lain & Valley

Covering Southeast Saskatchewan and Southwest Manitoba

March 2017 • Page 25

Prototype seeder is a robot

BY CHRISTALEE FROESE Engineer Nathan Muchowski expects robots to be seeding for farmers within the next five years.

In order to test his theory, he built a prototype that won third place in the 2016 agBOT Challenge in Rock-

ville, Indiana.

The idea for an unmanned seeder had been manned seeder had been on the 26-year-old's mind for several years, so when he saw a Twitter message for the AgBOT Challenge, he jumped into action. "This was a way to test my idea and to make a seeder exactly the way I wanted to do it," said Muchowksi.

Muchowksi.

The U of R graduate grew up on a grain farm in Odessa, Sask. where he was always drawn to the mechanical side of the operation. Upon graduating with a degree in electronics systems engineering in 2012, Muchowksi took a high-tech job in Regina, however, it wasn't in the agricultural sector.

The automated seeder "The automated seeder was a way for him to work on one of the ag-related projects he'd always been passionate about. The design stage took about 10 months with the physical construction phase consuming over 300 hours.
"I was very proud of what we had built and constructed because when you basically scrounge up

you basically scrounge up parts and money the way we did, and you actually have something to show for it, it's very rewarding," said Muchowski who had his grain farming dad, Pat Muchowski, help him with the fabrication of the seed-

The agBOT seeder cost roughly \$20,000 to construct, most of which came out of Muchowski's pock-et. Some ag-sector spon-sors did donate parts and

When the young engineer traveled to the Indiana competition in May under the banner of Muchowski Farms, the outcome was bitter-sweet as his seeder was not op-erational enough to be in the field-test.

"The judges told us that if we would have gotten it



Nathan Muchowski of Odessa got third in the agBot Challenge with this robotic seeder.

out there, we would have out there, we would have had first place because we were the only team that had answers to all of their objectives," said Muchowski. Unlike many seeders in the competition, Muchowski's was built from scratch

as he wrote the program, engineered the design and fabricated the entire seeder. The free-standing automated seeder was also fully electric, making it a zero-

emissions implement.
"I just didn't write the software or do the drive systems, but I integrated all the components togeth-er to make a working unit." Muchowksi sees un-

Muchowksi sees un-manned seeders similar to the one he designed being in the field within the next decade. He envisions farmers using 10 to 20 of them with only one person need-ed in a central command ed in a central command centre. In the next several decades, Muchowksi be-lieves robotic seeders like his will totally revolution-

his will totally revolution-ize farming.
"With machine learning and the advances in artifi-cial intelligence, there may not even need to be a farm-er controlling equipment for seeding, swathing and harvest." harvest.

harvest."

Despite a disappointing third-place finish in the AgBOT Challenge, Muchowski's participation in the competition delivered a reward he wasn't expecting. He had several ag-sector job offers following the competition, one of which was in Revina.

which was in Regina.

"It got me my dream job," said Muchowski, adding that the \$10,000-USD funds for the third-

place finish did help defray some of his costs.

The first-place finishing team in the AgBOT Challenge was also from Saskatchewan. University of katchewan. University of Regina students Samuel Dietrich, Joshua Friedrick and Caleb Friedrick took home the \$50,000 cash prize for their U of R proj-ect—a seeder pulled by a remote-controlled tractor.

The fourth-year students were supervised by associ-ate professor Dr. Mehran Mehrandezh, and worked with the help of technolo-gist Dean Kertai. They started with a regular trac-tor and made it capable of seeding while driving it-self. The students designed the software which enabled the tractor to be operated remotely by a farmer. The project was done as part of the students' final year Capstone engineering proj-

The second-place prize of \$30,000 was awarded to Purdue/South Newton Polytech of Indiana, Nathan Muchowski, repre-senting Muchowski Farms, split the third-place prize of \$20,000 with PeeDee Precision Ag of South Car-

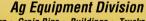
Muchowski said he is considering entering the 2017 AgBOT Challenge, which is again focused on seeders. However, he re-alizes that going solo on such a complex project is difficult.

"I learned that if you're going to take on some-thing of this scale, you re-ally need a large industry behind you to provide the





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Right: The children made observations about the soil and earthworms used in the garden. Here they display some of the healthy earthworms living in the soil. From left are Dana, Reese, Donnie, Dane, and Lennox.



Above, healthy tomatoes, and below, cucumbers, that are growing in the garden.





1994 Ford Versatile 9680: With Triples, 4 Rear Hydraulics, Rebuilt Transmission, New Brakes, New Coupler, all done June 2014. 5800 hours. Not used in the field since 2014



2013 SeedMaster 50-12 Drill: On Board 1000 L Liquid Tank. Also 2003 Bourgault 5350 Cart and 2012 Pull Behind CB 1600 Liquid Tank. Will sell cart

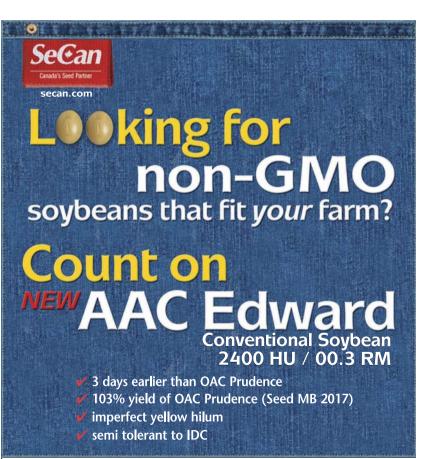
PHONE 306-468-4908

Learning about agriculture in the classroom

Mrs. Taylor's Grade 3 class at MacLeod School in Moosomin demonstrated just how much they had learned about agriculture as they showed off a garden they had grown to representatives of Sharpe's Soil Services recently. The garden was grown as part of the Ag in the Classroom program, and co-sponsored by Sharpe's Soil Services as part of the Little Green Thumbs program. Representatives of Sharpe's and a representative of Ag in the Classroom were on hand to look at the children's work. The children started growing the garden in October and have had to prune it a number of times, as it has grown so well.

Left: Tristin and Cameron show off a healthy pepper plant to Hayley Senkowski with Sharpe's.







Cell: 306-483-7738 Oxbow, SK

Genes that fit your farm:

Canola now a \$12 billion industry in Sask

A new report commissioned by the Canola Council of Canada shows just how large a part of Canada's agricul-

ture industry canola has become..
"When you're driving down the road in July, you see the great yellow flowers of canola in Saskatchewan. But what you don't see are the hundreds of thousands of jobs across the country that are linked to it and that's what this report shows," said Brian Innes, vice president of government relations at the Canola Council of Canada.

Canola has grown to become a \$12.2 billion industry in Canada. About 92,000 jobs and \$3.9 billion in wages are

Canada. About 92,000 Jobs and \$5.9 billion in Wages are connected to the canola grown, processed and handled in Saskatchewan, according to the new report. Titled The Economic Impact of Canola on the Canadian Economy, the report by LMC International analyzed data from three crop years, including the 2012, 2013 season, 2013, 2014 season and the 2014, 2015 season.

In Canada there are approximately 43,000 canola farmers with 26,000 of them living in Saskatchewan. The report found 250,000 people work in a career directly or indirectly in the canola industry, making \$11.2 billion in

Across the country, canola generates \$26.7 billion in economic benefits a year. However, Saskatchewan is the leader, with Alberta falling behind at \$7.13 billion and

leader, with Alberta railing behind at \$7.50 billion.

"Agriculture is not seen as maybe a big player in the Canadian economy, but studies like this really help to showcase the importance that agriculture and canola do play," said Janice Tranberg, executive director of Sask-

Canoia.

Tranberg thinks the report will assist in discussions about policy creation with the provincial and federal governments in the future.

"Almost 90 per cent of what we grow is exported out-side of Canada. (The report) also helps us when we're talking to our international counterparts to help them un-derstand that this is a crop that farmers in Canada want to continue to see grow and have opportunity to grow,"

The canola industry doesn't just include producers who grow the crop. It also includes seed development,

transportation, starch, vegetable fat and oil manufacturing, and livestock feed.
"Because we produce so much canola here in the province, we're also getting more and more follow on capacity in the area of crushing and processing, so that plays a very important piece. And as well the meal is often used in nutrition for cattle, for dairy, for poultry," Tranberg said.





Announcement from Broadview **Hometown Co-op Agro Centre**

Broadview Hometown Co-op Agro Centre is excited to announce a new fertilizer blending plant for Broadview!

Targeted start date for construction is Spring 2017 Targeted start date for being operational is Fall 2017 with full services in the 2018 growing season

> Darren Ottenbreit Ag Manager - Hometown Co-op 306-696-3038

Agro Centre Monday - Friday: 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.



Canola has grown to become a huge part of the agriculture industry in Saskatchewan



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9 A M

9 A.M. 10 A.M.

9 A M

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Multiple factors impacting grain market

USDA outlook

The US Department of Agriculture believes 2017 corn and soybean production will come in below the record levels reached in 2016, but supplies of both commodities plies of both commodities will remain abundant. The corn crop was seen falling seven per cent to 14.1 billion bushels, based on an average yield of 170.7 bushel per acre, USDA said. Ending stocks for the 2017-2018 crop year were pegged at 2.2 billion bushels, five per cent lower than the prior marketing year.

U.S. soybean production will fall to 4.18 billion bushels, from the record 4.3 billion estimated for 2016. Yields are expected to drop to 48 bush-els per acre from 52.1 bushels acre last year, offsetting per acre last year, offsetting what is expected to be a big increase in spring planted acreage (88 million acres planted versus 83.4 million in 2016). U.S. bean ending stocks are still projected at a large 420 million bushels. U.S. soybean production will fall to 4.18 billion bushels, from the record 4.3 billion estimated for 2016.

estimated for 2016.

U.S. wheat production for the 2017-2018 marketing year is seen dropping by 20 per cent, to 1.8 billion bushels, on expectations of both lower planted area (46 million acres, down from 50.2 million) and yields (47.1 bushels per acre, versus 52.6 bushels).

Brazil's soybeans

Hamburg-based oilseeds analysts Oil World forecasts record Brazilian soybean crop in 2017, Brazil's soybean crop in early 2017 is likely to reach a record 105 million tonnes against 95.4 million tonnes last year, helping boost Brazilian soybean exports, Oil World forecast earlier this

week.
"Under the lead of Brazil, South American soybean exports are now increasing sharply," Oil World said.

"Brazilian exports will be up steeply from last year in February... and for February to August 2017 we expect record Brazilian exports of 52.3 million tonnes, 4.5 million tonnes more than last year."



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FEBRUARY/MARCH 2017 SALE SCHEDULE -

MARCH

REBELS OF THE WEST SIMMENTAL BULL SALE BUTCHER SALE 9 PRESORT FEEDER SALE 10 SUNDAY MONDAY WEDNESDAY SATURDAY PLEASANT DAWN CHAROLAIS BULL SALE MONDAY WEDNESDAY BUTCHER SALE REGULAR FEEDER SALE COW BOYS ANGUS BULL & FEMALE SALE FRIDAY MONDAY BUTCHER SALE 9 A M WEDNESDAY PRESORT FEEDER SALE SHEEP/GOAT SALE THURSDAY 12 NOON

APRIL SATURDAY MONDAY TRI-N CHAROLAIS & GUEST SALE BUTCHER SALE WEDNESDAY REGULAR FEEDER SALE BRED COW & CALF SALE BUTCHER SALE PRESORT FEEDER SALE FRIDAY MONDAY WEDNESDAY

WEDNESDAY WEDNESDAY MONDAY WEDNESDAY FRIDAY

ΜΔΥ MONDAY

REPLACEMENT PEN OF 5 HEIFERS BUTCHER SALE PRESORT FEEDER SALE

BRED COW & CALF SALE

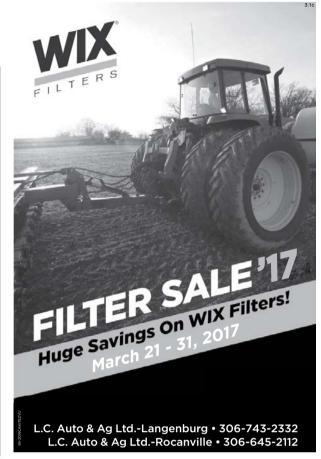
BUTCHER SALE REGULAR FEEDER SALE REGULAR CATTLE SALES EVERY WEDNESDAY UNTIL FALL

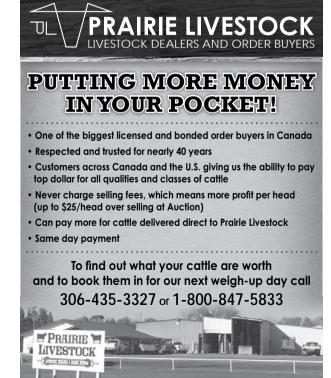
THURSDAY SHEEP, GOAT & HORSE SALE 12 NO
ERS LICENSE 171306 MB DEALERS LICENSE 1317. SALE DATES AND TIMES SUBJECT TO CH
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Agricultural biotechnology crucial for feeding world population

It took until 1800 for the vorld population to reach me billion people. The sec-nd billion was reached in mly 130 years (1930), the hird billion in less than 30 rears (1959), the fourth bil-ion in 15 years (1974) and he fifth billion in only 13

During the 20th century lone, the global popula-ion grew from 1.6 billion o over six billion people.

In 1970, there were oughly half as many peo-ole in the world as there

re today.
In The Population Bomb 1968), Paul Ehrlich writes: The world, especially the leveloping world, is rap-dly running out of food i€! in fact the battle to eed humanity is already ost in the sense that we vill not be able to prevent arge-scale famine in the

How was this global starvation catastrophe catastrophe averted?

One element high on the list is innovation. Crop production science and innovation led to new technologies that produce more per acre and more

per crop inputs.
Dr. Norman Borlaug
was an American agronomist known as "the father
of the Green Revolution." of the Green Revolution."
Borlaug developed new varieties of wheat that were planted around the world and had tremendous yield responses. His approach was adopted by other scientists to im-prove other crops. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1970 for his contributions to world peace through increasing food supply. Borlaug is often



Murray McLaughlin

credited with saving over a billion people from star-

With new technologies based on Borlaug's research, the successes Biotechnology continue. is a new set of tools that enhance crop breeding for new plant traits. Products from biotechnology have shown tremendous improvement since first pro-vided to farmers in 1995. Biotech-bred crops allow farmers to reduce pes-ticide use, and improve quality and yields with reduced input costs. Bio-tech-enhanced crops are now grown by 18 million farmers, most of them in

developing countries.

In Canada, corn, soy-beans and canola are grown using biotechnol-ogy (often referred to as segnetically-modified or-ganisms or GMOs). All are designed to reduce pesti-cide use while improving yields. In 1940, corn varieties yielded 25 to 40 bushels per acre. Now, with hy-brids and biotechnology, yields are typically 150 to 200 bushels per acre. GMOs have helped Canadian farmers man-

age production costs, in-

crease yields and provide safe, nutritious food to world's consumers. the world's consumers. There is tremendous experience and knowledge about the safety and benefits of GMO crops, based on years of development, testing and predictions of the consumer of the

testing and production.

The predictions of major hazards, by critics of GMO, have not materialized. GMO crops have played a vital role in improving world agricul-tural food production per capita. And this will be an ongoing need as the world's population heads to 10 billion people later

bit of billion people later this century. Biotechnology in agri-culture production should be embraced the same way we have embraced innovation in medicine, transportation, communication and any number of other

sectors. Biotechnology will continue to help reduce

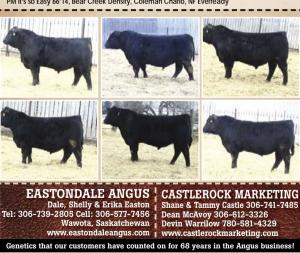
continue to help reduce global poverty.

We need more people like Borlaug. Through research, science and innovation, he helped ensure we have the necessary tools for a healthy future. Biotechnology will be an important part of that future.

Dr. Murray McLaughlin is an adviser to and foris an adviser to and for-mer executive director of Bioindustrial Innovation Canada, based in Sarnia, Ont., and a former Sas-katchewan deputy minis-ter of agriculture.

Dr. Murray McLaughlin is an adviser to and former executive director of Bioindustrial Innovation Canada, based in Sarnia, Ont., and a former Saskatchewan deputy minister of agriculture.





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Any time you have agriculture near water you run the risk of impacting run the risk of impacting surface water by contami-nating with nutrients, pes-ticides, and sediments. Annual crop production usually includes the use of fertilizers, pesticides, tillage and sometimes drainage, all of which may affect water quality. Livestock

ter quality.

Livestock production
practices such as riparian area grazing, confined
feeding and manure management may also impact
water quality. Most producers are aware of the impact and thay activally work ducers are aware of the impact and they actively work every day to ensure they are being good stewards of the land that they farm, as well as to the environment around them. Farmers have an exceedingly difficult job. They work with nature, and we are all aware that nature can throw many curves. With that farmers still continue to produce food for an ever

growing world population.
Perception is an immense challenge for agriculture in general. Agriculture can often get a bad reputation, or fingers often get pointed at it for being polluters of the land, or bad for the environment, when farmers are typically some of the best stewards of the land. Healthy land and soils equals increased profitability, and producers realize that the resource they depend on to be successful needs to be healthy in order to sustain their farming operation.

The way producers can ensure long term health of their operation both finan-cially and environmentally is by implementing BMPs. BMPs are Beneficial Management Practices that help to maintain and improve soil, water, air and biodi-

versity.

LAND MANAGEMENT Seeding land down to forage not only helps re-duce erosion and over graz-ing, it also acts as a buffer surface water by filtering out nutrients and sediments from entering waterways.

ROTATIONAL GRAZING AND RIPARIAN AREA GRAZING PLANS

GRAZING FLANS
Producers do not want
to over graze their land; it
costs them money in the
long term. By utilizing cross
fences and moving their
animals in a timely manner, the long term health of their pastures can be sustained. Producers are more likely to winter cattle extensively rather than confining them in pens. This helps to reduce in pens. This helps to reduce the manure pack which therefore can reduce the potential of contaminates from runoff in the spring. The benefit for a producer is that they don't have the extra overhead expense of manure removal from pens.



Jeff Odgers with his cattle

Johan Jacobs

Wapella, SK | March 31, 2017 · 11 am











AUCTION LOCATION: From WAPELLA, SK, at the jct of Hwy 1 & Grid 601, go North and follow curve 3.6 km (2.2 miles) to Range Rd 1331, then go 4 km (2.5 miles) North, then 0.6 km (0.3 miles) East, then 0.8 km (0.4 miles) North. Yard on East side. GPS: 50.319307. -101.903778

A PARTIAL EQUIPMENT LIST INCLUDES: 2012 New Holland T9.450 4WD Tractor · 2013 New Holland T7.170 MFWD Tractor · 2005 New Holland CR970 Combine - 2005 New Holland 94C 36 ft Draper Header - 2010 New Holland H8040 30 ft Swather 2009 Miller Nitro 4240HT100 ft High Clearance Sprayer - 2005 International 8600 T/A Truck Tractor - 2014 Maurer 38 ft T/A Grain Truck · 2013 Doepker 36 Ft T/A Grain Truck · 2000 Doepker 48 Ft Step Deck Trailers · Komatsu D75S-2 Crawler Loader · 2008 Seed Hawk 50 Ft Air Drill · 1997 Wishek 842T 22 Ft Tandem Disc · 2008 John Deere 568 Round Baler · (10) Grain Hopper Bins AND MUCH MORE!

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Johan Jacobs: 306.435.9605

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Patrik & Jessica Stocker

Wolseley, SK | April 7, 2017 · 11 am













AUCTION LOCATION: From WOLSELEY, SK, go 8 km (5 miles) East, then 5 km (3.2 miles) South OR From GRENFELL, SK, go 16.1 km (10 miles) West, then 5 km (3.2 miles) South OR From GLENAVON, SK, go 18 km (11.2 miles) North. Yard on West side. GPS: 50.3640000, -103.1520000

A PARTIAL EQUIPMENT LIST INCLUDES: 2006 Case IH STX480HD 4WD Tractor · 1999 Case IH MX135 MFWD Tractor 2005 Lexion 580R Combine - 1995 Case IH 2188 Combine - 2008 Lexion F535 35 R Max Flex Header - 1999 Case IH 11020 30 R Flex Header - 2009 Westward M150 35 R Swather - 1995 International 2674 T/A Grain Truck - 1989 Ford F700 S/A Grain

Truck · 2007 Seed Hawk 60 Ft Air Drill · 2009 Bourgault 6550ST Tow-Between Air Tank · 1981 Morris CP743 43 Ft Cultivator 1994 Tyler Patriot XL 90 Ft High Clearance Sprayer · 2010 Bandit 3400TC Fertilizer Cart · 2009 Buhler Farm King 1370 13 In. x 70 Ft Mechanical Swing Grain Auger ... AND MUCH MORE!

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of Agriculture

It actually increases the fertility of the land they were wintered, thus reducing the need for fertilizers. Water is continuously on a rancher's mind. A good water source is imperative for a healthy herd.

Farming along our water course systems means you have an excellent supply of water. Producers typically do not want their animals directly entering a water source. Many producers are often looking at remote watering systems that can be connected to the water source which can be safely brought to their cattle. These can of-

ten be solar and/or portable.

VARIABLE RATE

TECHNOLOGY AND MAPPING Variable Rate Technology and Mapping is yet another way producers both reduce their impact on the environment and increase their profitability. Reducing overlap in fields can save the producer money by reducing costly inputs and eliminates overlap in the field, which in turn also decreases nutrient loading and contaminates from entering the waterways.

Education and Awareness Education and awareness that deals with the environmental issues that actions by producers in an area can create can have a measureable impact Producers are encour-

aged to become conscious of how their practices affect the environment and implement BMPs to make improvements. An example of such producers are Jeff Odgers and Lynn Miller from the RM of Spy Hill #152. Jeff and Lynn have made education and awareness a large part of their farming operation. When asked about BMPs Jeff states "BMPs work well with our operation, they not only help with financial gain, they are a great tool for the soil health. They (BMPs) provide us with long term soil health as well as conserve moisture for future use." Jeff and Lynn take great pride in being good stewards of the land. They continue to educate themselves through workshops and apply those practices that will improve their operations as a whole.

stewards of the land. They continue to educate themselves through workshops and apply those practices that will improve their operations as a whole.

From Growing Forward 2, funding is available through the Farm Stewardship Program (FSP) to assist producers with implementing BMPs and through the Farm and Ranch Infrastructure Program (FRWIP), funding is available to develop water sources for Agriculture.

Program Deadlines:
• FRWIP – Applications need to be in by August 1, 2017

• FSP - Pre-Approval Applications need to be in by June 30, 2017 and Rebate Applications need to be in by January 31, 2018.



Lynn Miller with her cattle

Unreserved Public Farm Auction

Denmark Enterprises Ltd

Storthoaks, SK | March 30, 2017 · 11 am















AUCTION LOCATION: From REDVERS, SK, at the Jct of Hwy 8 & 13, go 9.8 km (6 miles) East to Range Rd 1310 (Bellegarde turnoff), then go 14.5 km (9 miles) South. Yard on East side. GPS: 49.4400000, -101.5427500

A PARTIAL EQUIPMENT LIST INCLUDES: 2016 Versatile 500 50th Anniversary Edition 4WD Tractor - 1999 John Dees 9400 4WD Tractor - 2005 Case IH MXMH 40 MFWD Tractor - 2011 John Deere 9770STS Combine - 2009 Case IH 7120 Combine - 2014 MacDon FD75-5 35 RT Rex Draper Header - 2012 Premier 1155 35 Pt Swather - 2013 Case IH Patriot 3330 100 Rt High Clearance Sprayer - 2006 International 92001 Eagle Sleeper TJA

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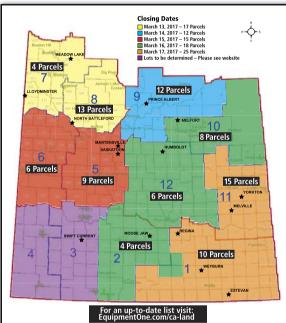
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Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture





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Ritchie Bros. Auctioneers will be offering this land event and others through our online only platform Equipment One. To see more information regarding the land you wish to bid on or buy, please visit **EquipmentOne.com/ca-land** once the bidding opens on March 1st.

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Online Bidding Opens March 1 First Lots Start to Close March 13



For more information contact:

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Outlook calls for more record years for farm economy



Canadian agriculture's economic performance last year, as well as anticipated returns this year, won't surpass the record set in 2015. But still, they'll be two

of the best years ever. That's the word from the 2017 Canadian Agri-cultural Outlook, released last week by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. It provides a forecast of farm income in the agricultural sector for the previous and current calendar years.

Long-term trends

As well, it looks ahead to longer-term trends that could impact the agriculture sector, taking into account top economic driv-ers such as those reported in FCC Express earlier this month.

The outlook predicts

net cash income in 2016 will fall two per cent to \$14.8 billion, followed by a seven per cent decline to \$13.8 billion in 2017.

However, the outlook document notes, those are still expected to be the second and fourth best years on record respec-

years on record, respectively.

Thanks goes to the low Canadian dollar. It's help-ing stem a more signifi-cant decline by making commodities from our

country more competitive against the U.S. dollar. Alagainst the 0.5. dollar. Al-though many crop prices are depressed, sales-wise, producers are making up for it in volume.

But can this situation be maintained? At least one farm leader is looking at the situation carefully.

"The outlook points to the importance of the dollar in insulating Canadian farmers from the declining commodity prices seen south of the

ton, a grain and livestock producer in Thamesville, Ont., and vice-chair of the Grain Farmers of Ontario.

"As productive as farmers have been with relatively good yields, in a time of declining commodity prices there is a bit of a concern moving forward that productiv-ity gains need to be main-tained in the midst of these challenges," Huston

Indeed, the outlook calls for crop receipts to increase modestly, two per cent in 2016 and one per cent this year, to \$32.9 billion, due to strong sales

and volume.

However, a drop will occur in the livestock sector, particularly as cattle and calf prices come down from 2015's record

Livestock forecast

It's expected livestock

by seven per cent in 2016 (to \$23.9 billion), and then a further four per cent this vear.

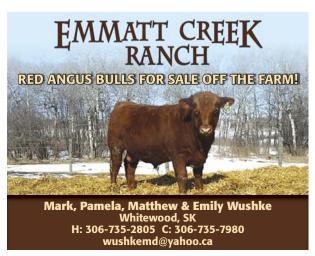
To make up for some of the shortfall, program payments will rise significantly. They're expected to increase by 24 per cent in 2016 to \$2.6 billion, and

by 22 per cent in 2017. For his part, Huston points to farming's posipoints to farming's positive economic impact on the country. Although there are moderate ups and downs, producers continue to help fuel the economy. They spend billions on operating expenses – around \$45 billion – and generate a significant portion of the GNP.

GNP.
"We always have to prehe says, "but hopefully in 2017 Canadian agricul-ture will continue having the success that can lead it to being a star in the Canadian economy.









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Threat of flooding may alter seeding intentions

BY RICHARD KAMCHEN

The severity of flooding conditions in Manitoba this spring could impact the types of crops farmers put in the ground.

The risk of flood is moderate to major across Manitoba, according to the provincial government's first flood outlook of 2017

"We are preparing for the worst," says Dan Mazier, president of Keystone Agri-cultural Producers.

The recent outlook warned the Red. Souris, Pembina, Roseau and Lower Assiniboine rivers and the Whiteshell Lakes areas are at major risk of flooding.

Late seeding impacts

Flooding might not only delay seeding, but also affect what's planted.
"You would have different cropping plans going out June 1 than you would have May 1, that's for sure," Mazier says.
Soybeans have become an extremely

Soybeans have become an extremely popular crop to grow in the province, and industry estimates had put soybean area this spring as high as two million acres. "Out of all our crops, it has the narrowest window," Mazier notes. "Every time some event happens that takes you off of the field, that window just gets narrower to get a crop in."

The more farmers are delayed, the greater the likelihood there'll be more short-season cereals like oats and barley nlanted.

Season cereals like oats and barley planted.
Mazier indicates it's not out of the ordinary for seeding to begin May 1, and adds some farmers begin prepping their fields



mid-April. With parts of Manitoba still having some of last year's crops left to be harvested, a flood would put affected producers even further behind.

Other risk areas

The province also forecast a moderate risk of overland flooding in the Interlake region, along the upper Assimiboine River and the northern portion of the province, including the Saskatchewan River.

Also of concern are major lakes, and current river flows and other lake levels are normal to above normal for this time of

year, the government added.

An early melt in mid-February in the southern portion of the Red River Basin reduced most snowpack south of Grand Forks, North Dakota, but that only slightly diminished flood potential on the Red River in Manitoba. It also left the soil saturated and unlocable to be list war of feets. rated and vulnerable to high run-off from future precipitation, the outlook said.

Future weather will decide

Ultimately, spring flood levels will de-pend upon weather events to come. Pre-cipitation amounts and timing, the pace of snow melt, and the timing of run-off in the province, the U.S., Saskatchewan and On-

tario also remain important elements.

The Manitoba government's second and final flood outlook is scheduled to be released in late March

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Record Crop Insurance coverage for producers in 2017

On Thursday Federal Agri-culture and Agri-Food Minister Lawrence MacAulay and Sas-katchewan Agriculture Min-ister Lyle Stewart announced details of the 2017 Crop Indetails of the 2017 Crop In-surance Program. Once again, Saskatchewan producers will have access to the highest cov-erage in program history as the Crop Insurance Program continues to strengthen and provide effective risk protec-tion for Saskatchewan farmers and ranghese. and ranchers.

"Crop insurance remains the "Crop insurance remains the most cost effective tool farmers have to protect their farm business against weather related damage to their crops," MacAulay said. "The Government of Canada is working closely with provinces and territories to ensure producers continue to have access to a comprehen-

to have access to a comprehensive suite of business risk management programs."
"More than ever, Saskatchewan producers need access to relevant and reliable risk management programming," Stewart said. "The 2017 Crop Insurance Program provides the coverage and options that the coverage and options that producers need to effectively protect their farm while providing the flexibility to be innovative and make the best decisions to be successful."

On average, Crop Insurance

on average, crop insurance coverage levels are increasing to a record \$217 per acre, up from \$216 per acre in 2016. The improved coverage is a result of the continuation of strong forecasted crop prices and in-

creased long-term yields. Due to an increase in coverage, the premium per acre is going up slightly to an average of \$8.51 per acre from \$7.84 per acre in 2016.

2016.

The effectiveness of the Crop Insurance Program for farmers was evident in 2016. A challenging growing season that included many storms and excess moisture across the province stretched into a delayed betweet Cuslity. downered. ince stretched into a delayed harvest. Quality downgrading occurred to many crops and approximately 1.3 million acres of crop was unable to be harvested last fall.

While Crop Insurance claims will be finalized into spring, the compensation for producers' yield and applied loses.

ers' yield and quality losses due to last year's challenging growing season is estimated to reach \$650 million; however, more than \$300 million was delivered before the end of

The Crop Insurance Program includes individualized coverage for each farming operation. The Saskatchewan operation. The Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation (SCIC) also provides a range of coverage options and pro-gram features that allow each farm to personalize their in-surance. Producers should visit their local Crop Insur-ance office before the March 31 deadline to review the coverage options available and to make sure the selections they make are providing the right risk protection for their farm business.

Prevent the buildup of herbicide resistant weeds

REGIONAL CROP SPECIALIST, YORKTON
The 2017 planting season will soon be upon us.
Producers are making final decisions about the types of crops to be grown this year. Although spraying season is a little further away, this is also a good time to think

about the weed control measures that can be used to pre-vent the build up of herbicide resistant weeds.

For some now producers have been aware of the potential for weeds to develop resistance to specific herbi-cide groups/modes of action. The first of action. The first documented cases in western Canada were wild oat and green foxtail that ex-hibited resistance to Group 1 herbicides. More recently we have seen the de-

velopment of many more resistant weeds to other herbicide groups such as wild oat, kochia and wild mustard with Group 2 herbicides.

Group 2 herbicides.

Resistance develops as a result of repeated use of the same herbicide groups over extended periods. There may only be one plant in the initial population that has resistance. This plant will increase with repeated use of herbicides of the same group and after several years show up as a small patch of plants that were not controlled by herbicide application. By the time it is visible as a patch in the field, it could be a little as three years before the whole field is infested. whole field is infested.

It is important to recognize that, of all the herbi-cides available, there are only 30 groups or modes of action and only 18 of these are available in Saskatchewan (maný are used on crops we don't grow here). As well, roughly 8 of these modes of action

dominate the majority of applications made by Saskatchewan crop producers. Breakthroughs with new modes of action have been few and far benew modes or action have been few and far be-tween in recent decades due to the lack of addition-al metabolic pathways that can be interrupted in a plant to result in its death. Because of this, produc-ers have few options other than to deal with

herbicide resistance through preventative

practices.
There are a number of practices that can be used to prevent the development of resistant propulations. For tant populations. For example; increasing crop diversity by rotating 3 or more types of crops (such as: cereals, oilseeds and pulses) will reduce the risk of developing herbicide resistance over less diversified rotations.

As well, tank mixes of different groups for control of the same weeds can reduce her-

bicide resistance risks. While rotation through various modes of action or groups of herbicides has been promoted as a way to slow resistance from developing, recent research has found that resistance evolution will continue under rotation strategies, just at a much slower

pace.

If you suspect that you have some patches that are resistant you should ensure that you prevent those plants from setting seed by either herbicide or mechanical means. Mark these patches since weed seed dormancy will mean that they will be back in the future. You may also wish to collect some seeds from those areas and have them tested to confirm your suspicions. to confirm your suspicions.

For more information on management of her-bicide resistant weed populations, please contact your local Saskatchewan Agriculture regional of-fice.

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