

# Plain & Valley

Covering Southeast Saskatchewan and Southwest Manitoba

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## Candace Barta-Bonk named Hungary's honorary consul in Saskatchewan

BY ROB PAUL  
LOCAL JOURNALISM  
INITIATIVE REPORTER  
Candace Barta-Bonk was recently named Saskatchewan's Hungarian honorary consul, a role focused on protecting the interests of Hungarian citizens in Saskatchewan and promoting the culture.

Although born in Saskatchewan, Barta-Bonk has deep family ties to Hungary and has always had a connection to the rich Hungarian community in the province and even spent time living in Hungary. This led to her involvement with the consulate.

"I am a fourth-generation Canadian, but I have pure Hungarian roots," said Barta-Bonk. "All of my great-grandparents were born in Hungary. This has led me to be involved in the Canadian Hungarian community."

"I was approached by the Hungarian Ambassador to Canada and asked if I would be willing to take on this role. It is a great honour for me and of course, I accepted."

"I feel that it is a way to give back and serve two different countries that I have called home. I grew up in Moosomin but moved to Kipling while I was in high school. I have also lived in Hungary Kaposvár for a large portion of my working career. I believe that this will give important context when fulfilling my duties in this role."

The journey to becoming Saskatchewan's honorary consul began a few years ago for Barta-Bonk when she hosted Balint Odór on his trip to Sas-



Candace Barta-Bonk, left, with Hungarian Ambassador to Canada Dr. Balint Odór and Moosomin MLA Steven Bonk, on a visit by the ambassador to Bekevar Church, an early Hungarian settlement in Saskatchewan, located near Kipling.

katchewan. "In 2017 the Hungarian Ambassador to Canada at the time, Balint Odór, visited Saskatchewan," she said. "On his trip he visited the Kaposvár Hungarian settlement near Esterhazy and the Bekevár Hungarian settlement near Kipling. I had the privilege of hosting the Ambassador at Bekevár."

"It was very special for me as it was my great-grandparents who were the settlers who helped to build the church. It was after this visit that the ambassador wanted to create

an honorary consul position for Saskatchewan. Up until that point, the honorary consul in Calgary was also responsible for Saskatchewan."

In her role as honorary consul, Barta-Bonk's priority is working with Hungarians in Saskatchewan and helping to foster the country's culture in the province.

"The role of honorary consul is to help facilitate cultural, economic, and social relations between Hungary and Saskatchewan," she said.

"The responsibilities

also include assisting Hungarian citizens living in Saskatchewan with notarizations of documents as well as directing them to the consul general in Toronto or the Hungarian Embassy in Ottawa. A very important aspect of the role is to promote economic and scientific relations between Hungary and Saskatchewan."

"The Hungarian ambassador to Canada, Dr. Mária Vass Salazar, has a very keen interest in innovation and science, and I am working towards high-

lighting points of common interest. The honorary consul is also responsible for organizing and preparing a program when the Hungarian Ambassador visits Saskatchewan."

With a large Hungarian community in Saskatchewan and a strong history in the province, Barta-Bonk is excited to help continue the tradition and share the heritage.

"Hungary and Saskatchewan have a long connection," she said. "The very first Hungarian settlements in Canada were in Saskatchewan—they

were started in the late 1880s at Kaposvár near Esterhazy, Otthon near Yorkton, and Bekevár near Kipling. Many other Hungarian settlements in Saskatchewan followed. There was also a second wave of immigration from Hungary following the 1956 revolution. The Hungarian community is very proud of their shared heritage and traditions. There are very active Hungarian communities in Regina and Saskatoon, with festivals, celebrations, language schools and folk dance groups for all ages."

Barta-Bonk says it's a privilege to be able to represent Hungary in Saskatchewan as an honorary consul, and she emphasizes the importance of keeping the cultural connection alive.

"This is something that is very important to me and the main reason why I took this role," she said. "I feel that it is important for people to know where they come from and to understand their history. The Hungarians who came to Saskatchewan were tough, resourceful people, who integrated into Canadian society but were able to hold on to their culture and traditions, so the Hungarian culture was all around me when I grew up. There was always Hungarian singing, food and of course, the language. I know that this is a similar story for many people in Saskatchewan, and it is my hope that now we have an honorary consul, we can make a stronger connection between Hungary and Saskatchewan."

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# Jamieson family overwhelmed by Moosomin and surrounding communities' support

BY ROB PAUL

**LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER**  
In October, 2020, Moosomin high school student Levi Jamieson was in an ATV accident and was rushed to Regina General Hospital by STARS air ambulance before being flown to Royal University Hospital Pediatric Intensive Care Unit in Saskatoon.

As a result of the accident, Jamieson lost the use of his legs and is adjusting to a wheelchair. While in the hospital recovering, and upon his return home to Moosomin, the community has rallied around the family to show their support.

There have been numerous fundraisers for the family, a Love 4 Levi account opened at Conexus Credit Union for donations, and people all around offering a hand to the family when they need one. Tens of thousands of dollars have been raised for Levi and his family through the community support.

Levi—who has been actively involved in 4H and his family farm since childhood, and who has his own herd of cattle now—hasn't let anything slow him down since coming home. He has returned to school, is back out helping on the farm, and having fun doing the things he loves like hunting, skidooning, and driving a team of horses. He has even tried his hand at sledge hockey.

It has been a long journey for the Jamieson family since the accident, however, things are starting to improve thanks to Levi's resilience in physiotherapy. The Jamieson family has been going to Regina every week, since Levi returned home, for his physiotherapy, but as he progresses, they'll be able to do more of it in town. "We go to Regina every week," says Levi's dad, Darcy Jamieson. "Sometimes it's two days and we stay overnight and sometimes it's just in and out. Most of it (physiotherapy) now is strengthening, which can be done mostly here (Moosomin). It's that and balancing. We can do a lot of it at home too, the days that we aren't there."

"When he left here in the air (on the STARS air ambulance), they stopped in Regina and then she (Levi's mom Diane) jumped in the jet with him from Regina to Saskatoon," said Darcy. "The Ronald McDonald House in Saskatoon was amazing to us."

Levi was in a medically induced coma from Oct. 18 until Oct. 23. On Oct. 23 he was given an MRI, which determined he required surgery on his back.

"He was in Saskatoon from October 18 to November 5—October 23 was surgery—and the Ronald McDonald House charges \$10 a night for families and they provide meals. You don't realize what a facility like that does for you until you need it," said Levi's mom Diane. "He wasn't awake for two weeks. Then we moved to the (Regina) General until December 16."

"Surgery is pretty much done," said Darcy. "But we're going to try and see another specialist—the Shriners have reached out to us to see one of their specialists and they're working on that as we speak."

"The physiotherapist said she's amazed because everything she throws at him he either does or fig-

ures out a way to do it," said Diane. "He's adapting very well."

Coming home from Regina was a milestone in itself for Levi, and being the animal lover he is, it was a treat to see all his animals on the farm again.

"It was good to see everyone," said Levi Jamieson, "and good to see the pets again—it was good to see all the dogs."

"I think at one point every dog we had was up in the bed with him," said Darcy with a laugh.

Things aren't as easy as they were before for the Jamieson family, but the family is adapting to the changes, and Levi's positive attitude has been a big factor in his quick adjustment.

"It's challenging with this wheelchair, but we were in the barn and he was in with his Jersey cow when she had her calf," said Diane. "He's been out and about. It takes a little bit more time to get to places he wants to go."

"You don't just jump up and say, 'lets go down to the World-Spectator,' it takes planning," said Darcy.

Levi says he is up for the new challenges ahead and already has goals going forward and his wheelchair isn't slowing him down or stopping him from embracing his favorite outdoor activities once again.

"I want to get back to riding my dirt bike and working with the cattle," says Levi.

"He has been skidooning," says Darcy. "We had him skidooning New Year's Eve on the front lawn. He was riding a small skidoo but I'm going to fix up his big one and he plans on riding it this year. He went out on the ice on the sledge and he's been driving the team of horses—we went out for sleigh rides one day at the farm."

"First thing he did when he got home was shoot a deer," adds Diane.

"We got the special permit to shoot out of a vehicle from the game wardens," said Darcy. "We worked on that when we were in the hospital and we got that all taken care of and we got him home that weekend (the last weekend in November) and he shot a deer—that was the plan of coming home, to get him out deer hunting and to get him away and active for a bit. You can only lay in a hospital for so long. It was the best therapy to get him out of there and get him home."

"He was asking the doctor to let him go and they couldn't believe how strong he was after he came back from his two days at home," said Diane Jamieson. "It was a different atmosphere and where he wanted to be so it was good."

Despite Levi's impressive advancements, the Jamieson family knows there are more obstacles ahead and right now they're focused on doing everything they can to make things accessible for Levi.

*Continued on page 12*



Levi Jamieson with his parents Diane and Darcy.



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Above, the aftermath of the fire, and right, the auction mart up in flames.

## Future uncertain for Pipestone livestock auction following fire

BY SPENCER KEMP  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER  
The livestock auction in Pipestone was destroyed in a fire on the evening of Monday, March 1.

The fire, thought to be electrical in nature, began around 6:30 pm when Chad Parks saw what he thought to be blowing snow and went to investigate. When he reached the building, the flames had already begun to spread.

Rhett Parks, the owner of Pipestone Livestock Sales and Whitewood Livestock Sales, says it all happened very quickly. He says that the building held a lot of memories for him and his family. His father Gene Parks and Jim Morris owned Pipestone Livestock Sales before Rhett bought the business.

"It happened pretty quick," said Parks. "From the time that my brother noticed that there was something up, when he saw the smoke, in about an hour to an hour and a half there was very little left. It was the first auction market that was built outside of Winnipeg in Manitoba back in the late '50s. At that time all the cattle would get on the rail and would be sold at the stockyards in Winnipeg. So Pipestone was the first market outside of Winnipeg. It was a place where people would come week in and week out. People would bring their cattle, and they would visit. One of my fondest memories was Thanksgiving dinner. Auctions were originally on Monday at the market and so Thanksgiving would fall on a Monday and my dad would be down there, then we would go down as a family and we would have our Thanksgiving dinner down at the market. It was our tradition for quite a number of years until I came to the market here in White-wood and started running it here."

Parks said that the fire was a big loss for their family.

"It's a hard day for our families. The community as a whole are all feeling a bit of loss here today."

Nobody was injured in the fire, something Parks says he is grateful for.

"We've been very fortunate. We've had the market there since 1985. My dad and his partner bought it in '85, then we bought it out from my dad's partner in 2003. It's been almost 40 years. We're fortunate to have the producers we serve and the customers that brought us their cattle to the employees that we work with and work alongside, and many of those employees have been with us for a while. We're very fortunate to have the staff that we do. We're very grateful for the relationships we've made over the past 40 years and we're extremely grateful that nobody was injured or hurt in the fire, and my brother, Chad Parks, was able to get the cattle that were in the barn out, so that's the most important thing. Buildings, property, and structures can all be replaced but people can't," said Parks.

"Things could have been worse. We're fortunate that in the big picture it's just a headache, it's definitely a setback but in the big picture we're all still here and we're all still pushing forward. So we need to be thankful for that. We also have to be thankful for all the emergency response services such as the firefighters, paramedics, and hydro workers."

"I want to thank everyone who was involved in helping get the fire under control. It meant a lot and it's no doubt a sad day for my family. It still hasn't quite fully set in. I grew up with that place being where dad worked. That was his business. I've been involved in the business for 20 years myself and this was kind of my time to shine. It's tough, it's almost like losing a family member in the sense that Pipestone was almost like a home away from home."

Reconstruction of the auction building is something Parks says they are entertaining, but nothing is decided.

"I don't want to promise that we are. But in saying that I don't want to say that we aren't. In the next little while here we'll be dealing with our insurance company. I don't want to lead anybody one way or the other but I do want to say that

we haven't ruled anything out. We're going to be giving it some serious thought. It's still just kind of fresh here with the circumstances at this time, but over the next few days, we're going to be doing some talking and meeting. At this point, I would say nothing is ruled out, but nothing is decided."

Parks says that the cattle run is thankfully starting to slow down for the season and they were able to operate through the busy season.

"The cattle numbers are going to start slowing down in the next few weeks. In a couple of weeks, the number of head at a sale will start to get very small. That should carry on through the summer. In the meantime we're undecided. We haven't had a whole lot of time to wrap our heads around what has transpired.

We're going to be talking here and we'll have to talk to the insurance company and they'll have to do an investigation. We'll get a better game plan going forward from there. In the immediate future, we'll be closed for a number of months then see what takes place going forward. It's hard to say at this point."

For those who want to still support them, Parks encourages producers to make a trip to Whitewood and auction cattle there.

"We're always happy to see customers come up to either of our markets. We have sales every Tuesday in Whitewood. We have some strong buyers and a strong market here. If any producers are wondering where to go, we're more than happy to see them come to Whitewood. Our doors are always open."

**Daryl Harrison**  
Member of the Legislative Assembly  
Cannington Constituency



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### Dogsled tours at Moose Mountain Provincial Park

On Saturday, March 6, the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan Eastern Region III teamed up with Eagle Ridge Dog Sled Tours to provide a fun and informative adventure for Métis youth and youths in the Moose Mountain area.

President of the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan Eastern Region III, Local #182, Dexter Mondor, says they wanted to hold camps over the summer but were unable to due to Covid-19, so they decided to hold dog sled tours instead.

"We partnered with Garrick Schmidt, who is the owner and founder of Eagle Ridge Dog Sled Tours," said Mondor. "He came out on Saturday to do a dog sledding tour and demonstration for Métis citizens of the Moose Mountain local area. The Saskatchewan Métis Nation paid for it through Eastern Region III. There's a program called Urban Programming for Indigenous People and we get funds allocated to us every year to engage our citizens. Last summer we were going to do some youth camps through the region, but because of Covid it had to be pushed back and we had to revamp and decided to do this."



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# SGI returning \$350 million to customers

BY SPENCER KEMP

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Saskatchewan Government Insurance will pass on roughly \$350 million in earnings to the people of Saskatchewan by issuing one-time rebates to all registered vehicle owners, and also improving injury benefits for its most seriously injured customers.

The provincial Crown corporation has a strong balance sheet due to a number of factors, including fewer collision claims due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

"The Saskatchewan Auto Fund Rate Stabilization Reserve is in a very strong financial position due to very strong investment returns and—to a smaller degree—fewer collision claims due to the Covid-19 pandemic," Minister Responsible for SGI Don Morgan said.

"As a result, SGI will pass on these earnings to the people of Saskatchewan by issuing rebates to all registered vehicle owners and by improving injury benefits."

## Rebates to be issued to vehicle owners this spring

The provincial government has approved the one-time rebate of \$285 million. The amount each customer receives will vary, and it will be calculated based on a proportion of vehicle premiums paid in the previous three years. Details are still being finalized, but it's expected the average rebate will work out to approximately \$285 per vehicle or approximately 26 per cent of an average annual premium in Saskatchewan.

The Auto Fund, which all Saskatchewan vehicle owners pay into via their insurance premiums, maintains the Rate Stabilization Reserve (RSR). Maintaining a healthy balance in the RSR protects customers against sudden rate fluctuations due to unexpected cost pressures. The RSR is one of the reasons that SGI customers enjoy, on average, the lowest rates for basic auto insurance in Canada and have not experienced significant rate increases, despite the rapidly rising cost of repairing today's modern vehicles.

The amount in the RSR is heavily impacted by the performance of its well-diversified investment portfolio. After losses last March, in the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, the RSR experienced strong investment earnings over the past fiscal year, especially in the last quarter. This allows SGI to absorb the one-time cost associated with issuing rebates, while remaining in a position to protect customers from significant rate hikes going forward. Even with issuing the rebate, the RSR will meet industry standards to protect against unexpected cost fluctuations.

Rebate cheques will be issued in May and sent through the mail to customers who have paid Auto Fund premiums in the past three years and are residents of Saskatchewan. Customers are encouraged to verify that their mailing address is up to date by visiting [www.MySGI.ca](http://www.MySGI.ca) to confirm or by contacting their local motor licence issuer.

## Enhanced benefits for most seriously injured customers

SGI is also implementing two significant enhancements for customers who receive long-term injury benefits as a result of being injured in vehicle collisions.

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(i.e., dressing, bathing, cooking, cleaning and yard care) will see the maximum payments for those services increase to better reflect current market rates. This is expected to benefit more than 1,100 SGI customers.

SGI customers who receive income replacement benefits from SGI and Canada Pension Plan (CPP) will no longer have income benefits from SGI reduced by their CPP payment. It is standard industry practice to reduce insurance benefits by the CPP payment. SGI is leading the industry by eliminating this practice, to the added benefit of our most seriously injured customers. It is estimated that this will benefit approximately 200 people.

The World-Spectators Spencer Kemp reached out to SGI Chief Financial Officer Jeff Stepan to answer some questions about the rebate.

## SGI is distributing roughly \$350 million to Saskatchewan residents. Are these earnings brought on by a surplus?

"It's really a surplus that has built up over the last three years. We need to keep a reserve and we call it the Rate Stabilization Reserve. We need to keep it to make sure we have sufficient money to pay claims, plus we want to have a buffer so that if we have a bad storm season we don't have to jack up rates.

What's happened over the last few years and particularly the last year we've had very strong investment earnings that have boosted that reserve above what's required. We've also had lower insurance claims because of the pandemic. Fewer cars on the road mean fewer claims.

That combination has put us in a position where we have excess capital that can be refunded back to the people of Saskatchewan."

## Why did SGI choose to do a rebate instead of reinvesting the money?

"The auto fund is managed on a break-even basis. Any money that comes in is used to pay claims or pay administrative costs. Because of that, all the money just stays within the auto fund. The only real option was to keep building up our capital and it just made more sense to pass that back on to the people of Saskatchewan."

## Why now?

"The position that we're in now allowed us to do this. The two ways that we could have effectively reduced the capital is we could have lowered rates and people would have had lower rates going forward for the next few years or we could have done this rebate.

The rebate, given the pandemic and situation we are in economically, it was decided that this was the best option to get cash in people's hands when they need it the

most.

The rebate option was chosen, and when we look at our year-to-date results we were in a position where we could afford it and still be prudent about it. We're still sitting with a capital that is just above our target."

## How are the rebates determined per vehicle?

"What we're doing is looking at the last three years of premiums that individuals have paid. Then we're going to add up the premiums the customers have paid and an individual customer's portion of that amount is going to be applied to the available funds.

So if you have a higher-cost vehicle to insure, then you are going to be getting a bigger rebate than somebody who has not put as much into insurance premiums."

## What is the full range of the rebates?

"It really varies. Some people might have only registered a vehicle for a portion of a year, which would mean they would get a very small rebate. But then there are some people and some companies that have fleets of vehicles that would be getting a fairly substantial rebate.

It's hard to say what the minimum and maximum would be. We haven't run all of the numbers yet, so we don't have that information."

## Will the funding be available for both commercial and personal vehicles?

"It's available for all vehicles. So commercial, personal, trailers, and any kind of vehicle that was registered with the auto fund."

## What is the eligibility for the rebate?

"You have to be a resident of Saskatchewan. So even if you have paid premiums but have moved out of the province, then you are not eligible.

If you have money owing to the auto fund, then what we're going to do is net the rebate against the amount owing. If you owe \$200 but get a rebate of \$285, what you would get is a cheque for \$85 instead."

## How are payments received?

"They're going to receive a cheque in the mail. There is nothing they need to do. We will be mailing out cheques.

The one thing that we ask people to do is to make sure they have their current address on file. They can do that through MySGI or ExpressAddress. Just make sure the address is current on file and they will receive a cheque in mail."

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## Six new foreign-trained doctors working within Prairie Mountain Health

Prairie Mountain Health (PMH) continues ongoing efforts to recruit physicians to the region. One of the initiatives the region utilizes as part of its overall recruitment strategy is the provincial Medical Licensure Program for International Medical Graduates (MLPIMG). The IMG Program assists foreign-trained doctors in obtaining their medical license to be able to practice as a primary care (family) physician in Manitoba.

During the last year, PMH sponsored doctors that successfully graduated from the program and have been strategically placed in PMH communities (or nearby areas) that require additional sufficient physician resources.

This time, these communities include Killarney, Melita, Ste. Rose, Swan River and Virden.

Some of the physician placements will include itinerant clinics in neighboring communities, including First Nation communities.

In return for regional sponsorship, IMG doctors agree

to practice in their respective communities for four years.

The program is supported by the University of Manitoba, Max Rady College of Medicine, the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Manitoba and Manitoba Health, Seniors and Active Living.

During the next rotation, which is already underway, PMH is sponsoring five more IMG physicians who started their training program in July of 2020. If successful, they will be able to commence practice within the health region sometime in early fall.

The new IMG physicians in PMH 2020/2021 and their start dates are as follows:

- Dr. Lziegbe Omoiki: Virden (Sept 2020)
- Dr. Zaheed Fashola: Virden/Melita (Nov. 2020)
- Dr. Indranie Unarain: Killarney (Oct 2020)
- Dr. Vivian Fanous: Ste. Rose (Oct 2020)
- Dr. Opeyemi Ola: Swan River (Aug 2020)
- Dr. Donatus Osuorah: Grandview (Sept 2020)

The Virden District Hospital. Virden is one of the communities where IMG Program doctors have been placed recently.



**SOUTH EAST  
CORNERSTONE**  
Public School Division #209

201c

### NOTICE OF CHANGE OF MEETING DATE

Take note that the Regular (Public) Meeting of the Board of Education of South East Cornerstone Public School Division previously scheduled for March 24, 2021 has been rescheduled to **MARCH 17, 2021** commencing at 1:00 p.m. at the school division office located at 80A-18th Street NE, Weyburn, SK.

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# As rollout starts, government says vaccines are safe and effective

BY ROB PAUL

**LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER**  
As Canada continues its Covid-19 vaccine rollout and works towards vaccinating the general public, people have questions about the specifics of the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines that are being administered by health professionals.

The Government of Saskatchewan wants all residents to feel comfortable receiving the vaccine when it's readily available to the general population and has plenty of resources accessible to give people a better understanding of the vaccine.

Covid-19 vaccine science from the Government of Saskatchewan:

- Scientists all over the world have worked on developing and testing Covid-19 vaccines.
- The technology was recently applied to this situation, but the work has been going on for years.
- Approved Covid-19 vaccines use "messenger RNA" to make the body produce antibodies to fight the virus. It is not DNA, and has no effect on a person's genes. It only triggers the body's immune response, to help it get ready to fight the virus.
- Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are 95 per cent effective in preventing people from getting Covid-19. Two doses are required for the highest effectiveness.
- There have been no shortcuts taken in developing Covid-19 vaccines. They have gone through all the necessary steps. Clinical trials began March 1, 2020 and have involved many thousands of people. Scientific validation and thorough, independent reviews followed.
- Development of Covid-19 vaccines was done more quickly because of unprecedented worldwide funding and collaboration due to the pandemic.
- Canada has real-time access to manufacturer clinical data for promising Covid-19 vaccines being developed. Health Canada fast-tracks approvals by reviewing data as it comes instead of waiting until all the data is in to start to review it.
- There is a lot of misinformation circulating about the vaccine—including that Covid-19 vaccines contain human or animal cells. They do not. Make sure to seek information from credible, science-based sources.

To become immune to Covid-19, the human body must learn how to stop by creating antibodies that can fight against it and that's where the vaccine comes into play.

According to the Government of Saskatchewan's health professionals the mRNA vaccines teach human cells how to make a protein that will trigger an immune response without using the live virus that causes Covid-19. Once triggered, the human body then makes antibodies. The antibodies help fight the infection if the real virus does enter the body in the future. The vaccine is given as a needle in the upper arm. The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines will require two doses.

As of now the vaccine is being prioritized for health workers and high risk Canadians, but as it becomes more readily available to the general public the most people are encouraged to get vaccinated with a few exceptions.

There has been some concern over differ-

ent groups potentially struggling to tolerate the vaccine, but other than pregnant women, children, and those allergic to ingredients, there is no definite reason to worry—those worried due to other health risks are encouraged to speak with their doctor.

Based on the clinical trials and the approval by Health Canada, the Pfizer vaccine can be used for anyone 16 years of age and over and the Moderna vaccine can be used for anyone 18 years of age and over. The vaccines should not be given to people who are allergic to any of the vaccine ingredients, including polyethylene glycol. At this time the vaccine has not been studied in pregnant and breastfeeding women and younger children—pregnant women and people with conditions that affect their immune system should consult their health care provider. Even if a person has already had a Covid-19 infection, they should still receive the vaccine once they've recovered. We expect to receive more detailed information from the vaccine manufacturers and Health Canada as soon as it's available.

After having the vaccine administered some people may feel side effects, but health professionals say that's not unexpected and unless the side effects are severe there's no cause for alarm.

There might be some mild symptoms a day or two after receiving the vaccine. The most common side effects are localized pain or redness or swelling at the injection site. Other symptoms may include mild fever, chills, headache, joint or muscle pain, nausea and vomiting, enlarged lymph nodes under the arm, or feeling tired. As with all vaccines, there's a chance that there will be a serious side effect, but these are rare. A serious side effect might be something like an allergic reaction. All residents will be asked to report any adverse or unexpected reactions to your local public health nurse, a pharmacist, doctor, or nurse practitioner as soon as possible, the government states.

As to why two doses of the vaccine are needed, it's because one will not create enough antibodies to fight the virus.

According to the governments health professionals, there is no evidence that individuals have a sufficient antibody reaction to only one dose to provide protection from Covid-19.

Two doses are required. When receiving the first dose of the vaccine, people will be provided documentation of which vaccine they have received and when to return for the second dose.

Even after receiving both doses of the vaccine, people still must wear their masks and follow all provincial health and safety guidelines.

While experts learn more about the protection that Covid-19 vaccines provide under real-life conditions, it will be important to continue using all the public health protection tools available to help stop this pandemic, like wearing a mask, washing your hands frequently and maintaining physical distancing.

Experts need to understand more about the protection that Covid-19 vaccines provide before deciding to change recommendations on steps everyone should take to slow the spread of the virus that causes Covid-19. Other factors, including how many people get vaccinated and how the virus is spreading in communities, will also affect this decision.

As more people become vaccinated, the provincial government will remain focused



A mobile vaccination unit.

on transmission rates to make decisions on loosening restrictions, but with the slower than expected rollout of the vaccine, the general population isn't expected to be vaccinated until the middle of 2021 at the earliest.



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Both newspapers publish a number of special sections throughout the year, and this position entails notifying advertisers about those special sections and co-ordinating those sections.

As well, the successful applicant would be helping customers with any questions they may have about advertising in the World-Spectator and the Plain and Valley, and assisting customers with their advertising needs. This includes taking phone calls, preparing price quotations, providing advice on what would work best for a customer, and sitting down with customers face to face to talk about what they need and what would work for them.

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### Advertising options

Plain and Valley reaches households across southeast Saskatchewan and southwest Manitoba. We also offer classified and display advertising in the weekly World-Spectator, career and classified advertising across Saskatchewan, and blanket classified advertising across Canada.

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### Deadlines

Deadline for the Plain and Valley is 5 p.m. Wednesday for the following week's issue.

### Online access

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**Left:** Taryn and Nick, the children of Courtney Schaefer, who attended the Slow Down and Move Over event in Esterhazy on March 7 in memory of their father. **Right:** The Slow Down and Move Over event in Esterhazy on March 7.

# 'Slow down, move over' awareness events began in honor of Esterhazy tow truck operator Courtney Schaefer

BY ROB PAUL  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Fire departments, tow trucks and emergency vehicles across Saskatchewan flashed their lights at the side of the road on Sunday, March 7 and Wednesday, March 10 as part of the Slow Down Move Over Awareness Event.

The event is held to raise awareness of rules around passing emergency vehicles on the side of the highway.

It started as a memorial for Courtney Schaefer, an Esterhazy tow truck operator who was killed in a collision on March 7, 2017.

A combined 'Slow down and move over' event and memorial was held in Esterhazy Sunday evening, and Rocanville, Moosomin, Redvers, and Wapella were among the communities that also held 'Slow down and move over' events this past week. 'Slow down and move over' is an event where emergency responders spread awareness about the importance of laws in place to protect tow truck operators, first responders, and highway workers.

## Remembering Courtney

Dallas Baillie of Baillie Brothers Towing said the event in Esterhazy served two purposes.

"We wanted to make the memorial and move over and slow down campaign the same event together, and so ourselves with the tow company, EMS, police and fire set up on the side of the highway west of town on the #22 highway.

"The idea was to make it basically a memorial to Courtney and to get our message across about the slow down and move over laws in Saskatchewan for anybody that is working on the side of the road, whether it's emergency vehicles or construction workers or whatever. This will be the fourth year that we've done it. We started doing this the year that Courtney was killed."

The first 'slow down, move over' event quickly spread across the province, and led to changes in provincial legislation, such as allowing blue flashing

lights on tow trucks, not just the traditional amber lights.

Baillie said he was surprised how the first event in 2017 captured the public's imagination.

"It took off all over, and I think that is just a testament to how important safety is to all of us that work on the side of the highway, whether it's EMS, fire, tow trucks, tire change guys, whatever, because at the end of the day we all want to go home too.

"It's unfortunate an accident had to happen to get this movement going. But because of it the movement is all over Western Canada now and we're working on sending our message down into the Eastern provinces, but we've got a pretty good stronghold on Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta for the slow down and move over laws."

What does he want to get across to the public?

"We just want people to understand that if you see

flashing lights on the side of the road, it really doesn't matter what color of flashing lights, that means something is going on there, so slow down, move over, give room to whoever it is working on the side of the road because at the end of the day everybody wants to go home from their job and some jobs are more dangerous than others. We're working for our families and a living, and we just want to go home safe."

Baillie said he sees the slow down, move over movement as one positive coming out of the tragic accident at Esterhazy four years ago.

"It was a tragic event but it happened and it brought much more publicity to the fact that we need safety on our highways," Baillie said.

"Today's drivers are so much more distracted than they were even five years ago, with all of the technology in vehicles. They need to pay attention when

they're on the road. An accident like that was very tragic but again it started this movement and this movement is getting stronger every year."

Baillie said he was happy that members of Courtney Schaefer's family were planning to be at the event in Esterhazy.

"We stand on the side of the road, just to show respect to Courtney and his family, and Kim has been a great advocate for this," he said. "Obviously she was impacted because of the tragedy in her life, but she's been instrumental in helping us with this movement, and so every year we

want to recognize her and her young daughter for allowing us to continue to go ahead with this movement, basically in Courtney's name."

## Legislation one legacy of Schaefer's death

One change that came about in response to Courtney Schaefer's death is a change in provincial legislation.

In April 2017, the Government of Saskatchewan introduced and passed legislation to improve safety for tow truck operators. The Traffic Safety Amend-

ment Act permits blue light to be used in conjunction with amber lights on tow trucks.

The legislation was introduced and passed in the same day—which requires the unanimous support of the Legislature—after Schaefer was killed March 7, 2017 in a collision along the roadside near the Gerald area during blizzard conditions. Saskatchewan became the first jurisdiction in Canada to introduce a two-color lighting combination for tow trucks.

Since then, Slow Down Move Over Day has been introduced and has grown each year.



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# Crime analysts uncover trends to support police work

BY TRAVIS POLAND

Behind the front-line RCMP officers in Saskatchewan, there's a team of crime analysts digging deeper into the details.

They look for connections between crime and search for trends, hotspots and potential offenders.

"The key is being intelligence-led," says Sgt. Scott Hunter, with the Crime Prevention Unit in Saskatchewan. "Knowing the trends, locations and times where certain crimes are occurring can help officers make their policing more efficient."

The analysts' work supports police officers who are often busy answering calls for service and focusing on the files on their desks.

"They can take a large amount of information that wouldn't be practical for a front-line officer to spend hours on and condense it into reports officers can use," says Hunter.

Using spreadsheets, databases, specialized software and information from across the province, crime analysts can help detachments be more dynamic and effective.

The information can help police organize patrols in crime hotspots, find potential suspects and engage with other detachments or specific units.

"We can flag crime patterns for specialized units to assist with," says Monica Deters, a crime analyst with the Saskatchewan RCMP. "Units like the crime reduction team, general investigation sections or even a gang unit."

Watching for crime trends also allows the RCMP to pass along that knowledge to the public.

"In the fall, we may see an increase in cabin break-ins and we can notify the public to remind them to lock up their cabins and ensure they remove their valuables," says Deters.

Last year, analysts saw an increase in break-and-enters at churches and places of worship throughout the province. In December, the RCMP issued a crime-pattern alert highlighting the problem and listing tips to help prevent future break-ins.

Between January and November, 64 incidents occurred in 55 churches across Saskatchewan—an increase of 60 per cent since 2019.

"Officers were able to create public awareness and engage the community and partners in the church community to help prevent further crimes," says Hunter. "If police are aware of a crime trend before it happens in their own area, they can be proactive and prepared and perhaps even prevent it."



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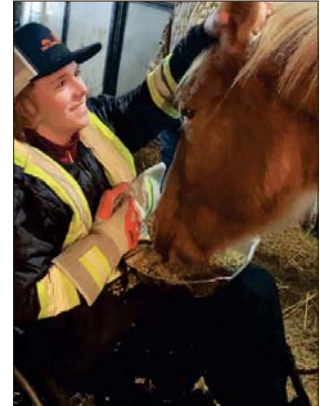
Levi shooting his bow



Levi on the Moosomin skating track.



Levi tagging calves



Levi and his horse Buddy.

# Jamieson family overwhelmed by Moosomin and surrounding communities' support

Continued from page 3

"We have a ramp and it's 24 feet now, but it still probably should be another eight feet longer," said Darcy. "Renovations will be challenging, that's the key," said Diane. "Right now he's downstairs in the living room because all of the bedrooms are upstairs. We're looking at lots of different things right now. We're looking at getting different saddles so he can get back on his horse—we're trying to adapt."  
 "There's a guy down in Greenville, Texas who makes saddles with back supports on them—he's been making them for 25 years," Darcy said. "We've been talking to him a bit and we're trying to get one. We have to do some measuring and fitting on him to send and he'll make a saddle for him. Then he can get back on the horse and do a bit of roping."  
 One thing the Jamieson family can't put into words is

the appreciation they have for the community support they've received. They've always known the community here was strong, but to feel the value of a small community's kindness first-hand has been life-changing for them. "I didn't think that would be there (the community support)," said Levi. "It's great to have the support."  
 "It's pretty overwhelming," said Diane "it's amazing to see all the community's support. Saying thank you doesn't seem to be enough. From texts to prayers to phone calls to food to donations, it was way overwhelming. There's been so many phone calls just offering help with anything—it's been from the moment it happened. We learned what we always knew about the Moosomin community, the surrounding areas, and all around. From the bottom of our hearts, it's unbelievable. I can't say enough."  
 "I don't think anybody expects support like that in any

case," said Darcy. "It's very overwhelming. We've always supported things ourselves so it's great that you get support back. We can't make the thank you big enough. Some of the stuff that was going on we were watching it—like the cow pie bingo (fundraiser), we watched that on TV in Saskatoon—and the nurses and doctors couldn't believe it because they're in a big city, so they couldn't believe it. They were all standing there and watching it with us and couldn't believe it. I don't think there's a person in this community that would turn us down if we needed something."  
 Both Darcy and Diane also say that since the accident, they now understand the real need for a paved runway in Moosomin—a project that is currently in the works—so that the Sask air ambulance can land in Moosomin and take direct flights to Saskatoon, where Levi was transported after landing in Regina on the STARS helicopter.

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# Expansion continues at West End Resort with 80 new seasonal sites and more activities

BY KARA KINNA

A new camping and boating season is just around the corner, and Willie Kuzub, the owner of West End Resort and Campground at Round Lake, is excited about the addition of 80 new seasonal sites to his campground.

The addition marks a significant expansion for the resort, which will now have 150 seasonal sites available and 30 sites for short-term campers, for a total of 180 campsites.

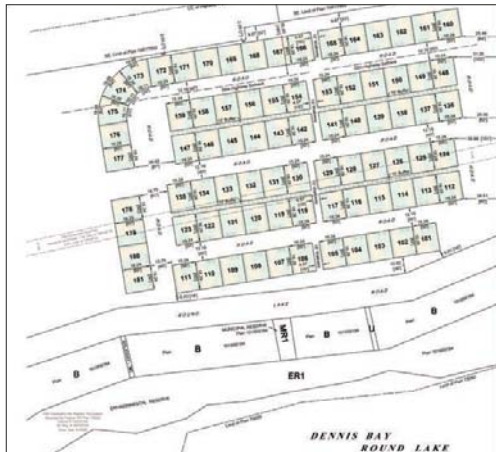
Kuzub has big plans for West End Resort, and the addition of the new campsites is just one more step toward realizing a larger vision. Last year, after years of work deepening an inlet on the lake, Kuzub opened a new marina at West End Resort with 50 boat slips that allow campers and boaters to keep their boats on the water all season long.

Kuzub says that 50 of the new seasonal sites will be operational by the end of the first week in May, and the remaining 30 will be ready by the end of the first week in June.

The sites will be large—50 by 60 feet, and will include sod, a large area to back in a camper, ample room for a deck and fire pit, and even room for a shed if campers want it.

Kuzub says he will be spending his spring ensuring the sites are well treed with evergreens and hedges so that they are ready for the 2021 camping season.

“We have a lot of trees that my grandfather had planted when he was still with us from PFRA, and we have a tree spade so we are going to move a lot of stuff around and try to get some nice trees in to where we want,” says Kuzub.



Left: The map showing the 80 new seasonal campsites.

Above: A rendering of the layout of the new sites

Kuzub says each of the new sites will be irrigated with lake water and he'll be encouraging campers to care for and dress up their lots with flowers and other embellishments through the season.

He says 24 of the new seasonal sites are already spoken for, and with his new marina as a draw and an increase in campers last year across the Prairies due to Covid-19, he expects all of his new seasonal sites to be rented before spring.

“Our marina is making a big difference,” he says. “When people can put their boats there and leave them tied up and come and go as they please, and when it takes five minutes to jump in your boat and go out onto the

lake versus going through the motions of having the hassle to load it and unload it, it makes a big difference for people.”

Aside from the new marina and the new seasonal sites, Kuzub also wants to increase the activities that are available at the resort.

“There are a lot of other things we are going to do this year,” he says. “We’re going to start a kids’ club where every Saturday the kids can come down around 9 o’clock and we are going to have crafts for them to do, maybe a nature hike—stuff like that. We will start with an hour every Saturday, but we will probably bump it up a bit.”

“We are actually going to have a food truck that’s going to be

on site all year—Lizzie’s Prairie Fields, out of Round Lake. She will offer some traditional food truck menu items as well as some healthier stuff. She plans to provide culturally diverse food choices that are locally sourced. She wants to use locally grown stuff whenever possible.

“And then we are going to have a few different variations of yoga a few times a week. The yoga started last year and it went off well for the last few weeks of the summer. It was still into September when they were doing yoga.”

Kuzub says he has also started to develop a gravel walking path along the marina and wants to continue to lengthen the path so it can be used by walkers or golf carts. He also has added wifi to the campground, as well as the ability for boats to fuel up right on the lake, and is also planning on holding outdoor movie nights with a large inflatable screen a few times a month, as well as a flea market on Sundays. In 2022

he hopes to add swimming lessons to the list of activities offered at the resort.

“We are really trying to create more things to do so you’re not just going camping, going out on the lake then coming back to eat and go to sleep,” he says. “We are trying to create more activities. Pickleball might be an option down the road. Maybe a tennis court or volleyball nets. Whether it’s walking trails, or golf cart trails, or quad trails, it just gives people stuff to do.”

West End Resort is a labour of love for Kuzub. His family—including his grandpa and his parents—have been actively involved in working on the land for years, and Kuzub eventually started his own construction company to do some of the work.

“That’s why I got into construction,” he says, “so that we could look into moving forward on some of this stuff and developing, and try to get our numbers up.”

Continued on Page 15



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# Changes to 2021 Crop Insurance program

Federal Ag Minister of Marie-Claude Bibeau and Saskatchewan Finance Minister Donna Harpauer announced enhancements to the 2021 Crop Insurance Program.

This year, Crop Insurance coverage will reach a record level due to higher commodity prices and increased yield coverage.

"Farmers across Saskatchewan continue to step up despite all the challenges thrown their way during the Covid-19 pandemic," Bibeau said. "These improvements to the Crop Insurance Program give Saskatchewan farmers more coverage they can count on. We will continue working with our provincial counterparts to ensure farmers have the risk management

tools to help their stability and growth."

"For over 60 years, the Crop Insurance Program has supported Saskatchewan producers with reliable coverage and exceptional customer service," Harpauer said. "We are committed to providing producers with the insurance programs they need and the enhancements announced today build upon the current suite of programs."

Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation (SCIC) continues to provide high coverage as we enter a new growing season. Coverage will reach a record level of \$273 per acre due to higher commodity prices and increased yield coverage, up from \$224 in 2020. This

represents a 22 per cent increase in coverage. The average premium cost per dollar of coverage continues to decline.

There was a 42 per cent reduction in average premium cost per dollar of coverage over the last 10 years. This includes a 20 per cent reduction directly resulting from the strong financial position of the program. However, due to the increased coverage for 2021, the average premium for producers will be higher than in 2020. The average premium per acre will be \$8.59, up from \$7.40.

Establishment benefit values are reviewed annually. This year, the establishment benefit values for canola, lentils, chickpeas and corn have increased.

Canola is now \$70 per acre. Large Green lentils are \$50 per acre and Red lentils are \$30 per acre. Large Kabuli chickpeas are \$65 per acre and Small Kabuli chickpeas are \$45 per acre. Corn is \$95 per acre.

New in 2021, producers growing tame hay will have additional options when insuring their hay acres. Crop Insurance customers now have the choice to insure their tame hay acres under the Forage Rainfall Insurance Program (FRIP) or the Multi-Peril Crop Insurance Program. Coverage options can be customized for each farming operation. Under FRIP, payments will be calculated based on rainfall levels, instead of overall yields.

"Saskatchewan cattle producers face a lot of risks. It is good to see the programs they can access through SCIC continue to evolve," Saskatchewan Cattlemen's Association Chair Arnold Balicki said.

"Adding tame hay to the Forage Rainfall Insurance Program and extending the calf coverage deadline and hours of operation for Livestock Price Insurance are all positive. I encourage cattle producers to look into SCIC's programs as there were many improvements in recent years."

Forage producers will also see an increase in Native Forage Establishment Benefit coverage. The Native Forage Establishment Benefit provides coverage on newly seeded native forage acres. The coverage is increasing from \$75 to \$200. Other Forage Establishment Benefit prices seeing an increase includes tame hay to \$90 per acre and sweetclover to \$65 per acre. Forage producers are encouraged to review available coverage options through SCIC's Forage Option and Weather-Based Programs.

*Continued on page 25*

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# Expansion continues at West End Resort with 80 new seasonal sites and more activities

Continued from page 13

"Now that we have the marina, we are pretty confident that's a good draw, a good foundation for us to build off of. The other draw I'm thinking about or planning for down the road would be a nine-hole, par three golf course. It's a little bit early to do that now because I may as well expand and see what kind of draw I can get with the marina and other stuff I can add to it, and then we will go from there.

"As long as we can grow and keep everybody happy and enjoying themselves, then we will. It's a really good family resort, we have tons of kids and young families, but we also have a lot of older folks who are between 65 to 70 years old. Once we put that marina in last year it was a gamechanger for a lot of our older folks. One fella said 'this is probably going to be my wife and my last year of camping, and now that this marina is here, it's so easy, we don't need the two of us to get the boat in the water and load it out after we use it for the day, because it's exhausting, it's a lot of work.' So now you can leave your boat in, jump in and go.

"And we really promote golf carts. So they can take their cooler with their sandwiches or munchies or drinks right down to their boat with the golf cart to where the marina slips are, throw it in their boat, come back, throw the stuff back on their golf cart and drive back up to the campsite. They don't have to be right beside the dock or lakefront. It's only minutes of driving with one of those vehicles to get there.

"The fella said 'Will, we went from using our golf cart about three times the year before to about three times using it this afternoon.' And just the glow in their eyes, I could tell they are probably going to have another few years of camping. It's not coming to an end for them.

"And so we've got a lot of those folks where it's kind of relit the spark for them. They are pretty excited. And that's nice to see."

Kuzub says West End Resort has evolved to have a community-like atmosphere over the years.

"We've got a lot of good people. Our clientele is really good, a lot of fun. My family and my mom and dad help me out a lot down there.

"Watching our kids grow up around all these other kids, it's like pretty cool too. Because when springtime comes, all of a sudden their summer friends start coming down on weekends and pretty soon it goes from our four kids or the 10 kids that are kind of local to that area—it just grows from 10 to like 100 kids. Suddenly there are just different faces you haven't seen all winter. It's good to see everybody back again. Then in fall it's kind of sad because ev-



An aerial view of the campsite and the marina at West End Resort on Round Lake.

eryone goes home. But in springtime everyone shows up again and you've got all of your friends back.

"It is like a community and everyone watches out for everyone's kids down there, it doesn't matter who they are. Everyone is kind of raising everyone's kids down there."

Kuzub says they have a lot of day trippers who come out to check out the resort now as well.

"We have a spot by the store where you can park and wander down to the beach and go for a walk.

"We've been getting a lot of folks from all over the lake coming by just to go for a walk and get out and it's kind of neat. The atmosphere down by the marina is kind of unique because it's something that has not been on our lake ever, so now you get people just bringing their boats in to go on a country cruise. They will come and idle through there

and then with the turtles and other wildlife there too, it's kind of a sightseeing experience and relaxing drive."

The community at West End Resort is coming from a large area says Kuzub.

"We are drawing from all over the place—Estevan, Carn-duff area, Moosomin, Rocanville, Esterhazy, Langenburg, Churchbridge, Yorkton, Melville, and this year a lot of the seasonals we've been renting to are from White City and Pilot Butte. We are starting to get a really good draw there, and some folks from Indian Head.

"It has been overwhelming in a great way to see this different group of people coming from everywhere. It's nice because everyone gets to know someone new every year too. That's the nice thing about it. You are meeting more people and new people. It's pretty neat that way."

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# USask awarded \$6.76M to help revive North American bison population, strengthen Canadian cattle industry

BY GREG BASKY

The University of Saskatchewan (USask) has been awarded \$6.76 million from the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) to help conserve bison and other threatened animal species and address challenges facing the beef cattle industry, including antimicrobial resistance which poses a global threat to animals and humans.

"Working with our partners in the livestock industry, Indigenous groups and other leading academic institutions, USask's world leading researchers will place Canada on the global stage of animal conservation and production," said USask Vice-President Research Dr. Baljit Singh. "This expert multidisciplinary team will apply genomics and other new technologies to the beef sector to enhance production, livestock health, and food safety, as well as reduce greenhouse gases for a more sustainable future."

The wide-ranging research program, made possible through the CFI Innovation Fund, includes working with Indigenous communities to develop the world's first bison genome biobank at the university's Livestock and Forage Centre of Excellence (LFCE).

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau today announced more than \$518 million to support the in-



A wood bison cow and calf at the Livestock and Forage Centre of Excellence (Goodale Farm) during the summer of 2019.

Rigel Smith photo

frastructure needs of universities and research institutions across the country.

"After the near extinction of bison 100 years ago, Canada has led the way in bison conservation, but due to small genetically

isolated herds and disease, bison remain at less than two per cent of their historic population. Without conservation efforts, bison as a distinct species would cease to exist," said team leader Gregg Adams, a specialist in re-

productive biology at USask's Western College of Veterinary Medicine (WVCM).

Genome biobanks are used to store and redistribute genetic material to preserve genetic diversity. Adams and other re-

searchers will use genomic tools to identify and restore the natural genetic composition and genetic diversity of Canada's plains bison and wood bison populations, ensuring the species will survive for generations to come. The work has the support of the Assembly of First Nations and other Indigenous groups.

"A genome biobank provides one of the best opportunities to revitalize the bison species and will serve as an excellent model that can be applied to other threatened Canadian species, such as caribou," Adams said, noting that more than 30,000 animal species are at risk of extinction worldwide.

New knowledge, technical expertise and genetic material will be shared with zoos around the world, including with the Toronto Zoo, a long-standing research partner with its own viable herd of wood bison.

Bringing together experts in areas as diverse as reproductive technology, beef cattle health and disease, genomics, microbiomics, and bioinformatics, the research program—"Integrated omics for sustainable animal agriculture and environmental stewardship" or "IntegOmes" for short—will include a fibre optics network linking on-campus labs with the LFCE to enable rapid transfer of large volumes of data.

Continued on page 31

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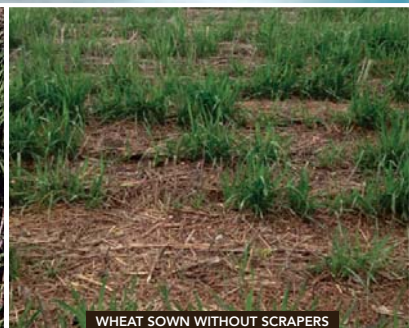

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## USask livestock research receives significant investment to advance industry

Saskatchewan's Agriculture Development Fund (ADF) will provide more than \$6.5 million to support livestock research efforts at the University of Saskatchewan (USask).

This includes operational funding for the Prairie Swine Centre (PSC) (\$1.9 million) and the Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization (VIDO) (\$1.58 million). A total of 19 individual USask research projects were also awarded approximately \$3 million, including almost \$332,000 for forage crop breeding development at the Global Institute for Food Security (GIFS) at USask.

"This investment helps ensure producers directly connect with the work being done at the university, and also allows new projects to move forward and influence the success of livestock operations," said USask Vice-President Research Karen Chad. "Agriculture is one of our signature areas, and we know advances in research and technology form a foundation for economic growth in this vitally important sector in Saskatchewan."

The ADF program is supported through the Canadian Agricultural Partnership, a five-year \$388-million investment by the federal and provincial governments in strategic initiatives for the sector in Saskatchewan.

"This funding will directly benefit the Saskatchewan pork value chain," said PSC CEO Murray Pettitt. "In the past 15 years, our research program has contributed an average return on investment of \$4.10 per pig/year to the Saskatchewan industry, and the funds received from the Agriculture Development Fund enable Prairie Swine Centre to attract additional research funding for the benefit of the industry."

A total of almost \$7.6 million from ADF was announced Jan. 27 for 26 agriculture projects in Saskatchewan and across the country, supplemented by an additional \$323,000 from industry partners.

"We are thankful for the ongoing support from ADF," said VIDO Director Dr.

Volker Gerdt. "Infectious diseases continue to threaten animal health and production. This funding helps ensure our cutting-edge research and development benefits producers."

**HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:**

**Acquiring and applying knowledge (\$1.9 million):** Prairie Swine Centre will continue to generate and deliver novel research results from our engineering, nutrition and ethology research programs. These results will continue to support the success and sustainability (economic, environmental and social license) of the Saskatchewan pork industry.

**Connecting and communicating with producers (\$1.58 million):** VIDO will aim to improve animal health and production through enhanced scientific communication, knowledge exchange and vaccine development. This ongoing project will help ensure the development and communication of solutions that benefit Saskatchewan producers and protect animals from infectious diseases.

**Improving forage crops (\$332,000):** Genetic improvements in bromegrass, an essential forage crop for cattle, have been low due to the complexity of the genome and the lack of efficient analysis tools. Led by plant molecular geneticist Andrew Sharpe, director of genomics and bioinformatics at GIFS, this project will produce a catalogue of genetic variation for bromegrass along with predictive models for the breeding process. The resulting information will have a direct impact on the ability of breeders to select the most nutritious varieties of bromegrass that produce the largest yield.

Examples of other innovative crop-related projects with potential economic impact include:

*Continued on page 30*

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# Varying moisture conditions continue in March runoff report

On Feb. 25, the Water Security Agency (WSA) released its updated spring runoff report for March 2021, continuing to show varying conditions across the province.

Compared to the February report, a wider band of the northern and central parts of Saskatchewan, encompassing Saskatoon, Prince Albert, Melfort and La Ronge area are expected to experience a near normal runoff. WSA snow surveys conducted in the latter part of February showed some higher levels of snowpack existed through parts of central Saskatchewan, especially Saskatoon. Pockets of southwestern Saskatchewan are also expected to receive a near normal runoff including Kindersley, Leader and Cypress Hills.

The report also continued to confirm the lower moisture conditions for many other parts of central and southern Saskatchewan. A band encompassing North Battleford, Swift Current and Regina are still expected to receive a below normal runoff, while most of the far south including Assiniboia, Estevan and Weyburn are anticipated to receive a well below normal runoff.

Conditions over southcentral and south eastern areas, particularly east of Highway 4 and south of Highway 1, are particularly dry and have a snowmelt runoff potential. While surface water supplies at larger reservoirs are expected to be

met in 2021, users that rely on smaller reservoirs/dugouts may see shortages continue or emerge in 2021 if snowpack conditions do not improve. Low levels on recreational lakes may occur during the summer months, particularly in the Qu'Appelle Valley.

While the snowpack is not overly heavy in the far north, encompassing the areas of Uranium City, Stony Rapids and Cluff Lake, the extreme wet conditions carrying through last fall continue to indicate a higher-than-normal runoff potential for these areas. At this time, however, unless there is significant precipitation prior to or during the spring melt and/or a rapid melt, flooding from snowmelt runoff in 2021 is considered a lower risk.

Ice on waterbodies also poses a risk during the melt period. While the risk of ice jamming is lower this spring with the expectation of below normal runoff, ice on waterbodies does become unpredictable and dangerous during the melt period and should be avoided.

WSA reminds the public that the runoff potential and response can change depending on future snow accumulations and weather during the melt. WSA will monitor conditions through to the completion of the runoff event. A final runoff report is expected to be issued in early April unless runoff is complete or near complete over most areas.



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Shea Long, Coastal Lifestyles Photography

## Researchers at USask help map broad genetic diversity of canola crop

Global Institute for Food Security (GIFS) researchers at the University of Saskatchewan (USask) are members of an international consortium of leading academic and commercial seed companies from the USA, Canada, Europe and Israel, that has announced the successful mapping of the canola pan-genome (its entire set of genes).

The International Canola Pan-genome Consortium was established in 2019 to advance the canola agricultural industry by capturing the broad genetic diversity of this crop.

The global consortium was led by Dr. Isobel Parkin (PhD), research scientist from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) and affiliate researcher at GIFS, Dr. Andrew Sharpe (PhD), director of genomics and bioinformatics from GIFS, and NRGene, a leading genomic artificial intelligence (AI) company based in Israel.

"Completing the sequencing of all the genomes and delivering the comparative pan-genome analysis has revealed the scope of genetic diversity that exists within the crop," said Sharpe. "It truly is the final satisfying step of this rewarding initiative."

The consortium included key players in the canola industry, among them Bayer, Corteva, Nutrien and NuSeed. Each member contributed their own canola lines and received the full pan-genome comparison results.

Canola is a major oil seed crop considered to be a high-quality vegetable oil and commonly used in food production and various industrial applications, including biofuel. It is farmed on approximately 35 million acres globally and with 85 million tons produced in 2019, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization. The results of the consortium's research has immense economic value for Canada, which is one of the world's leading producers and exporters of canola.

Extensive breeding of the crop across the world, is focused on developing higher yielding and more nutritional varieties that can naturally resist plant diseases. The use of DNA markers has already

enhanced canola breeding over the past three decades. However, understanding its whole genome which is complex, diverse and unstable became a bottleneck in canola breeding.

Building a pan-genome database to unravel the broad genomic diversity in canola is key to expanding the crop's productivity and will help increase its use for a range of applications—replacing lower quality vegetable oils and diesel fuels.

"The pan-genome is already revealing previously hidden novel structural variation that will prove invaluable in characterizing economically important traits of the crop," said Parkin.

The international consortium generated a full genome sequence of 12 canola and rapeseed varieties that were assembled using NRGene's DeNovoMAGIC™ software. Each genome was built from about one billion DNA chemical elements and differs on average from other genomes in 40 per cent of the DNA elements. These differences in the genetic content are responsible for the unique field performance of each variety.

To identify all of the unique DNA elements in each variety, NRGene performed an all-to-all comparison on the 12 chromosome-level genome sequences and built the pan-genome database.

"We are pleased that NRGene's genomic AI tools were chosen by the leading canola research teams to build an accurate pan-genome," said Dr. Gil Ronen, NRGene's CEO. "With the great help of our consortium partners, we successfully created a valuable asset that will be used for the coming decades towards overcoming canola's key breeding challenges."

The canola pan-genome will be used by the consortium members, and following scientific publication, will be available to the entire canola breeding and research community to accelerate the genetic understanding of this important crop. Elite lines with key commercial traits will be developed rapidly and bring better quality products to market.

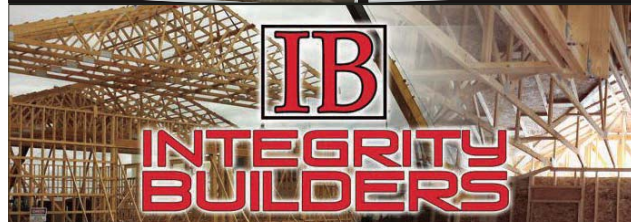
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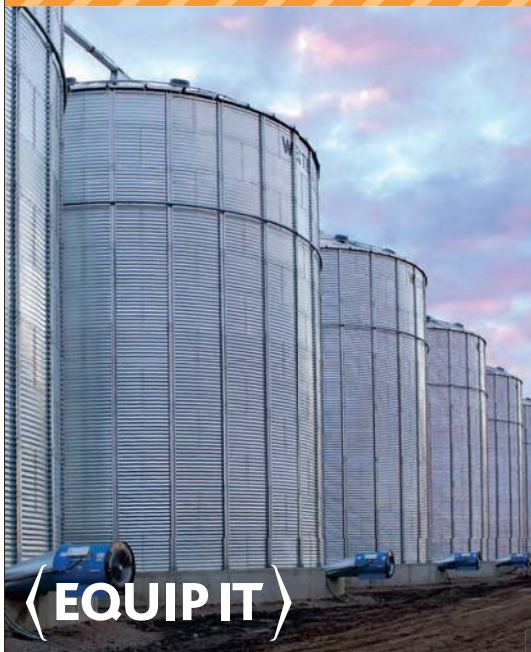
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# Coming together to set Canadian wheat research goals

## The value of engaging the entire wheat chain

When the Canadian Wheat Research Priorities task group convened in 2019 to begin the consultative process that would create the 2020-2022 priorities, they purposely invited representatives along the entire wheat value chain from across Canada.

"There is tremendous value in having everyone at the table," says Dean Dias, CEO of Cereals Canada – the organization that co-chaired the development of the research priorities together with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC).

"We set out to have the entire value chain involved to have a view from research on what is possible and what to focus on, a view from growers on yield and profitability, and a view from customers and exporters who know what is needed in the marketplace. And there is the role that groups funding public research, including AAFC, have in contributing to setting research priorities," says Dias.

### Setting representative priorities

Adam Dyck understands the value of an inclusive process from both sides of the table. He co-chaired the theme on customer quality. And for the past 11 years, he's been in charge of Canadian operations for Warburtons – the largest bakery in the UK that sources over 50% of its wheat from its long-running Canadian Identity Preserved Program.

"There was an open invitation across the wheat value chain to participate including public and private wheat breeders, the seed industry, growers, grain companies, millers, end users and academia," says Dyck. "With all these voices around the table, you develop outcomes that carry a lot of weight and represent the industry's wishes. Having everyone in the value chain involved in priority setting helps develop a strong theme."

Balancing standard wheat breeding goals (e.g. yield) with the quality traits that end-users want is an interesting and ongoing challenge when setting research goals around the customer quality theme. "We need to make sure that outcomes fit the end-use purpose," says Dyck. "So that what we are asking of wheat breeders in terms of quality, actually fits what end users want."

One example of customer quality research that could benefit the whole value chain is work on rapid testing for qualities like gluten strength and milling properties. Researchers are looking at cost-effective rapid testing tools that could help breeders measure these quality traits ear-



lier in the breeding process. This ensures that varieties released to market are well suited for the entire chain.

### Focus on customer satisfaction

All five themes in the research priorities document focus on producing more wheat, more consistently, and improving the sector for the benefit of everyone in the value chain. It's a key way to ensure Canada maintains its track record as a source for high-quality wheat around the world.

"Our goal with these priorities is to keep demand strong so growers see wheat as a profitable crop and keep acreage up," says Dyck. "Canada is already a world leader in wheat, so if we collaborate on research priorities—and execute them successfully over time—we can keep current customers happy and attract new customers to Canadian wheat."

### Inform funding decisions

Another critical element of the collaborative priority setting is to deliver a clear message to wheat research funders on what the value chain agrees the priorities are.

"This shared voice is extremely powerful and it's why it was so important to ensure representation from the entire value chain," says Dyck.

"We need to invest in research in the right places and another reason for the strategy to include funding groups in the priority setting process."

Bringing all the players in the sector together to develop shared priorities for Canadian wheat research builds a balanced, informed approach that considers multiple aspects.

"You could have high-quality wheat that doesn't yield well, or high-yielding wheat that doesn't meet the need

of end-use customers," says Dias.

"That's why it was so critical to build a loop where the industry came together to have those types of discussions as a whole value chain to set relevant targets for wheat research in Canada."



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The program is expected to take place from April to October 2021. Visit [www.cn.ca/vegetation](http://www.cn.ca/vegetation) to see the list of cities as well as the updated schedule.

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# Why 5G connectivity matters to agriculture

BY PETER GREDIG, FCC

The evolution of wireless connectivity has allowed us to do more and more with our smartphones. The next big leap forward in speed and capacity is called 5G, but what does this technology offer us beyond making it easier to stream video to your phone or tablet? What about agriculture and 5G? Let's start with an explanation of how 5G is different from what we have now, then consider why this may be important for agriculture.

## WHAT IS 5G?

The term 5G refers to the fifth generation of cellular networks, which began deployment in 2019. Most Canadians currently use 4G LTE, and some may still get only 3G connection, depending on where they live.

Devices in a 5G cell are connected to the internet and telephone networks via radio waves that come from local towers and antennas. There's nothing new on this front—it's similar to the way 3G and 4G LTE work.

What is new is the boost in bandwidth and download speed that 5G can bring. Without getting too deep into connectivity speed jargon, 4G LTE download speeds max out at one gigabit per second – 5G has the potential to reach speeds as high as 20 gigabits per second. The key word is potential. It will take time to get the 5G networks to the point where these impressive speeds will be commonplace. But even lower-performing 5G is still a big step up in terms of speed.

And it's not just speed. Latency is a measure of how long it takes an action request or data to travel from one device to another and return. The promise of 5G is to get that lag time down to one millisecond: essentially instantaneous.

5G offers more bandwidth, higher speeds and less latency. That's the good



news. The trade-off is that because it uses higher-frequency radio waves, the range of these waves is shorter so more towers are needed. The initial rollout of 5G will have towers that use a range of frequencies delivering three different speeds. This will ensure coverage across the cell for each tower. It will take years to fully switch to the highest-performing 5G capabilities.

## WHAT ABOUT 5G IN AGRICULTURE?

Theoretically, 5G will help agriculture make better use of the internet of things, artificial intelligence and robotics. It's all about data and how fast it can be processed. We hear more and more about connected sensors in barns, greenhouses, fields and on equipment – this is part of what's called the internet of things where anything and everything will be collecting data and connected to the internet. The 5G-enabled sensors will be able to collect and aggregate the enormous amount of data being collected and, in real time, push it through artificial

intelligence algorithms to enable complex real-time decisions.

A robotic weeder is a good example. The sensors on the weeder are looking for weeds while recognizing that the crop must not be disturbed. The sensors are gathering a lot of data that needs to be processed to let the robot decide what is and isn't a weed. A 5G connection enables the weeder to make decisions and work faster. If you think about any robot or autonomous vehicle moving at high speed, decisions have to be made instantly for safety reasons.

The bottom line is, if agriculture is to fully benefit from the internet of things, artificial intelligence and robotics, data must move and be processed instantaneously. And 5G is touted as the best way to accomplish this.

## WHEN WILL WE GET 5G?

Some telecom providers have initiated a 5G rollout in major urban centres like Toronto, Ottawa, Vancouver and Montreal. This initial launch will see the 4G network

augmented by 5G capability. It will take time for fully dedicated 5G coverage to expand beyond densely populated urban areas because more towers need to be installed. Rural Canadians may have a significant wait before full 5G capability is available to them. The other speedbump is that you'll need a new phone to use it. There are some 5G-enabled smartphones and tablets, but not all are supported by Canadian carriers. If you're buying a new device and want to be 5G enabled, check with your carrier to make sure it's on the supported list.

While the promise of 5G to enable the artificial intelligence and robotic revolution in agriculture is exciting, many rural Canadians are still waiting for functional mobile connectivity and basic internet service for their homes. It will be at least a couple of years before we really start to see 5G availability and functionality in rural areas.

## WHAT ABOUT HIGH-SPEED SATELLITE DELIVERY?

Rural Canadians may have access to high-speed internet for their homes from satellites well before 5G mobile becomes established. New providers of satellite internet services are eyeing rural Canada as a good potential market for their services. The good news is that you can access satellite internet anywhere—it's not limited by the number and location of towers. The downside is that satellite internet speeds are significantly slower than what 5G is promising and historically, the cost has been higher than other options.

Satellite services require a dish to be installed on or near your house that exchanges signals with a satellite and communicates with your router to create a wireless environment. It doesn't provide the speed or mobile service that 5G promises, but it's definitely worth looking at.

## Manitoba Ag Days gives back \$28,000, even during pandemic

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Ag Days is one of the last not-for-profit farm trade shows that are left on the circuit. Their mission is

to provide a platform to connect and educate producers, exhibitors and the public.

Traditionally they host an annual three-day trade show with complimentary speaker theatres, but in

2021 were unable to host their event due to the pandemic.

"It was a none discussion at our board table, it was unanimous that everyone wanted to see our Ag Days Gives Back program continue, even during a pandemic" says Hannah Minshull, Manitoba Ag Days board member and chair of the Ag Days Gives Back Committee.

Ag Days says they wanted to make sure that

they were still able to give back to the ag community, so they hosted an online 50/50 raffle. Thanks to the support of Manitobans they say they had the most successful 50/50 they have ever had. The total pot grew to \$35,560. The winner, Oksana Iwanchysko, took home \$17,780 and \$17,780 was added to their Ag Days Gives Back Community Giving Fund.

"Even with no show, we wanted to give back some

of the show's success to the communities which our exhibitors and patron's call home. Over the course of the last nine years we have given back over \$316,000 to assist many amazing projects that are helping to grow our communities along with supporting youth agricultural education throughout the province," said General Manager Kristen Phillips. "Since 2020/2021 was anything but normal we wanted to really focus on communities and what makes those communities thrive and grow, so you will see all \$28,000 in 2021 will go to youth education and growing our future generations."

Here is who will take home the money in 2021:

- \$10,000.00 will go to Agriculture in the Classroom – Manitoba to create a virtual Manitoba Ag Days Adventure. With no show they still wanted to deliver this important program to youth throughout the province and with their grant money they will launch the program on Canada's Agriculture Day – February 23, 2021.
- \$3,000 will go to three annual scholarships – ACC Diploma Scholarship – Paige Freitag – U of M's Diploma Scholarship – Eunseo Hwang – U of M's Degree Scholarship – Jill Martens
- \$15,000 will go to 15 Early Learning Centers across the province including:

- Melita Early Learning Centre: To purchase toys and ride toys for their outdoor play space, including bikes and scooters
- Elkhorn Early Learning Centre: To purchase a water chlorination system for drinking water for the chil-

dren and staff

-Minto Nursery School Inc: To purchase a new rug for their library area, an adult-size chair so the reader does not have to sit on a child's chair, a new shelf and some new books

-Waskada Wee Ones

Early Learning Centre: To enhance their outdoor play area with sandbox bench seating and storage, and install a sunsail for shade, as well as a reading nook with benches and plants

Early learning centres in Emerson, Langruth, Carman, Altona, Wawanesa, Morden, Ste. Rose, Brandon, and Erickson are also receiving part of the funding.

In total there were 67 early learning centers that applied from all over the province.

It was an overwhelming response to their program and Ag Days says they wish they had enough money to give each of the centers a \$1,000 grant as every single application pulled at their heart strings.

"The board of Manitoba Ag Days is very passionate about educating the future generation, making sure that children have access to and learn about agriculture," they said in a news release. "We also know that early learning centers enable our farm families to be able to farm while their children's minds and bodies learn, grow and develop. Congratulations to all of the recipients of this year's grants. And to all 67 centers please keep up the great work; you are essential to the success of our province."

The board of directors says they look forward to hosting their annual event in 2022. The dates are set for January 18-20, 2022.

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# Back in the day—banking precious memories

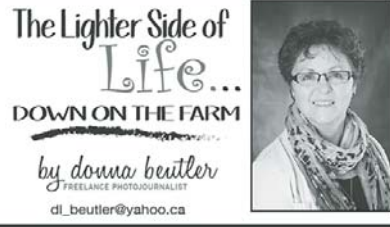
There's nothing quite like a stretch of serious cold temperatures to make you appreciate a good-working furnace and, yes, the fuel that runs it. As for the people who keep the world turning despite brutal outdoor conditions, I have nothing but respect, no matter what the job is that they do, including my guys who, like other livestock producers in this weather, must ensure tractors are running, cattle are cared for, cows due to calve are in the barn and cows that are calving are in the "warm" barn. And the bane of every cattle farmer—the untwisting of the watering bowls on the coldest days of the year.

I was never more grateful to be removed from hands-on "on-the-farm" duties than the -50 wind chill days that we experienced this past February. I feel I did my part by wishing my husband a good day when he left for the farm every morning to help with feeding, bedding and calving duties (before settling into my comfy chair under the electric blanket I might add). The fact that the "new-to-us" farm half-ton has remote start (unlike the one stolen from in front of our house one year ago) is a bonus and is not taken for granted, I assure you.

I had the opportunity recently to reconnect with some school chums from my days in elementary school in Northwestern Ontario, and as I shared some old black and whites on the Facebook memory page, I was reminded of what a shock to the system it was for me, at the age of 12, to leave the forests I was so accustomed to and arrive on a Southeastern Saskatchewan farm.

At the time, I probably would have been more inclined to call it a traumatic experience. After all, my biggest decisions up until "the move" had been whether I would toboggan or skate after school. And here I was, totally out of my element, in a world filled with days that were too short to get the to-do list done and a workload that had no end in sight. And holidays? Yeah, unheard of.

But of course, life is all about adaptation isn't it? I learned how to drive the car that first year (standard of course), then the tractor, learned how to work summer-fallow, feed cows, harrow fields, haul meals to the field in harvest time (I skipped the part about how to make them) and do the farm books (and yes, with a pencil, ledger book and adding machine). There was little down time in this new world I had been plopped into, but there was



little time to complain either, so do or die became the new motto.

Now that I have grandchildren growing up on the farm, it's always fun to say, "When I was little, we did it like this..." and have them look at me with disbelief. I mean, can you really feed and bed a hundred head of cattle with little square bales and dozens of pails of chop all handled manually of course. And how can you do farm books without a computer? Ahhh yes, much has indeed changed.

Talk like this generally leads to some questions about when Grandma and Grandpa raised cows back in the "olden" days,—you know, us 25 years ago. I recognize these farm kids have definitely grown up on a much more modern cattle farm than I did and they are way more into it than I ever was—they always know exactly how many calves are now on the ground, how many are in the barn "under watch," which ones had trouble calving, which ones didn't. The call record book is always at the ready on the corner of the kitchen table and they are totally in tune with what's written in it.

We stopped at the farm house the other day to pick up some eggs and told the twins that their chickens were laying pretty big eggs these days and that a couple of eggs broke just by closing the lid on the egg carton last time. Without blinking an eye, one responded, "You can buy eggs at the Co-op you know." Well, alrighty then. I guess

he means we have options and not to complain about their "big" farm eggs.

Those big farm eggs are coming in right handy these days. I mean, what do you do in lockdown but bake and send the end result off to the grandkids? Baking may not be my forte, but at least it's something to do. Besides, if I bake, it allows me to procrastinate on finishing off my year-end farm books.

In my great quest to find "things to do" this winter, being that a pandemic is somewhat limiting, I decided that perhaps pulling the carpet out of both bedrooms and replacing them with laminate would be a great plan. It started with a trip to the flooring store and a two-week deadline to get ready for room number one. My husband was half-way on board with the whole idea and by the time we had emptied our walk-in closet, he was no longer even remotely enthused. By the time the furniture was out, the walls touched up with paint, the new flooring down and the baseboards back in, there was only one conclusion. Room number two is permanently on hold!

I have been in daycare mode over February break (yes, care-giving is allowed) and have had the pleasure of the company of my grandchildren from time to time. Though I am not at home in the kitchen, I have fond memories of my Grandma and the goodies she would make us as kids and so, as I whip up another batch of waffles or crepes or beaver tails or whatever it might be for my own grandchildren, I cannot help but think of the things that they will one day recall about life in general, Grandma's kitchen, and particularly about life on the farm back "in the day."

And so, as the days get a little longer (and hopefully warmer) and the calves keep coming (or whatever is happening in our respective worlds), my wish for us all is that, despite the challenges we face, that we will stay strong and that we will look more at the positive in life than the negative. Here's to our readers—on-farm and off—hope you can bank another memory today!

## Changes to 2021 Crop Insurance program

**Continued from page 14**  
SCIC has been working with the Saskatchewan Vegetable Growers' Association to develop programming for the growing commercial vegetable sector in Saskatchewan. The impact of a crop failure on vegetable operations could be significant as a relatively small number of acres has extremely high value. New for 2021, the Commercial Vegetable Program is a pilot program that will provide stand-alone coverage for damage to cabbage and pumpkin crops. A minimum of eight acres is required to participate in the Program. SCIC will continue to explore insurance coverage options for the Commercial Vegetable Program.

Saskatchewan has also become a significant producer of chickpeas. SCIC is updating the base grade for large-seeded Kabuli chickpeas to reflect current production and marketing patterns. This increases the insured price and the quality coverage.

"Saskatchewan Pulse Growers welcomes this change to the Kabuli chickpea base grade calculation, as it better reflects the larger sizes grown by Saskatchewan producers," Saskatchewan Pulse Growers Board Chair Shaun Dyrland said. "This change should increase coverage levels for most of the 300 chickpea producers in the province."

SCIC encourages producers to review their business risk management plans regularly. SCIC has 21 local customer service offices across the province with knowledgeable staff avail-

able to discuss the insurance options best suited for each farming operation. March 31, 2021, is the deadline to select insured crops and coverage levels or make additional changes to Crop Insurance contracts. Producers need to also apply, reinstate or cancel by this date. For more information about the 2021 in-

urance options, call 1-888-935-0000 or visit [www.sic.ca](http://www.sic.ca).

Crop Insurance is a Business Risk Management program supported through the Canadian Agricultural Partnership. Under Crop Insurance, premiums for most programs are shared

40 per cent by participating producers, 36 per cent by the Government of Canada and 24 per cent by the Government of Saskatchewan. Administrative expenses are fully funded by governments, 60 per cent by Canada and 40 per cent by Saskatchewan.

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- MARCH 2021 -		
15	Monday	Butcher Sale 9 a.m.
17	Wednesday	Presort Feeder Sale 10 a.m.
22	Monday	Butcher Sale 9 a.m.
24	Wednesday	Regular Feeder Sale 9 a.m.
29	Monday	Butcher Sale 9 a.m.
31	Wednesday	Presort Feeder Sale 10 a.m.
- APRIL 2021 -		
6	Tuesday	Prairie Gateway Speckle Park Sale
7	Wednesday	Regular Feeder Sale 9 a.m.
9	Friday	Bred Cow & Pair Sale 11:30 a.m.
12	Monday	Butcher Sale 9 a.m.
14	Wednesday	Regular Feeder Sale & Pen of 5 Heifers 9 a.m.
19	Monday	Butcher Sale 9 a.m.
21	Wednesday	Presort Feeder Sale 10 a.m.
26	Monday	Butcher Sale 9 a.m.
28	Wednesday	Regular Feeder Sale 9 a.m.
30	Friday	Bred Cow & Pair Sale 11:30 a.m.

**May 13: Sheep Sale & Spring Horse Sale**

- Monday Butcher Sales**  
Delivery accepted 12 noon until 8 p.m. Sunday.
- Presort Sales**  
Please consign your calves ahead of time. Delivery accepted until 5 p.m. the day before the sale.
- Bred Cow Sales**  
Please consign your cows ahead of time. Delivery accepted until 2 p.m. the day before the sale.
- Regular Cow Sales**  
Delivery accepted Tuesday 8 a.m. - 10 p.m.  
Sunday delivery between noon and 8 p.m. for Monday Butcher Sales. Sale dates and times are subject to change.

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Canadians are buying more Canadian food products since the Covid-19 pandemic hit. Above, cauliflower being harvested and eggs being processed in Saskatchewan.

## People buying more Canadian food through pandemic

BY SPENCER KEMP  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Farm Credit Canada (FCC) conducted a survey that found more Canadians actively looking to purchase Canadian-produced food through the COVID-19 pandemic.

The survey, conducted between January 8 and 12, 2021, saw six out of 10 Canadians say they are more likely to purchase Canadian-made or grown food.

"We had surveyed 2000 Canadians across the country, reflective of how the country is divided, and the reason we did it is in advance of Canada's Agriculture Day, this one day a year where we celebrate Canadian food, we just wanted to know what consumers were thinking," said Marty Seymour, Director of Industry Relations with FCC.

Seymour's family comes from Carnduff where they grew canola and raised cows.

The survey showed around 56 per cent of Canadians are more likely to look for Canadian-made or grown food while 50 per cent are more likely to think about how their food is grown.

"I think this means opportunity, in the last ten years in agriculture we've been talking about trust in food and for me, it's somewhat inspiring to see that six in ten Canadians, since the pandemic, are more likely to buy Canadian-grown food. That to me is a clear demonstration that consumers trust Canadians and I think part of it infers the idea that we are supporting Canadian companies. We see that in retail we see that in food and we see it every-

where."

In the same survey, eight out of 10 Canadians say that Canada's food system and agricultural sector have adapted and responded well to the pandemic, a total of 94 per cent of respondents say they support Canada's agricultural sector.

Seymour noted an ongoing discussion regarding producers and their appreciation. Before the survey, Seymour claims that many producers did not feel that they were appreciated by the public. The survey found that 91 per cent of respondents agreed with this sentiment.

"I think there's always tension within the farm community whether farmers feel appreciated or not. I think that's fair. Maybe what this research does is validate with a third party that these farmers are appreciated. I think it's also interesting that 80% of people are just now learning more about how their food is produced. I don't care what industry you're in, when people want to understand how you make or grow your food, that just brings you closer to your customers and I think the outcome to that loyalty to the Canadian food production system," Seymour explained. "In the early days when we were looking for N-95 masks and everybody was trying to get their PPE for food processing, people were unsure about the Canadian food system but now nine out of ten Canadians in our research said that we should celebrate the industry. I think that's pretty cool when there are these people who aren't even connected to the food industry saying we should

celebrate them."

Seymour noted that despite all the hardships brought on by the pandemic, the increased awareness to the Canadian agriculture industry is a silver lining.

"I don't see any downside to this heightened awareness and heightened interest in the Canadian food system. Whether it lasts or not, the idea that we've invited more people to the table and they're curious about how their food is produced has no downside. Whether it lasts or not doesn't matter to me today, I'll take advantage of this time to help people learn more," Seymour said. "If that's a win from the pandemic, as much downside as we've seen, if Canadians feel more supportive of Canadian farmers? I'll take that."

The survey was done to help promote February 23, which is Canada's Agricultural Day.

Seymour says that this day is the one day a year that producers are celebrated across Canada.

"We did the research because on February 23 we will be celebrating Canada's Agriculture Day, and that's just one day of the year where we can stand up and say we are proud of our food sectors."

"The events over the past year have shown us that in times of crisis, the Canadian agriculture industry continues to provide safe and reliable food. Canadians have noticed and are responding with appreciation for the agriculture and food industry's ability to adapt, even under difficult circumstances."

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# 2020 a record year for agriculture exports in Saskatchewan

BY ROB PAUL  
LOCAL JOURNALISM  
INITIATIVE REPORTER

2020 was a record year for agricultural exports in Saskatchewan, helping the province lead the nation in growth of overall export sales over the previous year.

Saskatchewan produced \$16.9 billion in agricultural exports last year, a 31 per cent increase from 2019 and a new high for the province. This represents more than 55 per cent of total provincial exports in 2020, which were valued at \$30.4 billion.

This helps bring the province closer to meeting its Growth Plan goals, which include growing agri-food exports to \$20 billion and increasing agriculture value-added revenue to \$10 billion by 2030. These strong export numbers also reinforce Saskatchewan's global reputation as a dependable source of safe, high-quality resources, goods and products.

Overall merchandise export sales in 2020 were more than \$30 billion, up 2.5 per cent over 2019, the highest percentage increase among the provinces. On a national basis, exports were down 12.2 per cent over the same period.

Leading agriculture exports in 2020 continue to be canola seed, non-durum wheat, lentils, canola oil and durum wheat.

"The global Covid-19 pandemic has hit all economies hard worldwide, but these export numbers are strong signs our province is in a positive position for economic recovery in 2021," Trade and Export Development Minister Jeremy Harrison said. "With our world-class and growing export base, we have what the world wants and needs, and it will continue to drive investment and jobs for communities right across Saskatchewan."

In 2020, major increases in exports were seen in farm and intermediate food products, forestry products and building and packaging materials, and industrial machinery, equipment, and parts. Saskatchewan's top international markets for 2020 include the United States, China, Japan, and India—top markets for Saskatchewan agri-food exports in 2020 were the United States, China, Japan, India and Mexico.

"Saskatchewan producers grow safe, high-quality food that the world needs and our agriculture exporters remain committed to providing the world with these products," Agriculture Minister David Marit said. "I want to commend our producers on their hard work and resilience, which led to a new record in agri-food exports for 2020."

Increases in primary production as well as a growing value-added sector have contributed to the record agri-food export growth in Saskatchewan. In 2020, value-added exports were \$3.2 billion. Canola oil, canola meal and processed oats were Saskatchewan's top

value-added products. Currently, the Government of Saskatchewan is working to open three new trade offices in Singapore, Japan and India in 2021 to support increased export diversification. The new offices will complement the existing trade office in China, and continued access to Asian markets will benefit our key economic sectors.

Saskatchewan's 31 per cent increase in agricultural exports since 2019 has been in large part to increased demand which has led to increased prices of high quality products. "In 2020, Saskatchewan had more product available to service international markets. In 2019 and 2020, Saskatchewan recorded its second and third largest crops ever, with both years producing over 38 million metric tonnes of crop," said a spokesperson for the Government of Saskatchewan.

"Many Agriculture commodities experienced increased prices due to increased world demand and some production problems in other parts of the world (Australia and Europe) as a result of adverse weather conditions. Other factors include prices in canola, pulses, barley and other crops increasing, Canada's grain handling and transportation system performed well during the year, and all of Saskatchewan's main field crops saw exports increase in 2020, with cereal grains, oilseeds and pulses increasing 21, 42 and 78 per cent respectively."

As a result of the pandemic, the province saw increased demand in Saskatchewan produced agriculture products due to its strong reputations around the world.

"In 2020, Saskatchewan's reputation as a trusted, safe and stable supplier of high quality agriculture commodities and value-added products was strengthened," said the spokesperson. "There was an increased level of demand/dependence on Saskatchewan agriculture commodities as essential food staples in local diets around the world, including pulses and canola seed. The Saskatchewan government remains committed to supporting open and stable global supply chains by ensuring agri-food products can move efficiently, without disruption, through our transportation system."

With Covid-19 having a negative impact both in Canada and globally on economies, Saskatchewan's agriculture sector has been as important as ever in helping support the country as its backbone both through creating jobs and bringing in money.

"Saskatchewan is an export-dependent province and agri-food production continues to be an important part of the province's economy, which is driven by fuel, fertilizer and food," the spokesperson said. "Saskatchewan's top exports are: fertilizer (\$6.1 billion), cereal grains (\$5.5

billion), mineral oil (\$5.3 billion), oilseeds (\$4.6 billion), pulses and vegetables (\$3.5 billion), and animal/vegetable oils (\$1.8 billion). The agri-food sector is a cornerstone of the Saskatchewan and Canadian economy, with agriculture and related activities accounting for approximately 10 per cent of Saskatchewan's GDP and 35,000 jobs. In 2020, the value of Saskatchewan's top 10 exports increased by 3% from \$24.2 billion in 2019 to \$24.9 billion in 2020. The top ten exports accounts for 82% of the total Saskatchewan ex-

ports and agriculture exports accounts for 56% of the top 10 exports in 2020, an increase from 43% in 2019 and accounts for more than 40% of overall merchandise exports in 2020."

The success of Saskatchewan's record agricultural exports is expected to continue in 2021—though nothing is guaranteed in the sector because of a number of factors, the Government of Saskatchewan is optimistic they will hit their Growth Plan goals for 2030.

"Agriculture production is weather dependent

and can therefore be difficult to predict, however, over the medium term, we expect agri-food exports to reach new record levels. In 2020, the Government of Saskatchewan released its new growth plan," said the spokesperson. "Two notable targets for 2030 include increasing agri-food exports to \$20 billion and crop production to 45 million metric tonnes. In 2020, Saskatchewan had additional product to service international markets and we expect that capacity to increase in the years ahead. In 2019 and 2020, Saskatchewan recorded

its second and third largest crops ever, with both years producing over 38 million metric tonnes of crop. Global demand for food, due to a growing population and rising incomes, is creating additional export opportunities.

"There are many factors that influence exports from year to year, for example crop prices. The Government of Saskatchewan will continue to work on and nurture trade relationships in priority markets, as well as seek growth opportunities in the agri-food industry."

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# From ag waste to green energy source: USask researchers build better biomass pellet



As part of her doctoral studies, USask student Tumpa Sarker has discovered a method for creating a better biomass pellet.

Countries in Europe and Asia are increasingly relying on biofuel—products made from wood and plant residue—as an alternative to fossil fuels in power generation and home heating. The most

common form is biopellets, small, finger-sized pellets produced by compacting waste material from the forestry industry and farming. A recent discovery by researchers at the University of Saskatch-

ewan (USask) could help hasten use of cheap and plentiful agricultural waste as the go-to material for producing this environmentally friendly energy source.

Tumpa Sarker, a PhD candidate in USask's department of chemical and biological engineering, has found that heating canola meal, canola hull and oat hull before compressing it yields a higher quality pellet with lower moisture content and volume, and higher energy content and density. The resulting product has a heating value similar to coal, Sarker found.

"We have all this carbon stored in forests, and plant and agricultural residue," said Sarker. "We are looking at how to use it in place of fossil fuels to generate energy"

Many farming byproducts are currently left in the field to rot. The resulting methane releases large amounts of greenhouse gas. Compacting plant material into small pellets increases its density up to 10 times, making it much more economical to transport and store.

Canada currently exports up to four million biopellets to Europe each year, the majority of which are manufactured using forestry byproducts. While some Saskatchewan companies use

agricultural waste in animal feed, none are converting this material into biopellets.

"There is a really huge market for this (biofuel)," said Dr. Ajay Dalai (PhD), Sarker's PhD supervisor and Canada Research Chair in Bio-Energy and Environmentally Friendly Chemical Processing. "The world is hungry for reducing carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions and increasing use of non-fossil fuels for generating power and heat. These pellets are a great solution. They have low net CO2 emissions. This could bring money for (agricultural) producers and generate local employment."

The treatment process Sarker and Dalai used, called torrefaction, involves heating the biomass at temperatures between 200 and 300 degrees Celsius in an inert environment (an environment free of oxygen and CO2). Their work was done at the Catalysis and Chemical Reaction Engineering Laboratories (CCREL) in the USask College of Engineering and analyzed at USask's Saskatchewan Structural Sciences Centre (SSSC), with testing performed

using beamlines at the Canadian Light Source (CLS).

Dalai said the objective of the research—which is supported by Agriculture and Agri-food Canada as part of the Biomass Canada Cluster and by Saskatchewan's Ministry of Agriculture—is to develop a technology that can be picked up by a local company then used to produce high-quality biopellets for energy applications.

"Europe is very aggressive in reducing their emissions," said Dalai. "So that would be a major market if we had a local company making these pellets and exporting them abroad."

Dalai and Sarker are now turning their attention to finding an environmentally friendly binding agent that will make the pellets more durable and more resistant to absorbing moisture during shipping.

The Saskatchewan Structural Sciences Centre (SSSC) is a \$14M laboratory located in the Thorvaldson Building that university and industry scientists use for research in the fields of agriculture, medicine, engineering and natural sciences.

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# Prairie farmers and ranchers can further enhance biodiversity on their land through new Weston Family Prairie Grasslands Initiative

Ducks Unlimited Canada joins forces with foundation and prairie producers to benefit local environment

Prairie farmers and ranchers are key partners in one of the largest prairie grassland conservation efforts in Canadian history. Announced yesterday, the Weston Family Prairie Grasslands Initiative supports organizations that are working with local communities to deliver conservation solutions that are both economically and environmentally sustainable.

As one of the organizations involved, Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) will work collaboratively with prairie farmers, ranchers and other landowners to protect grasslands and wetlands over the next five years. Grasslands and wetlands are essential to a resilient landscape, and it is through these partnerships that producers can be compensated for their ongoing conservation efforts.

"DUC has been working on the Canadian Prairies since our organization was established more than 80 years ago," says Karla Guyn, chief executive officer for DUC. "We have a strong relationship with, and a deep respect for, the farmers and ranchers who steward the lands that support biodiversity in Canada. Working together, we can unite the needs of conservation and agriculture on this important working landscape."

Over the next five years, the



Weston Family Prairie Grasslands Initiative will contribute \$5 million to DUC's conserva-

tion easement program that will see more than 10,000 hectares (24,710 acres) of vital habitat

protected. This contribution directly benefits agricultural producers while maintaining

Canada's biodiversity and providing habitat for a wide variety of species including waterfowl, songbirds and pollinators.

Conservation easements are legal agreements between a landowner and DUC to preserve natural features and resources on their land. Under these agreements, the habitats are protected in perpetuity, but the land remains in private ownership and in grassland-based agricultural production.

"It's exciting to see what can be accomplished by bringing Canadians together to find innovative and sustainable approaches to restoring and protecting biodiversity," said Tamara Rebanks, chair of the Weston Family Foundation. "Our Foundation is committed to supporting landscape-level efforts to find solutions to our environmental challenges and, ultimately, improve the well-being of Canadians."

The funding DUC is receiving for its programs is part of nearly \$25 million in grants that have been awarded to five organizations across the country. The Weston Family Prairie Grasslands Initiative will support projects that conserve nearly four million acres of priority prairie grassland habitat by actively engaging landowners and agricultural producers.

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**WRAZ 31H**

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**GBR 45H**

SOS Game of Thrones 98D x G.Bros Crew 607Y  
Homo Polled • BW 105 • 205 DW 771  
CE 4.4 BW 2.1 WW 38 YW 80 M 19 TM 38  
Length, smoothness and shape



**WRAZ 201H**

Born April 1, Actual BW 94 lb, son of RRUP Reserve Champion Big Rock 7D.  
Actual Nov 3 WW 812 lb. WPD 3.4 lb. Long body, long dark hair. Cornerstone Maria cow family



**GBR 165H**

HTA Batman 836F x KMAC Serio 32S  
Homo Polled • BW 102 • 205 DW 828  
CE 4.1 BW 1.7 WW 50 YW 96 M 23 TM 48  
Meat, volume and correct



**GBR 29H**

Beck's Source 815G x McTavish Excel 20B  
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CE 7.7 BW .5 WW 48 YW 89 M 19 TM 43  
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# USask livestock research receives significant investment to advance industry

<sup>ES</sup> Continued from page 19  
Decontaminating eggs without the use of chemicals (\$260,000): USask researchers Lifeng Zhang (Engineering), Shelley Kirychuk (Medicine), and Karen Schwean-Lard-

ner (Animal and Poultry Science) will develop chemical-free surface decontamination methods for table eggs. The proposed research will help the egg industry in Saskatchewan to be economically, socially

and environmentally sustainable.

**Detecting respiratory viruses (\$212,000):** USask Professor of Veterinary Medicine and research chair Cheryl Waldner will

explore how DNA sequencing can be used to better detect respiratory viruses in feedlot calves. This study will enhance animal health while also reducing risk and minimizing economic losses for beef producers. New diagnostic tools for respiratory viruses will inform how we control disease and evaluate the effectiveness of on-farm vaccination programs.

**Easing pain in cattle**

**castration (\$150,000):** Western College of Veterinary Medicine Assistant Professor Diego Moya will assess the efficacy of a novel mechanism for delivering pain control during castration of calves of different ages. Using a combination of behavioural and physiological traits indicative of pain and discomfort, this research will help to develop and promote a strategy that can be widely adopted by the beef industry to im-

prove the health, and welfare of castrated calves.

Industry funding for USask projects of \$258,000 is provided by a wide range of organizations and agencies including: Saskatchewan Cattlemen's Association (\$117,725), Saskatchewan Alfalfa Seed Producers (\$85,000), Sask-Milk (\$31,504), Alberta Milk (\$15,000) and Saskatchewan Forage Seed Development Commission (\$9,130).

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#### Farm Equipment Auction:

Vic & Dave Huish (Huish Bros.)

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#### Farm Equipment Auction:

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#### Farm Equipment Auction:

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Manor, SK

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#### Farm Equipment Auction:

Harvey & Barbara Hemphill

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Stoughton, SK

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# USask awarded \$6.76M to help revive North American bison population, strengthen Canadian cattle industry



Team leader Gregg Adams is a specialist in reproductive biology at USask's Western College of Veterinary Medicine.

Christina Weese photo

**Continued from page 18**  
A key benefit to beef producers will be development of new genomic tools

to enable trait selection, enhance genetic diversity, and diagnosis of disease-causing microbes in herds.

"Our aim is to make it easier for cattle producers to identify and breed animals with desirable traits

such as better meat quality, stronger immunity against disease, improved production efficiency (associated with reduced greenhouse gas emissions), and better adaptation to their environment," said University of Alberta researcher and team member Graham Plastow, an internationally recognized expert in the use of genomic tools for selecting desirable traits in cattle and pigs.

"This work will lead to innovations that benefit a host of individuals and organizations, including livestock producers, veterinarians, and policy makers."

Related article: USask awarded \$3.2M towards first-in-Canada engineering biology centre for ag innovation

Related article: New national data platform to track risks and benefits of medication use during

pregnancy. To stay globally competitive, Canada's cattle industry—which accounts for \$18 billion of the country's annual gross domestic product—must reduce its environmental impact and battle antimicrobial resistance, said Adams.

"The cattle industry is under a lot of pressure to be more sustainable and eco-friendly, and we hope to be part of the solution,"

he said.

The IntegrOmes program will make possible real-time diagnosis of disease and appropriate use of antibiotics in both beef cattle and bison herds, thus reducing antimicrobial resistance. Adams and his team will develop better tools to test wildlife and domestic animals to identify and prevent spread of diseases, including those that can spread to humans.

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