



Ashley Bocek took this aerial photo of crops near Moosomin last week.

Crops looking good in the southeast

BY RYAN KIEDROWSKI
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

A cooler, wetter-than-usual July has helped bolster crops in the area as vast seas of yellow canola stretch across the prairie landscape. According to the most recent cropland topsoil moisture map, the levels are reported as 'adequate' for the southeast. The on and off wildfire smoke has providing mixed results in terms of crop development.

"I thought that smoke gave us tremendous yield, then the next year it didn't," said Gerald-area producer Kevin

Hruska, adding he's had it with the smoky summers of recent growing seasons. "I can't extrapolate what that smoke means to our crop yields, but it's sickening. It's five years of this in this area."

One bonus is the protection the smoke provides from the hot sun, although this summer hasn't seen too many hot days so far.

"The sun isn't cooking everything," agreed Blake Duchek, who farms in the Atwater area. "It's basically like it's cloudy all the time, and I think we'll probably see the canola bloom for an extra week or so. Every day that

it blooms, it's more and more canola pods that it forms."

That's good for the canola, but Duchek also noted some oats he's seeded on May 28 still haven't headed out yet.

"I just talked to my agrologist about it, and he's like, 'wow, that's pretty weird for them not to be headed out,' but being that it's been so cloudy and cool and with the moisture, he said that could delay it by 10 days," Duchek explained. "But, if we get an early frost, we could be in trouble."

Continued on Page B3

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Crops looking good in the southeast

Continued from front Moisture levels remain consistent

Near Rocanville, Rylar Hutchinson says that the smoke has helped his canola as well.

"I'd say the wildfire smoke is having a positive impact on crops this year especially the canola," he said. "It has helped it flower longer with the cooler temperatures and being overcast, and we've got to feel grateful considering how others are dealing with the wildfires, and in some areas drought. We've been very fortunate this year so far!"

Timely showers interspersed with a few days in a row of sunny conditions have set the stage for some fantastic looking crops, he says.

"Crops are looking good, it's been a good growing year so far," Hutchinson said. "We've had the little rains and it's not scorching hot either, which the canola likes. Cooler temps are easier on the canola and help it flower longer."

While it seemed as though late June and early July produced a higher than average number of funnel clouds, Hutchinson notes "nothing wild over here!"

"Just scattered showers," he said. "I'd say the crops are developing nicely compared to other years, but we're not out of the woods yet. There's a long way to go until the crops in the bin."

Producers are hoping the tap doesn't turn off quite yet as there's still a lot of time left before thoughts of harvest begin.

"I've been talking to some of the chemical reps and just interviewing them as they come to visit us about other things, and generally speaking, the crops in their whole area are sort of okay, however our crops are looking really good because we had that early snow and early rain, and we've had several nice little three- to four-tenths rains," Hruska said. "Right at the moment, we're quite pleased with everything, but our canola is definitely going to need a couple more showers because it's just in bloom now."

Despite the anomaly with his oats, Duchek calls this year's crop one of the best he's had in a number of years.

"Right where our land-base is, we've



Ashley Bochek took this photo of a canola crop with the Moosomin Parish and Heimbecker terminal in the background.

been getting rains every week to 10 days," he said. "I just pulled some plants out of the ground, and there's lots of moisture there to finish the crop off, so I actually think it is one of our best crops in a long time."

Looking farther south on the map, crops are also looking fine, but the hay could use a little help.

"Certainly in the southeast, anything I've seen looks really good," said Cannington MLA and provincial Agriculture Minister Daryl Harrison. "I would probably agree that overall, the canola crops are looking fairly decent across the canola growing region."

The Alida-area rancher also noted timely rains and a lack of 'blistering hot temperatures' helped canola producers out his way.

"We don't need any strong winds and hail—that can stay away—but as of now in the southeast, I'm going to say grain and oilseed producers are pretty pleased with how things look," Harrison said. "Our hay is not what it should be, but our

pastures are sufficient. Our crops seem to be doing very well. We had a little over an inch of rain at my place last evening (July 20), so that will go a long ways to getting our crops filled. As these storms come up, too, it's not in the bin, and we got a few weeks to go before that happens. So a lot can change between now and then."

Rain actually put haying activities on hold in some parts of the southeast, with 32 per cent of the crop cut, 49 per cent of it either baled or in silage, and 19 per cent still standing. Quality remains decent as well with 15 per cent of hay rated as excellent, 55 per cent good, 27 per cent fair, and only four per cent in the poor category.

Pests not a huge issue

Pests so far this growing season have also been at a minimum. Minor damage has been reported throughout the southeast due to the usual suspects including grasshoppers, lygus bugs, and flea beetles, but not to a crucial extent.

"Back in the springtime there, we only saw flea beetles the one night, and that was it," Duchek said. "The only thing that's really causing us any grief is the gophers."

Three years ago, Duchek broke one half-section that had been pasture, which had been hit hard by gophers the first year.

"That first year, they took a big chunk of the canola on the hills, they chewed it right out," Duchek recalled. "Then the next year—last year—was wheat, and there was no damage. They weren't there. Now this year, they are back."

Having seeded the land back to canola this year, Duchek has noticed large bare spots on the hilltops on the half-section. With a healthy population of predators such as coyotes and eagles, Duchek is baffled why the gophers continue to appear in such large numbers.

Over the next few weeks, producers will be busy with final applications of fungicide, getting that hay cut, and preparing equipment for harvest.

Thank you to all of our hardworking farmers, ranchers and agri-businesses!

Daryl Harrison
MLA for Cannington

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GIFS at USask study shows Prairie farmers producing lowest carbon intensity barley and oats

A new comparative carbon footprint study of barley and oats production shows that Saskatchewan and Western Canadian farmers are producing these crops with the lowest carbon intensity relative to other jurisdictions

The study, commissioned by the Global Institute for Food Security (GIFS) at the University of Saskatchewan (USask), compared barley and oats produced in Saskatchewan, Western Canada, Canada and international competitors—Australia and France for barley, and Australia, Finland, Poland and Sweden for oats.

"The results from our oat and barley report further reinforce the productive sustainability of Western Canada's cropping system," said GIFS Chief Executive Officer Dr. Steven R. Webb (PhD). "These findings are consistent with previous studies on non-durum wheat, durum wheat, canola, lentils, and field peas we announced last year. It's a clear story of innovation—demonstrating that Canada's advanced cropping systems continue to drive sustainable productivity."

Comparable to earlier studies, the lower carbon intensity numbers for barley and oat production in Western Canada are driven by the widespread adoption of various innovations and farming practices employed by producers, including:

- No-and minimal till farming;
- The adoption of herbicide-tolerant canola;
- A robust crop rotation system;
- The production of nitrogen-fixing pulse crops;
- The growing adoption of innovations on the rise, such as the variable-rate application of fertilizer.

"We are pleased to see that the latest carbon footprint study from GIFS confirms that Saskatchewan producers are global leaders in sustainable production," said Saskatchewan's Minister of Agriculture Daryl Harrison. "This research from GIFS will help ensure that our producers remain competitive on the world stage. This is evidence that matters to global markets that are looking for products that are sustainably produced. We're grateful to our oat and barley producers for the work they do to meet the needs of markets around the world that rely on Saskatchewan for safe, and high-quality food."

Continued on Page B7



A new comparative carbon footprint study of barley and oats production from GIFS at USask shows that Western Canadian farmers have lowest carbon intensity.



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Ashley Bocek took this aerial photo of crops near Moosomin last week.

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Wet start to the season and wildfire smoke affecting bees

BY RYAN KIEDROWSKI

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

With the peak of summer fast approaching, beekeepers are in the busiest part of their year. But the spring and summer of 2025 have been a real mixed bag with a cooler, wetter season plagued by intermittent wildfire smoke.

"The smoke definitely has a detrimental affect on the bees," said Lance Strong of B. Strong Apiaries located just outside of Rocanville. "Honeybees require a certain light intensity in order to leave the hive to forage. On the days when smoke is thick, it definitely shrinks the foraging window."

According to numbers from 2023, Saskatchewan produced 22 per cent of the 91.8 million pounds of honey (20 million lbs.) produced in Canada, exporting around \$4 million (down \$6.6 million from the year previous).

It not just the bees being affected by the smoky conditions, blocking out the sun's rays can affect the plants as well.

"The reduced light also affects the photosynthesis of plants, making it less efficient and therefore producing less nectar and pollen," Strong said. "This results in weaker colonies and smaller honey crop yields."

As with many producers across Saskatchewan, B. Strong Apiaries raises their own bees—a practice that means multiple mating flights need to happen for each virgin queen.

"The queen has a window of opportunity for her mating flights, and when that window closes, she doesn't mate again for her entire life span," Strong explained. "If that mating window happens to overlap with a smoky week or two, the result is a sub-par batch of queens at best. There is anecdotal evidence from various producers that their mating success rates have lessened in these smoky years."

Across the border in Manitoba, bee producers are seeing some of the same consequences as smoky summers become more intense.



Lance Strong pulls a frame from a recently gathered box to show what his team collects and processes.

"These last five years, we've been seeing more and more smoke through the summer, almost becoming a normal thing now," said Ian Stepler, Chair of the Manitoba Beekeepers' Association and a producer near Miami, Manitoba. "In regards to bees, we are quite concerned about it."

Every year, Manitoba beekeepers produce around 20 million pounds of honey with an approximate value of \$50 million

into the provincial economy, courtesy the efforts of 250 producers and billions of bees. In total, the Prairie provinces accounted for 73 per cent of all honey exports in 2023.

Smoke may also have benefits

While the negative effects of wildfire smoke are quite obvious, there may be

somehow of a silver lining to be found.

"Every year is different," Strong said, when asked about this season compared to 2024. "I can say that for our area at least, it's been a great start to the year for bees."

One huge benefit to all the rain received this spring is the resulting proliferation of other plants, growing at a time when usually things would not be as abundant.

Continued on Page B8

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Crop insurance extends for AgriStability producers

BY RYAN KIEDROWSKI

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

In a year plagued with drought conditions and trade instability, both federal and provincial levels of government announced a boost to the AgriStability program last week.

"It's nice to be able to announce those today," said provincial Agriculture Minister, Daryl Harrison on July 21. "I think producers are looking forward to it, producer groups are looking forward to it. It's nice to see it come to fruition."

AgriStability helps farming operations that face a large margin decline caused by production loss, increased costs, or market conditions. Personalized for every producer who enrolls, coverage uses historical information based on income tax and supplementary information. Delivered through the Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation, it's one of the business risk management programs in the federal Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership. For this year only, participants in the AgriStability program will see an increase in the compensation rate from 80 to 90 per cent and the maximum cap is doubling to \$6 million per operation.

Some parts of Saskatchewan are experiencing the "worst drought in a decade," with 44 per cent of the province listed as under drought conditions and 38 per cent classified as abnormally dry. The severity in some places is reminiscent of the Dirty Thirties—leading to the RMs of Enterprise, Maple Creek, Fox Valley, Waverley, Big Stick, and Wood River declaring a local state of emergency.

"Now is the time for unity, and we are working together to deliver for producers right across the country to make sure our programs work for them," Heath MacDonald, federal Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food said. "That is why, at our meeting last week, we agreed to make changes to AgriStability so that producers facing trade uncertainty and dry condi-



Federal Agriculture Minister
Heath MacDonald

tions have more protection."

As for future changes, AgriStability will see adjustments to the feed inventory pricing for livestock, starting in 2026. Some allowable expenses are also under consideration for the 2026 program year.

"The Saskatchewan Cattle Association has long advocated for changes to the eligible feed expenses and changes to the feed inventory pricing for AgriStability," SCA Chair Chad Ross said. "We applaud the changes announced today, including moving forward with the permanent change to the feed inventory pricing for the 2026 program year. This should make the program more responsive for livestock producers. We will continue to advocate for the allowable feed expenses to become permanent as well."



Saskatchewan Agriculture
Minister Daryl Harrison.

From the years 2018 to 2023, the AgriStability program paid out more than \$645 million in benefits, and payments are trending higher for the 2024 program year. The deadline for producers to enrol in the 2025 AgriStability is fast approaching, even though it has been extended to July 31 (from April 30).

Chinese tariffs continue to worry canola producers

During the virtual meeting between MacDonald and provincial and territorial ag ministers, the Chinese canola tariff was another hot topic. Put in place back in March, China imposed a 100 per cent tariff on Canadian canola oil and meal, which was in response to Canada's tariff on Chinese electric vehicles, steel, and alu-

minum.

"Our trade is a moving target," Harrison told the World-Spectator. "My biggest question from producers is China, and the canola oil and canola meal specifically—peas as well. They're worried about the trade with China, because China's tariffs are counter tariffs in response to our federal government's 100 per cent EV tariffs."

Harrison says there appears to be no movement with regards to the Chinese canola tariff.

"I brought it up at the FPT call, but also directly to Minister MacDonald," Harrison explained. "He said there are talks going on, that they are engaged. I said, 'that's the first question that's most often asked,' and the fact there's been little or no mention to it in any of the federal government's dialogue, nor in any media. Not knowing anything is probably worse than getting bad news, but most certainly, everybody's kind of waiting on pins and needles just to see. It's a huge cash crop for our producers, and then our canola crushers are also right in the middle of this."

Harrison also continues to be bogged as to the reasoning behind the retaliatory tariffs from China, citing the Chinese EV market in Canada doesn't seem to be all too large.

"We've been pushing the federal government since the counter tariffs came in, and actually even prior to it, because we knew when they initiated the tariffs on EV vehicles, that there could be repercussions, and there eventually was," he said. "We still continue to pressure the federal government—the new prime minister and new federal ag minister—they need to engage with China on a nation to nation level and get this resolved."

"I'm not sure that there's even an electric vehicle market here in Canada to try to protect, so it's really unclear as to what the intention was of our federal government to impose this in the first place," Harrison concluded.

GIFS at USask study shows Prairie farmers producing lowest carbon intensity barley and oats

Continued from Page B3

The carbon life cycle analysis of barley and oats followed established protocol supported by global standards, including ISO 14044 and ISO 14067, and leveraged the expertise of GIFS partners at PRISM Consulting who conducted these studies. The study compiled and reviewed data on the carbon dioxide equivalent emissions for the various activities that go into crop production including transportation of field inputs, seed, fertilizer and manure inputs, emissions associated with fertilizer and pesticide manufacturing, energy emissions (from irrigation, field activities, and post-harvest work) and nitrous oxide and carbon dioxide emissions from the application of nitrogen fertilizer, lime and urea.

The study also examined the potential of agricultural landscapes to support soil-based carbon sequestration.

"Agriculture is all about carbon and these studies show that Canadian farmers can produce more

good carbon with less waste, while helping us understand the impact of the innovative, practices farmers deploy on the production system," said Webb. "This highlights the importance of approaching these studies from a systems perspective, considering the food produced, the emissions or waste generated, and the ability of the system to sequester carbon in the soil."

The results show that whether including or excluding soil carbon sequestration, the carbon footprint to produce barley and oats is lowest in Saskatchewan and Western Canada, with the difference being more distinct when soil carbon is included.

"As the world's population continues to increase, so does the need to create sustainable methods to feed this growing population," said USask Vice-President of Research Dr. Baljit Singh (PhD). "The results of this study emphasize the true impact that the University of Saskatchewan and the Global Institute for Food Security have on Canada's agricultural

landscape. We have been leaders when it comes to researching and exploring innovative and sustainable farming practices and we are committed to continuing this excellent work for many years to come."

The study demonstrates the ability to drive productive sustainability through the large-scale deployment of innovations by producers.

"We undertook these life cycle analyses to understand how crop production compares across regions, the impact of innovation on production, and to support the development of a regulatory framework that is evidence-based, follows the data and considers the whole system through a productivity lens that measures grain yields, emissions and sequestration," said Webb. "There is always room for improvement across all production systems, and GIFS emphasizes that one size does not fit all, so the regenerative practices should be scaled to regions and account for regional differences."



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Wet start to the season and wildfire smoke affecting bees

Continued from Page B5

"Typically, we have a dearth period after dandelions and caraganas until clover and canola, however this year we had a lot of wildflowers along with early clover and alfalfa that kept the bees going without having to slow down," Strong said. "This has provided us with strong colonies going into the canola bloom—good for us and for the canola growers!"

Some studies suggest that adding three honey bee hives per hectare of canola increases yield by 46 per cent compared to fields without hives.

In addition to more foliage around, Stepler also suggests that smoke may actually have given some cover for the bees.

"It might actually help the bees because it's provided that little bit of a shield from the scorching, hot sun, protecting the crop a little bit, which allowed the crop to not get burnt off," he said, adding that the cover might have even made for a longer blooming period. "I'm hearing that more and more, actually, where it might be just a little bit of protection from the scorching sun. It depends on who you talk to, some beekeepers are very concerned about the environment and the smoke—and that I understand, they're more on the side of this smoke is bad for the bees—but the commercial guys talking to me

are just a little bit indifferent. Maybe it actually helps us, but with the caveat that we're not in the heart of it."

Beekeepers located closer to the thick of the heavy, orange smoke are the ones in trouble Stepler says.

"The bees stay in the colonies, and they kind of sit and lose weight," he explained. "They don't fly and they don't forage, so they think it affects the

queen mating and such."

As a result, some producers have had to relocate their bee yards in order to protect the hives.

Stepler described the growing season as "very interesting," adding that the spring had begun tough with colonies experiencing a dwindle initially due to the cool conditions.

"But then this spring turned around, and we

had very favorable conditions come through," he said. "The colonies turned around and they started to grow; they exploded and they haven't stopped growing. I don't think I've seen the colonies in such great shape."

Dandelions and berry trees began to bloom at the right time in Manitoba with flora becoming quite lush.

"Every flower plant has an extra flower, and the grass—we're still mowing our bee yards because the grass just won't quit growing," Stepler said. "You look at the crops around here, and they're just spectacular. We got timely rains come through in central Manitoba. I know there's some dry places in Manitoba, maybe the growth isn't as dramatic, but I'm

hearing from beekeepers this is a clover year, one of those years where you have the clover grow just tremendously and produce a lot of nectar. Beekeepers across Manitoba are like, 'all right, the clover years, we just love these years!' Nectar is flowing into the colonies, and if you were to count the rings in a tree, this would be one of those growth years."



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FCC and EMILI expand Innovation Farm Network in Manitoba

Farm Credit Canada (FCC) is expanding its Innovation Farm Network, a key part of its long-term strategy to make Canada a global leader in agricultural innovation and productivity.

The network is adding a 6,000-acre farm, with 2,600-acres dedicated to potatoes, in MacGregor, Manitoba to its series of Innovation Farms, which give farmers access to trusted, practical tools to grow efficiently, build resilience and with less risk. This marks the first time a potato operation has joined the network and reflects FCC's continued commitment to support agtech innovation that meets the needs of a wide range of producers.

The expansion is part of a multi-year partnership between FCC and EMILI, a Winnipeg-based organization focused on accelerating digital agriculture. EMILI will lead testing and validation efforts at the MacGregor site, building on the success of its Innovation Farms, its demonstration site launched in 2022.

"World leading innovation is essential to helping Canadian farmers keep pace in a highly competitive global industry. New methods and technologies in the ag and food industry keeps Canada's economy resilient and strong" said Justine Hendricks, president and CEO of FCC. "FCC's Innovation Farm Network and its partners are critical to delivering this vital innovation to Canadian producers when they need it the most."

In May, FCC announced a \$2-billion commitment through FCC Capital to help Canadian agtech companies bring viable, practical solutions to the market. The Innovation Farm Network is a key part of that investment strategy, offering real-world testbeds for startups while reducing the risk for farmers who want to adopt new tools.

The EMILI Innovation



Farms potato site, located at the JP Wiebe Ltd. operation in MacGregor, produces a variety of Russet potatoes used in food processing. It will test five new technologies for growing potatoes, related crop rotations and irrigated crops. One of those is a sensor-based storage monitoring technology developed by Cellar Insights, an FCC Capital portfolio company. Other tools being trialed include field-scale monitoring systems such as Ag3's CropSentry and Ukko Agro's ForeSite software, which help collect data on growing conditions.

"With the addition of this site, we can evaluate more technologies in more settings and see how they perform in prairie conditions and on different crops," said Jacqueline Keena, managing director of EMILI. "We're grateful to FCC for their ongoing investment. Their multi-year commitment helps us

reach more farmers and support more innovators to accelerate the adoption of

on-farm technologies, ultimately making them more efficient."

Potatoes are Canada's most valuable vegetable crop and the fifth-largest

primary agriculture crop overall. Canada ranks among the top 10 global exporters of table and seed potatoes. The potato sector is ripe for transformation through technology, particularly in areas like irrigation, water management, nutrient placement and yield optimization.

Expanding to more than 17,000 acres, the FCC Innovation Farm Network supports real-world testing of agtech innovations across Canada. Through a mix of farm types and regions, the network mirrors the diversity of Canadian agriculture, helping build confidence in innovations to lower the risk to producers of adopting new operations and processes.

FCC and EMILI will continue working together to align resources, connect innovators to testing environments and expand the network's reach and impact. Through FCC's investment in Innovation Farms, FCC is ensuring that Canadian farmers have access to the tools and insights they need to thrive.



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New crop outlook has improved since the start of the year

BY JUSTIN SHEPHERD
FCC SENIOR ECONOMIST

Over the past six months, grain and oilseed producers have experienced a period marked by significant news about global supply chains and U.S. trade relationships but generally stronger-than-expected prices. Weather conditions have, as usual, been unpredictable across the country; while some producers have faced yet another year of drought, many others are anticipating favourable crop yields. Since last January's outlook, crop margins have improved, though for most producers they remain close to breakeven levels.

For western producers growing canola, strong Canadian exports and positive news from U.S. government biofuel incentives have improved expectations for current and future demand, supporting prices. As the 2024/25 crop year concludes, market dynamics beyond tariffs and geopolitical factors have emerged as more significant influences on pricing of other crops. Overall, cash prices have strengthened since January; although they remain well below the peaks observed in 2022, current levels continue to exceed long-term historical ranges.

In its July 2025 WASDE report, the USDA lowered its forecast for both 2025/26 global production and ending stocks of wheat, partially based on lower crop expectations for Canada. Global ending stocks for wheat excluding China, continue to be tight and are at a nearly 20-year low. However, U.S. stocks remain well supplied which is keeping a lid on U.S. futures prices.

Global soybean markets remain well supplied, but a big shift is occurring within the U.S. due to government policies on biofuels as well trade policy with China, the world's largest importer of soybeans. The biofuel policy is driving higher soybean crush in the U.S. as they need to produce more soybean oil, with the expectation that 2025/26 industrial use exceeds food consumption for the first time ever.

Corn production is forecast to jump this year thanks in part to a large crop in Brazil, but higher consumption is expected to lead to ending stocks roughly unchanged year over year.

Current Prairie weather conditions resemble those recorded in early July of the previous year, though there are notable

differences in this year's July weather. The Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI) is used to assess vegetation density via satellite imagery in the Prairies, with higher values indicating increased vegetation density or stronger growth trends. The curve's shape provides additional insight; after crop emergence, an appropriate combination of heat and rainfall is required for optimal flowering duration, which is associated with higher yields. Last year at this point, NDVI data suggested high crop potential, but reduced summer rainfall limited overall yields.

Currently, average NDVI readings in the three prairie provinces are at average levels, suggesting yield potential that may fall within or slightly above the usual range. Satellite data provide estimates for specific moments in time. Rainfall in July has been greater than the previous year, and continued precipitation could improve crop outcomes compared to last year. These readings represent aggregate data, but some regions within the Prairies continue to experience drought conditions, which is affecting both hay and grain crops. Feed quality and availability in these areas may present challenges during the upcoming winter.

Ontario and Quebec have encountered distinct challenges to date, primarily due to excessive moisture during planting that resulted in significant delays. This is evident when reviewing their NDVI trends compared to historical data as early season readings were considerably lower than normal. However, subsequent periods of heat and rainfall across most regions have supported corn and soybeans in progressing toward typical development stages. With the winter wheat crop displaying favourable conditions at harvest, weather over the next month will be critical in guiding the late-planted crops through pollination. Nevertheless, average to above-average yields remain attainable.

The revenue outlook for the 2025/26 crop rotations—including canola/wheat in the west and corn/soybeans in the east—has improved compared to FCC's January forecast. This improvement is primarily attributed to slightly stronger pricing, as cost structures have remained relatively stable and yield projections are average across the major provinces. While anticipated

margins are higher than those recorded last year, they continue to fall below the five-year average. For many producers, especially when considering land costs, projected returns are expected to be at or near breakeven. It should be noted that actual results may improve should yields—or marketing opportunities—exceed our model's baseline assumptions.

The current crop year shows a more positive outlook than last year. Despite various challenges, such as differing weather conditions across regions, overall pros-

pects have improved. Cash prices have increased since January, influenced by global supply projections and market factors, which has impacted margins favourably for grain and oilseed producers. The Prairie regions have experienced better rainfall and cooler temperatures, leading to higher vegetation density readings and the potential for average or above-average yields. In Ontario and Quebec, after initial planting delays, the possibility of strong yields remains if favourable weather persists.

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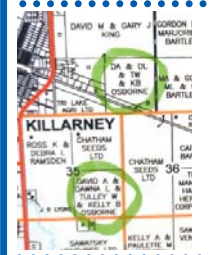


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Barbara Dennis hugging one of her nephews at the Dennis Family Farm 125 Celebration. Dennis family members came back to the farm from all over Canada.



Family members at the silent auction tables during the Dennis Farm 125 event. The auction was a fundraiser to buy a memorial bench for the Cannington Manor provincial park.

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Family members sitting around an evening bonfire at the Dennis Family Farm 125 years celebration.



Barbara Dennis asking for a blessing from God for the Dennis Family Farm and its family members during the farm's 125 celebration.

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A group photo of the many members of the extended Dennis Family whose ancestors settled on the farm 125 years ago located southeast of Wawota



Family members on the Dennis farm house front porch looking at the silent auction items and a display of the Dennis Family Farm history and photos from the last 125 years.



Shirley Dennis and Adam Dennis, representing the oldest and youngest members of the Dennis family, planting a maple tree to commemorate the 125th anniversary of the Dennis Family Farm.



From left, son Boyd, mother Barbara and son Brad Dennis at the Dennis Family Farm during the farm's 125th anniversary.



A family dance was held at the Dennis Farm with music by Joni and Roseanne of "Cut A Rug" music.

Sunnybrae farm celebrates 125 years

BY ED JAMES

From July 18-20, NW 12-9-34-W1 in southeast Saskatchewan was a very busy place. The location is the Sunny Brae Farm of Barbara and the late Neil Dennis. For three days it was the location of the Dennis Family Reunion and the celebration of the farm being in the same family for 125 years.

In 1900, Edward James Dennis and his wife Alice settled on this site, which, after years of hard work, good times and some bad times, became a successful family farm, often described as being a place of "peacefulness of the land."

The three-day event brought in generations of the Dennis Family members from all over the country. Behind the main house, in a shaded grassy area, it was filled with lawn chairs where family members of all ages shared histories, births and deaths, new adventures and old with much hugging and laughter among the wide variety of ages.

During the three-day event there was much to do, share and remember, with the farm yard filled with RV campers and tents. There was never a shortage of food and snacks, with bonfire hot dogs and marshmallows, potluck lunches, and a catered roast beef supper with a special dessert that featured a unique saskatoon berry sauce, the always popular pancake and sausage breakfast!

There were displays of old family photos and histories.

Another unique feature was a silent auction event with an eclectic collection of items from the farm's history, home made pickles, jams and baked goods, handmade quilts and blankets, Dennis family heirlooms, art work and old aerial photos of the Dennis homestead over the years. There was something for all ages and on some items there was intense bidding!

On Saturday afternoon, the official purpose of the gathering was held with prayers and histories and memories of the farm's 125 year history and operation. Pastor Trevor Dennis acted as MC along with his father and added to the history of the farm and its people over the years. However it was present owner, Barbara Dennis, who gave an emotional telling of the farm's history, its struggle, with the Depression, natural disasters and economic hardships. Her speech was very emotional and at times as she paused to compose herself.

Among the audience's older faces, you could see them remembering the past times. Barbara also took time to talk about her late husband Neil and his discovery of and later success with holistic farming methods and the recognition he was given. She ended her talk with the hope that the farm ownership would go on for future family generations and go forth with faith in God's help and a blessing on all those who came out to this farm that has seen five generations of ownership within the same family.

The crowd then moved to the driveway of the farm to a

large sign showing the family's connection to this piece of land along with recognition plaques of their success with holistic farming techniques

At the sign, a maple leaf tree was planted by the youngest and oldest members of the Dennis clan to celebrate the 125-year event.

After this event there was a general family meeting to discuss future family events in the area in remembrance of the family. This project will be funded by the money made by the successful and unique silent auction.

After an excellent catered supper, there was time for sitting by the bonfire, playing cornhole and conversation. Later in the evening there was a dance in a wonderful converted farm shed with the special musical styles of Joni and Roseanne "Cut a rug" recorded music show.

On Sunday, after the pancake breakfast, a church service was held in the field officiated by Pastor Trevor Dennis of Brandon.

"The celebration of 125 years was of the upmost importance to me personally and to the memory of my late husband Neil and finally to those Dennis family members over the years who have worked the land," said Barbara Dennis after the event.

"So much has transpired over the last 125 years. I found it extremely encouraging that so many family members and my friends helped me out on this day. But isn't this what family and friends are all about?"



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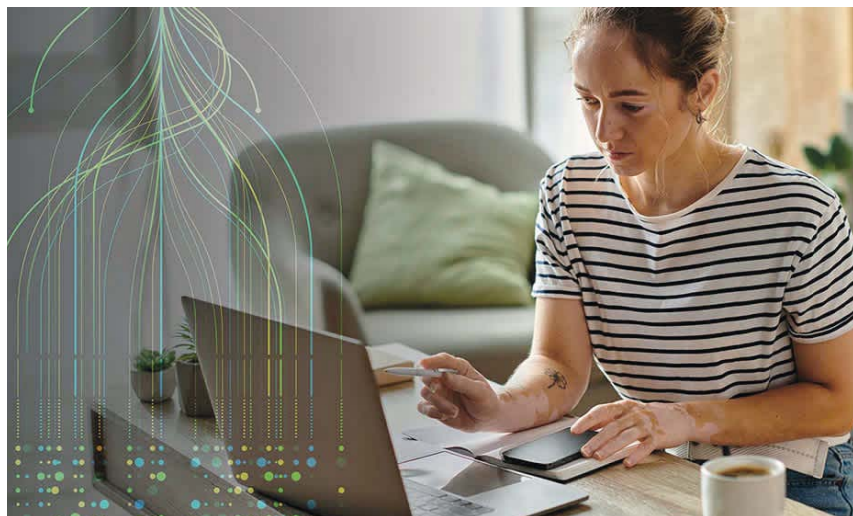
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FCC leads AI farming innovation with new partnership with RDAR



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Root fills the growing gap in Canada's extension services by delivering accessible, expert-backed guidance to producers without requiring complex data inputs. It translates decades of research, field experience and proven practices into practical, timely advice producers can use immediately. By simplifying decision-making and increasing confidence on the farm, Root helps accelerate productivity, reduce trial-and-error and empower Canadian producers to adopt better practices with less risk, right from their phones.

Now, through a new memorandum of understanding, RDAR will work with FCC to strengthen the tool's capabilities. The partnership will connect Root to relevant data sources and support testing efforts to ensure it continues to meet the evolving needs of Canadian producers.

"Root is more than a technology solution, it's part of a broader effort to bring back something Canadian agriculture has lost: accessible, trusted and timely insight," says

Justine Hendricks, FCC president and CEO. "With the decline of local advisory networks [extension services], too many farmers and ranchers have had to rely on fragmented information or go at it alone. By partnering with RDAR, we're helping producers access the kind of expertise that once came from decades of community-based knowledge sharing and we're doing it in real time, at the

pace of modern farming with trusted advisors."

RDAR invests in results-driven, producer-led research to improve productivity in Canada's agriculture sector. With over 500 projects in its portfolio, the organization brings deep knowledge of the issues producers face and a shared commitment to innovation.

"We are especially keen on incorporating RDAR materials into Root, FCC's AI / Large Language Model Pilot and making our materials accessible to producers and ranchers," said Dr. Mark Redmond, CEO of RDAR. "We are pleased to formalize our partnership with FCC; in the past, we have worked on initiatives concurrently, but now we will collaborate more closely. This alliance aims to foster innovative solutions for the agricultural sector," he added.

Root is built on a privacy-first principle, ensuring no personal user information is required to use the assistance. This protects producer confidentiality and builds trust as they explore the tool. Since its launch, Root has supported more than 2,900 conversations, with 91% of users reporting helpful results. It has analyzed nearly 400 images submitted by producers, helping identify parts and troubleshoot equipment issues. Producers are already using Root to get real-time support on farm management, all through a simple, mobile-friendly interface.

Launched earlier this year, Root is available in English and French and includes voice-to-text and image recognition, making it easy to use from anywhere, even in the field.

As demand grows for smarter, more accessible ag support tools, future versions of Root could offer additional functions to support producers, as well as agrifood and agribusiness operators, in making decisions about operations. The long-term goal is to give FCC customers and the Canadian ag and food industry personalized insights at their fingertips. There's no sign-up or registration required. Farmers and producers can start using Root right away. To use the tool, visit: Root, your virtual farm assistant.



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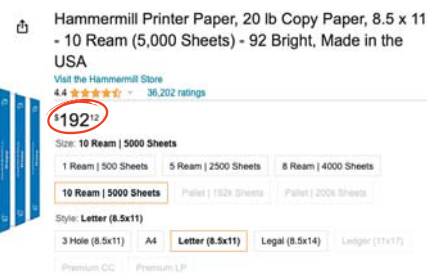
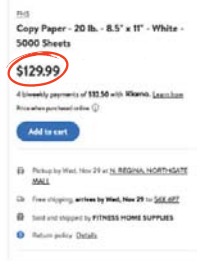
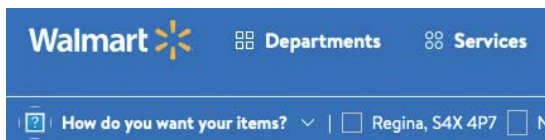
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A getaway from the farm is good for the soul

Summer at last! We are fully past seeding and spraying season and our routine, well, mine, has seen some changes. The last week of school meant some special daily lunches for the grands and their friends plus lots of yummy baking like cinnamon buns and skor cakes. Now for the big question ... Will they come back next year?

As we watch those fields of green and yellow take shape in our part of the province, we can't help but think of the southwest part of the province where they are suffering through their 9th consecutive year of drought. We certainly feel the stress they are under and know that a decade of crop loss can mean another decade will pass by before the economics make sense again.

When I was out driving with hubby, crop checking from a distance, dark blue skies were moving in from the west. What an incredible backdrop those skies were for the beautiful yellow canola fields.

It seemed like the farm grandkids were no sooner done school and they were headed straight to the local auction barn for both local and regional 4-H shows and sales. And unlike many years when the spectators needed an umbrella to stay dry or a good warm coat to stay warm, this year was more about sunscreen, sunhats and potential heat stroke. Early July brought with it some beautiful warm days—what a great start to summer 2025!

Hubby and I are not cattle people at heart but the grands love their animals and we were so proud of them as they showed their continuation heifers with calves at side and their steers. Our granddaughter (16) loves show life even though her heifer was more interested in chewing on that little strip of grass along the gravel showing than she did in being led around. I couldn't help but chuckle a little even though I am pretty sure our granddaughter wasn't chuckling at her cow. I love to watch the kids as they so confidently groom their animals and lead them around the ring. I remember absolutely zero about cattle grooming from showing cattle oh so long ago but I recognize the determination and dedication of all members of the 4H club who give it their all and whose skills and work ethics will serve them well wherever life takes them.

With 4H shows over, it was time to head to the lake with five of our grands, complete with fishing gear, golf clubs, bedding and snacks. Whose idea was it to suggest the three oldest, 13 and 14x2 be in charge of picking out snacks at the grocery store? Between marshmallows and Turtles, Smore kits and bags of bulk candy, we eventually had everything together, including fruit and veges (no thanks to the kids) for a complete and overly indulgent four days of camping together.

The twins don't sleep in, even during camping trips, and are quick to ensure Gramps is ready to get out on the lake bright and early as they push the boat off from shore and head to their favorite fishing spots on the lake. Fortunately, they caught a lot of fish because the twins



wanted fish for practically every meal! One of the northern pike (caught and released) was an incredible catch as were some of the walleye, so my worries about the twins not wanting to fish with us in southern Saskatchewan now that they make a few trips a year up north were all for naught. They still love Fishing Lake, a place we have taken them every year for the past dozen or so.

One night, our youngest grandson (11) and I were having a chat about when his mom (our youngest) was little and some of the chores she was required to do. He always has very specific questions and when I told him that my kids each had to do their own laundry starting at the age of 12, he looked at me quizzically. "You have one year to go," I told him, "before you have to start doing your own laundry." There was a slight pause before he responded, "My dad is 44 and mom is still doing HIS laundry." Now what can you say to that?

The kids met some new friends out at the lake in July and together all eight of them biked and swam and played board games and participated in my version of a scavenger hunt where we tick off what we see rather than collect what's on the list. Good thing because they actually did find an orange front door on a cabin along the lake. I mean, what were the chances? And wings? With no seagulls or birds around during our little trek around the campground, they swatted at a swarm of teeny-tiny flies (as in you could hardly see them) and we accepted it for "wings" as we were sure they wings even though you really couldn't see them.

The boys and I spent an afternoon on the golf course and because I don't and have never golfed, I had a dozen questions until finally, the youngest of the bunch said, "Grandma, stop talking. Don't you know it's rude to talk when someone is ready to hit their ball?" Well, who knew? Certainly not I. Nevertheless, I learned a thing or two, including that not even the thrill of the game will stop twin farm boys from walking through a four-inch

deep, stinky little "pond" in search of a golf ball and come out the other side with 142 golf balls and very dirty legs, feet and hands, none of which were at all easy to clean. And 'stink' doesn't quite describe it—between the golf balls in the back of the cart and the boys' feet, reek might better describe the air surrounding our group for the remaining four holes. I am pretty sure the group ahead of us and the one behind us thought the Grandma at the wheel of the golf cart ought to be making her grands shower a little more often!

With July being our quieter month on the farm before the fall craziness once again begins, we have had time to get together with friends and family at barbecues, at the coffee shop and at the lake where sharing not only what some of the challenges on the farm are but what a great life farm-life really is. One couple shared their frustrations with their air drill this year (oh yeah, we relate); another how switching from one mode of farming (dairy) to another has allowed them to spend some fun time camping with their kids and do away with those 4:00 mornings.

As we soon put lake life behind us, our thoughts will be on bringing in the 2025 crop. The twins have faithfully been planting and watering baby trees, tilling shelterbelts, cutting grass and checking their canola crop. And I faithfully get out to the farm when they are away and together with the dogs, try to get my self-imposed number of steps for the day in. When I was cooking and hauling meals to the field twice a day during seeding and did not go on any planned walks, I was easily making upwards of 20,000 steps a day. The minute the cooking/meal-hauling ended, I dropped that in half and even with planned walks now, I can't reach the same number as I did in seeding. How can that even be? And am I looking forward to September's busy pace again or not?

Life on the farm is definitely not for the faint of heart. We have been sowing and harvesting crops together for 48 years (more for hubby) and sometimes over those years I have resented the times we can't plan to go to an event or even a meeting that is being held in the middle of harvest or in seeding for that matter. And then I am reminded: This is our bread and butter. I have a roof over my head, shoes on my feet, food to eat. Our life has never been the 9-5, five days a week kind of life. I have nothing to complain about, even less to be resentful about. Plus every summer allows us a bit of getaway time to fish with the grands. Could life really be any better?

Here's hoping all our readers and farmers especially have an amazing summer and despite the workload that you carry at this time of year, may you get a chance to relax, to rejuvenate and to laugh with those you love. Remember—a getaway (if you can) is good for the soul. Happy Summer of 2025 folks! We'll see you when the combines begin to roll.

Governments provide drought support with the doubled low yield appraisal

The federal Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Heath MacDonald and Saskatchewan Minister of Agriculture Daryl Harrison have announced the Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation (SCIC) is implementing measures to offer support to producers facing this year's challenging dry conditions. SCIC is implementing the double low yield appraisal process, encouraging acres of low-yielding eligible crops to be diverted to make additional feed available to graze, bale or silage.

"I've spoken with livestock and crop producers in Saskatchewan who are worried about the impact that dry conditions could have this year," MacDonald said. "Changing the yield threshold will give them some breathing room, so they can make the best decisions for their operations."

"In multiple areas throughout the province, our livestock producers are facing challenges from this year's dry conditions," Harrison said. "There is a need to quickly adapt to best support producers' timely, on-farm decisions. In 2021 and 2023, this same initiative was successfully implemented, resulting in over half a million acres of additional low yield crop redirected to feed. Once again, livestock producers are encouraged to work directly with neighbouring crop producers to access additional feed."

When crops are severely damaged and the appraised yield falls below an established threshold level, the yield is reduced to zero for the Crop Insurance claim. SCIC is doubling the low yield appraisal threshold values, allowing customers to salvage their eligible crops as feed, without negatively impacting future individual coverage. Prior to compensation, all qualifying acres for double low yield appraisals must be diverted to livestock feed. They cannot be left to harvest. Prior to putting damaged crops to an approved alternate use, producers should contact their local SCIC office.

"This announcement is welcome news for our livestock producers," SARM President Bill Huber said. "As in past years, it will help address feed shortages so many ranchers are experiencing. Timely support like this is critical to ensuring the sustainability of the sector in this province."

"Many cattle producers throughout the province are facing potential feed shortages," Saskatchewan Cattle Association Chair Chad Ross said. "The recent rains may help with some of the later seeded crops and possible pasture rebound in some areas. Unfortunately, the hay crop was already burnt off in several places. Writing off some crops through doubling the low yield threshold will provide cattle producers an option for feeding their animals they didn't previously have. The SCA thanks Ministers Harrison and MacDonald, along with the governments for moving quickly on this."

"We appreciate governments recognizing and meeting the need to support access to feed," Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association President Jeff Yorga said. "There are producers struggling with drought conditions. They are assessing and adjusting crop and feed requirements. This action taken helps our producers make those important decisions in a timely fashion. As we move forward, I strongly encourage producers to directly connect with each other to coordinate access to any additional feed made available through this change."

"Swift action from government has provided a vital lifeline to many Saskatchewan farmers and ranchers amid this year's early challenges," APAS President Bill Prybylski said. "The quick adjustment of support measures reflects a strong commitment to agriculture and sets a high standard for proactive, responsive risk management programming. Producers across the province feel heard, supported and valued."

AgriStability can provide support to producers for

production losses and increased expenses resulting from dry conditions. In most cases, the additional expense a producer incurs to acquire additional feed for their livestock is an eligible expense through the AgriStability Program. The deadline for producers to enroll in the existing AgriStability program for the 2025 program year is extended to July 31, 2025. The AgriStability Program includes an option to access timely support through an Interim Benefit, which gives producers the option of receiving funds prior to the completion of the fiscal period in the program year. This can help support losses and cover costs.

SCIC recognizes the most pressing concern for livestock producers is reduced hay and pasture production. Pasture acres are insured for the impact of dry conditions through the Forage Rainfall Insurance Program. Starting July 15, 2025, eligible producers will begin to receive claim payments, providing timely financial relief to help offset the impact of below average rainfall. By August 15, 2025, remaining claims are automatically calculated based strictly upon weather station data.

Saskatchewan Farm Stress Line provides support when producers need it the most. This is a confidential service, available 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week, toll-free at 1-800-667-4442. Calls are answered by Mobile Crisis Services Regina, a non-profit, community-based agency and there is no call display.

Crop Insurance is a federal-provincial-producer cost-shared program that helps producers manage production and quality losses. Support for the program is provided by the governments of Canada and Saskatchewan under the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership (Sustainable CAP).

For more information, producers can call 1-888-935-0000, visit scic.ca or contact their local SCIC office.

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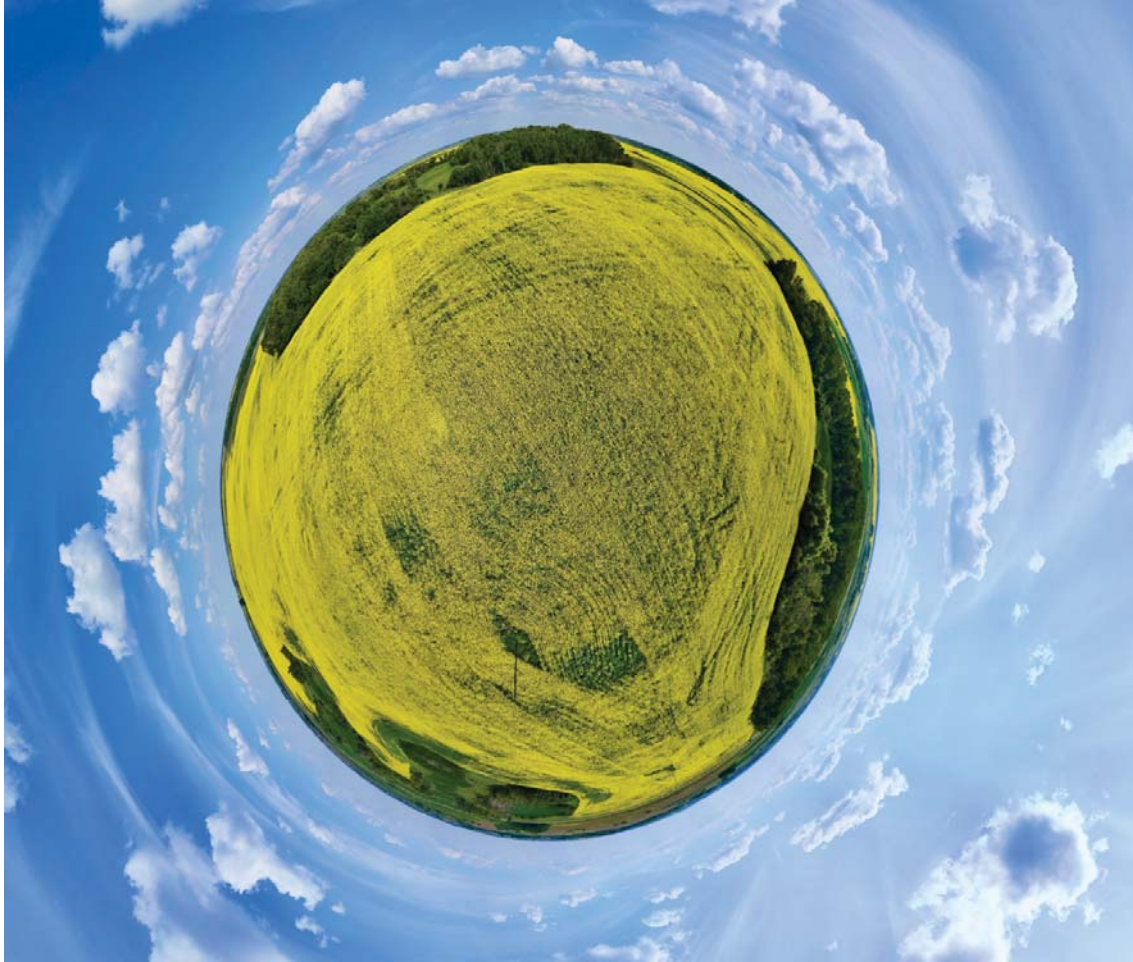


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Ashley Bochek took this aerial photo of crops near Moosomin last week.



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Better heating method makes legumes easier to digest

USask researchers find radio frequency heating breaks down antinutrient in peas and beans and is more energy efficient

By ELLA FUNK

While they have been part of our human diet for centuries, legumes like peas and beans are ultimately seeds for the next generation of plants. To protect themselves from being eaten by animals and insects, they contain “antinutrients” that are hard for animals – and humans – to digest.

These antinutritional compounds – which include tannins, lectins, trypsin inhibitors, and phytic acid – are broken down when beans and peas are heated. However, the large ovens that food processing companies currently use to heat beans and peas are inefficient. They can burn the outside before the inside has reached a temperature hot enough to deactivate the antinutrients.

Researchers from the University of Saskatchewan (USask) Department of Chemical and Biological Engineering have identified a new heating method – using radio frequency (RF) waves—that appears to be both more effective and efficient than the approach currently used in the industry.

Tolen Moirangthem, a PhD student from the group, compares RF waves to microwaves. “When you put a cup of water in the microwave, the water heats up, but the cup doesn’t. The same is true for the pea—the water inside heats up, but the rest of the pea doesn’t.”

Scientists call this process “selective heating,”



because it can heat some areas within a material but not others. It seems to help maintain the desirable nutritional properties in pea or bean, which can break down with regular heating methods. And unlike the long heating times of traditional processes, the RF heating method only takes a few minutes.

The team hypothesized that during RF heat treatment, the water inside a legume expands and turns into steam, which would cause the pores inside to explode from the pres-

sure. In turn, this would create larger pores in the samples, as well as more pores in total, as the steam looked for ways to escape.

Using the Canadian Light Source at the USask, the research group confirmed that the beans treated with RF heat did in fact have more pores, and the heating method reduced the amount of an antinutrient (proteins called trypsin inhibitors)—by 81 per cent.

“We know that we have big potential with this project,” says Moirangthem. “Animal protein is very expensive in different parts of the world, so we need sustainable plant protein that can be produced at mass volume to feed the world population.”

This new heating method could help make bean and pea crops even more environmentally friendly to process, with the bonus of making legumes easier to digest.



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