

*Prince Edward Island*

Fall 2024  
Volume 25 Issue 4

# POTATO NEWS



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*In This Issue:*

- PEI Potato Board's New Strategic Plan
- 2024 Annual Potato Industry Banquet
- Faces of the Industry



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## Features

Farm Day in the City 2024 .....	7
PEI Faces of the Industry.....	8
PEI Potato Board's New Strategic Plan 2025-2029.....	10
AAFC Scientists and Farmers Achieve the Right Balance.....	12
2024: Historically a Hot and Dry Growing Season.....	14
State of the Industry- IFPA.....	16
2024 Annual Potato Industry Banquet.....	19
PMANA Fall Meeting 2024 .....	21
Outlet Stabilization Support.....	25
PEI Potato Board Welcomes New Board of Directors.....	30

## Regular Departments

Chairman's Comments .....	4
Board News.....	5
Upcoming Events and Program Deadlines .....	15
Industry Updates .....	31

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# Chairman's Comments

by John Visser, PEI Potato Board Chairman



The 2024 harvest has wrapped up and for many, it was the earliest dig on record. A warm dry fall gave most growers a chance to get the crops out early and without any troubles. Some areas of the province, namely central up to West Prince, had significantly lower amounts of rainfall this year. Many growers felt the crop would be below average, however, while there were some impacts, many were pleasantly surprised by the crop. The quality is excellent with gravity being some of the highest we've seen in years. Crops were dry going into storage so there should be very few issues to deal with at all. All in all, a good weather harvest is a good harvest!

We recently met with our colleagues across the country at the fall meeting of the Canadian Potato Council. We are happy to have a General Manager of the CPC once again, with the hiring of Caleigh Hallink-Irwin. The CPC is a great table to share thoughts and concerns from each of our respective growing provinces and collectively come up with solutions.

Our board and staff have once again put a lot of time and effort into the potato wart file. The past few months have been focused on CFIA's new drafts of the National Potato Wart Response Plan. CFIA officials travelled to PEI last month to meet with growers and packers on how these plans will impact their operations. There have been countless meetings, drafts, and responses prepared. I want to thank the board staff and especially Mary Kay Sonier, for her work on these drafts.

This will be my last Chairman's Comments column as my time on the board has come to an end. I have been honored to be chairman over the past three years and feel we have navigated all the obstacles we faced as an industry well. I have really enjoyed my time around the Board table and attending national meetings on behalf of Island growers. I want to thank my family, especially my wife Linda, as well as my two sons and two business partners for allowing me the time needed to be away from the farm to attend meetings. I may not be around the table this year, but I will always be a strong advocate for our PEI Potato Industry.

I hope everyone gets some down time over the holidays. I want to wish you and yours a very Merry Christmas and a prosperous 2025.

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



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# PEI Potato Board News



It has been a busy summer for the staff of the PEI Potato Board. Above: Greg Donald, general manager of the PEI Potato Board, out on a tour with the representatives of Simplot visiting John Visser,



Rafael Carranza, one of the Mexican trade commissioners in the Consulate of Canada was in PEI recently exploring market potential. Together with Innovation PEI and AAFC representatives, board staff met to provide information on our potato industry, our export potential, and to hear about opportunities for our potatoes and potato products to be shipped into Mexico.



Tate made sure to make an appearance at the 2024 Prince Edward Island marathon. He didn't partake in the run but made sure to get lots of pictures with participants and spectators.



The chairman of the PEI Potato Board, John Visser was on hand at the Prince Edward Island Shellfish Festival to hand over a cheque to the winner of the PEI Potato Chowder Championship!



PEI Potato Board Marketing Specialist Mark Phillips hanging out with Tate at the Music, Food and Drink Festival known as the Sommo Festival in September.



*Donald Killorn(PEIFA), Kendra Mills, Krista Shaw, John Barlow, and Greg Donald*

The Potato Board welcomed MP John Barlow, Member for Foothills, AB and Shadow Minister for Agriculture, Agri-Food & Food Security to PEI in early October. Mr. Barlow met with PEIFA and Board staff to discuss current issues in the agriculture and potato industries and was able to visit multiple farms and speak directly with our growers. We thank MP Barlow for his continued interest in our industry and keeping issues top of mind with elected officials and lawmakers.



*Krista Shaw, Donald Stavert, Billy Cameron, Senator Percy Downe, John Visser, Senator Jane MacAdam, Senator Mary Robinson and Greg Donald*

The Board Executive, General Manager and Director of Stakeholder Relations invited the four PEI Senators to meet and discuss the PEI potato industry. The Senate is imperative in the passing of legislation, and it is important our industry is understood and represented. We were fortunate to have Senator Mary Robinson, Senator Percy Downe, and Senator Jane MacAdam join us for a great discussion.



*Chairman John Visser presents Rayanne Frizzel with a cheque for 4-H from french fry sales at Farm Day*



*Chair John Visser presents a cheque to Michelle Buttery of PEI Family Violence Prevention Services Inc. from french fry sales at Farm Day in the City 2024*



Representatives from the Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada and the Office of Immigration presented at a recent Lunch and Learn at the Board office. Labour continues to be a pressing issue and this session provided valuable information to all who attended.



Casa Recruit were in for a lunch and learn mid September to share insights on the benefits of hiring foreign workers from South Africa.



# Farm Day in the City 2024

*By Mark Phillips, Marketing Specialist*

Once again, we were proud to have been the presenting sponsors of Farm Day in the City on October 6th, the fifteenth year of the event. The event is one of the highlights of our local partnerships, and allows us to interact with a large, diverse group of people, to share what we do, and answer any questions about the potato industry on Prince Edward Island.

Over 150 farmers, producers, and artisan vendors showed up bright and early, keeping the good cheer going all day. Our activation included the Cavendish Farms French Fry Wagon, Virtual Reality Farm Experience, Photo Booth Station, and an Ask a Farmer booth. The 4H beef team also sold potatoes from G Visser and Sons to raise money for their fall trip to the Royal Winter Fair.

The Cavendish Farms fry wagon raised over \$4,700 for Family Violence Prevention PEI, and 4H PEI.

Dairy Farmers of PEI sponsored the Queen Street Main Stage, providing musical entertainment and other programming all day. Cavendish Farms sponsored the kid's zone. Performers, musicians, artists, and others helped add interactive programming to the day.

Thank you to our partners at Discover Charlottetown for putting on a great event and a special thanks to the growers and staff who volunteered their time to make the event a success. Save the Date for next year's Farm Day in the City to be held on Sunday, October 5, 2025!



*Rebecca MacSwain, Kendra Mills, Krista Shaw and Ryan Barrett ready to meet lots of people at Farm Day! Pictured Below: Tate is ready for lots of pictures!*



*John Phillips, Ryan Barrett and Randy Visser with lots of information & answering many questions.*



*Mark Phillips, Karen Martin, and Debbie Hirst are all ramped up for Farm Day in the City!*



# PEI Faces of the Industry



*Becky Townshend-Townshend Potato Company*

Becky Townshend owns and operates Townshend Potato Company with her father Peter in Rollo Bay, PEI. While Becky and Peter primarily grow for the processing market, they also have seed and table business on the farm. This summer, the farm undertook renovations to convert an existing building into box storage to support increased seed volume on the farm. Townshend Potato Company was founded in 1974, and Townshend's have been farming in Rollo Bay for eight generations.

Brett Francis operates Francis Farms with his father David in Lady Fane, PEI. The Francis' are busy year-round with their mixed farm, consisting of a beef feedlot and cow-calf herd, mixed rotation crops, and seed potatoes. The Francis family has farmed in Lady Fane for seven generations. Brett and his wife Keshia have four children, who love to spend time at the farm, often accompanying Brett or David while driving equipment. David's wife Vickie also plays an active role in the farm's operations.



*Brett Francis – Francis Farms*



Located in Kingsboro, PEI, Allison Rose owns and operates Bothwell Farms, near East Point. Allison produces primarily for the tablestock market and additionally produces quality seed potatoes. Allison's main varieties are AC Chaleur, Eva, and different russets. The Rose's have been farming in Kingsboro for several generations.

*Pictured Left: Allison Rose - Bothwell Farms*



# Harvest 2024



*Back to Front, Left to Right: Erma Chaisson, Bonnie Brennan, Mark Pridham, and Bethany Visser during mini tuber harvest at Fox Island Elite Seed Farm.*



*Mark Pridham and the harvester hard at work at Fox Island Elite Seed Farm.*



*Smith Farms harvest in Emyvale.*



*Farmboys bringing in some nice looking potatoes.*

# PEI PB New Strategic Plan

*By: Greg Donald, PEI Potato Board General Manager*

The Potato Board's strategic planning process engaged a wide range of stakeholders, including board members, committees, growers and staff to ensure that a diverse range of perspectives were incorporated into the development of our long term plan.

The findings centered on key areas including the Board's strengths, the challenges faced by the potato industry, and the strategic priorities growers believe should guide the Board over the next five years.

## **Strengths:**

Growers underscored several strengths of the PEI Potato Board. They emphasized the board's effectiveness in providing strong representation for the potato industry, both nationally and internationally, as well as the ability to unify the industry and foster productive government relations. Participants also noted the board's knowledgeable staff and its contributions to advancements in scientific research, sustainability, and extension programs. Furthermore, the consultation highlighted the industry's positive trajectory, with growing demand for PEI potatoes. The introduction of new potato varieties has improved both efficiency and profitability, while relationships with environmentally conscious Islanders have strengthened.

## **Challenges:**

The consultation also revealed numerous challenges confronting the industry, namely the ongoing management of potato wart. Regulatory burdens, including carbon pricing and extensive and duplicative government reporting, were frequently mentioned. Growers expressed uncertainty about how regulations will impact their operations, citing concerns about the complexity of documentation and compliance with evolving policies like Canada GAP.

Access to skilled labor was a recurring issue. Growers highlighted difficulties in finding and retaining qualified workers for machinery operation and farm management. They also noted the challenge of attracting young people to the industry and suggested that enhanced education and training programs could address this gap. Additionally, growers expressed concerns about the shortage of trained agronomists, which is expected to worsen over time.

Financial challenges were another significant focus,

with increasing input costs for fuel, land, labor, seed, and fertilizers cited as major concerns. The rising cost of farming was seen as a key barrier to profitability, leading to suggestions such as group purchasing programs to reduce expenses.

## **Strategic Priorities:**

When asked to identify top priorities for the next five years, growers emphasized the need for improved access to labor, better management of potato wart, and reduced regulatory burdens. Agronomy research, education, and continued efforts to promote the PEI Potato Brand were also mentioned as critical areas of focus. Other priorities included land management, ensuring the availability of seed varieties, and adapting to climate change.

Public perception of the industry was another key area of concern. While the industry has made progress in improving its image, growers acknowledged the need to continue educating Islanders about the sustainability and environmental stewardship practices of the potato industry. Ensuring continued public support will be essential for maintaining a positive reputation and addressing future challenges.

The PEI Potato Board's consultation process revealed a strong foundation within the industry, marked by effective leadership, growing demand, and scientific innovation. However, challenges such as regulatory uncertainty, labor shortages, and rising costs will require concerted efforts. Strategic priorities for the future should focus on improving operational efficiency, securing skilled labor, and enhancing the industry's public image to ensure long-term sustainability and growth.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this new plan. A special thanks to the professional assistance provided by Dawn Binns for the facilitation, design and preparation of this plan. We are also grateful for the funding support provided by the PEI Department of Agriculture via the Strategic Growth Initiative. As a result of everyone's efforts, the PEI Potato Board has a focused, results-oriented plan for the next 5 years that will provide us with a roadmap that reflects today's environment and capitalizes on future opportunities. It will allow an alignment of goals and resources. It will also provide a means to measure progress and a mechanism to provide improved communications internal and external to our organization.





# PEI POTATO BOARD STRATEGIC PLAN 2025-2029

## Vision

PEI Potato growers are united and at the forefront of national and global markets.

## Mission

The PEI Potato Board fosters long-term profitability and sustainability for PEI potato growers through marketing, advocacy, negotiations, and quality production support.

## Values

Integrity · Forward-thinking · Dedication · Collaboration · Stewardship

### Supporting Committees

Seed/Farm

Tablestock

Processing

Advocacy/Operations

Environment/Research

## Goals

Farms are economically and operationally viable.

There is growing demand and equitable returns for PEI potatoes.

Growers are leaders in quality potato production and environmental stewardship practices.

The regulatory environment is more supportive of growers.

The Potato Board is an influential and well-managed association.



*PEI Potato Board Staff From left to right: Rob Morrison, Scott Howatt, Krista Shaw, Amanda Pineau, Ryan Barrett, Rebecca MacSwain, Debbie Hirst, Kendra Mills, Mark Phillips, Karen Martin, Bethany Visser and Greg Donald*

# AAFC Scientists and Farmers Achieve the Right Balance with Residue Tillage

*Brett van Heyningen, Communications Advisor, Atlantic Region, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada / Government of Canada*

Many Canadian farmers rely on tillage, the practice of turning over soil in their fields, to prepare for planting crops like potatoes. Tillage, in some respects, is a double-edged sword. Increased tillage can help reduce soil diseases, but too much can also increase weeds and degrade soil quality making it more prone to erosion or reducing crop yields. The trick is for producers to find the right balance.

This balancing act is why Dr. Judith Nyiraneza, research scientist at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, and Prince Edward Island farmers spent four years studying and testing tillage methods as part of the recently completed Living Lab – Atlantic project. Using the Living Labs’ collaborative approach to innovation, Dr. Nyiraneza, her team, and Prince Edward Island farmers were interested in comparing moldboard plowing with a regenerative soil management practice, called residue tillage. Residue tillage cuts the residues into small pieces and distributes them within the soil while leaving a portion of the residues on the soil surface which helps to reduce soil erosion and retains moisture in soils.

“After just one growing season, and in subsequent seasons, we saw signs of soil health improvement in all measurements including soil respiration, active carbon, soil aggregate stability and nitrogen availability for crops with residue tillage compared to moldboard

plowing. Residue tillage also had no negative impact to potato yields.”

AAFC scientists Dr. Rick Peters on Prince Edward Island and Dr. Dahu Chen in New Brunswick worked with producers to explore tillage impacts on potato diseases. Dr. Peters compared the effects of residue and moldboard plowing on common scab, while Dr. Chen studied their effect on early dying disease, a fungal disease that causes yield loss in potatoes. Even though residue tillage did not significantly reduce pathogen levels and disease severity, Dr. Chen believes the soil health benefits of residue tillage provide enough incentive for farmers to adopt it over moldboard plowing.

Now, with more knowledge about the soil health benefits and minimal effect on disease, many growers have invested in purchasing residue tillage equipment, at least on Prince Edward Island.

“I am seeing lots of other producers adopt residue tillage now because of Living Lab – Atlantic. We’re getting the word out there,” says Andrew Lawless, a participating Living Lab farmer.

The return on investment can be quick based on what Andrew has seen in his own data and the results of the living lab project. “From a cost point of view, it’s a definite bonus. All producers have to do is look at the increase in yield it provides. Plus, residue tillage can cover more ground, in less time – it’s huge.”



*Andrew Lawless and Sons*



*Dr. Judith Nyiraneza*

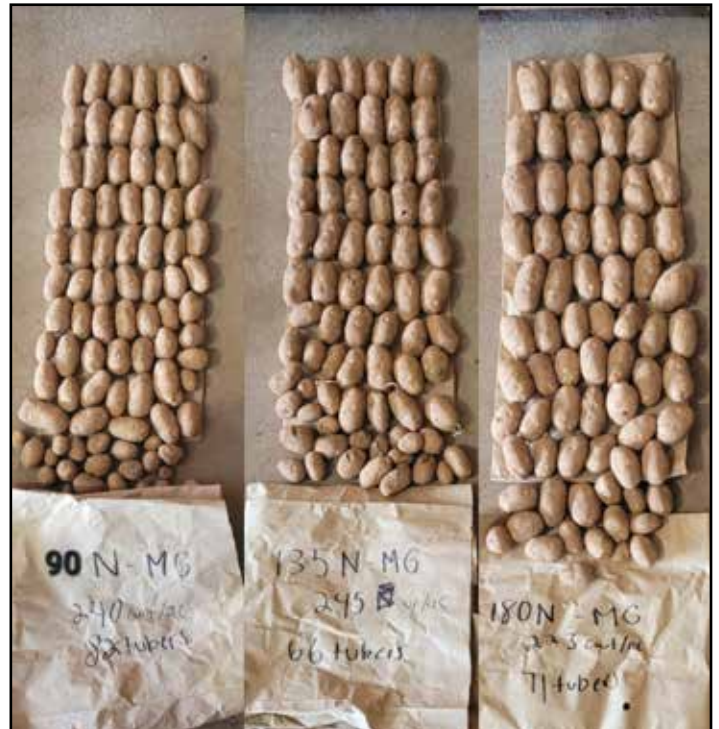


# AIM BBQs 2024

*By: Ryan Barrett, Research and Agronomy Specialist*

On August 27-29th, we hosted three barbeques across the province to demonstrate some of the research trials underway under AIM with growers. Some of the trials that we pulled samples on included using biopesticides to control common scab, using biostimulants to reduce plant stress, quantifying nitrogen credits from legumes ahead of potatoes, and reduction of applied phosphorus fertilizer. Full trial results will be made available to growers this winter, but these get-togethers are a good opportunity to provide an update on the types of trials that are underway as well as getting feedback from growers on their priorities for future research.

Thank you to our three host farms for the barbeques (Triple S Farms in Knutsford, Island Holdings Ltd. in New London, and Mo Dhaicadh Farms in Morell), to everyone who attended, and to Potato Board staff for assisting with the events, particularly Scott Howatt for his barbequing expertise!



*Top and bottom left: Ryan Barrett showcasing trials at the AIM BBQ in New London.*

*Above: Results from a Living Lab trial looking at optimizing nitrogen rates by factoring in legumes ahead of potatoes.*



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**Kenya & Tanzania**  
March 1-17, 2025

**\*\*May be tax deductible to Qualified Farmers\*\***

# 2024: Historically a Hot and Dry Growing Season

*By Bethany Visser, Junior Agronomist*

Every growing season is different, with weather patterns that are nearly impossible to predict, despite the best efforts made to. This poses unique challenges for growers every year. However, the historical trends of past weather can be used to understand the current season's extremes and prepare for the unpredictability of future years.

To analyze the conditions of the 2024 growing season, Environment Canada's daily data report provided rainfall and average daily temperatures for the Summerside and Charlottetown locations. The PEI Department of Agriculture climate database was used for the O'Leary and Souris areas. Historical records were gathered from the Environment Canada database for comparison. While these locations were chosen to provide an overall idea of what growing conditions were across the Island, it should be noted that rainfall amounts were highly variable throughout the province.

As any grower across the Island will share, all locations experienced an overly dry end to the growing season, receiving 100 – 150 mm less precipitation total than their historical averages. Most of the rain this season came in June, with O'Leary and Summerside receiving around the same amount of precipitation in the month of June as they saw the rest of the season. For Summerside, around 100 mm of this moisture was received in one day, setting a record for amount of rainfall received in a day in June according to CBC

News.

As the season progressed, less precipitation was received, causing early variety fields to quickly desiccate. In August, at a critical point for most of the potatoes on the Island, some locations in the eastern half of the Island received two to four times the amount of precipitation received by areas in the western half. Summerside saw only a quarter of the rainfall Charlottetown received that month.

After experiencing both extremes this season, the Summerside area received the most precipitation this season overall. It also saw the smallest difference between its current and historical averages, receiving around 77% of its historical average moisture. Charlottetown had the largest difference between current and historical rainfall, receiving the least amount of precipitation overall which was around 66% of its historical average moisture. While Souris had a similar cumulative rainfall as the rest of the province this season, it saw fairly consistent rainfall with fewer extremes compared to other areas in the province.

All locations had a higher number of growing degree days (GDD) this season compared to their historical averages. The most GDD this season were received in July and the least in May for every location across the Island.

The western end of the Island saw the most GDD, with fewer GDD received farther down east. O'Leary received the most GDD this season and also saw the

Rainfall (mm)								
Location	May 2024	June 2024	July 2024	Aug. 2024	Sept. 2024	2024 Cumulative	Historical (1981-2010) Cumulative	Difference
O'Leary	20.2	172.4	74.4	40.8	40	347.8	462.6	- 114.8
Summerside	18.4	185.4	81	20.3	54.5	359.6	464.4	- 104.8
Charlottetown	27.4	83.9	64.8	88.9	41.5	306.5	461.3	- 154.8
Souris	42.8	106.4	62.2	75.2	64.4	351	498.9	- 147.9

**Table 1:** Cumulative rainfall totals for 2024 growing season compared with historical average cumulative rainfall



largest difference between its current and historical averages with an overall 16% increase. Souris received the least GDD this season, but saw the same 12% increase as Summerside did in the number of GDD received this season compared to the historical average. Charlottetown saw the smallest difference between its current and historical records with only a 9% increase in GDD.

Overall, farmers across the Island experienced a dry and hot growing season. How these conditions impacted yield was dependent on various factors including variety, planting date, crop history, soil organic matter and availability and timing of irrigation.

While some areas saw greater impact on yield than others, the decreased pressure of certain diseases will hopefully ensure a higher quality of the crop. With more sun this growing season, an increased amount of photosynthesis resulted in an increased numbers of tubers per plant and specific gravity scores are appearing higher than normal in 2024. Hopefully this data, in combination with data from previous years can be used to help inform agronomy plans for the future, especially as producers adapt to increasing unpredictability in growing conditions with new practises and varieties.

Growing Degree Days (GDD)								
Location	May 2024	June 2024	July 2024	Aug. 2024	Sept. 2024	2024 Cumulative	Historical Cumulative	Difference
O'Leary	160	344	508	471	340	1823	1532	291
Summerside	173	274	480	476	330	1733	1528	205
Charlottetown	153	341	462	448	290	1694	1536	158
Souris	136	307	478	450	307	1678	1481	197

**Table 2:** Cumulative GDD for 2024 growing season compared with historical cumulative GDD

## Upcoming Events & Program Deadlines

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

### December 2024

- December 1-10 **Trade Mission to Philippines**
- December 11 **New York Produce Show, NY**
- December 12 **PEI Potato Board of Directors Monthly Meeting, Charlotttoun**

### January 2025

- January 9-10 **Potato Expo, Orlando , Florida**
- January 22 **PEI Potato Board of Directors Monthly Meeting, Charlottetown**

### February 2025

- February 12 **PEI Potato Conference**
- February 19 **PEI Potato Board of Directors Monthly Meeting, Charlottetown**

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# State of the Industry- IFPA

*By Mark Phillips, Marketing Specialist*

The International Fresh Produce Association (IFPA formerly PMA), Global Produce and Floral Show took place October 17-19, 2024. The show was in Atlanta Georgia. Over 1,160 companies from over 60 different countries exhibited at the show, including 157 first-time companies. PEI Potatoes showcased our branding and products with a 10x10 booth at this year's show.

The recent industry show brought together key players in the fresh produce and floral community, offering not only valuable networking opportunities on the trade floor but also featuring influential speakers, including Apple Co-Founder Steve Wozniak, US Olympian Allyson Felix, and a CEO panel discussing pressing issues.

A highlight of the show was IFPA CEO Cathy Burns, who delivered a compelling State of the Industry address, highlighting challenges like geopolitical tensions, extreme weather events, and emerging technologies such as generative AI. Burns emphasized action and advocacy as the vehicles through which the organization and its members will overcome these hurdles together.

"We must look at the how the state of things are, envision what we want the state of things to become, and most importantly, ACT to make it happen," she said. "The good news is this industry knows how to invent from within and tap into innovation from outside our community."

The rise of Artificial Intelligence (AI) took center stage, with examples ranging from 3D-printing of food to palm scanners measuring vegetable consumption. Burns discussed AI's potential impact on agriculture, citing McKinsey data that outlined its likely influence on sales, marketing, software engineering, and supply chain logistics. Some unique examples of AI include:

- Retail and foodservice applications of AI that enhance the customer experience, primarily suggesting meal solutions.
- Floral applications where AI-powered robots design flower arrangements via robotics.
- Food waste applications, including dynamic pricing systems based on product freshness and AI-

powered scanners that detect ripeness.

- Consumer applications of AI, such as smart cutting boards that help track nutrition and calories, as well as apps that use what's in the refrigerator to recommend meal possibilities.

She acknowledged the challenges of AI implementation but emphasized the industry's ability to adapt. "While it is a bit early to paint AI as a villain, the reality is that businesses may struggle with its implementation and implications, especially since some work functions will likely evolve. Activities that absorb 60 to 70% of employees' time today could be automated," she said.

Addressing global concerns, Burns presented findings on climate change's impact on the produce and floral community. Extreme weather events have doubled in the past 30 years, posing a threat to agriculture, and could force more than 122 million more people into hunger and poverty within the next seven years. IFPA's sustainability strategy involves participating in global conversations, leading environmental benchmarking, and contributing to climate-smart agriculture practices.

While sustainability continues to be important, human sustainability has also become a priority (defined as what happens when companies embrace helping their employees become healthier, more skilled, and connected to a sense of purpose and belonging), with Burns emphasizing the importance of supporting employee well-being. High burnout rates, costing the global economy trillions, prompted a call for businesses to prioritize both skill development and well-being. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) remained a focus, with IFPA launching a toolkit to guide members on their DEI journey.

Addressing the health of consumers, Burns highlighted the growing rates of obesity and diabetes globally. IFPA's nutrition policy initiatives, including advocating for full fruit and vegetable benefits in programs, demonstrated a commitment to combating these health issues. The IFPA Foundation for Fresh Produce aims to increase consumption through various consumer-related programs.



In conclusion, Burns urged industry members to advocate locally, domestically, and globally. Recognizing the industry as a voice of authority, she emphasized a three-pronged approach of government actions, public

relations, and consumer relations to tackle challenges. The overarching message was clear: action is the answer to creating a vibrant future for the industry and addressing global issues.



*The PEI Potato Board booth at IFPA*



*Great training session with Steve Wozniak at IFPA*

**FARM TECHNICIAN PROGRAM  
PEI FARM TECHNICIAN APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM.  
2025 Training Block  
Monday, January 6, 2025 to Friday, February 14, 2025  
Farm Centre, 420 University Avenue, Charlottetown PE**

Developed in consultation with the PEI Agricultural Trade Advisory Committee, this one-of-a-kind, two-year registered apprenticeship program combines classroom learning with on-farm experience, earning students a Certificate of Qualification in Farm Technician by the PEI Department of Innovation and Advanced Learning.

The program highlights the important contribution of farm technicians to Canada’s agri-food system.

Apprentices work throughout the year gaining skills on-farm with a farm mentor in addition to participating in five weeks of in-class training delivered by Extended Learning, Dalhousie Faculty of Agriculture, on PEI.

This unique program was developed to address the demand for a skilled, sustainable, agricultural workforce on P.E.I. and 100% funded if ei eligible.

Those interested in starting the journey to become a Blue Seal Certified Farm Technician must first register with;

**P.E.I. Agriculture Sector Council  
420 University Avenue  
Farm Centre, Suite 113  
Charlottetown, PE C1A 7Z5  
phone: 902- 892-1091, fax: 902-892-1891  
email: info@peiagsc.ca**

# Thank you to all the Sponsors of the 2024 PEI Potato Industry Annual Meeting and Banquet

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# 2024 Annual Potato Industry Banquet

The 2024 PEI Potato Industry Awards Banquet was held November 22 in Charlottetown and two very deserving members of the potato industry were recognized at the event.

Kevin McKenna was posthumously recognized for his unwavering forty-year commitment to the PEI Potato industry. Kevin joined his father and uncle's packing and shipping business in 1983. Kevin's prime responsibility from the time he joined McKenna Brothers, was to develop and expand markets as he focused mostly on the export side of the business. He was instrumental in expanding markets for PEI potatoes in Venezuela, Trinidad and Central America. He made frequent trips to those countries – to grow and strengthen the business prospects but often, to problem solve and mitigate issues at the ports. He put considerable time into fostering lifelong relationships with growers and customers. Many of these customers or their family members are still involved with McKenna Brothers 40 years later. This deserving award was presented to Kevin's wife Linda and their children Nolan and Caitlin.

Joanne Driscoll was also presented with an award

for her long-term involvement with agriculture, notably her contributions to the PEI potato producers. Joanne has spearheaded essential research initiatives, addressed critical challenges. Her expertise has been essential for Island producers adhering to CanadaGAP food safety protocols, and her years of service on the technical advisory committee reflect her deep understanding of farm operations. Having someone that truly understands the needs of farmers as well as the agricultural industry as a whole and someone who eagerly represents these perspectives around multiple tables is commendable. Her advocacy for producers across Canada is valued.

We also gave awards of appreciation to departing directors Billy Cameron and Craig Wallace. As well, we had a passing of the gavel, as John Visser turned the Chair position of our Board of Directors over to Donald Stavert. John has completed 2 terms as a director. He has been very active on the board including Chair for 3 years, and 1 year as Vice Chair. John was also a member of the Table Committee and a director for the United Potato Growers of Canada and the Canadian Potato Council.



*Some of the McKenna Family proudly displaying Kevin's award*



*Joanne Driscoll receiving her award from new Chair of the PEI Potato Board, Donald Stavert*



*John Visser passes the gavel to new PEI Potato Board Chair Donald Stavert*



*John Visser receives a commemorative clock from Donald Stavert*



*New Chair Donald Stavert says a few words*



*Billy Cameron receives his award*



*PEI Agriculture Minister Bloyce Thompson says a few words at the Annual Banquet*



*Federal Agriculture Minister Lawrence MacAulay speaks to the attendees of the 2024 Annual Banquet*



# PMANA Fall Meeting 2024

*By Scott Howatt, Processing Specialist*

The PMANA Fall meeting was held in Las Vegas, Nevada on November 12 at the Flamingo Hotel. The meeting was well attended with over forty grower and industry representatives in attendance. Of the twelve organizations across North America who act on behalf of processing potato growers, ten were present in person; Ontario and Wisconsin joined by Zoom. There were eleven written Area reports presented during the day-long session which included details of the quantity and quality of their harvested crop, the current outlook and movement of potatoes in their area, as well as an update on the value of their contracts and any current progress in contract talks with their customers.

The combined, overall production for 2024 in the eleven reports is projected to be down by over 18,000,000 CWT from the 2023 crop; a 4.0% overall decrease. This decrease in production was driven by the significant reduction in overall acres harvested. Altogether, harvested ground dropped by 32,500 acres, a 3.0% decrease. This acreage cut resulted because of the drop in contracted volumes in the Pacific Northwest (PNW). Growers from the PNW reported at the July PMANA summer meeting that these volume cuts needed to happen because of the major over-correction in 2023 by the processors and themselves, with over 46,000 more acres being harvested in that region in 2023 compared to 2022. The acreage reduction in 2024 was led by Idaho with a reported 20,000 fewer acres year-over-year, followed by the Columbia Basin at 11,500 less and Manitoba at 5,100 less acres. All other areas reported between 2,600 acres more to 2,500 acres less. Interestingly, when combined the Atlantic Northeast (ANE) added 7,800 acres harvested over 2023. These added acres in the ANE, together with much better year-over-year yields in Québec, Maine, and New Brunswick, push the estimated overall production in the ANE up by 4,780,000 CWT. Yield improvements were reported by the Columbia Basin, Manitoba, Québec, Maine & New Brunswick. Yield drops happened in Malheur County-Oregon, Idaho, Alberta, North Dakota, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Prince Edward Island.

Across the continent, all grower representatives

talked about their potato processing qualities either improving to their five year average scores (after last year's lower quality crop) or their crops being above average in quality parameters and payable percentages. A couple areas voiced concerns about storability of a relatively small segment of their crops, due to excessive moisture events or harvesting during too warm of conditions; otherwise the Area reports indicate the North American crop for processing will store very well this year. Just about every growing area spoke to a smaller-than-normal size profile of their crop. When all the quality factors are combined with the yields from the different areas, it becomes clear that there is more than sufficient supply of raw potatoes in all the regions of North America and there will be no movement of potatoes across the continent in the 2024-2025 season, which will mark the first year since 2020 that trans-continental movement of processing potatoes is unnecessary. This should be seen as a positive outcome for the overall economic and environmental sustainability of the frozen potato products industry.

On the finished side of the sector, we learned there is continued positive demand for finished frozen potato products; however the demand has slipped from the projected 3-4% growth that was heralded by industry leaders in the spring, to a growth rate that is now between 0.5-1.0%. For all players in the industry, this will be a serious point of concern as the processing sector is still within a period of growth with new processing plants currently coming into production in American Falls, Idaho and Coaldale, Alberta, and at the same time there are anticipated plans for expansion of capacity in the Columbia Basin, the US Midwest and the ANE. All grower organizations spoke to their fryer customers' operating at close to full capacity, except in the Columbia Basin, where Lamb Weston has shuttered their processing plant in Connell and some of their other plants are running at reduced capacity. It was reported by the growers from the Columbia Basin that Lamb Weston is repeating a major action from last season and diverting significant volumes of contracted potatoes to various livestock operations as a feed supplement. Again this year, it seems that Lamb does

not have the finished business sales to use the volume of potatoes they contracted in the American PNW.

From the farm yards, growers reported the challenges of finding and keeping skilled operators still remain. The grower organizations have started to research their costs of production for 2025; some have completed their preliminary reports and currently they are budgeting for operational costs to increase between 2-3%. The projected cost inflation for potato seeds, crop protectants, labour, machinery parts and repairs will be somewhat offset by fertilizer prices being relatively flat from 2024, interest rates dropping, and land costs slowing in growth.

In summary, the overall situation going into contract talks for 2025 is tenuous at best for processing growers. With Lamb Weston in a long position in the PNW and all other North American fryers having their volume requirements being filled by good quality potatoes within their area, the Supply of Raw component is definitely tilted in favour of the fryers. The slowing of the growth (Market Demand) for finished frozen products is another factor that opposes growers' needs for contract price increases to match their costs of production increases. To date, no grower group has

had any formal discussions with their fry customers. Some chip contracts have been settled in the PNW, and it is understood these agreements settled as roll overs of the 2024 agreements. The questions asked in my November, 2023 article were: "Will fryers take a short term approach to their contract talks with growers and push prices down? Or will they reflect on the volatility of the supply of potatoes they have witnessed over the past three growing seasons and be part of a collective approach to bring greater stability and sustainability to their potato suppliers?" The values of all 2024 pre-season potato contracts across North America were reduced, on the average by approx. 2.5%. Regarding supply, some fryers and growers worked hard at balancing their supply and demand equation (this is no easy task) and they should be commended for these efforts. However, our sector has few buyers and it only takes mis-steps by one to have a ripple effects from coast to coast, across all growing areas. The overall feeling from the processing grower representatives at the PMANA Fall meeting is that we are entering one of the most difficult negotiation seasons we have ever seen... it is a tough business where all players will be looking to reduce their costs!







# Update from the Department of Agriculture PEI

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



As we wrap up another year, it's common to reflect on the events that took place in the past season and review the successes and lessons learned. During my first season with the PEI Department of Agriculture, I had the opportunity to participate in several exciting projects and activities, where I got to meet many of our hardworking farmers and important leaders in the potato industry in Prince Edward Island.

In June, a Potato Crop Scouting Clinic was held in Emerald. With the participation of 41 people, the event featured presentations by experts in crop protection and nutrient management, along with a practical field session at the end of the agenda. On a busy day, the clinic was well received by the audience, and it is expected that future editions will take place in the coming years.

In July and August, the Crop Update Meetings were held between the offices of the Potato Board in Charlottetown and the Agriculture Insurance Company in Kensington. These meetings focused on the exchange of information about recent updates on weather conditions, pest and disease pressures, and potato crop development. Various sectors, both public and private, participated in the meetings, which had hybrid attendance — both in person and online.

From June to September, the Aphid Alert Program monitored aphid populations in PEI seed potato fields. A total of 32 traps distributed in 22 fields across the Island provided timely information for seed growers about the presence of important aphid species. One of the most important among them, the Green Peach Aphid was only found in traps during the last month of sampling, with a total number of 426 individuals identified between August 22 and September 12. Compared to the years 2022, with 3,456 individuals, and 2023, with 2,624 individuals, the 2024 season showed a significantly reduced number of Green Peach Aphids and it is expected that this will reflect in good results of seed lots passing the post-harvest virus test.

Along with fellow colleagues, the PEI Department of Agriculture reviewed and sent comments to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) regarding the draft National Potato Wart Response Plan and other documents related to field detection of potato wart. The opportunity to submit comments to the CFIA is of great importance as it helps the agency to define measurements that allow for the economical sustainability of the potato industry while enabling access to consumer markets of high-quality products.

Among the various informative field days throughout the season, I had the pleasure of participating in one on advanced grazing practices in rotation with potatoes in the central-western part of the Island. It was a wonderful opportunity to witness an important and unique strategy for building soil health, by fostering collaboration between neighboring landowners around mutual benefits in beef and potato production.

I would like to highlight the partnership between the PEI Department of Agriculture and the Potato Board in many of the activities described above, as well as the various supporters who contributed to organizing and providing meals for these events. It is also important to emphasize the valuable collaboration of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada Research Scientists, watershed associations, the private sector, and, of course, our producers.

The PEI Department of Agriculture will continue to work focused on the interests of our producers in 2025, with new and ongoing projects and innovations. Currently, updates are being made to the Continued Education Courses for the Pesticide Certification. Also, in February 2025, the PEI Potato Conference will be held at the Credit Union Place in Summerside. Hope to see you all there in preparation for another great season!

**“WE WANT TO  
LEAVE THE SOIL  
BETTER THAN  
WE FOUND IT.”**

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**GROWING  
FOR TODAY AND  
TOMORROW**



# Outlet Stabilization Support

By: Gwen Corrigan Vessey P.Ag.



On a recent field tour, members of the AWP Steering Committee, media and project cooperators viewed AWP supported projects focused on additional stabilization and sediment control for outlets on soil conservation works that were in close proximity to watercourses or wetlands.

Soil conservation structures in a field divert overland flow through a series of diversions or berms to an outlet, typically a well-stabilized grassed waterway or natural grassed hollow. Each structure in an integrated soil conservation system works to control the overland flow by slowing it down, increasing infiltration and removing silt and fine sand from the flow. While these measures are highly effective in removing the majority of soil from runoff, outlet features like rock chutes and sediment traps further improve sediment capture rates. This is particularly desirable when the outlets are close to watercourses or wetlands.

Armoured rock chutes are required to stabilize outlets that are draining large areas through a single concentrated flow. Rock chutes slow discharge down by dissipating the kinetic energy of the flow. This prevents the discharge point from eroding back into the field and captures fine sediment that may have been carried down to the outlet. As effective and necessary as rock chutes are, they can be expensive as they do require larger granite stone that must be trucked to the Island from New Brunswick or Nova Scotia. Local Island sandstone is not suitable for this purpose.

Sediment traps or ponds are another very effective option for removing most of the remaining fine silt and sand from outlets. Soil and water engineers will size sediment ponds according to the calculated peak flow from the outlet's catchment area. The design of structure will promote increased infiltration and allow for time to let fine soil particles filter out of the discharge before it exits.

Soil conservation structures will improve the soil

health, resilience and productivity of a field. When sediment traps and/or rock chutes are included in the plan, the benefits to the downstream ecosystem are maximized.

The PEI AgriWatershed Partnership offers support for outlet stabilization projects that are within 200 metres of a watercourse or wetland. Projects approval is merit-based and projects are evaluated and prioritized by their potential to improve the local ecosystem. Funding available: Eligible costs on approved projects rebated at 100% to a maximum of \$5000.00/project.

For more information, please visit the AWP website at <https://peiawp.com/>, email us at [info@peiawp.com](mailto:info@peiawp.com) or call 902-394-7933.



*A rock chute with R25 granite rock*



*An excellent example of a sediment pond at the outlet of a soil conservation project.*



By Victoria Stamper, General Manager of UPGC

We are now almost the end of November and all of the spuds are in the bin after what was generally a very good harvest season across Canada. The official report on potato production in Canada will not be released by Statistics Canada until early December, so although difficult to predict with perfect accuracy, we will do our best to give you our estimates based on discussions with grower organizations across the country.

UPGC expects the overall crop in Canada to be down approximately 2.3 million hundred weight (1.8%) from 2023 levels. Although down from the record production of 2023, at our predicted 125,534 million cwt, if fully realized, this would be the country's second largest potato crop on record. Our estimates rest on harvested acres predicted at 386,672 acres with an overall average yield of 327.2 cwt/acre, both based on generally decent harvest conditions with the exception of Manitoba and PEI. With heavy rains experienced in Manitoba in mid-September, potential greening and smaller size profile due to loss of nutrients during bulking up are of concern. In PEI it was the drought-like conditions during August and September that almost stopped an excellent field in its tracks. Unseasonably

warm temperatures through September and even into the first week of October did slow harvest across Canada, with many growers only achieving partial dig days through most of the storage crop harvest.

Abandoned acres, based on harvested acre projections, are estimated to be approximately 7,315; down a whopping 28% from last year's 10,017 acres which were due to the heavy rains that had hit Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick all summer long and PEI during harvest, leading to a much smaller crop in the east in 2023.

**Key Metrics for 2024:**

**Planted Acreage:** Reported by Statistics Canada at 393,987 acres, reflecting a -2.8% decrease compared to the previous year, mostly in the processing sector in Manitoba and Alberta.

**Harvested Acreage:** Estimated at 386,672 acres, a 0.1% decrease, but well in line with historical percentages and much improved based on better weather conditions in the east.

**Yield per Acre:** Estimated at 327.2 cwt/acre, showing a drop of 5 sacs from last year, most of these decreases in the west where lack of precipitation, high

The chart below presents the United Potato Growers of Canada (UPGC) estimates for 2024 on potato acreage, yield, and production, comparing current year data to the previous year.

PROVINCE	ESTIMATES FOR 2024				PRODUCTION ESTIMATES COMPARISON			
	Planted Acreage	Harvested Acreage UPGC Estimate	Yield UPGC Estimate	Production ('000 cwt) UPGC Estimate	2024 VS. 2023	2023	2022	2021
PEI	85,300	85,000	305	25,925	0.4%	25,813	27,789	27,209
NEW BRUNSWICK	53,000	52,735	320	16,875	13.4%	14,879	17,000	18,200
NOVA SCOTIA	800	776	290	225	1.4%	222	240	357
NEWFOUNDLAND	410	378	135	51	2.2%	50	52	55
<b>TOTAL MARITIMES</b>	139,510	138,889		43,076	5.2%	40,964	45,081	45,821
QUEBEC	47,444	46,495	315	14,646	8.6%	13,492	14,278	14,100
ONTARIO	39,238	38,610	230	8,880	3.2%	8,602	8,160	8,953
MANITOBA	78,820	75,727	360	27,262	-8.4%	29,760	26,139	24,024
SASKATCHEWAN	7,500	7,485	235	1,759	-1.2%	1,780	1,450	1,519
ALBERTA	75,500	73,990	390	28,856	-10.0%	32,063	26,813	24,614
<b>TOTAL PRAIRIES</b>	161,820	157,202		57,877	-9.0%	63,603	54,402	50,157
BRITISH COLUMBIA	5,975	5,475	320	2,055	-4.0%	2,140	1,600	2,080
<b>TOTAL CANADA</b>	<b>393,987</b>	<b>386,672</b>	<b>327.2</b>	<b>126,534</b>	<b>-1.8%</b>	<b>128,801</b>	<b>123,520</b>	<b>121,111</b>

Planted Acreage based on Statistics Canada Report July 18, 2024



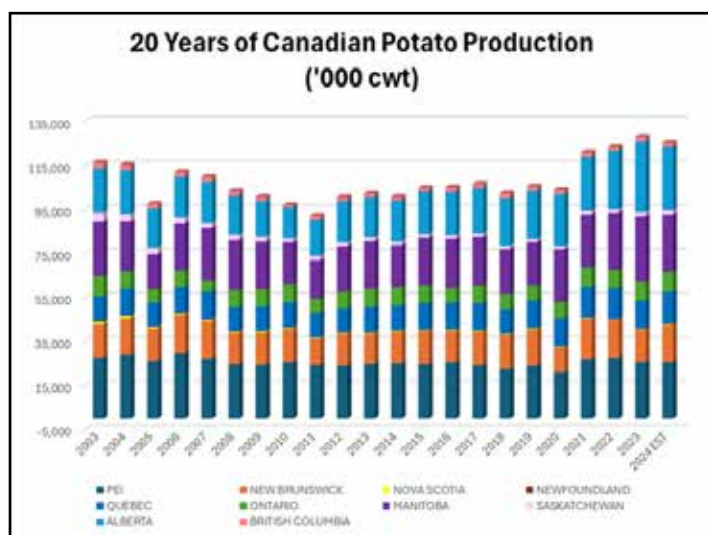
temperatures and environmental factors such as hail and smoke from forest fires, had an impact.

Total Production: Estimated at 126,534 ('000 cwt), reflecting a -1.8% decline in overall production, but if realized, still the country's second largest potato crop on record.

The results presented in the chart indicate a challenging year for potato production in certain regions, with lower yields and smaller production estimates. However, it is important to note that 2023 was certainly a very good year and production of over 126 million cwt of potatoes in 2024 is still a record for Canada.

### Observations by Province/Region:

PEI had an excellent planting season, some finishing up to two weeks ahead of schedule and growers reported some of the best crops they had seen through June and July. However, due to near drought like conditions through August and September, we estimate



a decrease in overall yields on the island, closer to the five year average. Despite these potentially lower yields compared to last year, PEI potato production is expected to be up slightly, due in part to approximately 800 more planted acres and a good early harvest. Starting the storage harvest with very dry conditions and unseasonably warm temperatures has been difficult and slow going, but with some cool weather and timely rains recently, harvest has been coming along well. Size profile may be on the smaller side due to the dry conditions during bulking, however quality appears to be better than last year during the wet harvest and cull rates are expected to be lower.

Neighbouring New Brunswick has certainly fared much better than last year when continual rains throughout the growing season caused issues of rot and hollow heart through much of the 2023 crop. Harvest has gone very well with nearly 75% completed at the beginning of October and some growers up to a week in advance. Although there is some disparity between the northern and southern regions with the latter reporting average to below average yields, overall we estimate an increase in both yield and production for the province. Cull rates are much lower than last year and the crop is expected to store well this year compared to last.

In 2023, Quebec's potato crop faced significant challenges due to consistent summer rain, leading to isolated cases of late blight in August and reports of hollow heart in russets during harvest. However, the 2024 season has seen a significant turnaround. Following excellent planting conditions, the growing season featured plenty of sunshine and timely rains, boosting crop development. Despite this positive outlook, parts of Quebec were affected by the tail end of Hurricane Debby, which damaged rows during the critical bulking period. This raised concerns about nutrient loss and possible greening in those areas. While quality may be impacted in some lower-lying areas due to the hurricane, yields have been reported as average to above average depending on the region and variety, with larger size profiles. Overall, production for the province is estimated to increase by just over 8%.

Ontario was able to get into the fields early in 2024 with warm conditions in March and early April, however then experienced sudden cooler temperatures and rain, delaying emergence. In May and June warmer temperatures returned and the crop recovered well. Despite isolated cases of late blight in July, overall the growing season was relatively dry in most areas, punctuated by some severe rains in certain regions. Temperatures remained unseasonably warm through September and early October slowing harvest to partial dig days for most growers. With higher planted acres this year and an increase in harvested acres, despite the challenges faced, we expect overall production in the province to be up close to 200,000 cwt, just over 3% increase over 2023. Reports from growers indicate a smaller profile but good quality potatoes.

Further west to Manitoba and the picture changes

from the east. Following a serious surplus of processing potatoes in 2023 we saw a decrease of nearly 3,000 planted acres in the province for processing contracts. The 2024 potato planting season faced challenges due to weather conditions, experiencing delays caused by excess moisture during the spring, slowing planting in some areas. However, once conditions improved, planting progressed, though later than usual. This slower start raised concerns about the potential for shortened growing seasons, especially for long-season varieties. Despite these challenges, there were periods of favorable weather during the growing season, which helped with crop development, until southern Manitoba received over 6 inches of rain over 24 hours in mid-September. Similar to Quebec, there were rows wiped out from the wind and rain causing concerns of possible greening and lack of nutrients during bulking. There are reports of drown outs and much of the crop in low-lying areas will likely be left in the field to avoid further problems in storage. With all of these challenges we do estimate yields, while variable throughout the province, to be lower than last year. With reported lower yields combined with fewer harvested acres we do estimate overall production to be down just over 8% from last year. It is important to note that much of this decrease is in the processing sector and that 2023 was a record crop for the province. Fresh growers are reporting that what is coming out of the field is excellent quality. Harvest has been slow going similar to many areas of the country due to higher than average fall temperatures.

The 2024 potato season in Alberta started out very dry, with concerns about how the growing season would unfold. Some areas reported their driest conditions on record after enduring 5-6 years of widespread drought. However, at the start of June the province received 150-200 mm of rainfall, which brought much-needed moisture. Cooler temperatures also helped mitigate the stress on crops and improved the outlook for the season. Seed growers in the province did face delays due to the wet conditions but preferred the delayed planting with adequate moisture over the alternative of planting into dry conditions. In areas without irrigation, like the seed sector around Edmonton, the only moisture crops receive is from rainfall, making this precipitation critical for the season's success. The growing season in Alberta faced its share of challenges, with smoke from forest fires in July including the

devastation in Jasper; a severe hail storm in Calgary in August and then severe rains at the end of September causing delays in harvest. Growers have persevered through higher summer and fall temperatures with some recent weather relief allowing up to three quarters of the commercial harvest to be completed by early October. Although there has been impact on the yields and a reduced size profile is being reported, overall quality is described as very good. With a reduction of close to 5,000 acres and yields down from last years record, we expect production in the province to be down by around 10% or just over 3 million cwt, mostly in the processing sector.

British Columbia, like Ontario, took advantage of very nice weather in March to get into the fields early, however only about three quarters of the crop was planted before rain and cooler temperatures arrived. The last quarter of the crop did not get planted until late May early June raising concerns over the time needed to get this crop to size up. By mid-October the crop is almost completely harvested, and most indications are of better yields than expected after a hot and dry growing season. Size profile and quality are also reported as very good and despite challenges early on and some rains causing delays at the start of storage harvest, overall growers are very pleased with the 2024 crop.

If we look at the crop by sector we expect to see a more balanced processing sector with reductions in planted acreage in the west and a much better crop in the east. There will be sufficient supply for the chip sector in Ontario and Quebec as well as frozen processing in New Brunswick in contrast to the shortages reported in 2023. The seed sector has mixed reports depending on the region with the west expecting decreased production but the east reporting better quality than in 2023 due to improved weather conditions throughout the growing season. Acreage in the fresh sector is flat in most of the eastern provinces but has shown some increases in Manitoba, Alberta and BC. Despite little or no changes in acreage in the east, the more favourable weather would indicate higher pack out rates and better overall production. While red inventory appears to be tight in Canada as in the US, yellows are in ample supply. Exports to the US will depend on the supply situation south of the border, although to date pricing has certainly improved over what was in the market late in the 2023 marketing



year. However with the exchange rate similar to last year, and a “plentiful” supply of russets south of the border, it remains to be seen if the level of exports to the US will increase.

This leads to a discussion of potato production by our neighbours to the south, which is being reported as lower by just over 4%, a 17.9 million cwt decrease from 2023. Official numbers were published by USDA in early November, however the official Statistics Canada report will not be released until early December so we have provided the UPGC estimates. Production is down in 10 out of 13 reporting states, with improvements seen only in Michigan, Colorado and Maine. The overall yield is estimated at 452 cwt per acre, 9 cwt below the 20 year trend, mostly due to a below trend-line yield in Idaho which makes up a third of the country's total production.

After two years of shortages in potato production in North America, particularly in the processing sector, 2023 saw a serious surplus in the Pacific Northwest, including Alberta and Manitoba, as processors, including dehy, over corrected. Too many planted acres, mostly in Idaho, combined with higher yields, changed an empty pipeline to one overflowing.

Province/State	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024 EST	Diff 2024 EST vs. 2023
Idaho	134,780	132,900	120,750	143,333	135,235	-5.65%
Washington	99,650	91,930	95,410	103,635	99,653	-3.84%
ALBERTA	23,407	24,614	26,813	32,063	28,856	-10.00%
MANITOBA	24,000	24,024	26,139	29,760	27,262	-8.39%
Oregon	27,000	26,280	25,800	26,660	26,250	-1.54%
PEI	21,000	27,209	27,789	25,813	25,925	0.43%
Wisconsin	28,770	29,030	26,600	28,350	25,080	-11.53%
North Dakota	23,800	22,500	21,750	26,425	23,200	-12.20%
Michigan	17,550	19,350	18,880	21,560	22,220	3.06%
Colorado	22,600	21,480	21,430	21,098	21,251	0.73%
Maine	13,460	18,390	18,430	16,800	18,258	8.68%
Minnesota	17,920	17,550	19,150	18,966	17,000	-10.37%
NEW BRUNSWICK	11,500	18,200	17,000	14,879	16,875	13.41%
QUÉBEC	12,731	14,100	14,278	13,492	14,646	8.55%
Nebraska	9,210	9,260	9,650	10,731	9,928	-7.48%
California	12,860	11,500	8,470	9,918	8,987	-9.39%
ONTARIO	7,518	8,953	8,160	8,602	8,880	3.23%
Texas	7,120	5,520	7,420	6,716	6,670	-0.68%
Florida	5,300	5,400	5,020	5,940	4,116	-30.71%
BRITISH COLUMBIA	2,155	2,080	1,600	2,140	2,055	-3.97%
SASKATCHEWAN	1,400	1,519	1,450	1,780	1,759	-1.18%
NOVA SCOTIA	300	357	240	222	225	1.35%
NEWFOUNDLAND	55	55	52	50	51	2.00%
Total - Canada	104,066	121,111	123,521	128,801	126,534	-2.60%
US Total	420,020	409,830	398,740	440,132	417,848	-5.06%
Total - North America	524,086	530,941	522,261	568,933	544,382	-4.32%

In 2024 however, we have seen another correction, yet much less extreme. The processing sector in Canada, both frozen and chip, appears to much more in balance with acreage reductions in the west and an improved crop in the east, although recent pullbacks on production from one of the major processors will have an impact even here in Canada. The fresh sector

also seems to be in a good situation with improved production over last year in the east. However we will keep an eye on demand moving forward as some acreage increases in the west combined with this improved production in the east is resulting in some pretty full storages now that harvest is complete. We will not receive official statistics for the certified planted acreage for seed in Canada until November and at this time it is difficult to estimate overall production for the sector. Indications are of decreased production possible in Saskatchewan and Alberta due to weather conditions throughout the season and fairly flat production in the east albeit with improved quality due to a drier growing and harvest season.

UPGC will continue to keep an eye on the movement of potatoes, not just the shipments of fresh potatoes, but also the shift of potatoes between sectors which can happen in times of over, or under, supply. It is important to speak about the facts and figures, but we realize that growers want to know what the impact will be, both on the current crop as well as next year's intentions.

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# PEI Potato Board welcomes new Board of Directors

*By Kendra Mills, Marketing Director*

The Prince Edward Island Potato Board elected a new executive team at the November 20, 2024 Board of Directors meeting.

The Board is pleased to announce that Donald Stavert will be the new Board Chair. Very involved in the industry, Donald has previously been in the Vice-Chair position and is the current Chair of the industry's Seed Committee. He represents the seed sector for the Central district. Donald and his family operate Stavert Farms Ltd in Lower Freetown.

Katie MacLennan was elected as the new Vice Chair. Katie has served on the Board for two years and represents the seed sector for the Western district.

Katie and her husband Jonathan operate MacLennan Properties Ltd in West Cape. Randy Visser is now the Secretary-Treasurer. Randy has served on the board for one year and represents the table sector for the Eastern district. Randy and his partners operate G. Visser & Sons in Orwell.

The Board also welcomed three new directors to the Board, including Andrew Nieuwhof of Blue Bay Farms in Rustico, Chris Rennie of Blois Rennie Farms in Elmsdale and Dianne Huestis of Cradle Isle Enterprises in Freetown. Rylan MacLellan will join as the new Young Farmer's representative by the new year. The remaining board members are Rit VanNieuwenhuyzen, Guy Cudmore, Ian Shaw, Becky Townshend, John Griffin and Shawn Birch.

The Board also recognized the efforts and commitment of outgoing board members, Craig Wallace, Billy Cameron, Marshall Smallman, the Young Farmer representative and retiring Chair, John Visser. They were

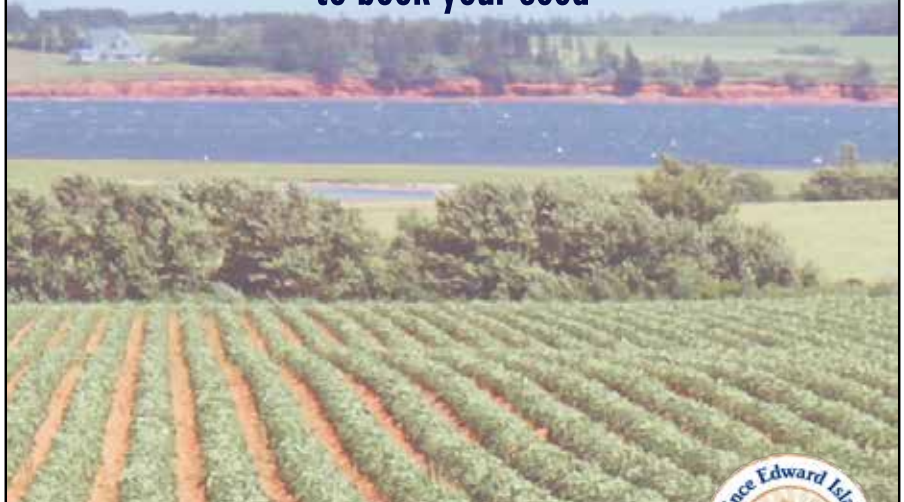
honoured at the Industry Awards Banquet.

The PEI Potato Board comprises 12 directors elected by their peers to serve a three-year term. The Island is divided into 3 districts: Western, Central and Eastern. There are three directors per district and three At Large; one representing each of the three sectors of the industry: Seed, Table and Processing.

The directors are all active growers and serve staggered terms so that one term expires, and one new director is elected from each district. This helps to maintain continuity in board operations from year to year. Board directors may serve a maximum of two consecutive terms.

## Fox Island Elite Seed Potato Farm

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[peipotatoagronomy.com/seed-for-sale/](http://peipotatoagronomy.com/seed-for-sale/)**





# Industry Updates



The Honourable Lawrence MacAulay, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, along with Rory Francis, President of ECODA, announced up to \$4.3 million over five years to ECODA through the AgriScience Program – Projects Component, an initiative under the Sustainable CAP. This funding will be matched with \$4.0 million from industry partners including Sevita Genetics, Semican, McCain Foods Ltd., CXC, Oxford Frozen Foods/Bragg Lumber Co., the PEI Potato Board, ResearchNS, and the provincial agriculture departments of PEI, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick. The ECODA research program includes 12 multi-year research projects, focused on a range of crops including NON-GM IP soybeans, canola, camelina, mustard, and pulses along with research on crop rotation potential with potato and carrot production.



Introducing the new general manager of the Canadian Potato Council Caleigh Hallink-Irwin with a background in crop protection, advocacy, and regulatory affairs she is excited to work once again with growers and all members are very happy to have her on board!



Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) would like to introduce Jennifer Gallant as the new Director of Research, Development, and Technology for the Charlottetown and Fredericton Research and Development Centres. Jennifer joined AAFC in December 2023 after previously being with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency from 2006 to 2023. As Director for Charlottetown and Fredericton Research and Development Centres, Jennifer manages the biomass and bio-products portfolio. Jennifer holds an M.Sc. in Biochemistry from the University of Waterloo and a B.Sc. in Chemistry and Biochemistry from the University of Western Ontario.



2024 recipient of the Paul MacPhail Potato Industry Scholarship is Camden Schurman. Camden is from Central Bedeque, PEI and enrolled in the BSc (Agr), Agricultural Business program.



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