highland Russet, but there was no significant difference between the control and treated groups.

The assessment of stress tolerance among the various potato varieties was conducted using membership function methodology, a form of indexing to accumulate results from all of the different varieties and assess them as a whole for a variety's level of drought or heat tolerance. Each variety

was then classified into one of four categories: low, mild, medium, or high tolerance to the imposed stress. Results revealed that the index values for all examined varieties fell within the medium tolerance category.

In the growth chamber experiment, drought and high-temperature combined stresses were applied to the plants of the 11 varieties. The drought and heat stresses had a strong impact on tuber number, yield, specific gravity, and malformation percentage across the varieties. The impact on yield, specific gravity, and malformation percentage differs by variety, but the stresses applied in the experiment affected the tuber number of all 11 varieties. The yield of Alverstone Russet, Dakota Russet, Russet Burbank, Mountain Gem Russet, Colomba, Caribou Russet, and AAC Red Fox was significantly decreased after drought and heat treatments. Dakota Russet has significantly higher specific gravity after the treatments, while the specific gravity of Highland Russet went down significantly after the treatments. All the 11 varieties showed a significant lower tuber number after treatments at different levels.



Based on the results across all variables, the following variety rankings under drought or drought and high-temperature combined stresses were developed:

Under Drought Stress Alone	Under Drought and Heat Combined Stresses
1 st : Mountain Gem Russet	1 st : AAC Red Fox
2 nd : Highland Russet, Goldrush	2 nd : Highland Russet, Caribou Russet
3 rd : Dakota Russet, Alverstone Russet	3 rd : Goldrush, Dakota Russet



POTATO GROWERS OF CANADA
LES PRODUCTEURS UNIS DE POMMES DE TERRE DU CANADA

By Victoria Stamper, General Manager of UPGC

It is the beginning of May and “Spring has sprung” as they say, or at least we thought so at the beginning of April. After a mild winter and warm temperatures many growers were getting ready to get in the fields, and in fact some did, getting the early crop started in BC and even Southwestern Ontario. However, by mid-month temperatures had dropped and intermittent rains had started and even a little snow at the end of the month in Manitoba and Quebec. So with the erratic rains and low temperatures it has been a lot of stop and start for planting all across Canada.

Although the official statistics won’t be published until early July as many areas could be planting well into June for some late varieties, we like to take an initial look at planting intentions for this year’s crop. Last year started off very well for potato growers across the country and although we are in need of some warmer soils, growers across the country are feeling confident that planting will be on schedule this season.

It is important to discuss the situation in the processing sector and it’s influence on acres overall. Even though global demand for French fries continues to increase, after the surpluses last year in the Pacific Northwest, including Alberta and Manitoba, most processing contract negotiations with the fryers ended up with reduced volumes. Demand for potato chips has also been reported to be down in North America recently which may impact chip acres in central Canada.

Most regions report acreage will be relatively flat in the fresh potato sector however, there may be some small changes in the seed sector as seed was very tight in eastern Canada after a very rainy growing season and harvest. The need for seed will continue to grow to support growth in all sectors and within certain regions and varieties. The abundant precipitation in the east also affected the fresh sector this year which continues to be tight and will likely stay that way through the transition from old crop to new crop, as the crop out of Florida and the southeast is not as robust due to weather conditions experienced from planting through their growing season.

For 2024, UPGC estimates Canadian Potato Acreage will decrease by 1.2%, to 392,540 acres, still a record crop for this country despite lower acres contracted in the processing sector.

Acreage planted last year (397,232 acres) was much higher than the 385,146 acres planted in 2022 and well above even pre-pandemic levels, but this increase combined with a return to trend line yields created a noticeable surplus in processing potatoes in western Canada.

Here is an outlook by growing area:

Prince Edward Island

PEI is still predicted to be the province with the highest acreage in Canada but is not expecting any increase over last year’s 84,500 acres with all sectors remaining fairly stable. Growers in the southeastern part of the island began to plant their early potato crop at the beginning of April after a mild winter and ice melting early. With low temperatures at night, many growers are still waiting for warmer soil temperatures and for the most part they are still on schedule for the usual mid-May planting. Despite lower precipitation levels over the winter, water levels are variable across the island, some reporting quite dry and others reporting sufficient moisture.

New Brunswick

Due to an extremely wet growing season and issues with hollow heart at harvest, the province ran short on potatoes for the processing sector this marketing year. The majority of the province is involved in growing potatoes to support the local fry plant and UPGC was predicting a slight increase in acreage to offset the shortages; however, there are reports that the lack of seed availability in certain varieties will likely hamper this growth, so we are estimating acreage the same as last year at 52,815 acres. Temperatures have been cooler, with even some snow seen in the month of April, so the majority of growers will likely only begin in the next few weeks when soil temperature rise.

Quebec

We are estimating Quebec growers will plant 47,100 acres in 2024, a 0.7% increase over last year’s reported 46,762 acres. The increase would essentially be in the processing sector, especially for french fries which should increase to meet contracted volume requirements for the local processor. Chip acres may be up slightly and fresh acres will likely be flat to last year. Although there is demand for seed in the east, and the overall tight market for seed this year may encourage greater numbers, and different

varieties, to be planted. Reports are that growers are going to be more cautious and expectations are that acreage in the seed sector will remain flat to last year. Planting has gotten underway in the areas south of Montreal, and a small amount in the Joliette area, focused on early varieties; however, with colder temperatures and quite a bit of rain in April, many growers in the northern areas will only get started in earnest in mid-May if warmer and drier weather prevail. Some areas with heavy soil around the St Lawrence may be planted a little later than usual as it is still too wet, but overall growers are positive about this year's planting. The only concern raised for the upcoming growing season is a potential water deficit in the Saguenay region where only about 50% of acres are irrigated; after such a mild winter and low snowfall growers will need moisture once the temperatures warm up.

Ontario

Based on recent reports, UPGC does not expect Ontario acreage to rise from the 37,700 acres planted in 2023. There is a potential to see a small increase in the seed sector which has been growing steadily in the province over the last 3-5 years; however, that may be offset with slight decreases in the processing sector as chip demand has slowed across North America as of late. Growers in the Leamington area

were able to get into the fields and begin planting very early in April and some growers just west of Toronto were quick to follow with nice temperatures and drier soils after a mild winter. However, within just a few weeks, things turned much cooler and wet as experienced in many regions across Canada, with reports of upwards of 120mm of precipitation during the month of April. The erratic weather has caused a start and stop to planting in the province; however, things are still on schedule. Planting in the traditional storage region in the Alliston area will be starting soon. In general, growers seem positive about the planting period this year.

Manitoba

We expect to see a decrease in Manitoba processing acreage due to over-contracting and improved yields in 2023 and a resulting surplus. Currently UPGC is expecting acreage to be approximately 79,300, down 2.1% from the 81,000 acres planted in 2023. Acreage overall for table potatoes will be similar to last year but we will continue to track the change from reds to yellows in this province that we have seen in many areas of North America. Snowpack was low after a fairly mild winter in Manitoba as it was in most of the country and growers will be keeping a close eye on water levels in the reservoirs, although recent reports after April rains indicate that at least some of them have

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Update from the Department of Agriculture PEI



By: *Rodrigo Sampaio dos Santos,*
Potato Industry Coordinator

As we enter a new crop season, I would like to mention some of the recent developments and upcoming events from the PEI Department of Agriculture that could benefit readers of the PEI Potato News!

New section

The Agriculture Climate Adaptation Section is brand new to the Agriculture Resources Division of the Department of Agriculture, with Adam MacLean as the new Manager. Focused on the impacts that climate change may have on agriculture in PEI, the section is engaged on working with industry to increase resilience and capacity for Island producers to adapt to environmental initiatives within agriculture. With the creation of this Section, we have started to build a team of experts to better assist and support farmers on the challenges of a changing environment and weather patterns. Through this section the Provincial Department of Agriculture is focused on helping develop and implement projects towards strengthening the diverse agriculture industries across the Province. If you have any questions about accessing assistance from this division, please reach out!

New programs and opportunities for producers

Optimization of Soil Health Testing Program

Changes have been made to the packages for the PEI Soil Health Testing Program, including the addition of a new test (available water capacity) as well as a re-structuring of the test packages. A summary of the packages can be found in the table below.

The complete Soil Health Schedule including fees can be found at the following: <https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/information/agriculture/soil-health-fee-schedule>

Additional to the new tests and packages, the Department will be providing the following services and workshops:

- **Aphid Alert** will run with an expected increase in the number of traps from 2023. A few other improvements are under evaluation and will be informed close to the start of monitoring.
- **Potato Scouting Workshop** will provide scouts with training on identifying pests, diseases, weeds, and nutrient problems. The workshop will be held in June, with a location and date to be confirmed and informed in the Agronomy Update sent by Ryan Barrett, from the PEI Potato Board. If you would like me to inform you directly on the venue and date of the workshop, send me an email at rsdsantos@gov.pe.ca and I will update you with the information once available.
- **Plant Disease Diagnostic Service** will re-open for the season on May 27. Samples may be dropped off directly to the lab, or at PEI Access sites outside of Charlottetown.

Clean technology program for agriculture industry

A \$1.4 million provincial funding program was released in February 2024 for agricultural producers looking to adopt clean technologies in PEI. The Agriculture Energy Systems

Package Name	Analyses
Basic Soil Health Package*	Soil respiration, Aggregate stability, Active carbon
Basic Soil Health Package + N*	Includes the same analyses of the Basic Package plus Biological nitrogen availability and Total nitrogen
Detailed Soil Health Package*	Includes the analyses of the Basic Package + N and adds Soil texture and Available water capacity
Detailed Soil Analysis	pH, OM, P ₂ O ₅ , K ₂ O, Ca, Mg, Cu, Fe, Mn, S, B, Na, Al, Lime Index, CEC, % Base Saturation

Pilot Program supports farmers to implement projects for energy use optimization, switching fuel sources, reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, and a variety of activities to increase farm resilience by reducing energy costs. The new Agriculture Climate Adaptation Section is delivering and executing the program, which is a one-year pilot with the possibility of extension based on its performance evaluation. The uptake period has ended in early March and funding has closed. The Department received a huge number of applications, indicating a positive reception of the pilot program by PEI producers. Potato producers participated primarily by upgrading crop storages: adding sensors and controllers in potato storages, and by replacing direct drive fan motors with variable frequency drives.

Housing improvement for temporary foreign workers

Temporary foreign workers represent an estimated 40% of PEI's agricultural workforce, having an important contribution to the operation of our agriculture industry. Early in April, the PEI Department of Agriculture launched the Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW) in Agriculture Industry Housing Improvement Program aimed at supporting agricultural operations to make improvements on the quality of housings directed for temporary foreign workers. Up to \$15,000 in grants may be provided for eligible

agriculture operations to improve living conditions for TFWs in PEI. For more information on the program, please, visit the PEI Department of Agriculture website at: www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/topic/agriculture

I would like to wish all the producers a great season!



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Get To Know PEI's Top 10 Potato Varieties

By: Rebecca MacSwain, Seed Specialist

1. Mountain Gem Russet

PEI's most grown variety in 2023. Mountain Gem is a medium to late maturing variety known for high yields and versatility in fresh and processing markets. Tubers are oblong-long with a russeted skin. PVMI (Potato Variety Management Institute) holds the rights to Mountain Gem Russet.

2. Russet Burbank

An industry cornerstone. Russet Burbank was registered in Canada in 1923 and bred by L. Burbank in California around 1880. Skin is heavily russeted, and tubers are long and cylindrical. Known for having numerous eyes and a long dormancy period. Can produce high yields under favorable environmental conditions. Often referred to as "Netted Gems", or "Gems" for short.

3. Dakota Russet

Bred by North Dakota State University in 2000. Upright plants produce consistent, blocky medium to large-size

russeted tubers with cream-colored flesh. Primarily a processing variety, best suited for fresh fries. Known for usually high specific gravity and reliable dry matter.

4. Prospect

Island roots. Prospect was bred in 1990 by Joyce and Robert Coffin. Prospect was registered in 2005 when commercial production began. Cavendish Farms held the proprietary rights of this variety until 2023, intended for processing use. Prospect is a high-yielding variety, producing approximately five large tubers per plant with a deep set, minimizing instances of sunburn.

5. Targhee Russet

Market versatility. Bred by the University of Idaho in Aberdeen, Idaho. An early to mid-maturity variety with high yield potential, suitable for both fresh and processing markets. Stores well long term. PVMI licenses rights to grow Targhee Russet.

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6. Caribou Russet

Tolerant to heat & drought. Bred by Greg Porter of the University of Maine, Caribou Russet is noted for its dual purpose in fresh and processing markets. Tubers are long and uniformly shaped. Plants are large and show exceptional early vigor. Caribou matures in 105-110 days. It is susceptible to PVY and is a symptomless carrier. Good tolerance to heat and drought stress. McCain Produce is the exclusive licensee of Caribou Russet in all countries except the USA.

7. Alverstone Russet

Ties to Alaska. Alverstone Russet got its name in reference to Mount Alverstone in Alaska due to the fact it can be stored under colder temperatures than other russet varieties. Alverstone produces high-yielding, oblong tubers. Excellent long-term storage attributes, combined with low sugars and medium-high specific gravity, make Alverstone favorable in the processing sector. HZPC is the agent licensed to sell Alverstone Russet.

8. Satina

PEI's most grown yellow fresh variety. Satina produces high yields of medium to large oval tubers with a smooth skin set and yellow flesh. Best suited for table (fresh) usage. Plants are noted for rapid foliage development and resistance

to secondary growth. Satina is highly resistant to common scab.

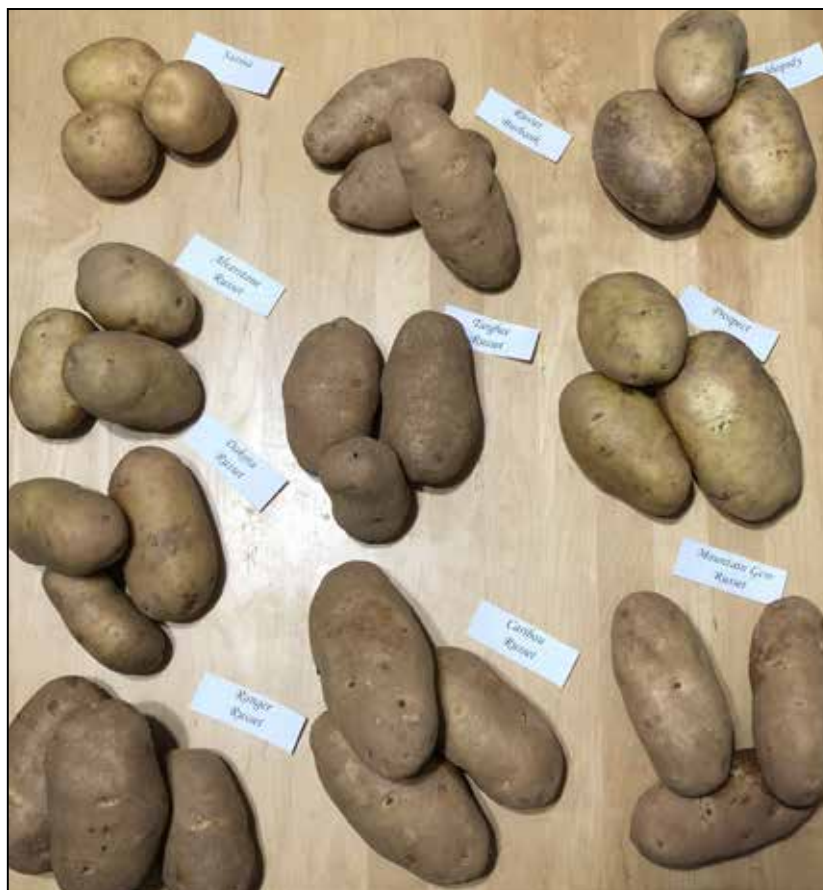
9. Ranger Russet

Resistant to Hollow Heart. Ranger Russet is a favourable processing variety, noted for its very high specific gravity and good processing quality. Tubers are long and slightly flattened with a russeted skin and white flesh. Good resistance to PVY and verticillium wilt. Late maturity.

10. Shepody

Plant and harvest early. Shepody produces large tubers with a light netted skin. Versatile, and can be used for fresh and processing markets. Bred in Fredericton, New Brunswick at the AAFRC Fredericton Research Station in 1969. Known to yield a high percentage of 10 oz tubers.

Source: <https://inspection.canada.ca/plant-health/potatoes/potato-varieties/eng/1299172436155/1299172577580>



Farm & Food Care PEI Update

By Jillian Ferguson

Spring is in the air, and Farm & Food Care PEI is looking forward to another exciting summer of programming coming up, connecting Islanders to farmers and showcasing how food is grown on PEI.

Save the date! Breakfast on the Farm will be hosted by Kool Breeze Farms in Summerside on Saturday, July 27th! Stop by for a locally-sourced breakfast meal, activities, farm tours and more. We are once again looking forward to working with our industry partners to deliver a great event this year!

The Farm Stand service is also back for this summer's growing season. Farm Stand is a digital payment platform offered to growers, allowing them to accept card payments with the scan of a custom QR code. Visit the "Resources" tab of our website to register your stand today!

We want to share your farm's story! Does your farm have a story to tell? Farm & Food Care PEI builds public trust by telling the true stories of Island farming to our urban neighbours. Featuring the hard work of real PEI farmers helps us connect with those Islanders. This can look like quick videos, online profiles, farm photos or video features. Reach out to us at farmfoodcarepei@gmail.com



Tate loves Breakfast on the Farm



Left above : Sneak Peak Potato farmer & PEIFA president Kiesha Rose-Topic, featured in this year's "Faces of PEI Food" campaign.

Left: Farm tour highlight: FFC PEI took members of the PEI Standing Committee on Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability on a tour of several Island farms this winter, including Garden Isle Farms in Albany, PEI. The MLAs had a chance to see how modern technology supports farmers' goals around sustainability and efficiency.

Reverse Trade Mission to Wisconsin

By Victoria Stamper, General Manager of UPGC

The United Potato Growers of Canada works regularly with their sister organization United Potato Growers of America to keep growers across North America up to date with the latest developments on market supply and demand of potatoes. Through this close relationship, one of the prominent members of UPGA, the United Potato Growers Cooperative of Wisconsin (part of the Wisconsin Potato and Vegetable Growers Association), extended an invitation for several Canadian delegates/representatives to attend their Reverse Trade Mission.

Wisconsin organized this Reverse Trade Mission (RTM) the week of April 14th for a group of delegates/representatives from Canada with this timeframe as a strategic way to feature planting in Wisconsin. The effort is a result of the Wisconsin Potato and Vegetable Growers Association (WPVGA) having received grant funds from their state agricultural department to showcase agriculture and specifically, the potato industry, on an international level.

It was a packed three-day agenda that included various farm tours as well as that of specific processing plants and organizations, along with presentations about Wisconsin's commitment to sustainable growing practices and research efforts. Dana Rady, Director of Promotion, Communication and Consumer Education at the WPVGA, Joe Kertzman, Editor of the Badger Common'Tater and Tamas Houlihan, the Executive Director of the WPVGA, were amazing hosts, and took the group to a few different areas in Wisconsin including a visit on farm to see planting in progress!

The reactions from the attendees were all very

positive, "I appreciated the opportunity to make some new acquaintances, share information and learn AND have fun and laughs doing so"; "It was a fabulous three days, and I learned so much about the Wisconsin potato and vegetable industry"; "I think we built some great relationships and I look forward to working together more in the future!"

I think one of the surprising highlights of the trip was the visit to the Food and Farm Exploration Center where the Canadian participants were lucky enough to have a private tour of the brand new, first rate, facility – and where we all learned that adults enjoy games and puzzles as much as the kids!

With participants from BC, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick and PEI, Canada was very well represented on the tour and Wisconsin lived up to their reputation of warm hospitality and an openness to share best practices and their pride in potato growing!



*Back Row: Greg Donald, Bill Zylman, Michael Kavanaugh, Kevin Brubacher, Tamas Houlihan,
Front Row: Tracy Shinnars-Carnelley, Michelle Flis, Dana Rady, Victoria Stamper*



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Early blight and brown leaf spot are endemic foliar diseases in potatoes, both caused by *Alternaria* species. If left uncontrolled, *Alternaria* diseases can cause significant yield reductions. Preventative foliar fungicide applications are part of an effective management practice. Initial fungicide applications should occur prior to row closure.

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Photo Credit: Dave Essery

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Double Nickel's liquid formulation ensures ease of application, with a short re-entry interval (REI) of 4 hours and a zero-day pre-harvest interval (PHI), optimizing operational efficiency. As a compatible tank mix or rotation partner with Cueva copper fungicide, it offers farmers a flexible and robust disease management solution. With its multifaceted approach and proven track record, Double Nickel LC stands as a reliable ally in safeguarding crop health and maximizing yields.

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For more information on Cimegra, visit agsolutions.ca/Cimegra

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Summer Partnerships

By Mark Phillips, Marketing Specialist

Fresh off our successful partnerships with the East Coast Music Awards and Burger Love, we are now looking towards our summer partnerships.

Harmony House

We are continuing our strong relationship with the Harmony House by returning as the sponsor of the hit show 'Inside American Pie.' The fan-favourite show is back for a fourth summer in 2024, having sold-out runs for the past three years. The show delves deeply into one of the most famous American songs – American Pie by Don McLean. Many people know that the song was written to commemorate the plane crash that took the lives of American icons Buddy Holly, Richie



Valens, and The Big Bopper, but this show thoroughly examines the hidden meanings and references within the song. Mike Ross shares the stage with Brielle Ansems, Greg Gale, Alicia Toner, and Kirk White as they explore the song through the music of the Beatles, Bob Dylan, Janis Joplin, the Rolling Stones, and more. The show runs several days a week from June 23rd to September 14th. We thank Mike and Nicole from the Harmony House for their continued efforts to ensure this partnership is a worthwhile and effective undertaking for PEI Potatoes. For more info, visit harmonyhousepei.com.

Under the Spire Festival

We are excited to continue our partnership with the 'Under the Spire Festival' (formerly known as the Indian River Festival) for the 2024 festival season. Over the years, we've had



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tremendous success with the festival, sponsoring shows from renowned artists such as Rose Cousins, David Myles, Lennie Gallant, KINLEY and Dennis Ellsworth, Catherine MacLellan, Jessica Gallant's Dolly Parton show and others. This year, we are proud to sponsor The Once on July 19th. The Once is a folk trio based in St. John's, Newfoundland, which features Geraldine Hollett, Phil Churchill, and Andrew Dale playing a mixture of original and traditional material. They are known for their multi-instrumental performances and their beautiful three-part harmonies, which will perfectly fit St. Mary's Church. Thanks to Lindsay Connolly, executive director of the festival, and the entire Under the Spire Festival team for making the partnership an excellent fit for our industry. On a related note, we extend our congratulations to Lindsay on her ECMA win for Innovator of the Year. Congrats Lindsay! For more info, visit underthespire.ca.

Sommo Music and Culinary Festival

The Sommo Festival launched in Cavendish, PE last year, and organizers have attracted some massive names to come to the island for the second annual event on September 13th and 14th. The headline acts include Greta Van Fleet, Noah Kahan, The Beaches, Half Moon Run, and Maren Morris. The festival is not just about music but also showcases the great culinary offerings available in PEI. We are proud to sponsor a booth in the food pavilion, partnering with the Food Island Partnership, Lobster PEI, and the Dairy Farmers of PEI. We



will be showcasing foods that promote potatoes, lobster, and dairy, and we will have sponsorship recognition on their website and social channels. Our team will also share footage and content through our social media in collaboration with the Food Island Partnership. The Food Island Partnership recently shot a commercial that highlights the five core PEI products and this commercial will be shown on the main stage sixteen times throughout the weekend. Ticket sales are off to a great start and it promises to be a great event!

Trevor Lambe Racing Team

On a final note, we will continue our collaboration with the Trevor Lambe Racing Team this summer and have a summer student joining us in June who will help us get our



pal Tate on the road. We plan to have a significant presence at many of the great PEI festivals and events during the summer of 2024. It's shaping up to be a great summer!



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BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR ENHANCED BIOSECURITY



- Cleaning and disinfection is of the utmost importance in reducing the risk of introducing or spreading disease to your farm.
- Each time a vehicle arrives or returns after being off-farm, the proper practice is to clean & disinfect.
- Incorporating routine cleaning and disinfecting of equipment, machinery, storage facilities, and transportation vehicles can help reduce disease transmission.
- A seed cutter is a common source of contamination for many diseases (IE. Bacterial Ring Rot (BRR), Bacterial Soft Rot, Fusarium Dry Rot, Late Blight, and Blackleg. Regularly clean and disinfect!
- FACT: BRR can live on wood surfaces for up to 7 years and can live on hard surfaces for up to 3 years.
- When cleaning, ensure thorough removal of all soil and debris. Wash surfaces with hot water for maximum efficacy, followed by the application of a disinfectant. Allow the disinfectant to remain wet on the surface for 10 minutes to effectively destroy pathogens.



Industry Updates

Three Island Potato Industry Leaders Receive National Agriculture Recognition

Three deserving Islanders have received recognition on the National agriculture stage. The Fruit and Vegetable Growers of Canada (FVGC, formerly Canadian Horticulture Council) annual meetings were held this past March in Ottawa. The awards were handed out as part of their awards banquet on the final night of the meetings.

Brenda Simmons, the former Assistant General Manager of the PEI Potato Board was presented with one of two Lifetime Achievement Awards. Brenda played a significant and dedicated role within the FVGC, particularly with the Canadian Potato Council (CPC). Her involvement as a director of the CPC for many years and her tenure as vice chair highlight her commitment to the organization. Brenda's understanding of the agriculture sector positioned her as the go-to person not only for PEI, but across the country. Her ability to navigate complex issues and guide stakeholders through challenging times underscores her leadership and expertise.

Mary Kay Sonier, the former Seed Coordinator for the PEI Potato Board was awarded as an Honorary Lifetime Member of FVGC. Mary Kay's deep farming knowledge has played a key role on her involvement on numerous national and international committees and working groups over the years. She has been an active member of the CPC for many years including a key member of the Research Working Group, Potatoes Canada, and the Seed Potato Sub-Committee, which she served as national Vice-Chair. She has also been involved with the Seed Certification Section of the Potato Association of America (PAA). Mary Kay played a significant role advocating on behalf of seed potato growers to both provincial and federal governments for the development of programs, policies and regulations that support viable growth of the industry.

Alvin Keenan, co-owner of Rollo Bay Holdings in Rollo Bay, PEI was honoured with one of two Doug Connery Awards, which are presented to those who portray leadership excellence and advancing interests in Canada's Horticulture Industry. Alvin has served the farming community in a variety of ways. Notably, he was the Atlantic representative and past president of the CHC, a role he valued and made notable progress in. He was president of the PEI Federation of Agriculture, the PEI Farm Practices Review Board, and a former Director of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture. He currently sits as President of the Board of the Grain Elevators Corporation here in PEI. Alvin has been a key mentor and advisor to those in the agriculture sector in

general not only in PEI, but across the nation and beyond.

Other recipients of awards are Glen Lucas, Doug Connery Award; Bev Appleby, recognized hard-working staff member of FVGC and Beth Connery, Lifetime Achievement Award. The PEI Potato Board congratulates all recipients of these prestigious, national awards.



Mary Kay Sonier, former Seed Coordinator for the PEI Potato Board, Alvin Keenan, co-owner of Rollo Bay Holdings and Brenda Simmons, former Assistant General Manager of the PEI Potato Board.

Employee Change at CPC

A message from Bill Zylmans, Chair of the Canadian Potato Council:

"We wish to inform you about a significant change at the Canadian Potato Council. Effective immediately, Gary Stordy is no longer an employee of the CPC. This shift comes at a critical time as we embark on the implementation of a new strategic plan, a move that aligns with our future direction and the enhancement of our collective impact.

We are thankful to Gary for his contributions over his tenure. We wish him the best in his future endeavours and appreciate his efforts towards our collective goals. As we

continue on our path and strive towards our strategic goals, we are in search of an individual who will join us in a key role to help implement our vision and goals. We are optimistic about the future and remain committed to advancing the interests of our members. We will provide more information about this search and our future direction shortly.”

PEI’s International Potato Technology Expo sees record attendance

There is definite energy and enthusiasm in the Prince Edward Island potato industry, judging by the number of exhibitors and attendees at the recent International Potato Technology Expo. The Expo, held February 21st and 22nd at the Eastlink Centre in Charlottetown, PEI, saw more than 3,100 people attend what has become the premier industry show in North America. This was a record level attendance for the event, including farmers and industry partners attending from across Canada and the United States.

Potato growers, processors, equipment dealers, scientists, agronomists, financial advisors, and many more attended the biennial, two-day event. “PEI’s Potato Expo was definitely THE one to attend, for anyone who works in the potato industry, and was a great example of how important and thriving our industry is,” says John Visser, chair of the PEI Potato Board. “We have an engaged sector full of people who are leaders and interested in moving things forward” he continues.

The Expo featured a conference on the two mornings of the event, proudly presented by the Prince Edward Island Potato Board, the Prince Edward Island Department of Agriculture, and the United Potato Growers of Canada, with sponsorship from Farm Credit Canada and Syngenta. Thursday’s line-up of speakers focused on the latest updates in potato market information, an agricultural economic outlook, and a panel discussion on attracting and retaining labour in agriculture. Friday’s speakers focused on primarily on agronomic topics, including integrated pest management and precision agriculture.

A big thank you to the organizers, Master Promotions, and all of the exhibitors and sponsors for contributing to an amazing event. The International Potato Technology Expo will return in 2026.



Soil Conservationist of the Year Award

PEI Soil and Crop Improvement Association recognized two farms for their soil conservation and general sustainable agriculture efforts at a recent event held in Summerside, March 9th, 2024 “This is our 34th annual presentation of Soil Conservationist of the Year Award; the Board of Directors has seen a tremendously positive evolution in attitudes and actions over the years in how our producers in this province are protecting the land and water resources. Kudos to our farmers as we are really second to none in sustainable agriculture”, says John Hooper, President of PEI Soil and Crop Improvement Association.

Picturesque Farms of The Brae, PEI, was the recipient of the award in the Livestock Category; and Hilltop Produce Ltd of Kinkora was the recipient in the Cash Crop Category. Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Gordon MacFadyen was on hand at the awards to assist Mr. Hooper and the other PEISCA directors.



Gordon MacFadyen, Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Mary, Luke and Justin Rogers of Picturesque Farms of The Brae and John Hooper




Gordon MacFadyen, Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Neville and Andrew Lawless of Hilltop Produce and John Hooper

Clements Award for Excellence


Bunny Burrow Vegetable Co., owned by Gordie and Andrea McKenna, is the recipient of this year's Gilbert R. Clements Award for Excellence in Sustainable Agriculture. At Bunny Burrow, Andrea, Gordie and staff specialize in growing carrots and turnips for the fresh market.

Andrea and Gordie have made sustainability a farm and community priority. They are founding members of the East Prince Agri-Environment Association and participate in on-farm research projects they hope will benefit the whole industry. The family takes great pride in using precision agriculture tools to guide their decision making to farm as sustainably as possible. Gordie and Andrea consistently make time to connect with other farmers and with the public about environmental sustainability, welcoming government and school tours, participating in national social media campaigns and speaking with media.





Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

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A stylized logo for International Day of Potato, featuring colorful potato shapes in blue, red, yellow, and purple.

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