

Prince Edward Island

Summer 2024
Volume 25 Issue 3

POTATO NEWS

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Prince Edward Island Potato Board

Annual General Meeting & Banquet 2024

AGM - November 20, 2024

PEI Board Office Meeting Room

8:30 AM - 11:00 AM

Banquet - November 22, 2024

6:00 PM Reception

7:00 PM Banquet

Delta Prince Edward



POTATO NEWS

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Marla Slater.....Operations Technician

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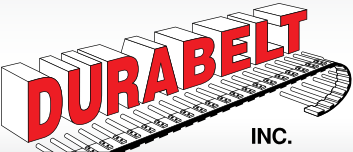
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Chairman's Comments

by John Visser, PEI Potato Board Chairman



We all know things can change quickly when it comes to crop health and especially weather, but so far this year we are seeing mostly great looking fields of potatoes. With one of the earliest plantings on record, and thanks to the good rains we got in late June, fields emerged quickly and kept on growing! Rains were much heavier in the central and western parts of the province this year, but as of print, there were no significant effects. Green Peach aphids are being seen in the North Eastern United States and New Brunswick, which typically means they will be here too. I'm pleased that our provincial Aphid Alert program has been expanded and we now have 30 traps placed throughout PEI. The key to ensuring we are protecting our crop is knowing when to actually do it.

The new CFIA National Response Potato Wart Management Plan has been drafted, released and public consultations ended on July 26th. We had great interest and engagement with our growers and the Board submitted comments along with several individual farms and provincial representatives. Special thanks to Mary Kay Sonier, our former staff member and now Potato Wart Consultant for all her work, advocacy and for providing us with education and information related to the science behind the pest. CFIA is hoping to put out a final draft in late fall and remain hopeful we will be working under the new plan (in some form) for the 2025 crop. CFIA's National Survey for Potato Wart will be conducted at harvest time with tare soil samples collected from selected fields. The Survey will

only be conducted on registered seed farms this year, with priority given to those fields who have yet to be tested.

Last year's crop will be finished up as the new crop is ready to be dug. Our year over year holdings are down, and while our smaller overall crop last year plays a role, we are in a great position as we head into harvest.

We are looking to host the Board AGM on November 20th and the Banquet on November 22nd this year. We will be welcoming three new directors to our Board of Directors to replace those whose term is coming to an end. More information on both will follow in the coming weeks but mark your calendars as it is a great time to get together with fellow growers, meet the new and returning board members, and chat with the staff of the Board office.

In closing, I hope you take some time to enjoy the summer with those around you. Fall is right around the corner and as we all know, there isn't a lot of down time in the harvest months. I want to wish everyone a safe and productive harvest season.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John Visser".

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PEI Potato Board News

The Board is pleased to welcome Bethany Visser to our staff as Junior Agronomist. Bethany is filling a 12-month contract to replace Humna while she is on maternity leave. Bethany grew up on her family's potato farm (J&S Visser Produce Inc in Orwell Cove), recently graduated with a B.Sc. in Plant Science from Dordt University in Iowa and has been working at the Board since May 15th. She will be primarily assisting Ryan with a variety of research and agronomy projects. Welcome to the team, Bethany!



Bethany Visser collecting petiole samples for an AIM trial

We are thrilled to welcome Shaelynn McCardle as our Student Marketing Intern this summer! Born and raised in Kinkora, Shaelynn has been highly involved in her community. She received both the Female Student Athlete of the Year and the Governor General's Award during her grade 12 year at Kinkora Regional High School.

Currently, Shaelynn is entering her final year of a Human Kinetics degree from St. Francis Xavier University which she will be completing from UPEI. Welcome to the team Shaelynn! Have fun with Tate this summer.

Marla Slater has recently joined the staff at Fox Island Elite Seed Farm in the position of Operations Technician. Marla has recently completed a one-year term as Project Manager for a capital investment project at Fox Island.

Marla brings a wealth of experience and knowledge in the agriculture industry, making her an invaluable asset to the team. She attended the Nova Scotia Agricultural College and has extensive hands-on experience working with her family's farm, Wilkie Farms. Marla's in-depth knowledge of early-generation seed potato production will be a significant asset to Fox Island. Welcome Marla!



Marla Slater joins the team at Fox Island as Operations Technician



Shaelynn McCardle and Tate out on tour.

Tate's Summer Tour

This summer, Shaelynn, our summer student will be taking Tate across the island to various community events and festivals to promote PEI Potatoes. She has already attended Canada Day festivities in Rustico and Victoria Park, popular attractions in Cavendish, the Summerside Lobster Carnival, and the Downtown Charlottetown Market, which attracts thousands of visitors every Sunday.

July events on her schedule included the Potato Blossom Festival, Somerset Festival, Prince County Exhibition, Breakfast on the Farm, and many more! If you'd like to get a picture with Tate, check out our website for his upcoming appearances this summer.

<https://www.peipotato.org/tates-dates/>

August 8th: Charlottetown Waterfront/Founder's Hall
August 16th: Gold Cup Parade
August 18th: Downtown Charlottetown Market
August 24th: Dundas Plowing Match Parade



Upcoming Events & Program Deadlines

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

August 2024

- August 14 PEI Potato Board of Directors Monthly Meeting, Fox Island Seed Farm
- August 27-29 AIM Summer BBQs, Locations to be announced

September 2024

- Sept 11 PEI Potato Board of Directors Monthly Meeting, Charlottetown

November 2024

- Nov 20 PEI Potato Board Annual General Meeting, Charlottetown
- Nov 22 PEI Potato Board Annual Banquet, Delta Prince Edward, Charlottetown

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Pa'Tato and the Tot

by Rich Knox, Writer/Director of
Pa'Tato and the Tot

As Islanders and folks around the globe enjoy their first tastes of new potatoes this season, there are new potatoes of another sort growing on our beautiful red soil of Prince Edward Island. Pa'Tato and the Tot, a brand new animated series for children is in production on PEI.

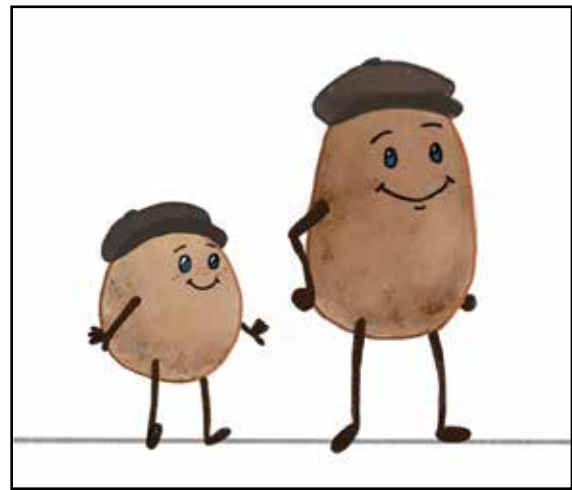
It stars the voices of Jonathan Torrens (Trailer Park Boys, Letterkenny, Jonovision) and Martha MacIsaac (Emily of New Moon, Superbad) with many more talented Island actors, and a beautiful visual world created by Teresa Kuo.

It is written and directed by Islander (and world-touring) musician, Rich Knox, and he has cobbled together some of the Island's best musicians to help round out the soundtrack, including members of the East Pointers, Shane Pendergast and more. It promises to be a truly Prince Edward Island story.

Based on PEI, Pa'Tato and Tot, a father and son potato team, go around the Island doing good deeds for their fellows Spuds, down at the wharf, out in nature, and even at an amusement park in Cavendish. It's a wholesome show, filled with good morals and life lessons that apply to anyone, like being thoughtful, helping out others in need, love of neighbour, being useful and even a little bit of water safety.

With the traditional sounds of Prince Edward Island music, and the beautiful backdrop of our Island scenery, our cast of colourful veggies will make you proud to be an Islander. They cast a light on the best parts of living on PEI, enjoying all the beauty that our island has to offer, and being in community with the great folks we get to count as our fellow Islanders.

This show is produced by Jeana MacIsaac and She Has The Tools Productions, and will be available to view on Bell Fibe TV1 in October of 2024. We are truly grateful for the support of the PEI Potato Board.



Left to Right: David Rashed (Engineer), Jonathan Torrens (Voice Actor - Pa'Tato), Rich Knox (Writer/Director).



Left to Right: Voice Actors Stephanie Mueller (Billie Jo), Shane Pendergast (John).

Philippine Delegation Spends Week on PEI

By: Krista Shaw, Director of Stakeholder Relations

A 15-member delegation from the Philippines composed of farmers from the United Potato Producers of Benguet and Mountain Province (UPPBMPI), senior executives of Universal Robina Corporation (URC), and the Undersecretary of High Value Crops from Department of Agriculture visited PEI from June 9-15th to meet with the Potato Board, growers, members in the agriculture community, and government officials.

The relationship between the Philippines and Prince Edward Island Potato Board was formed following a successful mission in 2019 which saw a multistakeholder visit to PEI to learn about our potato farming practices and our seed certification program. Seed, specifically Granola, was then sent to the Philippines for distribution to growers with many seeing 30-40% crop yield increases in the first year alone. Understanding the quality of PEI potato seed, and URC's desire to source chipping potatoes, a request was made in March of this year for the delegation to come to PEI to enhance education, build relationships, observe planting and other important growing techniques and teachings that lead to our quality crops.

With funding in part from ACOA and Innovation PEI, eight farmers, four officials from URC, two Department of Agriculture representatives, and the Trade Commissioner from the Embassy of Canada participated in a weeklong itinerary of workshops, farm tours, meetings with growers, business tours, visits to Fox Island Seed Farm, the Canadian Potato Museum, and the Harrington Research Farm. The group was also able to meet with Ministers of Agriculture Thompson and MacAulay during the week as well.

The mission was very successful. Delegates toured the Island with stops from tip to tip, and commented how advanced PEI is compared to their situation. Some of their farms operate without power, there are few if any storage facilities, and most everything is done by hand. Farms, especially those in the mountainous

areas, are not measured in acres, but rather square meters. Some saw pieces of potato equipment they had only ever heard about before, others sat in tractors for the first time, and one of the noted highlights of the week was observing mechanized potato planting – a first for the entire group.

Filipino farmers are keen to have PEI seed once again and work is underway with the Philippine Department of Agriculture to work on the import permit requirements to do so. While there are no Granola seed growers here in PEI, they are eager to try new varieties that will work well in their climate and that can keep them more current in today's farming practices.

The visit took place during the 75th year of diplomatic relations between Canada and the Philippines. A special thank you to all who hosted the group throughout the week.



Filipino delegation visits the Canadian Potato Museum in O'Leary, PEI



Above: L-R: Minister Bloyce Thompson, Krista Shaw, John Visser and Greg Donald welcome the Filipino delegation to Prince Edward Island.

Below L-R: Elisa Gabriel, Angel Cachuela, Jeline Panas, Shirlyn Reyes, Ardan Copas, Cheryl Natividad, Saturnino Gawec, Minister Lawrence MacAulay, Ingrid Bautista, Basilio Copas, Abigail Cruz, Vicky Yap, John Sagpa-ey, Saturnino Damitan, Regine Patino, Marcelino Endi saying farwell to PEI at the end of the week long tour.



World Potato Congress 2024

By: Ryan Barrett, Research Specialist



Above: Minister Bloyce Thompson, Ryan Barrett, Willem VanNieuwenhuyzen, Jubs Bristow, Greg Donald

The international potato community congregated in Adelaide, Australia in June for the 13th World Potato Congress. More than 1000 attendees from over forty countries attended two days of presentations, workshops, and networking events from June 23rd to 25th, culminating in a closing awards banquet at the prestigious Adelaide Oval, one of the premier sporting venues in Australia. Following the main Congress, several tours were organized that showcased both the agriculture and food industries in Australia as well as some of the country's famed natural beauty.

Prince Edward Island has for many years been strongly involved with the World Potato Congress after hosting the first Congress in 1993. The WPC is headquartered in PEI, with Ellen Kouwenberg serving as Executive Director and Angela VanNieuwenhuyzen providing administrative support, while Greg Donald and Brian Douglas serve on the Board of Directors.

A strong contingent of Islanders attended the Congress, including growers, Board staff, past and present WPC directors, government officials, and researchers. Ryan Barrett was invited to present on the topic of regenerative agriculture research and agronomy in Prince Edward Island, sharing highlights of research and agronomy projects in collaboration

with growers under AIM, Living Labs, and National Potato Cluster programs. Regenerative agriculture was a frequent theme of several presentations at the Congress, as many multi-national processors as well as national potato organizations embrace programs to move beyond "sustainability" to practices that are seen to "regenerate" soils and farming systems.

Two researchers from the University of Prince Edward Island also shared results of Board-supported research at the Congress. Dr. Aitazaz Farooque presented first year results of research into the use of artificial intelligence (AI) to detect PVY symptoms using an autonomous robot in potato fields. His graduate student, Andrew Fraser, presented on his project using remote sensing tools to detect variability in soil compaction, with the aim of producing compaction maps for producers. Both presentations were well attended and well received, showcasing the innovation that is happening in potato research in PEI through support from the industry.

A number of potato industry leaders were recognized with awards at the closing banquet on June 25th. Included among the many award recipients were:

- John Griffin of WP Griffin Inc. for his many years of contributions to the WPC as a former director and

CEO,

- Brian Douglas, for his many years of contributions to the WPC as a director and former administrator,
- Walter Davidson, owner of WD Potato Inc. for his successes in supplying potatoes for potato chip processing in Canada as well as his long-time support of the WPC.

On June 26th, some PEI attendees participated in a tour of Mitolo Family Farms packing facility, the largest fresh potato packer in Australia. Potatoes are harvested almost year-round in Australia and sent straight to the packing facility. The Mitolos grow more than 10,000 acres of potatoes for the fresh market, recently pioneering development of varieties of low glycemic index potatoes targeted toward those with diabetes or on low-carb diets.

Another tour visited Kangaroo Island, an 8000 square km island about 90 mins south of Adelaide,

home to many sheep and beef farms as well as a growing seed potato industry. More on Kangaroo Island on page 14.

Once again, the WPC was a terrific opportunity to network with growers, researchers, and industry partners from around the world while also learning about the potato industry in Australia. There are some natural advantages to growing potatoes in Australia, namely being able to produce two crops per year in many areas, an absence of Colorado potato beetle and fungal disease in many areas, and a reduced need for storage investments due to year-round harvesting. Availability of water is a major issue for most Australian growers, as Australia is the driest continent, and many potato-growing areas receive only 300-400 mm of rain each year. South Australia is home to the largest share of fresh potato acres, while Tasmania and Victoria grow predominantly potatoes for processing.



Andrew Fraser of UPEI presenting at the WPC in Australia



Dr. Aitazaz Farooque of UPEI presenting at WPC



*John Griffin Honored at the World Potato Congress Meetings in Australia
Dr. Nigel Crump, Dr. Peter VanderZaag, John Griffin, and Greg Donald*

PEI Potato Blossom Festival 2024



2024 Potato Producer of the Year: Dock Corner Farms
Spencer Rennie, John Visser, and Troy Rennie



Daniel MacDonald with Friend of the Potato
Industry: Billy Mackendrick



Colin Cornish with 2024 Potato Ambassador:
Hallie Sweet



John Visser, Hallie Sweet and Greg Donald

UPEI Faculty for Sustainable Design Engineering

By Mark Phillips, Marketing Specialist

This winter, the Potato Board worked with a team of engineers from the University of Prince Edward Island Faculty for Sustainable Design Engineering (FSDE). FSDE proposed a collaboration last summer, and the Board applied for help implementing our Kwik Lok branded tags.

Given the increasing use of private-label packaging, the tags have been seen as an additional way to increase brand recognition in stores.

The project was designed to:

- Improve the visibility of the PEI Potatoes brand on packaging.
- Provide a way for growers, packers, and dealers to share messaging without requiring new packaging.
- Drive brand awareness and recognition.
- Provide valuable work experience to UPEI students to complement their studies.
- Expose students to our industry and show agriculture as a viable career consideration.

When we explored the Kwik Lok issue, the students quickly learned of a fix that was not previously known to the producer, and within a few hours, their task was fixed, and they were left in need of a new project. We pivoted to a project for applying stickers to packaging like what was needed when the Puerto Rico market opened during the border closure. We thought it would be good to have a solution if stickers were needed again, plus it could present another option for brand recognition at the store level.

The FSDE team accepted this project and immediately started work on the project. They came up with an initial design based on a page-turning apparatus, but at our mid-term report meeting, they concluded it would not work and pivoted to another model. The team worked quickly to have a more involved prototype by the final presentation. This prototype used suction cups to move the bags and allow the next sticker to be applied. While the idea was good, the students ran up against many challenges, namely finding the right suction cup and then finding a way for all the parts to work simultaneously without interfering with one another. Once they got everything to work, finding a way to make it perform better than

manually applying the stickers was still challenging. At the time of the final presentation, two to three people would be required to operate the prototype.

While the idea for the prototype was solid, the early changes and the new direction coming at the project's midpoint left the team running out of time to complete the design. We ultimately decided not to proceed with the proposed prototype; however, the project and the team provided good insight into what would be necessary to use stickers for in the future.

We appreciate the work and professionalism of the UPEI staff and students. It was great to share information about our industry and the importance to the economy of PEI with students who would not have known much about it otherwise. Should another project arise, we welcome the opportunity to work with the UPEI team again.

While we were not entirely successful in the end, the project itself was valuable because it allowed us to explore options for our branding issues, engage with young professionals, introduce students to our industry, and learn more about what students do in the Sustainable Design and Engineering Program. This project was made possible by funding from Innovation PEI. Special thanks to East Point Potato Inc., Sherwood Produce, and G. Visser and Sons for assisting with this project.



L-R: Sandeep Kooyelas, Ashhad Adil Mohammed, Deanna Malone, Stuart Ferguson, Aiden McBurney and Mark Phillips

Manure and Cover Crops Benefit Soil Health

By Dr. Judith Nyiraneza, AAFC

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) scientist Dr. Judith Nyiraneza and her collaborators are on a mission to help farmers on Prince Edward Island increase organic matter in soils and increase potato yield. As co-lead scientist for AAFC's former Living Lab-Atlantic project, Dr. Nyiraneza recently completed a 2-year study that investigated the use of beef manure mixed with straw and high-residue cover crops in potato production systems. Manure contains a range of nutrients, and if properly applied along with use of a cover crop, it can improve soil structure and water holding capacity that can help plants to grow.

"On Prince Edward Island, manure is available, but potato growers may not have access to it. We're aware of its capabilities in improving soil health, and we wanted to see short-term effects of manure application at a moderate rate of 20 metric tonnes per hectare on potato yield," adds Dr. Nyiraneza.

Dr. Nyiraneza sees lots of potential with cow manure when it is added to soil during the planting of cover crops at least one year prior to potato planting season. With recommendations from Living Lab Atlantic partners including the PEI Potato Board, Dr. Nyiraneza planted numerous field plots and treatments at the Harrington Research Farm that reflected rotations on Prince Edward Island farms. Incorporating manure into cover crops increased total potato yield by 28%. With results like this, potato growers who have access to manure will be encouraged to incorporate it into their fields and that could spell good news for cattle farmers. This research is also

encouraging producers to adopt mixed farming by integrating livestock production into horticulture fields as well as encouraging potato producers to partner with neighbouring cattle producers to access manure or to have cattle forage in rotational crop fields as part of the new Living Lab PEI.

Super cover crops and looking to the future

While manure may not yet be widely applied in potato production systems, cover crops planted in summer or in fall are gaining popularity on Prince Edward Island due to their ability to provide crop residue and nutrients into the soil for subsequent crops as well as reducing the risk of soil erosion. Cover crops planted in fall reduce nitrate leaching into waterways, keeping our water clean. Dr. Nyiraneza and her team



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set out to increase residues by studying eight different full-season cover crops with manure applied and how they impacted potato yield, soil health, soil diseases and nitrate leaching. The cover crops were planted in the spring at least one year prior to potato planting season. The research team learned that forage pearl millet and sorghum sudangrass were most effective in increasing potato yield and reducing levels of root-lesion nematodes.

“Pearl millet is a relatively new cover crop for Prince Edward Island, but it is showing great promise in returning high amounts of residues in the soil, reducing the risk of nitrate leaching in soil, and increasing potato yield,” notes Judith.

Now with the launch of the new Living Lab PEI, Dr. Nyiraneza is continuing her work on manure and its effect on greenhouse gas emissions and ability to store

carbon. Starting in 2024, she is working with Prince Edward Island farmers to further develop and trial various liquid manure application methods including broadcasting manure onto soil, injecting it into the soil and mixing it with a natural organic substance called biochar.

While Dr. Nyiraneza is continuing to solidify her data, it already appears that cover crops mixed with manure can provide a good one-two punch for farmers looking to improve soil health and boost potato yield.



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Seed Production on Kangaroo Island

By Ryan Barrett, Research Specialist

On June 27th, Greg Donald and I were part of a tour to Kangaroo Island following the World Potato Congress in Adelaide. Kangaroo Island (known to locals as “KI”) is about 155 km long by 55 km wide at it’s widest, making it similar in size to Prince Edward Island. It is located 14 km from the Australian mainland, connected primarily by ferry and a small airport. While Kangaroo Island has several protected forests and natural areas, it is dominated by rangeland for sheep and beef cattle, with agriculture being the dominant industry. The Island only has a year-round population of 5000 people but is a popular tourist destination for many Australians, as it is slightly warmer in the winter and slightly cooler in the summer than the rest of South Australia.

In recent years, Kangaroo Island has been home to a growing seed potato industry. The government of South Australia has passed legislation establishing the island as a protected area for seed potato production, restricting the importation of potatoes to the island. Only seed potatoes are grown there, and the only

potatoes permitted onto the island are minitubers. Approximately 750 acres of “summer crop” are planted each year, while a further 125 acres of “winter crop” are also able to be planted. We visited the farm of Peter Cooper and family, who grow about 65 acres of potatoes in both summer and winter, but within that relatively small acreage produce multiple generations of up to ten varieties. The summer crop (planted in October, harvested in April) is fully irrigated, while the winter crop (planted in May, harvested in October/November) is dependent on rainfall. Average yields for the summer crop are around 360 cwt/ac , while the winter crop averages closer to 270 cwt/ac.

Kangaroo Island has a number of advantages for high generation seed production. The island is free of PCN and Colorado potato beetles, and aphid numbers are generally low. Aphids that do make it to the island generally do not carry PVY, so growers are able to maintain very low PVY levels without use of mineral oil or insecticides. Fungal pathogen pressure is also low, with late blight and early blight not much of a concern. As a result, crop protection costs are generally quite



Peter Cooper and the group touring the Kangaroo Island Seed Farm

low. There are some insect pests (mostly moths) which can damage the crop, but they are managed with one or two insecticide applications close to harvest.

Seed certification in Australia is performed by AuSPICA (Australian Seed Potato Industry Certification Authority), a non-profit industry organization. AuSPICA performs all the inspection, testing and certification functions for seed potatoes in Australia that CFIA performs in Canada. A neat innovation on the Australian seed tags is a QR code that provides full transparency on all the information available on a particular seed lot.

Peter Cooper talked to our group about how they came to growing potatoes just in the last decade after being primarily a sheep farm. They still raise approximately 12,000 sheep on the farm, half for wool and half for meat. Potatoes are in a six-year crop rotation, primarily with grass for sheep, although some canola has been introduced in recent years. Soil pH is very low there (4.5 to 5.5 pH), so many other crops are not particularly profitable.

At harvest, potatoes are taken from the field in boxes and graded at the farm before being bagged and transported right away. As a result, the only seed storage on the property is a small, refrigerated storage for minitubers to plant the next crop. Most seed sold

to commercial growers is generation three or four (Elite 2 or Elite 3 in Canada). Their system relies largely on visual inspection of seed fields, but depending on those visual inspections, additional testing may be required. Fields are required to be tested for PCN (despite the area being PCN-free) and 100 tubers per 5 tonnes of seed are tested for PVY and other viruses. Seed is sold by size, with 80% of the crop targeted to be 35-55 mm in size to be planted as whole seed.

While Kangaroo Island has several advantages for growing seed potatoes, growers there face some inherent challenges. Chief among those is simply getting on and off the island, as all equipment and product must travel to the island by ferry. At some times of the year, there can be significant delays in getting on and off the island. Additionally, Kangaroo Island is not blessed with much fresh water, with most farms collecting rainwater and the largest community dependant on a desalination plant for fresh water. Seed potato acres have fluctuated over the past 10-15 years depending on the availability of water and market demands. The island was also ravaged by wildfires in 2019/2020, affecting almost half of the Island with considerable damage to both farms and natural areas. Significant recovery dollars have been allocated to Kangaroo Island after the wildfires, especially in the areas of agri-tourism and eco-tourism.



Peter Cooper and family at the Kangaroo Island Seed Farm

2024 Research Projects for the PEI Potato Board

By Ryan Barrett, Research Specialist

Each year, the Board is involved in a number of research projects. The majority of these projects are supported by the Agronomy Initiative for Marketable Yield (AIM), while others are part of regional or national research programs. Here is a quick overview of the projects that the Board is undertaking in 2024.

AIM Soil Improvement Working Group:

- A. *Rotational Grazing*: assessing rotational/intensive grazing ahead of potatoes compared with mulching/baling forages. Three fields in potatoes in 2024. Part of ACS Living Labs, partnering with AAFC on data collection.
- B. *Nitrogen Credits from Legume Crops*: quantifying N credit from legumes with and without fall cover crop using different N rates in potatoes. Four fields in potatoes in 2024. Part of ACS Living Labs, partnering with AAFC and PEI Dept of Ag on data collection.
- C. *Long Term Cover Cropping*: assessing the effect of fall cover crop every year compared to no cover crop over 4-5 year period in the same field. Three fields in potatoes in 2024. Part of ACS Living Labs, partnering with AAFC and UPEI on data collection.
- D. *Crop Rotation Dynamics*: comparing different types of rotations (3 cash crops, 2 cash crops, 1 cash crop (potato only) for soil health, potato yield, economic return. Five fields in different stages of rotation.

AIM Seed and Tuber Quality Working Group:

- E. *Minuet*: Use of Minuet biopesticide to reduce common scab in susceptible varieties. Five potato fields in 2024. Partnering with AAFC on grading.
- F. *Straw Mulch*: Assessing the use of straw mulch to deter aphids on early generation

seed. One potato field in 2024.

- G. *Canopy colour*: using a kaolin clay product to mitigate heat stress to possibly deter aphid visitation. Three fields in potatoes for PVY measurement in 2024. Partnering with Genesis Crop Systems for data collection.

AIM Science & Tech Working Group:

- H. *Reduced Phosphorus*: assessing the impact of reduced P by 33-40% on suitable fields. Three fields in potatoes in 2024.
- I. *Megafol*: assessing the use of a biostimulant at tuber initiation and before potential stress event on yield and quality. Four fields in potatoes in 2024.
- J. *Soil Compaction*: assessing different types of remote sensing technologies to map/mitigate compaction in a site-specific way. Project with UPEI.
- K. *AgriScout PVY Detection*: using a robot buggy and artificial intelligence to detect PVY in plants and mark for removal. Project with UPEI.

PEI Department of Agriculture Applied Research Program:

- L. *HarvestEye*: assessing HarvestEye technology for measuring/mapping tuber size and quality across processing, table and seed production. Project with Genesis Crop Systems and Contour Consulting.

National Potato Cluster – FVGC:

- M. *Regenerative Agriculture*: investigating the long-term effects of regen ag practices on yield, quality, soil health and GHG emissions on two flagship farms.
- N. *Enhanced Efficiency Nitrogen*: investigating the use of reduced N rates, enhanced efficiency N products (SuperU), and N efficient varieties on yield, quality and GHG emissions. Plot-scale trial hosted by Cavendish Farms. Partnership with

Dalhousie AC, PEI Dept of Ag, Genesis Crop Systems, and Cavendish Farms.

Eastern Canadian Oilseeds Development Association (ECODA):

O. *Intercropping*: comparing intercropping of peas/mustard and peas/camelina compared with single crops, followed by potatoes the following year. Partnership with Dalhousie AC.



Chananpreet Singh, Yuvraj Singh Gill, Andrew Fraser, Agri-Scout Robot, Dr. Aitazaz Farooque of UPEI and Tate

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PEI Farmers work collaboratively with agricultural specialists, while accessing a variety of supports and programs, to implement beneficial management practices to protect the environment and foster farm sustainability.

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- Learn about key supports and programs for Island Farmers
- Meet some of those working to support soil health on PEI
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Update from the Department of Agriculture PEI

By: Rodrigo Sampaio dos Santos, Potato Industry Coordinator



Several staff at our Department of Agriculture conduct research across the province aiming to better understand the local factors that influence farm production on PEI. These researchers ultimately deliver practices to improve farming in alignment with the real conditions encountered by PEI growers. Amongst the areas of focus, initiatives that promote soil health is a key topic due to its impact on the environment and on the economic aspects of farmland production. Currently, a project linked to soil health is ongoing under the Sustainable Agriculture Section of the PEI Department of Agriculture, and I have invited Morgan McNeil, the project lead, to provide more details about it. Enjoy the reading!

Soil Health Improvement Plan Aboveground Crop Biomass Quantification Project

Written by: Morgan McNeil, Soil Health Specialist

The PEI Department of Agriculture (PEIDA) offers a Soil Health Improvement Plan (SHIP) advisory service to agricultural producers in PEI. Through the program, modeling software developed in the USA called the Revised Universal Soil Loss Equation (RUSLE2) is used to model crop rotation, tillage and other management practices to measure soil loss, and soil conditioning index. Some limitations of the software are that there is no vegetation option currently available to model Multi-Species Mixes (MSM) grown on PEI, including 2 or more species. The MSM have been gaining popularity on PEI, but further research is needed to assess their impact on soil health, not only in the short term, but also longer term. Therefore, the PEIDA decided to set-up a project with PEI producers to collect aboveground crop biomass from their MSM fields to generate a dataset based on local data from the province. It is also an opportunity to evaluate the existing software vegetation options currently developed for a number of other rotational crops in potato rotations such as buckwheat, brown mustard, and sorghum sudangrass.

The PEIDA has three years of funding secured through the Sustainable Canadian Agriculture Partnership (S-CAP) for the 2023, 2024 and 2025 growing seasons, and is currently in the second year of data collection. The first year of the project was successful working with five producers and a range of different crops in different parts of PEI. Producers can participate for 1, 2, or all 3 years of the project depending on their interest, and types of crops being grown in a given year. Participating producers are asked to provide the seeding date(s) for any fields contributing to the project. The PEIDA staff will make bi-weekly field visits to photograph the canopy cover and plant height over the growth period of the crops to generate a growth curve over the growing season. Participating producers are also asked to notify the PEIDA staff a few days prior to any mowing/cutting events to allow PEIDA staff to collect biomass samples as close to maximum biomass stage as possible. Depending on the crop, there can be up to 3 mowing events on a field, so multiple biomass sampling dates are implemented in the project to represent a standard growing season management regime to track biomass levels. Annual stipends are offered to each of the participating producers to show appreciation for their involvement. Good communication between PEIDA staff and the participating producers is key to the success of this project. If participating producers are not doing the mowing (but rather their farm staff) it is crucial for them to be in good communication throughout the duration of the project to avoid PEIDA staff missing any biomass sample collection dates.

For the 2024 growing season, there are currently five participating growers contributing at least one or more fields. The data collection is off to a good start examining buckwheat, brown mustard, sorghum sudangrass, and a few different Multi-Species mix fields including both Brassica and grass crops. Each

year brings different weather patterns, variation on length to maturity, and therefore different timelines for managing crops, but overall the crops are looking good and developing strong healthy ground cover. The PEIDA is confident that having at least 3 years of data collected in a row will be a good baseline to start from. If 3 years of data is successfully collected and used to evaluate or develop new vegetation options in the software modeling program, it will provide a more accurate and reliable output of soil health metrics than previously available. Working from updated models will provide the opportunity to make better recommendations to producers about their cropping, and field management practices. Overall, this should help improve the success of the SHIP program moving forward.

I would like to acknowledge my colleagues at the PEIDA for their help with the project to date; particularly Tyler Wright for project design and consultation with US colleagues having experience with RULSE development, and Aaron Jackson for his time visiting fields and collecting data. I would also like to thank Giulio Ferruzzi, Conservation Agronomist with the Natural Resources Conservation Centre (NRCS) and US Erosion Model Consultant, David Lightle for their time on RULSE consultation, and furthermore David for his help with RULSE model development.

If you have any questions, or are interested in participating in the project, please reach me at 1-902-213-3476 (cell) or by e-mail: momcneil@gov.pe.ca

Aaron Jackson sampling



Morgan McNeil sampling

Below: a field of Multi-Species Mixes



Young Farmers of PEI

*By Rebecca MacSwain,
Vice President of the PEI Young Farmers*

After a couple of quiet years during the COVID-19 pandemic, the PEI Young Farmers Association has been revived with renewed energy and enthusiasm. Established in 1948, the PEI Young Farmers Association has long served for individuals under the age of 39 working in agriculture, offering industry awareness, engagement, and support. For over 75 years, this organization has brought together like-minded people with a shared commitment to the betterment of the local agriculture industry. Members of past generations fondly remember attending Young Farmer events with neighbors and friends, creating lasting memories and strengthening industry ties.

In December 2023, the PEI Federation of Agriculture hosted the first Young Farmer gathering after a period with limited activity. The event held at the Rodd Royalty in Charlottetown marked the beginning of a new era for the organization.

More recently, an event in April at the Pourhouse in Charlottetown, was yet another success, with over 80 people in attendance. Agriculture themed trivia was hosted by Ryan Barrett, and a short business meeting

resulted in the election of a new board of directors. The newly elected board members are: Robert Larsen-President, Rebecca MacSwain-vice president, David Pitre-treasurer, Megan Adams-secretary, Ian Drake-past president, Bevin MacLennan, Ella Wood, Kaden Rennie, Kegan Ching, Travis Cummiskey.

Currently, the membership stands at approximately 110 members, representing all agricultural commodities, sizes, and regions across PEI.

The PEI Young Farmers Association is currently planning its next event, scheduled for July 27th. This upcoming event will include visits to three farms in Eastern PEI, showcasing different agricultural sectors and fostering further engagement and collaboration among members.

With a renewed sense of purpose and growing membership, the PEI Young Farmers Association is well positioned to continue its legacy of supporting and advancing the agricultural community on Prince Edward Island.

Check out the Facebook page “PEI Young Farmers” to keep updated with the recent activity of the group.




Board of Directors: L-R, Back Row: Ella Wood, David Pitre, Bevin MacLennan, Robert Larsen, Kaden Rennie, Kegan Ching, Travis Cummiskey, Ian Drake Front Row: Megan Adams, Rebecca MacSwain

Canadian Planted Acreage Report

Province	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	% Change vs. 2023
Newfoundland	425	425	475	415	425	410	-3.5%
Prince Edward Island	85,500	83,600	85,000	83,300	84,500	85,300	0.9%
Nova Scotia	1,440	1,200	1,200	800	800	800	0.0%
New Brunswick	52,900	48,540	53,000	52,200	52,815	53,000	0.4%
Quebec	43,508	45,924	46,236	45,371	46,762	47,444	1.5%
Ontario	34,027	36,500	38,324	37,180	37,700	39,238	4.1%
Manitoba	70,000	71,500	78,000	80,500	81,000	78,600	-3.0%
Saskatchewan	6,700	7,000	7,300	7,100	7,300	7,500	2.7%
Alberta	61,235	59,677	68,450	73,080	80,100	75,500	-5.7%
British Columbia	6,700	6,500	6,300	5,200	5,800	5,800	0.0%
Total Canada	362,435	360,866	384,285	385,146	397,202	393,592	-0.9%

Source: Statistics Canada. Table 32-10-0358-01 Area, production and farm value of potatoes




We at the Prince Edward Island Potato Board want to wish all farmers a safe and bountiful harvest.

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Effect of Minuet on Common Scab

By Ryan Barrett, Research Specialist

Common scab, caused primarily by *Streptomyces* species of bacteria, continues to be a significant source of losses in marketable yield for PEI potato producers. Recent research conducted under the FVGC's national cluster project on common scab indicated that the use of the Bayer in-furrow biopesticide Serenade Soil may help to suppress common scab symptoms. Serenade Soil has not been routinely used on most PEI farms, so there was interest from the AIM Soil Improvement Working Group to look into this more on a field scale. Bayer has since rebranded Serenade Soil as Minuet, so we undertook field scale trials in 2023 to evaluate this product for scab control. Three farms agreed to assess Minuet in on-farm trials in 2023. Each of these fields applied the label rate of Minuet (379 mL/ac) on a portion of a field in comparison to no Minuet. At MacLennan Properties in Springfield West, Minuet and the control were also compared with use of an additional in-furrow biological product, Microflora Pro. Each of the fields were planted with a variety that was known to be susceptible to common scab. In late September, 10-foot harvest samples were collected for assessment of both tuber blemish diseases (including common scab) as well as for total and marketable yield.

It appeared that there was no statistical difference in yield between the three treatments in MacLennan Properties field. There was a slight numerical improvement in yield in favour of the Microflora Pro treatment, but this was not statistically significant. This field of Ranger Russets was grown for seed, so it is not surprising to have very few tubers over 10 ounces. Based on 100 tubers per treatment, there was a significantly lower percent scab per tuber on the untreated check than on the two biological in-furrow treatments. However, it should be noted that the percentage of scab was quite low in all three treatments. This was confirmed by the low level of scab severity across all three treatments, with no difference evident between treatments. There were more tubers with zero scab in the untreated check than in the two treated strips, and there were more tubers with 1% and 5% scab in the treatments than the untreated check. Nonetheless, tubers at 1% and 5% scab would

still be considered to be generally low for common scab, particularly on a processing contract.

In MacSull Farms field in French River (Kennebec variety), there did appear to be a significant reduction in both percent scab and scab severity in favor of Minuet. We observed a 64% reduction in common scab incidence in favor of Minuet when examining 150 tubers from each treatment. There was also a corresponding reduction in scab severity for the Minuet treatment. There was a definite trend toward lower scab pressure in the Minuet treatment; in fact, twice as many tubers were scored zero in the Minuet treatment compared to the check.

Once again, there was no significant difference in yield or size distribution between the Minuet treatment and the untreated control in Hilltop Produce field of Ranger Russets. This was the best yielding field in the study, with negligible difference between treatment and control for yield and size. Similarly to the MacSull Farms field, there was a significant reduction in percent scab and scab severity in favour of the Minuet treatment, with a 61% reduction in percent scab observed. The Minuet treatment had a much higher number of tubers scoring zero for scab and had very few observations over 10%.


Take-home messages:

- Use of Minuet provided no increase in yield or change in tuber size distribution compared to the control treatment. There was also no significant difference in off-type or culled tubers.
- Use of Minuet reduced the percentage of common scab by approximately 60% and the severity of common scab in two out of three trial fields.
- In the third field there was a significantly higher percentage of scab (at lower levels than the other two fields) but with no difference in scab severity.
- These are only one year of results, and this trial will be repeated on additional farm fields in 2024 to add confidence to these results. The weather in most parts of the province was not generally conducive to common scab development in 2023; this may be different in this year's growing season.

Thank you to MacLennan Properties, Hilltop Produce and MacSull Farms for partnering with us on this farmer-initiated field trial. Thanks also to Rick Peters, Kim MacDonald, Bennett Crane and the team at AAFC Charlottetown for their assistance in grading the samples for this trial.



Tuber with obvious signs of scab



Agriculture Environment Unit (AEU)

The AEU is a team within The Department of Environment, Energy and Climate Action focusing on legislative compliance within the agriculture sector. The AEU establish priorities based on risk to the environment, public health and safety, they incorporate education and compliance coaching for lower-risk incidents of non-compliance but can use enforcement (Fines and Orders) for high-risk activities or when efforts to achieve compliance have failed. The AEU can be used as a resource for the agriculture community and provide information on buffer zones, planted headlands, pesticide records and storage requirements as well as helping identifying high slope lands and watercourses and wetlands.

For more information on the Agricultural Environment Unit please feel free to contact:

Shawn Schofield - Supervisor ✉ seschofield@gov.pe.ca ☎ (902)393-5285
 Prince County - Shelby Wellwood-Sawatzky ✉ swsawatzky@gov.pe.ca ☎ (902)313-0201
 Queens County - Vacant
 Kings County - Randy Monaghan ✉ rwmonaghan@gov.pe.ca ☎ (902)314-6470

The Biosecurity Project is now open for applications from PEI potato producers!



Funding assistance is available for the following Biosecurity activities:

- 100% coverage for one-on-one assistance to develop a biosecurity plan unique to your farm
- 70% coverage up to \$3,500 for a pressure washer
- 70% coverage up to \$10,500 for a permanent wash station

Implementing biosecurity measures on-farm acts as a proactive strategy to control and manage potential disease threats effectively. We strongly encourage you to take advantage of this opportunity which is funded by ACOA and the Province of PEI.

The deadline to apply is December 31, 2024 (projects must be completed by February 28, 2025).

Contact Rebecca MacSwain at 902-892-6551 for more information.



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Ridgetown Seed Potato Inspection Training

By: Rebecca MacSwain, Seed Specialist

On June 24th and 25th, the CFIA hosted an industry Seed Potato Inspection training course at Ridgetown College in Ridgetown, Ontario. Fifteen participants of primarily potato producers and some industry representatives from PEI, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta attended the two-day course. The training provided a comprehensive overview of the CFIA seed inspection process, covering seed potato regulations, preparation for inspection, biosecurity, common potato diseases, quarantine pests, and in-field plot demonstrations.

Of particular value were the field demonstration plots planted by Ridgetown College and CFIA, where participants were taught and then tested on their ability to identify and detect problem plants, as well as how different viruses present in different potato varieties. Examples of Potato Virus strains X, Y, XY, Potato Leaf Roll Virus, Blackleg, and foreign plants provided the participants with the opportunity to see the visual symptoms that CFIA inspectors look for during seed inspections.

This course is highly beneficial for the industry, fostering collaboration with CFIA and enhancing the understanding of seed regulations and the intricacies of the seed inspection process. Industry is hopeful that the course will be held again in subsequent years.



Potato plant showing signs of virus



Group photo from the Ridgetown Training



From left to right: Stacey Bajema, Seed Director of the Potato Growers of Alberta, Rebecca MacSwain, Seed Specialist of the PEI Potato Board, and Danny McCardle of McCardle Bros., PEI

Industry Updates

Canada's Food Island Cookbook Royalties Results in Another Large Food Bank Donation!

The Canada's Food Island Cookbook continues to give back in spades. The popular book, a collaboration project between funding partners Food Island Partnership, PEI Potato Board, Lobster PEI and PEI Department of Fisheries, Tourism, Sport and Culture, donates all proceeds to PEI Food Banks. This presentation of \$7,979.64 represented the previous six month period and is part of the \$19,769 which has been donated since the book was launched.

The cookbook is all Island-based, with recipes featuring PEI agricultural and seafood products showcased in some of the most beautiful Island landscapes. It is sold online, in many local Island shops, and in bookstores on PEI and beyond. It includes forewords from leading figures in the Canadian food and entertainment landscape, including Chef Michael Smith, Chef Chuck Hughes and Rick Mercer.

The book is "dedicated to all the farmers and fishers and makers of Prince Edward Island who work endlessly to deliver high-quality, sustainable and delicious food for consumers around the world to enjoy" according to the inscription, and this message has certainly resonated with those near and far. While the book is full of recipes, it also a beautiful photo, history and educational tour, walking readers through the Island's seasons of cooking and eating traditions.

For more information on Canada's Food Island cookbook, please visit <https://canadasfoodisland.ca/cookbook/>

International Day of the Potato 2024 on PEI

The UN General Assembly announced in March that this year would mark the inaugural International Day of the Potato, celebrated on May 30th. This recognition, originating from the World Potato Congress, aims to raise awareness about the multiple nutritional, economic, environmental, and cultural values of the potato as well as the potato's role in fighting food insecurity. It highlights the potato's contribution as an invaluable food resource and as a generator of income for rural families and producers.

Thanks to a grant from the Government of PEI's Agriculture Awareness and Public Trust program, the PEI Potato Board carried out numerous activities to celebrate the day. These included interviews with Board members, staff, and growers broadcasted on all radio and television stations in PEI. The mascot, Tate, made numerous appearances during the day, and over 450 bags of potatoes were handed out during a live broadcast on both CFCY and MAX FM. Islanders and tourists alike were very grateful for the free potatoes, frequently expressing that PEI potatoes were the best in the world.

As this was the first year the International Day of the Potato was celebrated worldwide, the PEI Potato Board aimed to ensure the day was fully recognized and that public interest and participation were high. Judging from the social media shares, likes, comments, and messages, along with attendance at the potato giveaway and posts from the Premier and both the Provincial and Federal Ministers of Agriculture, engagement was high, and the day exceeded expectations. The Board looks forward to making this an annual event, with plans to grow and expand it in the coming years.





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