

*Prince Edward Island*

Summer 2025  
Volume 26 Issue 3

# POTATO NEWS

*In This Issue:*

- Philippines Seed Trial
- Research Updates
- PEI Potatoes Summertime Activities

Publications Mail Agreement # 40011377



# *Save the Date!*

## **Prince Edward Island Potato Board Annual General Meeting and Banquet 2025**

### **AGM**

**November 19, 2025**

**PEI Potato Board Office Meeting Room**

**8:30 am - 11:00 am**

### **Annual Banquet**

**November 21, 2025**

**6:00pm Reception**

**7:00 pm Banquet**

**Delta Prince Edward**



# POTATO NEWS

Prince Edward Island Potato News is a publication of the Prince Edward Island Potato Board. It is published four times per year. While every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of published material, both editorial content and advertising, no responsibility will be assumed by the publisher for accuracy. Material contained in Prince Edward Island Potato News may not be reprinted in any form without the express written permission of the Prince Edward Island Potato Board. Mailed under Canada Post Publications Mail Agreement Number 4001137.

### Potato News Team

Amanda Pineau.....Production  
Krista Shaw.....Editorial Lead  
with the contributions of the entire staff at the PEI Potato Board and Industry.

### Prince Edward Island Potato Board

Chair: Donald Stavert  
Vice Chair: Katie MacLennan  
Secretary-Treasurer: Randy Visser  
Directors: Andrew Nieuwhof, Ian Shaw, Becky Townshend, Guy Cudmore, Shawn Birch, Chris Rennie, Dianne Huestis, John Griffin, Rit VanNieuwenhuyzen, Rylan MacLellan (Young Farmer Representative)

### Board Staff

Greg Donald.....General Manager  
Krista Shaw.....Dir. of Stakeholder Relations  
Kendra Mills.....Marketing Director  
Holly MacDonald.....Comptroller  
Scott Howatt..... Processing Specialist  
Mark Phillips.....Market Info. / Marketing Specialist  
Karen Martin.....Market Info. Officer  
Ryan Barrett.....Research and Agronomy Specialist  
Amanda Pineau.....Admin. Assistant  
Humna Khan.....Junior Agronomist  
Rebecca MacSwain.....Seed Specialist

### Fox Island Elite Seed Farm

Mark Pridham.....Farm Manager  
Eleanor Matthews.....Lab Manager  
Marla Slater.....Operations Technician

Tel: 902-892-6551 Fax: 902-566-4914  
Email: potato@peipotato.org  
Website: www.peipotato.org

Please return undelivered copies to:  
PEI Potato Board, 90 Hillstrom Avenue,  
Charlottetown, PEI, C1E 2C6

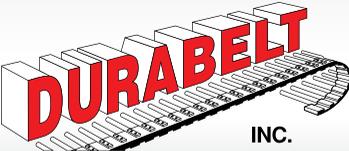
## Features

Freda the Fry .....	8
Philippines Seed Trial.....	10
Faces of the Industry.....	12
Straw Mulch to Reduce PVY Spread .....	14
PEI Potatoes Summertime Activities.....	16
PMANA Summer 2025 .....	18
Canadian Potato Council Update. ....	24
Spuds to Suds.....	25
Changes to PEI Representation in WPC.....	26
Breakfast on the Farm .....	30

## Regular Departments

Chairman's Comments .....	4
Board News.....	5
Department of Agriculture Update.....	11
Upcoming Events and Program Deadlines .....	19
United Potato Growers of Canada Update .....	22

Cover: Photo credit: Krista Shaw



## PEI MADE BELTS FOR PEI GROWERS

**BELTED CHAIN  
HOOK CHAIN  
WIRE BELT  
PARTS**



**DURABELT, INC.**  
PEI MADE SINCE 1985

☎ (902) 838-3535  
🌐 Durabeltinc.com

CANADA: Montague, PEI  
USA:  
Greeley, CO • Filer, ID  
Menahga, MN

# Chairman's Comments

by Donald Stavert, PEI Potato Board Chairman



It's the time of year where you can almost watch the potatoes grow by the day. A cooler spring and a stretch of wet weather during the main planting time caused some growers to be a bit later getting their crops in compared to last year. Despite this, once the warmer weather arrived the crops jumped and have been thriving since. As always, we need some moisture, but overall, the fields look great this year.

The aphids and Colorado Potato Beetles arrived much earlier than normal this year. At the time of print, we had a few Green Peach Aphids here on PEI, but other aphids are being seen and caught in our Aphid Alert Program. The program, a joint initiative between the Province of PEI and the Potato Board, is operating once again and has expanded from 22 growers to 29 this year and from 32 traps to 49 - which is great news. Thanks to Ryan Barrett at the Board for his weekly updates keeping growers informed so we can best protect our crop.

PEI was pleased to host the Potato Sustainability Alliance conference in July. It was the largest delegation for the event, and it was great to see so many strong advocates in our industry coming together to listen and learn.

Similar to last year, the 2024 crop should be cleaned up as the new crop is ready to be dug. Our holdings were higher over last year but sales and prices have been strong. We are in a great position as we head

into harvest. We are hoping for another strong year for our seed potatoes as well.

We will be hosting the Board AGM on November 19th and the Banquet on November 21st this year. Last year was our largest banquet ever and it is always a great night hearing about board activities and recognizing leaders in the industry. We will be welcoming three new directors to our Board of Directors to replace those whose term is coming to an end, which also includes me. 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 our world in the harvest months.

I hope the crops continue to thrive and I want to wish everyone a safe harvest season.

*Donald W Stavert*



Assurance | Accounting | Tax | Advisory

**Jennifer Dunn, CPA, CA, TEP**  
**Kevin Jay, CPA, CA**  
**Lauren Vail, CPA, CA**

Charlottetown 902-892-5365  
[www.bdo.ca](http://www.bdo.ca)



# PEI Potato Board News

## PEI Potato Board Welcomes Summer Student Ella Ramsay:

The Prince Edward Island Potato Board is pleased to welcome Ella Ramsay as the new Student Marketing Intern for the summer. Ella recently completed her first year at Mount Allison University, where she is pursuing a degree in Environmental Studies.

Ella has family (Lawless's) and friends with ties to the potato and agricultural industry. Her passion for agriculture and the environment was sparked at a young age, with added compliments from her involvement in the equestrian world, and it continues to grow.

Ella brings a connection to PEI's farming culture and a keen interest in environmental sustainability, making her a valuable addition to our team. Ella will be coordinating the appearances of our mascot Tate this summer, attending events and assisting our team as needed. We're excited to have her on board as she helps promote the Island's world-class potatoes and gain hands-on experience in agricultural marketing.



## Action Canada Tour:

On June 19<sup>th</sup>, Board staff were pleased to help organize a PEI Potatoes tour with 17 delegates from Action Canada, a leadership development fellowship comprised of young professionals from across Canada. Action Canada offers its fellows a deepening understanding of the country, while also equipping them with policymaking tools and fostering connections with diverse leaders nationwide. This immersive experience encourages Fellows to engage with grassroots realities on the ground, while also helping hone their leadership skills. Since 2003, over 300 alumni have gone through this proven program. They have been elected to all three levels of government, founded companies, and started non-profits, among others.

The primary topic of interest for their time in PEI is resilience to a changing climate, including how agriculture is responding to this challenge. After a morning visit to the Climate Change School in St. Peters, they arrived at Rollo Bay Holdings for a tour of their packing facility with Ray Keenan and team. The fellows were very impressed by the technology and commitment to excellence in evidence at Rollo Bay. After this, the tour bus visited AIM trial fields in Albion Cross and Canavoy to talk about some of the on-farm research that the Potato Board is leading in collaboration with other partners, and how many of these projects directly related to climate change resiliency and regenerative agriculture.



*Action Canada tour learning from Ray Keenan of Rollo Bay Holdings*

**CFIA President Paul MacKinnon visits PEI:**

CFIA President Paul MacKinnon and Associate Vice President Diane Allan were in PEI recently. The two came in response to an invitation to sit with growers and hear their thoughts about CFIA processes and better understand how they impact their operations. Over a day and a half they met with seed, fresh, and processing growers at farms and pack shed's from Orwell to Summerside. Thank you to the growers for taking time to sit with them, for touring them through your operations, and for being open and honest about the implications of CFIA protocols.



*Paul MacKinnon and Dianne Allan with some packing shed employees.*

**Nuffield Scholars:**

We recently welcomed two Nuffield Scholars from the UK-Harry Winslet and Peter Green-to the PEI Potato Board office. Harry, who grew up in Central London, is researching new approaches to peatland agriculture. Peter, from Cornwall, is exploring how to better capture value from farmers' stories.

It was a pleasure to share the story of Island agriculture with them and gain fresh insight into our own challenges. Their perspectives highlighted both the similarities and differences between our agricultural systems.

Potato Board staff members Greg Donald and Mark Phillips are also Nuffield Scholars. To learn more about the program, visit [www.nuffield.ca](http://www.nuffield.ca).



*Mark Phillips, Harry Winslet and Greg Donald*

*Below: Peter Green made a great presentation and took a lot of knowledge back home with him.*





**Expanding into New Markets Panel:**

Krista Shaw was invited to be a panelist at the PEI Business Summit. The talk focused on “Expanding into New Markets” beyond the US and Canada. The panel was hosted by Senator Mary Robinson. Other panelists included Wayne Easter and Joann Pineau. (Pictured left: L-R Senator Mary Robinson, Krista Shaw, Wayne Easter and Joann Pineau)

**Co-founder of GeneNeer visits PEI Potato Board:**

Dr.Kinneret Shefer, CEO and Co-founder of GeneNeer travelled from Israel to PEI to meet with government and industry officials focused on potatoes. (Pictured right:L-R Ryan Barrett, Krista Shaw, Dr.Kinneret Shefer, Rebecca MacSwain, and Greg Donald)



**FARMERS TALK.CA**

# Freda The Fry

*By Mark Phillips, Marketing Specialist*

As farming becomes less central to everyday life on Prince Edward Island and more Islanders grow up without firsthand farm experience, the disconnect between agriculture and consumers continues to widen. While events like Open Farm Day and Farm Day in the City help bridge that gap, author and farmer Patsy Dingwell saw a new opportunity to reach the next generation-through storytelling.

Her latest children's book, *Freda the Fry*, is a lively and engaging introduction to the journey of PEI potatoes. The story follows Freda, a spirited French fry curious about where she came from and where she's going. Through Freda's eyes, young readers learn about the Island's signature crop, from planting and harvesting to processing and the family dinner table.

Dingwell, a retired special education assistant who farms with her husband Rodney in Marie, PEI, has combined her background in education with her experience in agriculture. Her inspiration for *Freda the Fry* grew out of time spent on the harvester and memories of how children used to interact with farming more directly. Today, fewer children get those opportunities, and the book aims to make that connection in a fun and memorable way.

The idea for the story was also influenced by a family moment in the garden, when a young relative expressed surprise that vegetables came from the ground—highlighting how far removed many children are from the food production process.

*Freda the Fry* launched June 11th at a public reading event featuring PEI Potato Board mascot Tate. The following week, Dingwell shared the book with students at Morell Consolidated School, alongside the Cavendish Farms fry truck. The book will be promoted through Agriculture in the Classroom PEI and included in Canadian Agricultural Literacy Month programming.

With colourful illustrations and a playful narrative, *Freda the Fry* is more than a bedtime story—it's a tool to support agricultural awareness and youth literacy. The book is now available at select local retailers and online, with part of the proceeds supporting farm education initiatives for children.



*Patsy Dingwell reading to a class, her new book *Freda the Fry**

An advertisement for PEI Bag Co. The top left features the company logo: "PEI BAG CO." in blue, a stylized red potato shape, and "PACKAGING SINCE 1935" in blue. To the right, the words "HISTORY &amp; EXPERTISE" are written in large, bold, red letters. Below this, a paragraph states: "PEI Bag Company has a rich history of creating packaging solutions for a variety of industries, including agriculture, aquaculture, and confectionary." Underneath the text is a photograph of a factory interior with workers and machinery. At the bottom, a red banner reads "Delivering high-quality custom packaging products since 1935." Below that, a blue banner contains the text: "To find the packaging that works for you, visit our website or speak to one of our packaging specialists." followed by the website "peibag.com" and the phone number "1-800-716-2261".

# Update on PVY AI Robot Research

*By Ryan Barrett & Humna Khan, PEI Potato Board Research*

For the last two years, a team of researchers at UPEI's School of Engineering has been developing a robot that can be used to collect images of potato plants and use artificial intelligence (or machine learning) to identify Potato Virus Y (PVY). New necrotic strains of PVY are now dominant, and many of these strains are more difficult to visually identify in the field. At the same time, it is harder to find trained personnel to rogue seed potatoes during the relatively tight time window we have. It is hoped that in this project, artificial intelligence can detect Potato virus Y (PVY) more accurately than people in a less time-consuming and labor-intensive fashion.

To fix some weather-related issues identified in first year, the robot's structure was re-designed with fully waterproof compartments, enclosing batteries, processing units, and other sensitive electronics. Strong materials and a modular build make it easier to repair and use in the field. Protective casings also offer dust and debris shielding, extending equipment longevity. The camera system was improved with new curtains, better lighting, an upgraded camera, and a flexible boom arm. This new shade curtain with LED lighting enables all images to be taken with the same level of light, eliminating issues with glare on sunny days as well as enabling the robot to run under dark conditions.

The second year of the project delivered key advancements in field scouting, PVY detection accuracy, and grower-focused decision tools. There were few notable achievements such as major redesign and waterproofing of the robot, enhanced imaging with lighting, shutter upgrades, and adjustable boom, an expanded and diversified dataset for more robust AI training, precision localization using RTK and real-time cloud connectivity. Both research and commercial fields were used to test the robot and AI last summer, followed by confirmation by seasoned rougers and growers to confirm whether

the plants that the AI labelled as having PVY were truly infected. The research team also submitted several leaf samples for PCR testing to confirm infection. Accuracy rate was very high (over 80% in numerous fields), with very few false negatives identified.

The next project phase will introduce onboard real-time decision making instead of the past requirement to process images and create a GPS map of infected plants that need to be identified in a return visit to the field. Additionally, an integrated spraying module will mark infected plants directly in the field for easy identification by workers, enabling easier plant removal. Structural improvements have also been made to the robot, increasing the number of cameras from five to nine and replacing the fabric light shading with solar panels, which can be used to charge the robot as it is operating. The team has already been out in the field with the enhanced robot in July 2025, testing out some of the new enhancements.

The UPEI research team is primarily comprised of Charanpreet Singh, who just completed his M.Sc. project on this research; Andrew Fraser M.Sc; and their supervisor, Dr. Aitazaz Farooque. Funding for the second year of research came from the Agronomy Initiative for Marketable Yield, the PEI Department of Agriculture, the New Brunswick Department of Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries, and Potatoes New Brunswick. Moving forward, this project will additionally be supported by funding from NSERC as part of a multi-year, multi-partner sustainable agriculture project.



# Philippines Seed Trial

*By: Krista Shaw, Director Stakeholder Relations*

After months of communication, site visits, in person meetings, getting approval from each respective country, and working collaboratively to complete a Memorandum of Understanding and an import permit, seven varieties of Fox Island grown seed have finally landed in the hands of the farmers in the Philippines.

Last June, a 15 member delegation from the Philippines, including farmers, a processing company, and senior government officials, came to the Island, seeking once again to have PEI seed as part of their farming practices. The farmers were also eager to try out different varieties to see if any would be suitable for the fresh market they currently serve but also appropriate for processing. Most importantly, the farmers are seeking a variety that can withstand the mountain region weather patterns, including hot temperatures, heavy rain, and even typhoons.

During a visit to the Fox Island Elite Seed Farm, members of the mission were educated on a closed farm system and were impressed by the stringent bio-security practices, both aspects to which Fox Island adheres. Later in the summer, the farm was also host to the Canadian Ambassador to the Philippines. Both visits were integral to moving this initiative forward. While in the Philippines for the Team Canada Trade Mission, we once again met in person with the Undersecretary for Agriculture, the Ambassador,

as well as senior directors from the Bureau of Plant Health. Along with a strong message of support from the farmers, they agreed to host a variety trial.

Work immediately began to provide the variety list from Fox Island along with descriptions of each. We worked to provide an outline on how to proceed with the variety trial including plot specifics and determined the number of tubers to send. Kennebec, Norland, Satina, Hillite Russet, Eva, Mystere, and Russet Burbank were selected, and one hundred pounds of each variety was packaged and sent via air. They made it safely in less than 48 hours and were delivered to the local university and the farmers.

While the trial was originally to be planted in early March, issues around getting the appropriate import permit took significant time, delaying planting. They will be planting in August after the worst of typhoon season is hopefully past them. We have been maintaining regular contact with the General Manager of the United Potato Producers of Benguet Mountain Province and the seed is in storage and holding up well.

A lot of time and effort from all sides went into getting these seed potatoes to the Philippine farmers, but we are hopeful it could potentially open a door once again to successfully sending PEI seed to the area. Establishing and maintaining relationships with the farmers and government officials in the Philippines has been very worthwhile.



*Filipino workers digging potatoes*



*Potatoes awaiting planting in the Philippines*



# Update from the Department of Agriculture PEI



By: Rodrigo Sampaio dos Santos, Potato Industry Coordinator

Potato production faces significant challenges from insect pests that impact yield, quality, and storability. Among these, aphids are particularly important as they can cause direct feeding damage and transmit viruses—a major concern in seed potato production, where strict virus management is essential to maintain certification and marketability.

To support seed growers, the Department of Agriculture has operated the Aphid Alert Program for several decades. This program monitors aphid populations throughout the growing season and provides timely information for aphid management. In 2025, the program is monitoring five aphid species capable of transmitting viruses to potatoes. This report provides a comparative overview of each species, emphasizing their biology, virus transmission potential, and relative importance in potato fields.

## Monitored Aphid Species in 2025

1. Green Peach Aphid (*Myzus persicae*) A major pest in potato crops due to rapid reproduction and efficient transmission of viruses like Potato virus Y (PVY) and Potato leafroll virus (PLRV). Causes moderate feeding damage.
2. Potato Aphid (*Macrosiphum euphorbiae*) Larger aphid causing leaf distortion and yellowing; a secondary vector of PVY and PLRV.
3. Foxglove Aphid (*Aulacorthum solani*) Produces honeydew that fosters fungal growth; an important virus vector in seed potatoes. Causes leaf mottling.
4. Buckthorn Aphid (*Aphis nasturtii*) A minor vector using buckthorn as a primary host. Causes localized leaf crinkling and minor virus transmission.
5. Bird-Cherry Oat Aphid (*Rhopalosiphum padi*) Primarily a cereal pest, it occasionally transmits PVY to potatoes as a non-colonizing transient aphid with minimal feeding damage.

## Colonizing vs. Non-Colonizing Aphids and Virus Spread

Aphids involved in virus transmission can be categorized on their ability to establish colonies on potatoes:

- Colonizing aphids (green peach, potato, buckthorn) settle, reproduce, and amplify viruses spread within fields. Because they stay and reproduce within the

field, they can cause repeated virus transmission over time.

- Non-colonizing aphids (foxglove, bird-cherry oat) briefly feed on potatoes during migration. They do not establish colonies on potatoes, but they are important in introducing viruses early to potato fields. In seed potato fields, virus epidemics typically involve a two-phase dynamic:

1. **Primary Virus Spread:**
  - Non-colonizing aphids play a pivotal role in the early-season introduction of viruses like Potato virus Y (PVY) into seed potato fields.
  - These species migrate from overwintering hosts and, despite not colonizing potatoes, can transmit viruses as they briefly probe potato plants before moving on.
  - Their transient feeding activity often occurs before colonizing aphids are present, making early virus transmission difficult to prevent.
2. **Secondary Spread:**
  - Once viruses are introduced then the colonizing aphids become the primary drivers of virus multiplication within the field.
  - These colonizing species settle, feed, reproduce, and move from plant to plant, repeatedly acquiring and transmitting viruses as they build up population densities.
  - Their sustained presence allows for secondary spread, amplifying the initial virus infections.

Effective management targets both groups with early cultural controls to prevent virus entry and later insecticide and monitoring strategies to control colonizing aphids.

Comparative Summary of Aphids

Species	Size & Appearance	Virus Role	Feeding Damage	Importance
Green Peach Aphid	Small, light green/pink	Primary vector of PVY, PLRV	Moderate leaf curl/stunting	Very high
Potato Aphid	Medium-large, green/pink	Secondary vector	Leaf distortion, yellowing	High
Foxglove Aphid	Medium, pale green	Significant vector	Mottling, honeydew	Moderate to high
Buckthorn Aphid	Small, dark green/black	Minor vector	Local leaf curling	Low to moderate
Bird-Cherry Oat Aphid	Small, olive green	Minor vector	Minimal	Low

# Faces of the Industry

*By Rebecca MacSwain, Seed Specialist*

## **Shaw Brothers Farm:**

Shaw Brothers Farm in Stanhope, Prince Edward Island, has been in the Shaw family since 1773. It is the oldest family farm in PEI still operating on its original deeded land.

Steven and Norman Shaw are eighth-generation farmers, following in the footsteps of their late father George. Steven's son Jack is preparing to become the ninth generation. Jack has wanted to farm since he could talk and hopes to continue the family tradition. Jack has played a vital role on the farm this summer in roguing the potato crop.

The farm grows exclusively elite seed potatoes. The Shaw's typically multiply seed lots for two years, and sell to other Island producers as Elite 2 or Elite 3 class seed. Varieties on the Shaw Farm include Allegria, Norland, and Mountain Gem. They also grow cereals, soybeans, and wild blueberries. While the Shaw's were once active beef producers, Steven and Norman now focus solely on field crops.

The Shaws are introducing new sustainability practices, including longer crop rotations and cover crops like sorghum-sudan grass, to improve soil health.



*Norman, Jack and Steven Shaw  
of Shaw Brothers Farm.*

## **McCardle Bros:**

Danny McCardle is a part time Assistant Manager at McCardle Bros, a 6th generation potato, seed grain, and grass seed farm operation in Middleton, Prince Edward Island.

Danny graduated from Software Engineering at the University of New Brunswick in 2021 and worked as a Software Developer for 3 years before rejoining the family farm operation last year. Danny is excited about the opportunity to bring his technical experience and engineering knowledge back to the farm to help improve efficiency and day to day operations.

McCardle Bros specializes in table-stock potatoes, premium barley seed, and perennial ryegrass seed production. McCardles grow Russets, Round Whites, and Yellows, targeting the Spring and Summer months for shipping across North America. Recently, McCardle Bros have established new connections to export grass seed to China.

In his role at McCardle Bros, Danny helps with operating equipment, crop & storage planning, and exploring areas for technological advancement while farming alongside with his father, Fred, uncle Leonard, and cousin Nicholas.

Off the farm, Danny is launching his own ag-tech company, McCardle AgriTech, to build software solutions to problems facing potato farms on PEI. His first product aims to simplify data capture for food safety compliance with programs such as CanadaGAP.



**Rayner Farms:**

Glen and Levi Rayner, a father-and-son team, own and operate Rayner Farms in Cascumpec, Prince Edward Island. Levi represents the sixth generation of Rayners to carry on the family’s farming tradition.

Glen and Levi manage a diverse farm operation. They maintain a herd of 100 cow-calf pairs, grow mixed grains and forages, and produce seed potatoes for both the processing and tablestock sectors.

A strong advocate for the local agriculture industry, Glen has previously represented the seed sector for the West Prince district as a director of the PEI Potato Board, and has served multiple terms on the Farm & Seed Committee. Following in his father’s footsteps, Levi has recently joined the Farm & Seed Committee as a member-at-large.

As committed stewards of the land, the Rayners continue to implement innovative sustainability practices on their farm, which include cover cropping and the use of vertical tillage equipment. They are also long-time participants in the provincial Aphid Alert program, valuing both the in-season monitoring of aphid populations and the historical data the program provides.

Rayner Farms are also participating in rotating/ grazing trials ahead of potatoes as part of the ACS-Living Labs initiative. *(Below: Rayner Farms aerial picture)*



# Straw Mulch to Reduce PVY Spread

By: Ryan Barrett, Research and Agronomy Specialist

Transmission of Potato Virus Y (PVY) by aphids is a primary concern for seed producers on Prince Edward Island. In recent years, the dominance of new necrotic PVY strains have been found to cause yield reductions and are linked to internal defects in certain varieties. Since 2022, aphid numbers have dramatically increased in the Atlantic Northeast, with earlier appearances of green peach aphids (*Myzus persicae*), which are known to be more efficient vectors of virus than other non-colonizing aphid species.

Cultural management practices currently used to reduce PVY spread include planting clean seed, frequent application of mineral oil and aphicides, the use of green border crops to attract aphids away from potato fields, and early termination of seed fields. During a study tour in Scotland by the AIM Seed & Tuber Quality Working Group in 2023, multiple growers and agronomists mentioned that straw mulch has been used on high-generation seed in Europe to deter aphid visitation. Aphids are highly responsive to colour. Interrupting typical colour patterns of a potato field with the use of straw could result in reduced aphid visitation and therefore reduction of PVY transmission.

In 2024, a field trial was created to compare the use of straw mulch in a seed potato field to a control area in reduction of both aphid numbers and PVY incidence.

Six bales were spread across a two-acre section of a Mountain Gem seed field a month after planting. Coverage was not uniform across the treatment area due to variability in bale density as well as significant

winds on the day of application.

Throughout the growing season, aphid numbers were monitored twice per week. Only in the first week of collection was there a difference of more than one aphid per collection. After July 29<sup>th</sup>, only one aphid was collected. Given the low numbers of aphids collected, no conclusions can be made regarding the relative attraction or deterrence for aphid visitation due to the presence of straw mulch. Timely applications of aphicide and mineral oil also likely contributed to the low number of aphids observed.

Samples were dug in each treatment in mid-September and graded based on seed sizes. From each treatment, four samples of 50 tubers each were submitted to the Potato Quality Institute for post-harvest PVY testing through grow-out and ELISA testing. Though not statistically significant, there was slightly lower PVY incidence in the control treatment than the straw mulch treatment.

A 13.3% yield increase was observed in the straw mulch treatment, with borderline statistical significance. Given that the growing season was relatively dry in August, the straw mulch may have helped to conserve soil moisture. Fewer weeds were observed in the straw mulch treatment compared to the control section of the field; however, this was not quantified.

Another field has been set up for this year with increased straw coverage. Comparison between aphid numbers, PVY incidence, weeds, tuber count and yield will be considered when determining effectiveness of this practice.

## Potato Yield and Quality:

Treatment	Total Yield	Seed Size (mm)			Off Type/Culls	Marketable Yield
		<40	40-55	>55		
	lbs/10 ft.	lbs/10ft.				cwt/ac.
<b>Mulch</b>	25.6	1.1	16.8	7.7	0	332.8
<b>Control</b>	22.6	1.3	14.6	6.7	0.03	293.8
<b>Difference</b>	3	-0.2	2.2	1	-0.03	39
<b>p-value</b>	0.17	0.37	0.12	0.62	0.34	0.16



*Pictured above:  
2024 Straw Mulch Field*

*Pictured left:  
2025 Straw Mulch Field*

# PEI Potatoes

## Summertime Activities

*By: Mark Phillips, Marketing Specialist*

This summer, PEI Potatoes is continuing a vibrant season of partnerships and community engagement across the Island. These initiatives are designed to strengthen our brand, promote potato consumption, and support local businesses and consumers.

Our mascot, Tate, has been travelling across Prince Edward Island, bringing smiles, energy, and PEI Potato pride to festivals, parades, markets, and more. With a packed calendar of appearances, Tate has already made a strong impact at community events—and there's still more ahead!

The season began with two special book launches for Freda the Fry in Charlottetown and Morell, where Tate helped introduce young readers to the story of a PEI potato. In June, he visited Victoria and Gateway Village, surprising diners and staff at local restaurants. On Canada Day, Tate appeared in both the Rustico Parade and the Victoria Park celebrations in Charlottetown.

In July, Tate continued to delight crowds in Cavendish, the Summerside Lobster Carnival Parade, Founders Food Hall, and Port Charlottetown. He was a



crowd favourite at Breakfast on the Farm and the Somerset Festival Parade. Most recently, he made a lively appearance at the Crapaud Exhibition on July 26.

### **Still to come this summer:**

- July 28 – August 3 – Tyne Valley Oyster Festival
- August 1 – Port Charlottetown
- August 11– Old Home Week
- August 15 – Gold Cup Parade
- August 16 – 20 – Kensington Harvest Festival
- August 24 – Just Live Fun Run

**Supporting Island Events & Community Initiatives**  
Beyond Tate's travels, PEI Potatoes continues to support a wide range of arts, culture, and community events through strategic sponsorships:

### **Harmony House:**

We're proud to return as sponsor of the hit musical *Inside American Pie*, running from July 9 to August 28. This acclaimed show explores the story behind Don McLean's iconic song through music by the Beatles, Janis Joplin, Bob Dylan, and more. Following four sold-out seasons and strong demand, the show is back for 2025 and has already sold out.

### **PEI International Shellfish Festival:**

Running September 18–21, 2025, this event highlights PEI's seafood excellence and the perfect pairing of potatoes and shellfish. We're pleased to return as sponsor of the PEI Potato Chowder Championship, where local chefs compete for the title. We'll also be on-site offering samples of delicious PEI Potato dishes throughout the weekend.

### **PEI Marathon:**

We're proud to continue our support of the Jacob Simmons Marathon Spud Run, an event that promotes healthy living, showcases the nutrition of PEI potatoes, and honours Jacob Simmons' legacy. This year's race takes place on Sunday, October 19.

### **Stingray Farm Crew:**

Our summer partnership with the Ocean 100 Farm Crew continues for another season. Each week, the crew visits a PEI farm to drop off treats and PEI Potato

swag to nominated farms. Tate participates in many of these visits, helping to deliver prizes and tasty treats. Summer-long radio ads and YouTube pre-roll video ads support the promotion. To nominate a farm, visit the Ocean 100 website.

**Breakfast on the Farm:**

We're excited to sponsor and attend this year's Breakfast on the Farm at G. Visser & Sons in Orwell. It's a fantastic way to connect with families and share the PEI potato story. A big thank-you goes out to

Randy, Ben, Adam, and the entire Visser team for hosting this meaningful community event.

**Trevor Lambe Racing Team:**

Our ongoing partnership with the Trevor Lambe Racing Team continues as they represent PEI Potatoes on the track again this summer.

To stay up to date on Tate's upcoming adventures, visit [www.peipotato.org/tates-dates-2025](http://www.peipotato.org/tates-dates-2025) and follow PEI Potatoes on social media.



# PMANA Summer 2025

*By Scott Howatt, Processing Specialist*

On July 13-15 the Ontario Potato Board hosted the 2025 PMANA summer meeting in Niagara on the Lake at The Pillar & Post. The purposes of the summer meeting are to bring PMANA member organizations up to date with the crop conditions in the twelve processing potato growing areas of North America; to summarize the 2025 contract settlements; and to discuss relevant frozen potato industry issues and news. There were 26 grower representatives in attendance and they were joined by Bryan Henninger of Ag-World Support Systems, Patricia Kloepfer and Eric Phillips of Syngenta (both companies being long time sponsors of PMANA) and Victoria Stamper of United Potato Growers of Canada. The Potato Processing Committee sent Clint Ching, Kyle Maynard, Kevin Schurman, and Scott Howatt to represent PEI processing growers.

Each grower organization in attendance provided an area report and this article will provide an overview of these reports; however, the following summary does not contain numbers or information from New Brunswick or Quebec as they did not send growers nor reports. From the remaining ten processing potato areas that did attend, planted acres in 2025 are down by approx. 20,000 acres (2.0%) from 2024; with Washington State leading the way on acreage reduction with 15,000 (9.4%) less acres planted. Five areas reported increasing acres; Alberta, Prince Edward Island, Ontario, Wisconsin and Malheur Co., Oregon, in order of the size of their increase. The acreage decrease is welcomed by an industry which is in an over-supply situation from a strong 2024 potato crop, however, the 2.0% decrease does not come close to the volume cuts that were announced during contract negotiations this past spring. All areas, except Ontario and PEI, reported reductions in contracted volume with their processors, with the volume cuts in the various growing areas ranging from 4% to as high as 18%. By the math, these volume reductions should have translated to an overall acreage cut across the North American processing sector within 6 to 8% range, much more than the 2% reduction that actually occurred.

On top of the acres-planted not lining up with the volumes-contracted, all growing areas west of the

Mississippi are reporting healthy, strong potato crops coming along. Of course, at this time of the year it is too early to make predictions on overall potato production outcomes. That said, early digs suggest above-trend-line yields are definitely achievable in the Columbia Basin where harvesting has already begun for some processors and where, by the first full week of August, all the fry plants will be receiving new crop. The grower reps at the meeting described very good to excellent quality and size profiles developing in all the western and mid-western growing areas. The reports from the Atlantic Northeast (ANE) attendees of Maine, Ontario and PEI were more conservative on crop yield & quality expectations due to a cooler, longer planting season and currently more drought-like conditions persist across the region. The ANE grower reps spoke of an average-yielding crop and they stated their potato crops were behind in development compared to last season, in direct contrast to the reports from the areas in the west.

Most all area reps reported that the old crop inventories are in a long position and that the transition to the new crop is being delayed by their fryers to a later-than-normal date. These actions will create an even greater potential surplus of potatoes, especially in the Pacific Northwest (PNW). Generally speaking, most all attendees shared that their fry and chip plants in their growing area are running close to or at capacity.

Growers' projected costs of production for 2025 are on pace to be close to par with 2024 costs; a couple of areas thinking their costs will be down slightly (approx. 1%) but most grower reps shared cost increases from flat to 3.0% up. During early contract negotiations this past winter, there was much talk of growers' costs of production in the PNW being down between 2-3%; since then, however fuel costs have increased in the USA and equipment maintenance and parts costs continue to increase year-over-year. It is important to understand that because of the substantial year-over-year inflation that growers have experienced in their CoPs since 2020 (between 30 to 45% depending on the growing area) that now a simple 2.0% increase to CoP adds up to well over \$100 per acre increase.

With growers' costs of production showing no

signs of weakening and with most areas being long on old crop and coming into a potentially record-breaking 2025 crop, the outlook and attitude from the growers in attendance at the PMANA Summer meeting was sullen, at best. The last two years have seen value reductions in pre-season contracts across North America, triggered by the repeated over-supply of potatoes in the Pacific Northwest. A principal factor behind the increasing supply of processing potatoes (which is out-weighing the demand for same) is the true lack of profitable alternative crops to grow instead of potatoes. The world-wide weakening of the prices paid for commodity crops (wheat, corn, soybeans, etc.) has some growers planting potato acres that obviously do not have a processing contract attached to them. From the discussions at the meetings, it seems it is only the most disciplined amongst North American growers who have made the necessary cuts to acres to match their contracted volume reduction. For these growers, the circumstances that their fellow growers have put all potato farms in lacks sensibility. Yes, the acres which are under contract have a decent expectation of profitability; especially with the better-than-average yields which are being projected. However, potatoes that are harvested and have no home and eventually sold for below the costs of production (or even worse, dumped for livestock feed) will only erode the profits that were made on the acres that filled the contracts. Using a very simple example with estimated and rounded numbers, it only takes two acres losing \$400 each to make a \$600 profit from one contracted acre disappear and make red ink. The continued over-production of potatoes has the very-real ability to financially weaken processing growers' short term cash flows to unprecedented levels.

When PMANA President Dale Lathim was asked if there any positive news for attendees to take back to our grower organizations, he listed the following important points. The consumption of frozen potato products continues to grow, both world-wide and domestically in North America. French fries and other frozen potato products are on 83% of all menus in North America and they are a profit-generator for all restaurants. All four of the fryers in North America, Lamb Weston, McCain Foods, J.R. Simplot and Cavendish Farms are investing in substantial capital expansion and have been growing their capacities with the construction of brand new processing plants as well as adding upgrades and

expanding capacity to their existing plants.

My note to follow-up on this positivity: Many processing growers across North America need to review their business model and realize that the best way for them to be the most profitable and therefore the best prepared to enjoy the continued expansion in the processing sector of our potato industry is to align their production to meet 100% of their buyers' needs... not 105%. Potatoes without a home destroy profit margins, and margin degradation can happen exceptional fast when the costs of production exceed \$5,000 per acre. Collectively, we need to stop speculating what our neighbours are doing and correct our own approach so we match our supply of processing potatoes with the actual demand. If we all do this, then profitability will return to most all potato acres!

## Upcoming Events & Program Deadlines

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

### August 2025

- August 12-13 **Canadian Potato Council AGM**, Ottawa, Ontario
- August 19 **PEI Potato Board of Directors Meeting**, Fox Island, PEI

### September 2025

- September 18 **PEI Potato Board of Directors Monthly Meeting**, Charlottetown

### October 2025

- October 5 **Farm day in the City**, Charlottetown

### November 2025

- November 12 **PEI Potato Board of Directors Monthly Meeting**, Charlottetown
- November 19 **Potato Industry Annual Business Meeting**, PEI Potato Board Office, Charlottetown
- November 21 **Potato Industry Annual Banquet**, Delta Prince Edward, Charlottetown

# Renovation of Historic Fox House

## Preserves Legacy and Prepares for Future

*By Rebecca MacSwain, Seed Specialist*

A cherished piece of Island agricultural history has received new life, as preliminary renovations are now complete at the historic Ashley Fox House, located on the Fox Island Elite Seed Farm property in Alberton.

Originally constructed in 1930 by Lowden Ashley, the Fox House was built using profits from Prince Edward Island's once-thriving silver fox farming industry. The house remains a landmark of local heritage, and the PEI Potato Board is pleased to see the heritage preserved.

The house is structurally sound with its original integrity still intact. The decision to renovate the back portion of the house was made with the primary goal of addressing anticipated future housing needs for farm laborers. As local demand for skilled workers grows, suitable on-site housing is expected to be a valuable asset for the farm.

The primary upgrades to the house include:

- Installation of a new downstairs bathroom
- New electrical panel and plumbing systems
- Interior and exterior painting
- Addition of a heat pump for efficient heating and cooling
- Replacement of windows

In the interim, the Board is exploring short-term rental opportunities for the space, including potential use for traveling healthcare professionals, such as nurses, who are often in need of flexible, short-term accommodations.

A special thank you to Marla Slater, who served as Project Manager for the Fox House renovation. Her dedication, attention to detail, and commitment to preserving the home's character were key to bringing new life to this important piece of the Fox Island Elite Seed Farm's history.



*The historic Fox House with a fresh coat of paint was like breathing new life into this beautiful place.*



*Oh the stories this beautiful home could tell,  
in the days of old.*



*A new life for this space to make new memories, while  
preserving hints of the past.*



*And honestly how could that view get any better from the front door!*



**Wishing all our growers a safe and prosperous harvest in 2025.**



## POTATO GROWERS OF CANADA

## LES PRODUCTEURS UNIS DE POMMES DE TERRE DU CANADA

*By: Victoria Stamper, General Manager of UPGC*

### **Surplus, Shifts, and Survival: North America's Processing Potato Sector Navigates a New Era – What will the impacts be on the Fresh and Seed sectors?**

The 2025 PMANA Summer Meeting brought together key players from across North America's potato sector at a time of mounting pressure and global realignment. What emerged from the wide-ranging discussions was a picture of a resilient-but deeply challenged-industry adapting to global oversupply, foreign competition, and internal restructuring.

### **Global Growth Slows, Competition Heats Up**

Just 1-1/2 years ago growth in demand for frozen fries was forecast at 3.5-4% per year, however current projections now place that growth at just 1-1.5%. While consumption is still rising, North America's share is shrinking, undercut by aggressive exports from China and India where processing costs are 30–40% lower.

With wages and production costs so low, fries from China are hitting western shores at up to 50% below US pricing. Countries like Turkey are also increasing exports to North America, now accounting for 5% of offshore fry imports.

### **North American Capacity Grows... But Is It Needed?**

Even amid this supply surplus, processors are completing expansions that were planned when forecasted growth was higher. McCain's Alberta plant expansion is nearly operational, and Simplot's new Moses Lake facility is coming online three months early in November. Increasing Alberta's capacity to 14.5 million pounds at the Coaldale facility and adding another 12 million pounds to the Columbia Basin. Agristo out of Europe will be breaking ground soon on a new facility in North Dakota set for operation in 2028.

Yet production capacity isn't being fully used, and inventories from the 2024 crop still linger. In fact, processors have dumped or diverted millions of dollars worth of potatoes in the past two years—mostly from

the Columbia Basin, Idaho, and Alberta.

### **Contract Chaos and Grower Cuts**

With surplus weighing on the market, volume cuts hit hard in 2025:

- Columbia Basin reduced acreage by 15,000 acres.
- Manitoba saw an 11% volume cut, with some growers losing up to 100% of their McCain contracts.
- Alberta acreage increased to nearly 80,000 acres, but not without concern over storage, early harvest pushed back, and irrigation allocation.

To manage this pressure, some processors allowed growers to plant just 75% of contracted acres, a rare concession. Meanwhile, processors continue to request growers absorb more cost to protect processor margins, a trend that's sparked pushback in key regions like the Columbia Basin.

### **Yields High, Profits Uncertain**

Thanks to favorable growing conditions, many regions are on track for above-average yields:

- Oregon, Washington and Idaho are expecting strong harvests with nearly ideal growing conditions right from planting
- Manitoba and Ontario are ahead of schedule, set up for excellent crop quality.
- Alberta is seeing early row closure and potential trend line yields

But high yields won't necessarily mean high returns. Pricing is down, and in some areas, fresh pricing is below cost of production. A lack of alternative profitable crops compounds the challenge.

### **Structural Shakeups and Strategic Shifts**

Internally, the industry is undergoing major changes:

- Simplot has restructured senior leadership and recently acquired Clarebout—a major European processor with a state-of-the-art facility in France.

- Lamb Weston and McCain continue to push trial varieties, though grower feedback notes concerns over yield, seed quality, and complex contract terms.

### Looking Ahead: Balance Still Years Away

Industry leaders agree: the sector likely won't rebalance until the 2027 crop. Until then, the focus will be on managing carryover, improving processing efficiency, and adapting to a global market that is shifting rapidly.

As one grower representative summarized at the meeting:

“French fries aren't going anywhere—but who makes them, where, and at what cost is changing quickly.”

### So what does this mean for the fresh and seed sectors?

With volume cuts from two of the major processors coming so late in the year, and a lack of profitable alternative crops, most growers went ahead and planted despite the reduced demand for acreage. Some regions increased planted acres in fresh varieties, which may have helped the seed sector reeling from cancelled seed orders for processing, but is creating real concern for the table growers across North America.

Tariff concerns also continue to play on the minds of all potato growers as over 90% of Canadian potato (and potato product) exports are to our neighbours to the south. Certain Canadian provinces were hit hard during the short period that tariffs were in place in early spring and the impacts have been lasting.

July and August will be crucial months to see how the crop shapes up. To date, across the country, in fact across North America, planting went well, and weather has been excellent since with many regions up to a week ahead of schedule for crop growth. August meetings will be a good time to seriously discuss harvest and production numbers and the ability of producers to come together and plan movement of potatoes to help all regions balance supply and demand and stabilize market pricing. Making sure to plan harvest and perhaps leave questionable quality lots where they are.

United Potato Growers of Canada is grateful for the chance to attend industry meetings like PMANA to really have the full picture of the entire potato pile in North America. We will continue to keep growers updated as the crop develops and as the processing sector continues to work through these new challenges.



CIBC PRIVATE WEALTH  
WOOD GUNDY

## Your farm is more than just your business

Let us help you grow and protect your legacy.

Your farm needs careful attention to allow it to flourish. With the same attention to detail, our team of professionals can help you reach your goals, whether it be growing or protecting your business or passing it onto the next generation. Together with our CIBC partners, we'll create a financial plan that reflects your goals and vision for your farm and your personal financial objectives.

**To find out more, contact us today.**

**Earl Pickard, Investment Advisor**

CIBC Wood Gundy  
earl.pickard@cibc.com

**Will Poirier, Investment Advisor**

CIBC Wood Gundy  
will.poirier@cibc.com

400-119 Kent Street, Charlottetown, PE | 902 892-4231 | [www.pickardpoirier.com](http://www.pickardpoirier.com)



CIBC Private Wealth consists of services provided by CIBC and certain of its subsidiaries, including CIBC Wood Gundy, a division of CIBC World Markets Inc. The CIBC logo and "CIBC Private Wealth" are trademarks of CIBC, used under license. "Wood Gundy" is a registered trademark of CIBC World Markets Inc. If you are currently a CIBC Wood Gundy client, please contact your Investment Advisor.

*By: Caleigh Hallink-Irwin, General manager of The Canadian Potato Council*

## Summer Highlights from the CPC

It's been an energizing few months for the Canadian Potato Council (CPC), with momentum building around several key advocacy and trade initiatives.

One major milestone was the formal CPC–NPC (Canada–U.S.) bilateral meeting held in Idaho on June 24—the first of its kind in over five years. This meeting marked a strong step forward in rebuilding our cross-border industry relationship. Despite some persistent challenges, both delegations affirmed a shared commitment to trade stability and collaboration.

### Key takeaways from Idaho:

- **Renewed Collaboration** – Both sides expressed strong interest in making these bilateral meetings a recurring priority.
- **Shared Goals** – While there are some areas of disagreement, all parties emphasized our aligned interests in supporting potato business and trade. Everyone agreed: keep food out of trade wars.
- **Professional & Productive Dialogue** – The discussion remained constructive even on complex files like tariffs, regulatory alignment, crop protection, potato wart, and BC's anti-dumping legislation.

Earlier that month, CPC leadership was on Parliament Hill for a dedicated day of federal advocacy. On June 17, CPC Chair Bill Zylmans, Vice-Chair John Visser, and General Manager Caleigh Hallink-Irwin met with Senator Mary Robinson, Senator Todd Lewis, MP Dave Epp, Parliamentary Secretary Kody Blois, Agriculture Minister Heath MacDonald, and CFIA President Paul MacKinnon. The next day, CPC held a follow-up meeting at CFIA to discuss market access and the importance of Seed Regulatory Modernization.

Each of these meetings was engaging and enthusiastic. Parliamentarians expressed strong interest in the bilateral meeting with the US and welcomed CPC's proactive, industry-to-industry approach to protecting our trade relationship. CPC used these meetings to press forward on several key priorities:

- Re-establishing regular Canada–US dialogue

and reaffirming science-based, tariff-free trade in an era of rising protectionism;

- Reinforcing the importance of CFIA's National Potato Wart Response Plan, and ensuring science, not politics, leads market access decisions;
- Supporting a broader CFIA mandate that considers economic impacts alongside science;
- Endorsing proposed Plant Breeders' Rights amendments that would extend IP protection from 18 to 25 years, aligning with global standards and supporting innovation, sustainability and economic growth within the agriculture and agri-food sector.

CPC has also remained active with FVGC in national consultations on topics like advocacy, PMRA & pesticide re-evaluations, grade standards, labour, and plastics regulations. Across each file, we're looking for coordinated national solutions that reflect real grower needs and minimize trade risk.

Our next opportunity to connect will be at the CPC summer meeting on August 12 in Ottawa. We'll be discussing CPC's governance, trade, research, crop protection, and federal files in more detail.

CPC remains committed to being a strong, unified voice for Canadian potato growers, and ensuring that food stays on the kitchen table, not the trade table.



*L-R: John Visser, MP Dave Epp, Bill Zylman, Caleigh Hallink-Irwin*

# Spuds to Suds: Reusing Potatoes with a Purpose

*By Laura MacDougall, Co-President of Spuds to Suds*

Spuds2Suds is a student-founded soap business that reuses otherwise discarded PEI potatoes to make a lasting community impact! Our company is built on the principles of drive, integrity and creativity reflected by those dedicated to the cause. Over the past year, graduated business students and founders of Spuds2Suds Maggie McNeil and Samuel Harding grew an idea into a legacy that continues to evolve with the changing demands of the cosmetic market, as well as the increasing innovation found within sustainable design. With the support of Enactus Canada, Spuds2Suds has made real change based out of the University of Prince Edward Island.

The impact of Spuds2Suds can be identified through the use of unused PEI potatoes as a key ingredient. By harnessing the potatoes natural vitamin and mineral contents, which is added to an organic soap base, the end result is a soothing soap suitable for all skin types. The process is quite simple. After washing and peeling the potatoes graciously donated by our local farmers, the juice part of the mixture is added to a soap base along with coconut and essential oils. Depending on the season, the soap can be any color, scent or shape, which makes for the perfect gift! The end soap is packaged in a recyclable burlap bag that makes for a plastic-free, quality product.

As I, Laura MacDougall, along with my co-president, Rio Crystal, move forward with this company, we are excited to take it to the next level by introducing



new product lines of shampoo, deodorant and other hygiene products all while reducing waste. Our mission is to show the lasting impact small changes can have on the community. For each bar of soap we sell, one bar is donated to our local food banks to ensure everyone has access to hygiene products regardless of their living situation. We believe this to be a right, not a privilege, and we are accomplishing our goals while maintaining the sustainability that has caught the attention of media and consumers from across Canada.

After attending the 2025 National Exposition Competition in Calgary this past May, UPEI's team secured 3rd place in the Canadian Tire Sustainability Challenge out of 37 teams, and was in the semi-final round of the overall competition out of 50 teams from across Canada! We are extremely proud of what we accomplished at our first nationals, and we know it's only up from here!

As we look forward to another year of recruitment, development and memories made possible by our members, we hope to surpass our goals not only to Spuds2Suds, but to our local community that have helped to make our dreams a reality.



*From L-R: Samuel Harding, Laura MacDougall, Maggie McNeil, Aiden Pot, and Rio Crystal*

# Changes to PEI Representation in WPC

By: Ellen Kouwenberg, Executive Director of WPC

## Changes to PEI Representation in World Potato Congress Governance as planning unfolds for the Kenya Congress 2026

The World Potato Congress Inc. (WPC) has recently seen changes to its Board following its AGM held in June 2025. This leadership will help guide the WPC through planning the next Congress to be held in Kenya in 2026.

### Greg Donald: Vice President

Stepping into the role of Vice President is Greg Donald, whose connection to the WPC runs deep. Having served as WPC Treasurer since 2019, Greg's recent appointment to Vice President is a natural fit. As General Manager of the PEI Potato Board, a Platinum Sustaining Partner of the WPC, Greg has been a tireless advocate for the potato industry and has played a pivotal role in supporting and strengthening the WPC's reach as past Treasurer and Chair of the WPC Finance and Audit Committee.

### Brian Douglas: Experience and Continuity as Treasurer

Brian Douglas is the newly appointed Treasurer of the WPC. With a remarkable 41-year career in public service, Brian's commitment to agricultural advancement has been felt at both provincial and national levels, as former Deputy Minister in PEI's government and as Chairperson of the Farm Products Council of Canada. His transition to Treasurer of the WPC comes after serving in other capacities at the WPC including former WPC General Manager.

## Krista Shaw: Advocacy and Insight as International Advisor

Joining the WPC as International Advisor is Krista Shaw, a dynamic leader whose 22 years of experience span both public and private sectors. As Director of Stakeholder Relations at the PEI Potato Board and an integral member of Shaw Brothers Farm—PEI's oldest family farm—Krista's connection to agriculture is both professional and deeply personal. Her background in organizational governance, coupled with academic credentials in leadership and ongoing certification in international trade, position her as a powerful advocate for the potato industry on the international stage.

Krista's tenure as Assistant Deputy Minister, Executive Director, and Director in various government and non-government organizations as well as her personal connection to the demands of potato production, allows her to approach her new role with insight and dedication.

## Looking Ahead: Congress 2026 in Kenya

The first World Potato Congress Inc. was held in PEI in 1993, and its incorporation and head office remain in Prince Edward Island. The Congress event has since made its way around the globe, first as a triennial Congress, and more recently as a biennial event. Following record numbers at the 2024 Congress held in Adelaide, Australia, the World Potato Congress Inc. looks forward to working with official hosts for the 2026 World Potato Congress in Kenya - the National Potato Council of Kenya (NPCK) and FreshCrop Limited.



**WPC 2026  
KENYA**



**13TH WORLD POTATO CONGRESS**  
**KENYA : 26-30 OCTOBER 2026**

National Potato Council of Kenya (NPCK) is a multi-stakeholder, non-governmental and public-private partnership organization. The council draws its membership from farmers, researchers, seed producers, processors, traders, input suppliers, financial and insurance providers, regulatory agencies, government institutions, and development partners. The CEO, National Potato Council of Kenya, Mr. Wachira Kaguongo, also serves as an International Advisor with the World Potato Congress.

FreshCrop Ltd. is a producer of certified potato seed and ware potatoes in Kenya, with a network of 15,000+ Share Holder Farmers spread across 9 potato growing zones. FreshCrop hosts 8,000 farmers in their annual farmer field day. Chris Gasperi, CEO of FreshCrop, has attended past World Potato Congresses and the knowledge gained at these events, along with his experience in hosting large scale potato industry events, makes this partnership to the 2026 Congress

a natural fit.

Set to take place from the October 26-30, 2026 in Naivasha, Kenya, it will be the first time in its over thirty-year history that the World Potato Congress will be hosted in Sub-Saharan Africa, marking a milestone moment for the continent and the global potato community. The venue for WPC 2026 will be the scenic Sawela Lodges and Convention Centre, located on the shores of Lake Naivasha in Kenya's iconic Great Rift Valley. Located near potato producing areas, it is also a region in which the great Wildebeest Migration passes through. Delegates interested in extending their stay beyond the Congress will have an opportunity to take in potato production tours and safari adventures.

More information on the WPC and the 2026 Congress can be found at [www.potatocongress.org](http://www.potatocongress.org)

*Potatoes being harvested in a field in Kenya*



# International Day of Potato 2025

By Kendra Mills, Marketing Director

In December 2023, the UN General Assembly proclaimed 30 May as the International Day of Potato. Potatoes are eaten by more than one billion people around the world and are a vital food source. As the 3rd most consumed food globally, the potato offers enormous untapped potential.

On May 30, 2025, we celebrated the second International Day of Potato, by focusing on the contribution of the potato to the lives of producers and consumers with the these this year: Shaping History: Feeding the Future.

## Campaign Overview:

After a very successful launch campaign in 2024, garnering thousands of impressions, we looked to replicate that, with some key additions. We wanted to produce a hi-res video, showcasing the importance of the potato industry to PEI, and we wanted to get more of the larger industries involved – not only to celebrate their part in the process, but also use the industry companies to help amplify the message and gain greater reach. We wanted to use the radio station remote, both as a communication tool but as a method to give away potatoes, which was very popular and well-received in 2024.

The campaign started at the beginning of the week, on May 26. We utilized local radio and social media, as our primary communication tools – through both paid and unpaid methods.

## **Radio Campaign Start Date: week of May 26 - May 30**

Ocean 100 / Hot 105.5:

- Total: 118 x 30 sec. ads between both stations
- On-air giveaways & Farm Crew Cruisers
- Interviews with Minister Thompson / Greg Donald

SpudFM / 93.1 FM

- Total 176 x 30 sec. ads between the stations
- Radio Remote on-site
- Potato Giveaway at Founders Hall

## **Social Media Results Overview**

Leading up to International Day of Potato, we posted daily on Facebook and Instagram. These posts included the Merch Giveaway, the video created by Local, the reel created by Chef Dany and the post about the potato giveaway with CFCY. Here is a snapshot of the results from the one-week period when we promoted International Potato Day:

*Views: 106.7K on FB | 30.2K on IG*

*Reach: 74.7K on FB. | 7.5K on IG*

*Interactions: 1.8K on FB | 1.4K on IG*

The video we created got a total of 36,000 views, 229 shares and the insights tell us that the views, particularly on Instagram were from 81% Non-followers, which is great, as broadening our reach was a big objective.

Further, we know that so many local companies had fun interacting with our brand. We sent an email out to adjacent industries, partner companies, and lots of our broader partners to give them a head's up, and that if they tag us, we would share their message. We had so many of our important companies and farms join the message – Kensington Agricultural Services, Meyer Pots, New Glasgow Lobster Suppers, Allan Equipment and Maclean's Funeral Home were a few of the dozen and dozens of examples. It is so great to see so many Island companies join the message in their own way!

Leading this celebration on PEI of our #1 export is not only a lot of fun, but serves an important purpose in education of our industry. It also gives the business community and also our neighbours and consumers a way to interact with us. It all helps to ensure we maintain these great working relationships into the future!





**Farm Day  
in the City  
needs  
Volunteers!  
Sunday, October  
5th, 2025  
Contact:  
amanda@  
peipotato.org**



# Breakfast on the Farm 2025

*By Ella Ramsay, PEI Potato Board Summer Student*

On Saturday, July 19<sup>th</sup>, from 8:00 to 11:00am., around 1000 visitors gathered at G. Visser & Sons Potato Farm in Orwell for this year's Breakfast on the Farm – organized by Farm & Food Care. This signature summer event offers the public a firsthand look at life on a working PEI Farm.

Hosted on the beautiful property of the Visser family, the event featured a hearty free breakfast and interactive educational displays, all while showcasing the vital role agriculture plays in Prince Edward Island's economy and community. It was a fantastic opportunity for families to connect with local farmers, explore the equipment and technology used in modern farming, and better understand where their food comes from.

The PEI Potato Board was proud to be on-site, with an activation booth that drew plenty of attention. Visitors stopped by to pick up some PEI Potato recipe cards, try on a pair of the VR glasses for a virtual potato farm experience, and grab some fun PEI Potato branded giveaways. Our beloved mascot, Tate the Potato, made a special appearance, delighting children

and families with high-fives, hugs, and plenty of photo opportunities.

Breakfast on the Farm continues to be an important event for strengthening the connection between consumers and the farming community. Events like these not only build public trust but also celebrate the hardworking producers who keep our Island and connecting partners fed.

A big thank-you goes out to G. Visser & Sons for opening their farm and to all the volunteers and organizers who made the morning a success. The PEI Potato Board was thrilled to take part, and we look forward to seeing even more friendly faces next year!



*Tate and Ella on duty with big smiles to greet everyone visiting*



*A big thumbs up on the gorgeous weather and the fun crowd at Breakfast on the Farm*

# O'Leary Potato Blossom Festival : Farmers Banquet 2025



*Friend of the Industry Award:  
Jason Ramsay*



*PEI Potato Board Chair Donald Stavert with Potato  
Producer of the year winners Triple S Farms*



*Potato Ambassador:  
Hillary Cahill*



**GOW GROUP INC.**




**ALL YOUR  
AGRICULTURAL PROJECTS  
UNDER ONE ROOF**

- Bulk box and trailer
- Telescopic piler
- Conveyors
- Telescopic conveyors
- Cultivators
- Dirt eliminator
- Grading equipment
- Seed equipment
- Trailer inserts



**1 (800) 799-4711**



[www.gowagriculture.com](http://www.gowagriculture.com)



**YOU TRANSFORM IT  
WE FINANCE IT**

---

**LA TRANSFORMATION,  
NOUS LA FINANÇONS**



[fcc.ca/Food](http://fcc.ca/Food)

[fac.ca/Agroalimentaire](http://fac.ca/Agroalimentaire)