



Wheat's Up



Chair's Message

Kevin Auch, Chair | Alberta Wheat Commission Board of Directors

It was another successful Annual General Meeting (AGM) on February 1 for the Alberta Wheat Commission (AWC).



We had just fewer than 200 attendees join us for our AGM, and there were some great discussions around the resolutions brought forward by our members.

Of the three resolutions that were brought forward from our Regional Meetings back in November 2016, two of them were passed and one was tabled until it could be better clarified by the mover and seconder.

One of the resolutions that was passed deals with *Fusarium graminearum* and asked AWC to lobby the provincial government to change the Agricultural Pests Act to remove *Fusarium graminearum* as a declared pest and encourage all farmers to use best management practices to reduce the impact of fusarium on their farms. While there was a lot of discussion from our members about this resolution and best management practices being the most critical way to reduce the impact of fusarium, the resolution was passed and will be looked at by our Board of Directors for further action.

The other resolution that was passed was for the AWC Board to determine a way for all members to vote on resolutions presented at the AGM, as the majority of producers cannot attend the AGM in person. Again, there was good discussion about this resolution and some concern that those not present would not hear any of the discussion around the resolutions, which could influence their vote. This is certainly something AWC will look into going forward.

At the AGM this year we also said goodbye to two long standing Board members - Henry Vos and Lynn Jacobson. Both were founding members, sitting on the AWC Board since its inception in 2012. Henry and Lynn have spent many hours working for our members and have provided an important perspective and strategic direction to our management team. We are thankful for the time they have spent with AWC.

Finally, another key outcome of our AGM was the passing of a motion by our members to amend our regulations around the service charge. As many of you have likely seen in the past year, AWC has been communicating about a single check-off proposal.



With the Western Canadian Deduction (WCD) ending on July 31, 2017, AWC has committed to absorbing the responsibilities and financial obligations of the WCD. Growers are currently paying two check-offs - the AWC check-off of \$0.70 per tonne and the WCD check-off of \$0.48 per tonne - a total of \$1.18 per tonne.

When AWC assumes the WCD, growers will move to a single check-off and actually see a decrease in their overall check-off to \$1.09/tonne.

AWC did an analysis and determined that an additional \$3 million to \$3.7 million per year will be required to meet future commitments to variety development and market support for the Canadian International Grains Institute (Cigi). At \$1.09, AWC will collect an estimated \$3 million in additional revenue each year, which will meet this financial goal and any shortfalls will be made up from existing AWC resources.

AWC is committed to ensuring continuity in Canada's public breeding programs by providing financial support to breeding programs at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) and the universities, as well as committing continued funding to Cigi for market support, education and testing services.

This fall, AWC commissioned FarmShift to do a producer survey online and included some questions specific to this proposal and changes to the check-off.



From this survey we learned that 75 per cent of respondents were either strongly (30 per cent) or somewhat (45 per cent) in favour of the \$1.09 single check-off and this was confirmed when the motion was passed at the AGM.

The next steps are the finalization process with the Agricultural Products Marketing Council. Once approved, the single check-off will become effective August 1, 2017.

AWC would like to thank those growers who were able to attend the AGM and for your continued support.



General Manager's Message

CGC surplus under the microscope

Tom Steve, General Manager | Alberta Wheat Commission

The Canadian Grain Commission (CGC) is seeking input on what to do about a burgeoning surplus of \$107.2 million.

The first thing you are probably wondering is how did this happen? Following major funding cuts by the federal government (from roughly \$37 million per year down to \$5.4 million) the CGC moved to a cost recovery model on August 1, 2013. This meant the fees charged for the CGC's services would have to cover the majority of its \$60 million operating budget.

That same year the fees for outward weighing and inspection of export vessels more than tripled to \$1.60 per tonne. Roughly \$1.80 per tonne in CGC fees are now being passed directly to farmers by the grain companies.

Since 2013, record or near record crops have led to higher than expected fee revenues and the CGC is now seeking input on how to reduce that large pot of cash and design the fee structure going forward.

Through our membership in the Grain Growers of Canada, AWC has called for an immediate fee reduction to prevent the surplus from growing even further before the end of the current five-year fee cycle on March 31, 2018.

While AWC is still developing its policy on the surplus funds, our recommendations will be guided by the need to keep system costs as low as possible for farmers. That could include a plan to reduce fees over the next five-year cycle and bring the surplus down to a sustainable level. The CGC says it is required to maintain a reserve of roughly \$36 million under federal guidelines.

We have also considered recommending that funds be earmarked for a much-needed modernization of the grain grading system, adopting new technologies such as Falling Number (FN) tests that are more in line with international standards. That being said, we are reluctant to recommend using the surplus for large capital investments or other one-time expenditures if it means the inspection fees will remain high.

Although not part of this consultation, another issue to consider is whether outward inspection services by the CGC should be mandatory. Grain companies contend that third parties provide these services at a fraction of the cost and some vessels have both CGC and third party inspections done, leading to duplication.

➔ The CGC's consultation is open until May 1, 2018 and more information is available on their website at www.grainscanada.gc.ca



The Research Plot

Laura Anderson, Interim Research Manager | Alberta Wheat Commission



Fusarium Head Blight (FHB) is a fungal disease that infects cereal and corn and is becoming increasingly prevalent in western Canadian wheat crops.

Its main causal agent, *Fusarium graminearum* produces mycotoxins that will contaminate grain, reduce quality, and limit its use in both seed and feed markets. Optimal conditions for disease spread include frequent rainfall and humidity during flowering, as well as exposure to infected crop residues such as chaff, head tissues and kernels. Infection is commonly recognized by bleached or blighted heads that do not fill properly and leave kernels looking white or pink.



While there are a number of prevention methods set out for FHB, including extended rotations and use of fungicide seed treatments, the most effective way of controlling the disease is to rely on cultivars with genetic resistance. Alberta Wheat Commission (AWC) has supported the development of FHB resistance through funding the work of Dr. Nora Foroud, Research Scientist with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada in Lethbridge, Alberta.

Foroud's lab has worked to optimize the in vitro selection (IVS) technology used in wheat breeding to produce doubled haploid (DH) lines to select

for high levels of disease resistance to FHB and Deoxynivalenol (DON) accumulation. The group has worked with plant breeders who will incorporate the new resistant lines into their breeding programs, with the goal of generating seed that has resistance and favorable agronomics for Alberta's wheat producers.



To date, Foroud's lab has supplied more than 5000 plants to plant breeders.

Of these, the majority are Canada Western Red Spring (CWRS) class, as well as Canada Prairie Spring Red (CPSR), Canada Western Soft White Spring (CWSWS), Canada Western Red Winter (CWRW) and one general purpose line. The majority of the resistant plant lines were generated from 2015 to 2016 and will soon undergo FHB resistance evaluations. Once surpassed, breeders will make selections based on plant type and producers can expect to see cultivar registration in as little as seven years. The research work at Foroud's lab is groundbreaking, as she looks to develop similar IVS techniques for FHB in barley, durum wheat and other cereal diseases, including tan spot.

With such a large impact on Alberta's agricultural industry, AWC has invested \$1,361,875.00 in FHB projects since 2014. For a complete list of AWC funded research projects on FHB, please visit the Research section on albertawheat.com.



New industry-led safety association to be formed

Victoria Russell, Communications Specialist | Alberta Wheat Commission



When the AgCoalition formed just over a year ago in January 2016, it was in response to Bill 6: *The Enhanced Protection for Farm and Ranch Workers Act*. It was clear that the agriculture industry needed a mechanism to work together in an effort to ensure the regulations formed under the legislation would make sense at the farm and ranch level. In response, Alberta's agriculture community gave the AgCoalition a mandate to support farmers and ranchers participating in the Government of Alberta's consultation sessions that spanned the summer of 2016, until as recently as February 2017. In parallel, the AgCoalition was charged with building a culture of farm and ranch safety in Alberta to improve safety performance across the industry.

With the government's consultation tables now wrapped up, the AgCoalition met again on February 28 to complete an important step in

fulfilling this safety mandate. During this meeting, the membership achieved its main goal: to reach consensus in formalizing an industry-led farm and ranch safety association.

With an agriculture safety association in place, improved safety will be supported through coordinated delivery of education and adoption of leading practices in a method developed by producers, for producers. This ensures our industry can forge its own path to improve safety outcomes. The agriculture industry has already done its fair share of excellent work in building resources and materials to support farmers and ranchers in strengthening their farm and ranch safety culture. As other industries have demonstrated, establishing an industry-led safety association is a leading practice that can build on the work done to date and take it a step further.

The AgCoalition meeting started off with a short presentation from Deputy Minister of Labour Jeff Parr, who expressed the Government of Alberta's support for the industry-led association. Following this, attendees worked through a potential governance structure, staffing, programming and a funding model. The results of these discussions are currently being collated and will be used to inform the next steps. The safety association will be its own, non-profit entity, registered under the Alberta Societies Act. It will be collaborative, working with existing groups such as the Alberta Farm and Ranch Safety Extension Grant Working Group. Many AgCoalition member groups, coordinated by the Alberta Wheat Commission are working together to manage a \$500,000 grant from the provincial government under the Growing Forward 2 program, to carry out extension and education efforts in pursuit of improved safety outcomes.



The AgCoalition's formation was an important first step in building the momentum to work collaboratively with more than 97 per cent of the agriculture sector.

Moving forward, members resolved that the industry-led safety association would operate as a non-political entity, similar to other industry-led models so it can withstand governance cycles. This model will operate independent of the AgCoalition, but members also discussed whether there is additional value in retaining the AgCoalition as a vehicle to work on other industry-wide issues. We look forward to sharing our next steps in that regard with our members once the results of this discussion are compiled.



YIELD CHALLENGE Be the Wheat Champion



Alberta Wheat Commission is holding a fun contest for all wheat farmers to be the most productive wheat grower in Alberta.

Grand Prize – passes for FarmTech 2018

Entry is FREE. | Two categories for entry – dry land and irrigated.

Visit albertawheat.com for a complete list of rules for entry



A different spring

Clair Langlois, Cereal Extension Specialist | Alberta Agriculture and Forestry

According to rough estimates, it is believed that approximately one million acres of crop from 2016 remains unharvested in Alberta. The anxiety over what to do with the unharvested acres will likely mount as we get closer to spring. How to deal with the unharvested crop will involve many decision making factors and most cannot be determined until spring actually arrives. Let us take a minute to focus on how to deal with cereal crops still left in the fields from harvest 2016.

The first factor influencing our decision will be what type of spring we have. Will it be an early and open spring or a late and compressed spring? Decisions will be much easier of course if we have an early and open spring like most areas did across the province in March and April of last year. Second factor of influence will be how we left the crop going into the winter. Was it swathed and it presently sits in windrows, or was it left standing? By standing, that of course depends on the amount of lodging and straw breakdown that has occurred over the winter, but by definition it is ready for straight-cutting should it be harvested this spring.

Let us look at the easiest type of spring first, an early and open spring. The choice here is simple - best way to deal with all that crop and crop residue is to attempt to harvest if for no other reason than to simply get it out of the way and thrash and spread (or bail) the residues. Many questions have been raised as to the quality of the cereal out in the field, especially as it relates to a decision to even bother combining it or just burn it this spring. First, you may be pleasantly surprised at the quality of the grain from a spring harvest. Grade cannot improve from what was coming off last fall prior to shutting down, but your "sample" may improve as all that tough residue is now very dry and dead and should separate out in the combine much easier than the fight you had with it last fall. This should result in a cleaner sample, as even germinated seed should now be desiccated and likely break up somewhat in the thrashing drum.

Point being, grade and quality of a spring sample may surprise you and is unpredictable prior to attempt of harvest. The only thing working against us for a feed sample in the spring of 2017 is that there is reportedly a lot of good quality cereal crop readily available from what did come off last fall, which will make finding a buyer of feed wheat

harder to do this spring if it cannot be consumed on-farm or by one of your neighbour's livestock. If your crop was left in a windrow, the good news is our snowfall was relatively light this winter, reduced in volume at least twice already from warm winds, and has not flattened windrows as badly as what could have been. Mouse and deer excreta will be a bigger problem in windrows for your sample.

Compared to years when a heavy snow-load can completely flatten a windrow we have been fortunate to date to still have some air left in them, which will assist in drying them and make for an easier pickup this spring. Germinated seed on heads laying on the ground may by now be well-anchored, so watch for pulling mud up with these anchored/rooted heads, as you may have to leave some grain in order to alleviate this issue.



Another concern is that cereal grains, especially wheat, may have levels of the main mycotoxin deoxynivalenol (DON), produced by *Fusarium graminearum*, that potentially increased throughout the late fall and winter period. This would make the issue worse for that grain come spring harvest, thereby further restricting the marketability of the grain, even for feed.

Dr. Kelly Turkington, pathologist and research scientist with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada says if temperatures were warm enough over this time period then the production of DON with the existing levels of infection may increase, whether in the field, on a head, or as moist harvested seed sits in a bin.

The visible damage to seed, fusarium damaged kernels (FDK) is caused mainly by infections that set in early during the seed's development cycle at anthesis (flowering), but as the wheat seed develops and progresses toward early dough stage, infections coming into the head at these later stages do not typically produce classical symptoms of FDK. It may be present in the seed or on the seed, but show no visible damage. In addition, when seed is fully developed but not harvested yet, fusarium now has to compete with

a wide range of saprophytic organisms on any weather-beaten seed surface. It is understood that *Fusarium graminearum* needs temperatures warmer than about nine to 10 degrees Celsius moisture for growth host infection to occur, and more importantly it requires green (living) tissues to feed on to do so, both of which were not readily available over the late fall and winter period despite the perception there was a "green" bridge prior to freeze-up.

Most unharvested crops left in the fields last fall were well past maturity and harvest conditions existed, and as such, levels of "new" infections or infections spreading from fusarium species in your grains from sitting out in the fields should not be any worse than what they were prior to the cold wet fall setting in. There are two issues we are dealing with here, new infections setting in or spreading (not likely an issue), and DON levels increasing from already existing levels of infection within the seed by warm, wet weather turning on the mycotoxin factory (a little more unpredictable).

Let us now look at the hardest type of spring, a late and tight spring. Choices now are a lot more complicated, but are all based on management of time and equipment operator availability. The easiest way to deal with crop residue is still to use the combine with a straw-chopper, but there comes a point when time is in very short supply. I have heard of all kinds of ingenious ways producers are thinking of how to chop up and disperse or collect unharvested crop not worth taking off for grain, as they do not want to risk the 2017 crop. Most deal with some sort of collecting then destroying if crop is in a windrow, from silage choppers to bailing and burning of bails. If crop was left standing, then heavy disking (for those who have not long ago gotten rid of their big steel) and or multiple-pass heavy cultivation was being suggested. I can only imagine a grass-killing post-emergent herbicide will be a must in this latter line of thinking.

Having ruts in a field seems to be tipping the scale towards some form of heavy cultivation, even if it comes after combining first. The issue of cultivation or soil disturbance of any kind requires soils to be on the dry side and the problem is that simply may come too late to not irreversibly damage the full yield potential of the 2017 crop.

Therefore, there is a tendency to consider burning, but remember burning is a last resort, because it is a horrible way to keep available nutrients from your valuable crop residue, as most will go up in smoke. It is also dangerous to the surrounding environment, property, and human health.

Do not expect cereal seed to be fully destroyed by burning and hedge on a good flush of volunteers to pop up within this new cropping season. Secondly, the window of optimum burning between being dry enough to burn and creating proper perimeter protection cultivation strips, to when it is too dry for authorities to allow a burn and then implement a complete fire-ban is very small, often only ten to fourteen days long.

The third issue with burning of crop residues is a **permit is required in Alberta for burning of crop residue**, any burning actually, and if you are in the "Forest Protection Area" of Alberta you need to contact your local fire permit office (Forestry Office), and if in "Non-Forest Protection Area" you can obtain a permit through your local municipal

office. The fire protection season is from March 1st to October 31st of each year, the timeframe when a permit is required by law. As many such permits require inspections prior to permit issue, it is suggested that a meeting with your local permit office be arranged sooner than later to iron out any possible conflicts to this option being left as an available decision in your management tool box.

If we face a "late and tight" spring the one thing you have in your power of management is to plan now for a shorter season crop or at the very least, an earlier variety. It may be wise to consider a pulse in rotation if following your 2016 cereal crop. If following a spring harvest of 2016 canola, perhaps barley, or one of the newer shorter-seasoned wheat varieties you have been putting off testing due to a perceived yield penalty.



Having a plan and the seed in place for a shorter season option now will pay dividends later should we get into a late and tight spring.

This is especially true as quality seed is already in short supply for this coming spring. Rain in June seems to be the norm for northern and north-central Alberta where the largest part of unharvested grain exists, and completing planting for these areas by the fourth week of May is still the goal to shoot for, regardless of having included a shorter season option. Optimum yield and quality still comes from getting the crop in the ground by the third week of May, but having a short-season option - should that prove unavoidable this spring - will not be a situation made that much worse.

Likely by the time you read this article, you will have some hints from nature and weather forecasts as to which type of spring to expect. Here is hoping for an early and open spring for all, as well as lots of positive surprises regarding grain quality and yield from the 2016 cereal harvest that remains in many fields.

Know your unharvested acres options as spring approaches

Mustafa Eric, Media Coordinator | Agriculture Financial Services Corporation (AFSC)

The harvest in 2016 was difficult for many producers in Alberta. It left lots of crop unharvested in the fields because of excessive moisture and created financial and logistical problems.

"It was an extremely frustrating year for producers," said Chris Dyck, Interim Vice President of Innovation and Product Development, Agriculture Financial Services Corporation (AFSC).

"Producers were faced with crops that were not drying down in the field, along with field conditions that in many cases couldn't support the harvest equipment. Throughout the fall, we were impressed by the ability of our clients to get the crop off the field in spite of the tough conditions."

But, the crop that had to be left in the fields will now have to be dealt with as the snow melts. Producers have three clear options to consider this spring by keeping in close touch with their local AFSC Branch Offices (BO).

The main steps that producers should take before going into next sowing season include:

- Contacting a local AFSC BO if all or part of an insured crop is to be harvested.
- Contacting a local AFSC BO to have an inspection completed before harvesting or putting the crop to another use.
- Submitting a revised Harvested Production Report to a local AFSC BO once the harvest has been completed.



With 967,569 acres being reported as unharvested by producers, AFSC has been processing an unusually high number of claims over the last few months.

Through it all, AFSC is adhering strictly to established claim inspection standards with a team of qualified and experienced inspectors.

And it is that commitment to a high inspection standard that explains why the claims processing is not proceeding faster. As each and every on-farm

inspector employed by AFSC is trained and equipped with a special skillset that qualifies them for their position, employing temporary inspectors for a job that requires expertise and specialization is not considered by AFSC to be a proper solution to speed up claim processing.

However, extra measures are being taken to address the extraordinarily high number of claims. Among these steps are allocating available resources to high demand areas and plans to combine inspections of wildlife damage with those of the unharvested crop in the fields.

Despite the above average number of claims, as of March 3 a total of 1708 claims have been assessed, covering 616,412 acres with paid indemnities standing at \$29,544.

Contact a Branch Office if wildlife damage discovered, plan to put your crop to another use.

The number of wildlife damage claims is expected to rise as snow melts away and farmers determine the state of their crop still on the ground. Producers should apply to the Wildlife Damage Compensation Program (WDPC) if they identify wildlife damage on their unharvested crops. If a producer has plans to put their crops to another use, they should contact their local AFSC BO and indicate their requests for both pre-harvest and wildlife damage inspection. Those inspections can occur simultaneously.

The WDPC is in place to bring relief to farmers whose crops are affected by wildlife. There is no requirement for farmers to have an insurance policy with AFSC to be eligible for support under the WDPC. Inspection requests must be submitted, and AFSC will need to inspect the damage before the crop can be harvested or put to another use. Information about the number of processed and pending claims is updated weekly at [AFSC.ca](http://www.AFSC.ca).

→ Producers who wish to apply to or receive more information about the Wildlife Damage Compensation Program are advised to contact their local AFSC BO, call the AFSC Client Contact Centre at 1.877.899.2372 or visit www.AFSC.ca.



How do we come to the table to talk about farm transition and legacy?

Elaine Froese | CAFA, CSP, CHICoach

It was great to meet the energetic learners at FarmTech 2017 in Edmonton. It was no surprise that many stopped me in the hall to ask deeper questions that are keeping them awake at night. The most common question was “Elaine, how do we even get people to the table? My parents are refusing to talk, and my grandparents are even more stubborn.”

Farm families are stuck because they give in to procrastination and fear of conflict. If you want something really, really badly, how persistent are you willing to be to get answers to your “burning questions?” Love does not read minds. Legacy will not happen unless you commit to act, get clarity of expectations for each generation, and set accountable timelines. Everyone MUST do the work of talking.

So, let us dig in with practical approaches.

- 1. What do you want?** Name your income stream for the next 20 to 30 years as founders, and as young parents. What do you need (not want) for family living expenses? The dollar data is important for all generations. Grandparents may be holding tight to gold, cash, and land because they survived the depression and have money “security” issues, or power and control issues. Do you know what it cost you to live in 2016? Check your bank statements.
- 2. Where are you going to live?** Residence in Alberta is a wonderful thing, there are many beautiful locations. If dad cannot give up access to the shop and mom wants to be off the main yard (Grand Central Station of activity) then you have a spousal fight on your hands. Each couple needs to be clear about where and why they want to live at a certain spot. If a new house needs to be built for under \$300K, who is paying for that? Notice I gave you a budget for the house, because farm homes do not make money.
- 3. How are you going to service debt?** The founders do not want to burden the next generation with crazy debt. I hope you heard Merle Good’s presentation at FarmTech 2017 about creative equity sharing with corporations so that the parents have cash flow and shareholder loans. Most founders I meet do not expect their business heirs to buy the whole farm (they cannot afford to) but do expect some debt leveraging. It also helps if founders have the “personal wealth bubble” beyond the farm assets to draw income from and gift to non-biz heirs. So, what level of debt are you willing to service? Have you been to your lender of choice as a young farmer to see what you can manage?
- 4. What will your roles be as the farm grows?** How big is big enough? Just a little bit more than the neighbours? Does granddad want a position as wise elder, and can he transfer assets with a warm hand rather than a cold one? Does grandma want a life estate in her house, and then move to more care in a senior’s home when she needs it? Does dad want to become the hired man again? Does mom want to travel with a girlfriend? Does daughter in-law or son in-law have a voice in the transition plan at the beginning stages? Who is going to take over the financial role of bookkeeping? Who is the ultimate decision maker for management? What are the strengths and weaknesses of each farm team player? Roles and responsibilities change as we age, so pay attention to the spoken expectations of your farm team. Remember - job descriptions and performance appraisals worked on the oil patch and now those same skills need to be transferred to your farm to be more professional and aware.
- 5. What do we tell the non-farm heirs to help them understand that they are not getting a raw deal?** I do not make these questions up, these are real questions folks ask me as a coach. The fairness issue is about how the estate will be handled, and what legacy opportunities the farm succession or business continuance plan will give the non-business heirs. What do you owe your children? What support is, or has the farm cash already given to the family? Is there greed and entitlement issues that need to be talked about openly? A college education is worth \$200K if it was paid for by parents.
- 6. How do we protect our hard earned wealth from spousal breakup?** Do you have separate farm corporations that partner? Divorce fear keeps people in the dark for decades. I have seen this happen where the parents do not transfer assets until they see what happens for the first 25 years, and even then there is no guarantee that the marriage will last. My encouragement is to have a culture of love and respect for all family couples and let everyone voice their farm vision. Non-farm kids can also add insight and great wisdom to the planning conversations. See my blog on divorce.
- 7. Download the farm family toolkit at www.elainefroese.com.** You need to have a toolbox to work from. If you start here, you will have my coaching on paper to start getting organized to have more robust conversations. You have to talk and listen respectfully to each other. The talking is the work. A recent client relayed to me that her lawyer was impressed by how many issues were clear to the family BEFORE the lawyer visit, so much so that the family saved hundreds of dollars in fees because they came to their advisor table prepared.

8. **Talk to yourself about all of the points above.** Get clear on what your needs, wants, and expectations for transition and legacy are. "I think, I feel, I need, I want" is a good script. Then set a date with your spouse and talk with them. It helps if couples are aligned with what they value and envision for the next chapter of their lives. Then set a date for a family transition exploration meeting. Neutral zones like boardrooms at the accountant's office or a hotel work well, unless the family home is workable. Bring your flipchart, a talking stick, post-it notes and your best character. Hire a facilitator if you want to ensure the dialogue is kept safe and respectful. Hire a babysitter to care for the kids off-site. Meet for three hours with the first two hours to explore the issues, and the last hour to craft a "next-steps" list. Photograph the flipchart notes with your smart phones. Email the action list to everyone and set target dates for completion of all the action items. Set a date for the next meeting. Give a \$50 fine to those who cancel.

9. **Build a binder to organize all of the vital plans you are chomping away at.** The action list, accounting/tax, wills/estate, lifestyle plan (income streams, financial plan) insurance, business plan (vision for the farm), etc. This planning binder will be your "go to" document holder as you build your team of advisors and have more meetings to get clarity.

→ For our 1992 succession this took six months and only three meetings. For our 2017 succession, we have had one meeting with our coach so far, and we are moving off the main yard in 2020. Ravage my website www.elainefroese.com/store. I want to hear your success stories: www.elainefroese.com/contact.

Elaine Froese empowers farm families to talk, resolve conflict and build amazing legacies for their farms and families. She farms in SW Manitoba with her husband Wes, son Ian and daughter-in-law Kendra. Her fourth book "Building Your Farm Legacy" will be out soon.



Families who meet regularly are 21 per cent more profitable, so get going!

Managing mental health

Kayla Bertrand, Fund Development and Communications Manager | Canadian Mental Health Association Alberta Division

Large open fields and vast blue sky – some would say an ideal environment in which to live and work. But regardless of the environment where you work, maintaining your mental health and wellbeing is crucial.

Work is important to our well-being. In addition to the income it brings, it can be a big part of our identity and a way to contribute to something bigger. However, mental health has a big impact on the way we work.

The Alberta farming industry has unique features that impact mental health. Long hours, emotional and physical exhaustion, the pressure of sustaining a farm, social isolation, factors beyond your control and limited rural mental health resources can all contribute to stress, anxiety and depression.

A moderate amount of stress improves our efficiency and mental sharpness. But how do you know when your everyday juggling act has stopped being a motivating challenge and started being harmful to your health?

Here are some signs:

- ✓ You feel like you have lost control of your life.
- ✓ You often feel guilty about neglecting different roles.
- ✓ You frequently find it difficult to concentrate on the task at hand.
- ✓ You are always tired.

Experiencing stress, anxiety or depression is not a reflection of your work or worth. The good news is that we all can take steps to help maintain balance and build positive mental health.

Taking action is the first step. Ignoring the effects of stress, anxiety or depression can lead to other mental health problems. The tips below are common strategies that are helpful for many people.

- Solve problems as they come up. Remember, sometimes solving a problem means doing the best you can, or ask for help. Simplify your life. Learning to say no is a real skill that takes practice. Try to look for ways to make your to-do list more manageable.
- Learn helpful thinking strategies. Unhelpful thoughts, such as expecting the worst or believing that everything must be perfect can make problems seem bigger than they really are.

- Schedule brief breaks for yourself throughout the day. Your productivity and effectiveness will increase if you take just a ten minute break every two hours.
- Make the distinction between work and the rest of your life. Protect your private time.
- Focus on supportive and healthy relationships. Connect with those who mean the most to you.
- Take care of yourself. Try to think of a variety of ways you can be good to yourself. Eat well, get the rest you need and don't be hard on yourself.
- Talk about your problems. Loved ones may not realize that you are having a hard time. If you need to talk with someone outside your circle of loved ones, your family doctor may be able to refer you to a counsellor, or you may have access to one through your faith community.

Contact your local branch of the Canadian Mental Health Association Alberta Division if you need help. The website www.mymentalhealth.ca offers resource listings to help you maintain your mental health.

Other resources in Alberta include:

- If suicide is a possibility, call 911
- Rural Distress Line: 1 (800) 232.7288
- Distress Line (Edmonton and area): (780) 482.4357
- Distress Centre (Calgary and area): (403) 266.4357
- Distress Line of South Western Alberta: (403) 327.7905
- Alberta Mental Health Helpline: 1 (877) 303.2642

→ If you are in the Edmonton or Calgary areas and certain other communities, you can dial 211 for help locating resources. All Albertans can visit www.ab.211.ca for more information. There is Confidential Chat available on the top right-hand side of the website (available 12:00-8:00 p.m.).



Contact Us

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Upcoming Events

Event

April 4 - 9, 2017	Aggie Days	Calgary, Alberta
April 4 - 6, 2017	Team Alberta Outreach Mission	Ottawa, Ontario
April 25 - 26, 2017	Aggie Days	Lethbridge, Alberta
May 2 - 4, 2017	Amazing Ag	Edmonton, Alberta
June 27, 2017	CanolaPALOOZA	Lacombe, Alberta

**Please visit albertawheat.com for more up-to-date information on AWC's regional meetings and how to get registered.*



Visit albertawheat.com for more information on upcoming events, and to learn about the great work our team is doing.

Cleaning House

AWC recently cleaned up our mailing list to cut back on members receiving duplicate copies of Wheat's up. Please contact us at info@albertawheat.com or 403-219-7902 if you are still receiving multiple copies, or if you or someone you know did not receive a copy.

