

The Grain Exchange



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Chairs Messages

Prepared for what comes next

Todd Hames | Alberta Wheat Commission chair

This past year brought many challenges with it through the overarching impact of COVID-19. That being said I strongly feel that both the Alberta Wheat Commission (AWC) and Cereals Canada, where I also serve as board chair, have many notable accomplishments to be proud of.

Through AWC's increased use of technology, we were able to connect with farmers through online platforms such as The Growing Point's *In The Field* webinars and our annual regional meetings despite limited opportunities for in-person engagement.

Our dedicated employees along with our board of directors continued to make substantial progress on pertinent issues impacting farmers within our core areas of focus. Our policy team launched **managefhb.ca** after long advocating for the shift from regulatory control of FHB to a province-wide approach that promotes extension and education of best management practices. We continually combatted transportation issues relating to national markets and international market development. Our research team also made significant strides in adapting to provincial changes in the sector as Tom mentions in his column below.

The wheat industry in Canada is not made up of standalone efforts. Through my chair role at

Cereals Canada, I was able to be engaged in an alternate plan of action to bring the 2020 harvest season experience to international markets through the virtual new crop seminars. These online seminars allowed Canada to showcase the land and sustainability practices we are known for, in addition to the quality and friendly relationships that international buyers can count on, all while reaching a wide range of markets that in the past we have found difficult to access. You can read more about the seminars in *Virtual new crop missions* on page 5.

This year shows great promise in many ways, but what I am most excited for is progress regarding the AWC and Alberta Barley amalgamation exploration work. With the amalgamation sub-committee meetings already underway this year, it is expected that the commissions will begin planning for thorough consultations with farmers to explore feedback related to an amalgamation. Farmers can expect communication and more information in the coming months. It is our aim to provide utmost transparency during the consultations and for the committee to gather farmer feedback.

As we look forward to what this new year holds, I am hopeful that we can contain the spread of COVID-19 and that we will once again be able to connect with our community of farmers in-person. If instead we are held to this new normal for an extended time, I feel that AWC is well-versed in utilizing these new ways of connecting to deliver value and engage producers.



Farm policy: a family heirloom

Tara Sawyer | Alberta Barley chair

First, I must open my address with how big of an honour it is to step in to this role as Alberta Barley chair. For those who don't know me, I am Tara Sawyer, director-at-large and the newly elected chair for Alberta Barley. I farm near Acme, Alberta with my husband Matt and our three children Emmett, Cassidy and Quinton.

My connection to Alberta Barley and farm policy goes way back. My journey with Alberta Barley started many years ago as my husband Matt is a former board member and chair for the commission. I have a long history of involvement with Canadian agriculture groups and associations as I am a past director with Alberta's Canadian Agri-Marketing Association (CAMA) and Canada's Outstanding Young Farmers. Plus, I am the current chair of Alberta's Outstanding Young Farmers.

You could say farm policy runs in our family as my son Emmett appears to be finding a passion for farm policy as well. Ag policy is routinely table talk in the Sawyer household!

I am a firm believer that good policy is essential and vital for Canadian farms to survive, as it allows farmers to operate their businesses at optimum levels. I also take an interest in market development as our industry is being asked to feed a growing global population. We are fortunate enough to have the land mass, the clean air, soil and water, not to mention sound and sustainable farming practices. We need to ensure farmers have market access and strong trade

agreements in place that allow us to market our products to the world.

I am excited to have the opportunity to exercise my passion for policy and market development at the federal level as a new director with the Grain Growers of Canada (GGC), the national voice of Canadian grain farmers. I am eager to collaborate with farmers from coast to coast, alongside the GGC staff on federal policy issues that impact Canadian producers.

Throughout my involvement with the commission over the years, I am proud to have witnessed Alberta Barley's substantial growth, and I believe the best is yet to come. If 2020 has taught us anything, it is that challenges may arise in the blink of an eye, and Alberta Barley has proven to rise to any occasion. I look forward to serving barley farmers in my new role.

Looking ahead, Alberta Barley will be focusing on the ongoing amalgamation exploration work with the Alberta Wheat Commission. In the coming months, farmer stakeholders can expect communication and more information on the next steps in this process. Stay tuned!

Lastly, I would like to thank three former Alberta Barley board members; Dave Bishop, Jeff Nielsen, and Terry James. Thank you, Dave, Jeff and Terry for your years of dedication to Alberta Barley, and for shaping the Canadian agriculture policy and research landscape in to what it is today.



General Manager's Message

Tom Steve, General Manager | Alberta Wheat and Barley Commissions

2020: a year we won't soon forget

I'm sure most would agree that 2020 is a year we are happy to have behind us.

Yet despite the challenges of the Harvest from Hell, the fallout from a CN strike, rail blockades and a global pandemic, Alberta grain farmers fared pretty well.

The crop was mostly good, prices were mostly good right off the combine and grain movement was strong as railways saw declines in their other lines of business due to COVID-19.

Among the highlights for me are how quickly Alberta farmers recovered from one of the toughest harvests in recent memory. I was also proud of the resiliency of our staff in adapting to the new reality of working remotely. We quickly learned how to work with technologies we had barely heard of before the pandemic hit – Zoom, Teams and Webex.

In April, we saw the creation of Results Driven Agriculture Research (RDAR), a bold new direction in farmer-led research initiated by Minister of Agriculture and Forestry, Devin Dreesen. I have been privileged to serve on the interim board of RDAR and our initial \$4 million targeted research call was launched in October. The permanent board will be elected in March by RDAR's "Class A" members consisting of 33 crop and livestock commissions and farm groups.

Other major developments in 2020 included the signing of core wheat and barley breeding agreements with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the University of Saskatchewan's Crop Development Centre [CDC]. These investments of farmer check-off dollars from Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, totaling \$36.4 million over five years, support the development of new field-ready wheat and barley varieties.

The past year was also a successful one for our *FarmCash* cash advance program as we consistently maintained a turnaround time of three to five business days on new loans, even at the height of the pandemic.

As we embark on a new year, I would like to say a special thank you to four outgoing directors including Alberta Barley chair Dave Bishop, Alberta Barley director Jeff Nielsen who has served with distinction as president of Grain Growers of Canada and Terry James who chaired Alberta Barley's research and policy committees and served as our representative on the Western Grains Research Foundation.

Also terming out from the Alberta Wheat Commission board is John Wozniak who was part of various committees including communications, governance and finance, and represented Canadian farmers on a Cereals Canada New Crop Mission to the United Arab Emirates in January 2020.

Thank you Dave, Jeff, Terry and John for your hard work and dedication over the years.

AdvancingAg mentees sought inspiration in a mountain setting

Cole Christenson, President | Cole's Ag Communications

In a tumultuous year where nothing is what it was, the AdvancingAg future leaders program marched on – with ample safety precautions, plenty of Zoom meetings, and an eye to the future.

This made-in-Alberta mentorship program has and continues to promote a progressive and vibrant cropping sector, and supplies program graduates with a unique opportunity to learn from existing leaders within the agricultural sphere. With the help of the program mentors (and industry influencers), AdvancingAg future leaders, aged 18 to 35, are armed with knowledge and given key assistance in identifying career-centric learning and training opportunities.

To kick off the 2020-21 program year, in a socially-distanced environment, leadership mentees attended the fourth-annual leadership summit under the watchful eye of facilitator extraordinaire Linda Wilson. Wilson guided the attendees through a two-day course that included a deep-dive into; the concept of leadership, engaging in productive conflict, and a hands-on exploration of how to build engaged workplaces and communities.

"Effective communication is more than just a message, it's having your message understood," said attendee and mentee Brittany Turchyn, a territory manager with Corteva Agriscience who hails from the Peace Country. "The leadership summit allowed me to examine and learn not

only how to be a more effective communicator, but also a more engaged listener and participant."

This year's gathering was held at the Rimrock Hotel in Banff, Alberta, an idealistic setting for mentees to learn and benefit from valuable introspection while surrounded by 3,000-metre peaks.

"Learning the DiSC program was an awesome insight into both my personal behaviours as well as others I work with," recalled mentee Austin Jamieson, a grain market advisor with Cargill.

"The take-home message for me was the power in understanding, listening and asking questions," added Tayo Adegeye, a research associate with Synergy Ag.

With another year of engaged and excited participants, AdvancingAg continues to boast a notable contingent of alumni, all of whom have experienced mentorship and hands-on education from some of Alberta agriculture's best and brightest.

To keep up with this year's class of mentors and mentees, interested observers can visit advancingag.ca – which also features details on how to apply for the 2021-22 program year.

AdvancingAg
Future Leaders Program



Brought to you by the Alberta Wheat and Barley Commissions



Alberta Barley

Learning resources for farmers

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

With many conferences and events being cancelled this winter, farmers and rural residents that embrace life-long learning pursuits may feel that they are missing out on learning opportunities that have been traditionally available. We put together a few ideas that may inspire you to pursue professional or personal development online while in-person opportunities are limited.

Did you know that the Alberta Wheat and Barley Commissions have a podcast? Jeremy Boychyn, research agronomy extension specialist, began the agronomy focused *The Growing Point* newsletter and podcast before COVID-19 limited traditional learning opportunities. Visit albertawheatbarley.com to subscribe and listen to *The Growing Point*.

This past year the Alberta Wheat and Barley Commissions also launched a farmer-friendly online webinar series titled *In the Field*. These webinars feature experts including Dr. Boyd Mori, Dr. Breanne Tidemann, Dr. Kelly Turkington among many others and are available to watch at any time on our YouTube channel.

There are far too many YouTube channels and podcasts to list here but even a basic list of online and virtual resources would be incomplete without mentioning RealAgriculture. RealAgriculture has more than 230 podcasts available in their library that can bring added value to your farming operation. You can also stream Wheat School videos at realagriculture.com.

If you missed being able to attend a crop tour in person this summer, Farming Smarter uploads highlights of their applied research and other agronomy focused videos on YouTube as well. Just search for "Farming Smarter" on YouTube.

If you are looking to sharpen up your management skills, Farm Management Canada (FMC) offers a suite of management resources for farmers. FMC is a national organization that develops leading-edge management resources for farmers. FMC has made its entire library of webinars available for free online so visit agriwebinar.com to register and start streaming!

Improving the safety on your farm for you, your family and farm workers is a great way to spend time this winter. AgSafe Alberta offers everything you need to jump start your farm safety program with information, education and training available on their website. Visit the AgSafe Alberta website at agsafealberta.ca.

This winter learn the skills you have always wanted like advanced agronomy, focused farm management, human resource management or dive into a completely different field that takes you out of your comfort zone. Have fun!

The commissions go online with regional meetings

Megan Evans, Events Manager | Alberta Wheat and Barley Commissions

Due to enhanced Alberta Health Services safety recommendations that took effect in mid-November, the Alberta Wheat and Barley Commissions made regional meetings across the province accessible through an online format. All eligible producers taking part in regional updates were required to register for electronic voting and the Zoom webinar for their region.

Despite the short notice of having to switch from in-person to online meetings, producers registered in large numbers to participate in the commissions' governance process including resolutions and open regional rep and delegate positions, and to hear annual commission updates.

The changes to the format were met with increased attendance numbers and great engagement from farmers. The meetings also featured agriculture experts Dr. Kelly Turkington on Fusarium Head Blight management tips, Jon Driedger with an insightful market update, and Dr. Yamily Zavala who presented on benchmarking your soil and increasing soil health.

To ensure you receive the latest updates on regional meetings and other commission events, check out our websites at albertawheat.com and albertabarley.com and sign up for our mailing list. We hope to be able to connect with producers in their communities again soon!



The commissions keep watch on ag industry changes

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

When the UCP government was elected and took over the provincial government in 2018, we expected changes to bureaucracy but were uncertain of what the exact impact would be on the ag sector.

Shortly after stepping into his role as Minister of Agriculture and Forestry, Devin Dreesen announced his intentions to review and refresh the agriculture department with a “farmer-led” lens, while some positions primarily focused on extension were eliminated early on, industry consultations bridged the gap from this announcement to any major changes.

For our part, the Alberta Wheat and Barley Commissions stressed the maintenance of critical monitoring and surveillance work, as well as unbiased industry extension for research, policy and programming. Because the ministry housed talented, regionally-focused agronomy researchers, we encouraged the ministry to work with funders and stakeholders to transition their roles to other research institutions along with a long-term sustainable funding model. We began to foresee the loss of many programs and were determined to help direct them to a long-term home more conducive to carrying out scientific research.

Since the consultations, many changes have occurred and even more are expected prior to the provincial government's fiscal year end in March 2021. Producer groups including the commissions have been following closely with action to fill the extension and knowledge

transfer voids ensuring that the impact felt by our grassroots members are minimal.

Following a round of cuts to extension staff – during the spring of 2020, it became apparent that Alberta Agriculture and Forestry (AF) would not have capacity to produce the crop protection guide, commonly referred to as “The Blue Book”. To ensure that Alberta producers still have access to up-to-date crop protection information, the Alberta Wheat Commission applied for a Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP) grant to support the four crop commissions (Alberta Wheat Commission, Alberta Barley, Alberta Canola and Alberta Pulse Growers) in producing The Blue Book for the 2021 crop season. Post-2021, the commissions intend to continue producing the manual, replacing the CAP grant with revenue from 2021 sales to supplement their investment. Visit albertabluebook.com to learn more and place an advanced order of the 2021 Blue Book for March shipping.

Another agronomic staple that the crop commission did not want to lose due to changes within the ministry is Agronomy Update. For years, Agronomy Update has brought together Alberta's farmers, agronomists and researchers for presentations on the latest innovations in crop management. The four crop commissions worked hard to plan an accessible, quality virtual event that was held January 19 and 20, 2020, ensuring that this important extension opportunity was not lost.

Many AF staff and programs have been transferred to post-secondary programs throughout the province. Most of these transfers are based on three-year funding agreements with the province, including the transfer of the Field Crop Development Centre and the provincial barley and triticale breeding program to Olds College. We are hopeful the transfer of research staff to these institutions will allow more freedom to operate in a scientific space. However, these transfers are not without significant challenges. The commissions will remain highly engaged to ensure that programs are not diminished by funding issues once the provincial grants run their course.



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Promoting Canadian barley in a pandemic

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

Each summer, Alberta Barley works with partners to bring international buyers to Canada to tour the new barley crop, view the pristine growing conditions of the Canadian prairie, talk to farmers about their sustainable growing practices, and learn about the new malt barley varieties as they become available. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the annual promotion of the Canadian barley crop to international buyers had to be moved online.

Promotion of Canada's barley is central to Alberta Barley's mandate of improving the profitability of Alberta's barley producers. International buyers are recognizing that Canada grows excellent barley for both feed and malting. As international supplies became limited, the Canadian Grain Commission recorded that exports of Canadian barley increased from 932 thousand metric tonnes in the 2015-16 crop year to almost 2.2 million metric tonnes during crop year 2019-20. This increase in exports has helped to improve the farmgate price for barley over this time period.

As travel restrictions began in the spring of 2020, Alberta Barley along with the Saskatchewan Barley Development Commission and the Canadian Malt Barley Technical Centre (CMBTC) worked to develop an alternative promotional plan that would be completely online. All three partners redirected resources toward building an online platform that featured continuous, real-time updates on the 2020 barley crop for international buyers. Filming of the online materials occurred throughout the 2020

growing season in both Alberta and Saskatchewan to prepare for the platform launch coinciding with the 2020 harvest.

The promotional website barleyharvest.ca is managed by the CMBTC and includes a variety of multimedia and informational content of interest to international buyers. Digital media on the site, including videos showcasing the new malt barley varieties filling in the fields, has brought buyers an experience as close to an annual crop tour as possible. Interviews with producers allowed for the sharing of opinions on growing the different varieties and has encouraged international buyers to consider incorporating these varieties into their production. The harvest updates pre-empted international buyers' questions on 2020 harvest weather and any concerns regarding quality that could be expected. Finally, an interactive quality map is able to provide the results of barley quality analysis from 25 locations across the Prairies, encapsulating a snapshot of the 2020 harvest quality parameters such as protein, germination energy, thousand kernel weight and plumpness.

While COVID-19 continues to disrupt business as normal, Alberta Barley remains committed to promoting our barley to international markets. While we wait to resume normal travel, we will continue to innovate and partner with organizations aiming to improve the exports of Canadian barley and the profitability of Alberta's producers.

CMBTC announce recommended malting barley varieties for 2021-2022

Emily Johnson, Marketing Communications Coordinator | Alberta Wheat and Barley Commissions

This past November, the Canadian Malting Barley Technical Centre (CMBTC) announced their list of recommended malting barley varieties for the 2021-22 marketing year. This highly anticipated industry release identifies barley varieties that hold the most promise for producers in terms of selection and marketability based on current acceptance in the market.

This year's list includes three well-established varieties, CDC Copeland, AC Metcalfe and AAC Synergy in addition to three up-and-coming varieties, AAC Connect, CDC Bow and CDC Fraser that showcase excellent malting and brewing properties in addition to improved disease resistance. All of these varieties are two-row.

In addition, there are a number of other varieties that are contracted by specific companies in the industry including two-row varieties Newdale, Bentley, PlatinumStar, Lowe and Cerveza, as well as six-row varieties Tradition, Celebration and Legacy.

The CMBTC is no stranger to conducting applied malting and brewing research. All varieties included on the annual list of recommended varieties have been pilot tested by the CMBTC.

In addition to the list of recommended varieties to producers for the upcoming year, the CMBTC also includes a list of varieties in development that might soon make the cut as recommendations. Included in the list of varieties in development are: CDC Churchill, CDC Copper, and AB BrewNet.

Each of these newly registered varieties are in varying stages of seed propagation and commercial testing by the industry.

The CMBTC advises producers to talk to their local elevators, malting companies or grain buyers before making final decisions on which varieties to grow in their region.

View the CMBTC 2021-22 Recommended Malting Barley Varieties list at cmbtc.com.

Wheat Midge: protecting against another outbreak

Midge Tolerant Wheat Stewardship Team

With the many challenges 2020 has brought the world, it's no surprise that orange blossom wheat midge picked this year to show up in full force in fields across the Prairies.

"We actually had the biggest outbreak of wheat midge that I've seen in my short career," says Dr. Tyler Wist, research scientist of field crop entomology with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. "Results of the annual wheat midge survey that comes out in early January will include the data that we need to show a population increase, but the spring rains were perfect for midge development."

Wist says the overall midge population had been decreasing over the past decade in Western Canada, in part, due to dry growing conditions. He explains that larvae overwinter in the soil in larval cocoons and require adequate moisture in May and June to bring them to the soil surface. Above-average rainfall this spring in some parts of the Prairies made conditions ideal for the pest to thrive.

The Prairie Pest Monitoring Network (prairiepest.ca) ran models in mid-August to determine potential numbers of overwintering wheat midge larvae. Results predicted higher densities of wheat midge compared to 2019. Alberta was also forecast to have greater populations than Saskatchewan and Manitoba. Though the actual impact will be confirmed once survey data is compiled and analyzed this winter, it's certain some growers will see the effects of wheat midge this harvest.

Impacts on yield and quality

Orange wheat blossom midge can seriously damage yield and quality of susceptible wheat varieties.

In late September, the Canadian Grain Commission confirmed that midge was present in the 2020 durum and wheat crops. In order to determine damage, growers are encouraged to look for rupture of the bran on the back or side of kernels, a white line or mark on the back or side, or a distorted kernel.

As Wist explains, wheat midge larvae damage the wheat kernels by feeding directly upon them as they are developing. "Typically, four or more larvae per kernel, which is often the number of eggs laid by a female on one floret, will cause a complete shrivelling of the kernel and it will

blow out the back of the combine and be lost as 'phantom-yield loss,'" he says. "Less larvae inside a floret, can cause distortion of the kernel, splitting of the bran or simply a white line. Too many of these kernels in your sample can cause downgrading because midge-damaged kernels negatively affect the milling performance."

Midge tolerant wheat varieties

Growers who are less inclined to worry about downgrading by the elevator are those who planted midge tolerant wheat in the spring.

For more than a decade, these varieties have been the first line of defence against the pest. Midge tolerant wheat growers report significant yield and grade benefits — approximately \$36 per acre. There are now more than 35 varieties available in seven different wheat classes.

Midge tolerance in all varieties originates from a single gene called *Smt1*, which increases the level of phenolic acids in the wheat kernel and discourages feeding by the pest. As a result, the midge starve and die.

All varieties are sold as a blend of midge tolerant and midge susceptible wheat, providing an "interspersed refuge system" that disrupts the midge's ability to produce resistant offspring, preventing a build-up of a resistant midge population. As *Smt1* is the one and only midge tolerant gene, growers must do their part to protect the technology. All growers sign a stewardship agreement and commit to maintaining the refuge by limiting the use of farm-saved seed to one generation past certified.

Planning for 2021

Given the right conditions, such as consecutive wet springs, midge populations can build quickly.

"This year could be a building year for the midge population...with trouble coming next year," says Wist. "We'll know better once the midge survey is complete."

In the meantime, as growers plan for 2021, ensuring stewardship protocols are being followed or purchasing certified midge tolerant wheat are solid steps to prevent midge outbreaks and to protect future yield and quality.

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In order to determine damage, growers are encouraged to look for rupture of the bran on the back or side of kernels, a white line or mark on the back or side, or a distorted kernel.”

DAILY NEWS
February 29, 2020

RESISTANT MIDGE POPULATION EXPLODES

Sorry to startle you, but we needed to get your attention. The resistant midge population hasn't exploded, but it is certainly possible in the future if we don't follow Midge Tolerant Wheat stewardship practices.

Take Midge Tolerant Wheat Stewardship seriously. If not, this headline could become reality.

Limit the use of farm-saved seed to one generation past Certified seed. It's a simple step that protects the one and only tolerant gene.

When you grow Midge Tolerant Wheat, you sign a Stewardship Agreement and commit to only using farm-saved seed for one generation past Certified.

That's what keeps the interspersed refuge system at the proper level and prevents build-up of resistant midge. If you don't follow this practice, your actions could eventually

reduce the one and only midge tolerance gene ineffective. Let's work together and practice proper stewardship to keep Midge Tolerant Wheat a positive news story.

MIDGE TOLERANT WHEAT
Plant • Protect • Preserve

Contact your retailer or visit midgetolerantwheat.ca

Plot2 Farm

Conduct on-farm research designed around your topic of interest and learn how agronomic decisions impact your crop.

To learn more contact Jeremy Boychyn at jboychyn@albertawheatbarley.com

Virtual new crop missions

Brenna Mahoney, Director of Communications and Stakeholder Relations | Cereals Canada

Normally in December and January Cereals Canada, it's technical division Cigi, and the Canadian Grain Commission are in the middle of travelling for our annual new crop missions. During normal times, the new crop missions visit about twenty of our leading customers around the world to talk about the quality of the recently harvested wheat crop and to support them in their decision to buy Canadian wheat. But these are not normal times. We of course cannot travel to visit our customers because of the COVID-19 global pandemic. What to do? How do we provide support to our customers in 2020?

We have been presenting virtual seminars to customers in five key regions of the world: Asia, Latin America, Europe, Mid-East and North Africa, and to our key customers in the U.S. and Canada. We have presented Canadian quality, our sustainable production practices, and our ability to provide consistent supply, even in the face of the pandemic. In addition to these seminars, we have been providing individual customers with the opportunity to dive deeply into key areas that are of interest to them and speak directly to experts from the Canadian value chain. To view the events that have already taken place you can go and view the videos on canadiancereals.ca.

The 2020 crop enforces the Canadian brand of clean, consistent quality. This year we really do have a good story to tell. That good story, is your story. Looking back to harvest 2019, it really was the "harvest from hell". This year we get to tell your customers that the 2020 crop is much better, over 80 per cent of all wheat is in the top two grades. Strong milling quality is generating the best of breads and high-quality pasta. To get the full story on the 2020 wheat crop this year you can go to: canadiancereals.ca/2020-wheat-crop.

Our digital pivot also provides us with the opportunity to engage more directly with Canadian farmers. You will have the opportunity to hear directly from the value chain about the changing demands of consumers around the world in the new year, with a farmer event set for spring 2021. You will have the opportunity to see directly how the decisions you make on your farm impact global markets. The Canadian Cereals hub that we have created will be a place for you as growers to come and see what we are doing for you as a cereals industry.

Maintain and improve your farmland value with *FarmCash*

Syeda Khurram, Chief Operating Officer and Director of Human Resources | Alberta Wheat and Barley Commissions

Farmland value is an important consideration when farmers are looking to grow and improve the profitability of their farm. Farmers can enhance the value of their farmland by adopting management practices that will yield the greatest possible returns and maintain the long-term financial sustainability of their farm. Key determinants can impact farmland value including farm earnings, efficiencies, cost savings, productivity, market prices, interest rates and profitability.

Farmland value can also be assessed through a farm's yield, crop production and by how attractive it is to the potential investors. If land is generating better profits due to the improvement of maintenance and farm assets, it will in turn lift the value of that piece of land. Therefore, a high rate of profitability inevitably increases farmland value.

By using the right business management tools, producers can enhance their farm growth and ultimately boost their farmland value. That's where *FarmCash* comes in.

***FarmCash* offers low-interest rate cash advances of up to \$1 million, with \$100,000 interest-free and the remaining \$900,000 at TD prime minus 0.75 per cent on over 50 commodities including all major crops, honey and livestock with no application fees. *FarmCash* allows producers to make valuable investments and yield better returns for their farm that help maintain and increase farmland value.**

A key factor of *FarmCash* that directly impacts farmland value is our interest rate. Low interest rates reduce the cost of capital purchases and allow producers to reinvest their savings in assets that generate additional

income. In order to maintain and improve farmland value, it is imperative that farmers continue to drive reinvestment in farming operations. In addition to having increased purchasing power that allows farmers to make wise capital investments, low interest rates also reduce operating costs and increase farm efficiency and productivity.

In comparison, taking on a higher interest rate to finance a purchase reduces the level of profitability by increasing the borrowing cost and limiting opportunities to invest in revenue generating assets.

While investing in capital assets using operating reserves or exhausting cash may be other options, it would put a big hole on a producer's balance sheet and increase the farm's financial risk. Investing with *FarmCash* leaves a producer's cash balance untouched and allows the cost of the purchase to be financed over its useful life. The only cost to the producer would be the minimal interest rate and the depreciated value of the equipment over years. Meanwhile, a wisely chosen investment could allow the farm to improve its profitability, translating to a very low risk, high return investment.

Guarantee your expected returns using *FarmCash* or guarantee a better rate of return for your operations using *FarmCash*.

With *FarmCash*, farmers can make informed business decisions that allow them to expand and optimize operations to improve the long-term financial sustainability of their farms. Producers interested in improving their farmland value with *FarmCash* can apply for free using our simple online application at FarmCashAdvance.com and receive their advance in as little as three to five business days, or call 1.855.376.2274 to speak with a *FarmCash* representative.

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GROW

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Cash advances of up to \$1 million at FarmCashAdvance.com

FarmCash makes it convenient to apply for a low interest cash advance of up to \$1 million, with the first \$100,000 interest-free.

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Agriculture and
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**Advance Payments
Program**

Agriculture et
Agroalimentaire Canada
**Programme de
paiements anticipés**

*Based on submission of a completed application.

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.



Demand keeps brewery program hopping

Geoff Geddes | The Word Warrior

If there is one thing that is both recession-proof and pandemic-proof, it has to be beer. In fact, we need this magical elixir more than ever. Given that fact, it's good news that the Olds College brewery program is in great demand, and that Alberta Barley is helping it thrive. In fact, the organization recently renewed its funding partnership with the program for \$25,000 over the next five years.

"Alberta Barley was one of the founding members of the program, as we recognize and support the good work they do," said Geoff Backman, manager of business development and markets for the Alberta Wheat and Barley Commissions. "In our discussions with the college, we found they were already taking students to farms to understand the source of malt ingredients for brewing."

In renewing the funding, Alberta Barley endorsed the program and its ability to prepare students for careers managing breweries in Alberta and around the world.

"One of our long term market development goals is to see increased adoption of new barley varieties," said Backman. "These varieties often have superior yield and disease resistance for farmers, and lead to greater supplies of malt barley for maltsters and brewers."

Those same maltsters and brewers can be reluctant to move from varieties that currently work in their process, and not all brewers have a strong understanding of the farming world or what happens before malt reaches the malthouse.

Home grown

"By supporting this program, we hope to have students graduate with an appreciation of Alberta's malt barley and the farms that produce it," said Backman. "We would like to see them continue to seek malt produced in Alberta for the rest of their careers."

Those behind the program are pleased about the renewed funding, but also about the partnership itself and what it represents.

"This renewal really cements our relationship," said Peter Johnston-Berresford, lecturer & researcher – brewmaster and brewery operations management, School of Trades & Skills at Olds College. "Brewing is closely tied with farming and agriculture, so when we have agreements like this it underlines that reality."

It also helps that Olds College sits in the middle of Alberta's barley belt, where 25 to 30 students in the program gain an intimate knowledge of barley, wheat and anything else that is produced there. Of all the selling points for the program, that hands-on learning may be the clincher.

"Many of our students have jobs working in liquor stores, breweries or distilleries," said Johnston-Berresford. "There is tremendous value in practical experience, and by being able to opt out of some of our courses to work in the trade, they are getting paid, gaining knowledge and missing my first year brewing class, so it's a win-win-win scenario."

Rather than saddle students with some courses that are unrelated to their career of choice, the program ensures that everything they learn is pertinent, relevant and equips them to "hit the ground running" when they emerge.

Evolving and excelling

"We train our students to be transformative, evolving the industry and making it more competitive and quality-oriented," said Johnston-Berresford. "It's so satisfying when they get out and you see changes in the industry that are partly a result of what students wrought from their learning. They are expected to have a broad swath of abilities upon graduation, and that's what we aim for every time."

Just as Olds College is inextricably linked to agriculture in Alberta, those enrolled in the brewery program take that link to another level.

"We are fundamentally dialed into the farming community," said Johnston-Berresford. "Our students gain insights on the financial risks faced by growers, and what goes into culturing the products we can't live without. We take them on rural tours, have them talk with agronomists and farmers, and watch the harvest. Many of our students may not have grown up on a farm, but they gain a real appreciation for the challenges involved in raising crops for brewing."

If the popularity of the program is any indication, it seems to be on the right track. They never advertise, and never need to, as the program fills up every year, sometimes in the same month that they open for applications.

"We get students from Newfoundland to B.C., as well as the United States, South America, Europe and Asia," said Johnston-Berresford. "There are still 120 breweries in the province, so it's a stable trade and a key part of the economy; people are always going to drink and look for good beer. We have some rough figures showing that 85 to 90 per cent of students who finish the program are still in brewing five years later."

Part of what keeps students engaged is the chance for private brewing time at the college, something that is not offered anywhere else. They are provided with ingredients from suppliers so they can practice and hone their craft without leaving the campus.

While the hands-on aspect is a signature of the program, there is talk of pushing it a step further.

Can we talk?

"When I talked with Geoff at Alberta Barley, we discussed introducing students to farmers," said Johnston-Berresford. "This would not just be the occasional interaction, but more relationship and community building. My family is rooted in farming and I am a big proponent of rural sustainability. There is so much that students can derive from farmers, and vice versa, yet there are not many brewers that spend a lot of time talking to farmers."

The idea is to forge meaningful bonds between students and the farming community. Rather than instructors interpreting all the information for their class and perhaps losing some points in the translation, students could spend quality time with farmers in the field or sit down and talk about issues and strategies.

"Prior to the pandemic, we were talking about having farmers visit our brewery en masse to see how we make beer and what we do with their grain," said Johnston-Berresford. "That had to be postponed, but we are brainstorming other ideas, and I think things will evolve that I never anticipated. There are all sorts of options that can benefit both student and farmer."

Wherever the program goes from here, Alberta Barley feels good about its investment and the possible returns.

"Supporting the brewery program is something we see as a valuable endeavor for the long-term benefit of Alberta barley producers," said Backman.

Besides, vaccines may come and go, but beer is always there when you need it.



One of our long term market development goals is to see increased adoption of new barley varieties”





Better Together



Alberta Wheat & Barley Commissions will be at AgExpo in 2021!


Stop by our booth to meet some of our leadership and informative staff to get some great commission updates about our key program areas!

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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.



The Growing Point

Fungal seed testing and management – a practical approach

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

What level of cereal seed fungal infection warrants a seed treatment? In general, there are no strict rules or percentages for most fungi. A more appropriate question would be; if seed germination is lower than expected and disease is present, is the decreased germination due to disease or physiological issues? Additionally, if the germination issues are due to disease, will a seed treatment help?



Upon receiving a fungal test report, you will see values for the following fungi:

- *Aspergillus species (spp).*
- *Penicillium spp.*
- *Alternaria spp.*
- *Cladosporium spp.*
- *Epicoccum spp.*
- Common Root Rot / Spot blotch - *Cochliobolus sativus/Bipolaris sorokiniana*
- Head Blight / Seedling blight – mainly *Fusarium graminearum (Fg)*, but other *Fusarium spp.* may be involved
- *Fusarium Root & Crown Rot – Fusarium spp.*
- Net Blotch / Tan Spot / Leaf Stripe - *Pyrenophora spp.*
- Glume / Leaf Blotch - *Parastagonospora nodorum* aka *Septoria nodorum spp.*

Both *Aspergillus spp.* and *Penicillium spp.* are storage molds that can lead to mycotoxin development if grain is stored damp. In most scenarios, these two fungi will have no impact on germination. However, in the case that seed was stored damp and fungal test results indicate high infection levels greater than 10 to 25 per cent along with bin burnt seed and germination rates of 80 to 90 per cent, a seed lot or seed treatment with *Aspergillus spp.* and *Penicillium spp.* on the label could be considered.

Alternaria spp., *Cladosporium spp.*, and *Epicoccum spp.* also pose minimal risk to seed germination. These fungi are known as saprophytic, which means that they feed only on dead plant tissue. These fungi cause sooty molds which are most evident as blackish-grey swathed, or standing crop where harvest has been delayed due to wet conditions. If the total percentage of these fungi surpass 50 per cent and germination is low, it may be a good idea to reach out to your seed analyst for a second opinion as a different seed source may be needed. However, if germination percentage is adequate and seed infection levels are lower these fungi are not a concern.

You can also quickly eliminate smut as a factor as it typically does not inhibit germination. However, smut will cause loose smut and covered smut as the crop develops into mature plants and this will result in yield loss. A general rule of thumb to follow especially for loose smut, is that every one percent smut infection represents one per cent yield loss.

The remaining fungi discussed below, are the main fungal culprits of poor germination.

For *Fg*, management decisions of infected seed use are complex. History of *Fg* in the region and in your fields must also be taken into consideration. For more information on management decisions around *Fg* infected seed, visit managefhb.ca and discuss management options with an experienced agronomist.

When approaching any seed test result it is recommended to first assess the germination rate. If the germination rate is 'reasonable' such as in the greater than 80 to 85 per cent range, you are unlikely to see fungal disease concerns. If your germination is low, take time to look through the fungal test results. The pathogenic fungi of main concern include: *Cochliobolus sativus*; *Fusarium spp.*, especially *Fg*; *Pyrenophora spp.*; and *Parastagonospora nodorum*. If one of these fungi are presenting infection levels greater than 10 to 15 per cent, they may be impacting germination. In this scenario, seed treatment with labelled control of the culprit fungi may be beneficial. If any of these culprit pathogens, as well as *Fg* show cumulative infection level of 10 to 15 per cent the collective infection of these fungi may be impacting germination and using a broad-spectrum seed treatment may be useful. If you find infection levels greater than 25 to 50 per cent seed treatment may only provide disease suppression rather than control.

Keep in mind that one should not assume certified seed is disease free. When purchasing certified seed, asking for a fungal screen can help mitigate potential disease issues being introduced to your farm.

If you feel pathogenic fungi are impacting your germination and vigor it is a good idea to reach out to your seed lab and request a comparison of germination and vigor with and without specific seed treatments. This comparison will not perfectly replicate field conditions, but it can indicate the value of a seed treatment in relation to seed-borne pathogenic fungi. It is important to note that depending on rotation and disease management, some fields carry increased soil inoculum loads that may put added pressure on the seed and seed treatment.

In situations where no significant seed-borne fungi is present but germination and vigor are low, the seed lot likely has physiological issues that will not resolve with a seed treatment. In this case, increasing seeding rate or changing seed lots should be explored.

It is important that seed treatments are not seen as a quick fix for seed management. A seed treatment is best utilized as part of a larger management system including seed bed management for adequate moisture and seed to soil contact, managing fertilizer seed safety, shallow seeding, and long rotations. A long rotation reduces the buildup of disease inoculum in the soil, increasing the potential for seed to germinate and grow evenly with less impact from soil or residue borne diseases.



A seed treatment is best utilized as part of a larger management system including seed bed management for adequate moisture and seed to soil contact, managing fertilizer seed safety, shallow seeding, and long rotations.”



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

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Alberta Barley

Albertabarley.com/the-growing-point



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Policy TRACKER

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

Alberta's Economic Recovery Plan: building on agriculture's strength to diversify the economy

Alberta's Economic Recovery Plan recognizes the agri-food sector as an important part of Alberta's post pandemic recovery, growth and diversification strategy. Alberta Wheat and Barley Commissions' general manager, Tom Steve participated in the provincial agriculture and forestry sector table that contributed to the plan.

To achieve growth in agriculture, the plan focuses on core areas including: attracting investment to expand and diversify value-added processing, increasing access to key global markets and expanding infrastructure to increase primary production. The Government of Alberta made a number of new announcements within the last few months that support these priorities.

- The Government of Alberta has set a goal to increase agri-food exports to \$16.6 billion by 2022, a 43 per cent increase from 2018 that totaled \$11.6 billion. In September 2020, it was announced that more agricultural representatives will be sent to the province's trade offices in U.S., Europe, Mexico and Singapore to help meet this goal.
- In October 2020, investments in irrigation infrastructure were announced between the Government of Alberta, the Infrastructure Bank of Canada and eight irrigation districts. These investments into new irrigation projects totaling \$815 million will convert open canals into underground pipelines, modernize existing systems and open new reservoirs that will allow for expansion in farming areas. Additionally, \$10 million has been invested in irrigation rehabilitation projects for maintenance and infrastructure improvement.
- Invest Alberta has been created as Alberta's first crown corporation dedicated to investment attraction. They have named agriculture a key sector supporting investments in value-added processing.

Bill 47, Ensuring Safety and Cutting Red Tape Act

In November 2020, Alberta's Minister of Labour and Immigration, Jason Copping tabled omnibus Bill 47, *Ensuring Safety and Cutting Red Tape Act*. The legislation will roll back changes made under the previous government to the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) and the Workers Compensation Act. For producers, these changes mean that the nine components of a health and safety system currently required under the OHSA will be moving into guidelines yet to be defined. While having basic safety programming is still an imperative part of risk management on farms, the changes will allow for more flexibility to adapt safety programs to fit the structure and needs of all farm businesses. Other positive changes have reduced time limits for disciplinary action complaints and made changes to clarifying what is determined to be dangerous work. OHSA changes are expected to come into effect on September 1, 2021. AgSafe Alberta will be monitoring the details as more information becomes available, stay tuned! For questions please contact AgSafe Alberta at info@agsafeab.ca.

Changes to Mandatory Entry Level Training for experienced Class 3 drivers

On November 26, 2020 the Government of Alberta announced two initiatives to help reduce the cost and time for Albertans to become Class 1 drivers.

The Experience and Equivalency Class 1 Mandatory Entry Level Training (MELT) program will recognize the experience and knowledge that farm workers and workers in other industries gain through work experience. The program will recognize Class 3 drivers with a minimum two years of experience and allow them to take an abbreviated MELT program, requiring 40 hours of training compared to the 113 hours required for the full Class 1 drivers MELT program. Team Alberta and other industry partners have advocated for measures to streamline the process for farm workers to obtain their Class 1 MELT licences such as eliminating barriers to cost and time associated with Class 1 licensing.

A second program, **Driving Back to Work** will cover up to 90 per cent of the costs associated with obtaining a Class 1 commercial truck license for unemployed Albertans. This program aims to help Albertans pursue a career in the commercial trucking industry while also working to fill an expected shortage of 3,600 commercial truck drivers by 2023.

More information on the program and applications is available on the Government of Canada's website.

Proposed Tank Mixing Regulatory Changes

The Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) of Health Canada has released a regulatory proposal related to tank mixing that would see tank mixes without explicit labelling regarding allowable mixes become illegal for use without updated labelling registered through the PMRA. This would reverse the guidance provided by the PMRA in 2009 that allowed for the use of unlabeled tank mixing of pest control products, within the registered use pattern for each tank mix partner. The Alberta Wheat and Barley Commissions have worked together with the Canada Grains Council and other organizations across the country to put forth a submission within the PMRA consultation period on this proposal to illustrate the impact on farmers. In November, the commissions had two meetings with the PMRA to advocate for retention of the 2009 guidelines. Our first objective was advocating to keep Alberta in alignment with the other jurisdictions, while the second was to stress the importance of a long implementation period if changes are going to occur. This long implementation period is necessary to help ensure tank mixes regularly used on wheat and barley crops are not held-up in the relabeling process. The commissions continue to carefully monitor this issue and address ongoing concerns. The joint submission letter to the PMRA is available to view online at albertawheatbarley.com.



**TEAMALBERTA**



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.



Alberta Barley

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