

Prince Edward Island

Summer 2026
Volume 27 Issue 3

POTATO NEWS

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Save the Date!

Prince Edward Island Potato Board Annual General Meeting and Banquet 2026

Annual Business Meeting

November 18, 2026

PEI Potato Board Office Meeting Room

9:00 am

Annual Banquet

November 20, 2026

6:00pm Reception

7:00 pm Banquet

Delta Prince Edward



POTATO NEWS

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Chair's Comments

by Katie MacLennan, PEI Potato Board Chair

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 a later planting season for most growers this year. However, once the warm weather arrived the plants filled out and the fields are looking great. As always, we need some moisture, but I am hopeful we will have had some rain by the time you read this report.

On behalf of the industry, I want to share our appreciation to the Department of Agriculture in partnership with our Research and Agronomy team at the Board office for their work in keeping the Aphid Alert Program going. It is vital information for all growers- especially our seed growers- and helps us better manage our spray programs and keep our crops healthy and disease free. I also want to thank the growers who are participating in the Air Spore program. That information will be shared via Ryan's Agronomy Update with all growers and is yet another important update for all growers to be aware of.

PEI just hosted the summer meeting of the Potato Marketing Association of North America (PMANA) at Brudenell River Resort. Forty-six delegates attended along with spouses and family members. Immense planning went into this event, and I would like to extend appreciation and thanks to Scott Howatt, Processing Specialist and Amanda Pineau, Administrative Assistant for going above and beyond to make the event such a success. A special thank you to the generous sponsors – the event couldn't have occurred without your support.

Our old crop is coming to an end and it will be cleaned up by new crop without issue. Statistics Canada have reported PEI's planted acres are 83,700 acres down 3,600 from last year. This is a result of additional acres planted last year that aren't this year as well as a decrease in processing volume for one of our customers.

Fox Island Elite Seed Farm had one of the best years in recent history. Thanks to our irrigation system, we had a decent crop last year and excellent post-harvest results. Our new crop has been planted, inspected once and our screen houses look very healthy.

We will be meeting with our Canadian counterparts at the Canadian Potato Council Summer Meeting in Edmonton in August. I always look forward to being together to not only hear the successes other regions are having, but also the challenges and how we can work together to come up with solutions.

Mark your calendars early: we will be hosting the Board AGM on November 18th and the Banquet on November 20th this year. Both events are a time to celebrate our industry and gather with growers and other professionals to commemorate the end of harvest. We will be presenting Potato Industry Awards recognizing outstanding contributions to the local sector. We will also be recognizing youth in the industry with the Passion for Potatoes award. If you know of deserving individuals watch your inbox for details about how to submit a nomination.

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 you are able to attend one of our great local events and festivals which are the pride of PEI in our short summer season.

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



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A handwritten signature of Katie MacLennan in black ink.

PEI Potato Board News

New Staff at The PEI Potato Board:

Just a quick update to inform you that the PEI Potato Board has a new Junior Agronomist assisting Ryan Barrett with research trials and extension activities. Her name is Christine Parsons, and she started with us on May 11th.

Christine originally hails from Newfoundland, has a B.Sc. (Hons) from Memorial University and completed an M.Sc. in Environmental Science from UPEI in December 2025. Her Masters project related to Late Blight modeling in potatoes, and she brings experience in weather monitoring, GIS and disease prediction modeling to this role. In addition, Christine tells us that she is very excited to start working in agriculture, hoping to achieve CCA status in the next few years.

Christine has hit the ground running in her time in PEI so far, assisting Ryan with soil sampling and field trial setup. She will also be assisting with Aphid Alert sample collections this summer. Feel free to say hi if you see her at industry events this summer, as we look forward to getting Christine immersed in all things potato. We are glad to have her on board!

Christine can be reached at christine@peipotato.org.



2026 Potato Scouting Clinic

On June 30th, the PEI Department of Agriculture, PEI Potato Board, and East Prince Agri-Environment Association collaborated to host a scouting clinic in Emerald. The morning consisted primarily of presentations by subject matter experts on what to look for when scouting, including foliar diseases, insect pests, weeds, and nutrient deficiencies. The afternoon included an in-field scouting demo with an experienced scout, as well as a demonstration and discussion of how drones can be used to enhance traditional scouting practices. There was a very strong turnout for the clinic, including summer students and those new to scouting as well as long-time scouts and industry representatives. Thanks to Rodrigo dos Santos, Ryan Barrett, and Emily Murphy for spearheading efforts to make this clinic a success. Presentations from the clinic are available on the PEI Potato Agronomy website.



Donna Lewis leads a discussion on best practices and tips for crop scouting at the 2026 Potato Scouting Clinic.

Pictured left: Christine Parsons

**THE PEI POTATO BOARD WOULD LIKE
TO WISH ALL GROWERS A SAFE
AND PROSPEROUS HARVEST**

PEI Potato Board News



Holly MacDonald(left) and Kendra Mills(right) of the PEI Potato Board present Destinee McInnis of the Upper Room and PEI Food banks with a cheque from the proceeds of French Fry sales that were collected during International Day of the Potato.



Greg Donald, General Manager of the PEI Potato Board hosted the Potato Growers of Alberta(PGA), showing them a bit about what potato growing looks like on Prince Edward Island. PGA were supporting a directors retreat, allowing them to learn about different practices and techniques.



Greg Donald presenting Potato Producer of the Year during the PEI Potato Blossom Festival in O'Leary to Smallman Farms.



Senators Black, Lewis and Robinson along with their staff, met with representatives from Cavendish Farms and the Potato Board at the Cavendish Farms Research Centre. They were keen to hear about the varietal development work Newton and his team are doing to progress the industry forward. Pictured left to right are: Newton Yorinori, Cavendish Farms, Senator Rob Black, Senator Mary Robinson, Senator Todd Lewis, Krista Shaw, PEI Potato Board, Mark Cormier, Cavendish Farms.

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PEI Potato Board Awards Future Leaders Bursary

By: Krista Shaw, Director of Stakeholder Relations

The PEI Potato Board's inaugural Future Leaders Bursary program received an overwhelming response, demonstrating the strong interest among Island youth in building careers connected to agriculture and the potato sector. Established by the Advocacy and Operations Committee, the bursary provides up to five (5) annual awards of \$2,000 to students pursuing post-secondary education that will help strengthen and support Prince Edward Island's potato industry in the years ahead.

The quality and number of applications received made the selection process especially challenging. After carefully reviewing each applicant's achievements, industry involvement, and commitment to a future in agriculture, the committee made the one-time decision to award six (6) bursaries in 2026.

We extend our sincere thanks to all students who applied and congratulate this year's recipients. We look forward to seeing the contributions they will make to the future success and sustainability of PEI's potato industry.

The winners of the PEI Potato Board Future Leaders Bursaries are:



Erik Visser receives his bursary from board director Guy Cudmore, and will be attending Dordt University.



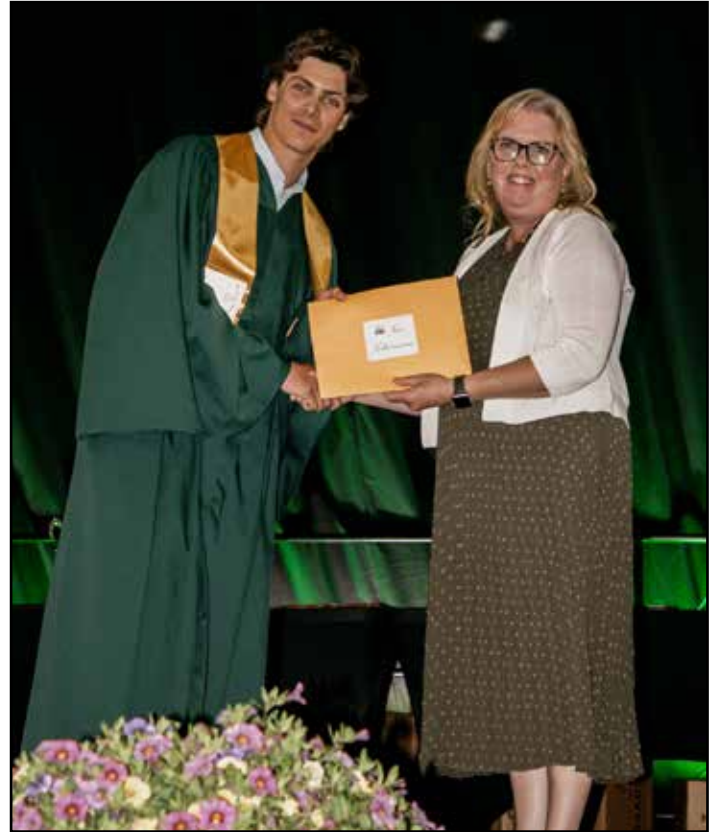
Krista Shaw of the PEI Potato Board presenting the bursary to Maura Mulligan who will be attending St. FX University in the fall.



The future leaders bursary awarded to Karson Webster and presented by Krista Shaw. Karson will be attending Dalhousie Agricultural College this fall.



Oliver Rennie receives his bursary from Chair Katie MacLennan, and will be attending Holland College.



Ian Schurman is presented his bursary by Chair, Katie MacLennan and will be attending Olds College this fall.



Katie MacLennan, Chair of the PEI Potato Board presenting the bursary to Evan Rennie, who will be attending the University of New Brunswick this fall.

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PEI Faces of the Industry

Board of Directors Edition Pt.1

By Rebecca MacSwain, Seed Specialist

Andrew Nieuwhof

The story of Blue Bay Farms began in 1979 when Andrew's grandfather immigrated with his family from Holland to Prince Edward Island. Over the years, the farm transitioned to the next generation, led by Andrew's father, Klaas, and his two uncles, Randall and Marten. Today, the operation remains a true family affair, managed by Randall, Marten, Klaas, Pete (Andrew's cousin), and Andrew. Together, they manage around 700 acres of seed, table, and creamer potatoes. To maintain high soil health and nutrients, the farm utilizes strict cover crop rotations between potato planting years. Blue Bay Farms also washes and packs its own table potatoes on-site, supplying markets across both Canada and the United States.



Andrew and Parker Nieuwhof of Blue Bay Farms

Growing up, Andrew was always around the farm, lending a hand in the shop or helping out during the busy planting and harvest seasons. While he loved the farm environment, his true interest lay in the machinery. Working on the equipment inspired him to pursue a career as a mechanic. He attended Holland College, earned a degree in automotive technology, and successfully achieved his Red Seal certification while working in local automotive shops. By the fall of 2018, Andrew was looking for a new challenge and wanted to find a way to bring his specialized mechanical skills back to the family business. After a conversation with his dad, Klaas, Andrew was given the opportunity to join the farm as a partner. It turned out to be the best decision he ever made. Today, Andrew loves the independence of maintaining and repairing all of the farm's heavy equipment himself, saving the business outside hiring costs. He has never looked back, proving that for him, farming isn't just a job—it's a passion.

Andrew married his wife, Timara, in July 2023, and in 2025, they welcomed their baby boy, Parker, marking the start of the next generation at Blue Bay Farms.

Andrew also serves on the PEI Potato Board of Directors since 2024 as the Central Tablestock representative, as well as the Tablestock committee.

Guy Cudmore

Guy Cudmore operates Preston Cudmore & Sons with his brother, Arthur, in North Winsloe, PEI. The Cudmores grow seed potatoes of various russet varieties for the table stock and processing markets, along with cereals, oilseeds, and soil-building rotational crops.

Now focused exclusively on field crops, the Cudmores were successful hog producers for many decades before changes in the marketplace led them to transition away from the hog industry.

Guy has been a dedicated volunteer with Farmers Helping Farmers for most of his adult life. He joined the organization in 1980 and, at the time, was its youngest

member. Farmers Helping Farmers is a PEI-based registered charity that partners with farmers and rural communities in Kenya to improve food security, agricultural productivity, and sustainable livelihoods. Through his volunteer work, Guy has travelled to Kenya three times to support agricultural development initiatives.

Guy serves on the PEI Potato Board of Directors as the Eastern Seed Representative and is also a member of the Farm & Seed Committee.

On Saturdays, Guy can often be found at the Charlottetown Farmers' Market, where he is a strong advocate for local agriculture and enjoys communicating with the public about food production and farming in Prince Edward Island.

Guy and his wife, Alana, have three daughters and four grandchildren.



Guy Cudmore of Preston Cudmore and Sons

Katie MacLennan

Katie MacLennan farms alongside her husband, Jonathan, and their son, Gabe, at MacLennan Properties in West Cape, Prince Edward Island. Together, they produce seed and processing potatoes, as well as cereals and other rotational crops.

Jonathan and Katie assumed responsibility for the potato operation from Jonathan's parents, Laurids

and Alma MacLennan, in 2004. Since then, they have continued to modernize the farm through the adoption of innovative technologies and sustainable production practices. Their operation features Tolsma ventilation systems with box storage, variable-rate seed spacing for planting, drone crop scouting, Smart Spud for bruise prevention, and two Valley pivot irrigation systems.

MacLennan Properties is committed to continuous improvement through research and innovation. The farm participates annually in field trials with AIM, Living Labs, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC), and the PEI Department of Agriculture. They are also yearly participants in both the Aphid Alert and Air Spore monitoring programs and are strong advocates for rotational grazing as part of a sustainable farming system.

Katie joined the PEI Potato Board of Directors in 2022 as the Western Seed Representative, and in 2025 she began her term as Chair of the PEI Potato Board, becoming the first woman to serve in that role in the organization's history.

Beyond the farm, Katie is actively involved in her community through her church and serves on the board of Develop West Prince. She enjoys traveling and spending time with friends and family.



Katie, Jonathan and Gabe MacLennan

Caddle Consumer Study

By: Mark Phillips, Marketing Specialist

A recent consumer survey shows that PEI potatoes are well-recognized and positively regarded in major Canadian markets, with purchasing decisions influenced by value, convenience, and availability. This is the first comprehensive survey since 2011.

In the last three months, 85% of consumers purchased Fresh Potatoes, followed by 81% for Chips and 65% for Frozen French Fries. One-third buy fresh potatoes monthly, with popular varieties being Yellow/Gold (61%), Russet (57%), and White (56%). Many shoppers prefer private label options for better value and typically buy 5- or 10-pound bags, with value, taste, and freshness as key factors.

Over half prepare fresh potatoes at least once or twice a week. While 61% reported stable consumption in the past five years, 24% saw an increase, mainly due to good value (46%) and ease of preparation (31%). Fresh potatoes are viewed as affordable (45%) and delicious (37%).

Awareness of PEI potatoes is high at 83%, especially in Atlantic Canada (98%) and among seniors (92%). Half of respondents find PEI potatoes available where they shop, with 59% having purchased them. Among those aware of PEI potatoes, 51% expect them to be superior, and 42% are willing to pay a premium for their Canadian origin.

While the survey shows our brand is strong and people desire and value PEI Potatoes, it reinforces the goal of making our branding more visible in stores, helping consumers purchase our potatoes over other growing areas, and maintaining our strong brand.

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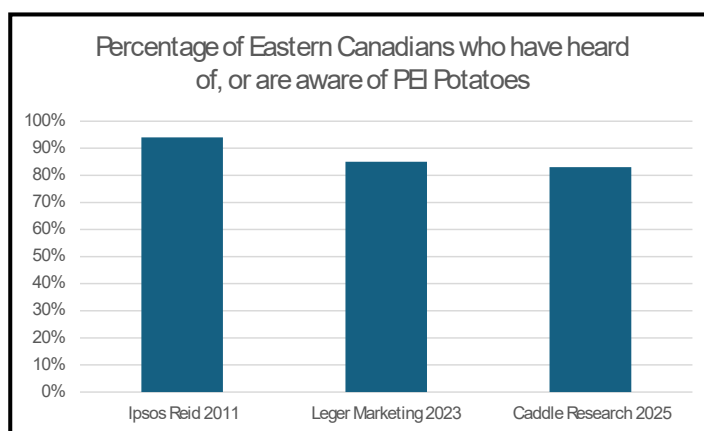
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Above chart shows the brand recognition by percentage for PEI potatoes in our most recent studies



Terraced fields at Russell Ching Ltd. In Souris

New Study Highlights:

PEI Potato Industry's \$2.9 Billion Impact

By: Mark Phillips, Marketing Specialist

A new economic impact study provides a comprehensive measure of the economic activity PEI Potatoes generate across Prince Edward Island and the rest of Canada.

According to a new analysis by the PEI Department of Agriculture, the Island potato sector generated an estimated \$2.88 billion in economic activity across Canada in 2022, including approximately \$2.03 billion within PEI alone. The study examined both potato farming and processing activities and measured their direct, indirect, and induced impacts on the economy.

The results illustrate the industry's role as one of PEI's largest economic engines. The potato sector contributed \$774.8 million to provincial GDP, supported 5,853 full-time equivalent jobs, generated \$327.7 million in labour income, and produced \$76.7 million in tax revenues within Prince Edward Island. Nationally, the industry supported 8,357 jobs, contributed \$1.16 billion to GDP, and generated \$113 million in tax revenue.

While growers and processors see the industry's value every day, the study shows the magnitude of its reach throughout the economy. Economic activity generated by the potato sector supports transportation companies, input suppliers, equipment dealers, financial services, utilities, retailers, and countless other businesses both on and off the Island. For every \$1 million in potato output, the sector generates approximately five full-time equivalent jobs. It contributes more than \$662,000 to provincial GDP when all direct and spin-off impacts are considered.

The study additionally highlights the continued scale of the industry. In 2025, a down year for the industry due to hot, dry weather, PEI growers harvested approximately 87,000 acres and produced 2.135 billion pounds of potatoes, generating \$399 million in farm cash receipts. Potatoes accounted for roughly 74 percent of provincial crop receipts and roughly 50 percent of total agricultural cash receipts, strengthening the crop's central role in Island agriculture.

Export markets continue to be a major driver of industry growth. In 2024, PEI potato and potato-product exports reached \$935.9 million, accounting for nearly 36 percent of all provincial exports. Processed potato products accounted for almost 80 percent of export sales, while fresh and seed potatoes continued to serve key domestic and international markets. PEI shipped potatoes and potato products to more than 25 countries, with the United States remaining the dominant destination.

Not surprisingly, processing remains the largest utilization category for PEI potatoes, accounting for roughly 63 percent of production, while fresh potatoes account for about one-third of the crop. Seed potatoes, despite being smaller in volume, still serve a strategically important role in supporting both domestic production and export markets.

The report also reflects how the industry has evolved. Although the number of potato farms has declined over the past two decades, average farm size has increased significantly as operations have expanded, modernized, and adopted new technologies. At the same time, growers have navigated ongoing challenges, including climate volatility and periods of drought that affected yields in recent years. Despite these pressures, the industry continues to invest in productivity, processing capacity, and market development.

For an industry frequently measured by acres, yields, and market returns, the study delivers a broader perspective. It shows that the impact of PEI potatoes extends well beyond the farm gate and processing plant, generating significant economic benefits for communities across the province and contributing substantially to Canada's economy.

The message from the report is clear: the PEI potato industry remains a major economic driver, creating jobs, supporting rural communities, generating exports, and generating billions of dollars in economic activity each year.



Canadian Potato Council Update

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

As summer sets in, the Canadian Potato Council's work continues to be guided by our four strategic priorities: effective governance, pre-emptive trade advocacy, research and pest management. Much of that work is connected by a common goal: staying ahead of issues that could affect growers' access to markets, confidence from trading partners and the competitiveness of Canadian farms.

Trade

CPC has taken a good step in establishing a new CPC U.S. Trade Relations Working Group. The goal is to make sure we are prepared for trade issues before they become crises, while continuing to strengthen our relationship with the U.S. potato industry.

CUSMA remains a concern on the horizon. While the agreement could have been extended on its existing terms for another 16 years, the U.S. decision not to renew it at this stage has triggered annual reviews during a longer phase-out period. Trade continues as usual for now, but annual reviews create uncertainty and the potential for recurring negotiations. CPC will remain engaged and continue advocating to keep CUSMA unchanged, because the current agreement benefits growers and the broader North American potato industry.

Discussions are also advancing between Mexico and Canada on opening fresh potato trade between the two countries. For market access to open for all of Canada, Mexico must first send auditors to review Canadian production and storage systems, with those costs borne by Canada. Auditors are expected to visit PEI and Alberta in July.

Potato Wart

This spring, routine sampling conducted through the Canadian Food Inspection Agency's National Potato Wart Survey identified potato wart in a PEI field. The detection demonstrates that Canada's surveillance system is working as intended and that CFIA is prepared to respond through the science-based measures established under the National Potato Wart Response Plan. Thousands of samples are collected across the

country, and appropriate regulatory controls remain in place to contain risk and protect potato-growing regions in Canada and abroad.

Following the detection, the U.S. National Potato Council wrote to the United States Department of Agriculture requesting restrictions on PEI potatoes. CPC strongly supports CFIA's National Potato Wart Response Plan and the continued use of science- and risk-based measures to contain, control and prevent the spread of potato wart. Any interruption of access to the U.S. market for PEI or Canadian potatoes would have serious consequences for the Canadian potato industry and would not reflect the strength of Canada's surveillance, regulatory controls and risk-mitigation measures.

CPC has been working steadily with government and industry partners to ensure decision-makers understand the effectiveness of Canada's regulatory system and the importance of maintaining predictable market access for Canadian potatoes. This has included written outreach and meetings with ministers, senior officials, parliamentarians, trade representatives and Canadian officials in Washington. CPC will continue supporting CFIA's science-based approach, keeping key representatives informed and reinforcing confidence in Canadian potatoes and Canada's regulatory system.

Pest Management

After 31 years, the Pest Management Regulatory Agency is evolving. PMRA has officially become the Pesticide Regulatory Directorate, or PRD, housed within the Healthy Environments and Consumer Safety Branch. CPC will continue monitoring what this change means for growers, particularly around timely access to crop protection tools and science-based regulatory decisions.

Spring Economic Update – Bill c-30

Bill C-30 passed on June 19, meaning PRD and CFIA will now need to consider food security and the cost of food in their decision-making. This is very good news for agriculture and Canadian food production, and it reflects an issue CPC and FVGC have been raising

for more than a decade. The change does not mean moving away from sound science; rather, the intention is to support more timely decisions. A more predictable regulatory system and more tools in the toolbox would help Canadian growers remain competitive with producers in jurisdictions that already have fuller access to those tools.

Potato Cyst Nematode

CPC is continuing to monitor the potato cyst nematode detection in Manitoba. The affected field is under official CFIA control, and the response is being managed through established, science-based protocols agreed upon by Canada and the United States. Our focus remains on supporting the industry, maintaining confidence in Canadian potatoes and ensuring that decisions are based on both facts and established processes.

Advocacy

Overall, a “perfect storm” is currently driving an uncompetitive environment for growers and can negatively impact domestic food production. Farmers are not the drivers of food inflation and farming is rapidly becoming unprofitable in Canada. In May, CPC and FVGC submitted letters and held meetings regarding supporting Canadian competitiveness by removing fertilizer tariffs, and CPC’s concerns were subsequently featured in SpudSmart magazine.

In June, CPC welcomed Canada’s first National Food Security Strategy and is pleased to see it recognize the essential role potatoes play in feeding Canadians, supporting rural economies and strengthening domestic food production and processing. CPC looks forward to working with the Government of Canada to turn the strategy’s commitments on addressing rising input costs, access to essential fertilizer and crop protection products, regulatory improvements and strengthening processing capacity into practical results for Canadian potato growers.

Summer of 2026, I spent part of July in Prince Edward Island for the Potato Marketing Association of North America meeting, followed by travel to Wisconsin for the Potato Sustainability Alliance and then to Detroit for a Canada–U.S. CPC–National Potato Council meeting. These events will provide valuable opportunities to connect with growers and industry partners, strengthen the relationships that support CPC’s advocacy work and keep advancing the priorities that matter most to Canadian potato growers. Our

next CPC in-person meeting is in Edmonton in August, and I look forward to seeing members there.

Upcoming Events & Program Deadlines

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

August 2026

- August 10-12 **FVGC/CPC Summer Meetings**, Edmonton
- August 18 **PEI Potato Board of Directors Monthly Meeting**, Fox Island

September 2026

- Sept 10-12 **CPMA Summer Meetings**, Calgary
- Sept 16 **PEI Potato Board of Directors Monthly Meeting**, Charlottetown

October 2026

- Oct 4 **Farm Day in the City**, Charlottetown
- Oct 13-17 **Global Produce and Floral Show**, Florida
- Oct 23-Nov 2 **13th World Potato Congress**, Kenya

November 2026

- Nov. 18 **PEI Potato Board Annual Business Meeting**, Charlottetown
- Nov. 20 **PEI Potato Board Annual Potato Industry Banquet**, Charlottetown



MacLennan Properties in West Cape

International Day of the Potato

By Mark Phillips, Marketing Specialist

On May 29 and 30, 2026, Prince Edward Island marked the United Nations' International Day of the Potato with a tribute to the crop that helps shape the Island's economy, culture, and identity. The observance, recognized globally each year around May 30, spotlights the potato's role in food security, nutrition, and rural livelihoods.

Across PEI, farms, processors, restaurants, and community groups joined the festivities. Through a partnership with Cavendish Farms and CFCY, PEI Potatoes hosted an event in front of the CFCY studio, where we gave away free potatoes and chips, and the Cavendish Farms Fry Trailer was on site serving free French fries all day. Tate was also in attendance, posing for pictures with people of all ages. We promoted the event on the radio throughout the day, with interviews from Bloyce Thompson, Kendra Mills, Greg Donald, Ellen Kowenberg, and Mark Phillips, spotlighting the importance of potatoes, particularly those from PEI.

We also partnered with Stingray radio stations to host an event at the Potato Museum, where they were on site and held contests to give away PEI Potato swag. Celebrations also took place on social media, including interviews with growers, Keisha Rose-Topic, Brandon MacPhail, and Chad Mooney. Additionally, potato posts highlighting the day were made by Tourism PEI, Premier Rob Lantz, PEI Department of Agriculture, MP Kent MacDonald, East Prince Agri-Environment Association, and more. The 2026 international theme, "Where potatoes grow, livelihoods flourish," resonated strongly on PEI, where thousands of jobs connect directly or indirectly to the potato industry.

The main global event was hosted in the Kingdom of Lesotho, along with a complementary event at FAO headquarters in Italy, championed by the Government of Peru and Spain in collaboration with other Members.

For Prince Edward Island, the International Day of the Potato is more than a celebration of a crop. It is a celebration of the people, innovation, and heritage that has made the potato a lasting symbol of Island life, and a reminder that the story of the Island and the story of the potato remain closely linked.



Representing PEI Potatoes on location at the Charlottetown waterfront, Left to right: Lee Ruby of CFCY, Ryan Barrett, Ellen Kowenberg of World Potato Congress, Kendra Mills, Greg Donald and Mark Phillips.



Minister Thompson helped out passing out free french fries with Greg Donald as one of the ways we were celebrating potatoes on PEI.

Potato Marketing Association of North America Summer Meetings

By: Scott Howatt, Processing Specialist

On July 12-14 the P.E.I. Potato Board hosted the 2026 PMANA summer meeting in Eastern PEI at Rodd's Brudenell River Resort. The goals 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 2026 contract settlements; and to discuss relevant frozen potato industry issues and news. There were 41 grower representatives in attendance, and they were joined by Bryan Henninger and Darren Burchill of Ag-World Support Systems, Stephanie Rioux-Theriault and Eric Richter of Syngenta (both companies being long time sponsors of PMANA), Caleigh Hallink-Irwin of the Canadian Potato Council, and Victoria Stamper of United Potato Growers of Canada. The Potato Processing Committee and the Potato Board were represented by: Katie and Jonathan MacLennan, Kyle Maynard, Clint Ching, Brandon MacPhail, David Sweet, Greg Donald and Scott Howatt.

Each grower organization in attendance provided an Area report and this article will provide an overview of those twelve accounts. Overall, planted acres in 2026 are down by approx. 23,000 acres (2.1%) from 2025; with Idaho leading the way on acreage reduction with 14,000 (4.5%) less acres planted. Washington, Malheur County in Oregon, and Maine reported flat acres compared to 2025. According to Statistics Canada's estimates for planted acres which were released on July 20, Alberta (5.2%) and Quebec (2.5%) are the two regions with increased acres. Alberta's increase is due to the expanding McCain Foods plant in Coaldale growing towards full capacity. Quebec is waiting for confirmation on their final acres from the province. This is the third consecutive year of PMANA reported acreage decreases (combined 65,000 acres) in the potato processing States & Provinces, and these reductions continue to be welcomed by an industry which has been in an over-supply situation since the 2023 crop.

Changes in contracted volumes across North America varied this year, and to better understand

the true picture of volume cuts, one needs to study individual fryer's volume cuts within certain regions over the past three years. For instance, in the Atlantic Northeast (ANE) Cavendish Farms cut volume by 10% in 2026, however, they had no volume cuts the two previous years. Meanwhile, Maine growers who supply McCain had volume cuts in both 2025 and 2026, 9% and 10% respectively, and in New Brunswick, McCain Foods cut volume 10% in 2025 and 4% in 2026. Overall, the Area reports indicate that many of the regions are getting their planted acres more aligned with their contracted volumes; particularly the Pacific Northwest (PNW) and the Midwest. However, the limited acreage reduction of 4,100 acres (1.5%) this year in the ANE does not align with the reported cuts in contracted volume. This is most likely a reaction by ANE growers to the major shortfall in potato production that happened in PEI this past year caused by the summer drought. The shortfall of raw potatoes in PEI created demand by Cavendish Farms who bought many "open" fry-quality, potatoes from Maine and New Brunswick, which indirectly created stronger demand in Quebec and Ontario as well.

Perhaps the biggest difference between last year's summer reports and the reports made in Brudenell is the potential production from the potato crops in almost every growing region. Last summer at Niagara on the Lakes, all PMANA areas west of the Mississippi River were reporting healthy, strong potato crops with well-above-average potential. The final outcome experienced by many farms in the west was one of the largest yielding, high quality crops on record for their region. Potato production in 2025 from all PNW growing areas, the Midwest states and Manitoba were of record proportion. This year, the projected yields per acre in every growing area in the west are down from last year and when all twelve reports are combined, PMANA projected potato production is down 3% from 2025 or 13,200,000 cwt (hundredweight); a substantial volume of potatoes. Only Alberta (5.0%) and PEI (17.3%) are projecting increased overall production,

both explainable; Alberta due to increased contracted volume by all three fry processors, and P.E.I. is very hopeful they return to a drought-free growing season. There are many weeks of growing season for potato growers to deal with across North America and therefore it is too early to make predictions on the final potato production in the PMANA growing areas. At this point the early digs of fresh crop in the Columbia Basin are running at lower yields compared to last year's very strong out-of-field crop. Elsewhere, there were reports of damaging late frosts, cold and wet springs, delayed planting, recent flooding damage, and for Idaho and Malheur County, a real concern about the availability of water for end-of-season irrigation. For the ANE growing areas (Ontario-East) the reports were mostly along the lines of an average to slightly better-than-average crop developing, except P.E.I. who reported a slow start to their planting season and fusarium issues in some potato fields.

Most areas reported their old crop inventories being larger than needed at this point of the marketing season. It was reported by some growers that the storability of their old crop is not as good as past years and in certain circumstances, bins of old crop are being rejected by fryers due to poor quality (mostly bruising

and discolouration issues). The writer believes that once the new crop becomes readily available, some of the old crop inventory will be difficult to move except to cattle feedlots or into dump piles. Regarding the operations of plants, the reports are different from last year, as some fry plants are strategically running below capacity while other plants (both fry and chip) are running close to or at capacity.

Processing growers' projected costs of production (CoP) for 2026 have changed since the winter negotiations in the west, with most Area reports showing CoP increases from 5 to 8% over 2025. A few areas, where growers purchased fertilizer in December, stated their CoP between 2-3%, however, those grower reps verbally shared that those projections are looking to be too conservative given the state of the world and how it is impacting fuel costs and inflation in general.

There was a different mood from the grower reps this year compared to 2025. Last year, with growers' costs of production showing no signs of weakening, most areas being long on old crop, and with most regions predicting a potentially record-breaking 2025 crop, the outlook and attitude from the growers in attendance at the PMANA Summer meeting in Ontario was sullen, at best. This summer, there is a strong feeling that the

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coming year's supply of raw potatoes will be more in-line with the demand from the fryers and chippers. Also, every potato grower in North America is growing the most expensive crop they have ever dealt with, and the capital investment required to plant, raise and harvest this specialized crop continues to grow at an unbelievably fast pace. The last three years have seen value reductions in pre-season contracts across North America, triggered by the repeated over-supply of potatoes in the Pacific Northwest. In the PNW, some growers have had to accept 13-15% reductions in the values of their contracts. One of the principal factors behind the increasing supply of processing potatoes (which has outweighed the demand for same) is the lack of profitable alternative crops to grow instead of potatoes. To the writer it seems we have reached the breaking point, where growers will choose a crop with little profit but with much less risk than open potatoes to grow under the "extra circles". I.e. It is better to potentially lose a couple-hundred dollars per acre growing small grains, than it is to guarantee your farm a loss of a few thousand dollars per acre growing potatoes that sell for less than \$3 per cwt or are delivered to cattle feedlots. That said, acres grown under contract for processors remain the leading crop for profitability in the PNW, and as an industry, all growers look for the return of profits in commodity crops which will help take the pressure off their processing acres. The erosion of the profitability on contracted acres that we

have warned about since 2023 has occurred. This fact will become apparent to any North American grower who harvests a below-average yielding crop in 2026.

There remains some positivity within the processing sector; the consumption of frozen potato products domestically continues to grow, however at a very modest rate of 1% per annum. Processors are continuing to make capital investment in their facilities to modernize and bring more productivity to their properties.

Not being lazy, but my summary from last year's article continues to hold truth: 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 exceptionally 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!



On Monday July 13th, the delegation of the PMANA Summer meetings enjoyed a banquet on the deck The Wheelhouse, in Georgetown, with entertainment by Gordie MacKeeman and Peter Cann.



On Sunday July 12th, to kick off the PMANA summer meetings, the delegates had the option to golf at the challenging Dundarave golf course or sit back and relax on the Fiddling Fisherman for an authentic Lobster Dinner on the water listening to the fiddling music of JJ Chaisson. The weather cooperated for both events and we returned to shore to attend the reception in the Dundarave room at Rodd Brudenell River Resort.

PEI Potato Board Hosts a Seed Rogueing Clinic

By: Rebecca MacSwain, Seed Specialist

It had been 10 or 15 years since the PEI Potato Board last organized a Seed Rogueing Clinic to provide scouts and rogues with both classroom instruction on the principles of potato rogueing and practical, hands-on training in identifying disease symptoms and off-type plants in the field.

In collaboration with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC), the PEI Potato Board hosted a Seed Rogueing Clinic on July 7th, 2026. The workshop was led by retired Seed Coordinator, Mary Kay Sonier, whose knowledge and experience provided participants with valuable insight into effective rogueing practices.

The clinic attracted more than 40 participants, including potato producers, industry representatives, and government staff. The day began with a classroom presentation before moving to AAFC's Harrington Research Farm for an in-field demonstration.

The demonstration plots featured 10 of the potato varieties most commonly grown on Prince Edward Island, allowing participants to compare differences

in plant growth characteristics, including size, growth habit, and foliage colour. The plots also exhibited plants with virus symptoms, as well as off-type and volunteer plants, giving participants the opportunity to practice identifying the types of plants that should be removed from seed potato fields.

It is often said that "rogueing is a dying art." While there is truth to this sentiment, with fewer seed potato producers today than in years past, the strong turnout demonstrated a shared commitment to maintaining the knowledge and skills needed to produce high-quality seed potatoes.

The PEI Potato Board extends its sincere appreciation to the staff at the AAFC Harrington Research Farm for establishing and maintaining the demonstration plots, and to Mary Kay Sonier for sharing her expertise and leading an informative and engaging workshop.

Mary Kay leads the participants of the rogueing clinic around the plot pointing out plants that need to be rogued.





*Mary Kay Sonier (pictured above) and
Ryan Barrett (pictured below)*



*Ella Ramsay, Summer Marketing intern and Christine
Parsons helping out at the plot.*



*Left: All hands on deck, Mary Kay , Ryan, Christine,
Ella, and Rebecca MacSwain(not pictured)*



Field for rogueing clinic has grown in and ready for teaching

Plant Diagnostic Services



Changes to Plant Diagnostic Services

Plant diagnostic services, previously provided by PEI Analytical Laboratories, will now be delivered by the Potato Quality Institute (PQI).

Starting mid-June 2026, all plant diagnostic requests will be directed to the PQI location in the West Royalty Industrial Park.

PEI Analytical Laboratories will be working closely with PQI during this transition.

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There is now a fee for this service. Please contact PQI for more information.

Access PEI

For the 2026 season, clients can still drop off samples at Access PEI outside of the Charlottetown area for delivery. The samples will be delivered to PEI Analytical Laboratories who will then deliver them to PQI.

You may receive a call from the PEI Analytical Laboratories to ensure you are aware the sample will be transferred to PQI.

If you have any questions regarding this transition, please do not hesitate to contact PEI Analytical Laboratories at 902-620-3300.



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PEI Potatoes Summer Events and Partnerships

By: Mark Phillips, Marketing Specialist

Summer is in full swing, and that means we are packing up and heading out into the community! We are thrilled to welcome back Ella Ramsay, who has returned to the Board for another busy season as our summer marketing student. Ella and Tate will be at many community events this summer and are excited to spread PEI Potato Pride!

‘Tate’s Dates’ is packed with lots of events this year. He has participated in the Rustico Canada Day Parade, Victoria Park Canada Day Celebrations, Morrell River Run Parade, Summerside Lobster Carnival Parade, and Potato Blossom Festival Parade. He will join the Crapaud Exhibition, Tyne Valley Oyster Festival, Summerside Tri-Lobster Race, the Gold Cup Parade, and more! He has also visited Cavendish, Founders Food Hall, Port Charlottetown, and more.

Be sure to follow PEI Potatoes on social media to keep up with Tate’s travels. If you snap a photo with Tate and Ella, share it online using the hashtag #PEIPotatoes!



Tate and Ella having some Canada Day fun

Beyond Tate’s travels, PEI Potatoes continues to support a wide range of arts, culture, and community events through strategic partnerships:

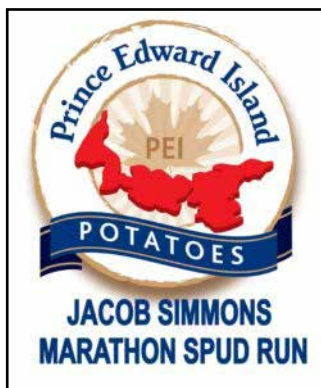
Harmony House: We’re proud to return as the sponsor of Inside American Pie, running from July 22nd to September 24th. Following five sold-out seasons and strong demand, it is back for 2026 and has already sold out. This acclaimed show explores the story behind Don McLean’s iconic song through music by the Beatles, Janis Joplin, Bob Dylan, and, of course, the title track. The show has had hugely successful runs at Toronto’s CAA Theatre/Mirvish Productions and premiered this year at the Curve Theatre in Leicester, UK.



PEI International Shellfish Festival: Running September 17-20, 2025, this event showcases PEI’s seafood and how well our potatoes pair with seafood. This will be the festival’s 30th anniversary. 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 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 events take place October 16th-18th, with the marathon on Sunday, October 18.



tasty treats. Summer-long radio ads and YouTube pre-roll video ads support the promotion. To nominate a farm, visit the Ocean 100 website.



Tate was onsite at Rayner Farms for their Farm Crew visit.

Stingray Farm Crew: Our summer partnership with the Ocean 100 Farm Crew continues for another season. Each week, the crew visits PEI farms to drop off treats and PEI Potato swag at nominated farms. Tate joins many of these visits, helping deliver prizes and

We also continued our sponsorships of the Potato Blossom Festival, Lobster Carnival, Crapaud Exhibition, and more! For more information, follow us on Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok for all the excitement.

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Update from the Department of Agriculture PEI

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



The challenging start to the 2026 growing season left many PEI potato growers dealing with an unusual situation: two crops growing in the same field. Poor seed performance associated with Fusarium dry rot, combined with cold and wet planting conditions, resulted in uneven emergence and, in some cases, significant stand losses. As a result, many growers chose to replant portions of fields or entire fields, creating substantial differences in crop age and development.

While the harvest season is still several weeks away, the effects of these maturity differences are already becoming visible. Earlier-emerged plants often have a larger canopy, more advanced tuber development, and may begin natural senescence sooner. Meanwhile, later-emerged or replanted areas are still actively bulking and can appear greener and less mature. This variability can complicate crop scouting and yield assessments, as different parts of the field may have very different yield potential and maturity status.

The challenge becomes increasingly important as growers begin planning for vine desiccation and harvest. In fields with significant maturity differences, there is rarely a perfect timing that benefits all plants equally. Desiccating too early may limit the bulking potential of later-emerging plants, while waiting for younger plants to mature may increase the risk of overmaturity, skin defects, or quality issues in the earlier crop. Fields intended for seed production may require particularly careful monitoring, as uneven maturity can affect tuber size distribution and skin set.

Regular field inspections can help growers better understand the extent of variability within each field. Digging plants from both early and late-emerging areas provides valuable information about tuber numbers, sizing, and overall crop development. These observations can assist with harvest planning and help identify fields that may require management approaches different from a typical season.

Although the conditions that led to these uneven stands cannot be changed, understanding their implications can help growers make informed

decisions during the remainder of the season. The fields that experienced emergence issues this spring may ultimately provide valuable lessons on seed health, planting conditions, and crop resilience under challenging weather patterns. As harvest approaches, careful monitoring of crop maturity across all areas of the field will be key to maximizing both yield and quality.

Plant Disease Diagnostic Service Available Through PQI

The Potato Quality Institute (PQI) is offering the Plant Disease Diagnostic Service this season. Early diagnosis can help identify disease issues, support management decisions, and reduce the risk of further spread within fields. Growers experiencing unusual symptoms are encouraged to contact PQI regarding sample submission and diagnostic options. Please note that a fee now applies for this service. For more information, contact PQI at 902-368-8378 or info@peipqi.ca.

Irrigation Extension Specialist

Scott Anderson, PEI's Irrigation Extension Specialist, is available to advise growers on irrigation permitting processes, system implementation, responsible water use, irrigation scheduling, and general best management practices. As weather variability continues to challenge potato production, effective irrigation management is becoming an increasingly important tool for protecting yield potential, maintaining crop quality, and improving farm resilience. Scott can be contacted at (902) 916-0603 or atlanticwaterpei@gmail.com.



Great ariel view of Blue Bay Farms , Established in 1979



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2026 International Potato Technology Expo

By: Ryan Barrett, Research and Agronomy Specialist

The 2026 edition of the International Potato Technology Expo, held February 26-27 at the Eastlink Centre in Charlottetown, featured in-demand speakers on a range of current topics as well as a sold-out trade show with the highest attendance ever recorded by the show. Once again, the two days of morning conference presentations were organized by the PEI Potato Board and the PEI Department of Agriculture, with the Department of Agriculture sponsoring the majority of speakers through the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership with funding from AAFC.

The first day started with Ryan Barrett sharing results from three years of on-farm research into the use of the biopesticide Minuet to control common scab. Ryan and his team found that Minuet did lead to a significant reduction in scab incidence across the three years of field trials, with some fields showing a 60-70% reduction in scab coverage with use of the product. Next, there was a panel of presentations on irrigation technology, as expansion of irrigation capacity has been a hot topic this past year. Representatives from Vanden Bussche (selling for Zimmatic and others), Valley Irrigation, and 46 Ag (selling for 360 Rain) provided updates on new technology available from their respective companies.

After a short break, Tyler Heppell (aka Potato Ty) from British Columbia talked about his journey in returning to the family farm and marketing potatoes through public engagement, including telling his farm's story on social media as well as giving back to the community through their Ugly Potato Days, donating local produce to the public. Tyler has hundreds of thousands of followers on Tik Tok and Instagram and provided some great examples of how to use social media to tell your story, educate the public about where their food comes from, and grow markets for your products. Following Tyler, Mark Phillips of the PEI Potato Board provided an update on Canadian and American potato markets, filling in for Victoria Stamper from UPGC who was unable to attend.

Starting off the second day of presentation was Leigh Hunter of the McCain Farm of the Future in Florenceville, NB. Leigh shared some of the regenerative agriculture projects that he and his team have been working on, including controlled traffic farming, cover cropping, diversified rotations, and reduced tillage. A number of these projects are part of a regenerative agriculture research project under the FVGC Cluster 4, supported by the PEI Potato Board and others. Following Leigh, the tag-team of Evan MacDonald and Chad Mooney shared how drones are being used in potato production in PEI. Evan walked through how he is able to use multi-spectral and thermal imaging drones both for plot and field scale research, but also for precision agriculture management, emergence counts, and land management. Chad was able to share his experiences using drones for enhanced crop scouting as well as for seeding cover crops and applying fertilizers. With recent changes in permissions for drone-based crop protection applications, it is certain that we'll see an increased use of drones on Island potato farms in the near future.

Following the break, Robert Newcombe from Nova Scotia walked through ways that artificial intelligence (AI) can be employed on farms and farm businesses to improve work efficiency, streamline repetitive tasks, and improve information gathering. Robert, who is from a farm family in the Annapolis Valley, used the acronym DRUDGERY to outline the usage cases for AI: Drafting, Reading, Upcycling, Designing, Gathering, Explaining, Reviewing, and Yuck (the tasks you dread). It was a very informative presentation that provided specific, ag-related examples of how AI could be employed at the farm level.

Last on the agenda was Dr. Aitazaz Farooque of UPEI giving an update on their project employing artificial intelligence and machine learning to detect PVY symptoms. In addition to the AgriScout robot platform that has seen annual enhancements, their team has also developed a smartphone app that can

be used by anyone to detect PVY symptoms in plants. Work is ongoing to bring the camera/machine vision platform to commercialization while also growing the database with more varieties and more images to further improve accuracy. This project was initiated and financially supported by the PEI Potato Board, with assistance from the PEI Department of Agriculture's Applied Research and Innovation Program under S-CAP. Videos of all of the conference presentations are

available on YouTube and are linked on the PEI Potato Agronomy website.

As noted, attendance was high for both days of the Expo with attendees from across Canada and a sold-out trade show. 2027 will feature the PEI Potato Conference on February 24th at Credit Union Place in Summerside, followed by the return of the Potato Expo in February 2028.



*Pictured above: Tyler Heppell (aka Potato Ty) speaking to the group about farming in British Columbia.
Pictured below: great to see so many attending the talks during the Internation Potato Technology Expo*





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

In the United States, the potato market experienced a notable upswing during the second quarter, marking the first significant increase in many months. This positive trend can be attributed to the stability and growth in the food service sector, which includes restaurants, quick service outlets, cafeterias, and delis. As a result, there has been a heightened demand for the baker portion of potato production, thereby boosting the current crop's value, particularly in cartons.

Due to an overproduction and subsequent market glut in the 2025 potato crop, the goal for 2026 is to align production more closely with demand. Preliminary acreage reports indicate some reduction in planting, but it remains uncertain if these cutbacks will be sufficient to achieve a balance between supply and demand. There is some cautious optimism however as stocks, including russets, have declined overall, leaving the "pipeline" emptier heading into new crop for the first time in a couple of years in Canada but more importantly in the U.S. Looking ahead, there may be several factors that could impact production; delayed plantings in certain regions; last winter's low snowfall resulting in reduced levels of stored irrigation water, posing a potential risk to late-season irrigation; and excessive rainfall following planting has already affected some acreage adversely on both sides of the border. Most recently, fires burning in northern Ontario are causing issues from smoke throughout the province but also into neighbouring provinces and states. Smoke does reduce light intensity which can have a mixed effect; reducing photosynthesis and carrying high pollutant loads but also the benefit of moderating temperatures.

Furthermore, transportation issues have become increasingly prominent since early Q2. With a heightened focus on truck safety, federal regulations in the U.S. now hold truck brokers accountable for hiring unfit equipment which has led to a significant portion of equipment being sidelined, mainly due to improper maintenance records rather than poor equipment care. Efforts are underway to address these

issues but availability of equipment, as well as drivers, will continue to be an issue in 2026. Along with these regulatory changes, since the conflict in Iran, freight rates have surged by over 50% compared to last year and show no signs of declining soon. Both of these factors will make proximity to large population centers a more valuable asset than ever before.

Processing Sector

The frozen potato market remains robust overall, but growth is beginning to slow, and the competitive landscape is rapidly evolving. Key trends include increased North American freezer stocks, stagnant global trade, stronger Canadian exports, and rising competition from China and India. These dynamics are reshaping the market and require ongoing attention and adaptation from stakeholders.

U.S. freezer stocks fell by 43.7 million pounds in May but still finished at 1.221 billion pounds, which is 1.6% above last year and the largest May 31 stock level since 2001. Reports indicate the industry's finished-product supply equals 31.7 days at current usage, up slightly from 31.2 days a year earlier.

It is estimated that buyers purchased 16.8% more U.S. domestically produced French fries during April and May than a year ago, while processors used 11.2% more potatoes for purposes other than dehydration. However, actual recovery rates from the 2025 storage crop are running below average.

Global trade picture

Global French fry exports were essentially flat, with major exporters shipping about 10.55 billion pounds in the year ending April 30. The EU remained the biggest player but lost share, while North America also lost share despite Canada setting a record export volume.

Canada exported a record 511 million pounds of frozen potato products to offshore markets, up 22.8% from the prior year. By contrast, U.S. offshore exports fell to 1.643 billion pounds, the lowest since 2010/11, and North American market share slipped to 20.6% from 21.3%.

Rising competitors

China and India were the biggest growth stories on the export side. China's exports surged 68.5% to 925 million pounds, and India's rose 50.2% to 631 million pounds. Argentina and New Zealand also posted gains, while Turkey declined sharply.

On the import side, several major destinations shifted market share away from the EU and North America and toward Asia and other lower-cost suppliers. Japan remains a major North American market, but China has grown there, while Mexico showed a notable gain in Canada's share and a drop in the U.S. share.

The North American processing sector is transitioning from the rapid expansion of recent years to a period focused on inventory management and profitability. Demand for frozen potato products remains fundamentally healthy, but elevated inventories, cautious contracting, and strong global competition are limiting growth in the near term. For growers, the emphasis has shifted from expanding production to maximizing quality, meeting contract specifications, and controlling production costs while the market works toward a better balance between supply and demand.

Fresh Crop and market conditions

As mentioned above, the fresh market has been influenced heavily by an oversupply of russet potatoes in the U.S. for the past two years and many have been concerned about the total planted acres in North America in 2026. Forecasts indicate that acreage will indeed decrease overall in both Canada and the U.S. with Idaho potato acreage estimated at 300,000 acres, down 15,000 acres from last year according to USDA, but reductions concentrated in dehydration and seed potatoes. Growing conditions are mostly favorable, but drought and irrigation water remain a major concern. Many regions of the U.S., like the San Luis Valley and Idaho, have been experiencing dry, hot and windy conditions, leading to predictions that overall yields will not be as robust as last year. In Canada, excessive rainfall through the Prairies and a cold, wet spring in the east may also impact yields and resulting production north of the border.

Price signals

Shipping-point and table potato prices have been mixed, with some western U.S. markets softer than a year ago and Wisconsin notably stronger in several

table categories. The fresh weighted average and grower returns index were both lower than last year in Idaho, San Luis Valley, Columbia Basin, and Wisconsin, indicating generally weaker fresh returns than a year ago.

Potato Industry as a whole

The core message is that demand remains active, but the market is becoming more competitive and more fragmented. Canada is outperforming the U.S. in export growth of frozen fries, but freezer stocks remain heavy, and lower-cost exporters are steadily taking more of the global French fry business. The table market has been plagued with oversupply, particularly in russets, for the last few seasons and pricing has continued to erode from the high levels of 2022. With input costs higher than ever growers have had to seriously consider their planting intentions for 2026.

Outlook for the 2026 Crop

Looking ahead to the 2026 harvest we expect that lower planted acreage across parts of North America should help bring supply more in line with demand. We are also seeing a very similar situation in Europe with decreases in planted acreage around 11% in the main areas of Belgium, Netherlands, France and Germany, combined with the heatwaves they have been experiencing since June, forecasting lower production overall. We are already seeing reduced production out of Spain. Europe has been dealing with a similar oversupply of potatoes in both processing and fresh markets throughout 2025-26. In North America processors are likely to remain disciplined with inventories until frozen stocks return to more typical levels and if the 2026 crop production is average or slightly below average, market conditions could become more balanced during the 2026–27 marketing year.

Crop Transition Conference, Minneapolis



Estimated Planted Acreage North America

Statistics Canada Estimates of Planted Acreage

Province	2025	2026	% Change
PEI	87,300	83,700	-4.1%
NEW BRUNSWICK	52,300	50,900	-2.7%
NOVA SCOTIA	850	800	-5.9%
NEWFOUNDLAND	415	390	-6.0%
TOTAL MARITIMES	140,865	135,790	-3.6%
QUEBEC	48,882	50,086	2.5%
ONTARIO	40,215	39,900	-0.8%
MANITOBA	72,100	70,500	-2.2%
SASKATCHEWAN	7,300	7,100	-2.7%
ALBERTA	81,760	86,000	5.2%
TOTAL PRAIRIES	161,160	163,600	1.5%
BRITISH COLUMBIA	6,000	5,800	-3.3%
TOTAL CANADA	397,122	395,176	-0.5%

USDA Estimates of Planted Acreage

State	2023	2024	2025	2026	Diff vs. 2025
Idaho	330	315	315	300	-4.76%
Washington	165	160	140	140	0.00%
Wisconsin	68	67	68	66	-2.94%
Oregon	43	43	41	41	0.00%
North Dakota	76	73	70	67	-4.29%
Colorado	55	54	55	53	-3.64%
Michigan	50	48	48	46	-4.17%
Maine	53	54	52	52	0.00%
Minnesota	46	43	40	38	-5.00%
Nebraska	22	21	20	18	-10.00%
California	23	21	21	20	-4.76%
Texas	15	15	15	15	0.00%
Florida	20	18	17	17	0.00%
Total - US	966	932	902	873	-3.22%



Harvest Season

Agriculture is at the heart of our community and economy.

I wish all Island farmers a safe and successful harvest season.

Bloyce Thompson

Hon. Bloyce Thompson
Minister of Agriculture

Paid for by the Government of Prince Edward Island



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VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR FARM DAY IN THE CITY!!!

OCTOBER 4, 2026

Please contact Amanda at amanda@peipotato.org if you are able to give us a few hours of your time.

World Potato Congress-Kenya 2026

Not to be Missed

By: Ellen Kouwenberg, Executive Director of World Potato Congress Inc.

When global potato professionals gather in Naivasha, Kenya, from October 26 to 30, 2026, for the 13th World Potato Congress (WPC), it will mark a historic first for East Africa.

If you are a producer or working in the potato sector and wondering why you should make the journey, the answer is clear: it is an opportunity to walk foreign fields, discover how a fast-growing industry operates under unique tropical highland conditions, and experience the culture and national parks all while networking with potato industry representatives from around the globe.

The Congress is hosted by two main parties. Partnering with the National Potato Council of Kenya (NPCK) is co-host FreshCrop Ltd. Founded by Christopher Gasperi, FreshCrop began nine years ago as a 4.5-acre farm operated from the back of a pickup truck. Today, it stands as a fully integrated enterprise multiplying high-health seed starting from in vitro tissue culture and apical rooted cuttings in modern greenhouse setups. FreshCrop supports a vast network of outgrowers through agronomy support, demonstration sites, and train-the-trainer programs—helping farmers boost yields from 4.5 tons per acre up to 11 tons per acre. Completing the value chain, FreshCrop operates a dedicated processing facility producing fresh-cut French fries (FreshChips) for major restaurants and food service chains, guaranteeing consistent market and sales opportunities for local growers.

Kenya is Africa's fifth-largest potato producer, harvesting over 2.1 million tonnes annually across 29 counties situated at altitudes between 1,500 and 3,000 meters.

About 90% of production comes from small-scale farms of half an acre to two acres, where 90% of the harvest is sold locally, often grown as a pure stand but rotated with maize, beans and other crops. Larger commercial farms tend to rely on irrigation. Growing runs across two seasons—from October to December and from March to June, when most of the crop is

produced — while irrigated growers can harvest at other times of year.

New for WPC 2026 is the official launch in Kenya of the WPC Inc. International Thematic Group Workshops, a day of focused, small-group dialogue held the day before the Congress begins — a format to be repeated at future Congresses. In Naivasha, six workshops will run on Monday - International Potato Marketing, Rooted Apical Cuttings, Hybrid True Potato Seed, the International Potato Research Collaborative Framework, Aeroponics and Global Potato Sustainability, chaired by a number of well-known global leaders including but not limited to, Greg Donald, Peter VanderZaag, Chad Hutchinson, John Mesko, Nigel Crump and Blair Richardson.

The Congress programme brings together plenary and concurrent speakers from across the potato world. Jamey Higham, President & CEO of the Idaho Potato Commission, will address branding and marketing, while Dr James Price of Scotland's James Hutton Institute will cover the integration of potato cyst nematode research and policy. Dr Monica Parker will present on rooted apical cuttings and their adoption internationally, and Amanda Davidson of WD Potato Limited will share her experience as a female entrepreneur in potato marketing. S. Soundararadjane, CEO of Hyfarm within India's Hyfun Group, will tell "The India Potato Story," and processing-sector perspectives will come from speakers including Jochem Rovers, Head of Agro International Development at the Belgian processor Agristo. They join Kenyan and international voices such as Dr Simon Heck of CIP, Prof. Hamadi Boga of AGRA and World Potato Markets editor Cedric Porter, who will speak on the changing world of potato trade and production.

A trip to Kenya is never complete without experiencing its world-famous landscape and wildlife. The tour program is explicitly designed to combine ag-industry discovery with pure adventure:

Overnight technical tours take delegates through top potato production zones enroute to Lake Nakuru

National Park, home to black and white rhinos, lions, leopards, Rothschild's giraffes, and zebras.

For partners and family members, curated programs offer safe cultural excursions, craft markets, and unique wildlife views—such as Nairobi National Park, where rhinos graze against the city skyline or take a short boat ride across Lake Naivasha to Crescent Island, where you can step off the dock and walk among wild giraffes, zebras, and wildebeest on foot.

For most delegates, the ultimate highlight of WPC 2026 will happen right on the farm. The official Post-Congress Field Demonstration Day will take delegates directly out in the field at FreshCrop in the high-altitude heartland of Kenya's Rift Valley.

Walking extensive demonstration plots, visiting an active biotech seed lab, and watching live field equipment displays—covering land preparation, planting, harvesting, and sorting—will give delegates an opportunity to compare notes on pest control, soil health, and crop performance with local and international growers facing the same global production challenges.

The Congress will be based at the Sawela Lodges and Convention Centre on the shores of Lake Naivasha and is expected to draw more than 1,000 delegates from over 60 countries.

For the delegates heading to Naivasha, the organizers have built the welcome into the logistics. Support begins with a greeting at the airport, shuttle transfers over the weekend to Lake Naivasha and once on site, shuttles will run between the designated Naivasha hotels and the Sawela Lodge conference venue throughout the Congress, with a return transfer to the airport end of week.

Aerial shot of field day with WPC





Ellen Kouwenberg pictured with some giraffes in Kenya.

The WPC Inc. Directors, International Advisors and the Kenya hosts look forward to seeing you in Kenya this October!

For the full program, registration and thematic workshop details, visit www.wpc2026kenya.com.



Above: Farmer training participants

Below: Potato Fields in Kenya




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