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# FARMERS' INDEPENDENT WEEKLY

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## INSIDE

### LIVESTOCK

- Hog barn challenges ..... 10
- Glen Nicoll's Manitoba Roundup ..... 11

### CROPS

- High-fibre flax straw market ..... 16

### FEATURES

- KAP annual meeting coverage ..... 14/15

### COUNTRYSIDE

- No. 1 cause of winter injury ..... 22

### RECIPES

- Fork in the Road ..... 21

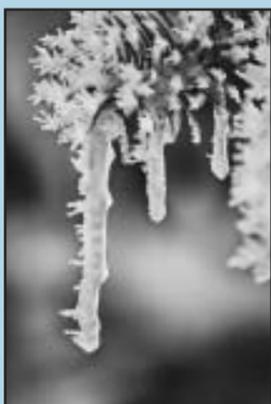
### QUOTE/UNQUOTE

*"The cheques are being drawn up as we speak."*

- Chuck Strahl / 8

### REGULARS

- Editorials ..... 4
- Comments ..... 5
- Law of the Land ..... 7
- Sheep Market ..... 12
- Classifieds ..... 23
- Weather Vane ..... 27



Be sure to enter the FIW Attention to Detail contest. See details / 9

This week's banner photo by Billy Dudek

Manitoba farmers can grow the equivalent of seven to 11 barrels oil an acre

## Cash in on high oil prices by growing switchgrass

BY ALLAN DAWSON  
FIW staff

PORTAGE LA PRAIRIE  
**F**ood is cheap. Oil sure isn't. So maybe farmers should switch — to switchgrass.

Renewable fuel crops can replace non-renewable oil, boost the local economy, reduce pollution and greenhouse gas emissions — and earn carbon credits to boot. In fact, by growing switchgrass on 15 per cent of their land, Canadian and American farmers could generate more energy each year than the Alberta tar sands, according to Roger Samson, executive director of a Montreal-based organization called REAP — Resource Efficient Agricultural Production.

"That energy equivalent is around 1.5 billion barrels of oil (a year) or four million barrels of oil a day, which is five per cent of the world's oil supply," Samson told about 80 people here last week at a conference organized by the Frontier Centre for Public Policy and the Manitoba Sustainable Energy Association.

Increasing oil prices and efforts to curb global warming spell economic opportunity for farmers, especially in Manitoba. Here's why. Fuel oil at 70 cents a litre produces heat costing well over \$20 a gigajoule (gj). A one-tonne bale of switchgrass that the farmer gets \$55 a tonne for, plus \$45 a tonne to pelletize for a total of \$100, produces heat for \$5.50 a gigajoule. That's one-quarter of the cost of oil.



ALLAN DAWSON

**SWITCHGRASS CROWD: PACKED MEETING:** Around 80 people attended a meeting on the merits of growing switchgrass to produce energy in Portage la Prairie February 2.

"These are the economics that are going to let farmers take on big oil, big natural gas and farmers can genuinely repeat the prosperity of rising energy prices," Samson said.

"This cheap rural energy will stimulate the entire rural economy."

#### Bush on board?

Even U.S. president George Bush, an oil man before getting

into politics, referred to switchgrass as a possible energy alternative during his recent State of the Union address.

Switchgrass, a warm-season perennial grass, grows well in southern Manitoba, Samson said. He estimates it will yield 2.4 to 3.6 tonnes an acre in Western Canada, equivalent to seven to 11 barrels of oil an acre. Last week a barrel of light, sweet crude for March delivery was

around US\$65 or C\$75, but there are predictions it will hit US\$80 or even US\$90.

If Manitoba farmers can earn \$55 to \$60 a tonne growing switchgrass it could generate \$144 to \$216 gross an acre, based on Samson's yield estimates. Although switchgrass has lower production costs, it's

SWITCHGRASS / 3

## Biodrainage can reduce excess moisture risk

BY LAURA RANCE  
Associate editor

**H**ow farmers manage the top four to six feet of soil can influence how many drainage ditches they need, a University of Manitoba agronomy professor says.

"When we think of water, we have a tendency to think of engineering solutions," Martin Entz told the Manitoba Soil Science Society's annual workshop. "I want to talk about biological water management."

Speakers at the plenary session on managing excessive moisture repeatedly referred to the need for more biological solutions to the issue of water management in Prairie cropping systems.

Prairie soils seem to suffer from either a feast or a famine when it comes to moisture, which makes biological resiliency an important strategy for handling both extremes.

Much of the research focus over the past century has been aimed at drought management.

But soils in some areas, particularly on the eastern Prairies, have a higher risk of excessive soil moisture, said Entz. He's been working with graduate students over the past 15 years to develop cropping systems that can thrive under such conditions.

University of Manitoba soil scientist Paul Bullock said it is virtually impossible to assess agrometeorological risk for excess soil moisture in Manitoba because there is very little data available.

"The difficulties experienced with excess soil moisture recently in Manitoba emphasize the need to expand our knowledge of the risk levels for excess moisture, in the same way that risk levels have been explored for moisture deficit and drought," Bullock said.

#### Springs getting wetter

April through June precipitation levels have been rising in several locations across the province since the 1980s. The correlation between that and excessive soil moisture varies with factors such as the soil type and its saturation level at the time the precipitation occurs.

While it is possible to calculate the potential of heavy rainfall events based on past

BIODRAINAGE / 2



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# In Brief...



**English wheat dry:** England and Wales had the driest January since 1997, with rainfall only 37 per cent of the long-term average, the government weather service said last Thursday. Key growing areas fared even worse, with East Anglia and the Midlands receiving only 31 per cent of the average and the Southeast of England only 32 per cent. There has been growing concern about the impact of dry conditions on this year's UK wheat crop, centered on East Anglia, the South-East and the East Midlands, which account for more than half of Britain's wheat area.

**Enhanced controls for cattle exports:** The Canadian Food Inspection Agency has enhanced controls to ensure that cattle exported to the U.S. are neither pregnant nor over 30 months of age. New shipments must be segregated and physically separated by gender for at least 60 days if pregnancy testing is done by palpation, and for at least 45 days if pregnancy testing is by ultrasound. Testing can also now be done by approved blood test. Exporters that do not meet the requirements of the U.S. Minimal Risk Rule will be suspended immediately until completion of a full investigation.

**Hamblin promotes biotech:** Morris-area farmer Lorne Hamblin is one of two featured in a new video webcast at [biotech-gmo.com](http://biotech-gmo.com), in which he and Spanish farmer Pedro Lerín discuss the impact of biotech crops on their operations. "Biotechnology has allowed us to do things that we haven't been able to before," says Hamblin. "It's given us the opportunity to clean up fields, to grow different crops." The interviews as well as one with Manitoba's Art Enns can also be found at Monsanto's Conversations about Plant Biotechnology website: [www.monsanto.com/biotech-gmo/new.htm](http://www.monsanto.com/biotech-gmo/new.htm)

**AU buys Lloydminster terminal:** Agricore United has agreed to purchase SaskPool's 50 per cent interest in their jointly held Lloydminster terminal. The Pool said the economics of owning a grain elevator in the Saskatchewan-Alberta border city will change dramatically with the completion of a major ethanol plant that is expected to consume over 350,000 tonnes of grain annually. The Lloydminster Terminal was originally built as a joint venture between Saskatchewan Wheat Pool and Alberta Wheat Pool in 1994.

## BIO DRAINAGE / FROM PAGE 1

weather records, without long-term records of soil moisture to compare against precipitation records, it is difficult to estimate the frequency of excessive moisture conditions, he said.

Entz said there is little farmers can do about changing the texture of their soils, but they can influence its ability to handle water through crop selection, their tillage practices and over all fertility.

"The way we treat our soil is very, very important," he said, showing slides of soil samples that densely compacted with virtually no filtration in a conventional rotation compared to samples that are loose, porous and rich in organic matter in an organic rotation.

Entz noted there is a growing body of literature that raises questions about the growing use of fungicides in crop production because of their negative impact on biological organisms. "It changes our soil," he said.

Entz said the crop selection and how crops are cycled through the rotation could affect the amount of water contained in the top layers of soil.

### When we think of water, we have a tendency to think of engineering solutions."

— MARTIN ENTZ, UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

"Dry beans are not water-tolerant plants," he noted. The rising acreage of dry beans in the province has been followed by increased salinity related to their lack of water use.

However, soybeans and fababeans show exceptional flooding tolerance, followed by oats, sunflowers, wheat, corn, barley, canola and dry beans. However, Entz said a crop's water tolerance can also be affected by air temperature, the growth stage at which the excessive moisture occurs, the crop's nutritional status and disease status. Often it is disease that wipes out a crop after a flooding



**UP, NOT SIDWAYS:** Moisture-loving crops and better soil structure can take some of the load off overtaxed drainage systems.

event rather than the flooding itself.

How crops are managed in a rotation can also have an impact. "Sunflowers reliably use two inches more soil water than most small grain crops," he said. "Sunflowers can reach down to six feet."

#### Retrieving nutrients also

Including plants such as sunflowers or perennial forages that can retrieve soil water from lower depths in a rotational cycle can help de-water soils for other crops that follow. They are also useful for tapping into nutrients that have leached to subsurface layers below where shallow-rooted crops can reach.

Entz said there are also opportunities to pull additional water from the soil by using double cropping and relay cropping. For example, spring broadcasting red clover into a fall-planted winter wheat crop can pull an extra two inches of water from the soil by fall. Plus it leaves behind some nitrogen.

Or farmers can sow a service crop following the removal of a crop in the early autumn to take advantage of the remaining growing-degree days.

Entz also offered some non-traditional engineering solu-

tions, noting there are now more than 100,000 hectares being farmed in Australia using raised-bed cropping systems. Small trenches between narrow blocks of crop are left intact for several years.

While farmers on the Prairies are accustomed to thinking of shelterbelts as a defence against soil erosion, they may serve other purposes as well.

R. Sri Ranjan, who is with the department of biosystems engineering at the University of Manitoba, said another bio-drainage approach to use trees or shrubs. "Deep-rooted trees can draw water from deeper layers and have a much larger impact on lowering the water table compared to shrubs," he noted. They can also serve as an interceptor drain, capturing subsurface flows well before they reach the farmed area. Certain tree species are better than others at removing salt from the subsoil, he said.

While an increasing number of farmers are turning to tile drainage as a means of protecting their crops from excessive moisture, he noted they increase the potential for nutrient and pesticide runoff from agricultural fields.

[laura.rance@fiwonline.com](mailto:laura.rance@fiwonline.com)

## Small increase in consumer price would boost bio-energy

BY ALLAN DAWSON  
FIW staff

PORTAGE LA PRAIRIE  
Consumers need only pay a fraction of a cent more to get "green" renewable energy that will not only boost Manitoba's farm and rural economy, but help the entire province, according to Les Routledge, a director with the Manitoba Sustainable Energy Association ([www.mansea.org](http://www.mansea.org)).

"0.05 cents (5/100s of a cent) per kilowatt-hour on every consumer's bill could create that reality in Manitoba," Routledge told a meeting here on bio-energy last week.

"We're talking about an extremely small increase in consumer rates that can create that kind of outcome. It could be huge for rural Manitoba."

In an interview later Routledge said Manitobans pay 5.4 cents per kilowatt-hour for electricity. If they paid 5.45 cents they could help encourage small hydro, wind and biomass energy projects to start up.

"That (extra 0.05 cents per kilowatt-hour) would enable us to create a market that would make it profitable to capture biogas for every hog barn in Manitoba," he said.

Not only would such a project create renewable energy (electricity and heat), it would dramatically reduce hog barn odours, drastically reduce greenhouse gas emissions and make for more environmentally friendly manure.

Routledge's calculations are based on a study in Ontario. The concept of paying a little more to make renewable energy profitable to the producer is called "Advance Renewable Tariffs." They're widely used in Europe and have succeeded in encouraging the development of renewable energy there.

Routledge said renewable tariffs work better than subsidizing the building of renew-

able energy projects because by paying producers enough to make a profit, a market is created. Once there's a market, producers can find their own capital.

"Instead of giving grants (subsidies) to people to capture biogas, by creating this market-based mechanism, a very small change in the consumer price can make a fundamental change in the countryside," he said.

Ten per cent of Germany's electricity comes from renewable sources, Routledge said. Germany has 16,000 wind turbines and the wind industry employees 45,000 people alone.

Routledge estimated 10,000 people in the Killarney-Boissevain-area export \$50 million a year buying fuel every year.

"Think of \$50 million over 10,000 people if that money stays local what it could do to our rural economy," Routledge said. "Now spread that across all of rural Manitoba."

The Manitoba government has set aside 50 megawatts for small-scale wind production, out of the 1,000 megawatts it hopes will be developed over the next 10 years. Routledge hopes the government will experiment with renewable tariffs on the small project and expand them if they work.

Peter Holle, president of the Frontier Centre for Public Policy, said bio-energy would be stimulated even more if Manitoba Hydro charged more for electricity.

"If we were pricing our electricity for what it's worth (relative to oil), we would have another \$1.1 billion of revenue in Manitoba," Holle said.

The Frontier Centre says that extra \$1.1 billion should be used to cut Manitoba taxes.

Higher electricity prices would encourage conservation and less consumption, freeing up more power to be exported to the U.S., Holle said.

[adawson@fiwonline.com](mailto:adawson@fiwonline.com)





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### Dairy farmers alarmed:

Dairy Farmers of Canada has criticized a Federal Court decision that ruled that a Canadian International Trade Tribunal's decision on the classification of European milk protein concentrate was "reasonable." DFC said it was "deeply disappointed and alarmed by this decision that will illegitimately displace fresh farm milk in the making of Canadian dairy products to the benefit of subsidized imported ingredients." Last March the CITT ruled it was more precise to classify the product as "protein substances" instead of "natural milk constituents."

### Mexico beef market

**change:** Mexico will expand access for a wider range of Canadian and U.S. beef products, reflecting the current guidelines set by the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE). Until now Mexico has permitted imports of boneless Canadian beef from animals under 30 months of age. Mexico will now allow imports of bone-in beef. An AAFC release said Canadian officials continue to work with their Mexican counterparts to ensure Canadian processors may take full advantage of this restoration of market access as soon as possible.

### Agrotain wins no-till

**award:** Agrotain International has won the reader's choice award for the <No-Till Farmer> magazine's Best Product of the Year in the fertility category. Through a postcard inserted in late summer, 119 products were nominated by readers who ranked their favorite products on a first, second and third place basis. Six firms were recognized for their first-place finish in each of the following no-till categories: equipment, fertility, herbicides, insecticides, seed and seed treatments. [www.lesspub.com/cgi-bin/site.pl?ntf/index](http://www.lesspub.com/cgi-bin/site.pl?ntf/index)

**Free building plans:** A U.S. MidWest Plan Service catalogue of plans contains more than 175 low-cost and free agricultural publications, some downloadable, from major U.S. universities. The catalogue also has a list of more than 100 free, downloadable building plans. It is available from the MWPS website, [www.mwps.org](http://www.mwps.org) MWPS is a publishing consortium of 12 U.S. universities and the USDA. Topics include raising and housing livestock, constructing and remodeling agricultural buildings, commercial greenhouses and homes, and several other management topics.

**New barley initials:** The Canadian Wheat Board last week announced the 2005-06 initial payment for the second feed barley pool, "Pool B", effective immediately for deliveries from Feb. 1 to July 31, 2006. The initial payment for No. 1 Canada Western (CW) barley is \$72 per tonne. A complete listing of payments for all the grades of wheat and barley in dollars per tonne and dollars per bushel is posted on the CWB website (under the payments link) [www.cwb.ca](http://www.cwb.ca)

## There are impediments to bio-energy

BY ALLAN DAWSON  
FIW staff

PORTAGE LA PRAIRIE

Even though creating energy from biomass makes economic, social and environmental sense, there are impediments.

One is it's new, said University of Manitoba professor Eric Bibeau told a meeting on biomass energy here February 2. It's also less convenient. Sure, bales of switchgrass can be burned in a furnace or pelletized and then fed into a furnace, but it's not as easy as turning on a natural gas valve.

Biomass also faces some

cheap competition from coal, which creates pollution and adds greenhouse gas to the atmosphere — costs that aren't currently reflected in the price.

Bio-energy is not a new idea. Pulp and paper mills have run on waste wood for years. Biomass is really like a solar battery. When it's burned properly it creates energy with very little pollution. And while it creates carbon dioxide, that gas is used by plants, which in turn are harvested so it's a closed loop system.

Bibeau has been working on biomass systems that create

heat and electricity. He said one \$2.5 million system he knows of can produce one megawatt of electricity, four megawatts of heat and pay for itself in two years.

Vidir Machine Inc. of Arborg makes a system that runs on wheat straw bales, said company co-president Raymond Dueck. An operation with at least an annual \$60,000 heating bill can install a Vidir system for around \$200,000, which will create three million BTUs and pay for itself in less than five years, he said.

[adawson@fiwonline.com](mailto:adawson@fiwonline.com)

## Chuck Strahl new agriculture minister

STAFF

Chuck Strahl, MP for Chilliwack-Fraser Canyon in British Columbia, is Canada's new Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister Responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board.

Cabinet appointments were made just before press time Monday.

According to his biography, Strahl was first elected as a Reform MP in 1993, and was re-elected in 1997, 2000, 2004 and 2006. In 2004 he was selected to serve as Deputy Speaker of the House of Commons and Chairman of Committees of the Whole.

Previous to becoming Deputy Speaker, Strahl was Critic for Democratic Reform, for Northern Economic Development, for Cultural Industries, for the Deputy Prime Minister, for Industry and for the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons.

He was also Vice-Chair of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs and a member of the standing committees on Fisheries and



CHUCK STRAHL

Oceans, on Canadian Heritage, on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development and on Natural Resources.

Strahl also served as Deputy Caucus Co-ordinator and Chief Whip of the Official Opposition. He served as the Official Opposition House Leader for the Canadian Alliance from January 2000 until April 2001.

Strahl was born in British Columbia in 1957 and was raised in the Fraser Valley. Prior to his election, he was a logging contractor. He and his wife, Deb, have four children.

### SWITCHGRASS

/ FROM PAGE 1

not a crop that will replace wheat, Samson said.

"We're looking at the marginal farmland you're not getting the best returns on," he said. "This could be a rotation species that would restore your soil fertility to increase your field crop yields."

Cooler-season grasses can produce energy too, but they don't yield as well as warmer season crops and they don't use moisture as efficiently, Samson said.

Selling biomass — crop residues and grasses — is gaining interest among farmers. Samson said one Ontario farmer sells crop residue pellets to greenhouse operators for \$130 a tonne. Last year he produced 30,000 tonnes, but has contracts this year for double that.

"He's going to plant 150 acres of switchgrass this spring because he realizes the crop milling residues won't supply the market," Samson said.

Biomass has an even better fit in Manitoba because we have cold winters, a large amount of farmland, several companies already building biomass burners and one of the most progressive governments when it comes to biomass policy, Samson said.

"We think in Manitoba you could potentially develop 10 million tonnes of energy grasses and crop milling residues in the next 15 years and that would create an industry of about \$1.5 billion per year," he said. "This is a very serious opportunity for the province, which doesn't have any fossil fuel resources. It would be a very good complement for creating a renewable energy program in Manitoba."

Not only does biomass energy make economic sense for farm-

ers and rural Manitoba where pelletizing plants could be built, but burning crop residue and grasses like switchgrass produces less pollution than fossil fuels such as coal and oil and reduces greenhouse gas emissions, which contribute to global warming.

"Kyoto should become a favourite word of farmers," Samson said. "The reason we say that is, Canadian farmers can produce a lot of green fuel. And through Kyoto with the carbon trading system that fuel will have a premium value. We're not going to be able to compete with the coal industry in western Canada unless you have carbon credits... because coal is too cheap."

**"These are the economics that are going to let farmers take on big oil, big natural gas and farmers can genuinely repeat the prosperity of rising energy prices."**

— ROGER SAMSON

Every tonne of biomass that's burned replaces 1.2 tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO2) from burning natural gas, 1.5 tonnes from oil and 2.0 tonnes from coal, Samson said. Replacing one tonne of coal with one tonne of biomass could be worth up to \$20 a tonne through trading carbon credits.

Burning biomass releases

CO2 into the atmosphere, but because it comes from plants, there's no net increase since new plants will use the CO2 as they grow. It's a closed loop, unlike with fossil fuels, which when burned add more CO2 to the system.

"Farmers have a vested interest in making Kyoto work," Samson said.

### Ethanol — old technology?

Instead of the federal and provincial governments encouraging ethanol production from corn, most of which is subsidized and imported from the United States, home-grown biomass should be promoted, Samson said.

"Why are we subsidizing grain-based ethanol with 1970s technology?"

"Canada is a net importer of corn. Why are we subsidizing corn ethanol plants when Canada is providing subsidies to American farmers? It's nice that we're supporting American farmers, but I think there are some Canadian farmers that want some support too."

Even when it comes to ethanol switchgrass has the advantage, according to Samson. During the process switchgrass produces lignin, which can be used to fuel the ethanol-making process, instead of natural gas. That results in net energy gain of 57 gigajoules for switchgrass made into ethanol, compared to just 21 for corn.

"And that's why the corn-ethanol industry is likely to collapse in the future and why it needs subsidies, because it's very energy-intensive," Samson said.

"So corn ethanol is a weak greenhouse gas rural development policy that needs to be revisited."

[adawson@fiwonline.com](mailto:adawson@fiwonline.com)

## Rance named to DCFRN board

Developing Countries Farm Radio Network has appointed FIW associate editor Laura Rance to its board of directors.

Founded by former CBC broadcaster George Atkins in 1979, the charitable not-for-profit organization is dedicated to improving food security, health and quality of life in developing countries.

By working with more than 250 broadcasting partners in sub-Saharan African countries, DCFRN provides relevant, practical information through radio to help small-



LAURA RANCE

scale farmers increase their food supply and improve their family's health and education.

Rance will be working over her three-year term to raise awareness in Western Canada of the organization's efforts.

## View Point



JOHN MORRISS  
FIW • EDITOR

### A old idea returns

Once met a retired gentleman who had a wonderful idea but poor timing. In the 1940s he invented a "straw pelletizer" — a mobile machine that he would take to farms after harvest, and for a fee, turn the straw stacks into large pellets or briquets that farmers could use instead of coal in their stoves and furnaces.

The combine soon took over, meaning the end of the straw stack, and around the same time, fuel oil became widely available to farmers who were quite happy to stop shovelling clinkers out of coal furnaces every morning. And back then, oil shortages and global warming were not even thought of.

They are today, and while fuel oil and diesel fuel might have seemed pretty cheap to farmers in the 1940s, they sure don't now. Today's grain business could be described as "value-subtracted" — taking high-priced commodities such as fuel and fertilizer and turning them into low-priced commodities — grain and oilseeds.

The idea of turning farm products into fuel has revived in recent years, mainly focusing on ethanol and more recently on biodiesel. The latter seems to hold promise. The technology is relatively simple, requiring little purchased energy. It can also use waste products from cooking and rendering. And if canola oil is selling for less than diesel fuel, you might as well burn the stuff.

Ethanol is to say the least, controversial. But leaving aside the arguments about net energy gain, the need for government subsidies to be economic, and that it might require import of U.S. corn, there's the basic reality that it's still based on that "value-subtracted" process of growing cheap grain. And if you're growing a crop for fuel, why use less than half the production, in this case only the kernels?

For more than 30 years it's been said that enzymes or other technical improvements to the distillation products would allow ethanol to be made from straw or wood.

We're still waiting, but should this process become a reality, what would that mean? The price for grain sold for ethanol would collapse to the value of straw. (Perhaps this new technology will come just as those new varieties of high-yielding wheat are released, the same ones that a farmer at KAP's annual meeting referred to as "Sasquatch" varieties. It does

seem that fuzzy outlines of both this new technology and the new varieties have been spotted in the distance, but never confirmed).

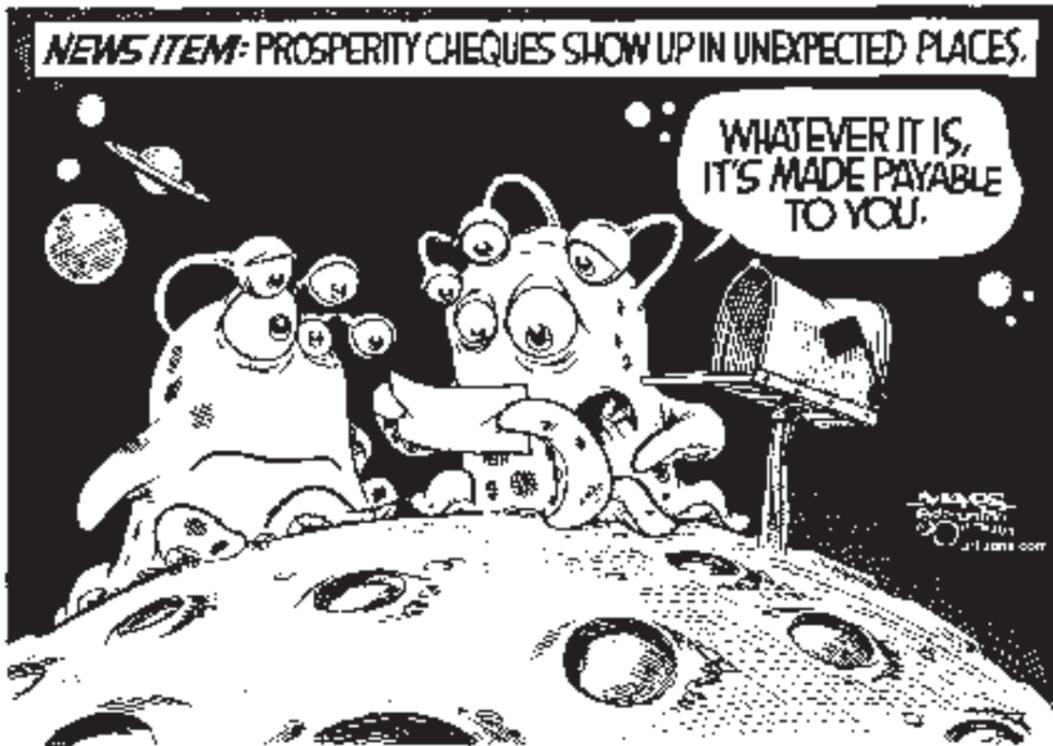
In the meantime, perhaps it would be wise to use another technology which can provide substantial net energy gain, lower greenhouse gas emissions, prevent soil erosion and water pollution, provide local employment and keep money in local communities instead of sending it to Alberta.

Almost sounds like a pitch from one of those 100-mile-per-gallon carburetor salesmen, but it's not. It's just a higher-tech system of throwing wood in the stove. As with any other technology, there have been improvements in the science of combustion since grandpa tossed out the coal furnace. Wood, straw and other biomass products can be burned at high efficiency and turned into hot water/steam, electricity or both.

Which takes us to this week's front page story on raising switchgrass for fuel. This is not a new idea — do an Internet search for it and you will find that the idea is well-advanced in the U.S., as well as in Europe, where there are also projects to raise annual crops of willow for power generation.

Especially intriguing is the idea of using cattails to absorb nutrients from sewage, and then burning them for fuel. While Winnipeggers and farmers accuse each other of contributing to nitrogen and phosphorus pollution in Lake Winnipeg, they are both taking steps to improve things. Meanwhile, small towns with sewage lagoons are discharging them with minimal nutrient removal. It would be much better to run the sewage through constructed wetlands and harvest the cattails for burning in local power plants, along with waste straw or crops grown specifically for power, such as switchgrass.

There would be no better way to boost grain prices than to take 10 or 15 per cent of cropland and turn it into energy. This is the best opportunity in a long time to provide a new and stable source of farm income. This idea is about to go mainstream — in fact it did last week, with President Bush getting on the switchgrass bandwagon. Farmers should get on too.



## Unrealistic expectations won't resolve BSE concerns

BY ELBERT VAN DONKERSGOED

"This finding is not unexpected," read the news release as the Canadian Food Inspection Agency revealed Canada's fourth case of BSE, bovine spongiform encephalopathy — often referred to as mad cow disease — in a six-year-old cow born and raised in Alberta.

Everyone close to the beef sector held their breath. Would the Americans slam the border shut again as they did in May 2003? Would they overreact again, in response to a Canadian system of safeguards that can identify the small number of BSE cases that are expected to be found in the North American cattle herd?

The Americans have indicated that they anticipate no change in the status of beef or live cattle imports to the United States from Canada. We are breathing easy again — or, are we? The breeding stock of all our ruminants is still not welcome in the U.S. Hamburger from older cattle, perfectly safe for Canadians to

eat, remains locked out of the U.S. market.

Why do some trade barriers remain? Based on the BSE guidelines of the World Organization for Animal Health, Canada is a minimal risk country. So is the U.S. The two North American neighbours are of equivalent risk for BSE. So, why does one country react with apocalyptic solutions to the other's efforts to manage the risk of BSE?

We've painted ourselves into a corner. For years we touted our safeguards — Canada and the U.S. basically developed them in tandem — as ironclad, impervious. BSE did not exist in North America, we said. Import controls, surveillance of the domestic herd, removal of specified risk material, and a feed ban, added up to an impregnable firewall to the disease that was devastating cattle production in Great Britain.

We didn't learn our lesson in May 2003 when our first BSE sick cow was identified. We promised elimination of the problem — instantly.

It is now 2006, and our choice of words is slowly becoming more realistic. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency said in its news release last week, "This finding is not unexpected;" and "This detection is consistent with a low level of disease...."

BSE exists in the North American cattle herd at a very low level — a minimal risk level and it's likely to be there for some time to come. Even traces of BSE are highly infectious, and infections seldom result in physical symptoms until years later. There's a long road ahead, of fine-tuning our already robust firewalls to manage the risk with which we have to live.

Unrealistic promises and apocalyptic over-reactions, like border restrictions will not help us or the Americans manage the minimal risk of such an elusive disease.

*Elbert van Donkersgoed P. Ag. (Hon.) is the Strategic Policy Advisor of the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario. [www.christianfarmers.org](http://www.christianfarmers.org)*

## FARMERS' INDEPENDENT WEEKLY

FARM NEWS • RURAL VIEWS  
P.O. BOX 1846 STN. MAIN  
WINNIPEG, MB R3C 3R1

Editor/Publisher • **John Morriss**  
204-235-0932 [jmorriss@fiwonline.com](mailto:jmorriss@fiwonline.com)

Associate Editor • **Laura Rance**  
204-792-4382 [lrance@fiwonline.com](mailto:lrance@fiwonline.com)

Associate Publisher • **Conrad MacMillan**  
204-837-1663 [cmacmillan@fiwonline.com](mailto:cmacmillan@fiwonline.com)

Sales & Marketing Manager • **Lynda Tityk**  
204-253-7253 [ltityk@fiwonline.com](mailto:ltityk@fiwonline.com)

Editorial • [news@fiwonline.com](mailto:news@fiwonline.com)

Allan Dawson  
204-435-2392 [adawson@fiwonline.com](mailto:adawson@fiwonline.com)

Lorraine Stevenson  
204-745-3424 [l Stevenson@fiwonline.com](mailto:l Stevenson@fiwonline.com)

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## Rancher chooses Ranchers Choice

BY COLIN MCKAY

**B**ack in 2003, BSE hit our country and cattle industry with a vengeance that none of us could have ever dreamt of. We all went to meetings to find out what each of us had to try and do to survive. From the Interlake area some cattle people like ourselves came up with the idea of a slaughter plant. They came around the province with the idea of a plant and figured by the next fall or sooner they would have it built.

Well like most cattlemen and farmers, if you need a building built, you buy the material and get it built! But these fellows had no idea of the red tape they would have to overcome before it could be built. As general manager Bruce McDonald said at a Boissevain meeting this fall, most projects this size take two to three years.

Well, we are in the third year and it is almost ready to go. But most people are upset it has taken so long — the red tape issues might as well have been taken care of first instead of later to keep everybody happy in government and the general

public. Bruce also said at the meeting if the 12,000 cattle producers in Manitoba had each put up \$800 we would have had enough money to see it completed.

If you put up \$100 for each hook you are in for the life of the plant and not just five years like some plants. If you take \$1,000 and buy 10 hooks, the federal government will give you \$500 more or five hooks, so now each hook is worth \$66 each and if you only take \$10 profit for each share at the end of the year. Where can you get 15 per cent on your money at the bank?

Cattle are collected and trucked to Dauphin from central points and your trucking is paid for out of profits and if you use your own trailer, you are paid also. This way everyone is treated equally. Dauphin is the only place that stepped up to the plate and offered to help. Sure it is up north, but those farmers and ranchers have to truck a lot of their goods south to sell, so why can't we go north for a change and the trucking is paid anyway?

Brandon and Winnipeg didn't offer to help because of

smell but there is very little smell out of new plants these days, and this also puts some revenue into smaller communities. Why not do some value-adding to our products here, instead of somewhere else getting the benefit? At a meeting in Souris recently the speaker told us of how Cargill at High River, Alberta has made more profit than their other nine plants in the U.S.A. since BSE. Doesn't that tell us something?

Yes we used to ship fat cattle to the U.S. a few years ago and down there we were paid for the heart, liver, tongue, tail and kidneys. This more than paid for the trucking. If you went to Cargill or Brooks, none of these five items were paid to you. Well in this plant at Ranchers Choice you are paid for these items plus many more items which are put into the profit column to split at the end of the year. As well, the main part of the meat is paid for in 3-5 days, not like 30 days from other plants.

This plant will slaughter big Bulls, fat Holstein steers or exotic steers at big weight, plus cows, and if the prices are right, we will get what the animals

are worth, instead of somebody else. Bulls used to be worth 70-80 cents per pound, and now they are 30-35 cents. They mainly go east and they are getting all the bulls they want so the price stays down.

So why not kill here and get what they are worth. Sell one fat 2,500-pound bull and get \$1,075 more than they are paying today and this covers your \$1,000 investment. The U.S. plants here are making lots of money and sending it south. So why not start helping ourselves to get it back to what we used to get for bulls, cows and fat cattle??

Ranchers Choice has a great symbol on its package, making it good to be shipped anywhere in the world. With the maple leaf on it, the people of the world know it is from Canada.

### Don't complain later

One last thing to consider. Sit on the fence if you want but if this plant is not built because a few of you wouldn't invest now, don't complain later if the border is closed again. Next time the governments, federal and provincial, may not help us survive another crisis like the last few years. If we won't stand

up to help ourselves, do you think it makes us look good in the eyes of the government? But if they see us willing to take a chance to help our industry, money may come more easily for future projects. Let's do the value-added here in Manitoba, instead of down east or the south of us — here is where the finished product should be sold from and not from some other province or state.

I hope more cattlemen and investors do some more deep thinking on this matter because this could maybe be the beginning of more projects to come in the future. By the looks of it, we've got to work together as one "unit" instead of everybody going different directions and getting nowhere. As farmers, we have all spent \$1,000 on items with no return, but this \$1,000 has a return each year which should help our families in future years.

Yes, my wife, sons and myself have invested over \$2,000 in this project. This is a Manitoba project and future for our cattlemen, young and old.

*Colin McKay and his family farm near Brandon*

## LETTERS

### Roads crumbling — Maguire

Manitobans deserve to be angry about the state of our provincial roads because our roadways are crumbling and are unsafe.

While the Doer NDP government blames the poor condition of provincial roads on weather and a lack of federal money, Manitobans realize the real issue is that our roads are not a priority for this government.

In 2004, the Doer NDP government passed the Gas Tax Accountability Act, which would see all revenues from provincial fuel taxes reinvested back into transportation infrastructure. Yet at the end of the 2004-2005 fiscal year there was nearly \$16 million of this revenue left unspent.

According to 2004-2005 Public Accounts documents, the Doer NDP government received nearly \$1.7 billion in federal transfer payments — just over \$260 million more than they budgeted for. This was additional money to the province that could have been used to fix Manitoba's crumbling roads instead this money went everywhere but into our roads.

According to numbers provided by the Manitoba Heavy Construction Association, the

Doer NDP government has made a habit of letting portions of their transportation budget lapse. Money that should have been spent on upgrading our roads is being left unspent at the end of the year. With the conditions of Manitoba's provincial roads, how can they let this happen?

This Doer NDP government has funds, they're just not making Manitoba's roadways a priority.

*Larry Maguire  
PC Transportation Critic, MLA  
for Arthur-Virden*

### Strong dollar relationship questioned

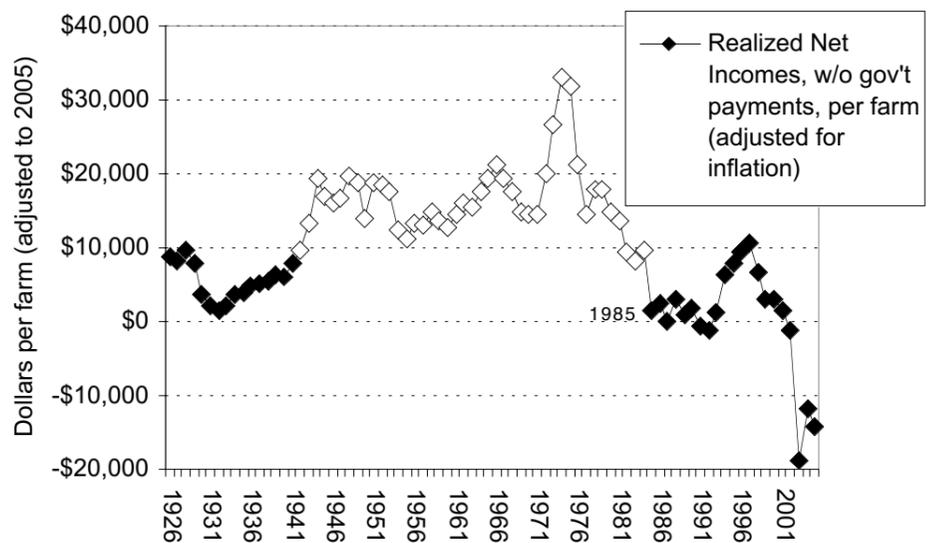
*An open letter to Barb Isman, Canola Council of Canada, and Nolita Clyde, Ag Commodity Research*

The January 26 *Farmers Independent Weekly* carried an article entitled "Stronger dollar, weaker canola." That story — built around your comments — focused on the role of a rising Canadian dollar in depressing our canola prices. As such, it is the latest in a long string of stories delivering the message that our rising currency is a significant cause

of poor prices and depressed incomes.

The data, however, seem to indicate the opposite. In the past four decades, in what year was the Canadian dollar at its highest level against the U.S. dollar? 1974. And in what year was our dollar at its lowest level? 2002.

How did farm families' prosperity in 2002 compare to their prosperity in 1974? The following chart helps tell the tale.



Please forward letters to *Farmers' Independent Weekly*, Box 1846, Station Main, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 3R1 or Fax: 204-257-4263 or email: [news@fiwonline.com](mailto:news@fiwonline.com) (subject: to the editor)

We welcome readers' comments on issues that have been covered in the *Farmers' Independent Weekly*. In most cases we cannot accept "open" letters or copies of letters which have been sent to several publications. Letters are subject to editing for length or taste. We suggest a maximum of about 300 words.

The wheat growers say the board could simply be directed to issue export licences

## WCWGA says CWB can be changed through regulation

BY ALLAN DAWSON  
FIW staff

The new Conservative government can easily fulfill its election promise to give western Canadian farmers "marketing choice" without holding a plebiscite or amending the Canadian Wheat Board Act, according to Blair Rutter, policy manager of the Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association (WCWGA).

Under section 46 (d) of the wheat board act the federal cabinet can introduce regulations allowing farmers to export wheat and barley without having to pay for an export license, Rutter said in an interview last week. Section 18 gives cabinet the power to allow domestic processors to buy wheat and barley directly from farmers without having to go through the CWB.

Those two provisions would allow the government to get around section 47.1 of the act, which says before removing the CWB's single-desk marketing authority for wheat or barley it must first consult with the CWB's board of directors and then farmers must vote in favour.

In 1993 the courts overturned a cabinet order to allow western farmers to bypass the CWB when exporting barley to the

United States — the so-called 'Continental Barley Market'. But Rutter said that's because the act didn't allow for partial deregulation. Had the order been to remove barley completely from the CWB, Rutter believes it would have been legal. That's exactly what the Conservative government did in 1989 with oats.

**"When is it appropriate for the state to trample on the rights of individuals' economic freedom to market their grain?"**

— BLAIR RUTTER

The Keystone Agricultural Producers (KAP) says farmers should decide any change to the CWB's marketing mandate. The WCWGA sees no need for a vote. The new government promised to end single-desk selling if elected, not to hold a plebiscite, Rutter said.

"That's why we maintain the government should follow through and honour their campaign commitment," he said.

Rutter said even if there was a vote, he believes a majority would favour ending the single desk. Even if it didn't, the CWB's mandate is unjustifiable, he said.

"When is it appropriate for the state to trample on the rights of individuals' economic freedom to market their grain?"

Single desk supporters, including CWB chair Ken Ritter, have said the CWB can offer little to farmers without the single desk. In an open market the CWB will be another grain company without elevators or terminals. Some industry observers believe there will have to be a lot of preparation before the change can be made. Some don't think the CWB can survive the transition.

Rutter thinks it can survive and the change can be made quickly. The main thing is for farmers to contract ahead of time how much grain they intend to market through the CWB, Rutter said. That way the CWB can plan its sales program.

Rutter also sees the government continuing to guarantee CWB initial payments, at least for a time. The voluntary wheat pool that ran in the late 1920s and early 1930s went broke because initial payments were not guaranteed.

adawson@fiwonline.com

## Eastman GO Team Launched

STAFF

Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives Minister Rosann Wowchuk presented a grant of \$1,000 to Main Bread and Butter Company while in Steinbach recently to officially open the Eastman region's new GO Team offices.

The Hometown Manitoba grant will go towards the company's building enhancement work.

Working out of the Steinbach, Vita and Dominion City GO Offices and the Beausejour and St. Pierre GO centres, the Eastman team's emphasis is on farm productivity and diversification, value-added processing, new product creation, marketing, business and community development, and financing. Leadership and youth programs are also part of the team's plan.

Crop and livestock production, food processing, marketing of locally-produced foods and small businesses specializing in agriculture supplies and services have created a thriving rural economy in this area, Wowchuk said.

She also noted the Eastman area is supported by a strong agricultural base that

includes many successful enterprises in both crop and livestock primary production and a thriving manufacturing sector.

"I am impressed with the initiative of the producers and business owners in this area in creating new enterprises and products," said the minister in a release.

The launch featured products to illustrate the opportunities that exist for value-added development in Eastman including:

- Granny's Poultry Co-operative (Steinbach) – raises and processes poultry and produces poultry-based meat products;

- Country Meat Deli (Steinbach) specializes in meats processed in Blumenort;

- Piney Fine Natural Spring Water (Piney) – bottles and markets pure spring water locally, nationally and internationally;

- Bothwell Cheese (New Bothwell) – produces over 30 varieties and 12,000 pounds of cheese every day;

- Country Perogy Shop (Kleefeld) – makes quality perogies locally for the regional market;

- Mum's Country Bakery (Ste. Anne) – specializes in tasty bakery treats;

- Apple Junction (Ste. Anne) – presses apples for fresh apple cider; and

- La Cocina Foods (Ste. Anne) – produces tortilla chips that enjoy local and national market recognition.

## FIW was proud sponsor of the 2005 Manitoba Conservation District Association Conservation Family Awards.



Marvin & Sandra Kovachik and family proudly accept their family farm sign at the MCDA Awards Banquet held in Brandon on December 6, 2005.

### INTERMOUNTAIN CONSERVATION DISTRICT 2005 CONSERVATION FAMILY AWARD WINNER – MARVIN & SANDRA KOVACHIK AND FAMILY

Family Name: Marvin & Sandra Kovachik & Family

Children: Cayden (41/2 months), Bryson (2), and Courtney (7)

Farm Location: Cowan, MB

Marvin & Sandra Kovachik own and operate Spruce Bluff Farms near Cowan, Manitoba. The Kovachiks have been farming for approximately 20 years and have resided at their current location since 1991. Marvin is currently a board member of the Intermountain Conservation District and Sub-district chair of the Pine/Sclater/Duck sub-district.

Future farm plans include utilizing the Beneficial Management Practices (BMP) program, acquiring GPS auto steer equipment for seeding and spraying, further additions of clover rotations, designing a high wheel sprayer, developing safer storage for chemicals and fuels, more centralized grain storage and installing 250 ft of drainage tile.

Marvin and Sandra currently farm 1600 acres and co-farm another 1120 acres with Marvin's father Joe Kovachik. Approximately 1600 acres is cultivated, 150 acres is in hay production and the remainder is bush and natural lands.

Alternative farming practices include the use of GPS systems for field mapping and harvesting.

The Kovachik farm has operated under minimum till and zero-till to minimize soil erosion. Clover

rotations have been included to increase the organic matter in the soil.

Several stream banks have been stabilized to reduce the amount of soil entering natural waterways.

Grassed strips 6 ft. in width are left adjacent to all road allowances to minimize the potential for eroded soils to enter the natural waterways.

All straw from cereal crops is left on the field or baled and pre-sold in the summer to cattle feedlot operators.

The Kovachik family owns and operates a managed woodlot where spruce is selectively harvested for lumber and poplar is harvested for firewood.

Preservation of natural areas and wildlife habitat is also an important aspect of the Kovachik farm.

Farm diversification is a continuous issue at the Kovachik farm as Marvin and Sandra are always accessing and inquiring into modern and future farming practices.

Aside from farming, Marvin and Sandra enjoy spending time with their children on numerous activities both on and off the farm.

In closing, Intermountain Conservation District is honoured to have selected the Kovachik family for recognition in the fields of agriculture and land & water stewardship.

**FARMERS' INDEPENDENT WEEKLY**  
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www.mcda.ca

# Law of the land

BY ANDERS BRUUN

Sometimes there are no easy answers;  
and sometimes there are!

In a recent case, a Divorce Court Judge in Tennessee ordered a Mr. William Travis Gobble to shuttle two children of divorced parents back and forth between the parents for visitation purposes.

It seems that he was the only member in the family who had a valid driver's license. Mr. Gobble objected to this and applied to intervene in the case so that he could make his position known and get the Order to shuttle the children back and forth dismissed.

As you will see below he did pick up on some of the formal legal language that is customary when addressing a legal document to a Court. The rest of the document is a rather unusual blend of sincerity and craziness.

The following is, word for word, Mr. Gobble's application to the court; spelling errors included.

"Comes the petitioner, Wm. Travis Gobble, who professes to be greatly aggrieved by the order of this court....whereby your intervenor was ordered to provide transportation for Suzanna and 'Log-Jam' White, minor children of Derrell and Chrysty White, during periods of visitation between the said parties, in the following particulars:

1. Your intervenor is the only damn one in the family with drivers licenses.

2. He should not be required to risk losing his.

3. On Friday afternoon by 1700 hours, and particularly on Sunday by the same time, your intervenor, generally has consumed three or more beers.

4. Three, or more, beers according to all the clients your intervenor has represented causes a driver to register .15 or higher on any cop's "Get'm" scale. (Hmm. Might Mr. Gobble be a lawyer?)

5. Accordingly to MADD mothers, any driver who has consumed three beers, whatever he registers, is drunk and a menace to society.

6. Small children should not be

subjected to such danger.

7. In addition thereto, your intervenor drives a small picky-up truck with only two seat belts, neither of which he can make operable.

8. The two children are of such a size that both must be bundled inside a device resembling and over-sized football helmet. Your intervenor has tried, but has been unable to date, to secure said children into such a device.

9. In any event, he, two children and a fourth person would crowd his little truck.

10. In the event your intervenor elected to have a fourth, or fifth beer enroute with said kids, he would have no place to sit said cans and would have to drive one-handed.

11. The kids themselves would be a further distraction.

12. A distracted driver is a dangerous driver.

13. Without a fourth person to assist him, should minor children commence to cry, a common occurrence, your intervenor would surely drop his beer and wreck.

14. As the common carrier, your intervenor would be thrown into regular contact with both parents and subjected to all the allegations hurled from both sides. Your intervenor is too old to suffer such.

FOR ALL OF WHICH Wm. Travis Cobble respectfully moves this Honorable Court to assign said duties to some other caring soul. - In the Matter of White v. White, Giles County, Tennessee, Chancery Court, No. 2196, filed May 13, 2002." This little item comes from a book by U.S. lawyer and academic, Andrew J. McClurg, titled "The Law School Trip".

You can read more about the book by going to [www.lawha.com](http://www.lawha.com). Professor McClurg's book is in one sense very traditional. Most lawyers with a few years of experience have accumulated a pretty good collection of jokes, stories, unusual or humorous judicial opinions and so forth to

put together a good book as Professor McClurg has.

While popular within legal circles, they are usually not big sellers. However, Professor McClurg's marketing strategy keeps his costs way down. His book is available only through his website or through [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com). He has bypassed traditional marketing techniques entirely which brings me to the point of this piece.

Had Mr. McClurg used the traditional book marketing methods he might have sold a few copies by advertising in legal magazines and newspapers. However it is not likely that the book, having a limited market, would end up on the shelves of many book stores, and if it did make the shelves of a book store it would likely have been removed before too long to be replaced by more recently published material.

However by marketing through Amazon and the internet he is able to substantially reduce marketing costs and greatly increase market exposure. He may even make a profit. There is a marketing lesson in this example as internet marketing applies to much more than just humorous books on obscure subjects.

To give just one example, through the use of [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) I was able to locate dozens of listings for businesses that sell "grain moisture meters" along with useful information from various sources on the use of these meters. And it's the same for nearly every product you can name (and a few we don't want you to name!).

In addition, I was able to use Google to learn that Mr. Gobble was indeed a Tennessee lawyer and that he had been disciplined for malpractice in 1996. It appears he may have slept, or was otherwise distracted, through much of a trial at which his client was acquitted.

In some ways (there are numerous exceptions), the internet is as useful as a gigantic mail order catalogue, telephone, fax, television, print media, the postal service and a large team of researchers, all in one. The sooner high speed internet is available to all Manitobans, the better.

It will enhance rural life and development a great deal.

*Anders Bruun is a partner with the Winnipeg law firm of Campbell, Marr LLP, and can be reached at 942-3311 or at [abruun@campbellmarr.com](mailto:abruun@campbellmarr.com)*

→ Due to an error this is a reprint of the Sudoku we ran January 19, 2006. Thanks to all those who contacted us to point out the error.

*Answer to last week's puzzle*

D	O	I	T	W	F	S	R	N
S	T	F	R	N	D	O	W	I
N	R	W	I	O	S	F	T	D
O	I	N	W	F	T	D	S	R
F	D	S	N	R	I	W	O	T
R	W	T	D	S	O	I	N	F
I	N	D	O	T	W	R	F	S
T	S	O	F	I	R	N	D	W
W	F	R	S	D	N	T	I	O



ANDERS BRUUN

# What's up

Send your coming events of interest to  
Manitoba farmers to: [events@fiwonline.com](mailto:events@fiwonline.com)  
or by fax to (204) 257-4263.

**Feb. 10 — Farm Credit Canada AgriSuccess** workshop on succession planning. Understand Estate Planning, 9 a.m. - 12 p.m. Grunthal Lion's Club, 196 Main Street, Grunthal. For info contact FCC (306)780-3486 or (306)780-8630

**Feb. 10 — Crop producers meeting**, Neepawa Legion Hall, 12 - 3:30 p.m. To pre-register or for info contact Neepawa MAFRI Office at 476-7020.

**Feb. 13 — Farm Credit Canada AgriSuccess** workshop on succession planning. Vision and Goal Setting - Plan to Grow, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. The Royal Oak Inn, 3130 Victoria Ave., Brandon. For info FCC (306)780-3486 or (306)780-8630

**Feb. 14 — Forage Day**, Giroux Community Hall. For more information call Kathy 204-346-6080.

**Feb. 14 — Farmer information seminar** on phosphorus and the proposed Water Quality Management Zones sponsored by the Manitoba Pork Council, 7 p.m., Keystone Centre, Pioneer Lounge, Brandon. Call Manitoba Pork for more info, 1-888-893-7447.

**Feb. 14-16 — Canadian Association of Agri-Retailers** (CAAR) annual convention and trade show, Prairieland Park, Saskatoon, Sask. Special session with Peter MacKay, deputy leader of the Conservative Party. For more info contact 989-9300.

**Feb. 15 — Farmer information seminar on phosphorus** and the proposed Water Quality Management Zones sponsored by the Manitoba Pork Council, 7pm, Somerset Community Centre. Call Manitoba Pork for more info, 1-888-893-7447.

**Feb. 15-17 — What are We Eating?** Towards a Canadian Food Policy. A conference examining how Canadians eat, implications of their food choices and goals of a Canadian food policy. Omni Mont-Royal Hotel, Montreal, Quebec. More info: McGill Institute (519) 398-8346; [www.misciecm.mcgill.ca/conf2006](http://www.misciecm.mcgill.ca/conf2006)

**Feb. 15-17 — Western Barley Growers Association** 29th annual convention and trade fair. Coast Plaza Hotel and Conference Centre, 1316 - 33 Street NE - Calgary, AB. To register or for more info contact WPGA at (403) 912-3998 fax: (403) 948-2060 email: [wpga@wpga.org](mailto:wpga@wpga.org) or try their web site at: [www.wpga.org](http://www.wpga.org)

**Feb. 15 — Fifth in the 2005-2006 faculty seminar series** featuring Gary Fulcher, Department of Food Science, on valued added opportunities in cereal processing. 3:30 pm in the Carolyn Sifton Lecture Theatre, Room 130 Agriculture Building, University of Manitoba.

**Feb. 16 — Manitoba Flax Growers Association's** annual meeting, Brunkild Hall. registration and coffee 8:30 a.m to 9 a.m. Call info Garvin Kabernick 736-2609.

**Feb. 16 — Creating Opportunities Public Consultations** - Adding Value in Rural and Northern Manitoba, Souris Memorial Complex, Kirkup Lounge, 32-3rd Avenue West, Souris. 9 a.m. - 12 p.m. For info contact MAFRI at 723-0072.

**Feb. 16 — Creating Opportunities Public Consultations** - Adding Value in Rural and Northern Manitoba, Shoal Lake Community Hall, 315 The Drive, Shoal Lake, 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. For info contact MAFRI 723-0072.

**Feb. 16-17 - Manitoba Corn Growers Association's** 36th annual corn school and annual meeting. Clarion Hotel, Winnipeg. For more information call 745-6661 or toll-free 877-598-5685.

**Feb. 17 — Creating Opportunities Public Consultations** - Adding Value in Rural and Northern Manitoba, Gladstone Elks Hall, 41 Morris Avenue North, Gladstone, 9 a.m to noon. For info contact MAFRI 723-0072.

**Feb. 21 — Creating Opportunities Public Consultations** - Adding Value in Rural and Northern Manitoba, Club Jovial, 157 Central Avenue, Ste. Anne. This will be a bilingual meeting with simultaneous English/French translation provided. 9 a.m to noon. For info contact MAFRI 723-0072.

**Feb. 24-25 — Manitoba 2006 Direct Farm Marketing** Conference, Royal Oak Inn, Brandon. Growing Rural Manitoba One Business at a Time. For more info contact local MAFRI offices.

**Feb. 26-28 — GrainWorld 2006**, Fairmont Hotel, Winnipeg. A conference bringing together farmers, academics and government policymakers with a focus on future trends and making the most of coming opportunities. Fee is \$275 (including GST) before Feb. 10. \$300 (including GST) after Feb. 10. To reserve hotel room contact toll free 1-800-441-1414 or by fax: (204) 949-1486. Hotel rate guaranteed until Jan. 25.

**Feb. 28-Mar. 1 — Designing and Marketing Foods to Boomers** and other Mature Market Makers. Featured speaker is Dr. David Foot, author of Boom, Bust & Echo, plus a host of leading marketing and culinary experts. Verdi Hospitality Centre, Mississauga, Ont. For more info contact Guelph Food Technology Centre at (519) 821-1246 [www.gftc.ca](http://www.gftc.ca)

**Mar. 2 — Creating Opportunities Public Consultations** - Adding Value in Rural and Northern Manitoba, Ashern Legion Hall, 3 Main Street East, Ashern, 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. For info contact MAFRI 723-0072.

## FIW SUDOKU

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the letters in the word  
H A N D I W O R K.

EASY

R	I		O	N	A			
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		A	K	I		N		W

Answer in next weeks' issue of FIW.

Most of the money should be in grain farmers' hands by spring seeding

# Grain aid speeded up

BY ALLAN DAWSON  
FIW staff

Canada's new agriculture minister didn't waste time getting down to business.

Mere hours after being sworn in, British Columbia MP Chuck Strahl announced grains and oilseed farmers will get "virtually" all of the \$755 million in ad hoc aid promised by the former Liberal government before spring seeding.

**"The cheques are being drawn up as we speak."**

— CHUCK STRAHL

"The cheques are being drawn up as we speak," Strahl said.

During the election campaign the Conservatives pledged to honour the Liberal aid announced in November, but also promised to speed up the payments.

"Both long-time farmers and new farmers that just got into the system will be getting cheques very quickly and it will be in time for their planting season," Strahl said.

Cheques will start going to farmers in about two weeks, he said.

The Liberals planned to make an initial payment to farmers based on about 70 per cent of the total, with a final payment in fall.

"It's a big increase in initial payments (we're making) but we felt it was necessary not only for the farm income crisis, but of course they need that money now when they are planning their spring activities on the farm."

An estimated \$92 million or 12 per cent of the total will come to Manitoba.

Under the program, producers of grains, oilseeds and special crops will receive payments based on average net sales from 2000 to 2004. The initial payment is based on 7.47 percent of average net sales. A producer with average net sales of \$70,000 will receive an initial payment of \$5,229.

When the program was first announced, civil servants said an initial and final payment were necessary because administrators were working with new farm income data and wanted to avoid overpaying farmers.

There were complaints that the nearly \$1 billion in ad hoc farm aid the federal government announced in the spring of 2005 (\$439 million of it for grain producers) didn't reflect farmers' needs since it was based on eligible net sales recorded between 1998 and 2002 under the Net Income Stabilization Account (NISA). In November officials said they hoped to use sales data from at least 2003 and perhaps 2004 gathered through CAIS (Canadian Agricultural Income Stabilization) program.

adawson@fiwonline.com



## Hog Margin Monthly February 2006

For more information call: Tyler, Irene or Adam  
(204) 235-2237/2246/2213 or www.mpgmc.mb.ca

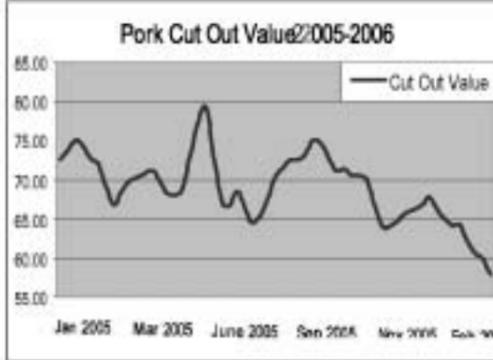
### Cash and Forward Market Recap:

- Cash markets fell during January as carcass weights reached new records at averages around 204 pounds. Weaker demand and falling packer margins kept cash bids slow and contributed to the weaker tone. The Canadian dollar continued its climb in January, touching \$0.88US briefly at the end of the month.
- Forward contracts fell significantly throughout the month as they followed the cash market lower and felt influence from the strong Canadian dollar. Futures traders are concerned about demand, and the lower prices of competing meats such as poultry.

	Dec 29	Feb 3	Change
CDN \$/ US \$	0.8585	0.8718	+\$0.0133
Carcass cutout	64.25	56.48	-\$7.77
Packer Margin	12.36	9.34	-\$3.02
Iowa/S. Minn	57.57	51.43	-\$6.14
National Daily	58.62	53.77	-\$4.85
MPMC "A" Pool	114.00	104.00	-\$10.00

### 2006: A Year for the Bears?

With a mild winter so far in the US and Canada, the supply of hogs has been steady. The slaughter numbers have been reaching the upper end of estimates and carcass weights are at all time highs. These factors combined leads to an influx of pork onto the market. The graph to the left shows the Pork Cut Out Value over the last 14 months. We have seen the largest decline over the last 2 months, and have bottomed to levels not seen since the beginning of 2003. To compound the problem, competing meats such as poultry are also experiencing declines in value, affecting pork as most consumers feel they are equal substitutes. It was felt recently that a cold weather spell in the US would be enough to slow producer marketings and possibly give a spark to the summer lean hog futures. However, the decline in pork meat prices may be too much to overcome. Combine this with the strength of the Canadian dollar and the Canadian cost of feedings hogs, and prices for the next few months don't appear very attractive.



### Outlook and Hedging Considerations:

- Hog prices in the first half of 2006 have seen significant declines over the last month. April - July Lean Hog futures are running about \$30.00/kg lower than at this time last year. As mentioned above, good hog supply, low pork prices and the Canadian dollar strength are all contributing. The Canadian dollar touched \$0.88US this past week, a sign that we may be on a path to \$0.90US or higher. We have not seen any positive feedback from the re-imposed ban on US beef moving into Japan. The combination of less beef and concerns over bird flu in Asia, could provide some support to hog exports.
- The duty on US corn continues, however MPMC does have a supply of Canadian origin corn at competitive prices. The CBSA will announce in March their final findings in the investigation of the dumping of US corn.
- Soymeal has seen decent declines over the past month, with large soybean supplies in the US and a decent growing season thus far in South America. Locking in a portion of your requirements for the summer is recommended.

### HOG FORWARD CONTRACTS (\$/c/kg)

	Dec 29	Feb 3	Change
March	134.89	117.64	-\$17.25
April	136.46	122.93	-\$13.53
May	143.19	133.93	-\$9.26
June	148.50	139.16	-\$9.34
July	138.27	131.70	-\$6.57
August	134.56	128.77	-\$5.79
September		114.71	

### FEED INGREDIENT PRICES (\$/tonne)

Soymeal			
Current	268	248	-\$20.00
6-month out	271	261	-\$10.00
Corn	154	148	-\$6.00
Wheat	145	142	-\$3.00
Barley	120	125	+\$5.00

*Note: This information is intended to aid hog producers in making their own risk management decisions. Opinions given do not guarantee any future events or performance. This report may not be reproduced, distributed or published without the written consent of the Risk Management Department of MPMC.*

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# Canada's grain, oilseed stocks top 10-year average

BY MARCY NICHOLSON

REUTERS

Canada grain and oilseed stocks soared above their 10-year averages in 2005, thanks to bumper harvests and a strong Canadian dollar, Statistics Canada said in a report released on Wednesday.

The StatsCan report pegged Dec. 31 stocks of canola at 7.5 million tonnes, up 42.5 per cent from the year-earlier figure. The large stocks break the 1999 record of 5.5 million tonnes.

"It confirms information we already know and we do look for our market to trade lower," said one canola trader.

Canadian farmers harvested a record 9.7 million tonnes of canola last fall, so large stocks were expected. Estimates by traders polled ahead of the report ranged from 7.3 million to 7.7 million tonnes, averaging 7.5 million tonnes.

Large supplies and production have pulled down prices in recent months.

"We've had a really big grain and oilseeds stock that has tested our logistical system, including rail cars and port congestion," Ag Research Commodity canola analyst Nolita Clyde said. "Crushers had opportunities but they're restricted by capacity as well."

Canola exports between Aug. 1 and Dec. 31 were 2.1 million tonnes, up 32 per cent from the previous year.

"We are using it quite quickly but not fast enough," Clyde said about this year's grain glut. StatsCan said the large stocks were the result of massive carry-in stocks and a leap in 2005 production.

## Other grains

Durum stocks also rose to record volumes after all three Prairie provinces increased production and held onto sizable stocks left from the 2004/2005 crop year.

Total durum stocks hit 6.4 million tonnes, up 1.5 million tonnes or 32 per cent from the previous year.

Durum exports increased 8.3 per cent to 1.7 million tonnes between Aug. 1 and Dec. 31 from the year-earlier figure.

Total grain and oilseed stocks in Canada rose above their 10-year averages on Dec. 31 due to a large harvest and a strong Canadian dollar, StatsCan said.

Overall quality was below normal but was better than the prior crop year.

Wheat stocks excluding durum increased 10.7 per cent to 17.7 million tonnes, up from the 10-year average of 15.7 million tonnes. Overall quality was estimated below normal but better than from the 2004/2005 crop year. All wheat stocks increased 15.6 per cent to 24.1 million from year-earlier levels. Exports dropped 9.7 per cent to 5.9 million tonnes between Aug. 1 and Dec. 31, 2004.

Some crops dropped from year-earlier levels.

Barley stocks were 9.7 million tonnes, within trade estimates, and down 2.4 per cent from year-earlier levels.



GEORGETTE HUTLET

**WINTER FUN:** Nicole Hutlet enjoys the snow on a family tobogganing outing.

## Cattails for 'green' energy

BY ALLAN DAWSON  
FIW staff

Cattails, reeds and other marsh plants capture and use nutrients including phosphorus and nitrogen, but then die and release those nutrients.

University of Manitoba professor Eric Bibeau is working on a project to harvest those plants in the Netley and Libau marshes with hopes of reducing the P and N that moves down the Red River and ends up polluting Lake Winnipeg.

But there's more to the project. Those marsh plants will be pelletized and then burned to create renewable energy.

"We want to do it in a cost-effective way and actually make money with biomass," Bibeau told a meeting here February 2.

The marsh plants — cattails, rushes and reeds — could produce three megawatts of power a year, he said.

Marsh plants act as bio-filter, capturing nutrients. Harvesting those plants in the fall could remove three to four per cent of the nitrogen and the phosphorus that would normally end up in Lake Winnipeg. That would reduce the nutrient load by as



ALLAN DAWSON

**GREEN CATTAILS:** Eric Bibeau of the University of Manitoba is involved with a project to remove cattails and other plants from the Netley and Libau marshes and pelletize them to be burned as bio-fuel, and capturing nitrogen and phosphorus before they get into Lake Winnipeg.

much as the \$180 million sewage treatment plant the City of Winnipeg plans to install, Bibeau said.

[adawson@fiwonline.com](mailto:adawson@fiwonline.com)

**FARMERS' INDEPENDENT WEEKLY**

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*Wingfield on Ice is Another installment of the much-loved chronicles of Walt Wingfield and life on his farm. His wife is expecting and a huge ice-storm is brewing. Wingfield on Ice is a feel-good evening of entertainment.*

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Getting feed and water to hogs in large barns is a challenge

## Failing to predict feed needs hog barn challenge

BY LAURA RANCE  
FIW staff

**P**igs raised in confinement operations are routinely out of feed due to human error or equipment malfunction, says a University of Nebraska extension swine specialist.

"We can find out-of-feed events in every single barn we visit," Mike Brumm said, noting it is rapidly becoming one of the biggest production issues in North American pig production.

Brumm told the Manitoba Swine Seminar last week that routine out-of-feed events not only cost producers money due to a slower rates of gain, they represent a serious animal welfare issue for the industry.

**"We tell the critics that we put pigs inside to care for their every need... can we defend out-of-feed events?"**

— MIKE BRUMM, U OF NEBRASKA

"We tell the critics that we put pigs inside to care for their every need," he said. "With that as a backdrop, can we defend out-of-feed events?"

Out-of-feed events are associated with higher incidences of gastric ulceration, hemorrhagic bowel syndrome — considered the leading cause of finishing barn deaths, and tail biting.

Brumm said human error has become a leading cause of empty feeders as the industry has moved to contract production and off-farm feed sourcing. Barn managers fail to properly anticipate when bins must be filled and it takes feed companies several hours to deliver, even on an emergency basis.

The result can be pens of pigs that go without feed for up to 20 hours.

He cited one incidence where a local mill charged a fee for emergency orders. The pig owner associated

those extra costs with a failure to monitor bins properly.

When those costs were transferred back onto contract growers, the rate of late orders declined, but Brumm said he doubts it was because barn managers increased their monitoring. "Most likely, pigs were now out of feed for longer periods of time than before," he said.

A secondary cause of out-of-feed events is when feed chutes get plugged with rations that are increasingly more finely ground, with fat added. There has also been a surge in the use of Distillers' Dry Grains in hog rations, which is a byproduct of the ethanol industry.

"In the past 10 years, there has been a marked reduction in the average particle size for swine diets, driven by data that suggests a one to 1.5 per cent improvement in feed conversion efficiency for each 100 micron reduction in particle size from 1,000 to 500 microns," he said.

But Brumm said a study that compared the economic impact of the loss in daily gain due to sporadic feed shortages to the feed conversion efficiency found the risk of loss to daily gain is greater. There was a half a pound loss in gain for every out of feed event.

"I am better off giving up feed efficiency rather than giving up sale weight," he said. When pigs miss a meal, they don't make up for it by eating more when food is available.

Brumm said another issue that is surfacing in U.S. barns is water supply shortages due to engineering design. Typical watering systems use a three-quarter inch (inside diameter) flow pipe, which can carry 5.5 gallons per minute. A typical 1,000-head finishing barn with 20 pens on each side needs to distribute 10 gallons per minute to reach all of the pens.

As well, as the industry moves to using watering systems to medicate the herd, the units commonly used also place a restriction on the flow. He said manufacturers have only recently moved to develop larger hose attachments for the medicating units.

lrance@fiwonline.com



ALLAN DAWSON

**THREE'S COMPANY:** Perry Zilkey with his triplet calves eight days after they were born January 25.

Nice calving percentage: 72 calves from 66 cows

## Triplet calves at the Zilkey farm

BY ALLAN DAWSON  
FIW staff

NEAR MANITOUBA

Bing, Bang Boom.

Those are the names of the triplet Charolais calves — two heifers and a bull — born January 25 at the Zilkey farm, operated by Perry and Joyce Zilkey and their sons Cameron and Carson.

Perry's mom Margaret came up with the names for the calves that weighed 55, 58 and 60 pounds.

It's not uncommon for the Zilkey's to have twin calves. In fact, out of a herd of 130 cows, they've had four sets so far this calving season, but this is the first time they've had triplets. The chances are about one in 105,000.

The purebred Charolais cow that had the triplets was bred to a red purebred Charolais bull raised on the Zilkey farm. The cow, eight years of age, is in fine condition and is feeding all three calves, but the Zilkey's are also bottle-feeding

them. The cow has had twins before.

The calves were born around 7 a.m. Perry saw the feet of the first calf and pulled it. He reached inside the cow and felt the second calf. After it was born he reached in again and felt the third one.

Triplets and even twins, adds work, but it also boosts the calving percentage. With 66 cows having calved so far this season, the Zilkey's have 72 live calves on the ground.

adawson@fiwonline.com

Brandon research herds are learning what many Manitobans already know — spits are good for you

## Enhancing pasture-finished beef systems

BY LAURA RANCE  
FIW staff

BRANDON

Feeding sunflower seeds in a grain ration prior to slaughter helps boost nutritional quality of grass-fed beef and doesn't hurt carcass quality, research at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada Brandon Research Centre has found.

Researchers there have been studying pasture finishing as a way for farmers to add value to their beef herds.

Cattle finished on grass produce beef with higher levels of conjugated linoleic acids (CLA), which are considered helpful in reducing the risk of heart disease, cancer and obesity in humans.

It is harder for pasture-finished beef animals to achieve premium carcass grades, said researcher Shannon Scott. That can be improved by feeding the animals a high-grain diet for a short finishing period before slaughter. But traditional grain diets result in a drop in the CLA levels.

So scientists decided to try

including black oil sunflower seeds, which are a good source of polyunsaturated fatty acids, in the finishing ration to see if nutritional benefits can be maintained without compromising carcass quality.

Researchers also experimented with adding carnitine, a vitamin-like compound shown to increase fat deposition and marbling in cattle. They found it had no effect on carcass quality.

Feeding the sunflower seeds to the pasture beef during the final stages of finishing increased CLA content of the beef by 50 per cent. It had a neutral effect on carcass quality.

The work complements research at the station exploring cow/calf production systems on pasture.

This research, co-ordinated by Julie Small over the past seven years, is showing that weaned calf production from an alfalfa-grass, extended grazing system averaged 2.4 per cent greater than from a conventional grass-drylot system. "The number of calves and birth weights were not

different among systems, but the effects of the extended grazing system emerged at precalving and turnout.

Researchers also found that grazed cows maintained their body weight and condition more consistently than drylot fed cows. The cows didn't gain as much weight but they maintained their body condition score.

The alfalfa-grass system used in the study contained an average of 17 per cent alfalfa in the mix. Carrying capacity was similar to a grass pasture, but fertilizer costs for the alfalfa grass system were 52 per cent lower than what was required by the grass pasture.

This work is part of a larger study using a "conception to consumption" approach to determine the impact of various production systems on the environment.

Scott said the pasture finishing of beef is far from the mainstream approach employed by the Canadian cattle industry, but it is a concept a proportion of the industry is exploring.

lrance@fiwonline.com

# Manitoba Roundup



GLEN NICOLL

The writing on the wall is showing scribbles of consumer resistance to retail price and an inventory picture is displaying a bunch more fed cattle looming.

End result, the fat bid is getting lower.

The Canadian wholesale price on the rail in the west is \$1.57, having dropped almost a dime in the past couple of weeks following the trend in the south. Boneless trim is sitting under \$1.30, undercutting the imported prices by 20 cents.

Canadian slaughter plants are running just over half full and the average carcass weight has risen to 862 lbs. as feedlots wait for a better bid.

February live cattle futures that had shot up to 97 cents late last year are now meeting a 92 cent price point and April is at 89 cents (C\$1.02). Packer bids in the U.S. have mirrored the nearby futures.

Commodities fund sell offs in response to rising inventories and lower cash prices have the feeder futures all sitting under \$1.10, April at \$1.08 (C\$1.24) compared to the cash index of \$1.11. That is the lowest point since the renewed rise last August.

Bleacher View: Brandon had just over 2000 in their sorted sale last week with another 440 in the regular portion. Some 100 head were split evenly between the cows and fats. Most numerous were six-weights in both sexes and the overall ratio on the sexes was 1.09:1 in favour of the steers.

Calves: In weights under 8s

the heifers had .2 more for every steer.

Light heifers in the \$1.30 made up 43 per cent of the sales, holding more 4s than 3s. The \$1.20s took in 52 per cent and five per cent sold under \$1.20. Some green, red-coloured Simms and Simm-Xs at 424 lbs. set the pace at \$1.36 (\$576 per head) and shorter 460-lb. Red Angus-Xs traded for \$1.21 (\$556). For a good-sized gut on the 460-lb. Char-Herf the price was \$1.17 (\$538). The \$1.30 five-weights contained 19 per cent, 65 per cent sold in the \$1.20s and 16 per cent were in the dollar-teens with a few drops below the buck for the likes of the limping 550-lb. Red Angus-Xs at 90 cents (\$495). The heaviest at the top end of \$1.30 was the ringful of 535-lb. Char-Simms that hadn't seen a bunch of grain (\$695), the 594-lb. Simms sold at \$1.13 (\$671) and a 575-lb. tag-out Char-X with frozen ears stalled at \$1. The whole of Manitoba averaged \$1.25 on the 5s while Alberta was at \$1.29 and Ontario averaged \$1.18.

For 6-weight heifers the \$1.20 bid barely appeared as seven per cent sold in the first couple of cents. That left 79 per cent of the 6s in the dollar-teens and 12 per cent under \$1.10. The fairly-green 619-lb. Red Angus-Xs sold at \$1.22 (\$755), the prime cut of 36-634-lb. Char-Xs near the beginning traded for \$1.17 (\$742), the framey, green 630-lb. all-sorts sold for \$1.13 (\$712) and the short 655-lb. Angus pair brought 93 cents (\$609). On almost 300 head of 7s, they found four per cent worthy of bids over \$1.10, 94 per cent were over the dollar with two per cent selling under. Up top were the 708-lb. Angus-Simms at \$1.12

(\$793), 787-pounders in Simm and Char-Simm colourations brought \$1.06 (\$834) and the framey 705-lb. Simm single sold for 84 cents (\$592).

On the little steers, they had 94 per cent priced above \$1.50. That was divided into 14 per cent over the \$1.60 mark and 80 per cent in the \$1.50s. Under \$1.50 accounted for only six per cent, mostly singles out of the sort. It was a single setting the \$1.68 top as the bidders chased the 350-lb. Char-X (\$588) and the heavier tan package at 488 lbs. brought \$1.52 (\$742). The 482-lb. all-sorts with horns sold at \$1.50 and the stunted 485-lb. Char-Simm-Red Angus bull brought \$1.21 (\$587). Five-weights put 31 per cent in the \$1.40s, 58 per cent in the \$1.30s and 11 per cent under \$1.30. There was the single 535-lb. Angus that hit \$1.50 (\$802) but the bunch in the middle of the upper echelon were the 531-lb. Red Angus-Xs at \$1.45 (\$770). The Simms at 539 lbs. sold for \$1.37 (\$738) and the tans at 588 lbs. sold for \$1.31 (\$770). The framey black and tan packages both traded at the same \$1.28 and the 575-lb. fleshy Herf bull brought \$1.15 (\$661).

On the 6-weight steers it looked like the \$1.20s were buying them all with 83 per cent selling in that price break. But the colour barrier dropped as seven per cent sold into the \$1.30s and up to \$1.43 for one 630-lb. Angus (\$900). A 600-lb. Red Angus was in the middle at \$1.35 (\$810) and then the biggest bunch, 29-627-lb. Simms, Red-Angus-Simms at \$1.27 (\$796). Coarse and fleshy brought the 645-lb. Char-Simm to \$1.11 (\$716) and the droop of the ears had the 600-lb. Char at \$1. Last week the west said the

6s were worth an average of \$1.30 but Ontario had them at \$1.21. A select group of 7s, some 18 per cent were worthy of bids just above \$1.20. They had 55 per cent priced in the dollar-teens and 27 per cent selling under \$1.10. Weights at the top went to 739 lbs. on the Char-Xs right at \$1.20 (\$887) but the peak was 3 cents higher. The 740-lb. Angus-Xs went out the gate at \$1.19 (\$880), some pretty good muscling on the 787-lb. Charand Lim-Xs for \$1.15 (\$905) and the framey discount was applied to the 770-lb. Simmand Salers-Xs at \$1.08 (\$831).

Yearlings: Brandon was siding with the west last week as they had 75 per cent of the 8-weight steers sell in the first three cents of the dollar-teens, another 24 per cent above the buck and one per cent under the dollar on just about 300 head. Red and tans took the premium with the heaviest at \$1.13 being the 838-lb. Char-Simms (\$947) and the 867-lb. Angus-Simms sold for \$1.10 (\$953). There was some butter on the 845-lb. Simm-Xs in black and grey at \$1.04 (\$879) and the staggy Red Angus-X at 815 lbs. sold for 89 cents (\$725). Heifers had 83 per cent selling over the dollar and 17 per cent under as the peak purchase was at \$1.10 for the 840-lb. Angus-Lim (\$924). The big bunch of 833-lb. Red Angus-Simms sold for \$1.04 (\$866), the 850-lb. slightly taller Simms traded for \$1 and the 826-lb. short, fleshy Char-Xs sold for 94 cents (\$776). A possible pregnancy on the 875-lb. Char-X kept her at 70 cents (\$612).

Nine-weight steers had 18 per cent on top of \$1.10, 55 per cent

above a buck and 27 per cent under the dollar. Some green 905-lb. Angus-Simms sold for \$1.11 (\$1004), the British-exotic bunch with some flesh at 915 lbs. sold for \$1.09 (\$997) and the taller 946-lb. Chars settled at 98 cents (\$927). A few heavier ones were just over the dollar and the 1125-lb. red Simm sold for 94 cents (\$1057). The short list of heifers had the 9s mostly in the upper 90s alongside the 960-lb. Simm-Xs at 95 cents (\$912). The 1110-lb. red Simm sold for 84 cents (\$932) but the green 1030-lb. Angus-Simm looking like she was coming two sold at 70 cents (\$721).

Slaughter: Brandon fats had the Choice 1393-lb. steers of many colours selling for 97 cents (\$1351), the 1458-lb. Lim-X steers sold for 93 cents (\$1356) and a well-fed 1555-lb. Angus-Simm was touching the overweight carcass discount at 90 cents (\$1399) alongside the 1230-lb. black Salers heifer with minimal fat cover (\$1107). Alberta averaged 91 cents and Ontario had dropped to just under the dollar.

I had a short page of cows that came to a 31 cent average as most were high-yielding and well-fed. A border-line heiferette, a 1945-lb. fat Simm sold for 35 cents (\$681), the 1615-lb. Simm had fed at least one calf at 32 cents (\$516) and the 1310-lb. Salers-X had weaned a few, carrying just a bit of flesh at 23 cents (\$301). The 1170-lb. Gelbvieh-Simm heifer had interest until 65 cents (\$760) and the 1220-lb. Char-X heifer made progress on the OTM question until 75 cents (\$915).

A 2030-lb. Simm bull brought 26 cents (\$528) and the top of the range ran to 32 cents.

[gnicoll@fiwonline.com](mailto:gnicoll@fiwonline.com)

## Maine-Anjou annual

BY GRANT MOFFAT  
Freelance writer

The Manitoba Maine-Anjou Association annual meeting was held recently in Brandon. Members heard that the largest entry in several years was shown at Manitoba Livestock Expo, with 34 cattle paraded before judge Darin Bouchard of Cypress River.

Shane Michelson of Lipton, Sask. showed both the Grand Champion bull and female in the purebred section of the show. In conjunction with the open show at Manitoba Livestock Expo, the 9th Annual Select-A-Sire competition was held with 32 memberships purchased. Rob Young of Carievale, Sask. was the winner of the draw and was able to select a bull from the four finalists. His pick was a bull owned by Shane Michelson of Lipton, Sask. This bull had also been selected as the People's Choice by the 32 members judging.

The Manitoba Maine-Anjou Association will host the Canadian Annual Meeting on July 29 at the Days Inn in Portage la Prairie. Another event in the planning stage is a Fall Female Sale at Heartland Livestock Yards in Brandon on December 2.

Thirty-six 4-H members

showed Maine-Anjou cattle for their projects in 2005 and a draw was made from all of these members. Brock Friesen of Grunthal was the winner and he won a cash prize of \$400 towards the purchase of a purebred female from any Manitoba breeder.

Jerri Judd and Kandi Underhill have taken over the editorial duties of the association publication, the *Maine Reason*, which is published twice a year. If you are interested in being added to the mailing list, contact Kandi at Box 269, Rapid City, Man. R0K 1W0.

Three new directors were elected to the board — Connie Johnson of Killarney, Ross McBride of Gladstone and Robert Kunzelman of Plumas. They join Sandy Underhill, Rapid City; Lissane Stepler, Miami; Patrick Johnson, Killarney; Sid Wilkinson, Ridgeville; Barry Walker, Plumas and Norm Underhill of Rapid City. A long time Director, Jim Wilson of Lenore, retired from the Board.

At the board meeting following, Norm Underhill of Rapid City was re-elected president. The other executive positions were also re-elected. Sid Wilkinson was re-elected vice-president, Lissanne Stepler as secretary and Sandy Underhill as treasurer.



### Attention Corn Producers Plan to Attend the 36th Annual Corn School & Annual Meeting

February 16 & 17, 2006  
Clarion Hotel, Winnipeg

- Thursday:** Tour of MacDon Industries Ltd.  
Supper - Guest Speaker - Janet Lacroix  
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Art Poppe highlights trip to South Africa
- Friday:** MAFRI Staff:  
Budgeting Nitrogen for 2006  
Insect Management in Corn  
Management Practices that Cost Little Or Nothing Extra  
Weeds to Watch Out For

Jason Voogt - Cargill AgHorizons  
"Not all Fertilizers are Created Equal"

Dr. Hartley Furtan - Ag. Economics U of Sask.  
"Why the Corn Tariffs are Indicative of Problems with Agricultural Policy Design in Canada"

Mike Jubinville, Pro Farmer Canada  
"Market Outlook: Where We Are, How We Got There, Where We Are Going"

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For More Information, a Registration Package or Banquet Tickets Call  
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There will be a \$10.00/person registration fee for the Friday daytime program

# Sheep Market Report

**W**ith slaughter lamb supplies running lower than usual for this time of year packers in eastern Canada are unable to contain the upward pressure while in the west Sunterra is fighting the price trend by killing lambs from its own feedlots.

The good news for producers still holding lambs is that it doesn't look like this price trend is going to reverse anytime soon. Expectations of lamb imports from the U.S. upsetting current Canadian trends have not materialized as yet. They may not happen at all for a number of reasons, financial and regulatory combined with limited volumes of U.S. lambs that meet Canadian market specifications.

In Manitoba, the Winnipeg Livestock Yards had their lamb goat and sheep sale on February 2nd with 240 head on offer. Lambs under 85 pounds traded from \$1.50 to \$1.80 while the heavies, lambs over 85 pounds

brought \$1.20 to \$1.30 per pound. Butcher ewes were still strong trading from 35 to 50 cents a pound with goats, all classes, selling from \$1.20 to \$1.50 a pound.

Leitch Livestock in Brandon is posting very little buying activity as supplies of slaughter and feeders lambs on farms throughout the west dwindle. Those still out in the country in very strong hands capable of feeding what they have to slaughter.

Roy Leitch reports that the volume of trade has dropped in fats and feeders. He is paying \$1.25 to \$1.30 a pound for slaughter ready lambs up to 115 pounds and says there is practically no trade in feeders. Leitch said butcher ewes are bringing 45 cents a pound right now but, "the market is crazy right now and you could see 60 cents on those same ewes," according to Leitch.

Heartland Livestock Manitoba lamb buyer, Tony Atkinson, said he is paying \$1.25 to \$1.30 a pound for fats with feeders going to \$1.35 a pound. He's pricing his butcher-ewe buys in at 40 to 45 cents a pound with kid goats

fetching from \$1.10 to \$1.20. Billies are trading in the 80 to 90 cent a pound range and nannies are bringing 50 to 60 cents.

Another sign that the sheep lambs and goat trade is slow can be seen at the Saskatchewan Sheep Development Board where they've just released their first tender since January 16. The offering on this tender is roughly 180 head of slaughter lambs instead of the usual one or two truck load lots.

In southern Alberta, Michael Dyck takes care of the sheep sales for Fort McLeod Auction and he's reporting fats trading in the \$1.25 range with 80-pound feeders fetching \$1.30 to \$1.40. Right now Dyck is offering forward \$1.45 a pound contracts for December-born lambs to be delivered in March at 70 pounds. Southern Alberta is expanding its lamb production capacity with producers in that area getting back into the business or expanding their flocks.

At a ewe sale in December good bred ewes traded as high \$175 a head with open ewe lambs fetch-

ing up to \$172 with the average trading from \$75 to \$100 a head.

In northern Alberta, Camrose area lamb buyer and feeder Dave Twitchel said people there are still selling their flocks because of the type of wages being offered in the oil patch. This is in spite of strong prices and an increasing price trend for the short term.

Twitchel reports butcher lambs are bringing \$1.23 to \$1.25 with good feeders in the 80-pound range going as high \$1.40 a pound. Butcher ewes are bringing 50 cents.

The Sunterra plant at Innisfail has booked 1100 head for this week's kill at \$2.60 a pound on the rail. Hair sheep lambs are in at \$2.50 on the rail. The posted live weight price runs from \$1.15 to \$1.27. The reason for the large price spread is to allow for quality and breed variances.

Sunterra is still on the market for feeders and is posting \$1.20 to \$1.30 a pound on all weights.

The plant has been booked a week and a half ahead and for the past two weeks has been killing purchased lambs rather than pro-



PETER SCHROEDTER

cessing from Sunterra's own feedlot.

In Cookstown on Monday, the Ontario Stockyards reports some 700 head on offer including 400 western

lambs. Monday's conditions were far from ideal with heavy snowfall keeping some lambs away from the auction.

Last week they had 1500 head including 650 western lambs. The auctioneers called the sale steady to stronger on all classes.

In the 50 to 64 pound class they sold 244 head to hit the \$2.14 a pound average on a prices that ran from \$1.91 to \$2.45

The 65 to 79 pounders had 339 head earning a \$1.89 a pound average on prices that ran from \$1.70 to \$2.15 a pound.

There were 265 head in the 80 to 94 pound division, which sold from \$1.57 to \$1.78 a pound for \$1.69 average and topped at \$2.10 for some fancy 87 pounders.

In the 95 to 109 weight class, the weight that western lambs usually hit the eastern market, there were 148 head and they earned a \$1.71 average on prices ranging from \$1.67 to \$1.75. The heavy lambs, over 109 were lightly tested with 76 head and they averaged \$1.39 with prices going from 98 cents to \$1.62 a pound.

Butcher ewes sold strong enough to earn an 80 cent a pound average on prices going from 74 to 87 cents a pound on 315 head. Goats were lightly tested and they averaged \$2.01 a pound.

All prices quoted from U.S. sources are in American dollars.

Dave Johnson who rides herd on the Equity Co-op's electronic lamb auction in Wisconsin said, "The (American) market is quiet and very, very ugly. Nobody really knows what's going on because there's no more mandatory market reporting. The last time this happened we had the same kind of a wreck back in 2001."

Johnson's prices are stronger than most with 130 to 140 pounders bringing 82 to 85 while lambs over 150 pounds trading at 70 cents.

The news doesn't get better anywhere on the American side of the border. The market is in the tank at Iowa Lamb as well, with heavy slaughter lambs, 150 pounds and up earning 65 to 70 cents. Good lambs, 130 pounders, are also trading lower than expected at 75 to 80 cents.

The prospects for American lamb coming into the Canadian market in numbers large enough to affect prices is limited for two reasons. The first is that importing U.S. feeder lambs requires federally licensed facility.

Importing slaughter weight lambs from the U.S. presents another problem. American lambs, even if they meet the Canadian slaughter weight requirements, are overfat by Canadian standards. This creates a lot of trim and extra work to get the carcass in shape for the Canadian market. That combined with the fact that corn-fed fat is yellow compared to white barley-fed fat makes direct to slaughter imports tricky. Add to that the volume required to buffer current tight supply situations and American lambs do not loom as large a threat to the Canadian lamb market as they did at first blush.

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261-0206

# India buys 500,000 tonnes of wheat

BY HARI RAMACHANDRAN AND NAVEEN THUKRAL

NEW DELHI / REUTERS

India, stung by spiraling domestic prices, last Thursday said it would immediately import 500,000 tonnes of wheat to boost supplies, offset inflationary pressure and ensure food security.

It is the first time since 1999 that the government has resorted to importing duty free wheat through the State Trading Corporation in southern India, where open market prices have been rising in non-wheat producing states.

"Wheat will be imported by the State Trading Corporation only in the southern states. There will be no other imports of wheat except at four southern ports," Farms Minister Sharad Pawar told a news conference, vowing to review the situation by May.

India levies a 70 per cent duty on wheat imports, making it unviable for private traders to import the grain.

"The corporation will execute the decision in a day or two and the wheat will take about 60 days to reach the ports," Pawar said.

Traders had been expecting India, a wheat exporter in recent years, to order imports after grain agencies cut procurement but government officials said they were confident they could get by.

Australia's monopoly wheat exporter AWB Ltd. said in December India might import about one million tonnes of wheat in 2006 to meet supply shortages.

## Correction

**Wiebe family:** Stan Wiebe, a MacGregor-area photographer and farmer farms in partnership with his brother Don Wiebe and his father Ed Wiebe. Incorrect information appeared in last week's paper.

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# U.S. wheat groups support GM

BY CAREY GILLAM

SAN ANTONIO / REUTERS

U.S. wheat groups must actively support the commercialization of genetically modified wheat if the industry is to reverse a decline in wheat acreage and profitability, industry leaders said on Sunday. "We desperately need a solution," said Art Brandli, a member of the Minnesota Wheat Council, speaking to members of the National Association of Wheat Growers at a grain industry conference in San Antonio. "We need higher yields and lower costs."

Syngenta is currently the lead agrosocieties company pursuing a biotech wheat product. The company has been field testing a spring wheat that is resistant to fusarium. But it has been reluctant to push the product toward commercialization after intense market opposition led rival Monsanto to shelve its proposed herbicide-resistant biotech wheat two years ago.

To try to accelerate

Syngenta's research, wheat industry leaders meeting in San Antonio adopted a joint resolution pledging to support Syngenta's work and to "work proactively" to win over food companies and consumers, both within the United States and abroad.

gy. We need to move the technology forward," said Darrell Hanavan, leader of the wheat industry's joint biotech committee.

Syngenta seed brand manager Rob Bruns said Syngenta needed demonstrated support if it was to undertake the costly

NAWG executive director Daren Coppock said his organization also is working closely with Canadian wheat groups to garner support for a simultaneous release in the United States and Canada.

The unity demonstrated in San Antonio was a dramatic shift from the pitched battle that has dogged the industry for years. The key fear in the past was that anti-biotech export customers would boycott U.S. wheat if a genetically modified variety was commercialized.

That fear remains. But the production challenges for wheat have grown to the point that Syngenta's disease-resistant wheat is worth the risk, according to wheat growers,

As well, Syngenta's wheat should have improved milling and baking qualities, which should help boost its marketability, they said.

"There is a huge turnaround in attitudes on biotech wheat. We want to keep pushing this train down the track as fast as we can," said Brandli.

## NAWG... also is working closely with Canadian wheat groups to garner support for a simultaneous release in the United States and Canada.

U.S. Wheat Associates, which markets wheat for export, approved the joint resolution on Saturday, and is preparing marketing materials for a range of top foreign buyers. NAWG, which was expected to adopt the resolution on Tuesday, was working to garner the support of U.S. food companies.

"I think it is important that we have unity on biotechnolo-

mission of moving a genetically modified, fusarium-resistant wheat through the regulatory system to market.

Both Bruns and wheat leaders said they had more work to do, primarily lining up buyers, both foreign and domestic, who will accept biotech wheat, and setting up systems for segregating conventional wheat from transgenic supplies.

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# KAP delegates debate food tax to bolster farmers

BY ALLAN DAWSON  
FIW staff

**R**esolutions are always a big part of the Keystone Agricultural Producers' (KAP) annual meeting.

Despite tough times some farmers still have a sense of humour. The last resolution passed at KAP's 22nd annual meeting January 27 speaks to just how difficult it is to fill out Canadian Agricultural Income Stabilization (CAIS) program forms. Starbuck-area farmer Brad Rasmussen moved a resolution to change the name of the CAIS supplementary forms to Sudoku — the challenging puzzle that appears in many newspapers, including *Farmers' Independent Weekly*. The motion was carried without further debate.

Given all the flooding last summer, not surprisingly three resolutions passed deal with drainage. KAP wants the Manitoba government to prevent damage to farmland caused by excess untimely flooding as a result of a lack of government planning. It also wants the Manitoba Department of Water Stewardship to design a drain maintenance program for all provincial drains and a comprehensive provincial water management strategy involving federal, provincial, and municipal governments.

Other resolutions:

- That KAP revisit mandatory membership for all agricultural producers in Manitoba.

- That KAP lobby government for the choice of Olympic average (three of five) or last three years within CAIS, whatever works better for the individual and that the calculation be done annual.

- That KAP lobby for policies that make Manitoba farm products a preferred source for ethanol and other green energy plants.

- That KAP support PMRA's Own Use Import Program regulations for importing equivalent chemicals from another country.

- That KAP lobby the federal government for a cash advance program for anything grown or raised on the farm.

- That KAP lobby the Canadian government, through the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, to ensure any changes to the CWB negotiated at the WTO be implemented only at the end of the implementation period to allow the CWB to make the changes necessary to benefit farmers.

- That KAP ask Premier Doer to ensure Manitoba Conservation, Manitoba Water Stewardship and Manitoba Agriculture, Food & Rural Initiatives do a complete cost analysis to determine how, or if, the proposed phosphorus and water quality management zone regulations should be implemented and share the results with producers before adoption and ask Doer to ensure these departments work with the agricultural industry so farmers won't be forced out of business or to incur large expenses.

- That KAP question the assessment branch about using the wrong factor number in determining tax assessments on farmland, lobby to get an appeal process and the ombudsman or auditor to investigate how widespread the miscalculation is.

- That KAP lobby the federal

and provincial governments for a program to cover living costs for rural students attending post-secondary education in urban centers.

- That KAP approach the Manitoba government to pay a higher price for electricity generated by smaller (less than 10 MW) renewable energy production units.

- That KAP ask the Manitoba Agricultural Services Corporation to review its grading system because of major differences between its grades and market grades.

- That KAP support the Canadian Corn Producers' efforts to persuade the federal government to commence WTO dispute settlement proceedings regarding the illegality of U.S. grain subsidies in light of a) the expiry of the so-called 'peace clause' and b) the recent WTO dispute settlement reports in the Upland Cotton complaint, which found several U.S. subsidy programs, which also apply to corn, violate U.S. WTO obligations.



ALLAN DAWSON

**KAP VOTING:** Hands high: KAP delegates passed 34 resolutions during their 22nd annual meeting in Winnipeg January 25 to 27.



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HERMINA JANZ

**THE VIEW:** Trees overhanging this farm gate make a beautiful frame for the distant horizon.

# KAP debates food tax to bolster farmers

BY ALLAN DAWSON  
*FIW staff*

**A** food tax to solve the farm income problem? Delegates at the Keystone Agricultural Producers' (KAP) annual meeting in Winnipeg last month debated three dozen resolutions, but that one took up the most time. After several amendments the resolution was deferred to a KAP committee for more study.

Last fall a discussion paper prepared for the Agricultural Institute of Canada (AIC) said a seven per cent tax on grocery store sales alone would generate an estimated \$3.3 billion, but only cost consumers 0.02 per cent of their disposable income.

**"There is something wrong here. Something has to be done."**

— ROBERT JACOBSON

Starbuck-area farmer Ed Rempel said he likes the food tax idea, but said "this will never fly in a thousand years." And if it did farmers would never get any other government support.

Ray Pelletier of the Dairy Farmers of Canada warned a food tax could drive consumers to buy groceries in the United States.

Taxing food will affect farmers, who are also consumers, said Barbara Stienwandt of the Women's Institute.

Souris-area farmer Walter Finlay said if the tax raises \$3.3 million, farmers won't need other government payments. Tax credits could be used to compensate low-income consumers for higher food prices, he said.

Robert Jacobson of the Manitoba Pork Council said out of a \$25 restaurant meal, the farmer gets only a couple of bucks, while the server expects a \$5 tip.

"There is something wrong here," Jacobson said. "Something has to be done."

Later in the meeting, Canadian Federation of Agriculture president Bob Friesen and agricultural economist Ed Tyrchniewicz were for their views on boosting farm income by taxing food. Friesen said Canadian consumers have the lowest food costs in the world and can afford to pay more.

Tyrchniewicz said given the new Conservative government has promised to cut the Goods and services Tax (GST), it's unlikely it will start taxing food.

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1005-2090-086-02A



**MORE STRAW, PLEASE:** Longer fibres are desirable if flax is used to make linen

There are ways you can get more fibre in your flax — or not

## High-fibre flax straw may have market potential

BY LAURA RANCE  
FIW staff

**H**aving more fibre in their flax straw isn't exactly high on most producers' priority list.

But what if that fibre content opened up new opportunities to add value to the crop that is mostly grown in Canada for its oilseed qualities?

That's the premise behind an Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada research program into the agronomics behind increasing the fibre content of oilseed flax crops.

Byron Irvine, the Brandon scientist heading up the research team, readily admits the supply of fibre from the 500,000 to 1 million hectares flax grown in Western Canada annually currently vastly exceeds the demand.

Only about 20 per cent is currently processed for its fibre. Much of the remainder is burned. But producing flax for fibre used in linens and cotton-fabric blends is a big industry in Europe.

Companies currently buying flax for fibre in Canada have recently implemented near infrared spectroscopy (NIR) technology that allows them to select straw with a high fibre content.

"We've been caught way too many times with some company coming in wanting to set up and wanting to grow this stuff and we don't know what we're doing," Irvine said.

Besides, a better understanding of the agronomic factors that contribute to more fibre production can also be used in reverse, he noted. "If they wanted to have less fibre then they sow at a little bit lower seeding rate, they sow it earlier in the year," Irvine said.

Seeding rates, seeding dates

both have an impact on the crop's fibre yield, but the research is showing row spacing does not. "This is a positive for producers since they can use their existing seeding system without sacrificing seed or yield," he told a recent science workshop in Brandon.

Researchers used three varieties, Flanders, Taurus and the European fibre variety Evelyn.

Fibre content is not affected by seeding rate, but higher seeding rates increase stem numbers, reduced stem size and reduced the variability of stem size. "Finer stems, with lower variation in stem size, are likely to result in more uniform retting (conversion to fibre) and improved fibre quality," he said.

**"We've been caught way too many times with some company coming in wanting to set up and wanting to grow this stuff and we don't know what we're doing."**

— BYRON IRVINE

### Lodging concerns

As well, in a wet season, such as 2004, higher seeding rates resulted in increased fibre yield. But it had little impact in a drier season, such as 2003.

Higher seeding rates also tend to increase lodging potential so some cultivars that are prone to lodging should be avoided.

Increasing the seeding rate from 40 kilograms per ha to 120 kg per ha didn't increase in the seed yield, Irvine said. Seeding rates as high as 80 kilograms per ha would likely produce high yields of seed and fibre of acceptable quality, he said.

Delaying seeding until the end of May increased fibre yields in the research trials by 35 per cent. While there was no corresponding drop in seed yield in the AAFC study, Irvine said other research has found a link to reduced seed yield at later seeding dates.

Irvine said the climatic conditions and the types of cultivars suited to Western Canada make it unlikely this region will ever pursue flax fibre production for the linen industry.

The European cultivars used for linen are taller and produce long-line fibre. However, Irvine said there is potential for the type of fibre quality produced in Canadian flaxseed to use in cotton blends. "Natural fibres are becoming more important. Cotton is a major world crop," he said.

Irvine said there is work breeders can do to improve the fibre content of existing oilseed varieties to some extent without sacrificing yield. But at that point, the challenge becomes managing agronomy and selection techniques to expand the market potential.

The way he envisages it, the selection process could work similar to how malt barley is selected. "Barley is barley, but with malt barley you tweak it a little. You do what you can to optimize your chances of getting selected," he said.

Or pricing for flax straw could be indexed according to the fibre quality and content.

Increasing the market potential for flax straw could combine with efforts to increase the food and feed markets for the oilseed to make flax a more competitive choice for Prairie farmers, he said.

"It would sure be nice to do something other than to burn it," he said.

lrance@fiwonline.com

## New study to help battle with blackleg

WGRF RELEASE

Helping western Canadian canola growers win the long-term battle with blackleg is the goal of a new, three-year study supported by the Endowment Fund, administered by Western Grains Research Foundation (WGRF).

The study will build a new base of knowledge on changing populations of the pathogen that causes blackleg. This will allow producers to better select canola varieties that have resistance to the pathogen types of most concern to their specific growing area. It will also fuel the development of new varieties that have better resistance against the ever-shifting pathogen population.

"There are many commercial varieties available to growers that have some form of resistance to blackleg, but the pathogen population has evolved to the point that there are now at least several strains in isolated areas of Western Canada that show the ability to overcome this resistance," explains Dr. Roger Rimmer, leader of the study. "We do not know what the basis of resistance is in most cultivars. Thus, these new strains will potentially be damaging on some cultivars but probably not all. To avoid losses, we need the ability to define and monitor the different types of the pathogen that are out there."

**"...the pathogen population has evolved to the point that there are now at least several strains in isolated areas of Western Canada that show the ability to overcome this resistance"**

Blackleg, caused by the pathogen *L. maculans*, is the most important disease of *Brassica napus* canola worldwide, says Rimmer. Currently, about 100 blackleg-resistant cultivars of canola are registered in Canada, but the genetic basis of the resistance in individual cultivars is unknown. With new types of the pathogen now prevalent in Western Canada and showing virulence on some forms of the resistance, researchers need a better understanding of both the



CANOLA COUNCIL

**BLACKLEG LEAF LESIONS:** Research will help identify the genetic basis for resistance

pathogen populations and the types of resistance available.

"This knowledge will help maintain the economic viability of canola production by providing farmers with better information on which cultivars to select for production in their location," says Rimmer.

To date, research to define and monitor the types of the blackleg pathogen present in Western Canada was done using a pathogen-based or "PG" system. The particular system used was based on testing with two cultivars known to have resistance to four different pathogen types.

"The challenge with this system is that it only discriminates between four types of the pathogen - PG2, PG3, PG4 and PGT - all of which occur in all or some of the canola growing regions of the Prairies," says Rimmer. "However, genetic analysis here and elsewhere has identified nine genes for resistance that occur in *Brassica napus*. These defined genes can be used to develop a more informative system for describing the pathogenicity of populations of the blackleg pathogen in Western Canada."

As part of the project, Rimmer and colleagues plan to develop canola lines that exhibit each of the nine forms of single-gene resistance to blackleg. "Developing single gene differential lines will provide materials to evaluate more precisely the resistance in new cultivars."

The Endowment Fund has supported over 200 innovative crop research projects since its inception in 1983. It is administered by WGRF, a farmer-directed organization that represents 18 diverse agricultural organizations in Western Canada.

[www.westerngrains.com](http://www.westerngrains.com)

The longer the flooding, the more likely the nutrients will move

# Increased P from waterlogged soils

BY LAURA RANCE  
FIW staff

**W**aterlogged soils undergo chemistry changes that can make them prone to releasing elevated levels of phosphorus into surface waters, a University of Manitoba soil chemist told the Manitoba Soil Science Society last week.

Gaza Racz said changes in the soil pH levels when soil becomes anaerobic (lacking oxygen) could lead to the release of phosphorus in a soluble form. Soil pH drops in alkaline or calcareous soils, which in turn makes minerals such as phosphorus and minor elements more mobile.

"The longer the flooding, the more phosphorus will come from that soil into surface water," he said.

That's an environmental concern, particularly in situations where lighter classes of land are drained and pushed into production of crops that require high applications of inputs, such as potatoes or corn — crops which also perform poorly



**NO OXYGEN:** A change in pH of flooded soils increases likelihood of phosphorus leaching.

under excessively wet conditions.

Racz said the risk of nutrient losses due to denitrification and leaching are more pronounced on soils prone to excessively wet conditions.

"We do have lower classes of land which even if we drain

that way may not produce consistently good crop yields because we are going to get wetness in those soils more often than in our better class soils," he said.

"Soils, particularly those with high soil test phosphorus and relatively large amounts of

phosphorous bound with nitrogen release substantial amounts of phosphorus to overlying waters," he said. "Nitrate can be leached to groundwater or transported to the atmosphere as nitrous oxide, which is a greenhouse gas."

Racz said those soils would present a lower environmental risk if they are devoted to forage and crops that can better withstand wet soils. "I put a question mark out there: should we really be draining a lot of these soils particularly trying to make them suitable for crops such as corn or potatoes?"

Racz said soil tests will do a good job of telling farmers what has happened to their nitrogen availability in the wake of a waterlogged period. But they are less accurate at predicting available phosphorus and minor elements.

"Soil tests for nitrogen potassium and sulfur give us a good idea of what's there now and if the soil undergoes a period of wetness," he said. "Those tests will also tell us what's left."

"For phosphorus and the minor elements as the soil becomes more aerobic the availability of those nutrients will change and I don't have much faith that if we took a soil test that it's going to predict what's going to happen two weeks from now if the soil gets wet or it gets very dry."

lrance@fiwonline.com

## Dutch farmers, feed makers angry at dioxin incident

BY ANNA MUDEVA

AMSTERDAM / REUTERS

Dutch farmers and feed makers expressed anger on Monday over contamination of feed with the carcinogen dioxin, saying measures should be taken to prevent such problems that damage the industry's image.

Hundreds of pig farms, including a handful which also raise chickens, were still quarantined in the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany as authorities probe levels of dioxin in feed and meat after toxins were found in Belgian pork fat ingredients.

It is the latest contamination problem to hit Europe after a similar case in 2004, when dioxin, a class of chemicals widely used in industrial processes, was found in Dutch

potato feed. "This incident has an impact not only on the quarantined farms, but the whole livestock breeding industry. Sales are stagnating as a result of import bans... and damage to trade is rising rapidly," the main Dutch farmers' organization LTO said in a statement.

"The damage to our reputation is also considerable. This is not acceptable for us," it said.

South Korea banned pork meat from Belgium and the Netherlands, one of the world's top meat exporters, some two weeks ago when news about the dioxin contamination first broke.

LTO said the existing rules on controlling animal feed were not enough to guarantee their safety and urged the Dutch feed makers association Nevedi to come up with a pro-

posal soon on how to prevent future incidents.

Contaminated feed has triggered several west European food scares such as the discovery of dioxin in Dutch potato animal feed in 2004, an illegal hormone in Dutch pigs in 2002 and a 1999 Belgian scandal of dioxin in chickens.

Authorities have said that the dioxin in the latest incident got into Belgian pork fat ingredients used to make animal feed in October. It was discovered and announced in late January.

Belgian food safety officials have said the contamination was caused by broken filters which led to the use of unfiltered ingredients to extract pig fat from the process of making gelatine at Belgian firm PB Gelatins.

## Product Update

### Everest — new package, renamed supplier

Arysta Life Science has announced new packaging for additional ease of handling, measuring and mixing Everest herbicide. It now comes in a convenient re-closable 567-gram plastic jug. Each jug treats 50 acres at the 11.5 grams per acre rate, with each case of 10 jugs treating 500 acres at the same rate.

Everest, a post-emergent herbicide for spring wheat, controls multiple flushes of green foxtail and wild oats, and has activity on broadleaf weeds including redroot pigweed, wild mustard, stinkweed, volunteer canola (non-Clearfield varieties) and green smartweed.

Everest is now being marketed under the name of its global parent company, Arysta LifeScience. Arysta, operating in more than 100 countries, previously operated under separate names including Arvesta Corporation, Calliope, Hokko do Brasil and Arysta.

Arysta LifeScience is the world's largest privately-held crop protection and life science company with 2004 revenues of US\$1 billion. [www.arystalifescience.com](http://www.arystalifescience.com).

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# Marketing

BY BRENDA TJADEN LEPP

## Be aware of price variability

Over the course of the past few years we've seen growth in the disturbingly high variability between the various buyers of Prairie crops. This has made it critical to be as thorough as possible in looking for the best price before deciding who to sell your crops to before pulling the trigger. We regularly find the difference between the lowest and the highest bid on the same day, sometimes even within the same town, to be about 50 cents/bu. Variability is wider in some markets than others, but the problem exists in marketing virtually all grain, oilseed, pulses and special crops.

This is a problem for farmers for two reasons: such wide variability makes the job of successful marketing more difficult, simply since you have to call literally every possible buyer every time you're considering a sale, or else risk leaving a significant amount of money on the table. And the time and effort it takes to hunt down the best bid comes at a cost — your time is not free, and the job is rarely done perfectly.

This variability also underscores the lack of transparency in Prairie cash markets, which is a different sort of problem. With such a range of prices trading in the market at any given time, one has to wonder why doesn't the lowest bidder hit the higher bidder's price? And if the grain is able to be bought at a lower price, why doesn't the higher bidder sweep up the grain offered at the low bids? This would first lower all prices, but then lift the overall market to the higher bid, in the process creating a more tractable and logical series of price signals.

Such price action might be more volatile, but that is less problematic than variability. The former begets marketing risk, but also opportunity, whereas the latter only creates more work for farmers trying to achieve the highest possible price for their crops.

One also has to wonder what's going on in a 'market' with such wide static variability between spot bids. If trading occurred

between the highest and the lowest bidders, again in the same basic regions during the same delivery windows, the spreads should collapse, resulting in an overall less variable, more logical/tractable market-clearing price. That they don't begs the question, why do these traders behave so irrationally?

Irrational buyers can't be trusted, nor the signals that come through their bids, hence the quality of the pricing information farmers face in highly variable markets is worse than it would be in a functioning, more transparent marketplace. Good market information is essential for farmers with the goal of planning and managing sales effectively.

### Ag Days price discovery

Theory aside, price variability has immediate practical lessons for farm marketers too. Consider the examples below that came to light recently at Saskatoon's Crop Production Days and Brandon's Ag Days last month. With most buyers present at these shows, posting bids at their booths, and thousands of farmers roaming around considering them all day long, these trade shows seem to more closely resemble a proper cash market than any other venue that exists today!

At Ag Days, two Manitoba companies were bidding \$7.25-7.30/bu for spot flax. At the same time, southern Manitoba elevators' average posted bids were in the \$6-6.15/bu area. Theoretically, it can be said that the loss of the flax futures contract and the growing number of buyers in this market, for a widening range of end use applications, makes this arguably the most difficult market to discover the price in these days. But practically, it also means that if you chose to sell 20,000 bushels of your flax to an elevator that week you left about \$25,000 on the table.

Less complex markets also seem to be becoming more variable, feed grains in particular. On any given day, the variability in feed wheat and barley bids between mills, colonies, elevators and brokers is about 70 cents/bu. A few years ago, it would have probably been more like 30-40 cents.

There was a rumour floating around at Crop Production Days in Saskatoon that a few growers had contracted new-crop Kabuli chickpeas for 35-40 cents. But no forward contracts are being offered by the buyers we had time to call this week, and price surveys show new-crop large-calibre chickpeas valued at around 30 cents during the week of the show.

A canola crusher during Ag Days was bidding \$11/tonne over the futures while neighbouring grain companies' bids were at least \$10/tonne under. This, too is explainable based on the mechanisms each different type of buyer uses to come up with its daily bids. A crusher works back from the oil and the meal, whereas an elevator can only pay the equivalent of what Chinese importers will pay. But it is still not logical and more importantly it creates a significant risk to farmers trying to achieve the highest possible price.

Also with Board grains, the marketing of which is supposed to create equitable pricing for all producers, similar cases of variable pricing opportunities are on the rise. Through the use of trucking premiums and blending upgrades, companies are able to artificially inflate the value to certain producers and effectively compete for deliveries of crops for which there is not supposed to be a cash market. As the debate surrounding the implementation of the new government's commitment to 'open-up' the 'market' for wheat and barley grows louder in the weeks and months ahead, let's not be deluded that competition for these crops doesn't already exist.

All of this is to say that it always pays to shop around. The recent weeks' brief 'market price discovery' opportunities provide a good \$1/bu reminder of why it's important every time you make a sale to find and talk to every possible buyer before pulling the trigger.



BRENDA TJADEN LEPP

## Wheat prices up last week

BY JULIE INGWERSEN

REUTERS

U.S. wheat futures last week had staged a rally over the previous two weeks on a mix of bullish fundamental factors and an infusion of speculative money from commodity index funds, and it might not be over yet.

"From a fundamental point of view, the upside is going to be determined by what happens in the next 30 to 45 days, weather-wise," Prudential Financial analyst Shawn McCambridge said.

Futures are finding support from drought in parts of the U.S. Plains hard wheat belt, which has raised concerns among traders about tight stocks at a time of strong export demand for U.S. hard wheat, notably from new buyers such as Iraq.

The run-up in prices has been pronounced in the Kansas City and Minneapolis hard wheat markets, where the front-month contracts each traded above \$4 a bushel last week for the first time since mid-2004. The Kansas City March contract climbed to a new high on Thursday at \$4.05.

Wheat prices got a jolt on Jan. 12 when the U.S. Department of Agriculture reported a 1 per cent drop in U.S. seedings of hard red winter wheat, when the trade expected an increase.

The data magnified the impact of a drought that has expanded in the southern U.S. Plains HRW belt this winter, punctuated by wildfires in Texas and Oklahoma.

As a result, the spread, or difference in price, between hard wheat futures on the Kansas City Board of Trade and soft wheat futures on the Chicago Board of Trade has been widening. The premium for KCBT new-crop July wheat over CBOT July wheat closed at 38-1/2 cents last Thursday, up from 10-1/4 cents three months ago.

"The slam-dunk trade we've had in the wheat market for the

past six months, certainly the last three months, has been the hard wheat/soft wheat spreads. Folks have made a lot of money at it," said grains analyst James Barnett of Man Global Research.

On the demand side, the market has been buoyed by the emergence of Iraq as a key buyer of U.S. wheat.

Iraq's Board of Grain tendered last week for 1 million tonnes of wheat. As of Thursday, the market was awaiting the results, with the United States and Australia seen as the likely suppliers. Australia was Iraq's primary wheat supplier under the regime of Saddam Hussein.

Wheat futures got another big boost last week from a fresh infusion of money from commodity index funds. These types of funds, which act as a hedge against other investments such as stocks, have become a hot trend in the past few years.

CBOT wheat surged last week after Deutsche Bank announced it would launch a fund that would track its Deutsche Bank Liquid Commodity Index *DBLCI*. The fund is the first commodity index fund to be listed on the American Stock Exchange.

Like other commodity indexes, the *DBLCI* is derived from prices in a "market basket" of commodities, in this case including wheat, corn, energies and metals.

"Whoever decides to buy into this index, they're going to buy a certain package of commodities. They don't care what price it is. They're just looking to buy a basket of commodities," Barnett said. "They don't care that it's dry in the Plains. It's not even an issue for them," he said.

The new investment has helped lift open interest in CBOT wheat to record levels this week, reaching a high of 349,250 contracts after Tuesday's close.

## Cold concerns in East Europe

BY EWA KRUKOWSKA

WARSAW / REUTERS

Milder weather offered relief for east European grain crops last week, but worries about winter sowings persist, analysts said.

A cold spell last month damaged as much as 20 per cent of Romania's wheat and Bulgaria's barley, preliminary estimates show, and threatened Hungarian and German crops lacking the snow cover that usually offers protection against frost.

This week temperatures have risen, briefly easing farmers' worries about further damage to yields, but transport in many parts of the region remained disrupted after January's big freeze.

Grain producers are bracing for another nervous week as weather forecasts signal another wave of freezing weather in several parts of the region.

"The sudden dry frost may

cause problems for cereals, though probably not to a significant extent," Andras Pasztohy, a state secretary in Hungary's Agriculture Ministry, told Reuters last week.

"The danger is not over yet," he said.

Hungary, where freezing temperatures were compounded by partly frozen water left standing on some 40,000-45,000 hectares of land sown with grain, has yet to estimate the extent of damage.

Black Sea states, including Romania with an estimated 6.0-6.5 million tonnes of wheat output, are also waiting to assess crop losses.

"Many fields are still frozen. We can accurately estimate potential losses in late February," a Romanian farm ministry analyst said.

Bulgaria's agriculture ministry estimates that up to 100 per cent of rapeseed sowings could be frozen, but the recent warming and melting snow helped to water the dry ground.

While winter sowings in Poland, Slovakia and the Czech Republic survived the frosts without major damage thanks to a thick snow layer, the heavy snow and freezing weather impeded transport and pushed prices in some regions slightly higher in recent weeks.

## Commodities boom has years to run

BY NIGEL HUNT

LONDON / REUTERS

The boom in commodities prices still has "a good few years to run" with gold, base metals and even uranium prices among those set to climb further, the manager of a new commodity fund said in an interview.

"There are great benefits to holding commodities. The bull run began in 2000... and there are a good few years to run on this," said Jeremy Charlesworth, Alternative Investment Strategy Director for BDO Stoy Hayward Investment Management Ltd.

The TRF Commodity Plus Fund, launched on February 1, will invest predominantly in physical commodities and futures but also put money in some related equities.

"There is a uranium story at

the moment and the only way to make an investment play is to buy uranium (companies) shares so we will have some equity investments," he said, noting the revival of interest in nuclear power was boosting uranium prices.

Charlesworth said precious metals were also an attractive option for the fund. Gold rose to a 25-year high last week and silver climbed to a 19-year peak on Friday.

"On precious metals I think we have only just seen the beginning," he said.

Base metals such as copper were also seen continuing to rise, boosted by growing demand linked to industrial development in China and India, Charlesworth said.

"That story is going to run and run and run," he noted.

Copper and zinc prices on the London Metal Exchange rose to all-time highs on Thursday.

Charlesworth also cited sugar as another market with upside potential, boosted by growing demand for ethanol as a petrol substitute. Ethanol is often produced from sugar cane.

"The ethanol story is getting bigger and bigger," he said.

White sugar futures in London rose to a 15-year high last month while raw sugar futures in New York climbed to a 25-year peak.

In contrast, grain prices still remain comparatively depressed, he noted.

"By any measure they are dirt cheap," he said, noting it was not yet clear what the catalyst would be for a run-up in grain markets, with increased Chinese buying one possibility.



**LIA"BEE"LITY?** A downturn in the forage seed industry has seen a leafcutter bee enterprise turn into a necessary pollination liability instead of a saleable asset.

Tough times in all sectors adds grief for forage seed producers

## Offshore forage seed dilution concern

BY GLEN NICOLL  
FIW contributor

If you were thinking of seeding down a field of annual rye grass for seed production, you better have bought the seed and signed the contract by now said Leslie Jacobson, president of the Manitoba Forage Seed Association (MFA).

Too many grain farmers searching for an alternative crop has led to oversupply in the forage seed business, adding to woes created by the collapse of a large American seed company and BSE-stressed livestock producers cutting back on replanting forage stands.

After a couple of seasons of poor summer weather, especially in Manitoba, producers are still sitting on some bins of seeds that they have been reluctant to sell at the going rate. Companies feeling the pinch of slower sales have been reluctant to own inventory that they might not be able to move so the seed supply pipeline intake has been plugged right at the bin, Jacobson says.

Farmer-to-farmer sales have even been slowed considerably by the BSE-caused losses in the cattle business. The queen of forages, alfalfa, has lost sales as the corn breeders come up with varieties that need fewer heat units. Jacobson says that is the competition on forage acres said Jacobson. Silage crops of corn with yields that can be up to eight times more than that of alfalfa, or cows that are harvesting their own feed in the winter as standing corn have crimped the demand for alfalfa seed he said.

The number of Manitoba forage seed producers fluctuates with rotations in cropped land but checkoff data says there is an average of about 600 producers.

### Left out of program

Along with the drop in market price for their production, the association is fighting for recognition under the federal program that was announced as help for all crop producers. Jacobson said that forage seed production isn't even listed under the special crops section that includes soybeans and canary seed.

"They are saying that forage seed is excluded because it is not in there on the original communiqué out of Ottawa and it

wasn't in the last one either. Nobody is going to get rich on this thing but our producers just keep getting overlooked," Jacobson said.

The federal exclusion was also evident on the expert committees that were set up to relay the producer research needs back to Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada administrators. Forage seed production was lumped in with hog and cattle production.

### Import threat

One seed producer and marketer wants to see the trade tighten up due diligence for the good of the whole industry. With companies trying to find the dropping price point where seed will be bought, there could be a temptation to bring in lower-priced offshore production. Paul Gregory of Interlake Forage Seeds says those imports are seeds from varieties that have not been proven in Western Canada.

A seed company can buy pedigreed seed from a grower with its accompanying declaration from the Canadian Seed Growers Association. If a producer doesn't fill in the weight of the production from that field, seed from just about anywhere can be blended in under a scheme called "buying paper." Gregory said there could be a profit motive of about a dollar per pound from seed coming from offshore. The livestock or hay producer that uses the seed could have a pretty sparse field when that imported variety doesn't make the first winter.

Common seed sales in Canada have no legal requirement to prove that they are viable in the area and by law they cannot be attributed to any specific variety.

"(Seed) producers can sell to the highest bidder but they need to be conscientious and put the weight down on the crop declaration or they are going to kill the (seed) trade," Gregory said.

The check in the system is that the tagged lot of seed from that field matches what might be reasonable production. A laboratory check using gel chromatography to confirm the RNA (ribonucleic acid) of a specific variety of plant is possible but it is not done as a matter of course.

Jacobson said that the forage seed companies are telling him that the offshore product hasn't been brought in this year.

[gnicoll@fiwonline.com](mailto:gnicoll@fiwonline.com)

## CWB funds research to fight fusarium in barley

### CWB RELEASE

The Canadian Wheat Board has committed \$300,000 to assist scientists in the fight against fusarium head blight in barley.

"Fusarium is one of farmers' worst disease problems, costing them tens of millions of dollars a year in crop damage," said Ken Ritter, chair of the CWB's farmer-controlled board of directors, which approved the three-year funding. "The more resistant we can make our barley, the better for farmers' bottom line."

The CWB has supported research in barley at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) cereal research centre in Brandon, Manitoba since 2004. The new funding for the Brandon Research Centre is contingent on matching support

from other sources. So far, funding has also been committed by AAFC's Matching Investment Initiative and the Crop Development Centre at the University of Saskatchewan, supported by Saskatchewan's Agriculture Development Fund.

Lead project scientist, Dr. Bill Legge, said program funding to date, including CWB contributions, has resulted in increased capacity for barley nurseries and more testing for deoxynivalenol (DON), which is the mycotoxin produced by this disease.

"Increased capacity improves the accuracy of our tests and, therefore, improves the accuracy in selecting and advancing fusarium-resistant lines of barley," said Dr. Legge.

Ritter said financial sup-

port from farmers through the CWB demonstrates the importance western Canadian farmers place on research that can improve market prospects for their crops.

In the past year, the CWB has also provided major support for grain storage research at the University of Manitoba, as well as research into food use of barley at the University of Alberta. In addition, the CWB has partnered in the establishment of a new technical and training centre in Beijing, which cements an important wheat and barley marketing relationship with China. Funds for these initiatives are not derived from Prairie farmers' pooled returns, but sourced from an account that holds farmers' cheques left uncashed after six years.

### Public Meetings

## Creating Opportunities – Adding Value in Rural and Northern Manitoba

Over the next several weeks, a committee made up of private citizens and an MLA will travel across the province to consult with Manitobans on how to develop more value-added opportunities in rural and northern Manitoba.

This is your opportunity to share your ideas on value-added business opportunities that will create wealth and employment in rural and northern Manitoba. It's also your chance to share your ideas on overcoming the barriers to making valued-added opportunities work using the products and assets available in your region.

Take advantage of this opportunity to make yourself heard by attending a session.

### Mark your calendar

#### Souris

**Date:** Thursday, February 16  
**Time:** 9 a.m. - noon  
**Location:** Souris & Glenwood Memorial Complex, Kirkup Lounge 32- 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue West

#### Shoal Lake

**Date:** Thursday, February 16  
**Time:** 2 p.m. – 5 p.m.  
**Location:** Shoal Lake Community Hall 315 The Drive

#### Gladstone

**Date:** Friday, February 17  
**Time:** 9 a.m. – noon  
**Location:** Gladstone Elks Hall 41 Morris Avenue North

#### Ste. Anne

**Date:** Tuesday, February 21  
**Time:** 9 a.m. – noon  
**Location:** Club Jovial, 157 Central Avenue

**Note:** This will be a bilingual meeting. Simultaneous English/French translation will be available.

#### Morden

**Date:** Wednesday, February 22  
**Time:** 2 p.m. – 5 p.m.  
**Location:** Morden Recreation Centre Hall 111 Gilmour St

#### Ashern

**Date:** Thursday, March 2  
**Time:** 2 p.m. – 5 p.m.  
**Location:** Ashern Legion Hall 3 Main Street East

### For more information

For more information on these meetings or to make a written submission, please contact your local Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives GO office or visit us online at [manitoba.ca](http://manitoba.ca)

**Manitoba**   
Building for the Future

A few minutes of observation can help with research on the health of the North American bird population

## Counting the real snowbirds

BY DONNA GAMACHE  
Freelance writer

If you have a bird feeder in your backyard and enjoy watching chickadees, woodpeckers and nuthatches come and go, you might be interested in taking part in the "Great Backyard Bird Count," scheduled this year for February 17-20.

This is the eighth year of the annual four-day count throughout North America. It started slowly but has been growing steadily, and this year's count is expected to be bigger than ever. In 2005, over 50,000 checklists were submitted from all across North America, with a total of 613 species sighted. The total bird count was over 6.5 million.

**The 2005 Manitoba results included six bald eagles, 10 great horned owls and 213 ravens.**

The GBBC operates through the Internet at [www.bird-source.org/gbbc/](http://www.bird-source.org/gbbc/), with bird-watchers e-mailing checklists of the birds they have seen. Those who want to take part should check this site out in detail beforehand.

Although many submissions are from those watching backyard feeders, the "backyard" title is somewhat of a misnomer, since some people obviously counted birds that aren't in anyone's yard. The 2005 Manitoba results included six bald eagles, 10 great horned owls and 213 ravens. But if you want to make your count while walking or driving, you should cover less than one mile.

Birdwatchers may count on one or all four days, using as many different locations as they wish, but they should submit separate records for each day and each location. Counting should be for a minimum of 15 minutes a day, preferably for



**COLOURFUL VISITOR:** The warm weather has also prompted some birds to cancel their usual trip south this winter. Cardinals are among the sightings reported at the Manitoba birds website <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/manitobabirds/>. Photos of many species can be seen at [www.birdsofmanitoba.com](http://www.birdsofmanitoba.com)

half an hour or more, but watchers should record only the highest number of individual birds that are in view at one time (so that the same birds are not recorded over and over.)

Reports may be submitted on each day if desired, and are updated almost as soon as submitted. Thus ongoing results can be studied, and a participant's count will show up shortly after it is sent in. Statistics are

shown on charts, as well as both regional and species maps.

For instance, type in "Manitoba" and "American robin" and you can learn that in 2005, only one robin was sighted in Manitoba during the count days in the Winnipeg region. In 2004, four robins were counted in the town of Binscarth.

I found the charts listing the localities especially interesting — 210 checklists from Manitoba

in 2005, including 62 from Winnipeg, 11 from Portage la Prairie (with 17 species, one of which was a northern cardinal!), and one from MacGregor (my submission) with nine species. For avid birders, there is a lot of information to be gleaned from these charts. We learn that 56 species were seen in Manitoba, with a total of 12,287 birds. The top five species were: common redpoll (4,689), house sparrow

(1,311), pine grosbeak (899), rock dove (878), and pine siskin (652).

The GBBC website has other useful maps and information, as well. Snow depth maps are used to determine how much snow affects the distribution of birds. For instance, it appears that robin distribution depends more on the amount of snow cover than on north/south distance. Even a light dusting of the white stuff results in a big decrease in their numbers.

There's a top 10 list for all of North America for the "Most Frequently Reported Birds" (won by the northern cardinal), and a top 10 list of "Most Numerous Birds" (won by the snow goose, with 835,000 birds!)

The website also offers help for hard-to-identify birds. Go to the "Show Me How" section, and you'll find a page labelled "Tricky IDs." (I found this one useful when trying to distinguish between a house finch and a purple finch.) There's also an "Online Bird Guide" with pictures and information on a large number of species, as well as information on how to choose binoculars, and how to make or choose a feeder.

If you don't have access to the Internet in your home, visit a library or an on-line friend. Once you've submitted your numbers, browse for results. It's exciting to see your own information added in.

Mark February 17th to 20th on your calendar, and let's really count the birds found in Manitoba. The long mild spell in early winter will probably result in a greater variety than most years. Maybe you'll be the lucky one to sight a robin or a cardinal at your feeder. On a January 4th CBC radio program, three cardinals and two Carolina wrens were reported in Manitoba, a rare occurrence.

During the first part of January, I counted several American goldfinches, in their winter plumage, at my feeder, and I'm hoping they're still around for the bird count. Now if only one of those cardinals would also appear.

*Donna Gamache lives and writes near MacGregor*

Workers Compensation Board announces funds for farm-related research

## Coping with disabilities to be studied

BY LORRAINE STEVENSON  
FIW staff

The Workers Compensation Board of Manitoba (WCB) is funding research into how injured farmers return to work.

Last week the WCB announced grants for several injury prevention projects and research priorities for 2006, including \$100,000 to the Canadian Centre on Disability Studies. That research will evaluate existing supports for Manitoba farmers coping with

disability. The money comes from WCB's Community Initiatives and Research Program (CIRP).

The one-year study will identify barriers farmers experience returning to work, and potential strategies for adapting to disability. WCB is prioritizing this for study to improve capacity within farm workplaces for farmers returning to work, and to minimize the human and financial impact these injuries can have, said a spokesperson for the WCB.

Dr. Olga Krassioukova-Enns, executive director with the Canadian Centre for Disability Studies, said issues faced by injured farmers returning to work aren't well understood. "The farm is not a well-defined workplace," she said.

Farmers also live where they work. "We're not just talking about the formal way they can return to work, but how they can return to their lives," she said. "Probably there are more complications around their different injuries."

The research aims to help injured farmers and their families better cope with disability.

Neil Enns, an Elm Creek farmer and president of Manitoba Farmers with Disabilities, said this research will draw out ideas injured farmers have about what supports are needed. A database of tools and other mechanisms used by disabled farmers in their workplaces will also be developed.

MFWD currently has 110

members, but there are no doubt others coping with disability that their organization doesn't know about, said Enns. He said he hopes this research raises awareness about MFWD. "We are operating a program all the way from prevention to rehabilitation," he said. "We are there to help."

The head office of Manitoba Farmers with Disabilities is in Elm Creek, telephone 436-3181, [www.fwdmanitoba.com](http://www.fwdmanitoba.com)

*l Stevenson@fiwonline.com*



# Fork in the Road

BY LORRAINE STEVENSON  
FIW staff

These recipes for easy-to-make meals come from the website of Dairy Farmers of Manitoba. To find more of their recipes try [www.milk.mb.ca/recipes/](http://www.milk.mb.ca/recipes/)

## CHORIZO PASTA

This pasta dish makes a perfect, delicious weeknight meal. It all cooks in one pot and is ready in no time. Serve with an assortment of steamed green vegetables such as broccoli, snow peas and beans.

3/4 lb. chorizo sausage, cut into 1/4 inch thick slices  
1 tsp. olive oil  
1 onion, chopped  
1 garlic clove, minced  
1 tsp. Italian seasoning  
1/4 tsp. crushed dried chillies  
1 tbsp. cornstarch  
3 c. milk  
1-14 oz can diced tomatoes undrained  
3 c. penne pasta  
1/4 tsp. salt

1 c. shredded mozzarella cheese  
Cook sausage in large pot on medium-high for about 5 minutes until well browned. Remove sausage from pan and drain on paper towel. Drain any fat from pot. Heat oil in same pot over medium-high heat. Add onion, garlic, seasoning and crushed chillies. Cook for about 5 minutes until onion is softened. In small bowl, combine cornstarch and 1 tbsp of milk. Add to onion mixture along with remaining milk. Stir until well blended. Stir in tomatoes and pasta. Cover and bring to boil. Reduce heat to medium-low. Simmer for about 20 minutes stirring occasionally until pasta is tender. Remove from heat. Add cheese and stir until well combined.

Yield: 4 servings  
Nutrient Content: Per Serving:  
Energy: 679.2 Kcal ·  
Carbohydrate: 85.0 g · Protein:  
39.9 g · Fat (Total): 19.6 g ·  
Calcium: 514.7 mg

## CREAMY SPINACH AND TURKEY PASTA

After a long day of errands, chores and catching up, sit down to this simple meal the whole family will enjoy. Chicken can be substituted for turkey if desired.

3 bacon slices, chopped  
1 tbsp. butter  
2 boneless, skinless turkey thighs or breasts, cut into thin strips  
1/2 c. chopped red onion  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
1 c. sliced red pepper  
2 tbsp all-purpose flour  
2 c. milk  
1/2 tsp. coarsely ground pepper  
1/2 tsp. salt  
1/4 tsp. ground nutmeg  
4 c. spinach leaves, loosely packed and trimmed  
2-1/2 c. bow tie pasta, uncooked  
1/2 c. finely grated fresh Parmesan cheese

Cook bacon in large frying pan on medium-high heat for 2 to 3 minutes until crisp. Remove from pan and drain on paper towel. Drain oil from pan and wipe clean. Heat half of the butter in frying pan on medium-high heat. Add chicken and cook for 5 to 8 minutes stirring occasionally until browned on all sides. Remove from pan and set aside. Heat remaining butter in same frying pan on medium-

high heat. Add onion, garlic and pepper. Cook for about 5 minutes until onion is softened. Add bacon and stir. Stir in flour and cook for 1 minute, stirring constantly. Remove from heat. Gradually stir in milk. Stir constantly over medium heat for about 5 minutes until mixture boils and thickens. Add pepper, salt and nutmeg. Reduce heat to medium-low. Add turkey and simmer, for about 5 minutes until turkey is tender, stirring occasionally. Add spinach and stir until spinach is just wilted. Meanwhile, cook pasta in a large pot of salted boiling water for 12 to 15 minutes until tender but still firm. Drain well. Return to same pot. Add chicken mixture and stir to combine. Stir in Parmesan cheese until combined.

Yield: 4 servings  
Nutrient Content: Per Serving:  
Energy: 810.8 Kcal ·  
Carbohydrate: 68.7 g · Protein:  
84.8 g · Fat (Total): 20.0 g ·  
Calcium: 449.1 mg

## CHICKEN VEGETABLE STEW

This hearty stew is a complete balance of all four food groups. Complete this meal with fresh rolls or whole wheat dinner buns. To save time during the busy week you can easily double this recipe and freeze in airtight containers for up to three months. Just reheat and serve.

1 tbsp. butter  
2 lbs. boneless, skinless chicken thighs cut into 1-inch cubes  
2 green onions, diced  
2 medium onions, diced  
3 c. water  
2 tbsp. chicken bouillon mix  
2 tsp. poultry seasoning  
4 c. chopped potatoes  
2 c. chopped carrots  
1 c. chopped celery  
1/4 c. all-purpose flour  
2 c. milk  
1 c. frozen peas  
salt and pepper to taste

Melt butter in large pot on medium-high heat. Add chicken and sear for about 10 minutes until browned on all sides. Add both onions. Cook for about 5 minutes until onion is softened. Stir in water, bouillon and seasoning. Cover and bring to boil. Reduce heat to low. Simmer for 20 minutes. Add potato, carrot and celery. Cover and simmer for 20 minutes until potato is tender. Place flour in small

bowl. Add 1/4 cup of milk and stir to smooth paste. Add to chicken mixture with remaining milk. Stir until well combined. Bring to boil on medium heat. Boil gently, stirring occasionally for about 5 minutes until slightly thickened. Stir in peas. Cook for 1 to 2 minutes or until hot. Add salt and pepper to taste.

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Yield: 6 servings  
Nutrient Content: Per Serving:  
Energy: 408.0 Kcal ·  
Carbohydrate: 36.7 g · Protein:  
41.3 g · Fat (Total): 10.3 g ·  
Calcium: 168.6 mg

## SALSA SCALLOPED POTATOES

A gentle, smooth Mexican flavour, a little bit of crunch from the peppers, toasted cheese on top — an old favorite with a difference.

1-1/2 lbs. potatoes (about 4 medium)  
2/3 c. diced peppers (red, green, or both)  
2 green onions, thinly sliced  
2 tbsp. butter  
3 tbsp flour  
1-1/2 c. milk  
1 tsp. ground cumin -(optional)  
1-1/2 c. grated Monterey Jack cheese, divided  
1/4 c. well-drained salsa (mild or medium)

1/4 tsp. salt to taste  
Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). Butter a 2 qt baking dish and set aside. Peel and thinly slice potatoes. In a covered casserole, microwave potatoes on High for 7 minutes, stirring once. Set aside. In the bottom of the buttered baking dish, layer half each of the potatoes, peppers and green onions. Repeat the layer and set aside. In a medium saucepan, melt butter. Add flour, blending well. Add milk and cumin and cook over medium-high heat, stirring until thickened. Whisk in 1 cup of the grated cheese until smooth. Stir in salsa. Pour milk mixture over potatoes. Sprinkle with remaining cheese. Bake for 35 min or until potatoes are tender and the top is bubbly and golden.

Yield: 6 servings  
Nutrient Content: Per Serving:  
Energy: 325.4 Kcal ·  
Carbohydrate: 37.2 g · Protein:  
12.6 g · Fat (Total): 14.6 g ·  
Calcium: 314.3 mg9

Winter is absent this year. Unfortunately, so is the sun. We may not miss the cold weather, but many miss the sun. Some so much, they've developed a type of depression related to this grey, overcast weather.

We all miss the sun when we don't get enough of the sunshine vitamin — vitamin D.

Vitamin D, explains Pat McCarthy-Briggs, a dietitian and member of the Manitoba Chapter of Osteoporosis Society of Canada, is as much a hormone as it is a vitamin. The body makes its own vitamin D, whenever we absorb ultraviolet rays through our skin.

Yet sunny or not, at this latitude the sun's rays aren't strong enough at this time of year to produce it. You can do your chores buck naked on any sunny day in February and all you'll get is frostbite. It's only between April and September that the sun's strong enough to make produce the sunshine vitamin in our skin.

We often don't get enough vitamin D in their diet either. Food sources are limited — fatty fish such as herring, salmon, sardines, plus egg yolks which contain some vitamin D. Food manufacturers also fortify cereal, milk, margarine and soy beverages with vitamin D.

Health Canada recommends a daily requirement of 200 international units (IU) of vitamin D for those under age 50, 400 IU if you're between 51 and 71, and 600 if you're over 71. The Osteoporosis Society sets that bar much higher. They recommend you get 400 IU of vitamin D per day if you're under 50 and 800 if you're over.

Trouble is, it's hard to get that much, given many of us don't eat enough of those foods, and have low milk consumption, especially among young people. No one authoritative study yet has come out stating that Canadians are a vitamin D-deficient populace. But some studies certainly suggest we're not getting enough. One study carried out in Canada's sunniest city — Calgary — testing a random sampling of adults found one-third had inadequate vitamin D levels in their blood at least once during a year.

Why is vitamin D so important? It helps us absorb calcium, which we need for good bone and muscle development. Without it, we absorb very little calcium from our food.

Two cups of milk per day gives the under-50 crowd their daily requirement, but as we age it's unlikely that anyone's consuming the up to eight cups a day that's required. That's why dietitians now generally recommend taking a daily vitamin D supplement in winter as well as eating the right foods.

"Asked a few years ago, dietitians would have been saying we don't need supplements, and we can get it from food, but there are nutrients where it's been made clear that individuals would benefit from a supplement," says McCarthy-Briggs. "Vitamin D is one of those nutrients."

If you take a multi-vitamin it will contain 400 IU of vitamin D; a single supplement comes in 400 IU or 1,000 IU, she notes.

Doing so could help each one of us ward off a serious public health problem — fragile-boned men and women developing osteoporosis, and suffering from bone breakages from falls. The Osteoporosis Society of Canada says 1.4 million Canadians already have the bone-depleting disease; one in every four women over 50 and one in every eight men.

Cost to treat osteoporosis and related health problems is now estimated to be \$1.3 billion each year in Canada. In Manitoba alone, falls and bone breaks run up a tally of \$256 million a year. The province recently announced \$430,000 toward building public awareness about developing and maintaining good bone health.

It is these kinds of health ailments that contribute, in part, to our over-taxed hospitals and increasing wait times.

Preventative steps we can take ourselves such as consuming more milk and other food sources with vitamin D (and calcium), taking a supplement in winter and getting more exercise, including weight-bearing exercise would do us all a favour.

Let's not wait for the sun to come out to start.

## Food in Fact

To benefit from the calcium in your diet, your body must be able to absorb and use it. In general, the calcium in fruits, vegetables, nuts and legumes is not adequately absorbed by the body. The reason is that most of these foods naturally contain substances like oxalate, phytate and fibre that bind calcium and interfere with its absorption. Most plant-based foods contain only small amounts of calcium. These foods are otherwise nutritious and can contribute to your overall calcium intake, but it's not a good idea to rely solely on them for your complete calcium needs. The Osteoporosis Society of Canada recommends that you try to meet your calcium needs first through foods, especially milk products, which are the richest source of easy-to-absorb calcium.

— Source: Dairy Farmers of Manitoba (Calcium/Nutrition)

Most snowmobile incidents occur in February

# No. 1 cause of winter injury in Canada

BY LORRAINE STEVENSON  
FIW staff

**M**aybe it's cabin fever. Reckless snowmobile operators who seriously injure themselves and their passengers do it most often in February. Snowmobiling is also now in the dubious lead of causing the most winter-sport-related injuries in the country.

Snowmobiling causes more injuries than snowboarding and skiing, with 41 per cent of Canadians brought to medical trauma units in 2003-04 after being hurt in a winter sport being snowmobilers, according to a new report released by the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI). Snowboarders and skiers and accounted for 20 per cent each of the injuries, while nine per cent were hockey players. Tobogganing and ice-skating account for seven and three per cent of the injuries.

During the winter of 2003-04, 788 people across Canada were admitted to hospitals after snowmobiling incidents. In Ontario alone, 1,728 people were seen in emergency departments with injuries related to snowmobiling that year — an average of 16 per day.

Crashes, rollovers and plunges into lakes and rivers were the most common types of accidents. The injuries range from limb crushes to spinal damage and head injuries. Young people are often hurt the most severely.



**HAZARDOUS ACTIVITY:** Snowmobile accidents cause more injuries than any other Canadian winter sport, report says

It's not the first report to come out showing young snowmobilers — those between 15 and 19 — get hurt most often. In 2003-2004 that age category was most often seen in emergency departments after snowmobile accidents.

"Not only can we see when these injuries tend to happen, we can also see what age group is most at risk," Margaret Keresteci, CIHI's manager of clinical registries said in a release.

Eighty per cent of those injured were male. In nearly half the cases (49 per cent), they'd been drinking before

the accident occurred.

That's probably the most troubling finding of this said Duncan Stokes, executive director of SnoMan, Manitoba's snowmobile association. Stokes, who noted Manitoba data was not reflected in this report, agrees there's a problem here too. This winter five have already died from injuries in snowmobile-related incidents. Last year seven died, and two died the previous year.

"We have to make people understand that these are powerful machines and you have to respect that machine and the

environment you're riding in in order to ride safely," Stokes said.

The CIHI report noted most of the trouble takes place when riders ride on private property. Eighty seven per cent of accidents took place on private property, while 13 per cent per cent occurred on roadways.

Manitoba's 14 fatalities — with the exception of one — all occurred off the groomed trails that SnoMan operates, suggesting that their trail system may be a safer place to ride than off-roading or "ditch-banging," Stokes said.

With excessive speed and

alcohol the common cause of accidents, safe riding messages must be reinforced, he added. "I think it's incumbent not only on our association," he said. "We'd like the health care industry to promote the safe riding message too."

Approximately 5,000 Manitobans have taken a voluntary snowmobile operator training course in Manitoba. It is offered by the Manitoba Safety Council in conjunction with Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation. There are 19,000 registered machines in Manitoba.

## Improving water quality in Killarney Lake

*Seven students gave speeches on the merits of conservation during the Manitoba Conservation Districts Association's 30th annual meeting in Brandon December 6 and FIW has been publishing them.*

BY JEREMY GROENING

It was the summer of 2003.

The temperature was 35 Celsius. You made your plans to go swimming at Killarney Beach. As you run towards the water to make your first plunge you suddenly stop in your tracks. The water resembles your Mom's zucchini soup.

I want to talk to you about 'Taming the Green Monster.'

Many families that summer all came to the same startling and disappointing conclusion: the water looked and smelled atrocious.

If you did work up the courage to set foot into the water these are some of the friends you would encounter: blue-green algae. They come in the forms of water moss and scum. Why do I call them friends? Because they cling to you. How? It's not just green

water. Algae also comes in chunks. When you come out of the water the green slime and chunks cling to you. In other words, you look like Shrek and you smell like a slough.

Now you can understand the need for action! A number of years ago the Killarney Lake Water Quality Committee (KLWQC) was formed. Its vision was to improve Killarney Lake and its watershed. Turtle Mountain Conservation District, as well as many other organizations, are represented on this committee. KLWQC is trying to work through education, awareness, and enhanced management of land and water resources.

One short-term strategy was to purchase and install a lake divider curtain. This curtain was intended to partition the beach area from the rest of the lake. It proved to be an overwhelming failure. It was impossible to keep the curtain in the correct position. Most of the time parts of the curtain were submerged in the water and it was not performing its intended task.

Long-term solutions have also been introduced. One of these is

the use of the Lawrence Channel to divert spring runoff. Most of the water entering Killarney Lake comes from the Long River. It has been discovered that the water quality during the peak spring runoff period is significantly poorer than the later spring runoff. Normally the poorer water entered Killarney Lake uncontrolled. To rectify this KLWQC consulted with Manitoba Highways. As a result the open highway crossings were replaced with gated culverts. This allows the first rush of poorer quality runoff to bypass Killarney Lake. It also allows the later, better quality water to be diverted through the Lawrence Channel.

This is a natural channel. The natural growth along the channel serves as a bio-filter. The water is diverted through Oakridge Road into a marshy area to further the filtering process. The road acts as a dam with gated culverts. This allows the KLWQC to control the flow of the water into Killarney Lake.

Another long-term solution is promoting programs such as riparian zone protection.

Riparian areas describe the land running alongside water bodies. The Turtle Mountain Conservation District is encouraging farmers to fence off the riparian areas. This allows the natural vegetation to re-grow along the banks. This vegetation filters out more than 50 per cent of nutrients and pesticides. If the Killarney Lake watershed is improved, then naturally the water flowing into the lake will also be improved.

In spite of all the techniques the KLWQC has undertaken it still believes the most important strategy is public awareness and education. Although all these procedures are in place and they will help the overall water quality of Killarney Lake, there is still a factor that it cannot control — a common specimen of blue-green algae, known as anabaena, which is capable of incorporating atmospheric nitrogen into its cells. It is not dependent on dissolved nitrogen in soil or water.

The last two summers the water quality of Killarney Lake has drastically improved. Is this the result of the efforts of the Killarney Lake Water Quality



ALLAN DAWSON

Jeremy Groening was one of seven young people who about conservation at the Manitoba Conservation Districts Association's annual meeting in Brandon in December.

Committee, or— is it weather related?

Which ever it is, we now know the zucchini soup recipe can be improved for everyone to enjoy!

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**1999 939C CATERPILLAR TRACK** loader, 1 3/4 yd. bucket w/heavy duty teeth. New parts include: complete under carriage & radiator. Well maintained. PH.204-535-2356.

## FARM EQUIPMENT Miscellaneous

**2 WAY MOTOROLLA RADIOS**, house & vehicle aeriels along w/base station. PH.204-352-2241.

**2001 TANDEM AXLE TRAILER** suspension, air ride, 11 x 22.5 rubber, \$2,995. PH. 204-822-3797.

**2003 S300 BOBCAT SKIDSTEER** loader, 85HP, 2 spd., Quick attachment feature. Counterweights. Options: steel track, heavy duty manure fork, snowblower. Well maintained. PH.204-535-2356.

**3 - 8 FT.** International drills; International 715. PH. 204-522-8488.

**4230 JD TRACTOR W/CAB**, good tires, VGC. and 148 JD FEL, joystick, bucket and grappel. PH. 204-828-3460.

**50 INCH, FARM KING**, 3 pt. hitch, blower, used for only one hour, new \$1,900. asking \$1,395. Ph. 825-8558.

**53FT. HYDR. HERMAN HARROWS**, spring tension; 18 1/2ft. International cult. w/cyl. and harrows; complete line of farm machinery. Owner retiring. PH.204-252-2281.

**6 CYL. MOTOR OFF** 303 International combine, complete w/clutch & radiator. Good power unit. \$300. PH.(306)563-6191.

**620 INTERNATIONAL 24 RUN** drill w/fertilizer box-steel press, good shape; 7200 International 24 run hoe drill, rubber press; 18 ft. Graham deep tiller. PH. 252-2281.

**7 FT. FARM KING** snowblower, good working cond. Ph. 248-2571.

**7FT. 3PTH DOUBLE AUGER** snowblower, hydr. chute, \$1,000. PH.743-2052.

**9/16" STRAIGHT TINES** FOR heavy duty harrow bar, approx. 25' length, \$11. Phone 256-8484.

**FOR SALE - 1990** Case IH 7200 drills, factory transport & markers, 16' load king drill fills. PH. 204-734-4350.

**FOR SALE, 2004 WESTFIELD** MK 100x61pto. grain auger, with swing hopper and cover. Ph. 204-882-2467. Ste Agathe.

**FORAGE HARVESTING** JD3970/3940 NH890/717 IH 781 Richardton Hi-Dump silage wagons, Vermeer twin hydraulic rake, \$4,500. PH. 204-857-8403

**HAYBINES, 16 FT.** NH #1475, #13,500; JD 1600, \$8,900; Macdon 5000, \$12,000; Several hay conditioners, \$500 up; 9 wheel rake, \$2,200. PH. 204-857-8403.

**HD BUCKET TO FIT IHC LOADERS**, 66" wide with 8 removable 32" teeth and mounting pins. Also grapple. Will sell separately. Exc. cond. Phone 204-482-5337.

**HYDR. SCRAPERS-CATERPILLAR** 10-40 yd.; LeTourneau 6-15 yd.; A.C./LaPlant 9-18 yd., etc., pull-type & direct mount avail.; Ashland 4 1/2 yd., 11 yd.; Leon 8 1/2 yd. Good Selection. PH.204-822-3797.

**INLAND 60 INCH**, 3 pt. finishing mower, rear discharge, very nice condition, new \$1,650 asking \$1,100. Ph. 825-8558.

## FOR SALE

1982 Versatile 555  
750 MF combine  
Morris deep tiller, 24ft.  
Vibra-shank IH cultivator  
245 Carter grain cleaner  
1 Universal leg, 12-ft.  
400 Vers. swather (good motor)  
318 Chrysler industrial motor  
"50" Chevrolet truck  
Farm King 6" grain aug. (like new)  
Westfield 8" auger  
1970 International truck (42,000)

Please call for details  
**1-204-252-2638**

**MANUFACTURER DIRECT. MODEL 3636** (36ft.) "UltraPacker" landroller/packer. \$19,975. Cash terms. Limited number of units available. Call Tony at 1-(888) 446-3444. Empire Welding & Machining Ltd.

**MANUFACTURER DIRECT. MODEL 3652** (52ft.) "UltraPacker" landroller/packer. \$24,995. Cash terms. Limited number of units available. Call Tony at 1-(888) 446-3444. Empire Welding & Machining Ltd.

**MANUFACTURER DIRECT. MODEL 3645** (45ft.) "UltraPacker" landroller/packer. \$21,750. Cash terms. Limited number of units available. Call Tony at 1-(888) 446-3444. Empire Welding & Machining Ltd.

**MINNESOTA SOIL MANAGEMENT** Assoc. offers for sale a 1998 Great Plains 15 ft. disc drill, 1994 John Deere 15 ft. disc drill, 1975 Dodge one ton (not safetied), 8 foot 3 point hitch shelterbelt cultivator, a Gopher Getter tunnel poison implement. Highest or any offer not necessarily accepted. Offers due Feb. 28 to the Minnedosa GO office, Box 1198 Minnedosa MB R0J 1E0, phone 204-867-6572 daytime.

**MOTOROLA FM BAND RADIOS** w/speakers and antenna and/or Peltor headsets. PH.204-535-2356.

**NEW 3PH BLADES, 9FT.**, \$800.; 10ft., \$1,000.; 10ft. heavy duty, \$3,100.; 12ft. Leon front blade, \$3,500.; 9ft., \$2,000.; 10ft. Waldren blade, \$1,800. PH.204-857-8403.

**TRUCK DRILL FILL TANK, 14FT**, 50/50 split, w/roll tarp cover, hydraulic motors w/electric controls, VGC, \$1,800. 204-256-8484.

**TRUCK DILL FILL, 14FT** w/hydr., hoses, almost new, open tp offers; 2-59 Case combines, shedded \$1,900. phone 204-425-7742 evenings.

**USED GRAVITY WAGONS, 250** Nubilt \$1,700; 250 Parker/12T wagon, \$2,500; 275 J&M, \$2,500; 350/JD wagon, \$2,500; 350 Lundell/12T wagon, \$2,600; 375 Kilbros/12T w/tarp, \$3,000; 500 Parker \$5,400. Ph 204-857-8403.

## FARM EQUIPMENT Miscellaneous

**WANTED 1938 CHEVROLET TRUCK**, complete or parts; for sale 6ft. Howard rotator, good shape, \$1800. PH.204-685-2970, MacGregor.

## FARM EQUIPMENT Wanted

**LIQUID FERTILIZER CADDY, 1400** gal. tank w/John Blue pump, distribution system for 40' cult. w/8" spacing. PH.568-4606 or 568-4593.

**WANTED - 4 OLD** connecting rods from a JD model D tractor, will pay the value. PH. Nick 426-5250.

**WANTED - OLDER LOADER** tractor, approx. 60HP. Must be good mechanical cond. Phone 828-3603.

**WANTED - OLIVER OC4**, cletrac Crawler, running or not. PH. 204-378-2495.

**WANTED - USED GRAIN** leg. PH.204-822-3797.

**WANTED 2 CYL. JD** tractors, running or not, any condition. PH.745-7445 or 745-2853.

**WANTED JD BALER**, #336, #337, #338, #346, #347, #348; NH baler , #315, #316, #320, #326; IHC and wheel drills, #510, #5100; JD #8350. 204-325-9669.

**WANTED: KINGSMAN ROUND BALE** feeder, model 9200. Ph. 204-656-4468.

**WANTED MANUFACTURERS FOR DEUTZ**, model DX6.50 or DA7120. PH.204-378-2307.

**WANTED: NH SP & PT BALE** wagons also Farmhand accumulators and forks. Roeder International, Seculca Kansas, 306-693-4565, or 785-336-6103.

**WANTED TRAILER TYPE POST** pounder. Ph. Charles Gall, 204-768-2196 evngs.

**WANTED TW5 FORD TRACTOR** w/FWA & 3 PTH. PH.768-2288.

## FEED Feed Grain

**300 LARGE ROUND BALES** of grass and alfalfa. No rain. Can deliver. At a bargain price/can swap for animals too. Phone 585-2738 evngs.

**FEED OATS, 38 LBS.** per bushel w/8" barley in it, dry. PH. (306)794-2023.

## FEED Hay & Straw

**100 ROUND HAY BALES**, 1150-1200 lbs., \$37.50 each; 1 Gelbvieh bull, 5 yrs. old, \$1,000. PH.204-828-3530.

**1000 2ND CUT SMALL** square bales, mixture of alfalfa & grass. At a bargain price. Can be delivered. PH.204-585-2738.

**1400 EXCELLENT QUALITY ALFALFA** bales, Feed test avail. \$60/ton. Hanley, SK, Phone 1-306-227-4503.

**2000 LB. BROME & alfalfa** 5x6 hard core bales, 3 cents per lb. PH.(306)794-2023.

**2ND CUT ALFALFA, 3X3X8** square bales, fall test, RFV 192. Ph. Alan at 204-747-2397.

**450 LARGE ROUND HAY** bales. Good quality hay and no rain. Timothy, alfalfa, brome mixture. Priced to sell. PH.352-4451, Walderssee, MB.

**500 SMALL SQUARE WHEAT** straw bales; 50 big round wheat & oat straw bales. PH.204-827-2144 or 827-2382.

**750 LARGE ROUND ALFALFA & grass** bales, 1500-1600 lbs. No rain. Can deliver. Call 204-345-8532, Lac Du Bonnet.

**ALFALFA & GRASS MIX**, 5x6 round bales, \$25. PH. Lac Du Bonnet 345-0146 or 268-5283, Richard Zaretski.

**ALFALFA-GRASS HAY**, 2004 or 2005, all no rain, 5x5 hard core, 1100 lbs. +, price negotiable. PH.204-535-2573.

**FOR SALE - 300** wheat straw bales, Crystal City area, \$12/bale. PH. 379-2939.

**FOR SALE - MEDIUM** square alfalfa, premium and good quality. PH.204-822-3797, Morden.

**FOR SALE - SMALL** square 2nd cut alfalfa bales stored inside, \$2.25/bale, delivery avail. PH. 204-776-2326 Minto.

**FOR SALE: LARGE ALFALFA** round bales. Phone for prices to Sid Knox, 204-685-3184 or Peter, 204-637-2289.

**FOR SALE: LARGE ROUND** hay bales, bale feeders, (204)773-3898.

**GRASS AND ALFALFA GRASS** large round bales, no rain, \$16-\$30/bale, 1400-1600lbs; Round bales: oat \$10; barley straw \$8; excellent Meadow Brome square bales, \$2.75/each. 204-354-2254.

**HOW MANY FOLKS OWN** FIW? / Seven.

**HAY FOR SALE** - Square bales 3x4x8, 1000-1100 lbs., good quality pure Timothy & second cut alfalfa. Some lower quality alfalfa and mixed hay avail. Can deliver, Gladstone. PH. 385-0100.

**HAY FOR SALE, MEDIUM** square alfalfa bales, 120 RFV, stored inside, 400 bales, \$70/ton. PH.204-822-3797, Morden.

**HIGH QUALITY ALFALFA & alfalfa** grass round bales. Weight 1300-1400 lbs., hard core. Priced to sell. Boissevain 534-6019 or cel. 534-8011.

**LARGE ROUND HAY BALES**, beef & dairy quality, tests available. PH.204-827-2104 or 204-827-2551, Glenboro.

**OATS, WHEAT, AND TIMOTHY** straw; starting at \$30/tonne. Alfalfa/Grass Horse hay; starting at \$85/tonne. Chris Kletke Ph. 736-3580 Brunkild Mb.

## FEED Hay & Straw

**QUALITY DAIRY HAY, PURE** alfalfa in 3x3x8 square bales, no rain; Also horse & beef hay. All shedded. Delivery avail. Call Bob Elliot 204-941-0250.

**ROUND BROME & ALFALFA** mix bales, no rain, 3 cents per lb. Delivery extra. Morris Olafson, Morden, MB. PH.822-3742.

## FEED Feed Wanted

**WANTED HIGH VOM & low vom** wheat, barley, peas, oats & corn. Competitive prices. We are looking for canola going to Harrowby, Manitoba. Stan Yaskiw, 1-866-290-7113.

## Vomitoxin Testing

Fast, Accurate Results \$25/test

**Intertek Agri Services**

510-136 Market Ave., Wpg, MB R3B 0P4

**1-866-821-2406 (Toll Free)**

## Firewood

**30 CORDS OF FIREWOOD, CULL TIES**, Selling very cheap for the whole works. Phone 204-426-5250.

**OUTDOOR WOOD BURNER, SHOP** bill, very heavy duty, reason for selling, have larger stove, \$875. Ph. 204-643-5682.

## GRAIN STORAGE Augers

**AUGERS: 10X60 WESTGO** SWING hopper, \$2,500.; 8x51 Farm King, \$1,650.; 8x46 Scoop-A-Second, \$1,200.; 8x30 Westgo, \$950.; belt conveyor, \$800. PH.204-857-8403.

## GRAIN STORAGE Dryers

**AB-8B FARM FAN GRAIN DRYER**, 2700-hrs. canola screens, all updates done ready to go, may deliver, \$3,950. Bernie 825-8558.

## Harness / Saddles / Accesories

**17" COLLEGIATE DRESSAGE** saddle complete, \$1,200. OBO. Phone 204-757-4485 or cel. 781-7792.

**HORSE DRAWN CUTTER WITH** front and back seat, with shafts or pole. PH.529-2411.

## Health Foods

**HOW WOULD YOU LIKE** the benefits of a healthier lifestyle? A natural product Hemalayo Goji Juice. Call Lisa Morton at (306)435-3421, Moosomin.

## HOMES Mobile Homes

**1978 EMPRESS 14X68FT.**, 3 bdrm, elec. heat, 12x20 porch, 8x18 deck. \$5,000. OBO. Phone 204-857-8064.

**YOU'RE READING FIW** – This is the newspaper Manitoba farmers are talking about. If you haven't already subscribed, call today 1-877-742-4307.

## LAND & PROPERTY Acreages

**PRIVATE SALE-160 ACRES**, approx. 85 hay, 10 acres Birch like park.lots of trees,good water, beautiful place to build a home, cabin,horses, south of Woodridge, \$52,000.Ph.253-2712.

## LAND & PROPERTY Buildings

**WANTED 600-700 SQ .FT.** OFFICE building or house to move. Phone 204-433-7189, St. Pierre.

## LAND & PROPERTY Farms

**GRAIN FARM, 1000+ ACRES** w/livestock component, exc. buildings, B&B agratourism, high speed internet, natural gas, town water, no flooding. Boissevain 204-534-6019 or cel. 204-534-8011.

## LAND & PROPERTY Farmland

**1/2 SECTION IN RM** of Westbourne. Good perimeter fence, 130 acres open access to year round creek. PH.1-204-385-2696.

**5 QUARTERS IN THE** Benito area, Swan Valley,exc. crop land,all grass & new fence,new 4 bdrm. bungalow,corals, could be sold w/cattle & machinery.PH.728-1861 or 720-0330.

## LAND & PROPERTY Homes

**STOREY & HALF** house to be moved, \$10,000 OBO. PH. 626-3337.

PLACE YOUR AD HERE / 1-866-483-8343.

## LAND & PROPERTY For Rent

**NEW 85 ACRESTAME PASTURE OR HAY-LAND**, low bloat grazed land alfalfa grass mixture, no cattle close by, Boissevain 534-6019 or cell 534-8011.

## LEISURE Campers / Trailers / Motorhomes

**LIVESTOCK**  
Cattle / Charolais

**KRUK CHAROLAIS**



Good selection of Red Factor Charolais Bulls for Sale at the farm  
Also check out 2-Red Factors at Douglas Test Station  
**Brian & Cathy Kruk**  
204-483-3589

**HIGH BLUFF STOCK FARM**

Charolais & Simmental Bulls Sell at Family Tradition  
**Bull Sale – March 23**

Charolais Bulls feature sons of "Cougarbill Hank"  
**Carman & Donna Jackson**  
Inglis, MB  
204-564-2547

**LIVESTOCK**  
Cattle / Gelbveih

**POLLED GELBVEIH BULLS, RED & black,** yearling & 2 yr. olds. Semen tested & delivered. PH. Lee at Maple Grove Gelbveih 278-3255.

**LIVESTOCK**  
Cattle / Hereford

**COMMERCIAL CATTLEMAN.** Prairie Partners Bull Sale, March 23/06, 1pm, Hereford/Angus/Simmental bulls at Don Guilford Hereford/Angus Ranch 873-2430/Gordon Jones Simmentals 535-2273/Fraser Redpath Simmentals 529-2560. Yearling floor price \$1600.

**FARM AUCTION STYLE BULL** Sale, 2:00 p.m., April 4, 2006. Call Bill at 204-763-4697 for your bull list.

**REGISTERED PUREBRED POLLED** Hereford bulls, 2 yr. olds & yearlings, also bred cows & heifers. Could take hay or grain on trade. Ph.204-723-2831, Catt Bros.

**ADS UNDER 25 WORDS ARE FREE** for everyone 1-866-483-8343.

**LIVESTOCK**  
Cattle / Limousin

**AMAGLEN LIMOUSIN HAS** yearlings & 2 yr. old bulls for sale at home or at the Douglas Test Station. Semen tested, delivered & guaranteed. PH.204-246-2312.

**CAMPBELL LIMOUSIN**



Watch for our Spring Bull Sale at the farm April 4, 2006  
**Bill & Lauren Campbell**  
Box 92, Minto, MB  
204-776-2322

**HIDDEN VALLEY**



**LIMOUSIN**  
Black & Red Limousin Bulls for sale at farm and at Shamrock Bull Sale April 5/06  
**Les & Loree Wedderburn**  
RR 1, Alexander, MB  
204-328-7144

**NAME OF THE PRODUCTION** department's cats? / Kit-Kat & Cookie.

**L & S Limousin Acres**

Check out our bulls at Douglas and at the farm.  
**Lawrence & Sherry Daniel**  
Box 191, Kenton, MB  
204-838-2198

**OUR GOAL:**  
To produce high quality cattle that work for our customers!

**LIVESTOCK**  
Cattle / Maine Anjou

**15 REGISTERED MAINE-ANJOU** cows, start calving March 1; 7 bred Heifers, start calving Feb. 10; 20 open Heifers, many Maine/Angus cross. PH 204-826-2147.

**LIVESTOCK**  
Cattle / Shorthorn

**WANT TO PUMP MORE** profit from your cows for you? Better sex for them, consider using these Hereford & Shorthorn bulls. PH (306)435-3421.

**LIVESTOCK**  
Cattle / Simmental

**COMMERCIAL CATTLEMAN.** Prairie Partners Bull Sale, March 23/06, 1pm, Hereford/Angus/Simmental bulls at Don Guilford Hereford/Angus Ranch 873-2430/Gordon Jones Simmentals 535-2273/Fraser Redpath Simmentals 529-2560. Yearling floor price \$1600.

**WOODSONG FARMS LTD.**



**Ralph Whitfield & Sons**  
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Fax: 204-483-2107  
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Ralph Whitfield/President 204-483-2643

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**BULLS AND FEMALES FOR SALE**

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Producing Quality **POLLED Seedstock** POLLED & HOMOZYGOUS

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Visitors Welcome  
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**(204) 847-2055**

**LIVESTOCK**  
Cattle / Various

**COMPLETE DISPERSAL OF YOUNG** cows & bred Heifers: Friday, February 24, 2006 - 12:00 noon at Heartland Livestock Services in Yorkton, SK. Included will be 50 Bircham Ranch Black Brockel & Baldy 3 yr. olds; 12 Black Simmi/Angus cross 4 yr. olds; 12 Gelbveih 4 yr. olds.; 10 Powerful Bircham Ranch bred Heifers as well as a consignment of top cut bred Black Heifers from Northriver Ranch - The Bernns family of Springside, SK. All females are fully processed & bred to quality Black Angus Bulls for late March/April calving. Two Herd Sires will be included; they are a 2 yr. old son of SA Neutron 377 & a 3 yr. old son of Crescent Creek Brave Heart 35F. Additional private consignments of quality bred cows will supplement this sale. Contact Dave Farrell at 306-783-3070 or cell 306-621-1278 or Robin Hill at Heartland Livestock 306-783-9437.

**DISPERSAL OF 17 FALL** calvers Angus X exotics, to calve in Aug.&Sept., 1st calvers & 2nd calvers & some older cows, bred Red Angus.Call 637-2445.

**GELBVEIH & CROSS BRED** yearling heifers for sale. Mostly red but some black. PH. Lee at 278-3255.

**WANTED 120 YOUNG COWS** for May calving. Contact Double AA Feeders at 204-345-8532.

**LIVESTOCK**  
Horses / For Sale

**2 YR. OLD UNREGISTERD** Dun Quarter horse mare. Well started under saddle. www.druwehorses.ca PH.204-224-4540.

**3 1/2 YR. OLD** reg. Quarter horse mare, well started under saddle, 8 wks. professional training, quiet & friendly. PH. 204-728-5364.

**5 YR. OLD REG.** Quarter horse sorrel mare. Has been shown. Well broke. Quiet, Blue Valentine/Hancock breeding, big hip. 15.1 H.H. www.druwehorses.ca PH.204-224-4540.

**6 YEAR OLD BAY** - gelding - 3/4 QH & 1/4 Belgium, halter trained sale or trade for a large harness trained pony Ph: 738-4648.

**WHAT WAS THE DATE OF FIW'S** first issue? / June 13, 2002.

**8 YR. OLD REG.** Belgian Stallion Sorrel w/stripes, exc. breeder, very quiet, hand bred or pasture, also shoeing stocks. PH. (306)745-3851 Esterhazy, SK.

**FOR SALE OR TRADE** - 1 broke to ride quarter horse mare. Reasonably priced. Phone 728-8553.

**MORGAN PERCHERON CROSS** YEARLING filly, halter broke & can be registered as a part bred. PH. 567-3823.

**NEED SADDLES OR TACK FIXED?** Call Lionel Hearn at The Leathersmith Shop. Phone 728-8553.

**LIVESTOCK**  
Swine / For Sale

**FOR SALE: WEANLING PIGS** born and raised outside. Please phone 204 874 2324.

**LIVESTOCK**  
Swine / Wanted

**WANTED: BUTCHER HOGS SOWS AND BOARS FOR EXPORT**



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728-7549  
Licence # 1123

**LIVESTOCK**  
Bison

**FOR SALE - BISON** 9 yearlings feeders, 5 calves. Call David 204-242-2329 Manitou.

**LIVESTOCK**  
Donkeys

**FOR SALE: 1 MAMMOTH** jack donkey, (204)773-3898.

**LIVESTOCK**  
Equipment

**FEHRWAY FEEDS & LIVESTOCK** Equipment, Winkler,MB-Galv.bale feeders, calving pens, Poly Chore sleds, windbreak panels, complete line of livestock equip. & feed, bulk or bagged. PH.204-325-7017.

**HARSH MIXER BOX W/SCALE,** mounted on Ford 600 4WD truck. PH.204-352-2241.

**KELLN SOLAR WINTER WATERING** systems guaranteed not to freeze and requires no heating element available in AC/DC Virden 204-556-2346 St.Claude/Portage La Prairie 204-379-2763.

**PORTABLE WIND BREAKS, CALF** shelters, free standing rod panels, fence line & field silage pumps; Speed-Rite fence equipment, drill stem, sucker rod; rough lumber. PH.204-827-2104 or 204-827-2551.

**WANTED: POLY CALF SHELTER.** Phone 204-757-4485 or cel. 781-7792.

**Miscellaneous Articles**

**100% COTTON OR POLY/CTN** Industrial Grade Coveralls, 5 Pair \$125; Leather Work Gloves \$15/Doz; Proban Coveralls from \$55. www.directworkwear.com or 1-800-661-9647.

**2 LARGE I BEAMS** 21" high x 50' long, very handy for moving bldg. Ph. Nick 426-5250.

**50 INCH, FARM KING,** 3 pt. hitch, blower, used for only one hour, new \$1,900. asking \$1,395. Ph. 825-8558.

**9/16" STRAIGHT TINES** for heavy duty harrow bar, approx. 25' length, \$11. Phone 256-8484.

**BOX LINER DODGE 1/2 ton** 8ft. long, new cond., asking \$120. PH. 204-256-8484.

**CREAM SEPARATOR, \$450.** OBO. Phone 204-757-4485 or cel. 781-7792.

**FOR SALE: 2 SERVICE** station Bennett Model #4027 Gas bowser w/dual heads. With new hoses & nozzles. One Temp. comp. \$2000, Reg. bowser \$1000. OR \$2500, for the pair. Dennis Gagnon, Baldur, 204-535-2149.

**GE #850 MEDALLION** STOVE, almond in color, 4 elements, self cleaning, good shape. Good for residence or cottage. \$125. OBO. PH.204-224-4540.

**INLAND 60 INCH,** 3 pt. finishing mower, rear discharge, very nice condition, new \$1,650 asking \$1,100. Ph. 825-8558.

**INTERNATIONAL STATIONARY ENGINE,** water cooled, 3HP-Clydesdale horses for cement mixer, auger, etc., \$250. PH. 256-8484.

**Miscellaneous Articles**

**PLANERS-SIZERS & 4** side will make log siding, common & panelling; Sawmill edger w/4 saws on Mandril,makes good lumber. Ph.Nick 426-5250.

**RED FOX, SPARROW HAWK,** beaver, 3 weasels, muskrat, Jack fish-42", caribou antlers, large owl, it's a fine assortment. PH. Nick 426-5250.

**USED HEAVY NYLON RUBBERIZED** canvas, 10 x 10 size, \$35, about 40 lbs., many other sizes up to 28 x 35, many uses. Selkirk 482-7251.

**Pets / Working Animals**

**BORDER COLLIE PUPS FROM** very good working parents, 8 wks. old, both parents are good tempered & very good w/children. Ph. 204-749-2210.

**CHOCOLATE LAB PUPS,** 15 wks. old, all vaccinations; also 2 yr. old male, \$250. ea. Good with children. PH.769-2385 or 483-0228, Elgin.

**FOR SALE: BEAGLE PUPPIES,** vet checked, first shots, dewormed. \$300/each. Phone 204-745-2897, Carman, MB.

**FOR SALE: GOLDEN RETRIEVER** puppies, vet checked, first shots, dewormed. \$225/each. Phone 204-745-2897, Carman, MB.

**PUREBRED BLUE HEELER PUPPIES,** parents excellent cattle dogs. PH.759-2345 or 365-0066.

**TIMBER WOLF/ROTTIE CROSS** puppies, parents excellent guard dogs, 8 males; 1 female. Unique markings, ready to go first week of February. Call 204-436-2562.

**SEED**  
Pedigreed / Cereal Crops

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# Barbeques, free storage and health care

BY MARK WEINRAUB

REUTERS

U.S. agribusiness companies, aiming to ensure a steady flow of grain to their elevators and processing plants, are becoming more creative with incentives they offer farmers.

A health care program from industry giant Cargill Inc. is the latest step up from the barbecue parties, free grain storage and financial planning assistance grain companies have offered farmers to ensure steady supplies of corn, soybeans and wheat.

But farmers can be stubborn customers when prices are not in their favour — holding back grain from the elevators and processors that depend on their supplies to operate efficiently. They will not be roped in easily.

"How it impacts their bottom line is really what's going to drive their decision," said Ron Gray, who operates Gray Farms in Claremont, Illinois. He farms 1,650 acres of corn and soy.

Cargill AgHorizons, a unit of Minneapolis, Minnesota-based Cargill Inc., upped the ante in

January when it offered to help farmers pay for health insurance.

Cargill's Harvest Health plan will pay farmers up to US\$5,450 a year for health care if they pledge to sell a certain amount of grain to Cargill. Cargill said there was no other comparable program for farm families, and noted that health insurance premiums have jumped nearly 60 per cent since 2000.

The proposal has got the attention of other grain companies, which farmers said had begun inviting them to meetings to discuss what a company should offer to ensure a consistent supply of grain.

Perks are just one piece of the puzzle for farmers trying to maximize their profit. By itself, the promise of health insurance probably will not guarantee any sales, but it does pique farmers' interest.

"I would say incentives go a long way, look at the airlines industry with frequent flier miles," said Jim Porterfield, director of special research projects for the American Farm



UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE

**WE'VE GOT SPACE:** U.S. elevator operators are searching for ideas to attract steady grain deliveries.

Bureau. "You can do the same thing with health insurance."

But as important as health insurance is, farmers must balance it with other interests. Many farmers send their grain to co-operatives they have invested in and in whose success they have a stake.

"Their corn is going to follow where their money went," said Bob Wisner, agricultural economist at Iowa State University.

Some farmers also shy away from long-term commitments to one company, a requirement of Cargill's health plan.

"In general, farmers are going to be a little bit leery of that," said John Kuhfuss, a farmer in Illinois. He said companies with a guaranteed stream of sales may not bid as high for harvested crops when it comes time to buy grain.

Farmers also face rising costs

on many fronts besides health insurance. For example, the high cost of gasoline deters farmers from hauling grain long distances, no matter what benefits are offered by an elevator or processor.

"This (the health plan) is kind of new and different but you have still got to live within a reasonable distance to a Cargill facility," Iowa State's Wisner said.

Cargill's competitors such as Bunge and Archer Daniels Midland will monitor the success of Cargill's health insurance plan, but farmers should not expect copycat programs right away.

Companies already offer smaller incentives.

One grain elevator hosts a party every other year, and does not require farmers to guarantee future sales as an admission ticket. More than 1,000 guests show up for a day of barbecue and door prizes. It does not add up to the cost of health insurance, but it does offer one thing the Cargill plan does not. "This is for free," said a grain dealer.

## Achieving Success

### Achieve® Liquid is tough on weeds but gentle on a malt barley crop

Malt barley can be a temperamental crop to grow. One of the keys to a successful malt barley crop is to reduce the stress on the plant, allowing it to meet the requirements of malt barley customers.

When growing a high return malt barley crop, growers tend to pay a little extra attention to crop inputs. Any time a grower can remove the stress on a barley crop, be it from disease or weeds, they can increase their yield, reduce protein and develop more plump kernels.

Achieve Liquid is safe on all varieties of barley. By allowing timing flexibility without compromising safety or effectiveness, Achieve Liquid is an ideal choice for today's malt barley growers.

#### Taking it to malt

Malt barley is one of the top two net returning crops, so growers want



to make sure they use products that reduce stress to the plant and allow it to develop properly. "If you injure the crop at any stage, and in particular with a herbicide, your crop will suffer," says Randy Retzlaff, a technical field manager with Syngenta. "With feed barley, damage from a herbicide could affect yield, but with malt barley

it can affect the status of the entire field."

Retzlaff says that a damaged crop can experience delayed maturity, stunting, yellowing and fewer tillers. All these things will bring down the value of the barley and make it less likely to obtain malting designation.

#### Keeping it consistent

Currently, maltsters are focused on the uniformity of seed to meet the needs of their customers. A uniform seed gives an even taste and appearance to the end product. A field damaged by in-crop chemical application can result in an uneven harvest.

In a study completed by researchers from Syngenta, Achieve Liquid was found to have excellent crop safety.

"Achieve Liquid is safe on the crop all on its

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Effective wild oat and grassy weed control is important to yield, quality and consistency. There is no better product to eliminate wild oats than Achieve Liquid. It also has proven

**"It's becoming harder and harder to have barley selected for malt without excellent weed control. Weed competition hurts yield and quality. We get good results with Achieve Liquid. It takes care of wild oats and millet, and is also very easy on the crop. Achieve is an excellent product. We're very happy with Achieve and we'll continue to use it."**

Doug Martin, Lumsden, SK

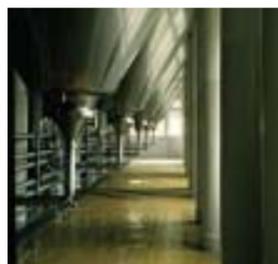


effectiveness on a wide spectrum of grassy weeds, including Persian dandelion, green foxtail and yellow foxtail.

The 2005 Stratus Agri-Marketing Brand Usage and Image Study

confirmed that more growers used

Achieve Liquid and Achieve Liquid Gold to protect their barley acres than any other grassy weed herbicide. Trust Achieve Liquid for a crop you'll be proud of.



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## U.S. lags Canada with white wheat

BY CAREY GILLAM

SAN ANTONIO / REUTERS

U.S. wheat farmers are not growing enough hard white wheat to meet demand, leaving American food companies little choice but to buy from U.S. competitors, a U.S. wheat industry official said February 5.

"We need to really focus on producing it and doing so in targeted areas so we can get critical mass," said Ron Stoddard, chairman of an industry development committee for hard white wheat.

Stoddard was among a group of wheat industry officials meeting in San Antonio to discuss industry issues.

He said annual demand for hard white wheat is about 10 million tonnes. U.S. growers were expected to plant an estimated 750,000 acres (303,500 hectares) for 2006, less than the amount needed, wheat experts said. That is down from 2005 when the U.S. harvested more than 812,000 acres.

In comparison, rival producer Canada had about 1.2 million acres of hard white wheat planted in 2005 and is expected to double that for the 2006 crop year, Stoddard said.

Australia is also a major competitor for hard white wheat, he said.

Major food companies in the United States have to import hard white wheat because they cannot source enough domestically, Stoddard said.

He said the U.S. industry needs to produce a sufficient volume to assure customers of a consistent supply.

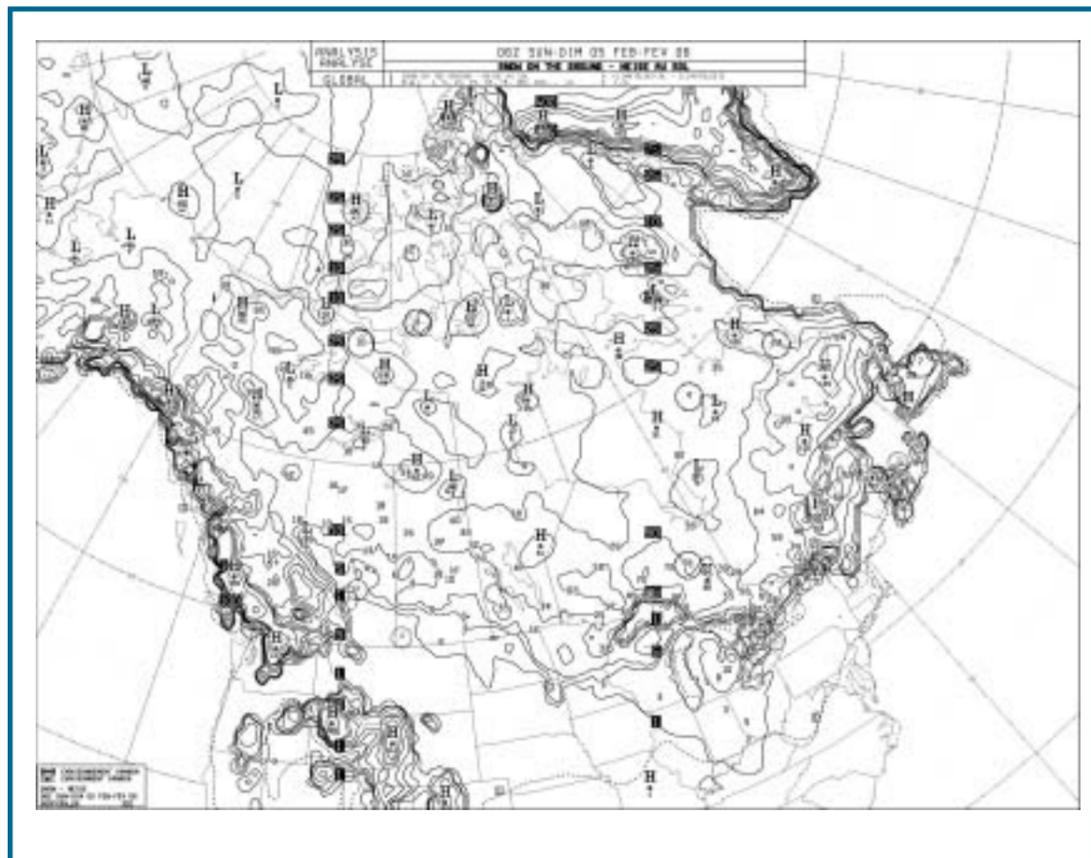
Hard white wheat is typically preferred to hard red winter wheat, a top bread wheat, because it has a sweeter taste and advantageous baking and milling qualities. Given the push by food companies to develop whole wheat products, white wheat has been in greater demand.

advertising feature

# THE WEATHER VANE



NEW ROUNDUP BRAND. NEW LOW PRICE. \$2.99 PER ACRE. NEW ROUNDUP BRAND. NEW LOW PRICE. \$2.99 PER ACRE. NEW ROUNDUP BRAND. NEW LOW PRICE. \$2.99 PER ACRE.



If you are wondering how much snow there is out there then this week's map is for you. This map is produced daily by Environment Canada and can be found on the Internet at [http://gfx.weatheroffice.ec.gc.ca/analysis/index\\_e.html](http://gfx.weatheroffice.ec.gc.ca/analysis/index_e.html). From this map you can see that once you get to southwestern Manitoba and continue westward, snowfall amounts are very low with a large area of southern Saskatchewan and Alberta having either a light dusting or no snow at all.

## FIW Forecast

Issued: Monday, February 6, 2006

Covering: February 8 – 15, 2006

### Cool and windy

PREPARED BY DANIEL BEZTE FOR FIW

Seasonal conditions will start off this forecast period, as an area of high pressure will be sitting over our region by the middle of this week. Under this high we should see mainly sunny skies with temperatures right in the middle of the usual temperature range for this time of the year. By Thursday the high will begin pulling off to our south and an area of low pressure will be strengthening to our north. This will switch our winds to the west and we will likely see an increase in clouds and possibly some flurries. On Friday the northern low will continue to deepen as it slowly slides southeastwards. At the same time a strong area of high pressure will be diving southwards over Alberta. This will create a large pressure gradient over our region, which means strong winds. Skies will remain cloudy with the odd flurry and temperatures will begin to drop under the very strong northwesterly flow. Winds will slowly weaken on Saturday as the low pulls away to the east and the center of the high moves in our direction. Skies should clear and temperatures will be cool. By Sunday the area of high pressure will slide by to our south and once again an area of low pressure will be moving through well to our north. This will switch our winds to a westerly flow and temperatures should begin to warm up. This warming trend should continue into Monday but as the northerly low passes by we will see arctic air build southward behind it, ushering colder weather for Tuesday and Wednesday.

Usual temperature Range for this period: Highs: -18° to -3°C  
Lows: -31° to -13°C

## End of warm weather in sight

BY DANIEL BEZTE  
FIW contributor

**W**e did it; we did it! It's not too often that we can say that we have beaten an all-time weather record, but that is exactly what we did for temperature in January. We did more than that; we beat the all-time record for the warmest November to January. Our three major districts, Dauphin, Brandon and Winnipeg beat every temperature record you can think of in January. Combine this with the relatively warm weather in December and November, and you get a record warm start and middle to winter.

Now I'll have to admit that I've been caught in one of weather's most difficult positions; that is, I have to rely on widely spaced weather sta-

tions. That's right, the number of Environment Canada (EC) weather stations in Manitoba and across the country has dropped significantly over the past several years. So the next time you vote think about that — I don't think a single candidate will have that on their radar screen, but when you think about it, it really is important. Maybe I can convince the government to go private and provide all our FIW weather network reporters with electronic weather stations.

Back to the January that really never was, and then a look ahead at what February might have in store. Will we finally see a return to Old Man Winter or is this a taste of the "climate change" winters to come? Let's see.

Well, to put things mildly... a bad pun, but really, that is the only word you can use to describe January. If it wasn't winter you would be saying it is

downright hot out there. When I looked at all three of our major stations I was hard-pressed to find more than one day during January that had temperatures near the seasonal average, let alone below average.

#### Southwest an exception

What about precipitation? Last week I mentioned that all three of our major regions of Manitoba — Winnipeg, Dauphin, and Brandon — had above-normal precipitation so far this winter. I also mentioned that having warm winter temperatures and above-normal precipitation is fairly unusual, since warm winter weather is usually associated with light precipitation.

Thanks to some of our southwestern readers, I have been corrected, or rather reminded, that the three regions that I use for talking about weather don't work for everyone. That's why we occa-

sionally have to look at precipitation maps to see what is really going on. Although this doesn't always give us the full story either. This is one of the reasons that we need to switch maps occasionally and look for inconsistencies. For example, looking at the current total precipitation map for southern Manitoba, only the southwest appears to be on the dry side. Areas to the north and west show higher amounts, with values quickly rising to above average. Trusting weather maps and data is a whole different article.

#### Rating the predictions

And the winner for January is...no one. Everyone, with the exception of the *Canadian Farmers Almanac* had predicted a warmer than average month, but all three of our main forecasters (*Old Farmers Almanac*, EC, and FIW) had also predicted below-normal precipitation. If you

live in southwestern Manitoba, then they were all right, but overall there was no clear-cut winner, only one clear-cut loser — the *Canadian Farmers Almanac*, which seemed to be calling for bitterly cold conditions. Oops!

What's in store for February? Well, I'll have to admit I probably have a bit of an advantage the way the publication days work out this year, so we're already into the month, but oh well, all is fair in love, war, and weather. For February, the *Old Farmers Almanac* is calling for warmer-than-average temperatures along with well above-average precipitation. Over at EC, they are leaning towards a continuation of the mild temperatures and dry conditions. Last but not least, here at FIW I'm calling for near-normal temperatures and precipitation, with a good chance of at least one good old winter cold snap. Please don't shoot the messenger!

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\* Derived from the Stratus Agri-Marketing, Brand Usage & Image Study, 2005-Wheat Grass Herbicides in Western Canada.

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