The Grain Exchange

Better Together

Alberta Wheat Commission

Alberta Barley

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WheatStalk and wheat socks

Gary Stanford | Alberta Wheat Commission chair

Another growing season is upon us, which means my favourite field day is approaching – WheatStalk! WheatStalk is Alberta Wheat Commission's (AWC) annual wheat agronomy event to celebrate one day of peace and wheat. The WheatStalk name and branding is derived from the iconic 1960's music festival Woodstock and perhaps last year you noticed a couple of tweets featuring me and a number of AWC staff wearing retro tie-dyed shirts at the event and hanging out by a VW bus.

Speaking of last year's WheatStalk event; it was co-hosted with Farming Smarter at their site in Lethbridge. It was a beautiful July day in the sunny south to be learning all-things agronomy pertaining to predominantly wheat, but also canola, barley, peas, and flax, just to name a few. Last year's lineup of speakers provided valuable insights to many agronomy aspects such as the impacts of variable seeding rates, herbicide and spraying applications, pest management for wireworms and identifying beneficial insects. Along with being an agronomy-filled day, WheatStalk also combines other entertaining elements so you can enjoy a field-day with fellow farmers, agronomists, researchers and industry peers. Last year, WheatStalk attendees received a mini speaker to play their favourite rock tunes, a great spread of wheat-based dishes and to spark some friendly competition, there was an archery station. And let's not forget that WheatStalk wouldn't live up to its name without a good selection of 1960's music!

This year, for the first time, WheatStalk will be touring north to the Peace region's Teepee Creek area. AWC is excited to run WheatStalk for our northern producers with a new theme, *Build Your Adventure* – derived from the flexible structure of the event this year. Typically, WheatStalk has scheduled stations for attendees, but this year attendees can create their own schedule that best suits their agronomy interests. WheatStalk will be at the Lyons Production Service Event Centre on August 8th and will have over a dozen learning stations ranging from soil health, tips-and-tricks to identifying pests, an intercropping demo, along with many other interesting stations. Attendees can also expect numerous trial plots displaying wheat, barley, canola and pulses.

We're excited to be hitting the road with WheatStalk and providing northern farmers with the opportunity to attend and learn from researchers, agronomists and other industry professionals. You will definitely catch me there, likely tweeting amongst the action! And if you don't already follow me, @senatrstanford is where you'll find me on Twitter.

We hope to see you in Teepee Creek this summer. Trust me, it's the wheat event you won't want to miss! For more information and to register for WheatStalk, visit **www.albertawheat.com** and go to the *Events* page. The first 50 people to register for WheatStalk will receive the highly sought after AWC wheat socks!

Made in Canada Tour

Dave Bishop | Alberta Barley chair

Alberta Barley continues to be a catalyst for industry collaboration and the upcoming *Made in Canada* tour is no different. Our organization continually seeks opportunities to unify the barley value chain and to strengthen the crop's competitiveness and profitability for Alberta farmers.

This July, Alberta Barley is partnering with the Canadian Malting Barley Technical Centre (CMBTC) to showcase Alberta's grain-to-glass value chain to a contingent of Canadian and American brewers. With a growing market for Alberta-grown barley, we have designed this tour as an opportunity to encourage variety acceptance by showing brewers the advantages of using new barley varieties.

Derived from the Barley Action Plan, the Made in Canada tour will feature short visits with an array of farms to view new malt barley varieties, a local malting outfit – Red Shed Malting – and the Field Crop Development Centre (FCDC), a research facility in Lacombe, to view pipeline varieties in its breeding program.

To emphasize how well these new varieties can be brewed, Alberta Barley has commissioned a custom beer from a local brewer. During the tour, our guests will taste this one-of-a-kind brew to get an idea of the quality and profile the variety has to offer.

MADE IN Canada CROP TOUR
JULY 23-25, 2019

Continued on next page

Collaboration is key. The tour will not only have Canadian and American brewers present, but the entire barley industry – seed companies, researchers, maltsters and exporters will all be present to provide further insight and network with our guests. With a united voice from our industry, our end-goal of variety acceptance is closer to reality.

At the end of the tour, we hope brewers from the U.S. and within our borders will have a new appreciation for Alberta-grown barley. We look forward to further building relationships to support growth amongst our provincial value chain, all while sharing a cold beer made from all Alberta ingredients.

“To emphasize how well these new varieties can be brewed, Alberta Barley has commissioned a custom beer from a local brewer.”

General Manager’s Message

Tom Steve, General Manager | Alberta Wheat and Barley Commissions

Is agriculture back under a UCP government?

The election of a United Conservative Party (UCP) government has ushered in a new era for Alberta’s agriculture sector. In many respects it will be viewed as a return to a time when farmers had a large influence in caucus and cabinet. Alberta Wheat Commission and Alberta Barley will be working hard to ensure that’s the case, but how will it actually play out in terms of public policy?

One thing is certain; the new government will have a deeper understanding of the risks and realities faced by farmers and ranchers. For example, the new agriculture minister, Devin Dreeshen, is a fifth- generation farmer (how refreshing) who actually knows an air drill from a combine and can operate both. Minister Dreeshen also served for a number of years on the staff of federal agriculture minister Gerry Ritz and is well known in ag policy circles.

There are many others in the cabinet and caucus – too many to mention – who are directly involved in the agriculture industry, including finance minister Travis Toews, a rancher and past president of the Canadian Cattlemen’s Association (CCA).

It’s been well documented that the previous NDP government had a rocky relationship with farmers. They instantly got off on the wrong foot in 2015 with the introduction of Bill 6 and never recovered. They had few MLAs with any connection to agriculture and it showed.

Agriculture, of course, is inextricably linked to Alberta’s history. So much so that the United Farmers of Alberta (UFA) served as the provincial government from 1921-1935.

Notable Alberta agriculture ministers during my career have included:

- Walter Paszkowski, agriculture minister under Ralph Klein
- Peter Elzinga, agriculture minister in the Don Getty government who chaired Ralph Klein’s leadership campaign and served as minister of intergovernmental affairs and deputy premier under Premier Klein
- Shirley McCLellan, agriculture minister and deputy premier in the Klein government
- Ed Stelmach, agriculture minister in the Klein government who later served as Alberta’s 13th Premier
- Doug Horner, agriculture minister in the Klein government who also served as deputy premier in the Stelmach government

Kind of an impressive list don’t you think? Agriculture has shaped the political landscape in Alberta for much of our history and now we again have a government with a deep understanding of our issues. At the same time, an increasing focus on the urban voter and fiscal realities of a burgeoning deficit should be a message to all of us not to take it for granted that policy decisions will go our way.

A wise former colleague of mine once said, “government policy is made by those who show up,” and that is exactly what we plan to do.

New project examines differences in feed and malt genetic potential

Lauren Comin, Director of Research | Alberta Wheat and Barley Commissions

The Canadian Grain Commission classifies barley into three classes: malt, food and general purpose (feed). Because of its higher value if adequate quality is achieved, more malt acres are planted than realize their intended purpose. Because of the high potential value of malt and market realities, barley breeding programs tend to put a strong emphasis on malt cultivar development, only turning to feed if a line is particularly high yielding and lacks the necessary quality package to end up in a pint glass. Because of this, improvements in malt varieties have relatively outpaced improvements in feed varieties. Despite the desirability of the malt market, there is a large feed market available to producers in Alberta and feed acres make up just over half of the insured barley acres in Alberta. Improving the yields of barley destined for feed end-use represents a significant opportunity.

Alberta Barley is investing $12,000 in a project led by Laurel Thompson of Lakeland College, in collaboration with Battle River Research Group, to help determine if managing malt genetics for feed end-use can increase barley profitability. In the one-year study, Thompson will compare the response of malt and feed cultivars grown under low (80 kg/ha total N, targeting traditional malt end-use) and high (140 kg/ha total N, targeting feed end-use) nitrogen management. The study will look at six varieties of feed and malt barley: CDC Austenson, Brahma, Oreana, CDC Copeland, AAC Synergy and CDC Bow, grown in two locations: Vermillion and Forestburg. A lodge-resistant variety is represented in both feed (Oreana) and malt (CDC Bow) classes in the study.

“New malt genetics are showing impressive yield potential. By challenging traditional end-use boundaries and managing these promising malts for feed end-use with higher nitrogen rates, we may be able to increase the yield, and therefore the profitability, of feed barley in Alberta,” says Thompson.

“If growers can use management rather than variety selection to determine the end-use of their barley crop on any given year, this will provide increased on-farm flexibility to growers,” adds Thompson. While only a one-year preliminary study, it hopes to inform future research to help barley producers ensure they are extracting as much profit from a crop as possible. It will help to answer questions on the feed quality of malt varieties grown under high N-management. If a new malt cultivar that hasn’t yet been accepted by maltsters can be grown with the intention of feed end-use, acreage can be built up while maltsters become familiarized with the new malt cultivar profile, increasing the chance of adoption. The project will also generate preliminary economic data to determine the most profitable barley cultivars to grow for feed end-use in Alberta. Alberta Barley is also supporting a related multi-year Canadian Agriculture Partnership (CAP)-funded project led by Thompson in collaboration with Alberta Agriculture and Forestry, examining barley profitability with feed or malt varieties, nitrogen rate and plant grower regulator use.

If this project interests you, please visit **www.albertabarley.com.** Information on extension opportunities and final results will be posted as they become available.

It starts with me

Devyn Brook, Community Manager | The Do More Agriculture Foundation

“Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle.” — Socrates

The Do More Agriculture Foundation is a group of passionate community members that recognize the cause for mental health care, resources, services, and education, across Canada. We are a not-for-profit organization looking to reinvent the narrative surrounding mental health in agriculture to one where all producers are encouraged, empowered and supported to care for their mental well-being.

In 2018 there were a number of suicides in our industry that rocked our communities to the bones. We cannot continue on this trajectory, we need to do more. Everyone has a story about how mental health has impacted them. We believe that the time has come for our stories to knit us tighter together, rather than push us further apart.

In November 2018, Do More Ag launched our first national awareness campaign called ‘It Starts With Me’.

“We each can have a positive impact and create change by making small adjustments to our internal and external language. We often don’t think about how the language we use can impact mental health,” explains Do More Agriculture Foundation co-founder Kim Keller.

We believe that the next steps include building capacity within our industry. The way that we can do this is equipping community members with Mental Health First Aid (MHFA). Through the support of Farm Credit Canada and Bridges Health, we created the Community Fund and have coordinated 12 Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) trainings across the country to equip community members with the skills to support someone who is developing or dealing with a mental health crisis.

Pulling together a MHFA training is no easy task. We have been truly awe struck by the gumption and passion of leaders in the community to bring this training to our ag industry. All 12 trainings have run successfully, meaning over 250 people across the country are better able to show up for a mental health crisis, and are better equipped with information to help prevent a crisis all together. The feedback inspires us to keep going.

“Eye opening - has completely changed my opinion on mental health. Everyone needs to take this course.” Strathmore, AB

“Facilitation was one of the best instructors I’ve had, and I have taken many courses. Content is applicable in a situation as mental health affects all.” Fairview, AB

If you or someone you know is struggling, you are not alone, and there is support available. Reach out, start a conversation, and be kind. It starts with me.

For more information about Do More Ag and to find a list of available resources, please visit our website at **www.domore.ag**. To learn more about MHFA or to find a training near you visit **www.mhfa.ca.**

The Do More Agriculture Foundation is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. If you are in crisis, please visit your local emergency department or call 911.

AWC is proud to recognize vice-chair and region two director Hannah Konschuh, who was one of the 12 community leaders in Canada who brought a MHFA course to her local community in Strathmore, Alberta.
Visit **grainswest.com** for the feature article on the Strathmore MHFA event or listen to the GrainsWest podcast, episode one *Reaching Out.*

Delayed leaf disease fungicide timing – is it worth it?

Jeremy Boychyn, Agronomy Research Extension Specialist | Alberta Wheat and Barley Commissions

Cereal leaf disease does not always align with flag leaf fungicide timing. If disease symptoms occur after flag leaf timing, is a later application still worth it? Should I delay the application to head timing (anthesis) to add fusarium suppression as well or should I apply fungicide now? Would this delay cause yield loss? Research conducted in Western Canada on spring wheat and across Canada for barley suggest that fungicide application at head timing does not come with a yield sacrifice compared to flag leaf.

Spring wheat varieties such as Carberry, CDC Go, CDC Abound among others (refer to the Alberta Seed Guide) are susceptible or moderately susceptible to leaf spot disease, and are at higher risk of disease infection. Research[1] comparing Prosaro (Bayer) applied at anthesis timing to Folicur (Bayer) applied at flag leaf timing on Carberry Spring Wheat in Saskatoon, SK; Indian Head, SK; Melfort, SK; Brooks, AB; Lethbridge, AB; and Lacombe, AB concluded that anthesis timed application of Prosaro provided adequate control of leaf diseases while maintaining yield. Results were grouped by high disease severity locations and low disease severity locations. Within the high disease severity location group, the untreated check had 72.3% leaf disease severity and 3676 kg ha-1 (55 bu/ac) yield. Flag leaf fungicide timing reduced disease severity by 38.5% and increased yields by 334 kg ha-1 (5 bu/ac). Anthesis fungicide timing reduced disease severity by 32.2% and increased yields by 465 kg ha-1 (7bu/ac). For the low disease locations, flag leaf and anthesis timing fungicides reduced disease severity from 16.2% for the check to 7.1% and 7.6% respectively, but yield was not changed by either application timing.

Similar findings were seen in research conducted by Dr. Kelly Turkington as part of the Growing Forward 2 research program. Turkington compared Twinline (BASF) at flag leaf timing to Prosaro (Bayer) at head emergence on various feed barley varieties. Locations included: Beaverlodge, Lacombe and Lethbridge, AB; Scott, Melfort, and Indian Head, SK; Brandon, MB; and Charlottetown, PEI. Similar to the response in spring wheat, a slight increase in disease severity was seen when fungicide was delayed until head emergence. However, there was no difference in final yield at either fungicide timing.

It should be noted that although dual fungicide application (flag leaf and head timing) increased yields above single fungicide applications, there was no economic advantage due to additional cost.

This research demonstrates that missing the flag leaf fungicide timing window is not always crucial for maintaining maximum yields. If you miss your flag leaf timing and disease pressure is not substantial, a delay to head timing will protect your yield, limit disease occurrence and provide fusarium head blight suppression. However, this does not mean head/anthesis timing is always the most appropriate. Leaf disease is a complex problem and a systems approach should always be used. If you are growing a highly susceptible variety under short rotations and the leaf below the flag leaf is displaying disease symptoms, a flag leaf timed fungicide may be most appropriate. If weather conditions remain conducive for leaf disease development, a second application may be needed to top up your leaf disease control, while providing suppression of fusarium head blight.

References

1. D.E. MacLean, J.M. Lobo, K. Coles, M.W. Harding, W.E. May, G. Peng, T.K. Turkington, H.R. Kutcher, Fungicide application at anthesis of wheat provides effective control of leaf spotting diseases in western Canada, Crop Protection, Volume 112, 2018, Pages 343-349, ISSN 0261-2194.

Meet the face behind The Growing Point – Jeremy Boychyn, Alberta Wheat and Barley Commission's agronomy research extension specialist. Subscribe online to The Growing Point for articles, podcasts and videos on timely agronomic information for Alberta Producers.

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Fusarium head blight – Protect yourself with the risk forecast tool

Jeremy Boychyn, Agronomy Research Extension Specialist | Alberta Wheat and Barley Commissions

If you farm in Alberta, *Fusarium graminearum* is a yearly concern that can lead to fusarium head blight (FHB) in your cereals. Between fusarium damaged kernels (FDK) and deoxynivalenol (DON), FHB can lead to significant reductions to your crop's yield, quality and grade. In some cases, it can render your crop unmarketable. Once flag leaf emerges, it is important to be on the lookout for environmental conditions conducive to fusarium development. Attention to this can help you protect your crop and help you make a decision on fungicide application.

Fusarium overwinters in grain and crop residue in the field. Those fields with a shorter rotation will be at higher risk of infection due to a build-up of infected crop residues. Given temperatures of 10-30°C and moisture the fusarium fungus becomes active eventually sporulating to produce fruiting structures known as perithecia on old crop residues. Within these perithecia are produced the wind-dispersed spore stage or ascospores. There can also be sporulation and subsequent development of the rain-splashed spore stage known as macroconidia. Spore germination requires at least 12 hours of high humidity or rainfall and temperatures within the range of 10-30°C. However, optimum temperatures are around 25°C. Although your greatest risk of infection and impact occurs during anthesis (flowering), infection can occur at any point the head is out of the boot. Infections that occur during anthesis are more likely to cause FDK, especially in wheat. Infections that occur outside of anthesis may not cause FDK, however, they can still lead to high levels of DON within your grain.

Between the cost of application and mitigating risk of fungicide resistance through overuse, the need to apply fungicides only when truly necessary is vital in sustainable agriculture. Reviewing weather in relation to temperature, rainfall and humidity over an extended period of time to determine your regions risk of FHB can be a challenge. This is why the Alberta Wheat Commission collaborated with Alberta Agriculture and Forestry (AF) to bring Alberta producers the Fusarium Head Blight Risk Tool, located on the AF website. By selecting the weather station closest to you, you can see Fusarium Disease Severity Value for that area. The system runs from June 1 to August 15. Feedback from this tool will assist with your decision on whether to spray for FHB or not. Keep in mind, this information is only part of the decision-making process. It is important to also ground truth the weather information you are seeing. Walk the fields and determine if moisture in the canopy is representative of the FHB risk tool; e.g. if the soil surface and crop canopy are still wet well into mid-afternoon, then likely conditions are favourable. You will also want to consider field history of FHB infection, variety susceptibility, crop stage, and value of potential crop. Once all of the factors are taken into consideration, an educated decision on fungicide application can be made. A decision table considering these factors along with other information can be found at **https://www.saskatchewan.ca/business/agriculture-natural-resources-and-industry/agribusiness-farmers-and-ranchers/crops-and-irrigation/disease/fusarium-head-blight.**

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FHB on wheat head indicated by premature kernel ripening and salmon pink/orange material between infected florets.

FHB on barley head indicated by brownish discolouration. Barley FHB can often be mistaken with spot blotch/kernel smudge infection or even hail damage. A key indicator in barley is pinkish/orange or whitish growth on affected head portions.

Photos courtesy of Kelly Turkington, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

Diverse rotations help manage herbicide resistance

Western Winter Wheat Initiative

Farmers looking for alternate ways to manage weeds and control resistance while using less herbicide should consider integrating a crop rotation that changes cropping patterns.

"I think farmers understand the important role a diverse crop rotation plays in mitigating herbicide resistance," says Ken Gross, agronomist with the Western Winter Wheat Initiative.

A diverse crop rotation can be incorporated as the foundation of a weed management program. Changing field conditions with different crop requirements and timing on a yearly basis reduces the likelihood of problem weeds adapting to the system.

Winter wheat can help

Winter wheat is ecologically different from other crops due to the overwinter dormancy stage that kills off many weeds and gives the plant an advantage over spring weeds. The fall growth habit, vigorous spring growth, and early maturity help break weed cycles in a field.

Gross says winter wheat provides a number of benefits to assist farmers in avoiding herbicide resistant weeds.

"This is primarily due to its completely different growth habit versus spring-seeded crops," he says. "This habit allows winter wheat to green up two to three weeks earlier in the spring, which makes it far more competitive against problem weeds like wild oats. As a result, in most years a grower does not need to spray for wild oats in their winter wheat field."

Winter wheat can also be an effective tool for maximizing crop protection products in subsequent years.

"We know that using the same crop rotation year after year increases your chances of developing resistant weeds on your farm," Gross says. "Adding another crop type like winter wheat into your rotation makes for good diversity, which allows a grower to more easily rotate herbicides that have different modes of action."

The bottomline

Adding winter wheat to your crop rotation can reduce the impact of weeds on your farm and the possibility of advancing herbicide resistance.

For more information, visit **growwinterwheat.ca**

The Alberta Wheat Commission is a proud supporter and sponsor of the Western Winter Wheat Initiative.

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Should falling number and DON be considered as grading factors?

Geoff Backman, Business Development and Markets Manager | Alberta Wheat and Barley Commissions

The Canadian Grain Commission has begun a formal discussion on the addition of falling number (FN) and deoxynivalenol (DON) testing to the Canadian Wheat Official Grain Grading Guide. This change is being proposed as international buyers have accepted these tests as indicators of both dough quality and safety respectively.

In recent years, these tests have been incorporated into the majority of international buyers' contracts for Canadian wheat. Here in Alberta, farmers are reporting that falling number tests are being done in country elevators in selected locations – especially in areas that commonly experience wet harvest conditions.

Farmers have voiced concerns that the current use of falling number tests is creating additional uncertainty and risk for farmers. Concerns include a lack of transparency into the testing process, what the number required for milling quality grain is and inconsistent responses between grain buyers. Incorporating the falling number test into the grading system has the potential to provide both farmers and grain buyers' clear expectations and rules on how these tests can be applied. In the interest of transparency, required standards for FN and DON need to be embedded into grain contracts to ensure that everyone is operating on the same expectations.

Would this mean that FN tests should be done in every region and at every elevator? In our view, no, as this would be an added and potentially unnecessary cost to the grain handling system given current technology. Even today, quality is assumed to be fine unless harvest conditions create concerns about issues which is when regional testing occurs. However, if FN or DON tests are used, we believe the CGC should consider having these values supersede the visual factors of sprouting, severe sprouting, mildew, frost (heat) damage and fusarium-damaged kernels as these visual factors tend to be indicators of similar concerns that FN and DON directly address.

A common concern with standardized testing is that the process is slower than visual testing and will delay the delivery process. While the testing process is slower, the laws do not hold grain companies to any obligation to test for each and every grading factor for a class of grain to be graded. This means the person inspecting and grading a sample of grain can choose to evaluate grading factors in any order and to stop any further evaluation when one factor is determinative of the grade. Therefore, grain companies will only conduct FN and DON tests when they are concerned of issues and only in regions where they feel the testing is warranted.

It is important that farmers understand these tests, why they are being asked for by our international customers and why these customers are incorporating them into their contracts. A FN test is used as an indicator of issues preventing baked products from rising. When wheat is milled and used to create a dough for a bread loaf, the gluten proteins and starches build upon each other to allow that bread to rise. If wheat has begun the process of sprouting, internal enzyme activity starts to break down starches. This damaged starch within the wheat will not allow dough to rise as expected. The falling number test is based on a simplistic re-creation of the dough making process: a wheat sample from a farm is milled and a standardized amount is placed in a vial, then mixed with a standardized amount of water for 60 seconds. A standardized weight is then dropped into the mixture. A timer is run from the beginning of mixing until the weight falls to the bottom of the vial. This time is the "falling number" and determines how thick the mixture is. If starch damage has occurred, the mixture will be less thick and the weight will take less time to fall.

Sprouting in farm wheat production generally occurs when ripe wheat is exposed to high amounts of precipitation in the fall prior to harvest. Farmers who live in regions that experience high amounts of annual precipitation have reported that their production has been tested for falling number regularly since 2016. Before delivery of wheat on a contract is allowed, a farmer must provide samples from each bin on their farm for FN testing prior to delivery, with the potential of further testing occurring during and after delivery as well. If a farmer's wheat is found to have a low falling number, that wheat is not accepted for delivery on a milling contract. If none of the farmer's wheat is acceptable, the farmer is given the choice of exiting their contract by paying a substantial sum, or to re-contract the wheat at a lower contract value.

Frustration has also been expressed by farmers who are receiving conflicting responses as to what an acceptable falling number is. Two companies may test the same sample, but only one company may find that the wheat is acceptable for milling. This confusion comes from a lack of clear standards as to what a farmer can be expected to produce. Frustration peaks when a grain company that a farmer forward- contracted with determines that a sample is unacceptable, yet another company would accept the same grain as milling quality.

Prior concerns have also been raised regarding the accuracy of visual grading factors, as they are dependent on the wheat to be visually displaying sprouting characteristics and for the individual inspecting to be competent and consistent in their assessment. Concerns regarding inspection occur when a late precipitation event occurs in a region that does not often worry about sprouting, as the inspector may not be experienced with correctly identifying damaged kernels. When a region has been widely or repeatedly impacted by late season precipitation, concerns are raised as to the potential for an inspector to suffer from fatigue in inspecting hundreds of samples. In theory, switching to a standardized test machine removes the reliance on an inspector maintaining a consistent eye.

Including falling number into the grading standard will impact farmers by creating an objective standard that all parties can understand, address the uncertainty that farmers are currently facing and improve understanding of international market expectations. Those farmers who are not being tested currently will be made aware that falling number is an important test to end users, that they may be subjected to testing and that they deserve a clear expectation of the standards they should be held to. However, unless a grain company decides to test, there is no requirement for their samples to be tested. For those producers who rarely experience harvest sprouting, they are unlikely to be directly affected by the proposed change. For those farmers that operate in regions where fall sprouting is a concern, the inclusion of falling number into the grading standard will provide clear expectations for what they are expected to produce and what is acceptable to deliver as a milling quality wheat.

AWC makes progress on research priorities

Lauren Comin, Director of Research | Alberta Wheat and Barley Commissions

In 2018, recognizing a need for the development of more specific farmer-focused priorities to guide our research investments, Alberta Wheat Commission (AWC) worked with a group of innovative producers and advisors to explore issues and concerns in five categories:

1. Pest management
2. Soil health and fertility
3. Crop management
4. Post-harvest management
5. Technology and equipment

To aid the working group and to allow for input from the greater AWC membership, an online survey was distributed to collect the research interests of producers across Alberta. The results of this survey were sorted according to the five categories above and included in discussions.

After each category was thoroughly examined, the working group reviewed the issues as a whole and selected those that they felt were most critical for AWC to address:

1. Innovative, non-chemical control of herbicide resistant weeds
2. Effects of pesticide use on beneficial insects and soil microbiota
3. Management of diseases: 1. Ergot and 2. FHB
4. Effects of N use on yield, protein and N losses
5. Determining soil and plant interactions- Rhizosphere
6. Mitigating lodging
7. Quantifying glyphosate residues from pre-harvest use
8. New technology for old pests
9. Precision agriculture

Since the development of this specific priority list, AWC has participated in one full funding cycle and has added several projects to our portfolio which address concerns on the list.

- **Development of a multiplex RT-immunoPCR assay and biosensor for the early detection of airborne fungal spores in cereal crops** - Dr. Claudia Sheedy, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC)
- **Development of a biosensor for fusarium head blight forecasting in wheat** - Dr. Susie Li, Innotech Alberta
- **Beneficial insects in prairie crops: quantifying the value and vulnerability of biological pest control** - Dr. Haley Catton, AAFC
- **Pesticide impact on soil microbiome; an opportunity to identify microbial candidates for inoculation and field bio-augmentation** - Dr. Claudia Sheedy, AAFC
- **Integrating N fertilizer technologies with superior genetics to optimize protein in CWRS wheat without compromising yield, 4R principles, and environmental health** - Dr. Brian Beres, AAFC
- **Developing novel technologies for controlling herbicide resistant wild oat in wheat** - Dr. Steve Shirtliffe, University of Saskatchewan
- **Nanocarrier technology for the next generation of cereal seed** - Dr. John Laurie, AAFC

It may take several funding cycles to address these prioritized concerns, but AWC is driven to work with funding and research partners to reach innovative solutions for Alberta producer's issues.

For more information on the projects listed above, as well as a complete listing of funded projects, visit **www.albertawheat.com.**

Keep it Clean! This Growing Season

Brenna Mahoney, Director of Communications | Cereals Canada

Canadian wheat and barley producers work hard to produce crops that meet the highest standards for domestic and export markets.

Domestic processors, grain buyers and export customers trust the quality and cleanliness of these crops but are increasingly testing shipments for levels of pesticide residues and traces of disease to ensure they comply with set maximum residue limits (MRLs). If these standards are not met, shipments can be rejected, resulting in millions of dollars of lost revenue and damage to Canada's reputation as a trusted supplier.

As a grower, you play an important role in managing risk and the decisions you make today can make a big difference tomorrow. Help maintain Canada's reputation for quality and protect your investments by keeping it clean this growing season.

Here are 5 Simple Tips to help you *Keep it Clean!*

Simple Tip #1 Use Acceptable Pesticides Only

Only apply pesticides that are both registered for your crop in Canada and won't create trade concerns. Be sure to talk to your grain buyer to ensure the products you are using are acceptable to domestic and export markets. One product of special concern is glyphosate, which has recently come under increased consumer scrutiny. See tip #2 for important pre-harvest glyphosate guidelines.

Simple Tip #2 Always Read and Follow the Label

Always follow the label for product rate, timing and pre-harvest interval (PHI). PHI is the amount of time that must pass between the last application of pesticide and swathing or straight-cutting. Harvesting grain too soon after pesticide application may result in unacceptable residues.

On wheat and barley, only apply glyphosate pre-harvest when the greenest part of the crop is below 30 per cent moisture. Applying glyphosate when kernels are too green can result in residues that exceed acceptable limits. Growing malt barley? Be advised that grain buyers will not accept malt barley that has been treated pre-harvest with glyphosate or saflufenacil (e.g. Kixor).

> "On wheat and barley, only apply glyphosate pre-harvest when the greenest part of the crop is below 30 per cent moisture."

Simple Tip #3 Grow Disease Resistant Varieties and Use Practices to Reduce Infection

This summer, watch your cereal crops for conditions that may elevate the risk of fusarium. If hot, humid or wet conditions persist during head emergence and flowering, consider applying a foliar fungicide to help protect the crop. As well, avoid irrigating the crop during flowering.

Simple Tip #4 Store Your Crop Properly

Make sure your bins are clean and free of treated seed and animal protein like blood meal and bone meal. Only use bin treatments approved for cereals, such as diatomaceous earth. When storing your grain, condition your crops to moisture and temperature levels safe for long-term storage.

Simple Tip #5 Deliver What You Declare

Remember, the mandatory Declaration of Eligibility is a legally binding document. When you sign the declaration at the elevator, you are making a legal assertion that your crop is the variety and/or class you have designated, and whether your grain may contain residues of specific crop input products.

We are all in this together! By doing your part to keep your wheat and barley crops market-ready, you help keep markets open for all. For more information, visit keepingitclean.ca/cereals.

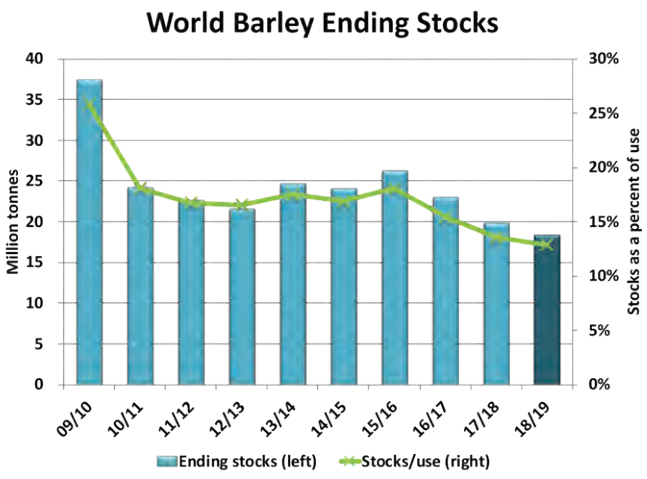
Barley outlook remains favourable

Chuck Penner | LeftField Commodity Research

The 2018/19 marketing year has been positive for Canadian barley growers. While the malt barley segment hasn't been spectacular, an exceptionally strong market for feed barley has kept prices for both classes supported. The key question now is whether that type of performance can be repeated again in 2019/20. Each marketing year is different from all of the rest and 2019/20 will certainly bring a fresh set of circumstances, but it's worth taking a quick look at 2018/19 to see if some of those same conditions will apply next year.

Even though Canadian barley supplies are large enough to cover domestic needs, the export market provided an even stronger pull in 2018/19, with prices high enough for most of the year to outbid domestic feed users. The result has been the largest export program in over 10 years, which has drawn down Canadian barley supplies to very low levels.

The reason for the strong export demand for Canadian barley was that last year's global barley production was the lowest since 2012. Among major exporters, the 2018 crop was 6% smaller than a year ago. While some overseas buyers shifted to other feedgrains, the big two – Saudi Arabia and China – kept their barley purchases quite high. Because of that, global ending stocks of barley dropped to the lowest level since 1983/84.

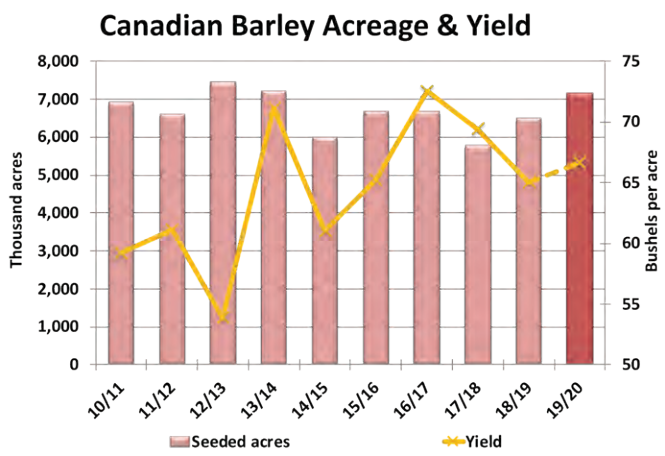


These low inventories at the end of 2018/19 also mean that maintaining adequate supplies in 2019/20 will be a challenge, with little cushion available for any sort of crop problems in key producing countries. Weather conditions and crop prospects will be closely watched. Back in 2018, almost every key exporting country, aside from Canada and Argentina, experienced crop issues and nearly all are trying to respond to the high price environment with more acreage in 2019.

At the time of writing, it's still early in the season but conditions are generally favourable in Russia and Ukraine although there are pockets of dry conditions. A generally favourable outlook is also in play for most of the EU, the world's largest source of export barley, although there have been some concerns about dryness in eastern and southern Europe.

Other parts of the global production outlook aren't as favourable. Rains have fallen in parts of Australia but the west is still quite dry and the country's barley crop may not be able to rebound much from the crop failures of 2018. Seeded area in Argentina is lower due to export taxes that have made barley less attractive to plant.

Canadian farmers are also trying to respond to strong barley prices by boosting acreage. According to StatsCan, seeded area in 2019 is up 10% over last year and will be the largest acreage base since 2013, if not more. One part of the catalyst for increasing barley acres was the uncertainty around Chinese canola demand and by planting time, that could have shifted even more acres into the barley column.



Of course, the weather will have as much (or more) to say about the crop size. Until more is known about crop conditions, the 5-year average yield would mean a Canadian crop of 9.2 million tonnes, 800,000 tonnes more than last year. But smaller carryover inventories from last year would offset a bigger crop and 2019/20 total supplies will only be up marginally. Unless yields are considerably above average, the Canadian barley situation won't get heavy.

The other side of the equation is where that barley goes. Total feed demand in Canada doesn't fluctuate all that much from year to year with only small changes in livestock numbers, although there are legitimate concerns about the potential impact of an outbreak of African Swine Fever. Otherwise, western Canadian feed demand mostly shifts between barley and feed wheat supplies, supplemented by domestic and imported corn.

The export outlook has a little more potential variability, largely due to geopolitical tensions. It's unlikely that Saudi Arabia will return as a buyer anytime soon, although it looks like some Canadian barley has "leaked" into the country from its next-door neighbours, with Kuwait and the UAE buying barley from Canada for the first time in many years. China has been the dominant buyer and there's some trade risk there as well. Japan has become the only other buyer of size, especially after Australia's crop failure in 2018/19. This means there is some risk of softer export demand for Canadian barley, but only if crops perform well in other exporters. And that's hardly a sure thing.

For the most part, feed barley prices have been firm but will turn lower at some point. The seasonal pattern for Canadian feed barley prices includes a decline, starting in midsummer and going until harvest is over in mid-September. This means that even if there are crop problems somewhere, prices won't likely start to strengthen until later in 2019.

Malt barley supplies in Western Canada have generally been adequate in recent years, even when the harvest has been challenging or delayed. This makes it difficult to generate a larger malt premium, unless there's a real harvest wreck. The most likely scenario is a modest spread between malt and feed, similar to the current year.

The bottom line is that in spite of increased acreage in some countries, global barley supplies won't become heavy. In fact, there's the potential of another year of low stocks that will keep buyers on edge. Any production glitches in one or more of the major exporters will be enough to cause prices to move back up again, making for another year of solid performance. And if the US corn outlook has turned bullish due to planting delays, it makes the barley outlook even friendlier.

Wheat running low on respect

Chuck Penner | LeftField Commodity Research

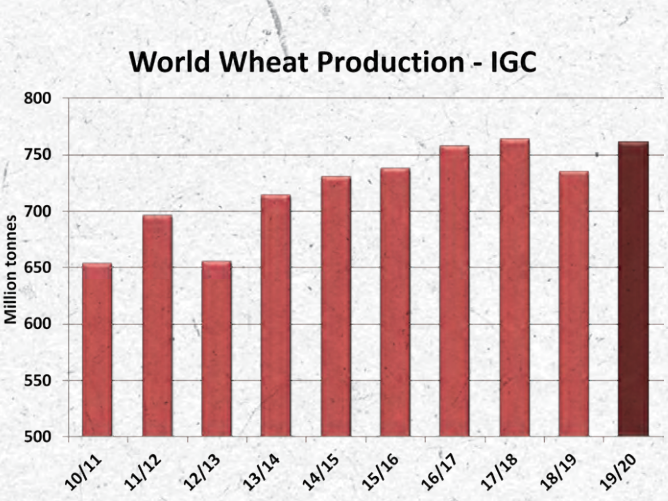
You won't need to listen to grain traders long before you realize that wheat is seen as the Rodney Dangerfield of commodity markets; it just doesn't get any respect. It's a commonly held view that the wheat market is unable to set its own direction and simply follows along behind others, particularly corn.

This anemic behaviour seems to have been the case again in 2018/19, with strongly bullish signals but a less-than-enthusiastic response. This past year, the global wheat crop shrunk nearly 30 million tonnes and for the first time in six years, more wheat was consumed than produced. Wheat ending stocks for 2018/19 will show a sizable decline from the previous year, especially among major exporters, but that still hasn't been enough to keep prices supported.

The lacklustre price performance in 2018/19 has been mainly a US phenomenon. Export prices for milling wheat in Russia (now the dominant global exporter) gained nearly US$50 per tonne since the 2018 harvest and even after coming off the highs, are still up US$20 per tonne from mid-2018. Meanwhile, Kansas (HRW) wheat futures spiked shortly during the 2018 harvest but have lost nearly US $70 per tonne from those highs. And since the major futures markets are focused on the US situation, prices in North America haven't been able to gain much traction. It doesn't help that the funds have become heavy sellers of wheat futures as they bet on even further declines.

The price response of Canadian wheat has been mixed. Red spring wheat prices started dropping in late March but basis levels have continued to strengthen. That's largely because Canadian wheat exports have performed extremely well in 2018/19, running 1.8 million tonnes ahead of last year's pace (as of early May), the highest total since the late 1990s, if not earlier. This rapid export pace along with solid domestic feed demand has drained Canadian wheat supplies down to multiyear lows. But once again, that's not enough to cause futures to rise, although the stronger basis has helped Canadian wheat prices avoid the full drop in futures.

Now, the market is looking ahead to the 2019 crop, which is where the outlook becomes a little cloudier again. The International Grains Council (IGC) is forecasting a 2% expansion in global wheat area and a 1% increase in yield. These percentages seem small but if they pan out, they'll add up to a large 26.5 million tonne rise in the 2019/20 global wheat crop, nearly a new record.



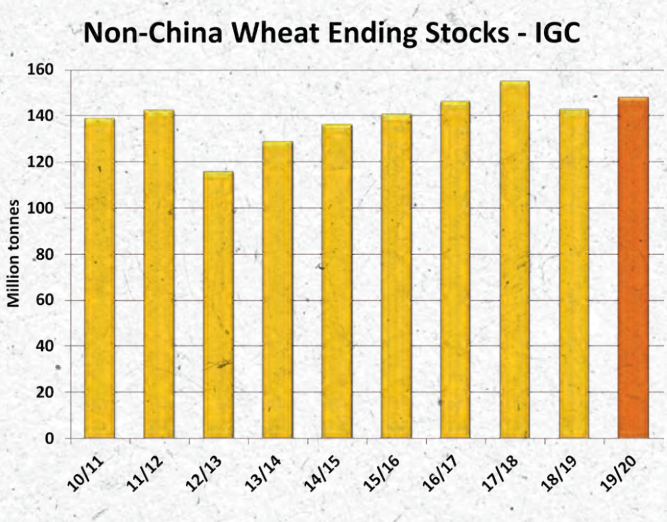
The chart shows that the 2019 crop increase is more of a recovery from last year's lows, rather than an expansion in wheat's popularity. After poor 2018 results in places like the EU, Australia, Russia and the US, a return to normal yields is enough to boost production back up to the highs.

Wheat crops in these key countries will need to yield well to produce this larger global crop but since most of it is winter wheat grown in the northern hemisphere, it's already well established and less prone to risk. The largest unknowns are the spring wheat crops in North America along with southern hemisphere crops in Australia and Argentina.

In Canada, StatsCan has projected seeded area of spring wheat to expand 12% over last year and, at 19.4 million acres, would be the largest acreage base since 2001. Even though wheat prices have been fading recently, the alternatives for Canadian farmers weren't looking great either, which caused a shift back to good old reliable wheat. Canada's diplomatic disputes with China over canola likely added a bit more impetus to planting spring wheat, which is a little less dependent on Chinese demand.

Even though Canadian wheat exports are more diversified than crops like canola or peas, the situation with China could still have a sizable impact on the outlook for Canadian red spring wheat in 2019/20. To a large degree, the big increase in Canadian exports in 2018/19 has been thanks to Chinese demand which has more than doubled from the previous year and rivals Indonesia as Canada's largest wheat customer. For Canadian wheat export potential and its impact on basis levels, the relationship with China is a key risk in 2019/20.

Despite the projected recovery in the global wheat crop, not all of it will flow down to ending stocks. The IGC is also projecting usage will expand by nearly 11 million tonnes as well. This expansion in wheat demand is the good news behind the wheat market. Even so, it still raises the possibility of record ending stocks for 2019/20.



It's important though to recognize where those wheat stocks are. According to the IGC, China accounts for nearly half (46%) of global wheat inventories. The problem is that those wheat stockpiles are nearly impossible to verify and even if they exist, simply aren't part of the global trade situation. When those Chinese "stocks" are taken out of the equation, 2019/20 ending stocks don't look too burdensome. Any meaningful problems with this year's crop could lift some of the heavy sentiment off wheat markets. Of course, that would also depend on wheat shedding its "respect problem".

Understanding Ukraine and Russia

Geoff Backman, Business Development and Markets Manager | Alberta Wheat and Barley Commissions

In September 2018, the national wheat value chain sent an investigative team to Ukraine and Russia (often referred to as the former Soviet Union or Black Sea region) due to the increasing levels of global wheat exports originating from the region. The goal of the investigative team was to understand what these regions goals were in the areas of wheat quality development and the improvement of farming practices and handling systems. The investigative team was composed of staff from Cereals Canada, the Canadian International Grains Institute (Cigi) and the Alberta Wheat Commission (AWC).

During the tour, it became clear that farming in the Ukraine and Russia region is varied. While the country has many small holding farms, it appears that the rise in exportable grains is being driven by a small number of agricultural corporations. Interviews revealed that these agricultural corporations have benefited from a comparatively low cost of land and labour versus that of Canada. These corporations stated that they faced no limits in accessing technology, such as crop protection products, tractors, combines, or seeders. They explained that their only limiting factor was the knowledge of their operators, in that they lack the knowledge to maximize production from the newest technology. This limit was being addressed by encouraging key staff to gain training on the latest agronomic practices.

This continued investment by the larger corporations indicates that grain exports from the Ukraine and Russia region will continue to increase in quantity. While the larger agricultural corporations are driving the change today, the new technology they adopt and introduce will filter out into smaller farm holdings. As access to improved technology increases for all farms (such as better machinery, seed varieties, and chemistry) the total productive potential of the region can be expected to increase.

The main limit on grain exports from Ukraine and Russia was identified as inland logistical rail infrastructure. Large inland elevators have been recently built within the country, allowing for production to be stored to prevent spoiling through the fall and winter. There are also large terminal elevators being installed in the port areas which will facilitate greater export by loading larger ships faster. Despite all the investment to ensure that grain can be handled, cleaned, dried, stored, and exported efficiently, there was no clear investment in ensuring that the grain could move long distances from the country to the port. Exporters claimed that 75 to 100 per cent of grain was delivered via trucks from the surrounding regions. This view was reconfirmed by country elevators who claimed that their ability to deliver to port was mainly limited by inefficiencies in rail service.

The investigative team was also interested in Ukraine and Russia's goals for wheat quality. Ukraine and Russia are known to be major exporters of medium protein and medium gluten strength wheat. This has enabled their growth of market share in the countries of Turkey, Egypt, Indonesia and Bangladesh. In both regions, producers were questioned as to their choice in wheat varieties and the potential benefits of trying to produce wheat with a higher protein or higher gluten strength. Producers explained that chasing yield gains from winter wheat varieties was the best choice for their farms. Yields were estimated to be 30 per cent better than other wheat types which provided additional protein and the winter wheat also matured after seeding of spring crops, which allowed for the producers to keep their staff working through the entire growing season. The responses indicated that Ukraine and Russia wheat should maintain a medium quality into the future.

The findings of the investigation indicate that the Ukraine and Russia will continue increasing their exports of medium protein wheat into the global market. While this may limit export opportunities for Western Canadian medium protein wheat classes (Canadian Prairie Spring Red & Canadian Western Red Winter), it may create opportunities for high protein and high gluten strength wheat classes (Canadian Western Red Spring). As international customers attempt to incorporate Ukraine and Russia's wheat into their production of flour for various end-products, the need for improving this flour using high-quality wheat will become more common. Canadian high protein and high gluten strength wheat is already globally recognized as a blending or 'improver' wheat which can fill this need.

The investigation concluded that, as the global wheat market changes there is still an important and valuable role for Canadian wheat production. Despite the massive growth in global supply, the demand for Canadian wheat should remain or increase as long as our supply is readily available.

> **"It may create opportunities for high protein and high gluten strength wheat classes (Canadian Western Red Spring)."**

Mark your calendars for the field days closest to you!

Date	Event	Host	Event Location	Town/City
Jun 26, 2019	Canola PALOOZA	Alberta Canola	AAFC Lacombe	Lacombe
Jun 27, 2019	Cypress Field School	Farming Smarter	Cypress Field Site	Medicine Hat
Jul 11, 2019	Field School	Farming Smarter	Farming Smarter Site	Lethbridge
Jul 24, 2019	Lacombe Field Day	AAFC Lacombe	AAFC Lacombe	Lacombe
Jul 24, 2019	Annual Field Tour	NPARA	NPARA Research Farm	Manning
Jul 25, 2019	Lethbridge Plot Hop	Farming Smarter	Farming Smarter Site	Lethbridge
Jul 25, 2019	Summer Field School	SARDA	SARDA Research Site	Falher
Aug 8, 2019	WheatStalk	AWC & PCBFA	Lyons Production Services Centre	Teepee Creek
Aug 14, 2019	Morning Coffee Harvest Tour	NPARA	NPARA Research Farm	Manning

Alberta Wheat and Barley Commissions support Applied Research Associations (ARA's) and numerous field days in Alberta. To learn more or to find an extension event near you, visit the Events page on albertabarley.com or albertawheat.com.

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CGA: Under Review or Under the Gun?

Geoff Geddes | The Word Warrior

They say good things come to those who wait, but they also say "he who hesitates is lost"; so what do "they" know? While the long wait for review of the Canada Grain Act (CGA) may be coming to an end, some feel success for the industry is less about acts and more about action.

In the federal government's latest budget, the CGA and Canadian Grain Commission (CGC) were singled out for a broad-based review that would leave them better aligned with current market realities. Given the dearth of updates to the century-old act, re-appraisal is mostly welcomed by industry, but with a key caveat.

"The CGA has been reviewed numerous times over the years, and the majority of attempts to update it have failed," said Tom Steve, general manager of the Alberta Wheat Commission (AWC) and Alberta Barley. "We feel it would be prudent to move forward with some needed changes, and opening up the act is part of that. At the same time, we're anxious to get on with amendments that have already been widely endorsed by industry and recommended by the federal government's Economic Strategy Tables. Reviewing the CGA is appropriate, but it's not necessary to make legislative changes that can have a real impact on stakeholders."

A weighty issue

One of the widely promoted changes would be elimination of outward weighing and inspection services as a mandatory requirement.

"Under their grain contracts, over 80 per cent of grain company vessels are also inspected by a private sector company," said Steve. "The mandated service by the CGC is redundant and an added cost that is being charged back to farmers, so that must be addressed."

At present, providing that service accounts for the bulk of the commission's revenue, prompting questions about whether alternative funding models should be considered.

Model behavior

"About five years ago, the CGC conducted extensive consultations on their funding model," said Cam Dahl, president of Cereals Canada. "They're a cost recovery organization that relies heavily on fees collected for outward weighing and inspection, but those fees cover much more than just that service. There needs to be greater alignment between actual costs and fees. We also need dialogue around how much of the CGC's services are a public good and should be publically funded, and how much is appropriate for cost recovery. For example, I think all the work of the Grain Research Laboratory falls under 'public good'; that should be part of the discussion."

A related concern around the status quo is the CGC's dual role: oversight agency for quality control of Canadian crops, and service provider. Some argue that it is a conflict of interest for the Agency to be both a regulator and service provider and that the private sector should be carrying out inspection services while the commission focuses solely on oversight.

"Where the commission provides the service, it's much more expensive and comes with limitations on aspects like overtime and grading shipments destined for export on evenings and weekends," said Steve. "The CGC can set the standard and evaluate whether inspections are performed properly, but actually supplying the service should be open to competition."

A third issue often cited as ripe for change involves the governance of the CGC. The current system calls for three commissioners appointed by the government, with the stated purpose of representing farmer interests.

"It's a governance structure from the past that should be re-evaluated," said Steve. "Commissioners are supposed to be advocates for farmers, and I'm not sure that's always the case. They are political appointees who are not necessarily chosen for their expertise."

Though the AWC has not taken a firm position, they lean towards an overhaul of the entire CGC structure, which may entail elimination of the current commissioner process. Though one school of thought is that changes to the CGC or the act itself are unlikely given the failure of reform efforts in years past, not everyone sees it that way.

Is the bin half full or half empty?

"I wouldn't discount earlier review work," said Doug Chorney, assistant chief commissioner of the Canadian Grain Commission. "People did the best they could with the information available at the time. The challenge for government is that you don't always get everything completed in the parliamentary calendar, but I think a lot of good came out of previous attempts. We've been directed to take a contemporary look at the act that reflects the world today and ensures any changes will reflect the current state of the grain industry."

In the meantime, industry stakeholders plan to keep the need for review squarely on the front burner.

"The CGA is complex legislation with significant implications for the grain sector going forward," said Dahl. "We must keep working with whatever government is in power to reinforce that reform of the act should be a top priority."

With the impending federal election, any review and consequent changes in legislation will likely be on hold until the dust settles.

Do good things really come to those who wait? For their part, farmers are banking on it.

Policy TRACKER

Shannon Sereda, Government Relations and Policy Manager | Alberta Wheat and Barley Commissions

Alberta has a new government, welcome to the United Conservative Party (UCP).

On April 16th Albertans voted in the UCP government led by the Honourable Jason Kenney. On April 30th the cabinet was sworn in, seeing the **Honourable Devin Dreeshen**, member elect for Innisfail-Sylvan Lake, become the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry. Minister Dreeshen actively farms with his family in central Alberta. For over eight years, he worked with the federal agriculture minister, the Honourable Gerry Ritz under Stephen Harper's Conservative government.

Other notable appointments for agriculture are **Honourable Travis Toews** as Finance Minister who is a cattle rancher in northern Alberta (Grande Prairie – Wapati) and has also worked as a director or representative in various agriculture organizations including President of the Canadian Cattlemen's Association. Further, **Honourable Richard Wilson** was appointed to the cabinet as Minister of Indigenous Relations. Minister Wilson operates his family farm near Wetaskiwin, which has received the Century Farm and Ranch Award.

On May 14th the Alberta Wheat Alberta Barley Commissions, along with our Team Alberta counterparts, met with the newly appointed agriculture minister and his Chief of Staff, Tim Schultz. The meeting was productive in sharing key issues important to farmers such as research funding, regulatory issues, market access, trade, the carbon tax and sustainability. We also heard the issues top of mind for the minister such as regulatory hurdles for farmers. We expect this to be the beginning of a strong relationship with Minister Dreeshen.

The Speech from the Throne on May 22nd marked the opening of the summer legislative session in which the UCP government will seek to address a number of campaign priorities including the introduction of Bill 1: *The Carbon Tax Repeal Act*, The Red Tape Reduction Action Plan and *The Farm Freedom and Safety Act* which will repeal and replace Bill 6. The Alberta Wheat and Barley Commissions along with our Team Alberta counterparts, will be actively working to establish relationships at all levels of government to continually establish ourselves as the foremost voice for the Alberta crop sector.

Team Alberta Ottawa Outreach – April 9 & 10, 2019

As part of our ongoing Team Alberta initiatives, the Alberta Wheat and Barley Commissions participated in the annual Team Alberta spring outreach trip to Parliamentar Hill. Directors present were: Dave Bishop, Alberta Barley chair; Ian Chitwood, Alberta Canola director; Chris Allam, Alberta Pulse Growers director; and Gary Stanford, Alberta Wheat Commission chair. Over the two days several meetings were held with various Alberta Members of Parliament as well as other key officials including Minster Marie-Claude Bibeau, Canada's recently appointed Agriculture and Agri-Food Minister, Minister Bernadette Jordan's staff in the office of Rural Economic Development, a number of Senators as well as representatives from the Prime Minister's Office, Transportation Canada and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. The trade dispute of Canadian canola into China was top of mind, but more than ever the trip highlighted the value of bringing our four groups together to have farmers meeting with politicians to best articulate the impact of public policy on farming operations and to this extent influence the policy outcomes and considerations.

Pest Management Regulatory Agency – Final Pollinator re-evaluation decisions for neonicotinoid pesticide

On April 11th Health Canada, through the Pest Management Regulatory Agency, completed its re-evaluation of three Group Four neonicotinoid pesticides which can be found in the following products used on cereals in Alberta for the suppression of wireworm: StressShield, Nipset and CruiserMax Cereals, in relation to their potential impact on bees and other pollinators. The department upheld their earlier proposed decisions which allows for their continued registration for seed treatment of cereal and legume crops, but proposes additional label statements to minimize bee exposure to dust during planting of treated seeds. While this is good news for farmers, these active ingredients are still undergoing re-evaluation based on potential impacts on aquatic invertebrates frequently detected in waterbodies. The proposed decision released in August 2018, which has called for phasing out these active ingredients based on the risk, was met with much concern from industry. Further research is now being considered and the department expects to report their findings in January 2020.

Changes to Alberta's Trucking Regulations – Class 1 Licensing.

In March 2019 the previous government introduced changes to the Class 1 driving regulation to include Mandatory Entry-Level Training (MELT) for commercial drivers which would require between 113 to 122 training hours. Farmers were concerned with the roll-out of the announcement and the limited time available to meet the new requirements in advance of seeding. Team Alberta was highly effective in working with the Ministry of Transport to gain an extension for the agricultural sector. As such the following deadlines apply to agricultural workers:

- Agricultural workers looking to obtain a Class 1 driver's license can apply for the extension before November 30, 2019.
- If successful in receiving the extension, they have until March 1, 2020 to comply with the new regulations.

This extension for farmers will continue under the mandate of the new government. For more information: **https://www.alberta.ca/assets/documents/trans-melt-famers-fact-sheet.pdf**

Grain Conditioning Study – Team Alberta

The Alberta Wheat and Barley Commissions are leading Team Alberta in the development of a comprehensive grain conditioning study to evaluate system efficiency, cost and energy use. The first phase of the project has been completed with the delivery of a benchmark report. This report included estimates of energy consumption for grain drying in Alberta, a high-level inventory of the types of drying systems used, along with the development of basic calculations for farmers to estimate their systems cost (including the cost of the carbon levy). The report estimates that the cost of fuel used for grain drying in Alberta in 2018 was between $35 to $45 million – double from 2017. Further, the study estimates that the added cost of the carbon levy equaled between $2.5 to $5 million in 2018. The study will provide a guiding document which outlines best practices for farmers looking to install, modify or expand existing systems as a means of reducing their grain conditioning costs. Also, the aggregated outcomes will be used to advocate for programs and policies to help further reduce the cost burden of grain conditioning for farmers.

We are actively looking to recruit participants for this project, which will continue over the next three years. The goal is to assess the on farm energy consumption and efficiency of heated air drying, in-bin natural air-drying (NAD) and in-bin NAD with supplemental heat.

Please contact **ssereda@albertawheatbarley.com** or visit **https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/H9HBTK8** if you are interested in participating.

TEAMALBERTA

Alberta Barley | ALBERTA CANOLA | ALBERTA PULSE GROWERS | Alberta Wheat COMMISSION

Team Alberta represents a working collaboration between four of Alberta's crop commissions: Alberta Barley, Alberta Canola, Alberta Pulse Growers and the Alberta Wheat Commission.

We work together with the aim to provide input to policy makers, ensure long-term access to markets, promote the sustainability of the crop sector, and advocate on behalf of farmers while enabling grass-roots advocacy by our farmer members.

With a mission to drive profitability for Alberta's wheat and barley farmers, the Alberta Wheat and Barley Commissions operate with an integrated management team.

Our amalgamated staff results in administrative cost savings that allows the commissions to further advance innovative research, market access, farm policy and government relations. In this new era of collaboration, the Alberta Wheat and Barley Commissions serve as leaders in the Canadian agriculture industry.

Alberta Wheat COMMISSION | Alberta Barley | **Better Together**

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