MANITOBA Pulse Soybean GROWERS

pulsebeat

Issue 101 • Spring 2025

THE *HEALTH* ISSUE

Healthy Farmers Healthy Farms

P.21

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Please direct your comments or concerns to Robyn Swark at 204.745.6488 or email robyn@manitobapulse.ca.

In This Issue

Manitoba Pulse & Soybean Growers 2025 Board of Directors and Staff

ELECTED FARMER DIRECTORS

Chair – Melvin Rattai - Beausejour
Vice Chair – Brendan Phillips, Hartney
Alex Burgess – Minnedosa
Ben Martens – Boissevain
Robbie Misko – Roblin
Bryce Pallister – Portage la Prairie
John Preun – St. Andrews
Frank Prince – Waskada
Ernie Sirski – Dauphin

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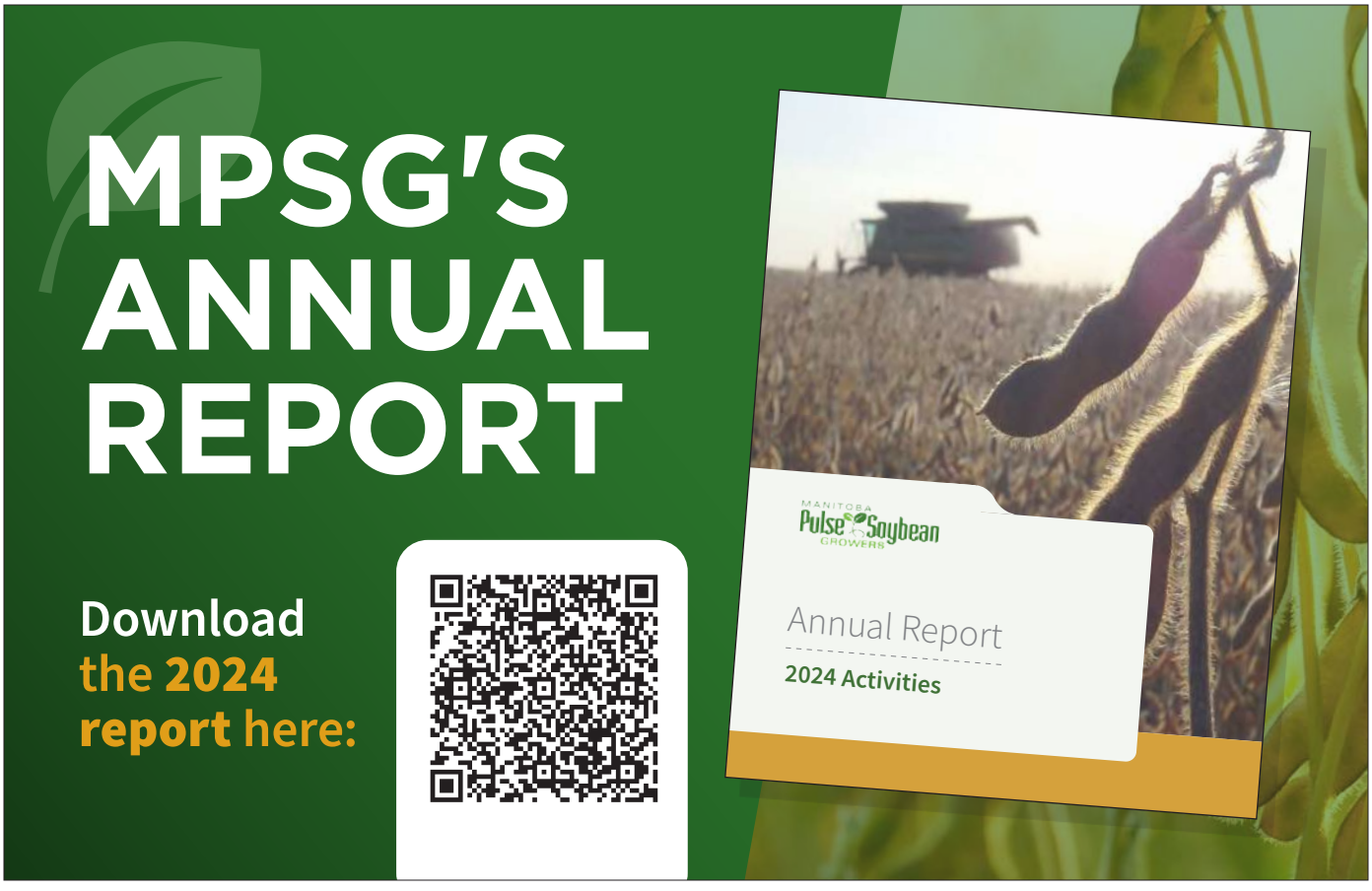
Manitoba Pulse & Soybean Growers 2025 Committees and Representatives

MPSG Committees – *The first named is chair.*
Executive – M. Rattai, B. Phillips, E. Sirski
Governance H/R – B. Phillips, F. Prince
Ag Policy & Market Development – B. Phillips, A. Burgess, E. Sirski, J. Preun, B. Pallister, R. Misko
Finance/Audit – J. Preun, B. Phillips, M. Rattai
Resolutions – A. Burgess, R. Misko
Nominating – A. Burgess, R. Misko
Research & Communications – B. Pallister, F. Prince, B. Martens, M. Rattai, R. Misko

MPSG Representatives
Canadian Grain Commission Pulse Advisory Committee – A. Burgess
Grain Growers of Canada – B. Phillips (J. Preun Alternate)
Keystone Agricultural Producers
- **Grains, Oilseeds, Pulses Industry Rep to KAP Board** – A. Burgess
- **Delegate** – J. Preun

Pulse Canada – B. Martens, J. Preun (B. Pallister Alternate)
Soy Canada – M. Rattai, E. Sirski (F. Prince Alternate)



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Message from Board Chair

Melvin Rattai, Chair, MPSG

AS CHAIR OF Manitoba Pulse & Soybean Growers (MPSG) I have the privilege of experiencing first-hand many positive changes brought about by producer-directed groups. As a farmer I recognize these changes can go unnoticed by our members as they are busy running their businesses. As a result, I want to take this opportunity to highlight some key achievements from 2024.

One of my favourites was the establishment of the Soy Quality Program at the Canadian Grain Commission's (CGC) Grain Research lab in Winnipeg, Man. In 2024, Soy Canada worked with CGC to relocate the storied soy quality program to Winnipeg after operating for years out of the Agriculture and Agri-Food (AAFC) lab in Harrow, Ont. The Winnipeg lab is continuing the testing of food-grade soybean variety quality as well as generating data on the performance of Canadian soybeans in the manufacture of miso, tofu and soy beverages. Canadian exporters use this information to promote our soybeans in premium markets around the world. In addition, staff from the CGC lend their food science expertise to conversations with buyers. The renewed Soy Quality Program will help growers earn extra dollars in the food market. Interestingly, not all human food markets purchase non-GM beans. Our commodity GM soybeans fit very well in some Southeast Asian food markets.

Another highlight for me was the advances MPSG made in its On-Farm Network research program. A decision to increase investment in data gathering technology is helping growers experiment with production questions right on their own land. At the annual On-Farm Network Appreciation Dinner in December, I witnessed the unique value this program brings to farmers across Manitoba.

Connecting with our elected representatives in government took on new urgency late in 2024 with a change in the United States administration. Through a combined effort by our national groups in Ottawa along with MPSG's long standing relationship with Manitoba Agriculture, we were able to meet with both the federal and provincial agriculture ministers in rapid succession. I'm pleased we're on the same page with the province regarding research, extension and trade. Joining other commodity groups in meeting with the federal minister and AAFC officials solidified the united front ag will take into what could be challenging times in Canada-U.S. trade.■

— Melvin

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Check out our **NEW production guidelines** for growing Faba Beans and Lupins in Manitoba!


Manitoba Pulse & Soybean Growers

Faba Bean Production Guidelines


Manitoba Pulse & Soybean Growers

Lupin Production Guidelines

Message from Executive Director

Daryl Domitruk, Executive Director, MPSG

THE WINTER EXTENSION season wrapped up amidst a general sense that farm business risks or, at least, uncertainty were mounting on multiple fronts. Still, growers seemed reluctant to commit to big adjustments in their cropping programs. Some crops are a bit more under the microscope – more growers are checking out food-grade soybean contracts. However, overall, no big shifts are happening to crop production practices. Change, especially abrupt change in response to crisis, can elevate risk and, as this issue of *Pulse Beat* discusses, the resulting stress can impact everyone and everything.

Against the current kaleidoscope of risks, it struck us how the focus areas chosen by Manitoba Pulse & Soybean Growers (MPSG) (see the strategic plan diagram on page 25) can mitigate risk in some areas as producers ramp up attention to others. Perhaps, in this way we can help balance out risk and its associated stresses.

Recently, our policy and advocacy role, more often in the background, took on greater urgency as we worked with partners to think through tariff scenarios. We went so far as to host a delegation of American soy growers and their national export agency. The focus was trade – Manitoba soybeans going to crush plants in North Dakota with meal backhauled to hog barns in Manitoba. Manitoba Agriculture Minister Ron Kostyshyn did a great job facilitating the conversation. The risk to both sides from tariffs clearly coloured the mood, but the desire to promote rather than impede this mutually beneficial trade was strong.

The soybean crush story served a positive purpose in the many group discussions about tariffs convened by the province and by Keystone Agricultural Producers. Just sensing that Manitobans are on the same page provided an antidote to our collective risk-induced stress.

The tariff topic was in the background during our visit with the board of Manitoba Agricultural Services Corporation (MASC). Of course, a visit to MASC is, by definition, about risk. This time we found common ground in opportunities to review seeding date deadlines for dry beans and to seek improvements to coverage for food-grade soybeans. Relations with MASC directors and management are collegial and there's a real sense of pulling in the same direction.

On the research side, projects such as drought tolerance, root rot resistance and new work on choosing fungicides wisely took on urgency in the context of mounting risks. Ongoing work to develop new crop options such as adzuki bean, food-grade soy and faba bean is being pursued with renewed gusto as the mission to diversify markets comes to the fore. Pulses as a family of crops have a lot to offer an economy seeking to broaden it market base.

Introducing new crop options and optimizing variety selection in existing crops is an area in which we believe MPSG can excel. To that end, one of our staff agronomists, Jennifer McCombe-Theroux, will be making this the focus of her work. Watch for messages from McCombe-Theroux about the location of 2025 variety trials in your area.■

— Daryl

MPSG Events

MANITOBA PULSE & SOYBEAN GROWERS AT AG DAYS

As part of this year's Ag Days, Manitoba Pulse & Soybean Growers (MPSG) hosted an engaging session at the Keystone Centre's MNP Theatre in Brandon, Man. on Thursday, Jan. 23, 2025. Attendees gained insights from Laura Grzenda, land management specialist with Manitoba Agriculture, speaking on sustainability practices shaping the agriculture sector. Brian Innes, executive director of Soy Canada shared an in-depth look at soybean market trends, both at home and abroad. Wrapping up the event, MPSG's Laura Schmidt, former production specialist – west, facilitated a dynamic farmer panel with Jeff Kostiuk, Eric McLean, Nick Burla and Kyle Case, highlighting the opportunities and challenges of growing legume crops in Manitoba. The session offered practical takeaways and inspiration for farmers navigating today's evolving agricultural landscape.

Photo: Toban Dyck

Laura Grzenda, land management specialist with Manitoba Agriculture, speaks about sustainability practices shaping the agriculture sector.


Photo: Toban Dyck

Daryl Domitruk, Manitoba Pulse & Soybean Growers executive director, speaks at Ag Days.

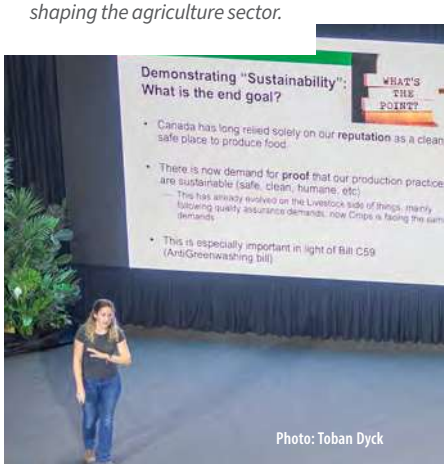

Photo: Toban Dyck


Photo: Toban Dyck

Brian Innes, Soy Canada, executive director, talks about soybean market trends.

Below: (Left to right) Farmer panel, Jeff Kostiuk, Eric McLean, Nick Burla and Kyle Case, discuss the opportunities and challenges of growing legume crops in Manitoba.

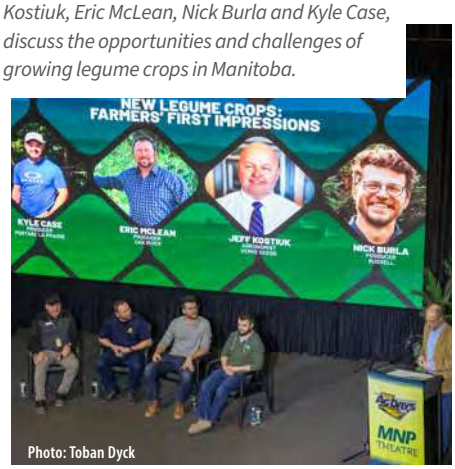

Photo: Toban Dyck

Photo: Toban Dyck

MANITOBA Pulse Soybean GROWERS

Production Guidelines

From field selection to harvest and everything in between.

Narrow-row production guidelines | Insect and disease scouting calendar

Growth staging guide | Desiccation and harvest guide

Scan the QR code to visit our production resources site.

Soybean 2025 Outlook

A commodity model under strain

EDITOR'S NOTE: THIS ARTICLE WAS WRITTEN ON JAN. 10, 2025

Owen Wagner, Vice President, Grains and Oilseeds Analysis, Rabobank North America

IT WASN'T THAT long ago that commodity markets had the world on a string. Propped up by the four-legged stool of:

1) Strong fundamentals
2) A positive macroeconomic backdrop
3) Supportive policy
4) The enthusiasm of managed money

This saw prices for corn, wheat, canola and soybeans roll into the summer of 2022 at or near record highs.

Fast forward to today and these former elements of support have morphed into the four horsemen of falling prices. The first shoe to drop in the unravelling of commodity prices was the United States Federal Reserve's interest rate increase in May 2022. With higher borrowing costs, businesses and consumers started to take a harder look at spending, particularly on purchases deemed discretionary. While there's some latitude at the margins, food is generally not a discretionary expense. That said, the growing share of grain used in biofuels has created an inextricable link with petroleum markets, which are discretionary. After all, when times are lean, consumers generally can't cut calories to balance their budgets, but they can choose to drive less, ultimately making agricultural commodities more vulnerable to macroeconomic headwinds.

In the 30 months since, other elements of support have fallen by the wayside. Going into 2025, soybean prices stood at their lowest levels since the height of the U.S.-China trade war of the first Trump administration. Surveying the price landscape for the year ahead, it's difficult to identify factors that could usher in a swift recovery, but it's easy to identify factors that represent further downside risk. Sticking with the macroeconomic story line, interest rate cuts in the U.S., all other things equal, should help stoke demand for commodities. In practice, however, instability in the world and a resurgence of protectionism and populism appear to be exerting a stronger and more bearish influence.

The Canadian dollar, of course, has been under pressure from U.S. President Donald Trump's chatter of tariffs within the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA) as well as economic weakness at home. While devaluation would otherwise help keep Canadian products competitive in export markets, it will also raise input prices, exerting upward pressure on 2025 production costs. Although the performance of the Loonie against the greenback may ultimately be a wash for Canadian farmers,

> *"... the growing share of grain used in biofuels has created an inextricable link with petroleum markets ..."*

the elephant in the room remains Brazil, the leading soybean exporter, which has seen its own currency fall 22 per cent against the U.S. dollar and 15 per cent against the Canadian dollar over the past year as foreign capital flees the country – increasingly put off by Brazil's deficit spending.

A weakening Brazilian real is bearish for commodity markets but provides a convenient segue into 2025 fundamentals. Following the return of Argentina to the marketplace and a record U.S. soybean crop in 2024, the world enters 2025 with the largest soybean stocks and second largest soybean stocks-to-use ratio on record. With a massive (170 million metric tonnes) Brazilian crop on deck, fundamentals are expected to further deteriorate as the year unfolds.

A host of policies will impact soybean markets in 2025. Our "known knowns" include biofuel policies in the U.S. that have become generally less supportive. Growth in the volume obligation under the federal Renewable Fuel Standard has stalled, while a 20 per cent cap on vegetable oil in California's Low Carbon Fuel Standard puts a severe constraint to future growth under that program. Meanwhile, Trump's appointee to lead the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Lee Zeldin, took a skeptical view towards biofuels as a congressman, and time will tell if his stance becomes more sympathetic. Finally, no discussion of policy is complete without a mention of the prospect of a U.S.-China Trade War 2.0. Demonstrably, the first trade war precipitated a loss in market share for U.S. soybean exports. A second trade war is likely to do the same – creating some opportunity for Canadian exports but with Brazil being the primary beneficiary.

In closing, 2025 may usher in new lows for soybean prices in the current cycle. Indeed, with soy/canola price ratios at their lowest levels since 2012, markets appear to be telling growers to pump the brakes on commodity soy. While the environment will continue to be challenging, Canadian growers possess a few unique advantages that should contribute to their resiliency going forward. First, as one of the last regions in the Northern Hemisphere to plant a crop, Canadian growers can bide their time, evaluate the market and adjust planting decisions accordingly. Second, Canadian agriculture does a superior job in diversifying and differentiating their production. Case in point – 25 per cent of Canadian soybeans are for direct consumption, compared with two per cent in the U.S. In the year ahead, Canadian growers may be best served by keeping one eye on the behemoths to the south hammering away at the commodity model, while using the other to spot premiums in niche markets and opportunities for value add. ■


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Unlocking New Opportunities for Canadian Pulses in Key Export Markets

PULSE CANADA

Jeff English, Vice President, Marketing and Communications, Pulse Canada

AS THE GLOBAL landscape evolves in 2025, Pulse Canada is working on your behalf to ensure that Canadian farmers, processors and exporters are positioned to succeed. By focusing on growing access and opportunities in both established and emerging markets, we're working to build a resilient and prosperous future for the pulse sector. Below are a few highlights of the work being done to grow benefits across the entire value chain.

INDIA

Since December 2023, India has temporarily lifted restrictions on pea exports, with the current policy set to expire at the end of February 2025. Since these restrictions have eased, Canadian growers have sent roughly 1.5 million metric tonnes of peas to India, making India the largest single market for peas for 2024. Canadian growers and traders have also seen tariffs removed on lentils and desi chickpeas through to March 31, 2025, which has opened doors for increased exports. Pulse Canada continues to engage with key farmer and industry associations in India and to monitor market access for peas, lentils and chickpeas. As India's policy decisions in 2025 will significantly influence global pulse trade, Pulse Canada prioritizes maintaining strong relationships and market presence.

CHINA

China remained an important market for peas in 2024. As has been well documented, Canada's government-to-government relationship with China has been tenuous. At the same time, China recently granted access for peas to Russia, who has entered the market in a major way. It has been well demonstrated that political relations can impact trade, which is why we have been enacting a strategy that focuses on building and strengthening industry-to-industry relationships. This is being done through in-person missions, both diplomatic and technical, as well as providing resources and learning opportunities for major companies working with Canadian peas. Most recently, Pulse Canada sent a delegation led by Chair Terry Youzwa to meet with Chinese counterparts, strengthening ties with officials and companies who are major customers of Canadian peas. The delegation also continued advocacy for market access for other pulse crops including lentils and faba beans. We continue to leverage memorandums of understanding signed with China's Chamber of Commerce for Food, Native Produce and Animal By-Products (CFNA) to ensure continued dialogue on the importance of Canada-China trade and on growing our respective pulse sectors.

INDO-PACIFIC

The Indo-Pacific region offers enormous potential for growth with its rapidly growing economies and large population. Staff at Pulse Canada continue work to develop new markets for pulses, such as the large Asian feed and pet food market, and to increase predictability and reduce trade risk in leading Southeast and South Asian nations. Collaborating with organizations like the Indo-Pacific Agriculture and Agri-Food Office, Pulse Canada is working to position Canadian pulses as a leading choice in these emerging markets.

NORTH AMERICA

Pulse Canada continues to prioritize strengthening the United States and Mexico markets and enhancing the integrated North American agriculture industry. In 2024, Canada gained new access to Mexico for faba beans for human and industrial use, further advancing opportunities for Canadian growers in North America's pulse markets. At the time of writing this article (Jan. 24, 2025), the threat of tariffs from the U.S. still looms large. Pulse Canada is working with likeminded groups, including the Canadian Agri-food Trade Alliance (CAFTA), to better understand the impact tariffs from the U.S. could have on our sector. Growers can be assured that managing our relationship with the important United States market is a top priority for 2025 and beyond.

SUSTAINABILITY POSITIONING

There's no doubt that Canada's pulse sector has both opportunities and challenges ahead in 2025. For those reasons, we continue to work on market development, helping to create opportunities for pulse crops in high-value markets.

Our sector has developed crop specific strategies for growth across all major pulse crops. Each strategy focuses on specific uses and markets where the largest opportunity exists. We're seeing tremendous potential in some non-traditional markets for pulse crops by leveraging both their nutritional and environmental benefits. This includes work in sectors such as pet food, animal and aquaculture feed, and furthering opportunities for pulse flours, starches and fibres among food companies around the world.

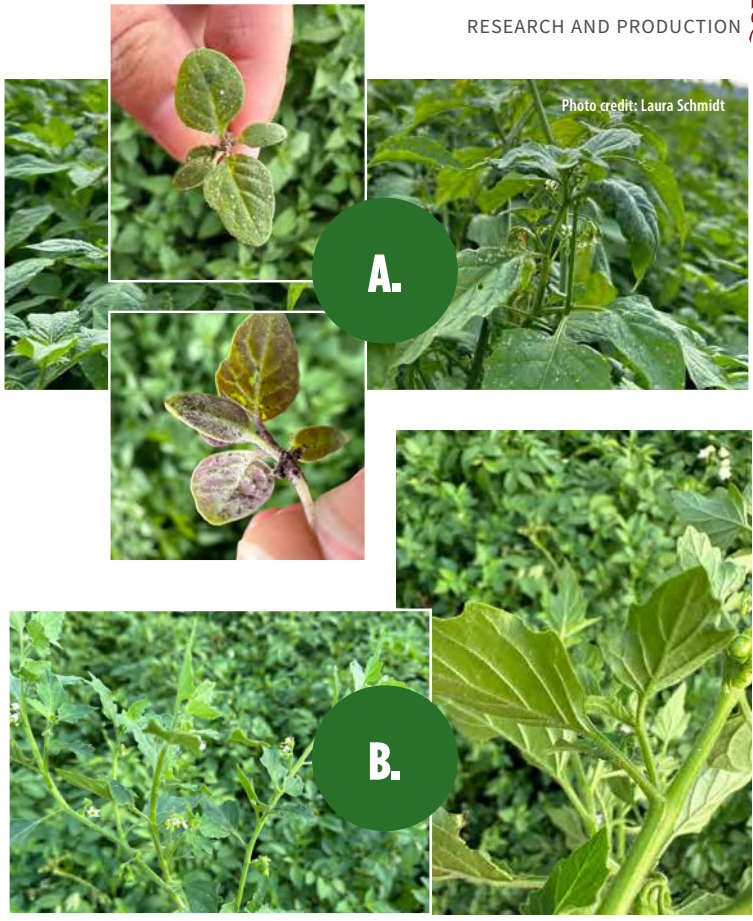
Through traditional volume markets, domestic value-added processing, and finding new uses in high value markets, we believe the demand for, and value of, the crops grown here in Manitoba and across Canada can continue to increase.

> For more information about how Pulse Canada is working to build a resilient and prosperous future for the pulse sector, please get in touch at **jenglishpulsecanada.com**.■

Soybean SCOUT

Q: Nightshade weeds are typically not very competitive, but in uncompetitive crops like dry beans where herbicide options are limited, they can be quite the challenge. Nightshade berries at harvest can stain seeds, impacting quality. Can you tell these two notorious nightshade weeds apart?

Find the answer on page 34.



You Can Help Us Cultivate the Future: Join Us for Canadian Agriculture Literacy Month!

Tanis Chalmers, Engagement and Development Manager, Agriculture in the Classroom-Manitoba

Brock Sutherland from Shur-Gro loved sharing his ag story at Christian Heritage School in Brandon, Man. during CALM in 2024.

EVERY MARCH, CANADIAN Agriculture Literacy Month (CALM) connects thousands of Manitoba students with the world of agriculture, giving them the chance to learn from the people who grow their food – people like YOU!

At Agriculture in the Classroom-Manitoba (AITC-M), this program is only possible thanks to the generous support of partners like Manitoba Pulse & Soybean Growers (MPSG), whose steadfast contributions help bring agriculture to life in classrooms across the province.

To MPSG and Manitoba's pulse and soybean farmers–thank you. Your support fuels vital programs like CALM and inspires a generation to understand, respect and value agriculture.

But there's still more we can do together.

The next generation of farmers, agronomists and scientists is sitting in classrooms today. By volunteering for CALM, you can share your passion, spark curiosity and make agriculture real for students. Whether it's sharing your love of ag, explaining crop care, leading hands-on activities or simply sharing your story, your voice matters. We need over 150 English and French speaking volunteers to make this program a success!

The 2025 CALM classroom activity, "What's in Your Lunch?" (EN/FR), will provide a hands-on, fun way of connecting students and teachers to the food they eat and the farmers that produce it. As a volunteer, you'll help them to learn about where their food comes from and highlight some of the different types of crops and livestock commonly grown and raised in Manitoba. Help students make that critical link between farmers who produce our food and all those in the agriculture industry who work hard to put food on our tables.

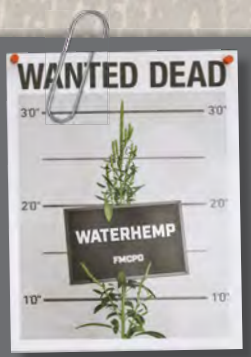
Please go to aitc.mb.ca/calmvol to sign up today!

And if volunteering isn't an option, please consider donating to AITC-M. With your donation, we can continue to develop innovative resources, host field trips and deliver programs that create lasting impact – on students, teachers and the future of agriculture.

Your support makes all the difference. Together, let's plant the seeds for a brighter future.

Get involved today!

> Visit **aitc.mb.ca** to sign up as a CALM volunteer or make a donation. Let's keep growing the legacy of Manitoba's agriculture industry – one classroom at a time. ■



FUGITIVE OF THE WEEK

CANADA'S MOST UNWANTED WEEDS

NAME: **Waterhemp**

No. **700**

Last known whereabouts: Starting to move into southern Manitoba and parts of Saskatchewan. Sets up camp where water runs, low areas of the field, and strips where the combine has previously spread chaff. Warning: Easily confused with redroot pigweed in seedling stage.

Scan to learn more

Manitoba's Soybean Industry Thrives with Genetic Advancements

Advancements in genetics drive higher yields, expanded acres and new market opportunities for Manitoba growers

SOY CANADA

Jeanine Moyer, Synthesis

MANITOBA'S SOYBEAN INDUSTRY has come a long way since the early days of the "let's try a new crop" approach.

From research and market development to agronomic innovations and changing climate conditions, many factors have contributed to the expansion of Manitoba soybean acres and the value the crop now delivers throughout the industry. One of the most important players in the evolution and growth of the sector has been the introduction of new and advanced soybean genetics.

"Continued investments in genetics have been one of the key factors that have enabled soybeans in Manitoba to become a reliable and permanent crop in our rotations," says Daryl Domitruk, executive director of the Manitoba Pulse & Soybean Growers (MPSG), noting soybeans were first introduced to Manitoba fields as a crop that could handle the wet growing conditions in the 1990s. Since then, soybean acres have ebbed and flowed with the weather, peaking in 2017 at 2.2 million acres, then retreating slightly from 2018 to 2021 during a series of dry years only to make a comeback last year at nearly 1.3 million seeded acres.

> *"I think we are on our way to finding stability with core growers having the experience and systems in place to reliably grow soybeans and achieve favourable yields and marketing opportunities."*
>
> **Brendan Phillips**

Domitruk points to the years between 2010 and 2024 as the major milestone stretch for Manitoba soybeans. He explains that during this period the province experienced every kind of growing condition, which allowed growers, researchers and seed companies to test their genetic material and generate about a hundred soybean varieties that are now available and proven to perform.

GROWING WITH GENETICS

"I think we are on our way to finding stability with core growers having the experience and systems in place to reliably grow soybeans and achieve favourable yields and marketing opportunities," Brendan Phillips, a soybean grower in Hartney, Man., says. "Variety development and different weed control systems have allowed growers in a large area of the province to gain confidence while recognizing that soybeans can be helpful in time management and resource utilization of equipment during busy seasons."

Bryce Rampton, a portfolio marketing manager for Corteva Agriscience's Pioneer brand in Western Canada, believes Manitoba's soybean industry is maturing. He says one of the key contributing factors has been the ability for seed companies to leverage genetic solutions that have been developed for other regions in North America, like trait packages and disease tolerant varieties. Building on the genetic success in other regions and testing them in local breeding programs and plot trials means provincial growers can capitalize on proven seed they know will perform in Manitoba growing conditions. "Corteva's local breeding and plot testing program has been a significant contributor to developing varieties that perform in Manitoba's climate and deliver the results growers are looking for," says Rampton.

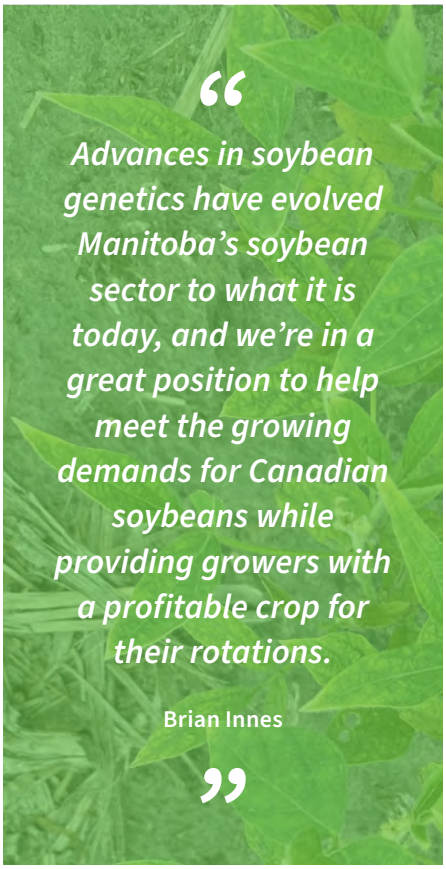
Advanced genetics are providing positivity, momentum and stability for the provincial soybean industry. "We're seeing these enhanced genetics translate to more acres and higher yields," notes David Kikkert, Canada corn and soybean portfolio lead with Bayer Crop Science. He points to the record yields growers have seen in the past three years as a trend that's reflecting the investments in genetics and trait technology that seed companies like Bayer are providing to provincial growers.

"Last year's average provincial record yield of 45 bushels per acre is an indication that Manitoba is moving to a more mature market," adds Kikkert.

REACHING NEW HEIGHTS

Over the years, Manitoba farmers have embraced advancements in soybean genetics and varieties better suited to shorter growing seasons and cooler climates, allowing for more widespread cultivation in the region. The industry has evolved thanks to breeding programs that have focused on developing earlier-maturing varieties with improved cold tolerance, ensuring higher yields and more stability.

"Most soybean seed companies are offering more complete varieties today



compared to a decade ago. They are delivering high yielding varieties with suitable maturity and disease resistance options that add value to crop rotations and the bottom line,” says Brad Pinkerton, Manitoba marketing representative for SeCan, who believes that the introduction of weed control technology like Roundup Ready 2 Xtend soybeans was a turning point for Manitoba growers. He notes weed control systems not only keep soybean fields clean but also help to break weed cycles in other rotational crops and provide another herbicide resistance management tool that growers are gladly adopting. Pinkerton also points out that, while canola remains a primary crop in Manitoba, growers are recognizing soybeans are easier to manage in comparison, and that’s another key contributing factor to the growth in acres.

Mark Jorgenson, Western Canada seed business manager with Sevita International, has been involved in the soybean industry since the early 2000s and has witnessed the evolution of the industry’s advancement firsthand. He notes that while there are more soybean varieties than ever, especially genetically modified varieties, he’s seeing a recent rise in conventional acres as growers look to spread their risk and capitalize on value-added premiums. “We’ve seen a lot of changes over the years, including markets for our soybeans. As the consumption of food grade soybeans continues to grow, Manitoba growers are in a position to take advantage of yet another opportunity that soybeans can offer,” says Jorgenson.

The growth of Manitoba soybeans has also seen the industry evolve in how it markets and coordinates the crop. Increased production has fuelled the growth of Delmar Commodities’ Jordan Mills processing facility in Roland, Man. along with exports. With Manitoba soybeans representing less than one per cent of the global soybean supply, exporters have refined export programs to capitalize on significant global demand.

Marketing Manitoba soybeans has also been adjusted to account for the quality produced. “Historically, Western Canadian soybeans have been discounted relative to other origins due to quality perceptions,” explains Brian Innes, executive director of Soy Canada. Discounts have been one of the topics covered at Soy Canada’s Northern Soybean Summit events that started in 2022.

“The increased dialogue at the summits among exporters, growers, seed companies and growers has helped to align actions by all value chain members with what customers value,” Innes explains. One tangible outcome is the ongoing work exploring ways to enhance the value of northern Canadian soybeans (also known as eastern Prairie soybeans), particularly in Manitoba, by having quality understood to be more than just crude protein content.

“There are a lot more opportunities to come,” predicts Innes. “Advances in soybean genetics have evolved Manitoba’s soybean sector to what it is today, and we’re in a great position to help meet the growing demands for Canadian soybeans while providing growers with a profitable crop for their rotations.”

Phillips also believes there are great opportunities for Manitoba soybeans, saying “they are improving the profitability and sustainability of our farms. Soybeans are an economical crop to grow with consistent yields that help growers form the foundation of a sustainable crop rotation.”

Looking forward, Domitruk believes Manitoba’s soybean sector is quickly closing the gap on mature markets like Ontario and Quebec when it comes to acres and yields. “I think we’re on the threshold of the next major milestone that will push our industry forward,” he says. ■

Industry Insights

Decades of growth have shaped Manitoba’s soybean industry into what it is today – one that offers significant opportunities for everyone along the value chain. Reflecting on the current industry, Soy Canada members share their observations and expectations, noting the evolution and anticipated future of soybean production in the province.

“Soybeans are a solutions-based crop. They offer growers agronomic solutions like weed control, along with disease and nutrient management. Soybeans are also sustainable, and as a nitrogen fixing crop, they can offer nutrient sources to enhance soil and plant health.” – *Bryce Rampton, portfolio marketing manager for Corteva Agriscience’s Pioneer brand in Western Canada*

“Manitoba soybean growers have more confidence than ever before. New genetics and trait technologies are delivering the quality, yields and crop management results that growers need.” – *David Kikkert, Canada corn and soybean portfolio lead with Bayer Crop Science*

“It’s taken time to get where we are today, but the soybean varieties available to Manitoba growers work for the growers and the end users. The outlook looks bright for the continued advancement of our industry.” – *Mark Jorgenson, Western Canada seed business manager with Sevita International*

“Focused breeding programs have delivered soybean varieties that are specific to Manitoba’s environment and growing conditions. These investments have enabled our industry to advance to where we are today.” –*Brad Pinkerton, Manitoba marketing representative for SeCan*

“Seed companies have done a good job adapting soybean genetics that perform for Manitoba growers. Soybeans have become a valuable and profitable addition to crop rotations. – *Daryl Domitruk, executive director of Manitoba Pulse & Soybean Growers*

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Strengthening Farm Financial Health in a Time of Uncertainty

GRAIN GROWERS OF CANADA

Kyle Larkin, Executive Director, Grain Growers of Canada

FARMERS ACROSS CANADA are no strangers to navigating challenges, but today's economic pressures are testing their financial resilience in new ways. From rising input costs, shifting global markets to increased taxes to crop price volatility, farm financial health is under immense strain.

Markets are unpredictable, and trade tensions with two of our largest trading partners – the United States and China – only adds to the instability. As key export destinations, any shift in trade relationships or purchasing patterns can have a profound impact on Canadian grain farmers. Trade tensions, changing demand, or tariffs add another layer of risk to already tight margins.

At the same time, the carbon tax continues to compound financial pressures for grain farmers, affecting everything from drying grain to transporting crops to market. For a sector already operating on thin margins, these additional expenses make it harder for farmers to stay competitive both domestically and internationally, especially when no viable alternatives exist.

Adding to these pressures is the recent increase in the capital gains inclusion rate, which creates further uncertainty about the future of family-run grain farms. While intended to target Canada's wealthiest individuals, these changes disproportionately impact farmers who rely on their land and equipment as their retirement plan.

Simply put, farmers are facing mounting financial uncertainty at every turn. Trade instability with China and the U.S., higher carbon taxes, and increased capital gains taxes are creating an unsustainable economic environment.

Yet despite these challenges, Canadian farmers remain resilient entrepreneurs. They continue to innovate and adapt while growing food for Canadians and the world. In response to these pressures, Grain Growers of Canada (GGC) has been working with policymakers to advocate for the financial health of family-run grain farms.

We continue to fight to secure exemptions from the carbon tax for the on-farm use of propane and natural gas for activities like grain drying. These exemptions help alleviate some of the added financial pressure, enabling grain farms to remain competitive. We are also focused on strengthening Canada's trade relationships. Access to global markets is critical for Canadian grain farmers and we continue to work hard to promote market access, especially in the U.S.

GGC has also fought for changes to tax policies, including pushing back against the capital gains tax increase, which threatens the ability of many farmers to retire securely and pass on their operation to the next generation of farmers. By ensuring our policies foster growth, stability, and successful succession planning, family farms can remain viable for generations to come.

There have been several recent victories to celebrate that are helping contribute to the financial health of farms. After over a year of advocacy, we helped re-implement the recently phased-out Accelerated Investment Incentive, a tax measure that allows farmers to depreciate large capital investments like equipment more quickly.

We also played a crucial role in securing the right to repair for farmers. With the passing of Bills C-294 and C-244 this past fall, farmers will have more access to software, resources and tools that will allow them to repair their own equipment faster and affordably, particularly during critical seeding and harvest periods.

All these efforts are critical to the long-term viability of family-run grain farms. By advocating for policies that foster growth and reduce financial pressures, we are helping to ensure that the next generation of farmers can feed Canada and the world.

> *"There have been several recent victories to celebrate that are helping contribute to the financial health of farms."*

Family farms are the backbone of Canadian agriculture, and their financial health is paramount to allowing them to continue growing food and contributing to Canada's economy. The government needs to be an equal partner with producers, because when farms succeed, Canada succeeds.■

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Holland, Man. farmer Reg Marginet stands on his farm with his numerous marathon medals. Marginet has been running marathons for more than 20 years.

> ***Once you get into it, you'll learn that's all you really focus on when you're running – this is how fast you can run the next half mile … It relaxes the mind and straightens the body.***
>
> **Reg Marginet**

Healthy Farmers Healthy Farms

Healthy crops start with healthy farmers

Ashley Robinson, Editor

As a farmer, your farm is your life. In most cases you live on your farm, meaning every waking hour is tied to your business. Because of this, it may not be easy to stay healthy while also keeping your farm healthy. We talked with a few Manitoba Pulse & Soybean Growers (MPSG) members about how they, or their farm, stay healthy and why it's important to do so.

HEALTHY SOIL, HEALTHY FARM

For MPSG board member Frank Prince, healthy soil is the backbone of his farm. "It's like your best cows. You got foot rot, and she can't walk around. She's not going to eat, and then she's not going to feed herself or her calves. Soil health is the same way. If you have concrete out there and you're trying to feed into it, nothing's going to grow," he says.

The Hartney, Man. farmer has spent most of his career working to take care of his soil and keep it healthy. He farms on sandier soil, and when his family first started growing crops, they quickly learned they needed protect their most important asset – soil.

"Soil is like having an employee. If you want your employee to show up and work hard, you treat them well. It's much the same with the soil. You don't want it to blow away or wash away. You want it to hold nutrients and hold moisture. You'll feed your plants so you grow high yields and make money," Prince says.

To take care of their soil the Prince family has experimented with everything from cover crops to minimal tillage. They've found that depending on the crop they're growing and the field they're growing it in, they have to treat their soil differently. Strip tillage works well for their corn fields, along with planting soybeans into corn residue. The payoff for all this work has been increased yields leading to rising profits.

"We have no complaints about yields, and we don't have dirt blowing away," Prince explains. "When you get drought conditions we get higher yields, because it handles the stretch better."

RUNNING TO STAY HEALTHY

Holland, Man. farmer Reg Marginet has always been a workout fiend, but he didn't get the running bug until he made a bet with his sister in 2002 to run the Manitoba Marathon. Since then, he's run it every year except for one.

"When I first started, I really got into it. I would get up at quarter to six in the morning, and I would run three miles, and then I would have breakfast and I'd be busy on the farm at seven o'clock," Marginet says.

The 70-year-old doesn't train as hard anymore, but he still enjoys it. Before he started running, he had always liked taking walks and doing physical activities such as participating in the Highland Games carrying competitions.

Marginet finds that during the winter it's easy to become couch bound as he doesn't have as much daily farmwork to do. He's even found that in the spring he'll be at his most fit, but then as the growing season unfolds and he gets busier with work, his fitness declines.

Running isn't just about his physical health though – it helps his mental health too. It's an opportunity to destress and get his mind off of work.

"Once you get into it, you'll learn that's all you really focus on when you're running – this is how fast you can run the next half mile," Marginet says. "It relaxes the mind and straightens the body." ■

How to Make Sense of Regional Variety Trial Data with the Highlighter Test

Jennifer McCombe-Théroux, Regional Variety Trial Agronomist, Manitoba Pulse & Soybean Growers

WHEN YOU'RE CONSIDERING which varieties will work best on your farm, the data from the Regional Variety Trials is a great place to start. These trials are spread across Manitoba and are designed to account for the unique growing conditions in different regions. This research offers data on various crop types, including yield, days to maturity and agronomic characteristics.

When looking through the many pages of data it can be overwhelming to interpret and compare varieties to determine which variety is a good fit for your farm. This is where the highlighter test comes in.

Adapted by Dennis Lange with Manitoba Agriculture, the highlighter test is a straightforward method for making sense of trial data to compare varieties based on statistical, not numerical, differences. It helps you understand if any yield differences between varieties are due to genetics and not from the environment or experimental error.

UNDERSTANDING DATA FROM THE REGIONAL VARIETY TRIALS – SOYBEANS

Before looking at the highlighter test, let's break down the data you will typically see from the soybean Regional Variety Trials:

- Check variety – A check variety is a widely grown and established variety chosen to be used as a benchmark.
- Relative days to maturity +/- check – The number of days from planting to full maturity (R8 or 95 per cent brown pod). It is expressed as + or – days relative to the check variety.
- Long-term yield per cent of check – The average yield per variety over time. It is expressed as a per cent of the check yield.
- Site years tested – The number of sites the variety has been tested on over time.
- Agronomic characteristics – Traits like iron deficiency chlorosis rating and group, herbicide-resistance type, soybean cyst nematode and phytophthora root rot resistance.
- Annual yield information – How each variety performs each year. It is expressed as per cent of the yield of the check variety.

These trials provide extensive information on varieties, but the next step is understanding the data to compare varieties and determine if the differences in yield are statistically significant. This is where the Least Significant Difference (LSD) value comes in – the amount by which two varieties must differ to conclude with 95 per cent certainty that a true yield difference exists due to genetics. If the difference in yield between two varieties is higher than the LSD value, then the higher-yielding variety is statistically higher in yield. An LSD value won't be present if there were no significant differences at a site, and this means that all varieties performed the same at that location.

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO THE HIGHLIGHTER TEST

To compare varieties through the highlighter test, start with three different colours of highlighters to compare yield data:

1. Highlight the LSD Value and Check Variety – Start by looking at the bottom of the Yields by Location table. At the bottom of this table, you will find the LSD value – this is your benchmark for comparing the yield differences. Next, choose a check variety. This can be the existing check or any variety that you would like to compare against. Highlight the yields for this check variety and the LSD values.
2. Highlight Varieties with Significantly Higher Yields – Grab a second highlighter with a different colour and scan the table for varieties that have yields higher than your check variety by at least the LSD value. For example, with an LSD of 10, variety yields must differ by at least 10 per cent from the check to be different.
3. Highlight Varieties with Significantly Lower Yields – Take a third highlighter with a different colour and scan the table for varieties that have yields lower than your check variety by at least the LSD value.

After going through with the highlighters, "you are left with a checkerboard pattern," as Lange puts it. It shows you by site the varieties that are statistically higher yielding than the check, those lower than the check and everything else (the unhighlighted) that is not statistically different from the check.

EXAMPLE – USING THE WESTERN HERBICIDE TOLERANT SOYBEAN RESULTS

First, highlight the check variety, S003-RX5, all data across the row, and the LSD values for each location on along the bottom of the table (see Figure 1). Then, in green, highlight the varieties that performed significantly better than the check based on each location's LSD. Use red to highlight the varieties that yielded less at those locations.

For this example, we used the check variety to keep things simple. However, you can choose any variety to compare and highlight + or - based on the LSD at each location. S003-R5X is the check and at the Dauphin, Man. site the LSD is 6. Varieties that performed better than S003-R5X in Dauphin would have yielded 106 per cent or greater. Whereas varieties that yielded less than S003-R5X at Dauphin would have yielded 94 per cent or less. Any unhighlighted varieties are not statistically different in yield than the check.

If we were to look at another site, for example at Melita, Man., the LSD at this site was 10. Varieties that yielded 110 per

continued on page 24

Figure 1

HERBICIDE TOLERANT SOYBEANS • VARIETY DESCRIPTIONS & YIELDS BY LOCATION • WESTERN MANITOBA

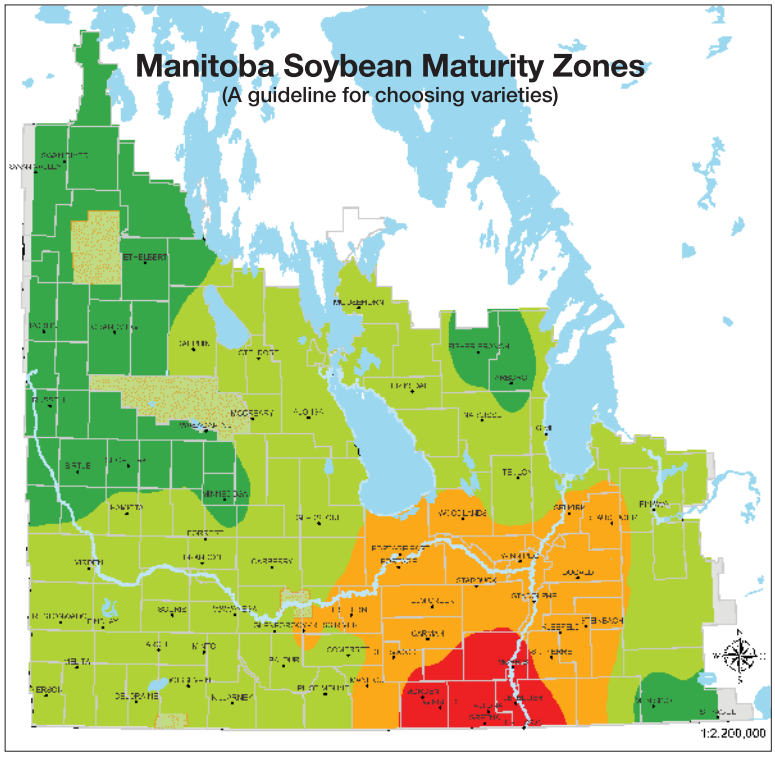
Manitoba Maturity Zone	Company Maturity Group	Variety	Average DTM +/- Check†	Long-Term Yield % Check	Site-Years Tested	IDC Rating (1–5)	IDC Group	Resistance SCN	Resistance PRR	2024 Yield % Check Dauphin	Hamiota	Holland	Melita	Souris	Swan River‡
Very Early-Season Zone	000.7	S0007-S1X	-5	85	16	2.4	S	–	1c,3a	91	88	73	83	83	83
	000.5	BY Nebo XT	-4	93	6	2.0	ST	–	1c	92	99	96	91	90	92
	Experimental lines that are being tested/proposed for registration in Canada														
	000.7	PR181000-04	-3	87	5	2.0	ST	–	–	93	88	88	90	80	–
	000.7	PR180907-05	-3	94	5	2.0	ST	–	1c	94	98	102	92	88	–
Early-Season Zone	000.7	Wolf R2X*	-2	88	16	1.9	ST	yes	3a	91	89	83	81	80	85
	000.7	PV S0007X74	-2	100	10	2.0	ST	–	1c,3a	103	100	102	89	98	93
	000.9	BY Arvon XT	-2	90	6	2.2	ST	–	1c,1k	83	93	99	91	89	90
	000.8	NSC EXP0008CX	-2	99	10	1.7	T	–	1c	96	101	94	97	94	96
	000.9	S0009-J5X	-2	96	10	2.0	ST	–	1c,3a	106	94	93	92	99	85
	00.2	Major R2X	-1	91	16	2.0	ST	–	1c	96	89	81	89	89	90
	00.1	S001-D8X	-1	91	22	2.0	ST	–	1c	90	89	95	96	87	84
	00.2	BY Meru E3	-1	96	6	2.1	ST	–	1c	101	93	106	98	90	93
	00.2	B0024EE	-1	97	6	1.9	ST	–	1k,6	99	96	107	96	90	98
	00.1	Alouette R2X	-1	92	6	1.8	ST	–	1c	95	94	98	80	91	92
	00.4	NS EXP004ME3	-1	105	5	1.9	ST	–	1k	102	104	120	103	104	–
	000.7	Briggs R2X	-1	94	16	2.0	ST	yes	1c	89	97	106	96	88	90
	00.2	P002A42E	0	95	10	1.9	ST	–	1c	97	90	105	99	91	89
	00.3	**S003-R5X**	**0**	**100**	**22**	**2.1**	**ST**	**–**	**1c**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**
	000.7	PV S0009X84	0	101	10	1.8	ST	yes	–	101	101	106	93	93	96
	00.7	Gecko R2X	0	97	10	2.0	ST	–	1c	87	102	95	92	94	90
	00.4	B0044EE	1	100	6	2.0	ST	yes	1c	103	98	111	94	102	96
	00.3	TH85003XF	1	99	6	2.0	ST	yes	1c,3a	102	97	106	93	97	98
	000.9	Young R2X	1	99	22	1.7	T	yes	1c	98	106	103	99	100	93
	00.3	P003Z08E	1	95	6	2.2	ST	–	1c	93	98	96	96	95	96
	00.2	NSC Arden RR2X	1	97	15	1.8	ST	–	1c	106	98	104	105	101	–
	00.1	BY Hector XT	2	92	10	1.9	ST	–	1c	88	88	94	73	82	85
	00.5	Hart R2X	2	98	19	1.9	ST	–	1c	104	95	114	96	97	–
	00.4	NSC Holland RR2X	2	95	13	1.9	ST	–	1c	101	100	104	87	94	–
	00.1	DKB001-07	3	102	9	1.7	T	yes	1k	100	103	100	97	96	–
	00.2	TH84002X	3	102	10	1.8	ST	yes	1c	101	96	99	82	100	95
	Experimental lines that are being tested/proposed for registration in Canada														
	000.7	PR180640-05	-2	98	5	2.0	ST	–	–	97	103	102	93	98	–
	000.7	C4M24518 XT	-2	91	6	2.0	ST	–	1k	94	95	99	91	86	87
	00.3	PR180517X-01-06	-1	85	4	2.3	S	–	1c	86	87	88	–	82	–
	00.6	EXP006-24E3	2	99	5	1.7	T	yes	1k,3a	99	98	114	92	99	–
	00.1	CP00123WPX	2	102	9	2.1	ST	yes	1c	100	112	103	97	102	100
	00.6	EXP006-24XF	3	95	5	1.8	ST	yes	1c,3a	97	96	101	92	92	–
Mid-Season Zone	00.3	BY Deno XT	4	97	10	2.0	ST	yes	1c	99	86	96	81	90	89
	00.4	Merino R2X	4	98	13	1.7	T	yes	1k	100	102	104	86	96	–
	00.4	P004Z87E	4	97	6	2.1	ST	–	1c	97	98	106	86	96	100
	00.3	Oslo XF	4	100	5	1.9	ST	–	–	95	101	105	102	99	–
	00.3	SI 00323XT	4	105	10	2.0	ST	–	1c	104	105	106	96	98	102
	00.2	DKB002-32	4	103	15	1.8	ST	yes	1k	107	110	115	98	107	–
	00.4	Bourke R2X	4	97	18	1.8	ST	–	1k	98	105	107	96	97	–
	00.2	PV 22s002 R2X	4	97	22	2.0	ST	yes	1k	102	106	86	86	88	91
	00.7	B0074EE	4	103	6	1.9	ST	–	1c	106	106	104	107	100	99
	00.6	Badger R2X	5	105	9	1.7	T	–	1k	105	115	103	101	98	98
	00.4	DKB004-04	5	99	5	1.7	T	yes	1c	107	106	105	79	97	–
	00.5	PV 16s004 R2X	6	97	18	1.8	ST	yes	1k	98	101	94	97	92	–
	00.6	Mao R2X	6	104	5	1.7	T	yes	1c	109	108	105	91	104	–
	00.5	TH84005XF	6	96	8	2.0	ST	yes	1c	91	92	96	82	87	–
	00.7	P007A68E	6	102	9	1.9	ST	–	1c	100	92	106	89	101	97
	00.5	TH82005 R2X	7	102	18	1.9	ST	–	1k	112	107	111	102	95	–
	Experimental lines that are being tested/proposed for registration in Canada														
	00.2	PR23X2350	4	101	6	2.0	ST	–	–	108	100	110	98	101	95
	00.9	PR24XF2450	6	100	5	1.8	ST	–	–	100	102	112	91	99	–
CHECK CHARACTERISTICS															
	00.3	**S003-R5X**	119 DTM	67 bu/ac	22 site-years					79	70	41	59	88	73
													bu/ac		
									CV %	4.0	3.2	5.9	5.7	4.6	5.3
									LSD %	6	5	10	10	7	8
									Sign. Diff.	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
									Seeding Date	May 29	May 21	May 22	May 16	May 17	May 29
									Harvest Date	Oct 7	Oct 2	Oct 7	Sep 25	Oct 3	Oct 1

† Maturity ratings were averaged across the Dauphin, Hamiota and Melita sites over multiple site years. ‡ Dashes indicate that varieties were not tested at the early sites.

* Ⓟ Indicates a variety that is protected by, or has been applied for and pending, Plant Breeder's Rights legislation that complies with UPOV 1991.

continued from page 22

Figure 2



cent or greater yielded better than S003-R5X and varieties that yielded 90 per cent or less yielded less than S003-R5X. Any unhighlighted varieties aren't statistically different in yield than the check.

LOOKING FURTHER AT THE DATA: DIGGING DEEPER INTO THE DETAILS

Once you have compared the statistical yield differences and you've narrowed down your varieties, it's time to dig deeper and compare maturity, stability in yields across test sites, how many years the variety was tested and the agronomic characteristics you're looking for on your farm.

Maturity – Soybeans require anywhere from 105 to 125 frost-free days from planting to maturity. To further narrow down your soybean options select varieties suited to your growing region using the Manitoba Soybean Maturity Zones map (see Figure 2) and days to maturity. Highlighting across the whole row of the check or the variety you would like to compare, helps you to see that the varieties above the check are earlier maturing and the varieties below the check are longer maturing.

Yields – Annual yields are found in the Yields by Location tables and this is the place to use the highlighter test to compare yields statistically for a single-year data set. Long-term yields are found in the Variety Description tables, which shows how over time this variety has consistently maintained its yield stability in a longer period of time depending on the site years tested.

Site locations – When looking at sites, the first place to look is the location that most resembles your farm land. However, looking at that variety and its results at each location will also show you the yield stability of that variety in different environments.

Site-years tested – The more a variety has been tested helps give us confidence in the results as it has been grown on more site locations and years under varying environmental conditions.

Type – For the herbicide-tolerant varieties, type indicates if it's an Xtend (glyphosate + dicamba tolerant), E3 Enlist (glyphosate + glufosinate + 2,4-D choline tolerant), Roundup Ready (glyphosate tolerant), WPX-Blended (glyphosate + dicamba tolerant) or XtendFlex (glyphosate + dicamba + glufosinate tolerant) variety. Use this information to help narrow down your options based on weed pressure in your fields.

IDC tolerance – Variety selection is the best tool to prevent IDC development. On fields with a higher risk of developing Iron Deficiency Chlorosis (IDC) (high calcium carbonate and soluble salt levels, see Table 1), choose a tolerant variety to minimize the impact of IDC on soybean yield.

Phytophthora Root Rot, Soybean Cyst Nematode – Consider these resistance traits based on the disease presence and risk in your fields.

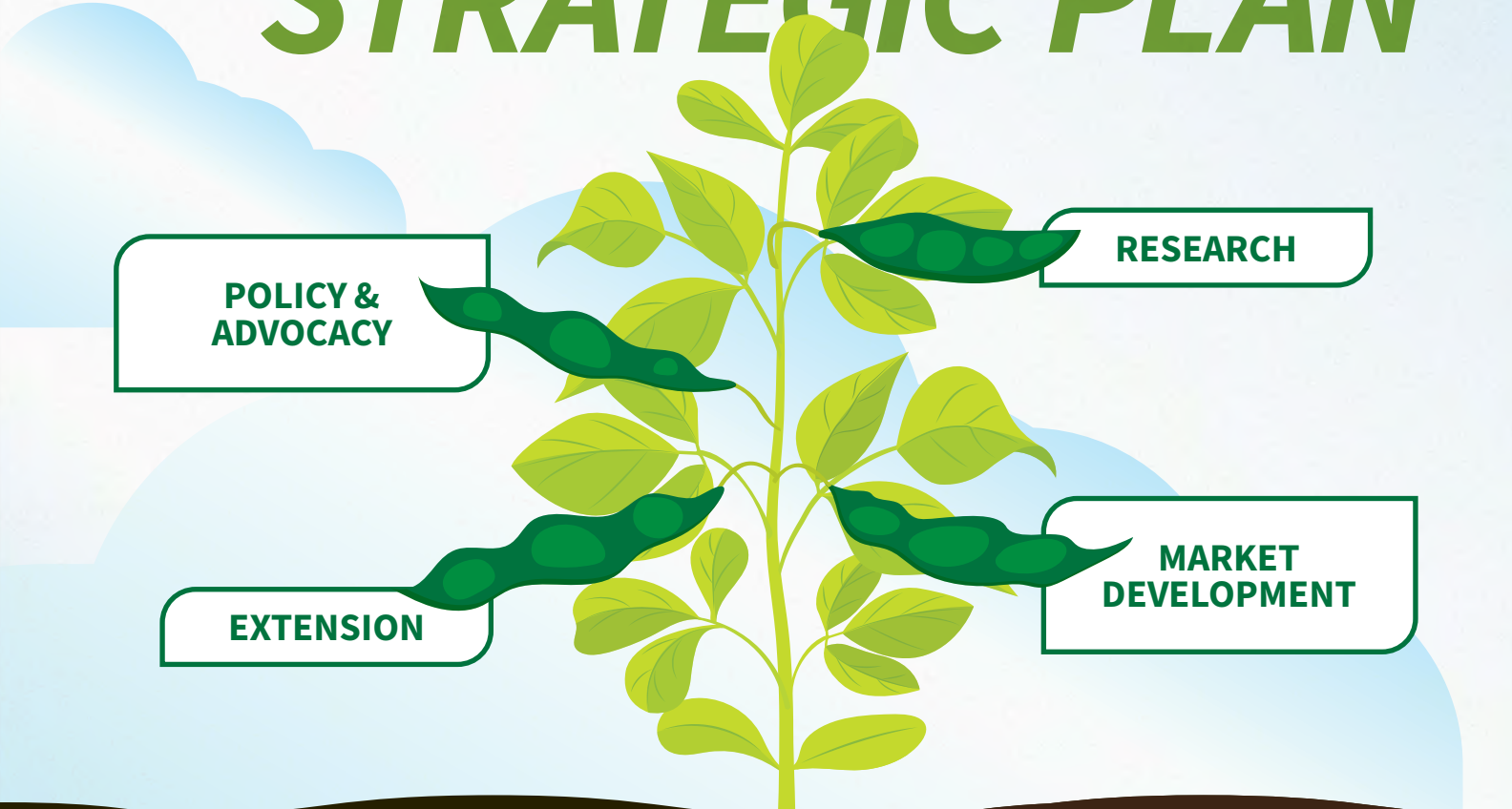
The highlighter test is a tool that can be used on regional variety trial data for all crop types to evaluate any single year using the LSD value. By understanding the LSD value and its role in these evaluations, you can visualize and understand the yield data and truly distinguish between genetic differences to help make informed variety selection decisions. ■

TABLE 1. Field Risk of IDC Based on Carbonate and Soluble Salt Soil Test Sevels

SOLUBLE SALTS	CARBONATE LEVEL (%)		
(mmhos/cm)	0 to 2.5	2.6 to 5	>5.0
0 to 0.25	Low	Low	Moderate
0.26 to 0.50	Low	Moderate	High
0.50 to 1.0	Moderate	High	Very High
>1.0	High	Very High	Extreme

Adapted from Agvise Laboratories

THE MPSG STRATEGIC PLAN



Governance & Administration

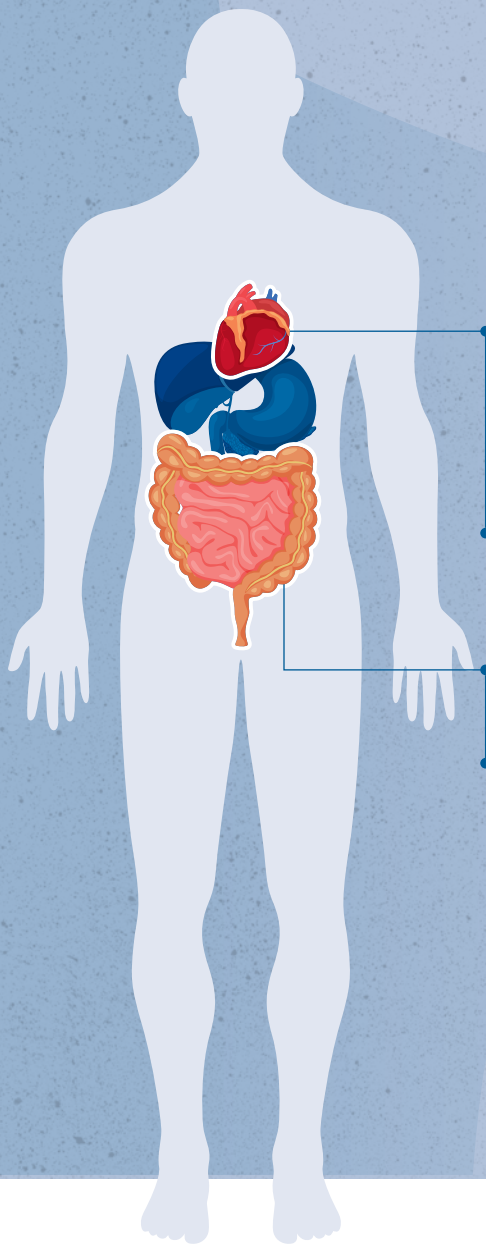
- Effectively applies core capabilities
- Anticipates and manages changes in resources
- Understands and is guided by the needs of farmers
- Focuses the board on governance, strategy and value to farmer
- Integrates sustainability in all aspects of operations and services
- Prioritizes financial prudence and accountability
- Manages risks to the organization
- Manages mis-information

Core Capabilities

- Ag Science and Technology
- Knowledge transfer to farmers
- On-farm research
- Leveraging check-off revenue
- Forging of partnerships
- Pursuit of farm sustainability

MANITOBA Pulse Soybean GROWERS

Dietary **Health**



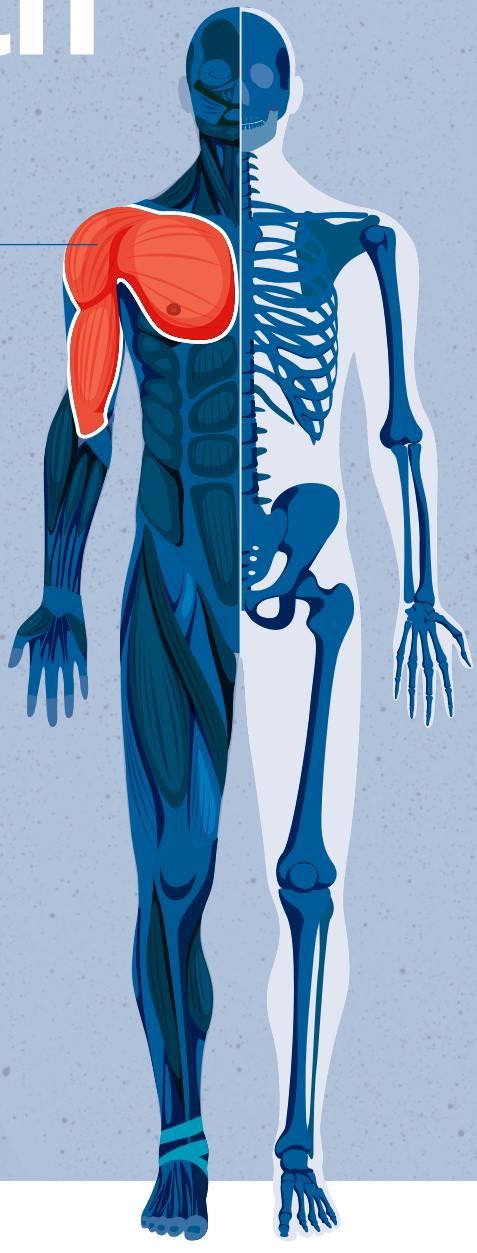
Half a cup of beans provides **nearly 30%** of the daily recommended protein intake.

Eating beans regularly can help **prevent spikes in blood sugar levels, reduce blood pressure, and reduce bad cholesterol** - all factors in cardiovascular disease.

Consumption of soy protein has been linked with a **modest decrease in cholesterol levels.**

Soybeans have a high fibre content, which is **good for gut health.**

Pulses are high in dietary fibre which **aids in satiety** and supports digestive health by **promoting regularity.**



2 to 5

Pulses contain **two** to **five times** more fibre than cereal grains.

Weight Loss

Pulses have been shown to ***increase weight loss*** when used in energy restricted diets.

Beans are ***very low in saturated fat.***

Pulses are a source of

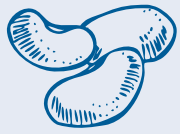
iron, phosphorous, zinc, selenium, magnesium, choline, niacin, vitamin B6 and vitamin E.

Pregnant women

Beans contain folate (folic acid), an important vitamin required by pregnant women. It helps protect against neural tube defects and birth defects of the spine and brain.

Lower Cholesterol Levels

Regular consumption of beans may help to lower cholesterol levels.



Beans are an excellent source of **energy-containing *complex carbohydrates.***

People *with Diabetes*

Pulses have a **low glycemic index,** making them a good food to *help manage blood sugar* levels for people with diabetes.

All information is from Pulse Canada, Love Canadian Beans and Healthline.

Farmer Mental Health – The Road Ahead

Awareness and resources continue to expand but so does need

Matt McIntosh, Writer and Farmer

IT WASN'T THAT long ago that mental health was a little-discussed subject in farm country. After concerted efforts in recent years to raise awareness, though, Canadian farmers now have access to a variety of resources to help overcome mental health challenges.

According to some experts, awareness campaigns and increasing openness from farmers about personal struggles fostered a more understanding and supportive culture in Canada's agriculture sector. As pressures facing farmers continue to expand and diversify, that support matters more than ever.

SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS

For Gerry Friesen, a long-time advocate for mental health awareness in agriculture, the response he receives when speaking about his own struggles with anxiety and depression have changed drastically in the last 15 years.

Under his brand "the Recovering Farmer," Friesen says the groups he speaks with today are much more engaging and less apprehensive to discuss mental health challenges. Friesen is also the chief administrative officer for The Manitoba Farmer Wellness Program – a program providing farmers access to free counselling services from specialists with agricultural backgrounds.

"We're drawing more interest every year. It's a good and bad thing. We're making it more acceptable to seek help, but that stress on the farm is growing," says Friesen, citing increasing trade, infrastructure and weather issues as three of many complex pressures burdening the minds of Canadian farmers.

"All of these things are outside the control of farmers. When things are outside our control they create a lot of stress, and that stress is very difficult to deal with. You're always one decision away from a completely different life."

Friesen's perspective is echoed by Lauren Van Ewyk, an Ontario-based counsellor, farmer and chief executive officer for the National Farmer Mental Health Alliance – a country-wide association of mental health professionals that offers mental health services with practitioners knowledgeable about agriculture and the complexities of farm life.

Van Ewyk says progress in both mental health awareness and cultural acceptance is highlighted by the increasing number of people contacting the association for help. Recognition of the problem and support for free counselling from both federal and provincial governments have also helped make mental health services more accessible for farmers, as have the proliferation of province-specific agriculture industry initiatives like We Talk. We Grow. in Nova Scotia and Manitoba Farmer Wellness Program.

"We have seen amazing growth," says Van Ewyk, referring to the Alliance and her own business. "This past year we have seen marriages restored; clients experiencing suicidal distress to move into recovery and healing; and families experiencing inner-relationship strife, develop communication and move forward together."

THE ROAD AHEAD

Van Ewyk reiterates farmers are themselves "fixers" – that is, people who can fix a problem if given the right tools. While the proliferation of targeted and industry-relevant counselling and other health-supporting tools continues, the need for such services similarly grows.

Citing a University of Guelph study, for example, Van Ewyk says the pressures fermented by the pandemic have been particularly hard on rural women.[1] Suicide rates for rural youth are also higher compared to their urban counterparts, as are the rates of substance abuse. Like Friesen, Van Ewyk also points to climate, policy, trade and other challenges as persistent issues pressuring farmer well-being. Collectively, these factors mean farmers are "constantly rallying and falling." In time, this leads many to shut-off their ability to feel vulnerable or express vulnerability, increasing the risk of reaching a crisis point.

The widespread generational transfer of farms is a factor, too, and one Canada's agriculture sector is not prepared for.

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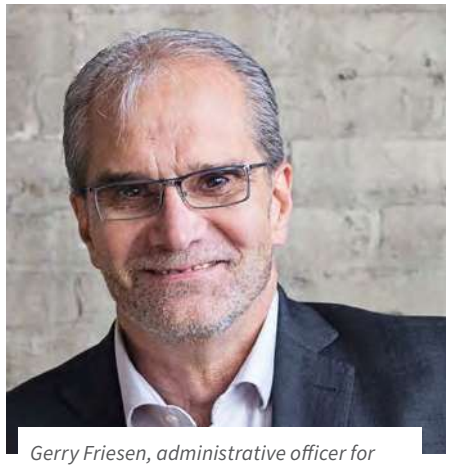

Gerry Friesen, administrative officer for Manitoba Farmer Wellness Program

Lauren Van Ewyk, an Ontario-based counsellor, farmer, and chief executive officer for the National Farmer Mental Health Alliance

[1]Deacon, L., Sarapura, S., Caldwell, W., Epp, S., Ivany, M., & Papineau, J. (2023). COVID-19, mental health, and rurality: A pilot study. *Canadian Geographies / Géographies canadiennes*, 67, 460–469. https://doi.org/10.1111/cag.12832

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continued from page 28

FARMER STATISTICS

- **58 per cent of farmers** meet the criteria for an anxiety disorder.
- **35 per cent of farmers** meet the criteria for a depression diagnosis.
- **40 per cent of farmers** are reluctant to get help due to stigma.
- **76 per cent** experience moderate to high perceived stress.
- Farmers are **twice as likely to commit suicide** in Canada and the United States, compared to the general population.
- **Only 9 per cent** of farmers seek support compared to 16 per cent of general rural population.
- **25 per cent** of Canadian farmers have either thought about taking their own life last year, wished they were dead, or felt that their life was not worth living.

"Farm transition is a piece that hasn't been well studied. There are a lot of transitions happening right now, and the long and short of it is transition is hard," says Van Ewyk. "Post World War II, a lot of immigrants from Europe came here and went into farming. Some came over in survival mode with an experience of trauma. When you have an 80-year-old person who has the majority shares in the business, but grew up in survival mode because of trauma, it's hard to break with that. You're dealing with strength, and support, and safety and identity."

"Trauma is something we're not talking about enough. Relationships between families are getting damaged. People are walking away from the farm for their own wellness. It's quite alarming."

Fundamentally, Van Ewyk says those working within agriculture must continue to spread awareness, while equipping more people – from farmers themselves to seed dealers and other agribusiness people – with the tools to support their clients, neighbours, family or friends if they notice someone might need help. Signs of struggle can include changes in behaviour, such as disengaging from community activities or trouble managing relationships, a loss of trust in others and other emotional changes, and even self-sabotage through poor or otherwise extreme and unnecessary business decisions.

FARMER MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

Manitoba Farmer Wellness Program

Provides mental health support for farmers, their families and employees in the form of confidential one-on-one counselling sessions, with counsellors who have a background in agriculture. This service is available free of charge. Similar services exist in other provinces.
manitobafarmerwellness.ca

National Farmer Mental Health Alliance

Professional therapists and counsellors with lived agriculture experience, along with agriculture specific training, provide services to farmers, their families and community stakeholders. Other resources include blogs on relevant subjects, the Rural Well podcast, national and provincial resources and online mental health programming.
nfmha.ca

Do More Agriculture Foundation

This initiative provides a suite of training, resources and other events and programs supporting mental health and mental illness awareness. It also acts as a hub for anyone looking for counselling services, as well as contact information for national and provincial crisis lines.
domore.ag

Manitoba Farm, Rural & Northern Support Services

Free, confidential online or telephone counselling for anyone who lives on a Manitoba farm or in a rural or Northern community. Public education, a volunteer training program and a monthly suicide bereavement support group are also available, along with books, videos and articles related to rural, northern, Indigenous and agricultural mental health.
supportline.ca

continued from page 30

Trauma is something we're not talking about enough. Relationships between families are getting damaged. People are walking away from the farm for their own wellness. It's quite alarming.

Lauren Van Ewyk

"Farmers might be more likely to reach out to their feed guy. They might drop a comment and not go further than that. Those people interacting with them need to be armed with the resources to validate the farmer's concerns, and care for their own wellness in the process," says Van Ewyk.

"Production is related to one's mental health. We need to make sure that conversation about mental health is interwoven in that lens."

Friesen also emphasizes the need to continue engaging all agricultural stakeholders.

"I think the resources are there. It's still a matter of being out there in the community," he says, adding representatives with Manitoba Farmer Wellness actively attend farming events throughout the year to share information and resources.

"I know we often talk about farmers wanting to talk to someone that knows something about agriculture. But quite frankly, when we're in crisis, it's about overcoming that crisis at that point so it's important to talk to a friend, family member or neighbour. We're working on building awareness so people will know what to do when they run into that problem." ■

VIEW FROM THE FIELD

Laura Schmidt, Former Production Specialist – West, Manitoba Pulse & Soybean Growesr

TAKING A CLOSER LOOK AT FABA BEAN DISEASES – MANITOBA'S FIRST FABA BEAN DISEASE SURVEY BEGINS

Faba beans have some fantastic qualities. They're excellent nitrogen fixers, are well suited to cool, moist growing conditions and are resistant to Aphanomyces root rot. They have great standability at harvest, pod at least six inches off the ground, are beloved by pollinators and effectively break up various pest cycles. On the flip side, as a small-acre crop, there are also some unanswered agronomy questions. One of those questions is centered around foliar and root diseases.

Foliar diseases infecting faba beans are very easy to mix up. Common culprits include chocolate spot (Botrytis fabae), Stemphylium blight, Alternaria leaf spot, Ascochyta and others. Along with being difficult to distinguish from one another, there's also the question of the relative importance of each of these diseases and their impact on yield and quality. Looking below-ground, the last time root rots were documented in faba beans on the Canadian Prairies was nearly 40 years ago.

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) researchers across the Prairies have banded together and initiated faba bean disease surveillance to explore and document diseases impacting faba bean production. To support this initiative, Manitoba Pulse and Soybean Growers (MPSG) agronomists surveyed 12 faba bean fields across the province in late July, collecting symptomatic roots and leaves for further diagnostics.

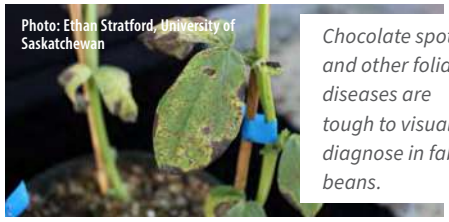
The faba bean disease surveillance initiative is led by Ahmed Abdelmagid with the AAFC Morden Research and Development Centre, Sabine Banniza with the AAFC Saskatoon Research and Development Centre, and Syama Chatterton with the AAFC Lethbridge Research and Development Centre.

MPSG has contributed $98,460 to this project running from 2024 to 2026.

If you're growing faba beans in the next two years, we'd love to survey your fields! Reach out to Ahmed Abdelmagid at **ahmed.abdelmagid@agr.gc.ca** to participate.

Surveying five foot-tall faba beans on 10-inch rows presented an interesting challenge.

Stemphylium blight and other foliar diseases are tough to visually diagnose in faba beans.



Chocolate spot and other foliar diseases are tough to visually diagnose in faba beans.

Faba bean taproots can reach deep into the soil. This survey will be the first to explore root diseases in Manitoba faba beans in 40 years.

Transitioning Family Farms for the Future

When fights erupt over farm succession it can be hard on everyone. Here are some tips to help with smooth transitions.

Mark Halsall, Writer

MOST PRODUCERS RECOGNIZE the merits of having a sound transition plan for their farm. For many family operations, sharing farm responsibilities and decision-making between different generations can foster new ideas and innovation while also helping ensure the farm's long-term viability and success.

While there are many reasons why transition planning makes business sense, one vital consideration isn't about dollars and cents. It's about how farms without a workable succession plan in place can harm everyone's mental health and sometimes be so disruptive it tears families apart.

Elaine Froese, a longtime farm coach who also farms with her family in Boissevain, Man., says she's sick of hearing about families fragmenting and imploding over inadequate, ill-conceived or non-existent farm succession plans.

"I don't want to hear any more stories about brothers not talking to each other for 15 years because of how the transition plan went down," she says.

Pulse Beat spoke to Froese and Dean Lewko, an agriculture transition specialist with Farm Credit Canada (FCC) based in Winnipeg, to get their take on mental health challenges related to farm transition planning and how farmers can turn apprehension into action.

Lewko has plenty of experience in this area, typically helping 85 to 100 producers each year with their transition plans.

"I don't think there's anything harder to deal with from a mental health component than a family dispute over a family farm, when people aren't speaking and nobody knows what's going to happen," he says. "There's nothing worse than finding out what the transition plan is when the will is read."

Lewko notes people who have put in 20 or 30 years working on a family operation often have expectations around taking it over one day, sometimes based on conversations with farm founders about what might happen.

However, when transition planning is left too late or if plans change – the farm founders deciding non-farm heirs should have a bigger stake but not being clear on how that should happen, for instance – it can be crushing blow.

"You can end up with families taking each other to court," says Lewko. "The costs just become insurmountable, and eventually the farm can end up being sold because that's the only way the problem can be dealt with."

Froese agrees court battles around farm succession are becoming all too common these days. "Farm litigation is exploding," she says. "It's one of the fastest growing practices in law."

> **"There's no magic bullet that's going to work for every single farm … It really is just keeping that communication open and finding out within each family how that works.**
>
> **Dean Lewko**

Dean Lewko, agriculture transition specialist with Farm Credit Canada.

SLEEPLESS NIGHTS

Lewko says he's talked to many clients who have spent years of sleepless nights worrying about what they see as inevitable disagreements and ugly conflicts among family members if farm succession is brought up.

"In reality, by avoiding it you're probably doing the worst possible thing you can do to create those disagreements and problems and hardships," he says.

Froese agrees, stating that putting off decisions around transition plans can sow strife and disharmony on family farms, which is hard on everybody.

"Procrastination is not good for your mental health, and it's not giving people what they need," she says.

"What people need is certainty about their future," Froese adds. "When hope is deferred for decades […] then people start to get disenchanted and feel trapped, and they can actually get depressed."

Froese notes that many in the next generation of farmers are well educated, and they may opt for other agriculture career options if stresses on the family farm are too great.

"What people are finally starting to understand is that you can no longer ignore the human potential on your farm, and you can no longer keep frustrating them," she says.

> **I don't want to hear any more stories about brothers not talking to each other for 15 years because of how the transition plan went down.**
>
> **Elaine Froese**

Elaine Froese, family farm coach in Manitoba.

COMMUNICATION IS KEY

So, what's the secret to successful farm transition planning? Both experts say communication, for one, is essential.

"This is above and beyond the most important component of a farm transition," says Lewko, noting that people need to feel like they've had an opportunity to speak and be heard. He adds it's equally important for both sides to listen and really try to understand each other's point of view, without projecting their own views or ideas.

Froese adds she believes many older farmers feel the way to solve problems is just put their heads down and work harder, not recognizing how powerful healthy family relationships and making collaborative decisions with the next generation can be.

A good starting place for farmers to get unstuck on transition planning is to change their mindset around conflict, which shouldn't be viewed as a bad thing but rather an opportunity for conflict resolution, explains Froese.

"I'm tired of people saying, 'keep the emotions out of it' because people's emotions are part of conflict and expressing emotion is a positive conflict behavior," she says. "Once you understand why something is so important to someone, then you can start creating solutions to make changes around it."

Froese maintains that if families can come together and get everything out in the open for people to talk about, it can lead to positive discussions about how they can grow together on the farm and find a path for transition that aligns with everyone's values.

"You do that by having conversations and figuring out what does a good day look like on the farm," she says. "It's not just about the numbers. It's about the people. Are the people happy? Do the people feel they have a good quality of life? Do the people feel they have enough financial security?

"By having everyone at the table, you can pound out expectations, you can pound out what reasonable timelines are, and then you can actually put an action plan in place," says Froese.

Lewko notes constructive discussions around transition planning can happen in number of ways. This could include scheduling regular meetings or having farm successors submit written proposals to the farm founders to consider.

"There's no magic bullet that's going to work for every single farm," he says. "It really is just keeping that communication open and finding out within each family how that works."

GET HELP

Lewko says once things start rolling on a transition plan, a common mistake is for farmers to do what comes naturally and attempt to do everything themselves.

"By nature, farmers will go from doing their taxes to trying to change an engine in their tractor to inoculating their cattle," he says. "This is one thing where you need help."

Lewko says it's important to try to build good team around you to assist with what can be a complicated process. This can include accountants, lawyers, financial consultants and other trusted advisors.

Lewko says when farmers can get good professional advice on transition planning and see what works for other farmers, "it makes it so much easier. It doesn't feel like an insurmountable task and starts to feel like just another necessary part of running your farming operation."

He notes there's lots of good information, including links to webinars and planning tools, that farmers can access on the FCC website at fcc-fac.ca. "It's a really good place to start," Lewko says.

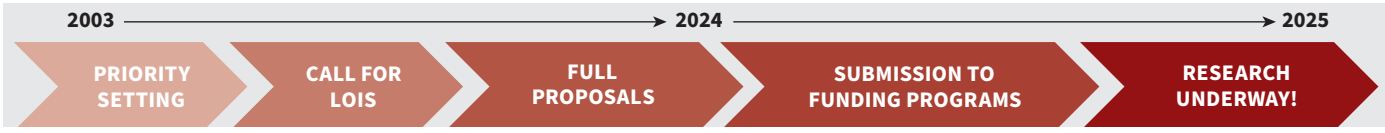
Farmers can find more supports, resources and practical tools for successful transition planning at Froese's website, elainefroese.com. You can also book a meeting with Froese and other members of her farm coaching team.

Froese notes the coaches are skilled in conflict resolution and other techniques that can help families get unstuck and find fairness in farm transition – something she stresses often requires reconciliation and repairing fractured relationships in addition to finding common ground.

"You can't typically do that on your own because you're too emotionally engaged in the outcome," Froese explains, adding professional mediation and facilitation can be invaluable in helping farm families work things out, if everyone is willing to put in the work. ■

The Latest Launch of Pulse and Soybean Research

Cassandra Tkachuk, Research Project Manager, MPSG



MANITOBA PULSE & Soybean Growers (MPSG) was hard at work throughout 2024 lining up the next wave of research projects starting in 2025. As research manager, it's an interesting thing to spend most of my time operating one year in the future.

The process actually begins two years in advance of a project's start when the internal research committee, made up of MPSG directors and staff, determine the top research priorities on behalf of the farmer membership. That list of priorities then becomes a call for letters of intent (LOI) that's circulated early in the year. The goal is to find researchers who are interested and willing to tackle a project that aligns with our priorities.

The timing of all that is to get ready to apply to the next provincial Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership (SCAP) program (or other available programs) to leverage your check-off dollars for a more robust investment. Matched dollars these days are anywhere from 50:50 to 70:30. Meaning, at best, MPSG puts in 30 per cent of the funds and the leveraged program supplies 70 per cent. This is where we really put your investment to work.

Projects deemed to be successful at the LOI stage advance to the full proposal stage. After full proposals are submitted to a program, we wait patiently for approval. Once approved, and agreements are in place, all systems are go on those projects.

What have we conjured up for you starting in 2025?

Here is a sneak peek of the research:

- The pursuit of dry bean flood and drought tolerance tackled by a new collaboration of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Ontario and North Dakota bean breeders.
- Fine-tuning the Aphanomyces root rot oospore test for more accurate disease risk prediction for a given pea field.
- A deeper investigation of how Manitoba soil, environmental conditions and various other practices impact soybean biological nitrogen fixation.

We're intrigued to see how these projects will contribute to our knowledge bank for Manitoba production and look forward to sharing the results with you as activities transpire.

The list of fully executed projects MPSG is funding within this five-year funding cycle (2023–2028) can be found in the Research Projects – Spring 2025 chart on the adjacent page. These projects were launched in 2023 and 2024 and are now fully underway. Each project spans anywhere from three to five years in duration. Most projects are co-funded under the provincial SCAP program, some projects are co-funded with other commodity groups and a few projects are solely funded by MPSG.

Going back to how we set the top research priorities, it is through feedback from you – the farmer membership, agronomists and other stakeholders who share real world experiences with us. We want you to tell us what you need for your pulse and soybean crops so we can go forth and find solutions for you. ■

Q: Can you tell these two notorious nightshade weeds apart?

Nightshades are in the same plant family as potatoes and produce berries containing seeds. These berries remain juicy well into harvest and can rupture, staining seeds and making them sticky and more likely to pick up soil and debris. They can also gum up the thresher, and moisture from the berries can affect storage quality.

Research from Minnesota has shown that a single plant can produce as many as 7,000 berries and 800,000 seeds when grown without competition. One plant may commonly produce 200,000 seeds.

Answer:

Leaves and stems of eastern black nightshade are hairless. Berries begin green and mature to black. Leaves are alternate and cotyledons are oblong to elongated.

Eastern black nightshade requires a longer growing season to set seed than hairy nightshade. In North Dakota[1] and Ontario, populations of Group 2-resistant eastern black nightshade have been confirmed.

Key early identifier: Undersides of young leaves are often dark purple.

While the immature fruit of both nightshades is green, the size of the sepals (small green leaves surrounding the berries) differs. Eastern black nightshade has small sepals.

Leaves and stems of hairy nightshade are densely covered in hairs. Berries remain green. Hairy nightshade leaves are alternate and cotyledons are oblong to elongated, finishing in a point.

Hairy nightshade emerging in late summer may produce viable seed before frost while eastern black nightshade requires a longer growing season.

Key early identifier: Young leaves have hairy margins.

While the immature fruit of both nightshades is green, the size of the sepals (small green leaves surrounding the berries) differs. Hairy nightshade sepals are large, covering a third to half of the berry, and are covered in hairs.

According to testing in North Dakota, Basagran may control hairy nightshade, but not eastern black nightshade.[1]

[1] *North Dakota Weed Control Guide 2024,* North Dakota State University

Research Projects – Spring 2025

Project Title	Principal Investigator(s)	Institution or Company	MPSG Investment
Improve Yield and Capture New Markets			
Accelerated genetic gain and improvement in dry bean yield, N fixation, disease resistance and seed quality	Valerio Hoyos-Villegas, Jamie Larsen	Michigan State University, AAFC-Harrow	$310,954
Development of improved pea cultivars to enhance Canada's leading role in international pea markets	Tom Warkentin	University of Saskatchewan	$37,398
Breed for top-performing field pea varieties and develop molecular markers to select for and improve yield, protein, maturity, standability and seed size	D.J. Bing	AAFC-Lacombe	$30,000
Short-season soybean breeding for Western Canada	Elroy Cober	AAFC-Ottawa	$229,805
Genomic improvement of faba bean	Nicholas Larkan	AAFC-Saskatoon	$27,000
Characterizing the protein and amino acid composition of Manitoba-grown soybean to support commercial value-added applications	Rotimi Aluko, Maneka Malalgoda	University of Manitoba	$87,483
Biological N-fixation of dry beans and N management strategies to refine production recommendations in Manitoba	Kristen MacMillan	University of Manitoba – MPSG Agronomist in Residence	$112,848
Mitigating soybean production risks: iron deficiency chlorisis, weed control timing and land rolling strategies	Kristen MacMillan	University of Manitoba – MPSG Agronomist in Residence	$68,782
Developing bio-inoculants for dry beans using a genomics driven approach to promote N-fixation	Ivan Oresnik, George diCenzo	University of Manitoba, Queens University	$100,000
Development of remote sensing tools to evaluate the in-field results of adopting best management practices (BMPs) for soybeans and pulses	Dilshan Benaragama	University of Manitoba	$140,024
Influence of seed moisture content and fan speed on air seeder damage of dry bean	Charley Sprenger	Prairie Agricultural Machinery Institute	$38,400
Prolonged nitrogen fixation during periodic moisture stress to enhance yield and protein accumulation in soybean	Yvonne Lawley	University of Manitoba	$38,000
Optimizing nitrogen and phosphorus management for dry bean production in southwestern Manitoba	Ramona Mohr	AAFC-Brandon	$55,340
Effects of preceding residue management on dry beans in southwestern Manitoba	Ramona Mohr	AAFC-Brandon	$25,476
Reduce Losses to Pests			
Accelerating solutions to root rot of pea and lentil using a multifaceted and integrative approach	Syama Chatterton	AAFC-Lethbridge	$77,419
Towards a better understanding of dry bean root rot and soybean cyst nematode management	Owen Wally	AAFC-Harrow	$48,280
The prairie weed monitoring network: surveillance, risk assessment and forecasting	Charles Geddes	AAFC-Lethbridge	$50,000
Protecting Manitoba's soybean industry from soybean cyst nematode	Mario Tenuta	University of Manitoba	$39,139
Staying on top of soybean root diseases under climate change in Manitoba	Yong Min Kim	AAFC-Brandon	$49,830
Investigating pea crop rotation length and sequence for sustainable protein production in Manitoba	Kristen MacMillan	University of Manitoba – MPSG Agronomist in Residence	$99,544
Pea leaf weevil seed treatment comparison	Laura Schmidt	MPSG	$16,548
Zidua herbicide crop tolerance assessment	Laura Schmidt	MPSG	$18,500
Accelerate discovery of root rot solutions for pea and lentil	Sabine Banniza	University of Saskatchewan	$35,342
Faba bean in crop rotation: Impacts on pea and soybean root rot, soil chemistry, microbiome and yield of most important crops in Western Canada	Ahmed Abdelmagid	AAFC-Morden	$98,460
Improve Soil Quality and Agroecosystem Health			
Building resilient soils with cover crops in Manitoba	Afua Mante	University of Manitoba	$126,068
Soil and water management research and development site in an undulating landscape	David Whetter, Bruce Shewfelt	AgriEarth Consulting, PBS Water Engineering	$52,253
Irrigated and rainfed field trials to maximize biological N-fixation: Assessing the impact of soybean and pea on residual soil N and yield of cereal and oilseed crops	Kevin Baron	N49 Genetics Inc.	$14,625
Effects of using low ground pressure (LGP) traffic systems for seeding on soil compaction and yield in different soil types	Lorne Grieger	Prairie Agricultural Machinery Institute	$39,165
On-Farm Network			
Soybeans – seeding rates, row spacings, double vs. single inoculant, single vs. no inoculant, biological products, fungicides, iron chelate	Christopher Forsythe	MPSG	$642,018
Peas – seeding rates, seed treatments, foliar fungicides, double vs. single inoculant	Christopher Forsythe	MPSG	$267,508
Dry Beans – foliar fungicides	Christopher Forsythe	MPSG	$98,086
		TOTAL	$1,755,729

ON-FARM NETWORK

Dry Beans – Reviewing field scale research to determine if fungicide applications pay

Christopher Forsythe, Agronomist for the On-Farm Network, Manitoba Pulse & Soybean Growers

on-farm network
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DRY BEAN ACRES have been trending upwards in Manitoba recently, and last year we saw a 28 per cent increase in dry beans compared to 2023. Since more farmers may be looking to increase their dry bean production this year, including potential first-time growers, it's timely to look at fungicide economics for dry beans.

Farmers ask the question, how often are foliar fungicide applications profitable? From small plot research, we have seen that fungicides can be effective at reducing disease and/or improving dry bean yield, especially in wet conditions. We also have field-scale research conducted in Manitoba to help shed some light on the answer and hopefully inform application decisions as well.

White mould is the main dry bean disease farmers aim to manage with fungicide since it has more potential to reduce yields than any other foliar disease. In wet years, and especially when July rainfall right before flowering is high, the risk of white mould increases significantly, and farmers generally spray fungicide accordingly. These conditions are where farmers expect to see a response since the impact of a fungicide application on yield is dependent on the extent of disease pressure in the field.

Fungicide applications vary year to year, and from 2021 to 2024, roughly a third of dry bean acres received a fungicide application. Fungicide use is higher in years with a wet, humid July.

Since 2016, Manitoba Pulse & Soybean Growers' (MPSG) On-Farm Network has been looking at whether foliar fungicides in dry beans improved yield and provided an economic return. There have been 23 field-scale trials with replicated strips running the length of the field completed to date. They compared a single fungicide application at flowering (early pin bean or R2 stage) to no fungicide applied at all. July rainfall was higher than normal at four of the 23 trials and the other trials were drier than normal. The products tested have been Lance, Acapela, Cotegra, Allegro, Proline Gold, Dyax and Zolera FX. There were 20 trials planted on 30-inch rows and three trials were planted on 15-inch rows or narrower.

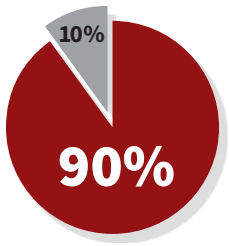
White mould was found at eight trials. At all but one, white mould incidence (per cent of plants with white mould symptoms) was reduced at varying levels with the fungicide application. At two out of the 23 trials (10 per cent) where one fungicide application was applied compared to no fungicide at all, yield was increased enough to pay for the fungicide product (not including application cost). Profit margins are calculated using real yield data and average fungicide product cost.

At these two trials, yield increased by 165 to 175 pounds per acre. Assuming a dry bean price of 47 cents per pounds and an average fungicide product cost of $22.50 per acre, this resulted in a profit of $57 per acre at those two sites (49 pounds per acre is break-even yield). But at 90 per cent of trials, a single fungicide application didn't significantly improve yield and a loss per acre occured.

At two trials (conducted in 2021 and 2024), two fungicide applications were compared to one fungicide application but neither resulted in a significant yield difference.

Curiously, in 2024, when it was a wetter year and disease pressure was a concern, at two out of four field-scale dry bean fungicide trials, there was no yield advantage to fungicide at any sites. As for a possible explanation? At one trial, the second of two applications was applied past the product's recommended crop staging window (the product was applied at full-pod or R4, whereas a second application should be applied at mid-bloom or R3). At the other trial, where it was a single fungicide application compared to none, perhaps the damaging disease period came on later in July and a second application was needed for a response.

MPSG's *Fungicide Decision Worksheet for Managing White Mould in Dry Beans*



In only 10 per cent of 23 on-farm trials conducted in Manitoba, a single application of foliar fungicide improved dry bean yield and provided a return on investment.

Based on this on-farm research, most of the time it doesn't pay to spray. This doesn't mean you should never apply a fungicide, but make your decision based on disease risk, namely conditions at flowering: high rainfall of one to two inches one to two weeks before flowering, humid soil, crop foliage and temperature between 15 to 30 C. Always use MPSG's *Fungicide Decision Worksheet for Managing White Mould in Dry Beans*. Remember, dry bean fungicide is purely preventative. For white mould control you need to apply the fungicide before symptoms appear.

At the end of the day, applying fungicide can pay off sometimes, but an application every year may not be necessary depending on conditions. Increase your chances of a fungicide application paying off by using a reliable product, spraying early before symptoms appear, but not too early (early flowering is best), and always consult the decision worksheet.■

To view resources from the Soil Health Network visit

Starting from the Ground Up for Soil Health

How the Soil Health Network is creating a community

Ashley Robinson, Editor

FINDING EVIDENCE-BASED INFORMATION about how to make your soil healthy is not always easy, nor is talking to others about it without being sold something or told you need to do it a certain way.

"People do not like to be spoken to top down, told how to run their business. The [Assiniboine College] applied research team just felt that farmers really had the answers. To give them the opportunity to get together and share those ideas and things that they've tried and what has worked and what hasn't worked," explains Jane De Pauw, coordinator of applied research at Assiniboine College.

In 2022, Assiniboine College decided to do something to help farmers. Regenerative agriculture and sustainability were making headlines, and everywhere farmers turned they were bombarded with information about soil health. The college applied for funding from the Weston Family Foundation to support farmers in exploring best management practises for soil health, receiving financing in December 2022 for a five-year project.

"The whole idea was that farmers would help other farmers, and they could develop these areas of support basically, or these communities of practice," De Pauw says.

In March 2023, Brent VanKoughnet was hired as the project lead for what became the Soil Health Network. Initially, the first two years were supposed to focus on Manitoba only. But as the project got up and running and more people heard about it, they had interest from across Western Canada, so they expanded earlier than planned to include Saskatchewan and Alberta.

The Soil Health Network takes a grassroots approach for farmers to learn about soil health. Assiniboine College provides a framework for farmers to find and share information. The team at the Soil Health Network is working to create a space for farmers to discuss soil health in ways that are practical and achievable.

One of the groups' initiatives includes facilitating farmer-led discussions on soil health. To do this, they find champions of soil health, who are identified by producer organizations. The champions then invite 10 to 12 of their peers to their farm for a candid discussion about what they're doing on their farm and the challenges they're facing. Soil Health Network representatives facilitate the discussions, sending out the invites and helping guide the conversations.

"When the host has chosen who's there, there's a remarkable comfort and familiarity with each other's issues and they dive into a really productive conversation almost immediately," VanKoughnet explains. These discussions are "all different, and they're all really cool, and many growers say, 'I didn't realize some of those solutions were in the room.'"

To date, a dozen of these peer group discussions have been hosted at farms across Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta.

The Soil Health Network has also created a website of resources on soil health. They've poured through available research to find the best extension and producer related information around soil health and put it all in one place. The information is organized into categories making it easy to access.

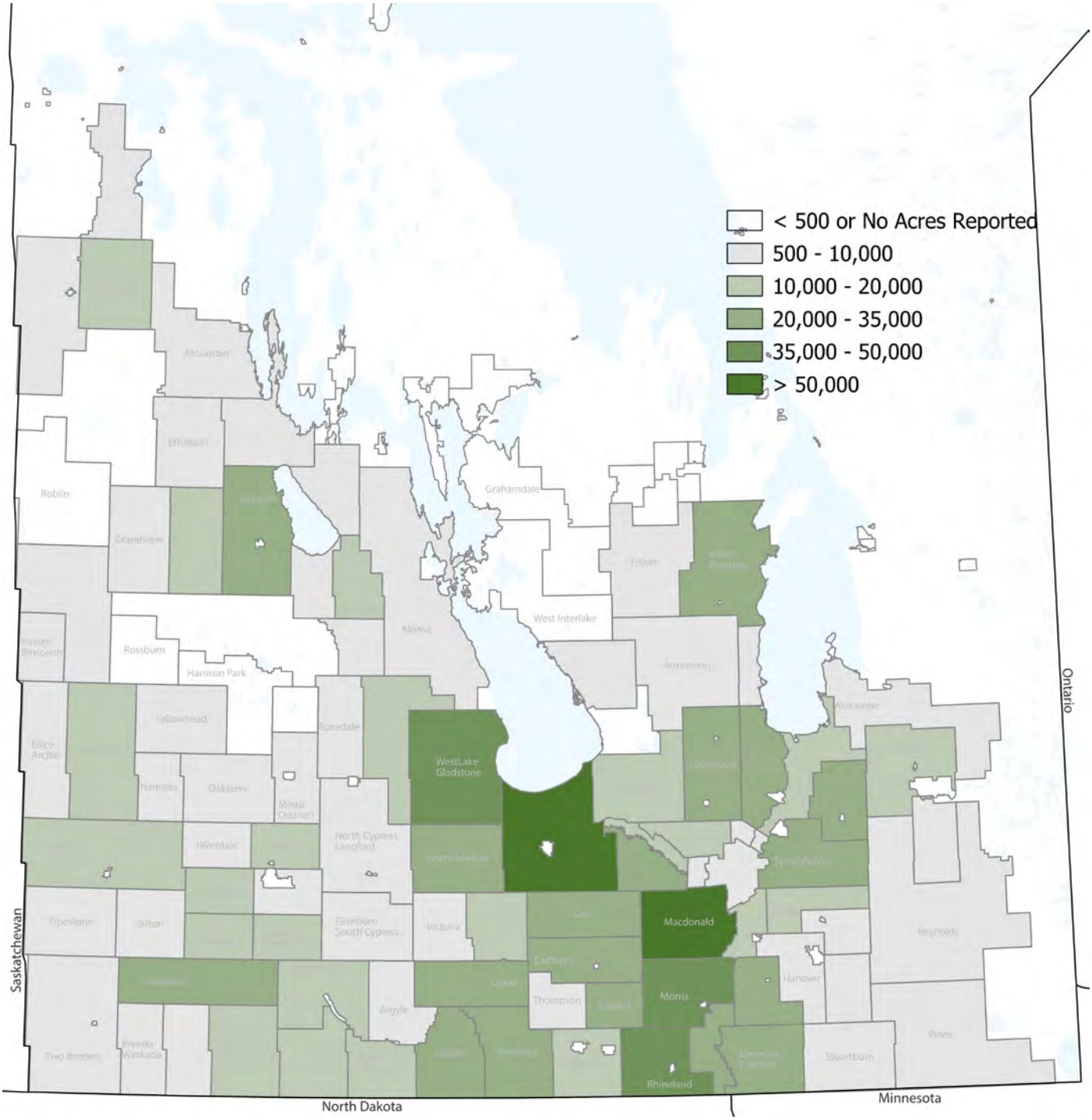
The team is working on creating other resources including a podcast series on soil health. The podcast will feature farmers sharing their interesting takes on soil health or researchers talking about their soil health work.

The Soil Health Network is also planning to experiment with online peer support groups and discussion forums. Forums may include group discussions of specific topics. The first 25 people to join online will be invited to a discussion group. A special guest will lead the discussion and interact with the framers.

While the funding is only for five years, the Soil Health Network wants to create a lasting legacy. They hope that by providing these tools to farmers, farmers will continue having these frank and honest discussions with each other about soil health.

"My hope is that we have impact well beyond the five-year Weston funded program. We plan to leave some legacy culture behind, where soil health conversations and collaboration becomes the norm, rather than something that needs to be carried and nurtured. That would be a wonderful legacy," VanKoughnet says. ■

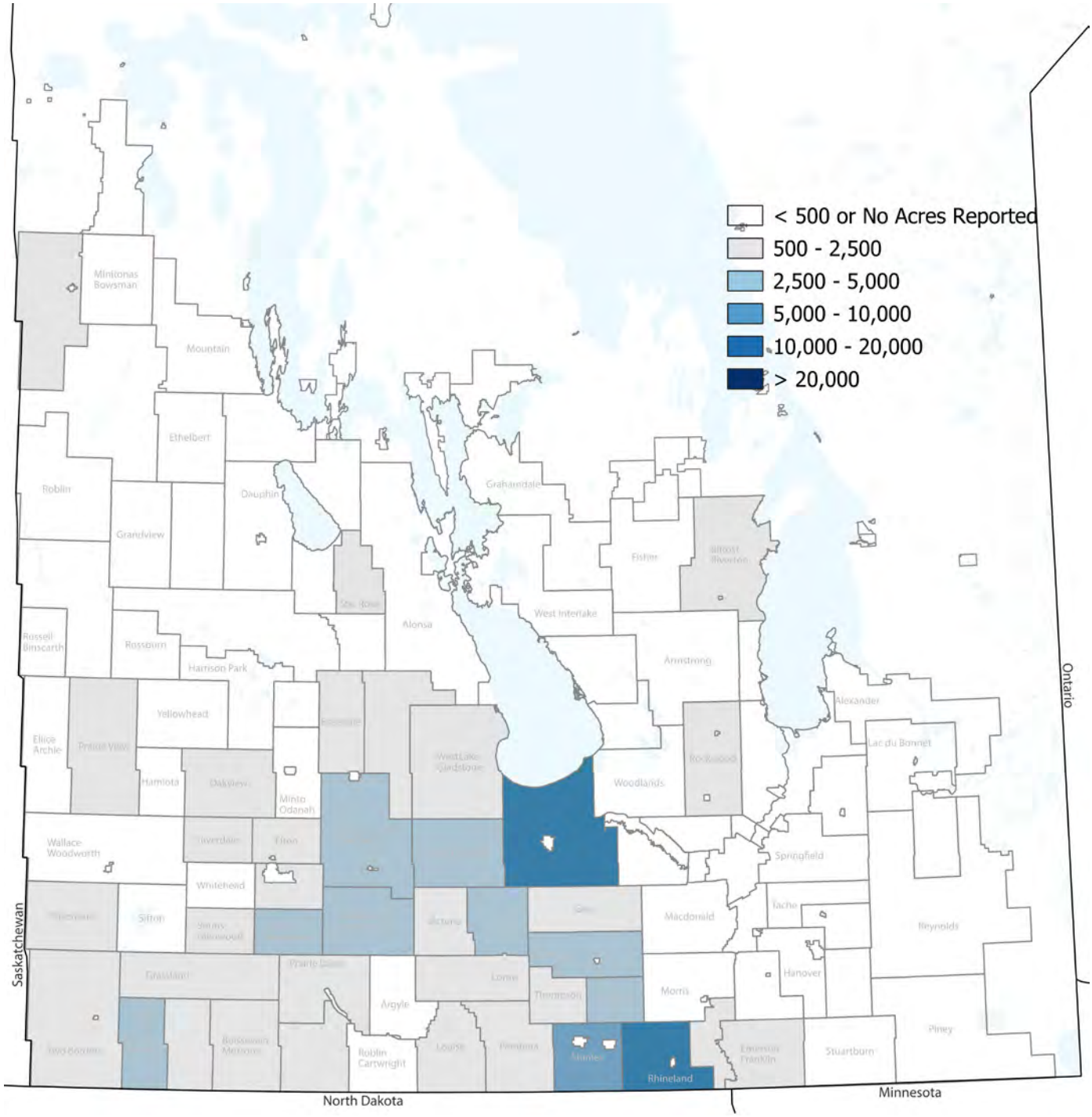
2024 Soybean Acres



MANITOBA Pulse Soybean GROWERS

MASC Manitoba Agricultural Services Corporation

2024 Dry Bean Acres



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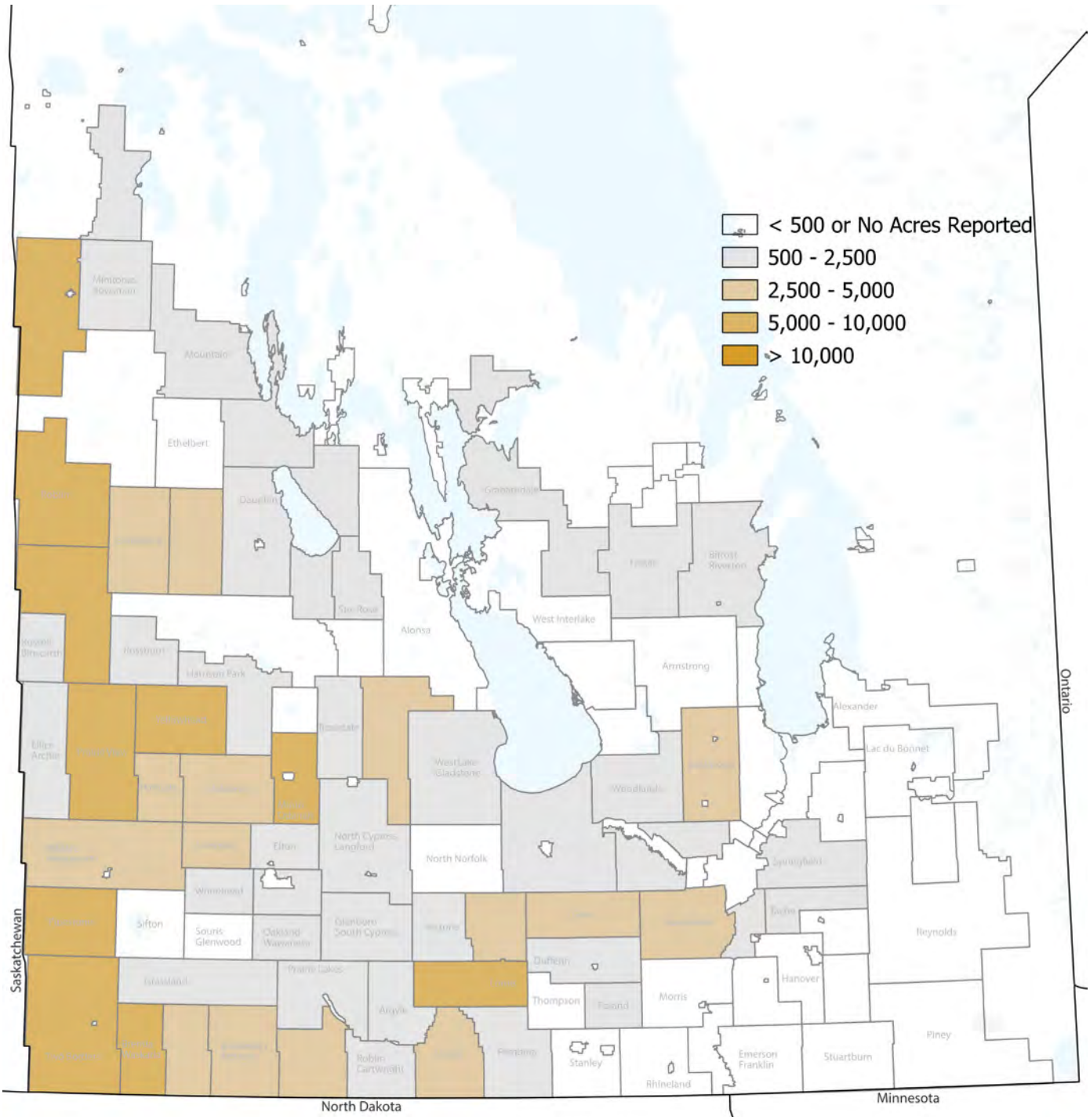
2024 Pea Acres



MANITOBA Pulse Soybean GROWERS

MASC Manitoba Agricultural Services Corporation

Manitoba Pulse and Soybean Buyer List – Febuary 2025

The Canada Grain Act requires some elevators and grain dealers to have a Canadian Grain Commission (CGC) license and post security to cover their liabilities (what they owe) to farmers. Grain dealers and operators of primary, terminal, and process elevators in western Canada are licensed by the CGC. Seed cleaning plants, which do not purchase grain, and feed mills do not have to be licensed.

It is the responsibility of farmers to satisfy themselves that any company they deal with is financially sound. Questions regarding licencing and security should be directed to the CGC at 800-853-6705 or 204-983-2770.

MPSG's pulse crop buyers list contains the names of companies that have registered with MPSG and are actively purchasing pulse crops in Manitoba. The word registered does not imply endorsement. The complete list is available on our website manitobapulse.ca.

COMPANY	EDIBLE BEANS	FABA BEANS	LENTILS	PEAS	SOYBEANS	PHONE	LOCATION	CGC REGULATED
Adroit Overseas Enterprises Ltd.	√	√	√	√	√	604-930-4855	Surrey, BC	√
Agassiz Global Trading	√			√	√	204-745-6655	Homewood, MB	
Alliance Pulse Processors Inc. dba AGT Foods Canada	√	√	√	√	√	306-525-4490	Regina, SK	√
All Commodities (AC) Trading Ltd.			√	√		204-339-8001	Winnipeg, MB	√
Avena Foods Ltd. dba Best Cooking Pulses Inc.			√	√		306-586-7111	Rowatt, SK	√
Belle Pulses Ltd.		√		√		306-423-5202	Bellevue, SK	√
Besco Grain Ltd.		√		√		204-745-3662	Carman, MB	√
Brett-Young Seeds Ltd.				√	√	204-478-2204	Winnipeg, MB	
Broadgrain Commodities Inc.	√	√	√	√	√	416-504-0070	Toronto, ON	√
C.B. Constantini Ltd.	√	√	√	√		604-669-1212	Vancouver, BC	√
Cargill Ltd.					√	204-947-0141	Winnipeg, MB	√
Columbia Grain Inc. (CGI) (Walhalla Bean Co.)	√					701-549-3721	Walhalla, ND	√
Columbia Seed Co. Ltd	√	√		√		306-525-2295	Regina, SK	
Delmar Commodities Ltd.	√		√	√	√	204-331-3696	Winkler, MB	√
ETG Commodities	√	√	√	√	√	416-900-4148	Mississauga, ON	√
G3 Canada Limited				√	√	204-983-0239	Winnipeg, MB	√
Gavilon Grain LLC					√	816-584-2210	Omaha, NE	√
Global Food and Ingredients Inc.	√	√	√	√		416-840-8590	Toronto, ON	√
Grain St Laurent	√	√	√	√	√	514-871-2037	Montreal, QC	√
Hensall District Co-operative Inc.	√			√		204-750-0529	Winnipeg, MB	√
Horizon Agro Inc.					√	204-746-2026	Morris, MB	√
Kalshea Commodities Inc.			√		√	204-488-0251	Winnipeg, MB	√
Knight Seeds			√		√	204-764-2450	Hamiota, MB	
Lighhouse Commodities, LLC					√	701-516-8024	Bismarck, ND	√
Linear Grain Inc.	√	√		√	√	204-745-6747	Carman, MB	√
Lyft Commodity Trading Ltd.	√	√	√	√	√	604-355-4275	Vancouver, BC	√
McDougall Acres Ltd.	√	√	√	√	√	306-693-3649	Moose Jaw, SK	
Natural Proteins Inc.					√	204-355-5040	Blumenort, MB	
Nutri-Pea				√		204-239-5998	Portage la Prairie, MB	
NuVision Commodities Inc.	√			√	√	204-758-3401	St. Jean Baptiste, MB	
Parrish & Heimbecker Ltd.				√	√	204-987-4329	Winnipeg, MB	√
Paterson Grain	√			√	√	204-956-2090	Winnipeg, MB	√
Prairie Fava Ltd.		√				204-721-4715	Glenboro, MB	√
Prairie Premium Products Inc.				√		204-252-2940	Portage la Prairie, MB	
Providence Grain Group			√	√	√	780-997-0211	Fort Saskatchewan, AB	√
PS International, LLC dba Seaboard Special Crops		√	√	√		306-565-3934	Regina, SK	√
Richardson International Ltd.			√	√		204-934-5652	Winnipeg, MB	√
• Richardson Pioneer Limited				√	√	204-934-5627	Winnipeg, MB	√
• Tri Lake Agri Limited				√	√	204-934-5652	Winnipeg, MB	√
Roquette Canada Ltd.				√		204-428-3722	Portage la Prairie, MB	√
Rudy Agro Ltd.	√		√	√		306-867-8667	Outlook, SK	√
Scoular Canada Ltd.	√	√	√	√		403-349-5077	Calgary, AB	√
Seed-Ex Inc.				√	√	204-737-2000	Letellier, MB	√
Semences Prograin Inc.					√	450-469-5744	Saint-Césaire, QC	√
Sevita International					√	613-989-3000	Inkerman, ON	
Shafer Commodities Inc.	√	√	√	√	√	204-822-6275	Morden, MB	√
Simpson Seeds Inc.			√	√		306-693-2132	Moose Jaw, SK	√
Southland Pulse Inc.			√	√		306-634-8008	Estevan, SK	√
Sunnydale Foods Inc		√		√		306-986-6180	Saskatoon, SK	
Sunrise Foods International Inc.					√	306-657-4541	Saskatoon, SK	√
SureSource Commodities, LLC				√		866-697-5960	Petrolia, ON	√
The Andersons Inc.			√	√		419-891-6464	Maumee, OH	√
Vandaele Seeds Ltd.		√		√		204-665-2384	Medora, MB	√
Vanderveen Commodity Services Ltd.				√	√	204-745-6444	Carman, MB	√
Viterra Inc.	√		√	√	√	Contact your local Viterra Sales Rep		√
Western Harvest Bean ULC	√					204-515-7331	Winnipeg, MB	
Wilbur Ellis Company of Canada Ltd.	√	√	√	√		403-328-3311	Lethbridge County, AB	√
XPT Grain Inc.	√			√		306-525-0205	Regina, SK	√

RECIPE **CORNER**

Chocolate Bean Truffles

Courtesy of MPSG, GETTYSTEWART.COM AND GREAT TASTES OF MANITOBA

SERVINGS: 18 to 20 | PREP TIME: 20 min plus 30 min rest | TOTAL TIME: 50 min

Ingredients

⅓ cup large or quick cooking oats

1 can (540ml/19 oz) black beans, rinsed and drained

½ cup soft, pitted dates (about 5 medjool dates), chopped

2 tbsp coconut oil, melted

⅓ cup unsweetened cocoa powder

2 Tbsp espresso or instant coffee powder

¼ cup maple syrup

pinch of salt

Method

1. Add oats to food processor and process until fine flour consistency.
2. Add black beans, dates and coconut oil. Process until smooth. Add cocoa powder, espresso powder and maple syrup. Process, scraping down sides as needed. Repeat several times until smooth. If too thick, add one tablespoon of water.
3. Taste and adjust sweetness as needed.
4. Transfer truffle mixture to bowl and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes to firm up.
5. Meanwhile, prepare your favourite coating(s) and place on plates. Line a tray with parchment paper and set aside.
6. Scoop out a tablespoon of dough to make even, bite-sized balls. Wet hands slightly and form into small balls (½–¾") then roll in your favourite coating.
7. Store truffles in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to a week, or store uncoated truffles in the freezer for up to three months.

Coating Ideas

- cocoa
- toasted, chopped nuts
- shredded coconut flakes
- sprinkles
- crumbled freeze-dried berries

View the recipe online:

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RECIPE **CORNER**

Black Bean & Corn Stuffed Sweet Potatoes

Courtesy of MPSG, GETTYSTEWART.COM AND GREAT TASTES OF MANITOBA

SERVINGS: 4 | PREP TIME: 10 min | COOK TIME: 15 min | TOTAL TIME: 25 min

Ingredients

STUFFED SWEET POTATOES

4 sweet potatoes
1 Tbsp canola oil
¼ cup onion, diced
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 tsp ground cumin
½ tsp coriander
1 tsp chili powder
¼ tsp smoked paprika
¼ tsp salt
⅛ tsp black pepper
2 cups black beans
1 ½ cups whole kernel corn (frozen or canned), thawed or drained
1 tsp hot sauce (as desired)
½ cup salsa
1 tbsp lime juice

OPTIONAL GARNISH

chopped tomatoes
cilantro, green onions
avocado, guacamole, sour cream, feta

BBQ MAYO

½ cup mayo
1 Tbsp BBQ sauce
1 tsp lime juice
dash hot sauce

Method

1. Scrub sweet potatoes well and remove any blemishes. Prick with fork several times. Place on microwave safe dish and cook on high for five minutes (or roast in oven at 400F/204C for 45 minutes). Check, rotate and cook for another three to five minutes. Repeat at one-minute intervals until knife goes in smoothly. Set aside and let cool slightly.
2. Meanwhile, in large skillet, heat oil over medium heat. Add onion and sauté until translucent.
3. Add garlic, ground cumin, coriander, chili powder, smoked paprika, salt, pepper and sauté for 30 seconds until fragrant.
4. Add black beans, corn, hot sauce, salsa and lime juice. Cook on low for five to seven minutes, allowing flavours to meld. Mash some of the beans for a thicker consistency.
5. Taste and adjust seasoning as needed.
6. To assemble, cut each baked sweet potato in half and fluff the insides with a fork creating a bed for the filling.
7. Stuff each sweet potato half with the black bean mix.
8. Garnish with your favourite toppings and serve with the BBQ Mayo.

View the recipe online:

GREAT Tastes OF MANITOBA

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