

MANITOBA Farmers' Voice

SUMMER 2015 EDITION

KAP The Official Publication of
Keystone Agricultural Producers



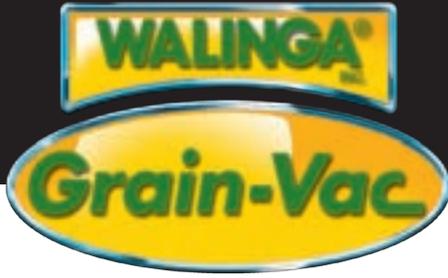
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MAYFAIR FARMS

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perseverance have brought
success to the Giffin family

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MAYFAIR FARMS

Perseverance, diversification key to success for family operation

BY JACQUIE NICHOLSON

DIVERSIFICATION IS A TIME-HONOURED tradition for the Giffin family, owners and operators of Mayfair Farms in Portage la Prairie. Over the farm's 75-year history, Mayfair has seen dozens of crops — everything from peppers to pumpkins to beans to berries — grown and harvested through a variety of methods.

The third generation of Giffin farmers feel they've finally settled on a winning combination: 30 acres devoted to a bustling U-pick strawberry patch, 650 acres of light red kidney beans, and 450 acres for the various vegetable crops that have proven most profitable over the years.

The operation has grown to the point that it employs not only most of the Giffin family, but also 10 year-round local staff and 65 seasonal staff, primarily Mexican workers participating in the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program.

Todd Giffin, who manages the farm with his brother, Mike, says creativity and willingness to try different things goes back generations in the family. Todd and Mike's great uncle, George Hill, founded not only Mayfair Farms in 1940, but also a Portage la Prairie drugstore, a hotel and motel, a glassware shop, and a Mercury dealership. >>

The Giffin family pull together in good times and in bad to make the farm succeed. Pictured with Mike (left) and Todd is Melanie Giffin, office manager and daughter of the late Scott Giffin.







Harvesting cauliflower, a late-season crop, is labour intensive with lots of hand work once the crop is cut. Mayfair Farms employs approximately 65 seasonal workers, many of them from Mexico, and 10 year-round staff.

“There are still articles in the paper today about that history and all the things that he did,” Todd says. “It’s a pretty cool legacy he’s left. I guess you could say we’ve always been very diversified as a family.”

Within the farm itself there was experimentation right from the beginning. George Hill, running the farm with Mike and Todd’s grandparents, raised cattle and at one point over 2,000 turkeys. They picked up a contract with Canadian Forces Base Shilo in the 1940s, providing red potatoes to the Department of Defence.

Todd and Mike and their two brothers, Scott and Mitch, grew up in the same yard with their grandparents and their Uncle George. Because George didn’t have children of his own, the Giffin boys were his de facto grandkids.

In the early ’70s he decided to start up a strawberry patch, partly, Todd thinks, out of entrepreneurial spirit, and partly to give his nephews something to do.

“It was a learning curve for us,” recalls

Reflecting on the farm’s successes over the years, Todd says he takes particular pride in being a fair employer

Todd, who was about 10 years old at the time. “Keeping the berries clean was a big job, and the field we planted in was dirty with weeds. It was more work to keep it up, and that’s one thing we learned was that we had to work harder at it.

“We ended up losing our first planting, in about ’72, but the next year we did a little better job and by about ’75 we were able to start picking the berries.”

The family had some outside help from Manitoba Agriculture specialist Pete Peters, but ultimately it was the four Giffin boys who ran the patch and took care of the customers.

During the ’70s, Mayfair began to grow beans, peppers and celery — the celery specifically for the Campbell’s Soup Company in Portage. However, in 1984, they abandoned celery due to issues with importing seedlings from Florida. They also built a greenhouse to grow their own pepper seedlings.

“Once we had the greenhouse, that allowed us to play around with growing some other things,” Todd says. “We tried romaine lettuce, leaf lettuce, cucumbers, and radishes, all sold through Peak of the Market.”

In 1984, the year Todd graduated from high school, the family found they weren’t able to harvest efficiently with just local help. They brought in their first offshore labourers, four workers from Mexico.

In the late ’80s Mitch Giffin went off to medical school, and the other three Giffin boys deepened their involvement with the farm. In the early ’90s they bought a nearby cauliflower and cabbage operation, and built a vegetable cooler to

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

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cool the new crops. The construction of a packing shed a few years later allowed them to do more of their post-harvest handling.

“At that time, the Canada geese population was really starting to expand, and we were having a lot of issues with wildlife in our lettuces,” Todd says. “So we gave that crop up in the late ’90s, but at the same time we also started growing some transplanted Spanish onions, and then later, after we built an onion shed, red and yellow onions and jumbo onions.

“Throughout the years we’ve tried all kinds of different things. We’ve tried transplanting corn. We’ve tried rutabagas, and we’ve tried pumpkins — which we still grow.”

They also began to grow light red kidney beans in the early 2000s, first by custom operation, and then with their own equipment.

But amid all the expansion and the experimentation, there have been challenges. In 2005, four bays in the greenhouse collapsed under a heavy snow load, forcing the Giffins to scramble to rebuild.

In 2006, the United Food and Commercial Workers successfully organized Mayfair’s then-65 workers into a union, raising the possibility of a sudden spike in labour costs and increased outside intervention in daily farm life. Two years later, however, the workers voted to decertify.

In 2009, the unthinkable happened. The Mayfair packing shed collapsed, injuring several workers and killing Scott, the oldest of the Giffin brothers. The family was devastated, but that didn’t change the fact that they still had a crop to get off, and dozens of workers depending on them for a livelihood.

“At the end of the day, you still have a job to do,” says Todd. “When the accident happened, we had one shed that had cabbage, and all of the growers around helped us move the cabbage to another building where we could go and work on it.

“In times of need you find out where your friends are, and they were all around us.”

The tragedy, he says, tested their

resolve as a family, and ultimately brought them closer together. Today most of the Giffin clan is involved in the farm in some way.

Scott’s daughter, Melanie, is Mayfair Farms’ office manager, and his other two daughters, Kaley and Lana, often help out during strawberry season. Kelly Giffin — the father of Scott, Mitch, Mike and Todd — takes care of the books, and Mike’s kids, Foss and Sara, are also Mayfair employees.

Todd’s son Carter works on the farm, and his daughter, Jessie, plans to return once she’s completed her horticulture certificate at Assiniboine Community College. Mitch’s children, Cate and Aedan, live in Vancouver, but they hope to come and help out this summer.

Family participation is especially crucial during strawberry season, where up to 400 people per day can visit the Mayfair U-Pick strawberry patch. Safety and biosecurity protocols such as hand-washing facilities and appropriate signage are a must, and simply directing traffic can be a job in itself.

“We used to pick a lot of berries for people, but now we’re seeing the resurgence of young families coming out for that experience — enjoying the weather, having a day of fun in the patch,” Todd says.

“We were starting to get worried because we could see the die-hard berry-pickers of the canning generation getting older and we wondered if we would ever be able to replace all those customers, but now it seems like interest is really making a comeback.”

That same renewed consumer interest in locally grown food has helped the vegetable side of the operation as well. Canadian wholesalers’ desire to buy Canadian has allowed the farm to remain competitive despite a number of obstacles facing prairie vegetable farmers.

“It costs us more to produce here because of our short season — we’re not able to get two or three crops off our land,” Todd explains. “Minimum wage is high here, so labour costs are a factor. Heating costs for the greenhouse are

high. There are a lot of things that are going against us, but we’re still able to get a fair price because people want to see Canadian on the shelf.”

Expanding into cabbage, cauliflower, and dried beans was another turning point for the farm. Cauliflower and cabbage are high volume crops — Mayfair produced three million pounds of each last year — and the kidney beans have allowed them to reduce their labour costs.

“With the beans, you can go out with equipment and do the work, whereas cauliflower has to be tied with elastics weeks before you even get close to harvesting. The hand-roguing, the transplanting, it’s machine-assisted but it’s still very labour intensive. The post-harvest stuff is all done by hand with a knife.”

Reflecting on the farm’s successes over the years, Todd says he takes particular pride in being a fair employer. Most of Mayfair’s foreign workers have been with the farm seasonally for over 15 years. His involvement with KAP, as president of the Vegetable Growers Association of Manitoba, is geared toward being a voice for vegetable farmers on issues related to labour.

Todd is also proud of the way his family works together, and with the perseverance they’ve shown during hard times.

“We’ve had a lot of tough years where we didn’t make money,” he says. “Not sure why we continued with it — probably part of that competitive nature you develop as four boys growing up together, and never wanting to fail or give up. That’s probably why we are where we are today.”

“We’ve made a lot of decisions over the years, but the big decisions I don’t think are where your success comes from. I think it comes from all the little decisions that have to be made along the way. Those add up, and you can’t make the same ones every time; because things are always changing, what’s good to do one week might not be the best thing to do the next week, or the next year. It’s all kind of from the gut.” MFV

Members must set policy direction for KAP

BY DAN MAZIER, KAP PRESIDENT

IMAGINE YOU'RE STANDING IN AN elevator with your MP or MLA in the lead-up to a big election. Or maybe it's federal Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz or his provincial counterpart Ron Kostyshyn. You're headed to the 30th floor, so you've got some time. Or better yet, maybe the elevator's stalled and you've got lots of time.

What would you say? What issues would you raise? What would you demand answers about?

It's not often that any of us get that kind of access to a politician, but you have it as a member of KAP. We've had no problem getting politicians' and political candidates' attention when we've approached them as a voice for over 4,000 producers and commodity groups.

In the lead-up to the NDP provincial leadership convention earlier this year, KAP circulated a questionnaire to the three leadership candidates, asking them to outline their platforms on priority issues for farmers. We received responses from all three candidates, which we were then able to share with our members.

Within the last few months we have met extensively with the board of Manitoba Agricultural Services Corporation, as well as with Minister Kostyshyn, to lobby for changes to crop insurance and excess moisture insurance that would see better protection for producers who have been affected by multi-year losses.

KAP's reach certainly isn't limited to politicians either. Earlier this spring I sat down across from Ian White, president and CEO of the Canadian Wheat Board, to discuss the resolutions that KAP members have brought forward concerning the board's transition.

The Crop Logistics Working Group is another prime example of an important table that we've been able to take a seat at. The CLWG was renewed by Agricul-



tural and Agri-Food Canada earlier this year with a mandate to improve the efficiency of grain transport from farm to customer.

The group includes representation from across the agricultural sector — and is KAP's opportunity to work with key players such as AAFC, the Canadian Grain Commission and the Western Grain Elevators Association, to find solutions to the rail transport issue.

With the Ag Transport Coalition reporting that only 30 to 35 per cent of rail cars are showing up within the week they are ordered, this is one of our highest priority issues. The CLWG has prepared a submission for the Canada Transportation Act review this month, and we'll share the results of the review as soon as we have them.

KAP also participates in the Sustainable Drainage Task Force alongside >>

Ducks Unlimited, the Manitoba Habitat Heritage Corporation, and the Province of Manitoba. For the last two years the province has been working on an overhaul of its drainage practices and regulations, and KAP has been representing farmers' interests in these discussions.

The current proposal is encouraging in that it cuts down on some of the red tape in drainage licensing, and its integrated approach is good news for downstream producers who often suffer as a result of poorly-planned drainage.

Another important KAP lobby effort involves the Nutrient Application Advisory Group, organized by KAP, the province, the Manitoba Beef Producers, the Canadian Association of Agri-Retailers, and a number of custom application companies.

This project began in spring of 2012 when our members expressed frustration that the winter fertilizer ban kept them off the fields despite ideal soil conditions. We responded by lobbying for spring and fall variances when circum-

“ The best way to contribute to KAP’s advocacy for farmers is to participate in crafting our policy. District meetings are where that policy first begins to take shape and are your best opportunity to make your voice heard.”

stances warrant it, and that bought farmers a few extra days for nutrient application both last fall and this spring.

These are just a few of the gains we’ve made for Manitoba farmers in recent months, and so much more is always possible. Now, with both federal and

provincial elections coming up in the next year, the time is right for KAP members to start mulling over your imaginary elevator speeches with elected officials, and thinking about the issues you want us to raise on your behalf.

The best way to contribute to KAP’s advocacy for farmers is to participate in crafting our policy. District meetings are where that policy first begins to take shape and are your best opportunity to make your voice heard. Find out when the next meeting is in your district and show up with your own ideas for resolutions, or get involved discussing and debating the issues others have brought forward.

The good news is you don’t need to wait to be stuck in an elevator before you can have a word with your MP or your ag minister. But it will take some time and commitment on your part. KAP has countless opportunities to act as a voice for farmers, but we can only make the best of them if we know exactly what you want us to say. MFV

Meet KAP’s vice-presidents



Glenn Young

Glenn Young was elected vice-president in 2015 — although his history with KAP goes back to the organization’s very early roots. Glenn was a founding member, and it was his volunteer work signing up farmers for memberships in his municipality

that helped get KAP off the ground in 1985.

He has served on KAP’s Taxation Committee, and currently is a member of the Business Risk Management Committee, as well as the Grains, Oilseeds and Pulses Committee.

Glenn also served on the national committees for the NISA (Net Income Stabilization Account) and CAIS (Canadian Agricultural Income Stabilization) programs. He was the chair of the appeals committee for CAIS, and remained appeals chair when CAIS was followed by AgriStability. He still retains that position.

Glenn was also a board member and farm financial advisor for the Manitoba Farm Mediation Board for almost 25 years. He holds a bachelor of science in agriculture from the University of Manitoba.

A grains and oilseeds producer in the Cypress River area since 1975, Glenn also raised cattle for a number of years. He recently rented out most of his land, and now helps his renter during seeding and harvest.



Justin Jenner

Justin Jenner has been a KAP member for over a decade after joining the organization early on in his farming career. He has been a member of the KAP Executive since 2012, and is currently chairing the Grains, Oilseeds and Pulses Committee. In addition, he

co-chairs the Young Farmers Committee.

Justin graduated from the University of Manitoba in 2002 with a bachelor of science in agriculture, and has been farming full time ever since. He co-owns and operates Jenner Farms Ltd., a 4,500-acre grain and cattle farm located southeast of Minnedosa. The farm produces mainly wheat, canola, barley, and forage crops, as well as beef from a cow-calf operation and feedlot.

A fourth generation farmer, Justin saw the family farm recognized as a century farm in 2012.

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KAP HIGHLIGHTS

See what KAP is doing on behalf of all Manitoba farmers

BY VAL OMINSKI

GENERAL COUNCIL CALLS FOR KAP INCLUSION IN DEVELOPMENT OF GF3

► Key among the wide range of topics discussed at Keystone Agricultural Producers' General Council meeting in April was the upcoming Growing Forward 3 policy framework. The current Growing Forward 2 agreement in place expires in 2018, but is so complex that farm groups

are already looking three years down the road. Delegates to the meeting passed a resolution calling on the federal and provincial governments to involve KAP and other farm groups in the decisions that will be made during Growing Forward 3 development.

"This is an important process, and we must be at the table," said KAP president Dan Mazier. "There is so much at stake.

Business risk management programs in Growing Forward 2 are not meeting farmers' needs, and we must look at new programming that is more robust and responsive to changes on the farm — and this includes the effects of climate change."

OTHER RESOLUTIONS FROM SPRING GENERAL COUNCIL

Temporary Foreign Worker Program

Manitoba commercial beekeepers are negatively impacted by the new cumulative duration limit (4in/4out rule) of the Temporary Foreign Worker Program, and federal Ag Minister Gerry Ritz has said an amendment to this rule will be addressed by a meeting of stakeholders. Therefore, KAP will lobby AAFC to include the Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council, KAP, the Manitoba Beekeepers Association, and commodity associations in stakeholder consultations regarding this issue.

Fuel storage

In 2011, the Government of Manitoba made changes to bulk fuel storage regulations, and because KAP members are significant users of fuel KAP will lobby the Government of Manitoba to engage in meaningful consultations with farmers relating to bulk fuel storage before any changes are implemented.

Water retention research

Because soil has the capacity to hold large volumes of water, KAP will call on the governments of Manitoba and Canada to provide funding for at least five years for farm research on increasing water-holding capacity of Manitoba's agricultural lands.

Bipole III

KAP will continue to provide support for Manitoba landowners in their negotiations with Manitoba Hydro on liability, future land use restrictions (for example manure injectors and irrigation), and the resale value of property (aesthetics and otherwise).

Biosecurity

KAP will encourage livestock transportation companies to ensure that the footwear and work wear of their drivers are clean, or that drivers wear disposable footwear and work wear, with the intention of preventing the spread of disease.

Rural/urban dialogue

KAP will support and be involved with events such as Ag in the City and any others that provide a forum for dialog, discussion and information-sharing between food producers and the urban public. Additionally, because there is an increasing number of small farmers in Manitoba who are formerly from urban centres, KAP will welcome them to the industry and reach out to them whenever possible at functions for new small farms in Manitoba.

HELPING FARMERS COMPLY WITH SAFETY REGS

► KAP has partnered with SAFE Work Manitoba to offer free on-farm safety consultations. A safety consultant will meet with you on your farm to help identify potential safety issues, understand your responsibilities under the Workplace Health and Safety Act, and develop a safety plan for your operation. These consultations aren't inspections — the role of the consultant is to provide assistance, not to issue citations — but they will help you to prepare for future inspections by Workplace Safety and Health.

Also, if you have received an improvement order from a past inspection, the consultant can visit you prior to re-inspection and let you know if you're complying. Call KAP at 204-697-1140 to take advantage of this service.

CLIMATE CHANGE: BRM PROGRAMS MUST BE IMPROVED, NEW PROGRAMS DEVELOPED

► The agricultural risk management review task force, struck last winter to appraise the effectiveness of current BRM programs as they relate to climate change, has begun to consult with stakeholders. KAP recently attended a meeting with members of the task force, including chair Bill Uruski and past KAP president Doug Chorney, and stressed that BRM programs must be improved in order to increase producer uptake. At the same time, new programs must be developed that will encourage producers



KAP is calling for better BMR programs to address climate change, as well as new programs that will encourage producers to manage and mitigate the effects of climate change.

to manage and mitigate the effects of climate change.

The task force will be meeting with farmers this summer, and KAP encourages members to participate. Watch for info and dates in the KAP Alert.

CONTINUED WORK ON RAIL TRANSPORTATION

► KAP continues to be active in the federal Crop Logistics Working Group, chaired by the CGC's Murdoch MacKay. It includes stakeholders from the grain handling and transportation system sector. KAP president and representative on the committee, Dan Mazier, is on the subcommittee reviewing the Maximum Grain Revenue Entitlement, the program that is supposed to help protect grain shippers from excessive freight costs.

Additionally, KAP made an extensive submission over the winter to the Canada Grain Transportation Act Review, with 13 recommendations that included continuation of the Maximum Grain Revenue Entitlement. KAP also called for

penalty provisions in service level agreements if the railways fail to deliver to the agreed-upon service levels, as well as for arbitration options for dispute resolution between shippers and railways. For more information, contact the KAP office.

SUCCESS: PRODUCER PAYMENT SECURITY REVISIONS

► KAP lobbied the federal government last fall to move quickly on improving producer payment security, and in December the government paved the way for a fund-based security model — something that KAP has encouraged since it led a coalition to evaluate different security methods five years ago. KAP is stressing that farmer involvement and oversight is required to ensure such a fund serves the needs of producers. KAP has also lobbied for inclusion of feedmills in producer payment security to protect producers who sell to them — and the federal government recently made a proposal to this effect.

EFP NEWS

► KAP continues to be involved in the administration of the Environmental Farm Plan program, reviewing new or updated plans and issuing certificates of completion. Producers with certificates can then go on to apply for BMP (beneficial management practices) funding when it becomes available. EFP work shops will be held by MAFRD on June 18 at GO centres in Gladstone, Beausejour, Arborg, Teulon, Dauphin Somerset, Carman, Hamiota, Russell, Brandon, Souris, Melita, Virden, Swan River and The Pas. Call your local GO Office to register — and watch the Environmental Farm Plan website for funding availability.

KAP RAISES PROBLEM OF INCREASED EMI DEDUCTIBLES, MASC LISTENS

► KAP met with Manitoba Agricultural Services Corporation over the winter to put forward concerns and requests raised by KAP delegates in recent resolutions. In particular, KAP stressed the increased

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 15

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Former KAP VP Curtis McRae used videos, a slideshow and his own brand of humour at Ag in the City to educate Winnipeggers about farming.

KAP DIRECTOR EDUCATES, ENTERTAINS AT AG IN THE CITY

► KAP’s Curtis McRae hosted the Meet a Farmer segment at Agriculture in the City, held at the Forks in March. He spoke to an audience of mainly urban Winnipeggers, including a group of Grade 11 students, about the joys and challenges of farming, using videos and a slide show to provide the story behind the foods they eat every day. Ag in the City is an annual awareness event meant to educate Winnipeggers about the importance of agriculture in our province. Curtis farms near St. Andrews and is past vice-president of KAP and a current District 5 director.

SUCCESS ON TAX DEFERRAL FOR LIVESTOCK PRODUCERS

► KAP lobbied last fall for a federal income tax deferral after the 2014 flood destroyed thousands of acres of forage and hay land, leaving producers short of feed for the winter and forcing them to reduce their herds. The deferral was subsequently announced early last winter.



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Cigi working for the entire wheat value chain

JoAnne Buth reflects on her first year at the helm of the Canadian International Grains Institute

THE CANADIAN INTERNATIONAL GRAINS INSTITUTE — better known as Cigi — is an independent market development institute and research facility located in downtown Winnipeg. Funded by farmers, the federal government, and industry partners, Cigi’s mission is to increase the utilization and value of Canadian grain and field crops.

Last summer, JoAnne Buth left her position in the Canadian Senate to take the top job at Cigi. Prior to politics Buth had spent most of her career in agriculture, working in the soils and crops branch of Manitoba Agriculture and as an information officer for the Agriculture Canada Research Station. She served as vice-president of the Canola Council of Canada for eight years and as president for five.

With the first anniversary of her return to the agriculture sector approaching, Buth spoke to *Manitoba Farmers’ Voice* about her inaugural year with Cigi, the organization’s achievements, and her goals for the future.

BY JACQUIE NICHOLSON

In summing up her approach to management, JoAnne Buth borrows from an old African proverb: “If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.”

When she took over the leadership of Cigi last August, Buth knew that collaboration would be key to the organization’s continued success: collaboration with her staff, with other organizations, and with everyone who makes up the western Canadian field crop industry.

Cigi, she says, was entering a growth phase and there were any number of directions its work could go.

“I was really excited coming into this job to take a look at possibilities for additional expansion and to look at really what the industry needed,” she recalls. “We used to be directed by the Canadian Wheat Board, and so as that has changed, we have had the opportunity to go to the entire value chain and say, ‘What does the value chain need from Cigi?’”



JoAnne Buth

The Canadian wheat value chain, Buth explains, encompasses everyone from growers to exporters to millers to end-use customers. Much of Cigi’s work involves providing technical support to end-use customers, but it also collects information about customer needs in

order to educate grain producers and others along the value chain.

That shift to working in service of the entire industry has influenced Buth's decisions and her choice of projects for her first year.

"What I've introduced over the last year is really a systemic, market-based approach," she says.

"We look at the different countries and regions and customers, and we evaluate each market on the basis of several questions: Are they an expanding market? Is there potential there? Who are our competitors in this market? Are they primarily U.S. or Australian? Why? And what are the opportunities for Canadian wheat there?"

In partnership with Cereals Canada and with support from the province of Manitoba, Cigi has begun a thorough market analysis for wheat and durum, hoping to be able to share the results by the end of the year.

Cigi has also been promoting the Canadian brand abroad. Crop missions — overseas trips to promote Canadian grain products to potential buyers — have long been a part of Cigi's work. But in 2014, under Buth's direction, they took on a new form as Cigi partnered with the Canadian Grain Commission and Cereals Canada in what they've dubbed a "Team Canada" approach.

The team delivered seminars on the latest crop of Canadian wheat to customers in 20 countries around the world: nine in Asia, four each in Latin America and Middle East/North Africa, and three in the European Union.

Cereals Canada presented information on industry issues, allaying customers' concerns about transportation. The CGC discussed the quality assurance program and the grading system, and Cigi delivered the facts about the quality of the crop.

"We had a long, tough, growing year and a tough harvest, and there were rumours out there that we didn't have a lot of quality product to offer," Buth says. "It's true that we didn't have a lot of No. 1, especially on the durum side.

"But because of the quality analysis that Cigi did, we were able to explain



The Asian "noodle line" is a series of machines that makes dough, cuts it into noodles, and cooks the noodles. It's used to compare and demonstrate to foreign customers the quality characteristics of different Canadian wheat varieties in the making of Asian noodles such as ramen instant noodles.

that the downgrading factor of mildew is not going to affect the colour of the bread or noodles. So that went a long way toward assuring customers that they would have enough quality of Canadian product."

The crop missions were universally well-received, and one customer from London made the pronouncement, "Canada is back."

"What he meant by that is, when there were marketing changes in Australia it took them about five to seven years to respond with this kind of industry approach to their customers," Buth says. "In Canada, we did it within a couple of years. He said it was clear that all of the different components of industry were there to assure customers and to answer questions. It was clear that we're back in the game."

Another highlight for Buth and for Cigi this past year was a federal-provincial government grant of \$2 million. The money will enable Cigi to buy 20 pieces of new equipment for the milling, baking, noodle, and pasta facilities where its staff conducts their applied research work.

"One of the pieces we'll be purchasing is a new 'BoMill,' which is a seed sorter that uses near-infrared to sort kernels,"

Buth says. "We'll use it to do demonstrations for growers, seed companies, and feed companies, and they will also get a chance to use it. We've been looking at how we can use it to remove fusarium-infected kernels and upgrade the wheat, essentially."

While it's been a year of successes, Buth says she's also cognizant of the challenges ahead. One of those is sustainable funding; Cigi is currently funded in part by producers through a dues check-off that expires in 2017, as well as through government funding that is also time-limited.

Buth says she has begun to meet with stakeholders to discuss finding more consistent financial support for Cigi's work.

"Everybody has been very supportive of the work that Cigi does, and we do have some time yet to work through these issues," she says.

Another challenge for Buth, and one she is eager to meet, is to raise awareness along the value chain about Cigi's work and how it benefits them, particularly growers. She believes knowledge of Cigi's programs and mission is beginning to increase, but there is still much more to do. >>

“At the end of the day, we need to ensure that there’s value for everybody, especially the grower. We don’t have an industry unless the grower chooses to grow wheat.”

“One of the things we are doing right now to benefit growers is taking a look at the quality characteristics of different varieties, so that we can ensure that the varieties that are being registered now — the ones that are being commercially grown out there — will meet the needs of the customers. That’s something we do in order to provide that information back to farmers.”

Cigi’s most popular program is Combine to Customer, a 2-1/2 day seminar that invites producers to visit Cigi’s facilities. They hear presentations from industry representatives, learn about grain inspection and grading, and attend sessions in milling, baking, and pasta processing.

Growers appreciate the hands-on nature of the program, says Buth, who chaired the most recent session.

“In the analytical area, they get to hold gluten in their hands and feel the characteristics of gluten,” she says. “In the baking area, we have a demonstration of how bakers use wheat, and what quality characteristics are important for things like crumb colour and dough stickiness, and the volume of the loaf.”

“That’s all really important because when a farmer delivers grain to the elevator, it’s gone. And so this program allows growers to make the link, to realize what it is they’re growing, how important it is, and why quality matters.”

Buth says that her proudest achieve-

ments of the past year are those that aren’t hers alone but that are shared by Cigi’s staff and by the growers producing quality product. She points to Cigi’s ability to compete with its U.S. counterpart, the U.S. Wheat Association, despite being less than half its size.

“The U.S. actually has a portion of their strategic plan that is targeting Canadian dominance in Latin America,” she says. “They target areas where we have made good inroads, so we need to keep doing what we’re doing.”

Asked about future plans and goals, Buth pointed to ongoing internal discussions about relocating the Cigi facility.

“We like the downtown, and being close to the grain commission is important to us,” she says. “But we do need more space in some areas... I’m hoping that within the next eight to 10 months we’ll have some sort of a plan for renewal, whether that’s in the same building or somewhere new.”

She also challenges herself and her staff to remain mindful of the full scope of Cigi’s responsibilities and priorities going forward.

“Sometimes we think that the end-user is our customer,” Buth says. “But really we work for the Canadian wheat value chain. At the end of the day, we need to ensure that there’s value for everybody, especially the grower. We don’t have an industry unless the grower chooses to grow wheat.” MFV



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Manitoba 

KAP members from Birtle named Manitoba's outstanding young farmers

BY JACQUIE NICHOLSON

IF YOU WANT TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN farming, you might want to try getting off the farm.

It may sound counterintuitive, but it's worked for Mark and Cori Pawluk, second generation grain and oilseed producers from Birtle and winners of the 2015 Manitoba Outstanding Young Farmers Award.

"I've been to conferences from Paris to India to Chicago," says Mark Pawluk. "I think there's a lot of value in getting off the farm and doing some networking and learning, whether it's post-secondary education, some other formal training, or just going to some local workshops."

Mark began farming with his parents in 1999 after graduating with an agribusiness degree from the University of Manitoba. In 2003, when he was 23, he bought the grain elevator in Birtle, built a new cleaning facility, and created Pawluk Ag Ventures.

"I think if we were to build this facility today we would probably analyze it and see all the risk and the potential problems that might arise," he says. "But as it happened, it turned out to be a great example of the kind of opportunity that young people see that others let pass by."

The risk paid off in a big way. The family farm has since expanded to 5,700 acres and the elevator's rail access opens up almost limitless market possibilities for the Pawluks' wheat, barley, flax, and canola crops.

They have also been able to add revenue by offering toll processing and transloading services. The plant operates year round, processing flax seed for the human and pet food markets.

Mark and Cori met in 2008 through

mutual friends while Cori was taking a Bachelor of Science degree in psychiatric nursing at Brandon University. She moved with Mark to the farm after her graduation, and quickly began to learn the ropes.

"The hardest thing to learn was having a schedule that depends on the weather, and getting accustomed to the long stretches of work in the spring and fall," Cori recalls. "The most fascinating thing was seeing how much work, money, and care goes into growing a crop, and then putting it all into Mother Nature's hands. And somehow, it usually works out."

In addition to handling the administrative work for Pawluk Ag Ventures, Cori works as a registered psychiatric nurse at Brandon Regional Health Centre and cares for the couple's three-year-old son, Landon. She also offers a unique perspective in discussions about the direction of the business.

"You can get in kind of a rut when you've been doing this for long enough," Mark says. "Cori helps me to think outside the box. She didn't grow up on a farm, and that's a positive thing. She brings a fresh perspective."

In addition to Mark and Cori, Pawluk Ag Ventures employs two full-time staff, two or three seasonal staff, and Mark's dad, Brian, who despite officially retiring in 2011, continues to be an invaluable resource around the farm.

"He still does an incredible amount," Mark says. "As he steps further and further back and I start looking to hire someone to replace him, I realize there's just no way to replace that experience and knowledge."





Mark and Cori Pawluk will go on to compete in the Canadian Outstanding Young Farmers competition in Edmonton this fall. Pictured here with son Landon.

Just being able to get his input on key decisions, I value that more now than I ever did.”

The Pawluks’ success prompted a longtime friend, Tyler Fulton, to nominate them for the Manitoba Outstanding Young Farmers Award, a competition that celebrates the achievements of producers under 40. Tyler and his wife Dorelle had a great experience when they competed and took home the award in 2013.

“After it was over, I started thinking,

‘Who would really love this? And who would have a great chance of doing well?’” Tyler says. “Mark and Cori were the first ones to come to mind. They, to me, are the quintessential farm managers.

“They are very deliberate in the decisions that they make on their farm, and Mark has always shown a willingness to think about things a little bit differently and put his money where his mouth is. The elevator purchase in Birtle and the business that he does is not your standard approach to »

things, and that's really received well in the OYF."

Manitoba Outstanding Young Farmers judge Dustin Williams says that while all of this year's competitors were strong contenders, Mark and Cori stood apart for their strong financial performance and excellent crop and production management.

"They just have a very innovative and dynamic approach to marketing their crop," he adds.

Mark agrees that owning the elevator has made all the difference for Pawluk Ag Ventures, bringing in extra revenue and enhancing their marketing efforts.

"In 2013 when the railways struggled to move the crop inland, cash values reflected a huge disconnect between local and port prices," Mark recalls. "We were able to access rail cars and sell into the track market in Thunder Bay and direct to U.S. mills, realizing the true value of what that grain was selling for.

Not only does the elevator and rail access add revenue, it also saves costs. The majority of the Pawluks' grain production makes a mere six-mile haul from the farm into town, where it gets put onto rail. It allows them to keep their freight costs down, and save on elevation and handling tariffs.

"When I bought the elevator, I don't think we even realized its full potential," Mark says. "At the time the Wheat Board was in power so market access and opportunities were limited. Today, there's a lot more opportunity, and that rail access really opens up our world."

In a competitive industry, Mark believes it's important for producers to think strategically and develop sound business skills.

Modern farming is about more than just being able to drive a tractor, he says, and today's young producers need to challenge themselves to learn as much as they can about marketing and to think creatively about ways to set themselves apart from the pack.

"If you find something that's going to add value, don't be afraid to take some chances. And remember to dif-



When he was just 23, Mark bought the elevator at Birtle and built a cleaning facility — something that has given the family farm a leading edge in marketing and adding value.

“If you find something that's going to add value, don't be afraid to take some chances... Look for ways to do it cheaper or sell it for more money, and preferably both.”

ferentiate yourself. Look for ways to do it cheaper or sell it for more money, and preferably both.”

This generation of farmers faces a number of obstacles, from increasing capital and financial requirements to weather and climate-related challenges. One that the Pawluks have struggled with is trying to find skilled workers as they expand their operation.

"It has been challenging at times, although we are very fortunate to have some great people, and recognize that we wouldn't be where we are today without their hard work and dedication."

Carving out time for parenting, for rest, and for commitments outside of the farm is another challenge for young producers, but it's one the Pawluks say they're getting better at. As they have

pulled back on increasing their acreage, put more emphasis on the elevator and cleaning facility, and hired outside staff, they have also moved toward a more structured hourly schedule.

"We try to get our work done throughout the week and then take weekends to enjoy ourselves and spend time together as a family," Mark says.

"That's not to say that we operate on a 40-hour week every week, but at the same time, if I know I've got guys showing up on Monday morning for work, maybe I don't need to be out working on a Sunday afternoon. If something can wait until Monday, it waits."

The family enjoys camping, golfing, and boating in the summertime, and travelling in the winter wherever they can. Being deliberate about making time for family means that Mark and Cori spend as much time as possible with their son.

"Being able to teach our son the value of hard work and the advantages of living in a small community is probably the thing I like most about farming," Cori says.

Having taken the regional Outstanding Young Farmer title, Mark and Cori now move on to the national competition in Edmonton this fall.

"It's a full week of basically hanging out and networking with other like-minded young producers," Mark says, "so we're really looking forward to it." MFV



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New contact for KAP members' insurance needs

KAP'S STAKE IN THE CO-OPERATORS member-owner network means its members have access to exclusive insurance products. Because everyone's needs are different and the spectrum of options can be overwhelming, The Co-operators has appointed Tracey Malone of Inview Insurance Services to consult with KAP members about what is available to them.

Malone approaches her relationships with clients from the perspective that insurance is a personal investment that must be customized to each individual's specific needs.

"We don't believe insurance is a product you buy off a shelf," she says. "We're not an insurance store. We are very much relationship-based and take time with our clients to help them find the best solutions to meet their needs."

This approach, she explains, prevents clients from purchasing more insurance than necessary and directs premium dollars within a budget to the areas of need that are most important or represent the greatest risk.

Inview Insurance Services is now the contact for KAP members looking for farm insurance, offering everything that a producer might need under one roof. For members who haven't shopped around for farm insurance in recent years, a quote from Malone is a must, as The Co-operators has updated the products they have on offer.

Many clients appreciate not only the customized and professional service offered by Inview Insurance Services, but also the opportunity to support a value-rich company that operates under a co-operative model.

"The Co-operators has over 65 years of history as a co-operative. Our focus extends beyond financial results to a



genuine concern for also satisfying the needs of our member-owners, communities and staff," Malone says.

"This is where my passion lies: with our member-owner network and also within the voluntary non-profit and co-operative sectors. These are the things The Co-operators has always done well, so it's where we put our focus."

Contact Tracey Malone with any questions you might have about the insurance products and savings available to you as a KAP member. When it comes to protecting what matters to you, Inview Insurance Services will put your needs first and help you find the best solutions for you, your family, and your farm. **MFV**

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www.cooperators.ca/en/inview-insurance

Farmers tell their stories in new documentaries

Aiming at non-farming public

BY JACQUIE NICHOLSON

DO A GOOGLE SEARCH FOR DOCUMENTARIES about agriculture and you'll find no shortage of offerings: films on everything from sustainability to biotechnology, farm labour practices to animal welfare.

But how many of the films that claim to tell the story of our food systems actually come from within the agricultural community? Many popular documentaries about agriculture are critical of the industry and most contain little input from producers themselves.

Two new film projects spearheaded by prairie agrologists take a different approach. *Built on Agriculture*, a four-part PBS series that aired its first episode in May, tells the story of commercial agriculture in Manitoba from its origins in 1812. *KNOWGMO*, a feature-length documentary still in production, seeks to dispel common public misconceptions about genetic engineering and to discuss the ways the technology can benefit growers and consumers around the world.

Both films look to farmers to tell their own stories and to shape the narrative about their work. And both have the general public as their target audience, with the hope of engaging and educating viewers who may not have any direct connections to farmers and farming.

"A dream I always had was to somehow, somewhere, put together an audiovisual production for the general public to understand the importance of production and the passion of >>



Robert Saik is a Red Deer agrologist and the CEO of Agri-Trend. He decided to partner with his filmmaker son, Nick Saik, to combat the surge of opposition to genetically modified crops that has become especially common on social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter.

farmers,” says Robert Tisdale, a retired agrologist and consultant who spent much of his career working in pedigreed seed and special crops production.

“Farmers’ passion is extremely understated. I think a lot of farmers, when it comes to what they do and how they do it, talk with too much humility, and this can be a barrier toward the general public really understanding agriculture. But the equipment they work with, the risks they work under, the family units that do the work... this is all indicative of the sophistication of thinking that farmers have.”

Tisdale finally got his chance to fulfill his farm documentary dream when he became president of the St. Andrews Society, and member of the Bicentenary Committee which was planning activities to mark the bicentenary of the 1812 Red River Selkirk settlement, the first permanent European agricultural settlement on the Northern Great Plains of North America.

An agricultural subcommittee was struck to discuss opportunities, and ultimately decided on a legacy project — a film about the history of farming in Manitoba. The group, chaired by Mike McAndless, included numerous organizations and individuals involved in the ag sector. They considered many production options, but eventually pitched the idea for *Built on Agriculture* to PBS’s Prairie Public Television, and it was immediately picked up.

Tisdale began heading up the funding effort for the project, and has done so well he is now seeking the final 10 per cent (\$25,000) to cover off the industry portion.

The four-part series covers the birth of commercial farming in Manitoba, as well as the history of agricultural institutions such as the Canadian Wheat Board. Interviews with farmers highlight their experiences and perspectives, and explore the challenges of the industry’s future and the need for increased production to feed a growing global population.

“We’ve worked very hard in our editing process to avoid taking a stand on particular political issues,” Tisdale says.

That isn’t to say that *Built on Agriculture* avoids hot topics, he adds. It covers a range of complex issues, including marketing, risk management, plant breeding, and the role of technological innovation in farming.

“We highlight different perspectives, and we talk with each individual about their position on an issue,” Tisdale explains. “A documentary, if it’s doing its work, provides you with information and the clear positions of individuals, but then you are left to decide. The narrator simply carries you through it, and at the end of the documentary you find yourself in a position where you have to make a decision.”

Another project that explores controversial topics critical to the future of farming is *KNOWGMO*, a film its executive producer touts as a much-needed defense of the agriculture industry.

Robert Saik is a Red Deer agrologist and the CEO of Agri-Trend, a consulting firm that works with growers around the world. He decided to partner with his filmmaker son, Nick Saik, to combat the surge of opposition to genetically modified crops

that has become especially common on social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter.

Anti-GMO rhetoric, Robert Saik says, is often emotionally charged and based on oversimplification or misunderstandings about science.

“So many of the ideas are conflated,” he says. “They say, ‘GMO leads to superweeds.’ But herbicide resistance is something we deal with in all herbicide regimes, including in the U.K. fighting black-grass right now where there are no GMO crops.

“They attribute the decrease of monarch butterflies to the use of GMOs, but if farmers’ fields are cleaner and the milkweed population is down, is that really a GMO problem or is that just the result of the fact that farmers are cleaning up their fields? Maybe we need some areas planted along the migration route that have milkweed in them if we want to address that issue.”

Saik says he is uniquely positioned to make a film about genetic engineering, not only because of his background and connections in agriculture, but because of his current role in the industry. While Agri-Trend influences a lot of acres across North America, he says, its compensation doesn’t depend on the sale of seed or inputs.

“So when people attack me and call me a shill, which is a common argument from anti-GMO activists,” he says, “I can tell them, ‘Well, explain that to me, because I don’t make money from the growing of the crop or the sale of crop inputs.’”

KNOWGMO is geared toward the urban public, and responds to common criticisms of plant biotechnology.

It also highlights the ways that genetic engineering has been used to improve farming practices around the world: the creation of the rainbow papaya to overcome the ringspot virus in Hawaii, the role of Bt cotton in reducing pesticide use in India, and the potential of Vitamin A-enriched golden rice to prevent premature blindness in many developing countries.

Canadian farmers will also have the spotlight in Saik’s film, discussing the ways that GMO technology has allowed them to reduce tillage and pesticide application and produce greater yields.

“We’ll of course be talking to young farmers about the technology, but also to farmers in their 60s and 70s about the changes they have observed during their lifetimes,” Saik says. “They really understand what it meant when HT canola came out and the change that made to our ability to grow canola in arid climates.”

Like Tisdale, Saik believes that farmers have a critical role to play in shaping the narrative about agriculture.

“Farmers are in a very good position,” he says. “Activists will start backing away when they realize they are ganging up on farmers. People have a very strong and a very good opinion of farmers, and so getting farmers engaged in this conversation is very important.”

Farmers have also helped considerably in another important area of *KNOWGMO*: the funding. Saik says that all of the \$700,000 he has raised so far has come from farmers, farm associations, and small or medium-sized agribusinesses. He is

continuing to fundraise not only to complete the production of the film, but also to assist with distribution costs and film festival entry fees.

The more people who can be exposed to the ideas in the film, the bigger impact it can have, Saik says. And there's a lot at stake.

"The fearmongering of food is leading to panic policies that are hurting the rest of the world and are hurting the future of agriculture, because we're not being allowed to use science," Saik says. "Plant breeding has changed more in the past five years than it has in the previous 5,000, and they're saying we can't use that."

He expects the world premiere will be sometime in 2016 but is planning an industry viewing on December 2 in Saskatoon. Readers who are interested in learning more about the film — or donating to the project — should go to <http://www.knowgmothemovie.com/>.

Built on Agriculture has already aired its first episode on Prairie Public Television, with the remaining segments slated to air in September. The first segment, on the Selkirk settlement, can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MlssZiikcok>. The series will reach households in both Canada and the U.S. through the PBS network, a fact that pleases those who have worked on it.

"The end game is, consumers make informed choices," Tisdale says. "And they have a larger respect for growers." MFV



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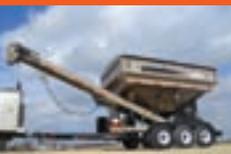
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New insurance programs providing security for livestock producers

BY JACQUIE NICHOLSON

UP UNTIL 2014 THERE WAS VERY little in the way of price protection for livestock producers, despite the industry's reputation for unpredictable markets. Beef producers in particular felt this gap all too acutely during the BSE crisis in 2003.

"It wasn't a huge number in the grand scheme of things, but it was a big number for us: 150 fat cattle ready to go to the U.S.," recalls Wayne Gardiner, who runs a cow-calf and backgrounder operation at Lakeland.

"At that time they were probably worth \$1,200 to \$1,300 a head. We ended up having to feed them most of the summer and then ended up with more like \$300 or \$400 a head on them. It was a huge hit to our operation, and there was just no way to protect against it."

Last year, the Manitoba Agricultural Services Corporation announced its new Western Livestock Price Insurance program, designed to address some of the market instability faced by producers.

The program allows producers to lock in a protected floor price for their livestock, which is determined by factors like futures markets, exchange rates, and the basis between U.S. and Canadian livestock prices. Premiums are determined according to the length of the policy, the coverage level desired, and the market volatility at the time of purchase.

Gardiner and his family, who calve about 600 cows and background between 1,200 and 1,300 through the winter, learned of the program at a presentation given by MASC.

"We had zero protection otherwise," he says. "Before this there was really nothing out there besides going into the futures market and playing with options and futures contracts, and it was just too difficult for us to do that."



Cattle producer Wayne Gardiner recommends both livestock price insurance and forage insurance for the security they provide.

He says he appreciates the range of options in coverage levels and terms, as well as the simplicity of the program.

“We don’t buy the most expensive coverage, but we usually go down and buy something that costs us maybe \$15–\$20 per animal, and that’s going to guarantee us a floor price that we can live with in the event of a BSE-type disaster again.

“For us, most of our cattle are home-raised, so we know what our costs are on the cow-calf side, so even at a level of a \$2.06 market, or a \$2.10, we’re still very profitable.”

Another new program the Gardiners have been able to take advantage of is MASC’s revamped forage insurance. In part due to input from the Manitoba Beef Producers and the recommendations of an industry-government forage task team, MASC updated its insurance options for forage in 2014.

The program is cost-shared with the provincial and federal governments to make it more affordable for producers.

“In the past we’d looked into the programs and the coverage levels were so low and the premiums so expensive that it just didn’t work for us at all,” Gardiner says. “Now they’ve managed to get the premiums way down and bring the coverage levels up so they’re based on your own production, or a lot closer to your own production.”

Gardiner says he usually chooses the higher level coverage on alfalfa and keeps his stands fairly new, which keeps coverage levels up and premiums within reason — age of hay stand is considered when calculating probable yield.

Another improvement to forage insurance is that coverage is provided on each separate type of hay, and not combined for coverage or claim purposes.

While Gardiner says he hasn’t had to make a claim on either the forage or the livestock insurance so far, he recommends both programs for the security they bring to him as a producer.

“It just lets us sleep at night,” he says. “With the livestock insurance, we buy it and we know the value of the >>

Western Livestock Price Insurance

- Producer purchases insurance based on coverage level desired, length of policy and expected sale weight. These factors will determine the price of the insurance premium, as will the market volatility at time of purchase; the higher the market volatility, the higher the premium.
- Upon premium payment, the producer has a protected floor price.
- For cattle, if the settlement price is below the selected coverage price during the last four weeks of the policy, the producer can make a claim for all or some of the insured weight on that policy. For hogs, if the cash market is below the selected coverage at the expiration of the policy, an indemnity is automatically paid to the producer.
- There is no obligation to sell livestock at the time the policy expires.

FOR CATTLE PRODUCERS

Feeder cattle

- Offered year-round.
- Insures feeder cattle, using a forecasted market-driven price; reflects the risks of backgrounding cattle.
- Policies expire 12 to 36 weeks after purchase of coverage.
- Settlement price is based on the average price of an 850-pound steer, derived from current sales data from auction markets in Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

Fed cattle

- Offered year-round.
- Available for fed cattle intended for sale; policies expire 12 to 36 weeks from the date of purchasing coverage.
- Settlement price is based on the weekly Alberta Fed Cattle Price, using CanFax data.
- Basis-only policies are also available.

Calves

- Offered in spring.
- Designed for cow-calf producers to purchase coverage from February to May.
- Policies expire 16 to 36 weeks after purchase of coverage, during the fall calf run from September to December.
- Settlement price is based on the average price of a 600-pound steer calf, derived from current sales data from auction markets in Saskatchewan and Manitoba.
- Deadline to purchase coverage is in May each year.

FOR HOG PRODUCERS

- Offered year-round.
- Designed to provide producers with protection against declining hog prices.
- Producers can select policies from two to 10 months.
- Policies are purchased based on expected sales weight of hogs, with no weight minimum, and no obligation to sell at policy expiration.
- Forward coverage prices are based on CME Lean Hog Futures (basis), U.S./Canada currency differences, and a localized factor that reflects the difference between market conditions in Western Canada and the U.S.
- Settlement price is a monthly averaged formula price, calculated using the USDA spot cash price (converted to Canadian dollars) and adjusted for a Manitoba factor.
- A producer is entitled to a claim if, at the time of policy expiration, the monthly settlement price is lower than the coverage price of the purchased policy.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

All local MASC insurance offices
Manitoba’s Program Coordinator: 204-239-3084
Website: www.WLPIP.ca
Phone: 1-844-782-5747 (toll-free)

market we're going into — we'll be buying for our heifers in October or November and then we won't be worrying all summer about the market.

“With the forage, you don't have the worries about getting a drought and getting no hay that year, and not being able to afford to replace it.”

The livestock sector faces some unique challenges that require producers to constantly have risk management in mind.

The livestock sector faces some unique challenges that require producers to constantly have risk management in mind

According to Gardiner, having sufficient insurance programs available ensures that producers all across the sector can be competitive.

“Without insurance, people won't take the risks,” he says. “If the background and feedlot operations can make use of this program, then they can buy in cattle at whatever the market is and insure them, so it works down the ladder and keeps the whole industry rolling.” MFV

Revised forage insurance

Select Hay Insurance

Select Hay Insurance provides coverage for producers who experience a production shortfall or quality loss due to designated perils.

- Provides production and quality guarantees individually on five types of hay — alfalfa, alfalfa grass mixtures, tame grasses, clover, and coarse hay, with no offsets between hay types for coverage and claim calculations. (Note: coarse hay is native hay and other types of hay not included in the other specific categories.)
- Producers can choose a coverage level of 70 per cent or 80 per cent of probable yield.
- Coverage changed from an individual productivity index (IPI) system to an individual coverage (IC) system, which will be more responsive to each producer's actual yield.
- Forage stands of less than or equal to four years old and stands older than four years old have the same premium, but have differing probable yields.
- Producers insuring alfalfa can also insure for a higher relative feed value (RFV) by enrolling in the enhanced quality option (see below).

Basic Hay Insurance

Basic Hay Insurance provides lower-cost, whole-farm production coverage to protect winter feed supplies against losses due to designated perils.

- Provides a combined production guarantee including all five hay types.
- Coverage is based on 80 per cent of the long-term average yield, with producers having the option of selecting a high insured dollar (\$67 per tonne) or low dollar (\$40 per tonne) value (based on 2015 prices).

- Age of stand is considered when calculating probable yield; stands of less than or equal to four years old and stands older than four years old will be differentiated.
- To keep premium costs reasonable, there is no quality (RFV) guarantee.

Also included at no extra cost

The following benefits are provided at no additional cost with both select and basic hay insurance:

- The **hay disaster benefit** compensates producers for the increased costs of purchasing hay and transportation when there is a severe province-wide forage shortfall (more than 20 per cent of insured producers report yields of less than 50 per cent of the long-term provincial yield). When triggered, this benefit will pay \$40 per tonne of production shortfall to enrolled producers who have a production shortfall claim.
- The **forage restoration benefit** provides compensation when insured forages and forage seed are damaged by excess moisture and need to be re-established. Compensation is provided to help cover the cost of establishing a new forage stand.

Insurance options

- A **harvest flood option** is available to producers insured under select or basic hay insurance. It provides coverage for coarse hay* if a producer is unable to harvest due to wet conditions at harvest time. Two levels of coverage are available: \$35 per acre (high dollar value) and \$20 per acre (low dollar value). A base deductible of 20 per cent of the total insured acres for coarse hay is applied. (*Coarse hay is native hay and other types of hay not included in the other specific categories.)
- An **enhanced quality option** is available to producers with alfalfa hay insured under select hay insurance. It provides a higher RFV guarantee for alfalfa hay.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

All local MASC insurance offices

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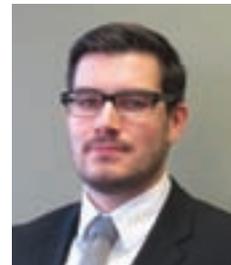
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Take advantage of Growing Forward 2 programming

BY JAMES BATTERSHILL, KAP GENERAL MANAGER



TWENTY PER CENT. IN AN INFORMAL poll of General Council delegates, that's the percentage who indicated they had dropped out of the AgriStability program since 2013. That's the year that reference margin limitations were introduced and the top tier of support was eliminated.

Potentially more concerning is that a large portion of currently enrolled producers indicated they are considering withdrawing from the program in future years due to a lack of opportunity to ever collect a payment.

Farmer frustration with the program is clear, but we should all be concerned if too many producers choose not to enroll. Many in the agribusiness management sector agree that AgriStability, while not a very good income stabilization tool anymore, is still a relatively inexpensive single-year disaster insurance tool for the vast majority of farmers.

The fear that many farmers shared when AgriStability 2 was introduced was that both the federal and provincial governments were intentionally trying to reduce enrollment with the hope that they could then justify eliminating the program outright for Growing Forward 3.

I don't necessarily subscribe to this belief, but I do think it's clear that government is pushing farmers to rely on market-based risk management tools rather than government-subsidized programming. The entire AgriRisk program is designed specifically to help the insurance and risk management industries develop such programs and products.

This isn't inherently bad, as there is certainly a role in agriculture for private sector risk management tools and products, but it would be a mistake to believe these products can replicate the kind of support that our existing BRM programming offers.

KAP has also seen a decline in participation rates in the Environmental Farm Plan program since 2013. Under Growing Forward 1 we would see an average of 210 producers a year having their EFP workbooks reviewed, but under Growing Forward 2 that has declined to 142 producers per year on average.

There is farmer frustration with the EFP program due to a reduction in the number of BMP options available for funding, but I would still strongly encourage all Manitoba producers to attend a workshop and have a review done. You may not have started to see it at the elevator or auction mart just yet, but we know that more and more of our customers are looking for information regarding the environmental sustainability of our industry.

The EFP program is well regarded by our customers nationally and is generally quite accessible to farmers. My fear is that if our participation rates decline too far, the credibility of the program will come into question.

If this happens we may end up seeing the McDonalds and Walmarts of the world start to dictate sustainability criteria to their suppliers, which will inevitably be less flexible, and include less farmer input than the EFP currently does. This would also inevitably add additional cost and administrative burden to farms in Manitoba and across Canada.

There are, in fact, many beneficial Growing Forward 2 programs that I would encourage farmers to participate in. The Growing Assurance suite of programs, which includes EFP, also provides incentives for farmers to complete a field bio-security plan (mbpestlab.ca for more details), or to participate in commodity-specific, on-farm food safety programs.

Plus there are new and innovative BRM tools being offered such as the Western Livestock Price Insurance program, which again has seen limited uptake, but many cattle producers I have spoken to indicate that it is an appealing program for their farms.

In addition, young farmers are fortunate to have unique programs targeted at them to help pay for private strategic business planning, financial management planning, or the development of an HR plan.

Even farm groups like KAP have received support from GF2 programs. The Growing Visions program allowed us to do a high-level review of our mandate and organizational structure, by providing support for our executive to do a strategic planning session with an outside consultant.

As well, we were able to perform an assessment of our member communication tools, and update our by-laws to better reflect current best practices for not-for-profit governance.

KAP is going to keep working with our commodity group partners and our national organization, the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, to assess GF2 programs and develop recommendations for how they can be improved for GF3.

Individual farmers have a significant role to play in shaping these future programs as well. By not taking advantage of programs offered, you cannot provide feedback directly to government — and this sends the message that farmers don't want or need the program, rather than the program needs to be improved.

I encourage you to review the Growing Forward 2 programs offered (gov.mb.ca/agriculture/growing-forward-2), and pick the ones that suit your needs. MFV

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