

Prince Edward Island

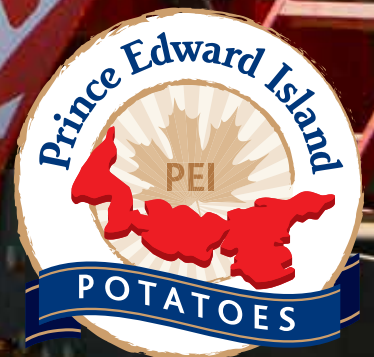
Spring 2026
Volume 27 Issue 2

POTATO NEWS



In This Issue:

- PQI Celebrates 30 Years
- Aphid Alert Report
- PMANA Update



AGTIV®

RELIABLE INOCULANTS

for POTATO PRODUCTION

IN-FURROW APPLICATION or SEED-PIECE TREATMENT

- ✓ Faster germination
- ✓ Improved crop yield, quality and uniformity



31.6 cwt/ac
9.2%

Average yield increase with **AGTIV REACH®** POTATO
1199 sites over 14 years, North America and Europe

+10.3 cwt/ac

Average yield increase when adding
AGTIV STIMULATE® POTATO to **AGTIV REACH®** POTATO
16 third-party trials over 4 years, North America

DEEPER ROOT REACH

AGTIV® is an innovative technology brand made of high-quality and proven natural active ingredients that deliver superior quality and performance for producers. Ask your local representative, or scan to learn more about the AGTIV® offer for potato.



info@ptagtiv.com

1 866 454-5867

PTAGTIV.COM



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: Katie MacLennan
Vice Chair: Shawn Birch
Secretary-Treasurer: Randy Visser, Directors:
Andrew Nieuwhof, Ian Shaw, Marijke Oudshoorn, Greg Wood, Guy Cudmore, Pat Clarkin, Chris Rennie, Dianne Huestis, 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
Christine Parsons.....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

- Gaining Access to the Fresh Potato Market in Mexico..... 8
- Faces of the Industry.....10
- Canadian Potato Council Update.....14
- Processing Contract Settlements of North America.....16
- Aphid Alert 2026- Season Report.....18
- Island Students Explore Agriculture Literacy Month.....22
- Update from the Dept. of Agriculture.....24
- PQI Celebrates 30 Years of Service to PEI Potato Growers.....26
- PEI Young Farmers Update30
- CPMA Convention and Trade Show 2026.....34

Regular Departments

- Chair's Comments 4
- Board News..... 6
- Upcoming Events and Program Deadlines 15
- United Potato Growers of Canada Update.....28
- Industry Updates38

Cover: Photo credit: Victor Karki

DURABELT

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

Chair's Comments

by Katie MacLennan, PEI Potato Board Chair



As we close out the winter season here on Prince Edward Island, it's clear that Mother Nature once again delivered a tale of two regions. Unlike last summer where the West seemed to receive a few more timely rains than the central and eastern parts of the province, winter seemed to be the opposite. The central and eastern parts of the Island saw significant snowfall and moisture accumulation, while the western end received substantially less. While there is no lasting snow or water logged fields, the water tables have been fully recharged after last years drought and soil moisture is good heading into spring.

We hosted another successful International Potato Technology Expo in late February here in Charlottetown. With a 25% increase in attendance over last Expo, it was evident that growers are interested in hearing about new technologies and practices to improve overall yield and quality. The education sessions each morning had capacity attendance which is a testament to the caliber of speakers and prevalence of topics. A like to give a note of appreciation to all the speakers and industry stakeholders who participated. Thanks to Ryan Barrett and Rodrigo Santos with the Department of Agriculture for their work putting the program together.

During the Expo we completed the bi-annual Grower Satisfaction Survey. The results were very good with a 93.5% satisfaction rate with the work of the Board and staff. In addition to the strategic objectives


that were identified two years ago in the last grower survey, irrigation, seed compensation, tariffs, and drones were recognized as new and emerging issues.

I'm please to say that the board is currently working on all these issues. The satisfaction survey is an important way for growers to provide feedback to the Board and I want to thank all that participated.

A sure sign of spring is seeing and meeting the trucks hauling seed on the road! Despite the 95% pass rate, seed is tight this year. This was based solely on the smaller yields after the drought last year along with a predicted stable acreage for 2026.

On the market access front, we were pleased to see progress in gaining access to Mexico for fresh potatoes—an effort that has been a priority for the Board for the last year or so. While there are still additional steps to complete before we can actually ship potatoes down there, we are hopeful the 2026 crop will be in Mexican grocery stores. This development represents an important opportunity; in the current trade environment, having alternative markets for our high-quality potatoes is not just beneficial—it's essential. Markets have been unusually slow this year – down 32% over last year. Price remains flat which is good. Old crop is holding steady and at this point there are no concerns with being long.

The drought impacted everyone in our industry in some way last year. In a year which has us facing increased costs to plant and maintain our crop, many are looking to supplemental irrigation as a tool to assist. In a cost analysis exercise, it was staggering to see the revenue our growers lost as well as the economic impact of this loss to the Island economy. The Board struck an Irrigation Advocacy Committee in February to devise a responsible irrigation strategy as we move forward. Joined by the Wild Blueberry Growers Association, the Horticulture Council and co-chaired by the Federation of Agriculture, the group met with the Department of Environment, completed research



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

Charlottetown 902-892-5365
www.bdo.ca

on potential programs that could assist, and completed a jurisdictional scan of other provinces across the country. A presentation is ready and a meeting with the Department of Finance and Agriculture has been requested.

I would also like to recognize the Processing Committee for their hard work over this year's negotiations. Many have described this as an exceptionally challenging negotiation, and that's not an overstatement. With the rising costs of inputs—particularly diesel and fertilizer—placing increased pressure on farm margins, these discussions have taken on even greater importance. The dedication shown in representing growers' interests under these conditions deserves acknowledgment.

As we turn our attention to spring planting, I want to emphasize the importance of farm safety. This is one of the busiest times of year, and it's critical that safety remains front of mind. Please ensure that all workers are familiar with your farm's safety practices and protocols. Take extra care when moving equipment on public roadways and make safety a priority in every task.

I want to wish you all a safe and productive start to the season. Let's hope Mother Nature is more cooperative for our 2026 growing year!



Did you know....

To operate a forklift in Prince Edward Island, workers must receive adequate instruction, training, and supervision as required under the **Prince Edward Island Occupational Health and Safety Act** and its applicable regulations. Compliance is further supported by relevant Codes and Standards. The CSA Standard B335-15 Safety Standard for Lift Trucks outlines that operators must complete adequate training that includes both education (theory) and practical (hands-on) components. Training must include the content of the forklift manuals' safe operating procedures, load handling, stability principles, inspection and maintenance requirements hazard recognition, and site-specific conditions such as working around pedestrians or elevated work areas. Employers are responsible for ensuring operators are competent, meaning they can demonstrate the knowledge and skills to safely perform the work, and must provide refresher training or re-evaluation every three years, when conditions change, or if unsafe operation is observed.



Contact: Shawn Schofield, Occupational Health and Safety Officer – Farm Safety Specialist.
sschofield@wcb.pe.ca
or by phone at 902-213-5583

PEI Potato Board News



Premier Lantz and the US Ambassador held a round table with industry leaders, including PEI Potato Board GM, Greg Donald in Charlottetown.



Thanks to Senator Mary Robinson (who happened to be chairing the Agriculture Standing Committee that evening) a tour of the Senate of Canada was set up during the free evening at the FVGC AGM.

Pictured Left to Right: Dan Leblanc (Potatoes NB), Senator Percy Downe, John Visser, Gerald Dykerman, Katie MacLennan, Krista Shaw, and Rebecca MacSwain.



“Through resilience and determination, women farmers continue to pave the way for future generations. This year, and every year, their invaluable contributions should be recognized.” Minister Bloyce Thompson Pictured Above: Bottom Row L to R: Keisha Rose Topic, Erica Nyhof, Mette Ching, Minister Bloyce Thompson, Andrea McKenna, Liz Maynard, Ellen Davis. Top Row L to R: Bethany Nyhof, Krista Shaw, Suz Brouwer, Katie MacLennan, Jamie Ward.



Agriculture Minister Bloyce Thompson meets bi-monthly with Greg Donald and Krista Shaw to discuss the concerns of PEI growers.

Pictured left: Senator Mary Robinson and staff met to discuss priorities affecting growers before the senate. Karine Leroux, Mahek Noorani, Krista Shaw, Tate, Sen. Mary Robinson, & Greg Donald



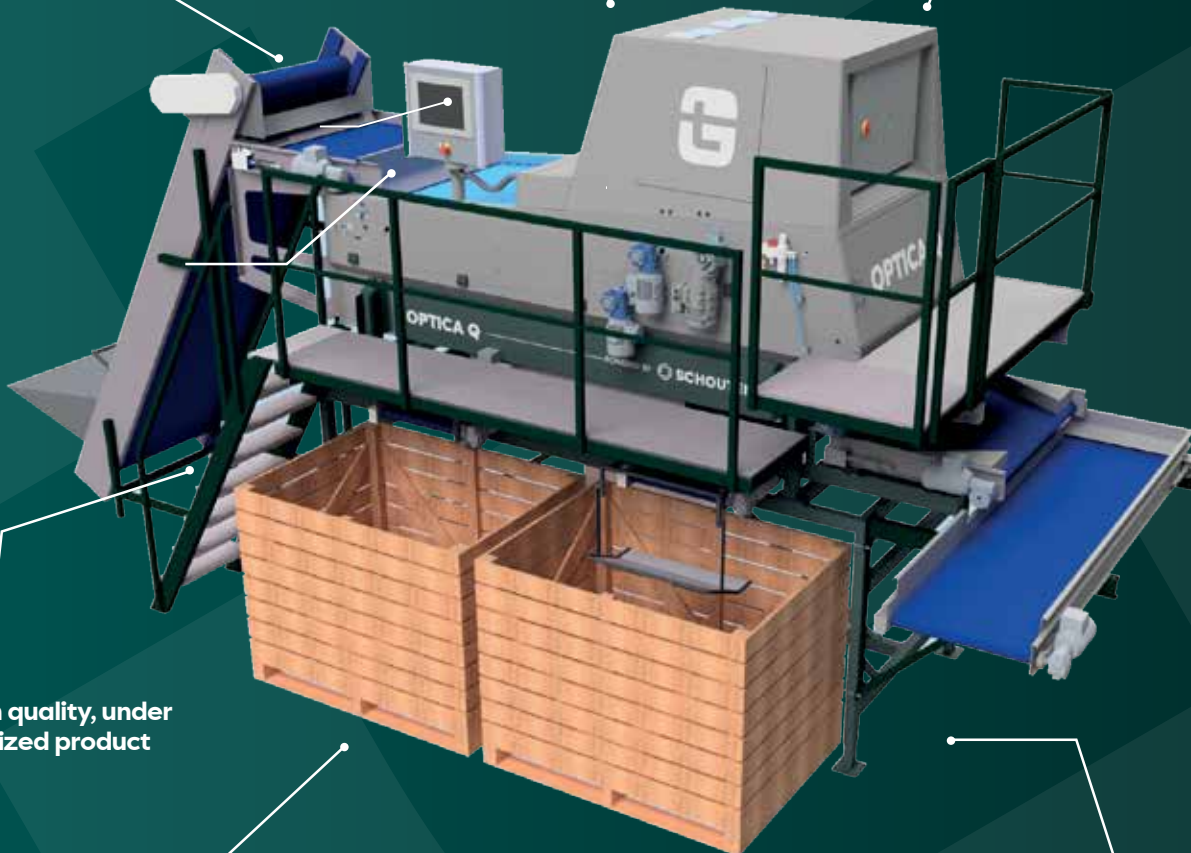
Why choose Optica Q?

High capacity and very accurate sorting of potatoes and onions with a proven machine

Huge labor reduction

Easy to operate no technical skills needed

Easy to integrate in existing sorting lines



Sorting on quality, under and oversized product

Excellent remote customer service

Request a local demo to see the machine in action

Tolsma Grisnich Canada Inc.
Summerside, PEI
+ 1 902 439 6336

Tolsma Grisnich Canada West
Lethbridge, Alberta
+ 1 403 331 7764



 **TOLSMA**
CANADA

→ DRIVING EFFICIENCY,
ENSURING QUALITY

TOLSMAGRISNICH.COM/CA

Gaining Access to the Fresh Potato Market in Mexico

By: Krista Shaw, Director of Stakeholder Relations

In early 2025, discussions began with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) to explore gaining market access for Canadian fresh potatoes in Mexico. At the time, uncertainty around trade and tariffs with our largest export market, the United States, underscored the need to diversify and pursue new opportunities for our high-quality crop. Mexico quickly emerged as a strong candidate, given its participation in the Canada–United States–Mexico Agreement, its substantial imports of fresh potatoes, and its accessibility via marine shipping routes.

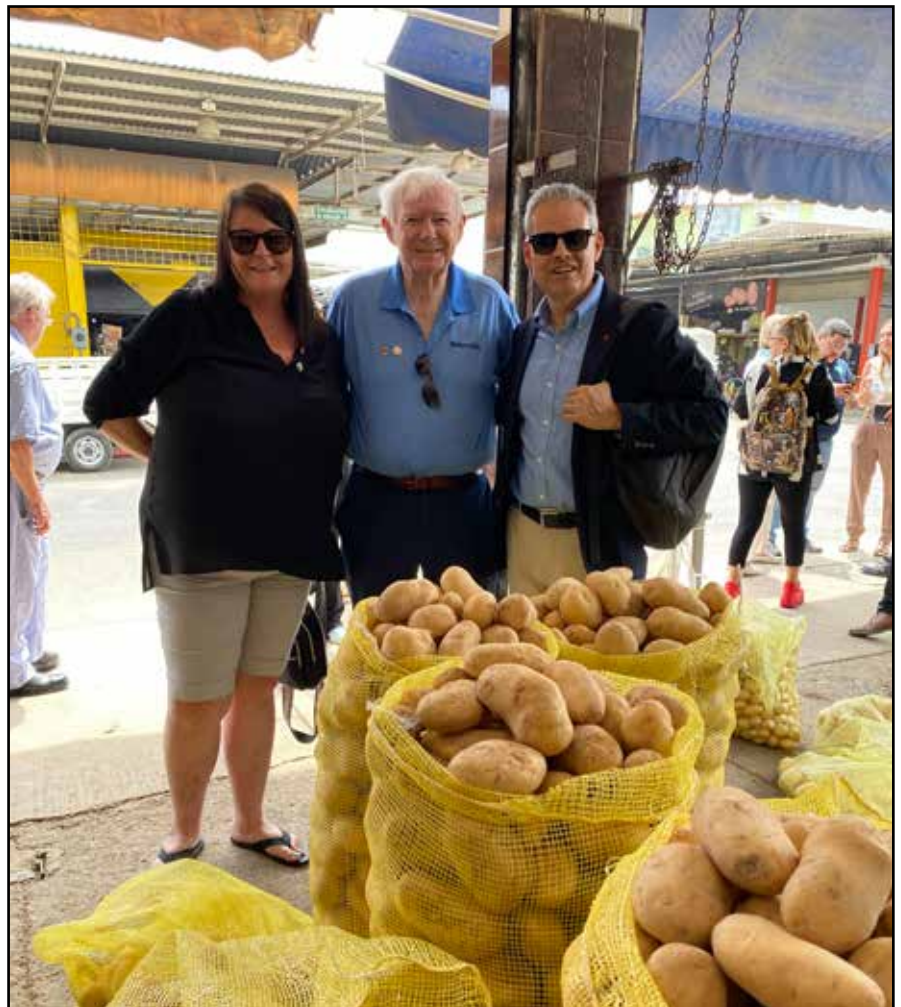
Before formal discussions could begin, Mexican authorities required proof of interest which meant securing letters of support from potential Mexican buyers. In March 2025, board staff joined an Innovation PEI trade mission to the ANTAD & Alimentaria Expo; the country's largest retail-focused trade show. Over two days of targeted meetings with retailers and industry stakeholders, we secured ten letters of support, with additional endorsements following from established contacts within the Canadian potato sector.

With this groundwork in place, CFIA and Senasica (Mexico's national plant health authority) undertook a series of technical discussions beginning in late spring and continuing into winter of 2026. These briefings and meetings helped to establish export requirements, including the development of a detailed workplan and pest risk list for Canadian exporters. CFIA met regularly with the Canadian industry to gather intel and provide updates as appropriate.

This past February I was fortunate to be selected as only one of only two potato representatives Canada wide

to attend the Team Canada Trade Mission in Mexico City and Guadalajara. During that mission I was able to meet with Mexican trade commissioners, senior Global Affairs and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada staff members, Minister Heath MacDonald and Minister Dominic Leblanc and their respective teams. At each meeting I stressed the importance of the Mexican market for Canadian potatoes as well as the continued importance of gaining access to new markets in general.

On March 12, 2026, Canadian exporters received confirmation that Mexico had officially opened its



*Krista Shaw, Ray Keenan and Juan- Carlos Munoz,
Trade commissioner in Mexico at the
Food cooperative in Guadalajara.*

market to both fresh and processing potatoes. A particularly significant outcome was the approval of port access through the Port of Veracruz; a major advantage for Eastern Canadian producers. Sincere appreciation goes to Minister of Agriculture, Heath MacDonald, who played a key role in advancing the file and ensuring it moved quickly.

While important logistical work remains—such as establishing shipping routes, refining packaging, and securing buyers, this milestone represents a significant step forward. Market access to Mexico marks a major win for Prince Edward Island’s potato industry and a meaningful move toward greater export diversification.



*Pictured above and left: Potatoes on display in Mexican grocery stores
Pictured below: Fresko one of a number of grocery stores under La Comer Corporation*



PEI Faces of the Industry

By Rebecca MacSwain, Seed Specialist

Russell Ching Ltd.

Kegan, Tim and Isaac Ching of Souris, along with their fathers, Denton and Martin, uncle Brian, and Martin's other son Ben and Ben's wife Charlene, operate Russell Ching Ltd. They currently grow russet, round white, red, and yellow-fleshed varieties for the Canadian, U.S., and Puerto Rican tablestock markets.

Kegan, Tim and Isaac's late grandfather, Russell Ching, began farming potatoes in 1952. At the time, in addition to farming, Russell worked as a potato inspector in Summerside and owned a propane business, where his sons Martin and Brian were also involved. The propane business was sold to Irving in 1996. Russell later owned Souris Stevedoring, which loaded potato boats bound for Barbados, Venezuela, and other export counties. The last boat of potatoes left Souris in the early 2000s.

The Chings continue to adopt new technology and practices on their farm. In recent years, they expanded their pack shed into a new, modernized facility with a

strong focus on quality and efficiency, incorporating automated packing equipment to reduce manual labour. In 2026, they plan to begin irrigating a portion of their crop using a Rain 360 irrigation system.

Townspud Inc.

Townspud Inc., located in Fortune, PEI, is operated by Wayne Townshend and his three sons, Adam, Kyle and Isaac.

The Townshends have a long history of producing seed and table potatoes. After the loss of long-standing seed markets with the suspension of seed potato exports, Townspud decided to dedicate a percentage of their acreage towards growing chipstock for export markets. Over the last few years, they have automated their packing shed to make grading, packing, and palletizing more efficient.

Wayne served on the PEI Potato Board of Directors from 2015-2021 and served as the Chair of the PEI Potato Board from 2020-2021. Adam operates Eastern Crop Supplies, which specializes in starter and foliar nutrition products, and has been active with the Soil & Crop Association. Kyle is an active member of the PEI Potato Board's Farm & Seed Committee, which oversees seed-related initiatives and the oversight of the Fox Island Elite Seed Farm.

While the Townshends keep busy at home, they remain active in their community and with their growing families. The Townshends are hopeful that some of the family's 12 grandchildren will choose farming as their career, continuing their family legacy.



Kegan, Tim and Isaac Ching of Russell Ching Ltd. in Souris



Wayne, Adam, Kyle and Isaac Townshend make up Townspud Inc.

Jake MacKinnon, Department of Agriculture

Jake MacKinnon serves as Agriculture Information Supervisor with the Prince Edward Island Department of Agriculture in O’Leary, where his portfolio spans all commodities Island-wide but intersects regularly with PEI’s potato industry.

In his current role, Jake works directly with potato producers navigating programming and resources provided by the Department, helping them access resources and complete projects that drive on-farm innovation and expansion. He supports new and generational operations in business planning, skills development, and applied research, with a particular focus on the next generation through initiatives like the Future Farmer Program 2.0.

Before moving into his current position, Jake was involved in collaborative on-farm research through

Living Labs and other applied projects, working alongside potato producers to trial and evaluate sustainable practices in real production settings. That hands-on experience continues to inform his advisory and program delivery work today.

Jake also has a personal connection to the industry; his family farm in Souris participates in land rotation with a local potato producer, a longstanding arrangement that reflects the cooperative, community-rooted approach to land management that has sustained Island agriculture for generations. Whether helping a producer complete a project application or supporting a young farmer through their first business plan, Jake brings a practical, producer-first perspective shaped by professional experience and a genuine connection to PEI’s farming community.



Jake MacKinnon, Agriculture Information Supervisor

Alternaria Survey Highlights Fungicide Resistant Risks for PEI Potato Growers

By: Ryan Barrett, Research and Agronomy Specialist

Early blight and brown spot continue to be persistent foliar diseases for potato growers across Prince Edward Island and North America. Both are caused by *Alternaria* fungi and can lead to significant yield loss and tuber defects when left unmanaged. A recent two-year survey conducted in PEI provides new insight into which *Alternaria* species are present in local fields—and raises important considerations around fungicide resistance.

What was studied

Leaf samples were collected across PEI in 2024 and 2025 to identify the *Alternaria* species present and assess potential resistance to commonly used fungicides. Samples were processed locally by personnel with AAFC Charlottetown before being sent to North Dakota State University to be analyzed for species identification and genetic mutations linked to reduced fungicide sensitivity.

Species diversity

One of the most notable findings from the survey was the absence of *Alternaria solani*, the pathogen traditionally associated with early blight. Despite field symptoms suggesting early blight, none of the lab-tested isolates matched this species in either year.

Instead, the most common species identified was *Alternaria alternata*, the primary cause of brown spot. Two other small-spored species - *A. arborescens* and *A. tenuissima* - were also detected. In 2025, a number of isolates could not be identified using current methods, suggesting the possible presence of an additional *Alternaria* species not yet fully characterized. This points to greater *Alternaria* species diversity in PEI fields than previously understood, with brown spot pathogens playing a larger role than expected.

Fungicide resistance signals

The study also examined genetic mutations associated with fungicide resistance. Results showed that:

- *A. arborescens* had the highest frequency of mutations, with roughly two-thirds of isolates in 2024 carrying previously identified resistance-

related mutations. Some isolates contained multiple mutations.

- *A. alternata* showed lower - but still notable - levels of mutation, with about one-third of isolates carrying known resistance markers.
- In 2025, overall mutation levels were lower, but the trend of higher mutation frequency in *A. arborescens* remained.

Additionally, several newly identified mutations were detected, though further research is needed to determine whether these contribute to resistance in the field.

What this means for growers

These findings have practical implications for disease management programs:

1. **Reconsider disease targets.** With no *A. solani* detected, brown spot pathogens may be more prevalent than previously assumed. Fungicide programs should prioritize products effective against brown spot, not just early blight.
2. **Rotate fungicide groups.** The presence of resistance-related mutations highlights the importance of rotating fungicides with different modes of action. Repeated use of the same chemistry increases selection pressure and accelerates resistance development.
3. **Monitor field performance.** If disease symptoms persist after a fungicide application, it may indicate reduced product efficacy. In these cases, switching to a different fungicide group for the next application is recommended.

Bottom line

This survey underscores the need for growers to adapt disease management strategies based on evolving pathogen populations. Greater species diversity and evidence of fungicide resistance mean that traditional assumptions about early blight control may no longer hold. A more targeted, rotational approach to fungicide use, focused on brown spot control, will be key to maintaining effective disease management in PEI potato production.



Alternaria brown spot symptoms visible on potato leaves.

A MORE MARKETABLE CROP IS **SPUD-DENLY** EASIER



To learn more about Miravis® Duo, visit [Syngenta.ca](https://www.syngenta.ca), contact our Customer Interaction Centre at 1-877-SYNGENTA (1-877-964-3682), or follow @SyngentaCanada on Social Media.

Always read and follow label directions. Miravis®, the Alliance Frame, the Purpose Icon and the Syngenta logo are trademarks of a Syngenta Group Company. © 2026 Syngenta.

 **Miravis® Duo**

syngenta®



Canadian Potato Council Update

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

Our work continues to focus on four key priorities: effective structure and governance, trade-specific advocacy, research, and crop protection. Over the past few months, trade and crop protection have been especially active, with Canadian Potato Council (CPC) continuing to advocate for practical, science-based policies that support Canadian potato growers and strengthen our industry's competitiveness.

On the trade front, the announcement that Canadian potatoes will have market access to Mexico is an exciting first step. There is still work to do, but CPC has brought together a targeted group to work with Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) as this file moves forward. We know CFIA and SENASICA are continuing to work together, and CPC is focused on supporting a coordinated, constructive approach that keeps momentum moving in the right direction.

Canada United States Mexico Agreement (CUSMA) is also very much on the horizon. In March, CPC had the opportunity to meet with Canada's agricultural negotiators to discuss issues that may come forward during the review process. CPC's position is clear: CUSMA has served the Canadian potato industry well, and we want to see stability, predictability, and

continued strong trade relationships across North America. While we know trade negotiations can be challenging, CPC continues to maintain strong, mutually beneficial relationships with our US counterparts, and we will keep working to support positive, fact-based dialogue.

Crop protection has also been a major focus. CPC joined Fruit and Vegetable Growers of Canada's (FVGC) Crop Protection Advocacy Group (CPAG) for an in-person meeting with Health Canada in March. The Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) has now been renamed the Pesticides Regulatory Directorate (PRD) and moved into the Healthy Environments and Consumer Safety Branch. Like Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) and CFIA, PRD is facing funding pressures and staffing changes, while also working to manage a heavy workload. As a result, several transformation initiatives at PRD are being scaled back. Water monitoring will continue with a reduced scope, while the Pesticide Use Information project is ending. That may mean more direct consultation with CPC and other grower organizations to ensure real-world grower information continues to inform regulatory decisions.

CPC and FVGC submitted letters in support of PRD's consultation on permitting pesticide application by drones for products currently registered for aerial application. We hope to see this regulatory change come into effect soon! Remember to check labels carefully, as they will specify whether drone use is permitted or not.

CPC has been active on many other advocacy fronts in recent months, submitting letters and comments on issues including supporting drone-based pesticide application, continued

Custom Engineered Polyethylene Films Form / Fill / Seal (FFS) Applications



all american poly
(800)526-3551
allamericanpoly.com



Form-Ex

Built as a true workhorse film; it performs consistently across a wide range of applications and equipment.

Form-Ex Plus

Designed to run at higher machine speeds and lower sealing temperatures, it helps reduce energy costs while increasing throughput.

Form-Ex Pro

This premium film runs at the highest machine speeds and lowest temperature settings, delivering maximum productivity and energy savings.

Advanced seal-through-contamination technology ensures strong, reliable seals even in challenging environments - protecting your product and your brand.

potato wart research, Plant Breeders' Rights, Potato Cyst Nematode compensation, Mexico market access concerns, and supporting grower competitiveness through fertilizer tariff relief and stronger Business Risk Management support.

Together, this work reflects CPC's continued focus on practical, science-based policy, stronger and more diversified market access, support for research and innovation, and a clear national voice for Canadian potato growers.



Upcoming Events & Program Deadlines

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

May 2026

June 2026

June 24 PEI Potato Board of Directors
Monthly Meeting, Charlottetown

July 2026

July 12-14 PMANA Summer Meetings,
Brudenell, PE
July 15 PEI Potato Board of Directors
Monthly Meeting, Charlottetown

*The PEI Potato Board would like to wish
all growers a safe planting season!*



Processing Contract Settlements of North America

By: Scott Howatt, Processing Specialist

In this same column last spring I wrote, “...settlements for the 2025 season will forever be marked as the second and most cruel year of down agreements for the growers who supply potatoes to the processors of North America.” Fast forward to this season, and the contract settlements with French fry processors across the continent are making it three years in a row that North American growers are giving up profit margin on their contracted acres. By mid-April, the range of value change in contracts was from minus 2.5% to minus 5.3% lower than 2025. Recently, PEI became an outlier with a rollover of the previous year’s contracts between Island growers and Cavendish Farms. This agreement resulted from a recommendation by their mediator as the solution to an impasse that both sides found themselves at after three days of intense mediation. The mediator (who would become their arbitrator, if necessary) wanted the parties to achieve a negotiated resolution as opposed to the parties going to arbitration. So, here we are at the start of May, all the Pacific Northwest (PNW) contracts finished with significant lost values, growers dealing with increased costs of production, and some fryers in some western areas cutting their contracted volumes this spring. Meanwhile, in most Midwest jurisdictions, agreements have not been achieved, as those growers see their diesel fuel and fertilizer prices increasing in real time. Here at home in the Atlantic Northeast, growers in New Brunswick and Quebec have decided to “unify and dig in” with goals to follow the rollover settlement in PEI, while McCain growers in Maine agreed to a down settlement much earlier in April.

Like last year, during negotiations, processor executives in the PNW and Midwest leveraged the (once-again) gross oversupply of potatoes in Idaho and Alberta against all grower groups west of the Mississippi during contract talks. They pointed out how their excess plant capacities provide them the option to move contracted volumes from one region to another. And, from my viewpoint, it seemed like the growers’ realities

of increasing costs of production fell on deaf ears at the negotiation tables in the west. Fryer management brought their stories of the “major difficulties” of competing against one another in the marketplace AND competing against offshore processors who are delivering lower-priced, good-quality, finished-frozen potato products into the east and now, into the west coast of the United States. The continued slow growth in the North American marketplace was also highlighted by the fryer executives, and if I may share my opinion, many contract growers felt trapped as the prospect of growing any other commodity crop other than processing potatoes seemed futile at best.

2026 contract talks began in the Columbia Basin in December with the Potato Growers of Washington (PGW) reporting they had reached agreements with Lamb Weston and JR Simplot prior to Christmas. Before mid-March, they completed their negotiations with McCain Foods. Basin settlements are reported to be between 2.5% to mid-high 3.0% down in value. In February, PGW cited their projected costs would be up between 2-4% over 2025. The next settlements finished in late February / early March with Alberta growers agreeing to take 5.3% down with their three fry companies. The growers of Idaho and Malheur County, Oregon reportedly agreed to 4.5% down on their annual agreements with Lamb Weston, JR Simplot and McCain Foods. In February, these PNW grower groups had indicated their projected production costs for 2026 would be up between 2% to 5% over 2025.

At time of print, this desk is only aware of one settlement in the Midwest between Wisconsin growers and McCain Foods; reported to be down 4.1% from 2025 but with a fuel escalator clause to assist growers with their rising costs. The remaining grower groups and fry companies in the Midwest are still working on coming to terms in a time of great volatility in diesel and fertilizer pricing. Meanwhile in the Atlantic Northeast (ANE) there are currently two settlements. First, on April 15th the growers of Maine agreed to a 3.8% down offer from McCain Foods (also with a


fuel escalator) with a 10% cut in contracted volume. Then, on April 23rd, PEI growers agreed to the earlier described rollover agreement with Cavendish Farms, combined with a fuel index rider, but also with a 10% cut in contracted volume. The remaining PMANA areas (North Dakota, Manitoba, New Brunswick and Quebec) are still negotiating with their fry customers as of April 29th. Processing growers from the Midwest to the ANE are reporting their variable productions costs for 2026 will be at least 5% higher than 2025.

As talks progressed, growers were being informed of contract volume decisions and of the flexibility the fryers have of moving volume from one region to another. The growers in Idaho and Alberta, who experienced volume cuts last year, have those previously cut volumes returning to some of their plants. Some growers in the Midwest are faced with volume cuts, while others are having volume being returned, however the amount of volume returning seems to be conditional on final settlement values. In the ANE, growers have been advised of volume cuts of between 4 to 10% across the pile.

As I look back at the articles that I have written the last two springs and worry over this article, it is my opinion that this sector of the North American potato industry is at a crucial juncture for processing growers. For the third year in a row, the gross oversupply of potatoes in the PNW has played the leading role in lowering contract values across North America. This perennial drive by the American processors to reduce their costs of raw potatoes seems to have no end in sight. On April 6th the Processing committee hosted a contract grower meeting in Charlottetown. After I reported the PMANA contract settlement news from across North America, one young farmer stated, "...it sounds like one side at these tables is busy protecting their profit margins, while the other side at the

table is fighting for survival."

This pretty much sums up the situation we find ourselves in-except he left out one critical piece. Growers planting more acres than they have contracted and growers not accounting for increasing trend yields with newer varieties and technologies is exactly what is creating the environment for these processors to "protect their profit margins at the cost of their growers". I will say this again, but this time more harshly: every North American grower needs to dial their planted acres and subsequent production closer to their actual contracted commitments. The supply of potatoes is the only factor that is within a grower's control. You are risking the future of your family farm as you continue to lose the most valuable part of any successful business, your profit margins.



THINKING OF SELLING OR EXPANDING YOUR OPERATION? CONTACT ALLAN WEEKS IN CONFIDENCE! WE CURRENTLY HAVE INTEREST FROM LOCAL BUYERS AND HOLLAND BUYERS.

PROUDLY HELPING ISLAND FARMERS SINCE 1990

ALLAN WEEKS
902-394-3276
ALLAN@ALLANWEEKS.COM
WWW.PEIFARMS.COM

ALLAN WEEKS
REAL ESTATE CO.

Aphid Alert 2026-Season Report

By: Ryan Barrett, Rebecca MacSwain, Rodrigo dos Santos and Brooke MacPhail

The PEI Department of Agriculture, in partnership with the Prince Edward Island Potato Board, administers the Aphid Alert program each summer to support the Island’s seed potato producers in their efforts to prevent the spread of potato virus and safeguard the quality of Island potato seed. The Department of Agriculture is the primary funder and administrator of this service, as well as performing the aphid counts twice per week. The PEI Potato Board assists in recruiting cooperating farms, delivery of kits, and collection of aphids twice per week for a subset of farms.

This year, there were a total of 49 traps deployed across the province. The majority were yellow pan traps deployed in seed fields. Six yellow pan traps were deployed in commercial fields paired with nearby seed fields to investigate the difference in aphid counts between seed and commercial fields. A smaller number of traps were yellow bowl traps in seed fields.

Collections began during the week of June 23rd and concluded the week of September 15th. Most traps were collected twice per week during the season;

however, sampling frequency was not uniform across the Island, with some producers starting to submit samples later and other discontinuing sampling after the end of August. Approximately 90 samples per week were collected from July 8th until August 30th.

In Figure 1, we see that aphids per week and total aphid numbers remained relatively similar for the first eight weeks of the season, ranging from 3.9 to 5.4 aphids per trap. During this time, 84% of aphids were classified as “Other Aphids” or non-colonizing aphids. During this period (up to Aug 23), only 11 Green Peach aphids were collected. As we moved into late August and early September, aphid numbers began to increase, peaking during the week ending September 13 at 13 aphids per trap. By this time, Other Aphids now represented 33% of total aphids, while Green Peach Aphids were 12.5%, Bird Cherry Oat Aphids were 25%, and Buckthorn Aphids were 22% of total aphids.

Overall, total aphid numbers in the early part of the season were comparable with recent years, but the late August peak in aphids was comparable to 2024

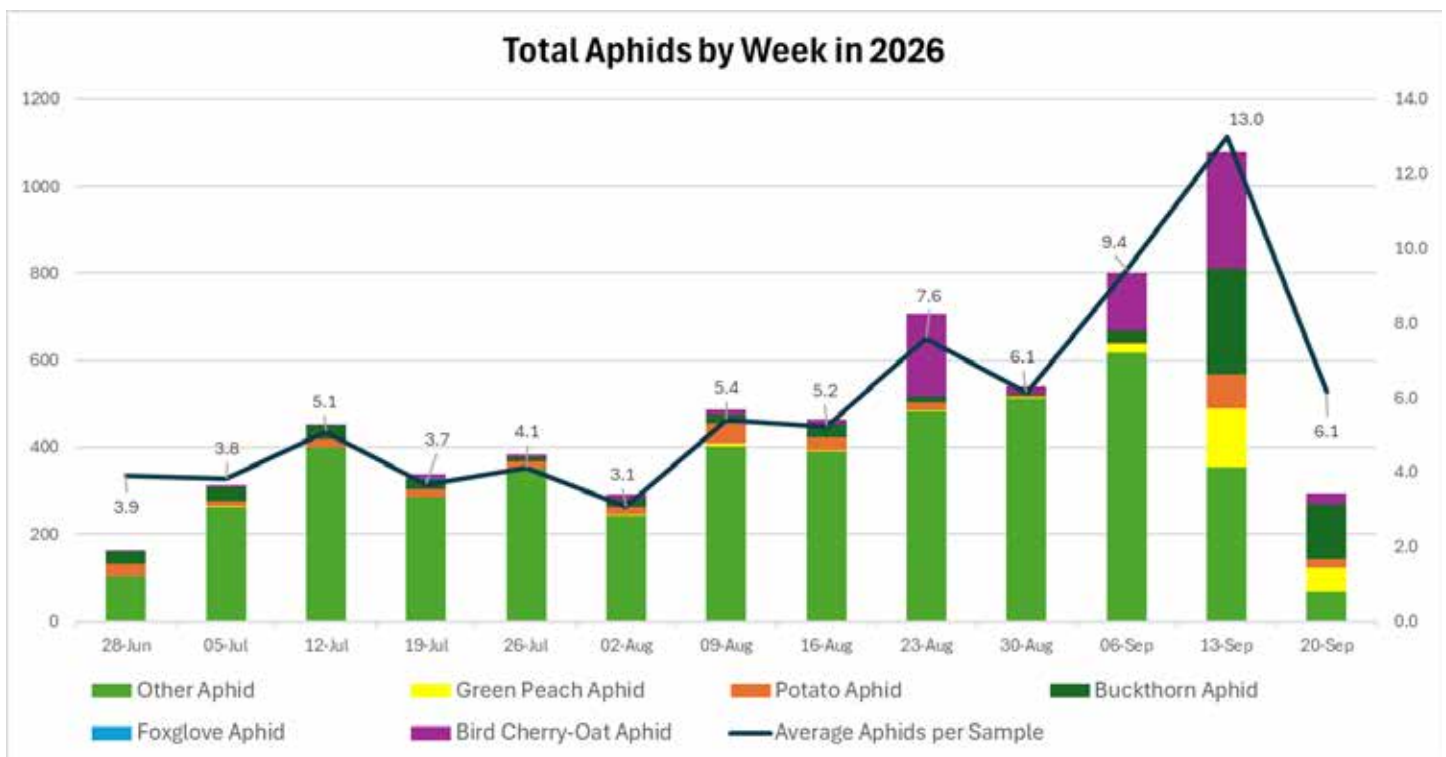


Figure 1: Total aphids and average aphids collected per week, stratified by species, for the 2025 growing season.

while smaller than 2023 and 2022. 2024 and 2025 have been good years for post-harvest test virus levels, while 2022 and 2023 saw elevated virus transmission and more seed lots failing to meet the virus cap of 3.0%.

Total Green Peach Aphid numbers were much lower in 2025 than in either 2022 or 2023. Green Peach Aphid is recognized as the most efficient aphid vector for the transmission of Potato Virus Y (PVY) and Potato Leaf Roll Virus (PLRV). Green Peach numbers generally peak in late August and early September each year, so killing seed crops before these aphids peak is a recommended management practice to prevent virus spread, alongside the use of mineral oil and aphicide.

Commercial vs. Seed Fields:

As noted previously, this year we paired six pan traps in commercial potato fields this year with six traps

in seed fields, either on the same farm or on farms in close proximity to each other. Across the whole season, we collected 585 aphids from the commercial field, compared with 366 from the seed fields, which was statistically significant.

While there were many more Other Aphids collected in the commercial fields during the season, the number of colonizing aphids were similar between the commercial and seed fields. The paired fields in West Prince had more than four times the aphids in the commercial field, while paired fields in Central Queens had more than two times as many total aphids in the seed field. It is anticipated that the Aphid Alert program will include some traps in commercial fields again in 2026.

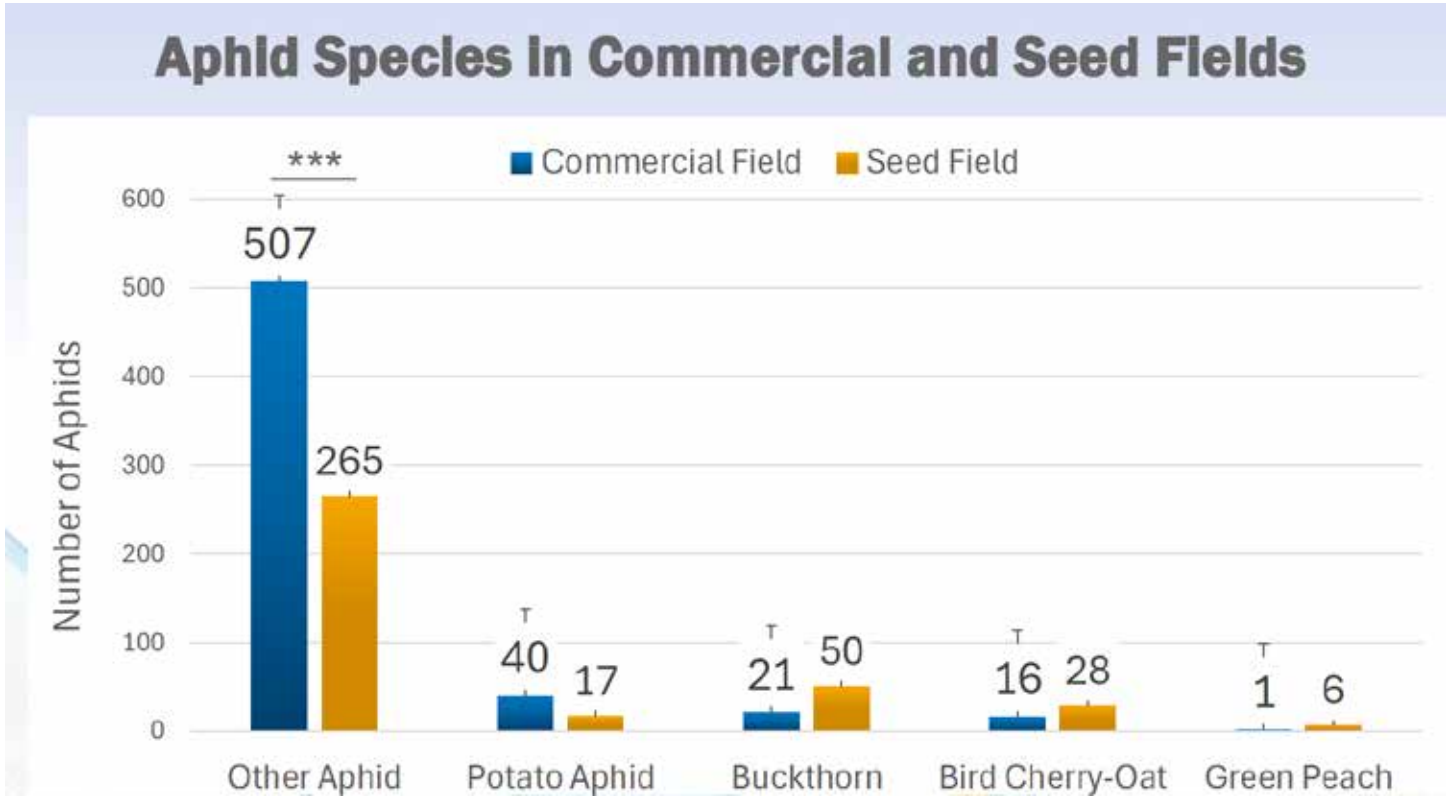


Figure 2: Comparison of total aphids collected in commercial fields compared with seed fields in 2026.



Fill Your Boots 2026

By Mark Phillips, Marketing Specialist

On Saturday, February 21st, three PEI potato farms hosted the fifth annual Fill Your Boots event, welcoming Islanders to celebrate potatoes, generosity, and community.

Throughout the morning, close to 900 Islanders visited the participating farms to stock up on fresh PEI potatoes. In doing so, they helped raise nearly \$2,000 in monetary donations, along with a truckload of dry food items destined for local food banks across the Island. If you were unable to join this year's event, you can still support the spirit of Fill Your Boots by donating to your local food bank or making plans to attend next year. Every act of generosity helps strengthen our Island community.

The Island-grown initiative was led once again by G. Visser & Sons (Orwell), with this year's event joined by Monaghan Farms (Norboro) and Spud Isle Ltd. (St. Peter's Bay). The event was proudly supported by the PEI Potato Board and continues as a cornerstone celebration of Potato Lover's Month in Prince Edward Island.

From 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., visitors arrived carrying anything they could—buckets, bags, totes, and even boots—to fill with free PEI potatoes straight from the farms' storage. While the potatoes were free, attendees were encouraged to donate to their local food banks and to “fill the boots” for community members who were unable to attend.

Now in its fifth year, Fill Your Boots welcomes Islanders each winter. Since its 2022 launch, eight Island farms have shared nearly 300,000 pounds of potatoes with over 9,000 visitors and helped raise more than \$20,000 for food banks province-wide.

The day was filled with smiles, conversation, and a few lighthearted contests. Attendees were invited to guess how many potatoes filled a bucket and how much one particularly impressive potato weighed.

One of the most memorable moments of the day came from a young visitor at G Visser and Sons who gazed at the massive pile of potatoes and exclaimed:

“Wow, look at that! It's like a giant wall of potatoes. Is this potato heaven?!”

That reaction summed up the spirit of the day perfectly.

Above all, Fill Your Boots continues to demonstrate the impact of community. The generosity shown—through both food and monetary donations—helps ensure support gets to Islanders who need it most during the winter months.

A sincere thank you to everyone who filled their bags, buckets, and boots. Special thanks to this year's participating farms—Spud Isle Ltd., Monaghan Farms, and G. Visser & Sons. We are especially grateful to G. Visser & Sons for their leadership every year since the initiative began five years ago.



The best potatoes come straight from the farm

Your Storage Facility Deserves a Modern Upgrade

Old wood flume floor storage systems are costing you money, failing inspections, and putting your crop at risk. We build stainless steel concrete floor systems that last decades - not seasons.



REAL RESULTS - SEE THE DIFFERENCE

Potato Storage Retrofit



BEFORE

Deteriorating Wood Floor

Gaps, rot, contamination risk. Failing food safety standards.



AFTER

Steel Retrofit

Special Fiber Concrete. Optimized airflow. Built for decades.

Pressure Washing & Disinfecting



BEFORE

Contaminated Storage

Buildup, residue, food safety concerns.



AFTER

Pristine Clean Facility

Professional sanitization. Food safety ready.

Why Growers Choose Stealth

We don't just patch problems. We engineer permanent solutions for potato storage infrastructure.



Food Safety Compliant

Our stainless steel systems meet and exceed Canadian food safety regulations. Many clients report significantly improved inspection results after retrofitting.



Built to Last Decades

Stainless steel does not rot, warp, or deteriorate. One investment now replaces the cycle of constant wood-floor repairs and replacements.



Optimized Airflow

Custom-designed floor channels ensure proper air distribution throughout your storage - keeping your crop at the right vatemperature and humidity.



Savings for Life of Storage

Stainless steel systems last the life of your storage. One investment eliminates the cycle of constant wood floor repairs and replacements. Built to perform for decades.

Growing Knowledge: Island Students Explore Agriculture Literacy Month

By: Mark Phillips, Marketing Specialist

Throughout March, classrooms across Prince Edward Island buzzed with curiosity as students investigated where their food comes from and how it is produced, all as part of Canadian Agriculture Literacy Month (CALM).

Celebrated nationwide each year, CALM brings real-world learning about agriculture and food production directly into schools. This initiative helps students understand food, the science and technology behind agriculture, and connect with PEI's vibrant and essential farming sector.

This year, CALM reached over 1,800 Island students, supported by more than 2,000 volunteer hours dedicated to hands-on, evidence-based learning experiences. From classroom readings to interactive presentations and farm visits, students had meaningful opportunities to learn about agriculture in engaging, practical, and memorable ways.

The value of CALM extends well beyond the classroom.

“By helping students learn about the people and processes behind food production, as well as the wide range of careers within the agriculture sector, we are building awareness, appreciation, and opportunity,” said Minister of Agriculture Bloyce Thompson in a Facebook post. “Canadian Agriculture Literacy Month helps inspire the next generation of Island farmers and agricultural leaders who will carry our industry forward.”

The initiative is delivered in partnership with Agriculture in the Classroom PEI, which collaborates closely with educators, presenters, and volunteers to bring agriculture education to Island schools.

One of the highlights of this year's CALM programming was the sharing of the story *Freda the Fry*, written by Patsy Dingwell. This story introduced Grade 3 students to PEI potato production through a

fun and friendly French fry-themed narrative. The book was read in 60 Grade 3 classrooms across 30 Island schools, thanks to 42 volunteer readers who donated their time to bring the story to life. The Potato Board sponsored the printing of the books and accompanying activity booklets.

In total, volunteers helped reach thousands of students, highlighting the vital role of community involvement in the success of agricultural education initiatives. Ag Adventure Days also played a key role, offering students hands-on experiences that showcased the diversity of Island agriculture—from potatoes and crops to livestock, innovation, and environmental stewardship.

Thanks to these efforts, Island students now have a stronger understanding of PEI agriculture, a greater appreciation for local food, and a clearer connection to the farmers—including potato growers—who help feed their communities every day.



*Minister Thompson reading
Freda the Fry to a Grade 3 class
during Agriculture Literacy Month*



Agriculture Minister Bloyce Thompson, and Education Minister Robin Croucher, with Mark Phillips and a Grade 3 class at West Royalty School

NOW YOU SEE IT

MAKE YOUR VISION BECOME A REALITY



Call Dalmac for all your Branded Print, Signage & Crested Clothing



91 Euston Street, Charlottetown
902.892.0156 | info@dalmac.ca | www.dalmac.ca





Update from the Department of Agriculture PEI

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



For potato growers in Prince Edward Island, spring always arrives with a familiar sense of urgency. Once fields begin to dry and soil temperatures start to climb, planting can move quickly, leaving very little time to deal with equipment problems or make adjustments in the field. That is why equipment preparation well before the start of the planting season remains one of the most important jobs on the farm. When machinery is ready ahead of time, growers can take advantage of short planting windows, place seed accurately, and avoid setbacks that can affect crop uniformity for the rest of the season.

Potato planters deserve top priority during pre-season inspections. Seed placement, spacing, and depth are all determined at planting, and errors at this stage are difficult or impossible to correct later. All planter components should be checked carefully for wear, including chains, belts, cups, bearings, and seed metering systems. Wear can lead to skips, doubles, or uneven spacing that result in variable emergence and inconsistent tuber sizing. Depth-control systems should be working smoothly to place seed into adequate moisture without planting too deep, which can slow emergence in PEI's cool spring soils. Furrow openers and closing systems should also be evaluated to ensure seed pieces are covered evenly and pressed into the soil without excessive compaction.

Tillage equipment plays an equally important role in preparing a good seedbed. Sharp, properly aligned tillage tools also reduce fuel use and help create a uniform seedbed that supports even planting depth across the field.

Fertilizer applicators should be inspected and calibrated well ahead of planting. Accurate nutrient placement is critical early in the season. Blocked spouts, worn meters, or uneven delivery across rows can lead to striping and variability that show up quickly after emergence. Calibration should be done using the fertilizer blend intended for planting, as differences in granule size and density can affect application rates.

Seed handling and cutting equipment should

not be overlooked. Dull knives, inconsistent cutting action, or rough handling can increase seed piece damage and raise the risk of decay, especially under cool and wet planting conditions. Cutting equipment should be set up to produce uniform seed pieces with clean cuts, and sanitation should be part of routine preparation to limit the spread of seed-borne diseases. Equipment used to move seed—from storage to planter—should also be checked to ensure it minimizes drops, bruising, and excessive handling.

Tractors and supporting equipment should be inspected. Hydraulic systems, electrical connections, hitch points, and tires all need to be in good condition before planting begins. Proper tire inflation and ballast help reduce slippage and soil compaction, which is particularly important for maintaining good soil structure in potato fields.

Before full-scale planting begins, it pays to spend time making test passes and checking equipment settings in the field. Small adjustments to planting speed, spacing, or depth can make a big difference in stand uniformity. Taking the time to fine-tune machinery early can prevent larger problems once planting is underway.

Even with equipment fully prepared, planting decisions must always be guided by weather and soil conditions. Prince Edward Island springs are unpredictable, and planting into cold, wet soils increases the risk of poor emergence and disease pressure. Monitoring soil temperature, moisture, and short-term forecasts remains essential. Well-maintained equipment gives growers the flexibility to move quickly when conditions are right, helping ensure potatoes are planted into soils that support good emergence, healthy early growth, and a solid start to the season.

DREAM. GROW. THRIVE.



fcc.ca/YoungFarmer

YOU'RE PART OF **SOMETHING BIG**

Canadian agriculture needs more young farmers like you. Let's farm like the world is counting on us.

fcc.ca/YoungFarmer



PQI Celebrates 30 years of Service to PEI Potato Growers

By: Amanda Pineau, Potato News Production

The Potato Quality Institute (PQI) was established in response to the Federal Government's Cost Recovery Program, under which the Food Production and Inspection Branch (now known as the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, CFIA) discontinued free routine testing for bacterial ring rot (BRR). To address this gap, the Prince Edward Island potato industry; including the PEI Potato Board, CFIA, and the Provincial Government; partnered to create an organization that would continue providing essential testing services for the potato seed sector.

On April 1, 1996, PQI officially opened its doors. From the outset, growers were able to submit samples for BRR testing, export testing, nuclear stock testing, and other virus testing. At that time, growers could choose between PQI and three other laboratories on Prince Edward Island.

With a strong foundation in place, PQI expanded its services over time, and in the fall of 1998, post-harvest testing was introduced. As demand for services grew, so did the need for additional space and capabilities. Continued growth and industry demand led to a facility expansion in the spring and summer of 2011, enabling the introduction of PCR testing. In 2013, PQI further broadened its testing scope to include nematode and Verticillium testing. Most recently, in September of 2022, PQI added AirSpore testing to its services.

Responding to the evolving needs, the industry has always been central to PQI's mission. Managed by Pat Quilty since 2001, following Ellen Larsen-Kouwenberg. PQI continues to play a vital role in supporting the quality and sustainability of Prince Edward Island's potato industry.



From left to right: Nancy La, Hannah Quilty, Gordon Wheatley, Patrick Quilty, Patricia Malone, Vera Morrison, Marilyn Johnston, Rayola Coulton, Laurene Clow, Anne-Marie Berger, Radwa Mostafa, and Tracey Singleton. A big part of the team who work dilligently to bring results to growers, quickly and efficiently!



*Left: Nancy preparing a sample for PCR testing
Above: Connie MacDonald, Duaa Hindawi, Radwa and Tracy coring a sample for BRR testing*



Right: Gordon grinding a sample in PCR



Rayola, Duaa, Patricia and Nancy sorting one of the many samples that come into PQI for testing.



Post Harvest testing requires many steps to bring growers accurate results: sorting, planting, watering, regrowing, picking then grinding all happen before testing in the lab can begin.





By Victoria Stamper, General Manager of United Potato Growers of Canada

Demand Plateau? Opportunities in a more mature market

After years of steady growth across both domestic and export channels, Canada's potato industry is beginning to confront a more complex question in 2026: is demand still expanding—or starting to level off?

While potatoes remain a staple in Canadian diets and a cornerstone of the country's agri-food exports, recent market signals suggest that growth may be slowing. Softer movement in both fresh and processing sectors in the last year points to a market that is no longer accelerating at the pace seen in previous cycles. Instead, the industry may be entering a period of demand maturity—where gains are harder to achieve and competition is intensifying.

At home, potato consumption in Canada has remained relatively steady over time. Fresh potatoes continue to benefit from their affordability, versatility, and long shelf life—key advantages in an environment where consumers are increasingly price-conscious. However, stability does not necessarily translate into growth.

Shifts in consumer preferences are playing a role. While traditional potato consumption remains strong, particularly in staple formats, there are changing dietary trends—ranging from low-carb to plant-based eating—as well as the impact of GLP-1 medications on appetite, that have created both challenges and opportunities for the sector.

On the processing side, demand for frozen potato products such as fries and value-added items remains a key driver. Quick-service restaurants and foodservice channels continue to underpin this segment, but growth has moderated compared to the rapid expansion seen in the post-pandemic recovery period. With foodservice traffic stabilizing and consumers becoming more selective in their spending, the pace of demand increases has slowed.

The result is a domestic market that appears

mature and relatively satisfied, where year-to-year *demand fluctuations are more closely tied to economic conditions than to structural growth.* It is also important to note that mother nature plays an important role as well, and although we are at full market satisfaction level now, all it takes is a catastrophe somewhere, i.e. drought, or unharvested acres to swing the pendulum the other way.

Canadian potatoes are entering a season defined by two opposing forces: tighter economics on the farm and changing expectations at the dinner table.

The latest consumer trends point to a shopper who still cares about Canadian-made products, but in a more practical way than before. Shoppers are less likely to be swayed by slogans alone and more likely to decide based on brand ownership, where a product is made and where the ingredients come from. For the potato sector, that is a useful signal: origin still matters, but only when it is paired with quality, consistency *and a product format that fits how people actually cook and eat.*

A market built on convenience

That's where creamer potatoes, for example, have carved out space. Small, uniform, and easy to prepare, they match the way many consumers now shop and cook. They feel premium without being complicated, and they fit the broader demand for convenience meals, smaller households and quick side dishes.

For retailers, creamers are attractive because they offer a simple value story: easy to cook, easy to portion, and *easy to repeat in weekly shopping habits.* They also allow brands to differentiate on size, packaging and freshness in a category that can otherwise feel interchangeable. In a market where shoppers are balancing food inflation and household budgets, a potato that saves time can be just as important as one that saves money.

For growers, the rise of creamer potatoes is more than a merchandising trend. It affects variety choice, field management, harvest timing and storage strategy.

Smaller tubers can require different agronomic decisions, and the premium market can reward growers who can deliver consistent sizing and visual quality.

Reaching the Next Generation of Buyers

Innovation in new products and packaging that will attract the future generation of consumers is key but interacting with a younger generation on social media will make a big difference in a marketing program as well. Younger consumers aren't reading brochures; they're watching TikTok and Instagram. Retailers and packers are using influencers and short-form content to tell the story of where food comes from. That storytelling increasingly includes growers themselves. The more transparent and relatable the supply chain looks, the more trust it earns.

Cost pressure on the farm

On the supply side, growers are facing significant challenges, and the economics are getting tougher just as the market is asking for more precision. Agriculture is no longer just a local issue; geopolitical events like the closure of the Strait of Hormuz due to the conflict in Iran are impacting costs directly. Diesel prices are forecast to keep climbing, freight costs are already being pushed higher by surcharges, and fertilizer prices have risen sharply, with urea moving from below US\$800 per tonne last summer to around US\$1,200 per tonne in March. Land values continue to rise adding another layer of financial strain. Those pressures do not just squeeze profit; they shape decisions about acreage, storage and crop mix.

Finding value in a market that demands more than volume

The future of the Canadian potato industry may depend on balancing scale with specialization. Bulk potatoes will always matter, but the strongest opportunities may lie in products that meet modern consumer habits while offering growers a path to stronger returns.

If the sector can keep production efficient, manage rising costs and communicate its Canadian identity clearly, it can build value even in a difficult market. The big challenge is not just growing potatoes, it is growing the right potatoes for a market that now wants convenience, provenance and price discipline all at once.

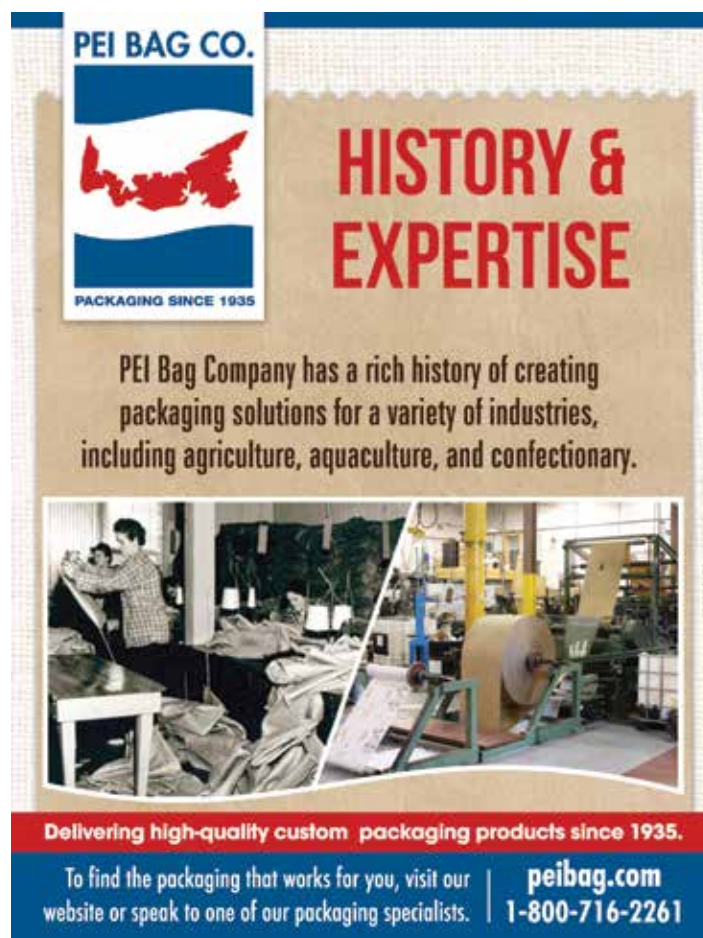
Looking Ahead

The idea of a "demand plateau" does not signal an end to opportunity for Canada's potato industry, rather

it marks a shift in how that opportunity is realized. Future growth, at least in the fresh sector, is likely to depend less on broad increases in volume and more on strategic positioning within both domestic and global markets. Growers are entering a planting period full of uncertainty, rising costs, and questions about the future, but there are many opportunities.

There are still avenues for expansion. Emerging markets, evolving consumer preferences, and continued innovation in product offerings all offer potential for the processed sector. At the same time, maintaining strong relationships with existing buyers and protecting market share as well as offering the consumers what they want will be just as important for the fresh sector.

In 2026, the Canadian potato industry finds itself in a more mature phase—one where *success will be defined not just by how much is produced, but by how effectively that production is matched to demand*. The challenge is no longer simply feeding a growing market but navigating one that is affected by global events and an ever-changing consumer looking for healthy, "craveable" food that is convenient and provides good value – a role the fresh potato can fit perfectly.



PEI BAG CO.
PACKAGING SINCE 1935

HISTORY & EXPERTISE

PEI Bag Company has a rich history of creating packaging solutions for a variety of industries, including agriculture, aquaculture, and confectionary.

Delivering high-quality custom packaging products since 1935.

To find the packaging that works for you, visit our website or speak to one of our packaging specialists. peibag.com
1-800-716-2261



PEI Young Farmers Update

By Jamie Ward, Young Farmers Program Coordinator

It has been a busy and rewarding few months for the PEI Young Farmers Association, highlighted by the success of our Annual General Meeting held on Friday, February 20th at Red Shores Racetrack and Casino in Charlottetown. The AGM brought together members from across the Island for a full day of engagement, discussion, and learning, providing a valuable opportunity to connect with peers and strengthen our growing network of young farmers.

The event featured four informative presentations covering key topics relevant to young farmers. Presentations were delivered by Paul King - PEIFA, Jake MacKinnon - PEI Department of Agriculture, Riley Chapell - PEIFA, and Chad Mooney - AgronomAI, each bringing unique perspectives and expertise to the discussion. Remarks from PEI's party leaders and MLAs were also made, offering valuable insight into the province's agricultural landscape and future direction.

A key component of the day was our closed policy session, where members participated in meaningful discussion and successfully passed all 11 resolutions brought forward to the floor.

We were also pleased to welcome five new board members: Chad Mooney, Maggie MacCormick, Nathan Lawless, Suz Brouwer, Derek Reynolds, and Jillian Ferguson as a PEIFA rep, whose leadership will help guide the organization moving forward. The AGM served as an important opportunity to connect, reflect on our progress, and set clear priorities for the year ahead.

The PEI Young Farmers Association has recently undergone a leadership transition, with Suz Brouwer officially stepping into the role of President. Suz was sworn in following Robert's decision to step down as

Below: New President Suz Brouwer



he takes on a new leadership position as President of the PEI PC Party. We would like to extend our sincere thanks to Robert for his dedication and contributions to the organization during his time as President.

Suz Brouwer is a first-generation dairy farmer based in Kingston, Prince Edward Island, and the owner-operator of Eastview Dairy. She established the operation in August 2023 through the New Entrant Program, building a modern dairy business from the ground up. Suz currently milks 45 cows using a robotic milking system and manages around 300 acres of cropland. She is also very active within her community, frequently hosting farm tours for commodity groups and local high schools, helping to build awareness and understanding of modern agriculture. As a sole operator, she brings a high level of dedication, innovation, and resilience to her work. She is a strong representative of the next generation of farmers on Prince Edward Island.

Looking ahead, the PEI Young Farmers Association is focused on several key initiatives that will continue to build momentum and provide value to our membership. We are currently working toward the release of our policy document in the coming months, which will

reflect the priorities, challenges, and opportunities identified by young farmers across the Island. Five key priorities include land access, climate change, capitol access, succession, and human and labour resources. This document will help guide our advocacy efforts and strengthen our voice within the industry.

Plans are also underway for our annual summer farm tours, scheduled for mid-summer. These tours continue to be a highlight of our programming, offering members the chance to visit a variety of operations, learn from their peers, and build stronger connections within the agricultural community. In addition, we are in the final stages of wrapping up our sponsorship campaign. The support from local businesses is essential in allowing us to deliver high-quality events and initiatives, and we are grateful for the continued investment in the next generation of farmers.

*Pictured Below: Back Row, Left to Right: Derek Reynolds, Kegan Ching, Robert Larsen, Nathan Lawless, Megan Adams, Ella Wood
Front: Maggie McCormick, Rebecca MacSwain, Jamie Ward (PEI Young Farmers Program Coordinator), Suz Brouwer*



FVGC Annual General Meeting 2026

by: Krista Shaw, Director of Stakeholder Relations

The Annual General Meeting of the Fruit and Vegetable Growers of Canada (FVGC) was held March 9–12th in Ottawa. In conjunction with the event, the Canadian Potato Council (CPC) and the United Potato Growers of Canada (UPGC), also host meetings while all provinces are represented from across the country. During the CPC session, Bill Zylmans was re-elected as Chair for his final term, while John Visser was re-elected as Treasurer. UPGC re-elected Greg Donald as secretary of the UPGC Executive,

Currently without an Executive Director for the second time in recent years, the FVGC meetings focused on necessary changes required to maintain

membership. The time together served as an important forum for member organizations nationwide to share concerns and provide input on how the organization can better support the industry. During the Atlantic Caucus meeting, John Visser was re-elected as one of two Atlantic representatives on the national FVGC Board, and Krista Shaw was re-appointed as an Atlantic representative on the Trade and Marketing Working Group. A notable highlight of the meeting was Joanne Driscoll receiving the 2026 Doug Connery Award, which recognizes individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the growth and advancement of Canada's horticulture sector.



Left to Right, John Visser, Senator Mary Robinson, Greg Donald, Katie MacLennan, Rebecca MacSwain, Brian Gilroy, Alvin Keenan, Nancy Keenan, Benny Nabuurs

WE'RE TOAST.



**SAID THE COLORADO
POTATO BEETLE TO
THE WIREWORM.**

Control the two toughest pests in potatoes.

Cimegra[®]
Insecticide

□ - BASF
We create chemistry

Always read and follow label directions.

AgSolutions and CIMEGRA are registered trademarks of BASF; all used under license by BASF Agricultural Solutions Canada Inc. © 2026 BASF Agricultural Solutions Canada Inc. All rights reserved.

CPMA Convention and Trade Show 2026

By: Mark Phillips, Marketing Specialist

The annual CPMA Convention and Trade Show took place in Toronto, April 28-30, and it was memorable and productive. From the opening reception at Ripley's Aquarium, we saw strong industry engagement, meaningful conversations, and plenty of opportunities to reconnect with partners, customers, and peers from across the supply chain. Our booth was busy throughout, and we had many good conversations about the challenges and opportunities affecting our sector.

The convention featured strong messages during the Delegate Breakfast and State of the Industry sessions. CPMA President Ron Lemaire shared a confident outlook, noting that while the industry faces rising costs, labour shortages, and climate challenges, it continues to show resilience and adaptability. His statement that the sector is "built to adapt" stood out

and reminded everyone of the need for collaboration, innovation, and a clear focus for the future.

Futurist Jim Carroll gave a keynote that encouraged everyone to think boldly about the future of produce. He talked about how quickly things are changing and urged industry leaders to embrace innovation, stay flexible, and keep evolving. Carroll's idea of "finding your tin can," or rethinking traditional practices like packaging, was especially relevant for potato producers as customer expectations and retail trends change. He also presented insights on robotics, artificial intelligence, and the rise of 24-hour precision agriculture, showing how much production and supply chains are already transforming. Carroll also pointed out that it's more important than ever to keep things simple when engaging with consumers.

The PEI Potato industry will have strong



Ron Lemaire, Ray Keenan, Luke Bakker, Mark Phillips, Greg Donald, Minister Heath MacDonald, Chi Nguyen, and Steve Bamford

representation on the CPMA Board, with two Islanders now serving. We congratulate Kendra Mills, now in her second term, and Jennifer Harris on their appointments to the CPMA Board of Directors. Their direction and dedication will help guide the association. Their recognition emphasizes both their achievements and Atlantic Canada's role in the national produce community.

Many industry leaders and politicians were walking the floor, including Ontario Premier Doug Ford, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Health MacDonald, Shadow Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food John Barlow, MP Lianne Rood, Senator Rob Black, and many others. Minister MacDonald participated in a fireside chat with CPMA president Ron Lemaire and Ambassador of Mexico to Canada Carlos Joaquin Gonzalez, discussing Canada and Mexico's agricultural partnership. Following the panel, we participated in an international reception featuring representatives from 25 countries.

The biggest takeaway from the CPMA 2026 convention is that the produce industry is resilient and focused on moving forward. Our industry values being connected, adapting to change, and delivering high-quality products to Canadians and customers worldwide.



Trade show booth at CPMA



PEI Potatoes among the sponsors at CPMA



*Greg Donald, Kendra Mills, John Barlow,
and Ray Keenan at CPMA*



Island Irrigation

Expert Knowledge

Quality Installation

Proudly Serving Farmers



islandirrigationpei@gmail.com

902.940.5234



McLean's
Overhead Garage Doors

Tough Doors. Local Service. Built to work as hard as you do.

Book Your Door Service Today!

hello@mcleansgaragedoors.ca

902.394.2812

International Day of the Potato

By Mark Phillips, Marketing Specialist

On May 30th, the global agricultural community will celebrate the International Day of the Potato, recognizing the cultural, economic, and nutritional importance of one of the world's most beloved crops. This observance is more than a celebration—it is a call to acknowledge the potato's vital role in global food security, rural livelihoods, and climate adaptation.

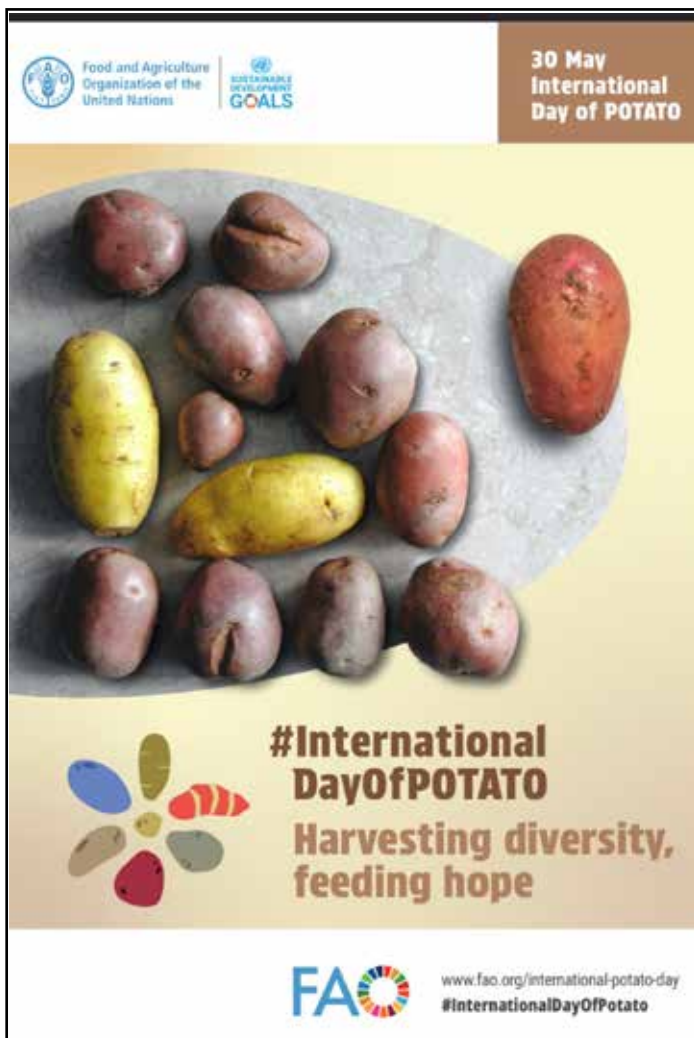
The International Day of the Potato was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in 2023 to raise awareness of the potato's importance as a staple food and its contribution to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The inaugural celebration took place in 2024.

Last year, our industry proudly marked the second observance with a successful, multichannel campaign

that included social media outreach, the launch of a video showcasing the importance of the potato industry on PEI, online advertising, local radio contests, potato giveaways, and prizes through online and radio promotions. Overall, it was a highly successful and impactful campaign.

We are currently developing a new strategy to build on last year's momentum while introducing a few exciting new elements, like the Cavendish Farms fry wagon. We encourage all industry stakeholders to get involved and help us celebrate the International Day of the Potato on social media and beyond.

If you have ideas or would like to contribute, please contact the Board office at 902-892-6551.



AMY PERRY
REALTOR®
902-388-6227

exp
REALTY
OF CANADA, INC.

Some of the best moves happen quietly.

FARM GATE

- COMMERCIAL DAIRY FARMS
- BEEF OPERATIONS
- MIXED FARMS
- HOBBY FARMS
- ACREAGE AND RURAL LAND

40 + years of Agriculture

Lic. in NS, NB & PEI

Not intended to solicit anyone under contract.

Industry Updates

Soil Conservationist of the Year Award

Blue Bay Farms was established in the late 1970s by Minno Nieuwhof, and the Nieuwhof family has been farming in Rustico for 47 years. Today, the operation is run by his three sons and two grandsons—Randall, Klaas, Marten, Pete, and Andrew—who continue to build on that legacy.

Blue Bay Farms produces potatoes for both the fresh market and seed sector, managing approximately 725 acres. Their planter is equipped with variable-rate fertilizer and seed spacing technology, allowing them to tailor inputs based on the specific potential of each field. By factoring in potato variety, field topography, sun exposure, and yield history, their agronomist develops detailed field profiles to maximize productivity. As Pete notes, areas with lower potential are not treated the same as higher-performing zones, ensuring inputs are used efficiently.

To support soil health, the Nieuwhof's incorporate rotational crops such as sorghum-sudangrass, mustard, and diverse six-species cover crop blends. Land in spring cereals or winter wheat is often traded with a neighbouring farm. Their typical six-year rotation includes potatoes, undersown grain, hay, potatoes again, a six-species soil-building mix, and sorghum-sudangrass. This approach ensures each field benefits from a restorative phase over time.

They also adapt rotations as needed. For example, winter wheat may follow potatoes instead of a cover crop mix, with tillage radish sometimes added after harvest. Mustard may replace sorghum-sudangrass where wireworm control is required.

A significant portion of their potato acreage is planted to winter cover crops, including winter wheat, barley, or fall rye. On more vulnerable slopes, they apply hay or straw mulch using a bale buster—an early innovation on PEI led by Minno and his sons as a soil conservation practice.

Blue Bay Farms has transitioned to reduced tillage, relying primarily on a Landoll and a Lemken Terra Disc. The Terra Disc is equipped with an air seeder, allowing them to establish soil-building crops efficiently—eliminating the need for a grain drill. In some cases, they also utilize custom no-till services for planting

sorghum-sudangrass.

Fields with heavy residue typically receive a single pass with the Terra Disc in the fall. Most crops are established with one-pass tillage at planting, while hay fields are plowed ahead of potatoes. Their tillage approach varies slightly depending on the preceding crop but consistently aims to minimize soil disturbance.

Pete and his family are frequently asked about their rotation choices, fertility strategies, and management practices, and they are always willing to share their experience. Their visible soil conservation structures often spark conversation as well, providing opportunities to explain their purpose—keeping soil where it belongs. These efforts date back more than 30 years to Minno's leadership.

Through the ALUS program, Blue Bay Farms has implemented conservation features across 430 acres, including 4,800 feet of farmable berms, 25,600 feet of diversion terraces, 32,600 feet of grassed waterways, 21 acres of extended buffers, and 11 acres of retired high-slope land.

In addition to required grass headlands, the farm has established extensive voluntary permanent headlands—some up to 80 feet wide in sensitive areas.



Blue Bay Farms receives the Soil Conservationist of the Year Award in the cash crop category during the PEI Soil and Crop Improvement Association awards presentation March 4 in Summerside. From left, AAFCD director of research Jennifer Gallant, Kayla Nieuwhof, Pete Nieuwhof, and PEISCI president John Hooper.

They have also planted trees and collaborated with the Hunter-Clyde Watershed Group on conservation initiatives.

Blue Bay Farms has been featured in the Soil First Farming initiative by the PEI Department of Agriculture and regularly participates in Open Farm Day. They host farm tours for school groups and contribute to the Agriculture Resource Council's Farm Tech Training Course.

The farm was also involved in the PEI Soil and Crop Agri-Conservation Club pilot in 2002. Kayla Nieuwhof has contributed to sustainability efforts through her work with the Potato Board and the Farm & Food Care program.

As a successful multi-generational family farm, the Nieuwhof's are committed to strengthening rural PEI through sustainable, economically viable agriculture. (From Tyler Wright, PEISCI)

Doug Connery Award

The Fruit and Vegetable Growers of Canada (FVGC) presented Joanne Driscoll, executive director, Prince Edward Island Horticultural Association, with the 2026

Doug Connery Award at its annual banquet in Ottawa.

This award publicly recognizes persons who, during their association with the FVGC and Canada's horticulture sector, have made outstanding contributions to the improvement and advancement of the industry. The award was created in 2012 in honour of the late Doug Connery, a past president and driving force behind FVGC who suffered an untimely passing in 2011.

Joanne Driscoll has dedicated her career to advancing Canada's horticulture sector. After graduating from the Nova Scotia Agricultural College and McGill University's Macdonald College, she began as a crop scout in Prince Edward Island and went on to become executive director of the PEI Horticultural Association.

In this role, Joanne Driscoll has led important research and agronomy initiatives that address real challenges for growers and strengthen the productivity of the sector. She has also been a trusted advocate for producers navigating food safety, traceability, and regulatory requirements, including through her work with CanadaGAP.

(From Fruit and Vegetables Growers Canada)



Benny Nabuurs, Katie MacLennan, Rebecca MacSwain, John Visser, Beth Connery, Joanne Driscoll, Bev Appleby, Greg Donald, Gerard Dykerman



THE BEST FROM EVERY HARVEST
wymasolutions.com

By **Fortifi**



Facing labor shortages, rising energy bills, or costly downtime?

You're not alone. Around the world, post-harvest operators are under pressure to do more with less—fewer skilled people, higher running costs, and tighter production windows.

At **Wyma Solutions**, we understand the daily challenges of keeping your line moving efficiently. That's why our **2026 Equipment Inspection Tour** is designed to help you improve reliability, reduce operating costs, and get the most out of every hour in production.



Each confirmed inspection will receive a Wyma Gift Pack valued at \$500

Register your interest via QR code or contact support@wymasolutions.com & we will be in touch to confirm details

Wyma are experts in designing end-to-end line solutions, project management, and automation.

Get the best from every harvest & talk with
L 18
us.sales@wymasolutions.com



With Volm see us at
January 6-8
Booth 709

