

The Grain Exchange



FEATURED STORIES

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WheatStalk 2021 is coming to a location near you

Todd Hames | Alberta Wheat Commission chair

Since the summer months entail most of farmers' attention going towards their fields, we would be remiss if we didn't plan to go ahead with the Alberta Wheat Commission's (AWC) signature extension event, WheatStalk.

AWC remains hopeful that our communities allow for safe outdoor events come late-summer. Last year, we were successful in hosting a socially-distanced WheatStalk field day that was safe for all guests and compliant with Alberta Health Services (AHS) protocols.

Our current plan for this year's wheat-centric event includes a new and exciting change from previous years. Rather than a single event, WheatStalk 2021 will be hitting the road to bring agronomic solutions to farmers across Alberta's various regions through a multi-stop event tour.

Guest speakers will join our agronomy extension team including agronomy research specialists Jeremy Boychyn and Dr. Sheri Strydorst as they present on Fusarium management, extra nitrogen at seeding and plant growth regulators in wheat. Over the past several years, WheatStalk has been providing farmers with a great opportunity to see visual differences in the field as a result of new agronomic research. With this year's additional event locations and dates, farmers in each region

will be able to compare agronomic practices that are relevant to their local conditions and consider what might be valuable to implement on their farm.

We look forward to seeing farmers from across the province on this year's WheatStalk tour with field days scheduled at Gateway Research Organization (GRO) in Westlock, Chinook Applied Research Association (CARA) in Oyen, SARDA Ag Research in Falher and Battle River Research Group (BBRG) in Forestburg. For full event dates and locations see the WheatStalk advertisement on page 6.

Registration is open now so visit albertawheatbarley.com/alberta-wheat/events to reserve your spot for the WheatStalk tour date nearest you. Pre-registration is required and attendance is limited. Be one of the first 25 to register for your location and receive a complimentary pair of our famous wheat socks!

We hope you can join us for a safe walk through various wheat trial plots with AHS protocols in place, to gain valuable agronomic information through outdoor presentations with agronomy experts. As research is the AWC's largest priority, we look forward to showcasing the valuable results of farmer-invested research through WheatStalk every year. Tell your neighbours that WheatStalk is back and better than ever!



Canadian barley remains a bright spot

Tara Sawyer | Alberta Barley chair

It is hard to believe that this time last year, there was so much uncertainty during the first wave of the pandemic and its effects on the Canadian grain industry including grain market prices, supply chain logistics and farmer safety amongst numerous other concerns. While today, over a year later, there is plenty of optimism in our industry, particularly for barley growers.

On the markets-front, it is a good time to be a barley grower! Over the past year, we have seen some of the strongest feed barley prices in history, which in-turn has forced maltsters to increase their bids as well. These strong prices attribute to various factors but strong export demand of Canadian barley to China and Japan remain a bright spot.

April 29, 2021 the Canadian Malting Barley Technical Centre (CMBTC) published a report of preliminary 2021 seeding estimates. At 8.613 million acres, this year will be the largest barley seeded area in Canada since 2009. The report also indicated that Alberta remains to have the highest seeded barley acres, although Saskatchewan is

expected to have nearly a 25 per cent increase from last year. Additionally, across the various Canadian crops, barley is forecast to see the largest increase of seeded acres from 2020 to 2021; a 13.9 per cent increase.

While the current Canadian barley market is positive, there could not be a better time for us to be gearing-up to celebrate the Alberta Barley Commission's 30-year anniversary. You will see more on this come fall, as the 2021-22 fiscal year will officially mark 30 years for Alberta Barley. We have a few exciting things planned. Stay tuned here!

Lastly, as addressed in my previous chair's message in the spring edition of the newsletter, we continue to work closely with Sask Barley and the CMBTC to align the Canadian barley value chain and progress the wind-down of the Barley Council of Canada (BCC). This includes identifying the groups that will absorb the key functions of market access, market development, research and policy at the national level. This work is set to end and BCC will be transitioned effective August 1, 2021. For any questions on the wind-down of BCC, I encourage you to connect with myself, Alberta Barley's general manager Tom Steve, or chief operating officer Syeda Khurram.



General Manager's Message

Tom Steve, General Manager | Alberta Wheat and Barley Commissions

A single wheat and barley commission: where do you stand?

A journey that started almost four years ago to combine the resources of the Alberta Wheat and Barley Commissions has entered a new phase and we will soon be asking farmers to provide input on the merits of taking it to the next level. But first, a bit of background.

In late September of 2017 the commission boards announced a four-month trial of a single management team. I had been serving as general manager of the Alberta Wheat Commission (AWC) and took on the additional role of interim manager of Alberta Barley. We had already been sharing office space as well as accounting and administrative functions, so going the extra mile to a combined management team seemed like a logical next step.

On January 31, 2018, the shared management structure was made official and management was directed to formalize an operating model that would see us serve both the wheat and barley commission boards.

The new operating model was put in place in the summer of 2018 and cost savings in the first year were \$350,000, rising to \$410,000 in year two. Since then we have continued to operate as one management team serving two commissions and two boards.

In 2019, motions were passed at the AGMs of both commissions urging the boards to explore the idea of a more formal amalgamation and in early 2020 we formed an amalgamation sub-committee with equal representation from each commission to move the ball forward.

Starting this summer, we will be reaching out to you to seek your views on a fully integrated wheat and barley commission.

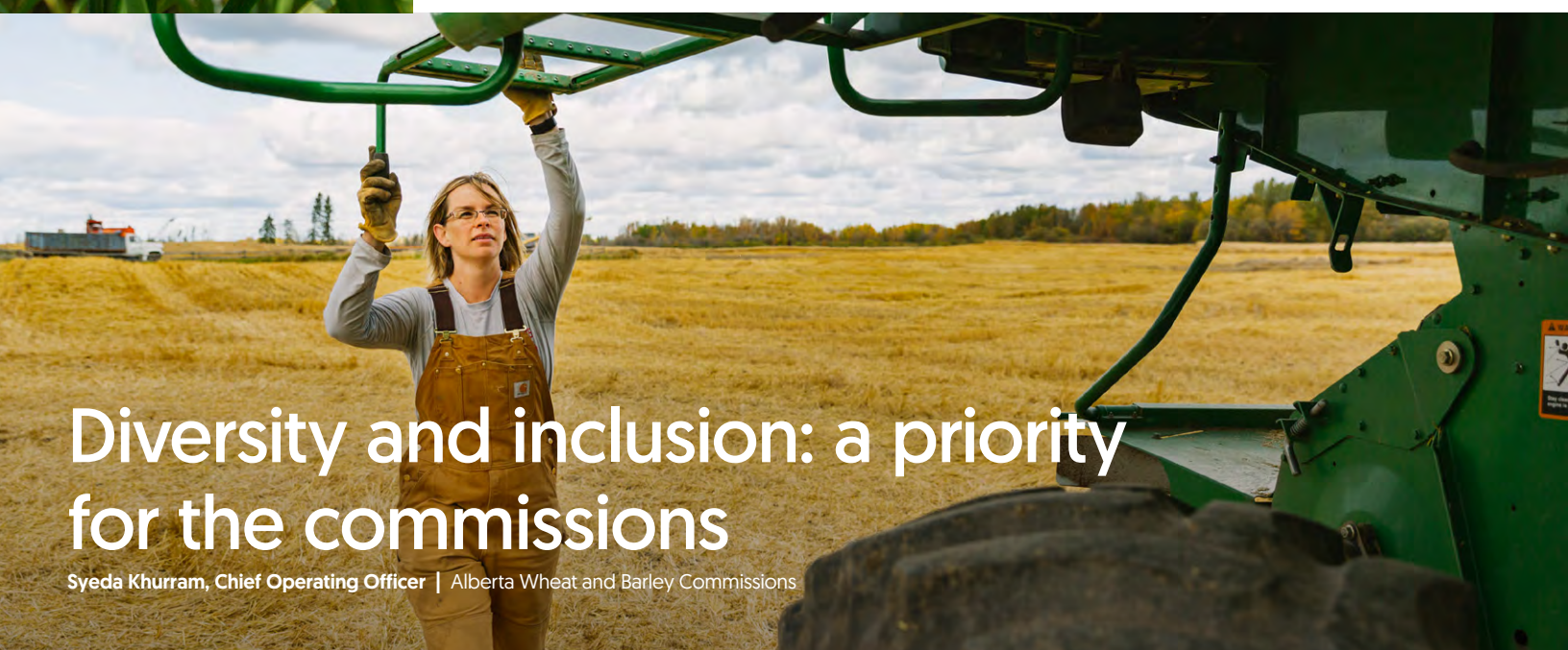
First, we will be outlining the value proposition. What's to be gained from going to the next step? The integrated management team has given us greater capacity and synergies in areas such as research, extension, communications, events, policy and markets, but what additional benefits can be achieved – and for that matter, what are the risks if we don't move forward?

Are there concerns about the loss of barley's voice, given that wheat is a much larger acreage crop? How will we brand a combined commission?

How will the new board be structured and how will we ensure strong regional representation at the delegate/regional representative level?

And, how would we divide the check-off dollars? Currently, we have two separate budgets for the commissions.

Our consultations over the summer will be followed by virtual town hall meetings after harvest and regional meetings in November. We look forward to hearing from you.



Diversity and inclusion: a priority for the commissions

Syeda Khurram, Chief Operating Officer | Alberta Wheat and Barley Commissions

My journey with Alberta Barley began in April 2011, when I joined a team of three staff members. I still remember my first board meeting. I was the odd one in the room – a woman of colour in attendance with 11 white male board members. That day, I made a commitment to further advance our 'diversity and inclusion' (D&I) practices. During my tenure, I have witnessed the adoption of D&I at our workplace every single day – expanding the inclusive workforce for the commissions from three to 20 members.

My passion and commitment to D&I comes from the fact that I myself, by default, am in that category of diversity. I take huge pride in setting a tone for the commissions' culture by developing and promoting inclusive practices at our workplace, striving to provide a positive, respectful and nurturing environment.

So what does D&I mean to the commissions?

Each staff member in our organization shapes and builds the workplace culture. We promote equality and equity in our workplace to all employees regardless of their age, gender, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation, education and national origin. It is also a strategic priority embedded in our business plan.

We embrace and respect people from diverse backgrounds. Staff are empowered and given equal opportunities to climb the ladder of success. We encourage and provide leadership, education and training opportunities to everyone at all levels. We also integrate flexibilities that allow employees to balance family and office obligations. We leverage their expertise and talents.

It is worth noting that 59 per cent of our staff are women, serving at various positions, while 41 per cent of our staff come from diverse backgrounds. The management team that directly reports to the general manager are eight staff members, and five of them are women leading major strategic portfolios. Currently, the Alberta Barley board is led by a woman and we have had women in leadership roles on the Alberta Wheat Commission board.

How did the commissions foster an inclusive culture?

The big drivers are inclusion and equity which are applied during the screening process, throughout the hiring process, and even after the employee is hired. We draw people from a big talent pool and assess with one eye – merit, regardless of their age, background or gender. Their performance is assessed annually based on goal completion directly linked to the commissions' priorities.

As a result, we have been able to unleash creativity and innovation in everything we do. Our staff are aware that they can fulfill their career goals without any hindrance. Thanks to the adoption of D&I practices, the staff feel valued and this is also why we have long-serving employees.

Although we are excited about the progress we have made, we still believe there is more to be done and we continue to improve inclusion around gender, ethnicity, LGBTQ2S+, and empowering women to maintain a culture of excellence.

In 2022, our focus will be to further develop metrics to measure D&I and to develop succession plans for staff, directors, regional representatives and delegates.

I often ask myself how much evolution is needed in the 21st century? The more I think about it, the more it makes me believe that the women of today are more powerful than ever before. Women before us have made sacrifices and paved the way for us.

It is our time to shine, celebrate, lead and inspire others. Because the evolution starts with you, within you and around you – be a catalyst, be a leader, be the change maker and lead by example!

Support found for University of Alberta core breeding program

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

They say if you work long enough at something, it will eventually pay off. For Dr. Dean Spaner, his work at establishing and maintaining a wheat breeding program at the University of Alberta (U of A) has paid off in spades. Since 2013, Spaner's program has yielded 14 varieties, including 13 Canada Western Red Spring (producers might know some of the popular varieties as Jake, Tracker and Parata) and 1 Canada Prairie Spring. With that said, Spaner didn't just walk into genetic wheat breeding success. He joined over a decade before his first variety release, signing on to take the wheel of an all-but-defunct program.

"When I started there was about a 30-year-old seeder, no combine, no truck, no quality lab, no disease nursery, no irrigation capabilities for a disease nursery," says Spaner. "Basically, the program was dead."

The Canadian Wheat Research Coalition (CWRC), a funding collaboration between Alberta Wheat Commission, Saskatchewan Wheat Development Commission and Manitoba Crop Alliance, has now recognized Spaner's success, as well as the future potential of the program, with a historic core breeding support grant. Worth \$2,000,033.00 over five years, the funding, which came into place May 1, 2021, will ensure that the U of A program has the resources for essential technical support positions, equipment

and supplies. The agreement with CWRC follows a series of agreements supported by the Western Grains Research Foundation, facilitated by funds from the now defunct Western Canadian Deduction check-off. CWRC members support projects within the program through other means, such as project grants within the Agricultural Funding Consortium, along with co-funders such as Results Driven Agriculture Research.

"Long-term and substantial support allows us to continue the employment of trained long-term employees who continue a breeding program's mandate. It is essential, and very much appreciated." Spaner adds, "As the only university wheat breeding program in Alberta, we can support the development of scientists who will contribute to this sector in Alberta and Western Canada. We have done so over the years. This is perhaps one of the greatest feelings of accomplishment I have had at this job. I do feel we have, through support from the commissions, contributed to the health of the wheat industry in Western Canada."

For more information on the program check back in this space and in other Alberta Wheat and Barley Commission publications; GrainsWest magazine and the Spotlight on Research publication.

A call for transparency in the Canada Grain Act

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

April 30, 2021, the review period of the Canada Grain Act concluded. One of the main topics of discussion amongst government, industries and producer groups was the funding of the Canadian Grain Commission (CGC). This article aims to educate farmers on the current funding model of the CGC, the downfalls of this model and recommendations submitted by the Alberta Wheat and Barley Commissions.

The commissions call for an end to the current funding model for the CGC as it hides regulatory costs in farm gate grain prices. Instead, the commissions propose that the CGC's regulation cost show as a fee on producer sales of grain. This fee must be applied transparently by CGC licensees to all grain deliveries, reviewed annually, and be calculated in a manner that prioritizes funding current operations through surplus funds. This change would formally recognize that farmers are the main source of CGC revenue. It would also ensure that farmers are aware of the costs that they are paying for the regulatory system, and prevent the accumulation of annual surpluses.

Since 2012, the largest source of CGC revenue are fees charged for the mandatory inspection of all Canadian grain export vessels, except those destined for the United States. CGC funding reports show that over 85 per cent¹ of annual CGC revenue in 2019-20 came from fees and services. While export inspection fees are charged directly to grain export companies, the competitive nature of international grain trade means that the CGC fee cannot be passed onto international buyers. Instead, the companies incorporate the CGC fee into their operating costs, resulting in farmers paying for the fee through reduced cash prices for grain. The current system results in farmers indirectly bearing the cost of the CGC, but provides no transparency. Moving this cost from the grain basis to a line item on the producer's payment will make the ongoing producer funding of the CGC fully transparent.

Not only is the current funding structure for the CGC not transparent, but it is also inaccurate. The CGC operates on a cost-recovery model, which means they set a fee for the entire year based on an estimate of their

annual costs divided by an estimate of how much grain will be exported. Since 2012, the CGC has underestimated the amount of grain exports eight out of the last nine years. For each year that exports were estimated too low, the CGC acquired a surplus of revenue. Although the CGC has tried to address this, they continued to collect surplus funds over the 2019-20 crop year of over \$3.12 million. The commissions have called on the CGC to address their cumulative surplus of over \$148 million by reducing their inspection fee and by operating on surplus funds. The CGC has dismissed this ask as they have suggested that grain companies would likely capture any reductions in fees, passing none of the savings onto producers.

By moving CGC funding from the grain basis to the producer's payment, the concern of grain companies holding the benefits of lowering fees can be addressed, and the CGC can annually adjust their fee based on the financial results of the previous year. If a surplus is collected in the previous year, the CGC would be able to reduce their regulatory fee the next year to accommodate, and this reduction would be noted to producers on their payments.

The Canadian Grain Act review has provided an opportunity for long-standing producer concerns regarding transparency and efficiency with the CGC to be revisited. With our submission complete, the commissions will continue advocating for greater transparency and efficiency to ensure the best use of producer dollars.

To view the Alberta Wheat and Barley Commissions' submission visit albertawheatbarley.com.

¹ <https://www.grainscanada.gc.ca/en/about-us/reports/planning-performance-reporting/financial-statements/2020/>

“Not only is the current funding structure for the CGC not transparent, but it is also inaccurate.”

5 SIMPLE TIPS TO KEEP YOUR CROPS READY FOR MARKET

- TIP #1 USE ACCEPTABLE PESTICIDES ONLY**
- TIP #2 ALWAYS READ AND FOLLOW THE LABEL**
- TIP #3 MANAGE DISEASE PRESSURES**
- TIP #4 STORE YOUR CROP PROPERLY**
- TIP #5 DELIVER WHAT YOU DECLARE**

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Logos for Canadian Agricultural Partnership, Canola Council of Canada, Pulse Canada, Cereals Canada, Cereals in Transition, Better Together Canada, and Canola

The Blue Book

Alberta's Crop Protection Guide

Get your copy of the 2021 Blue Book today

Visit albertabluebook.com to learn more



The 2021 Blue Book is produced collaboratively by four of Alberta's crop commissions: Alberta Barley, Alberta Canola, Alberta Pulse Growers and the Alberta Wheat Commission.

CN tracks a takeover

Geoff Geddes | The Word Warrior

While Gold Rushers were told to “go west, young man”, Canadian National Railway (CN) and Canadian Pacific Railway Ltd (CP Rail) recently looked south to try and claim their own pot of gold. On March 21, 2021, CP entered an agreement to acquire Kansas City Southern (KCS) for \$25 billion USD. The deal was potentially the largest merger of North American railways in history, encompassing a rail network of 32,000 kilometres covering the U.S., Mexico and Canada.

Eyes on the prize

Though merger talks only took shape in recent months, KCS has long been viewed as a prime merger or takeover target. It may be the smallest of the Class 1 railways in the U.S. (railroads with revenue of at least \$500 million), but KCS is also one of the most attractive for buyers.

“KCS is a much envied piece of property because it goes all the way from the Kansas City depot into Mexico,” said Mark Hemmes, president of Quorum Corporation in Edmonton. “Both CP and CN have eyed KCS as an opportunity to create a contiguous rail line from Canada to Mexico. Right now, for either railroad to access southern states like Arkansas and Texas, they have to interchange with another railway, so a deal like this could be beneficial for both CP and its shippers.”

Don't knock opportunity

“Mexico remains an important trading partner for Canada,” said Geoff Backman, business development and markets manager for the Alberta Wheat and Barley Commissions. “We export over 900,000 tonnes of wheat per year on average, and rail provides an important alternative shipping method for our grains. Maintaining and increasing that access is very important for Alberta producers.”

From an overall grain industry standpoint, there are a number of potential benefits from the agreement. Gaining access to more of the Texas market could result in greater sales of specialty products, and the state's large livestock sector means more opportunity for different meal products like oats and canola meal, as well as milling wheats and pulses.

“There is also a very concentrated population down the center of Mexico,” said Hemmes. “If you come up with efficient routing by rail to that central area, there could be increased prospects for selling wheat, canola and pulse products directly into those markets.”

A new offer

Yet if business is all about building relationships, the merger talks quickly became a love triangle. On April 21, 2021, KCS announced it had received an unsolicited proposal from CN to acquire the company.

“We firmly believe our proposal is far superior to KCS' existing agreement with CP,” said Robert Pace, chair of the board of CN. “It offers superior financial value over the immediate and long-term, a more complementary strategic fit, greater choice and efficiencies for customers and enhanced benefits for employees and local communities.”

“Either offer [CP or CN] would provide some benefits to the Canadian marketplace,” said Hemmes. “Both proposals will give us direct access to markets that we didn't have before. A lot of people will have opinions on which offer is better and how this will impact competition, so it's going to be an interesting show to watch over the next few months.”

Striking a deal

On May 21, 2021, KCS agreed to enter into a merger agreement with CN and thereby terminated the existing agreement with CP. Under the proposed terms of the CN agreement, each share of KCS stock will be exchanged for \$200 USD and 1,129 shares of CN common stock. The total enterprise value of the deal is said to be \$33 billion USD.

At the time of writing (May 25, 2021) the agreement remains contingent on approval from the Surface Transportation Board (STB). The STB is an independent federal agency in the U.S., charged with the economic regulation of various modes of surface transportation, primarily freight rail.

“Historically, the STB has not been a big proponent of mergers or consolidations,” said Hemmes. “They will look at the deal very carefully, as they fear that once you have one merger, it can create a domino effect in the industry.”

For their part, wheat growers in Alberta are likely crossing their fingers that the deal gets two thumbs up.

Though “going west” brought windfalls for many during the Gold Rush, “going south” could offer farmers something they rarely see these days: a golden opportunity.



Mark your calendars for field days closest to you!



Date	Event	Host	Event Location	Town/City	Registration Details
Jun 24, 2021	Summer Solstice Tour	NPARA	NPARA Research Farm	Manning	npara.ca
Jun 24, 2021	Lethbridge Field School	Farming Smarter	211034 Hwy 512	Lethbridge County	farmingsmarter.com
Jul 13, 2021	Word of Winter Wheat	Farming Smarter	Virtual	Virtual	farmingsmarter.com
Jul 17, 2021	Sustainability Tour	Farming Smarter	211034 Hwy 512	Lethbridge County	farmingsmarter.com
Jul 22, 2021	Annual Field Tour	NPARA	NPARA Research Farm	Manning	npara.ca
Jul 22, 2021	Lethbridge Plot Hop	Farming Smarter	211034 Hwy 514	Lethbridge County	farmingsmarter.com
Jul 27, 2021	WheatStalk at GRO	AWC and GRO	Pibroch	Westlock County	AWC Events Page
Jul 29, 2021	WheatStalk at CARA	AWC and CARA	Highway 41 E	Oyen	AWC Events Page
Aug 5, 2021	MARA Ag Fair	MARA	Fort Vermilion	Fort Vermilion	mackenzieresearch.ca
Aug 5, 2021	WheatStalk at SARDA Ag Research	AWC and SARDA Ag Research	Falher	Falher	AWC Events Page
Aug 12, 2021	Morning Coffee Tour	NPARA	NPARA Research Farm	Manning	npara.ca
Aug 12, 2021	WheatStalk at BBRG	AWC and BBRG	Highway 33	Forestburg	AWC Events Page
Aug 10-11, 2021	AgSmart	Olds College	Olds College	Olds	agsmartolds.ca
Aug 14, 2021	Open Farm Day	Farming Smarter	211034 Hwy 515	Lethbridge County	farmingsmarter.com
Oct 21, 2021	Virtual Field Tour	Farming Smarter	Virtual	Virtual	farmingsmarter.com

Alberta Wheat and Barley Commissions support Applied Research Associations (ARA's) and numerous field days in Alberta. Stay tuned for any additional field days and visit the Events page on albertawheatbarley.com.

Get involved: just do it!

Brian Kennedy, Grower Relations & Extension Manager | Alberta Wheat and Barley Commissions

I don't want to steal a running shoe company's slogan, but I have never heard anyone who has exercised say that they wished they hadn't. Just like I have never heard anyone who has been involved with the Alberta Wheat and Barley Commissions wish they hadn't.

Some of us may think to ourselves from time-to-time that we should join the parent council, ag society, hiking club, a board or run for office. More often than not, there are a lot of great people who say to themselves, "I would like to become involved with an organization" but for various reasons just need a gentle nudge.

This is your gentle nudge to become involved with the commissions and run for a director, regional representative (rep), or delegate position.

I spoke with a couple of the commissions' farmer representatives; current Alberta Barley chair, Tara Sawyer, and Alberta Wheat Commission's Second vice-chair, Greg Sears; to ask them questions about their involvement with the commissions.

Tara Sawyer, farms near Acme, Alberta

Q: How has becoming a director been a valuable experience for you?

A: It has allowed me to take my passion for agriculture into an organization that genuinely advocates for farmers.

Q: Do you feel that you are making contributions to the grain industry?

A: Yes, every day. Every person's opinion and feedback matter and helps shape how we try to move the industry forward.

Q: Would you recommend farmers to become involved with the commissions?

A: Yes, because farmers voices and opinions matter. We need to hear ideas and perspectives from farmers, and especially from the next generation who have begun their farming careers.

Greg Sears, farms near Sexsmith, Alberta

Q: What surprised you the most about your role as a director?

A: I was surprised with the depth of issues that the commissions deal with; agronomy, research policy, and public perceptions to name a few.

Q: How has being a director been a valuable experience for you?

A: The biggest value is broadening one's network, both in connecting with more people on the technical side and other farmers who keep me motivated. It has made me a better person and a better farmer.

Q: Do you feel that you are making contributions to the grains industry?

A: Yes. I think where I have had an impact is connecting producers with non-producers in government, the value chain, and also the general public.

Q: Would you recommend farmers become involved with the commissions?

A: Yes, and for multiple reasons! It's a good opportunity for personal growth as a farmer and as an individual. Being a part of the commissions exposes you to different perspectives and different ways of doing things. Everyone has different strengths and weaknesses and it is important for any organization to have a diversity of people with different voices and different strengths.



To appropriate another slogan, *have no fear!*

Every year, in September the commissions make a call for directors, reps and delegates from different regions across Alberta to get involved with our farmer governance. Throughout the summer and fall season, we hope you consider becoming involved. If you are interested in learning more, find out who your farmer representative is and contact them, or myself Brian Kennedy, for more information. Put your fears aside and consider this opportunity if you are a wheat and/or barley farmer in Alberta.

Visit our Regional Governance page on our website at albertawheatbarley.com and watch for election information this fall.

Amalgamation consultations begin this summer

Erin Tateson, Interim Communications Manager | Alberta Wheat and Barley Commissions



The catalyst

What started as a trial-run in 2017 for the Alberta Wheat Commission (AWC) and Alberta Barley to operate two commissions with one unified staff, led to a formal resolution brought forward during regional meetings in late 2018 calling for a "comprehensive review of the potential to formally merge the Alberta Wheat Commission and Alberta Barley and if appropriate, conduct a producer plebiscite to obtain member approval for a merger."

This resolution was then passed at the annual general meeting (AGM) of both commissions in 2019. The proof was in the pudding. Alberta farmers were pleased with the joint operating model of the two farmer-led commissions.

To back-up a step and for historical context, this was not always the way of the two commissions. Prior to 2017, AWC and Alberta Barley were two separate organizations that only shared an office space and finance and administrative staff. Now, although AWC and Alberta Barley formally remain two separate organizations, they share management and staff meaning they equally allocate human resources including the general manager, chief operating officer, director of research, markets, communications, policy, agronomy and extension expertise.

Better Together

The amalgamated staff led to a new era of collaboration and the realization of numerous cost-saving synergies. This new working model also gave the commissions the ability to add or enhance programs and initiatives that would benefit farmers. A prime example of this is the Alberta Wheat and Barley Commissions' growing agronomy extension portfolio supported by

programs such as The Growing Point newsletter, In the Field webinars, Plot2Farm on-farm research trials, and our WheatStalk extension events. The commissions identified a gap in the then Alberta farming landscape, and decided to pursue building a boots-on-the-ground agronomy portfolio that would give farmers unbiased agronomic information year-round.

It did not take long before a new and fitting mantra arose for the Alberta Wheat and Barley Commissions: Better Together. While some core program areas and priorities remained separate based on the commodity such as research and market access based on end-use, many other synergies and affordable sharing opportunities surfaced. Both commissions have heightened their kids' education efforts by sharing a new enhanced, interactive booth called Wally Wheat and Betty Barley's Grain Gallery. The commissions also developed a shared, quarterly newsletter that gets mailed to all Alberta wheat and barley levy-payers, which was a high-priced endeavour prior to amalgamating resources. The commissions have also embarked on other new, joint ventures such as The Blue Book, the virtual Malt Academy, Agronomy Update, the Prairie Cereals Summit, amongst others.

Future direction

To ensure a thorough and democratic process, the commissions formed a sub-committee to guide the ongoing amalgamation exploration work. The sub-committee is comprised of a selection of current and past board members, delegates and regional representatives from both AWC and Alberta Barley. A key objective for the sub-committee was to draft a model of a proposed amalgamated governance model for wheat and barley farmers' consideration during

the consultation period.

The proposed governance structure consists of one farmer-led board of 14 directors representing wheat and barley farmers from six regions in Alberta. Meaning, there would be two directors representing each region, plus two director-at-large positions which do not require regional representation. There would also be four delegate positions for each region, resulting in a delegate body of 24 farmers.

As currently established for both commissions, research will remain the top priority for the proposed amalgamated organization and funding will be merit-based. AWC and Alberta Barley check-off will also remain the same at \$1.09 per metric tonne for wheat and \$1.20 per metric tonne for barley.

Provide your input

The future of the Alberta Wheat and Barley Commissions remains to be determined by our farmer stakeholders. This is where we need Alberta wheat and barley farmers' help! The consultation is not a formal plebiscite but as part of a democratic process, the commissions want to gauge farmers' opinions on the possibility of formally merging into a single organization.

If you are an Alberta wheat or barley farmer, do not miss this opportunity to contribute your input during the summer and fall of 2021. Farmers are encouraged to visit albertawheatbarley.com to access a short online survey which will be available at the beginning of July, along with more information on future online town hall events in late October as another forum for input.

What's in a name?

Madeleine Berg Communications

Since 1900, nearly 650 distinct varieties of wheat and over 400 varieties of barley have been registered in Canada. Many are named after places [Leduc, registered 1982]; others give a nod to history [Columbus, registered 1980]. Some names are patriotic [Canuck, registered 1974]; others suggest crop greatness [AAC Awesome, registered 2016]. And some names, well, leave a reader guessing [Warthog, registered 2001]. While researchers have all kinds of different strategies to name their new varieties, one thing is certain: a whole lot goes into picking the perfect name.

"Naming a new variety is very personal. It's actually more difficult than naming your own child," says Rob Graf, a winter wheat breeder at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Lethbridge Research and Development Centre. The issue, he says, is that each new variety's name within a crop type must be unique, particularly if Plant Breeders' Rights are to be applied. Whereas a child's name can be 're-used' [for example, 229 girls born in Alberta in 2019 share the name Olivia], there is a 'one variety, one name' policy that requires that the same name be used for a variety worldwide.

"We often think we're really clever in coming up with a catchy new name, only to find out later that it's not available to use," says Graf.

A name cannot contain trademarks, misleading information, or unfounded marketing language.

Too, namers must consider what the name's spelling or pronunciation might mean in other languages.

And there's more: though not mandated by law, an ideal name should be short, easy to spell and not at all confusing. [After all, a misspelled name on a bin of certified seed invalidates the pedigree and relegates the entire bin to feed.]

The perfect name is also memorable. Jim Downey, research and development manager at SeCan says that variety name awareness is a key part of getting farmers to ask for a new variety.

"We have no proof, but we feel that a good variety name is always a benefit with marketing a new crop variety."

Few names meet the 'memorable' requirement as well as the two-row feed barley CDC Dolly, noted for its 'large, plump, uniform kernels'.

"I could tell you I named it Dolly after a calf I had on the farm when I was a child. But maybe there was a song by a certain singer on the radio when I was thinking up a name," says CDC's developer, now-retired barley breeder Brian Rossnagel. "Back in those days, you could do things like that and everyone would laugh and let it go."

Many varieties are named in honour of a mentor, industry leader or other important person (usually, though not always, deceased).

AC Barrie, AC Metcalfe, CDC Austenson, CDC Buck are all named for key plant breeders. There is risk to naming after a person, however.

"You name a variety when you apply for registration, long before you know if its going to be good. If for whatever reason it doesn't prove successful, that variety is forever associated with that name," says Rossnagel. "You don't want to name it after someone and then have it turn out to be a dud."

Not surprisingly, many – perhaps even most – names carry a background story.

Columbus was so-named because it happened to be listed as row 1492 in its breeder's early screening nurseries. The semi-dwarf six-row barley Earl - intended as a replacement for Duke – was coined thanks to one of Rossnagel's favourite songs: Duke of Earl. And Graf named Flourish not only because he hoped it would 'flourish', but also because it had high flour yield (ie: 'flour-ish').

"I've always tried to choose names that mean something to me personally. People might not get the connection, but they don't necessarily have to know. It's enough for me to know," says Graf.

Ultimately, of course, a name is just a name. What makes or breaks a variety is about what it can do in the field, not what's on its label.

In The FIELD WEBINARS

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

The Advance Payments Program is a federal loan program administered by the Alberta Wheat Commission. It offers Canadian farmers marketing flexibility through interest-free and low interest cash advances.

Plant Breeders' Rights: protect yourself with knowledge

Dr. Sheri Strydhorst, Agronomy Research Specialist | Alberta Wheat and Barley Commissions

Have you ever been asked to sell "just 500 bushels of 'feed wheat' seed" to a neighbour who does not have livestock? A question like this should set off alarm bells. Many farmers have heard about the recent, "Largest Plant Breeders' Rights (PBR) settlement in Canada" between a large farming operation in southern Alberta and three seed distribution companies. In this settlement, a large farming operation in southern Alberta had to pay a cash settlement of \$737,597 compensation for royalties, legal and investigative costs.

The value of this cash settlement elevates PBR infringement to a new level, but it highlights the need for greater education across the value chain. Knowledge of PBR obligations is your best protection.

It has never been legal to sell farm-saved seed of PBR protected varieties. Most wheat and barley varieties grown in Canada are protected under Canada's current Plant Breeders' Rights legislation PBR 91 or Canada's previous legislation PBR 78. This PBR protection is not unique to Canada, in fact PBR91 now aligns Canada with legislation that the rest of the world adopted 24 years after the signing of International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV91). Varieties protected under PBR91 and PBR78 are identified in the Alberta Seed Guide with the  and  symbols, respectively.

If a variety you are growing is protected under PBR legislation, you have obligations when you purchase, save, store, clean and use the grain you produce as seed. Under PBR 91, it is an infringement to buy farm-saved (brown bagged) seed. Not only is the seller of brown bagged seed liable for damages, but buyers are also liable.

These are sensitive topics in the farm community, but the plant varieties represent massive investments of time, expertise and money. By following these simple steps, you will be protecting yourself and your farm:

1. Know the varieties that you are buying by purchasing certified seed. Look for the blue certified seed tag. Keep the tag and invoices/bills of sale. This is your proof that you acquired the seed with the authority of the breeder.
2. If you save seed for planting in subsequent years (farm-saved seed), you can clean it, store it and plant it on your farm. However, keep the blue certified seed tag (from your initial certified seed purchase) in case you are asked to prove that the seed was legally acquired. Be aware that some patents or use agreements may prohibit seed saving if the variety carries other intellectual property protection, such as patents or use agreements.

It is also important for our research community to be aware of these legal requirements. Varieties and unregistered entries used in research trials may have PBR, and/or other contracts that dictate how grain produced from these trials is disposed. Any unused seed or grain harvested from research experiments must not be used as seed for any purpose. Unused seed and harvested grain from research trials must be disposed of in a manner that does not involve planting for any purpose. Unused seed and harvested grain from research trials must be: disposed of, fed to livestock, or delivered to an elevator to be sold as grain for any class the variety or bulked varieties are eligible for. All staff involved in handling harvested grain need to be aware of these restrictions.

More information about Plant Breeders' Rights legislation can be found at pbrfacts.ca.

On-farm grain drying: second year observations

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

Team Alberta's study on grain conditioning is entering its third and final year of data collection with the project end date slated for the beginning of 2022. The primary goal of the study is to identify the energy consumption of different grain drying methods and systems and compare results to find potential areas of efficiency gains.

Several systems were studied during the 2020 data collection period including eleven in-bin, direct-fired natural gas systems; four indirect-fired natural gas-fired systems; three bins heated using solar air collectors; and twelve bins using only aeration.

Data and observations that have been collected from the study are used to compare different drying methods based on specific energy, lowest operating costs and lowest greenhouse gas emissions. The outcomes of the study will lead to the development of a guide specifically for producers looking to add drying methods to their operation, or for existing users to improve their current systems with energy efficient upgrades or operations.

The secondary outcome of this analysis is to provide input to government policy and programming, specific to understanding the impact of the carbon tax on grain drying operations, and how help can be delivered to farmers to mitigate the cost of the carbon tax on their grain drying operations. Some high-level technical and policy observations and considerations are shared below. To read the complete study please visit www.teamalbertacrops.com.

Technical observations from the first two years:

- The natural air drying (solar) system resulted in the lowest specific energy consumption out of all in-bin dryers, as a result of low heating fuel consumption and using only electrical fan energy for air circulation. These systems require favourable weather conditions and are less reliable than comparable heating systems. They can be used as secondary systems but are not recommended as the primary grain conditioning method.
- The indirect-fired systems observed tend to have slightly lower thermal efficiency but require less run time due to the lower relative humidity of the supply air. These are the likely causes of the observed increased efficiency in indirect heated systems, however, further study is required.
- Rooftop exhaust fans decrease specific energy by approximately nine per cent when compared to bins with passive venting.

- A new air distribution system is being tested which may reduce specific energy by approximately 39 per cent when compared to other distribution systems. Further analysis is required.
- Increased supply air temperatures generally resulted in higher moisture removal rates, higher efficiency and lower fuel consumption, which also resulted in corresponding reductions in drying run times and reduced electricity consumption. Increased supply air temperatures need to be monitored as bins that are too dry can cause excessive shrinkage and reduce profitability negating savings. Research continues on optimal and maximum supply air temperatures across grain types and air distribution systems.
- In 2020, two continuous flow driers were metered showing a significant differential in the range of specific energy between the two systems. This will be important when choosing a system.
- Sites metered in this study utilizing a combination of electricity, natural gas and propane show a combined increase of more than 100 per cent on fuel costs, as well as an increased utility cost of over double for an average-sized farm in Alberta.

Policy considerations based on year one and two observations:

Smaller farmers are more sensitive to increases in operating costs. The average farm size in Alberta is trending upwards and as operating costs increase this trend will accelerate and threaten the feasibility of smaller operations. Grain drying is an unavoidable practice required to prevent grain quality deterioration and spoilage but is also difficult to predict. In order to reduce operating costs of grain drying while also reducing greenhouse gas emissions, the following are some initial considerations:

- Remove the carbon pricing on natural gas and propane fuel consumption for sub-meters on grain dryers. The result of the carbon price will see more than a 100 per cent increase in natural gas – the cleanest fuel option for drying. On grain drying alone, the carbon tax is expected to cost farms up to \$25,000 annually.
- Encourage the use of natural gas-fired systems or those with lower energy emissions through the use of rebates or tax incentives, and support the expansion of natural gas infrastructure to supply grain drying sites with natural gas.
- Invest research funding into in-bin drying system operations that show higher efficiency.

Team Alberta

A collaboration between Alberta Canola, Alberta Barley, Alberta Pulse Growers and the Alberta Wheat Commission – has been leading this grain conditioning study. Funding for the study has been contributed by the Canadian Agricultural Partnership. 3D Energy Limited has conducted all of the data collection and analysis and the Prairie Agricultural Machinery Institute (PAMI).



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The Growing Point

Winter wheat planning

Jeremy Boychyn, M.Sc P.Ag, Agronomy Research Extension Specialist | Alberta Wheat and Barley Commissions

If there ever was a hard-working but overlooked middle child of cereals it would be winter wheat.

For a crop that, yields higher than spring wheat across western Canada¹ by capturing more sunlight and available moisture² has more weed competitive ability³, reduces soil erosion⁴, substantially avoids Fusarium head blight (FHB) infection⁵, dodges summer heat during flowering and grain fill, improves rotation diversity, and presents multiple soil health benefits, winter wheat receives the short end of the stick. Winter wheat received about 1.5 per cent of total Alberta wheat acres (not including durum) in both 2018 and 2019 crop years.

One of the biggest challenges of winter wheat production is proper planning. Due to its season not aligning with spring-seeded crops, the intention of winter wheat seeding can easily slip as the season progresses. With that said, producers in various parts of North America smoothly and successfully implement winter cereals in their rotation every year.

If you are reading this now at the end of June or the beginning of July, you might think to yourself "It seems early to be thinking about winter wheat!". Take that thought and throw it in the slough, now is the perfect time to plan for winter wheat seeding. In fact, a calendar reminder each year at this time goes a long way to make winter wheat seeding a reality for your crop rotation.

Here are some of the considerations one should take when planning for winter wheat. Create a checklist and work through them over the next few weeks.

- Variety selection and marketing
- Field selection
- Fertility planning
- Logistical considerations

Variety selection and marketing will go hand-in-hand

Some varieties are more suited for different end uses. For example, Pintail is better for the feed or ethanol market while AAC Wildfire is attuned for milling. Talk to your seed supplier and ask what varieties work well in your area. From there, determine which market you can sell into. Your local grain elevator, feedlot or seed supplier can provide information on market demand. From this information, you can select the most appropriate variety for production.

It should be noted that variety selection on the prairies has improved over the years due to comprehensive work by Dr. Rob Graf at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada Research Centre in Lethbridge. His work has led to the availability of higher-yielding and increased winter-hardy varieties compared to past varieties. Talk to your seed supplier or refer to the Alberta Seed Guide for more information. Regional variety trial information is available in the Alberta Seed Guide or at www.seed.ab.ca.

Field selection is vital

Selecting a field that can be seeded between September 1 to 15 and provides adequate stubble to capture snow is important. September 1 to 15 is ideal winter wheat seeding timing across the Prairies. The exception to this is the Peace region of Alberta. Peace region growers should aim for seeding between August 25 to 31. Stubble allows for snow capture which is important for the crop's winter survival. In some areas of Alberta, this could be canola stubble while in other areas, pea or barley silage stubble can be a viable option (Irvine et al 2013).

Fertility planning

Pre-book soil sampling and determine where you may be purchasing fertilizer from. With winter wheat, split nitrogen(N) application is the name of the game. This allows the distribution of costs between fall and spring. It also allows mitigation of excess N loss in the fall and early spring. Typically, applying a portion of N (20 to 30 per cent of total) upfront helps promote strong growth in the fall and increases winter survival. This is followed by a spring application to provide the remainder of N required to reach crop yield expectations. A stabilized N product is recommended in situations that require 100 per cent of N to be applied at the time of seeding.

Logistical considerations

Consider where and when equipment will be needed. This includes the tender truck or any equipment needed to pick up seed and fertilizer if it won't be stored on-farm beforehand. A common concern is the perceived lack of time to seed winter wheat in the fall. However, experienced winter wheat growers have demonstrated that there is ample time to seed winter wheat. Many take advantage of combine shutdowns or damp conditions to get their acres in.

As mentioned, planning for the fall-seeded crop is the hardest part. Tackling the factors listed above will allow for a smooth winter wheat seeding process and increase the chances of success.

For more information on planning and managing winter wheat in Alberta, check out growwinterwheat.ca.

¹ Larsen, R. J., et al. "Extending the growing season: winter cereals in western Canada." *Canadian Journal of Plant Science* 98.2 (2018): 267-277.

² Entz, M. H., and D. B. Fowler. "Agronomic performance of winter versus spring wheat." *Agronomy Journal* 83.3 (1991): 527-532.

³ Beres, Brian L., et al. "Weed-competitive ability of spring and winter cereals in the Northern Great Plains." *Weed Technology* 24.2 (2010): 108-116.

⁴ Delgado, J. A., et al. "Use of winter cover crops to conserve soil and water quality in the San Luis Valley of South Central Colorado." *Soil quality and soil erosion*. CRC Press, Boca Raton, FL (1999): 125-142.

⁵ Kriss, A. B., P. A. Paul, and L. V. Madden. "Relationship between yearly fluctuations in Fusarium head blight intensity and environmental variables: a window-pane analysis." *Phytopathology* 100.8 (2010): 784-797.

“ One of the biggest challenges of winter wheat production is proper planning.”



Meet the face behind The Growing Point – Jeremy Boychyn, Alberta Wheat and Barley Commissions' agronomy research extension specialist.

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Policy TRACKER

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

PMRA re-evaluation decisions favourable for farmers

On March 31, 2021 the Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) of Health Canada released their final decision on two neonicotinoid pesticides, thiamethoxam and clothianidin, which are widely used in seed treatments by wheat and barley farmers to combat damage caused by wireworms. The PMRA determined that the neonicotinoid insecticides when used as a seed treatment, and in other instances, are not a threat to aquatic insects. This is a reversal of the 2018 proposed decision of the PMRA to phase out all agricultural uses of these products. This re-evaluation decision is very favourable for farmers who will retain these important innovative tools for integrated pest management on their operations. Thiamethoxam is the active ingredient found in products such as Cruiser 5F5, Cruiser Max and Helix. Clothianidin is the active ingredient in products such as Valent, Poncho and Prosper.

Supreme court rules in favour of federal carbon price regime

On March 25, 2021 the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that the federal Liberal government's carbon pricing regime is constitutional. Alberta was amongst the provinces who opposed the carbon tax, arguing that under the Constitution, natural resources are within the purview of the province. Currently, Alberta has been operating with the federal tax in place under the federal backstop which has been imposed on provinces who fail to have their own plans approved by the federal government. The federal price on carbon is expected to rise to \$170 per metric tonne by 2030. Alberta Premier Jason Kenney, pledged to consult Albertans on the next steps with the goal of minimizing costs and impacts on trade-exposed industries that must compete globally, while ensuring that Alberta reduces emissions responsibly. In February, Alberta Environment and Parks began consultations on Alberta's Climate Approach which included targeted conversations around technology and bio-based policy solutions including agriculture. The Alberta Wheat and Barley Commissions, as part of Team Alberta, have been active in these conversations. You can find our joint submission at teamalbertacrops.com.

Federal initiatives promise relief from carbon pricing for farmers

Bill C-206 a private member's bill put forth by MP Phillip Lawrence has made it through second reading in the House of Commons and is currently being studied by the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. Bill C-206 would introduce the much-welcomed exemption to qualifying farming fuel for grain drying operations under the federal back stop currently in place in Alberta. Farmers are exposed to escalating costs associated with grain drying as the price on carbon is rising annually to an

eventual \$170 per metric tonne by 2030. A three-year study on grain drying being undertaken by Team Alberta shows that drying costs will increase by more than 100 per cent by 2030. Some on-farm estimates show that the carbon tax on the cost of drying grain will exceed the cost of fuel by this year with the carbon tax at \$40 per metric tonne. The exemption is necessary for farmers who have extremely limited technological options or substitutes for grain conditioning systems on farm to protect the storage quality and marketability of grains. The year-two results of the grain drying study can be found at teamalbertacrops.com. Other relief promised by the federal government in the 2021 budget includes an allocation of \$100 million as a return to farmers due to the increased production costs from the carbon pricing. This will apply to farmers in backstop jurisdictions, including Alberta. Payments are expected to start in 2021-22 and increase over time as the price on pollution in Canada rises (there are no details at the time of writing (May 13) on how this rebate will be administered). The budget also promised funding to the Agricultural Clean Technology program that will prioritize \$50 million to help farmers with the purchases of more fuel-efficient grain dryers across the country. Implementation is yet to be determined.

Changes to business risk management programs

Federal, provincial and territorial agriculture ministers gathered in March of this year to come to an agreement on short-term changes to the AgriStability program that will see the reference margin limit removed retroactive to the 2020 program year. The deadline for farmers to enroll in the 2021 program year has been extended to June 30, 2021. The change is meant to help simplify the program and increase the level of support for agricultural operations with lower allowable expenses. This will bring \$95 million in further funding through AgriStability nationally, making the program more equitable and predictable for crop sector farmers. Farm groups including the Alberta Wheat and Barley Commissions advocated for accepting further changes proposed by the federal government which included an increase in the compensation rate from 70 to 80 per cent, however agreement from all parties on these changes could not be reached. Federal and provincial governments continue to work toward long-term programs to improve or replace AgriStability for the next policy framework which comes into effect in early April of 2023. The federal government has floated three proposed models, in addition to a whole farm insurance-based model being proposed by the provincial government. Consultations on new programs will begin shortly. More information on the recent changes to AgriStability can be found at www.afsc.ca.



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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 themselves.

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.



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