

Plain & Valley

September 2019 • Page 21



The three Wilson men. At far left on the binder is Ken Wilson. In centre is Marilee Simmons of Redvers and Rick Kaminskas of Prince Colton, and at far right is Kevin on the antique tractor.



Marilee Simmons of Redvers and Rick Kaminskas of Prince Albert throwing sheaves into the separator.

Wilson harvest relives the past

BY ED JAMES

Ken Wilson and his family farm about 11 miles south of the community of Wawota and are very much like others farmers in the area except for a special event that they have held every September for the past four years. The event is what Ken calls, "The Old Tyme Harvest" and this year it was held on September 7. It is a gathering of friends and neighbors from all over the area who have a love of historical farming equipment.

The Wilson family have a wonderful collection of tractors, combines and threshing machines that have been restored to their former glory days, but then Ken and his son's Kevin and Colton take it one step further by taking in a grain crop that they have planted for the old-time harvest demonstration. However, the situation gets even better as fellow collectors bring by their vintage farm equipment and vehicles.

The events started at 11 am and with the help of baling wire, duct tape and a few well placed bangs with a heavy hammer, the vehicles are off and running in the fields. There is never any shortage of drivers of all ages who want to experiences driving these open air rigs that do not have the air conditioned cabs, floating seats and the sound systems of today's combines!

The crowd in attendance was a bit down this year, perhaps because of the cooler, overcast weather conditions. However, what the event lacked in numbers it made up for with the enthusiasm and involvement from those who came out. But if you needed a break, the ladies of the Wawota United Church "Raise the Rafter's" group were on hand with refreshments and a quiet place to sit, eat or just visit.

Some of the people who came out were seniors who, back in the day, had used these types of farm machinery, and the looks in their eyes or the smiles on their faces reflected past days of farming.

If there is a single event each year that causes the most joy, it's the opportunity to climb up on the full hay racks and fork the sheaves of grain into the antique separator. These machines take a lot of preparation to get them ready with the lineup of the power tractor, the placing of the long canvas pulley belt on the machine, checking for the correct tension, and finally one of the operators going around the threshing machine with an old fashioned oil can to lubricate the many moving parts. Once these things are done the many volunteers of all ages, male and female, start forking in the bundles of grain as the machine rattles and clanks.

From the far end of the machine, there is

a steady flow of yellow grain straw, making a huge inviting mound to jump into if you are feeling like a kid again! From another spout the heads of wheat fill up the bright green wagon. Back in the day when the wagon was filled, the team of horses would be hitched up and it was off to the nearest country grain elevator. There is a rhythm between the workers and the machine that is only broken when there is a clog in the machine, a change of workers or the arrival of a new wagon of sheaves!

Also on display that day were a selection of hand-made replica steam engines, the type that were used many years ago. These models were a labor of love in their exact detail and operation! For many years the gathering of winter hay was carried out by collecting it loose, putting it in a hay wagon taken to the barn, where the lift from the top peak of the barn would lift it up and store it in the barn hay loft. However, in the early 1900s the first straw making machine was introduced. One of these machines was brought out for the weekend event and it was a far cry from today's bale makers. This machine was powered by a pulley belt from a tractor, the straw was manually fed into the machine and thick wooden boards were placed at various intervals for the size of square bale you wanted.

But wait, there is more work to be done! As the bale is pushed near the exit chute, workers have to feed long, thin metal wires through the moving bale so it is tied together. Overall it is a long, slow process, but things have improved, so the bales of today look like large, white marshmallows sitting in the farmers' fields!

Near the end of the day I had a few moments to talk to the senior Mr. Wilson who said that he was happy with the day's events and could understand the smaller crowds, given the weather. He was very grateful for all those who came out to help, and those who brought items to display. He felt it was important to see and remember the old types of farm machinery and those who take the time to restore them and keep this special farming history alive. He closed by saying that he and his sons and many friends plan to do it again next year, to keep the history alive.

At the end of the day it was still cool and overcast, while overhead flocks of Canada Geese flew low in the sky, a sure sign that winter is on the way and the many farmers will be spending many long hours to get their crops off in machinery that is a lot quicker and more comfortable. However, even the newest equipment breaks down at the most inopportune time!

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FCC review suggests modest farmland value increase for 2019



Average farmland values in Canada are showing only modest increases for the first half of 2019, according to a review by Farm Credit Canada.

The national average for farmland values fell from a 6.6-per-cent increase in 2018 to a three-per-cent increase in the first half this year. If this increase holds steady for the remainder of this year, it will be part of a five-year trend of softening growth in average farmland values.

"There might be some

minor market adjustments along the way, but the days of sharp increases in farmland values have been replaced by more modest growth," said J.P. Gervais, FCC's chief agricultural economist.

FCC's review showed lower increases from 2018 in British Columbia (2.7%), Alberta (1.6%), Saskatchewan (2.9%), Ontario (3.3%) and Quebec (2.8%), while Manitoba (6.2%) showed a slightly higher increase. Publicly reported transactions in four Atlantic provinces

have yet to be reviewed and assessed.

Average farmland values have increased every year since 1993; however, increases were more pronounced from 2011 to 2015 in many different regions. In 2015, the average increase was 10 per cent, and since that year, Canada has seen more moderate single-digit increases in average farmland values.

"Now we appear to be moving into a time of cautious buying, where producers are focusing more on

improving productivity and building resilience in their operations," Gervais said.

Most Canadian farms continue to be in a good financial position and the overall farm debt-to-asset ratio remains lower than the 15-year average, so many producers are in a position to purchase land if it's part of their business plan.

"The balance sheet is still strong, but uncertain-

ty in markets and the fact that farmland values have climbed rapidly in the past may be giving some producers reason to pause," Gervais said. "Others may have already expanded their operations and are now exploring other strategic investments."

Changes in commodity prices, uncertainty around global trade and some challenging weather conditions may have also taken some

of the steam out of farmland values. Producers can prepare for these unpredictable circumstances by maintaining a risk management plan while remaining focused on the big picture, according to Gervais.

"Demand for Canadian agricultural products is projected to remain strong at home and abroad in 2019-20, so there is a long-term positive future in agriculture," he said.

A salute to Agriculture Producers

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Steven Bonk, MLA
for Moosomin Constituency

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Wild pigs invade Canadian provinces—an emerging crisis for agriculture and the environment

Wild pigs—a mix of wild boar and domestic swine—are spreading rapidly across Canada, threatening native species such as nesting birds, deer, agricultural crops, and farm livestock, research by the University of Saskatchewan (USask) shows.

The first-ever published survey of the wild pig distribution in Canada has found a rapid expansion in the invasive species' range, which is increasing by nine per cent a year.

"Wild pigs are ecological train wrecks. They are prolific breeders making them an extremely successful invasive species," said Ruth Aschim, a PhD student who led the research published today in *Nature Scientific Reports*. "Wild pigs can cause soil erosion, degrade water quality, destroy crops, and prey on small mammals, amphibians and birds."

Wild boar were brought from Europe in the late 1980s and early 1990s to diversify Canadian livestock production. Others were imported as 'penned game' for shooting.

The hybrid wild pigs have rapidly multiplied and spread, making them the most prolific invasive mammal in Canada.

By 2017, they had spread exponentially across Canada, from British Columbia to Ontario and Quebec, with the majority in the south-central half of Saskatchewan. Their territory has increased by 88,000 square kilometres per year, on average, over the last decade.

Concentrated on the Canadian prairies, wild pigs currently have a range of over 750,000 square kilometres, the USask research found. The researchers found the territory of a male wild pig can be as large as 300 square kilometres in the summer, with sows covering up to 230 kilometres.

The research team, based in USask's animal and poultry science department in the College of Agriculture and Bioresources, has mapped the pigs' range as it expands since their initial introduction onto the landscape in the early 1990s.

Their maps, published alongside the USask research, show that wild pigs are now firmly established in Saskatchewan, Alberta, and Manitoba, with populations scattered in B.C., Ontario and Quebec.

Newfoundland and Labrador, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, the North West Territories, the Yukon, and Nunavut do not currently host wild pig populations. A group of escaped wild pigs in the Yukon were removed last summer.

Wild pigs typically weigh between 120 and 250 pounds. They have around six piglets per litter, per year.

They are adapted to very cold temperatures, and can breed in any season, living in pigloos burrowed into the



A sounder of wild pigs. Mature females and their litters of various ages, in Saskatchewan, Canada feeding on harvested crop residue. The hybrid wild pigs have lighter coloured fur than true Eurasian wild boar.

snow. Sexually mature within four-to-eight months, they feed on all common types of farmers' crops, including corn, wheat and canola. They also eat insects, birds, reptiles and small mammals.

"The growing wild pig population is not an ecological disaster waiting to happen—it is already happening," said USask's Ryan Brook, lead researcher for the Canadian Wild Pig Project, a Canada-wide research program, and Aschim's supervisor.

"Wild pigs are so widespread that they are a major challenge to control in Canada and eradication is only possible with a comprehensive plan to deal with this highly efficient invasive species. In Saskatchewan they are already posing significant risks to agriculture and livestock production. Our mapping of their expanding territory shows just how quickly they are spreading. This is a rapidly emerging crisis."

The USask research team surveyed the pig distribution using eight different complementary monitoring methods, including capturing and fitting tracking collars to wild pigs, trail cameras, surveying hunters, government staff, and farmers, and getting the public to report sightings. The team did not record wild pig numbers in this project.

"Wild pigs are able to survive and thrive in a wide range of environments and climates," said Aschim. "They are omnivores, very adaptable and are able to rapidly expand their range into unoccupied areas."

Farmers have reported wild swine raiding farms, scattering, frightening, and interacting with livestock, destroying crops and eating hay bales and grain. They can also be destructive and use their long noses and thick strong necks to root up soil and vegetation, degrading habitat, and tearing up ground set aside for conservation purposes.

Their main range is on agricultural areas south of Saskatchewan's boreal forest.

Wild pigs can adapt to almost any climate, from North Africa to Russia and Canada, and now have the widest distribution of any large mammal on earth. They thrive in the U.S. and Australia and have been documented in the Galapagos Islands. They cost U.S. agriculture more than one billion U.S. dollars per year.

The research was funded by the U.S. Plant and Animal Health Inspection Service, National Feral Swine Damage Management Program (U.S. Department of Agriculture), Saskatchewan Fish and Wildlife Development Fund, University of Saskatchewan, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC), and the Cyril Capling Trust at USask.



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8. The successful bidder will be required to complete and execute an Offer to Purchase.
9. There are no reserve bids or right to refusal on any of these parcels.

91c

The magic of the harvest season

The oil. Where could the cooking oil be? I mean, really, how could I possibly misplace it? It was day 15 or maybe 22 of harvest (they tend to run together) and I was once again in a mad rush to get supper for 10 out to the field.

The potatoes were cut for home made french fries but the oil was nowhere to be found.

I sometimes misplace my car keys, yes, but the oil? How can you misplace your oil?

My daughter-in-law had no idea where it was. My daughter hadn't borrowed it. It had vanished.

In my hurry, I grabbed some flavoured olive oil and made do with what I had. Later that evening I was combining with the twins (now seven) and I was still wondering about where the heck the oil had gone when I said, "I wonder where my canola oil is." And wonder of wonders, I hear, "We know where it is!" "Where? Where is the oil?" I asked them, expecting a clear and concise answer. Their response, yet again was, "We know where it is."

I went home late that night still not knowing where the oil was.

The next night, *deja vu*, my sidekicks were back in the combine with me and I once again asked them about the oil.

"In the spare bedroom," one replied. I needed more specifics so I asked them to expand on that. The other one said, "Under the dresser!" with the underlying sentiment not spoken, but implied, 'Where else would it be?'

What I didn't know (since I had been away during the September long weekend) was that the kids had been at my house playing 'store' over the weekend.

Well not only was there oil under the dresser, but an expansive supply of dry goods that belonged in the pantry.

I couldn't help but wonder what kind of store would keep their groceries on the floor under the bottom shelf but I didn't even ask.

I will know however, where to look for the oil next time. And pray the lid is on tight!

Despite the crazy busy time of year that it is for grain farmers, it's also the most fabulous time of year!

The sunsets are beyond compare, the wheat is this amazing shade of gold and the combines are rolling along all around us.

Of course there are the inevitable combine breakdowns that wreak havoc on our plans for the day and the glamour of the season meets reality head on more often than not.

I was thinking that after my 'stone meets header auger' moment (or was that a rock?) a couple of years ago, that the guys had forgotten all about it, but wouldn't you know, someone had to say how nice it is to drive a combine with a perfectly smooth header auger (not ours obviously). How rude!

I write this column late at night after a full day on the combine. I have concluded that looking for a half ton truck in the dark is somewhat like looking for a needle in the haystack.

I have had three additional pairs of eyes helping me and telling me which way to go. Finally one of the twins says, "If I was driving, Grandma," ... pause ... "I wouldn't have a clue which way to go!" Not so helpful after all.

The Lighter Side of Life... DOWN ON THE FARM

by donna beutler
FREELANCE PHOTOJOURNALIST
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At any given time, the twins know exactly which combine their dad is driving and which one Grandpa is driving.

They both look the same to me. Green, basically. As we go back and forth (for hours and hours), they talk about roosters, hogs and goats. They would like to get some. Roosters. Hogs. Goats.

They really would especially like to be able to 'slop the hogs.' It only costs \$80, they tell me, to get a hog. And if it's pregnant it could have babies and they would have lots of hogs to slop.

"How much would a rooster cost," they ask me. Of course, all things animal are out of my league, although I tell them I did have a goat once.

I suggest they get goats. But, I tell them, Grandpa will park his machinery next door, far, far away, if they get goats. And maybe never go out to the farm in the car—ever!

They think goats climbing on the vehicles would be the best part of having goats!

One of our discussions this harvest centred on which combines would be theirs when they get big.

One is going to have the 9500, the other the 9600 some day.

"What about Grandpa's combine?" I ask. "Who is going to get that one? The one with the slightly dented header auger?"

"No one," they say. "Grandpa's going to keep driving that one forever." I'm thinking I may need to explain retirement to them one of these days.

One night we were finishing up a field of canola a cou-

ple of miles from home base.

The darkness and the dust that lingered made it a little difficult to see, but as the three combines made their way up and down the field, it was exciting (to me) to approach the 'end zone' and be able to park my machine for the night.

The guys headed over with the other two machines to another field to finish up there.

The next day, my husband tells me I missed three rows on that field we had been working on the day before. Now, exactly where is the logic in that?

How possibly could there be three operators combining in one corner of the same field but only one (moi) missed three swaths. Go figure.

As harvest winds down, leaving us with only a couple more days, I can't say I'll be sad to say we're done, but at the same time, I will look at the end of the season with a bit of nostalgia—after all, each harvest season has its own unique history—especially as seen through the eyes of the next generation's farmers!

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Drivers are being asked to take extra precautions when passing slow-moving farm equipment and to be respectful of other drivers. Producers need to ensure lights are working and adjusted before moving equipment on highways and to regularly inspect and maintain their equipment. They should also know all height, length and weight restrictions on their farm vehicles and when permits may be required.

Travellers are reminded to slow to 60 km/hr when passing emergency and service vehicles parked at the side of the road with their lights flashing, including:

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- emergency vehicles (police, ambulance and fire).

This will ensure drivers, passengers and crew members can do their jobs safely.

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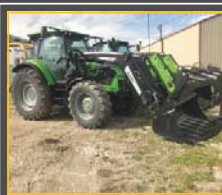
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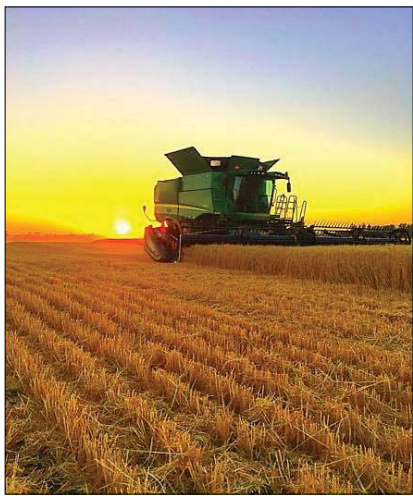
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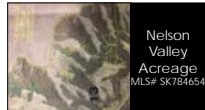
There have been lots of great submissions for the World-Spectator's harvest photo contest. The World-Spectator has asked readers to submit their best photos of harvest 2019. Above left is a photo submitted by Craig Roy of cutting wheat at Spring Creek. Above right is a photo of Garry Beckett harvesting hop vines at JGL Shepherd Farms. And left is a harvest sunset photo submitted by Danny O'Connor.

The winner of the contest will win \$100 and photos can be submitted to photos@world-spectator.com

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Dan Loran submitted this photo of a beautiful sunset with the Indian Head elevators.



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A practical alliance

University and industry benefit from agronomist-in-residence

It has been two and a half years since Manitoba Pulse and Soybean Growers (MPSG) and the University of Manitoba joined together to create the Agronomist-in-Residence program, an applied research position designed to help bridge the gap between classroom and farmers' fields.

The goal: to hire a research agronomist focused on pulse and soybean production issues who would not only advance University's research expertise, but also share that knowledge with industry and students. And since she joined the Department of Plant Science in the Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences in late 2016, Kristen MacMillan has not only checked off all those boxes, she has far surpassed the high expectations of this innovative program.

"The Agronomist-in-Residence program is completely unique – no other university in Canada, and possibly in North America, has taken this specific type of approach," said Martin Scanlon, Dean of the Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences.

"Agronomic research represents a continuum from basic scientific exploration to the practical extension of best practices to farmers. Kristen has been a key fulcrum in the interplay between basic research and near market science. She has also contributed immensely to our experiential learning programs by providing hands-on opportunities and challenging our students to solve real-world problems."

Protein demand booming

The idea of a resident agronomist was conceived to help build applied research capacity, and today it is especially relevant with the escalating demand for protein in Canada and around the world. The Manitoba government has signaled its interest in growing this capacity through the Protein Advantage Strategy, a consultative plan aimed at facilitating growth and investment in protein production and processing, and the research and development which supports these sectors. One such investment is the \$400 million pea protein processing facility under construction by food ingredient company Roquette at Portage la Prairie.

Daryl Domitruk is the Director of Research and Production for MPSG, which represents more than 4,000 farmers in Manitoba who grow soybeans and pulses, including edible beans, peas, faba beans, lentils and chickpeas. He says the MPSG's collaboration with the University of Manitoba was partly driven by the need to add capacity in order to sustain the production of pulses and soybeans, which are so critical to a successful protein industry.

"MPSG members are very keen and determined to see their research dollars generating practical results," he added. "Meeting growers' near term needs is at the heart of the Agronomist-in-Residence program and, in fact, drives everything MPSG does. The other factor at play for MPSG was the relative scarcity in Manitoba of research capacity dedicated fully to pulses and soybeans. The existing research community was doing all they could for our crops, but their time quickly becomes fully committed across a wide range of crops."

For Kristen, coming to work at the University of Manitoba has meant coming full circle. She received her Diploma in Agriculture, B.Sc. (Agronomy) and M.Sc. (Cropping Systems) from UofM, and then in 2013 joined MPSG as their first production specialist where she advising farmers and agronomists on soybean and pulse production. Kristen also took on the role of director of research and production, and led the development of the organization's first strategic R&P plan. She is also involved in crop and livestock production on the family farm near



Kristen MacMillan with diploma students in the soybean field agronomy course

Marquette where she gains valuable insight and aims to practice her own advice.

So when the Agronomist-in-Residence was created, she was the natural choice for the job.

Connecting researchers with producers

One of the principal requirements of Kristen's position was to design a robust applied research program, engaging scientists, industry and farmers throughout the province and contribute to the development of best agronomic practices for growing soybeans, edible beans and field peas in Manitoba.

"Currently, some of the areas I'm exploring are seeding practices and seed quality in soybeans, nitrogen management in dry edible beans, designing new pulse intercrop systems and next year, I will be initiating new work on field peas. Overall, I'm interested in studying agronomic practices and systems that address productivity, profitability and sustainability goals in our farming systems," said Kristen.

Working with crop research centres and farmers, she has trial plots stretching from Melita and Dauphin, and from Carman to Portage and Arborg. Kristen, along with her team of research technicians and summer students, has conducted multi-year studies on varying management systems and environments. The results of her studies are integrated into award-winning fact sheets and visual guides, news articles and reports to assist farmers and agronomists in decision making. In addition to informing regional crop production practices, her work is also supporting policy and providing new data on western Canadian soybeans to the scientific community.

And when she isn't on campus or out in the field, she

is at producer meetings and conferences, connecting with the people that utilize and inform her research program.

"One of the challenges in the general scientific community is the time gap between research and adoption," said Kristen. "For agriculture in Manitoba, the network of outreach and extension is evolving to better connect research and those practicing in the field."

William Pallister is a Portage-area dry bean farmer who connected with Kristen at the winter bean meetings. He is also a Faculty alum, graduating with his Diploma in Agriculture in 2015 and his B.Sc. (Agribusiness) in 2017. William describes the Agronomist-in-Residence as "a resource that combines both practicality and research."

"Kristen has been an excellent agronomist and researcher on behalf of bean growers. We are able to make decisions on our farm with greater confidence knowing that her research is behind us," he said. "She has also been great for bumping ideas off of when we are trying out new things on the farm."

Learning by doing

While research and outreach are significant activities for Kristen, a third dimension of the Agronomist-in-Residence is as educator, understandable considering its setting at the University of Manitoba.

Continued on page 35

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A practical alliance

University and industry benefit from agronomist-in-residence

Continued from page 33

She has guest-lectured in courses such as Crop Production Principles and Practices and Advanced Cropping Systems, where she provides case studies and real scenarios for students to analyze.

"Kristen has been a pioneer in our experiential learning program and is focused on learning outcomes.

She can see the value in introducing students to applied research and extension," said Michele Rogalsky, Director of the School of Agriculture.

"Many of our students are farmers and farm managers, and she is preparing them for their own operations and for the future of the industry."

Last summer Kristen designed and launched a Soybean Field Agronomy course for diploma students that helped develop critical thinking skills while practicing integrated crop management, one of the first experience-based cur-

riculums offered in the Faculty.

Each student monitored a soybean field, developed crop scouting skills and applied their knowledge to make sound agronomic decisions.

They also developed an understanding of the knowledge transfer process, a model she has coined "From Theory to Practice", by touring her agronomy research plots at Carman and attending an industry field day.

The course is now in its second summer with eight students honing their analytical and communication skills.

From theory to application

In reflecting on her progress so far as the University's first Agronomist-in-Residence, Kristen sees a common theme emerging: the demand for and appreciation of experience-based learning and practical application.

"In the classroom, I can see the enthusiasm when stu-

dents connect theory to application. When speaking with farmers, they appreciate my approach as a scientist, agronomist and farmer and involving them in the process through conversation at extension meetings. When collaborating with research colleagues, we strike a balance with understanding fundamental mechanisms and their value in the field and how they might sometimes be different."

As the program approaches the end of its third year, Kristen continues to break ground on new ways to help students, researchers and farmers explore the opportunities created by the heightened demand for protein sources.

"Pulse and soybean farmers are seeing the research results at the farm level and they can be proud to know that the reach of this program has been gone beyond that to the University and industry level, which will provide a cascading impact on how we approach discovery and application of agronomic research," she said.



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– SEPTEMBER 2019 –

4	Wednesday	Regular Sale	9 a.m.
11	Wednesday	Presort Yearling/Calf Sale	10 a.m.
18	Wednesday	Regular Sale	9 a.m.
19	Thursday	Sheep, Goat & Horse Sale	12 Noon
25	Wednesday	Presort Feeder Sale	10 a.m.
28	Saturday	Little Valley Quarter Horse & DAC Farms	
30	Monday	Butcher Sale	9 a.m.

– OCTOBER 2019 –

2	Wednesday	Presort Feeder Sale	10 a.m.
4	Monday	Butcher Sale	9 a.m.
9	Wednesday	Presort Angus Feeder Sale	10 a.m.
14	Monday	No Butcher Sale Receiving Feeders: 10 - 5, Presort	
16	Wednesday	Presort Angus Feeder Sale	10 a.m.
17	Thursday	Sheep & Goat Sale	12 Noon
21	Monday	Butcher Sale	9 a.m.
23	Wednesday	Presort Charolais Feeder Sale	10 a.m.
28	Monday	Butcher Sale	9 a.m.
30	Wednesday	Presort Angus Feeder Sale	10 a.m.

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– NOVEMBER 2019 –

4	Monday	Butcher Sale	9 a.m.
6	Wednesday	Presort Charolais Feeder Sale	10 a.m.
11	Monday	Butcher Sale	9 a.m.
13	Wednesday	Presort Angus Feeder Sale	10 a.m.
15	Friday	Bred Cow Sale	11:30 a.m.
18	Monday	Butcher Sale	9 a.m.
20	Wednesday	Presort Feeder Sale	10 a.m.
22	Friday	Bred Cow Sale	11:30 a.m.
25	Monday	Butcher Sale	9 a.m.
27	Wednesday	Presort Feeder Sale	10 a.m.
29	Friday	Bred Cow Sale	11:30 a.m.

– DECEMBER 2019 –

2	Monday	Butcher Sale	9 a.m.
4	Wednesday	Regular Feeder Sale	9 a.m.
6	Friday	Bred Cow Sale	11:30 a.m.
9	Monday	Butcher Sale	9 a.m.
10	Tuesday	No Borders Charolais Sale	
11	Wednesday	Regular Feeder Sale	9 a.m.
13	Friday	Bred Cow Sale	11:30 a.m.
15	Sunday	Bonchuk Farms Female Production Sale	
16	Monday	Butcher Sale	9 a.m.
18	Wednesday	Regular Feeder Sale	9 a.m.
20	Friday	Bred Cow Sale	11:30 a.m.

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Manitoba provides livestock producers with funding

The province of Manitoba is advising that livestock producers who have been affected by dry conditions on pasture can apply for funding to support water access and management under Ag Action Manitoba, Agriculture Minister Ralph Eichler announced today.

"We recognize that many producers are feeling the effects of our dry summer and that they may require additional assistance to secure a safe and reliable water supply for their livestock," said Eichler. "Properly functioning and adequately protected ground and surface water sources are essential to ensuring the health of livestock and ground water sources."

Funding is provided through the Managing Livestock Access to Riparian Areas beneficial management practice (BMP) under Ag Action Manitoba – Assurance. Eligible projects and related costs include:

- drilling new or deepening existing wells, test hole drilling, screening, casing, well caps and related activities;
- installing water pumps and required plumbing components and related activities, such as professional and contractor fees;
- constructing new or rehabilitating existing dugouts including professional and contractor fees; and
- establishing alternative watering system equipment



and permanent fencing to restrict livestock access to surface water and dugouts.

To be eligible, applicants must complete an environmental farm plan (EFP) that will help manage risk on

their farm related to water quality and supply, soil health, air quality and biodiversity. Producers have until Nov. 1, 2020, to submit their EFP statement of completion.

Ag Action Manitoba – Assurance: Beneficial Management Practices provides targeted incentive programs to agricultural producers and select industry service providers to advance the adoption of beneficial management practices (BMPs). These practices reduce identified environmental risks, improve agro-ecosystem resilience, build public trust and improve environmental sustainability of farm operations in Manitoba.

Applications will be accepted and reviewed on an ongoing basis until Oct. 11. Priority will be given to applicants within federal tax deferral areas, as identified at www.agr.gc.ca under Drought Watch.

Producers can contact their local Manitoba Agriculture office or call the department (toll-free) at 1-84-GROW-MB-AG (1-844-769-6224) for more information on any of these programs and services or go to www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture under Quick Links.

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USask-led group awarded \$1.65 M to train young scientists for expanding plant protein industry

BY USASK RESEARCH PROFILE AND IMPACT

An interdisciplinary university group led by University of Saskatchewan researcher Michael Nickerson has been awarded \$1.65 million by the federal granting council NSERC to train a new generation of innovative plant protein scientists to help industry satisfy the exploding worldwide demand for meat alternatives.

"This major public investment in research and training presents a novel and exciting opportunity to leverage our university's expertise and investment in both agricultural research and agri-food and bioproduct development for a sustainable future," said USask Vice-President Research Karen Chad.

"By working across disciplines and institutions, and engaging with industry, this innovative project will provide young scientists with strong technical and leadership skills to advance the expanding protein ingredient industry," she said.

Nickerson said global demand for plant protein ingredients is expanding due to population growth, the high cost of animal-derived proteins, and a large group of consumers who've chosen a "flexitarian" diet—mostly vegetarian and meat only occasionally—for ethical and health reasons.

"This project is a huge opportunity for students, who will acquire the skills needed for a rapidly growing plant protein ingredients industry that needs graduates who can hit the ground running," said Nickerson, a professor of food and bioproduct sciences at the USask College of Agriculture and Bioresources.

"By incorporating four-month industry internships into the program, we will train scientists who will have a blend of leadership, science training and human dynamics, and an understanding of what issues really impact the development of the protein ingredient industry."

NSERC's six-year Collaborative Research and Training (CREATE) award includes eight co-applicants and 12 collaborators. The project, called Canadian Agri-food Protein Training, Utilization and Research Enhancement (CAPTURE), includes scientists from USask, University of Manitoba and

University of Alberta, and aims to train 71 highly qualified personnel—10 PhDs, 44 master's students and 17 undergraduates. Including cash and in-kind support from the institutions, government, and industry partners, the investment totals \$4 million.

"In addition to plant proteins having huge implications for the health of Canadians, there will be considerable economic and social benefits to Canada as we diversify ingredients and foster innovations in the food industry," Nickerson said.

Efforts of Prairie governments to build a strong value-added plant-ingredient processing sector have been effective, said Nickerson who holds a Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture Strategic Research Chair in Protein Quality and Utilization.

"There's a huge wave of



Michael Nickerson, a professor of food and bioproduct sciences at the USask College of Agriculture and Bioresources.

industry investment happening across the Prairies, whether it's Roquette building a huge pea protein fractionating plant in Portage la Prairie, Verdient Foods investing in a plant in Vanscoy, or the involvement of big players like

AGT Food and Ingredients," he said.

As processing plants expand and more players come on stream, companies can't find enough highly qualified personnel with not only technical and scientific knowledge, but

soft skills such as leadership, project management, communications, and creative thinking, Nickerson said.

Trainees will focus on five key research areas:

- Improving the quality of protein feedstocks;
- Developing innovative dry and wet fractionation (separating crop seeds into protein, starch and fibre components);
- Improving the properties of plant proteins to create new uses or increase nutritional quality;
- Developing value-added applications;
- Examining supply chain and market development opportunities for plant protein ingredients and identifying barriers to moving new ingredients to market.

CAPTURE also will help develop a protein research network on the Prairies where the feedstock is

grown, said Nickerson.

USask resources such as the Crop Development Centre and Global Institute for Food Security, and facilities such as KeyLeaf, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, and the National Research Council, make Saskatoon a great hub to build a protein network, he said. The group is also working with provincial food development centres and integrating with the industry-led Protein Industries Canada (PIC) supercluster.

"Building this protein network is really important because it will make us that much more ready for when the protein supercluster comes online, not only with our students but in research collaborations among the group's industry interactions," said Nickerson.

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USask-led research teams to improve agriculture through genomic science

Wheat, lentils and livestock will be the focus of a \$24.2-million investment over four years by Genome Canada and its partners in three University of Saskatchewan-led research projects aimed at ensuring Canada remains at the cutting-edge of these agricultural markets.

"The agricultural sector is critical to Canada's economic growth and to improving food security, both at home and abroad," said USask Vice-President Research Karen Chad.

"Working with our many academic, government and industry partners, this leading-edge genomics research in our rapidly growing biosciences cluster will help crop and livestock producers address key challenges and opportunities, advancing our goal to be the university the world needs."

More than half the funding—about \$13 million—comes from co-funders such as the Saskatchewan government, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC), the Western Grains Research Foundation, Saskatchewan Wheat Development Commission, the Alberta government, Alberta Wheat Commission, Saskatchewan Pulse Growers, USask, and partners in the beef industry.

The three USask-led projects, administered by Genome Prairie, are part of a \$76.7-million investment, including partner funding, in eight new projects across the country announced July 23 by Canada's Science and Sport Minister Kirsty Duncan to advance sustainability and productivity of Canadian agriculture, agri-food and fisheries.

\$11.2 MILLION—4DWHEAT:

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In a collaboration between USask and AAFC, USask wheat breeder Curtis Pozniak and AAFC molecular geneticist Sylvie Cloutier will use genomics to improve the breeding and production of wheat, a vitally important crop in global food security.

"Wheat is the most important crop for current and future global food security because it supplies the most calories and protein to the global population," said Pozniak, who has played a key role in international discoveries to decode the bread wheat and durum wheat genomes.

"Meeting the challenge of increasing wheat production to match the growing demand for food over the next 20 to 30 years is of paramount importance. We will apply cutting-edge genomics to fully access diversity in wheat breeding and to enable new sources of diversity for enhancing yield and managing producer risk to important diseases."

\$7.4 MILLION—ENHANCING THE VALUE OF LENTIL VARIATION FOR ECOSYSTEM SURVIVAL (EVOLVES)



University of Saskatchewan crop scientist Curtis Pozniak.

Building on USask's renowned history of lentil breeding success, USask plant scientists Kirstin Bett and Bert Vandenberg aim to improve lentil productivity through genomics.

"The industry is seeking to enter the high-value food and ingredients sector and expects future lentil varieties will support this new venture," said Bett. "We aim to accelerate

incorporation of specific quality traits in breeding through strategic use of genetic variability, enabling Canadian producers to rapidly capture emerging market opportunities."

As the largest lentil producer and exporter in the world, the Canadian economy already benefits from \$2.5 billion in export revenue.

"We will contribute to the Canadian pulse industry's goal of diversifying market outlets and creating price stability," said Vandenberg. "We also aim to secure Canada as the global leader in all aspects of lentil innovation, and as a preferred supplier of high-quality lentils to the world."

\$5.6 MILLION – GENOMIC ANTIMICROBIAL STEWARDSHIP SYSTEMS FROM EVIDENCE-BASED TREATMENT STRATEGIES (ASSETS) FOR LIVESTOCK

A multidisciplinary team led by Cheryl Waldner, USask professor of large animal clinical sciences, and Simon Otto, University of Alberta assistant professor of public health and a USask alumnus, will study diagnostic testing for antimicrobial resistance in livestock management, a growing challenge to human and animal health around the world.

This work holds promise to radically accelerate diagnostic testing time for livestock producers and greatly improve the use of antimicrobials (antibiotics) to treat bacterial infections in cattle, swine, poultry and other food animals, said Waldner.

Continued on page 42



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WCVM internship primes vet for large animal practice

BY LYNNE GUNVILLE

Dr. Robin (Rob) Stevens had been a practicing physiotherapist for several years when he decided to adopt Cola, a rescue dog from Taiwan. Although Stevens knew he could provide a better life for Cola, he had no idea that his new pet would ultimately lead him to a new path in life as well. "I think that deep down inside of me I'd always wanted to be a veterinarian," says Stevens who had moved to Canada from South Africa in 2008. "Cola just kind of sparked the fire inside me again, and so I started taking undergraduate classes so I could apply for veterinary medicine."

By the time Stevens had graduated from the Western College of Veterinary Medicine (WCVM) in 2018, he'd developed a keen interest in large animals, particularly dairy cattle and theriogenology (reproduction). He decided to apply for a one-year ruminant field service internship at the WCVM—an opportunity for him to determine whether large animal medicine was the best fit.

Since Stevens had grown up in a South African city, he lacked the experience of many of his Canadian classmates who came from farms. He hoped the internship would allow him to learn more about the veterinary care of production animals while working with local producers and learning the small but important aspects of large animal medicine that aren't taught in veterinary school. He wasn't disappointed. As a member of the WCVM Veterinary Medical Centre's Ruminant Field Service team, Stevens spent most of his days driving to local farms and providing a range of services that included pregnancy diagnoses, estrus synchronizations, bull breeding soundness evaluations, calving and treatment of sick animals.

Although Stevens and his team worked mainly with beef and dairy cattle, they also provided care for sheep and goats as well as the odd llama or alpaca. He particularly enjoyed the dairy herd health.

"I enjoy having an ultrasound in my hand and using my hands to diagnose preg-



Dr. Rob Stevens completed his one-year clinical internship in June 2019: "The level of experience and the mentorship and the value that you get in terms of your academic advancement is second to none."

nancies from as early as 30 days on," says Stevens. "Calving is also fun. Correcting a dystocia [difficult calving] or doing a C-section right there in the barn—it's a surgery where you're basically the technician, surgeon and anaesthesiologist all in one, and getting a live animal out after is extremely rewarding."

In addition to his field service duties, Stevens participated in a research project that explored the possibility of reusing costly progesterone inserts. He also helped investigate a commercial beef farm's high incidence of respiratory disease in calves to determine if the issue was caused by insufficient immunoglobulin in the cows' colostrum (first milk).

Stevens valued the chance to work with and learn from the other members of the field service team, including Drs. Fritz Schumann, Kamal Gabadage, Nathan Er-

ickson and Chris Luby.

"They taught me some wonderful things—different ways of seeing and approaching cases," Stevens says. "They have a wealth of knowledge and experience, and they would help me and give me advice when I needed it. I had some really good mentorship during this past year."

In February 2019, Stevens was rewarded for his commitment when he received the Dr. W. Bruce Wren Food Animal Incentive Award—an honour that's given during the Western Veterinary Conference (WVC), held each year in Las Vegas, Nev.

Stevens was one of five North American postgraduate students who were recognized for demonstrating excellence in the food animal practice area. As one of the award recipients, Stevens' expenses were paid to attend the entire international conference. He benefited from the chance to attend lectures given by prestigious

veterinary specialists and to meet people from other educational institutions all over North America.

"The connections that I made were the most valuable part," says Stevens. "I've actually sent a couple of emails with questions for people that I met at the conference. Just attending those lectures and making those connections was very valuable for my career and education."

Now that Stevens has completed the one-year field-service internship, he's moved to Smithers, B.C., where he's working with Dr. Mike Des Harnais (WCVM '00) at his practices, Babine Animal Hospital and Driftwood Veterinary Services.

Since the Smithers area has no regular veterinarian for routine bovine work, Stevens will focus on the ambulatory large animal services and hopes to expand the large animal field service side of the practices.

"I'm looking forward to building a practice where you have people who trust you and your opinion and value the hard work and effort that you put in and the friendships that you create," says Stevens. "I learned a lot about that from Dr. Schumann—if I could be half the doctor as someone like Dr. Schumann, then I'd consider myself to be a success."

In addition to working as a clinician, Stevens is hopeful that there will be a teaching role for him in the future, perhaps through setting up clinical rotations for fourth-year WCVM students at his practice.

When Stevens looks back on his year as a clinical intern at the WCVM, he appreciates the education and the knowledge he gained and recommends that anyone considering an internship should be prepared for hard work but great value.

"The level of experience and the mentorship and the value that you get in terms of your academic advancement is second to none," says Stevens. "I've met a lot of wonderful people here, and I've made a lot of good friendships. There's a team aspect here at the WCVM, and that's probably the most important part. It's been a wonderful team."



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USask-led research teams to improve agriculture through genomic science

Continued on page 42

"The idea for this project comes from an increasing need to ensure the safe use of antimicrobials as the world faces the growing global threat of antimicrobial resistance," Waldner said. "Disease-causing bacteria are increasingly able to resist the antibiotics used to treat them, and the agriculture industry is being called upon to improve antibiotic stewardship in livestock."

Integrating genomic technology (such as hand-held devices to sequence samples) into diagnostic strategies will

revolutionize livestock production, she said. The research team will work closely with beef industry partners, including feedlots and veterinarians, to ensure that the diagnostic testing methods are optimized.

Genome Prairie is also the lead centre for a project awarded \$1.1 million over three years from the Genomic Applications Partnership Program, and with co-funder support, the project will total \$4.4 million. Led by University of Manitoba scientist Vince Palace, the project at the International Institute for Sustainable Development – Ex-

perimental Lakes Area addresses cleaning oil spills in sensitive freshwater ecosystems using non-invasive tools.

"Congratulations to the research teams at the University of Saskatchewan and IISD Experimental Lakes Area for their diligent efforts working with Genome Prairie to develop first-in-class projects," said Genome Prairie President and CEO Reno Pontarollo. "We look forward to working closely with these researchers to help achieve the best possible benefits for the Prairie provinces, Canada and the world."



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USask researchers look to help farmers live pain-free with the use of mechanical exoskeletons

Up until now, farmers have been suffering in silence.

Which is why Dr. Catherine Trask (PhD), Canada Research Chair in ergonomics and musculoskeletal health at the University of Saskatchewan, told The Western Producer she is taking on the task of determining the suitability of exoskeleton use in agriculture.

In the article, she speaks about how farmers have high rates of back injuries and, according to Canadian Census of Agriculture, the number of back-related injuries is set to rise as farmers age. She says that exoskeletons—a wearable device that acts as a passive lifting structure - can reduce postural and muscular load while performing manual farm tasks.

"If there was a farmer who was looking to avoid back pain or to avoid a recurrence of back pain, this might be something that could come up on their radar. It's the kind of thing



Catherine Trask (right) and Xiaoke Zeng study farmers' exposure to body vibrations.

that could be useful," Trask said in an interview with The Western Producer.

Similar technology is already being used in manufacturing and heavy industry contexts. While the

team are researching the physical benefits of using the exoskeleton in farming, they will also explore experiences, perceptions and potential barriers to using exoskeleton in farming.

Trask and her team are looking for 18 volunteer farmers from central Saskatchewan, both male and female, who are over the age of 18 to participate in the study.

"We're looking for all kinds of commodities and really trying to get a range of tasks. We're measuring throughout the 2019 growing season and we're looking for folks involved in grain production, oilseeds, pulses but also ranching," she said.

The study will see participants doing a variety of movement-focused daily activities such as shovelling grain or doing equipment repairs while wearing an exoskeleton equipped with wearable sensors that monitor muscle activity.

Fiscal sense builds fiscal strength

Building financial strength is a multi-step process, experts say, that takes years to establish. Engagement in how farm revenue is dealt with, along with some financial education are critical steps in building financial strength of the farm operation.

When it comes to generating revenue, making it often receives greater consideration than where it ends up going, according to Vanessa Stockbrugger, founder of Alberta-based WomenCents. She stresses the importance of being engaged when it comes to how money's spent, saved and invested.

"No one cares more about your money than you do," Stockbrugger says. "If you don't make it a priority, nobody else will."

Mark Verwey, BDO Canada's national agriculture industry group leader, adds that increasing revenue for its own sake doesn't work.

"The measures to increase revenue have to take into consideration the bottom-line impact," Verwey says. "Financial institutions need to see profitability and the ability to service existing and new debt."

Verwey says the financial strength of balance sheets and statements of operations must be taken into consideration, and it's important for the results of both to trend in a positive direction.

Stockbrugger believes Canadians' financial knowledge has room to grow. The population doesn't need to become experts but should have the base knowledge necessary to understand what they have—financial assets, physical assets, insurance, debt, transition plans—as well as available options.

This can partly be achieved by building knowledge through independent, unbiased sources like the Canadian Total Excellence in Agricultural Management, Stockbrugger and Verwey recommend.

"Knowledge is power, and the more you have, the greater your competitive advantage," Verwey says.

"It's important to measure your success in dollars and cents and know financially the impact of your decisions."

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