

NOVEMBER 2021

First win by a woman, first win with Clydesdale team: Michelle Newton wins Chore Team Competition at Agribition

BY KEVIN WEEDMARK

Moosomin came out strong in the Chore Team competition at Agribition this year.

Michelle Newton won the competition—the first time it has been won by a woman and the first time it has been won with a team of Clydesdales—and Amanda van de Kerckhove came in sixth.

"I had a really good couple of days there," says Michelle. "What they did this year at Agribition is, they had to change it up a little bit to combat Covid and so they tried to get most of our competition in, in one day. So what they did is they set up a pattern. So you have to drive your horses, ground drive them to a little skid that's heavier and you drag that, you hook to that, and then you go hook to the wagon and you can't cross lines and go through an alley in a figure-eight, you have to dock, do all these things in a pattern."

"Then they time you also so you can only do it in so many minutes and you get points for each obstacle that you complete and how you do it."

"Then at the end they rate you. There were 12 teams total that they accepted entries for. Normally on other years they do a pattern competition and then they do a speed race where it's fun and you throw bales and they do a water race to see how much water you can keep in, but they didn't do the fun events this year, they just did two rounds of the pattern—one round in the morning and one round in the afternoon."

"Twelve teams did the patterns and then at a dinner break we brought in some farm equipment, some drills and stuff like that just for an audience pleaser, just to show people what else we do."

"Then they did round two of the pattern and then they placed the top six and I won first place for top six and then the finals were Tuesday at noon. So six teams did the pattern again on Tuesday at noon and that's when I won the championship."

Michelle says the competition isn't something horses can be specifically trained for.

"You work with your horses, you don't necessarily train them for each obstacle, you just work with them, spend time with them just like any riding or any animal sport."

"You just work with them and not every obstacle is the same, each competition has their own pattern. So you get there and they tell you the pattern and that's when you know what you have to do."

"I was really lucky, I also got chosen to be Teamster of the Year too, chosen by the judges and committee members. So I got an extra prize on top of the prizes, so it was really cool."

Michelle has been around horses all her life but has been working with Clydesdales for just a few years.

"I grew up with light horses, and I got my first team of horses just seven years ago and then from there just started doing competitions. It was just some place to go to get together with other people that drive, and you learn things and have a good time and it's a lot of fun. Like when you're around the people that enjoy doing what you



Michelle Newton took first place in the Chore Team Competition at Agribition this year. It's the first time the competition has been won by a woman, and the first time it has been won with a team of Clydesdales. Inset is her championship buckle.

do. It was really good."

What does she enjoy most about working with Clydesdales? "Oh, their mannerisms," she says. "They've just got such big hearts. They just do what you want them to do and try their best. My mares are amazing, they give me everything they've got."

"It's my therapy. Some people hunt or golf, that kind of thing, and I have my team of horses. When you're having a good day or a bad day, that's what you go to. It's my break from reality."

Michelle says she was happy to see how well another competitor originally from the local area, Amanda Van De Kerckhove, did at the competition.

"She's in Saskatoon now. She made the top six and she

placed in sixth overall out of the 12 at the end of the two days. So she did really good, too!"

Before this year, the best Newton has done in the competition is fourth overall.

"I was tied for third, but because your pattern plus time, the other guy was slightly faster so I ended up in fourth and that's the best I've ever done."

"I've won a few banners in the water race before, but never in the actual pattern. The pattern one is the hardest one, it's the most stressful I guess you could say. The feed and the water race are more entertainment and fun, it's not quite as stressful."

"So I'm very happy with how it went this year, I was really lucky!"

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The Roquette pea protein plant in Portage la Prairie

World's largest Pea Protein Plant opens at Portage

BY CHELSEA KEMP

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Portage la Prairie celebrated the opening of the world's largest pea protein processing plant Wednesday.

The "Plant for the Future" was established by Roquette to meet the rising demand for alternative proteins across the world, said the company's CEO, Pierre Courduroux.

"We see this as a transformational event in our history and a boost to the global plant-based food sector," Courduroux said. "Diets have changed considerably in recent years, and the desire for alternative proteins continues to grow. Our company is proud to bring this amazing new facility online to serve demand in North America and around the world."

A virtual grand opening and press conference was held Wednesday to celebrate the opening of the plant. The event included information about pea protein, cooking tips using the plant, and appearances from Canadian astronaut Chris Hadfield, Courduroux, Roquette senior vice-president Jeremy Burks and Roquette's Canadian managing director, Dominique Baumann.

Roquette has worked closely with food leaders to develop new products that aid in the development of new plant-based cuisine, Courduroux said, and these steps are creating more sustainable food for a healthier planet.

Demand for pea protein has been growing — multiple industry estimates expect an annual global growth rate between 15 and 24 per cent over the next decade.

He added with the establishment of the plant in Portage la Prairie, Roquette is the only company with major pea protein facilities on both sides of the Atlantic, which will aid in its ability to meet expanding consumer demands.

Portage la Prairie was chosen as the site for the plant because the region produces the most peas in the world, the city

is close to Winnipeg and has easy access to the United States — shortening supply chains and securing access to a high-quality product.

"It really positions us as a true leader in this plant protein market to have that presence on both sides of the ocean," Courduroux said. "This is going to be a fantastic tool for Roquette to continue building this future with our customers and partners."

The 200,000-square-foot plant in Portage can process 125,000 tons of yellow peas per year. When combined with Roquette's plant in France, the company's capacity now rises to 250,000 tons of peas per year.

With this new facility, Roquette has largely exceeded its \$713-million (500 million euro) investment in plant proteins it had targeted in the 2015-2020 period.

The plant sits on 60 acres in Portage, and the facility is looking to expand in regards to future production on an available 200 acres they have purchased.

It will have a full staff of 120 — 114 positions have already been filled.

"It's a great feeling for us. It's been a long journey. It's not necessarily been easy all the way, but I'm so proud when I look at the achievement of the Roquette team," Courduroux said.

He added it has been a challenge scaling up production at the company, given the grand opening and construction of the plant took place during COVID-19.

Burks said they were able to learn from their operations in China and Europe and quickly adapt protocols to ensure the safety of workers.

The opening of the plant marked an important milestone for the company and the industry. He said Roquette is acting as a pioneer in the Westman area and will help grow the industry as a whole working as a leader and partner with farmers.

Burks said it has been a challenge ex-

panding the use of peas, especially because there has been a marked effort at the company to ensure nothing goes to waste.

He added the pea processor is always exploring proteins to work with and regularly deals with peas, wheat and wheat proteins.

The focus at the Portage plant will be peas.

"Peas provide a tremendously versatile protein with many different applications, so that's going to keep us pretty busy in the short term," Burks said.

Global demand for the plant protein is expected to grow, he added, describing it as a "fast-moving target."

The growth is expected to be sustainable for the future, and the Portage plant will aid Roquette in meeting consumer needs. The main market for the protein

coming out of the Portage plant is human nutrition, but he did not rule out expanding into pet and animal feed.

Roquette is working across the supply chain and is looking to source a variety of peas for its plant, Burks said.

The company has a farm where different varieties of peas are grown so they can better understand their performance in a variety of conditions. This is also done for other crops.

"We work in close collaboration with the farmers ... and give them what we've learned with our own experience," Burks said. "This has to be a good deal for everybody, and we believe that by helping on the production side of our raw material, the growth of the pea, that we can make some progress there for the benefit of the growers."



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Wetlands and drought

Are we being Hydro-illogical? This is our first article on the winter series.

Do you suffer from being "hydro-illogical"? Sadly most of us do. While this word is likely new to you it has been around for decades. It describes how people tend to forget about a drought after it rains...and then go back to behaving and using water as if there was no drought. That's the hydro-illogical cycle.

When drought ends, or we get rain, people are often glad to resume business as usual. Although people should appreciate the moisture, we also need to stop and learn from the experience. Drought is a creeping disaster, and our Climate history predicts that drought will happen again just as it has done repeatedly before. What can we learn from this drought is that there will be a next one, we need to better prepare, and it could be worse due to climate change.

According to Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada the worst Saskatchewan drought was recorded back in 1961 when portions of the province received roughly 60 per cent less precipitation than normal. This year's drought is expected to cover a larger area than in 1961.

While drought affects everyone, it affects farmers immediately, ruining a crop or devastate animals in the blink of an eye. How we and our governments respond to drought (and other natural disasters for that matter) has become a topic of concern as governments continue to distribute increasing amounts of money to victims and sectors for drought relief. Despite governments spending \$100's of billions in aid for past droughts, studies have shown that drought disaster relief does little to reduce vulnerability for the next drought. It may even increase vulnerability because it encourages the status quo. In other words, vulnerability to drought is often the direct result of poor planning and poor resource management.

Alice Davis
Lower Qu'Appelle
Watershed Stewards

In a recent interview, Dr. John Pomeroy, Director of USask Centre for Hydrology and Canada Research Chair in Water Resources and Climate Change pointed out that farmers haven't helped themselves by draining wetlands across the province. "It's reduced the holding capacity of a river basin and the landscape," Pomeroy said of the common practice. "Also, that water carries nutrients, fertilizer and phosphorus, which feeds algae blooms and causes our lakes to go green. Sloughs, ponds and wetlands are the areas where groundwater is recharged. We've actually inadvertently cut off the recharge of groundwater in many areas". Unfortunately, what seems like a simple water management technique to farmers and governments, not only causes problems downstream, but makes problems worse during drought.

Dr. Pomeroy also said he believes that Saskatchewan's Water Security Agency (WSA) has approved every drainage permit. Not surprising given a recent Audit of WSA by the Provincial Auditor who found that WSA is not adequately assessing the risks when approving wetland drainage and is not actively searching for illegal drainage activity. According to WSA's 202 annual report, over the last three years the agency has licensed drainage for an area 13 times the city of Regina without protecting one acre of wetland.

Despite being possibly one of the worst droughts on record, track hoes and bulldozers are once again out on the landscape this fall draining and cultivating more wetlands to farm more acres, and WSA continues to promote and develop thousands of more drainage projects. We couldn't be more hydro-illogical. By destroying wetlands, we destroy the very thing that flight climate change by storing carbon, act like mini air-conditioners on the landscape moderating temperatures, and store water during times of drought and slowly release it during floods. Draining wetlands also send more nutrients into our lakes increasing algae blooms, causes flooding and destroys precious wildlife habitat. Despite all these benefits an estimated 29,000 acres of wetlands are drained annually in Saskatchewan and most without a license even though one is required by law.

The challenge is to move away from simply responding to crises with aid and instead develop a more proactive resource management approach that identifies risk and targets programs such as wetland protection and restoration to reduce that risk. Building resilience lessens the need for costly crisis-oriented government interventions. We need to conserve wetlands rather than pay billions of dollars for drought aid. We need to put programs and incentives in place to make it worthwhile for farmers to retain those wetlands and safeguard the benefits they provide our watersheds. We need governments promoting wetland protection policies not drainage policies. Sadly, Saskatchewan is still the only province without a Wetland Protection Policy and WSA continues to develop drainage projects in the face of drought and climate change. We are being "hydro-illogical".

For more information about wetlands and watershed stewardship, and the Lower Qu'Appelle Watershed Stewards visit: <https://www.lqws.ca>.

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SARM and SUMA launch Saskatchewan Rural Crime Watch Association

BY SIERRA D'SOUZA BUTTS

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Saskatchewan Rural Crime Watch Association has elected its first Board of Directors to assist local areas with the development and sustainability of local Crime Watch groups.

Ray Orb, the president of the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities (SARM), says rural crime across the province is a huge issue.

"For some time at least for a couple of years, rural crime is still an issue. We believe it's still too high, that's why we are addressing it by looking at this provincial wide association," says Orb.

"It's still a big problem, we still get a lot of reports and I know the RCMP do too. Whether it's about break-ins, property theft, vandalism, a lot of those numbers are too high. It's the safety and well-being of a lot of those rural people, in some areas they might not feel safe because that area may have had a lot of break-ins or a lot of thefts in their area. It's an issue, you know safety, damage to property in some cases it is pretty high. There's a variety of issues behind that but it's still a priority for us."

Orb says he hopes one of the outcomes to come from this provincial crime watch association is for citizens and organizations to be aware of what's happening in their rural areas.

"We're hoping for better ways to communicate with the local crime watch associations and the organizations, SARM, SUMA, the RCMP and the Ministry of Corrections as well. We're hoping to really get the information out there from the RCMP. One example is to keep your eyes and ears open, looking to see what's out there in rural areas."

"It might be a rash of break ins, something like that. The awareness is there and we're hoping to better facilitate this through this provincial light association by sharing this information, and creating better awareness along with providing feedback from RCMP," he says.

The most common crime that oc-



curs in rural areas in Saskatchewan is drug trafficking, Orb says.

"According to the RCMP, there's a certain amount of crime that's created by drug trafficking. There's people out there needing money because of the drug trades and there are a certain number of gangs out there as well. Honestly people travel across the country more now and in some cases, we are getting people from other provinces that are taking drugs across rural areas."

Through the Saskatchewan Crime Watch Association, citizens are able to report an incident to the association and from there, the RCMP will follow up on the case.

"It's very easy for citizens to report an incident. We work with the local RCMP attachment, if you want to go out to Rural Crime Watch Association then the individual will need to contact their local RCMP attachment," he says.

To participate in the program, Rural Crime Watch volunteers will have to complete security checks with their local RCMP. The role of members is to observe, record, and immediately report all unusual or sus-

picious vehicles or occurrences to their local RCMP detachment, or 911 in the case of emergencies. The RCMP, in return, will inform the Rural Crime Watch group when there is criminal activity in the area.

"By reporting suspicious activity immediately to the RCMP or 911, volunteers become the extra eyes and ears for local police when they may not be in their area," says Orb.

This non-profit association led by SARM, SUMA, Rural Crime Watch members, the RCMP, and the Ministry of Corrections and Policing is a community-led and police-supported program dedicated to preventing and reducing criminal behaviour. It's an initiative both SARM and SUMA hope community members will actively support by becoming volunteers.

"Rural Crime Watch has already been proven successful. Statistics show that areas with organized Crime Watch programs tend to have a significant reduction in criminal activity, including theft of equipment and grain, vandalism, dumping of garbage, break-and-enters, and cattle rus-

ting," Orb says.

With this association currently in effect, he says he's hoping to reduce rural crime across the province. "I'm hoping this does make a difference for when we look at the stats for rural crime numbers, that when they are reporting the numbers, we are seeing a reduction. I think to some extent they are making a difference already, because there are a number of RMs already working. But I'm hoping that we see a larger drop, especially when we look at the stats now compared to a year before or a couple of years before, we want to see a difference. That's really our goal," Orb says.

"We're happy about this and hope it makes a difference, there's still a lot of work ahead of us but we've got lots of help from our local crime watch associations already. We've got people who have been really promoting this. Part of this crime watch network would be either councillors, reeve's in the RM and some local people too that are helping us promote this. As well the RCMP too. We are really thankful to them and the ministry, also SUMA, we are really thankful for working together on this project."

Other local crime associations, and organizations like SUMA and the RCMP will be working very closely with the Board of Directors of the Saskatchewan Rural Crime Watch Association.

"Our communities have always looked out for each other," says SUMA President, Rodger Hayward. "We share a common goal of wanting safer homes and safer communities, and starting a Rural Crime Watch program in your area makes that goal actionable. Simply put, working together helps the police solve and prevent crime, which makes our communities safer places to live."

The Rural Crime Watch Association is already in effect, as a team of Board of Directors is in motion.

The inaugural Board of Directors meeting is being planned for the near future where a President and Vice-President will be elected.

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Agriculture business case competition engages post-secondary students on campuses across Canada

Program will introduce students to the agriculture career track as they tackle complex business challenges in the industry

The Canadian Agricultural Human Resources Council (CAHRC) is pleased to announce the launch of a new partnership with the Business and Higher Education Roundtable (BHER) to create an agriculture-focused business case competition for Canadian post-secondary students from any discipline. This partnership is made possible through generous support from the Government of Canada.

The goal of this partnership is to increase the number of post-secondary students considering agriculture as a career choice. Research conducted by CAHRC has shown that there will be a need for 123,000 more workers in agriculture by 2029. Innovative programs such as this one are essential to draw the next generation of Canadians into the agri-workforce.

"There is a real need to explore untapped labour sources as we look to the future of the agri-workforce," said Jennifer Wright, Acting Executive Director at CAHRC. "Agriculture offers outstanding opportunities and

we need to expand awareness of these opportunities to students in more general disciplines such as science, information technology, business or marketing. We are excited to introduce post-secondary students to the rewarding careers available across the value-chain."

Launched in fall 2021, the business case competition is co-designed with BHER, students, educators and employer advisory groups. Working to solve real-life business problems, students from agriculture and non-agriculture backgrounds, such as STEM and business facilities, will collaborate, network and connect with employers involved in the project.

Under-represented groups, such as women, newcomers, Indigenous students and students with disabilities are encouraged to join the business case competition and bring diversity and innovation to solving agriculture's unique challenges. Participation in the program will benefit students, educators and employers alike as they share ideas and expand networks for future career opportunities.

opportunities.

"The Canadian agriculture industry is a primary economic driver for Canada but faces exceptionally high job vacancies and Covid-19 has amplified the impact of this", added Wright. "The opportunity to partner with BHER to engage agriculture and non-agriculture students alike in building awareness of the industry and job-ready skills is exciting and will have a positive impact on the industry."

Three post-secondary campuses have signed on to take part in the business case competition this fall including: Fanshawe College in London, Ontario; Lakeland College in Vermillion, Alberta; and Northern Farm Training Institute in Hay River, Northwest Territories. Following the completion of campus-based competitions, the top teams from each school will take part in a national competition in winter 2022. There is still time to sign your school up for the campus competition. Please contact CAHRC to find out more.

Moosomin 4-H Multi Club

BY CAMDYN SPARVIER

On Sunday November 7, 2021, the Moosomin Multi 4-H Club members met at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Moosomin.

Our annual bottle drive was held during the month of October, thank you to all who supported us.

We have many projects going this year and all are underway. Our Light Horse group was busy taking advantage of the beautiful weather this fall with seven riding lessons! Farm Machinery has been busy

meeting Friday evenings working on their projects and the Canine group has been learning how to groom their dogs! The Sewing group made Halloween costumes for their dogs, hair scrunchies and are now working on making tote bags.

Main courses and desserts have been made by the Cooking project and the Exploring 4-H group has been going on nature hikes, learning about eatable berries and how to make medicine out of them!

Our Woodworking group made bird houses and shelves and the Car Care group was planning to get their winter tires on their vehicles!

It has been a busy fall and everyone is enjoying their projects so far.

We would like to thank Benjamin Franson for braving the cold and laying a wreath on behalf of our Club at the Remembrance Day service in Moosomin on November 11.

Our next planned meeting is Sunday January 16, 2022 at St. Mary's Catholic Church.

Saskatchewan agriculture helps feed the world and helps fuel our province's growth.

Thank you to our agriculture community for the enormous contribution you make!

Steven Bonk,

MLA

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The trip to Alberta and getting work done

With harvest but a distant memory, the idea of a road trip to our neighboring province to the west was enticing. With some hesitation to travel in this continuing pandemic, we finally bit the bullet and made the decision to take some get-away time in before winter is fully upon us.

We booked some rooms and planned our departure day two or three weeks ahead of time. As the days grew closer we heard the dreaded word—blizzard. Really? It had been a full two years since we had even considered an out-of-province trip and now a blizzard was on its way. As it was we didn't have to make a decision about leaving on our planned departure day because all highways in the Regina vicinity were closed and there was no question—we were storm stuck in our own home. Fortunately the highways the following day were excellent, though the city of Regina appeared to have been inundated by snow. Every south-facing side of every building there had been plastered with snow from roof to ground, windows included. What a sight!

As we reached Alberta, having driven through the snow-free western part of Saskatchewan, we noticed tractors alongside the ditch up in the distance. And wouldn't you know, after travelling in post-blizzard Saskatchewan, there were mowers out cutting grass in Alberta!

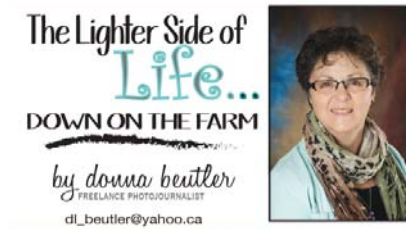
As I drove, humming along to the country music playing on the radio, my hubby enjoying a siesta moment, I could see flashing lights in the distance. As I got closer, I saw a ginormous something on a long flat deck trailer, followed by the required "wide load" half-ton. I have no clue what it was, but to best describe it would be to say a huge (perhaps 20-foot) metal cube. Its sides stretched out over the flat deck by at least six feet on either side. And every now and then it wobbled quite extensively and then seemed to settle back in for the ride (clipping along at 100 km an hour, no less). I moved

into the passing lane and slowed to allow the car ahead of me to pass this beast before I attempted to go past it myself. As I steadied my speed, this thing began to really wobble (as in nearly touching the pavement to its left, then to its right, back and forth). I feared for the car ahead, knowing it would be obliterated if this thing went over.

My heart began to race as I closed in on the moment I would start to pass, but the cube steadied itself and then, just as I began to speed up, the wobbling started again, only this time, sparks flew up from the highway as it touched down. I hit the brakes, my hubby sat straight up and the "wide-load" half-ton sped up beside me. By this time, my heart was in my chest as the ginormous cube settled back into some semblance of stability. I am pretty sure the wide-load driver next to me could feel the terror I was feeling.

My now-wide-awake guy had some words of wisdom for me as I was deciding whether to pass or drive the next hundred miles at less than speed-limit. "Put it to the floor when you go past," I was duly instructed and let me tell you, that's precisely what I did. I am pretty sure I was doing nothing less than rocket speed as I went past. Whew! That was just crazy, I thought as I continued on towards Calgary.

Our first overnight stop, with Covid precautions in mind, we chose to order supper delivered to our hotel. We gave our name, our phone number, our hotel location and room number but an hour later, we were still waiting. Hour and a quarter. Hour and a half. Hour and three-quarters. That's when the call came asking why we hadn't picked up our food. "Didn't you tell me you offer delivery and then ask me for my hotel address and room number?" I asked. "Yes, I did," she responded. "So would you like me to change this then from pick up to delivery?" "No," I said. "Just keep it as delivery." "Okay," she answered and voila! a few



minutes later, supper arrived! Needless to say, I wasn't sure this vacay was off to a very good start.

An overnight visit by one nine-year-old and two 10-year-old grandchildren a few weeks ago was a reminder that when you live on a farm and you are away from said farm, it's always on your mind anyhow, even if you are only 10. "We'll need to go out to the farm in the morning," one twin said to Gramps. "Yup, gotta feed the animals," the other said, "and gather the eggs." While they proceeded to give Grandpa instructions for morning chores in the absence of their parents, I paid little attention. I was already planning my laid-back, do-nothing Sunday.

I did suggest to them however, that we sleep in until 8:00 the next morning and have a leisurely breakfast together before anyone headed out to the farm. At 7:30 I heard someone (our 14-year-old granddaughter) let herself in (having heard it might be a good morning for a pre-hunting season drive to look for deer). By 8:00, when I got out of the shower, the kitchen was deserted. Empty breakfast plates sat on the table, the bacon and scrambled eggs were all gone and the syrup bottle sitting on the table was a reminder that not everyone eats their eggs with ketchup. Ahhh yes, the call of the farm, even if it is Sunday morning and even if you are just a 10-year-old kid.

The kids eventually returned home to snuggle under throws on the couch with iPads in hand. My question about what they wanted for lunch went unanswered;

Done. I volunteered to everyone I knew who needed a poster made or a wooden sign created that I had all the time in the world to do one for them. It's not like I didn't know I was procrastinating in getting those farm books entered, but what was it gonna take for me to get serious about actually getting them done. And then came the dare!

There's something about a dare such as that one from my hubby: "You'll never have them up to date by the time we leave for Alberta." And that's all it took! The part of farming that has always been the thorn in my side was completely and fully completed well before departure day.

A few years back, I had written a column based loosely on not being able to find my cooking oil on a busy harvest day as I was attempting to make supper for the field. The twins eventually told me, some three days later, that they had been playing store and it was under the dresser in the spare bedroom. As it was, the column ran in a fall ag issue of the Spectator/P&V and then, a year or two later, inadvertently ran again instead of a "new" one. I knew none of this until my next door neighbor, at a community function at the Legion Hall, tapped me on the back, leaned over and asked if I had found my oil yet. I laughed but at the

time I had no idea what he was talking about.

Later, I discovered the story behind the story, so to speak, and over the past few years, it has become a bit of a one-liner by those who read these columns: "Have you found your oil yet?" Today the first person to ask me that question left this earth and my heart is broken. The fellow who brought us fresh garden veggies, cut our lawn if we were away, watered our flowers, welcomed us into their yard and their home for many a visit, delivered peach cobbles every single harvest and delectable Christmas goodies every Christmas no matter what, helped me raise the walls of my she-shed, shovelled many wheelbarrows of clay into the gaping hole between our homes after our new build, and in general just made our move to town so welcoming and so wonderful. Wolfie taught us how enjoyable it could be to just sit outdoors and enjoy a good old chit-chat, something we never did often enough on the farm.

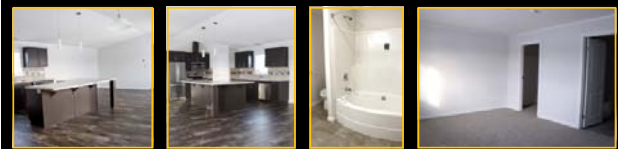
And so, to all our farmer friends especially, but to everyone in general, take time in the busy-ness of life to enjoy some sit-down time for yourself, reach out to those who could use a helping hand and those who don't—after all there is nothing better than connecting with others for the simple enjoyment of a good ol' chit-chat. Until next time...

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APAS says shipping delays cap off a tough year

BY SIERRA D'SOUZA BUTTS

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

With the recent heavy rainfall in B.C., the Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan (APAS) speaks about what their plans are in supporting farmers in the province during these tough times.

APAS' president Todd Lewis, speaks about what farmers should expect during the delays of grain transportation across the country.

What are the immediate impacts on the Prairie commodities in the market, based on the infrastructure closures in B.C.?

"Well we really have to see how it's going to affect the market, we're expecting some delays in shipping of course. The number of days it has been delayed always works its way back to the farm gate. I think we're at the stage now where it's not something that can't be overcome, if they're able to resume as quickly as possible, hopefully repairs will be made in a safe and sound manner."

"The wild card in all of this is seeing more weather related events, there's talk about more rain on the coast for the next number of days and of course we are going into the winter period, the weather is always unpredictable around the winter time too. It's not unusual to have shipping delays in the winter but really some of the damage to the track and to the infrastructure is unprecedented. Of course we are hoping the repairs will keep going on as well as they have, and that we'll see some resumption in service this week some time."

How have the CP rail and CN rail, informed you about how this will impact grain shipments?

"We've been following what's been on the news, there have been a couple of government calls over the last week and so. We know the CN and CP are doing their best, it's their business to ensure that the train gets up and running as quickly as possible. We're satisfied that these are amazing jobs that they are doing, as far as engineering and the jobs trying to get product the places that have been moshed out. There's lots of issues as far as maintenance repairs, you know we trust the railroads to our best and of course, the safety of the workers who are trying to do these repairs, we just wish everyone well. We're satisfied, I think our producers are satisfied, an are being patient and just hoping for the best."

Do you have an idea of how long this impact will affect shipments of grain?

"Not yet, to be fair we'll see that as we go forward, particularly over the Christmas season is a little bit of a slower pace with grain shipments and we really don't see that changing much. After these repairs have been made, the system is going to take a while to get back, it's a big complicated system and it's going to take a while to get up to speed. We expect to see service restored as quickly as possible and resume to normal as quickly as possible, but it's going to take a while to get there and we understand that. We just hope that these repairs get made and do their best to get back to normal shipping, as soon as possible."

Aside from this recent issue, are shipments of grain a concern?

"I think the shipping season you know as we go forward, there's less crops to ship this year of course because of the drought. We want to ensure there's enough engine power there too to ensure this year's crop. Of course we're simply hoping to see labor and equipment maintained to a level that we're able to ship the crops in a timely fashion, really the whole shipping system is under stress coming out from Covid. There's been lots of backlogs. Grains are no different, we certainly hope to see shipping get back to normal sooner than later. We'll be keeping a close eye over the winter Winter."

In your opinion, does the federal or provincial government have a grain strategy for farmers in Saskatchewan?

"They certainly do, the provinces and the federal government. The federal government are the regulators of the railroads, we only have two railroads operating in this



APAS President Todd Lewis

country, it's a duopoly. The minister of transport as well, the Canadian Rail Transportation (CRT), they all work together. There's also collaborations for disasters like this, there's the government in B.C. as well."

"I think governments want to see grains move as well, it's an important part of the Canadian economy, not just Western Canada, not just Saskatchewan but a huge part of our trade balance with our trading partners. It's important that we see grain move and I think we'll see the government step up as well to do their best to ensure we get through this difficult period."

In the long run, what needs to change to ensure Prairie commodities can get to the market on time?

Well CP and CN rail both have winter grain movement plans and I think we need to see those plans being robust. That when the plans are put in place, the shipping schedule that is within those plans, if some of those plans don't occur we need to see why they didn't happen and just understand some of the problems that can arise. Over time we understand better when the railroads have problems, that these problems are recognized and alleviated as quickly as possible."

"This particular issue now with the heavy rain fall and the damages that arose, nobody can foresee that kind of damage and that kind of storm. But at the same time, as we come out of this and we hope to see collaboration between railroads, and shippers as well, the railroads, you know to ship product - to use other routes. Through the United States for example and up to our northern import of Prince Rupert so to see grain move in a timely fashion I think we need some out of the box thinking perhaps because we see more damage from delays. It really is important that this year's crops get to our customers because Canada has a reputation of being a reliable source of product or international customers, it's important to maintain that reputation."

In general, how big of an issue is transportation?

"Well some years in the past we've had some terrible shipping years, its cost farmers billions in the past but you know all we can do is keep moving forward. It is a

evolving industry and situation, so things like this weather situation, sure hasn't helped things but that's the whole part of trying to move grain in a country as big as Canada. With the weather and large distances, it has to be covered but the industry is resilient and the railroads are resilient, you know hopefully we get through this just like we have with other crises, and to continue to see improvements to see grain move. We have an increase in volumes within the radar this year with the lower productions, but over the last decade we've seen a huge increase in volumes and we'll continue to. We're just hoping that we continue to see par with the railroads, and it's a big part of their business, grain movement. For the entire economy it's a down, it's not just the grain system, it's a huge part of the economy. The port of Vancouver for instance is the main economic driver activity in the lower mainland, and grain moving through that port is very important."

With all things considered this year, what kind of year has it been for agriculture in Saskatchewan?

"It's been troublesome, without a doubt the drought has put lots of pressure on the livestock industry and grain producers. I think the silver lining has been in the grain side, on the side of the commodity prices, the increase in them as pushed it low to a point, but the shortage of seed and water in some cases, has been very difficult on the livestock sector like the cattle, the cattle sector in particular. Really it's affected all of agriculture, we have seen lower crop production of course and that affects producers, bottom lines. It has been a difficult year and really a lot of concern going into next spring, we need to see some significant soil and moisture, especially in the Western side of the province now. Going into the next spring as well, increased fertilizer pricing and input of crops, we'll be talking more and more about that as the spring comes up. It's been a difficult year unfortunately, but we'll make it through this last year, especially on the livestock side and the reduction of herd. We're just hoping we can produce stock, as much bringing stock as possible that can be maintained so we can get through this bad year that we just had."

"Farmers' mental health is always important, if farmers are feeling the pressure, talk to your financial institutions, communication is going to be the key. There's a lot of issues around the contracts with grain companies, so if farmers are feeling the pressure in some cases, talk it out with their creditors. The sooner the better, nobody likes a surprise and hopefully farmers will be able to get their finances in place now that harvest is done, some of the cattle robust gone to market at this point. Let's hope we can get farmers in position for next spring, to keep the task going and keep the industry continuing for the future."



Matthew Yanick



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Applications open for NextGen ag mentorship

Applications for the Next Gen Agriculture Mentorship Program (Next Gen) are now being accepted. Next Gen is delivered by Canadian Western Agribition (CWA).

"Investing in the next generation of agricultural producers is critical to helping the Canadian industry grow and thrive," said Marie-Claude Bibeau, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. "The connections these young people make will help them gain knowledge they can apply to their operations and become industry leaders of tomorrow."

"Ensuring security in the sector and contributing to economic growth is best achieved by mentoring future leaders," Agriculture Minister David Marit said. "This program builds leadership capacity through knowledge and first-hand experiences, which is critical to a strong agriculture industry in Saskatchewan. Our government is proud to support such an important initiative."

The program develops young leaders and prepares them to take on active roles in industry leadership, governance and efforts to build public trust through the pairing of each successful applicant with an established member of the agriculture

industry.

The federal and provincial governments will provide \$100,000 to support this round of mentees as they continue their leadership journey in the agriculture sector.

"Agribition is honoured to help pave the way for the next generation of leaders in agriculture," CWA President Chris Lees said. "Over the past few years we've seen valuable connections made between mentees and mentors through this outstanding program."

This year, eight applicants will be selected and paired with a mentor for an 18-month mentorship experience beginning in February 2022. Applicants should have clear developmental goals and exhibit strong leadership potential. More information about the program is available online at saskatchewan.ca/CAP or agribition.com/get-involved/next-gen-program.

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USask researcher Bunyamin Tar'an inspects a chickpea field near Limerick, Saskatchewan in the summer of 2020. He is part of an international team whose research was published in Nature.

U of S chickpea research aims to improve the crop

USask chickpea research aims to improve important food source for low- and lower-middle-income countries

University of Saskatchewan (USask) researchers are part of a global team that used DNA to track the genetic evolution and migration of the chickpea, offering insights that could lead to more nutritious and adaptable varieties.

Improvements in this important crop for the majority of the world could help achieve "zero hunger" on earth. An article on the study's findings was published in Nature on Nov. 10.

Dr. Bunyamin Tar'an (PhD) and Dr. Amit Deokar (PhD) of the USask College of Agriculture and Bioresources were involved in the overall research, sequencing the genetics of 200 Canadian chickpea plants, as well as performing associated data analyses.

"Chickpeas are one of

the main protein sources for hundreds of millions of people—especially in South Asia, Africa and other parts of the world," said Tar'an. "The research provides an avenue to support global efforts to develop chickpeas with even better nutritional value as well as more climate-resilient varieties."

Funding for the USask research involved in the study was provided by the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture and the Saskatchewan Pulse Growers.

"By employing whole genome sequencing, we have been able to affirm the history of chickpea's origin in the Fertile Crescent (a crescent-shaped region in the Middle East, known to be home to some of the earth's earliest civilizations) and identify two paths of diffusion or migration of chickpea to the rest of the world. One path indicates diffusion to South Asia and East Africa, and the other

suggests diffusion to the Mediterranean region (probably through Turkey) as well as to the Black Sea and Central Asia (up to Afghanistan)," said Prof. Rajeev Varshney, a research program director at International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics and leader of the study.

"More importantly, this research provides a complete picture of genetic variation within chickpea

and a validated roadmap for using the knowledge and genomic resources to improve the crop."

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Sask. Agriculture Minister keeping an eye on grain transportation

BY SIERRA D'SOUZA BUTTS

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Saskatchewan's Minister of Agriculture, David Maritz, spoke with the World-Speculator last week about how producers are dealing with the current issues of transportation, due to the recent flooding in B.C.

With the closure of railroads, some Prairie elevators are shipping just a fraction of normal shipments.

What fallout are you expecting for farmers, from B.C.'s transportation issues?

"We're obviously keeping on track with it, in fact I had a call with B.C.'s agriculture minister this morning to reach out to her and ask if there's anything we can do to assist and she said thank you. We've been texting back and forth the last couple of days about the transportation issue. On the transportation file we obviously have our officials, along with the ministry of highways and are constantly in communication with CN and CP, just to see how they are doing and the challenges that they are having around it as well," he says.

"Obviously we are monitoring it on a daily basis and communicating, both railways have been very co-operative and communicating back to us on the status of when they get a major repair done, where they're moving to next, and the time frame. Obviously if they get more

rain then there's challenges of how to get the work done while it's raining, stuff like that. But we've had live communication with both railways."

Knowing that there is a possibility of flooding like this happening in BC, do we need to look at further transportation options?

"We've always said that, we also know that in British Columbia they are having a fuel shortage as well. So instead of depending on the rail, there are pipelines that should be used to get fuel to the coast. Saskatchewan has been a strong advocate for that. As far as the grain logistics, Vancouver has been a major port but Prince Rupert is also a major port as well, and can be utilized. There's always options that I'm sure the industry is looking at, and we leave that up to the grain companies and railways to work that out on how they are going to deliver the product and to where."

How will this issue impact farmers?

"I've been in discussion with the railways just a matter of a few weeks ago and in discussion product was moving well. We thought the tonnages were moving well and the car supply was there. So is there enough product sitting on the other side of Abbotsford, that is ready to go in to ship, is there product in Prince Rupert, obviously there's a lot of product going to

the U.S. side as well because it's a major importer of our grains as well. We're seeing that, the industry is keeping contact by communicating with our stakeholders and usually what they do if they are having challenges or concerns, they reach back to us."

Do you think it will have more or less of an impact than it would normally because of the lower yields this year?

"It's too early to tell yet, I know that when the first rainfall hit into B.C., the public was concerned that the railways would be shut down for an indefinite period of time. You know we reached out to the railways and if everything went well, it wasn't going to be a matter of weeks it would be a matter of days. Obviously they are challenged by the weather as well, so we're just keeping in communication with them and they're keeping in communication with us on the status of their infrastructure and the repairs that they are doing."

On another issue, what feedback are you receiving from producers on the Drought Response Initiative?

"For the most part, very good responses. You look at the crop insurance side, it will probably be the highest payout in crop insurance in Saskatchewan history. I think that just speaks well on the program we have in place, about the coverage that we

have. That's one thing our government has done by making those programs available, both for the grain and the livestock folks as well because we also introduced rainfall insurance, forage insurance, for the livestock sector as well. I talked to some ranchers who are in those programs and they are going to receive funds to help them buy feed and things like that."

"We just had a reception here last night in the legislature. A lot of livestock organizations and stake holders were in the room, I talked to a lot of them and most of the people are saying thank you. I think that's what I'm hearing most of all is thank you for the programs that we did put in place, that did give them the ability to go try and source feed."

Is that program enough to support local farmers' loss from the drought?

"Yes I do, we made it pretty clear on the crop insurance side. Like I said, we got the highest coverages on record and the payout is obviously going to be significant as well. From the livestock sector, there was a couple of groups that I met, the Saskatchewan Cattlemen's Association who I met last night and they were very thankful for the \$200 they had that was going to them the ability to go and buy feed. I had quite a few ranchers come up and shake my hand and say thank you very much. I take it from that, that we've done a great job on it."

New plant welcome addition for farmers

By CHSELSEA KEMP,

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The new Roquette pea processing plant in Portage la Prairie is expected to be a boon for Manitoba and Saskatchewan farmers and the agricultural industry.

Manitoba Pulse and Soy Bean Growers executive director Daryl Domitruk said the opening of the Roquette plant will impact the industry in several different ways.

"We've seen our pea acres increase in response to the contracts that Roquette has been offering. Farmers have taken those up because

they obviously see that as a way to make money," Domitruk said.

The plant has prompted provincial pea producers to push the market forward, he said, adding that other provinces including Alberta and Saskatchewan have invested heavily in the development of pulse crops while Manitoba has not done so to the same extent prior to the announcement of the plant.

These investments will present opportunities in value-added processing that will accrue benefits for the province, he said, while at the same time increasing the production of

legumes like peas and soybeans serving as a way to combat climate change.

"We're really reducing the carbon footprint of crop production by expanding the growth of peas and soybeans," Domitruk said. "We think the time is perfect. Win-wins are now in front of us, to reduce carbon footprints and also generate jobs and economic activity through the value-added processing of these legumes."

Demand for pea protein has been growing — multiple industry estimates expect an annual global growth rate of between 15 and 24 per cent in the next decade.

Portage la Prairie was chosen as the site for the Roquette plant because the region produces the most peas in the world, the city is close to Winnipeg and has easy access to the United States — shortening supply chains and securing access to a high-quality product.

The 200,000-square-foot plant in Portage can process 125,000 tons of yellow peas per year. When combined with Roquette's plant in France, the company's capacity now rises to 250,000 tons of peas per year.

The plant sits on 60 acres in Portage, and the facility is looking to expand in regards to future production on an available 200 acres they have purchased.

The plant offers another market for crops grown by producers — an important step because Manitoba has not been a big producer of yellow peas for several decades, Domitruk said.

Manitoba is becoming a place to invest in these kinds of facilities, and the hope is the new plant marks the start of a new trend in the province. Domitruk said it could be the first step for rolling out new markets in the

province and delivery opportunities.

"The more the better from the farm perspective," Domitruk said.

He added the opening of the MERIT Functional Foods Corporation plant in Winnipeg serves as another example of the growing greens economy taking root in the province — a promising trend from the farm perspective.

He said Roquette and farmers have a joint interest in building resiliency into the production of crops to help ensure the industry can continue to thrive.

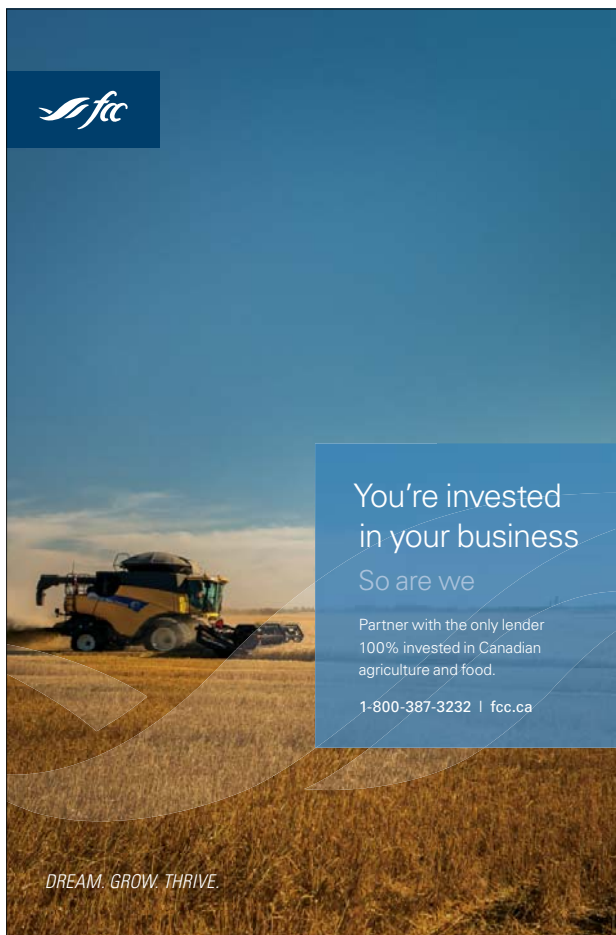
The company has made a significant investment in the province, and it will be doing everything it can to ensure the continued flow of peas and raw materials into the plant.

From a farmer's perspective, they want to see the same thing, Domitruk said.

"We don't want to plant crops to have them fail and succumb to the impacts of extreme weather," Domitruk said. "We at Manitoba Pulse and Soy Bean Growers have made some significant investments in plant breeding, agronomy and other areas to build resiliency, and Roquette has also made some investments."

He added the organization is working on some small programs to ensure the quality of peas, marking the start of promising collaborative opportunities to build resiliency.

The industry is already grappling with extreme weather and will be forced to for years to come. For example, growers saw a reduced yield of peas in 2021 due to the drought on the Prairies. The crops also face the threat of excess moisture. Peas are not adapted to wet fields and will encounter this and come up with ways to prevent damage.



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