



NOVEMBER 2025



New USask graduate Jessica Davey with the Shorthorn cattle she raises on her family farm in Saskatchewan.

USask graduate advocates for the beef industry

Jessica Davey is building transparency in the beef industry as a progressive livestock producer

By BRETT MAKULOWICH

"My goal is to contribute to feeding the world while being sustainable," said Jessica Davey.

Davey holds many roles in the beef cattle sector. These include being a primary producer, an advocate who engages consumers about where their beef comes from, a leader for youth in agriculture, and a new graduate of the College of Agriculture and Bioresources (AgBio) at the University of Saskatchewan (USask).

Davey officially received her Bachelor of Science in Agriculture (major in Animal Science, minor in Agribusiness) at USask Fall Convocation on November 12.

"My experience at the University of Saskatchewan was

life changing. I was able to further develop my passion, learn, develop new skills, and gain experience," said Davey. "I was very involved with the College of Agriculture and Bioresources and the Agricultural Students Association and made lifelong connections in the agriculture industry."

Davey maintained an extensive list of leadership roles in extracurricular agriculture activities on and off campus and earned 16 scholarships during her time as a USask student. One of these scholarships was the 4-H Canada Leadership Excellence Award of Distinction (LEAD) Scholar for Sustainable Agriculture and Food Security. These awards are 4-H Canada's most prestigious honour,

recognizing outstanding youth members who demonstrate 4-H values in their everyday lives, have become exceptional leaders through their 4-H experience, and who share the best of themselves with their communities.

As a 4-H Canada LEAD Scholar, Davey led a student-raised beef initiative with Marquis Culinary Centre on the USask campus. This involved raising beef on her family farm, Rivendale Cattle Company, and selling it to USask for use at Marquis. She hosted a beef BBQ with Marquis during orientation week and spoke to students about farming and raising beef in Saskatchewan.

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USask graduate investigates gene to improve the health of barley

Fan Yang's thesis research focused on protecting barley from a common plant disease

By BRETT MAKULOWICH

Feeding the world requires healthy crops that can resist plant disease. Barley is the world's fourth largest cereal crop in terms of production. This important crop is at risk worldwide from the fungus, *Ustilago hordei*, which infects barley with a disease called covered smut. This fungal infection starts on the surface of barley seed and causes the kernels of the barley plant to be replaced by masses of brown spores.

Fan Yang's research sought to identify a gene that can prevent barley yield loss from covered smut and thus improve economic returns to farmers.

"My research focused on identifying a resistance gene, called *RuhQ*, within the barley genome that provides long-term resistance to covered smut," said Yang. "I investigated how the pathogen infects barley seedlings and reduces grain quality and yield. I also explored which defense pathways are activated by the *RuhQ* gene to help barley defend against covered smut."

In July 2025, she successfully defended her PhD thesis. A study of *RuhQ*-mediated resistance to covered smut (*Ustilago hordei*) in barley. Yang was supervised by Dr. Aaron Beattie (PhD), associate professor in the Department of Plant Sciences in the College of Agriculture and Biore-sources (AgBio). Yang will officially receive her PhD in Plant Sciences at USask Fall Convocation on November 12.

"The Plant Sciences PhD program at the University of Saskatchewan provided me with an exciting opportunity to gain advanced knowledge in plant pathology," said Yang.

New USask graduate Fan Yang used the Phytotron research facility on

campus to study plant disease in barley. (Photo: Submitted)

Fan Yang. (Photo: Submitted)

Throughout her PhD she utilized USask's world class research facilities. These included the Crop Molecular Genetics Lab, the Agriculture Greenhouses, the Phytotron, and the Microscopy Core.

"My research found that the protein structure of the candidate *RuhQ* is distinct from that of known resistance proteins," said Yang. "My research also revealed a new infection process associated with the covered smut pathogen. A promising candidate gene for *RuhQ* was identified along with possible defence-related phytohormone pathways involved in *RuhQ*-mediated resistance."

Yang's research is already being applied in the real world with the USask Crop Development Centre using the *RuhQ* gene in its barley breeding program. This will help prevent barley yield loss and improve economic returns to farmers in Western Canada.

"Incorporating the *RuhQ* gene into future barley varieties is especially important to organic farmers who are unable to use chemical-based seed treatments to control covered smut," said Yang.

Yang received funding from the Saskatchewan Barley Development Commission Scholarship and the Rene Vandeveld Postgraduate Scholarship for her research.

Originally from Yunnan, China, she came to Canada when her husband, Wen Zang, attended USask for his PhD degree. Yang earned her bachelor's degree in Agronomy (major in Seed Science and Engineering) and master's degree in Agronomy (major in Crop Genetics and Breeding) from Northwest Agriculture

and Forestry University in China. She worked as a research technician at AgBio prior to beginning her PhD program.

"My experience at the University of Saskatchewan has been excellent," she said. "It's a supportive research community. I have a wonderful thesis supervisor, professional committee members, and classmates who are helpful and friendly."

Yang's future plans include continuing to work with Beattie on research related to *RuhQ*-mediated resistance in barley.

"I like that research allows me to explore the unknown and that it constantly challenges me to stay curious, think deeply, and critically assess information during the process of finding answers," said Yang.



New USask graduate Fan Yang used the Phytotron research facility on campus to study plant disease in barley.

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Crush it, don't crash it: How to win your first decade farming



BY RICHARD KAMCHEN

Planning isn't just paperwork. It's how you take control of your future. Avoiding common pitfalls now can give you the momentum and confidence to thrive in your first decade and beyond.

These four moves can help you crush your first decade and stay on track.

Avoid flying blind – build a plan

If you don't know where you're going, it's difficult to steer the ship. "If you don't know where you're going, it's difficult to steer the ship," says Kevin Frankl, manager of special credit with FCC in Regina.

And without a strong business plan, you risk veering into dangerous waters.

A business plan will help you stay on course by outlining costs, revenue projections, financing and long-term goals. Without one, you risk overspending, poor cash flow and debt that doesn't match profitability.

Not only that, but lenders will be wary of dealing with a business with such uncertain risk and destination.

Borrow wisely, not wildly

Debt is an ongoing concern in any business, and farming is especially dependent upon taking on debt from year to year.

Whatever the debt is for – land, equipment or infrastructure – make sure you can repay it in good and bad times, advises Frankl. More debt spending will only make it harder to survive future production hits that come.

Unfortunately, Frankl has often seen farmers take on too much debt, too soon.

"People will buy a too-big combine because they're planning for growth but can't afford it now."

They might be coming off a great year, but they're unable to make repayments when there's a downturn.

Pace growth strategically

While many might consider exceeding one's growth plans a success, Frankl points out that it can be detrimental.

"Cash flow often suffers after a period of growth," Frankl says. "And if you grow too big, too quickly, it can be devastating to the operation as banks and creditors may not share in your appetite for growth, especially if

cash flow concerns have led to late repayment, inability to resolve operating issues or even just added risk to payment."

Know your numbers: COP matters

You may increase the risk of experiencing unprofitable years if you don't conduct a cost of production (COP) analysis, which measures per-unit costs.

"If you don't know your costs, you're not managing your marketing properly. If you don't know what price to sell at, you're probably not analyzing your costs very well," Frankl says.

The early years of farming come with big decisions – but they also offer big opportunities. Make them count by proactively avoiding common pitfalls and you'll set a strong foundation for the decades to come.

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Made in Canada pride is back on the grocery shelf

Countless surveys have told us that Canadians want to buy Canadian. They say they want to support local farmers and processors, keep dollars at home and protect jobs. But when standing in front of the grocery shelf, good intentions often give way to convenience and price.

That contradiction, however, seems to be fading. And geopolitics has a lot to do with it.

According to the latest NIQ (formerly NielsenIQ) retail data, sales of "Made in Canada" food products are up more than 10 per cent year-over-year as of September 2025, while U.S.-made products are down nearly nine per cent. This trend has persisted for more than six months. In the world of consumer data, that's not a blip—it's a shift. Canadians aren't just saying they want to buy Canadian; they're actually doing it.

Turn on the television any night and there's one recurring face: Donald Trump. Canadians, whether they follow U.S. politics closely or not, are constantly reminded of his message of America First.

And consciously or not, they're responding. Every fiery clip about tariffs, immigration or foreign competition reinforces the sense that Canada needs to rely on itself. Buying Canadian food has become a quiet, patriotic act and a statement of self-reliance in an uncertain world. When cross-border relations feel tense, the grocery store becomes a symbolic space of control. Each jar of Canadian jam, each bag of local flour, feels like a vote for stability and identity.

The "Buy Canadian" idea isn't new. But for years, it mainly lived in our rhetoric. The North American market blurred origins, and few shoppers bothered to read the fine print. Since early 2025, though, both "Made in Canada" and "Product of Canada" categories—which differ in how much of the ingredients and processing are domestic—have shown consistent growth, while U.S. imports have posted negative sales for seven straight months.

In consumer economics, half a year of steady behaviour signals more than a mood swing; it's habit formation. Canadians are showing signs of permanently incorporating origin awareness into their grocery choices.

This new grocery patriotism, however, also raises a difficult question: at what cost? When consumers focus narrowly on national origin, market competition can narrow too. If buying Canadian becomes more about sentiment than value, we risk paying more, sometimes for products that aren't necessarily better or more sustainable. It's worth asking whether this wave of food nationalism, however well-intentioned, has contributed to higher prices. The more insulated our food market becomes, the greater the risk of inefficiency and complacency.

Canada's agri-food sector is remarkably diverse and resilient, but we can't grow or process everything efficiently. Pretending otherwise is economically naive. Self-reliance must not become self-restriction. If this patriotic shift is to benefit Canadians, it needs to be guided by our comparative advantages, not emotional reflexes.

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Sylvain Charlebois

and clean processing is globally admired. That's where national energy should go: doubling down on what we do best, not trying to replace what others already do well.

Instead of equating "Canadian" with "expensive," our food economy should aim to make "Canadian" synonymous with quality, efficiency and innovation. That's the formula that will keep domestic production competitive while allowing consumers real choice at the shelf.

This is not a call to abandon local pride. In fact, it is far from it. A strong domestic food base is vital for resilience. But the challenge for Canada is to balance patriotic consumption with global pragmatism. We should buy Canadian when it makes sense, trade when it benefits us and stay open to the world.

Canadians are driving the surge in "Made in Cana-

da" sales less as a reflection of emotion than as a clear response to uncertainty. The world is volatile. Supply chains are political. And consumers, consciously or not, are adapting. But if we let fear rather than strategy shape our choices, we risk turning a healthy preference into a costly habit.

After years of saying they wanted to buy Canadian, Canadians finally are. The question now is whether we can channel that patriotism into productive competitiveness, not protectionism.

Dr. Sylvain Charlebois is a Canadian professor and researcher in food distribution and policy. He is senior director of the Agri-Food Analytics Lab at Dalhousie University and co-host of The Food Professor Podcast. He is frequently cited in the media for his insights on food prices, agricultural trends, and the global food supply chain.

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How to cope when off-farm stressors add pressure

Farmers know the rollercoaster of uncertainty—but lately, the ride's gotten wilder. Life has moved from global pandemic recovery—no small feat—to changes in long-term, relatively stable trading relationships. As markets swing, costs climb and AI ramps up, it's no wonder stress levels are rising.

Of course, some stress can be positive. It stirs action and fosters innovation. But too much can leave you feeling stuck and take a health toll—physically, through high blood pressure, heart disease or stroke, and mentally, through anxiety, worry or a sense of hopelessness.

Stress doesn't discriminate by age or job. How and when it appears is unique to each person.

Recognize the signs

Just like you check the daily forecast, monitoring and understanding your stress and tolerance levels is important. Signs are typically physical, behavioural, emotional or intellectual. Someone might experience stress in their body—tension, headaches, stomach issues—while another's mind races with recurring thoughts. Still, someone else may feel increased unease or experience greater mood shifts. Often, stress accumulates due to the combined effects of various factors, such as work, family, finances or world events.

Be your own barometer

"Be really honest with yourself about your well-being and notice changes," says Ontario-based psychotherapist Bonnie Taylor, MSW, RSW.

What's your internal dashboard reading? Green and good? Yellow—caution, or red—danger?

"Think about your body daily so you can recognize an average stress day, the green zone, not stress-free, but a day when you manage most things. In the yellow zone, stress consumes more of your thoughts and your body reacts more intensely. You still do what you need to, but maybe you're more tired, irritable or reaching for coffees to keep ramped up," Taylor says.

"In the red zone, your ability to handle stress or solve problems is limited. The body is using reserves just to manage. It might feel like everything is overwhelming and you can't perform."

Recognizing when your stress is growing, in your yellow zone, is the best time to act. Since you can't control things outside your control, like geopolitical situa-



tions, it's important to focus on what you can do.

Use positive strategies to help cope

Since there's no one-size-fits-all for stress reduction, Taylor offers several stress management tools.

"Get your to-do list out of your head and onto paper. That alone is sometimes enough to ease stress because it's a way to look at what's consuming your thoughts, time and body's reactions," Taylor says.

Setting boundaries is another approach. "Consider saying no and look at how much you take on. Ask if others could take over, recognizing that you are absolutely capable, but there may be others capable as well, freeing you for other priorities or time to de-stress."

You may find watching the news or social media informative, helpful with decision-making or a de-stressor. However, Taylor advises setting a timer to remind yourself to consider your physical and mental state. Do you feel better or worse after watching? Taking a break is OK.

Other strategies might be a daily ritual, such as enjoying morning coffee without distractions. Or naming things you're grateful for, taking short daytime rests and deep breathing to gain calm.

"Practicing mindfulness is essential," Taylor says. "It can be as easy as pausing to check your five senses. Name five things you hear, four things you see, three things you smell, two you can touch and one you taste right now."

biking, walking, dancing or quality time with family.

Remember, support is around you

"Farmers tend to be isolated in their workday, but we're social creatures. It's so important to connect with others, particularly off-farm. Call somebody to see how they're doing. And don't ignore someone who reaches out to you. Maybe it's asking others how they're dealing with these external things. Just raising the topic is an opportunity to start helpful conversations," Taylor says.

Doctors, therapists, accountants, financial planners and others can also be supportive. Friends, mentors or leaders from community clubs, faith groups or volunteer organizations may also provide valuable support.

"Mental health and wellness are really enhanced by our community. It's somewhat of a community responsibility to be there for each other, but only the individual knows what works for them," Taylor says.

Know the signals: take early action against stress

BODY: Notice headaches, digestive trouble, sweating, tingling, muscle tension, aches, breathlessness or frequent illness.

BEHAVIOUR: Watch for changes in activity or sleep and be mindful of behaviour shifts like outbursts, complaining, isolation, crying, grinding teeth or taking dangerous risks.

EMOTION: Monitor for mood swings, nightmares, loss of interest, feeling overwhelmed, frustration, intolerance, fear of failure, low confidence, apathy or comparing yourself to others.

HEADSPACE: Pay attention to memory lapses, poor focus, racing thoughts, poor judgment, confusion, loss of objectivity or urges to escape.

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How do I market my grain effectively?

No one has a crystal ball. While you may not be able to predict the future, you can still strategize to make the best of market conditions. Start with a simple, critical question: When do I need to move my grain? Do I have time to wait for better prices?

Whether you need to generate cash, need the storage space or have other reasons, you need a plan to sell your grain proactively and with market conditions in mind.

Selling in increments is common practice—for example, 20 or 25 per cent is sold at different points throughout the year.

Every farm and every grain sale is different—each one involves unique goals, circumstances, and a different balance of risk and reward. Some farms might not have the same level of risk tolerance as others.

When to sell is a personal decision, and there's an element of personal preference involved. The right selling approach will differ from one farm to the next, and having a plan will help to ensure your decisions are well-informed.

I often describe marketing strategies as either offensive or defensive. Defensive sales focus on locking in profits when prices are favourable, helping manage risk. Offensive sales are about seizing opportunities when market conditions suggest there's potential for better returns. The key is to stay informed and understand how markets typically behave, especially in your region.

For example, the best approach to marketing canola in Alberta's Peace Region may differ significantly from what works in Manitoba's Red River Valley. Ask yourself: Should we react to short-term market movements? Should we take a more aggressive or more cautious approach right now? Is there one crop with a stronger outlook that deserves a different strategy?

Create a plan that considers a few possible market scenarios so you're ready to



adapt as conditions change.

A fear of missing out (FOMO) is something many farmers experience, especially when it comes to getting the most out of marketing grain. Having the right information can take you a long way.

A lack of control can be frustrating. Waiting for the top of the market can lead to decision paralysis and that "deer in the headlights" feeling during price swings.

Grain markets tend to rise gradually and fall quickly. Sudden downturns can feel harsh, while too much information can be overwhelming. That's why it's important to build a basic understanding of how markets work.

At their core, markets are driven by supply and demand.

In a demand-led market, users are actively entering the marketplace, generating longer-run 'bull markets' with rising prices. Be alert to supply shocks that can create brief price spikes as those opportunities may require quick action.

Conversely, in highly supplied markets, where many producers are pushing grain

into the marketplace, prices typically decline, leading to 'bear markets' characterized by falling prices and weaker returns.

Seasonality also shapes supply and demand. In fall, large volumes of grain entering the market add pressure due to abundance. In spring, prices may rise as old crop supplies tighten or weather challenges affect planting. Be aware of these seasonal patterns and how they influence market trends.

Other factors influencing supply and demand include weather, politics, trade, border issues, tariffs and currency fluctuations.

To navigate this complexity, set a clear marketing plan, stick to it and review your results regularly to stay disciplined. Focus on beating the local average price and use an incremental sales approach to build consistency.

With so much to consider, don't hesitate to ask for help. A trusted third-party advisor can support your decision-making, clarity and confidence.

Your grain marketing checklist

- Determine when to move grain based on cash flow, storage capacity and market pricing conditions.
- Implement an incremental selling strategy to manage risk and take advantage of market fluctuations.
- Assess your risk tolerance and personal comfort level with market volatility.
- Choose between offensive (opportunity-driven) or defensive (profit-locking) marketing strategies.
- Monitor seasonal trends and supply cycles that influence grain prices.
- Consult trusted advisors or market analysts to guide informed decision-making.
- Create a clear, consistent marketing plan – and review it regularly to stay on track.
- Manage emotional triggers like FOMO and work to your plan.

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USask graduate advocates for the beef industry

Continued from front

"It was a great opportunity for students to learn about where their food comes from and the story behind it," said Davey.

Davey's advocacy work isn't limited to the Prairies. She was one of two Canadian ambassadors for the World Food Forum Student Ambassador programme led by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. She participated in a youth policy pilot project about food waste and school nutrition in which she developed policy materials with a focus on beef production systems.

Her advocacy work continued this past summer when Davey was a public engagement and stakeholder intern with the Canadian Cattle Association. She was responsible for public outreach and programming such as hosting a documentary launch event and connecting with online influencers.

"Connecting with youth and consumers builds trust and transparency around farming and ranching," said Davey. "People learn about cattle and the environment, the sustainability of raising beef, and the nutrition of eating beef."

Throughout her extracurriculars and summer work experiences, Davey was able to draw upon her USask education to advance her career.

"The Bachelor of Science in Agriculture program provides very diverse opportunities to learn both the academic and practical knowledge of agriculture and livestock production of various species," said Davey. "The professors and academic advisors in the Animal Science program are engaging and work to enhance the student experience. There are so many hands-on learning experiences, such as the ANSC 301 Animal Production Tour course and the ANSC 315 Animal and Poultry Nutrition course."



"The College of Agriculture and Biore-sources is just full of so much history and agricultural legacy in Saskatchewan and is the future of the ag industry."

— Jessica Davey

Led by Dr. Greg Penner (PhD) and department assistant Colin Peterson, ANSC 301 is a seven-day field tour across Western Canada, exploring both traditional and exotic livestock operations, marketing enterprises, and feed processing facilities. In ANSC 315, taught by Dr. Tim Mutsavangwa (PhD), students conduct laboratory work including practical nutritional exercises. Davey and her

classmates assisted PhD candidate Cassidy Ross (thesis supervisor Dr. Gabriel Riberio (PhD)) with a cattle research study.

Originally from Montrose, Sask., Davey has a strong family connection with USask and AgBio, with her mom, dad, brother, and aunt all alumni of the college.

Davey's future plans include continuing her beef ad-

vocacy work and being involved in provincial and national organizations. She co-owns and operates Rivedale Cattle Company, a purebred and commercial beef cattle operation, with her family. Davey also has her own photography business, Jessica Davey Photography. She is looking forward to continuing her career in the agriculture industry.



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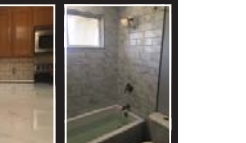
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New partnership provides smoother process for sustainability

Canadian farmers are leading the way with sustainable agriculture, and a new partnership is making it easier and more rewarding to get involved.

Driving sustainability through technology

FCC's Sustainability Incentive Program, combined with SWAT MAPS and AgExpert, is bringing together the best in ag tech innovation and environmental care to help producers adopt eco-friendly practices, streamline access to financing incentives and celebrate those driving positive change in Canadian farming.

Streamlining process for faster results

"FCC is committed to advancing sustainability in Canadian agriculture," says Colin Brisebois, Vice-President, Product and Market Strategies. "By partnering with SWAT MAPS and integrating with AgExpert, we're making it easier to recognize producers for their adoption of practices that benefit their land, business and the environment."

Thanks to this new integration, producers who have a minimum of 50% of their total planted area using SWAT MAPS for precision agriculture may be eligible for

streamlined verification of their 4R practices and qualify for incentives.

"Incentive payments are calculated as a portion of the customer's FCC lending, up to a maximum of \$4,000 per year," says Colin.

Work smarter with AgExpert and SWAT MAPS

"We are pleased to announce this sustainability collaboration with FCC as it embodies the commitment we both have to promoting sustainable agriculture," said Bonnie Dobchuk, Sustainability Director at Croptimistic Technology. "SWAT MAPS customers, using our variable rate prescriptions, can feel confident that they are optimizing their inputs while being good environmental stewards."

SWAT MAPS, a smart soil mapping tool, already helps producers follow 4R practices. Now, by connecting with AgExpert Field, SWAT MAPS users can easily verify their sustainable actions right in the AgExpert platform – meaning no more duplicate data entry. You can learn more about SWAT MAPS here.

If you already use SWAT MAPS and AgExpert, your commitment to sustainability is being noticed, and now

it's even easier to be rewarded. Apply for the FCC 4R Sustainability Incentive Program through AgExpert Field and be part of the growing movement of Canadian farmers leading the way toward a more sustainable future.

Not using AgExpert? Visit agexpert.ca and find out why so many producers are using this software to manage their operations and make solid business decisions.

Help shape the future of sustainable agriculture

Agronomists, agrologists, retailers and other industry professionals play a vital role in verifying 4R adoption and supporting producers in their sustainability journey. With this new integration, it's easier than ever to collaborate, validate practices and contribute to a more sustainable agriculture and food industry.

Partners can help scale impact, build trust and ensure producers are recognized for their efforts – while strengthening their own relationships and service offerings.

By inviting new partners to join in, we're boosting our impact and helping shape the future of sustainable agriculture in Canada. Not part of the collaboration yet?

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Adventures during the off-season

The hum of the combine engines, the augers and the semi tractors slowing down on the highway before turning into the farmyard has been replaced by quietness save for the sound of the odd air bin blowing its contents around inside.

The machines have been cleaned and dusted and washed and parked in their assigned spots and us grain farmers have almost forgotten the mad rush of those harvest days – but not quite. In place of memories of the crazy hours and the warmer memories of meals in the field and long, drawn out campfires are the grands and I await the return of the men from the field in the evenings. Isn't it interesting how the memories become sweeter as time goes on?

I sometimes recall harvest times in the mid-late 60's when I was barely seven or eight years old. My life then was concentrated in the forests of Ontario, with meandering bike rides through the forest, the sound of waterfalls and the picturesque lakes near where we lived. And snow, lots and lots of snow in the place where the wind seldom blew. But summer for our family back then was reserved for the Saskatchewan prairies, not as in a vacation destination but more of a farming destination. Some things are faded memories for me now as in 'who seeded the crops when we were out east?' and 'who finished the harvest when we headed back east to start a new year of school?' Despite not remembering certain details, one thing is clear—we sucked in a lot of dust on those open combines!

Some of you remember those days, I'm sure! Tiny little combines in comparison to today's machines, no cab and if I remember correctly, a long walkway (or so it seemed to me) from the top of the steps to where the seat was. And there we sat (or stood as the case may be and let's not even discuss safety here), out in the open with the dust settling over us like blankets from head to toe. I remember the truck that hauled the grain away. Small doesn't quite describe those grain trucks adequately. But no matter what challenges there likely were in those days for my parents, I have warm memories of riding that combine, the stars shining above (no cab to obscure the direct sight line above) and the wind gently blowing in our hair. Okay so gently doesn't always adequately describe the Saskatchewan winds. Sandwiches and cookies were a mainstay for our on-the-go meals, eventually replaced with four-course meals on the tailgate of the half ton (once we actually owned a half ton) after we had made a permanent move to the prairies.

This fall has seen some amazing temperatures and so it makes our daily trek to the farm to feed farm cats and check bin temperatures an absolute delight! Plus, it allows me to put off opening the "To Be Entered" file of bills and that makes me oh so happy.

A recent trip to the Alberta mountains and to Calgary meant packing up that particular file of bills only to leave

The Lighter Side of
Life...
DOWN ON THE FARM
by donna beutler
FREELANCE PHOTOJOURNALIST
dl_beutler@yahoo.ca



it in my computer bag the entire time I was away. Now that was a holiday!! Visiting with family was the best and staying together with our farm grands, their parents and our niece meant lots of laughs and a few adventures.

The twins (14) had asked well in advance of our trek west if we could take them to Bass Pro and of course I volunteered Grandpa because they all seem to talk the same language – hunting, fishing and arithmetic. Oh pardon me, that would be hunting, fishing and farming, farming being the lesser of what's on those boys' minds right now as they anticipate ice-fishing season and are in the very midst of deer hunting season. The gals and I were a bit more into clothing and shoe stores at the mall and avoided Bass Pro like the plague.

I told the kids when we reached the mall what their Christmas dollar amount was and that they could spend it on whatever they wanted but that I would wrap it up for Christmas and that they had to look surprised and amazed at what we had bought them. They agreed. And with that, us gals parted ways with Gramps and the twins as they set off on their two-hour Bass Pro excursion.

Later, back at the airbnb, I looked at their receipts I asked why one had overspent the limit I had said. And that's when we realized one boy (well Gramps technically) had been charged for two ice fishing rod cases instead of one. Now how were we going to prove that error? 'No problem,' they said when I phoned. Just come back and we will check the video footage for the time shown on the receipt.

Well this was going to be easy or so we thought as we all piled back into the car, headed north to Balzac and east to the mall for the second time that day, proudly avoiding the #2 Highway for the much quieter Centre Street heading north out of Calgary. Unfortunately, we thought we were turning into the parking lot on the south side of the mall only to discover we had taken the wrong turn – one that

took us right out onto the busy #2 and from there back towards our Airbnb and once again, north on Centre Street to Balzac and then east to the mall—for the second time that afternoon.

Knowing we wouldn't miss our turn this time around (and yes it taught me to use the Maps App every time not just some of the time), we arrived at Bass Pro only to see hundreds (literally) of people standing in front of the doors. Not only were we arriving, but so was Santa apparently. In a camo colored boat no less! A couple of kids and I braved the crowds, essentially pushing through people who were more interested in seeing Santa than letting us through and once we got inside we noticed that hundreds more were indoors but customer service was wide open for us!

With all the commotion going on around us in the front entry, lobby and inside the store, customer service (after a 10/15-minute wait) said they would forego looking at the store videos and just refund us our money. 'Sweet!' I thought. 'Is this the credit card this purchase was made on?' the lady asked as I groaned. 'No,' I said, 'the other credit card is with my husband out in the car.' I looked through the hundreds of people now filling the store along with Santa, Mrs. Claus and a long entourage of characters behind them and thought, 'None of this – the trips back and forth to the store, the crowds of people – is worth the \$50 we were getting in refund money.' And then, bless this gal's heart, she said to me, 'We never do this, but I will credit it back to your card.' Now, those were the sweetest words ever heard!

Lunch times with the grands and their friends continue to enlighten us shall we say. We try to sit back and not talk, just listen. And laugh. And raise our eyebrows. The talk is of "We should be under two feet of powder by now," and "Did you feed the steers this morning?" and "What's for lunch tomorrow, Grandma?" and "So and so is such an awesome/awful teacher." As I said, enlightening.

There's lots of talk of deer hunting too as the majority of the 'Lunch Bunch' are hunters. So not only do we hear about the "fish that got away," we also hear about the "deer that got away." Not so for our oldest granddaughter though who, home from university for the weekend, tagged her buck barely an hour into the season. I am not sure who was more proud, her or Gramps.

The off-season from the busy spring/fall season (for us) has been replaced by some quieter moments though the farm never has a shortage of work to do. And that's good, it's time for some downtime and to be able to catch our breath. Having said that, it's also time to get ready for Christmas! The time to celebrate the birth of the King of Kings and to share His love with all those around us. Here's hoping your Christmas is full of blessings, love and laughter! Until next time!

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Enhanced FCC Transition Loan terms aim to better support ag and food entrepreneurs

Agriculture and agri-food business owners transferring farm or business assets to new owners now have a new option to consider, given recent changes to Farm Credit Canada's (FCC) Transition Loan. The loan's new terms come at a very important time. Canada's agriculture and food system is sitting on more than \$50 billion in farm assets expected to be transferred in the next 10 years.

"Transferring the family farm or business can be a stressful thing to manage, but the support of the FCC Transition Loan can help address the financial barriers folks experience," said The Honourable Heath MacDonald, federal minister of agriculture and agri-food. "It also creates opportunities for people looking to start or expand their operations, making it a real investment in the future of our agricultural sector."

The enhanced FCC Transition Loan is specifically designed to facilitate the transfer of assets, making it easier for both buyers and sellers. The new terms allow disbursements to the seller over a period that extends to 10 years. The loan is available for farms, agribusiness or food businesses going through changes in ownership, be it within or outside the family.

"One of the most consistent challenges faced by Canadian producers is transitioning their operations to either family or an outside qualified buyer. It is complex, nuanced, and emotional," said Justine Hendricks, FCC president and CEO. "For our part, we've been working hard to build a loan product that makes transition and sale easier for both buyers and sellers. Whether the buyers are new to the sector or not, this product is focused on delivering peace of mind and flexibility to Canadian agriculture and agri-food producers. It's designed specifically with affordability and success in mind."

Benefits for the seller:

- Guaranteed full payment of the sale proceeds by FCC
- Customized payment schedule for up to 10 years, and
- Opportunity to support a next generation entrepreneur

Benefits for the buyer:

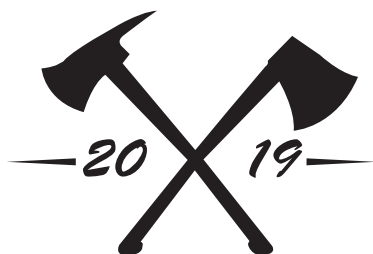
- No need for upfront capital for a down payment
- Flexibility to choose between improving cash flow or building equity (potential to reduce interest expense and pay off loan sooner), and
- FCC's AgExpert software is included

"The FCC Transition Loan has been a game changer for our farm," said Aaron and Amber Hoffus, grain, oilseed and cow-calf producers in Bjorkdale, Sask. "It has helped us to secure land and equipment, with flexible terms and saving interest helped us to continue growing. We've had the opportunity to grow and build our family farm for our kids, and hopefully generations to come, and would recommend the FCC Transition Loan to anyone looking to do the same. The enhancements to this particular FCC loan come at a critical time and can help other entrepreneurs



neers like us better manage the realities that come with the transfer of assets."

The FCC Transition Loan complements FCC's suite of products and services that support young producers and entrepreneurs, including FCC Advisory Services. For more information on the FCC Transition Loan, visit www.fcc.ca/transitionloan.



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Farmers take the hit while biofuel companies cash in

Canada's emissions policy rewards biofuels but punishes the people who grow our food.

Policymakers and environmental advocates decry methane and carbon dioxide emissions from livestock digestion, respiration and manure decay, labelling them urgent climate threats. Yet they celebrate the same corn and canola crops when diverted to ethanol and biodiesel as heroic offsets against fossil fuels.

Biofuels are good, but food is bad.

This double standard isn't just inconsistent—it backfires. It ignores the full life cycle of the agricultural sector's methane and carbon dioxide emissions and the historical reality that modern farming's productivity owes its existence to hydrocarbons. It's time to confront these hypocrisies head-on, or we risk chasing illusory credits while penalizing the very system that feeds us.

Let's take Canada as an example.

It's estimated that our agriculture sector emits 69 megatonnes (Mt) of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) annually, or 10 per cent of national totals. Around 35 Mt comes from livestock digestion and respiration, including methane produced during digestion and carbon dioxide released through breathing. Manure composting adds another 12 Mt through methane and nitrous oxide.

Even crop residue decomposition is counted in emissions estimates.

Animal digestion and respiration, including burping and flatulence, and the composting of their waste are treated as industrial-scale pollutants.

These aren't fossil emissions—they're part of the natural carbon cycle, where last year's stover or straw returns to the atmosphere after feeding soil life. Yet under United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) guidelines adopted by Canada, they're lumped into "agricultural sources," making farmers look like climate offenders for doing their job.

Ironically, only 21 per cent—about 14 Mt—of the sec-



Joseph Fournier

tor's emissions come from actual fossil fuel use on the farm.

This inconsistency becomes even more apparent in the case of biofuels.

Feed the corn to cows, and its digestive gases count as a planetary liability. Turn it into ethanol, and suddenly it's an offset.

Canada's Clean Fuel Regulations (CFR) mandate a 15 per cent CO₂e intensity drop by 2030 through the use of biofuels. In this program, biofuel producers earn offset credits per litre, which become a major part of their revenue, alongside fuel sales.

Critics argue the CFR is essentially a second carbon tax, expected to add up to 17 cents per litre at the pump by 2030, with no consumer rebate this time.

But here's the rub: crop residue emits carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide whether the grain goes to fuel or food.

Diverting crops to biofuels doesn't erase these emissions: it just shifts the accounting, rewarding biofuel producers with credits while farmers and ranchers take the emissions hit.

These aren't theoretical concerns: they're baked into policy.

If ethanol and biodiesel truly offset emissions, why penalize the same crops when used to feed livestock?

And why penalize farmers for crop residue decomposition while ignoring the emissions from rotting leaves,

trees and grass in nature?

This contradiction stems from flawed assumptions and bad math.

Fossil fuels are often blamed, while the agricultural sector's natural carbon loop is treated like a threat. Policy seems more interested in pinning blame than in understanding how food systems actually work.

This disconnect isn't new—it's embedded in the history of agriculture.

Since the Industrial Revolution, mechanization and hydrocarbons have driven abundance. The seed drill and reaper slashed labour needs. Tractors replaced horses, boosting output and reducing the workforce.

Yields exploded with synthetic fertilizers made using methane and other hydrocarbon inputs.

For every farm worker replaced, a barrel of oil stepped in.

A single modern tractor holds the energy equivalent of 50 to 100 barrels of oil, powering ploughing, planting and harvesting that once relied on sweat and oxen.

We've traded human labour for hydrocarbons, feeding billions in the process.

Biofuel offsets claim to reduce this dependence. But by subsidizing crop diversion, they deepen it; more corn for ethanol means more diesel for tractors.

It's a policy trap: vilify farmers to fund green incentives, all while ignoring the fact that oil props up the table we eat from.

Policymakers must scrap the double standards, adopt full-cycle biogenic accounting, and invest in truly regenerative technologies or lift the emissions burden off farmers entirely.

Dr. Joseph Fournier is a senior fellow at the Frontier Centre for Public Policy. An accomplished scientist and former energy executive, he holds graduate training in chemical physics and has written more than 100 articles on energy, environment and climate science.



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J. WES GLENNIE | CELL: 306.339.7578 | BOX 425, CARNDUFF, SK, S0C 0S0

JWESGLENNIE@GMAIL.COM